

**Queensborough
Community College**
THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

**COMMITTEE ON
CEREMONIAL OCCASIONS**

Prof. Jeff Hest, Chair

June 15, 2005

TO: Dr. Emily Tai, Secretary, Academic Senate Steering Committee

FROM: Prof. Jeff Hest, Chair, Committee on Ceremonial Occasions

SUBJECT: Annual Report, 2004-2005 of the Committee on Ceremonial Occasions (*CoCO*)

COMMITTEE ON CEREMONIAL OCCASIONS and YEARLY ACTIVITIES

The *CoCO* met officially nine (9) times during the 2004-05 academic year (10/7/04, 10/20/04, 11/17/04, 1/25/05, 2/2/05, 3/23/05, 4/11/05, 5/4/05). A special meeting of the committee and personnel from all departments at the College involved in Commencement was held on 5/18/05. The first part of the meeting was held to go over the responsibilities agenda and clarify everyone's role. The second half of the meeting was held for the committee. The 2004-05 committee members included:

Committee Member

Jeff Hest, Chair
Holly O'Donnell, Secretary
Elaine Della Vecchia
Shannon Kincaid
Peter Marchitello

Eladia Raya
Margot Small

Pat Spradley

Department

Music
Basic Skills
Nursing
Social Sciences
Health, Physical Education and
Dance
Foreign Languages and Literature
Mathematics and Computer
Science
Social Sciences

In addition to the Committee members' contributions, Ms. Millie Conte (Office of the President) and Ms. Susan Agin, Administrative Representative (Box Office) provided invaluable assistance.

Thanks also to Mr. Joseph Cartolano, Mr. Joseph Cunningham, Ms. Susan Curtis, Ms. Ardelle Donohue, Ms. Sofia Foglia, Dr. Ellen Hartigan, Mr. David Moretti, Mr. Bruce Naples, Ms. Gisela Rivera, Ms. Rosalind Rosencrantz, and Ms. Monica Stancanelli, whose contributions are greatly appreciated.

The administrative aspects of the *CoCO* are conducted under the auspices of the Office of the President. Other offices involved in the planning and execution of the Commencement activities included: Academic Affairs, Box Office, Buildings and Grounds, Campus Planning, Central Receiving, Information Technology, Development & Alumni Relations, Homebound Office, Institutional Advancement, Metropolitan Food Service, Mailroom, Sponsored Programs, Printing Services, Publications, Purchasing, QCC/QSA Association, Registrar, Security and Safety, Telephone Services, and the academic departments. Each office played a significant role in the success of the graduation.

I. **INFORMATION: MAILINGS, WEBSITE, POSTERS, ETC.**

The *CoCO* coordinated the composing and mailing of the Commencement information brochures and posters. In January, Prof. Hest composed letters to advise potential graduates from August '04, January '05 and June '06 of their impending Commencement. He congratulated them and reminded them of the importance of the occasion, outlined the procedures to purchase Caps and Gowns and advised them of Rehearsal and Commencement dates. He composed a follow-up letter in early April, and again supervised the mailing to all potential graduates. Prof. Hest also sent e-mails to all Faculty, informing them of the Administration's decision to have a tent to protect against the elements, and to enthusiastically invite them to participate in the Commencement exercises. Information was mailed to students and posted on campus throughout the spring semester to encourage students to file for graduation. Information was included on the QCC Website. Students and faculty were given updated information regarding Filing, Graduation Fee, Purchasing of Caps and Gowns, Graduation Hotline and Commencement Regalia. Ms. Agin, Prof. Marchitello and Prof. Raya compiled and disseminated this information. The Graduation Hotline was established to provide students with continual access to current information. Students were able to speak to a live person during regular business hours; Ms. Agin and the Box Office staff handled calls. After hours, callers were greeted with a recorded message providing current detailed information. The Committee was also involved with food (Prof. Spradley, Prof. O'Donnell and Prof. DellaVecchia), music (Prof. Hest) ornamental equipment and floral arrangements, (Prof. Raya and Prof. Small), Bayside Volunteer Ambulance (Prof. DellaVecchia and Prof. Spradley), photographer and DVD sales (Prof. DellaVecchia and Prof. Kincaid), and signs and badges (Professors Raya, DellaVecchia and Small).

III. **ACADEMIC ATTIRE: CAPS & GOWNS**

The distribution of student caps and gowns was coordinated by the on-campus Barnes and Noble Bookstore. Students were required to pay \$33.25 plus tax (\$38.70 total) for a cap and gown in addition to the regular filing fee of \$19.00 for graduation.

The Bookstore continued selling student cap and gowns up-to-and-including the morning of Commencement (Friday, June 3, 2005). Ms. Agin tracked the purchase of student cap and gown orders.

Professors Kincaid and O'Donnell handled the faculty cap and gown orders. In addition to the usual lackadaisical response to their e-mails sent to Faculty, they experienced an inordinate amount of difficulty dealing with Steve Clarke, the representative from Herff Jones Cap and Gown Company. Clarke proved to be almost completely non-responsive to their questions and concerns. His unreasonable and un-business like demeanor created an enormous and unreasonable work-load for these *CoCO* members. Clarke also refused to live up to his promises on numerous occasions, most egregiously in regard to distribution hours for Faculty. The sincere recommendation of Professors Kincaid and O'Donnell, which is totally supported by the Chair, is that Herff Jones be replaced next year.

Faculty caps and gowns were distributed on:

Weds.	June1, '05	9:00–10:00am	Rm. M-136
Fri.	June3, '05	8:00- 8:30 am	Rm. M-136

IV. REHEARSAL and CEREMONY

Rehearsal for graduation took place on Wednesday, June 1, 2005, at 8:30 AM in the Humanities Theater, which had been laboriously cordoned off with tape the night before into appropriate sections with myriad signs posted by Ms. Conte and Professors Kincaid, Cesarano and Hest. It concluded in a processional march outdoors to, and onto, the Athletic Field.

Queensborough's Forty-Fourth Commencement exercises were held outdoors on Friday, June 3, 2005 on the Athletic Field. The total available seats numbered approximately 2,250 to accommodate all graduates, guests and faculty. All potential graduates, all Faculty, all members of the platform party and most guests were protected against the sun (which was not as strong the previous year) by a large tent rented from the Ace Party Rental Company. In compliance with New York State regulations regarding individuals with disabilities, Ace Party Rental Company also erected ramps leading on and off the stage. Approximately 500 graduates attended this year's Commencement. The number of faculty members who attended was approximately 110. The number of dignitaries attending totaled 5.

V. MARSHALS

The following Commencement Marshals, led by this year's Grand Marshal, Dr. Dinah Moche did a commendable job. The marshals' efforts to line up the students, seat them, and correctly pronounce students' names were invaluable.

<u>Marshal</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
Dr. Jonas Falik, Business	Faculty
Dr. Maureen Wallace, Nursing	Dignitaries
Dr. Jacob Appleman, Mathematics and Computer Science	A.A. Graduates
Dr. JoAnn Wein, Art and Photography	A.A. Grads
Dr. Paris Svoronos, Chemistry	A.S. Grads
Dr. Melvin Gorelick, Biological Sciences and Geology	A.S. Grads
Prof. Jean Murley, English	A.A.S. Grads

Dr. David Lieberman, Physics	A.A.S. Grads
Dr. Joseph Nagler, Music	A.A.S. Grads
Dr. Anita Ferdenzi, Social Sciences	A.A.S. Grads
Dr. Patricia Allaire, Mathematics and Computer Science	Certificate Marshal

VI. BANNERS

Two banners (approximately 25' long) reading "*CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES*" were hung several days prior to Commencement. One of the signs was hung outside the entrance to the Administration Building, and the other banner was near the entrance to the Athletic Field. Additional banners (6' high) with the QCC logo were suspended from the poles in the main parking lot.

During the processional, the first graduate in each degree group carried a degree banner. The four degree banners (A.A., A.S., A.A.S. and Certificate) were then placed in holders to the right and left of the stage. All of the banners contributed to the festive mood of the celebration week and graduation ceremony.

VII. PHYSICAL PREPARATIONS FOR THE CEREMONIES

Ace Party Rental Company provided the tent, the stage (20' x 42' 2.5' high), two ramps, (each 4' x 24'), railings and steps, approximately 2,300 chairs, and stanchions. Under the supervision of Mr. Joseph Cunningham (Director of Security), the College assumed the responsibility for the security of the stage.

Ms. Agin contracted with All Affairs Chair Rental provided ten (10) portable toilets (including one wheelchair accessible toilet), toilet paper and paper towels. The portable toilets were placed near the southwest corner of the tennis courts.

Prof. Marchitello made the arrangements with the Coca Cola company to provide 1300 bottles of Dasani water, gratis, for the Commencement Ceremony. The bottles were placed under the seats of all graduates, faculty members and platform party members.

Building and Grounds personnel, under the direction of Mr. Joe Cartolano, provided various physical arrangements, structures and services required for this complex operation. Building and Grounds also supervised the construction of the stage and all electrical connections. Special accommodations were made for QCC graduates with disabilities participating in the commencement ceremony—several students were seated in the front row and joined the graduation line to receive diploma covers and shake the President's hand.

VIII. SPEAKERS & AWARDS

During the Commencement Ceremony, greetings were offered by: The Honorable Jay Hershenson, CUNY Board of Trustees; Charles Schumer, United States Senator from the State of New York; New York State Senator Frank Padavan; Queens Borough President Helen Marshall; New York City Councilman David Weprin; Dr. Sheena Gillespie, Chairperson, Faculty Executive Committee; and Bonnie Duen, President, Queensborough Student Government. President Eduardo J. Martí was the main speaker. The keynote speaker was Michael Bloomberg, Mayor of the City of New York.

The President’s Award, for achieving the highest scholastic average was given to Leonie P. Peele. The recipient of this award is considered to be the Valedictorian of the graduating class. The award for achieving the second highest average was given to Eri Sugiura. The recipient of this award is considered to be the Salutarian of the graduating class.

IX. MUSIC, SOUND & VIDEO

The Royal Brass, Inc. performed the music for the processional and recessional, and after several auditions, Queensborough student Devin Olivas was chosen to perform the National Anthem. Ms. Agin led the graduates in the singing of the Alma Mater. Mr. John Funke, Box Office, directed the installation and operation of the sound system by Pragmatech Sound Corporation. Mr. Phillip Roncoroni, under the supervision of Mr. Bruce Naples of the Academic Computing Center produced a video recording the ceremony. This video recording serves as an archive for the college of the event. The finished, edited recording was offered for sale on DVD to students for \$25 through the QCC website.. Orders for DVDs can be purchased online through September 3, 2005, on the website. The finished, duplicated DVDs are scheduled for delivery to Queensborough for pick-up through the QSA beginning Monday, October 3, 2005.

X. RECEPTION

A cake and punch reception, catered by Metropolitan Food Services, was held for all graduates and their guests on the eastern side of the tennis courts following the ceremony.

XI. COMMITTEE FOR 2005-06

Members of the CoCO for 2005-06 include:

<u>Committee Member</u>	<u>Department</u>
Holly O’Donnell, Co-Chair	Basic Skills
Shannon Kincaid, Co-Chair	Social Sciences
Antonella Ansani	Foreign Languages and Literature
Elaine DellaVecchia	Nursing
A. Cohen	
H. Dougherty	
S. Sciammarella	

On May 18, 2005, elections were held for the positions of Chairperson of the Committee on Ceremonial Occasions for the 2005-20056 academic year.. The results of this election were as follows: Shannon Kincaid and Holly O’Donnell were elected Co- Chairpersons, for the 2005-2006 academic year. A vote for Secretary will be held at the first COCO meeting in the Fall.

XII. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Herff-Jones should be replaced by another supplier of Academic Attire who would appreciate our business.
- Communication between CoCO members and the Administration should be improved in order to obviate any confusion over last minute changes in procedure at the tent
- Prospective Marshals should be canvassed to gauge their commitment and desire to be involved in the Rehearsal as well as the Commencement process.
- The time set for Rehearsal should not be unnecessarily early in the morning, as many feel that this has the effect of dissuading both Faculty and students from attending.
- The name of the Department that each Marshal represents should be omitted from any Degree signs at Rehearsal and day of, so as not to confuse students.
- Someone must be appointed to make sure that signs and designated seating area boundaries not be removed between Rehearsal and day of.
- That same person should ascertain that the microphone and podium be ready on stage both for Rehearsal and day of.
- The Committee should reconsider the practice of having the names of students on cards, insofar as several graduates crossed the stage and then raced to the porta-potties. Several others crossed the stage out of order because they stopped to chat or pose for pictures. These confusing practices present real opportunities to have graduates officially photographed out of the order that the cards are received by the official photographers.
- Faculty who are part of the “gauntlet” to greet potential graduates should be accessible to receive instructions from the members of CoCO, and ready to go into formation.
- The tent should be retained as a permanent item, as it provides shelter and inspires confidence among those who want to attend.

Respectfully Submitted,

Prof. Jeff Hest, Chairperson, Committee on
Ceremonial Occasions, 2004-2005