Report of the COACHE Working Groups
February 28, 2017

In 2015, Brooklyn College participated in the Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) sponsored by the Harvard University Graduate School of Education. Faculty participated in a Faculty Job Satisfaction Survey, the results were compiled by COACHE and returned to Brooklyn College in a “Provost’s Report” which summarized the key findings. Our data was compared both to data from 5 institutions selected by the Provost (Montclair State, Buffalo State, SUNY New Paltz, UNC – Wilmington and the University of Baltimore) and 41 Master’s Institutions, with schools primarily from New York, New Jersey and North Carolina. The other CUNY senior colleges also participated in the COACHE survey.

In early 2016, the Provost consulted with the chair of CAP Liaison, Professor Kip Marsh, and the chair of Faculty Council, Professor Yedidyah Langsam, and it was decided that five (5) small working groups would be formed, each charged with reviewing the information contained in the COACHE report on a reported topic and provide some guidance/recommendations on how to improve the faculty’s perceptions of that category. The 5 working groups focused on the following topics:

- Working Group 1 – Personnel, Family Policies, Practices
- Working Group 2 – Facilities, Infrastructure, Research
- Working Group 3 – Department Life
- Working Group 4 – Relationship with the Administration
- Working Group 5 – Promotion/Tenure, Teaching, Research, Service

Each working group was composed of four (4) faculty members and one senior member of the Academic Affairs Administration. The working groups convened in the fall of 2016 and delivered their reports at the beginning of the Spring 2017 semester.

The content that follows is the unabridged, unedited reports/recommendations of the working groups. These reports are especially timely as the College begins its strategic Planning Process for the next five (5) years.
“Family friendly” event scheduling: Faculty with young children can find it challenging to participate in departmental and college life when events are scheduled in a way that conflicts with their familial responsibilities. Brown University, among others, has formulated guidelines on “family friendly” scheduling (attached), which could provide a model for similar guidelines at Brooklyn College.

Staff support for decisions on benefits: New faculty, and other faculty who need to make critical decisions about health insurance, retirement planning, and other benefits, need clear information about alternatives, and strong staff support in weighing their options. We recommend a review of current information resources, and current staff support, to improve these services for faculty.

Clarification of family-related policies: The complexities of such family-related policies as FMLA and paid parental leave pose another significant challenge for many faculty. We recommend the development of information resources that make these policies clear.

Resources for faculty seeking housing: As gentrification accelerates in Brooklyn, and housing prices continue to go up, faculty (especially new faculty) are finding it harder and harder to find affordable and convenient places to live. We recommend that the college investigate ways to provide information and referrals to faculty seeking housing in Brooklyn. Possibilities might include a variation of the new faculty bus tour of Brooklyn, with a focus on affordable and accessible neighborhoods; or an online repository of housing information, including information contributed by faculty (following the model of Yelp and similar utilities).

Respectfully Submitted,

Allan Amanik (Judaic Studies)
Kara Andersen (Film)
Charles Edwards (School Psychology, Counseling & Leadership)
Matthew Moore (Associate Provost for Faculty and Administration)
Christopher Richards (Art)
I. CURRENT STATE OF FACILITIES: PROBLEMS AND SHORT-COMINGS

1. The COACHE survey results revealed that faculty have noted that not only are many classrooms and public areas at Brooklyn College in disrepair (an issue that has gained public recognition), but that requests to Facilities are often not addressed at all or not addressed in a timely manner.

2. There are no prioritizing procedures that would separate major renovation requests from more minor repairs.

3. Repairs impacting health and safety issues connected with poor maintenance are not labeled as such in the recording and processing procedures, often leading to an inability to recognize and prioritize these kinds of repairs.

4. There are no procedures in place to notify the applicants of approval and to provide a timeline for the process of repair/renovation or for tracking all requests through completion via Facilities.

5. There is no formal Facilities budget, which leads to both underfunding and a lack of accountability. It also leads to a lack of transparency.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE THE FACILITIES ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

1. Develop periodic maintenance schedules and systems that routinely check classrooms and public areas around the campus.

2. Develop record-keeping systems that record all requests, including requests that come via telephone, in person, or through email.
   a. A procedure should be established for all Brooklyn College faculty, administrators, staff, and students to report the disrepair of public spaces, including bathrooms and offices. We suggest that a web link be developed (perhaps by ITS) that would facilitate and track such reporting.
   b. Develop systems to reconcile completed requests and tasks. The system should create a projected timeline for repairs to be completed, and track that completion providing updates to invested parties.

3. Develop systems that prioritize work requests. To make decisions about requests received by Facilities, individuals (or perhaps a group) can be designated. This includes but is not limited to the designations regarding decisions on major (capital) renovation or building requests. Also, a separate designation that records and tracks requests impacting health and safety concerns must be included in this categorization.
4. Publicize annual reports which include relevant information regarding all repair requests (completed and incomplete) as well as future planned work.

5. Facilities should have a separate budget line, with its major component parts clearly enumerated. The College should also investigate the availability of funds for major renovations or improvements from such sources as The Capital Budget, CUNY Central, or the Capital Improvements Fund.

In furtherance of this effort, the committee recommends that an outside expert be consulted to further evaluate and offer recommendations.
COACHE Group 3 was comprised of four full time faculty members and one administrator. Two faculty members were from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, one from the School of Natural and Behavioral Sciences and one from the School of Education. Two members of the committee hold the rank of Professor while the other two are Associate Professors.

After a two-week reading and review period of the COACHE Survey, the committee met on two occasions for approximately 90 minutes. Our charge was to assess and evaluate “Department Life” at Brooklyn College and we conducted thorough and insightful discussions. With a pool of 19 categories in the survey, some were more relevant than others to our faculty. Here are the highlights of our discussions:

~ The consensus of the group was that Department Chairs are willing to work with faculty members in an effort to accommodate personal and family schedules.

~ We had a long discussion regarding mentoring of junior faculty members. There is a great deal of concern with the teaching load for junior faculty members. Please note that this group came up through the ranks prior to New Faculty Reassigned Time (NFRT). Their experience was that their teaching load interfered with completing peer-reviewed publications. Comments such as “overwhelmed” permeated the conversation.

~ The group expressed concern over the lack of senior faculty support they received when negotiating with publishers.

~ One member cited a series of incidents that happened to her, but are likely common across campus, regarding the initial setup of her office and lab. The issue is space planning and the complaint is that Facilities leaves too many jobs undone. If someone is hired to start in August, his/her office and lab (if applicable) should be up and running before classes begin. She felt that faculty were “the low priority” for Facilities and department support staff.

~ One member was upset about pre-tenure breaks in service and unpaid leave stating that she had to decline an opportunity for research abroad because it would break her tenure clock.

~ Consensus was that junior faculty members are more prepared for their tenure and promotion reviews than they were due to improved mentoring (attention from chairs/senior faculty) and NFRT.

~ We discussed the pros and cons of having a faculty mentor on campus versus off-campus. The issue addressed was pairing junior faculty members with someone else in their discipline. One member of my group serves as a mentor for a faculty member at the University of Baltimore because no one there matches her area of expertise.
~ One member asked, “How are junior faculty members supposed to adapt to changes in tenure expectations when a new Chair is elected?” The consensus was that Chairs and mentors must guide junior faculty to think about the expectations for the field, not the institution.

~ When our discussion turned to “collegiality,” the response was that too many faculty members serve as Chair for too many terms. We did not specifically discuss term limitations, but the consensus was that Chairs should rotate more frequently than is currently practiced. The general feeling is that few departments have a succession plan and that far too often there is a hostile atmosphere when a new Chair is elected. The group expressed concern that there is a lack of information and experience sharing when department administrators change. We did discuss the difficulties of rotating chairs in a small department, especially one with few or no full professors and the fact that many people have no desire (or ability) to assume the responsibilities of Chair.

~ Our discussion about “Appreciation and Recognition” hit a wall and marked a low point in Brooklyn College campus culture. Faculty members do not feel recognized or rewarded for service. My group encouraged bonding exercises such as a monthly presentation by a different faculty member discussing his/her research and/or creative work to the department to engage in greater intellectual discourse.

~ “Reward us by showing the money,” was a common theme as faculty members seek conference and travel money from a very limited pool. There is also a great deal of mistrust that Chairs are transparent about TS, OTPS and Adjunct budgets.

~ One member commented that there should be a College and Department new faculty checklist (and timeline for completion) of things that they need to do and should be done for them.

~ General consensus is that departments should develop a long-term vision and strategic plan based on the expectations of the discipline. The emphasis should be on hiring philosophies (do we want to hire multiple people to teach X, or individuals to teach X, Y and Z?) so that new faculty clearly understand the direction, philosophy and culture of the department.

~ Several members expressed concern about the Deans/Schools system and that there is a distinct lack of communication between Deans and the rank and file.

~ Across the board, there is a desire for the College and Departments to more clearly define “Service” at the institution.

Vanessa Perez-Rosario          PR&LS
Florence Rubinson              School Psychology, Counseling & Leadership
Swapna Banerjee               History
Elizabeth Chua                Psychology
**Stuart MacLelland**          Acting Associate Provost for Academic Programs
Meeting was held on Thursday, 27 October 2016

Members:

Jillian Cavanaugh  Anthropology & Archaeology
Tracy Chu  HNS
MJ Robinson  TV/Radio
Beth Evans  Library
Maria Ann Conelli  Facilitator

The group organized the discussion into two parts: what makes for effective academic governance and what are the hallmarks of an effective relationship between faculty leaders and senior administrators. The group posed questions, offered thoughts and in some cases posed ways of dealing with the issues.

Part 1: Effective Academic Governance
The discussion was shaped by the following five points:
Trust
Shared Sense of Purpose
Understanding the Issue at hand
Adaptability
Productivity

The group felt that there should be an assessment of the higher level administrators, with outcomes/expectations laid out in the beginning. This review should be a 360 and be shared with the college community.

Also discussed were the challenges of the governance structure that does not explicitly describe the new School structure and the role of the deans. This should be a basic description of the School structure within the College and the general listing of the responsibilities of the deans. At present there is great variance among the Schools and this would provide some clarity.

2. What are the hallmarks of effective relationship between faculty leaders and senior administrators. (The discussion was shaped by the 5 points above)

President and Provost:

- There needs to be greater transparency from the top down, particularly concerning how hires are determined, how adjunct budgets work, how staffing is decided. The President’s recent listening tour, followed by open forums to present findings is a step in the right direction, but more needs to be done.
When is it a CUNY decision and when is it a Brooklyn College one. There needs to be greater clarity about who is making decisions.

There needs to be more trust building.

**Deans:**
- What do the deans do—there is much variations among the Schools.
- There needs to be more interaction between the dean and faculty, greater access to the dean, more faculty-centeredness.
- Greater flow of information, faculty want to have All School Meetings.
- There is a culture of distrust—the quest emerged as to who are the deans advocating for the faculty, departments, School.

**Chairs:**
- Faculty want more trust with the Chair and better communication.
- Is information flowing from the administration to the faculty, and what is the most effective way to make this happen.

The faculty feel uninformed, overworked and excluded from the conversation. They are frustrated by the ineffectiveness of the registrar’s office, the growing demand for larger classes, shrinking budgets, and poor facilities.
COACHE Working Group # 5 (Promotion & Tenure: Teaching & Research)
Recommendations

Chair: Richard Greenwald (Dean, Humanities & Social Sciences)
Members: Cheryl Carmichael (Assistant Professor, Psychology), Nicolas Giovambattista, (Associate Professor, Physics), & Lulu Song (Assistant Professor, Early Childhood Education)

PROMOTION & TENURE

Brooklyn College

Pre-tenure faculty appear to have dissatisfaction with the clarity of tenure process, clarity of tenure criteria, clarity of body of evidence for deciding tenure, and the consistency of messages about tenure. The office of the Associate Provost has already launched a series of workshops on promotion and tenure for untenured faculty to remedy this.

TEACHING & RESEARCH

TEACHING

Faculty members are dissatisfied with time spent on teaching, number of courses taught, level of courses taught, discretion over course content, number of students in classes taught, equitability of distribution of teaching load, and quality of grad students to support teaching. We make the following recommendations:
1. Departments survey their faculty to inquire about course teaching preferences and make efforts to honor faculty teaching preferences in a rotating manner (to the extent that it allows for coverage of all necessary courses)

2. Departments with master’s programs can create volunteer teaching assistantships in which one or more master’s student is allowed to serve as a TA for a course, receive teaching mentorship from the faculty instructor and develop teaching skills, and assist the faculty instructor with course administration.

3. Departments can encourage instructors to recruit top seniors in the major as volunteer course assistants who can hold additional office hours and review sessions.

RESEARCH

Faculty are dissatisfied with the amount of time spent on research, and support for research, although pre-tenure faculty are satisfied with the availability of course release for research. We make the following recommendations:

1. Provide start-up funding for all tenure-track faculty hires.
2. Provide research space for all tenure-track faculty hires.
3. Maintain new faculty release time policy (it appears to be effective)
4. Provide each school a discretionary fund consisting of Release Time Grants to support High Impact Practices, such as undergraduate research, and faculty research.
5. Provide additional funding to support research and travel for faculty who can demonstrate impact in their field (relevant peer-reviewed publications, talks, etc) performed in the previous year.

Faculty are dissatisfied with expectations for finding external funding, and support for obtaining grants (pre-award). We make the following recommendations:

1. Support a Faculty Fellow for each School to help look for grants, mentor grant writers, and shepherd grants through. (Note: Peter Lipke has a model for NBS and the NIH SCORE program. Perhaps this could be expanded for NBS and used as a model for other schools)
2. Request that the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs host a series of brief workshops on funding agencies and funding opportunities
Faculty are dissatisfied with support for research (post-award). We make the following recommendations:

1. Request that the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs create a searchable FAQ for grants and RF to be placed on their website including a list of contacts at RF and a guide to help faculty determine who their RF contact person(s) should be.

2. Request that the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) Office provide additional support and guidance for the human subjects research review process, including templates of consent forms and step-by-step instructions for IDEATE (the online IRB application platform) regarding IRB procedures (e.g., preparing and submitting applications, amendments, continuing reviews, final reports, etc.).

3. Provide more resources (additional full-time or part-time personnel) for the Brooklyn College’s HRPP Office.

### MENTORING

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Although mentoring was not under the purview of this working group, we felt the need to comment on mentoring as it may have a positive impact on satisfaction with promotion & tenure. Faculty find mentoring important and are finding mentors outside of the department, but do not seem to find mentoring from within the department effective. Moreover, faculty mentors do not feel that there is sufficient support in place for being a good mentor. We make the following recommendations:

1. Pre-tenured faculty should be matched with a tenured faculty member in their department or allied discipline. Matches should be based on the pre-tenure faculty’s preference and approved by the department chair. The mentor should be provided with necessary resources (e.g., time) to offer support. The mentor and the mentee should decide together how the mentoring takes place. The department chair should request regular feedback on the mentorship from both the mentor and mentee to ensure effectiveness of the mentoring process and report progress to the school dean.

2. Each school should explore ways to provide school-wide support for mentoring beyond the department. Dean’s should develop a plan and submit it to the Provost.