

# BCC Committee on Academic Freedom

## Minutes of April 25, 2017

11:15pm, Loew Hall 200

Present: Roni Ben-nun, Irene Delgado, Farnaz Kaighobadi, Seth Offenbach, John Ziegler, Muhammed Conta

Total Membership: 11 (quorum=6)

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- **Actions**

1. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved, with one minor correction.
2. R. Ben-nun reported that he had reached out to both Prof. Sharon Utakis and James Verdicchio for the PSC's and Public Safety's points of view, respectively, on demonstrations. He had at that time heard back from Prof. Utakis, who relayed that, according to the PSC, permission to demonstrate is not needed as long as demonstrators are not using any volume enhancing devices, but it is a courtesy to inform Public Safety. Prof. Ben-nun will follow up with Public Safety.
3. The adoption of a position statement was discussed, and BMCC's 11-page document on academic freedom was cited as a useful model. The BMCC document accounts for CUNY, PSC, and AAUP statements on academic freedom, as well as the BMCC committee's mission, and it provides illustrative examples. The BMCC committee occupies a similar advisory role to the BCC committee.
4. The need to raise awareness of and make easily accessible relevant information to the BCC community was also discussed, including what to do if a problem regarding academic freedom arises or if a demonstration is proposed.
5. A student representative asked how much the BMCC document focuses on students and if the BCC committee will ensure that students are an important part of whatever documents it adopts.
6. The need to coordinate with the PSC and to figure out how the committee fits into existing structures was agreed upon, as was the need to map the current mechanisms for complaints about academic freedom infringements. M. Conta also requested that how students fit into the institutional structures surrounding academic freedom be clearly defined. F. Kaighobadi responded that any document would cover both faculty and students, and R. Ben-nun added that the committee will likely operate on an as-needed basis once the aforementioned needs are met.
7. S. Offenbach recommended gathering input from all concerned parties and publicizing the committee's existence as goals for the next academic year. M. Conta inquired how issues are taken care of currently, to which it was answered that departments, the PSC, Public Safety, and Student Success all play roles. It was reiterated the committee's role is advisory only, but that that did not preclude the committee from making recommendations to relevant parties after reviewing current procedures. Additionally, R. Ben-nun observed that a committee

recommendation might acquire more power if approved by the BCC Senate. It was also confirmed that students can reach out directly to the committee and suggested that various points of contact could be publicized on the new website.

8. The committee will not convene again until the following semester, but any thoughts or issues can in the meantime be emailed to the committee membership.

Respectfully submitted,



John Ziegler