

QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
The City University of New York

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, QUALITY OF LIFE AND DISABILITY
ISSUES of the ACADEMIC SENATE

TO: Devin McKay, Secretary, Academic Senate Steering Committee

FROM: Georgina Colalillo, co-Chairperson, Committee on Environment, Quality of Life and Disability Issues

SUBJECT: Annual Report of the Committee on Environment Quality of Life and Disability Issues for September 2008- May 2009

DATE: August 26, 2009

Committee Members: Diane M. Carey, Secretary; Georgina Colalillo, co-Chairperson; Young Kim; Holly O'Donnell, co-Chairperson; Patricia Spradley
Steering Committee Designee: Marilyn Katz
Committee on Committees Liaison: Regina Rochford
Student Representative: Marvin Young

Date committee met and times it meets regularly: The Committee on Environment, Quality of Life and Disability Issues met six times during the 2008-2009 academic year: September 16, October 16, November 11, December 9, March 12 and April 30. Meetings were held on Tuesdays in the Fall and Thursdays in the Spring usually at 3:30 or 4:00 p.m.

Narrative summary of committee work and report on status of prior recommendations:

The Committee worked on the following bylaws charges:

- Through a process that involves the administration, formulate and recommend to the Academic Senate policies and practices pertaining to the College environment in matters of health, safety, security, maintenance and allocation of facilities.
- Evaluate and report to the Academic Senate on the administrative response to problems in the College environment
- Receive all proposals concerning naming and renaming campus facilities and make appropriate recommendations
- Review and report on College Master Plan regarding facilities and campus environment

- Review the assessment of the campus with regard to services for students with disabilities and disability issues as the assessment relates and pertains to the campus environment and campus facilities and make appropriate recommendations to the Academic Senate.

In addition, the Committee worked on the following specific charges from the Steering Committee:

- Report on current use of space re: student classroom and faculty offices
- Create subcommittee to review and report on College Master Plan- involve all parts of the community in comments and suggestion
- Review the College assessment of the Early College High School proposal for environmental impact on the College and its facilities, services and programs
- Obtain from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities an annual assessment of the campus with regard to such.
- Solicit student designees- determine possibility soliciting student designee(s) from disability office.
- Work with administration and possible a student/faculty/administration task force to implement structural changes to support CUNY sustainability initiative.
- Work with Administration to assist with any continuing action items related to the Summer 08 and winter Intercession 09 Asbestos Abatement Project.

Space Allocation/Utilization:

Queensborough Community College (QCC) has been experiencing a steady trend of increased student enrollment (with more full-time students) and this necessitated reshuffling, restructuring and the creation of new instructional spaces in the Technology Building. Diane Call reports that three new instructional spaces (2 classrooms) in the Technology Building have been created. These rooms are ADA accessible and full utilization began. Modular classrooms have been placed behind the “Z” building and are fully operational. These changes are expected to relieve some of the increased demand for space and help with scheduling difficulties.

Summer Projects include: remodeling of LB 30 to create three new spaces, new fencing around the perimeter of campus, a Pergola on the lawn between the “C” building and the Oakland Building.

CUNY’s Central Space Management Team visited the campus in October, 2008. The Committee will follow-up on the report when it becomes available.

With regard to plans for Early College Classrooms on QCC campus, there is a decreased interest in this due to: space and location issues, age difference of students and increased

suicide rate associated with young students. The committee will communicate with the Steering Committee about the possibility of removing this charge.

QCC is in the process of Middle States Self-study. One of the issues identified was space. At a meeting of the Academic Senate, there was a discussion on college policies regarding admission and classroom space. It was indicated that the task force on scheduling would be evaluating this.

Student Designees:

Student representation at committees of the Academic Senate was identified as an important initiative to support shared governance and improve student life on campus. Marvin Young, who serves in the QCC Student Government Association as Vice President for Evening Students attended most of the Committee's Fall, 2008 meetings. He did not attend meetings in Spring 2009. The student actively participated in discussions and provided input on major issues.

Parking Issues:

Marvin Young, Student Representative, distributed copies of the SGA Parking Proposal, which he explained will help make student parking more efficient. Currently students must navigate the perpetually full parking lots as well as the inconvenient token system. The proposal would allow student to use a refillable swipe card to park instead of constantly purchasing individual parking tokens. The proposed system would be more convenient. A copy of the proposal was presented to committee members.

VP Call and Mel Rodriquez noted that there is a task force on ID cards. This task force is working on the possibility of providing students with an "all-in-one" card that could be used for parking, the cafeteria, the library, etc. VP Call and Mr. Rodriquez will keep the committee updated on the task force's progress.

Infrastructure:

During the Summer/Fall 2008, the College experienced serious electrical power issues as a result of storms and water flooding into the vaults. Complicating the issue, the emergency back-up generators started to fail and the fuel filters clogged. Emergency generators were put into effect and required monitoring at night by engineers. Buildings & Grounds (B&G) and Information Technology (IT) worked around-the-clock in order to repair the resulting problems as quickly as possible and to ensure that the situation did not cause a lengthy inconvenience for students, faculty and staff.

VP Call reported that Con Edison partnered with QCC and leased transformers to college for four month. The campus electrical equipment is antiquated and the college desperately needs an upgrade of the entire electrical system. Budgetary constraints make such a project impossible at this time with the many fiscal uncertainties plaguing the city

and state budgets. CUNY currently has only about one third of the required funds set aside for QCC's electrical issues. The resolution is to settle for repairs at this time with plans for an upgrade when more funds become available. All buildings have power. The transformer site was barricaded and pedestrian traffic near the site was re-routed as a safety precaution. No reported incidences during resolution of this problem.

Construction and Renovations:

- Renovations Involving Asbestos Abatement - Summer 2008 and January 2009. Major renovations involving removal of floor tiles/asbestos abatement in the Science Building Floors 2 and 4 took place in the summer, 2008 and Science Building Floor 3 completed during semester break, January 2009. Mel Rodriguez reported that air monitoring was conducted during the abatement projects. He reported that several PSC Health and Safety Watchdog representatives performed a "walk through" of the renovated areas early in the Fall 2008 semester. The Committee requested the report on the walk-through for review. Mel Rodriguez provided an update after the January, 2009 abatement. He was provided with daily air monitoring reports during several phases of the project. None of the data provided showed any airborne asbestos levels that would cause concern. Mel Rodriguez has been involved throughout the process to oversee compliance. The Committee will continue to monitor as renovations continue. Administration is responsive and is following all precautions for relocating departments as necessary.
- Harriet Kupferberg Holocaust Resource Center (HKHRC): Construction on the Holocaust Resource Center is near completion. Expected date of completion is Fall, 2009. The Committee continually receives and reviews updates related to construction site. Reports on the construction project have been positive. Student Representative Marvin Young expressed concerns about how the HKHRC will be powered. VP Call reported that the electricity will come from the existing system. The campus also has been evaluated by Con Edison to determine if it is a candidate for solar powered energy. QCC has been placed on a list to receive solar panels but this will take some time.
- Main Gate/Parking in Lot #1: Access to the main entrance parking area (Parking Lot #1) is undergoing renovations. In order to complete the work on the above in the timeframe required, the Contractor has requested that the main gate be blocked until further notice. Therefore, the Main Gate will be completely blocked until further notice. Access

will be diverted to the entrance from Cloverdale Blvd. in order to enter and exit Parking Lot #1.

This temporary inconvenience will allow the work to be completed faster and provide a safe working environment for the contractors as well as safe passage for the persons entering the campus. The Committee has been monitoring the progression of this project.

Don Rainey, CUNY Campus Facility Officer, has vacated this position. No replacement has been announced at this time. Jim Fox is the contact person until a replacement is found.

Campus Safety and Security:

The Campus Security Report and the Sex Offender Report was reviewed for 2008. The Report includes an explanation of the availability of escorts for faculty during late hours and isolated areas.

A Campus Advisory was sent out on the QCC community dialogue - October, 2008 – an incident occurred on campus with student/visitor in possession of illegal drugs. The local police precinct was involved and the issue was resolved without incident.

Campus Public Safety pamphlets were distributed to Committee and reviewed. These are published annually and can also be found on the QCC website.

- CUNY Alert: Registration online is available. Enrollment is growing steadily. Marvin Young will discuss with QCC SGA about getting the message out for students to enroll. CUNY Alert was successfully used during the power failure on campus in Summer, 2008 and during the snow emergency in Spring, 2009.
- Emergency Procedure Quick Guide: was developed by Public Safety Department and distributed campus-wide. It was suggested that all department should familiarize themselves with the procedures and keep the guide handy.
- Closed circuit surveillance cameras have been installed throughout the campus for the full implementation of the CUNY Alert System.
- Digital signage was installed on campus, exterior sirens were installed to add to the campus alert system

- Each floor/Department has a designated fire coordinator. These designated individuals completed a Fire Safety Training course and they were provided a brightly colored vest, whistle and flashlight.
- Mel Rodriguez receives a list each semester with the location of students with disabilities.

There is a periodic test of the speakers on the **Emergency Voice Alert System** throughout the campus. Notification of testing is sent via the QCC community dialogue. The purpose of this system is to provide pre-scripted emergency alert notifications in the event of serious emergencies on campus.

College Health & Environment Issues:

HEALTH:

- **Second Hand Smoke:**

The issue of second-hand smoke and complaints from faculty and students has been a recurrent issue. The problem areas are: the entrance of the buildings, particularly the Science Building from the courtyard outside the cafeteria. The problem becomes intensified in the colder months when individuals smoke closer to buildings and smoke permeates through doors and vents. There were also complaints that the cigarette odor enters the buildings from the garbage receptacles that sit close to the buildings. Although free standing cigarette disposals are provided on campus, they are not utilized. The Committee discussed the possibility of signage to be placed on buildings stating permissible distance from the building for smokers to stand. In addition, it was recommended that the garbage receptacles should be distanced from the entrances of the buildings. Relocating the garbage receptacles provided a partial solution but complaints continue. The dialog of the college community is leaning toward have a smoke-free campus. Second hand smoke is not only unhealthy; it detracts from the appearance of the campus due to inappropriate disposal of cigarette butts. The Committee discussed the possibility of recommending a no smoking policy for outside areas or having areas designated for smoking on campus. The discussion centered on these main issues:

- Where would students, faculty and staff smoke if the campus was smoke-free? Leaving campus could be a safety concern.
- Would the policy address students, faculty/staff and visitors?
- What would the penalties be?
- Who would enforce the policy?
- Who would adjudicate the cases?
- What would be the consequences of dedicated space for smoking?

The Committee looked at alternate solutions to the problem such as health education:

- Student Health Services – Isabel Hocevar has established an active smoking cessation program on campus that is sponsored by NYS – it is available free to students, faculty/staff and the community.
- Nursing students participate in QCC health fair in December and educate the campus community on smoking.
- Smoking cessation information is advertised through the electronic billboard and QCC website.
- Involve the SGA in getting information out on smoking cessation and also involving SGA in ongoing dialogue on recommendations for smoking outdoors.

The Committee requested the assistance of Mel Rodriguez, Health and Safety Officer, in providing the latest guidelines on “smoking on campus” and distance allowance from buildings (doors and vents). Committee members reviewed NYC Smoke Free Act and NYS Clean Indoor Act. Diane Call has attended all meetings and has participated in the conversation. Recent articles on second-hand smoke were circulated to all new incoming committee members. Mel Rodriguez sent a draft of the campus smoke free policy being formulated at Kingsborough C.C.

This same topic was also being reviewed by a subcommittee of the CUNY EHS council, of which he is a member. This draft was in the process of being reviewed for consideration as a university-wide policy. The document was sent it to all Committee members (incoming and outgoing) requesting their review and comments. The document may contain everything needed - the policy, regulatory citations and language regarding enforcement. Mel Rodriguez will keep the committee posted on any decisions made concerning the status of this policy.

The incoming committee members are aware that this issue needs to be addressed early in the Fall 2009 semester and should be given high priority.

- H1N1 Influenza Preparedness:

The campus has initiated preventative measures for the H1N1 virus beginning in the Spring, 2009 semester

- Information pertaining to H1N1 is posted on website
- Student Health Services sends out information via community dialogue
- Buildings and Grounds involved with sanitizing bathrooms and insuring soap dispensers are refilled periodically.
- Health Education - notices posted around campus

- Clorox disinfectant wipes supplied to all departments- for wiping of all common surfaces (door knobs, telephones, computer keyboards, etc.).

Committee suggested that disinfectants should be accompanied by instructions for use. It was suggested that an e-mail go out through the QCC Community Dialogue.

Incidence of H1N1 Influenza is expected to peak during the influenza season (October – March) and New York City is preparing. All Committee members received an e-mail with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) website dedicated to H1N1 virus information. Isabel Hocevar was contacted and reports that vaccines for H1N1 influenza will be available at QCC in October and she has scheduled immunization clinics for students, faculty and staff. The H1N1 vaccine needs to be given in a series of two doses in order to be effective. In addition, the influenza vaccine will also be available this fall. The vaccines are available to students for free. Due to the projected high demand to immunize the college community, the Nursing Department is mobilizing student nurses to assist in the immunization clinics. Information concerning immunization clinics will be available on the website and advertised through the electronic billboard.

- SAFETY:

Elevator Malfunctioning/Repairs: The elevators in the Science Building and the Medical Arts Building are plagued by periodic malfunctioning. The Committee received from Buildings & Grounds information about the inspections and repairs of the elevators in the Science and Medical Arts Buildings, particularly Elevator A and B and they have been reviewed. Elevator A in the Medical Arts Building has been out of order frequently. In April, 2009 the elevator in the Science Building was out of order for an extended period of time. After extensive rebuilding, testing and independent inspection it was back in operation. During periods of extended elevator outages, Ben Freier assures that every effort is made to have the classes of students with disabilities moved or changed.

- CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT:

The Dig In Event took place on May 1, 2009 and as a result almost 400 trees and shrubs were planted by student, faculty, staff and neighbors around the athletic field area. Many of the trees and shrubs planted are not native to this region. There was inquiry from the Biology Department as to the possibility of planning native trees and bushes instead as the “non-native” do not support the local biodiversity and are not ecologically sound. This request needs careful consideration and should take into account time, energy and financial expenditure that would be incurred to make these changes.

The college obtained the trash compacter near the Science Building through a partnership with the NYC Department of Sanitation. It is self-contained and deodorized and will improve both sanitation and recycling.

Review Assessment of the Campus with Regard to Services for Students with Disabilities, Health & Safety, Security and Maintenance.

Services for Students with Disabilities

Ben Freier, Director of Services for Students with Disabilities has attended a majority of the Committee meetings and provides updates. At the start of each semester, The office of Students with Disabilities sends out an e-mail through the QCC Community Dialogue about new initiatives and to remind faculty and staff about the free standing desks and chairs in every classroom and how to obtain needed services or items for disabled students. New tables and ADA stations for students with disabilities will be arriving. New full-time position of a Disability Accommodation Specialist Level 2 provisional has been approved and a search committee has been formed.

Some of the issues affecting students with disabilities this academic include:

- Elevator access during Medical Arts Building and Science Building elevator outages.
- Transporting students with disabilities during emergencies and evacuation
- Frequently non-functioning handicapped access button throughout campus, particularly in the Administration Building
- Bathrooms in gym and the library not handicapped accessible.
- Adequacy of ADA parking spaces near Art Gallery and HKHRC.

Many of these issues were resolved or have plans for resolution in place:

- Elevators in Science Building have been repaired and are working. Students with disabilities had their classroom assignments moved or changed to insure their access.
- Each floor was assigned a fire coordinator. Campus Security has a protocol for handling disabled students in emergency situation – only fire department can help disabled students during evacuation. Mel Rodriguez receives an updated list from the Office of Students with Disabilities of all disabled students
- Work to “hard wire” ADA electronic door openers is complete. This should reduce incidence of malfunction. Electronic door opener will be installed at ACC entrance.
- The Office of Students with Disabilities requested that Jim Fox make an assessment to determine whether bathrooms located at L-110, G-204 and G-205 meet federal guidelines for accessibility.
- Adequate handicapped parking spaces during renovation of Lot #1 were insured by placement of cones by Public Safety with monitoring for violations. The new

lot will have 2% of parking spaces designated as handicapped spaces. This will exceed the number of handicapped spaces that were in the old design.

Sustainability Campus Council:

A CUNY Environmental Sustainability Committee has been established and QCC is taking part in this initiative and has established the Campus Sustainability Project of which Mel Rodriguez is a member and provides updates for the Committee. GoGreen e- Newsletter is available. A Sustainability Website has been developed which provides updates: <http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/susproj/> A new private recycling vendor has been hired (Royal Contracting). There are new recycling bins on campus. The college can get real numbers regarding how much is recycled.

The Committee recommends actions on the following issues:

- Review “No Smoking Policy” draft being considered by CUNY EHS Counsel and possible adoption at QCC
- Monitor efforts and preparedness to control outbreak of H1N1 Influenza
- Evaluate the plausibility of planting only native trees and bushes on campus
- Sustain efforts for student involvement and input at committee meetings.
- Collaboration of Committee members with Campus Sustainability Project
- Review campus walk-through and assessment after completion of major projects.
- Education of students, faculty, staff on proper disposal of recyclables.

New Committee Members for 2009/2010: Hayes Mauro, Dion Pincus, Alicia Sinclair
Carol Soto, Patricia Spradley;

Chairperson and Secretary for 2009/2010: TBA

Respectfully submitted,

Georgina Colalillo
Co- Chairperson