

STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT

1. Senate Matters: Composition and Membership

Now that Section G of Article VI, Section 1 of the Bylaws has been omitted, we are happy to indicate that the following senators are welcome to attend our forthcoming meeting, if their current schedule while on leave permits:

Susan Jacobowitz

Linda Reesman

Linda Stanley

Jannette Urciuoli

2. Committee Matters: Composition and Membership

Last month, the Steering Committee received the names of students who have volunteered to serve on the Committees of the Academic Senate. Our thanks go to Ms. Gisela Rivera, Mr. Raymond Volel, and Student President Ms. Stephanie Sandson for their cooperation with the Steering Committee of the Academic Senate. However, it has come to our attention that some student representatives are not always sufficiently acquainted with the work of these committees. As of this writing, the Steering Committee is therefore looking to arrange a meeting with Student Government leadership at which we may discuss ways in which we might better cooperate and communicate.

The Committee on Committees, as per the attached report, have also announced the names of the liaisons assigned to our various committees. We thank Professor Sheila Beck, Chair of the Committee on Committees, and her hard-working committee members, for finalizing these arrangements.

3. Committee Matters: Activities

The Steering Committee wishes to renew its thanks to the members of Committee on Curriculum, together with Department Chairs, and members of the Faculty Executive Committee, who have been kind enough to lend their scrutiny to various components of the Curriculum of the New Community College. The chair of the Steering Committee, who also serves on the University Faculty Senate Executive Committee this year, is particularly indebted to colleagues for the speed with which this initiative was set in motion—members of the UFS Executive Committee will be meeting with accreditors on

November 1-2, and so there was a tight time frame in this matter that we are exceedingly grateful our colleagues were willing to accommodate.

The Steering Committee is also in receipt of a proposal the Distance Education Committee has advanced to change its name to the Committee on E-Learning. This resolution would need to be vetted by the Committee on Bylaws before it could be reviewed by the Senate; but the Steering Committee is aware that this is a matter that the Committee on Distance Learning has been entertaining for some time, and so we will continue to work our colleagues in this matter.

The Steering Committee would also like to formally thank Dr. Philip Pecorino, who has very generously agreed to represent our members, and the members of the Committee on Assessment, in a presentation that President Call, Dean Corradetti, and Professor Edlin will be making at the forthcoming Middle States Conference in Philadelphia, this December, entitled “Culture of Collaboration: Cultivating a Campus Environment for Assessment.” This presentation, which will follow up from the talk Dean Corradetti and the chair of the Steering Committee gave at the conference sponsored by the University Faculty Senate on Queensborough’s response to the Middle States Accreditation Process last April, will give Dr. Pecorino an opportunity to speak about how the Assessment Committee has fared in its first year of existence: what sorts of concerns it has addressed; what sorts of reports it has received, and how it has supported the construction of a “culture of assessment” on our campus.

Finally, the Steering Committee is making every effort to work with our Student Government leaders to address some of the issues that were raised by the campus ban on smoking, passed by the October 12, 2010 Academic Senate. The Steering Committee wishes to affirm, once more, that we understand—indeed, a majority of us are in sympathy with--the concerns of those who introduced this resolution, which cited the well-documented dangers of second-hand smoke as its rationale. On the other hand, we are aware that implementation of this new Academic Senate policy will impose a hardship on members of our campus community who are smokers. We are therefore appealing to those members of our campus community with concerns about adhering to this new policy to share with members of our Committee on Environment, Quality of Life, and Disability Issues, suggestions concerning measures that they believe might be helpful during this current period of transition, which we would charge the members of the Committee to share with the senate and President Call as recommendations. Are there particular smoking cessation initiatives or support services that would be useful? The Steering Committee is anxious to work with students and colleagues across campus to ensure that this transition is handled in a respectful manner, and so we look forward to receiving feedback in this matter.

4. University and College Wide Matters with Direct Bearing on the Senate

- As per the UFS Minutes included as Attachment D of this agenda, on October 19, 2010, the University Faculty Senate discussed a resolution that had been proposed, not without some agonizing, by the UFS Executive Committee, to support Chancellor Goldstein's Compact. I have reproduced the text of this resolution below in order to acquaint the membership of the Academic Senate and the college community with its contents. The Steering Committee would be most grateful for comments on this resolution, which occasioned considerable controversy at the last plenary. The Professional Staff Congress expressed its unequivocal opposition to this resolution at the UFS—indeed Drs. Bowen and London, Chair and Vice-Chair of the PSC, attended the plenary to speak with some eloquence against it. Several UFS Senators from various campuses did the same. After some vigorous debate, in which the good will and thoughtfulness of both those who supported the measure and those who viewed it with suspicion was fully in evidence, the UFS voted to postpone action on the two resolutions contained in the document until the next plenary on November 16 to allow more time for deliberation. The UFS Executive Committee has now crafted a revised resolution, that we believe speaks to some of valid concerns raised at the Plenary, and which it is hoped faculty will support:

Preamble

The Executive Committee of the University Faculty Senate, with the unanimous advice of our Budget Advisory Committee, invites the plenary at this meeting to endorse the following resolutions regarding CUNY's funding and fiscal future.

We move these resolutions because of:

- stark economic realities;
- the fiscal condition of the city, state and nation;
- the recent history of damaging budget reductions;
- the outlook for further drastic cut backs; and
- our obligation to provide academic programs and support services that our students deserve.

We urge that the University Faculty adopt the following:

Resolutions on the Compact

Whereas, the CUNY Compact calls for a shared responsibility for funding among the State, the City, CUNY, private philanthropy, and students, and

Whereas, the CUNY Compact calls for complete State and City coverage of mandatory costs and calls for the implementation of a rational tuition policy,* and

Whereas, the Compact also calls for the safeguarding of full student financial aid and for expansion of TAP to be directly correlated with tuition increases,

Therefore, Be it Resolved, that the UFS calls upon the State Legislature and Executive to fully fund the CUNY Compact, and

Be It Further Resolved, that the UFS calls upon the Legislature and Executive to return to CUNY, for expenditure by CUNY in the areas of academic programs and student support services, any tuition monies henceforth generated by the raising of tuition.

* a rational tuition policy mandates small, annual increases no more than the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI) to avoid the need for erratic spikes in tuition.

Proponent: Executive Committee

Explanation

The State budget for CUNY in Fiscal Year 2011 – that is, the current year – includes a cut to CUNY’s senior colleges of \$84.4 million in its operating budget. Combined with the reductions of the past two fiscal years, CUNY has now sustained more than \$205 million in State cuts since Fiscal Year 2009.

The CUNY community colleges received a cut of \$285 per student FTE, which is approximately \$20 million. Last year, in FY2010, the community colleges sustained a \$14 million mid-year cut, half of which came directly from college base budgets. In 2009, State aid per FTE was \$2,675 but this year it is only \$2,260. As a result of these cuts, the FY2011 community college allocation model is funded at only 90% (whereas the FY 2010 allocation, for example, covered 99% of model expenditures). Furthermore, the \$42.8 million in Federal Stimulus funds that the CUNY community colleges now receive is set to expire in Fiscal Year 2012.

The State and City budget outlooks are grim: the estimated State shortfalls for the next three fiscal years are as follows:

<> FY2012 – \$8.2 billion

<> FY2013 – \$13.5 billion

<> FY2014 – \$15.6 billion

A large portion of the shortfalls in the State’s fiscal outlook emanates from the sunseting of the Federal Stimulus Program.

Estimated City shortfalls for the next three fiscal years are as follows:

<> FY2012 – \$3.7 billion

<> FY2013 – \$4.6 billion

<> FY 2014 – \$5.3 billion

All State Financial Aid awards, that is, Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) awards, were reduced by \$75, as a result of the Governor’s vetoes. TAP is no longer available to graduate students and new satisfactory academic progress standards have been established. The City adopted budget reduced funding for the Vallone Scholarships program from \$9.5 million to \$6 million. On the other hand, the maximum Federal Pell Grant award for FY 2011 is \$5,550, an increase of \$200 from the FY2010 award.

- I have also been asked by the University Faculty Senate to make an appeal to faculty to consider joining the CUNY Academy for the Arts and Sciences. The CUNY Academy sponsors lectures, seminars, and conferences, as well as a travel grant and a research award for junior faculty. It can be a wonderful opportunity for junior and senior faculty alike to share ideas and present research. If you are interested, visit their website at <http://www.cunyufs.org/academy/index.html>.