

Steering Committee Report
Academic Senate Steering Committee
Queensborough Community College
October 10, 2017

The month since the last Steering Committee Report has been an eventful one. We had a difficult senate meeting on September 12 that has been the subject of much discussion on campus. Without revisiting everything that happened, the Steering Committee would only like to urge the members of our Academic Senate to remember that we are all participants in shared governance. We hope that all of our membership can act in good faith and respect the best intentions of our colleagues.

This month on the agenda we have a Committee on the Bylaws resolution concerning the way that the Committee on Committees handles nominations for committees of the Academic Senate. As it has been, it was possible for a nomination to a committee to be made at the meeting where the vote on the entire CoC slate was to take place. Given the effort involved in the vetting that went on before bringing the CoC candidates to a vote, the need to ensure balance among departments, trying to give junior faculty an opportunity to serve after they went to the trouble to obtain signatures to appear on the ballot, all involved have determined that a change is necessary. Given the amount of work that the CoC does in general, we should be listening to them and all senate committees when they identify issues in the bylaws or elsewhere. The Steering Committee would like to thank current CoC chair Helmut Loeffler and former chair Christine Mooney as well as the current chair of Bylaws, Susan Jacobowitz, who will be very busy this year as a variety of changes and updates are brought forward.

Also included are reports from Curriculum, with new and experimental courses set to be approved in Math and Physics and program revisions in Physics, Math and Chemistry. There is a monthly report from the Committee on Committees updating committee membership and one from the Committee on Food Insecurity. We also have three more committee annual reports on the agenda, and are in receipt of a fourth report that we will be sharing in November.

At the September meeting of the Academic Senate, Senator Clingan, the chapter chair of the PSC at Queensborough, indicated that he would be bringing forward an anti-bullying policy for approval by the Academic Senate at the October meeting. This policy, initially circulated in late April 2017, was re-circulated by the Academic Senate Steering Committee in September for further discussion. We received a couple of comments, but not nearly enough, and it was agreed that this policy would not be brought forward for a vote at this time. Senator Clingan in an email to the chair of the Steering Committee, Joel Kuszai, requested that that the Steering Committee take the lead on furthering the work undertaken by the group working on the problem, especially Clara Wajngurt. There are a variety of options for how to do this, and at the time of this writing there is no decision on a process for moving forward on an anti-bullying policy that will be acceptable to all the constituencies it seeks to protect and observing the Collective Bargaining Agreement and all applicable laws (CUNY, as of now, has no anti-bullying policy). This is not going to be an easy effort and it's not one that will be successful if done in secret or in a hurry. The Steering Committee may call on you for service to the as-yet-to-be-determined effort, but do not wait for us to get in touch. If you would like to be involved in this effort, please contact us right away to indicate that. We hope to have

an informal and *collegial* conversation about this issue under Old Business (or as a discussion following delivery of this report) and if between the writing of this report and the October 10 meeting we reach consensus about the way forward we will discuss it then.

In other matters, we have held and attended meetings, in large and small groups, and there is a lot to take in on the matter of bullying, parking, and other issues facing the campus community. Over the next months, the Steering Committee will use the space of this report to describe and engage the college community—especially the Academic Senate—on matters that we should all be considering, long before things get to a point where it is too late and minds are made or feelings hurt, before the failure to understand each other's views is seen as a betrayal, as was the implication last month over the parking issue. By using this forum to focus the community's attention well in advance of any developing crisis, we hope that those with a stake or interest in upcoming or ongoing issues will step forward, in public or private, to engage and be heard. This includes not only faculty and staff, but students and administrators too. Maybe this will contribute to some healing of the community from the seeming fractures that have emerged.

Recently, some of the SGA leaders have been in touch with the Steering Committee and we've had productive discussions about how to collaborate. Student leaders have expressed concerns that are not always on the faculty and staff radar. This includes issues we know about, like parking and transportation, but also ones we do not know as much about, such as the impact on our students of the proposed end of the DACA program for "dreamers," the undocumented youth who arrived in the United States as children, and more. The Steering Committee suggests that we as a Senate pay close attention to what the students ask from us, and that we consider deeply what they ask us to consider.

The work of the Middle States Self Study review groups is underway and already the Steering Committee has been asked to provide information (or help find it). One wrinkle is the ongoing effort to update the College website so that it is ADA compliant, something which has made finding some documents temporarily difficult. Throughout the College, many faculty have volunteered to serve on one of the Middle States Self-Study working groups. You may see a copy of the Self Study Design on the QCC Website.

Dr. Emily Tai, vice chair of the Steering Committee, as part of her incomparable effort in putting together the committee charges for the academic year, included references to the relevant Middle States standards and criteria, thus closing a loop in an important way and assuring that the work prompted by the Middle States review process is engaged at every level. The Steering Committee once again would like to acknowledge her tireless effort on some of the most important aspects of the work of the Steering Committee. The charges have been sent and a meeting of the senate committee chairs scheduled for October 4th, 2017.

In another matter to consider, the Steering Committee asks that you keep the people of Puerto Rico in mind as the serious situation there is still unfolding, relief efforts ongoing after the massive devastation of Hurricane Maria. On October 3, 2017, President Call distributed a memo explaining how faculty may get involved. Efforts at QCC are coordinated by Dr. Brian Kerr, and anyone seeking to volunteer at the Campus Collection Center, should contact him. Items may be dropped off at the Campus

Collection Center, which is in Room 38 on the Concourse Level of the Medical Arts Building. They are seeking batteries, flashlights, portable lanterns, diapers, baby wipes, cases of water and feminine hygiene products. Please consider donating at your soonest convenience. Please, no food! There are also a variety of organizations which CUNY and others have recommended, including the American Red Cross, United Way, Catholic Charities, Salvation Army and the Hispanic Federation (Hurricane Relief Effort). Most council districts in New York City, and assuredly every community on Long Island, Westchester and beyond, have established locations where you can drop off items or pitch in and help. It is now understood that New York and Florida will be some of the most popular destinations for the displaced U.S. residents who will likely leave Puerto Rico and we should be prepared to welcome them in our communities and at Queensborough when they arrive.

It was also announced recently that the Supreme Court will hear arguments in Janus vs. AFSCME. You will be hearing more about this in the weeks to come, but if the court should rule in favor of Janus, the agency fees that underwrite the cost of having a union bargain on our behalf will be at risk. Union membership will mean more than a simple obligation of having a job at CUNY and the Steering Committee joins with the PSC Executive Committee in promoting awareness of what is happening with this case and how, over the long term, we will be impacted. We urge all union members on campus to make a commitment to the union to which they belong, whether it is the PSC, DC37 or another.

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