



Steering Meeting *Minutes* December 3, 2021

Attendance:

Present: Adam Kocurek (AK), Deborah Leter (DL), Sharanya Dutta (SD), Edward Charnley (EC), Parisa Montazaran Osmanovic (PMO), Angela LaScala-Greunewald (ALG), Katherine Anderson (KA), Christopher Campbell (CC), Carmin Quijano Seda (CQS), Adashima Oyo (AO), Silvia Rivera Alfaro (Proxy: Jonathan Hanon(JH))

Absent: No Absences

Meeting Chair: AK

Minutes: DL

Minutes Assist: JH

Meeting called to order at 4:44PM

I. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve: JH

Seconded: CC

Vote: Passes unanimously

II. Approval of Minutes of the November 5, 2021 Meeting

Motion to approve: JH

Seconded: CC

Vote: Passes unanimously

III. Executive Committee Reports

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

- **Chartered Org Rosters:** If you still haven't found the time to sign the chartered org rosters, please please do. They have **until Dec 20** to get active status, or they'll lose their funding. Please sign ALL the rosters, if you can, it only takes a bit. They're all pretty close to total, with the 11 of us signing, that should basically put them all over the limit.
- **SPARC:** I hope everyone has completed their SPARC training. If not, please email Eric Brown ASAP.
- **Room Reservations:**

- Please continue to check room reservations. There was some confusion about one with non-CUNY attendees. It's been taken care of for the moment, but please watch the video if you haven't already and email me with any questions. Also, if anyone does not have access to the other two emails (dgsc@cunydgsc.org AND dsc.steering.committee@gmail.com) PLEASE talk to Debbie asap. She will get you into those two emails. We have to check these two+our officer emails during our office hours, so things don't fall through the cracks. The steering.committee one specifically is the one where an email is auto-generated with every room reservation request, and if we have to email Matt Schoengood for permission, that's the email we have to forward. In the case of this confusing request, they didn't need an exception, because it was only one room on one day, not 8 weeks from the date of request. It had non-CUNY folks coming into the building, so I had wanted to check with Matt, just so they wouldn't be stopped at the door. But visitors are allowed, and the event is slated to end at 6pm on a Friday, so they shouldn't need special permission as long as they're doing their due diligence re: GC-mandated paperwork.
- If you do use an exception, please remember to update the Google sheet: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1MjOJCiSoY7WFBqHGE8IRujjWFlatArlI85NINOKbFHE/edit?usp=sharing>
- If a room request has been approved for personal use (this was the case Nov 5), there's a different sheet you have to update so we can keep track: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1NT8JYNUUIJOCFZDyPF7DNBFPDyYGhqtC-REzyWu129U/edit#gid=0> (this has not been updated by whoever approved that room reservation request)
- All this information is color-coded and highlighted in the Ultimate Room Reservation Guide, including a link to the training video: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PpuAMilpwQAOoqI1oJXSRE_yBKQGz85sKzLVfMSwPec/edit?usp=sharing
- **Sprintax TDS:** The workshop is going to happen at some point before the end of this semester, no date yet. I have sent OIS a very detailed PDF with all of the questions we got from students about the Sprintax TDS platform + my own questions, so if they send it to Sprintax TDS ahead of time, we should be covered and have an actually useful workshop. In the event I cannot attend it because of a conflict, I'd like multiple international students to attend. This will only really make sense for international students, so Ed+Silvia+Carmin, will you please attend this with me/instead of me if I can't? Also perhaps Christopher, so that you're looped into the issue? I'll let you know as soon as I know what the date and time of the workshop is.
- **Hiring committees:** Both the Adjunct Project and OpenCUNY need one new leader apiece. I sent out an email soliciting volunteers for the hiring committees. We have a defined structure but we do need a rep on each hiring committee and a member of the student body not affiliated with the DGSC, so please volunteer/send me your suggestions! And we need one of you on the steering committee for each hiring committee as well. Email me on ccsa@cunydgsc.org ASAP please.

Announcements:

- I'm termed out in my CCSA position next academic year, so we are looking for a new CCSA. If anyone here is interested, or if you know someone who might be a good fit, please let me know! Happy to go over the details re: managing workload and expectations etc.

Discussion:

EC: OIS and CUNY Central want to push Sprintax. Some international students are ready to use their own funds to get private accountants so they don't have to use Sprintax. Is there a way to create a database and have a list of accountants that international students have used/how much this costs?

SD: Chris, maybe something you might want to work on? We could put together this information for students. We can ask this question on the international students Whatsapp group. We could reach out to program reps too, and ask them to reach out to international students in their programs. I've also used the New York State tax preparation service and it was helpful. It's a free service. However, I don't think we can do anything about Sprintax TDS, as it's a CUNY Central (Board of Trustees) decision and not a GC one.

JH: Re: Sprintax - I was just appointed as alternate to BoT committee on Fiscal Affairs. Is this where Sprintax is getting discussed?

AK: Jonathan - Would be a good idea to bring this question up at this committee. They might have some insight.

SD: No one in admin is trained in this tax software and only Sprintax TDS can tell students if they've filled the forms out correctly.

Motion to consider New Business Agenda item A. Hiring Committees

Motion to move agenda item forward: SD

Second: CC

Vote: Motion passes unanimously.

CC for OpenCUNY hiring committee.

EC for Adjunct Project hiring committee.

B. Co-Chair for Communications (Deborah Leter)

Activites/Recent Meetings:

11/30: Graduate Council Executive Meeting

- Graduate Council is looking for student nominations for their new Budget Committee (sent out an email to DGSC listserv about it + will bring it up at plenary).
- Several programs are getting rid of their GRE requirements
- Any new business items we want to raise at the next Graduate Council meeting Dec. 15? (To be discussed as a new business agenda item later on)

Updates:

- Website: We've just settled on some key aspects of the website's appearance/visuals and as soon as we're granted permission by our website developer, Jose, to log-in to the website and make edits, we will start editing and updating some of the content. Adam, Sharanya and I will do that for the parts of

the website that we oversee in the first part of January. Part of the work will involve merging Works with the website, so we'll work closely with Jose to do that. Once we return in the Spring, we will share all these updates with you and seek your input + provide training on how to navigate the new website.

Upcoming Meetings:

- EC lunch with President and Provost (Dec. 10)
- Co-chairs meeting with OSA (Dec. 8)
- Graduate Council (Dec. 15)
- College Association Meeting (Dec. 7)

Announcements:

- Elaine Montilla (IT) and Emily Drabinski (Library) will be our guest speakers for next plenary. Are there any special requests for guest speakers for the Spring semester? I'm hoping to have President Garrell come to the first meeting, if she's available. Please feel free to let me know/email me with requests or suggestions.
- I won't be continuing on as CCC next academic year, so we are looking for a new CCC. If anyone here is interested, or if you know someone who might be a good fit, let me know!

C. Co-Chair for Business (Adam Kocurek)

- One of our lawyers, Erin Lloyd, has announced that she is no longer taking clients and is moving away from NY. I've been in contact with another practicing attorney (Ruth Chung) recommended to me by Erin, and we are having conversations about her taking over Erin's position. For now, Austin Brown will be the only lawyer to whom we can refer students.
 - The Law Office of Ruth Chung, Esq., practices in Matrimonial and Family Law, providing services to all five boroughs in New York City. She handles cases involving custody, visitation, divorce, uncontested divorce, child support, orders of protection, pre/post nuptial agreements, and more. Since Austin largely specializes in issues around housing and other legal areas, I think Ruthie would be a nice complement.
 - I know that we talked about potentially getting an attorney who specializes in international law/tax law, but this is such a specialized subfield of law, Erin couldn't recommend to me anyone who met these requirements, and I am eager to get another attorney in our fold as quickly as possible. While I definitely would like to add an international law/tax law attorney, that is a longer-term project.
- I've responded to several program representative emails requesting clarification about deadlines for using their allocations - I will clarify this during our last plenary session for the year. So far, it looks like most programs are electing to save their allocations for use in the Spring semester, though some programs are holding events/conferences this semester using their program allocations.
- College association will be meeting December 8th - I will be presenting our budget for review and approval, and will relay information from this meeting at our following plenary meeting.
- OpenCUNY server costs have changed slightly, as the server now bills differently for bandwidth. This year, server costs have ranged from \$200.43 (Mar. 2021) to \$215.24 (Sep. 2021). They are requesting a total of \$2600 for yearly server costs. Currently, the OpenCUNY Server & Domain Registration budget

line is \$2500, so when I revise the budget for the Spring semester, I will make that adjustment. But they have recovered their website from the cyber attackers and are back up and running.

- Payment - if you haven't submitted your stipend requests for this year yet, please do so ASAP so I can get you paid! Steering updated stipend monthly amounts for December-on are \$399.88.
- Elections are just a few months away now - I can no longer serve in this role after this academic year. If you are interested in running for CCB, please don't hesitate to reach out!

Discussion:

JH: 2500 to 2600: that's something that will need to be voted on at plenary because that's a 4% increase, right?

AK: Yes, correct, as I can only make changes up to 2%. I have very limited power to make changes to the budget, so we'll have to have it approved at plenary.

CQS: The use of program allocation and/or DGSC grants to pay keynote speakers from within the CUNY system. What if the speaker is from the GC, is there a conflict there?

AK: Only if the speaker is a faculty member. DGSC funds can't go towards paying faculty, to safeguard against nepotism. This is a rule across CUNY - to prevent students feeling pressured to use student activity fee money to pay, say, an advisor. I would suggest reaching out to Angela - Officers for Funding can help with this.

CQS: If they are faculty from other CUNY colleges outside the GC, is that a problem?

AK: That's not a problem at all. I know program allocation can't be used to pay faculty, but it might be more flexible with the DGSC grants budget line, but let's double check that. Get in touch with Angela.

D. USS Delegate (Edward Charnley)

Activities:

- Sat in on USS Steering.
- Attended USS Plenary.

Updates:

- The USS continues to find itself unable to elect its steering committee, with one seat remaining deadlocked, and the chairperson position still vacant. Repeated balloting has not managed to fix the problem.
 - USS rules mean that we would require a full quorum to be able pass anything without a supermajority. Numerous campuses have not appointed their USS delegates, and thus a majority of around 70% is required in order to win any election or pass any motion.
 - (In case it isn't obvious, this makes it for all intents and purposes impossible.
- In light of the fact that the USS is, institutionally speaking, incapable of achieving anything, I was thinking it might be nice to start a side project.
 - The [New York Times](#) recently ran a story on the introduction of INT 1867, a bill to allow "non-citizens" to vote in NYC municipal elections. Surprisingly, USS actually managed to push out a resolution in support of this bill.
 - This would be a huge deal for CUNY internationals who are normally politically motivated but barred from active participation in city elections.

- Perhaps the DGSC could produce some kind of statement of support, or advocacy program?
- USS Steering is meeting this Sunday, but no agenda has been sent out yet. This is a trend that has persisted in USS.

Announcements:

- Jonathan: USS Steering would like to vote to support the PSC / CUNY Rising Alliance march regarding the New Deal for CUNY and the new budget, and is putting it up for a vote at USS Steering this Sunday. I would like to get the DGSC Steering's opinion on this matter, in the context that many GC students will be unable to benefit from these conversion lines.

E. UFS Liaison (Parisa Montazaran Osmanovic)

Activites:

- UFS plenary is Tuesday 12/7
- Reactivation Committee is Thursday 12/9
- Liaising with Professor Okome (Brooklyn College) re: conditions for adjuncts
- Liaising with Professor Li (CCNY) re: motion to introduce additional titles and salaries for lecturers at upcoming UFS plenary
- Attended Childcare Services meeting yesterday and expressed interest in data re: historical attendance rates and ratios of students:faculty:staff, gathering data on student need and how to better serve and prioritize grad students
- Met with Provost Everett this morning and plan to meet again after holidays re: issues that can be addressed in the short term, ie reallocation of departmental funds to support existing students with funding that was previously assigned to fully funded students that receive outside fellowships, DEI wrt faculty hiring and admissions processes, etc.

Announcement:

- Need help with language/document to introduce a motion for student liaison to get a vote in the UFS to be distributed prior to plenary on Tuesday. Others are distributing their communications and "warming people up" to their concerns and initiatives and I would like to put this on their radar

Discussion:

JH: When it comes to additional lines and salaries, when it comes to graduate students getting these lines, seems like campuses want you to have a MA degree for you to take on these lecturer lines. The lecturer position actually only requires a BA degree. The Code of Practice regarding Instructional Staff Titles says a lecturer title only requires a BA degree yet so many campuses want a MA degree for this position. So, many of us can't benefit from this because many of us only have BAs until we are ABD. I've been told by UFS Executives this issue is of concern to the PSC and not UFS, so we keep getting tossed around.

PMO: I will be sure to discuss this with Professor Li. Is the issue with hiring? Are people saying "we can't hire you because you don't have a MA?"

JH: I have been affected by this; John Jay Computer Science dept has told me they would have loved to hire me for one of the conversion lines, but because a MA is needed, I was unable to be hired. So, I'm still an adjunct at John Jay, because someone in admin said I needed a masters.

IV. Steering Officer Reports

A. Officer for Funding (Angela LaScala-Gruenewald)

Activites:

- Conducted initial review of three new grant applications
 - Commemorative video of LAILaC's 25th Student Conference (\$700)
 - The Ivory Tower and the Open Worlds: a praxis program (\$700)
 - Feeling the utopia: new pasts and new futures for Latin America (\$700)
- Setting up grant committee meeting to review these grants on 12/6 and invite applicants to observe if they would like to join the discussion
- IOU emails that I need to send as soon as possible: to Katie Anderson (thank you, Katie! sorry I'm behind on this!) to promote grant opportunities among the stem programs and other programs
- Set up social media calendar for promotion of grant opportunities with social media coordinator

Announcements:

- Spring semester grant deadlines:
 - January 21, 2022
 - February 18, 2022
 - March 18, 2022

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

Updates:

- The **DGSC's Winter Talent Show** will be celebrated next Tuesday, **December 7, at 6:00 p.m.** in room 5414. Here is the link to register: <https://forms.gle/dReybAZUGqzaKALj8>
- I have updated the event, and announced yesterday and today that there will be board games to play, food, wine etc. as a way to attract more people.
- So far, only three students have registered for this event.
- I don't know if I should cancel the event, because of low reponses. Any suggestions?
- One suggestion to salvage it, is for the Steering to come to the event, and at least have some food and wine there with the students who can come.

C. Officer for Technology & Library (Adashima Oyo)

Activites:

- Completed three finalist interviews for the Head Reference position
- Met with Interim Chief Librarian to discuss low library utilization rates
- Library staff welcomes ideas from the DGSC

- No technology updates.

Discussion:

JH: As USS Vice Chair for Technology, I attended the CUNY Virtual IT conference, made connections with several CIOs (Chief Information Officers, Elaine Montilla is ours) at CUNY, including Brian Cohen. Trying to push Academic Commons and Manifold as more common things being used, but some campuses are using other softwares and learning management systems. To keep things coherent across campuses, using this software called Navigate. Each campus now has a coherent way in which to look at courses, communicate with professors, that isn't CUNYFirst. CUNY Central has a license for this. Not quite sure why some campuses aren't using it yet. We already have a license. We should probably talk to IT and ask them about it, reach out to other campuses who have updated to this and see how it's going, to see whether we want to upgrade to Navigate from CUNYFirst.

D. Officer for Governance & Membership (Katie Anderson)

Updates:

- Duly Elected:
 - Britton Williams - At-Large Representative (Social Welfare)
- Awaiting acceptance of election:
 - Program Rep - Urban Education
 - At-Large Representative - just emailed me back
 - At-Large Representative
 - At-Large Representative
- There seems to have been some confusion on DGSC membership within the Office of Student Affairs
 - I have created a "clean" list of current representatives and will share this with Eric Brown and Elise Perram at the start of the next semester.
 - (Sharanya, does the CCSA normally perform these checks?)
- There are currently 12 programs without representation (one in progress, some very low enrollment). I will start an effort to make students in these programs aware of their potential resources in the spring.
- DGSC election season is closer than we think!! If you know someone who may be interested in joining the DSGC, invite them to a spring meeting.

Discussion:

JH: Representative eligibility: are representatives removed from their position if they haven't resolved their incompletes?

AK: I think it's a case by case basis. OSA can make exceptions based on student circumstances. We can ask OSA for clarification on this point at our next co-chairs/OSA meeting.

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

Activites:

- The Health and Wellness Committee would like to invite Clare Wilson and someone from the Wellness Center as guests to Plenary during the Spring. For this, I understand the right process would be coordinating with the Co-Chairs. The reason for this proposal is that these offices have a key role for the health of the community but are not very well understood by the community. In the Committee we talked about the need to make information on them available to the student body.
- I am working on scheduling meditation. Due to the very little time left in Fall, we are putting all the sessions in Spring. Meditation is a proposal made by a student, and it is an important inclusive health activity.
- I am starting to schedule the activities for Spring. We will continue yoga, have those meditation sessions. Elise Perram suggested going back to have pilates, but I know we also talked about the chance of having activities led by students. Sara, Jonathan and I talked about creating a “call for proposals”, and we would be sharing the call soon. Nevertheless, I would like to know if the process for paying the students would be the same that we have for paying the yoga professor, and also if there are any kind of limitations the Committee of Health and Wellness has to take into consideration for doing this process.
- We are founding a chartered organisation, tentatively called “GC Students for Disability, Health, and Wellness” which will be for students to organise separate from the DGSC regarding wellness initiatives, and to appoint members to CCSD. Although it is a collective proposal, Jonathan is leading this initiative. He has been in communication with those of you related to chartered organisations.

Updates:

- Jonathan has reached out to Clare Wilson regarding scheduling an open forum on Student Disability Services. We believe the subject has to be discussed in a wider space, because many people have questions about this. For example, there are people with mental health conditions that are debilitating and do not know about their rights for accommodations. Also, the subject of accessibility in the building and other similar subjects should also be addressed.
- Sara is in the process of reaching out to the Wellness Center regarding gaps in services and staff being overwhelmed from taking on multiple roles due to short-staffing.
- Regarding the Wellness Center, I am carrying the process of the nurse practitioner. I mentioned this in our last Steering meeting and the Plenary. I have not heard from any DGSC representative who would like to collaborate on the subject or knew anything about how it was. On my end, I am in the process of learning more about the possibility of hiring a person. For this, I have been talking with the Co-Chairs to find information in our archive on how it was done in the past. At a moment (2017) students were paying about \$12/semester for this service and got to the point to vote about it. Also last year there was a nurse practitioner but the contract was terminated at the end of August due to budget reasons. The Co-Chairs are asking more detail to their predecessors. The nurse practitioner would require a change in the DGSC budget and, therefore, I believe this must be a topic of discussion for the entire Steering, before I continue taking actions with the administration.
- I have no updates on the situation of Clinical Psychology. I agree with Sharanya about the importance of listening to the students and what they ask from us in terms of political activities. At the same time, I found out about the entire problem because of a student, whose name I am not mentioning to respect their privacy. This person has been in touch with me for a while. Last time we followed up on their situation, they told me this program issue is making their relationship to the program harder, particularly it is still very hard for them to get a sense of community. They feel faculty are not connecting with the

students or they are not so accountable. This person was previously thinking about leaving their program due to the lack of faculty/administrative response and support to access their rights related to mental health and accommodations. I feel concerned about how these violent situations affect the health of the GC students and their achievement of their goals. They might feel there is too little room to do something, and they might not even know about spaces like the DGSC. For those of us who are new at the Steering, last year we had a hard situation at LAILAC that ended with what I interpret as certain retaliation (not having admissions this year). Last year we also heard about very hard situations for biology (and STEM) students, which included students that had to change their labs due to bullying professors, people that were not getting paid because the professors were not accountable just because they were upset, or even people who couldn't come back to their labs to pick up their things, to mention some. I am really sorry not to be in person for this important discussion.

F. Officer for Outreach (Christopher Campbell)

Activities:

- Carmín and I have discussed planning an online gaming event for GC students.
- The Outreach Committee will meet sometime next week to discuss the Writing Center event. We'd also like to invite Dave Hershinow and/or Allison Douglass of the Writing Center to speak as a guest during one of next semester's plenary meetings.
- The Writing Center event will take place online on Tuesday, January 18th. The plan is to use GatherTown as a way to make the event more engaging/interactive. There will be three WC consultants staffing the event. We plan to use the event as a way to gather feedback about in-person events for the spring semester.
 - Only 6 program reps (me included!) filled out the Google Form I sent during our last plenary.

Updates:

- One student from the Physics Dept. has told me that their rehiring is still in process, and there has otherwise been no update about their pay.

AK motions to table agenda items B and C and discussing them on email.

CC seconds.

Motion passes unanimously.

V. New Business

- A. Hiring committees (Considered out of its regular order, see CCSA report above)
- B. [Agenda items for EC lunch with President and Provost \(Dec. 10\)](#)
- C. Agenda items for Graduate Council (Dec. 15)

VI. Announcements

VII. Adjournment

Meeting is adjourned at 7:24 PM by unanimous consent.