

**STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE
QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE, CUNY
MONTHLY REPORT**

1. Senate Matters: Composition and Membership

As of October 15, we have regretfully accepted the resignation of Dr. Peter Gray (English). He will be replaced by Dr. Jose Osorio (Foreign Languages).

Senators should be advised that, unfortunately, with Dr. Osorio's appointment as voting Senator, we come to the end of our current list of alternates. According to Article I, Section 2 of the Bylaws of the Academic Senate, future vacancies that may arise between now and the spring election of senators will take place in this manner:

“In the event that there are vacancies in Faculty Member-At-Large positions or with the Adjunct members or CLT's or HEO's that cannot be filled by available Alternates, these positions are to be filled by a direct vote by the entire Senate at the next regular meeting of the Academic Senate following the occurrence of the vacancy. The elected replacement Senator will then serve for the length of the remaining term of that Senator who has left the college, or for the period that Senator is on leave.”

The Steering Committee trusts that events of the past few months have dramatized the critical importance of a robust faculty voice in shared governance bodies. While we are aware that our faculty colleagues have a spectrum of competing commitments and responsibilities, we urge our colleagues and their department chairs to encourage faculty to run as Senators-at-Large for the forthcoming April, 2013 election. We also wish to remind the members of Queensborough's faculty that the position of “Alternate Senator” is as important to the full membership of our Academic Senate body as the titles of those who are immediately assigned the rank of Senator, given the turnover in faculty membership that may occur over the course of any academic year.

In preparing the minutes of the last Academic Senate meeting of October, 2012, it has, meanwhile, come to our attention that some senators did not utilize their clickers although their presence at the Academic Senate was duly noted by the members of the Steering Committee. Although we appreciate that the matters discussed at the previous meeting were extremely controversial, we would be extremely grateful if those Senators who prefer to abstain from a definitive position on the present, difficult matter would be willing to signal their disposition to abstain by pressing Clicker button “C” rather than not using their clickers. This is particularly important for the purpose of recording a quorum, and so we are very courteously appealing to fellow Senators: whatever your disposition on a particular resolution submitted for the consideration of the Academic Senate may be, please consider affirming your support for the viability of our shared governance body by abstaining officially, rather than unofficially, so that your presence, and valued participation, may be recorded by the Steering Committee secretary.

Finally, given the continuing urgency of the issues our campus faces, we wish to renew our invitation to all members of Queensborough's faculty to remember that all meetings of the Academic Senate are open to the public as per the 2006 Perez decision on Open Meetings Law, as noted in Article I, Section 3, b of the Bylaws of the Academic Senate:

Meetings of the Academic Senate shall be subject to the Open Meetings Law and the Freedom of Information Law. Under the Open Meetings Law, the public has the right to attend any meeting of a public body. Any time a quorum of a public body gathers to discuss business, the meeting must be held in public, subject to the right to convene an executive session under certain limited circumstances. Non-members must conform to the usual requirements of parliamentary procedure; the Parliamentarian will interpret and enforce the rules which include that no non-member of the body may speak without the permission of the body.

Once again, we pledge to recognize any member of faculty who wishes to speak to the issues on which we deliberate.

2. Committee Matters: Composition and Membership

- Several resignations and appointments have added new members to the Committee on Academic Development, Course and Standing, and eLearning. We are also pleased to indicate that the Committee on Publications has met and elected a chair (Dr. Joel Kuszai) and a secretary (Dr. Liisa Yonker). The Steering Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank all outgoing members of these committees for their valuable service to shared governance, and to welcome all newly appointed members to their new committee assignments. We likewise would like to thank the hard-working members of the Committee on Committees, and their tireless chair, Dr. Edward Volchok, for all their trouble over the past busy month. We refer Senators to Dr. Volchok's report, which enumerates the changes to these committee rosters.

Once again, we wish to remind members of Queensborough's faculty that even in the absence of a spring committee assignment, it is quite possible that members of faculty may be called upon to serve on a committee of the Academic Senate. As with running for Academic Senator-at-large, we urge our colleagues to consider service in shared governance—we are always grateful for the rich expertise each of our colleagues bring to our elected governance bodies!

2. Committee Matters: Activities

- The Steering Committee of the Academic Senate has directed the Committee on Environment, Quality of Life, and Disability Matters to explore the possibility of developing an "Anti-Bullying" policy. The components of this exploratory process will include, but not be limited to (a) an examination of current CUNY Workplace Violence and Sexual Harassment Policies that might cover some of the issues raised by such interactions; and (b) an examination of "best practices" as manifested in the policies of

other campuses, both in CUNY and beyond. Our objective in this investigation will be to ascertain whether a policy on bullying would productively complement current policies, and how best to formulate such a policy proposal should it be needed. We are anxious to avoid situations where behaviors that might genuinely require modification would remain unaddressed because of a proliferation of overlapping policies might complicate decisions about an appropriate response, which is why we are directing the co-chairs of this committee, Dr. Matthew Lau and Dr. Elizabeth Bartels, to review existing policies first. In this “information-gathering” stage, the Steering Committee of the Academic Senate hopes that it can count on those administrative units of our college that might be called upon to provide information to the members of our committee on Environment, Quality of Life, and Disability Matters in the form of existing reports.

- In support of this initiative, we would also like to request that the members of our Committee on Bylaws review the Bylaws of the CUNY Board of Trustees (at <http://www1.cuny.edu/abtcuny/trustees/bylaws/index.html>) to see if there are any sections of the law related to “Bullying” behavior that Queensborough’s committees and Academic Senate would need to incorporate into any drafted language on this matter.
- At our last meeting of the Academic Senate, it was determined that the Academic Senate would await a formal retraction of the Administrative email of September 13, 2012, before taking further action on the course submissions and revisions that members of our Academic Departments have been submitting to the Committee on Curriculum for consideration among those courses that would be submitted by our college to adhere to the “Pathways Curriculum” initiative being implemented by the CUNY Central Office in the wake of the Board of Trustee June, 2011, Resolution on Transfer. The Committee on Curriculum, acting in accordance with the resolution passed by the Academic Senate in October, has nevertheless continued to engage in an extensive process of review, and, accordingly, has submitted a three-part report to the Academic Senate: A Statement Regarding Financial Matters (Attachment F1); a report related to various new and revised courses, excluding Pathways-related matters (Attachment F2); F3, however, a file of considerable magnitude, is available at the link we have supplied at the agenda page. This is a collection of over 200 courses submitted for the Pathways Required and Flexible core categories. We urge faculty to review all parts of this document, although we expect that Senators will already be familiar with those courses listed in the F3 file that have originated in their own departments.

Once again, we wish to thank the members of the Committee on Curriculum for their outstanding, extensive, dedication to shared governance and our college in this endeavor. The amount of time and effort each of them has expended has been consistently beyond the call of duty, and we can only express a profound gratitude that we know we share even with those members of Queensborough’s Faculty and Administration who voted in opposition to the resolutions of the October, 2012 Academic Senate.

The question of how to approach these course submissions continues to trouble the Steering Committee as it does our colleagues. We welcome continued debate on this issue.

3. University and College Wide Matters with Direct Bearing on the Senate

Prior to the last, October, 2012 meeting of the Academic Senate, the Steering Committee was in receipt of the following communication. We had hoped, originally, to read this document into the record of our Academic Senate, as the author requested.

Unfortunately, the length of the meeting, and the difficulty of maintaining a quorum after 5 PM prevented us from honoring the author's request. We have therefore taken the liberty of reproducing here for the review of the Academic Senate:

Statement prepared by Professor Gerard Frohnhoefer, adjunct faculty in the Social Science Departments of both Queensborough Community College and Laguardia Community College, for submission to the Academic Senate Meeting of October 9, 2012 on the subject of the "Pathways" Curriculum:

- Members: I may only have a "worms eye view" of the battle going on, but I will put my two cents in anyway. What is being proposed is a major step backward. What the Chancellor and the Board of Governors have to honestly ask themselves is "Do I want to send my children or grandchildren to a CUNY campus once this Pathways program is implemented?" There are only two possible answers "Yes" or "No". If yes - why? Do I really want my sons or daughters or grandchildren to be deprived of the opportunity to learn how to write more effectively? Do I want them in this global environment not to know another language different from their own? Do I want them in this critical age of science and technology not to be able to read the Scientific American, the Tuesday New York Times Science and Technology sections with comprehension and understanding coming from direct hands on experience? Do I want for them what I wanted for myself—the opportunity to think like a renaissance person, to be knowledgeable in many fields or only restricted to a tunnel vision of their own profession? Do I really want to academically "ham string" the parents and children of my neighbors? If your answer is yes! Why is it yes? What advantage will they have in this intense atmosphere of intellectual competition? Will they be shortchanging themselves from future graduate programs and professions that they may decide to change to as careers today morph at internet speed? Why would we want to trap them into an intellectual caste system and morass of lower goals and lower expectations? Would we really be "more efficient"? Would we really be saving money that could be used to enhance their development? Let's be honest—efficiency is not effectiveness and personal development is expensive. I have had the pleasure and challenge to have taught in LaGuardia Community College for the past 27 years and at Queensborough much more recently. I have also had the pleasure and experience at teaching at a fantastic NYC public high school – Aviation- for the past 15 years. I have been and intend to continue to teach thousands of students, many of whom are new immigrants filled

with the naiveté of this land and its opportunities. Most do not look back but ahead – most want that American dream that our parents and grandparents sought for us – many born here are catching up to the message of that dream and want to make it real. I taught English at that high school and saw the eagerness and hard work many knew had to be activated to enter college-private or public. Many had to defer to CUNY for financial reasons, but found that this choice was as good if not better than most private colleges. Let's not “lower the bar” for so called higher graduation rates as we have done in our local public school system, for cookie cutter education programs across our campuses – but give them the opportunities to pursue careers and interests that enable them to become the men and women and citizens they desire to become. Each semester I let my college classes know they are sitting in one of the top universities of the world. Some doubt what I am telling them since they have a false notion that “cheap” can't be that good, but it's good enough. A popular belief among many of us – quality only comes at a great price. No! It does come at great personal cost – hard work, motivation, and overcoming great difficulties of working while for some it's being a single parent, for them and others it's living in a dangerous neighborhood with peer pressure from yes parents as well as neighbors who say “what are you knocking yourself out for the man ain't goin let you in anyway etc.” The doubts they have are blown away when I tell them the graduates of the City University of New York have won more Nobel Prizes across the board in all fields more than Harvard, Oxford, Paris, Tokyo, Bologna, Sydney and any place else. Why? Because of the value of handwork, great expectations and a faculty and a city that cares. Why would we want to change that?

- The CUNY Central Office of Academic Affairs has been collecting data on two programs of interest to faculty on Queensborough's campuses: CUNYStart, an intensive remediation/test preparation program; and the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP).

For CUNY Start, as per a paper shared by the CUNY Office of Academic Affairs, “a quasi-experimental study of the program conducted during the summer of 2012 showed impressive results for the program, which started in fall, 2009. After one semester, CUNY Start students were much more likely than a comparison group to gain proficiency in reading, writing, and math... Overall, almost one-third of CUNYStart students (32%) finished the semester with no remedial needs, compared to 2% of a comparison group of students. The study also showed that one semester after CUNYStart students began their degree programs, they tended to earn more credits and have higher GPAs than comparison group students....Comparison group students entered CUNY as full-time, first-time freshmen or advanced transfer students in fall 2009 through fall 2011.”

All of the selected comparison students required remediation.

On this first issue, the Steering Committee is hoping to receive more data that might evaluate the academic performance of CUNY Start students over a longer period of time. We are also wondering if students motivated enough to enroll and thrive in a remedial “test-preparation” course might be presenting other qualities that would predict academic success, exclusive of whatever felicitous impact the CUNY Start curriculum might have.

A preliminary report regarding the impact of the ASAP program is, meanwhile, available at: <https://www.cuny.edu/academics/programs/notable/asap/about/evaluation/ASAP-Key-Eval-Prog-Overview-0901712.pdf>.

Finally, the Steering Committee of the Academic Senate had the pleasure of recently attending a conference, organized by the American Association of University Professors, on the subject of Shared Governance. It was extremely interesting to meet with fellow elected governance leaders, and hear about various challenges being faced by public higher education institutions across the country. There was a workshop, attended by this Steering Committee, on making Academic Senates more effective; discussions of the roles of Assessment, and the legal and practical challenges to Academic Freedom, particularly in the wake of the Supreme Court Decision *Garcetti v. Ceballos* (2006). Senators interested in this matter are particularly referred to two papers produced by the American Association of University Professors on this issue, available at: <http://www.aaup.org/aaup/comm/rep/A/postgarcettireport.htm> and <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/academe/2011/JF/Feat/delf.htm>

Also of interest was a talk given by Dr. George Cohen, Professor of Law and Chair of the Faculty Senate at the University of Virginia, who described the role of shared governance in defending the role of University of Virginia President Theresa Sullivan, in the midst of the crisis that occurred at that institution last June.