Developing Citizens of Integrity

by Stephen Bryan

Think back to a time where your son or daughter made an error in judgment. Perhaps there was an instance on the playground when he was not playing fairly with other kids. Maybe in middle school she responded inappropriately to a teacher’s instructions. Or possibly as a teenager he drove your car without permission. How did you react? Most of us likely would have taken the opportunity to have a “teachable moment” with our son or daughter through a discussion with him/her about the inappropriate behavior and/or given some form of discipline. Your goal likely included a desire to shape your child into a person of high integrity and strong moral character.

Such important life lessons continue in the university setting, and particularly at Duke, where we are concerned not only about the intellectual development of our students but their character development as well. The Office of Judicial Affairs within the Dean of Students Office serves to foster such teachable moments, both proactively in helping students identify and avoid potential pitfalls in their decision-making and then, should they engage in misconduct, helping them learn from their mistakes so they may approach a similar situation differently in the future. We have found that students’ poor decisions are often made in moments of weakness, such as during a time crunch, perceived pressure to conform, high stress levels, self-pressure, or even while under the influence of alcohol or, unfortunately, other drugs. Inappropriate behaviors may range from the mild to serious; from vandalism or disorderly conduct to cheating, fraud, or assault. Many of the students who are found in violation of university policy through the Office of Judicial Affairs never had any intention of doing so; rather, they simply got caught up in a series of poor decisions.

The Duke Community Standard, or honor code, is our philosophical statement about what we expect of our students. It emphasizes our commitment to “principles of honesty, trustworthiness, fairness, and respect for others,” in students’ lives inside and outside of the classroom. From this statement flows our policies on academic integrity, alcohol, drugs, etc., and how we respond when students may be in violation of them. As a parent, how can you from afar best support your son or daughter in making healthier choices? Keep the lines of communication open (but do not be too overbearing; remember, you want your son or daughter to develop autonomy). Ask good questions about how he or she is really doing. Listen for subtleties. Offer empathy for the challenges he/she may be facing, particularly at predictably stressful times such as at midterms, finals, or as projects are due. Refer them to helpful campus resources, such as Counseling and Psychological Services. And, if he/she does make mistakes, be supportive. (Our Web site offers additional information for you should you receive a call from your son/daughter saying the he/she may have violated university policy.)

As a parent, how can you from afar best support your son or daughter because we know he or she can excel at Duke and make significant contributions here and beyond. Thank you for what you have done in preparing him or her to lead a life of integrity.

Looking Towards the Future:
A Parent’s Role in Career Development

by Kara Lombardi

Perhaps you’ve heard this question around the holiday dinner table: “So, what do you want to do when you finish school?” For seniors this discussion is far more likely and comes with a dose of reality that the college experience is coming to an end. First-year students may feel insulated by the years still in front of them. Regardless of where a student sits in the progression of a college education looking toward the future can be nerve-racking and exciting. There are always activities that students can engage in to make progress in their career development.

The career search is not just a one-time transaction that occurs in the senior year. It’s a culmination of a variety of activities. Employers like candidates who are self-aware, knowledgeable about the opportunities that they are pursuing and have demonstrated application of critical skills.

Let’s face it, parents have a lot of influence on the decisions made by students. We know that Duke students look to their parents for direction, advice and consultation regarding careers. So what’s a parent to do in helping their student navigate the career planning process and the thought of life after Duke?
1. Encourage your student to explore widely.

Encouraging your student to take a wide variety of classes is a great start. Students change their minds about many things during their four years of college including interests, majors and career aspirations. Even the most focused first-years should be pushed to challenge themselves with a mixture of diverse courses. This will position them much better to change their path should they choose to do so.

2. Push them to ask questions.

Most eighteen to twenty year olds have a pretty narrow frame of reference regarding careers. Of course they know about doctors, lawyers or engineers but their exposure is otherwise limited. Recommend that they ask questions of your friends, neighbors and other members of your community. Duke has a wonderful group of alumni who visit campus and are available through a searchable database for the purpose of educating students about a wide range of careers.

3. Send your student to work.

Internships are a great way to build skills and to network. Many employers not only value internships but they use them as a way to recruit talent into their organizations. Spending at least one summer in an internship will widen their frame of reference and potentially sharpen their career goals.

4. Direct them to resources.

Duke has plenty of wonderful resources to support students in this process. Students should tap into advisors, faculty and of course the Career Center. Be sure your student has investigated all the resources available.

5. Be a partner in the process.

It is awfully tempting for a parent to want to make it as easy as possible for their student to make decisions and become successful adults. A great way to be a career partner is to empower, encourage and help guide, but not direct students. Serve as a sounding board and brainstorm ideas with them. This can be a difficult process, but well worth it when your student finds a satisfying career path in the end.

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Engineering Internship Gives Pratt Junior Hands-on Experience

by Deborah Hill

Mechanical engineering junior Meredith Condict spent her summer doing what engineers love best—playing with powerful tools in a machine shop at Nekton Research in Durham, N.C.

Nekton specializes in underwater technology, sonar array technology, digital signal processing and high-speed counting and packaging technology. Condict has gained hands-on designing and building robotic devices.

“The project I worked on all summer was designing the mechanical structure for a device that tests the properties of fresh water,” said Condict. “The device included pH, turbidity, and other sensors as well as a fixture of live clams that open and close depending on the quality of the water. My task was to create and build the casing and a mount so it could be attached and dragged behind a boat or attached to one of the small underwater vehicles.”

“Meredith made parts for everything she’s worked on,” said her supervisor, Joe Suprick, engineering manager at Nekton. “I’m not joking when I say she can do anything we ask her to do. Sometimes she does it and then comes back with better ways to do it next time. It’s been amazing.”

“This internship has been so great. I spent 90 percent of my time doing hands-on work and very little time at the computer,” said Condict, from Yardley, Pa. The internship also helped her enjoy the balmy North Carolina summer. “I also spent time on a boat trolling Jordan lake testing different designs of underwater robots to see how well they move through the water.”

Condict used machine to mill and drill parts for every robot she worked on. She also learned how to do plaster molds for fiberglass epoxy resins. “I can’t learn in a classroom what fasteners work best and what order to put everything together in, so it’s been fascinating to get this hands-on experience.”

“I am enjoying testing the waters at Nekton and getting a taste of many aspects of mechanical engineering which, hopefully, will help me make a decision about the future when the time comes,” she said. “Already I know that I would enjoy a similarly close, friendly working environment when I start my career after graduating.”

“I’ve always loved math and science and knew I would pursue a career in some technical field,” said Condict. Although incredibly proud and excited about her decision to pursue engineering at Duke and ultimately as a career, Condict reports her family has dubbed her the clan’s ‘oddball.’ Aside from an engineer grandfather, she’s the only one with such interests.

Aside from her brainy pursuits, Condict is also an accomplished trumpet player, and has played in Duke’s orchestra although she isn’t able to this semester. “There just aren’t enough hours in the day, but I hope to continue playing in the pit orchestra for the Hoof ‘n’ Horn musicals, which are completely student-run,” she said.

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Visit Parent & Family Programs on the world wide web at: http://deanofstudents.studentaffairs.duke.edu/
Certificate Programs at Duke: Pathways to Knowledge

by Jerry Oster

“In every major or program of study,” says the home page of Duke’s Office of Undergraduate Admissions, “the focus is on interdisciplinary exploration.” Many students gain their first understanding of exactly what that means when they consider one of Duke’s certificate programs.

In addition to its 38 majors and 41 minors, Duke currently has 14 certificate programs: Documentary Studies; Early Childhood Education; Film/Video/Digital; Health Policy; Human Development; Information Science and Information Studies (ISIS); Jewish Studies; Latin American Studies; Markets and Management Studies; Marxism and Society; Neuroscience; Policy Journalism and Media Studies; Philosophy, Politics and Economics; and Primatology.

“A certificate program is not a substitute for a major,” says Robert J. Thompson, dean of Trinity College and vice provost for undergraduate education. “It is a supplement that affords a distinctive approach to a subject – an approach that may not be available in any single academic department. A student interested in some issue has a chance to engage with that issue over time, looking at the issue through multiple lenses, experiencing what various disciplines have to say.”

Duke’s advisors try to make students aware of certificate programs early in their careers – and, in so doing, to educate them about the interdisciplinary approaches that are a hallmark of Duke. “Many pre-major students have a hard time grasping what an interdisciplinary course of study actually entails,” says Michele Rasmussen, academic dean for pre-major students and director of the Pre-Major Advising Center (PMAC). “Our conversations with them provide an opportunity to talk about the benefits of looking at a subject from a variety of perspectives.”

Students elect certificate programs for a variety of reasons. Christopher J. Conover says the Health Policy Certificate Program he directs “provides them an opportunity to study difficult or interesting problems whose resolution could help a lot of people and it also may give them a better sense of a career path to follow. For example, roughly 20 percent of our certificate students are pre-meds and 20 percent go to law school or graduate school.”

Of the students in the Human Development Certificate Program, Associate Professor of Medical Sociology Deborah T. Gold says: “Many plan to go to graduate school in the social or behavioral sciences; some are medical students who believe that they will not have the opportunity in medical school to study human behavior; others are biologists who want the psychosocial context for their work or psychology or sociology students who want a biomedical context for theirs.”

Josh Gibson, production coordinator and instructor in the Film/Video/Digital Program, says his certificate students include “those who have always had an aspiration to get into the film industry after college, but felt it was important to get a liberal arts education first. There are others who only recognize later in their college experience that their premed or economics track is something they’re doing to please their parents, but what they really love are movies and film studies.”

Some pre-meds in the Undergraduate Neuroscience Certificate Program “feel it enhances their application,” says program co-director Dr. Jeffrey A. Lamoureux. Conover says the Health Policy certificate “can help differentiate students and give them a leg up in a very competitive admissions process, but I would never recommend that a student seek the certificate just for this reason.” Professor of Biological Anthropology and Anatomy Kenneth E. Glander says “the opportunity to work with a mentor” motivates a number of students in the Primatology Certificate Program.

Some certificates serve as a kind of credential in areas where Duke does not offer pre-professional training. Research Associate Kenneth S. Rogerson, director of the Policy Journalism and Media Studies Certificate Program, notes that “Duke does not have a journalism school or department of communications. The certificate is the avenue for students who are interested both in careers as journalists and those who are interested in studying the media from a more academic standpoint.”

Program directors feel certificate programs add particular value to students’ educations. Health policy director Conover says “any time students have their thinking or view of the world challenged, it provides a tremendous opportunity for learning.” Neurosciences co-director Lamoureux concurs: “Students gain insight into how common ideas may permeate a variety of intellectual disciplines, as well as how researchers in disparate fields may bring different perspectives to bear on a common topic.”

Human Development Certificate Program Director Gold says that while “it is possible to study the phenomenon of human life by looking only at the social, psychological, or biological perspectives, learning how those different approaches help us more completely understand what that means when they consider one of Duke’s certificate programs.”

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understand the human condition opens new worlds for all of us. Many students have commented on how this certificate program unifies and strengthens their understanding about the human condition by revealing the ways in which these various theories interact.”

Students agree. Kate Abramson T’06 says “the interdisciplinary nature of the health policy certificate program “has helped me focus my studies and improve my job options. It demonstrates that I have not only a sounding grounding in psychology, but have done significant coursework in the cutting-edge field of neuroscience.”

And Jenny Snead Williams, coordinator of the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, observes: “The certificate can be viewed as a formal way of recognizing a student’s interest and scholarship in a topic of study that crosses traditional disciplinary lines. The combination of courses that are taken to fulfill the requirements cover at least three departments, allowing a student to come away with a well-rounded understanding of a topic of interest.”

How does a certificate program come into being? “It’s not unusual that a certificate program will emerge out of a FOCUS module,” Dean Thompson says, “where the faculty will have had a chance to work together and get to know each other, and where there’s a demonstrated student interest.”

FOCUS modules often inspire students to pursue certificates. Claire DeChant T’06 took the Exploring the Mind FOCUS module taught by Professor Gold and ended up in Gold’s Human Development Certificate Program. “Many of my academic interests are addressed by this certificate program in ways that are not by any major,” DeChant said in an e-mail. “Unquestionably, the interdisciplinary nature of the certificate program has added immense value to my education.”

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A Message from the National Chairs

“As our daughter, China ’06, heads into the home stretch of her undergraduate experience, filled with both excitement about having another year to take advantage of all Duke has to offer and anticipation of what lies ahead after graduation, we are grateful that Duke has provided her with an environment so conducive to personal and intellectual development. We recognize that this stimulating and positive environment would not have been possible without the crucially important generosity of those parents and alumni who have come before us, and we are delighted to have the opportunity to follow the example of those benefactors by being involved with the parents committee. The fact that our fellow members are such terrific individuals is a fabulous bonus. We are honored to be part of this dynamic group.”

-John and Kiendl Gordon P’06
National Chairs, Parent’s Program 2004-2006

2004-2005 Parents’ Fund Highlights

✓ For the ninth consecutive year, the Parents’ Program set new records for both pledged and paid dollars to the Parents’ Fund.
✓ 153 parents volunteered their time and efforts on behalf of the Parents’ Fund.
✓ Paid commitments to the Parents’ Fund increased by 17%.
✓ Kudos to the Class of 2009 which achieved 52% participation and met the Freshman Challenge!!
✓ Kudos to all proud Duke Grandparents who supported the Grandparents Fund! Because of your support, we met the Grandparents Challenge by increasing grandparent giving by 20% over last year and secured an additional $100K for the Parents/Grandparents’ Fund!

Thank you for all your support!