

## **Steering Committee Report**

### **February 2015**

Senate membership is stable and all Senate committees are fully staffed and functioning smoothly.

The Senate Committee on Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness is putting forward the following resolution: “Data collected on the numerical questions of the Student Evaluation forms should be tabulated to generate numerical assessment of student evaluations of faculty.” The Steering Committee supports the work of the Academic Senate Committees and facilitates the right of individual committees to place resolutions before the full body. Full debate and consideration is requested for this resolution.

Many questions remain such as: What is the tabulated data to be used for? Who will do the tabulating? Will the information be publicly promulgated and, if so, how and to what purpose? Will the aggregate data be decoupled from the comments section and, if so, how and to what purpose? And, most importantly, how will this data tabulation benefit students and faculty?

At the request of the Steering Committee, the Bylaws Committee is being asked to draft a resolution clarifying the use of electronic voting by Senate Committees. *Robert’s Rules of Order* has allowed electronic voting under certain circumstances since 2011.

As was stated in the Steering Committee Report of December 2012, the Eleventh

Edition of Robert's Rules of Order (Da Capo Press, 2011) states that: "...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). *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 so..." 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. No formal action was taken when this issue was first addressed in the Senate (December 2012) but the Steering Committee is once again sharing this information to support an addition to the Senate Bylaws establishing guidelines for the conduct of electronic meetings. Past discussion of this point in the Senate indicated a strong sense that electronic meetings would not be appropriate for all committees, particularly the Curriculum Committee, but it would make sense to allow this possibility for some committees. As always, we welcome the comments of Senators and committee members on this matter.

The next meeting of Academic Senate Committee chairs will be held on Wednesday, February 25, 2015, from noon to 1:30 PM, in Medical Arts 134. Agenda items include the protocol for preparing resolutions and policy statements available on the Governance website (<http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/governance/academicSenate/index.html>), procedures for placing materials on the Senate webpage, possible revision of committees' bylaws charges, the updating of committee guides, workload or any other concerns regarding the transaction of committee business, and a presentation by Mr. David Moretti on the Queensborough Website.