

Senate COVID Response Task Force - Follow Up Recommendations - 4.28.21

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Since the publication of the Task Force's [report](#) in September 2020, and its expansion in January 2021, the college has instituted a variety of initiatives that reflect the recommendations made in our report. We wish to acknowledge these, and then lay out below some further areas for consideration on the part of the college administration. These refined recommendations are a consequence of the meeting between the Task Force, Interim President Daisy Cocco De Filippis, Acting Provost & Vice-President of Academic Affairs Charles Drago, and Senior Vice President of Administration & Finance, and Acting Vice-President of Student Development and Enrollment Management, Esther Rodríguez-Chardavoyne on April 5, 2021.

In the realm of **Communication & Consultation**, the college has made notable strides with the weekly *Semanario*, and the State of the College meetings (twice a semester). The former provides information about all aspects of the college, and the latter provides another forum at which information is shared about current happenings and future plans, and allows for some questions to be submitted and addressed. Additionally, all reopening information has been consolidated into the college's [Ready](#) page, and the SVP regularly reports on reopening at the State of the College. Moreover, the Office of Academic Affairs [OAA] has hosted a variety of discussions with academic and administrative leaders to gauge what options are available for in-person instruction in the fall. Additionally, after a confusing period of transition to online instruction last spring, the relationship between the Office of Educational Technology [EdTech], the Educational Technology Leadership Council [ETLC], and the faculty is again clear, supportive, and mutually appreciative. Finally, OAA has established a regular practice of sharing information about college operations and reopening plans at Academic Council [AC] and Chairs, Coordinators, and Directors meetings [CCD], and OAA has begun working on Prior Learning Assessment.

In the realm of **Advisement & Registration**, an Interim Associate Dean of Student Development and Enrollment Management was appointed to fill a vacant and essential position; the Cross Divisional Advisory Committee [CDAC] was expanded to include faculty members; the *Semanario* of February 5, 2021 laid out the efforts the Division of Student Development and Enrollment Management [SDEM] expended in order to boost enrollment for the spring semester—which included extensive outreach to students; the Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Research, and Assessment [OIERA] has begun giving presentations at AC and CCD to facilitate the comprehension of the data available to guide future enrollment strategies; and representatives of OIERA and OAA have offered to meet with departments to show faculty how to use the enrollment data and grade reports available on SharePoint.

What follows are recommendations the Task Force feels deserve continued attention.

Communication & Consultation – Follow Up Recommendations

- More opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to give feedback on college developments and future plans

Our report called for more opportunities for the college community to give feedback as part of the communication and consultative process with the administration (p. 4). We recommend that, in addition to the State of the College addresses and the *Semanario*, a more town-hall style event be organized once or twice a semester. This event should allow for anonymous questions to be pre-submitted by the college community, and then for a moderator to pose said questions to the President and members of the cabinet to address, followed by opportunities for follow-up questions by members of the audience.

- More detailed reports on the course of the enrollment process

Our report called for more detailed reports to be made available to academic and administrative leaders on the enrollment process, from tracking applications, to admissions, orientation, and ultimately registration in classes (p. 4). In this past fall and spring, reports were distributed detailing the number of students registered in classes, with a comparison to the previous year. We recommend these reports be expanded as noted above so that our recruiting efforts, from beginning (application) to end (registration), can be better assessed.

- More sustained OIERA presentations at AC and CCD

Our report called for detailed presentations by OIERA on their data analysis to help guide the college's future enrollment strategies (p. 5). Such presentations have begun, focusing on information that is available on, for instance, SharePoint. We recommend that future presentations be more focused on the analysis of said data, with recommendations for academic, student support, and administrative units to consider. These would then form the basis of discussions between the Chairs and OAA, OAA and SDEM, and SDEM with AC and CCD as we navigate this enrollment crisis.

- Moving forward on Prior Learning Assessment & articulations with Continuing Education and Workforce Development

Our report called for greater efforts to recruit non-traditional students through the establishment of a Prior Learning Assessment [PLA] Office and that a college-wide committee be established to market Hostos to said students, as well as building firmer connections between students in the Division of Continuing Education & Workforce Development [CEWD] and credit-bearing

courses in Academic Affairs (p. 6). We recommend that work on PLA and articulations with CEWD be accelerated, that the process be more broadly discussed at AC and CCD, and that these opportunities be aggressively marketed. Additionally, as these articulations from non-credit to credit (both PLA and CEWD) will be counted towards our curricular programs and degrees, they are required to go through all levels of governance, from the departments involved through to the Senate.

Advisement & Registration – Follow Up Recommendations

- More communication from SDEM and the office of the Interim Associate Dean of Student Development and Enrollment Management regarding enrollment strategies to meet the enrollment crisis

Our report called for the appointment of a Dean of Advisement and Enrollment Management to provide overall direction, goal setting, and assessment of the student enrollment process (admissions, advisement, registration, Bursar) (p. 19). We recognize an Interim Associate Dean of Student Development and Enrollment Management has been appointed. We recommend this dean, and SDEM more generally, investigate internal issues in the enrollment process that may have contributed to the decline in enrollment at Hostos, and how they could be ameliorated. Despite SDEM's student outreach efforts, publicized in the *Semanario*, as noted above, a week before the beginning of spring classes a call went out to the Chairs, Coordinators, and Directors to help make additional last-minute calls to increase enrollment numbers. Whether the decline in enrollment at Hostos reflects the CUNY-wide (and national) community college enrollment decline, and/or reflects the need to refine the enrollment process at Hostos, should be determined.

- More systematized communication between SDEM and OAA, including a mutual process to target and support the first-year experience

Our report called for greater communication between SDEM and OAA (pp. 19-20). We recommend that the office of the Interim Associate Dean of Student Development and Enrollment Management meet regularly with the Provost, Chairs, Coordinators, and Directors to share the strategies and goals of the advising units, to ascertain faculty views on students' college-readiness, as well as to become familiar with recent curricular developments. At the moment, neither faculty nor advisors are adequately aware of what the other is doing (curricular developments and advising protocols, respectively), and our students do not receive the best guidance possible. Additionally, it is unclear what role faculty have in advisement when it comes to programs housed in their departments, and how this connects to the various advising units of the college. Finally, a closer collaboration between OAA and SDEM through a coordinated program aimed at supporting first-year students, both inside and outside the classroom, would be critical to our retaining these students thereafter.

- Greater coordination of all advising units; enlargement of, and an expanded role for, CDAC

Our report called for a consolidation of all advising units and their reporting to a singular dean, and an expanded CDAC in order to coordinate advisement across the college, establish common metrics of assessment, and implement best practices (pp. 19-20). If this consolidation is not possible, owing to the need for advising units to reside in separate divisions, greater coordination between all the advising units with an expanded CDAC is recommended. CDAC now has two faculty members, and two new high-ranking co-chairs (Deans King and Mester). We had recommended, and continue to recommend, that its membership should grow to include representatives from OIERA, the Bursar's Office, Registrar's Office, and Transfer Office, so that advisement strategies, goals, and measured outcomes are grounded in both data and the experiences of a wider range of Hostos staff who interact with students on a regular basis and can speak to their needs. Additionally, we recommend that CDAC's minutes be publicly accessible, so as to involve the broader college community in the discussion of the advisement of our students.

Lessons for the Post Pandemic – Follow Up Recommendations

- A college-wide team be created to bring together the best practices learned from the lockdown

We recommend that a college-wide team, under the leadership of a senior faculty leader and a senior administrative leader, reporting to the President, be assembled to investigate and document best practices learned from the period under lockdown, as well as the challenges encountered and not yet surmounted, which would then inform policies at post-Covid Hostos. Items for study include: effective and sustained training for online education; remote tutoring; effective remote departmental meetings, committee meetings, advising, admissions, Human Resources and other such administrative offices and services; the student experience with remote instruction; the student experience with remote college support services; an assessment of the effectiveness of remote instruction; and an assessment of how students were served and supported by the college during the lockdown. The resulting report should be publicly accessible, and opportunities for the submission of anonymous comments and suggestions by the college community should be made available.

We thank you for taking the time to read over these recommendations, and look forward to a continued collaborative dialogue with the college administration.

Sincerely,

The Senate COVID Response Task Force