**Provost's Advisory Council**

**Summary of December 1, 2011 meeting**

Bert Garza

Rosanna DeMarco

Pat DeLeeuw

Gilda Morelli

Colleen Griffith

Don Hafner

Judith Gordon

Tom Wall

Maureen Kenny

Gerald Smith

David Wirth

Stephen Pfohl

David Quigley

Timothy Crawford

Anthony Annunziato

Jenny Baglivo

Callista Roy

Harrison Kent

Larry McLaughlin

Anita Tien

Christopher Kirby

1. The summary for the meeting of October 27, 2011 was approved. The summary will be sent to the President's Office. All summaries are posted on the Provost's Office website; members are encouraged to share the summary with colleagues.
2. The Conflict of Commitment and Conflict of Interest policies outlined in the Faculty Handbook were discussed by the Council.

* Bert Garza reported that the goal of these policies is not to avoid all potential conflicts, but to ensure that University officers are aware of potential conflicts and to manage them appropriately and fairly. A member of the group noted that the policies help to raise awareness of potential conflicts of commitment and conflict of interest.
* It was observed that the absence of specific processes in the document has prompted some questions from faculty about how potential conflicts are discussed and resolved among faculty, department chairs, and deans. It has been left to the individual schools to determine the process for their faculty.
* A question was raised about whether the policy’s stipulation that “External activities should be of such nature and conducted in such manner that they bring credit to the University” might cause concern among faculty that this would be used to restrict faculty freedom of expression, especially because it is not clear who would decide what activity was and was not acceptable. Council members are invited to suggest more appropriate language.
* It was confirmed that faculty intending to teach a course (but not a single seminar session) at another institution must have prior approval from the University, regardless of whether the course is to take place during the academic year or the summer.
* A faculty member with questions about a possible conflict should first approach the department chair and/or the Dean's Office.
* Faculty may not use Boston College resources (such as email or stationery) in support of a cause; that would constitute a conflict. A question was raised about when it is appropriate for faculty to be identified by their professional titles when publicly advocating for causes (e.g., in editorials). Generally, if the faculty member has specialized knowledge in the area of advocacy, using the professional title is considered appropriate.

Next steps:

1. Members of the Council are invited to provide suggested language to clarify the policies.
2. Members are asked to engage colleagues in conversation about the policies.
3. Pat DeLeeuw observed that Faculty Annual Reports are to be completed this month. It was noted that the University Libraries and Provost's Office are working together to enhance ease of use for faculty entering information about publications.

* It was reported that faculty have noted improvements in the reporting instrument over the

past year.

* It was observed that the instrument has built-in reporting capability, and that faculty (particularly department chairs) would be interested in generating their own reports.

1. Don Hafner stated that Boston College--unlike many other institutions--does not have a focused program for communication with parents. The Provost's Office has been collaborating with Institutional Research to host conversations with current BC parents about what they would most like to know from the University, and at what points during the academic careers of their sons and daughters.

* Initial feedback has indicated that parents would rather have timely communication from the University that aids in understanding and preparing for the academic decisions their sons and daughters will be facing.
* It was proposed that parents might be contacted at the beginning of each year from the University.
* Communications timed to acceptance, matriculation, Summer Orientation, the opening of the academic year, course registration, and major declaration were proposed. It was suggested that the number of proposed communications might be too high, and that parents should be alerted to the frequency of communication.
* Several members of the Council noted the tension between appropriately informing parents and inadvertently encouraging the involvement of "helicopter parents." It was noted that students need their parents to be effective mentors, and that students also might be concerned if their parents became too intrusive.

1. Provost's Report

* At its next meeting, the Provost's Advisory Council will be joined by Professor Mary Crane, the Director of the Institute for the Liberal Arts, which is organizing University-wide conversations about the Core over this year and next.
* The Provost publicly thanked Gilda Morelli, who is concluding her term as Vice Provost for Graduate Education, and whose tenure has been marked by improved communication with and on behalf of graduate students at the University.