Minutes of
The Lehman College Senate Meeting
Wednesday, September 24, 2008


The meeting was called to order by President Ricardo Fernández at 2:10 p.m.

Minutes Adopted
A motion was made and seconded to adopt the minutes of the Senate meeting of April 30, 2008. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Change of Agenda
A motion was made to allow the University Faculty Senate report to come first since Prof. Manfred Philipp had another commitment. It was seconded and approved.
Announcements and Communication-

a. President Ricardo R. Fernández-

1. The new academic year was formally opened last week at the Convocation ceremony. This morning there was a ground-breaking ceremony for the new science building; which was attended by the Chancellor, several vice-chancellors, the University’s Dean of Science, and a several elected officials.

2. Last Monday, the Board of Trustees approved two new programs at Lehman College: a master’s degree in business with three specializations and a baccalaureate degree in exercise science.

3. President Fernández also announced future upcoming activities. On Friday, October 3, the CUNY Center for Sustainable Energy will hold a university-wide conference on the Lehman campus. The President encouraged senators to attend one or more of the sessions. A film developed by former Vice President Al Gore, titled “An Inconvenient Truth,” will be shown at the session. This film intended to highlight environmental problems world-wide, will also be shown on September 26th and 30th.

4. The State and the City both depend on revenue from Wall Street and are obviously going through severe economic times. Some people thought Gov. Patterson was exaggerating when he commented a few weeks ago that current downturn is comparable to the Great Depression. President Fernández hoped that would not be the case, but did say this is a problem that will be with us for a long time. This is a world-wide phenomenon and will take us a couple of years (or longer) to straighten out. As a result, we will have to tighten our belts. Fortunately, this State and this City are known for their resiliency. As mentioned at the convocation, Herbert Lehman was governor of the State during the entire Great Depression, for ten years, from 1932 to 1942. He recognized that it was important to invest in the infrastructure—the platform on which progress would be made. In periods such as this, the single most important investment that can be made is in education. President Fernández hoped that the governor and the legislature would keep this in mind. Nevertheless, this will be a difficult year and the beginning of a difficult period.
President Fernández indicated that during these tough economic times, the college community can put its energy to productive use instead of worrying about impending doom. He expressed confidence in a period of productive change, with an opportunity for planning. Consequently, he announced the creation of a Strategic Planning Council which will be made up of faculty, administrators and students. Over several months, the Council’s task will be to develop a plan which will guide this institution in the next decade. The Council, chaired by Prof. Ira Bloom, will have its first meeting on Monday. We expect a plan to be completed by the end of the spring semester. We are now celebrating 40 years of Lehman College as an independent entity and will turn 50 in 2018. This plan will lay out the main parameters to guide the growth of the college.

President Fernández called upon Prof. Vincent Prohaska for an update on the status of our self-study for accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). Thanks was expressed to all those who assisted with the Middle States accreditation process in the last year and a half. Prof. Prohaska reported that a complete draft of the self-study is now available for comments from the college community. From the College home page, look for the “Middle States” link under the main picture. In the box to the lower right are the 14 MSCHE standards that we must meet. MSCHE is especially focused on standards 7 (Institutional Assessment) and 14 (Assessment of Student Learning). Some institutions have been having difficulty in re-accreditation recently, (having to complete follow-up reports in one or two years, or even being revisited by evaluation teams). They have failed in completely meeting one of these two standards, usually 14. Thus, we have begun a major initiative to begin assessing student learning in all departments this semester to demonstrate our compliance with standard 14. Along with the standards, the web site also contains the draft of our self-study, demonstrating how we meet the 14 standards. At this point, the committee would appreciate hearing about anything we’ve missed in the self-study. In addition, the last three sections in each chapter of the self-study address “Strengths,” “Challenges,” and “Action Plans.” These are areas in which we especially need comments and suggestions from the campus at large. These areas are likely to be the starting points for our next round of college strategic planning. The committee can be contacted directly at middle.states@lehman.cuny.edu. Open forums have been scheduled to discuss our self-study on Wednesday, October 22, from 2 to 4 p.m. and on Thursday, October 30, from
4:30 to 6 p.m., both in Carman B04. The entire college community is invited. The evaluation committee will be on campus from March 9 to 11.

a. **University Faculty Senate**

1. Prof. Manfred Philipp reported that last night at the University Faculty Senate Plenary the Chancellor was asked about the possibility of retrenchment in connection with the fiscal crisis. But it is fair to say that the Chancellor has been warning the Senate about this crisis for about a little more than a year. He personally is well connected to the financial world, but he did say last night that it turned out to be worse than he expected, but he did expect something on this order.

2. The joint degrees for the sciences at Hunter and City Colleges have now been approved by the governor. The public health joint degree at Hunter College was also approved. The engineering degree at City College was approved but it will not be joint.

3. CUNY has adopted a new technology fee, raising it from $75 to $100 per semester for full-time students. This action was taken in an executive committee meeting of the Board during the summer without a public hearing. The required public hearing took place afterward. CUNY has contracted with a vendor for credit card payments that will now be charged to students. Fees like this are not covered by the tuition assistance program. It has been suggested that these fees should be incorporated in a future tuition increase so low income students would not be charged with the fee. Prof. Philipp stated that the Chancellor declared that there would be an increase in tuition. It hasn’t gone up for quite some time. A long period with a lack of increases means that the students will be the losers because the increase will be higher. If the financial crisis continues, as it is expected to, it is certain that this University will feel it. The Governor so far has cut the University’s budget by seven percent which works out to $51 million. There was also a previous cut of $17.7 million. Next year, the colleges will be exposed to the full brunt of these cuts, foreshadowing a tuition increase.

4. The University has passed a new domestic violence policy that largely comes from the State, but the application will be modified by the University.

5. “Becoming a Faculty Member” is a conference that will be sponsored by the University Faculty Senate and will be held on November 14 at John Jay College.

6. Last night the University Faculty Senate adopted a new academic freedom statement. Since the Board of Trustees has not adopted a clear statement on this subject, nor is it
anywhere in line with that of American Association of University Professors, it is important to have this.

b. Student Conference-
1. Mr. Jason Jeremias, Student Conference Chair, reported that the Student Conference has been quite busy over the last month. The Conference has been restructured to include sub-committees to work on new pathways to promote student involvement in academic standards and student life. Right now the Conference is promoting a student-inspired video. Also, the Student Conference is updating its web site and hopes to launch this on Target Vision by the end of the month. It will include the Conference’s new preamble, new bylaws, pictures, contact information, and student conference numbers so students can come to the Conference directly with their problems. Problems of students with disability are being considered to evaluate what steps could be taken. “Students are coming to us with tears, and that’s shameful.”

2. Nominees for election to the Senate Committees were presented as follows:

Committee on Admissions, Evaluation and Academic Standards (CAEAS): Angel Vitiello, Justin Simmons, Ayesha Lewis, Kenosha Phillip, and Jason Jeremias; Library, Technology, and Telecommunications Committee: Francisco Valverde and Nusrat Chowdhury; Campus Life and Facilities Committee: Kewe Mbengue, Nusrat Chowdhury, and Ricky Esposito; Undergraduate Curriculum Committee: Rovna-lyn Joseph, Justin Simmons, Vered Albelda, Kewe Mbengue, and Lamont Badru;
Governance Committee: David Afrani, Justin Simmons, Ayesha Lewis, Jason Jeremias, and Nusrat Chowdbury; Budget and Long Range Planning Committee: Angela Ho, Lamont Badru, and Angel Vitiello; Academic Freedom Committee: Jason Jeremias, Ricky Esposito, Kenesha Phillip, and Mingfan Sun; Graduate Curriculum Committee: Keith Lewis.

REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES-

a. Committee on Governance-
1. Prof. Duane Tananbaum, chair, said a chair person who will preside at the Senate in the absence of the President needs to be elected at the first meeting of the Senate at the
beginning of each academic year. Nominations were taken from the floor for Prof. C. Alicia Georges and Prof Rosalind Carey. Prof. Georges was elected.

2. Elections were also held for two vacancies in the Governance Committee for a term of two years. Prof. Rosalind Carey and Prof. Manfred Philipp were elected by acclamation with one vote in opposition. The three continuing members of the Committee are Prof. Tananbaum, Prof. Marie Marianetti, both of the History Department, and Prof. James Jervis from African and African American Studies.

3. The slate of student nominees presented in the report of the Student Conference was elected by acclamation.

b. Committee on Admissions, Evaluations and Academic Standards-
There was no report.

c. Undergraduate Curriculum –
Prof. Barbara Jacobson presented an experimental course for the Macaulay Honors College and two experimental courses from the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science as informational items. Four new courses and changes in other courses in the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science were proposed. Moreover, she presented two new courses from the Department of Journalism, Communication & Theatre, and a new course, Global Justice, in the Department of Philosophy and in the Department of Political Science. Also proposed were changes in prerequisites for BIO 330 and 490 from the Department of Biological Sciences. The report was approved.

d. Committee on Graduate Studies-

1. Prof. Timothy Alborn reported a change of Overview of Program in the Department of Early Childhood and Childhood Education; a proposal to establish an Institute for Health Equity at Lehman College in the Department of Health Sciences; changes in several courses and two experimental courses in the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science; an experimental course in the English Department; a new course in Spanish in the Department of Languages and Literatures; and a change in General M.S.
Ed Program information from the Department of Middle and High School Education.
The report was approved.

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

f. Committee on the Library, Technology and Telecommunications-
There was no report.

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

h. Committee on Budget and Long-Range Planning-
In the absence of Prof. Delson, the report was given by Prof. Feinerman.
1. The committee meets together with the Faculty Personnel and the Budget Committee, and a meeting was held yesterday, and Prof. Feinerman was elected as chair.
2. At the meeting yesterday, Vice President Derek Wheeler and Provost Mary Papazian reviewed the budget snapshot, discussed the state of the college budget. As a result of the State budget problems of this past spring and summer, CUNY’s budget has been cut; CUNY Compact III has been delayed until next year. We seem to have a budget shortfall of $1.3 million for this year. As for non-teaching positions, we have $2 million worth of vacancies, some of which will not be filled, and there is a possibility of a tuition increase. If it comes to be, it will be after the election. There were no student members in attendance; Prof. Feinerman urged them to attend in the future.
3. The next meeting will be some time in November or December as needed.

OLD BUSINESS
There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS
There was no new business

ADJOURNMENT
The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,

Esdras Tulier