

Boston University Faculty Council
Minutes of the Meeting
November 11, 2015

The fourth regular meeting of the Boston University Faculty Council for the 2015-2016 Session was held on November 11, 2015, at 3:30 p.m. on the Charles River Campus, 595 Commonwealth Avenue, Room 410. Steve Brady, Chair of the Faculty Council, presided over the meeting. The following members attended:

Andy Andres (CGS), R.
John Bernstein (COM), R.
Joel Brandwine (CFA), R.
Christopher Coffman (CGS), Alt.
Susan Conkling (CFA), Alt.
Canan Corlu (MET), R.
Yvette Cozier (SPH), R.
Cristian De La Rosa (STH), R.
Ted de Winter (ENG), R.
Stephan Ellenwood (SED), R.
Rani Elwy (SPH), Alt.
Ivan Fernandez-Val (CAS), R.
Tamar Frankel (LAW), R.
Allyn Hubbard (ENG), R.
Alison Kirby Jones (Questrom), Alt.
Cataldo Leone (GSDM), R.
Rachel Levy-Bell (MED), R.
Luz Lopez (SSW), Alt.
Jordana Muroff (SSW), R.
Eileen O'Keefe (SAR), R.
Matthew Parfitt (CGS), R.
Joshua Pederson (CGS), Alt.
Kelly Pesanelli (SAR), Alt.
Marnie Reed (SED), R.
Donald Smith (Questrom), Alt.
Courtney Suess-Raeisinarchi (SHA), R.
Barry Unger (MET), Alt.
Kathryn Webster (SAR), Alt.
Lauren Wise (SPH), R.
Jason Yust (CFA), R.

Committee Chairs

John Carroll, Media and Communication
Kathe Darr, Equity & Inclusion
James Hamilton, Research
D. Lynn O'Brien Hallstein, Teaching Resources
Robert Volk, Credentials & By-laws
Joyce Walsh, Student Life

Officers

Steve Brady, Chair
J. Robb Dixon, Vice Chair
Janelle Heineke, Secretary-treasurer

Members without a vote

Doreen Miller, R. CELOP

Guest

Jean Morrison, University Provost

I. Secretary's Report: Approval of Minutes of the September 30, 2015 and October 23, 2015 meeting

There being a quorum, the Faculty Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the September 30, 2015 meeting and the October 23, 2015 meeting.

II. Chair's Report

Faculty Council Chair Steve Brady reviewed the meeting calendar for the rest of the fall semester. He informed the Council that the discussion about non tenure-track faculty continues. Vice Chair Dixon and the NTT drafting group are scheduled to meet with Julie Sandell this month.

The Academic Freedom Committee will convene this month to discuss a possible Faculty Council resolution about trigger warnings.

The Council reviewed the questions that were forwarded to the Provost prior to the meeting: academic support for international students, implementation of the credit hour policy and non tenure-track faculty review and promotion are scheduled for discussion. A Council member asked whether, in an effort to maintain enrollments, we admit students who do not have the language skills to be successful. Another Council member asked whether the plan to raise the TOEFL score will help to address this problem. A Council member reported that international students said at their college meeting that TOEFL tests memorization, not actual language skills. Chair Brady noted that in the questions to the Provost, this inquiry is not confined to linguistic issues, but also take into account possible cultural differences that might affect international students and faculty, too. Cultural differences might be a factor where problems of plagiarism arise. A Council member said that the Administration should describe its strategic plan for supporting the students, since the percentage of international students continues to rise. The Council member discussed the standard practices of the schools and colleges. Some of the graduate programs require Skype interviews prior to admission.

Chair Brady updated the Council on the Faculty Diversity Task Force. The subgroups (recruitment, retention, inclusion) meeting and the Task Force members will attend school/college faculty meetings in the upcoming weeks. The Chair asked the Council members to encourage their faculty colleagues to attend these meetings and share their thoughts with the Task Force.

Chair Brady told the Council that faculty on the Medical Campus have brought up concerns about how research grants are managed. He has shared their concerns with members of the research administration.

III. Guest: University Provost Jean Morrison

University Provost Jean Morrison joined the meeting. She discussed the Task Force on General Education. Presently, there is no governance structure to implement a university-wide undergraduate curriculum. The University by-laws do not contemplate any academic programs across schools and colleges. Therefore, before a new undergraduate general education curriculum can be adopted, the Administration must establish a governance process.

The Board of Trustees will have to amend the University by-laws. Provost Morrison provided the Council members with a draft proposal to amend the University by-laws. She said that this language will be developed in consultation with Faculty Council, the Council of Deans and the University Council, but she stressed that the University by-laws are the provenance of the Board of Trustees and the President. None of the constituent bodies approve the changes.

Next the Provost will have to create a governance structure to ensure the faculty will govern the undergraduate curriculum. Institutions with comparable programs have a general education committee. Provost Morrison said that University Council is the governing body that is best suited to house a general education committee composed of faculty.

A general discussion followed. Chair Brady asked why the proposed amendment to the University by-laws is limited to undergraduate education. Provost Morrison said that graduate education raises many complex issues and the intent of the amendment is to focus on undergraduate general education only. Another Council member said that historically the faculty of the schools and colleges approve curricula and programs. In particular, the faculty of CAS and CGS will be profoundly affected by the general education curriculum and asked how the faculty will be consulted. Provost Morrison said that the general education curriculum proposal will have to go through the standard review via eDAP and the undergraduate programs committee before it is brought to University Council for a vote. The University by-laws will ascribe authority over the undergraduate general education curriculum to the University Council.

A Council member asked what the timeline is for implementation. Provost Morrison said that the current task force is responsible for developing the vision of what the general education program should be and present recommendations to the Provost. There will be a second task force to implement the recommendations. It is likely that a new curriculum will launch no earlier than fall 2017. A Council member asked who will be on the second task force. The Provost said that it will include faculty from across the schools and colleges.

A Council member asked the Provost what she hopes the new general education program will achieve. The Provost said that this is an opportunity for the University to articulate its values and to define and design how we want the students to experience their university education. Currently our general education requirements are complex and, compared to other schools, incomprehensible. The general education curriculum will

help to craft a compelling narrative for why students should come to BU. If we cannot describe the academic experience to students, we can't recruit the quality of students that we want. The Provost said that the general education curriculum will have to be flexible to allow students to transfer between the schools and college and change majors.

Chair Brady raised the questions the Council asked about international student support. The faculty are not clear about what support programs are in place for international students with linguistic, cultural, or academic issues. There is a sense among the faculty that we are not serving our international students as well as we might. Chair Brady asked what is the University's vision for these students and how do we ensure that they are successful.

Provost Morrison said that the percentage of international students in the undergraduate class has increased every year. She said that 25% is the maximum number of students that we want to admit into the undergraduate class. Of that cohort, 43% of the students are from China. At the graduate level, schools and colleges managed their admissions and enrollment. Last year Provost Morrison convened a task force, chaired by Willis Wang, to study international student support at the undergraduate level. As a result of the task force's report, the University raised the TOEFL score and set the minimum to 90-100. Dining Services has expanded its menu to include more foods that the students like to eat. Provost Morrison said that more resources are needed to help the faculty respond to the students' problems appropriately. Provost Morrison said that with respect to academic support in the classroom, her office is reviewing training modules for faculty to learn how to identify problems and get guidance on how to handle these issues. She expects that the Office of Global Programs will be the source for faculty and students to consult to find help.

A general discussion followed. A Council member said that international students have trouble accessing the writing center. The students have not been trained in methods of attribution and unintentional plagiarism is a problem. Another Council member said that there is a great disparity among the graduate programs with how much support the international students receive for career advising, internships and job placement. The same Council member said that if graduate student support must be delegated to the school/college level, the Provost should define the basic requirements that the college must provide. Provost Morrison said that the deans are asking for more funds to support their international graduate students and she allotted more funds to Global Programs last year as well.

A Council member asked the Provost to clarify a statement she made at the Faculty Assembly meeting with respect to the course credit hour definition. Should we be bumping up the rigor of our 4 credit courses, or should we switch to 3 credits for 3 contact hours? Provost Morrison said that the current problem is many of our courses award more credit than the contact hours. It should be one credit for one contact hour. It is better for our students who transfer between the schools and colleges if we have a common standard. A Council member asked if we have the classroom capacity for classes to move from 3 to 4 credit hours. Provost Morrison said that we do, but the class

schedule will have to change and instruction time will have to begin at 8:00 a.m.

Chair Brady asked the Provost to address the Council's question about trigger warnings. Provost Morrison said that this has to be decided by the faculty. The faculty challenge students to think about difficult issues. Trigger warnings place limits on the intellectual growth of the students.

Chair Brady asked the Provost for her thoughts on whether non tenure-track faculty should have a development plan. Provost Morrison said that we have a lot of needs in terms of faculty development and a plan for each non tenure-track faculty is a good aspiration. However, it is more pressing to communicate a clear process of promotion through the ranks.

IV. New business and adjournment

As the meeting concluded, the Council members noted that several of their questions remained unaddressed. Chair Brady and Provost Morrison agreed that she should come to another Faculty Council meeting to discuss the rest of the questions.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Janelle Heineke
Secretary-treasurer