

LEHMAN COLLEGE AD HOC SENATE STUDENT EVALUATION COMMITTEE  
*Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday, October 1, 2015, 3:30-4:30p.m.,  
Carman Hall 201*

*The Ad Hoc Senate Student Evaluation Committee consists of the following members:*  
*Faculty & Administration-* Robert T. Valentine (History), Chair; Stefan Becker (Vice Provost for Academic Programs), Alison Behrman (Speech), Ron Bergmann (Information Technology), Salita Bryant (English), Faith Deveaux (Special Education), Sophia Diamantisfry (Academic Programs), James Jervis (African & African-American Studies), John Dono (Information Technology), Mine Doyran (Economics), Robert Feinerman (Mathematics), James Mahon (Philosophy), Abigail McNamee (Early Childhood Education), Penny Prince (Music), Vincent Prohaska (Psychology), Kevin Sailor (Psychology), Duane Tananbaum (History), Elin Waring (Sociology), Mary Rogan (Special Counsel).

*Students-* None at present.

*Minutes of the Meeting*

Stefan Becker, Salita Bryant, John Dono, James Mahon and Robert T. Valentine attended the meeting held on Thursday, October 1, 2015.

*Articles appearing in the July, 2015 issue of Clarion*

The committee discussed the two articles pertaining to Student Evaluations which appeared in the July, 2015 issue of the PSC-CUNY newspaper *Clarion*. Switching to an online student evaluation format has caused a marked decrease in the rates of return (ranging from 20-40%) across the spectrum of CUNY member colleges. Bronx Community College, City College, City Tech and LaGuardia Community College have all gone back to the use of paper evaluations (City College since 2011), resulting in returns synonymous with the pre-online era.

Also, the articles expressed a CUNY-wide concern for low response rates as affecting the status of faculty tenure & promotion. Kingsborough's PSC chapter suggested that a minimum number of student evaluations should be received for faculty tenure and promotion purposes, but no action has yet been taken.

*The Lehman College Experience*

The online evaluation results at Lehman College are in the same range and have only increased marginally with the availability of student evaluations on *iphones* and tablets. While the committee has agreed to "stay the course" and not recommend returning to paper, it will continue to explore new ways to facilitate increased online responses. One suggestion was to determine which faculty members received high rates of response and find out why- what is their secret? What are they doing right?

*Real-Time Response Rates*

It was suggested that faculty should have the ability to monitor the number of responses received in "real time." This could be set up by IT. Faculty could receive the number of responses *while* they are administering the evaluations in class (through *iphones* or tablets) or at some other time, with the response rates in percentages, rather than having

to disclose the names of non-respondents. The analogy of watching stock market prices rise at the exchange was employed to convey the impact of real-time response rates for student evaluations.

#### *Student Evaluations on the Last Day of Class*

The notion of conducting the surveys on the last day of class was brought up again, but this time students would not have their evaluations e-mailed to them until then. Experience has shown that the students will do the surveys beforehand and then simply leave on the last day of class. Some of us witnessed an exodus from our classrooms this past spring, since many of the students completed their evaluations previously (or said they did). Thus, the student evaluations could be sent out during the last week of classes instead of a week or so beforehand.

#### *Incentives- Rewards & Punishments*

We continue to struggle with the prospect of coercion *or* incentive in getting the students to complete the evaluations. One incentive might be to make the results available to the students who have completed their evaluations. They would receive the results *before* the commencement of the following semester.

Another incentive might be to give the students some form of class-related *extra credit* for completing the evaluation.

#### *Format of the Student Evaluation Form*

The committee concurred with the suggestion that the number of questions on the evaluation form be reduced to just a few. There are currently 25 questions contained within 6 distinct categories. A few salient, hard-hitting questions might do the trick, making the evaluation less cumbersome for the students.

Also, if the multiple-choice response format is to be retained, such responses ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree” should be substituted for the choices in some of the categories. It was further suggested that faculty members should be able to add a few questions of their own, especially if they are pertinent to their courses.

Finally, the appearance of the evaluation form might be changed to make it more visually appealing (no chili peppers, but smiling faces?). Students might be painfully reminded of the battery of standardized tests they had taken throughout their primary and secondary educational years when they see the likes of our survey.

#### *New Members*

The Ad Hoc Senate Student Evaluation Committee is an open committee and all faculty, administrators, and students are welcome to join; your input is invaluable.

#### *Next Meeting*

The next meeting of the Ad Hoc Senate Student Evaluation Committee will be held on Thursday, November 12 at 3:30pm in Carman 201 (the next meeting of the Lehman College Senate is scheduled for Wednesday, November 18).

Respectfully submitted,  
Robert T. Valentine, Chair