

May 6, 2018

Dear President Anderson:

As you already know, I tendered my resignation from my position as Assistant Professor and Director of the Journalism and Media Studies program in the Department of Television and Radio. Because I never had the chance to communicate directly with anyone in a position of authority who was willing to listen and learn about the circumstances surrounding the program for which I was responsible, the department in which I was housed, and the egregious and ongoing compromises to academic/journalistic integrity that forced me to make a decision of conscience, I am writing you this narrative to provide a full accounting of my six years here.

I was hired in 2012 to assume the directorship of the Department of Television and Radio's Broadcast Journalism undergraduate degree program. Prior to my arrival, one full-time faculty member was exclusively devoted to the program; he came to campus in 1988 after a 25-year career in the newspaper and commercial television industries. Sometime in the mid-to-late 2000s, the founding director developed some sort of health condition that necessitated taking indefinite medical leave. However, his faculty-line remained technically filled and it was not until he formally retired could a search for a replacement commence. It would be the first full-time, tenure-track faculty search in the Department in nearly five years, and the first ever for a position related to the Broadcast Journalism degree program.

During this period the Department's leadership also went through a tumultuous change. The previous chair, Dr. George Rodman, had engendered a significant amount of ill will from other full-time faculty, based primarily on two grievances: open displays of misogyny—a significant issue in a department where half the full-time faculty is female—and a laissez-faire policy on academic achievement and integrity. In simple terms, the Department of Television and Radio positioned itself as a refuge of last resort for students who could not succeed in other majors on this campus, and grade-inflation was encouraged. This created a severely dysfunctional environment within the Department that would evolve into open warfare between two factions, headed by Drs. Rodman and Frederick Wasser. Dr. Wasser would ultimately challenge Rodman for the chairmanship; from that moment the relationship between the two would become increasingly acrimonious, damaging both the Department's institutional coherency and reputation.

In AY 2011-12, the founding Dean of the new School for Visual, Media, and Performing Arts, Dr. Maria Conelli, elected to temporarily place Dr. Rodman in the Department of Film until Dr. Wasser's term as chair of Television and Radio ran its course through AY 2012-13, due in large part to grievances both professors had filed against each other. Dr. Conelli also expressed a commitment that, outside of hiring a new director for the Broadcast Journalism program, no other School resources would flow to the Department of Television and Radio until it selected new leadership. This is the context in which the Department's search and hiring processes for my position took place, and I obviously knew none of this when I arrived in Brooklyn from Madison, Wisconsin in August of 2012.

However, it did not take long to get a sense that something was not quite right when I had my

first on-campus meeting with my Department chair. “The key to hiring a full-time, tenure-track faculty member is to convince them that they’re entering heaven on earth, but then slowly break it to them that they’ve actually entered the most exquisite form of hell,” Dr. Wasser told me. I was surprised at this but did not take it seriously, as I was occupied with assessing the state of the academic program for which I was newly responsible.

The curriculum of the Broadcast Journalism program had not been substantively updated or revised in more than a decade, seemingly oblivious to the massive changes that digital production/distribution, networked communication, and the collapse of industry business models had wrought on the study and practice of journalism more broadly. Overly focused on commercial broadcast television production skills, students were being misadvised, to the point of registering for unrelated coursework in lieu of required classes, by an ad-hoc group of senior faculty in the Department with no connection to or understanding of the Broadcast Journalism program. Student morale was a significant issue, as was the fact that the adjunct instructors who had been carrying the majority of the teaching responsibility in the program were not comporting to the curricular standards outlined by the Department or College, and there was no collaboration between them and the Department more broadly.

The first thing I decided to do was offer an expanded slate of office hours for student advising, primarily to identify and rectify prior advising-errors and address student concerns; I wanted them to know that they had a committed advocate on campus. At the start of the Fall 2012 semester, Professor Irene Sosa confronted me about the office-hour schedule I had posted on my door. I was making more time available to students than the minimum of three hours per week we were obligated to provide by the terms of our labor contract, which had expired several years prior and was under active renegotiation. Professor Sosa intimated that if the College administration got wind of the fact that some faculty were willing to work more than the minimum, that could be used as leverage to require everyone work more under a new contract. I explained my rationale for extended office hours, after which she left.

A few days later, I was called into my chair’s office and asked to explain my decision to hold so many office hours. After I did so, Dr. Wasser responded, “What do you care? They’re only students.” I responded that if we’re not on this campus for the students, then why are we here? Dr. Wasser was not pleased with this response and dismissed me. Subsequently, the three hours of reassigned time I had been promised for program directorship was revoked and I would be assigned various tasks related to Dr. Wasser’s position as chair that had no bearing on my actual duties. In addition, Dr. Wasser made several arbitrary decisions that unjustifiably complicated my work as Broadcast Journalism director, including the approval of student course-variances without consultation.¹

At several subsequent meetings, both private and Departmental, Dr. Wasser would attempt to provoke arguments with me, seemingly out of a desire for conflict. I sought out counsel from other full-time faculty, through which I learned the context of my arrival on campus. It seemed likely that I was being cultivated as Dr. Wasser’s new sparring-partner in the absence of Dr.

1. John Anderson, “RE: Broadcast Journalism/Frederick Wasser,” Memorandum to Stuart MacLelland and Maria Conelli, May 26, 2015, p. 1.

Rodman.² Despite the friction, I taught two classes per semester in my first year, completed my first book manuscript, and conducted a comprehensive assessment of the Broadcast Journalism degree program. It became clear fairly quickly that curricular triage was necessary in order to bring it closer to the comprehensiveness and quality standards required of any reputable undergraduate journalism program in the twenty-first century.

This triage-process involved revising existing courses and creating new ones to take the major beyond the realm of broadcast television. I also implemented an internship/independent project requirement, revamped the major's electives-requirement, which previously did not allow students to take journalism courses in the Department of English save for one, and created a nine-credit capstone-course replacement scheduled to run during the normal academic year cycle.³ The learning curve with regard to navigating this institution's curricular design and approval process was steep; throughout this process, I kept my chair well informed of the steps I was taking and asked for his input, which I did not receive. However, Dr. Wasser did make a formal objection to my initiative to the Department's curriculum committee, and I was allowed to provide a rebuttal.⁴

At our monthly Department meeting in March 2013, after our Department's curriculum committee had already examined and approved the proposed changes to Broadcast Journalism, Dr. Wasser and Professor Sosa attacked the changes, the program, and myself. My work was called "deplorable" and the two urged the rest of the faculty to reject the triage revision. But when the vote was taken, the only two who opposed the changes were Wasser and Sosa. Subsequently, Dr. Wasser amplified his resistance to changing the Broadcast Journalism program, lobbying the administration and the undergraduate curriculum committee of Faculty Council to reject our proposed changes.⁵ He even spoke in opposition to them on the floor of Faculty Council at its April meeting—where the vote was 89-1 to approve the revision.

2. Id. at 1-2.

3. In the Broadcast Journalism curriculum that I inherited, all students were required to take a nine-credit capstone course that was only offered during a summer session. While this provided a supplemental revenue-stream for the Department outside of the academic year, it caused several problems for students. First, it severely disadvantaged students who work full-time; as the "Summer Broadcast News Institute" (SBNI) convened on a four day per week schedule for most of each day, this effectively forced students to take a leave of absence from their places of employment (if they were allowed to) for six weeks. Second, not all financial aid programs provide assistance for summer courses, meaning many students were required to find an additional ~\$2,000 from somewhere to complete the major. Third, the stated College maximum credit-load for any summer session is six credits; as SBNI was a nine-credit course, special dispensation needed to be provided for every student who registered for it. Finally, College graduation regulations state that students cannot participate in commencement ceremonies if they have more than six credits left to complete in their studies; thus Broadcast Journalism students were effectively prohibited from participating in the commencement ceremony concomitant with their final academic year on our campus.

4. See John Anderson, "Re: TV/Radio Rationale for BJ," e-mail communication to Irina Patkanian, Mobina Hashmi, and Katherine Fry, March 31, 2013.

5. This necessitated writing an extended rationale at the request of the Council's Undergraduate Curriculum Committee; see John Anderson, "RE: Extended Rationale for Proposed Changes to the Broadcast Journalism Degree Program," Memorandum to the Faculty Council Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum and Degree Requirements, March 23, 2013.

Dr. Wasser's tenure as Chair thus came to a close and he left campus for a Fulbright-sponsored appointment in Finland for AY 2013-14, and the Department elected Prof. Stuart MacLelland to replace him as chair. Dean Conelli requested that I write a reflection of my first year at Brooklyn College. While I was pleased with what I had accomplished, I noted that "there's been little in the way of mentorship or even a sense of collective vision and commitment that I can identify" in the Department of Television and Radio. "At present, it seems that the [Department] is a loose (and understaffed) collection of teacher-scholars who all do important work, but not with any real sense of common conviction, somewhat dissociated from the larger campus community. And I wonder how pervasive this state of affairs may be elsewhere on campus."⁶

These changes we made to the Broadcast Journalism in my first and second years demonstrated to the larger campus community, and especially the students, that there was new life in our Department and its approach to journalism education. This resulted in a significant increase in student enrollment. It also caught the attention of faculty in the Department of English's Journalism degree program. In the Fall of 2013, I was approached by two of these faculty members, Profs. Paul Moses and Anthony Mancini. Simply put, they sought to merge our two journalism programs in order to escape a dynamic of hostility that existed between them and their own Department chair. While at first I did not understand why Brooklyn College had two siloed journalism programs in the first place, I expressed interest in exploring a merger, but explained that such decisions were above my pay-grade and that my hands were full attempting to restore the program I was responsible for, as it existed at the time.

I reported this conversation to Prof. MacLelland, who thanked me for the information and said that he had also received questions from our Dean and Provost William Tramontano about the potential for merging our two academic programs—discussions that were initiated in the Office of the Provost by Profs. Moses and Mancini. Such talk was in its early stages, said MacLelland, and I was directed to "keep doing the job that we hired you to do." In my second year here I taught three classes per semester, traveled the world to talk about my first book and related research, assumed leadership positions in professional organizations, and increased my campus-commitments, including advising our student radio station and becoming a Department representative to Faculty Council.

Initially, Prof. MacLelland and I worked together in AY 2013-14 to identify qualified adjuncts to help us teach some of the new courses we had introduced in our program; however, this occurred at a time when the College was burning through its surplus funding and rumors of cuts to adjunct budgets were just beginning to circulate, and no formal Department mechanisms existed for the recruitment, training, mentorship, or evaluation of adjunct performance.

The increase in student enrollment taught me much about the inherent challenges of working with campus advising, financial aid, and registration offices and newly-centralized administrative systems such as CUNYfirst; it also quickly introduced me to the effects that the politics of austerity have had on this campus over the past three-plus decades. There was no real sense of community or camaraderie in our Department or School; most faculty had retreated into individualized projects with little connection to Department goals and objectives, and worked to build up defenses against potential encroachments into their own domains. As chair, Prof.

6. John Anderson, "First-year reflection," April 23, 2013.

MacLelland's primary objective seemed to involve networking with key members of the College administration to provide any positive signal that the Department was being reinvigorated following the self-destructive tenure of previous chairs, primarily with the intent to secure more resources.

I interpreted Brooklyn College's motto, "Nothing without great effort," quite literally and sought to inculcate the culture of my program with this as its cornerstone. I did not realize at the time that attempting to instill rigor and substance would not sit well with many of my Departmental colleagues, who apparently saw this work as some form of existential threat. This would become very clear to me in AY 2014-15, when the seeds of my departure were laid.

Upon our return to campus in the Fall of 2014, Prof. MacLelland called a meeting with me to discuss conversations he'd had with Dean Conelli and Provost Tramontano regarding entreaties from faculty in the Department of English's journalism program about a merger. Considering that we had just revised our curriculum, and AY 2014-15 would be my third-year pre-tenure review, Prof. MacLelland and Dean Conelli thought it was prudent that before seriously considering this idea our program should conduct an intensive self-study. I was tasked with designing and executing this project; though other faculty members were assigned elements of the study, most did not fulfill their obligations leaving me to complete or extend their work. This project occupied the entirety of my time outside of teaching, advisement, and other campus/community service, leaving no intellectual or emotional space to maintain my research agenda that year.

The chair of the Department of English and Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences charged their own journalism faculty to undertake a similar process. At the start of this process, Prof. Moses produced a memorandum summarizing conversations he had with his Dean, Dr. Richard Greenwald, our respective chairs, and myself, in which Moses concretized his opposition to doing any work that would not lead to a straightforward merger: "We are, as I understand it, to examine deficiencies in our own curriculum. I told [Dean Greenwald] that what he wants to do is a waste of time. . . In my view, the proposal from TV-Radio [to do its own self-study] somewhat rescues the credibility of the process."⁷ Citing the fact that he had already navigated a similar process years earlier which "prompted personal attacks on me from the English Department" and out of concern that "there is already too much acrimony" between faculty there, he announced that he would not be participating in the AY 2014-15 work.⁸

Our Department's self-study was completed in March of 2015 and contained multiple elements, such as a curricular review, resource assessment, and student survey; a comparison of our offerings to both top undergraduate schools of journalism and institutions similar to Brooklyn College, including other CUNY journalism programs; and an outcomes assessment of Broadcast Journalism courses mapped to Departmental goals and objectives.⁹ Our curricular review set the

7. Paul Moses, "Re: Self-study," Memorandum to Eric Alterman, Jessica Siegel, Ron Howell, and Anthony Mancini, cc: John Anderson, September 24, 2014, p. 1.

8. Id. at 2.

9. See John Anderson et al., *Broadcast Journalism Self-Study, AY 2014-15*. At the time, our journalism program had no specific mission statement or learning goals/objectives, other than those outlined by the Department more broadly.

tone for the study itself, noting that “[t]here is no formal institutional documentation or memory of the Broadcast Journalism program prior to the 2012-2013 academic year” and emphasized that recent changes made to its curriculum were “admittedly limited” given the lack of dedicated personnel and resources.¹⁰

The curricular review also brought to light several deficiencies in Department operations regarding the oversight of faculty. For example, the Department requires all teaching faculty to deposit copies of course syllabi for archival, but this was not being done.¹¹ Of the syllabi that were available for examination, significant disparities existed between different sections of the same course, most notably in terms of quantity and caliber of assignments required of students by full-time faculty as compared to adjunct faculty. Faculty taught many courses with no journalism experience at all, in part because they were cross-listed with the Department’s undergraduate major in Television and Radio, which fundamentally diminished their usefulness in a journalistic context.¹²

Our summary of findings noted that the Broadcast Journalism program, on paper, “provides a relatively solid foundation of journalism education, in which every course in the sequence covers an important topic that journalism students need to understand, or teaches a skill that is integral to the reporting process.”¹³ However, in reality the lack of programmatic cohesion and collaboration between its faculty and the Department more broadly “seems to promote instructional duplication, not complementarity, across some courses, while sections of other courses do not fully comport with College instructional requirements. Important aspects of the fundamentals of journalism education, such as the cultivation of critical-thinking and writing skills, suffer as a result,” as did opportunities to actually produce works of journalism in the courses themselves.¹⁴ The report highlighted the fact that between 60% and 75% of all Broadcast Journalism courses offered in any given semester were taught by contingent labor, which “complicates the process of finding and placing adjunct and substitute faculty in a well-coordinated and timely fashion,” and made programmatic adherence to learning goals and objectives across the curriculum extremely difficult.¹⁵

Student feedback further illustrated these disjunctures: students noted that some courses the Department had labeled as “production-intensive” did not adequately teach them the promised skills, while others revolved more around assuaging the personality of the instructor rather than demonstrating proficiency in the subject(s) at hand.¹⁶ Open-ended responses to the survey highlighted complaints regarding “time-to-degree and financial aid hav[ing] been complicated by a lack of available sections for some required courses, and about how courses seem to get scheduled or changed at the last minute.”¹⁷ One in five students reported that they did not feel like they had adequate access to infrastructure necessary to complete their assignments, such as

10. Id. at 1.

11. Id. at 2, footnote 4.

12. Id. at 2-11.

13. Id. at 11.

14. Id. at 11-12.

15. Id. at 12.

16. Id. at 14-20.

17. Id. at 25.

internet connectivity, online campus resources, and production facilities,¹⁸ and some lamented the fact that most courses did not encourage them to develop skills beyond the purely vocational in contexts outside of the classroom.¹⁹

The Department of Television and Radio had no mechanism by which to catalog and maintain connections with alumni in any of its programs; many Broadcast Journalism alumni reported being unprepared for dealing with social/mobile media tools and platforms on the job, and wished they had received more instruction in writing across platforms and on particular skills such as fact-checking, as well as journalism courses dealing with particular subject-specialties such as politics, sports, and the environment.²⁰

Our external evaluation, conducted by Associate Dean Andrew Mendelson from the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism, confirmed and amplified many of the self-study's findings. Noting that the program "had been allowed to stagnate" and did not have its own mission statement or learning goals and objectives, Mendelson acknowledged my attempts to "revive the program," though he worried that "as an untenured faculty member, [Anderson] must develop his own scholarly agenda. It is imperative that he is provided both the support needed to build this program and also time to do what he needs to do to achieve tenure and promotion."²¹

Dr. Mendelson observed that the focus on reportorial skills, siloed by technological platform (audio, video, or online), precluded opportunities for "courses focused on subject areas, such as sports, arts, business or politics. . .students aren't able to explore advanced coursework that develops their storytelling ability, on subjects such as investigative, documentary, podcasting and virtual reality [journalism]. Finally, there is no room in the curriculum for students to explore topics of media entrepreneurship, management, and business models."²² From a curricular standpoint, "there are no standardized expectations for required courses, nor coordination between the required courses. Syllabi for different sections of the same course vary widely, and there is often overlap between courses due to the lack of coordination. . . .While faculty should be allowed the freedom to individualize courses, such freedom cannot trump the goals and outcomes of the program. Faculty must work together to create a coherent and consistent experience for students."²³

Dr. Mendelson's discussion with Broadcast Journalism students confirmed that "often there are not enough sections of required courses to accommodate student demand. . . .I found a uniform level of dissatisfaction with the major. Students felt stuck, too far along in their academic careers to switch majors."²⁴ This, in his view, contradicted the more positive findings of the Department-

18. Id.

19. Id. at 27-28.

20. Id. at 29-30. The Department of Television and Radio still lacks a formal mechanism by which to track alumni and maintain relationships with them post-graduation.

21. Andrew Mendelson, *External review of Brooklyn College's Broadcast Journalism program*, July 22, 2015, at 1-2.

22. Id. at 3.

23. Id. at 5-6.

24. Id. at 4.

conducted student survey.²⁵ In his conclusion, Dr. Mendelson concurred “with the department’s assessment from its self study, ‘In many important respects, the Broadcast Journalism program and its curricular maintenance and development needs long outgrew the system that presently supports it. This constrains the program’s ability to evolve and experiment with new courses reflecting the realities of journalism, both now and in the future.’ The ability to develop and update this program is impossible without additional faculty, staff, and equipment resources, but doing so also requires a philosophical re-orientation beyond the legacy media forms of television and radio news to reflect the digitized media environment.”²⁶

Though Prof. MacLelland mandated that our self-study not include a comparative analysis of our program relative to the one in the Department of English, Dr. Mendelson addressed this issue and recommended the creation of an entirely new Department of Journalism to be housed in the School of Visual, Media and Performing Arts: “Journalism is more than the tools used to produce it and the media used to distribute it; it is an academic field in its own right, distinct from both English and the more entertainment-focused Television-Radio,” he wrote.²⁷ He noted that any journalism major should “embrace a variety of storytelling tools and platforms, built upon the normative ideals of the Fourth Estate and a free press and the changing converged, digital news environment.”²⁸ Furthermore, Dr. Mendelson suggested that “the BJ faculty appear more open to reinventing the way journalism is taught, where as the English journalism faculty seem to see a merger as a quick way to get access to equipment, without truly embracing the need for significant curricular revision,” and worried that “a simple merger could, at a minimum, place the untenured BJ faculty member in a precarious and limited role, outranked by his new colleagues. . . . Building on Prof. Anderson’s passion, this new department could create a leading undergraduate urban-focused, multimedia journalism program.”²⁹

For its part, the journalism program in the Department of English produced a document of which the first dozen pages were a manifesto arguing the need for an immediate merger of our two programs; the rest was an amalgam of faculty resumés, clippings of previous journalistic works, and reportage about awards they had received. Their external evaluators suggested that both programs eventually integrate, in the interim as an interdisciplinary endeavor housed in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, then finally as a permanent program of the Department of Television and Radio.

While our Department’s self-study occupied much of my time and energy that year, I managed to keep abreast with my teaching, advising, and service obligations. However, Dr. Wasser had returned to campus and wangled an appointment to Faculty Council’s Committee on Course and Standing as its chair. As you know, this committee functions as a kind of curricular Supreme Court for the campus, where students and departments can petition for variances from degree program-requirements. Dr. Wasser, apparently sore from “losing” the conflict with me in my first year over the triage-revision to the Broadcast Journalism program, utilized this position of

25. This survey was written by Dr. Katherine Fry, and the questions were worded in such a way as to elicit positive responses.

26. Id. at 9.

27. Id. at 10.

28. Id. at 11.

29. Id. at 11-12.

power to exact revenge.

This revenge manifested itself in two primary ways. First, Dr. Wasser arbitrarily approved curricular variances allowing students to graduate who had not successfully completed our degree requirements. I had numerous discussions with one student in particular, both individually and with Prof. MacLelland over the course of AY 2014-15, who had failed multiple courses in the program, had not completed the major's electives-requirement, and openly expressed defiance at the notion of doing the work necessary for academic success. The student, a double-major in Broadcast Journalism and Psychology with a minor in Business Administration, was counseled to drop their first major with an option to downgrade it to a second minor;³⁰ instead, they appealed to Course and Standing which approved their request without comment, and even found courses taken at a community college six years prior to serve as replacements for the missing electives.³¹

Meanwhile, Broadcast Journalism students who needed curricular variances were denied them by Course and Standing. Several dozen students required these variances due to the fact that they were following curricular plans that pre-dated the triage-revision. Most notable was the fact that in order to change our capstone course from something that ran in the summer to a course scheduled during the academic year, we needed to change the course number. Doing so meant seeking variances from Course and Standing so that the Registrar could certify the new capstone as a legitimate replacement for the old capstone.

In January of 2015, I supplied Prof. MacLelland with a list of Broadcast Journalism students who needed the capstone variance in order to maintain their financial aid eligibility and time-to-graduation. Dr. Wasser refused to act on these requests until Prof. MacLelland, the Registrar, and the Center for Academic Advisement and Student Success made repeated entreaties of their own to Course and Standing—and then his committee approved them piecemeal over the months of March and April. In the process, some students lost out on a significant portion of their financial aid, and prospective graduates became increasingly concerned that they would not be able to meet the College-imposed deadlines for registration and participation in commencement exercises. At least one Broadcast Journalism student was denied the opportunity to formally celebrate the accomplishment they and their family had worked so hard for.³²

Further complicating matters were fundamental compromises to journalistic ethics in our coursework that I discovered through the self-study's curricular review process and in student advising meetings. In AY 2013-14, our Department had hired a long-time adjunct instructor with nearly two dozen local Emmy awards in television news reporting to their name to serve as the core instructor in our newswriting, TV news reporting, and capstone courses at the limited-term Substitute Assistant Professor level. I discovered that this instructor essentially taught the same

30. See John Anderson, "RE: Nickesha Johnson – 14195792," Memorandum to Stuart MacLelland, April 20, 2015.

31. See Anderson, "RE: Broadcast Journalism/Frederick Wasser" at 3-4, and John Anderson, "Course and Standing Wrinkles," e-mail communication to Maria Conelli, June 4, 2015.

32. Anderson, "RE: Broadcast Journalism/Frederick Wasser" at 3. Problems with the timely granting of variances such as these continued throughout Dr. Wasser's tenure as chair of Course and Standing, which finally ended at the conclusion of AY 2016-17.

material in every class, using pedagogical techniques more in-line with boot camp than a classroom: essentially, students were denigrated until they broke and capitulated to the whims of the instructor, at which point their stories were wholly molded by the instructor, from shot-selection to writing style.

My first inkling that something might be amiss came in the summer of 2013, when this instructor contacted me with a concern about how to grade a student whose work they found problematic. I responded that they should be given the grade that they deserved, to which the instructor replied that they give out no grade lower than a B- because to do so “would make me look bad.”³³ Imagine my surprise when, the following Spring, I learned that our program had won the College Emmy award for Best Student Newscast, for a program produced in our capstone course taught by the instructor in question. College-produced publicity materials prominently touted the work of our students—one of whom was the deficient student who had failed to complete our curricular requirements, but would ultimately receive a waiver from Course and Standing to graduate with a degree from our program and walk the red carpet in Los Angeles holding an Emmy trophy.³⁴

Additional investigation conducted as a part of our self-study turned up evidence that the work the instructor submitted for Emmy consideration was not an accurate representation of the caliber of storytelling produced by the capstone students themselves. Rather, once the course had concluded and grades were tendered, the instructor cajoled a bevy of graduate teaching assistants and selected alumni into “correcting” and “sweetening” the newscasts in a flurry of post-post-production. This included wholly re-cutting student stories, making technical improvements such as color-correction and audio manipulation, and redoing the graphics throughout the newscasts. *That* was the work ultimately submitted into awards competitions such as the Emmys.³⁵ Subsequent conversations with graduate assistants who worked with this instructor over the span of several years confirmed that this practice was pervasive.

Honesty and transparency are core elements of journalistic integrity and ethics, and to know that colleagues in my program were actively undermining these values for personal gain alarmed me in a manner that I still find difficult to put into words. As a part of my third-year review process, and after our self-study had been completed, I produced memoranda documenting both Dr. Wasser’s bullying behavior and sabotage of the Broadcast Journalism program’s academic integrity, and our Substitute Assistant Professor’s ethical corruption. As the Broadcast Journalism program itself remained in a state of great flux and our Department had just hired another full-time, tenure-track faculty member with experience running a journalism program at a college in Long Island to start in AY 2015-16, I recommended that I should step aside from program directorship so that I could reacquire the proper balance of teaching, research, service, and sanity required of a tenure-track faculty member, and to protect my students from further retributive actions.

33. John Anderson, “RE: Barbara Nevins Taylor,” Memorandum to Stuart MacLelland, April 29, 2015, at 2.

34. See Brooklyn College Office of Communications and Marketing, “A Resumé Booster with a Ring to It,” *BC News*, April 30, 2014, http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/web/news/bcnews/bcnews_140430b.php.

35. Anderson, “RE: Barbara Nevins Taylor” at 4-5, 10.

In prior conversations about these problems. Prof. MacLelland's advice had been to "keep your mouth shut until you get tenure," but that position, in my view, was no longer professionally or personally tenable given how I had been treated and what I had discovered. "[W]e would be better served by a person that does not have a target painted on their back," I wrote. "I also did not come here to oversee a degree-mill."³⁶ I provided copies of these memoranda to Dean Conelli as well, knowing that I would also be meeting with her as a part of my third-year review.

I was also directed by Dean Conelli to produce a document reflecting on my first three years at Brooklyn College. While I had accomplished much, "I quickly learned in Year One that the atrophy and apathy I discovered in my program extended beyond it, and after spending several months conducting my triage assessment and preparing the foundation to begin critical revisions, I found myself in a pitched battle within my own department...over the very legitimacy of my proposed changes." I noted how, in Year Two, I'd been approached by faculty in the Department of English about merging our journalism programs: "I think a majority of English Journalism faculty saw defecting to our program as an easy out from their own fractured internal dynamics. However, since then it has been those dynamics that have captured thinking about the future of journalism education more broadly at Brooklyn College."³⁷

Although both programs were in the terminal phase of their self- and external studies, I observed that "not only were notions of eventual integration of journalism education on our campus taken off the table" as a part of this process, "but preferences for journalism education to ultimately reside in English were strongly articulated. Suddenly, I found myself having to justify my program's existence and legitimacy again. . . . [T]his year, I've learned that autonomy is a double-edged sword; in many respects, we as faculty and program directors are left to our own devices because there is simply not enough hours in the day for effective oversight or engagement. Sometimes, it feels like I'm in a Hunger Games-like competition for attention and resources, in which important initiatives are subject to manipulation for self-preservational or promotional advantage at the expense of instructional cohesion and quality." So much had transpired on all fronts in my first three years that "it positively overwhelms me at times. I'm admittedly still naïve enough to not have a solid grasp on which challenges I face are truly existential, and which are just the price of admission to modern academia as practiced within the CUNY system during an era of austerity. I hope that, between now and the time I am proposed for promotion or tenure, that I find the most constructive balance between all the threads of my academic career."³⁸

On June 3, 2015, I had my formal third-year review meetings with both Dean Conelli and Prof. MacLelland. At my meeting with the Dean, she first went over her written report of my work, and then suggested that we "read between the lines." First I was told that she had received and read my memoranda but planned to shred them. Furthermore, she would take the official position, if asked about any of these matters, that she had *not* been informed of my concerns, and strongly suggested that any problems I was having should be addressed solely to my chair.

My meeting with Prof. MacLelland occurred directly after my meeting with Dean Conelli. I was

36. Anderson, "RE: Broadcast Journalism/Frederick Wasser" at 4.

37. John Anderson, "Third-Year Reflection," March 1, 2015 at 2-3.

38. *Id.* at 3.

unprepared for the verbal lashing I received from my chair. Prof. MacLelland excoriated me for blowing the whistle on our fraudulently obtained Emmy: “Look, we won, and that’s all that matters”—it was more important that we *look* good, but not actually *be* good. He took specific umbrage with my categorization of our Broadcast Journalism program as a degree-mill, despite the mounting evidence supporting this assertion. Finally, he produced a copy of my job description and tossed it across his desk at me, exclaiming, “This is the fucking job we hired you to do, and you will do it, no questions, and if you don’t like it you don’t have to stay. Is that clear?”

I walked home from campus afterward in a daze, though I distinctly remember feeling like something had broken in me that day. My workplace seemed actively hostile now. How could I oversee, much less rebuild, a journalism program if no consensus existed in our Department on fundamental questions of ethical and moral import that lie at the heart of journalism itself? As the avenues of communication in the Department and School on these matters seemed to have broken down, I turned to the last place I thought I might find help: my union.

I made contact with one of our campus’ grievance counselors, who was very receptive to my concerns and suggested that my documentation of Dr. Wasser’s behavior was “explosive” on several counts. They also agreed that the academic malfeasance perpetuated by a contingent instructor and seemingly sanctioned by my Department and School were problematic.³⁹ Their reading of my third-year review from Dean Conelli suggested that “[y]ou clearly have the scholarship for tenure and promotion. . . .In fact, I see an argument for going up for promotion during the next round.”⁴⁰ However, they were less enthusiastic about pursuing a formal complaint or grievance against any senior faculty in my Department, noting potential consequences I might face from them as an untenured professor. I explained that I was well aware of the consequences but had an obligation, both as an educator and a journalist, to report these transgressions and seek some sort of just resolution. Shortly thereafter the counselor notified me that they were “off the clock” on Annual (summer) Leave and that I should contact PSC-CUNY’s central office for next steps.

I had one phone call with a person in that office, who simply reiterated to me the severity of my allegations. They also informed me that, although our contract contained disciplinary provisions for academic or professional misconduct among faculty members, they had never actually been formally exercised, and that the consequences of doing so could be fatal for my career at Brooklyn College. Again I acknowledged these risks and asked for advice on next steps; the second counselor was noncommittal and promised that they would follow up on my case. This

39. See PSC-CUNY Contract, Articles 21.1(b) [Neglect of duty] and 21.1(d) [Conduct unbecoming a member of the staff], available at <http://www.psc-cuny.org/contract/article-21-disciplinary-actions>; see also City University of New York, *Policy on Reporting of Alleged Misconduct*, Section 1.2 [What Should Be Reported], which includes “Conflict of interest or ethics,” “Research or academic misconduct by faculty or staff,” and “Retaliation for reporting misconduct under this Policy,” available at <http://www1.cuny.edu/sites/onboard/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/reporting-on-alleged-misconduct-020902015.pdf>.

40. See Jocelyn Wills, “Re: complaint/grievance procedure,” e-mail communication received June 14, 2015.

never occurred, and the time-window to pursue claims such as these as defined by our labor contract lapsed without any action taken. With all available options exhausted, I felt well and truly alone on multiple levels.

In July of 2015, I was re-approached by Professors Moses and Mancini from the Department of English to attend a meeting they were convening at a CUNY property in Manhattan to discuss the potential for a merger of our two journalism programs. I was surprised by this entreaty, considering that Prof. Moses had opted out of the study-process and that neither Deans of our respective Schools had yet responded to our self- and external study reports. I reported this invitation to my chair; Professor MacLelland told me to “take the meeting,” so I did.

When I arrived, in the room were Profs. Moses, Mancini, and Alterman from the Department of English, along with Dr. Ted Hamm, the director of the Journalism and New Media Studies program at St. Joseph’s College, who had been tapped to serve as discussion facilitator. Initially, the tenor of our discussion was quite cordial, until Dean Greenwald arrived: he had not been informed that I would be in attendance and directed me to leave. After informing him that two of his faculty members had invited me, he left and placed an urgent phone call to Provost William Tramontano. The Provost subsequently contacted Dean Conelli and expressed his displeasure with my “intervention” into another department’s business; Dean Conelli then contacted Professor MacLelland. My chair initially chastised me for being at the meeting, until I reminded him that he had directed me to do so.

During the Manhattan gathering, we sketched out a theoretical and skeletal integration of our journalism curricula. I considered the exercise more of a thought experiment than anything else, but I did not know that Prof. Moses subsequently drafted a more formalized proposal to his Dean that highlighted my tentative support for the idea.⁴¹ Just before the start of the Fall 2015 semester, I was summoned to my chair’s office and informed that he and Dean Conelli had decided that we would “go it alone” regarding any future revisions to the Broadcast Journalism program. My colleagues in the Department of English apparently received a similar mandate from their Dean and chair. In follow-up communications, Prof. MacLelland advised me to “tread carefully here, John. No one has asked Paul [Moses] to author this missive. He is really jumping the gun by circulating a document, however complete or incomplete, before Deans and higher ranking administrators have had a chance to discuss the external evaluations. I tried to explain. . .that Journalism at Brooklyn College will not be determined by a 100 yard dash. I assure you that English will not beat us to the punch by lobbing the first volley over the bow. . . .You have my support to start drafting curriculum as per the TVR perspective to be reviewed only by TVR Faculty at this point.”⁴²

I was puzzled by this response, and replied in part, “It’s not important to me who files the first plan so much as it is that there is consensus over what that plan actually says we will do. Again, all of the study-documents that have been produced over the last year show that everyone needs to make changes, and that TVRA/VMPA is the presumed end-state home for journalism

41. See Paul Moses, “Re: Journalism curriculum,” Memorandum to Dean Richard Greenwald, August 13, 2015.

42. Stuart MacLelland, “Re: “English integrated journalism degree memo,” e-mail communication received August 13, 2015.

education here. . . . It seems to me like this has the potential to turn into a dispute between line-level faculty and administrators (which includes department chairs) over issues that have very little to do with actually providing our students with a comprehensive and quality education.”⁴³

MacLelland’s response was curt and to the point: “Where we start working at cross-purposes is when you refuse to listen to my message. . . . If your intuition and experience tell you to take another path, follow it.”⁴⁴ I interpreted this, based on my experiences during the prior academic year, that my position at Brooklyn College was of no material concern anymore to my chair. Even so, I replied simply, “Duly noted, sir. I’ll await your direction and schedule for future steps on this.”⁴⁵

Prof. MacLelland subsequently handed down two mandates. First, I was to break off communication with journalism faculty in the Department of English. Then I was directed to convene a series of voluntary retreats with our Department’s faculty during the Fall of 2015, where our self- and external studies were discussed in detail, and from which a new mission statement and learning objectives were developed for a new Bachelor of Science degree program in Journalism and Media Studies (JAMS).⁴⁶ As these took place, Prof. MacLelland reported that he was in discussions with various members of the College administration to support our plan.⁴⁷ Actual collaboration with faculty in our Department was scattershot at best, given that nobody but myself was materially invested in the journalism program, so there was little interest to do the work necessary to wholly reconfigure it.

By the Spring of 2016, and with the assistance of our newest hire, Dr. MJ Robinson, I had developed several new courses for the JAMS major, revised many legacy courses, and produced the requisite documentation for approval and implementation by the necessary campus institutions. The new program would adopt a “critical, ethical, and deliberative paradigm for the practice of journalism as a public service,” anchored in the study of political economy and media literacy.⁴⁸ In every document generated for review I was explicit about the need for additional investments, primarily in qualified, full-time faculty and “the cultivation of a strong adjunct instructor pool” as integral to the success of any new journalism program.⁴⁹

During AY 2015-16 I also developed a serious case of diverticulitis with a very unusual presentation: instead of manifesting with the normal symptoms of fever and pain, my body attempted to effectively bury the inflamed pouches on the wall of my colon, creating a large

43. John Anderson, “Re: English integrated journalism degree memo,” e-mail communication, August 13, 2015.

44. Stuart MacLelland, “Re: English integrated journalism degree memo,” e-mail communication received August 13, 2015.

45. John Anderson, “Re: English integrated journalism degree memo,” e-mail communication, August 14, 2015.

46. See John Anderson, “Reconfigured Journalism Program, Department of Television and Radio, Retreat Notes,” September 4, 2015 and Anderson, “First Draft of JAMS Program,” October 9, 2015.

47. I was not privy to these discussions in any way, save mentions that Prof. MacLelland would make in sporadic e-mail contact regarding other matters.

48 See “B.S. degree program in journalism and media studies,” available at <http://brooklyn.cuny.edu/jams>.

49. Anderson, “First Draft of JAMS Program” at 2.

abscess and fistulae connecting my bowel to my bladder over the course of several months. Throughout the Fall semester I began to experience lower back pain but thought little of it; by the Spring semester I had begun to rapidly lose weight and experienced difficulties using the bathroom.

In March of 2016, I had a surgical drain placed in my back to empty the abscess in preparation for colon-resection surgery, which took place over Spring Break and necessitated a nine-day stay in hospital and a temporary colostomy for three months. Prior to this, I had been a healthy person with no major medical issues or surgeries. Both my primary-care physician and colorectal surgeon suspect that, given the onset of symptoms and the length of time with which I lived with the problem, it most likely manifested itself in the late spring or summer of 2015, and that workplace stress played a factor in its onset and complication. My feeling that something had broken in me following my third-year review turned out to be true.

As I shepherded the JAMS curriculum through the Department approval process, we changed chairs yet again: Prof. MacLelland was appointed by Provost Tramontano to be Acting Associate Provost for Academic Programs,⁵⁰ and Dr. Katherine Fry was elected to become our new chair. Prof. MacLelland promised that he would see the creation and implementation of JAMS through to a successful conclusion, but after moving to Boylan Hall I heard little from him anymore. I had high hopes for Dr. Fry's tenure as chair, as she had both a Ph.D. and some nominal experience in the study of journalism, as well as a research interest in media literacy, which was to be a cornerstone of our new curriculum. However, Dr. Fry seemed overwhelmed by the responsibilities and complications she had inherited, and chose instead to focus on a bevy of new initiatives wholly unconnected to the JAMS program that perpetuated the illusion of Departmental accomplishment while doing little to improve the Department's fundamental coherency or instructional quality across all its degree programs.

Four days before Faculty Council as a whole was to vote on the reconfiguration of our journalism degree program in April of 2016, myself, Prof. MacLelland, Drs. Fry and Robinson, and Dean Conelli were summoned to Provost Tramontano's office. There we also found three members of the English Department's journalism faculty: Profs. Moses, Mancini, and Jessica Siegel, but not their chair. The Provost informed us that while he was in no position to halt Faculty Council's approval of JAMS, we were directed to explore an "integration" between our new program and the English Department's legacy program, which had changed nothing since the completion of its self- and external study. It was intimated that the Department of Television and Radio should also change its name, in preparation for larger integration-efforts that were on the horizon. Provost Tramontano stated that he wanted AY 2016-17 to be the final year where two separate journalism degree programs existed on our campus, though the ultimate home for journalism education would be the Department of Television and Radio and with JAMS as its foundation. No firm commitments were made regarding investments in new journalism faculty lines and other necessary resources such as lab space, technology, and support staff, all of which both of our studies deemed necessary.⁵¹

50. This position was discontinued after MacLelland's interim stint in office.

51. John Anderson, "Notes from Brooklyn College Future of Journalism meeting, March 4, 2016," March 4, 2016.

It was not until I was sitting in the Provost's conference room, having lost thirty pounds over the prior semester and a half and staring at major surgeries in the near future, did everything begin to make sense: none of this was about actually improving or investing in journalism education on our campus. Rather, the entire effort of the prior two years was a game of maneuvering for territorial dominance, where the chairs of the Departments of English and TV/Radio, along with a few senior faculty and our respective Deans, lobbied key elements of the College administration in order to secure a place of primacy in whatever form journalism education would take in the coming years. Very little of this concerned the things we often say we're here to do, like pursue a rigorous agenda of academic inquiry, instructional coherency, and student support. I had known informally that Profs. Moses and Mancini in particular were unhappy with the JAMS proposal, primarily because it cast a wider net than the purely vocational practice of news reporting and fostered an inherent critique of the corporate media ecosystem, but I did not really understand just how detached the process for "how things get done" here was from the governance structure as it exists on paper, despite the trials I had faced in my own Department.

I spent the final weeks of Spring 2016 and our annual leave-time that year adapting to life with a colostomy and generally trying to recover a work/life balance that allowed me the time and space to re-engage with research-work that I had neglected in the prior two years, though I only missed one week of classes due to the surgery. I also moved further away from campus, from a two-bedroom apartment three blocks from the College to a one-bedroom in Bay Ridge, hoping that physical distance from my workplace would help with this process. My colostomy-reversal surgery took place about a month before the start of the Fall 2016 semester. During my convalescence, only one meeting of journalism faculty from the Departments of English and TV/Radio occurred, which involved discussions about porting six courses from English Department into the JAMS program, following their revision to comport with the stated mission and objectives of our program, and other minor tweaks to JAMS itself.⁵²

Upon my return to campus in AY 2016-17, the year of JAMS' formal implementation, the priorities and tenor of our Department had changed again. Dean Conelli mandated severe cuts to our adjunct-budget, leading to the last-minute cancellation or consolidation of courses, including new JAMS courses that students who had voluntarily transitioned from the old Broadcast Journalism program into JAMS needed in order to graduate that year.⁵³ Several questionable adjunct-hires were made at the last minute, including a medical-industry PR professional with no grasp of mobile media technology teaching the new JAMS core course Tools of Storytelling, and an adjunct that worked at other CUNY schools to teach the major's writing-intensive course—but devoid of the writing-requirements.

The inaugural cohort of JAMS students began contacting me with concerns about the caliber of

52. See MJ Robinson, "The following changes/integration strategies involving existing ENG J courses and ENG J course content were discussed at the 4-11-16 meeting," notes drafted April 12, 2016.

53. The fact that not all Broadcast Journalism students have made this transition, and that the Center for Academic Advising and Students Success and Office of the Registrar were never properly informed of the program-changes, has severely complicated the advising and course-scheduling process, as our Department must make the proper blend of courses available to both majors in order to allow students timely completion. It has also caused new and significant wrinkles in students' relationship with the Office of Financial Aid.

our classes. When I reported these concerns to Dr. Fry, the answer was two-fold: JAMS is but one of four programs in the Department of Television and Radio, and as chair she could not dally on the problems of one program. Furthermore, Dr. Fry intimated that my concerns weren't necessarily legitimate—just a manifestation of a negative attitude I had developed over the past turbulent four years. When I attempted to cultivate a stronger pool of adjuncts, particularly by offering more than one course to incumbent instructors with proven track records in the classroom, I was chastised for my initiative as overstepping the bounds of my position. Subsequently, I relinquished all adjunct-hiring decisions to Dr. Fry.

During the Fall 2016 semester, Dean Conelli reported to Dr. Fry that she was receiving increased pressure from Provost Tramontano to merge the two journalism programs. Dr. Fry tried to schedule additional meetings between our respective faculties, but it always seemed like someone could not make any of the dates or times proposed. In e-mail conversations about curriculum, when I would inquire with my colleagues in English as to whether or not they had made any efforts to work on the curriculum that both Departments had agreed would be ported over to JAMS, the responses invariably involved lobbying for other courses to be brought over for which JAMS courses already existed. When a disagreement would ensue, Profs. Mancini and Ron Howell would essentially argue that since they had been teaching their courses for decades, and we were offering ours for the first time, their courses were more appropriate.

I also began to hear rumors from JAMS students that there was some sort of shakeup coming to the Department of Television and Radio, which might put the future viability of JAMS in question.⁵⁴ Inquiries to students seemed to suggest that these rumors emanated from the instructors of elective-courses they were taking in the Department of English. I was also contacted directly by students, first working on stories in English and TV/Radio writing classes, and later from student-reporters at our two campus newspapers, about rumors regarding the impending merger of our two journalism programs; interestingly, these queries noted fragments of discussions we had about the issue at our monthly Department meetings.⁵⁵

Concurrently, efforts were made at CUNY's Journalism Discipline Council to announce the impending merger of our two journalism programs to the wider CUNY system and to the city's high schools. I contacted the Graduate School of Journalism's overseer of the Discipline Council, Associate Dean Judy Watson, to let her know that talk of an impending merger was premature. Prof. Mancini was apparently forwarded my e-mail to Dr. Watson; he responded directly to me that "[t]here was no design somehow to unilaterally alter the philosophy of JAMS, though all of the details of the merger are still under negotiation. . . . However, I wish to remind you that, to the benefit of the students and the institution, we in the English/Journalism program started this movement to merge."⁵⁶

54. The Department's AY 2016-17 "primary project" was exploring a merger with the Department of Film, which was ultimately tabled at the end of the year.

55. The instructor of the TV/Radio Writing course in which these rumors first manifested, which is not a part of the Broadcast Journalism or JAMS programs, was Dr. George Rodman. The *Kingsman* newspaper's faculty advisor is Prof. Anthony Mancini, while the *Excelsior* newspaper's faculty advisor is Dr. Rodman.

56. Anthony Mancini, "Presentation to Counselors," e-mail communication received September 20, 2018. I would later learn that Profs. Moses and Mancini had a long prior relationship with the CUNY

At that semester's Journalism Discipline Council meeting at the J-School in Manhattan, Prof. Mancini confronted me in the elevator and on the stairs leading up to our meeting-room. He excoriated me for being over-educated and inexperienced in the practice of journalism, devoid of ethics, and promised that JAMS would not achieve traction, especially with "that bitch over there running the shop," which I believed was a reference to Dr. Fry. In the Discipline Council meeting itself the notion of Ph.D.-holders teaching journalism was met with open laughter. I reported this encounter to Dr. Fry, who said she'd report it to the Dean. Dr. Ellen Tremper, chair of the Department of English, reported to Dr. Fry that she planned to discontinue admission to their journalism program following the end of the academic year.⁵⁷

After several discussions, the full-time faculty in our Department that taught in the JAMS program agreed that further pursuit of integration with English's journalism program was untenable. Whereas we were legitimately engaged in a radical rethink of journalism education, our counterparts pretended to go through a similar process and, once complete, leveraged their well-cultivated connections with our campus administration to have things go their way, data be damned. Dr. Fry asked us to formalize this in a memorandum she could share with the Dean and Provost, which we did. "It is important to keep in mind that JAMS was created after the self- and external studies, both of our program and the one in English, were completed—and our respective Chairs and Deans had rejected the notion of a straightforward merger of the existing journalism programs in TVRA and ENGL," we wrote.⁵⁸

Simply put, we were not willing to wholly renegotiate the Journalism and Media Studies program's founding mission and principles due to philosophical and pedagogical differences with senior faculty in the Department of English, who had yet to produce any documentable rationales for their position and behavior. The proper venue for those discussions was Faculty Council, and no faculty from English objected or suggested changes to the JAMS program when it was introduced for a discussion and vote. But it was the bad-faith nature of the integration-negotiations which caused us to step away: we noted that English faculty had attempted "a variety of tactics and strategies to obfuscate, undermine and bully JAMS faculty, in hopes of avoiding engagement with substantive work such as developing new curriculum and/or reconfiguring existing ENGL curriculum to work within the context of JAMS. . . . [B]y and large ENGL faculty have yet to break the print paradigm and refuse to conduct the critical analyses of their own curriculum and pedagogies that are necessary for their integration into JAMS, as we have already done."⁵⁹

Graduate School of Journalism; Prof. Moses was consulted in the drafting of its inaugural curriculum. The Discipline Council had previously been used as the incubator for a document, written by Prof. Moses, arguing against the necessity of requiring a terminal degree for professors of journalism in the CUNY system, which has subsequently been used at several campuses as supplementary documentation in bids for tenure and promotion.

57. This effort was vetoed by Provost Tramontano.

58. John Anderson, MJ Robinson, and Miguel Macias, "RE: Failure of negotiations to integrate the Department of English's Journalism program into JAMS," Memorandum to Katherine Fry, September 23, 2016, at 1.

59. *Id.* at 2.

During the Winter Break of 2016-17, I traveled back to Wisconsin to spend time with my father, who was in the last stages of renal failure, and hoping for a respite from work-stresses. On December 23, Dr. Fry forwarded an e-mail she had received from Dean Conelli, who indicated that unless we accepted a transfer of Profs. Moses and Seigel into our Department with no conditions attached, support “to move ahead” with new investments in JAMS “may not be an option.”⁶⁰ This was apparently a dictate from Provost Tramontano, who concocted it in collaboration with Prof. Moses. I was personally inclined to accept this dictate, as Profs. Moses and Seigel were the most forward-thinking among the English faculty about the study and practice of modern journalism, and who had also worked the most at adapting to new storytelling tools and platforms. Prof. Moses had intimated more than once over the years that he could retire at any time, so at the very least, over the longer-term, our Department would triple the amount of dedicated, full-time teaching-power in JAMS through the acquisition of two full-time faculty lines. However, Drs. Fry and Robinson interpreted Dean Conelli’s communication more like an ultimatum—an attack on the integrity of faculty autonomy at the College by circumventing the Department’s Appointments Committee in the consideration process. At the time, their argument swayed me and Dr. Fry ultimately declined the Dean’s request.⁶¹

In the Spring of 2017, our student newspapers published stories on the “failure” of a merger of journalism programs, which clearly framed the Department of Television and Radio as the bad actor in this drama.⁶² Another story that semester alleged corruption in the student radio station, of which I am the advisor.⁶³ It should come as no surprise that students from the Department of English’s journalism program occupy the primary editorial positions at both of these papers, and those stories related to the integration-drama heavily featured Anthony Mancini as an interviewee.

The triumphant launch of a new degree program I had hoped for in AY 2016-17 had turned to ashes in my mouth. The hard and often solitary work of the prior two years conceiving of and building JAMS had resulted in not much more than a new course sequence with many updated names and descriptions, but taught mostly by adjunct instructors, some of who were demonstrably un- or underqualified for the courses they were assigned. None of the vague promises of investment in the program had materialized, though in my annual review Dr. Fry

60. Maria Conelli, “Journalism,” e-mail communication forwarded from Katherine Fry, December 23, 2016.

61. Six months ago, Dean Conelli finally explained to me that it is wholly within the Provost’s scope of authority to transfer faculty lines between departments in different schools. Had I known that my colleagues’ concerns were not grounded in legitimate governance policy, I would have advocated accepting the Provost’s terms. But it was Christmas, after all, and I wanted to focus on my dad.

62. See Zainab Iqbal, “Two Journalism Programs, One Campus: What Happened?” *The Excelsior*, April 5, 2017. For what it’s worth, student media first reported on a potential “merger” of the two journalism programs on campus in October 2014, long before our self- and external studies were completed, and continued to hint that a merger was inevitable during the time when we were directed to complete our self- and external studies, and following the Provost’s mandate to explore an integration; see Faraz T. Toor, “Journalism and Broadcast Journalism Program Merger Reportedly Nixed; Cross Disciplinary Approach Possible in Future,” *The Excelsior*, October 14, 2014, and Jherelle Benn, “Long Awaited Friendship Rises to the Surface,” *The Kingsman*, May 12, 2016.

63. See Zainab Iqbal, “WBCR’s New President May Have Altered Election,” *The Excelsior*, April 5, 2017.

suggested that I consider applying early for tenure and promotion.⁶⁴ Many students in transition, who had bought all our hype, were disillusioned; students who came to our campus specifically because of the promise of JAMS began to get suspicious. My attempts to address these issues and advocate for their correction were first ignored and then rebuffed; meanwhile, any inkling of collegiality between my senior colleagues and myself had collapsed. In May 2017, shortly before Finals Week, my father passed away, and I spent most of the summer shuttling between New York and Wisconsin helping my mother come to terms with widowhood.

Before the start of Fall 2017, I communicated with Dr. Fry about the ongoing unmet needs of JAMS, with emphasis on advocating for new full-time faculty hires and recruiting and retaining qualified adjuncts. I did not receive a response; in fact, many of the same adjuncts who performed deficiently in AY 2016-17 were reappointed this year, though some had been moved into different courses where they might do less educational damage. Shortly after the start of the semester, I received a phone call from Dr. Fry in which she informed me that my bid for early promotion had failed in a tie Departmental vote (three for, three against, and one abstention). Although my chair could not tell me the substance of the discussion that had transpired, she could tell me that my performance as a teacher, scholar, and program advisor were not at issue—the one suggestion she made was that I work on my “collegiality.”

I asked Dr. Fry if there was any mechanism of recourse; she said that I could still push forward with an early-promotion bid, but did not sound confident that it would succeed. Calling this vote “a wake-up call” about the state of play in our Department, Dr. Fry told me that such a rationale would not hold water were I to vie for both tenure and promotion in AY 2018-19. I asked Dr. Fry how I could go about cultivating “collegiality” in an environment devoid of any semblance of mutual trust and respect; she replied that I should make myself “as small as possible” and “fly under the radar” in the time between this failed bid and my next one.

In a subsequent in-person meeting, I requested that Dr. Fry and I hammer out a tangible plan of action to detach me from my program directorship, given the criticism I was facing from senior faculty in two departments and unfair reportage about the state of journalism education and my work on our campus in the student media. Doing so would remove nearly all of the impediments I faced to reacquiring a proper balance of work necessary to achieve tenure and promotion, including resuscitating the research agenda I had to abandon in prior years. I also suggested if no material support was forthcoming for JAMS, we should consider discontinuing the program, perhaps reconfiguring it as a concentration within a revamped Bachelor of Arts degree in Television and Radio.⁶⁵ Although she agreed to this plan of action verbally, attempts to formalize

64. I ultimately elected to try for promotion only, as my research/publication agenda and connections to external professional organizations had effectively ground to a halt over the prior three years, overwhelmed by program-creation and –advising obligations, and drained both mentally and emotionally from the slings and arrows from senior faculty both within and outside my Department. I thought that perhaps achieving a semblance of fiscal stability would help me recover a sense of life-stability more broadly; as you know, the cost of living in Brooklyn has long outpaced the growth in faculty compensation afforded by CUNY, and I desperately wanted to get out from underneath the last of my student loans.

65. This has been the Department’s primary “project” this academic year, though it has not followed any self-study process that I can identify.

it in writing were rebuffed,⁶⁶ and the scattershot pattern of making administrative decisions based on expediency, devoid of context or even prior deliberations, continued.

As JAMS students began taking their courses in Fall 2017, they reported back to me an increasing level of concern with the quality of the education they were receiving. Students reported that advanced-level courses essentially replicated issues and tools learned in introductory-level ones. In our Fundamentals of Newswriting class, students did very little work to develop a stronger grasp of the English language, instead being treated to playacting-style “news conferences” from which they were to intuit faux stories. The only element of “reporting” they were able to practice in *any* course typically involved interviewing random people on or around campus, devoid of substantive story-hooks or rationales.

Students in JAMS’ ethics course were not taught fundamental principles grounded in any semblance of moral philosophy. An adjunct in Multimedia Design and Production, a mid-level course that (on paper) should help students develop a better grasp of specific media production technologies, told students that they should subscribe to the Lynda.com tutoring-service in order to properly learn the software packages they would be using in class. Upper-level JAMS courses, which students who had transitioned from Broadcast Journalism to JAMS needed this year in order to graduate on schedule, were postponed or cancelled, necessitating the creation of questionable “independent studies” to be used as curricular replacements.⁶⁷

A reporter from the *Excelsior* this past fall parsed my social media feeds in a fact-checking exercise of sorts designed to paint me as unprofessional and unreliable.⁶⁸ On September 26, after being informed of a comment I made on Twitter about the ongoing weaponization of student media to perpetuate a turf-conflict over journalism education on this campus, Professor Mancini e-mailed me directly to let me know that he considered me “incompetent. . . given your woeful lack of experience in the field,” and predicted that it was doubtful I would receive tenure at this institution.⁶⁹

The trigger for my resignation occurred this past October, following discussions about course-scheduling for the Spring 2018 semester. At a meeting with Dr. Fry about the state of JAMS courses, I reiterated the need to both offer a more expansive panoply of courses and develop a better system of recruitment and mentorship for adjunct instructors, especially in those courses cross-listed in both the JAMS-BS and TVRA-BA degrees. Dr. Fry reiterated the administration’s

66. John Anderson, “Convo follow-up,” e-mail communication to Katherine Fry, September 8, 2017.

67. Such curricular variances also require the approval of Faculty Council’s Committee on Course and Standing, which this year has been chaired by Prof. MacLelland.

68. See Zainab Iqbal, “BC Professor Falsely Accuses Colleague of Denying Climate Change,” *The Excelsior*, November 1, 2017. It should be noted that I mentioned no professor by name on social media, instead having produced what is now popularly called a “subtweet.” Interestingly, *The Kingsman* produced a follow-up story that identified a separate professor in Earth and Environmental Sciences who teaches “climate skepticism,” but makes no mention of the context that inspired their story; see Ahmed Aly, “BC Professors’ Core Science Textbook Contains Climate Change Skepticism,” *The Kingsman*, November 28, 2017.

69. Anthony Mancini, “Kingsman,” e-mail communication received, September 26, 2017, available at <https://twitter.com/diymediadotnet/status/913174566452781056> (September 27, 2017).

call to further cut back on our adjunct budget and suggested that we work to reduce the number of JAMS courses that we would offer this academic year. I tried to explain how, given the current trajectory of our Department and the campus more broadly, we risked graduating students in a “new” journalism program who would actually learn fewer core skills than those that were available under the old Broadcast Journalism degree. Dr Fry replied that the only problem that existed was my “attitude,” and that I should correct it immediately. The meeting ended with an agreement that the number and variety of courses offered in JAMS would be curtailed, but in the section of the major where students develop core competencies in storytelling technologies and platforms, we would still offer a fairly robust spread.⁷⁰

On October 24, students in my Information Curation and Verification class informed me that the schedule of courses for Spring 2018 had been posted to CUNYfirst, but some of the courses that I had promised them would run were nowhere to be found. Apparently, the Department would offer similarly-themed courses which already existed in our curricular repertoire, but were not explicitly included in the JAMS degree program. Thus, of 10 possible courses from which JAMS students could learn core production skills, only three would be offered, and two of them were cross-listed with the TV/Radio major, taught by adjuncts with no journalism experience; the only JAMS-native course that would run had been identified by students as overly duplicative to an intro-level course they had already taken.

After confirming with our Department secretary that this was indeed the case, I e-mailed Dr. Fry to clarify the situation: “this means fewer than one-third of the courses in JAMS Section II will be taught next semester—and of those, only one is native to the JAMS curriculum. How do I explain this to my students?”⁷¹ Dr. Fry replied, “The decisions made about which courses are on the schedule are a function of many things, not just one program. Considerations of all students needs, faculty needs, adjunct budget, etc., etc. . . . I think that what we have here is a situation where the JAMS curriculum could perhaps be widened in this sense to include other studies courses that serve the BA students. This takes more time to work out, but is much more efficient and would not sacrifice quality one bit. If your students have an issue with the offerings for spring they are welcome to come talk with me. I would appreciate, in fact, that you just send them to me if there really is a huge issue for anyone.”⁷²

It was as if discussions about concerns articulated the prior year had not happened, the context in which I had struggled on the tenure-track to this point did not exist, and that my concerns were more a function of my personality than actual, tangible deficiencies in our program and Department’s resources and administration. I did not take this lightly: “What has ended up happening in the case of JAMS is that TVRA-BA courses have been substituted for offering courses distinctive to the major for the purposes of expediency, in active ignorance or denial of the state of the major and our department more broadly, much of which has been well-documented before your tenure as chair even began,” I replied.

70. In this section of the major, students must take at least three of ten possible courses; at this meeting, Dr. Fry agreed to offer four of these courses in Spring 2018; one of them, Special Topics, would run two sections devoted to the study of different subjects, making for a total of five distinct courses in that section of the JAMS major that students could choose from.

71. John Anderson, “Re: Spring course list,” e-mail communication, October 25, 2017.

72. Katherine Fry, “Re: Spring course list,” e-mail communication received October 25, 2017.

I reminded Dr. Fry that we had verbally committed to a plan of action to reconsider the future of JAMS as a stand-alone program, based on an assessment of the resources necessary for its viability, and also to work out a plan to transition me out of program directorship given what I had been through since 2012, but that there had been no movement to concretize this. I interpreted her “suggestion to ‘widen’ the JAMS curriculum to provide more connections to the TVRA-BA program is tantamount to suggesting that we should discontinue the JAMS degree, as it is functionally impossible to provide the distinctive education that we claim to on paper. The quality of this program was sacrificed long before I got here, and in my sixth year it’s become positively clear to me that it is not likely to ever achieve this distinction, given resource-constraints and general dynamics of the institutions of which it is a part. If this is the option you would like to pursue, I will support this unreservedly. The next obvious step, then, is to suspend admission to JAMS so that we can teach out the existing student cohorts and concentrate our energies into turning the TVRA-BA program into something with actual coherency.”⁷³

Dr. Fry responded, “You misunderstood my email and misunderstand my responsibilities within the department as a whole. We will not be discontinuing JAMS and will not be suspending admission to JAMS. A number of us continue to work hard on the BA overhaul. As per your request, after the spring 2018 term you won’t be Director of the JAMS program any longer, so you’ll no longer need to concern yourself with these sorts of pragmatic decisions. In the remainder of this academic year, please maintain a tone of civility and collegiality in your communications with me.”⁷⁴

There it was. My prior efforts were really nothing more than a fancy pantomime. On paper, the Department of Television and Radio had radically redesigned its approach to and execution of journalism education, but in reality the new program was destined to produce fewer and worse educational outcomes than what it replaced, exacerbated by ongoing Department dysfunctionality and strangulation by the conditions of austerity that exist on this campus. Personally, I felt like the third chair in six years had no designs to treat me or the program I oversaw with any more dignity and respect than the prior two had, and my desire to be free of program administration would be contextualized as punishment, not mutual understanding. I could not in good conscience remain at an educational institution that does not provide a semblance of a quality education at the standard of “nothing without great effort” to which we purportedly subscribe. For all of this to transpire in a field such as journalism, at a time in our history as this, amplified the pain.

My response pretty much wrote itself: “That’s fine, Dr. Fry, for I will not be staying at this institution...I’ll follow up with a hard-copy of the attached [letter of resignation] forthwith upon my return to campus tomorrow. For what it’s worth, this is not a snap-decision on my part, I’ve been leaning in this direction for a few years now and the events of the last year have made it concrete. I thank you for providing me with the clarity.”⁷⁵ Outside of one half-hearted entreaty to reconsider, and communications regarding how the separation-process itself works, there has been no further discussion of my resignation with Dr. Fry or any of my Department

73. John Anderson, “Re: Spring course list,” e-mail communication, October 25, 2017.

74. Katherine Fry, “Re: Spring course list,” e-mail communication received October 25, 2017.

75. John Anderson, “Re: Spring course list,” e-mail communication, October 25, 2017.

“colleagues.”

I had not planned in any way to go public with my decision until very late in the Spring 2018 semester; the only people who knew in October were Drs. Fry and Robinson. However, at the College-wide tenure, promotion, and reappointment meeting held in early November, my name was listed for reappointment, but struck through; this apparently came as a surprise to Dr. Fry, who asked Associate Provost for Faculty and Administration Matthew Moore for advice. He told my chair to not mention this anomaly unless someone specifically asked in the meeting. Of course, someone did, and Dr. Fry told all the Department chairs that I had resigned.

At our November Department meeting, immediately before adjournment, she informed our faculty and explained that I would continue my current duties until I departed. Dr. Fry notified me that she would be making this announcement; I replied that it seemed to be a necessary step considering that all other Department chairs now knew, but “I would recommend that we don’t open the announcement up for discussion, as that will not be constructive. I think it’s also important that we be vigilant about any opportunistic harassment or abuse that might result [in the coming months], as since I have already tendered my resignation such behavior could be construed as actionably retaliatory.”⁷⁶

Shortly after these announcements were made, JAMS students began to report back to me that they were hearing rumors that “JAMS is going down”: multiple professors were supposedly leaving and the Department of Television and Radio would not be able to offer some required courses to students, thereby delaying their time-to-degree. I responded that there was no truth to these rumors, and that if they wanted to confirm the reality of the situation they should contact Dr. Fry. At no time did I inform any student that I had already resigned. However, during our semesterly teaching-evaluation cycle, two students in our Tools of Storytelling course pitched final-project story ideas to the adjunct instructor about the rumors that were circulating, ostensibly to unpack the confusion and dissatisfaction. The adjunct counseled that such stories were not appropriate for the objectives of the class—but Dr. Robinson, who was evaluating the adjunct that day, adjourned to Dr. Fry’s office and gave a highly embellished account of what the students had actually said. Dr. Fry immediately called me at home and began to berate me for being the supposed originator of these rumors.⁷⁷

The following week, other JAMS students pitched similar story-ideas in their Fundamentals of Newswriting course. During a break in class the adjunct reported this to Dr. Fry, who entered the classroom when class re-convened and told students that, indeed, I had resigned but that everything was going to be fine. Immediately, I began receiving e-mails from students in this class expressing shock and dismay. I called Dr. Fry and left a voicemail inquiring about this sequence of events, and also inviting her to my class later that week where she could make the same announcement. In an e-mail response, Dr. Fry declined my offer to speak to my own class, but suggested that “it would be wise for me to create an email that goes out to all the undergraduate majors [in our Department]. . . explaining what I explained to student’s [sic]

76. John Anderson, “Re: tomorrow’s department meeting,” e-mail communication, November 13, 2017.

77. I have spoken in great detail to both the adjunct instructor and the students who were in this class and confirmed that the story of what transpired, as related to Dr. Fry, was far from an accurate representation.

today.”⁷⁸

I thanked her for her explanation, and wanted to make sure that she understood I was not the source of these rumors: “I have not told any students that I had tendered my resignation until I began receiving inquiries from students in [the newswriting] class this afternoon, and I have only responded in private to those individual inquiries. Nor had I planned to make any statement, even after you made the announcement at yesterday’s department meeting,” I wrote. “In addition, I have never insinuated to students in any way that the major was being discontinued, that students would be prohibited from graduating, or any other shady details which you may have heard through whatever grapevine is in operation here.

“I think we both have our legitimate suspicions as to who the likely actors are behind this, both within and outside of our department, but I am choosing to not react to those because it’s wasted energy and fosters the very stress that those actors hope to cultivate. . . .I hope we can keep front-of-mind the fact that my work record and all interactions I have had with you have been based on nothing but honesty and transparency, even when that has caused friction. And while this transition will be challenging for all involved to some degree, I also hope that assumptions are not generated based on prior experiences regarding the behavioral history of our departmental colleagues—for that history and the culture it has fostered were determinant factors in my decision to opt out of it.

“It’s obviously your prerogative with regard to making a mass-communication to all undergraduate students in our department about this situation. All I would ask is that it be well-considered from the perspective of motive and that it, too, provide an honest and transparent articulation of the present state of affairs and next steps.”⁷⁹ The following morning, a mass e-mail was sent to all undergraduate majors in our Department from Dr. Fry: “There has been a rumor circulating that the Journalism and Media Studies (JAMS) program within the Department is in danger because Professors are leaving, required courses will not be offered in the future, and students will not be able to graduate in a timely manner. Please know that the JAMS program is *not* in danger, that students *will* get the courses that they need, and that the JAMS program is in fine shape. We are committed to the JAMS program and the JAMS majors, and any indication otherwise is patently false.

“It is true that the current Director, Prof. John Anderson, will be leaving Brooklyn College at the very end of this academic year -- early June, 2018. Until that time he will continue his duties as JAMS Director as he always has, and is available to advise JAMS students about the major, and to advocate for the Program and teach in the Program. We are currently working on the transition to a new JAMS Director so that there will be a seamless transition after June, 2018. . . .If you've been concerned about JAMS, or have heard rumors about its potential demise, please rest assured that those are merely rumors, and that all is well with JAMS!”⁸⁰ My resignation was reported in both student newspapers; the *Excelsior’s* headline suggested my departure was due to

78. Katherine Fry, “class tomorrow,” e-mail communication received November 15, 2017.

79. John Anderson, “Re: class tomorrow,” e-mail communication, November 15, 2017.

80. Katherine Fry, “Department of Television and Radio,” e-mail communication received November 16, 2017.

unspecified “controversy” within the Department of Television and Radio itself.⁸¹

During Fall 2017, you were called upon to intervene in a conflict within the Department of English, after Provost Tramontano attempted to arbitrarily award the Department a new faculty line to replace Prof. Moses, who retired last year, and after Dr. Ellen Tremper attempted to discontinue the Department’s journalism program—all which was breathlessly reported in the *Kingsman*.⁸² I stumbled through the remainder of the Fall semester and began exploring the job market.

On my last scheduled day on campus in December, Dean Conelli invited me to her office for a long conversation about the trajectory that brought us to this unfortunate place. She apologized for “failing” me as a junior scholar and program director, and we lamented the toxic campus culture that poisoned journalism education and my ability to survive and thrive here. Through this dialogue, we both came to learn that we suffered from information asymmetry at critical junctures over the last six years: I had been kept out of the loop on many discussions involving the future of journalism education on this campus, and she had been kept out of the loop as to what the actual state of journalism education in the Department of Television and Radio really was. Surprisingly, Dean Conelli not only requested to serve as a reference as I pursued other employment, but asked twice if I would reconsider my decision to resign. I told her that I didn’t know: though I am qualified to teach far beyond journalism, the status quo was unsustainable and my affiliation with my home Department was already in shambles. “I don’t want to leave, but I can’t stay,” I told her as we shook hands. She suggested we “revisit these issues” in the Spring semester.

We never got the chance to continue this discussion. On February 13, 2018, the date of our first Department meeting of this semester, Dr. Fry e-mailed me using the pretext of informing me that I would not be eligible to vote on a pending matter to replace a member of our Department’s appointments committee. She then took the liberty of bringing up “a few other things” about which she requested a meeting. First, she told me that “some Journalism BS [sic] and JAMS students continue to be under the impression that the JAMS program is in decline and will be discontinued. I don’t know where that information is coming from, and I’m wondering if you can shed some light on that for me. . . .

“One more item I have concerns about is that I have heard rumor that you have been taking some of your students out for drinks and all-around socializing. If this is true, it is not in any way appropriate. I have only heard this as a rumor, and I welcome the chance for you to offer your take on this rumor. Please come see me in my office this morning before the faculty meeting if it works for you.”⁸³

81. See Quiara Vasquez, “JAMS Director John Anderson to Resign in 2018,” *The Kingsman*, November 22, 2017, and Adam Zaki, “Director of JAMS Announces Resignation Amidst Controversy in Department,” *The Excelsior*, November 29, 2017.

82. See Dylan Campbell, “Journalism Director Suddenly Stripped of Title,” *The Kingsman*, September 19, 2017, and Campbell, “Professor Mancini Reinstated as Journalism Department Director,” *The Kingsman*, October 3, 2017.

83. Katherine Fry, “department meeting and other issues,” e-mail communication received February 13, 2018.

I categorically denied these allegations, noting that I had not heard any reports from students of more rumor-mongering, and that “I now function simply as a caretaker of the program and am minimizing my time spent on campus to the fullest extent possible in my final semester. I think any ‘rumors’ can be chalked up to the toxic culture that exists on this campus and the maneuvering-for-gain that seems to be a hallmark of senior faculty here, especially in the fields of journalism and media studies more broadly.” I also found it interesting that, as the campus struggles with bona-fide cases of sexual predation as manifested among the faculty of the Feirstein Graduate School of Cinema,⁸⁴ it was odd that a similar allegation would surface targeting me. I declined the offer to meet before our Department meeting took place, though I did suggest alternate times later in the day.⁸⁵

On the subway-rides to campus that morning, I began to suspect that perhaps a narrative was being constructed about my departure that would contextualize me as fully to blame while absolving our Department or the College more broadly of agency in the broader sequence of events—doing so would fit prior patterns of behavior that I had experienced all too well, in a variety of contexts, since 2012. I re-examined our labor contract which, in conjunction with state law, gives faculty the right to have union representation present in any conversation with a superior “whenever it reasonably appears that the employee may be the subject of a potential disciplinary action. . . . This includes when any supervisor asks you questions to obtain information which could be used as a basis for discipline; or asks an employee to defend or explain her or his conduct.”⁸⁶

When I arrived on campus I found a response from Dr. Fry in which she “appreciate[d] your reply and your candor,” while suggesting we meet later in the week.⁸⁷ I informed her that if she

84. As was reported to you in conversation with Dean Conelli on December 19, 2017, a Feirstein School faculty member “put his hand between a woman’s legs, at a bar, when he was drunk,” sometime in the prior academic year. Dean Conelli also told you that other allegations of sexual harassment involving Feirstein faculty are “well-documented,” and that this behavior has already forced one student to leave the Feirstein School.

85. John Anderson, “Re: department meeting and other issues,” e-mail communication, February 13, 2018. I informed Dr. Fry that I have occasionally met off-campus with alumni from our program. In two instances, I invited students who had achieved grades of B or better in my writing-intensive Journalism and Society course to join us for dinner; those students were encouraged to bring friends, significant others, and family if they so chose, and some did. Not all students were of the legal age to drink, and they did not; those who did consume alcohol also consumed food, and at no time did anybody exhibit signs of inebriation. My intent for these gatherings was to put students in conversation with each other, and with alumni, in hopes of facilitating a sense of community in the JAMS program. I am a fairly socially awkward person by nature and had absolutely no desire to cultivate deeper personal relationships with students on any level. Upon further reflection, I believe that conversations I have had on these matters with my office-mate, Dr. Robinson, were embellished by Robinson and reported to Dr. Fry, much like student dissatisfaction as expressed in an adjunct’s course was embellished and reported to Dr. Fry during the Fall semester, leading to the public acknowledgement of my resignation, *supra* Footnote 77.

86. See PSC-CUNY, “If You Are Being Disciplined,” available at <http://www.psc-cuny.org/rights/if-you-are-being-disciplined>.

87. Katherine Fry, “Re: department meeting vote and other issues,” e-mail communication received February 13, 2018.

was “asking to have further discussion regarding ‘rumors’ of my activities at this institution, I interpret this as an investigatory request which has the potential for disciplinary action, and thus invoke my right under state law and our labor contract to have union representation at any meeting where these topics are discussed,” and noted that I would reach out to our union representatives on campus “to find out the protocol for this.”⁸⁸

More than eight hours later, I received Dr. Fry’s reply: “Yep, I’m completely familiar with all the contract and PSC-CUNY language around faculty members who are being disciplined. I was just asking for a conversation. . . . I am curious about one other thing, though. Last December someone came to me with the information that you had told the students in one of your classes in the fall that I was morally and intellectually unfit to lead. Apparently some students who were in that class were so uncomfortable hearing that that they went to another person within the department and asked what they should do about having heard it. The information was then conveyed to me. Again, unless I am hearing straight from you that you said that to a classroom of students, then I can only take it as hearsay.”⁸⁹

I could take no more, and replied, “My my, Dr. Fry, what an interesting fishing expedition you seem to be on in my last semester here. Will it be possible for me to depart this campus with my dignity and sanity intact, or do you have further inquisitory surprises in store over the next 4.5 months? Rest assured that I do not waste time in classes with department/school politics. There’s hardly enough time in classes to cover the things that we actually need to teach. . . .

“I find it troubling that an academic department, particularly one ostensibly grounded in the study of communication, would give such credence to games of telephone, but given what I’ve experienced in the last six years I can’t say I’m surprised.”⁹⁰ I have subsequently been accused of spreading other rumors denigrating the leadership of our Department, but in actuality I’ve restricted my time on campus solely to the day on which I must teach my class and in hopes that I could just be left alone to figure out the next steps of my professional and personal life.⁹¹

Following my resignation, you forced a merger of what remains of the two journalism programs on this campus, effective in AY 2020-21, which has been celebratorily covered by both the *Kingsman* and *Excelsior*.⁹² Furthermore, all rumors about the demise of JAMS seem to have magically ceased—though the rumor last fall of multiple professors leaving has come true with the recent announcement of Prof. MacLelland’s resignation from our Department.

88. John Anderson, “Re: department meeting vote and other issues,” e-mail communication, February 13, 2018.

89. Katherine Fry, “Re: department meeting vote and other issues,” e-mail communication received February 13, 2018.

90. John Anderson, “Re: department meeting vote and other issues,” e-mail communication, February 13, 2018.

91. See Katherine Fry, “graduating students and honors/distinctions, etc.,” e-mail communication received April 27, 2018. This latest “rumor” manifested itself in our capstone journalism course, taught by Dr. Robinson. Students involved in the incident report that, as before, their comments were embellished and taken out of context when they were reported by Dr. Robinson to Dr. Fry.

92. See Joseph Modica, “BC Journalism and Radio/TV to Merge After 5 Years of Unknowns,” *The Kingsman*, March 2, 2018, and Zainab Iqbal, “Journalism Merger is Finally Set for 2020,” *The Excelsior*, April 25, 2018.

All applications for employment in academia that I have tendered this academic year have ultimately been rejected. I believe this is due in part to the fact that I sacrificed my research agenda after AY 2013-14 in order to do the program-work that I was directed to, but the “stories” produced in our student newspapers that have unjustly tarnished my program and me in hopes of forcing a journalism merger have been also been raised in campus-visits, forcing me to respond clearly, directly, and comprehensively. I also can’t help but wonder if some of my references have been spiked.

This is not the first time I’ve encountered an existential vocational dilemma. I completed my undergraduate journalism degree in the 1990s with the intent of producing radio stories for the rest of my life. Little did I know that Congress would intervene in 1996 to rewrite the laws governing media regulation that would set off a trend of industry consolidation that has obliterated radio journalism over the last two decades. As I advanced in that career, I discovered that the job was more about entertainment than information, and I reached a point where I could no longer ethically work in an industry that contravened the very values that had attracted me to it. It was that dilemma which led me to graduate school, where I specialized in media law, policy, and activism and discovered my passion for teaching.

Thus it is highly ironic that my first tenure-track job would be to run and reinvent a journalism program, and I honestly believed that my experience, education, and perspective would be useful in that task. I wholeheartedly subscribed to the mission of the City University of New York and took literally Brooklyn College’s own motto, “Nothing without great effort”; the state of journalism, our media environment more broadly, and the world in general calls for nothing less. I love the fact that our institution, and the system of which it is a part, provides educational opportunities to those in our society most deprived of them. As a teacher, scholar and activist I thought Brooklyn College was a place where I belonged. Every chair that I have attempted to serve was well-aware of my unconventional perspective on the state of journalism and the need to think outside of the box regarding how to teach it—they all were in attendance at my job-talk in December 2011 in which I was explicit about my aims. In prior conversations with Dr. Fry when she first became our chair, she even complimented me about how JAMS could become the cornerstone of the type of education our Department would offer going forward.

But in hindsight I now realize that I was hired under false pretenses, given an impossible task, and punished for trying to blow the whistle on practices that actively undermine the quality and consistency of the education that we purport to provide. At no point in the back channel maneuvering over control of the future of journalism education at Brooklyn College was I permitted to present my perspective on this state of affairs, primarily because I did not have the appropriate status within our faculty hierarchy to raise these issues, and could therefore be threatened both directly and indirectly to keep silent. Throughout this journey, I’ve discovered levels of institutional dysfunction and outright corruption on this campus that violate not only College and CUNY policy but also potentially state law, some of which are ongoing.

It is unconscionable that faculty would manipulate the trust of student journalists, both in the classroom and student media via a literal old-boy network, in order to advance selfish aims that materially contravene the principled and honest practice of journalism and journalism education.

If you examine any and all College-generated documents related to my employment and progress on the tenure-track, you'll see that I have grown to become one of the most inspiring and respected teachers in my Department, with an ambitious (albeit unrealized) research agenda, and willing to serve in a variety of capacities regarding campus, community, and professional service—and that I have done so with no sub rosa motivations.

In sum, my experiences forced me to realize, similar to my first career, that the system of which I am a part at Brooklyn College is morally untenable. I cannot in good conscience continue to contribute toward an endeavor lacking the most basic standards of educational/ethical integrity and professional decency, that promises our students heaven on earth but actually shepherds them through an exquisite form of hell that leaves them ill-prepared to compete in the high-pressure media marketplace in which economic stratification and implicit bias already handicaps their chances at success. For every student who graduates from our journalism programs and lands a modicum of employment in their chosen field, there are several more who graduate lacking the most basic reading, writing, and production skills, much less a sense of what journalism is and should be in our ostensibly democratic society.

At the same time, I must acknowledge that there are amazing feats of education and scholarship happening at Brooklyn College. But the Department of Television and Radio is not one of those places: instead of a Department, in reality it's a Potemkin village of unaffiliated and mostly-disintrested faculty who actively foster not one, but four degree-mills, and who've spent their professional lives adapting to and perpetuating the stricken and toxic institutional culture which has evolved here in recent decades. This culture prioritizes self-preservation and -promotion over any of the lofty ideals on which this institution stakes its identity and legitimacy. We spend a lot of time looking like we're doing things without actually doing them, because we need to justify our existence and stave off any disruption to an unsustainable status quo.

I know that you are well aware of all of this, as you've spent more than a year now assessing the overall situation and have data such as the COACHE survey, feedback from your listening tour, and Faculty Council program-reports that delineate it. Many of the issues I've outlined here you directly addressed in your latest Stated Meeting of the Faculty, particularly with regard to developing a culture of transparency, service, and trust.⁹³ When coupled with austerity and the ongoing corporatization of higher education more broadly in the United States, it's clear even to a non-tenured rube from the Midwest like me that major structural readjustment is inevitable and the processes are afoot.

I've done everything I can in the last six years to become informed about these trends and their implications, and to work within my program and Department to try and orient us toward proactive adaptation. I am sorry to report that not only have I failed, but that the public record of my time here has been constructed in such a way as to paint me as the one who resisted change, both on this campus and in the journalism world of the CUNY system more broadly. The pending merger of the journalism programs on this campus triggered by my resignation effectively rewards those bullies who have done the most actual, tangible damage that I struggled to avoid and correct, at great cost to my physical, mental, and emotional health.

93. Brooklyn College Office of the President, "State of the College, Spring 2018," Powerpoint slideshow, available at http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/web/abo_president/2018_Spring_Stated_Meeting_Slides.pdf.

We, as a nation and society more broadly, are living through an era of reckoning, in which we scratch the surface of institutions we thought provided cohesion only to find a rotting mess underneath. In every instance, there have been people who tried to warn us of this state of affairs, only to be punished and ostracized for their efforts. In hindsight we look back and lament missed opportunities to make positive and proactive change, but by then lives have been destroyed and the damage done. This is why, despite the fact that I'll most likely never again work sustainably in the field of higher education, I can leave with a clear conscience knowing that I tried my best and fought hard for principles of justice and equity that lie at the core of my being, and ostensibly at the core of Brooklyn College's own mission.

I can only hope that, given your record of words and deeds so far in your tenure as President of Brooklyn College, you take this information into account as you develop the parameters of this institution's forthcoming and inevitable evolution. I wish I could have been a part of that adventure, as critical opportunities to make constructive change do arise in the face of such adversity. But now, I can only urge you to minimize the harm that many elements of this institution are causing to those who we purport to serve. With regard to the necessity of working to change journalism and journalism education at this moment in our history, unless you are willing to rethink it in its entirety, with substantial investment in the resources to provide a stable and well-rounded teaching presence here, Brooklyn College should exit the provision of journalism education entirely. There are many other programs within the CUNY system that can shoulder that burden much better than we may ever do.

If you have any questions about this narrative, or would like access to the documentation that I have referenced herein, please don't hesitate to ask. In the remaining two months that I have left in Brooklyn, I sincerely hope that I am allowed to leave without further retribution or abuse, as both my professional and personal life truly depends on it.

I don't envy your position, Madame President, and I wish you the best of luck in helping Brooklyn College adapt to the present and prepare for the future. There is much to do and I hope that when all is said and done you, too, are ultimately guided by your conscience.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Anderson