The Boulder Faculty Assembly held a special meeting on September 5, 2013 in the University Club Lounge. Chair Paul Chinowsky presided. The meeting convened at 4:00 p.m. and adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

I. Chair’s Report

Chinowsky spoke briefly about the relevance the BFA can have to the Campus and the institution. He noted that the BFA’s formal decision-making process, driven by bylaws and rules, is not always appropriate when the Campus needs to act quickly or address matters that are more informal or abstract in nature. Two examples: the re-institution of Reading Days was a successful use of the BFA’s formal process. The BFA’s new Faculty Mentoring Students program is a successful use of a more strategic, collaborative BFA process.

II. Review of BFA Initiatives

Chinowsky reported that several of the BFA’s initiatives, developed last spring and at the BFA’s Special Meeting in May, are already underway:

- Faculty Mentoring Students. Faculty in this program will meet with a set group of Freshmen once per month through May, at meals in the Residence Halls. The faculty will not serve as academic advisors, but as a point of contact in the Campus community. About 130 faculty and 1,000 Freshmen are involved.
• BFA Leadership Institute. 16 faculty have been nominated by their peers for the program, which includes several presentations to the group by Campus leadership.

• BFA Faculty Recognition Program. Under this program faculty can be nominated to receive a small acknowledgement for their service such as a coffee card and a letter of thanks copied to the honoree’s department chair. Approximately 100 small awards can be granted each year. [The nomination form is on line at http://tinyurl.com/kba6g5 ] All faculty are eligible, including lecturers.

• The BFA’s working group to analyze new technologies, currently known as the MOOC group, continues to meet.
  o Greg Carey reported the most likely outcome will be a recommendation and an educational document for faculty as to what MOOCs are and the provisions of UCB’s contract with Coursera. Carey offered to supply copies of the Coursera contract. [Available at http://tinyurl.com/o4cf2la.]

• Budget Planning Group. This group will involve more faculty in the Campus’ budget process, with an especial focus as to proactive, multi-year planning.

• Faculty Ambassadors. The BFA is working with Admissions and others to develop a group of faculty to travel throughout the state and the country to talk about their work and recruit students.

III. Small Group Discussions

Chinowsky initiated small group discussions on how faculty governance is relevant and could be more so, especially to the individual departments and academic units. He requested each group produce one or more ideas for action, and note how to get started.

Ideas included:

• Be an early part of the Campus decision-making process. Move forward by finding out more about the Campus’ policy development process, and make sure faculty governance has a role.

• Be specifically involved in the quality of the undergraduate body. One way to move forward is to push for permanent funding for the Esteemed Scholars program, and expanding the program. Another is to create a collaborative BFA and Admissions working group to explore other ways to recruit and retain top students.

• Help address or refer concerns that affect more than one department, over which departments do not have control. Move forward by forming an ad-hoc task force structure within the BFA to investigate and issue reports and recommendations; and a system by which concerns can be identified.

• Be involved in protecting the infrastructure that supports our position as a good research University, for example the Libraries.

• Be more visible with regard to the BFA’s usefulness, significance and accomplishments. Move forward by publicizing the BFA’s activities to Chairs and faculty.

• Publicize faculty efforts to recruit students, that showcase the faculty. For example Music School composition competitions, the prizes for which are individual lessons at the Music School.
• Improve BFA communication with faculty within departments. Move forward by sending an annual message to the department chairs describing the BFA’s activities that year, along with a request that the Chair make room in department meeting agendas for reports from their BFA representatives. Be more streamlined in printed communication, for example issuing a one-page handout for department meetings, rather than relying on BFA members to redistribute the minutes.

• Improve the BFA’s collective representation of faculty interests when administration pursues policies that inadequately take those interests into account. To move forward, the BFA could devise a method for gathering information about policies that most concern faculty, choose which to bring to administration, and then negotiate using the most effective means for that particular policy. The BFA could also work to make administrative actions less impersonal in their impact.

• Change existing campus culture to be more collegial and cooperative. Move forward by articulating the expectation that faculty must work together, and that they should be rewarded and not penalized for doing so, and creating a group to meet with each of the Deans to express those expectations.

• Improve internal communications. Move forward by creating a new BFA online presence, separate from its procedural website, to conduct P.R., to engage the faculty in issues of importance to them, and to market faculty accomplishments.

IV. Adjournment

There being no further business, Chinowsky adjourned the meeting at 5:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Sierra Swearingen-Todd, BFA Coordinator.