

LEHMAN COLLEGE

The City University of New York Minutes of the Stated Meeting of the General Faculty Wednesday, May 10, 2006

CALL TO ORDER: Professor Robert Feinerman, chair of the Executive Committee of the Faculty, called the meeting to order at 2:15 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the meetings of February 22, 2006 were submitted and approved.

2. Communications:

A. President's Report: 1. Year's Summary: President Ricardo Fernández gave a short report on the year. Overall, he saw it as positive, though the budget is still uncertain. He is hopeful that the Governor will allow most of it to go through to the University with it then filtering down to the colleges. "Let's wait and see after "the wash and rinse" to see what ends up at Lehman. He congratulated the faculty for all their good work during the year and especially cited Dr. Garro, our provost, "who has been a significant force in academic leadership."

B. Provost's Report: The report was moved to the end of the meeting

C. University Faculty Senate: Professor Esther Wilder gave the report on issues addressed by the UFS this semester. **1. Restructuring Science Education at CUNY:** In February a committee of four scientists came to discuss CUNY's doctoral programs in the natural sciences and to make recommendations for improvements. Many feared that the Chancellor's vision would concentrate resources at fewer campuses (Hunter and CITY), reduce the number of doctoral students and adversely affect undergraduate education in the sciences at many campuses (due to the draining of resources and of doctoral students). Meanwhile, the report of the External Advisory Committee expressed support for the consortia model, recommended better financial support for doctoral students, and suggested that research-active faculty play a key role in mentoring graduate students. **2. Investment Money:** At the March plenary, the Chancellor announced that the state legislature had proposed considerable funding for real investment money at CUNY, and he indicated that this funding would be used to address base level equity issues. Moreover, he reported a high level of funding to support capital construction as well as operating costs, and that no tuition increase would be levied next year. **3. CUNY Teacher's Academy:** At the March plenary, the UFS had a panel on the CUNY Teacher's Academy. It involves six four-year colleges, including Lehman, and it seeks to prepare math and science teachers. Those accepted into the program will receive full tuition and receive summer support for teaching (partnerships will be established with surrounding middle and high schools). The emphasis is on attracting good students. **4. Student complaints:** The UFS has been closely following CUNY's new policy entitled, "Recommended Procedures for Handling Student Complaints about Faculty Conduct in the Classroom." VC Schaffer hopes to bring the policy to the Board in June. This will be

a university-wide policy and will be implemented at each of the campuses. **5. Black Male Initiative:** Another initiative that the UFS is focusing on is CUNY's "black male initiative" to help retain and graduate black men. Currently, there are several programs at Medgar Evers College that work towards this objective and may be replicated on other campuses. Meanwhile, however, The New York Civil Rights Coalition has filed a federal complaint alleging that these programs are racially and sexually discriminatory. **6. Retention report:** Several UFS senators expressed disappointment with the CUNY retention report which points to high rates of attrition among CUNY students. Several senators felt that the report misrepresented the attitudes of the CUNY faculty. Others were uncomfortable with the characterization of a variety of classes as "killer courses." There were also complaints that the report was poorly written and contained factual errors. **7. On-line courses:** At its April plenary, the UFS held a panel discussion as to whether faculty are required to undergo training to teach online courses and whether online courses are subject to special requirements at different institutions. At some colleges, faculty are required to undergo specialized training and some have policies regarding online course instruction. Panelists stressed that online course instruction represents a new modality of instruction, and requires high levels of student-faculty interaction. **8. Chair of UFS:** At the last UFS meeting, Manfred Phillip was nominated to the chair of the UFS (the only nominee). Elections will be held at the next UFS meeting in mid-May. Moreover, here at Lehman we held elections for two open seats in the UFS. Jim Jervis and Marie Marianetti were elected senators, and Richard Holody and George Chaikin were elected as alternate senators.

C. State of Lehman 300, 301: Prof. Robert Whittaker reported. **1. Sections:** A snapshot was presented of the sections offered in the spring, amounting to 60 sections. For the fall there are 1,500--1,700 students. The concern is whether there are enough places so that students can satisfy the requirement and graduate. So far it seems that it's working, but there are difficulties in determining at any one time how many students have not fulfilled the requirement. By the end of the registration period, we have few empty seats. **2. Adjuncts:** With the number of sections, it is inevitable that more adjuncts will be teaching. We've been fortunate that some professors who have retired come back and teach, and a number of long-time adjuncts are also contributing. We are confident that the quality of the courses has been maintained. It's been noted that students looking for electives, often come back to Leh 300 and 301, which might be seen as an element of success. **3. Success Rate:** Some 80 percent of the students earned a pass in the courses, although Prof. Whittaker did not know how that compared to the Lehman population. However, the course grades are what he would expect. For Leh 300 and 301 the mean grades are just about 2.9, which would be expected of students at this level. He mentioned that more unprepared students are received than we would like. As for the students, the expectations of the faculty are highly divergent. By and large, the students find the courses challenging and interesting.

D. Report of IT Steering Committee and Upgrade of Campus Network: The report was given by Prof. Zong-Guo Xia. **1. Work at Lehman:** Prof. Xia sees his work at Lehman as meaningful, rewarding and enjoyable. He has seen great progress in the last few years. In 1998 at Lehman when the new IT Center was constructed, the state

provided \$3.4 million for equipment. Most of the equipment is now outdated and needs to be replaced. At Hunter they have 160 IT staff; at Lehman 43 at the IT Center with 17 of those as hourly-based employees. So there will be a lot of challenges, leadership, wisdom, and hard teamwork. Prof. Xia was especially glad to be at the meeting so could meet the faculty and they could see who they need to come to when there is an IT problem. He said the network is operational and the credit goes to many people within Lehman. With more experience, we will have a good idea of the effectiveness of the network.

2. Network Bandwidth Upgrade: The bandwidth upgrade project was intended to address the poor response time experienced by users on campus when accessing applications at CUNY/CIS (for ex. Blackboard, CUNY Portal, eProcurement, sSIMS) or the internet (Web browsing, Library online subscription services). Prior to the upgrade, the College had an 8Mbps (8 megabits per second) connection, using ATM (Asynchronous Transfer Mode) technology, directly to CUNY/CIS. Traffic to the internet traveled first to CUNY/CIS, and from there was redirected to a gateway to the Internet. While this had been acceptable several years ago when the program was first established, over time the uses of the network and the nature of the traffic—including much more graphics content, as well as streaming audio and video content—has far outstripped the capabilities of this connection. The initial and major phase of the bandwidth upgrade was to connect the Lehman campus to the CUNY Manhattan Fiber Link. This was accomplished during Spring break in early April of this year. This fiber connection is an optical fiber loop running the SONSET (Synchronous Optical NETWORK) protocol that connects all CUNY Manhattan Campuses, CUNY/CIS the Research Foundation, and now Lehman. Each site has a dedicated 1Gbps (1 gigabit per second) bandwidth on the ring. Two additional nodes on the CUNY Manhattan Fiber ring are the CUNY gateways to the Internet, one with 200Mbps bandwidth. This aggregate 500 Mbps bandwidth to the Internet is shared by all CUNY campuses. Thus, with the fiber ring in place, the campus now has 1Gbps connection to CUNY/CIS and any of the CUNY Manhattan campuses. However, the connection to the Internet is restricted by the two shared gateways from the ring to the Internet. While response for Web browsing or other Internet dependent activities is much improved, it is not the case that the campus has a 1Gbps connection to the internet. There will soon also be an Internet-2 Gateway, with 100 Mbps of bandwidth on the CUNY Manhattan Fiber ring. Thus, any faculty who wish to develop projects using Internet-2 on the Lehman campus will have access to this Gateway. No implementation date has been published. As new information is available, it will be shared with the faculty. The second step in the bandwidth upgrade project is to add a Cablevision Lightpath connection for the campus. This service will provide an alternate connection to the Internet with 39 Mbps of bandwidth, and will also provide an alternate voice connection for the campus PBX. The alternate Lightpath connection is dedicated to Lehman and will take some Internet traffic off the fiber link for the campus, as well as provide a backup connection between Lehman and Manhattan. Similarly, the voice side of the Lightpath connection will take some of the traffic off the current Verizon circuits, and serve to distribute campus telephone services across two separate and independent connections, thus minimizing the possibility of complete failure of campus telephone services. Installation of the Lightpath service is currently on hold pending resolution of contract language between Lightpath, CUNY, and the State.

D. Faculty Election Committee: Prof. Feineman said this is the only committee we have left that is elected by the General Faculty. It consists of seven Faculty members, each of whom serves a two-year term. Last year four people were elected who will continue for one more year. The Executive Committee of the Faculty nominated three people to serve for a two-year term: Cecelia Spinosa, Giselia Jia, and Cindy Lobel. They were unanimously approved.

E. Vice President Wheeler: (A copy of the 2005-06 Budget Snapshot was distributed.) **1. This year's budget:** Mr. Wheeler referred to a priority of projects across the college as well as departmentally that help to define the mission of the college. Many have been working for the last year-and-a-half on a Strategic Plan for Lehman. It has been ordering how we allocate resources on a day-to-day basis. As to the Fiscal Year 2006 budget, Mr. Wheeler referred to some major numbers which underline the Lehman College Strategic Plan in action. During his year we had several opportunities to implement important objectives in the plan. The bandwidth project was not necessarily envisioned for this fiscal year. To date \$128,845 has been allocated to implement this project. On the mirror point e-mail system, we had an opportunity to get permanent licensing, although the University is against any commitments made to any e-mail vendor, other than Lotus Notes. To take advantage of the opportunity, we had to come up with \$100,000, and we did because we recognized the value of a reliable system to Lehman College. And upgrading the system is one of the objectives in the strategic plan. We purchased this year a Content Management System at \$36,000 to manage the web site. To date we have paid \$53,340 for the degree work system that will help students sign up for the right classes and help faculty counsel and advise students. Also, we have the matter of the Lippman Hearn contract to do a marketing and branding study for Lehman to deal with the college's identity both internally and to the community we serve—to perspective students, to perspective faculty members, to CUNY, to New York City as a whole. Installment one will cost \$218,000. All these items suggest how the college is prioritizing and executing critical issues in our strategic planning. **2. Budget Snapshot:** When Mr. Wheeler last reported, he had serious concerns as to whether we could finish out the fiscal year on budget. We've had good developments, some reimbursements, but the most important single item is the continued enrollment growth and revenue. Our projection at this time is that we will be able to balance our budget this year. The snapshot shows a shortfall of \$27,666 against \$62 million worth of spending. The shortfall will be found some place. During fiscal year 2006, we will not have to spend \$500,000 in Contra which is over collections of tuition revenue from last year. So this fiscal year has been difficult. We've all made sacrifices, we're going to get through it fine, and we should be approaching next year in good financial shape. This may be the first time in anyone's memory that CUNY has received a fully funded operating budget (subject to the Governor's approval).

E. Provost's Garro's Recollections: In recalling his five years on campus, the provost reviewed the high points of his activities. He joked that as Chairman Feinerman would have it, "This should be 50 words or less." He thanked everyone: faculty, administration, and students for the opportunity of working with them. He reflected on the major issues and said we made progress because we worked as a team. As major

issues, he noted the curriculum, promoting scholarship, facilities, budgets, and development of new academic programs. Academic quality and faculty scholarship is what a provost is all about. The new Gen Ed curriculum was being discussed and voted upon. This has been a major review of what this campus is about in the last five year. He went over such things as the quality of the curriculum in which he participated and particularly appreciated direct contact with the students and to see firsthand the problems of the faculty. Faculty scholarship: During the transition period, the Committee of Distinguished Scholars asked to meet with the then new provost to discuss recognizing and growing faculty scholarship. To them it meant the issue of time to carry out that scholarship. The Provost instituted a day when faculty scholarship is recognized with a display of published works. Also instituted was a faculty development award which addressed the issue of faculty release time. Also established were the Shuster Awards, the Fellowship Awards and the Excellence in Research and Research Scholarship and Creative Works. Additional major issues were Facilities, Budget, and the need and opportunity for New Program Development. It became obvious that we needed a strategic plan to cover these areas. It was established and resources are being distributed according to that plan. Out of this approach developed a new science facility, which is rapidly becoming a reality. Although we are renting classrooms several days a week, we learned to our chagrin that we really have a scheduling problem. As to budget, we recognize we are a tuition-driven institution. We totally revamped the admissions process. Processes such as admissions and academic support led to forming an Enrollment Management Counsel, which deals with recruiting, retention, and the graduation of students. Since that time, we have been exceeding our revenue targets by one to three million dollars annually. The Provost emphasized a variety of new programs such as the MSW and MPA, the Honors College and the Teacher Academy. **2.**

Upcoming: The Provost pointed to success in such areas as the Gen Ed program where we've put in place programs to assess the outcome. He reminded the audience that the Middle States evaluation will be coming up in 2009, and that you cannot think of the evaluators as your friends. They don't come here to fix problems; we have to fix them before they get here. Implementation of the Teacher's Academy will be a major challenge. One of the goals was to bring The Academy and the sciences closer together. The Campaign for Student Success is another consideration, getting over to them that college is not their part-time job; it needs to be the full focus of their attention while they are in school. We need to put aside resources to continue the efforts to recruit and retain outstanding faculty. With respect to facilities, the Multi-Media Center will be underway this summer. It could become a CUNY-wide core facility, since there is not be a similar facility within the University. In addition, the new science building is moving along rapidly, with the funding being now being raised for phase two. The bell schedules needs to be rearranged along with reclaiming Fridays, because we have to make better use of campus facilities. We have a real commitment to the high schools in the Bronx as exemplified by a new high school on campus. But the question is, are we reaching a saturation point in terms of what we can be doing for the high schools? What is the impact now of the high school students on the Lehman campus? This is something that will be looked at very closely in the future. The Provost concluded by expressing his pleasure in working with the divergent groups on campus and hoped that his friends

would come to visit him in his new position in Massachusetts. He received resounding applause.

F. Prof. Feinerman: The Chair said he has been at Lehman 35 years during which there has always been a special relationship between the Provost and the faculty. On behalf of the faculty he thanked Provost Garro for the support given to us as individuals and as a group and wished him well in the future. There was another round of applause.

G. New Business:

There was no new business.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

The next scheduled meeting will be on

Respectfully submitted,

Grace Bullaro
Executive Committee