

# MINUTES

## Meeting of the Hunter College Senate

### 8 November 2006

- 1 The 473<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Hunter College Senate was convened at 3:45 PM in Room W714.  
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- 3 **Presiding:** Kelle Jacob, Vice Chair  
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- 5 **Attendance:** The elected members of the Senate with the exception of those listed in Appendix I.  
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7 Alternate Senators were formally seated in accordance with the procedures approved by the Senate,  
8 and clickers were distributed to them.  
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- 10 **Agenda:** The revised agenda was adopted as distributed.  
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- 13 **Report by the** The Vice Chair presented the report as follows:  
14 **Administrative**  
15 **Committee:** **Election of Chair for Charter Review Committee**  
16 The floor was open for nominations for Chair of the Charter Review Committee.  
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18 Professor Pamela Mills (Chemistry) was nominated.  
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20 It was moved that nominations be closed. The motion carried.  
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22 It was moved that the Secretary be instructed to cast a single ballot in favor of the nominees. The  
23 motion carried by voice vote without dissent and Professor Mills was elected.  
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25 **Special Election to fill vacant seats on the Senate**  
26 In accordance with Article IV.2.H.i & ii of the *Charter for a Governance of Hunter College* the  
27 Administrative Committee presented the names of all nominees received to date:  
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29 **Students:**  
30 Jenny Alcaide (undeclared)  
31 Emily Bell Dinam (History)  
32 **Faculty:**  
33 Mary Lefkarites (Curriculum & Teaching)  
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35 It was moved that the entire slate be accepted. The motion carried by voice vote without dissent.  
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- 37 **Committee** **Nominating Committee**  
38 **Reports:** Dr. Marilyn Rothschild, Chair of the Committee, presented the report dated 8 November 2006 as  
39 follows:  
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41 1. Undergraduate Course of Study Committee: (Tuesdays 12-2)  
42 Faculty from Sciences & Math: Derrick Brazill (Biological Sciences)  
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44 2. Grade Appeals Committee  
45 Faculty: Mary Lefkarites (Curriculum & Teaching)  
46 Faculty Alternate: Ron Long (Religion)  
47 Student: Melissa Rosario  
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3. Graduate Course of Study & Academic Requirements Committee  
Faculty Alternate: Terrie Epstein (Curriculum & Teaching)
4. Undergraduate Academic Requirements Committee  
Faculty Alternate: Joyce Griffin-Sobel (Nursing)
5. Budget Committee  
Faculty from Education: Anthony Picciano (Curriculum & Teaching)  
Faculty from Humanities & Arts: Alan Hausman (Philosophy)  
Faculty from Health Professions: Susan Pivko (Physical Therapy)  
Faculty from Social Work: Elizabeth Danto
6. Departmental Governance Committee  
Faculty Alternate: Chuck Filanosky (Educational Foundations)
7. Calendar Committee  
Faculty from Education: Jenny Tuten (Curriculum & Teaching)
8. Committee on the Library:  
Faculty from Social Work: Annette Mahoney
9. Teacher Evaluations Committee  
Faculty Alternate: Migdalia Romero (Curriculum & Teaching)  
Student: Carrie Gonzalez
10. Evening Council  
Faculty from Education: Sally Milgrim (Curriculum & Teaching)  
Faculty at-large: Laurance Splitter (Curriculum & Teaching)  
Student: Valerie Wilkinson
11. Standing Committee on Academic Freedom  
Faculty from Sciences & Mathematics: William Sakas (Computer Science)  
Faculty from Humanities & Arts: Sarah Chinn (English)  
Faculty from Social Sciences: Barbara Welter (History)  
Faculty from Education: Migdalia Romero (Curriculum & Teaching)  
Faculty from Schools of Health Professions: Phil Alcabes (School of Health Sciences)  
Faculty from School of Social Work: Roger Sherwood  
Faculty from Library: Julio Hernandez Delgado  
Faculty At-large: Diana Conchada (Romance Languages)  
Faculty Alternate: Ruth Sidel (Sociology)  
Faculty Alternate: Ines Miyares (Geography)  
HEO Staff: Anthony Grande (School of Social Work)  
HEO Alternate: Dana Reimer (Geography)  
Ex-Officio: Provost Vita Rabinowitz
12. GER Appeals Committee  
Faculty Alternate: Wayne Harding (Chemistry)
13. Select Committee on the First Year Experience  
Faculty: Sara Dubow (Curriculum & Teaching)  
Student: Tin Thu (Sociology)  
Student Alternate: Carrie Gonzalez

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112 14. Select Committee on Performance Measures and Outcomes Assessment  
113 Faculty Alternate: Bill Williams (Mathematics & Statistics)  
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115 15. Charter Review Committee  
116 Faculty from Sciences & Mathematics: Ezra Shahn (Biology)  
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118 It was moved that nominations be closed. The motion carried.  
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120 It was moved that the Secretary be instructed to cast a single ballot in favor of the entire slate as a  
121 packet. The motion carried by voice vote without dissent.  
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123 **Report by the**  
124 **President:**

The following is a summary statement of President Raab's report to the Senate. She said:

125 "We had agreed with Richard who had asked that the Provost be invited to talk today about the  
126 *Campaign For Success* and the *Mellon Grant*, that we do it in somewhat of a joint presentation. I  
127 am going to give you a little bit of background as to how these two issues became a priority for us  
128 and for the College, and then turn it over to Vita.  
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130 As many of you know, we have been trying for the last few years to really focus on the student  
131 experience at Hunter College. This began as a Senate priority very soon after I arrived. I was  
132 asked by the Senate to create a Presidential Committee to look at the area of Student Services, and  
133 particularly how it was working in supporting our students. There was a College-wide Presidential  
134 Committee, chaired very ably by John Tronto that made a numbers of recommendations about the  
135 reorganization of the Student Services. We have implemented almost all of those. There was a big  
136 focus on improving advising, bringing in more advisers, and some of that we are now able to  
137 implement through the COMPACT. So that was a very positive development. We then tried to  
138 look very closely at some very specific long-standing problems of the College, and those are the  
139 issues of graduation rates and retention rates. And one of the biggest problems for all of our  
140 students that I heard continually was the issue of getting enough classes, of getting enough of the  
141 classes needed for the requirements, to begin a major, and getting them in the time needed not to  
142 waste a semester. That leads a student to get frustrated which leads to lack of interest and  
143 possible lack of retention.  
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145 So we have to offer more classes. We have previously spoken about the closed course report  
146 which was a good beginning, and we are now trying to take that to a more sophisticated level  
147 where we could see how students were trying to register for classes, what these classes were,  
148 when they were booked, how they tried again in another sequence until it was impossible for them  
149 to get into that class. We then were able to walk through the computer records. We were able to  
150 notify students and ask them if they would take that class this summer if it was offered. If they said  
151 "yes", we gave that course over the summer, and before we got to that remedy, we just tried to  
152 open sections very carefully. We have now moved to adding to the Adjunct Budget about \$1M a  
153 year, focused on the basic courses that students are trying to get in order to be able to graduate,  
154 and if that does not work, we will try to give these courses over this summer.  
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156 We have also tried to do something about our space problem, and we have worked with various  
157 departments. We are continuing to work at liberating more of the space here that doesn't get used  
158 for classes, and to schedule as many classes as possible. We are actually putting in two new  
159 classrooms of significant size in the vending machine space on the second floor. Everything is  
160 driven by how we offer students the classes that they need when they need it. We have had some  
161 success. The graduation rate has gone up a few percentage points and retention in the last five  
162 years has gone up five percentage points between the freshmen and sophomore year, and that is  
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year we were really concerned about. We are beginning to see an impact and we know that this is not enough and that there is much more to do.

In another area we have started a pilot program called “Nine to Twelve” which is asking a question of students: “How do we get you and how do we give you a financial incentive to move from nine credits to twelve credits a semester?” We are just beginning to just launch this, and we are finding that for some students it is an issue of money. If we can help them finance that fourth class so that they don’t have to work that one extra day or two afternoons a week so that they can take that class and move along towards graduation. We are trying to explore all the different confluences of factors that make it harder for our students to move along in their studies.

We are beginning to see some positive results but we are just not satisfied or we are not going to be satisfied until we feel that we are really giving all of our students an opportunity to graduate in six years. We would love it if it was four years but we are looking at a six years graduation rate that has to be significantly improved. Our efforts have coincided with the CUNY Campaign for Success that has the same goals. There are other focuses and that is what the Provost is going to speak about. We really need faculty support, whether it is for using technology in a class, when classes are given, whether there are more winter classes available, all these things are really in the purview of the faculty, and we are hoping to come together and pull all of our efforts towards this single goal.

We are going to talk about the Mellon Grant as well. I have been working with the Mellon Foundation for a number of years and it was clear that they were open to a request for a significant grant, and I knew they are interested in the undergraduate education. But there are also a number of other things that we do here at the College that could have been of interest to them. I decided to seek this support, to look at our undergraduate curriculum and particularly the requirements, and ask the question whether we have the most advanced and desirable Undergraduate Liberal Arts Education that we can provide our students. That is what the Mellon Grant is all about. It is to help us come together as a community to really talk about the undergraduate requirements, what a Hunter College Liberal Arts Education is, what it should be, and how we bring these two things together to support our students and help increase the graduation rate.

I am very happy to welcome the Provost to talk about these two subjects with which she has done a great deal of work.”

**Report by the Provost:**

The following is a summary statement of Provost Rabinowitz’ report to the Senate. She said:

“I very much appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today about three major college-wide initiatives that will affect the entire Hunter community and involve close collaborations among senior administrators, the Senate, the faculty, staff, and students. These are the Mellon Project, Hunter’s upcoming evaluation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, and CUNY’s Campaign for Student Success. Taken together, they may well determine whether we reach our highest and best destiny within the framework of Hunter’s distinct mission.

A confluence of these initiatives makes it opportune, indeed necessary, that we begin this conversation in earnest right now. In my time today I can only introduce them, but I hope that this is just the first of many conversations on these topics in many forums over the next several

221 months and years. My goal today is to set the stage for this journey and to interest you—faculty,  
222 staff, students, in joining in on what we hope will be a thoroughly engaging and galvanizing  
223 experience.  
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231 **Mellon Project**  
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233 As many of you know, thanks to the efforts of President Raab and a blue ribbon panel of  
234 academic leaders and advocates for students, Hunter College is the proud recipient of \$600,000  
235 from the Andrew Mellon Foundation. This grant calls for the assessment and improvement our  
236 undergraduate curriculum—from the first year experience to our graduate requirements, with a  
237 particular focus on our general education requirement. These goals and these funds will enable us  
238 to engage in a process similar to ones that are now going on in great institutions of higher learning  
239 throughout this country. Colleges all across the country are challenged to respond to the  
240 globalization of the world's economy, breathtaking technological advances, clashes of cultures  
241 and religions, and the decline in US dominance in key areas, including science, technology, and  
242 the arts. Increasingly, evidence suggests that college students in the new century have changed,  
243 and come to us with different skills, goals and expectations than those of students a generation or  
244 even a decade ago. Institutions of higher learning are rethinking what it means to be an educated  
245 person in the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Colleges like ours are pondering what the best liberal arts  
246 education in an urban public institution might look like. Meanwhile, faculty and administrators are  
247 increasingly being held accountable for the learning and performance of our students.  
248 Nationwide, the quality of student achievement, as measured by assessments of today's graduates,  
249 appears to be declining, and increasingly, we are challenged by a skeptical public to rethink what  
250 we are doing and how we are doing it.  
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252 Over the next weeks and months, we will be sharing with you some data on student achievement  
253 and satisfaction. You will see that, despite some recent gains and pockets of excellence, measures  
254 of Hunter students' engagement, satisfaction, performance, retention, and graduation rates are not  
255 where we want them to be. We can do better, and we must do better. The Mellon Project affords  
256 us the means and the opportunity to take stock and take action. You will be hearing soon about a  
257 variety of opportunities to learn more about the national discourse in higher education regarding  
258 the challenges, trends, and best practices in student learning, liberal arts education, general  
259 education, curricular renewal, and assessment of student learning. I sincerely hope that all of you  
260 will contribute to and learn from the activities of the Mellon Project, and that, in the coming  
261 months, we can identify a Mellon Task Force that will take this important work forward.  
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263 **Major Middle States Accreditation in Academic Year 2008-2009**  
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265 In academic year 2008-2009, Hunter College will undergo its regular ten-year evaluation process  
266 by our accrediting body, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. In fall of 2008, the  
267 final draft of our self-study and our supporting documents are due to the Commission, and our site  
268 visit will take place in spring 2009.  
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270 Under normal circumstances, preparation for the ten year review is an arduous, massive  
271 undertaking in which teams of faculty, students, staff and administrators evaluate virtually every  
272 aspect of institutional effectiveness from facilities and student life to graduate education and  
273 faculty research excellence. But, as my earlier remarks suggest, these are not ordinary times.  
274 Colleges are under unprecedented pressure to demonstrate that students have specific skills and  
275 meet explicit learning goals. Moreover, our accrediting agencies are themselves under fire for  
276 failing to hold colleges accountable for student learning outcomes and under threat of losing their  
277 franchise unless they toughen up and enforce standards. We can expect a rigorous review.

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As we know from Middle States' response to our Interim Review in 2003-2004, and as many of you heard more recently from the President, the state of the College is strong. Middle States found us a much improved institution from our last major review in 1997. We made solid gains in several

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key areas from finance and administration to student services to fundraising to the upgrading of facilities to the hiring of full time faculty. But there are fourteen accreditation standards that we must meet, and the emphasis is plainly on assessment of student learning. We have not institutionalized the assessment of student learning in the areas of general education and the majors within the School of Arts and Sciences, and for a variety of reasons, it is not easy to do so. But the call to assessment is not going away, and it should not go away. As many of you know, there is much for students and faculty to learn from good outcomes assessment. There are good models for this work within and beyond the college, and we must make real progress in institutionalizing assessment of student learning starting now.

In particular, we must move quickly to form a community-wide steering committee of faculty, staff, administrators and students to oversee the self-study process and to reinvigorate and reinforce our assessment committee. You will be hearing more from us about Middle States in the coming weeks, but we ask that you begin to consider how you can contribute to this vital effort.

**CUNY's Campaign for Success**

Finally, I want to formally introduce to you a CUNY-wide initiative that dovetails well with our goals for the Mellon Project and the Middle States Review, and more generally with the president's longstanding priorities for strengthening undergraduate education. This is the CUNY Campaign for Success, about which you have information in your packets. In brief, the presidents, provosts, and deans of students have been charged by CUNY with developing a comprehensive plan to improve the conditions for undergraduate student success. Specifically, we are asked to reexamine practices, reflect on the messages we communicate to students, and re-evaluate established structures, all with an eye to improving student engagement, performance, retention and graduation rates. Again, this is precisely our intent with the Mellon Project and it is compatible with our work for Middle States. But it is important to know that CUNY, in step with recent trends, is now explicitly holding the colleges accountable for these activities and these outcomes and is annually evaluating the colleges with respect to the goals of the campaign. You will be hearing more about Hunter's campaign for success as we go forward.

**Conclusions**

Colleagues, the Mellon Project, the Middle States Evaluation and the CFS are three major projects that will involve the sustained efforts of many people over several years. While each is distinct, they are clearly interrelated, and should draw strength from each other. Taken together, they challenge us to engage in continual evaluation of our curriculum and teaching, put student learning and student success at the heart of our efforts, and consider making fundamental changes in how we do what we do. No one imagines that this will be easy. And yet, given what is at stake, it is hard to imagine more important or engaging work. We owe our students nothing less than the best preparation for the world that awaits them: the best curricula, the best courses, the best academic supports, the best pedagogies, the best methods of assessment.

There is no going forward with any of this without the strong support of all stakeholders, but particularly the faculty. Obviously, the Hunter College Senate has a central role in to play in every one of these initiatives. The President, and the Offices of the Provost, Student Services and the

335 Finance and Budget hope to build that support starting now. We look forward to working with  
336 you to make Hunter College the best it can possibly be.”

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338 The Provost concluded her report by answering questions from the floor.  
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347 It was moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 4:45  
348 PM.

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352 Respectfully submitted,

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356 Jill Gross,  
357 Secretary

**APPENDIX I**

*The following members were noted as absent from the meeting:*

**Faculty**

Art	Richard Stapleford "E" Reiner Leist
Biological Sciences	Thomas Schmidt-Glenwinkel (A)
Chemistry	Pamela Mills "E"
Computer Science	William Sakas (A)
Economics	Jonathan Conning (A)
Educational Foundations	Peggy Chen "E"
Film & Media Studies	Tim Portlock (A)
Geography	Hongmian Gong (A)
Health Sciences	Jack Caravanos (A) Kathryn Rolland
History	Angelo Angelis (A)
Music	David Capps
Nursing	Leighsa Sharoff "E"
Physics/Astronomy	Ying-Chih Chen (A)
Psychology	Jeffrey Parsons (A)
School of Social Work	Carmen Moreno (A) Bernadette Hadden
Sociology	Juan Battle (A)
Special Education	Grace Lappin

**Ex-Officio**

Ahmed Tigani, USG President  
Sarit Levy, GSA President  
Sarah Jenincky, HEO Forum President  
Jason Ares, CLT Council President

**Students**

Jonathan Alexandratos (History)  
Anthony McRae (Music)  
Sivia Naimer (Economics)  
Lawrence James (Chemistry)  
Christopher Kenny (Poli.Sci.)  
Channel Mellish  
Tithi Ghosh (Math)  
Sharlene Hamlet  
Jian Jie Ren "E"  
James Wagstaff (Graduate)  
Marina Matatov (BA/MA)

**Lecturers and  
Part-Time Faculty**

Claus Mueller (Sociology)  
Joshua Grumet (Film&Media)  
Matthew Oles (German)  
Tami Gold (Film & Media)  
Barbara Sproul (Religion)