

Committee on eLearning
A Queensborough Community College Academic Senate Standing Committee

2016-2017 Annual Report

Introduction and Thank You

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank all Committee members for their excellent service and commitment to shared governance over the past year. This was a successful year for the Committee's goal of providing oversight and support for eLearning on campus. I would like to give a special thank you to the three departing members of the Committee: Barbara Rome, Kwang Kim, and Sharon Reeves. It has been an honor to serve as Chairperson of this important group of faculty, staff, and students.

– Kevin Kolack, Ph.D., June 2017

Committee Members

For 2016-2017, the Committee was composed of: Aviva Geismar, Kwang Kim, Dimitrios Kokkinos, Kevin Kolack (Chair), Kathleen Landy (President's designee), Hamid Namdar (Secretary), Sharon Reeves, Barbara Rome, Meg Tarafdar, George Weissinger (Steering Committee designee), Xiao Wang (student representative), Eileen White, and Zi Xuan Yi (student representative). Denis Bejar of the Office of Educational Technology was a valuable attendee at most meetings. The Committee had no CoC liaison. Student representatives weren't named to the Committee until 2/28/17, and neither attended any Committee meeting or other event. Representative Wang did not seem to understand why (s)he was emailed a welcome to the Committee or notified of meetings/events, and no communication whatsoever was received in response to such notices from Representative Yi.

For 2017-2018, Barbara Rome's term on the Committee expired, as did that of Kwang Kim and Sharon Reeves. Zeynap Akcay, Peter Novick and Nina Sarkar were newly appointed. Hamid Namdar was elected Chair of the Engineering Technology department in May and will need to be replaced by the CoC for next year. Kevin Kolack was reelected unopposed to serve as Chair and Zeynap Akcay was elected unopposed to serve as Secretary.

Committee Meetings

The Committee met at its regularly-scheduled time (Thursdays at 3PM, the week of Senate meetings) throughout the 2016-2017 school year (9/15/16, 10/20/16, 11/10/16, 2/16/17, 3/23/17, 4/6/17, 5/11/17). Agendas and Minutes were posted on the Committee's web site by the Chairperson.

Steering Committee 2016-2017 charges and responses, including Committee actions and recommendations:

Based upon recommendations of the 2015-2016 report, the Committee should continue to support strategies to enhance student readiness for and success in FNET/PNET designated-classes—whether these are workshops for faculty or administrative initiatives designed to monitor student registration.

Turnover in the advising offices continues to make this a challenge. The Committee continued to reach out to advisers directly and through the Academies, providing the flyer from last year (attached) so that students are better informed when registering for online classes.

With respect to eLearning readiness, Hostos Community College has begun to roll out their excellent, Blackboard-enhanced student eLearning Readiness Program in conjunction with any other CUNY school interested and able to do so. Hostos and several other colleges have more eLearning support staff than at QCC, and with Bruce Naples' retirement and subsequent splitting of the Academic Computing Center (ACC) into the ACC and the Office of Educational Technology (OET), adoption of the Hostos program was not possible this year. Hostos also employs registration stops so that students cannot register for online courses without taking the readiness program. Registration stops are not used this way at QCC.

Based upon recommendations of 2015-2016 report, members of the Committee should continue their highly successful brown-bag series for faculty on effective online teaching. The following topics have been proposed: How Can I Design Copyright-Compliant Courses?; What Are Five Tips for Writing Effective Learning Outcomes?; How Can I Use Technology to Improve Learning?; How Can I Create an Online Service Learning Project?; In Blended Courses, What Should Students Do Online?; What Do Students Want in Online Courses?; How Can I Align Technology with My Pedagogical Goals?; How Can I Get Useful Feedback to Improve My Online Teaching?; How Can I Assess Critical Thinking with Student-Created Work?. Depending upon faculty interest, a “recap” or “follow-up” brown bag, with faculty who used tips offered in last year’s workshop series might also be offered to give faculty an opportunity to discuss successful pedagogies, and brainstorm further course design.

A survey was deployed to faculty in November 2015 to choose future topics. Retiring Committee members Barbara Rome and Hamid Namdar coordinated bag lunch seminars on the dates below, using a 20-Minute Mentor Commons video (QCC has a license) as a springboard for discussion. Kathleen Landy was able to further support the Committee by providing the space as well as lunch (through CETL funding) this year. Scheduling this year was challenging due to calendar conflicts and attendance was perhaps diminished by the new Dialogues system. Approximately 12-20 faculty attended each seminar on:

November 30th, 2016: “In blended courses, what should students do online?”

April 5th, 2017: “How do I convert a face-to-face class to a hybrid class?”

The “recap” idea was of interest, but not acted upon.

The Committee will continue to organize these seminars, with CETL funding providing lunch for attendees to increase attendance. Future topics suggested by the poll are

listed above.

Based upon Annual Reports from 2014-2015 and 2015-2016, complete, in concert with the Committee on the Library and Committee on Student Activities, content review for a “resources” web page of exercises and best practices regarding fitness while studying; and consult, as necessary, with college units concerning modes of dissemination (e.g. a link on the section of the website for students or a workshop).

Committee member Geismar completed her preliminary list of exercises and best practices, Committee Chair Kolack developed a web page on the Committee’s site (<http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/governance/academicsenate/elearning/studyexercise.html>), and the information was disseminated via the Committee newsletter (attached) prepared by Committee members Tarafdar, White, and Kolack. Once the college adopts a set of eLearning standards and best practices (see below), the Committee suspects that CETL will take over the web page. The Library Committee did not want to use videos not produced “in house,” so this Committee proceeded without them.

Provide input on the college’s adopted standards for effective eLearning programs.

While the QCC eTeam does this via the Quality Matters rubric, the college currently does not have adopted standards for eLearning. These standards are being developed by faculty currently/formerly teaching online courses, the QCC eTeam, Kathleen Landy, Denis Bejar, and this Committee for presentation to the Senate next year.

Provide input on the curriculum of the e-Learning Institute conducted for faculty development.

This was accomplished through our monthly meetings with OET director Denis Bejar. The eLearning Institute was reformatted in the Spring 2016 semester to occur on consecutive Fridays, and this new system will alternate years with the older condensed version offered over the summer. Assessment of the program by the OET is ongoing. Per last year’s annual report, such standards/policies will also include methods of evaluation (by students as well as peer faculty) of online courses.

Provide input regarding any general (that is, non-discipline-specific) learning outcomes assessment for eLearning courses.

Course assessments are the same online and offline at QCC. (End-of-semester evaluations are handed out as normal in partially online courses, and are mailed to students for fully online courses.) Most faculty teaching online courses assess their courses in some fashion throughout the semester, as is advised in the eLearning Institute. We expect some sort of policy or best practice to be part of the standards to be adopted at QCC.

Based upon Administrative request, designate Committee representative to the Technology Fee Committee.

Chairperson Kolack was assigned to the Technology Fee Committee. Meetings occurred during one of his classes and Secretary Namdar was able to attend as a proxy once Kolack was made aware he was a member of the Committee. The Committee sent a representative (Kolack) to the “Tech Fee Awards” in April, and hopes this Committee can be more involved with the Technology Fee Committee next year as its recommendations directly impact eLearning at QCC.

Monitor possible implementation of other “High Impact Activities” in eLearning.

This point warrants additional attention, in the faculty eLearning Institute and/or the policies/guidelines being developed. This was explicitly discussed at a Committee meeting in 2015-2016, and the Learning Communities HIP seems to be an ideal implementation. However, the Committee was faced with questions regarding implementing the practice. Linking face-to-face courses is already problematic enough logistically, but the HIP coordinators are making it happen. They, in conjunction with CETL, could add PNET/FNET courses into the mix for interested faculty.

Collaborate with CETL and the Committees on Academic Development and Computer Resources in support of workshops to support instructional technology, as well as support for faculty writing technology-related grants.

This is ongoing, in the course of the CETL Pedagogical Research Grant program and OET workshops. “Getting the word out” is part of the impetus for the new Committee newsletter.

Possible additional collaboration with the Committees on Continuing Education and Curriculum regarding the role course delivery might play in structuring course content, as well as Departments (for curriculum-specific best practices & development of more hybrid and asynchronous on-line courses).

The Committee feels this is already ongoing with the Bag Lunch series and the faculty eLearning Institute. While Math and Nursing (among other departments) continue to find success in online offerings, Physics, Biology and Chemistry have had less success, and further work must be done to determine if online courses can serve the QCC community in these subjects. “Flipped classroom” pedagogy is being evaluated as an option (in addition to peer mentoring/peer-led team-learning (PLTL)) by the chemistry and biology departments as part of the HSI-STEM grant with Queens College.

Complete approval process for re-drafted, revised and updated Committee Guide, authored by Committee Chair Kevin Kolack, 2015-2016.

The Guide was adopted and is posted on the Committee web site.

Comment, where appropriate to the Committee charge, on Queensborough’s meeting of revised Middle States Accreditation Standard 3 & 4 (available at <http://www.msche.org/documents/RevisedStandardsFINAL.pdf>):

- *An institution provides students with learning experiences that are characterized by rigor and coherence at all program, certificate, and degree levels, regardless of instructional modality. All learning experiences, regardless of modality, program pace/schedule, level, and setting are consistent with higher education expectations.*
- *Across all educational experiences, settings, levels, and instructional modalities, the institution recruits and admits students whose interests, abilities, experiences, and goals are congruent with its mission and educational offerings. The institution commits to student retention, persistence, completion, and success through a coherent and effective support system sustained by qualified professionals, which enhances the quality of the learning environment, contributes to the educational experience, and fosters student success.*

This is being accomplished through development of the college’s standards, policies and

best practices. The Committee believes that eLearning at QCC is as successful as traditional courses due to the training and support provided by the ACC and IT departments, as augmented by the Committee's ongoing activities and those of CETL.

Request from the Office of Academic Affairs/Office of Strategic Planning/Assessment/Institutional Effectiveness, updates on any Administrative assessments of the following areas: eLearning Program, ACC.

The Committee did not take action in this area, but will make such a request next year.

Other Items Acted Upon by the Committee

The Committee proposed an update to the Bylaws (to reflect its current name and operations) which was submitted to the Steering Committee and the Bylaws Committee for action in the Fall 2016 semester (attached). The Bylaws change was approved by the Bylaws Committee at their September meeting but was not presented to the full Senate and is therefore not reflected on the college website or elsewhere.

The Committee published a newsletter (attached), disseminated via email and as part of the May senate materials, noting items of interest to the eLearning community.

Additional Items for the Coming Year

The QCC IT plan was published in 2016. The Committee will need to confirm that points concerning eLearning are proceeding as planned.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin Kolack, Ph.D.

Committee on eLearning Chairperson