

LaGuardia Community College
Minutes of the Senate Meeting
May 12, 2010

Present: S. Adhikari, C. Baldonado, N. Berke, J. Cantwell, T. Coogan(replaced J. Wynn at 4 p.m.), F. Egger-Sider, M. Glick, U. Hidle, R. Kahn, J. Karlen, W. Kurzyna, R. Levine, G. McCormack, L. McShane, S. Mettler, J. Michello, E. Murray, P. Nicolov, A. Pappas, E. Rivas, I. Shakir, P. Sokolski, C. Sterling-Deer, L. Teplin, A. Tucker, J. Wynn (for T. Coogan), B. Yearwood

Absent: T. Albright, A. Allen, M. Garcia, R. Johnson, A. Lazo, J. Park, P. Pinero, MD Rana, L. Ricketts, A. Tardy, G. Walters, Z. Yang

Excused: C. Baldonado, M. Johnson, G. Richmond,

Guests: N. Ben-Yehuda, L. Capuano, L. Cardaio, S. Hanson, P. Katopes, T. Murasso

Nota Bene: For each action summarized in these minutes, the set consisting of those senators who participated in the action forms a subset of those listed as "Present". The specific vote of each senator that participated in an action is contained in the summaries.

Chairperson Kahn called the meeting to order at 2:25 p.m. in room E 500.

I. Approval of Minutes for April 7, 2010

By general consent, the Senate approved the draft version of the minutes of the Senate meeting held on April 7, 2010, with corrections. All senators listed as present for the meeting participated in this action, with Senators Cantwell, Coogan, McCormack, and Sokolski absent from room for the vote.

II. Report from the Chairperson

Chairperson Robert Kahn commented on New York Governor Patterson's attempt to impose unpaid furloughs on CUNY employees, saying that while it was fortunate that workers in community colleges were spared thus far, we needed to maintain solidarity with our fellow employees in the four-year colleges who would bear the initial brunt, if the Governor's plan is upheld.

III. Curriculum Committee Report

There were several curriculum items presented. It was moved and seconded to adopt all items on the Senate consent calendar simultaneously as presented. The full group of items was approved by unanimous vote. All senators listed voted to approve, with J. Cantwell, T. Coogan, G. McCormack and P. Sokolski absent from room during the vote. The approved items were:

Revised Course Proposals:**CSE 095, Essentials of Reading I, Department of Communication Skills****CSE 099, Essentials of Reading II, Department of Communication Skills****CSE 103, Critical Reading and Academic Literacy, Department of Communication Skills****CSE 105, Academic Vocabulary, Department of Communication Skills****New Course Proposals:****ELC 110, Intensive Chinese 1& 2****ELH 201, Contemporary Hebrew Literature****ELJ 110, Intensive Japanese 1&2****ELR 110, Intensive Elementary Russian 1&2****ELS 110, Intensive Elementary Spanish 1&2****Presented by Prof. John Shean, Chairperson of the Curriculum Committee****IV. Discussion of Counseling with Vice President Peter Katopes**

The Chairperson prefaced the appearance of Vice President Katopes by noting the CUNY policy that expects all members of the college community to engage informally in counseling of students. He referred to the ratio of students to designated counselors as problematical. V.P. Katopes announced from the outset of his remarks that he would avoid topics germane to the internal politics of the Counseling Department, acting at the request of the Department's P&B Committee.

V.P Katopes began with an overview of counseling, characterizing it as an example of “atomization” of entities and functions within the academic environment. He said that myths and misconceptions concerning the University's readiness to engage with serious emotional issues among its students were making discussion of the topic difficult. While he stated that he could not categorically claim that there were a sufficient number of counselors at LaGuardia to cope with an enlarging student population, he quoted a number of statistics that he said placed our ratio of students to counselors in a positive position vis a vis the national standard, and the ratio calculated at other CUNY campuses. He pointed out that the count of qualified counselors on campus should not be limited to those in the Counseling Department per se, that others with equivalent credentials could be found in various other parts of the total college community, totaling 17 plus. He went on to state that he saw a sense of anxiety and insecurity arising from fears of bodily harm as the result of emotional crises fueling a great deal of the debate over the status quo of counseling. He urged the body to trust the abilities of security to deal with such possibilities, and criticized the oft-stated belief that the policies to follow in emergencies of this nature were not clearly defined; he demanded that members of the community make themselves aware of the correct steps to take in the event of such crises.

On the issue of the hiring of HEOs to replace recent retirees within Counseling, he defended these actions, saying that a case in the policy's favor was the greater availability of HEOs to work at times that full-time faculty might not, e.g., summer break. Following his presentation, Senator P. Nicolov gave a detailed defense of the Vice President's citation of additional resources to those generally known; he referred to a set of resources that he feels answer the charges of the critics, and was willing to document these resources for those who wanted him to do so.

Following V. P. Katopes' presentation, the comments from the floor during Q & A continued to break down into pro and con interpretations of the authentic preparedness of the college to deal with the crises of students requiring trained psychotherapeutic intervention. There were several calls for an increased effort both in putting more trained counselors in place, and in informing all members of the college of the specific means of getting help in serious situations, such as e-mails by troubled students who threaten suicide. Several senators referred to the large number of less dire cases of emotional problems that don't seem to have solutions. V. P. Katopes said he would look into ways of improving communications.

Following the Vice President's departure, Chairperson Kahn followed up by underscoring what he saw as an obvious need for greatly enhanced communication in this area. L. Capuano Vella pointed to the usefulness of the Student Handbook, as well as the capacity of HR to enhance this handbook to help cope with the issues under discussion. L. Teplin said that it remains unclear what personnel handle what types of cases, that the structure needs to be made more coherent. She predicts, along with others, that Counseling cannot survive if its members who retire are consistently replaced by HEO's. S. Mettler took issue with the Vice President's repeated charge that it was the faculty's ignorance of proper procedure that was mainly at fault. L. Capuano Vella and E. Murray proposed that Mitchell Levy be invited to the Senate to give the body further information regarding the resources that already exist.

V. Proposal to Create New Senate Budget Committee

Due to disputed sections of the proposal put before the Senate to create a committee charged with oversight of budget concerns, the Chairperson tabled the motion and said that the language having to do with the number and constituencies reflected on the committee, as well as the name, would be redesigned and proposed again at the next meeting.

VI. Discussion of Incomplete Grade Policy

Following extensive debate, with senators representing several departments objecting to language in the policy regarding the granting of Incomplete grades and the process of filing a letter asking for such a grade, Chairperson Kahn requested that the members of the Academic Standing Committee add/amend general language that will allay the criticisms of the proposed policy, to be put before Senate at a future meeting. Of particular concern to both Senator Karlen and Senator Pappas was a paper filing process that would preclude physically incapacitated students from being able to apply for the Incomplete grade.

VII. Election of New Student Member of the Senate Executive Committee.

By acclamation, Senator S. Adhikari was elected to replace R. Johnson on the Senate Executive Committee.

VIII. Report on the Status of the Cooperative Education Department.

Senator J. Cantwell, the representative from Cooperative Education, asked for time to inform the Senate about developments taking place that same afternoon in the reorganization of his Department. He said that he had been told in a meeting with V.P. Peter Katopes that there was to be a “decentralizing” of Cooperative Education, which was not to be considered elimination, but an invitation to individual members of the Department to seek out new positions elsewhere throughout the College. This would lead to the faculty of Cooperative becoming “embedded” in other departments. The execution of this plan was scheduled for Fall I, 2010. There was no provision given for the redeployment of the Department's adjuncts. Senator Cantwell spoke to the long tradition of innovation and excellence the Department was known for, and predicted that the structure in place for getting our students good internships would be endangered. Mr. Kahn saw the move as contradictory to the spirit that had motivated the naming of the former “M” Building after Joseph Shenker, and said the decision was an explanation of several of the low scores received by administration in the recent Faculty Satisfaction Survey. Senator Mettler said that the move was part of the recent management style which totally bypasses the role of the faculty in directing academic policy. Senator Karlen said it was demeaning to ask faculty to “shop themselves around” to other departments. Cantwell asked that his faculty colleagues be invited to the next meeting to discuss this decision, and this was fully supported by the Chairperson and seconded by many Senators.

XI. Old Business. None.

X. New Business. N. Berke announced that the only workable time to assemble faculty Senators to take part in the certification of degrees would be at 4:30 p.m. following the May 26 meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

William F. Kurzyna
Secretary
College Senate