



Plenary  
*Minutes*  
March 18, 2022

**Attendance**

*Present:* Avinash Jairam, Sameer Sabharwal-Siddiqi, Zhuo Yin, Christina Weinbaum, Adam Kocurek, Austin MacDonald, Maura McCreight, Alex Xiaole Jiang, Abigail Findley, Fedor Marchenko, Jamila Hammami, Carmin Quijano-Seda, Katherine Anderson, Barbara Storch, Britt Munro, Oriana Mejias Martinez, Jonathan Hanon, Angela LaScala-Gruenewald, Yassin Chandran, Tyler Crown, Sara Fresard, Efthimia Johanides, Silas Grossberndt, Trey Dellucci, Parisa Osmanovic, Ayo Deas, Christopher Campbell, Edward Charnley, Cassandra Barnes, Kenisha White, Tenn Joe Lim, Kyle Fraser, Michael Greer, Amit Kumar, Alaa Sharif, Jason Nielsen, Shibanee Sivanayagam, Sharanya Dutta, Rod Hurley, Deborah Leter, Chapman Lindgren (PROXY: Jonas Sutphin), Paul Oder (PROXY: Irina Fanarraga),

*Absent:* Jenna Marie Sparacio, Beicer Tapia, Sami Sauma, John Young, Labanya Unni, Cristina Pardo Porto, Robert Wrigley, Alexandria James, Prathmesh Deshmuk, Adashima Oyo, Ava Zwolinski, Britton Williams

Meeting called to order at 5:17 PM

**I. Approval of Agenda**

Motion to approve: Jonathan Hanon (Computer Science)

Seconded: Zhuo Yin (Physics)

Vote: Passes unanimously.

**II. Approval of Minutes of the February 18, 2022 meeting**

Motion to approve: ZY (Physics)

Seconded: JH (Comp Sci)

Vote: Passes unanimously.

**III. Executive Committee Reports**

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

**CHARTERED ORGS**

- Please sign the chartered org rosters when you can! I've opened them all. There's a shorter list now because many orgs have been chartered due to inactivity.
  - Help chartered organizations achieve active status by signing up on their rosters:  
<http://cunydgsc.org/works/chartered-organizations/list>

- 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. If you have trouble accessing DSCWorks, please email Debbie and let her know immediately? Whoever is the current leader should now have leadership access, so please start thinking about your reports from the previous semester as well as the current semester (if you're doing events, write up a report while it's fresh in your memory!)

### **SPARC**

- Please make sure you have all completed SPARC and WVP training in Blackboard and are compliant. 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 training, 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.

### **ELECTIONS**

- Nominations closed on March 1. Turnout very low, 1.69%
- I have already prepared the election ballot, and will soon send it to SERC for review. Elections will be live on April 1, so please please vote. All three co-chairs are termed out this semester and there will be huge turnover, so we need enthusiastic engagement in student government.
- The programs that do not have any nominations and need to petition for an open seat:
  - Audiology
  - Biography and Memoir (MA)
  - Business
  - Chemistry
  - Cognitive Neuroscience
  - Data Science (MS)
  - Data Analysis and Visualization (MS)
  - Digital Humanities
  - French
  - International Migration Studies (MA)
  - Liberal Studies (MA)
  - Middle Eastern Studies (MA)
  - Nanoscience (MS)
  - Nursing
  - Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences (MS)
  - Speech-Language Hearing Sciences
  - Theater
  - Women and Gender Studies (MA)

### **LIBRARY COLLECTIONS**

- Britt and I had a cool idea, she will fill you in!

### **TAX STUFF**

- Please continue to get the word out about Dan, our tax person. For both residents/citizens and international students/nonresident aliens. The more people we have, the cheaper his services will be. I'd really like for this to have mass student support. Please let your friends/programs know. He also does resident/citizen taxes.

## B. Co-Chair for Communications (Deborah Leter)

### *Activites/Recent Meetings:*

- **03/16 Co-chairs meeting with Office of Student Affairs**
  - New university policy on travel: no longer need forms for domestic travels, only international travel.
  - Random covid testing is continuing but is going to be moved from the James Gallery to the Foundation lounge, so that the James Gallery can resume operation.
- **03/16 Graduate Council meeting**
  - President Garrell: 700 people coming to the GC everyday.
  - Budget update: CUNY Chancellor had proposed a request for \$20m for graduate education, but was rejected from governor's budget. Chancellor has now developed a \$7m request to increase doctoral students' stipends.
- **02/23: DGSC Executive Committee meeting with Provost**
  - We asked for clarification on Chancellor Rodriguez's **\$20m budget request to the state** – the request was denied. These funds would have been used to increase GC fellowships and eradicate the two-tiered funding system. The OSA told us that the Chancellor has gone back to ask for \$7m. We asked the Provost for clarification on this and as of now it's unclear. We hope to get more information at our next meeting.
  - **Student payment delays:** issues with students not getting paid on time / the right amount. This is a priority issue for the Provost. There are a lot of offices involved in causing these delays (some at the GC: bursar, HR, financial aid, payroll) but also coming from faculty and offices on other campuses, or the Research Foundation.
  - **Student payment email:** These emails go to Patti Myatt (Provost's Office), she then forwards them to the offices concerned to get quick responses to students. There are delays with HR more than other offices. Provost is willing to hire a new person to manage this on the HR side.
  - We'd like our next meeting to have the GC Provost, President, and HR so we can talk about HR issues affecting students.
- **GC website:** Contacted the website developers about the broken links. Their response was that students might be trying to access pages and documents on the old site through bookmarks and direct links, which might explain part of the problem. It might also be an issue with the site search, as it will take a bit of time to index the new site. They're looking into ways to speed that up.
- **Resolution:** "Resolution requesting a Centralized payment system for CUNY Graduate Center doctoral and master's students in order to ensure timely payment and consistent teaching workload across the senior colleges" – sent out this morning to the CUNY Chancellor, CUNY University Provost, GC President, GC Provost, and cc'd OSA, Josh Brumberg (Dean of Sciences), Brian Peterson. The Executive Committee of the PSC-GC endorsed the resolution. They will vote on it at their next plenary so that the whole chapter can endorse it. We'll follow up directly with President Garrell and Provost Everett when we meet with them soon about this resolution.

*Announcements*

- We need 10-12 students from different departments to get involved in the final stage of the **Chief Librarian search committee**. There are three finalists, who will each meet with a group of students on Zoom in the coming weeks (tentative dates are March 21, 25, and 29). **First meeting Monday, March 21, 4:30-5:30pm.**
- Dissertation showcase! May 18th. Deadline for submission is March 20th. **Get help presenting your research.** Participants receive coaching, a \$250 honorarium, and a professional video of their presentation to use for their own career advancement. There is still one spot if you want to be on the selection committee for this! (committee will meet April 5 from 11-1)
- **70% in person services** kicked in on February 28th. Admin offices should be open Mondays-Thursdays.
- **DGSC lounge:** There is coffee in the DGSC lounge on the 5th floor, feel free to stop by anytime and hang out there!

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

*Updates:*

- I. Budget: We had a significant drop in student enrollment during the Spring semester. We went from 3427 students in the Fall semester to 3174 students in the Spring semester. This is concerning for a number of reasons, but thankfully shouldn't impact the budget too much, as we had a significant carryover from the last year. Some changes I want to make to this budget:
  - A. Reclaim Hosting, our servers, increased their rates to \$5952.00
  - B. We have an increase in the rate for Web Avenue Media, our website manager from \$3600 to \$4250 per six month period, meaning for this academic year, we have to pay \$7850.
  - C. Server costs have also increased for OpenCUNY servers, from \$2500 to \$2800.
  - D. To compensate for the drop in budget, I'm going to trim the extra funds I strategically placed in the program/chartered org allocation budget lines to make up for this.
- II. Students have been asking for confirmation as to whether or not they can hold in-person GC events. It seems like the tentative answer is yes, though we are getting confirmation from Brian Peterson to make sure that 1) events can be held, and 2) catered food can be reimbursed with DGSC funds.
  - A. I'm still really pushing students to hold events outdoors, especially as the weather gets better.
  - B. The Business Office is reimbursing student leaders for outdoor events/events at bars and other locations. NOTE: PLEASE remember to include the CUNY sales tax exemption form. We cannot reimburse sales tax, use it when getting reimbursed for DGSC purchases.
  - C. With regards to paying non-CUNY (and even worse, non-US) people honorarium - I'm currently working with the OSA and Business Office to try and revise this restrictive practice - where I (or my successor) can hopefully pay US-based folks their honoraria more quickly for stipends of \$300 and lower, without needing to request a requisition.
    1. Please be aware that we cannot legally pay people without a US TIN. Also, it takes longer to pay people who are non-CUNY.
  - D. May and June are when we usually see a surge in student spending - this will keep me very busy, right around and following Finals week. I'm going to encourage chartered org leaders and program reps to please not wait until the final hour to hold events and request pay or reimbursement.

- III. May and June are when we usually see a surge in student spending - this will keep me very busy, right around and following Finals week. I'm going to encourage chartered org leaders and program reps to please not wait until the final hour to hold events and request pay or reimbursement.
- IV. Grad Education Task Force survey is forthcoming soon! Please provide feedback so we can better our school.

#### **D. USS Delegate (Jonathan Hanon)**

##### *Updates:*

- USS has somehow gotten worse
  - Chairperson and Vice-Chair for Graduate Affairs were not successfully elected.
  - Vice-Chair for Community Colleges and Vice-Chair for International Affairs were vacated.
  - Because some representatives were unhappy with the Chairperson and VCGA elections not selecting their candidates, they said they would vote against every item on the agenda and make them all fail. We did not get to nominate for the vacated positions.
  - Said representatives motioned to adjourn the meeting, and in the interest of allowing items to be reconsidered at the next meeting, we all agreed to adjourn.
  - Because of this, our DGSC resolution and two other co-sponsorships were not considered.
  - Because elections did not happen, we are down to 6 USS Steering members. Therefore, USS currently does not legally have a Steering.
  - I appreciate Zhuo Yin and his support in this process, he is a very active Alternate, I will be nominating him for Vice-Chair for International Affairs if the nominations happen.
  - Next Plenary is Sunday, March 20, 2022, let's see how it goes.
- Scholarship Committee
  - I was elected its chair, and submitted a proposal for this year's evaluation cycle. I am awaiting a response from Joseph Awadje and CUNY CIS. It is likely that applications will open soon.
- Technology Committee
  - As its chair, I wrote a proposal for student representation on administrative technology committees. I went over it with Elaine and the Graduate Council IT Committee, and am awaiting further guidance from James Haggard, CUNY Deputy CIO, and have coordinated with Marty Burke regarding the hiring committee for the new CUNY CIO.
- Board of Trustees Committee on Fiscal Affairs
  - Because of the demand for online courses, and SUNY establishing fully online accredited degrees, I spoke to the Chancellor about CUNY working on accreditation for online degree programs. I will keep you updated on this.
- Blackboard Ally
  - I've been added to the Blackboard Ally pilot program, a test of a system for Blackboard to be more accessible for students with visual and hearing impairments. My system was activated yesterday, and apparently, most of the features are unavailable. I will be working with CUNY Central's Blackboard Administrators on this issue.
- Graduate Center Budget Committee

- The Budget Committee met yesterday, our goal on this committee is to ensure transparency in Graduate Center operations to ensure everything is operating above the table. We will be meeting semi-frequently, with a frequency to be determined.

#### **E. UFS Liaison (Parisa Montazaran Osmanovic)**

##### *Discussion:*

JH (Comp Sci): Regarding the discussion with Hugo Fernandez: Parisa and I spoke with him, the comment was that the UFS Liaison isn't a member of the UFS body and that adjunct faculty aren't full-time faculty. The problem with this is that if they don't want adjunct faculty to have a say in UFS, why is the UFS always intruding in USS? There are adjuncts and full time faculty members on UFS. Full time faculty get credit waivers when serving on UFS, but adjuncts aren't getting anything to serve on UFS, they're doing it just to represent their body. It's not fair. There are very few adjuncts on UFS. The UFS Liaison is representing the GC's doctoral students, as an adjunct doctoral student faculty member. The representative at our campuses represents the faculty, but not "doctoral students adjuncts". The representative at the Graduate Center represents GC faculty, not GC students. One vote out of a body of about 200 people is all we're asking for. USS is a far smaller body, about 70, and yet the faculty and administration still interrupt us to say whatever they want whenever they feel like it. They're speaking as if Parisa has always had a voice, but that's not true, because Parisa has been silenced many times.

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

##### **A. Officer for Funding (Angela LaScala-Gruenewald)**

##### *Updates:*

- Grant Updates:
  - I am proud of all our grant work over the last two months; evaluated 7 grant applications in total
  - 6 of 7 funded so far in 2022; 3-4 more applications to evaluate in April (about \$5650 total this FY)
    - Some examples of grants:
      - Interpretation services Spanish-English for a workshop event
      - Covering the costs of a virtual academic coworking space
      - Classics department annual conference
      - Stephen Brier Retirement Symposium (Urban Studies)
  - March Grants Committee meeting was on Monday 3/7; evaluated four applications; approved three (one grant application rejected because it is scheduled after this FY for Oct 2022)
  - Considering bylaws amendment to allow us to support activities during summer session (working w/ Jonathan and Adam to consider language; reached out to Katie)
  - Next Grants Application Deadline is **today Friday, March 18th**
- Promoting Grants/Program Access to DGSC Grant Money:
  - Our program representation for these grants is improving, but could be better, especially with STEM. I know Katie (Governance) and the whole SC has mentioned this to me, so will really try and spend more time on this over the next few months.

- Working to promote grants (and all DGSC services) with in-person/virtual presentations to student groups
- Put together tiny ppt for March 11th Virtual Charter Organization Fair; test run for larger presentations
- Working on our social media posts
  - Doing grantee profiles as one promotional idea. Please let me know if you have ideas of great grantee profiles we can do!
- Reminders/Announcements:
  - Next Grants Application Deadline is Friday, March 18th
  - Next Grants Committee meeting Monday, April 4th

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

#### *Updates:*

- We lost a lot of representatives with the semester change.
- We finally have 17 out of 17 At-Large Program Representatives!
  - welcome aboard to Alexis Hardy (Psychology) and Sara Fresard (Biology)!!
- 14 programs that are eligible for DGSC representation have no representatives
  - Audiology
  - Biography and Memoirs
  - Chemistry
  - Cognitive Neuroscience
  - Data Analysis and Visualization
  - Digital Humanities
  - French
  - International Migration Studies
  - Middle Eastern Studies
  - Nanoscience
  - Nursing
  - Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences
  - Speech Language and Hearing Sciences
  - Theater
  - Women and Gender Studies
- If you know anyone who may be slightly interested in the DGSC - invite them to a meeting!! Or tell me and I can send out an invitation! The less students involved → the less people who know what services we offer → the less value this organization has.

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

*Updates:*

- We started Desk on the Cloud 3 weeks ago. It had low attendance, but I will continue informing the students to get more registration and participation.
- West African Dance classes are not ready yet. I am in the process of coordinating with Eric Brown, but he's not receiving a response from the administration as promptly as I would like to.
- Yoga is having a lower attendance this semester. I would like to hear opinions of how to improve the numbers.
- We are collaborating together with the Library to have a campaign on mental health, which will take place around march.
- GC Students for Disability, Health, and Wellness Chartered Org is working to schedule our first meeting. If anyone is interested, please reach out to Jonathan at [jhanon1@gradcenter.cuny.edu](mailto:jhanon1@gradcenter.cuny.edu)

**D. Officer for Outreach (Christopher Campbell)**

*Updates:*

- The Dissertation Showcase organizers are searching for one more volunteer to join their search committee. Next week volunteers will be sent a packet of applications to review for acceptance into the Dissertation Showcase.
- Debbie sent an email out about this earlier, but the search committee for the Chief Librarian position needs one more student volunteer to help out with the decision making process. There will be two meetings. One next Monday and one on (I believe) April 8th.
- Working with Silvia and Rod to prepare a COVID-related student oral project that we hope to launch on the CUNY Archive Project's website.
  - Ideas for events? Speakers?
  - Is anyone familiar with the admin at CUNY Archive Project?
- I'd like to discuss possible Outreach objectives for this tax season.
  - What will students need most help with?
  - What are the go-to sources for answers to these questions?
  - More generally, where do you see the need for the Outreach Officer to become involved?
- The Scrabble Tournament went well, albeit we only had four attendees. Something that we'd like to do again.
  - Should we up the prize?

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

*Updates:*

- The **Scrabble Online Tournament** was celebrated on **March 8th from 6:00 to 7:30 pm**. Four students came to the event, plus three DGSC members.
- We used the website <https://woogles.io> to set up the virtual matches, and it worked great.
- Students received GrubHub gift cards of \$15, and expressed interest in participating in other online and in-person events.
- I participated in the **Chartered Org Fair** last Friday, **March 11th from 4:00 to 5:00 pm**. Around ten student leaders and one new student joined the meeting. The DGSC suggested doing this event in-person to increase the



number of participants. Eric Brown said that he will be considering this option and other online strategies, but he didn't specify if his office will organize another event like this one in the Spring.

- I am still working on the preparations of the second **Native American Jewelry Workshop**. This time around is going to be celebrated in person on **May 4th (just before Mother's Day)**. We are making a pendant, so it could be worn by everyone. Please, save the date. More details will be coming soon.
- **End-of-the Semester Picnic**. We are working on the details to celebrate a **DGSC's Picnic at Sheep Meadows (Central Park) on Saturday, May 21st**. We will offer food and drinks to DGSC outgoing and incoming members. We hope everybody can join and celebrate our hard work we have done and our student community.

*Announcements:*

- **Native American Jewelry Workshop: Save the date May 4th, 2022**
- **DGSC's Picnic: Save the date May 21st, 2022**

**F. Officer for Technology & Library (Britt Munro)**

- Collections input- please encourage your departments to make suggestions to the library through this link here: <https://libguides.gc.cuny.edu/guides/suggestmaterials> . If there are any patterns or big general gaps that you or anyone in your cohort see, you can email me or librarians directly [will send out student survey about collections soon]
- Mental Health Campaign in the library w/Silvia
- Proposals for STF committee needed! \$675,000 in total.  
STF info here: <https://www.gc.cuny.edu/information-technology/student-technology-fee>  
Inactive form- just to give you an idea of what to include in proposal:  
<https://www.gc.cuny.edu/information-technology/request-forms/student-technology-fee-project-proposal> .  
Email proposals directly to me and I will present on the floor.  
Some examples of proposals that passed from previous year (2021)-  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EcYBh3-n1W-ndBETS\\_CnPm8zn1fI9aLZ/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EcYBh3-n1W-ndBETS_CnPm8zn1fI9aLZ/view)
- Please encourage your cohorts to come to the library! Feel free to get in touch if you have any great ideas to make the post-covid Mina Rees more alluring. Lots of people said that they needed somewhere to zoom/make coffee: the DGSC rooms are great for that! You can reserve here or just hang at the lounge in 5414-  
<https://cunydisc.org/services/room>

**V. New Business**

A. Updates from the Adjunct Project

Jamila Hammami: We are hiring. We have a new website, a new series "Dispatches from the Struggle", and a few great speakers in this series. We're focusing on the Afghan refugee crisis, and that was not recorded for safety reasons. Our

next one is on the 24th, and will be on indigenous sovereignty. I've been co-organizing a Ramadan celebration and Afghan Team Fundraiser that came in just today. We have reached out to people working on a documentary about Ramadan and young Muslim leaders, and our event will be included in their documentary. If anyone is interested in Accessibility, we are hiring an Accessibility Consultant. I am currently the only Adjunct Project Staff Member, we are hiring two Co-Organizers. We have a LinkedIn, an Instagram, I've been managing the Social Media.

#### **VI. Announcements**

#### **VII. Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn: AK (History)

Seconded: JH (Comp Sci)

Meeting adjourned at 7:26 PM