

**BROOKLYN COLLEGE**  
**POLICY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the**  
**November 15, 2023 General Meeting**  
**5:00pm, Gold Room, Student Center**

**Present:** President Michelle J. Anderson, Senior Vice President Alan Gilbert, Provost April Bedford, Vice President Todd Michael Galitz, Executive Legal Consul Sarah Luke, Dean Peter Tolias, Dean Qing Hu, Dean Stephanie Jensen-Moulton, Dean Philip Napoli, Associate Dean James Eaton, Professor Douglas Cohen, Professor Joseph Entin, Professor Beth Evans, Professor Namulundah Florence, Professor Mona Hadler, Professor Mobina Hashmi, Professor Tim Shortell, Professor Malka Simon, Professor Sophia Suarez, Noam Abrahams (USG), Shannon Dyett (USG), Carrie Ebbin (USG), Cynithia George (USG), Royta Iftakher (USG), Dylan Karlowski (USG), Darla Moise (USG), Yisroel Shulman (USG), Ajadah Simms (USG), Milada Sirota (USG), Abby Melbye (GSO), Patricia Colmenero Alcantara (GSO).

**Absent:** Vice President Ronald Jackson, Dean Maria Scharron-del Rio, Professor Jillian Cavanaugh, Professor James Lynch, Professor Patricia Antonello, Professor Brian Sowers, Nairobi Otero (GSO).

**Non-voting:** Sadiya Hoque, Taseen Islam (USG), Joan Joseph (USG), Robert Echevarria, Liora Tkatsenko.

1. President Michelle J. Anderson called meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.
2. President Anderson delivered updates on the Board of Trustees consideration of Eid as a holiday on the academic calendar and the CUNY requirement to provide syllabi to students two weeks before classes, which will be mandated in response to accessibility challenges that occurred on campuses across the country. Professor Mobina Hashmi expressed concern for adjunct faculty who start their employment close to the start of the semester. Discussion ensued.
3. President Anderson opened the floor for consideration of the October 18, 2023, minutes. Professor Hashmi requested the addition of two points made by Professor Joseph Entin and herself to the minutes. The October 18, 2023, minutes, as amended, were unanimously approved.
4. Executive Legal Consul Sarah Luke provided a written report on Governance and Policy and requested that the body explore staff representation on Policy Council. Suggested to

request PACS (Presidential Advisory Committee on Staff) for a proposal. Dialog ensued. Further discussion was tabled for next meeting.

5. Senior Vice President Alan Gilbert provided a written and oral report on behalf of the Fiscal, Infrastructure and Planning Committee.
6. Associate Dean James Eaton provided a written and oral report on Faculty/Student Relations. Highlighted the discussion to re-envision the meaning of “Office Hours” to encourage students to attend.
7. Vice President Todd Michael Galitz provided a written report on External Relations.
8. President Anderson addressed old business of school structure. Dialogue ensued and conclusion was that there was not enough time to consider fundamental restructuring of schools. President Anderson suggested, instead, that a conversation focus on school identity, and the discussion was tabled for the next meeting.
9. President Anderson provided an update on the progress of a physical merch store.
10. President Anderson addressed new business. Carrie Ebbin (USG) raised the students’ concerns of academic freedom in the classroom and increased sensitivity toward students by faculty.
11. Professor Namulundah Florence suggested to add these student concerns as new business for the following meeting.
12. President Anderson proposed an informal, two-hour December meeting for discussion only, with preference to the availability of the students.
13. President Anderson adjourned the meeting at 6:13 p.m.

## **Policy and Governance Committee Meeting**

**November 1, 2023**

*Attendees: Prof. James Lynch, Prof. Namulundah Florence, Yisroel Shulman, Ajadah Simms, Aharon Grama, and Sarah Luke*

1. The committee reviewed the history of policy council standing committees and agreed to reach out to Prof. Langsam to see if he recalls why the standing committees have changed over time.
2. The committee considered whether we should amend the language of the Fiscal, Infrastructure and Planning Committee to represent current practice or amend it to allow the administrative constituency to exercise discretion in selecting their representatives. We decided to pose this question to the whole body at the next meeting.
3. The Committee would like to explore the idea of formal representation of staff as a constituent in the Policy Council.
  - a. In that regard, we would like to request that PACS develop a proposal for the inclusion of staff in the governance plan.
  - b. We would like to request feedback from the full body on this issue, and we will discuss this further at our next committee meeting.

BROOKLYN COLLEGE  
Policy Council Standing Committee on Fiscal, Infrastructure, and Planning  
Wednesday, November 08, 2023, 10:00 A.M.

I. Committee Discussion

- Budget
  - Link capital budget with operational budget
    - Capital budget is more robust than operational
  - CUNY approved BC financial plan for FY24
  - Current estimates show college deficit of 2 million dollars for FY24
- Savings
  - Adjusted campus access for late-night hours
    - Reduced campus safety staff and OT
    - Finalizing on campus safety staff reallocation at Student Center
- Initiatives
  - Food services
    - Food trucks paying \$100 a day
    - Expected revenue of approximately \$100K a year once fully implemented
  - Upcoming FRAC survey for employees and students
  - Shared Resources
    - Review opportunities to collaborate with other campuses and within campus
  - Turn off lights and ACs upon departure
  - Reduce printing
  - Creation of 1 or 2 year course schedule for students
    - Build around academic mission and offer programs that students need
    - Current way to schedule courses is tedious (ex. ECSC)
    - Use alternative methods of scheduling (ex. Share course spreadsheets in Teams)
    - Bulletin has to be regularly updated for courses that are not being offered
  - Offer registration earlier as long as class schedules are provided by departments
  - Rent out campus spaces for additional revenue
- Facilities
  - Elevators being currently assessed for repairs by new vendor
    - Add maintenance logs in elevators
  - Expanding BC Fix-it to report more problems/repairs needed
    - Reintroduce to campus community that is not aware of BC Navigator feature
    - Facilities staff may not be able to absorb all data through BC Fix it and Archibus

II. Topics to focus on for FY24

- Course scheduling
- Capital and operating budgets in context of student success
- Cafeteria and food services
- Reporting Facilities problems

# Faculty/Student Relations Committee Report

Subcommittee Meeting on October 24, 2023

## Open Items from Previous Meeting

### **1. Classes Scheduled during Common Hours**

The committee recognized that there are discussions occurring in several fora within the college, including Faculty Council and CAP – the former passing a resolution to voice support for the USG’s letter on this topic. We reviewed and discussed the fall 2023 semester data (similar scale of “incursions” as found in spring 2023) and the fact that scheduling activities for the spring semester have begun. We were unanimous in the position that scheduling classes during the Tuesday and Thursday Common Hours should not happen. However, the committee also recognized the need for the traditional “flexible common hours” on Thursdays to accommodate *limited exceptions* for long duration courses and those with facilities limitations that preclude scheduling outside common hours.

**Action:** Continue to monitor progress of discussions/implementing a solution to this problem.

(Note: The Spring 2023 schedule will be finalized soon and progress toward meeting the principle of avoiding Common Hours will be measurable.)

## New Items of Concern/Interest

### **1. Facilitating / Creating / Enhancing Opportunities for Student-Faculty Engagement**

- a. *New Events for Informal Student-Faculty Interaction:* The main idea for this topic was arranging a student-faculty “mixer” once per semester during [Tuesday] Common Hours, making this a standard event on the college calendars (administrative, academic, student affairs). We identified a tentative date of November 21 for the first one. The student governments will figure out if this is a tenable date for the students. Details such as funding/cost-sharing, catering, etc. were briefly discussed.

**Action:** Prof. Cavanaugh volunteered to be the committee point person as ideas and details are worked out with the student governments.

- b. *Involvement of Faculty in Existing Events:* The committee members were in agreement that additional faculty involvement in student events would be welcome. However, where and how this involvement occurs is something that requires further discussion (which events/activities, which clubs). The divide between student and faculty access to student event/activity

information quickly became apparent in our discussion. What is the best way to share information with faculty (live calendar vs. periodic digest, all events vs. 'curated' subset)?

**Action:** Student government is exploring and sharing with the committee what existing tools and information exist. Further discussion required within the committee.

- c. *Office Hours:* The discussion centered around encouraging students to take better advantage of office hours and figuring out ways to make these sorts of interactions less intimidating.

Repurposing or reframing office hours as opportunities for academic and professional support, and not just acute problems in a class. Reinforce positive behavior (e.g., a student who came to office hours should be encouraged to come back to make it clear it's a good thing, not a burden).

**Action:** Department chairs on the committee agreed to bring this to "Chairs Lunch" for discussion. Developing an info sheet of "best practices" for faculty surrounding office hours; similar guidance for students taking various forms (TikToks, IG infographics, etc.), perhaps working with the peer mentors to develop "How to office hours..."

## 2. Faculty "Bedside Manner" / Countering Discouraging Behavior

Concerns were raised about faculty behavior that is discouraging to students or contributing to a negative environment in the classroom and on campus – but not rising to the level of harassment or abuse, where there are more clear avenues to report. The effects of this discouragement is student attrition (transferring, quitting), disengagement, decreased performance, and dissatisfaction. Related to this is the perennial frustration that complaints don't seem to lead to any change. Topics such as sensitivity training, limits/slow movement of personnel actions, and a lack of clarity about where to go with issues were discussed.

**Action:** A broader discussion, perhaps with the full Policy Council, is warranted. This should include the development of mechanisms with appropriate feedback processes.

## Items Not Discussed

### 1. School Restructuring or Consolidation

The committee did not discuss the topic of restructuring/consolidation of the academic schools. However, this is a relevant topic to this committee.

## Policy Council External Relations Committee Report

November 15, 2023

- The External Relations Committee met on November 8 and discussed the following:
- Community Engagement and the Tow Center: Dena Beard, Director of the Leonard & Claire Tow Center for the Performing Arts, joined the meeting as a guest to review plans for engaging local communities and cultural organizations through programming. She reported that the full calendar balances academic programs and external events; audience engagement is a critical component of these plans. Beard has contracted several Ukrainian and Russian-language artists and companies, and she plans extensive outreach to relevant communities. Planned performances also include artists and organizations from local Caribbean communities. A “School Time” event will feature immigration stories, and extensive programming will bring large numbers of high school students to campus. The committee discussed the potential recruiting benefits of visiting high school groups experiencing Brooklyn College, and they recommended providing admissions information to these students. Student government representatives on the committee also offered assistance with surveying current students about their program interests.
- Admissions Recruiting and Student Retention: The committee noted the successful Open House admissions event on October 29, which included broad participation from students, faculty, and staff. The committee also discussed some of the ways the Israel-Hamas conflict has made recruiting and retention more challenging. Admissions, working in collaboration with Judaic Studies, has conducted outreach to yeshivas, local high schools, and community groups to reassure them that Brooklyn College remains a welcoming environment to students of all backgrounds. Committee members also discussed the need for continued communications about support services available to current students. Recent discussion events have been productive, and other student government-organized activities are planned to help boost morale on campus. Committee members also encouraged additional positive messages and engagement opportunities on campus to counter negativity and fear.
- Other Activities: Committee members shared news of other recent college programs that engaged local communities. These included a community garden event, pumpkin smashing, and a new partnership program in development with Northwell Health.