



Minutes of the Meeting
January 17, 2023

The Boston University Faculty Council convened on January 17, 2023 in the Metcalf Trustee Ballroom, 1 Silber Way, 9th floor. Kimberly A.S. Howard, Chair of the Faculty Council, presided over the meeting.

Officers and Committee Chairs							
X	Howard, Kimberly	Chair	WCEHD	X	Furman, Jeff	Faculty Policies	QST
X	O'Keefe, Eileen	Past Chair	Sargent		Barbone, Paul.	Graduate Programs	ENG
	Will, Leslie	Secretary-Treasurer	GSDM	X	Murphy, George J.	Research and Scholarly Acti.	MED
X	Kinraide, Rebecca	Academic Freedom	ENG		Will, Leslie	Student Life and Policies	GSDM
X	Gavornik, Jeff	Administrative Policies	CAS	X	Andres, Andy	Sustainability	CGS
X	Reed, Marnie	Awards	WCEHD		Pani, Pinelopi	Teaching Resources	GSDM
	Ritter, Brigitte	Compensation and Benefits	MED		Andres, Andy	Undergraduate Programs	CGS
	Hughes, Jeffrey	Credentials and By-laws	CAS				
X	Karin Schon	Equity and Inclusion	MED				
Representatives (R) and Alternates (A)							
	Afasizhev, Ruslan (A)	GSDM			Gopalan, Srikanth (R)	ENG	
			X		Hall, Adam (A)	MED	
	Alenberg, Diane (A)	CAS			Han, Jingyan (R)	MED	
	Alosco, Michael (R)	MED	X		Hesse, Petra (A)	WCEHD	
	Austin, Judy (A)	COM			Jackson, Hayes (R)	COM	
X	Bai, Mabel (A)	SHA			Joyce, Kathleen (R)	LAW	
	Bania, Thomas (A)	CAS			Juilen, Charlene (A)	MED	X
	Barbone, Paul (R)	ENG	X		Kahn, Shulamit (R)	QST	
	Benoit, Greg (A)	WCEHD	X		Keohane, Ana (R)	GSDM	
X	Brown, Lisa (R)	Sargent	X		Lakin-Schultz, Katherine (R)	CAS	
X	Brown, Shelley (R)	Sargent	X		Leahey, Kristin (R)	CFA	X
	Burger, Sandra (R)	CGS			Lee, Elaine (R)	MED	
	Burton, Deborah (A)	CFA			Levin, Leonid (R)	CAS	
X	Byrne, Tom (A)	SSW			Liao, Peixi (A)	GSDM	X
	Byttebier, Stephanie (R)	CGS			Loechler, Edward (R)	CAS	
	Canelli, Robert (A)	MED	X		Lumpkin, William (R)	CFA	
X	Cohen, Alan (R)	QST	X		Lunze, Karsten (R)	MED	X
X	Conley, Christopher (R)	MED			Maseli, Vasiliki (R)	GSDM	X
X	Cozier, Yvette (A)	SHA			McKeen, Bill (A)	COM	
X	Craigen, Laurie (R)	MED	X		McLaughlin, Donna (R)	SSW	
	Cronin, Shea (R)	MED	X		Menéndez-Antuña, Luis (R)	STH	
	Currie, Richard (R)	SHA			Michalakakis, Konstantinos (A)	GSDM	
X	DeNatale, Doug (R)	MED			Muirhead, Philip (R)	CAS	X
X	Desilets, Sean (R)	CAS	X		Mustafa-Kutana, Suleiman (R)	MED	
X	Dobbs, Christina (R)	WCEHD	X		Nash, Kate (A)	LAW	
	Edwards, Heather (R)	MED	X		Noor, Jawwad (A)	CAS	
X	Ellis, Theresa (R)	Sargent			Oller, Thomas (A)	CAS	X
X	Fazio, Catherine (A)	QST			Onorato, Amelia (A)	CELOP	X
	Feng, Hui (R)	MED			Pani, Pinelopi (R)	GSDM	
X	Fincke, Beth (R)	CELOP			Park, Hee-Young (A)	MED	
	Furman, Jeff (R)	QST	X		Pendleton, Rebecca (A)	LAW	
X	Genovese, Salvatore (A)	CGS			Pinsky, Eugene (A)	MED	

Guests: University Ombuds Francine Montemurro; Associate Ombuds Riley Barrar; Executive Director of Student Wellbeing Carrie Landa

I. Chair's Report

The meeting was called to order by Chair Howard. She first gave some announcements:

- Provost Morrison will come to the February meeting – as usual, Director Khosla will solicit questions from the members.
- In March, we will meet at G-107 on the Medical Campus. Nimet Gundogan, Director of Benefits will come and bring representatives from Blue Cross Blue Shield to provide an update about employee health care usage.
- The agendas for April and May are being set and will be announced at our next meeting.

In addition, the spring Faculty Assembly will be held March 28 in the Trustee Ballroom. As usual a videoconference to the Med Campus will be provided.

The Chair's report followed:

Last month, President Brown visited the Executive Committee meeting to discuss the possibility of extending the test-optional policy through 2025-26. He is proposing this in order to collect more data regarding how those students who did not submit test scores are doing compared to those who did. Some points of interest include retention rate and grades each semester. The aim is to gather enough evidence to finally decide whether we will stay test optional OR go back to requiring ACT or SAT scores. The Executive Committee provided support to President in this matter.

There are a sufficient number of candidates to host an online ballot to elect the next Nominating Committee and we will have an election in the coming weeks.

Chair Howard also gave an update on Presidential search, since she sits on that committee. The Committee is presently reviewing applications with goal of scheduling interviews in the next few weeks.

There are three visitors to the Council meeting today.

From the Ombuds office, Francine Montemurro and Riley Barrar will discuss faculty climate issues and other issues they see. Following that, we will have a conversation with Dr. Carrie Landa, Executive Director of the office of Student Wellbeing. We will hear about her office's work and their efforts to help students thrive on campus.

II. Guest: University Ombuds Francine Montemurro

Ms. Montemurro was welcomed to the podium. First, she defined what the Ombuds office does.

Their work can be divided into three areas:

- a) Provide counseling- help people with their concerns informally. Their work is confidential and off the record. They not follow through on investigation, but may refer to other offices for investigation.
- b) Discuss the visitor's conflict and help them figure out what matters most to them and how to accomplish this. Those cases often give a view into the function or dysfunction of a unit. The office does not make a judgement but may help define systemic problems. For example, if a postdoctoral fellow and lab director don't get along, the conflict may build to involve the lab. The Ombuds' job isn't to discipline anyone or lay blame but to help figure out why this happened and what can be accomplished. When you have a workforce of people from diverse backgrounds, different expectations, there is no training on how to work together.
- c) Consider how can conflict be prevented? They provide programs for preventing problems, and make suggestions on how to avoid these issues.

In summary, the Ombuds office is a confidential, safe place. They don't share what people say with anyone unless they are given permission, or if there is an imminent risk of serious harm. They are neutral third parties. They are as independent as it is possible to be and still be a part of the university.

A member asked whether visitors go directly to the Ombuds office or should they go internally in their school first. Ms. Montemurro replied that sometimes people are brought to the office, but people can come directly.

Next, she described seven issues that often arise:

- 1. Workplace climate: abusive behavior/bullying. Not only between faculty but also among students and staff. All sorts of policies exist regarding this; often a specific office is included. There isn't much information about 'bullying' not related to protected classes. Someone needs to hold the bully responsible for their behavior in order to stop it. The university needs a statement of expectation about behavior.
- 2. EOO: the length of time of their investigations and with other offices take so long that there is great stress related to the investigation and action.
- 3. What happens after a personal action or EOO action often takes a long time and is traumatic. Many schisms and disruptions remain after an investigation.
- 4. Because of understaffing in the HR office, onboarding and orientation is often problematic and usually left to the local unit or department. This is not a frequent complaint from faculty, but sometimes could be better. New faculty are often not adequately prepared to manage people. This is especially true if they are supposed to oversee entire units such as research labs. These skills can and should be taught. Many cases the office sees are related to these roles such as PI, chair, or lab director.
- 5. The process used for reappointment of non-tenure track faculty is not clearly laid out, and sometimes doesn't work. The terminology is somewhat vague. A template for a fair process needs to be developed.
- 6. Familiarity and expectations around fair hiring process also is not clear. The Charles River Campus has a lot of information but this is not the case on the MED campus. Some schools have well written guidelines but others do not. Questions about this seem to be very basic.

7. There are still occasional questions about academic freedom and freedom of expression. For example, a faculty member may be asked to include something into their syllabus to which they object.

A member asked how the Ombuds office manages to identify and remedy systemic issues and still maintain confidentiality. Ms. Montemurro replied that sometimes they can't. Sometimes there is a small cohort of people who raise a specific concern, and if a systemic solution were raised their confidentiality would be forfeited. In these cases, the Ombuds has to wait and then raise a very general question to the leadership. They err on the side of maintaining confidentiality. Sometimes, however, the visitor could be the one to bring something forward. If this is the case, the office will help them do that.

A member commented about the reappointment of contract faculty. There don't seem to be metrics for reappointment. Ms. Montemurro agreed; they are open to interpretation. The reappointment process across the 17 schools should be examined, and guidance should be provided on issues that are open to interpretation. Sometimes no statement or policy exists, particularly on reappointment, but depends on the power arrangement in the particular school. People should be advised of the process.

Chair Howard inquired about the avenues through which the Ombuds office provides feedback or suggestions. For example, if they identify some issues about hiring on the MED Campus, how are they able to bring this up to the appropriate leadership? Ms. Montemurro replied that they often refer issues to the provost or dean, depending on situation. Other times it is more appropriate to bring up an issue at a much lower level.

Chair Howard then observed that many issues probably come up in every given year. Covid probably changed things for a bit, but has the office seen changes in what kinds of issues are being raised over time? Ms. Montemurro commented that they used to get many sexual harassment complaints, but get fewer now because the university has different places to go. However, since the murder of George Floyd, people are more inclined to talk about issues that deal with their identity. There are also more issues about the student-faculty relationship in the classroom around what is professional to say, what terms can or can't be used, etc. Perhaps CTL could provide faculty with some tools regarding how to respond to controversial topics and discussions so that there isn't an inappropriate reaction.

Chair Howard then thanked Ms. Montemurro and Mr. Barrar for what they do for the University, and asked them what they might need to do their job better. Ms. Montemurro replied that they are maxed out by the number of cases, and can't do 'preventative medicine'. Chair Howard then thanked Ms. Montemurro and Mr. Barrar for coming and sharing their presentation.

III. Guest: Executive Director of Student Wellbeing Carrie Landa

Chair Howard introduced Dr. Carrie Landa, the Executive Director of Student Wellbeing. This is a new office that opened in November, 2021 but has been fully staffed only since July 2022.

Dr. Landa explained that she was with Student Health Services, having trained as a clinical psychologist focusing on mental health including intervention and prevention. She noticed that students were struggling with many issues outside mental illness, including interpersonal relations. These problems

were not pathology but rather challenges navigating problems in daily life. How could SHS help them? What other sorts of intervention could be offered other than drugs and counseling? There is a huge and well-known demand for or mental health services on college campuses. Although Boston is a resource-rich community for mental health care, there is still a 3-6 month waiting list for services. All institutions, including BU, are facing this challenge. There is a need to think holistically about mental health and address the fact that many students need help. The University needed to determine how to support students during their time here so that they could go on to productive careers and lives.

Mental health issues in higher education used to center around developmental struggles – identity issues, homesickness, breakups, growing away from parents, and low-level depression. As times have shifted, more students with real mental health disease were coming to college. The issue was how to support these students who need more resources – medication, counseling, etc.

The BU Health Minds Study reported in 2019 that more than 75% of students would talk with non-clinicians if their problems are impacting their academics. Such problems could include feeling too depressed to finish schoolwork or get out of bed, and students may need a medical leave of absence. Educating the community is essential to addressing these problems. The community needs to know what resources are available, as well as what problems exist. Moreover, clinicians shouldn't be just behind closed doors, but need to be out in the community. The JED Foundation Campus Program exists to help college campuses be better places for students to get comprehensive support and help- not just clinical services, but resources about how to navigate challenges. BU worked to become a JED certified campus in 2014, and then launched the Wellbeing project in 2019.

The new strategic plan identified student wellbeing was identified as a priority. The challenge was how to address this over the next 10 years. After putting together a proposal that was approved in 2020, the Student Wellbeing office started November 2021 and has been fully staffed since July 2022.

Dr. Landa then explained how Student Wellbeing is different from student health. SHS is there to take care of an illness, whether it is a disease, injury, assault, or mental health illness. Wellbeing is broader. It includes social health, financial wellbeing, relation to the environment, physical and mental health. Organizationally, it is directly under Provost's office, parallel to Student Health Services. The goal of Student Wellbeing is holistic wellbeing: to enable students to learn while they are here and to enhance their wellbeing for life. She then reviewed Maslow's hierarchy of need. Physiologic needs at the bottom of the hierarchy – food, housing, safety, financial security – are very important, and aren't typically addressed by Student Health. However, students can't learn be successful academically if they don't know where next meal is coming from. BU has a food pantry that recently received \$75,000 from state to support our pantry to address one of the more basic needs.

To address ALL the needs of students, Student Wellbeing utilizes 3 mechanisms:

1. Education: engaging with departments to bring educational opportunities to students, and teach students how to take care of themselves. Students don't always need to see a counselor for clinical intervention. Everyone can benefit from the skills taught in therapy, not just those struggling. The Office is currently putting together a series for graduate education, and figuring out how to incorporate this into graduate programs.
2. Prevention programming: the office has grants for \$2000 to units across university to partner with them and create a program. Programming can look like anything from a speaker series to apple picking. Students can also apply for funds. With different Wellness programs available across campus, it is hoped that students can press pause, engage with each other, and have fun.

3. Communication: The University has an excessive amount of email. Communication needs to be streamlined and make effective and consistent. Effective dialog is the way to decrease the volume of clinical need. A brand-new website (www.bu.edu/studentwellbeing) was launched in August, with linked social media accounts. A resource tool has also been developed, which is a resource guide for all resources involving wellbeing across all campuses.

Dr. Landa then discussed how to measure success. The metrics are not clear, but shifting the culture will be the most important. Students have often felt that the institution doesn't care about them – the Student Wellness office wants to change that. She emphasized that we can all support wellbeing in different ways, and urged council members to find the way they can participate. The Office looks forward to collaborating with departments and regularly grants requests for funding.

A member commented on an intersection between ombuds and Wellbeing in the form of faculty evaluations. Students say, 'evaluations don't matter as long as university doesn't do anything about them'. They perceive that 'bad' faculty repeat behaviors year after year with nothing being done. What can faculty members do upon hearing about faculty in a different department? Dr. Landa replied that resources to address this can be identified. The problem is that while students want more transparency, how deficient faculty are dealt with can't be publicized. We need to explain process for remediating faculty AND the limitations of the procedure. The administration may need to get involved if issues aren't resolved.

A member commented that it would be important to find out what is known about a given faculty member. We as faculty don't know if the faculty member is that 'bad', and the Dean may not either. Is there data available? Not just a vibe? However, these programs and skills are helpful; in the future the students will enter into a workforce where these issues may come up. They will learn to handle these issues if they know how.

A member commented that sometimes faculty not prepared to handle personal problems, but are often the 'first responders'. This is seen at the very beginning during the orientation/onboarding process- faculty members come as subject matter experts, but may not know how to solve life problems when a student comes for help. Maybe a one-page guide on how to address certain situations can be prepared. Dr. Landa replied that they are doing this – one page with all office contact information on it. It explains when you might reach out to the Student Wellness office, and includes tips for implementing these in the classroom. Dr. Landa suggested that it be put in class syllabi, where students will see it.

The member followed up by asking whether today's students are different compared to earlier generations. Dr. Landa replied that today's students are having struggles – not so much mental illness, but life struggles. They may never have had the opportunity to handle these things on their own or learn to solve personal problems. Interpersonal issues are the most common. Another main problem is that today's students are not used to discomfort or anxiety, and see both as problems that need to be solved. Both of these are signs of growth, and can be motivators and opportunities to learn. The students need to learn to tolerate distress, and it is hoped that the interventions teach the students how to do this.

A member asked how to reach out to programs on campus that are in contact with students. They further asked how the students get to the Student Wellness office. Dr. Landa replied that they are trying to have collaborations to engage with the students where they are, because students don't want to have to go to things. Next semester the Office will start a graduate assistant program – almost like a peer mentor opportunity. Graduate students will serve as campus navigators and connect students with

available resources. This will help to address the bottleneck of students coming into office – they can be diverted to the graduate student. Students can stop by and then are referred to services that are more intensive.

Chair Howard asked about how to find out more about the graduate assistant positions, since she knows students who would be interested. Dr. Landa replied that students in Social Work, Counseling, and Higher Education programs would be great partners, and the Office will be reaching out to them.

IV. New business and adjournment

There being no new business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Will, Secretary