

**Faculty Senate Minutes #574
John Jay College of Criminal Justice**

Wednesday November 19, 2024

1:40 PM

Zoom

Present (29): Chevy (Schevaletta) Alford, Nicole Awai, Ned (Warren) Benton, Mustafa Demir, Artem Domashevskiy, Jonathan Epstein, Diana (DeeDee) Falkenbach, Nina Rose Fischer, Alejandro Garcia-Lozano, Robert (Bob) Garot, Heath Grant, Veronica Hendrick, Mohammad Islam, Susan Kang, Karen Kaplowitz, Catherine (Cathy) Kemp, Vicente Lecuna, Joseph Maldonado, Brian Maule, Adam McKible, Raymond (Ray) Patton, Alison Perry, Susan Pickman, Stephen (Steve) Russell, Ignacio Sanchez, Francis Sheehan, Todd Stambaugh, Robert Till, Violet (Sung-Suk) Yu

Absent (11): Elton Beckett, Heath Brown, Nicole Elias, Anru Lee, Brian Montes, Joseph Rebello, Marie Springer, Shilpa Viswanath

Invited Guest: Provost Allison Pease

AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Adoption of Minutes #573 of the November 6, 2024, meeting
3. Invited guest: Provost Allison Pease
4. Search committee for Dean of Faculty position
5. JJ's designation as a Tier 2 college
6. CUNY as a non-attendance taking institution
7. The difference and the different consequences between an F final grade, an INC, and a WU
8. Discussion: Should a student be able to appeal a final grade after the department grade appeals process is completed?
9. New business

1. Adoption of agenda. Approved.

2. Approval of Minutes #573 of the November 6, 2024, meeting. Approved

3. Invited Guest: Allison Pease, Provost

President Kaplowitz summarized discussions taking place at the Provost's Advisory Council about how to improve learning outcomes, increase faculty engagement on campus, and increase student engagement on campus.

Senator Chevy Alford spoke of her concern about the difficulty of students to keep up with weekly assignments in asynchronous online courses, especially for students for whom English is not their native language. They may not be able to properly pace themselves through the semester. They may have good ideas but may have difficulty expressing them in online writing assignments. Provost Pease noted that instructors are free to set deadlines for all their courses, both in-person and online, including for asynchronous online courses. She noted that during the pandemic instructors were encouraged to be flexible with their deadlines, but too much flexibility does not serve students well as they prepare for their careers and the demands of professional life. She thinks individual instructors should feel free to set learning outcomes in line with their department's curricular map—one instructor may value content and ideas, but another may emphasize the importance of grammar and writing, but each instructor should decide on one thing they want to really make certain their students learn that semester.

Senator Todd Stambaugh regards the question of course modalities as an academic matter related to learning outcomes. He doesn't think that course modalities should be used to solve cultural problems such as lack of community. He asked whether we have data as to how students fare in different course modalities. Provost Pease reported that students receive comparable grades in online, hybrid, and in-person courses; but we don't have any assessment data on learning outcomes, so these comparable grades may reflect different grading standards. She noted that community can also be built online but that requires infrastructure that we don't have at John Jay. She said the current mix of modalities provides students flexible pathways to graduation. She reported that some faculty, especially some department chairs, believe students learn better in-person. She herself is open to seeing where the data leads us.

Senator Ray Patton agreed with Senator Stambaugh about disentangling the question of modality and learning from the question of community. He welcomes debate around these issues but emphasizes the need for data before any policy level decision.

Senator Cathy Kemp agreed wholeheartedly with Senator Patton. She also noted that some faculty are concerned about enrollment in their majors. She would like to see new data and more carefully calibrated data on student demand for course modalities. She thinks students vote with their feet when they enroll in online courses.

Provost Pease said that this may be because our students have been taking online courses since high school because of the pandemic; they may feel more comfortable but that doesn't mean that this is the best modality for them. We need more evidence; our junior students may choose in-person courses as they progress in their studies because perhaps they are beginning to experience the pleasures of in-person learning. It's simply too early to tell.

Senator Nina Rose Fischer emphasized the need for quality control and for ongoing pedagogical training in online teaching. How are we sure that online courses are pedagogically effective? What governance structures do we have around online teaching? Provost Pease noted that with HEERF money the college had developed asynchronous online course shells; but these

shells have been largely ignored by faculty, she said. She pointed out that because of contractual agreements with the PSC, observation of online courses is limited to one day rather than over a period of time, making oversight of online courses a challenge.

Senator Stambaugh asked if the college has looked at studies of the effectiveness of different course modalities from outside of CUNY. Provost Pease acknowledged that the research literature contains a variety of views about the effectiveness of course modalities. She also noted that it is difficult to know how that literature applies to our situation, as a commuter college in a large metropolitan region, with students who completed high school during the pandemic.

Senator Adam McKible has found that his hybrid courses are much more effective in helping students learn to write. He realizes others' experience might be different but sees no need to impose a blanket policy about modalities to all academic disciplines and learning outcomes.

Senator Kaplowitz asked if the college has compared student evaluations of in-person, online, and hybrid courses. Provost Pease acknowledged that no one has done that and said this might very well be a good source of the information we are looking for. She thought VP Christopher Shults might be someone the Senate could approach about providing such a data.

Senator Stambaugh commented that the merits and pitfalls of possible new college policies are being discussed but all he has heard has been anecdotal evidence or personal opinions. He believes that we need rigorous data before any new policy about course modalities is implemented.

The Senate will formulate a list of the kinds of data we think the Provost should consider before she proposed any new policy.

4. Search committee for Dean of Faculty position

The college is beginning a search for the Dean of the Faculty. Currently, Angela Crossman serves interim Dean. In the coming months, the college will also be conducting searches for the roles currently filled by Andrew Sidman and Janice Johnson Dias. Dean Dias has informed the Provost that she will not be continuing in her current role beyond December. President Kaplowitz will be soliciting nominations of faculty members to serve on these search committees.

5. JJ's designation as a Tier 2 college

President Kaplowitz shared a chart from Dean Carpi comparing productivity across CUNY campuses, but the comparative data on faculty productivity only goes through 2019, because CUNY stopped providing such data after that date. Because the data is old, and we have no way of obtaining recent data, she is wary of presenting it to CUNY as the cornerstone of our argument for being designated a Tier-1 institution within CUNY. She invited other viewpoints; there were none.

6. CUNY as a non-attendance taking institution

Senator Kaplowitz reported that although CUNY took the decision to not be designated by the federal government as an attendance taking institution, which requires reporting attendance to the federal government every two weeks, John Jay and CUNY faculty are not prohibited from taking attendance. In fact, faculty should state their attendance policies on their syllabi and should take attendance in class.

The Senate took the decision to write to faculty to clarify policies and practices around taking attendance.

Senator Mustafa Demir recommended informing students of these policies, ideally every semester. They seem to not understand the rules. He also thinks the Faculty Handbook should be updated to include this information.

Senator Nina Rose Fischer asked how faculty handle the situation of students with extenuating circumstances that prevent attendance, such as caring for an ill family member. President Kaplowitz explained it is entirely up to the discretion of the faculty member.

Senators Veronica Hendrick and Kaplowitz spoke to the importance of clear attendance policies and a clear connection between grades and attendance in motivating students to show up in class. The whole class suffers when too many students are absent.

7. The difference and the different consequences between an F final grade, an INC, and a WU

President Kaplowitz explained the difference consequences of F, INC, and WU grades. An F is for a student who has done all the work but still hasn't been able to achieve a passing grade. A WU is for a student who stopped coming to class. A WU is thus a more punitive grade for a student than an F. A WU can affect a student's financial aid. A student who stops coming to class in effect breaks an implicit contract they entered when accepting financial aid. An INC should only be given to a student who has requested one, and it only should be given for students who would pass the course if they satisfactorily completed the missing work. A faculty member is not obligated to say yes to a student request for an INC grade.

Senator Alford noted that many of our students have very difficult personal circumstances that cause them to withdraw unofficially and that we should know, so that we can inform our students, that retroactive withdrawal is an option at any time, although the student has to withdraw from all the courses being taken that semester in order to avail themselves of this course of action.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.

Submitted by S. Russell and K. Kaplowitz