October Faculty Senate

Executive Committee Report

I am pleased to present this report on behalf of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. Before I begin, I would like to extend the Executive Committee’s condolences to the families and friends of our student, Dior Berkeley, and our former student, Kimani Foster, who lost their lives recently in a car accident. Our thoughts are with those whose lives they touched.

We hope that everyone is having a productive and safe semester. We have had a busy month, and I will briefly summarize our activities in this report.

We recently learned that Mustafa Ali Hassanien, a filmmaker and student at the College, was arrested in May at the Cairo airport. Mustafa is still being held in pretrial detention in Egypt and faces a number of charges that appear to be a politically motivated response to his criticism of the Egyptian government. Both PEN America and the International Coalition for Filmmakers at Risk (ICFR) have denounced this detention. The Faculty Senate Executive Committee will be sending a letter in support of our student, and we urge the College to do the same. We very much hope for his safe and rapid release.

On September 29, the Executive Committee met with the provost, the deans, and the associate provosts. The provost discussed budget challenges that the College is facing and reiterated that CSI’s classes will be primarily online this spring. He explained that, due to a union grievance filed against CUNY, he could not provide specific data we had requested on class size and numbers of faculty, staff and others who had been terminated and/or rehired. He stated that the average class size increased from 23 to 26 students this semester. In terms of planning for the future, there does not seems to be a clear recommendation from the provost on the following issues: no plans for new approaches to tenure and promotion in the coming semesters (other than an extension of the tenure clock); no plans for retaining CSI’s large population of new students; no contingency plans on teaching modalities, communication, or re-entry strategies (other than to state that additional buildings will be opened); and no plans for addressing anti-racism concerns (other than a call to faculty for suggestions). It should also be noted, for the record, that a study on the extension of tenure clocks has been shown to actually have a negative impact on the progression of women’s academic careers. Questions about seeking institutional funding from outside sources, such as foundations, were also addressed by indicating that it was up to the faculty to pursue such initiatives. We also noted that the campus-wide Re-Entry Committee had not met this semester, although there is a meeting of subcommittee chairs scheduled for October 16.

The Faculty Senate and College Council Executive Committees have expressed concern about the results of the COACHE survey that was conducted last year. We have learned that the COACHE committee had not met since February. (A few days ago we were told that the committee is meeting this week). We urge the Administration to transparently address the problematic issues that the survey has revealed. CSI is one of the few CUNY campuses in which faculty and staff morale, job satisfaction, and overall professional environment have declined precipitously. With this in mind, we will hold a joint Town Hall on October 29 to address concerns about the college’s direction. We hope you will join us.

In closing, we would like to recognize the outstanding work of CSI’s faculty and staff in this difficult time. We applaud the professionalism, creativity, and sheer grit of our colleagues and our students as we face the unprecedented challenges of college life during the pandemic. We look forward to a fruitful second half of the semester, a happy fall, and a rewarding electoral season.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Marcus-Delgado

Chair