

**Faculty Senate Minutes #571
John Jay College of Criminal Justice**

Tuesday, October 8, 2024

1:40 PM

Zoom

Present (31): Elton Beckett, Ned (Warren) Benton, Heath Brown, Mustafa Demir, Artem Domashevskiy, Jonathan Epstein, Nicole Elias, Diana (DeeDee) Falkenbach, Nina Rose Fischer, Alejandro Garcia-Lozano, Robert (Bob) Garot, Heath Grant, Veronica Hendrick, Susan Kang, Karen Kaplowitz, Catherine (Cathy) Kemp, Vicente Lecuna, Anru Lee, Brian Maule, Joseph Maldonado, Adam McKible, Brian Montes, Raymond (Ray) Patton, Alison Perry, Susan Pickman, Stephen (Steve) Russell, Ignacio Sanchez, Todd Stambaugh, Robert Till, Shilpa Viswanath, Violet (Sung-Suk) Yu

Absent (6): Chevy (Schevaletta) Alford, Nicole Awai, Mohammad Islam, Joseph Rebello, Francis Sheehan, Marie Springer

Invited Guest: Provost Allison Pease

AGENDA

- 1. Adoption of the agenda**
- 2. Adoption of Minutes #570 of the September 25, 2024, meeting**
- 3. Report from the Chair**
- 4. Invited Guest: Provost Allison Pease**
- 5. Proposed Updated Resolution requesting the CUNY Board of Trustees to rescind JJ's honorary degree conferred upon Rudolph W. Giuliani in 1988**
- 6. Proposed Revision of the John Jay College Procedure for Awarding Honorary Degrees to include language about revoking an honorary degree**
- 7. Review of the agenda of the October 15 meeting of the College Council**
- 8. New business**

- 1. Adoption of agenda.** Approved.
- 2. Approval of Minutes #570 of the Sep 12, 2024, meeting.** Approved
- 3. Report from the Chair**

Senator Elton Beckett is being honored by the John Jay Alumni Association at a reception at 6:30 pm on Tuesday October 15.

Dominic Stellini has been appointed Associate Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students, effective October 1. He has been a member of the student affairs team at CCNY since 2010. Danielle Officer, who had served as interim vp and dean for two years, will continue in a leadership role at the college.

The Governance Committee of the CUNY Board of Trustees will be voting on October 9 on proposed changes to the CUNY bylaws. President Kaplowitz reported that the university administration has adopted almost all of the changes proposed by the ad hoc faculty committee established by the University Faculty Senate and the Council of Faculty Governance Leaders.

The following day is the Town Hall meeting at 4:30-6:00 PM.

CUNY has hired a company called Constructive Dialog to train administrators, faculty, and students at each college in best practices in facilitating dialogues. For the faculty it's a 5-hour session; for administrators it's 20 hours of training. The four faculty chosen to participate in the training program are Michael Brownstein (Chair, Council of Chairs), Karen Kaplowitz (President, Faculty Senate), Steve Russell (vice chair, Council of Chairs), and Marisa Tramontano (student club advisor).

During the Covid pandemic, CUNY had changed the withdrawal from class date to the last day of classes to make things easier for students; then CUNY discovered that the rate of W's had increased. Now CUNY has moved the date back to the 10th week of the semester and, so, this semester it is November 6.

At the most recent Town Hall Meeting, many students expressed their anger that Prof. Ric Curtis (Anthropology) will be returning to teach on campus in Fall 2025. This is the result of the decision of an arbitrator, whose ruling is binding and is not appealable. Several years ago, three tenured faculty members and one adjunct faculty member were accused by the College of violating CUNY's sexual misconduct policy and CUNY's drug and alcohol policy. The adjunct was not reappointed. President Mason brought termination actions against the 3 tenured full-time faculty. One tenured member resigned. Another tenured member retired. Professor Ric Curtis filed a grievance with the union and is also suing the College in federal court. The arbitrator ruled that many of the claims against Prof. Curtis are true, but that the punishment of having his employment terminated is not proportionate to the violations he committed. The arbitrator also ruled that Ric Curtis is to be punished by having no salary during the 2024-2025 academic year and that he must also complete training on sexual misconduct and on the University's drug and alcohol policy. Asked for information about the charges and the specific findings by the arbitrator, President Kaplowitz said that when she asked the PSC Central for a copy she was told that she may not see it without Prof. Curtis' permission.

4. Invited Guest: Provost Allison Pease

Provost Pease shared news of successes at the college, reporting that in the last ten years we have doubled our 4-year graduation rates and increased our 6-year graduation rates by 13%. We have the most successful graduation rate for transfer students in all of New York State. We have become the third largest grant-earning institution in CUNY and our faculty produces the most scholarship per person in all of CUNY. We produce the third highest number of Black applicants to law school in the country after Howard University and Georgia State, and Black students graduate from John Jay at 5% above the national average. We are a top baccalaureate origin institution for Hispanic Doctoral applicants in the country. The diversity of students in our Economics and Philosophy majors mark those programs for national distinction. We are diversifying every field we touch and making them more just.

On the other hand, Provost Pease is concerned that all students don't always have access to the range of resources and opportunities available to John Jay students when they arrive on campus. She hopes to provide a framework to help every student find opportunities as soon as they arrive on campus. And she hopes to embed career development earlier in the college experience.

She asked for input from the Senate on two current challenges. First, and most immediately, Town Hall is tomorrow. At the last Town Hall and on social media, students have been accusing John Jay faculty of being abusive and of being sexual predators. Provost Pease asked for ideas and help in combatting this negative narrative about the college and about faculty in particular. She said our students are sharing online a range of negative rumors, innuendos, claims of sexual predators, claims about abusive faculty. She said she's been informed that there were 145,000 visits to these comments on TikTok. She recalled she told the audience that we have 1,200 professors, this was 6 years ago, and that our faculty are honorable. She asked how we can combat this narrative; we are faculty under attack right now and this is unfair. She said she is frustrated and heartbroken.

Senator Elton Beckett, the facilitator at the Town Hall meetings, reported that following the last Town Hall he himself has been misrepresented on social media, with a photo of him and the designation of a "sexual predator." He thinks we need to reconsider the nature, purpose, and format of our Town Hall meetings. Provost Pease recalled that at the last Town Hall meeting

President Kaplowitz encouraged faculty to attend and speak at the monthly Town Hall meetings in person or by Zoom, so that negative voices aren't the ones dominating the forum. Senator Ray Patton echoed Senator Beckett's comment that Town Hall in its current form is not productive. He would like to see other formats tried and suggested drawing on existing faculty expertise to promote constructive dialogue.

Senator Steve Russell noted that he hasn't heard faculty portrayed negatively in his own class and, so, he's not sure that a negative view of faculty is widespread among students. Senator Nina Rose Fischer expressed dismay at the cancel culture now playing out at Town Hall and would also like to see alternative formats tried.

Provost Pease faces a second challenge, namely formulating a unifying framework for students. She asked, “What as faculty do you want me to keep in mind as we develop this framework?” Senator Heath Brown asked that students be given the grace to fail, and the opportunity to have fun during their time at college. Their peers at other institutions across the country have such opportunities. Senator Russell noted the disjuncture between his understanding of what it is we are doing and how students conceptualize it. For him, the goal of what we are doing is learning and the process is intrinsically, organically connected to that goal, so that students must read, write, study in order to learn. But many students understand what we are doing as a transaction in which they exchange cash and jump through certain hoops in order to obtain credits and a credential. He hopes the administration understands what we are doing as learning, so that even an F can be a success if it provides a student an opportunity to learn.

Senator Joseph Maldonado asked that we engage in a partnership with students. We can each learn from the other. Senator Catherine Kemp observed that our current student success metrics don’t measure well what faculty think of as our goal, which is learning. She was privileged to attend a college in which she took only three courses per quarter and so could devote herself to learning. She thinks our students are being asked to take too many credits per semester, which may help them obtain a credential sooner but which does not provide them the time they need to learn. Senator Violet Yu echoed Senator Kemp’s comments on workload. Her students can’t keep up with the number of courses they are being asked to take. Senator Susan Pickman hopes that we teach our students enough to function in the world. But she noted that we also need to equip them with the skills they need to cope with failure or to accept circumstances that are beyond their control. In life, it happens sometimes that things don’t go your way.

5. Proposed Updated Resolution requesting the CUNY Board of Trustees to rescind JJ’s honorary degree conferred upon Rudolph W. Giuliani in 1988

The Senate considered a recommendation from the Executive Committee to amend its previously approved resolution recommending that the CUNY Board of Trustees revoke the honorary degree conferred on Rudolph W. Giuliani in 1988. The amendment was to include the fact that not only was Mr. Giuliani disbarred by the Appellate Division of the New York Supreme Court on July 2, 2024, but he was also disbarred by the Washington, D.C. Court of Appeals on September 26, 2024. The amended Resolution was adopted by unanimous vote.

6. Proposed Revision of the John Jay College Procedure for Awarding Honorary Degrees to include language about revoking an honorary degree

The Faculty Senate unanimously adopted a proposed revision to the College procedure for awarding honorary degrees to include a procedure for rescinding honorary degrees. The new text the Senate is proposing be added to the procedure is as follows:

If a recipient of an honorary degree from John Jay College subsequently engages in documented behavior that is inimical to the values for which the honorary degree had been awarded, the

Faculty Senate may consult with the President of the College and with the Committee on Honorary Degrees and shall, in a closed session meeting, consider recommending to the CUNY Board of Trustees that it revoke the honorary degree; if at least three-quarters of the Senators, present and voting by secret ballot, conclude that the documented behavior is so egregious that the honorary degree should be revoked, the Faculty Senate shall forward its recommendation to the CUNY Board of Trustees for action by that body.

Having been approved by the Senate, this proposed amendment will be sent to the College Council for action.

7. Review of the agenda of the October 15 meeting of the College Council

A proposal to allow visiting (non-John Jay) students to take up to 14 credits in summer school at John Jay is on the agenda. Also on the agenda, is a discussion as to whether and when President Mason should make public statements on behalf of the college. She's now thinking she should **not** make such statements

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.

Submitted by S. Russell and K. Kaplowitz