

**Queensborough Community College
Academic Senate**

To: Kathleen Villani, Secretary, Steering Committee
From: Dr. Geoffrey Burleson, UFS representative, for QCC
Date: 5 November 2006

**The 322nd Plenary Session of the University Faculty Senate
The City University of New York
Tuesday, October 24th, 2006**

The membership was welcomed by the Provost of Baruch College, Dr. David Dannenbring.

Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved, with some last minute additions from UFS Chair Manfred Phillipp. (These additions are all included under “New Business”.)

Approval of the Minutes of September 2006

The minutes were unanimously approved.

Chair’s Report

The chair briefly summarized his report. Here is the full text:

The discussion at the UFS Plenary last month about the *proposed policy on student complaints* has resulted in significant changes in the proposed document. While more changes may be needed, it is anticipated that the document will be brought to a Board Committee on November 6, be subject to public comment on November 20, and be voted on by the B.o.T. on November 27. Discussion on the proposed policy on computer use will continue. I thank Vice Chancellor Schaffer for his presentation and all participants in the process.

Assessment of colleges continues to be a local and national issue. On the local level, there is a growing debate about the use of instruments such as the Collegiate Learning Assessment. At the national level, the Spellings Commission Report has initiated a discussion about the traditional ways that higher education institutions are accredited and evaluated. Assessment was a major topic at last Friday’s meeting of the CUNY Council of Faculty Governance Leaders.

I have continued to *visit college senates and faculty councils, and presidents*. To date, this has included Queensborough Community College, City College, Bronx Community College, and Medgar Evars College. I will not “visit” my home campus and the Graduate Center since I am a member of the Lehman Senate and the Graduate Council. I thank all those who invited me to those meetings. Issues discussed included college issues that come to the board and college governance questions, but were otherwise different on each campus. These visits will continue. The *Task Force on Doctoral Education* in the (Natural) Sciences continues to meet. I attend and comment, but have chosen not to take part in the subcommittee structure. Prof. Liesl Jones of Lehman is a new UFS-nominated member of the Task Force, joining Prof. William Hersh of Queens. It should be noted that the Natural Science Discipline Council, at a meeting that your chair could not attend, resolved to ask that all appropriate Executive Officers be included in the Task Force deliberations. Messages from the Executive Officers of the affected disciplines to the Task

Force remain unanswered. According to President Kelly, the Task Force Report, expected in January or later, will be submitted to the Committee on Structure of the Graduate Council for its consideration.

The new system of consultation between the UFS and PSC has included a PSC Report at the Council of Faculty Governance Leaders. The PSC Report at the FGL meeting gave faculty governance leaders information on PSC interactions with the university administration concerning the proposed policies on student complaints and computer use. Participants continue to respond positively to this initiative.

The *School of Professional Studies* has continued to add new certificate programs. Your chair has urged the School to use the standard CUNY format for the preparation of materials that describe new programs, including full consultation with those who run similar programs in CUNY. The latter point is important, since it has been proposed that SPS, in its online offerings, be allowed to generate programs that compete with existing offerings in CUNY. At least one new program in SPS (not an on-line program) has attracted considerable criticism from the director of a similar existing program in CUNY.

The agenda and date for the *Fall Conference* has been set to December 1. The Conference will discuss the Spellings Commission Report. Featured speakers include *Professor Robert Zemsky* – Member of the Spellings Commission; Chair and Professor, the Learning Alliance for Higher Education, University of Pennsylvania; Founding Director of the University of Pennsylvania's Institute for Research on Higher Education and *Dean Susan Albertine* – School of Culture and Society & Professor of English, College of New Jersey; Active Member of the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

I look forward to seeing you there!

Manfred Philipp
Chair, University Faculty Senate

Reports from Representatives to Board Committees

A report regarding an October 12th meeting of the Board of Trustees of the City University Construction Fund (CUCF) was dispersed but not discussed. The main content of the report, written by Prof. Ned Benton, primarily addresses three major actions by the CUCF Trustees: authorization of a study of Brooklyn College Roosevelt Hall to assess and plan for current and future needs for science programs, authorization of a project for a master plan update for Hostos Community College, and establishment of a \$3 million fund for emergency repairs at community colleges.

PSC Report (oral): President Bowen

1. President Bowen is delighted to be forging a closer relationship with the UFS, as exemplified by regular reports of the PSC to the UFS, and Dr. Pecorino's presence and participation at a recent PSC meeting.
2. President Bowen discussed in detail improvements to the Dental Plan under the new contract.

3. The steady rise in prescription drug prices has historically been covered by PSC reserves, which contributed substantially to the mounting deficit over the past 12 years. In the future, increased welfare fund contributions might be needed to offset the inexorable rise in these costs.
4. Sabbaticals: although the PSC has no interest in micromanaging academic decisions regarding sabbaticals, please contact the PSC if anyone is told that a sabbatical is not possible due to “financial restrictions.”

New Business

Lobbying

Prof. Martha Bell, representing the Faculty Executive Committee, spoke as an advocate for lobbying, offering examples from her numerous experiences in the field, and noting that many different approaches to lobbying can be effective. Prof. Bell recently met with the State Board of Regents; the main topic was the fact that SEEK financial tables hadn't been reconsidered or revised in 10 years. A new cutoff of 200 percent of the poverty level was successfully proposed as a new cutoff for SEEK eligibility. Prof. Bell recommended that both Democrats and Republicans need to be the recipients of lobbying efforts, and especially singled out Republicans from upstate New York and Eastern Long Island districts. Other officials that should be considered for targeted lobbying include members of the Department of Budget in the Governor's Office, co-chairs of the Higher Education Commission, the City Council, and newly established Advisory Boards set up the Board of Regents within each county or district.

Academic Freedom

Prof. Lenore Beaky reported on progress and issues surrounding academic freedom, as a result of recent meetings she attended as a National Representative to the AAUP. Prof. Beaky reminded the UFS of its recommendation that all CUNY campuses institute academic freedom committees. She also noted that the AAUP is beginning to conduct a general investigation of academic freedom at CUNY.

Student Complaint Procedures

Prof. Karen Kaplowitz discussed numerous revisions in a detailed proposed Policy for Student Complaint Procedures, which will be presented to the B.o.T. on Nov. 6th. A public hearing on the matter is also scheduled for Nov. 20th. Since the document may affect terms of conditions and employment, the PSC is examining it as well. Numerous aspects of the document were discussed and debated during the plenary.

Honoring Former Chair O'Malley

Former Chair of the UFS, Prof. Susan O'Malley, was presented with a framed Resolution Of Appreciation, and the honorary title of UFS Leader Emerita.

CUNY Budget

Prof. Arthur Levine noted that budget requests from each CUNY campus will be due on October 31st. Prof. Levine surmised that a number of college administrations within CUNY have probably

already drawn up a budget request without faculty input, and urged members to approach their respective administrations with recommendations regarding the budget.

CLA (Collegiate Learning Assessment)

Profs. Lenore Beaky and Phil Pecorino offered a critical presentation on the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA), a standardized assessment test that has already been administered at Lehman and City Colleges, and is being considered for wider use within CUNY. Currently, La Guardia CC, QCC and KCC have all been scheduled for administration of the CLA. The CLA itself purports to measure the “value added” of a college or university. After tests are scored, schools receive an Institutional Report comparing their results with other institutions nationally. The test itself requires no more than 100 students to participate; cost to schools is \$6300 per testing group.

Profs. Beaky and Pecorino discussed what they feel are numerous flaws in the test itself, and missteps regarding its consideration and adoption on CUNY campuses:

1. To this point, no faculty governance body has discussed, been consulted on, or approved the use of the CLA. *Ad hoc* committees have only recently been established at some campuses.
2. The test itself is flawed on many levels. Although it purports to assess critical thinking, analytical reasoning and written communication, the format and tasks required by the test are inadequate to measure these areas with any degree of reliability or usefulness. A sample question involving perusal of documents surrounding the purchase of a corporate jet was cited as an example; the student is supposed to compose a memo with recommendations to executives based on this activity.
3. The test has been criticized by several important authorities and bodies, including the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.
4. Results of the test will not suggest avenues to focus efforts on specific changes in curriculum or modes of teaching.
5. The methods by which 100 “random” students can be secured to take the test can result in widely varied ranges of student abilities within these small groups. How students are chosen is not clearly addressed, nor are any safeguards preventing groups of already high-performing students from being assembled as a testing group.
6. Prof. Beaky presented a detailed resolution recommending that “faculty governance bodies should determine whether or not any college-wide or CUNY-wide assessment measure should be adopted”, and recommended that voting on this resolution be an agenda item at the next UFS plenary.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Dr. Geoffrey Burleson
Alternate, UFS