Steering Meeting *Minutes*
March 16, 2022
Rescheduled from March 4, 2022

Attendance:
Present: Sharanya Dutta, Debbie Leter, Adam Kocurek, Jonathan Hanon, Katherine Anderson, Christopher Campbell, Carmin Quijano-Seda, Britt Munro, Angela LaScala-Gruenewald

Absent:

Meeting Chair: DL
Minutes: JH
Minutes Assist: CC

Meeting called to order at 5:02PM

I. Approval of Agenda
> Motion to approve: AK
> Seconded: BM
> Vote: Approved unanimously

II. Approval of Minutes of the February 4, 2022 Meeting
> Motion to approve: AK
> Seconded: JH
> Vote: Approved unanimously

III. Executive Committee Reports
> **A. Co-Chair for Student Affairs (Sharanya Dutta)**

Updates:

ELECTIONS
- Nominations closed on March 1. Turnout very low, 1.69%
- The programs that do not have any nominations and need to petition for an open seat:
    - Audiology
    - Biography and Memoir (MA)
    - Business
    - Chemistry
    - Cognitive Neuroscience

- ○ Data Science (MS)
- ○ Data Analysis and Visualization (MS)
- ○ Digital Humanities
- ○ French
- ○ International Migration Studies (MA)
- ○ Liberal Studies (MA)
- ○ Middle Eastern Studies (MA)
- ○ Nanoscience (MS)
- ○ Nursing
- ○ Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences (MS)
- ○ Speech-Language Hearing Sciences
- ○ Theater
- ○ Women and Gender Studies (MA)
- ● The other programs have at least 1 nomination. A ballot will be created for the program if the nominee does not opt out.
- ● For the next step, Debbie has to do some formatting and contact the nominees. Then the compiled list of nominees who did not opt out will be sent to Elise Perram and Eric Brown to check for eligibility, and I will put those names on the election ballot, and send it to SERC to approve the ballot, and open the elections first day of April.
- ● Jonathan and Katie are very generously helping me format the voters list.

LIBRARY STUFF
- ● Britt and I had a cool idea, she will fill you in! Angela and Jonathan (and Adam, as always), thank you for being so supportive!

CHARTERED ORGS
- ● Please sign the chartered org rosters when you can! I've opened them all.

ROOM RESERVATIONS
- ● Please please everyone check for any new room reservations during office hours. It's a shared steering responsibility. Also, as room reservations get resolved, archive the emails in the steering email. We are allowing events up to full room capacity but WITH masks, so please approve the room reservations accordingly. Non-CUNY people are allowed but they have to get a Cleared4 pass. I wonder if we could link this information on the DGSC website so people knew where to look when they went for room reservation info. This is the link: https://www.gc.cuny.edu/news/covid-19-information-and-safe-campus-reopening/request-cleared4-cuny-access-pass-visitors

SPARC
- ● Please make sure you have all completed SPARC and WVP training in Blackboard and are compliant.

TAX STUFF

- Please continue to get the word out about Dan, our tax person. For both residents/citizens and international students/nonresident aliens. The more people we have, the cheaper his services will be. I'd really like for this to have mass student support. Some more email blasts might help as we're scrambling towards tax season.

Announcements:

Discussion:

JH: As an update from OSA, Data Science is a subprogram of Computer Science, so we will be working with that information to combine the two for future DGSC sessions.

B. Co-Chair for Communications (Deborah Leter)

Updates/Recent Meetings:

- **02/23: EC meeting with Provost**
  - We asked for clarification on Chancellor Rodriguez's **$20m budget request to the state** – the request was denied. These funds would have been used to increase GC fellowships and eradicate the two-tiered funding system. The OSA told us that the Chancellor has gone back to ask for $7m. We asked the Provost for clarification on this and as of now it's unclear. We hope to get more information at our next meeting.
  - **Student payment delays**: issues with students not getting paid on time / the right amount. This is a priority issue for the Provost. There are a lot of offices involved in causing these delays (some at the GC: bursar, HR, financial aid, payroll) but also coming from faculty and offices on other campuses, or the Research Foundation. Provost wants to develop a system whereby delays coming from these offices don't lead to students not receiving their payments (i.e. if money hasn't come in from RF or Queens College, students still get paid).
  - **Student payment email:** These emails go to Patti Myatt (Provost's Office), she then forwards them to the offices concerned to get quick responses to students. There are delays with HR more than other offices. Provost is willing to hire a new person to manage this on the HR side.
  - We'd like our next meeting to have the GC Provost, President, and HR so we can talk about HR issues affecting students.
- **GC website:** Contacted the website developers about the broken links. Their response was that students might be trying to access pages and documents on the old site through bookmarks and direct links, which might explain part of the problem. It might also be an issue with the site search, as it will take a bit of time to index the new site. They're looking into ways to speed that up.
- **Resolution**: "Resolution requesting a Centralized payment system for CUNY Graduate Center doctoral and master's students in order to ensure timely payment and consistent teaching workload across the senior colleges" – sent out this morning to the CUNY Chancellor, CUNY University Provost, GC President, GC Provost, and cc'd OSA, Josh Brumberg (Dean of Sciences), Brian Peterson. The

Executive Committee of the PSC-GC endorsed the resolution. They will vote on it at their next plenary so that the whole chapter can endorse it. We'll follow up directly with President Garrell and Provost Everett when we meet with them soon about this resolution.

Upcoming Meetings:

- 03/18: Plenary meeting (Pres. Garrell guest speaker)

Announcements:

- Please add your questions/topics you want Pres. Garrell to discuss at Plenary on the google doc tonight/tomorrow morning!
- We need 10-12 students from different departments to get involved in the final stage of the **Chief Librarian search committee**. There are three finalists, who will each meet with a group of students on Zoom in the coming weeks (tentative dates are March 21, 25, and 29).
- Co-chairs are supposed to have a Zoom **meeting with EDLAB soon**. I really want us to resume our movie-ticket services and am hoping to get a quick training on how to do this. Let's talk about who is doing in-person office hours, and if people want to start doing hyflex steering meetings.
- **70% in person services** kicked in on February 28th. I've emailed the DGSC listserv to remind students about this and to let them know to contact us if they are seeking in-person services but are not receiving them. Offices should be open Mondays-Thursdays.
- **DGSC lounge**: I bought coffee for the lounge – if you happen to be there anytime in the future and notice we're out of coffee, do let me know! I'm going to contact Facilities and see if they can help us donate/get rid of some of the stuff we have there that no-one seems to be using. The door to the lounge should be open at all times (sometimes I notice it's shut, so I just re-open it) – so that anyone can use it.

Discussion

JH: Regarding the website, the GC is offering training for Drupal and editing access (https://www.gc.cuny.edu/comms/web-request). Should we get this access?

DL: I don't think we need to go through that, we only really update information on a yearly basis, but others may want to.

AK: It may be a good idea for the next Executive Committee, and it'd be good to go through the Drupal training because our new system will also be Drupal, so that may be useful. Once we elect the new Steering body, we can propose that as part of training and onboarding.

DL: It might make sense for the next EC to do that instead of us. We can think about that for our replacements.

SRA: I could go in person more, I'm trying to go once a week. Can I change my office hours to be able to do my office hours in person?

DL: Yes, we can have this conversation over email, and you can let me know who's going to be coming in-person.

AK: With regards to lockers and movie tickets, we should meet with EDLAB to have a foundation of what was before, since those services aren't provided over the summer.

C. Co-Chair for Business (Adam Kocurek)

Updates:
- Budget: We had a significant drop in student enrollment during the Spring semester. We went from 3427 students in the Fall semester to 3174 students in the Spring semester. This is concerning for a number of reasons, but thankfully shouldn't impact the budget too much, as we had a significant carryover from the last year. Some changes I want to make to this budget:
  - Reclaim Hosting, our servers, increased their rates to $5952.00
  - We have an increase in the rate for Web Avenue Media, our website manager from $3600 to $4250 per six month period, meaning for this academic year, we have to pay $7850.
  - Server costs have also increased for OpenCUNY servers, from $2500 to $2800.
  - To compensate for the drop in budget, I'm going to trim the extra funds I strategically placed in the program/chartered org allocation budget lines to make up for this.
- Students have been asking for confirmation as to whether or not they can hold in-person GC events. It seems like the tentative answer is yes, though we are getting confirmation from Brian Peterson to make sure that 1) events can be held, and 2) catered food can be reimbursed with DGSC funds.
  - I'm still really pushing students to hold events outdoors, especially as the weather gets better.
  - The Business Office is reimbursing student leaders for outdoor events/events at bars and other locations. NOTE: some program reps forgot to include the CUNY sales tax exemption form, and as such, we are now trying to get them their sales tax back (we cannot reimburse sales tax), so I will be sure to remind people of this on Friday.
- The Advocate released a publication in February - those people are paid, with the exception of a handful of non-CUNY people who are still going through the requisition process.
  - This issue, paying non-CUNY (and even worse, non-US people) has been the bane of my existence as CCB. I'm currently working with the OSA and Business Office to try and revise this practice - where I (or my successor) can hopefully pay US-based folks their honoraria more quickly for stipends of $300 and lower, without needing to request a requisition.
- May and June are when we usually see a surge in student spending - this will keep me very busy, right around and following Finals week. I'm going to encourage chartered org leaders and program reps to please not wait until the final hour to hold events and request pay or reimbursement.

Announcements:

Discussion:

SRA: The LAILAC conference is being done hybrid, do we need to make any paperwork for the space?

AK: Just following the protocols.

SD: Do you mean non-CUNY people?

SRA: Yes, non-CUNY people will be involved.

SD: You just need to follow those protocols and fill out the form for non-CUNY people to access the premises. (https://www.gc.cuny.edu/news/covid-19-information-and-safe-campus-reopening/request-cleared4-cuny-access-pass-visitors)

SD: Are we paying international students without any US TIN?

AK: If someone does not have a US TIN, they need to fill out a W-11 and petition the IRS for a TIN. Some people are willing to do it and wait, but for those who are not, we're working to find alternative solutions, such as covering hotel costs.

ALG: We are working to make honoraria a minimum of $300 to make it worth the time and effort.

SD: We don't want to put that much labor in. On a case-by-case basis, it becomes too complicated for both the CCB and the recipient. The longevity of the DGSC depends on cutting out some of the bureaucratic noise. We want to be egalitarian and inclusive, but it's not fair for the CCB to do that much work for someone to receive $300. We need to find a more streamlined process while still following the law.

AK: I try to leave it to the business office to coordinate with the people, but they forward it right back to me. This might be something to evaluate.

SD: This gives CUNY a bad rep, because it's mismanagement. People don't know it isn't our fault, and they get mad at us.

ALG: Most of my questions can be answered as a grants committee discussion, but the main questions are about Sharanya's concerns about sustainability issues in grant funding. Having an outside speaker is a key component of many of our grants, and without that, it may seem kind of xenophobic. If someone does not have a tax ID, are you also doing leg work to help them get that tax ID, or do you just tell them how to do it, and it's up to them?

AK: I've been on 8 emails back and forth between him and the business office just today. I'm not a tax attorney, so I need to say I don't know. You need to fill out a W11, but other than that, I need to largely leave it on them. It's just the business of doing this work for the USA from outside of the USA.

ALG: And if we lopped off that part of your work (the tax ID part), would the work be more doable?

AK: If they're based in the US, even if they're not from the US, having a tax ID makes things much faster.

ALG: I just wanted to make sure once the tax id was in place we weren't still doing that.

AK: For weeks, going back and forth with the business office, Albany, they have to petition for it, and we have no legal mechanism to pay them. I don't want to put out a hard rule that we're just not paying people, but maybe we have to frame it instead that they need to do the labor to get the tax id, a GC student cannot do this for you.

SRA: I agree with the concerns of xenophobia, and it's important for people to have a network to work with. The person who did the Central American mapping workshop donated the work, despite where they are coming from, but what if we wanted to do an event with a community leader who is an indigenous person or having no conditions to do this paperwork? It's kind of colonial for the person on the other side.

SD: I hear your concern, Silvia, but CUNY admin will not want to be liable for this person. If we try to pay someone without a tax ID, that would be illegal.

D. USS Delegate (Jonathan Hanon)

Updates:
- USS has somehow gotten worse
  - Chairperson and Vice-Chair for Graduate Affairs were not successfully elected, for the reasons mentioned at the previous Steering meeting, where we are working to make USS less authoritarian.
  - Vice-Chair for Community Colleges and Vice-Chair for International Affairs were vacated, Vice-Chair for International Affairs unfortunately passed away.
  - Because some representatives were unhappy with the Chairperson and VCGA elections not selecting their candidates, they said they would vote against every item on the agenda and make them all fail. We did not get to nominate for the vacated positions.
  - Said representatives motioned to adjourn the meeting, and in the interest of allowing items to be reconsidered at the next meeting, we all agreed to adjourn.
  - Because of this, our DGSC resolution and two other co-sponsorships were not considered.
  - Because elections did not happen, we are down to 6 USS Steering members. Therefore, USS currently does not legally have a Steering.
  - I appreciate Zhuo Yin and his support in this process, he is a very active Alternate.

- ○ Next Plenary is Sunday, March 20, 2022, let's see how it goes.
- Scholarship Committee
  - ○ I was elected its chair, and submitted a proposal for this year's evaluation cycle. I am awaiting a response from Joseph Awadjie and CUNY CIS.
- Technology Committee
  - ○ As its chair, I wrote a proposal for student representation on administrative technology committees. I went over it with Elaine and the Graduate Council IT Committee, and am awaiting further guidance from James Haggard, CUNY Deputy CIO, and have coordinated with Marty Burke regarding the hiring committee for the new CUNY CIO.
- Board of Trustees Committee on Fiscal Affairs
  - ○ Because of the demand for online courses, and SUNY establishing fully online accredited degrees, I spoke to the Chancellor about CUNY working on accreditation for online degree programs. I will keep you updated on this.
  - ○ Apparently, the Graduate Center is at a huge financial deficit. Mid-year projections show the GC using 89% of its $3.85m in reserves, having about $420k left. I received a report from Interim CFO Christina Chiappa about this. Because we were not allocated adequate stimulus funds, we were not able to recover the deficit that was incurred due to not being able to rent out floors of the building. I will bring this up at the Graduate Council Budget Committee tomorrow, March 17, 2022. I will be running for chair of the Budget Committee. I don't expect to get elected, but it's about making it known that there are issues that need to be resolved. We need more accountability, and I want to make sure this happens.
- Blackboard Ally
  - ○ I've been added to the Blackboard Ally pilot program, a test of a system for Blackboard to be more accessible for students with visual and hearing impairments.

Announcements:

Discussion:

E. UFS Liaison (Parisa Montazaran Osmanovic)

Updates:
- *Met with Hugo Fernandez and Jonathan on 3.1.22 to discuss introducing amendment to bylaws to allow UFS liaison floor and voting privileges. Updates from Hugo today that the UFS liaison "has floor privileges. No voting powers." and is represented for voting by the rep of the college where they teach.*
- *UFS Plenary 2.22.22*
  - *Enrollment down 9%, community colleges down 17%*
  - *Cynthia Wiseman asked if we have updates on hiring stats and was told the community colleges are working on hiring, no concrete numbers*
  - *Eugena Griffin: no implementation plan for tax mandate on 4/1*
  - *Pecorino: faculty not consulted on 70/30*

- *Doug Medina: Academic Freedom*
- *Debate and Vote on "Unilateral Directive for Distribution of Instructional Modalities Spring 2022"*

Announcement:

Discussion:

IV. **Steering Officer Reports**
    A. **Officer for Funding (Angela LaScala-Gruenewald)**

Updates:
- **Grant Updates:**
  - Really proud of all our grant work over the last two months; evaluated 7 grant applications in total
    - 3 of 7 funded so far in 2022
      - Interpretation services Spanish-English for a workshop event
      - Covering the costs of a virtual academic coworking space
      - Classics department annual conference
    - 4 of 7 reviewed during March Grants Committee meeting
      - Conversation with Filmmaker Luis Lopez Carrasco
      - The 24th Annual CUNY Philosophy Graduate Student Conference
      - Stephen Brier Retirement Symposium (Urban Studies)
      - CUNY Early American Republic Seminar Graduate Student Conference (History)
  - March Grants Committee meeting on Monday 3/7; evaluated the above applications; approved three (one grant application rejected because it is scheduled after this FY for Oct 2022)
  - Considering bylaws amendment to allow us to consider funding activities during summer session (working w/ Jonathan and Adam to consider language; reached out to Katie)
  - Next Grants Application Deadline is Friday, March 18th
- **Promoting Grants/Program Access to DGSC Grant Money:**
  - Our program representation for these grants is improving, but could be better, especially with STEM. I know Katie and the whole SC has mentioned this to me, so will really try and spend more time on this over the next few months.
  - Working to promote grants (and all DGSC services) with in-person/virtual presentations to student groups
    - Working with Chris and Carmin, as per last SC meeting discussion
    - [Brainstorm doc](#) here in case anyone wants to take a look/add suggestions
    - Put together [tiny ppt](#) for March 11th Virtual Charter Organization Fair; test run for larger presentations
  - Social posts with Inma. We brainstormed a lot of excellent ideas during our last Grants Committee meeting (thank you Adam and Jonathan!). I sent these to Inma. Need to draft language and send it to Inma to post.

- Doing grantee profiles as one promotional idea. Please let me know if you have ideas of great grantee profiles we can do!

Announcements:
- Next Grants Application Deadline is Friday, March 18th
- Next Grants Committee meeting Monday, April 4th

Discussion:

SD: Do you have any samples of grants that Britt and I can see for our proposal?

ALG: I can look back and find a good grant with a request for funding for material goods.

SD: Can we submit it past the deadline?

ALG: I can grant an extension.

JH: Would the rest of the committee be opposed to having an additional meeting if we still have funds?

AK: I'd be fine with it.

KA: As grant money runs out, I'm wondering what the plan is?

AK: Our grants budget is $20k and our grants are $700 or less. Currently the ones that have been processed, we've currently spent $600, according to Works, which is not true. There's no way we're close to $20,000.

JH: $5650 has been granted, and out of everything we've completely approved, we've allocated $7050.

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

Updates:
- The **Scrabble Online Tournament** was celebrated on **March 8th from 6:00 to 7:30 pm**. Four students came to the event, plus Christopher, Jonathan, and I.
- We used the website https://woogles.io to set up the virtual matches, and it worked great.
- Students received GrubHub gift cards of $15, and expressed interest in participating in other online and in-person events.
- I joined the **Chartered Org Fair** last Friday, **March 11th from 4:00 to 5:00 pm**. Although 7-10 student leaders joined the meeting, just one new student came. So, Debbie suggested doing this event in-person. Eric Brown said that he will be considering this option and other online strategies, but he didn't specify.
- I'm thinking of doing the **Native American Jewelry Workshop** in person in room 5414. I'm considering two dates: **April 27th** or **May 4th** (just before Mother's Day). I'll have a final date before the plenary meeting. I'll make an official announcement then.

- **End of the semester event for DGSC's outgoing and incoming members**: I was thinking that we could organize DGSC's Picnic at Sheep Meadows (Central Park) on **Saturday, May 21st or Sunday, May 22nd**. We can purchase food and drinks and invite everybody in the DGSC to come. What do you think? Would you like to come?

Announcements:

- ***Native American Jewelry Workshop****: Save the dates **April 27 or May 4th, 2022***
- ***DGSC's End-of-the Semester Picnic:*** *Save the dates **May 21 or Mar 22, 2022***

Discussion:

DL: There's usually a retreat at the beginning of the academic year. I do like your idea, Carmín, of doing something with the old cohort and the new cohort, and maybe it can be done around the final meeting of the year. Unfortunately I'll be in France.

SRA: About the workshop, I think it should be LGBTQ inclusive. How we reach out to people is important.

CQS: I will put that in the flyer to make sure everybody feels included. Thanks.

C. Officer for Technology & Library (Britt Munro)

Updates:

- *Meeting with Elaine and Jonathan*
- *Library- keen for targeted student input in collections- link here . Currently putting together lists for Seagull books and Westland publishers, Magabala books in Aus. Library want to take it from here but encourage student feedback on the collection. Will run survey about this too-*
  https://libguides.gc.cuny.edu/guides/suggestmaterials
- *Mental health campaign- approved by the library, putting together with Silvia. Library ran a survey and mental health needs were most pressing among the student body.*
- *Ran a survey about why students aren't back at the library- (they're worried about funding)- main things were absence of zoom rooms, covid, comfort, no coffee or eating. Will bring these issues to the library.*

Announcements:

- *LGBTQI officers across campuses and preferred name policy updated-*
  https://www.cuny.edu/current-students/student-affairs/student-life/office-of-student-inclusion-initiatives-ossii/cuny-lgbtqi-hub/
- *Please encourage your students back to the library and tell them there's no mask mandate etc.*

Discussion:

- *New website not run by IT- where are we at with the broken links etc? Can I help?*
- *We need proposals for STF to bring to the floor!*
- *We need 10-12 students for chief librarian search.*

JH: We need to look at proposals for tech allocation and look for any redundancies between them. We need to keep these things in mind when evaluating these proposals. How much are these things going to benefit the GC population? What sorts of proposals have been submitted?

SD: Do you have a record of what has already been spoken for?

BM: Just about half of the STF.

JH: The record says $189,395, with an additional $218,400 for the Library.

SD: I've heard from people like Ed that there are journals that are unavailable.

JH: A lot that is currently available it taken out of the STF.

SD: We should ask program reps what is missing and what we need that we don't have.

BM: I can bring this up on Friday, too.

DL: The library doesn't seem empty, but it may just be that there were no students last semester.

D. Officer for Governance & Membership (Katie Anderson)

Updates:
- We have two new At-Large Representatives - finally at full capacity in this area!!
    - Alexis Hardy (Psychology)
    - Sara Fresard (Biology)

- low election turnout = potential for a lot of work for the incoming OGM at the beginning of the FA22 semester.
    - I am going to copy the list of programs that did not participate in this election cycle into the OGM transition document.

Announcements:
- A STEM Late payment email hotline has been created. Students have been instructed to email complaints to this address: studentpay@gc.cuny.edu. So far, people are already reporting slow response times, or no responses unless outside parties are also cc'd.

Discussion:

JH: Should we bring this up at Friday's Plenary since the President is coming?

SD: No, we should compile a list of anonymous comments.

AK: This is through the Provost, anyway, so it should be saved for our EC meeting with the President and Provost.

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

Updates:
-We started *Desk on the Cloud* 3 weeks ago. It had low attendance, but I will continue informing the students to get more registration and participation.
-*West African Dance* classes are not ready yet. I am in the process of coordinating with Eric Brown, but he's not receiving a response from the administration as promptly as I would like to.
-Yoga is having a lower attendance this semester. I would like to hear opinions of how to improve the numbers.
-As Britt mentioned in her report, we are collaborating together with the Library to have a campaign on mental health, which will take place around march.

Discussion:

F. Officer for Outreach (Christopher Campbell)

Updates:
- The Dissertation Showcase organizers are searching for one more volunteer to join their search committee. Next week volunteers will be sent a packet of applications to review for acceptance into the Dissertation Showcase.
- Debbie sent an email out about this earlier, but the search committee for the Chief Librarian position needs 10-12 more student volunteers to help out with the decision making process. There will be three meetings. The first meeting is next Monday.
- Working with Silvia and Rod to prepare a COVID-related student oral project that we hope to launch on the CUNY Digital History Archive's website.
    ○ Ideas for a launch event? Speakers?
    ○ Is anyone familiar with the admin at CUNY Archive Project?
- I'd like to discuss possible Outreach objectives for this tax season.
    ○ What will students need most help with?
        ■ vouch for the new tax lawyer
    ○ What are the go-to sources for answers to these questions?
    ○ More generally, where do you see the need for the Outreach Officer to become involved?
    ○ Also, ways of addressing new students with information about the DGSC before they come to the GC for their first semester.
- The Scrabble Tournament went well, albeit we only had four attendees. Something that we'd like to do again.
    ○ Should we up the prize?

Announcements:

Discussion:

DL: We usually do a table at One-Stop to advertise the DGSC. This year, we did a virtual orientation.

CC: We want to show people the structure and let them see what it looks like, so it's more hands-on.

SD: Maybe we can make the DGSC leadership tree look nicer.

SRA: I was wondering if doing the Scrabble in person would help with the attendance, so people could talk and have teams. Being online changes the feeling.

JH: Since we're talking about redoing the leadership tree, let's redo the CUNY Power Structure diagram. There's a lot of missing information, and it's not very visually appealing, or easy to follow.

V.   New Business

VI.   Announcements

VII.   Adjournment
Motion to adjourn: JH
Second: DL
Meeting is adjourned at 6:49pm by unanimous consent.