

Minutes of the 170th Meeting of the Faculty Senate

Thursday, February 15th, 2024 from 3:30 to 4:30 pm in person & virtually.

Faculty Senate (FS) Members in Attendance:

Zaghloul Ahmed, Neo Antoniadis, Comfort Asanbe, Alan Benimoff, Jason Bishop, Cynthia Chris, Andrew Colbeck, David Curcio, Christine Flynn Saulnier, Valerie Forrestal, Kenneth Gold, Roshen Hendrickson, Susan Holak, Burnett Joiner, Wilma Jones, Sylvia Kahan, Carlo Lancellotti, Catherine Lavender, Andrew Leykam, Timothy Lynch, Lisa Manne, Lee Papa, Michael Paris, Jonathan Peters, Greg Philips, Sarah Pollack, Don Selby, Susan Smith-Peter, Carles Solà Belda, Michael Steiper, Sarolta Takács, Thomas Tellefsen, Mikael Vejdemo-Johansson, John Verzani, Simone Wegge, Siona Wilson, John Wing, Mark Zdziarski, Sarah Zelikovitz.

FS Members Via Zoom:

Heidi Bertels, Vandana Chaudhry, Rosane Gertner, Orit Gruber, Alfred Levine, Sharon Loverde, Mark White, Cindy Wong.

Guests In-Person:

Cheryl Adolph, Winsome Alston, Stephanie Allen, Michael Anderson, Alyson Bardsley, Warrick Bell, Holly Block, Sharon Cammarano, Jessica Collura, Brian Cortijo, Danna Curcio, Nina DelGatto, Veronica DiMeglio, Michael Dreher, Aleks Dudek, Jennifer Durando, Valkiria Duran, Gene Fellner, Stephen Ferst, Hernan Green, Neila Green, Anusha Harris, Sheila Harris, Michel Hodge, Patricia Kahn, Jackie Lamberti, Georgia Landrum, Michael Lederhandler, Michael Levitas, Mark Lewental, Chase Licata, Carey Manifold, Susan Massara, Tara Mastroilli, Mohammad Moussa, Ralf Peetz, Keith Pisons, Laxmi Ramasubramanian, Terri Sangiorgio, Donna Scimeca, Alex Scott, Glenn Garbe Sheehan, Suzy Shepardson, Jessica Stein, Amy Stempler, Brenda Valentin, Rosemary Vitale.

Guests via Zoom:

Maria Bellamy, Marta Cabral, Stefan Charles-Pierre, Barbara Cohen, Linda Conte, Celeste Del Maestro, Danielle Dimitrov, Clarissa Domingo, Emmanuel Esperance, Brian Farr, Katrina Fama, Maryann Feola, Doriann Hyland, Linda John, Dalia Kandiyoti, Michele Karpeles, Jane Kisto, Lisa Korchma, Lynne Lacomis, Mary Murphy, Leonardo Pignataro, David Pizzuto, Janine Scotto, Byron Taylor, Joyce Taylor, Priscilla Villacis.

Meeting called to order at 3:36pm by Chair Susan Smith-Peter.

- I. Approval of the agenda.
Motion seconded, and passed.

- II. Approval of the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Senate of December 14th, 2023.
Moved, seconded, and passed with one abstention.

- III. Executive Committee Report: Appendix A.
 - a. Question and ensuing discussion about the locations of departmental graduation ceremonies – concerns about students and family remaining on campus to wait for their ceremony, as well as the necessary staffing to run departmental ceremonies in 1P.
 - b. Comment about using digital display screens in buildings to display items from CSI Today
 - c. PSC CUNY representative Jason Bishop brought up concerns about academic programs being evaluated by a central University authority rather than local faculty, and how this could allow politics to dictate which programs get shut down. Chair Smith-Peter mentioned that AVP Hensel’s memo calls for yearly program reviews, which would place a burden on program directors. She added that thankfully CSI’s administration is not taking the entire Hensel memo as a directive.

IV. Provost’s Report:

Clarification from Provost Michael Steiper about graduation ceremonies being moved to 1P in order to leverage existing spaces to save money, but this means that we can bring departmental ceremonies back. He also pointed out that these same rooms are already used for other college ceremonies. The body responded with concerns about the length of time it will take to run so many ceremonies, and Provost Steiper said that he was told that all the departments could be accommodated in two rounds of concurrent ceremonies, plus one large department using the main ceremony stage. In response to a question about whether this means that the school will run all departmental ceremonies, he clarified that the school would just be doing the math to assign each department with the best space for their size. He also assured the body that the deans are listening to all the feedback, and for faculty to go to their chairs and/or their deans with their concerns.

Provost Steiper congratulated faculty for doing the work with their students to keep enrollment up. He mentioned that Assistant Provost Carey Manifold will be sending out information about Early Alerts, and there will be an EAP navigate training or info session at a future Faculty Senate.

He also welcomed Associate Provost for Faculty Success, Laxmi Ramasubramanian, who will be sending out a call for GRTI spending, as well as information about other research, scholarship, faculty development, and pedagogy topics. He also announced that the COACHE

committee will present their findings and their recommendations in a future meeting, as well as sharing the presentation as a town hall.

Provost Steiper then announced recent faculty publications, presentations, and awards, as follows:

H. Ege Ozen published an article in International Relations

Jane Marcus Delgado delivered several international lectures in affiliation with the University of Valencia in Spain

Beth Livingberger had a solo exhibition at the Berk Gallery at Marshall University in West Virginia.

Siona Wilson presented the third version of her major curatorial project, Girls Plus Eggs at Duke Hall Gallery at James Madison in Virginia, and also delivered a lecture as the Dorothy Liskey Wompler Distinguished Professor at James Madison University

Peter Kobachnik published an article in Geographics A, series B.

Susan Brillheart, Danielle Hunton, and Donna Curcio all received certification as certified nurse educators after a rigorous certification exam

Paul Archibald had a proposal accepted for presentation at the BPD conference in New Orleans

Barbara Teater published an article in the Prison Journal and will be presenting a paper at the Society for Social Work and Research and Washington

Xiaomin Guo published an article in American Business Review.

Soon Ae Chun has contributed several conversations at the UN SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) including a presentation to the executive board of the committee on migrants

Jonathan Peters presented at several sessions at the national conference on resiliency, also the transportation research board of the National Academy of Sciences, and he has a panel forthcoming at the annual meeting of the Transportation Research Board

Lewis Pattingy received a grant of \$374,000 from the NSF to have a summer REU site here at CSI

Sos Agaian was elected fellow and conference chair for the Artificial Intelligence Industry Academy, and is also serving on many conference conferences as a chair.

Neo Antoniades has done several high school outreach events over this fall semester and has

hundreds of students coming this summer for programming in the department

Trevor Gunn had a paper accepted at Beiträge zur Algebra und Geometrie

Zheng Huang is an invited speaker at the geometry seminar at the University of Luxembourg and also published a paper in the Peking Journal of Math.

Mark Aaron Polger has published an article in the Journal of Education for Library Information Science

- Question from body about the budget and whether it will affect open lines that departments are trying to run searches for. Provost Steiper said to go ahead with those searches if they are necessary, but perhaps hold off if you think you won't be able to get enough candidates.
- Comment about how departments and units must be the ones to decide if a program should be closed down.
- Question about billboards on Victory Blvd, to which President Lynch said that they will be functional by the 3rd week of March.

Consent Agenda for February 15th, 2023

AIII. DEGREE CHANGES

1. Department of Media Culture
 - a. Change in existing degree: Communications BS: Design and Digital Media Concentration
 - b. Change in existing minor: Communication: Design and Digital Media

AIV. NEW COURSES

1. Department of Media Culture
 - a. New course: COM 4XX Advanced Motion Graphics
3. Department of Philosophy
 - a. Experimental Course: PHL 195 Illness and Empathy

AV. CHANGES IN EXISTING COURSES

4. Department of Media Culture
 - a. Change in existing course: CIN 240 Third World Cinema
 - b. Change in existing course: COM 370 Web Design, Graphics, and Theory

- c. Change in existing course: CIN 309 Electronic Media: Alternative Video Histories
 5. Department of Psychology
 - a. Change in existing course: PSY 211
 6. Department of World Languages and Literatures and Interdisciplinary Programs
 - a. Change in existing course: INT/LNG 230
 7. Department of Engineering & Environmental Sciences
 - a. Change in existing course: GEO 310 Geochemistry
- Consent agenda moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.*

VI. University Faculty Senate Report (Prof. John Verzani) –

- There are a few open seats on University Faculty Senate, if anyone is interested in running. Elections will be held this Spring. The Board has recently passed a new policy about presidential approvals, making them more frequent, so getting elected can give faculty a chance to weigh in every 3 years.
- At that same meeting was the approval of this 37 million dollar allocation that this year will keep the college afloat should we meet the target of 2.1 million.
- Enrollment is up but they are still projecting an \$8 million deficit. The best way to help is retention.
- The University Faculty Senate has put together an ad hoc committee to address the mandate that all online courses use the new LMS, and there may be an amendment to that mandate in response.
- Comments on the Hensel memo:
 - CUNY's Board of Trustees owed the state a report on how it will manage its fiscal stability in an era of declining enrollments
 - there are places where governance is being trampled and I'm pleased that CSI is not one of those.
 - The memo mentions taking money out of the adjunct budget; CUNY spent 312 million dollars on adjuncts this year. The memo puts a figure of about 20 million dollars in potential savings. And to take money out of the adjunct budget, you need to do a few things. One is put more students in a class, and the other is to ask full time faculty to teach more classes.
 - The memo makes assumptions about cutting programs saving the school money, but what they really mean is cutting *positions* saves money. (faculty governance leaders will be meeting with Bob Marutha from the University Provost to explain some of the modeling assumptions that went into that memo and perhaps we'll discuss that.
- See also: <https://www1.cuny.edu/sites/cunyufs/2024/01/30/the-budget-cinch/>

VII. Old Business – none

VIII. New Business –

Chair Susan Smith-Peter mentioned that honorary degree recipients are being discussed,

but no one has been chosen as of yet.

Prof. Wilma Jones did a presentation on the new Brightspace D2L LMS, including how to preview your Brightspace account, with the last 3 semesters-worth of classes already loaded. In Spring 2025, the last 2 years' courses will be added.

To check your Brightspace, first log into Blackboard, and then open "brightspace.cuny.edu" to view your personal homepage. She showed how to find your courses, quizzes, assignments, as well as a course shell sandbox to experiment with and training resources.

Prof. Jones addressed a question about discussion boards: no student information will be included, due to privacy regulations.

Prof. Verzani mentioned that you can also manually migrate courses, and that there will be training available on every campus.

AVP Patricia Kahn explained how student content could be migrated by exporting content from Blackboard as a zip file, which can then be imported into D2L, and that IT can help with the process.

Go-live date is Spring 2025.

IX. Announcements:

- a. Cynthia Chris announced that Faculty Personnel Policy committee has met and will be reviewing the Faculty Handbook, and will be making suggestions for updating
- b. After the Provost's Tea, there is a solo exhibition from Miguel Aragon of PCA called "Holding it All Gently"

Question and ensuing discussion about the Faculty Handbook, with a suggestion to expand to include adjuncts. Prof. Chris recommended Chairs taking up the handbook and adding department-specific and adjunct information. There were concerns about getting adjuncts to come to campus for training, since they only have 3 hours, which are already taken up with other mandatory trainings.

X. Adjournment. Motion made, seconded, and passed unanimously at 4:33 pm

Appendix A - Faculty Senate Executive Committee Report for 2/6/23

In my capacity as chair of Faculty Senate, I feel that I must convey to everyone here the significance of certain recent statements by AVP Wendy Hensel. In response to a request by the state for how CUNY was going to save money, Hensel created a memo that made recommendations as to how savings could be found at college campuses. The memo focuses on changes and cuts that impact faculty rather than administration. In addition, it has troubling implications for faculty governance.

These changes include changing reassigned time, including possibly decreasing it for faculty. Particularly significant is the argument that colleges should begin a process to consider closing low-enrolled programs. This is in pursuit of cost savings that are often not met, as less reassigned time for program heads does not necessarily decrease the adjunct budget.

Even though these processes are taking place at CUNY Central, CSI's administration has not taken these recommendations as orders but have wisely decided to work with the faculty on these issues. At the meeting with the provost and the deans on February 6, the FSXC received affirmation that closure of programs would be considered together with faculty, rather imposed on them. We agreed that there would be a process to close programs that would engage shared governance and would involve the IPC, the Budget Committee and Faculty Senate.

The Hensel memo asserts that a Council on Academic Policy at the central level is establishing guidelines about what determines the vitality of a program, which they say will be shared with the colleges. This is defined as being low enrolled or low degree producing. It also calls for annual review of programs. If this is carried through, it would mean an intrusion of central authority into the details of how a program is run, which typically has been more in the purview of the deans, together with program directors.

Other recommendations are less relevant, such as ensuring that introductory sections are mostly full. CSI is within the recommended norm for this.

Even though this information is dispiriting, each of you has an important role to play. First, everyone who was chosen to represent a group or department should carry this information back to them. In particular, everyone should read John Verzani's blog post titled "The Budget Cinch," which gives crucial information. Forewarned is forearmed.

Second, as faculty we have a crucial role to play not only in pedagogy but also in processes closely related to the budget, such as retention and enrollment. All departments and groups should think about how to increase retention and do what they can to increase enrollments. Faculty Senate also has a role to play in this, which means we will set aside time to discuss matters related to retention and what we can do about it as faculty members.

In less apocalyptic news, we discussed the HPCC (High Performance Computing Center). As many of you know, the HPCC is located at CSI but serves all of CUNY and beyond but has not always received sufficient funding from CUNY. It is now not working, which has caused problems for the research of faculty members across CUNY. The provost stated that he had received agreement from CUNY Central to provide some emergency funding for it. This was welcome news. We also discussed high-performance computing needs of faculty.

We also discussed ways of recognizing faculty members, such as reinstating the Ava Chin-type posters of several years back, but using the screens that have been installed throughout campus but are not always used. Valerie Forrestal said she would run an RSS feed to showcase faculty publications in an automated way. The administration noted that a more consistent presence on social media is a goal and that someone has been hired to focus on Instagram.

The provost agreed that the Dolphin Awardees for Excellent Teaching would be forwarded to the CUNY Teaching and Learning Conference. We also talked about another candidate for an honorary degree, which will be discussed more later.