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

August 29, 2008

Chair: Gregory Donovan (GD)

Present: Jill Belli (JB), Rob Faunce (RF), Anton Masterovoy (AM), Christine Pinnock (CP), Chris Sula (CS), Denise Torres (DT), Tasha Youstin (by Proxy: Philip Kopp)

Absent: Ally Foster (AF)

Meeting was called to order at 6:08pm

I. Approval of Agenda

GD asked if there were any items to add to the agenda, there being none, RF motioned to approve the agenda, PK seconded.

II. Approval of Old Minutes

GD asked if there were any additions, corrections or items left out of the minutes. There being none, RF motioned to approve the old minutes, DT seconded.

III. Old Business

A. E-records for the Wellness Center

GD asked for a status of the Electronic Medical Records (EMR) monies allotted for the Wellness Center last year. DT stated funds are available for transfer and once the WC is fully staffed an operational a decision could be made by them as to which system would best serve their needs. RF clarified that this is not an action item as the decision had been made at the last plenary and that therefore it would be a point of information at the plenary. DT underscored that the NP only recently came aboard and a new Coordinator is being vetted and as the primary users of the system the NP and Coordinator are the key stakeholders in that process.

DRAFT

B. GC Email

GD stated that last fall the student body was promised email forwarding and at last communication at the end of the summer he was informed there would be upgrades. GD stated this needs to be look at. As well, the question of whether the GC would move to Windows Live remains unresolved although as of now he understands it will not move forward. Email forwarding remains a central concern for students as does being able to send emails from a gc.cuny.edu domain name.

C. Elections review

GD raised questions about the electronic voting process. A key concern is the security of voting. For voting the combination of name and Banner were needed. CS offered that Banner ID#s are used as identifiers and a critical password for many systems so while it has kept SS#s safe knowledge of an individual's Banner # can allow access to various systems. The causal use of Banner IDs within various departments was discussed and RF suggested that the new Provost address this issue with EOs to underscore the FERPA violations this represents. PK supported this. GD also stated there were assistive technology difficulties with some students not being able to access the system via JAWS although this was reportedly available to the DSC. AM stated that during his get out the vote efforts many students did not know who they were voting for or any of their positions indicating a picture and bio sketch may be helpful in the future. RF added that it seems some individuals voted based on pleasant sounding names or based on their ordinal positioning within the page. GD stated people would only vote based on looks. DT stated it was a good suggestion and would be helpful and this is a reality of all politics. JB stated often times people recognize others although they may not remember their names and this would help people connect names to faces. GD stated it would be time intensive to upload info. RF reminded the body the SC was no longer paid an additional stipend for election duty. GD reiterated that pictures would reinforce ill-considered voting and would be too time intensive. DT stated those were two separate issues. AM stated a cut-off date could be put in or the requirement that candidates submit materials ready for upload. CP stated this may detract people from running. RF stated it was difficult enough to contact people to accept or decline nominations. GD stated this was a potential barrier to participation. CS raised issue of seeming to sponsor folks and placing that within the efforts of the DSC. AM affirmed the potential conflicts and

DRAFT

suggested a WIKI page. CS stated that would be a good way of allowing others to run while not being a conflict of interest and asked about the voting system as a way for departmental elections. GD stated there are survey systems available at the GC, free of charge, which could be used. RF stated that the SC should discuss further the issue of the role of SERC in the process as the voting is supposed to be confidential and not available to anyone on the DSC. RF further stated this would not be an option this year as those on SERC did not sign up for that, but a stipend could potentially be paid and/or the bylaws changed to have them assure the integrity of the voting. As well, RF offered that serving as a vendor to departments to run their elections through our system could pay for the additional work.

IV. New Business

A. Psychological Counseling Services

GD asked DT to speak to the PCS. DT spoke to the availability of both medical and psychological services, the increased attention these services have had in the academic community given suicides and acts of violence on other campuses locally and nationally. The President has committed to properly funding the PCS. It is currently staffed by psychologists and GC PhD students in psychology. An on-going issue, however, is the nature of counseling services, their duration, and the ability to adequately meet the needs of the student body. DT reported that issues raised previously have been 1) the length of service as most students only get 8 visits or so; and 2) the issue of “creaming” or taking interesting and clinically ideal students who are easily engaged in care but may not be in distress while not addressing the more complex and difficult issues of students experiencing distress. JB raised the issue of long waits. CP raised the issue of users of the service feeling like part of a quota system wherein users are called back repeatedly even after termination in order for interns to meet their internship requirements. GD stated these types of questions could be raised in New Business D. Student Survey.

RF prompted to begin discussion of New Business D. Student Survey at this juncture; GD seconded; passed by unanimous consent.

D. Student Survey

Issues to consider for survey included the following items:

- Wellness center
- Financial Aid
- Technology

DRAFT

- Travel Funds
- Professional Development
- Library
- Bike stand availability
- Food—access and cost

GD asked folks to think of questions, approximately 1-5 per issue in order to develop a survey. DT agreed to develop the Wellness Center questions. CS agreed to consider the Tech questions.

B. Travel Funds

Addressed above, in item D, under survey design.

C. Information Flow

GD expressed his commitment to making sure that the IF ad hoc committee would be an active working committee where real solutions are developed. CS will be chairing the committee. GD asked DT at what points systems could be put into place to better satisfy students and suggested only issuing checks once per month, on the first of the month. DT stated checks were issued around the 1st and the 15th of the month and reinforced that with a number of exceptions the turn around time was less than 2 weeks. Furthermore, she stated that there were over 2300 requests filed by the office in the last academic year. GD asked whether it would not be better just to say one time per month. AM questioned whether there should be a cut-off date stating if not within a certain time frame then checks are not issued until the next batch. DT stated some students just need to be more mature and not think of the process like an ATM where the money gets pulled out immediately. She further stated that there are many systems through which requests must go through and people to approve it. PK asked if a statement on the form making it clear what the expectations were would not be useful. DT stated that the form clearly states to submit copies of receipts and tape receipts to a piece of paper—easy requests that are often ignored and contribute to delays. JB asked what the process is and GD asked DT to take the SC through it. DT offered that barring any blatant problems with submission the following steps are taken:

- 1) it is received by the SC and signed by an SC member;
- 2) it is reviewed for compliance with
 - BOT regs & DSC rules including
 - Acceptable documentation/receipts
 - Approved expenditures
 - Appropriate and timely signatures

DRAFT

- for accuracy of calculations
 - for actual funds availability
- 3) the line from which the funds are to be pulled are documented on the request
 - 4) it is countersigned by the CBM
 - 5) all documents are uncollated, copied, recollated, stapled, stamped (as copy) and temporarily filed
 - 6) documents are submitted to Finance office
 - 7) Finance office cuts checks and informs CBM when ready
 - 8) CBM makes copies of all the checks
 - 9) CBM separates mailing checks from pick up checks
 - 10) checks for mailing must be returned to Finance for closure and then mailed
 - 11) persons with checks for pick-up are individually informed of their availability
 - 12) copies of individual checks are then attached to the copy of supporting documents
 - 13) for each check, the number of the check and the date it was cut is documented on the check request
 - 14) each check request is then entered into the spreadsheet and the date of entry is documented on the form.
 - 15) each check request is then filed within the appropriate allocation (e.g., department allocation, chartered org., etc.)

GD offered that it was the lack of notification of check requests having been received by the CBM and informed it was in process. DT stated that is an unreasonable expectation. GD offered that for some people it is the anxiety of not knowing where they are in the process that is distressing and that a system could be put into place where people know where they are at would allay anxiety and concern. DT reiterated a few people had issues. GD offered that some people submitted requests and the DSC never acted on them and that creating a log would be helpful. PK suggested creating a site where people would go to in order to access the information. DT reiterated that would add more work to a position already overburdened with accountability mechanisms and that people have to understand when it comes to handling money there are very clear systems we have to follow. AM spoke to bureaucracies and rules. DT stated while the CBM needs to be compulsive with details being bureaucratic when people need their money is unfair, the two week turnaround time worked well for most people, and the few who complained were the same ones who submitted multiple small requests in the amounts of 5 or 10 dollars rather than submitting one big request, who misdocumented funding sources,

DRAFT

and who accused the CBM of not cutting checks for checks clearly issued. DT stated submitting a check request for \$1.49 (one dollar and forty-nine cents) cost more to process than the check was worth. GD reiterated that information flow was important and that not enough information was getting to the student body. RF suggested that the forms SC members were going to re-assess and re-write be brought to the Information Flow committee for feedback and work. CS intends to call a meeting of the working group immediately.

V. Student Affairs Report

A. Chartered Organizations

GD stated there are space issues and computer issues in the CO offices. He went through each office with the Director of User Services to examine the computers and found that many offices were underutilized and all offices did not have updated systems. He will be following through with removing inactive CO from offices and moving in active groups to underutilized spaces. As well, GD will move the Roster system to an electronic system to streamline the process now that he has structured and created an actual system.

B. OpenCUNY.org

GD stated that the above domain name has been reserved for use of the chartered orgs and others such as the Adjunct Project and the Advocate. This will centralize information and allow RSS Feeds to circulate across various activities and groups.

VI. Communications Report

RF stated he represented students at a community meeting on 7/1 wherein he testified on the need for housing for the GC in Long Island City. It is anticipated that by 2010 the building will be able to accommodate staff and students. As well, he has solidified Bob Campbell, Matt Schoengood, Sharon Lerner, and Elise Perram for September; President Kelly in October; and invited the new Provost Chase Robinson in November (he is not confirmed). GD stated that he and RF had done an OpEd piece over the summer wherein they spoke to the issue of raising the tech fee; had this happened during class time they would have solicited SC input.

VII. Business Report

GD asked DT if there was anything to report. DT reported the auditors will be coming soon and the next CBM will need to be ready.

DRAFT

VIII. USS Report

RF stated AF was informed of the next meeting and will attend.

IX. Committee Reports

None

X. Announcements

None

XI. Adjournment

RF motioned for adjournment, DT seconded.

Meeting adjourns at 7:43 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Denise Torres