



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

Minutes
October 28th, 2020
Via Zoom

- I. CALL TO ORDER: 3:11pm
- II. ATTENDANCE: A quorum was achieved. The following senators were absent: Warren Benfield, Anthony Bishop, Arthur Cain, Erik Freas, Hollis Glaser, Joel Hernandez, Samvel Jeshmaridian, Michael McGee, Mohamadou Sawadogo, Achraf Seyam, Mohamed Sofaini, Ching Song, Ali Syed, Meryem Zaman
- III. WELCOME: AS Chair welcomed new Senators.
- IV. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: Minutes of 9.23.2020 approved. Amended minutes of 4.22.2020 approved.
- V. STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES: The following items were unanimously approved by the Academic Senate:
 - a. CURRICULUM COMMITTEE:
 - i. **New Course:** ITL 312 Modern Italian Theater
Description: In this course students will read, analyze and discuss selected Italian plays from the 18th to 20th centuries. The course will address crucial cultural issues across those time periods. No knowledge of Italian required.
 - ii. **Pathways Course:** ITL 312 Modern Italian Theater
Description: This proposal includes ITL 312 in the World Cultures and Global Issues bucket of the Pathways Flexible Core.
 - iii. **New Pilot Course:** LIN 150.6 Language, Race, and Ethnicity in the United States and Its Territories for ESL 95
Description: This course combines the course content of LIN 150 and ESL 95. Students who pass LIN 150.6 are exempt from further ESL courses. LIN 150.6 may not be taken by students who have passed LIN 150 or ESL 95 or are exempt from writing.
 - iv. **Pathways Course:** LIN 150.6 Language, Race, and Ethnicity in the United States and Its Territories for ESL 95

Description: This proposal includes LIN 150.6 in the US Experience in its Diversity bucket of the Pathways Flexible Core.

v. **New Department:** Department of Ethnic and Race Studies

Description: This resolution would establish a new department at BMCC named the Department of Ethnic and Race Studies. The new department would house the Ethnic Studies program formerly administered by the Center for Ethnic Studies. Ten faculty from the Department of Social Sciences, Human Services and Criminal Justice will be transferred and appointed to the new department.

b. FACULTY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- i. Faculty Development Day scheduled for November 13th, 2020, 10:00 am – 12:30 pm. Keynote speakers are Drs. Precious Sellars-Mulhern and Lesley Rennis. Theme: Strategies for Self-Care. Invitation will be sent out later in the week.

c. INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE

- i. Resolutions (below)
 1. Student Evaluation of Teaching: motion to table the resolution passed with 37 aye and 28 nay.
 2. Peer Observations resolution: Instruction Committee Chair offered to table to resolution this session in the interests of time.

d. ACADEMIC STANDING COMMITTEE

1. No report. Continued to read appeals.
2. Chair welcomed student committee member J. Ramesar.

e. COMMITTEE ON STUDENT AFFAIRS

- i. Met with Dean Zummo for updates on Starfish and Connect2Success.
- ii. Met with VP Wallerer for update on Navigate.
- iii. Continued discussion on how faculty can assist students. Will distribute informative document to faculty.
- iv. Planned Zoom event for November 10th, 2020; “Know Your Rights: Housing Insecurity and Homelessness”. More information to follow.

f. ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE

- i. Waiting for first wave of numbers on admissions to report out on difficulties encountered by students.

g. ACADEMIC FREEDOM COMMITTEE

- i. Looking at AAUP for policies on new learning systems.
- ii. Resolution (below): Parliamentarian called point of order because Governance is not the purview of the AF committee. Acting Chair of AF committee agreed to table.

VI. CHAIR'S REPORT

- a. Statement of the Council of CUNY Faculty Governance Leaders (below): this is for information, not action at this time, but departments should discuss the issue of class size.
- b. The Assessment Committee is being reconstituted with the view to reaching a mutually agreeable solution. H. Bulley noted the current committee has not been involved in discussion. Provost Wong reported that Administration met with the committee and heard their concerns. Discussion was put in abeyance because of COVID. Committee will be invited to further discussion now. There is a process that must be, and is being, followed.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

IX. ADJOURNMENT: 4:19pm

Resolutions from the Instruction Committee of Academic Senate

Resolution Concerning Student Evaluations of Teaching for Fall 2020

WHEREAS many faculty members did not self-select to teach remotely and had very little prior experience and training in remote instruction, and

WHEREAS thousands of students currently in online courses had originally registered for face-to-face learning, and

WHEREAS the transition to online teaching and learning is difficult for both faculty and students, and

WHEREAS the withdrawal date for students has been moved to the end of the semester, after Student Evaluations of Teaching (SETs) have been completed, contrary to past practices, and

WHEREAS the results of SETs influence decisions regarding reappointment, tenure and promotion, and

WHEREAS the Instruction Committee of the Senate has developed a new instrument to assess student experiences in the classroom, which can be offered to professors for their own private use this semester,

BE IT RESOLVED that BMCC suspend Student Evaluations of Teaching for the Fall 2020 Semester.

Resolution concerning Peer Observations of remote teaching during pandemic

WHEREAS in April of 2020, the Academic Senate passed guidelines for peer observation of online courses that are aligned with the contractual procedures for online peer observations and

WHEREAS a large number of classes have exceeded enrollment of 25, which was agreed upon as the appropriate maximum number of students of for online instruction, and

WHEREAS many faculty members have not elected to teach remotely and have had very little experience training in remote instruction and,

WHEREAS no faculty member can assume instructional or pedagogical expertise in teaching in a remote environment in which students have not elected to learn in a remote environment,

BE IT RESOLVED that during this period where most instruction is remote, all peer observations only be used “formatively,” for the benefit of the observed professors; and that these observations not be included in decisions concerning reappointment, tenure, or promotion, unless it is the expressed preference of the observed faculty member.

Resolution from the Academic Freedom sub-committee of Academic Senate

Resolution Regarding the Governance Plan

Whereas in the Academic Year 2017-2018 the President’s Cabinet and the Academic Senate decided to change the Governance Plan to its original unicameral structure;

Whereas the Academic Senate’s ad hoc Committee to change the Governance Plan met and wrote a Governance Plan in that same year;

Whereas that plan was in its final draft;

Whereas the Interim President decided a new Governance Plan should be submitted by the permanent President;

Whereas BMCC now has a permanent President;

Be it resolved that the original Academic Senate Governance Plan Committee recommence to finalize the draft of the new Governance Plan;

Be it further resolved that the same committee submit the new Governance Plan to the BMCC community during the 2020-2021 Academic Year.

STATEMENT of the Council of CUNY Faculty Governance Leaders

Based on these considerations that:

- the University and its constituent units are dedicated to student success in their studies; and
- student success is inextricably linked to the effectiveness of instruction by faculty; and
- faculty student interaction in a fully online class is an important feature for successful outcomes [1]; and
- there is research showing that smaller classes lead to significant improvements in student performance and retention and decreases in loss of instructional staff [2]; and
- for effective instruction the optimal size of both online and on-campus classes is a pedagogical matter best left to faculty; and
- the optimal size of both online and on-campus classes will vary with due consideration for student needs and faculty concerns and the interests of the College; and
- different academic disciplines hold different expectations for class sizes, and, in some disciplines, disciplinary professional organizations recommend optimal class sizes for different levels of instruction; and
- research recommends online class sizes that are much smaller than current CUNY practices,[3] and stipulates a cap of 28 for most online classes, and lower caps for classes designated as writing intensive, developmental, capstone, and honors; and
- the nationally recognized and CUNY celebrated online courses at the School of Professional Studies operate with a limit of 25; and
- the CUNY BOT has not established guidelines on this matter and it is thus a matter for faculty academic judgment under CUNY BOT Bylaws 8.5 and 8.6 that states: “Each college shall have a faculty or academic council, which shall be the primary body responsible for formulating policy on academic matters” ;

the Council of Faculty Governance Leaders propose that each CUNY unit adopt as academic policy that:

each academic department and program have the right and authority to set minimum and maximum class-size limits for best pedagogical practice with its own course offerings, both online and on-campus, in accordance with all applicable city, state, and federal statutes.

[1] “There is consensus that the single greatest predictor of positive self-reported student learning is instructor-student interaction. Teacher immediacy (timely and personal responsiveness) is one of the

key drivers of student satisfaction (Bonnel, Ludwig, & Smith, 2008; Keeton, 2004; Schutt, Allen, & Laumakis, 2009). Citing student-to-student interactions/activities are also predictive of reported learning, but at a level half that of instructor-student interaction (Bernar et al., 2004; Keeton, 2004; Marks, Sibley, & Arbaugh, 2005). A third driver of student learning and satisfaction is ease of use of technology.” (Taft, **Susan H.**, et al. “A Framework for Evaluating Class Size in Online Education.” *Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2011.)

[2] “The online literature consistently indicates that online education benefits student access but is not more efficient; that is, the workload and intensity of effort for faculty are in general heavier for online education than for classroom-based education. (Ascough, 2002; Drago & Peltier, 2004; Fjermestad, Hiltz, & Zhang, 2005; Parry, 2009).” (Taft, **Susan H.**, et al. “A Framework for Evaluating Class Size in Online Education.” *Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2011.)

[3] See, for example, Tomei, Lawrence A, and Douglas Nelson, “The Impact of Online Teaching on Faculty Load—Revisited: Computing the Ideal Class Size for Traditional, Online, and Hybrid Courses.” *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2019.