Minutes of the Senate Committee on Environment, Disability, and Quality of Life Issues
Wednesday February 24, 2016 2-3pm - H444

Present: Leah Anderst, Sebastian (Ben) Murolo, Dominic Hull, Weier Ye, Sheila Beck, Wei Lai, Clara Wajngurt, Isabel Hocevar, Bill Faulkner, Ed Locke, Lt. Jack Black, Ben Freier

I.   The minutes of the previous meeting on December 16, 2015 were approved.

II. In response to an email request from Dr. Phil Pecorino, on behalf of the Faculty Executive Committee, the committee discussed a variety of questions and concerns related to video surveillance on campus. Ed Locke and Lt. Black provided the committee with many specifics related to security cameras on campus: expectations of privacy in various spaces on campus, the number of cameras today vs. the number when Mr. Locke began at QCC ten years or so ago, which departments and offices have access to which cameras, how long footage recorded by the cameras is saved, and what kinds of requests or complaints might result in his office, Public Safety, reviewing footage from a particular camera on a particular date and time. The increase in cameras on campus (from about 4 VHS cameras ten years ago to 200 cameras today) is a response to security and safety concerns on QCC's open campus, concerns that committee members agreed are legitimate. The committee co-chairs have written preliminary responses to Dr. Pecorino's specific questions (below) which will be turned into a report to share with the FEC.

III. Anti-Bullying Subcommittee: The committee discussed the continuation of the Anti-bullying subcommittee and continuing bullying concerns on campus. Clara Wajngurt, who heads the subcommittee, expressed a desire to gather information before determining the next steps for the subcommittee. Firstly, the Anti-bullying statement, which was approved by this committee and by the faculty senate last spring, should be included in the College Catalog, from which it is so far absent. Bill Faulkner indicated that he will follow up with Stephen Di Dio about this. The committee then discussed hearing word that another CUNY campus has created a definition of bullying, and research should be conducted to verify this. The committee then discussed, in general terms, the current processes at QCC for an employee who feels bullied, especially by a direct supervisor. Currently such persons can speak to Human Resources or to a representative of the PSC. There is a desire among the subcommittee members to create an impartial and confidential panel of faculty and staff members from QCC that would hear bullying cases, a panel that would keep the complaints and their resolutions within our campus rather than take them to the PSC or to CUNY. Clara Wajngurt indicated that she would look into bullying policies or definitions that may exist at other CUNY campuses and bring her findings to a future committee meeting.

IV. New Business: A committee member raised a concern about handicap accessible doors in the Science building, where construction is taking place. The committee member noted that the doors there do not open in response to the handicap buttons. Ben Freier and Bill Faulkner both noted that they will look into whether the new doors need new batteries or whether they have been properly set by the installers. Another committee raised a similar issue with the keyed elevator in the Humanities building. The elevator lock on the third floor did not work recently, and the committee member called B&G to report it. Such incidents should instead be formally submitted to B&G through their online request system.
V.   The meeting was adjourned.

Draft Report on Video Surveillance on Campus:

The committee on Environment, Disability, and Quality of Life Issues met on February 24, 2016 and gathered responses from Ed Locke, Lt. Black, and VP Faulkner related to the security cameras and video surveillance at QCC. Below are Dr. Pecorino's questions and the responses received in the meeting.

Note: A representative of the ACC was not present at our meeting (they do not regularly attend our meetings) but will be invited to a future meeting in order to add to this discussion concerning the security cameras they operate separately from Public Safety.

-How is the information recorded?

The vast majority of the cameras on campus are recording all the time, while some are motion activated. Some of them are static cameras, pointed in a specific direction (such as in classrooms with smart technology), and others pan over larger areas (such as the cameras in QCC parking lots). These cameras record in public places where there is not an expectation of privacy, places such as the student union, the library, outdoor spaces, parking lots, and hallways. There are not cameras in spaces where there is an expectation of privacy, spaces such as bathrooms, locker rooms, and faculty and staff offices.

-Who has access?

Public Safety has access to data from all cameras in public places such as outside campus buildings and inside building hallways, open spaces such as in the library or the cafeteria, and building entryways. Cameras in classrooms that are equipped with smart podiums or computer labs are accessed only by the Academic Computing Center. Public Safety does not have regular access to the data from these cameras, but in the event of a reported criminal or illicit incident, they can request the data from ACC. Some individual departments or offices also have access to the data recorded by cameras in their vicinity: the Art gallery staff has access to cameras in their spaces, Student Union staff has access to cameras in the student union, and Building and Grounds can access certain cameras on campus as needed.

-For how long is data held?

Data collected by campus cameras is saved for between two weeks and three months. Footage possibly recorded by a camera related to an incident reported six months after it has taken place, for instance, would no longer be available.

-What sorts of incidents might result in looking at the data?

Formal incident reports of criminal or illicit activities would prompt Public Safety to review available surveillance footage.

-For exactly how long have the cameras been recording? What are the exact dates when cameras started operation for each different location?

The college has steadily increased the presence of surveillance cameras over the last ten years. Since there are now 200 individual cameras operated by Public Safety, there is not data on the

exact installation dates for the location of all 200 different cameras. There are plans to install additional cameras in building hallways such as in Humanities.

-Do the cameras work 24/7 or are they intermittent?

While a few cameras are motion activated, it should be assumed that they all operate 24/7. ACC cameras in classrooms with technology can be turned off by individual instructors during a class if the instructor desires (Dr. Pecorino shared instructions detailing how to do this in a previous series of emails). It is unclear when or how those cameras are then turned back on.

-Is there an opportunity for misuse of data recorded (or use other than what the cameras' stated intentions are)?

The primary purposes of the cameras are to serve as deterrents and to make data available in the case of investigations of criminal or illicit activities. The point was reinforced that the footage for these cameras is only reviewed or formally accessed in the case of such a report. A committee member asked what might happen if, say, a supervisor requested access to footage from a particular camera in order to check up on an employee under him or her without there being a formal incident report attached to the request. Ed Locke indicated that in such a case, the supervisor would not be given the data and would instead be referred to Labor Relations.

Dr. Pecorino's email refers to a case where ACC camera data was apparently used for purposes unrelated to protecting classroom technology. Without knowing the specifics of the case in question, Mr. Locke and Lt. Black indicated that there is no guarantee that footage from cameras whose primary purpose is to protect technology won't be used for other purposes such as investigating a report of criminal or illicit activity. If for instance, a person were to attack another person in a smart classroom and that incident was recorded by an ACC camera whose primary purpose is to protect the technology, Public Safety would indeed request that footage in order to investigate the incident.

-What would be the full range of "incidents" for which data would be used?

Ed Locke and Lt. Black reinforced that footage is only accessed in the case of investigating formally reported criminal or illicit activities on or around campus.