

**Faculty Senate Minutes #515  
John Jay College of Criminal Justice**

**Wednesday, November 16, 2020**

**1:40 PM**

**Zoom**

**Present (35): Chevy Alford, Andrea Balis, Elton Beckett, Ned Benton, Chelsea Binns, Michael Brownstein, Marta Concheiro-Guisan, Silvia Dapia, Lissette Delgado-Cruzata, Jonathan Epstein, Jessica Gordon-Nembhard, Heath Grant, Amy Green, John Gutierrez, Maki Habermeld, Christopher Herrmann, 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, Marie Springer, Marta-Laura Suska, Lucia Velotti, Adam Wandt, Violet Yu**

**Absent (4): Mohamed Ben Zid, Marta Bladek, Joel Freiser, Veronica Johnson**

**Guest: Professor David Munns**

**Invited Guest: President Karol Mason**

**Agenda**

- 1. Adoption of the agenda**
- 2. Chair's report**
- 3. Adoption of Minutes #514 of the November 4, 2020, meeting**
- 4. Election of members of the CC Committee on Student Evaluation of the Faculty**
- 5. Consideration of a Resolution on Confidential Online Voting**
- 6. Invited guest: President Karol Mason**

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

**2. Chair's Report**

President Benton reported that the three co-chairs of our Middle States Reaccreditation Project are: Interim VP Allison Pease; Professor James Cauthen (formerly vice chair of the Council of Chairs); and himself, Ned Benton, as president of the Faculty Senate. Furthermore, a call will be sent to all faculty inviting self-nominations for people willing to serve as co-chairs of the seven Middle States self-study committees. The three co-chairs will choose these committee co-chairs.

**3. Adoption of Minutes #514 of the November 4, 2020, Faculty Senate meeting. Adopted.**

**4. Election of members of the CC Committee on Student Evaluation of the Faculty**

The Senate elected Professors Christopher Hermann (LPS) and Violet Yu (Public Management) to serve on the Committee on Student Evaluation of the Faculty, a College Council committee. They join Professors Keith Markus (Psychology) and Daniel Yaverbaum (Sciences), who are continuing their 2-year terms, and two students.

#### **4. Discussion of a proposed Resolution on Confidential Online Voting**

President Benton explained that the Senate Executive Committee is recommending that the Senate vote on a motion to bring to the College Council a resolution stating that there should be a single technology for faculty elections so that confidential faculty online voting be secure, transparent, and trustworthy. If this resolution passes at the Senate and then at the College Council, a longer document, which would outline the operational details, could be considered by the Senate and the, if approved, sent to adoption to the College Council. He presented the following Resolution on behalf of the Senate Executive Committee:

**Resolved,** When secret ballot voting takes place for 1) department and academic program governance elections, 2) Faculty Personnel Committee and departmental faculty personnel decisions, and 3) college-wide faculty elections, it is policy of the College Council that:

- The voting technology and process should be objectively secure and confidential.
- To achieve that, the college should designate, support, and require use of a single technology for all such votes.
- Confidential faculty voting should be implemented with transparent and efficient procedures adapted to each of the three voting contexts.

Senator Christopher Herrmann asked what problem is this resolution seeking to be a solution for. President Benton said that faculty want the Faculty Personnel Committee and department election votes to be confidential. Senator Herrmann asked whether this means these votes have not all been confidential. President Benton said that it correct.

The Senate voted using SimplyVoting. The resolution was adopted by a vote of 30 yes; 1 no; 0 abstentions and will be submitted for inclusion on the College Council at its December meeting.

#### **5. Invited Guest: President Karol Mason**

President Mason was welcomed and said how very glad she is to be meeting with the Senate.

Senator Andrea Balis said that it is clear that asynchronous online courses are not good for our freshmen and sophomore students. President Mason said students are definitely finding it challenging and are saying that it feels to them as if the workload is heavier in that setting. She asked whether there a difference between synchronous and asynchronous courses? She said we learned of their perceptions from a student survey we gave to our students and we are next

surveying faculty. She thanked faculty who signed up for training. She said we will have distance learning in the spring semester but we have no idea about the fall semester.

President Benton asked about teaching online after the Covid crisis is over and asked whether President Mason is aware of either John Jay or CUNY wanting to increase the percentage of classes offered online and, if so, whether asynchronous or synchronous courses are wanted. President Mason said CUNY has no preference as to what we offer; as for us, we want to offer whichever format is better for our students. She said that many of us thought asynchronous would be better but we are hearing from students that they like structure of and contact that synchronous courses provide. She said no one is pushing anything. No one size fits all. For example, with regard to students who are accessing our mental health services, we have found that the rate of showing up by phone is much higher than in person. Similarly, more show up for town hall meetings, for college council meetings, for talks by experts. And yet they continuously ask when the library will be open, which I have discovered by asking them, is a proxy for a place to study.

Senator Jessica Gordon-Nembhard asked about her new vision for a college committee on diversity and inclusion. President Mason said she is reconstituting the committee in a way that addresses what we learned from the climate report. She has received a list of names from the HEO council and from the students and is awaiting names from the Faculty Senate. She said the Senate's Executive Committee has sent her a list of excellent questions which she is still working on (with Gabriela Leal, the chair of the new committee) and after she sends the answers she will request names of faculty for the committee. This committee will not duplicate activities with the Senate's new committee. Her goal is to move us beyond compliance to creating a climate where people feel included and where there's equity. She said that she had wanted to hire a vice president of equity and diversity but the budget situation has made that impossible.

Senator Gordon-Nembhard asked who the committee will report to and whether there will be any teeth in holding people accountable. President Mason said the committee will report to her. She said she will be holding the committee accountable. No one has done this successfully. She said it is not a secret that she is unhappy with the team of consultants she hired because they focused on compliance rather than on climate.

Senator Marie Springer asked how do we have integrity of online testing given that CUNY will not let us engage in online proctoring. Students have easy access to test banks, to the textbooks, to their notes. President Mason said that faculty cannot require students to turn on their cameras if they did not put this in their syllabus. She said the TLC and DOES provide other ways to assess students than exams.

Senator Balis said that as someone teaching undergraduates, she sees that they are lost and need connection to faculty. President Mason said that students having academic problems should be reported to Dara Byrne and Sumaya Villanueva; those having mental health issues, should be reported to Gerard Bryant.

Senator John Gutierrez asked about the economic position of the college, saying that we have heard about furloughs for staff. He asked what is she hearing about where we are and where we'll likely be. President Mason said the furlough is for only ECP [Executive Compensation Plan] employees – that is, deans and above – which involves about 25 employees at John Jay who will be furloughed for a total of 5 days between January and June. NYS is down \$15 billion from what the state had estimated. Whether we get federal help will depend on who controls the U.S. Senate. Even if the Senate doesn't flip, she is optimistic. NYS is holding back 20% of college budgets, including 20% of our TAP funds. We will have a deficit, but we don't yet know how deep it will be. She is cautiously optimistic. But there will be no true clarity until the new congress is seated. She is holding a faculty/staff meeting in early February because we should know more by then.

Senator Ben Lapidus asked whether the regular 2% step increases that are not contractual are going to happen on schedule in January. President Mason said she doesn't know but will find out. She does know that the contractual increases are being delayed.

Professor David Munns said he is teaching two synchronous courses this semester. One class the students all turn their cameras on: this is a Macaulay Honors course in which the students are part of a cohort and know each other and have had trust exercises together. In the other class, the students do not turn their cameras on; they are not part of a cohort. President Mason noted that in our LEEP Program all the students have cohort. They have a higher retention rate and building cohort experience is key. Also, we have many more transfer than freshman students and we find that our justice academy students do much better than non-justice academy students.

Senator Amy Green asked how has the economic climate affected fundraising. President Mason said the fundraising for money for emergency student support has been fabulous. Our gala was supposed to have been May 7 but of course did not take place. At her first gala we raised \$1 million which was dedicated to our Honors Program. There will be a virtual gala in February. She said she has lost a year in fundraising but when we ask, people respond.

Senator Francis Sheehan said the rules about camera use for synchronous online courses seem to keep changing. He called it very frustrating. He said his students have their cameras on during class, which promotes class discussion. He said the best discussions are after class; the students are hungry for interaction. As someone who teaches science, he has to give exams. Last spring, he researched how other universities proctor online exams while protecting privacy. Although it is very labor-intensive for faculty, he explicitly added the camera requirement to his syllabus and uses the method. It works great. However, mid-semester this fall CUNY said we could require cameras during our lectures if the requirement is stated in pre-registration materials, if it is stated on the syllabus, and if it is for pedagogical reasons, but faculty cannot require that students' cameras remain on when giving exams. President Mason said we have been told that the directive was in response to issues raised by CUNY students.

Senator Sheehan asked whether CUNY is really saying that CUNY faculty can't proctor their online exams. President Mason said he should have a conversation with Yi Li and Allison Pease.

Senator Max Mak said that last semester's Credit/No Credit grading policy was incredibly generous and asked if there is any movement by CUNY to return to that policy this year. Students are still in pain and are suffering trauma, he noted. President Mason said there's been lots of discussion about this. Students have asked for this and have signed petitions. The problem is the negative impact on courses where those courses graded as CR/NC are prerequisites. CUNY has heard from students but there's no unanimity among faculty. If faculty do support the CR/NC grade, they have to make that known.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:11 pm.

Provided by  
Karen Kaplowitz