**QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**The City University of New York**

**ACADEMIC SENATE COMMITTEE ON**

**ENVIRONMENT, QUALITY OF LIFE AND DISABILITY ISSUES**

**TO:** Academic Senate Steering Committee

**FROM:** Prof. M. Chantale Damas, Chair, Committee on Environment, Quality of Life and Disability Issues

**SUBJECT:**  Annual Report of the Committee on Environment Quality of Life and Disability

Issues for September 2020-May 2021

**DATE:** August 10, 2021

**Committee Members**:

Prof. M. Chantale Damas, Physics (2022) Chair

Prof. Noelia Diaz, English (2021) Secretary

Prof. Kelly Ford, Business (2023) Member

Prof. Naja Hougaard, Social Sciences (2022) Member

Prof. Neeraj Mehta, Music (2022) Member

Prof. Mohamed Javdan, Biology (2023) Member

Prof. Janet Franzese, Nursing (2023), Member

Prof. Christina Saindon, Speech Communication and Theatre Arts (2021) Member

Prof. Dugwon Seo, Engineering and Technology (2021) Member

**Liaisons:**

Prof. Anthony Monahan (Health, Physical Education & Dance), Liaison, Steering Committee

Vice-President William Faulkner, President’s Designee

Mr. Benami Freier, Liaison, Services for Students with Disabilities

Ms. Isabel Hocevar, Liaison, Office of Health Services

Mr. Mel Rodriguez, Liaison, Environmental Health and Safety

Prof. Elizabeth Toohey (English), Liaison, Committee on Committees

Mr. John Triolo, Liaison, Office of Campus Safety

Prof. Clara Wajngurt (Mathematics), Chair, PSC Health and Safety

**Student Members:**

Juan Vargas

Rashmika Patel

**Membership composition changes:**

Prof. Naja Hougaard (Social Sciences) was not attending any of the Committee fall 20 meetings and numerous attempts were made to contact her. In spring 21, the Chair confirmed that Prof. Hougaard left QCC and was not replaced during AY 2020-21. Student members were contacted, but none attended any meetings in AY 2020-21.

**Number of Committee Meetings**: The Committee on Environment, Quality of Life and Disability Issues met three times during the 2020-2021 academic year. The Committee meets on Wednesdays at 12:10 – 1:30, but not on a regular schedule.

Meeting dates: All meetings were conducted via Zoom

Fall 2020: October7, 2020

# Spring 2021: February 17, 2021, April 14, 2021, May 12, 2021

**2020-2021 Bylaws Charge for Committee:**

1. Through a process that involves the administration, formulate and recommend to the Academic Senate policies and practices pertaining to the College environment in matters of health, safety, security, maintenance and allocation of facilities;
2. Evaluate and report to the Academic Senate on the administrative response to problems in the College environment;
3. Receive all proposals concerning naming and renaming campus facilities and make appropriate recommendations to the Academic Senate;
4. Review and report on College Master Plan regarding facilities and the campus environment;
5. Review the assessment of the campus with regard to services for students with disabilities and disability issues as the assessment relates and pertains to the campus environment and campus facilities and make appropriate recommendations to the Academic Senate.

**Committee Activities for 2020-2021 Academic Year:**

EQLD Committee Dropbox Folder

In fall 2020, EQLD Committee Chair created an EQLD Committee Dropbox folder to archive all EQLD Committee documents. All EQLD Committee members have access to this shared folder.

Subcommittee on College Accessibility

The Subcommittee on College Accessibility met on October Oct 15, 2020, to discuss plans for their presentation to FEC presentation, as well as discussed, the UDL workshop series.

The brief report from the Committee Chair (Prof. Angela Rindinger-Dotterman) is as follows:

*During the Spring 2021 semester, the Accessibility Committee discussed the feedback we received from our December two-part workshop series on UDL.  In collaboration with CETL and the ADC and eLearning Committee, two of our members led a one-hour session on using UDL approaches in online classes (April).  We began collaborating with the Perkins Grant Student-Centered IDT, to discuss ways that our committee can support the team working on the grant, which is focusing on student-centered supports for students with disabilities. This collaboration remains ongoing.  Most of our committee members have also joined the IDT, and our committee has agreed that we can offer faculty support for this initiative, as its home is in Continuing Education, a program that can sometimes be marginalized within the college. Given the work and Zoom fatigue, we decided to wait until late summer to advertise a working group for faculty interested in issues of disability and pedagogy, which we'd like to see meet throughout next year.  We are still determining whether or not it is ideal to collaborate with another committee/campus entity (e.g., CETL) to launch that group.*

College Reopening Plan

During each meeting throughout the AY 2020-21, Vice-President (VP) William Faulkner, President’s Designee, gave detailed account about the College’s reopening plan, which was constantly in flux. At the last meeting of the Committee on May 12, 2021, VP Faulkner updated the Committee on the latest recommendations issued by the Chancellery. The number of students on CUNY’s campus was slated to increase from 25 percent to ~66 percent. The caveat was that contingency plans must be put in place to pivot to virtual teaching, if necessary. In addition to updating the Committee, as a member of the Campus Emergency Advisory Committee (EAC), VP Faulkner regularly met with EAC members to evaluate and consider reopening plans. Through regular town Hall meetings, VP Faulkner updated the campus community on the campus’ reopening plans.

Health and Safety Concerns and Reporting

As of Monday, August 16, 2021, anyone entering any CUNY facility will need to be fully vaccinated (defined as 14 days beyond the last vaccination shot) or show proof of a negative COVID-19 test taken within the past seven days.  A temporary new mask mandate was also issued, and with the exception of vaccinated people (as long as they can maintain physical distance), everyone must wear a face mask inside all CUNY campuses and observe the rules of when not to wear masks (e.g., eating, drinking, outside when maintaining physical distance, etc.).

*PSC CUNY Health and Safety*. Prof. Clara Wajngurt, Chair, PSC Health and Safety regularly reported to the Committee about PSC’s work regarding CUNY campuses’ reopening plans. The PSC worked closely with CUNY representatives in order to establish a COVID vaccination and testing policy that ensure protections for all employees. Prof. Wajngurt sends PSC CUNY monthly updates via emails to the Committee Chair regarding PSC CUNY’s safe campus reopening plans. All PSC emails and documents were uploaded to the Committee’s EQLD/PSC CUNY folder. Campus walkthroughs, organized by the PSC, Chairs and the Emergency Advisory committee, were conducted in August by a group of trained volunteers. All walkthrough reports can also be found in the EQLD/PSC CUNY folder.

With campus reopening, custodial cleaning will be increased to ensure adequate cleaning, however, given the new increased numbers on campus, it is unlikely that all surfaces will be able to be cleaned in between classes. Cleaning wipes will be made available in the classrooms for both faculty and student’s use. Prior to the pandemic a budget crisis resulted in custodial employee layoffs that coincided with a large number of retirements. With new funds available, QCC is considering hiring new custodians including a night shift to ensure proper cleaning, particularly in the bathrooms. HEPA filters were being installed where it’s possible as well touchless faucets.

Campus Safety

Mr. John Triolo, Liaison, Office of Campus Safety reported on The QCC Annual Security Report. The 110 page document can be accessed here: <https://www.qcc.cuny.edu/publicSafety/index.html>. The committee reviewed the report with Mr. Triolo. No recommendations were made at that time.

Regarding Campus safety issues related to COVID-19 pandemic, concerns were raised as to who should be responsible to remove students from the classrooms if they are not wearing masks. Additionally, there are not enough security personnel that can be placed at all checkpoints in every building to quickly call upon to assist. Mr. Triolo and Student Affairs are in dialogue to develop a policy for mask non-compliance. In the meantime, security should be contacted if any issues arise. Prof. Noelia Diaz suggested that faculty add a COVID statement policy to their syllabi to ensure consistency and prevent conflicts. VP Faulkner will bring up this suggestion to the Administration. Prof. Chantale Damas, EQLD Chair, also suggested having a designated liaison within individual departments to report issues. These suggestions will be further discussed at the next EQLD meeting in fall 21.

Campus Facilities

Repairs and updates on campus facilities were on hold during AY2020-21 semester, except for two capital projects that moved forward: theater upgrades and the replacement of the roof in the Engineering Technology (ET) building. Due to COVID 19 only essential personnel were allowed on campus. The Committee will inquire with VP William Faulkner about the status of the following when meetings resume in fall 2021:

1. *Cafeteria Vendor Contract*. The final contract for a new cafeteria vendor has been delayed until next year but an expansion of vending machines and grab and go options of pre-packaged food will be available. Perhaps by spring 2022 the new cafeteria vendor contract will be signed. For now, all meals should be eaten in the Atrium, not in the classrooms or hallways, except for snacks. Mr. Triolo mentioned that added signage to avoid congregation on some areas of the building might be feasible.
2. *Food Service Contract.* Food service contract is being finalized.
3. *Science Building.* Work on the Science building (upgrading the temperature control) has been paused but the ventilation is believed to be adequate.
4. *Fire Alarms and Hallway Doors.* Fire doors in the Science and Medical Arts Buildings will be upgraded. The committee is working to identify doors in heavy traffic areas that should be more accessible with automatic opening.
5. *Child-Care Center*. The proposed Day Care Center for students is on hold but the Administration is considering conducting a survey to evaluate the demand for it. A shift to increase remote learning might place less demand for space on campus easing one of the hurdles towards establishing it.

**Pending Committee Work**

Updated Committee Guide: The EQLD guide update will be discussed in the Fall and new members will be assigned since previous members tasked with finalizing the update are no longer part of the committee. The completion of the Guide is pending.

**Recommendations for 2021-2022**

* Advocate for a campus environment that communicates openness and trust to the student body
* Follow up on measures taken to ensure that all members of the community are safe while the Delta Variant/COVID-19 remains a concern. QCC will follow both Chancellor and Governor’s guidelines and recommendations. The PSC will continue to participate on discussions to ensure the safety of employees and students.
* Continue to monitor progress on ADA compliant restroom conversions, fire door upgrades in campus buildings including Science and Medical Arts
* Continue to inform the QCC community of Committee activities with regular reports to the Academic Senate and the Steering Committee
* Support, and communicate with, the newly formed subcommittee on College Accessibility issues. The subcommittee reports to EQLD. As some classes are still online, the work of the subcommittee is still essential.
* Follow up on the renovation updates. Once the Academic Master Plan is completed, it will inform the Facilities Master Plan. Among the spaces the EQLD will follow up on is the Academic Senate approved Child Care Center for students.
* Follow up on guidelines of allergens on campus, in particular on the Cafeteria. A new vendor will replace the current one, at which point the committee will seek clarification on the guidelines and procedures for the Cafeteria.

**New membership list for 2021-2024: Term Ends:**

Prof. M. Chantale Damas (Physics), Chair 2022

Prof. Noelia Diaz (English), Secretary 2024

Prof. Kelly Ford (Business) 2023

Prof. Janet Franzese (Nursing) 2023

Prof. Sujun Wei (Chemistry), Member 2022

Prof. Mohammad Javdan (Biology), Member 2023

Prof. Neeraj Mehta (Music), Member 2022

Prof. Yusuf Gurtas (Math), Member 2024

Prof. Stephanie Rost (History), Member 2024

**Student Representatives:**

1. Ankush Gaba (President, SGA)
2. vacant

**Acknowledgments:**

The Committee Chair would like to acknowledge the important contributions of several individuals:

**Prof. Noelia Diaz,** **Secretary,** for her commitment to every aspect of Committee function.

**Vice President Bill Faulkner,** **President’s Designee,** for his support to the Committee, attending and providing important and relevant information at every meeting.

**Prof. Clara Wajngurt, Chair, PSC Health and Safety**, for her important work on the PSC Health and Safety Committee, attending and providing important and relevant information from PSC and for organizing the walkthroughs on Campus.

**Profs. Steven Dahlke, Jannette Urciuoli**, and ***Zivah Perel Katz*, Steering Committee members,** for guidance and support throughout the year.

Respectfully Submitted,

M. Chantale Damas, Chair