



Steering Meeting *Minutes* October 1, 2021

Attendance:

Present: Debbie Leter (DL), Katherine Anderson (KA), Sharanya Dutta (SD), Edward Charnley (EC), Adashima Oyo (AO), Silvia Rivera-Alfaro (SRA), Carmin Quijano-Seda (CQS), Parisa Montazaran Osmanovic (PMO)

Guests: Jonathan Hanon (JH)

Absent: Adam Kocurek, Angela LaScala-Gruenewald, Sameer Sabharwal-Siddiqi

Meeting called to order at 4:08PM

I. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve: SRA

Seconded: DL

Vote: Unanimously Approved

II. Approval of Minutes of the September 10, 2021 Meeting

Motion to approve: SRA

Seconded: CQS

Vote: Unanimously approved

III. Executive Committee Reports

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

Activites:

- **SPARC compliance:**
 - Has everyone completed their SPARC training? They are more strictly enforcing this requirement now and several reps have received an email saying they're ineligible to serve. We're not allowed to ask whether this is because of SPARC or something else, but Katie is in contact with the reps to ask them to complete SPARC and to write to Eric to see if they can be added back as reps. We've been losing reps at an alarming rate lately, and we really need some stability, so SPARC compliance should not at all be the reason that someone isn't allowed to serve. Please complete the SPARC training yourselves ASAP, and encourage your program reps and at-large reps you know to do it ASAP.
 - SPARC is not the same as ESPARC, nor is it the same as WVP training (all of which you have to complete and all of which are in Blackboard under "My Organizations").
- **Chartered Orgs:**
 - **The chartered org rosters are now live, please sign the chartered org rosters when you have a moment?**

- I will send out a final email soon and begin dechartering the chartered orgs that have not been active now for 3 consecutive semesters.
- I'm particularly worried about STEM representation in chartered orgs. *I think we should reach out to our STEM students in a more targeted way with the new SMC—maybe department wise. We cannot afford to have all our STEM chartered orgs dechartered.*
- **GC reopening, steering office hours, and room reservations**
 - These are all new business items, and I will speak more on them at the end of the meeting.

B. Co-Chair for Communications (Deborah Leter)

Activites/Recent Meetings:

- *9/17 - Call with Sameer & Leanne Fan from Adjunct Project/Out-of-state campaign* to discuss the out-of-state tuition issue as it pertains to MA students. MA students were unintentionally left out of the petition that was circulated last May, the focus was on PhD students. The GC is very much divided between PhD and MA students, and the out-of-state campaign reflected that, since the focus was on PhDs. Leanne has been in touch with several affected masters students to plan ways forward -- but haven't heard anything since then.
- *9/27 - Introductory meeting with President Robin Garrell:*
 - President & Provost are organizing a virtual town hall on October 27th (12-1:30), we should feel free to suggest topics we think should be discussed.
 - We talked about the importance of clear and open communication, and I mentioned that in my brief time as CCC so far this seems to be a major issue affecting students at the GC: students aren't getting responses from admin on issues affecting them (i.e. OIS), students aren't receiving the guidance and updates they need from admin (i.e. the FICA issues and students giving each other advice on the listserv)... and I also said that we as the DGSC are thinking about our own communication and outreach strategies to make sure we operate in as transparent and democratic a way as possible. We talked about how to get information to students most effectively (with email fatigue, more town hall type of events where students can ask direct questions would be helpful).
 - Out-of-state issue for MA students: Pres. Garrell had raised this issue to the Chancellor back in the Spring, but this seems to be a firm decision on CUNY Central's part (apparently, it would be too complicated to manage this as it would require doing so for MA students across the CUNY system). I want to suggest we write a statement as the DGSC in support of MA students at the GC (to be discussed under New Business).
 - One of Pres. Garrell's projects right now is showcasing student work, and hopes to do more of this moving forward.

Updates:

- Co-chairs are still having almost weekly meetings with Jose, our website developer, to discuss the new DGSC website. By next week we should know whether the software upgrade that Jose's team is

working on has been successful, and what our timeline will be moving forward. Our big ask right now is for a concrete timeline so we can speed up this long-winded process and roll out the new website by mid-year. I will share more concrete updates when I have some.

Upcoming Meetings:

- 10/20: First Graduate Council meeting of the year
- 10/22: EC meeting with Provost (rescheduled from 10/01)
- 10/22: Co-Chairs & OLT meeting with IT

C. Co-Chair for Business (Adam Kocurek)

- I have not yet received any input from GC students regarding the proposed budget for FY 2021-2022. I'm taking that as a sign that the budget was largely well-received. If you have any questions or concerns about the budget, please don't hesitate to let me know. Please note that I can make changes to the individual budget lines with CCB discretion (without vote by plenary) so long as they do not exceed 10%, so I can continue to make minor changes to the budget on an as-needed basis.
 - This coming week, I will sit down and calculate all the individual program allocation totals, doubling them from the base standard as I did last year, and notify the reps. However, only if the budget is approved by plenary will the doubling of the program and chartered organization allocations be accepted. For now, I am telling reps that they can spend at *least* the bare minimum for imminent events, so long as they have reps who completed SPARC and are eligible to serve on the DGSC.
- All but one of the outstanding requisitioned honorarium payments from last FY were processed and mailed yesterday (9-30-2021), so that is finally behind us. We seem to have a procedural system finally in place. I have already received emails from reps concerned about paying honorarium to non-CUNY recipients, and have already begun that process with them, because even though it certainly won't take 5+ months any more, it will still take several weeks.
- After dozens of emails and no less than 7 calls back and forth with members of the business office, bursar office, and CUNY Central Office, I was able to successfully renew the FY 2021 vendor IDs of steering officers who are continuing to serve with us this year. The new procedure, as mandated by CUNY Central Office, was much more complicated than ever before, and required extensive back-and-forth with members of the business office and bursar office (who also had questions) until we got last-minute approval from Central Office. This is one example of many (including requisitioned honorariums) in how the CCB role has had to rapidly change and become more laborious since 2019, and it has started to negatively impact both the timeliness of my work and imposes much greater labor obligations than my predecessor had. I'm going to bring this up with the president and provost, as this is getting untenable.
- The Graduate Education Task Force met on 9-30-2021. It was a productive session, but only introductory. We will be meeting monthly, with more updates to come.
- I will be emailing our affiliates this coming week with an update regarding their projected budgets, and to also get from them their affiliate reports to share at the next plenary meeting.

- Remember to please generate your stipend requests for the months coming! You can find your old stipend requests under "My Content Activity" on the home page of DSC Works and clone them to quickly generate new requests.

D. USS Delegate (Edward Charnley)

Activities:

- Since the previous Plenary I have liaised with various members of the USS and attended a 7 hour USS Nominations Plenary.

Updates:

- The USS is in a somewhat confused state as it passes through the process of nominations and elections. Their procedure for elections is somewhat archaic, and does not lend itself well to an online modality. As such, it is likely to consume the next USS Plenary meeting in its entirety.
- Nerdeen Mohsen and Jacklyn Tomlin have been nominated for Vice Chair of Graduate Affairs.

E. UFS Liaison (Parisa Montazaran Osmanovic)

Activities:

- Since the previous Plenary I have discussed issues of vaccination requirements/ deadlines/ accessibility with various members of the UFS and attended the 9/28 UFS Plenary.

Announcements:

- Key points from 9/28 Plenary:
 - Open meeting law now allows for public bodies to do their business via teleconferencing with certain requirements so until Jan 2022 we will do so and reassess if UFS has suitable physical space to meet
 - approved chairs of standing committees, advisory committees,
 - university has legal authority to request, not mandate Faculty and staff to vax; mandate would require union renegotiation of employment criteria
 - Student mandate is effective; deadline for students to upload proof of vax is 10/7. University might force academic withdrawal, which could impact the students financial financial aid, etc. - Whether or not the university is going to do this is not clear to Marty Burke - he's been in multiple meetings, listening to both sides
 - withdrawals could affect enrollment for this semester and going forward and university could levy sanctions through the board of trustees bylaws
 - For the week of 9/22-9/26 there were eight positive cases identified by campus testing program and 33 cases identified outside of qt protocols. There have been 128 positive cases identified out of 45,175 tests. What that means for a student population is not clear since that information is not on the website, but testing is ongoing and testing will continue.

- Central office is requesting 70% of classes in Spring be offered face to face; face to face would include hybrid-flex and 30% of classes would be either hybrid or fully online synchronous and asynchronous.
 - Hy-flex is not a modality, it is “an attribute of face to face courses” that allows for virtual participation - the 30% would be hybrid and fully online courses.
- it's not clear if the central office has the authority to mandate what the modalities of instruction might be on a specific campus, let alone that every full time faculty member would be teaching at least one face to face class but they're doing it anyway - it was previously decided by individual faculty members, by departments, by divisions
- Since NYS is no longer in state of emergency central office is flexing admin muscles and wants more uniformity
- People were annoyed about change from everbridge and concerned with privacy/security in the transfer of data from one system to another
- One prof asked “if the university does drop students, is it possible that at some point in the future that students get vaccinated, would it be possible for them to then be readmitted to courses?” to which marty said he has no idea yet.
- concern about no social distancing required next semester
- people pissed that a month in there is no concrete details on Fall reopening policy, ie the Oct 7 mandate throwing enrollment into flux
 - one figure they heard is 80% of students have uploaded vax proof, but 25k have no documentation
- concern about hy-flex and what that will mean for class size, some had classes go from 30 to 50
 - they want rules about what different classes mandate
- overall university enrollment is down 7.6%, undergraduate enrollment is down 8.6%, first time freshmen down 11.5%

IV. Steering Officer Reports

A. Officer for Funding (Angela LaScala-Gruenewald)

Activites:

- Assembling grants committee to review September grant
- Working on promotional ideas for October (stay tuned...)

Updates:

- Right now, main priority is that I need one more person to serve on the grants committee in order to begin grant review process. Any ideas on who might be a good DGSC rep to serve? Email me if you have any thoughts!
- Trying to think about promotional ideas for our DGSC grants as well as ways to promote other student funding opportunities. How have previous Officers of Funding done this? Seems like most OF work has focused on grant making and grant management but are there other ways this role could be leveraged

to help fund students given vast funding discrepancies/inequities at GC? Email if you have any thoughts!

Announcements:

- Thank you for such a warm welcome on Friday! Excited to get to work.

B. Officer for Governance & Membership (Katie Anderson)

Updates:

- Jonathan Hanon has compiled a list of proposed edits to the Constitution and Bylaws. I will work to schedule a meeting to review the changes.
- Many changes to program representation have occurred in the past week.
 - depending on word from Eric Brown, philosophy and WGS may be without representation.
 - one phil rep received votes in the last election and can be brought in easily. the second set will require a petition.
 - WGS would need to submit a petition to reinstate representation
 - We still have plenty of potential At-Large reps on deck, so no worries on this front - I am working on contacting those who are next in line.

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

Activities:

- Yoga. Until now 4 sessions have taken place (September 20, 23, 27 and 30) with the participation of around 15 people per session, excepting for the first session that had 10 people since the information on the class was still not being spread.
- Navigating NYSHIP will take place on Friday 8th or 15th at 9:00 a.m. I am currently waiting for the response by Student Affairs on what date they prefer. I would like to hear your ideas on how to attract students to this important event. I established the hour via survey, but I only got 17 responses.

Updates:

- There are important updates in relation to the composition of the Health and Wellness Committee. During this week Kattie informed me that one of the members, Pamela Stenberg, is not eligible to serve on the DGSC. Therefore, we would need a replacement. Nevertheless, I am also worried about Monica Thompson, who has not responded to any of my emails and was absent to our first meeting.

Announcements:

- I shared the information from WorkWell NYC about their [fall calendar of digital classes](#) on the "DSC-Listserv". They have classes I thought we could incorporate into our offer, such as Zumba. I believe despite the fact that there is this option in the city, we could have our option not only in physical activity, but also in the communal well being. For example, if we had African dances we could look for ways of raising awareness about the situation that black students face. I would like to have your ideas about it.

D. Officer for Outreach (Sameer Sabharwal-Siddiqi)

No report.

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

Updates:

- In the past plenary meeting, I announced the **three major events** I'll organize this semester, which are **90's Board Games Night (Oct 12)**, **Native American Jewelry Workshop (Oct 27)**, and the **Talent Show (Dec 2)**.
- Last week I bought **four (4) new board games** (Mall Madness, Don't Wake Daddy, Pretty Pretty Princess, and Guess Who?) for a **total cost of \$65.27**.
- I talked to Inma to help me prepare a **flyer**, and I created a **registration form** to be included on the flyer.
- Here is the flyer Inma came up with:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uzb9LlpfSNA4BXne9bLbWFZEPNjHRonC/view?usp=sharing>
- Here is the Registration Form: <https://forms.gle/6n4keB5W3B5DSPRR9>
- I also reserved **rooms 5414 and 5409** from **6:00 to 9:00 p.m.** on **October 12**. (*I just need to confirm that we can actually use those rooms for that period of time.*)
- I will be **distributing the flyer** on **Monday, Oct. 4**.
- I have also contacted **Bri Alexander** about the **Native American Jewelry Workshop**. She confirmed that she is available to do it on **Oct. 27**, but we might need one more week to get everything ready. So, the final date could change to the first week of November. I'll keep you posted.

Announcements:

- I got accepted to present in person at the American Anthropological Association (AAA) Annual Conference on November 19. Thus, I will not be able to attend November's plenary meeting. But I will send my report beforehand. I just wanted to give you all the heads up.

F. Officer for Technology & Library (Adashima Oyo)

Activites:

I just met with Emily from the library. Three main outcomes:

- Reviewing resumes for Head of Reference search.
- Emily doesn't think it's a good idea to survey the students about the library.
- Emily doesn't think the library should increase hours to the evenings and weekends without the presence of library staff (and not just security).

- Emily said she's open to coming to one of our meetings, and speaking directly to the DGSC SC and hearing our feedback. Are we allowed to have her attend one of our meetings to speak with us for about 5 minutes or so? I actually think it would be a good idea!

I do think she wants to work with us, but she has her own constraints. Some good news is that she will check to see if GC students can use the IUDC libraries in our area since they all have more generous hours (i.e., NYU's library is open 24 hours). Also, she suggested we consider pursuing using the 8th floor for additional space for students since the building is open until 10pm, but the library closes at 6pm.

Announcements:

- GC Library has recently received \$60K in funds. This should help with some staffing.

V. New Business

A. Suggestions for new Officer for Outreach

DL: If you have any suggestions for this role, please let us know.

B. GC's reopening plan and Steering Committee office hours

SD: I wanted to flag some gradual changes in our office hours and presence in the building as the campus reopens. This is the last year Adam and I can be on steering. We are looking to focus the Spring semester on training the next Co-Chairs. There are many in-person duties that we need to re-familiarize ourselves with. The goal to do this is by the end of this semester. Can you all find time to gradually increase your in person hours, perhaps during your office hours? We should be prepared to be fully in-person in the spring.

C. DGSC room reservations

SD: There is a room reservations guide and all of steering should participate in signing off on room reservation requests processed through Works.

D. DGSC statement of support for MA students affected by out-of-state tuition issue

DL will draft statement for steering to review before presenting to a vote at the next plenary meeting.

E. Divestment from Fossil Fuel Pipelines Statement

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1stnB3TiZ_qhiCxnddCvoLqvTEBxGPq_efaFcyIj6Z4Y/edit

VI. Announcements

None.

VII. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: SRA

Second: DL

Meeting is adjourned at 6:13PM by unanimous consent.