

BROOKLYN COLLEGE  
OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK  
FACULTY COUNCIL  
December 8, 2020

- (6673) Call to order      The fourth meeting of Faculty Council for the 2020-2021 academic year was called to order at 3:30 pm by Professor Langsam (CISC) via Zoom.
- (6674) Roll call      The roll call was taken at the door. Department Chairs and Representatives: Fraser (AFST), Amanik (JUST), Dunbar (KINS), Childers (MLAN), Weston (PSYC); Delegates: Banerjee, Bowdoin, Girelli-Carasi & Smith (HSS), O'Connor-Petruso (EDUC), & Wills (Prog Dir) were absent (-9); Alonso (MLL), Girelli-Carasi & Smith (H&SS), were excused (-3); Administrators: Lopes & Scharron Del Rio were also absent and excused. All other members were present
- (6675) Minutes of November 17, 2020      The minutes of November 17, 2020 were approved unanimously.
- (6676) Steering Committee      An election for the Committee on Committees took place. Professors Cherrier (EESC) and Klein (ECON) were nominated. The Secretary cast one vote, and both were elected.
- Faculty Council endorsed the Statement of the Council of CUNY Faculty Governance Leaders Statement about class size with a vote of 86 yeas, 1 nay, and 5 abstentions (**Appendix A**).
- (6677) Communications from the Administration      President Anderson discussed current enrollment at Brooklyn College, contextualizing it in the demographic shifts of the past decade, which include a dip in the number of eighteen-year-olds graduating from high schools and the resultant decline in applicants to CUNY, especially at community colleges. She called attention to robust new recruitment efforts, including focused outreach, which she hopes will increase the yield and the diversity of first-time, full-time first year students. She urged faculty to encourage students to enroll in winter and spring semesters. She announced the dissemination of a “cheat sheet”

of resources for students and the fundraising results of Giving Tuesday.

Provost Lopes announced programming at the Center for Teaching and Learning in January, as well CUNY online training.

Senior Vice-President for Finance and Administration Gilbert reminded Faculty Council about his monthly town hall. He discussed the budget, and the CARES Act allocation.

A discussion about a number of issues followed, including CARES Act reimbursement policies and funding possibilities, the “DEFEND US, DON’T DEFUND US: A Resolution from Brooklyn College Faculty and Professional Staff,” passed at November’s Faculty Council meeting, the vacancy in Facilities, and advocacy and lobbying efforts among New York State and New York City elected officials for CUNY and Brooklyn College funding.

(6678)

Committee on Committees

The Committee on Committee presented a nomination, which was approved with 87 yeas, 3 nays, and 0 abstentions.

(6679) Liaison with the University Faculty Senate

Professor Cohen (MUSC) reported on the latest University Faculty Senate (see Appendix A). A conversation with Executive Vice Chancellor Cruz focused on the decision to remain online during the spring 2021 semester, the next learning management system contract, enrollment and graduation, the CR/NC policy, and the use of student cameras for online proctoring. The motion to amend the UFS charter to include adjunct instructors as UFS members and guidelines for the number of members per campus passed. The motion to call the question on the motion to create a standing committee on community colleges failed and the motion to postpone the motion until the next meeting failed, at which point the meeting was adjourned.

(6680) Degree Lists

Degree Lists 2021/5 & 6 was approved with a vote of 90 yeas, 0 nays, and 1 abstention.

(6681) Reports of Standing Committees

Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum and Degree Requirements: Curriculum Document 409 was approved with changes with a vote of 86 yeas, 0 nays, and 0 abstentions.

Committee on Graduate Curriculum and Degree Requirements Curriculum Document 2 then passed with changes with a vote of 83 yeas, 2 nays, and 5 abstentions.

(6682) Old Business

There was no old business.

(6683) New  
Business

Professors Shortell (SOCY), on behalf of UCDR and Sosa (TREM), on behalf of Course & Standing, introduced the "Resolution to Extend the CR/NC Policy." Professor Langsam informed Faculty Council of the three options presented by the Board of Trustees about this issue. An amendment to exempt from the CR/NC policy classes that require a grade as a prerequisite was for passed with 62 yeas, 37 nays, and 0 abstentions. The resolution as amended passed with a vote of 61 yeas, 9 nays, and 5 abstentions.

Professor Tremper (ENGL) announced that Cornel West will speak to the campus on March 9 and that Robert Jones '07 will read from his novel *The Prophets* in February, both as part of the Common Reader Project.

Professor Wasser stated that the recent letter from the co-chairs of the Implementation Team for Racial Justice was misguided and should be ignored.

(6684)  
Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Yediyah Langsam  
Chair

Martha Nadell  
Secretary

## Appendix A



### STATEMENT of the Council of CUNY Faculty Governance Leaders

Based on these considerations that:

- the University and its constituent units are dedicated to student success in their studies; and
- student success is inextricably linked to the effectiveness of instruction by faculty; and
- faculty student interaction in a fully online class is an important feature for successful outcomes [1]; and
- there is research showing that smaller classes lead to significant improvements in student performance and retention and decreases in loss of instructional staff [2]; and
- for effective instruction the optimal size of both online and on-campus classes is a pedagogical matter best left to faculty; and
- the optimal size of both online and on-campus classes will vary with due consideration for student needs and faculty concerns and the interests of the College; and
- different academic disciplines hold different expectations for class sizes, and, in some disciplines, disciplinary professional organizations recommend optimal class sizes for different levels of instruction; and
- research recommends online class sizes that are much smaller than current CUNY practices,[3] and stipulates a cap of 28 for most online classes, and lower caps for classes designated as writing intensive, developmental, capstone, and honors; and
- the nationally recognized and CUNY celebrated online courses at the School of Professional Studies operate with a limit of 25; and

- the CUNY BOT has not established guidelines on this matter and it is thus a matter for faculty academic judgment under CUNY BOT Bylaws 8.5 and 8.6 that states: “Each college shall have a faculty or academic council, which shall be the primary body responsible for formulating policy on academic matters” ;

the Council of Faculty Governance Leaders propose that each CUNY unit adopt as academic policy that:

each academic department and program have the right and authority to set minimum and maximum class-size limits for best pedagogical practice with its own course offerings, both online and on-campus, in accordance with all applicable city, state, and federal statutes.

[1] “There is consensus that the single greatest predictor of positive self-reported student learning is instructor-student interaction. Teacher immediacy (timely and personal responsiveness) is one of the key drivers of student satisfaction (Bonnell, Ludwig, & Smith, 2008; Keeton, 2004; Schutt, Allen, & Laumakis, 2009). Citing student-to-student interactions/activities are also predictive of reported learning, but at a level half that of instructor-student interaction (Bernar et al., 2004; Keeton, 2004; Marks, Sibley, & Arbaugh, 2005). A third driver of student learning and satisfaction is ease of use of technology.” (Taft, **Susan H.**, et al. “A Framework for Evaluating Class Size in Online Education.” *Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2011.)

[2] “The online literature consistently indicates that online education benefits student access but is not more efficient; that is, the workload and intensity of effort for faculty are in general heavier for online education than for classroom-based education. (Ascough, 2002; Drago & Peltier, 2004; Fjermestad, Hiltz, & Zhang, 2005; Parry, 2009).” (Taft, **Susan H.**, et al. “A Framework for Evaluating Class Size in Online Education.” *Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2011.)

[3] See, for example, Tomei, Lawrence A, and Douglas Nelson, “The Impact of Online Teaching on Faculty Load—Revisited: Computing the Ideal Class Size for Traditional, Online, and Hybrid Courses.” *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2019.