

April 19, 2010

**From:** Aránzazu Borrachero, UFS Member/Queensborough Community College

**To:** Barbara Blake-Campbell, Secretary, QCC Senate Steering Committee  
Emily Tai, Chairperson, QCC Senate Steering Committee

Att.

### **Report on the 350<sup>th</sup> UFS Plenary Session of CUNY, April 13, 2010**

UFS Chair Manfred Philipp called the meeting to order at approximately 6:38 p.m.

#### **I. Approval of the Agenda for April 13, 2010**

The agenda was approved by voice vote.

#### **II. Approval of the Minutes of March 2, 2010**

Minutes were approved as distributed by voice vote.

#### **III. Reports**

##### **A. Chair's Report (oral and written)**

The Chair referred to his written report and said that it would be discussed after Mr. Marc Shaw's presentation. The Chair congratulated re-elected and new members, and bid farewell to those members that will be leaving the senate. He noted that some Colleges have not conducted elections yet. The Chair introduced Mr. Shaw and welcomed him to the senate session with a word of remembrance for the late Mr. Ernesto Malave.

##### **B. Interim Senior Vice Chancellor for Budget, Finance, and Financial Policy Marc Shaw (oral)**

Mr. Shaw started with a biographical summary: more than 25 years in a career on government that includes work in state government, state finances, director of finance of city council, budget assistant to Mayors Koch, Dinkins, Giuliani and Bloomberg, sometimes during very difficult fiscal times. Mr. Shaw has also worked for MTA for 6 years overseeing metrocard and easypass implementation. Mr. Shaw has been watching the growth and development of CUNY for a long time.

Update on Albany. Mr. Shaw reviewed the information that is available regarding the governor's initial budget and proposed cuts. No restoration money has been offered for senior colleges, and some for the community colleges. The reason is, of course, the government's enormous deficit. The agreements that government officials have reached so far solve some parts of the deficit, but there is still a 3.5 million-deficit unresolved. Unlike past fiscal crisis, in this one, taxes are not going to be part of the solution. Lit. Gov. Richard Ravitch--the only sane person in Albany right now--believes that there will be no budget this year, and that the government will most likely end up borrowing money. A chain of postponing decisions will leave the problem in the hands of the new governor, who will have to face problem and solve it in just three months.

CUNY has done a good job to prepare for this cuts, so this year and next year are not worrisome. The year after will be very tough, though. All public universities are in trouble. They get money from the states and the states are in the worst situation they have been for decades. Mr. Shaw has started working with other states to come up with solutions, and he has been meeting with other public universities' administrators. A coalition must be created to look for new moneys.

Some of the senators asked questions to Mr. Shaw:

Q-if there is no budget, how can the state borrow?

A-It cannot. The real crisis will take place when the state will run out of cash. There will be lots of pressure on the state. They will ask a legislative authority to issue bonds, a terrible thing to do.

Q-What percentage of the community colleges' budget and the senior college's budget comes from student tuition and how does it compare to other universities?

A-One third, or slightly little less, and this percentage is comparable to other universities.

Q- Why is there is a bill to move the state budget fiscal year for three months?

A-The budget is complex. It is proposed in January and there is no time to review it by March. Mr. Ravitch is proposing this change in the context of wider and deeper budget reforms. His aim is to achieve more transparency and to keep things from getting out of control. It will not affect the CUNY budget.

Q- Is there any basis to the New York Times news about the take-over of CUNY by the city?

A- The city and the state plan and implement many things together. The city, by using state authorities, has more freedom to act because they have more power. From time to time they figure out a friendly divorce on some of those things: an example is Governor's Island. I believe they just threw out the line of CUNY in explaining this process and that is all there is to it.

Q-There has been some chat in newspapers about threats to pension funds.

A-City and pension funds are complicated, large, and they have problems, but they are guaranteed. The benefits are protected.

Q-What happened to the idea of a financial transaction tax?

A- This is a very hot issue in Wall Street, which has threatened to move out of New York if such a tax is imposed. The government officials backed off when they heard this. Nowadays traders may conduct business anywhere thanks to technology.

Q- CUNY has the structure, the personal resources and the capability to study with solutions for the crisis and to educate businesses. Will we be consulted to deal with social issues that are causing these problems?

A- We are open to all type of creative initiatives. If you have ideas, please let us know.

Q –Can you say more on the Ravitch plan?

A- The “problem” with it is that it is rational, and the government does seem incapable right now to consider rational solutions. Ravitch looked at the New York structural imbalance problem, which the recession has just unmasked and exposed for what it was. All these years of not facing reality make it worse. Ravitch wants to face the structural budget problem. His desire is to not make cuts beyond the level of functioning, but at this point that is perhaps unavoidable.

Q-Have there been early-retirement discussions?

A- Yes, it has been considered as a way to save money and to accelerate CUNY's process of diversification.

Q- About the 80 million-dollar deficit for senior colleges, any more ideas besides early retirement?

A- CUNY is prepared for rainy days. The problem is not next year, but the year after. We have been slowing down some of the hiring that is taking place.

Q-In the face of higher enrollment, what is the financial office going to do?

A- This is a really big problem. Physical space is not created overnight. Enrollment growth is bailing us, but in the longer term is a big problem.

Q-The administration should not be growing while there is crisis and retrenchment.

A- I agree. There must be transparency in the process and faculty involvement.

#### **B. Representatives to Board Committees (written, available at meeting)**

Prof. Richardson announced UCRA nominations again. The Research Award Committee still needs candidates to coordinate panels.

The whole process of awarding grants is under negotiation between the Chancellor's office and

the Union. The negotiations are confidential at this point.

#### **IV. Nominations for Officers and Members-at-Large of the Executive Committee**

The Chair introduced attorney Jay Wisner, who has been asked to run the nomination process and the elections. Prof. Manfred Philipp cannot run for the position of Chair again.

The floor was opened to nominations for Officers and Members-at-Large. The results are as follows:

Nominations for Chair: Prof. Barnhart and Prof. Cooper.

Nominations for Vice Chair: Prof. Martell.

Nominations for Secretary: Prof. Kaplowitz.

Nominations for Treasurer: Prof. Freedman, Prof. Bell.

Nominations for Members-at-Large: Prof. Martínez-López, Prof. Campbell, Prof. Dalglish, Prof. Richardson, Prof. Baumrin, Prof. Tai, Prof. Pecorino.

#### **V. New Business**

##### **A. Resolution on Academic Credentials (presented by Professor Pecorino)**

Prof. Pecorino explained that CUNY has high standards and wants colleagues to be forthright with their credentials, but sometime there are nominations that do not go through the Personnel and Budget Committee, or through other established mechanisms of quality control. CUNY cannot tolerate that candidates to CUNY positions list accomplishments that have not happened, like bought diplomas, articles that were not written, etc. In some cases, the administration has said that it does not matter because the position does not require those accomplishments. The faculty says that it does matter. This resolution will make clear to the Board of Trustees that it is and act of academic misconduct to present false accomplishments.

Prof. Pecorino proceeded to read the resolution. Some members suggested modifications and precisions to the wording of the resolution, and a motion was approved to send the resolution back to the Executive Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:11.