

**Report for Lehman Senate of USF on UFS Plenaries. Submitted by Lehman USF reps:
Naomi Zack, David Manier, and Stephen Castellano.**

To the Lehman College Senate: Below is a report for the October 15, 2025 Lehman Senate meeting consisting of the agenda for the September 16 UFS meeting and a summary (by DM) of the discussions there - official minutes of that meeting are forthcoming. Please see the CUNY UFS website for further news and updates in the 'archive.' <https://www1.cuny.edu/sites/cunyufs/>

**The 449th Plenary Session
of The University Faculty Senate
of The City University of New York
Rooms 0818/0819
Tuesday, September 16, 2025
6:30 – 8:00 p.m.**

Agenda

1. Approval of the Agenda
2. Approval of the Minutes of May 6, 2025
3. Remarks by Board of Trustees Chairman William Thompson – 6:35 – 7:05 p.m.
4. Introduction of Faculty Representatives on CUNY Board of Trustee Committees – 7:05 – 7:20 p.m.
5. Approval of UFS Standing Committee Chairs and their Membership and Introduction of Advisory Committee Chairs – 7:25 – 7:40 p.m.
6. Approval of Jonathan Cornick for University Students Elections Review Committee Representative – 7:40 – 7:45
7. Acknowledgement of Recently Elected UFS Senators and Alternates 7:45 – 7:50 p.m.
8. Chair's Report – John Verzani – 7:50 – 7:55 p.m.
9. New Business – 7:55 – 8:00 p.m.

UNIVERSITY FACULTY SENATE

City University of New York

16 September 2025

Below is a summary (by DM) of some information shared at this UFS meeting.

Remarks from Board of Trustees Chairman William Thompson: “We’re living in difficult times...these are scary times. The attack on higher education that was projected last year is here. We’re in a different phase right now, we’re in a different place.”

Regarding funding, the State came through for us and eventually the City did, too, which made us whole. Lots of unknown questions regarding fiscal matters – but we’re in a better (not good) shape right now, especially because enrollment is generally up a bit at CUNY.

They are implementing some “fiscal discipline” to work through problems. Making sure they are prepared for whatever comes. When they are asked by the federal government to provide information “or else” (as they have been a couple of times), they are relying on the law in responding, sticking to what is legally required. So far, courts have been supporting such approaches.

Questions/discussion:

- Q: In addition to four adjuncts that were fired, six tenure-track and tenured faculty were summoned by administrators at BC (chairs were bypassed), which was very intimidating. Their political advocacy was being questioned. Under what circumstances is such behavior deemed appropriate?

A: Because of the legal proceedings underway, not able to comment on the specifics. But, in general, no one wants to stifle free speech. People need to express themselves, there needs to be discussion, that is healthy, but when it becomes threatening, intimidating, attacking, then it’s a problem. He doesn’t think we need to be concerned about CUNY administrators when it comes to free speech.

- Q: A question about BOT resolution passed to centralize legal counsel. Will there be consultation going back to individual campuses? How will it be conveyed to campuses?

A: He said we can blame him personally for this. There needs to be some discussion with CUNY Central (oversight) but not taking away control from individual campuses. Because of how things are right now in the US, this was deemed important. They are hoping for better coordination, better focus, best practice, communication between counsels on

various campuses. One impetus for this was to avoid “irresponsible” things that happened on individual campuses in the past. (!!)

- Q: Regarding the Mutual Academic Defense Compacts: Will the BOT and Chancellery be working with SUNY and other schools to follow up on this? Does CUNY have a commitment to make that happen?

A: They have already been working with SUNY – beginnings of conversations, nothing finalized yet. There is a SUNY/CUNY/Governor discussion/collaboration. Made the comment that we’re all in the same boat now so we are working together.

- Q: Given the firing of four adjuncts at BC, because of protest activities, are there protest guidelines on CUNY campuses?

A: He didn’t want to give wrong information, but will get back, in writing, to Chair Verzani, to make sure the information is accurate.

- NYCCT rep: Inquired about the presidential search process on their campus.

A: NYCCT probably won’t start search until beginning of new year.

- Q: Female faculty involved in the Brooklyn College situation (9 out of 10). Asked that there be some sort of investigation into that.

A: “I hear you and I will leave it there.”

- Q: How is CUNY going to reconcile that diversity is in the law, embedded into the CUNY mission, yet we’re seeing clear anti-diversity messages and mandates coming from USDOE? What is the plan for negotiating that tension between state and federal law? She added that research is already being defunded because of diversity.

A: If you look at what’s happening at the federal level, it’s disproportionately affected black women at a staggering rate. But this is NYC and CUNY, and diversity is who we are. We have a diverse pool of individuals; we’re not going to change who we are. “This is CUNY. That is who we are [diverse].” He understands that research and grants are being pulled, that it impacts all of us, but it is something we can’t do anything about.

Also of note:

Chair John Verzani reminded that the UFS blog is a useful source of information so check it out. <https://www1.cuny.edu/sites/cunyufs/ufs-blog/>