



DOCTORAL AND GRADUATE STUDENTS' COUNCIL

The Graduate Center, CUNY
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Plenary Meeting

Minutes

—
April 28th, 2023

4:30PM

Meeting Chair: Chris Campbell

Minutes: Jonathan Hanon

Minutes Assist: Silvia Rivera Alfaro

Attendance

Present: Nan Coffee (NC), Ligia Mendonca (LM), Silvia Rivera Alfaro (SRA), Bryce Barthuly (BB), Margaret Matte (MM), Justice Evans (JE), Hadley Newton (HN), Cassandra Barnes (CB), Jianing Qi (JQ), Bilal Abdulrahman (BA), Sayantika Mondal (SM), Sam O'Hana (SO), Astrid Wik Hallaraaker (AWH), Mariatere Tapias (MT), Edward Charnley (EC), Pablo Yanekelevich (PY), Alexander Pau Soria (APS), Jonathan Hanon (JH), Sandy Jimenez (SJ), Eva Steinberg (ES), Roderick Hurley (RH), Katherine Anderson (KA), Robert Wrigley (RW), Zhuo Yin (ZY), Daniel Okpattah (DO), Silas Grossberndt (SG), Philip Wiles (PW), Amour Castillo (AC), Alex Jiang (AJ), Axel Kodak (AKo), Yassin Chandran (YC), Ryan Wythe (RW), Bryce Goldblat (BG)

Remote attendance via Zoom: Adam Kocurek (AK), Ian Williams (IW).

Absent: Parisa Montazaran Osmanovic, Katherine Rivera Gomez, Sharanya Dutta, Labanya Unni, Chapman Lindgren, Angela LaScala-Gruenewald

Meeting began at 4:55pm

I. Approval of Agenda

Motion to Approve: JH

Seconded: RH

Vote: Unanimous

II. Approval of the Minutes of the 24 March 2023 Meeting

Motion to Approve: JH

Seconded: SRA

Vote: Unanimous

III. New Business

A. Confirmation of New At-Large Representatives

1. Sam O'Hana
2. Alexander Pau Soria
3. Eric Barenboim
4. Bilal Abdulrahman

Motion to approve: JH

Seconded: SM

Vote: Unanimous

B. Affirmation of Previous DGSC Decisions

Motion to approve: SRA

Seconded: SM

Discussion:

EC: I would like to have further explanation of the situation with quorum and having a majority vote.

JH: This is related to NYS law regarding proxies and not majority voting. We want to follow the law.

CC: We are working to be in accordance with the law.

Vote: Unanimous

C. New Student Organization: CUNY Comix Programming Group

Sandy Jimenez from the Master Program from Biography and Memoir presents the proposal for the Charter Organization proposal. He invites us to their first event.

Motion to approve: AJ

Second: SM

Vote: Unanimous

D. Bylaws Amendments

1. Changes to Reappointment of Senior Employees

Silvia explains that this proposal comes after the work of the task force for the Adjunct Project. We want to be able to

Motion to approve: JH

Second: AP

Discussion:

EC: What happens to those who were hired before?

SRA: The timer for three years starts for everyone in July.

RH: Would opening the call imply creating more work to the Steering.

SRA: Our idea is to be able to prevent situations in which a person that is not doing the best work just stays.

SM: Even if someone is doing a good job, opening the call would be important in case new people want to participate.

ZY: Adjunct Project and Senior Employees are leadership positions that bring people in. When you have someone for 4-5 years, they can lose concern.

EC: We're focusing a lot on the Adjunct Project, but criticism of long-term officeholders is harsh.

Motion to move into executive session for personnel matters: JH

Second: ZY

Vote: Unanimous

The Plenary entered Executive Session at 5:26pm

Motion to end executive session: JH

Second: SM

Vote: Unanimous

The Plenary exited Executive Session at 5:31pm

Motion to change the language: SM

Second: RH

Vote: Unanimous

Motion to approve: SM Reappointment of Senior Employees

Second: RH

Vote: Unanimous

2. Chartered Organization Reports

SRA presents the amendment

Motion to approve: SO

Second: ZY

SM: I thought chartered organizations get the same amount of money

SRA: Chartered Orgs were supposed to present a budget for next semester, but this doesn't change the DGSC budget. It's that they need to present a proposed budget.

Motion to vote: ZY

Second: AO

Vote to end discussion: Unanimous

Vote on the chartered organization reports change: Unanimous

3. Creating on an Adjunct Project Advisory Board

Jonathan presents the proposal.

Motion to approve: JH

Second: SM

Discussion:

RH: Currently the AP only reports to Steering?

JH: It is to have a board

RH: How often the advisory board would be meeting?

JH: It is twice per semester

Vote: Unanimously

4. Affiliate Accountability

Motion: ZY

Second: SM

Vote: Anonymously

5. Fixing Typos and Inconsistencies with the DGSC Bylaws

Motion: ZY

Second: AZ

Vote: Anonymously

E. Resolution on Sexual Misconduct and Gender Discrimination at the GC

Motion: AO

Second: SM

Discussion:

SRA: I would like to propose changes to include faculty and staff in this resolution as they also experience this.

Motion to amend the resolution: SRA

Second: JH

Vote: Unanimous

The Plenary entered Executive Session at 5:58pm

Motion to move into executive session for personnel, investigation, and litigation: EC

Seconds: JH

Vote: Unanimous

The Plenary exited Executive Session at 6:07pm

Motion to exit: JH

Second: ZY

Vote: Unanimous

ZY: I feel that administration never takes action on this. On the Board of Trustees, we have students on committees, and we can add resolutions as items on BoT Committee, and they try to push our resolutions away. We have seats on two BoT Committees from GC, we can make the language that we can put it on BoT Committee. Chancellery don't have vote on BoT, but faculty and students do. We might be able to bring things to BoT.

Vote on resolution: Unanimous

F. Endorsement of USS Resolution "Accommodating Muslim Students for Eid"

ZY: We tried bringing this to BoT, and they sent the

Motion to approve with any possible changes to be approved later by the Executive Committee: JH

Second: ZY

Vote: Ed Charnley votes no.

IV. Executive Committee Reports

A. Co-Chair for Business (Jonathan Hanon)

Updates:

- Meeting with Business Office about payment delays
 - Blake and Todd has been paid
- The State Budget is still being finalised, we are waiting for a final confirmation on the state budget.
- Program Allocations, Chartered Org Budgets
 - All expenses are due on May 31st.
- Reimbursements
 - Processing them has not been an issue, but we are requesting a guide from the Business Office to give to students regarding the check request, \$15 rules per person for food, receipts, rosters, flyer/agenda/notice, tax-exempt forms. If not, I will need to work with the next CCB in June to create a guide.
- Requisitions
 - No longer an issue on their own, but a few other issues (below)
- Honoraria
 - According to CUNY procedures, and CUNYBuy system, when you wish to pay an individual for services (honorarium or otherwise), you need to consult the Co-Chairs so they can be run by the Business Office to see if the individual is eligible to be paid. When you do this, please be sure to detail the service being provided and the payment for the service. This is to ensure that you do not promise payment and then find yourself unable to pay the individual.

Announcements:

- Auxiliary Enterprise Corporation and Food Services
 - The GC and JJ AECs have established a joint subcommittee for the Food Services RFP for food in the Dining Commons. The RFP will close on 5/16, and the evaluation will conclude on 6/9. I will be serving on this RFP Committee.
 - We met with Brian Peterson today about the RFP, and the committee will meet on 5/18 or 5/19.
 - The AEC will meet the week of 5/23 to discuss this and other matters.
 - Not counting our chickens before they hatch, but this seems like a huge victory for the demands of Reclaim the Commons.

Revised FY23 Budget Presentation and Vote:

- Rebalanced budget to account for April vacancies.
- Moved excess to Emergency Fund
- No other changes

Motion to approve the budget: ZY

Second: SM

Vote: Unanimous

FY24 Budget Report:

- It turns out that we don't need to present the budget and vote on it at two different meetings, so we can vote on both the final FY23 budget and the proposed FY24 budget in the same meeting.
- Next year's budget is somewhat difficult to balance for a few reasons.
 - Due to the return to in-person activity, the decrease in enrollment, the filling of multiple vacancies, and the fact that stipends are 7% higher due to collective bargaining than they were when we originally went online in 2020, accounting for about \$8k of our budget.
 - When the student activity fee was increased back in 2004/2005, we had a significantly higher enrollment in what was called the "Roach Motel" era. We also had fewer affiliates and few affiliate leaders.
 - OpenCUNY did not exist at the time, and OpenCUNY originally only had one Coordinator.
 - Because of this, the cost of stipends out of our base budget is about 35% higher per stipend due to collective bargaining, when we have established many new affiliate leader positions which increase our stipend lines by about 30% due to the creation of said positions.
 - Because of this, we spend about twice as much on stipends as we did in 2005, with a budget that is about 30% smaller.
 - We are spending a lot of money on technology that just keeps getting more expensive per year (Reclaim Hosting for the DGSC website, LiquidWeb for OpenCUNY, GoDaddy for our domain names, Google Workspace for our email addresses, VoteNet for elections, AvenueWebMedia for web services)

Motion to approve the budget: ZY

Second: SM

Vote: Unanimous

Motion to move into executive session of personal matters: JH

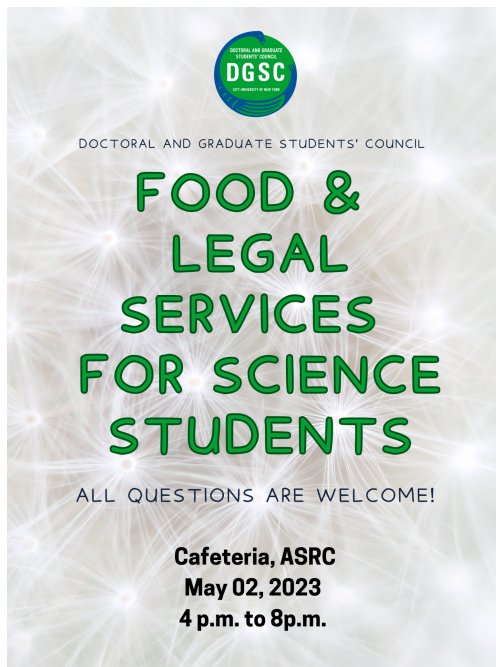
Second: SO
Vote: Unanimous

The Plenary entered Executive Session at 6:27pm

Motion to exit: ZY
Second: SRA

The Plenary exited Executive Session at 6:38pm

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



Updates:

-Elections will close on May 1 2023. As today at 3:25 p.m. we have 9.86%

-Adjunct Project hiring committee met on 04/20. We received 10 applications. We will interview 6 candidates on May 2 and 3.

-Last GC Budget Committee meeting of the year took place on April 24. A positive issue is that the GC didn't finish the year with a deficit, but just due to the pandemic surplus funds. It is also important to mention that CUNY at large has a deficit. This is why there is "budget savings plan" of 5.5%. In the debrief of the proposal sent by the GC to CUNY Central the student services and the fellowships were not reduced. However, there is no plan for improvement in our fellowships. There is still an unknown factor of if we would get more state funding, and tensions because SUNY is currently getting a lot more than CUNY.

Announcements:

-DGSC will hold an event at ASRC on May 2 from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Chris has sent the information to Josh Bumberg, APOs, and it is also announced at ASRC itself.

-Please, support the chartered organizations by signing their rosters on Works!

-Just a reminder that in the May plenary for upcoming representatives there will be elections for DGSC officers for those of you who get reelected or new or incoming reps :)

Discussion:

JH: The issue with science students is also shown by the participation of science students at the Steering in the last years. From 2008-2011, we had one science student. 2011-2017, we had zero. 2017-2020, we had two. 2020-2022, we had two. 2022-2023, we have five.

AC: What do you mean by Science?

SM: I had the same question.

JH: Students in the cluster of Science at the GC. "Science" and "Social Science" are two different clusters at the GC.

SM: About the election, in the elections there is no information about the candidates.

CC: I would like it if Rod could help us with information.

RH: We actually tried to put a bio but it became a lot of work, and people started to decline nominations because instead of just accepting automatically if you don't decline, you need to do work to accept the nomination. We tried it for a while, and a lot of people wouldn't even read the descriptions. It's worthwhile for people who want to use it, but maybe we can think of another way.

SRA: Maybe we can do a Google doc so that nominees who want to share information can include theirs in a participatory way, without putting additional work to the

RH: I think a Google doc is a good idea. I think this could be something to

CB (Anthropology): A larger issue is people don't know what the DGSC is in the first place. There are so many organizations at the GC that people don't get it. It's not the PSC, it's not USS, and we need to rethink what we do on that end.

SM: We have a few more days for the election, outreach to your department may help a little.

DO: Last year, in my cohort, I spoke to each student and made sure they voted, and select people for other positions. I never heard anything about DGSC until I joined other than a video on the CUNY website for a few seconds.

CC: The Steering does create a video to put out at the beginning of the academic year.

DO: That is what I am saying that in my orientation we only had the video, according to my experience.

SRA: Before the pandemic, there was tabling on the concourse, and a Chartered Org Fair. This year, there was tabling in the Dining Commons with student organizations that wanted to participate, along with the DGSC. I hope there will be more next year. With the surplus and elections, we've sent all-student emails to inform what the DGSC is. Please let's continue with ideas via email.

JH: We've been talking a bit recently about renaming the DGSC because it sounds too much like the PSC, but that's not something for now, it's just food for thought.

EC: It might be worth thinking about what we do. Half is that we need to go to our constituents and explain what we do, and the other half is actually doing it.

SRA: We will send an all-student email with election results, and ask for a bio so people get to know the candidates.

C. Co-Chair for Communications (Christopher Campbell)

Updates:

- The DGSC received 44 proposals requesting funds from our surplus. The Surplus Committee met for the first time this past week to discuss how we will score the proposals. There are 8 people on the Surplus Committee. We are reading and scoring the proposals over the course of about two weeks. Awards will be determined by the middle of May.
 - Criteria for the proposals:
 - (1) the breadth of the project's appeal to the student body (including the number of students served); (2) the proposal's capacity to improve student life at the GC; and (3) the project's efforts towards diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- The Executive Committee of the Graduate Council met last week to discuss the upcoming Graduate Council meeting, which will take place on May 10th from 3-4:30pm. Aside from the No Confidence vote, quorum for this meeting is important so that Spring semester degrees can be granted by the Grad Council body.
- The DGSC Executive Committee met with President Garrel and Provost Everett this past month. We discussed the Undocumented and PRUCOL Resolution, the Co-Sponsorship of uSS Resolution for International and Undocumented Students, the Resolution in Support of GC Housing, and the Auxiliary Enterprise Corporation Resolution. In terms of undocumented and PRUCOL students, President Garrell said that these are students who she is advocating for at the state level. She has been working with the State to determine how the Dream Act might enable Masters, Graduate, and Doctoral students to have access to funding and tuition.
 - President Garrell discussed the GC's official food pantry as well. She stressed the importance of this being a community effort that will best meet our needs. They are communicating with NYC food banks to determine best practices, including shelving, guidance on safe storage, signage, and safety for individuals accessing the food pantry.
 - President Garrell noted that tracking student payments, not much has happened with that. CUNYFirst is a legacy system that will be replaced and, for the moment, no one will make an investment to fix these problems with CUNYFirst.
- A handful of students were invited to speak privately with Provost Hensel the day of the Community Meeting. DGSC Representatives brought forward a number of

our resolutions, including the Resolution on Undocumented and PRUCOL Students, Reproductive Justice, Centralized Payment System, Graduate Center Student Housing, Support of Reclaim the Commons, No Confidence in GC Administration, the PSC Contract Negotiators, and the Auxiliary Enterprise Board. For undocumented students, Provost Hensel suggested they need to convene a group to think through, with legal counsel at the table, how they can legitimately do this because of liability concerns. We showed Provost Hensel our draft of the Resolution on Sexual Misconduct and Gender Discrimination at the GC and she was extremely concerned and asked to follow up with both the DGSC as well as individuals who would like to speak directly with her.

- Strategic Planning Task Force
 - Silvia is on Institutional Identity, I'm on Student Success, Jonathan is on Institutional Impact, we need someone for Operational Quality. Admin chose this without consulting us. This is a year-long or multi-year process, so be prepared for roughly what would be a monthly meeting. However, your voice would be part of the development of the Graduate Center from 2023-2028.

Discussion:

AZ (CompLit): Can you help me know what has been discussed previously here, but I have knowledge of a story of a person who was denied a fellowship after being admitted. PSC had a meeting with the GC lawyer, thus I am confused about how much DGSC can do about this. Is there anything the GC could do?

ZY: USS has a meeting this Tuesday with the Vice-Chancellor for Legal Affairs, and we will need to work around this between the rules. It will need to come from private funds such as the Foundation.

AZ: The undergraduate institutions accept undocumented students and provide scholarships, and we are the only institution that does not accept them.

ZY: To address the issue, Central created a position of "CUNY Director of Undocumented and Immigrant Student Success"

SRA: We brought up this resolution because we had knowledge of this case in the current year. We don't know if there were more in the past. To not go into more detail, in our meetings with the President/Provost, we brought the resolution, and talked about private funds. They said they can have money for one person, but if they have more, they cannot. They don't want to give us a number. We told them to work this year to get money for the next year and prepare for this. We also spoke to Wendy Hensel and Alicia Alvero about this, and they said they'd like to follow up on this, but we have to make that pressure.

JH: When I volunteered at the Brooklyn College Orientation, their Immigrant Student Success Director told me that students wanted to apply but could not. I wasn't sure whether to bring that

to the DGSC or not but when we heard this from members of the GC committee, this is something we brought up immediately.

AZ: Thanks for the information. I believe this is something we really need to take action on.

JH: Some information I want to bring and forget in my report is that a contract for food services with John Jay will be signed at the end of June.

D. University Student Senate Delegate (Alex Jiang)

Updates:

- Undocumented Students Resolution on Sunday
- BoT Committees on Monday, I will not be there.
 - State assembly proposed our request for \$7 million to graduate student funding. (not the executive or the senate)
- Elections, nobody got elected, still 3 vacant positions
- Meeting with President/Provost, showed them resolutions we passed. There seems to be a way forward for a centralized payment system, which she denied in a previous meeting. There is a joint food services RFP, which she also denied in a previous meeting.

Discussion:

IW: I saw in the news that the budget passed but it didn't have numbers.

XJ: I looked for information but we haven't received a final budget from the state.

JH: City budget is mostly for community colleges.

E. University Faculty Senate Liaison (Parisa Montazaran Osmanovic)

UFS Plenary was 3/28/23, next tentative meeting is 5/9/23

Interim CFO Chiappa have presentation on state and city budget:

- a. The FY2024 State Executive Budget maintains a 100% funding floor for community colleges and maintains flat per student funding. Additional language states that up to 20 percent of the aid shall be payable subject to a plan developed by the City University of New York and approved by the director of the budget with actions necessary for community colleges to undertake to operate without reliance on the base aid funding floor in future years.
- b. Without a floor, Community Colleges would lose \$59M, according to NYS estimates.
- c. The Assembly and Senate's proposal both excluded the above highlighted language and added \$6.5 million and \$8.7 million in operating funds for community colleges, respectively.
- d. Cumulative efficiency target of \$49.7 million is baselined, \$20.6 million from prior year plans and \$29.1 million in new reductions.

- e. CUNY is currently out of compliance with FERPA with respect to blackboard when we add instructors as peer reviewers
 - i. This is because campuses aren't required to add peer reviewers as 'students.' That decision is left up to the individual campuses. Noncompliance is due to CUNY's practice of deploying the INSTRUCTOR role in Blackboard without customizing it to remove some options.
 - ii. Wendy Hansel asked CIS to remove this option and asked Deans, Presidents and CAOs to integrate CUNY wide processes so that we may improve data accuracy and security.

No discussion.

IV. Steering Officer Reports

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

Updates:

-Zoom Yoga classes end May 1st.

Fall semester: Hybrid Yoga? In-person and Zoom classes. I will send out a poll gathering interest on either class and time/day according to instructor availability.

We held a Student insurance Q&A Session with the Office of Student Affairs. Students should have shown up but did not, maybe due to a lack of dissemination across campus. I will plan another one close to the beginning of the Fall semester.

No discussion.

B. Officer for Library & Technology (Daniel Okpattah)

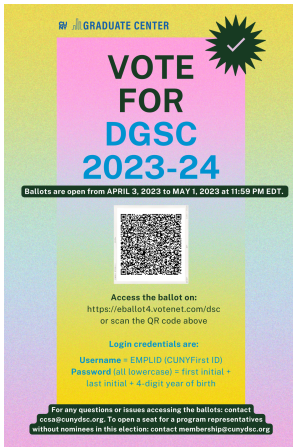
Updates:

- Interviews to appoint a new CIO.
- Organized with Alycia Sellie to speak with the plenary.

Discussion:

AC: At the moment in the search for the CIO we chose the 3 finalists.

C. Officer for Outreach (Amour Castillo)



Updates:

Made this (left) for digital signage to promote voting for DGSC folks, joining the international students whatsapp, looking to see what folks want for outreach as I just started and I am still getting to know my expectations.

Ideas/next Steps: Newsletter or some place to compile events happening at the GC or online (Can even use Digital Signage)

- Need more info on how I can be of service to international students
- Meeting with the Outreach committee (who are these folks? What is our budget? etc.)

Discussion:

RH: How are people aware of the existence of the group? I am not exactly an international student, so I am not aware of the information

SM: This group was something created autonomously and started to be more and more publicized during the year. I can send you the information.

SRA: I want to mention from the meeting with the Provost that there are a lot of complaints about the Office of International Students, and that he wants to have a confidential meeting with international students who have complaints about the office.

D. Officer for Governance & Membership (Ian Williams)

Updates:

By the numbers (as of last Plenary - removals noted below)

- Current reps: 32 (was 33 at start of March plenary)
- **Current vacancies (was 31 at start of March plenary): 33**
 - Current Steering vacancies: 0
 - Current At-Large Representative vacancies: 7
 - Current Program Rep vacancies: 26
- March 2023 Quorum requirement: 18
- March 2023 attendance: 27

Resignations

- N/A

Removals

- Ed Charnley, Program Representative, History
- Brian Aguilar, Program Representative, Urban Education

Petitions for Reps

- N/A

Constitution & Bylaws Committee

No discussion.

E. Officer for Funding (Bryce Barthuly)

Updates: The grants committee met on March 24th. During our meeting, the committee approved 6 grants. Another grant was subject to an expedited review and was approved shortly thereafter. The awarded grants are referenced below:

- CUNY Directed Reading Program End-Of-Semester
 - LGBTQ+ Night at the People's Pantry
 - CUNY Struggles across Generations
 - Brian E Hour Science Communication Workshop
 - Through the Periscope: Changing Culture, Italian America Book Launch Roundtable
 - Identify Play: Constructing the Self in the Ancient Mediterranean
 - 13th Annual Graduate History Conference (awarded via expedited review)
- Following the grant application deadline of April 21st, the committee will meet again on Monday, May 1st to review new grant applications.

No discussion.

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

Updates:

- Digital signage.
- Campaign material for elections.
- Surplus related meetings and posters.
- Serving on the Surplus proposal committee.

- Meeting with the business office Thursday to discuss feasibility of projects.
- Planning event with lawyer.
- Potentially think of some sort of end of semester event (ideas are welcome).

No discussion.

VI. Announcements

RH: Could you help us know how May plenary will be.

JH: It will be at 3 p.m. for outgoing and 4:30 for incoming members.

SRA: If you want to run for officer positions please reach out to us if you want to know more about this.

We lose quorum.

VII. Adjournment

Meeting is ended at 7:39 without quorum