

LEHMAN COLLEGE
ACADEMIC FREEDOM COMMITTEE
Minutes of the committee meeting
4 FEB 2021

Present: Diane Auslander, Analia Firpo, Elgloria Harrison, David Manier (chair), Mohan Vinjamuri

1. A quorum having been established, and minutes of the preceding meeting having been approved via email, the meeting was called to order by Prof. Manier at 3:30 p.m.

2. In response to a discussion during this month's Senate meeting, we reviewed issues related to mental health at Lehman, particularly with regard to additional stresses being caused by the current Covid-19 pandemic. This matter can have academic freedom consequences insofar as (for example) students should be free to choose whether or not to disclose mental health issues to professors. In disciplines like psychology and social work, this may be particularly relevant, since related topics may be discussed during class, however, issues may also arise in other departments. Moreover, since the pandemic may be affecting students in relation to issues such as health, finances, and housing, professors need to respond, on the one hand, by trying to maintain appropriately high academic standards, but on the other hand, by being appropriately flexible. This involves academic freedom to the extent that it impacts autonomous decisions of professors, who also respond to the demands/needs of students and the administration. We agreed to discuss these issues further in subsequent committee meetings.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
David Manier, Assoc. Professor
Chair and Secretary Pro Tempore

Cc: Sophia Diamantis-Fry