Minutes of
The Lehman College Senate Meeting
Wednesday, February 4, 2009


The meeting was called to order by President Ricardo Fernández at 3:30 p.m.

Minutes Adopted:
A motion was made and seconded to adopt the minutes of the Senate meeting of December 10, 2008. The minutes were unanimously approved with the correction that extended library hours are Friday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and on Sunday from 12 o’clock noon to 8 p.m. The Saturday hours remain the same, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Announcements and Communication-

a. President Ricardo R. Fernández-

1. President Fernández visited the Bronx delegation of the State Legislature yesterday, leading the presidents of the CUNY schools in the Bronx as he has done over the last four years. The meeting was arranged with both the Assembly and the Senate and both visits were successful. The group managed to speak to all the representatives of the Assembly, except two, and in the afternoon spoke to all but two of the Bronx Senators. And they also had a chance to speak to Senator Carl Kruger, chair of the Budget and Tax Reform Committee and Senator Toby Ann Stavisky, chair of the Higher Education Committee.

As usual, the legislators were keenly receptive, but they emphasized the present difficult environment and cautioned against undue optimism. The discussion centered on two issues: (1) what’s happening with the 2008-09 budget and (2) the fiscal 2009-10 budget which begins on April 1. The delegation took the usual priorities that the University has delineated, namely, the Senior College operating budget and the restoration of funds recommended for reduction. Also, the state aid for community colleges was a major issue. There was emphasis on the investments in core activities that the governor put forth in his plan whereby twenty percent of any increase in tuition would be turned back to the university. Thus, at least a portion of the funds that people will be asked to pay as a tuition increase will come back in the form of either increased faculty, staff, better services, or some investment in the University. This is an important change in the practice. Typically, what has happened over the years is that the Governor proposes a reduction, the legislature approves it, tuition is increased, the amount of the increase closes the gap, and there is no new money for anything. Given the rate of inflation, CUNY is falling behind. The aggregate impact over the years has created some real imbalances and deficiencies. The presidents also emphasized the need to address the proposed reduction in TAP. The Assembly and Senate representatives were provided with a chart detailing the number of Lehman students who live in their districts who are receiving TAP. They were impressed by the numbers and fully recognize the value of the University. The legislators were willing to be of help, while recognizing the restraints they are working under. Under consideration was the question: what represents a full-time student? The proposal was to move the criterion from 12 credits to 15 per semester. This
would result in a significant reduction in money CUNY students would receive.

Compared to other institutions, Lehman has relatively few students who are taking 15 or more credits. President Fernández believes we will see some movement in that direction. President Fernández also emphasized Lehman College’s capital budget needs. Specifically mentioned was Lehman’s Science Facility, Phase II, which deals with the underground connections that are needed. This is costly, requiring the University to seek $20 million to cover the work. It’s likely that Lehman will receive consideration because it’s easier for the legislators do that. (It also stimulates the economy.) This year, in the community colleges finances, a cut of $2 million has been made up but this will not happen in next year’s budget. It’s difficult to assume that the budget will be out by April 1. Fortunately, New York Senator Charles Schumer is one of the people most directly shepherding the stimulus package through the U.S. Senate and he fully understands the importance of strengthening higher education in getting the economy back on track. Next Tuesday, a group of students will travel to Albany to meet with the legislators since it is important for the legislators hear directly from the students.

2. President Fernández introduced Dr. Robin Kunstler, Acting Dean of the Natural and Social Science Division, for a report on the fast-approaching Middle States Review.

3. Professor Kunstler reported that the Self-Study is posted on the Lehman website and she urged that Senators read it, if they haven’t already. The Middle States review team will visit the campus March 8 to March 11. Groups are being set up for meetings, and individuals will be contacted soon. She just wanted to make sure everyone is aware of the team’s visit and that they receive a proper welcome. The Senate will be kept informed on what’s happening. A hard copy of the Self-Study document is in the library for anyone interested.

b. Student Conference-

1. The report was presented by Mr. Jason Jeremias, Student Conference Chair. Reporting on the first meeting of this semester, it was decided to go forward with an ad hoc committee to consider forming a student government association to supplant the old bodies of CASA and the Student Conference. Meetings will be held every other Friday starting next week.

2. Meetings are also being held on plans for the homecoming event.
a. Committee on Governance-

1. Prof. Duane Tananbaum reported that the Committee met on January 26 to continue the discussion on various issues in the governance documents, including trying to reduce the number in the Senate to make it easier to form a quorum. The President will join the next meeting as the discussion continues.

2. Ballots for nominations for Senators at large and other constituencies will be going out within the next month. Nomination ballots will also be going out in March for the Senate committees. Senators are urged to watch their mail boxes. Elections have two rounds. First, there is a request for nominations (you can nominate yourself or a colleague can nominate you). If you nominate someone other than yourself, Senators are urged to first make sure that the person is interested.

3. In answer to a question from the floor, Prof. Tananbaum explained that the only committee one has to be a senator to serve on is the Governance Committee. People, faculty and students do not have to be members of the Senate to serve on any other committees.

4. The next meeting of the Governance Committee is scheduled for 4:45 p.m. on February 24 in the President’s Conference Room, Shuster 336.

b. Committee on Admissions, Evaluations and Academic Standards-

There was no report.

c. Undergraduate Studies –

1. Prof. Barbara Jacobson submitted proposals from two departments: the Department of Biological Sciences and the Department of Economics, Accounting and Business Administration; and one informational item from the Department of Biological Sciences. The report was approved.

2. The next committee meeting will be at 12:15 p.m. on February 11 in Carman 221.
d. **Committee on Graduate Studies**-

1. Prof. Timothy Alborn reported a change in the Department of Economics, Accounting and Business Administration. This involves a change in ECO 720 (Advanced Auditing) to ACC 719 (Advanced Auditing). The new alpha code in the course (ACC 719) and its prerequisite (ACC 441) appropriately anchor the course in the core requirement of the Master in Science program in Accounting. The addition of “or equivalent” corrects a mistake in the original description. A redundant phrase in the course description is also deleted. The report was approved.

2. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, February 10 in Carman B33.

e. **Committee on Academic Freedom**-

There was no report.

f. **Committee on the Library, Technology and Telecommunications**-

1. There was no report.

2. The next meeting is scheduled for 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 10, 2009 in the Library.

g. **Committee on Budget and Long-Range Planning**-

There was no report. The next meeting is still being planned.

h. **Committee on Campus Life and Facilities**-

1. Prof. Janette Tilley reported that a request for proposals for the food services has been issued. Returns are expected within the next couple of weeks. The request was made for sustainable, local food options as well as Kosher and Halal foods. To get a better sense of the community’s needs and wishes for food services, the committee will send out a short survey, asking students and faculty to take the time to communicate their needs.

2. The next meeting is scheduled for 2:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 4 in Shuster 325.

i. **University Faculty Senate**-

1. Professor Manfred Philipp reported that the Chancellery has indicated that the executive budget would be consistent with an additional 350 new full-time faculty members over
retirements and resignations. Faculty is urgently needed due to the increasing enrollment. It is clear that the proportion of full-time faculty will decline. The question now is whether there will be an increase in the absolute numbers. Prof. Philipp commented that this is becoming a little more doubtful.

2. Problems with the Blackboard system were next discussed. Similar reports of the problem were heard last night at the Plenary. The real question is when will this be settled? It’s not over yet. In the meantime, the IT people have discovered new pathways. As of yesterday, Blackboard has been running, but there are still open questions.

3. The CUNY-Plus library system is having its own problems. The CUNY IT people did not originally buy the system but they are responsible for maintaining it.

4. On April 24, the University Faculty Senate will hold its Spring Conference, on the theme “Access to Higher Education in the Health Sciences.”

5. One of the UFS initiatives for the University Master Plan is the School of Pharmacy. The chancellor has indicated that this is going forward with a study on how this can be done. Due to overcrowding at Borough of Manhattan Community College, the University is looking into establishing another community college with a concentration in nursing.

6. At the last meeting of the Board of Trustees, Prof. Philipp expressed his appreciation for the efforts of CUNY’s community colleges. He did that because various members of the Chancellery have been complaining that the graduation rates are too low. The colleges are graduating students in a smaller proportion than many people would like to see.

7. Dr. Jillian Small, vice chancellor of Research, has been asked by the chancellor to establish a task force on the PSC/CUNY Research Awards. These awards are negotiated by the union, and the money is managed by the University Faculty Senate.

8. Half of the University’s capital budget goes to the Advanced Science Research Center and adjacent buildings at City College. That means that other facilities will get less money. The University Faculty Senate has been discussing with the Chancellor the governance of the Center because it’s in the interest of the entire faculty in the University. The concern is that the facilities be available in an equitable way to faculty and their research students across the University without a concentration on Hunter and City Colleges. Prof. Philipp believes this effort will be successful.
OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Esdras Tulier