

CHASS General Faculty Meeting
November 12, 2003

Dean's Report
Linda P. Brady, Dean and Professor of Political Science

1. Fundamental Changes in the Climate for Higher Education Impact NC State and CHASS

As you know from our discussions over the past two years, this is a difficult time for higher education around the country. North Carolina State University has not been immune to the national trends, which include declining state support for higher education, increasing concerns about access and affordability, and public calls for greater accountability.

At NC State, we have been faced with a \$116 million cut in the university budget during the past twelve years. During that period NC State has received enrollment increase funds from the Legislature, but these increases have not made up for the magnitude of the cuts. CHASS's state-appropriated budget has been reduced by 9.75% in the past three years. While we have tried to make strategic decisions about where to take budget cuts, and not cut across the board, undoubtedly these cuts have had a serious impact on the mission of CHASS—especially in the areas of extension and engagement. These activities continue, albeit with a reduced level of support provided by non-state-appropriated funds. Our primary objective has been, and will continue to be, protection of the classroom.

Another major area of concern relates to access and affordability. Some of you may have attended the Tuition Town Hall Meeting hosted by Chancellor Fox and Provost Oblinger on November 2, 2003. In that session, Provost Oblinger presented the recommendations of the 2003-2004 Task Force on Tuition, which include a proposed tuition increase of \$300 per year for the next three years. Forty-six percent of the funds generated from this increase would be dedicated to undergraduate student financial aid. Another 12% would be dedicated to the Graduate Student Support Plan. The remaining 42% would be dedicated to Academic Excellence, which the Task Force defines to include course size, course/seat availability, library ranking, quality of classroom and laboratory facilities, and faculty salaries.

Many of the students who attended the Town Hall Meeting raised concerns about the impact of this proposed increase on access and on efforts to enhance the diversity of the student body. While understanding their concerns, Chancellor Fox has recommended to NC State's Board of Trustees a Campus

Initiated Tuition Increase of \$300 per year for the next three years. The Board of Trustees will consider this recommendation when they meet next week. The proposed increase for NC State students remains below the national average of 14% increase in tuition in the last year. Some universities have raised tuition by as much as 33% or 45% in one year. We have no choice but to increase tuition to maintain a quality educational experience for NC State students.

Finally, I know that many of you are concerned about the assessment process, which includes assessment of academic programs, the major, and general education courses. The process of SACS re-accreditation drives much of this effort. Much of it also is driven by public and legislative calls for greater accountability. All of us understand the need to assess what we are doing in the classroom. It is important to know if we are achieving our educational objectives. At the same time, we must reconcile the demands of the assessment process with issues of faculty and staff workload. There is no question about whether we must do assessment, but I believe there is room for a discussion about how to go about it. This issue is on the Deans' agenda and on the Provost's agenda. Gail O'Brien will join other Associate Deans for Academic Affairs in meeting next week with the Provost to discuss the assessment process.

Let me take this opportunity to update you on two other issues of concern to the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, namely, the administrative restructuring currently underway, and the Compact Planning Process for 2004-07.

2. Strengthening Interdisciplinary Programs in CHASS

As you know, last fall a Task Force on Interdisciplinary Programs was charged with reviewing the status of interdisciplinary programs in CHASS and making recommendations to me about how the College could more effectively organize and deliver interdisciplinary programs. Professor Walt Wolfram, Department of English, chaired the Task Force. Other members included faculty from across the College, a student representative from the Division of Multidisciplinary Studies, and a faculty member from another College. The Task Force was asked to consider issues related to programmatic structure and implementation, staff, financing, evaluation and assessment, and space.

In spring 2003, the Task Force majority report recommended a shift away from a departmental model, with the relocation of administration to the Office of Academic Affairs in CHASS, and the relocation of current faculty members in the Division of Multidisciplinary Studies to existing departments. Minutes of the Task Force meetings and the final reports—both majority and minority—are posted on the CHASS website.

I have considered the Task Force recommendations seriously in my decision to pursue this restructuring. During the past several months I also have consulted widely within the College and the University about this restructuring. Effective July 1, 2004, the Division of Multidisciplinary Studies will be disbanded. The administration and support of academic programs offered or coordinated by the Division will be relocated to the Office of Academic Affairs in the College.

Faculty with whole or joint appointments in the Division will relocate to existing departments within CHASS or to appropriate departments in other NC State colleges, based on the negotiation of Memoranda of Understanding. Discussions are proceeding with MDS faculty members to design arrangements that will support their continued contributions to interdisciplinary programs, address the needs of departments in which they will be relocated, and ensure that issues related to evaluation, reappointment, promotion, and tenure are dealt with in a way that serves the interests of the faculty member, the interdisciplinary program with which he or she is associated, and the University.

In parallel, we are addressing issues related to administrative, clerical, and student services support for interdisciplinary programs. Let me emphasize that all of the programs currently administered through or coordinated by the Division of Multidisciplinary Studies will continue to be offered by the College. No programs are being eliminated.

I would like to express my appreciation to a number of CHASS faculty and staff who are working with us on this transition. First, I want to acknowledge the efforts of Walt Wolfram and the other members of the Task Force, for their work in providing the context for this administrative restructuring. Second, let me thank my colleague David Greene, Division Head, and the faculty members in the Division of Multidisciplinary Studies, for the constructive way in which they are approaching the difficult process of change. Joe Herkert, in particular, has assumed a new role as Interim Director of Interdisciplinary Studies. Third, I am grateful to CHASS department heads, and especially David Martin, Doug Jesseph, and Jim Svara, for their willingness to explore the opportunities associated with the relocation of faculty. Finally, I am grateful to my colleagues in the Dean's Office, especially Gail O'Brien, who is working closely with David Greene and Joe Herkert, to ensure the seamless transition of support for academic programs and student services, and Jessie Sova, who with her colleagues in CHASS Finance and Personnel, have assumed new responsibilities in the absence of additional resources.

The administrative restructuring we are undertaking represents only one part of our effort to enhance the College's commitment to interdisciplinary programs.

We must ensure participation in interdisciplinary teaching and research is recognized and rewarded in annual reviews, in the process of reappointment, promotion, and tenure, and in comprehensive review of tenured faculty. At the College level, I have made a commitment so that at least one of the two appointments the Dean makes to the CHASS RPT Committee ensures the representation of interdisciplinary programs. In addition, next year we will establish a College-wide annual faculty award to recognize excellence in interdisciplinary activity, as we currently recognize teaching, research, and extension and engagement.

3. Planning for the Future: CHASS Compact Plan for 2004-07

Associate Deans Gail O'Brien, Matt Zingraff and I presented the draft CHASS Compact Plan for 2004-07 to Provost Oblinger, Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Studies John Gilligan, and Vice Chancellor for Extension & Engagement Steve Jones on October 30, 2003. Provost Oblinger requested each Dean to limit our request for new funding to between 2% and 4% of our state-appropriated budget.

After reviewing the draft Compact Plans submitted by our departments and divisions, we proposed a focus on three primary initiatives during the next three years: (1) Building a faculty for the 21st century; (2) Expanding interdisciplinary educational opportunities; and (3) Raising the college profile in graduate education and research.

Highlights of the plan include a request to add 23 new faculty lines across the College, the addition of 61 new graduate teaching assistants, substantial investments in interdisciplinary undergraduate programs, and support for existing, proposed, or forthcoming graduate programs, including the MFA in Creative Writing, the Masters in Social Work, and the proposed Ph.D. in Communication, Rhetoric, and Digital Media.

The full text of the draft CHASS Compact Plan, including associated spreadsheets and the overheads that structured our presentation on October 30, are posted on the CHASS website. We encourage you to review these materials and provide comments to your department head or to the Dean's Office. We will have an opportunity to make adjustments in this draft plan before our next meeting with Provost Oblinger and Chancellor Fox in February 2004.

4. Recognizing the Contributions of CHASS Faculty Members

Let me close by recognizing the contributions all of you continue to make in a difficult resource environment. I want to thank you for your willingness to address the needs of NC State students—both CHASS majors and others—with

an emphasis on the needs of students planning to graduate in Spring 2004. Many of you have volunteered to teach additional sections. We also have dramatically increased the size of sections in some departments. Provost Oblinger recognizes the commitments made by you to deal with the near-term crisis, and he has promised to work with us to develop appropriate longer-term strategies for dealing with increasing numbers of students.

General education will always be an important mission for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. At the same time, we are increasingly “the College of Choice” for many students at NC State, and we are committed to expanding our graduate programs. As I have said before, we cannot do all things and do all things well. I look forward to working with you to discuss fundamental values and choices for CHASS in the coming year.