

PANEL & DISCUSSION

# FACULTY GOVERNANCE UNDER ATTACK AT CUNY

Wednesday Feb. 7th, 6-8pm

Segal Theater, Graduate Center

RSVP [klashley@pscmail.org](mailto:klashley@pscmail.org)

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The newly-proposed governance plan for School of Professional Studies concentrates almost all decision-making power in the Dean. What's happening at SPS could happen at any CUNY campus. We need to organize and firmly reject any and all plans that undermine faculty governance. Join instructional staff representatives from UFS, PSC, SPS and Guttman CC in probing and offering answers to questions about the future of shared governance at CUNY.

# BACKGROUND

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The practice of faculty governance assigns faculty decision-making roles, most significantly in personnel and curricular matters. Over the past 15+ years CUNY has established several new schools—like the Guttman Community College—as well as adopted new academic initiatives—like Pathways—for which CUNY Central has drafted initial Governance plans, policies and guidelines. In many cases, CUNY Central's proposals have reduced faculty's role in curricular and personnel decision-making and narrowed the traditional faculty role in shared governance.

The latest—and perhaps most egregious—example of this narrowing is the proposed draft Governance Plan for the School of Professional Studies (SPS), which concentrates almost all decision-making power in the Dean. While SPS's structure may be distinct from most CUNY campuses, the recent proposal will have implications for the rest of CUNY and lays out the general directions the university wants to follow.

Faculty at SPS, the Professional Staff Congress, and the University Faculty Senate responded to the proposed draft SPS Governance Plan, drafted by the Dean, with a series of criticisms, and a redrafted Plan is likely to emerge shortly. The following issues that emerged in SPS's initial draft will be challenging for shared governance at CUNY in the future:

1) **Reduced Full-Time Faculty:** CUNY has not hired sufficient numbers of F/T faculty to meet the needs of students, address curricular and hiring/reappointment/tenure and promotion needs for departments, or serve on shared governance bodies. Adjunct faculty usually have little role in college governance or other departmental functions, and, at SPS where adjuncts teach 94% of the courses, the proposed governance plan gives them no decision-making role.

2) **Attack on Department Structure:** Newly established schools and colleges within CUNY have minimized the use of academic departments and have assigned increased decision-making power to deans. Such control is accomplished either by not having formal departments subject to established contractual rules and practices or by expanded use of non-tenured faculty titles. The stealth attack on department structures on other campuses often takes the form of channeling resources into interdisciplinary programs, not subject to the usual governance regulations.

3) **Proliferation of Online Courses:** Across CUNY, there is increasing emphasis on online courses, which can remove faculty from the experience of collective decision-making and shared governance and permit increased management control. SPS represents the vanguard of these trends, and it is important that CUNY faculty examine, together, how best to structure governance plans that perpetuate the values of shared governance in a changing academic environment.