

# Office of the Hunter College Senate

## MINUTES Meeting of the Hunter College Senate 17 November 1999

1                                   The 386th meeting of the Hunter College Senate was convened at 4:15 PM in Room W714.  
2

3   **Presiding:**                Pamela Mills, Chair  
4

5   **Attendance:**             The elected members of the Senate with the exception of those listed in Appendix I.  
6

7   **Agenda:**                    The agenda was adopted with the change that item 4 be considered before item 3.  
8

9   **Minutes:**                  The Minutes of October 20th were approved as distributed.  
10

11 **Report by the**                A summary statement of President Caputo's report to the Senate is attached as Appendix II.  
12 **President:**

13

14 **Report by the**                A summary statement of Professor Liveson's report is as follows. He said:  
15 **Ombudsman:**

16                                    "In the two years I've been the College Ombudsman 148 formal cases have arisen. By "formal case" I mean a matter  
17 for which a written complaint is drafted, at least one conference is held with me, and steps are taken towards achieving  
18 a resolution, where appropriate. These do not include brief informal inquiries, generally short phone calls, that are  
19 immediately resolved and of which the office does not keep records.  
20

21                                    Over 95% of the cases are brought by students; less than 5% have been brought by faculty and staff. This is to be  
22 expected in light of the union representation available to faculty and staff. Although there are no specific restrictions  
23 imposed on the Ombudsman under the charter, and the office of the Ombudsman is happy to assist all members of the  
24 community wherever possible, matters relating to areas addressed by negotiated contracts are best resolved via the  
25 mechanisms set up in those contracts for that purpose.  
26

27                                    Previous Ombudsman reports have referred to cases involving charges of sexism, racism, and discrimination based on  
28 sexual orientation. No complaints along these lines have been brought to the Ombudsman's office during the past two  
29 years. These problems are either receding (I hope) or are surfacing elsewhere.  
30

31                                    My review of previous Ombudsman reports leads me to conclude the College is successfully addressing a number of  
32 problem areas. For example, earlier reports speak of many complaints involving the Credit/No Credit procedures.  
33 These rules have been clarified and this is no longer a substantial problem area, as far as the Ombudsman's office can  
34 tell. Similarly, a brief flare-up in "Incomplete" complaints subsided after the Senate took action. I note as well that  
35 previous reports cited bookstore complaints as a category. I have not received a single complaint relating to the  
36 bookstore.  
37

38                                    For the most part, complaints involve areas in which a Department Chair or adviser or professor has discretion to  
39 exercise and does so to the displeasure of the student. In the overwhelming majority of cases the Department Chairs  
40 and other faculty I contact are extremely helpful and cooperative in correcting the matter or in establishing to my  
41 satisfaction that no action is warranted. I should also note that the Student Services staff and the Registrars,  
42 Admissions', Financial Aid, and Bursar's offices have all been helpful in resolving issues that arise.  
43

44                                    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  
45 Ms. Judith King, and her guidance and assistance have been indispensable. Ms. Renate Murray is also owed my  
46 thanks for being extremely generous with her help.  
47

48                                    My impression is that a large segment of the College is not aware that there is an Ombudsman. In that connection, the  
49 Office is planning to seek to recover rights to a bulletin board that had been used in the past to notify the community  
50 of the Office. Many who have heard of the Office do not have a clear sense of what an Ombudsman does. I myself  
51 remain in that category -- the position is constantly redefining itself, it seems to me, as different problems turn up over  
52 the years.  
53

54                                    I would like to close this report with the words of a respected former Hunter College Senator, Professor Sam Korn,  
55 who stated in his Ombudsman's report of February 11, 1981: "Depending on the specific complaint, the course of  
56 action taken by me varies from simply helping the student carry forward his or her own appeal, getting the attention of

62 the relevant officers in the college (to correct the problem), interceding personally on behalf of the person asking for  
 63 help, serving as an intermediary between parties in conflict, etc. Sometimes I will not support an appeal because the  
 64 complaint is not justified, and at times I can only offer commiseration and the promise to help eliminate the problem  
 65 in the future. Some injustices can be undone, some cannot.

66  
 67 Thank you."

68  
 69 **Report by the**  
 70 **Administrative**  
 71 **Committee:**

69 Professor Mills presented the report as follows:

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

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

73  
 74 Judy Sanchez (undeclared)

75  
 76 It was moved that the nomination be approved. The motion carried by voice vote.  
 77

78 **Approved Curriculum Changes**

79 The following curriculum changes, as listed in the Report dated 17 November 1999, were approved as per Senate  
 80 resolution and were submitted for the Senate's information: Items US-1090 (Geography) and US-1093 (Chemistry).  
 81

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

83 Professor Mills informed the Senate that she had testified at the November 15<sup>th</sup> Open Hearing of the Board of Trustees  
 84 as follows:  
 85

86 Hello. My name is Pamela Mills. I am an Associate Professor of Chemistry at Hunter College and the Chair of  
 87 the Hunter College Senate. I will address item no. 5C by summarizing the concerns of the Hunter College Senate  
 88 that we articulated at our November 3 meeting.  
 89

90 We are extremely concerned about the potential negative affects the transfer resolution will have on the integrity  
 91 of our curriculum and our curriculum-making process, and on the preparedness of our students in our upper  
 92 division classes since the A.A. and A.S. degrees were not specifically designed to fulfill our general education  
 93 requirements. While we are concerned about these curricular ramifications, we also wish to convey to you our  
 94 commitment to minimizing obstacles for the student who transfers from the community college to the senior  
 95 college. We are a part of a University and feel strongly that this transfer process should not be onerous. In fact,  
 96 the Senate has recently adopted new procedures for streamlining the transfer process. The Chair of our  
 97 Distribution Committee is scheduled to speak today and he will give you a perspective on the work the  
 98 Committee has done regarding transfer students  
 99

100 While we would like to see a more effective transfer process at CUNY, we also insist that our curriculum achieve  
 101 the educational goals that we have set for our graduates. We have designed our curriculum to ensure that all of  
 102 our graduates will have been exposed to a wide-range of disciplines and discipline-areas and are concerned that  
 103 the variability among general requirements in the A.A. and A.S. degrees throughout CUNY will compromise our  
 104 commitment to a liberal arts curriculum.  
 105

106 Perhaps the goal of creating a seamless transfer process for all students with A.A. and A.S. degrees is not  
 107 appropriate because the course of study of the A.A. or A.S. degree was not designed with the intention of  
 108 fulfilling a senior college's distribution requirement. Let me give you an example drawn from my own discipline  
 109 of chemistry. In highly sequenced majors, such as chemistry, students must begin their major early. Students who  
 110 enter Hunter in their freshmen year, intend to graduate in four years and major in chemistry, must take  
 111 distribution courses throughout their entire four years. In this way science students at Hunter acquire a liberal arts  
 112 education rather than a narrowly focussed science education as in some institutions. Now what about the student  
 113 who transfers from the community college? If this student has prepared to transfer to Hunter with all lower  
 114 division science courses completed, this student, just like the Hunter student, will not be able to complete the  
 115 Hunter distribution requirement in two years. In many cases, however, this student will be able to complete the  
 116 distribution requirement of the community college. Should this student now be exempt from the remainder of  
 117 Hunter's distribution requirements? If one does the transfer mathematics, one finds that this student needs less  
 118 than 60 credits to fulfill all remaining requirements, including distribution. *There is no need to exempt this*  
 119 *student from Hunter's distribution requirements.* The community college degree was designed for a different  
 120 purpose than the one this transfer resolution will ask it to serve. I think this argument holds in more majors than  
 121 chemistry.  
 122

123 The transfer resolution, while addressing a concern shared by all of us, does not accommodate the various goals  
 124 of the general education requirements in the different institutions and in the different degree programs. We ask  
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 126

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131  
132 that you examine other mechanisms perhaps more administrative than curricular for streamlining the transfer  
133 process than is evident in the current resolution.

134  
135 **Establishment of Select Committee on Performance Measures and Outcomes Assessment**

136 Professor Mills presented the following resolution as submitted:

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

144  
145 The specific charges to the committee shall be as follows:

- 146  
147 1. To become familiar with current common practices of developing and using measures to assess performance  
148 in institutions of higher education.  
149  
150 2. To examine current measures and report on the validity and appropriateness of these measures to the Senate.  
151  
152 3. To propose alternative measures to the Senate to give a broad picture of the success of the academic mission  
153 at Hunter.  
154  
155 4. To consult with the appropriate Offices at Hunter to examine the feasibility of collecting data needed for  
156 broad performance and outcomes assessments.

157  
158 After discussion the resolution was approved by voice vote.

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160 **Discussion of Hunter College Mission Statement**

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

162  
163 After discussion it was moved that the Mission Statement be committed to the Administrative Committee for  
164 tweaking.

165  
166 After further discussion it was moved that the motion be amended by substituting the following: "that the Senate  
167 establish a Select Committee to review the Mission Statement."

168  
169 After discussion the question was called and carried on the motion to substitute. The motion was approved by voice  
170 vote, and the substitute motion became the main motion on the floor.

171  
172 After discussion it was moved that the motion be tabled for four years. The motion carried by voice vote.

173  
174 It was moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

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177  
178 Respectfully submitted,

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180  
181  
182 Barbara L. Hampton  
183 Secretary