

# CUNY COUNCIL ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY

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**MINUTES OF THE MEETING** held December 2, 2005 at 2:00 PM, Baruch College

One Bernard Baruch Way, 55 Lexington Avenue @ East 24<sup>th</sup> Street

Department of Modern Languages Faculty Lounge

Vertical Campus, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Room 6-210

## **PRESENT:**

Sergio Abramovich (FUNIBER), Antoinette Blum (Lehman), Enrique Bruce (Hostos), Laura Callahan (CCNY), Monica Casco (QC), Jennifer Eddy (QC), Aristides Falcón-Paradi (KBCC), Marlene Gottlieb (Lehman), Rigofredo Granados (City Tech), Giulia Guarnieri (BCC), Eda Henao (BMCC), Annette Kym (HC), Elena Martínez (Baruch), Jenny-Lin Martínez (QCC), Nuria Morgado (CSI), Debra Popkin (Baruch), Alister Ramírez (BMCC), Alicia Ramos (HC), Liliana Soto-Fernández (JJC), Elizabeth Starčević (President, CCNY), Catherine Theobald (CSI), Carmen Valle (City Tech.), Eva Vásquez (York), Alan Wallis (BMCC), Ping Xu (Baruch)

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The meeting was called to order at 2:08 PM.

1. Minutes of November 21, 2005 were approved with minor corrections.
2. After a few welcoming works, the president, Elizabeth Starčević presented the Treasurer's Report on behalf of our treasurer, Lorena Ellis, who could not attend the meeting. Our current balances are: checking: \$2,186.06 and savings: \$451.08.
3. Elizabeth started a thought-provoking commentary on an article that appeared in the last issue of *On Campus* regarding CUNY's Online degree. She also mentioned an article on the *New York Times* dedicated to the language tribulations of a Japanese player with the *Mariners* and related it to the growing need in our society to learn/teach more languages than the ones that have been traditionally taught in our schools.
4. She went on to point out how there was no mention on news related to Hurricane Katrina's crisis about the need for translators to help some of the victims.
5. The president mentioned, as well, an article that appeared in the November 18<sup>th</sup> issue of the *New York Times* that dealt with the fact that "the military is falling far behind in its effort to recruit and re-enlist soldiers for some of the most vital combat positions in Iran and Afghanistan." (Cave, Late ed. – final, section A, Page 18, column 4). Among those positions that go unfilled are those of linguists and language experts. She related this to previous Council meetings when we discussed issues relating to teaching languages and how they impact our students' lives, the nature of language instruction, and the possible role of native/heritage speakers performing jobs that would be much more difficult to carry out by non-native speakers.
6. She told the Council that CCNY is currently revising its core curriculum. They have found that one of its strengths is the inclusion of foreign languages in it.
7. Members reported on whether their department allows Pass/Fail for language courses at beginning sequence, for required courses in the major, or ONLY for free electives? Members reported the following:
  - a. **Baruch:** Students in the **School of Business** may not take pass/fail in any course. Students in the **School of Liberal Arts and Sciences** are allowed one course per semester to be taken as pass/fail. Students need to inform their instructor of their desire to apply for the pass/fail option during the first 2 weeks of class. They need to get the instructor's approval and file a form requesting a pass/fail option.
  - b. **BMCC:** A "NC" grade can be assigned to a 1<sup>st</sup>-semester freshman who has completed a course with a "D" (with the student's permission) or an "F" grade. It can also be assigned to a **Nursing** course one time only during the 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> clinical semesters, when a student has earned a grade lower than a "C." Students who transfer to another institution should note that "NC" grades may be treated as "F" grades.
  - c. **Bronx Community College:** It has no pass/fail.
  - d. **City College:** This decision is not made by the Department. The Pass/Fail option has been allowed for beginning sequence language courses, and for required courses in the major for students who are

non-majors. However, the Pass/Fail option is currently under consideration in the Academic Senate. The position of the Chair of the Foreign Languages and Literatures Department at City College is that this option should not be allowed for any course that is part of the general requirement of the college, or for students who are language majors.

- e. **City Tech:** It has no pass/fail.
  - f. **Lehman:** It is not allowed for majors or for core electives. Few students use the option. No “D” is allowed as final grade in a 1<sup>st</sup>-semester language sequence.
  - g. **Hostos:** It has no pass/fail.
  - h. **Hunter:** It is allowed (credit/no credit). It is discouraged for majors.
  - i. **John Jay:** Not allowed for required core courses.
  - j. **Kingsborough:** Not done in the Modern Languages.
  - k. **Queens College:**
    - i. Students may apply for “P/NC” for only one class a semester
    - ii. No more than 21 “P/NC” credits may be applied toward the BA
    - iii. May not be done in any course in the major, graduate courses, ACE Seminar courses, English 095, English 110, English 120, Math 110, and WIC courses.
    - iv. Students may rescind their request for “P/NC” only during the “P/NC” period.
  - l. **Queensborough:** It is not allowed for language courses. It is allowed for free electives or if a student was misplaced and needs the credit to graduate.
  - m. **Staten Island:** This option was just approved by the Senate. It had never been done in the past. It was approved only for electives.
  - n. **York:** It has no pass/fail.
7. Based on Lehman’s comment that “D” as a final grade is not allowed in 1<sup>st</sup>-semester language sequence, Elizabeth Starčević suggested this as a possible topic for Council members to discuss and perhaps reach a common policy among language departments. This agreement could include departmental policy for acceptance of “D” as final grade in 1<sup>st</sup>-semester language sequence and/or whether grades of “D” in languages courses should be transferable.
8. For the question of whether any college had a Foreign Language/Teacher Ed. Program that would be interested in including Chinese, only Queens College and Hunter College have programs that could be interested. Elizabeth Starčević suggested that these departments contact Ron Woo directly to inquire about the desire of the China Institute to develop certified teachers of Chinese as a foreign language in NYC. [woo@nyc.boe.net](mailto:woo@nyc.boe.net)
9. It was announced that on January 30, there would be a LOTE symposium. They are looking for innovative/fresh presentations around the topic of creative ways of improving foreign language instruction, both generic and language specific.
10. Council members decided on dates for our spring 2006 meetings:
- a. **2/24/2006**
  - b. **3/24/2006**
  - c. **5/5/2006**
12. Jorge Abramovich, Director of FUNIBER USA (Fundación universitaria iberoamericana) addressed Council members to introduce the goals of his foundation. It fosters collaboration between universities of Latin America, Europe, and the United States to develop an instructional global network on line. Most of their

programs are post-doctoral and Continuing Ed. Members were very interested in what Mr. Abramovich had to say and asked many questions. For further information about the foundation and/or specific questions, please contact Mr. Abramovich at: [sergioabramovich@funiber.org](mailto:sergioabramovich@funiber.org). His complete address is:

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13. Elizabeth Starčević thanked our guest and noticed that his presentation came at a time when we are asked to consider the institutionalization of an Online B.A. degree within CUNY without much feedback from a faculty who has not had the opportunity to really be educated about what an online degree involves or the issues this sort of degree will create for instruction, students, teachers, and our institutions.
14. Possible topics for our next meetings:
  - a. Workshops for foreign language training (primarily for adjuncts)
  - b. Discussion as to how the Council would like to spend its moneys.
  - c. Fund raising initiatives, e.g. CUNY collaborative grants, federal and state agencies, ask book companies for grants.
  - d. Look into each institution's tutoring centers, how are they set up, and how do they train their tutors.
  - e. Activities the Council may be able/willing to commit.
  - f. ACTFL language policy (Look in [www.languagepolicy.org](http://www.languagepolicy.org) for information and ideas)
15. Jennifer Eddy, editor of the New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers (NYSAFLT), extended an invitation to Council members to submit an article to this peer-reviewed journal. The journal is published 3 times a year. The first issue of 2006 is an open theme. The deadline is Jan 15, 2006. The journal publishes articles from professors, graduate students, teachers, administrators, and education specialists; **all languages and all levels of instruction**. She urged members to write up something to share with their colleagues and to submit it to the Journal. The journal welcomes any contributions which further the discussion on world language education and seeks material on all topics related to instruction, culture, literature, learning, curriculum, materials, assessment, and research. Articles can be research or practice, pedagogy oriented.
16. Lastly, members asked that in the spring the Council start to discuss an issue that seems to be of concern and interest to many colleges: assessment of foreign language courses at all levels. It was noted that ACTFL's assessment method does not really work for most of our departments.
17. The meeting adjourned at 4:00. Council members enjoyed sweets and snacks brought in by all for all to share.

Respectfully submitted by:

Eda Henao – CUNYFL Secretary  
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