

## Steering – Minutes October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012

Meeting called to order: 6:26 PM 12

Present: Eero Laine (EL), Anne Donlon (AD), Colin Ashley (CA), Christina Nadler (CN), Stefanie A. Jones (SAJ), Jen Tang (JT), Monique Whitaker (MW), Nicole Hanson (NH), Dominique Nisperos (DN), Evan Misshula (EM)

**Plenary**

Executive Committee Absent: Maria Cristina Garcia

Steering Committee I. Approval of Agenda

- a. Motion to approve agenda EL, EM seconds
- b. Unanimously passes, 11 yea, 0 nay, 0 abstain

Constitution and Bylaws

Grants II. Approval of Minutes of September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012

- a. Motion to approve EL, MW seconds
- b. Passes unanimously, 11 yea, 0 nay, 0 abstain

Health Issues

Media Board III. Executive Committee Reports

- a. Co-Chair for Student Affairs (Eero Laine)

Outreach

Student Services

- i. Executive Committee met with Provost Chase Robinson and Assistant Provost Louise Lennihan. They confirmed that there will be more tracks in MALS – Master of Liberal Studies programs. There are close to 20 tracks, from Fashion Studies to Gender and Sexuality. Because it is Liberal Studies they add a MALS track within a semester whereas a stand-alone MA involves applications to 80<sup>th</sup> St. and the state. 80<sup>th</sup> St. is shooting things down unless they have a practical application. Grad council approved a Women's Studies program but 80<sup>th</sup> St. denied it saying there are no jobs.
- ii. They mentioned reports on peer institutions, but would not say who our peers are. They reference them in grants, but would not give an answer about who they thought our peer institutions were. They offered us info on program governance, that many have not been updated since the 70s/80s. Lennihan said that the handbook is actually where things happen. This indicates what EOs are hearing about how to change their programs. It puts a lot of power into the hands of the department administration because it may not even have to go through the Structure Committee and Grad Council. The handbook can have a varied scope that is not written out.
- iii. There is a new project in the provost's office with Alice Eisenberg's replacement who will collect the minutes of the executive committees for every program-which means that there have to be executive committee meetings that meet and keep minutes. The DSC has been asking for this for a long time, so this is an interesting development.
- iv. Note for everybody's committees: The co-chairs are ex officio on all committees. That is in the constitution which supersedes the bylaws which designate who are voting members.
- v. The Structure Committee on the grad council: Barbara Weinstein was elected chair, she has served for some time. The librarians will now have a vote on Grad Council. The head librarian usually sits ex officio without a vote. The faculty that are in the union will elect someone to vote on grad council. Discussion:

- b. Co-Chair for Communications (Anne Donlon)
- i. Met with Anne Henderson, Vice Provost for Sciences who spoke about bringing science students back to the GC since they become isolated when they begin to do lab work. She noted that there are new fellowships to help them.
  - ii. Met with the Ombudsman again. It is his job to meet with anyone who wants. He was also willing to come to a DSC meeting. He was open to that. The Ombuds-person/officer meets with students to deal with academic issues or discrimination. It is an intermediary step before taking actions. Discussion:
  - iii. We met with Chase Robinson and Louise Lennihan who referred to peer institutions when they were talking about MALS and the need to provide more support. They said our completion rates were less than our peer institutions. We have 40% completion rate. But they are careful to preserve tracks and programs.
  - iv. Colin and I are on the Curriculum and Degrees Committees so we are going through these MALS proposals. We want to see what the overall plan is and will be having a conversation about that so send us your thoughts.
  - v. We talked about tuition remission for years 6-8, as has been brought up every year. A brilliant way CN framed this was thinking of the GC a tuition-free institution. Chase said in a few years this could be raised as a possibility in the future.
    1. MW: Tuition remission is important for international students.
  - vi. We reviewed faculty hires and memberships. If there is a central line search, than there is a search committee formed and it goes by the EO and Executive Committee hires.
  - vii. We asked about EO selection: why are EO's at the GC appointed where elsewhere they are elected. We were told that it has always been this way at the GC because it is a unique institution. There is now a nominations avenue that people like.
    1. EL: It had to do with the idea that someone at the other campuses could be elected EO, and that could create difficulties.
  - viii. Community meetings were also raised. Chase said he would last year, we reminded him about it again and he was enthusiastic about having 'Office Hours with the Provost': 1 this semester, 2 next semester.
  - ix. We also met with Polly Thistlewaithe, new head librarian and asked about high prices of journal subscriptions. We talked about the move toward open access scholarly publications. She is chairing a UFS/Library collaborative committee, so hopefully we will hear more about that. We also looked into library catalogue issues: dirty data, multiple listings for the same book, transferring data to other software. There is not much progress there. CUNY's NYPL application for MARLY should be more immediate.
  - x. WE met with the President since plenary. He mentioned moving us downstairs to where the old computer desk was in the library basement. He thought he had mentioned it to us.
    1. CN: He didn't indicate that there would be an intervention. He did not really set up a space where we could be an official conversation we could say no to.
  - xi. We spoke about the easels. He did not take too strong a stance and seemed to support keeping them.
  - xii. Blood drive: was canceled and got informal word that blood drives will not be held on campuses. We are looking for a more official statement on it. Yolanda Jones in HR wants to speak to us about whether we could do a van or off campus.
  - xiii. Gender neutral bathroom, Kelly said they are going forward.
  - xiv. Residence Halls are going forward, one in LIC, another after that.
  - xv. Pushed for a timeline on the roof: 9<sup>th</sup> floor rooftop bar, "public" space, which will be ready in about 18<sup>th</sup> months. It will work as a rental. But we have no way of looking at the calendar to see if places are booked.
  - xvi. Students can contact the DSC and book space, chartered orgs, APOs, EOs.
  - xvii. DSC list-serve is moving forward

- xviii. Institutional memory: when you leave steering, write a memo summarizing the responsibilities of the position. You may want to have that as an ongoing document throughout the year. Our tasks change over the year and we may want to keep that in mind.
- c. Co-Chair for Business (Colin Ashley)
  - i. Remember to sign up for office hours and put them on the calendar. Make sure to do your tasks while you have your shift. Check requests can get backed up and people don't get their money in a timely manner. You can do some of those things from home.
  - ii. MW: Can people tweet and post to FB when they are in the office. The mail people also want to deliver mail.
  - iii. NH: Please mark on the website when someone picks it up.
  - iv. CA: we need to know where the check is
  - v. DN: There are apps that will allow us to automate tweets
  - vi. CA: We did the lockers today and will send out an email on how to officially give them their things back. Some items were just left in lockers so they may not have an official locker. Until I send the email, do not give back items.
  - vii. Programs and chartered orgs have received information on how to get their allocations. You can forward requests to me.
  - viii. Try to pass on more information about legal services. That is a service that seems to be under used.
  - ix. I discovered that we need 5 bids for the website. I am working now on two active unofficial bids, and am looking for another.
  - x. Budget Highlights: We went over budget in a few places: Chartered Orgs, because of the new incentive programs which we have addressed in the new program. The most additional funding that groups can get, by meeting a variety of criteria, is \$300/semester. We did pretty well for staying under budget for most things. Overall we had a surplus. Discussion.
  - xi. The second budget is based on the budget that Anne prepared that we voted on last year and currently spent. Because her projections were off, I adjusted them on the 3<sup>rd</sup> budget, which will be the one that we work with once it is approved. The only line I need to figure out what to do is the carryover from last year. We need to vote on that as a budget line for plenary and approve for use by the college association. Surpluses that are not voted on at the end of the year has to be voted on by the college association.
  - xii. The total student activity fees based on fall numbers did go down a bit. That an program allocations were the only things that needed to be adjusted.
  - xiii. We still need to decide allocations for the Wellness center and we should follow-up at the next plenary.
- d. USS Delegate (Christina Nadler)
  - i. I did not run for USS chair Kafue Kouakou ran unopposed for chair. Only one person ran for each position. There will be elections for fiscal and legislative and one other position. They did not send out candidate statements either because people did not send them or in, or they were not yet sent out. They went out last year, but this year there were none. There is not much to report as the minutes did not say much. I will try to organize a meeting of the adhoc USS committee sometime before plenary.
- e. UFS Liaison (Stefanie A Jones)
  - i. I was not able to attend this meeting, but Anne attended in my stead.
  - ii. AD: There was a pathways conference today. Ron Spalter was the guest who talked about CUNY sustainability. The state no longer covering electricity. CUNY uses 1% of the city's electricity, and it id 10% of government electricity use. Bloomberg had the 30 in 10 years plan – reducing energy by 30% in 10 years. But the committees we set up will not be able to meet those goals. They will have a new electricity initiative to spend the money to we save on electric use. This will be incentivized by campus so that the saving will go to

operating budgets. One piece is also printing costs—which might explain that push at the GC. Discussion

- iii. There were report-backs on things like transfer rates that they used to justify pathways. They found that if you did a weighted average, there was an excess of about 1 class more that transfer students take than freshman. AAUP censure is a possibility because of pathways.
- iv. SAJ: Continued work on Gender Neutral Bathrooms. We had a meeting on the Town Hall and decided not to go forward with it based on the information we got about them going forward. There is a wide amount of support around the restrooms. At the President's Community Meeting they said they were planning on putting in two.
- v. AD: I asked him about that after the meetings and he confirmed more than one restroom and he thinks on the first and fifth floor.
- vi. SAJ: New York state law says that any bathroom can be used by any person. There is no such thing as a bathroom violation in New York State.
- vii. Retreat is tomorrow 12:45 in 5489 we have trainings tomorrow.
- viii. SAJ: we will do sign-ups for the party after plenary. We should table.

#### IV. New Business

##### a. Room Reservations Guidelines

- i. DN: Student Life and Services met, and discussed the issue and advocated having a procedural change over a policy change. We recommended giving departments and chartered orgs preference for two day reservations for conferences up to a year in advance. We should also consider updating the website to collect data on the nature of the event when reservations are made. For example we could have a drop down menu to specify whether the reservation is for a study sessions, regular/recurring student organization meetings, film screening, conferences, party/celebration/social event, political meeting
- ii. Discussion
- iii. DN: I will write out these recommendations and send them out in a google doc.

#### V. Steering Officer Reports

##### a. Officer for Funding (Jen Tang)

- i. We had our grants committee meeting last Thursday which was the first time we received and voted on grants.
- ii. We created a chart organizing the considerations that factor into our analysis (**see attached**). Grant committee members all go through this chart before the meeting. Our decisions are in the right column. In total we funded over \$3,000 toward projects. We are considering creating a check list for them to submit that they have done their due diligence. Most of them are social science events.
- iii. We also compiled a list of hotels that people are using for their events. We also used this as an opportunity to tell them about their program reps and other support from the DSC. Some hotels have a corporate rate.
- iv. Discussion of grants.

##### b. Officer for Governance & Membership (Maria Cristina Garcia)

- i. Please **see attached**.
  1. EMAIL10/22 to add information to MCG's committee meeting.

##### c. Officer for Health & Wellness (Monique Whitaker)

- i. We hope to change our bylaws with MCG to change Health to Health and Wellness Committee
- ii. I followed up on the DSC reps, to get more information on the blog about disabilities.
- iii. Met with the head Chef and the Manager of the café/cafeteria. We went over some of the requests we have previously made. They have been hesitant to label because of liability issues. They can say things "not prepared with nuts," "not prepared with dairy." But they cannot make guarantees. I asked them to send me their requested wordings and I will

make the labels. Publicizing things that students have requested that are in place but not well known: like organics, local food. Also willing to add kosher backed goods downstairs. I asked about free trade coffee and moving it upstairs. Soymilk is available in both places. They are ok with almond milk. They are looking into the possibility of compost trashcans. They are on trying to find out more on waste recycling.

- iv. I have been following up with the rest of our committee members on projects and attended the first food justice meeting. There is now a food studies stream in public health course on food that will be looking at CUNY and that could give us some good information.
  - v. The issue of the lack of space for a GC wide-student study is being taken up by one of our committee members.
  - vi. Added Google analytics from the Health and Wellness blog. There are more people looking at the site than expected. The bulk of our traffic is coming from Facebook. So, please add everyone you know from the GC to the DSC page.
  - vii. I am going to make a Google doc to respond to the illegality of the security policy and using that as a jumping off point to talk about other ways of approaching women's security.
  - viii. JT: we should really use our Facebook more because it really drives traffic. We should encourage our friends and clubs to post their events on are walls and retweet each other.
  - ix. AD: Gwen in student services would love to work with us on these things.
  - x. EL: I would recommend contact John Flaherty about those issues.
  - xi. NH: I have some feedback from some Criminal Justice who have found the blog really useful. It has been awesome.
- d. Officer for Outreach (Nicole Hanson)
- i. The first event that we will have will be at City either the last Thursday of October, or the first Thursday of November. Anthony Perri is working on that. It will be an informative get-together. The second event will be near Lehman. The committee decided to do something more social. If anyone knows of anything, that would be very helpful information. We are thinking of an activity.
  - ii. We have a workshop that we are developing for student organizing. We have been talking about the lack of communication between various reps in different bodies. We are hoping to facilitate better communication and teach people about FOIA and open meeting law. We are going to do a focus group with John Jay to use as a basis for other events that will branch off.
  - iii. A major focus of outreach will be to help people better organize and know their rights.
  - iv. We have one issue that we had last year. We do not have an international student on the committee that we are required to. I don't really know why, because I have invited many. We are out of compliance and I was thinking of adjusting the bylaws and want feedback.
- Discussion
- e. Officer for Student Life & Services (Dominique Nisperos)
- i. We met to discuss room reservations as noted previously.
  - ii. One of our ongoing issues has been membership, two of our appointees declined to participate this semester citing an inability to meet the commitment. So we will have to do outreach at the next plenary and figure out how to remove the others from the committee and whether or not that requires a bylaw change.
  - iii. We are looking at the fitness classes offered and working to get information on the demand to see if there are other classes we should be offering students. Currently, Student Services says they cannot offer more classes without either canceling one of the existing classes or finding more funding. As it stands, the classes cost more than the DSC raises through fees. We are considering creating a survey around the fitness classes to see what students are interested in.
  - iv. We will be asking facilities not only to retain the cork boards in the building, but to increase them. We would also like to pursue the ability for students to publicize their

organizations and causes by tabling in the cafeteria in addition to the downstairs area of the lobby.

- v. We are looking into various local discounts for food and services in the area. Another idea is to organize more student social events and outings.
- f. Officer for Technology & Library (Evan Misshula)
  - i. It is 9:01 We had a meeting with Polly Thistlewaithe. Anne covered most of the issues. She wants to put me in touch with Matt Gold who is the senior administrator in charge of some of the open source initiatives. We spend about half a million dollars every year on new acquisitions and a good deal of that goes toward serial and academic publications that are prohibitively priced.
  - ii. MW: I was working at a making a program and they have a lot of fonts that seems like it might be a waste of money.
  - iii. EM: A good project which will take longer than I will be here is to get information on use. One thing is an institutional repository. Harvard has made this a policy that professors have to retain copyright for themselves and for their institutions. I will follow up with these things.
  - iv. JT: I was talking with Joanna and Chris who were working on the Occupy CUNY Hack-a-thon. They are primarily based at the GC. Could we fund that through the student tech fee?

#### VI. Announcements

- a. CN: I would like for everyone to come with some ideas for something you would like to get information on. You might not think you could FOIL that, but think about things you are interested in. It does not have to be just at the Graduate Center.
- b. CA: I also tried to put a hold on USS fees. It is like \$7K.

#### VII. Adjournment

- a. DN motions, EM adjourns. Unanimous 11 aye, 0 nay, 0 abstain