The 386th meeting of the Hunter College Senate was convened at 4:15 PM in Room W714.

Presiding: Pamela Mills, Chair

Attendance: The elected members of the Senate with the exception of those listed in Appendix I.

Agenda: The agenda was adopted with the change that item 4 be considered before item 3.

Minutes: The Minutes of October 20th were approved as distributed.

Report by the President:

A summary statement of President Caputo's report to the Senate is attached as Appendix II.

Report by the Ombudsman:

A summary statement of Professor Liveson's report is as follows. He said:

"In the two years I've been the College Ombudsman 148 formal cases have arisen. By "formal case" I mean a matter for which a written complaint is drafted, at least one conference is held with me, and steps are taken towards achieving a resolution, where appropriate. These do not include brief informal inquiries, generally short phone calls, that are immediately resolved and of which the office does not keep records.

Over 95% of the cases are brought by students; less than 5% have been brought by faculty and staff. This is to be expected in light of the union representation available to faculty and staff. Although there are no specific restrictions imposed on the Ombudsman under the charter, and the office of the Ombudsman is happy to assist all members of the community wherever possible, matters relating to areas addressed by negotiated contracts are best resolved via the mechanisms set up in those contracts for that purpose.

Previous Ombudsman reports have referred to cases involving charges of sexism, racism, and discrimination based on sexual orientation. No complaints along these lines have been brought to the Ombudsman's office during the past two years. These problems are either receding (I hope) or are surfacing elsewhere.

My review of previous Ombudsman reports leads me to conclude the College is successfully addressing a number of problem areas. For example, earlier reports speak of many complaints involving the Credit/No Credit procedures. These rules have been clarified and this is no longer a substantial problem area, as far as the Ombudsman's office can tell. Similarly, a brief flare-up in "Incomplete" complaints subsided after the Senate took action. I note as well that previous reports cited bookstore complaints as a category. I have not received a single complaint relating to the bookstore.

For the most part, complaints involve areas in which a Department Chair or adviser or professor has discretion to exercise and does so to the displeasure of the student. In the overwhelming majority of cases the Department Chairs and other faculty I contact are extremely helpful and cooperative in correcting the matter or in establishing to my satisfaction that no action is warranted. I should also note that the Student Services staff and the Registrars, Admissions', Financial Aid, and Bursar's offices have all been helpful in resolving issues that arise.

To a large extent I am standing here before you as a mere figurehead, a shell. The real work of the Office is done by Ms. Judith King, and her guidance and assistance have been indispensable. Ms. Renate Murray is also owed my thanks for being extremely generous with her help.

My impression is that a large segment of the College is not aware that there is an Ombudsman. In that connection, the Office is planning to seek to recover rights to a bulletin board that had been used in the past to notify the community of the Office. Many who have heard of the Office do not have a clear sense of what an Ombudsman does. I myself remain in that category -- the position is constantly redefining itself, it seems to me, as different problems turn up over the years.

I would like to close this report with the words of a respected former Hunter College Senator, Professor Sam Korn, who stated in his Ombudsman's report of February 11, 1981: "Depending on the specific complaint, the course of action taken by me varies from simply helping the student carry forward his or her own appeal, getting the attention of
the relevant officers in the college (to correct the problem), interceding personally on behalf of the person asking for help, serving as an intermediary between parties in conflict, etc. Sometimes I will not support an appeal because the complaint is not justified, and at times I can only offer commiseration and the promise to help eliminate the problem in the future. Some injustices can be undone, some cannot.

Thank you.”

Report by the Administrative Committee:

Professor Mills presented the report as follows:

**Special Election to fill vacant seats on the Senate**

She presented the following nomination for one of the vacant seats for students:

Judy Sanchez (undeclared)

It was moved that the nomination be approved. The motion carried by voice vote.

**Approved Curriculum Changes**

The following curriculum changes, as listed in the Report dated 17 November 1999, were approved as per Senate resolution and were submitted for the Senate's information: Items US-1090 (Geography) and US-1093 (Chemistry).

**Update on the Board of Trustees' Articulation Resolution**

Professor Mills informed the Senate that she had testified at the November 15th Open Hearing of the Board of Trustees as follows:

Hello. My name is Pamela Mills. I am an Associate Professor of Chemistry at Hunter College and the Chair of the Hunter College Senate. I will address item no. 5C by summarizing the concerns of the Hunter College Senate that we articulated at our November 3 meeting.

We are extremely concerned about the potential negative affects the transfer resolution will have on the integrity of our curriculum and our curriculum-making process, and on the preparedness of our students in our upper division classes since the A.A. and A.S. degrees were not specifically designed to fulfill our general education requirements. While we are concerned about these curricular ramifications, we also wish to convey to you our commitment to minimizing obstacles for the student who transfers from the community college to the senior college. We are a part of a University and feel strongly that this transfer process should not be onerous. In fact, the Senate has recently adopted new procedures for streamlining the transfer process. The Chair of our Distribution Committee is scheduled to speak today and he will give you a perspective on the work the Committee has done regarding transfer students.

While we would like to see a more effective transfer process at CUNY, we also insist that our curriculum achieve the educational goals that we have set for our graduates. We have designed our curriculum to ensure that all of our graduates will have been exposed to a wide-range of disciplines and discipline-areas and are concerned that the variability among general requirements in the A.A. and A.S. degrees throughout CUNY will compromise our commitment to a liberal arts curriculum.

Perhaps the goal of creating a seamless transfer process for all students with A.A. and A.S. degrees is not appropriate because the course of study of the A.A. or A.S. degree was not designed with the intention of fulfilling a senior college’s distribution requirement. Let me give you an example drawn from my own discipline of chemistry. In highly sequenced majors, such as chemistry, students must begin their major early. Students who enter Hunter in their freshmen year, intend to graduate in four years and major in chemistry, must take distribution courses throughout their entire four years. In this way science students at Hunter acquire a liberal arts education rather than a narrowly focussed science education as in some institutions. Now what about the student who transfers from the community college? If this student has prepared to transfer to Hunter with all lower division science courses completed, this student, just like the Hunter student, will not be able to complete the Hunter distribution requirement in two years. In many cases, however, this student will be able to complete the distribution requirement of the community college. Should this student now be exempt from the remainder of Hunter’s distribution requirements? If one does the transfer mathematics, one finds that this student needs less than 60 credits to fulfill all remaining requirements, including distribution. There is no need to exempt this student from Hunter’s distribution requirements. The community college degree was designed for a different purpose than the one this transfer resolution will ask it to serve. I think this argument holds in more majors than chemistry.

The transfer resolution, while addressing a concern shared by all of us, does not accommodate the various goals of the general education requirements in the different institutions and in the different degree programs. We ask
that you examine other mechanisms perhaps more administrative than curricular for streamlining the transfer process than is evident in the current resolution.

**Establishment of Select Committee on Performance Measures and Outcomes Assessment**

Professor Mills presented the following resolution as submitted:

**BE IT RESOLVED,** that the Hunter College Senate establish a *Select Committee on Performance Measures and Outcomes Assessment*, consisting of one faculty representative from each of the divisions and two from the divisions serving at-large (as defined in Article IV.1.B.ii of the Charter); 4 students; and, serving without vote, the Director of Institutional Research, the Deans of the Schools of Arts & Sciences, Education, Health Professions, Social Work or their designees, the Chief Academic Officer or designee, and the Vice Presidents for Student Affairs and Administration or their designees.

The specific charges to the committee shall be as follows:

1. To become familiar with current common practices of developing and using measures to assess performance in institutions of higher education.
2. To examine current measures and report on the validity and appropriateness of these measures to the Senate.
3. To propose alternative measures to the Senate to give a broad picture of the success of the academic mission at Hunter.
4. To consult with the appropriate Offices at Hunter to examine the feasibility of collecting data needed for broad performance and outcomes assessments.

After discussion the resolution was approved by voice vote.

**Discussion of Hunter College Mission Statement**

Professor Mills presented the current Hunter College Mission Statement as requested at the last Senate Meeting.

After discussion it was moved that the Mission Statement be committed to the Administrative Committee for tweaking.

After further discussion it was moved that the motion be amended by substituting the following: "that the Senate establish a Select Committee to review the Mission Statement."

After discussion the question was called and carried on the motion to substitute. The motion was approved by voice vote, and the substitute motion became the main motion on the floor.

After discussion it was moved that the motion be tabled for four years. The motion carried by voice vote.

It was moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara L. Hampton
Secretary