

LEHMAN COLLEGE AD HOC SENATE STUDENT EVALUATION COMMITTEE
*Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday, November 12, 3:30-5:00p.m.,
Carman Hall 209*

The Ad Hoc Senate Student Evaluation Committee consists of the following members:
Faculty & Administration- Robert T. Valentine (History), Chair; Stefan Becker (Vice Provost for Academic Programs), Alison Behrman (Speech), Ron Bergmann (Information Technology), Salita Bryant (English), Faith Deveaux (Special Education), Sophia Diamantisfry (Academic Programs), James Jervis (African & African-American Studies), John Dono (Information Technology), Mine Doyran (Economics), Robert Feinerman (Mathematics), James Mahon (Philosophy), Abigail McNamee (Early Childhood Education), Penny Prince (Music), Vincent Prohaska (Psychology), Kevin Sailor (Psychology), Duane Tananbaum (History), Elin Waring (Sociology), Dennis DaCosta (Special Counsel).
Students- Soribel Grullon, Tyra Matty, Odessa Mckenzie

Minutes of the Meeting

Of the Faculty & Staff Committee members, Stefan Becker, Ron Bergmann, John Dono, Faith Deveaux, Duane Tananbaum, Elin Waring and Robert T. Valentine, as well as the three new student members, Soribel Grullon, Tyra Matty, and Odessa Mckenzie, attended the meeting held on Thursday, November, 12, 2015.

To our delight, many students from the Student Leadership Development program also attended the meeting, causing it to be moved into Carman 209. This was a wonderful opportunity for many of the students to express *their* views about the evaluation process.

A large number of students attended the meeting, although some of them did not sign the attendance sheet; but those who did are as follows:

Suzette Ramsundar (Associate Director of Campus Life);

| | | |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Awal Abdulai | Yvonne Gonzalez | Nirmal Ramlogan |
| Hassanatou Bah | Robert Jaccoi | Damaris Rodriguez |
| Alejandro E. Beato | Rafeeza Khan | Jissett Rosario |
| Danny Benelcazar | Lorena Maldonado | Manaf Sani |
| Verline Brisson | Jennifer Meza | Nicholas Santiago |
| Nadiesha Burgess | Bolande Olatunji | Elizabeth Sterling |
| Victoria Charles | Richard Orta | Domimar Lopez Tejada |
| Elizabeth Cuesto | Pascale Pluviose | Evelyn Uttikur |
| Oluwaseun Eleyinafe | Freddy Ramirez | Felix Vasquez |
| Akintayo Fadoju | Gabriela Ramirez | Danae Vidal |
| | Raessa Walcott | Danique Wiggan |

Student Concerns about the Evaluation Form and Process

The students were encouraged to express their concerns about the evaluation process and form. Several of the students stated that the evaluation form is too long and cumbersome, not as user-friendly as that in *Rate Your Professor.com*. The Committee members agree with this assessment and will draft a shorter, more concise version.

When asked why they do not fill out the forms, several of the students felt it would do no good, since their grievances about a particular professor and/or course would not be heeded. Also, their Lehman e-mail accounts are filled with too much e-clutter, which is why the students prefer their own e-mail accounts and do not always check their Lehman e-mails (faculty & staff can definitely relate to that!). Plus, the prospect of having to remember and frequently change passwords renders Lehman e-mails somewhat unattractive. But, Professor Bergmann informed the students that they could access the evaluation forms through Lehman Connect.

The main concern, however, is that the students do not have access to the results of the evaluations. The students feel they should be able to view these results in order to assess whether or not they want to take that course or professor. The Committee concurs with this, believing that the results should be available, as is the case with some of the other CUNY colleges, which post their student evaluation results.

They also contend that some form of extra credit should be available for completing the evaluations, but were informed that policy of the College prohibits such an incentive, especially since the beneficiaries would have to be identified, which would compromise anonymity. But, it should be noted, extra credit could be simply based upon the evaluations *returned* and would not jeopardize anonymity, since the professor would *not* actually see the evaluations themselves! IT could inform the professors which students have responded electronically *without* having to divulge any of the contents of the evaluations.

Still, the students were receptive to this and other incentives (rewards) that might be offered for filling out the evaluations on their *iphones*, tablets, laptops, and so on. The Committee has addressed and discussed this idea on several occasions, and no clear consensus about such rewards has been achieved.

The Time is Nigh to Wrap Things Up

After the students left, the Committee discussed in-house matters. On behalf of the Governance Committee, Professor Tananbaum encouraged the Ad Hoc Student Evaluation Committee to agree upon final recommendations to be presented to the Lehman College Senate for its December 9 meeting. The Student Evaluation Committee has been meeting since April, 2014 and has had ample time to discuss the ramifications of the evaluation process and determine what should be done to increase student participation. The time has now arrived for the Committee to present a list of fundamental resolutions to the Lehman College Senate for its consideration. The Student Evaluation Committee will meet once more in order to prepare its set of resolutions, which will be submitted in compliance with the November 25 deadline for senate agenda materials.

Aspects of the Fundamental Resolutions to be Presented to the Lehman College Senate

1. The Committee will submit a revised, shortened version of the evaluation form.
2. It will recommend that results of the evaluations are made available to the students.
3. A *minimum* number of evaluations must be received before they could be considered for tenure & promotion and other purposes, mainly to ensure a fair assessment of the professor and the course, as well to as protect the anonymity of the respondents.

A Somewhat Controversial Recommendation

The Committee continued to discuss whether or not to return to paper evaluations, to be handed out, distributed, collected, and collated, as in the past. This would most likely increase the number of responses. However, some members of the Committee (and Senate) have already “crossed the electronic Rubicon” and *do not* want to return to the use of paper.

There is, however, a logistical aspect of using paper that should be considered- would it be too difficult and time-consuming for IT to process mounds of paper, especially since the current technology is so far advanced? While some Colleges in the CUNY system have reverted to paper (and increased their student responses), others have not and remain committed to an electronic format.

4. Lehman College should return to the use of paper Student Evaluations, to be distributed in class, filled out, and then returned for electronic processing.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Ad Hoc Senate Student Evaluation Committee will be held on Thursday, November 19 at 3:30pm in Carman 201, owing to the short amount of time before the next senate meeting (December 9) and the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday. The Committee should be prepared recommend proposals for the consideration of the Lehman College Senate.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert T. Valentine, Chair