



DOCTORAL AND GRADUATE STUDENTS' COUNCIL

The Graduate Center, CUNY
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Plenary Meeting

Minutes

—

February 17th, 2023

4:30PM

Meeting Chair: Silvia Rivera Alfaro

Minutes: Jonathan Hanon

Minutes Assist: Christopher Campbell

Attendance

Present: Cassandra Barnes (CB), Justice Evans (JE), Sayantika Mondal (SM), Jonathan Hanon (JH), Chapman Lindgren (CL), Nan Coffee (NC), Kelsey Chatlosh (KC), Katherine Rivera Gomez (KRG), Davide Leoneh (DL), Hannah Maier-Katkin (HMK), Annie Beliveau (AB), George Monge (GM), Silvia Rivera Alfaro (SRA), Robert Wrigley (RW), Allen Zhang (AZ), Alexander Pau Soria (APS), Yagiz Ay (YA), Sam O'Hana (SO), Zara Khan (ZK), Katherine Anderson (KA), Itsue Nakaya-Perez (INP), Yuwen Yu (YY), Ajmain Yamin (AY), Adam Kocurek (AK), Alex Jiang (AJ)

Remote attendance via Zoom: Parisa Montazaran Osmanovic (PMO), Maria Teresa Tapias (MTT), Ligia Mendonca (LM)

Absent: Ian Williams, Daniel Okpattah, Deborah Leter, Silas Grossberndt, Michael Williams, Pablo Yanekelevich, Astrid Wik Hallaraaker, Amour Castillo, Angela LaScala-Gruenewald, Philip Wiles

Meeting called to order at 4:30pm.

I. Approval of Agenda

Motion to Approve: Jonathan Hanon
Seconded: Sayantika Mondal
Vote: Unanimous

II. Approval of the Minutes of the 9 December 2022 Meeting

Motion to Approve: Jonathan Hanon
Seconded: Sayantika Mondal
Vote: Unanimous

III. New Business

A. Linguistics Program Representative Petition (Margarette Matte)

Motion to Approve: Adam Kocurek
Seconded: Sayantika Mondal
Vote: Unanimous

B. Computer Science Program Representative Petition (Jianing Qi)

Motion to Approve: Jonathan Hanon
Seconded: Sayantika Mondal
Vote: Unanimous

C. Resolution Endorsing the Demands of Reclaim the Commons

Zoe Hu (Reclaim the Commons, English): I'm chair of PSC-GC and here to discuss the Reclaim the Commons Campaign. The Pantry is part of the campaign, but there is a wider goal of having administration listen to the student body about reopening the kitchen, subsidized low cost hot food. It's been too long without hot food. We have to purchase food in midtown or wait to get home to eat, it's not sustainable. We have been very active, there have been quite a few DGSC members in the campaign, we brought these demands to the Community Meeting. Garrell and Everett seemed open to them and made verbal commitments to certain things, I'm unsure what those are, and our demands are that management fund the pantry so we're not just going off of community donations. It's been great, we've raised thousands of dollars, but we want to raise resources for the pantry so we can get up to code with health and safety. The second demand is the space of the commons, we understand there are issues with the kitchen, so we know this can't be immediate, but we want to hold management accountable and gave them a deadline of March 31st for community organization, and we want to make sure there are hot food options, something until we have full operation. The third demand is transparency, there has been a lot of

money allocated to renovating the kitchen, and in three years, we've seen no progress in renovating the kitchen. The demands are written on the walls here in the Commons, with deadlines and breakdown as to what management/leadership needs to give us. We see this campaign as an opportunity for students to get more involved and connected, get more politicized, management does not feel accountable to us because they have succeeded in isolating us. There is safety and power in numbers, and we need to mobilize as GC community to assert the changes we want. It's been great that the PSC has been working with the DGSC, which freaks admin out that we're collaborating, and we're off to a great start. There are events in the commons being hosted by us, not by management, and we encourage use of the space and we can look for funding for you. We envision a lot of possibilities here, at the Segal Theater, and we have these demands on management. There are a lot of students who are unfunded, and this is an opportunity for us to unify for this and much more.

Adam Kocurek (History): Thank you for your work on this initiative. Question about the background on this project, in the context of the community meeting, Everett said admin have concerns about whether the pantry meets licensing and certification requirements. If someone gets sick, who is liable? It's fair if we had something like milk sitting out, but is there a program that needs to be met for compliance reasons?

Zoe: That's an important point. Food pantries are a big part of other CUNY campuses. In 2018, Cuomo mandated all CUNY/SUNY campuses to have food pantries, but somehow, the GC was left out of that. Given that there's a prevalence of these, there are specific ways to make sure a food pantry is a part of our campus. I don't know if there's a license, but I know there are standards that other campuses follow. We are looking for support from food safety experts, and are working with people independently who are advising us as well, so we're not dependent on GC admin for this support, we're doing it on our own right now, being mindful that no perishables are left out.

Sharanya Dutta (English): Keeping the email chain open with the legal team, a big part of the compliance is that they made promises that they are in support of the pantry, there should be a paper trail.

Zoe: We've sent our demands in writing to Garrell and Everett, and we are definitely keeping a paper trail.

Silvia Rivera Alfaro (LAILAC): The food pantry was a topic in 2018, but when it was no longer a requirement, GC admin stopped working on it, then COVID happened. It passed to the hands of the students (as usual). One of our committees, the Budget Committee, the provost presented what we should cut from the budget, and two suggestions were student services and library.

Ed Charnley (History): You're doing a good job promoting this throughout CUNY, food pantries pay a big role. In my country (UK), we have food banks, which is a big thing over the past ten years. If you're running a country successfully, people need to get food. A big premise of capitalism is that when you work, you can afford your own food. In the NYT a few days ago, the Chancellor is hosting his own TV talk show via CUNY TV, and the reporter pointed out that social media is likely more effective. Chancellor said he wants to be on TV, so it seems like a passion project, while we're getting food from a food pantry because we can't afford food. There's a disconnect when CUNY is talked about in big forums like the NYT where they paint people like Rodriguez and Garrell as phenomenal and generous, when they go home to their \$300k Park Avenue apartments and forget about us until they come back to work, with the NYT speaking very nice things about them when they ignore what happens on the ground level. Is now the time we talk to media, with these inequalities?

Zoe: Giacomo is in contact with journalists in the Chief and the Gotham Gazette, and there is a large interest in this topic. We've been put on blast on social media. I agree that there is a huge disconnect between how CUNY is portrayed and reality, and the admin knows this. They are trying to manage their image and publicity without addressing the disconnect. This past weekend, Music applicants came to apply and audition. They used the Dining Commons, and they put up screens to cover the Pantry. Having this here is a way of shaming them, and is a piece of leverage we can use to get other things like subsidized hot food. The Commons is also often rented out, and that is why management wants to cover us up, because fancy guests will not want to see this. We're talking to local NY journalists, I'm not sure if any national journalists would be covering this.

Parisa Montazaran Osmanovic (Sociology): We're always looking for more help on this project, so if you have ideas, or even just moral support, all hands on deck.

Zoe: We have a few ways to help, you can do grocery runs, hold events, food safety, outreach. There's a QR code you can scan (link for minutes later). I'm sure everyone is aware of budget cuts mandated by Felo, we're being told to cut 5.5% of our budget, and to institute a hiring freeze, that we have experienced how dysfunctional this building is. The hiring freeze affects us as students because without new lines, we lose advisors, instructors, etc. I encourage everyone to get involved in any way they can, to create a more political body on campus.

Motion to Approve: Adam Kocurek

Seconded: Sayantika Mondal

Vote: Unanimous

Silvia (LAILAC): Passes unanimously. We are going to post this resolution to the DGSC website. If you would like to collaborate on this effort, you can write to us to work with the

DGSC in the process.

D. New Student Organization: DGSC Student-Parents Organization

(Silvia reads the petition)

Sharanya (English): I have a concern with point (d) that it should be amended to say like other chartered orgs

Chris Campbell (Comparative Literature): We spoke to OSA about that the Childcare center is only open until 5pm, and this group would work towards some kind of service for students age 2-5.

Silvia (LAILAC): If we want to approve it with the changes in the language

Motion to approve with the changes in language: Adam Kocurek (History)

Second: Sharanya Dutta (English)

Vote: Unanimous

E. Officer for Funding Election

Silvia (LAILAC): Bryce has been serving as Interim and has been doing a great job

Jonathan Hanon (Computer Science) nominates Bryce Barthuly (English)

Bryce accepts

Jonathan (Comp Sci) motions to close nominations and elect by unanimous consent

Syantika Mondal (Mathematics) seconds

Vote: Unanimous, Bryce is elected Officer for Funding

F. Officer for Outreach Election

Silvia (LAILAC) nominates Pablo Yankelevich (LAILAC)

Pablo declines

Jonathan (Comp Sci) nominates Jianing Qi (Comp Sci)

Jianing declines

Sharanya (English) motions to table

Adam (History) seconds

Vote: Unanimous

G. College Association Vacancy

Silvia (LAILAC) nominates Sharanya (English)
Sharanya declines

Silvia (LAILAC): Two meetings a semester, about an hour long

Jonathan (Comp Sci): The meetings will be in person, we need to fill the position to be able to allocate our surplus

Syantika (Math) nominates Alex Jiang (Physics)
Alex declines

Silvia (LAILAC) nominates Katherine Rivera Gomez (Biology)
Katherine accepts

Jonathan (Comp Sci) motions to close nominations and elect by unanimous consent

Syantika (Mathematics) seconds

Vote: Unanimous, Katherine is elected

H. Tech Fee Committee Vacancy

Jonathan: Tech Fee Committee meets once a year, the budget is about \$1m, students are the majority.

Adam: I'm currently the Alternate, I'm willing to if necessary, but it'd be a good way for getting someone to join the Steering as CCB or OLT.

Sharanya: Departments need printers, the library doesn't have display cases, please volunteer, it's once a year, you can be responsible that our library and tech services are enhanced.

Ed Charnley self-nominates

Jonathan nominates Jianing Qi
Jianing accepts

Ed withdraws his nomination

Adam motions to close nominations and elect by unanimous consent
Sayantika seconds
Vote: Unanimous, Jianing is elected

IV. Executive Committee Reports

A. Co-Chair for Student Affairs (Silvia Rivera Alfaro)

Updates:

- SPARC:** This is a reminder that all student representatives need to complete this training. If you have any questions contact Eric Brown to ebrown2@gc.cuny.edu
- Nominations for DGSC are open till March 1:** Please nominate yourself or other students and help us make clear to everyone the importance of participating. At the moment only 23 people have participated, which is 0.79%.
- Dining Commons:** During the past two weeks we worked to support the students of Reclaim the Commons serving food on Wednesdays at 5 p.m. at the Dining Commons.
- Wellness Center:** they are starting to search two new positions for the center. No students will be involved in the search committee.
- Childcare Center:** I have been following up on this topic. The survey from last semester was responded to by only 87 students.
- Affiliates:** As we talked about during the September 2022 plenary we have been moving slowly on the affiliates.
 - a) **Adjunct Project:** The task force met on February 14. At the moment we identified some of the issues related to the project. To move forward AP should have a closer relationship with the DGSC Plenary and officers; having active conversations with PSC across the issues brought by the student; AP is a way to help fellow students to get funding; creating an advisory board (such as the other affiliates have), maybe the lack of the board is a legacy of the history of the project; the AP should respond to the GC context
 - b) **OpenCUNY** will be coming to the next plenary meeting. This would be an opportunity for all representatives to have more information on this project and make decisions together.

Announcements:

Discussion:

Adam Kocurek: I'm excited to get the Adjunct Project off its feet. In collaboration with PSC-GC, this is a natural lean-in for people to get paid positions through the DGSC. When assembling those hiring committees, we can see who's doing this work on the ground.

Jonathan Hanon: Just a technical detail, if we want to re-allocate the funds for Adjunct Project, we can re-establish those paid positions as soon as April.

Silvia: The idea is to get feedback today and bring it back to the Task Force for proposals for the next Plenary and start the hiring process for the positions, and with the issues we have found in conversations, we have can make changes such as establishing an Advisory Board, which

B. Co-Chair for Communications (Christopher Campbell)

Sayantika: Can this surplus be used for renovations to lounges like the DGSC Lounge?

Chris: We're working with Brian Peterson and the Business Office to develop this RFP and make sure these proposals are okay.

Sharanya: Please have a draft proposal on the website with the details once you talk to the Business Office which may be more helpful than a Q&A which people cannot make. Can this funding be put to the Childcare Center?

Chris: That's been a part of the discussion

Pablo: Will the money be available for the food pantry?

Chris: We need to receive a proposal for that, we're not clear on procurement guidelines, we'll meet with the Business Office to see what's okay and what's not okay. I'll send an all-student email with this RFP.

Sayantika: What is going to happen after this RFP?

Chris: We will form a committee to read the proposals, we should finish reading them by mid-May, order by July 1st, and it should be received by Fall semester. This is \$300k, it's a lot of money, tell us how to spend it, help us spend it.

Silvia: This is money from the Student Activity Fee, so anyone should be able to propose.

Sharanya: Are all 3 Adjunct Project positions open?

Silvia: Yes, in the first Plenary we decided not to open the positions. The calls are the old calls, we don't currently have a hiring committee. If we vote to start the hiring process, we can vote on modifications next Plenary if you want us to start, we can move that.

Sharanya motions to reconvene the hiring committee for the Adjunct Project

Sayantika seconds

Vote: Unanimous

C. Co-Chair for Business (Jonathan Hanon)

Updates:

- Spending DGSC Funds - Business Office is finally working with us
 - Reimbursements happen under new protocol, but are happening in a timely manner. We can start using our funds again, keeping in mind the \$15 limit for food per person per event and the need for event notices and rosters for any purchases made for events.
 - The Business Office is working directly with the caterer.
- Board of Trustees
 - At the Finance Committee, I spoke to the Chancellery about the GC's deficit and how it comes from CUNY not paying for the annual increase in Grad B payment for teaching Grad Bs at other campuses. They paid the GC for this year's portion, but for the portions since 2018, the GC will not be paid.
 - A few Trustees agree that Administration are paid too much, but overall, nothing seems like it will change. I suggested to the GC that to cover their deficit, they can decrease the President and Provost's salaries, but that probably won't happen.
 - I was the only individual to sign up to testify at the Public Hearing, so my written testimony was uploaded and the hearing was cancelled. I testified on adjunct precarity and low adjunct wages, and stressed the Collective Bargaining increases, as well as the lack of transparency at CUNY.

Announcements:

- Program Allocations - I'll have your Spring allocations as soon as the Registrar sends OSA finalised enrollment numbers.
- We are coordinating for tax services and will give updates as soon as details are finalised.

Discussion:

Adam: Thanks for the work you do in BoT. Do we know what the program allocation for Spring is?

Jonathan: Not yet, I should have figures within two weeks.

Sayantika: Businesses are not taking the exempt form, do we have any updates on this?

Jonathan: The Business Office is aware and hasn't helped us yet, so we'll follow up with them.

D. University Student Senate Delegate (Alex Jiang)

E. University Faculty Senate Liaison (Parisa Montazaran Osmanovic)

IV. Steering Officer Reports

A. Officer for Health & Wellness (Katherine Rivera Gomez)

No discussion.

B. Officer for Governance & Membership (Ian Williams)

Updates:

By the numbers

- Current reps: 38
- Current vacancies: 26
- December 2022 attendance: 27

Resignations

- Vicki Li resigned from the Linguistics rep on 2/10/23

Petitions for Reps

- Margaret Matte expressed interest in serving as the Linguistics rep; she plans to bring a completed petition to Plenary.
- Jianing Qi submitted a completed petition to create a second Computer Science rep.
- A few students expressed interest in other programs (MALS & WGS). They have been sent petitions and the process was explained.

Constitution & Bylaws Committee

- Met in December; no concrete recommendations at this time.
- Will plan to convene in March and discuss affiliate issues previously mentioned by Silvia.

No discussion.

Motion to amend agenda to present a Bylaws amendment: Jonathan

Second: Silvia

Passes unanimously

Jonathan explains the amendment that removes the requirement of OpenCUNY Board Members to be registered for OpenCUNY.org and that the full student body can elect rather than only members of OpenCUNY.org

C. Officer for Student Life & Services (Sayantika Mondal)

No discussion.

D. Officer for Library & Technology (Daniel Okpattah)

Updates:

1. *Success with the extension of library hours*
2. *Search for the the new Vice President of IT and Chief Information office ongoing*
First meeting was held on 02/16/23 which I was not aware of but that was due to miscommunication with Julie Vanegas which has been resolved.
I will meet with Smale Maura on Friday, 24th February, 2023 for a debrief on what transpired on 02/16/23.

No discussion.

E. Interim Officer for Funding (Bryce Barthuly)

Updates:

- Upcoming funding application deadlines this spring semester:
 - Today, February 17th
 - Friday, March 17th
 - Information and Future Deadlines can be found via <http://cunydisc.org/grants>
- Recently approved grants include:
 - Math Weekly Afternoon Tea (\$700)
 - Where is Academic Work (\$700)
 - Graduate Students in Music (GSIM) Conference (\$500)
- The grants committee will convene to review new/revised applications
 - Date and Time is TBD

Sharanya: I helped someone apply and it said we cannot support conferences, but an example is that we can.

F. Officer for Outreach (Vacant)

VI. Announcements

Motion by Jonathan to move into Executive Session for purposes of Personnel, Investigation, and Litigation

Second by Sayantika

Vote: Unanimous

The DGSC went into Executive Session at 6:36pm

Motion by Sayantika to move into Public Session

Second by Jonathan

Vote: Unanimous

DGSC returns to public session at 7:13pm

VII. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: Adam Kocurek

Seconded: Sharayna

Voted: Unanimous

Meeting is adjourned at 7:14pm