

CCNY Faculty Senate, Senate Affairs Committee
First Meeting 2013-2014
Friday November 1, 2013 3:00, Shepherd 150

- 1) Election of chair, decision about how to share responsibility for taking minutes
- 2) Collection of contact information and preferred meeting times
- 3) Discussion of work to be done by subcommittees on Elections and Bylaws
- 4) Division of labor, and time goals for completion of work
- 5) Other business
- 6) Adjournment

CCNY Faculty Senate, Senate Affairs Committee, 2013-2014
Friday, November 1, 2013, Shepherd 150, 3-4 pm

Present: Dan DiSalvo, Marta Gutman, Ellen Handy, Charles Watkins
Excused: Anil Agrawal, Maria Binz-Scharf, Renata K. Miller, Carlos Ribo (alternate)

Meeting Minutes

This was the first meeting of the Senate Affairs Committee in this academic year. Prof. Handy organized it at the request of Prof. Jeruzalemi, the chair of the CCNY Faculty Senate. The proposed agenda was approved.

1. *Chair*: Prof. Watkins nominated Prof. Handy, Prof. DiSalvo seconded, and Prof. Handy was elected unanimously. The committee agreed to share responsibility for taking minutes, and Prof. Gutman volunteered for the first meeting. Contact information and information about preferred meeting times was also collected; and concerns about membership addressed. As per FS bylaws, all members are senators and all were elected at the October plenary session of the Faculty Senate.
2. *Subcommittees*: The committee discussed the work to be done by three subcommittees: nominations, elections, and bylaws. All present agreed it made sense to focus on elections and bylaws in the fall semester and hold off consideration of nominations until spring.
3. *Elections*: Prof. DiSalvo agreed to continue to serve as the “elections maven.” Prof. Handy nominated Prof. DiSalvo chair of the Elections Subcommittee; Prof. Gutman seconded; the election was unanimous. He will clarify the length of the term of service for senators, collection information from departments, divisions, and schools, as need be. This is the core principle: whether elected or nominated by petition, the term of service is the same, unless a senator is filing the unexpired term of another senator.
4. *Bylaws*: This topic was discussed at length. The following is a summary of main points raised and decisions taken.
 - a. The committee agreed that revisions of the bylaws should be pursued: the bylaws used by the Faculty Senate are outdated; they have not been formally approved (although they guide the Senate, in effect serving as common law for the body); and they are not fully in synch with the CCNY and CUNY governance plans. The goal is to have new bylaws ratified this academic year.
 - b. The committee discussed the extent of the revisions needed, noting that this could range from a full-scale rewrite to excising slight inaccuracies. Prof. Handy distributed copies of bylaws from other faculty senates of senior colleges to use by way of comparison in crafting changes. The CCNY FS bylaws are longer than most.
 - c. The committee discussed the process of deciding what, and how, to revise, recognizing that there may be disputes about content and procedure. Rather than starting by forming a subcommittee to propose changes, the committee decided to begin by soliciting

opinions not only from all members of the Senate Affairs Committee but also from the full Faculty Senate. The goal is to ground the proposal for new rules in the community's sense of what they should be; the suggestions will also have to be checked against CCNY and CUNY governance plans for compatibility.

- d. Prof. Watkins and Prof. Gutman expressed concern about the need to address special needs (Human Rights and the ties of this particular cause to community affairs) and to ensure that special interests are not granted undue influence.
- e. Prof. DiSalvo offered this counsel as a model for moving forward: the bylaws should be understood as a constitution that establishes a set of powers and rules for governance rather than to implement policy that has an aspirational goal or specific outcome. The policy outcomes should result from deliberation by the elected body under a set of carefully crafted rules.
- f. The committee agreed that Prof. Handy will share this counsel/model when she reaches out to all members of the senate by email. All comments are due by the November plenary on the 21st. A special Gmail account will be set up to receive suggestions.
- g. The committee is aware that there may be differences of opinion as to how best to proceed. Citing James Madison, Prof. DiSalvo suggested that it will be the responsibility of the committee to "refine and enlarge the public views."

5. *Adjourn*: The committee voted to adjourn at 4:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Marta Gutman
SSA rep to the CCNY Faculty Senate Executive Committee

