

COACHE Group Reports Spring 2024

Executive Summary

In 2022-2023, faculty completed the COACHE survey. Forty nine percent of faculty responded (A breakdown can be found in the report.) As in past years, faculty shared their concerns, satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the nine themes. The COACHE Committee, co-chaired by Gina Cherry, Gail Fernandez and Claire Wladis organized working group members to review and analyze the findings as well as make recommendations based on the findings. Five subcommittees were formed: (1) Service, (2) Scholarship and Creative Work, (3) Governance, (4) Diversity and Equity, and (5) Qualitative Data Coding. (See attached for list of committee member names.) While each subcommittee focused on a specific aspect of the report, the following areas of dissatisfaction and/or concern came up repeatedly throughout the report.

In general, faculty believe the college needs to:

- Increase time for research, and support for research more generally.
- Align policies around online/in-person teaching to student demand and faculty need to balance workload, and ensure online courses are taught by online-certified faculty.
- Improve communication.
- Address the existence/perception of a lack of trust, support, and transparency between administration and faculty.
- Address faculty feeling that there is a lack of care at the college.
- Address issues of discrimination and marginalization on campus.
- Create a more equitable means of distribution of service.

In fall 2024, the COACHE Committee findings and recommendations will be shared with the Faculty Senate as well as with the broader community through a town hall session and at academic department meetings.

The following pages include the recommendations made by the subcommittees. In some instances, the recommendations have been shortened and there is overlap between the groups. The last page of the Executive Summary has the names of each COACHE Subcommittee.

Recommendations

Research Subcommittee

1. **Increase access to time for research/scholarship:**
 - a. **Provide reassigned time for faculty who apply for large-scale external grants.** *As described in detail in prior COACHE reports, writing external research grants is extremely time-consuming, but necessary for securing external funding. Providing faculty with the time needed to write grant proposals is critical for increasing the college's future external funding.*
 - b. **Establish a program to provide reassigned time for research-active veteran faculty** (those past the first five years who no longer qualify for PSC reassigned time) who meet pre-specified criteria. Use a rubric developed by faculty-led team.
2. **Reinstate internal research funding programs and ensure that these funds can be used for reassigned time.** *Currently, for the first time in two decades, there are no more internal BMCC funding opportunities for research/scholarship.*
3. **Address Overall Workload**
 - a. **Provide more flexible policies around remote/hybrid work (remove arbitrary restrictions to online/remote work)** *Being able to have remote work and flexible options was cited as **critical for faculty to manage their overwhelming workloads, particularly by women, underrepresented minority faculty, and faculty with disabilities.***
We suggest that BMCC allow student demand to drive online course offerings, rather than arbitrary policies (allow well-qualified faculty to teach as many online courses as student demand will support).
4. **Access to conference travel funds:**
 - a. **Streamline the process for requesting travel funds.** *We suggest revising this process to not require advance approval as long as the faculty member is traveling to a standard conference in their discipline, and to only require submission of a single form with receipts after travel has been completed, similar to the process employed by the RF for grant-funded travel.*
 - b. **Increase the amount provided for conference travel to cover the cost of at least one national conference per year.** *Attending a national conference easily costs close to \$2000 when accounting for flight, local transport, conference hotel, food, and registration fees. Currently, faculty are paying out-of-pocket to attend national conferences because existing funding covers only about half of the costs.*
5. **Improve critical research supports and institutional structures:**
 - a. **Create a faculty research advisory committee, chaired by a faculty member, to be an integral part of institutional decisions regarding**

research (policies, procedures and structures, including budgetary allocations). *This should consist of experienced faculty researchers, but membership should be open to all interested faculty to ensure equity and diversity. Decisions about research resources should be made jointly by the faculty research advisory committee and administrators who oversee research (research office, grants office, etc.).*

- b. Revamp and regularly maintain research/scholarship website at BMCC to include correct information about current internal research/scholarship funding supports** *This includes information about internal funding opportunities, internal CUNY funding, process for requesting research supplies/software, conference travel funding/process, the processes for applying for external funding, etc. Currently most of this information is not openly available, and what information is available is scattered across different websites.*
- c. Establish transparent, streamlined procedures for requesting research essentials (e.g. supplies, software, space, travel funds).** *Currently there is no publicly described process for obtaining these research supplies. Equitable distribution is only possible if this process is transparent and openly available to all faculty. This should go on the research/scholarship website (see prior point).*
- d. Implement 360 degree evaluation process for chairs, staff and administration and include faculty input on the criteria/metrics to be used.** *When there are research/scholarship-related issues with chairs, administrators, or staff, there is no way for faculty to provide any formal feedback about this to BMCC. Having a 360 degree evaluation process for all chairs/staff/administrators would provide critical feedback about what structures/policies/practices are negatively impacting research/scholarship (and other aspects of the college's mission).*

Service Subcommittee

Key suggestions

1. There should be training and compensation for the service work and integrated into requirements for promotions and tenure.
2. A lot more reassigned time for service and service requirements should be commensurate with departmental size, teaching load and in line with transparent criteria.
3. Recognition for excellence in service can create additional motivation in faculty with an Outstanding Service/ Engagement Award or an Excellence in Advising Award.
4. Remote meetings and service are more effective, achieve greater outcomes and have positive experiences for faculty and students.
5. Clarify the student centric purpose of service and align the wider team towards standardized expectations.

6. BMCC and departments should explore additional meaningful service opportunities to better engage and reward contributions.
7. Department chairs should clearly and transparently communicate service expectations to faculty that promotes departmental culture.
8. Publish a list of college-wide service opportunities to encourage involvement and generate interest.

Diversity & Equity Subcommittee

Institutional Recommendations

1. **Demonstrate the college's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion**
 - The commitment should be financial and all institutional language should center equity and be trauma-informed.
2. **Conduct an Accessibility and Inclusivity Audit by an independent organization**
 - The audit should ensure that our space more than complies with regulations and is welcoming to all.
3. **Dedicate a staff person in Human Resources to focus on work-life**
 - The position should be robust and well-resourced, modeled after programs at other NYC universities that view faculty holistically and in the context of their families (i.e., Columbia University: <https://worklife.columbia.edu/>, New York University: <https://www.nyu.edu/about/leadership-university-administration/office-of-the-president/office-of-the-provost/work-life.html>) (correct link)
4. **All faculty, staff, and administration should participate in diversity, equity, inclusion professional development, such as the training being developed by the Race, Equity, and Inclusion Professional Development Committee**
 - Faculty who completed the COACHE survey indicated the need for all members of the college community to center diversity, equity, and inclusion as demonstrated in the following:
 - Provide anti-bias and culturally responsive trainings for faculty, staff, administration and others
 - Curriculum and syllabi need to reflect equity and inclusion
 - More support needed for faculty of color, LGBTQIA+, Muslim, Jewish, and aging faculty

College-wide Recommendations

1. **Hire an Ombudsperson to support those who have been aggrieved.**
 - Modeled after other CUNY colleges, such as LaGuardia Community College or Medgar Evers College (<https://www.laguardia.edu/students/ombuds-office>, <https://www.mec.cuny.edu/academic-affairs/ombudsman/>).
2. **Embed diversity, equity and inclusion in college-wide hiring practices**
 - Search committees should:
 - Require diversity statements with CV's or applications

- Include questions as to how diversity, equity and inclusion is embedded into the candidates' work
- Membership should be made public
- Provide bias training for search/ hiring committees

Departmental Recommendations

1. Increased transparency for tenure, promotion, and sabbatical process

- Clearly established requirements for tenure, promotion and sabbatical leave should be developed and made readily available to faculty via the department, the department website and/or faculty handbook.

2. Create departmental system of service based on time demands

- The distribution of service work should be consistent throughout all members of the department, regardless of status, race, and gender.
- Chair or designated department member should be responsible for overseeing the process.

3. Implement formal mentoring that embeds diversity, equity, and inclusion

- A formal faculty mentorship program should be established in which a new or junior faculty member is paired with one or more senior faculty member(s) in order to (a) increase sense of belonging as well as retention for all faculty, especially minoritized faculty, and (b) prepare faculty for the requirements of tenure and promotion.

4. Emphasize asset-based/equity-centered pedagogy in teaching and curriculum

- Ensure that historically under-included perspectives and voices are centered.
- Establish departmental recommendations for syllabus review (such as: [Syllabus Review Guide for Equity-Minded Practice](#)).

5. Collaborate with faculty on course scheduling and modality

- Enable faculty to have input on their schedule that does not prioritize status, tenure, or title.
- Respect faculty autonomy over course location and modality.

Governance Subcommittee

Suggested Improvements in Communication

1. News for faculty.

On the BMCC website (perhaps under the faculty/staff tab), create a tab with news for faculty, updated regularly, where faculty information is collected. Inside this tab can be links to other parts of the BMCC website with the news tab as a central gathering place.

The tab should include:

- Meeting announcements;
- Policy updates;
- New procedures;
- Links and info about mandatory trainings (such as the ethics training); and
- Copies of any BMCC-wide emails sent out.

2. Administration should communicate information and policy decisions directly and regularly with *all* faculty, so that information is widely known. These communications can be via email, but should also be linked in the news for faculty tab.

Suggested Improvements in Governance

1. The order of the senate and college council meetings should be reversed, so that the senate meeting is first.
2. Administrators should stay for full length of both college council and senate meetings, to demonstrate that they value the concerns raised.
3. The president's report should be shorter. As mentioned in the communication section, it should also subsequently be publicized to the whole college (it is currently placed on the senate part of the BMCC webpage; all faculty can see it, but many do not know it is there).
4. Administration should respond to senate resolutions within a certain time frame, both at the senate meetings and college wide, with the means of communication defined.
5. The Senate should send faculty attendance to department chairs.
6. Senators should be encouraged by their department chairs to give report backs on senate meetings at their department meetings; this should include sharing information and soliciting questions.
7. An organizational chart that includes administrative job titles and functions should be placed in a prominent place on the BMCC website. Such a chart does currently exist for BMCC, at <https://bmccprodstroac.blob.core.windows.net/uploads/2024/01/BMCC-Federal-AAP-2023-2024-Final.pdf>, but needs to be posted more prominently. An example of such a chart can be found on the Hostos Community College website, <https://www.hostos.cuny.edu/Administrative-Offices/Office-of-the-President/Organizational-Charts>.

Suggested Improvements in Faculty Input

1. There should be a faculty representative on the college cabinet.
2. Administration must create more ways for faculty to contribute to decision making, both inside and outside of the faculty senate. For example, the Brightspace meeting which solicited feedback and concerns from faculty was a good start and can be used as a model for how to bring stakeholders together on important issues.
3. We need policies to protect timelines for decision making, so that faculty are not faced with sudden emergency requests.
4. The College Council should involve more time for questions and feedback. There should be more dialog and exchanges, not just being talked at with reports of the administration's activities. One way to do this could be to eliminate the President's Report in College Council, post it ahead and/or do a 5-minute highlight.
5. Additionally, since council meetings are limited to an hour, other avenues for discussion on key topics should be created (see #2).
6. The administration should be open about hiring and involve department chairs in the process.
7. There should be more transparency regarding administrative decisions in general.

8. A committee on student retention should be established that includes both faculty and staff. For other pressing college issues, faculty should be contacted to see if there is interest and expertise.
9. Placing more value in faculty input and concerns can allow for new faculty leaders to emerge.

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