

MINUTES OF THE COLLEGE COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON GOVERNANCE
MEDGAR EVERS COLLEGE
APRIL 19, 2023

In Attendance:

Ms. Julie Augustin (HEO Elect)
Dr. Kathleen Barker (Faculty)
Dr. William Carr (Faculty)
Dr. Victoria A. Chevalier, Chair (Faculty)
Ms. Shirley Irick, Esq. (President's Designee)
Dr. Ken Irish-Bramble (Faculty)
Professor Gregorio Mayers (Faculty)
Dr. Harsha Rajapaske (Faculty)
Professor Jade Robertson (Faculty)
Dr. Donna Wright (Faculty)

Absent:

Ms. Paige Adjara (Elected Student)
Ms. Katie Davis (Community Council)
Ms. Joanna Dorsey (President, SGA)
Mr. Lucius Priester (Alumni Association)
CLT/HEO (Elected Member)

Visitor – Dr. Lashley (Faculty)

1. Chair's Call to Order: 11:44am

2. Approval of Agenda – Moved by Dr. Barker and seconded by Ms. Augustin. The agenda was unanimously approved by 10/0/0.

3. Approval of the March 13, 2023 Minutes – Dr. Barker motioned to approve the minutes. Seconded by Dr. Rajapaske. The minutes were unanimously approved, 10/0/0.

4. Old Business

a. Term Limits

A discussion was held concerning whether the Council should have term limits for representatives who serve. Dr. Wright noted that the current 2 year term limit is particularly short; perhaps extending the term to three years, while terms remain two years, might provide an adequate number of years of service (six years total). Dr. Barker noted that it might be a better practice to keep the terms to two years but not place a limit on how long you can serve. Dr. Barker opposes limiting the number of terms a member can serve. Dr. Barker argues that it is actually more conducive to a democratic process to have no term limits and notes that in some governance plans only tenured professors are allowed to serve. Dr. Rajapakse supports term limits because there is a fear of the buildup of power within one or a few representatives. Dr. Chevalier pointed out that voting those representatives out of office, always available to the body, is a key feature of the democratic strengthening Dr. Barker noted. Ms. Irick noted there is an issue of repercussions for untenured faculty members who serve, vulnerable as they are to inappropriate pressure and bullying. Dr. Robertson suggested the possibility of different terms for different committees, as well as different terms for the larger council's representatives' service. Dr. Carr noted that the point of term limits is to bring diversity of service into the committees and Council. Dr. Irish-Bramble agreed with Dr. Robertson about varied term limits; he proposed staggered term limits. Dr. Irish-Bramble echoed Dr. Rajapaske's concern, stating his concern for "queens and kings" who "rule" based on collating power, effectively becoming gatekeepers. Ms. Irick noted that some representatives are not serving the function of actually representing their schools by sharing the information with their colleagues as they are charged to do as representatives. Dr. Chevalier suggests item be tabled till next meeting, so we may move forward the Agenda.

5. New Business

a. Academic Integrity Committee

Dr. Barker noted that the University Faculty Senate is rewriting the Academic Integrity guidelines for students and the University because of the rise of artificial intelligence usage. Dr. Chevalier stated that some fear the "death of Humanities departments" because of the rise of AI; however, AI can always be spotted by academic faculty in Humanities because it is vague, soulless, and incapable of fulfilling the requirements of analytic writing assignments.

Dr. Irish-Bramble questioned whether our Academic Standards and Regulations Committee would not bring us into compliance, or do we need another committee specifically for concerns of

Academic Integrity. He gave an example stating if two students are accused of cheating and the result was that one student failed and the other student received a reduced grade, that scenario would still be a grade challenge – which would indeed fall within Academic Standards and Regulation Committee, thereby not requiring a new committee as Ms. Augustin noted.

Dr. Robertson suggested that Academic Integrity could be a step before appeals arrived at ASR, and could prevent the issue from getting to a grade dispute/appeal. Dr. Carr suggested that a charge to the AI committee could be proactive. Dr. Carr also noted that students already sign an agreement that they understand and will respect/comply with AI policies (pg 6). Dr. Irish-Bramble pointed out that we already have Dr. Carr's suggestion that students sign an agreement already in the syllabus, and that the students have an agreement that they sign in the beginning of the semester.

Additionally, Dr. Irish-Bramble noted that we already have a third committee –

Fac/Student/Disciplinary Committee– which already addresses student cheating. Ms. Augustin pointed out that the language for the ASRC incorporates proactive language so they should be doing that now. Dr. Carr noted that it is important to educate the students through proactive engagement and to effectively put programs in place to educate everyone about academic integrity. Dr. Chevalier noted that the culture of the college community local and global must change, or incorporate education/best practices on academic integrity. Ms. Augustin stated we already have the vehicles on campus to incorporate the education of AI and we can just contact the already existing departments, groups, classes etc. to require them to do this. Dr. Barker indicated that ASRC is well positioned for policy, but that Academic Integrity is more like a court system, a legal matter, and so academically and institutionally is very different to Academic Standards issues.

In closing, Dr. Chevalier requested that we please review the handout and we will continue to review the issue at the May meeting.

b. Academic Freedom Committee

Closing Comments

- Dr. Chevalier shared with the Committee a handout of the minutes from the October 2008 College Council meeting. The minutes stated General Education was voted into College Council at the October 2008 meeting, but the minutes do not indicate that a vote occurred at that meeting, nor was any discussion recorded.
- Therefore, as was stated by multiple faculty at previous Governance meetings during Spring 2023, the General Education Committee has **never** been a Committee of the College Council either de facto, or de jure, until this current Governance Committee unanimously voted that it be included as such. That language is ready to be read at College Council.
- Ms. Augustin suggests we may revisit the roles of the representatives of College Council as well as the function of the members and committees.
- Dr. Chevalier suggests we consider shared governance for next meeting – she thinks a discussion of SG would be productive.
- Dr. Irish-Bramble asks about attendance at Governance committee meeting; Dr. Chevalier states that she ritually calls Ms. Davis (Community Council Representative) and some others to encourage them to attend.
- Dr. Chevalier recap: Extend the term limits; dispense completely with the term limits; untenured faculty and the problem of their service—due to untenured vulnerability--on particular committees of the College Council?...
- Motion to Adjourn: moved by Professor Mayers and seconded by Ms. Augustin. Unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 1:01 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Counsel Shirley Irick, Esq., President's Designee