

Faculty Senate Minutes #270

Friday, December 3, 2004

9:30 AM

Room 636 T

Present (21): Teresa Booker, Marvie Brooks, Orlanda Brugnola, James Cauthen, Effie Cochran, Edward Davenport, Robert DeLucia, Kirk Dombrowski, Joshua Freilich, P. J. Gibson, Jennifer Jackiw, Karen Kaplowitz, Tom Litwack, Vincent Maiorino, Evan Mandery, John Matteson, Marilyn Rubin, Francis Sheehan, Thalia Vrachopoulos, Alisse Waterston, Susan Will

Absent (16): Andrea Balis, Janice Dunham, Konstantinos Georgatos, Elisabeth Gitter, Heath Grant, Carol Groneman, Jennifer Groscup, Judith Hawkins, Kwando Kinshasa, James Malone, Edward Paulino, Rick Richardson, Jodie Roure, Liliana Soto-Fernandez, Robin Whitney, Kathryn Wylie-Marques

Guests: Professors Sondra Leftoff, John Pittman

Invited Guest: Dean for Planning and Assessment Rubie Malone

Agenda

1. Report and Announcements from the chair
2. Invited guest: Dean for Planning and Assessment and Chair, Comprehensive Planning Committee, Rubie Malone
3. Discussion of the Draft Strategic Plan required by Middle States by April 1

1. **Report and Announcements from the chair**

President Kaplowitz welcomed everyone to this specially scheduled, additional meeting of the Faculty Senate and she provided an update on the election of the five faculty to serve on the President's Committee on Critical Choices (on the associate degree program and on humanities majors). Of those nominated all but five have declined or are unable to serve because they are not available in January. Thus there are five candidates for the five faculty positions. The Senate voted to elect the five candidates to the Committee on Critical Choices. The five elected faculty are: Senator Tom Litwack, Senator Evan Mandery, Professor Jose Luis Morin, Professor John Pittman, Professor Timothy Stevens.

Senator Mandery spoke about the Senate's vote at its previous meeting to recommend that the President of the Faculty Senate and the Chair of the Council of Chairs be *ex officio*

members of the Committee. Because President Travis has requested that there not be *ex officio* members, Senator Mandery urged that the Senate vote to have the Committee meetings open to the College community. President Kaplowitz reported that she had reviewed the ground rules with President Travis who does not want the meetings to be open until after the Committee's Report is transmitted to the College community.

2. Invited guest: Dean for Planning and Assessment and Chair, Comprehensive Planning Committee. Rubie Malone

Dean Malone was welcomed. She expressed her appreciation at having been invited and praised the Senate for holding a special meeting on a Friday to further discuss the draft Plan. Dean Malone was asked whether, if the Strategic Plan contains "recommended actions," as the draft currently does, the College would be committed to implementing those actions. She said that is her understanding. There was much discussion about the language of the document and how "recommended actions" are to be described.

Dean Malone invited the Senate to make recommendations to the Strategic Planning Committee and she also invited interested faculty to come to her office and discuss questions and recommendations directly with her. She engaged in a discussion with the Senate about a number of procedural issues.

3. Discussion of the Draft Strategic Plan required by Middle States by April 1

President Kaplowitz explained that Vice President Kirk Dombrowski would be chairing the next part of the meeting, because President Travis has called a meeting of the College Budget Committee for 11 o'clock this morning, a meeting which she as well as Senator Litwack, chair of the Senate's Fiscal Affairs Committee, must attend.

Senator Teresa Booker and others distributed copies of printed comments by various faculty on the Draft Strategic Plan for the College. Senator Effie Cochran urged the Senate to especially read statements by Professor Jose Luis Morin and Professor Sondra Leftoff. Senator Tom Litwack said that given the many statements that have been issued by faculty and distributed today, it would be impossible to digest all these statements. He suggested that a general discussion take place with the authors or their representatives summarizing the main points of each statement and that the Senate engage in a discussion of the broad themes of the Draft Plan. [Copies of all the statements are available in the Office of the Faculty Senate.]

Professor John Pittman said that he had read Chair Stevens' revised version of Goal One of the Draft Plan, and said its brevity and directness set a good example because a long, fully complete document could never be digested by the entire College community.

Vice President Dombrowski said that Senator Booker had done a lot of work preparing to present the statements sent in by faculty and he thought we should hear from her. Senator Booker reviewed the nature of the statements she received in advance of the meeting, for which

she had prepared a Power-Point presentation.

Senator Robert Delucia said that he knows his subcommittee on Goal One would be happy to consider the written statements circulated at the Senate meeting, and he reassured the Senate that its comments would be reviewed by all the various subcommittees that are working on the Plan.

Vice President Dombrowski said that today is by no means the last chance for faculty input into the Strategic plan, but is rather the first meaningful chance of many. He stressed that the draft document is extremely preliminary, because a draft document had been requested in order to provide transparency, because of concerns expressed by many in the college community about what is taking place in the process of drafting the document.

The Senate engaged in a discussion of the themes of access and excellence. Senator P. J. Gibson said she hopes we would not view access and excellence as necessarily opposed. Senator Jennifer Jackiw spoke of the importance of stressing the achievement of academic excellence. Professor Pittman said that if we stress excellence over access we would be ignoring our role within the City University, which is to serve urban students.

Secretary Edward Davenport said that he has been teaching students in the SEEK program for 30 years and in that context he has never seen any necessary contradiction between access and excellence. He also disagreed with Professor Pittman, saying it is the City University, specifically the CUNY Board of Trustees, which has been moving to restrict access in recent years, at least with respect to the senior colleges. He said that many faculty seem to want John Jay to have an access policy that is even more open than that adopted by the University and, he said, perhaps that is what we should have but, if so, we should recognize that we would be setting the College apart from the direction of City University.

Senator John Matteson spoke about access and retention, citing what he called the disturbing statistic that our sophomore and junior classes combined comprise fewer students than our freshman class. Senator Sheehan cited the statistic that 1,200 of our 10,000 undergraduate students are on academic probation, a situation he characterized as appalling. He said that an emphasis on excellence means that we are committed to deciding how we can do the absolute best for the students who are here and it does not necessarily mean excluding anyone. Senator Sheehan also pointed out that we cannot accept to John Jay all the students who want to come here, because our physical plant will not allow it and so we already limit access. And even when we move into our new building we will not have room for the number of students who are currently enrolled and so we will have to continue to limit access in some way, he said.

Senator Janice Dunham said that although we all may understand that for us excellence necessarily involves access, the general public may not understand this, and given that this is a public document we are working on, we need to explain this point in the document so that the public can understand it. Senator Thalia Vrachopoulos spoke about how important access had been to her own educational experience. Senator Matteson and others said that access belongs among the themes in the document only if we include specific language about what access means and how we are to attain it.

A motion was made that the Senate recommend that access be included in the Strategic

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Plan. Senators Cauthen and Sheehan said they favor access but that they oppose voting on this motion until there is specific proposed language that defines what is meant by access. It was suggested that this issue be revisited at the next Senate meeting, on Friday, December 10. There was a unanimous vote to table this issue to the next Senate meeting.

Senator Rubin volunteered to develop language defining the meaning of access for discussion at our meeting on December 10 meeting. She asked anyone with ideas about language about access to submit them to her by Wednesday, December 8th, so she can present them at the meeting.

By a motion duly made and adopted, the meeting was adjourned, as scheduled, at 12 noon.

Submitted by,

Edward Davenport
Recording Secretary

&

James Cauthen
Associate Recording Secretary