

STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT

September, 2011

1. Senate Matters: Composition and Membership

The Steering Committee would like to begin by expressing our most profound regret at the passing of an esteemed senator, colleague, and personal friend to many in this body, Dr. Tom Smith. Dr. Smith led the Department of Speech, Communication, and Theatre Arts with endless charm, insight, and imagination. We know that his departmental colleagues will miss his gentle leadership, while all of us will miss his erudition, and his outstanding sense of humor. We hope the members of his department will accept our profound condolences.

The Steering Committee would also like to offer its welcome to Dr. Georgia McGill, who has been elected to serve as Dr. Smith's successor as Chair of the Department of Speech, Communication, and Theatre Arts. We look forward to working with her in the Academic Senate.

2. Committee Matters: Composition and Membership

As members of the Senate will read in the attached report from the Committee on Committees, various resignations and assigned campus responsibilities made it necessary to replace a few committee members—in particular, we would like to welcome Ken Pearl and Maurizio Santoro to the Committee on Curriculum, where they will assume the two vacant seats created when this writer was elected chair of the Steering Committee, and Professor Warsi assumed leadership of the Department of Basic Educational Skills. We would also like to thank the outgoing chair of the Committee on Committees, Professor Sheila Beck, for managing a few additional transitions, as reported in her last monthly report.

The Steering Committee is also delighted to report that we are working closely with Student government and have, as of this writing, secured the names of student representatives to most committees of the Academic Senate. The Steering Committee wishes to thank Student Government for their cooperation in this matter. We would also like to thank the office of President Call, for providing us with a list of Presidential designees.

Once again, the Steering Committee would like to remind all members of standing committees that it is customary for the election of a committee chairperson and secretary to occur at its first meeting as a newly constituted committee. Usually, this means the election will have already taken place at the final meeting of the spring semester, during which all members attend, and incoming members—that is, those who will serve on the committee in the coming academic year—vote. If a committee of the Academic Senate did not find an

opportunity to convene a final meeting, however, then a chair should be elected at the first meeting convened in the fall semester. If the outgoing chair of the committee has been reassigned to another committee, then the meeting should be convened and chaired by the committee member whose surname is first alphabetically. This committee member then presides over the election of a committee chair and secretary. It is particularly important

Because these, and other questions regarding committee procedures, are always pressing at the beginning of the semester, and because the members of the Steering Committee would be grateful for an opportunity to meet with new committee chairs, discuss their concerns, and have some immediate feedback regarding the charges assigned their committees for the 2011-2010 academic year, the Steering Committee will be calling a meeting of all chairs of standing committees of the Academic Senate on **Wednesday, September 21, 2011, between 1-2.30 PM in Science 414**. We should indicate that, as of this writing, we are still awaiting a few annual reports that will enable us to fully elaborate these charges, and so the Steering Committee would like to appeal to those outgoing committee chairs who may not yet have been able to prepare their annual report to do so, so that the Steering Committee may share your recommendations with your successor on the 21 September.

3. Committee Matters: Activities

In the same spirit, the Steering Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank all the chairs of our various committees and sub-committees, who labored assiduously to add their reports to this September's Senate agenda. To these extensive reports, the Steering Committee would like to add some commentary about matters of importance in the coming academic year:

- Last Spring, the Committee on Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness closed its work for the academic year 2010-2011 by promulgating, in its annual report (attachment J) a five-year schedule of request and report, through which administrative offices of our college would share information about the processes by which they evaluated their departments and procedures. This, in turn, would create an archive of material from which to draw for Middle States Self-Study purposes, to demonstrate that standards 7 and 14 regarding institutional and academic assessment are both being met.

Along these lines, the Committee on Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness invited the Steering Committee to consider how the effectiveness of governance might be assessed. The Steering Committee has been giving a great deal of thought to this question. On the one hand, the governance process at Queensborough is straightforward in that every chairs of a committee of the Academic Senate completes each year of service by submitting a written report, with recommendations for the coming year, these recommendations are thereafter incorporated into the charges

assigned to each committee in the year that follows. Thus, committee work is assessed, and “loops” are “closed,” on an annual basis.

What has received less scrutiny, as of this writing, however, is the Steering Committee’s oversight of this process, and how that process might, in itself, be assessed. After giving this matter extended and careful consideration, the Steering Committee has come up with a few points that might be appropriate for rubrics, that might run along an axis that we would propose as *full; partial; inadequate*. Areas to be considered might include, but would not necessarily be limited to:

- Utilization of the Governance Process to **address institutional issues/solve institutional problems**
- Utilization of the Governance Process to ensure **transparency** in the conduct of administrative and institution
- **Efficiency** of the Governance process

Needless to say, the Steering Committee invites the comments of both our college’s Committee on Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness, and the members of our Academic Senate body on these criteria.

Where the Steering Committee, in assessing itself according to these criteria, did find difficulties in “efficiency” during the past academic year, was in the area of elections—last year, in particular, we were distressed by a series of technology and communication glitches that led to difficulties with election procedures in both the Academic Senate and the Faculty Executive Committee. To that end, we are grateful and pleased to announce that Dr. Belle Birchfield, our elected Senate Technology Officer, will be accepting an assignment at Queensborough Election Coordinator for the current academic year. In this capacity, Dr. Birchfield will be working with the FEC, the Steering Committee of the Academic Senate and the Committee on Committees to coordinate and standardize the process for elections of governance bodies at our college. In this way, we are hoping to resolve the area where we can honestly admit we remain “inadequate;” we also offer it as evidence that self-assessment will result in actions to ensure efficiency and transparency in the address of institutional issues.

- Other examples of utilization of the governance process to address institutional issues and solve institutional problems might be discerned in the Steering Committee’s resolutions of last year to form two special committees: the Special Budget Advisory Committee, and the Special Committee on General Education Outcomes.

- The Steering Committee would like to report that the Special Budget Advisory Committee met several times with Vice-President Newcomb over the past spring, 2011. These meetings were productive and substantive enough so that the Steering Committee is prepared, as of this writing, to entertain arguments to make such a committee permanent. The Steering Committee welcomes the comments of its senators on this point.
- The Special Committee on General Education Outcomes was first created, with support from Queensborough's administration, as a means to respond to the mandate, issued by the Office of Vice-Chancellor Logue, to create working groups that would support the "Pathways" initiative. This spring, members of this committee looked to address some of the transfer issues advanced as a rationale for the Pathways initiative directly, by meeting with representatives of Queens College, which accepts a large number of transfer students from our college, in order to see if there are ways to better facilitate transfer between our two institutions.

Over the summer, as senators may be aware, the Pathways initiative was unanimously passed by the Board of Trustees on 27 June, 2011; and a University-wide fourteen-member Steering Committee was constituted and met, under the leadership of CUNY Law School Dean Michelle Anderson. As some of you may be aware, a website, detailing some of the transactions of this Steering Committee, and their rationales, has been established by the CUNY Central Office at <http://www.cuny.edu/academics/initiatives/degreepathways/planning-process.html>

Faculty members appointed to the CUNY-wide Steering Committee include several faculty who testified in support of the Pathways initiative at the open hearing held at Hostos Community College on June 20, 2011. No faculty member who testified against the resolution was selected, and no faculty member from Queensborough Community College was selected. The Office of Vice-Chancellor Logue has, however, appointed three members of our faculty to serve on the thirty-nine member "working committee" that will interact with the Pathways Steering Committee: Dr. David Lieberman; Professor Margaret Reilly; and Dr. Patricia Schneider (at <http://www.cuny.edu/academics/initiatives/degreepathways/about/working-committee.html>).

Going forward, we invite the members of this committee to meet with our General Education Committee, in order to tackle the critical question of what Liberal Arts and Sciences *content* students will need to know in order to demonstrate the skills and learning outcomes identified as optimal by this CUNY Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will, moreover, be urging members of the Academic Senate and its committees to keep an eye out for the report this Steering Committee will release by November 1 (note announcement at <http://www1.cuny.edu/mu/academic->

[news/2011/08/04/a-message-to-cuny-faculty-regarding-pathways-project/](http://www.cuny.edu/news/2011/08/04/a-message-to-cuny-faculty-regarding-pathways-project/)), as there will be a critical two week comment period thereafter. As of this writing, we are hoping, in concert with Queensborough's Administration and Faculty Executive Committee, to dedicate several on-campus events to discussions of these matters.

- The Steering Committee is, meanwhile, aware of other on-campus indicatives with implications for the work of our committees: we are hoping that the Committee on Cultural and Archival Resources will be involved in the process of planning the implementation of our institutions NEH Challenge Grant; that the Committee on Environment, Quality of Life, and Disability Issues, possibly in concert with the Committee on Student Activities, will take a leadership role in formulating strategies to promote compliance with CUNY's new Tobacco policy; and that the Committee on Curriculum can monitor and evaluate any curricular changes in Queensborough programs mandated by the Pathways initiative.

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

- While the Pathways initiative remains the major challenge before us, another element is current debate over remediation. Many students do not complete their course of required remediation, and cannot succeed without it. This state of affairs has been of some interest to the CUNY Central Office. The Steering Committee would like to express its warm thanks to members of the Curriculum Committee and Continuing Education Committee who have monitored the introduction of CUNYStart on our campus; as of this writing, members of both the Curriculum and the Steering Committee have reviewed the CUNYStart curriculum, and we would like to thank Vice-President Steele's office for their support of this effort. We are hoping that there will be an assessment of the success of CUNYStart students, not only on their qualifying examinations, but in credit-bearing courses.
- The Steering Committee would also like to invite our colleagues to review three documents:
- the first, disseminated by President Call, is the CUNY Master Plan. We urge colleagues to review this document and to be liberal with your comments and ideas!
- The second and third are relevant to the future of remediation in CUNY, with particular emphasis upon Mathematics proficiency: *Proposals to Improve Success Rates for Students in Developmental Education at CUNY*, prepared by a working group appointed by the Office of Academic Affairs, and a response from instructional faculty who serve in the Mathematics Discipline Council, solicited by the CUNY Office of Academic Affairs. It should be noted, that, while our faculty will recognize a few individuals who participated on this task force, it appears that instructional faculty were not invited to participate in the original consideration that prompted the Mathematics Discipline

Council's consideration. The Steering Committee therefore encourages faculty comment on both of these documents.