

DSC Plenary
Minutes
November 22, 2019
4:30 PM

Attendance

Plenary

Executive Committee

Steering Committee

Constitution and Bylaws

Grants

Health & Wellness

Outreach

Student Services

USS Advisory Committee

Advocate Advisory Board

OpenCUNY Board

Governance Task Force

Present: Kathryn Alessi, Carly Batist, Kieran Bono, Shoumik Bhattacharya, Giacomo Bianchino, Isatou Bittaye-Jobe, Kiera Bono, Elizabeth Che, Ming Chen, Hyein Cho (Proxy: Janari Kayapopalan), Julia Danitz, Prathmesh Deshmukh, Sharanya Dutta (Proxy: Onur Ayaz), Andre Eliatamby, Sonja Gandert, Michael Greer, Jane Guskin, Roderick Hurley, Bertrand Fredrick Ithurburn, Adam Kocurek, Raj Korpan, Simon Kostelanetz, Ariel Leutheusser (Proxy: Gustavo), Tenn Joe Lim (Proxy: Ronen Hui), Casina Malinchak, Zachary Mitnik, David Monda, Lauren Moton, Jason Nielsen, Kwame Ocran, Bernadette Ojukwu, Carmin Quijano, Sami Sauma, Sherry Sayavongsa, Queenie Sukhadia, Joseph Torres-González, Joseph van der Naald, Zhuo Yin, Yilin Wang, Anthony Wheeler.

Absent: Angie Alvarado, Samantha Barthelemy, Yuliya Barycheuskaya, Braden Campbell, Elena Chavez, Yuliya Cheban, Kristofer Eckelhoff, Sarah Frantz, Raven Gomez, Carolina Heredia, Rachael Joakim, Andrew Kotick, Fuxian Li, Mary Jean McNamara, Dominique Nisperos, Alison Parks, Kieran O'Reilly, Valicia Philbert, Andres Rayas, Elsa Saade, Gwen Shaw, Andrielle Silva, Anais Wong.

Elizabeth Che (Educational Psychology) calls the meeting to order at 5:00pm

I. Approval of Agenda

Giacomo Bianchino (Comparative Literature) moves to approve the agenda.
Michael Grier (Philosophy) seconds the motion.

Discussion: None.

Vote: Motion passes unanimously

II. Approval of the Minutes of the October 18, 2019 Plenary Meeting

Kwame Ocran (MALS) moves to approve the minutes of the October meeting.
GB (Comparative Literature) seconds the motion

Discussion: None.

Vote: Motion passes unanimously

III. Executive Committee Reports

A. Co-Chair for Student Affairs (Elizabeth Che)

- Governance Task Force (GTF) met on 11/19/2019. Anais Wong was elected as the chair of the GTF. Planning on distributing a new survey early next semester to survey student awareness about their program's structure.
- Chartered Organizations: Please sign chartered org. rosters at: <http://cunydisc.org/works/chartered-organizations/list>. To obtain active status for Fall 2019, chartered organizations must have 20 signatures on their roster and submit the Spring 2019 semesterly activity report. Active status will allow chartered organizations to access their allocations for reimbursements, use their room reservation exception in Spring 2020, and meet the requirement for using their office space (if they have one).

- Reminder about using the room exception: Uses for the room exception include: processing requests outside of the 8-week window, requesting multiple rooms on the same day, requesting rooms on consecutive days. etc. Program representatives and chartered organization leaders are allowed to use their room exception once during the academic year (Fall 2019-Spring 2020). In order to use the room exception:
 - The program must be currently represented on the DSC.
 - Chartered organization must be active the previous semester. (e.g., Fall 2019 event = Spring 2019 active status; Spring 2020 event = Fall 2019 active status).
 - You must send CCSA an email (ccsa@cunyds.org) to confirm if you would like to use your program/chartered org. room exception when making the room reservation request(s).

Discussion:

Zachery Mitnik (Criminal Justice): Regarding Chartered Org signatures, does signing the roster carry any responsibilities?

EC (Educational Psychology): There is no responsibilities attached to signing, it is just to keep them going.

Zhuo Yin (Physics): What is the process for non-DSC room requests?

EC (Educational Psychology): If you are a program representative, and you want to reserve the Segal Theatre, you have to get permission from your EO.

B. Co-Chair for Communications (Roderick Hurley)

Recent Activities

- 10/18 - DSC Party took place after last month's plenary and was very well attended. Public Safety reported that there were over 400 students in attendance. Students came in various degrees of costume, the DJ music was a hit, and the food never ran out. The main area of concern, which we will discuss during the debrief, is that two students got drunk. Public Safety offered excellent assistance throughout the event, with getting students out of the building when the party ended, and also with managing the situation with the two students at the end.
- 10/28 - DSC met with the IT staff and received updates on several issues.
- 10/28 - EC met with Interim President James Muyskens and Interim Provost Julia Wrigley
 - Provided updates on GC budget - still assessing and looking for places to cut expenditure; specifically where faculty who are beyond retirement age, and administrative staff are concerned.
 - President Muyskens brought up the issue of our resolution opposing fees for course changes and offered his support. He said the resolution had been sent to CUNY Central and that their strategy would be to actively pursue the removal of fees for doctoral students only initially.
- 10/29 - DSC Steering issued a statement opposing the proposed PSC bargaining agreement with CUNY. This statement, which was also endorsed by several former DSC Co-Chairs and Steering Officers, has been distributed to GC administration and students.
- 10/30 - Graduate Council meeting
 - Voted to grant degrees
 - Discussed the preservation of the Advanced Research Collaborative (ARC) despite funding cuts
 - Discussed the need to reduce the GC's energy footprint, possibly creating a committee
 - Provided an update on Middle States Accreditation Process
- 11/8 - College Association Fall 2019 Meeting
 - College Association typically meets twice a year to oversee and approve the DSC budget. At today's meeting the revised DSC 2019-20 budget that was approved unanimously at our last

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Plenary meeting after much debate, was also approved unanimously by the College Association.

- Board members were elected to positions as follows :
 - Vice-Chair - Les Gribben (Director of Admissions)
 - Treasurer - Althea Harewood (Dir. of Finance for GC-Related Entities)
 - Secretary - Roderick Hurley (DSC Co-Chair)
 - Executive Committee - Raj Korpan, Elizabeth Che (DSC Co-Chairs), Thom Thurston (Econ. Faculty)
 - Budget Committee - Althea Harewood, Mira Goral (SLH Faculty), Polly Thistlewaite (Librarian), Raj Korpan, Elizabeth Che, Roderick Hurley, Giacomo Bianchino (DSC Representative)

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- 11/19 - Website Redesign Interviews - The Office of Communications and Marketing is in the initial stages of a project to redesign the GC website. The external consultants met with groups of students to get feedback on the website's functionality.
 - Interested in how students interact with the website
 - What resources do new and continuing students go to the website to find information on - courses, funding, housing, etc.
- 11/20 - Co-Chairs met with OSA
 - Graduate Center housing - A former tenant brought it to our attention that the building management had not been helpful in forwarding mail to their new address after they moved out. This is compounded by the fact that individual tenants cannot set up mail forwarding with USPS on their own because the building is registered as a commercial property, not a residence.
 - When we met with OSA they said they were aware that the building management was not forwarding mail as they said they would and that the policy was not always clearly communicated to students.
 - OSA is working to get an updated written policy within the next couple weeks that includes a commitment from management to fwd mail for 2 months after tenants move out, and outlines exactly what steps tenants need to take.
 - I'm also setting up a visit to the building, and a meeting with the 2 residence assistants to get an overall better idea of how things happen. I've also already started reaching to let tenants know that we are interested in hearing from them about their experiences.
 - I think this is a good opportunity to take a general approach to looking into conditions at GC housing.
 - I had asked about the building's non-residence status previously, and asked them again about this. They will inquire about whether it was possible to get the designation changed.
 - NYSHIP
 - Scott Voorhies reported that the NYSHIP workshops have been very productive, and he would be happy to facilitate more workshops.
 - Some students have had their coverage terminated for non-payment without any notification to the student or to his office. This resulted from random admin errors in some cases, but also students submitting timesheets or other paperwork late. He mentioned that he is always willing to help individual students address any NYSHIP issues they encounter.
 - Course Change fees

- OSA echoed what the president had said regarding working on removal of these fees for Doctoral students only/first, but said they would ask about master's students again.
 - Transfer Credits
 - GC has a paid subscription to "Edge" for checking transcripts, which tells what the equivalent of the degree is in US terms. They do not look at the schools. If they can match the degree, credit is granted. If there's a discrepancy the transcript is sent back to the department.
 - Credits are assessed after about a year and this is an internal program decision. Mismatches between masters and program.
 - There is consistency within programs, but they don't know how the individual programs decide on what credits to accept.

Plenary

Upcoming Meetings

- Co-Chairs meeting with OSA on 12/11
- Next DSC Plenary Meeting scheduled for 12/13.

No Discussion.

Executive Committee

Steering Committee

C. Co-Chair for Business (Raj Korpan)

- College Association met on 11/8 and approved the changes to the DSC budget
- We are in the process of renewing our contract with VoteNet for another 4 years for \$10,215
- DSC Steering Committee and Past DSC Leadership released a statement on 10/29 opposing the Proposed PSC Contract
- Presidential Search - The Co-Chairs were asked to provide 3 student representatives to meet with the candidates. The three students are Michael Greer, Rod Hurley, and Zhuo Yin
- Legal consultations are available and intended for GC students only. Spread the word! email ccb@cunydisc.org
- Have AMC discounted movie tickets available. Angelika and Regal tickets are on their way. Price has gone up slightly: \$9 per ticket. Check cunydisc.org for office hours to buy tickets.
- Petrie Emergency Fund still available for students. Applications are on the financial aid website.

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Discussion:

MG (Philosophy): Did anyone reach out to you after last plenary with budget adjustments?

Raj Korpan (Computer Science): No

ZY (Physics): How do we have enough money to pay the \$10,215?

RK (Computer Science): That money is not coming out of our operating budget, that is coming out of our reserve fund. There is a line item on the budget called "student elections" cost which is a fourth of the cost of the overall one. That reflects the money we will be paying this back into our reserves for the next four years.

ZY (Physics): Does this mean that we will have accumulated enough in the reserves?

RK (Computer Science): Essentially.

OpenCUNY Board

Governance Task Force

D. USS Delegate (Jane Guskin)

- USS steering elections (4-hour meeting held 10/20): The "Unity" team headed by Timothy Hunter dominated the contested seats. Elected:
 - Chair: Timothy Hunter (CityTech)
 - VC of Legislative: Juvanie Piquant (City Tech)

- VC of Fiscal: *STILL IN PLAY* between Fay Yanofsky (BK) & John Mondal (Baruch); runoff scheduled for next plenary on 11/24. Outgoing VC for fiscal Razieh Arabi agreed to stay on until the 11/24 vote.
- VC of Graduate: Dexter Roberts (Baruch)
- VC of Senior: Natalie Segev (JJ)
- VC of CC: Celis Hinds (KCC)
- VC of P/T & Evening: Ali Hassan (QC)
- VC of Disabilities: Leonard Blades (SPS)
- VC of International: Nicole Agu (CSI)
- VC of Tech Fees: Kesi Gordon (York)
- Follow Free CUNY on Instagram to stay up to date on actions & meetings.
- Upcoming CUNY Board of Trustees (BoT) meetings (location/agenda not yet announced):
 - Monday, Nov. 25, 4:00pm: BoT Standing Committee Meetings
 - Monday, Dec. 9, 4:30pm: BoT Hearing
 - Monday, Dec. 16, 4:30pm: BoT Meeting

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No Discussion.

E. UFS Liaison (Mary Jean McNamara)

EC (Educational Psychology) read the report for UFS Liaison.

- Attended the October meeting of the Faculty Senate where Matt Sapienza, the Chief Financial Officer and Senior Vice-Chancellor addressed the Faculty Senate. Highlights:
 - The City gave CUNY 12 million last year, took back 5 million that was owed from a previous year, (no explanation given), and awarded a 1 million grant for food banks at the community colleges. Sapienza thought that food banks were a great bonus from the City.
 - Sapienza reported there is an increase in the number of students receiving financial aid to take non-credit courses.
 - CUNY is in the third of a four-year plan to increase tuition by \$200.00 each year.
 - The “Excellence Fee” generated \$31.5 million in revenue for CUNY.
 - 80% of the revenue goes to Faculty and Staff “fringe benefits,” retirement accounts, health insurance, etc.
 - The overall budget that CUNY is projecting it will need from the State, the City, and tuition is \$3.9 billion.
 - Total payments to adjuncts are approximately \$240 million.

EC (Educational Psychology): Please email ufs@cunydisc.org with any questions.

Discussion: None

IV. Steering Officer Reports

A. Officer for Funding (Isatou Bittaye-Jobe)

- The Grants committee met on November 5, 2019. We reviewed and approved 3 grant applications. The approved grants are:
 - Screening and conversation with Nayra Sanz Fuentes (\$650.)
 - Graduate Students in Music Conference 2020 (\$700)
 - Africana Dance Dramaturgies: How we represent (\$350).
- A total amount of \$1,700 was approved.
- Next month’s grant application deadline was November 15 and the committee will be meeting on December 5. We have received 8 applications

- The next deadline is in January, the meeting will be February
- I will be stepping down from the Officer for Funding role at the end of the semester.

Discussion:

ZY (Physics): What are the responsibilities for this position?

Isatou Bittaye-Jobe (Women and Gender Studies): You are required to do office hours as a steering officer which is 3 hours a week. On top of that is the responsibilities of the funding officer which includes grants meetings. And you also have to attend steering and plenary meetings.

ZY (Physics): Does the position provide NYSHIP?

EC (Educational Psychology): No

B. Officer for Governance & Membership (Adam Kocurek)

- Constitution and Bylaws committee will be meeting soon
- Please send interested students to me, I am always looking for proxies. It is best if you have a person in mind when you ask for a proxy.

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Discussion:

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ZY (Physics): Can a proxy be from another program?

Constitution and Bylaws

Adam Kocurek (History): It can be any GC student, not necessarily from your program.

C. Officer for Health & Wellness (Ming Chen)

- Puppy Therapy
 - Reaching out to the Alliance of Therapy Dogs (<https://www.therapydogs.com/>). They can just provide 1-2 dogs. Still waiting for their response.
 - Reaching out to New York Therapy Animals to schedule more dogs for the event. Haven't got a response. Will call them soon.
 - Will reach out to North Shore Animal League and Bideawee (38th street)
 - Please let me know if you have suggestions for a nice puppy therapy group
- NYSHIP Seminar
 - The first NYSHIP Seminar was held on October 25th from 1 PM to 2 PM in Room 5409.
 - There were 14 out of 23 registered people showing up.
 - The event went longer than expected (finished around 3 PM).
 - The second NYSHIP Seminar was held on November 22 (Friday, 1 PM to 2 PM) in Room 5414.
 - There were 11 out of 24 registered people showing up.
- Massage Event
 - The therapist, Julie, was not sure about her availability during finals week. Will confirm that ASAP.

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Discussion:

MG (Philosophy): If you have trouble looking for puppies, you could also look into adult dog therapy.

MC (Educational Psychology): I will take a look.

D. Officer for Outreach (Sharanya Dutta)

- In the process of drafting the letter to upper administration about transfer credits. Will get in touch with the people who have emailed me for more information, should I need it.
- Gustavo Jimenez (LAILAC): Working out how to form an organization/alliance of international students across departments.

Discussion:

MG (Philosophy): Creating such a chartered organization would show the administration that they are not doing the things they say they are doing. It would be a way to organize and work on international student issues.

EC (Educational Psychology): Please send questions or comments directly to Sharanya.

E. Officer for Student Life & Services (Giacomo Bianchino)

- DSC Position on the Contract:
 - On the 23rd of October, the PSC Executive Committee handed down its memorandum of agreement for their proposed contract with CUNY 2017-2022
 - On the 29th of October, the DSC released a statement **opposing** the ratification of this contract, signed by executive and steering members past and present
 - The DSC opposes the contract because it holds that
 - The gains for adjuncts are too low to provide a liveable wage
 - \$7000 is the minimum for which we should be bargaining
 - The gains for grad students, while present, do not justify the ratification of the project
 - The funding of the contract is ambiguous enough to merit serious suspicion about cannibalising CUNY funds
 - This is the position of the DSC and does not reflect the position of its affiliates (Adjunct Project, Advocate and Open CUNY)
 - Though representatives attended it, the DSC also did not participate in the recent information session for science students. The “representatives” who attended did **not** represent the views of the DSC itself
 - After student and worker agitation, the PSC has released some information about the contract and its funding. Despite this, the DSC remains concerned about the limitations of the budgeting and still urges PSC members to vote **no** on the contract
- One-stop civil resistance
 - Happened on the seventh of November
 - 5 Speakers from Free CUNY, 7k, Rise and Resist and the squatters’ movement
 - Learned about the history of struggles across NYC and some from abroad
 - Resources are available from the workshop: email or talk to me if you would like access thereto.
- Farm Workers’ roundtable
 - To coincide with and promote the Boycott Wendy’s march, the SSC partnered with the Adjunct Project to co-sponsor a roundtable on the farmworkers’ movement in America
 - We had speakers from the Coalition of Immolakee Workers (CIW) and the Fair Food Program (FFP), as well as the Adjunct Project
 - We heard about the history of the CIW and FFP, as well as the intersections between the struggles for job security and decent conditions for farmworkers and adjuncts
 - If you would like the SSC to support an event you want to throw, let us know.

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Discussion:

ZY (Physics): I spoke with a few of the PSC delegates. I have been teaching for 5 years at CUNY. In 2014 I had 20 students in my class. By 2016 I had 33 students in my class. This affects students across different disciplines. But the increase in payment is not keeping pace with the increase in class size. The contract does not address the issue of class size. I think they should have included language on class size. In Chicago, the teacher’s union they negotiated in the contract about class size. No matter how much they pay, even if it is \$7000 or \$10000, they can still manipulate the number of students in the class. In the sciences, very few faculty members do the grading, the grad students do much of the grading.

GB (Comparative Literature): Just to clarify, in Chicago they included explicit language in the contract about class size.

ZY (Physics): Before they even began negotiations class size was taken off the table.

Jane Guskin (Sociology): The union says that they don't bargain over class size, they say they don't even do it. I want to address the health care for unfunded students. The gain is that money has been set aside for it and a committee has been formed to discuss it. In theory the committee could do something, but the contract does not explicitly include health insurance for unfunded students.

Andres S. B. Rayas (Political Science): I appreciate the work of the DSC in this. What documents can I point to with more information? Can the DSC's statement be amended to include information about class size? There are people in my department who are still on the fence.

GB (Comparative Literature): In our current statement, we have links to all the DSC's past resolutions. But you can pass that one.

David Monda (Political Science): We had an informational meeting about the contract and also a departmental meeting with union reps. The consensus seems to be that the yes side will win. Does the DSC have a plan forward if the yes vote wins? What are the next steps after this vote either way?

GB (Comparative Literature): Even if the yes vote does win, a strong no vote from the GC and other schools just makes things stronger in the future. There are other groups who are organizing such as \$7k or Strike around this. The DSC doesn't have a specific plan in place, but we can discuss this and work on a plan. We could condemn the contract. We've already done a lot of work advocating and that will help with the next contract.

Jane Guskin (Sociology): We are going to organize a city-wide meeting to maintain the energy of the no movement. We don't want to lose the momentum and push to change the union.

F. Officer for Technology & Library (Michael Greer)

Update

- Object Library
- Student Technology Fee New Policy
 - Requires administration to report to us on how the STF is being spent and to conduct a survey of students on their technology needs.
- Meeting with IT on 10/28/2019. Summary of meeting can be found [here](#) (still has details that need to be ironed out).
- Open Letter: Resolution Opposing Penalty for Course Changes. Ideas?
- Note: Students are allowed to use any public computer in any public lounge.

This Month I Will Be:

- Sending out IT summary with highlights
- Sending out emails to Columbia/NYU student associations and to Wrigley/Muyskens probing into equal library access
- Following up with IT about new STF policy
- Finalizing Open Letter

No Discussion.

V. New Business

A. Chartered Organization Presentation

Presented by: Luis B. Quesada and Laura Pavón

LBQ: We have been meeting since the last spring semester as students in LAILAC interested in Mexico. We would like to promote the study of Mexico as an object from a multidisciplinary perspective. We will be looking at literary and film studies, and intend to be having monthly meetings as well as other events

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where we bring scholars to speak. We believe this is important for a number of reasons, such as the sociopolitical moment we are in.

LP: We are interested in a student conference. There are other chartered organizations (Colombian Studies Group, Dominican Studies Group), but we believe there is a need to bring students together to study Mexico.

Discussion:

ZY (Physics): What is the motivation of this group? Is it to bring Mexican students together?

LP: It is a space to bring together students that are studying Mexico. We have students from LAILAC, anthropology, comparative literature.

LBQ: It doesn't have to be your dissertation project.

DM (Political Science): I enthusiastically support this project. But might not there be some people who would argue that it is better to bring together Latin America together rather than compartmentalize

LBQ: The Latin American context and country group is so wide it would not be productive to have a general group

LP: It always opens to a variety of disciplines

RK (Computer Science): How is this group different than the Mesamerican Studies Group?

LBQ: This is addressing a different issue

ZY (Physics): Is this comparable to the Chinese Students Association?

RK (Computer Science): A Latin American Students Association already exists but this is different.

Sonia Gandert (Art History): Will your group address border studies, Chicano studies, Mexican-American in the US?

LBQ: Yes, we were discussing this today.

ZY (Physics): You want to include non-Mexican students, how many do you expect to be in the group?

LBQ: We got 50 signatures, but not many of them were Mexicans.

MG (Philosophy): Just to clarify, this group is not for Mexicans, it is for people who study Mexico.

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VI. Announcements

A. Participatory Budget Initiative

RK (Computer Science): Looking for people to serve on the committee. The PB process has not been launched yet because we don't have enough people on the committee. Please pass the message to anyone who is interested in serving on the committee. We are not deciding which projects win. We are just setting the guidelines and inviting the submissions.

MG (Philosophy): Can you list a couple of things that PB has done before?

RK (Computer Science): For the pantries, plates were bought, environmentally friendly soap, crockery, etc. Another one was the water bottle fountain bottle, the art project, facilitating the accessible automated library door (committee is still working on it).

ZY (Physics): How much time do members need to commit ?

RK (Computer Science): Not that frequently. Mostly by email. We will have to meet before the end of the semester, but we could do things through skype.

ZY (Physics): Is this allocation from the DSC or from the students?

RK (Computer Science): We've allocated \$6000 for this semester. We usually allocate \$1-2000 per project.

B. Plenary Attendance Incentives

IBJ (Women and Gender Studies): Distributed Starbucks gift cards to 10 random representatives present at the end of the meeting as part of the DSC's Plenary attendance incentive initiative.

VII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:48 pm by unanimous consent.

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