

Provost's Advisory Council
Summary of December 5, 2013 meeting

James Bretzke, S.J., Chair
Lillie Albert
Katie O'Dair
Betty Blythe
Susan Michalczyk
Bill Duffey
Judith Tracy
Danny Willis
Can Erbil

Sam Graves
Daniel Chambers
Tom Wall
Min Song
Tony Annunziato
Cy Opeil, S.J.
Narintohn Luangrath
Donald Hafner
Anita Tien

Laura O'Dwyer
Vickie Monta
James Gips
Linnie Green Wright
Devin Pendas
Kate Gregory
Siobhan Kelly
Joe Quinn

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1. The summary for the October 24, 2013 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 the summary with colleagues.
 2. Sarah Beckjord, the former chair of the University Council on Teaching, joined the Council to discuss to a proposed policy about consensual relationships. The proposed policy was developed by the UCT last year, based on comparable policies at peer institutions.
 - It was noted that most institutions of higher education have such a policy, and that Boston College is the only Jesuit university that does not have one. It was explained that the policy would help faculty and academic administrators by setting forth guidelines that would protect both students and faculty.
 - A question was raised about whether the policy would prohibit a faculty member or graduate student from having a consensual relationship with an individual who might become his or her student in the future. It was explained that the policy does not forbid such a relationship, but it would be expected that a faculty member would disclose the relationship, and that that the relationship would disqualify the faculty member from exercising professional or academic authority over the student in the future.
 - It was suggested that definitions of "faculty" be more fully defined and prominently highlighted, to clarify that graduate students who are teaching undergraduates are included in the scope of the policy.
 - It was proposed that the policy be renamed to clarify that consensual romantic relationships between instructors and students are to be avoided.
 - There was general agreement on the part of the Council in favor of the proposed policy.

Next steps:

1. Suggestions will be incorporated, and the proposed policy will next be discussed at the Faculty Forum in Spring 2014, as well as with General Counsel.

3. Pat Keating, Executive Vice President, and Peter McKenzie, Financial Vice President, joined the Council to report on the FY15 budget planning process. The proposed budget will be presented to the Board of Trustees and approved in March 2014.

The long-range financial planning model used by BC currently assumes an inflation rate of 2% annually. The rate of return from the endowment is assumed to be inflation plus 5 percentage points (i.e., 7%); with 5% being drawn from the endowment annually.

On the revenue side, for planning purposes undergraduate enrollment is assumed to be 8,900 (it has been generally closer to 9,100). Tuition increases are set at the rate of inflation plus 2 percentage points, while room and board charges grow at the same rate as inflation, for an overall increase in total student charges of about 3.5%. (It is also assumed that graduate tuition will grow at the rate of inflation plus 2 percentage points, but this is subject to market variables.)

On the expense side, financial aid is assumed to increase at the same rate as tuition; salaries increase at the rate of inflation plus one percentage point (i.e., 2.5% for merit, and .5% for market/equity adjustments). The financial aid budget has been supplemented by an additional \$2 million yearly for the last several years.

Assumptions notwithstanding, actual practice has been slightly different:

- Overall, expenses have been less than budgeted, by about \$25-30 million. Medical benefits have been assumed to rise at the rate of 7% annually, but health care cost increases have been more favorable to Boston College in the last couple of years. Utilities have also cost less than budgeted, and the University has been able to realize savings from administrative salaries, where some positions have not been filled.
- There has been a revenue shortfall in unrestricted giving and athletics.
- It was noted that in the coming years, the room and board rate may go up an extra half point each year, to cover costs associated with anticipated debt service for a new residence hall. It was also mentioned that the University has been thinking about improving competitiveness in certain admission markets, and that a number of financial aid proposals to increase our yield are being evaluated.

A few questions were raised by the Council:

- One member observed that major disruptions are being seen in undergraduate and graduate education: some students are now graduating in 3 years, more institutions are launching online courses and online degree programs, and concerns about affordability continue to be raised. It was stated that Boston College is in a position to handle short-term disruptions well; it was also noted that BC has been experimenting with online education in Semester Online. Boston College remains committed to need-blind admissions and full funding of demonstrated need.
- Questions were asked about the state of graduate enrollments. In master's programs in the Lynch School, there have been concerns about the applicant pool not being as strong as would be desirable. In addition, some softness has been noted in interest in the Lynch School MA programs and the Carroll School evening MBA program, reflecting the fact that automatic salary increases that formerly accompanied advanced degrees (e.g., the

MAT and MBA) are becoming less common. In response to a weak labor market for lawyers, applications to law schools are down nationwide. The Provost's Office, the Budget Office, the Deans' offices, and Enrollment Management are working together to track these trends and manage their impact.

- It was pointed out that undergraduate financial aid is not limited to grant aid, but includes loans and parental and student contributions as well. It was also remarked that BC does not have any academic merit aid, except for the Presidential Scholars Program, which provides full tuition but not full room and board.

4. Provost's Report

- Joe Quinn reported that the Admission Office and Information Technology Services were able to circumvent problems caused by the redesign of the Common Application. The redesign led to technical difficulties in relaying applications and supporting documents, and caused several colleges and universities to extend application deadlines. No extensions were needed at Boston College, thanks to the work of Admissions and ITS.
- Some background about Franciscan Hospital's Kennedy Day School and the proposed merger with Boston College's Campus School was provided. Several meetings with the parents of Campus School students have been held and the University continues to weigh whether or not to proceed with the merger.