

**Visit of Donna Lisker, Dean of the College and Vice-President for Campus Life,
Smith College**

7 November, 2017

Meeting with PhD candidates

“Does Gender Matter: Successfully Navigating Your PhD Program”

12:00-13:30, Spiegelzaal

Gender creates, for both men and women, a complicated set of expectations, resources, and obstacles in starting an academic career. The demands and outlooks of friends, family, advisers, and colleagues are all shaped, sometimes subtly sometimes not, by evolving and varied understandings of gender. Donna Lisker has devoted her career to helping students and staff in American universities to create a more supportive educational environment, particularly with regard to gender issues. In this meeting she would like to facilitate an informal and free-ranging discussion in which FASoS PhD candidates reflect on whether, and if so how, gender has played a role in their academic careers thus far.

Meeting with PhD supervisors, co-supervisors, and potential supervisors

“Recognizing the Role of Gender in Academic Advising”

16:00-17:30, Spiegelzaal

Supervising PhD candidates can involve a complex balancing act. Supervisors oversee and aid candidates in conducting research and crafting their arguments; they manage candidates (especially in the Netherlands) as contract employees; and often they mentor and assist candidates in their personal development during a formative period in their lives. Gender can inform those and other aspects of the candidate-supervisor relationship in ways which we may or may not be conscious of. Donna Lisker has devoted her career to helping students and staff in American universities to create a more supportive educational environment, particularly with regard to gender issues. In this meeting she will lead an informal discussion with FASoS staff regarding gender and PhD advising. What, if any, differences do supervisors see between supervising female and male PhDs? Throughout the discussion Prof. Lisker will offer insights from her research and best practices based on her experiences at Duke University and Smith College.



Donna Lisker

Donna Lisker was appointed Dean of the College and Vice-President of Campus Life at Smith College in July 2014. In that role, she oversees all things undergraduate, from first-year orientation through commencement, and serves on the President's Cabinet. Her team pays particular attention to the integration of students' lives inside and outside the classroom, and will be focusing on student leadership initiatives in the coming months.

Prior to coming to Smith, Donna had a 15-year career at Duke University in Durham, NC. From 2007-2014, she served as the Associate Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Education. Her portfolio encompassed coordination of all aspects of the undergraduate experience – academic, residential, social and co-curricular. In 2004 Donna founded the Baldwin Scholars, Duke's prestigious women's leadership program, and served as its co-director until her departure from Duke. From 1999-2007, Donna was Director of the Duke University Women's Center, where she led the undergraduate research component of the Duke University Women's Initiative.

A native of Philadelphia, Donna received her B.A. from Williams College, and her M.A. and Ph.D. in English from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She's married to Peter Schwaller, an open-source software development manager, and they have two college-age daughters, Samantha and Veronica.