

## **Senate Proposal: Resolution to Endorse Faculty, Student, and Staff Membership on the Manhattan College Board of Trustees**

**Sponsors:** Senators Meg Toth and Heidi Furey (Faculty, SoLA)

**Date:** REVISED 28 March 2021

### **Rationale:**

The college faces ongoing challenges with shared governance, transparency, and communication that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Recent institutional efforts to gauge constituents' experiences on campus--such as the 2018 Council for Faculty Affairs (CFA) administered evaluations of administrators, the 2019 COACHE survey, the 2019 Institutional Priorities survey, the 2019 Student Satisfaction Inventory, the 2020 student survey about commencement, and the CFA petition from November 2020 signed by roughly 150 faculty--demonstrate the need to have more diverse representation in the college's decision-making process. While the administration has made efforts to disseminate information to its constituents through the Senate and at faculty and student town halls, the college's ultimate decision-making body--its Board of Trustees--has no faculty, student, or staff representatives with voting power. In the past, faculty, staff, and students have been able to rely on the Christian Brothers, many of whom played an active role in the Manhattan College community, to convey their needs and concerns to the Board. However, with fewer Christian Brothers on campus, the board of trustees needs concrete connection to students, faculty, and staff.

### **Solution:**

One step towards more effective and equitable shared governance is to give faculty, students, and staff full membership, with voting power, in major governing bodies like the Board of Trustees. In cases in which the students, staff, and faculty merely have advisory positions on such bodies, they should be given the power to vote. And in cases in which no representative position exists for students, staff, or faculty, one should be created. Such a solution is in alignment with our strategic plan, our mission, and AAUP (American Association of University Professors) best practices guidelines, which explicitly recommend both "membership of faculty members on administrative bodies" and "membership of faculty members on governing boards." (See appendix.) Currently, students, staff, and faculty do have an advisory role as representatives on Board of Trustee committees, but, according to the bylaws, they have no voting ability.

### **Proposed Resolution:**

Whereas the Manhattan College senior administration has expressed a commitment to shared governance and transparency in decision making;

Whereas the Manhattan College senior administration has expressed a commitment to communication to all constituencies; and

Whereas the current structures within the Board of Trustees put campus constituents in an advisory role without voting ability; therefore, now be it

*Resolved*, that the Senate requests the President of Manhattan College recommend to the Board of Trustees a revision to its bylaws that will establish one, new permanent seat on the Board of Trustees to be filled by a faculty member who has full voting rights, with the nomination forwarded to the Board of Trustees from, and selected by, the Council for Faculty Affairs;

*Resolved*, that the Senate requests the President of Manhattan College recommend to the Board of Trustees a revision to its bylaws that will establish one, new permanent seat on the Board of Trustees to be filled by a student who has full voting rights, with the nomination forwarded to the Board of Trustees from, and selected by, the Student Government Association; and

*Resolved*, that the Senate requests the President of Manhattan College recommend to the Board of Trustees a revision to its bylaws that will establish one, new permanent seat on the Board of Trustees to be filled by a staff member who has full voting rights, with the nomination forwarded to the Board of Trustees from, and selected by, the Staff Council.

Appendix:

Where available, see links below. Otherwise, follow this link to a shared drive with PDF documents:  
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1gE9xIGfgA4YqWMe8z8vkDyGbP54XmVJN?usp=sharing>

Contents of Appendix:

AAUP Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities

[\[https://www.aaup.org/report/statement-government-colleges-and-universities\]](https://www.aaup.org/report/statement-government-colleges-and-universities)

AAUP Statement on Shared Governance [<https://www.aaup.org/our-programs/shared-governance>]

AAUP Article on Faculty Members on Board of Trustees [<https://www.aaup.org/article/faculty-members-boards-trustees#.YFNwk5NKjOR>]

2018 CFA administrator evaluations [not public, but Dr. Shawn Ladda has the data]

2019 COACHE surveys

2020 CFA Statement on Shared Governance

2021 statement from Student Government leadership about commencement