

Plenary Minutes February 15th, 2013

Plenary

Executive Committee

Steering Committee

Constitution and Bylaws

Grants

Health Issues

Outreach

Student Services

Student Tech Fee

Present: Reethee Antony, Colin Ashley, Ravi Bachu, Christin Bowman, Anick Boyd, Emily Channell, Jagadisa-devasri Dacus, Katherine Dawson, Annie Dell'Aria, Anne Donlon, Chris Eng, Stephanie Fiorenza, Nicole Hanson, Tristan Husby, Sarah Ruth Jacobs, Stephanie Jones, Svetlana Jovic, Laura Kane, Eero Laine, Jacqui Levin, Rachel Liebert, Christen Madsen, Amy Martin, Jessica McCurdy, John McMahon, William McNally, Deepak Menon, Benjamin Miller, Valia Mitsou, Kristin Moriah, Maria Mytilinaki, Christina Nadler, Dominique Nisperos, Stephen O'Connell, Megan Paslawski, Tayfun Pay, Tony Perri, Derek Petti, Jennifer Prince, Nancy Roecklein, Rebecca Salois, Virtue Sankoh, Jared Simard, Anna Simonson, Christine Smith, John Spear, Lauren Suchman, Jen Tang, Carissa Veliz, Christina Ventura-DiPersia, Monique Whitaker, Emily Williamson

Absent: Flannery Amdahl, Justin Bracken, Priya Chandrasekaran, Jennifer Chard, Mia Chen, Desiree Fields, Maggie Galvan, Katarzyna Platt, Fatemeh Pooyaei Mehr, Ashish Punia, Christina Ramos, Louisa Thompson, Julie Viollaz

Dr. Don Robotham Director of the Office of Educational Opportunity & Diversity Programs and the Advanced Research Collaborative

DR discusses the Office of Educational Opportunity & Diversity Programs and his work in coordinating the various aspects of it. The GC currently has eight Magnet fellowships available (\$25000 plus other perks including a signing bonus). These are shared across all programs. The Magnet Fellowships currently carry service requirements. There is no teaching but there is a mentoring component, which is considered equivalent to teaching.

Q: Is there a process for choosing the disciplines of Magnet scholars, especially in relation to the mentoring program. DR: It is not so systematic. But most Magnet Fellowships tend to go to students in the humanities and the social sciences.

DR emphasizes that the program is largely managed by students at this point. After the third year, the students are moved into manager positions. This is a fact that DR is very proud of.

DR explains the application process and the workings of the Pipeline Program and the Black Male Initiative.

DR explains that the Advanced Research Collaborative invites faculty members from other institutions and CUNY to the Graduate Center as Fellows.

DR is looking for ways to include students in the ARC program. DR is exploring ways to create competitions for small research grants for student oriented research proposals. DR believes that the money is available to begin such a program. DR states that the projects must be collaborative, interdisciplinary, and relatively easy to complete. DR states that there are likely enough funds for research grants of about \$1000 per student for successful applications.

Q: When can we expect to hear more information about this program. DR would like to conclude the application process within two weeks. DR hopes everything is in place by the first week of March. DR notes that he must include the EOs and other faculty members. DR notes the concern that has already been expressed regarding the involvement of students

Q: Related to the reduced enrollment, how will the office of OEODP work to continue to fulfill the mission of public education. DR notes that this is a concern of OEODP and something he is also

concerned about. DR states that if you narrow the pool of people who generate knowledge that the knowledge created will necessarily be narrow. He believes this very strongly, but notes that he is choosing his words carefully. DR states that he is not President and thus can say what he want. He is not concerned with market based solutions.

Q: I am on the admissions committee in my program. We do not have any clear direction regarding what exactly is "underrepresented minority." Is there any guidance on this matter? DR: No. We follow federal regulations on this matter. DR discusses the flexibility that is necessary in these considerations.

Stefanie Jones (SJ) calls the meeting to order at 6:44pm

Plenary

I. Approval of Agenda

Colin Ashley (CPA) motions to approve the agenda. Megan Paslawski seconds.
 The motion passes unanimously with emendations to the agenda.

Executive Committee

Steering Committee

II. Approval of Minutes from November 16, 2012

Laura Kane motions to approve the Minutes from November 16, 2012. Amy Martin seconds.
 The motion passes unanimously.

Constitution and Bylaws

III. Approval of Minutes from December 14, 2012

Bill McNally motions to approve the Minutes from December 14, 2012. Anick Boyd seconds.
 Jen Tang was absent from the meeting--this should be reflected in the minutes.
 The motion passes unanimously.

Grants

Health Issues

Outreach

IV. Executive Committee Reports

1. Co-Chair for Student Affairs--Eero Laine (EL)

1. EL reports that the Middle Eastern Studies Organization is in the process of dechartering. There is a call out for interest in re-activating the organization, which has already received some interest. EL asks reps to forward information regarding the organization to students in their programs and to contact him for any further information.
2. EL reports that the Constitution and Bylaws Committee is working on governance to create a DSC Governance Task Force. More information will follow at later meetings.
3. EL enters into the record the following documents: "Closing Down the Roach Motel," *Inside Higher Ed*, 5 February 2013 and "My PhD Program is not a Roach Motel," *The GC Advocate*, 11 February 2013. (See attached)

2. Co-Chair for Communications--Anne Donlon (AD)

1. AD reports on digital signage at the Graduate Center. AD has shared information regarding how to get your messages on to the digital screen throughout the building. AD presents a working protocol for digital signage and encourages students to include the dates that the slide should be displayed
2. AD announces that Maria Cristina Garcia was removed after missing two plenary meetings. The DSC EC appoint Ben Miller as the interim officer
3. AD announces that Evan Misshula resigned and Kristin Moriah has been appointed in the interim
4. AD announces that The DSC EC met with Provost Chase Robinson, Head Librarian Polly Thistlewaithe, Ray Ring, and Mike Byers. The meeting related to 1.2 million dollars for a student center on the C-level of the library. They proposed moving the DSC and all of its offices to the C-level, which would eliminate student work space on the C-level.
5. AD reports on the status of the parental leave working group. At the meeting with President Kelly, he said the plan was to introduce a maternal leave policy. AD reports this is not what the DSC had been advocating for as it leaves out adoptive parents.
6. AD reports on meeting with Don Robotham. She will forward any information she receives from him regarding the fellowships mentioned at the beginning of the meeting.
7. AD reports that the EC met with President Kelly and discussed the "Roach Motel" statement. He expressed his apologies.
8. AD reports that President Kelly agreed to some system of posting flyers throughout the

Student Services

Student Tech Fee

Plenary

Executive Committee

Steering Committee

Constitution and Bylaws

Grants

Health Issues

Outreach

Student Services

Student Tech Fee

- Graduate Center--possibly new corkboards at the ends of the elevator corridors.
9. AD reports that the EC also discussed upcoming issues of diversity related to the cuts to programs with President Kelly.
10. AD reports that the EC met with Student Affairs and discussed parental leave again. The EC also spoke with Jennifer Furlong (jfurlong@gc.cuny.edu), the new director of professional development and planning
11. AD reminds reps that DSC nominations are currently open and encourages reps to nominate.
3. Co-Chair for Business--Colin Patrick Ashley (CPA)
 1. CPA announces that program allocations will be set shortly after the enrollment rates are determined for the spring.
 2. CPA will present the budget for the 2013-2014 at the next plenary meeting.
 3. CPA reminds reps that movie tickets are now \$6.50 due to an increase in price from AMC.
 4. CPA provides an update on the website. The company with the lowest bid actually wants to create a site based in wordpress. He is looking into finding additional funds to meet some of the other bids.
 5. CPA reports on the upcoming blood drive. CPA and Chrissy Nadler are the "Blood Captains." The blood drive will be held off campus in a van or bus.
 6. CPA reports on the reappointment of the DSC Affiliates. At the February Steering meeting on affiliate reappointment Gregory Donovan and Maggie Galvin were reappointed as co-coordinators of OpenCUNY. Joe Heissan was reappointed as co-coordinator of the Fundraising and Alumni Commission. Michael Busch was reappointed as the Editor-in-Chief of the Advocate. Conor Tomás Reed, Zoltán Glück, and Alyson Spurgas were not reappointed as co-coordinators of the Adjunct Project. Q: What were the concerns of Steering in not reappointing the co-coordinators of the Adjunct Project?. CPA: There were concerns regarding communication between the AP and the DSC. There were also questions related to the work performed during the past semester and if that work was directly connected to the DSC.
4. USS Delegate--Christina Nadler (CN)
 1. CN reports on difficulties experienced in receiving materials from the CUNY Central Office. CN and Monique Whitaker will be reporting on what they find. CN eventually was given a flash drive with scans. CN also requested materials related to the promotional video related to pathways that was produced. CUNY Central denied such correspondence. CN has followed up and continues to question their sincerity. Dave Fields was apparently incredulous that correspondence could possibly include emails. CN is exploring an appeal process. CN will call a meeting of the ad-hoc committee on USS shortly.
 2. CN will be working with the Officer of Governance and Membership regarding the creation of a committees for USS and UFS to mirror the work of the Steering Officers.
 3. CN reports that the audit of USS finances is moving forward after not happening for the past ten years. They will begin with an initial review of the current year.
 4. CN reports on the parental Leave survey. The survey has closed and the Parental Leave Working Group will be analyzing the data. Q: If the administration is framing pregnancy as a medical issue, could we frame it as a mental health issue? CN encourages more people to join the committee to explores these options.
5. UFS Liaison--Stefanie A. Jones (SAJ)
 1. SAJ reports that she has spoken with Mike Byers and President Kelly regarding gender neutral bathrooms. There appears to be some problems related to accessibility and the ways in which the door opens
 2. SAJ reports that she met with the Wellness Center regarding racism and mental health in the academy. More information is forthcoming
 3. SAJ notes that UFS met. UFS passed a resolution on Academic Freedom and Brooklyn College.
 4. SAJ reports that the "Kroll Report" the report created regarding the events at Baruch College it will be discussed at the next Board of Trustees meeting but in executive session.

5. SAJ reports that the administration is sending emails to students regarding Pathways, which claims that faculty supports it. SAJ reports that the leadership of UFS has stated that there is not much left to do in terms of programs and campuses. They are hopeful about the lawsuit being put forward by the Professional Staff Congress.
6. SAJ reports on the budget for the State of NY. (Attached) SAJ reports that new programs are being developed that link budgets and funding to neoliberal ideas of success and job placement. The preliminary NYC budget has also been released and will be updated soon.

V. New Business

Plenary

1. Ratification of New Members

1. Ben Miller (BM) presents the following students for ratification as DSC representatives:
 1. At-Large Representatives: Ravi Bachu, Katherine Dawson, Maria Mytilinaki
 2. Program Representative for Criminal Justice: Julie Viollaz

Executive Committee

2. Ben Miller motions to ratify the new members of the DSC. Jared Simard seconds. The motion passes unanimously

Steering Committee

2. Resolution on the Robert E Gilleece Student Center (Attached)

1. AD presents the Resolution Affirming the Robert E Gilleece Student Center.
2. Discussion ensues regarding the language of the resolution.
3. CPA motions to adopt the resolution, which reads: RESOLVED: The Doctoral Students' Council affirms its permanent location and complete use of space in the Robert E. Gilleece Student Center located on the fifth floor of the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Anick Boyd seconds.
4. The motion passes unanimously.

Constitution and Bylaws

Grants

Health Issues

Outreach

Student Services

Student Tech Fee

Anick Boyd Motions to form the Robert E Gilleece Student Center ad-hoc committee.
 Bill McNally seconds.

The motion passes unanimously.

3. Election of Officer for Governance and Membership

1. SAJ opens nominations for the Officer for Governance and Membership
2. Dominique Nisperos nominates Ben Miller.
3. SAJ requests additional nominations. No other nominations are made.
4. Jared Simard motions to close nominations and elect Ben Miller.
5. Tony Perri seconds
6. The motion passes unanimously

4. Election of Officer for Library & Technology

1. SAJ opens nominations for the Officer for Library & Technology
2. Megan Paslawski nominates Kristin Moriah.
3. SAJ requests additional nominations. No other nominations are made.
4. Ben Miller motions to close nominations and elect Kristin Moriah.
5. Dominique Nisperos seconds.
6. The motion passes unanimously.

5. Solicitation of Constitution & Bylaws Committee Members

1. BM asks for volunteers to be members for the Constitution and Bylaws Committee
2. SAJ encourages reps to join the C&B Committee

6. Presentation of proposed Bylaw changes

1. BM presents proposed Bylaw changes to be voted on at the March meeting of plenary

7. Resolution on CUNY Library Catalog/Ad-hoc Committee

1. Reethee Antony (RA) distributes the Resolution on the CUNY Library Catalog that was passed by the DSC in December 2011 (SEE ATTACHED)
2. Reethee Antony reports that the Library Committee met and is disturbed by the large amount of money being spent on other initiatives but not on updating the library catalog.
3. Discussion ensues
4. RA motions to create an ad-hoc committee on the CUNY Library Catalog.
5. Amy Martin seconds.
6. The motion passes unanimously.

VI. Steering Officer Reports

Plenary

Executive Committee

Steering Committee

Constitution and Bylaws

Grants

Health Issues

Outreach

Student Services

Student Tech Fee

1. Officer for Funding--Jennifer Tang (JT)
 1. JT reports that approximately half of the money available for DSC grants has been expended.
 2. JT is investigating local restaurants that have affordable food for conferences and other events in order to make that information available to grant applicants.
 3. Q: Are there resources for students who are writing grants? JT: Yes! It's on the website and has information that will be addressed by the committee.
2. Officer for Student Life & Services--Dominique Nisperos (DN)
 1. DN reports that the Committee on Student Life and Services Committee will be meeting again soon.
 2. The comfort stations organized by the committee at the end of semester were incredibly successful and efforts will be made to work with the library on similar initiatives in the future.
 3. DN reports that the committee is still investigating local discounts.
 4. DN encourages everyone to complete the food survey.
3. Officer for Outreach--Nicole Hanson (NH)
 1. NH reports that the Outreach Committee has not yet met for the semester but it will be having events at campuses other than the Graduate Center throughout the semester.
 2. The Program Student Association mentoring is progressing and moving forward.
 3. NH reports that the ad-hoc committee on the GC restructuring has not met but will be meeting soon.
 4. NH is working on a "Policy Tree" that illustrates the decision making process at CUNY.
 5. NH will be founding a "Spirit Team" which will be called an "Outreach Team" consisting of students who are interested in being involved but not as an official representative and asks for students who are interested.
 6. NH reports that in her program there have been difficulties related to student representation on program committees and will be following up on this matter and the ways that Open Meetings Law relates to these issues. NH will be raising this issue publicly and requests that representatives contact her to be involved.
4. Officer for Health & Wellness--Monique Whitaker (MW)
 1. MW reminds reps of the Monday afternoon coffee breaks on Mondays from 2 to 4 pm with MW.
 2. MW reports on the upcoming NYSHIP workshop. It is run by students and is for students.
 3. MW reports that the GC Wellness Festival will be on April 15th on the Concourse Level from 10:00 am to 4:30 pm.
 4. Q: What happened with flu shots? How were they publicized? MW: The notices were emailed to students, but there have been a number of issues related the lack of flu shots across CUNY.
 5. Q: How does the Wellness Center administer care? Student was denied an ice pack for a head injury and is concerned others are being turned away. MW will follow up on that matter with the Wellness Center
 6. Q: Is it possible to have someone from NYSHIP on hand at the Wellness Festival? MW will follow up with NYSHIP and Scott Vorhees.
 7. Q: Will the Wellness Festival have HIV testing? MW: yes, that service was offered at the last Wellness Festival and it will be at this year's as well.
 8. MW reports on the Affordable Healthcare Act, which includes mandated free birth control. MW will post updates on Health and Wellness Blog and Twitter. Point of information: NYSHIP is grandfathered in and does not fall under the new Affordable Healthcare Act.
5. Officer for Governance & Membership--Ben Miller (BM)
 1. BM reports that over the fall semester, 17 reps were removed for non-attendance or resignation. The DSC has gained four as of today's meeting.
 2. BM is currently running elections in order to fill available seats.
 3. BM is working to resolve clicker issues.
 4. BM thanks Amy Martin for joining the C&B Committee.
 5. BM thanks the students in attendance as a proxies.

Plenary

Executive Committee

Steering Committee

Constitution and Bylaws

Grants

Health Issues

Outreach

Student Services

Student Tech Fee

6. Officer for Technology & Library--Kristin Moriah (KM)
 1. KM reports that she is in the English program.
 2. KM reports that the administration is attempting to implement a quota system for printing--students on the committee are not in agreement.
 3. KM reports that Baruch is requesting \$3000 for computer improvement. She will provide more information when she has it.
 4. KM reports that Occupy Data is having another event on February 23rd. Look for more information
 5. Discussion ensues. Jared Simard presents historical information on the issue of printing quotas. He clarifies that there was no quota just a tracking system. He reiterates that the printing budget comes out of the Student Tech Fee, which is paid for by students and should be spent as students see fit.
 6. Amy Martin reports that there have been issues related to the print release software. Printing has not gone to the printers and backs up. She encourages students to report all problems to IT.
 7. Dominique Nisperos states that the system is more of an inconvenience than anything else and it wastes student time.
 8. Christen Madsen provides tips on the best ways to indicate printing problems to IT.

VII. Announcements

1. SAJ announces that she is currently missing her very nice gel ink pen that went around with a sign-up sheet.
2. MW requests that members of the Health and Wellness Committee see her after the meeting in order to find a time to meet.
3. AD reports that the DSC Executive Committee has formed an Emeritus DSC Leadership Advisory Board. The EC is working on the details. This was meant to be included in the CCC report.
4. DM requests input on the student wide survey that is being created.
5. BM announces that the Macaulay Honors Program is currently accepting applications for digital fellows.
6. CPA thanks Dominique Nisperos for making food.

VIII. Adjournment

Monique motions to adjourn. Bill McNally seconds.

The motion passes unanimously

The meeting is adjourned at 8:42pm

Respectfully submitted by Eero Laine, DSC Co-Chair for Student Affairs

<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/02/05/cuny-graduate-center-hopes-offer-public-model-reform-doctoral-education>

Losing Down the 'Roach Motel'

February 5, 2013 - 3:00am

A. By

Colleen Flaherty

Plenary

Executive Committee

Steering Committee

Constitution and Bylaws

Grants

Health Issues

Outreach

Student Services

Student Tech Fee

“Financial” and “stability” aren’t terms that have paired well in many sectors of late, and higher education is no exception. So when the City University of New York Graduate Center was offered stable funding for five years by the state Legislature in 2011 as part of broad reforms for CUNY and the State University of New York, accompanied by modest tuition hikes, it could have gone in a number of different directions with its newfound security. But citing a commitment to reforming graduate education, the center is overhauling the funding and structure of its doctoral programs to help students graduate faster and better-prepared for academic and nonacademic job markets alike.

“We don’t live in Humboldt’s university anymore,” said President William P. Kelly, referring to Wilhelm von Humboldt, architect of the 19th-century, highly standardized Prussian model of education that has influenced the American system. “It’s not accessible, given the human cost of time-to-degree.”

In other words, he added, it’s time to rethink the “roach motel” concept of graduate school, where “you check in and don’t check out.”

The center is recruiting the first 200 candidates who will receive new Graduate Center Fellowships to begin their studies in the fall in the humanities, social sciences and sciences (other than those in biochemistry, biology, chemistry and physics, who receive different scholarships). Candidates will be guaranteed full tuition funding and an annual \$25,000 stipend for five years (that’s up 40 percent from the current stipend of \$18,000). There’s also a decreased work requirement aimed at reducing time-to-degree: after starting the program as a research assistant or in a similar post, a student will teach one course per semester during his or her second, third and fourth years. Currently, graduate students teach two courses per semester.

Students will spend their fifth year in service as a Writing Across the Curriculum fellow, or in a similar assignment (the program pairs doctoral candidates with faculty to help institute more writing-intensive courses for undergraduates).

“It’s a multipronged process,” Chase Robinson, center provost and senior vice president, said of the new center initiatives, which will cost \$11 million annually.

“There’s no magic bullet, but these are several different fronts we need to work on.”

Robinson said it’s not expected that everyone will finish their degree in five years, and certain programs – such as those in the humanities and social sciences – could well take longer (the center’s current average time to an English degree, for example, is 9.5 years). “The important issue is making students aware from the start that although they may not finish the degree in five years, if they [don’t], that will be principally a function of life decisions and life choices.” (At the end of five years, students writing their dissertations are eligible to apply for center grants.)

Kelly called it a “carrot and stick” approach to reforming graduate education, something that’s “practically and ethically” necessary.

Doctoral program reform – and reducing time-to-degree in particular – has been a hot topic recently in higher education circles, given the bleak academic job market in many disciplines and spiraling student debt (nationwide, such debt surpassed credit card debt

Plenary

Executive Committee

Steering Committee

Constitution and Bylaws

Grants

Health Issues

Outreach

Student Services

Student Tech Fee

to reach \$1 trillion for the first time ever last year). But so far, it's mostly still a point of discussion. Besides the funding opportunity – and the center's unique, 90-percent-Ph.D.-student profile – Robinson said culture and geography have contributed to the institution's ability to act on reform.

"There's something about New York," he said. "When it comes to the social sciences and humanities, New York is an extremely attractive place, and it's good for us to have the competition that [New York University] and Columbia [University] present."

Kelly said the fellowship program ultimately could have implications for the dissertation process, where "oral and [comprehensive exams] are not discrete events, but a jumping board to the dissertation." Robinson said new fellows will be encouraged to begin research earlier in their careers.

Fellows also will hone "transdisciplinary" skills through the center's existing Advanced Research Collaborative and related seminars, and gain increased professional-based opportunities outside of the center in New York to prepare them for possible careers outside academe – something Robinson said has to be stressed more in discussions about reform (Kelly said 30 percent of 2011 center graduates pursued such careers). Other benefits of the Graduate Center Fellowship include eligibility for low-cost individual or family health insurance. Also new in 2013 are Full Tuition Fellowships for 100 students for five years. These come without stipends or health insurance eligibility. (Continuing a long-term trend toward increased student support, all incoming doctoral students will receive five years of tuition funding by 2015, except for students in nursing, audiology, public health and social welfare programs).

Not Without Controversy

But reform isn't uncontroversial, particularly talk about initiatives to address the glut of certain degrees in the academic job market. The center will begin "right-sizing" its own enrollments starting this fall, targeting to cut them by 25 percent by 2015. Kelly said this goal is mostly applicable to programs with job "supply and demand" issues, such as traditional humanities departments. (Center administrators declined to name specific programs most affected by the cuts, but Robinson said individual department enrollment cut levels resulted from extensive conversations with those departments, who are free to institute them on their own timelines – all at once or progressively – through 2015.) The provost said faculty reaction to the fellowships have been positive, and that departments will retain the authority to decide how coursework and coverage, among other details, will be impacted. At the same time, the center is making clear that departments need to chart paths for doctoral students that -- even if longer than five years -- don't involve anything close to a decade.

Faculty also have been assured that no course cuts are planned for departments with lower enrollments, Kelly said, as funding stability gives the center the ability to "proceed rationally, rather than out of desperation." Robinson agreed. "There's no stomach for or any temptation to close down these departments," he said. "These departments are intrinsically valuable and we believe strongly in liberal arts."

More generous fellowships, coupled with an ongoing effort to recruit top faculty, will attract better students – which in turn makes faculty happy, Robinson added. (Because the application deadline for some fall 2013 Ph.D. programs is still open, he said it's too soon to tell just how much of an impact the reforms will have on admissions.)

Still, not all faculty members are on board.

Ammiel Alcalay, a comparative literature professor at the Graduate Center, said in an e-mail that while more money for students is good, other details of the fellowship could

Plenary

Executive Committee

Steering Committee

Constitution and Bylaws

Grants

Health Issues

Outreach

Student Services

Student Tech Fee

“drastically narrow the aspirational horizons of people, particularly the kind of people that are at CUNY, who might not be absolutely directed toward a particular goal.” Continuing, he said, “Time-to-degree has become the mantra in management in efforts to ‘digitize’ the academy and cut down drastically on the kind of education that matters most, the kind you can’t plan for or be directed to.”

Alcalay also questioned how lower enrollment levels eventually would impact departments. “There is no question that the reduction in students will lead to the loss of faculty positions, the consolidation of programs and, most worrisome from my point of view, the further appointment of only central faculty at the Graduate Center,” he said, adding that one of the centers’ great strengths is the faculty pool that its position within the greater CUNY consortium affords.

The Graduate Center chapter of CUNY’s Professional Staff Congress hasn’t taken a position yet on the fellowship program, a union spokesman said. CUNY’s Doctoral Students’ Council did not return a request for comment.

If the program is successful, Kelly said it could serve as a model for public institutions looking into doctoral program reform (private [Stanford University](#) announced similar initiatives to reduce time-to-degree in recent months, based primarily on full-year funding for five years – something harder to achieve at less-endowed institutions. Duke University launched similar initiatives a little less than a decade ago).

Robinson said he’ll measure success qualitatively and quantitatively, through a combination of metrics, including tracking admissions (application numbers, yield and acceptance rates), progress to several degree milestones, and time-to-degree and placement within and outside of the academy.

Interest Outside CUNY

As CUNY launches its new model, interest in graduate school reform continues to grow. Michael Bérubé, immediate past president of the Modern Language Association and professor of English at Pennsylvania State University, said in an e-mail he’s “at once curious and agnostic” at the prospect of a five-year humanities doctorate.

“I am hearing a lot of skepticism about it, but this much I know – our current time-to-degree, nine-plus years, is too long,” he said. “[W]hen you have people in their mid-30s looking at a terrible academic job market, having spent their 20s and early 30s in the lowest reaches of the tax code, you’re talking about a brutal system that basically selects for people who are a) independently wealthy or b) willing – perhaps foolishly – to take on massive student debt.”

But because it’s unclear how many institutions will be able to provide 12-month stipends and full tuition for students, he said, “so much remains to be seen.”

Michigan State University will host a conference on the subject in April, with representatives from at least six universities and higher education associations confirmed to attend (Michigan State already has instituted incentives for reducing time-to-degree, including some summer funding, resulting in a current six-year average across the humanities). Karin Wurst, dean of the College of Arts and Letters, said she hoped the conference would deepen the national conversation on reform by focusing on practical solutions and strategies to tackling not only time-to-degree but “how to open more career paths for our students with humanities Ph.D.s who might be interested in areas beyond academia.”

John Stevenson, dean of the Graduate School at the University of Colorado at Boulder, which has launched initiatives to reduce time-to-degree in several of its humanities departments in recent years, will participate in the conference.

“I can’t emphasize enough what I think is the moral imperative here,” he said of graduate school reform. Because reducing time-to-degree not only gets graduate students out on the job market faster with less debt but also frees up available resources for more students wishing to pursue higher education, “It’s the right thing to do.”

Debra Stewart, president of the Council of Graduate Schools, said the council has been studying graduate school reform for a number of years through its Ph.D. Completion Project, and said there’s no data to support that “longer is better in terms of the student experience.” But more rigorous career tracking for Ph.D.s inside and outside academe could lead to a better understanding of time-to-degree and employment opportunities, she added.

Plenary

Executive Committee

Steering Committee

Constitution and Bylaws

Grants

Health Issues

Outreach

Student Services

Student Tech Fee

Read more: <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/02/05/cuny-graduate-center-hopes-offer-public-model-reform-doctoral-education#ixzz2NMJUUn4>
Inside Higher Ed

<http://opencuny.org/gcadvocate/2013/02/11/my-phd-program-is-not-a-roach-motel/>

B. My PhD Program is not a “Roach Motel”

(This is a response to the recently published “Closing Down the Roach Motel,” which appeared in *Inside Higher Ed* on February 5, 2013
[<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/02/05/cuny-graduate-center-hopes-offer-public-model-reform-doctoral-education>])

By:

Plenary	Colin Ashley
	John Boy
Executive Committee	Anne Donlon
	Gregory T. Donovan
Steering Committee	Colleen Eren
	Zoltán Glück
Constitution and Bylaws	Karen Gregory
	Stefanie A. Jones
Grants	Eero Laine
	Ben Miller
Health Issues	Christina Nadler
	Jared Simard
Outreach	Jennifer Sloan
	Alyson Spurgas
Student Services	Chris Alen Sula
	Suzanne Tamang
Student Tech Fee	Jen Tang
	Monique Whitaker

We are current and former students at the CUNY Graduate Center. Many of us have been involved in the Doctoral Students' Council (DSC), the student government run by graduate students. We also take classes, write dissertations, work in university offices, perform research, and teach (often three or more courses each semester) at different colleges throughout the City University system. In our work on the DSC, we are elected student officers, newspaper editors, committee members, media coordinators, and student organizers.

As students and workers, we welcome the additional resources and reduced teaching load that will potentially allow incoming Graduate Center students to dedicate more time to their scholarship. Indeed, the Doctoral Students' Council and other student groups have been advocating for similar increases and benefits for some time. However, we have been advocating for such resources for *all* of CUNY's graduate students, not a select few. The new scheme will only affect students who enter the Graduate Center beginning Fall 2013. Nothing will change for the nearly 4,000 graduate students currently enrolled at the Graduate Center. Despite the benefits to future graduate students, the new fellowships represent a pay discrepancy that fundamentally violates the idea of equal pay for equal work. Unfunded and underfunded students will continue to rely on a patchwork of loans, adjunct teaching, part-time jobs, and other precarious forms of labor to support their continued scholarship. But the new restructuring plan is also disturbing for deeper structural reasons.

In the article, Professor Ammiel Alcalay points to the real issue with the new funding restructuring—

Plenary

Executive Committee

Steering Committee

Constitution and Bylaws

Grants

Health Issues

Outreach

Student Services

Student Tech Fee

the reduction in PhD enrollment carries with it the acute possibility of losing those students who make up the core of the City University of New York. Drastically cutting admissions in the name of what President Kelly considers “practical and ethical” (note the order of those concerns) will disproportionately affect working class students and people of color who have been historically excluded from higher education. The dramatic impact that such policies will have on the racial and class composition of students attending the Graduate Center would follow a trend of decreasing diversity across the CUNY system.^[1] With more competition for fewer seats, those with already privileged personal or institutional backgrounds will fare disproportionately better in admissions, despite the fact that many highly successful graduates of the Graduate Center lack those backgrounds. At best, this restructuring is another point at which CUNY is abandoning its historic mission to provide equal and accessible educational opportunities to the people of New York City; at worst, it is a thinly veiled classist and racist project that further hinders social mobility.

In addition to limiting enrollment, Provost Robinson’s assertion that the inability of students to complete the degree in five years or less will be merely “a function of life decisions and life choices” is absurd and offensive. Other universities whose students have smaller teaching loads in less expensive cities currently have a longer time-to-degree than the Graduate Center. Behind such moralizing language lies a blunt attempt to remove student voices from the conversation, as we rush with our heads down to complete our studies before the funding clock runs out. In this respect, the restructuring of the Graduate Center follows a rather banal and callous neoliberal trend across higher education today: the gutting of social sciences and humanities; assembly-line style speed-up in PhD production time; and the loss of spaces for long-term, dedicated, and quality research and writing.

This isn’t just about money. Reducing graduate education to graduation rates and economic benchmarks (such as job prospects or projected income of graduates) actually impoverishes the quality of PhD and MA study. A significant part of our education, as well as our professional and political identity formation, includes advocacy, activism, and participation within the university system; so, too, the capacity to explore new possibilities, recognize dead ends, and revise from a position of greater knowledge. This work is essential to the health of the academy, and it is also time-consuming, to varying extents for various students. The administration’s easy equation of time-to-degree with moral character is fallacious and misleading, just as fellowship packages are not the only factor promoting or limiting consistent advancement in scholarship.

Which brings us to our final point: President Kelly’s offensive metaphors are perhaps the most disturbing element of this article. Surely a scholar with such a nuanced understanding of language should realize that offering a model of education where students will be controlled like livestock by “carrot and stick” is hardly a way to foster a space for meaningful and engaged scholarship. Also, we hope that the reference to graduate education and by extension the Graduate Center as a “Roach Motel” where students “check in and don’t check out” is disingenuous. It would be truly unfortunate if the comment was an unintended moment of public sincerity—a statement that reveals how President Kelly actually thinks of current students, scholars, activists, and citizens who enliven the Graduate Center. We are not pests to be trapped and poisoned. We are workers and students. CUNY is our workplace and our intellectual home, and we will not stand idly by to watch it dismantled by neoliberal “reformers” who would eagerly turn it into an elite, corporatized institution for a privileged few.

Addendum: As students, we are distraught by the ideas presented by some of our administrators. However, this should not dissuade prospective students from coming to CUNY. The CUNY Graduate Center, as the PhD granting institution of the City University of New York, is in a position to directly oppose encroachment on higher education (i.e., challenging the implementation of

the [Pathways](#) curriculum, the political bullying of [academic freedom](#), and self-serving administrative [pay raises](#)—and these are just some notable highlights from this year in a strong history of dissent).[2] At CUNY you will find engaged students and faculty willing to speak out against callous administrators who do not act in our interests. We welcome incoming students to our resilient, defiant, and engaged community. Join us in scholarship and in struggle.

[1] <http://thechoice.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/05/23/at-cuny-an-ethnic-shift-because-of-stricter-admissions/>

[2] <http://www.thenation.com/blog/172243/what-cuny-pathways-means-undergraduates#> ;

Plenary <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/05/nyregion/despite-criticism-brooklyn-college-says-speakers-on-israel-can-still-appear.html> ;

Executive Committee <http://www.psc-cuny.org/node/3531>

Steering Committee

Constitution and Bylaws

Grants

Health Issues

Outreach

Student Services

Student Tech Fee