



## Minutes

### Higher Education Officers Council

May 7, 2015

3:00 P.M

New Building, Room L.61NB

**Call to Order & Adoption of Agenda:** The meeting was called to order by President Sandrine Dikambi at 3:10 PM. There was no quorum so the agenda was not formally adopted, but it was agreed that presentations, reports, and discussion should continue even though no votes could take place on business items.

**Members Present:** A list of members present appears at the bottom of these minutes.

**Approval of Minutes:** There was no vote on the November or March minutes due to lack of quorum.

### Reports

Charter Review Committee: In Linda Mitchell's absence, Nikki Hancock-Nicholson gave the report. Over the course of the year, the Executive Committee has identified several further changes needed to improve the charter. However, work on further revisions is stalled due to lack of committee members. Ms. Hancock-Nicholson encouraged interested HEOs to volunteer.

Elections Committee: Inez Brown announced that nominations are still being accepted for College Council Representative. We have had only five nominations so far, and three people have declined. Deadline to nominate or self-nominate is next week. She will also be reaching out for volunteers to help count the votes.

Membership Committee: Kevin Nesbitt has resigned his role as Member at Large and Chair of the Membership Committee because he has been bumped up to College Council Representative to fill the vacancy left by Nilsa Lam. Makeda Jordan is next in line and has taken over the role.

Quality of Life Committee: In Nancy Marshall's absence, Katherine Outlaw gave the report. The committee's primary project for the year has been to develop a survey to gather data about HEO quality of life concerns. They are currently working with Institutional Research to finalize the survey. It will be distributed soon.

College Council: At the most recent meeting of the College Council, electronic evaluations were discussed. The college will be using electronic student evaluations of faculty going forward. This issue is relevant to HEOs, because processing thousands of paper evaluations was a multi-step process that created workload for HEOs in more than one office on campus. The Interdisciplinary Studies Program is now its own academic department. Also voted on and discussed were a new major in Toxicology, the commencement awards for students, and various course revisions. The next meeting is May 11.

HEOs present at today's meeting were reminded that the various governance meetings on campus are open to anyone, and HEOs wishing to learn more about campus governance can attend those meetings as long as their supervisors allow them. However, Kim Chandler and Rulisa Galloway Perry shared that they were informed that the Budget & Planning Committee meetings are now closed. There was some concern that neither the HEO Council nor the PSC delegates had been informed of this decision. Ms. Chandler suggested the HEO Council Executive Committee invite Marjorie Singer to educate us about the Open Meetings Law.

As part of the current governance reform project on campus, there has been an attempt to identify every committee that exists on campus. So far, more than 300 different committees have been identified. Once we know which ones will remain, we should consult Ms. Singer for a list of which ones are subject to the Open Meetings Law and which ones are closed.

## **Old Business**

Vacancies:

College Council: Tiffany Onorato has been bumped up into the vacant seat left by Nilsa Lam, and Kevin Nesbitt has replaced Ms. Onorato as the alternate.

College-Wide Assessment Committee (CWAC): Two of our seats will be empty in July: One is the empty seat left by Maureen Coyle, and the other is the seat currently filled by Kelly Greene. We need to find out if Ms. Greene is willing to serve for two more years or if we need to replace her. The third seat is occupied by Rosann Santos-Elliott and expires in 2016.

Summer Soiree:

The HEO Council year-end party will be Thursday, June 11 at 4:00 on the Mirante Terrace. A Caribbean theme is planned.

## **New Business**

Governance Forum: There was a governance forum held on April 23 in which the process of governance reform on campus was discussed. Presenting at the forum were President Travis, William Kelly (former Interim Chancellor and former president of the Graduate Center), and Frederick

Schaffer (Senior Vice Chancellor and CUNY General Counsel). Several HEOs were there, including members of the HEO Council Executive Committee. President Travis explained that although he has been meeting only with the Faculty Senate so far, he will be meeting with the Student Council and HEO Council in the fall. A table comparing governance structures of the various CUNY colleges was shared prior to the forum. Based on that table, inclusion of HEOs in governance is far from universal in CUNY, but it does exist. Both Kelly and Schaffer emphasized the importance of removing obstacles and encouraging participation in governance. Those in attendance were encouraged to ask questions and give feedback. Michele Doney asked for their feedback about comments she has heard during HEO Council election cycles, where nominees either decline due to prohibitively heavy workloads, or are not permitted by their supervisors to run. The response was that every college needs to make its own decisions about governance, but that addressing barriers to participation is part of what the current process is meant to do.

This led to a larger discussion about HEO participation in governance, and the past, present, and future of the HEO Council itself. Much of the feedback came from Kinya Chandler and Rulisa Galloway Perry, who are long-time HEOs and were directly involved when the HEO Council was reconstituted in 2004 after many years of dormancy and held leadership in the HEO Council for several years afterward. They stressed the importance of remembering that we did not always have a HEO Council. They further feel that the HEO Council is not currently something the administration feels it must answer to, in part because for the past few years we have not had the president and the vice presidents attend HEO Council meetings to respond to HEO concerns. For example, Nikki Hancock-Nicholson reminded everyone that Senior VP Pignatello attended a HEO Council meeting in November to talk about budget and HEO hiring concerns and to answer questions.

Two major areas of concern that come up during the discussion were communication and engagement. Ms. Chandler feels the current HEO Council is playing too much to external constituencies and not communicating enough with HEOs. Others expressed that many HEOs ignore communication coming from the HEO Council and do not attend meetings to participate and stay informed, and that this is a problem even among elected representatives under the new charter. There was some discussion as to whether the new model is the right one. Katherine Killoran reminded everyone that the new model is still very new and asked everyone to give it some time to work. She also suggested that four meetings per year may not be enough to accomplish everything people seem to want. Ms. Hancock-Nicholson expressed the Executive Committee's frustration that we struggle to achieve a quorum at the few meetings we're already holding. It was noted that the HEO survey currently in the final stages of development is meant to gather exactly the type of information that some commenters at the meeting feel is missing. Ms. Galloway-Perry emphasized the importance of educating HEOs about what it would mean if the HEO Council slips into irrelevancy or is lost altogether.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Michele Doney, HEO Council Recording Secretary.

HEO COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Baerga, Christine  
Broccoli, Elizabeth  
Brown, Inez  
Doney, Michele  
Francis, Howart  
Galloway-Perry, Rulisa  
Hancock-Nicholson, Nikki  
Jordan, Makeda  
Killoran, Katherine  
Lorenzo, Jennifer  
McKiever, Shavonne  
Outlaw, Katherine  
Scaduto, Michael  
Taylor, Betty  
Winter, Janet

OTHER HEOS PRESENT

Blanco, Giselle  
Chandler, Kinya  
Ifill, James  
Palleja, Sandra  
Perez, Maribel  
Purdie, Yvonne  
Riela, Suzanne  
Taveras, Rita  
Washington, Deborah