

**Provost's Advisory Council
Summary of October 6, 2016 Meeting**

Laura O'Dwyer (Chair)	Kent Greenfield	John Rakestraw
Christopher Constas	Sharon Beckman	Margaret Loughman
Anthony Annunziato	Mariela Paez	Craig Ford
William Keane	James Bretzke, S.J.	David Quigley
Patricia Riggan	Theresa O'Keefe	Billy Soo
Jonathan Laurence	Claudia Pouravelis	Akua Sarr
Can Erbil	Gregory Kalscheur, S.J.	Nanci Tessier
Judith Clair	Gautam Yadama	Thomas Chiles
Ronnie Sadka	Thomas Wall	Joseph Carroll
William Fehder	Joseph Du Pont	Jessica Pesce

1. **The summary of the April 28, 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. **Policies for Postdocs and Visiting Scholars—Bill Nunez, Jiin-Yu Chen, Bill Murphy**

This past May, the Department of Labor revised the Fair Labor Standards Act so that effective December 1, 2016, \$47,476 would be the new minimum annual salary needed for employees to be exempt from overtime. Before the change, it had been \$23,600. The university employs some postdocs who currently earn less than the new minimum. HR and the Vice Provost for Research's office worked with a committee of faculty and current postdocs to create a new policy on hiring and compensating postdocs that aims to provide greater consistency and transparency to practices throughout the university. The committee benchmarked other universities' postdoc policies and joined the National Postdoctoral Association to learn best practices in creating this draft. The policy draft is being circulated to chairs and administrators around campus before it is finalized.

The new policy raises the baseline salary for postdocs to match the \$47,476 minimum. Postdocs should be primarily full-time employees, with some limited exceptions allowed. Part-time postdocs will be hourly, non-exempt (overtime eligible) employees and can only be hired with the approval of the VPR's office. There are currently 13 part-time, benefits eligible, grant-funded postdocs who would be affected by this change, and the VPR's office and HR will meet with them in mid-October to explain the changes to their benefits. The policy will also centralize the postdoc hiring process. If the position is university funded, it will go through the Vice Provost for Faculties. If it is grant funded, it will go through the Vice Provost for Research. There will be a template for postdoc offer letters so that the language is consistent. The policy caps the total time that someone can be a postdoc at 6 years, including time at other universities. Extensions may be allowed in limited special cases, e.g., due to illness.

In some cases, money allocated in grants for postdocs will need to be re-budgeted. The university will not make up the difference in funding. This is consistent with how many peer institutions are handling the shortfalls. OSP requests that these re-budgets be submitted by November 1. All new grant proposals that have been submitted since May already factored in the appropriate postdoc salary amount, so this only affects existing grants.

Overall, the FLSA change will have the greatest impact on non-academic areas of the university.

In light of the revised postdoc policy, it was also important to revisit the definition of Visiting Scholars at the institution. Billy Soo and Jessica Pesce said that Visiting Scholars have typically been faculty or graduate students from another institution who are unpaid and visit BC to collaborate with our faculty on a project. To ensure that there is no confusion between postdocs and Visiting Scholars, the definition of the latter will specify that Visiting Scholars are not Boston College employees, nor should the relationship between the visitor and the sponsoring faculty member be that of an employer-employee.

A Council member asked about bringing in and compensating high-profile visiting faculty from other institutions. Billy Soo replied that, if a school wants to pay those people, they should employ a title other than Visiting Scholar so that they can pay the person a stipend. Another council member asked about faculty members who are on leave from home institutions but teaching at BC. Billy Soo replied that those people would certainly be paid for their work, but their title would not be Visiting Scholar. They would be a Visiting Assistant/Associate/Full Professor, and they would be hired through HR as an employee. Any title that is associated with a paid position should already exist in HR/PeopleSoft. The title of Visiting Scholar is meant for people who are unpaid and doing primarily their own, individual research with the help of BC faculty and the university's library resources.

3. Childbirth and Adoption Accommodation Policy for Graduate Students

Dean Kalscheur presented a draft policy for childbirth and adoption accommodations. Up until now, these cases have been handled on an ad hoc basis. MCA&S has now created a draft policy that they would like to share with the rest of the university to see whether it's applicable to all units. One major question is whether this policy should apply to all graduate students or only those who receive funding from the university.

David Quigley asked whether it would be advisable to have a standardized policy within all schools or whether there could be a broader statement that can be put forward at the university level with each individual school having its own specifics for accommodations. A Council member said we should discuss scenarios around different kinds of graduate students in order to assess the implications. Another Council member said no matter what the policy is, we may have to make exceptions or create a separate policy for the Woods School, where most graduate students might be older. Another Council member said that the policy should take into consideration what happens in the last trimester of pregnancy, before the student gives birth, as they often might have to miss class by then. The proposed policy only discusses accommodations that begin at the birth of the child. Some Council members

suggested the time missed before giving birth would be better considered a medical leave. The Law School representatives noted that law students cannot miss 8 weeks of class due to ABA policies. Therefore, the Law School would prefer that each school have an individual policy along with an overarching statement from the university.

A Council member brought up the issue of graduate students who are earning money off grants. She said that the NIH has clear policies about family leave that are usually only applicable to principal investigators. The sentence in the policy about the university assuming responsibility could lead to a commitment of funds on the university's part. What about a student who returns from leave and the grant is over and/or there is no more work to be done? Billy Soo and Greg Kalscheur said the policy could indicate that funding support from the grant would end when it was due to end and not afterwards.

Most of the feedback, however, was about the language in the policy itself. While the policy mimics those for staff and faculty in terms of gender, several Council members felt that the gendered language in the policy was concerning. Some Council members would prefer to see the language changed to "spouse" instead of "husband." Council members also commented that some institutions provide more than one week of leave for a father. Granting one week of leave to "fathers" (as opposed to spouses) perpetuates the stereotype that men are breadwinners and mothers are caregivers.

4. Provost's Report

Town Hall sessions about strategic planning were held this past week. Strategic planning began last December, and assessment was conducted during the spring semester. With feedback from the community, the plan will be drafted in late fall/early winter in order to be submitted to the Board of Trustees for their review and further development in March. A website where community members can submit their thoughts, called USPI Voices, will be online soon.

The Visiting Committee for the NEASC reaccreditation will be on campus in mid-March. A final version of the report is being written and should be ready by early 2017.

The newly renovated McMullen Museum on the Brighton campus opened this September, featuring an exhibition that demonstrates BC's collaboration with the Harvard Art Museums and the Gardner Museum.

5. Announcements

This summer, the Provost's Office announced a new Faculty Annual Reports system called Faculty 180. The external vendor will be on campus November 2nd and 3rd to hold 60-minute training sessions in Fulton. An email announcement will be sent to all faculty today.

Experience Survey update: As discussed in the April PAC meeting, last fall's faculty and staff experience survey found that women and AHANA faculty felt differently about their

classroom experiences than white men. To follow up on this issue, Institutional Research will conduct focus groups with faculty. Please let Billy Soo know if you or any of your colleagues would like to be included in these focus groups.

6. Future Agenda Topics

A Council member said that she would like to discuss university responses to events on campus that affect campus climate/culture. In many cases, students find out about issues before the faculty and staff who are here to support them.

Other Council members said they would like to talk about internal grants. For example, the REG cap has been \$2,000 for the last 15-20 years, and people would like to see it higher. Additionally, TAM grant proposals are only reviewed once a year, and the timing doesn't align well with faculty who might be designing new courses.

Another Council member said that, while there is a lot being done on campus to encourage and facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration, not everyone knows about these initiatives. How can we better enable and better publicize these types of collaborations?

Another Council member noted that there is concern with the safety of the BC-operated shuttle busses.

Graduate students are concerned with how to determine their hours. Some TA jobs count for 20 hours, some count for 10, and some not at all. Grad students would like to see the math laid out on assistantships so they know how many jobs they can take on.

Laura O'Dwyer said people should feel free to let her know other ideas for future topics.