



Plenary Minutes

February 19, 2021

Attendance

Present:

Adam Kocurek, Alexis Hardy, Amanda Benjamin, Beicer Tapia, Bertrand Ithurburn, Blondie Lekemo Ngatchi Epse Pawa, Carmín Quijano-Seda, Casey Hall, Cecilia Salvi, Christian Martinez, Christopher Scott Campbell, Chuxin Liu, David Dansu, David Monda, David Udell, Deborah Leter, Dhanya Babu, Dohyun Shin, Edward Charnley, Edwin Grimsley, Efthimia Johanides, Fedor Marchenko, Jennifer Rossberg, Jocelyn Lai, Joseph Boninger, Katherine Anderson, Kyle Fraser, Lisa Millsaps-M-Graham, Luke Kayga, Marianne Madoré, Meltem Topaloglu, Michael Greer, Milo Ward, Pamela Stenberg, Pedro Cabello del Moral, Prathmesh Deshmukh, Raj Korpan, Robert Wrigley, Rod Hurley, Samantha Barthelemy (Quorate Proxy: Amber Grof), Sammi Sauma, Sara Ortiz, Sarah Chu, Saroj Chand, Sharanya Dutta, Sierra Holt, Silvia Alfaro, Sonja Gandert, Tenn Joe Lim, Yuliya Barycheuskaya, Zhuo Yin, Shokolatte Tachikawa, John Young, Caludia Wald, Bianka Figueroa, Amit Kumar, Oriana Mejias

Guests: Matthew Schoengood, Mariel Villere, Brian Peterson

Absent: Cristina Pardo Porto, Shannon Brick, Mohamad Hodeib

Meeting called to order at: 4:52 pm (EST)

I. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve: Sara Ortiz (Int'l Migration Studies) moves to approve the agenda with one Emendation - Adding New Business item E, DGSC Co-sponsoring with USS a [Resolution Demanding a Safe Vessel at NYC Hudson Yards](#)

Seconded: Adam Kocurek (History)

Vote: Approved unanimously

II. Approval of Minutes of the December 11, 2020 Meeting

Motion to approve: Bertrand Ithurburn (Computer Science)

Seconded: Edward Charnley (History)

Vote: Approved unanimously

III. Executive Committee Reports

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

- Nominations Ballot Open!!: February 2 (12AM) - March 1, 2021 (11:59PM).
 - Access link: <https://eballot4.votenet.com/dsc>
 - Email CCSA@cunydgsc.org for any log in issues. I can enter your nomination manually. Remember to use your EMPL ID and not Banner to login.

- Chartered Organization nodes for Spring 2021 updated:
 - Help chartered organizations achieve active status by signing up on their rosters: <http://cunydisc.org/works/chartered-organizations/list>
 - In the process of contacting inactive chartered orgs. If any chartered org has a leadership update, please email me so I can change it in DSCWorks so you don't get unnecessary email blasts.
- SPARC compliance: Deadline July 30, 2021.
 - This year is not like the other years, in that CUNY Central and the GC will actually be enforcing the SPARC compliance. So if you do not do the SPARC, ESPARC, and WVP trainings, and email Eric Brown (where needed), you will face Financial Aid holds, and Registration holds for the next semester. For international students, this may even affect your visa status if you cannot be registered full time. So please do this ASAP.
 - In Blackboard > Enter your CUNYfirst username, along with @login.cuny.edu, and password > Blackboard page will open with the Home tab active. The course will be displayed under My Organizations.
 - Employees must hit "Submit" on the final slide to generate the certificate. The employee will need to go to the certificate page to retrieve. In some cases, the training administrator will need to manually mark the completion in Blackboard and then the employee will have access to the certificate. We also recommend taking a screen shot of the last page of the video – completion page.

B. Co-Chair for Communications (Rod Hurley)

Recent Meetings:

- 12/17 and 2/18 - GC Reactivation Committee
 - Two rounds of mandatory testing were conducted in December at all CUNY residences, including the GC apartments at 116th St. about 50% participation.
 - Mandatory covid testing every 2-weeks on Saturdays. Students are required to get a test on their own if they don't take these tests.
 - Everbridge app kiosk will be operational soon for people who want to enter the building and haven't completed the screening process
 - Giving Tuesday had a goal of \$15k, and raised 15.8k, which was matched by the GC Board Chairperson
 - From January students will be able to request access to spaces for research and special equipment. If the COVID situation allows, this will be expanded to give access to students who want a room for teaching or studying.
 - Currently building access is only available to students in the Speech, Language, Hearing Program who need special lab equipment that is only available at the GC,

- and students in the Music program who have to do recitals. These students have to make an appointment 2 weeks in advance and it is a one time deal, not a recurring reservation. These two programs are being used as a pilot, with a view to expanding in March to include other students who need space to teach or study.
- The CUNY goal is to return to in-person in the fall as much as possible but each campus has to work according to their own variables. So GC is deciding what activities are essential - who can come and for what purpose.
 - The GC Library is moving to Level 1 reopening, with a small number of staff members coming in to the building. They are creating a handbook for protocols and hoping to implement grab and go services in the fall.
 - 12/18 - College Association
 - Persons were elected to the following positions:
 - Vice President - Les Gribbon
 - Treasurer - Althea Harewood
 - Secretary - Rod Hurley
 - Budget Committee - Adam Kocurek, Sara Ortiz
 - The DGSC budget was presented by CCB, Adam Kocurek and unanimously approved by the College Association
 - 2/3 - Co-Chairs Meeting with the Office of Student Affairs (OSA). For the Feb 3rd meeting we were joined by President Garrell and Interim Provost Wrigley, who provided the following updates regarding admissions and student funding:
 - GCF admissions will be cut in half for Fall 2021. GC admin negotiated a written guarantee from CUNY that GCFs will be restored to the current number for Fall 2022.
 - The money that would have gone to new GCF stipends will be used to fund all 6th year students with Graduate D assistantships and NYSHIP.
 - The number of tuition fellows will also be cut (roughly) in half.
 - The savings are enough to give the remaining TFs Graduate B assistantships and NYSHIP
 - No agreement has yet been made between CUNY and the PSC for the use of the \$700k that was allocated to provide health insurance for all doctoral students
 - CUNY central office has agreed to reserve fellowship funds for current 1st-year international students until they are able to receive them
 - approved by the College Association
 - 2/17 - Co-Chairs Meeting with the Office of Student Affairs (OSA)
 - Emergency grant funding is being depleted so now they are being more selective about what qualifies as emergencies for these grants

- The Institutional Advancement and Communications offices have now been merged. Jay Golan is no longer at the GC. Wendy de marco Fuentes is now interim VP over this joint office.
- The Dean of Masters Programs position has been dissolved. Julie Suk is on faculty in the Sociology department.
- Provost search has begun. The DGSC did not receive a request to recommend students for this committee. The committee seems to have been hand-picked by the President's office, with only one student on the committee. I plan to raise concern about how this was done and request that we be allowed to recommend an additional student for the search committee.

Updates/Announcements:

- Carolyn McDonough resigned from her position on the DGSC and Steering Committee because of academic commitments. The DGSC Executive Committee has appointed Carmin Quijano Seda as interim steering officer.
- The co-chairs met and decided to rearrange the steering roles. Ed Charnley has taken on Library and Technology, and Carmin has been serving as Officer for Student Life and Services.
- DGSC Ad-Hoc Committee on Accessibility
 - I have been in touch with the committee to find out if they are currently working on any initiatives or would like our support on anything. One thing they mentioned was the installation of new accessible doors on the first floor of the library.
 - Two years ago, the DGSC approved funding for the project, which was estimated at \$3,000. When the committee chair met with Admin and Facilities, they were told it would cost approximately \$10,000.
 - The committee has been unsuccessful in advocating for the remaining money from GC admin so I would like to propose that the DGSC funds the entire project. I think we should push to get the motorized doors installed in time for the return to campus.
 - I spoke to VP Brian Peterson about this and I'm awaiting an updated estimate for the cost of the project.
- CUNY for Abolition and Safety (CAS) is working on several campaigns at CUNY and beyond, and have requested our support:
 - [A petition telling Governor Andrew Cuomo, Chancellor Félix Matos Rodríguez, CUNY Board of Trustees, CUNY College Presidents to CUNY cut ties with Corcraft and support the call for Governor Cuomo to grant clemency to aging prisoners now.](#)
 - [A petition addressed to President Raab of Hunter College to re-name Hunter West after Audre Lorde.](#)
 - [An anonymous survey on policing and public safety at CUNY.](#)

- The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness is hosting a series of webinars, beginning in late February, to promote effective data communication to students and help students learn how to use the available data. They invited the DGSC to meet and provide feedback about what should be included in the webinars and the kinds of data that would be helpful to students in the future.

Upcoming Meetings:

- 3/17 - Co-Chairs Meeting with OSA
- 3/18 - GC Reactivation Committee Monthly Meeting
- 3/19 - DGSC February Plenary Meeting

C. Co-Chair for Business (Adam Kocurek)

Spring 2021 Program Allocations Update - Several people have asked me for updated Spring 2021 program allocation numbers. Note - the add/drop period for this semester ends on February 23rd. Once they have compiled the data, the Office of Student Affairs will send me the updated program enrollment numbers, at which point I will officially update the total allocation numbers for the individual programs (remember, program allocations are determined by the enrollment of students who pay the Student Activity Fee in a program).

- Remember that for Fall 2020, due to rollover funds from Spring 2020, I doubled the Chartered Org budgets and program allocations for that semester - this semester, we will return to the original amount (but note - if you did not spend your Fall 2020 allocation, it rolled over to this Spring semester). The Spring allocation amount should be just about half of the Fall allocation, unless your program saw a sharp drop or spike in enrollment. I will contact the individual program representatives by the end of February with their updated program allocation totals.
- With regards to spending your allocations - please note that if you want to use your allocation to pay for a service (e.g. a public speaker or entertainer via Zoom), you CANNOT pay that person and then request a reimbursement from the Business Office - they will deny the request, as that is a taxable income. Rather - contact me and I will provide you the honorarium and payment forms to get that individual(s) paid.
 1. Also note - the Business Office will reimburse gift cards (if, for example, you wanted to use your allocation to provide people with seamless/grubhub/etc. gift cards for a virtual party) up to \$15 per card, but you can give multiple cards to one person! In addition to completing your reimbursement request, just email me the receipts as a zip file, as you will likely not be able to fit them all on DSCWorks.
 2. If you are unsure about how to spend your allocation, or whether or not the spending is eligible for reimbursement, just email me!
- Budget updates - because I have not yet received the updated enrollment numbers, I have not yet made votable changes to the DGSC budget. However, since our last meeting with the

College Association, it was suggested that we increase our budget lines for fitness class contributions, the childcare center, and to the Petrie fund. What are our thoughts? I think it is a good idea - we can flatline the movie ticket purchase budget line, and transfer some money from DGSC events budget lines in order to return childcare center support to \$10,000 and provide some more funding for fitness classes, which our Officer for Wellness can elaborate on.

- We have received confirmation from our website developer that they should be ready for a spring rollout of our new website.
- Since the GC is going to be fully online for the rest of this academic year, the DGSC will not be conducting a locker raffle this semester. If you or a student you know has materials from Spring 2020 still in a DGSC locker and want to retrieve them, please contact GC front desk and security.

D. USS Delegate (Sara Ortiz)

- USS / DGSC Joint Student Voter Awareness and Political Education Campaign in partnership with *CUNY Votes & CUNY Civics*
 - *Electoral Organizing / Lobbying Candidates for all seats 2021 New York City Elections*
<https://www.thecity.nyc/22233447/what-you-need-to-know-now-about-the-2021-elections-in-new-york-city>
 - <https://www.gothamgazette.com/city/9596-who-is-running-for-what-office-2021-new-york-city-elections-mayor-city-council>
 - USS Student Leadership Retreat (Rescheduled- Date TBD)
 - New Deal 4 CUNY Bill Launch Event & Press Conference [CUNY Rising Alliance](#)
 - Lobbying E-Meetings:
 - [Legislative Advocacy for CUNY students Meeting with Katherine Diaz for Angela Fernández \(NYC City Council 2021 Candidate- District 10\)](#) (2/18/21)
 - [Samy Nemir Olivares](#) (District Leader and State Committee member, Assembly District 53) & Isabel Anreus for State Senator [Julia Salazar](#) (District 18 northern Brooklyn)
 - CUNY Citizenship Now! – Eboni Mason, Special Events Manager - joint collaboration between USS, International Affairs Committee & CUNY Citizenship Now!
 - CUNY Housing Insecurity - Met Council on Housing – Cancel Rent and House the Homeless Campaign - Endorsement Lobbying Meetings
 - DGSC/ Adjunct Project / [CUNY for Abolition & Safety Partnership](#) on A People's Budget Initiative
 - Black History Month (February)

- USS Racial Equity and Anti- Discrimination Committee
- The Reckoning at Hudson Yards Spring March and Event
 - [USS / DGSC Joint Resolution Demanding a Safe Vessel at Hudson Yards](#)
 - USS Ad Hoc Committee on Mental Health Awareness
- I would like to add that our next USS Plenary meeting will be February 28th (12 noon) . I will update this in the minutes as well as in the slides. You can view it on our [Facebook live page](#). if you can't attend you can see it there. You can see a calendar of meetings on our website, usscuny.org, and all of our meetings live on Facebook.

E. UFS Liaison (Natacha Pawa)

- I attended the Data and Analytic Forums on January 21 while highlighting the issue of diversity during the admission process in small departments like the French Ph. D program. I posed questions such as : What are the data? How can we diversify the student body to represent the francophone world?
- I participated in the PSC Mid-Winter Phone Bank Party calls on Wednesday, January 25.
- I communicated to the student body the opportunity of the [Mellon TLH Fellowship](#) on January 29.
- I sent an invitation to the EcoCareers Conferences scheduled on April 7 and 8 2021. Register [here](#)
- **Invitation to the Spring 2021 Open Knowledge Intensive workshop series:**
 - [Open Knowledge Intensive: Presenting Abolition Science Radio](#) - February 25, 5:00-6:00pm
 - [Expanding and Exploring Open Pedagogy](#) - March 9, 4:00 - 6:00 Pm.
- Next UFS meeting : Tuesday , February 23.

IV. Steering Officer Reports

A. Officer for Funding (Christian Martinez)

Recap of Last Semester

- 4 applications were received, with 3 of them being approved
- Total of \$1510

This Semester

- February 19, 2021 (Grants Committee Meeting on March 3rd 2021 from 12:00pm-2pm)
- March 19, 2021 (Grants Committee Meeting on March 24th 2021 from 12:00pm-2pm)
- April 16, 2021 (Grants Committee Meeting on April 28th 2021 from 12:00pm-2pm)
- So far, we have approved 1 grant: Graduate Students in Music Conference 2021

B. Officer for Governance & Membership (Katie Anderson)

- There was a lot of representation movement over winter break. At the conclusion of this meeting, we will have welcomed in 5 new members since our last plenary meeting.
- I am in the process of contacting APOs of unrepresented programs to ask them to encourage their students to self nominate for the upcoming election cycle.
- If you are not going to nominate yourself, who would you like to nominate in your place?

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

- After collaborating with the Office of Student Affairs in the search committee, we want to share with you that Bill McGowan is the new Student Health Insurance Manager. These are very positive news since the position was empty since Scott Voorhees retired in Spring 2020.
- The Committee of Health and Wellness has created a list of providers and will continue working on improving the accessibility to online information related to our insurance or other options for students. We invite you to contribute with [this living document](#). I personally want to thank Deborah Leter, Pamela Stenberg, and Pedro Cabello del Moral for their work in the committee.
- The committee also proposed creating a yoga class. This idea has been actively supported by the entire Steering Committee and today we are happy to announce that next week we will start offering free online Yoga and Fitness Dance. Please help us to spread the information with your programs. We really believe these activities can help not only to improve our health in general, but also to navigate the Spring semester, which is our third one online.

D. Officer for Outreach (Cristina Pardo Porto)

- No new updates.

Discussion:

EC (History): Cristina is looking into the problems international students are having regarding their tax forms and filing taxes with Sprintax. We will be distributing the survey results to the Office of International Students so they can make a determination on whether to continue with Sprintax or explore some other service. Please spread the word and make sure your international student colleagues are aware of the survey and encourage them to fill it out.

SO (IMS): Here is a recommendation from CUNY Citizenship Now! for pro-bono (free) tax services for non-residents - <https://urbanupbound.org/>

E. Officer for Student Life & Services (Carmin Quijano Seda) (Interim)

- I took office on January 22, 2021. Regarding my preparation as interim Officer for Student Life & Services:

- I've spent some time doing training with Adam to get acquainted with the DGSC Works website and the reviewing of students' requests through that platform
- I've also been in contact with Rod to get to know the duties of my role
- Duties:
 - Doing weekly office hours (answering emails, reviewing project proposals, reaching out to people)
 - Assisting with ongoing Steering Committee projects
 - Making a plans for activities in the Spring
- Activities:
 - Live Virtual Theatre: I've reached out to a theater new theater company called La V, that does live virtual performances on Zoom and Instagram. They are pioneers in virtual plays, and they are interested in doing a performance for GC students. I will meet with them next week to go over the details (dates, logistics, etc.)
- Future plans:
 - I look forward to the opportunity to continue on Steering, so I can implement this and other initiatives, like a talent show at the end of the semester

F. Officer for Technology & Library (Edward Charnley)

Library

- Met with Emily Drabinski from the library for a breakdown of the current library situation, which appears as follows:

The Library has entered "Stage 1" of reopening, which entails:

 - a) Staff are being rotated in to deal with backlogs of mail and returned books.
 - (1) There are hundreds of books and boxes of mail to be processed.
 - (2) This process began the week of January 25th 2021.
 - (a) This will be slow - there are only 4 staff members involved (volunteers) and they are being rotated in on a daily basis, with no more than one staff member on site per day, spending no more than 4 hours on site.
 - (b) Building restrictions remain in place which severely restricts the libraries ability to speed up this process - Emily Drabinski was reluctant to put a specific date one when this would be finished, but she was confident that it would not take excessively long despite the restrictions on staffing.

- b) In relation to this, it is now possible to return books, but the policy of no fines or required returns will remain in place - if you wish to return books you can, but only if you wish to.
 - c) A scanning service was supposed to be made available for students this week, however the library staff member was in contact with a confirmed case of COVID, and has had to quarantine. I'll keep everyone posted on this.
 - d) Emily's biggest concern at the moment is that she is being forced to slash the library budget.*
 - (1) 5% this year, followed by another 5% next year.
 - (2) At this point she feels that these cuts will jeopardize the library's mission as a research institution.
 - (3) GC library is idiosyncratic, and is (meant to be) defined by the research interests of students and staff, which will become increasingly difficult.
 - e) Two major problems she has identified are:
 - (1) E-books are more expensive and not less expensive than normal books and this is having a detrimental effect on their ability to acquire new material.
 - (2) The acquisition process is byzantine and obtuse.
 - f) The library is currently trying to acquire funding from the Student Technology Fee budget.
 - (1) These funds would not mean an increase to the STF, the library would be attempting to claim a share of the existing STF funds.
 - (2) This would be done on the basis of apply for assistance in paying for digital collections.
- Emily is asking for student support within their departments to rally around this (create a list about some of the tissues they've been facing regarding library resources)

IT

- Student Technology Fee [Website](#) Launch

The new STF website went live this week and will be updated as needed to keep the GC community informed in a more transparent manner. The website includes the following:

 1. FAQ Section: this section was created and incorporated into the website to answer the most common questions we've received in the past years.
 2. STF Form: this form was tested and modified to accommodate the needs of all requestors. Moving forward, the STF Form will serve as the primary submission method for funding.

3. Email Address: stf@gc.cuny.edu was created to manage communications related to all STF matters and to follow up on funding requests as received throughout the year.
 - Emergency funding reallocation
1. The demand for student laptops is rapidly increasing. Since the Technology Fee's primary mission is to support students' evolving technology needs, we will be reallocating funds set aside for printing supplies (\$30,000) to acquire additional laptops for the GC student population, as needed. There are seven pending requests in the queue, and we anticipate more in Spring 2021.
2. Updates to STF Membership
 - i. Sadly, as some of you may know, we suffered the passing of professor Leah Schwartz this year. Lia was a member of the student tech fee committee and was a fierce advocate for ensuring transparency and fairness in the process. I know we will miss her dearly.
 - ii. President Garrell is working on identifying a new member from the Humanities.
- I will be turning out a series of articles on NYC Mayoral candidates over the next couple of months (I hope - it will depend on how long I can wait for campaigns to respond to my requests for interviews and info).
 - If any of you have any questions which you think are pertinent to mayoral candidates ideas/views/plans for CUNY please let me know.
- Sara Ortiz and I are both interested and excited about the possibility of promoting political awareness among the student body.

V. New Business

A. Election of Steering Officer

Nominations:

1. EC (History) nominates Carmín Quijano Seda (LAILAC)

Vote: Carmín Quijano Seda elected unanimously

Discussion:

RK (Computer Science): I just want to raise the bylaws requirement for the maximum number of steering committee officers from the same program.

RH (Psychology): We can have a maximum of 3 people from any program, so we have reached the maximum number of LAILAC students but are still in compliance with the bylaws.

B. Approval of New Program Representatives (Voting)

1. Shoko Tachikawa, Data Analysis and Visualization
2. John Young, Classics

Motion to approve: Katie Anderson (Biology)

Seconded: Natacha Pawa (French)

Vote: passes unanimously

C. DGSC Funding for Accessible Library Door Project (Voting)

Motion to approve: AK (History)

Seconded: RK (Computer Science)

Discussion:

RH (Psychology): I move that we table this item until we have an updated estimate of the cost and can vote to approve a specific amount. Seconded: AK (History)

Vote: passes unanimously

D. DGSC Co-sponsoring with USS a [Resolution Demanding a Safe Vessel at NYC Hudson Yards](#)

Motion to approve: Sara I move to approve the resolution.

Seconded: Adam (History)

Discussion:

SO (IMS): This resolution was created around students' concerns over three suicides that occurred on Hudson Yards. The third suicide was on January 11, 2021; the second suicide, one of our own, a CUNY alumna of Macaulay Honors College. We need to do something about it, and we want to show the corruption and lack of responsibility of the Hudson Yards. We would like to hold the city and the owners accountable. We don't want it to be reopened until it becomes safe for the public. The pandemic has really unveiled race and class inequalities, and have raised concerns about mental health issues, like anxiety and depression. It's been hard for me to finish this resolution, but I would like to ask to tax the Hudson Yards project (10% of their income), and make sure that this money helps out the most vulnerable communities regarding their mental health.

RH (Psychology): I really think this can be a very powerful resolution. I want to propose that representatives be given some additional time to read it and offer input before voting on it.

RK (Computer Science): I am in favor of passing this resolution. I think 10% is not asking too much but might be a very ambitious point, so please think about the language when collaborating with it. I think we could also talk on the issue of money charged to students for mental health. We could add another clause about that.

SO (IMS): I move to table the resolution so we can make the adjustments and or emendations before voting.

Seconded: AK (History)

V. Announcements

SO (IMS): Plenary Attendance Incentive Raffle winners are:

Claudia Wald, David Dansu, Beicer Tapia, Alexis Hardy, Meltem Topaloglu Onen

RK (Computer Science): Please send me your comments and feedback about the Provost search.

VI. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 7:06 pm