

**Graduate Center, CUNY  
Doctoral Students' Council  
Plenary Minutes**

**April 11, 2008—6pm**

**Members and Voting Alternates Present:**

Anthropology: Javiela Evangelista (proxy: Chris Caruso), Mariya Radeva  
Art History: Whitney Thompson  
Biology: Lisa Offringa  
Comparative Literature: Adele Kudish  
Computer Science: Omer Demir (proxy: Mehmet Bicer)  
Criminal Justice: Crystal Rodriguez  
English: Kerdiana Chez, Allyson Foster  
French: Chong Wojtkowski  
Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Lit: Teresa Darwich  
History: Carl Lindskoog  
Liberal Studies: Christopher Ian Foster  
Mathematics: Micah Miller  
Music DMA: Judy Woo  
Philosophy: Chris Sula  
Political Science: Aaron Ibur  
Psychology: Cognition, Brain, Behavior: Karla Felix  
Psychology: Educational: Astrid Rodriguez  
Psychology: Environmental: Stephanie Domenici Cabonargi  
Psychology: Learning Processes: Matthew Taylor  
Psychology: Neuro: Jenny Ly  
Psychology: Social Personality: Rachel Verni  
Social Welfare: Denise Torres  
Speech & Hearing Sciences: Kristen Maul  
Theatre: Ana Martinez  
Urban Education: Pamela Proscia

At-large Reps: Jill Belli , Randy Cota, Gregory Donovan, Rob Faunce, Taylor Kennamer, Fiona Lee, Charles Lieberman, Anton Masterovoy, Neil Meyer, Amy Meyers, Amanda Springs, Brenda Vollman, Kate Wilson, Danielle Wu

**Members Absent:**

Art History: Monica Steinberg  
Audiology: Allison Shapiro (excused)  
Biology: Kathleen Schnaars Uvino  
Chemistry: Nancy Medina (excused)  
Classics: Michael Broder (excused)  
Comparative Literature: Andrea Efthymiou (excused)  
Computer Science: Deniz Sarioz (excused)  
Criminal Justice: Alissa Ackerman  
Engineering Biomedical: Xiang (Ian) Gu (excused)

Engineering Chemical: Mehrdad Kheiripour  
Engineering Civil: Rouzbeh Nazari  
Engineering Electrical: Rex Wong  
English: Cori Gabbard (excused)  
History: Jameel Haque (excused)  
Linguistics: Elizabeth Pratt (excused)  
Music PhD: Roberto Barnard  
Political Science: April Henning  
Public Health: Lauren Evans  
Psychology: Bio: Maria Maust (excused)  
Psychology: Forensic: Elizabeth Arias  
Psychology: Industrial and Organizational: Jessica Anderson (excused)  
Sociology: Jesse Goldstein

At-Large Reps: Nazreen Bacchus (excused), Ericka Calton, Larry Ianotti (excused), Geoff Rab (excused), Meghan Sacks, Aya Shohat,

Members Present: 41; Members Absent: 28

Chair: Brenda Vollman (BV)  
Minutes: Allyson Foster (AF)

**Guest Speaker:**

Stephen Brier (SB), the Vice President for IT and External Programs, spoke about the ongoing effort to obtain health insurance for GC students employed within the CUNY system. He said that the best solution at this point is to seek coverage under NYSHIP, the institution that currently provides health insurance to SUNY students and other NY State employees.

To be eligible under NYSHIP, a GC student would have to earn a minimum of \$4000 annually from CUNY. This would apply to those who teach (at least one course per semester), as well as Grad A, B, and Cs, and college assistants. Under NYSHIP, 90% of healthcare costs would be covered for a single user, and 75% for a family. NYSHIP requires a minimum 50% contribution from employers.

The GC has made an official inquiry about our eligibility for NYSHIP. City employees are not eligible for coverage under NYSHIP, but GC students are paid by the state. Once our eligibility is officially determined, the next step is securing the necessary funds from the State. It would cost approximately \$2.6 million to provide coverage for approximately 2300 students.

For further information on NYSHIP, see <http://www.cs.state.ny.us/nyship/nyship.cfm>

Adele Kudish (AK) asked if the NYSHIP program has a time limit, and SB said that as it

is based on income, students would be covered for as long as they are earning the minimum amount required. AK also asked if the initial coverage would start in the fall semester, or in the spring semester, and SB said he would look into it.

Kate Wilson (KW) pointed out that adjuncts at some community colleges get paid by the city rather than the state, and wondered if that would complicate their eligibility for NYSHIP. SB said he would look into it.

Carl Lindskoog (CL) said that even if we get covered under NYSHIP, only 50 – 60% of GC students will be eligible. He asked if they are looking into other options that would include more students. SB said that progress will need to be incremental, and that to get insurance for everyone would probably require a national program.

At 6:26 the meeting was called to order by BV

## **I. Approval of Agenda**

Chong Wojtkowski (CW) notes agenda need to say Draft.

Gregory Donovan (GD) requested the following changes:

Under III. Old Business, add item h. Eastern European Studies Group

Under IV. Old Business add item d. Food List

BV: Approve

KW: 2<sup>nd</sup>

Unanimous consent

## **II. Approval of Minutes**

Rob Faunce (RF): Approve

GD: 2<sup>nd</sup>

Unanimous consent

## **III. Old Business**

### **a. Nurse Practitioner**

RF: The situation is hopeful. We probably won't have a nurse practitioner by the end of the semester, but we might have one by mid- to late May.

## **b. Bylaws**

Voting took place to approve the bylaw amendments that were presented for consideration at the March Plenary.

### Bylaw 1.6: Advertising and Outside Funding

There was a typo in the amendment: the strikethrough in the word “funding” needs to be removed.

The typo was fixed.

GD: Motion to approve

Danielle Wu (DW): 2<sup>nd</sup>

Unanimous consent

### 3.6: Grants

RF: Motion

Adele Kudish: 2<sup>nd</sup>

Unanimous Consent

### 5: Use of Student Activity Fees in Payment of “Outside” Performer or Speaker

GD: Motion

Judy Woo (JW): 2<sup>nd</sup>

Unanimous Consent

### 9: USS Delegate DSC Responsibilities

Crystal Rodriguez (CR): Motion

AK: 2<sup>nd</sup>

Unanimous

### 13: Health Issues Committee

CR: Motion

Chris Sula (CS): 2<sup>nd</sup>

Unanimous

### 15: DSO Wage and Stipend Schedule

CL noted that increasing the Adjunct Project Coordinator stipend had been discussed at the last Constitution and Bylaw Committee meeting, and while the stipend has been increased from \$350/month to \$425/month in the proposed 2008/2009 budget, the bylaw still reads \$350/month.

RF said that we could table this bylaw and present it again for ratification once the Constitution and Bylaw Committee had met.

Charles Lieberman (CL): Motion to table

Chong Wojtkowski (CW): 2<sup>nd</sup>

Majority to table

18: Compliance with New York State Laws

KW asked if there was any way in which the addition of this bylaw could be detrimental to the operation of the DSC, and CL asked if this amendment had been run past anyone in Student Affairs and CUNY Legal. RF said that this underscores what is already in the NYS Open Meetings Law, and that Sharon Lerner in Student Affairs had been consulted.

Anton Masterovoy (AM): Motion

RF: 2<sup>nd</sup>

Majority in favor

### **c. Budget**

Concerns were expressed over the discrepancy between the Adjunct Project Coordinator salary in the proposed 2008-9 budget and the proposed amendment to Bylaw 15 (see above). People were reluctant to pass the proposed budget until the discrepancy had been cleared up. BV pointed out that if we pass the proposed budget now, it can always be re-presented in the fall, and Denise Torres (DT) added that we have a large discretionary budget that money can be pulled from. Jill Belli (JB) asked if there was a way to clear everything up now rather than having to wait until the fall.

RF moved to suspend the Plenary so the Constitution and Bylaw Committee could meet to correct the proposed amendment to Bylaw 15.

KW: 2<sup>nd</sup>

Majority in favor

Plenary Suspended at 6:58pm

Plenary resumed at 7:01

Re-presentation of the amendment of Bylaw 15 to the Plenary.

CR: Motion

AM: 2<sup>nd</sup>

Unanimous consent, with 4 abstentions

Discussion about the proposed budget continued.

GD: Motion

AM: 2<sup>nd</sup>

1 abstention

Majority in favor

#### **d. Elections**

RF reported that the online voting is going really well. As of this morning (only a week into voting), as many people had voted (roughly 5%) as had in total in the last election. GD noted that the default feature that requires you to vote for every position has been fixed for the most part; if you encounter it just put “N/A.”

#### **e. Wellness Center Monies**

As per the discussion at the April Plenary, DT distributed the ballot on what to do with the surplus monies we have to spend on health-related issues. Extensive discussion took place in which many concerns about the various options were brought to light, and no agreement seemed within reach. KW suggested a straw poll to see how many people cared about deciding definitively how the money should be spent, and how many didn't mind if it just went back en masse to the Wellness Center.

GD: Motion to take a straw poll

16 don't mind if the money reverts back to the Wellness Center

6 want to make specific recommendations

RF suggested that we could let the money revert to the Wellness Center, but that we could do a resolution to make a recommendation to the WC as to how we would like the money spent (e.g. on EMR)

RF: Motion to postpone until next meeting

GD: 2<sup>nd</sup>

Unanimous Consent

DT said that she would do some more research into Electronic Medical Records (which many people were interested in purchasing for the Wellness Center), and bring the information to the next meeting for further discussion.

#### **f. Email Task Force**

GD reported that he had met with Bob Campbell, who is committed to email forwarding and alumni email. GD is optimistic about the email situation, and hopes to have something more to report at the next meeting.

### **g. Health Insurance**

CL said that even though the State Budget is closed, students should keep up the pressure on their Representatives. He suggested that we contact the Chancellor to thank him for his letter of support, and ask for more details about proposed timelines, etc. The Adjunct Project is in the process of organizing another public event at 80<sup>th</sup> Street.

### **h. Eastern European Studies Group**

A: Motion to charter the group

DT: 2nd

Unanimous

## **IV. New Business**

### **a. Leadership Accountability**

Kery Chez [KC] expressed concern over the time it is taking to process grant requests and the lack of accountability protocols in the DSC structure. KC noted that the Feminist Studies Group has been having some trouble with unresponsiveness, receiving accurate information, and delays in the grant process and the accurate processing of Chartered Org and grant monies.

BV and DT wondered if it was a general issue, or one for specific groups, and whether the issue was leadership accountability or a problem with information flow. KC named two other Chartered Orgs (the Cinema Studies Group and the French Interdisciplinary Group for 17th-Century Studies) that have expressed similar concerns, and added that the issue of accountability relates to unresponsiveness especially where discrepancies in monies arise, because Chartered Orgs rely on the monies to effectively plan their events. Fiona Lee (FL) noted that the Postcolonial Studies Group has also experienced problems.

GD acknowledged that the process can be slow, but that it is often due to factors such as COs not submitting rosters before requesting money. Also, grants must be approved by committee, which slows things down, especially when the same few people are being tapped to do the work. Randy Cota noted that in the case of professional development or cultural grant monies, missing rosters are not relevant.

BV said that the grants have a one-month turn around time. DT presented a chart that broke down the processing times, which averaged 7-14 days.

CW and several others discussed setting specific response times for confirmation of receipt of grant applications, updates, and the final response. GD said that setting shorter response

times would not help if things were already not being accomplished within a longer time frame.

GD said that the Steering Committee would welcome input and participation on this issue, and BV proposed that we form an Ad Hoc Information Flow Committee to discuss grant info and processing, etc. Other names, such as Protocols Committee or Oversight Committee, were suggested.

RF motioned to form the committee

KW: 2<sup>nd</sup>

1 opposed

Majority in favor

### **b. Travel and Research Funds**

A discussion took place regarding the high demand for Travel and Research Grants, and the fact that students who apply for monies in the Spring semester are often turned down. GD suggested that we keep applying in order to indicate that there is a demand, and that we continue to alert APOs and Student Affairs about our concerns.

### **c. Middle States Working Groups**

Student committee members are still needed. Email GD if you are interested in participating.

### **d. Food List.**

GD suggested that we ask the Dining Commons to provide lists of ingredients for their menu items.

A straw poll was taken to see how many people were interested in pursuing this issue, and the majority approved.

## **V. Student Affairs Report**

### **a. Chartered Orgs**

Nothing to report

### **b. DSC RSS**

Research Computing will install the necessary software, most likely starting in the fall. If interested in the process, email GD.

## **VI. Communications Report**

### **a. Communications with Administration**

RF reported that President Kelly will be speaking at the May Plenary, hopefully in the transition between the two meetings. The next BOT is meeting on April 28, so contact RF if you want to get on the docket (e.g. if you want to speak about Health Insurance, etc.)

### **b. Report on External Meetings**

The last Steering Committee meeting approved \$1000 for the Adjunct Project health insurance campaign; Plenary approval is needed for \$500 of that to be allocated.

DT: Motion

KW: 2nd

Unanimous

## **VII. Business Report**

DT reported that the USS has approved a request for \$2500 for the Child Care Center. We still need to decide what to do with the \$10,000 that the USS has offered to the GC: should we put \$5000 into the Travel and Research Fund? Do we still want sofas?

DT also reported that \$1000 has been dedicated from health monies for the Wellness Center Festival.

## **VIII. USS Report**

AF reported that as she was not informed of the date of the March meeting, she had nothing to report. She will, however, be attending the meeting on April 13.

## **IX. Committee Reports**

### **a. Health Issues:**

DW encouraged us to attend the Wellness Festival, and noted that they are working to prioritize students. There will be a staff and student sign-in.

### **b. Community Building:**

DW asked that we brainstorm about what to do with money from USS.

**c. Library:**

AM reported that we may be getting better lights in the library.

**X. Announcements**

No announcements

**XI. Adjournment**

RF: Motion to adjourn

DT: 2<sup>nd</sup>

Unanimous Consent at 8:42 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Allyson Foster