

TO: THE COLLEGE COMMUNITY

Respecting Governance at Hunter College

The *Charter for a Governance of Hunter College* (<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/senate/charter.htm>) establishes the Hunter College Senate as the governance body for the College. The Administrative Committee, which is charged to "Assure continuity of the Senate's business," is concerned with a number of developments at the College. The faculty and student representatives on the Administrative Committee believe that it is vitally important that a solid relationship be maintained between the administration of the College and its duly constituted governance body. In this regard we feel it is essential that the Senate and the administration maintain open communication, allow the free flow of information, and cooperate. In light of these concerns, the Senate Administrative Committee informs the Hunter College Senate and the College community of the following areas of concern:

1. Meetings with the President.

Traditionally, the President has met with the Administrative Committee. A meeting was scheduled for September 23. We were informed by the President's Office on Tuesday September 21 that she would not be able to meet with us and that she did not wish to reschedule the meeting. Our office has called the President's office a second and third time to ask that the meeting be rescheduled. We are concerned that the President has not yet met with the Administrative Committee this semester, hampering the process of governance and the free flow of information.

The next scheduled meeting of the President and the Administrative Committee is set for October 28.

2. Provision of Data to the Senate.

The *Charter For A Governance Of Hunter College* gives broad and important powers to the Senate, including:

"Curriculum and related education matters," "Academic requirements and standards of academic standing," "College development, review and forward planning of facilities, staff, and fiscal requirements," "Instruction and the evaluation of teaching," "Safeguarding the academic freedom of ALL members of the Hunter community," and "Other matters which may be subsequently assigned to the legislative prerogatives of Hunter College." (Article II, Section 1)

In order to effectively carry out these duties, Senate committees need information about the current status of many aspects of the College's functioning, including budget information, information about student performance, course offerings, and so forth. The Administration has been slow in providing the Senate with necessary information and in some cases has not complied with long-standing requests for information.

For example, the administrative committee asked all of the Deans to provide us with a breakdown, by department, program, and/or division, of their adjunct budgets in April 2004. We have not received these data yet. We received an oral reply from Acting Dean Cohen. We repeated this

request to Acting Dean Friedlander in September, since our concern is most acute in the School of Arts and Sciences. The Acting Dean of Arts and Sciences told us to get the data from the Provost. We have asked the Provost, who forwarded our request to the Vice President for Administration, who sent us a data set showing the gross adjunct budgets by School. We have not yet received the specific departmental and programmatic data that we requested. Faculty may remember that under the last duly selected Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, these data were regularly provided to department chairs and to the Senate.

For another example, we have requested, since their existence were first announced, that the “closed course analysis” data be made available to Senate committees, especially the Undergraduate Course of Study Committee. This request has been made repeatedly. No data have been forthcoming.

3. Search Procedures.

To lead to successful searches, the Charter requires cooperation between the President and the Hunter College Senate. In this regard, effective administrative searches in the academy are an extension of the principle that academic leadership is of the form of “*primum/prima inter pares*” (first among equals) rather than of other forms such as the assemblage of a unified management team.

The President must initiate a request to create a Search Committee. We are concerned that the timely replacement of acting administrators has not been observed. CUNY By-Laws require that special permission be granted for anyone to remain in an acting position for longer than *one year*. The current Acting Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences is now in her third year in this position. We have asked that this search begin repeatedly; it was also a part of the Senate Resolution of the Restructuring of Arts and Sciences adopted last Spring.

4. Appointment of an Acting Vice Provost.

Effective executive leadership, the collaborative nature of Hunter’s governance, and our search procedures, all imply that, as in the past, the Senate be consulted in changing administrative titles, lines, and responsibilities.

As the *Charter* makes clear, “Administrative Search Committees shall be constituted for all administrators (full deans and above) who, because of the nature of their policy making, have a significant impact on academic affairs and on the rights and welfare of the students and the faculty...” and “As new administrative positions or titles are created, they will be examined to see whether or not they satisfy the criteria” for searching.

The President created and appointed an acting “vice provost” (a title that is not officially among the titles at CUNY), without consulting with the Senate leadership and without the courtesy of informing us before the person she appointed began work at the College. Because a Vice-Provost is a key academic officer, it would have been especially appropriate to consult us before making this change. Not only would such consultation encourage the development of stronger relationships between the Senate and the administration, but it would also enhance decision-making and administrative capacity among the various academic programs directed by the Provost’s office and the overall curriculum and academic policies of the College.

We hope that by informing the Hunter College community of these concerns that we can all agree again about the importance of respecting the existing College governance structure.