

Academic Programs Committee
Duke University

Resolution:

The Duke Medical School's Proposal to convert its Division of Neurosurgery into
the Department of Neurosurgery

Oct. 3, 2014

The Academic Programs Committee has examined the proposal to transform the division of Neurosurgery within the Department of Surgery into a Department of Neurosurgery, along with supporting documents. On September 24, APC met with Theodore Pappas (Vice Dean, Medical Affairs), John Sampson (Chief, Neurosurgery division) and Cindy Gordon (Administrative Director).

The committee was impressed by the strength of the division on all of the criteria provided by the medical school. The proposed transformation is important: only 9.7% of neurosurgery units in the nation are housed in surgery departments and Duke's is the only top 25- rated neurology and neurosurgery program that lacks departmental status. Clinical productivity is extremely high (above the 95th percentile AAMC) and patient satisfaction is similarly high (above the 85th percentile). The proposal describes clinical excellence in a host of specialty areas within neurosurgery; intrinsic brain tumors, cerebrovascular, skull base surgery, spine surgery, pediatric neurosurgery, functional neurosurgery, VA services, trauma. The scale of NIH funded research at Duke is second nationwide only to that of UC San Francisco. The faculty is very active in publishing with Drs. Sampson and Friedman at the forefront of citations. Finally, the proposal shows that the division has been very successful financially and that the new department will be financially solvent.

APC accordingly approves the proposal for neurosurgery to become a department.

The committee wishes to underscore two points that were most prominent in our discussion:

- 1) The committee was very impressed with Dr. Sampson's leadership as division chief. In particular, we noted his emphasis on building links to basic science departments outside the medical school, such as neuroscience and engineering, and prioritizing research through initiatives such as Research Day. The committee was similarly impressed by Dr. Sampson's vision for the new department's role in global health initiatives. Duke neurosurgeons are currently

leading programs in Uganda and this focus on global health could be a way that Duke Neurosurgery continues to differentiate itself and excel.

- 2) APC members expressed concern over what seemed a lack of diversity in the division. Dr. Sampson helpfully indicated that Neurosurgery is more diverse than the national norm with regard to gender, sexual orientation and race. Dr. Sampson also reported that he has created a working group to increase diversity, and that the division was already focused on recruitment strategies toward this end. The committee acknowledges these points and encourages the new department to keep diversity at the forefront of its strategic planning.