Building Community of Interest:

Report of the Task Force on the Intellectual Climate
at Duke University

April 1994

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Executive Summary of Specific Recommendations

1. Residential Life

   * Replace selective and lottery housing with a system of residential "quadrangles," stable residential communities in which all students in residence are full participating members; incrementally improve facilities and amenities in these units to include at least one faculty apartment and a large social space in each, seminar and study rooms, and possibly faculty offices. (pp. 8-9)

2. Dining

   * Reexamine food services with a view to their role in the educational mission of the University. (p. 10)

   * Remove TVs from most or all dining areas. (p. 11)

   * Include a dining component in first-year seminar program. (p. 11)

3. Alcohol Policy

   * Recharge the current Alcohol Policy Committee to become a broad-based standing committee on alcohol and community concerns. (pp. 12-13)

4. Intellectual Traditions

   * Institute an annual Duke Symposium, an event of perhaps two weeks duration, organized each year by a different school or grouping of units to focus the attention of the entire community on an interdisciplinary topic of general interest, and featuring a number of invited speakers, performances, discussions, classroom visits, etc. (pp. 13-14)

   * Consider establishing an institute or center to host visiting faculty for a semester or year and channel their energies into the community at large through lectures, seminars, and other appropriate events. (pp. 14-15)

   * Extending visits by scholars, performers, public figures whenever possible into residencies involving housing on campus, shared meals, and informal encounters with students and others in the community. (p. 15)
5. Faculty Governance

※ Increase the flow of information and input of the faculty as a whole as major policies are being formulated; reexamine the committee structure with a view to reducing faculty time commitment or increasing the real power of these bodies. (p. 17)

6. Admissions

※ Continue to fine-tune the entire recruiting process to present the University in a way that makes it possible to attract more of those who seek an intense intellectual experience and currently tend not to apply or not to accept at Duke. (p. 19)

※ Attempt to increase merit-based academic scholarships, currently funded at a level ten times smaller than the corresponding scholarships for gifted athletes. (p. 19)

7. Orientation

※ Include at least one event centered on a topic of intellectual substance, including opportunity for interaction with faculty and lively discussion among peers. (p. 20)

※ Include faculty and upper level and graduate students in discussions of community and social issues in order to make them intellectually more stimulating; consider in this context presentations by student groups that will give first-year students a sense of diverse social and cultural opportunities open to them (p. 20)

※ Mandate during this period an individual meeting of each new student with an academic advisor, and make actual registration for classes a central part of orientation to the intellectual life that is commencing. (pp. 20-21)

8. Advising

※ Advising should not be centered around the current checksheet, which directs attention repeatedly and exclusively to graduation requirements. A chronological display of courses with titles would be more conducive to conversation about academic interests and intellectual goals. Students should bear responsibility for learning, understanding, and completing graduation requirements; advising should deal with questions of substance, not just form. (p.22)
Expect all faculty with ongoing appointments, except in exceptional circumstances, to participate in advising as a condition of appointment. (p. 22)

Reexamine the current forms of advising, considering such questions as the desirability of advisors meeting students in the residence halls, the limitations imposed by the current total separation of pre-major and major advising, even the possibility of advisors being assigned without reference to major. (pp. 22-23)

9. Electronic Media and Intellectual Exchange

Electronic media offer opportunities for information sharing, discussion, and community building; as an example, we pass on a student suggestion received by e-mail: that departmental agendas and minutes (except where they involve sensitive personnel issues) be posted for student consideration and response. (pp. 23-24)

10. The Arts and Intellectual Life

Consider ways to make the arts a more central part of the intellectual life at Duke; these might include expanded opportunities for making arts events part of course work where appropriate, encouraging students and faculty to attend events together, and expanding the subsidies for student tickets. (pp. 24-25)

11. Undergraduate Academic Life

Expand the first year seminar program to give each student at least one of these intensive and active learning experiences during the first year. Schedule group meals as a regular part of these seminar courses. (p. 26)

Expand the idea of groups of integrated courses so successful in the FOCUS programs to upperclass students, perhaps as part of an innovative senior year program. (p. 27)

Encourage collaborative learning projects and reserve appropriate spaces for such collaborations and for group meetings with faculty. (p. 27)
∗ Design the University Writing Course around one or more topics of real intellectual substance and general interest, with students signing up for sections by residential area so that they are likely to see each other regularly outside of class. If possible, move at least some sections to the residence halls and meet around the dinner hour to encourage sharing a meal as a natural extension of the classroom. (pp. 27-28)

∗ Include independent study or supervised research in the curriculum of every student, preferably in the junior year, so that it will have the chance to influence a greater part of the overall intellectual experience. (pp. 28-29)

∗ Expand the possibilities for serious intellectual activity (not necessarily course work) during the summer. Summer research programs, externally funded, exist in the sciences and engineering, and that model, involving collaboration of undergraduates, advanced degree candidates, and faculty, should be more widely applicable. (p. 29)

∗ Emphasize teaching and contribution to intellectual life at the University as criteria for tenure and advancement alongside scholarly publication. (p. 30)

∗ Support the Center for Teaching and Learning as an ongoing resource equally valuable for graduate students beginning their teaching careers, younger faculty members, and seasoned veterans. (p. 30)

12. The Professional Schools and the Undergraduate

∗ Encourage thought about using presence of professional schools on campus to expose students to the intellectual challenges offered by the various professions, not just to information about career paths and preprofessional preparation. One modality might be to provide incentives for graduate and professional students to present their research and intellectual concerns to interested groups of undergraduates, and to act in informal mentoring roles. (pp. 33-34)
By Way of Preface

The Task Force on the Intellectual Climate at Duke University was called into being by the Executive Committee of the Academic Council, with the support of President Keohane, to consider (in the words of our charge) the "goals of an intellectual community and objectives for the intellectual life to which such a community might aspire," to probe the extent to which Duke currently succeeds in providing "an atmosphere that promotes the widest possible engagement in the intellectual enterprise and its full integration into the life of the community," and to make specific suggestions for improvement. This task was assigned to us in the context of a wide and continuing debate led off by Reynolds Price's Founder's Day address and William Willimon's report on undergraduate life, and continued in many venues. We have worked in the awareness that other committees (on residential life, "greek" life, and East Campus, among others) are at work from other perspectives on some of the issues with which we are grappling, but we have not felt ourselves in any way restricted by those parallel efforts. We hope all of them will be part of a well-informed, articulate, passionate debate involving as large a segment of the campus community as possible.

Because of these beginnings and this context, our primary focus has been the undergraduate experience at Duke University, but our committee was deliberately made up of faculty from several different schools as well as both undergraduate and graduate/professional students, in order to bring the widest possible perspective to bear on the issues, which cannot after all be restricted to any single segment of our community. After meeting initially at the end of the fall term, our main labors have been squeezed into the first three months of 1994. Given the limited time at our disposal, we have not attempted systematic research, have not held elaborate hearings, have not conducted surveys of opinion. We have nevertheless spoken, as a committee of the whole, in smaller groups, and individually, with a large number of people representing a great variety of interests, perspectives, and experiences. A number of students and faculty have made use of our e-mail address to communicate ideas and concerns. Several people have forwarded information about parallel inquiries being made elsewhere, and through them we have got the benefit of written materials or conversations with colleagues from a number of other institutions. It would be invidious to single out only some of the many who have helped us, so we hope that all will be content to receive thanks no less sincere for being in this blanket form. A few names must be mentioned here, however. Linda Lehman of the Academic Council office helped in every possible way with our arrangements; her student assistants David Gardner and Kirk Downey provided excellent minutes of our meetings. We are grateful to them all.
Some general considerations about the intellectual climate at Duke

The Task Force began its work with a lively discussion about its name. What do we mean when we talk about the intellectual climate? Intellectual life can be a solitary thing, the communing of a scholar with an intellectual problem that he or she has chosen to pursue, but if it is to have an impact on others, it must in some way be shared, become public. At a university, intellectual life means first of all the creation of an intellectual community. In such a community, there will be many divergent interests, many different forms and levels of engagement, but at the core will be a sense of common purpose and a common quest for understanding. Intellectual community implies a shared responsibility for the communication and challenging of ideas, and that in turn presupposes that all those engaged in it are active participants, not mere spectators and consumers. This of course has to do with how we relate to each other on just about every possible level. One way to think of this is in terms of the anonymity we often have to each other—not just students to faculty, but students to to other students, faculty to faculty, schools to schools, and so on. Building an active intellectual community is among other things the breaking down of these barriers. The measure of a healthy intellectual climate will be the degree to which it invites active participation across the boundaries.

We also gave some thought to the question of whether we have a problem surrounding our intellectual climate, and if so, how big it is. One cry frequently heard when people talk about change at Duke is, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Another is, "Let Duke be Duke." Is anything broke? Can there be anything fundamentally wrong with a Duke that consistently ranks among the top national universities? One answer is simply that we have heard enough dissatisfaction expressed in enough quarters to say that there are unresolved and troubling issues that need to be addressed. Another is to point out that the very existence of this task force suggests that the university does not yet have a clearly articulated consensus about what our goals as an intellectual community should be. At the same time, we are keenly aware that what we are talking about at Duke does not represent merely a local problem. The same kind of soul-searching that we are engaged in here is going on at colleges and universities across the country. And of course that is part of what it is to be a university, by mission and temperament a very self-reflexive kind of institution. Universities are always changing as the world around them changes; we always need to think about how we are meeting the needs of all members of the community. Precisely because there is so much about this institution that is genuinely excellent, we should strive to improve it in every way we can. In the area of intellectual climate, we believe that there is room for
improvements that will make Duke not only better but truer to itself and its mission. The following paragraphs set out some of the general lines of thought upon which our more detailed discussions and recommendations depend.

We have heard and observed a great deal of evidence concerning artificial and unnecessary barriers that impede the development of a stronger intellectual community. One appears to us to be the tendency to limit the "intellectual" to the "academic." This is enshrined, for example, in the unofficial student motto, "We work hard, we play hard." Clearly, it is dangerous to generalize on the basis of a slogan such as this; many students say that it does not reflect the intellectual excitement they find in their studies; others cannot honestly say that they are working very hard. What has perhaps not sufficiently been emphasized is the way in which the motto does reflect a whole set of attitudes that limit intellectual life and campus interaction. Instead of encouraging students to imagine a rich, playful, joyful life of the mind, it suggests that intellectual life is a job, and a rather dreary one at that. Life inside the classroom or the library or the laboratory is modelled as a series of chores, from which the rest of student life provides escape. As our report will make clear, we do not construe this as just a student problem. The dichotomy between life inside and outside the classroom in many ways characterizes the faculty culture at Duke, too, and if students tend to equate "intellectual" with the most stultifying aspects of "academic," it may not be entirely their fault.

Duke University is a young university and has had to struggle to reach its present level of eminence. We have certainly come a long way from the time that Duke could still be referred to in the press as "the nicotine college in North Carolina" and its research be associated in the public mind primarily with Parapsychology.1 Particularly in the last two decades, Duke has leapt from respectability to a level of national and even international significance in a large number of areas. We have done this above all through careful attention to the kinds of excellence of faculty and programs that achieve national and international reputation. This process is never complete, of course, and no university can rest on its laurels, but we submit that Duke has reached the point where "perceived excellence," i.e., confirmation by the outside world that we are an institution to reckon with, is no longer a sufficient standard for measuring our success. One source of concern is the widespread feeling that we may have acquired our reputation for scholarly excellence without a concomitant improvement in the intellectual climate for undergraduate education. We need to look at the intensity of the educational experience we are providing, inside and outside the classroom, and we must evaluate carefully the ways in which we do and do not constitute ourselves as an intellectual community. If we

do not encourage all students to see their educational experience as at least potentially transformational--as a mode of reexamining the attitudes and beliefs about themselves and the world with which they come to college--we have failed them, no matter how well we have prepared them for the job market or further specialized study.

One relevant consideration on the more narrowly academic side of intellectual life at Duke, is that one often hears teaching and research dichotomized (like "work" and "play"), in part because of a faculty culture and a reward system that separate out "our own work" as scholars and privilege it over the common educational mission. We believe that there is a strong consensus within the academic community at Duke concerning the crucial importance of research and scholarly reflection, and concerning the responsibility of faculty to publish the results of those activities. We believe that excellent research and teaching can and often do go hand in hand. It is as short-sighted to treat the two as enemies as it is to treat social life as the antithesis of intellectual life. But if the goal is to make the production of knowledge and its diffusion as closely related as possible, the institution must recognize and reward teaching and the related pursuit of intellectual community more fully and in a more balanced way. Concomitant with a renewed emphasis on the educational mission, we believe that there is a need to emphasize to all parties at Duke that participating in the intellectual community is an activity (not a passivity), a cooperative venture designed to lead to sustained independent thinking and the testing of that thinking in thoughtful interchange with others.

In thinking of ways to reach this goal, we must not lose sight of the fact that Duke is a research university of international stature. Too often, this is assumed to be a barrier to liberal education rather than a source of strength for our teaching mission. We believe that the presence of major graduate and professional programs and schools is an attribute of which we could take greater advantage in constituting our intellectual community and in offering the best possible experience to our undergraduates. To take one current example, there is enormous potential for our intellectual climate in the ongoing process of internationalization. True internationalization will involve intellectual exchange at all levels, will be inherently multidisciplinary, and will provide opportunities for teaching and learning that an institution less fully engaged in research cannot hope to offer. We need to understand how to recognize and exploit such opportunities. Above all, we must find ways to involve more students in the excitement and joy of intellectual engagement on the frontiers of knowledge.

A different set of problems arises at Duke, as no doubt at other institutions, because the intellectual enterprise has developed separately from other activities and facilities. If intellectual (not merely academic) life is the core of the institution, we should reasonably expect all major
university activities and facilities to be shaped by their relation to that core. Campus housing and dining services, for example, should not be viewed simply as services or individual entitlements. The university has the right, perhaps the obligation, to insist on a residential environment compatible with lively discussion and quiet conversation, one that offers all students the opportunity to share cultural interests and to extend their intellectual experiences beyond the classroom. The university sends signals about what kind of community it believes itself to be and what it expects from its members by the way it organizes and regulates its residences, eating facilities, social spaces, and the like.

Occasions and traditions that provide opportunities for substantive discussion of topics of general intellectual interest are another indicator of our expectations and their availability can be a superb tool for forging intellectual community. Intellectual life at Duke tends to be divided between an enormously rich array of specialized talks and seminars designed primarily for faculty and graduate students in a particular discipline and public events (e.g., major speakers) that seem largely to involve media personalities and second-string politicians. Imagine the possible effects of a focus of intellectual energy treated with the concern and devotion now accorded to our basketball program!

All these general considerations speak in different ways to the same core concern—the forging of a community that derives from a common pursuit of knowledge and understanding, in which each member, whatever his or her role, is respected as a full participant and expected to assume responsibility for participation in and contribution to that common pursuit.

I. The Campus as a Setting for an Intellectual Community

A. Residential Life and the Intellectual Climate

1. The Connections Between Residential Life and the Promotion of Intellectual Community. The name "dormitory" denotes etymologically merely a place to sleep. Everyone rightly expects, however, that residence halls will be more than places for individuals to go to rest at the end of day. What more can they and should they be? As things now stand, everyone also seems to agree that the current residential system at Duke does not contribute in the way it might to a rich intellectual life, indeed, that residential life is deeply implicated in many of the problems associated with the current campus atmosphere. Rather than simply offer another critique of residential life at Duke, however, we want to consider the role that living on campus can play as part of the college experience with an eye to identifying residential policies and programs that can contribute to enriching that experience.
It is not essential for universities to provide students with housing; many universities in other countries, and some in the large cities of this country, do not do so. If campus housing is to be more than a mere convenience for students, it must enhance the educational experience; at Duke, in fact, as at other colleges, housing is offered with precisely that promise. At various times, and in different locations across the campus, the promise has been honored to some extent. Initiatives such as the Faculty in Residence program and, more recently, "theme houses" designed to bring students together around common intellectual and cultural interests, are widely regarded as successes for those who have access to them. Those who have participated in the FOCUS programs (clusters of seminars taken together by groups of first-year students who also share a weekly meal) agree that the residential setting has been one of their attractive features. But the general picture of life in Duke dormitories suggest a surprisingly impoverished intellectual community.

Some students, indeed, argue that the university should not use its residential policy to force them into participating in a program of activities in which they may have no interest. We agree. On the extreme version of this view, however, housing is regarded as nothing more than an individual entitlement (it is, after all, guaranteed for four years) to be used for whatever purposes individual students and groups of students feel appropriate. We believe, on the contrary, that the university has a right, indeed an obligation, to assert the connection between its educational mission and its provision of housing by insisting on a residential environment compatible with lively discussion and quiet conversation, one that offers opportunities for all students to share their intellectual and cultural interests and to extend their academic experience beyond the classroom. We believe that the university has a right, indeed an obligation, to insist on standards of behavior compatible with respect for the needs both of privacy and of community. In short, we think that the university can and should send signals about what kind of institution it believes itself to be by the way it organizes and regulates its residential program.

2. Desiderata for Residential Communities. In so far as we are able to discover a rationale for the current system, it seems to result from construing the residents primarily as consumers whose demands are to be met whenever possible. The best means for that purpose is generally understood to be maximizing the choices available to the individual. This policy produces some very satisfied customers, but at a high price: strongly felt inequalities and the tensions that result from them; instability, as the consumers jockey to maximize their advantage within the available choices; lack of commitment or a sense of belonging for those who do not get their choice among the options offered; and above all the incoherence of a
patchwork system with minimal overall goals and expectations, whose parts function in very different ways and with differing degrees of success.

What seems to us to be lacking, in short, is an overall sense of community, emphatically including intellectual community. It is surely possible to reach agreement on a number of elements that are essential for fostering that sense, and more particularly to offer each student in residence a feeling of inclusion and participation in a vital intellectual community. An initial element must be the definition of that community as more than a group of bed spaces or a drinking club. Every residential community must be a place where common interests, the free exchange of ideas, relaxed social activities, and active recreation are all accepted as a normal and expected part of life. Such expectations will also enhance the sense of cohesion within a residential community. It is worth emphasizing that from an intellectual as well as a social point of view, diversity (of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, but also of intellectual interests, avocations, and talents) is a prime desideratum. The kind of community we envision requires some stability of membership, so that commitment to it, a sense of "ownership" in what it offers, will come easily to all its members. It will be greatly fostered by the establishment of traditions: customs, celebrations, events particular to each community.

3. The Dichotomy Between Selective and Lottery Housing. At Duke, dormitory space, with the exception of the apartments on Central Campus, is organized by houses (not necessarily self-standing structures) that range in size from fifty to more than one hundred students. Each house is either selective (i.e., dedicated to a fraternity section or to one of several other kinds of affinity groups) or a lottery house (i.e., filled by students who enter a housing lottery and are assigned dormitory space.) This system leads to numerous and troubling inequities. The most important of these is the way in which it constitutes a two-tiered and even hierarchical ordering of residential life. The very existence of selective housing implies lottery housing; a system can only be selective by excluding some people. Selective housing has clear advantages for those who successfully find and gain admission to a group that they believe will meet their needs, but it has the built-in drawback of leaving behind in a kind of undifferentiated mass students who did not find or gain admission to such a group, or who did not wish to be part of one to begin with. (As a practical matter, students who are not part of a selective group may find themselves lodged with one that did not fill all the spaces in the area assigned to it, neither fully part of that group or of any other.)

The subject of residential fraternities requires specific comment at this point. We have spoken with representatives of the Interfraternity Council, who have emphasized to us the value to their members of participation in fraternities. The members of the Task Force have
divergent views on the overall value of the Greek system at Duke, but on one point we are in strong agreement: the decoupling of fraternities from housing privileges. We feel that the presence of living units organized around male social concerns and designed in the first instance for a group of initiates makes the goal of creating a campus in which every student is a full and equal participant substantially harder to achieve. Furthermore, there seems little doubt that the role of residential fraternities, which, particularly because they have been allocated space that gives them a kind of dominion over the undergraduate social scene, detracts significantly from the intellectual climate on campus. In short, we are convinced that fraternities as currently constituted are detrimental to what we are seeking. This does not mean that all of us oppose the existence of fraternities as entities recognized by the institution and given space for meeting and conducting social activities. It is presumably part of what a university is about to encourage the congregation of like-minded individuals for whatever purposes—social, athletic, devotional, intellectual—that so not contravene the university's standards of conduct or conflict with its reason for being. But it is a very different thing to cede a large part of a limited, common good—in this case, residential space—for purposes of a group with its own agenda, one that often seems in conflict with the general interest.

Our proposal is not, however, directed simply at the elimination of residential fraternities. We are challenging the whole principle of selective housing for subgroups of students. This may seem paradoxical, since the rise of successful selective houses based on shared intellectual and cultural interests (Round Table, Share, the Arts House) encourages one to believe that residential life at Duke can be the source of a richer and more stimulating environment. Indeed, it would be tempting to conclude, as others have, that all that is required to improve residential life at Duke is to add more theme houses of this kind. After considerable discussion, however, we have come to the opposite conclusion. We are skeptical about the desirability of making residential choices using a particular interest or affinity as the primary criterion; we believe that diversified residential communities offer the greatest opportunities for personal growth. That is, no doubt, merely a subjective reaction. There is surely reason for concern, however, about siphoning off from the general residential population those people with the most clearly defined and strongest interests, people who have much to contribute to the larger community. And we return to the unavoidable fact that not everyone will wish to or be able to find a place in such a selective environment. The inevitable result will be a smaller, even more marginal and frustrated group of students relegated to even more marginal lottery spaces.

4. An Alternate Vision for Residential Life. We suggest that the University give serious consideration to a housing policy not based on the
distinction between selective and lottery houses, but on larger, more stable residential communities which, for the present purposes, we shall refer to as "quadrangles." In such an arrangement, students would affiliate for their entire period in residence with one of perhaps six or eight groupings of geographically contiguous residential spaces each housing roughly from six to eight hundred students. Space could be assigned within the quadrangle in various ways, but students would know that except in exceptional circumstances they would remain in the same quadrangle.

There is obviously more than one possibility for articulating such a residential system. It might, for example, include students from all four undergraduate years, and even a certain number of graduate and professional students as space permitted. First year students might be integrated into cross-sectional housing or given separate housing within each quadrangle. On the other hand, if it is decided to house first-year students in a block or blocks of their own, each of their residential units might be loosely affiliated with one of the quadrangles to which it would be expected that students from that unit would move at the start of the second year. Central Campus would continue to provide the alternative of on-campus apartment living.

The quadrangle system would require a modest initial capital investment and some incremental expense in future building of residence halls, but we believe the costs would not be prohibitive and would constitute an excellent investment. As new residence halls are built, not only should they be planned for fostering the kind of communities the University wants to develop, but they should also provide sufficient extra space to permit retrofitting existing residence halls with some amenities. Each quadrangle ought to have at least one larger social/cultural space, where student performances and other community events could take place. Each quadrangle should have an apartment for a resident faculty "master" who would help coordinate activities involving students, faculty and visitors for the quadrangle; additional faculty associated with the quadrangle might have apartments in the quadrangle, and thought should be given to the possibility of providing a certain number of faculty offices within the quadrangles as well. One interesting suggestion, offered by a member of the faculty, is that some emeritus faculty, who have time for and interest in interacting with undergraduate students, might enjoy having office space in a residence hall in return for performing services as fellows in a quadrangle.

Such a quadrangle system would provide a stable community with a good range of facilities and foster a variety of community activities and interest groups. Intramural leagues and other recreational activities would naturally be organized within the frame of the quadrangles, and through the quadrangles first-year students would be able to find easy access to the whole gamut of opportunities available.
B. Dining and the Intellectual Climate

1. The Connections Between Dining and the Intellectual Life. The possibility of a truly vigorous and stimulating intellectual climate in an institution such as Duke appears to hinge on two factors: (1) the capacity of individual members of that community, particularly students and faculty, to shake off and break through the traditional roles that tend to induce habits of safety and conformity—roles that encourage us to anchor ourselves firmly within a certain zone of comfort and that inhibit the taking of risks and the crossing of barriers, restrain or even invalidate the operations of curiosity, and impede or frustrate the emergence of that pervasive skepticism about the compartmentalization of knowledge and experience that is perhaps the surest sign that intellect is alive and well; and (2) the capacity of members of that community to give effective and meaningful public expression to an activity that necessarily is pursued largely in private and in isolation. In a university setting the intellectual life of an individual is not a matter for that individual alone, nor is it ultimately reducible to institutionally-sanctioned indices of "performance."

One may wonder whether or in what way dining and meal arrangements fit within the cluster of concerns that target the intellectual life of the Duke community. On the one hand, it is clear that feeding students is not, in and of itself, an essential part of the University’s central educational mission. On the other hand, it seems reasonable to argue that a university which assumes the burden of providing dining services to its members has the responsibility of seeking to do so in a vacuum but rather in a way that actively fosters and promotes the basic educational mission of the institution, or at the very least does not actively undermine that mission. Providing food—even the widest variety of food and choice—is not enough: the institution must be concerned above all with the context within which this service is provided and with the educational message implicit in the way in which it structures and delivers this service.

Measured against this yardstick, the dining experience at Duke presents a number of problematic features. Most of these appear to be the effects of one central liability: a tendency to view eating arrangements at Duke as almost exclusively a matter of individual entitlement, with the primary goal of maximizing individual convenience and choice. The system seems to be driven by a dynamic that empowers individuals to act effectively as consumers, extending their range of choice both quantitatively and temporally, and not so subtly (through the psychology of the Duke Card) fostering individual convenience and even whim as the controlling calculus of choice. The operation is seen as working effectively if student-consumers, acting essentially as individuals, are able to satisfy their desires in the way and at the time of their choosing. Modifications to
the operation are prompted only by perceived changes in consumer "demand" and generally follow the established logic of individual entitlement.

Convenience and choice are values not lightly to be overridden, but concern for them undergirds the dining system at Duke to the point that we can fairly characterize that system as prompted and justified by commercial rather than by educational criteria. Indeed, the success of the system appears to be measured within the university bureaucracy entirely by its commercial success. But the attitudes and energies useful for achieving commercial success seem at odds with some important educational values. There is a need to restructure the University dining experience in such a way that food might function more regularly and effectively as a lubricant and catalyst for intellectual activity and as an important factor in fostering a sense of community.

2. Some Ways of Improving Dining at Duke. The University should actively investigate strategies for promoting some sense of dining as a communal experience for undergraduates. It would be naive to expect the goals and strategies appropriate to a small liberal arts college in this regard to be viable options for Duke, but that does not mean that new and innovative ways cannot be found to promote dining (the dinner meal in particular) as a time for sharing and taking stock with others, for pausing and reflecting on larger issues, for seeking true refreshment of body and spirit in a congenial, convivial, relaxed setting that encourages one to linger rather than just rush through.

The University should also consider carefully the physical setting within which dining occurs and pay particular attention to those factors that promote a frenzied or hectic atmosphere. Eating on the run should be an available alternative for those who occasionally find themselves under duress; it should not be the norm for dining at Duke. The decision to place televisions in many of the dining facilities exemplifies what happens when "consumer satisfaction" becomes the sole basis for action, without regard for the likelihood that TVs discourage just those activities--conversation above all--that make dining in common a desirable feature of campus life. We recommend that TVs be removed from most if not all dining areas.

We also propose that the first-year seminar requirement (see below) include a provision for group meals and individual meetings with the professor on a regular basis. Meals can provide a welcome adjunct to classroom activity; they offer an opportunity to already existing clusters of faculty and students for extending their contact around matters of mutual concern, but in ways that encourage both students and faculty to jettison the often stultifying roles and poses that the classroom setting often prompts them to assume in favor of a more level and more neutral "playing field" where inhibitions are reduced and where more spontaneous interaction is
likely to occur. And building this systematically into the first year would have the benefit of inculcating habits of interaction between students and faculty that could not but have a welcome effect on the overall intellectual climate of the institution. Indeed, all faculty should be encouraged to think of ways in which meals might serve as adjuncts to their particular courses, and the University administration should develop a program of incentives to signal its support for faculty initiative in this important area.

C. Facilities and Opportunities for Contact among Students, Faculty, and Staff

The facilities for interaction among small groups at Duke are surprisingly unsatisfactory. Most departments, for example, lack the sort of lounges where majors, graduate students, and faculty can expect to find one another during the course of the day. Groups that wish to meet find it cumbersome and sometimes expensive to secure space. The very successful new Café in the Bryant Center, and (for those who have no objection to second-hand smoke) the Coffee House on East are good places for conversation, but they are not an adequate answer to the need for informal meeting space. We hope that in a reorganized residence system, some of the spaces currently empty except for the occasional TV viewer can be informal meeting places, perhaps fitted out with a small coffee bar or other amenities. These might be open to residents of the quadrangle and faculty and graduate students associated with it during the day, and available for meetings, discussion and reading groups, or small parties in the evenings.

D. Alcohol and the Intellectual Climate

The abuse of alcohol is one of the problems most emphasized in recent discussions of the campus climate. The 1993 Student Health Education survey of Duke undergraduates reveals that the patterns of abuse at Duke are very similar to those reported in national studies, but that does not mean that Duke does not have a problem. The survey permits us to quantify some of the consequences directly related to academic performance. For example, 47% of the 615 Duke students surveyed admit to binge drinking, defined as drinking five or more drinks in one session at least once during the two weeks that preceded the survey (compared with 45% in the national survey). Of these, 38% of women and 35% of men admitted that their binges interfered with participation in class, and 50% of women and 47% of men missed class due to drinking.¹ These are far from the most disturbing statistics about alcohol and the Duke student, but they suggest, if anyone still doubts it, that drinking behavior directly impairs

¹These figures are taken from the Executive Summary of a 1993 Duke Student Health Survey of alcohol use based on the anonymous responses of 615 Duke undergraduates (52% female, 48% male).
the academic experience. Obviously, the destructive behaviors and attitudes engendered by alcohol abuse have broader ramifications for the kind of community Duke is and the quality of its life. We therefore recommend that the current Alcohol Policy Committee be recharged to become a broad-based standing committee on alcohol and community concerns, including representatives of the faculty, undergraduate, and graduate/professional students as well as University staff.

II. Promoting Community Life

A. Intellectual Traditions

One important aspect of the intellectual climate at Duke is the availability of events that can attract a cross-section of the community and engage them in shared intellectual excitement and thoughtful conversation. In any given week, of course, there are numerous lectures, performances, meetings and other activities. But there are few strong intellectual traditions of the kind that galvanize wide interest and generate conversations before, during, and after they take place. And apart from arts events that can be counted on to draw in a certain number of students and faculty members (Duke Drama, the Duke Artists Series, and so on), there are relatively few events in between specialized departmental events and events of broad popular appeal.

1. The Duke Symposium. Imagine for a moment the atmosphere on campus during the week of the Duke-Carolina game. We know what people will talk about in the days leading up to the event; we know where people will be during the game itself. What takes place provides a common point of reference for almost everyone on campus--a bond, a sense of living and working together. Duke University already has significant institutions of community life. How can we build upon that kind of community spirit and extend it to other, more intellectual, activities? We can learn from "the team" some essential ingredients: make it big, make it concentrated, make it count as "fun," make sure everyone knows about it, make it the thing to do in any given week. Some of the suggestions in other sections of this report will indicate intellectual traditions worth building at Duke that are more or less directly tied to the curriculum: for example, a lecture series keyed into the UWC program, perhaps tied into the experience of eating and talking together. We have one additional suggestion of this kind to offer in this section: the Duke Symposium, spread over one or (even better) two weeks, on a yearly topic that crosses disciplines and could engage a number of people on campus in different ways. Earlier in Duke's history there was something of this kind
called the Symposium. We propose reviving the Symposium, or something like it, and making it a Duke tradition.

Many institutions schedule such events during an inhospitable icy January. We might follow suit and schedule the Duke Symposium for the second and third weeks of Spring term. Or we might take a more experimental approach, scheduling it for two more glorious weather weeks in early October or early April. During this time, departments and organizations would be discouraged from scheduling lectures or performances unrelated to the Symposium. Classes would meet—but some of them would be encouraged wherever appropriate to key into the Symposium’s theme. A set of major speakers (perhaps four to six) would visit campus and be made available in public lectures, performances, classroom visits, and so on. The themes would ideally be interdisciplinary and broad enough to interest many people on campus (some examples: "Cultural Studies and the Traditional Disciplines," "Feminism and the Difference it Makes," "Scientific Research and Human Values," "Thinking Globally: Economic Life and the World Today"—or any number of other topics.

Responsibility for organizing the topic and events for a given year could rotate from school to school, be shared by more than one school, or be organized by an interdisciplinary program (such as Science, Technology, and Human Values) or by subgroup of departments within one or more schools acting in concert for that year. But the organizers should seek to reach not just people in their immediate community but the broadest possible swath of the Duke community. The goals of the Symposium would be to create a period of relative quiet and focus attention on a related group of intellectual experiences designed to be widely shared. The result would, we believe, be the creation of a tradition stimulating to intellectual life for the two weeks of the Symposium, and for several weeks on either side, a tradition that would come to be anticipated as a focal event in each academic year. The Symposium would need to be done for several years in a row—funded handsomely, and advertised well—to establish itself. We think it would be worth the effort.

2. An Institute or Center for Visiting Scholars. Even though Duke currently enjoys the reputation of being a locus of interdisciplinary study, it is still organized rather tightly around departments; and the the formula budgeting system tends to emphasize autonomous status of the various schools. We think that Duke would be well advised to consider an institute or center that welcomes visiting faculty to the campus for a semester or year and channel their energies into the community at large. Many comparable universities have found that such programs provide stimulation of interdisciplinary activities already in place, stimulate new departures, and become a significant part of the community’s life—and constitute as
well authentic intellectual traditions. The advantage of some such system for Duke, which is relatively isolated geographically, seems obvious.

In a time of budgetary constraints, it is important that any new institute or center be self-supporting and benefit many sections of the University community. New funding would be required, and might perhaps be sought in conjunction with the University's ongoing efforts at internationalization. One benefit of such a center, and possible source of funds to defray its costs, might be the expectation that the visitors teach one course during their stay or by participating in a weekly seminar, which might itself become an important intellectual tradition, especially if a lunch or other occasion for further discussion follow each meeting. If the Institute or Center did its job well, students and faculty would quickly learn to schedule classes, whenever possible, around these meetings—which would ideally appeal to faculty, graduate students, and advanced undergraduates. As with the Symposium, rotating topics and the selection of visiting scholars by different mixes of schools and departments would insure that over time a large part of the community would find their intellectual lives enriched by this program.

3. Residencies as a Tool for Fostering Intellectual Community. As a general principle, the value for stimulating discussion and community interaction around the presence on campus of a visiting scholar, public figure, performer, or artist will be increased out of all proportion to the incremental costs by extending wherever possible the "one-shot" lecture, reading, or performance into a residency involving housing on campus, informal presentations, shared meals, discussions with graduate and undergraduate students and other members of the community. There is now at least one apartment in the residence halls that can be used by visitors who are interested in interaction with students; the availability of other and more centrally located lodgings, and some modest funding to make a longer stay attractive, and cooperation in programming between academic units and Student Development would surely yield gratifying results. Interaction with visitors ought to be one of the expectations that students, and for that matter faculty and staff, come to take for granted as one of the perks of belonging to an academic community.

B. Claiming a Stake in the Community

Ultimately, community life at Duke will and must flow from a daily sense that its members have a say in how things happen here--and so a stake in putting their time and effort into community life. Currently, that sense is deficient for both faculty and students. (We do not presume to speak in this report for staff, though we firmly believe that their greater integration
into the common enterprise is a great desideratum.) We seem to come
together to react against things that have been, or seem to have been,
already decided. Students find themselves in that position very often. For
the faculty, the Nixon Library remains the paradigm of a galvanizing issue.
Ideally, we could generate group energy more routinely. Ideally, faculty
and students would shape life at Duke rather than react to how things have
been shaped.

We touch here on matters very deep in the culture of Duke that need
airing and discussion: how, and how much, information, particularly about
fiscal matters, is shared with the academic community; how things get
decided and how much faculty and student opinion count. Currently,
schools and departments seem to be in competition for scarce resources,
but on what basis and with what assessment of the returns money is
allocated is never made public. As regards decision-making, there is much
airing of opinion but no mechanisms whereby majority opinion can be
registered and count.

For as long as the members of this Task Force can remember—and
perhaps more in the last five years than ever before--Duke is a community
with many committees. These groups--advisory, supervisory, etc.--advise
and buffer--but, in the end, relatively few have any real power to make
decisions. The elaborate structure of bodies that report to other bodies
often forestalls action for years--by which time it is time for another
report. Many committees and faculty governance bodies are, in fact, little
more than the designated recipients of reports or the generators of reports.
Too rarely does anyone on a committee experience a satisfactory sense of
follow-through from advice to action. To put it simply: the current
committee structure gives the appearance of faculty involvement in
community life and consumes time. But it produces few concrete results
relative to the time spent. We seem at times to aspire to the condition of a
governmental bureaucracy.

What is worse, but perhaps predictable, is that faculty participation
in committees and the other forms of involvement in community life is not
work that the University rewards. Indeed, it is work we seek to spare
"junior" colleagues, who routinely live at this University for years before
they are expected or invited to participate in community life. We are
"protecting" their time, we say, to allow them to publish before tenure.
But what we are doing as well is ensuring that they will have absorbed the
message that community life does not really matter. Even more cynically,
we are encouraging them to achieve the level of passivity required of
committee members at Duke before being loosed into the committee
structure.

At Duke, faculty governance is reflected by two bodies--the
Academic Council and a faculty council for each of the schools--in which
membership is by election and is, hypothetically at least, "representative."
These groups have important watchdog and informational functions, but as currently constituted they also do a great deal of routine business. Sometimes, whole semesters pass during which the members listen, often quite passively, to reports from administrators. The "real" action may take place in the executive committees of these bodies or in the offices of the administrators who prepare the reports telling faculty what the plans are for "their" university. Once again, by and large faculty participate as spectators, not actors.

If we are to expend our intellectual energies on community life, faculty (and in their own way, students) need to have real power to register opinions as policies are being formulated. For example, basic issues about how the budgets are made, how the new "formula" budgetary system works, whether money will be spent on faculty development or "infrastructure," whether or not we are to make "five year plans," ought to be debated and not just presented as faits accomplis ("done deals") to the faculty. We ought to have some meetings-- perhaps, given our numbers, necessarily by schools--at which everyone can come and everyone can vote. Ideally, the votes would bind the administration to some kind of action. But at the very least, the faculty should be allowed to register votes on issues that affect the future of the University--and encouraged to be there (every man and woman of them) to do so. At the same time, we recommend reducing the number of committees, which often seem to have ill-defined and overlapping functions, whose task is to discuss and give advice rather than accomplish a specific and meaningful task.

Currently, we have a model in which much time and talk are expended by faculty committees, but the power is perceived to reside (and in fact largely does reside) elsewhere. Either the faculty should be given a real say in how things get decided at Duke or our time on committees ought to be drastically reduced. In short (and this goes for students as well): make our stakes real in committee structures as an expression of community life real--or free time and energy for other avenues of intellectual life.

III. The Undergraduate Educational Experience

The "work hard/play hard" dichotomy assumes that students in fact work hard, but the evidence is mixed. Students from the class of '92 who responded to Alumni Affairs' "Duke Experience Survey" gave academic pressure an average rating of 6.6 on a scale of one to ten. Almost half claimed that they had spent fewer than twenty hours a week studying; fewer than one in five claimed to study more than thirty hours a week. Now, "academic pressure" may not be a good measure of students' intellectual lives. Indeed, the term seems to reinforce another implication
of "work hard/play hard": that the curricular part of education is to be construed as drudgery. But we have heard from a number of faculty the view that the curriculum permits students so inclined to evade intellectual challenge and coast by, receiving high marks for minimal effort. And we have heard from a number of students that the level of intellectual stimulation in many of their classes has been disappointingly low. We have not attempted to do the work of a curriculum committee in reformulating graduation requirements, but rather have looked for specific ways to increase the intensity of the intellectual experience for undergraduates at Duke, considering admissions, orientation, and advising as well as some aspects of the curriculum itself.

In general, our perspective is that teachers need to demand of their students a more active, engaged participation in the process of learning, and that students need to take greater responsibility for and a more active role in their own education. The curriculum needs to be understood by all parties (students, teachers, and administrators) as the framework for intense intellectual adventure, not as a series of discrete hurdles. A curriculum that supports the kind of intellectual climate we wish to foster at Duke would insist on education as an active, cooperative venture (and so provide all students with opportunities for active participation in intellectually demanding small group learning experiences from the first term of the first year), as leading to sustained independent thought (and so provide all students with a significant research opportunity before completing their studies), and as at least potentially transformational (and so require students to take responsibility for defining and explaining the shape and the challenge of their own course of study.)

A. Admissions

Whatever may have been true in the past, it is very hard to lay the blame for any lack of intellectual intensity in undergraduate education on our admissions policy. We have a large and able applicant pool and our reputation as a "hot college" has only increased its size and quality over the last few years. And yet, our own Director of Admissions, Christoph Guttentag, points out that we have what we might call an acceptance problem. The students who win admission to Duke and Harvard, Duke and Stanford, Duke and Yale, Duke and Princeton, go overwhelmingly (by a ratio of something like eight or nine to one) to those other institutions. These students are not dull drudges; on the contrary, they tend to be the bright and creative individuals we should most wish to have at Duke. Why don't they come? No doubt there are lots of reasons, but one seems to be that Duke's reputation is that of a (respectable and respected)party school. Students are impressed by the "academics" (shorthand for a classroom-bounded and requirement-driven notion of the intellectual life) but even
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more impressed by the fun and the game (basketball). Those for whom "fun" emphatically includes the joys of learning, thinking, arguing, do not seem to find Duke quite so alluring. We would be very ill-advised indeed, especially when Duke's applicant pool is so large and impressive, to imagine that bright party animals are our natural clientele, or to put it in the current jargon, constitute our market niche. We should make every reasonable effort to make Duke appealing to the "loners and daring dreamers" (in the phrase of Dartmouth's president, James Freedman), as well as to the high school class presidents and the jocks.

The Admissions Office has come a long way in recent years, both in its general culture (decreased emphasis on "well-rounded students," increased emphasis on a "well-rounded class" that may contain a number of individuals with emphatic interests and pronounced talents even if their scores are not quite as high and their club memberships not quite as numerous as some other candidates) and in its presentation of Duke to prospective students. No doubt more could be done in these areas. Some further attention, for example, could be given to how student guides present the undergraduate experience to prospects and their families. ("Work hard, play hard" are words that should never escape their lips!) Alumni who interview prospective students across the country should perhaps be brought further abreast of the changes at their alma mater. But it is our definite impression that a only a different college atmosphere and experience can substantially improve the applicant pool and change admission results, not different admissions policies.

We note one possible exception to that dictum: a substantial increase in merit scholarships, at least for a certain period of time, could have a considerable effect on the undergraduate climate. Duke currently makes a large investment to get one kind of exceptional student--the outstanding athlete. According to a recent report, Duke spent $4,465,000 on non-need based scholarships, of which $4,000,000 was for athletic scholarships and only $465,000 for merit-based academic scholarships. Even if we regard a portion of the athletic scholarships as investments rather than expenditures, in the sense that they generate income whereas the academic scholarships do not, the disproportion is striking. And one could certainly argue that the emphasis on athletics contributes to some of the problems we are trying to address, whereas an increase in academic awards might help solve them. At any rate, an increase in academic merit scholarships is the most direct way we can think of to increase the enrollment rate of the students whom we think would help change the intellectual climate at Duke. As one might imagine, the enrollment rate for those offered A. B. Duke scholarships is very high, and the enrollment rate of those who are candidates but so not receive them is very low. Those students are often offered scholarships at other institutions, or else find that without the incentive the scholarship provides, the atmosphere at Duke looks less inviting than that elsewhere.
We recommend therefore that Duke make a strong effort to increase endowment for academic merit scholarships.

B. Orientation

It is noteworthy that the orientation program gives students guidance on a whole range of subjects but almost entirely fails to mention intellectual life. That subject is left to the initial advising session, in which not the spirit of intellectual adventure but academic rules and regulations predominate. Most of the eighteen year-olds who just beginning their college experience are looking for signals from the institution and from their peers about what to expect and how to act. (We were told by one student that she was surprised and disappointed when, in the course of her first weeks at Duke, the only activity to include her whole house was a trip to kegs.) The Task Force feels that we are missing an opportunity to influence expectations and behaviors by not offering at least one event centered on a topic of intellectual substance, including opportunity for interaction with faculty and lively discussion among peers. We recommend that such events become part of orientation immediately and be made mandatory for all new students as soon as possible.

Some of the topics that are now broached in orientation might also be addressed in intellectually more stimulating and more proficuous ways. We recommend, for example, that those planning orientation search for ways to make issues of difference, tolerance, free speech, and community expectations the subject of substantive discussions by groups that bring first-year students together with upper level and graduate/professional students (such as FACs and RAs), faculty, and Student Development staff. A presentation by student groups that pursue diverse political, cultural, and social agendas might precede those discussions as a way of giving new students an opportunity to learn early on about the many opportunities available to them for intellectual and cultural enrichment.

We also recommend a change from the current practice of expecting entering students to register for their first-semester courses by mail during the summer on the basis of brief printed descriptions and without benefit of consultation with an academic advisor. Although in the current system, students may of course change their course registrations after their arrival, discussion of academic plans with their assigned advisor is entirely optional; the only required meeting is the group session mentioned above, in which a group of a dozen or so students are given general advice about rules and procedures. We recommend that during orientation all students meet individually with an academic advisor to discuss their intellectual goals, academic plans, and course choices. It may be useful, both for the individual student and for the Registrar's office, to continue the practice of asking students to indicate course preferences during the summer, but we
do not think that this should be described or treated as the definitive act of registration. That ought to be completed on campus as a central part of orientation to the intellectual life that is commencing.

C. Advising

Both students and faculty agree that academic advising has the potential for making a positive contribution to student-faculty interaction. Advising provides a structure for introducing faculty and students, and it also offers the possibility for sustaining their interaction through periodic meetings. In the current structure, however, advising is too often described as perfunctory and unsatisfying to one or both parties in the advising relationship. Many students see it as a useless convention apart from securing permission to register. Faculty tend to regard advising as a missed opportunity for meaningful conversation and are generally unhappy with its gatekeeping function and emphasis on monitoring requirements. The frequency with which undergraduate advising has appeared as the subject of criticism and the topic of committee reports is a good indication that it has played a dubious role in supporting a healthy intellectual climate within the University. Debates regarding the quality of undergraduate advising have been ineffective in changing its basic nature most likely because any action resulting from them rarely reaches into the actual advising appointment.

The Task Force noted that one persistent element of undergraduate advising that has gone unnoticed in the numerous debates by committees and councils about the subject is the advisory checksheet, the computer-generated instrument designed to monitor progress toward the degree. Checksheets are among the various documents received by students as they advance through Duke, but they are the only sort of student record routinely provided to faculty advisors. The close association of the arrival of checksheets with the preregistration advising period has resulted in the checksheet's becoming the primary tool for advising sessions and, we think, directing the conversation within those sessions.

As currently constructed, the checksheet only serves to direct advising conversations toward the topic of degree requirements. Historical course information is presented in abbreviated form--course numbers are provided, but not course titles. Chronological patterns of course enrollments and academic performance for students in Trinity College are totally obscured by the sorting of courses among curriculum areas rather than by semester or year. The subject of curriculum requirements is further emphasized with an itemized list of unfulfilled requirements. To the extent that the checksheet functions as a tool for directing an advising session, therefore, it can be successful only with respect to degree requirements.
The Task Force recommends that the undergraduate schools reconfigure the student records provided to advisors to de-emphasize their record-keeping character. A chronological display of course information by title, we believe, would be more conducive to general conversation about the student's academic interests and more likely to guide both faculty and student toward substantive questions and answers than permitted by the current instrument.

Consistent with the Task Force's general philosophy that students take responsibility for their education at Duke we believe that students should be held accountable for learning, understanding, and completing their school's curriculum requirements. The University certainly publishes an abundance of bulletins, brochures, and guides for students' use, and we expect that the Registrar would continue to provide to each student information about their progress. With these tools, undergraduates can monitor their own progress toward the degree rather than be encouraged to think that it is an advisor's responsibility to alert them to a potential deficiency. In order that students not form a misimpression about their responsibility in this matter, it would be preferable that each student's first advisor make referrals to appropriate printed materials rather than to cite a litany of degree requirements.

Academic advising seems so important to us that we recommend as a condition of appointment, except in the most exceptional circumstances, that all faculty with ongoing appointments who teach undergraduates will also do advising. Not all faculty currently do so; in departments with small numbers of majors, the Director of Undergraduate Studies may serve as the only designated advisor for majors while one or two other faculty serve as premajor advisors. There is good reason to believe that the intellectual climate at the University would be enhanced if all teaching faculty contributed to undergraduate advising in some form.

We not only encourage new thinking about the purpose of undergraduate advising, we also recommend that its current form be reexamined. For example, why is all premajor advising done in a central office, and all advising after declaration of the major done in departments? Might it not be desirable, for example, to have advisors meet students in their residence halls? Why should we make so firm a distinction between major and premajor advising in Trinity College? The declaration of major provides a reference point for partitioning students between two separately administered advising systems, but it is an arbitrary reference point. Decisions about both major and non-major courses are made simultaneously, first as part of the long range planning process that precedes a student's declaration of major and then as part of the post-declaration updating and fine tuning that occurs independently or with a departmental advisor's input. The Task Force speculates that the intellectual content of advising sessions might actually improve if students
were randomly distributed among advisors outside their major departments. In such advisor-advisee relationships, there is likely to be a more balanced exchange of information with both parties learning more about the institution's resources for undergraduates. Naturally, students would want to get course advice, career information, and other kinds of help from faculty in their major department, but that should not be their sole source of academic advice.

Students have told us on more than one occasion that if you are not preprofessional, you have very little in the way of guidance at Duke in learning to think or talk about the future--very little mentoring, very little emphasis on overall intellectual development. The director of the Career Development Center has pointed out to us that there is no necessary correlation between one's college major and career path after graduation. While students are obviously eager to know how to prepare themselves for the world beyond college, we should be encouraging them to look for more than just tips on getting into professional schools or finding jobs. It does not serve them or the intellectual climate well to encourage the notion that academic exploration is primarily a means of choosing a career, or that answering the question, what am I going to major in, needs to imply an answer to the career question.

**D. Electronic Media and Intellectual Exchange**

The Task Force has found that as a means for disseminating, receiving, and circulating comments about its own work, both internally and externally, e-mail has been invaluable. We are aware that faculty are already using it to communicate with students, post assignments, and so on. More and more members of the community are discovering what the electronic media can offer them, and those offerings are increasing every day. Next year, every dorm room at Duke should have an ethernet connection installed, and the computer store is subsidizing the cost of ethernet cards. Most students who wish to go on-line will be able to by the beginning of fall term, 1994. To give an idea of the possible uses for community building, information sharing, and substantive discussion the new media can facilitate, we summarize here a communication (received on e-mail!) from an undergraduate who proposes electronic posting of departmental agendas and minutes to elicit student response.

Although undergraduate students have few long-term interests in departmental affairs and should have only a marginal role in making decisions, they do have a stake in knowing what is being planned and discussed (in so far as it does not deal with confidential personnel matters, of course.) It seems reasonable to inform them of proposed changes in program or other relevant concerns. Electronic information distribution provides a "centralized" means of communication, providing all students
equal access at the same time that it offers them an easy way to respond to issues that concern them. Minutes or other communications could be uploaded from hard or floppy disk to an appropriate server. Conversations among students, faculty, and department staff could ensue; various possible modalities of distribution and forums for expression of students concerns can be envisaged.

This suggestion, which envisages students actively engaged in discussing among themselves and with their teachers issues surrounding their own education, represents just one of the almost limitless possibilities for intellectual community offered by the new electronic media. It will be important for Duke to keep abreast of this fast-moving area and to make the best possible use of the resources available to us.

E. The Arts in the Intellectual Life of the Community

As long as anyone on the Task Force can remember, Duke seems to have been ambiguous about the status of the arts (not the academic study of art history, musicology, and so on, but the practice of painting, playing an instrument, etc.) The arts are generally understood as an enhancement of campus life, pursuits to be encouraged but still somehow peripheral to our main purpose. Their marginality is evident, perhaps most obviously, in the appointment of arts faculty to non-tenure-track ranks and in the sheer inadequacy of many arts facilities. And yet, we all recognize that the arts are a central focus of education and a serious pursuit of the educated everywhere, and that they can provide intellectual pleasure, stimulation, and perturbation of great intensity. Duke University should work harder to integrate the arts into the intellectual life of the community. The Task Force has not tried to tackle this complicated subject in detail, but we offer a few modest suggestions.

There are many opportunities for including performances, films, exhibits, or other arts events in the syllabus of courses primarily directed to language and literature, history, cultural studies, and so on. The Institute of the Arts and the various arts departments and programs have shown great willingness to cooperate in such ventures. Perhaps the Institute and/or the Center for Teaching and Learning could assemble a record of faculty experience along these lines as a way of informing and encouraging others to follow suit. Funding should be made available wherever possible to support the cost of tickets, honoraria, or other expenses incurred in including arts events more widely in our teaching. We also urge that some thought be given to ways of bringing students and faculty together informally, perhaps by assisting with
arrangements for a subsequent discussion/social hour in a commons room or other suitable space, to which the artists of the evening could be invited.

As often as possible, visits of artists to our campus, like visits of scholars, should be made into residencies with a variety of activities built in. (See the section on "Residencies as a Tool for Fostering Intellectual Community," above, page 15.) We also recommend that wherever possible, arts events be free to students or reduced student prices be offered. The "Discovery Card," which allowed students this year to have access to available seats for performances of visiting music and theater groups should be continued and expanded.

F. Teaching, Learning, and the Curriculum.

The academic program of a university does not define the boundaries of intellectual climate at the institution, but it is the strongest factor acting to stabilize that climate. In its discussion of curriculum changes that would have a positive impact on intellectual climate, we were surprised to discover how infrequently our proposals and those submitted by other members of the community addressed the subject of stricter graduation requirements, course loads, or specific curriculum content. This does not mean that we can be complacent about these areas. Indeed, the community contributions to our proposals included one strongly voiced opinion, echoing discussions heard in perennial debates on this topic, regarding the weak expectations we have for our undergraduates and the excessive amount of degree credit awarded for pre-college studies.

In our discussions we found ourselves returning again and again to the nature and quality of the learning experiences made available to students by faculty working as individuals or as members of a larger and more centrally coordinated effort. Refreshing the intellectual climate at Duke requires that greater attention be placed on the manner in which students become engaged with their academic endeavors so that learning experiences can be structured to promote a greater degree of personal investment. Promoting active learning through appropriately structured courses and teaching methods and creating serious opportunities for engaging students in work with faculty are two general goals for guiding specific improvements.

1. Performance Versus Engagement. The undergraduate curriculum too often seems to assign students the role of consumers of information. Most faculty find it comfortable to lecture, most students find it comfortable to listen and take notes. But there is a good case to be made that the most effective education begins where those roles end. Certainly, if students are given to understand that they can do well in a class by reading the assignments, attending the lectures, and "regurgitating" the
material covered on tests, they will feel little incentive to be anything other than passive learners. They may perform well, in terms of their grade in the course, but never engage themselves in more than a superficial way with the material. Making new ideas and information truly one's own requires using them in problem solving, analyzing them critically, questioning their meaning, and attempting to connect them to other areas of knowledge. Ideally, every course in our curriculum should expect and provide modalities for all these activities. And this kind of engagement is communal as much as individual—is enhanced, that is, by an atmosphere open to discussion and by cooperative learning among students. The obsession of students with their grades is understandable and in some ways appropriate, given that it is the clearest and most widely regarded external sign of achievement. The institution has no business, however, in sending the signal that grades are the achievement or the primary goal.

2. Developing active learning habits in students. We are convinced that the degree to which students are intellectually engaged within the classroom is reflected in all phases of their university life. Adjusting each student's educational experience to minimize passive learning and maximize active learning has the potential, therefore, to make an important contribution to the overall intellectual climate. Duke has already made significant advances in this area for first year students. It is during their first and second years that students adapt their behavior and learning styles to the expectations of their new institution, so it is important to place them in classroom environments where those styles can be exposed and strengthened. Having created a very successful seminar series and several interdisciplinary programs for first year students, Duke should continue its experiments in changing the nature of the first year experience in college and formally break the tradition of enrolling the majority of the newest members of its community in course schedules dominated by large lecture courses. The First Year Seminar program and the FOCUS programs are excellent models for bringing relatively inexperienced students into an intensive and active learning climate centered on a relatively specialized or interdisciplinary topic. We are unaware of any assessment of the impact of first year programs on subsequent learning habits, but we conjecture that students who go on to take lecture courses in an area related to that of their first seminar probably approach the subject matter with more initiative and awareness of its connection with their previous experience. We strongly recommend expanding the number of seminars and programs to include every first year student as a way of giving each student early exposure to one of the most positive element in the undergraduate experience at Duke.

Scheduling group meals and frequent individual appointments with professors as part of a course, integrating programs of seminars and other courses around an interdisciplinary theme or problem, and experimenting
with cooperative learning within classes are suggestions are likely to secure
the attention of students to the subject matter and strengthen their
investment in it. We are particularly impressed with the success of the
first year FOCUS programs that, for a small number of students, provide a
stimulating introduction to higher learning, and we propose that
opportunities for similarly integrated courses be added as part of higher
learning for upperclass students, perhaps as a senior year study option.
Collaborative learning by students in group projects has been a successful
element in several courses including Project CALC, CPS 155 (Program
Design and Construction), and Bio 206S (Controversies in Biology). The
University needs to facilitate spontaneous meetings of groups working on
projects or of small groups of students who want to meet with their
professors outside of class by creating or reserving appropriate spaces for
them.

3. The University Writing Program as an Opportunity to Develop
Intellectual Community. The University Writing Course is the only course
required of all undergraduate students at Duke University. Opinions differ
as to how effective this course is in its current form; the Task Force is not
in a position to offer an assessment. We do feel strongly, however, that the
course has unique potential for affecting the quality and intensity of the
intellectual life for first year students, and therefore of helping set tone and
expectations for the entire undergraduate experience. As things now stand,
this opportunity is certainly not being fully realized. With the exception of
the FOCUS programs, where the writing course is coordinated with the
subject matter of the particular program, there is no particular connection
between the themes around which the various sections are organized and
anything else a given student may be studying. One can imagine a number
of ways in which the course might be better integrated into the first-year
experience: for example, by offering sections aligned to specific academic
subjects or enrolling students in sections that correspond to their declared
general interests. We strongly favor, however, a different kind of model,
in which one or more topics of real intellectual substance and general
interest (e.g., the nature of liberal education; science and art as ways of
knowing; nature, technology and the human future) would be offered.
Students would sign up for these sections residentially, i.e., the students on
a given hall who choose or are assigned a particular topic will in all
likelihood find themselves in at least one small-group class together. This
will provide an initial contact around a shared set of intellectual tasks and a
topic likely to stimulate lively discussion. (FOCUS students, who already
live in proximity to one another, would presumably continue to have
writing sections coordinated with their program.)

We understand that the University Writing Program is charged with
teaching one of the central skills necessary for success in education and
career--effective and responsible written communication. We do not underestimate that task, but we believe that it is entirely compatible with the use of this course also to stimulate lively shared conversations among groups of first-year students who live in close proximity. We note that the program has been laboring under the burden of 8 a.m. meetings, an administrative convenience but an arrangement almost certain to turn make the course seem an imposition and a penance. The Writing Program earlier this year proposed to offer at least some sections of the course during the late afternoon, where possible in the residence halls. Although the suggestion was turned down for 1994-95, we feel it has real merit and hope it will be given a chance. The location would emphasize the residential connection among the participants, the timing would make a shared evening meal a natural extension of the classroom. In this way, what is now almost universally felt to be a chore might become the standard-bearer for the kind of interaction that we hope to stimulate among undergraduates.

4. Faculty-Student Collaboration. A commitment to undergraduate involvement in the research conducted at the University, or to the pursuit of the student's own project with faculty sponsors, is consistent with the position of an undergraduate institution within a major research university and provides one of the potentially most powerful mechanisms for active learning. The Task Force discussed the possibility of instituting a thesis requirement for all undergraduates but did not reach consensus on this issue. We assume that a major impediment would be the limitation on faculty resources, and we discussed the possibility of including the many talented graduate and professional students as mentors, not only to address that limitation but also to forge linkages beneficial to the intellectual climate of the entire University. While we do not propose including a thesis requirement in the undergraduate curriculum, we do recommend that the faculty bodies of the undergraduate schools consider how to include in each student's academic experience an opportunity for independent study or research.

We believe further that requiring an independent project in the junior rather than the senior year merits careful attention. A serious involvement with active learning and investigation scheduled before a student's final year offers the possibility of influencing a greater fraction of the undergraduate intellectual experience--planning in the sophomore year, implementation in the junior year, reflection in the focus and direction of the student's work in the senior year. A certain number of students would be motivated by the experience of research to continue on with a senior thesis; the theses would no doubt benefit from the additional research experience. But even those who did not go on would have had a taste of the trials and joys of focuses independent study. This program
would be labor-intensive for faculty, but given the large number of students currently engaged in independent work (e.g., 60% of Biology majors already do research, much of it in the Medical Center), we do not think a general requirement is an impossible goal. The research project would not necessarily have to be located in the student's major field, but simply in an area in which he or she is prepared to do independent work and finds a faculty mentor. (A program of research assistantships for juniors recently and very successfully begun at Dartmouth College may provide a useful model for us.)

Finally, the Task Force strongly recommends that the University expand the range of serious learning experiences offered to students during the summer. The summer provides a unique period for intellectual activity for everyone in the academy. Such activity need not be conducted for course credit, as is shown by the success of the existing models of science and engineering research programs organized in the summer with extramural support. In addition to laboratory research, the Task Force envisions undergraduates and advanced degree candidates collaborating with faculty in the editing of a special issue of a scholarly journal, preparing a brief for a major case, working on an archaeological dig off campus, and participating in case studies. The University should create and support opportunities for students who are serious about their active involvement in learning, and it should strive to eliminate any obstacles involving financial aid regulations or summer housing in order to make its resources available to students during the summer.

5. Student-Student Collaboration. Students are already working together in impressive and productive ways. Within the classroom, many professors have discovered that collaborative projects bring out the best in their students, substantially increasing the amount and intensity of intellectual exchange. A noteworthy instance of this sort of collaboration is the series of student-curated exhibits that have enlivened the Art Museum. There are of course many other instances outside the classroom setting. The number of publications that enrich while commenting upon the intellectual climate at Duke seems to grow each year. The latest, Open Forum, has included a number of stimulating contributions on issues raised in this report. Indeed, the gratifying amount of attention given this year to intellectual climate issues on the Duke campus bodes well for the increase in the scope and visibility of these students efforts. We encourage all these efforts and hope that they will be given support as needed by faculty, the various administrative offices involved, and student government.

6. Increasing Emphasis on the Teaching Component of the Academic Career. The selection of new faculty at Duke is based, as it must be,
largely on scholarly prowess and promise. The nurture of intellectual community, however, requires more than individual accomplishment; one crucial element is a rich and vigorous engagement in the teaching mission of the institution, including interaction with students outside the classroom. The most critical point in the development of a university faculty is the tenure decision, which not only determines the fate of individual colleagues but also provides standards of value and a tone for the entire enterprise. As things now stand, younger colleagues get the message that nothing but publication counts when they are systematically sheltered from university service and provided with leave time and other forms of relief from teaching. This is done out of kindness, and no doubt it helps to increase the pace of publication, but it also socializes the faculty member into a value structure in which teaching and being an intellectual companion and resource to colleagues and students are not among the highest priorities. This socialization will not automatically reverse itself once a faculty member achieves tenure. We think, therefore, that it is of crucial importance to the future of Duke University to insist that tenure decisions take serious account of the faculty members' contributions to intellectual life here as well as to scholarship in the world at large.

7. The Teaching-Learning Center. The plans for the new Center for Teaching and Learning seem to us to among the most encouraging signs of renewal in the intellectual climate at Duke, because they emphasize the centrality of the educational mission within the research university. And particularly because we believe that the University needs to make credible to all faculty, above all the untenured faculty who are under enormous pressure to concentrate on scholarly publication, that time and energy spent on teaching will be noticed and rewarded, we welcome the Center with special warmth. Its programs ought to make it possible for all teachers, but especially new members of the profession, to increase their effectiveness as teachers and to work more efficiently within the constraints of limited time.

The Center also will concentrate on preparing graduate students for careers in teaching by helping them to improve their skills as teaching assistants and instructors here at Duke. This, too, should contribute to the improvement of the intellectual climate in our classrooms. In short, we believe that the Center for Teaching and Learning ought to be given continued support by the administration, and that all faculty members should acquaint themselves with its services and consider availing themselves of its aid.
IV. The Professional Schools and Undergraduate Intellectual Life:

A. Identifying Intellectual Strengths and Opportunities

Early in its deliberations, the Intellectual Life Task Force decided to look almost entirely at undergraduate intellectual life. This decision does not reflect the belief that the problems that have been identified with undergraduate intellectual life at Duke are unique to the undergraduate colleges. Judging by the number of institutions that are now engaged or recently have engaged in such reviews, some of the problems identified with the intellectual climate at Duke are present in many, perhaps most, perhaps all American colleges and universities. Many of these problems are endemic in this society and are certainly present in varying degrees and forms in the professional schools. Rather, the decision reflects the Task Force's understanding that the concerns that led to its formation were primarily about the undergraduate college and a desire to keep its discussions and recommendations more focused. The discussion of the professional schools will be limited to opportunities that they now provide, useful models that they suggest, and suggestions for future initiatives.

1. Opportunities. Duke University describes itself as a small private research university. Among that class of institutions, it is marked by importance and distinction of its professional schools. These schools are consistently ranked among the best in the United States. They bring to the campus a wealth of talent in the form of faculty, students and visitors. They support and maintain large research laboratories and libraries. In addition, these schools regularly create the opportunity to involve the University more immediately and directly in the problems faced by American society in the late twentieth century. Despite, and possibly in part because of, the strength of these schools, there is a tendency among some in this community to see the presence of the professional schools as irrelevant to, or even detracting from, the academic mission of the institution. The specter of professional--often rendered as "narrowly professional"--education is depicted as a major cause of the instrumental approach taken by many undergraduate students to their college experience, and there is a commonly voiced view that professional students themselves are not seriously engaged in intellectual pursuits. The members of the task force strongly disagree.

The study of the ancient learned professions (theology, law and medicine) has for centuries been at the center of the western university. The newer professional schools are all emphatically interdisciplinary in character and have intellectual affinities to and working relationships with numerous other departments and divisions of the University. All of the
professional schools are, or at least should be, a vital part of our
intellectual life. Despite the very different organization and traditions of,
and pressures on, the professional schools, the faculties and administrations
of each have sought, supported and encouraged interdisciplinary work with
each other and with Arts and Sciences. Some of this collaborative work is
on joint research or jointly sponsored conferences. Some occurs in centers
located in one of the professional schools (for example, the Center for
Applied Ethics housed in Engineering) but drawing resources and
participants from across the campus. Some is even more informal, like the
highly successful Thursday lunch group, which brings together faculty
from history, political science, economics, sociology, business, law, public
policy and the School of the Environment, inter alia, to discuss matters of
current interest.

It may help to give an idea of the interdisciplinary character of one
of the professional schools--Law--as it is currently constituted. Similar
accounts could be given of the other professional schools. Faculty in the
Law School hold advanced degrees in political science, economics,
religion, history, English, comparative literature, psychology, and
philosophy and regularly teach in the Religion Department, the School of
the Environment, and the Literature Program. Faculty from History,
Political Science, Psychology, Philosophy, and English teach in the Law
School. The former chair of the English Department has taught Contracts
with one member of the Law School faculty and Interpretation with
another. Faculty from the Sanford Institute and the Law School have
jointly taught courses on the United States Congress and jointly sponsored a
conference on environmental regulation. Faculty from Economics and the
Sanford Institute have held Olin Research Fellowships in Law and
Economics in the Law School. One member from the Law School is
currently working on a research project with a faculty member in the
Psychology Department on the use of psychological evidence in court,
another has been working on modeling civil litigation settlements with a
former Duke graduate student in Economics. At the curricular level, the
Law School and Graduate School together operate one of the most
extensive joint degree programs available anywhere in the world. Almost
a quarter of all the J.D. students are studying for joint degrees. A third of
that group are working toward degrees in the Graduate School. The joint
degree programs represent a laudable willingness on the parts of both the
Graduate School and the Law School to permit students to do serious work
across disciplines. (Their strength, creating opportunities for individual
initiative, are also their weakness. At present neither the Law School nor
the Graduate School provides much in the way of institutional support,
beyond graduate awards, for students trying to straddle the two worlds.)
2. The Professional Schools and the Undergraduate. Because of the relatively small size of several of the professional school faculties, the opportunities for undergraduates or graduate students to work directly with professional school faculty are, and are likely to remain, relatively limited. There are, nonetheless, important resources in these schools for students and especially attractive opportunities for faculty interdisciplinary work. As we have noted, Duke undergraduates are already involved in important and useful ways in labs operated by the Medical School. The University ought to explore ways to expand such opportunities, particularly during the summers, for those students who have demonstrated a serious interest in and commitment to research. The Fuqua School has organized a course on Global Economic Interdependence with half of the spaces reserved for students from outside the Business School; further opportunities of this kind should be actively encouraged. A large number of Duke undergraduates expect to attend a professional school for advanced training after college. Contact with the relevant school on their own campus, if it is designed in such a way as to that offer a sense of the intellectual challenges involved in the field of study, should help them to see beyond the issue of preparing for a career to the larger context in which the professional field is located and ways in which it constitutes itself as an intellectual discipline.

3. Graduate and Professional Students and the Intellectual Life of Undergraduates. Professor Harold Koh of Yale has described law students as one of the most underutilized sources of natural energy left in the United States, and the same may surely be said for the students of the other professional schools. Most graduate students in Arts and Sciences are expected to teach as part of their program, but most professional students do not have readily available channels to share their expertise and enthusiasm with undergraduates. A few have taught in the University Writing Program or have served as instructors in house courses. Many act as resident advisors. There was strong sentiment on the task force that more could be done to utilize their talents.

One of the most commonly voiced concerns in the discussion of intellectual life at Duke was of finding ways of getting students to be less passive about their intellectual lives, to create a culture at Duke in which students would regard themselves intellectual actors. One potentially useful way of encouraging such independence would be to create opportunities and incentives for both graduate and professional students to present their research and intellectual concerns to undergraduates and to read and listen to those of the undergraduates. Such interactions can be especially important if they can be made to occur outside the curriculum, and outside of any relationship of power involving the ability to grade. The experience of graduate and professional students will be too close in
time to be easily dismissed as either irrelevant or unattainable, and their expertise generally too recently acquired and tenuous to be treated as unchallengeable and left unchallenged. And here again, the emphasis will be on the intellectual issues and challenges, not on credentials and career advancement.

Finally, as indicated earlier, we believe that there can be interesting opportunities for mentoring of undergraduates by graduate and professional students and collaborations among them and members of the faculty, for example in summer research projects.