



To: Duke University's Academic Council  
From: Tom Ferraro, Professor of English, Chair of APC 2021-22  
Re: Academic Programs Committee (APC) 2021-22 update  
Date: April 12, 2022

I am pleased to provide the Academic Council with this summary of APC's activities during the 2021-22 academic year. It has been a privilege to serve as chair and to work with the Provost, the Executive Vice Provost, and faculty from across the university, as well as with the competent, effective, and kind support staff. If the Provost ever taps you on the shoulder and invites you to become a member of APC, I encourage you to give it your full consideration as it is an interesting experience.

Following a brief introduction to the committee's function, a description of the topics covered this year is provided. The report concludes with a more thorough explanation of the committee's purposes, organizational structure, and mode of operation, which is a standard inclusion.

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you this overview of the committee's work. I can assure you that the committee members take their charge seriously, devote considerable attention to the topics that come before them, engage in thoughtful conversation, and reach decisions and make recommendations that they believe are in the best interests of the university.

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APC is fundamentally an advisory body to the Provost with a broad remit (see more just below). This year APC has sixteen voting members drawn from across the university, as well as one representative from the Graduate and Professional Student Council. Eleven voting members are completely new to APC in 2021-22 (yet another with only a semester of experience), an uncommonly large percentage in the wake of across-the-board membership extension the previous year (to maximize APC expertise during Covid). Eighteen *ex officio* non-voting members are invited to attend its deliberations, including two undergraduate representatives. The Executive Committee of the Academic Council also appoints two non-voting members. (A membership roster for 2021-22 appears at the end of this document.) APC meets as a full committee monthly. The voting members are also divided into two subcommittees, each of which meets monthly. Generally, the full committee meetings are used for discussion and advice to the Provost on major policy questions, while the subcommittees conduct reviews of external reviews of academic units, of newly created degree programs, and of joint doctoral programs between units, as well as consider proposals for new degree programs, and the creation, contraction, termination, or merger of major units.

### **PURPOSES**

The Academic Programs Committee (APC) has three basic functions, each of which involves the provision of advice to the Provost on pivotal matters relating to Duke's core academic mission:

- 1) Consideration of external reviews of: units (departments and university institutes), newly adopted degree programs (a probationary review is required for new degree programs, typically after the first three years of operation), and joint doctoral programs between units. (APC does not review certificate programs, or the accreditation processes for professional schools).
- 2) Consideration of proposals for new degree programs or the creation, contraction, termination, or merger of major units (such as departments or university-wide institutes).
- 3) Consideration of major academic policy questions with salience for the entire campus.

## **ORGANIZATION**

To ensure that APC's deliberations incorporate faculty perspectives from across the university, the Provost and the Executive Committee of Academic Council (ECAC) collaborate in the selection of members from each of the professional schools, as well as a range of departments in each division of Arts & Sciences. The Graduate and Professional Student Council also has representation on APC. There are several *ex officio*, non-voting members from Duke's senior academic leadership who receive the meeting materials and are invited to all meetings.

Since 2014-15 APC has been composed of two subcommittees within the full committee. Each subcommittee is structured to achieve the widest possible representation of schools and divisions, and each has one appointed graduate student representative. Each subcommittee meets once per month and has the authority to act on behalf of APC as a whole. The full committee also meets once a month. By this mechanism, APC convenes three times a month during most months of the academic year, although faculty members, aside from the Chair and Vice Chair, attend only two meetings per month. The APC Chair has the responsibility of ensuring comparable standards of evaluation across the two subcommittees.

The Provost typically appoints faculty members of APC to serve three-year terms, with the Chair coming from the third-year cohort. When selecting the Chair, the Provost again works with ECAC, and typically rotates the choice between the broad divisions of intellectual inquiry within the university.

## **MODE OF OPERATION**

Typically, the two APC subcommittees handle external reviews or new degree/unit proposals, while the full committee discusses broader policy questions. In the past, scheduling difficulties have resulted in a subcommittee discussing a policy issue, but not this year. The Provost also retains the discretion to ask the full committee to consider an external review or proposal for a new degree program or unit.

When undertaking the first two of its functions, APC receives the full documentary record concerning either the external review or the new proposal. These materials include the prior evaluation by the Executive Committee of the Graduate Faculty (in the case of departments or joint doctoral programs), or by the Masters' Advisory Council (in the case of professional degree programs.) The APC chair then appoints a "lead discussant." This faculty member reviews the materials especially closely and, in consultation with the APC chair, frames discussion questions for the head of the unit/program under review, or for the lead faculty members on a new program proposal. These queries furnish a starting point for the brief presentation by unit/program heads at APC, and subsequent interaction between the presenters and the committee.

During an APC meeting considering an external review or new proposal, the lead discussant is responsible for ensuring the questions from the subcommittee are addressed. The lead discussant then drafts the committee resolution – a document that summarizes the discussion that APC had on the topic and provides concrete recommendations to the unit/program heads and the Provost on how to proceed regarding the proposal or review at hand. The resolution is reviewed by the APC Chair and the Executive Vice Provost before being shared with the subcommittee for a vote or additional comments. This process usually takes place electronically, although if several subcommittee members ask for an additional face-to-face discussion, the Chair will delay the vote until the next meeting of the subcommittee.

In the case of an external review, the Executive Vice Provost or the Provost provides APC's resolution to the unit/program concerned. The resolution also helps to inform any Memorandum of Understanding drafted by the Provost. In the case of a proposal for a new degree program or unit, the APC resolution, with the assent of the

Provost, goes forward to ECAC and then the full Academic Council, before final consideration by the Board of Trustees.

Before moving to generate a resolution, APC may ask for additional information from unit heads/lead proposers. In the case of new proposals, APC may also ask for minor revisions to the formal proposal, or send the proposal back for more substantive reconsideration and reframing.

APC also receives visitors to frame its policy meetings of the full committee. The Provost, Executive Vice Provost and the APC Chair work together to set the broad agenda for these discussions. The Chair then works with the invited members of the university community to identify appropriate background reading materials and structure brief presentations to set up discussion. Typically, the Chair takes notes during these meetings, and where appropriate, solicits additional feedback from committee members. After the meeting, the Chair often submits a memorandum to the Provost and the heads of relevant university units/programs, summarizing the views expressed and the suggestions furnished by APC members and offering additional commentary, where appropriate.

Over the course of its deliberations and discussions, APC often identifies broader issues and concerns that transcend individual proposals and routinely brings these to the attention of the Provost.

### **APC'S ACTIVITIES DURING 2021-2022**

APC's school-year deliberation was relatively heavy on operational reports and policy sessions, relatively light on Departmental/Program/Unit Reviews (the hiatus first reflecting Covid delays and then procedural changes) except for The Graduate School (timed with respect to the natural cycle of the Graduate Deanship), and somewhat average on new proposals (all of modest order). As during last year, APC confirmed that most departments and units struggle with achieving financial sustainability and resolving space issues, all the more so in the wake of Covid retrenchments and redirections; most struggle, too, with increasing diversity and inclusion among faculty and students, despite efforts that may have predated BLM-inspired commitments, although future efforts should benefit from the University's rallying call and the TDE grant.

Given that 70% of the voting membership of APC joined in fall of 2022, much of the year has been dedicated to bringing the Committee up to speed.

At the beginning of September, Kyle Cavanaugh, Vice President of Administration, and Jennifer Francis, Executive Vice-Provost, updated APC on Covid measures established for the Fall Semester and, as it turned out, carried through the Spring—above all the decision to hold classes and other university events in person but with all present duly masked, with encouragement to use N-95, KN-95, or at least triple-ply surgical masks. APC learned the impressive fact that during the first year of Covid, in which Duke conducted thorough tracings of every case among its students and employees, not a single case of Covid at Duke was determined to have been transmitted in the classroom; the primary scene of transmittal has been eating, drinking, and socializing in close quarters.

Christoph Guttentag, Dean of Undergraduate Admissions, presented an overview of recent admission strategies, including decisions to experiment with test-free applications (partially triggered by testing difficulties under Covid but also because scores are class-and-ethnicity inflected and because they are so high from so many applicants they often fail to differentiate as well), to recruit strongly first-gen and students from under-resourced circumstances, and to expand slightly the percentage of Early Decision admits willing to commit to Duke in

advance of their admission scoreboard—with exciting overall results but significant financial consequences for maintaining need-blind Admissions. Mary Pat McMahon, VP/VP for Student Affairs and Ex Officio Gary Bennett, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, also attended and presented, in part to help Dean Guttentag address anticipated inquiry from faculty concerned about notable shifts in student temperaments (for all their intelligence and ambition), on the order of “why can’t we enroll more students like student X?” How Duke markets itself may be part of the problem, members of APC suggested. But it might well be secondary to the Gen-Z wide culture of risk aversion, certification obsession, and reputed utility that, in fact, Duke has unwittingly and at times expressly encouraged, to the detriment of mental health and self-directed intellectual growth—Gen-Z issues of resilience, trust in curiosity, and modes of pursuing synthesis across siloed endeavors that are now being addressed by the new Quad Ex System, curricular innovations in advance of the New Curriculum, and refreshed advising and longitudinal mentoring.

In November, APC discussed with Sally Kornbluth, the Provost, at her behest, a series of issues concerning the current process for Departmental and Program Reviews—many of which had been flagged by APC over the last couple of years: external reviewers invariably recommend more faculty, space, and grad resources, doing so with little understanding of the university’s operations or investigation into departmental rationale; units devote enormous time compiling the data and writing the self-study, which is often scarcely used; no follow-up or accountability mechanism beyond the oft-delayed cycle of the Review itself, averaging 7+ years; external reviewers lack local vision while informed by close friendships with several department members; because the reviews are focused on graduate programs, undergraduate programs are given short shrift; there is no regular venue for evaluating graduate student concerns; because reviews are frequently conducted at the very end or very beginning of a Chair’s term, there tends again to be a lack of accountability (or blaming the previous chair). At the November meeting, APC revisited these issues, then thoroughly discussed the Provost’s draft for a newly configured Review process. Reviews would be overseen and conducted by a standing internal review committee consisting of three subcommittees drawn from across the university. Reviews would be conducted every 5 years, ideally in the middle of a chair’s term, and there would be a meeting convened two years after the review to assess progress with the Dean and a representative from the Provost’s office. Such reviews would entail a streamlining of the review template, including a Dean’s letter specifying strengths, weaknesses, and goals; departmental interviews by rank (including grads) with internal reviewers; several external reviewers to evaluate the department’s scholarly reputation (APC urged three or four); and a synthesizing report by the internal committee, omitting FTE and space allocations but with pointed judgments and recommendations. In general agreement, APC urged the Provost to bring her proposals to ECGF. [In the interim, ECGF has suggested revisions, and the Provost plans to bring the revised proposal to ECAC and the full Academic Council, with an eye toward implementation in the Fall. In the meantime, current Reviews proceed as usual.]

Subsequently, on different occasions, APC was treated to several extended presentations that were significantly or largely informational:

A meeting in December was dedicated to recent developments in Career Advising in both the undergraduate and graduate/professional spheres. Greg Victory, AVP for Student Affairs and the new Executive Director of the Career Center, presented on the shift to more integrative advising, featuring amplified resources, collaboration across the university (with faculty especially), and an emphasis on “purpose-driven life.” Gary Bennett and invited visitor, Mary Pat McMahon, filled-in the roles that longitudinal advising, Quad Ex programming, and new courses emphasizing resilience and self-cultivation. A member of APC queried the use of “purpose-driven” life given the origins of the phrase, now mostly forgotten, in cultural campaigns of the Christian Right. APC then

heard from Melissa Bostrom, the Director of Professional Development in the Graduate School, and Maria Wisdom, the Associate Director of Strategy and Operation in The Graduate School, along with *Ex Officio* members Neil McWilliam, Graduate Dean in Arts and Sciences, and Ed Balleisen, Vice Provost for Interdisciplinary Studies, on various initiatives in support of graduate and professional students, especially Ph.Ds. in the humanities and interpretive social sciences facing extended downturns in the employment market. Such initiatives include on the one hand CV-enhancing disciplinary-focused training such as the Certificate in College Teaching and on the other hand preparation-cum-reflection for careers outside of the tenure-track professorate, especially arenas of employment for Ph.Ds. in the expanding administrative-and-support structures of Higher Education (co-curricular and extra-curricular programming, interdisciplinary institutes, diversity-equity-inclusion efforts, compliance operations, grants management, longitudinal mentoring of students and faculty, res life oversight, etc.) and of the intellectual service industries more generally.

At the request of the Provost and the APC chair, Vice Provost for Interdisciplinary Studies Ed Balleisen updated APC on University reconsiderations of its signature system of university-wide initiatives, institutes and centers—known collectively as UICs--which system had already been pinpointed by multiple governing bodies as a potential site for modest post-Covid cost-cutting. From the fall of 2020 through the spring of 2021, IPC undertook a wide-ranging and in-depth look at our UICs, as well as the role of cross-school interdisciplinarity more generally. APC has been kept apprised and conducted two thorough discussions regarding IPC recommendations during 2020-'21. Ahead of our meeting, the members of APC were urged to read the condensed, public version of the IPC report, and Vice Provost Balleisen also supplied us with the short history of interdisciplinarity at Duke that he produced for IPC's benefit. At APC in February, Ed outlined the history of the decision-making over the past five years and then emphasized the four foci of implementation that are in their advanced states: 1) efforts to streamline units missions and focal points, which has involved a significant degree of sunseting projects and centers, as well as establishing periodic consequential reviews of mission and funding for ongoing and prospective UICS; 2) heightened partnership across UICs and between UICs and schools, with curricular and outreach missions as well as research at issue; 3) reinvigoration of structures of faculty governance within UICs; and 4) administrative reconfiguration, as for instance with SSRI (Social Science Research Initiative) under its new director, Professor Don Taylor. Veteran APC members were by and large satisfied that earlier concerns regarding the general administrative process (for absorbing Institutes into Schools or folding them, for attending to donor relations in wake of sunseting, for Deanery participation in resource allocations, and for the structure of administrative oversight itself, whether standing or Central) had in the interim been productively addressed.

In February, Josh Socolar, Chair of the Arts and Sciences Council, with *ex officio* Dean Valerie Ashby in explanatory support, outlined the process through which the Trinity Curriculum Development Committee was coming into being, as A&S Council had already gathered initial departmental input, and the Dean in consultation was formalizing the charge and garnering appointees to the Committee (subsequently announced), of which Professor Scott Huettel of Psychology and Neurobiology had agree to Chair. APC received the presentation as primarily informational, with members willing to wait to see the full charge and appointed membership.

Then in March, the Provost, Sally Kornbluth, presented an overview of the Educational Vision of the 2030 Task Force in advance of the release of the Report on April 11. Reality check begins with the changing landscape of our liberal arts mission: ~60% nonwhite UGs, 20% first gen and 52% on financial aid; UGs less likely to smoke, drink, and use recreational drugs but more likely to face mental health problems and to seek nearly constant mentoring, in part due to pronounced parental and peer pressure; so too, UGs very instrumental in their attitude

toward education, including a cynical approach to box checking in Curriculum 2000 matrix, a fanaticism about grades, and a huge appetite for credentials, certification (21 actual certificate programs, and rising!), and competitive selection—so a need to encourage a more reflective and integrated learning as well as exposure to habits of mind and planetary concerns. Members of APC sought and received clarification on the Report's envisioned three-part sequence for undergraduates—a welcoming invitation to deep inquiry, a potentially transformative disruption of default thought processes, and a culminating synthesis entailing an intellectual product/performance. Concern was expressed for departments and forms of inquiry perceived by the undergraduates to no longer be of value to their lives-qua-careers, with the Provost concurring that the students need to take significant courses across the three divisions. Members of APC spoke in support of increased faculty engagement (high-touch and research-inflected teaching, better leveraging of expertise and interest in the professional schools, sharpened assessments of intellectual and skill development), including the further development of common courses (such as those arising from BLM, Climate instruction, and the Resilience project). Members also outlined the difficulties they anticipated or had already experienced in recognizing faculty engagement of this order. At issue for some are the age-old tensions between research on the one hand and teaching/mentoring on the other and the limited departmental purview and authority of chairs drawn from and returning to their units. Members raised other questions, too: 1) to what extent the reputation and function of our tier-one research is both dependent upon and even driven by its well-reputed liberal arts college; 2) to what extent there has been a steadily “progressive” switch of faculty attention from intellectual communities on campus to those in the virtual network beyond, exacerbated by Covid-disciplined professionalism, and 3) whether faculty engagement is an issue of rewards-and-incentives (faculty, as Dean Valerie Ashby underscores, are already being paid for the full trifecta of research, teaching, and service) or of the kind of researchers-scholars-creators we hire and tenure in the first place. There was general accord with the 2030's recommendations on graduate and professional student enhancements (experiential learning, inter-program and cross-School training, cultivation and support for diversity along lines of race/gender/class and national province); and little said one way or another on increased temporal and spatial flexibility for teaching (intensive short courses, alternative semester organization, hybrid delivery).

Finally, one more important policy decision is coming before APC at the behest of the Provost and the APC Chair on April 20: it concerns the recent establishment (Material Sciences, Computer Science) and rapidly growing interest in developing “4+1” Masters Programs (4 years in Trinity/Pratt plus another year as a graduate student to earn what is otherwise a 2-year Master's degree), entailing possible intensification of undergraduate specialization and hyper-competitiveness, the ethics and reputational impact of retaining our most accomplished undergraduates in our graduate programs, the utility and hence cost-effectiveness for the students of particular master's degrees, the potential impact of “4+1” influx on resource allocation, class size, and student morale in the respective graduate programs, and so forth.

A comprehensive summary of activities is provided immediately below, as well as the membership roll.

## **Departmental, Program, and School Reviews**

- Romance Studies Department
- Literature Program
- The Graduate School

## **Program Changes/ New Proposals**

- Accelerated master's degree (4+1) in Computer Science
- Request of SoM Emergency Medicine Division to become a Department
- Name change of the Cell Biology PhD degree to Cell and Molecular Biology, with a merged between the CMB admitting program and reactivated CB admissions

## **Policy Discussions**

- Admissions Process (and Res Life)
- Departmental Review Process
- Career Advising Update for UG and Graduate
- UICs/Interdisciplinary Programs
- Duke University Strategy Team 2030 Report
- Accelerated "4+1" master's programs (scheduled for April 20)
- "Concurrent" Master's Degrees for Ph.D. candidates in other departments/programs (scheduled for April 27)

cc: Jennifer Francis, Executive Vice Provost  
Sally Kornbluth, Provost

## **ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE**

The APC is an advisory body to the Provost. The charge to the APC is a broad one in terms of advising the Provost on university-wide academic issues as well as providing advice on the creation, termination, or contraction of academic units. The full Committee meets once a month. Members serve on one of two subcommittees which meet every three weeks. The membership of the APC is comprised of senior faculty members from schools with undergraduate bodies and the professional schools, including two from the Executive Committee of the Academic Council. Ex officio members include the Provost, the Dean of the Graduate School, the Chair of the Academic Council, and the Executive Vice Provost, among others. Term: three years.

### **Term Ending August 31, 2022**

Tom Ferraro, Chair, English  
Fan Li, Statistical Science  
Cary Moskovitz, Thompson Writing Program  
Tracey Yap, School of Nursing

### **Term Ending August 31, 2023**

Gabriel Rosenberg, Vice Chair, Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies  
Amy Schmid, Biology (did not serve 2021-2022)  
Avner Vengosh, Nicholas School of the Environment

### **Term Ending December 31, 2024**

David Goatley, Divinity  
Marin Levy, Law  
Daisy Lovelace, Fuqua (resigned, 2/22)  
Jay Pearson, Sanford  
Herman Pontzer, Evolutionary Anthropology  
Deondra Rose, Sanford  
Rebecca Stein, Cultural Anthropology  
John Supko, Music  
Julie Thacker, Surgery/SOM

### **Ex Officio**

Valerie Sheares Ashby, Dean, Arts & Sciences  
Gary Bennett, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education  
Eve Duffy, Associate Vice Provost for Global Affairs  
Jennifer Francis, Executive Vice Provost  
Deborah Jakubs, University Librarian & Vice Provost for Library Affairs  
William Johnson, Dean of the Humanities  
John Klingensmith, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Graduate School  
Sally Kornbluth, Provost  
Rachel Kranton, Dean of Social Sciences  
Laura Lieber, Religious Studies - ECAC representative  
Paula McClain, Dean and Vice Provost of the Graduate School  
Maggie McDowell, Graduate and Professional School Council  
Neil McWilliam, Dean of Graduate Studies (until 3/3/2022)  
Manoj Mohanan, Sanford School – ECAC representative  
Mohamed Noor, Dean, Natural Sciences  
Martin Smith, Dean of Academic Affairs and Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education  
Sophie Smith, Duke Student Government  
Erika Weinthal-Nicholas, Chair, Academic Council  
Justin Wright-Nicholas, Dean of Graduate Studies (as of 4/1/2022)