

Plenary Meeting of the Doctoral Student's Council Official Minutes

Date: Friday, October 17, 2003

Time: Meeting Called to order 6:11pm

Chair: Paul McBreen

Minutes: Carolyn Fisher

Quorum Present

I. Approval of Agenda

Item VI A (Budget Update) was tabled until next plenary.

The approval of the Agenda was motioned, seconded, and passed without objection.

II. Approval of September Minutes

The approval of the September minutes was motioned, seconded, and passed without objection.

III. Speaker: President Frances Degen Horowitz

President Horowitz made the following points in an introductory speech:

- Thanks to reps for agreeing to be part of DSC, given students' busy schedules
- There are over 4000 graduate students, the university depends on DSC as a touchstone for admin to understand student concerns and to share what's going on that will affect you.
- We hope all have enjoyed refurbished 365 Express—thanks to the GC foundation board for putting up the money for this refurbishment themselves. The art was donated by the artist.
- This year we admitted largest class in history of grad center: over 700 new students including masters students
- This year we have the highest enrollment in history. This is a testimony to attractiveness of programs here.
- 1/3 of grad students were CUNY undergrads.
- Budget: tight but stable. Huge shortfall in tax levy budget in Albany. We have same budget as last year. The tuition increase filled the hole of what the governor cut from our budget.
- 2% of this years' base budget is sequestered against a possible midyear cut. If this happens, we'll be okay by using the sequestered money.
- Next year will be a tough year. We'll ask you to come to Albany to lobby on behalf of our budget. Discussion about this in Community Meeting on Monday.
- President Horowitz states that SUNY has a line item in the State budget for tuition remission.

The discussion was opened up to questions from the floor:

Paul McBreen asked about student space—doors get locked around the grad center around 9 PM, this is a problem. Doors should close around 10:30 if building closes at 11pm, especially student common areas.

President Horowitz promises to look into this matter. She adds that we're working very hard on improving current residence hall, but we're also trying to try to acquire a site to build a residence hall for students. She hesitates to mention it because she's not sure it will happen. We've tried to build before, but it's fizzled. But we're further along in the process than we've ever gotten.

-we can't charge market rates for Manhattan

-we'll be conferring with the DSC about these issues.

-we're aware that housing is a problem.

A representative from psychology makes a comment about the GTF positions—a lot of us work as Adjuncts, could program heads be briefed on GTF rules when they change? Also, could GTFs be placed in more community colleges?

Jacob Kramer: Is there a position on tuition remission for adjuncts besides the new packages?

President Horowitz replies that we want that. But we asked for that and we were given the new program. We will request that the new program be phased in more quickly (over 3 years instead of 6). The state legislature has responded that they agree the situation is terrible, we'll do something about it. But the state senate says that if CUNY wants to do it, they can do it since their budget is so big. The new tuition program will free up other dollars for other students. Also if we do get the reduced phase-in, at that point more and more positions on the campuses will come into the adjunct teaching fellow pool. Fewer adjunct positions out there, but more in the pool which are getting remission

Dominic Wetzel asks a question about the gym

President Horowitz replies that we're still trying to explore what's possible. We don't have money for equipment and staff. We're still investigating other avenues besides subcontracting with area gyms. Big problem is the staff. There would have to be fees, but not too high otherwise students wouldn't do it.

Maira asks could you tell us what changed from the original plan for the fitness center?

President Horowitz replies: It had been going to be equipped, but then there was no provision for staffing. But before we moved in, the new building and the operating budgets were cut.

Maira: Could community meetings be not only time (scheduled during nine to five) when students can give input?

President Horowitz replies that you can always email me.

Kate Moss: could we arrange to use other campus gyms at reduced rate?

Matt Schoengood replies that we've gotten a reduced rate at John Jay, but they still charge too much. Also our using the gym may cause an interference with varsity sports and lockers. I will follow up with Baruch, though. We've also looked at private clubs.

Patricia Ruiz Navarro expresses concern about the limited schedule of the library on weekends.

President Horowitz replies that it comes back to budget issues again and availability of staff: staff don't like to work on the weekends, but the main problem is the budget. We thought that 10-6 is the best time in terms of largest student use of the facilities.

IV. Chartered Organizations

A. General Chartered Org. Update (Carrie Fisher)

Carrie announces that there will be a chartered organization fair in early February. Also, the club AELLA has been resuscitated, and the club Biology Graduate Student Organization will be dechartered as of December 1 if we don't hear from them.

B. Vote on Culture Club (Efua Okoh, rep)

After a discussion about the constitution, it was moved to postpone this vote until next month pending revisions being made.

C. Vote on Eighteenth Century Studies Group (Ruth Garcia, rep)

The question was called:

Motion to approve the charter of the Eighteenth Century Studies Group

Seconded

23 for

2 against

1 abstain

Motion passed.

D. Presentation on Women of Color Network (Stephanie Campos)

Stephanie Campos presented the constitution of the Women of Color Network. The vote on chartering this organization will take place next month.

E. Presentation on Feminist Studies Group

Jamie Bianco presented the constitution of the Feminist Studies Group. The vote on chartering this organization will take place next month.

V. Activity Updates and Rep Involvement Opportunities

A. DSC Awareness Week (Celia Braxton and Moira Egan)

Celia Braxton announces that we'll be tabling downstairs next week to increase awareness of DSC. She demonstrates the packets.

Celia sends around a sign-up sheet for ONE HOUR shifts, and requests that those who sign up please stick around after the meeting to learn about how to use the popcorn machine.

Moira Egan says thanks are due to Rob Landsman for the donation of the popcorn machine.

B. DSC Fall Party (Sheryl Gordon)

Sheryl Gordon announces that the party is next week, she asks reps to please sign up for set up and clean up. Also take flyers, put them around your department.

C. Campus Equity Week (Dominic Wetzel)

Dominic Wetzel says:

I'm Liason to the PSC, to represent student concerns to the PSC.

There is a demonstration on Monday, October 27 for Campus Equity Week—an international week. He sends around sign-up sheet for informational picket. There are events on October 31 at the Grad Center—film festival, workshops about how to get a full-time faculty position.

Tell people in your department about it, please sign up.

D. City Council Hearings

Paul says: I went to a city council hearing on the topic of how are the tuition dollars being spent. Go to the next one! The last was very poorly attended,

E. Health Services and Health insurance (Carrie, Paul and José)

Jose announces that there are currently two options for students to buy health insurance. The cuny wide plan is widely underutilized—less than 2000 students out of 200,000 use it.

It was announced that there is a budget crisis and the Student Affairs office threatened to cease to pay the Nurse Practitioner if we don't raise student fees. We need to form a new committee to work on this issue with Student Affairs administrators.

Kate Moss volunteers for the committee and says that this will be even more of an issues now that the new GTF positions are coming in, people who would have been adjuncts would have been eligible for PSC insurance but will now no longer have that option. Health insurance is the one thing that we need the most.

Celia Braxton: we should put this out to our programs—it affects everybody.

Kate Moss: We should get information on how much students are using the center

Jose says that one third of our student fees currently support the Wellness Center and test subsidies.

Dominic Wetzel says that at the protest coming up – a central issue is health care.

Juliana Munoz and Sheryl Braxton also volunteer for the committee.

We should send something out over the DSC listserv to forward to our programs.

Moira—we should send a petition to Matt Schoengood. The more strongly we convey that this is a really serious issue, the better.

Victoria asks why are library hours not as important as the other issues such as health?

VI. Announcements

A. Budget Update was tabled until next month.

B. Unofficial minutes on website

It was announced that soon after each meeting there will hopefully be unofficial minutes posted on the website. If reps have any concerns, they should check them out when they get posted, and if necessary contact Camille who will remove them until they can be approved.

Item C. (DSC Email List) was tabled until next month.

D. Labyrinth bookstore feedback

Carrie Fisher asked representatives to please get feedback from students in their department about the Labyrinth bookstore on campus for next meeting.

E. DSC Logo Contest (Steering Committee)

Paul announced that the DSC would be having a contest to design a logo for the DSC, and that more details would be coming soon.

F. IR workshops (Paul)

Paul asks that reps attend IR Workshops and give feedback about them.

Paul adds that all reps should visit the website regularly and send events from your programs to the website as part of your job as a rep.

G. Help Wanted at the IR Help Desk

It was announced that the IR Help Desk is hiring.

It was asked whether there are certification requirements for being hired?

It was announced that representatives need to go to the Graduate Council—students don't attend. We need to get our reps to go.

Jose said that the Grad Council is the governing body of the Grad Center.

Celia announced that the DSC awareness week would be cancelled unless more people sign up after the meeting for time slots.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:50.