

LEHMAN COLLEGE

The City University of New York Minutes of the Stated Meeting of the General Faculty Wednesday, February 18, 2009

CALL TO ORDER: Professor Manfred Philipp, chair of the Executive Committee of the Faculty, called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the meeting of May 7, 2008 were submitted and approved.

2. Agenda for Meeting: The agenda for the meeting was submitted and approved.

3. Election of Disciplinary Committee: Mr. Vincent Zucchetto, executive assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs, stated that, as required by Article 15.3 of the Board of Trustees Bylaws, the General Faculty is required to elect a panel of six faculty members to serve on the Faculty-Student Disciplinary Committee for a term of one year. The following faculty members have agreed to be nominated for election to this committee: Professors Andrea Boyar, Nancy Maldonado, James Jervis, Duane Tananbaum, Heather Sloan, Alan Kruger, and Gary Schwartz. A motion was made and seconded, and the slate was approved by acclamation.

A. President's Report: **1. The Budget:** President Fernández indicated that people are still trying to sort out what the stimulus will be for New York. Whatever money available will be applied to CUNY is still unclear. **2. Visit to Albany:** President Fernández was in Albany last Saturday for the Black-Latino Caucus Conference. CUNY sponsored a luncheon attended by Governor Paterson and the new U.S. Senator from New York, Kirsten Gillibrand, along with leaders from the Assembly and the Senate. The general tone was positive about CUNY. No promises were made though the legislators recognize the importance of CUNY. In fact, the theme of the conference was *CUNY for a Healthy New York*. The founding dean for the CUNY School of Public Health was the featured speaker. He spoke eloquently about the school and the significance of that initiative for the city and for the country. **3. Middle States:** In three weeks, the visiting team from the Middle States Association will be on campus. They will be with us Monday, March 9, Tuesday, March 10, and then on Wednesday, March 11 there will be an open meeting. The faculty is encouraged to come and to listen to a preview of the findings and recommendations that the team will write in their formal report. **4. Tuition increase:** The governor has proposed cutting the increase by 20%. That amount would be turned back to the university so that it could be invested in such things as new faculty and new student services. **5. Positive developments:** The general stability of Lehman College was defined as positive: we're getting more students.

B. Report of Provost Mary Papazian: **1. New initiatives:** Provost Papazian reported that we are launching several new initiatives this year. They celebrate the work of

our students and of our faculty. We will be hosting our first “scholarship day,” an event that is expected to continue each year. It will celebrate the work of our undergraduate and graduate students. The date is Wednesday, April 22. The deadline for participation is March 10. Applicants should contact Liesl Jones, who is leading a planning committee for this event. **2. Faculty Recognition Day:** The Provost also announced that a Faculty Recognition Day is to be held to celebrate their excellent work from noon to 2 p.m. on May 13 in the East Dining Room. The purpose of the session will be to recognize faculty scholarship and research, teaching, service and civic engagement. Up to 15 faculty members will be recognized. **3. Volunteers:** Provost Papazian had asked for volunteers for faculty sponsors for the Research Advisory Board. There was an overwhelming response of 45 faculty members, but the number will have to be kept to 15 or so. If you were not selected this time, your name will be kept on file for future activity. **4. Funding:** There are some potentially good things that are happening with the stimulus package. There will be many opportunities for funding in a variety of disciplines. Our new grant officer has already stepped in and has read the initial versions of the bill looking for places where we can extend the work and interests of the faculty. **5. The Science Building:** On the capital side, the work is progressing with the Lehman Science Building. Also, we have been able to renovate one of the chemistry labs this year. In addition, we have funding from CUNY to renovate another lab. **6. Enrollment:** The current number of students is about 12,000, with the increase coming from continuing students. When our students continue at higher rates, we see a positive sign for their success. **7. Searches:** Several searches are ongoing. Campus interviews have been completed for the Dean of Arts and Humanities. We have launched the off-campus interviews today for the Dean of Natural and Social Sciences. **8. Budget Recommendations:** In the budget recommendations from CUNY, the University has asked for a 350 increase in faculty, not for us alone, but we do hope to get a few new ones in select areas.

C. Report on Online Education: **1. Continued growth:** Prof. Whittaker said the online courses continue to grow, now showing a 16% increase. We are now offering 210: 120 undergraduates and 90 graduates. There was enormous growth in the fall, and we continue to grow in the spring. This puts a burden on our faculty development in keeping up with demand. Blackboard could be called “Black eye,” at least in terms of CUNY Information Services, but we managed to make it through the holiday weekend. However, many students could not get on for a number of reasons, not only with CUNY Blackboard but also with the CUNY portal. Finally, we managed to get a reasonably well-balanced system. We lost two weeks of many sections, but an upgrade is on the way. In the meantime, Lehman Online provides timely information. **2. General education:** On Friday, May 8, Lehman will host the Fifth Annual General Education Conference, sponsored by CUNY.

D. Report of the Dean of Education: **1. Teach for America Report:** Dean Eldridge described the Teach for America program to prepare new teachers for America’s schools. The program recruits from research institutions throughout the United

States. From the recruits, it requires a two-year commitment to teach in urban schools or challenging schools. In New York City, the students are placed in city schools, and it is a requirement of New York State that anyone who does not have a teaching certification and license must be enrolled in a graduate program. We have 250 of these students enrolled at Lehman College. Additional members will not be placed in Lehman College beginning next year in the fall. But the people now in the program will be with us until they graduate. Please note that our future will be built on four pillars: (1) deep and committed collaboration and relationships with urban Bronx schools, (2) innovative and responsive programs to prepare urban teachers, counselors, and school leaders, (3) cutting edge research and scholarship, and (4) best practices in urban teaching and learning from birth to post-graduate. We will be preparing Bronx teachers for Bronx kids in Bronx schools.

E. Report of Prof. Kunstler: **1. Middle States:** Prof. Kunstler reported that the Middle States Evaluation Team will be on campus Monday and Tuesday, March 9 and 10. Meetings with various groups have been arranged. They will be meeting with the President's Cabinet, the Dean's Council, the chairs, members of the Senate and representatives from student groups, student services, admissions, and faculty, among others. At 11 a.m. on Wednesday, March 11 there will be an open meeting in the East Dining Room for a presentation of their findings. One area that Middle States is focusing on is whether colleges are conducting a comprehensive review of all syllabi to see that they contain student-learning outcomes and are consistent across all sections of a given course. Prof. Kunstler is collecting syllabi to establish a file that will be available to the team.

F. Report of Helene Silverman, PFC: **1. Family leave:** Prof. Silverman said that this matter is still in negotiation, but everybody seems to believe a resolution will be soon. **2. Classrooms:** Complaints are being received about a lot of courses without classrooms. Prof. Silverman doesn't know whether everyone has this as a problem: when a class is hybrid, someone else moves in, then the class comes back and there are two classes attempting to enter the same classroom. It's generally considered that CUNY First should help. **3. Over-enrollment:** Prof. Silverman discovered what was happening in her online courses and a lot of others. It had to do with a restriction on registration and subsequently was corrected.

G. Nominations to Elections Committee: **1.** The chair changed the order on the agenda to consider the Nominations to the Elections Committee. The nominees were Juan de la Cruz and Ermine Kayaalp, both from Economics, Gul Sonmerz from Health Sciences, David Badillo from LAPRS, Naphtali O'Connor from Chemistry, and Nicholas Boston, from JCT. The group was elected as a slate by acclamation.

H. Report of Prof. Manfred Philipp, UFS: **1. Budgets:** As described by Prof. Philipp, all available evidence indicates that the city and state budgets will not result in losses of faculty numbers in either the two-year or four-year colleges of CUNY. That is, the pending budget will not mandate any retrenchment. This is despite the huge decline in tax revenues seen both by the city and state. It is not clear, however, if the

proposed budgets will allow an aggressive program of new faculty hiring. There is at least one indication that administrators are considering asking the colleges to hire more non-tenure-track full-time faculty members instead of tenure-track faculty. The UFS has also heard complaints that CUNY's budget restrictions are resulting in restrictions on supply budgets for undergraduate teaching laboratories.

2. Reason for budgets: One reason for the relatively secure budgets is CUNY's ballooning enrollment. Michael Barnhart spoke to this at the last Plenary, and incoming data show that that the trend to increased enrollment continues. The limiting factor will be whether space is available.

3. Online and hybrid courses: For online programs, which are regarded by some as a solution to the space problem, a limiting factor may also be the reliability of CUNY's online systems. For any course that uses Blackboard to facilitate instruction the last two weeks have been difficult. Not only has the CUNY Portal had significant problems, its absence led in the most recent week to a loss in the ability to generate new login IDs and passwords for newly hired instructors and newly enrolled students. That problem seems to have been solved, but the difficulties with Blackboard remain. To quote today's CUNY IT Steering Committee update: "We are having major performance problems with the Blackboard 8 system. This past weekend after we had gotten the directory servers stable so people could actually log in to BB 8 we began to see increasingly slow responses which deteriorated until the application was completely stalled. We started the back-end servers and got the application back into service in the morning at approximately 6 a.m. when all application servers locked up nearly simultaneously." This means that despite the best efforts of the CUNY IT staff, we are entering the second week of classes on many campuses without a robust and reliable Blackboard instructional system. How the colleges will handle the resulting deficit in the amount of instruction is not clear. CUNY+, the university's library computer system, has also had outages that have consumed significant amounts of IT staff efforts to correct.

4. Spring conference: The UFS Executive Committee decided to make "Access to Higher Education in the Health Sciences" the topic of the next UFS Spring Conference to be held on April 24. This is the same day of the CUNY Education Conference, but the audiences are expected to be quite different.

5. New Community College: The proposed new Community College continues to draw attention. University Dean John Mogulescu is preparing a grant application to the Gates Foundation that would finance planning for the proposed college. The purposes of the new college include providing more community college seats in Manhattan and the creation of a college with a higher graduation rate. In a statement to the Board of Trustees, Prof. Philipp expressed an appreciation for the efforts and quality of CUNY's existing Community Colleges.

6. PSC-CUNY Research Awards Program: Vice Chancellor Small has set up a task force to examine issues relating to this subject, issues that Prof. Philipp earlier reported to the UFS Plenary. That task force continues to meet and has two UFS and one PSC representative.

7. Fiscal crisis: As part of the UFS response to the fiscal crisis, we are in closer consultation with the PSC, NYPIRG, and the USS, as well as with the SUNY UFS and the SUNY Faculty Council for the Community Colleges. Naturally, this also involves continuous close consultation with CUNY management at several levels. Prof. Philipp has asked important state officials to meet with the CUNY Council of

Faculty Governance Leaders. Daniel Doktori of the Governor's office has already met with them. Deborah Glick, chair of the NYS Assembly Higher Education Committee, has agreed to meet with that group in May. We will be calling on UFS Senators to visit local legislative offices in support of the CUNY budget.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosalind Carey,
Executive Committee