Minutes of
The Lehman College Senate Meeting
Wednesday, April 7, 2010


Due to the absence of President Ricardo R. Fernández and Professor Manfred Philipp, the meeting was called to order by Ms. Hyacinth Bouzalakos, Student Conference Chair, at 3:40 p.m.

Ms. Bouzalakos made a motion to adopt the minutes of the Senate meeting of March 3, 2010. The motion was seconded, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Announcements and Communication: 

1. In the absence of President Ricardo R. Fernández, Provost Mary A. Papazian gave his report.

1. CUNY is forming a committee on evaluating tobacco usage policy. It will be a large committee, and will be comprised of stakeholders from all over the CUNY system.
2. There has already been a great deal of work completed in the process of establishing a new CUNY community college. That work continues, and there is now an ongoing search for a founding president. This individual will begin the actual process of shaping the new institution, with input from faculty. Simultaneously, CUNY is seeking to hire eight founding faculty members to join with the new president in responding to the many issues involved in developing the system’s newest community college—which is slated to open its doors two years from now. The Senate will be hearing more about this project as work continues.

3. Enrollment throughout CUNY is robust. For the entire system, it is up by about three percent; of course, every campus is not growing at that rate. Some colleges, especially those in Manhattan, are capped at current enrollments because of size constraints. In fact, for the first time, CUNY may halt admissions around May 1. Also under discussion is the creation of a waiting list for students who want to attend but are blocked by an enrollment cap. This is new territory for CUNY; there is a desire to cope with higher levels of student demand while also remaining conscious of educational quality. CUNY has determined that three percent growth this year—supplementing the eight percent expansion the system experienced last year—is all the system can handle effectively, particularly in a tight budget time when it is difficult to increase support—buildings, faculty, etc.—that are needed to provide a quality education to greater numbers of students. Here at Lehman, we appear to be in good shape. We have made a transition in regard to higher admission standards, and are beginning to respond to the recommendations of the Strategic Planning Council to raise admissions standards further in fall 2011.

4. A new CUNY committee has just begun to meet focusing on theatre and the arts. The New York City theatre community is very interested in engaging college students more actively, both on- and off-Broadway. They have asked CUNY: “What can we do? We want to work with you to create a program that engages students.” CUNY responded positively to this request, and established a group, which recently held its initial meeting, to explore possibilities. It is expected that some pilot programs will be developed, and we at Lehman will be discussing whether we want to participate in this initiative.

5. The budget-related “soap opera” in Albany continues and no State Budget has been issued yet. We have no confidence at this point of what the final budget numbers will be. We do not anticipate an expansive budget; in fact, CUNY has asked Lehman to be quite conservative in its
budget assessments for the next three years. We will submit to CUNY a three-year forecast, and they will let us know what is realistic in terms of hiring and spending. Our budget situation is fine for this year, and with some planning and prudent decisions, we should be all right for next year as well. However, we are quite concerned about the third year: the stimulus money will be gone and the State has not figured out how it is going to deal with all of the shortfalls in its revenue. So we have to plan, over the next two years, for the last year in the three-year cycle.

As we outline the budget for next year, one area that will require tightening is adjunct expenditures. We spend approximately $9 million per year on adjunct costs. This is in keeping with the tremendous enrollment growth we have experienced, but it is not sustainable in the short- or long-term. So we are looking to reduce the adjunct budget next year by approximately four-to-five percent, or about $400,000 out of a $9 million budget. We are working with the deans to figure out where the targets should be; the Budget Office has been very helpful in providing expenses per department and per program, enabling us to make decisions that will have the least impact on our programs and on our students’ ability to take the courses they need to ensure progress and graduation. We hope to have numbers fairly soon so we can begin to finalize schedules for the fall.

6. The Strategic Planning Council issued its report. A smaller group has met to develop the Council’s recommendations into a framework, with goals, objectives, and action items. The President hopes to have a discussion on this framework at the Senate meeting in May that had been listed as “optional.” The president’s hope is that the business of the Senate can be completed at its April 28 meeting and that a substantial amount of time at the May 12 meeting, now definite, can be devoted to reviewing and generating feedback on this framework.

b. Student Conference-

1. The report of Ms. Hyacinth Bouzalakos, Student Conference Chair, consisted of her reading into the record a quote from Tom Blair:

“Silence is one of the great arts of conversations, as allowed by Cicero himself, who says, ‘There is not only an art but an eloquence in it. A well-bred woman may easily and effectually promote the most useful and elegant conversation without speaking a word. The models are scarcely more variable than the models of silence.’”
REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES-

a. Committee on Governance-

1. Professor Duane Tananbaum described a new policy of exchanging the draft minutes of committee meetings among committee chairs—and when appropriate, with the full committees. This way, each body gains a sense of important developments on the other committees, and everyone shares a better sense of the broader picture. The hope is that an exchange of committee notes will improve communication and enable chairs to deal with issues that arise in a timely fashion—before they reach the Senate floor.

2. The Governance Committee is in the process of soliciting nominations for the position of College Ombudsman. An e-mail was sent from the Provost’s Office urging the nomination of up to four individuals. On April 28, the committee will present to the Senate a slate of candidates to be voted on. The Senate will then submit those individuals it selects to the president, who will make the final decision. This is how nominations are specified in the governance documents. We would hope to change this process in the future, but are operating under their requirements now. The Ombudsman will serve a two-year term, so there will be sufficient time to make the nominating and selection process clearer and simpler for the next election.

3. We expect to release an e-mail in the next few days soliciting nominees for membership on Senate committees. This process needs to be completed by the end of the academic year. To fill Senate vacancies among untenured and assistant professors—and lecturers—we are seeking a list of these individuals from Human Resources.

4. The committee met with the provost and the chairs of the Undergraduate Curriculum and Graduate Studies Committees to discuss the divisional curriculum committees. The provost presented a flow chart, which has since been distributed to all faculty members. The Governance Committee continues to have concerns about this new process.

At the meeting with the provost, also under consideration were the draft bylaws for the Center for Human Rights and Peace Studies. A few suggestions were made in regard to the Center’s governance.

5. At the committee’s meeting tomorrow, one topic will be the proposed new Student Governance Association bylaws and what needs to be done to make these fit with the Senate’s governance documents and bylaws. The meeting will take place at 9:15 a.m. in Carman 201.
b. **Committee on Admissions, Evaluations, and Academic Standards**

1. Mr. Ralph William Boone informed the Senate that his committee has taken under advisement the president’s and provost’s intention to bring before the Senate a proposal that Lehman’s SAT entrance requirement be raised to 970 for fall 2011 admission. We have been collecting data: SAT scores across New York State and in the Bronx, as well as long-term testing trends. The perennial subject of *access versus standards* came up for discussion and was very well represented by the students who came to our meetings to make their thoughts known.

2. We were also asked to look at department grade point average requirements—some are at 2.0, some at 2.7, some at 3.0—required of students to proceed on in their studies. We were asked by Governance Committee members to examine this situation to determine if it was “getting out of hand,” and will issue a report shortly.

3. The Governance Committee also asked us to assess how many appeals were lodged, and in what categories, and we are working to elicit this information.

4. The next meeting will take place on April 28 at 2 p.m. in the Library Tree House, 3rd floor.

c. **Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum**

1. Professor Barbara Jacobson presented curriculum changes from the Department of Biological Sciences; the Department of English; the Department of Health Sciences; the Department of History; the Department of Journalism, Communication, and Theatre; the Department of Latin American and Puerto Rican Studies; and the Department of Political Science. There were also experimental courses in the Department of Journalism, Communication, and Theatre and the Department of Latin American and Puerto Rican Studies as informational items. The report was moved, and approved unanimously.

2. The next meeting will take place on April 21 at 12:30 p.m. in Carman 221.

d. **Committee on Graduate Studies**

1. Professor Janet DeSimone presented proposals from the Department of History and the Department of Middle and High School Education. The report was moved, and approved unanimously.

2. The next meeting will take place on April 12 at 11 a.m. in Carman B20
e. Committee on Academic Freedom-
   There was no report.

f. Committee on Library, Technology, and Telecommunications-
   1. Mr. James Carney updated the Senate on the CUNYFIRST project. He noted that there were still problems with the system, and he would keep the Senate updated on its installation at Lehman.
   2. The College, Mr. Carney noted, continues to introduce more and more “smart classrooms.” E-mails are periodically sent out describing which classrooms in which buildings have been upgraded. To be placed on the list of those receiving these communications, contact Mr. Migdio Domínguez, assistant manager of Information Technology Resources, at migdio.dominguez@lehman.cuny.edu.
   3. Lehman College has appointed Ms. Alyson Vogel as its associate director for online learning. Ms. Vogel will attend the next committee meeting to discuss how the College will proceed with monitoring and informing the community about the rollout of various elements of Blackboard—and any problems with Blackboard that arise.
   4. The committee was asked to look into the issue of degree audit availability. This is not now available on the web, but as of May 1 will be, in a phased way. Students must realize, however, that this online information does not take the place of meeting with the Registrar and engaging in graduation checks.
   5. The committee was given a tour of Lehman’s new Multimedia Center; on April 23, there will be a special event to announce officially the availability of the Center to the entire college community. Committee members were quite excited about the capabilities that the Center brings to Lehman and want to emphasize that they are available to every sector of the College. To learn more about the Multimedia Center, please contact Mr. Carney or Mr. Jerold Barnard, manager of Media Technology Services and Information Technology Resources.

g. Committee on Campus Life and Facilities-
   1. Professor Janette Tilley reported that the Committee met with Vice President Derek C. Wheeler and senior members of the Public Safety Department to review why the announcement of the College’s closure during the snow storm early in the semester was not effectively communicated. The problem stemmed from the failure of the CUNY Alert System
to communicate the College’s closure in a timely manner; that issue now has been resolved.

Professor Tilley pointed out that CUNY Alert is actually a statewide notification system.

However, there was also discussion of why the banner announcing the closure took one hour to be posted on the College’s website.

2. Ms. Rene Rotolo, assistant vice president for Campus Life and Facilities, provided information to the Committee that assures that there is budget coverage for the second phase of the new science facility.

3. The next meeting will take place on April 21 at 3:30 p.m. in Shuster 325.

h. Committee on Budget and Long Range Planning-

Professor Robert Feinerman reported on a meeting of the joint faculty-Senate Committee on Personnel and Budget. Vice President Derek Wheeler reported to the group on this year’s budget, and as Professor Feinerman described it, the budget was essentially a “wash,” with income and expenditures matching, which makes for a good year. For next year, until the State resolves its budget issues, the College cannot develop a firm budget.

i. University Faculty Senate-

There was no report.

j. Old Business-

There was none.

k. New Business-

There was none.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Esdras Tulier