

QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
The City University of New York

**COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, QUALITY OF LIFE AND DISABILITY ISSUES of the
ACADEMIC SENATE**

TO: Dr. Peter Bales, Chairperson, Academic Senate Steering Committee

FROM: Profs. Leah Anderst and Sebastian (Ben) Murolo, Co-Chairs, Committee on Environment, Quality of Life and Disability Issues

SUBJECT: Annual Report of the Committee on Environment Quality of Life and Disability Issues for September 2015-May 2016

DATE: June 16, 2016

Committee Members:

Prof. Leah Anderst, Co-Chair
Prof. Sebastian Murolo Co-Chair
Prof. Patricia Kinneary, Secretary
Prof. Sheila Beck, Member
Prof. Sara Danzi Engoron, Member
Prof. Dominic Hull, Member
Prof. Wei Lei, Member
Prof. Julia Rothenberg, Member
Prof. Weier Ye, Member

Chong Jue, Liaison to the Committee on Committees
Clara Wajngurt, Liaison to the Steering Committee
Vice-President William Faulkner, Liaison, President's Designee

Mr. Ben-Ami Freier, Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, Committee Liaison
Mr. Mel Rodriguez, Environmental Health and Safety, Committee Liaison
Mr. Edward Locke, Office of Campus Safety, Committee Liaison
Ms. Isabel Hocesvar, R.N., Office of Health Services, Committee Liaison
Ms. Mary-Beth Shaw, Committee Liaison
Victor Silva and Sherice Leggette, Student Members

Number of Committee Meetings: The Committee on Environment, Quality of Life and Disability Issues met six times during the 2015-2016 academic year.

During 2015-2016, Vice President William Faulkner served as the President's Designee to the Committee on Environment, Quality of Life, and Disability Issues.

Space Allocation/Utilization/Facilities

Humanities Building Renovations and Concerns

The committee discussed a few issues related to the Humanities building: renovations to the English department offices, renovations to the elevator, and the courtyard space and bird netting. The English department renovations took place over the summer of 2015, and while the department continues to consider privacy concerns especially as it relates to meetings with students, the renovations have been met with satisfaction. The elevator has also received cosmetic renovations, repairs to the walls and the floor.

The courtyard of the Humanities building is protected from birds by netting. Early in the fall of 2015, the netting trapped and killed a number of small birds. Faculty members from English in particular expressed concern with this. Ripped portions of the netting were subsequently repaired, and additional decoy owls were placed around the area. The remainder of the academic year had no reported bird deaths via the netting.

Parking Concerns

The committee received requests from the FEC parliamentarian related to the difficult parking situation for faculty and staff on campus. The committee discussed parking concerns during the March 23, 2016 meeting and gathered information to write a report to submit to the FEC. The parking concerns raised centered chiefly on questions related to enforcing rules against illegally parked cars and cars parked without faculty/staff tags. Ed Locke and Lt. Black explained the multiple ways that the parking lots are monitored: entry gate staff, a security staff member roving in the lots to enforce tags are on cars, and security cameras. They also indicated that there are occasionally cars parked in the main faculty and staff lot without tags because guests visit our campus for a few reasons including job interviews or guest lectures, and security tries to accommodate those guests as well. It was acknowledged that parking is a problem at QCC, given the increase in our student population over the last ten years and the attendant increase in staff and faculty who drive to campus. A number of possibilities to alleviate parking concerns were discussed by the committee and included in the report to the FEC.

Flyers on Campus

New this academic year, paper flyers and posters related to student club events cannot be posted on bulletin boards around campus. During the March 23, 2016 meeting, committee members noted this in particular in the Humanities and Sciences buildings. The rationale behind this restriction is unclear. The committee discussed alternative ways to disseminate information related to events to the broader campus community: emails to the campus community, flyers handed out to faculty members, e-signage, and creating a new area on the QCC app dedicated to club events.

Food Pantry

This spring semester saw the creation of a food pantry for the campus community. An ad-hoc committee on food insecurity at QCC, which included one member of this committee, researched other CUNY food pantries and helped to establish and pilot a pantry on campus. This committee received a naming request, and unanimously approved the name “Lucille A Bova Food Pantry.”

College Health and Environment Issues

Anti-Bullying Issues and Sub-Committee

The subcommittee of this committee on Anti-Bullying continued to meet over the course of this year, chaired by Clara Wajngurt. Following the anti-bullying statement created by the committee and approved by the faculty senate during the spring of 2015, the subcommittee focused on gathering information related to bullying on campus, chiefly through a survey distributed to campus employees via survey monkey. The survey was

discussed in the December 16, 2015 meeting, and members of the committee expressed reservations. The survey was disseminated during the spring 2016 semester following advice from the senate parliamentarian. Results of the survey were discussed at the final meeting of the semester, and there was disagreement about whether to distribute a summary of the survey responses without write-in comments or, the complete survey responses including many write-in comments, or none of the survey results.

As of the upcoming 2016/2017 academic year, the subcommittee will fall under the charge of the Steering Committee and will no longer be a part of this committee.

Safety and Security Issues

Annual Security Report

The annual security report (the Clery Report) was discussed at the December 16, 2015 meeting. Committee members noted an increase in incidents labeled “stalking” from 2013 to 2014. Lt. Black explained what kinds of incidents may fall under that term, he explained that Title IX requirements may have resulted in an increase in reporting such incidents, and he provided suggestions for faculty in particular on ways to minimize the potential for stalking among students. His suggestions include encouraging students not to share personal emails or phone numbers and instead to communicate with each other via QCC email and Blackboard.

Hate Stickers and Flyers on Campus

Hate stickers and related flyers were brought to the committee’s attention and discussed at the October 7, 2015 meeting. QCC Public Safety received complaints of finding hate stickers in different areas on or near campus. These stickers are directed at various groups of people, primarily immigrants and people of color. Public Safety indicated if these stickers were seen on campus to take them down and be reported to public safety. Mr. Edward Locke and Lt. Jack Black also reported that there have been various disturbing postings against NYPD found mostly on the 3rd and 4th floor of the Humanities building and in parts of the Sciences building. The local police precinct is aware of it. The committee took copies of the stickers provided at the meeting.

Security Cameras on Campus

The committee received an email request with several questions pertaining to Video Surveillance on campus from the Faculty Executive Committee Parliamentarian. The issue was discussed with Public Safety during the February 24, 2016 meeting and subsequent meeting on March 29, 2016. A committee co-chair met with Bruce Naples, head of the ACC, to discuss the issue and public safety was at the meeting sharing their cameras. Since their cameras are in public places there are no rights to privacy as explained however, in the classroom was a concern by the committee and FEC.

The committee discovered that Public Safety has access to data from all cameras in public places and the Academic Computing Center has access to cameras in classrooms or computer labs. Public Safety does not have regular access to the data from these cameras. The Art Gallery staff has access to cameras in their spaces. Student union staff has access to cameras in the student union and Building and Grounds can access certain cameras on campus as needed. There is a stringent approval process to gain access to ACC cameras. ACC can

remotely turn off cameras when class is not in session. This is mainly because the bulbs used are expensive. Faculty have the ability to turn off cameras if they so choose.

The concern by the FEC, was that ACC cameras are supposed to be used solely for protection of equipment but in one instance brought to the committee's attention it was used for other purposes. Public Safety indicated it requests recording from ACC cameras if there is such an incident to determine what actually occurred. The committee submitted a report to the FEC related to security cameras on campus.

Recommendations for 2016-2017

The following are the members of the Committee on Environment, Quality of Life, and Disability Issues for 2016-2017:

Prof. Leah Anderst, Co-Chair
Prof. Dominic Hull, Co-Chair
Prof. Sara Danzi Engoron, Member
Prof. Edward Davis, Member
Mr. Benama Freier, Member
Prof. Jonathan Funk, Member
Prof. Wei Lei, Member
Prof. Julia Rothenberg, Member
Prof. Weier Ye, Member

Prof. Sebastian (Ben) Murolo, Liaison to the COC
Prof. Clara Wajngurt, Liaison to the Steering Committee
Vice-President William Faulkner, Liaison, President's Designee

Mr. Mel Rodriguez, Environmental Health and Safety, Committee Liaison
Lt. Jack Black, Office of Campus Safety, Committee Liaison
Ms. Isabel Hocesvar, R.N., Office of Health Services, Committee Liaison
Ms. Mary Beth Shaw, Title IX Officer, Committee Liaison

At our May 4, 2016 meeting, Profs. Leah Anderst and Dominic Hull were elected as Co-Chairs for the 2016-2017 academic year. A committee secretary will be elected during the first meeting of the fall 2016 semester.

Plans for the 2016-2017 academic year:

- to continue to consider solutions for the parking issues on campus
- to continue to consider ways that student groups can advertise events on campus
- to develop ways to increase recycling and sustainability measures on the QCC campus
- to respond to the quality of life needs and queries of campus community.

Respectfully Submitted,
Leah Anderst, Co-Chair
Sebastian (Ben) Murolo, Co-Chair