

Resolution Opposing the Suppression of Community Input in Library Renovations and Egregious Resource Gaps in Library and Information Technology Services

Adopted by DSC on October 19, 2018

WHEREAS, the Doctoral and Graduate Students' Council (hereafter, "DSC") comprises representatives from doctoral and master's programs at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (hereafter, "CUNY"); and

WHEREAS, the DSC promotes the ideals of democracy within CUNY, and beyond, in order to enable its students, faculty, and staff to participate in the important social, political, and economic decisions that affect the quality of the lives of their community, and their greater global communities at-large; and

WHEREAS, the DSC aims to ensure shared governance and students' rights to representation, thereby supporting a governance structure wherein students may provide input, particularly on matters that impact the pursuit of their studies, including access and use of library resources and space; and

WHEREAS, In the 2017 fall semester, the DSC learned of the Graduate Center Administration's plans to make renovations to the first floor of the library; and

WHEREAS, the DSC recognizes the importance of much needed renovations to the physical spaces of the Graduate Center and the library specifically, as well as creating state-of-the-art technological and library resources available to students; and

WHEREAS, the DSC unanimously approved the formation of an Ad-hoc Library Committee in the fall of 2017 coordinated by the DSC Officer for Library and Technology in order to provide input for much needed improvements in the Library work spaces; and

WHEREAS, in an attempt to learn from the student body and incorporate student voices in the process, the DSC created and administered two staggered surveys between December of 2017 and February of 2018; and

WHEREAS, the DSC also set up a line of communication with Keith Wilson, an artist and recent hire by Provost Joy Connolly as the Interim Director of the Center for the Humanities, and, after a two-semester effort to learn about students' thoughts and needs, recommended to prioritize: 1) workspace; 2) accessibility; and 3) the hiring of a third-party consultant in order to establish a proper community input process; and

WHEREAS, the approval and start of the renovations project, under the title of the "Object Library" was confirmed and announced by Provost Joy Connolly at the start of the summer session, giving little time for students to inquire about the project plans; and

WHEREAS, the Graduate Center Administration's top-down approach suppresses community input and silences potential opposition and is compounded by the egregious library and technology resource gaps; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that any renovations in the library or elsewhere should be centered on improving students' needs, such as building ergonomic workspaces and that meet accessibility standards for all students; and be it

RESOLVED that Graduate Center Administrators and the Center for the Humanities should make available a comprehensive design plan of the Object Library, including conceptual plans, physical layouts, budget and/or fundraising strategy, and timeline; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that any renovations and improvements made in a communal space anywhere in the building, especially the Library and its vicinity should be made with the goals of meeting students' needs and closing the resource gaps in Library and Information Technology Services; and be it

FINALLY RESOLVED that the DSC strongly urges Graduate Center Administrators and the Center for the Humanities to properly involve the voices of the Graduate Center community, including students, librarians, staff, and faculty, by immediately incorporating an adequate community input and decision-making process, and hiring a third-party consultant if necessary, in order to ensure that the "Object Library" and any intended subsequent projects do not continue to alienate Library patrons and staff.