

**Provost's Advisory Council**  
**Dec. 11, 2017 Meeting**  
**8:30-10am, Lynch Center, Fulton 515**

**In attendance:**

Mariela Páez (Chair)	William Fehder	John Rakestraw
Anthony Annunziato	Gregory Kalscheur, S.J.	Patricia Riffin
Stephanie Berzin	William Keane	Ronnie Sadka
Joseph Carroll	Richard Lennan	Akua Sarr
Thomas Chiles	Peter Lee	Billy Soo
Chris Conostas	Theresa O'Keefe	Sasha Tomic
Thomas Crea	Claudia Pouravelis	Thomas Wall
Joseph Du Pont	David Quigley	Stanton Wortham

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- 1. The summary of the November 9, 2017 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. Joseph Du Pont (Office of Student Affairs), Gregory Kalscheur, S.J. (MCAS), Akua Sarr (Undergraduate Academic Affairs), John Rakestraw (CTE), and Peter Lee (GSA) presented on Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives across Campus.**

Joe Du Pont announced that Dan Bunch has been rehired to assist the Office of Student Affairs on student outreach relating to diversity and inclusion issues. After the campus-wide march in October, the Office has been meeting with student leaders to discuss plans for promoting diversity and inclusion, including starting an online diversity training module for incoming AY 2018-19 freshman. One challenge will be how best to integrate the module and the Mosaic program to other parts of the first year experience. It was also noted that BC is the first school in the country to partner with the Anti-Defamation League in providing diversity training to student RAs and leaders.

Greg Kalscheur polled the MCAS departments about their current and upcoming diversity and inclusion programs and initiatives.

- The Pulse program faculty gathered in August after Charlottesville to talk about what the program could do more systematically across all sections. One of the learning goals in the program is to understand intersectionality and privilege. With this in mind, they reviewed their common readings and made sure to highlight readings on the topics of race and oppression. Kristin Heyer's new spring Pulse elective related to these issues have filled to capacity. A Council member inquired as to how many students take Pulse each year. Greg stated that about 400 students, mostly sophomores, complete Pulse each year.
- Some professors gave extra credit for students participating on Dialogues on Race (DOR), a peer-led discussion group on issues surrounding race, identity, and racial justice.

- A new approach to the Cultural Diversity Core requirement focuses on difference, justice, and the common good. New courses are also being developed on how power shapes difference and injustices. Courses for the fall 2018 relating to these topics are being solicited. The Philosophy, History, and English departments have committed to offering courses on race and social justice.
- The English department brought in Stacy Grooters from the CTE to consult on having difficult conversations in the classroom and an initiative to help with increasing diversity in syllabus reading assignments. Teaching mentorship in the core classes will devote more attention to these issues.
- The Theater department has engaged Pat Touzin and Patricia Lowe on how to better engage with students on campus issues. The department chair plans to have ongoing monthly conversations.
- The Earth & Environmental Sciences department is discussing the issue of sexual assault in the sciences, partly in response to an incident at Boston University. The department held a workshop on microaggressions and is planning a Title IX workshop in the spring term.
- In a letter to students, Greg referenced justice, faith, and solidarity as Jesuit ideals to encourage conversations. He particularly emphasized solidarity and focusing on what we have in common rather than what divides us.

Akua Sarr discussed how the Learning to Learn office has initiatives like Sisters Let's Talk for women of color and Dedicated Intellectuals of the People (DIOP) for men of color. The two groups meet independently but after the campus incidents, they held a combined meeting for dialogue. Offices have also stayed open late to be available to students for support and conversations. The Montserrat Office out of Mission and Ministry, together with its e-board, issued a letter to the members of the PAC encouraging conversations in class and providing suggestions on how faculty can talk to students about racial incidents. The Montserrat Office has also extended office hours to foster dialogue. They plan to meet in February to monitor how students are coping.

John Rakestraw mentioned that a pedagogical concern relating to recent campus issues is that students' sense of belonging impacts their ability to learn. With this in mind, the CTE has provided a number of programs in support of faculty:

- A Teaching Cohort on inclusive classrooms where faculty regularly meet to read and discuss assigned texts and readings. Each faculty member also works on a project in his/her course to bring back to the group as a case study.
- Workshops on managing difficult discussions in the classroom.
- In addition to the English department as mentioned earlier, Stacy Grooters has also led similar workshops in CSON, LSOE, SSW, and the Capstone Program.
- The CTE, together with the UCT, Provost Office and Mission and Ministry, will be hosting a course development retreat, modeled loosely after the writing retreat sponsored by Mission and Ministry. The retreat will be held from June 4-8 in Cape Cod, and the announcement will be emailed soon. The goals of the retreat are to help faculty develop new courses or make significant revisions to an existing course.
- The CTE is eager to work with faculty on these issues and anyone interested should reach out to them.

Peter Lee of the Graduate Student Association explained that the GSA has different student affinity groups, such as the Graduate Pride Alliance, Students of Color Association, and Graduate International Student Association, which all do considerable work in this area. This year, a student veterans' association was also started to meet a campus need. The groups get feedback from students about the topics they want to discuss (e.g., the new tax bill information session and de-stress events around finals).

David Quigley explained that this agenda item came from Laura O'Dwyer's idea on how to build on our last meeting's conversation about race-related campus incidents. After sending out the campus-wide letter by him and Barb Jones about the incidents, they received feedback from student leaders on what more could be done. These include the online module for freshmen mentioned earlier and a student campus climate/experience survey. Both are being implemented.

Tom Wall mentioned that the library is committed to representing and showing diversity with the goal of representing as many different viewpoints and promoting a dialogue about them. He also invited faculty to contact the library if they needed any resources or readings related to these topics.

A Council member mentioned that he opens class asking for news, gossip, or complaints, to invite difficult conversations. He finds that students lack vocabulary to talk about things, and suggests that students learn the "Jesuit dialect." The same Council member asked about the content of online module and its connection to Jesuit tradition. David explained that Student Affairs will take the lead in selecting the module and that the curriculum presents a range of opportunities for academic affairs involvement. Another Council member expressed the hope that the online module would be BC-specific and not generic.

A Council member mentioned that while we've talked a lot about programmatic initiatives, she would be more interested in admission and retention of diverse students and faculty as she sees the challenges in doctoral program recruitment. David mentioned that there are efforts at all levels, undergraduate, graduate and faculty, to increase diversity. In particular, the university has made some recent strides with faculty of color comprising 46% of all full-time faculty hires last year.

A Council representative asked if the diversity and inclusion module is only for undergraduate students or will it include graduate students also? Joe DuPont responded that down the road, the goal is to build a common language across the campus, but we would be starting with undergraduates for now. Several Council members stressed the importance of including all faculty in the training initiatives and the need to create spaces to discuss diversity and inclusion issues.

### **3. Academic Calendar 2020-2022.**

David mentioned that the academic calendar for 2020-2022 needs to be decided by February 2018. There are both internal and external factors to consider in setting the calendar. An external driver is the Department of Education ruling that institutions need to consistently meet their credit hour requirements in terms of contact hours. For some earlier years, we found that the academic calendar had 63 teaching days in the fall and 70 or 71 in the spring, which created pedagogical challenges in teaching the same content over different semesters, particularly in technical subjects in the sciences and mathematics.

Billy Soo pointed out that the first draft of the calendar has been distributed to the council. As a matter of policy, there should be a minimum of 68 teaching days each semester with a goal of 69-70 days. For the spring semesters of 2021 and 2022, there is also a Wednesday substitution for the Monday schedule in January to even out the number of evening class sessions. The main challenge in the fall semesters of 2020 and 2021 is the late Labor Day, which results in only 67 class days in the fall of 2020 and 68 class days in the fall of 2021. Among the possible options for options for gaining a class day or two are: (1) Recover the Tuesday after Columbus day as a class day. Starting AY 2018-19, the Tuesday after Columbus Day has been provided as an extra day off to allow for a 4-day Fall Break. (2) Reduce the number of study days from the current four days when including a weekend to three. (3) Another option is to delay the end of exams in the fall of 2020 till Monday, the 21<sup>st</sup> of December, but this may create challenges with the timing of submission of grades.

Other universities, such as BU and Harvard, hold classes on the Tuesday after Columbus Day and, in fact, prescribe a Monday schedule for that day. BU also has fewer exam days (5-6) than we do (7, excluding Sunday).

A Council member was worried about how students would respond to the loss of the fall break and mentioned that we need to take this into account. Another Council member pointed out that the fall 2020 calendar only provides two study days without the benefit of an adjoining week-end. Delaying the start of final exams to the following Monday, the 14<sup>th</sup>, would actually provide a 3-day study period but the last day of finals would now fall on the 21<sup>st</sup>, which is consistent with the fall 2021 calendar. Billy will go back to the Office of Student Services to inquire on their perspective on delaying the start of final exams.

### **4. Provost report**

David highlighted the proposed federal tax legislation and its effect on higher education. Father Leahy recently sent out a letter to the community on the issues surrounding the pending tax bill and encouraged everyone to write to their representatives. In particular, the proposed bill would eliminate the deductibility of interest on student loans, tax graduate students on tuition remission, and eliminate the tax exemption on construction bonds issued by universities. The bill originally would have also imposed a tax on the BC endowment but the latest version imposes a higher threshold on the endowment per student, and would now exempt BC. Nevertheless, the bill provides a punitive vision of higher education. Connected

to this bill is the Higher Education Act reauthorization. What we see so far is favorable to for-profit institutions and seeks to eliminate some previous requirements.

As many know, the Honors Program is being sunset in MCAS, CSOM and LSOE.

There has been a record number of applicants for early admissions, with strong numbers in terms of both diversity and quality of applicants. Nanci Tessier will be able to say more at a future meeting. Electronic admission notifications are going out this Thursday. The prospects also look good for the January 1 deadline for regular admissions. For the Gabelli Presidential Scholars, students have to apply in the early admission pool. That program tries to bring in a cohort of 15. A Council member requested information about the AHANA student composition by individual schools.