

MINUTES

Meeting of the Hunter College Senate

17 December 2008

- 1 The 498th meeting of the Hunter College Senate was convened at 3:45 PM in Room W714.
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- 3 **Presiding:** Richard Stapleford, Chair
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- 5 **Attendance:** The elected members of the Senate with the exception of those listed in Appendix I.
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7 Alternate Senators were formally seated in accordance with the procedures approved by the Senate, and
8 clickers were distributed to them.
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- 10 **Report by the President:** There was no report.
11
- 12
13 **Report by the Administrative Committee:** The Chair presented the report as follows:
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15 Approved Curriculum Changes
16 The following curriculum changes as listed in Part I and Part II of the Report dated 12/17/08 were
17 approved as per Senate resolution and were submitted for the Senate's information: Items GS-784
18 (C&T/Mathematics & Statistics), and GS-785 (C&T), GS-786 (Economics), GS-783/US-1542
19 (Geography), US-1549 (Classical & Oriental Studies), US-1552 (Romance Languages), US-1553, US-
20 1554, US-1556, and US-1557 (Film & Media Studies).
21
- 22 List of Candidates for Diplomas and Degrees
23 Professor Stapleford moved for the ceremonial adoption of the list of candidates for diplomas and degrees
24 to be awarded in January 2009. The motion was approved by voice vote without dissent.
25
- 26 White Paper
27 The Chair next introduced the following White Paper:
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- 29 **THE HUNTER COLLEGE SENATE AND THE DEFINITION OF VOTING MAJORITY**
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- 31 According to the New York Court of Appeals, the state's highest court, college governance bodies,
32 such as the Hunter College Senate, are subject to the New York State Open Meetings Law. This law
33 holds that the public has the right to attend any meeting of the body and that a quorum for the conduct
34 of business is one more than half the membership. That is in accord with both the spirit and the
35 language of the Hunter College Senate Charter.
- 36 A problem arises because of a related law, the General Construction Law, which in its section 41 states
37 that in voting resolutions,
- 38 "not less than a majority of the whole number [of members] may perform and exercise such power,
39 authority or duty. For the purpose of this provision the words 'whole number' shall be construed
40 to mean the total number which the board, commission, body or other group of persons or officers
41 would have were there no vacancies."
- 42 Simply put, action can be taken by the body only upon majority vote of the total membership. In the
43 100-member Senate this means 51 votes are required to take action.
- 44 Over the last two years attendance at Senate meetings has averaged between 55 and 65 members. This
45 is ample to achieve a quorum (51 members) but it has proven to be inadequate to permit the will of the
46 majority of attendees to act on resolutions. We have arrived at a point whereby the Senate is unable to

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52 act on any but the most routine matters. If 55 Senators are present and voting on an issue and 5 are
 53 opposed, the measure fails. Given the fact that the Senate considers contentious and complicated issues
 54 of policy the expectation of almost total agreement among the Senators as a prerequisite for acting is
 55 unreasonable. It has all but completely stymied representative government at Hunter College, an
 56 institutional imperative won by the great sacrifice of students and faculty and affirmed by the State of
 57 New York.

58 This situation frustrates democratic government, the intention of which is to permit bodies to hear
 59 multiple viewpoints and determine by vote the will of the majority. It also ignores the intention of
 60 representative democracy — the Hunter College Senate, for example — which permits a body politic to
 61 delegate its power to elected individuals. The principle whereby an individual can represent a larger
 62 constituency is a fundamental structural necessity to allow democratic government to function. This is
 63 the basis of the system that permits a body to define its voting majority as one more than half of those
 64 members in attendance.

65 Since no factional or individual right is protected by the application of the New York State
 66 Construction Law it is perverse to continue to allow it to impede representative government at the
 67 College. The Hunter College Senate therefore petitions the Legal Affairs office of the City University
 68 of New York to reverse its ruling that action may be taken only by the majority vote of the entire
 69 membership and allow the Senate to return to its previous manner of functioning whereby action may
 70 be taken by a majority of the attending members.

71 After discussion, the White paper was approved by unanimous consent.

72 **Committee** **Undergraduate Course of Study Committee Re: Learning Outcomes Statement for all Courses**

73 **Reports:** Professor Eckhard Kuhn Osius, Chair of the Committee, presented the following resolution for Senate
 74 approval:

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 76 WHEREAS, curriculum proposals for new courses require that each syllabus include “A statement of
 77 the key or critical course specific learning outcomes in words that indicate what the student will learn
 78 and be able to demonstrate after this course”...; and,

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 80 WHEREAS, the Middle States Commission for Higher Education Standard 14 (Assessment of Student
 81 Learning) requires that institutions clearly define and document student learning outcomes at every
 82 institutional level; therefore,

83
 84 BE IT RESOLVED, that such a statement of expected learning outcomes be included in ALL syllabi
 85 and not just new course proposals.

86
 87 After discussion the question was called and carried. The resolution was approved with none opposed and
 88 3 abstentions.

89
 90 **Undergraduate Course of Study Committee Re: Limitation of Credits during Winter Session**

91 Professor Eckhard Kuhn-Osius, Chair of the Committee, presented the following resolution for Senate
 92 approval:

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 94 WHEREAS, the time during the Winter session is very limited, giving a full-time student not enough
 95 time to carry an overload, and

96
 97 WHEREAS, Hunter College limits the number of credit hours a student can take during the regular
 98 semester, and

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 100 WHEREAS, the time available per credit hour for students taking a full load during a 14-week semester
 101 corresponds to the time available for a student taking 4 credits during the 18 class days during January;
 102 therefore,
 103

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109 BE IT RESOLVED, that no student can take more than 4 credits during the Winter Session and that no
110 department may offer courses carrying more than 4 credits during the Winter Session.

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112 After discussion the question was called and carried.

113
114 Voting by clickers produced the following results: 46 in favor, 6 opposed, and 3 abstentions. The motion
115 did not carry, the required number of 51 votes not having been achieved.

116
117 After discussion it as moved that the motion be reconsidered. The motion carried.

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119 After discussion the question was called and carried.

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121 Voting by clickers produced the following results: 50 in favor, 3 opposed, and 1 abstention. The motion did
122 not carry, the required number of 51 votes not having been achieved.

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124 It was moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM.
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129 Respectfully submitted,
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133 Phil Alcabes,
134 Secretary
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APPENDIX I

The following members were noted as absent from the meeting:

Faculty

Africana&PR/Latino Studies	Pedro Lopez-Adorno (A)
Art	Reiner Leist (A) Paul Ramirez
Chemistry	Pamela Mills
Computer Science	Ioannis Stamos (A) Virginia Teller
Curriculum & Teaching	Ann Ebe (A) Sema Brainin
Economics	Howard Chernick Jonathan Conning (A)
English	Christina Alfar (A)
Film & Media Studies	Shanti Thakur Tim Portlock (A)
Geography	Haydee Salmun (A) "E"
Health Sciences	Mimi Fahs (A)
History	Barbara Welter Bernadette McCauley (A)
Music	Jewel Thompson (A)
Nursing	Donald Smith Judith Aponte
Physics & Astronomy	Noel Goddard (A)
Political Science	Charles Tien (A)
Psychology	Tracy Dennis (A)
SEEK	Patricia Martin (A)
School of Social Work	George Paterson
Sociology	Claus Mueller (A)
Special Education	Shirley Cohen (A)
Student Services	Reva Cohen (A) "E"
Urban Affairs	Laxmi Ramasubramanian (A)

Lecturers and Part-Time Faculty

Barbara Sproul (Religion) "E"
Barbara Barone (Math&Stat)
William Mayer (Classics)
Constantin Radis (Sociology)
Carmela Scala (Romance Lang)
Aubrey Ewaroo
Jeffrey Mongrain (Art)
Matthew Knip
William Sakas

Administration

Dean Jacqueline Mondros (A)
Acting Dean Ken Olden (A)

Ex-Officio

Jason Ares, CLT Council President
Nadine Young, HEO Forum Pres.
Sarit Levy, GSA Pres.

Students

Maria Arettines
Kaveh Tabatabaie (PoliSci)
Claudia Caceres
Johanna Gurman
Dulgun Maidar
Jenny Alcaide
Amardeep Singh (Biology)
Christina Podkalicki
Peter Cardenas (Psych)
Zain Saeed
Mariya Yefremova (Poli Sci/Eng)
Francesca Manieri (SEEK)
Ian Christner (Grad. Sociology)
Robert Walko (Economics)
Sera Yeysides (Econ/Poli Sci)
Kareem Devonish
Darius Carr
Jessica Torres
Lorena Sanchez