

**Provost's Advisory Council
Summary of March 30, 2017 Meeting
8:30-10 am, Lynch Center, Fulton 515**

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

1. The summary of the February 23, 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. Faculty Focus Group Update—Kelli Armstrong and Jess Greene, IRPA

The fall 2015 faculty and staff experience survey was the first time faculty were included in a campus-wide survey on campus climate and culture. The results were disseminated and discussed last spring, and the survey will be repeated in fall of 2018. The key question when presenting to the PAC and other groups last spring was about the different classroom experiences of faculty from different backgrounds. For example, female and AHANA faculty said they felt their classroom experience was not as good as their male and white counterparts. To dig into this issue further, IRPA conducted 6 focus groups in November-December, 2016, with 4-6 faculty members in each group. The groups were mixed across schools and tenure status. The conversations were held by affinity group (African American, Asian American, Latinx, LGBTQ, women, and mixed random sample) with a staff member of that same group serving as facilitator. Overall, 36 faculty members participated.

Overall, the participants said they were not surprised by the survey data. In terms of in-class interactions, some faculty noted that students question their authority often, and this was especially true for faculty for whom English was not their first language. Participants said that students who challenge their authority are apt to use a tone of disrespect, and male students tend to interrupt more often. Backlash often results when critical but constructive feedback or corrections are offered. Female faculty have been described as mean, intimidating, or snobbish if they correct students in class. International faculty were surprised by the reactions of some of their students in class. While these findings might not be unique to Boston College, faculty felt it might be a bit worse at BC than at other institutions with which they had experience.

Another theme that emerged in the discussions was teaching evaluations. The type of backlash faculty said they experienced in class often translates to poor teaching evaluations. Female faculty

said their evaluations had more comments about their physical appearance than their male counterparts, and ESL faculty were concerned about how their language skills might impact their evaluations. Faculty said they would like more clarity on how teaching evaluations are used in promotion and tenure processes.

Outside the classroom, female faculty said they felt students demanded more of their time and were more likely to overshare personal information. There was general concern that students' expectations differ based on the faculty member's characteristics.

The last theme was about campus culture, which sets the tone in the classroom. Faculty members in these groups said that their sense of belonging on campus varies. Participants noted that their comments about these struggles were sometimes "brushed off" by colleagues who did not believe or understand them, leading to a low sense of belonging on campus. They reported being asked, "Are you really sure that's what happened? That never happens to me." Faculty said it is a difficult climate for AHANA, female, and ESL faculty, especially when they have both students and colleagues pushing back and questioning them. A more positive outcome from the focus groups was that LGBTQ faculty felt that they were supported on campus.

IRPA and the focus group participants had some suggestions for how to move forward, including educating faculty and staff about bias, increasing and expanding mentoring for faculty, and holding sessions on these topics for students in first-year orientation. In terms of communication, participants requested that the purpose and role of teaching evaluations be clarified and that the Provost's Office describe institutional efforts for recruiting and retaining AHANA faculty. They also would like to see more female and AHANA candidates in leadership positions at BC. Participants would appreciate more opportunities like this to express their opinions about these issues, as they found it extremely useful.

A Council member noted that Shaun Harper will be the keynote speaker at Excellence in Teaching Day on May 8, and this is his area of focus. The CTE is currently running discussion groups on his work now. He said that too often, faculty and students are separated in two silos. Integrated conversations can be helpful in bridging the gap. Another Council member said that students experience these same issues, so it would set a good example to show that faculty are talking about the same topic. He also noted that students who drop classes are still able to complete teaching evaluations for the course, so it would be helpful to fix that technological issue that often leads to lower teaching evaluations.

Another Council member said these findings reminded her of the focus groups and survey done with BC female students' declining confidence levels. She wondered whether there might be an atmosphere on this campus that is worse for women since these issues are happening for both female faculty and students. Kelli Armstrong said that research shows these issues exist for women on elite campuses, including those with female presidents like Duke and Princeton. Within BC there are pockets of students with worse experiences, but the phenomenon is not unique to BC. It also occurs at public institutions.

Another Council member said she hoped this type of conversation would not exist in a vacuum. She suggested we keep track of these data and examine the changes over time. She felt that an AHANA faculty mentoring program would be beneficial in helping explore these issues.

Other Council members added that the data found in these studies matches the overarching literature on group dynamics in workplaces. Faculty need tools to navigate these challenges and build inclusive classrooms for everyone. Faculty are encouraged to join the GSA at town hall meetings to discuss issues across groups. Members said that a more systematic approach to addressing classroom and campus climate issues would be helpful, since individuals do not operate in a vacuum. At Excellence in Teaching Day, there will be a panel of women and AHANA faculty that builds on these focus groups. A CTE cohort for next academic year will be focusing on creating inclusive classrooms. The CTE also holds regular sessions on managing difficult dialogues in the classroom. If faculty have other suggestions for topics and sessions they would like to see, please reach out to John Rakestraw.

3. Interdisciplinary research and the Institute for Integrated Science and Society—Tom Chiles, Vice Provost for Research

The planned Institute for Integrated Science and Society is presented in the draft of the strategic plan. The Institute will bring together departments in the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities to address critical problems in the areas of energy, health, and environment. The university will also explore new interdisciplinary programs in the natural sciences, mathematics, computer science, and other divisions that will combine elements of applied science, technology, and entrepreneurship. The Institute has changed in several ways since it was originally conceived. At first, it was science-centric; now, with input of many constituents across campus, it will be program that is inclusive for entire university.

Nationally, about 38% of top ranked undergraduate applicants intend to major in science. At BC, 25% of first-year students intend to major in science. These numbers are increasing from year to year. STEM majors are increasingly choosing schools that support student innovation and entrepreneurship. Even secondary schools are building maker spaces/incubator spaces now. Additionally, federal funding for research now emphasizes multidisciplinary teams that are planning to solve complex problems. Peer universities are investing heavily in science faculty and research facilities. It will be increasingly difficult for BC to remain a national leader in STEM education and research without applied science programs.

In planning for the Institute, Tom Chiles worked with IRPA for internal data collection and assessment, along with external consultants for space and finance. Two faculty committees helped define a mission for the Institute that focuses on BC's strengths. There are three directives: be distinctive, align with the university's Jesuit mission, and be sustainable. The Institute will build on BC's current strengths and partner with Law, SSW, LSOE, CSON, and CSOM, especially with their international programs and entrepreneurship programs. The Institute will also tap into the network of Jesuit institutions across the globe.

In terms of the Jesuit mission, the Institute will aid in BC's liberal arts curriculum by helping students live lives of leadership, faith, and service. The research and scholarship from the Institute

will reflect a shared commitment to the common good, contextualize students' education, help meet the greater needs of society, and develop creative, innovative, and holistic solutions to complex problems. The Institute will provide experiential opportunities for students to apply their skills to real world solutions.

A Council member asked about timeframe for the Institute. Tom Chiles said they are currently working with architects on space and design. It will likely be a new building on the site where Cushing currently stands. There are three construction projects underway for the next two years on campus. Once those are done in 2019, the goal is for construction on the Institute to begin. It will hopefully open in 2021. They are working with Advancement to secure gifts to fund it. In response to a question about diversity, Tom Chiles said they are focusing on recruiting top female faculty into positions earmarked for the Institute. Another Council member asked whether it would be possible to use the acronym "STEAM" instead of "STEM," as this includes creativity and the arts.

In terms of what faculty can do to help in the process, Tom said that they will engage a larger committee across campus as programs for the Institute take shape. It will be important for this building to create an interdisciplinary space for everyone to use.

4. Provost's Report

The annual Faculty Forum will be held Monday, April 3rd at 4 pm in Fulton. Tom Chiles will talk about the Institute and David Quigley will talk about the strategic plan.

David thanked everyone for their help and support during the NEASC reaccreditation visit. The external committee was impressed by us and our work.

Graduate Student Unionization Update: there has been a recent push toward unionization from the graduate and professional students. Bill Murphy in HR is our expert on unions, and he has prepared a union FAQ sheet that has been distributed to department chairs. The Columbia University case that is currently being appealed granted graduate students in private universities the right to unionize. Institutions are arguing that TAs, TFs, and RAs are primarily educational experiences and do not constitute an employment relationship. The other key piece of BC's position is the Pacific Lutheran case which questions the jurisdiction of NLRB in faith-based institutions. Senior administrators and faculty have been deposited in the past two weeks.

Originally, undergraduate student workers and graduate students in the STM were included in the collective bargaining unit, but they have now been excluded. The UAW and NLRB would be involved in our mission and academic programs if the graduate students were to unionize. Faculty governance in graduate programs, teaching assignments, and dissertation directions could change.

David Quigley said BC is currently waiting for the regional director's decision, which will determine if there will be a graduate student vote to unionize. It is possible that this will carry over into the fall.