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Report to Phi Beta Kappa members applying for Chapter at USF.

Alvin W. Wolfe, October 13, 1997

Subject: Phi Beta Kappa Triennial Council

This is an expanded edition of the email note I sent to the CAS Phi Beta Kappa members on September 30 and of the report I presented to the Steering Committee on October 9, about our coverage of the Phi Beta Kappa Triennial Council. Both Jan Platt, president of the Tampa Bay Phi Beta Kappa Association, and I, representing the USF faculty applying for a Chapter in the next Triennium, renewed old contacts and made lots of new ones, and learned a great deal about the Society, its modes and its moods.

I sensed a strong desire to activate the Phi Beta Kappa Society as a whole, as well as its local Chapters and Associations, toward our general mission of improving liberal education. Many want to see the Society and Chapters do more outreach, not only in relation to the Associations but into communities, especially through high schools. One program that received a lot of good notice was organized by the Washington Phi Beta Kappa Association in collaboration with a large number of the universities and colleges in the Washington area. They are working directly in high schools. We at USF might look to anything that we are doing that sounds something like that and mention it prominently in our application. I am thinking of Carl Riggs' Center for Excellence in Math and Science, and the work that Gerry Meisels is doing. I am sure that Education is working in that direction as well, but our application will focus more on the College of Arts and Sciences.

There is no doubt that the Phi Beta Kappa Society is recognizing the inevitability of technological change and concomitant effects on liberal education -- especially the opportunities for communication, and wider and faster dissemination of educational resources. I saw no opposition to such developments -- electronic enhancement of access to library-like resources and electronic mediated learning -- except that an organization as steeped in tradition as Phi Beta Kappa, founded in 1776 and maintained by members electing members in course directly for 200 years, is bound to move very cautiously. As an example of such caution, a highly pertinent one right now: they are talking a lot about having a national Phi Beta Kappa web page, talk, talk, talk, as they are trying to make it perfect before releasing it. Such extreme caution is delaying their joining the 21st century, but it does not prevent it.

For USF, we should of course call attention to our electronic library resources. We should also look for whatever else might prove that we are using electronics and computers to enhance quality rather than just quantity of data delivered.

The Council approved seven institutions to host chapters: Hendrix College, Lewis and Clark College, University of Maryland (Baltimore), St. Mary's College of Maryland (a state, not a religious school), Spelman College, Western Michigan University, Willamette University. Forty-seven had applied, and I believe 12 were visited. I had a long conversation with Burton Wheeler, the chair of the Qualifications Committee, whom I have known since the 1960s when

we were together at Washington University in St. Louis. We also learned a lot from the open discussion of the general criteria and questions and answers about each of the applying institutions. We learned a lot that should be helpful for our application.

Here are some random ideas gleaned from both the public and private sessions. Decisions to admit or reject a new chapter are not made on the basis of strict quantitative criteria but rather the Committee, and the Visitors and the Senate, are concerned about the “general tenor of the educational institution regarding the liberal arts.” Are there enough faculty concerned with liberal arts? Are enough students actually studying the liberal arts? Does the institution put enough emphasis on the liberal arts? This latter, perhaps subjective judgment, seems to be the one that hurt Florida International University during this past Triennium. Apparently, members of the Phi Beta Kappa Senate overruled the Qualifications Committee on the grounds that it did not appear to them that FIU really cared about liberal arts. FIU will be applying again, and our two applications will certainly be compared scrupulously, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

In a discussion of why institutions have been rejected in the past, the first item mentioned was quality of the library. Secondly, restriction of academic freedom (especially in regard to religious institutions) has been important. In this regard, we must remember that Phi Beta Kappa was originally founded as a secret society, secret so that its members could pursue free inquiry despite a restrictive environment. [With academic freedom and tenure under attack 230 years later, perhaps we may have to draw more upon those roots to get courage of the type our Phi Beta Kappa ancestors had. Phi Beta Kappa chapters may have to battle stealthily for free scholarship in the liberal arts tradition in the face of demands that students take only those courses absolutely required for a lucrative career and that teaching faculty be restricted to five-year contracts. I don't think we want to raise those issues in our application, but I could not resist mentioning them here.] One leader said publicly, “I know instances where Phi Beta Kappa has been responsible for the reintroduction of tenure for faculty and where Phi Beta Kappa has been responsible for the building of a wing of a library.”

In response to a query about possibly developing a matrix chart that would make it easier to compare institution, the Qualifications Committee said it rejected that idea on the grounds that it would lend itself too easily to a purely quantitative rating, whereas they wanted to retain the contextual qualities that can best be expressed by textual descriptions. Previous applications by institutions are referred to, usually to indicate that previous criticisms have been addressed.

A questioner who commented that just because an institution has a Division I athletics program it should not be assumed it does not have a quality liberal arts program. A responding official admitted to a bias against an institution that pays its coach ten to one hundred times as much as it pays its faculty leaders. He also said, “We do not ask our committee members to check their values at the door.”

A meeting of chapter representatives on the subject, “The Life of the Chapters,” introduced a set of questions that reveal the way Phi Beta Kappa is thinking. The topics included:

1. Membership roster?
2. Annual dues?
3. Meeting for election of new members in course (rather than mechanically select)?

4. Award scholarships?
5. Teaching awards?
6. Chapter Newsletter/Web page?
7. Local community projects in schools?
8. Cooperate with local PBK association?
9. Communicate with Chapter alumni?
10. Financial support from Administration?
11. Other forms of support from Institution?
12. Get in touch with entering students?

It seemed clear to me that an institutional application that suggests that the applying members would build a chapter that would work along these lines would be favored.

Finally, I am more optimistic about our own application now than I was before the Council. There is a lot of uncertainty, of course, but if we do a good job of selling USF's commitment to liberal arts education, throughout the university but especially through the College of Arts and Sciences, we can succeed. Before I went, I was thinking 50-50. I now say at least 60-40. Western Michigan made it, Univ of Maryland (Baltimore County) made it. Florida International University almost made it, and they will be applying again. Our application will certainly be compared with theirs. We must emphasize our strengths, and show how hosting a Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa at USF will further the purposes of the Society: "to recognize and encourage scholarship, friendship and cultural interests." Those original words may sound a little anachronistic, but they are still principles worth striving for in this era of efficiency, effectiveness and bottom line.

Best wishes, Alvin Wolfe

Letter by A W Wolfe to Chronicle of Higher Education

September 1996

Opinion and Letters Department
Chronicle of Higher Education
1255 23rd Street N.W.
Washington DC 20037

To the Editor:

Christopher Shea's "Lost Cachet", in the March 22 issue, really misses the essence of Phi Beta Kappa. When the Society was founded in 1776 at William and Mary it was to protect scholarship from those who would restrict their freedom of inquiry. Because the threats to that freedom were real, chapter membership had to be secret and highly select. But grade point average is not the crucial thing. Threats to academic freedom are real today. To use the vernacular, it does not take a rocket scientist to figure out that the current thinking of trustees, regents, and legislators calling for post-tenure review, five-year contracts, and abolition of tenure are serious threats to academic freedom, and that peer insistence on political correctness is a threat to academic freedom from another source. We need Phi Beta Kappa as much as its founders did, but we cannot expect that the Society will have popular appeal.

Alvin W. Wolfe
Distinguished Service Professor, Anthropology
University of South Florida, Tampa
(PBK, Nebraska 1950)

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Report to Phi Beta Kappa members applying for Chapter at USF.

Alvin W. Wolfe, April 27, 1998

Subject: Phi Beta Kappa Application

Today I received a letter from Douglas Foard, Secretary of the Phi Beta Kappa Society in which he said, "I am obliged to inform you that the University of South Florida was not selected by the committee for further study during the present 1997-2000 review cycle"(letter dated April 20, 1998). In turn, I feel as he must have, "obliged to inform you." I have since spoken with him on the phone, and while he would prefer to discuss this in a face to face meeting, he did give me a little more information from his recollections of the comments by members of the Committee on Qualifications.

First, he mentioned that only 9 of the 51 applications are being moved on to the next level, so we are one of 42 good institutions that were not selected. I don't think he told me, but I have learned that both Eckerd College and FIU are among the nine that will continue. In response to my question, he said he did not feel that geographic propinquity played a role. Eckerd's success, then, did not reduce our chances. He pointed out that last year St.Mary's College and University of Maryland Baltimore County were both successful.

He assured me that the committee's action refers specifically to the compatibility of USF's programs with "Phi Beta Kappa's own institutional objectives, especially the primacy of the liberal arts." We should understand that their decision is not a reflection upon the excellence of the many programs we offer, but only their compatibility with Phi Beta Kappa's special objectives.

They liked the Honors Program as it was presented this time. Also, the problems we had previously concerning libraries were not raised as an issue this time.

Some Committee members felt that we had a lot of courses taught by part-time faculty and graduate students. We anticipated this as an issue, but we thought we had explained it well in the application.

Compared to the expectations of the PBK Committee on Qualifications, a high proportion of Arts and Sciences students major in fields like criminology, communication and psychology, fields which they see as more professionally oriented than other "liberal arts" disciplines.

Our GED and Liberal Arts core curriculum requirements are seen as somewhat ambiguous. "Here," he said, "are areas that USF and Phi Beta Kappa must talk about to make sure that we are speaking the same language."

**Notes (by A. Wolfe) on telephone call by Alvin Wolfe and Jean Linder to Douglas Foard
(June 23, 1998).**

In this cycle there were 51 applications, and only nine were chosen to be visited on the basis of their preliminary submissions. Two of those nine are in Florida, Eckerd College and Florida International University.

This time our honors program was fine.

Concern was expressed that only 66% of the courses are taught by full-time professors (and something about the figures on this not adding up correctly).

Liberal arts requirement seems good, with a 36-hour core, but concern was expressed that there were 300 courses to choose from.

Graduation rate is low, at 46%. To get the committee to understand the value of our program, we should track the graduating students.

One committee member was quoted as saying "There are few physics majors, but tons of criminology majors."

The criteria are not very specific, but "a good institution would be one where you go for liberal arts."

New College? Not a problem this time.

It was difficult to find items in the appendices because there were no page numbers.

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[dated ca October, 1998]

President Betty Castor
Office of the President, ADM241
University of South Florida
Tampa, FL 33620

Dear President Castor:

It has only recently come to my attention that you may not have received a copy of the enclosed letter from Douglas Foard, Secretary of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, informing us that we were not selected by their Committee on Qualifications for further study during the 1997-2000 review cycle.

I apologize for my oversight in not making sure that you had a copy. I look forward to our meeting on Tuesday, October 20, when we will be able to discuss the implications of the Phi Beta Kappa Committee's decision.

By the way, I am not yet discouraged. I think that if we continue doing what in our minds will make us a better liberal arts institution, and if Phi Beta Kappa will continue to try to understand the liberal arts in the modern era, our trajectories should merge seamlessly in the first triennium of the Twenty-First Century. That's not far off at all.

Sincerely yours,

Alvin W. Wolfe
Distinguished Service Professor

Enclosure: Foard letter dtd April 20, 1998

cc: Jean Linder

Phi Beta Kappa Forum on Liberal Arts
Marshall Center, USF Club
3:30 - 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday, March 31, 1999

Brief report on meeting, Alvin Wolfe

More than twenty USF faculty members who are members of the Phi Beta Kappa Society met on Wednesday, March 31, in the first of what they anticipate will become a series of forums on how they might best apply their talents to enhancing the liberal arts emphasis at USF and, in the process, gaining authorization to establish a chapter so that the best USF students would have the right to be inducted into this most prestigious of honor societies.

Alvin Wolfe, Distinguished Service Professor of Anthropology, welcomed the group and thanked the USF Club for making their facilities available for the meeting and thanked Dean Robert Sullins for making the refreshments possible. He introduced the forum with the following comments:

The Phi Beta Kappa Society, founded at William and Mary in 1776, authorizes new chapters to institutions only upon application by faculty members of the institution who are Phi Beta Kappa members. When the Society was founded in 1776 at William and Mary it was to protect scholarship from those who would restrict their freedom of inquiry. Often that history is forgotten as we think of it merely as an "honor society." It is more. Because the threats to that freedom were real, chapter membership had to be secret and highly select. But grade point average was certainly not the crucial thing. Threats to academic freedom are real today. We need Phi Beta Kappa as much as its founders did, but we cannot expect that the Society will have popular appeal.

In 1998, we faculty members at USF were turned down once again. I will give you a few details about that, but I don't want to dwell upon it. My belief is that our USF Phi Beta Kappa faculty should become very active in the USF academic community so that we will have more influence on instilling and maintaining in this university the kind of liberal arts program, including both curriculum and surrounding activities, that will make the Phi Beta Kappa Society want our affiliation. Forums like this one today might help us generate the energy and activity that we need to accomplish that end. At first, I thought we would only have Phi Beta Kappa members here, but gradually it opened up to others, those with special interest in the curriculum of liberal arts, then those with special interest in honors (like Sigma Xi members), and then everybody.

Professor Wolfe proceeded to describe some of the circumstances of USF's 1997 application having been turned down by the Phi Beta Kappa Society:

On April 27, 1998, I received a letter from Douglas Foard, Secretary of the Phi Beta Kappa Society in which he said, "I am obliged to inform you that the University of South Florida was not selected by the committee for further study during the present 1997-2000 review cycle"(letter dated April 20, 1998). He did not provide much in the way of detailed analysis of our application, and encouraged me to visit him in

Washington to discuss it further. Instead, I spoke with him on the phone, along with Jean Linder who had facilitated our application as a representative of the Provost's Office. He gave us a little more information from his recollections of the comments by members of the Committee on Qualifications.

First, Doug Foard mentioned that only 9 of the 51 applications were being moved on to the next level, so we are one of 42 good institutions that were not selected. Both Eckerd College and FIU are among the nine that will continue. In response to my question, he said he did not feel that geographic propinquity played a role. Eckerd's success, then, did not reduce our chances. He pointed out that in the last triennium two institutions in the same metropolitan area, St. Mary's College and University of Maryland Baltimore County, were both successful.

Secretary Foard assured me that the committee's action referred specifically to the compatibility of USF's programs with "Phi Beta Kappa's own institutional objectives, especially the primacy of the liberal arts." We should understand that their decision is not a reflection upon the excellence of the many programs we offer, but only their compatibility with Phi Beta Kappa's special objectives.

They liked the Honors Program as it was presented this time. Also, the problems we had previously concerning libraries were not raised as an issue this time.

Some Committee members felt that we had a lot of courses taught by part-time faculty and graduate students. We anticipated this as an issue, but we thought we had explained it well in the application.

Compared to the expectations of the PBK Committee on Qualifications, a high proportion of Arts and Sciences students major in fields like criminology, communication and psychology, fields which they see as more professionally oriented than other "liberal arts" disciplines. One committee member was quoted as saying, "There are few physics majors, but tons of criminology majors."

They were concerned about our having what they considered a low graduation rate, quoted as being "forty-six percent."

Our GED and Liberal Arts core curriculum requirements are seen as somewhat ambiguous: "There is a 36-hour core, but 300 courses to choose from." "Here," he said, "are areas that USF and Phi Beta Kappa must talk about to make sure that we are speaking the same language." From the Phi Beta Kappa perspective, a "good institution is one where one would go for liberal arts." I know that this time Florida International University passed Phi Beta Kappa muster, while in the prior triennial review period, Florida International was viewed as "not putting sufficient emphasis on the liberal arts." We have to become that kind of university or at least we have to have that image.

Before introducing the Panel of faculty members who would raise issues for discussion by all participants in the forum, Professor Wolfe noted that the discussion was not to be limited to the structure or content of the "Liberal Arts Curriculum," but was to be an open forum on any aspect of liberal arts relevant to our intentions to establish a chapter here. Mention was made that this discussion today could still have an impact on the Liberal Arts Education platform of the USF Strategic Plan 2000, even though the report of the Liberal Arts Task Force has already been submitted to the Provost by Task Force chair Sarah Deats, Professor and Chair of the Department of English.

The panel which would start off this current discussion of liberal arts consisted of College of Arts and Sciences Phi Beta Kappa members Carol Jablonski, Professor of Communication, and Gerry Meisels, Professor of Chemistry and former provost at USF, both of whom had a lot to do with developing USF's current Liberal Arts Curriculum, along with Mark Amen, Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, where 85% of the curriculum is taught, and Robert Sullins, USF Dean of Undergraduate Studies, who has considerable responsibility for administering it. Another "expert" on hand, to fill out the panel, was John Richmond, Professor of Music, and the chair of the General Education Council.

Many issues were raised and discussed in some detail, and not always with consensus among the participants.

Professor Meisels, former provost of the university who now specializes in improving science education at all levels in the Florida educational system, made some strong points about USF's close cooperation with the Community College system in developing an integrated system of liberal arts education for the entire state. As this becomes more successful, all the students experience improved opportunities in a rapidly changing world of work and professions, where, he noted, Americans are now making an average of seven major career changes. Without a solid basis in liberal arts we could not adapt so well to the changing environment.

Dean Robert Sullins also spoke of the University's articulation with the Community College system in positive terms, as a contribution that this institution is making to the general education of the entire community served. Professor Wolfe pointed out that the Phi Beta Kappa Society itself is beginning to recognize the importance, the value, of fostering liberal arts in communities, in contrast to the image that many people have of an "honor society" interested primarily in grades and the college curriculum.

Active in the discussion, in addition to those already named, included faculty members Carl Riggs, Professor of Biology and former Vice President for Academic Affairs, Charles Arnade, Professor of International Studies, Leon Mandell, Professor of Chemistry and former dean of the College of Natural Sciences, John Shively, Professor Emeritus, College of Medicine, Spencer Cahill, Professor in the Bachelor of Independent Studies Program, Mike Gibbons, Professor of Government and International Affairs, and Jean Linder, Director of the Sun Coast Area Teacher Training Honors Program.

There were, of course, some pessimistic statements and questions -- "Is it not more trouble to go through the agony of preparing a Phi Beta Kappa chapter application than it is worth?" "They will never grant chapter status to us because we are not the small liberal arts college that they favor but rather we are a huge university that serves many more students and many more purposes." "It is all politics and bureaucratic nonsense anyway."

However, "at the end of the day," there was considerable consensus that these discussions and the effort that goes toward PBK chapter status should have the effect of improving liberal education at USF.

Memo April 5, 2000

To: Provost Tighe

From: Alvin W. Wolfe

Subject: Phi Beta Kappa Application, due October 2000

About twenty of the more than a hundred USF Faculty members have been discussing the wisdom of applying once again for a chapter at USF. Despite the downsides pointed out by some, the optimists prevail and we are asking your help once again in preparing the lengthy and complicated preliminary application. In 1997 you assigned Jean Linder to that task and she did a great job. Although it is billed as a "faculty application," there is no way we could do it alone.

Your office has already helped us by polling the departments to identify Phi Beta Kappa faculty appointed since the fall of 1997. As I am sure you know, there is much much more to do. The preliminary application is not something that uses boiler plates. I have received the new application form from the Society, and will be happy to go over it with whoever you assign to help us.

Acting President Peck spoke well of the Phi Beta Kappa enterprise some weeks ago, and we were planning to meet with him. Subsequently, he felt we should wait until the new president was announced. Now, that original meeting is no longer scheduled, and I personally think it would be better to have something underway before we try to raise the issue with President Genshaft, who must have more urgent things on her mind right now. In any event, if we are to do it, we must get started now because the application is due in Washington on November 1, 2000 for approval at the 2003 Triennial Council.

Personally, I believe it would be good to schedule a meeting of all interest Phi Beta Kappa faculty members, and have you come as a helpful guest to talk about how we might organize this new application. We have not scheduled any such meeting yet. The Alumni Association of PBK of the Greater Tampa Bay Area is having its Spring 2000 meeting and dinner at the University Club in Tampa, and it would be useful to be able to make some report to that group about our plans. The president of the Association is Dean Lloyd Chapin of Eckerd College, an institution that anticipates the announcement of its new chapter at the 2000 Triennial Council in October.

We will be looking forward to hearing from you. We, i.e., myself and some number of the faculty members, would also be willing to meet with you at your convenience. Although we are not formally organized, I attach a list of the twenty-some faculty members who have shown significant interest. This does not mean that those not mentioned have no interest in the application process, only that they have not signaled it explicitly to me.

Attachment: List of twenty-some active Phi Beta Kappa members.

Potential members of the PBK Faculty Steering Committee for Chapter Application: (draft 4/4/00)

Charles Arnade, International Affairs, GIA
Jess Binford, Chemistry
Nancy Cole, Theater, Fine Arts
Sara Deats, English, CAS
James Halsted, Criminology, CAS
Alan Hevner, ISDS, Business
Gerry Meisels, One100, Center for Science Literacy
William Murray, Classics, History, CAS
Carl Riggs, Biology, Science & Mathematics
Alvin Wolfe, Anthropology, CAS

Other active faculty:

Michael Angrosino, Anthropology, CAS
Debra Chandler, Soc Foundations, EDU
Margaret Fisher, BIS
Christina Greene, History, CAS
Kathleen Heide, Criminology, CAS
Doug Rohrer, Psych, CAS
Jay Coble, Arts, Fine Arts
Jan Pipkin, IT
Leon Mandell, Chemistry
John Shively, Medicine

News from USF Phi Beta Kappa Members
From Alvin Wolfe, April 12, 2000

University of South Florida faculty members who are Phi Beta Kappa are getting organized again to apply for chapter status during this coming triennium. October is the due date. Both the Interim President, Richard Peck, and Provost Thomas Tighe have shown interest. Representatives are scheduled to meet with the President Peck on Tuesday, April 18, to discuss it and to open communication with President-elect Judy Genshaft.

Meanwhile the faculty members have been engaging in discussions, mostly through our PBK email list, about several important issues:

- (1) One of these focuses on the invitation from member Mike Angrosino for Phi Beta Kappa faculty to participate in an undergraduate research program initiated and funded by Vice President for Research George Newkome. This is a part of USF's move toward Research I status. With Phi Beta Kappa involved, we will help ensure that it is not all technology-oriented.
- (2) Another issue being discussed is the set of criteria used by Phi Beta Kappa chapters in selecting student members. Concern has been expressed by Fine Arts faculty that Phi Beta Kappa may be too strict in discounting "studio arts" courses. The discussion has to do with the degree to which studio courses contribute to the liberal arts as opposed to professional applied arts.
- (3) A third issue raised is whether new legislation in Florida is moving too narrowly in its emphasis on reading, writing and arithmetic and thereby causing schools and students to neglect the arts and humanities, both expressive and relational.

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MEMO: Monday, April 24, 2000

TO: President Peck
Provost Tighe

FROM: Alvin Wolfe (spokesman for Phi Beta Kappa faculty)

This memo is merely to cover a copy of the application form that Phi Beta Kappa is using for this next triennium, application due November 1, 2000 for the 2000-2003 review cycle. Attached as well is a copy of the current Phi Beta Kappa publication, The Founding of New Chapters.

I look forward to our scheduled meeting with President Peck at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, May 2.

Attachments

Phi Beta Kappa
Issues arising from the USF 1997 application

Only 66% of undergraduate courses taught by full-time professors (numbers did not add up).

Honors program fine.

Liberal Arts Curriculum. 36-hour core, but 300 courses to choose from!

Graduation rate is low, at 46%. To get the committee to understand the value of our programs, track the graduating students....

“There are few physics majors, but tons of criminology majors.” Perhaps too many “professional schools” within the College of Arts and Sciences.

New College? Not a problem this time.

No page numbers on the document made it hard for committee members to check on different items.

- News for USF Phi Beta Kappa Members

From Alvin Wolfe, May 3, 2000

May 1: Ten of us met in the USF Club Campus View to discuss our approach to the meeting with Interim President Peck on the following day. Present were Charles Arnade, Nancy Cole, Sarah Deats, Gerry Meisels, William Murray, Marth Rearick, Carl Riggs, Chris Steele, Irving Weiner, and Alvin Wolfe.

We tried to keep the discussion forward looking rather than continuing to bemoan our past failures to make the cut. Nonetheless, areas we want to improve continue to include: percentage of courses taught by full-time professors (66% considered low by PBK); honors program (better if it were done as regular faculty assignment rather than as overload); liberal arts curriculum (make sure its purposes and accomplishments are clear in the application); graduation rate (considered by PBK as low at 46%, but perhaps we can improve our explanation that a part-time student body has some benefit for a liberal education); proportion of our majors that are in professional training rather than liberal arts (again, if we don't want to change that, we have to explain it better).

May 2: Seven of us (Arnade, Cole, Deats, Meisels, Murray, Riggs, and Wolfe) had an hour-long meeting with Interim President Dick Peck on Tuesday morning. He impressed us with his knowledge about our situation. Being a Phi Beta Kappa member himself, it was not difficult to convince him of its worth. He will visit the Phi Beta Kappa headquarters on a forthcoming trip to Washington, something that Betty Castor had wanted to do for us but did not get the occasion. President Peck took notes on everything we said, partly to use on that trip and partly to brief President Genshaft. He saw no reason to doubt that she would be fully behind our application, and he offered to encourage the support of the Provost and of the several relevant deans, Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and Dean of Fine Arts.

We do expect to have logistical support from the Office of the Provost as we had last time, some person assigned to pull the data together and take the lead in drafting the application. Last time we had great help from Jean Linder, but I think we may have relied too much on her and we did not take enough initiative on our own. This time I think it would be helpful if we ourselves (Phi Beta Kappa faculty or a committee of us) met regularly so that we would have continuous involvement and would not have to rush at the end.

After the meeting, I communicated with Associate Provost Catherine Batsche briefly at lunch. Also, I let all three of those deans know that we want their support and their involvement. I am in the process of making appointments for a delegation from PBK to meet with each of them. Getting the involvement of the deans may have been a weakness during the last application, although there was no message to that effect from the Committee on Qualifications.

Let us continue to use the pbk list for our discussions between face-to-face meetings.

--Alvin

News for USF Phi Beta Kappa Members
From Alvin Wolfe, June 6, 2000

Four of us met with David Stamps, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Tuesday June 6, to enlist his support for the effort to get a USF Chapter. Present were Charles Arnade, William Murray, Carl Riggs, and Alvin Wolfe. Sara Deats wanted to be there, but was teaching a class at that hour.

We found Dean Stamps to be very receptive, even enthusiastic. He suggested we work with the CAS Advisory Council through its newly elected chair, Bob Potter, to get the issue directly before the CAS faculty. David saw our effort as fitting in well with the data collection that is going on now for the new SACS accreditation process.

Dean Stamps told us that President Peck was planning a Washington trip in the middle of June and would be trying to visit the Phi Beta Kappa Society at that time.

Dean Stamps also agreed to meet with us again, from time to time, as appropriate to see that all those who will be involved in the PBK application will be well informed of all the arguments that arise. I won't review them here since we have touched on them in many previous messages in the list. (List users are aware, are you not, that through your web browser you can review all the past messages or you can search for messages with a particular content. Go to <http://www.cas.usf.edu/cgi-bin/lyris.pl?enter=pbk> and follow instructions.)

Best wishes. –Alvin Wolfe

PRESIDENTS OFFICE

Subject: Phi Beta Kappa Visit (by USF Interim President Peck)

June 15, 2000

Washington, D.C.

I met with Dr. Doug Foard, who is secretary (or 'Director') of Phi Beta Kappa. He brought out his notes, taken during conversations with the interview team, and we went through those notes. While there were a number of positive things offered by the committee he and I discussed only those items that remained at question.

1. According to our application, two thirds of our classes are taught by full-time faculty. Eleven percent are taught by adjunct or part-time. Those numbers do not add up to 100%. There was some question as to whether they were inaccurate, or simply careless. Nothing in our application explained why the numbers didn't add up to 100%.
2. The application pages were not numbered, and in one case had been out of order and difficult to follow -- not a way to win friends with the committee.
3. The committee believed that while the 36-hour core curriculum is a good idea and a good curriculum, they thought that 300 courses from which to choose those 36 were too many.
4. Graduation rate was listed as 46% (low), but in addition a number of numerals in that category didn't add up to 100%.

It's here where I made a point in conversation that Doug Foard believes should be included in our application, and that is that it's not possible for students who take "a full load" consisting of 12 hours, or even 15, to graduate in four years. So many of our students work part-time that our student population cannot match the graduation rate of a place like, say, Williams College. I offered him a different way of reading the numbers. If our students are regarded not as individuals, but are counted as FTE students, that number of FTE students, divided by the number of Baccalaureate degrees issued in the year, results in a figure of something like 4.3, or 4.3 years for the average full-time student here to graduate. That makes our rate more than acceptable. An explanation needs to be offered, a very very brief one, as to why many comprehensive universities should be evaluated on terms that apply to them rather than only to small liberal arts colleges.

5. The core curriculum, outside the Honors Program, is vague.
6. We should probably explain that Criminology is not Criminal Justice. That is, it's not a "cop shop" but indeed a theoretical and academic pursuit. I have no doubt of that, but it's a department that not all small colleges have, and therefore was something that was questioned by a couple of members of the team.

7. The most positive response I got from him was by showing him the layout of two colleges -- a new college of community and professional programs, pulled out of Arts and Sciences, and the remaining Arts and Sciences College, which looks very much like a traditional model that Phi Beta Kappa members are used to seeing and understanding. I shared that with him and watched him smile, lean back in his chair, and relax, as if to imply by body language "that takes care of it" -- "it" being the objection to the number of professional programs in the College of Arts and Sciences, which makes it differ from that Williams College model.
8. We talked for some time about Florida International University, which is likely to get its chapter this year. What had happened was, six years ago they applied and, were found wanting, although their Honors College was favorably received. But the folks at FIU, particularly the Dean of Arts and Sciences, took to heart the objections registered by the interview team and revised and resubmitted their application. The revisions were right on point. The application was admired, and has gone to the entire council, that is the big governing body. Doug Foard believes that they will receive their chapter this October. One of us probably ought to speak to the Arts and Sciences Dean at Florida International and ask how they revised their initial application.

It might be a good idea for someone, probably Marci Finkelstein, to attend the Phi Beta Kappa council meeting in October, in Philadelphia. That will be a bit late for the application that we have underway, but she may be able to make the kind of personal contacts that would allow our application to be read more favorably.

That's what the hour's conversation with Doug Foard amounted to. He is most agreeable. He understands (as does the new head of the committee -- herself a faculty member at a comprehensive university rather than a small liberal arts college) that we are different and need to be considered slightly differently. But the fact remains that Phi Beta Kappa has a set of standards to which we must adhere if we expect to join the organization.

MEMORANDUM Date: Saturday, August 12, 2000

TO: Interim Dean Renu Khator and Interim Provost David Stamps, with copies to President Genshaft

FROM: Alvin W. Wolfe, Distinguished Service Professor, speaking for the Phi Beta Kappa faculty members who are applying for a chapter at USF

SUBJECT: Urgent need for coordinated development of application

The preliminary application must be at the Phi Beta Kappa Society in Washington on November 1. Officially the application is to come from PBK faculty members, but the application asks for so many specific details that it requires coordinated data collection using resources from Institutional Research, the Office of the Provost and the College of Arts and Sciences. We need also to take into account faculty and programs from Fine Arts, the Honors Program, and programs at branch campuses.

We started this process some months ago, and thought we were on schedule. Now, with changes in both the College and the Office of the Provost, we are not sure where we stand. The Phi Beta Kappa faculty are willing to do a lot - for example, we have been working on the section on faculty lists, and Sara Deats and others have agreed to draft an introduction - but we need a focus for the coordinated effort, a focus in the form of a person assigned to pull the data from various sources and to integrate these data into a product according with the rather rigid PBK-approved format.

President Genshaft will be speaking to the Annual Meeting of the Tampa Bay Phi Beta Kappa Association on October 17. It is our hope that we can have our draft document ready by October 1 so that she might draw upon it, or at least be able to mention our progress on that occasion. So that she knows that is our intention, I am sending a copy of this memo to her.

The faculty are very grateful for what has already been done at both the College and Provost level, but we are concerned that, with all the other important things you have to do in your new positions, you might forget the urgency of this issue. I look forward to hearing from either or both of you. You may reach me at 974-0794 or wolfe@chumal.cas.usf.edu.