



Steering Meeting *Minutes* February 4, 2022

Attendance:

Present: Sharanya Dutta (SD), Deborah Leter (DL), Adam Kocurek (AK), Jonathan Hanon (JH), Parisa Montazaran Osmanovic (PMO), Angela LaScala-Gruenewald (ALG), Katherine Anderson (KA), Silvia Rivera Alfaro (SRA), Christopher Campbell (CC), Carmin Quijano-Seda (CQS), Britt Munro (BM)

Absent: None

Meeting Chair: SD

Minutes: AK

Minutes Assist: CC

Meeting called to order at 4:10PM.

I. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve: AK (History)

Seconded: JH (Computer Science)

Vote: Passes unanimously

II. Approval of Minutes of the December 3, 2021 Meeting

Motion to approve: JH

Seconded: AK

Vote: Passes unanimously

III. Executive Committee Reports

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

Updates:

- Nominations Ballot Open: February 1 (12AM) - March 1, 2021 (11:59PM).
 - Did everyone get that notification/saw one of the emails from Debbie?
 - Access link: <https://eballot4.votenet.com/dsc>
 - Log-i@n instructions:

Username = EMPLID (CUNYFirst ID)

Password (all lowercase) = first initial + last initial + 4-digit year of birth

- Email notifications have been sent out to students with the CCC + SMC'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. Debbie 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 2022 will be updated over the next week or so: Please help chartered organizations achieve active status by signing up on their rosters during your office hours: <http://cunydisc.org/works/chartered-organizations/list>
 - Let me know if you catch any errors (e.g., blocking roster registration or linked to Fall 2021 rather than Spring 2022).
- I continue to struggle to get the hiring committees up and running (sigh). The AP needs to replace two co-organizers (we finally have a hiring committee for that, now they have to get the word out and the work begins when we actually have some applications). Still do not have a DGSO member who is an OpenCUNY user for the OpenCUNY hiring committee. Again, this is just a regular student/any student (not a rep) who is also an OpenCUNY user. So if you know someone who fits this description, please let me know and I will contact them.
- I've also sent you an email about finding someone who knows R, the programming language, to help me + Katie during elections, so please help me find someone! Respond to that email if/when you do!

B. Co-Chair for Communications (Deborah Leter)

Updates/Recent Meetings:

- Reopening letter to Chancellor Rodriguez – organized by SGA (Student Government Association) Presidents from across CUNY
 - Started meeting late January, we were informed of these meetings rather late and played a minimal role in them
 - Jonathan, Adam, and I made a few small suggestions to the letter, but this was most definitely an initiative of the CUNY colleges
 - I'm not aware of there being any feedback so far from Chancellor Rodriguez.

- It looks like we will start having monthly SGA President meetings, to form a more united front and engage in collective advocacy. There will be an initial meeting next week to discuss this. I'll provide more specific updates after this. One of the requests in the letter that was sent out was monthly/regular meetings between SGA Presidents and the Chancellor.
- Survey: Spring semester reopening plans (sent out January 12 with Chris)
 - 423 responses
 - Main question: Do you support the Spring semester reopening plans (50% until February 25th, 70% after)? A follow-up question provided students space to type reasoning for their responses. The responses for question one were: roughly 70% "no" and 30% "yes."
 - The responses to the survey were quite varied: While some students argue we need to learn to live with this pandemic and want to return to in-person learning and teaching, other students are calling for classes to be entirely remote given the omicron variant. In a significant number of responses, students expressed concern and fear about their safety and the safety of those they live with and do not feel comfortable returning to classes in-person. A key theme across many responses was flexibility: students want more online, hybrid, and hyflex classes, rather than a rigid 50% or 70% in-person mandate. Some students are also asking for the first few weeks of the semester to take place entirely remotely, until this current wave hopefully dies down.
 - This was sent to OSA, Pres. Garrell, and Chancellor Rodriguez
- Social media projects (with our social media coordinator, Inma)
 - Goal for Spring 2022: revamping our social media presence by having a "DGSC services" series on Twitter and Instagram. Also, trying to get more GC students involved on our social media page.
- Website update
 - We're making progress! We've got the layout nailed down and are finalizing the details with our website developer, Jose. We're moving away from the Works system and integrating Works into our new website, so are making sure that everything that needs to be transferred over to the new site is taken into consideration.

Upcoming Meetings:

- Co-chairs meeting with OSA: Feb 16th
- EC meeting with Provost - soon, date TBD
- DGSC Plenary - Feb 18th
- Upcoming Plenary guest speakers: Pres. Garrell in March, Dave Hershinow (Writing Center) + Clare Wilson (Disability Services) in April

Announcements:

- I'd like to send the entire student body a start-of-the-semester email that focuses on showcasing our social media + giving a snapshot of the services we'll be offering in the coming months.
- Last-minute suggestions for a February plenary guest speaker?

C. Co-Chair for Business (Adam Kocurek)

Updates:

- I am waiting for the end of the add/drop period to update our budget for the Spring semester - as soon as the add/drop period ends and I get the final enrollment numbers from Elise Perram (should be the 21st of February), I will be able to edit the amount of student activity fee money we are getting, reflecting our change in budget (it is usually a minimal drop, due to graduation, academic leave, or people leaving their programs). Once we get the updated figures and I need to make cuts, I think I'm going to make the cuts from our program allocation and chartered organization allocation budget lines, as the figures I put in actually is more than double what they normally are.
 - I also plan on giving OpenCUNY's website management budget line some more money, as they needed to update their server and domain costs have increased slightly.
 - Any other thoughts about how we should edit our budget?
- I have begun the onboarding processes for our two new steering members.
- I have transferred over \$7,000 to the Office for Student Affairs to pay for yoga and fitness classes; this should be more than enough to cover costs for the Spring semester, and likely carry over into the Fall semester.
- I have spoken with two students who have expressed interest in taking over as the Co-Chair for Business when my term ends on June 30th.
- The Graduate Education Task Force convened on 1/28. My subcommittee presented our "Great Ideas" survey, which should be live for all programs soon. We will convene again as a body on 2/25.
- Ruthie Chung, the lawyer who has agreed to replace Erin Lloyd, is having her paperwork processed with our Business Office now.
- Provost and President Open House . Essentially the President and Provost expressed commitment to concerns of faculty, staff, and students at the GC, everything was brought up. Why are staff not mandated to be vaccinated but students are? We got an explanation for that. They've recorded the session, I think, and placed it somewhere. The thing that I brought up was about in-person activities at the GC. Essentially they told me what I already relayed - they're not advocating any in person events or conferences. We also asked they do that monthly (open houses), but they have yet to confirm.

Discussion:

JH: I have 2 questions. About the budget, does that have to go through College Association?

AK: The college association already got our budget and approved it, and they'll likely ask again in June. It will eventually have to go through College Association. We have discretion over voting on our budget. Essentially College Association provides input and feedback. They've never put their foot down on a budget. They've asked us to speak to what a particular line of the budget speaks for. We have total authority over updating and changing our budget.

D. USS Delegate (Jonathan Hanon - interim)

Updates and Announcements:

- USS Updates:
 - There is still no Chairperson
 - Candidate Aharon Grama was disqualified without just cause by USSERC, who act unilaterally as judge, jury, and executioner, without any input from any other body, including USS itself.
 - The USSERC governing documents are not public, all of their decision making happens behind closed doors, and they take over meetings without allowing for Robert's Rules of Order to be followed.
 - A large group of USS Delegates, including myself, are abstaining from voting in the only remaining candidate, Salimatou Doumbouya, for Chairperson due to the unjust nature of this disqualification, in an attempt to show how broken the system is that a candidate can be disqualified without proper trial.
 - The final vote on Sunday was 22 votes for Salimatou, 18 abstentions, where 29 votes are required to elect a chair. As you can see, this is only 40 members out of a 56 member quorum.
 - Salimatou is being coached from the sidelines by Juvanie Piquant in an attempt for Timothy Hunter to have control of USS for a third year in a row.
 - Of the 22 who voted, many just want the election to end, and do not support Salimatou.
 - Delegates are attempting to have the Chairperson election process restarted to be able to have a legitimate election instead of an "election" with only one candidate unopposed.
 - There is also no "interim Chairperson", so there is no Student Trustee.
 - A proposal is being drafted so this never happens again, although many students are against the proposal, claiming it to be an insult to the election of the Chair, rather than seeing it as a way to prevent a constitutional crisis from occurring in the future.
 - The likelihood is that these initiatives to change the rules will fail, and USS will continue with a constitution that does not have a way to prevent what happened this year from happening again.
 - Committees have started convening
 - Academic Affairs
 - A letter was sent out to the Chancellor by the Council of SGA Presidents (including our own DGSC Steering) regarding concerns in the reopening process
 - Disability / Mental Health Affairs
 - Events are being scheduled CUNYwide
 - Student Empowerment Day - Short event to appeal to legislators - Feb 10
 - Joint CCSD / USS Open Forum (more info to come)
 - Building the Bridges Conference - More in-depth event to bridge disability awareness at CUNY (more info to come)
 - Goals: Increase awareness of student disability accommodations, advocate for mutual understanding between students and faculty.
 - We have established the Council of Disability Club Presidents

- Technology Affairs
 - I am drafting a proposal to give more of a student voice on committees making technological decisions in this crucial time where technology has become such an integral part of our education, such as the CUNY IT Steering, Learning Management System Committees, and Software Search Committees. We need student voices on everything, because students have just as much if not more of a stake in the technology we use.
- Racial/Ethnic Equity
 - Agenda items
 - Advocacy against all types of hate, including racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination
 - Availability of food for students with dietary restrictions, i.e. Kosher, Halal, Vegan, and increasing access to cafeteria for night students to be able to get food on campus
 - Faculty training (possibly paid) for handling racial disputes
 - Advocating for minorities in STEM
- Gender/LGBTQ Equity
 - LGBTQ Resource Database
 - Looking for student representation on the LGBT Council for CUNY, but need volunteers.
 - Upcoming events: CUNY LGBT Conference at John Jay
- Sustainability Committee
 - CUNY Climate Coalition, Sustainability Council, and Climate Center Consortium put a resolution which passed at the Board of Trustees on Monday for a 90-day plan to reduce plastic waste at CUNY. This includes reducing single-use plastic and placing more garbage cans and recycling bins across campuses.
- Bylaws Task Force
 - Multiple amendments have been proposed to the USS Bylaws regarding the process for USS Chair / Vice-Chair Elections, to attempt to prevent these constitutional crises from occurring again.
- Reactivation Town Hall
 - There is no social distancing requirement
 - They will only follow CUNY faculty vaccine mandate when it finally comes up.
 - They say 98% is good enough.
 - They have mobile HyFlex (OWL) units, with no clear plans for use
 - Classroom assignments are being made basically arbitrarily
 - The priority is more on moving in-person without any input from the community
 - Maintaining masking, but no clear plan as to how to enforce.
 - Following CDC guidelines that asymptomatic are not required to quarantine
 - No specific requirements on what kinds of masks are being used. People are “recommended” not to use a bandana or a gaiter, but the focus is more on “comfort” than “safety”.

- N95s are available from public safety, PPE is available from the library, the childcare center has access to clear masks. Departments should not order their own PPE, work with facilities.
- Staff are NOT included in the vaccine mandate because Gov. Hochul said so.
- Unvaccinated need to test every 7 days, which is not enough for safety.
- No cafeteria, but there are “places on campus to eat your own food”.
- No accommodations for students uncomfortable with in-person courses unless exposed.
- The only mental health services at the GC are through the Wellness Center, which functions mainly as a referral service, so we're basically on our own.
- Basically, our safety is being seen **as an afterthought**.
- Reactivation committee has not met since December 9th, before Omicron was even a concept. There hasn't been messaging because, according to President Garrell, “things have been changing day to day, so there's no point to updating if the information will just change the next day”. The GC is moving as information from Central evolves. Important to check the site - updates on January 6th. As they put it, we are “shifting from reopening to operations, because we are open and moving forward, so we are no longer reopening, we are open”.
- **Importantly, let's discuss this:** Why was the DGSC not consulted before decisions were made? President Garrell has no answer. VP Schoengood said he spoke to Central about it, but apparently, nothing ever got to us. Apparently, our concerns don't matter. **Let's talk about this.**

Discussion:

KA: I wanted to ask about the reactivation town hall, was anything said about the turnaround time for on-campus covid tests? I had a wait time that would have lasted 3 whole classes, and it seems ridiculous that it's taking so long.

JH: It should only take 2 days, that means they're either overloaded or taking their time. We need to advocate on this.

E. UFS Liaison (Parisa Montazaran Osmanovic)

Updates:

Meeting with Marty Burke

Held firm on that UFS Liaison cannot get a vote because not full-time faculty

Said Liaison would only get a vote if full-time faculty, and would need to be elected to UFS

Also hesitant to allow the UFS Liaison to speak. Must request on a meeting-to-meeting basis.

Not possible for UFS Liaison to have a voice until they vote on it, it will take months.

Discussion:

AK: Marty Burke said this was attempted by our predecessors, and it failed in UFS EC, but the leadership has changed, and said that we should attempt. He was a student activist once and understands. He did offer to assist us with drafting an email to whoever is heading the EC of the University Faculty Senate.

JH: But there are adjuncts on UFS. Pamela Stenberg is on the UFS as an adjunct professor. I don't understand why this is a particular problem. Hugo Fernandez (UFS EC) speaks on USS every meeting, so remind me to bring this up to Prof. Fernandez in USS.

IV. Steering Officer Reports

A. Officer for Funding (Angela LaScala-Gruenewald)

Updates:

- The grant review process is moving along
- Had to do revisions to all three grants funded in December; revisions complete and money approved
- We will promote the February deadline on social, etc.
 - I owe Debbie/comms a short write up of the grants for social media; Adam/Jonathan/I will discuss during our committee meeting
- We received three (awesome!) grant applications to evaluate in January
- Grant Committee's first meeting of 2022 is this Monday 2/7
 - Jonathan, Adam, and myself will review the three proposal submitted last month

Announcements:

- February grants deadline is Friday, February 18!

Discussion:

ALG: A majority of grants come from departments with ongoing DGSC connections such as History and LAILAC, but I would hope for students from other programs, like STEM, to apply.

SD: Maybe we can ask at student association meetings, or advertise through Outreach or Student Life. You can work with Chris and Carmin on spreading the word.

ALG: I think that's a great idea. And I'm excited to build new relationships with programs that seem to have less of a solid relationship with the DGSC.

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

Updates/Meetings:

- **Virtual Chartered Org. Fair:** *Eric Brown has asked for the DGSC support to organize a virtual fair for first year students. Debbie and I will meet him on Monday to see how we can collaborate.*
- **DGSC Social Media Presence:** I have been exchanging emails with Debbie, Inma, and Chris regarding how to better use our social media accounts. We haven't set a meeting yet, but we have exchanged a few ideas. As OFSL, I would like to share photos of our recent events (like the winter talent show, the board games' night, and other workshops), and create a monthly newsletter with things to-do around NYC (both academic and non-academic events). Maybe the newsletter could be presented like a series of posts on Instagram, for example.
- **Spring Events:** The following are some ideas for Spring events:

- **Native American Jewelry Workshop (virtual?)**: Since we cannot hold big events in the DGSC rooms, I think that I'll move this workshop online. However, doing it online requires more work and organization, because we will need to send the materials to participants. Therefore, I will move it to the end of the semester (early May, maybe), so Bri and I have enough time to organize it.
UPDATE: Since Adam clarified the issue about the DGSC's rooms at this Steering meeting, I will try to make this workshop in person.
- **Crochet/Knitting Workshop (virtual)**: A student from Urban Ed, who attended our Fall events, offered to do a crochet/knitting workshop in Spring. I haven't contacted her yet. But I will next week and figure out a date (probably early March).
UPDATE: Since Adam clarified the issue about the DGSC's rooms at this Steering meeting, I will try to make this workshop in person.
- **Video Games Night (virtual)**: Chris and I have talked about this previously, but we haven't talked about the logistics. We should set a meeting soon to set up a date and promote it.
- **Anecdote**: Last Monday I went to the DGSC lounge and completed my office hours there, and two students came in and asked for condoms. I think it would be a good idea to also have a stack of surgical masks. I believe the GC has a supply of KN95 masks and we can get them through facilities@gc.cuny.edu. I'll try to do my office hours in person as much as I can, to keep the office open and these items accessible.

Announcements:

- *I'll announce the dates of the events at our next plenary meeting on Feb. 18.*

C. Officer for Technology & Library (Britt Munro - interim)

Discussion:

CC: There's currently a search committee for the Chief Librarian. Someone suggested someone from my program join the search committee. They had their first meeting a few weeks ago, they wanted to get student library priorities from the DGSC. I told them to reach out to the OTL and Debbie about circulating the survey.

BM: If they get in contact with me, I'm totally happy to help with that.

D. Officer for Governance & Membership (Katie Anderson)

Updates:

- We have lost many representatives since our last meeting.
- I am working to fill as many spots as possible before our first Plenary of the semester, but people have been slow to respond to e-mails.
- if anyone tells you they want to join, want to quit, or have been informed that they are ineligible to serve - please let me know
- Peek behind the curtain: we have almost exhausted our At-Large Representative list.
 - this did not happen last year, we did not even come close.

- After the list is exhausted, steering can appoint new reps with no election. A good time to bring in new people who may be interested in continuing next year.

Announcements:

- The STEM DGSC Representatives are writing a statement in support of the recent push for centralized payments in years 2+ made by Neuroscience students. Planning to bring this to a vote at the upcoming Plenary for full DGSC support.

Discussion:

JH: 2 questions. Do we have a list of programs whose program rep seats have been vacated so that we can better determine who to reach out to to replace them?

KA: I was able to assemble a new spreadsheet with updated info. I can update steering with that information.

JH: Regarding Constitution & Bylaws, would we be better off pushing off our amendments until next year to have a more formal proposal and have more time to discuss?

KA: I think that makes sense. There's a lot of formatting and other work that needs to be done that will likely take more than one discussion, so pushing it to next year might make sense.

SD: Membership participation is our number one issue, so before we go about changing the Bylaws, we should have a more engaged membership.

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

Updates:

- Sara Ortiz resigned from the Committee of Health and Wellness, so we are currently missing a member. We will discuss this topic later in this meeting as part of New Business.
- We have created a group and site for Health and Wellness in the CUNY Commons. The reason to create it there is that all GC students have access and the site can be easily administered by the new Officer and the members of the Committee. This is the link to the site: <https://wellness.commonsc.gc.cuny.edu/>. As you can see, it includes information about providers that has been something other committees and officers worked on in the past. This website would also be the place of a possible collaboration with Jamila Hammami from The Adjunct Project. I will be meeting again with them during February.
- I met today with Inma, our social media correspondent, we decided to create a campaign focused on wellness, community and connection:
 - We want to have pictures of people in the building or gathering online in community. We want to heal the sense of belonging to a community that has been lost in this virtual time. We are looking for a hashtag. I will ask the representatives to spread this petition to everyone so that they send their pictures to socialmedia@cunydsc.org
 - Our campaign will be on social media, but also the website, the Grad Center electronic boards, and email.
 - We will also include phrases about mental health and advertise the website.

- Today Feb 04th Jonathan Hanon and I met with the Office of Student Affairs (Bill, Elise, Eric) to discuss how to more effectively convey information regarding NYSHIP to GC students, as well as regarding the nurse practitioner.
 - **About Navigating NYSHIP.** Previous Navigating NYSHIP workshops were not very beneficial because of so much administrative information (eligibility, enrollment, finding providers, using insurance, etc.) being packed into such a short period of time. This is many students' first experience with the US health insurance system. Because people only use one or two pieces of this information at once, we proposed the OSA to create short YouTube videos of each specific topic and we will post them in the new website we are creating. The OSA will share with us previous videos they have created for the orientation and will think about creating new up-to-date videos.
 - **Additional health-focused event,** We discussed creating a Town Hall or a similar event focused on Health and Wellness, including short informative talks about NYSHIP, Wellness Center, and Disability Services as part of the event. Elise will think of people from the GC to join this space and will contact us when they are ready.
 - **About the Nurse Practitioner,** Elise mentioned that this service was established when students didn't have access to NYSHIP. After NYSHIP, PhD students got individually covered and the fee was cancelled. Another reason for this change was the establishment of more stipends through the DGSC, which used the funding which was formerly available to provide the Nurse Practitioner. OSA informed us that CUNY is thinking about implementing a Wellness Fee as part of our Student Activity Fees, similarly to the Technology Fee. OSA does not want our Student Activity Fees to increase, and is hoping to push the administration to pay for this. Our proposal is to create a resolution to support OSA expressing the need for our campus to have a Nurse Practitioner and other personnel available regardless of whether a student has health insurance. Elise also informed us that they are trying to hire a social worker, but we are still unsure whether administration will pay for it.

Announcements:

- I will meet with Rod Hurley soon to talk about the possible activities for April to **honor the student movement**. If someone would like to join, please let me know.
- I would like to create a **campaign for mental health awareness** around the library or other spaces so that people who come to the campus would get info about resources, including us. I really believe it would be great if we can try new ways of getting in contact with the community and let them know more about the DGSC. I have been talking to Britt and she will join this initiative :)
- **Yoga** will take place twice a week on Monday 9:00 a.m. and Thursday 6:00 p.m. The dates are 2/14, 2/17, 2/24, 2/28, 3/3, 3/7, 3/10, *3/18, 3/17, 3/21, 3/24, 3/28, 3/31, 4/4, 4/7, 4/11, 4/14, 4/25, 4/28, 5/2, 5/5, 5/9, 5/12, 5/16, 5/19, 5/23, 5/26.
- We will have **meditation sessions** once a month Monday at 6 p.m.: 2/14, 3/21, 4/11, 5/9, 6/13.
- I am currently working on student led activities. For dance I sent a call for proposals and I have received responses from 2 dancers, one at the Sociology PhD and another at Urban Education. The deadline for their proposals is February 15th. My idea is to make the decision with the Committee of

Health and Wellness, since it has been our goal to organize this kind of process, but I would like to know if there are any thoughts about it.

- As we all know, with the pandemic, mental health is an issue affecting everyone. I want to propose creating a space for students to write and study together that includes exchanging about their progress. This would be an alternative to helping create connection. I am worried about the feeling of loneliness and those feelings of being trapped (blocked) people are experiences. For this I ask a student to replicate a community project he has been developing (but in Spanish for Latin America) since 2020. I am actually already in contact with Adam about it and I will also get in contact with the Writing Center to tell them about this project. This is the information:

Desk on the Cloud: Student-Led Online Writing Space

Desk on the Cloud is an online academic community that connects CUNY graduate students who are obliged to avoid using the facilities of the GC due to COVID-19-related restrictions, and have to work on their dissertations, research proposals and other types of academic writing. Our aim is to make the solitary task of writing an enjoyable experience, and to habilitate a network of emotional support and solidarity for CUNY graduate students. Desk on the Cloud uses a version of the Pomodoro technique, where we focus on carrying out a doable, tiny, previously set goal during 40' with no interruptions. After it, we check our progress and share our thoughts with the rest of the participants. Each session is composed of 10' of introduction and 2 pomodoros, with a break of 10' between each time set. We close with a small reflection on what worked and what didn't work for everyone. Although Desk in the Cloud is not a workshop on academic writing, we encourage people to share tips about how to improve their writing habits and techniques. We meet every Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (NYC time, GMT-5) via Zoom.

Estimated number of participants: 5 - 25 graduate students

Rates: \$300 honorarium

Time: Tuesday 3-5pm EST,

Dates: March 1 thru May 10

- Please let me know if you have any questions or thoughts about these proposals.

F. Officer for Outreach (Christopher Campbell)

Updates:

- 1) Writing Center + DGSC January event was delayed due to staffing issues.
 - a) More updates soon. I'll be in touch with Allison from the WC within the next couple of weeks once semester start has settled.

Announcements:

- 1) I was contacted by Jack Devine from the Office of Career Planning & Professional Development asking if the DGSC would like to coordinate with them to promote events that can help students get jobs. We're meeting next Tuesday if anyone else would like to join (I cc'd Carmín specifically on an email back to Jack, but are there other offers that might want to get involved?).

- 2) A portal for updating students on their stipend disbursement is apparently in the works (although stipends are currently late for many students). Any word on this portal?
- 3) Zoom -

Discussion:

JH: Just to clarify, what stipends are we talking about?

SD: The lump-sum fellowships from the bursar office, they're being delayed for international students. I emailed Alan Tsang, and he said I should get mine Feb 10th, but others on the chat said they aren't getting them until much later. I suspect it has to do with accounts being on hold, but I don't think they adequately advertise this fact, that students must complete TDS and other hoops before they can get paid.

CC: CUNYFirst gives an expected disbursement date, but it seems to frequently be incorrect.

SD: The reason this is always late is because it comes from an alternate release from CUNY Central, and he doesn't actually have this money, so he's tried to streamline the process over winter break to do things early in TDS, but CUNY Central doesn't start this until Feb, after we officially open for the semester.

CC: I know CUNY Central is involved, but I've heard we get money from Albany, so it's really a question of where the money is.

BM: Just really quickly - in terms of international students, has anybody else heard about CUNYFirst not working for people overseas? It seems like an IT issue that's impacting many international students. I tried VPN-ing, and it wasn't working.

SD: I think they've blocked VPNs and IP addresses from outside the country. It's a mess.

SRA: I've heard of issues with students who have an advisor who is also their supervisor in STEM. In humanities, we have two separate people doing this, but in STEM, in many cases, the advisor is the one paying the student, so I've heard of some problems with this involving students with disabilities. I brought it up to Clare Wilson and she was surprised.

CC: What do you think would be the best approach? Maybe an anonymous survey? Or maybe an office hours session?

SRA: Let's collaborate on this.

KA: In biology, we put weight on the centralised payment issue with a survey that's less personal and more about payments. With these issues comes gaps in health insurance, so this exists already, and it's the thought of many STEM students that this centralised format for payment, fixing this will alleviate a lot of other issues with students slipping through the cracks. With the bio survey that went around, it's important to only present process data so that people's identity and safety are preserved.

SRA: All this information is super important. I would love to see this kind of information. We can also ask admin to see if they have any guidance about how to go about this kind of project.

V. New Business

A. Next year's steering committee

AK: We've never had a formal discussion about it, but something to think about between now and next Steering meeting. Who's intending to stay on? Termed out, don't want to? Gives us a better idea exactly what positions we need to fill, start actively trying to headhunt people during this semester to gauge interest.

SD: Which of us are termed out?

AK: Me, Sharanya, Silvia and Katie and Carmin are at the 2 year mark for steering.

SD: Anyone who wants to continue in any role?

Jonathan as CCB, Chris as CCC, Parisa as UFS, Britt as OTL.

AK: So we might need all new steering members with the exception of OTL and UFS.

SD: Yes everyone, please reach out to us and let us know if you plan on staying or if you need to step back!

B. USS Alternate position

C. New committee member for Health & Wellness committee

Vote to approve Shibanee Sivanayagam (Anthropology) as new committee member: Passes unanimously.

VI. Announcements

VII. Adjournment

AK: Motion to adjourn meeting at 7:08

SRA: Second

Meeting is adjourned at 7:08PM by unanimous consent.