

LEHMAN COLLEGE

The City University of New York

Minutes of the Stated Meeting of the General Faculty

Wednesday, February 13, 2013

CALL TO ORDER: Professor **Robert Feinerman**, Chair of the Faculty Executive Committee called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. and introduced the first speaker, **President Ricardo Fernandez**

Opening remarks and budget request

President Fernandez referred to the “weighty topics” and agenda of today’s faculty meeting and specifically mentioned V.P. Troy’s upcoming “useful, challenging and important” talk on enrollment data. Fernandez began his own remarks with mention of the CUNY Chancellor’s testimony of yesterday (February 12) before the State Legislature’s Committee on Higher Education. Of significant interest to President Fernandez was that Lehman’s request for \$20M to complete the \$41 million needed to build the modular structure for the School of Health Sciences and Nursing, was included in the [overall] CUNY request. He noted that in comparison to Hunter College’s \$500M request (in connection with the Cornell Roosevelt Island project), for example, ours is minimal.

The changing world of higher education:

Fernandez commented on the vast and significant changes that are “moving very quickly” in Higher Education and explained that from a campus perspective these changes are not obvious (except for recent reports sponsored by organizations such as the Gates foundation). He noted, however, that changes in higher education were reflected in the President of the United States mention of CUNY [in his State of the Union address] when he spoke of the New York City College of Technology collaboration with IBM to get students into a short-term certificate program that would yield immediate results as one example of the new importance and high visibility of significant changes.

Fernandez continued on this subject mentioning that one of the reasons for a changing higher educational environment is cost – which he determined was a major issue in the minds of most Americans and cited a few facts:

(1) the median U.S. income fell by 7% between 2006 and 2011 (this is inflation adjusted) – he mentioned that we all have felt that and certainly at Lehman where salaries have essentially been frozen for almost four years;

(2) at the same time the average tuition at public four year colleges has increased by over 18% - which Fernandez said is driven primarily by the disinvestment of most state legislatures in higher education across the country;

(3) to compare it to other costs in our society, college tuition has increased at twice the rate of health costs in the U.S. over the last 25 years which shows a clear unsustainability and has led some elected officials – such as the governors of Texas, Wisconsin and Florida and some legislators in California to now talk about \$10,000 degrees - this is a baccalaureate degree that is allegedly just as good in terms of quality as anything that is now being offered but for one quarter of the expense;

(4) U.S. Student debt is estimated to now surpass a trillion dollars – a concern by some that this is the next bubble that will hit at in the future.

President Fernandez's Statement on Online Courses, MOOCs*, Coursera* and edX

We all read the papers and know what's going on in terms of technology** and MOOCs offered by organizations such as Coursera and edX is one of the latest developments in this area. The American Council of Education (which represents all of higher education – profit and nonprofit) has recently recommended five of these MOOCs offered by Coursera for credit. Now whether a certificate given will be something students can turn in for credit somewhere is unknown at present but I think we're headed in that direction and we have to pay attention.

In Fall 2011 there were 6.7 million students taking at least one online course in higher education. To put that in perspective it is an increase of almost 600,000 students over the previous year evidence that this is growing by leaps and bounds and is what Higher Education is paying attention to. If these MOOCs are automatically given a legitimacy – by such as the American Council of Education -- and they begin to then be used by individuals who can maybe complete their BA degrees or get some sort of certificate this will enable them to get in the workforce faster.

Thirty-two percent of higher education students now take at least one online course -- a significant change from three to five years ago -- yet only 30% of chief academic officers believe that their faculty accept the legitimacy and value of online education. That is probably lower than in 2004. Online education is less than 20 years old with the first online courses being given in 1993. Online education is an area that should be of interest to faculty since this is the world in which we and our students are now living and in which we have to navigate going forward to be able to serve our institutions and students better.

The [five] courses offered through Coursera and validated by ACE are:

Duke University: **Introduction to Genetics and Evolution; Bioelectricity: A Quantitative Approach**

University of California, Irvine: **Pre-calculus; Algebra**

University of Pennsylvania: **Calculus: Single Variable**

In closing President Fernandez noted that these are not fly-by-night institution offerings but legitimate rigorous courses that if completed by individuals will be given recognition. He stated that this is just the beginning of what will happen in every field across higher education and encouraged faculty members to educate themselves [[Note the links below](#)]. Referring to Lehman's place in the world of online

education President Fernandez reported that although at present we offer hybrid and asynchronous (fully online) courses and are also a member of a consortium of 36 institutions across and beyond the U.S. involved in online education there is still work to be done and stated he will be happy to speak to anyone on the subject via email or telephone.

Chairman Feinerman introduced the Provost, Dr. Anny Morrobel-Sosa as the next speaker

Provost Morrobel-Sosa

The Provost addressed Professor Feinerman's Executive committee query about plans being developed to change some of the doctoral programs. In doing so she presented the same update provided to the Senate not too long ago with regards to the CUNY administrative "conversation" begun about a year and a half ago when the Vice Chancellor for research together with the leadership of several doctoral programs requested an external evaluation of the programs -- primarily Biochemistry, Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

The Provost found that the external committees review made it was clear that we have some concerns with regards to the conduct of the programs, i.e., the way that we use and record programs at the doctoral level, the level of activity and the level of grant support for the doctoral programs. Based on that review, initial discussions were begun with the programs that house a large number of the faculty involved in the programs and that also had a large portion of external research dollars -- specifically Hunter and City College followed later on by Queens College. Those discussions centered around what and/or how the future of these doctoral programs would be better served and the question of whether to focus on a college-centric location rather than across the entire university.

The Provost continued by noting that all of this was done as preliminary material and stated that the rumor mill began at around December which is when she found out about the discussions -- mostly by some of our own faculty who had either been involved in the discussions or had alerted her. Since that time Provost Morrobel-Sosa has consulted with both the Vice Chancellor for Research and the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs regarding the idea of this proposal to ask about its origin, what the consequences might be for faculty and students. She was told is that this is a conversation that is still evolving. The Provost declared that that is the extent of what she knows about the proposal and though the discussion has quieted down quite a bit in the last few months she has made it very clear that should these conversations initiate again she expects to be involved in that conversation and if she is not invited she will invite herself.

The Provost added that the issues with regards to the doctoral science programs are mostly due to budgeting issues such as the cost of laboratory instrumentations and maintenance - all of the types of things that we need to be very careful about in how we decide the future of any program and stated that obviously we need to consult with the faculty involved in the programs. She also noted that this leads to another conclusion which she has previously mentioned in the Senate, i.e., her effort to put together a strategic task force to look at enhancing research and scholarship and to look at the kinds of graduate programs that we should be engaged in and to what extent.

The provost believes that is something we need to do regardless of where the decisions on doctoral programs happen in general and mentioned the importance of Vice President Robert Troy's upcoming presentation regarding the overall enrollment and closed by stating that we need to make sure that we have a diversified enrollment not only between undergraduate and graduate programs but that are also very much along the lines of what our students are interested in.

V.P. Robert Troy: Spring Enrollment. See power point file attachment. Note: "Flash Report" is the current enrollment which is an estimate of our absolute enrollment for the Spring – the actual Spring 2013 numbers will be available mid-March.

Professor Esther Wilder: A presentation on Quantitative Reasoning/Quantitative Literacy included a 15 page handout.

Professor Duane Tananbaum: Lehman Senate Report: In a few weeks faculty should receive nomination forms for elections -- both for serving on Senate committees and for at-large members of the Senate. Professor Tananbaum reminded us that we can also nominate ourselves. Once all of the nominations are in a slate of names will be given to the Senate for election.

Professor Rosalyn Carey – PSC Report

Dr. Carey informed us that Manfred (who was not present) has returned from abroad and resumed his role as Chapter Chair. Therefore, all chapter business should now be directed to him and not to Carey. However, Professor Carey completed grievance training and as a grievance officer can be contacted at the PSC's central office for contractual concerns. Carey suggested the grievance training to faculty, noting that whether or not one expects or wants to serve as a grievance counselor it is simply a good idea to have knowledge of the contract.

On the subject of **Pathways** Dr. Carey reported the following:

The legal proceedings with CUNY over Pathways are continuing. There are two lawsuits. The first is based on a 1996 settlement agreement with Irwin Polishook and Sandi Cooper; the lawyers met last month with the judge in conference. This lawsuit is or soon will be in oral arguments on a motion by management to dismiss. The second lawsuit is based on the open meetings law. The reasoning behind it is the reworking of curricula to conform to Pathways without employing appropriate procedures. No date for a conference with the lawyers and judge has been set regarding this lawsuit.

Carey added that there was a step two grievance hearing last semester claiming that Pathways violates College Bylaws but that she has not been able to determine the status of this. The grievance concerns about ten CUNY colleges: BC, BMCC, CC, CSI, Lehman, JJ, MEC, QCC, York, and NYCT. There is also now an appearance of a PERB charge that has been filed (about direct dealing on workload with departments and not the PSC). PERB stands for Public Employees Relations Bureau. Manfred will keep us informed of developments.

The Adjunct health insurance has been extended through April 30 and review of the proposed new coverage is ongoing.

Finally a Chapter meeting: is tentatively scheduled for Wed., 3/13 at 3:30, room TBD. When the day/time and place are firmly fixed, a notice will be sent out. The agenda is to get feedback from members on a variety of issues, including but not limited to workload, class size, and Pathways.

Professor Helene Silverman announced the Men's Swimming and Diving Team win. UFS Report: at the last faculty Senate meeting a resolution was passed on the situation at Brooklyn College which basically opposed the whole concept of academic freedom. The second part is the Kroll Report. Kroll is an organization that was hired to evaluate a situation that happened at the Board Meeting at Baruch. It is being reviewed by the Faculty University Senate.

Meeting Closed by Professor Robert Feinerman: Chairman Feinerman concluded the meeting and announced the next General Faculty Meeting date of April 24, 2013.

Respectfully transcribed and submitted by
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*MOOCs = massive open online courses (http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/05/education/moocs-large-courses-open-to-all-topple-campus-walls.html?_r=3&hpw)

*Coursera is an educational technology company founded by computer science professors Andrew Ng and Daphne Koller from Stanford University <https://www.coursera.org/>

*edX is the nonprofit platform started in 2012 at Harvard and MIT <https://www.edx.org/>

**Noteworthy Articles on the subject of online education

<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/01/29/yale-takes-time-reflect-evaluate-jumping-moocs>
"Not Rushing into Moocs", *Inside Higher Ed* (Yale holding off for now – January 2013)

<http://www.insidehighered.com/views/2013/03/07/thomas-friedman-wrong-about-moocs-essay>
"Moocs R Us", *Inside Higher Ed* (March 2013)

<http://www.technologyreview.com/news/512256/in-the-developing-world-moocs-start-to-get-real/>
"In the Developing World Moocs Start to Get Real", MIT Technology Review