

Steering  
*Minutes*  
April 5, 2019

Plenary *Attendance:* Shoumik Bhattacharya (SB), Elena Chávez (EGC), Rod Hurley (RH), Raj Korpan (RK), Alison Parks (AP), Ana C. Perry (ACP), Jason Nielsen (JN), Anaïs Wong (AW)

Executive Committee *Absent:* Elizabeth Che (EC), Teresa Ober (TO), Marlene Nava Ramos (MNR),

**Steering Committee**

Constitution and Bylaws RK: Calls the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

Grants **I. Approval of Agenda**

Health Issues AEP moves to approve the agenda with the following emendations: Addition of New Business Item Number 3 "Scheduling May 2019 Plenary" and New Business Item 4 "Party Debrief."

Media Board RH seconds.

Outreach No Discussion.

Student Services Motion Passes unanimously.

Participatory Budget **II. Approval of Minutes of**

**A. March 1, 2019**

SB moves

AW seconds.

No Discussion.

Motion Passes unanimously.

**III. Executive Committee Reports**

**A. Co-Chair for Student Affairs (Alison Parks)**

*Elections* have successfully opened. They will remain open until May 1st at 11:59 PM. Please spread the word widely.

*Chartered Organizations:* There are only 8 chartered orgs currently active. Please sign rosters.

The meeting we were scheduled to have today with OSA was cancelled so there isn't anything to report on this end.

*Discussion:*

AW: Some reps from a chartered org came to ask me about being active with many questions about how to become active for the semester.

AEP: I will send another reminder. You can also tell people with questions to contact me directly.

RK: What happened with the room?

AP: An outside group was hosting an event and when their project/AV was not working, facilities moved them into one of our rooms which had already been reserved by Elena for a Student Life and Services Committee Event.

**B. Co-Chair for Communications (Teresa Ober)**

*Recent Past Meetings:*

- Interim President Connolly (March 18): DSC EC
- Graduate Council Meeting (March 27): All agenda items were approved. There was concern raised around faculty attendance for these committees.
- GC Website Redesign (April 8): This was the final meeting to select a vendor for the website redesign.

*Upcoming meetings:*

- Social Media Correspondent Meeting (April 15, 5:30 PM): All Steering are welcome.
- Middle States Steering Committee Meeting (April 17)
- Office of Student Affairs (??? and May 3): DSC Co-Chairs
- Graduate Council Meeting (May 8)
- IT Staff (May 10): DSC Co-Chairs and Officer for Library and Technology will be meeting.
- Library Staff (May 17): DSC Co-Chairs and Officer for Library and Technology will be meeting.
- Graduate Center Budget Advisory Committee (???)

*Announcements/Reminders:*

- We have a new Social Media Correspondent: Sharanya Dutta will be joining the team! If interested in taking part in the onboarding meeting, please let CCC know. The meeting is scheduled on Monday, April 15 at 5:30 PM.
- Please volunteer to purchase going away gifts for the outgoing 2018-19 DSC representatives. Let one of the co-chairs know if interested!
- If you, or someone you know, are still interested in being nominated to serve on a Graduate Council Standing Committee, please let me know as soon as possible.

*Discussion:*

Please contact the Co-Chair for Communications directly.

**C. Co-Chair for Business (Raj Korpan)**

- *DSC Participatory Budgeting Initiative:* Meeting with Facilities on April 8 to discuss projects.
- *Graduate Council IT Committee:* We met on April 3 and discussed the purpose of the committee and its governance role, we will be having an open town hall type meeting in May to invite the GC community
- *DSC Website:* Down today (April 5) due to server issues, met with IT on March 29 to discuss server migration off of GC servers - decided to move forward with another vendor instead of AWM due to contract issues. Will be pursuing Reclaim Hosting
- *Budget update:* Spending is on track and on budget generally. I will be bringing a vote to plenary to allocate \$5000 from our reserve fund for the website migration since we no longer have access to the STF funds that were allocated last year.
- *Check requests:* Encourage all representatives to submit by June 1st

*Discussion:*

JN: How did we miss out on the student tech fee money?

RK: The deadline for spending for the fiscal year is March 1 so because we didn't spend the money last year, it disappears.

AEP: What is the deadline for chartered org receipts? Steering?

RK: All requests, except for grants, are due June 1. Grants deadline is in May.

**D. USS Delegate (Rod Hurley)**

*USS Meetings*

- Monday February 11, members of USS, along with dozens of students from CUNY and SUNY, attended Students With Disabilities Lobby Day in Albany to voice
- USS Plenary meeting took place on Sunday, March 17, 2019, at Guttman Community College.
- CUNY Trustee Michael Arvanites addressed the meeting. He said that his focus is on capital projects and facilities and that the BOT was planning repairs and upgrades across CUNY. He said BMCC now has the largest solar panel array in the city, an elevator upgrade project will be launched soon, and they are now looking at establishing all-CUNY dorm.
- In his report USS Chair Haris Khan said that at the board of Trustees he was advocating for mandated student consultation on all facilities projects, and capital budget requests, all well as CUNY Bylaws changes to reform of the allocation of Student Tech Fees to outline the use of these fees, and a mandated equal number of students on committees. He also gave a statement on the State's final budget allocation for CUNY for fiscal year 2020 (included in meeting documents).
- USS meeting documents can be viewed [here](#).
- On Saturday March 23rd USS led a protest march across the Brooklyn Bridge to raise awareness for the need for increased funding for CUNY.
- On Friday, March 29th USS held its 2nd Annual International Students Conference at BMCC.

*Board of Trustees*

- At the BOT Meeting on March 18th all items on the agenda were approved.
- All BOT meeting documents and video archives can be found [here](#).

*Announcements*

- April 15: BOT Committee Meetings
- April 29: BOT Public Hearing
- May 2, 6:00 PM, **CUNY's Got Talent**: Proshanky Auditorium at the Graduate Center. This is a CUNY wide talent contest with over \$5,000 in prize money. Interested in auditioning? Send an email to [events@usscunys.org](mailto:events@usscunys.org)

*Discussion:*

RK: You mentioned changes in the student tech fee, what is going on?

RH: There's nothing concrete, but the USS chair is proposing formal changes to the bylaws which mandate equal student representation on the allocation committees, more transparency once the money has been allocated, and revised language about the purposes of the fund

**E. UFS Liaison (Anaïs Wong)**

- At the UFS plenary on March 26, the body voted down charter revisions on the membership article (which would have clarified eligibility for part time faculty to be on UFS—as well as all instructional staff titles). This makes the fight for representation of student-instructors at UFS very difficult right now. All other changes were approved without issues. UFS also adopted a resolution in support of “student decision-making with respect to student activity fees at the City University of New York.”
- Budget transparency came up informally in the Structure committee, so this might be a good time to bring it up formally. The next structure meeting is on Wednesday April 17, so maybe I'll try bringing a resolution draft to that meeting and I'd appreciate any suggestions on the language.
- There are currently 154 responses to the title IX survey. Do we want to try getting more, or should we announce the survey closing soon and then work on computing answers? Who would like to participate ?

*Discussion:*

SB: What does helping compute mean? Is there technical requirements?

AW: Basically just going through the data.

RH: Regarding the resolution, it's very vague.

AW: Yeah, it's very vague and doesn't have a lot of effect but that's what passed.

JN: What are your thoughts on the survey?

AW: I think just to give us time to do something with it we should say it's closing soon and provide a deadline.

AP: 154 responses for our student body is a lot so I think setting a deadline by the end of next week or the following one would be sufficient.

RK: The Committee on Committees of GC met yesterday and discussed getting the UFS position to be a voting seat through the GC. Polly seemed very much on board as did some other faculty so maybe there's more to be done.

AW: She definitely seems like she is on our side. As does Interim Provost Wrigley. Unfortunately, the other members of structure are not on our side. They are very adamant about the fact that while we are faculty at other campuses we are not faculty here. The new language of the UFS charter also may put all part-time representatives in jeopardy. I don't think we should stop this fight, I just think that the timing is off for now at the UFS level so maybe we can move forward within the GC.

JN: Can the process happen through Graduate Council?

AW: The initial idea was to bring it up to Structure so that they could bring it up to Grad Council.

JN: I think if we can get Polly on board her voice would carry a lot at the Graduate Council meetings.

RK: Teresa and Rod can add things to the GC agenda through EC.

AW: Can we add new business to the agenda? I don't think that's something we can achieve through a resolution.

RK: I think we can also bring this to Governance Task Force - setting people to the task of looking through the governance docs.

#### **IV. Steering Officer Reports**

##### **A. Officer for Funding (Elizabeth Che)**

- *Grants Committee* met on April 2, 2019 at 3pm in 5489. The Grants Committee approved up to \$3,725 at this meeting and \$700 through the expedited review committee. The six proposals approved include:
  - En un cuarto los dos (\$700)
  - 2019 Booth Award Honoring Ishmael Houston-Jones (\$700)
  - "Pioneers: First Women Filmmakers" Screening (\$300)
  - CUNY Early American Republic Seminar Fifth Annual Graduate Student Conference (\$625)
  - New Theatre from Spain (\$700)
  - Crossing Boundaries: Towards an Interdisciplinary Medieval Studies (\$700)

- The Grants Committee also voted to approve additional funding for the Nature, Ecology & Society Colloquium (\$169.77) because they were having difficulties obtaining reimbursements from the USS. USS did not inform them that they will only pay directly to the vendor until after the event.
- Overall, the Grants Committee approved up to a total of \$20,257.15. There is still a start-up grant in review.

*Discussion:*

RK: This year, we had requests from the same programs over and over.

SB: Is it that some programs come back every year?

AP: I remember Andy had done a survey of all the different programs and it did show that there was a concentration among several programs.

ECG: I was wondering if biochem or physics are not participating because their program representatives aren't actively letting them know. As a LAILAC student, I'm getting emails from our rep all the time reminding us about the deadlines. On the other hand, people that are requesting money for events that aren't clearly student events...there could be more research done. There could also possibly be limits per program.

SB: As someone who's applied for grants last year and this year, I don't think that we should put any limitations on it because people don't often know that others in their program are applying. I think that there needs to be more advertising.

RH: I just wanted to clarify the USS situation. This was one of the first co-sponsorships that came to USS after the implementation of CUNYFirst and I didn't know that this was the case. Previously there were many ways that USS could pay for things, including sending money directly to campuses, but all of that has stopped. USS debit card got taken away. Anyone now that gets paid has to be a registered CUNY vendor and must have previously filled out the paperwork.

RK: I wanted to respond to the suggestions made. I think it would be good to go back and look at Andy's report as well as update it. I think a lot of the work of advertising has to be through the officer and this year with the transition it's been difficult. Regarding the details of the grants, there's been times when we've had a full committee, but this year we've had a very skeleton crew, which has made things difficult. I think that we should focus more on the events that ask for the same money for the same event every year.

AEP: I think that programs applying every year aren't the problem. Some programs are very strapped for cash and can't support student events. On the other hand, programs like Art History and Theatre are flush with thousands of dollars of money from the "Chair accounts."

AP: As someone who's in a program with funding - that's a valid point. I know that the grant application that I submitted; we didn't necessarily need the money for that. When I was funding we were really tough on people so maybe maintaining that would be good.

JN: I think a few things are being collapsed here. I don't think it's a problem that groups are coming back every year, but I do think it's an issue of what other sources of funding they have and who've they've reached out to. I think that advertising is the best way to help correct the problem. I'm sure there are STEM programs having events. I do think that the grant committee should be stricter. I think it would be a bigger problem if we weren't able to fund everyone.

AEP: When I was on the grants committee it was a pretty brutal process. But, during those two years we didn't have enough money to fund everyone, so we were extra careful. I think that during years like this when we have enough to fund everything, great, give all the money to everyone. But there are years we will not have that budgetary luxury.

#### **B. Officer for Governance & Membership (Jason Nielsen)**

##### *Membership:*

- Special election for Nursing ends April 9th.
- Nominations ballot for open seat in MALS happening now.

##### *Governance:*

- Planning another C&B meeting -- need to figure out when.

##### *Discussion:*

None.

#### **C. Officer for Health & Wellness (Ana Perry)**

- *The Wellness Festival is Tuesday April 30th from 10:00 AM-4:00 PM* (Concourse level): The Massage Therapist will be there from 11:00-3:00, 15 minute slots. I will start advertising that next week.
- *Finals Relief Massages:* AP secured \$200 from Wellness Center to help with cost for Massage Therapist - this should allow for two days of Massages during Finals depending on the massage therapist's schedule

##### *Discussion:*

None.

#### **D. Officer for Outreach (Shoumik Bhattacharya)**

- *End of Semester outreach event:* Will happen on Thursday 2nd May from 530-730pm. I will use this event to come up with some notes for the next Outreach Officer. It will be especially targeted toward international and off-campus STEM

students. I will mainly use it as an opportunity to talk with my constituents and get issues that may come up for the following Officer for Outreach.

*Discussion:*

AW: So you haven't received any complaints this year?

SB: I received about three, but they were all very individualized issues with paperwork.

AW: I know that some people were paid late this semester.

SB: Because of CUNYFirst we're supposed to check off three different forms. The people upstairs are claiming that students were missing one of the forms. I tried to talk to them about RH's point that they only process them once a week.

AW: Joy Connelly was saying at our meeting with her that there were no issues about late payments and saying that each problem was an individualized plan so I wanted to know.

ECG: I got an email from financial aid saying that I needed to accept my financial aid for summer. So are they doing it in advance so that they don't delay our payments? Is this just for international students are for everyone?

SB: For everyone.

ECG: Is there any chance that we'll organize with the new officers to push for payments that are actually on time and not three weeks later than the rest of the students.

SB: Yes. This is something that I plan on bringing up to the new person. Perhaps even pitching it as part of the outreach position so that we can recruit people from the beginning who are into the issue. I want to make sure that the next officer is as prepared as possible because the beginning of the fall semester was rough.

## **E. Officer for Student Life & Services (Elena Chávez)**

*Activities of the Committee for Student Life and Services:*

- We held our first Healing Circle Workshop with positive outcomes. Participants suggested that we continue organizing this type of workshop and opening up safe spaces to speak up. Our facilitator, Ashly Andersen from NYC Alliance against Sexual Violence provided clear information about where and how to report sexual assaults (she also provided info on how to get free therapy and a list of hospitals throughout NYC especially trained to assist). We thought that our officer for Wellness would want to send out this documents via DSC list serv.
- We also held out first session for Mental Health First Aid training. We get 7 participants out of 10. Next session will be held next Thursday at the same time and room. We got to learn that the existence of NYC Thrive (a special section of the Department of Health in NYC) is under threat. We hope to bring more awareness



among our GC community on the importance of Mental Health by keeping an eye on the need of this kind of workshops in the education sector and in our community.

- The Committee has booked an appointment with Eric Brown and Student Affairs office to potentially “co-organize” some events. We are looking forward to hearing more about what they want to propose. A higher budget would be beneficial as long as the committee will be willing to organize a bigger number of events.

*Discussion:*

AP: I wanted to say that I'm totally for sending out the information and will also post it to the website. Let me know if you need more help with anything. The Health and Wellness budget usually goes to the massage therapist, but let me know if you need anything.

JN: Do you know if the Mental Health First Aid workshops happen at other campuses are not?

ECG: I do not, but it would be worth looking into.

RH: I wanted to ask something similar and find out how you went about getting it to come here. I'd be willing to propose something to USS.

ECG: Our facilitator is not charging us any money so this is volunteer labor. She's also from CUNY. We could also consider becoming trained to be facilitators ourselves. It would just be good to repeat these workshops so that graduate students here can bring the knowledge back to their campuses.

RK: Is she CUNY faculty?

ECG: Yes.

RH: Could she train people to facilitate the trainings?

ECG: She cannot personally train, but she can refer people to the department of health to get the training. It's just a lot of time.

**F. Officer for Technology & Library (Marlene Nava Ramos)**

- The Student Technology Fee Committee meets on Thursday, March 7th at 10am -- there is a proposal to replace printers for \$23,000, and perhaps a proposal to get rid of EViews, a statistical software (\$540).
- The STF proposed budget was approved by GC administration. An email announcement of STF funded services is forthcoming.
- IT Services and Library Meetings are underway; may I kindly request Co-chairs to schedule an executive meeting with the Center for the Humanities? As the end of the semester approaches, we should confirm whether there will be any summer break adjustments.
- Lastly, I'm signed up for food for April's plenary. May I switch with someone else and their role for May's plenary?

*Discussion:*

AP: She emailed Elizabeth and I about this. Marlene offered to order the food in advance, so it's really just someone who can be ready to pick it up.

JN and RH agree to assist with food.

JN: So who is ordering the food?

AP: I can order, but I'll email Marlene.

RH: Just forward the food order to Jason and me.

AP: Sounds great.

**V. New Business**

**A. Steering Discretionary**

AEP move to allocate up to \$80 to replenish the period supplies.

SB seconds.

*Discussion:*

None.

Motion Passes Unanimously.

AEP move to allocate up to \$600 for outgoing representative gifts.

SB seconds.

*Discussion:*

ECG: Is there going to be any gifts for steering officers.

RK: Yes. That typically comes from EC discretionary. In past years we've also given gifts to committee members.

Motion Passes.

SB: Do we need new clickers?

JN: We don't need them right now, but we may need them soon. I haven't looked into the cost

AEP: Can we allocate discretionary money at the May steering?

RK: Yes.

JN: Okay,

SB motions to allocate up to \$2,000 to the childcare center.

RH seconds.

*Discussion:*

RK: The childcare center did reach out directly so I told them that I would bring it up.

Motion passes unanimously.

JN moves to allocation up to \$100 for a cart and a large cooler.

RH second.

*Discussion:*

RH: What's the cart for?

JN: To help carry things for parties. Like just a granny cart. We may have to put in 5497, but it doesn't take up too much room.

Motion passes unanimously

AW moves to allocate up to \$25 for the purchase of cleaning supplies.

AEP seconds.

*Discussion:*

None.

Motion passes unanimously.

SB motions to allocate up to \$300 for Committee Member gifts.

RH seconds.

*Discussion:*

RK: Last year I purchased notebooks and Starbucks gift cards, but you can get whatever you want.

Motion passes unanimously.

## **B. Review of 2019-2020 Proposed Budget**

RK presents the budget for 2019/2020.

Questions:

SB: How did we lose so many students?

RK: I don't know. But this is going to be a very conservative budget. If we're able to add more back once we get the actual fall enrollment that will be great but I'd rather be safe than sorry.

RK: Do people have suggestions?

SB: I think the Outreach Committee can operate on a smaller budget that could be a place you can cut from. I wouldn't suggest zeroing out the party budget. It's a great way to have a presence on campus and they're well attended and they're one place a lot of inter-departmental mingling happens.

AW: I think reducing it and bringing it down to one would be a good idea.

AP: I think that reducing the budget and focusin on one party would be best.

RH: Can you explain the money for the reserve fund?

RK: Because the website is an unforeseen expense this year, we don't have any budget lines to take it from so we can move into our reserve fund, which we are mandated to have by CUNY bylaws. However, this money must be paid back within the last year.

AEP: What's the Special Purposes Fund for?

RK: I don't know, but we're required to have it. I can look into the bylaws.

RH: How much money do we make off the movie tickets?

RK: So far we've earned \$5,000 in revenue, but we've spent zero. I only buy movie tickets as we need them. It's a budget line that evens out.

RH: Is that money that we could possible allocate elsewhere?

RK: Yes.

SB: But if you cut down that amount, wouldn't you also need to change the revenue section?

RK: Yes. The amount of money we spend on tickets would be equal to the revenue.

RB: Is this budget being presented in April?

RK: Yes, presented in April, voted on in May.

SB: Would it be able to change after plenary?

AEP: Yes, once it's presented we'll get suggestions and then we can change it given the suggestions and bring it to the body to vote for.

### **C. Scheduling May 2019 Plenary**

AEP moves to begin the May 2019 Plenary meeting at 3:30 PM

SB seconds.

#### *Discussion:*

RK: Are we going to assume that this meeting is going to only last an hour?

AEP: This is just how it has been in the past, but I'm willing to amend the motion.

AEP amends the original motion to begin at 3:00 PM based on last year's outgoing plenary meeting start time.

SB re-seconds.

Motion passes unanimously.

### **D. Party Debrief**

AW: Somehow at the last party we had too little food, and this time we had too much food.

SB: The bar was also about 40% less crowded.

JN: It was definitely less well-attended, but I think that it's an advertising issue. We didn't advertise well enough.

RK: Are there any issues that we should discuss?

JN: We did have one person throw up, so I don't know how to handle the over serving.

AP: I remember hearing that I talked to Gwen and she mentioned having a way that some alcohol is diluted for people who seem like they've had too much.

AEP: I think it's less an issue of how we serve and more about having a concrete plan for when overconsumption does happen and steering needs to intervene.

RK: I think that for food, it did help having pizza.

AP: I think that having pizza and not a variety of food where people felt compelled to take one of each. I think that staggering the food was also a good idea.

SB: I think it's hard to predict the number of people because it's simply a matter of timing. But the food coming in different stages was smart.

RH: I think that we need to get a speaker for the dance room because people were not into the low music.

AEP: I just wanted to suggest that if we do have to cut the party budget and only have one party that we have it in the fall, it's typically the better attended party.

RH: I think that that's a good idea and that in the spring we have some sort of open house/social type of event just for people to hang out.

**I. Announcements**

None.

**II. Adjournment**

RK moves to adjourn the meeting by unanimous consent. There were no objections. The meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.