

# MINUTES

## Meeting of the Hunter College Senate

### 8 September 2004

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2 The 443rd meeting of the Hunter College Senate was convened at 4:10 PM in Room W714.  
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4 **Presiding:** Joan Tronto, Chair  
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6 **Attendance:** The elected members of the Senate with the exception of those listed in Appendix I.  
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8 **Agenda:** The agenda was adopted as distributed.  
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10 **Minutes:** The Minutes of April 14, April 28<sup>th</sup>, May 5<sup>th</sup>, May 12<sup>th</sup>, and May 19<sup>th</sup> were approved as distributed.  
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12 **Report by the**  
13 **Chair:** Professor Tronto read the message she had posted on Hunter-L:

### **“Waiting for Dean Godot?”**

#### **The Problem**

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17 A colleague worked as a staff member at a large public Southwest University. He recently  
18 reported that the faculty there had been waiting for a long time for all the administrators to be put  
19 into place so that they could act like a faculty again. He said, “But I think they are just going to  
20 keep waiting, and never regain their role in the institution.”  
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22 Does this scenario sound familiar? Increasingly, universities are expected to imitate corporations,  
23 and finding the right leadership seems to be the panacea (here at CUNY, for example, the  
24 Chancellor gave himself a huge raise out of Research Foundation funding while the faculty work  
25 without a contract). At the same time, those of us who spend our lives in the academy have fallen  
26 into a bad habit. We have been willing to accede to the hierarchical model that the top leadership  
27 sets the direction for the institution. As we wait for the “right” deaconal structure, the “right”  
28 president, provost, dean, associate dean, etc. (and I think some of our current administrators are  
29 really fine), incremental changes are piling up, having a large impact, and changing our college in  
30 ways that we no longer control. No wonder, then, as I have listened to faculty and students in the  
31 last year, they seem disengaged, morale is low, and almost no one is eager to participate in college  
32 governance.  
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#### **Universities are not Corporations or Bureaucracies**

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36 In his commencement address at NYU in 2003, John Sexton, President of NYU pointed to the  
37 venerability of universities:  
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39 “Consider this reality: There are only 85 human institutions that have been in continuous  
40 operation for more than 500 years. Two you could get with a little thought: the Catholic  
41 Church and the British Parliament. If I tell you there are eight cantons in Switzerland, you're  
42 up to 10.  
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44 ”But the striking point is that of the remaining 75 human institutions that have been in con-  
45 tinuous operation for more than five centuries, 70 of them are universities, beginning with Al-  
46 Azhar University in Egypt. That universities endure in this way testifies powerfully to the ideal  
47 that knowledge and learning deserve a special house of their own, and all of us – faculty,  
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students and everyone associated with our university -- are privileged to be the inhabitants of that house.” (*NY Times*, June 1, 2003, p. 41)

Universities are not corporations or bureaucracies that should operate on a principle of hierarchy. To transform the collegial (same Latin root as “college”) way that we make decisions and judgments into a hierarchical form is, in fact, poisonous to the university’s way of being. Universities are still best described as self-governing, and they must be. As the creators, preservers, and transmitters of the most exalted knowledge in a culture, those of us in the academy are dealing with “goods” more precious than any found in the marketplace. The integrity of knowledge is our special responsibility, and it requires that we make hard judgments about our own work, the work of our colleagues, the work of our students, all the time. To be involved in the university requires us to make difficult judgments about ourselves and others. The creation of knowledge requires both bravery and humility. Peer review is the principle that guides our lives as teachers and scholars. We are reviewed by peers, by equals, because no one else is qualified to do it. To introduce the principle of hierarchy, i.e., to argue that there is a “boss” to whom the rest of us should submit because that person occupies a structurally superior position, violates the principle of peer review. There is a reason why universities have a culture of consultation, then, that extends far back to the medieval roots of the Western university and helps to explain why these remarkable institutions endure through time.

Some people, who do not understand the nature of the university, attribute our commitment to collegiality, to collective and shared decision-making, as an attachment to the (in their view, failed) politics of the 1960s. (See some of the consultants’ volumes of the Mayor’s Advisory Task Force on CUNY, 1999). While people in the 1960s also opposed hierarchy, the university did not decide to become collegial as a result of the 1960s. It is true that Hunter College’s governance structure changed in the early 1970s after student unrest. Students were rightfully frustrated by their exclusion and by the intransigence of the university. But in broadening governance, Hunter actually came closer to its long-term commitments. Traditions of self-governance are intrinsic to the nature of the academy.

### **Fateful Decisions for the Senate**

So, it is time for us—faculty and students of Hunter College—to stop waiting for a president, a dean, a new department chair, someone else, to make Hunter better.

We have the Senate as a way to express our collective will. The Senate is not a perfect institution, but it is large enough to allow for genuinely open and diverse discussions of important issues. Anyone who wishes to join this discussion is welcome. In recent years, the Senate has spent too much of its time dealing with trivial matters. We can change this situation if we bring more serious matters to the Senate.

We really need, as a College, to make some fateful decisions, to agree on some basic principles, and to have our individual and collective actions guided by our agreed-upon goals, not some administrator’s ideas.

I hope that this year the Senate will make some fateful decisions. Here are some of the kinds of questions that we have to put to ourselves:

- Is Hunter basically an outstanding liberal arts institution with professional schools that are strengthened by being part of a liberal arts institution, or are we a multiversity in which the professional schools matter as much as the liberal arts college? How does our vision of our own unique history and quality fit with the vision of us that exists at 80<sup>th</sup> Street? What is our proper role within CUNY?

- 111           ▪ Who do we want to be our students? Do we want to make the commitment that we will  
112           provide the necessary resources to all students admitted here that they will be able to complete  
113           their degree here? What is the proper balance of first year students to transfer students? That  
114           is the proper balance of graduate students to undergraduate students?  
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- 116           ▪ How do we want to educate our students? Do we want to make certain that students are  
117           transformed through their learning to know more about the world and how to find out about  
118           it? What is the difference between an “honors” student and another student? What does it  
119           require for students today to be well educated?  
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- 121           ▪ How shall the faculty balance its joint commitments to creating new knowledge through  
122           research and scholarship, and to preserving and transmitting existing knowledge, through  
123           teaching, training, and working with graduate students?  
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125 Over the course of this academic year, I hope to write a series of these essays about “Fateful Deci-  
126 sions.” After we have had a chance to discuss them, we will see if we are ready to restate our basic  
127 principles and thus to guide decisions made around us.  
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129 I invite all members of the Hunter College community to jump into this discussion, to post  
130 responses to this and other writings on Hunter-L, to discuss these questions with students, faculty,  
131 and administrators, and to join into this process to define the College for ourselves.”  
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133 **Report by the**  
134 **President:**

A summary statement of President Raab’s report to the Senate is as follows. She said:

135 “It is a pleasure to welcome everybody back. There is very good news about our rankings in *US*  
136 *News and World Report*. We are ranked 50 this year, which is up from 66. A number of factors  
137 contributed to this rise, including the graduation rates, retention rates, SAT scores of students as  
138 well as the peer review. For the peer review we have to thank all of the faculty here for helping to  
139 make this possible. The *Princeton Review* is based on student reports and what people think of  
140 each other’s institutions. We did very well coming in at number four for diversity and number  
141 twelve for best bargain. This was a great year for us to start off the new academic year.  
142

143 RE: Budget

144 You have all been following as much as one can, the budget discussions up in Albany that are  
145 going back and forth between vetoes. The most important point at the moment is that we have  
146 been left sort of at a hold harmless place in terms of our operation budget. We are hoping that  
147 some of the items that the governor vetoed within the CUNY operation budget will be positively  
148 reconsidered. One of most important items to us is the addition of new faculty. Nobody can guess  
149 at this point where this is going. Our capital allotments were left untouched. One of the very good  
150 other pieces of news in June was that the CUNY Board of Trustees approved our contract with one  
151 of the major real estate advisors and land-use attorneys in the city, who are now hard at work  
152 looking for a site for a new science building. The first phase of this is funded in the CUNY capital  
153 budget. We are also looking for a new facility for the art program, and the first phase of planning  
154 is also funded in the capital budget. They are hard at work and as soon as there are options to  
155 discuss I will come back with a report. In the next few months I am hoping to present the  
156 architectural plans for Roosevelt House. That money is secure and the plans are moving ahead.  
157

158 We did very well this year with our city officials. I have to thank the chemistry faculty for being  
159 very aggressive in coming over to my office and saying the organic chemistry lab must be  
160 renovated. We got Virginia Fields and our councilwoman to provide a million dollars. From the  
161 City Council we received \$300,000 to begin work on the Thomas Hunter Hall exteriors, and our  
162 local State Assemblyman Jonathan Bing has provided funds to restore the student lounge in  
163 Thomas Hunter Hall. So, we are working on that as well.  
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167 Re: Structure of the School of Arts & Sciences

168 As you know, we had a very long conversation last year about the structure of the School of Arts  
169 and Science. I felt that it was a very important conversation to have before going ahead with a  
170 search for a permanent dean. I want to thank everyone here who participated either on the  
171 committee or with comments. I have spoken to many faculty here and also to many other academic  
172 leaders at other institutions. I think that the conversations here were very thought provoking and  
173 that we all learned a lot about where we are as an institution at Hunter now. I think that the Senate  
174 report, although it did not have a consensus in it, provided us with a lot of information about the  
175 needs of the school regardless of the structure. As I said, there was no clear consensus that  
176 emerged from the report, and I think in discussing it we all realized that there was really no right  
177 answer, and that each of these structures had benefits and issues that had to be addressed. There  
178 was a lot of consensus on the point that the new unified structure had not been fully implemented,  
179 and that it was left with many of the other remnants without the resources to fully implement the  
180 office of the dean. In looking at all the information and talking to faculty and administrators  
181 throughout the schools, and specifically within Arts & Sciences, I have decided that the wisest  
182 course right now is to keep us within the one unified School of Arts and Science under one dean  
183 with a very very strong commitment to fully implement and staff the office. To that end we have  
184 already recruited a top notch budget person, who will begin to work with the chairs and the deans  
185 office in the next few weeks to simplify and expedite many of the budgetary and budget  
186 management issue.

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188 We are also looking at the other needs in the office to ensure that it is serving the departments for  
189 which it is responsible and doing the absolute best job. There are many factors that influenced my  
190 decision. It was a very hard decision because there were very strong merits on either side, but I  
191 felt that since the time of the three dean structure we have become much more disciplinary in  
192 nature, and I was very influenced by the number of chairs who felt they did not know where their  
193 home would be if we went back to the three dean model. I also believe that the work that we have  
194 done and the work that is happening at the school that is focusing on undergraduate liberal arts  
195 education through coordinated programs, improvement in ORSEM that the Dean's Office and  
196 Student Services have been working on, enrollment management of providing the classes that  
197 students need to be able to complete their GER and all the other emphases that we have put on  
198 student success by providing them with the classes and the support that they need to stay in school  
199 and to proceed towards graduation, was really supported by a unified deans model. That was a  
200 very important factor in my decision-making, as well as the general growth of complexity within  
201 CUNY in budget and enrollment management issues, which have an impact on whether we are able  
202 to serve our students.

203  
204 As I said, in choosing this model we are fully committed to providing the resources to support the  
205 Dean's Office. One of the issues that came up over and over again in all of the discussions was the  
206 question of whether you can get sufficient support for academic planning, curricular development,  
207 and faculty development through one dean, and the question of whether there can be a level of an  
208 associate or some type of intermediary level that can provide that type of intellectual community  
209 that many people recalled and really felt was lacking and what was the appropriate mechanism to  
210 do that. Is it associate deans, is it one associate dean, are they associate deans by subject matter, or  
211 is it by curricular or faculty support function. I felt that that is a decision that the school and  
212 specifically the chairs need to focus on and provide guidance for. So, I have spoken to the chairs of  
213 the School of Arts and Science and asked Dr. Frank Kirkland to take on the role of chairing an  
214 informal committee to discuss this question, and to make recommendations on how we fulfill the  
215 need that was clearly articulated. Frank has just agreed to do this and he is working on how to put  
216 together that committee, how to get that input, and also what the timetable is. I also want to say  
217 that we all owe a great debt of gratitude to Janet Robertson who has done as far I can see about six  
218 jobs. It has been truly extraordinary. By hiring the budget person, we will be able to free her up to  
219 focus on personnel issues and other types of administrative work in the office so that she does not  
220 have to be the sole person responsible for all the administrative functions.

227  
228 I will come back to talk to about the committee's suggestions, and we can have a conversation  
229 about how do we fill that role in the Dean's Office.  
230

231 Re: Search for Dean of the School of Education

232 The Chair of the Senate and I are conferring on how to restart the search. As many of you know,  
233 there were three candidates who came to campus for interviews. I carefully read the evaluations of  
234 faculty groups, students, administrators, and the references that the search firm provided that were  
235 very very extensive. But at the end of the day I did not feel comfortable that we had found our  
236 Dean of Education yet. So, we are going to restart the search.  
237

238 Re: Capital Campaign

239 The Chancellor will make an announcement about the campaign for the CUNY colleges in  
240 November. As I said last year, the College presidents were very adamant as a group that each  
241 campus have its own campaign, because we all feel strongly that we have our own identities, our  
242 own alumni base, our own philanthropic base, and that we want to be able to really go after the  
243 sources of funding that are out there for us. In the next couple of weeks I will be talking a lot  
244 about the Hunter Capital Campaign, and I will be asking for your help.  
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246 President Raab yielded the floor to Vice President Ayravainen, who said:  
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248 "For those of you who have not looked at the Registrar's new web page, please do so. We have  
249 loads of information about requirements, deadlines, exciting things that are happening. We also  
250 have something called E-advising and Linda Carlson and her staff have worked very hard to put  
251 new information on our web page. E-advising is not meant as a replacement to seeing advisors, but  
252 it does have commonly asked questions and answers. The Registrars web page is updated  
253 constantly with new information, and if you have any suggestions we will do everything in our  
254 power to make those suggestions a reality.  
255

256 A number of years ago the Senate passed a rule that says that a student who reaches the sixty-first  
257 credit must declare a major at the college (page 42 of the current Hunter College catalog). For a  
258 variety of reasons it has not been enforced. However, we find that at graduation audit we have  
259 students with well over one hundred credits who have never declared a major, but they think they  
260 have. They have a rude awakening at that time. We are now going to start enforcing that  
261 particular rule. We already have a list of students from our current student body with more than 61  
262 credits who have not declared their major. We are in the process of writing them a letter, indicating  
263 that they have up until November 1<sup>st</sup> to declare their major in a particular department or program.  
264 The letter will also indicate that if they have not declared their major by November 1<sup>st</sup> we will put  
265 a registration stop on their records so that they cannot register for the next term until they have  
266 actually declared a major, and that they should come to the Office of Student Services immediately  
267 so that they can be cleared for registration which usually happens around December 10th. This is  
268 extremely important for our students.  
269

270 The Provost and I discussed that we are also going to send a letter every semester to all students  
271 who have achieved 30 credits at the college, asking them to start thinking about declaring a major  
272 by investigating departments, reading literature, going on the websites, and discussion with their  
273 faculty what it is that they want to do and how to go about doing it so that they are getting used to  
274 the idea that they do have to declare a major in a timely manner. Graduate Audit is the area where  
275 the college certifies that a student has met all requirements for graduation. It is not an advising  
276 tool, and students should have seen advisors and should be familiar with College requirements for  
277 graduation prior to turning in the graduation audit form."  
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280 **Minutes**  
 281 **Meeting of the Hunter College Senate**  
 282 **8 September 2004**

283  
 284 Vice President Ayravainen yielded the floor to Provost Pizer, who said:

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 286 “Eija has phrased the issue well. The whole question about how students progress through Hunter  
 287 College, the kind of academic advising that they get, and the ways in which they choose courses  
 288 are at the heart of this. We get audited by the State, and under NY State guidelines, students who  
 289 have not declared a major by the 61-credit point are ineligible for TAP. There are currently over  
 290 1800 undergraduate students at Hunter with more than 61 credits who have not declared a major at  
 291 this point. That is more than 10% of our undergraduate student body of 15,000. We will look at  
 292 that group of students and work with them and the departments so that they will be able to declare  
 293 a major before spring registration.”  
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295 Provost Pizer yielded the floor to Vice President Ayravainen, who said:

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 297 “We also are in the process of sending another email memo to students about academic integrity  
 298 and student disciplinary procedures. Copies will be sent to faculty and staff as well. As you know,  
 299 the CUNY Board of Trustees approved a new policy on academic integrity last June. It does not  
 300 differ greatly from what we have already been doing. This memo will describe what the  
 301 procedures are, and what is expected of students and faculty at the college. If you do have any  
 302 questions or if you are uncertain about what to do, please call Dean Escott at 772-4876 or email  
 303 me.”  
 304

305 Vice President Ayravainen yielded the floor to Vice President Zinnanti, who said:

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 307 “I want to talk about a situation that is facing the College that is very important. The Chancellor  
 308 has signed a consent decree with the Federal Department of Environmental Protection, and all  
 309 CUNY colleges will be audited for compliance with EPA rules. This is a very serious matter,  
 310 because if we are found in violation we will be fined heavily, and the College is responsible for  
 311 paying those fines. This affects the Schools of Arts & Sciences, Health Professions, Campus  
 312 schools, as well as our Facilities area. The audit will begin in mid-October and will be conducted  
 313 by the firm of O’Brien & Gear on behalf of the EPA. The areas that we are very concerned about  
 314 are laboratories, studios, shops, and storage rooms. We are very concerned about the management  
 315 of chemicals, labeling, storage, and the disposal of chemicals as well as universal waste like  
 316 computer monitors and light bulbs. Ricardo Franco is our Director of Environmental Health and  
 317 Safety, and his phone number is 772-4462. Please call him if you have any issues that you think  
 318 are not in compliance with EPA guidelines that will place the College at risk. I would appreciate it  
 319 if you would report them directly to him or to me.”  
 320

321 **Report by the**  
 322 **Administrative**  
 323 **Committee:**

The Chair presented the report as follows:

**Election of Committee Chairs:**

324 She informed the Senate that the election of Chair for the Budget, Master Plan, and Charter Review  
 325 Committees would be postponed to the next meeting.  
 326

327 The floor was open for Chair of the Nominating Committee.

328  
 329 Dr. Marilyn Rothschild (Physics & Astronomy) was nominated.  
 330

331 It was moved that nominations be closed. The motion carried by voice vote. Dr. Rothschild was re-  
 332 elected Chair of the Nominating Committee.  
 333

**Amendment to College-Wide Search Procedures**

334 The motion on the floor was the addition of the following paragraph to section 3.A: *Search Committees*  
 335 *for College-wide Administrators* that would have the effect of adding three members of the staff to the  
 336 Search Committee:  
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344 “In the case of a search for **Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students** the Hunter  
345 College Senate shall elect a panel of 6 students and 8 faculty members from the pool of nominees  
346 in such a manner as to achieve the widest possible distribution among the divisions, and 6  
347 members of the staff from areas reporting to the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of  
348 Students. Nominations of members of the staff shall be made by petition submitted to the Senate  
349 Office of at least 25 signatures by members of the staff from areas reporting to the Vice President  
350 for Student Affairs and Dean of Students. From this panel the President shall choose a search  
351 committee consisting of 4 faculty members, 3 students, and 3 members of the staff.”  
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353 The motion was approved by voice vote after a brief objection by Dean Linda Chin.  
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355 The meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM because of the late hour.  
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357  
358 Respectfully submitted,  
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362 Anthony Picciano,  
363 Secretary  
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