

**Faculty Senate Minutes #511**  
**John Jay College of Criminal Justice**

Tuesday, September 22, 2020

1:40 PM

Zoom

**Present (37):** Chevy Alford, Andrea Balis, Elton Beckett, Ned Benton, Mohamed Ben Zid, Chelsea Binns, Marta Bladek, Michael Brownstein, Marta Concheiro-Guisan, Silvia Dapia, Lissette Delgado-Cruzata, Jonathan Epstein, Joel Freiser, Jessica Gordon-Nembhard, Heath Grant, Amy Green, John Gutierrez, Maki Haberfeld, Christopher Herrmann, Veronica Johnson, Karen Kaplowitz, Erica King-Toler, Benjamin Lapidus, Joyce Lau, Anru Lee, Alexander Long, Maxwell Mak, Mickey Melendez, Catherine Mulder, Christian Parenti, Hyunhee Park, Jay Pastrana, Edward Paulino, Francis Sheehan, Lucia Velotti, Adam Wandt, Violet Yu

**Absent (1):** Marta-Laura Suska

**Guests:** Professor Benjamin Bierman, Professor David Munns

**Agenda**

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Adoption of Minutes #510 of the September 9, 2020, meeting
3. Announcements & Reports
4. Committee Election
5. Discussion and vote on issues related to faculty elections in virtual meetings
6. Discussion on Letter from the Black Students Union & JJ's Curricular Initiative for Justice and Anti-Racism

1. **Adoption of the Agenda.** Approved.

2. **Adoption of Minutes #510 of the September 9, 2020, Faculty Senate meeting.** Adopted with correction.

3. **Announcements and Reports**

President Benton reported that the Chairs have taken up the issue of promotions for adjuncts, which the Senate has done as well. But Provost Li has said no to promotions for adjuncts. So a small faculty group, including Ned Benton, is working on this issue. The group is looking at other CUNY campuses and at SUNY. Joel Freiser has been pushing for this.

4. **Committee election**

Three members of the faculty self-nominated for the two faculty seats on the Student Activities Association Board of Directors (SAABOD), an entity which is mandated by CUNY of all of its colleges. The SAABOD receives and allocates more than \$3.5 million a year in mandatory student activity fees from John Jay students each year. The candidates were: Professors Jean-Marie Col (Public Management); Toy-Fung Tung (English); and Liza Yukins (English). Using SimplyVoting, the Senate cast secret ballot votes and elected Jean-Marie Col and Liza Yukins.

## **5. Discussion and vote on issues related to faculty elections in virtual meetings**

The Senate took a Survey Monkey poll created by the Senate's Executive Committee about voting during virtual meetings. The results were shown to everyone. One surprising result is that 11 of the 23 departments did not use SimplyVoting for their spring elections. Senator Mohammed Ben Zid said the problem remains of the control by a third party, in this case by DoIT. Everyone should be able to see the results of each election, he said. Senator Michael Brownstein said that he had been somewhat dissatisfied at the spring department election because it took 20 minutes to log in and get onto the site and calling Joe Laub but, he added, he doesn't know what the alternates are. Senator Mickey Melendez agreed that the problem of the third party is key, that it takes Joe Laub to set up each vote and therefore does not ensure confidentiality. Senator Maxwell Mak said his department used ADoodle – having obtained permission from legal counsel to do so – and the department election was completed in 20 minutes. Senator Melendez said that the Senate Technology Committee rejected ADoodle having determined that it permits others to figure out who voted and who each person voted for.

We have 23 academic departments but in some cases the Senate comprises several members of the same department. The results of the Monkey Survey, as follows, were reported by President Benton:

Question #1: The College should use a single technology throughout the college for confidential voting at John Jay: 28 said they agreed/strongly agreed; 5 were neutral.

Question #2: Based on my experience, SimplyVoting is a satisfactory technology for confidential electronic voting: 27 people agreed/agreed strongly; 3 people disagreed/strongly disagreed; 2 were neutral.

Question #3: My Department used SimplyVoting for the Spring 2020 elections: 23 said agreed/strongly agreed; 11 disagreed.

Question #4: My experience in last spring departmental elections with SimplyVoting was satisfactory: 19 agreed/strongly agreed; 4 disagreed/strongly disagreed; 2 were neutral.

Question #5: My experience last spring with college-wide elections and with Faculty Senate elections using SimplyVoting was satisfactory. With the exception of problems experienced by using SimplyVoting was satisfactory: 27 agreed/strongly agreed; 4 disagreed/strongly disagreed; 2 were neutral.

Question #6: With the exception of problems experienced by some faculty accessing SimplyVoting because of email/password problems, my experience in last spring departmental elections with SimplyVoting was satisfactory: 23 agreed/strongly agreed; 2 disagreed/strongly; 3 were neutral.

Question #7: The rules for department and program elections, currently issued by the Office of the Provost, should continue to be drafted by and disseminated by the Office of the Provost: 20 agreed/strongly; 6 disagreed/strongly; 6 were neutral.

Question #8: My experience with Zoom meetings at John Jay has been satisfactory: 30 agreed/strongly agreed; 4 disagreed/strongly disagreed; 4 disagreed/strongly.

It was agreed that these Survey Monkey results will be provided to all Senators before the next Senate meeting and will be discussed at our next Senate meeting after everyone has a chance to really review them.

## **6. Discussion on Letter from the Black Students Union & JJ's Curricular Initiative for Justice and Anti-Racism**

During the summer, the Black Students Union (BSU) at John Jay issued a letter to President Mason and another letter to the department chairs, which was cc'd to the president and vice president of the Faculty Senate and others, making eight demands presented as follows:

"1. Hire faculty that represent us, who's *[sic]* research and commitment serve the topical priorities that this institution has promised to us.

"2. Train professors in a Trauma-Informed Pedagogy. Those who look beyond the statistics, and see the plight of Blacks in this country as victims of oppression rather than criminals.

"3. Make mandatory, an anti-racism workshop series that ALL faculty must attend and are graded on their participation, allowed to evaluate their own biases and reflect on their privileges.

"4. All incoming students, both freshmen and transfers, must be required to fulfill 3-6 hours of mandatory anti-racism training just the same as they are required to take a freshman or transfer seminar in person. (teach faculty how to create conducive learning environments for hard discussions such as race [which by the way should not be so hard])

"5. As a core requirement, all students must choose from at least two Africana Studies courses. One in their first year at the college and one as a requirement for graduation in their final year. (We recommend: AFR 125, AFR 215, AFR 237, and AFR/PSY 347)

“6. Diversify course content: the incorporation of Black and other scholars of color into every syllabus, across every course and in every classroom (yes, this includes mathematics).

“7. Train faculty on methods of instruction that practice inclusion to help them and address the racist experiences some students have expressed having in the classroom.

“8. Design learning goals that are measurable within the curriculum that equip students with an understanding of racial injustice and institutional racism. With such a lens, our students will be able to analyze, understand, and intervene in systems of oppression in order to advance equity for all people. This is a priority in the John Jay mission.”

President Benton also referenced a letter sent to all faculty from Associate Provosts Dara Byrne and Allison Pease.

Senator Jessica Gordon-Nembhard said she has been saying for years in every meeting including when she was chair of Africana Studies that the Africana Studies Department is under-resourced and yet taxed to do everything on campus, including when students need help. The BSU sent the letter to the department chairs, she said, because President Mason told them that it is the chairs who make things happen. But it's the Senate who makes these things happen. The Faculty Senate should pledge to do this and to pressure chairs; some chairs need pressuring more than others. Africana Studies is asking for more resources and more faculty and is working with LLS and SEEK. AFS125 and AFS123 and LLA124 were the 3 ethnic studies courses when there was an ethnic studies one-course requirement at John Jay. SEEK also has a racial justice course. Africana studies doesn't have a major but is now pushing for more students to take the Africana Studies minor.

Senator Francis Sheehan asked how many more sections would Africana Studies have to offer to accommodate two mandated courses for every student. Senator Gordon-Nembhard said the department needs more adjuncts: we teach 6 sections of AFR123 in the fall and one in the spring. She said the department would have to double or triple the number of sections. They would need two to three full-time lecturers and would love to have a full-time assistant or associate professor.

Senator Violet Yu said the BSU letter is timely but said each department probably has a course about race. We should get an inventory of courses that are race related. The goal expressed in the letter is to expand not only Africana Studies. She said it doesn't have to be courses that are added but rather current courses can be expanded, courses such as Sociology and LPS. The Senate can send a letter to each department chair to identify courses. She said requiring two courses of each student is unrealistic. She recalled that as an undergraduate, she had to take a course in race, ethnicity, or gender related studies and thinks that is a very good thing but does not think a course should be required in students' senior year.

Senator Cathy Mulder said brown skinned people should be included as well; we are a Hispanic

serving institution. She added she didn't like the requirement that faculty be graded.

Senator Amy Green noted that Africana Studies is working with Wynne Ferdinand, head of Gen Ed, and it should be possible to put in a secondary requirement that Gen Ed courses have to touch on racism. She agreed with Senator Yu that two required courses are not necessary.

Senator Ben Lapidus said he agrees with Senators Yu and Green. Getting an inventory of courses that address anti-racism is an excellent idea. Although he is no longer the chair of Art & Music, he can speak to the fact that his department have both art and music courses with heavy components of social and racial justice.

Senator Veronica Johnson said that the Psychology Department is doing lots to incorporate racial and social justice and sexism into its courses, into research methods, etc. We teach multi-racial psychology. Our Black students seem to feel there's a lack of focus on anti-Black racism. Our Black students are suffering racial trauma. Anti-Black racism is not being addressed in our curriculum. Africana Studies teaches much more than what other courses teach and perhaps we have to redo our courses.

Senator Gordon-Nembhard said she doesn't think this is an either/or situation: we can have a required course *and* we can decolonize the curriculum. We used to have required courses on race and ethnic studies and so she doesn't know why we're so upset about the idea. Her department colleagues are experts on anti-Blackness. BSU and the Africana Studies Department consider all brown and Black people to be of African descent. This is also the LLS & Latinx Studies Department perspective, that Latinx people are of African descent.

President Benton said that reflecting Amy's comment we have a 4-year structure called Pathways. CUNY forced us to have Pathways: students who complete their Gen Ed courses at a community college and then transfer to a senior college only take 4 more Gen Ed courses which are focused on the theme of justice. There are challenges about requiring a specific class of students; we might require it at John Jay but a community college student could transfer in and not have to do any courses. There are only 4 upper level courses. When CUNY imposed Pathways we couldn't have ethnic studies any longer; that was when and why the requirement was dropped.

Senator Erica King-Toler said she spend last year in the Center for Teaching and Learning working on one of her courses, adding diversity to the syllabus. BSU refers to doing this and even in Math there could be inclusion. If John Jay has the courses let's work with them. People of color do not want to have to do all the work.

Senator Melendez said we are a HSI and a MSI. So even before Black Lives Matter, this has been a part of our college's mission. It's a no-brainer and it took a long time coming.

Senator Jay Pastrana said he supports the BSU letter. He suggested we revise John Jay's Institutional Learning Goals.

Senator Francis Sheehan said the BSU letter should state that it includes brown people; we are also an Hispanic Serving Institution; in our country it has become acceptable to separate infants and children from their parents at our southern board and our DACA students must live in fear; systemic racism includes brown people and I want us to be addressing it at the same time.

Senator Green said there are all kinds of oppression. Requiring a single course won't solve the situation; anti-racism and anti-oppression must be integrated across the curriculum. She said she is against ghettoizing this issue on one course.

Senator Lissette Delgado-Cruzata said we should continue this discussion at the beginning of our next Senate meeting. The Senate should develop a set of actions.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:07 pm.

Provided by  
Karen Kaplowitz