

**Minutes of the Meeting  
of the Faculty Delegate Assembly  
Wednesday, May 17, 2006**

The meeting, held in the President's Conference Room (1700E), was called to order at 1:30 by Pres. Jason Young.

The minutes of the March meeting were read, discussed, and will be revised.

CUNY Vice Chancellor Selma Botman addressed delegates concerning new University initiatives:

\*Black male initiative: a recent conference on issues affecting African-American male university attendance attracted 1000 people. The keynote speaker was John Hope Franklin, James B. Duke Professor Emeritus of History, formerly a professor of legal history at Duke, who once served as history chair at Brooklyn College. A search will be conducted for the director of an institute dealing with equity issues.

\*Science initiative: the university will rethink the way doctoral education in laboratory sciences is organized, and will work with faculty on individual campuses to plan reform.

\* New programs to become reality in the fall include:

1. An online baccalaureate for degree completers, and
2. The Teacher Academy,

\* The "Campaign for Success" will address how the university can better create conditions for success across CUNY campuses, i.e. how to deal with obstacles students face, how to improve graduation rates.

\*New degree programs: the Math Discipline Council conversations reveal CUNY is facing a math crisis. Departments at Hunter and other City University colleges will be consulted as to how to address the situation. The Campaign for Success has identified academic challenges students face, in terms of where the most failures occur at the undergraduate level. There are high failure rates in math courses across the university. Chancellor Botman proposes to identify faculty that are successful, analyze what they are doing, then replicate it across the university. Students are under-prepared coming out of New York City high schools. CUNY is applying for an NSF grant to pilot a program in which high school science and math teachers will be paired with university researchers to deepen relationships.

Chancellor Botman was asked how the university develops its initiatives, and to whom faculty should communicate ideas about cluster hires and suggestions regarding innovation. What channels of communication exist? Faculty with ideas concerning a cluster should communicate them to Hunter's Provost and/or to V.C. Botman.

CUNY's philosophy is that the university can't replicate on every campus breadth and depth in a field, but gathering strength across campuses, can achieve excellence in an area. The result has been clusters in science (e.g. photonics faculty spread across campuses). U.S. history and demography were clusters that were under consideration when Dr. Botman arrived, but there was no budget for hiring during her first year. CUNY already had remarkable strength in demography in the areas of sociology and economics. It was proposed that the funding of 10 lines would position

the university to establish a high-profile center that would attract funding. This year's hires will include three lines, to go to Baruch, Queens and the Grad Center. Next year Hunter will receive a line.

A second cluster on which she is working is U.S. history. The aim is to encourage instruction of introductory U.S. history to lower level undergraduates. Hunter was authorized to hire in U.S. history/Asian American history, but the hire is not going to take place. Discussions are under way with the President and the line may be switched to another subfield. CUNY's Central Office decides on areas of clusters, after discussions with groups of faculty.

Dr. Botman was asked about the university's inability to attract and retain faculty. CUNY is losing out to schools that are not superior because current salaries are no longer competitive. Recently-minted PhD.s are not attracted to the university. The Vice Chancellor responded that her experience in public higher education indicates that institutions are hamstrung by their dependence on local and state funding. The expense of living in New York City is another challenge. There are no university initiatives that would assist junior faculty to address housing costs.

The Vice Chancellor Botman was also questioned about the strategy of CUNY's online degree program. Centered in the School of Professional Studies, it targets degree-completers. Students must transfer at least 30 credits, but no more than 90. A website describing the program -- [www.cuny.edu/online](http://www.cuny.edu/online) -- is now available. An excellent education will be offered to New Yorkers who, for various reasons, interrupted their education. The faculty of the SPS will be consortial. Candidates have already volunteered, and will be bought from individual departments for 6 credit hours per year. Students already enrolled in a CUNY school will not be accepted into the SPS. The School of Professional Studies, however, will have no monopoly on online degrees. BMCC is about to debut an online A.A. NYCT will offer nursing courses to R.N.s seeking a B.S. in nursing. Lehmann also will offer online courses in nursing. Faculty who were initially skeptical about the academic Aheft@ of such courses have been won over to online teaching. Dr. Botman supports online education throughout the system, not just in SPS.

Hunter faculty questioned the program's avoidance of general education requirements. The only science course offered was a non-lab course. While it is possible for online programs to offer lab experience, CUNY's apparently does not. The Vice Chancellor responded that the SPS has several levels of courses to address different educational needs.

Dr. Botman was asked for further details concerning CUNY's evaluation of graduate science programs. The university asked prominent academicians to evaluate the graduate center's consortial model, and the group reported that the model was not viable for science and needed rethinking. A second team of scientists (including representatives from MIT and the Universities of Chicago, Florida and Maryland), praised CUNY's doctoral students, but criticized the admissions system as Byzantine@ (too late, funding packages are insufficient). Their recommendations: rant-funded, research active faculty should be empowered to select students and offer packages to them. CUNY's funding system has to be completely reevaluated, and the panel recommended a system that many other schools use. (The first year to be underwritten by some central pot of money, years 2-5 funded by research/grant and institutional dollars). Some campuses should have joint authority to confer doctorates (Grad Center and HC, e.g., would confer degrees jointly). Dr. Botman believes CUNY needs a year to design reforms to doctoral programs. Students would be recruited for fall, 2007 under the new system. Tuition remission, recommended by the report, and already a reality at SUNY, is also a priority. CUNY must address it with City and State officials.

A possible School of Public Health is in the embryonic stages of exploration. The university has some serious omissions, especially in biostatistics and epidemiology. While the university is interested in such an initiative, it is not currently a top priority. Regardless of the way it appears on campuses, CUNY has a thin administrative structure.

HC has \$500,000 Mellon Grant to look at gen ed requirements. There are 55 credits required in gen ed. From a student=s perspective, taking more courses in gen ed than they do in their majors is a barrier. What kind of literacies do students actually need to function in the world into which they are graduating? Dr. Botman=s advice is to focus on students and their needs. The current focus on literacies is good one: students should learn to think like mathematicians, rather than memorizing formulae.

The final question/comment from faculty concerned the quality of university teaching and Central Administration=s role in improving it. Vice Chancellor Botman responded that the Campaign for Success has placed a great deal of emphasis on that issue. Successful faculty (those who have been recognized with teaching awards) will be asked to work with the Central Administration.

Concern was also raised about the introduction of master=s programs at the Grad Center, since they would appear to be in direct competition with existing degree programs at individual CUNY schools. Dr. Botman responded that the new degrees will articulate with doctoral programs, and will concentrate on areas of study not already offered in CUNY schools. Furthermore, market forces will determine the continuing success or failure of both new and existing programs.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Woodard  
Secretary