



## Plenary Meeting Minutes October 16, 2020

### Attendance

*Present:* Adam Kocurek, Alaa Sharif, Alexis Hardy, Bertrand Ithurnburn, Blondie Lekemo Ngatchi Epse Pawa, Carolyn McDonough (PROXY: Jennifer Rossberg), Casey Hall, Cecilia Salvi, Christian Martinez, Cristina Pardo Porto, David Dansu, David Monda, Deborah Leter, Dhanya Babu, Dohyun Shin, Edward Charnley, Edwin Grimsley, Efthimia Johanides, Fedor Marchenko, Felix Grezes, Jennifer Rossberg, Joseph Boninger, Katherine Anderson, Kyle Fraser, Luke Kayga, Marianne Madoré, Meltem Topaloglu, Michael Greer, Milo Ward, Pedro Cabello del Moral, Prathmesh Deshmukh, Raj Korpan, Rod Hurley, Samantha Barthelémy (PROXY: Oriana Mejias Martinez), Sara Ortiz, Sarah Chu, Saroj Chand, Sharanya Dutta, Sierra Holt, Silvia Rivera Alfaro, Sonja Gandert, Yuliya Barycheuskaya, Zhuo Yin  
Jonathan Guttermann, Jasmine Pathan

*Absent:* Sammi Sauma, Pamela Stemberg, Jennifer de Rutte, Lisa Millsaps-M-Graham, Chuxin Liu, Christopher Scott Campbell, Carmín Quijano-Seda, David Udell, Irina Fanarraga Robles

*Guests:* Elaine Montilla, Eric Brown

Meeting called to order at 5:10pm

### I. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve with emendation: Sharanya Dutta (English) adds 2 voting items to the agenda.

Ratifying a new Chartered Org: Boosting Research Area Interactions in Neuroscience Engagement Hour (BrainE Hour). Also adding Shannon Brick as the new and second Philosophy Program Representative.

Seconded: Zhou Yin (Physics)

Vote: Passes unanimously

### II. Approval of Minutes of the September 25, 2020 Meeting

Motion to approve: Adam Kocurek (History)

Seconded: Silvia Rivero Alfaro (LAILAC)

Vote: Passes unanimously

### III. Executive Committee Reports

#### A. Co-Chair for Student Affairs (Sharanya Dutta)

- First and most importantly, PLEASE complete your SPARC training. Program Reps, At-Large Reps, DGSC EC and Steering, Social Media Correspondent, Affiliate Leaders, Chartered Org Leaders—ALL OF YOU/US HAVE TO COMPLETE SPARC TRAINING. On Blackboard under “My Organizations” you will see “Graduate Center Student SPARC Fall 2020”, click and begin your training. Please complete the training and provide a screenshot or printed copy certificate to Eric Brown, Student Activities Coordinator, [ebrown2@gc.cuny.edu](mailto:ebrown2@gc.cuny.edu) by **December 1, 2020**. We technically cannot work for the DGSC and receive a stipend without completing this SPARC training.

- The application deadline for the Adjunct Project Co-Coordinator position just closed yesterday. We will be reviewing the applications and deciding on a Co-Coordinator soon!
- **Chartered Org rosters need to be completed and reports submitted by December 20 for all chartered orgs.** Some orgs have done exceptionally well. I'd like to shout out to AELLA which was recently re-activated and has over 40 signatures already! For those of you who manage chartered orgs, you know what a pain it can be getting people to sign the roster, [so please be generous and sign other chartered orgs' rosters](#). Program and At-Large reps, please take a few minutes out of your day to help them out. Mobilize friends in your department and other departments, please. IF YOU ARE NOT ACTIVE (i.e. if you have not submitted the report and you do not have 20 signatures on the roster by Dec 20), YOU CANNOT BE REIMBURSED FOR THE MONEY YOU SPEND. If anyone wants to reach out to me with any questions about this process.

### **B. Co-Chair for Communications (Rod Hurley)**

#### Recent Meetings:

- 9/30 - Executive Committee of Graduate Council
  - This is an advisory and review committee for the Graduate Council. This committee reviews agenda and materials for Graduate Council meetings. This committee can act in lieu of the graduate council in emergencies and makes recommendations for actions to be taken by the graduate council.
  - The committee voted to approve the October graduate council agenda, with an additional item to discuss doctoral admissions policy for Fall 2021.
- 10/14 - DGSC EC meeting with Library Staff
  - Provided updates on library resources.
- 10/14 - Co-Chairs Monthly Meeting with Office of Student Affairs
  - Direct deposit payments for NRA students is being implemented and should be in full effect for Spring 2021.
  - Wifi hotspots have been purchased for GC residences and should be installed soon.
  - Child Care Center is hoping to have a limited number of children in the Spring. Remote sessions are going well.
- 10/15 - GC Reactivation Committee
  - An amendment incorporating feedback from the committee members to the reopening plan should be available at the next meeting. Changes to phase dates, number of people in building, and baseline for building closure, and opening up small spaces at the GC for students, which will require a certain staff support. Also looking into providing a station for printing. A revised plan can only be implemented after approval by CUNY.
  - A major point of discussion was the Everbridge app which must be used to generate a "green token" that allows access to the building. One of the issues is that when "red tokens" are generated they will stay in place for 14 days unless a negative covid test, or note from a doctor is submitted.

#### Updates/Announcements:

- We hired a new Social Media Correspondent, Inma Zanoguera Garcias, a doctoral student in the English department. Inma will be helping in our efforts to maintain community and advocate for GC students by

increasing our online presence and sharing information via social media. You can submit events for promotion through the DGSC's social media accounts using our [Social Media Event Submission Form](#) or by emailing Inma at [socialmedia@cunydisc.org](mailto:socialmedia@cunydisc.org).

- With support from the DGSC Steering Committee, students from the Anthropology department have organized and drafted a petition for [Support for International Students](#), which already has over 300 signatures. Please share the link with your constituents.

Upcoming Meetings:

- 10/21 - Graduate Council Meeting
- 11/6 - DGSC Steering Committee Meeting
- 11/18 - Co-Chairs Monthly Meeting with Office of Student Affairs
- 11/19 - GC Reactivation Committee Monthly Meeting
- 11/20 - DGSC Plenary Meeting
- One thing I forgot to mention is that we are considering requiring meeting registration so we can keep track of attendance. As a security measure meeting registration would be a recommended added measure.

**C. Co-Chair for Business (Adam Kocurek)**

- We have received the updated enrollment numbers from admin, now that we are past the add/drop date. Final enrollment numbers are 3474, which is a slight increase from last year's total of 3461.
  - This means our total operating revenue is not as low as we had anticipated, being about \$294,206, which is slightly smaller than last year's operating revenue due to the fact that we anticipate not selling any movie tickets this academic year due to COVID-19.
  - I've put the additional funds into the DGSC discretionary funds, which we will be drawing from for various projects, including but not limited to the novel DGSC emergency grants.
- DGSC Emergency Grants - like so many other departments and entities in the GC, we are going to be offering our own emergency grants to GC students. These are intended to be small-scale efforts to help students in dire need, not to serve as a substitute for the larger emergency grants offered by the Petrie Fund.
  - Essentially, this relief effort would operate on a reimbursement model, in which students needing aid in paying a grocery or medical expense, or a portion of another bill or rent, can reach out to the DGSC and the EC will look at the request and can reimburse up to approximately \$50. For much larger sums, we would work with the student to help them acquire the GC emergency grants or set them up with a legal consultation.
- With the final program enrollment totals, I have been able to calculate the program allocations for each program that has membership with the DGSC. I will be reaching out to the individual program representatives early next week and letting them know exactly how much money they will have at their disposal. Considering the leftover sums from last year, I made the decision to redirect those funds to the program allocations budget line, so as to more directly allow student representatives to spend funds in ways to directly aid their departments; ultimately, this means I was able to nearly double the program allocations for each department this year.
  - PLEASE NOTE: we live in uncertain times, and as we likely will be heading into a second wave of COVID-19 in the winter, we may also face another SAF-refund by the Board of Trustees, which will cut our operating budget. So please do not spend all of your program allocations flippantly, or right away - I will try my

hardest to preserve the integrity of the program allocations, and cut from other budget lines before I touch them, but if we face, say, a \$60,000 refund, inevitably I will have to cut from program allocations. But you will always be guaranteed the base amount - \$5 per enrolled student or \$200, whichever is the larger number - barring catastrophic circumstances.

- The Advocate is churning out new editions! Please read their newest work, and if you are in need of income and want to get paid for your writing, reach out to The Advocate about contributing.
- I met with the members of OpenCUNY, who are working to update their website, plan to host some virtual workshops, and continue to aid students with creating web profiles.

#### **D. USS Delegate (Sara Ortiz)**

- ✧ USS Plenary Meeting - Sunday, October 11th - The elections placed our historic all-WOMXN's "Slayte" in a strategic position to win! All candidates on our slate won, and three positions are still at a tie between candidates for Vice-Chair for Legislative Affairs, Vice-Chair for Fiscal Affairs and Vice-Chair for International Affairs (for whom we will be voting on in our upcoming November USS Plenary (Date TBD)
- ✧ I was elected to the Steering position of Vice-Chair for Graduate Affairs!
- ✧ We cannot start the Steering Committee onboarding process until all USS Steering Officers have been elected and the results validated by the Central Office of Student Affairs before they are official. (November)
- ✧ I'm working closely with Aharon Grama, the newly elected Vice-Chair for Technology Affairs, to increase brand awareness, visibility and reach of USS
- ✧ Efthimia Johanides, USS Alternate, stepped down thus we must initiate the process to nominate a new USS alternate. I need to consult with Steering on how this process will proceed. Cecilia Salvi offered to step up as a \*temporary\* alternate until an alternate can be elected

#### **E. UFS Liaison (Natacha Pawa)**

- I served as student representative in Middle State Accreditation on October 5 and 7, 2020.
- Next University Faculty Senate meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 27.

### **IV. Steering Officer Reports**

#### **A. Officer for Funding (Christian Martinez)**

- During our last meeting, The Grants Committee approved 1 grant application: The 11th Annual Pedagogy Day: Academic Activism in Pedagogy.
- [Today is the semester's second grant application deadline 10/16/2020.](#)
- As mentioned in the last Plenary Meeting, the Grants Committee has decided to add a COVID-19 Section, featured below:
  - Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the DGSC Grants Committee recognizes the challenges Graduate Center students face in maintaining a sense of community. Accordingly, the Grants Committee now encourages students in all programs to apply for DGSC funding for community-based events and activities. We welcome proposals that bring students from doctoral and M.A. programs together in less formal, non-academic settings while still ensuring that events are open to all GC students. These applications should be submitted as a start-up grant. The Grants Committee is committed to fostering connections between students during these virtual times. Some examples of community-based events include, but are not limited to, study groups, dissertation-writing groups, parties, social events, seminars, outdoor gatherings, etc.

**B. Officer for Governance & Membership (Katie Anderson)**

- Attendance last month was fairly good!
- If you are going to miss a meeting, [PLEASE submit a proxy request on DSC Works](#). Also, please make an attempt to find your own proxy. This can be any currently-enrolled GC student. (You can use the fact that we raffle off gift cards at the end of every meeting as an incentive for this person to take your place). It is helpful if you can connect me with your suggested proxy via email. Just submitting a proxy request DOES NOT guarantee that you will receive a proxy.
- Many programs are gaining representation within the DGSC - welcome!

**C. Officer for Health & Wellness (Silvia Rivera Alfaro)**

- I continue participating in the NYSHIP Search Committee for the new manager. Today (Oct 16th) I discussed the process with the rest of the committee. As part of my participation I have communicated doubts discussed with the other Steering members to the administration in relation to international students and Covid-19 so that our perspective as students is taken into consideration for the election; the administration has responded very positively. Hopefully there will be a new manager in the next few months.
- I started coordinating with Elise Perram, Director of Student Affairs, on the *Navigating NYSHIP* workshop. I hope we will be announcing the date during the next week.
- The Wellness and Health Committee is currently reviewing the DGSC website with information about health providers that are outdated. We will work on proposals to make it easier for students to navigate NYSHIP.
- For World Mental Health Day, on behalf of both the Steering Committee and the Health and Wellness Committee, I shared resources related to the mental health offered by the Wellness Center. It is important for us to let you know, as representatives of your programs, that we are concerned about the mental health of our community so we ask you to help us sharing those resources also via your programs to raise the issue of mental health that is hard for graduate students and has worsened because of the current pandemic. It is important to know that the Wellness Center can only support counseling those who are in New York, because of state policies. We shared resources of self-care, the list of clinicians for those who are looking for assistance, and hotlines for mental health. I invite you again to get in contact with me if you have any questions, concerns or ideas for working together. Finally I want to remind you that mental health crises are emergencies and so people can look for assistance at emergency services.

**D. Officer for Outreach (Cristina Pardo Porto)**

- Please sign the petition in solidarity with new and current international students:  
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfvg38aq8K9SeLrl4Pr86h8IDUgqCO\\_PIT04d0kdKxPYQWx\\_fw/vie\\_wform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfvg38aq8K9SeLrl4Pr86h8IDUgqCO_PIT04d0kdKxPYQWx_fw/vie_wform)
- There is an open meeting for international students next week, Thursday 22nd at 12pm. You need to register in advance for this meeting if you wish to attend: <https://gc-cuny.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJltceygqDwuH93FSRtR3Tt5RZTg-IsN9xN1> We will discuss and organize the current strategies and initiatives related to present, new and future International Students at the Graduate Center.
- Some international students (not 1st year) that are abroad have reached out to me saying that their

fellowship lump-sum checks haven't arrived yet in the mail. I'm working with them to figure out what is going on. I want to remind students that are abroad to update their address in CUNYfirst as the checks are being mailed to this address. I have contacted Phyllis Schulz and she said that her office and Bursar are working hard on trying to set up direct deposit to send fellowship, but it is not as easy as just adding the funds to payroll.

**E. Officer for Student Life & Services (Edward Charnley)**

- Currently building student life resources for COVID safe New York culture and community.
- Have been speaking with members of the History department's peer mentors program for a potential cross department peer mentors conference to exchange ideas on effective peer mentoring in COVID and generally.
- Looking into the way in which different departments are attempting to maintain student communities and dialogue during the online period with a view to writing a report.
- I am still in the process of trying to build a committee. I am currently in the process of asking chartered org leaders if they would like to serve. I want to stress to the DGSC body—it is one or two meetings per semester to talk about possible ideas for the Office of Student Life and Services to pursue, with free food. There is no heavy workload requirement. Please sign up for this committee!

**F. Officer for Technology & Library (Carolyn McDonough)**

IT:

- On Sept. 25, 2020, I attended a meeting with the IT team at the invitation of Elaine Montilla with Rod, Sharanya, and Adam. I made reference to this meeting during the Plenary later that afternoon when I gave my oral report, which is as follows: We discussed the STF as the top priority for students. Elaine affirmed that IT is highly aware of the student body's STF concerns among the many pressing matters currently facing IT, which include fending off increased phishing scams amid the CUNY-wide emergency funding (currently the only "operating budget" for CUNY colleges.) CUNY funding is beholden to NY State which has not yet submitted its budget because it is waiting for federal funds. During this meeting, I advocated for a printing station for GC students so that we may be able to 1) read offscreen 2) retain/use our allotment of 1,000 printed pages per day in some way. In an effort to ameliorate the STF situation, the IT team created a pilot STF form which was sent to Rod and I to "test" by Oct. 7. I completed the form and submitted it to the IT team on Oct. 7. I have observations about the Pilot STF form's interface, the options within the fields provided, and the "logic" underlying the form, which I will take up with Elaine and Rod, after Rod and I have conferred about our experiences in completing the "test" form.

LIBRARY:

- In addition to my twice monthly meetings with Emily Drabinsky, Interim Chief Librarian, GC, I also attended a DGSC Library Committee meeting on Oct. 14 with Rod, Sharanya, and Adam. The 3 key takeaways, in my estimation, are as follows: 1) The Library team re-emphasized the best way for students to obtain research materials remains Inter Library Loan and they followed up with specific links to assist in this. We will all continue to remind/provide these links to the student body via listserv. 2) Sharanya suggested that the library create a "Covid FAQ" page. Emily and the team liked the idea very much and will create it. I suggested we re-frame/re-name this page to "Using the Library in Covid Information" to more accurately reflect its content and to accommodate updates. 3) The library committee also re-emphasized that all staff are available to help

GC students with all research needs in any way they can. They also noted that there is SPECIAL ACCESS to E-RESERVES available with materials delivered electronically through MARLi, but students must still apply to MARLi and go through the process of being approved.

- Important reminder from the Library staff: INTER-CUNY library and PHYSICAL BOOKS from the GC Library are NOT AVAILABLE, due to Covid-19.
- As with IT, the library budget is at the heart of the matter and the GC library continues to operate on emergency funding.
- It is important for the GC student body to be aware of and reminded that NY state is in an unprecedented "state-of-the-state" financially, due to Covid-19, which has had a direct effect on CUNY colleges' budgets.

## **V. New Business**

### **A. Approval of New Program Representatives (Voting)**

1. Earth and Environmental Sciences - Tenn Joe Lim
2. Women and Gender Studies - Jennifer Rossberg
3. Music - Kristofer Eckelhoff
4. Music - Robert Wrigley
5. Philosophy - Shannon Brick

Katie Anderson (Biology) moves to approve new program reps (above).

AK (History) seconds the motion

Vote passes unanimously.

### **B. Presentation of 2020-2021 DGSC Budget (Voting)**

AK (History) motions to approve the budget

Second: SRA (LAILAC)

Vote passes unanimously.

### **C. Ratifying a new Chartered Org: Boosting Research Area Interactions in Neuroscience Engagement Hour (BrainE Hour) (Voting)**

SD (English) moves to approve

Natacha Pawa (French) seconds the motion

Passes unanimously

## **VI. Announcements**

- CUNY is expanding its mental health services with face-to-face online counseling and other remote wellness services at a time when increasing numbers of students across the country are struggling with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. [CUNY Plans Expansion of Mental Health Services to Address Escalating Need of Students Struggling with Effects of Pandemic](#)
- Plenary Attendance Incentive Raffle
  - Dohyun Gracia Shin (Theater and Performance)
  - Felix Grezes (Computer Science)
  - Yuliya Barycheuskaya (History)

- Marianne Madoré (Sociology)

Please be on the lookout for a digital gift card sent to the email you provided in the chat! Thanks for sticking around until the end! More gift card raffles at future plenaries!

**VII. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 7:15PM