

## Chapter 3 – Duke’s Enduring Themes

We begin our strategic planning process with an affirmation of the centrality and importance of six enduring themes that have defined, and continue to define, Duke:

- interdisciplinarity
- knowledge in the service of society
- centrality of the humanities and interpretative social sciences
- internationalization
- diversity
- affordability and access

While these enduring themes could be common to many universities, Duke’s distinction rests on how they are manifested in our everyday activities, how they undergird our school and departmental strengths, and how they work together to enable us to realize our collective institutional vision. Each of these themes is embodied in what happens in our schools and in the ways that they combine in a kaleidoscopic pattern to give a collective coherence and beauty to the university as a whole. Following each of themes described below are strategic implications that guide this plan.

### **Interdisciplinarity**

Many of the most interesting and pressing problems of today, such as environmental pollution or economic competitiveness, human health or cultural understanding, are deeply interdisciplinary at their core. Consequently, some of the most creative teaching and research occurs increasingly at the intersections and interstices of traditional departments and programs. Faculty and students who are equipped to address these issues most constructively will be those who have learned to work in more than one dimension, using the tools of their own as well as other disciplines, who have been trained to grasp the interaction of many parts of the question and bring to bear multiple sets of analytic skills, and who can collaborate as well as work alone. Duke has long recognized this fact, and perhaps our best known institutional strength is our self-definition as a scholarly community that values, and has a proven track-record of success with, interdisciplinarity. Interdisciplinarity thrives at Duke because faculty tend to be less oriented to a map of the disciplines than to intellectual questions and living human issues, which their knowledge might help to understand. When we are oriented toward challenges of this order, the disciplines are naturally synergistic, since no discipline holds all the pieces of the puzzle to be solved. As a young university, we have been forced to leverage resources and collaborate across departmental and school boundaries, a feat facilitated by our compact campus that joins in close proximity – unlike many other major research universities – our undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools.

This institutional self-identification with interdisciplinarity was crystallized in the 1987 accreditation review and report “Crossing Boundaries,” that placed interdisciplinarity as the foremost of intellectual qualities to which the University sought to aspire. In the late 1990’s, Duke was a leader in establishing a Vice Provost for Interdisciplinary Studies and

through that office has provided faculty development opportunities and university-wide forums to foster interdisciplinary collaborations. Strategic and deliberative actions over the past two decades have seeded and nurtured the creation of a variety of cross-school, multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary centers and institutes, such as the John Hope Franklin Humanities Institute, the Institute for Genome Sciences & Policy, and the Social Science Research Institute, as well as an innovative framework for seeding, supporting, and evaluating interdisciplinary efforts. Interdisciplinarity, combining and recombining issues and ideas, will remain at the forefront of what we do and continue to be an integral part of Duke's identity, providing a signature strategic advantage.

- We must overcome continuing obstacles for cross-school hiring and teaching, and develop procedures for recruiting and promoting faculty who will contribute to both schools and signature institutes and centers.
- We must improve mechanisms for identifying and delivering resources to interdisciplinary, cross-school activities.

### **Knowledge in the service of society**

The founding indenture of Duke University directed the members of the University to “develop our resources, increase our wisdom, and promote human happiness.” Indeed, we have gone far in achieving James B. Duke's dream to establish a place of outstanding intellectual eminence, “a place of real leadership.” But in Mr. Duke's vision, such leadership also involved harnessing the power of higher learning for the larger social good to meet the world's great needs: for intellectual understanding; for bodily care and healing and for spiritual inspiration; for justice; for economic productivity; and for understanding and caring for the natural world. At Duke, we have taken this charge seriously, and our work – both research and education – does not enclose itself tightly within the confines of ivory towers. Our work forms an arc, spanning from inquiry through discovery on the one end and translation into practice on the other. For example, Duke Medicine advances significant medical discoveries and tests them for their value for human care. Faculty from the Schools of Divinity, Medicine and Nursing collaborate to address the multiple faces of care at the end of life, a fundamental human need. Students in the Law School and the Fuqua School of Business volunteer their time in clinics, giving legal advice to local non-profits or advice to small business owners. Students in Public Policy's Hart Leadership Program collaborate with Duke faculty and community partners to pursue field-based projects in over 35 countries on complex social issues such as HIV/AIDS, economic development, gun violence, and youth empowerment. Scholars in the humanities study language and culture to help students and the wider public understand the nature of human interaction in a contemporary world that brings people of very different backgrounds together on a daily basis.

At Duke, civic engagement and public service are not extraneous to the work of the university; rather, they are outgrowths and extensions of inquiry and discovery – in short, “learning to make a difference.” The culture of societal engagement is strong across this campus because it grows directly from our scholarly activities. Initiatives such as the Duke-Durham Neighborhood Partnership flourish because working for the common good

is rooted our self-definition. Indeed, we believe, as an institution, that we should share the expert knowledge faculty and students bring to bear on pressing societal issues, whether in the schools, health, and legal aid clinics in Durham or in universities and hospitals halfway across the globe. What we get in return, beside the satisfaction of citizenship, is the education that flows back to theory from practice: the learning that arises when theoretical intelligence is tested in the arena of real human needs.

- We must work to create an enduring culture of service.
- We must expand opportunities for students and faculty to apply knowledge in the service of society.

### **Centrality of the humanities and interpretative social sciences**

While Duke, like our society as a whole, is rightly focusing substantial resources on the potential of science and technology to advance knowledge and improve human life, the humanities and interpretative social sciences must remain a critical element of our endeavors. These disciplines not only help to preserve the past (including the history of science, technology and medicine), they also provide the best window on the variety of human experience from which we can learn. But they are much more than repositories; they engage critically the fundamental questions that have shaped humanity's quest for knowledge, our definitions of the purpose of human life, of right and wrong, of the nature of the good life and a just society, the balance of personal freedom and social power. In addition, together these disciplines have the interpretative tools to understand the complex interplay of politics, economics, technology and culture in shaping whole societies and to discern large patterns of society and culture that shape individual choices and experiences, often in ways that individual actors do not fully comprehend. Finally, they are adept at holding us and our society to account when there is a lack of clear thinking about values and first purposes or when our actions and outcomes fall short of them. We have to see our own knowledge projects and institutional aims through the perspectives that the humanities and interpretative social sciences offer, for we are all of us – scientists, engineers and physicians; historians, anthropologists and novelists; students, administrators and trustees – acting on the same human stage illuminated by these fields.

- We must continue to sustain and develop Duke's strength in the humanities and interpretative social sciences, facilitating cross disciplinary conversation and collaboration across these fields.
- We must extend the conversations beyond these allied fields into wider cross disciplinary dialogues involving public policy, science, technology and medicine.
- We must seek ways to expand the voices of the humanities and interpretative social sciences as prominent partners in the ongoing conversation about the character and role of the modern University, and Duke's distinctive role as a leader in the United States, and increasingly international, higher education.

## **Internationalization**

The events of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq changed the world, dramatizing the religious, political, economic, cultural, military, and intellectual challenges that confront the rapidly globalizing, post-cold war world. These challenges have prompted nations, peoples, and institutions to consider more closely how they define themselves, and they have forced universities to frame new paradigms for research and education. Seeking to understand and thrive in this complicated new environment, Duke has increasingly focused on developing a sensitivity to, and awareness of, the fact that we operate in an interdependent world, where what were once hard and fast borders are now permeable, where individuals are part of an increasingly global community, and where problems transcend traditional boundaries. To be citizens of this world, we must be knowledgeable about issues that impact that world, such as global warming, poverty and pandemics, and conflicting cultures, and proactive in using that knowledge to make a difference.

Duke has long recognized that we cannot be a great university without being an international university. Beginning with the 1994 creation of the Office of the Vice Provost for International Affairs, Duke has set an institutional priority on enhancing our internationalization efforts, seeking to draw smart minds from around the world as students, faculty, and stimulating research collaborators. Because the majority of research is now produced by citizens of other nations, our faculty and programs increasingly collaborate with scholars abroad. We have won federal support for more international and foreign area study centers than any other private university in the United States. All of Duke's professional schools are engaged in international activities and partnerships, and more than 500 international post-doctoral fellows carry out research at Duke annually. Similarly, we have sought to open the minds of our students to the global world they will inhabit, giving them skills with which to interact with people from other nations and cultures through Duke course work, academic study abroad, and the non-course based engagements and exposures with foreign cultures. We are proud that a higher percentage of Duke undergraduates study abroad than at comparable schools, and one-third of Duke graduate and professional students are international. By increasing funding for non-US students to come to Duke, we have sought both to take advantage of international talent and to provide a more international experience for all students on our campus. Internationalization at Duke is not a specific or discrete set of add-on activities or units; rather, it is woven into the fabric of all of our efforts to become a world-class institution, thereby better serving the world of which we are a part.

- We must target education and research resources to address significant regional and global issues.
- We must forge international partnerships to enhance education and research.
- We must focus resources on the recruitment, retention, and support of talented international faculty and students.
- We must expand and integrate study abroad experiences with students' overall academic program.

## Diversity

Duke University has a responsibility for as well as a practical interest in building the diversity of its faculty, students, and staff. We are also committed to advancing research and teaching on the history, cultures, and contemporary issues affected by and affecting the lives of under-represented minorities in the United States and less economically developed populations abroad. It is only a little more than forty years since the first African Americans joined our faculty and student body. Since that time, Duke has undertaken many steps to foster increased racial presence and better race relations on our campus, and to provide regional and national leadership. We cannot, however, rest on our accomplishments. Too often diversity in numbers is not diversity in the experiences of our students. As changes in our society and the world demand that we bring to our community faculty members and students from a wide variety of backgrounds, we must more fully integrate their experiences and perspectives into our research and educational programs as well as our campus community.

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. Faculty and students benefit most by interacting creatively and productively with the widest possible range of individuals, ideas, and peoples. We seek to model and teach that the range of human differences in the classroom, in the hospital, and in our laboratories matters at Duke and in the world. How better to learn about other cultures than to participate in a classroom debate with a broad range of people, all with different backgrounds and experiences? How better to understand the challenges we all face in society, this ever-changing and increasingly global world, than to hear our students and faculty share their own creative ideas in a respectful environment? Learning about the myriad beliefs and viewpoints, from world events to religious convictions to preferences in music and film, is part of the excitement of engaging ideas in a community of inquiry such as ours, but engaging the individuals who hold those beliefs is also critical. 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 a clash of differing ideas, that a deeply-entrenched belief may not be accurate, 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.

A second practical concern is equally as important. In the post-Cold War and increasingly globalized world, talent and potential are far more widespread and far more accessible than was true even twenty years ago. If Duke is to achieve the excellence to which it aspires we must seek that talent from all backgrounds and places on the globe. The diversity and excellence of our faculty and students must reflect both that search and our commitment to it.

Over the past two decades, Duke has worked hard to prompt and promote opportunities for faculty and students to engage deeply and genuinely with ideas and with each other. We have affirmed diversity as fundamental to our research and educational goals and

have undertaken significant efforts to transform the campus into a more vibrant and inclusive community. Recognizing the importance of faculty as intellectual drivers, mentors, and role models, we have sought to tap into the widest range of talent by diversifying its members. These steps have included the Black Faculty Strategic Initiative, which more than doubled the number of African-American faculty over ten years (1993-2003); and the subsequent Faculty Diversity Initiative, which maintains our commitment to the growth of African-American faculty, but also broadens the scope of our efforts to encompass a wider range of cultural, ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds and to focus as well on underrepresented groups such as Latinos/Latinas and women in science .

We have also sought to diversify our undergraduate, graduate, and professional student bodies and provide them with depth of understanding of themselves and the world that equips them to become better scholars, leaders, and citizens. Our percentage of African-American undergraduates is among the highest among our peers, and the 2006 entering undergraduate class will represent over 40% students of color. Finally, we have sought to provide both spaces and university-wide programs and events to promote greater understanding about the many expressions of cultural identities, to nurture new sensitivity to and respect for difference, and create an enriched teaching and learning environment for all.

Too often faculty members from underrepresented minorities are faced with extra burdens in their roles as citizens in our community. There remain significant lost opportunities to hire minority faculty and to retain them once they arrive at Duke. And our programs of research do not fully capture the opportunities represented by the expertise and interests of our faculty and students.

- We must continue to diversify the faculty through the Faculty Diversity Initiative, supporting the expansion and retention of African American and other underrepresented faculty members and assuring the appropriate resources to further this goal.
- We must continue to diversify our student body by pursuing aggressive admissions policies and offering as strong a program of need-blind undergraduate financial aid as our resources permit.
- We must work both toward an enduring change in campus culture and toward inclusion through programming on campus and beyond.
- We must seek opportunities to support disciplinary and interdisciplinary research programs on issues of race, ethnicity, and gender in the sciences, social sciences, humanities and the professions.

### **Affordability and access**

Duke's historic commitment to affordability and access was built on the fundamental principle of justice, on our belief that access to higher education – and thereby worldly success – should be available to all, not simply to those who can pay. But in modern America, qualification for college admission has had a high correlation with family

income, and the premier private universities tend to recruit classes substantially tipped toward upper income sectors. Universities alone, of course, cannot affect or right every cause contributing to the unequal preparation of the young. But just for that reason, we have a special obligation to do what we can, and assuming the share of costs that a family cannot afford to pay is our way of assuring that we recruit students on the grounds of ability, dedication, and promise alone, not of family circumstance. Moreover, society has a profound self-interest in seeing that those with talent have access to quality education. We tend to take for granted the dynamism that makes our economy and culture develop wealth and an envied quality of life, but there is no reason to believe these things are self-sustaining. They are driven by human intelligence and creativity, and for renewal, these resources need cultivation and investment. Making sure that those gifted with these traits get the education that will allow them to give the greatest return on their talents is the best way to provide for this social good. It is safe to say that the talent upon which we will someday want to draw is not confined to a single social origin or band of income.

Duke's commitment to financial aid and need-blind admission is the investment we make to produce the trained talent our future world will require – and when we think of graduate and professional schools, this means the talent that will keep our own fields strong and strongly advancing. Some 45% of all Duke undergraduates receive aid from the University. To meet the challenge to be able to ensure that we select and recruit students on the grounds of ability, dedication and promise alone, we have recently engaged in a \$300 million Financial Aid initiative to strengthen Duke's financial aid endowment. We have dedicated our institutional resources to financial aid over time, and launched this focused and substantial fundraising effort, not only because of our responsibility to nurture talent for the good of society at large, but also because we believe that when we enable students to come to Duke from other income groups, other regions, other countries, we create a better experience not just for them but for every member of our common community.

- We must provide increased support to ensure broader access to our undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools.
- We must increase support for professional students committed to less remunerative careers.

Duke's commitment to these six themes – interdisciplinarity, knowledge in the service of society, centrality of the humanities and interpretative social sciences, internationalization, diversity, and affordability and access – drives all that we do and lays the groundwork for our future. Shaping, owning, and building upon these enduring themes, however, has not come about accidentally or instantaneously, but rather because of broad and deep reflection and intentional dialogue within and across the Duke community.

