

**Provost’s Advisory Council
Summary of November 3, 2016 Meeting
8:30-10 am, Lynch Center, Fulton 515**

Laura O’Dwyer (Chair)	Stephanie Berzin	Gregory Kalscheur, S.J.
Christopher Conostas	Thomas Crea	Thomas Wall
Anthony Annunziato	Kent Greenfield	Joseph Du Pont
William Keane	Sharon Beckman	John Rakestraw
Patricia Rigglin	Mariela Paez	Margaret Loughman
Jonathan Laurence	James Bretzke, S.J.	Craig Ford
Can Erbil	Theresa O’Keefe	David Quigley
Judith Clair	Claudia Pouravelis	Billy Soo
Jane Ashley	Sasha Tomic	Akua Sarr
William Fehder	Stanton Wortham	Jessica Pesce

1. **The summary of the October 6, 2016 meeting was approved.** It will be sent to the President’s Office. All summaries are posted on the Provost’s Office website; members are encouraged to share them with colleagues.

2. Update on NEASC reaccreditation process—Robert Newton

Bob Newton joined the group to provide an update on the reaccreditation process. The commission’s visiting team will visit BC in March 2017, and our self-study must be submitted by the end of January. Donna Shalala, former President of the University of Miami and current President of the Clinton Foundation, will chair the committee. The self-study draft is complete and is currently being reviewed by the Provost, EVP, and President. The report is 100 single-spaced pages long, and includes about 400 links and 700 pages of supporting documentation, such as the faculty handbook.

This is Bob Newton’s fourth time through the reaccreditation process. He reports that the emphasis has changed each time, and it is now more demanding than in previous years due to changing relationships between accrediting boards and for-profit institutions. Even though BC is a non-profit, the accreditation process is similar for all institutions. Some areas of focus have changed since the last round of accreditation. The standard formerly called “faculty” has become “teaching, learning, and scholarship.” Separate categories for library resources, information resources, physical resources, technological resources, and financial resources have all been condensed into “institutional resources.” A new standard for “educational effectiveness” has been added. The visiting committee is expected to focus on this newly added standard to see how the institution has responded. Visitors will be looking to see how effectively BC has used its resources and programs for its students, with a particular focus on outcomes and assessment.

The goal of the self-study report is to describe how the institution has addressed each standard. The report should be broken down into 30% description, 60% appraisal, and 10% projection, where the projection highlights selected areas for improvement. BC’s report also

includes sections on four special areas of interest to the university: integrated science, core curriculum, student formation, and our emerging strategic plan. Adding these sections will help us get feedback for future planning.

A Council member asked what the outcome of the visit will be. Bob Newton said the visiting committee will provide a report that is about 20-25 pages long, as well as recommendations on a few areas to pay attention to for our 5th year report in 2022. David Quigley added that there are three possible outcomes: continued accreditation, probation, or withdrawal of accreditation. Accreditation is linked to access to federal financial aid funds, which is why the process is so important. In the last report, BC was asked to pay particular attention to assessment of student learning. That has led to the development of the E1A forms, other departmental changes, and the use of assessment for budget reallocation and planning.

Another Council member asked about the makeup of the visiting committee. BC recommended names for the committee and the chair that included people we thought might be able to help us improve. Many are from institutions we aspire to emulate in various ways. We will know the makeup of the committee by early 2017.

3. New Dean's introduction—Stanton Wortham, Lynch School of Education

There are three new Deans this academic year. Two are new to BC and have joined this Council. We would like to hear their visions for their schools.

Stanton Wortham joins BC from the University of Pennsylvania. He said he feels BC is a good place to be leading a school of education because the Lynch School is doing very well, and it is situated in a larger community context where the goal is to help improve society. Nationally, however, schools of education are having a difficult time. There has been a 32% decline in students taking teacher education classes in the last five years nationwide. The broader picture nationally includes the vilification of teaching as a profession and of schools of education. There is a well-funded movement towards licensing teachers through certification instead of graduate training, as well as through other types of organizations that are not attached to universities. Teach for America (TFA) and other organizations are trying to encourage people to go into teaching, but they do not emphasize the specialized knowledge required to be a teacher. Some national leaders are even saying that schools of education should be shut down.

At the Lynch School, they are trying to respond to the crisis in teacher education in two ways. First, they are reexamining what they are doing and how they can position themselves for this new world. The school has excellent educational leadership and teacher preparation programs with alumni who are doing well. Second, they are looking to see if there are other kinds of programs they could offer, including executive education, online and hybrid programs, and programs focusing on measurement and statistics (a strength of the ERME department). The Lynch School also has great expertise in international higher education which might be a building block for future programs or collaboration with leaders in other countries.

As part of this self-examination, the school is looking at what is distinctive about LSOE. Its mission is to enhance the human condition and to make the world more just. Other institutions are more competition-focused than LSOE; the Lynch School has great camaraderie and support, which has led to greater cooperation. American education has recently become obsessed with vocational and content-based competencies. Venture capital funding is being directed toward technology to make stackable credits and unbundled education a reality. Stanton Wortham feels that this runs contrary to the goal of developing young people. BC has an emphasis on student formation and educating the whole person; this is what sets the Lynch School apart.

A Council member asked what might encourage young people to go into the field of teaching. Stanton Wortham said that teaching is highly respected in other parts of the world, but our country is seeing a structural change. As the Baby Boomers retire, the number of teachers will decrease. Younger people are interested in service and giving back, which is why TFA has been successful, but it is not successful at retaining teachers. Retention is difficult because the field does not pay well and the current test-driven environment enforces serious consequences for teachers whose scores do not meet certain goals. Stanton feels that schools need to provide a better environment for young teachers that will encourage them to stay.

4. Core Renewal—Greg Kalscheur, S.J., Mary Crane, Charles Keenan

Greg Kalscheur said that the core renewal fits in well with Stanton Wortham's discussion of the importance of student formation. Core renewal is about integration, not about unbundling education. The current core footprint from 1991 still remains, while the renewal process since 2012 has sought to create a deeper sense of engagement and to promote integration and reflection in courses. The new core features larger, team-taught classes on complex problems and smaller, tandem-taught classes on enduring questions. They are designed to promote interdisciplinarity.

Complex problems courses are 6-credits, fulfilling two requirements. They are taught by two faculty from different departments and feature a joint lecture once a week, smaller labs once a week, and once a week reflections with faculty members, guest speakers, and field trips. Some examples are courses on climate change and performing politics.

Enduring questions classes are two separate, but linked, 3-credit courses. The faculty members collaborate on their syllabi, and the classes are capped at 19 students each. The classes meet in reflection sessions four times per semester. Some example topics are the relationship between justice and the environment, humans and nature, and living in the material world. There will be 13 new pairs of these classes in 2017-18, the third year of pilot classes.

The program is growing; there are close to 1000 seats available for the 2017-18 year, a marked increase from the approximately 300 spots in the first year of the pilot. The program has involved faculty from various schools at BC, including MCAS, CSOM, CSON, LSOE, and SSW. The core renewal team is assessing the pilot with the help of Institutional Research. So far, they have seen that there is higher enrollment among female and AHANA students in

the pilot core courses when compared to other core courses. This could be a result of the topics addressed, or because the classes are designed to be small and create community. It is also possible that OTE advisors are directing their students into these classes. This type of class attracts students who are willing to take risks and experiment with their education.

Surveys have shown that students strongly agree that the questions in these courses are of great interest to them, that they have gained a greater understanding of these problems, that the course material is central to human life, and that they would recommend these courses. Students were less likely to agree that the courses helped them choose to major in these areas, and they did not find a great focus on the role of religious faith in these courses.

Some challenges that the program has faced so far include building connections across departments and with staff; securing Teaching Assistants; teaching in new ways; enhancing the lab and reflection components. As a result of these findings, the team has made changes to the pedagogy training they provide.

A Council member asked whether these courses cost more to run than traditional courses. Mary Crane said that there is a stipend paid to faculty in the first year, there is additional training required, and the class sizes are smaller, all of which cost money, but not a significant amount. Another Council member asked if it would be possible to look at the long-term outcomes of the students who took these courses to see if there is greater engagement or increased student growth later in their college careers. Mary Crane said they will be working with Institutional Research to examine this; specifically, they can compare these students' responses on the senior exit survey to those of the students who do not take these courses.

5. Provost's Report

A webinar on the strategic planning process has been put online in the hopes of engaging alumni. The USPI voices website, which can be accessed via bc.edu, is a place where any community member can put forward suggestions. We will talk more about strategic planning in the December meeting.

Admissions update: this past Tuesday was the deadline for early action. So far, it looks like BC has received more early action applications than last year.