

**City University of New York**  
**BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE**  
**2015-2016 Academic Freedom Committee**  
**Year End Report**

**Committee Members:** Silvia Roig (chair), Ainoa Iñigo (secretary), George Stevenson (secretary), Erik Freas, Peter Bratsis, Fred Peskoff, Sophia Clark

The Committee for Academic Freedom began the 2015-2016 academic year by electing officers. Silvia Roig was elected Chair & Representative to the Executive Committee, and Ainoa Iñigo and George Stevenson were elected Secretaries. A motions was made for both to serve as alternative co-secretaries.

Erik Freas volunteered to provide reports and documents from the previous year when he was the chair. Then the Committee began by reviewing the meaning of Academic Freedom and the purpose of the Committee. After that the Committee evaluated what should be the Committee's goals for the academic year. Peter Bratsis suggested that assessment issues could be an area of concern. Erik Freas expressed his concern on the role of faculty in assessment and the possibility of their role being diminished. Thus this could result in faculty marginalization or suppression of expertise in assessing real skills vs. testable skills. Erik Freas mentioned a resolution before the University Senate in response to an assessment at Lehman College that was not designed by the department but by an outside organization that the Lehman faculty took issue with, both in principle and in the specific assessments proposed. Peter Bratsis offered the idea of passing a preemptive resolution against allowing outside evaluators to design assessments at BMCC. Discussion moved to whether the issue of Librarians being prevented from using non-Library Science publications as counting toward tenure was an Academic Freedom issue or a university administration/contract issue, or even if it was an intra-departmental matter. More information was required to determine this and the Committee decided to postpone this discussion until further review and until we gathered more information.

We set up a system to make it easy for faculty to make suggestions or send their complains via email at [bmccacademicfreedomcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:bmccacademicfreedomcommittee@gmail.com).

Silvia Roig, the chair of the Committee, in the following meeting proposed to review the Academic Freedom Manual that was adopted by the Academic Senate on May 25, 2011. After reading the Manual and discussing the definition of Academic Freedom, it was observed by the Committee that the cases used to illustrate the definition were sometimes confusing and that some information was missing such as the CUNY General Policies and Bylaws and the Committee diagram. The Committee decided to focus on evaluating the manual individually and to make corrections/suggestions that would be shared and discussed during the next meeting. Later, Silvia Roig presented a detailed document with general modifications of the manual and she assigned a the following case of study for each member of the committee: the use of technology, the choice of learning activities, determining grades, the choices related to classroom discourse and the conduct beyond the classroom. Each member will come up with three examples to illustrate each case of study. One example will show a clear violation of Academic Freedom. Another will demonstrate no violation of Academic Freedom and the third an unclear

situation of Academic Freedom. During the following meetings, the Committee discussed each example, adopted appropriate changes until they were approved by motion.

In our final meeting we finished correcting the last examples of the case of study and Silvia Roig agreed to format all the suggestions. It was decided that Silvia Roig would send the revised version of the Manual to all members and voting would be conducted online since we had no more meetings scheduled for this academic year.

Two weeks after our final meeting Erik Freas contacted via email Silvia Roig, the chair of the Committee, with a request of the Executive Committee to write a resolution in support of The [Report of the University of Chicago's Committee on Freedom of Expression](#) (January 2015). Erik Freas volunteered to write the resolution and present it to the Senate.

As far as for unresolved business we agreed to review the Academic Freedom in the digital age in next academic year.

May 21, 2016

Silvia Roig  
Chair of the Committee