

**Minutes of
The Lehman College Senate Meeting
Wednesday, April 1, 2009**

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Senators present: Adams, D.; Afrani, D.; Alborn, T.; Ayala, N.; Baliaj, O.; Banoum, B.;
Bernstein, D.; Bodden, A.; Boone, R.; Borrell, L. ; Bryant, S.; Buckley, M.;
Bullaro, G.; Calvet, L.; Carey, R.; Choudhary, A.; Crump, C.; Dauben, J.;
Decker, C.; DellaPina, M.; DiPaolo, M.; Duru, c.; Esteves, C.; Feinerman, R.;
Fernández, R.; Fiol-Matta, L.; Fletcher, D.; Ganjian, I.; Georges, C.;
Gorokhovich, Y.; Graulau, J.; Haghghat, E.; Happaney, K.; Harushimana, I.;
Ho, A.; Iheanachor, G.; Jacobson, B.; Jeremias, J.; Jervis, J.; Johnson, R.;
Kleiman, S.; Kolb, P.; Kunstler, R.; Lerzundi, P.; Lewis, A.; Lewis, K.; Lin, I.;
Magdaleno, J.; Marianetti, M.; Markens, S.; Mineka, J.; Munch, J.; O'Hanlon,
T.; Olabode, A.; Ona, S.; Ornstein, S.; Papazian, M.; Philipp, M.; Prohaska, V.;
Qian, G.; Reid, A.; Rotolo, R.; Ruiz, J.; Sailor, K.; Sakho, N.; Schlesinger, K.;
Seiger, L.; Silverman, H.; Simmons, J.; Small, M.; Tananbaum, D.; Tegeder, D.;
Thompson, P.; Tilley, J.; Totti, X.; Trimboli, S.; Vitiello, A.; Voge, S.;
Warde, B.; Watson-Turner, S.; Wheeler, D.; Whittaker, R.; Wilder, I.;
Zucchetto, V.; Zwiren, M.

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Senators absent: Acosta, G.; Ajayi, D.; Akan, A.; Amoama, C.; Bamshad, M.; Bonastia, C.;
Bouzalakos, H.; Eldridge, D.; Fleitas, J.; Flook, R.; Folsom, C.; Gerry, C.;
Gonzalez, G.; Gulla, A.; Holloway, J.; Jafari, M.; Jones, L.; Levitt, J. ;
Mbengue, K.; Matthews, E; Maybee, J.; Middleton, J.; Niedt, P.; Nnamani, S.;
Oviedo, M.; Perry-Rider, G.; Raaum, R.; Ramos, R.; Rice, A.; Tabachnikov, A.;
Thelusmond, A.; Troy, R.;

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The meeting was called to order by President Ricardo Fernández at
3:30 p.m.

31 **Minutes Adopted:**

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A motion was made and seconded to adopt the minutes of the Senate
meeting of March 4, 2009. The minutes were unanimously approved.

35 **Announcements and Communication-**

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37 **President Ricardo R. Fernández-**

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39 **1.** President Fernández began with some brief announcements and comments. This weekend the
40 Somos El Futuro Conference is taking place in Albany, which will be attended by some
41 students and staff. Earlier today we had the privilege of listening to Ms. Jill Abrahamson,

42 managing editor of *The New York Times*, as the annual Herbert H. Lehman Memorial Lecture
43 speaker. Prof. Duane Tananbaum spoke briefly earlier at a dedication of some artifacts from
44 the Herbert H. Lehman ferryboat that entered service in 1965 and was retired in 2007. They
45 can be seen in the Lehman Library. Much to the pleasure of the college, members of the
46 Lehman family were present.

47 **2.** Concerning the state budget, we have read that there is an agreement, at least in principle,
48 on some of the major features. As for the University, nothing really has changed. The plans
49 for next year, along with the tuition increase, represent relative security for CUNY.

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51 **b. Student Conference-**

52 1. Mr. Jason Jeremias, Student Conference Chair reminded the senators that at last month's
53 meeting, he talked about some of the "malfeasance in student government." The Student
54 Conference position is not based on animosity toward any administrator or any opposition to
55 the Campus Association for Student Activities (CASA). He asserted that the Student
56 Conference is pointing out these problems, he asserted, because it has a deep concern for the
57 college. He spoke about major difficulties that are affecting Lehman College's strength in
58 being a cultural, economic, and intellectual center. These difficulties require immediate
59 attention because- he claims- students bear the burden of these difficulties, and the
60 Conference's belief is that "a healthy student government leads to a healthy campus." One
61 particular issue is the confusion of students who hold elected positions and the students they
62 represent. Student Conference seeks to study the documents that govern them and how they
63 can be used in a way that promotes transparency and responsibility. "The Student Conference
64 sees these difficulties as opportunities to change our course to supplant disenchantment with
65 encouragement, division with unification, and confusion with clarity. We believe in the final
66 analysis that this will benefit all students and recognize the commonality among our
67 differences." Mr. Jeremias spoke about an atmosphere of animosity on campus, which
68 prevents students from making an impact. He was happy to announce that Vice President José
69 Magdaleno has formed a committee to meet with the various groups of students on campus
70 and to begin to resolve the difficulties. It will be composed of Conference and CASA
71 members as well as members of clubs and organizations of students, and other faculty and
72 staff.

73 2. Mr. Jeremias announced that the Conference held new elections resulting in 14 new
74 members on the Student Conference. The Conference also encourages more students to
75 attend the Senate meetings so they can understand how school policy is made.

76 (President Fernández at this point explained that the student governance is essentially
77 bifurcated—there is the Student Conference and also CASA; the latter requested the
78 opportunity to address the Senate.)

79 Mr. Jeffrey Valdez, Vice President of CASA, was granted floor rights. He explained that the
80 Campus Association for Student Activities is the student government at Lehman College. He
81 pointed out that the organization has a president, and that he serves on various boards and
82 committees that affect every aspect of the college’s life, and was elected by the students. To
83 enter into discussions with the Conference, he felt that a proper foundation has to be built and
84 a culture of cooperation has to be established. He recognized that the name CASA causes
85 confusion at Lehman College and is part of the problem. In elaborating, he said, “being called
86 the Campus Association for Student Activities suggests we only have jurisdiction over the
87 activities on campus, and this is not the case. Because of this, beginning today, we will put
88 forward a referendum to change the name of CASA to the Student Government Association,
89 as it was formerly known. We look forward to working with faculty, administration, and most
90 importantly students, in reviewing our constitution.”

91 **REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES-**

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93 a. **Committee on Governance-**

94 1. Prof. Duane Tananbaum presented a list of student nominees for election to the Senate
95 Committees to serve through the end of this academic year. They have been presented by the
96 Student Conference and approved by the Governance Committee. The nominees are:

97 **Governance Committee:** Mr. Angel Vitiello, **Admission, Evaluation and Academic**

98 **Standards:** Mr. David Lowenstein, and Ms. Shaumi Akthar; **Campus Life and Facilities:**

99 Mr. Duane Adams, Ms. Mobria Small, Ms. Abisola Olabode, and Ms. Alejandra Bodden;

100 **Graduate Studies:** Ms. Ayesha Lewis and Mr. Justin Simmons; **Budget and Long-Range**

101 **Planning:** Ms. Hyacinth Bouzalakos; and for **Library, Technology & Communications:**

102 Mr. Cameron Crump. The nominations were unanimously approved as a slate.

103 2. Prof. Tananbaum also reported that nomination ballots for the Standing Committees went
104 out to faculty. They were received about a week or ten days ago. The deadline was extended

105 through today because the ballots were not received as promptly as the Committee would
106 have hoped.

107 3. The Governance Committee is meeting at 2 p.m tomorrow in Shuster 325 to make up a
108 slate for nominations for faculty seats on the Senate Committees.

109 4. Another nomination ballot is going out for faculty Senators At Large, part-time faculty,
110 administration representatives and Gittleson staff. These are due back by April 22.

111 5. The Committee is continuing to work on various amendments to the governance
112 documents. We've had a number of successful meetings having an agreement on the
113 language which now needs to be drawn up.

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115 **b. Committee on Admissions, Evaluations and Academic Standards-**

116 1. Prof. Kevin Sailor reported that the Committee was asked to consider the effects of
117 Blackboard outages on the academic integrity of online courses this semester:

118 **a.** Credit for conventional courses is defined in terms of the number of hours of instruction
119 that are offered. One 50-minute hour per week over 15 weeks is one credit. If this amount
120 of instruction is reduced then the integrity of the course is jeopardized.

121 **b.** The calculation of credit in online courses at Lehman has been done in terms of the
122 equivalence of the workload of such courses to conventional courses. This formulation
123 makes it more difficult to determine to what extent interruptions in service affect
124 instruction because instruction is not assumed to take place uniformly over the course of
125 the semester.

126 **c.** Evidence about the extent of the disruption and their impact is hard to obtain. Most
127 experts seem to indicate that the disruptions have created significant problems but these
128 problems have been managed by extending deadlines for assignments and using
129 alternatives to Blackboard.

130 **d.** One disturbing situation is that we have no guarantee or sense that the delivery
131 problems of Blackboard have been solved. Planning needs to take place to determine the
132 best course of action should disruptions continue or get worse.

133 **e.** Historically, there have been disruptions in instruction such as during the protests of the
134 early seventies in which accommodations were made to remedy the reduced amount of
135 instruction that was given during the semester.

136 2. CAEAS discussed several mechanisms for trying to accommodate the effects of service
137 disruptions in Blackboard:

138 **a. Incomplete grades (INC)** could be offered to students in online courses if the instructor
139 feels that it is impossible for the work to be completed within the time course of the
140 semester. This course of action has several drawbacks. First, these incompletes would
141 delay graduation for some students. Second, it might require instructors to render services
142 beyond the contractual time period. Third, incompletes can affect the eligibility of a
143 student for financial aid.

144 **b. Pass/Fail.** In 1970, Lehman offered students the option of taking a letter grade or
145 opting for a pass/fail grade if they didn't like the letter grade. This option was offered to
146 try to ameliorate the disruptions caused by unrest on the campus. The rationale was that
147 enough instruction occurred to grant credit and the pass/fail prevented students whose
148 performance suffered from being overly penalized. Drawbacks: Exemptions of the
149 pass/fail prohibition for courses in Gen-Ed and the major would have to be waived.
150 Students who took courses on E-permit would be subject to the rules of their home
151 institution.

152 **c. Z grade.** As a very temporary measure, a Z grade might be assigned, but it is unclear
153 how such a grade would be resolved.

154 3. There is no easy solution if further disruptions of Blackboard occur. A plan needs to be
155 developed for a significant disruption. For example, how would we handle a disruption
156 during the last week of classes or during finals week? Online instruction at Lehman is
157 growing and we should at the very least use the current situation to develop better plans for
158 various contingencies. Discussion followed.

159 4. The next Committee meeting will be held on April 6 at 3:30 p.m.

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161 **c. Undergraduate Studies-**

162 **1.** Prof. Barbara Jacobson submitted proposals from: the Department of African and African
163 American Studies; the Department of Art; the Department of Economics, Accounting and
164 Business Administration; the Department of Environmental Geographic & Geological
165 Sciences; the Program in Linguistics; the Department of Latin American and Puerto Rican
166 Studies; the Department of Middle and High School Education; the Department of Physics
167 and Astronomy; the Department of Political Science and the Department of Sociology. Prof.

168 Jacobson noted that the proposals included a Mexican and Mexican American minor in the
 169 Department of Latin American and Puerto Rican Studies; and a proposal to establish a
 170 program in Interdisciplinary Environmental Science. The proposals were unanimously
 171 approved.

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173 **d. Committee on Graduate Studies-**

174 1. Prof. Timothy Alborn reported on proposals from: the Department of English; the
 175 Department of Music; the Department of Sociology; from the Department of History; the
 176 Department of Environmental, Geographic, and Geological Sciences; the Department of
 177 Middle and High School Education; the Department of Languages and Literatures; and the
 178 Department of Counseling, Leadership, and Special Education. The proposals were
 179 unanimously approved.

180 2. The next meeting will be after the spring break—room and time to be announced.

181 **e. Committee on Academic Freedom-**

182 There was no report.

183 **f. Committee on the Library, Technology and Telecommunications-**

184 1. Mr. James Carney was given floor rights. He reported that the Committee met on
 185 Tuesday, March 10 in the Library Conference Room, and he was elected chair in a
 186 unanimous vote. The composition of the committee will be confirmed shortly after
 187 conference with the Governance Committee.

188 2. Members of the committee will be receiving copies of the student survey in order to cull
 189 relevant questions for the faculty survey. Members will recommend three or four questions
 190 to revise and include on the survey. A subcommittee to address the faculty survey was
 191 created to be chaired by Prof. David Fletcher. The subcommittee will meet prior to the next
 192 committee meeting.

193 3. A discussion was held on security measures on new acquisitions for the Media Center and
 194 the progress in equipping the center with state of the art production equipment purchased
 195 from Sony at a significant discount. The Journalism, Communication and Theatre newsroom
 196 is now in use. Integration of the production equipment for the center will go out to bid
 197 shortly with installation during the summer months.

198 4. The Committee discussed the outages of the CUNY portal and access to Blackboard.
 199 Prof. Robert Whittaker, Associate Provost for Online Education, was invited to the next
 200 committee meeting to determine the reason for the recent outages and the steps that will be
 201 implemented to avoid this problem in the future.

202 5. The next meeting is scheduled for 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 7 in the Library
 203 Conference Room.

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 205 **g. Committee on Campus Life and Facilities-**

206 There was no report.

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208 **h. Committee on Budget and Long-Range Planning-**

209 There was no report

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211 **i. University Faculty Senate-**

212 1. Professor Manfred Philipp reported that the March 31 plenary featured Executive Vice
 213 Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer, Allan Dobrin and Associate Vice Chancellor and
 214 University Chief Information Officer, Brian Cohen, who discussed the problems concerning
 215 Blackboard. They are planning an off-site backup which will be outside the city. This way
 216 it will have a separate power supply and separate everything. But it will not be a backup that
 217 can jump in at frequent intervals. So the current interruptions will unfortunately continue.
 218 Various complications were involved between using Blackboard 6 and Blackboard 8. Vice
 219 Chancellor Dobrin had been under the impression that campus faculty governance groups
 220 had requested the update to Blackboard 8 from Blackboard 6, since the administrative
 221 representatives from most of the campuses had (apparently) advocated such a change. This
 222 was given as the reason why Blackboard 8 was not first tested on a smaller number of
 223 campuses before being made the standard for all but three campuses.

224 2. Nominations were conducted for the five at-large positions on the University Faculty
 225 Senate Executive Committee. All of the incumbents: Prof. Stefan Baumrin of Lehman
 226 College and the Graduate Center), Prof. Sandi Cooper of the College of Staten Island, Prof.
 227 Anne Friedman of Borough of Manhattan Community College, Prof. Leslie Jacobson of
 228 Brooklyn College, and Prof. Philip Pecorino of Queensborough Community College, were
 229 re-nominated. Prof. Michael Barnhart of Kingsborough Community College, Prof. Terrence
 230 Martell of Baruch College, and Prof. Rishi Raj of City College of New York, were also

231 nominated. The nomination period remains open until the election takes place at the May 5
232 plenary.

233 3. The plenary heard reports on presidential searches at Brooklyn College, Hostos
234 Community College, and Medgar Evers College. These reports were delivered by faculty
235 members at these campuses.

236 4. For the third successive plenary, a discussion was held on the PSC-CUNY awards
237 process. This time the panel consisted of Prof. Kathryn Richardson of New York City
238 College of Technology, chair of the University Faculty Senate Research Committee, and
239 Prof. Jim Gordon of Hunter College. The panel was introduced by Prof. Friedman and a
240 resolution endorsing the Joint Resolution of the University Committee on Research Awards
241 (UCRA) and the University Faculty Senate Research Committee was introduced by Prof.
242 Pecorino. The resolution passed unanimously.

243 5. On March 10, Prof. Philipp and Prof. Martha Bell lobbied in Albany on behalf of more
244 funding for the university. This was the occasion of the CUNY/SUNY Legislative
245 Luncheon, attended by legislators who are also CUNY and SUNY alumni.

246 6. The Chemistry, Biology, Biochemistry, and Physics Discipline Council resolved that the
247 CUNY Advanced Science Research Facility, located on the City College of New York
248 campus, establish a governance body that includes elected faculty representatives. It also
249 asks that the Graduate Center Executive Officers of those disciplines be part of that
250 governance body. At the present time, academic planning for the facility, which is under
251 construction, has, for the last two years, apparently been done entirely by Vice Chancellor
252 Gillian Small's office, with the advice of those faculty members selected by that office.
253 There has been no participation by University Faculty Senate bodies.

254 7. Planning for the CUNY School of Pharmacy continues under the leadership of Dr.
255 Alexandra Logue, Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. This school has been a
256 long-standing agenda item of the University Faculty Senate. A steering committee is
257 expected to be announced soon. The proposed location at York College will allow for
258 participation by the staff of the United States Food and Drug Administration Regional
259 Center, which is based on that campus.

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261 **OLD BUSINESS**

262 There was no old business.

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264 **NEW BUSINESS**

265 There was no new business

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267 **ADJOURNMENT**

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269 The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

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271 Respectfully submitted,

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273

274 Esdras Tulier