

**STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE
QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE, CUNY
MONTHLY REPORT**

1. Senate Matters: Composition and Membership

As per the Steering Committee's announcement at the November 13 Academic Senate, we are most pleased to welcome Dr. David Humphries as the new Chair of the Department of English and our newest Senator from the Department of English. The Steering Committee wishes to thank Senator Reesman for her previous service to the Academic Senate in the capacity of English Department Chair, and to thank her for her continuing representation of the Department of English as a Senator-at-large.

The Steering Committee also wishes to welcome Dr. Paul Weiss as Senate Parliamentarian, and to thank the former Parliamentarian of the Academic Senate, Dr. Shannon Kincaid, for his two years of service in this capacity. We are extremely grateful to be able to be able to rely upon the guidance and learning of such expert colleagues.

As the Academic Senate anticipates its final meeting in the 2012 calendar year, we wish to renew our invitation to all members of Queensborough's faculty to remember that all meetings of the Academic Senate are open to the public as per the 2006 Perez decision on Open Meetings Law, as noted in Article I, Section 3, b of the Bylaws of the Academic Senate:

Meetings of the Academic Senate shall be subject to the Open Meetings Law and the Freedom of Information Law. Under the Open Meetings Law, the public has the right to attend any meeting of a public body. Any time a quorum of a public body gathers to discuss business, the meeting must be held in public, subject to the right to convene an executive session under certain limited circumstances. Non-members must conform to the usual requirements of parliamentary procedure; the Parliamentarian will interpret and enforce the rules which include that no non-member of the body may speak without the permission of the body.

Once again, we pledge to recognize any member of faculty who wishes to speak to the issues on which we deliberate.

Over the past several months, the Steering Committee has been in correspondence with a number of faculty who have been closely following the issues argued in the Academic Senate, and who are gratifyingly invested in their outcome, but who do not currently serve as Senators. We would like to take this opportunity to invite all our colleagues to consider running for one of the 42 seats for Faculty-at-large in the Academic Senate in the forthcoming spring, 2013 elections. Petitions will be circulated for nomination in late February and early March, and all members of faculty who might decide to stand for election may count upon the chair of the Steering Committee to sign in their support.

2. Committee Matters: Composition and Membership

- Committee membership is stable at this time. However, given that we are coming to the end of the fall semester, the Steering Committee and the Committee on Committees would like to remind faculty who may be going on sabbatical leave to consider resigning from any committee appointment they may be holding if they do not believe they will be able to maintain active membership during their sabbatical. We likewise ask Department Chairs to advise the chair of the Committee on Committees and/or the Steering Committee of any resignations or non-reappointments of faculty currently serving on committees so that we may appoint the proper replacements. Any and all communication relevant to these matters will remain confidential.

2. Committee Matters: Activities

- In addition to its recent directive to the Committee on Environment, Quality of Life, and Disability Matters to explore the possibility of developing a “Anti-Bullying” policy, the Steering Committee is also asking that the Committee join with the Sustainability Council to review the question of recycling and energy and resource conservation on campus. The Steering Committee Designee to this committee, Mr. Dion Pincus, will be working on creating a list of ten things members of the campus community can do in support of the environment. We thank Mr. Pincus for this initiative, and welcome suggestions from members of our campus community!
- The Steering Committee has also proposed additional support for the Committee on Academic Freedom through the creation of an “Academic Freedom Bookshelf”—either a literal shelf collection that might be located in the Queensborough Archives, or a virtual list of books and article relevant to this topic, that would be maintained at the Schmeller Library’s website. While there are some logistic challenges raised by this request that are currently being considered by the Committee on the Library, the Steering Committee is imagining that the creation of such a bookshelf would represent a permanent resource that any member of Queensborough Community College’s faculty—and especially those appointed to this committee--would be able to utilize to study the parameters of Academic Freedom as a legal concept and a faculty prerogative.
- The Committee on Admissions has also been asked to review the latest Enrollment Management Report, which includes information about a program being implemented at several of CUNY’s Community Colleges, in concert with a roster of about 10-20 high schools, termed “the Early College Initiative.” (Some general information about the initiative is available at <http://www.earlycolleges.org/partners.html>.) The initiative moves students toward an associates degree by offering the possibility of transferring as many as sixty credits from a secondary school program to a community college toward an associates degree. We have asked our Committee on Admissions to offer comment on this report.
- The Eleventh Edition of *Robert’s Rules of Order* (Da Capo Press, 2011), after past silence on this point, offers guidance on *electronic meetings*, as follows “...a group that

holds such alternative meetings [that is, “electronic meetings”] does not lose its character as a deliberative assembly, so long as the meetings provide, at a minimum, conditions of opportunity for simultaneous aural communication among all participating members equivalent to those of meetings held in one room or area. Under such conditions, an electronic meeting that is properly authorized in the bylaws is treated as though it were a meeting at which all the members who are participating are actually present...” (p. 97). The new edition of *Robert’s Rules of Order* goes on to stress that the “deliberative” character of meetings is not necessarily retained by email, but that such meetings can be authorized for particular committees by an organization’s bylaws, as per p. 98: “...committees that are expressly established by the bylaws can hold a valid electronic meeting only if authorized in the bylaws to do...” The text goes on to say that standards for participation, the evaluation of quorum, means by which motions may be submitted, and so on, must be explicitly established prior to such a meeting. The Steering Committee is sharing this information to support a consideration of whether members of the Academic Senate believe it would be appropriate to establish guidelines, in the bylaws, for the conduct of electronic meetings. Past discussion of this point established that electronic meetings would not be appropriate for all committees; however, would it make sense to allow this possibility for some committees, and, if so, which? We welcome the comments of Senators and committee members on this matter.

3. University and College Wide Matters with Direct Bearing on the Senate

Over the past several weeks, the Steering Committee has been in receipt of a number of queries from faculty members (some of whom serve in the Academic Senate, and others of whom do not but attended the meeting, in accordance with Open Meetings Law), who have been concerned about the lack of clarity that occurred in connection with President Call’s statement as recorded in the minutes of the November 13, 2012 meeting and the votes on Curriculum that followed. (See attachment A of this agenda). For this reason, the Steering Committee is recommending the consideration of the following resolution:

Whereas, at the November 13, 2012 meeting of the Academic Senate members of the Academic Senate appear as present on the roll but not recorded in the voting on matters related to Pathways, which is not in accord with the obligations under the New York Open Meetings Law (<http://www.dos.ny.gov/coog/openmeetlaw.html>; decision in *Perez v. CUNY* 2006, available at <http://law.justia.com/cases/new-york/court-of-appeals/2005/2005-08765.html>)

and

Whereas, at the November 13, 2012 meeting of the Academic Senate several Senators indicated that they did not understand what was being voted upon on as matters related to (a) the rescinding of the October 9, 2012 Resolution of the Academic Senate to “pause” in consideration of courses related to the Pathways Curriculum; and (b) the “Resolution Regarding Transfer,” or “Pathways Curriculum,” in itself (as per Attachment A, Minutes of the Academic Senate, November 13, 2012, lines 877-938)

and

Whereas, at the November 13, 2012 meeting of the Academic Senate the attempt to have an exact record of the proceedings by electronic means, which might have contributed to greater clarity on these points, met with technical failure so that there is no recording;

and

Whereas, at the November 13, 2012 meeting of the Academic Senate, the attempt to have an exact record of the proceedings by electronic means was related to an action presented to the Senate concerning the statement of the President with regard to satisfying the terms and conditions of the resolution adopted by the Senate on October 9, 2012,

Therefore,

Be it resolved that the Academic Senate rescinds the actions of the Senate on Pathways related items, beginning with the action to accept the Statement of the President as satisfying the terms and conditions of the resolution adopted by the Senate on October 9, 2012, and closing with the vote that followed, as recorded in lines 877-938, Attachment A, *Minutes of the Academic Senate*, November 13, 2012.

EXPLANATION:

This resolution (motion) is being placed onto the agenda of the Academic Senate so that members of the Academic Senate may have an opportunity to review all items, and discuss any issues related to the Pathways initiative. The purpose of this motion to rescind is to allow for full discussion, given strong faculty concerns raised that such opportunities for clarification were not afforded on the floor of the November 13 Academic Senate. The objective of this resolution is clarification: Those members of the Senate who are and were supportive of the previous outcomes may vote against the resolution(motion) to rescind. Those who believe that more discussion and a clearer presentation of items at issue—out of respect for those Senators who either were not present; or whose clickers malfunctioned; or who were confused concerning the vote-- may vote for the resolution (motion).

Please note that, as per the Eleventh edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*, a vote of 40 or more members of the Academic Senate in support of this motion is needed for it to be adopted and for the previous actions to be rescinded.

- **The University Faculty Senate is in receipt of the following resolution from the University Student Senate. As of this writing the resolution is scheduled to be circulated among the members of the University Faculty Senate and reviewed by the University Faculty Senate Committee on Student Activities:**

RESOLUTION FOR CUNY FACULTY TO CONSIDER THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF HURRICANE SANDY ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

WHEREAS, on October 29th, 2012 Hurricane Sandy had a profound effect on the coastal areas of New York City and the tri-state region, indiscriminately causing harm to residents, their homes, neighborhoods, and way of life,

WHEREAS, we, the CUNY community, are amongst the City and State institutions who suffered great losses; our losses can be counted in precious young life, property damage, and instructional time,

WHEREAS, a total of at least 8850 members of the CUNY Community (7682 students and 1168 faculty and staff) were or are living in heavily impacted areas—what city officials call evacuation zone A,

WHEREAS, those figures fail to capture the true impact of Hurricane Sandy's devastation, as they omit the people living in zone B and zone C that were also impacted; the figures also do not include those living in Long Island or New Jersey,

WHEREAS, many of our students, faculty and staff suffered physical, financial and emotional losses; chief among them the unfortunate death of 4 CUNY Students—Jacob Vogelmann, Brooklyn College; Jessie Streich-Kest, Hunter College; Lauren Abraham, LaGuardia Community College; John C. Filipowicz, College of Staten Island,

WHEREAS, the long term damages of Hurricane Sandy cannot be tabulated and will definitely last through this semester and probably for many years to come,

RESOLVED, that the University Student Senate call upon Chancellor Goldstein and the Board of Trustees to take actions that will protect CUNY students and their ability to finish the current semester without being hindered academically because of Hurricane Sandy,

RESOLVED, that the University Student Senate call upon the City University of New York Faculty members to be compassionate and take into consideration the direct and indirect factors that might have affected our students and their ability to properly focus in class and finish the semester in good academic standing,

RESOLVED, that the University Student Senate call upon all University faculty members to take these facts into consideration and make the necessary accommodations for students who have been affected by Hurricane Sandy, making modifications to their curricular goals for this semester and creating avenues for students to make up lost work, ensuring that our students are not penalized for missing classes because of Hurricane Sandy.

- **At the 371st Plenary of the University Faculty Senate on Tuesday, December 4, 2012, the University Faculty Senate passed the following resolution, 63 to 3 with 2 abstentions:**

Whereas, the CUNY faculty is committed to providing our students with an excellent education,

and

Whereas, the University Faculty Senate has expressed its objections to both the process and substance of the Pathways curriculum many times, both formally and informally, both in writing and orally,

and

Whereas, as the implementation of Pathways has progressed to each subsequent stage, the flaws of the Pathways curriculum have emerged more and more clearly to the faculty who will be teaching these courses and approving degree candidates, faculty who have spent their professional lives and careers devoted to the education of our students,

and

Whereas, faculty members have created courses under protest and in the context of coercion and because of the necessity of providing new courses for their students,

and

Whereas, certain curricular problems have been identified at campus after campus, specifically the need for modification of the numbers of contact hours for courses in certain disciplines and the number of credits overall,

and

Whereas, faculty at several campuses have declined to act to approve courses proposed by their own colleagues because of these curricular problems,

and

Whereas, the Board of Trustees Resolution of June 2011 which established Pathways calls for “all of these pathways policies and processes, including the Common Core, be reviewed and evaluated each year for three years beginning in 2013, and every three years thereafter, to modify them as necessary to improve them or to meet changing needs,”

Therefore, be it Resolved, that the University Faculty Senate calls upon the Chancellery to begin the required review in January 2013 and conduct this review in consultation with the University Faculty Senate,

and

Be it further Resolved that, the University Faculty Senate calls for a moratorium by the Chancellery on all further implementation of Pathways until this initial and collaborative review is concluded.