

YORK COLLEGE  
City University of New York

Senate Minutes  
September 24, 2024  
AC: 3D01

Administration: Schrader, Rios, Williams, Brazill, Davidson  
Faculty: Amaghionyeodiwe, Birk, Burke, Barley, Barone, Brathwaite, Buxenbaum, Chirico, Dean, Forrester, Hartmann, Henry, Hornung, Lee, McNeil, Mc Gee, Meddeb, Moore, Musumeci, Parmet, Richards, Sheidlower, Shearin-Patterson, Radhamohan, Saad, Thompson, Wang, Wu  
Students: Adigun, Ambati, Baez, Bishundayal, Daley, Eghaghe, Fordjour, Greene A., Ibeh, Joseph J., Kargbo, Khamis, Maharaj, Maqsood, Marcellus, McLaren, Moreira, Ogueri, Patino, Persaud S., Pierre, Polack, Santos, Sinclair, Singh, Taylor, Toumba, Velzen, Williams R,  
Guests: Hsu, Platzek, Fellows, Suarez, Roman, Dervisevic, Bingol

1. Welcome & Introductions

2. Special Elections:

Vice-President of the Senate: Santos

Secretary: Barley

Parliamentarian:

3. President's Report: Schrader

Good afternoon,

Welcome back, and Welcome to the first Senate meeting for the 2024-25 academic year. It is good to see everyone here today, around campus and earlier this month at Convocation.

Please mark the date of October 25 for our State of the College gathering. In my past lives, Convocation was both a welcome back to the semester, a review of the previous year, and presentation of major goals and initiatives for the coming year. Since York also has a state of the college, there will be a more comprehensive presentation of the latter two areas in addition to feedback from University's Annual Performance Management Process (PMP) then. Lori is out today so we will not have an update from her area today, but she will present at the State of the College.

My campus update of August 26, provided you with summer highlights. Today, I want to take this opportunity to share with you a number of priority items for this year.

VP Williams will provide a more comprehensive Enrollment report. But, if you have been monitoring the weekly Enrollment Reports that Lori sends – the last one was issued last

Wednesday- you will know that while we did not meet our overall target of 6300 students, for the first time in 5 years we were not skilling on slopes of Vail, Colorado, we were on a hike up Mt. Kilimanjaro increasing enrollment by 1.4%. A big thank you to Enrollment Management, Academic Affairs, Academic departments, Marketing, the Welcome Center, staff, faculty and so many people who helped to make this happen.

We were able to increase, because we exceeded enrollment for some of the cohorts, but it wasn't enough to take us further up the mountain and our continuing student enrollment experienced the most severe decline (down 11.8%) in CUNY. This as you know also affects our first-time full time freshman retention rate.

There are many reasons why students don't come back. I am pretty sure everyone at York, and everyone in this room also have their own ideas as to the reasons why students don't return, and for every student who didn't return, there is a reason or multiple reasons why. We are trying to get a better sense of the why, in fact Lori did do a survey of the 100 or so students who left to go elsewhere, and only 10 students responded (and about 5 or so, said that York did not have a major they were interested in). We need better data, but I would also like to improve our response rates to student surveys, so I hope to work with Student Government this semester on strategies for doing so.

On our end, there are also multiples what's and how's and who's. What should we do, how should we do it and who should be involved. From what I can see, there are many things we can do, and it can only be done as a college wide and shared effort.

So, allow me in this report to put a bug in your ear.

It's time for us to rethink how we do Advisement; how can we do it better to support the retention and persistence of our students. Early on I convened a meeting of the Advisement Council to get a sense of what some of the issues are, also know there was a review of Advisement with recommendations. We need to caucus once again, and I have asked VP Williams to help to lead this effort so we can move from recommendations to implementation.

Let me put a bug in your other ear.

It's time for us to think about how we can expand options for students. This semester there are 7129 students enrolled in online programs at Senior Colleges and 1318 enrolled in online programs at Community Colleges. Increasing this option for our students is important for us to stay competitive in CUNY, in Queens, and in NY. I am not suggesting we just become an online college, I am suggesting we have more online degree options and high demand courses, for students, who already live in this world. As we strategically, create these opportunities, we have to ensure that there is no difference in student outcomes for students in online programs compared student in in person classes and we have to ensure that there is adequate virtual support for students.

Let me put this bug in your other ear:

I like many of you have been in CUNY for more than a minute. That's why we know that The New York Times has its best sellers list and we have ours. The Board of Trustees monthly report has always attracted a large number of readers, anxious to see who getting hired and at what salary. But I have to tell you, what is interesting reading are the new degree programs being approved and offered.

What also plays a significant role in attracting and retaining students are the degree programs we offer. Most people would like to think that workforce is only focus on community colleges, but it is not. Because what are we doing in higher education and at senior colleges if we are not preparing our graduates to obtain jobs, enter professions across a spectrum of industries and fields, in high demand and specialty areas? Senior colleges prepare students for the workforce too, and leadership, and management a myriad of roles that are needed. We have a roster of excellent degree programs but we have programs that way may need to rethink.

The time has come for us to develop a new academic plan, one in which we take a critical look at our program offerings and outcomes to determine if they will meet the workforce needs of the next 5-10 years, to determine if they are still relevant, and determine how existing programs can be enhanced.

I am grateful to the curriculum committee and departments that already are engaged in this work. Especially because we have to take it up a notch.

I think an important aspect of this plan is understanding what is happening around us. The Jamaica Neighborhood Plan will be critical to our work. It provides a vision for housing, jobs, green and public spaces and investments in the local community. There is currently a proposal on the table for the development of a mixed use building which would have affordable housing on the top, and several floors on the bottom for York College, and we will need to decide what we will do with this space. Just like the academic plan we will develop, the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan is not one we are creating for ourselves, it is one we are creating for the future, the future generation of students and graduates. There will be more to come on the next steps for the development of our academic master plan.

The development of an Academic Master Plan will also drive the development of a Facilities master plan (which is also overdue for York) which will help to determine the development/enhancement of spaces to support our academic programs. Ed will provide a more comprehensive update on facilities.

Just like enrollment and retention the work ahead will require a college wide effort. Thank you in your advance for your engagement in this process.

Let me put another bug in your ear.

As I shared previously, many of our students stop out for any number of reasons. Some of those reasons are tied to finances, even with the relatively low cost of attending York, it is still expensive for students. And even if they are able to handle their tuition, the cost of living in NYC, transportation, unexpected emergencies, and any other number of situations that empty

their wallets, are often enough for them to throw in the towel. That's why our fundraising efforts are critical. We are committed this year to improve advancement efforts, be enhancing donor relations, seeking out partnerships, pursuing naming rights, and increasing auxiliary revenue. Also critical to these efforts is re-engaging alumni. In October we will host an alumni night to do just that, more information will be forthcoming.

The time has come for us to award honorary doctorates just like every other senior college in CUNY. The administration is committed to working through governance and with the college senate to make this happen.

Colleagues, we are approaching October 7<sup>th</sup> which marks a year since the Hamas terrorist attack on Israel and the war in Gaza. It also coincides with the Jewish High Holidays of Rosh Hashanah (beginning the evening of October 2) and Yom Kippur (ending on the evening of October 12). October also will be the final stretch of the US presidential election. Tensions are high, but our commitment to the safety of and respect for each member of our college community is higher.

On the presses today is the findings of Judge Lippman's Review of University's Anti-Discrimination Policies. We are navigating unprecedented times, and such times calls for us to assess our approaches and efforts. I believe the feedback about the direction we should go regarding increasing resources, redesigning the portal, and increasing coordination are important. Equally as important is ensuring that we create more spaces for active dialogue that helps to bring people together. I look forward to doing the work, for all of us doing the work needed to combat and eradicate discrimination in all its forms. To this end, I am pleased to report that I received a list of four finalists for the CDO position who I will be interviewing in the coming weeks.

In closing, let me add that I am looking forward to a productive year and the work of the senate, our standing committees and our college community in advancing student and institutional success.

## II. Student Caucus Report: Joseph

Good afternoon, everyone! How are you all doing today? My name is Joah Joseph, and I have the honor of serving as the President of the Student Government Association. I was born and raised in a Haitian Christian family, where faith, family, and love have profoundly shaped the person I am today. My upbringing taught me the value of compassion, community, and resilience—qualities that continue to guide me in my leadership role.

Throughout my life, I've come to understand the immense power of a strong support system. Every step of my journey has reinforced the importance of teamwork and collective effort. Success is rarely achieved alone; it thrives through collaboration, shared purpose, and unity. As Helen Keller wisely said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

Under my presidency, one of my top priorities is fostering a spirit of teamwork within the Student Government Association. My fellow senators and I are committed to working closely together to achieve remarkable things—not just for our student body, but for York College as a whole. We are a community of diverse and unique backgrounds and cultures, and it's through embracing these differences that we will find our greatest strength.

As the semester began, we kicked things off with our SGA & Club Leadership Retreat, where we gained invaluable insights into what it truly means to be a leader. We explored how to lead effectively while fostering collaboration and teamwork—skills that will be essential as we move forward this year.

On September 17th, we hosted our Welcome Back Party and Grab-and-Go event for both our day and evening students, with sessions from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. These events were designed to bring our students together and reignite campus energy. We're excited to continue organizing more events throughout the year to enhance student engagement and make the campus a vibrant hub for all.

Additionally, tonight we will hold the official SGA Swearing-In Ceremony at 6:30 p.m., whereas senators, we will formally accept our roles and responsibilities as representatives of the Student Government Association. It's a moment of pride and commitment, and we're thrilled that friends and family are welcome to join and celebrate this important milestone.

Looking ahead, we are dedicated to building a stronger, more connected community at York College. Through events, leadership initiatives, and your involvement, we hope to create opportunities for every student to engage and grow. We are all in this together, and I'm excited to see what we can accomplish!

President Schrader, I'd love to request if all of the senators who have class at 2:00 pm, may leave at 1:50 pm, so they are not late.

### III. Faculty Caucus Report: Chirico

Welcome back . . .

Acknowledgement and thanks to Veronica Mariani

We look forward to working with Ms. Joseph and the SGA toward our shared goals

#### 1. Upcoming Presidential Search

- As we know, the last two presidents of York College were appointed and not searched. York is not a ward of the CUNY system that needs to have leadership imposed on it from the Central Office. We were founded in 1966, opened to students in 1967. Developmentally, we are approaching retirement age. It is time we have a say in our future.

A search committee has now been charged and the application deadline is October 1. I have been informed by the Office of the Chancellor that a message will go out to the York campus this week to bring us up to date.

2. Standing Committees of the Senate:

- Membership is complete for all committees; conveners have been notified, and several committees have met
- Conveners typically send a Doodle poll to determine best dates/times for meetings; you are urged to check your email and respond. Upon convening, a committee chair is elected, and the group decides how and when to meet. It is important for all who were elected or appointed to serve answer those meeting requests as the work of the committees is essential for the work of the college.

3. Regarding the rezoning plan, there are faculty whose research involves environmental concerns in the area who have been attending the meetings about the plan. If you just search “Jamaica Neighborhood Plan,” you will see what has been discussed, maps of potential change, and how to get involved.

4. The University Student and Faculty Senates together with the Council of Faculty Governance Leaders have worked throughout the summer preparing a response to the proposed changes to the CUNY byways and Manual of General Policy At York, the Committee on Governance is again looking at the York College Charter. Local governance documents take precedence save for contractual obligations.

IV. Enrollment Report: Williams

**Student Affairs and Enrollment Management Report**  
September 24, 2024

V. Administration & Finance: Rios

VI. Academic Affairs: Brazill

