

**University Council on Teaching
Meeting of Febraury 12, 2014
Waul House Presentation Room
10:30-12:00**

Present: Jackie Lerner (Chair), Kathy Bailey, Sue Barrett, Pat DeLeeuw (guest), Thomas Groome, Vidya Madhavan, Michael Martin, Katie McInnis-Dittrich

Minutes: Minutes from December 11, 2013 were distributed electronically for approval.

Business:

1. Update on TAMs and TAMEs: Jackie reported that \$240,000 would be available for teaching, advising and mentoring grants, a much higher figure than in the past, but this needs to be confirmed. Pat will report back on the figure at the next UCT meeting.

2. Discussion of Report of Faculty Committee on Undergraduate Women: Pat reported that there is a national conversation currently underway concerning the academic self-perception of undergraduate women, with articles appearing in the Chronicle of Higher Education and USA Today, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/09/26/study-females-lose-confidence-college/2871111/> based on a Heights article <http://www.bcheights.com/news/report-confirms-decline-of-female-self-esteem-at-bc-1.3128620#.UvuzeErfZyQ>

Pat reported that Dartmouth applications are down by 14% and the university is exploring whether there is any correlation between the precipitous drop and reports of sexual harassment or other factors. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2014-02-10/dartmouth-freshman-applications-drop-14-prompting-scrutiny.html> The committee agreed that while we need to address the issues in the BC Report, we are also sensitive to BC's image as a Jesuit University that offers a caring and safe environment for our students.

Pat also reported that the BC chapter of Strong Women Strong Girls is planning a display of their activities in the neighborhood community to build positive self esteem in girls in grade school. The Heights article will be included in the display in O'Neill Library.

On the positive side, The Council for Women at Boston College is sponsoring a well-endowed lecture series on women and leadership beginning in fall '14. Successful women leaders will be invited to campus to give talks and break out sessions for undergraduate women. Kathy will provide an update after the next CWBC on February 25.

Katie stated that the Report was discussed in a faculty meeting in the Graduate School of Social Work but was dismissed as poor methodology. The committee agreed that, although more data could be gathered, the basic findings in the report are valid and there is reason for concern. The committee believes that these issues should be addressed because BC prides itself on being a place of excellence in the Jesuit tradition.

Jackie noted that research on national developmental norms in adolescents shows self esteem in girls goes up after high school and stabilizes in college. Therefore, the issues identified in the Report deserve attention.

Kathy reported that part of the Report was discussed in a meeting of the Athletic Advisory Board, especially page 15, which states that one of the two college experiences that negatively correlates with women's academic skills self-rating is participation in intercollegiate sports (the other is failing a course). Vidya suggested that coaches should be made aware of this finding and address it with their teams. She also noted that targeted programs for specific groups of women might be more effective than global programs, although these are also needed.

Tom suggested that the model of the online academic tutorial could be used for incoming students to make them aware of what constitutes sexual misconduct. This would also make them conscious of and responsible for their behavior. Bystander awareness education is already mandated for first year students. The Women's Resource Center, the Sexual Assault Network and the Office of Residential Life have teamed up on occasion to raise awareness about sexual assault. An informal group, Students for Sexual Health, has also done programming on these issues. Sue raised the question of how many students are reached by these programs.

The committee expressed interest in inviting someone from the Office of Student Affairs to speak to the UCT to see what programs are being offered to how many students on these issues. Jackie will extend the invitation to an appropriate person in Student Affairs.

Pat reported that under federal regulations faculty are required to be trained in sexual violence and misconduct reporting procedures. BC holds training sessions but they are voluntary. This raised the critical issue of whether BC is in violation of federal mandates. There was consensus on extending an invitation to Katie O'Dair as Title IX compliance coordinator to clear up these questions.

Katie McInnis-Dittrich suggested that advisors can play a major role not only in harassment issues but in women's self esteem concerns as well. GSSW advisors are equipped to address these issues and may offer a model to other schools. Kathy expressed some skepticism that faculty would be eager to have such personal discussions with students, and may feel uncomfortable and unqualified to do so. Michael mentioned that pre-major advisors in A&S are good resources for students. Akua Sarr offers programming for pre-major advisors.

The UCT will move on specific recommendations at the next meeting, but agreed a first step might be to recommend that department chairs be given copies of the Report to discuss with their faculty and aggregate suggestions to rectify the problem of declining self esteem in Boston College women. The committee agreed that the Future Steps section of the Report offers a set of thoughtful initiatives that require consideration and possible implementation.

In the concluding discussion, the observation was made that top down steps taken on the part of the administration need to be coupled with serious changes in the peer culture and behavior on the part of both men and women at BC.

3. Kathy brought up the issue of BOC's new policy that requires a minimum of 25 people at all dinners that they cater. This puts a huge strain on department budgets and undermines the efficacy of student faculty relationships at these events. Dinners and discussions that follow a lecture by a guest speaker serve as an excellent way for faculty and students to interact, for faculty to mentor, assist and support students, and to carry out one of the main missions of the university. But groups of 25 are simply too unwieldy and costly to carry out these objectives. Jackie will follow up with Pat Bando.

4. Agenda items for future discussion: follow up on Advisor Questionnaires presented by Don Hafner, gmail for faculty, visit from Nick Gozik (OIP).

Next Meeting: March 12 10:30-12:00 in Waul House