

QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
The City University of New York

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

TO: Devin McKay, Secretary, Academic Senate Steering Committee

FROM: Georgina Colalillo, Chairperson, 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 2007- May 2008

DATE: September 5, 2008

Committee Members: Sheila Beck, Georgina Colalillo, Chairperson, Margot Edlin, Secretary,
Charles Neuman, Marilyn Katz, Young Kim, Designee

Date committee met and times it meets regularly: The Committee on Environment, Quality
of Life and Disability Issues met six times during the 2007-2008 academic year: September 26,
October 24, November 28, February 21, April 3 and May 8. Meetings were usually held on
Wednesdays or Thursdays at 4:00 p.m. in the Fall and at 1:00 p.m. in the Spring.

Narrative summary of committee work and report on status of prior recommendations:

The Committee worked on the following specific charges from the Steering Committee:

- Report on current use of space re: student classroom and faculty offices
- Create subcommittee to review and report on College Master Plan involving all parts of the community
- Review the College assessment of the Early College High School proposal for environmental impact on the College and its facilities, services and programs
- Obtain from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities an annual assessment of the campus with regard to such

In addition, the Committee worked on the following bylaws charges:

- Through a process that involves the administration, formulate and recommend to the Academic Senate policies and practices pertaining to the College environment in matters of health, safety, security, maintenance and allocation of facilities.
- Evaluate and report to the Academic Senate on the administrative response to problems in the College environment
- Receive all proposals concerning naming and renaming campus facilities and make appropriate recommendations

- Review the assessment of the campus with regard to services for students with disabilities and disability issues as the assessment relates and pertains to the campus environment and campus facilities and make appropriate recommendations

Space Allocation/Utilization:

The committee has performed a thorough assessment of faculty and student space on campus utilizing both faculty surveys and classroom scheduling master plan. D. Call was very responsive in assisting the committee with their research and forwarded a recent report of the instruction space and percentages of use (Total & Percent Room Usage by Build/Sem/Year – printed March 5, 2007). In addition, M. Edlin acquired the final draft of the Report of the Task Force on Scheduling (December 13, 2006) and distributed to each member for review. The committee has concluded that faculty space allocation issues seem to be most critical in the Humanities Building due to the large number of departments housed there and the types of programs and quantity of space needed to safely and effectively operate to full potential. Coupled with the projected increasing student enrollment, the committee worked closely with Diane Call to develop solutions that would be economical, aesthetic and feasible. One possible solution that the College was negotiating was to obtain modular classrooms. The classrooms will be obtained from BMCC and are anticipated to be ready for Fall 2008. These buildings will rest on permanent foundations and will be located behind the temporary building that houses the Shadow Box Theater. The Committee was concerned about the modular classrooms meeting ADA compliance for accessibility. D. Call assured that she will ascertain that this requirement is met before they arrive. In addition, committee members were able to evaluate the modular classrooms by reviewing the photos sent by D. Call. The Committee arrived at a consensus to support the use of the limited modular classrooms to relieve space constraints in so far as they do not contribute to more congestion on campus, do not detract from the openness and beauty of the campus and they are placed in inconspicuous areas.

The Committee received a complaint from a faculty member that the lounge on the 4th floor and the third floor courtyard of the Humanities Building are always locked and inaccessible. These spaces could be used for meeting privately with students. The Committee remains mindful of the needs of faculty, students and community and is committed to ensuring an environment that optimizes teaching-learning. As a result, the Committee drafted recommendations specifically related to space issues in the Humanities Building. A summary of the recommendations follows:

The Committee has also identified the following areas as needing modifications:

- Faculty Office Space: faculty find it difficult to meet with students (particularly multiple students) in a private, quiet space. In addition, overcrowded office space makes accesses impossible for wheelchair-bound students.
- Under-use and inaccessibility of formal/informal meeting spaces for supervised meetings: 4th Floor lounge area and 3rd floor courtyard, Humanities Building, Student Union Building – Upper Level, RFK Building- Entrance Lobby; open space on the commons level Medical Arts Building (outside of M-136), Oakland Building.
- Lack of space for student presentations and practicing presentations.

Recommendation from the Committee on Environment, Quality of Life and Disability Issues as possible solutions to maximize space utilization:

- Creative and more flexible use of space: utilizing locked and off- limit spaces by creating a system of reservation/scheduling for these spaces.
- Promoting use of Student Union Building for purposes of informal meetings, practicing presentations, group study, etc.
- Review use of auditoriums, lecture halls and practice spaces to double-duty as classrooms, and formal, supervised meeting spaces.
- Assess the feasibility of adding movable dividers to large spaces, lecture halls, and classrooms in order to divide them into smaller spaces as needed to alleviate crowding.

The recommendations were reviewed and discussed with V.P. Call. Initial responses include the creation of new instructional spaces in the Technology Building on the 0 level – T-03, T-08 and T-09. Use of the classroom will begin Fall 2008. Level 0 in the Technology Building is ADA accessible.

OCC Naming Guidelines:

The latest Guidelines on Naming were approved by the Academic Senate in February, 2006. The following resolutions were submitted to the CUNY Board of Trustees and approved in June, 2008: Naming of the Eva Bobrow Nursing lounge; Naming of the Claire Shulman Educational Technologies Lab; Naming of the Robert F. Kennedy Gymnasium; Naming of the Kurzweil Recital Hall. These namings were “grandfathered” in and an explanation of the resolution was provided for each. They have been entered into the Queensborough Senate record.

Construction and Renovations:

The Campus Learning Center has been completed. Construction on the Holocaust Resource Center is well underway and expected date of completion is January, 2009. The Committee continually receives and reviews updates from Don Raney. Reports on the construction project have been positive.

New fire alarm installation took place in the Administration Building to repair non-functioning alarms. Fire alarms were out of service for a period of time. Eugene Martin followed up on the situation to insure that proper safety systems are in place during the repairs.

Renovations involving Asbestos Abatement, Summer 2008. Major renovations involving removal of floor tiles/asbestos abatement in the Science Building Floors 2 and 4 have been completed. The Committee will review and continue to monitor ongoing asbestos abatement as renovations continue. Administration is responsive and is following all precautions for relocating departments as necessary.

Diane Call reported the following planned changes and additions: new and repaired chairs to be added to common areas in building around the campus, digital signage to be installed by light switches; exterior sirens to add to the campus alert system; a plan to create departmental

coordinator positions for emergency situations; new front gate and fencing to be installed at the 56th Avenue entrance to campus.

College Environment Issues:

Printing Services had a situation where the garbage located outside the main egress from the building was attracting swarms of flies which were entering the building when the paper supplies were brought in from the outside. The smell of the garbage was also permeating the printing area. This was resolved with moving the location of the garbage bins and this rectified the problem.

In addition, the vent in the storage room of Printing Services was reported to be non-functioning. This problem was corrected by Buildings and Grounds.

Second hand smoke was an ongoing issue – especially at the entrance of the Science Building from the courtyard outside the cafeteria. There were complaints that the cigarette odor came from the garbage receptacles close to the building. Also, during the winter months the smoke was drawn into the building when smokers stood near the doors as they opened. The Committee has recommended to the Safety and Health Officer that signage be placed on buildings stating the smoking policy and appropriate distance from the building for smokers to stand. In addition, the garbage receptacles should be distanced from the entrance.

Elevator Malfunctioning/Repairs: There has been frequent malfunctioning of the elevators in the Science Building and the Medical Arts Building. One incident involved a student getting stuck for an extended period of time. B. Freier has reported that many physically challenged student have been stuck in these elevators or have missed a significant amount of classes due to delay in repairs. Compounding the problem is that wheelchair evacuation devices are available, but security staff and faculty are not permitted to intervene with students by carrying them down in these devices. The committee will review this issue and develop a better plan. The problem of getting students with disabilities to their classes when the elevators are out of service should be investigated. In addition, a more efficient means of communicating that elevators are out of services needs to be established. The Committee has requested from Buildings & Grounds information about the inspections and repairs of the elevators in the Science and Medical Arts Buildings, particularly Elevator A and B. Susan Manel has emailed copies of the appropriate reports for the committee's review.

Review Assessment of the Campus with Regard to Services for Students with Disabilities, Health & Safety, Security and Maintenance.

Services for Students with Disabilities

Ben Freier was appointed Acting Director of Services for Students with Disabilities and has attended a majority of the Committee meetings and continually updated the Committee. Dean Steele sent an email to the QCC community to place a disability statement on all college syllabi pending approval from the Academic Senate.

B. Freier announced that budget cuts may decrease services for students with disabilities. The Committee will monitor this situation to ascertain that ADA compliance is not affected.

B. Freier is creating a spreadsheet of students' schedules in order to determine which students will need an ADA desk and when. This will make keeping track of the missing desks easier and free up more desks which can be moved as needed. In addition, information will be provided to professors, prior to the semester, about students and their accommodations. This will assist in the preparation before the semester begins. A VESID eligible counselor will be available to student to assist in recruitment and enrollment.

The ADA button on the Administration Building door entrance is frequently broken. D. Call states there is a plan to replace all wireless automatic entry buttons with hard-wired door opening mechanisms and this will cut-down on the malfunctioning.

There is a pilot of new technology for hearing impaired students underway that will enable hearing-impaired students and teaching faculty the ability to communicate via live typists and enhance communication. The Committee will follow-up on the implementation of this new technology.

The Library is working toward making the second floor of the Library ADA compliant. The staff attended a conference to obtain ideas and suggestion for how to improve the situation.

Campus Safety and Security:

There was an issue with the speed bumps in Parking Lot #3. To avoid slowing down for the speed bump, cars were going around them at a fast speed creating a hazard for any pedestrians in the area. The Committee recommended the use of cones around the speed bump to deter motorists or to lengthen the speed bumps. Ed Locke reports that this is not feasible as the speed bumps are short in order to facilitate snow removal. The Committee has recommended the use of signage warning motorists to slow down and observe speed limits.

In regard to potential workplace violence issues, closed circuit surveillance TVs that will provide external views of the campus are being revamped. Smart classrooms and computer rooms have cameras, but there are not other interior systems. The full implementation of the CUNY Alert System is underway.

The Campus Security Report and the Sex Offender Report was reviewed for 2007. The Report includes an explanation of the availability of escorts for faculty during late hours and isolated areas.

Training for use of defibrillators (AEDs) has been completed. A list of qualified persons in each department has been distributed. The committee notes that no one has been named for the Science Building and recommends that a certified person be named.

The Committee participated in a walk-through in the gymnasium after there were reports of a lot of dust and problems with indoor temperature and ventilation. As a result recommendations were made and discussed with D. Call. Many of the problems identified have been resolved as a result of months of ongoing cleaning and painting. There remains no air conditioning in the building except in the offices due to the difficulty of retrofitting a building of this age. Ventilation is still being addressed. There was a discussion of the possibility of partnering with a

professional health club to sponsor, renovate and operate the site as a means of funding improvements. The Committee will follow-up with a repeat walk-through.

MRSA concerns: A complete clean-up of the gymnasium and all equipment was performed. The Committee recommends placing dispensers of alcohol-based hand sanitizers near exercise equipment and use of signage advising to wipe equipment down after use. In addition the Committee recommends educating all students about prevention and minimizing spread through precautionary measures.

.Complaints of air temperature issues have been directed to Buildings and Grounds and addressed and rectified when possible.

Mel Rodriquez has been named the new campus Health and Safety Officer. He will receive an email inviting him to all Committee meetings

New Recommendations:

The Committee will continue to monitor and report on space issues.

The Committee will continue to monitor and review reports on construction and renovation projects throughout the campus.

The Committee will review the Master Plan and assess the proposal for the Early College High School for its environmental impact on the College and its facilities, services and programs. The Committee will work with administration, students and faculty as part of a task force to implement the CUNY Sustainability initiative for a “greener campus” and to reduce QCCs “carbon footprint”.

The Committee will work with Administration to assist with any continuing action items related to the ongoing asbestos abatement renovations on campus

The Committee recommends actions on the following issues:

- Completion of a more organized emergency response team with floor coordinators
- Relocation of the handicapped collection areas for disabled students and faculty closer to the red emergency phones on all floors.
- Improve all interior and exterior building signage to be clearer and more conspicuous.
- Request student involvement and input at committee meetings
- Conduct a formal campus walk-through and assessment after completion of the major projects.
- Naming a person certified in the use of AEDs for the Science Building which does not have a designated staff member yet.
- Develop a plan with Services for Students with Disabilities to evacuate students with disabilities during emergencies.
- Education of students, faculty, staff on proper disposal of recyclables.

New Committee Members for 2008/2009: Diane Carey, Georgina Colalillo, Young Kim, Holly O’Donnell, Patricia Spradley; Marilyn Katz, Steering Committee Designee

Chairperson and Secretary for 2008/2009: Georgina Colalillo, Co-Chairperson, Holly O'Donnell, Co-Chairperson; Diane Carey, Secretary

Respectfully submitted,

Georgina Colalillo