

# Interim Report on the Undergraduate Experience at Duke University

## Interim Report on the Undergraduate Experience at Duke University

Office of the Provost

September 13, 2007

### Executive Summary

Beginning in March 2007, the Provost's office met with students, faculty, staff, and alumni to discuss the findings and recommendations of the Campus Culture Initiative Task Force Report. These meetings informed the administration of a range of perceptions of social life at Duke, a range of views on the proposed recommendations, what different constituencies see of value in the Duke undergraduate experience, and thoughts about what can be improved and how to achieve that improvement.

Duke places a priority on building a sense of community among students, faculty and staff, creating opportunities to focus on issues of difference and respect, race and gender, and the processes by which students develop values and learn to act in ways that are consistent with those values. The discussions revealed the importance of space – housing, dining and social – to achieving these aspirations for the Duke experience. They also showed that additional attention needs to be given to formal and informal ways in which students and faculty interact; a process for exploring these issues is being developed separately.

This document is intended to frame discussions with students, faculty, staff, and alumni during the 2007 fall semester. Over the next two months, the Provost and/or Dean of Undergraduate Education will lead open forums with the quads on West Campus, the neighborhoods on East Campus, and with students living off campus. These discussions will focus on concrete options. The following questions are designed to begin these conversations, focusing on options for housing, dining, and social spaces.

- There are about 2800 beds on West Campus and 1700 sophomores, and the current policy is that all sophomores must live on West. Recent thinking about Central Campus is that it would be designed principally for seniors. Should this model be reconsidered in a way that allows for the option that both campuses can support interclass living?
- What housing model best optimizes the experience of independent students and students wishing to live in selectives, theme houses, and blocks on the West and Central campuses? What additional theme houses are of interest to students?
- What are the appropriate expectations for serving the larger Duke community for groups that are allocated space?
- What combination of venues – from those emphasizing individual convenience (i.e., “grab-and-go” options) to those emphasizing community connections (i.e., “sit down and eat”) – should comprise the dining options on the West and Central campuses?

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## **1. Introduction**

Over the past two years, Duke has deliberately examined the status of its campus culture and undergraduate experience. As part of a university-wide planning process, a Strategic Planning Committee on the Undergraduate Experience was charged by the Provost in August 2005; the group filed its report in January 2006, the content of which framed many of the goals articulated in the University's current strategic plan, *Making a Difference*. Subsequently, the President charged the Campus Culture Initiative Task Force in April 2006 and that group submitted its report in February of 2007. Beginning the second week of March 2007 with meetings with student governance groups and a student forum to discuss the specific recommendations of the Campus Culture Initiative Task Force Report, the Provost's office met with many groups across the spring semester to solicit their input (for a list see Appendix 1). These meetings were supplemented by individual discussions with faculty, students, staff, and alumni.

These conversations informed the administration of a range of perceptions of social life at Duke, a range of views on the recommendations of the Campus Culture Initiative task force report, what different constituencies see of value in the Duke undergraduate experience, and thoughts about what can be improved and how to achieve that improvement. These discussions thus provided an informed foundation upon which initial decisions could be made and a framework for further discussion and planning.

Now is the time to move forward and make further decisions. Concern about student-faculty interaction is common at major research universities, and has been the subject of discussion at Duke for some time. Our discussions so far in the current process have yet to reveal new approaches to this issue, but the importance of advancing this discussion cannot be overstated. Building a vibrant community in which there are opportunities for intellectual and social interactions outside of class remains a priority and several groups are working on these issues. The conversations this fall will focus on options for housing dining and social spaces. From our discussions of these options, a set of recommendations will be made to the President in the early winter.

## **2. Mission and Aspirations**

Duke is a place for excellence, a place of community, a place for engagement, and a place for fun. Intellectual, artistic, athletic, and civic engagement are experiences that are common to all and that engage the passions of many. Duke places a priority on building a sense of community among students, faculty and staff, creating opportunities to focus on issues of difference and respect, race and gender, and the processes by which students develop individual and collective values and learn to act responsibly in ways that are consistent with those values. We seek to prepare students for personal and professional life in the twenty-first century, by offering a distinctive experience that engages the breadth of resources of a research university in furthering undergraduate learning and connecting to real world issues. Duke takes seriously its obligation to bring knowledge to the service of society. We aspire to create the best structure for giving students the opportunity to grow to their fullest potential and individuality, while learning how to operate in the complex and diverse social settings in which they will live and work. In addition to acquiring substantive knowledge and learning how to learn, this ambition requires that Duke provides an environment that encourages the development of curiosity, initiative, responsibility, self-confidence, self-awareness, empathy, and an

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ethical code by which to conduct one's life. Central to this environment is the academic experience that students encounter during their four years at Duke. Also essential is engagement in a vibrant social and residential community. An important part of student life at Duke is to develop a sense of belonging to the Duke community as a whole while exploring individual identity through participation in groups sharing more specifically delineated common interests.

### **3. Observations from discussions during the 2007 Spring Semester**

This section presents key observations stemming from our discussions last spring, organized around four themes that emerged as broadly important to members of our community: engaging diversity, gender relations, regulations and responsibilities governing student social life, and selective living. For each theme, we provide an overview of issues emerging in discussions, a list of specific views expressed by students, and a summary of key issues.

#### **A. Engaging diversity**

Overview: Our insight into engaging diversity was mostly limited to discussions around race, ethnicity and national origin, and this topic was examined most deeply with the Black Student Alliance, the Asian Student Association, and a group of international students. There was some discussion of diversity with selective housing groups, but this topic was generally not a focus of the conversations. There are other facets to diversity, e.g., other ethnic groups, sexual preference, economic background, that will need to be explored going forward.

In a world characterized by globalization and increasing inter-cultural interaction, it is critical that our students engage other cultures and the differing perspectives they offer in their daily experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Students benefit most by interacting creatively and productively with the widest possible range of individuals, ideas, and peoples. These interactions need to happen in the context of the spaces where students live, dine and engage in curricular and extra-curricular activities. They should be both formal and informal, and should involve organized groups and their activities and individual interactions. Fostering such interactions should be part of the logic informing our housing and dining decisions.

There are several hundred student organizations at Duke and our students are often “compulsive joiners”, a habit they may bring with them from high school. One question that our discussions raised was whether the proliferation of student organization reflects students becoming more engaged in the campus, or is a sign of too much joining but not enough doing. Further, does membership in too many groups lead to too little time for informal interaction, or for private time and solitude? This topic, one that has received considerable national attention, requires further examination to understand its implications for our campus. But a clear consequence of the expanding number of such groups is a growing need for space and money to support programming and a corresponding requirement to foster effective communication and cooperation between groups in the planning and sponsoring of events. Current support levels per group are generally inadequate to enable different groups to engage effectively and frequently with one another. Without careful thought, an unintended outcome of such a structure would be even further fragmentation of our community rather than the engaged and interacting pluralistic community we seek.

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### Views Expressed

- If students are not interacting in diverse communities before they come to Duke, it is hard to get them to do so at Duke
- There is a tendency to gravitate to others with similar background as the freshman year progresses; once one moves to West Campus, events form around groups of similar backgrounds – there are few incentives to develop multicultural events or engage in such experiences
- The use and importance of alcohol in social experiences varies significantly among different cultural groups with several cultural groups choosing not to serve alcohol at parties
- Fraternities build inclusion by exclusion, blocking does the same by a different approach. Neither builds towards a pluralistic community where diversity is engaged and where students belong to groups with partially overlapping memberships and have multiple loyalties.
- Incentives for engaging diversity on campus are insufficient and don't work, students groups that would encourage such activities struggle for funds to do programming
- Engaging diversity needs to come from the classroom, it must be part of a student's intellectual development
- Top down cultural programming will not work; students are adept at getting out of what they don't want to do.

Summary: Our goals must support students' initiatives to assert their own racial, ethnic and religious identities, while at the same time, and with equal commitment, they must foster interaction, exchange and learning across group boundaries as well as a sense that membership in one group is not exclusive of membership in others. This issue is becoming increasingly important as many students (as well as faculty and staff) come from mixed racial/ethnic/religious backgrounds, with the consequence that there is an increasing differentiation between heritage and identity. To achieve these goals Duke must be a welcoming pluralistic community, one that embodies the diversity of cultures and culturally-based organizations represented by our students and faculty. Such a community could engender a range of social opportunities, many of which would not be centered on alcohol.

We need to assure that our community has a positive climate for engaging diversity, and of equal importance, that we articulate why engaging diversity is critical for making the most out of a Duke education – students need to understand and appreciate how experiencing diversity as part of the Duke education will reap advantages for living and working in the world after Duke. Diversity is not only about differing viewpoints, perspectives and opinions, but is also about the engagement with the people who are the keepers of those viewpoints, perspectives and opinions. Discovering, through the discord of differing ideas, that deeply-entrenched beliefs may not be universal, can be a thought-provoking – as well as a life-changing – experience. It is also critical preparation for living and working in the world into which our students enter upon graduation.

### **B. Gender relations**

Overview: Cross-gender relationships are a part of the social fabric of almost all environments we inhabit as adults, whether for work or leisure, and whether in search of wisdom, friendship, or one of the many different varieties of love. College provides a testing ground that is bounded and

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relatively secure, and an important chance to learn about gender similarities and differences while experiencing the freedom to inhabit a number of social roles.

As we know from the Duke Women's Initiative, there are aspects of college women's experience that can inhibit their confidence or aspirations, lead them to feel dominated by men's perspectives, restrict the ways in which they explore their sexuality, and even endanger them. Of course, many of the norms defining social interaction between young men and women when entering college were well established much earlier on in their lives, perhaps limiting what we can expect to influence by any attempt to reframe aspects of culture once they arrive at Duke. From our discussions, we sensed dissatisfaction among both male and female students in the habits of relationships that dominate the campus culture and a real opportunity to help students self-reflect about how they make choices and the assumptions that drive their behavior. Interestingly, we also found that students often negatively characterize the culture of gender relations by the behaviors they attribute to a majority of students, but the vast majority of students do not acknowledge that they undertake such behaviors. Clearly, there is a perception of the campus culture of gender relations that departs from the reality and may well inhibit the development of a better climate.

### Views Expressed

- There is need for mentoring during the first six weeks of school – to educate students about the hookup culture, dating, friendships between men and women
- Most women's organizations, sororities in particular, do not have adult mentors with whom they can have sustained relationships
- Women need to prove themselves in social settings more than in academic settings; they are relatively confident in the latter
- Many express that women's self-esteem decreases while men's increases over the four years of college, with many students attributing this to the dominance of the fraternities in defining the social life on campus
- Duke students are high achievers in both academic and social life; they strive for both but fear letting the two intermingle.
- Duke students are too busy to build meaningful relationships; it's much easier to hookup. Additionally, hooking up avoids longer-term implications and women sometimes see hooking up as a way of maintaining their sense of personal freedom to choose into the future
- There is a lack of campus venues for dating
- There is a lack of social opportunities to build platonic relationships
- Empower women, don't approach this issue by trying to disempower men
- Enable real co-ed living and co-ed blocking on West, and possibly on East
- There is a need to create an environment that fosters positive relationships between men and women
- The male dominance of the social scene at Duke is a deeper issue than just selective living, although the latter certainly contributes to it.

Summary: Students express an eagerness to engage social change on campus that can result in more satisfying gender relationships. Important steps suggested for moving in this direction include enabling co-ed living and co-ed blocking on West Campus, providing social and recreational outlets that facilitate the development of platonic relationships, and providing mentoring on gender issues during the first semester freshman year.

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### C. Regulations and responsibility governing student social life

Overview: Considerable concern was raised that regulations surrounding social events on campus have significant unintended consequences that outweigh their benefits. While students acknowledge that many of the rules are in place to encourage students to keep themselves safe, the number of “hoops” that a group must jump through in order to have a social event has advantaged groups that have collective action advantages, space, and money (fraternities, most notably). This unintended advantage is especially true when various self-imposed restrictions on use of funds allocated to student groups limit purchase of alcohol, and when various personnel – bartenders and party monitors – are required at these events.

Many students feel that rules are inconsistently enforced. In addition, different residential advisors may treat similar situations quite differently. Several individuals complained that they were held responsible for damages to commons rooms even when the damage was done by others. This speaks to a theme we heard often that the current structure may not be consistent in holding students accountable for their actions. Students also told us that they receive mixed messages on how enforcement of regulations takes place at parties.

#### Views Expressed

- There is a lack of a middle ground in the social scene, currently one needs alcohol to enable comfort at social events
- The role alcohol plays on gender relations enables one to avoid emotional connections
- Alcohol provides a common theme to which students relate; that is, it is something you can talk about, especially when you don't have much else outside academics to talk about
- Alcohol is often the focus of evening social events
- Rush places a huge emphasis on alcohol
- Access to alcohol drives social life on the West Campus and is a major reason to join fraternities

Summary: While the discussions focused on complex issues surrounding the social scene at Duke, we were left with a general impressions that rather than take ownership of their actions and learn about the consequence of violating what would be a more general set of guidelines, students often either look for ways around the rules or obsess over whether they have checked off all the requirements. The latter choice enables students to rationalize that any activity/behavior is then deemed appropriate. The structure as currently articulated does not lead to the desirable self-awareness and development of individual and group ethics.

Students should be able to take initiative in an environment that fosters opportunity, but one in which there are clearly articulated rules and regulations that are perceived to be consistently enforced. Students need to have the opportunity to make mistakes and learn from those mistakes; at the same time they need to be responsible and accountable for their own behavior and the welfare of their community, as embodied in the *Duke Community Standard*.

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### D. Selective living

Overview: Housing for upperclass students on west campus falls into five categories: selective fraternal, selective non-fraternal, living-learning elective, blocks, and unaffiliated, with unaffiliated representing the largest group of students at about 60% of West Campus residents. Regardless of their particular view, our discussions showed that there is general agreement among students, faculty, and staff that social aspects of the Duke experience could be better. The CCI report recommended the elimination of all selective and elective organized living groups; student opinion ran the full spectrum on this subject, but was generally opposed to such a step. While some students supported the task force recommendation, the majority of students support residential living groups and expressed a desire for a more diverse (and well-funded) set of options for selective/elective living. There also was a general consensus across the groups that Duke should support a more pluralistic social and living environment, with a richer array of social and living opportunities in which no one type of living choice dominates.

Students – both those who live in selective housing and, interestingly, some who do not – raised concern that the task force report did not articulate the positive contributions selective living groups make to the campus and the external community. Concern was also raised about the treatment of selectives as a single entity, given the large differences between and among the purpose and objectives of the many different and different kinds of living groups.

Many view the loss of selectives as a major step away from enabling students to develop affinity groups, create group identity and meaningful friendships, and mentoring across the four years of undergraduate life. Many others view the elimination of selective housing as creating opportunities to establish a range of social cultures on campus, replacing the current dominant culture centered on Greek organizations.

Student leaders recently spent considerable effort in defining a evaluation process for selectives, one that would link the space allocation (location and number of beds) to the contributions the group makes to the campus in two fundamental categories (quad interactions, membership experience) and a subset of supplemental categories (social programming, external involvement, intellectual focus, healthy living).

#### Views Expressed

- Selective living empowers intergenerational cohesion, social networking (with alumni, etc.) and mentoring; and students seek this kind of cross-year connection
- After the well-regarded first year on East Campus, the majority of students express a desire for residential options that foster intergenerational interactions
- Students want a place to say where they're from – there is dorm pride on East Campus, and selective groups serve the same purpose on West Campus; independence is a lonely experience
- Selectives provide the only current mechanism for building community on West Campus
- The Greek scene is segregating, it's like going to someone's house, you wouldn't go to it unless you were invited and knew someone
- Quads are not viewed as a viable social unit by students, nor are the leadership positions in the quad council aggressively sought

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- Duke has many signifiers of “you don’t belong here”: wall around East campus, benches representing selective groups
- Enhancing the availability of spaces for other groups to hold social events would benefit student life
- Common spaces that don’t belong to a group are not well utilized

Summary: Consistent with the CCI Report, our discussions generally confirm that a fundamental issue in the undergraduate experience at Duke is the dominance – real and perceived - of the social scene by fraternities. Some of the dominance by these groups may result from unintended advantages they have acquired because of campus policies (e.g., the ownership of common spaces), an issue that might be addressed through both a review of the regulations governing social events and by increasing the number and types of selective/elective living units. Many students voiced the opinion that they do not see themselves as part of this culture, although they acknowledge, and sometimes express dissatisfaction with, the perceptions of its dominance of the undergraduate social scene. The majority of students with whom we spoke voiced support for creation of a more pluralistic residential campus, expecting that by doing so, a more diverse and desirable set of social opportunities would result. It needs to be acknowledged that a potential downside of increasing the number of such living units is the possible interpretation of an institutional message that students need to develop a group identity, whether or not they are inclined or ready to do so.

### 4. Options for Housing, Dining and Social Spaces<sup>1</sup>

The report of the Campus Culture Initiative Task Force revealed that the ways in which spaces are designated and used are foundational to the undergraduate experience. This conclusion was confirmed in our discussions with students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Because of their centrality to enhancing the undergraduate experience, our discussions this fall will focus on housing, dining and social spaces. In addition to simply living and eating, residence halls and dining facilities provide important venues for students to interact with each other and for interactions of faculty and staff with students. All members of our campus community share the ability to serve as role models and can model how to work together to build character and a sense of purpose within the communities in which we work and live. Many of our staff represent a “front line” for interacting with students. These daily interactions are an important component of what defines the Duke experience, and enable learning about human interactions and establishing relationships that go well beyond that experienced in the class room or with classmates. We should not minimize the influence both casual

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<sup>1</sup> The task force report presented a set of recommendations around Duke’s admissions policies and athletics, which are not the focus of this document. To address admissions requires knowing what we want to achieve. The discussions around this document will provide that information and will subsequently be used by existing committees to affect appropriate action with respect to admissions. We have previously examined the link between admissions criteria and academic performance. Research between admissions criteria and social outcomes has not been done, and should be studied. In the case of athletics, the university has charged a new athletics council to better integrate academics and athletics. The athletics department is also working on a 5 year strategic plan, which should be available to the campus community during the academic year. Discussions around athletics, if required, will take place after their strategic plan is released and the new council has an opportunity to do its work. The Task Force report provided a set of recommendations for alcohol use. There is overlap between housing and dining and alcohol consumption, and this is discussed in the text. We are bound by the current drinking age laws and the major challenges are to clearly articulate University policy, assure its consistent enforcement, and educate students about responsible behavior, both individually and in communal situations where alcohol is present.



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and sometime deliberative interactions have; they enable our students to amass the skill and comfort of living and working with those who differ from themselves. Our discussions must also examine how to be clear as to our expectations and how best to engender socially responsible behavior of students in these communal settings.

### *The current housing model*

The current housing model at Duke is based on an interpretation of student development that presumes common sets of developmental attributes among classes of students and common environmental conditions designed to promote intellectual, social and interpersonal maturation. Thus all first-year students, housed on East Campus, share experiences intended to expose them to the variety of opportunities available at Duke and designed to optimize diverse, broad and occasionally challenging encounters with other first year students, various faculty and staff. Sophomore students are obliged to reside on West Campus under the belief that bonds established in the first year will carry over to the second year, and further, that as students narrow their selection of group affiliations, intimate relationships and fields of inquiry, they can best do so in residential communities characterized by close living quarters, blends of selective and independent membership and fewer residential faculty and staff. By the junior and senior year, the current model suggests that apartment style housing, both on and off campus, offers the best exposure to adult living and prepares students for community living and learning beyond Duke and Durham.

### *Reassessing the housing model*

One of the important lessons learned from the discussions this past spring is the importance of cross-generational interactions within the context of residential living. Such interactions were thought to be important for fostering an environment where students are able to fully benefit from our co-educational and diverse student population. To accomplish these goals requires that we rethink our current housing model, question some of the spatially-explicit features of the developmental model upon which it is based, and rethink the relationship between the West and Central campuses. While a mapping of the developmental model onto a progression from one physical location to another offers a convenient framework for envisioning how to take advantage of Duke's geography, it seriously weakens our ability to build cross-generational connections through living groups, with the attendant advantages such connections can bring to improving campus climate.

With regards to housing, moving away from the current model has several dimensions, each associated with both positive and negative consequences. While the Campus Culture Initiative Task Force recommended the elimination of selective housing, such a move would be inconsistent with our aspirations to create a vibrant, pluralistic community. We will no longer consider reducing the number of selective living groups; the reasoning for this decision is elaborated on in the Appendix 2. Our efforts this fall will be to define a set of housing and dining options that are rooted in the principles presented above and that best address the challenges we face.

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### *Increased selective living options*

Housing focused around intellectual and other themes could draw a diverse student population, increase opportunities for students to socialize and engage intellectually with those different from themselves, foster cross-generational connections, and promote opportunities to grow intellectually and socially within a communal setting different from the options available today. Theme housing also would expand the academic experience beyond the classroom, and could engage faculty who are interested in the particular theme of the housing unit. Additional theme housing could provide additional social options for the Campus. But in order to do so, these houses would need to have resources – in terms of space and money – commensurate to existing selectives. Experiences at other institutions show that theme housing could also result in segregation of students depending on the particular themes; there would need to be a rigorous process for approval of such houses to assure they contribute to the mission of the University, become the base from which activities reflecting the theme would be launched to the broader community and influence campus climate in a positive manner. Increased elective/selective housing would reduce the number of rooms available for independent students and would likely make it much harder for students who chose not to live in such units to block and end up with contiguous rooms. Thus, a potentially negative consequence is that students may interpret an increase in housing options to mean that they must belong to an elective/selective group to get the most out of a Duke education.

### *A revitalized central campus*

The current model suggests the new Central Campus should provide apartment style housing for seniors and some juniors, combined with dining facilities that prepares students for community living and learning beyond Duke and Durham. This model, however, may serve too narrow a population as Central Campus offers an opportunity to explore alternatives for living and learning for all classes beyond the first year. Central Campus could offer a range of living opportunities ranging from dormitory rooms similar to those on the West Campus to apartments that would be open to sophomores, junior, and seniors. Selective and theme houses could also be present on Central Campus. Current plans for the number of residences on Central Campus are based on the current capacity of the West Campus. We should consider if there are advantages to reducing the number of students who will live on the new Central Campus by constructing a new dorm on the West Campus, which could also be designed to include apartment style rooms. Because the University has recently selected the master architect to oversee design of the Central Campus project, it will be important to determine the desired housing model in the near future.

### *Social Spaces on West Campus*

On West Campus, selective housing groups are currently allocated common rooms that are located near or adjacent to the dorm rooms occupied by its members. These common spaces are viewed as “owned” by the particular housing group, and are used informally by the members of the housing group and for social functions sponsored by the group. Concerns were raised in our discussions that parties held in common rooms adversely impact both gender relations and engagement of diversity. The renovation of the West Union building offers the opportunity to create spaces for social events that are not associated with any one group, and that are not located immediately adjacent to

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dormitory rooms. It will be important to make sure that all constituencies – faculty and students as well as administrators – are involved in the planning of the West Union renovations.

It is widely acknowledged that the distribution of small social spaces in West campus dorms is disadvantageous because their location sometimes make them easily (even if unofficially) controlled by a single social group, and their design makes them relatively dysfunctional for many kinds of social events. If West Union is renovated so that it provides space for social events, one option that merits consideration is eliminating the practice of allocating designated commons rooms within the dorms to specific living groups. This would have the benefit of providing all living groups with equal access to space for planned social events, enabling the commons spaces in the dorms to be a shared resource and then locate or relocate these rooms to more effectively support the student interaction and community development needed to achieve diversity and gender relations goals. A potential downside is that such rooms may not see any use; several students expressed the view that a room that belongs to everyone is often used by no one. If this were true, then such a model could inadvertently result in decreased student interactions in the dormitories.

### *Dining Model for West Campus*

Eating is fundamentally a social activity, and so dining represents an opportunity to influence the cultural framework of Duke. If dining was associated with venues that encourage conversation and community, then dining may bring added value to undergraduate experience. The balance between venues that encourage patrons to linger and engage with one another versus venues that cater to individual convenience by encouraging a “grab-and-go” pattern of eating needs to be addressed. It may enhance local communities on campus to have dispersed facilities rather than have venues centralized in the vicinity of West Union and the Bryan Center. The campus culture could also be enhanced by facilities that make it possible for students of legal drinking age to drink in a socially convivial and responsible manner in accompaniment with food.

## **5. Key Questions to be Addressed this Fall**

The questions listed below are designed to focus the conversations around options for housing, dining, and social spaces. We have chosen to focus on space – housing, dining and social – because the discussions to date clearly reveal that the designs and uses of space are foundational to the Duke experience. Not only do our residence halls, dining facilities, and common spaces structure how students live and eat, their designs can promote or inhibit how students engage diversity, develop interclass friendships, relate across genders, and interact with faculty outside the classroom. To assure that Duke is a place for excellence, a place of community, a place for engagement, and a place for fun requires that spaces be designed and used appropriately.

- There are about 2800 beds on West Campus and 1700 sophomores, and the current policy is that all sophomores must live on West. Recent thinking about Central Campus is that it would be designed principally for seniors. Should this model be reconsidered in a way that allows for the option that both campuses can support interclass living?

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- What housing model best optimizes the experience of independent students and students wishing to live in selectives, theme houses, and blocks on the West and Central campuses? What additional theme houses are of interest to students?
- What are the appropriate expectations for serving the larger Duke community for groups that are allocated space?
- What combination of venues – from those emphasizing individual convenience (i.e., “grab-and-go” options) to those emphasizing community connections (i.e., “sit down and eat”) – should comprise the dining options on the West and Central campuses?

### 6. Process

This document is intended to frame discussions with students, faculty, staff, and alumni during the fall semester. On the dates listed below, the Provost and/or Dean of Undergraduate Education will lead open forums with the quads on West Campus, the neighborhoods on East Campus, and Central Campus and students living off campus.

#### West Campus Quad meetings

Sept. 17: 9 PM	Craven Quad	F-Commons Media Room
Sept. 19: 9 PM	Kilgo Quad	N-Commons Media Room
Sept. 24: 9 PM	Edens Quad	2A Media Room
Sept. 26: 9 PM	Few Quad	FF-108 Commons
Oct. 1: 9 PM	Keohane Quad	4B-401 Commons Media Room
Oct. 3: 9 PM	Crowell/Wannamaker Quads	G-Commons Media Room

#### East Campus Neighborhood meetings

Oct. 15: 9 PM	Neighborhood 3	Southgate Commons
Oct. 17: 9 PM	Neighborhood 1	Alspaugh Commons
Oct. 22: 9 PM	Neighborhood 4	Blackwell Commons
Oct. 24: 9 PM	Neighborhood 2	Giles Commons

#### Central Campus and students living off campus

Sept. 25: 7 PM	Richard White Lecture Hall
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There will also be discussions with faculty governance groups, and input will be solicited from Duke staff and alumni. To develop concrete action plans for advancing the undergraduate experience will require bringing representatives from these constituencies together to integrate and prioritize the collective outcomes from the various meetings. By doing so, we will be assured of thoughtful engagement from the entire Duke community in advising the administration on how best to achieve the aspirations we hold for the undergraduate experience. Actions for addressing the major questions posed above will be recommended to the President in the early winter.

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### Appendix 1: Groups Engaged in Discussions during the Spring '07 Semester

#### Student Organizations:

Asian Student Association, Baldwin Scholars, Black Student Alliance, Brownstone, Campus Council, Chi Psi, Delta Sigma Phi, Duke Student Government, Duke University Union, East Campus Residential Advisors, Inter-Fraternity Council, Inter-Community Council, Inter-Greek Council, International Students, Kappa Kappa Gamma, men not living in selective housing, Alliance of Queer Undergraduates at Duke, National Pan-Hellenic Council, Order of Omega, Pan-Hellenic Council, President's Council, Sigma Chi, Student Communications Advisory Council, and women not living in selective housing.

#### Faculty Groups:

The Academic Council and its Executive Committee, the Academic Council Student Affairs Committee, the Arts & Sciences Council and Executive Committee, the Arts & Sciences Student Faculty Engagement Committee, the Division Chairs Meetings of the Arts & Sciences Faculty, the Directors of Interdisciplinary Centers, the Nicholas School Faculty Council, and the Pratt School Faculty Executive Committee.

#### Staff Groups:

Student Affairs Staff, a group of Residential Advisors on East Campus, members of the House Keeping staff who work on West and East Campuses

#### Alumni and School/University Boards:

The Duke Alumni Board, Executive Committee of the Graduate and Professional Students Council, the Trinity College Board of Visitors, and the Duke Board of Trustees.

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### Appendix 2: The Choice for Pluralism

It will have drawn the attention of some that the option of eliminating all selective housing at Duke, as recommended by the original CCI report, is not included in this follow-up interim report. This change will come as a relief to some and as a disappointment to others. Because the abolition of all selective living – including not only fraternities, but any housing based on a process of self-selection – was the most provocative recommendation coming from the CCI, we offer here a more detailed rationale for not carrying it forward.

It might be cynically thought that this decision was simply a response to pressure, or anticipated pressure, from alumni and donors, an accommodation to the sentiment of “let Duke be Duke” that is thought pervasive among those who graduated from Duke in all but the most recent years. Undoubtedly, there is such sentiment but it is far from pervasive; the vast majority of those in Duke’s extended family are deeply appreciative of Duke’s ability to change and to be agile in doing so. More to the point, we heard little of such conservative sentiments. In fact, some prominent alums and donors, including some former fraternity members, were strongly supportive of giving full consideration to the “abolition” option.

Among the hundreds of students we talked with, however, the sentiment was vastly, but certainly not unanimously, *against* abolishing selectives. This was true not only among current fraternity members and current non-fraternity members of selective housing groups, but – perhaps surprisingly – also among many so-called “independents”. The common view was that selective housing at Duke plays an important role in campus social life and is a real expression of student choices, choices they should be allowed to make as part of forming their young adult identities. Non-fraternity selectives were additionally argued to offer opportunities for diverse criteria to be brought into the decision about where and with whom to live, and hence to enhance the development of identity through living. The criteria characteristic of non-fraternity selectives are often in quite sharp contrast with those predominant in fraternal selectives, things like true co-education grounded in living (e.g., Brownstone) or the development of qualities conducive to leadership and independence among women (e.g., the Baldwin Scholars). Finally, and this was perhaps both the strongest and most widespread sentiment, many students expressed a strong desire for more connection across classes – i.e., connections that connect younger students with older one – and they argued that selectives provide *the* major opportunity for students to live in communities with students from different years and to receive the support and mentoring from upper-class students that they seek.

Of course, even strong supporters of selective living and certainly those less invested in selectives brought forward recurrent criticisms of how the selective living system on our campus works and of how these shortcomings have negative impacts our campus culture. Preeminent among these criticisms was that one element of selective living, the fraternity system, has a disproportionate influence on campus culture, imposing the social norms and behavioral patterns of a minority on the majority of students who have a more pluralistic set of interests and ideals. In its bluntest form, the charge is that fraternities “determine” the campus culture and – importantly for our thinking about how to move forward – that this dominance is fostered by the control of space which the current housing system affords to selective living groups. Our own conversations with the community generally confirmed this view, although with more nuance. Fraternities are not all the same, nor are

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the behaviors with which they are associated; some have histories of repeated violations of campus rules and social norms, others have few or none. And most if not all fraternities make positive contributions to values which we as a University seek to promote, although to substantially differing degrees. Furthermore, it also became evident in our discussions that while some of the predominance of fraternities is due to the *privileged* control they exercise, de facto if not de jure, over commons spaces in the dorms they inhabit, a good deal of it also results from *advantages* they have because of their ability to take advantage of campus rules governing social activities because they can more easily organize collective action and because their members pay substantial dues that can be used to support activities.

It also was clear from our conversations with members of the CCI task force that the recommendation regarding abolition of *all selective living* was based on the reasoning that fraternities were overly dominant in the campus social culture, that their predominance needed to be reduced if other problems in the campus culture were effectively to be addressed, but that a recommendation to eliminate just fraternities would never succeed and that hence all selective living needed to be abolished. This same concern about the social predominance of fraternities was voiced by many faculty and students, including some themselves members of selectives and even fraternities.

As we have already noted, however, not all, or even a large portion of those arguing that fraternities and fraternity values were overly dominant in the culture agreed that the appropriate response was abolition of all selective living, or even the more targeted abolition of Greek selective living. Rather, what increasingly emerged was a sentiment for a greater number of alternative, “elective”, living options that would coexist, on an equal basis in terms of resources, with the existing range of selective living groups. This broadening of selective living options could create at Duke a balanced, “pluralist” community of group living opportunities rooted in multiple values and in students’ choices. Each group, as part of its charter, would have to contribute through some of its activities to the richness of activities available to the broader community even as it provides a deeper immersion in its own values for those who choose to join it and live together. In this way, each will contribute uniquely colorful threads to the warp of our campus cultural fabric and will be complementary to the weave of stronger hues formed by values, passions and commitments shared across far broader spans of our community.

A number of conditions will have to be met for this pluralist community to emerge successfully at Duke. We list some of these here to provide a focus for the practical discussions that must accompany a larger discussion of the principles that must underlie our community. The list here is neither inclusive nor exhaustive:

- All groups, selective and elective, must have a strong relationship with one or more faculty and other adult mentors who are integral to the governance and programming expected of the living group;
- All groups, selective and elective, must have similar access to resources of space and programming funds, provided through some combination of University and member resources;
- Social spaces, including commons spaces in dormitories, must be common property and hence “possessed” by no single group. This may well require, over time, the reallocation of

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group living spaces within dormitories and/or the relocation of commons rooms within the dorms. It will also require the integration of the commons rooms into the system of reserving social spaces for events, including parties;

- Other rules governing commons uses will need to be examined to encourage their shared availability to multiple groups living within a single dorm or quad;
- Rules governing the allocation of living space to selective and elective groups and the expectations for those groups if they wish to retain their space allocations over time will need to be developed, consistent with the enlarged numbers and types of living groups. Major advances in this direction were made with the new (2006-2007) evaluation process developed by students and this process and the rules and expectations that flow from it can likely be readily extended to govern the new system;
- The appropriate allocation of spaces to the full array of different selective and elective living groups foreseen will require relaxation of the rules governing the types of residents that can live at the front of main West Campus. It must continue to be assured, however, that no particular type of residential choice or living group come to dominate that highly visible and symbolic space. Instead, that frontage, like each individual dorm or quad, should reflect the pluralism of selective, elective and independent living choices our students choose to make;
- There must be careful examination of the implications for the new residential system for what types of residences are built on Central Campus. The question is: should Central Campus housing be consistent with Duke's "developmental model" and hence primarily – as is currently envisioned – for seniors and designed with the next stage of their life clearly in mind (apartment style residences) or should Central Campus housing be, like West, "3-class residences", but with far greater flexibility in the specific types of living spaces available, including dormitory, suite and apartment style residences in some combination? Note: this choice would entail an end to the policy of all sophomores living on West but would enhance the "intergenerational" character of the overall housing system.

These are but some of the issues to be addressed as we move forward with our discussions this fall of the building a truly pluralist residential and social community at Duke.