

MINUTES

**Meeting of the Hunter College Senate
7 December 1994**

	The 315th meeting of the Hunter College Senate was convened at 4:15 P.M. in Room W714.	1 2
Presiding:	Kenneth S. Sherrill, Chair	3
Attendance:	The elected members of the Senate, with the exception of those listed in Appendix I.	4 5
	Professor Gilpatrick moved that the Agenda be amended by moving agenda item # 3 to be the first item of business.	6 7
	The motion to adopt the agenda as amended carried by voice vote.	7
	<u>Discussion of the Proposed Restructuring of the Department of Academic Skills</u>	9
	Professor Sherrill yielded the floor to President Blanche Blank.	10
	The following is a summary statement of President Blank's statement:	11
	She said: "I am opening this discussion because you might want to know about the most recent event, which was a meeting that took place at 1 PM in the Assembly Hall. Here is what happened.	12 13 14
	This afternoon I attended the meeting of SEEK students called by Lucille Croom, Chair of the Department of Academic Skills. Professor Croom opened the meeting which was attended by about 150 students and some faculty. There was an agenda, and I addressed the meeting very briefly. Provost Laura Struminger was second on the agenda and began to address the meeting. The students rose quietly and turned their backs on her while she spoke. She did not complete her remarks because the students began to chant, preventing the completion of her remarks and also preventing the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Elsa Nunez-Wormack from addressing the meeting. Then Daniel Hayward, a SEEK freshman, addressed the group followed by Charles Barron, a man who said he was a SEEK graduate and activist. Immanuel Roy, President of the Student Government spoke next, and Charles Barron spoke again. The meeting concluded, and after the meeting a group of students remained outside the Assembly Hall and shared their concerns with Elsa Nunez-Wormack and with Lucille Croom.	15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
	As I listened I heard a request from the students to be included. Consequently, I am asking the SEEK students to elect two representatives for the Committee on Restructuring Implementation which I announced last week, and whose membership now includes the deans, the chair of SEEK, faculty of the receiving departments, a student appointed by me, and now two more SEEK students. The Committee will be chaired by our College Ombudsman, Giuseppe Di Scipio.	31 32 33 34 35 36 37
	The second thing I want to do is to simply reiterate my support for the goals of the restructuring initiative for the improved success and graduation rate of our SEEK students. All the deans and vice presidents are in support of this goal.	38 39 40 41
	Third, I have endorsed Dean Scott's recommendation that the counselors in the Academic Skills Department present a restructuring plan as requested by the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. Hunter College is one of two SEEK Programs that have not submitted such a plan to the Central Office. Upon approval of the plan by 80th Street and the Hunter College Administration I will guarantee a three-year period for the implementation, and at the end of that period the results will be evaluated.	42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49
	Finally, I have assured every member of the teaching faculty of the Department of Academic Skills that he or she will have a place in a	50 51

department at Hunter College. I have instituted a mechanism for this process, and I want to reiterate my genuine concern and my genuine sympathy for all the discomforts that any change engenders. I understand that, and once again I really feel that I do empathize with your concerns on that matter. Thank you."	52 53 54 55 56
Professor Kirkland requested that the President reconsider the appointment of the Hunter College Ombuds Officer as Chair of the Committee for Restructuring Implementation.	57 58 59
Professor Gilpatrick moved for approval of the Statement and Resolution prepared by Professors Hodges and Tronto as distributed at the door.	60 61
It was moved that the Senate dissolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to allow 15 minutes of informal discussion. The motion carried by hand vote at 4:30 P.M.	62 63 64
(The statement made by Provost Laura Struminger is attached as Appendix II. The statement of the Department of Academic Skills as presented by Professor Gail Gordon is attached as Appendix III.)	65 66 67
The Senate reconvened in formal session at 4:45 P.M.	68
The motion on the floor was the statement and resolution by Professors Hodges and Tronto.	69 70
Professor Yepez moved the following substitute motion: "that the Resolution of the Department of Academic Skills be adopted."	71 72
After discussion Professor Wallach moved that the substitute motion be amended to read as follows:	73 74
"WHEREAS, ...faculty in the Department; <u>and</u>	75
<u>WHEREAS</u> , the faculty and staff of the Department of Academic Skills Program express...; <u>therefore</u> ,	76 77
BE IT RESOLVED, that the Department continue its internal restructuring effort..."	78 79
After discussion the question on the amendment was called and carried.	80
The motion to approve the amendment carried by hand vote with 39 in favor and 24 opposed. The amendment became part of the substitute motion on the floor.	81 82
Professor Gilpatrick moved that the substitute motion be further amended by appending the Hodges/Tronto statement and resolution.	83 84
After discussion Professor Milgrim moved that the amendment be amended by substituting the word " <u>include</u> " for the word "exclude" on the third line of the "Therefore be it resolved" paragraph of the Hodges/Tronto resolution.	85 86 87
The question on the amendment to the amendment was called and carried.	88
Professor Milgrim's amendment to the amendment was approved by hand vote and became part of the amendment to the substitute motion.	89 90
The question on the amendment as amended was called and carried.	91
The motion to approve the amendment as amended carried by hand vote. The Hodges/Tronto statement and resolution as amended became part of the substitute motion on the floor.	92 93 94
The question was called and carried on the motion to substitute. The motion to substitute was approved by hand vote.	95 96

	The motion on the floor was Professor Yepez' motion as amended.	97
	The question was called and carried.	98
	The motion was approved by hand vote with 43 in favor, 20 opposed, and 8 ab- stentions. (The motion as amended and approved is attached as Appendix IV.)	99 100
Report by the Administrative Committee:	Professor Sherrill presented the report as follows:	101
	<u>Special Election to fill vacant seats on the Senate</u>	102
	He informed the Senate that Ms. Sherry-Ann Smith (Political Science Major) has been nominated for one of the student seats on the Senate.	103 104
	It was moved that the Secretary be instructed to cast a single ballot in favor of the nominee. The motion carried and Ms. Smith was elected to the Senate.	105 106
	It was moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried by voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 5:40 P.M.	107 108

Respectfully submitted,



Renate Murray
Executive Assistant

APPENDIX I

The following members were noted as absent from the meeting:

FACULTY:

Anthropology: Gerald Creed
William Parry

Art: William Agee
Jane Roos

Biological Sciences: Rivka Rudner
Shirley Raps
Roger Persell

Chemistry: Angelo Santoro

Classics: William Mayer
Alex Alexander
Tamara Green

Communications: Serafina Bathrick "E"
James Roman

Computer Science: Christopher Ward
Thomas Wesselkamper

Curriculum & Teaching: Alene Smith

Economics: Terence Agbeyegbe
Nashwa George

English: Floyd Horowitz

Geology & Geography: Richard Liebling

Health Sciences: Khursheed Navder "E"

Mathematical Sciences: Daniel Chess
Norma Moy

Nursing: Marie Mosley
Eileen Lahey "E"

Physics & Astronomy: Al Bennick

Social Work: Jayne Silberman
George Getzel
Malka Sternberg

Sociology: Robert Carter
Martin Warmbrand

Theatre & Film: Dan Koetting "E"
Alkis Popoutsis

Urban Affairs: Stanley Moses

STUDENTS:

Jean Lemaitre
Mark Quick
Tracey Rivera "E"
Hopeton Smalling
Yvonne Zaharakis
Gary Braglia
Lucrece Francois
Meg Bruck
Inacio Pinto
Andrew McCann
Adeline Su
Allison Lavalas
Sonya Martirosyan
Paula Henriquez "E"
Mintra Bajnauth
Kimberly Baxter
Joyce Bowden
Istvan Busa-Farkas
Shoshana Roland "E"
Priscilla Chang
Bianna Belfer
Jose Diaz
Neida Gonzalez
Patricia Laporte
Christine Gengaro
Mark Weinstock
Elka Mumizaga

Dean Carlos Hortas
Dean Susan Lees

APPENDIX II

Provost Laura Strumingher made the following statement. She said:

"I'd like to tell you about the history of the decision to restructure, about our vision for the future, and about where we are at this time.

History:

The SEEK Program was established at Hunter to provide special services for a unique group of students—students who are economically and educationally disadvantaged, yet who have the potential for successful completion of college-level work. This program has been in place for 27 years. In recent years approximately 400 students are chosen annually to enter the program. Each receives a guarantee of 10 semesters of financial aid, plus counseling and tutoring, and extra stipends for books. Most students entering the program require remedial classes. Until now these classes have been taught by faculty in the department of Academic Skills which teaches only SEEK students. A good number of students who enter the program complete their remedial courses, some do not. Sadly, the vast majority of SEEK students, more than 80%, have not graduated 10 years after they entered SEEK. This was one of the chief issues that leads us to rethink the structure of the program.

What is it that causes this high failure rate? Certainly, there are many causes outside of the college that contribute to a student's decision to leave school. Most of these causes are not in our ability to control. But repeated recent investigations of this subject beginning with the middle states evaluation in 1988 and the follow-up reviews and periodic reports required by middle states questioned the existence of two parallel remedial programs and the negative potential of segregating SEEK students. In addition to reports required by accrediting agencies, I personally took a strong and pro-active interest in the problems of access to courses faced by remedial students both SEEK and non-SEEK. In 1991 I appointed a task force chaired by Dean Scott, including members of the instructional faculty and all remedial units on campus. The task force was charged with reviewing and recommending a restructuring of basic instruction that would lead to the end of duplication of remedial and developmental sections. Following exhaustive consultation with students, faculty and staff, the committee came up with two important findings: 1) All the programs were given credit for their performance and for their devotion to students; 2) The task force recommended that the specific issue of restructuring would benefit from an external review process.

That process took place during academic year 1993-94. The external review of the departments of Academic Skills, English and Math were done simultaneously, as each unit was informed, to facilitate a decision about restructuring. Reviewers who visited Academic Skills last spring and spoke to students were concerned about the feeling of SEEK students that they were not part of the "real" College. And, indeed, as the retention statistics illustrate, few ever got to take courses in departments outside of Academic Skills. Not surprisingly, students felt that other departments were not welcoming them.

Simultaneously, Vice Chancellor Nunez-Wormack requested all SEEK programs to submit restructuring plans in September 1992. The former director of SEEK submitted a plan in October 1993 that was rejected by the Vice Chancellor. He was asked to resubmit. While every other SEEK unit of CUNY has submitted a plan that has been accepted, our department has not yet met that goal.

Future:

Out of the substantial information provided by years of review, a vision for the future of Academic Skills/SEEK began to emerge. This was not a preconceived plan, but rather one arrived at after extensive review with many who teach developmental courses.. The SEEK student group—about 400—who are accepted to Hunter for the Fall 1995 will not take classes in Academic Skills.

Beginning with the entering class of Fall 1995, SEEK and non-SEEK students who need remediation will share classes taught by the English or Math departments. By that time instructional faculty who were appointed in Academic Skills will have relocated to the appropriate discipline-based departments. No faculty member will lose their jobs; everyone will be relocated. This change in faculty appointments will provide an opportunity for some who wish to teach a limited number of non-developmental courses in the departments. This has

Appendix II (continued):

been an unrealized request of some faculty for years. It was necessary to complete this part of the plan now so that faculty could be scheduled to teach courses in their departments in the Fall semester and thereby ensure a continuous delivery of instruction to students. The rest of the restructuring plan, all of the very important details which have been raised in the past weeks, will be worked out by the restructuring committee which will include representatives from every area concerned and by curriculum committees of the English and Mathematics departments. Indeed, I plan to follow the advice of an external reviewer for the Mathematics department to provide an opportunity for a retreat of the newly integrated faculties of Mathematics to discuss the curriculum and any course modification to the existing courses in the Mathematics department. A similar opportunity will be offered to the English Department. It remains my hope that every department of the College will work to implement this plan so that SEEK students have a better chance to succeed at the College. This includes a commitment from departments to offer more bridge courses and to reconsider the appropriateness of access codes. It is in all of these areas that I anticipate review by the undergraduate course of study committee and the Senate.

SEEK students will continue to receive the additional counseling and tutoring and financial aid that they are entitled to by legislation. The SEEK department will continue to exist as a unit within the Division in Education. This model of SEEK department exists at two other CUNY campuses, one of which has the highest retention rate for SEEK students in CUNY.

The present:

On a personal note, I regret bitterly the pain caused to colleagues who oppose this plan or the process by which this plan was developed. I regret that change is so painful, but I know that our SEEK students deserve a better chance to graduate. The restructuring is dedicated to that effort."

APPENDIX III

DEPARTMENT OF ACADEMIC SKILLS ADDRESS TO THE HUNTER COLLEGE
SENATE
DECEMBER 7, 1994

The faculty and staff of the Department of Academic Skills/Seek Program thank the Senate and its leadership for the opportunity to raise in this forum an issue of great importance to the Hunter College community.

As recently as September 1994 and in response to the External Review Report, the Provost of Hunter College, Dr. Laura Strumingher, asked the Department to continue in its self-restructuring/modification effort for the purpose of developing innovative teaching and counseling modalities to improve the retention and graduation rates of SEEK students. At that time she added that she would assist in any way possible in supporting our internal restructuring/modification. The Department took Provost Strumingher's encouragement and promise of support at face value and proceeded with the task at hand, in good faith.

You can imagine how utterly shocked we were to learn from Provost Strumingher on November 2, 1994 that she had unilaterally decided to separate the SEEK instructional faculty from the Department and would reassign them elsewhere, effective Fall 1995.

In order to move the discussion forward we need to put the matter in its proper perspective. First, the discussion today should not address the legality of the administration's action, for the proper forum for that lies elsewhere. Secondly, the issue is not about the efficacy of remediation per se, because there is a time and place for that, too.

We in the Department of Academic Skills/SEEK protest the manner in which the administration's decision was made, and we are troubled by four important issues raised by this crisis. We believe they constitute legitimate issues for discussion in this forum because they impact on faculty-student-administration relations at Hunter College and because they are at variance with Hunter's stated commitment to an ideal campus climate.

1. We believe that the administration violated SEEK Guidelines by not following the prescribed protocol for the consultation and participation of the parties directly affected. We are currently pursuing clarification of the matter in another venue. The legal question notwithstanding, we find the basic ethical issue troubling.

For example, while there were prior discussions and consultations with personnel in the English and Mathematics Departments, and the Professional Staff Congress in the formulation of the decision to separate and reassign SEEK instructional faculty, there was no participation by or consultation with either the Dean of Programs in Education and the Acting Chair/Director, or the SEEK student body and the SEEK faculty, who are the most directly affected.

2. The administration based its decision to separate SEEK instructional faculty to a large extent on two documents: the "Fall 1986 Entering Freshmen Graduation Rates by Remedial Need and by SEEK Status" and the "External Review Report." First, the 1986 statistics are not accompanied by any analysis which helps explain the

phenomenon, and does not provide a basis to conclude that the best way to improve graduation rates is to dismantle the Department of Academic Skills/SEEK Program.

Second, the External Review Report in no way recommended the dismantling of the Department. On the contrary, it repeatedly recommended a college-wide collaborative effort (including SEEK, DEP and MATH) to find innovative methods to help improve the graduation rates of Hunter College students; this recommendation seems to have been completely ignored by the administration.

This, convinces us that the administration's decision is not based on sound academic program planning, and thus lacks propriety.

3. Despite the administration's assurances to the contrary the instructional faculty of the Department will be placed at risk if the transfers take place. Arnold Cantor, the Executive Director of the PSC, advises us that the transferred faculty will be considered, for the most part, the last hired in the receiving departments. In light of the President's announcement of a hiring freeze at the last Senate meeting, these forced transfers (**and they are forced transfers**), will disproportionately impact minority faculty in the event of retrenchment.

4. What pains us most, is the manner in which the administration has treated an academic department and its faculty; not only by denying us participation and consultation in the matter, but also by misrepresenting the facts. This in our judgement constitutes a grievous injury. Then, the administration, when faced with criticism of its failure of protocol, treats the matter as if it were an inadvertent omission, a **TYPO** as it were, to which one would just shrug one's shoulders and say "**oops**". And, in the administration's haste to bring its transfer plan to a speedy conclusion, it has engaged in behavior bordering on, or in fact, intimidation. This, in our judgement constitutes the **INSULT** added to **INJURY**.
WE ARE OUTRAGED!

Senators, you too should be outraged because what the administration is doing to us, it can do to you.

We ask you, the Senate, to support the resolution of the Department of Academic Skills/ SEEK Program by vote and to petition Acting President Blank to rescind the decision to separate the SEEK instructional faculty from the Department of Academic Skills/SEEK so that we may put this unhappy situation behind us.

We can then continue the process recommended by the external reviewers to engage in a college-wide collaborative venture with the full and authentic consultation and participation of all concerned, with the goal of improving the retention and graduation rates of all Hunter College students, SEEK and non-SEEK -- and to do so with a genuine spirit of mutual trust and respect, and with collegiality.

APPENDIX IV

The following resolutions were adopted by the Hunter College Senate on December 7, 1994:

RESOLUTION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ACADEMIC SKILLS:

At the November 9, 1994 department meeting the majority of the faculty and staff of the Department of Academic Skills/SEEK Program voted overwhelmingly to approve the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Department of Academic Skills/SEEK Program represents the largest multicultural faculty in Hunter College serving an important segment of the college's student body for over 25 years; and

WHEREAS, in the Spring of 1994 the Department was invited by the Hunter administration to engage in an internal restructuring effort with the purpose of improving the retention and graduation rates of SEEK students; and

WHEREAS, on Wednesday November 2, 1994 the Hunter College administration announced to the SEEK instructional faculty that they will be separated from the Department of Academic Skills/SEEK Program effective fall 1995; the formulation of the decision by the administration was made without prior consultation in the matter with Dean of Programs in Education, the Acting Chairwoman/Director of SEEK or the affected faculty in the Department; and

WHEREAS, the faculty and staff of the Department of Academic Skills Program express their utmost desire that the Department remain in its present structural and administrative configuration; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Department continue its internal restructuring effort designed to improve the retention and graduation rates of SEEK students; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon Acting President Blank to reverse the unilateral decision to restructure the Department of Academic Skills/SEEK Program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we call upon the Board of Trustees, the Office of Special Programs, and the Hunter College community to support this resolution and to petition Acting President Blank to rescind the decision to dismantle the Department of Academic Skills/SEEK Program.

AMENDMENT: (Prepared by Professors Hodges and Tronto)

As we begin the presidential search process again, we are concerned about the Provost's unilateral decision to dismantle the Department of Academic Skills (SEEK). While we agree that the problems of retention of students at Hunter College, and the problems evident in remedial education at Hunter College at this time, are serious problems requiring drastic action, we believe that the Provost's precipitous actions do not reflect how we should make decisions at this College. In light of our concern to attract and hire the best future leader for the College, we believe that the Provost's approach to this problem creates a crisis in how the College makes sound academic policy.

In order to restore a sense of academic due process, community decision making, and to insure the best possible education of all Hunter College students, we propose the following resolution. Our goal is to restore a more deliberative process, to allow all parties to air their grievances, and to use the wisdom of all members of the Hunter College community in moving forward on this matter.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS,

The Provost's decision to dismantle the Department of Academic Skills, were it to proceed, constitutes the most extensive restructuring of an academic department that has occurred at Hunter College in the last 20 years.

WHEREAS,

Despite its massive nature, this uncommonly hasty action was taken without a written plan; without an impact assessment; without College-wide consultation; and may well represent the vision of essentially one person.

WHEREAS,

This major academic decision affects not only the interests of the Department of Academic Skills, but the priorities and programs of the entire College.

WHEREAS,

No state of financial exigency warrants this action, and the action purports to address no problem whose immediate solution is urgent.

WHEREAS,

This action, occurring as it does, when the College is without permanent presidential leadership, constitutes a virtually irrevocable operation that would limit the options that our next president could exercise in implementing a vision of her/his own, even if this new leader's vision involves some form of restructuring for the Department of Academic Skills.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Hunter College Senate shall establish a 7-member Select Committee on Remediation to reconsider this matter. The membership of this Committee will be chosen by the Senate Administrative Committee but will include persons from the Departments of Academic Skills, English and Mathematics, as interested parties. Its charge shall include:

- A. To consult fully with both the Provost, and the SEEK students and faculty and all other members of the College community who wish to be heard with regard to the wisdom of this proposal;
- B. To evaluate this measure and other possible concrete and immediate solutions to problems of remediation and retention in the College;
- C. To report back to the Senate in writing by the first Senate meeting of the Spring, 1995.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT

The Hunter College Senate urges that no lines be transferred from the Department of Academic Skills until a full airing of the situation has occurred. Specifically, we urge the following measures:

1. that faculty from the Department of Academic Skills not apply for transfers to other departments this semester.
2. that departmental P&B's not act to move faculty members until a broader discussion of this issue can occur.
3. that the F P&B not approve these transfers.
4. that the relevant deans advise relevant department chairs not to act.
5. that the Provost remove all deadlines for requests for transfers.
6. that the President not approve these transfers.
7. that the Board of Trustees not approve these transfers at this time.

APPENDIX III

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

Presented by Professor Rose Boone for the Department of Academic Skills

1. FALL '93: Self-study
Told by the Provost and Dean that the purpose of study is to see where we are going. What our weaknesses are told to highlight. Weaknesses as opposed to emphasizing strengths.
2. Nov '93 Chair retired and acting chair was appointed.
3. Spring '94 Provost assured group of no plans to restructure program. Purpose of study is to see what needs modifying and to plan new programs (innovations and modifications of program).
4. Spring 94 External Review committee met with individuals.
5. Spring 94 REquest for restructure for Academic Plan from Vice Chancellor due on 12/15. The Chairwoman proposed retreat.
6. Sept 94 Request for restructure from Provost. Restructure in terms of new model. Nol plans to restructure program ("Somebody write this down [I have no plans to restructure the program])
7. Sept 94 RETREAT- formed new groups to design model by Oct 15 for Provost (a letter from SEEK was sent)
8. Oct 12, 94 Provost sent memo requesting SEEK Instructors to meet with counterparts to design new programs for developmental students. A follow up meeting was planned for SEEK Writing & DEP faculty.

-DEP faculty cancelled the next meeting with the explanation of they were not ready to meet (However, SEEK and Hunter Math faculty met.)
9. Nov.2,94 Provost called meeting of instructors to inform group of her decision to separate. She also requested a list be submitted in TWO weeks of THREE choices of departmental transfers.
10. 11/7/94 Provost met with counsellors.
11. 11/14/94 Union rep met with department.
12. 11/16/94 President sent letter to instructional faculty.
13. 11/28/94 Hand delivered letter from Presidenty to instructional faculty.