

**Provost's Advisory Council  
Summary of February 26, 2015 Meeting**

Can Erbil (Chair)	Lillie Albert	Thomas Wall
Min Song	Laura O'Dwyer	Katherine O'Dair
Anthony Annunziato	James Bretzke, S.J.	John Rakestraw
Cyril Opeil, S.J.	Catherine Mooney	Hagop Toghramadjian
Susan Michalczyk	Theresa O'Keefe	David Quigley
Devin Pendas	Daniel Chambers	Patricia DeLeeuw
Samuel Graves	Joseph Jiang, S.J.	Thomas Chiles
Marie Boltz	Rev. James Burns	J. Joseph Burns
Danny Willis	Vincent Rougeau	Joseph Carroll
Judith Tracy	Gregory Kalscheur, S.J.	Jessica Pesce

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1. The summary of the December 4, 2014 meeting 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 them with colleagues.
2. Update on Strategic Planning for the Natural Sciences

Tom Chiles has been working to promote research on campus. In the 18 months that he has been Vice Provost for Research and Academic Planning, he has increased the resources available to faculty for their research and scholarship. In addition to Research Expense Grants and Research Incentive Grants, two new funding mechanisms have been created: Ignite Grants and Research Across Departments Grants (RADs). Ignite Grants have two deadlines per year. External evaluators review the grant proposals at the first level, followed by a campus committee. This year both grant cycles were very competitive. Reviews from the external evaluators were positive, and grants were awarded across schools. RADs Grants align with paradigm shifts in science funding, which now encourage faculty to collaborate across departments and schools. The goal of these grants is to fund interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary proposals.

The Office of the Vice Provost organized Boston College's first Advancing Research & Scholarship Day this past December. The goal was to bring faculty from across campus together while promoting research on campus externally and internally. This year's theme was public health, an interest of faculty across many schools. The event included ten faculty talks, a poster session for graduate and undergraduate students, and a keynote talk by BC alumnus Phil Landrigan, head of Mt. Sinai's program in Public Health. The theme of the coming year will most likely be big data, a topic growing in national importance. If anyone knows of faculty who might be interested, please let Tom and his colleagues know.

Tom has focused most of his and his team's energy on strategic planning for the natural sciences. The impetus for pursuing science planning lies in both faculty research and undergraduate education. Forty percent of all high school graduates express interest in majoring in a STEM field, a number higher still among our top admissions prospects and

presidential scholars. Moreover, private and federal agencies tend to fund multidisciplinary approaches to complex problems; where there used to be one or a few authors on a scientific paper, there are now many more, crossing departments and even institutions. Another current trend is the fusing of departments; scientists are completing their postdoctoral work with experience in multiple disciplines. These are the science faculty of the future, yet BC's science facilities insufficiently support this type of work. A committee has been formed that includes faculty across ranks and across the university in order to draft a strategic plan, which is moving toward recommending the creation of a new Institute for Integrated Science and Society. The Institute's research will be aligned with the mission of BC, and it will have three thematic areas of focus: health, environment, and energy. The Institute's foundation will depend on the hiring of six senior integrated scientists and a director, who will have joint appointments in A&S science departments. The plan also includes the establishment of an engineering program to be housed in A&S.

Members of the Council had questions and comments:

The Educational Research, Measurement, and Evaluation (ERME) department, the home of the TIMSS and PIRLS study that uses big data, would be interested in participating in the upcoming Research & Scholarship Day.

Many newly-admitted and prospective students are eager for an engineering program at BC, but is there sufficient space for such a program? Tom said the committee is looking at extending Higgins Hall southward and repurposing existing space in Higgins and Cushing. The last science space to be renovated was Higgins in 2001.

Another Council member asked about collaborations between universities and pharmaceutical companies for lab space, as with Emmanuel College and Merck. Tom Chiles said that a problem with that type of set-up is that the in-house (industry) users have first priority in using the equipment. If BC wants to remain competitive as a research university, it is important for it to own the facilities.

The Council asked about whether there would be a school of engineering. Tom Chiles answered that it will begin as a program, offering BA and perhaps MA degrees, but if all goes well, a doctoral program that helps attract top faculty and an engineering school might someday follow. David Quigley noted that it often works well to pair engineering within A&S, following the model of schools like Harvey Mudd and Swarthmore, to enable collaboration with the liberal arts.

### 3. Update on University Budget Planning Process

Special Guests: Michael Lochhead, Executive Vice President; Peter McKenzie, Financial Vice President

Mike Lochhead was welcomed to BC by the PAC. He said that the Board of Trustees is scheduled to vote on the budget on March 6. The budget for next year assumes a CPI of 2% and 8,900 undergrad students. Tuition will increase at 2% plus CPI (4% total). Room rates will increase 2.6%, which accounts for new residence halls. Combined room and board will

increase 3.6%. All revenues will increase 2%. Financial aid will increase by \$8.9 million, which is a 5.5% rate of increase. Salaries this year will increase 2.5 %. Medical insurance costs are increasing nationally. Retirees' medical costs will increase 5%, driven by changes in life expectancy for those who are retired. Total budget and revenues will see a 4.3% increase.

Capital projects: The new museum and conference center construction is progressing well, and it is slated to open next year. The 2150 Commonwealth Avenue dorm should be open summer 2016. It will be a 490-bed residence hall. The 2000 Commonwealth Avenue building suffered leaks due to weather. It is scheduled for renovation starting in July into a 540-bed residence hall. The next major project is the recreation center, for which the design is currently taking place. Other renovations will happen in Higgins, Merkert, O'Neill, Cushing, and Fulton.

Peter McKenzie said that BC is doing well overall. Though the recession caused a \$400 million drop in endowment, the last few years have seen significant positive returns. The Light the World Campaign is doing well and is \$100 million shy of its goal. While the endowment has done reasonably well, it is still just \$2.2 billion, while some of our competitors are at \$7 billion and more. One weakness in the current budget is masters programs' enrollment, which reflects a national trend. Additionally, revenues for athletics, the bookstore, and dining are not increasing.

A student committee member mentioned that the undergraduate government was curious about where the university budget was focused. They saw that 40-42% was directed toward academics, while some peer institutions spend 80% on academics. Peter McKenzie said that the difference comes in how the spending is categorized. BC separates academic building and financial aid funds from what is spent on academics, while other schools might not. In addition, BC has more students on campus than some of its peers, so the auxiliary services are higher.

A Council member asked about how the science strategic plans fit into the budget. Peter McKenzie said that it factors into the long-range plan, which takes assumptions for new facilities and programs and puts them into a 10-year plan, while also making assumptions about the gifts that might support these initiatives. The next capital campaign will likely have a target of over \$2 billion, which will be necessary to stay competitive in the sciences. A leading concern for the budget is the rising cost of health insurance.

#### 4. Provost's Report

Admissions update: Early action saw a pool of historic size, with nearly 10,000 applications as opposed to the previous 6,000. The overall application pool was 29,500. It appears to be a very strong cohort with a slight increase in international applicants.

The Law School recently welcomed the Rappaport Center for Law and Public Policy to its campus. The Center will enhance campus conversation about policy and public service. A Council member asked about whether the Law School would be adding a public policy

program to its JD program. Vince Rougeau said there were no current plans, but, in the future, the Law School might consider a joint public policy and law degree.

David Quigley raised the issue of the four snow days BC has had this year, the highest number since the Blizzard of 1978. He thanked library, dining, and facilities staff for their tireless work in keeping BC open. He and Mike Lochhead had a difficult decision on the second day of the third storm, where BC had a delayed opening. The campus was clear by the afternoon on the first day, but late that afternoon, he learned that the MBTA rail service would be closed the next day. In collaboration with others, David decided to have a delayed start the next day, as many faculty and staff would still be able to get to campus and the MBTA bus system was operating. Ultimately, the B and C lines would be shut down for almost 2 weeks.

David thanked everyone for the way they handled the Monday-to-Thursday schedule switch after the second storm. It went very smoothly. He decided to do this after he heard from affected faculty that those with Monday classes after 4 pm would not see their classes at all from January 12<sup>th</sup> until February 16<sup>th</sup>. Some schools switch Monday schedules like this every semester to accommodate for the numerous holidays; Can Erbil said that Brandeis does this.

A Council member said that the majority of the negative feedback came from graduate students, who were displeased with the message and the messaging. Graduate students felt that the decision and the messaging implied that BC was an undergraduate residential campus, despite the 5,000 graduate students living off-campus. In future, it might be useful to direct people to the website in the RAVE alert and put a more detailed message there. David Quigley also reminded faculty that they always have the authority to cancel their own classes if there are concerns for student/faculty safety.

After the four snow days, some on campus received calls from parents asking why the faculty were not making up classes online. The Center for Teaching Excellence has been providing services and tips for faculty on teaching through disruption, but David also hopes that departments will discuss means for keeping up intellectual continuity. Greg Kalscheur said that the Board of Chairs in A&S raised a question about the times chosen for closing/opening. Before the first blizzard, BC closed at 5 pm, but many classes start at 4:30 pm.

A Council member said that parking was difficult after the storms, especially on the delayed opening day.