

Evolution Learning Community  
Executive Council Meeting with Deans' Council  
December 12, 2005  
3:00 – 3:45 p.m., Alderman 215

In attendance: Tricia Kelley; Dale McCall; Provost Paul Hosier; members of Deans' Council

Representatives of Executive Council met with Deans' Council to apprise UNCW academic administrators of initial ELC plans, to receive feedback on plans, and to request support for the program.

DM presented the rationale and reviewed the discussions to date concerning development of a year-long learning community of interdisciplinary study and discussion of evolution centering on the Darwin anniversaries in 2009. The "talking points" document developed for discussion with the Provost and Chancellor was distributed to meeting participants (see below). PK distributed a list (included below) of possible ELC programs and activities being considered for 2007-2009 and discussed the general plan for teaching, scholarship and public outreach. Results of meeting with Chancellor, in which she expressed support for the program, were also summarized.

DM and PK fielded questions and received suggestions from members of Deans' Council. Responses by Council members ranged from enthusiastic to wary. Concern was expressed that the topic could yield a negative response from the community and possibly be damaging to UNCW's relationship with the community. DM and PK indicated that the evolution-creationism controversy was not the central focus of the ELC; however, the ELC group recognizes the sensitivity of the issues involved. PK indicated that appropriate handling of the subject had the potential to defuse the controversy and strengthen UNCW-community relations.

## Evolution: A Campus-Wide Learning Community, 2006-09

Building on the success of the Brown vs. the Board of Education Learning Community, (Spring 04), Tom Schmid issued an open invitation to faculty and staff in Spring 05 to discuss the feasibility of organizing a much more elaborate learning community of interdisciplinary study and discussion of evolution. The timing for such an event seems propitious, with the 150th anniversary of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* and the 200th anniversary of Darwin's birth a brief four years away. Although the teaching of evolution has once again become the object of pointed debate in American society (the intelligent design movement is the latest manifestation of this century-long conflict), this controversy forms but one aspect of the proposed campus-wide program about the broader themes and issues relating to Darwin and evolution.

Faculty and staff from throughout UNCW, including Philosophy & Religion, Biological Sciences, Chemistry, History, English, Political Science, Education, Library, English, Film Studies, Environmental Studies, Earth Sciences, Anthropology, Psychology, the Honors Scholars Program, CTE, CFL, University College, Public Service and Continuing Studies, and Campus Events responded with enthusiasm to Tom Schmid's call. Over the course of spring and summer 05, a core group of approximately 30 members of the UNCW community met to consider how best to organize such an ambitious undertaking. By July, a preliminary outline of events, programs, classes, and scholarly activities had taken shape, subcommittees were identified-- Curriculum, Educational Outreach, and Events/Programs--a three-person Executive Council— Kathleen Berkeley, Patricia Kelley, and Dale McCall—elected, and a website (<http://library.uncwil.edu/faculty/peterson/elc/>) created. The Executive Committee (the larger group) and the Executive Council agreed to a tentative timeline, which follows:

- 2005-07: PR with university administration and UNCW community to ensure popular support and wide-spread participation, planning events, identifying potential funding sources, grant-writing , and support for Darwin Scholars' projects (both teaching and research)
- 2007-08: developing educational packets for teachers, sponsoring a Summer Institute for teachers, developing linked courses on evolution , writ large, for UNCW's Living and Learning Community program, and support for Darwin Scholars' projects (both teaching and research)
- 2009 (the "Year of Darwin": Spring and Fall semesters): public events, speakers, programs, a scholarly symposium, and perhaps a trip (members of the UNCW community and the public) to the Galapagos and/or Patagonia.

Administrative Support might include, but is not limited to the following:

- Workload reassignment for faculty heavily invested in administrative and/or grant writing efforts
- Support for hosting speakers and for speakers' fees
- Support for publicity
- Support for designating existing resources (e.g.: The Cahill Awards, CTE curriculum grants) for scholarship and curriculum development

## POSSIBLE ELC PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

### UNCW Curriculum and Programs

Formal ELC courses similar to *Brown v. Board* model (primarily in 2009)

- Courses emphasizing evolution in individual departments
- Linked Learning Communities courses (team-taught, cross-listed; ½ of all LC's in 2009)
- Cooperation with interdisciplinary programs
  - Honors
  - SHS minor
  - MALS
- Develop interdisciplinary basic studies course "Evolution of the Universe and Life"

Trip to Galapagos (or Patagonia) for students/faculty – summer 2009

Extracurricular campus-centered activities (primarily 2009)

- Friday faculty/graduate student seminars
- Sigma Xi sponsored activities
- Professional development events for faculty (e.g., short courses on teaching evolution)

Darwin Scholars Program

- Set aside CAS/Cahill Research and CAS/CTE Teaching initiatives for evolution-related topics (1/4 – 1/2 in 2007, 2008) - "Darwin Scholars"
- Visiting scholar, e.g. 2-yr "Darwin Teaching Scholar" 2008-2010

### Educational Outreach

Teacher-centered activities (coordinate with SMEC)

- Develop educational packet for secondary/middle school science teachers (curricular materials linked to standard course of study) - 2007
- Summer Institute for teachers (sponsored by NSF, NEH, NCHC, NESCENT) - 2008
- Series of Saturday seminars with continuing education credit for local teachers - 2009
- Evening programs for local teachers - 2009

Student-centered activities 2008-2009

- Marine Quest
- Summer Ventures
- Literature Camp

### Public Events

Series of major public speakers, spring and fall 2009 (e.g., Darwin's journey, human origins, evolution and creationism)

Faculty presentations to community - 2009

- Speaker's Bureau
- Lifelong Learning Courses

Major scholarly events

- Convocation of Nobel Laureates – spring 2009
- Scholarly symposium, e.g. "Evolutionary Synthesis in Contemporary Science" – fall 2009

Related cultural events 2009

- Art exhibition
- Film series
- Theater production
- Displays (e.g., Library, World Cultures showcases, departmental displays)