



MINUTES FOR THE SENATE COVID RESPONSE TASK FORCE

Date and Time: May 21, 2020 | 11:30-1:00pm

Location: Zoom Conference Call

Presiding: Ernest Ialongo, Chair of Senate

Present: Muiz Agbaje (SGA President-Elect), Nieves Angulo (Chair of the Math Dept.)
 Babette Audant (Assistant Dean for Institutional Effectiveness, Strategic Planning and
 Assessment, Middle States Liaison), Marcella Bencivenni (Coordinator and Vice-Chair of PSC
 CUNY), Andrea Fabrizio (Chair of the English Dept.), Tram Nguyen (Vice-Chair of Senate),
 Nelson Nunez Rodriguez (Coordinator and Middle States Co-Chair), Daliz Pérez-Cabezas (HEO,
 Chief of Staff, CEWD and Interim Director of CLIP), Fabian Wander (Director of Wellness)

Minutes Prepared By: Daliz Pérez-Cabezas

Mandate of the Task Force, from the May 18 email to the college:

“The goal of this task force . . . is to engage the campus community in a dialogue to address the challenges we face in these extraordinary times. More specifically, the task force will provide recommendations to our administration and the college community to help Hostos effectively respond to this crisis in the coming months. To ensure this college-wide effort, the task force is made up of members from across our college's constituencies, departments, and divisions. This crisis has shown how our professional lives are deeply interconnected with the budget, enrollment, pedagogy, technology, mental and physical health, and so on. The task force intends to provide holistic recommendations that keep these connections in mind.”

TOPIC	DISCUSSION	DECISION / ACTION
Chair’s Remarks	Introduction and Welcome; Goals and Objectives of the Task Force: Dialogue across the College; Reasonable, informed, collaborative recommendations Members introduce	

	themselves	
TOPIC	DISCUSSION	DECISION/ACTION
Identifying COVID-19 Task Force Concerns	<p>How will we manage the process so we can obtain the most buy-in?</p> <p>Would like the taskforce to become part of the conversation on the college's COVID-19 response and ensure shared governance.</p> <p>Concern was raised that a suggestion will become policy on offering distance education. It was noted that bylaws dictate assignment of classes is prerogative of chairs.</p> <p>How can this task force help ensure reasonable change on the campus?</p> <p>This is a new era in higher education. There's an opportunity to support faculty beyond technical support for distance education—to include pedagogy and mental health support.</p> <p>Concern was raised that faculty were not consulted on budget regarding reducing adjuncts. Faculty have ideas how not to cut hours to adjunct and they haven't had the opportunity to share these ideas.</p>	

	<p>A concern was raised that the college is not communicating what's going on across CUNY or at Hostos.</p> <p>Why isn't the college requesting additional funding from CARES Act for minority institutions that could be used to support payroll?</p> <p>There are a lot of questions from students and faculty about when we will return to campus. There's a lot of work being done behind the scenes to plan the return to campus. Why isn't this being centralized? It's all being done differently across the college.</p> <p>How are we going to bring people back to campus safely? For example, are we testing people for COVID-19? Are we testing individual's temperature? A concern was raised that these ideas are not being communicated to the people that have to implement it and they aren't being consulted in these conversations.</p> <p>It's good there are CUNY Central administrators on these COVID-19 task forces but what are faculty's comfort level and how are student's feeling?</p> <p>It's frustrating not to know if we'll be going online in the</p>	
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	<p>Fall but we're being asked to plan as if we're going online. The uncertainty makes it difficult to plan; would help to know how they trying to resolve this uncertainty.</p> <p>We need more concrete information on the budget because it will affect hiring.</p> <p>Enrollment is a concern. How's it going? Numbers don't look good. Who's re-enrolling?</p> <p>With regard to distance education, we need to find out what worked and didn't work from student's perspective.</p> <p>How will we be introducing ourselves to the new Interim President? How will the new Interim President work with the faculty and introduce herself in this remote environment?</p> <p>One main concern is retaining students. Students may delay enrollment because they don't want to do distance education and feel that they're wasting another semester. There are students who are struggling with technology and students and faculty that cannot look at computer screens for a long time.</p> <p>We need to think about pedagogy and mental health and student preferences.</p>	
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	<p>The college doesn't seem to have great coordination between advisement services and faculty on the campus. There's a lack of coordination between OAA and SDEM.</p> <p>How can we identify synchronous options for students? Who coordinates this and communicates it to students?</p> <p>There's a lot of outreach happening to students. There's not a centralized database for tracking communications to the students.</p> <p>A large group of students were left out of a recent call campaign—students near graduation. We need to make sure they understand all their requirements so they can graduate on time.</p> <p>We're not likely to open if the DOE doesn't open. There are a lot of people who'd be impacted by the DOE's closure.</p> <p>Not enough communication of what's going on in order to plan ahead and provide information to everyone you manage. The lack of communication is heightened by rumors.</p> <p>Hostos has the lowest conversion rate from admissions to enrollment.</p>	
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	<p>The COVID-19 response will make it difficult to determine/assess whether students were successful in a course. Was it because they weren't able to access the necessary technology to participate in class, etc?</p> <p>Proficiency index will be recalibrated to work without regents scores. How will this impact the college.</p> <p>Developmental students, who are most at risk, are not well served by taking distance education courses.</p> <p>People are really scared of online technology because the technology isn't working; for example, Blackboard freezes.</p> <p>Stress of having to learn new tools and having to manage the technology has impacted faculty's decision to work in the summer. We have to look at the mental health of faculty.</p> <p>Need each unit of the college to lower its walls and work together. To really be honest so we can move forward.</p> <p>We need to actively address student mental health issues. Students aren't getting the mental health support they need. For example, no one was available to address a student's thoughts of suicide.</p> <p>The administration seems to</p>	
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	<p>be straining with the crisis. The messages from the administration have been contradictory. During a crisis, we need to be assured that the administration is working on those things that can be addressed during this period, but there has been no communication about this. There is no comprehensive message from the administration.</p> <p>At other campuses, they have communicated updates via video messages. There have been no chairs and coordinators meeting.</p> <p>There needs to be more communication amongst cabinet members.</p> <p>Need to determine what is the appropriate class size for the Fall and what accommodations are going to be made to address COVID-19.</p> <p>It's difficult to recruit students if they don't know what the expectations are for returning in the Fall. Will in-person classes be held in person? How will this be managed? These decision need to made by the college/CUNY regardless of what the Governor says.</p> <p>A concern was raised about creating course shells and whether this move towards one ideal course someone</p>	
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	<p>approves will result in losing more people; faculty will not be able to deliver what the college is asking.</p> <p>We need to make sure that academic freedom is protected. We need to start from the teaching needs and not budget.</p> <p>How do we redirect ourselves from the abyss?</p> <p>There's a concern that budget models are being developed without consultation. We should ask to see these models, so we see how they plan to move forward and what the timelines and trigger points are for the budget. It's also not clear what enrollment looks like for the Summer and Fall.</p> <p>We need a narrative from the President presented to the college community so that we can rally around it.</p> <p>There's a concern that students are dissatisfied on many issues. For example, students cannot give feedback this semester.</p> <p>There has been no pre- and/or post-consultation on various issues such as online training, scheduling, and message courses such as online readiness course. The lack of consultation is an issue because the college is not benefiting from the</p>	
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	<p>expertise/experience of faculty.</p> <p>There's a lack of communication. This task force will be working on getting facts and advocating for better communication.</p> <p>Could we ask to eliminate the extra fees students pay when making an online payment?</p> <p>Admissions: We should invite someone from Admissions to speak so we can learn how online application documents are being uploaded and reviewed. What is the lag time between submission and acceptance?</p> <p>Enrollment: We should invite the enrollment committee members so we can get an update on the new enrollment processes and protocols. Are there online payment difficulties for students? Why are we losing students between applying and enrolling? How is Hostos addressing this challenge?</p>	
TOPIC	DISCUSSION	DECISION/ACTION
Next Steps	<p>Identified six priority areas</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication (Humanizing the message/creation of the narrative) 2. Priorities from the administration's perspective. What are they mostly concerned 	Ernest will send out the six priority areas and each member will identify next steps or recommendations for each priority area.

	<p>about? How will they communicate? What's consultation strategy?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. Advisement4. Tech support for all5. Mental health for all6. Consultation	
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