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CUNY Graduate Center  
Doctoral Students' Council  
Steering Committee Minutes

November 3<sup>th</sup>, 2006

Members Present: Michael Broder, Ericka Calton, David Golland, Aaron Ibur (by proxy: \_\_\_), Rouzbeh Nazari (by proxy: Zeeshan Suhail), Brenda Vollman, Chong Wojtkowski, Kate Wilson.

Members Absent: Charles Lieberman.

Sufficient quorum to conduct business.

Chair: DG

Minutes: EC

DG called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. ZS arrived at 6:36 pm to proxy for RN.

- I. Approval of Agenda
  - A. **BV moved to approve; CL seconded. Agenda approved unanimously.**
  
- II. Approval of Old Minutes
  - A. Dave proposed amendments
    1. **MB moved to approve; KW seconded. Minutes approved unanimously as amended.**
  
- III. Old Business
  - A. English Department 05-06 Receipts
    1. BV was approached by two ESA students to get reimbursed for last year's departmental allocation. Rob (this year's official rep) emailed her to see how much money they [the English Department] have and have we resolved the issue at hand. BV suggested they resolve the issue and they should request an honorarium.
    2. BV moved that we are willing to pay Rebekkah only up to half of the money they spent out of this year's allocation if the

English Department pays her the balance of what she's owed; BV and MB in favor; RN, KW, CW, EC opposed; DG abstained. Motion fails

B. Movie Tickets

1. BV mentioned that if we keep selling movie tickets at \$6 each, we can give away 25-30 tickets; we have always given away tickets as incentives and we should keep the price at \$6. There was no objection by the Steering Committee.

C. Office Duties / Meeting Duties

1. BV asks that we please remember to check the blackboard during office hours.
2. Meeting Duties: The draft of the minutes should be posted within 1 week of the meeting.
  - a. The spring meeting duties will be reassigned.
  - b. DG remarked that the draft minutes should be emailed to Camille Tipton; DG will update and send Camille a final draft.
  - c. CW mentioned that Camille updates on Mondays only.

**Constitution - Section 3.0 Duties of the Representatives**

2) inform their constituency of significant events. dates and deadlines announced by and actions taken by the DSC; to this end, the Executive Committee shall make available to all members of the DSC, within one week of any DSC meeting, an unofficial copy of the minutes for that meeting. It is specifically recommended that these unofficial minutes be posted in a public location within each department by that department's representative;

IV. Student Affairs Report

A. Campus Visit to Lehman

1. We will meet at 2:30 pm on Friday, November 10, at Lehman College for the "Happy Hour" that will include wine and pizza.
2. CL will come with adjunct information.
3. RN, EC, BV volunteered to participate.

B. Office Hours and SC Duties

1. Please send an email to everyone on the Steering Committee if you must miss office hours.
2. BV asked if Sharon Lerner or Elise Perram could post a note if no S.C. member was available and asked that we include them on communications if we must cancel our office hours (BV will send their contact information to the S.C.)

C. Chartered Organization

1. Some organizations cannot be contacted and they face possible dechartering.
2. CW supports the Braz. Org.
3. BV asked CW to make a list of the people that cannot be reached and the S.C. could try to contact them during office hours.

## V. Communications Report

### A. Clarification of the Quorum, Voting, Proxy, and Eligibility Rules

While I already discussed this at the plenary, it's important that the members of the Steering Committee be crystal-clear about these new requirements and how they affect us so that we can take questions.

1. **Quorum.** Quorum is the required amount of members present in order to conduct business at a meeting. Our Constitution, which defines quorum as one-quarter of the current membership, not counting vacant seats, and which requires one-third to be present for constitution and bylaws changes, is nullified on this count by Article 41 of the New York State General Construction Law, which requires that a majority of all seats—vacant or filled—be present for quorum. The number of DSC seats changes from year to year based on enrollment within programs and total college enrollment. This year we have 84 seats, so quorum is 43. The Steering Committee's quorum requirement, seven voting members including at least one co-chair, exceeds the Article 41 requirement and so is unchanged. Additionally, some committees (like the Health Committee) have specific membership numbers or ranges. The health Committee can have 4-10 members, including the chairperson; as a result, quorum in that committee is 6. For committees without specific membership numbers or ranges, the majority of the actual membership will suffice for quorum.
2. **Voting.** Also according to Article 41, voting must be by majority of seats, not by majority of those present. In the case of the plenary, that means that motions require 43 votes in the affirmative in order to pass. In the case of the Steering Committee, that means 5 votes, regardless of how many members are actually present at a meeting. Additionally, full and accurate records of how each member voted must be kept on file, although not necessarily in the public record. Because of the size of the plenary, ballots are now being used for the official vote count, so that we can satisfy this requirement without constantly stopping the meeting to record individual votes on individual items. In the Steering Committee, other DSC committees and the Media Board, which are much smaller groups, we can do roll-call votes or just record the individual votes of members as they occur. If you are a committee chair, you must keep up-to-date records of the membership, members present and absent at meetings, and individual votes, and submit them to me for the file.
3. **Proxies.** We misinterpreted our own proxy rules. According to the DSC Constitution, Article IV., section 2.5, we cannot serve as proxies for each other, and no proxy can replace more than one member. Members who are going to be absent should either find their own proxy from outside the DSC membership or authorize

me or another co-chair to assign their proxy to an eligible student at the time of the meeting. All proxy authorizations must be in writing and submitted to me or another co-chair before the end of the meeting.

4. Eligibility. In June, the Board of Trustees passed new eligibility guidelines which require that all members and officers of student government (including proxies) and all students involved in college governance (i.e. the College Association, Auxiliary Enterprise Board, Grad Council, or College-wide committees) have a GPA of at least 3.0. This new rule goes into effect on January 1, 2007, but all students currently serving will be “grandfathered in” for the rest of this year. Given the requirements of our PhD programs, 3.0 should not be a difficult standard to maintain, and there is a clear logic to the new rule. Mainly, for our purposes, this means that
  - a. Starting with the February plenary and January Steering Committee meetings, proxies must have a GPA of 3.0 or higher;
  - b. After this year, first-year students (who have no GPA’s) cannot be appointed by the Steering Committee to fill at-large vacancies; and
  - c. During the elections process this spring, the Office of Student Affairs will have to go through an additional step of certifying all candidates for the DSC as meeting the GPA requirement.

B. The University Student Senate and Moira Egan

Let me remind everyone of the situation with this; I apologize to those of you who are hearing this for the second time. In 2004, Moira Egan, who was then a DSC member, was awarded the Donald and Mary Ellen Passantino scholarship by the University Student Senate. The award was for \$1,000.00. To date, Moira has not received a check. My repeated communications with USS as well as the Central Office of Student Affairs and the Research Foundation, which banks the USS money, has not resulted in Moira’s being paid. The most recent reason given is that apparently Moira’s name never appeared on the final recipients’ list even though she was notified of the award, her name and bio appeared in the event program, and she attended the dinner. My predecessor as Communications Co-Chair, Paul McBreen, and I were present at the 2004 dinner and can confirm this. The 2005-6 chairperson of USS, Carlos Sierra (Lehman College), is holding the 2006 award ceremony downstairs at this very moment, and is short of funds (in fact, it’s a cocktail reception rather than a dinner because he couldn’t afford the traditional sit-down dinner). Hoping to raise funds, he asked me to ask the DSC to co-sponsor the event. I recommended at our October plenary that we agree to co-sponsor the event by writing Moira a check for \$1,000.00, thereby sending a message as well as ensuring that Moira is actually paid. As you know, nothing passed last month because of the new voting rules. In any event, I have

subsequently learned from the Office of Student Affairs that we cannot use the Student Activity Fee in this way, so I have resumed my attempts to get Moira paid by USS. At their last meeting I brought the matter to the attention of the USS plenary. Unfortunately the meeting did not have quorum, but the new chairperson, Robert Ramos (Brooklyn College Grad) told me that he will personally look into the matter, and the other members of the USS plenary were sympathetic. If they have quorum at their next plenary I will formally introduce a resolution that I wrote which would require the USS office to use all the resources at its disposal to ensure that Moira gets paid. I still don't think, frankly, that she'll ever get paid without a lawsuit, but I am doing my best to pursue every avenue short of that.

C. *Advocate* Page Reminder

Someone told me that Michael might be interested in compiling our page for each issue of *The Advocate*. Please remember to submit any items to him by Monday, 11/6 so that he can compile the page for me by Thursday, 11/9.

D. Board of Trustees Report

Coming down the pike is a new standard procedure for students to file complaints about professorial misconduct in academic settings. The chancellery has devised a fairly cut-and-dry procedure, in accordance with the law and union requirements, that the Board will be considering this month. One issue that was raised at USS last week about this was the fact that there is no student involvement at any point in the proposed procedure. While this may seem to be against the grain, given student involvement in college governance on everything from departmental committees at the Grad Center to voting membership on the Board of Trustees, in fact it may not be an issue. If we look at our own faculty membership committees, the standard is that students do not have a vote on matters related to the membership or discipline of individual faculty members. Nonetheless, we do have a voice on those committees, even though we don't have a vote, and there may be an appropriate argument here that at least one student—perhaps the SGA president or a DSC co-chair or designee—should sit as a non-voting member of on any committee formed under this new procedure. The Board Committee which will be considering this on Monday is the one on which I am the voting student member this year, the Committee on Academic Policy, Program, and Research, and I would appreciate your feedback on this.

VI. Business Report

A. Party

1. please submit receipts. Approximate party total spent = \$1954.
2. Honorarium for Jason - \$200 (Vote) as DJ (puts party total at 2154 or \$154 over).

3. Prizes: best overall was a bottle from the case of red, \$15 Barnes and Nobles gift card, \$10 Starbucks card, 4 movie tickets, candy and basket; “most scary” and “most original” included the Starbucks card, candy, 4 movie tickets. Awards were only given to registered students who dressed up.

#### B. Check Requests and Documentation

1. All requests must come with documentation.
2. I have to follow up on the Advocate requests for articles and stipends. They are supposed to be paid per issue, and it appears as though they decided to just divide the budget by 9 months, or the term of the school year, but I need things in writing. I plan to speak with James directly to rectify all future requests.

#### C. Departmental Allocations.

1. 24 progs get auto \$150 (\$3600) & 3423 students remaining \* \$2 per student = \$6846 => \$10,446 per semester or total of \$20, 892 for year
2. I wonder if we can increase the amount to \$3.00 \*3577 students → (\$10671) per student, or a min. of \$180 [\*22 = \$3960 → 798 students approx \$5 per student] – **new totals for semester (\$14,631 \* 2 = \$29, 620) – budget allows for \$9,000 per semester (2\* = \$18000)** [ [ [ [ [ \$2,504,125 SAF – approx 15% of SAF]
3. changing the allocations this way would give more depts. Access to per person #s (new dept # is 60 students

### VII. New Business

#### A. Filling At-Large Vacancies

1. There are 9 candidates for 3 spots (3 from the English Department, which has 2 vacancies). EC proposed Tieuvi Nguyen; CW seconded. Unanimous consent.
2. For the 8 remaining positions: BV motioned for James to withdraw his nomination; EC motioned to vote for an English student and BV recommended James Hoff; CW seconded. Kate supported it. Unanimous consent.
3. For the 5 remaining positions: BV motioned that we vote randomly; CW seconded. Unanimous consent.
4. The spots were randomly drawn by Rachel Shift (Sociology):
  - a. #3 V.S.
  - b. #4 A.H.
  - c. #9 C.A.
  - d. #2 J.D.
  - e. #5 G.P.

- B. Webmaster Hours – B.V. asked that Camille resubmit items in order of preference, since one is immediate and one is for next year. K.W. remarked that we need a long-term projection of costs to legitimize the expense to students. B.V. noted that we need the relationship with the GC to maintain content to end the expense.
- C. Meeting Dates – Proposed dates for next year (Spring semester) are:
1. January 26, 2007: Steering Committee meeting #1
  2. February 9, 2007: Steering Committee pizza party (to stuff envelopes for nominations)
  3. February 23, 2007: Plenary meeting #1
  4. March 9, 2007: Steering Committee meeting #2
  5. March 23, 2007: Plenary meeting #2 (& election ballot stuffing)
  6. April 13, 2007: Steering Committee meeting #3
  7. April 27, 2007: Plenary meeting #3
  8. May 11, 2007: Joint Plenary meeting
  9. May 18, 2007: Joint Steering Committee meeting
- D. **Grants Discussion committee** to discuss parameters of Cultural Affairs and Professional Developments Grants.
1. Need them to be more parallel and maybe some of the language clarifies in terms of the proposal submitted, when to submit, what can be covered.
  2. Is anyone here interested in chairing that committee?
  3. BV will bring requests to Plenary for others to join.
- E. **DSC contributions:** In honor of Aaron's father and Celia Braxton's daughter. To vote:
1. \$150 from DSC to Myim Rose Foundation.
  2. \$100 from DSC to a melanoma research foundation, in the name of his father.
- F. **Departmental Allocations:** BV proposed bringing to the Plenary to increase the amount allocated for departments to \$3 per student or \$180. This changes the size of the departments who can receive the minimum amount, thereby more evenly distributing the per student allocation.
1. WE are required to put aside 7.5% of annual Student Activity Fee per semester (ByLaw #8 Dept Allocation) making it \$9390  
\*2 = 18780 ((about what is now in approved budget [18400]).

VIII. Announcements – none.

IX. Adjournment at 8:16 pm by acclimation.