

## **STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT**

### **1. Senate Matters: Composition and Membership**

As several senators have noted, the Senate meeting of February 10, 2009 will be the second Academic Senate meeting of this academic year scheduled for a Tuesday during which the University has scheduled non-Tuesday classes. In the coming academic year, the By-Laws amendment that addresses this problem, adopted in fall, 2008, will be honored to avoid further recurrence of this situation. The Steering Committee has been extremely grateful to those Senators who have been kind enough to notify us that their alternate schedules would prevent their attendance at an Academic Senate meeting.

The Steering Committee and the Committee on Committees have nevertheless noted a few instances in which it would seem that elected Senators have been absent due to other, unexplained factors. We are also anxious to verify that there is full representation on all Committees of the Academic Senate, given the important work each committee has been charged with in the midst of Queensborough's Middle States Accreditation process.

For this reason, Dr. Jannette Urciuoli, Chair of the Committee on Committees, is in the process of sending out a mid-year query to all Department Chairs and Chairs of Committees of the Academic Senate, asking that she be notified if there are any senators or committee members who have been or will be prevented from representing their departments in the Academic Senate or from committee service by a scheduling conflict or personal circumstance. The Steering Committee has already been altered of one such instance. Once we know if there are other senators who cannot serve, the Steering Committee, acting in concert with the Committee on Committees, will be able to review the Alternate list, to see which alternate Senators might act as appropriate replacements. This information will also be of service to members of the Academic Senate currently serving as Alternates who might wish to run for reappointment for their one-year terms this spring.

Dr. Urciuoli has indicated how she can be reached if chairpersons wish to consult with her in the e-mail she's sent. Please be advised that I am also available on Thursday afternoons, in my office in Medical Arts 413--my office phone number is 718.581.2081 if this is more convenient. The Steering Committee and Committee on Committees is committed to maintaining a quorum in the Academic Senate and on all committees, and so we are grateful to everyone for their assistance in this matter.

### **2. Committee Matters: Composition and Membership**

The Committee on Committees reports that it has voted to appoint Professor Jung Min-Cho (Library) to replace Professor Sharon Lall-Ramnarine (Chemistry), who will be on maternity leave this Spring, on the Academic Senate Committee on Admissions. Professor Cho's reassignment to the Committee on Admissions means that she will no longer serve as Steering Committee Designee to the Committee on Admissions, and so

the Committee on Committees has elected Professor Pellegrino Manfra (Social Sciences) to serve as the new Steering Committee Designee to the Committee on Admissions.

### 3. Committee Matters: Activities

The current imperative to find ways to accommodate Queensborough's recent surge in enrollment, together with trends reported in the 2007 Distance Education Survey of the Instructional Technology Council of the American Association of Community Colleges that document a growing student interest in E-learning and Distance education, have renewed the interest among Queensborough faculty in developing on-line programs and courses.<sup>1</sup> This month's Academic Senate agenda includes several items relevant to the future of Distance Education at Queensborough, reflecting the collaborative work of several committees:

- Over the months of November, 2008-January, 2009, members of the Committees on Academic Development and Elective Programs and Distance Education laid the ground work for meaningful assessment and student feedback to instructors in asynchronous Distance Education courses by collaborating to create a "Student Evaluation of Faculty Form" that differs from the Student Evaluation form submitted to students enrolled in traditional classroom settings. As the report from the Chair of the Committee on Academic Development and Elective Program shows, this form reflects the special needs and concerns of on-line students and instructors.
- The Committee on Distance Education has also developed a "Guidelines" document that builds upon the previous transactions of the Committee on Distance Education in articulating "best practices" for instruction in on-line courses, regarding such matters as length of time between instructor/student communications, and how student evaluation might be best handled in the event of technology breakdowns and other emergencies. The Distance Education Committee is hoping to have this material ready for the review of the Academic Senate by later this Spring.
- The Committee on Distance Education is calling, finally, for the formulation of a Sub-committee to Develop Online Programs. This subcommittee would examine the possibility that some programs currently offered at Queensborough might be offered in on-line form, or that new programs might be developed as courses offered primarily in asynchronous form.

The members of the Committee on Distance Education and the Steering Committee are in agreement that the assembly of such a sub-committee might carry several advantages: first, it would address the potential that on-line programs may have to bring new enrollment to Queensborough from among older non-traditional students who find it difficult to travel to campus even for evening courses; second, it would allow individual departments to consider adding on-line sections of courses so as to avoid placing further pressure on limited classroom space; third, it would identify courses and programs that do

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<sup>1</sup> This report is available at <http://www.itcnetwork.org/file.php?file=%2F1%2FITCAnnualSurveyMarch2008.pdf>

not currently enroll large numbers of traditional students but might enjoy higher enrollments in on-line form; and, finally, such a sub-committee might identify types of courses that might lend themselves felicitously to on-line instruction. The Steering Committee has, for example, raised the possibility that Writing Intensive courses might be offered on line, and invited the Committee on Distance Education to collaborate with the members of the Committee on WID/WAC to consider this option during the Spring semester.

Ideally, such a committee should have representation from all academic departments. Although it is possible that such a wide representation may prove unwieldy and require modification down the line, the Steering Committee is therefore inviting department chairs to nominate a representative from each department to serve on this sub-committee in order to assemble a group that could begin deliberations by late March. The Committee on Distance Education and the Steering Committee are imagining on-line program development as a collaborative process that should involve all of Queensborough's departments, because many of our programs include general education requirements that will compel a spectrum of courses to be developed in on-line as well as classroom form. The Steering Committee will also urge members of this sub-committee to reflect upon the ways in which on-line learning might be fit into the Academy Structure currently being crafted for next year's class of Queensborough Freshmen.

The Steering Committee wishes to renew its thanks to the members of the Committee on Distance Education and Academic Development and Elective Programs for their fruitful collaboration, and believes this new effort to develop on-line courses will also be extremely beneficial to our college.

The Steering Committee would also like to take this opportunity to thank the members of Queensborough's office of Environmental Health and Safety for cooperating with the Committee on Environment, Quality of Life, and Disability Issues concerning the conduct of the recently completed phases of the Asbestos abatement project.

#### **4. University and College Matters with Direct Bearing on The Senate**

As some members of the Senate may be aware, the Library Faculty have been at work since the summer of 2006 on a project to reconfigure space in Schmeller Library to create collaborative learning spaces that would facilitate the implementation of Queensborough's Learning Academies as well as, more generally, the creation of a "hybrid library" such as is outlined in the most recent CUNY Master Plan:

“where library services are seamlessly integrated with technology help desks, student writing centers, and group study spaces that facilitate collaborative learning.”<sup>2</sup>

In several conversations and correspondence the Steering Committee has engaged in with Professor Galvin, Chief Librarian of Schmeller Library, and members of the library faculty, the library staff has cited research that such a reconfiguration is necessary to meet the needs of contemporary students who are most likely to be heavily reliant upon collaboration and technology in their learning. Members of the library faculty have also been deeply concerned that Schmeller Library's resources—including the guidance that members of the library faculty are prepared to offer students in the areas of library research and information literacy—are not being adequately utilized. Members of the library faculty are anxious to work with the instructional faculty to reinforce classroom learning by furnishing students with a place to undertake research, work through assignments, and engage in quiet study.

Over the past few months, members of the Library staff have accordingly been paring down Schmeller Library's older holdings, to make room for new acquisitions and collaborative learning spaces for students by moving approximately 4000-6000 volumes either into storage or “largesse” collections that would be offered to libraries in other units of CUNY.

The Steering Committee has had several conversations with the director of the library, Professor Jeannie Galvin, concerning the implications of this reconfiguration of the library's collection for teaching and learning at Queensborough. The Steering Committee recognizes that the impact of this diminution of Queensborough's book collection may be limited, given the vast resources to which CUNY faculty and students now have access through CUNY's internet subscriptions to such on-line collections as JSTOR and Project Muse (available at the Library portal), as well as access to other CUNY libraries through CUNY Plus and “Clicks.” Indeed, the library faculty have been quite emphatic that they expect the impact of the library's “weeding” project upon teaching and learning at Queensborough to be minimal.

The Steering Committee is nevertheless pleased to announce that the Library Faculty has agreed, as of Thursday, January 15, to share its lists of volumes offered as potential largesse to other CUNY libraries with all faculty members, in order to safeguard against the possibility that the elimination of certain volumes might hamper teaching and learning more than might have been anticipated, particularly in the area of course development and the formulation of capstone projects in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Members of faculty interested in acquiring volumes from this list are asked to indicate the list number for the book

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<sup>2</sup> CUNY Master Plan, 2008-2012, p. 59, available at [http://web.cuny.edu/administration/chancellor/materplan\\_08\\_12.pdf](http://web.cuny.edu/administration/chancellor/materplan_08_12.pdf)

The Steering Committee wishes to thank Professor Jeanne Galvin for bringing this reference to our attention.

of interest and to claim their books at the library. Where multiple requests for a book may occur, the Library faculty has very graciously agreed to reconsider eliminating a book from Schmeller's collection.

The Steering Committee wishes to thank Professor Galvin and the entire Library faculty, for their extraordinary effort and trouble in this matter. We hope the Library faculty's willingness to share these Largesse lists, despite the inconvenience this might impose—and the response of faculty to these lists, which has apparently been very positive—represents the first step in a closer collaboration between library faculty and faculty members in Queensborough's academic departments that will help our students master both their course work, and the broader skills of library research they will require to make further progress in their academic and professional lives.