

## Brooklyn College Statement re: February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Faculty Council Meeting

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Brooklyn College has completed its investigation of the incident that resulted in the disruption of the meeting of the Faculty Council on February 16, 2016 and has brought disciplinary charges against four of the students who were responsible for the disruption.

The Brooklyn College Office of Judicial Affairs and the Brooklyn College Office of Legal Affairs conducted the investigation and determined the facts as follows.

On February 16, 2016, during a meeting of the Faculty Council, approximately eight to ten students entered the meeting room. Shortly after the completion of President Gould's remarks, the students stood up from their seats and took part in a "mic check", or call-and-response, in which one student read a statement and the other students repeated it. The statements concerned a number of issues relating to the University, such as tuition increases, the lack of a contract between the University and the faculty union, and reports of police surveillance on the Brooklyn College campus. The Chairperson of the Faculty Council directed the students to stop disrupting the meeting, but they moved to the front of the room where they continued chanting demands. The Chairperson repeatedly directed the students to stop and ruled them out of order. The Chairperson then stated that he would have to adjourn the meeting if their disruption continued. The students continued to disrupt the meeting, and as a result, the meeting was adjourned.

As the meeting adjourned, one of the students departed from their written script and chanted "Zionists out of CUNY" (or a similar statement). It is unclear whether or to what extent other students repeated that chant. After the adjournment, one of the students turned toward the Chairperson, who wears a yarmulke, and shouted "Zionist" at him. Several witnesses confirmed that the student shouted "Zionist." One witness stated that the student shouted "Zionist Jew"; another witness stated that the student shouted

“Zionist” followed by another word that the witness did not hear. Contrary to allegations reported to the media, no witness heard the phrase “Zionist pig.”

The College was able to identify four of the students who participated in the disruption and brought disciplinary charges against them for violation of several of the University’s rules regarding public order (the “Henderson Rules”). Two of the students resolved the charges prior to a hearing by admitting to them and accepting the proposed sanction; the one who shouted at the Faculty Council Chairperson agreed to a penalty of disciplinary probation, and the other student received an admonition.

Efforts to resolve the charges without a hearing with the remaining two students were unsuccessful. On May 20, 2016, a disciplinary hearing was held per established University procedures. The disciplinary hearing committee was comprised of two faculty members, one student, and one staff member. The committee determined that these students violated one of the Henderson Rules and therefore, imposed the penalty of a warning.

The four students faced related charges to the disruption of the Faculty Council meeting, not to the content of their speech, because it was their disruptive conduct that violated University policies and rules.

Brooklyn College is a highly diverse campus where all members of the community can exchange viewpoints on local and global issues and engage in debate and protest. The College encourages students to discuss their opinions and voice their concerns in ways that adhere to University policies and rules in order to ensure that the rights of all are protected and that the College can conduct important business essential to its academic mission.