



Steering Meeting *Minutes* February 5, 2021

Attendance

Present: Roderick Hurley (RH), Katherine Anderson (KA), Edward Charnley (EC), Adam Kocurek (AK), Sara Ortiz (SO), Natacha Pawa (NP), Cristina Pardo Porto (CPP), Silvia Rivera Alfaro (SRA), Carmin Quijano Seda (CQS), Christian Martinez (CM), Sharanya Dutta (SD).

Absent: None.

Meeting called to order at 4:36PM

I. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve: RH moves to approve the agenda with one emendation to add "Signing on to open letter urging CUNY to divest from prisons" as New Business.

Seconded: AK

Vote: approved unanimously

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

Motion to approve: EC

Seconded: CM

Vote: approved unanimously

III. Executive Committee Reports

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

- Nominations Ballot Open: February 2 (12AM) - March 3, 2021 (11:59PM).
 - (It's the email with the Bernie meme). Did everyone get that notification?
 - Access link: <https://eballot4.votenet.com/dsc>
 - Email notifications have been sent out to students with the CCC's help.
 - Notifications will also be posted on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and the DGSC Website.
 - PLEASE ask people in your departments, chartered orgs, anyone else you know to nominate!
 - You should get these reminders to nominate regularly, and also on your department listservs. Rod will be sending them to APOs, so if you haven't received them on dept listservs, please follow up?
 - If any of us intend to continue in these/other positions, we have to be nominated as At-Large/Program Reps again, although that obviously does not guarantee that we will get these Steering positions—we have elections for those. But if we are not At Large/Program Reps, we won't even be eligible to run for Steering, so please nominate yourselves/get someone to nominate you. You can also be written in, if I'm not mistaken.

- If anyone has any trouble nominating someone, please email me directly and I will manually enter them into the ballot.
- Chartered Organization nodes for Spring 2021 will be updated over the next couple of days: Help chartered organizations achieve active status by signing up on their rosters during your office hours: <http://cunydgsc.org/works/chartered-organizations/list>
 - Let me know if you catch any errors (e.g., blocking roster registration or linked to Fall 2020 rather than Spring 2021).

B. Co-Chair for Communications (Rod Hurley)

Recent Meetings:

- 12/17 - GC Reactivation Committee
 - Two rounds of mandatory testing were conducted in December at all CUNY residences, including the GC apartments at 118th St. with about 50% participation.
 - Everbridge app kiosk will be operational soon for people who want to enter the building and haven't completed the screening process
 - "Giving Tuesday" had a goal of \$15k, and raised 15.8k, which was matched by the GC Board Chairperson
 - From January, students will be able to request access to spaces for research and special equipment. If the COVID situation allows, this will be expanded to give access to students who want a room for teaching or studying.
- 12/18 - College Association
 - Persons were elected to the following positions:
 - Vice President - Les Gribbon
 - Treasurer - Althea Harewood
 - Secretary - Rod Hurley
 - The DGSC budget was presented by CCB, Adam Kocurek and unanimously approved by the College Association
- 2/3 - Co-Chairs Meeting with Office of Student Affairs (OSA). For this meeting we were joined by President Garrell and Interim Provost Wrigley, who provided the following updates regarding admissions and student funding:
 - GCF admissions will be cut in half for Fall 2021. GC admin negotiated a written guarantee from CUNY that GCFs will be restored to the current number for Fall 2022.
 - The money that would have gone to new GCF stipends will be use to fund all 6th year students with Graduate D assistantships and NYSHIP.
 - The number of tuition fellows will also be cut (roughly) in half.
 - The savings are enough to give the remaining TFs Graduate B assistantships and NYSHIP
 - No agreement has yet been made between CUNY and the PSC for the use of the \$700k that was allocated to provide health insurance for all doctoral students
 - CUNY central office has agreed to reserve fellowship funds for current 1st-year international students until they are able to receive them

Updates/Announcements:

- Carolyn McDonough has resigned from her position on the DGSC and Steering Committee. The DGSC Executive Committee has appointed Carmin Quijano Seda as interim steering officer.

- We also decided to rearrange the steering roles slightly, so EC will take move to Library and Technology and the newCarmin will serve as SLS
- DGSC Ad-Hoc Committee on Accessibility
 - I have been in touch with the committee to find out if they are currently working on any initiatives or would like our support on anything. One thing they mentioned was the installation of new accessible doors on the first floor of the library.
 - Two years ago, the DGSC approved funding for the project, which was estimated at \$3,000. When the committee chair met with Admin and Facilities, they were told it would cost approximately \$10,000.
 - The committee has been unsuccessful in advocating for the remaining money from GC admin so I would like to propose that the DGSC funds the entire project. I think we should push to get the motorized doors installed in time for the return to campus.
- CUNY for Abolition and Safety (CAS) is working on several campaigns at CUNY and beyond, and have requested our support:
 - [A petition telling Governor Andrew Cuomo, Chancellor Félix Matos Rodríguez, CUNY Board of Trustees, CUNY College Presidents to CUNY cut ties with Corcraft and support the call for Governor Cuomo to grant clemency to aging prisoners now.](#)
 - [A petition addressed to President Raab of Hunter College to re-name Hunter West after Audre Lorde.](#)
 - [An anonymous survey on policing and public safety at CUNY.](#)
- The Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness is hosting a series of webinars, beginning in late February, to promote effective data communication to students and help students learn how to use the available data. They invited the DGSC to meet and provide feedback about what should be included in the webinars and the kinds of data that would be helpful to students in the future.

Upcoming Meetings:

- 2/17 - Co-Chairs Meeting with Office Student Affairs
- 2/18 - GC Reactivation Committee Monthly Meeting
- 2/19 - DGSC February Plenary Meeting

C. Co-Chair for Business (Adam Kocurek)

- Budget update: Things have been chugging along steadily. Some programs were able to make creative use of their Fall semester program allocations, some spending it on gift cards for their students or on virtual events. Most programs, however, did not use their program allocation for the Fall semester, or only used a small portion of it; however, I have been in communication with several program representatives who have made it clear that they intend on using their rolled-over Fall semester and Spring semester allocations this spring.
 - NOTE: While I am not broadcasting this, if some programs elect to forego using their program allocations, that would be fine by me. We are likely going to take a big budget cut next semester, as a significant majority of DGSC funding comes from the Student Activity Fee, and with admissions being cut in half, that directly affects us. So I'm hoping that we have a significant financial roll-over from this academic year to help us limp along next year.
 - During the College Association meeting, I presented our budget to admin and they approved but suggested some amendments, which we went back and forth on. One definitive change I want to make is to raise the Child Learning and Development Center budget line from \$6K to \$10K,

and I propose doing so but taking \$4K from our participatory budget line, which is currently a static operation.

- If you have other thoughts about how we can edit the budget before I present it to the plenary, please let me know!
- The GC Budget Committee and Reactivation Committee will be meeting later in February- I will continue to advocate for the support of GC students and their interests in those spaces, particularly those of international students, 5th+ year students, and master's students, and will have more to report later. If you want something expressed at those meetings, please let me know.
- Please confirm that you have no outstanding balance on your account before you request any Spring stipends! While Allan Tsang at the Bursar assured me that he would catch and pause any DGSC payments being processed by his office if there is an outstanding balance on your account, I also don't want to leave things totally in the hands of the Bursar.
- Website update: Since Reclaim Hosting rendered DSCWorks non-functional with their update, I've worked with them and our Website hosts to restore the old site to functionality and now I am acting as liaison between Reclaim and our website managers to start putting the new site on our server. More updates to follow.
- I'm going to be reaching out to the affiliates again soon asking for a status update on their projects and a report on their updated goals for the semester. More information soon.
- I met with Sara and Natacha with the Data and Analytic Forums about Student Participation. We brainstormed different ways we might facilitate student engagement, as well as discussed topics their department might wish to explore.

D. USS Delegate (Sara Ortiz)

- 2021 New York City Elections <https://www.thecity.nyc/22233447/what-you-need-to-know-now-about-the-2021-elections-in-new-york-city>
- Collaboration with DGSC "*Political Education & CUNY Votes / CUNY Civics*" Student Voter Awareness and Political Education Campaign
 - CUNY Rising Alliance -[CUNY Rising Alliance](#)
 - Legislative Agenda
 - Upcoming Joint E-meetings:
 - i. Samy Nemir Olivares (District Leader and State Committee member, Assembly District 53) & Isabel Anreus - <https://samy.nyc/> - State Senator Julia Salazar
 - ii. Katherine Diaz (campaign manager) – Angela Fernández, Candidate for City Council – District 10
- CUNY Citizenship Now! – Eboni Mason, Special Events Manager - joint collaboration between USS, International Affairs Committee & CUNY Citizenship Now!
- Testified at both Board of Trustees Hearing on Higher Education: Housing Insecurity Among CUNY Students & State Senate Executive Committee on State Budget: Housing
 - Met Council on Housing – Cancel Rent and House the Homeless Campaign
 - If we don't act now, it will be too late! Call your state reps and ask them to sponsor and pass these three bills TODAY!

- Cancel Rent (Salazar/Niou) (S8802/A10826)
 - Eviction Moratorium (Myrie/Reyes) (S8667/A10827)
 - Housing Access Voucher Program (Kavanagh/Cymbrowitz) (S7628A/A9657)
- [Invest In Our New York Act](#)

- b. DGSC partnering with Adjunct Project - A People's Budget - Meeting next Wednesday 2/10 (Time TBD)
- Meeting with Sara Djubek

E. UFS Liaison (Natacha Pawa)

- I attended the Data and Analytic Forums on January 21 while highlighting the issue of diversity during the admission process in small departments like the French Ph. D program. I posed questions such as : What are the data? How can we diversify the student body to represent the francophone world?
- I participated in the PSC Mid-Winter Phone Bank Party calls on Wednesday, January 25.
- I sent information to students about the [Mellon TLH Fellowship](#) on January 29.

IV. Steering Officer Reports

A. Officer for Funding (Christian Martinez)

- All of the dates for the grant application deadlines have been updated on the website
- The first grants committee meeting will be taking place next week
- There are currently two grant applications that the committee needs to review
- I spoke with Inma about advertising which was very fruitful. We are now in direct contact and she will be disseminating more of our information such as deadlines and events that we have approved and are taking place
 - One thing is to use our instagram as a way to publish the event flyers
 - If anyone has any proposals for posts, please feel free to reach out

B. Officer for Governance & Membership (Katie Anderson)

- Lots of movement within program representation during winter break. We have a lot of fresh faces who are eager to get involved!
- There is still room for more people to get involved.
- Starting conversations about continued/transfer of membership.

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

- We are organizing yoga for the CUNY community (students). We have the option of Tuesday and Thursday at 8:30 a.m. We still do not have a person that could teach in the afternoons or during the weekend. I am waiting for answers. I have doubts about budget and other details and I would like to discuss this with the entire Committee. I would like us to also discuss other activities you have suggested.
- The Committee for Health and Wellness met during January to keep working on updating the website information. We have created this living document ([available here](#)) with the information of the providers that were in the old website. Our intention is that the document will be available for future committees and that it will not get out-of-date.

- The committee of outreach and health will be working together in navigating NYSHIP for this semester. We want to create a special edition for international students, particularly we also want to create some digital (e.g.video) material for students that will arrive to the GC next semester.

D. Officer for Outreach (Cristina Pardo Porto)

Tax Related:

- Reminders of: Sprintax TDS (update financial profile and upload documents in document exchange) and FICA Tax Exemption.
- Tax season is coming: Webinars by SPRINTAX.
- Please be advised 1042s are usually mailed by March 15th by the State. W2 from the Graduate Center have been mailed already.
- In order to prepare to this:
 - To what extent can I give tax advice?
 - My committee is thinking about a tax-filing-party, a sort of a space where we can file our taxes together and ask for non-official help ---
NON-OFFICIAL TAX ADVICE OFFICE HOURS?
 - Can we find and pay a tax consultant specific for students/internationals/non-resident aliens? Someone that is available for consultations, not to give a “webinar”
 - Awaiting response from:
- Allan Tsang - about when the lump sum deposits are going to be made - is the Direct Deposit process for IS completed?

Outreach Committee:

- Can we request to have an Outreach tab in the new DGSC Web page? We are currently brainstorming ideas (similar to the International Student Spotlight in the Advocate that you proposed), as well as working on several how-to documents and we would like to have a space to upload that - we decided that creating another platform is not user-friendly.

E. Officer for Student Life & Services (Carmin Quijano) (Interim)

- Thank you so much for welcoming me to the student committee. I am honored to be here.
- I have more questions than things to report, since I just began 2 weeks ago.
- I had an orientation with Rod
- We went over office hours, budget, projects
- I have some activities in mind, I would like to know more about the committees, am I responsible for a committee. Who's on what committee. I know we have set activities for the semester.
- I have an idea for a Virtual Theater Collective from Puerto Rico- I spoke to them and they are willing to perform for students. They're fully booked right now, but perhaps we could book after spring break
- Poetry readings is another activity I would like to pursue
- Rod mentioned a talent show, which I am fully in support of too.

- I am reaching out to all of you to put together a calendar of events for the upcoming plenary.
- Please send me your project ideas

F. Officer for Technology & Library (Edward Charnley)

- Met with Emily Drabinski from the library for a breakdown of the current library situation, which appears as follows:
The Library has entered “Stage 1” of reopening, which entails:
 - Staff are being rotated in to deal with backlogs of mail and returned books.
 - There are hundreds of books and boxes of mail to be processed.
 - This process began a week ago (week of January 25th 2021).
 - This will be slow - there are only 4 staff members involved (volunteers) and they are being rotated in on a daily basis, with no more than one staff member on site per day, spending no more than 4 hours on site.
 - Building restrictions remain in place which severely restricts the libraries ability to speed up this process - Emily Drabinski was reluctant to put a specific date one when this would be finished, but she was confident that it would not take excessively long despite the restrictions on staffing.
 - In relation to this, it is now possible to return books, but the policy of no fines or required returns will remain in place - if you wish to return books you can, but only if you wish to.
 - As of next week (starting Mon Feb 8th 2021) there will be scanning services made available for students - I will update on how that will work on Monday after Emily lets me know.
 - Emily’s biggest concern at the moment is that she is being forced to slash the library budget.
 - 5% this year, followed by another 5% next year.
 - At this point she feels that these cuts will push the library over the edge into becoming “unviable” as a research resource.
 - GC library is idiosyncratic, and is (meant to be) defined by the research interests of students and staff, which will become increasingly impossible.
 - Two major problems she has identified are:
 - E-books are more expensive and not less expensive than normal books and this is having a detrimental effect on their ability to acquire new material.
 - The acquisition process is byzantine and obtuse.
 - Emily is asking for student support within their departments to rally around this (create a list about some of the tissues they’ve been facing regarding library resources).
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- I will be turning out a series of articles on NYC Mayoral candidates over the next couple of months (I hope - it will depend on how long I can wait for campaigns to respond to my requests for interviews and info).
 - If any of you have any questions which you think are pertinent to mayoral candidates ideas/views/plans for CUNY please let me know.
 - Sara and I are both interested and excited about the possibility of promoting political awareness among the student body.

V. New Business

A. Approval of New Program Representatives

- Shoko Tachikawa (Data Analysis and Visualization)
- John Young (Classics)

Moved by: KA

Seconded by EC

Vote: motion passes unanimously

B. Steering Committee Plans for Spring Semester

RH: We covered this earlier in Officer Reports

C. 2021 Citywide Elections - Political Education & CUNY Votes / CUNY Civics

SO: We covered this. #NewDeal4CUNY & Ed's Mayoral Article for The Advocate

D. Resolution Demanding a Safe Vessel at NYC Hudson Yards

SO: This resolution is on hold for now because it is still being developed, so we will table this until next meeting.

E. Sixth-Year Funding for Doctoral Students

- F. Signing on to open letter urging CUNY to divest from prisons and cut ties from Corcraft, a company that utilizes prison slavery. You can view the letter and student/faculty groups across CUNY which have signed [here](#).

Moved by RH

Seconded by EC

Vote: motion passes unanimously

VI. Announcements

VII. Adjournment

Meeting is adjourned at: 6:54 pm