

**STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE  
QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE, CUNY  
MONTHLY REPORT  
November 12, 2013**

**1. Senate Matters: Composition and Membership**

All positions in the Academic Senate are filled with the exception of the Student Government President pro tem

**2. Committee Matters: Composition and Membership**

Two members of the Committee on eLearning who resigned have been replaced as given in the report of the Committee on Committees.

**3. Committee Matters: Activities**

Of note are the following:

The Committee on Bylaws will be considering a resolution to remove the Committee on Ceremonial Occasions due to the action of the Senate in May, 2013 in which the Senate was opposed to creating any official College Ceremonies at all and for which the Committee might render service and recommendations and fulfill its charges.

The Committee on Environment, Quality of Life and Disability Issues will be considering what if anything is to be done to support a climate of mutual respect and the intolerance for bullying at the College.

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

**A. The University Faculty Senate**

The 377th Plenary Session of The University Faculty Senate of The City University Of New York, Tuesday, October 22, 2013, 6:30 p.m. approved the revision of the UFS Charter which must now be ratified by the faculty of CUNY. QCC will conduct a vote on the matter during this academic year.

**B. The CUNY BOT met on September 30, 2013 and took several actions. Available here:**

[http://policy.cuny.edu/board\\_meeting\\_summaries/2013/09-30/pdf/#Navigation\\_Location](http://policy.cuny.edu/board_meeting_summaries/2013/09-30/pdf/#Navigation_Location)

**QUEENS COLLEGE -APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM PRESIDENT:**

RESOLVED, That the Board of Trustees of The City University of New York approve the appointment of Dr. Evangelos John Gizis as Interim President of Queens College, effective January 1, 2014, at a compensation to be recommended by the Chancellor to the Board, subject to financial ability.

EXPLANATION: Dr. James Muyskens will step down as President of Queens College, effective December 31, 2013. Pending the completion of a search for a new president, Dr. Evangelos John Gizis will serve as Interim President

## 5. Actions of the Steering Committee

### A. Revision and reconstruction of the Academic Senate website

- An area (blog) has been created to report on activities of the Committees of the Academic Senate and the Senate itself.  
<http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/governance/academicSenate/as-blogs/news-and-views.html>
- An area has been created to allow candidates for election to seats in the Senate to state their principles and positions for the electorate.  
<http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/governance/academicSenate/CandidatesforSenateMemberships.html>

### B. Holy Day Observances

The request below has been sent to the College Administration.

President Call:

We have received communications from faculty on the challenges they face with student absences due to religious observances. We think that they need assistance with compliance with the law and respect for the rights of students.

Given that we are obliged to respect New York State Law 224a regarding the observance of religious Holy Days and as we do not have local power over the academic calendar scheduling of classes and given that our student body and faculty have become more and more diverse with regard to their ethnicity and religious affiliations we respectfully request that the QCC administration furnish the faculty each semester/month along with the academic calendar and calendar of events for the month with the listing of the most important religious Holy Days of the world's religions, days for which religious observances or refrain from work are religious obligations.

Philip Pecorino,  
Chairperson, Academic Senate Steering Committee

Alexandra Tarasko,  
Chair of the Faculty Executive Committee

Lana Zinger,  
PSC-QCC Chapter Chairperson

The administration is now working with faculty leadership to construct a method for informing faculty of what they need to know concerning how to support students and respect their rights.

### C. Recording of Votes

In order to comply with the Open Meetings Law and the need for a quorum in order to conduct official business, starting with the meeting in December of 2013 when matters are put to a vote in the Academic Senate there will be the options to vote in the affirmative or negative and all other members eligible to vote who are in attendance and not voting either yeah or nay will be recorded as abstaining which would be an accurate rendering of what they are doing. The Open

Meetings Law requires a report to the Public on how each member of the body who was present acted on matters put to a vote. Further, Robert’s Rules of Order 11<sup>th</sup> Edition

“...To “abstain” means not to vote at all, and a member who makes no response if “abstentions” are called for abstains just as much as one who responds to that effect...” (p.45)

“ Although it is the duty of every member who has an opinion on a question to express it by his vote, he can abstain, since he cannot be compelled to vote. By the same token, when an office or a position is to be filled by number of members, as is the case of a committee, or a position on a board, a member may partially abstain by voting for less than for those for whom he is entitled to vote...”(p. 407)

If the Senate wishes to consider other options this should be brought up during the Senate meeting or to the attention of the Steering Committee. The principles challenges to be met are those who are elected to the Senate and do not attend and those who attend but do not participate in the voting.

## **6. Resolutions presented by the Steering Committee for the consideration and disposition by the Academic Senate**

None for this meeting.

## **7. Shared Governance Discussions and the Academic Senate**

In our readiness to entertain discussion of all other college-related matters, we wish to remind all members of Queensborough’s faculty 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.*

As always, we pledge to recognize any member of faculty who wishes to contribute to our dialogue.