The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

There were present:

**Committee Members:**
- Hon. Philip A. Berry, Vice Chair
- Hon. Valerie L. Beal
- Hon. Wellington Chen
- Hon. Freida D. Foster
- Hon. Joseph J. Lhota
- Hon. Kathleen Pesile

**University Staff:**
- Chancellor Matthew Goldstein
- Executive Vice Chancellor and University Provost
- Alexandra Logue
- Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer
- Allan H. Dobrin
- Senior Vice Chancellor Marc V. Shaw
- Vice Chancellor Eduardo Marti
- Vice Chancellor Pamela Silverblatt
- Vice Chancellor Gillian Small
- Vice Chancellor Iris Weinshall

**Trustee Observer:**
- Hon. Sandi E. Cooper
- Hon. Cory Provost

**Trustee Staff:**
- Senior Vice Chancellor and Secretary of the Board Jay Hershenson
- Senior Vice Chancellor and General Counsel Frederick Schaffer
- Deputy to the Secretary Hourig Messerlian
- Mr. Steven Quinn

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<td>I. A. THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK – HONORARY DEGREE</td>
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RESOLVED, That the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees hereby approves the award of an honorary degree of Doctor of Letters by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice to Tony Kushner.

EXPLANATION: At the meeting of the Board of Trustees on May 2, 2011, the Board of Trustees approved the award of certain honorary degrees and tabled the award of an honorary degree to Mr. Kushner. Since that meeting the Chancellery has conducted a thorough review of the public record concerning Mr. Kushner, and the Chancellor and Chairperson strongly endorse the award of an honorary degree to him based on his based on his extraordinary artistic and professional accomplishments. It is appropriate for the Executive Committee to act on this matter because the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Trustees will not take place until after the John Jay College commencement.

Chancellor Matthew Goldstein stated that honorary degrees at this university have a long tradition. In my tenure as chancellor alone we have awarded over 450 honorary degrees. And this is the first time where there has been an issue that hopefully will be strongly rectified this evening. Honorary degrees start almost exclusively at our campuses. They may start with an individual making a recommendation, they often start at the department, division or school level. Depending upon the governance structure of each of our campuses, they are usually recommended to the
president by either a college personnel and budget committee or the local faculty senate. Ultimately the president works with the chancellor of the university and sends recommendations to the chancellor. I under circumstances like that do one of three things. I have sent back a recommendation because I believed it was not worthy of the university to award such a degree and I have done that on several occasions. I have worked with the president to modify in some way the background material for the honorary degree, but in most cases because work is done so scrupulously at our campuses because our campuses take this seriously, I often just forward the recommendation with a strong endorsement. And that's how we dealt with Tony Kushner. I was supportive of this recommendation. I think Mr. Kushner is quite deserving of the highest award that we give at this university of an honorific nature.

Having said that, I will be recommending on a going forward basis that when recommendations are made to me before I bring them to the Board that they will go through one of our standing committees and probably it will be either the Committee on Academic Programs or the Committee on Faculty, Staff & Administration, or both.

But now to the motion before you, I would like to take this opportunity to again voice my strong support for the proposal tendered by John Jay College to grant an honorary degree to Tony Kushner. As I have said indeed from the time the proposal was first sent to me for approval, I have consistently expressed that Mr. Kushner's extraordinary body of work and enormous artistic contributions should be recognized by this university.

Among Mr. Kushner's many awards are a Pulitzer Prize for Drama, two Tony Awards and an Emmy Award, three OBI award, an Oscar nomination, an arts award from the American Academy of Arts & Letters, the PEN Laura PEL's award for a mid-career playwright, a Spirited Justice Award from the Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders and a Cultural Achievement Award from the National Foundation for Jewish Culture. The titles of his plays also indicate what so many people have praised about them, they are wide ranging, complex, emotional, dark, intelligent and funny, similar to Angels in America, which considers and complicates issues like AIDS, religion, politics, the supernatural and gender roles, his works as a whole bring together many points of view. They celebrate a struggle for meaning and truth, a curiosity and sensitivity about the world that often seems contradictory, harsh, unfair and wondrous all at once. I think that this is the best that we can ask of our artists and through their art they move us to reconsider what we thought we knew and to pay close attention to the lives of others. That gift is what connects us all.

As anyone who has experienced Mr. Kushner's work knows he is not afraid to provoke, to reveal emotion at a gut level, but always to the higher purpose of creating for audiences the chorus of voices and complexity of intent that define our collective humanity. His expression is ground in compassion, empathy and intellectual rigor. In the spirit of all great artists he challenges Orthodoxy, confronts assumptions and tests certainties and in doing so ignites our imagination, illuminates issues and ideas and expands our vision.

Whether or not we agree with him, whether or not we take exceptions to some of his conclusions, I believe that in many ways this is also the highest ideals of a university, a search for knowledge and understanding that values questions, dialogue and dissent.

We do not shy away from the difficult, the unpopular, the mysterious, rather these are the areas that most deserve our careful scholarly attention and or deepest humanity.

At an institution like the City University of New York woven together by disparate voices and diverse interests and connected by our shared search for meaning and our respect for the
individual answers to these questions, honoring an artist committed to the highest purposes of art
can only elevate our own historic mission.

Trustee Kathleen Pesile stated that last week a dispositive judgment was made about awarding
an honorary degree. At the end of the day we are now correcting it because it benefits CUNY and
we will not get another chance to remove this blemish. I spent thirteen years along with each of
you and the Chancellor to improve on CUNY's meteoric rise. I think the following quote attributed
to Justice Felix Frankfurter is most appropriate here, "Wisdom too often never comes and so one
ought not to reject it merely it comes late."

Trustee Wellington Chen stated that I supported and voted for the awarding of an honorary
degree to Mr. Kushner, when the first resolution was presented last Monday evening to the CUNY
Board of Trustees. As Chancellor Goldstein has indicated tonight, the substantial and significant
artistic and literary accomplishments over many years merit this important recognition. This is the
highest academic honor that the university may bestow on people whose lifelong achievement
should be celebrated. While I would have loved to have seen this approval granted last week, I
am reminded of the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, my favorite hero, who said "The time is
always right to do what is right." So Mr. Chairman, I will vote again for this honorary degree just
as I had done the first time.

Trustee Joseph J. Lhota stated that I too voted last week to give Tony Kushner this honorary
degree and I believe he is worthy of receiving it and I will vote for it again tonight. Freedom of
thought and expression is the bedrock of any university, it is at the core of academic freedom.
What Tony Kushner's beliefs are are not a reason why we are going to give him an honorary
degree, it is because of his artistic talent and the work that he has done as a playwright. I fully
support the opportunity to vote again to give him a degree.

Trustee Valerie L. Beal stated that as you know, I voted against tabling this honorary degree so
clearly I will be in favor of the honorary degree today. One of the reasons that I voted against
tabling it, and will vote in favor of it today, is because I respect the wisdom and the guidance of
the faculty of John Jay. I appreciate the Chancellor changing the process, but I respect those at
John Jay and especially the president Jeremy Travis for they did do their due diligence and my
vote was an affirmation of that faculty and that president and that I was confident that they had
looked at the issues. So once again I would like to affirm that confidence.

Trustee Sandi E. Cooper stated that I do not hold a vote, but I am grateful for the convening of
this Executive Committee and I did if you recall send you all a letter immediately at the end of that
meeting pleading with you to do this because in my years of teaching, over fifty, I really do think
the faculty know what they are doing almost all the time.

Trustee Cory Provost stated that had I not been ill I would have been at last week's meeting and
definitely would have voted in favor or Mr. Kushner's award. I am glad that we are convening this
body to act on this award.

Following discussion the item was unanimously approved.

Vice Chair Philip A. Berry stated that the Chancellor will be following up with the appropriate
actions to communicate the resolution of the Executive Committee to Mr. Kushner and interested
parties.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.