Resolution on Faculty Authority in Deciding Instructional Modality

September 30, 2021

The College of Staten Island (CSI) is an institution within The City University of New York (CUNY) under the jurisdiction of the Board of Trustees. CSI is first and foremost an educational community. As a public, urban college, CSI sees its mission as “the intellectual, personal, ethical, professional, and civic development” of its students. (Preamble of the CSI Governance Plan)

It has long been recognized that Curriculum and Instruction are the prerogative of the Faculty of CUNY and CSI. According to Section 8.6 of the CUNY Bylaws, “Each college shall have a faculty or academic council, which shall be the primary body responsible for formulating policy on academic matters,” while Article I, Section 2a of the CSI Governance Plan states that “The Faculty Senate shall be responsible for the principal academic policy decisions of the College.”

In reaction to concerns about enrollment during the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Administrations of CUNY and CSI usurped the authority of the Faculty and violated the rights of students when they changed the mode of instruction of “on-line” courses to “hybrid” in Fall 2021, and

WHEREAS, CSI followed the CUNY guidelines set in September for Spring 2022 that moved the College to offer a percentage of 70% in-person/HyFlex courses and 30% hybrid and online courses,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that:

1. The mode of instruction for all courses offered in Spring 2022 and for all semesters going forward be determined by the Faculty of the College of Staten Island.
2. The Academic Department Chairs, in accordance with Article III section 4a of the CSI Governance Plan are to “provide leadership in the areas of teaching effectiveness, curriculum, and program development,” by working with their faculty and Dean to identify the mode of instruction of all courses offered through their departments.
3. That the 70/30 guidelines given by CUNY be taken as “aspirational and not operational,” to insure that the Faculty and Department Chairs offer courses in multiple modalities, including in-person/on-line/hybrid/HyFex delivery, that expands student access where it is most needed while ensuring the academic integrity of instruction at CSI.
4. That for Fall 2021, historic practices be reinstated by the Academic Department Chairs in collaboration with the Chief Registrar, those practices including but not limited to:

a. Allowing students to be moved from one section of a course to another section of the same course;

b. Allowing students to take an incomplete in a course and finish the course within the confines of the rules for Incompletes;

c. Allowing students in a course to take a “make-up” exam at a different time and place.

1. That the Faculty and Chairs of Academic Departments, in collaboration with the Chief Registrar, can change the mode of instruction from Hybrid to On-Line to best accommodate the needs of the students and/or the faculty,

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that:

1. That in Fall 2021, the Administration conduct a survey of its graduate and undergraduate students regarding their chosen mode of instruction, and that the data be analyzed and shared with the faculty and department chairs so that informed decision about mode of instruction can be made.
2. That students whose course modality of instruction changed from on-line to hybrid in Fall 2021, and who receive a WA in that course, are fully reimbursed for the cost of that course.
3. That students whose course modality of instruction changed from on-line to hybrid in Fall 2021, and who receive a WA, be given special consideration for Financial Aid and Excelsior Grants.