



CUNY Graduate Center
Doctoral Students' Council
Plenary Minutes

November 18, 2005

Chairperson: D. Golland

Minutes: T. Lee

Meeting called to order at 6:07 P.M.

Members and Voting Alternates Present:

Anthropology: Tina Lee, Andrea Morrell

Biochemistry: Jianghua Yin

Business: Kate McPhadden

Chemistry: Marie Thomas; Hasan Yumak

Classics: Pat Brooks

Comparative Literature: Joanna Guittari

Criminal Justice: Charles Lieberman

Earth & Environmental Science: Lee Hachadoorian

Engineering Biomedical: Ericka Calton

Engineering Civil: Rouzbeh Nazari

French: Chong Wojtkowski (failed to sign in)

Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Literature: Hyon Kim

History: David Golland; Kevin McGruder

Mathematics: Hieu T. Nguyen

Music DMA: Barbara Podgurski

Music PhD: Megan Jenkins

Philosophy: Jennifer Jensen

Political Science: Aleta Styers

Psychology Environmental: Stephanie Domenici (failed to sign in)

Psychology Learning Processes: Adrienne Robek

Psychology Social Personality: Valerie Futch

Sociology: Antonia Levy

Speech and Hearing Sciences: Yan Helen Yu (alt.)

Theatre: Kate Wilson

Urban Education: Donal Mulcahy

At Large: David Aliano, Celia Braxton, Moira Egan (failed to sign in), James Hoff, Binh Pok, Spencer Sunshine

Members Absent:

Art History: Daniel Quiles

Biology: Adam Kavalier, Selena Ahmed

Classics: Paul McBreen (alt.)

Computer Science: Sumon Azhar

Criminal Justice: Brenda Vollman (excused), Meredith Dank (Alt.)

Educational Psychology: Kallen Tsikalas, Mariya Shyko, Leslie Craigo (Alt.)

Engineering Biomedical: Kelly Brook Emerton (Alt.), Abaishek Datta (Alt.)

Engineering Electrical: Muhammad Salim

English: Adriana Tomasino (excused)

German: Marie Giurrieri

Liberal Studies: Cam McDonald (excused)

Linguistics: Alexandra Ioannidou

Music PhD: Jonas Westover

Political Science: Christopher Poulos, Jen Gaboury, Annelies Kamran (Alt.)

Psychology Biological: Alicia Walton

Psychology Clinical: Nora Goudsmit

Psychology Developmental: Aloka Star Felty

Psychology Forensic: Virginia Fineran

Psychology Social Personality: Sarah McClelland (Alt.)

Social Welfare: William Cabin

Sociology: Emily Mahon, Stephen Sheets (Alt.)

At Large: Jen Adler (excused), Ian Jones, Dorian Luey, Ulyana Munoz, Pamela Proscia, Nelly St.

Maurice, Nelson Tiburcio, Camille Tipton (excused), Michael Westbrook

Guests Present:

William A. Allen (USS)

Jin Ren Zhang (USS)

Carlos Sierra (USS) (failed to sign in)

Total Members and Voting Alternates Present: 34. Members Absent: 38. Alternates absent: 7. Guests present: 3.

Quorum established to conduct business.

I. Invited Speakers had not yet arrived when the meeting was called to order. Moved on to next item.

II. D. Golland announced the following agenda additions: IV E. Substituted Kate Wilson for Jameel Haque. Added IV G. Miguel Malo update (Chong). Added V D. Chartered Orgs Reminder and E. Master Plan. Changed X D. to Computer Issues (Tina) and Moved Other New Business to X. E. Motion to Approve as Amended.

**Moved by C. Wojtkowski; Second by Charles Lieberman
Motion Passes Unanimously**

III. Motion to Approve October Minutes

**Moved by C. Wojtkowski, Second by M. Egan.
Motion Passes Unanimously**

IV. Old Business

A. D. Golland read by-law 13 aloud. It was discussed at the last plenary. C. Braxton suggests that the words “to other health services” be added after “in excess of \$48,000 shall be allocated.” This is so that it is clear that money can be used for services other than the Nurse Practitioner at the Wellness Center. She also raised the question of saving money from one year to the next. The word “allocated” is used to cover this. A. Styers reminds us that we do cash accounting and so we will need to keep the money in a reserve fund. T. Lee reported that we have already thought of this and we will do exactly that. The question was raised about what happens if there are fewer than 4,000 students. Are we still obligated to put \$48,000 to Student Health Services? D. Golland answered that we have a commitment to Bill Kelly that we will pay this amount for the next 4 years. This is why the by-law is set to expire at the end of this agreement. J. Hoff suggested that Bill Kelly might be willing to find the money to make up any deficit we might face if enrollment dips. Motion to approve by-law as amended.

**Moved by C. Braxton, Second by E. Calton
Motion Passes Unanimously**

B. By-law 14 was handed out at the last plenary but not discussed. D. Golland read the by-law and then opened the floor for comments. M. Egan asked about the specific number of committee members (between 3 and 9) that is mentioned and the fact that the by-law says that subcommittees can only be made up of committee members. How will this work if there are only 3 members? D. Golland answered that they probably wouldn't both to make a subcommittee that had 3 people if that is the total membership. M. Egan suggested that something might come up after the committee is formed and there might be a need for subcommittees or a need for more members to spread the work. Does this by-law allow for the committee to grow after the initial members are appointed by the plenary.

C. S. Domenici discussed a recent memo sent by Associate Provost Julia Wrigley regarding the tuition cap. It proposes that the cap on internal and external funding be abolished, clarifies that GTFs and Tech Fellowships are not included because they are technically part-time work, and states that full-time work is included but asks for comments on this issue. M. Egan pointed out that some dissertation fellowships are very small and this makes the cap unfair. A. Robek expressed the opinion that the rule that having a full-time job means you must lose your dissertation fellowship is unfair. Students should be able to decide for themselves whether they can work full-time and still find the time to write. Many students might need the money from a full-time job. A. Styers said she did not receive the memo and asked that it be re-sent. C. Braxton suggested that the full-time job rule was arbitrary, not all of these jobs pay a living wage and are lucrative enough to warrant losing a fellowship. B. Podgurski asked if it would be possible to decide about full-time jobs on a case-by-case basis. People with \$150,000 a year jobs don't need the fellowship and it could go to someone else. E. Calton pointed out that this kind of rule makes the dissertation fellowship into a need-based fellowship. Robek concurred and suggested that all fellowships should be merit-based and that any cap makes them need-based. M. Jenkins suggested that the

dissertation fellowships could be tied to a specific amount of time spent writing. Others pointed out that this is impractical. How would it be monitored. B. Pok suggested that work should not be tied in to any cap--\$20,000/year is not enough to live on. At this point a straw poll was taken with the following questions:

1. 21 members were in favor of no cap whatsoever.
2. 12 members were in favor of a cap that only applied to internal funding.
3. 5 members were in favor of a higher cap on both internal and external funding (maybe \$50,000).
4. 23 members were in favor of full-time work not being included in any cap.

Golland reminded the group that a resolution about this issue was tabled last meeting and listed the options for how to deal with it. T. Lee moved that, since there is a diversity of opinion not captured by the resolution as written, it should be tabled indefinitely.

**Moved by T. Lee, Second by J. Hoff
Motion passes unanimously**

D. D. Golland briefly explained the status of the constitutional amendments and explained that we had incorrect information about the procedure last year. We were working under the assumption that we had to pass the amendments and then they had to be ratified by the DSO with a 10% voter turn out and a majority voting yes. This is not the rule according to the constitution. Rather, the DSO has the chance to VETO proposed amendments. It was further explained that all constitutional amendments were discussed last year and voted on at the 5/14 plenary. However, the outcome of the vote on changes to Art. V. was omitted. T. Lee has that it passed unanimously in her notes and D. Golland explained that he remembered this as well. A motion was made to correct the minutes. K. Wilson asked if we could also fix a typo at the same time.

**Moved by Charles Lieberman, Second by C. Wojtkowski
Passed 31 – 0 – 1**

At this point (7:05!!) the speakers arrived and were introduced by C. Lieberman. Carlos Sierra spoke and assured the group that they will be lobbying for better funding and tuition assistance. Their website is under construction but will be working soon.

E. Kate Wilson gave a brief presentation about the Middle East Studies Organization. It is a scholarly organization not ethnically-based. There is currently a center for middle east studies and lots of classes offered but no student group. It will be a cross-department organization. A question was asked about their first event. 8 to 10 people attended and it went well. At this point, K. Wilson was asked to leave so that a discussion could take place. C. Wojtkowski praised the constitution and said she was “all for it.” M. Egan wondered whether the organization might duplicate the efforts of MEMEAC (Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center). D. Aliano pointed out that there is already a precedent for this. Although the Center for Latin American, Caribbean and Latino Studies exists, we

have AELLA as a chartered org. Motion of approve the Middle East Studies Organization

**Moved by C. Wojtkowski, Second by A. Morrell
Motion Passes Unanimously**

- F. Tech Fee Committee Report. Since Paul McBreen was not present this item was tabled.
 - G. C. Wojtkowski brought us up-to-date on the Malo Trial. He was convicted on 10/24. A huge press conference was held on 11/9. Bail was imposed and posted. The sentencing will occur on 12/3. Please sign the petition calling for Malo to not serve jail time on the Steering Committee Office Door and the Door of Tina's Office.
- V. Co-chair for Student Affairs Report
- A. The Spring Dates are listed on the last page of the handout and they will be sent over email.
 - B. Business cards are in the steering committee office and more will be ordered soon.
 - C. The final vote on our student activity fee increase by the Board of Trustees will be on 11/28. It has been approved by the student affairs committee at the BOT.
 - D. 12/20 is the deadline for chartered organizations to turn in their rosters, constitutions, and contact info.
 - E. On Monday there will be a hearing at the BOT about the Master Plan and "The Compact" to finance it (a handout from cuny.edu was available with more details). A "modest" (around 3%) tuition increase is proposed for the next 4 years for all CUNY students. But, if the plan goes through, we will have about \$900,000 more in our budget at the GC. The co-chairs have already suggested that part should be spent on travel and research and dissertation fellowships. We certainly agree that the state should commit to funding, but they should take on more of the burden than is proposed currently. C. Braxton raised a question about the financing. The document states that an "internal reshaping" of the CUNY budget should occur with "redeployment and efficiency measures, as well as changes to personnel practices" to allow presidents to shift funds to master plan priorities. What could this mean? More adjuncts to save money? A. Morrell suggested that the PSC probably has a position on this. C. Lieberman suggested that we take a position on tuition increases for graduate students that can be given to the USS as they decide their position. Motion: The Doctoral Students' Council Denounces Tuition Increases for Graduate Center Students.

**Moved By C. Lieberman, second by ??
Motion passes unanimously**

VI. Co-chair for Business Report

- A. It was reported by T. Lee, last plenary, that we would need to put about \$9,000 more into our reserve and capital funds as a result of the increased student activity fee (which is our source of income). On 10/27 a meeting of the college association was held. At this meeting, it was decided that only the part of our activity fee income that

is not earmarked will count as income and used in the calculation of our reserve/capital funds. This means that only \$28.75 of the activity fee is “income” (current fee is 29.60 + 12 starting in the spring - .85 for USS and 12 for health care). The rest of the activity fee (along with the revenue from movie ticket sales) goes into a category called “dedicated inflows” and will be kept under a separate account code at the business office. I have revised the budget to reflect this new way of categorizing our inflows and have removed the extra money going to reserve/capital. This all means that we have a surplus of \$12,572.88 in the budget. T. Lee proposed that we take \$9,000 of this and move it to the Travel and Research line. This will leave a budgeted surplus of about \$3600. It is likely that we will end the year with more cash than this since departmental allocations and chartered org money is often not spent. Even if we manage to get everyone to use their allocation (my goal) this amount seems reasonable. In my mind, we need to spend this money on student needs and not just let it sit in our accounts. This is especially true since, as of Monday, about 2/3 of the travel and research fund has already been promised to students (\$86,990). We need all the money we can get for this. Motion to allocate \$9,000 more to the Travel and Research Fund.

**Moved by T. Lee, Second by M. Egan
Motion carries with 4 abstentions.**

- B. Medical Test Subsidies. Mary Clancy has worked out a deal with Mt. Sinai for incredibly cheap medical tests. The only catch is that they will now accept only one check to pay for the entire cost of all tests each month. The wellness center is telling students this when they come in. On a TRIAL basis, we are doing the following:
1. We are writing a check for the entire cost of all tests ordered by Mary Clancy each month.
 2. Students must pay their 30% share to the wellness center. They are forwarding this money to the DSC as it comes in.
 3. We will be “fronting” the 30% for students who have not yet paid when the bill is due and will be reimbursed.

If, after a couple of months, we find that we are not being reimbursed in a timely manner by students, the program AND THE DISCOUNTS will be discontinued.

- C. Golland suggested that we might want to reconsider paying for 100% of lab costs is they are so cheap and we might pay less that we would have in the past. E. Calton suggested that maybe the rule could be 100% if the cost is under a certain amount. A. Levy reminded everyone that the cheaper costs might encourage more students to go and we would actually spend more, just for more tests and more students. T. Lee stated that she would support spreading the money around more rather than paying a larger portion of the cost of lab tests. This issue will be discussed in the future.

VII. Co-chair for Communications Report

- A. Golland reported that there has been a delay in receiving flu shots. The DSC is also working on a plan to distribute free condoms at the GC. These were procured by QUNY.
- B. Golland reminded the reps that Grad Council attendance is important. Find out who the rep is for your department and remind them to go.
- C. BOT Committees (except Student Affairs): Golland attended the meetings of the Board of Trustees Standing Committees on Facilities, Planning, and Management; Student Affairs and Special Programs; and Fiscal Affairs. Also in the building there was a meeting of the Committee on Faculty, Staff, and Administration, of which Golland was last year's student member. The Facilities Committee approved a five-year capital plan involving various construction projects, including a public-private partnership with Forest City Ratner to build an academic building at City Tech with a private residential tower above. At the Fiscal Affairs Committee meeting, student member Ryan Merola of Brooklyn College waged a 45-minute long virtual filibuster against a tuition indexing plan which would increase undergraduate tuition over the next four years; at one point, Trustee Nilda Soto-Ruiz and Faculty member Karen Kaplowitz seemed to be leaning towards voting against the measure, which would have caused its defeat by a vote of 3-2 against; in the end, however, the appointed trustees reverted to rubber-stamp form and the final vote was 3-1-1 (Merola voted no and Kaplowitz abstained). The Faculty Committee approved the appointment of Steve Brier as the Graduate Center's Vice President for Information Technology. All committee votes must be finalized at the subsequent meeting of the full Board; the next meeting will be held on November 28th at 4:30 p.m. at Baruch.
- D. Golland did not serve as USS Chairperson for twenty-four hours during the recent transition.

VIII. Health Services Committee

- E. Calton reported that a paper version of a Wellness Center survey was circulated at two events last week. 39 were returned. An online version is ready and Dave will send the link.

IX. USS Report

- C. Lieberman assured us he will bring our concerns about the planned tuition increases to the USS. K. Wilson suggested that Lieberman should urge the USS to edit any documents they distribute (folders were distributed by Sierra and the other USS representatives earlier in the meeting).

X. New Business

- A. T. Lee reminded the group that the student lounges must be reserved if they are to be used for events.
- B. A. Levy raised the issue of smokers directly outside the door. They tend to block traffic and non-smokers have to go through second-hand smoke. A. Styers said that the co-chairs last year brought this complaint up to facilities. They were told that

smoking is prohibited by the handicap entrance and the “main entrance” which is the middle set of doors. The south entrance is the only one left for smokers to use.

- C. A. Levy also reported that required classes in the political science department are getting very large as enrollment is increasing. This makes the classes less valuable to students. Students in their department have complained and were told that budgets prevented the department from offering more required classes without cutting electives. Levy asked if other departments were having the same issue? D. Aliano reported that they often have the opposite problem in history—electives that have a low enrollment being cancelled. K. McGruder asked about the class sizes in question. Levy reported that classes are over 20 students. D. Golland will put this question to the list.
- D. T. Lee reported continued computer problems at the GC and urged all of us to call the help desk every time and keep a log of any problems they encounter. This will, hopefully, convince OIT that there are real problems. She offered to collect logs to bring them all at once. B. Pok reported that these issues were brought up at the Tech Fee committee and no one from OIT believed there are still problems. She also reported that wireless networking should be implemented by next fall and OIT thinks this will make the system work better.
- E. D. Mulcahy raised a question about the flash drives. His department received a small number of flash drives—not enough for 25% of their students but only for, in his estimate 7%. B. Pok explained what happened with the drives and why the numbers were so small. More will be ordered in the future.

XI. Motion to Adjourn

**Moved by C. Liberman, Second by C. Wojtkowski.
Adjournment at 8:07 pm**

Respectfully submitted,
Tina Lee