Minutes of
The Lehman College Senate Meeting
Wednesday, November 17, 2010
Senate Meeting


The meeting was called to order by President Ricardo R. Fernández at 3:43 p.m.

President Fernández made a motion to adopt the minutes of the Senate meeting of October 13, 2010. The motion was seconded, and the minutes were approved as corrected. On line 114 the word should read unwieldy, not unyielding.

Announcements and Communications—

a. 1. President Fernández announced that not much has changed on the issue of the budget since the October meeting. In anticipation of what’s coming in the future, he’s appointed a committee made up of representatives of the Senate Budget and Long Range Planning Committee, College Faculty Personnel and Budget Committee and members of the
administration, to look at potential places where economies and efficiencies can be found, to ensure that the money is being spent in the most effective manner possible. He looks forward to the recommendations based on analysis of the entire institution.

2. Yesterday, Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer Allan Dobrin and Senior Vice Chancellor for Budget, Finance and Fiscal Policy Marc Shaw visited Lehman. Mr. Shaw has extensive experience in state and city government. He reported that the governor’s budget will be probably not be ready before February 1, 2011 and that there will probably be a significant reduction. CUNY lost $205 million in two years. Steps are being discussed with the Board of Trustees. None of this will be clear until the beginning of the second semester. We will then have a better sense of the challenges at that point.

b. Student Conference—

Mr. Marvin Bennett reported that there is an issue with the proposed changes to the Constitution for Student Government. There is some concern about the name. Next week there will be a meeting that will address the need for clarity, and a better sounding name. It was agreed that the resolution concerning the proposed changes to the Constitution for Student Government under Old Business, would be deferred and would be addressed after next week’s meeting.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES—

c. Graduate Studies—

1. Prof. Janet DeSimone presented an informational item from the Department of Languages and Literatures and the Department of Middle and High School Education. She also presented proposals from the Department of Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences. The proposals were approved unanimously.

2. The last meeting for the semester is next Monday at 11:00 a.m.

d. Governance Committee—

1. Prof. Duane Tananbaum presented the resolution on the CUNY Compact. He pointed out that the resolution was passed by the University Faculty Senate last evening and
had been discussed by the Governance Committee. The resolution was moved, seconded and approved with one vote in opposition and no abstentions.

2. Prof. Tananbaum presented a slate of student nominees to the Senate Standing Committees: for the Governance Committee: Ms. Tanaka Nyemba and Mr. Andrew Lawrence. Library, Technology, and Telecommunications Committee: Ms. Dannilda Correa, Mr. Oluwatosin Eleymafe, Mr. Abisola Olabode and Mr. Charles Beard. Campus Life and Facilities Committee: Ms. Tanaka Nyemba, Ms. Michaelle Garçon, Mr. Ibrahim Souare, Ms. Gloria Thomas, Ms. Claudia Amoama, and Ms. Abisola Olabode. Graduate Studies Committee: Ms. Dannilda Correa and Ms. Anyelina Fermin. Budget and Long-Range Planning Committee: Mr. Iddrisu Abubakari Sadiq, Ms. Fatima Sesay, Mr. Ivan Waldo and Mr. Charles Beard. Academic Freedom Committee: Mr. Cornel Duhaney, Ms. Fatima Sesay, and Mr. Oluwatosin Eleymafe. The slate of nominees was approved unanimously.

3. Professor Tananbaum also presented a resolution regarding the possible restructuring of the college’s academic divisions, especially the possible realigning of departments, which involves matters of considerable interest to the faculty and students. The resolution asks that an ad hoc Senate Committee be created. This “Committee on Structure” will work with College administration, to advise and make recommendations to the Senate on matters pertaining to any restructuring initiative. The Committee on Structure will consist of one faculty member from each Senate standing committee, five students chosen by the Student Conference, the chair of Executive Committee of the Faculty, and one administrator appointed by the President. An ad hoc committee was determined to be the best way to address issues both broad and narrow regarding restructuring at Lehman. Prof Tananbaum noted that the resolution was developed with the cooperation of the administration.

4. Provost Mary Papazian commented on the above referenced resolution. She reported that she would be glad to meet with student groups or faculty, and that this is a dialogue intended to be broad and deep. Some of the changes require nothing more than a name change, but others would require more thinking. These all have to be looked at from all angles.
5. This committee would, according to the provost, help to identify what needs to be changed. There are two areas involving only a name change, The School of Education and The School of Continuing and Professional Studies. Other changes are more substantive, and require a different kind of approval process. Dr. Papazian referred to the planning for a School of Health Sciences, Human Services and Nursing. There is also preliminary discussion about establishing a School of Arts and Sciences. Finally, having a School of Business may make sense several years down the line.

6. There was a motion to call the question. It was unanimously approved. A vote on the resolution was moved, seconded and approved. The Governance Committee is asking the Standing Committees to conduct an election of all members to the ad hoc committee by December 1st.

7. The next meeting of the Governance Committee is December 1st at 2 p.m. in Carman-201.

e. Committee on Admissions, Evaluations and Academic Standards—

Prof. Anne Rice reported that at its meeting on Wednesday, November 10th, the Committee approved the list of candidates for January 2011 graduation. She also reported as an informational item that the committee is continuing a pilot test version of student evaluation of teaching. The candidates for January 2011 graduation were approved unanimously, subject to final verification by the registrar.

f. Undergraduate Curriculum—

1. Professor Barbara Jacobson presented proposals from two departments. From the Department of Environmental Geographic and Geological Sciences: a new course and an experimental course. From the Department of Physics and Astronomy: several changes in the curriculum. The proposals were unanimously approved.

2. The next meeting is Wednesday, December 1st at 12:30 p.m. in Carman 263.
g. Academic Freedom—

Professor Mario González-Corzo, the new chairperson, reported that the Committee is working on several projects. One being a strategy to reach out to the Lehman community in general, and increase awareness of academic freedom.

h. Library, Technology and Telecommunications—

No report. The meeting will be rescheduled within the next two weeks.

i. Campus Life and Facilities—

1. Prof. Janette Tilley announced that there is no report. She also stated that she will be replaced as chair by Prof. Wesley Pitts.

2. The next meeting is on January 22 at 2 p.m. in Music 313.

j. Budget and Long Range Planning—

1. Professor John Mineka reported that the faculty on the committee met with Vice-President Vincent Clark and Provost Mary Papazian. The student representative was absent.

2. The college has met the cuts to its budget thus far this year primarily by cutting its OTPS budget, rather than personnel, staff or faculty. There have been some cuts of adjunct faculty and college assistants. The College has resources to meet some further cuts in the spring.

3. The provost told the Committee that any major budget cuts could be absorbed by not hiring to fill vacant positions. This does not preclude the loss of adjunct faculty.

4. Professor Mineka stated that the chancellor seems to be preparing for the spring semester by giving himself and his entourage of vice chancellors generous raises, perhaps anticipating the money will be more difficult to come by in the future.

5. The chancellor has been emphatic that there will be no retrenchment, that is, no firing of tenured faculty. Professor Mineka asked whether we should believe him, and added that no one is saying anything about the loss of adjuncts and college assistants.
6. Governor-elect Andrew Cuomo is coming forth as a democrat with the intentions of a republican. He is emphatic about cutting taxes, and cutting services, especially health care and education. Professor Mineka asked: should we believe him?

7. Generally, there is certain complacency around CUNY about what will ensue in January when students and faculty are on vacation.

8. Prof. Mineka stated that the college community should be sending letters and email to the governor and to our representatives in Albany, and writing letters to the newspapers. He suggested that the college community take to the streets.

9. He added that we should mobilize the support of our communities, of our students, the parents and grandparents of our students, the brothers and sisters of our students, everyone, in a word, who has a stake in CUNY.

10. CUNY faces major cuts. This is not merely a belt-tightening exercise. For the chancellor, this is an opportunity to make major changes in the university and its student body: eliminating programs, raising tuition and raising admission standards. Attacks have already begun on the Center for Worker Education.

11. The faculty, the staff and the students will need to bet together and fight back hard.

k. University Faculty Senate—

1. Professor Manfred Philipp reported that last night, in an overwhelmingly positive vote, the University Faculty Senate (UFS) Plenary acted to support the CUNY Compact. This follows the support of the Compact by the UFS Executive Committee and the UFS Budget Advisory Committee. The Compact provides for limits on the size of tuition increases, instead favoring gradual tuition increases, with retention of tuition revenue inside the university. It also emphasizes complete State and City coverage of mandatory costs. Such a “maintenance of effort” provision had been advocated by the SUNY UFS in connection with the proposed SUNY-CUNY Empowerment Act. There already is a “maintenance of effort” provision for New York City’s support of the CUNY community colleges. The Compact also emphasizes safeguarding full student financial aid. The vote followed presentations on the university budget by Executive Vice Chancellor Allan Dobrin, Senior Vice Chancellor Marc Shaw, and Associate Vice Chancellor Matthew Sapienza. New
York State Senator Toby Ann Stavisky, Chair of the Senate Higher Education Committee, also spoke to the UFS Plenary about the state budget.

2. The Board of Trustees is expected to vote on a revised tuition schedule for Master of Social Work programs, increasing tuition by $500 for full-time students and $50 a credit for part-time students. In addition, the Board is expected to vote on an immediate 5% tuition increase beginning in spring 2011 for all majors and categories. A further 2% increase is expected in the fall. The overall budget request totals $2.7 billion.

3. The failure to acquire tuition revenues promised by the proposed Empowerment Act combined with the absence of sufficient state aid has resulted in the halt in student admissions to Classics, French, Italian, Russian, and Theatre programs at the SUNY University of Albany. While this kind of closure of undergraduate programs has not happened yet in CUNY, there are hiring freezes, even for replacement faculty and staff, at John Jay and Baruch Colleges, and the Graduate School.

4. At the Board of Trustees Public Hearing on Monday, leading officers of the PSC testified against the proposed tuition increases. In testimony given in written form (since I taught a class at the time of the hearing) I testified in favor of the increases, pointing out that CUNY gets less money per student than SUNY, and spends about half the money per full time student than do the NYC public schools. This, in my view, is academically unsustainable and will not likely change, necessitating higher tuition. Despite the so called CUNY Decade of the Sciences, the new units of CUNY are already establishing curricula that fail to include high-cost basic science lab courses. In support of the UFS, I argued that CUNY must have more money to hire more full time faculty, offer high quality courses and have high quality general education curricula. Testimony at last night’s UFS plenary indicates that some students are leaving Borough of Manhattan Community College because of the institutional poverty that they encounter there.

5. The chancellor has announced that the budget crisis, in its current dimension, with nine-digit budget reductions, will likely lead to staff layoffs, but will not lead to retrenchment of full time faculty. It will not be possible to use tuition alone to compensate for the projected decreases in state support, since the decreases are so large that the tuition necessary to counteract this would move tuition above the maximum level provided for by the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP).
6. On November 22 the Board of Trustees is expected to vote to rescind the requirement that CUNY degree candidates pass the CUNY Proficiency Exam (CPE). This rescission will apply to all currently enrolled students, formerly-enrolled students, and students who enroll in CUNY after the date of the resolution. At present, CUNY students must pass the CUNY Proficiency Exam in order to obtain an associate or baccalaureate degree from CUNY. Last month’s report of the CPE Task Force recommended this action. The Board of Trustees is also expected to facilitate the granting of tenure to tenured associate professors who are being hired by CUNY. This is currently facilitated for tenured full professors.

7. Associate University Provost Julia Wrigley has released a report on Transfer Student Articulation. The report notes the difficulty that community college Associate in Applied Sciences (A.A.S.) degree recipients have after transfer. It also emphasizes the changes needed in curricula in order to make the transfer and articulation process more productive for students. The most detailed critique of the document has been provided to the UFS by Prof. Kevin Sailor of Lehman’s Psychology Department.

8. In an October 28 memorandum sent to CUNY college presidents, Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost Alexandra Logue announced that, beginning in fall 2012, the effective date for promotion will coincide with the date of August reappointment. In 2012 this will take place on August 24. As per New York State law, the date of tenure will continue to be September 1. Promotion and tenure will still require two separate votes in faculty P&B committees.

9. The UFS Executive Committee has met with all but one of the founding faculty of the New Community College (NCC). Those faculty members emphasized the changes they will make to the proposed content of NCC courses. It remains unclear if the core curriculum courses will be changed so as to make transfer to the senior colleges any easier than it now appears to be.

10. The UFS Executive Committee has met with Vice Chancellor for Human Resources Management, Gloriana (Ginger) Waters, Senior University Director for Human Resources Operations and Deputy to the Vice Chancellor Raymond O’Brien, and University Dean for Recruitment and Diversity Jennifer Rubain on affirmative action issues. It is clear that
some members of the Board of Trustees wish to strengthen university compliance with affirmative action guidelines.

11. At a recent UFS Plenary, Senior Vice Chancellor for Legal Affairs and General Counsel Frederick P. Schaffer emphasized that social security numbers are not to be stored on items that can be lost, such as thumb drives and notebook computers. Some colleges in the university persist in using social security numbers for student and faculty identification.

12. UFS Chair Sandi Cooper, SUNY UFS President Ken O’Brien, former UFS officer Lenore Beaky, and I gave talks at the AAUP Shared Governance Conference last weekend in Washington DC. The SUNY and CUNY delegations consulted on the Empowerment Act and the CUNY Compact.

13. Calendar items: The UFS Conference on the Provision of Public Higher education in the Prisons will take place on February 4. UFS Chair Sandi Cooper discusses General Education requirements with EVC Logue tomorrow morning. The CUNY Construction Fund also meets tomorrow morning. The Council of Faculty Governance Leaders meets this Friday, November 19 with Chancellor Matthew Goldstein and with Dr. Tina Good, President of the SUNY Faculty Council for the Community Colleges. The UFS Executive Committee holds a special meeting with Vice Chancellor Schaffer on November 30, which is also the date of the all-day CUNY Government Relations Conference. The UFS Budget Advisory Committee meets on December 3 with Vice Chancellors Marc Shaw and Matthew Sapienza. On December 7 The UFS Executive Committee meets with Vice Chancellor for the Community Colleges Eduardo Martí. [VC Martí represented CUNY at the White House Conference on Community Colleges.] The Faculty Advisory Council to the Research Foundation meets with President Richard Rothbard on December 10. The CUNY and SUNY UFS Executive Committees have a joint meeting on December 17. The UFS Executive Committee meets with Chancellor Goldstein on January 11.

Old Business—
The Resolution to amend the bylaws and the Governance Documents was postponed.

New Business—
There was none.
President Fernández adjourned the meeting at 4:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Esdras Tulier