

MINUTES
Meeting of the Hunter College Senate
10 September 2008

1 The 492nd meeting of the Hunter College Senate was convened at 3:45 PM in Room W714.
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3 **Presiding:** Richard Stapleford, Chair
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5 **Attendance:** The elected members of the Senate with the exception of those listed in Appendix I.
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7 Alternate Senators were formally seated in accordance with the procedures approved by the Senate,
8 and clickers were distributed to them.
9
10 **Minutes:** The Minutes of May 14th and May 21st were approved as distributed.
11
12 **Report by the** The report was postponed to a later time since the President had not yet arrived.
13 **President:**
14
15 **Report by the** The Chair presented the report as follows:
16 **Administrative**
17 **Resolution Re: Experimental Courses**
18 The motion on the floor was the resolution as carried over from the last meeting.
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20 The Chair presented the following amendment on behalf of the Administrative Committee:
21
22 BE IT RESOLVED, that all courses given under the experimental special topics rubric, sponsored or
23 otherwise, must be approved by departmental curriculum committees before they can be offered.
24
25 The question was called and carried.
26
27 The amendment was approved by unanimous consent.
28
29 The motion on the floor was the following resolution, as amended:
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31 WHEREAS, "academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental for the protection of the
32 rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning;" and
33
34 WHEREAS, content of courses is reserved to individual faculty through departmental oversight
35 committees, and the faculty collectively through the Hunter College Senate; and,
36
37 WHEREAS, experimental special topics courses are unusual in that they do not automatically pass
38 through departmental curriculum committees; therefore,
39
40 BE IT RESOLVED, that all courses given under the experimental special topics rubric, sponsored or
41 otherwise, must be approved by departmental curriculum committees before they can be offered.
42
43 The question was called and carried.
44
45 Voting by clickers produced the following results: 55 in favor, 8 opposed, and no abstentions. The
46 motion carried.
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54 **Election of Committee Chairs**

55 The floor was open for nominations for Chair of the Budget Committee.

56
57 Professor Dixie Goss (Chemistry) was nominated.

58
59 It was moved that nominations be closed. The motion carried.

60
61 It was moved that the Secretary be instructed to cast a single ballot in favor of the candidate. The
62 motion carried by voice vote without dissent.

63
64 The floor was open for nominations for Chair of the Master Plan Committee.

65
66 Professor Barbara Sproul (Religion) was nominated.

67
68 It was moved that nominations be closed. The motion carried.

69
70 It was moved that the Secretary be instructed to cast a single ballot in favor of the candidate. The
71 motion carried by voice vote without dissent.

72
73 The floor was open for nominations for Chair of the Nominating Committee.

74
75 Professor Marilyn Rothschild (Physics & Astronomy) was nominated.

76
77 It was moved that nominations be closed. The motion carried.

78
79 It was moved that the Secretary be instructed to cast a single ballot in favor of the candidate. The
80 motion carried by voice vote without dissent.

81
82 The floor was open for nominations for Chair of the Charter Review Committee.

83
84 Professor Pamela Mills (Chemistry) was nominated.

85
86 It was moved that nominations be closed. The motion carried.

87
88 It was moved that the Secretary be instructed to cast a single ballot in favor of the candidate. The
89 motion carried by voice vote without dissent.

90
91 **New Member for Mellon Project Special Committee to Review the GER**

92 Professor Stapleford informed the Senate that Professor Christa Acampora, who chaired the
93 Committee, is on leave for the next year, and that the Committee had elected Professor William Sakas
94 as Chair.

95
96 At the recommendation of the Committee he then nominated Professor Michael Steiper
97 (Anthropology) to fill the vacant seat.

98
99 It was moved that the Secretary be instructed to cast a single ballot in favor of the nominee. The
100 motion carried by voice vote and Professor Steiper was elected to the Committee.

101
102 **Update on On-line Evaluation Summer Pilot Program**

103 The following is a summary statement of the update presented by Professor Manfred Kuechler, Acting
104 Associate Provost for Information Technology. He said:

105
106 “About two years ago the Senate voted to explore the possibility of doing the teacher evaluations
107 on-line. Last year, under the leadership of Kelle Jacob, the Committee on Evaluation of Teaching
108 was very active and recommended that we do a pilot study over the summer to see how on-line

114
115
116 evaluations would work. Following the wishes of the Senate, the Administration complied and
117 conducted a pilot on-line evaluation over the summer.
118

119 Before I report on that pilot, I want to remind you what the next steps would be. The Teacher
120 Evaluations Committee would have to decide whether they want to bring a resolution to the full
121 Senate calling for a permanent transition to on-line teacher evaluations, and then the Senate would
122 have to vote for it. It could probably not be implemented for this Fall semester because sufficient
123 advance time is needed so that it can be done properly. Next Spring would be the earliest that it
124 could happen.
125

126 Let me briefly report about the pilot study. The Teacher Evaluations Committee had identified a
127 vendor in upstate New York in the vicinity of Buffalo. I had attended the vendor's presentation
128 because Kelle Jacob invited me along as being someone interested in technology. At that time I
129 had no role in the Administration. I was very impressed with the vendor at the time, but did a little
130 research afterwards and had some concerns. Anyway, Kelle was very strong on this and so we
131 went with it. I have to say that the Hunter Administration, both the Provost Office and especially
132 Margaretta Silva the Teacher Evaluation Coordinator, and Gil Giannini and Michael Medwed of
133 ICIT's Administrative Computing Division, had to do an awful lot of work to make that happen.
134 Some of you may know that we still use social security numbers as student ID's and the vendor
135 wanted us to turn those over to them. That, of course, was a no-no. Therefore, ICIT had to
136 program a lot of things so that we could do the authentication of the people here at Hunter and
137 then pass it along to the vendor. That created a lot of extra work and I must say that the vendor
138 was not the most efficient one to work with. It was not possible to do on-line evaluations for both
139 summer sessions. We ended up doing it for Summer Session II, and only for Arts & Sciences
140 because of the timing of these courses. Involved in the pilot were 2,731 students who were
141 registered in the 161 courses that qualified, with a total of 205 sections during that period, and 137
142 instructors teaching one or more of these courses. In terms of course registrations we had 3,641,
143 some students taking more than one course. Ideally, in the end we would have had 3,641
144 individual evaluations. We got it done during the 10-day period beginning on Monday, August 11
145 until August 21st. Margaretta Silva did a great effort in going around to the Departments,
146 distributing fliers, and trying to make people aware. But as always, when there is a change people
147 do not immediately embrace change, and so the response rate for on-line evaluations was less than
148 what we had hoped for. The response rate overall for the College was 33%, less than we typically
149 get for the manual evaluations with a response rate around 50%. So, that is a little bit lower. It is
150 not untypical for institutions that move to on-line evaluations to have an initial drop in the
151 response rate. Once people get used to the whole process, it tends to go up and go higher. The
152 response rate differed quite a bit among departments. In some it was as high as 40% and in others
153 as low as 20%.
154

155 We did not change any of the access policies. Currently everybody in the Hunter community can
156 see any summary for every course and every department by going over to the Reserve Desk at the
157 Library to look that up. For technical reasons it was not possible to give the same on-line access
158 for this pilot. Initially, the Chairs were notified that they could see the courses in their division. If
159 they contacted Margaretta Silva, we could have given them access to all the other courses as well,
160 excluding the written comment section which under the current policy only goes to the instructors.
161 We did nothing that would transcend the current policy and students were given less than what
162 they normally get. They only got means rather than the full summaries that they can see if they go
163 over to the Library.
164

165 The one conclusion that we have drawn is that if the Senate instructs us to do on-line evaluations
166 it will not be with this vendor. We have already looked at another company that we have worked
167 with on some other products, and we are very favorably impressed. They offer a similar
168 functionality at about a quarter of the price that the company in Buffalo is charging. If the Senate
169 instructs us to do on-line evaluations that would probably be the vendor that we would go to. But
170 again, we have decided it would not be good to rush it in any way. The more time we have, the
171 better we can prepare for that.
172

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176
177 I want to point out that the new Chair of the Teacher Evaluations Committee, Steven Beard, and
178 his Committee will take up the issue and then report to the Senate.”

179
180 Professor Kuechler concluded his report by answering questions from the floor.

181
182 **Items Carried** **Undergraduate Academic Requirements Committee Report Re: Plus/Minus Grading**

183 **Carried Over:** The motion on the floor was approval of Option B:

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185

Option B: C	72.5 – 77.4%	2.0
C-	70.0 – 72.4%	1.7
D+	67.5 – 69.9%	1.3
D	60.0 – 67.4%	1.0
F	0 – 59.9%	0.0

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191 Voting by clickers produced the following results: 37 in favor, 20 opposed, and 5 abstentions. The
192 motion failed, the required number of 51 votes not having been achieved

193
194 After discussion Professor Hausman moved for approval of Option A.

195
196 After further discussion Option A was rescinded.

197
198 After discussion Professor Sproul moved for approval of Option A.

199
200 Professor Hausman moved for reconsideration of Option B.

201
202 Voting by clickers produced the following results: 39 in favor, 17 opposed, and 2 abstentions.

203
204 Option B was on the floor.

205
206 The question was called and carried.

207
208 Voting by clickers produced the following results: 39 in favor, 18 opposed, and 1 abstention. The
209 motion failed, the required number of 51 votes not having been achieved.

210
211 **Reports:** **Update by the Middle States Steering Committee**

212 Professor Phil Alcabes, Co-Chair of the Committee, presented the following Report:

213
214 1. Summary

215 We have completed phase 1 of self study, assembling the documentation to demonstrate how the
216 college sets goals, assesses its achievement of mission, and makes new plans. We are now embarked
217 on phase 2, in which the steering committee develops a written report accounting for the college’s
218 compliance with all 14 Middle States Commission on Higher Education standards and examining two
219 areas of special emphasis. The two areas are Student Success and Academic Planning for the 21st
220 Century Institution of Higher Education.

221
222 2. A few of our findings so far are:

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224
- That the college continues to fulfill its mission by providing an excellent education to students
225 from a wide array of backgrounds. The qualifications of admitted students continue to rise.
226 Matriculated students pursue Hunter degrees in more than 140 undergraduate, 107 masters, and
227 four doctoral programs. Two-thirds of entering freshmen came from NYC high schools, the
228 majority have at least one immigrant parent, and over one-quarter were themselves born outside
229 the U.S.
 - That Hunter maintains an extraordinarily accomplished faculty, but that the college’s capacity to
230 continue to fulfill its mission is jeopardized by the very small size of the full-time faculty. Well

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- 238
- 239 • over 60% of sections of 3-credit courses college-wide are taught by adjunct instructors now,
240 including over 75% of basic courses such as Math 101 and English 120.
 - 241 • That the college is more than ready for strategic planning. The college has new interdisciplinary
242 and postgraduate programs, including doctoral programs in the sciences and a new MFA program
243 in integrated media arts. The growth of graduate programs creates a need for oversight from
244 within the Provost's office. Plans for development of new institutional sites at the Julia Richman
245 campus and in East Harlem, restructuring of the schools of the health professions, and
246 development of the Roosevelt House Policy Institute could be integrated into overall strategy for
247 development of the college.
 - 248
 - 249 • That the college's mission statement should be examined and revised, developing language that
250 reflects issues facing an institution like ours. The statement that "Hunter is one of the oldest
251 public colleges in the country" is simply false and should be removed. More importantly, the
252 college's half-century-old mission statement does not reflect Hunter's potential in new
253 educational endeavors, including lifelong learning, global awareness, and liberal arts for
254 professional education. Nor is it clear about Hunter's service role in the city and its communities.
255
 - 256 • That the emphasis on retention and graduation rate as an indicator of student engagement is
257 misplaced, and should be replaced with more realistic assessments of student's expectations from
258 Hunter, better assessment of student learning, and better plans to remedy glaring sources of
259 dissatisfaction. Although Hunter enrolls increasingly accomplished students (for instance, the
260 proportion of admitted applicants with high-school averages in the A range increased from 2% in
261 2000 to 25% in 2007), only 37% of students admitted to Hunter actually enroll. Hunter's fall-to-
262 fall retention rate for those freshmen who do enroll is now over 80%, the highest it has been in
263 recent years. Yet, Hunter knows little about why students leave Hunter and enroll elsewhere, and
264 less about what makes some courses successful and others not.
 - 265
 - 266 • That advising in Student Services and advising in academic departments must be better
267 coordinated. In the 2006 CUNY Student Experience Survey, only 54% of Hunter students
268 reported feeling satisfied with advising at Hunter College.
269

270 3. Plan for self study and strategic planning. In keeping with a resolution of the steering committee
271 reached in May of this year, reports by working groups highlighting these findings will be made
272 available to the Senate Master Plan committee. The Steering Committee recognizes that the Senate
273 Master Plan committee is uniquely positioned to help the President's office in devising a college
274 strategic plan.
275

276 **New Business:**

276 **Announcement:**

277 Professor Frank Kirkland informed the Senate that Professor Lani Guinier and Dr. Johnnetta Cole will
278 be visiting Hunter College on Wednesday, September 24th from 5:30 to 7:00 PM at the Kaye
279 Playhouse, and on Thursday, September 25th from 9:00 to 11:00 AM in the 8th Floor Faculty/Staff
280 Dining Room. The event is sponsored by the Senate's Mellon Project Special Committee to Review
281 the General Education Requirement.
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283 It was moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried by voice vote and the meeting
284 adjourned at 5:05 PM
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288 Respectfully submitted,
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292 Phil Alcabes,
293 Secretary

APPENDIX I

The following members were noted as absent from the meeting:

Faculty

Africana&PR/Latino Studies Pedro Lopez-Adorno (A)
Anthony Browne

Art Reiner Leist (A)

Chemistry Pamela Mills
Dixie Goss (A)

Classical & Oriental Studies Khristopher Strone (A)

Computer Science Ioannis Stamos (A)

Curriculum & Teaching Ann Ebe (A)

Economics Howard Chernick
Jonathan Conning (A)

Educational Foundation Peggy Chen (A)

Film & Media Studies Michael Gitlin
Peter Parisi
Gustavo Mercado (A) "E"

German Eckhard Kuhn-Osius
Elke Nicolai (A)

Health Sciences Mimi Fahs (A)

Mathematics & Statistics Makram Talih (A) "E"

Political Science Joan Tronto

Psychology Tracy Dennis
Tricia Striano (A)

SEEK Maria Rodriguez "E"

School of Social Work George Paterson

Sociology Claus Mueller (A)

Student Services Reva Cohen (A) "E"
Madlyn Stokely

Lecturers and Part-Time Faculty

William Mayer (Classics)
Constantin Radis (Sociology)
Carmela Scala (Romance Lang)
Aubrey Ewaroo
Jeffrey Mongrain (Art)

Administration

Dean Jacqueline Mondros (A)

Ex-Officio

Jason Ares, CLT Council President
Agnes Violenus, Alumni Assoc. Pres.
Nadine Young, HEO Forum Pres.
Sarit Levy, GSA Pres.

Students

Jiayun Zhong
Karen Busani-Halevi
Binu Abraham (Classics, THH)
Kristine Jagdeo (Sociology)
Maria Arettines
Ana Martigny (Geography)
Diana Rojas (Romance Lang)
Tithi Ghosh (Math)
Jean-Kenson Dorlouis (Biochem)
Tonia Tiewul (THH)
Dulguun Maidar (Poli Sci)
David Wexler (Poli Sci)
Meryam Bukhari (undeclared)
Julia Estevez (Art)
Tamon Charles (Biochem)
Natalia Urrea (grad.-Romance Lang)
Miguel Suero (Grad.-Theatre)