

STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT

1. Senate Matters: Composition and Membership

Senate Composition has remained stable over the past month.

2. Committee Matters: Composition and Membership

As the calendar year draws to a close, the Steering Committee and the Committee on Committees are anxious to verify that there is full representation on all Committees of the Academic Senate, and that all Senators currently elected to represent their departments or constituencies of the Queensborough Community will be able to continue to do so during the Spring semester.

For this reason, Dr. Regina Rochford, Chair of the Committee on Committees, is in the process of sending out a mid-year query to all Department Chairs and Chairs of Committees of the Academic Senate, asking that she be notified if there are any senators or committee members who have been or will be prevented from representing their departments in the Academic Senate or from committee service by a scheduling conflict or personal circumstance. The Steering Committee has already been alerted of one such instance. Once we know if there are other senators who cannot serve, the Steering Committee, acting in concert with the Committee on Committees, will be able to review the Alternate list, to see which alternate Senators might act as appropriate replacements. This information will also be of service to members of the Academic Senate currently serving as Alternates who might wish to run for reappointment for their one-year terms this spring.

Dr. Rochford will be indicating how she may be reached if chairpersons wish to consult with her in the e-mail she's sent. Please be advised that I am also available on Thursday afternoons, in my office in Medical Arts 413--my office phone number is 718.581.2081 if this is more convenient. The Steering Committee and Committee on Committees is committed to maintaining a quorum in the Academic Senate and on all committees, and so we are grateful to everyone for their assistance in this matter.

3. Committee Matters: Activities

- As of this writing, a proposal to extend the purview of the Committee on the Gallery and Performing Arts to include matters related to the Harriet and Kenneth Kufenberg Holocaust Resource Center and Archives is under review by the Committee on Bylaws. The Committee on Bylaws has asked for the clarification of a few matters, and so we hope to finalize this process early in the coming year.
- Senators will note that this agenda includes a Recommendation to the President from the Committee on Environment, Quality of Life, and Disability Issues regarding the question of cigarette smoking on campus. The next issue the

Committee plans to address will be the issue of automobile parking, which we are confident the outstanding members of the committee will address with the same energy and dedication they have devoted to this issue.

- As of this writing, Dr. Jose Madrigal, chair of the Committee on Publications, has agreed to act as his committee's representative to the Administrative Task force on Assessment, which will be considering ways to address our college's mandate to conform to Standards 7 and 14 of Middle States Accreditation. We are grateful to both Dr. Madrigal and Dr. Pecorino for their outstanding dedication to governance in this matter.
- Although we have listed this item under New Business, the Steering Committee wishes to recognize the hard work of our Special Committees, particularly the Special Committee to Review the Assessment Database, whose chair, Dean Arthur Corradetti, will be speaking to us at the December Academic Senate meeting.

4. University and College Matters with Direct Bearing on The Senate

- The American Association of University Professors has expressed concern over the recent Supreme Court decision *Garcetti v. Ceballos*, which upheld the discipline of a deputy district attorney for having criticized his supervisors' actions. As reported on the AAUP's website (available at <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/comm/rep/A/postgarcettireport.htm>) "the Court ruled that when public employees speak *pursuant to their official duties, the employees are not speaking as citizens for First Amendment purposes, and the Constitution does not insulate their communications from employer discipline.* Although the majority expressly left open whether its ruling should apply to "speech related to scholarship and teaching" in public colleges and universities, subsequent decisions in the lower federal courts concerning faculty speech have disregarded this reservation and now threaten to diminish severely the constitutional protection of the academic freedom of professors whose engagement in governance, as well as their teaching and research, is considered part of their "official duties."

For this reason, the American Association of University Professors has urged academic institutions and governance bodies to reaffirm the importance of Academic Freedom on their campuses. The Steering Committee is therefore inviting the members of the Academic Senate to consider reaffirming Resolution for College Policy on Academic Freedom, ratified by this body most recently at the March, 1999 meeting of the Academic Senate, and offered for reaffirmation in Attachment G of this agenda.