

**Provost Advisory Council  
Summary of December 4, 2008 meeting**

Bert Garza	David Quigley	Meghan Cawley
Pat Byrne	Bob Bloom	Cole Boskey
Pat DeLeeuw	James Russell	Paul Lewis
Anita Tien	Don Hafner	Lillie Albert
Othelia Lee	John Spinard	Ferna Phillips
Hassan Tehranian	Callista Roy	Kevin Bedell
Monique Lowd	Dick Cobb-Stevens	Kay Lemon
Paul Davidovits	Angela Amar (for	
Robin Fleming	Rosanna DeMarco)	

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1. The summary of the November 6, 2008 meeting was approved and will be forwarded to the President's Office.
  
2. Meg Ryan joined the Council to hear any questions about the draft handbook for Academic Program Reviews. All departments and the professional schools at the University are being placed on a five-year cycle for self-study and external review.
  - Questions were raised about the suggestion, in the self-study guidelines, that departments consider three possible scenarios (resources remaining steady, resources increased by 10%, resources decreased by 10%) in their academic planning. It was noted that these scenarios were also outlined in the Strategic Planning process and are meant to encourage departments to examine the rationales behind current departmental allocations.
  - It was noted that the academic program reviews are intended to complement, rather than duplicate, any self-studies that are part of professional accreditation programs. Thus the Provost and Deans will plan to align the academic program review schedule with professional accreditation schedules.
  - It was stated that the external reviewers have the option of creating an "eyes-only" report to the Provost (and, in some cases, the Dean and/or the President), a public report to be made available to the Provost as well as the department, or both. The choice is left to the external review team.
  - A member asked about plans for zero-based budgeting. The Provost noted that in the next couple of years, Deans will be leading zero-based budgeting processes for each of their schools. It is expected that Deans and their teams will build a school-wide structure and process involving individual department chairs and program directors to incorporate information and assess needs. Along these lines, it was noted that department chairs will benefit from support and training in budget planning and implementation, as well as in personnel management.
  - It was observed that the guidelines for the self-study do not make reference to specific professional criteria. It is expected that the criteria will arise from the individual department and its disciplinary field.
  - While the self-study guidelines encourage departments to situate program and activities (both current and proposed) against the backdrop of the larger

University, it was noted that when appropriate, a department should provide explanation for how the larger University context does (or does not) apply.

- It was proposed that departments should receive as much advance notice as possible as to when they will undertake self-studies. The Provost noted that the Deans are submitting a five-year schedule for the departmental reviews.
- It was suggested the guidelines for preparing the self-study (in section 2) could explicitly state that the department should provide long-term and short-term goals as well as the other elements outlined (departmental overview, description of programs, description of teaching activities, description of research activities, and description of service activities).
- It was stated that the guidelines for the external visit should explicitly include time for the reviewers to meet with undergraduate and graduate students.

Next steps:

1. The Academic Program Review handbook will be finalized, incorporating comments from the Council of Deans and the Provost's Advisory Council.
3. The Council reviewed language for Conflict of Interest/Conflict of Commitment policies. Once these are adopted, it will be expected that each faculty member will annually sign a Conflict of Interest/Conflict of Commitment statement.
    - It was noted that on occasion, faculty members may be asked to serve in a consulting capacity (e.g., expert witness) that may take more time than is customarily prescribed in the COI/COC statement. In those cases, it is expected that the Dean and the department chair will be involved in discussions with the faculty member about what would be appropriate.
    - A question was raised about the specific language and tone of the Conflict of Interest portion of the statement. Because this language is drawn directly from the University's Policies and Procedures, it is not possible for us to amend wording at this time.
    - It was noted that journal editorships, service in professional associations, etc. are encouraged activities for faculty, but they also pose potential conflicts of commitment and should be reported by faculty.

Next steps:

1. Council members are encouraged to review expected faculty activities enumerated under "Conflict of Commitment," note omissions, and suggest additions.
  2. The Provost's Office will develop a form for faculty to sign, which will be presented to the Council for discussion.
4. Provost's Report
    - Comments and questions about the President's recent letter regarding the economic downturn were invited. The Provost noted that BC relies on its endowment for approximately 10% of its operating expenses. Despite the current economic uncertainties, all approved faculty searches will continue. No information is available at this time about salary or tuition increments for next year. It was

suggested that the Provost's Office might issue a statement explicitly stating that approved faculty searches will proceed.

- A question was raised about whether, given the current economic turmoil, there were any students who have been closed out of registration due to family financial difficulties. It was reported that very few such cases had arisen thus far, and that the university will do what it can to respond. Faculty are encouraged to refer their advisees to the Financial Aid office to discuss any challenges. The Provost's Office will follow up with Student Services about course registration.
- A member of the Committee raised a question about the transition from a course-based system of degree credit to a credit-based system, suggesting that some departments had doubts that they would be able to devise a scheme for making such a conversion. Don Hafner noted that the request to Schools and departments to submit an implementation plan was intended to uncover such difficulties, and he urged all Schools and departments to continue their efforts, with the understanding that any difficulties in meeting the transition schedule can be discussed.