

**Minutes of the Meeting
of the Faculty Delegate Assembly
Wednesday, December 20, 2006**

FDA president Jason Young called the meeting to order at 1:25.

The October minutes will be distributed at the next (February) meeting.

The minutes of the Executive Committee meeting of December 6 were distributed.

Two guests at a future FDA meeting will talk about the upcoming Middle States Report as well as the Spellings Report.

* FDA Resolution re: Proposed Master Plan

The 1999 Master Plan stated that Hunter needed more space and not just for science. It also specified that the new space be within walking distance of the college.

Professor Bargonetti offered a resolution on the Master Plan. After reading the resolution she asked for questions.

Q: What happens to the Health Professions people after their building is razed?

A: HP will be in swing space, not yet determined. They're the ones making the sacrifice.

A faculty member added that Hunter will have to ensure that programs aren't disrupted.

Prof. Young indicated that Hunter has sent out a request for an expression of interest for swing space for the dorm on 25th Street. Hunter at this point is just looking for builders who might be interested in doing the project. As for the Julia Richmond Educational Complex, no ground will be broken for the science building until JREC has a new space on 25th street.

Q: Can something be included in the resolution about the provisions made for a temporary location for The School of Health Professions?

Prof. Bargonetti agreed that this was a good idea.

A faculty member pointed out that to make the move the Health Professions School has to show that its programs aren't compromised—for the sake of accreditation.

Prof. Young observed that the fate of JREC is now in the hands of the Department of Education and that, if the deal goes forward, JREC won't have any say in the matter.

Prof. Bargonetti announced that she would make changes in the resolution and offer it at the next meeting for a vote.

* Online bulletin boards. They would provide information about routine things like photocopying and reserving classrooms. They could also include a side-by-side list of faculty research interests. Currently one has to go into each department's website to get this information. This bulletin board could also include information about what faculty are teaching.

Prof. Splitter of Curriculum and Teaching announced that he was now directing the Teaching and Learning Center. He urged those present to look for announcements for programs from the center.

Prof. Swan of the Library suggested establishing an online information commons for faculty where, for instance, they could post articles that they're working on.

Prof. Young also suggested that the bulletin board carry information about tenure—for instance, tips, recommendations, and experiences—and information about faculty mentoring. Also, the bulletin board would provide a central location for students to get advice about their programs and requirements. It would have information from the advisors as well as information from the advising office.

Adjunct concerns would be addressed as well. We need to integrate adjuncts more into college-wide communication. (Professor Sorman is currently working on an adjunct handbook.)

* Maintenance: If you have a problem, send an email to the FDA. We want to bring the concerns to the maintenance staff.

*Future FDA meetings:

The February meeting will feature a segment on the library. Prof. Tony Doyle will organize this session.

There will be a meeting relating to diversity. We'll have invited guests to talk about diversity.

There will also be a meeting on academic freedom.

* Report on the CUNY UFS Conference on the Spellings Commission, December 1, 2006

There will be greater political attention on the academy than in the past. Benno Schmidt of the CUNY Board of Trustees talked about a great push towards privatizing public education. According to Schmidt careers in the United States are no longer in manufacturing but rather in fields requiring knowledge. This has moved the political spotlight onto higher education. Politicians are demanding that there be a return on their tax investment. This means that non-educators are now having a greater say than in the past about how the academy is run. They will be looking at graduation rates: How many students graduate in 4 years? How many in 6? Also, what do students know when they graduate? Spellings herself, through accrediting agencies, can affect policy in high education, since the federal government validates the accrediting agencies. Those latter have to show that they're taking the Spellings Commission's requirements seriously.

Prof. Young pointed out that Hunter will be feel the impact of the Spellings Report early, since

the school is up for accreditation in two years. The Spellings Commission wants answers to the following questions: What's taught? What are students learning? How do we test the skills that they've acquired? One possible implication of the Spellings Report is that CUNY will have to start combining departments. For instance, if Hunter's Psychology Department is deemed to be dispensable, maybe it could be combined with the department at Queens or Brooklyn.

Prof. Young also mentioned the Collegiate Learning Assessment Test, which has been given to 100 students at both Lehman and City Colleges. It's a way of attempting to determine what skills students are acquiring.

A faculty member pointed out that as long as we come up with something about performance standards on our own we can pre-empt 80th Street, since performance standards are the prerogative of the school.

*Roundtable discussion with Prof. Sandy Clark, Chair of the Hunter Senate Committee on Assessment, and Associate Provost David Potash

Provost Potash spoke first.

The Spellings Commission is dead, but some of its ideas will survive. There has come to be a hodgepodge of accrediting agencies as higher education has expanded. Maybe it's time to look at the way the different agencies work and the criteria they use.

Prof. Young pointed out that most of the growth in higher education hasn't been in the liberal arts.

Provost Potash agreed, adding that he's concerned about how some of the ideas of the Spellings Commission will affect the liberal arts. Outcomes assessment doesn't generally exist among private colleges. In public colleges it does to varying degrees. Outcomes assessment is straightforward for programs which have a licensing test at the end. Hunter has a tough time with outcomes assessment because our students come from all different backgrounds and many transfer in. This makes it difficult to determine what they already know. However, there need to be clear ways to figure out what students are learning in a given class. If a significant number of students fails a course, that shouldn't just be an end of the matter. It might mean instead that we need to change the requirements for the course. Maybe we need to think more about goals: what students need to know before they can move on to the next level. Language departments tend to do this well. Some departments don't do it as well. For instance writing is more difficult to track in this way, likewise math abilities. We need to show that we're doing a better job graduating our students. We're not doing as well as Brooklyn and Queens. To some extent this has to do with the relationships students have with their teachers.

Professor Clarkson spoke next.

Learning goals need to be set by the members of the department, not by chairs. These goals shouldn't be imposed from outside. However, we don't have the option of saying we won't assess; that would put us in a vulnerable position.

A faculty member pointed out that the real question is what we can expect students to learn, not just what we would like them to learn.

Prof. Clarkson then talked about outcomes assessment. Outcomes assessment asks what faculty are doing to move students toward desired goals. What on the other hand isn't moving students toward these goals? We would like to know that we're doing a better job each year. For example, if 50% of students are failing a course, maybe we need to make some changes in the course requirements. Faculty in their departments get to decide what their goals are and to what extent they're reaching them.

Provost Potash observed that departments need to figure out that they want their students to do in each course that they take.

Faculty made the following comments.

- Outcomes assessment has been used in the Curriculum and Teaching Department for years in the form of rubrics.
- Data that the department uses has to be clear to someone outside the department.
- The accrediting body provides the rubric; it doesn't say what departments have to teach or what classes they have to offer. The accrediting body provides information about what students are supposed to know.
- German and other liberal arts are different from the professional schools. We don't control our intake. And there are many more things that people do with a German major than with a speech pathology major for instance.
- We should shy away reductionism. In the liberal arts it's a way of thinking that's inculcated, and that's not easily quantified.

Prof. Clarkson closed by saying that she prefers to react to what each department comes up with.

The meeting was adjourned at 3.

Respectfully submitted,

Tony Doyle
Secretary