

Minutes of the 174th Meeting of the Faculty Senate

Thursday, September 19th, 2024 from 3:30 to 4:25 pm in 1P-119

Faculty Senate (FS) Members in Attendance:

Zaghloul Ahmed, John Arena, Comfort Asanbe, Banu Aslanertik, Probal Banerjee, Michael Batson, Alan Benimoff, Vandana Chaudhry, Andrew Colbeck, David Curcio, Deborah DeSimone, Valkiria Duran-Narucki, Valerie Forrestal, Joseph Frusci, Rosane Gertner, Kenneth Gold, Patti Gross, Susan Holak, Eric Ivison, Emma Johnson, Burnett Joiner, Wilma Jones, Sylvia Kahan, Catherine Lavender, Alfred Levine, Timothy Lynch, Lisa Manne, Halil Ege Ozen, Michael Paris, Lee Papa, Jonathan Peters, Greg Philips, Sarah Pollack, Randelle Sasa, Susan Smith-Peter, Carles Solà Belda, Michael Steiper, Sarolta Takács, Barbra Teater, Thomas Tellefsen, John Verzani, Simone Wegge, Siona Wilson, Mark Zdziarski, Sarah Zelikovitz.

Guests in Attendance:

Cheryl Adolph, Michael Anderson, Warrick Bell, Maria Bellamy, Jason Bishop, Thomas Chen, Sharon Christian, Jessica Collura, Brian Cortijo, Nina Del Gatto, Hernan Green, Clarissa Domingo, Michael Dreher, Aleks Dudek, Jennifer Durando, Emmanuel Esperance, Stephanie Gonzalez Allen, Patricia Kahn, Nicole LaMassa, Anna Lambert, Jacqueline Lamberti, Michael Lederhandler, Mark Lewental, Carey Manifold, Susan Massara, Tara Mastrorilli, Christine McEvelly, Mary Murphy, Ralf Peetz, Angelina Raio, Laxmi Ramasubramanian, Terri Sangiorgio, Alex Scott, Carlos Serrano, Suzy Shepardson, Jessica Stein, Amy Stempler, Dana Trimbolo, Rosemary Vitale, Robert Wallace, Cindy Wong.

Meeting called to order at 3:30pm by Chair Susan Smith-Peter.

I. Approval of the agenda.

Motion seconded, and passed unanimously.

II. Approval of the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Senate of May 16th, 2024.

Moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.

III. Executive Committee Report (Appendix A)

IV. Provost's Report

- CSI eclipsed 11,000, and will come very close, if not all, the way to our goal of 11,193. Importantly, there is strong enrollments across all units. Thanks to all the faculty chairs, deans, offices, registrar, IR, and all the advising units for the preparation, forecasting, scheduling and advising, heading into fall. The school is leveraging data and tools in new ways and this has begun to bear fruit. It has helped everyone better serve our students, retain more students, and helped more of our students make degree progress.
- Specific thanks to Assistant Provost for Student Success, Carey Manifold and her team of directors for all their efforts this summer.
- Improving enrollment will enable the school to make considerable reinvestments in faculty again this year, as well as focus more effort in other areas such as student learning, faculty success, and teaching, research and scholarship.
- The Center for Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development held a successful open house last week led by Center Director, Professor Wilma Jones. Please also take special note of the events that are being planned this semester that are supporting the LMS transition to D2L Brightspace, which is happening January 1st 2025. (*We go live in 25!*)
- Associate Provost Ramasubramanian is working with her team to ensure that faculty are being supported in conducting their research and scholarship, managing their grants, submitting new proposals, and generally serving as a partner to faculty in their aspirations. Please contact her or Provost Steiper with ideas and/or concerns.
- Listing of recent faculty publications and accolades
- Registrar's office W policy changing back to the way it was; please reach out to Susan Massara with any questions.

Discussion on CUNY mandated reporting rules

- Lunch and Learn with chairs was held, so contact your chair with questions
- Concerns about being a mandated reporter expressed
- Provost Steiper will initiate a dialogue with Director of Institutional Equity and Title IX Compliance Tara Mastrangelo on the topic

V. Reports of the Committees of the Faculty Senate

- a. Academic Technology Committee (ATC) Report: Using academic technology for student retention, presented by Dimitrios Pavlidis (Appendix B)

VI. Consent Agenda:

DEGREE CHANGES

UNDERGRADUATE

1. Department of Chemistry
 - a. Change in existing degree: Chemistry BS and MHC Chemistry BS
 - b. Change in existing degree: Chemistry BA and MHC Chemistry BA
 - c. Change in existing degree: Chemistry 7-12 BS and MHC Chemistry 7-12 BS
2. Program in Biochemistry
 - a. Change in existing degree: Biochemistry BS and MHC Biochemistry BS
 - b. Change in existing degree: Biochemistry BA and MHC Biochemistry BA

GRADUATE

3. Program in Environmental Science
 - a. Double-Counting Policy

NEW COURSES

UNDERGRADUATE

1. Department of Media Culture
 - a. Experimental course: COM 3XX Digital Journalism: Field Producing
2. Department of Chemistry
 - a. New/Experimental course: CHM 230 Introduction to Scientific Computing for Chemists and Biochemists with Python

GRADUATE (n/a)

CHANGES IN EXISTING COURSES

UNDERGRADUATE

1. Program in Biochemistry
 - a. Change in existing course: BIO/CHM 370 Biochemistry I

GRADUATE

2. Program in Electrical Engineering
 - a. Change in existing course: ELE 600 Theory and Stochastic Processes in Engineering
 - b. Change in existing course: ELE 610 Advanced Signal Processing
 - c. Change in existing course: ELE 620 Networking System & Protocols
 - d. Change in existing course: ELE 630 Semiconductor Devices
 - e. Change in existing course: ELE 636 Electrical Machines and Energy Systems
 - f. Change in existing course: ELE 641 Advanced Digital Communications
 - g. Change in existing course: ELE 652 Information Theory

h. Change in existing course: ELE 701 Photonic Devices
Consent agenda moved, seconded, and passed.

VII. Reports of the Committees of the Faculty Senate, cont.

b. Report from the Research Committee, presented by Chair Jonathan Peters

VIII. University Faculty Senate Report (Prof. John Verzani)

- a. Proposed changes to Bylaws updates; should go in front of governance committee on October 9th. There will be public hearings between now and then. University Provost made many changes based on faculty feedback.
- b. Plenary with Chancellor – ensuing discussion on contract negotiations
- c. Discussion on student protests and encampments – Chancellor indicated willingness to update Henderson Rules’ restrictions on time and place for protests, behavior, and perhaps update them

IX. Old Business - none

X. New Business –

- a. Resolution on Committee Meeting Modality, presented by Prof. Michael Paris (Appendix C)
 - Discussion on who sets the rules for the committees, the committees themselves, or the parent body. According to Robert’s Rules, the body sets the rules, but is allowed to delegate that authority to the committees. Robert’s Rules also states that without a standing rule, meetings cannot take place online at all.
 - Discussion on importance of having a robust faculty presence on campus, and benefits of in-person collaboration, along with comments about the importance of flexibility for adjunct and new faculty, allowing them to take on roles they might not otherwise be able to.
 - *Resolution moved, seconded, and passed.*

XI. Announcements - none

VI. Adjournment. Motion made, seconded, and passed at 4:24pm

Appendix A: Faculty Senate Executive Committee report for September 10, 2024

On September 10, 2024, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee met with the provost and deans, as well as Chief Librarian Amy Stempler and Laxmi Ramasubramanian, Associate Provost for Faculty Success. There was a general discussion about how to get a full picture of faculty publications and other accomplishments, including the use of AI tools that can provide information. I would like to encourage all faculty to share accomplishments when asked, as this is important for the college.

The executive committee asked for more staff in the Office of Special Programs and Research, as data showed that it was understaffed compared to similar offices across CUNY, even accounting for research money coming in. The provost stated that there will be new positions so that the needs of faculty doing research will be met. The rollout of Cayuse, a research administration software program, will be supported with a staff position.

We discussed St. George and learned that the college has not yet found someone to sublease the space. CUNY has picked up the lease for one year only. There are seven years left in the lease. There was a discussion of how the space might be used over that time, including whether innovative uses for the space could be found.

Drawing on the blog by John Verzani on the University Faculty Senate website, we brought up the possibility that Course Dog could generate schedules using AI. The provost agreed that such AI-generated schedules would only serve as a guide and not as a final version of the schedule.

We discussed the transfer initiative. This is a process by which the members of departments get together with similar departments across CUNY to come up with competencies. In this way, the junior and senior colleges are to come to agreement on what it is that each of them should teach in particular disciplines. It was agreed that any curriculum changes that result would go through a governance process. According to a PowerPoint made by CUNY Associate Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs Alicia Alvero given at the Faculty Governance Leaders meeting on September 6, faculty created a finalized list of competencies for psychology, accounting, computer science, engineering and business. She stated that the next group of disciplines were math, biography, sociology, liberal arts, history, economics and public health.

We ended by noting that creating standing rules for the committees of Faculty Senate would be on the agenda for this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Smith-Peter
Chair, Faculty Senate

Appendix B: Academic Technology Committee (ATC) Report

Using academic technology for student retention (July 2024, CUNY College of Staten Island)

During Spring 2024 The Academic Technology Committee (ATC) was tasked with writing a short report with results from a brief literature review pertaining to uses of academic technology for student retention in higher education.

ATC members researched various sources and found a variety of suggestions for student retention. While most of these strategies do not primarily focus on digital technologies, it can be argued that these technologies are at the core of all aspects of documentation and information for and about the students, and therefore pertain to these retention efforts.

We organized the information we found in three main categories:

Technology as tools to monitor and support students

Learning management systems (LMS) and student information systems (SIS) collect vast amounts of data on student performance, attendance, and engagement. Institutions can analyze this data to identify at-risk students and intervene early with targeted support services.

Several articles (such as NJEdge, 2023 or Shinn, 2024) focus specifically on AI as a tool to promote academic integrity, teaching practices, accessibility, and student engagement. These articles mention the need to consider ethical considerations and equal access (e.g. paid versions versus free) and argue that AI could be an excellent pedagogical tool to assist with formative assessment and provide a variety of assessments.

Flores-Caballero (2022) notes that education scholars and universities have documented that the lack of a personalized approach to and the experience of a "de-personalized learning environment" lead to student disengagement and ultimately drop-out. Technology can be used to foster connections between students and faculty/ academic advisors, helping faculty to monitor students' progress and send timely and actionable feedback to students and their academic advisors.

Seery et. All (n/d) focus specifically on online students and discuss common factors that influenced student retention. One theme to highlight was the "Student Success Support". This involved everything from outreach, financial aid, and technological support. The strategy to this issue was, in addition to providing a comprehensive suite of student services, to make orientation programs mandatory. This ties into another theme mentioned in the review, which is developing the courses to utilize video lectures and other multimedia resources. Since CUNY is transitioning to a new LMS, it might be prudent to consider using all the resources that Brightspace has to offer. Recording lectures (for example, and if applicable) could be applicable even for in-person classes. This, however, brings up a separate set of critical issues to discuss regarding faculty's academic freedom and copyright. Although this discussion is not in this

report's scope, we want to bring awareness to the impact these measures can have on faculty ownership of their academic freedom and work.

Flores-Caballero et. All (2022) draw on Johnson & Willging (2009) to show how “a recent review of dropouts in web-based distance education concluded communication or social interaction among students and between teacher and students represents a major factor in the decision to withdraw from a web-based course, as well as technology issues” (p.82). They continue to argue that “Consciously evaluate equipment and supplies utilized to conduct the process of teaching and learning. This assessment must consider if equipment and supplies are relevant to the concepts, skills, or competencies that will be taught, if existing technology is up to date and is enough based on the number of students enrolled. This also includes computer laboratories for students with flexible hours, technical support, and email accounts for students so they can do their assignments, among other things. With the benefits provided by the use of technology, faculty members must make every effort to integrate this technology into the classroom. This requires the use of computer technology, such as spreadsheets, databases, and graphics presentation software packages. An up-to-date reliable and adequately maintained computer laboratory for the student community is a necessity in today’s technology focused society (Lau, 2003)”. In addition, they show that students who benefit from the support of special programs (such as ASAP, CD, FYS, ECC) have a much higher rate of graduation than students who receive no support.

Technology as tools to better student-experience and relevance

One of the most significant benefits of technology in education is its ability to personalize learning experiences. Adaptive learning technologies use data analytics to tailor educational content to individual student needs, thereby enhancing understanding and engagement.

Given that student engagement is a fundamental piece of student retention (Zepke, 2021), the use of relevant technologies as teaching tools that are relevant and meaningful to students' daily experiences can be an important way to retain students. We argue that the use of appropriate and compelling pedagogical tools (to be determine by each discipline/ instructor) is fundamental for engagement, and many of these tools are digital tools (such as Slack, Nearpod, Perusal, Jamboard, Padlet, etc.) that are not directly sanctioned by CUNY – as will any current tools not be, due to the very nature of their relevance and contemporality, which necessarily makes CUNY official policies lag behind. Therefore, we believe that there should be a policy giving faculty discretion over the use of pedagogical tools in addition to the official LMS.

In accordance with this, Flores-Caballero et. All (2022) argue that “for any university to truly be competitive within the digital global economic environment, its curriculum must provide opportunities for the students, in particular, and faculty, as well, (lecturers) to obtain a global perspective and become global citizens. The university’s curriculum must be able to drastically engineer internationalization. The curriculum of the university should be such that every student

and others in the university community major in just one thing, positively changing the world (Kpolovie & Lale, 2017).”

Buckenmeyer et. All (2016) found that 85% of students felt technology was crucial to their academic success - mostly focused on learning management. This type of academic technology is important for a student's overall experience, which leads to higher retention.

Dawson et. All (2017) found evidence suggesting that larger direct interventions still appear to have minimal effects on at-risk students - even when done being guided by Brightspace and other LMS specifically, etc. This suggests that simply switching LMS (a very small and indirect intervention) will have essentially no effect on student retention. It also seems to be the case that at least some systems appear to require instructors to manually code psychological aspects of each student for each course - something that the report mentions to be an "exceedingly high" amount of work and is unlikely to be done correctly.

Technology as pedagogical tools for teaching

Using AI driven systems curriculum can be adapted to accommodate learning styles and provide for personal learning experiences that improve the learning experience.

Technology also plays a pivotal role in enhancing student engagement, which is directly linked to retention. Interactive tools such as gamification, virtual reality (VR), and augmented reality (AR) can transform the educational experience from passive to active learning.

Oates et al (2024) further discuss the possible introduction of gamification into educational activities to boost student engagement and improve retention. The concept of gamification is the act of introducing “game-like” elements, such as points and competitive leaderboards.

Mah (2016) argues for a model that “synthesizes learning analytics, digital badges, and generic skills such as academic competencies. The main idea is that generic skills can be represented as digital badges, which can be used for learning analytics algorithms to predict student success and to provide students with personalized feedback for improvement” (p.285).

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Respectfully submitted on behalf of ATC Committee 2023-2024,

Marta Cabral [she/ her/ hers]

Appendix C: Faculty Senate Resolution on Meeting Formats

WHEREAS, the New York State Open Meetings Law does not require the Curriculum Committees of the Faculty Senate (the General Education Committee, the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, and the Graduate Education Committee), as well as other committees under Faculty Senate, to hold meetings in person; and

WHEREAS, Robert's Rules states that committees must meet in person unless directed otherwise by standing rules; and

WHEREAS, Robert's Rules further states that the parent body may issue such standing rules;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Faculty Senate as a whole shall now develop standing rules that direct the committees of Faculty Senate to determine, by majority vote of the current members, on whether their committee meetings shall be held in person, or remotely, and also

Be it resolved, that if committees vote to hold meetings remotely, they will be bound by the following rules, taken from the 12th edition of Robert's Rules (pp. 639-641):

1. Login information.

The Corresponding Secretary shall send by e-mail to every member of the Board, at least one week before each meeting, with the time of the meeting, the URL and codes necessary to connect to the Internet meeting service, and, as an alternative and backup to the audio connection included within the Internet service, the phone number and access code(s) the member needs to participate aurally by telephone. The Corresponding Secretary shall also include a copy of, or a link to, these rules.

2. Login time.

The Recording Secretary shall schedule Internet meeting service availability to begin at least 15 minutes before the start of each meeting.

3. Signing in and out.

Members shall identify themselves as required to sign in to the Internet meeting service, and shall maintain Internet and audio access throughout the meeting whenever present, but shall sign out upon any departure before adjournment.

4. Technical requirements and malfunctions.

Each member is responsible for his or her audio and Internet connections; no action shall be invalidated on the grounds that the loss of, or poor quality of, a member's individual connection prevented participation in the meeting.

5. Forced disconnections.

The chair may cause or direct the disconnection or muting of a member's connection if it is causing undue interference with the meeting. The chair's decision to do so, which is subject to an undebatable appeal that can be made by any member, shall be announced during the meeting and recorded in the minutes.

7. Assignment of the floor.

To seek recognition by the chair, a member shall raise their hand. Upon assigning the floor to a member, the chair shall clear the online queue of members who had been seeking recognition. To claim preference in recognition, another member who had been seeking recognition may promptly seek recognition again, and the chair shall recognize the member for the limited purpose of determining whether that member is entitled to preference in recognition.

8. Interrupting a member.

A member who intends to make a motion or request that under the rules may interrupt a speaker shall use the videoconferencing software's chat feature for so indicating, and shall thereafter wait a reasonable time for the chair's instructions before attempting to interrupt the speaker by voice.

9. Motions submitted in writing.

A member intending to *make a* main motion, to offer an amendment, or to propose instructions to a committee, shall, before or after being recognized, post the motion in writing to the online area designated by the Recording Secretary for this purpose, preceded by the member's name and a number corresponding to how many written motions the member has so far posted during the meeting (e.g., "SMITH 3: "; "FRANCES JONES 2: "). Use of the online area designated by the Recording Secretary for this purpose shall be restricted to posting the text of intended motions.

10. Display of motions.

The Recording Secretary shall designate an online area exclusively for the display of the immediately pending question and other relevant pending questions (such as the main motion, or the pertinent part of the main motion, when an amendment to it is immediately pending); and, to the extent feasible, the Recording Secretary, or any assistants appointed by him or her for this purpose, shall cause such questions, or any other documents that are currently before the meeting for action or information, to be displayed therein until disposed of.

11. Voting.

Votes shall be taken by the anonymous voting feature of the Internet meeting service, unless a different method is ordered by the Board or required by the rules. When required or ordered, other permissible methods of voting are by electronic roll call or by audible roll call. The chair's announcement of the voting result shall include the number of members voting on each side of the question and the number, if any, who explicitly respond to acknowledge their presence without casting a vote. Business may also be conducted by unanimous consent.

12. Video display.

[For groups using video, but in which the number of participants is too large for all to be displayed simultaneously:] The chair, the Recording Secretary, or their assistants shall cause a video of the chair to be displayed throughout the meeting, and shall also cause display of the video of the member currently recognized to speak or report.