



Steering Meeting *Minutes* May 7, 2021

Attendance

Present: Adam Kocurek, Carmin Quijano-Seda, Christian Martinez, Cristina Pardo Porto, Ed Charnley, Katie Anderson, Natacha Pawa, Rod Hurley, Sara Ortiz, Sharanya Dutta

Absent: Silvia Rivera Alfaro

Meeting called to order at 4:39pm

I. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve: SD

Seconded: AK

Vote: Approved unanimously

II. Approval of Minutes of the April 2, 2021 Meeting

Motion to approve: SD

Seconded: AK

Vote: Approved unanimously

III. Executive Committee Reports

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

- DGSC Elections closed May 3! Thanks Christian, for thinking of me, messaging me, and helping me out at 1am Indian time! Super appreciate it.
- 9.32% of the students voted (309 students). Those are not great numbers but in keeping with full remote voting + last year's numbers. We're a little bit lower than last year.
- I will now work on resolving ties and Rod will check if the people who have been elected are willing to serve. We will then hopefully have a final list of elected candidates as reps and in committees by the time the May plenary (May 21) comes around.
- In that plenary, after approving/ratifying the at-large and program reps, we will each explain the current positions we occupy as Co-Chairs, USS+UFS and then solicit nominations from the plenary body for who should be EC next year.
- If there's only one candidate, the plenary body votes and they are elected. If there is more than one candidate, then each person gives a very brief pitch for why they'd be a good fit, and then take questions from people. And then the plenary body votes.
- We collect nominations for steering members (all the Officers) after each current Officer has briefly explained their role. Then the same process happens. Who takes exactly which steering officer role is

worked out later sometimes, people are just voted on to the steering body generally, although preferences are indicated. In the interest of brevity, please have something written down and keep it very brief. It's already a very long meeting and we do not want it to go on longer than necessary.

- If you are not continuing in your current role, please think of a suitable new representative that may be able to take that work on. Reach out to people you know, see if they're interested in serving. It helps to know who we can nominate beforehand even though lots of people nominate on the spot etc.

B. Co-Chair for Communications (Rod Hurley)

Recent Meetings:

- 4/27 - I attended a meeting with the president, provost, OSA, Communications, and IT regarding new student orientation and engagement. They would like us to create short welcome videos similar to what we did last year. They also asked us to create a slack channel for new students to connect with other students in their programs. I would like some help updating the new representatives orientation guide. This is a good way to update/re-acquaint yourself with the DGSC, especially if you're planning to serve next year. Please let me know if you can help with any of these.
- 4/29 - At GC Reactivation Committee Monthly Meeting we received updates regarding preparations for limited return to campus in the fall.
 - Registration so far - 50% of students are in at least 1 hybrid class - Admin is still determining how/when hybrid classes will meet
 - They do not yet know what the protocols for entry will be
 - Renovations to classrooms at 6' distancing are ongoing.
- However, all these plans will most likely change because since that meeting CUNY announced that they are moving toward 3' distancing and 60-75% reopening. Apparently some campuses have paused fall registration so that they can make those changes.

Upcoming Meetings:

- 5/19 - Co-Chairs Meeting with Office of Student Affairs
- 5/21 - DGSC Outgoing Plenary beginning at 3PM, followed by Plenary-Elect Meeting at 4:30PM
 - You are required to attend both meetings. Even if you will not be a DGSC representative next term.

Updates/Announcements:

- The Art/Photo Exhibition is now live on our website (<http://cunydgsc.org/dgsc-art-and-photo-exhibit>), with contributions from 22 students from 17 different programs. Over the next few weeks the contributors and their works will be featured on our social media.
- Please be sure to update your transition memo ASAP, even if you are planning to continue next year in the role! A year from now, even if you are still serving in your current role, having that information out-of-date by more than a year is not good.
- Once the composition for the incoming Steering Committee is confirmed, we will be scheduling a joint steering committee meeting for early-to-mid-June. It is important that you attend this meeting.
- You should also anticipate scheduling a transition meeting with your successor **in June**.

C. Co-Chair for Business (Adam Kocurek)

- The Provost Search committee has finished interviewing candidates. I have sent my short list and individual ratings to the conference organizer, who will tabulate the average scores from the total feedback from the committee, and will send the top three to the President for interviews/campus visits. In my opinion, the top three candidates (there is a general consensus among who the best interviewees were) are very good, and would all fit into the Provost role very well.
- I've been having multiple meetings with grant recipients, program representatives, and chartered org leaders about spending their budgets. Unfortunately, many of them have waited until the very end of the semester to begin planning, when they are all feeling burned out and overextended. There is this fear, also, that if they don't use their money, they will "lose it," and I'm trying to mitigate those concerns while also trying to help them organize strategies and plans to best suit the needs of their departments/organizations.
 - I have noticed that many of the check requests being submitted by program reps are riddled with errors, and it is slowing down the process, as I have to follow up and get forms, updated address information, etc.
- 2021-2022 Budget - I will have to present a draft budget on the May plenary for the coming academic year.
 - This budget is more premature than it normally would be because:
 - While we never incorporate budget roll-over in the May budget proposal, it always factors into the CCB planning, and to be honest, I have absolutely no idea what our roll-over is going to be, though I hope for our sakes it is large.
 - The Fall semester enrollment is definitely going to be smaller than normal, but by how much is still a mystery - I won't have that information until June from Elise
 - I am going to draft the budget over the next week, and I think I'm going to artificially deflate enrollment by 10% just so that when I get the final enrollment numbers, it's not so drastic a change and I won't have to scrap the whole thing.
 - I am also going to try to beef up the program and chartered org allocations for the 2021-2022 budget, but I don't want to double it.
 - In retrospect, doubling the allocation budgets proved to be a real headache and different programs were able to make wildly different uses of it.
- Stipends - please upload your June stipend requests if you haven't already, as with any remaining stipends you are owed. Co-Chair for June-August get \$705.67 per month, UFS/USS get \$352.8 per month, and Steering Officers get \$235.2 per month.
- Training: Once we elect a new plenary and steering body, I and the other Co-Chairs will begin the process of summer orientation and job training. With us going hybrid in the Fall semester, it remains to be seen what a "hybrid DGSC" will look like, so bear with us (me) - we are going to be learning together. I am going to bring this up again at the next OSA/DGSC meeting so that I can start meaningfully prepping for training.
- DSCWorks account permissions and accessing check requests.

D. USS Delegate (Sara Ortiz)

● USS Committees Progress

- Mental Health Committee
 - Mental Health Resources prominently displayed on every CUNY student's Blackboard & CUNYFirst Account
 - The Month of May is Mental Health Awareness Month - We have created a planning committee for a **CUNY Student March for Mental Health and Suicide Awareness at the Highline/Hudson Yards on Sunday, May 30th** ~ Candlelight (LED?) Vigil at The Vessel. We have created a [Google Jamboard](#) to brainstorm the planning process.
 - This event will be to amplify the [DGSC & USS Pass Joint Resolution Demanding a Safe 'Vessel' at Hudson Yards](#)
 - Began conversation with Abigail Thomas, Executive Vice Chair of CCSD, regarding officially chartering with USS.
- Racial Equity Committee
 - No updates
- Gender Equity & LGBTQ+ Committee
 - No updates
- Legislative Affairs Committee
 - Progress has been made with respect to "Closing the TAP gap". USS has made its way through the NYS legislative session with some strong wins for CUNY such as a 3-year tuition freeze, increased TAP Award, funding for mental health services and so much more. As the end of the semester and summer approaches we will be shifting to City Council advocacy, our legislative Director Jasper Diaz (legislatedirector@usscuny.org), and Vice-Chair of Legislative Affairs Sumana Ali (legislative@usscuny.org) will be leading the efforts in advocacy regarding the New York City Council.
- Academic Affairs Committee
 - A P/NC [Flexible Grading Policy Resolution for the Spring 2021 Semester](#) has been passed in committee to be brought to USS Steering at the rescheduled meeting this coming Monday, May 10th.
 - Election of replacement Vice Chair - Jonathan Hanon from the Graduate Center.
 - A [memo to encourage local SGA support](#) was submitted to the Council of Presidents, to be voted on in each of their elections.
 - The transition team will work on encouraging CUNY to permanently abolish the SAT and GRE requirements. Professors will be "strongly encouraged" to be trained in and refrain from using anything other than Blackboard or Zoom for virtual or hybrid lectures.

● USS Scholarship Committee

The USS scholarship committee is in full swing. Scholarship applications opened yesterday (May 6th). Please let students know that if they qualify to apply for a scholarship, it will be indicated in their CUNYfirst Student Center, under "to do". We are still looking for additional members. If you or anyone you may know is interested in serving on this committee as a reader or reviewer, please reach out to our Executive Director Robin Green (executivedirector@usscuny.org) to join and learn more!

- **Next USS Plenary**
 - **Sunday, May 16, 2021 - 12 noon**
 - Elections Plenary
 - Elections of Vice-Chair for Disability Affairs and Vice-Chair for Fiscal Affairs Vacancies
 - You can view live stream of all USS plenaries on our [Facebook Live webpage](#)
- **Other News**
 - Members of USS Committees spoke to NY1 News reporter Ron Lee this morning (May 7th) at Brooklyn College, to advocate for CUNY to establish the Muslim holidays of Eid al Adha and Eid al Fitr as official academic holidays (without classes). [See change.org petition "Demanding CUNY Cancel Classes for Eid"](#)
 - I have begun to collaborate with CUNY students to discuss establishing a CUNY Jewish Coalition to advocate for the safety and religious rights of Jewish students.
- **Transition Document**
 - I have begun working on updating the 2019 transition document

E. UFS Liaison (Natacha Pawa)

- I attended to the Graduate council on May 5 :
 - Some departments removed the GRE as an admission requirement..
- Library to reopen in Fall (Emily Drabinski)
- Meeting with Joe Boninger this Wednesday, May 12, 2021, to clarify my opinion on the Reopening resolution
- Last UFS meeting of the semester, **May 11, 2021.**

IV. Steering Officer Reports

A. Officer for Funding (Christian Martinez)

- The last grants committee meeting was on April 28th
- We had no grant applications
- With the leftover budget, we were thinking about donating some of our budget to the Emergency Grant fund. Thoughts?

B. Officer for Governance & Membership (Katie Anderson)

- no major updates
- look at my earrings :)

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

- Today 05/07 at 10:00 a.m. we hosted "Navigating NYSHIP" and I think there are important details to learn from this. In Fall 2020, I created the event and sent the invitations online. We had only 6 people in the meeting. Therefore, this Spring I created a google form for registration: 17 people signed in for the event and these people will also receive the slides. Nevertheless, only 2 people participated in the event. As you can imagine this was a really bad moment and I felt very ashamed because William McGowan, Elise Perram and Eric Brown are really interested in outreach. Elise asked for ideas from the

students who participated. An idea Elise mentioned is to present at one of the plenary meetings to give information to all representatives; I share the idea here to see if this could be the meeting with new representatives so that they could be prepared for helping incoming students. Another option would be to leave this petition for the next Steering Committee. I will definitely include the details about Navigating NYSHIP in my transition memo.

- We have yoga for everyone during the summer!!!! The classes will continue to be on Tuesday and Thursday at 9:00 a.m. The dates are May 13, 18, 20, 25, 27 and June 01, 03, 08, 10, 15, 17, 22, 24, 29. I will start by informing students who are already registered in yoga. I sent an email to Elise Perram asking when we can start sharing the information publicly. I hope I will be able to share the information via our servlist on Monday.

D. Officer for Outreach (Cristina Pardo Porto)

- No updates to report.
- This semester we didn't use the budget.

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

- Native American Jewelry Workshop (May 5)
 - o I am happy to report that the workshop was a success in terms of assistance and the participants' feedback.
 - o 48 students registered for the workshop; and 37 attended the event.
 - o We recorded it for those who could not attend; and sent the video the day after. It has 10 views so far.
 - o We spent a total of \$300, and sent out thirty \$10 gift cards to the first 30 participants who registered.
 - o Everybody got their kits on time, and were happy about the quality of the materials.
 - o The workshop took a little longer than expected (until 9:30 pm), and that's something that we will take into consideration for the next time.
 - o But, overall, participants were super happy and interested in this type of event. One student said on the chat that "this was the best event she has ever attended in the GC". So, I take that as a huge accomplishment.
- End of the semester party (May 21 - 8:30 pm?)
 - o Due to a personal situation, the DJ we used for the last party is unavailable.
 - o I have two DJs in mind, but I haven't contacted them yet.
 - o Do you think that I could offer them a \$300 honorarium for a 1.5 hr set? Or if you have any other idea, let me know.

F. Officer for Technology & Library (Edward Charnley)

- The additional STF funding was used to purchase the Duke E Book collection; those books should be available at some point in the summer, but definitely in the fall.

- o There are some pre-existing deposits in the JSTOR ebook collection; because of this, if you find something in JSTOR ebooks that you want the library to own, there is now some space for purchasing JSTOR books because we have the Duke collection.
- Library is working to set up interlibrary loan and planning to pilot a grab and go system in the summer.
 - o This is contingent on the reopening process.
 - o The plan is a soft pilot in July. The complete services will be online in the fall. ALL DEPENDENT ON THE REOPENING COMMITTEE.
- Study space will be available in fall based on a reservation system.
- NYPL has begun a grab and go service for its research collections for Grad Centre affiliates.
<https://www.nypl.org/research/grab-and-go-for-researchers>

V. New Business

- A.** [Open Letter](#) on Persistent Delayed Payments for Graduate Center Science Fellows
Motion to approve: SD
Seconded: AK
Vote: Unanimously approved

VI. Announcements

VII. Adjournment

Meeting is adjourned at: 6:50PM