

July 1, 2009

From: Edward Volchok

To: Prof. Devin McKay, Secretary of the Steering Committee of the Academic Senate
cc: Dr. Emily Tai, Chair of the Steering Committee of the Academic Senate
Dr. Linda Reesman, Vice-Chair of the Steering Committee of the Academic Senate

Annual Report of the Distance Education Committee for 2008-2009

Committee Members

For the academic year 2008-2009, the committee was composed of the following members:

Name	Department	Role
Dr. Edward Volchok	Business	Chair
Dr. Lorena Ellis	Foreign Languages	Secretary
Dr. Francis Cotty	Biological Sciences & Geology	
Dr. Helene Dunkelblau	Basic Skills	
Dr. Charles Neuman	Physics	
Dr. Anita Ferdenzi	Social Sciences	Steering Committee Designee
Mr. Bruce Naples	Director, Academic Computing Center	President's Designee
Mr. Anthony Angulo	Student	Student Representative
Mr. Clyde Shillingford	Student	Student Representative

Dates and Times Committee Met

The Distance Education Committee met after each of the Queensborough Community College Academic Senate meetings, from approximately 4:15 pm to 5:15 pm. Our April 21, 2009 was cancelled due to a lengthy Academic Senate Meeting that afternoon. The dates of our meeting were:

- September 9, 2008
- October 14, 2008
- November 11, 2008
- December 9, 2008
- February 10, 2009
- March 10, 2009
- May 13, 2009

Narrative Summary of the Committee's Work

The charge of the Distance Education Committee is to:

- Report and make recommendations to the Academic Senate on all matters related to distance education, in particular, concerning policies and procedures related to the development of, support for, and offering of programs, degrees and classes;
- Work on the assessment process and criteria related to the distance education program of the College and report findings to the Academic Senate;
- Serve as an advisory body for all matters related to distance education.

Among the topics the Committee reviewed during the 2008-2009 academic year are the status of past recommendations, issues of faculty and student support, learning outcomes assessment, student evaluation of online instructors, departmental observation of online faculty, class size limits, and the need for expanding online curriculum at the college.

Recommendations Made During the 2008-2009 Academic Year and Their Status

- A. Student Evaluation Form for Online Instructors:** During the 2008-2009 Academic Year the Distance Education Committee, working in support of the Academic Development/Elective Academic Programs Committee, a template for student evaluations of online faculty was developed and sent to the Steering Committee of the Academic Senate. **Status:** A plenary session of the Queensborough Community College Academic Senate approved this recommendation.
- B. Special Committee to Develop Online Education at Queensborough Community College:** The Distance Education Committee recommended the establishment of a college-wide special committee or sub-committee to

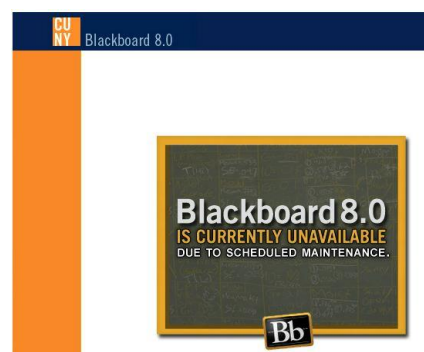
investigate new academic programs/courses the college could offer online. **Status:** The Academic Senate approved the establishment of the Special Committee to Develop Online Education at Queensborough Community College. This committee has met three times since its inception in April. The chair of the Distance Education Committee was elected as chair of the Special Committee to Develop Online Education.

The original list of committee members for the Special Committee to further On-Line Programs at Queensborough approved by the Academic Senate was as follows:

Department of Art and Design: Professor Anissa Mack
Department of Basic Educational Skills: Dr. Helene Dunkelblau
Department of Biological and Geological Sciences: Dr. Nidhi Gadura
Department of Business: Dr. Edward Volchok
Department of Chemistry: Dr. Jun Shin
Department of Counseling: Dr. Wilma Fletcher-Anthony
Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology: Professor John Buoncora
Department of English: Dr. Jean Darcy
Department of Foreign Languages: Professor Indra Avens
Department of Health, Physical Education and Dance: Dr. Alicia Sinclair
Department of History: Dr. Kenneth Pearl
Department of Library: Dr. Sara Rofofsky Marcus
Department of Mathematics and Computer Science: Dr. Patrick Wallach
Department of Mechanical Engineering Technology & Design Drafting: Dr. Joseph Goldenberg
Department of Music: Professor Melanie Sehman
Department of Nursing: Professor Patricia Burke
Department of Physics: Dr. Alex Flamholz
Department of Social Sciences: Dr. Caf Dowlah
Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts: Professor Robert Sweetnam

- C. **Alternatives to Blackboard:** In January 2009, CUNY IT moved the university from Blackboard 6.3 to Blackboard 8.0. This transition was marked with unacceptably long reoccurring outages. When faculty and student went to their Blackboard sites, they were frequently greeted with a message like this one on the right.

In response to this unfortunate situation, the Committee drafted a document highlighting the pros and cons of various scenarios for delivering instruction online that our College can support with its current assets. These scenarios include using Blackboard, ePortfolio, or building a course website hosted on the college server. **Status:** This document was forwarded to the Steering Committee during the latter part of the spring semester. While this document is not a recommendation *per se*, the Distance Education Committee hopes that the Steering Committee will send this document to faculty members this summer to help them in the preparation of their courses for the fall.



Report on Past Recommendations

Based on our review of our files and discussions with Dr. Philip Pecorino, there are a number of recommendations made by the Committee of Distance Education and its predecessor, the Subcommittee on Distance Education of the Committee on Computer Resources, that have not yet received a response. These recommendations have been sent to the Office of Academic Affairs or the Steering Committee of the Senate or both. Included among these recommendations are:

1. A Formal Distance Education Plan for Queensborough Community College: According to Dr. Philip Pecorino, there have been proposals for the college to develop a strategic plan for distance education going back as far as the 2003-2004 academic year. **Status:** No action taken on these recommendations. We hope the work of the Special Committee to Develop Online Education and the Committee on Distance Education during the 2009-2010 academic year will lay the groundwork for this strategic plan.
2. The Strategic Plan of the College should include support of distance education efforts particularly for faculty members to develop distance education classes. **Status:** Accomplished with the current strategic

plan, but without a larger context to place the increased number of Distance Education courses. No plan for the infrastructure necessary to support increased Distance Education offerings.

3. The College should offer workshops focusing on online pedagogy and course design. **Status:** Accomplished, but this support is not sufficient. This is something that both the Distance Education Committee and the Special Committee to Develop Online Education will take up this year.
4. Faculty offering workshops for colleagues should receive recognition for their efforts as part of the review process for promotion and tenure. **Status:** No action taken on this recommendation.
5. A Distance Education Plan should address many administrative issues regarding distance education courses. **Status:** No action taken on this recommendation.
6. For a Distance Education Program to be successful, a useful marketing plan should be established. **Status:** No action taken on this recommendation. The Special Committee to Develop Online Education will outline the requirements of such a marketing plan.
7. The Distance Education classes should be made a more prominent part of the College website. **Status:** Accomplished.
8. The College website should be improved so as to present prospective students with a “one-stop-shopping” venue for online classes. **Status:** No action taken on this recommendation.
9. Study the overall effectiveness of distance education at the College and the impact, if any, on retention. **Status:** No action taken on this recommendation.
10. Recommendation that faculty be given some formal training related to teaching an online class prior to being assigned such a course. We recommended that the College develop a daylong or multi-session seminar for online teaching. **Status:** Not accomplished.
11. The committee has recommended the following class size limits:
25 students for fully or partly online sections;
20 students for fully or partly online writing-intensive sections; and,
8-15 students for fully or partly online honors sections.
Status: The Senate rejected this recommendation. The Distance Education Committee intends to revisit the issue of class size as most, if not all, of its members feel the class size of on-campus classes are too large for an effective online class.

New Members for 2009-2010

Members who joined the committee in April:

- Professor Tina Bayer – Nursing
- Professor Peijun (Jeffery) Jia – Library

The following members will be leaving the committee this September:

- Dr. Helene Dunkelblau – Basic Skills
- Dr. Charles Neuman – Physics

For 2009-2010 the Distance Education Committee’s members are:

Name	Department	Role
Dr. Edward Volchok	Business	Chair*
Dr. Lorena Ellis	Foreign Languages	Secretary*
Prof. Tina Bayer	Nursing	
Dr. Francis Cotty	Biological Sciences & Geology	
Prof. Jia Peijun	Library	
Dr. Anita Ferdenzi	Social Sciences	Steering Committee Designee
Mr. Bruce Naples	Director, Academic Computing Center	President’s Designee
Student Member 1	Open	
Student Member 2	Open	

**Re-elected May 13, 2009*

Key Items on the Agenda for 2009-2010

- Learning Outcomes Assessment for Distance Education Courses
- Protocols for the observation of Distance Education Faculty
- Class Size Limits

- Working with the Special Committee to Develop Online Education
- Additional technological and pedagogical support for faculty designing online classes

Finally, as chair of the Distance Education Committee, I'd like to express my gratitude to all the members of this committee for their diligence and dedication. Each has made important contributions. In addition, the accomplishments of this committee would have been impossible without the sage counsel of two members of the Academic Senate: Dr. Emily Tai, chair of the Steering Committee, and Dr. Philip Pecorino, chair of the Curriculum Committee. The Committee is very grateful to the assistance so generously offered by Dr. Tai and Dr. Pecorino, and the valuable input of the President's designee of the Distance Education Committee, Bruce Naples, Director, Academic Computing Center.

Edward Volchok, PhD
Chair, Committee on Distance Education