

**Steering Committee Report
Academic Senate Steering Committee
Queensborough Community College
December 2018**

For this fourth meeting of Fall 2018, the half-way point of the 2018-2019 academic year, we have several reports to receive, business to undertake and also matters to consider as we conclude the semester. As usual, we have a report from the Committee on Curriculum with items requiring approval of the Academic Senate. We have two more annual reports, distributed to the Academic Senate now because they are finally able to be posted on the College website as ADA-compliant documents. In addition to David Moretti, Director of Web Services, grateful thanks to Christopher Roblodowski, Chair of the Committee on Awards and Scholarships and former Committee on Curriculum Chair Dr. Lorena Ellis, who saw the 2017-2018 report through to completion long after her term as chair of that committee ended. This has been a difficult process and the Steering Committee would like to thank all involved.

At the request of the Self-study Steering Committee Executive Co-chairs Drs. Antonella Ansani, Arthur Corradetti and Kelly Ford, we are circulating the [Middle States Self Study Report draft](#) for purposes of discussion, commentary and feedback on the self-study draft. If you have not, please download and print a copy of the report. Although there have been multiple public hearings, this will be an excellent opportunity to respond to the draft. If you have feedback and would prefer not to speak at the meeting, you should send comments to Dr. Corradetti, Dean of Institutional Effectiveness. If you would like, you can send your comments to the Steering Committee, which will submit written feedback by the end of the semester.

Related to that, in the Self-study Report draft it says that one possible recommendation for improvements to governance at QCC would be the development of mechanisms to measure the effectiveness of governance. Recently a number of issues have arisen that make it incumbent upon all of us to double-down and ensure that we are meeting our obligations under the applicable bylaws, the Governance Plan and CUNY policy. The Academic Senate should consider even suggestions that do not rise to the level of a “recommendation” in the terms of the Self-study. Each possible recommendation underlines the seriousness with which we at QCC carry out our responsibilities and we should follow suit, well beyond what we choose to mandate. Emerging from this should be some sort of short, medium and long-range plans for how to assess governance at QCC. We should assess the Senate and what it does or does not do and we should assess our many committees. Are they meeting their charges? Do they have charges appropriate to what is needed on campus? Do any committees underperform regularly, and what does that mean? Can we measure anything other than productivity? Since the publication of the Self-study draft, the Steering Committee has been discussing these issues and now we welcome public discussion the entirety of the draft, not just the section on governance.

As one site for discussion about these matters, please consider the curious case of one committee, the Committee on Ceremonial Occasions, which recently voted to abolish itself as a standing committee, possibly becoming attached to another committee or going away altogether. The matter of whether to send its charges to another committee, perhaps as a subcommittee, or banish the whole idea of considering “ceremonial occasions” as an activity worthy of faculty service, is going to come before the Committee on the Bylaws and then Senate in Spring 2019. Given that the committee was not itself sponsoring any occasions, nor did it have a role in any actual or proposed events, it was clear that the need for such a committee was not there. There was nothing for the committee to do. Perhaps there are other committees that are likewise not as useful to the College as they once were. Perhaps there is a need for other yet-to-be-seen committees, and we will do outreach to find out where interest is and what might be needed. The Committee on Food Insecurity was created and sustained because of faculty interest and that can be a model. Over the remainder of the academic year, the Steering Committee will be working on some means of evaluating committees in the long and short term—not people on committees but the committees themselves. Those who serve on committees deserve to be doing relevant work

to support the mission of the College and so we owe it to them to take a look and see if any adjustments need to be made.

If you have any suggestions or would like to participate in thinking about how to assess governance at QCC, the Steering Committee would love to hear from you.

The last item on the Agenda for December 2018 is the matter of who chairs the Academic Senate meetings. As has been noted, QCC's practice of having the President of the College preside over the Academic Senate is irregular at best and highly inappropriate at worst. In most academic councils or faculty senates, the chairperson of the Steering Committee normally would preside over meetings. For a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the widespread support for this change, the Steering Committee, in consultation with President Lynch and others, has decided to bring this matter to the floor for a discussion and vote. What we are voting on is the change in the Academic Senate Bylaws. You can read the full text of the proposal but it's important to note that it will take effect after the requisite change in the Governance Plan is achieved and after the election of the next Steering Committee. The change to the bylaws was approved by the Committee on the Bylaws under the guidance of Sebastian Murolo, who chairs that committee.

But while the Senate needs to approve its bylaws, this proposal is linked to similar language in the Governance Plan, which takes precedence over the Bylaws of the Academic Senate. As we know that President Lynch supports this change, and it brings us into alignment with our peers at CUNY and with Middle States' standards, all which is left is to see this through is a change of the Governance Plan, requiring approval of two of the three constituencies: the faculty, the students and the president. The faculty need to approve of the change to the Governance Plan *and* the President of the College needs to approve. If either the faculty or the president do not approve, then the students need to approve by referendum. The quorum requirements may have made their involvement in all but the most important matters a difficult proposition. The Faculty Executive Committee has been working hard to bring this matter, and other changes to the Faculty Bylaws and the Governance Plan, forward for approval by the faculty. The Steering Committee will do all it can to help make the endorsement of the faculty and/or students a reality.

Because the College is closed on February 12, 2019, the next Senate meeting is on February 19. Deadline for submission of agenda items is February 4; the Steering Committee Agenda meeting with President Lynch will be on February 5, 2019. All of the dates are published on the [Academic Senate calendar page](#).

Happy holidays for those who are celebrating, a good conclusion to the Fall 2018 semester, a happy new year, and see you in two months.

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