



Creating the Future of the Schiller Institute

Key Faculty Insights at a Glance

Faculty convenings, held in Spring 2021, resulted in key takeaways and inquiries of over 200 BC faculty in seven areas. These takeaways are summarized below.

1. Enthusiasm at BC for interdisciplinary activities and space is marked by...

- Growing interest in and enthusiasm for interdisciplinary research, teaching and learning
- The notion of Schiller as part of a “refreshing vision” that could provide “space and time and structure” for faculty to come together and “gain exposure outside of siloes”
- Excitement at the prospect of new resources and personnel, including maker spaces for students, new faculty hires and novel sources of funding, to promote interdisciplinary activities.

2. Suggestions for promoting interdisciplinary collaboration at BC include...

- Holding interdisciplinary conversations or “summits;” hosting forums, colloquia and/or poster sessions on interdisciplinary research topics; and creating centers or working groups
- Auditing current BC programs and faculty research areas to map emerging areas of interdisciplinary expertise; co-sponsoring policy briefs
- Hosting informal faculty get-togethers such as coffee breaks or lunch-and-learns

3. Student engagement at Schiller is seen as...

- A priority, with faculty having already witnessed high student engagement with Schiller programming on environmental racism, among other efforts
- Related centrally to interdisciplinary coursework, as faculty sought to promote such coursework beyond the BC core at higher levels of study
- Fostering students’ meaningful careers via experiential learning opportunities that engage the broader Boston community
- Strengthened by Schiller’s undergraduate Global Public Health minor program evolving into a major and other future credentialing opportunities for graduate students

4. Schiller's role in promoting the common good is...

- Inextricably tied to Boston College's broader mission and aims
- Interdisciplinary, related to human-centered engineering, theological notions of "what it means to be well" and other traditions in promoting community well-being and providing opportunities "to improve the world, improve communities"
- Evidenced in aims to improve public health, create green energy solutions, mitigate climate change and harness technology for social betterment, among other Institute goals

5. To learn more about and contribute to staffing at Schiller...

- Faculty sought to understand the substantive areas in which faculty would be hired as well as how and when collaborative hiring processes would take place
- Faculty suggested standout mid-career scholars that might benefit the work of Schiller
- Faculty inquired about tenure processes for Schiller faculty, efforts to increase faculty diversity and opportunities to affiliate with Schiller for current BC faculty
- Faculty also wondered about future staff hires at Schiller and the Institute's place within BC's broader academic hierarchy

6. The mission and direction of Schiller is...

- A source of interest and excitement among faculty
- Closely aligned with but distinct from that of the new Engineering Department
- Focused not only on substantive areas of energy, health and the environment but also aims to "catalyze" interdisciplinary engagement across the BC campus.
- Part of a growth stage in interdisciplinary efforts as well as community-facing efforts at addressing complex social problems

7. Opportunities for funding from Schiller...

- Include ongoing (at the time) and future opportunities, not limited to Schiller Institute Grants for Exploratory Collaborative Scholarship (SIGECS), nearly \$410,000 of which were awarded in May 2021
- Are eagerly anticipated in areas such as external training, graduate students and more general grant support for interdisciplinary projects from Schiller