

BROOKLYN COLLEGE
POLICY COUNCIL

Minutes of the
April 22, 2026 General Meeting
5:00pm, Gold Room, Student Center

Present: Senior Vice President Alan Gilbert, Vice President Yasmin Ali, Executive Legal Counsel Jaclyn Helms, Interim Dean James Lynch, Dean Paula Massood, Dean Philip Napoli, Dean Maria Scharron-del Rio, Dean Peter Tolia, Randall Clarke, Aharon Grama, Professor Patricia Antonello, Professor Jillian Cavanaugh, Professor Douglas Cohen, Professor Mobina Hashmi, Professor Kip Marsh, Professor MJ Robinson, Professor Irene Sosa, Professor Brian Sowers, Professor Jolie Tong, Deborah Bernfeld (USG), Haikeda Hilliman (USG), Hailey Johnston (USG), Cyle Paul (USG), Ailyn Paz (USG), Fia Sanchez (USG), Ajadah Simms (USG), Keyanna Tyrell (USG), Beth Rocco (GSO), Nilgun Gungor (GSO).

Absent: President Michelle J. Anderson, Provost April Bedford, Judith Kenny, Professor Dov Fischer, Professor Namulundah Florence, Malak Elsaidy (USG), Doha Nemr (USG).

Non-voting: Sadiya Hoque, Robert Echevarria, Khadija Javed, Marcus Malivert, Vanessa Tseytlina.

1. Dean Maria Scharron-del Rio chaired the meeting on behalf of President Michelle J. Anderson and called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.
2. The minutes of the March 18, 2026, meeting were presented. The attendance record was corrected to show that Professors Jolie Tong and Irene Sosa were present and Professor Namulundah Florence was absent. Aharon Grama moved to approve the corrected minutes, and Interim Dean James Lynch seconded. By counted vote, the motion passed with 24 in favor, none opposed, and one abstention.
3. Aharon Grama reported on prior Governance and Policy Committee discussions regarding the classroom recording policy.
4. Senior Vice President Alan Gilbert reported on behalf of the Fiscal, Infrastructure, and Planning Committee. The committee discussed topics for the April 28 Open Forum, budget matters, and facility updates.
5. Dean Scharron-del Rio submitted a written report on behalf of the Faculty-Student Relations Committee.

6. Interim Vice President Ludovic Leroy submitted a written report on behalf of the External Relations Committee.
7. Aharon Grama reviewed prior Governance & Policy Committee discussions regarding the development of a bullying policy. Options considered included developing a standalone anti-bullying policy; incorporating bullying provisions into existing student, employee, and faculty handbooks; requesting a CUNY-wide policy; taking no action; or referring the matter to another committee.
8. The Council discussed the need for a standalone bullying policy, including concerns regarding definitions, retaliation, enforcement, existing policies, and support resources.
9. Randall Clarke moved to refer the matter to the Governance and Policy Committee with instructions to develop a standalone bullying policy. Professor Irene Sosa seconded.
10. Following a division of the assembly, the vote was 11 in favor, 5 opposed, and 13 abstentions. The motion passed, and the matter was referred to the Governance and Policy Committee for development of a standalone bullying policy.
11. Cyle Paul (USG) moved to extend the meeting until 6:15 p.m. Haily Johnston (USG) seconded. The motion failed.
12. Dean Scharron-del Rio adjourned the meeting at 6:01 p.m.

Policy Council – Faculty-Student Relations Committee Report

April 22, 2026

Members

Deborah Bernfeld
Jillian Cavanaugh
Mobina Hashmi
Ariel Maguire
Lisa Millsaps-Graham
Ailyn Paz
María Scharrón-del-Río (Chair)
Ajadah Simms
Brian Sowers

Topics and discussions in committee during year 2025-26

Recording policies in classrooms/offices

Building trust within the campus community

Student disciplinary process overview, confidentiality and Henderson Rules

The application and communication of the Henderson Rules

Summary of discussions

Members met discussed concerns regarding recording policies in classrooms and offices, and verbally relayed suggestions during Policy Council Fall 2025 meetings.

Building trust within the campus community remained a central theme, alongside continued discussion of strategies to better align communication between faculty and students.

Most of the meetings discussed the student disciplinary process and concerns regarding the Henderson Rules. The Committee invited Vice President for Student Affairs Yasmin Ali to our meeting. Members prepared a series of questions before VP Ali's visit, which she answered for our committee. As a result of feedback from the BC community (including Policy Council) the language in the official letters sent to students was changed to address concerns about student alienation.

The group reviewed disciplinary processes and procedures, including both mediation and formal disciplinary pathways. Questions were raised about the meaning of outcomes such as

“dismissed,” as well as whether participation in mediation could impact involvement in special programs. Across these discussions, there was an emphasis on transparency and the importance of ensuring that consequences are directly tied to clearly communicated allegations. The student behavior reporting process and the routing of discrimination-related concerns were also discussed, along with internal processes for case review and risk assessment.

The role of the Ombudsperson was also discussed, including reports of a shift toward greater involvement. Questions were raised about whether positioning the role within administration is sufficient or potentially problematic, particularly in the context of free speech concerns. There was consideration of whether multiple Ombudsperson roles—such as administrative and faculty-based—could better support neutrality and trust. Relatedly, VP Ali reported that there is ongoing development of materials to clarify processes, including faculty guidance documents and student-facing brochures outlining rights and procedures.

There was sustained and detailed discussion of the Henderson Rules, particularly in relation to protests, demonstrations, and political dissent. Concerns were raised about insufficient clarity regarding what is permitted, what constitutes a violation, and what defines a lawful directive. Questions also emerged about who is considered an authority figure in enforcement contexts and when the Henderson Rules are applied. Participants noted inconsistencies in the enforcement of policies, including the events policy, and expressed concern that the current framework may be insufficient in protecting students engaged in protest or dissent. There was recognition of the need to assess campus-specific implications and repercussions of enforcement practices.

A strong emphasis was placed on the role of students in policy and governance. Participants discussed the need to create spaces that ensure students have meaningful input and power in revisiting and restructuring disciplinary policies, including the Henderson Rules. Suggestions included open forums with administrative participation to gather feedback and document student experiences, followed by the formation of working groups to support re-evaluation and potential revision of existing rules. There was also consideration of establishing a student-faculty body to maintain ongoing communication with Student Affairs.

Concerns related to free speech and protest continued to surface, particularly regarding the relationship between disciplinary frameworks and the protection of dissent. Participants discussed the importance of documenting patterns of administrative action, and considered how institutional efforts could better support civic engagement. Upcoming initiatives were discussed as potential spaces to encourage dissent and align with broader institutional commitments to social justice and open discourse.

Finally, student support needs were raised, including the identification of a gap in after-hours student medical support. This was noted as an area requiring further attention and development.

Recommendations

- 1) The Committee suggests two events to engage the community in campus-wide discussions of the Henderson Rules, particularly as they relate to protests and free speech.

- a) At least one event to provide education regarding the Henderson Rules and the BC events policy. Topics that need clarification include what constitutes a lawful directive, who are campus authority figures (in this context), and conditions of enforcement. Some committee members brought up the
 - b) A student-led or student-facilitated event, perhaps an open forum, regarding these topics. Student committee members were particularly interested in having administration present and open to feedback as part of these discussions.
- 2) Consider establishing a working group to support re-evaluation and potential revision of existing rules. This group might explore the development of alternative policy approaches that better account for the nuances of protest and dissent.
 - 3) Consider forming a student-faculty body to maintain ongoing communication with Student Affairs.
 - 4) Finalize and distribute clear informational materials for faculty and students regarding processes and rights. Incorporate student feedback into the development of these materials.
 - 5) Provide a formal report on the Ombudsperson role and its evolution. Consider the establishment of multiple Ombudsperson roles to support neutrality.
 - 6) Align institutional initiatives (i.e., The Institute for Democratic Renewal) with ongoing conversations about protest, dissent, and free speech.
 - 7) Develop after-hours student medical support resources.

External Relations Committee Report

April 7, 2026

Participants: Ludovic Leroy, Kip Marsh, Lisa Millsap-Graham, Beth Rocco, Mohamed Tabrani

Summary of Meeting

The committee received updates on ongoing external relations and lobbying activities in support of Brooklyn College's programmatic and capital priorities. The discussion focused on current funding proposals submitted across multiple levels of government and the strategic approach to advancing these initiatives throughout the remainder of the lobbying season.

Lobbying and Government Relations Initiatives

Lobbying Efforts

President Michelle Anderson continues to build and maintain year-round relationships with elected officials to advance Brooklyn College's programmatic priorities. This sustained engagement remains central to the College's government relations strategy.

During the current lobbying cycle, funding proposals for key initiatives were submitted at every level of government, including:

- Federal
- State
- New York City Council
- Brooklyn Borough President's Office

In all cases, proposals emphasized the direct benefits to students, faculty, and the broader Brooklyn community.

Submitted Initiatives

The following initiatives were advanced through recent funding requests:

- A demographic study of the Haitian diaspora, spearheaded by the Haitian Students Institute
- A capital request for renovations and equipment upgrades at the Tow Center
- Support for the SRIJB program
- Funding for the Transfer Student Research Mentorship program
- Operations funding for the Haitian Studies Institute
- A renovation project for the campus tennis courts

Each proposal was framed to highlight student impact, academic enrichment, community engagement, and long-term institutional benefit.

Next Steps

The Office of External Affairs and the president will continue to advocate for funding for all submitted initiatives throughout the remainder of the lobbying season and beyond, maintaining active engagement with elected officials and government partners to advance Brooklyn College's priorities.