

**Provost Advisory Council  
Summary of April 30, 2009 meeting**

Bert Garza	Tom Wall	Gilda Morelli
Pat Byrne	John Spinard	Don Hafner
Pat DeLeeuw	Jim Russell	Anita Tien
Kevin Bedell	Jim Morken (for Paul	Angela Amar (for
Lillie Albert	Davidovits)	Rosanna DeMarco)
Hassan Tehranian	Paul Lewis	Bob Bloom
Kay Lemon	Cole Boskey	Robin Fleming
Ferna Phillips	Brian Jacek	
David Quigley	Callista Roy	

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1. The summary of the March 26, 2009 meeting was approved and will be forwarded to the President's Office.
  
2. A draft version of proposed guidelines for faculty sponsorship of student-initiated events was discussed. This discussion was occasioned by the cancellation of a speaker event, in which the Provost's Office was not consulted, and the discussion concerned the process by which such things should be done in the future.
  - Concern was expressed about the practical aspects of implementation of the guidelines.
  - A question was raised about whether the requirement that faculty sponsors be involved with the students organizing the event from the outset would preclude events prompted by timely and emergent issues.
  - It was observed that there are many areas of "expertise" that are not covered among the faculty at Boston College. In addition, some members noted that there are subjects that they are "keenly interested in" but which are not their areas of academic appointment.
  - Some perceived the requirement that a faculty sponsor should have "demonstrated scholarly pursuits" as too limiting and proposed using the phrases "academic interest" or "academic knowledge" instead. The Provost encouraged members of the Council to send suggestions for alternative phrasing.
  - It was suggested that it would be useful to include a list of the specific responsibilities a primary faculty sponsor would assume.
  - It was observed that the draft guidelines include both a statement of policy and procedural guidelines, and that separating the two into distinct documents would improve clarity.
  - It was noted that in cases with controversial speakers, a faculty member with "demonstrated scholarly pursuits" may not be prepared to field questions from the media. The Provost replied that the involvement of Public Affairs is intended to help faculty address media queries.
  - It was noted that the guidelines are not intended to place limitations on who may speak on campus for academic purposes.
  - It was observed that the draft guidelines emphasize the mentoring role of a faculty

- A member of the Council reported some questions from faculty about what is meant by "student-initiated events," and asked for clarification as to whether the guidelines would apply to, for example, faculty sponsorship of student groups visiting campus.
- A question was raised about which individuals or offices would be empowered to cancel events, and whether the guidelines should include an explicit statement that events with faculty sponsorship cannot be cancelled without the consultation of the Provost.
- Significant concern was raised by some members of Council about free speech and academic freedom at the University, and the public perception of the University.
- It was suggested that the adoption of any guidelines should be part of a multi-pronged approach moving forward, including perhaps a coordinated speaker series or a "provocative speakers" series.
- Several Council members made specific suggestions for amendments to the draft text.

Next steps:

1. The guidelines will be amended. Later this spring they will be discussed by students and Student Affairs.
3. Suggested topics for discussion for next year include:
  - graduate programs at the University
  - role of faculty advising to student groups
  - revision of the University Statutes
  - follow-up discussions about topics that have been discussed earlier, e.g. course evaluations, academic program reviews, etc.
4. Bert Garza reported that 30 new faculty searches are planned for next year, in addition to the 17 searches that will be continued from this year. Deans will present their recommendations and requests for new positions shortly.

Deans and the Provost's Office will be conducting separate exit interviews with faculty who choose to go to other institutions.

The transition to a credit-based system continues. The plan is that in the fall of 2010, the class of 2014 will be on the credit-based system. (The classes of 2013, 2012, and 2011 will remain on the current course-based system.)