

**Provost's Advisory Council**  
**April 2, 2020 Meeting**  
**9:00-10:00 am, via Zoom**

**In attendance:**

|                        |                         |                    |
|------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Sharon Beckman (Chair) | Regine Jean-Charles     | Claudia Pouravelis |
| Anthony Annunziato     | Gregory Kalscheur, S.J. | David Quigley      |
| Joseph Carroll         | William Keane           | Catherine Read     |
| Mary Ellen Carter      | Thomas Kohler           | Tracy Regan        |
| Thomas Chiles          | Jonathan Laurence       | Ronnie Sadka       |
| Thomas Crea            | John Mahoney            | Akua Sarr          |
| Joseph Du Pont         | Mason Marek             | David Scanlon      |
| Kristin Flower         | Allison Marshall        | Billy Soo          |
| Yonder Gillihan        | Madeline McCullough     | Thomas Stegman     |
| Stacy Grooters         | Gilda Morelli           | Sasha Tomic        |
| Angela Harkins         | Karen Muncaster         | Thomas Wall        |

---

- 1. The summary of the February 6, 2020 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. Update on COVID-19's Impact on Boston College and Shift to Online Education: David Quigley, Provost and Dean of Faculties**

David Quigley began by expressing gratitude to the campus community for its response to this extraordinary situation. There have been challenges, and there will be more, but there have been many moments that exemplify BC's best institutional self.

He continued with an overview of the COVID-19 impact on BC. On March 11, 2020, the decision was made to send most on-campus residential students home and move to remote education after a one-week hiatus of classes. BC's early spring break had allowed a week to plan what the second half of the semester might look like. The one-week hiatus between March 12 and March 18 was critical to allow many students time to travel and adjust to being home, and to allow faculty time to prepare for remote instruction. The Office of Residential Life, the Campus Police, Dining Services, and Facilities provided extraordinary support to students who were required to vacate their dorms. On March 19, 2020, online remote education began, and a series of academic policy changes were put in place. Modifications included the reopening of the drop period, the extension of withdrawal to the last day of classes, and the liberalization of pass/fail policies.

David then provided some updates and reminders:

- Summer study abroad for 2020 has been cancelled.
- Summer Session I (May 13-June 19) will be offered online. There has not yet been a decision on Summer Session II.

- There has been no decision on Commencement at this time.
- It is unlikely that the first six summer orientation sessions will be held on campus. There may be some virtual programming, and the University is considering ways of orienting all 2300 first-year undergraduates during Welcome Week in August.
- The Academic Calendar has not been changed. There will be no classes on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, or Easter Monday, except for those beginning at 4:00 p.m. or later. Classes will also not be held on Patriots Day.
- For classes that are being taught synchronously, faculty are expected to follow the registrar's calendar for course meeting times.

He concluded, emphasizing the critical work that John Mahoney, Vice Provost for Enrollment Management, Grant Gosselin, Director of Admissions, and others involved in undergraduate, graduate, and professional school admissions, are doing to connect with admitted and prospective students. Yielding a strong undergraduate class of 2024 and a healthy enrollment for cohorts in the graduate and professional programs is imperative.

### **3. Update on Implementation of New Course Evaluations and Spring 2020 Course Evaluations: Billy Soo, Vice Provost for Faculties**

Billy Soo provided an update on the proposal to revise course evaluations as well as developing plans for conducting course evaluations for the current semester. The University Council on Teaching (UCT) had made recommendations to revise the course evaluation instrument and process for the Fall 2020 semester. The proposal has been presented to most constituents across campus and the feedback has been generally favorable. In light of the current situation, however, it makes more sense to delay its implementation to next spring, or more likely, fall of 2021.

For the current semester's evaluations, the UCT and the deans feel that course evaluations should proceed as planned. There is a great opportunity to capture valuable feedback on what works well and what does not in a remote online setting. While there is some concern from faculty that their performance this semester will not be representative of the quality of their teaching, the deans recognize this and will read the evaluations with this context in mind. Feedback from this semester will be informative in helping plan for potential future disruptions.

A council member asked if a question would be added to specifically address the switch to online teaching.

Billy answered that the UCT is working with student services to determine if questions can still be added to the existing course evaluation. If possible, a question bank would be circulated to the departments and schools with questions to add about the online experience. If questions cannot be added to the existing tool, a separate instrument may be used; however, the response rate may not be as good.

David added that the feedback received so far from students, faculty, parents, program

directors, etc., has provided a nuanced view of the efforts going on across and beyond campus. This semester's course evaluations will provide valuable documentation of the work that is being done, and information for future planning. He urged the group to think about other assessments that can help provide a holistic view of teaching and learning this semester.

#### **4. Proposal to Extend Probationary Period for Tenure-Track Faculty: Billy Soo, Vice Provost for Faculties**

David began a conversation about the proposal to extend the probationary period for tenure-track faculty. Some peer schools moved very quickly on this issue and two primary approaches have emerged, an opt-in and an opt-out. The proposal for BC is the opt-out option and assumes the majority of tenure-track faculty will add a year to their clock. The proposal has been shared with stakeholders across campus.

Billy discussed the specifics of the proposal, which was written in consultation with the General Counsel's Office to ensure all possible scenarios were addressed. Any faculty on the tenure-track, up to their 5<sup>th</sup> year, gets an extra year on the clock. This extra year is automatically granted unless the faculty member decides to go up early. The option to go up early, or according to the original regular clock, still exists, and the faculty member would simply need to inform their dean or department chair prior to the beginning of their 6<sup>th</sup> year.

Under the current statutes, those faculty in their 6<sup>th</sup> year can go up in their 7<sup>th</sup> year if they have the support of the dean and department. With the proposal, if tenure is not granted in their 7<sup>th</sup> year, the faculty member would be given an 8<sup>th</sup> and terminal year. If they do not have the support of the dean and department chair, the 7<sup>th</sup> year will remain their terminal year.

Faculty who previously received an extension on their clock, for example from a maternity leave, will have an additional year added to their clock as well.

David added that the proposed policy aims to handle most cases in a blanket fashion, but there are nuances to the process that need to be considered and urged faculty to reach out to their Dean's or the Provost's Office, if there are question on navigating the tenure clock.

A council member asked whether faculty start-up funds would be extended.

David responded that the Office of the Vice Provost for Research is working on this issue. There will be some flexibility and extensions will likely be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Tom Chiles added that discussions are underway on this as there have been several inquiries. The hope is to have some clarity in the next month.

A council member asked if a faculty member who was denied tenure in their 7<sup>th</sup> year would be eligible for review again in the 8<sup>th</sup> year.

David answered that the possibility does exist, but only if there is support from the dean and department chair.

A council member asked if the promotion schedule for non-tenure-track faculty will be impacted.

David responded that there is sufficient flexibility in the existing policy to allow for a one-year, or more, delay in going up for promotion for non-tenure-track faculty members.

A council member asked how individual faculty members should engage deans and department chairs on this.

David answered that one of the reasons to do the opt-out is to minimize the need to engage departments and deans for exceptions. The assumption is that everyone receives the same blanket extension and only those who want to expedite will need to engage, noting that there is flexibility for those faculty who want to expedite.

A council member asked about the standards for promotion and the impact on future hiring.

On the question of standards, David discussed the need to maintain our high standard of distinction. Faculty productivity has been disturbed by months, if not a full year. It would be wrong to expect a higher level of productivity in light of the extension.

In terms of hiring, nothing has yet been decided for faculty or staff hiring. Extending the probationary period will have some impact on the ability to hire as aggressively over the next few hiring cycles as in the past. This is, however, only one factor that will influence hiring going forward.

A council member asked about security for part-time faculty, contract faculty, graduate students, and other workers at the University.

David responded that the scale of the financial impact is still unknown but the goal is to support the University community through the current fiscal year as we begin to plan for various contingencies in FY 2021.

## **5. Provost's Report: David Quigley, Provost and Dean of Faculties**

David provided some additional updates.

- Fr. Keenan has been appointed Vice Provost for Global Engagement and is well positioned to lead discussions about how to build on existing relationships and create new global partnerships.

- Laura Steinberg has been appointed the inaugural Seidner Executive Director of the Schiller Institute. She is joining BC from Syracuse University and will be on campus in May.
- Bill Nunez from the Office of the Vice Provost for Research and Joe Schott from the General Counsel's Office will join the next PAC meeting to discuss foreign influence and collaborations. The federal government has a particular interest in undisclosed foreign collaborations and sources of support at research universities. Bill and Joe will talk about new online education for faculty researchers, and new policies and requirements for disclosures.
- Isabel Lane will also join the next meeting to provide an update on the BC Prison Education Program, which is in its second semester with courses in history, theology, and literature being offered.
- There have been a number of questions about reimbursements for travel and conference fees that were made prior to the COVID-19 impacts. The federal government has moved to a more generous approach to allowing federal grant funds to cover some of those expenses. The Associate Deans will continue working with the Provost's Office on solutions.

Billy provided an update on revisions to the 2020-2021 academic calendar. The spring 2021 calendar has been revised to move the Monday for Tuesday schedule swap from the second week of classes to the Tuesday after Patriots day. This eliminates three consecutive Monday-Wednesday-Friday teaching days so early in the semester. Additionally, Marathon Monday has been rescheduled to September 14, so classes will be cancelled for that day as well.

David then opened the meeting for questions.

A council member asked when a list of summer session course offerings would be available.

Karen Muncaster responded that the summer school website would be live Friday, April 3, with all of the courses that will be available. Registration has been delayed to Monday, April 6. Faculty who preregistered to teach will be notified if their course is going online or being cancelled.

A council member asked about study abroad for next year.

David responded that there are typically between 400-500 students who would be going abroad during the fall semester. The Office of International Programs is working with advisors and associate deans to help the students consider their options and plan for their fall semester. The University is working on contingency plans for students who had planned to go abroad but will not be able to.

A council member asked how summer courses that have a clinical or lab component will be handled.

David responded that some of these courses have extensive content that could be delivered online with some discrete experiential component that could be pushed to a later time. Creative thinking about the academic calendar may be necessary.