Academic Programs Committee Resolution on the Proposal to Convert the Margolis Health Policy Center to an Institute
April 2023

I. Introduction

The Academic Programs Committee reviewed the proposal to convert the Margolis Health Policy Center (Margolis) to a university-wide institute during full meetings on 2/22/23 and 4/19/23. Representing Margolis were Mark McClellan, Director, and Gillian Schmidler, Associate Director. Margolis leadership provided APC a formal proposal, appendices and letters of support, and the guidelines for conversion to institute status adopted by APC and submitted to Academic Council in 2015. At a later meeting, APC also received written answers to additional questions posed by APC and a revised proposal that reflected feedback from APC.

a. Summary of APC discussion
   i. 2/22/23 Meeting
      1. APC considered the proposal in light of the adopted guidelines and found that the proposal made a strong general case that Margolis had (a) achieved a critical mass of faculty engagement; (b) attained a substantial educational footprint; (c) cultivated deep linkages to external partners and constituencies; (d) effectively partnered with core Duke units; (e) developed a robust plan for furthering Duke’s goals of diversity and inclusiveness; (f) shown strategic significance for Duke; (g) identified opportunities to widen external fundraising. Although the proposal as a whole made a strong case, APC noted that there was unevenness in how successfully Margolis satisfied some of the specific guidelines and it pressed Margolis’s leadership on areas where the proposal could still be strengthened.
      2. APC raised concerns, relevant to (a), (b), and (d), that Margolis had limited engagement with Trinity faculty and that its conversion to institute states might generate duplication with the operations of DGHI and the School of Medicine.
      3. APC questioned the depth and scope of Margolis’s engagement with faculty across the university working on health inequality and health justice, relevant to (a), (c), (d) and (e), especially given the initial proposal’s emphasis on practicing leadership in that space.
      4. APC also evaluated the proposal, independent of the guidelines, according to the costs and benefits of its adoption for the university in general. APC asked for clarification about the financial structure of Margolis and how converting to an institute was likely to impact its future finances and the finances of the university. Margolis leadership provided ample details on this issue and satisfied APC’s concerns.
5. At the discussion’s conclusion, APC considered it prudent to extend discussion to a second meeting, to gather additional information relevant to the discussion, and to offer Margolis’s leadership the opportunity to provide detailed written answers to some of APC’s queries and to revise the proposal in light of APC’s concerns.

ii. 4/19/23
1. APC found that the revised proposal offered a clearer explanation of Margolis’s distinctive and valuable approach to health policy.
2. APC discussed information gathered from meetings that committee members had with leadership in DGHI and the School of Medicine and concluded that Margolis’s contributions to the university were distinctive and valuable. APC also noted that avoiding duplication from any potential future expansion would require careful guidance from senior administration as well as close collaboration with stakeholders at DGHI, the School of Medicine, and around the university.
3. APC noted that the revised proposal now helpfully framed Margolis’s engagement with faculty from across the university working on anti-racism, health justice, and health inequality. Those links can still be further strengthened, and in that regard APC noted that conversion to institute could help build enduring collaborations with those faculty and community partners.
4. APC applauded Margolis’s efforts to engage Trinity leadership and to devise a plan to better engage Trinity faculty, noting that Margolis’s leadership had already scheduled meetings to initiate the process. APC discussed other ways Margolis might better engage Trinity faculty.
5. APC offered some suggestions on how Margolis’s governance structure might better institutionalize collaboration and planning with other units at the university.
6. APC considered concerns about how Margolis could continue to function without the extensive professional networks of its current leadership team. APC noted that because Margolis is unusually reliant on those networks, more consideration may need to be given to cultivating a robust pipeline of future leadership.

iii. Issues for Future Consideration
1. Based on extensive committee fact-finding and deliberation, APC concluded that any outstanding major reservations with the proposal had been satisfied. APC also aimed to communicate broader suggestions about Margolis and the proposal should it be considered by Academic Council. Those suggestions are included in a supplemental memorandum.

II. Resolution
a. APC approves the proposal to convert the Margolis Health Policy Center to status as a university-wide institute.

III. Vote
a. The APC Full Committee voted on this resolution with a final tally of 13 yes’s and 1 non-vote.