

**Provost's Advisory Council**  
**Thursday, April 16, 2020**  
**8:30-10am, Zoom**

**In attendance:**

Sharon Beckman (Chair)	Regine Jean-Charles	David Quigley
Anthony Annunziato	Gregory Kalscheur, S.J.	Catherine Read
Joseph Carroll	William Keane	Tracy Regan
Mary Ellen Carter	Thomas Kohler	Ronnie Sadka
Thomas Chiles	Jonathan Laurence	Akua Sarr
Thomas Crea	John Mahoney	David Scanlon
Joseph Du Pont	Allison Marshall	Billy Soo
Kristin Flower	Madeline McCullough	Thomas Stegman, S. J.
Yonder Gillihan	Gilda Morelli	Sasha Tomic
Stacy Grooters	Karen Muncaster	Thomas Wall
Angela Harkins	Claudia Pouravelis	

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- 1. The summary of the April 2, 2020 meeting was approved.** It will be sent to the President's Office. All summaries are posted on the Provost's Office website; members are encouraged to share them with colleagues.
  - 2. Boston College Prison Education Program – Isabel Lane, Program Director**

Sharon Beckman began by introducing Isabel Lane, Program Director of the BC Prison Education Program. Isabel received her PhD from Yale in Slavic Languages and Literatures and was a faculty member with the Bard Prison Initiative before coming to BC.

Isabel discussed her background and her interest in prison education. Her teaching, both at Yale and with the Bard Prison Initiative, focused on breaking down the boundaries between traditional college classrooms and spaces where college does not usually happen. At Yale, this took the form of exploring experiential activities in classes to combine traditional classroom with the outside world. This kind of teaching is very difficult in a prison setting as experiential opportunities are limited. Teaching in a prison is one of the least traditional spaces for a college classroom. At Bard, Isabel taught a Soviet Literature and an Ecology course at both a men's and a women's prison, and a first-year writing intensive literature course at the women's prison.

She continued, providing some background on the program. The first admissions cycle kicked off almost immediately after her hire in the summer of 2019. The program has not yet received accreditation to offer a bachelor's degree but a substantive change proposal has been developed and submitted to NECHE (New England Commission of Higher Education). In anticipation of gaining the accreditation later this spring, 16 men were selected from over 100 applicants for admission to the first cohort. Starting last fall, these 16 men enrolled in first year writing, introduction

was lost due to a transfer, but the remaining 15 students are currently enrolled in God, Self, and Society, a Globalization and History core course, and a Literature core course for the spring semester.

Isabel continued, discussing the impact education has on incarcerated students. Professor Cherie McGill used an exercise in which her students wrote letters to an incoming second cohort of students. From these writings, she collected an array of quotes speaking to how

Isabel answered that the Bard Initiative, which is supporting the growth of the BC program, began in a

Joe Schott discussed the current federal landscape on foreign influence. For some time, there has been growing concern from the Federal government about the strategic threat posed by China, in particular, as well as other nations, and the methods used by the Chinese to gain advantage and grow their economy and influence around the world. Last year there was a US Senate Sub-Committee report that looked into the Chinese Talents Programs. There is suspicion that hundreds of people participate in these programs. The larger part of the sub-committee report spoke to the lack of attention by the FBI and other U.S. agencies to this perceived growing national security threat, and the belief that here has not been enough scrutiny of arrangements. It is important to note that this increased interest has bi-partisan support and the expectation should be for increased scrutiny and laws to continue.

The FBI has a team set up in Houston focused on individual faculty on campuses and foreign nationals coming to U.S. campuses. There are active investigations into individuals suspected of espionage or other violation of federal laws. The Federal research sponsors are enforcing their disclosure requirements in a much more aggressive manner. The Department of Education has begun strictly enforcing the provision in the Higher Education Act that requires institutions to disclose any gift or contract of more than \$250,000 from a foreign source. These are burdensome information requests that have largely been ignored in the past. There is accusatory language in the letters to institutions regarding lack of compliance, with the implication that universities are complicit in assisting those who are hostile to the US.

There have been a number of high profile criminal cases at universi





and there will be guidance and concrete examples of the kinds of disclosures that do, or do not, need to be made.

#### **4. Provost's Report: David Quigley, Provost and Dean of Faculties**

Billy talked about a UCT proposal to add two additional questions to the spring course evaluations. The questions very broadly address what was good and what was challenging about taking their classes remotely. There will also be a preface at the beginning reminding students of the challenges of a sudden emergency move to remote learning, and that they should be reviewing the class overall and not just the second half of the semester that was taught remotely.

David provided some updates.

Admissions and enrollment for fall 2020 are trending well at the both undergraduate and graduate level.

The Political Science department decided to let several faculty members in security studies decide whether or not to submit a proposal to the Koch Foundation. Five faculty members continued conversations and moved forward with a proposal.

Fr. Leahy's letter yesterday announced an immediate hiring freeze beyond essential hiring. Most construction is being delayed, and there will be constraints on University spending in all areas. Additionally, there will be no salary increases this year.

He then provided some updates on the COVID-19 response:

- Summer Session I and Orientation have been moved online.
- Decisions on the BC Experience high school program and Summer Session II will be announced soon.
- Commencement has been postponed and reunions have been cancelled.
- The goal for the fall is to start on time at the end of August with on-campus instruction. There are many questions that will be explored over the summer as plans develop, while working with the uncertainty and the likelihood that the situation can change dramatically between now and August.

A council member asked if research activities would resume more quickly than a full University reopening.

David noted that the state is still subject to the Governor's shelter in place orders. As things play out with a rolling reopening across the state, the University will likely follow suit with its own multi-stage reopening plan. Research labs may be among the first to come back to operations.

David concluded the meeting by thanking Sharon for her leadership, and thanked Cathy Read for her service as she steps down and retires at the end of the academic year.