

Remarks to CHASS General Faculty Meeting
November 12, 2002

Linda P. Brady, Dean and Professor of Political Science

1. I'm pleased to be with you this afternoon to share good news about the college and to offer a strategy for enhancing the college's commitment to interdisciplinary programs.
2. This fall, CHASS welcomed the strongest, most competitive freshman class in many years. Based on all the usual measures (SAT, GPA), CHASS freshmen are highly competitive and well prepared for the challenges of college. Significantly, our selectivity is up as well, based on the numbers we admit as a percentage of those who applied (from 63.5% in 2000, 01 to 52.4% in 2002). Our yield is up as well, with thanks to the work of our Academic Affairs team, and especially Lynda Hambourger, our Director of Enrollment Management. This fall, 44% of those freshmen admitted to CHASS have enrolled, compared with 38% in 2000, 01.
3. There is good news as well on the financial front, concerning the impact of budget cuts and the allocation of enrollment increase funding. With respect to the budget cuts, last summer the college prepared a plan in anticipation of cuts up to 5%. The plan did not aim for across the board reductions, but focused on the long-term interests of the college and the need to protect CHASS students. The English Department alone assumed approximately \$450,000 of the \$840,000 reduction target.
4. Many of you have felt the impact of this plan—in leaves that were postponed and in unanticipated teaching assignments. I understand the impact of these decisions on your work, and

pledge to do all that I can to ensure we don't face this situation again.

5. But the fact that we had a well thought-out plan had an impact. The CHASS budget cut was heavily subsidized, and has led to a reduction of only 1.33%. Funds previously identified for cuts have been returned to departments in the same proportion that those departments contributed to the reduction plan. We received additional funding from the provost to add sections of high-demand courses, and we appreciate the willingness of departments to make last minute adjustments in teaching assignments to enable us to serve NC State students.
6. There have been additional cuts since we implemented our plan. The provost has absorbed approximately \$4.2 million in cuts from his enrollment increase funds. This cut was the NC State academic affairs share of a system-wide reduction of approximately \$41 million, required to fill the remaining gap in the state budget for the current fiscal year. In addition, the universities are only receiving 98% of the cash associated with their monthly budgets, beginning this month. Finally, we have been alerted to the possibility that we may face another cash flow crisis in May and June, reducing funds available to the 75% level we experienced at the end of last year. The administration's willingness to support implementation of our plan means we should be able to conclude this fiscal year without any further cuts in department budgets.
7. The second bit of financial good news relates to the provost's decisions concerning the allocation of enrollment increase funding for the current fiscal year. We received this news last Tuesday. As you know, college needs are prioritized through the compact planning process and submitted to the

provost for funding consideration. This year, the provost has fully funded the needs associated with the Department of Communication Graduate Program. This funding supports two faculty lines, 12 TAs, and a graduate secretary. In addition, the provost fully funded the research ethics initiative, including administrative and webmaster support. We also owe our thanks to the provost for fully funding a new faculty line in research ethics, now occupied by Dr. Gary Comstock. Third, the provost has funded two additional faculty lines in the college. Allocation of these lines will occur next fall, in conjunction with implementation of compact plans for FY03-06. Finally, the college received a block grant of unrestricted, permanent funding to address infrastructure needs. We are exploring several areas of investment, including information technology, classroom improvements, increased stipends for graduate TAs, and operating budgets.

8. In short, the college did extremely well in this year's competition for new resources. Why did we fare so well? I'm convinced that the role CHASS plays at NC State is finally being recognized. Our willingness to think creatively about the development of new programs and, yes, about ways to deal with the budgetary challenges we will continue to face, has made the difference. We are now in a position to put these resources to good use.
9. Let me move to the future of interdisciplinary programs in CHASS. As many of you have heard, I have been talking with many groups and individuals within and outside of the college, about an enhanced profile for interdisciplinary programs, in conjunction with my belief in the engaged liberal arts. CHASS has a long history of investment in interdisciplinary teaching and research, through faculty associated with the Division of Multidisciplinary Studies and

other departments within the college. We need to strengthen our current efforts, and expand our commitment to interdisciplinary programs, in order to better serve the needs of our students and our society.

10. We have formulated an enrollment management strategy premised on the need to better serve internal transfers, recruit more competitive freshmen, and reduce the number of external transfers. The expansion of some of our existing interdisciplinary programs, such as STS, is one strategy. We also should consider the addition of new, interdisciplinary undergraduate majors, in areas in which we anticipate student interest—such as Africana Studies, International Studies, and Environmental Studies. We currently offer minors or certificates in some of these fields, and faculty across the college are involved in teaching and research from which we can build nationally competitive programs.
11. Our goals also include the development of new, interdisciplinary graduate programs. The chancellor and the provost recognize the need for additional Ph.D. programs in the humanities and social sciences, as a central element of their strategy to improve the university's national rankings among public, research universities, and as an important consideration for membership in the Association of American Universities. Already faculty in the Departments of English and Communication are working together on a proposed Ph.D. in Communication, Rhetoric, and Digital Media. I want to recognize Carolyn Miller and Bob Entman for their work co-chairing the committee designing the program, and department heads Mary Helen Thuente and Craig Smith for their support of this initiative.
12. I have been engaged in conversations with a number of individuals and groups about how best to expand and

institutionalize our commitment to interdisciplinary programs. During the past several months I have obtained a commitment from Provost Cooper to return all of the provost's recall funds generated by CHASS to the college, over the next four years, with the expectation that these funds will be invested in cluster hires—the addition of faculty members with a commitment to interdisciplinary areas of teaching and research. This represents an up front commitment of more than \$400,000, and the first time the provost has committed his recall funds to a college beyond a single fiscal year.

13. I have also met on one or more occasions with associate deans and department heads, MDS faculty, members of the Faculty Council, CHASS Faculty Senators, Benjamin Franklin Scholars, former MDS heads Chuck Korte and John Riddle, and former head of University Studies A.C. Barefoot. In these meetings I have shared with them my goal of establishing interdisciplinary programs as the core of liberal arts education for the 21st century. I also have listened to their concerns.
14. Obviously I understand the special concerns of MDS faculty about the future of their division, and about their own futures as individual faculty members. MDS faculty have long-standing commitments to interdisciplinary programs. Their work is important and deserves to be recognized and rewarded. We have tremendous strengths in this area, across the college—we want to build on and expand these commitments, not diminish them. Let me state clearly that I have not made a decision to implement structural changes in CHASS that will lead to the elimination of MDS as a division, the reduction of MDS programs, or the relocation of MDS faculty. Given the budgetary circumstances we are likely to face for the next year or two, we must maximize all

of our faculty resources if we expect to substantially enhance our profile in interdisciplinary teaching and research. We also need to institutionalize a broad commitment to interdisciplinary teaching and scholarship across our departments and divisions, and not rely solely on vacant lines to fund interdisciplinary work.

15. Within the next week I will move to appoint a CHASS Ad Hoc Task Force on Interdisciplinary Programs, consisting of 7 to 10 faculty from across the college. The task force will be charged to: (1) examine the college's current involvement in interdisciplinary programs, with an emphasis on assessing strengths and identifying opportunities for expansion; (2) examine models for interdisciplinary programs at peer institutions, and invite the participation of external consultants from those programs; (3) examine alternative structural and administrative arrangements that could support an expansion of CHASS interdisciplinary activities.
16. I will encourage the Task Force to consult widely across the university, including with members of departmental and division faculty within CHASS, faculty and administrators in other colleges and the provost's office served by our interdisciplinary programs, students enrolled in these programs, and others, as they deem appropriate.
17. I will ask the Task Force to provide its recommendations to me by June 1, 2003. The Task Force Report will be posted prominently on the college website, and will form the basis for further discussion and implementation in the next fiscal year.
18. In support of this effort, I will commit resources to fund a course release for each member of the task force, and

additional funding for external consultants. Administrative support will be provided.

19. While the Task Force is engaged in its work, no decisions will be made regarding the elimination of any programs or reassignment of faculty. I will also commit any necessary additional resources to ensure that we continue to meet the needs of students enrolled in current interdisciplinary programs.
20. Simultaneously, we are engaged in a new round of compact planning, for the 2003-2006 time-frame. The CHASS compact plan will plot the course for liberal arts education at NC State in this new century. We believe in the social responsibility of higher education, and in the special responsibility of the humanities and social sciences to focus our intellectual resources on the great problems we confront as a society and as a world—including poverty, war, injustice, and environmental degradation.
21. Our compact plan will focus on the engaged liberal arts—for CHASS, taking advantage of our location at a public, land-grant, research extensive university, this means a focus on interdisciplinary programs and engagement with the communities we serve. Over the next decade, we expect to reshape liberal education in ways that will dramatically impact the experience of our students and the expectations we have of ourselves.
22. When we celebrate the 50th anniversary of CHASS in 2013, we envision a learning environment in which every CHASS student's education will involve an interdisciplinary component, service-learning, internships, and mentoring relationships, as essential elements of a liberal arts education. The initiatives proposed in the CHASS Compact Plan for

2003-2006 represent important building blocks in designing that future.

23. Our goals for the college link directly to the university's academic affairs objectives, namely to become a top tier public research university, a magnet for exceptional students and faculty, and a provider of life-long learning opportunities to the citizens of North Carolina. Our goals are consistent with the chancellor's goals for NC State, including building a diverse and inclusive campus community, fostering new partnerships, and preparing to meet the enrollment challenges we face in the coming decade. I am convinced we can gain more than our fair share of resources allocated for new programs on this campus, if we have a vision that is based on an enhanced commitment to interdisciplinary programs, a plan to allocate (and reallocate) our own resources in support of that objective, and a willingness to be open-minded and creative about how we move forward.
24. Let me say a final word about the process we have used to develop the college compact. In August the college held a leadership retreat for dept heads, center directors, and deans' office staff to discuss a college-wide commitment to interdisciplinary programs and engagement. Department heads and center directors have developed their compact plans, with your active participation, in this context. Last Friday we conducted a compact planning retreat for dept heads and deans office staff to review department plans explore areas of collaboration across departments and divisions, and colleges. The retreat discussion was informed by the results of the deans' retreat with the provost and chancellor, held on November 4. I would like to share with you a one-page summary of the themes I presented at that retreat. Interdisciplinary programs form the heart of the programmatic initiatives and codicils we intend to explore.

We will have yet another round of conversations, within departments and within the college (facilitated by technology) as the compact planning process proceeds.

25. In short, I am convinced we have a significant opportunity to enhance the visibility of this college over the next decade—not only within the state of North Carolina but around the country. Interdisciplinary programs will play a major role in the future of CHASS. I look forward to working with all of the college’s constituencies to make this happen, in a way that builds on our historic strengths and exploits new opportunities.
