

Draft: These minutes are not official until approved by the committee.

Self-Study Focus Committee on the Undergraduate Experience

September 20, 1994

Attending: Dillon, Holmes, McMillen, Mahony, Maiz-Pena, Prioleau, Ross, Shandley (co-chair), Srinivasan, Zumwalt (co-chair).

J. Kuykendall (guest of the committee).

1. Co-chairs Shandley and Zumwalt called the meeting to order at 4:30 PM.

2. The committee welcomed President Kuykendall, whom the committee had invited to provide some background to the committee's charge. In his remarks, President Kuykendall spoke of his concern for a wholesome undergraduate life in which all students could be full participants. He reminded the committee of the existence and relevance of the 1990 Task Force on the Quality of Student Life. [Copies are available in Dean Shandley's office and at the library.] Finally, he complimented the committee on its initial listing of appropriate topics, feeling that each was relevant to the committee's task. He did caution the committee about a significant digression into curricular matters at the expense of attention to broader issues of student life.

3. While the committee was digesting the President's remarks, Professor Zumwalt requested and received some editorial corrections to the minutes of September 8, 1994.

4. Questions to the President prompted discussion on the following items.

A. It is expected that the committee's report would represent the flavor of the committee's agreement or consensus on important matters. For instance, while the fact-finding process and the analysis of information could yield full agreement, the strength of the committee's recommendations for prescriptive actions might vary with the issue in question.

B. The President indicated that his desire for a topic on the undergraduate experience stemmed from his concern that some students on campus (women, African-Americans, gays/lesbians, and those from lower-income households) encounter obstacles in taking advantage of opportunities on campus. Additionally, the community has not been totally successful in providing opportunities that meet the particular needs of these individuals and groups. In subsequent discussion of this issue, the committee task was phrased as investigating the experience (its opportunities and its constraints) of the 18 to 22 year old at Davidson College.

C. The committee contemplated a procedure to organize and divide the twenty-four issues which it had previously identified. B. Mahony suggested a possible division: 1. residential life (basic comforts, physical existence), 2. psychological well-being, 3. social or community life (including issues of alienation), and 4. spiritual life. K. Holmes proposed looking at these issues from a geographic or place-specific perspective, i.e., the residence halls, the Union, Patterson Court. In preparation for the next meeting, the committee was asked to continue reflecting on this model or to suggest another means for organizing the topics. Also, committee members should consider whether all twenty-four topics identified in the first meeting should be included in the study. Finally, using the identified topics, members should begin to contemplate the priorities of our work.

D. It was indicated that Deborah Harris, a parent, would be joining the committee for future meetings. Also, the desirability of soliciting other parental input was discussed. Finally, President Kuykendall suggested that the committee make good use of outside sources, perhaps, using a subset of committee members for initial interviews in order to operate more efficiently.

5. The meeting was adjourned at 5.40 PM.

**NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, October 5, 7:30 AM
Breakfast Meeting at the Commons**

Clark Ross, Secretary

[Note: Copies of the corrected and approved minutes of 9/8/94 will be available at the 10/5 meeting.]

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September 8, 1994

Attending: Dillon, Holmes, McMillen, Mahony, Maiz-Peña,, Prioleau, Shandley (Co-Chair), Srinivassen, Zumwalt (Co-Chair).

1. Co-Chairs Shandley and Zumwalt called the meeting to order at 4:30.

2. Professor Randy Nelson, Director of the Self-Study, appeared before the Focus Committee on the Undergraduate Experience to explain the purpose and objectives of the self-study, the reaccreditation process, and the importance of the criteria to comply with this innovative, and experimental reaccreditation process which SACS invited Davidson College to participate in. Dr. Nelson detailed the five particular areas of the self-study.

3. Dean Shandley explored the different facets of the meaning of "undergraduate experience," and invited the members of the Committee to define it. He provided background information concerning discussion held at the Strategic Planning Retreat, held on 17 August 1994, which related to the Quality of Student Life at Davidson.

4. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to a discussion of possible topics to be included in the study of the undergraduate experience. The following is a list of these topics in the order of discussion:

--the importance of women's issues, both inside and outside of the classroom, including social life, athletics, safety, and counseling.

--an examination of Patterson Court with a look at the future of fraternities at Davidson College.

--a study of students who have been unhappy at Davidson College and transfer to other colleges.

--a focus on African-American students who are unhappy here, and have given up hope for an integrated campus life.

--a need to investigate ways of improving faculty-student relationships outside the classroom.

--the role of the College Union.

--the role of F.L.A.G. as a support group for those students who cannot "come out" at Davidson College for fear of labelling.

- the quality of the residence halls, including consideration of the lounge and study spaces.
- the issue of alcohol and substance abuse.
- the viability of the Honor Code and the Code of Responsibility.
- the issue of respect of community in terms of responsibility to the group, and responsibility to property.
- issues concerning recruitment and select process in admissions.
- a concern for the rigor of the academic program, and variance of rigor, specifically in terms of grading.
- support of special student populations, including the handicapped, international students.
- a concern about the spiritual life of students.
- a concern about food services.
- the issue of how well the undergraduate experience meets the needs of students who graduate from Davidson.
- the role of academic advising.
- a focus on stress on the life of students.
- a concern about eating disorders.
- an examination of the relationship between students and the broader community.
- a concern about the increasing size of the student body and its effect on the faculty and size of classroom.
- an examination of the Junior Year Abroad.
- a look at the off-campus component in student life, including service work and internships.

5. Professor Zumwalt circulated a memorandum from Chaplain Spach, dated 28 June 1994, inviting the committee to investigate the religious life at Davidson College, specifically in terms of spirituality and religious programming.

6. Co-Chairs Shandley and Zumwalt recommended that the committee members read the Davidson College Strategic Planning Document which was distributed to all present, as well as the Report to the President of Davidson College from the Task Force

on the Quality of Student Life (30 March 1990), which would be placed on reserve in the college library.

7. There was a discussion concerning the need for confidentiality regarding matters the committee might be investigating in the future. It was agreed that general information regarding the nature of the committee's focus would be shared with the broader college community, but that this in no way should include potentially sensitive or confidential matters.

8. Professor Nelson reminded the Committee of some logistical matters, such as gathering information, and consulting the guidelines for the Self-Study, available in the Self Study Office. He stressed that the agenda for the Committee should be inclusive of matters that affect the Quality of Life of Davidson students.

9. There was discussion about the possibility of inviting President Kuykendall and Professor Kelton to future meetings.

10. The meeting was adjourned at 5:40.

Magdalena Maiz-Peña, Acting Secretary

The next meeting will be on September 20, at 4:30, in the Conference Room, Chambers 106.