

Provost Advisory Council
Summary of September 25, 2008 meeting

Attending:

Bert Garza	Paul Davidovits	Hassan Tehranian
Pat DeLeeuw	David Quigley	Kay Lemon
Pat Byrne	Don Hafner	Othelia Lee
Monique Lowd	Paul Lewis	Ana Aleman Martinez
Robin Fleming	Susan Gennaro	Lillie Albert
Kevin Bedell	Callista Roy	John Spinard
Gilda Morelli	Ferna Phillips	Anita Tien
Tony Annunziato	Alberto Godenzi	

1. The summary of the April 24, 2008 meeting was approved and will be forwarded to the President's Office.
2. The group reviewed operating procedures (see below) for the Provost's Advisory Council. Particular attention was drawn to items 3, 14, and 12, about communication between Council members and fellow faculty, and about the development of agenda items for discussion. It was noted that regular faculty meetings and consistent self-identification by members of the Council are helpful in ensuring that information is circulated throughout the College and professional schools.
3. Increasingly, the Provost's Office is asked about ongoing and planned academic activity at the University. In the past it has been necessary to refer to the College and professional schools for information.

To streamline this process, efforts are being made to synthesize, standardize and gather information proactively that is not available through other sources, e.g., participation in advising programs. The goal is to provide a University-wide mechanism that enables faculty to submit information in a format that would be accessible for multiple purposes by different units, such as departments, college/professional schools, and the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Assessment. This would have the benefit of minimizing requests to faculty.

Among the suggestions made in response to these plans were the following:

- The need to improve documentation of faculty contributions to the advising program: several council members observed that quantitative data on advising such as the number of recommendation letters written may not accurately reflect the quality of an advisor or instructor. For example, students may gravitate towards other faculty in securing letters for purposes of "connection" or "prestige." It was suggested that faculty might provide information about the students they individually mentor, e.g. in the labs or in other research settings, that may be more meaningful.

- It was observed that creating reports is time-consuming for faculty, and that only information that has an identified user and purpose should be gathered.
- A suggestion was made that faculty websites could be standardized as well, so that the information requested in the annual reports aligns with information already available on the website.
- Others noted that faculty activity is a reflection of University resources as well, e.g. the quality of instruction and faculty advisement varies depending on the size of classes, for example.

Along with information that would capture teaching activity, research activities, and service, some specific measures of activity were suggested:

- a. what types of awards/fellowships/internships are being conferred upon a faculty member's students;
- b. information that differentiates between undergraduate and graduate education; and within graduate education, professional education;
- c. faculty mentoring, and activity on third-year review committees;
- d. interdisciplinary and interdepartmental research and collaboration; intradisciplinary and intradepartmental research and collaboration;
- e. innovations in use of technology;
- f. curricular revisions;
- g. reading of faculty research;
- h. commitment to and promotion of diversity of faculty, students, and staff;
- i. government report writing (e.g. policy and expert witness).

Next steps:

1. The Provost's Office will meet with department chairs for additional conversation and return to the Provost's Advisory Committee later this academic year.
 2. In addition, the compilation of annual reports of schools will be discussed at upcoming Council of Deans meetings.
4. Suggestions were made for topics for future meetings:
- Communicating about discussions of potential changes to tenure process, and reviews leading to tenure
 - Communicating about discussion of workloads
 - Ways to enhance communication between faculty and the libraries
 - Communication between departments such as Information Technology and faculty
 - Student formation
5. Other items:
- The Provost reported that discussions are ongoing about the creation of a Center for Student Formation
 - Emergency management: John Tommaney, Director of Emergency Management, and Pat Keating will be joining the Provost's Advisory Council at a future meeting to discuss faculty outreach for emergency management and business continuity.
 - Conflict of interest/conflict of commitment: the Provost is reviewing how best to achieve improved documentation of conflict of interest/conflict of commitment.

- Residential learning: discussions are ongoing about ways to enhance cultural and academic programming in the residence halls, and to create learning spaces in existing halls as well as programming classrooms in new residence halls.
- Congress has passed the Higher Education Opportunity Act, which will require that faculty post course syllabi and required textbooks well in advance of the beginning of the semester. This will be a requirement of all institutions receiving Federal funding.
- Discussions with the University Council on Teaching, the Deans, and other groups have pointed to a move from counting courses to counting credits in academic progress. The goal is that with the class of 2014 (entering in fall 2010) this new system will be enacted.
- An update was provided about the progress of the search for a University Librarian.

Operating Procedures of the Provost's Advisory Council

1. The purpose of the Provost's Advisory Council will be to advise the Provost and Dean of Faculties on issues of major importance to the faculty and academic operation of Boston College.
2. The membership of the Council will include:
 - The Provost and Dean of Faculties
 - Vice Provosts as appropriate
 - The University Librarian
 - Eight elected faculty members: two members from each division of Arts and Sciences; two members from Education, Law, Management, Advancing Studies, Social Work and Nursing, with no more than one from any School
 - Two additional faculty members appointed on an annual basis by the Provost and the Council Chairperson.
 - Three members of the Council of Deans appointed annually by the Provost and the Council Chairperson.
 - The Director of Learning Resources for Student Athletes
 - Two undergraduate students appointed by the UGBC
 - The Graduate School Association President
3. Members would be expected to provide regular reports and solicit regular input from the appropriate bodies in their schools, e.g., in A&S, the Board of Chairs or EPC.
4. Agenda items may be submitted by Council members for review by the Provost and the Chairperson who will be responsible for setting the agenda.
5. Elected faculty members will be chosen in the annual faculty elections for two-year terms. Both tenure-track and full-time adjunct faculty will be eligible to serve.

6. At the end of the spring semester a Chairperson will be elected from among the faculty members of the Council to serve a one-year renewable term.
7. Meetings will be scheduled at least monthly during the academic year.
8. Special meetings will be held as necessary.
9. The Council will hold normally an annual meeting with the President of the University and will invite other members of the administration to meetings as appropriate.
10. Committees will be formed to study specific questions.
11. While an effort has been made to keep the Council limited in its membership to promote efficient operation, occasionally faculty, students or staff members will be invited to offer advice or make presentations relevant to particular academic issues.
12. It is assumed that members of the Council will stay in close touch with the student, faculty or administrative groups from which they are drawn.
13. Summaries of meetings will be brief, highlighting agenda items and actions rather than conversations. Unless otherwise specified, members will be free to share agenda items and meeting summaries. Materials distributed in preparation for meetings may be shared with others unless otherwise specified. Copies of the PAC summaries will be sent to members of the Council, vice presidents, associate deans, department chairpersons and the Office of Communications.
14. On occasion, members of the Council may request that remarks be considered private.
15. Meetings will be conducted informally. Strict parliamentary procedure will be employed only when the Chair judges that this is necessary for effective action.
16. The operating procedures of the PAC will be reviewed annually.