EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: ARTS & SCIENCES STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

Trinity College of Arts & Sciences is a vibrant community of scholars engaged in research and education, an international community diverse in cultural backgrounds and intellectual interests, and a dynamic community that provides gateways for both the self and the world beyond. We emphasize the advancement of knowledge and learning, enriched not only by disciplinary depth but also across disciplines and within newly emerging fields. We create opportunities for members of our community to make a difference by promoting knowledge in the service of societies with sensitivity both to diversity of cultural expression and to the ethical dimensions of our enterprise.

The 2006 Arts & Sciences strategic plan articulated specific objectives to build on strengths which positively differentiated Duke from our peers. Supported by the Provost’s Strategic Investment Pool (SIP), the plan developed a thematic approach focusing on three fundamental goals: develop Duke’s distinctiveness as a nationally-recognized leader in emerging fields and traditional disciplines; enhance Duke’s ability to offer the type of educational experiences through which students are empowered to learn, expected to change and encouraged to lead; and provide an appropriate infrastructure to support the development of Arts & Sciences.

As we enter 2010, many of 2006 Plan’s strategies have been successfully implemented. We recruited a cadre of nationally-recognized scholars in many core fields, including African and African American studies, neuroscience, labor and population economics, literary and cultural studies, business ethics, global health, judicial decision-making, chemical biology, high energy physics, and new media. We enhanced undergraduate education by creating new courses and majors and doubled the number of students pursuing mentored research and graduation with distinction. We placed emphasis on research-based service learning. We strengthened the Arts & Sciences infrastructure with new facilities (e.g., French Family Science Center) and classroom modernization (e.g., The Link, our multi-media student-faculty teaching-learning center), and we reorganized our resources for maximum efficiency.

The resource environment has changed dramatically for Duke as for our peer institutions. In response, we reduced administrative costs, eliminating 7 staff within Trinity College Dean’s office and 40 staff positions college-wide. Over the last 10 years, the Arts & Sciences faculty has grown greater than 15 percent. With that growth, Duke has optimized student learning with a faculty-student ratio as high as sustainably possible. Thus, further intellectual growth will come through targeted replacements of departing faculty with no further increase in faculty size.

School Academic Priorities

As indicated in the 2006 Academic Plan, Trinity College of Arts & Sciences will continue to be known for, and distinguished by:

- Committing to the liberal arts: foundational disciplines and interdisciplinary scholarship and education
- Enhancing Duke’s global presence and global programs
- Defining and leading intellectual paradigms that create knowledge and translating knowledge to the benefit of society
- Developing learning opportunities that engage students in a community of scholars
**Committing to the liberal arts: foundational disciplines and interdisciplinary scholarship and education**

In the prior strategic plan, we prioritized recruitment of established scholars to provide ongoing and future leadership in our departments and programs. We will complement this successful strategy by focusing now on identifying and recruiting the most talented younger scholars, who will benefit from these mentors and help redefine the evolving boundaries of the disciplines. These scholars exemplify the philosophy and strength of a research university where students can connect to the deep expertise of world-renowned scholars. Concomitantly, we are also working to reduce reliance on non-regular rank faculty instruction.

Our 2010 plan update builds on thematic approaches that cut across departments and programs, including institutes and schools. Specific examples include theory and applied mathematics, both in natural sciences and the social sciences; the neurosciences which bridge the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities; global demographic and survey studies of social and economic standing that inform political attitudes and behaviors; and the visual studies initiative. Interdisciplinarity is a priority for our faculty hiring plans, and we will use models of joint searches between and across departments and schools, such as the recent recruitment shared between global health and sociology as well as that between biology, physics, and the Institute for Genome Science and Policy. We are developing new interdisciplinary initiatives, ranging from the new undergraduate neuroscience major to new humanities gateway courses. The Focus Program, which we have asked each department to support, provides a high impact exposure to interdisciplinary learning for first-year students who often build on their interests in their Duke careers.

**Enhancing Duke’s global presence and global programs**

All Duke students will live and work in a globally interconnected world, while many bring international backgrounds or experiences. Therefore, our plan pays particular attention to Duke’s global presence and builds on the international research and scholarship of our faculty. For example, cohorts of social science faculty conduct research on large field studies and surveys of political, economic, and social behaviors of diverse populations on several continents. Duke’s interdisciplinarity naturally emphasizes deep similarities as well as differences across cultural norms, as exemplified in our multi-pronged global humanities programs as well as our contributions to the Duke Global Health Initiative.

Duke is an acknowledged leader in global undergraduate education, with Duke having the highest percentage of students studying abroad among our peers. This emphasis on global connectivity provides an opportunity for building greater connections both between research and teaching, and between experiential programs, such as DukeEngage, and our foundational curriculum.

**Defining and leading intellectual paradigms which create knowledge and translating knowledge to the benefit of society**

Duke has developed an especially strong commitment to knowledge in the service of society. This commitment to applying academic knowledge to meet social needs is reflected in faculty hiring. One example is the joint appointments with the Kenan Institute of newly endowed chairs in the area of practical ethics, which has transformed our teaching of ethics. Additionally, we seek to expand multidisciplinary and multi-school initiatives that address Duke’s contributions to social issues, such as bioethics, human rights, and global health. An example is an initiative that applies economics, sociology, anthropology and politics for healthcare delivery. Other priority
programs include, but are not limited to, energy and the environment, global humanities, and broad issues of entrepreneurship.

**Developing learning opportunities that engage students in a community of scholars**

A distinctive opportunity for Duke students is to develop their own intellectual passions, mentored by faculty who are world leaders in the intellectual area of student interest. We placed institutional priority on expanding and strengthening mentored research for undergraduates and graduation with distinction. We will continue to support and foster such opportunities emphasizing engaged teams of faculty, postdoctoral associates, graduate students, and undergraduates. This alignment of student and faculty research underscores the need to re-examine Arts & Sciences traditional majors and curricula, ranging from the numbering and sequencing of courses to creating new gateways and pathways for learning, including innovative course enhancements. For example, the Biology, Chemistry, and Mathematics departments are revising their course of study for the first two years, and Political Science is reorganizing its major curriculum to align more closely with cutting-edge themes. Many humanities departments, such as English, Romance Studies, and Literature, are reinvigorating their undergraduate curriculum. As already noted, we are working to best connect foundational classroom and experiential learning so that each will reinforce the other.

**Assessing and Improving our Strategies**

In all that we do, we ensure the application of benchmarks and metrics. Progress will be gauged by such means as regular and repeated external reviews, advancement in departmental rankings, growth in external research support, creation of new linkages between programs, and participation in, and quality of, mentored research.

Our plan commits Duke to continued leadership in research and in transmitting knowledge through the best possible educational opportunities for our students. We continue to deepen the excellence of our faculty and broaden its demographic base by strategic hiring, albeit in reduced numbers. We recognize that altered financial circumstances require reexamination of our existing modes of support for all activities, including partnerships within and across schools. We have been working with departments and programs to identify priorities and invest our resources strategically so that Arts & Sciences can maintain its forward momentum on our trajectory of excellence and continue making the most positive difference in our local, national and global communities.