

**Notes from emergency L-M meeting, Thursday, March 12, 2020, 5 pm
Conference Room 630, Haaren Hall**

Attendees (Management): Karol Mason, Yi Li, Joseph Laub, Raj Singh, Ellen Hartigan, Ella Kiselyuk, Kinya Chandler.

Labor Attendees: Zabby Hovey (Chair), Paul Narkunas, John Pittman, Ellen Belcher, Ellen Sexton, Paul Narkunas, Janet Winter, Rulisa Galloway-Perry, Zabby Hovey, Andrew Sidman (Council of Chairs) and Doug Toppin, (DC37).

Calling into the meeting by phone additionally: (Faculty Senate) Ned Benton and Karen Kaplowitz; Angela Crossman (Council of Chairs); Holly Clarke (PSC), Steve Titan and Kim Charles (Administration).

We met for over two hours with President Karol Mason and many members of her administration. The president began by explaining that she is getting expert health and safety information.¹

Mason said her priority is to preserve the semester for the students so that they can get credit, and to cut down on the number of people on campus to slow the spread of disease. She said Governor Cuomo's decision on Wednesday to limit CUNY and SUNY to "distance learning" was made in consultation with Chancellor Felix Matos Rodriguez.

Over the course of the meeting, President Mason conveyed understanding that the Governor has assured all employees of their continuing pay, including hourly employees' (DC-37 employees inclusive). HEOs, CLTs, Library Faculty and other non-instructional staff are expected to continue to be on campus, the president confirmed. She was adamant that all people not feeling well should stay home but did not offer categorical accommodation in other ways. Staff seeking to be protective of vulnerable household members or having individual circumstances that newly interfere with in-person work during this health crisis, she indicated, would be considered on a "case-by-case" basis. Such individuals should start by communicating with their supervisors and HR about the problem.

Instructional issues: Karol Mason underscored that "distance learning" is not the same as "online classes." The Board of Education has a definition for "online" and our distance courses are not expected to fit that definition. She emphasized that there is not one mode nor platform specified for faculty to use; they need to make the appropriate adjustments to their classes using their judgment to secure student engagement and elaborated (below) resources available and in development. Provost Yi Li acknowledged that there are several hundred courses at John Jay. Some classes have major difficulties with remote viability, and he was putting a lot of attention into those. (They include science lab courses, theater, art and those with internship components). The president encourages thinking outside the box, in providing distance learning. e.g., using phone conferences, just audio, is acceptable.

¹She consults primarily with Dean of the CUNY school of Public Health Ayman El-Mohandes, often multiple times a day, and, when necessary, has swift access to the NYS Department of Health. We learned that the Provost's advisory task force includes the top leaders of the Faculty Senate and Council of Chairs and faculty experts on public health and emergency response, Angelique Corthals and Warren Eller, respectively.

There is no requirement for “high tech,” but she specified that no face-to-face gatherings could happen for traditional classroom subjects.

The president and the provost assured everyone that faculty should rely upon the Teaching and Learning Center (headed by Gina Foster) and DOES (Department of Online Education and Support, the new name for John Jay Online, which incorporates Blackboard support). They explained that these departments are best positioned to help faculty with the pedagogical and technical questions arising as we move toward the March 19 phase. DOES may be able to provide equipment faculty lacks, or at least quantify and eventually address such needs. Faculty currently have Blackboard and access to Blackboard Collaborate (its teleconferencing capacity). The university will roll out WebEx. The Provost’s council is trying to get laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots for students with the aid of philanthropists. We pointed out that our John Jay Dell office computers do not come with cameras and microphones. Dolt is pursuing acquisition of webcams.

Faculty who have such questions that cannot be addressed by the TLC and DOES should relay them to their department chairs, who have been and will be channeling questions and concerns up to the administration who forwards them to the CUNY Central administration. Some issues are matter of university-wide policy that is in flux; others will be clarified by a working group led by the Provost and Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness, Allison Pease.

President Mason and Provost Li showed that the hiatus until classes resume 3/19 is not only for faculty to make remote learning adjustments to courses; the administration sees the period as an industrious time for it to develop additional resources for us. Beside channeling questions from chairs and the advisor team, they expect to soon articulate policy decisions that emerge from Chancellor Felix Matos Rodriguez. He is further advised by the Coronavirus Task Force.

The chapter leadership registered the importance of communicating the full array of online resources for our course planning purposes. These online resources are subject to negotiation with outside vendors and CUNY procurement practices. New options will not be announced until they can be confirmed. As an example, the college is trying to negotiate a campus-wide Zoom contract, so that individual faculty will not need to use their own accounts and be limited to 40 minutes.

In addition, we stressed repeatedly the importance of getting a list for faculty and staff of whom they should contact within expected concrete scenarios. For example, Associate Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Studies, Dara Byrne’s office, is where faculty or staff should turn when students disappear from online classes, are not responding to faculty emails, and in danger of failing. As online courses have high dropout rates, this is bound to be useful information. We pointed out that many faculty have never before been involved with distance learning; this phase will be challenging.

Karen Kaplowitz urged adoption of pass-fail options for all courses (*and that has been done - see mail from administration*).

Attendance requirements for non-instructional faculty, HEOS, CLTs, and other staff:

HEOs, CLTs, Library Faculty and other non-instructional staff are expected to continue to be on campus, President Mason confirmed; she said the expectation is for normal hours, but to work it out with one’s supervisor. Workers with health conditions should contact HR to request accommodations including absence from campus. Other workers must talk with their supervisors. Mason acknowledged that developments had been moving so fast that it was impossible to know all that would happen. [*Since this 3/12 meeting, Lehman College persuaded its president to close its library and that PSC Chapter leadership called on the president to have the library remain closed on Monday. Saturday, as you have learned by email, PSC President Barbara Bowen called on the Chancellor to make all of the*

university's work remote, a "service recess" of March 16-19.² We urged support for the librarians, HEOs, CLTs, NTAs and others, including those in DC-37, who will remain on campus and face the commute to work that others can avoid.

Important Miscellaneous

There are many issues that will have to be resolved by negotiation between PSC and CUNY leadership.

The Facilities Department says it has enough cleaning supplies and staff. If they need more staff, there is an outside company they can call upon.

The provost acknowledged that the observations/evaluation process must be mindful of the changed circumstances of observees. President Mason expects there will be time flexibility for some personnel processes, but we are bound by our collective bargaining agreement for others (such as the May 1 notice for adjuncts qualifying for individual 3-year contracts) and are set to fulfill those deadlines. *[Side note to members from Chapter Grievance Counselor Paul Narkunas: these contractual deadlines could be renegotiated in light of emergency circumstances. Due to such issues and many more, PSC Pres. Barbara Bowen requested to begin bargaining with CUNY in her March 6, 2020 letter. It is my understanding that bargaining has been taking place between CUNY and the PSC in the interim.]*

All workers are encouraged to set up direct deposit for pay in case the campus does close completely.

² Barbara Bowen: "The University's first priority must now be to avoid endangering employees and students. Students' ability to finish the semester, as important as that is for the students who rely on CUNY, must be the second priority. The health and safety of students, employees and the city must now come first."