

CHASS Faculty Meeting 12 April, 2009
Summary of Key Points
Jeff Braden, CHASS Dean

Nearly 50 CHASS faculty members attended the spring 2010 Faculty Meeting, representing all departments and units. As dean, I opened the meeting with the observation that, although the coming year or two may be difficult from a budgetary perspective, it is still appropriate to conduct strategic planning for the college. Our new chancellor has announced that he will initiate university wide strategic planning in the coming year; therefore, our college process is well timed to add to (and perhaps lead in) that process.

Each unit was invited to put forward a representative to summarize the discussion within that unit. The original presentations for each unit are available on the college website (http://www.chass.ncsu.edu/faculty_staff/governance/meetings.php).

As I listened to the presentations, I heard the following points repeated most often:

- We need a better understanding of how funds are allocated in support of academic units on our campus, and how those principles and practices affect CHASS. Many raised questions and concerns about the pursuit of enrollment increase funding, whether CHASS had received an appropriate share of funding given its contributions to the university, and noted that our ability to articulate and implement strategic plans was predicated on a clear understanding of resource allocation principles and practices.
- We must replace losses of tenure/tenure track faculty. The ability to provide research, teaching, and service ultimately rests on the quality of its faculty, and having sufficient numbers of faculty to fulfill those obligations.
- Newly hired tenure/tenure track faculty should not have primary “homes” in interdisciplinary programs. Rather, new faculty who may be hired to support interdisciplinary programs should have tenure homes within existing disciplinary/departmental structures. Furthermore, hiring must ensure disciplines retain sufficient faculty to adequately represent fundamental aspects of their disciplines. Interdisciplinary programs should add new faculty to departments, but should not come at the expense of department hiring. Strong disciplines are the foundation of good interdisciplinary programs, which should be fluid and grow out of the interactions and overlapping interests of disciplinary faculty.
- We must support faculty if we are to achieve our promise as one of two Tier I (technically, “research extensive doctoral) universities within the state. We must provide support to faculty directly (e.g., travel, scholarly leaves, hosting speakers and programs) and indirectly (e.g., teaching loads appropriate to a strong research/scholarship mission).

There were other ideas less commonly mentioned, but not necessarily controversial. These included the following points:

- Build (or sustain existing) doctoral programs and support graduate students.
- Focus on specific areas that either embrace or complement existing emphases on campus. Two specific foci in which CHASS could play a unique role were globalization, and the intersection of technology and society.

- Develop wholly new foci in music and the performing arts, which are areas that are traditionally part of comprehensive universities.
- Enhance and coordinate undergraduate advising so that it was less discipline/department specific, and better able to help undergraduates navigate college and university requirements.

Some of the discussion suggested issues that are not yet resolved. Among those issues are:

- The relative importance of GEP vs. majors in undergraduate instruction. Whereas some faculty clearly embraced the ideal of providing (and supporting) undergraduate education for non-majors as a core part of our mission, others felt that (new) resources would be better allocated to departments that attracted large numbers of majors.
- Similarly, it was not entirely clear that there was consensus around support for research and graduate studies relative to investments in undergraduate academics. Some faculty suggested we should commit our resources to enhancing our identification as the college most allied with teaching and learning, whereas other faculty felt development of original research/scholarship and graduate programs was more consistent with the university's mission as a doctoral, research-extensive university.
- Finally, most units saw investments in their own unit/discipline as worthy and central to advancing the college. Although there is no reason to believe that such arguments are not valid, collectively, they do not help us make tough decisions among competing priorities.

The next steps that are implied by the discussion include the following:

- The dean needs to engage central administration to increase transparency surrounding resource allocation principles and practices within the university. The sense of many faculty (which has been bolstered by recent articles in the *Chronicle* and elsewhere suggesting the funds generated by humanities and social sciences instruction subsidize instruction and research in other disciplines) is that the college has not been dealt with fairly with respect to past allocations, and that it will be essential to understand the principles and practices that will guide future allocations in order to plan for the future.
- We need to hire faculty to sustain our instructional, research, and service missions. However, given economic uncertainty going forward (i.e., a slow economic recovery coupled with the likelihood that federal stimulus dollars will be consumed), we also need to retain the flexibility to make budgetary adjustments. Given that projections for fiscal year 2011-12 are especially, I suggested temporary appointments (e.g., visiting professorships, post-doc fellowships) as a compromise between permanent commitments to tenure/tenure track faculty and ensuring we have strong scholars and teachers to carry forward the work of the college.
- We must continue our college conversation in parallel with the broader, university-level conversation that will begin in earnest this fall. We must consider carefully the relative priorities we will place on GEP vs. major, and undergraduate vs. graduate emphases on the instructional side. Likewise, we must define our priorities with respect to investment in scholarship and research (primarily in the form of tenure/tenure track faculty), and meeting the needs of undergraduates (which could be met through higher teaching loads for tenure/tenure track faculty, or investment in teaching faculty/graduate assistants not on a tenure track).

This summary is an effort to codify the nature of our discussions to date, and to identify issues for further discussion. Specifically, the annual college leadership retreat of department heads and deans will address strategic planning, and we will continue the conversation via regular updates and faculty meetings during the coming academic year. I will make it a top priority to engage university leadership in a discussion of resource allocations, and will bring that information back to the faculty to help us move ahead with our plans.