



DOCTORAL AND GRADUATE STUDENTS' COUNCIL

The Graduate Center, CUNY
Robert E. Gilleece Student Center | Suite 5495
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Plenary Meeting

Minutes

—

March 24th, 2023

4:30PM

Present: Jonathan Hanon (JH), Silvia Rivera Alfaro (SRA), Nan Coffey (NC), Bryce Barthuly (BB), Xiale Jiang (XJ), Margaret Matte (MM); Emily Mangione (EM); Pablo Yankelovich (PY), Philip Wiles (PW), Sayantika Mondal (SM), Astrid W (AW), Adam Kocurek (AK), Cassandra Barnes (CB), Amour Castillo (AC), Angela LaScala-Gruenewald (ALG), Silas Gossberndt (SG), Chapman Lindgren (CL), Mariatere Tapias (MT), Katherine Rivera Gomez (KRG), Christopher Campbell (CC), Zhuo Yin (ZY), Daniel Okpattah (DO), Katherine Anderson (KA)

Remote attendance via Zoom: Parisa Montazaran Osmanovic (PMO), Justice Evans (JE), Jianing Qi (JQ)

Absent: Roderick Hurley, Sharanya Dutta, Eva Steinberg, Ligia Mendonca, Labanya Unni, Edward Charnley, Robert Wrigley, Zara Khan

Meeting Chair: Jonathan Hanon

Minutes: Parisa Montazaran Osmanovic

Minutes Assist: Christopher Campbell

Meeting called to order at 5:03pm

I. Approval of Agenda

Motion to amend agenda to add a resolution on the Auxiliary Enterprise Corporation and moving Co-Chair for Business Report first for Budget Report: Jonathan Hanon

Seconded: Sayantika Mondal

Vote: Unanimously

Motion to approve agenda: Adam Kocurek

Second: Sayantika Mondal

Vote: Unanimously

II. Approval of the Minutes of the 17 February 2023 Meeting

Motion to Approve: Christopher Campbell

Seconded: Sayantika Mondal

Vote: Unanimously

III. New Business

A. Officer for Outreach Election

Christopher Campbell nominates Amour Castillo for the nomination

Motion to Approve: Ian Williams

Seconded: Katherine Rivera Gomez

Vote: Unanimously

Amour Castillo is voted unanimously as the DGSC's new Officer for Outreach.

B. Resolution in Support of Admission of Undocumented and PRUCOL, including DACA, TPS, and Asylum Pending Students at the CUNY Graduate Center

Jonathan Hanon reads this resolution to the plenary.

Discussion

No discussion.

Motion to Approve: Christopher Campbell

Seconded: Katherine Rivera Gomez

Vote: Unanimously

C. Co-Sponsorship of USS Resolution for International and Undocumented Students

Alex Jiang reads this resolution to the plenary.

Motion to approve with conditional co-sponsorship, that if USS votes to make amendments the resolution on its Sunday March 26th plenary, the co-sponsorship might be ratified by the DGSC

Executive Committee: JH (CS)

Seconded: ZY (Physics)

Discussion

SM (Math): Will we see the amendments if they look very different?

JH (Computer Science): Yes, we will bring it back to the DGSC if it does look different from what we voted on in this body. We also don't want to have to wait until the next Plenary meeting to approve it so we can solicit feedback.

AJ (Physics): We're helping the USS's idea.

JH (Computer Science): They co-sponsored our resolution and we weren't able to amend ours so now they may not be able to amend theirs

Vote: Unanimously

Conditional Co-Sponsorship is Approved Unanimously

D. Resolution in Support of GC Housing Students

Jonathan Hanon reads this resolution to the plenary.

Discussion

AK (history): I want to personally endorse this. As a former EC, we had meetings with OSA and there were complaints about wifi not working and students having to buy their own routers. I agree with the sentiment behind this.

SG (Physics): The last line of the resolution, the resolve, maybe we take out the word 'keeping' as we have stated above that it is not currently meeting the definition of affordable housing. I suggest changing 'keeping' with 'making'.

JH: Objections within the body?

No objections.

IW (Social Work): Any circumstance where GC administration attempts to balance the budget will affect this

SM (Math): Maybe we should also include the fact that we should provide affordable housing for everyone?

JH: That's not within the scope of this resolution.

ZY: GC Housing is quite expensive.

CC (Comp Lit): I agree with Jonathan on the scope of the resolution

AK (History): full-time faculty at the GC live in GC housing. I'm not sure of the percentage, but this is a topic of tension within the body. Another point of contention is how many GC faculty send their children to childcare center that students subsidize. That's another thing we might want to look into.

ZY: It's a unilateral rent raise for all residents?

JH: Yes.

Motion to Approve: Zhuo Yin

Second: Adam Kocurek

Vote: Unanimously

E. Resolution of Demands for the Graduate Center Auxiliary Enterprise Corporation Regarding Use of Funds and Compliance with Open Meetings Law

JH reads this resolution to plenary

IW: Would it be good to include their tax non-profit corporation number, which is 35-2189280

AK: I'm not sure what the implications would be for them to liquidate their cash assets but I think even without knowing all of those parameters the spirit of this makes sense. We've outlined a number of grievances the money could be used for right away.

JH: Any other input on this resolution? A motion to bring this to a vote?

Motion to Approve: Adam History

Second: Christopher Campbell

Vote: Unanimously

F. Bylaws Amendment Proposals

Jonathan presents the amendments. One will be voted today, the others will only be presented.

1. Amendment to OpenCUNY Board Requirements

Motion to Approve: Silvia Rivera Alfaro

Second: Katherine Rivera Gomez

Vote: Unanimously

Ian presents of the amendments proposed to be voted on the upcoming plenary

2. Changes to Reappointment of Senior Employees
3. Revision of Chartered Organization Reports
4. Creating an Adjunct Project Advisory Board
5. Affiliate Accountability (Advocate Advisory Board, OpenCUNY board, and Report to Plenary)
6. Fixing Typos and Inconsistencies

Discussion

IW: Silvia, can you please tell us more about chartered organizations?

SRA: The change in the reports of chartering organizations was a proposal that Sharanya Dutta, previous CCSA, suggested to me when I started in this position. In Committee of

IW: Currently the Adjunct Project has no advisory board.

AK: Should we include the PSC Graduate Center in point 4?

JH: We cannot do it due to governance issues.

YZ: We should have more meetings with the Adjunct Project.

JH: That's going to be another amendment, #5. Next time we're going to talk about the composition of the committee. The composition of the committee may change but this is just a presentation of the advisory board. JH reads slides on the Adjunct Project advisory board.

YZ: Proposes that the Adjunct Project comes every semester

IW: Supports the idea

AK: I believe that AP should come every semester at the beginning as it is repopulated.

IW: What is the minimum level of communication and being in the loop?

AK: I think building in the expectation of having one per semester makes sense with three new affiliates who are figuring out their role. So we can leave in that provision but have one meeting per semester.

JH: When we have this meeting with AP and the Plenary, it should only be for the first year, but your question is should we build this meeting into the bylaws?

AK: Yes, it could be said in the transition memo that this is something that has been changed until it becomes routine. It might make sense to have a caveat where we convene more intentionally.

“Adjunct Project must report once per semester.”

AJ: Why should the Adjunct Project meet more often than other affiliates?

IW: It's the lack of involvement. One of the differences between the AP and the other affiliates is that the AP are organizing on behalf of the members of the union. Those organizing conversations in a space like that can be productive as part of the ongoing dialogue.

ZY: I have been involved in AP before. Usually what happens is that AP workers don't report back to the DGSC. We also need them to report back to the DGSC so we know if something is going on. We have no idea what they're doing. It's a structural issue and having this meeting

once per semester helps to solve that issue.

JH: We need to work more directly with AP because we have overlapping interests considering we are all adjuncts.

IW: We are also talking about how it will be helpful for AP and coordinators to have more direct communication with the body. They might have things they want us to do or might need more mobilization from us.

JH: Any other input on this amendment? Or any of the previous amendments in general

For the last proposed amendment, Jonathan Hanon reads typos in bylaws and displays how they will be fixed.

Discussion

ZY: How long did this take?

JH: It took me about two hours back in Summer 2021, I've been waiting two years for this.

IV. Executive Committee Reports

A. Co-Chair for Business (Jonathan Hanon)

Updates:

- The budget is balanced.
 - Enrollment is accounted for.
 - Adjunct Project is funded from April to June.
 - Vacancies have been accounted for.
 - Program Allocations are balanced.
- I attended the BoT Committee on Finance and Administration
 - Asked Chancellery about adjunct pay, tuition increase, balancing enrollment, their answer to everything is "I don't know", so I doubt we're getting answers on anything.
- I testified at the BoT Public Hearing
 - Graduate Council was rescheduled, we likely won't have quorum at the rescheduled meeting.
 - As always, No Confidence. Nothing new.
- Payment delays (again)
 - Due to delays in the processing of invoices by requisition, we are currently unable to order from Blake and Todd
 - The Office of Student Affairs is currently working to schedule a meeting between the Co-Chairs and the Purchasing Department of the Business

- Office, to figure out what's going on
 - We hope this will be resolved soon
- Services Provided
 - Tax Services through Dan Noble (DGSC covers \$75 each)
 - Legal Services through Austin Brown
- Program Allocations, Chartered Org Budgets
 - All expenses are due on May 31st.
 - You must submit receipts, rosters, and event flyer/agenda/notice along with your check requests on Works.
 - Tax-exempt forms are required, as we are non-tax-levy and cannot reimburse sales tax

Jonathan presents the budget proposal ([images on slides](#)).

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

Updates:

-Mandated trainings for students:

- SPARC: This is a reminder that all student representatives need to complete this training.
- You also need to complete ESPARC and Working Place Violence training.
- If you have any questions contact Eric Brown to ebrown2@gc.cuny.edu

-Food services and Pantry

- On March 17, OSA along with interim provost Monica Varsanyi organized a meeting about establishing an official pantry at the building. The DGSC Executive Committee was invited to the meeting and we requested the administration to include Reclaim the Commons in this conversation, in line with the demands the DGSC is supporting. Reclaim came to the meeting. As an outcome a Committee that includes the administration, students, faculty, and staff is being created. If someone would like to volunteer on this committee you can let Jonathan Hanon know about it.

-Elections update:

- According to the new enrollment statistics, some programs have lost representatives for the next academic year. Psychology went down from 4 to 3 reps, sociology from 2 to 1 rep, and MALS from 2 to 1.
- For this election, 21 programs have nominations. I include the number of seats each of these programs has at DGSC for next academic year according to enrollment:
 Anthropology (2), Art History (1), Biochemistry (1), Biology (2), Business (1), Criminal Justice (1), Computer Science (2), Digital Humanities (1), Economics (1), English (2), LAILAC (1), History (1), Math (1), Music (2*), Philosophy (1), Physics (2), Political

Sciences (2), Psychology (3), Sociology (1), Social Welfare (1), Theatre (1). *Only one seat was open via nominations.

- If your program has no nominations, you can start a petition for a DGSC rep for 2023-2024 immediately. Please contact the Officer for Governance and Membership.
- Ballots are currently under revision of the Student Election Review Committee.
- Election will take place from April 3 to May 1.

-Adjunct Project and affiliates

- Adjunct Project Call for Applications closed on Saturday March 18th with 10 applications.
- The hiring team is lacking a DGSC representative, if you want to volunteer, please speak up on the discussion of this report.
- OpenCUNY is still operating with 2 out of 3 coordinators. They have asked us to bring to the plenary the interest of reopening the third position.

-Chartered Organizations

- This year we have been working towards reactivating the chartered organizations as we come back to in-person academic life. Last semester we de-chartered organizations that have been inactive more than three semesters as mandated by our bylaws. This allowed us to get a better understanding of the situation after the pandemic.
- Currently all active chartered organizations have offices and some of the leaders have started to come to work on their office spaces.
- Some of the organizations have been collaborating with Reclaim the Commons, such is the case of Anthro Film Club, Dominican Studies Group, and QUNY
- On March 03, we had the Chartered Organizations Lunch with 9 leaders participating out of our around 40 organizations.
 - An important request by the chartered org leaders to DGSC Officers has been to create a handbook that centralizes the information they need to know, including contact list of other chartered organization members, so that they can
 - A proposal that came from this meeting was to organize a chartered organization and other student organizations fair, but with a bottom-up model, so that the fair has active participation of the student leaders as organizers in deciding the model of the fair.

Discussion:

IW: Back to the AP. It's also an opportunity to be involved in offering the positions and inviting people to help revive this. It's also something to put on your CV that you're on a hiring committee. My idea of it, and we've started building some infrastructure. We can meet and decide based on ratings. We don't need to have unnecessary meetings. Participation and input would be helpful!

DO: With nominations for our program, I think I nominated someone to replace me and he didn't receive the nomination.

SRA: You have to have certain conditions. OSA checks students. After they check the nominations, we reach out to the nominees. Maybe the person was ineligible.

JH: I just checked and the person is eligible.

SRA: We can follow up after the plenary and check why the person was not contacted.

C. Co-Chair for Communications (Christopher Campbell)

Updates:

- **DGSC Budget Surplus RFP:** The Request for Proposals has been sent out through a number of channels, including an all-student email, the DGSC listserv, as well as through the EO and APO listserv. On all digital screens at the DGSC it is promoted along with a QR code directing students to the Google Form where they can submit their proposal. I've received two proposals so far. Please, please, please make sure that you're spreading the word about this RFP so that we can fairly and thoroughly spend \$100,000 of this surplus for next fiscal year.
- **Surplus Q&A with Business Office:** This will take place on Zoom next Thursday, March 30th at 11am. Those interested in submitting a proposal should attend, particularly if they'd like to ask members from the Business Office about procurement details (i.e. you have an idea in mind but you're not sure if it's feasible or allowable). I sent out an email to APOs, EOs, and the DSC listserv with this information. I can send this to Representatives as well.
- **International Student Survey:** We are coordinating a meeting with OSA on the topic of International Students. In anticipation, we will be sending out a survey to international students asking them about their experience not only as an international student in the US but also about their experiences with the Office of International Students, which we've received a number of complaints about. This will be sent out to all of the avenues I mentioned above, but will also include the International Students' WhatsApp group.
- **DGSC + Student Research Fellowships:** If you're not familiar, each year the provost's office runs a "Fellowship Competition" for dissertation writing year students (i.e. 6+ year when we don't have fellowships). These usually range anywhere from 5k to a full 25k. The process of choosing the "winners" has always been vague and unclear. I've applied twice and I've been rejected. Next year will be my 8th year at the Graduate Center, and I plan to finish my dissertation Summer 2024. The rejection letter I received from Rachel Sponzo is display on the screen.

- After a few emails, we've decided to set up a meeting with Rachel Sponzo, the Provost, and a few others to discuss how framing this as a "competition" should be reconsidered, how more transparency should be involved in the selection process (i.e. who is serving on these committees, how often, is there a set group of tastemakers deciding who wins these fellowships?), and so on. What do you think we should take to this meeting in the form of ideas or suggestions on how to change this "competition" process?
- **Meeting with President and Provost:** Lastly, we'll be meeting with the President and Provost next Tuesday at noon. What questions would you like us to ask? What concerns would you like us to bring to the table?

Discussion:

KRG: We need to know who is reviewing these applications and it would be helpful to have feedback on these proposals. They should treat us in a more professional way. And for the proposals of the surplus, with the total of money only 6 proposals would pass?

CC: If we receive more proposals we might spread the money out.

KRG: There are similar situations of students who have to take the first exam multiple times. When you experience this, they should be recused from participating in these processes.

SRA: in sciences and other departments, students have experienced discriminatory experiences. It's not clear in the university how these things are attended to (title IX and racism for example). The International Students, Sharanya mentioned this, this year a person brought an issue with this office and other people who oversee this office. If we start to move the topic, hopefully, we can get some changes done to the internal problems in the office.

KA: I don't know how it works with the dissertation committees but with the NIH grant, every grant gets a score, and then they rank all of the applications, then the bottom half get automatically rejected with no comments. All of the top half gets comments whether you were accepted or rejected. Too many applications? Explicitly say, the top half of all of our applicants get comments. The Surplus funding? The proposals. I'm wondering if you could speak to what the scope of what these proposals need to be?

CC: They can't be used for travel.

D. University Student Senate Delegate (Alex Jiang)

Updates:

- BoT Committee on Advancement and External Affairs
 - Our funding objective is more important, but maybe we could do more by joining the conference trip.
- USS plenary passed co-sponsorship for our dining commons resolution

- Meeting on science student issue with Joshua Brumberg (dean of science), the Director of the Wellness Center (Arielle Shanok), and VP for Student Affairs (Matt Schoengood)
 - We need to keep pushing the centralized payment system
- Upcoming event at ASRC on May 2nd from 5pm-8pm with food and attendance of DGSC lawyer

Announcements:

Discussion:

ZY: GC received 98% funding roughly from NY State. This funding is given every year. When it comes to April 1, they'll decide how much money they'll give us next year. We need to push them, if we don't, they could give it to the MTA or something else. The first weekend is Caucus weekend, the second is called SOMOS Conference." I attended both and there are about 40 students and you saw the NYS assemblymen and I told them to increase funds for CUNY. We can make demands to increase our stipend from \$27k to \$30k. In general, this issue is determined by CUNY Central.

IW: I have noticed the Assembly Standing Committee of Higher Education had a change in leadership from Deborah Glick, who represents a district in Manhattan, to Patricia Fahy, who represents a district in Albany.... Any noticeable changes or thoughts on that?

ZY: What happened in NYS is that the governor defunded CUNY this year, but NY Senators have different opinions, but they have not the option to raise.

E. University Faculty Senate Liaison (Parisa Montazaran Osmanovic)

Updates:

- UFS Plenary meeting was Tuesday, 2/21/23
- 62 of the 139 voting members were present: no quorum so meeting was informational
- Remarks by Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer Hector Batista – 6:35 – 7:05 p.m. – EVC Batista briefly outlined the fiscal challenges facing the University and the critical actions that need to take place moving forward – especially with regard to capital projects, facilities, enrollment strategies, and cost efficiencies. He also updated the body on CUNY's ongoing COVID-19 efforts. He then took questions related to the University's campus savings plans, equity initiatives, and the recently revived Vacancy Review Board.
- Committee meeting discussed how to get more participation from campus representatives
- Next Plenary meeting on Tuesday, 3/28/23

Announcements:

Discussion: At the meeting JH told Hector Batista that maybe he should take a pay cut

IW: Any news related to Covid-19 and Cleared4?

PMO: To my recollection they are continuing. I am in the Covid reactivation committee and they even stopped meeting. They do not even notify the members.

JH: You may not get a notification when you're selected for random testing. I was supposed to get tested last week, my cleared 4 was in the gray ... Jonathan talks about the inconsistencies and lack of logic with COVID testing and access to the GC campus.

SRA: To make pressure related to COVID, on January 25, they aren't asking any visitor to show any COVID information but they're continuing to ask us about COVID. It's very confusing because anyone. Last semester they were making everyone go downstairs to check COVID information if they were coming into the building. If it's not needed for visitors, why for us?

AC: They just need an ID. Not cleared4.

IV. Steering Officer Reports

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

Updates: Improv Theatre and Movement classes ended yesterday. Four classes were offered in 5 weeks and the attendance was less than 4 people each time. Although the number of sign ups was in the 30s, it seems like the time might be the culprit for the lack of attendance. Every student that attended was happy with the class and had favorable reviews for these classes in the future.

Yoga classes are still continuing until May 1st, Mondays at 8am and Thursdays at 7:30pm, please spread the word.

Along with the Co-Chair of Student Affairs and OSA, we organized a Q & A with NYSHIP for students. This was planned for 3/22 between 3-4pm, no students attended as this may be either the time of the semester, or the lack of dissemination of information to students and departments.

Announcements:

Discussion:

SRA: OSA says one person came to Bingo. Student turnout is low. One of the things that we talk about is that it may be important to organize a NYSHIP event the first semester

but not exactly when everyone is inundated with information because insurance is so technical. It's important that everyone helps us reach out to students. Many students come to officers with questions but they don't use insurance or go to doctors because they're afraid of doing something wrong but they don't come to these Q&A sessions.

KA: Is insurance Q&A helpful for students who get insurance from other CUNY campuses, not just the GC.

KRG: I think it's specifically NYSHIP. It would still work the same way. They're all within the same contract. It's all NYSHIP.

B. Interim Officer for Outreach (Amour Castillo)

No report at the moment.

Discussion: Students welcome Amour as a DGSC officer.

C. Officer for Governance & Membership (Ian Williams)

Updates:

By the numbers

- Current reps: 33
- Current vacancies: 31
- February 2023 attendance: 27

Resignations

- Christina Weinbaum, Philosophy, Program Representative

Petitions for Reps

- (leaving open in case any received at Plenary)

Constitution & Bylaws Committee

- Met on 3/21/23, have some recommendations for updates to Bylaws.

Announcements:

Discussion:

AC (Psychology): To clarify, there was confusion about one because they thought Rod (from Psychology) was the program rep, so they didn't attend meetings and then found

out that they were supposed to be attending. I think knowing how many people you can have is confusing because you don't know how many people can be reps.

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

Updates: Report on slides - *Officer for Student Life and Services* please insert the report here.

Announcements:

No Discussion

E. Officer for Library & Technology (Daniel Okpattah)

Updates:

- Application for the CIO /VP position closed
- About 15 people passed to the initial phase of the interview
- Interviews to begin from next week
- A student representative is needed on board for days I can't make it to the interview due to schedule classes
- Alycia Sellie (Collection Development Librarian) would like to speak to us on library collections on the next plenary meeting if possible.

Discussion:

AK: For the interviews happening while you are teaching, are those in person or hybrid?

DO: I think their interviews are in person. I have to reconfirm this detail. She was just looking for availability. I told her I only had five days available. She said one of those days we cannot meet because of Spring Break. She's not said "Ok, this is how interviews will go." We just meet to discuss the kinds of questions we will ask when we go into the interview.

JH: Any days you or Adam are not available I can step in as well.

DO: Sure.

AC: Me too. I work in the library.

ZY: Is it possible to ask the library to fix the door and make it accessible?

DO: Send me the room number.

ZY: It's the entrance to the GC library.

JH: Can we find a way to discuss as DGSC that we make that door accessible. We can't make that with surplus funds, but can we demand that door to be accessible because of ADA?

AK: Couldn't we comp something and the loosened up funds could then be put towards making those doors accessible? They're beautiful but they're hard to push through. Surplus money can go to funds to free up their funds to do door projects. That necessitates a longer conversation.

JH: If the doors aren't accessible per American with Disabilities Act, that's a violation of the law. Technically there's something that should be done about that if they don't want to be reported and fined. Maybe we should report an ADA violation.

SRA: There is a website of ADA to report on this.

MT (Urban): This is an issue in all CUNY campuses. I have seen this with my undergraduate students.

IW: The commission on human rights in NY can also be informed, 2124160917 to file a complaint.

AC: Can we create a group to work on this or something similar?

AK: This is not a suggestion, but I agree that one should exist. I would send an email on the topic and say that we have people interested.

JH: Yes, we can continue the conversation on this. We could start a task force and send an email later this week.

F. Officer for Funding (Bryce Barthuly)

Updates:

- The grants committee met on Friday, March 3rd.
 - o Two grant applications were approved during the meeting:
 - Suzuki Project (\$670)
 - Reclaim the Commons (\$1,000)
 - o One grant application was approved through an expedited review (via email)
 - Big Apple Health Psychology Colloquium (\$700)
- The grants committee met on March 24th to review new and resubmitted applications.
 - o Six grant applications were approved during the meeting:
 - CUNY Directed Reading Program End-Of-Semester Poster Session (\$1,000)
 - LGBTQ+ Night at the People's Pantry (\$700)
 - CUNY Struggles across Generations (\$700)
 - Brian E Hour Science Communication Workshop with Denise Croote (\$540)
 - Through the Periscope: Changing Culture, Italian America Book Launch Roundtable (\$500)
 - Identify Play: Constructing the Self in the Ancient Mediterranean. One grant was approved via expedited review of the committee (\$300)

- The next grant application deadline is Friday, April 21st

Announcements:

Discussion

AC: have any grants been denied this academic year?

BB: Not this year.

JH: One grant denied because it was submitted before there was a grant committee meeting scheduled, and another was resubmitted and the original grant was denied. One grant missed a grant deadline, but they submitted it and it was approved.

VI. Announcements

None

VII. Adjournment

Meeting is adjourned at loss of quorum at 7:41PM