



CUNY Graduate Center
Doctoral Students' Council
Steering Committee Minutes

November 4th, 2005

Chairperson: Celia Braxton
Minutes: Tina Lee
Meeting called to order at 6:08 P.M.

Present were Steering Committee members Celia Braxton, Ericka Calton, Stephanie Domenici, David Golland, Lee Hachadoorian, Tina Lee, Charles Lieberman (non-voting ex-officio), Adriana Tomasino, Chong Wojtkowski and Brenda Vollman. Quorum established to conduct business.

- I. Approval of Agenda.
Under VII. New Business; Disability Issues was made item C. and Other New Business moved to item D.
Motion to approve agenda (with amendments).
Moved by B. Vollman; seconded by C. Wojtkowski.
Motion passed unanimously.

- II. Approval of Old Minutes. Motion to approve the minutes of the Steering Committee meeting of October 7th, 2005 (with amendment--addition under item IV. e. "moved by D. Golland; seconded by B. Vollman").
Moved by B. Vollman; seconded by C. Wojtkowski.
Motion passed unanimously.

- III. Old Business.
 - A. Coffee Hour Arrangements. B. Vollman reported that she has placed an order with Java Stop for \$200 (tea, coffee, pastries/cookies). We are not being charged tax. L. Hachadoorian will be in the office to receive the order at 1 pm on 11/10. D. Golland and L. Hachadoorian will handle set-up. C. Wojtkowski will be at the event until 3:30. C. Braxton will attend. E. Calton and T. Lee will handle clean-up.
 - B. Health Committee. E. Calton met with Sharon Lerner and Elise Perram in the Student Affairs office about the new brochure about Wellness Center services. She has also been working on a survey about the Wellness Center that will be on the web and distributed in paper form at the Coffee Hour. Everyone should look at the survey on oldphdstudent.com and give feedback. The web

survey will be ready over the weekend and the paper survey by Monday for the Coffee Hour being held at John Jay College by the Criminal Justice and Forensic Psych. programs. We should begin advertising the web survey after Lerner and Perram have had a chance to comment.

- C. Travel and Research Fund. T. Lee and S. Domenici discussed the amount of money that will be put in the Travel and Research Fund for 05-06 and 06-07. Options for how to administer the fund were presented. These included possibly: abolishing the 50% rule (i.e. that a grant will only fund 50% of the cost of a conference/research trip), raising the amount of the grants to \$300 or \$350 dollars, instituting a rule that the amount of a grant can be reduced if a student has other sources of funding. Domenici and Lee informed the group that it seems unfeasible to break the fund up over the course of the year so that students going to conferences in the Spring (after the fund is usually closed) might have a chance to receive funding. After a discussion a motion was made to endorse the following changes: 1) Abolition of the 50% rule. 2) Increase in the grant amount to \$300 for research/conference presentation and \$250 for conference attendance.

Moved by L. Hachadoorian; second by D. Golland

Motion Passed 5 – 4 – 0

- C. Braxton suggested that we revisit the idea of splitting the fund up and that this be done by conference date (i.e. on part of the money for Fall and intersession conferences and the other for Spring and Summer Conferences). Motion to table the discussion until December.

Moved by L. Hachadoorian; seconded by D. Golland

Motion Passed 8 – 1 – 0

IV. Communications Report

A. Flash drives

- i. D. Golland reported that we need to first ratify the vote we took via e-mail. The question was “Should the DSC handle distribution of the flash drives?” The final tally was 5-4 against. [No: Dave, Chong, Stef, Adriana, Tina; yes: Celia, Brenda, Lee, Ericka.]. Motion to approve by unanimous consent.

Moved by D. Golland.

Motion passed without objection.

- ii. Paul McBreen of the tech fee committee was informed of our decision and he contacted VP Brier. Golland asked that ten flash drives be sent directly to the Steering Committee office for our use. As of Wednesday, the APOs had been contacted and distribution should begin shortly.

B. Guest speakers

- i. Hon. Carlos Sierra of Lehman College, Student Trustee and Chairperson of USS, has confirmed his attendance at the November meeting. Mr. William Allen, the new Vice Chair for Graduate Affairs, will be joining him.

- ii. The first choice for the December meeting was President Kelly; the second was VP Brier. Both, along with the provost, will be away that weekend. Golland has asked Hon. Susan Gushee O'Malley, Faculty Trustee and Chairperson of UFS, to speak, and she has agreed. The topic will be adjuncts vis-à-vis her role as UFS chair and Faculty Trustee.
 - iii. President Kelly and VP Brier have each agreed to speak at meetings in the spring. There are really only three speaking slots in the spring: February, March, and April. Any suggestions for the third slot? Barbara Bowen was suggested.
- C. Brailing Update
 - B. Vollman and D. Golland were trained on the Braille embosser in September. A brailled copy of the agenda and old minutes were given to Moira Egan prior to the October meeting. Golland expects to get her a brailled copy of the proposed bylaws in time for the November meeting.
- D. Grad Council
 - After a petition to the Structure Committee, Grad Council added a faculty alternate or alternates to the Executive Committee of the Art History Program. Golland tried to amend the motion to get an equal number of additional student alternates added but was unsuccessful. Art History, you may recall from our last plenary, is the only program without student reps on Grad Council. Golland has contacted the DSC rep, Dan Quiles, and informed him of the situation.
- E. BOT Committees (except Student Affairs)
 - On Monday Golland attended the meetings of the Board of Trustees Standing Committees on Facilities, Planning, and Management; Student Affairs and Special Programs; and Fiscal Affairs. Also in the building there was a meeting of the Committee on Faculty, Staff, and Administration, of which Golland was last year's student member. The Facilities Committee approved a five-year capital plan involving various construction projects, including a public-private partnership with Forest City Ratner to build an academic building at City Tech with a private residential tower above. At the Fiscal Affairs Committee meeting, student member Ryan Merola of Brooklyn College waged a 45-minute long virtual filibuster against a tuition indexing plan which would increase undergraduate tuition over the next four years; at one point, Trustee Nilda Soto-Ruiz and Faculty member Karen Kaplowitz seemed to be leaning towards voting against the measure, which would have caused its defeat by a vote of 3-2 against; in the end, however, the appointed trustees reverted to rubber-stamp form and the final vote was 3-1-1 (Merola voted no and Kaplowitz abstained). The Faculty Committee approved the appointment of Steve Brier as the Graduate Center's Vice President for Information Technology. All committee votes must be finalized at the subsequent meeting of the full Board; the next meeting will be held on November 28th at 4:30 p.m. at Baruch.
- F. USS Chairperson Transition

Golland was not chair for a day. He arrived for the final steering committee meeting on Sunday the 23rd about fifteen minutes early, still having not heard from Lauren Fasano. The office was empty. Had she not shown up and not contacted Golland to ask to be excused, he would have become chair for a 24-hour period until the annual transition, scheduled for the next day at 4:30. The meeting was scheduled to begin at 4:00. At 4:00, as he was about to convene the meeting and immediately adjourn for lack of quorum, the office phone rang. He answered and it was Lauren calling to tell him that she'd be there in five minutes. One other outgoing vice chair showed up, as did one member of the incoming steering committee.

- G. Absentee Reps. D. Golland had contacted 16 reps who had accrued at least three unexcused absences from plenary meetings to inform them that they were in danger of being removed by the Steering Committee. There were several who had not responded. The Steering Committee asked D. Golland to keep trying to reach them and tabled the discussion of removal until the December meeting.

V. Business Report

- A. Medical Test Subsidies. T. Lee reported on a new procedure we are being asked to implement for the payment of medical test subsidies. Mary Clancy has negotiated very cheap rates (sometimes a 50% savings or more) on lab tests with Mt. Sinai. In order to get these rates, Mt. Sinai needs to get payment more quickly and needs on check to pay the lab tests. In the past, the DSC has sent one check for the subsidy amount and the student/insurance company has sent another check for the balance. The new policy will be that students, when a test is ordered, will be informed that they must remit their portion to the Wellness Center ASAP after billing occurs. At the end of each month, the Wellness Center Staff will forward T. Lee all the checks from students and the bills. A check will be cut for the entire amount of the lab tests and the checks deposited in our account. Any amount not yet collected from the students will be fronted by the DSC and the student will be sent a letter. In September and October, for example, the DSC will be fronting about \$177. We are being asked to try this system for a month or two to see if it works. If we find that we are fronting money and not being reimbursed by the students, the program and the savings will be discontinued. A motion was made to authorize this new arrangement.

**Moved by E. Calton; second by B. Vollman
Motion Passes Unanimously**

- B. NYPL Copying. T. Lee asked about the progress with reinstating our contract for discount copying with the New York Public Library. No progress has been made as of yet. T. Lee will find out what the next step is.
- C. Reserve/Capital Funds. As a result of the College Association meeting in October, the increased student activity fee revenue (as a result of the referendum) will not count as income since it is earmarked for health services. Thus, we do not have to increase our Reserve and Capital funds as T. Lee told the Plenary at the October meeting that we would. This now

means we will end the year with a fairly substantial surplus (if all the money in each category is spent). She will propose that part of this money be moved to the Travel and Research fund leaving a surplus of about \$3500 (rather than about \$12500).

VI. Student Affairs Report

- A. Funding Cap. S. Domenici reported on the meeting that she and T. Lee had with Acting Provost Linda Edwards and with Assistant Provost Julia Wrigley. The administration is open to changing the funding cap policy as a result of the input we have received so far. It seems that many students are opposed to the funding cap. Wrigley has drafted a memo outlining the proposed policy change (i.e. to end the funding cap that applies to Dissertation Fellowships) and asking for input. The memo also asks for input about whether or not students should lose a Dissertation Fellowship if they have a full-time job. This memo will be circulated soon.
- B. BOT Committee on Student Affairs. The committee approved the \$12 increase in our student activity fee. A discussion was also held at the meeting about an office of Graduate Student Recruitment. One policy being considered is offering a tuition discount to CUNY undergrads who enroll in graduate programs at CUNY. It seems that this might mainly apply to those who enroll in Master's Programs.

VII. New Business

- A. Flyer Creation and Distribution. C. Braxton asked everyone to please use Microsoft Word to create flyers. In addition, all documents should be saved in our shared folder. They can also be emailed to the DSC gmail account if need be. B. Vollman brought up the issue of having publicity in electronic form so that it could more easily be sent to students who take classes at campuses other than the GC. When flyers come into the office, the person on duty should ask the department/organization who sent it to give us an electronic copy for distribution.
- B. Meeting Chair and Secretary Duties. A discussion was held about plenary meeting protocol. Some members feel that the chair should lead the discussion and act as a moderator. Others feel that the presenter can lead the discussion (if there are 2 presenters they must decide who will do it) with the chair acting as a timekeeper and calling the votes.
- C. Disability Issues. B. Vollman reported that JAWS has been removed from the office computer since it seemed to be causing problems in other programs. She has contacted Steve Brier's office about installing JAWS on a computer in the Hub on the 5th Floor (5487). It will be installed at an adaptive station. C. Braxton reminded us that we should be monitoring the automatic doors in the lobby. The security guards have a tendency to disable the switches in cold weather
- D. Other New Business. C. Lieberman suggested that there should be a place to leave bikes inside the building.

VIII. Announcements

- A. D. Golland announced that he will be ordering Subway sandwiches for the December Meeting. Please tell him what you would like on yours.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 P.M.

**Respectfully submitted,
Tina Lee**