

DOCTORAL STUDENTS' COUNCIL



**CUNY Graduate Center
Doctoral Students' Council
Steering Committee Minutes
DRAFT**

April 4, 2008

PRESENT: Alissa Ackerman (AA), Gregory Donovan (GD), Allyson Foster (AF), Adele Kudish (AK), Denise Torres (DT), Brenda Vollman (BV), Danielle Wu (DW).

ABSENT: Rob Faunce (RF), Nancy Medina (NM)

BV convened the meeting at 6:03 PM

I. Approval of Agenda

GD moved to add e. Middle States to IV. New Business. AM 2nd Motion passed by unanimous consent. AM moved to approve the agenda. AA 2nd. Motioned approved by unanimous consent.

II. Approval of Old Minutes

Need to be amended to state Steering Committee rather than Plenary.

III. Old Business

- a. GC Email Task Force: Exec Committee has a meeting with Bob next Friday. The Task Force continues its efforts. GD noted that something needs to change and we will have a chance to get current status and report back to the plenary.
- b. Nurse Practitioner Update: DT stated that the contract is in process and we are waiting for state approval.

IV. New Business

- a. Tabling/GOTV: GD stated that those who have not signed up must sign up with someone and table together. Monday is cancelled. DT will send message to RF to cancel as RF obtained tables, GD obtained laptops, and DT purchased incentives. Obtaining laptops has been confusing with GD and DT speaking with multiple parties as AV does not provide laptops without projectors. DT asked for feedback regarding the idea of serving coffee. GD stated this was not a good idea next to laptops and might pose a problem with RA. DT solicited ideas regarding how to use incentives

wisely: floated concepts of using bags, stickers, our GOTV postcards, etc as an attachment to the incentive. BV stated this would help spread participation in the tabling effort as well as a visual reminder/cue that it is time to vote.

b. Elections Update: GD stated the website is live! A SC member has already voted.

c. Ballot-Making: GD thanked everyone as each member of the committee contributed to the uploading of the ballots and we were able to do so in a timely and responsive way.

d. Healthcare Monies Survey: AK offered that health insurance and the Wellness Center are two different issues and two separate things and these appear to be merged in the plenary thinking regarding how to use the money. BV stated that we no longer have the subsidy for labs. DT stated we have begun reimbursing labs again from IUFH at 70%. GD stated that given his new understanding with our web voting contract we will not be able to upload the survey as agreed during the last plenary as the contract requires seven days. DT provided SC with the suggestions provided by students. GD stated those read did not include items previously recommended in the plenary. DT stated it is important to ensure that these monies benefit all students and serve the needs of the Wellness Center. Further, DT stated that while the suggestions were good, especially purchasing equipment for the new NP, some were not possible, and others would only benefit a few. DT stated that she had discussed with Student Affairs exploring Electronic Medical Records (EMRs) as the WC continues completely on tradition systems for billing, pharmacological contraindications, and scheduling follow-ups. BV stated these were good ideas and a mechanism to put the money back into the Wellness Center. GD raised the issue of allocating the dollars to the WC and the money being used elsewhere and ultimately not used for EMR or other equipment. DT stated that purchasing would require a long bidding and contractual process so that this coupled with a paper trail and a clear statement on the DSC's part would provide the necessary documentation to assure the money is allocated as the DSC desires. GD stated there was a lot said around this issue in plenary and we had to address those concerns. GD stated we had already solicited responses which were closed as of today. Discussion regarding how best to proceed ensued and sending out a ballot via email for voting was recommended. GD stated that given the change in contract he could not get up any ballot as the contract requires seven days and we had agreed to survey the student body before plenary. DT suggested the ballot should be a paper ballot at the plenary so that a record of the decision can be kept on file. AM suggested sending

an email for responses. Recommendation of an electronic vote with email blast to the plenary considered but it was agreed it should be at the plenary meeting.

Decision regarding what would go on the ballot—if all recommendations, even if inconsistent with fiscal policy be placed. DT suggested these should all be placed on the ballot but in an attempt to use the money fairly we should recommend a position of allocating a certain percentage to the WC for EMRs/equipment, a percentage for psychological services, a percentage for reimbursement of any incurred health care cost so that those who were unable to by insurance, who paid for a prescription, or who had a doctor's visit would receive one (1) set amount, of about \$30 or \$40 dollars, for reimbursement. GD stated this was not a lot. BV stated that \$24 is what each person actually pays and this amount would be fair. AF asked if this would be possible. Calculations were considered and this was determined to be possible. GD stated that the plenary had suggested other things. DT reiterated that this would satisfy multiple sectors and benefit the most students in the fairest ways. GD stated that offering one option was not appropriate. DT stated this was not one option but a means of offering a choice that meets various needs. GD reiterated the plenary had made other suggestions. DT asked how was offering a ballot with this as our recommendation a problem. GD stated there were other recommendations and this suggested we were not listening to the concerns of the plenary. DT again reiterated a ballot with this among the choices would be fair. GD asked if DT meant only one choice. DT stated no this could be the last choice or first choice indicating the various percentage or dollar allocations. GD stated he understood DT was saying this would be the only choice. AK stated that she understood this as well. DT reiterated that it would be a way of offering students choices and a choice that was inclusive of various ideas suggested.

Agreed that a ballot with all choices noted would be the best way to proceed. AK suggested that a clearer explanation of the suggestions be available on the ballot so that people could understand the issues. BV, AM and AF agreed. GD stated that he had agreed to get the website up but could not put the ballot up or do this. DT stated that she would do so. GD stated this was not necessary. DT reiterated she would do it tonight. GD asked if she was staying late to do this. DT stated yes, whatever it takes to get it done and reviewed by the committee so we can have it for the plenary but stated she needed the commitment of the rest of the committee to review it by Sunday so edits/revisions could be made. Each member agreed to respond by Sunday at Sunset.

DW entered at 7:43

E. Middle States Self-Study: GD attended today's meeting and stated it won't be so intensive though the MSSS Steering Committee will be meeting monthly and is a monthly commitment. The Self-Study needs students for the various committees. Other committee student positions do require commitment and the benefit is that you have the opportunity to work with other faculty and administrators. GD asked DSC SC members to consider participating. BV stated we should also let reps know that it is not just for DSC and that it might be good to get it advertised in The Advocate. GD asked if this was possible. DT stated she thought it was and would forward to J. Hoff.

V. Student Affairs Report (GD)

a. Chartered Organizations: GD states that the roster issue is a big bureaucracy and he spends a great deal of time managing it. GD went on to say that what we request of the COs is really not a lot. GD was asked for clarification. He stated COs are required to get twenty signatures from at least three departments with no more than 10 signatures from anyone department. Issue of CO difficulty in obtaining the requisite documentation arose. GD spoke to the burden of having to file a roster each semester and queried SC regarding thoughts on this. This is not a problem for most, but for many they have had difficulties and if has worked with DT to enforce the Constitution by having DT refer students to him if they file requests for funds but do not have a charter or constitution on file. DT stated that the funds are doled out each semester and a new charter is required because each semester there is a new student body and the students who signed may no longer be students and new students come in. GD stated this was true and having to spend time on this required a great deal of effort. BV stated that it indicates some groups are not active. DT asked if a group does not have enough signatures are the same people only benefiting from the money. DW stated it is a good filter for who is really serious about reaching out to students. BV affirmed same, reinforcing that this is part of a leadership position. GD stated this is about making it easier not just for them but for the Co-Chair of Student Affairs. DT can we have electronic signatures? GD stated he thought we could. AM suggested it might be possible to have a Google groups which is for invited members only. BV stated using some form of electronic mechanism would bring us into the modern era. GD stated forcing them to send a digital constitution allows people who are considering chartering an organization to be able to see the other orgs currently chartered and for them to determine whether or not they are suggesting a CO that overlaps with other COs. BV stated it also provides a measure of institutional memory that carries on beyond an individual committee. GD will bring it

out at the plenary and to the COs.

b. Healthcare Now Website: GD stated the health insurance efforts are pushing for parity with SUNY (e.g., access to a reduced plan as a student who does not adjunct). AK provided clarity around opting in/opting out. DW stated this is what most universities have anyway. Email with preloaded text and address is uploaded (www.cunydisc.org/insurance). GD will not be managing the website, we can take it down and change it, but he will not be repeatedly editing. Issue of language discussed. DT asked if we could put up a statement underscoring that this was a DSC service provided to the student body and that the wording does not express the DSC position but is provided in an effort to respond to student concerns, provide a forum and information, etc. At a loss to find the word for it, DW stated “a disclaimer.” DT affirmed same.

VI. Communications Report (RF)

a. Updates on Communications with Administration: GD discussed issue of room requests, especially given the letter sent by administration, forwarded by RF. DT stated this is an issue with history and it is important for us to remind the student body of our responsibility. How best to communicate to students using the rooms that there were limits to number of persons was explored. BV stated this was an issue of fire and safety and that she takes this seriously. Question of whether we should continue to accept electronic versions arose. GD suggested having them sign a contract in addition to the Room Request Form. DT stated that would increase bureaucracy and suggested we continue asking that students submit their GC Banner ID as their signature. BV and GD stated this would be useful. Concern arose regarding privacy and willingness. BV stated Banner ID is safe identifier and there were no student conspiracies. GD again raised issue of how to communicate strongly to those who reserve rooms that this was a serious issue. BV stated there was always the issue of holds on student accounts which could seem draconian but communicated the importance of the issue to the students. DT suggested that we return to the standardized room request confirmation email and add a paragraph clearly stating the maximum room capacity, responsibility regarding security and any of those issues of import. Discussion was had and BV stated we should go back to the standardized form. GD stated this would be a good way to communicate our concerns and hold students accountable.

b. Open Meetings Law Discussion: postponed until RF returns.

VII. Business Report (DT)

- c. Budget resubmission: DT asked if there were any suggested revisions to the budget based on the issues raised in the plenary. GD asked for a review of those issues. DT mentioned issues with reduction in grants, Advocate line, removal of the coffee house money, and travel & research changes. GD asked about the travel and research changes. DT stated there had been a request for a reduction and an increase, that there were different thoughts on this. GD stated he only heard an increase. BV provided history of the dangers of increasing as those monies may not be matched and a precedent for increasing the standard amount created. GD expressed concern regarding issues raised in plenary and how to address next week even if it was only a few persons who had the concerns. DT stated it was generally the same persons and most of the concerns are addressed by the discretionary fund which is the highest it can possible be. BV stated this allowed for the greatest flexibility as the SC could fill gaps when a need arose. Question of why the coffee house was an issue especially as we could pull from the discretionary fund, as with the grants.

Issue of the Advocate budget raised at length. DW raised issue of the Film Series. Discussion regarding the use of the film series to attract writers discussed. GD asked whether JH had fixed line items. DT stated all of us had fixed line items, but especially the newspaper.

BV asked what the bold number below the line signified. DT explained again that the issue regarding advertising monies prompted that line. DT explained that the income generated from advertising cannot go to the Advocate but is returned to the DSC—and will be addressed later—but given concerns raised regarding the size of the Advocate budget was placed beneath to demonstrate that in consideration of the advertising revenues expected the actual money allocated to the newspaper is smaller than what it at first appears. DT further stated that the bolded number was placed below to demonstrate the ‘real’ cost of the Advocate to the DSC. GD stated that he had spoken to JH (EIC) outside of the Media Board about this issue and in Media Board where at least four budgets were presented for consideration. GD stated that this budget was approved as it met BV’s recommended limit of \$25,000 whereas the other budgets were higher. DT stated that she had created the pie chart specifically to demonstrate that while it may feel like a substantial part of the DSC budget and some feel it is too much, the reality is that the newspaper and cultural affairs only account for 5% of the budget so the reality is it is our smallest expenditure. GD advised there are multiple realities. DT stated perhaps, but the numbers are the numbers.

DW asked if we had used the SC Development workshop money. BV stated those were the funds used early in the year to promote teamwork among the SC.

GD pointed out that the line that reads Webconsulting/hosting should read the same way as that for the Advocate budget, i.e., Website/domain registration. DT said oops, yeah. GD stated it was a minor revision but it needed to be made for the final version. DT agreed to make same.

DT asked if there was any further need for clarification. There was none. AM motioned to present budget to plenary as is. GD 2nd. Motion moved by unanimous consent.

- b. Discretionary money: DT raised issue of the Professional Development and Cultural Affairs grants asking whether the SC wanted to fund these as they are all used up. GD offered an affirmative. BV asked how much was in the Discretionary Fund at present. DT stated it was approximately 3000. BV recommended \$1000. GD stated that \$1500 would be a more reasonable allocation. BV asked how many grants were in the pipeline. DT stated none officially but that some individuals had expressed interest in applying for money. BV asked how many approximately. DT stated three (3). GD stated that given maximum allotment he would recommend \$1500. BV stated that \$1000 represented 1/3 of the remaining money and allocating more given other issues may arise between now and the end of the semester, it was better to allocate \$1000. GD asked SC members what issues we see arising. DT stated we did not think we would need a new coffee pot, but we did; we can't predict these things. GD asked whether it would be to the CA or PD grants. BV stated that she recommended up to a maximum of \$1000 as part of a pool available to the Chair of the grant committees to be utilized for either CA or PD grants. AM motioned, AK 2nd. Moved by unanimous consent.

DT raised issue of the Health Issues money. DT indicated that above the 96,000 earmarked for health and the Wellness Center, there are monies for the Health Issues Committee. DT stated she has been speaking with Annabella Bernard (AB) at the Wellness Center who has also worked with DW on the Wellness Festival. DT spoke with AB regarding the concerns expressed by some members of the plenary around staff receiving prizes. DT made it clear that the prizes would need to be for students as we would be using student health funds. Also, DT spoke to the fact that last year, as Chair of the HIC, she witnessed the raffling of prizing which was done with AB, Deborah

Mandas, and DT in a clear, documented manner. DT stated she had promised to provide at least two movie tickets and would ask the SC how much we would allocate. BV stated the tickets must be purchased and could not be given away. DT stated the additional paper work was burdensome but understandable. DT stated she recommended Barnes & Nobles give certificates. BV recommended the Vitamin Shoppe or Whole Foods and membership to Baruch's gym, GD recommended DrWilde.com, DW recommended Duane Reade, and AA recommended certificates to rock climbing. AA stated the certificates to the gym would be transferable so that would allow someone with a membership to pass it on. BV stated one problem might be the way the membership year is based on the academic year. DT suggested we find out if we could purchase for the next calendar year. BV stated she would find out. Other thoughts regarding health related things solicited. BV recommended purchasing massage certificates from the masseuse who provides free massages. DT suggest have a single provider was problematic versus the larger chains. DT asked AA if she would do work on the rock climbing gym, GD on the Dr. Wilde.com, and other takers. DW agreed to do the Whole Foods and AF the Vitamin Shoppe. DT would do Duane Reade. BV recommended certificates be \$25 except for the gym memberships. BV motioned for \$1000 allocation, DW 2nd. Moved by unanimous consent. DT will inform AB.

VIII. USS Report (AF): No new news to report.

IX. Committee Reports

- A. LIBRARY COMMITTEE (AM): He has been in consistent contact with library personnel and stated that concerns regarding lighting were addressed. He stated we may be able to get better lighting in the library.
- B. COMMUNITY BUILDING (DW): Brooklyn College is scheduled but she is overstretched and cannot do it. DW stated there are students there and though no date was set hoped that someone would be willing to take this on. Members declined. GD stated that if she was overstretched she need not go out to Brooklyn College as she was doing a lot. DW stated she spoke with Rouzbeh regarding sofas. DT asked if we were pursuing sofas again. DW stated she needs a time frame in order to move forward—Is there a deadline? There is money there—up to 10,000 is there—we need to use it. DW also noted it should be something for the entire student body not just people at the GC and asked the SC for suggestions. BV asked if that was not something for the CB committee to discuss and decide. DW stated she

was the CB committee. BV suggested looking at the minutes from plenary for suggestions. DT asked if there was some type of student event or conference that we could pay for through those monies. GD stated this was a good idea. RF had been encouraging that this be done as swiftly as possible because of the timeline involved in getting funds from USS. Agreed to explore and consider options.

- C. HEALTH ISSUES COMMITTEE (DW): The Wellness Festival is April 17th a Thursday. She has been working with Annabelle Bernard of the Wellness Center.

- D. CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS COMMITTEE (AF): AF stated most issues are resolved except the issue with the Advocate bylaw. DT informed that she had discussed with the Advocate Editor-in-Chief, James Hoff (JH). Having worked on it jointly before the last plenary and having agreed the language met the needs of our auditors and the purpose we would now put in the language. Issue of plenary concern raised and DT reiterated that the Board of Trustees Fiscal Accountability Handbook requires that all monies earned or gained as a profit from student activities fees must be returned to the DSC general fund as it is a product of those fees, and that as such, the newspaper is not entitled to the money. Instead, the suggested bylaw suggests it be considered in the next year's budget and used to offset increases in the Advocate budget so the paper can expand and to motivate to improve advertising. DT further reiterated that the language was specifically chosen by JH and DT to comply with these mandates but to remain flexible enough to meet the needs to improve the budget. BV stated this was the clearest articulation of the problem. GD asked why it could not be included in the current year budget and that it is unclear. BV stated the budget for a year is decided by the previous year's committee and is, therefore, already decided. DT stated that after discussing with JH it was agreed I would write the new Bylaw specifically citing the BOT. It was stated that this would be too limiting. DT stated that it was similar to the Sunshine Law language in that we would be deferring to a superseding rule. DT to submit revised language.

X. Announcements

- A. TECH FEE MEETING (AA): Meeting is May 8th @ 2PM and she requires a proxy.

XI. Adjournment AA motioned to adjourn. DW seconded. Meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 8:43