**Provost's Advisory Council**

**Summary of October 27, 2011 meeting**

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Tom Wall

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Francine Cardman

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1. The summary for the meeting of September 22, 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. Chris Hepburn, Chair of the University Council on Teaching, joined the Provost's Advisory Council for a discussion about peer review of teaching. Guidelines have been developed by the Provost's Office to promote consistency of practice.
* It was noted that peer evaluation of teaching already takes place across the schools.
* The general sense of the group was that the guidelines were constructive, reasonable, and practicable.
* The guidelines are intended to permit school- and department-specific modifications.
* The guidelines provide for peer review of the teaching of full-time non-tenure-track faculty, proposing review of those faculty before each contract renewal. This has not been past practice across the University.
* In the professional schools, faculty should consider how best to implement peer review of clinical teaching.
* It was also observed that the optimum frequency for peer review might vary (e.g., pre-tenure peer review vs. post-tenure review).
* A question was raised about post-tenure peer reviews. Some faculty noted that post-tenure reviews may be challenging to implement from a variety of perspectives, although the focus on formative (rather than summative) reviews may diffuse concerns among faculty.
* It was suggested that in the future, evaluation of doctoral students teaching undergraduates should be explored, as well as long-term part-time faculty.
* The Provost noted that part-time faculty play essential roles at the University, particularly in the professional schools, where pedagogy can be enhanced by long-term part-time faculty with insights about practice. They are also important in addressing short-term staffing needs across the University.
* The Provost's Office is exploring ideas for enhanced support of teaching, including the possible establishment of a Center for Teaching Innovation.

Next steps:

1. The guidelines will be discussed with department chairs.
2. Implementation plans will be discussed in the Council of Deans.
3. The final text will then be included in the Faculty Handbook, with implementation by schools and departments.
4. The Provost's Office will continue to discuss ways to support faculty in their teaching.
5. Tom Wall, University Librarian, and Jane Morris, Scholarly Communications Librarian, led a discussion with the Council about the Open Access movement.  Several universities (including Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Duke University) have policies requiring faculty to deposit their articles (or pre-publication copies) in an Open Access university repository.  Grant funders (e.g., the National Institutes of Health) are also requiring Open Access.  It should be noted that there are many other levels to Open Access efforts.

These initiatives mark a response to the traditional "publisher-takes-all" approach to copyright, which have placed institutions and libraries at a significant budgetary and logistical disadvantage.  Those institutions adopting Open Access policies have done so at the initiation of faculty, to enable broader dissemination of ideas, showcase University accomplishments, and eliminate economic barriers to access.  There is a waiver or opt-out provision.

* Concerns were expressed about high-impact journals refusing to publish articles unless copyright is transferred, as well as the submission and publishing costs of Open Access journals.
* It was noted that requiring pre-tenure faculty to publish in Open Access journals may add even more pressure on those faculty, given the mandate to publish in high-quality refereed journals. However, many high quality journals allow simultaneous deposit in an institutional repository.
* It was observed that current options for Open Access, the consequences of electing a specific option, and the processes for Open Access are complex.  Leaving it to individual faculty to understand those options, consequences, and processes will place undue burden on faculty.  Faculty will be unlikely to pursue Open Access as a result.
* Within the Boston College context, a preliminary approach to Open Access might involve asking faculty to place their articles in a repository, making them open access when there is no publisher objection, but available in a BC-only domain where publisher’s policies require it.  It is anticipated that publishers would be unlikely to oppose this move.
* It was suggested that it would be helpful to invite staff from institutions that have adopted Open Access policies to Boston College to speak about their experiences.

Next steps:

1. The University Libraries staff will gather more discipline-specific information about Open Access.
2. The suggested presentation with professionals from other institutions will be explored.
3. A discussion at the Faculty Forum will be considered.
4. Provost's Report
* In response to questions raised in the Faculty Forum, John Spinard and Bert Garza described efforts to develop a budgeting process that is initiated by departmental needs, rather than by the central budget office. The aim is to involve all departments and schools in the budgetary process and to ensure that their projections and priorities are established by the units, rather than the central administration.