

Provost's Advisory Council
Thursday, March 25, 2021
8:30-10:00 a.m. - Zoom

In attendance:

Sharon Beckman (Chair)
Anthony Annunziato
Michelle Elias Bloomer
Mary Ellen Carter
Joseph Du Pont
Kristin Flower
Yonder Gillihan
Stacy Grooters
Christian Guma
Angela Harkins

Dewin Hernandez
Regine Jean-Charles
Gregory Kalscheur, S.J.
William Keane
Thomas Kohler
Adam Krueckeberg
Jonathan Laurence
Karen Lyons
John Mahoney
Allison Marshall

Gilda Morelli
Karen Muncaster
David Quigley
Tracy Regan
Ronnie Sadka
Akua Sarr
David Scanlon
Billy Soo
Sasha Tomic
Thomas Wall

-
- 1. The summary of the February 11, 2021 meeting was approved.** It will be sent to the President's Office. All summaries are posted on the Provost's Office website; members are encouraged to share them with colleagues.
 - 2. Student Affairs Update on Student Mental Health, Responses to COVID-19 and racial incidents, and VP Search:** *Melinda Stoops, Associate Vice President for Student Health and Wellness, Tom Mogan, Associate Vice President for Student Engagement and Formation, Michael Lochhead, Executive Vice President and Acting Vice President of Student Affairs*

Michael Lochhead opened the conversation with an update on the ongoing response to recent racial incidents on campus, discussing the commitment of the staff in Student Affairs to build trust with the students and to provide an environment where all students feel comfortable and safe.

At the request of the Office of University Advancement, there was a meeting with Student Affairs leadership and the AHANA Alumni Advisory Executive Committee to discuss the incidents in Xavier Hall and other areas of concern. One primary concern, which has also been raised by faculty, is how we might improve communication regarding incidents to various stakeholders on campus.

Starting the week of March 30, all undergraduate students will be required to attend mandatory meetings to reinforce messaging that BC will not tolerate incidents of racial bias, and that all members of the community should feel like BC is their home. Data from the last student experience survey will be used to show that not all students experience BC the same way and emphasize that everyone has a role to play in creating an inclusive, caring, and welcoming culture on campus.

Student Affairs has been working with Lise Leist, a current BC Trustee who specializes in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion program evaluation and development, to review DEI programming within the division.

There is also an ongoing review of the *DiversityEdu* platform which all freshman go through. There is a need to engage with the rest of the student body in a planned and intentional manner. There is additional content via *DiversityEdu* that could be leveraged to engage students throughout their time at BC, or other competency modules may be needed. Student Affairs has been working with Mission and Ministry's First-Year Experience to integrate their diversity trainings as well as working with others across campus to design workshops to engage in these important conversations.

Following the recent mass shooting in Georgia, communication went out to students offering support resources, and a candlelight vigil was held on Maloney lawn. Through the Office of Institutional Diversity and Vice Provost Akua Sarr, there was also a Courageous Conversations event addressing anti-Asian racism and violence.

Mike introduced Tom Mogan, Associate Vice President for Student Engagement and Formation, to discuss engagement with students around racial incidents on campus and around the country, as well as the University's ongoing COVID-19 response.

Tom began with a review of the response to racial incidents. Last summer there were conversations with student groups across campus to address concerns and hear how BC could be more supportive. The DEI committee within Student Affairs created spaces for staff to prepare to support and engage students in the fall. Once students returned to campus, Student Affairs helped to support activism on campus. In coordination with the Forum on Racial Justice and student groups, there was a Solidarity for Racial Justice event in the fall, which facilitated conversations and commitments to solidarity and action.

In the fall, the Bias Motivated Conduct Policy was modified, strengthening it to reflect that bias-motivated conduct can not only be a violation of student conduct, but also serve as an aggravating circumstance, and a student can be charged with both bias and conduct violations. This had been the practice, but it was made official.

Tom continued, discussing student engagement and support related to COVID-19. Creating a sense of community, while working within the local and federal guidelines and restrictions, has been challenging and limiting to programming possibilities.

In the fall, Student Affairs held a series of virtual dinners with members of the freshman and senior classes to provide a space for conversations around their concerns, fears, and hopes for the academic year. Seniors surveyed indicated that relationships, managing money, and moving to a new city were their primary worries. Student Affairs partnered with the Career Center and the Alumni Office to provide programming to address some of these concerns.

Early in the spring semester, there was a Winterfest event that featured food, fire pits, and outdoor games, and a Turks and CaiStokes event provided students with a spring-break-type event. Additional initiatives planned for the spring semester include:

- Equinox – an event similar to Winterfest, looking toward the spring equinox, which will feature a senior-week type atmosphere for students
- For first-year students, spaces equipped with games can be reserved in O’Connell House for groups of up to six students to gather
- Baldwin’s Backyard will begin in April and will provide outdoor gathering spaces
- BC After Dark will transform Hillside café and the adjacent plaza into a sports bar type atmosphere for students who are 21+

Tom discussed the ongoing concern for student gatherings and violations to the student code of conduct. Most of the violations have been due to large gatherings. There has been consistent messaging to students about their responsibilities and consequences for violations.

A council member requested a formal system to inform faculty about racial incidents on campus, noting that faculty sometimes hear about incidents from students during class. A council member added that improved communication would allow faculty to make better use of resources available to them in preparing for conversations with students.

Mike acknowledged the need to disseminate information in a timely manner, and this is a topic of ongoing conversations.

A council member asked for increased communication to graduate students around commencement and options for in-person programming for the end of the academic year.

Mike responded that larger scale events will depend on the vaccine rollout and the state limitations on gathering sizes. Additional correspondence around plans for the end of the semester will be coming soon. Tom added that Student Affairs is aware of the graduate student specific concerns and is working with Carole Hughes on them.

Mike then introduced Melinda Stoops, Associate Vice President for Student Health and Wellness, to provide an update on student mental health.

Melinda began by discussing historical trends around mental health issues on college campuses. Data from an American College Health Associate study from 2009 to 2015 showed increasing levels of anxiety, depression, and panic attacks among college students over the period, and it has only increased since then.

The mental health crisis on college campuses has been exacerbated by COVID-19. Factors that most impact students include stress, social isolation, disruption of routine, loss, anxiety, and uncertain futures. There is a level of vulnerability for students that did not exist a year ago.

In addition to COVID-19 related stressors, students are experiencing stresses related to the ongoing racism and racialized violence across the country. Students of color particularly

may be feeling isolated, experiencing safety concerns, feeling like an outsider, and experiencing pressure to prove themselves.

Last summer a mental health module was introduced to teach students about their personal mental health while also encouraging a bystander method of looking out for their friends. The module includes strategies and techniques for dealing with stressors and directs them to additional resources on campus. There are student health coaches available to help with addressing stress factors. Student mental health is a campus issue, and there are a number of good resources available from offices around campus.

Beyond the standard support provided by the University Counseling Services, which include individual therapy, group therapy, and same day consultations, a number of online support groups have been established. There are general support groups, but also groups for specific student populations or students dealing with special circumstances.

Melinda concluded, reiterating that supporting student mental health is a community effort and encouraged faculty to reach out with questions about how to support students in need and available resources.

3. Eagle Apps Rollout – Mary French, *University Registrar*, and Jennifer Mack, *Director of Student Information Systems*

Sharon introduced Mary French, University Registrar, and Jen Mack, Director of Student Information Systems, to discuss the Eagle Apps rollout.

Mary French began with an overview of the rollout of Eagle Apps and the scope of the project. Eagle Apps contains a number of service modules. Most of the modules were built in-house by BC as part of the Eagle Apps project. The homegrown modules include Student Accounts, Curriculum, Course Scheduling, Registration, Grading, Academic Records, Program Enrollment, Graduation, and Reporting. A handful of service modules were purchased from external vendors, including Financial Aid, Advising, Degree Auditing, Transfer Courses, and Transcripts.

She continued, reviewing the timeline for the project. The UIS system will be phased out through the rest of the spring 2021 semester and graduating the last class utilizing UIS in May. Course Management, Course Offerings, and Course Information Schedule are already live in Eagle Apps, and the academic teams in the schools have been working to prepare for summer and fall course registration through Eagle Apps. The rest of the rollout will proceed according to the following schedule:

- Late March: Academic Records, Degree Audit, Financial Aid, and Program Enrollment
- Early April: Registration for summer session

- Early May: Student Accounts. Note: Student Accounts has already launched but continues to integrate with UIS, and will switch to full integration with Eagle Apps in May.
- Late May/June: Registration for the fall semester
- Summer: Degree Audit, Grading, and Transcripts
- Summer: The first class graduating out of Eagle Apps will occur.

Mary continued, discussing the summer registration timeline. Eagle Apps will provide students an opportunity to plan their schedules via a course-planning module that will be available to them before the registration period opens. Registration for the various schools will be spread out in April to allow for the best possible support to students and troubleshooting, as necessary. Registration for the fall semester has been pushed back to late May and June to allow for additional planning to accommodate a higher volume of students registering. Advising will happen prior to students leaving campus, with registration happening after Commencement. Pandemic conditions have led many peer schools to take a similar approach.

Jen Mack provided some background on the work thus far. Course Management and Course Offerings were deployed in mid-December and since then, there have been 18 additional deployments to production with new features, functions, and bug fixes. A support module was implemented which utilizes the BC Works ticket system. There have been 17 group-training sessions attended by over 300 staff members, and over 80 one-on-one training sessions. An Eagle Apps curriculum has been developed in Canvas with 19 training videos currently available across different subject areas. Eventually, every module will have a Canvas training component as well as quick snippet help videos that link from within the application.

Support for the application continues to be improved, with an external product being purchased for in-app help. There will be an “auto bot chat” feature that will walk the user through pre-programmed questions and route to live chat support if necessary. This feature will be piloted during registration.

Jen continued, discussing communications and information regarding the rollout. Outreach is catered to the audience and will be ongoing as the rollout continues. Targeted emails have gone out to various audiences since December, covering such topics as the timeline and key dates, training resources, and access requests. There is additional information available on the Eagle Apps product site and the Eagle Apps Resources for Faculty and Staff site, both of which can be found on the Registrar’s website and will require BC authentication for access. The community has been interested and engaged with the project.

Mary added that Eagle Apps will require users who are off campus to use VPN to access the system.

A council member noted that to view the course schedule requires authentication and asked how non-matriculated students will be able to view the course offerings.

Jen responded that there will be both an internal and a public facing version of the course schedule. The internal version is already live, and the public version will go live soon.

4. Provost's Report: David Quigley, *Provost and Dean of Faculties*

Billy Soo provided an update on the academic calendar for the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 academic years, which are close to being finalized. The proposed calendar includes a four-day fall break around the Columbus Day holiday. Options for condensing the calendar are being considered, including shortening the exam period which, currently at eight days, is longer than most peer institutions.

Billy continued, discussing the new Massachusetts paid family medical leave law that took effect on January 1, 2021. There are some details still being worked out, but in most cases, faculty leaves will not change. Maternity leaves will be broken into a six-week medical recovery leave and a twelve-week bonding leave, still resulting in a full-semester of leave. The most significant change to BC's faculty policy is that the non-birthing parent is now also entitled to a twelve week bonding leave and a full-semester of teaching relief.

A council member asked how the tenure clock is impacted.

Billy responded that the birthing parent will get a one-year extension on their tenure clock and current contract. The non-birthing parent will not be eligible for a tenure clock extension.

David provided some updates.

The Board of Trustees approved the FY22 budget. There will be a tuition increase of 2.5%, the lowest increase in many years. A merit increase for faculty and staff was also approved.

Undergraduate admissions decisions will be released tonight. The class of 2025 is on track to be strong academically and diverse. Graduate and professional school admissions is promising as well. Starting in April, the Admissions Office will be offering a small number of campus tours for admitted students and their families. Tours will be limited in size, outdoors only, and socially distanced.

There continue to be a number of focused discussions with various constituents on campus around race at BC. One area of particular interest has been faculty hiring, retention, and long-term goals and challenges. The cohort of new hires this year will be smaller than usual, but the yield of new AHANA faculty, and especially Black faculty, is strong. The hope is for a more robust and typical hiring cycle next year.

The search for the next Dean of CSON is wrapping up, and an announcement will be made soon. At the Law School, Diane Ring will be stepping in as Interim Dean for the 2021-2022 academic year, with a search commencing in the fall for the permanent Dean.

An announcement about Commencement is expected in early April, with a number of elements depending on state and federal guidelines for gatherings.

Looking towards the summer, most courses will be virtual. On-campus testing protocols have not yet been decided. International summer programs have been cancelled.

Planning for the fall semester is underway. Much will depend on the pace of the vaccine rollout and what public health officials allow by August. There needs to be confidence that the community is protected and that viral spread is under control. The goal is to return to a more normal on-campus experience with the vast majority of courses being held in person.

A council member asked if the BC community will have access to vaccines on campus. Another council member asked if members of the community will be required to be vaccinated.

David responded that there is no information yet on whether BC will become a vaccination distribution site. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has thus far opted not to work with higher education institutions to establish campuses as primary sites for the vaccine rollout. He added that the University's decision about a potential vaccine mandate partly depends upon the vaccines moving from emergency use authorization to more permanent approval by the FDA.