

Provost's Advisory Council
Summary of April 4, 2013 meeting

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Anita Tien
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1. The summary for the meeting of February 21, 2013 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. Proposed language for the Faculty Handbook regarding the promotion of non-tenure-track faculty was reviewed.
 - Faculty at the Law School have recommended two amendments to the language. The first amendment, to clarify that non-tenure-track faculty would not vote on promotion of tenure-track faculty, was approved. The second amendment, to clarify changes in titles for non-tenure-track faculty, was judged unclear. It was agreed that this proposal will be further clarified within the Law School.
 - A question was raised as to whether the proposed grievance committee for non-tenure-track faculty should be composed of elected or appointed members. It was agreed to begin with appointed members, with the understanding that there may be a transition to elected members at some point.

Next steps:

1. The Law School will further discuss the recommendations it presented.
 2. University Counsel will be asked to review all proposed changes in language.
 3. The Provost's Advisory Council will review final revisions.
3. Research productivity metrics from the Faculty Annual Reports were discussed.
 - Faculty continue to report that the Digital Measures instrument for entering information is unwieldy and time-consuming. It was observed that three years ago, the instrument was considered the best available; since then, other commercial products have been developed that might be superior.
 - It was suggested that the Provost's Office develop a list of frequently asked questions to help guide faculty using the Digital Measures instrument.

Next steps:

1. The Provost's Office will explore the availability of other commercial products and report back to the group.

4. Pat Keating, Executive Vice President, joined the Provost's Advisory Council to discuss the FY14 budget, which was approved by the Board of Trustees at its meeting last month.
 - Boston College's FY14 operating budget will be \$886 million, representing a 2.9% increase over last year's budget. Of that amount, \$5 million is set aside yearly for academic strategic funds. The expected endowment payout will be about 3%.
 - Tuition rates will increase 4%. Room and board increases will be closer to the anticipated inflation rate, resulting in a cost increase of 3.6% overall. Budgeted undergraduate financial aid will rise 8%, double the tuition increase rate.
 - The FY14 budget anticipates that fundraising revenue will remain the same as last year. It was noted that sponsored research is down, owing to significant contractions in grant funding.
 - Boston College has been fortunate in that health insurance rates have not risen as much as had previously been feared. Efforts to achieve operational efficiencies have been helpful, and utility cost increases remain low.
 - It was noted that some areas within the budget are problematic. There will likely be shortages on the revenue side (e.g., enrollments in the Woods College and the Law School are down, ticket sales for Athletics are down, and operating gifts have not met expectations). There will also probably be overages on the expense side, most notably for financial aid.
 - Questions were raised about financial aid for graduate students. It was noted that the recent extension of healthcare benefits to graduate students was a significant boost in aid. Question was raised about whether graduate stipends should be more regularly re-adjusted according to merit.
 - It was noted that the university is doing an analysis of the potential complications caused by federal sequestration, and planning possible responses.

5. Provost's Report
 - The Bookstore has received objections from faculty about its early requests for information about book assignments and course size. It was explained that the Bookstore begins sourcing used books for fall courses in the spring, to achieve best pricing for students purchasing textbooks. Faculty assistance and support of this effort are critical.
 - BC has begun exploring the possibility of offering two MOOCs (massive open online courses), either with a partner (such as EdX) or on its own.
 - Discussions with 2U and the Semester Online Consortium continue. It is anticipated that a final decision will be made within a couple of weeks.