

Boston University Faculty Council
Minutes of the Meeting
September 9, 2014

The first regular meeting of the Boston University Faculty Council for the 2014-2015 Session was held on September 9, 2014, at 3:30 p.m. in the Photonics Colloquium Room, 8 St. Mary's Street. Steve Brady, Chair of the Faculty Council, presided over the meeting. The following members attended:

Representatives and Alternates

Andy Andres (CGS), R.
Kazem Azadzo (MED), R.
Canan Corlu (MET), R.
Yuri Corrigan (CAS), R.
Yvette Cozier (SPH), R.
Ana di Robilant (LAW), Alt.
Ivan Fernandez-Val (CAS), R.
Walter Fluker (STH), R.
Matthew Fox (SPH), Alt.
Moshe Hagigi (SMG), Alt.
Gisela Hoecherl-Alden (CAS), R.
Walter Hopp (CAS), R.
Allyn Hubbard (ENG), R.
Eleni Kanasi (GSDM), R.
Rebecca Kinraide (CAS), R.
Frank Korom (CAS), R.
Michael Kwag (SHA), Alt.
Susan Lee (CGS), R.
Cataldo Leone (GSDM), R.
Leonid Levin (CAS), R.
Luz Lopez (SSW), Alt.
David Lyons (LAW), Alt.
Lindsay Moore (CGS), Alt.
Jordana Muroff (SSW), R.
Eileen O'Keefe (SAR), R.
Joshua Pederson (CGS), Alt.
Marnie Reed (SED), R.
Sheila Rodriguez-Vamvas (GSDM), Alt.
Amy Shanler (COM), R.
Woosung Sohn (GSDM), R.
Kristine Strand (SAR), R.
Anne Sullivan-Soydan (SAR), Alt.
Martha Thompson (CAS), R.

Barry Unger (MET), Alt.
Kathryn Webster (SAR), Alt.
Jason Yust (CAS), R.

Committee Chairs

John Carroll, Media and Communication
D. Lynn O'Brien Hallstein, Teaching
James Hamilton, Research
Janelle Heineke, Faculty Policies
Shiela Kibbe-Hodgkins, Awards
Celeste Kong, Compensation and Benefits
Hee-Young Park, Graduate Programs

Robert Volk, Credentials and By-laws
Officers

Steve Brady, Chair
Kathe Darr, Past Chair
J. Robb Dixon, Secretary-Treasurer

Members without a vote

Doreen Miller, Alt. CELOP
Carol Piñeiro, R. CELOP

I. Secretary's Report: Approval of the May 6, 2014 Minutes

There being a quorum, the minutes of the May 6, 2014 meeting were approved.

II. Chair's Report

Chair Brady reviewed the meeting schedule for the fall semester and reminded the Faculty Council members to come to the meet and greet for Faculty Assembly members on September 23 and to encourage their colleagues to attend. He informed the Council that the University Council committees will be seated this month and will start meeting soon. The Chair met with President Brown and Provost Morrison during the summer and discussed the new structure of the University Council and how policies will be drafted and reviewed. This will be an experimental year for the University Council. The Provost's office will create a policy template and a flow chart of the review and approval process. President Brown invited Chair Brady to interview the final candidate for the Athletic Director Search and to give his opinion to Todd Klipp, who directed the search.

The Chair informed the Council that the Executive Committee met during the summer and endorsed the following policies: Degree Definition; Transfer Credit; International Travel. The Council members received the draft policies in early July and were invited to forward their comments before the Executive Committee met. The Executive Committee received all comments prior to the meeting and the vote.

The Chair reminded the Council members that they will be asked to comment on all new degree proposals and curriculum changes this year. The Provost's office will solicit comments via the eCAP system. Also, the Provost's office is working on another online system to collect comments about policies that they expect to roll out this year.

Chair Brady and Past Chair Darr are members of the Socially Responsible Investing Committee. Chair Brady informed the Council that the Committee will forward its recommendation to the Board of Trustees to divest in the civilian manufacture of fire arms. The Committee will meet later this fall, and they expect to discuss divestment from fossil fuels and/or tobacco manufacturers.

Looking ahead, Chair Brady said that there will be a search for a new dean of the College of Arts and Sciences this year. He outlined the Handbook procedure for a dean search. The Faculty Council elects two (2) faculty who hold appointments external to the school or college subject to the search. He told the Council that the Faculty Assembly members will receive an email calling for nominations for two (2) faculty to serve on the Committee as the Faculty Council's appointees. Council members were encouraged to nominate qualified colleagues.

The Chair anticipates that the status of part-time faculty is an issue that the University will have to discuss this year. He informed the Council that the Provost launched a website for part-time faculty, providing information about resources that are available to them and also commenting on the effect unionization will have on adjunct faculty. Chair

Brady invited the Council to view this site and asked the Director to send the link to the members. A Council member asked if a link to the SEIU website advocating for unionization can be included in that email to the Council members, too.

III. Update: University Benefits Task Force Committee

Chair Brady reported on the summer activities of the University Benefits Task Force Committee. President Brown charged the Task Force to review the University's health insurance plans and make recommendations to rework the plans to avoid the Affordable Care Act Cadillac tax that will take effect in 2018. Also, he charged the Task Force to bring the retirement benefits plans into compliance with IRS regulations. The Task Force was asked to maximize the value of dollars spent and to ensure that benefit plans are sustainable and do not consume an increasing share of total compensation dollars. The Task Force will deliver its recommendations in January, 2015

The Chair outlined a few possible designs for health insurance and retirement benefits. For health insurance, HMOs are falling into disfavor in the industry; and the University may eliminate that option. The Chair informed the Council that he has advocated for modest changes to health insurance because the future of the industry is uncertain. For retirement benefits, presently the University match for highly compensated employees exceeds the limit permitted under the tax code. Also, a disproportionate percentage of staff and junior faculty are not enrolled in the retirement plan; and the University may adopt an "opt out" policy rather than requiring employees to sign up for the plan when they are eligible.

A general discussion followed. One Council member asked how the changes to retirement benefits might affect the faculty with private contractual agreements with the University. The Chair replied that the proposed changes are driven by the IRS regulation and that the University needs to bring its contributions into compliance with the rules. The Task Force may recommend to increase slightly the contribution for lower paid employees and decrease slightly the contribution for higher paid employees. A Council member asked how the Task Force defines "highly compensated employees." The Chair said that the definition is set by the IRS regulation, but the threshold is around \$100,000-\$150,000.

A Council member asked if mitigation payments will be applied for health or retirement or both. The Chair said that mitigation payments may be applied to older employees for retirement benefits.

Another Council member noted that if the lower paid staff are enrolled in HMOs, eliminating that option may be a burden on them. Also, it is likely that lower paid employees do not enroll in the retirement plan because they cannot to pay their contribution. Another Council member asked if the retirement plan system discriminates against staff by design. A Council member said that it does not; ERISA regulations do not allow discrimination.

A Council member suggested that the open enrollment period for any changes to health insurance or benefits should be a substantial period of time to allow employees time to learn about their options and choose their plans. The Chair said he will take that suggestion to the Task Force.

The Chair informed the Council that he will update the Faculty Council Compensation and Benefits Committee regularly on the Task Force's activities. He also said that it is incumbent upon the Faculty Council to inform their colleagues that changes are coming to the health insurance and the retirement plans.

IV. New Business

A Council member asked to raise "old business" under new business. He reminded the Council of a resolution the body passed at its regular meeting on March 5, 2013¹, asking the Administration to take action to increase diversity among the faculty and to report regularly on its progress. Past Chair Darr answered that, while the Faculty Council has not received formal updates from the Administration, during her tenure as the Chair of the Faculty Council, she discussed this matter regularly with the President and the Provost. She was privy to some initiatives, in draft form, that were not yet ready to be made public. Chair Brady reported that this matter has been discussed among the Board of Trustees members as well.

One member asked whether the Faculty Council should not pass another resolution on this matter. Another Council member cautioned that the Council should be cautious about its approach to faculty hiring. While many units would be grateful for assistance to improve their diversity, faculty hiring is an academic matter that is the proper purview of the unit.

Chair Brady asked the Faculty Council Equity and Inclusion Committee to discuss this issue and to draft a thoughtful resolution to bring before the Faculty Council.

V. Adjourn

There being no new business. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Robb Dixon, Secretary-treasurer
Faculty Council

¹ The Faculty Council urges the Central Administration of Boston University to take urgent action to implement the recommendations of the Faculty Council Equity and Inclusion Committee to promote the inclusion of under-represented minorities among its faculty and to report monthly on the University's progress in this regard.