interfaculty programs are growing rapidly, with enrollments up 47 percent from academic year 1997 through 2004. (In the same period, humanities Ph.D. enrollment rose 6 percent, social-sciences enrollment declined more than 6 percent, and enrollment in the smaller life sciences, physical sciences, and engineering and applied sciences programs rose 16 percent, 33 percent, and 78 percent, respectively.) The faculty has an obvious interest in coordinating the relative shifts in student populations with growth in its own ranks.

Skocpol noted the opportunity for broad analysis of each of the traditional divisions and their individual programs. Understanding their admissions selectiveness and yield, time to degree, placement, and other factors might reveal practices that could inform and improve Ph.D. education overall. In data distributed to the faculty at its November 8 meeting, for example, Skocpol pointed out that the average time to degree in the humanities and social sciences has been rising, to 8.1 years and 6.9 years, respectively; and in natural sciences, declining to 5.9 years.

She also displayed the years devoted to each Ph.D. degree earned for students ad-