

**Faculty Senate Minutes #559
John Jay College of Criminal Justice**

Thursday, November 2, 2023

1:40 PM

Zoom

Present (35): Chevy Alford, Maria Arndt, Madhura Bandyopadhyay, Tarun Banerjee, Elton Beckett, Ned Benton, Heath Brown, Jean Carmalt, Kate Cauley, Peter Diaczuk, Jennifer Dysart, Jonathan Epstein, Nina Rose Fischer, Heath Grant, Maki Haberfeld, Veronica Hendrick, Mohammad Islam, Karen Kaplowitz, Edward Kennedy, Vicente Lecuna, Anru Lee, Joseph Maldonado, Mickey Melendez, Brian Montes, Sofia Morote, Raymond Patton, Susan Pickman, Stephen Russell, Francis Sheehan, Marie Springer, Todd Stambaugh, Charles Stone, Robert Till, Sung-Suk (Violet) Yu, Zhun Xu

Absent (2): Catherine Kemp, Gregory Sheppard

Invited Guests: Professor Glenn Corbett, Interim Provost Allison Pease

AGENDA

- 1. Adoption of the agenda**
- 2. Approval of Minutes #558 of the October 16, 2023, meeting**
- 3. Revised Faculty Senate proposal for a path for Lecturers to move to assistant professorship line: Executive Committee**
- 4. Invited Guest: Interim Provost Allison Pease**
- 5. Proposed revision of the text on the wall next to Room L61 about John Jay, the man: Executive Committee**
- 6. Report and discussion about a fire alarm and evacuation of the NB last week and proposed courses of action**

1. Adoption of agenda. Approved.

2. Approval of Minutes #558 of the October 16, 2023, meeting. Approved.

3. Revised Faculty Senate proposal for a path for Lecturers to move to assistant professorship line: Executive Committee

4. Invited Guest: Interim Provost Allison Pease

Provost Allison Pease presented her four academic priorities for the year. First, she is focused on improving undergraduate and graduate retention and graduation rates and, thus, focused on strong foundational skills, as well as experiential learning and internship opportunities.

Second, is the creation and advancement of knowledge in support of justice education; she noted we are a research powerhouse, that our research footprint is large but largely unknown. Third, that we embody and promote our values of equity in the student communities as well as in the faculty and staff communities. Fourth, that we have an equitable research environment, adding that not everyone has benefitted thus far.

Senator Jonathan Epstein asked about her plan to treat the new lecturers as a cohort. Provost Pease said that the Lecturer Consortium is being run by Wynne Ferdinand of her office. There are monthly meetings and a year-long agenda. This was begun a year ago.

Senator Ray Patton said the provost's goals are inspiring, from the aspirational to the very practical. He asked how the Academic Affairs division is being affected by the budget situation. Provost Pease thanked him for this question, saying that the importance of goals is that when one is asked to cut spending, one already knows what is important. She said she's in talks about what we can do, but that none of this budget news came as a surprise. She noted that we are still hiring faculty and we could stop doing this, but increasing the number of our full-time faculty is a strategic goal of John Jay. Provost Pease said she asked Karol Mason and Mark Flower if she should stop hiring, explaining that she doesn't want to start searches if we might have to stop them. Both President Mason and VP Flower told her she was not to stop the faculty searches.

Provost Pease noted that our scheduling is also important, that we cannot continue our schedule footprint with courses that students are not signing up for. Andrew Sidman sends a suggested list of courses to offer to every chair based on enrollment patterns and, yet, almost every chair then schedules 10 courses that were not on his list, which means 220 extra courses being offered. We are not in fiscal trouble this year because we've been highly responsible. We are planning for our budget for next year and are coming up with ways to cut expenditures. We'll probably be ready to share those ideas by February, she said. Also, last year we had to cut temporary services by 10%, which is difficult because many of our students are paid from this fund for their work as peer tutors and peer coaches. She finds real value for our students in having peer mentors and, so, she moved this category of expenses to RF [Research Foundation] funds rather than temp services. We will have a yearlong conversation; we don't have to make decisions now. She said there will be an explicit list of choices, probably in February.

Senator Ned Benton asked whether there is any decision about the proposed doctor of professional studies program, noting that CUNY approved the Letter of Intent after the proposal was endorsed by the FPS and the Faculty Senate. Provost Pease said the decision was made to not go forward with the program; she and Ned agreed to discuss this outside the meeting.

Senator Elton Beckett said students are consistently complaining that staff who work 30/70 schedules aren't responding to student questions within the promised 48 hours. Provost Pease said she would share this with HR.

Senator Heath Brown recalled that last year there was an exciting cluster hire in environmental/ climate justice. He asked for further information, including about a center that was supposed to be established. Provost Pease reported that we hired three faculty: one each in Political Science, Anthropology, and Interdisciplinary Studies. Two are primarily responsible for curriculum alongside faculty who started and have maintained the minor; two are working on getting funding for a center. One of the faculty has already submitted three very large grants. The provost said we are giving her 3 years to get funding and then another 3 years for the center to become self-supporting.

Senator Brown agreed with the provost's comment that our research footprint is large but largely unknown. He described our website as showing almost nothing about our research. The provost agreed and suggested the Senate might want to convey this observation to those responsible for the website.

Senator Robert Till asked whether someone is doing social media really well so that academic departments could emulate it. The Provost said she really doesn't know.

Senator Steve Russell recalled that a little more than a year ago, the provost restructured the Office of Academic Affairs (OAA) and he asked whether the reorganization has achieved what she had hoped it would. Provost Pease said she feels we are on our way to making it work, but one can't turn a metaphorical cruise ship in a year. There are things she'd tweak. One thing that is really working is the creation of an office for student professional development; each program—such as McNair – had been reinventing the wheel and now they are working together. Her focus is on academic excellence and so having an office of academic programs that includes undergraduate and graduate programs is something that is really successful. And having a dean of faculty is really wonderful, she said, adding that she realizes the benefit of Angela Crossman every day: Angela troubleshoots for faculty, is there to give advice and explain procedures, and does programming of workshops and events. And we now have an adjunct specialist: if you're a chair you have to fill out tons of hiring documents but now Tamari Tevdoradze is doing it instead. Provost Pease said that increasing retention and graduation rates is still a huge goal and we can't separate that from our curriculum.

Senator Jean Carmalt expressed concern that we might increase class size because of our budget situation. Provost Pease said we are not pushing to have larger classes. Senator Carmalt then asked how we are recognizing and honoring pedagogical development in the tenure and promotion process. Provost Pease said this is a question for the FPC, explaining that she is sort of a FPC member and sort of not, that is, she votes on policy issues but not on personnel matters and, indeed, she doesn't affect personnel decisions. This is a recent change, she explained, adding that it happened during the pandemic. President Kaplowitz said she had not been aware of this and that perhaps the Senate should look into this.

5. Proposed revision of the text on the wall next to Room L61 about John Jay, the man: Executive Committee

President Kaplowitz explained that last semester Ned Benton brought to the Senate the fact that although John Jay was a slave holder and enslaved 17 people over the course of much of his life, no information about this is in the bio of John Jay on the large wall next to L.61. Nor is there any information there about John Jay's work as an abolitionist. She added that Ned had presented the Senate with a possible revision of the text, which was sent with the agenda. She further explained that Ned is the creator of the Northeast Slavery Records Index, for which he recently received a huge grant. She referred to his essay from the Index on "Slavery and the Extended Family of John Jay" at <https://nesri.commons.gc.cuny.edu/slavery-and-the-extended-family-of-john-jay/>

Last semester the Senate unanimously endorsed Ned's proposal that we urge President Mason to have the text revised. A few weeks ago, Karen and Steve raised the issue again with President Mason who agreed with the Senate's recommendation and said that when the Senate agrees on a new text, we should give it to the person in charge of graphics who will redo the wall. And so the Senate members are being asked to email to the Senate executive committee suggestions for improving the proposed text; wordsmithing during a meeting is not a good use of our time, she added. Then the Executive Committee will incorporate the various suggestions and place a new version on the next meeting agenda.

Senator Benton explained that he and his Public Management Department colleague Judy-Lynne Peters have been working on the Northeast Slavery Record Index since 2017 and discovered that one can't study slavery in New York State without encountering John Jay on both sides of the slavery issue: he was an enslaver; he bought people; he sent them to the Caribbean; but at same time there was no one who did as much to move toward the ending of slavery in New York State as John Jay. He proposed that slavery be abolished in the NYS constitution; as governor he tried to end slavery but two-thirds of the Senate owned slaves; he proposed gradual abolition, whereby the children of the enslaved would not be slaves. It's challenging to write about him both as an enslaver and as an advocate for ending slavery, he concluded.

Senator Heath Brown told Ned that he enjoyed his article and found the list of the 17 people whom John Jay enslaved to be the most powerful part. He suggested those names belong in the text. Ned thanked Heath very much for speaking of this. He said he and Judy-Lynn Peters work a lot with communities that commemorate slavery; one focus is to honor the enslaved and bring back their personhood; we at this college are not responsible for enslaving these 17 people but we should take on the work of giving them back their personhood; we should be honoring not only John Jay but also those he enslaved.

President Kaplowitz explained that Ned had originally proposed that the Senate recommend both a revision of the text and a memorial to the 17 enslaved people which would presumably have their names as a part of it. Ultimately, the executive committee decided to take this up in two stages; first the wall bio and later a possibly a memorial.

Senator Francis Sheehan noted that we are limited in space; we need to have as close to the number of words on the wall as there currently are. If we were to list the 17 names, we would have to sharply reduce the rest of the text.

Senator Tarun Banerjee said revising the text on the wall is an important thing for us to do. But he urged that we not attempt to balance slavery with abolition efforts. He said the two are a false equivalency and, therefore, we should avoid the use of the word “although,” as it exists in the proposed revision of the text.

Senator Joseph Maldonado thanked everyone for bringing this issue to the Senate. He read Ned’s article and he was very moved by it. He urged us to remember that when we say we are acknowledging the progress John Jay made at the time that the bar at that time was so very low.

6. Report and discussion about a fire alarm and evacuation of the New Building last week and proposed courses of action

President Kaplowitz explained that the previous week, during 4th period, a fire/evacuation alarm went off; she and her students heard no announcement over the public address system; her students didn’t want to leave the building but she insisted. Outside, there were very few people and they could see the classrooms from the street and could see many classes still in session. There was not a single Public Safety Officer to be seen. Subsequently, students reported that some professors insisted leaving immediately; others that their professors joked about the alarm; and others that their professors forbade them from leaving the classroom.

President Kaplowitz reported that she met with Public Safety and Risk Management Director Diego Redondo who explained that a building heater had overheated which triggered the alarm and summoned the NYFD.

President Kaplowitz explained that years ago when there was a high level of faculty non-compliance with fire/emergency alarms, the Senate sent a letter to faculty providing information, including that it is a misdemeanor to stay within a building if a fire alarm is sounded and it’s a misdemeanor to interfere with anyone else’s ability to leave. As a result, compliance was subsequently high and the Senate sent out the letter a number of times but not in the recent past. The Executive Committee is proposing that the Senate issue a letter to the faculty once again.

Senator Ray Patton asked why not ask President Mason to send such a letter. President Kaplowitz said a letter from faculty to faculty will be taken more seriously because we know what it’s like to have our class disrupted, our syllabus put out of whack, an exam or speaker disrupted. Also, we have control over what we put in a letter; we’d have none if someone else wrote it.

Senator Francis Sheehan stated that John Jay experienced a serious institutional failure last week. It doesn't seem that anyone can act without a planned drill in which everyone knows the date and time of the drill and knows in advance what each person is to do. He said we have to prepare for a real event, not a drill. This is especially important because the New Building wasn't built to the code that was then in existence but, rather, to a prior, less stringent code.

Senators reported chaos on the L Level, with the Public Safety Officer not knowing what to say to everyone; public address announcements that were filled with static and were incomprehensible; students freaking out by the metal walls that surrounded them (meant to keep out smoke).

Professor Glenn Corbett said he strongly supports a letter to the faculty because it's essential to get faculty to evacuate the building when there's an emergency and to have their students evacuate the building as well. The building was built to the 1968 code, not the code established after 9/11. Because of insufficient funding, the building project was shortchanged. The metal walls, which are actually titanium, exist because unlike most atriums which are vertical ours is horizontal and to stop the spread of smoke the architects created a horizontal ventilation system to remove smoke and bring it outside; but there's so much space within the horizontal atrium that the architects didn't want to ventilate the space and so they decided to compartmentalize the atrium by building 27 titanium doors that drop from the ceiling when the alarm goes off. There should be telephones in the hallways; there should be areas of refuge for people with disabilities who can't navigate stairs. He lamented the fact that the architects never consulted with any of our Fire Science faculty.

Senator Robert Till said it's important to know that the NB is fully sprinklered, which is invaluable. There's a 95% chance that the sprinkler system will protect people. But, he added, he does not want people to walk toward the atrium; rather, people should walk to the real exits. He said there should be exit maps in every room showing how to get to the real exits. Senator Sheehan asked what the schedule is for checking our systems. In his opinion, it should happen every month.

The Senate approved a motion by unanimous vote to send a letter to the faculty. President Kaplowitz said a first draft of such a letter would be on the agenda of our next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 PM.

Provided by K. Kaplowitz