



Borough of Manhattan Community College
The City University of New York
Academic Senate

Minutes
September 23rd, 2020
Via Zoom

- I. CALL TO ORDER: 3.35pm
- II. ATTENDANCE: A quorum was achieved. The following senators were absent: Warren Benfield, Sharon Brickman, Arthur Cain, Samvel Jeshmaridian, Serine Ndiaye, Mohamed Sofaini, Ching-Song Wei
- III. Moment of reflection lead by Prof. M. Enrico on the passing of our colleague and friend, Prof. Alicia Perdomo.
- IV. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: Minutes from meetings of 5.13.2020 were unanimously approved.
- V. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES:
 - a. CURRICULUM COMMITTEE: The following item was unanimously approved by the Academic Senate:
 - i. **New Course:** ITL 205 Italian Cinema in Context
 1. **Description:** Taught in English, this course provides a historical introduction to Italian cinema, first concentrating on examples of iconic genres and movements, such as the classics of neorealism, and *autres* of the 50's, 60's and 70's.
 - ii. **Pathways Course:** ITL 205 Italian Cinema in Context
 1. **Description:** This proposal includes ITL 312 in the World Cultures and Global Issues bucket of the Pathways Flexible Core.
 - b. COMMITTEE ON STUDENT AFFAIRS
 - i. Elected officers
 1. Laurie Lomask – Chair
 2. Christine Jacknick – Secretary/ Liaison
 - ii. Continuing work on Starfish language.
 - iii. Reviewing student feedback on issues with distance/ online learning.
 - iv. Thanked the administration for provision of iPads and Chromebooks.
 - v. Discussed \$18 class change fee. Some students are misplaced through BMCC's error – those fees can be waived by the registrar, but committee suggests something is built into CunyFirst to avoid the problem.
 - vi. Planning series of online student forums:

1. Housing insecurity
2. Financial insecurity
3. Career forum
4. Registration process

c. FACULTY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- i. Elected officers
 1. Rifat Salam - Chair
 2. Joanna I. Giza – Secretary
 3. Jennifer Longley - Liaison
- ii. Reviewed year-end report.
- iii. Several tasks:
 1. Faculty Development Day – will be virtual this semester. Will focus on faculty experiences with distance/ online learning – sharing strategies etc. Planned for Friday, November 13th, 2020.
 2. Faculty Development Grant – will clarify with Dean Berg about how much money/number of grants this year. Will look at review process to make it as equitable as possible.

d. INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE

- i. Elected officers
 1. Andres Colapinto – Chair/ Liaison
 2. Michael McGee – Secretary
- ii. Continuing work with student experience surveys.
- iii. Started investigation into course caps and increase in class sizes: which classes were impacted and by how much?
- iv. Continuing work on video/ recording of classes issue.
- v. Continuing work with trauma-informed pedagogy work.
- vi. Continuing work on peer observation guidelines.
- vii. Discussed role of academic senate in communicating with faculty. Recommendation made by the committee in the year-end report were not shared with the college community.

e. ACADEMIC STANDING COMMITTEE

- i. Elected officers:
 1. James Blake – Chair
 2. Cynthia Wiseman – Liaison
 3. Thierry Agbotouedo – Secretary
- ii. Met over the summer and read approximately 1300 appeals.
- iii. Prepared resolution – below. Resolution unanimously approved.

f. ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE

- i. Elected officers
 1. Ben Powell – Chair
 2. Orlando Justo – Secretary
- ii. Discussed purview of committee for new members who are unfamiliar.
- iii. Read through and shared report of 2019-2020 committee.
- iv. Discussed barriers to student access due to admissions process; will work on the issue.

g. ACADEMIC FREEDOM COMMITTEE

i. Elected officers

1. Hollis Glaser - Chair/ Liaison
2. Yuliya Shneyderman - Secretary
3. Gerard Clock - Liaison

ii. Prepared resolution – below. Resolution unanimously approved.

VI. CHAIR’S REPORT

- a. BMCC has many issues as the moment and is hamstrung by lack of budget. School is making sacrifices, but it is not clear what sacrifices are being made by CUNY Central; we expect greater transparency.
- b. Shared governance is valuable and allows discussion of our greatest concerns.
- c. Chair applauded Pres. Munroe’s focus on social justice. AS Chair expressed hope that our new administration will work productively for us with CUNY central.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- a. AS seat has become available with Prof. Perdomos’ passing. Election needed to fill seat.
- b. Rapid Response Enrollment Task Force. Four faculty elected:
 - i. Eda Henao – MLD
 - ii. Benjamin Powell – SCT
 - iii. Robin Isserles – SOC
 - iv. Andrew Smallwood – CES
- c. J. Blake inquired on how input can be given by those not elected to the committee and whether students will be elected to the committee. Pres. Munroe: communication mechanism will be discussed at first meeting. No students will be elected to the committee.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

IX. ADJOURNMENT: 4.14pm

Academic Standing Committee Resolution

We members of the Academic Senate write to affirm our position and charge and responsibilities in the college and university as professors and colleagues. We write to express our concern over recent administrative decisions that immediately and potentially negatively affect the work of faculty and the standing of faculty in the governance of the college and the university.

Recent significant changes were implemented over the summer during a global pandemic and mass unrest and overwhelming uncertainty without faculty input. Such practice is troubling for its disregard for our position in the college and university.

We write to insist that our contribution to decisions that impact pedagogy be sought and be honored. We maintain that the decision to raise course caps should have been discussed with the Academic Senate, the body that represents faculty.

We write to insist that our informed input in decision to extend withdrawal deadlines be sought and honored out of courtesy for who we are and the value we contribute to BMCC and CUNY.

Whereas BMCC without faculty consent raised course caps from the 25 agreed to between the union and Interim President Wilks and Interim Provost Wong during this time of COVID-19 to a per class increase to accommodate administrative needs;

Whereas, research has shown that larger class size, particularly for online modalities, impacts the chances for academic success;

Whereas, faculty in the classroom can attest to the negative impact of larger class size on the academic performance of students in classes at BMCC;

Whereas, CUNY Central without the input of faculty or faculty governing bodies has changed the date for withdrawal from classes to the very end of the semester;

Whereas, an early deadline for withdrawal fosters accountability and agency, in that it requires that students assess their performance during the semester and make a conscious decision regarding withdrawal from a course;

Be it resolved that the BMCC administration should honor the prior agreed-upon course cap and that in the future, faculty and the Academic Senate, the body that represents faculty, must have input in all decisions regarding class size, particularly during these unprecedented times in the midst of a global pandemic that has disproportionately affected New York City and even more disproportionately affected our CUNY community's students, staff, faculty, and administration;

Be it resolved that faculty must have input regarding changes in protocols of withdrawal dates, such as setting deadlines for students to elect to take a W.

Resolution from the Academic Freedom sub-committee of Academic Senate

Whereas, the AAUP's document "On the Relationship of Faculty Governance to Academic Freedom" states: "the faculty's voice should be authoritative across the entire range of decision making that bears, whether directly or indirectly, on its responsibilities."

Whereas the same document further states that "academic freedom of faculty members includes the freedom to express their views... on matters having to do with their institution and its policies...."

Whereas in order for faculty to express their views, they must be informed about those policies.

Whereas a significant portion if not the entirety of BMCC's institutional policies are established in the Cabinet meetings;

Whereas, decisions purportedly related to budgetary constraints, have been made without consultation with faculty and outside of college governance (i.e. class size cap raised from 35 to 37)...

Whereas the AAUP's central document on shared governance (The Statement of Government of Colleges and Universities) states that "Agencies for faculty participation in the government of the college or the university should be established at each level where faculty responsibility is present."

Whereas the faculty of the university are represented on the Board of Trustees by the University Faculty Senate president as a non-voting member;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Academic Senate Chair shall be a non-voting member of the BMCC Cabinet in order to fully represent and inform the faculty on relevant decisions.