

## COACHE Subcommittee Report on Research/Scholarship

Research/scholarship was one of the most negatively-rated aspects of working at BMCC across the board. This has remained relatively unchanged across the last 3 COACHE reports spanning the last eight years. This points to an urgent need to address this longstanding issue.

### Summary of Recommendations

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.  
*RT need only be provided to faculty who meet certain benchmarks, such as particular publication, outreach and/or external grant funding amounts. As noted in prior reports, the cost of providing this RT only to highly active researchers who are past the first five years of their appointment is relatively inexpensive compared to the investment in research infrastructure that can in turn drive subsequent external funding.*
2. **Re-instate 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. These are critical as seed funds for securing later external funding, and are critical for faculty to conduct scholarship, given that BMCC does not provide faculty with research accounts or provide any other source of research funding. Faculty need these funds for different purposes (e.g., research staff, travel, reassigned time, equipment, etc.), and therefore they need to be flexible. However, since lack of time for research/scholarship was one of the most critical needs described on the COACHE report, all internal funding programs need to include the ability to use the funds for reassigned time.*
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 giving priority for online courses sections to faculty who have been formally certified to teach online (to ensure quality), and removing arbitrary restrictions requiring faculty to teach a certain number of courses in person, which limits faculty with substantial service or research roles from teaching online. 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.**  
*Currently the process requires multiple rounds (over a month in advance, and again after travel) of filling out confusing forms in CUNYfirst that are often sent back repeatedly for*

revisions. *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.**

*Current amounts have never been adjusted for inflation (despite heavy inflation since the pandemic), and even before then were never enough to cover the cost of 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.). Currently, the process by which all research/scholarship-related decisions are made at the college is completely opaque, and faculty are not formally involved in any way with the decision-making process, even though they are the ones conducting the research/scholarship. For example, even though faculty are the ones who bring in indirect funds to the college to support scholarship/research, they have no say, and are not even informed about, how those funds are allocated to research/scholarship.*

- 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, scholar incentive award, fellowship leave, 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. Create an Ombudsman position or similar entity for faculty to report workload (and other) concerns.**

*As discussed in prior reports, there is currently no anonymous reporting procedure for faculty who have workload concerns, issues with chairs interfering with research/scholarship, and other related concerns. Other colleges have an Ombudsman position that serves in this role, and BMCC could easily adopt their model.*

- e. 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. For example, faculty describe how research can be radically impacted in both good and bad ways by their chair, but they are often very vulnerable to the chair (and the*

*administration can be unaware of issues with chairs in particular departments because there is no formal evaluation process for chairs). 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).*

### Summary of Current Findings Related to Research

The top two most negatively-rated aspects of working at BMCC were 1) support for research/scholarship/creative work and 2) teaching load. Roughly one-quarter of BMCC faculty each time have rated “lack of support for research/creative work” as one of the top two worst aspects of working at BMCC. This has remained unchanged from COACHE reports for 2015 and 2019, revealing that lack of support in these areas has persisted unchanged for almost a decade.

Across all aspects measured by COACHE, research/scholarship was the most poorly-rated area across the board, repeated patterns from prior COACHE reports in 2015 and 2019. These results are summarized in Table 1. Research was the only overall category under “nature of work” with an overall negative rating (with more faculty dissatisfied than satisfied). All subcategories related to research were rating negatively except for “influence over focus of research”. The very lowest-rated subcategories across all “Nature of Work” items (not just for research, but including all service and teaching subcategories as well) were “support for travel to present/conduct research” and “availability of course release for research”, establishing these and the biggest issues that faculty face overall in the nature of their work, not just within their scholarship. Overall scores for these categories are practically identical to those same scores in 2019 and in 2015, illustrating that these problematic aspects of faculty work have remained unchanged for roughly a decade.

Table 1. Faculty Ratings on Nature of Work: Research

|  | 2023 | 2019 | 2015 |
|--|------|------|------|
| Nature of Work: Research                       | 2.81 | 2.84 | 2.82 |
| Time spent on research                         | 2.83 | 2.79 | 2.80 |
| Expectations for finding external funding      | 2.76 | 2.82 | 2.75 |
| Influence over focus of research               | 3.89 | 3.90 | 3.87 |
| Support for research                           | 2.46 | 2.67 | 2.64 |
| Support for obtaining grants (pre-award)       | 2.80 | 2.86 | 2.77 |
| Support for maintaining grants (post-award)    | 2.71 | 2.75 | 2.91 |
| Support for travel to present/conduct research | 2.30 | 2.23 | 2.13 |
| Availability of course release for research    | 2.26 | 2.15 | 2.13 |
| Ability to balance teaching/research/service   | 2.92 | 2.75 | 2.76 |

Notes: Red shading indicates negatively-rated aspects.

Scores range from 1-5, with 3 being neutral, greater than 3 indicating that on average faculty rate this aspect as more positive than negative, and less than 3 indicating that on average faculty rate this aspect as more negative than positive.

We note that many of the items above relate to workload, and as we will see in the qualitative responses that follow, having lower workload, including access to remote, hybrid, and/or flexible schedules, was a critical factor in faculty’s ability to balance their workload, including research. Because of this, we report on faculty responses to the custom item “In the wake of the pandemic, which of the following would be most helpful to you personally?”, where faculty were given a list of 12 items. Faculty overwhelmingly choose “continuing to provide access to remote work and flexible work arrangements” as the most important on the list (selected by 73% of faculty), and this was substantially stronger for women (78%), faculty of color (84%), and underrepresented minorities (85%). This suggests that continued access to

remove work and flexible work arrangements is an equity issue. Not only did women, faculty of color, and underrepresented minorities choose this at significantly higher rates, in qualitative responses, faculty described how this was critical to accommodate disabilities and health conditions.

Table 2. Percentage of Faculty Who Rated “Continued Access to Remote Work and Flexible Work Arrangements” One of the Most Helpful Things in the Wake of the Pandemic (from a list of 12 options)

|  | overall | women | foc  | urm  |
|--|---------|-------|------|------|
| Continuing to provide access to remote work and flexible work arrangements | 72.6    | 78.3  | 83.7 | 85.1 |

Qualitative responses from faculty reinforced the critical importance of the categories from Table 1, and the trends related to remote and flexible work arrangements from Table 2.

### Sample of Qualitative Responses Related to Research

Here we present just a small sample of quotes for each major category that arose in both the quantitative and qualitative data. Each section provides illustrative quotes for the most common themes. These were chosen because they were found to be broadly representative of the concerns related to scholarship/research raised across responses. (A wider range of excerpts can be found in the Appendix.)

#### 1) Availability of course release/ time for research:

A large number of qualitative responses described a need for more time for research. This was one of the most common comments across the board on the COACHE survey.

- The most important improvement would be to reduce the teaching load. We have so many other obligations, including increased focus on research and publishing. Additionally, class sizes are too large... Many of our students require strong support to achieve academic success, and it is not possible to devote the time needed to do that when we have so many classes, so many students and so many other responsibilities. Good teaching requires a tremendous commitment of time and energy. With the current teaching load at the community college, it is impossible to provide our students with the level of scaffolding and care that they need to succeed.
- Time is what is most necessary for conducting research, therefore teaching load should be lessened for those who successfully publish and present papers. The lack of formal recognition for research or professional achievements at [college], not just in the form of "celebrations" (wine and cheese) of those achievements, is demeaning and disrespectful.
- The formal teaching load is set [network]-wide through collective bargaining, but individual [network] colleges have the flexibility to provide reassigned time to mitigate the faculty's teaching load. [institution] has not made this a priority, and is miserly with reassigned time and other forms of support for research and scholarship. We need more time for the non-teaching parts of our jobs!

#### 2) Internal grants:

During the pandemic, All BMCC internal research funding programs (faculty publication grant, development grant) were eliminated and have subsequently never been restored. Most internal CUNY research grants were eliminated as well (only the interdisciplinary research grant and the PSC CUNY awards remain, and all of the research grants focused on CC faculty have been eliminated). This is a critical issue that has worsened substantially since the last report, and faculty described this as a barrier to conducting research.

- Re-institute re-assigned time for internal grants. Re-institute the Faculty Publications Grant. Give actual released time for work on large, time-consuming projects that are undertaken on behalf of the college.
- During the pandemic, both BMCC and CUNY suspended or discontinued a lot of internal grants and supports for research, and many of these have never been re-instated. But faculty research did not stop, and faculty needs for research support have not decreased--if anything, they have only increased. This funding needs to be reinstated and preserved during future crises.

### **3) Overall workload concerns:**

Across the COACHE survey, faculty described issues with workload. This often related to research/scholarship, but because workload inextricably involves research, teaching and service, this did not always fall just under the umbrella of research. However, because workload issues were more negatively rated around research/scholarship than other areas, we have included a general workload section in this research/scholarship subcommittee report. However, the issues described here are more broadly applicable, across all areas of faculty experiences.

Overall, faculty described feeling exhausted and overwhelmed, feeling that they could not adequately serve students because of a lack of time resources, and feeling that they had to sacrifice their health and/or free time to do their job well. Faculty often cited a lack of reassigned time for research (for faculty past the first five years of appointment) as well as a lack of reassigned time for heavy service roles. They also often described how BMCC students require particularly intensive help and more time from faculty, which makes it difficult to teach larger classes and greater numbers of classes. Many respondents described how the shift to remote and hybrid forms of work, particularly when it was flexible and responsive to faculty needs, allowed them to better manage their workload and save time commuting. Because so many responses discussed remote/hybrid/flexible working conditions during the pandemic, we also include a subsection focusing specifically on those responses.

- I find that the teaching load at my institution is such that I work seven days a week to get it all done because I also have a strong research and writing ethic which requires sustained attention outside of my heavy teaching load. Consequently, I work on the weekends, and early in the mornings before I come to teach. It's a lot and has taken a toll on my health. If I don't work that much, my research doesn't get done, my work does not get written up to get published, and my students don't get the best instruction. I feel strongly that they deserve strong instruction. If I had fewer classes to teach, I would better be able to achieve that elusive balance.
- Reduce teaching workload and expectations of committee work. My department chair mentioned the college wanted a superwoman. sorry, I am just human making great efforts with passion and care, and trying to balance out working (teaching, advising, etc.) and serving at the college plus maintaining high quality research, publications, teaching, and a family life (sometimes the latter and my health have suffered horribly from this and no one in the department seemed to care... the superwoman expectations).
- What I notice about faculty overall is that we are overworked. Too much is expected and too little is given in return. too much paperwork, too many committees, too much attention required for the bottom line. not enough resources to teach, mentor, guide students to develop skills. Faculty required to fill the gap between what they know students need and what they are expected to do. too much of the time it is impossible to fill that gap. Yet we go on.

### ***Flexibility of work modality:***

In particular, many faculty described how having remote, hybrid, and/or flexible work modalities significantly improved their workload and work/life balance. As there were several custom questions on the survey that asked faculty to describe positive and negative about changes made during the pandemic

at the college, many faculty responses described their opinions about remote, hybrid, and flexible work; this include comments about online and in-person learning more generally. A small minority of responses indicated that they thought that online learning was bad in general (14 responses total), and some faculty felt that the college should primarily teach students in-person, with only smaller numbers of online sections (24 responses total). However, the vast majority of responses (135 total, representing 78% of all responses related to course modality) wrote positively about the potential of online courses for students (with many respondents stressing that these courses need to be taught only by those faculty who are properly certified to teach online) as well about the positive impact on their own ability to balance their workload and achieve work-life balance. Many faculty advocated for removing arbitrary policies around in-person teaching, and allowing online-certified faculty to teach as much as is needed to meet student demand. The vast majority of faculty described how having either a fully remote, hybrid, or flexible work schedule allowed them to better manage their workload.

*Faculty comments about remote/flexible work and their workload:*

Faculty overwhelmingly described how having access to remote work and flexible work arrangements significantly improved their ability to manage their workload.

- My workload is manageable as long as I am allowed to continue teaching online and attending meetings virtually.
- The ability to teach online [during the pandemic] has been extremely positive for my work, largely in reduced wasted time commuting. NYC housing is too expensive and as a result I am a super-commuter; every visit to campus eats up a minimum three hours spent unproductively (I get motion sickness so cannot work while commuting). The pivot to online allowed me to rededicate 9+ hours/week on average to some aspect of my work—one-on-one with students, crafting feedback, or research and writing. Online is not for everyone; in-person is not for everyone. I believe that a university that offers both options will better serve students. I hope that those who firmly believe in one or the other will understand that their personal preferences do not necessarily apply to everyone else.
- Continue to hold meetings remotely (allow for remote attendance of in person meetings--this is essential if you don't want to marginalize some community members, such as the physically disabled). Allow for continued remote/flexible work arrangements, whenever it will not cost the college money or harm students.
- I was able to achieve balance amongst teaching, service, research and family life in 2014 by developing hybrid courses, one of which was certified as "excellent" by a national organization. However, out of the blue, without ANY explanation or transparency, a mandate came from the Provost that no more hybrid or online courses could be offered in the Science department ONLY, beginning Summer 2023. Thus, I am exploring my options for leaving BMCC.
- Allowing those who excel at online teaching to teach more online classes. This will allow for a flexible schedule. Truthfully, I work more when I have a remote schedule than in-person when I have an in person schedule.

*Faculty comments about online teaching specifically:*

In addition, faculty described the importance of having online courses taught by faculty who have been certified to teach online, as well as the importance of offering online courses in order to respond to diverse student needs.

- For instructors with training and competence, online classes can be productive options for students. (Instructors who don't have the appropriate skills should not be allowed to teach online. This should mostly solve the outcomes gap issue.)

- To the extent which the college is limiting online courses (for competent qualified faculty), I believe that is not a good decision. If students want to take online courses, and an instructor is competent to teach it, and outcomes are reasonable (e.g. for that instructor's online courses), that should be allowed.
- We as an institution need to be prepared to change to meet our student's needs. As a community college, we need to think beyond a typical student and include more non-traditional students, immigrants, and people in prison or jails. We need to understand that teaching should be based on multiple teaching methods, more flexibility within our classes, and not rigid rules on either being in-person or online line.
- There is much to be gained for continued support of online and hybrid classes. Many of the students in our department work full time or part time, and appreciate the flexibility of online courses (including those taught as synchronous classes). This is especially helpful when students have difficulty arranging childcare. Another aspect of increased flexibility that turned out to be positive is online meetings, which allow faculty who are not scheduled to teach classes to participate in meetings. For committees with large memberships, scheduling meetings over Zoom (or hybrid meetings) leads to greater attendance and participation.
- I teach a subject that has to be in person. I appreciate having fewer people on campus, having more space to work in and less pressure over room availability. The prevalence of online or hybrid courses has eased the overcrowding somewhat, and I would like to see that continue.
- There has also been a lot of negative talk about students not signing up for in person courses, and attempts to convince students that they are wrong to take courses online (because of concerns about course outcomes such as passing rates). But this is a deficit view of students. We should respect students when they say that they need online courses, and instead of negating or erasing their own ability to reason about what they need by telling them that they are wrong, we should ask ourselves how we can better support their needs to take courses online. How can we make online courses better? The same goes for faculty/staff seeking remote/flexible work arrangements—these should be accommodated unless they negatively impact students, and faculty who like and are good at teaching online should be valued, not criticized and shamed.

#### **4) Funding for research/conference travel:**

Many faculty described how existing funding for conference travel is much too low to cover actual cost (it currently covers only roughly half of the cost of attendance at a national conference). In addition, faculty described the process of applying for and receiving this funding as time-consuming and difficult.

- There should be actual reasonable financial support for travel. I am limited to [dollars] per year, so I must pay out of pocket for conference travel. That amount is less than many graduate students, it is embarrassing and absurd.
- There is not enough money for conference attendance and the paperwork we have to fill out just to be partially reimbursed is enormous. Nevertheless, conference attendance is expected for promotion purposes.
- If the expectation is that faculty be actively involved in research, we need more time and resources to do that. This means greater access to reassigned time for scholarly work and readily accessible funds for scholarly activities (i.e., attending conferences). The current amount allotted for conferences covers only a small fraction of the required expenses, and it is often a hassle to access those funds- it shouldn't be.

#### **5) Issues with administrative support and bureaucratic runaround**

Faculty also described issues with administrative support for research, including substantial bureaucracy that took up extra time and made it difficult to conduct research.

- The number one thing my institution could do to improve my workplace is to respect my time. This can be addressed through teaching load reductions for people doing research and people in major service roles, but a large part of the workload at [college] is intangible and related to the bureaucratic runaround that both faculty and students face at [university] as an institution.
- The institution has to work on reducing the Kafkaesque bureaucracy, the pervasive "pencil-pushing" mentality of many full-time staff members and the many rules and regulations that often border on the absurd.
- Restructuring so good chairs don't burn out and bad chairs don't sit tight for years making everyone miserable. I have a good, supportive chairperson right now that serves the students and faculty, and that person will probably not make it past three years. It is too much work with not enough support, but I had a chair for [number] years that did nothing but disparage and barely got anything done. That person wouldn't mind being the chair again and has already been putting that out there. The chair has a huge effect on the faculty and the students and if the job is done right it destroys the person doing it and makes it unattractive to people who want to do things for the right reasons.

## 6) Culture

Faculty also described issues with institutional culture, where their expertise as researchers was not utilized or respected in institutional decision-making, and where work-life balance was a problem.

- Actually listen to faculty input. There are plenty of opportunities provided by administration for faculty to express their opinions and provide input on plans so they can say they consulted with us. However, in general, the local as well as the [institution] central administration don't actually listen to our feedback. Our experience in the classroom with actual students gets dismissed in favor of data compiled by economists at neoliberal research foundations like CCRC. The reforms they are instituting will have unintended negative consequences because the policies are all based on work done by researchers that don't have a strong foundation in the respective fields (math education, composition, and developmental reading, as well as ESL). Our input, as faculty and experts in our fields, should be given greater respect and should be considered more seriously.
- Emphasize and facilitate an institution-wide movement toward promoting work-life balance. The institution encourages leadership, but part of learning to be a leader is to learn balance. I haven't ever heard that discussed as a leadership issue at [college]. Hard-working, competent leaders in all departments are burning out. We need healthy leaders for the length of their time here, not just until they reach full professor.
- During the pandemic there was a shift in attitudes that we were "all in this together" and all doing our best, and that we should all give each other the benefit of the doubt and support one another as best we could. The assumption was that people needed and deserved help and flexibility, and that their lives outside of work (health, family, etc.) were important and should be respected. This attitude needs to be continued. Many students, faculty and staff still have health issues, family commitments, time and place constraints, etc. Just because the pandemic ended does not mean that these went away. Going back to ignoring these factors in people's lives is inequitable and not in line with our institutional mission. There has been continued rhetoric to "get back to normal", but I think this is wrong-headed. I don't want to get back to normal. I want to keep the supportive and flexible culture and the remote/flexible work and learning arrangements (for faculty/staff and students) that we developed during the pandemic.

### **Analysis of Actions Taken on Recommendations from Prior COACHE Report**

A number of recommendations were made on prior reports to improve supports for research and scholarship, but while there has been progress in a few areas many of these recommendations, including some of the most critical ones, have yet to be implemented. Here we summarize actions recommended on



the 2015 COACHE report (because of the pandemic, no final report for 2019 was issued, even though scholarship-related issues were similar in 2019 as in 2015 and 2023). Specifically, we analyze which of these recommendations have and have not been implemented.

### **I. Reassigned time for veteran faculty past the first five years of appointment**

- Establish a program for veteran faculty who meet pre-specified criteria to guarantee a minimum amount of reassigned time for research. Use a rubric developed by faculty-led team.

**NO ACTION TAKEN SINCE PRIOR REPORT.** The 2015 COACHE report on research specifically stated, “Time was by far the most significant obstacle to research identified by BMCC faculty. The recommendation to create a research reassigned time program is the most important change needed to support research at BMCC. Veteran faculty (faculty in professorial lines who are not eligible for contractual reassigned time for research) with an established record of significant research achievements at BMCC must have access to regular, predictable reassigned time for research; without this change, other changes will have very limited impact.” However, even though this change was stressed as the most critical to implement, no steps have been taken to follow this recommendation. In fact, because of the substantial reduction in internal BMCC and CUNY funding for research since the pandemic, there are fewer routes than before for faculty to obtain reassigned time for research. Veteran faculty at BMCC currently have no more access to reassigned time than they did when the 2015 report was written.

### **II. Change institutional culture to better support research**

#### ***Department level***

1. Appoint an experienced and successful researcher in each department at the deputy chair level or higher to serve as Research Coordinator

***NO ACTION TAKEN SINCE PRIOR REPORT.*** *No department deputy chairs have been appointed as research coordinators systematically throughout the college.*

2. Train chairs and departmental P&B committee members on how to support & evaluate faculty research.

***NO ACTIONS TAKEN SINCE PRIOR REPORT.***

#### ***Institutional level***

1. Create a faculty research advisory committee, consisting of experienced faculty researchers (but membership should be open to interested faculty); this committee should be an integral part of institutional decisions regarding research (policies, procedures and structures, including budgetary allocations).

#### ***SOME ACTION TAKEN:***

***Progress made:*** *This committee was created, but then disbanded during the pandemic and has not resumed since then.*

***Still to be addressed:*** *The committee was constructed to fulfil the recommended roles as outlined in the 2015 COACHE report, and is not “an integral part of institutional decisions regarding research (policies, procedures and structures, including budgetary allocations)” as recommended. This committee, while it still existed, only once per year, and its only role was to review applications for internal research grants. Membership to the committee was not open and meetings are not open. This committee has played no role in, and has not been informed of, any institutional decisions regarding research other than choosing the specific awardees of*

*internal grants. This committee is chaired by an administrator, and faculty researchers have no leadership role in the committee.*

2. Create an Ombudsman position or similar entity for faculty to report workload concerns.

***NO ACTION TAKEN SINCE PRIOR REPORT.*** *No Ombudsman position currently exists.*

3. Implement 360 degree evaluation process for chairs, staff and administration and include faculty input on the criteria/metrics to be used.

***NO ACTION TAKEN SINCE PRIOR REPORT.*** *No significant changes to the evaluation process have been made that include faculty input or allow faculty to evaluate chairs, staff or administrators.*

### **III. Revise institutional structures to better support research**

1. Streamline grant submission procedure (single sign-off; clear approval rubric; faculty retain control of content—e.g. allow necessary reassigned time).

#### ***SOME ACTION TAKEN:***

***Progress made:*** *Since the prior COACHE report, the approval process for reassigned time to be included in grant budgets goes directly to the provost rather than through the grants office—this streamlining of the approval process for reassigned time for externally funded research has improved the efficiency of the grant submission process for faculty and has made the approval process for reassigned time more transparent. Since the hiring of a new director of the grants office, the process for applying for external grants has been significantly clarified, streamlined, and improved.*

2. Establish scheduling policies that reflect research responsibilities (eliminate on-campus-rule).

#### ***SOME ACTION TAKEN:***

***Progress made:*** *Since the 2015 COACHE report, BMCC has published a standardized faculty scheduling policy that clarifies specific details of the policy on faculty schedules and allows for more consistent implementation of that policy across departments. This has improved transparency.*

***Still to be addressed:*** *The continued distinction between virtual and in-person attendance of meetings and teaching is inequitable, because it systemically disadvantages certain groups (e.g., neurodiverse, introverted, disabled students/staff/faculty) and does not recognize the important ways in which faculty may be available to students (especially students enrolled in fully online courses) virtually. The arbitrary “on campus” requirement demands that all faculty teach physically on-campus twice weekly even if they are only teaching a single course that term. It does not take into account individual faculty administrative or research workload, expertise in online teaching, or student demand for online courses. This creates unnecessary commutes, a greater scheduling burden, and a more hostile climate for neurodiverse and disabled individuals that doesn’t improve anything for students. In addition, faculty who are the most involved in research/service teach fewer classes and therefore are more likely to be restricted from teaching online by the existing policy; for example, faculty who teach only one class per term are disallowed from teaching online at all. This is not equitable, and it penalizes the hardest-working faculty the most. If the main concern is serving students, then online courses should be allocated first to faculty with the most expertise in and commitment to online teaching, and should be offered based on student demand, not arbitrary policies unrelated to actually enrollment needs.*

3. Establish transparent, streamlined procedures for requesting research essentials (e.g. supplies, software, space, travel funds).

***NO ACTION TAKEN SINCE PRIOR REPORT.*** *The conference travel reimbursement system is still time-consuming and difficult, and the amount of research funds are still unchanged. There are no posted procedures for procuring other research supplies.*

4. Establish IT policies that allow faculty to procure and install software and research tools.

***SOME ACTION TAKEN:***

***Some progress made:*** *Since the pandemic, access to some important software/technology, like Zoom, has been much improved.*

***Still to be addressed:***

*BMCC faculty are still not allowed to have administrative access to their computers, and are therefore still unable to install their own software for research or teaching. Faculty input is not solicited about what research software or electronic resources they need, and the process for requesting these resources is not posted anywhere.*

5. Value and support BMCC faculty appointments at the CUNY Graduate Center.

***NO ACTION TAKEN SINCE PRIOR REPORT***

6. Remove restrictions from current internal funding programs (e.g. allow funds to pay for RT).

***NO ACTION TAKEN SINCE PRIOR REPORT:*** *The faculty development grant was modified after the 2015 report to allow faculty to use funds for reassigned time, but then that has since been revoked. All BMCC internal research funding programs (faculty publication grant, development grant) have been eliminated since the pandemic and have since to be restored. Most internal CUNY research grants were eliminated as well (only the interdisciplinary research grant and the PSC CUNY awards remain, and all of the research grants focused on CC faculty have been eliminated). This is a critical issue that has worsened substantially since the last report.*

7. Move up research leave (e.g. sabbatical) timeline so decisions are made by January of the leave year.

***ACTION TAKEN:*** *Research leave timelines now have two deadlines—one which allows faculty to receive a decision much earlier in the year, so that they can now make plans for their sabbatical year in advance.*

8. Create transparent and consistent process for all internal research-related opportunities (i.e. sabbatical, internal funding). (p. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**)

***NO ACTION TAKEN:*** *The official BMCC webpage on internal-funding has not been updated since the pandemic and is completely inaccurate and out of date.*

9. Increase the amount of travel funds available.

***ACTION TAKEN, THEN UNDONE:*** *Travel funds were increased after the 2015 report, but this has been taken away and reinstated several times, so it is unpredictable. No adjustments have ever been made for inflation, despite rampant inflation since the pandemic, and funds are still insufficient to pay the full cost of attendance at a national conference. Faculty attending national*

conferences must pay expenses out of pocket. Many faculty still express concerns that the travel funding amounts available are insufficient for conference travel, and are far below their peers at other institutions. In addition, **the process for requesting these funds and having them paid is very administratively burdensome and requires multiple unnecessary steps**—this has not improved since the prior report.

10. Increase available internal funding opportunities.

***NO ACTION TAKEN SINCE PRIOR REPORT. ON THE CONTRARY, FUNDING HAS BEEN REVOKED IN DIRECT CONTRADICTION TO THESE RECOMMENDATIONS. All BMCC internal research funding programs (faculty publication grant, development grant) have been eliminated since the pandemic and have since to be restored. Most internal CUNY research grants were eliminated as well (only the interdisciplinary research grant and the PSC CUNY awards remain, and all of the research grants focused on CC faculty have been eliminated). This is a critical issue that has worsened substantially since the last report.***

## Appendix: Further Excerpts from Qualitative Responses

Here we include a short selection of further quotes from qualitative responses related to research/scholarship. This is not comprehensive, but just provides some further qualitative responses for the interested reader, as we tried to keep the number of quotes used in the body of the report to a short sample that would be quick to read.

### Time for research:

- Bringing down the community college teaching load to be commiserate with the 4 year schools 4/3 - would be a great start... we have needier students and spend many hours advising/consulting with them outside of class and we have the same research/creative work requirements for tenure.
- Please give us release time for research, especially those of us who are writing books and monographs. The load is too high- this does not benefit the students at all. Too many students per course, with too many needs: we are in over our heads trying to teach them when they have so many other needs that need to be met.
- I think that my institution could reduce the number of teaching hours/year and that would greatly improve my workplace environment. It is extremely difficult to balance teaching load (large number of students), with service, with scholarly work. If we reduced the teaching load by just a few more hours, it would make it so much easier to excel in all three (3) areas required for tenure: scholarly work, service, and teaching.
- There needs to be more resources put into research. With the high teaching load and constant administrative tasks by the time I get to my research, I am exhausted. If there was more release time or just less administrative work this would lead to a vast increase in productivity. I feel that I need to choose between being an outstanding teacher and getting some research done.
- We had a recent reduction in teaching load which will make a big difference but we are still at 4/4 which is a lot of teaching per professor. If there were more support for research leave, more funds for supporting time to do research and travel to conferences to support disseminating research, working here would be much better. My colleagues only see me on the conference circuit some of the time because our travel funds here are less than what their students are allowed. So more support for travel, and more time for research would improve working here a great deal.
- The number one thing that would improve my workplace is to reduce the teaching load from 4/4 to 2/3. The students we work with need and deserve considerably more attention and nurturing than at other schools.
- The college should revise its policy for granting reassigned time. For faculty with active/busy research agendas, managing workload is difficult (writing, traveling for research or conferences while teaching 3 or 4 classes is unmanagable).
- The college must have a system in place (preferably at the departmental level), to offer a flexible teaching workload for faculty who are actively engaged in research.
- Improve course release time - especially after the 24 credits for new hires is completed. Full time faculty have few opportunities to lower their four-course teaching load per semester after that, as it lowers morale and is not an incentive to stay at the college.
- The institution should be more willing to work with faculty to address the problem of teaching load and reassigned time for full time faculty. There is strong evidence that shows faculty at [college] spend, on average, more hours in the classroom than faculty at other community colleges from within [area]. This data was already available after the previous COACHE survey, but no changes have been made.
- A fair work contract that would provide (1) reduced teaching load; (2) increased compensation; and support for research and creative work, including reassigned time for tenured faculty, our department is small and most faculty are tenured, so we all assume a greater than usual share of the burden for service (college-wide and departmental) without any reduction in teaching load or

expectations for research. even though this is a community college, there is strong emphasis on quality research and publication, without the compensation of reduced teaching and service to support research and publication efforts.

### **Work/course modalities:**

- Flexibility in online and hybrid teaching. This allows me to meet students at all times which was not possible when I had to be in school for all classes and meetings. The time freed up from commuting is helpful for improving teaching and research.
- Many of the positive factors [from the pandemic], like virtual meetings and working from home, are being rolled back, which is negative especially for disabled faculty, but increases commute times and thus workload.
- Stop micromanaging full time faculty choices for how they teach (online, in person, hybrid, etc.)
- The pandemic finally forced the college to accept the role of technology and the changing nature of learning and instruction. I was hopeful that when we are safe from COVID this innovation will grow. Instead, all I see are efforts to return to the old, ever ineffective ways.
- The online classes are effective and many students like it because they can work and get an education. Somehow my department was singled out and starting summer 2023 ALL classes are now in person. Somehow administrators missed the point here. We have classes for students and faculty who prefer teaching/learning in person. Keep the online classes. It is what most students want. LISTEN.
- Confusing priorities concerning online classes. Are we trying to reduce them or increase them? Are we responding to student interest, or working against student interest?
- [During the pandemic] the college became more creative and flexible in understanding that people can be productive and learn in other ways than a traditional sense. I'd like to see the openness to changing schedules and creativity continue.
- I have noticed that my online asynchronous courses fill immediately, while face to face courses do not. I guess it might help to do more online asynchronous courses.
- More online teaching was a positive shift, it was good for both students and faculty as long as faculty knew how to teach a course online. I say "more" because BMCC used to offer online and hybrid classes even before the pandemic. Recently, the institution has decided NOT to offer online and hybrid class anymore, instead it is aiming for fully in-person teaching, which I think it is a HUGE mistake.
- The college should let faculty (or the department) to decide the mode of teaching.

### **Other:**

- Additional conference travel support. I received more conference support as a Ph.D. student than I do at my current institution. It is difficult to network with colleagues and obtain outside feedback on my research without conference travel support.
- I need more support for research, both on and off grants. The office of institutional research is great, but overworked, and the grants office is terrible -- they routinely give bad or wrong advice, and we are discouraged from applying for sufficient release time in a grant.
- The college could reduce class sizes, be more pro-active about providing students with support (such as mental health support), provide more support for professors who are also currently struggling (such as release time, travel money, and sabbaticals), and overall not make it OUR job to "make sure" our institution keeps running by scrambling to increase student enrollment and retention at all costs.