

**Provost Advisory Council
Summary of November 6, 2008 meeting**

Bert Garza	Paul Davidovits	Jim Russell
Pat Byrne	Pamela Grace	Dick Cobb-Stevens
Monique Lowd	Henry Humphreys	Othelia Lee
David Quigley	Patrick Rombalski	Lillie Albert
Hassan Tehranian	Anita Tien	Kevin Bedell
Cole Boskey	Paul Lewis	Don Hafner
Gilda Morelli	John Spinard	Pat DeLeeuw
Anthony Annunziato	Meghan Cawley	

1. The summary of the September 25, 2008 meeting was approved and will be forwarded to the President's Office.
2. Vice President for Student Affairs Patrick Rombalski joined the Council to introduce himself and discuss current initiatives throughout the division. A higher-education consulting firm, Keeling and Associates, is conducting a review of Student Affairs from the perspective of developing a theory-driven approach to residential learning. The division is also beginning a strategic planning process that will continue through the end of the 2008-09 academic year. The membership of the Strategic Planning group includes those from outside Student Affairs.

Patrick invited questions from Council members.

In response to a query about the impact of students in triple rooms, it was stated that the ultimate goal is to eliminate the practice of tripling. Currently, approximately 400 freshmen (out of a total 2,200) are placed in triples.

With the recent passage of a state ballot initiative decriminalizing possession of marijuana, a discussion of the impact of this legislation on the lives of students at Boston College, including drug use.

A question was raised about whether Boston College undergraduates are less engaged in intellectual or academic conversation than those at other places. Student Affairs is interested in exploring systemic ways to engage students in academic conversations outside the classroom.

Currently, there is no programming at Boston College for incoming freshmen in the days between their arrival on campus and the beginning of classes in the Fall semester. This is unusual (compared with other institutions) and Student Affairs is formulating some programming proposals.

In reply to a question about the community-service orientation of BC students, it was stated that much of the service activity at Boston College is developed by students themselves, rather than through a centrally-coordinated university office.

In response to a question about the role of faculty advisors in student organizations, it was noted that each Student Affairs professional currently has

It was remarked that faculty going into residence halls for talks, meetings, or other events have found the experience somewhat artificial. Students need and desire activities that will draw them out of their dorm rooms and pull them into “community,” but these activities need to be organic, such as theme residence halls (e.g., foreign-language halls, social-justice halls, etc.) that can bring together students and faculty who are already united in part by a shared interest.

It was noted that graduate students should also be considered as potential contributors to these learning communities.

A Council member observed that the Cornerstone seminars have been particularly effective in bringing students together in learning communities.

It was observed that, particularly for junior faculty, unless the university makes clear that it encourages and acknowledges faculty contributions to residential learning activities, there are few effective incentives for faculty to make greater investments in activity in the residence halls. Including an “academic core” of faculty office space, seminar rooms, etc. in each residence hall is a concept that should be investigated. Appropriate housing for faculty in or near residence halls is another possibility. Council members noted that among faculty there is significant interest in becoming involved with students, but that resources--particularly time--remain scarce. The university could show its commitment by asking faculty to report their participation in residential learning programs on the faculty member’s annual report.

A comment was made that students harbor a concern that residential learning communities will encroach on their ability to relax. It was stated that generally, residential learning communities are voluntary and populated by students who self-select.

4. Provost's Report

The Provost announced that the Statutes have been reviewed over the summer. BC is unique in having definitional statements as well as procedural details--which no other institution includes in its Statutes. Discussion has begun on de-coupling the procedural details, which may be put into a faculty handbook.