**Senate Proposal: Resolution to Endorse Faculty Membership on the Manhattan College President’s Cabinet**

**Sponsors:** Senators Maeve Adams (Faculty, SOLA), Sarah Wacker (Faculty, Science), Richard Gustavson (Faculty, Science), and Swaminathan Krishnan (Faculty, Engineering)

**Date:** March 1, 2022

**Rationale:**

The college has acknowledged that our community faces ongoing challenges with shared governance, transparency, and communication that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. This is documented at length in the MSCHE Self-Study. In his email of 17 September 2021, President O’Donnell took one important step in announcing the formation of several working groups, including one prompted by “assessments of our shared governance system [that] have identified significant questions and concerns from all stakeholder groups.” We applaud this effort and the important work that the working group continues to do. In AY 2020-2021, then-senators Meg Toth and Heidi Furey (Faculty, SOLA) sought to improve one of these governance structures through a Senate resolution. The resolution sought to endorse faculty, staff and student membership on the Manhattan College Board of Trustees. While the Senate passed this resolution, the Board of Trustees and the President declined. The Working Group on Shared Governance has since then done important work in communicating to the entire college helpful definitions of co-governance and also in soliciting feedback about stakeholder concerns. As the MSCHE Self-Study details, the existing shared governance structures at Manhattan College, including the Senate, are not seen as working effectively to enact meaningful shared governance. On the one hand, this is because while “recommendations for policy changes can originate with campus groups or individuals, however, none of these groups is empowered to make formal recommendations directly to the President and the Board. Instead, these groups can bring their recommendations to the Senate for shared governance related issues.” On the other hand, the college needs to “develop shared governance structures” that include stakeholders in decision making.

**Solution:**

One positive and active step toward developing shared governance structures is to include stakeholder representation in existing governing bodies where decisions are made. Adding a representative faculty member to the President’s cabinet is a feasible and effective way of converting a governance structure into a shared governance structure. 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.” It is likewise aligned with the principles outlined by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges which has stated that "the president or chancellor, along with the chief academic officer, must play a central role in building, encouraging, and maintaining effective shared governance." We request that this faculty cabinet member be empowered with all the rights and privileges of other cabinet members, contributing their voice to discussion and decision making as an active and current member of the faculty that they represent directly. We ask, too, that they be allowed to report to faculty on those matters except in situations where confidentiality is necessary. Such a solution thus addresses issues of both shared governance and transparency. We propose this resolution as a complement to the work the Working Group on Shared Governance is doing and in the spirit of collaboration that it represents. If we are to make good on our expectations to build better shared governance structures, we will require the ingenuity and open-mindedness of many bodies on campus. Shared governance implies a distribution of power rather than a rigid and closed concentration of it. The Senate is identified in the college organizational structure (and in the MSCHE Self-Study) as one primary and existing shared governance structure. It is appropriate, then, that we propose this solution. We do so, furthermore, in light of changes made at comparable Colleges and Universities (listed below) that have made similar progress in improving shared governance structures.

**Colleges and Universities with Faculty Membership on Cabinet**

Merrimack College (2 faculty representatives)

Carroll College (1 faculty representative)

Allegheny College (Chair of Faculty Council)

Whitman College (Chair of the Faculty)

Salisbury University (President of Faculty Senate)

Stonehill College (“Board of Incorporators” with power to amend college bylaws, composed of faculty and senior admin)

Baruch College (Chair, Faculty Senate)

Millersville University (5 faculty members elected by respective schools)

**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;

Whereas the Manhattan College senior administration has expressed a commitment to improving or developing new shared governance structures;

and

Whereas existing shared governance structures put faculty constituents in an advisory role with only limited or indirect participation in decision making; therefore, now be it

*Resolved,* that the Senate requests the President of Manhattan College to appoint a faculty member to his cabinet, empowered equally with respect to fellow cabinet members, with nomination forwarded to him, and selected by, the Council for Faculty Affairs or via some other equitable voting procedure decided in consultation with the Senate and the Council for Faculty Affairs.

Appendix Contents:

AAUP Statement on Government of 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>)

Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (<https://agb.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/2017_statement_sharedgovernance.pdf>)

MSCHE Self-Study

(<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1bym5iNPvJHhd5rYmLFcbIYzYbyAby2d1/view>)