ACADEMIC COUNCIL  
MEETING of DECEMBER 12, 2007  
McKenna Hall Auditorium  
3:30 – 5:00 p.m.  


Members absent: John Affleck-Graves, Seth Brown, Michael Lykoudis, Christine Maziar, Gaby Montero, William Westfall, Carolyn Woo

Members excused: Panos Antsaklis, Cornelius Delaney, Thomas Noble, Rev. Mark Poorman, C.S.C.

Observers present: Kevin Barry, Kathryn Lam, Dale Nees, Harold L. Pace, Brandon Roach, Don Wycliff

Observers absent: Daniel Saracino

Guests: Bob Johansen, Acting Director and Senior Fellow, Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, Scott Appleby, Director of the Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies

After calling the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m., Fr. Jenkins asked Prof. Page to offer the opening prayer.

1. Peace Studies Ph.D. Program: Prof. Holland introduced the proposal for a Peace Studies Ph.D. Program noting that the proposal is comprehensive and clear and that it has been closely examined and warmly supported by the College Council of Arts and Letters and the Graduate Council. He stated that the Kroc Institute is a remarkable part of the University and that this proposal carefully thought through how to develop a program in Peace Studies at the doctoral level in collaboration with four departments. The proposal is strongly recommended by the Graduate Council. Prof. Holland then introduced Bob Johansen, Acting Director and Senior Fellow, Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, and Scott Appleby, Director of the Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies. He asked them to very briefly comment on the proposal from the perspective of the Kroc Institute.

Prof. Johansen said that they developed the proposal because they think there is a very serious need for more rigorous and interdisciplinary study of the causes of war and conditions of peace as well as all forms of political, ethnic and religious violence. They think that Notre Dame and
the Kroc Institute are well positioned to do “path-breaking work” in this area. The proposal is designed to draw on disciplinary and departmental methodological strengths and also to benefit from interdisciplinary questions and research findings from peace research itself. Furthermore, the program carves out a niche that they think is unique and builds on the peace building in which the Kroc Institute is already involved. They are pleased with the collaboration of four other departments in setting up this proposal and are excited about the interdisciplinary research and teaching possibilities that this program will present. Prof. Johansen then fielded questions from the Council.

Prof. Jessop inquired about how the funding of this program will potentially impact the financial support to other departments. He was concerned that in a “zero sum game” that the financial aid provided to a new Peace Studies Ph.D. candidate would mean that a student in another department would not receive any aid. Prof. Johansen responded that the funding for the program is not coming out of the departments. Initially the Graduate School “is offering a kind of guarantee” for the opening year. The long range plan is for the stipends to come from the Kroc Institute endowment income.

Prof. Roche offered his thoughts from the perspective of the College of Arts and Letters. He was initially “modestly cautious” about the proposal because he was not sure there would be a market for jobs for Ph.D.s in peace studies, and because it was not clear the program would be in collaboration with departments. However, the proposal convinced Prof. Roche that there are huge opportunities for Graduate Students to obtain positions upon graduation. Furthermore, the proposal is exemplary in its collaboration with four different departments and provides the opportunity for collaboration with other departments (perhaps theology) in the future. Prof. Roche shared a second caution. For a long time, he has been an advocate higher stipends as opposed to more stipends. Initially he was very concerned about the costs of this program, but the Kroc Institute has been exemplary. While they could have invested in fellows or might have just focused on research, they decided to invest in graduate students who will get Notre Dame degrees. In addition, he noted that it is only “one-time cash for a very brief period of time that will come from the Graduate School.” He summarized, “from both perspectives, I’m really very happy with the proposal and I give it my full support.”

Prof. Carlson offered her support from the psychology department. Dr. Younger, Director of University Libraries, shared her support for the proposal. She particularly appreciated the consideration that the proposal gave to its impact on library resources. She also mentioned that Doug Archer from the Library staff worked very well with the Kroc Institute in putting it together. She emphasized that the library is well-prepared to support a doctoral program in peace studies and related disciplines using onsite resources and interlibrary loan. Finally, she noted that the library has allocated $150,000 for peace studies in the coming year and that Mr. Archer will be working with the Kroc Institute on that going forward.

Ms. Cucchiara questioned Prof. Johansen about the length of the program given the heavy course load it requires (for example, seven more courses than required for regular history students). She suggested that it may be best to offer a six year program, rather than a five year program as proposed because of the large course load. She also thought that this would allow students to
apply for national grants in their third year, which would enable them to do field research in their fourth year and thus the University would still only pay for five years of funding.

Prof. Johansen thanked Ms. Cucchiara for her comments. He acknowledged that Graduate Students do not always complete their studies in an optimal amount of time. He said that he is hopeful that many students will attract external funding, which would enable them to stay longer if needed. However, he is prepared to look at the cost, even if students are unable to fund themselves. He said that he wants students to be well cared for and to have adequate time to do the work they need to get their degree. He indicated that those that developed the proposal thought about and discussed these issues.

With no further comments, Fr. Jenkins called for vote. The Council unanimously approved the Peace Studies Ph.D. proposal.

2. Name Change of Committee: Prof. Carlson introduced the proposal from the Graduate Council Subcommittee to 1) assign committee status to the group and 2) name this committee the “Advanced Studies Committee of the Academic Council.” She explained some history about the subcommittee’s status: there was a recommendation in 2004 from the Committee on Committees to avoid redundancy between the formal and larger Graduate Council and the Graduate Council Subcommittee of the Academic Council. As part of that change, members of the Academic Council now sit on the Graduate Council. It has become very confusing as to which Graduate Council people are referring: the formal at large body or the subgroup from the Academic Council. Furthermore, the subcommittee does hold its own meetings outside of the Graduate Council, they make suggestions for the Graduate Council to put on its agenda, and they bring suggestions from the Graduate Council to the Academic Council to put on its agenda. In addition, the new name will more accurately reflect the fact that this subcommittee is to consider, not just the graduate programs, but also Law School and MBA programming students. Prof. Carlson responded to some clarifying questions from the Council stating that the current structure is working very well, however since they do meet separately from the formal Graduate Council and carry out tasks, they wish to have an elevated status.

Fr. Jenkins called for a vote. The proposal to assign committee status to the Graduate Council group of the Academic Council and name this committee “Advanced Studies Committee of the Academic Council” was passed unanimously.

3. Academic Calendar: Dr. Pace presented a proposal from the Provost Academic Calendar Committee to add the Wednesday before Thanksgiving as a University Holiday. He indicated that the committee had two initial concerns: 1) if Wednesday was added to the Thanksgiving holiday, students may be more likely to take the whole week off from classes and 2) a policy may not be necessary since the faculty “really hold the key to whether or not students come to class.” He said that the committee asked itself: “Why change the Thanksgiving holiday if it was just a matter of faculty properly addressing those students and asking them to come to class as they would like?” As the committee deliberated, it seemed clear that there were more practical issues that needed to be addressed and that it was appropriate for the committee to come forward to Prof. Burish. Prof. Burish then brought the issue forward before the Academic Council.
Dr. Pace explained that there are two practical issues to consider: 1) over half of the undergraduate students seem to leave campus on that Wednesday before Thanksgiving, and 2) the faculty are confused about whether or not Wednesday is an official holiday.

Dr. Pace referred to two documents that were distributed: 1) the letter the committee sent to Prof. Burish and 2) the appendix to the report. He highlighted a few key issues in the report:

1) The committee surveyed a sample of the faculty regarding the possibility of adding Wednesday to the Thanksgiving holiday. Results indicated about 50 percent of students taking classes held on that Wednesday. Engineering suggested 62 percent of their students were actually attending. Faculty said that they were a little frustrated with those results. They were also frustrated when they heard comments from their students that their class was the only one actually meeting that day, so why is it not cancelled? The faculty felt that this question put them on the spot. Faculty members indicated that they were willing to follow whatever policy the University developed, but that they were a little frustrated with the fact that there did not seem to be clear policy statements from the administration regarding this issue. Lacking a statement, they were following the culture in a lot of cases.

2) The committee surveyed St. Mary’s College which has had Wednesday as a part of the Thanksgiving holiday for a number of years. The registrar at St. Mary’s sent out an email to the faculty at St. Mary’s and asked them to respond concerning this issue. 34 faculty responded saying, for the most part, that students did attend the Monday and Tuesday classes that week (i.e., students did not further extend the holiday and takeoff Monday and Tuesday as well). In that way, the faculty did not see the policy as a problem. In fact, many of them liked the calendar.

3) The committee also looked at the calendars of 18 of our peer institutions. There were five schools that actually included the Wednesday through Friday holiday for Thanksgiving and a couple that gave a full week break and incorporated Thanksgiving into their fall break (though that was not considered a trend). Many of the calendars give Columbus Day as a holiday and that may have affected that school’s thoughts on giving another day at Thanksgiving. Requests were also sent to the institution’s Registrars asking them for comments on this issue; however the responses were not very conclusive.

4) The committee received anecdotal information from Notre Dame’s faculty saying that our undergraduate students are not on campus in great numbers on that Wednesday. The committee determined that the number of students eating in the dining halls on that Wednesday could serve as a reasonable proxy for the number of students on campus on that day. Food Services indicated that on a typical Wednesday, 11,000 students were served, but on the average on those Wednesdays before Thanksgiving, 4,700 students were served (i.e., over half of the student population is not on campus on that Wednesday).

Given the issues above, the committee recommended to Prof. Burish to add Wednesday as a holiday, but to maintain the 70 class days in the term (as mandated by the Academic Council) by reducing the number of reading days from four to three. The last class day, instead of being Wednesday, would be Thursday. The second part of the recommendation expressed the need for the Provost and the Deans to develop and issue a clear policy statement to the faculty concerning
conducting class on regularly scheduled class days. The policy statement should specifically address the class meetings before and after the holidays. It is also important that such a policy be equally enforced in each college and department. Dr. Pace indicated that this second part of the recommendation is so important to the committee they would recommend that it should go forward as a change in policy, even if the first part is not supported.

Dr. Pace went on to describe four issues that the committee identified regarding their recommendations:

1) The committee is concerned that if students are given the Wednesday off, that they will choose to take the remainder of the week for a second fall break. That was not a point on which the committee came to a clear conclusion or resolved.

2) If Wednesday is given as a holiday, it would reduce the number of Monday/Wednesday/Friday and Monday/Wednesday class days by one, and it would add an additional day to the Tuesday/Thursday classes. Is this a good swap for the Wednesday before Thanksgiving?

3) If Wednesday is added to the Thanksgiving holiday, there is a matter of symmetry in the spring that may need to be addressed so that there are an equal number of study days in the spring semester (possibly by adding another day at Easter).

4) The committee has another proposal on its docket that has yet to be addressed. The committee is considering asking that classes be dismissed a little bit early on Holy Thursday, so that students will have the opportunity to go to mass. Dr. Pace said that this point is not part of the committee’s current proposal, but that it could certainly be discussed.

Dr. Pace opened the floor to other members of the Provost Academic Calendar Committee to make any comments.

Prof. Buechler commented that he surveyed the faculty in science and a large percentage said they did hold class on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, but that attendance was poor. He thinks that if the number of class meetings of Tuesday/Thursday and Monday/Wednesday/Friday can be preserved, the recommendation seems like a practical solution. Traveling is very difficult that day, so many students will skip class unless faculty start giving quizzes and exams on that day and that seems pretty harsh. Prof. Buechler continued that one option the committee discussed was calling the Thursday reading day, a Wednesday. Monday/Wednesday/Friday classes or Monday/Wednesday classes would occupy that slot and that would preserve the balance and keep the number of class meetings the same.

Prof. Burish asked Dr. Pace if the committee consulted with undergraduate students or other students (like Law) to understand their view and how they would be affected by changes in the calendar. Dr. Pace responded that there were undergraduate students on the committee and one of them made the recommendation to the committee to consider taking the reading day in exchange for the Wednesday holiday. Concerning the professional schools, Dr. Pace indicated that there are some problems for the Law School in the proposed calendar given that they have a different start date and a different end date and their reading days are more limited than the rest of the University.
Prof. O’Hara expressed that the Law School calendar cannot drive the entire University calendar, but that the proposed changes to the academic calendar will be much more complicated for the Law School. She explained that the school has accrediting requirements regarding minimum numbers of class days as well as the number of minutes students are in the classroom. The recommendation does not compromise those standards because the school is well in excess of those minimums. The Law School tries to relatively carefully mirror the University calendar, but that presents certain challenges because, for example, many law schools do not have a one-week fall break. However, it operates to our students’ advantage for interviewing that we do have a fall break. The school does not have a Monday/Wednesday/Friday, Tuesday/Thursday sequence; it has a more complicated sequencing. The current calendar begins on the Monday of the opening week of school and has 14 Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday/Fridays. That sequence is accomplished by making up the Thursday/Friday of Thanksgiving break. The school has only two study days, not four. A loss of a day of classes will bring the calendar down to 69 days, which is a day that has to be recaptured. Unfortunately it cannot be recaptured out of study days because the school already has the bare minimum number of study days needed from an accreditation standpoint. Though the school has not thoroughly addressed the issue, not many of the alternatives are attractive. Prof. O’Hara explained a number of possible alternatives: 1) the school could still hold class on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, 2) it could hold a Saturday class, 3) it could adjust the number of minutes in all of its class sequences, or 4) it could try reworking the exam schedule. Prof. O’Hara reiterated that the proposal does present more complexities for the Law School.

Prof. Warlick asked why the Provost Academic Calendar Committee rejected the notion of beginning classes on Monday instead of Tuesday at the beginning of the semester. This would add back a day to the Monday/Wednesday/Friday and Monday/Wednesday class sequence that would be lost with the Wednesday holiday before Thanksgiving.

Dr. Pace explained that historically the Monday before the start of classes is an administrative day for enrollment. Mr. DeBoer offered his concerns from the First Year of Studies perspective. On that Monday, their office sees nearly half of the incoming freshman class as they seek advice on class schedule changes. First Year of Studies is also part of the orientation session that occurs that day between first years and faculty members. The office also hears from upper classmen that Monday is a day for them to organize since, in most cases, they returned to campus on Sunday (the first day dorm residence halls open).

Prof. Roche said that he would be interested in considering the total number of class days the University currently requires. He cited other universities that have fewer class days (60-65 day range), but still offer a strong education. He has heard comments from faculty members saying that they spend much more time in the classroom than at their previous research institution. As the University looks to become a great research institution he thinks this is important to consider. Fewer class days would allow faculty to have more time for research. Through other strategies, the University could ensure that students retain a great learning experience. Prof. Roche asked if the University has systematically considered how Notre Dame compares to other institutions regarding the number of class days.
Dr. Pace said that a study was conducted within the past three or four years and Notre Dame fell in the middle of the group. The Ivies were typically around 65 class days, while some state schools (e.g., Purdue) were above 70 class days. He said that his office could perform another study, but that he thinks that issue should be considered separately from the Wednesday holiday before Thanksgiving.

Prof. Fallon and Prof. D’Angelo shared concerns for the loss of a reading day under the proposal. Those days serve an important function and they get compressed under this proposal. Prof. Fallon supported Prof. Roche’s idea to benchmark against other institutions.

Prof. Burish added that if reducing the number of class days is considered, it is important to remember that most of the Ivies require four courses a semester, not five, and that actually is also part of their calendar system. The academic calendars are different in more than one way. Furthermore, he would suggest looking at how the Ivies requirements for individual research projects that all students do gets woven into their calendar. He indicated that the discussion would need to be larger than simply determining the number of class days.

Prof. Jacobs added two comments in regards to the proposal that you re-identify the final Thursday of the semester as a Wednesday in order to balance things out. 1) As Prof. Jacobs does the math, that would not necessarily lead to parody across the Monday/Wednesday schedule, Tuesday/Thursday, Monday/Wednesday/Friday. However, a classification of that Thursday to be equivalent to a Friday would result in 28 Monday/Wednesday classes, 28 Tuesday/Thursday classes, 42 Monday/Wednesday/Friday (or twenty-one hundred minutes, across the board). 2) Some classes have laboratories that meet once a week. There is an expectation that regardless of the day of the week to which students are assigned, they would have the same number of labs.

Prof. O’Hara suggested that there may be benefit to having the Undergraduate Affairs Committee review the proposal further to consider the issues at a greater depth.

Prof. Tenbrunsel asked why the Wednesday before Thanksgiving took priority as a proposed new holiday over other days, for example, Labor Day. Dr. Pace said that the Academic Council has talked about Labor Day and Martin Luther King Day as being possible holidays and there have been members of this committee that have spoken to that possibility. However, those suggestions “never caught fire” as they were presented to this committee.

Fr. Jenkins called for a vote on the proposal to “make the Wednesday before Thanksgiving part of the Thanksgiving recess, and then reduce the number of study days in that fall semester from four to three” starting in Fall 2008. The proposal passed with a vote of 25 (supported) – 15 (opposed) – 3 (abstained). The recommendation that the Provost and the Deans develop and issue a clear policy statement to the faculty concerning conducting class on regularly scheduled class days was accepted by the Provost, Prof. Burish.

4. Centers and Institutes Guidelines: Prof. Pope-Davis introduced a proposal to update the guidelines in the faculty handbook regarding Centers and Institutes. He explained that there is a concern that there is no formal inventory of all the centers and institutes on campus. This proposal 1) provides a set of guidelines as to what constitutes a center or an institute and 2)
requires every center or institute to re-register at the University. This final step will provide a
current, accurate account of all centers and institutes on campus and will give them an
opportunity to articulate which of the criteria they fulfill.

Prof. Roche asked Prof. Burish if, as Provost, he wants the final approval of centers and institutes
as articulated in the proposal. Prof. Roche indicated that in the past, final approval was granted
by the Office of Research. Prof. Burish said that he does want his office to have final approval,
not primarily for oversight, but so that it has a master list of approved centers and institutes
throughout the University. That list does not currently exist and it creates some problems for the
Provost Office.

Fr. Jenkins moved for a vote to approve the guidelines, which passed unanimously.

Members then discussed the necessity of the Academic Council to approve amendments to the
Centers and Institutes Guidelines. Prof. Merz suggested that future “minor” changes to the
document need not come before the Academic Council and that the definition of “major”
changes and “minor” changes be at the discretion of the Provost or his delegate. Prof. Roche and
Prof. Burish supported Prof. Merz suggestion that it is unnecessary to bring forth to the
Academic Council every detailed change made to the document. Prof. O’Hara proposed that
language be developed by the Working Group Committee of the Academic Articles to address
the procedures and process by which amendments to the guidelines will be handled. The
Working Group can then present the language to the Academic Council during their review of
the Academic Article on Centers and Institutes. The suggestion was accepted by the Academic
Council.

5. Faculty Teaching Family/Relatives Policy: Prof. Pope-Davis proposed a new policy
prohibiting faculty from teaching or advising their own relatives at the University. He said that
concerns lodged by both students and faculty in recent months suggest this policy is needed. The
policy would go into effect for the 2008-2009 academic year.

When Prof. Younger asked for an example of when an exception might be granted, Prof. Pope-
Davis responded that one might occur if during a period of three to four years while a student is
an undergraduate, a required course (needed to graduate) is being taught by their father or mother
and the course does not occur every year. The proposed policy places the burden of proof to
make the case on the student.

Prof. Jacobs suggested a change to the language of the policy to avoid redundancy, to which no
one objected. He suggested omitting the word “children” in the policy, since “relatives” is later
defined as including children. Prof. Fox suggested adding “Law” to the policy where examples
of advanced degrees are listed. Prof. Pope-Davis accepted the change. Prof. Barry raised
concern about the need to include further language to clarify the term “cousin,” to which Prof.
Merz disagreed. Prof. Pope-Davis said he would leave “cousins” as it stands.

Fr. Jenkins called for a vote on the policy (as stated below), which the Council approved
unanimously.
**Policy prohibiting faculty from teaching and formally advising their relatives**

In order to uphold the most objective evaluations of degree-seeking students, faculty members are prohibited from teaching their own relatives in credit-bearing courses offered by the University. Similarly, faculty members are prohibited from serving as formal advisor (including serving as a member or chair of a degree committee) to their own relatives seeking advanced degrees (Masters, Law or Ph.D.). Under extraordinary circumstances, a student may request an exception to this policy by making a written request to the dean of the respective college, indicating why an exception is warranted. In the event that the dean is teaching the course in question or has a potential conflict of interest, the written request should be submitted to the associate provost for faculty affairs.

Note: For the purposes of this provision, a "relative" is considered a spouse, parent, child, child by adoption, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, uncle, aunt, cousin, niece or nephew of the employee or of the employee's spouse. Relatives also include "step" relationships such as stepchild and stepparent.

**6. Subcommittee Updates**

**Undergraduate Studies:** As chair of the Undergraduate Studies Subcommittee, Prof. Page informed the Council that the subcommittee has decided to take on one small project and two large projects for the academic year. The small project will be to consider ways that a more formal relationship can be established between the student senate and the faculty of the University. The first large project is to consider ways to implement the report produced by the Advisory Committee on Academic and Student Life in April 2005 entitled “Responding to the Scholarly Calling, Fostering Future Scholars and Teachers from within the Notre Dame Community.” The second large project is to take on the larger issue of grade validity at the University of Notre Dame. The subcommittee plans to produce a white paper that will provide a context (including benchmarks and best practices) for the consideration of grade validity at Notre Dame. They also plan to develop a standard set of definitions for grades assigned at the University (with the intention that the definitions will have sufficient breadth to serve as a basis for college and departmentally specific grading criteria). The subcommittee hopes to deliver results from their projects in the spring 2008 semester.

**Faculty Affairs:** Prof. Garnett, chair of the Faculty Affairs Subcommittee, explained that the subcommittee established priorities at the beginning of the year, which included reflecting and commenting on the Catholic hiring report and considering maybe some benchmarking information about post-tenure review procedures at other universities. However, those issues have not yet been addressed because of the significant time the subcommittee is spending on the Academic Articles. She said that the subcommittee met twice in the last month for a total of five hours to go through all the comments. The subcommittee completed their review, made suggestions to the working group on the Academic Articles, and plan to bring the revised articles to the Council at its January 14, 2008 and January 23, 2008 meetings. After those meetings, the subcommittee hopes to meet with Prof. Burish regarding the Catholic hiring report and perhaps revisit the issue of post-tenure review.
Prof. Pope-Davis reminded the Council (as originally communicated via email and again included in materials for today’s meeting) that an additional meeting of Academic Council is scheduled for January 14, 2008. The purpose of the meeting is informational (not a voting meeting) where members can consider the proposed revisions to the Academic Articles.

**Graduate Council:** Prof. Carlson referred to a summary of the Graduate Council Subcommittee’s agenda that was distributed to members of the Council. She explained that the subcommittee worked on two agendas. One agenda includes short-term projects that can be accomplished this academic year, given the ongoing search for a new dean of the Graduate School. The second agenda includes long-term items of concern or challenges that the subcommittee thinks may be helpful to bring to the new Dean of the Graduate School for consultation.

Prof. Carlson summarized the four short-term projects:

1) Health insurance coverage for students – Plan to maintain 30 percent coverage of fully funded individuals for the current year but increase to 50 percent for next year. There is also some discussion about increasing stipend levels.

2) Best practices across Notre Dame’s graduate programs – Plan to collect and disseminate them to the directors of graduate studies in all departments.

3) Graduate School commencement ceremony – Plan to consider whether and how graduate students should be represented at the Sunday large commencement ceremony. The graduate school held its graduates ceremony on Saturday last year and it is scheduled to for the same day this academic year.

4) Electronic applications – Have been fully implemented and training sessions are currently taking place for the administrative assistants in departments.

7. **New Business and Updates:** Prof. Pope-Davis informed the Council of the results a survey he circulated to members of the Council regarding future meetings. The general consensus from the response was that in the event there is no agenda, most members asked that the meetings be cancelled, rather than using them for informational purposes. There was generally no major objection to scheduling future meetings after five o’clock, provided there was sufficient advance notice so that people can plan accordingly.

With no further business to discuss, Fr. Jenkins adjourned the meeting at 4:50.