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Note to editors: The following is the last of four articles published in Duke University's faculty-staff weekly newspaper, *Dialogue*, examining key aspects of university life now under study at Duke. This article appeared in the April 29, 1994 issue.

DUKE'S GEORGIAN EAST CAMPUS HAS AN IMAGE PROBLEM; GOTHIC WEST CAMPUS IS MORE POPULAR

by Virginia Boyd

Duke University's East Campus has an image problem despite its expanses of wide grassy lawns punctuated with huge old trees and graceful Georgian architecture.

That's a conclusion of a special committee that has been studying ways to improve the campus.

The fact that image is an issue comes as no surprise to many campus residents including students who temporarily call Duke home as well as faculty and employees who spend much of their daily lives somewhere on university grounds.

Only one-and-a-half miles separate Duke's East and West campuses, but the campuses are seen as vastly different, with the larger gothic West Campus being the most popular. Frequently described as the "main" campus and the "hub" of university activity, West continues to be favored by the majority of students for housing and by faculty and administration for office space.

Some say East Campus's long-standing reputation is a carryover from its former use as the Woman's College campus. Even though both campuses became coeducational more than 20 years ago with the merger of the men's and women's undergraduate colleges in 1972, East has not been able to shake its image of being in some way lesser to West.

The work of three task forces, assigned this academic year to a re-evaluation of student life and the educational experience at Duke, brings a timely focus to the ongoing work of the East Campus Enhancement Committee. The future of East Campus is interwoven with that of intellectual, residential and greek life at the university.

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In 1991, Vice President for Student Affairs Janet Smith Dickerson was asked to chair the East Campus Enhancement Committee by then-university President H. Keith H. Brodie. "The committee

was given the mandate to identify ways to improve parity for East Campus," said history Professor John Richards, who is now committee co-chair with Dickerson.

A draft of the final report of the committee was completed April 29 and will be presented to President Nannerl O. Keohane.

"East Campus's biggest problem is an image problem," Richards said. "I don't see our recommendations as being part of a major restructuring of East Campus but rather paying attention to a more cultural change that needs to take place as well as identifying some key facilities that could be added to help that change take place."

Last May, the committee submitted a report to Keohane outlining academic priorities for East Campus. The report focused on three areas for clarifying East Campus's academic mission and enhancing its role within the larger university community, Richards said.

The committee recommended building upon and strengthening existing concentrations in the arts and humanities already located on East as well as considering moving another humanities department to the campus.

Academic departments and programs now located on East include art and art history, women's studies, dance, film and video, drama, philosophy, history and literature. Duke's art museum, office of continuing education and Institute of the Arts also are housed on this campus. This spring, the Center for Documentary Studies moved to a restored house that is located directly across from East Campus.

The 1993 report also included a recommendation to relocate the community service program and other university community outreach programs to East because of the campus's proximity to Ninth Street and downtown Durham. These programs would be joining the Talent Identification Program and the education program which also have strong community connections, Richards said.

The Community Service Center will move to Crowell Building on East this summer. It is being joined by the student development office which will increase the presence of administration, another underrepresented group on East, many say.

The third suggestion outlined in the committee's 1993 report focused on moving the Center for International Studies and related programs, whose offices are now scattered along Campus Drive in converted houses, to a central location in new or renovated facilities on East. This recommendation met with controversy and strong faculty resistance, Richards said, which again centered on the campus's "out of the way" image.

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During this academic year, the 13-member committee identified and studied individual concerns and suggestions for East Campus, Richards said. "We attempted to do a comprehensive survey of all aspects of East Campus life," he said.

The committee members felt issues involving academic life and programs were more of a concern than those involving residential facilities, Richards added.

While the university has made a "substantial effort" to renovate East Campus facilities by designating at least \$30 million for building repairs and upgrades, including that of Lilly Library and the Carr Building, Richards said there is still room for improvement.

He said East has attractive qualities that could be strengthened without forcing it to compete with West.

"We have looked at the kinds of things that would make it worthwhile to come to East even if you didn't live on East and that would improve the campus for those who live there as well," he said.

Improvements to sports and recreational facilities, dining facilities, the busing schedule for transportation between campuses as well as circulation on East, and parking have all been discussed by the committee, Richards said.

Emphasis also has been placed on creating and improving places, such as the Coffeehouse, where undergraduate and graduate students can feel comfortable meeting each other and exchanging ideas.

East Campus's lack of appropriate facilities for events, including lectures, also has been addressed by the committee, he said.

"We would also like to see more academic and administrative services on East," he added.

Richards is a member of the history faculty which has recently been consolidated on East. "I don't feel isolated or anything of the sort," he said. "The history department got better facilities than would have ever been possible on West. It has helped the department's undergraduate and graduate programs as well as faculty life."

Homey and Artsy

"Homey," "spacious," "artsy" and "friendly" are adjectives often used to describe East Campus. "Physically, East has wider open spaces, different architecture and more spacious rooms and hallways," said Kira Marchenese, a Duke junior living in Brown House.

"It's a lot more laid back. You don't see people rushing to classes like you do on West. But, it's also more than that. West Campus is very mainstream while East Campus provides living options for alternative groups. ... My personal impression is that people on East place more importance on intellectual communication," she added.

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"I think of East as the more tranquil campus and as more a part of the Durham community as a whole, rather than an isolated environment," said Kathy Silbiger, program director of Institute of the Arts. "I like the physical location of East, but regret its lack of integration with the rest of Duke's campus, which has been perpetuated by patterns of administrative and residential life.

"East is more suited to what I think a university is about since it provides space to move about and to think. It has less of a party atmosphere and is more homelike," she said.

"This is what I think college campuses should be like," said Marilyn Hartman, program director of continuing education. Hartman, who has worked on East Campus since 1977, described the campus as "comfortable and containable" and "vibrant and physically beautiful."

"East is where it's at for the arts at Duke," she said.

"West is the main campus and East is the secondary campus with fewer resources and people," said Josh Stolker, a senior who is a member of the East Campus Enhancement Committee and lives in the Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity section on East. "West is trendier and East is quieter and homier," he added.

East Campus's image is no accident, according to Annabel Wharton, associate professor and

chair of the department of art and art history. In an article titled "Gender, Architecture, and Institutional Self-Presentation: The Case of Duke University," published in the winter 1991 volume of the scholarly journal *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Wharton explains that the campus's reputation has a basis in both its architectural design and its historical role.

"Although the campus is not, in fact, a square, it is experienced as a rational set of rectilinear coordinates, so that even with a minimal experience of the site, the observer feels comfortably located," wrote Wharton.

"The neat, neo-Georgian core of the women's campus, modeled on Jefferson's University of Virginia, is ordered by an axis introduced by the main gate and culminating in the low, broad dome of Baldwin Auditorium. The seated statue of the patriarch of the Duke family, Washington Duke, punctuates the design's horizontal axis. The architectural composition is perfectly symmetrical. ... From the center of the campus, the simple bilateral symmetry of the overall plan and the conformity of the individual buildings convince the observer that he or she fully comprehends the whole complex.

"The experience of this setting is passive; the potential surprises of the architecturally heterogeneous periphery of the women's campus are masked and alienated by a thoroughly homogeneous core," she said.

West Campus, on the other hand, through its landscaping, layout and architectural style, "invites investigation and promises the excitement of discovery."

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"Even the dominant axis along which the men's campus is organized is much more dramatically rendered than that of the women's campus -- instead of being prone, it is actively scandent. From the bottom of the hill on which the campus is set, the axis is revealed: a tree-lined, processional access rises toward the Chapel tower which terminates the visual field with a dominant vertical thrust. The ascent of the axis is punctuated and reinforced by the erect statue of the university's most beneficent donor, James Buchanan Duke," Wharton wrote, adding that the whole of West Campus can be fully grasped only by "a thorough exploration of its varied parts."

Wharton also noted the relatively short time span (1925-1932) that separated the planning and construction of the two campuses. "Most campuses of comparable size were realized in multiple phases which embody shifts in educational practice as well as architectural style," she wrote.

Distinct Styles

The choice of distinct styles for the former men's and women's campuses is also significant because their design took place during a period when architectural eclecticism was popular in the United States. "In phases of architectural eclecticism, style functions as a more sensitive indicator of a patron's perspective than it does when a single style is dominate ...," Wharton explained.

In her article, Wharton documents the excitement expressed over the architectural design and planning of West Campus and the rather unenthusiastic acceptance of the "appropriate" style chosen for renovating Trinity College's former campus as the site for the new Woman's College.

"The women's college seems to have been peripheral topographically and architecturally; not surprisingly, marginality also characterized the history of women at Trinity College," Wharton wrote. She further details the rather lengthy and slow beginnings of establishing an organized female presence on

campus as well as the highly concentrated course offerings in the arts and humanities made available to the women on "their" campus and the accompanying exclusivity of West as the site for upper level courses in the natural sciences.

Wharton also wrote of the lack of emphasis placed on the Woman's College in the university's early promotional brochures. Describing a 1952 brochure titled "Let us tell you about ... Duke University," Wharton wrote, "Counterbalancing photographs of dormitory rooms on East and West are as gender-biased as the texts. In the men's campus dormitory, two men are depicted at their desks, back to back, engrossed in their studies. The scene is very different in the East Campus bedroom. No desk is visible. Three young women sit chatting on a bed flanked by another woman on a chair and one on the floor. Four of the women are knitting; the fifth is perusing a magazine."

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"Although the Co-Ordinate College for Women and Trinity College for Men merged in 1972, ending the segregation of women on East Campus, the marginalization encoded in the architecture of the institution is still effective. Indeed, the shifting of academic departments between East and West provides a gauge of their relative weight within the institution," Wharton continued.

"Duke's presently high stature is directly related to its attraction for students intent on preparing themselves for careers in medicine, law, and business; departments affiliated with these prestigious enterprises are located on West," she explained.

"Whether the traditional weakness of the arts at Duke University relegated them to East, or their siting on East insured their low profile, it is nevertheless apparent that a department's location on East Campus still indicates its relatively low institutional status. Perhaps by considering the social and political as well as purely aesthetic implications of institutional building, architectural historians may contribute to bringing the pressure of understanding to bear on the present as well as the past," she concluded.

Despite the consolidation of the large and highly regarded history department on East, Wharton still stands by her assessment of the campus today. Responding to a proposal to make East Campus an all-freshman campus, she said "I think it's a ghastly idea. I don't believe in the ghettoization of anyone."

Trinity senior Kevin Mullen, vice president of facilities and athletic affairs for the Duke Student Government and the young trustee nominee, offers an opposing view. East could benefit from the positive energy of freshmen, Mullen suggested.

"Making East an all-freshman campus would give it an identity. It would no longer be a second-class community that is devalued all the time. It would be the place where you start your Duke experience," he said.

"An all-freshman campus is a bad idea no matter where you put it," said Kira Marchenese, who leads a group formed to oppose an all-freshman campus called Students with an Alternative Vision for East Campus (SAVE). "Freshmen and upperclassmen have a lot to gain from interaction with each other," she added.

SAVE's purpose has broadened to include serving "as student advocates for East Campus and its

community," Marchenese said. The group wrote a detailed report, "The Four Year Experience: An Alternate Vision for East Campus," which they submitted to university administrators in November.

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The report included specific suggestions that relate to many of the areas that the East Campus Enhancement Committee has studied. Suggestions included improving computer facilities, moving more administrative and student activities offices to East, making sure freshmen are introduced to East's assets during their orientation, and promoting East as a location for more planned events. The students plan to complete an update of their report this spring.

Marchenese referred to the groups' suggestion of routinely including East Campus in the tours prospective students get of the university as an important way to end the cycle of students' psychological identification of West Campus as the "real" Duke.

The preference for West over East is "very much a matter of convenience," she said. "The solution is better busing and an emphasis on atmosphere rather than location."

While acknowledging many of the improvements that have been made to East recently, Wharton said in a recent interview that the only way to truly rid East of its image is to "change the topography of the university's campus."

"The best thing to do would be to fill in the gap between East and West by building on Campus Drive," she said.

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