Minutes of
The Lehman College Senate Meeting
Wednesday, November 18, 2009


The meeting was called to order by President Ricardo Fernández at 3:35 p.m.

Minutes Adopted:
A motion was made and seconded to adopt the minutes of the Senate meeting of October 28, 2009. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Announcements and Communication-
1. President Ricardo R. Fernández mentioned that he had testified this afternoon at the City Council on the proposed reductions in the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) that the Governor has put before the legislature. A hearing had been called and there were people present from CUNY.

President Fernández testified on behalf of the senior colleges; Dr. Eduardo J. Martí, president of Queensborough Community College, testified for the community colleges. It was a lively
exchange. The college representatives argued against any reduction in TAP, and in the
process provided data. Lehman alone, the president said, has more than 3,500 students in the
fall receiving TAP. Most students receive the maximum because of their financial situation;
others receive much less. The Governor called a legislative session last week, with no results.
There’s a session this week, but nothing has materialized. Obviously, the state is in a difficult
financial situation and is attempting to raise funds in every possible way, including cuts in
TAP. So we hope that the City Council will be able to influence some of the state legislators in
the city. The community colleges are being hit harder in the sense that the community colleges
are funded significantly by the city, which is looking for a $10 million reduction. We will
need to have a strong presence in Albany and in the city when we press our cause.

b. Student Conference-
1. Ms. Hyacinth Bouzalakos, Student Conference Chair, stressed the importance of TAP. She
stated that some students would be forced to drop out of college without this support. She
promised that the Student Conference would work on this issue, especially helping with a
strong presence in Albany.
2. A special election will be held on December 2 to fill vacancies. The Conference expects to
increase its membership more than 24.
3. At the last meeting the Student Conference voted to propose changes in the graduation
ceremony on matters related to the program, such as whether graduates’ names are called.
4. Another proposal has to do with forming a Communications Board to strengthen
communications among the entire Lehman community.

REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES-
a. Committee on Governance-
1. Prof. Duane Tananbaum reported that the committee has been meeting weekly on a number
of items. It also met this afternoon with the Provost to discuss the Divisional Undergraduate
Curriculum Committees and will meet next Tuesday with Prof. Ira Bloom, who chairs the
Strategic Planning Committee, to discuss concerns about the role of the Senate in the strategic
planning process. Prof. Tananbaum notes that there are three items brought to the Senate by
the Governance Committee.
2. The first item was the nomination of Professor Cheryl Smith Gabig of the Department of Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences to fill a vacancy on the Committee on Graduate Studies. She was elected by acclamation.

3. A resolution was presented at the last meeting that the college’s legal counsel inform the Governance Committee whenever a request is made to see the written ballots in which a vote is taken. The Committee reconsidered it and proposed a revised resolution:

“Resolved that the college’s legal counsel inform the Lehman College Senate through the Governance Committee, when any request is made to examine the written ballots or the list of yeas and nays on any votes in the Senate. The name of the person making the request shall not be included in the legal counsel’s report of this request to the Governance Committee.”

The resolution passed by voice vote.

4. The next item involved the proposed changes in the Lehman College Governance Document and bylaws, which the Committee has been working on. Most of the changes have to do with the size and membership of the Senate. Those changes would go into effect the next time we would elect at-large senators, which would take place of spring 2011. A few other changes in the document, not having to do with elections, would go into effect immediately, once these amendments are approved by the Senate, the College president and subsequently by the Board of Trustees. Prof. Tananbaum said he was presenting the proposed changes today as a point of information with the changes being explained briefly. A more extensive discussion at the next Senate meeting in December is planned, and a vote would be taken at that time. Amendments to the Governance Structure document requires 25 signatures, including at least 10 faculty members and ten student signatures. A petition was being circulated for this purpose.

5. The document was projected on the large auditorium screen with new items underlined and deleted items with a strike-through. (For ease of reference, the strike-throughs are deleted, and new language is underlined herein.)

6. The first change in the Governance Document is in Section I.A., General Statement. Here the Committee has made “non-teaching instructional staff”- as the term is used in the contract- a separate category from administration representatives.

7. Roman Numeral C: Composition of the Senate. The proposal is a departure from the present system where membership in the Senate is proportional: administrators constitute 1/6th of the Senate, students 1/3 and faculty ½. It originally seemed like a good idea providing for a
membership of 108 a few years ago. However, because of increases in the number of administrators, we are now in the upper 130s or lower 140s in terms of Senate membership, and this is particularly a problem for the students who are unable to fill their quota of about 40 seats. Unfortunately, those unfilled seats still count against us for a quorum and in obtaining a majority on various issues. So the present process has proved unworkable. Rather than defining representation in terms of proportions, we plan to define it in absolute numbers, and those absolute numbers will lock in those original proportions. Thus, there would be a total Senate membership of 102.

8. Under Department Representation, the sentence is to read: “One representative with at least two years of full-time service shall be elected from each department by and from those members eligible to vote in that department.”

9. At-Large Representation: The number of faculty senators elected at large shall be adjusted to maintain the total number of department representatives and at-large faculty senators at 51.

10. There has been some confusion in the election of faculty from what is called Group B, which consists of assistant professors without tenure, all instructors, and all lecturers full-time. What happens if someone is an assistant professor without tenure at the time of the election, but then is tenured the next September? For clarification the phrase “at the time of the election” has been added to Section C.1.c.

11. Part-time Faculty: “Three part-time faculty Senators shall be elected from those part-time members of the instructional staff who teach at least six semester hours per week. They shall be elected by all part-time members of the instructional staff.” The phrase “with full voting rights” has been eliminated, because all Senators are provided full floor and voting rights.

12. Administration Representation: “The President, Vice-Presidents and Full Deans shall be members of the Senate with full voting and floor rights. Prior to the first Senate meeting of the academic year, the President shall appoint additional administrative representatives for one year terms with full voting and floor rights so that the total number of administrators in the Senate, including ex-officio representatives, shall equal twelve.” The President, Vice President and Full Deans will automatically be members. Beyond these positions it will be up to the President to appoint other administrators so that the total number is twelve.

13. Non-Teaching Instructional Staff Representatives: “There shall be five representatives, elected by and from the Higher Education Officer and College Laboratory Technician series. They shall serve with full voting and floor rights.” Instead of being defined as administrators, these representatives are now defined in their own category.
14. The Gittleson representative has been eliminated.

15. Student Representation. Number of students: “There shall be 34 students comprising the total student membership of the Senate.” That amounts to one-third of the Senate and is expressed in the proposed change as an absolute number.

16. Additional Representatives: Those in the Senate with floor rights but not voting rights was eliminated as not being necessary.

17. Length of Service in the Senate. “At-large Faculty and Non-Teaching Instructional Staff. All full-time and part-time faculty elected at-large and non-teaching instructional staff representatives elected to the Senate shall serve two-year terms and shall be eligible for re-election.”

18. Part Time Faculty: This is deleted since it is covered in the previous section, which is also true of Ex Officio Representatives.

19. Vacancies: “(a) Senate seats shall be considered vacant when a senator is no longer employed or matriculated at the College or when a senator resigns from the Senate. (b) Vacancies in seats designated for Faculty-at-large, Non-Teaching Instructional Staff and Student Representatives shall be filled by the person who received the next highest vote total in the most recent election for such seats. If there are no eligible individuals remaining on the list from the previous election, a special election shall be held.”

20. Personnel and Budget at Section IV.A.1. “Members of the instructional staff with full-time appointments in titles of Professor, Associate Professor and Assistant Professor may serve as members of the Personnel and Budget Committees of their departments; four of the five members of the committee must be tenured, unless there are fewer than five tenured members in the department.”

Changes in the Lehman College Bylaws

Article II. Organization of the Senate. “The Senate shall be constituted and members elected or appointed as provided for in the ‘Governance Structure of Lehman College.’”

1. All the provisions concerning the elections have been deleted from Section 1., and incorporated into Section 2.

2. Section 2. Conduct of Elections: “Faculty at large, Part-time faculty, representatives, and Non-Teaching Instructional Staff elections shall be conducted by the Committee on Governance. The elections for Student Representatives shall be conducted by the Student Elections Board.”
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“Election of Faculty at large and Non-Teaching Instructional Staff Representatives and Senate committees shall be completed no later than the last Senate meeting of the academic year.”

3. Section 3c: “Chairs of Senate Committees shall be entitled to floor rights to present their reports.”

4. Section 4c: “Secretary: A recording secretary shall be appointed by the President.”

Section 4d: “A Parliamentarian shall be appointed by the President.”

5. Functions and Membership C: “Representatives of the administration serving on Senate committees shall be voting members and shall be appointed by the President.” Currently, representatives of the administration serving on Senate committees are non voting members.

6. Article IV. Committees, Section 2: Election of members of standing committees other than the committee on Governance shall be completed no later than the last Senate meeting of the academic year, with the term beginning at the start of the following Fall semester.”

7. Section 7, Committee on Governance: “Nominates candidates to committees, soliciting nominations and presenting slates of nominations to the Senate no later than the last Senate meeting of the academic year.” It also “[a]dministers the election of the at-large faculty and Non-Teaching Instructional Staff representatives to the Senate.”

b. Admissions, Evaluations and Academic Standards

1. Mr. Ralph Boone presented to the Senate the list of undergraduate and graduate candidates for January 31, 2010 graduation subject to approval by the registrar.

2. The next meeting will be before the end of this semester.

Undergraduate Curriculum-

1. Prof. Barbara Jacobson presented one proposal from the Department of Economics, and Business, which is a new minor in Business Administration and Liberal Arts. There were also two experimental courses from the Department of Journalism, Communications and Theatre as informational items.

2. Prof. Jacobson read corrections into the minutes on the curriculum change for the minor in Business and Liberal Arts. First, the proposal should show, 17 credits instead of 17-18 in two places on page 3. The other correction on page 3 under “credits” is 3 in Communication, not 3-4 as written. There followed an extensive discussion on the subject of the proposed new
minor. A motion to refer the proposal back to the Committee for further study was approved by voice vote.

3. The next meeting will be on Wednesday at 12:30 p.m. in Carman B-051.

d. Committee on Graduate Studies-
There was no report.

e. Committee on Academic Freedom-
There was no report.

f. Committee on Library, Technology and Telecommunications-

1. Mr. James Carney reported that on the Committee meeting of November 10, Associate Provost Robert Whittaker updated the Committee on the status of Blackboard and the issues surrounding the transition to Blackboard 8.0. The system is stable since it was moved to servers at Blackboard. The old anti-plagiarism system, Turnitin, was a standalone system which was only being used by a small number of Lehman faculty and was costing thousands of dollars per year. The SafeAssign system, which is an actual module of Blackboard 8.0 and provides similar functions, was included in the Blackboard package acquired by Lehman College.

2. The Committee passed a motion indicating its support for the rollout of Blackboard 8.0 including the SafeAssign system. Furthermore, the Committee and Dr. Whittaker agreed to maintain an ongoing relationship with the online working group, and that the chair of the Library, Technology and Telecommunications Committee will be involved in the working group meetings, and Dr. Whittaker or his designee will be invited to the Committee meetings. The Committee chair will then report on online issues to the full Senate on a regular basis.

3. The Blackboard 6.0 system will be disabled effective December 30, 2009. This means that all student content such as discussion posts and student submissions will be lost. Faculty members are urged to archive all courses they wish to keep since regular access to the course materials will be lost. The Committee relayed some problems reported by faculty and students regarding access and problems submitting assignments. Dr. Whittaker agreed to investigate these issues and report back to the Committee.

4. Concerning the printing report, the pilot period for the new unified system will be announced shortly. The target date to go live with the system will be the day after finals end. The system will be running concurrently with the old system with the new system as a default. This will continue through the winter break with a complete changeover set for the beginning
of the spring semester. To support student education on the system, printed materials have
been made available at the Library. Chief Librarian, Dr. Kenneth Schlesinger also reported on
research to create an Information Commons in the library. It would serve as a full service
information mall for students and faculty.

5. Roll out of Smart Classrooms continues ahead of schedule by almost a year, with funding
from both the Technology Fee and the CUNY Compact. It is now moving on to regular
classrooms. The Committee asked for additional training for faculty and some training for
students who use the technology for presentations and White Board use.

6. Technology fee requests for the 2009-2010 school year are now available. Department
chairs should contact their Information Technology Coordinator to execute these purchases.

7. Two regular Committee attendees have been asked to serve on the search committee for a
new Vice President of Information Technology. The Committee asked, to the degree possible,
to be kept informed on the progress of the search.

8. The next meeting of the Committee will be scheduled via the Committee Listserv.

Committee on Campus Life and Facilities-
There was no report.

Committee on Budget and Long Range Planning-
There was no report.

University Faculty Senate-
1. Prof. Manfred Philipp reported that the University Faculty Senate fall conference was
cancelled because the principal speaker, Vice Chancellor Ernesto Malavé, has fallen ill.
However, a spring conference, in addition to the one already planned, will be held on the
subject of Middle States and Assessment.

2. The Faculty Experience survey cards have gone out to the faculty. Deadline for return is
November 25.

3. The Task Force on the CUNY awards process will next meet in December.

4. A proposal is being made on the governance of the School of Public Health, but as yet it has
not been settled.

OLD BUSINESS
There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS
There was no new business.

ADJOURNMENT
The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Esdras Tulier