



Steering Meeting *Minutes* October 2, 2020

Attendance

Present: Sharanya Dutta (SD), Sara Ortiz (SO), Katie Anderson (KA), Adam Kocurek (AK), Cristina Pardo Porto (CPP), Edward Charnley (EC), Natacha Pawa (NP), Christian Martinez (CM), Rod Hurley (RH).
Absent: Carolyn McDonough (CMD), Silvia Rivera Alfaro (SRA).

Meeting called to order at 4:39 PM

I. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve: SO

Seconded: CM

Vote: passed unanimously

II. Approval of Minutes of the September 4, 2020 Meeting

Motion to approve: AK

Seconded: NP

Vote: passed unanimously

III. Executive Committee Reports

A. Co-Chair for Student Affairs (Sharanya Dutta)

- The election for the second Philosophy Program rep is closing tonight at 11:59PM. Whoever wins will be automatically approved for the position. *Voter turnout remains VERY LOW, we should talk about what, if anything, one can do about that (especially with whoever is the new SMC).*
- Adjunct Project's hiring call is still open.
- Still no word on SPARC training. I emailed Eric and he said that they are working out some kinks. Please complete as soon as you receive it in your CUNYfirst to do task list, mail it back to Eric Brown ASAP so we can all be in compliance with protocol.
- Chartered Orgs:
 - Have you signed the rosters yet for all the chartered orgs? If not, PLEASE do so.
 - A lot of the chartered orgs that were about to be dechartered have actually stepped up and there are new people who are working to take over leadership. I'm very excited!
 - AELLA, Africana Studies Group, Mesoamerican Studies Group, Puerto Rican Studies Group are reactivating.
 - Global Enlightenment Thought, Jewish Connection Group, Global Studies Collective, Food Studies Collective, CUNY Women in STEM might have to be dechartered, but they still have some time to get back to me.
 - CUNY STEM Outreach will have to be dechartered.

- BrainEHour, which has some similar goals, will be a new chartered org hopefully after we vote next plenary.
- I think we should reach out to our STEM students in a more targeted way with the new SMC—maybe department wise, maybe Raj will have some suggestions. We cannot afford to have all our STEM chartered orgs dechartered.

Discussion:

EC: Some chartered orgs on the list are still lacking necessary signatures and are in danger of being dechartered. Why can't we just pair them with each other to gather mutually needed signatures. Would that be alright or 'playing the system?'

SD: That should be fine. We don't have access to these groups, but we could encourage the leaders to support each other

EC: What is the Global Leadership Enlightenment org?

SD: Last listing we have is from 2017. I don't currently have the updated chartered org. descriptions. If you know of a student who is volunteering to take on a leadership role within this chartered org., have them establish a DSCworks account and commit to attending one meeting and coordinating one event to reestablish the group.

EC: I'll ask my lit survey group if they are interested in the Global Enlightenment group

CPP: Can any of these organizations change their name or function?

SD: Yes. The organization has to report the change to the DGSC. Any major changes to an organization/constitution necessitate a re-chartering process, but minor changes do not have to be reported.

CM: I would like to take over the CUNY stem outreach organization.

SD: Send me an e-mail and I can explain the process to you.

B. Co-Chair for Communications (Rod Hurley)

Activites/Recent Meetings:

9/30 - Executive Committee of Graduate Council - This is an advisory and review committee for the Grad Council. This committee reviews agenda and materials for Graduate Council meetings. The Graduate Council EC can act in lieu of the Graduate Council in emergency situations, and makes recommendations for actions to be taken by the graduate council. One major, and possibly controversial issue added to the agenda was the issue of reducing or cutting all admissions next academic year. There is concern that if programs reduce or cut admissions, they might not have access to those funds for current students, and might have difficulty increasing admission numbers in the future.

Update:

Our subcommittee finished reviewing applications for the Social Media Correspondent job and I'm preparing to offer the position to the selected candidate.

Upcoming Meetings:

- OSA/Co-Chairs Monthly Meeting - Usually the Wednesday or Thursday before plenary
- 10/16 - DGSC Plenary Meeting

Discussion:

SD: If a course taught by consortial faculty gets dropped because of lower enrollments, it will be very hard to bring it back. The consortium stuff pertains to specialization within many areas of the GC - as these positions are commonly peripheral positions and not central positions.

C. Co-Chair for Business (Adam Kocurek)

- Thankfully, the program and at-large representatives seemed largely in favor of the allocation spread for the 2020-2021 DGSC draft budget. Since the plenary meeting, I received the updated enrollment numbers for the GC and re-calculated our SAF income. Our total enrollment numbers for SAF-paying students rose from 3461 last year to 3474 for the Fall semester, meaning an increase of \$548.6 from the SAF. I increased the Executive Committee Discretionary Fund from \$1000 to \$2,060 to account for this and other increases. The reason I put the income in EC Discretionary is because I am thinking it is from this budget line that we will dole out the DGSC emergency grants.
 - Regarding the emergency grants - I have the go-ahead from Phyllis Shulz and Anna Metreveli, and was advised to keep the total reimbursement amount relatively low, around maybe \$50. We need to figure out how to screen and approve people requesting our aid. I recommend the EC, at the very least, look over the plea and come to a collective decision. I feel very uncomfortable making those decisions by myself, and was also suggested that we emphasize that this is very much a needs-based, temporary service we are providing. For more dire issues, we can re-direct people to the Petrie Fund and our lawyers on retainer. I want steering's input on this.
- Regarding the program allocations, in order to accommodate the large increase in that budget line, I doubled the maximum amount allocated for each program; it seemed the most egalitarian way. Some departments may request more money, and if that should be the case, then I can drain money from the programs that don't have DGSC membership, like Business, and reallocate it if there is a good reason.
 - Note that the Chartered Orgs budget also doubled, from \$10,000 to \$20,000.
- I am waiting to hear back from members of OpenCUNY to schedule a group meeting with them and get a goals report from them.
- I know several members of steering have complained about the bugginess of DSCWorks. I contacted Jose, our website manager, about the problem, and he said that he is running diagnostics and will be doing a systems update in the near future; the website will be down for a few hours, but he will update me when that will occur. Hopefully that will solve the issues.
- The Advocate released their first publication of the new semester. Please consider contributing to their upcoming issues, and letting people in your programs know that they pay per article.
- PLEASE submit your check requests before the end of the semester, as imminently as you can, for tax reporting purposes as well as timeliness!

Discussion:

CPP: We discussed me joining the committee that makes decisions on DGSC emergency grants.

AK: Yes, that seems like a natural extension of your role.

SD: For every new application that comes in, it is not sustainable to ask steering every time. Maybe we can generate a document of criteria that the requests will have to meet. We could start now. It would be nice for people who have experience with mutual aid to lead this.

AK: Great point. Anna suggested we copy language utilized by Phyllis when she distributes it to the larger applicant pool.

SD: I got a message from a student who was charged a fee on the first day of classes. We have the power to fight these add/drop fees on behalf of students. I want to inform you of these tissues.

SO: this has been a major issue. I have spoken with higher ups in the registrar's office. The add-drop policy was modified from a template. The language on the policy is very ambiguous and some students are being unfairly penalized.

D. USS Delegate (Sara Ortiz)

- First USS Plenary Meeting of the Fall 2020 semester- Sunday 9/27/2020- 12:30-7:30pm
 - Over 80 attendees on the call
 - USEERC Elections (I will add the names when I get them) and Nominations for USS Steering Positions
- I nominated Juvanie Piquant as Chairperson of USS
- Sara Ortiz nominated as Vice-Chair for Graduate Affairs - I accepted the nomination!
- USS Elections Meeting will be held on Sunday, 10/11/2020 at 12 noon
- Conversations continuing and opportunities for joint collaboration and mutual support between the GC and USS Steering Committee underway.
- Online fitness classes (Fanni Sampson, IMS Program)

Discussion:

RH: Congrats! Being on two steering committees is a lot of work. Please let us know how we can support you.

Sara: I did not take it lightly. I am serious about really progressive change at CUNY and working to build connections across CUNY.

SD: We often don't know what's going on at other campuses outside of what we interact with. So this position will be a nice bridge.

E. UFS Liaison (Natacha Pawa)

- Teresa Ober, former UFS for 2017-2018 had a transition meeting with me on Sunday, September 13.
- I attended the UFS faculty Senate Plenary meeting on Tuesday, September 22st.
- I was introduced to Martin Burke via email from the Co Chair of Communication. I haven't followed up with him yet.

Discussion:

AK: When is the next UFS meeting?

NP: I don't have the exact date yet. I have not been informed of the next meeting. Usually they inform us weeks before the meeting, for now I do not have information for it.

IV. Steering Officer Reports

A. Officer for Funding (Christian Martinez)

- The Grants Committee had its first committee meeting with grant applications this past Wednesday. We received only one application, 11 Annual Pedagogy Day, and approved the grant application for \$700.
- The Grants Committee has decided to add a COVID-19 response to grant applications aimed at more community building activities for students and departments. Under start-up grants, students can apply for grants that are more centered around events for their department, just as long as they still keep it open to all students. For example, if CogNeuro wanted to throw a Halloween party for themselves but have it "open" to everyone

Discussion:

KA: About the CogNeuro program bridging the gap between cohorts – This is a need in every program. I wanted to connect with the incoming cohort in my own program; my Admin didn't know the e-mail addresses.

CM: I created multiple groups for my department. the main focus seems to be on providing for academic activities, but we also have to put focus on other types of community building activities.

AK: I wanted to expand on start-up grants. They have historically been used by people in the GC who do not have any other sources of funding. In addition to program allocations which individual programs can access, this could be another way for students to do other projects. They would have to appeal to the student body on a larger scale, and if it generates more interest in activities among students that would be great.

B. Officer for Governance & Membership (Katie Anderson)

- WGS (1), EES (1), and Music (2) have completed petitions to establish representation within the DGSC.
- Attendance was pretty good at our first plenary:
 - 9 unexcused
 - 1 excused (I found a proxy)
- After sending out “notice of first absence” emails, two at-large and one program rep have resigned.
 - no elections are necessary to fill these seats
 - I have extended the position to the people who received the next-most votes. All have accepted.
- C&B stuff: The Adjunct Project is working to adjust the language of the Bylaws to be more permissive of interpretation of the roles to future members. This is moving slowly, but I am hoping it will be over within the next month or two.

Discussion:

SD: Do we vote to approve replacement representatives during steering committee and then take it to plenary?

RH: When seats become vacant, we just go to the person who got the next most votes in the last election and ask whether they accept the position. Steering and plenary don't have to vote on that.

AK: Were there any cases when there were no runner ups and we'd have to nominate an at-large rep?

KA: No, that hasn't happened yet. I will take a look at the old election docs to see if there are any programs that do not have runner ups.

C. Officer for Health & Wellness (Silvia Rivera Alfaro)

No updates at this time

D. Officer for Outreach (Cristina Pardo Porto)

- I sent an email to OIS asking for the LIVE CHAT service for IS. No response. Disappointing because international students are struggling a lot. How can we hold the administration accountable and better support international students?
- I have been actively sharing these two surveys:

- International Student Culture Survey (this one is created by a group of IS)
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfl2rHRRkipDaUgQ4NiaqbVAKk24I_8k7So3P5xBq6qvyc_OA/viewform
- Survey for 1st year International Students that are currently abroad (I hope to have a report on the results to share with you all soon) <https://forms.gle/6bQTaZNWEZChi4Lw6>
- I created a new Twitter account with the Outreach Committee: @outreachdgs
- We are currently working on other several Outreach tasks. Our second meeting will be this coming Monday.

Discussion:

RH: I'm going to send up a follow up e-mail to Linda and cc GC admin.

CPP: i feel that the school is not informing the students - they do not know what is going on. It would be helpful for them to explain exactly what they will do and why. I met with a first-year student in my program and they did not even know how to use CUNYFirst.

RH: Transparency is something we should be get, despite the other things that can't be controlled, so I agree.

SO: Is there any relationship between the DGSC and CUNY Citizenship Now?

Rod: Not a formal relationship. But we have only had positive interactions with them.

SO: I could potentially facilitate an immigration/housing/ effort with the group. I don't think we would have to pay them to run a workshop for students.

SD and CPP will meet and discuss this matter further.

SO will follow up with network of non-profits external to CUNY for mutual aid.

E. Officer for Student Life & Services (Edward Charnley)

- Continuing to have problems with filling my committee (there is no more sure fire way for me to kill an email conversation than to ask the person I am speaking with to serve on my committee).
- Working on arranging social and community events for students.
 - Film Screening? *Women Make Movies* (the film's distributor) can put together a password-protected watch page (here's a sample: <https://www.wmm.com/all-weve-got-watch-page-sample/>) for the screening. Schools will typically share that link with their constituents a couple of days before the Q&A or panel (if they decide to host one, which most do). That way students can watch the film at their leisure. And then the watch page also can list the time/Zoom link/etc for the conversation/live event piece. Basically, what we've found is that it works better to let people watch the film on their own beforehand, then have a set time/etc for the live conversation.
 - *Women Make Movies* is the distributor of the film, so they handle all the logistics/licensing fees for the screening itself. For the separate conversation/panel is optional. If we would like the director to be part of the event I typically ask for a fee of roughly \$250 to cover my time/etc, but that is negotiable.
- DHS - Visa changes - F1 Visa changes and Visa agreements. -September 25, rule change proposed. October 25th will be decided upon, right before the election. This could be devastating for international students

Discussion:

SD: I sent the DGSC an e-mail today from the MIT International Students who have been organizing (along with all the tech schools) against these proposed changes. We should support them.

EC: The only thing i had to add is that we should start creating a plan for if this rule change does occur. Will students be able to maintain their student visa status if the change is made?

AK: I attended Ed's last game night and had a lot of fun beating him! Please encourage everyone to attend and participate. We should figure out what networks of ours may be receptive to getting involved in student life. Incentives, like common interests, food (Seamless, Grubhub), could be creatively used.

EC: Do committee members have to be DGSC reps? I have a couple of friends at the GC who might be interested, I think I could get them to support the committee, I'll follow up with them.

AK: Any GC student can be on a committee.

F. Officer for Technology & Library (Carolyn McDonough)

• LIBRARY

The biggest current priority for Library is scheduling Interim Chief Librarian Emily Drabinski to visit the wider student body via DGSC plenary.

A special message from Emily Drabinski was sent out to the GC community which confirms my statement at the Sept. 25 DGSC plenary about the continuation of library fines "amnesty" and which follows below:

[the GC Library] confirm[s] that the library will be extending renewals until we are able to safely open the library and process returns. No fines will accrue for materials, including interlibrary loans. We transitioned to a new library services platform over the summer and continue to troubleshoot automatic notifications — they are sent in error. I understand some members of the GC community may have received overdue books notifications this week. Please disregard these messages and hold onto materials. We do not need you to return them right now and no fines will accrue." [the above was announced via email to the GC community from Emily Drabinski, week of 9/29-10/2/20]

• TECH

Phishing scams / cyber security continue to be the current priority because many GC students AND faculty have fallen prey and have lost thousands of dollars in online scams. October is NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH. I will be sending a listserv email with links to assist with "CYBER AWARENESS", some of which were provided to Rod, Sharanya, and I by Elaine Montilla last Friday, Sept. 25 at the IT DGSC meeting and others I've collected (mainly from BMCC where I teach, which has an excellent IT communications team).

My listserv email is drafted as follows:

"CUNY is once again participating in the National Cybersecurity Awareness Month program run by the National Cyber Security Alliance (NCSA) to create awareness about Cybersecurity. This year's awareness theme is "Do Your Part. #BeCyberSmart."

CUNY also provides an [online security awareness course](#) (please provide the registration information requested) that is catered to CUNY students, faculty and staff and a growing security resources list on the [CUNY Information Security](#) pages. You may also want to subscribe to [OUCH!](#) — The world's leading, free security awareness newsletter designed for technology users."

Discussion:

EC: Specific example: the library told a student she could only have one chapter of the book. The way we overcame it is that we divided and conquered, each requesting a separate chapter of the book.

SD: You could come together and put together a book list to use your program allocation to purchase the book.

EC: Could we purchase the book and send it to the student who requested it?

Sharanya: It may be problematic for one person to get mail delivered to their home address and ask for reimbursement.

AK: I do not think that you are able to mail to a personal address, when the products are purchased with DGSC money. Is there any way she could get it as an e-book?

EC: No, and it's \$200 to buy the book. Professors aren't getting with the program. Every week I'm encountering one book or another that I cannot access.

AK: I'll confirm with Anna about the reimbursement process. The student should be able to purchase it and get reimbursed.

SD: Maybe we could make an exception since we cannot get into the building.

AK: Let's continue this conversation via e-mail.

V. New Business

A. Additions to DGSC Standing Committees (Voting)

No new appointments at this time.

B. Approval of New Program Representatives (Voting)

1. Earth and Environmental Sciences - Tenn Joe Lim

2. Women and Gender Studies - Jennifer Rossberg

Motion to Amend list to add two Music Program Representatives: NP

Seconded: EC

Vote: passed unanimously

3. Music - Kristofer Eckelhoff

4. Music - Robert Wrigley

Motion to Approve New Program Representatives: RH

Seconded: EC

Vote: passed unanimously

C. Social Media Correspondent

RH: Discussed this in CCC report.

D. Online Office Hours

RH: I received a suggestion from a Program Rep for us to make ourselves available on Zoom to chat with students one-on-one. I want to propose that we hold scheduled online office hours. I created a spreadsheet for us to log when we're available. We should all set aside at least two hours each week for office hours. You don't have to be on Zoom the whole time, but definitely do monitor your e-mail during those hours in case a student requests a meeting during those hours. Our foremost responsibility advocating for and serving GC students, which includes many other tasks, like checking and responding to e-mails, approving check requests. Let's remember that we are sharing in this work, we are accountable to each other in a non-hierarchical way, and we are collaborating and supporting each other. We should all consult, support and hold each other accountable in our roles. We have this year together, so let's cultivate harmony and collegial accountability.

VI. Announcements

SD: Please sign ALL the chartered organization rosters!

AK: Please generate all check requests by midnight on October 9th.

VII. Adjournment

Meeting is adjourned at: 7:01 PM