

York College
The City University of New York
94-20 Guy R Brewer Blvd.
Jamaica, New York 11451

December 10, 2024

Senate Minutes

Present:

Administrators: Brazil, Rios, Schrader, Williams
Faculty: Alapo, Amaghionyeodiwe, Barley, Birk, Brathwaite, Burke, Buxenbaum, Chirico, Baron, Dean, Forrester, Hartman, Henry, Hornung, Lee, McGee, Meddeb, Musumeci, Parmet, Penn, Preiser, Radhamohan, Richards, Saad, Thompson, Wang
Students: Ambati, Baez, Bishundayal, Daley, Eghaghe, Fordjour, Ibeh, Joseph, Khamis, Maqsood, Ogueri, Patino, Polack, Santos, Sinclair, Singh, Taylor, Toumba, Van Velzen

1. Call to order: Quorum (36)
2. Minutes: November 26, 2024: Motioned, seconded: passed.
3. President's Report:

Dear College Community,

The end of the fall semester is fast approaching; and while the days are moving quickly, my priorities have remained the same: Enrollment, Facilities, Financial Health/Resources, Assessment, Improving Communication, Increasing Visibility, Identifying/Elevating our Brand, and Improving Operations. I wish things could move as fast as I articulate what is needed, required, and deserved, but as I have shared many times before, just like we didn't get this way over night, redress will not come quickly either. However, I am hopeful because of the steps we have made toward accomplishing our larger goals.

Since we last met, we continue to focus on these goals. Year to year enrollment shows a slight decrease in overall headcount for the Spring 2025. We expect to easily overcome this 1% decrease in the coming weeks. The University received 55,050 applications, marking an increase of 20,745 applicants, or a 71% rise, compared to the same period last year for Fall 2024. Overall, freshman applications are up by 13% year-to-date. Per our Executive Director, as part of that pie we received a file of 4,106 freshmen, already skill proficient, 1924 are potential SEEK students, and 94 transfers as well.

As promising as the future looks for the fall semester, enrollment by itself is no means the singular solution to addressing the deep structural deficit we currently have and will more than likely have for the next few years. We have a projected budget shortfall of \$11.8M, an increase of \$1.2M from the FY25 Financial Plan. This adjustment

is primarily due not meeting our revenue targets, which was caused by lower-than-expected enrollment numbers and changes in the projected calculation rates. As a result, we are facing difficulties in achieving our financial reduction target. We continue to explore exploring various strategies which include identifying cost-saving opportunities across the college to mitigate the impact and ensure financial stability moving forward.

As we continue to have staffing and talent gaps across all divisions, we know that this will be a balancing act. We have gaps in faculty and staff that need to be filled so we can effectively deliver our academic programs and operate optimally.

This year, we have had multiple meetings with key Central Office staff to state our case of need and advocate for resources, and we will continue to do so in the coming year. We will also continue to engage with our elected officials to draw a much-needed picture on our current needs, explore and pursue opportunities and forge partnerships that will address our pressing needs. Over the past few weeks, we have hosted Assemblywoman Hyndman and Assemblyman Anderson at York. Dr. Simons and I took them on a walk of the campus, so that they can understand the need, our plans, and enjoy the energy of our vibrant campus community. On our walk with Assemblywoman Hyndman and we got locked out of the building and a student who was nearby with a group of other students, came to our rescue. As we stopped to thank them, Assemblywoman Hyndman got an earful from the students. They were the incredible students from the Occupational Therapy program. They spoke about their love of the program and their future professional goals. They were so well-versed; we thought the student was a faculty member. When we walked away, the Assemblywoman shared that although she has been to York many times, she never experienced what she experienced that day.

I want to thank the Faculty and Student caucus for providing feedback and recommendations regarding the use of potential space in the proposed mixed-use building. I should have an update with regards to where we are with the project in the new year. We are fortunate to have elected officials that support and believe in the mission of the college.

I extend a special thank you to the Office of Student Activities and all volunteers for a spectacular Thanksgiving Luncheon for the campus community. I am particularly grateful for the donation of 50 turkeys from The Real Veggie Foundation which were given away to students.

We all know the difference our Giving Tuesday donations make in helping students persist in their goal to earn a college degree. Thank you to all those who donated last week. I would also like to remind you that if you haven't given, or you want to give again, that the portal will be open until December 31. So far for this cycle, we have seen a slight increase in the number of donors, an increase in the gift size, and increase of our total amount raised now compared to last year. Right now, we are at \$103,394 our goal is \$150,000. I want to give a special thank you as well to the Advancement Team as well as the all the volunteers who participated as part of our phone bank. I am pleased to share that Nicole Goldberg has joined us as the Interim Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations to help lead efforts in this area.

An important aspect of attracting donors, is ensuring that we increase our visibility and elevate our brand. I want to thank faculty, staff, and students for all the incredible work you do and to Marcia Comrie, for all that she does to capture this work-- the heart and soul of York College-- for others to see.

I am grateful too, for our colleagues who have agreed to serve as MSCHE co-chairs, and for those who have answered the call to serve on a committee. Colleagues, I can't underscore how important this process is for the future of York college and our mission. Our self-study is a process that requires campus-wide involvement, it is not an administrative thing. So many of you already provide a service to the college in addition to your regular responsibilities and there are more than enough of us to share the load and responsibility. As the African proverb reminds us, many hands make light work.

While we are on the topic of MSCHE, we need to ensure we are all—academic, administrative, and student services areas- engaged in assessment. VP Hoeffner sends comprehensive data snapshots to the campus, it's not just for your reading pleasure, it is for you to consider how the data presented affects and informs your work. I look forward to elevating assessment even more in the coming year.

I know, there is always a lot to do and a lot happening at York. As the young ones would say, the college is popping. It is popping so much, that often there are competing events occurring at the same time. There is a lot to do to ensure that the planning and execution of our events occur effectively. As such I have put together a small committee, chaired by Marlon Midwinter and Nicole Williams to identify issues and concerns, as well as recommendations for improvement. In addition to the need for improvement in this area, it is not lost on me that we have little or no space to hold events for our internal college community. Know that we are committed to finding additional spaces that give us these opportunities, as well as the opportunity to connect. In the interim, the work of refreshing areas continues.

I am excited that the refresh of the Public Safety Break Out room is nearing completion with the installation of new floors, seating, counters, and a new refrigerator. As you all know this room also served dual purpose as the Lactation Room. As a reminder, the Lactation Room is now located in the Health Services Office. I am also pleased to share that the HR Conference Room (which was in poor condition but was often used to meet with new employees and which is shared with the Office of Advancement) has also received a recent refresh. I can't thank our Laborers and Trades staff enough for their work on these projects.

You may know that VP Rios and I often take walks throughout the day. I am always on the hunt for work for him to do. Recently however, I asked the cabinet to join us on a walk. As a result of our walk, we were able to identify a suitable location for our food pantry, and a location for a graduate student lounge. We anticipate that they will be functional next semester.

As we wind down these next 2-3 weeks, I urge you all to read the monthly reports issued by the cabinet. VP Rios has an expansive one to share and given that his presentation of IT was rushed during our last meeting, I have also asked our CIO to share a monthly report with you as well. On this topic, at the last Senate meeting there was a discussion about Artificial Intelligence (AI) as course/program offerings. As a

result of that discussion, I reached out to Provost Brazill and suggested that we have an in-service/panel discussion with AI experts during the winter intersession prior to the start of classes so we can expand our knowledge base as a college. More information will be forthcoming.

Thank you to the Office of Human Resources for their continued recognition of our Employees of the Month and for continued staff updates. As I have shared previously, compared to many other campuses, the York College Office of Academic Affairs is very lean, and is not similarly staffed like its counterparts. Adequate staff in this area is meant to ensure that faculty and the academic enterprise are well supported. As such, it is my pleasure to welcome Theresa Williams to York, she will serve as the Interim Director of Academic Affairs. I would also like to announce the appointment of and welcome Yasmina Moore, who will serve as our long awaited and very much needed Director of Procurement. I would also like to welcome to new Peace Officers, Allan Ward, and Syed Hamza to the college. The Office of Human Resources will share their contact information in the next Staff Update to the college. In the interim, please make time to introduce yourselves and welcome them to the college.

Colleagues, I ask that you also make time to thank Lt. Suarez for a most commendable act of service he did last Thursday. On that day, Director Assman had to convince Lt. Suarez to go have some steak with him after work. Suarez didn't want to go, but he acquiesced. He usually takes a certain route to get to Hillside Avenue, but his GPS took him a different way, and because of that, he witnessed a pedestrian get struck by a tow truck. He didn't just witness, he sprang into action, and because of his actions—stopping the flow of blood from her leg, he saved her life. He also stopped the driver and called 911. And he didn't stop there, he called the woman's husband, and he visited her in the hospital. She is in the ICU. Fortunately, she didn't lose her leg as they had anticipated, although she still might, but most importantly she did not lose her life because of Lt. Suarez's actions. That could have been anyone, anyone of us and I am confident that Lt. Suarez and anyone on our public safety unit would do the same thing. How fortunate are we to have such a team as part of our college community.

Recounting Suarez's story of his unlikely route to Hillside Avenue, reminds me and us all that we are exactly where we are supposed to be - at York College, making a difference in the lives of our students. I'm beyond proud of what we've achieved together in 2024. As we prepare to and then step into 2025, let's continue to focus on our mission.

Students, your mission is completing this semester strong! Best of Luck on your final exams. Finally, I am not one to violate CUNY's gift giving policy, so while my gift to you is free, it is worth more than all the gold in the world: My gift is this wish for you:

May this brief respite from work and school this holiday season, bring you immense joy, and numerous opportunities to love up on your loved ones and love up yourself through acts of selfcare.

I wish you all the happiest of holidays.

4. Student Caucus Report:

Good afternoon, all,

As we approach Christmas and the holiday season, it's a time to give thanks and show our love and appreciation to those who matter most in our lives. Whether it's friends, family, colleagues, or others, we all have someone—or a group of people—who hold a special place in our hearts because of the love and support they give us. Though I'm still young, one thing I've learned in my time on this earth is that we all need each other. Love and support are the true definitions of wealth. They make life meaningful and worth living. Wealth isn't measured by our salaries but by the relationships we cherish and the people who cherish us in return. It's about the experiences we share and the roles others play in shaping our lives.

As a Christian, I know I've mentioned this before, but God, my family—whether by blood or the friends and loved ones I've gained throughout my journey—have played a significant role in shaping who I am today. They've been instrumental in the knowledge I've acquired and the successes I've achieved. Their unwavering support has reinforced my deep belief in the importance of trust and building strong support systems wherever I go. As the President of SGA, I feel truly blessed this semester to have connected with such brilliant, like-minded friends. They've shown me what it truly means to be a leader. Leadership isn't just about taking charge; it's about working collaboratively, building trust, and creating a foundation of mutual support. In moments when I've felt down or overwhelmed, they've been there to lift me up. When my cup feels empty, they pour into it, just as I strive to do for them.

This semester has been a valuable learning experience for all of us, both as students and student leaders. It has been an incredible journey supporting, advocating for, and serving as resources to our student body. We remain committed to staying true to our vow as senators to represent and uplift all students.

Yesterday, December 9th, I hosted a full day leadership training with Mr. Francois for SGA and the club leaders. We were able to dig deep within ourselves and who we are as human beings, students, and leaders. We had the chance to be more intentional about why we choose to be student leaders. Understanding our why makes our what becomes more impactful. Our heart has to be in the action. I want to thank all those who showed up and choose to be intentional.

Looking ahead, we're excited to share details about our upcoming events. On December 12th, we'll be hosting a Movie Night, followed by the highly anticipated SGA Dinner Gala on December 13th. Additionally, we're proud to announce an event specifically for our weekend students on December 14th, from 10 AM to 12 PM.

As senators representing the diverse needs of our student body, our goal is to create events that cater to all—day students, evening students, and weekend students. We want every student to feel seen, heard, and valued in our community. As we know final weeks are quickly approaching, we are in the process of expending the computer lab for our student from 9 am to 11 pm for our students. So, they have the space and time to study and excel in their final exams.

As I mentioned during our last Senate meeting, I will be heading to Albany for an internship this spring, which means I will be stepping down as President of SGA. This was an incredibly difficult decision because I deeply value the bonds I've built with my fellow

senators and friends, the York College community, the student body, Mrs. Skinner, the Dream Team, VP Williams, President Schrader—and so many others (if I started naming everyone, we'd be here for hours).

To all of you, whether you're in this room or not, I want to say thank you. But above all, I want to thank God. You all have been instrumental in my journey as a voice for the student body and York College. I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to represent York at the Senate level.

Please remember, this is not the end—I'll be back in the fall semester, and I look forward to continuing to serve and grow with all of you.

Thank you!

5. Faculty Caucus Report:

The search for the next York president is now moving towards a close. Yesterday and next week, various constituencies on campus have had/will have the opportunity to meet with the finalists.

In 2022, the CUNY Board of Trustees changed the both the make-up of search committees and added that a search could be confidential. This means that everyone involved must sign a "Non-Disclosure Agreement." Both the Faculty Caucus and the union have objected to the inability to have candidates come to campus. We have also objected to the interviews occurring on days when students and faculty are in class; especially since this week is the last day of classes and next week is final examinations.

Those revised guidelines do state regardless of whether it is determined candidates will come to a campus that, "elected faculty and student governance leaders . . . shall meet and provide the Chancellor with a report on their views of each candidate."

The Caucus has been tasked with evaluating Honorary Degree candidates. The deadline to vote is today; if you have not yet done so, please make your selection.

At the broader CUNY level, I am happy to report that Bill Thompson, the chair of the CUNY Board of Trustees, addressed the University Faculty Senate primarily to assure faculty that the Board would take all steps possible to protect students given the current press to deport immigrants. It is estimated that more than 400,000 undocumented students attend college in the United States.

On behalf of the Caucus, amid the chaos in the world, globally and locally, I hope everyone can find a few moments to reflect on the year past as you plan for the year ahead.

6. Standing Committee of the Senate:

a. Curriculum Committee:

<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:US:1e91a74e-9b13-4be5-9c11-90545bb5f64d>

7. Adjournment

Respectfully,

LR Barley, Senate Secretary