



**Minutes of the Meeting  
March 1, 2022**

The Boston University Faculty Council convened on February 1, 2022 in the Metcalf Trustee Center, 1 Silber Way, 9<sup>th</sup> floor. Eileen O'Keefe, Chair of the Faculty Council, presided over the meeting.

Officers and Committee Chairs								
X	O'Keefe, Eileen	Chair	Sargent	X	Furman, Jeff	Faculty Policies	QST	
X	Howard, Kimberly	Vice Chair	WCEHD	X	Coleman, Fadie T.	Research	MED	
X	Will, Leslie	Secretary-Treasurer	GSDM	X	Hughes, Jeffrey	Student Life and Policies	CAS	
X	Kinraide, Rebecca	Academic Freedom	ENG	X	Andres, Andy	Sustainability	CGS	
X	Will, Leslie	Administrative Policies	GSDM	X	Pani, Pinelopi	Teaching Resources	GSDM	
X	Reed, Marnie	Awards	WCEHD	X	Andres, Andy	Undergraduate Programs	CGS	
X	Williams, Mark T.	Compensation and Benefits	QST	X	Barbone, Paul	Graduate Programs	ENG	
X	Hallstein, Lynn	Credentials and By-laws	CGS					
X	Chang, Charles	Equity and Inclusion	SPH					
Representatives (R) and Alternates (A)								
	Alosco, Michael (R)	MED		Hopper, Clay (A)	CFA		Pinsky, Eugene (A)	MET
				Huckle, Nicholas (A)	CAS	X	Powers, Gina (R)	QST
	Austin, Judy (R)	COM	X	Hughes, Jeffrey (R)	CAS		Prince, Michael (A)	CAS
	Bania, Thomas (A)	CAS	X	Iffland, James (A)	CAS		Quatromoni, Paula (A)	Sargent
X	Barbone, Paul (R)	ENG		James, Breehan (A)	CFA		Rawassizadeh, Reza (A)	MET
X	Bendayan, Alexander (A)	GSDM	X	Joyce, Kathleen (R)	LAW	X	Ritter, Brigitte (R)	MED
	Benoit, Greg (A)	WCEHD		Juilen, Charlene (A)	MED	X	Schon, Karin (R)	MED
X	Brown, Shelley (R)	Sargent	X	Kinraide, Rebecca (R)	CAS		Schwartz, Peter (A)	CAS
X	Buerger, Sandra (R)	CGS		Kirby Jones, Alison (A)	QST		Semeter, Joshua (A)	ENG
X	Byttebier, Stephanie (R)	CGS	X	Kong, Celeste (R)	GSDM		Shabazian, Cameron (A)	GSDM
	Calvillo, Jonathan (R)	STH		Lakhani, Afsheen (R)	MED		Slanetz, Priscilla (R)	MED
	Canelli, Robert (A)	MED		Leahey, Kristin (R)	CFA		Smith, Kevin (A)	CAS
X	Coleman, Fadie T. (R)	MED		Lee, Elaine (R)	MED		Smith-Crowe, Kristin (A)	QST
X	Conley, Christopher (R)	MED		Legg, Mark (R)	SHA		Star, Daniel (R)	CAS
X	Craigen, Laurie (R)	MED		Lindsey, Kate (R)	CAS		Straub, John (R)	CAS
X	DeNatale, Doug (R)	MET		Liu, Chunyu (R)	SPH		Suchdev, Kushak (A)	MED
X	Desilets, Sean (A)	CAS	X	Loechler, Edward (A)	CAS	X	Sullivan-Soydan, Anne (A)	Sargent
	Devoe, Ellen (A)	SSW		Lumpkin, William (R)	CFA	X	Tallman, Sean (R)	MED
X	Dobbs, Christina (R)	WCEHD		Lunze, Karsten (R)	MED		Tripodis, Yorghos (R)	SPH
	Edwards, Heather (R)	MED	X	Manglos-Weber, Nicolette (R)	STH	X	Ünlü, Selim (R)	ENG
X	Ellis, Theresa (R)	Sargent		McKeen, Bill (A)	COM	X	Villegas-Reimers, Eleonora (R)	WCEHD
	Fabian, Patricia (A)	SPH		Miller, Margo (A)	CELOP		Volk, Robert (R)	LAW
X	Fazio, Catherine (A)	QST		Mochida, Yoshiyuki (A)	GSDM		Walker, Gigi (A)	LAW
X	Fincke, Mary Elizabeth (R)	CELOP	X	Muroff, Jordana (R)	SSW	X	Weinstein, Jack (R)	Pardee
X	Furman, Jeff (R)	QST	X	Mustafa-Kutana, Suleiman (R)	MED	X	Williams, Mark T. (R)	QST
	Gavornik, Jeffrey (R)	CAS	X	Myers, Samantha (R)	CAS		Wippl, Joe (A)	Pardee
	Genovese, Salvatore (A)	CGS		Nash, Kate (A)	CGS		Yang, Shi (R)	MED
	Gopalan, Srikanth (R)	ENG	X	Noor, Jawwad (A)	CAS		Zelnick, Marni (R)	COM
	Griffin, Sue (R)	CAS	X	Pani, Pinelopi (R)	GSDM	X	Zlatev, Vladimir (R)	MET
X	Hall, Adam (A)	MED		Park, Hee-Young (A)	MED		Feng, Hui (R)	MED
X	Han, Jingyan (R)	MED		Parla, Ayşe (R)	CAS		Currie, Richard (A)	SHA
X	Hesse, Petra (A)	WCEHD		Pendleton, Rebecca (A)	LAW	X	Walsh, Joyce (R)	COM

Guests: President Robert A. Brown, Associate VP for Enrollment and Dean of Admissions Kelly Walter

I. University Provost Jean Morrison

Chair O'Keefe called the meeting to order at 3:32. She welcomed President Brown to review the status of the COVID-19 policies. President Brown highlighted two changes in policy. First, faculty and staff testing is no longer required, although testing still is available. Second, the facemask policy is changing. As of March 7, masks are no longer required in any area except for indoor classes, shuttle bus, and health care facilities. In addition, masks can NOT be required in a certain venue, and instructors cannot require masks in their classes. These policies will be evaluated in one month to evaluate the infection rate. These changes were thought to be prudent since classroom transmission has not occurred. There have been infections in dorms, but no outbreaks. Later in the semester, testing may also become optional for students. President Brown then welcomed questions and comments from members.

A Council member asked how students returning from spring break will be screened for Covid. President Brown said the students will still be tested coming back from break. They will get a message that they need to get tested when they return.

A Council member said the data show that the strains circulating now are more transmissible and asked what data is driving the University's decisions to reduce the protocols. President Brown said the positivity rates have not returned to October range. For faculty/staff, the positivity rates are going down. Student rates are closer to 1%. The severity of the disease/cases is what is driving the decision. Omicron and the omicron variant do not cause nearly the severe disease that other variants did. Our policies are a combination of where we are in the transmission and the severity of the diseases.

A Council member asked if there have been any cases of the delta variant. President Brown said we are seeing the omicron variant, but not delta. On December 12, we had our first cases of omicron. On Dec. 27, it was 98% of the cases. It drove delta out in two weeks and spread across the state. We have not decided when to dismantle the testing centers.

A Council member said that people are acclimated to the health and safety protocols. Even though things are getting better, it has not gone to zero. President Brown said the Covid rate will never go to zero. The Council member said we should try to get as close to zero as possible. As we learn more about Covid and long Covid and the potential serious long-term consequences, it seems that if we have established the protocol that is minimizing the impact, we should keep the protocols in place. If we abandon the protocol, we know the infection rate will not continue to come down as before. At some point, we have to establish normalcy, but why not keep it at the current level? President Brown said he sympathized with that view. However, BU is mixed in with the population of the city of Boston, and the source of the virus transmission is from the outside the University community. There comes a point where the protocols are not protecting us, but rather individual decisions about our health. On March 7, we will not instantly see everyone unmasked. People will make their own decisions relative to wearing the mask. Testing will still be available for faculty and staff, but at some point, we have to move from institutionalizing the protocols to individual choice. Unsupervised testing for faculty/staff and then students is a step towards that.

A Council member noted that Covid cases come in waves. We have not had an enduring stable pattern where we can say there is not going to be some new wave that comes along. The Council member asked why not wait until the infection rate flattens out. President Brown said the wave of infection comes from the surrounding city, not from BU. The Council member replied that if they bring it in to the university, then they could transmit it to people on campus. We can minimize the impact by continuing current policies.

A Council member said that they already received questions from their colleagues about testing protocols. Faculty want to know if optional Covid testing applies to students. President Brown said students will continue to test weekly and get reminder emails.

A Council member said that, for those looking for a stable plateau, also look at wastewater signatures. It is a good predictor (with a small delay) but the wastewater PCR data in Boston has been at the baseline for at least a week. The data suggest that we have reached a plateau, regardless of what we do with masks right now.

A Council member asked if the University intends to recognize the Healthway employees. They have protected the University community and many will likely lose their jobs when we loosen the protocols. President Brown said there is a bonus program for the Healthway employees. They will be paid beyond their termination. There may be a community gathering to recognize their contributions. In the beginning, the Healthway workers were from other offices on campus; now they are temporary employees.

A Council member noted that special considerations for those with caregiving disruptions were eliminated. The Council member said they are hearing concerns from colleagues, particularly mothers, and asked the rationale for not allowing classes to be held on Zoom as an emergency measure. President Brown said that, as we come out of Covid, we need to take a pause and see what we have learned about hybrid and remote learning. We do not have a system to monitor the uses of Zoom or hybrid teaching. We need to discuss that before we decide that each person is making an individual decision about this.

President O'Keefe thanked President Brown for coming to discuss these issues. She then welcomed Kelly Walter, Associate VP for Enrollment and Dean of Admissions, to discuss how admissions decisions are made in the context of test optionality.

## II. Undergraduate Admissions

VP Walter first reviewed information on the number of admissions. She reported that undergraduate applications have increased 72% in 10 years. The number increased 7% this year to nearly 81,000 applications in 2022. Similarly, the number of early decision applications increased 429% over the same 10 year period, with an 11% increase this year alone. It should be noted that early decision is binding. Consequently, our selectivity had decreased markedly. In 2012, it was 46%; in 2015, 1 in 3 applicants were admitted; in 2018, 1 in 5 (20% selectivity). It will be lower this year.

Beyond sheer numbers, however, the composition of applicant pool and of the class is important: URM, first generation, socio-economic status. How do we get through 81,000 applications?

To review 81,000 applications, the Admissions Office begins with enrollment priorities:

- Improve diversity (ethnic, geographic, socio-economic)
- Improve the academic profile of the class
- Enroll 50% of the class via early decision
- Maintain 24% international students
- Maintain an admissions rate under 20%
- Maintain BU's commitment to City of Boston and the Boston Public Schools
- Meet full need of all admitted first year students who are US Citizens

To shape the Freshman Class, a number of factors are evaluated, and regression analysis is employed:

- School and College targets
- Yield
- Percent Pell-eligible (0% family contribution) – how many can we afford?
- Percent International
- Legacy applicants
- Percent First Generation
- Faculty/Staff applicants
- The economy
- Other institutional Priorities

Our targets are 3100 for the fall first year students, 840 for fall transfers, and 600 for spring CGS students. A holistic review process is used to identify the most highly qualified applicants for admission. A large staff including 60 staff and 58 seasonal readers reads every application at least once. The readers consider two main questions when reviewing applications: Will this student be successful. thrive at BU, and ultimately graduate; and, are these students who will really engage with the University? Will they contribute and how?

Two areas are assessed in depth. First, there is the academic rating. The transcript is closely examined to look for overall level of rigor and/or difficulty, trends in the high school record, areas of academic strength, signs that the student pushes themselves, the high school GPA, high school RIC (rank in class), and test scores (if submitted). An academic rigor rating is then assigned. Admissions considers what courses are available to the student in terms of what the high school offers for AP classes. The transcript is reviewed for the rigor of the courses completed in the context of what the school offers.

The personal evaluation includes teacher recommendations, college counselor recommendations, essays/writing samples, extracurricular activities, leadership, evidence of personal qualities such as resilience, work ethic, and motivation, and background and life experiences. We then assign a Q rating from 1-4. This is a subjective rating that includes innovation, grit, service, engagement, and self-awareness, and relies on people who know the applicant. From this information, we try to get an overall view of the student that includes their engagement in their community, their character and motivation, and the impact of their education and home environment.

This process has changed very little with the test optional policy. The reference to standardized testing has been removed; otherwise, the reviewing process has not changed significantly. There is no algorithm, formula, or minimum requirements for admissions. The entire process is a mix of art and science. Our charge is to meet the enrollment targets with individuals who will collectively make BU exciting.

VP Walters then answered questions from FC members.

A Council member asked if her office follows the students over time, checks to see if they are successful, and then refines the model. VP Walters said it does. The University is interested in student persistence and the graduation rate. Institutional Research works with Admissions and sends reports to deans with graduation rates by gender, ethnicity, race, 1<sup>st</sup> generation status, and college. Our students progress to their degrees above the national average. We identify the population that might be struggling and work with them through the Educational Resource Center. For 20 years, Admissions has done research to determine the best predictor of freshmen year academic performance. Every year, it is high school GPA. SAT and ACT scores are not the best predictor of college performance. The scores are additive to the GPA, but on their own they are far less predictive than GPA. Approximately 1800 colleges are test optional right now.

A Council member noted that many international students are non-citizens who are residents of the U.S. Is 'international' synonymous with 'noncitizen'? VP Walters said Admissions thinks about the students we provide financial aid for and those we do not. In order to receive financial aid, an applicant must be a US citizen or hold a green card.

A Council members asked if the 24% international students paying full tuition. If so, then they are subsidizing everyone else. The Council member asked how they fit into the holistic analysis. VP Walters said that one factor built into the regression model is the tuition discount. Enrollment generates tuition revenue. Our goal is to enroll 20% Pell-eligible students (in contrast to the 12-13% at the Ivies) so the students paying full tuition are factored into our analysis. At some point, we would like to be able to offer need-based aid for international students but right now, we are not able.

A Council member asked if international applicants have changed, based on politics. VP Walters said there has been a shift. Most of our international students are from China, but the numbers are not growing as fast as before. We are seeing a huge growth from India and significant growth from the Middle East. South America is not a strong pipeline for BU, and she is not sure why. South American students tend to go to Boston College in the Boston area. She noted that the University is not dependent on China. We had applicants from 168 countries this year.

A Council member asked how Admissions measures the success of holistic admissions. VP Walters said the graduation rate (87-88%) and the persistence rate (91-92% into second year) indicate that we are selecting the right students for BU. It is not quite an assessment of holistic admissions, but an indication of doing well. A Council member clarified that their question focused on the success of students from minority backgrounds and low-income backgrounds. VP Walters said we want to make sure we do right by our students. When her office reviews the GPAs of these groups of students, there is great similarity among them.

A Council member asked how Admissions have factored the effect of Covid into its analysis, since high schools often relaxed their grading. VP Walters reported that, over the past two years, the Common Application included a question about the Covid impact at the applicant's school for the students and the counselors. Students had to face new challenges. Students have not had a normal classroom

experience in two years. If grades are regressive, we won't know whether it was due to Covid, or due to test optional. We are waiting to see how this first year class did in their first semester.

A Council member asked how financial aid packages and competitiveness compare to the Early Decision cohort vs. normal admissions. VP Walters answered there is no difference between these two groups. BU meets their full need. FAFSA and College Scholarship Service Profile forms generate an Expected Family Contribution, and the financial aid award is the difference between tuition and EFC. BU does not offer early action, only early decision and regular admission.

A Council member asked if BU has any metrics for how well students do after graduation. VP Walters said this is managed by Alumni Relations. BU does a first destination survey 6 months after graduation, asking whether the graduate is in school, employed, doing military service, etc.

Chair O'Keefe thanked VP Walters for her enlightening report, and then gave a Chair's Report.

### III. Chair's Report

Chair O'Keefe said that, at the beginning of the year, we had four priorities to address:

1. Test optional admissions: we had the report today and will stay engaged
2. Academic freedom and challenges to this: there will be a committee report on April 5
3. Equity and Inclusion: there will be a committee report on April 5
4. Global pillar in BU2030.
5. Covid impact on professional development.

President O'Keefe met with Provost Morrison several times as well as ARROWS. Chair O'Keefe communicated with Provost Morrison about extending the accommodations for faculty who are caregivers, but the Administration wants faculty to be back in person. At this point, faculty should address issues with their Dean.

President O'Keefe reminded the members that Willis Wang is holding listening sessions regarding study abroad programs, the Global pillar in BU2030, and the reduction in STEM study abroad opportunities. The final session is tomorrow at 10:00 a.m.

The Council will meet at the MED campus for the April meeting. Besides the committees listed above, there will be a report from the Awards committee. At the April Executive Committee meeting, David Carballo has been invited to discuss assessment of the HUB thus far. Andrea Taylor, Senior Diversity Officer, will come to the May meeting to discuss her role in diversity.

President O'Keefe also reminded the members that on February 24, members received the amended Program Discontinuation Policy for comment. There is a 14 day period for comment. Once comments are addressed, the policy will go forward to University Council.

Andy Andres gave a report of the Nominating Committee. At least four committees will have openings for chairs: Equity and Inclusion, Student Policies, Compensation and Benefits, Media and Communications. He noted that Committee Chairs are also on Executive Committee and the University Council. Members were asked to contact Andy if they are interested.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:52.

IV. New business and adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Will

Secretary-treasurer