

Brown University Community Council

Public Meeting

Wednesday, April 2, 2025

4:00 – 5:30 PM EST

Meeting Minutes

Present (In-person & *Virtual*): Christina H. Paxson, Scott AnderBois, Nicole Bonelli, Louis Boyang, David Buchta, Mary Jo Callan, Cass Cliatt, Ruth Colwill, Vilma Cortez, Weston de Lomba, Frank Doyle, Miled Faiza, Lindsay Garcia, Samdeet Khan, *Surya Khatri*, Ainsley LeSure, Kevin LoGiudice, Ken Mak, Akashleena Mallick, Jennifer Maloney, Calista Manuzzo, Sydney Menzin, Niyanta Nepal, Daniel Newgarden, Esha Patel, Jessica Pesce, Kayla Rosen, Ranna Rozenfeld, Robert Sobol, Irene Sudac, Jacinda Townsend, Leah VanWey, Stephanie Zielinski

Absent: Max Clermont, Matthew Guterl, Caroline O'Brien, Matthew Rutz

President Christina H. Paxson welcomed the Brown University Community Council (BUCC) and community members in the audience. She reviewed the meeting agenda, which included the Report of the President, a Q+A with Provost Francis J. Doyle III on University finances and new measures to ensure financial stability, and listening session with James R. Kellner, Professor and Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on University Values and Voice, and open time for community members to address the Council.

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the BUCC meeting held on February 27, 2025. The motion was seconded and passed.

President Paxson began her report by highlighting the recent announcement that Pat Poitevien, senior administrator and member of the faculty within the Division of Biology and Medicine, had been appointed the new Vice President for Campus Life. The president thanked EVP for Planning and Policy Russell Carey for taking on the role in the interim, and acknowledged the great work of the search committee, which he co-chaired along with Françoise Hamlin.

President Paxson addressed that there are many questions regarding what is happening with the federal landscape. She referenced the email from Provost Doyle and EVP Carey to the Brown community earlier this week responding to questions about government actions. President Paxson shared high level comments, noting that Brown is taking the long view; the University has been through challenges before. Brown will continue to advance its mission and the University's standing as a leading research institution, which requires strong programs for graduate students and a deep commitment to undergraduate teaching and learning, and

maintaining free expression and an inclusive environment. President Paxson said she is proud of how the Brown community has navigated this challenging time.

President Paxson spoke about the current threats to research funding, a possible endowment tax, and concerns for international students and faculty colleagues navigating federal actions.

President Paxson noted the importance of continuing to come back to Brown's mission. She said given this current moment, it is more important than ever to have core values affirmed by the Brown community. The president shared comments about the University's current response to external threats, including getting stories about the value of the University out into the world, and making sure it is clear that the University is compliant with laws.

President Paxson opened the floor for questions or comments. A community member in the audience asked a question about immigration actions and different types of warrants. The president noted this is a question that has been asked before, and the Brown administration will clarify this for community members.

Next, President Paxson introduced Provost Doyle to speak about University finances. Provost Doyle showed the Brown Budget Explainer video, which describes how the budget is built and spent each year to sustain the University. Provost Doyle emphasized terms that were mentioned in the video, including "perpetuity", "long-term", and "sustainability". He spoke about the nature of Brown's structural deficit and current strategies to reduce it, including keeping staff hiring flat and reducing the size of some PhD cohorts (but not cutting any programs or rescinding offers). Provost Doyle noted the University continues to expand new revenue-generating programs, including master's programs and offerings through the School for Professional Studies.

Provost Doyle commented that now the University is also facing headwinds from federal actions, so senior leaders are considering different scenarios, including the impact of an increased endowment tax or a reduction in the pool of international student applicants. The University administration will continue to take a strategic, consultative approach to decisions moving forward.

Provost Doyle welcomed questions from the BUCC and community members in the audience.

A BUCC member asked about the faculty travel fund and how faculty can be strategic about the funding sources they are tapping. Provost Doyle shared guidance and encouraged faculty to continue submitting abstracts and planning for career development; Dean of the Faculty and BUCC member Leah VanWey noted the need to take a long-term view about faculty activities.

Another community member asked if any capital projects were about to be embarked on, but needed to be stopped. The provost commented this is something being thought about now, looking at milestones for consideration. The president noted that the University leadership team wants to be ready and prepared to make hard decisions, but will only execute them if necessary, not preemptively.

There were additional questions about spending accountability; revenue generated from new master's programs; revenue opportunities from the Brown University Health partnership; and philanthropy considerations.

Next, President Paxson introduced Professor James R. Kellner to facilitate a listening session with the BUCC about the *Draft Statement of University Values and Voice*, which was shared with the Brown community on March 18. Professor Kellner began by reiterating Brown's mission as the north star for the Ad Hoc Committee on University Values and Voice. He then reviewed the draft core institutional values and statement of voice, highlighted ways for community members to share input, and invited feedback from the BUCC.

BUCC members asked questions about the Ad Hoc Committee's considerations as they put together the *Draft Statement of University Values and Voice*. Professor Kellner invited BUCC members to share any additional feedback with the Committee through the available channels.

President Paxson opened the floor for comments from community members in the audience. Community members asked questions about the *Draft Statement of University Values and Voice*, as well as actions the University is taking to support Brown community members in the face of recent federal actions impacting immigration.

President Paxson and Provost Doyle noted the resources available through the Office of Global Engagement, including webinars that will be offered for Brown community members to have questions answered in a way that respects individuals' privacy. President Paxson reaffirmed that protecting students and employees is an important part of what Brown does.

The meeting concludes. The next meeting of the BUCC will take place in Fall 2025.