

DEPAUW UNIVERSITY
INTELLECTUAL LIFE PLANNING: NEXT STEPS
February Faculty Meeting
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With full faith and hope that together – faculty, alumni, students, staff and Board of Trustees members – we can create at DePauw University one of the most vibrant intellectual and creative environments in the nation, an undergraduate institution of truly significant reach and reputation, I outline the following next steps to allow us to continue the intellectual life conversation begun by the faculty this academic year, a conversation ultimately joined and greatly enriched by the thoughts and comments of students (who presented a formal report to the faculty and the Board), staff and Board of Trustees members. Through continued discussion and debate, and ultimately action by the faculty, the administration, and the Board of Trustees, we can build on DePauw’s considerable strengths and unique characteristics, incorporate those features from the finest liberal arts colleges in the nation that serve our purposes and intentions, and continue vigorous progress toward the fulfillment of our mission and our heightened aspirations.

In years past, DePauw developed both a mission statement and a vision statement. The mission statement offers a concise summary of our purpose: “DePauw University, a residential liberal arts college, provides a diverse learning and living community which is distinctive in its rigorous intellectual engagement and international and experiential learning opportunities. DePauw teaches its students values and habits of mind which serve them throughout their lives as each of them makes a positive difference as an active citizen of the world.” The vision statement, of more recent origin, notes (in part) that “We are a distinguished university and a proud family, nationally recognized for extraordinary effectiveness in linking liberal arts education with life’s work.” Both the mission statement and the vision statement, grounded as they are in a deep awareness of DePauw’s history and distinctive characteristics, can continue to guide us now.

The recent reports on DePauw’s intellectual life from faculty (through the Faculty Governance Steering Committee [“FGSC”]) and from students reveal that our University has much to be proud of. We can point to many unique and strong academic and co-curricular programs, and we can all cite countless examples of the type of intellectual engagement our mission and vision statements celebrate. The faculty report also notes, however, “while there is broad agreement that intellectual life at DePauw has much strength, there is even broader agreement that we are not living up to our potential; there are many weaknesses to be addressed.” The students also note that we have a strong academic foundation, but they, too, “are excited about the potential to improve this already strong academic foundation.” The students, echoing Board sentiment, call for action. They note that “most of the questions raised by President Casey . . . are not new ones” and conclude that “it is time to take action and start implementing the suggestions made in the report.”

I present the following five charges to the faculty. I ask that the faculty move to vote in principle on significant enhancements and clarifications to our academic program by the end of the 2009 spring semester. With agreement in principle on broad changes in our graduation requirements, Winter Term operations, First-Year experiences, internship guidelines, research opportunities, and those co-curricular programs that link the curriculum to life’s work, we will be well on our way to significantly revitalizing DePauw and establishing a vibrant intellectual life as the centerpiece of all that we do. It is also my hope that we can use the 2009-10 academic year to transition to a revised academic structure, admitting a class of students in the fall of 2010 into a new system. Those changes that can be implemented more swiftly, however, should be put into effect as soon as is both reasonable and feasible.

PROCESS AND CALENDAR

Procedural Notes:

- A. I am charging the FGSC to continue operating as a special faculty planning, transition, and implementation committee through the current academic year and the 2009-10 academic year. As an extraordinary measure I will also ask that the current FGSC members stay on *this* committee through the 2009-10 academic year (except for those who will be on sabbatical) to ensure that the faculty work of the 2008-09 academic year continues smoothly. They will rotate off their regular committees at the end of the year, if their term ends. In the late spring, the new members of the FGSC (i.e. those who would join the FGSC by virtue of their selection as new chairs of one of the six major faculty committees) will join with the continuing FGSC members, serving together as a special faculty planning, transition, and implementation committee. I ask that the FGSC ensure that the School of Music is appropriately represented on the current and the continuing committees, through special appointment of faculty members or other appropriate means.
- B. Given the extraordinary amount of work that these charges call for, and the pressure these charges might place on one faculty committee – the Committee on Academic Policy and Planning (“CAPP”) – I call on the FGSC to determine how best to assign and distribute the work related to these charges among the members of CAPP, the Committee on Management of Academic Operations (“MAO”), and the Student Life and Academic Atmosphere Committee (“SLAAC”) and such subcommittees as the First-Year Seminar and Winter Term committees. I also ask that, as necessary, additional faculty members – those not currently serving as members of these standing faculty committees – be brought into these planning efforts, both to help in the distribution of work and to ensure that all necessary voices are added to the discussion. Of particular interest is the addition of members of the faculty steering committees of the current Programs of Distinction (“POD”) to the CAPP/MAO/SLAAC planning conversations as well as those connected to the “W”, “Q” and “S” oversight groups, as these programs are specifically and directly affected by several of these charges.
- C. I call on the FGSC to ensure that student voices are brought into these discussions.

Proposed Calendar

A. Spring Term 2009

Faculty members address the charges outlined below, voting in principle in May on changes to graduation requirements, improvements to Winter Term, clarifications to internship operations, enhancements to the first-year student experience, and modifications to the University’s current structure of “Programs of Distinction.”

B. Academic Year 2009-2010

The expanded FGSC committee monitors and coordinates specific enacting legislation necessary to implement changes voted by the faculty during the 2009 spring semester (legislation will be developed in appropriate standing faculty committees). The committee

develops a timetable to implement all faculty-endorsed changes in time for the 2010-11 academic year.

CHARGES TO THE FACULTY

1. **Graduation requirements:** Both faculty and students report that current graduation requirements are cumbersome. Further, many report that the current structure seems not to be directed by any overriding belief about how students should be educated in a liberal arts context. The curriculum should be designed not primarily to regulate but to ensure that students obtain critical skills and are exposed to a wide variety of ideas and intellectual approaches. The curriculum should guide, yet allow students the time and space to explore burgeoning intellectual interests.

FIRST CHARGE TO THE FACULTY: I call on the faculty to vote in principle, by May 2009, on the broad structure and outline of a new system of graduation requirements. The faculty is specifically charged to consider options regarding: the current group distribution and structure; “W”, “S”, and “Q” requirements; and, Physical Education course requirements.

2. **Winter Term:** Students and faculty report that while Winter Term provides many compelling experiences, it suffers from noticeable weaknesses. Further, as with the curriculum, the Winter Term program seems not to be animated by a commonly held view about its purpose.

SECOND CHARGE TO THE FACULTY: I call on the faculty to vote in principle, by May 2009, on the basic features of an approach to Winter Term at DePauw that builds on current positive features but which strengthens the overall program. The faculty is specifically charged to consider options regarding: the awarding of course credit for on-campus courses; applying standard grading options to such courses; and, shifting oversight of such courses to academic departments.

3. **Internships:** For a number of years, DePauw students in Fellows programs have been able to earn course credit for semester-long non-campus based internships; only a few other students have taken advantage of the recently-developed option to design similar internships independently. Other students work with the Winter Term Office and Career Services to devise and plan three-week internships in January. Students report that these experiences enrich their intellectual experience and prepare them for life’s work. Applicants to DePauw report that internships are an appealing feature of DePauw. Students in the current PODs, however, seem better advised and supported in their pursuit of internships than those not in

these programs. Further, only POD students seem to be supported in their efforts to specifically and meaningfully connect the internship experience to their class work.

THIRD CHARGE TO THE FACULTY: I call on the faculty to vote in principle, by May 2009, on the criteria that will guide both semester-long and Winter Term internships at DePauw. The faculty is specifically charged to consider how best to have student internships support the intellectual development of students; how best to ensure continued and meaningful faculty oversight of internships; and, how best to mesh the realities of off-campus internships with the curricular requirements of students.

4. **Programs that “link the curriculum to life’s work”:** Two of the PODs, the Management Fellows Program and the Media Fellows Program are, among other things, designed to introduce students to broad professional practice areas through internships, advising, and dedicated courses. In short, these programs bridge the curriculum to co-curricular activities, as well as to life’s work, in a guided and structured way. (The three other current PODs are separately discussed in notes at the end of this document.)

FOURTH CHARGE TO THE FACULTY: I call on the faculty to vote, in principle, by May of 2009, on the criteria that should guide those current programs that, through the creation of a curricular and co-curricular structure, link the academic and creative activity of the campus to life’s work. These criteria should address the ways in which we can ensure deep and meaningful faculty oversight of such programs. I also charge the faculty to consider the possibility of delaying entry into such program – for all or most students – until the end of the first year. Finally, I charge the faculty to consider whether DePauw might develop additional bridge or linkage programs where faculty and student interests strongly intersect (the Environment and Sustainability, or Ethics and Community, to name two possibilities.)

5. **First-year programs:** DePauw has created a strong First-Year Seminar program as well as a strong mentorship program. Taken together, and enhanced, we might create an even more coherent and compelling entrance into college life, a time and a place for intellectual exploration and growth. The first year should be a time for students to learn how a broad-based education, with exposure to many disciplines and with significant opportunities to develop critical writing, analytical, and presentation skills, prepares students for one’s career and for a meaningful life guided by reflection, empathy, and intelligence.

FIFTH CHARGE TO THE FACULTY: I call on the faculty to vote, in principle, by May 2009, on potential enhancements to the first-year experience at DePauw. The faculty is specifically charged to consider: how best to introduce students to a community of scholars; how best to encourage students to engage in open and

deliberate explorations of the full intellectual opportunities that DePauw presents; how best to create common intellectual experiences for first-year students; and, how best to ensure students are prepared for the advanced course work which follows the first year. Among the matters to be considered by the faculty are how to strengthen and potentially expand the First-Year Seminar, how to best integrate English 130 into an expanded first-year program, how best to connect Office of Student Life programs with any new academic program developed for our first-year students, and how best to maintain the positive aspects of the fall term academic programming through current Winter Term and into the spring semester.

SPECIAL NOTES

Notes on Honor Scholars, Science Research Fellows, and Information Technology Associates Program

The following notes pertain to the three other existing Programs of Distinction, which (I believe) should be discussed and potentially modified in ways that recognize their different missions, opportunities and challenges.

1. I will meet with CAPP, the Committee on Administration (“COA”), the Vice President for Academic Affairs (“VPAA”), and the current faculty leadership of the **Science Research Fellows Program** (and others) to consider expanding the current SRF program into a broader **Office of Student Research and Internships**, an office designed to encourage and support all who wish to engage in research activities and in internship opportunities.
2. I will meet with CAPP, the VPAA, and the current faculty leadership of the **Honor Scholars Program** to consider how best to preserve and build upon the strengths of the Honor Scholars Program while modifying the program in light of any changes to DePauw’s graduation requirements, first-year experience, and of other intellectual life enhancements that emerge through continued faculty deliberation and discussion.
3. I will meet with the VPAA, and the current leadership of **ITAP** to determine how best to enhance or modify the program such that it best serves the intellectual development of those students currently engaged in the program or those future DePauw students who are interested in technology. Among the changes to be considered are determining how, through discussion with relevant departments, DePauw might ground the program more directly in the curriculum.

Notes on Faculty Work Load, Administrative Structures and Culture, and the Campus

1. I will meet with COA and the VPAA to discuss faculty workload, specifically charging that committee to offer counsel and advice on how best to arrange faculty workloads to support whatever vision and structure emerges through continued faculty discussions about DePauw’s intellectual life and academic program.
2. I will meet with the COA, the VPAA, and the Board of Trustees to discuss how we may best adjust our administrative structures to meet the needs of any new academic and co-curricular structure created through these continuing discussions.
3. A continued concern and topic of discussion will be how to address the sense that our academic culture is overbureaucratized. I will meet with COA, COF, and senior administrators to discuss this issue.
4. Finally, as the faculty continues its discussions of these charges, the campus planning committee will begin its work, charged to consider how best to create spaces that support the vision that emerges from the intellectual life discussions.