



MEMORANDUM

FROM: President Ricardo R. Fernández
TO: Faculty and Staff
RE: Prioritization of programs and services
DATE: February 18, 2014

In the announcement that went out a week ago, I indicated that I would seek nominations of faculty and staff to serve on a Steering Committee and two task forces, one focusing on academic programs and services and the other on administrative programs and services. The purpose of this memorandum is to request your input regarding nominations.

In order to help you decide whom to nominate (self-nominations are acceptable and encouraged), I would like to share additional information about the process so that the nature of the exercise is better understood as is the level of commitment that will be required of those who volunteer to participate in this important process.

The planning model that will be followed comes from Robert C. Dickeson's book, *Prioritizing Academic Programs and Services*, which lays out an evaluation process to examine all academic and administrative programs and services based on their centrality to the mission and contribution to student success. It calls for task forces comprised of a group of faculty and staff that represent the Lehman College community in its multiple dimensions (schools, departments, gender, ethnicity, long- and short-term seniority, tenured and tenure-track, program size, teacher/scholar/artist/clinical practitioner). A smaller, Steering Committee, co-chaired by the Provost and Senior Vice president of Academic Affairs and the Vice President of Administration and Finance, involving faculty and staff, will also be appointed to oversee the entire process.

Persons interested in serving on the task forces and the Steering Committee should know that this exercise will be intense, requiring many hours of meetings, study and analysis of data, discussions and deliberations over the course of this semester and the next academic year. Assisting in this work will be two groups made up of College staff, one to provide needed support in gathering the data from internal and external sources and drafting reports for group discussions, and a second one to keep the campus community informed with periodic updates throughout the entire process.

The model calls for transparency, which means that all of the data and information will be available to the task force members and the Steering Committee. Regular reports will be issued to the campus community by the task forces.

In addition, there will be open forums (one per semester is anticipated but additional ones will be held, as needed) for the College community to receive information, ask questions and voice concerns. Community participation and engagement in these forums is essential for the process to be successful in establishing priorities for planning and decision-making in the years ahead for Lehman College. As I pointed out in my earlier communication, this exercise will also be useful multiple ways, including the preparation of the Middle States Commission's interim report (2014) and the next self-study (2017-2018), the annual CUNY Performance Management Plan (PMP) report, academic program reviews and reports to program accreditation agencies.

It is important to note that the ultimate purpose of this program prioritization exercise is to strengthen the College's planning process so that it is data-driven, allowing resources to be allocated and/or reallocated to meet current and future program needs and services in an efficient manner. The current and foreseeable financial outlook for higher education and the growing, intense competition for students makes it essential for us to engage in this exercise, and to do it now.

Change is always difficult to face, given the unknown, future challenges that will confront institutions and individuals. However, I want to reassure all who are willing to engage in this process –and the Lehman College community at large-- that the fundamental tenets that have guided Lehman College since its founding as a senior college of the City University of New York are not changing, and will not change. Our strategic plan, *Achieving the Vision* and its mission, vision and values will continue to provide guidance and direction for Lehman's future development.

The commitment to providing students with a high quality, liberal arts education is fundamental to the College. Perhaps now, more than ever before, students who choose to study at Lehman are best served by the aims and outcomes that only a liberal arts education can provide. Our strong foundation in the arts, the natural and social sciences and the humanities serves as a base that will enable Lehman graduates to become active civic and economic contributors to society.

In recent years, concern has heightened about the ability of college graduates to find meaningful employment. Employers send out mixed signals, indicating a preference for hiring graduates who come with job-related skills while at the same time employers highlight "preparedness" as having critical thinking skills, quantitative literacy, the ability to express oneself (writing and speaking) in English and one or more other languages, knowledge of and ability to use technology, knowledge of human diversity and global cultures, ethical reasoning and collaborative problem-solving. Very important to employers also is the ability to apply knowledge to complex problems in new settings (The LEAP Employer-Educator Compact, AAC&U, 2013).

The above list of desirable knowledge and skills preferred by employers is best obtained through an educational process grounded in the liberal arts and sciences, whether students go on to careers in a profession or continue their education in graduate school. In the final analysis, this is what a Lehman College education has provided to its more than 65,000 graduates and what it will always be known for – a high quality, liberal arts education that prepares students for life as productive and responsible citizens.

Please complete the requested information below and email your nomination.

I look forward to your participation in this process.

PRIORITIZATION TASK FORCES NOMINATION FORM

NOMINEE: _____

DEPARTMENT/UNIT: _____

NOMINATOR: _____

DATE: _____

Circle one:

1) *ACADEMIC TF* 2) *ADMINISTRATION TF* 3) *STEERING COMMITTEE*

Please submit your nomination to Patrick.Valdez@lehman.cuny.edu
with a copy to Morrobel.Sosa@lehman.cuny.edu and
Vincent.Clark@lehman.cuny.edu by February 21.