

**Provost's Advisory Council  
Summary of April 25, 2013 meeting**

Bert Garza  
Judith Gordon  
Lillie Albert  
Danny Willis  
Katie O'Dair  
Diana Pullin  
Timothy Crawford

Jeffrey Bloechl  
Harry Kent  
James Bretzke, S.J.  
Anthony Annunziato  
Tom Wall  
Vickie Monta  
Stephen Pfohl

Renee Jones  
Anita Tien  
Larry McLaughlin  
Don Hafner  
James Gips  
Theresa O'Keefe

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1. A member raised a question regarding the summary for the meeting of April 4, 2013, in which it had been stated (in item 2) that the proposed grievance committee for non-tenure track faculty would initially be composed of appointed members, "with an understanding that there may be a transition to elected members at some point." That member indicated that her recollection of the discussion was that the transition to elected members would occur after the first year. It was clarified that frequently, there are no grievances in any given year, and that it would be preferable to have experience with the currently proposed system before making any additional changes.
  2. The summary was then 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.
  3. Sarah Beckjord, Chair of the University Council on Teaching, joined Council to discuss the UCT's response to the report of the Alcohol Task Force, which suggested a link between problem drinking on campus and the issue of grade inflation/compression.
    - It was observed that evidence of a causal link between grade inflation/compression and problem drinking is not strong, and therefore efforts to increase academic rigor may or may not affect patterns in student drinking. Nevertheless, it was felt that faculty and academic administrators should turn their attention to such issues, since focusing on academic rigor has pedagogical merit in and of itself.
    - To the extent that binge drinking should be a concern of the entire University, and not limited to Student Affairs, there was consensus that academic offices should make efforts to address the problem.
    - Some members of the Council suggested that efforts to focus on topics such as plagiarism, drug and alcohol abuse, dorm life, and general academic expectations--as part of the first-year experience--would be very helpful.
    - It was noted that problem drinking is particularly visible during large-scale events such as tailgating, but that it is found throughout campus in less-visible areas.
    - Apart from focusing on grade compression/inflation, it was pointed out that increasing the level of difficulty of courses would be important.
    - A suggestion was made that the existing question about workload in the Student Course Evaluations be changed from, "Compared to similar courses (i.e., Core, major,

etc.) this course required..." to, "What is the total hours per week that you worked on this course, including class time?" It was felt this would enable the University to gather better data on the work required in each course.

- It was noted that the Law School faculty have had a rigorous policy on grade distributions in place for some time, and the policy has worked well in constraining grade inflation.
4. It was announced that Barbara Jones, Vice President of the Division of Student Affairs at Miami University of Ohio, has been appointed Boston College's next Vice President for Student Affairs. She will start in early July.
  5. Pat Keating, Executive Vice President; John Tommaney, Director of Emergency Management and Preparedness; and Rita Owens, Executive Director of Academic Technology (whose portfolio includes data security and emergency management in academic areas) described University procedures regarding emergency management:
    - University preparedness for campus safety and emergency management is coordinated by the Office of Emergency Management and Preparedness and a 25-member Executive Committee (comprised of individuals from offices across the University. Together they conduct table-top simulations; conduct risk assessments; and work collaboratively as needed during emergencies.
    - Boston College has an Emergency Operations Center and comprehensive Emergency and Recovery Plans for every office on campus.
    - A comprehensive and coordinated emergency structure based on a federal template within BC facilitates coordination with outside responders.
    - The University uses a multi-layered approach to communications that includes web communications, social media, email, and text messaging.

University actions during the week of the Boston Marathon were summarized, and the Executive Committee will be holding after-action review meetings to identify lessons learned and areas for improvement. It was generally agreed that that the events of Monday and Friday were handled extremely well. A few questions were posed:

- One member of the Council inquired what has been done in terms of planning for medical care during emergencies. The University Health Services and the Connell School of Nursing have been involved in BC's emergency management and table-top simulations. It was also pointed out that the University has a relationship with St. Elizabeth's Hospital.
  - It was noted that communications when cell networks are overtaxed or deactivated can be particularly challenging. This is why Boston College employs a layered approach to communication. In addition, key individuals on the Emergency Management Executive Team have two-way radios.
  - It was reported that on Friday, April 19, when the Governor of Massachusetts asked residents to shelter in place, Boston College instituted extra patrols to assure the security and respond to the needs of off-campus students. There is a special communication protocol and network for such students.
6. Provost's Report

- Boston College has joined the Semester Online Consortium. Next steps are that an implementation team will be addressing issues related to integrating the Semester Online program with existing BC policies and practices. The team will make recommendations for the consideration of the University Council on Teaching and the Council of Deans, with the input of other groups, including the Academic Associate Deans.
- The admissions outlook remains positive. Compared to last year at this point in the admission cycle, yield is up about 3 percentage points.
- Commencement will take place on Monday, May 20. Faculty were reminded of the importance of their attendance.
- The Provost thanked all of the Provost's Advisory Council for their time and efforts over the past year.