

STATEMENT ON SERVICE

JIM WISEMAN

In my last job, which was a visiting position, almost all of my service was to the department, and I had very few college-wide responsibilities. I didn't think too much about it at the time, but my feeling was that while I had the interest and opportunity to contribute a lot to the department, the college itself was running fine, and didn't need or ask much from me beyond my teaching. Here at Agnes Scott, I feel not just a responsibility for but a real interest in service to the entire college and academic community – I'm part of a bigger endeavor, and the things I do can make a real difference. To illustrate this feeling, and where it's taken me, I'll discuss a few of my service experiences (PDC, SpARC, dual-degree advising, and organizing conference sessions) in detail. These are not necessarily the experiences that I've enjoyed the most (that was definitely guest coaching the basketball team), but they've been the most useful to me in learning how I can contribute. (I've attached a longer list of some of my service experiences to the end of this statement.)

Since 2006 I've been on the Professional Development Committee, where our main job is to make decisions and recommendations on funding for our colleagues. Overall, I've enjoyed it, although it's a lot more fun being able to say yes to people than having to say no. The best part has been finding out what other faculty members are up to. Before I joined the committee, I had no idea how many really interesting projects, both research and teaching, were going on. And while I'm probably never going to contribute anything to, say, medieval history, it's nice to feel that as a PDC member I am, in a small way, helping make it possible for other people to contribute. At a larger school, I might not have that chance.

The downside, of course, is that there are more exciting projects than there is money to fully fund them. We've had to make some very difficult choices, giving people less funding when we know that they could make good use of more, simply because there's only so much money to go around. (The choices are especially hard when student researchers are involved, as they often are.) I don't like that part of the committee's work at all, but I suppose that it's been a good lesson in making unpleasant decisions. What makes it tolerable is the fact that, as my fellow committee member Eileen Cooley has pointed out, everyone involved is very respectful of the projects that we're evaluating. Overall, I value my role on the PDC because I think what we're doing – making sometimes hard decisions that can substantially help our colleagues do important and exciting work – is worthwhile.

I've represented the PDC and the natural and mathematical sciences conference on the ad hoc committee on student evaluations since the end of the '06/'07 academic year. One thing I've learned from that is the enormous amount of work it takes to run the college. Even our small, simple task of revising the student evaluations has taken the seven of us hours of meetings, hundreds of emails, and dozens of drafts, and we're not done yet. But what's really struck me is the attitude of the committee members – we have a job, it's worth doing, and we're going to try to do it right. People joke and complain, of course, but everyone takes it seriously.

It's been fun to see the different ways people approach the problems, and try to combine the best parts of each idea.

I've been on the SpARC committee since 2006. In '06/'07, Doug Falen and I were the publicity subcommittee, where, in addition to the usual committee work of evaluating proposals, communicating with speakers, chairing sessions, and assessing presentations, we were responsible for soliciting proposals and advertising the talks through email, the web, ASC-TV, posters, fliers, table tents, and word of mouth. This year, I'm SpARC co-chair (with Katherine Smith). Since most of the work for SpARC is in the spring, I'm still figuring out exactly what that entails, but I know that there will be a lot of details and organization to take care of. Fortunately, we'll have a lot of help (last year's committee had twelve members), and I'm looking forward to learning how to manage a big group and getting better at delegating responsibility.

I really enjoy the SpARC committee. It gives me the chance to work with people from all over the campus community. There are the faculty members on the committee, from many different disciplines, as well as the faculty and students giving presentations. And as chairs, Katherine and I will be working closely with a lot of different college offices, including the Dean of the College, Office Services, Facilities, Food Services, the Center for Writing and Speaking, ITS, and probably more that I don't know about yet. The best part is that when all of us are done, we have something big to show for our work – a full day highlighting student achievement.

I've been the advisor for the 3-2 dual-degree engineering program with Georgia Tech since 2006. I talk with interested incoming students about the program, whether it's something they might want to do, and what to do now to keep their options open. With a lot of help from Jennifer Cannady in Academic Advising, I guide the upper-class students through the (surprisingly complicated) application process, and fill out official recommendation forms. I found the job very challenging at first, as I tried to learn all the rules and procedures, many of which apparently aren't written down anywhere, but now I really enjoy it. I get to talk with some very bright, motivated students, and help them move toward their goals. It's good to know that when they get to Georgia Tech (and so far all of our applicants have been accepted), their Agnes Scott education will help them enormously as they become engineers, and it's good to feel that I've had some part in that.

I have co-organized two special sessions in dynamical systems (my research area) at American Mathematical Society meetings in the last couple of years. It had never really occurred to me before that someone had to organize sessions – they were always just there. But I and some of my friends in the field felt that recent sessions had gotten too specialized and narrow, of interest to fewer and fewer people. Because we thought that it was bad for the field and boring for us (not necessarily in that order), we decided to organize a session ourselves. It turned out to be a little more work than we were expecting, but also more rewarding. By far the hardest part was trying to get some of the potential speakers to make any kind of scheduling commitment, but it all worked out eventually, and we ended up with a successful and interesting (at least in our opinion) session. The second time I was able to apply some of the lessons I had learned, and things were much easier. Again, the organizers were very pleased with the session. I wouldn't say that I've enjoyed organizing the sessions (although it hasn't been too bad, at least

the second time), but it's definitely been worthwhile – I feel that I've contributed something valuable to the research community.

All of these service experiences, as well as others that I haven't discussed, have helped me better understand what I can contribute that will be most rewarding for the college community and for myself. I have valued learning about and contributing to my colleagues' activities (as with the PDC), working directly with and for students (as with SpARC and the dual-degree advising), and interacting with people across the entire college community (as with SpARC and the evaluations committee). I want to continue with these and similar activities, and I also want to learn more about the big picture – how the college runs, what the faculty's role is in running it, and how I contribute to that. My primary focus will always be my own classes, but it's important to me to be a part of something bigger, and to contribute in places other than the classroom.

Service to the college

- Professional Development Committee, 2006-present
- SpARC (co-chair (with Katherine Smith), 2007-present; publicity committee, 2006-2007)
- Ad hoc committee on student evaluations, 2007-present
- Library Advisory Group, 2006-present
- Natural and Mathematical Sciences Conference co-convener, 2006-present

Service to the students

- Dual-degree engineering program faculty advisor, 2006-present
- Infinity Club (math club) faculty advisor, 2006-present

Service to the profession

- Co-organizer, Special Session on Dynamical Systems, AMS Spring Southeastern Section Meeting, Davidson, NC, March 2007
- Co-organizer, AMS-SIAM Special Session on Contemporary Dynamical Systems, Joint Mathematics Meetings, San Antonio, TX, January 2006
- Reviewer for *Mathematical Reviews*, 2005-present
- Referee for *International Journal of Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences*, *Topology and its Applications*, *Mathematics Magazine*

Service to the community

- Gardened with Trees Atlanta for Community Day, May 2007
- Planted grass at United Methodist Children's Home for Inaugural Outreach Day, April 2007
- Packed meals for Project Open Hand for Community Day, May 2006