



DOCTORAL AND GRADUATE STUDENTS' COUNCIL

The Graduate Center, CUNY
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Steering Committee Meeting

Minutes

September 9th, 2022

4:00PM

Attendance

Present: Ian Williams (IW) , Natalia Lara (NL), Silvia Rivera Alfaro (SRA), Daniel Okpattah (DO), Angela LaScala-Gruenewald (AL), Katherine Rivera Gomez (KRG), Christopher Campbell (CC), Sayantika Mondal (SM), Proxies: Eric Barenboim (EB, for Jonathan Hanon), Vivek Sharma (VS, for Alex Jiang)

Note: Jonathan Hanon (JH) entered later.

Absent: Parisa Montazaran

Meeting Chair: Chris

Minutes: Silvia

Meeting called to order at 4:05PM

I. Approval of Agenda

Motion to Approve: Silvia

Seconded: Eric

Vote: unanimously

II. Approval of the Minutes of the 3 June 2022 Meeting

Motion to Approve: Silvia

Seconded: Ian

Vote: unanimous

III. Executive Committee Reports

A. Co-Chair for Student Affairs (Silvia Rivera Alfaro)

Updates:

-DGSC Rooms. We collectively cleaned rooms across August. On behalf of the co-chairs I want to thank everyone for the amount of energy those who had the time/energy/opportunity to participate put into this work. We focused on the Lounges.

Another issue is that, as we have communicated via email, Works is –contrary to its name– not working due to the website migration. I created an excel spreadsheet for keeping track of the rooms as a temporary solution. About the policies for reserving the rooms, we will discuss the subject in the New Business section of today’s agenda.

-New Student Orientation. The orientation was A SUCCESS! Natalia, Alex, Ian, Chris, Jonathan, and I had the opportunity to participate in the Students’ Organization Welcome Fair and the energy of coming back to in-person was very motivating. During the discussion of this report, please let me know the opportunities for improvement you find and also the positive parts of the experience! This was our first massive event since Covid and we learned a lot about organization in communication with the administration.

-Affiliates status. Currently we are opening the three leading positions for the Adjunct Project and one position for The Advocate. I am coordinating, on behalf of the co-chairs, a meeting of the three of us with the current leaders of The Advocate and OpenCUNY to debrief and plan a collective plan to improve the presence of the affiliates within the GC.

-Elections. There were two pending elections for the Philosophy Department Elections and the Political Science Program. I set them up and completed the processes.

-Chartered organizations. During the Summer, I reviewed the status of the organizations. This is the list of the current status.

-Active we have:

1. Africa Research Group (ARG)
2. American Studies Area Group
3. Arab Crossroads
4. Chinese Students and Scholars Association (CSSA)
5. Cinema Studies Group (CSG)
6. Classical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies Group (CANES)
7. Colombian Studies Group
8. Critical Palestine Studies Association
9. CUNY Internationalist Marxist Club
10. CUNYSciCom
11. GC Students for Disability, Health, and Wellness
12. Immigration Working Group

13. Jewish Connection Group
14. Korean Students Association (KSA)
15. Mesamerican Studies Group
16. Mexican Studies Group
17. Pearl Kibre Medieval Study
18. Postcolonial Studies Group (PSG)
19. Space Time Research Collective
20. Students of the State (SOS)
21. Taiwanese Students Organization (TSO)
22. Text Textile Texture (3Text) Studio
23. Twentieth Century Area Studies Group

-Inactive for more than one semester, but not for 3 consecutive semesters:

24. AELLA (Latino and Latin-American Students Association)
25. Dominican Studies Group
26. Early Modern Interdisciplinary Group (EMIG)
27. Mentoring Future Faculty of Color Group (MFFC)
28. Thought Club
29. Women of Color Network*

-Organizations at risk of decharterization:

I emailed all the organizations at risk at the end of July asking about their interest to get reactivated.

-Expressed their interest in reactivation:

30. Ecocriticism Working Group
31. Feminist Studies Group (FSG)
32. GC Poetics Group - a student wants to revitalize it
33. Middle Eastern Studies Organization (MESO)

-To be voted for dechartering later today:

34. Association for Critical Theory (ACT)
35. Collective of Critical Transport Scholars (CCTS)
36. Comp Comm
37. CUNY Materials Research Society (MRS)
38. CUNY STEM Outreach
39. CUNY Women In Science, Technology, Engineering and Math
40. Food Studies Collective
41. Frame
42. GC-ISO: GC Chapter of the International Socialist Organization
43. Global Studies Collective
44. Hunter Alliance of Cross-Disciplinary Sciences (HACS)
45. Mise en Scene
46. Prison Studies Group

47. Puerto Rican Studies Group (PRSG)
48. QUNY
49. South Asian Students and Scholars (SASS)
50. SPTSA: Social and Political Theory Students Association

-There are 2 possible chartered organizations proposals for this semester: Cuban Studies Group and Eastern European, Eurasia, & Slavic Studies

- Due to Works being off, I have not yet opened the list for signatures.

Announcements:

-International students. I will be working on this subject with Natalia and a student who wants to move certain concerns to the admin. We have an upcoming meeting on the subject with the student to hear about those concerns.

-Cafeteria: I would like to propose we collaborate to create an organized collective campaign on the topic. I know there are people in the Steering who are interested and I also know that there are students who have been reaching out to us. I believe this is also an opportunity for students to come together..

Discussion:

IW: I support the campaign for the cafeteria and suggest getting information on how the cafeteria was and how we want it to run. I propose looking for ethical vendors with a social cause and that we propose that to the admin.

KRG: How is Works helpful and when will we have it back?

CC: Chris summarizes the process with the website developer. He hopes it will be back by next week.

SRA: It affects us all with stipends. We are creating workarounds for our tasks.

CC: We are working hard on pushing the designer. The issues with the designer are inherited.

VS: Jonathan mentioned he talked to the Chancellor about the contract with the canteen, food trucks, grab and go.

SRA: Would anyone like to join on a committee to promote reopening the cafeteria? I'll send an email with details and people can decide if they'd like to be involved.

NL: Shayantika could be interested.

JH: CUNY is working on a plan for food.

SRA: I will reach out to Ian so that we can work together on a plan for the cafeteria and will email the proposal to everyone.

B. Co-Chair for Communications (Christopher Campbell)

Updates:

- Meeting Duties

- Only about half of us have signed up for steering & plenary meeting duties. I'll share the link in chat. You'll want to sign up for 9 or 10 roles throughout the entire academic year. This helps make sure that all of our meetings run smoothly, and we can anticipate who will be in charge of which task during any given meeting. Thank you for signing up!
- Communication strategies/priorities
 - As a follow up to the email thread we exchanged over this past week, I want to apologize again for not communicating in advance about the stipend payment issues that have been lingering since the summer.
- Steering WhatsApp Group Guidelines
 - After some consideration and consultation with some of you, I decided that we should maintain the Steering WhatsApp group despite some of the initial turmoil surrounding it. I think it's a useful tool for communication on the fly. Going forward, I'd like to use the Steering WhatsApp group for the following purposes:
 - a) Sending reminder messages about events, emails, and the like.
 - b) Exchanging files or photographs from events
 - c) General questions (where is this, where is that, how do I do this...)
 - I didn't anticipate, and don't consider, the WhatsApp group as a conversational space. If broader matters need to be brought to the attention of everyone (problems at the GC, student issues, ideas about programming or advocacy, etc.) these should be sent via email.
- Office Hours and Officer Responsibilities
 - If you haven't done so, please sign up for weekly office hours. I sent an email out about this a couple of weeks ago. You'll add your hours to both an excel file and the dgsc google calendar (let me know if you need help navigating the calendar!). Adding your hours to the Google calendar will automatically make your office hours available on the dgsc website. Note that we'd appreciate, if at all possible, if your office hours don't overlap with another steering officer's office hours. They should be once a week for two hours. It would be great if everyone could hold their office hours in person here at the GC. Let me know if this is not the case.
- Collaboration between officers on projects
 - Just a reminder that you're not alone! While planning an event or programming or advocacy, please reach out to dgsc steering members to see if anyone would be interested in joining along with you.
- Steering retreat
 - DGSC Steering typically holds some sort of retreat around the beginning of the academic year (going to a park, going upstate, etc.). I'd like to gather some ideas for a retreat from you all in our discussion today. This

could be an afternoon/evening thing, or a multi-day (weekend) thing if we'd all like. Completely open to ideas!

- Updating DGSC Flyers, Brochures, etc.
 - The DGSC lounge plus all of the paperwork within and around it needs some major revision. First and foremost, one major issue is that right before the pandemic, the DSC changed its name to the DGSC. All of the flyers, brochures, banners, literally *everything* has DSC written on it. These things need to be changed. Additionally, one of my goals on the DGSC this year is to give these documents, and even the lounge itself, somewhat of a makeover. I'm proficient in Adobe Suite so I've been doing this myself, but if anyone would like to jump in with me I'd really appreciate the help.
 - a) That said, if there's any sort of document you think needs to be created, please let me know! Happy to mock something up for you.
 - (1) For example, Ian reached out to me about creating a powerpoint for Program Reps to use when teaching/advising their colleagues about what the DGSC is and does.

Discussion:

SRA: Could we use Canva as a collaborative tool?

CC: I will try Canva. I started with Adobe Illustrator because it was how it was done in the previous files

ALG: About Whatsapp, it would be great to have the rules formalized somewhere.

C. Co-Chair for Business (Jonathan Hanon)

Updates:

- Budget and Expenditures
 - I am in the process of revising the budget based on last year's expenditures and carryover.
 - Because our budget is now processed by CUNY Central, we are being kept under a magnifying glass in terms of expenditures. Please remember to use the Tax Exempt Form, because sales tax cannot be reimbursed.
- Purchasing
 - I have set up an Amazon Business Account for the DGSC under the CCB email, and have activated its tax-exempt status. According to the GC Business Office, I think we're good to go.
 - I will begin to create accounts with other vendors that will allow us to register our tax-exempt status online. This should allow us to make many of our purchases easier. For now, these accounts will belong to the CCB.

- For these purchases, we will create a shopping list that we will all be able to keep track of, so nobody purchases duplicate items.
- Payroll / Reimbursements
 - The Business Office has communicated with us how to get set up with the new CUNYBuy portal to be paid. For new Steering members, please do this as soon as possible, so you can be paid.
- DGSC Services
 - Locker raffles will begin some time soon, but since nobody has asked me about it yet, this is not a priority.
 - People have asked about movie ticket sales, but doing it ourselves is impractical. As a student, the very same discounts are available through id.me, which has discounts for this and much more. As such, I would like to permanently discontinue this service through the DGSC, and instead, refer GC students (or CUNY students) to id.me, to remove a responsibility from the DGSC, while still making this opportunity available to students.
- Affiliate Reports
 - I am in the process of reaching out to OpenCUNY and The Advocate to request Affiliate Reports, to indicate what they have been up to and what their goals are for the year.
- Requisition Orders
 - I am awaiting Ron Paynter to handle my forms to give me CCB access in CUNYfirst. This is required for honoraria, which are how we pay people from outside the CUNY system. We cannot process honoraria until this access is given to me, but there aren't many requests still pending.

Discussion:

ALG: Thank you for following up with Anna from the Business Office. Could you ask her to get a timeline for us?

JH: I will do so.

SRA: What would happen with Amazon for Chartered Orgs or Grants?

JH: I can try to see if I can make a system that will give people access, requisition access, with my payment information removed and their payment information added on. We'd need to have an account that we can give people requisition access.

IW: The last email from Anna was two days ago. I haven't received anything about CUNYBuy, instructions, or signing up as a vendor. Has anyone received any info?

JH: I will not be able to know until Monday.

EB: I believe there is a communication issue as I didn't know anything about discounted tickets, neither id.me. It would be good to work on better communication.

JH: So we will discontinue the tickets via DGSC.

D. University Student Senate Delegate (Alex Jiang)

Updates:

USS Retreat: The annual USS retreat, Jonathan and Zhuo (USS alternate) is coming as officers on the USS steering committee. This retreat is both for training purposes and a preparation for the later election of USS steering committee in October.

Discussion:

JH: USS elections are next Sunday, will you be attending Chris?

CC: I do not know.

E. University Faculty Senate Liaison (Parisa Montazaran Osmanovic)

Updates:

-Parisa plans to attend the UFS plenary

Discussion:

JH: Is the UFS meeting in person, online, or hybrid?

ALG: I do not have the info.

JH: I will reach out to Parisa or UFS.

IV. Steering Officer Reports

A. Officer for Funding (Angela LaScala-Gruenewald)

Updates:

- We assembled a 2022-2023 Grants Committee (6 members total) and had our first introductory meeting; we set meeting times for the rest of the semester
- Considering for funding (\$700): Students in GC Philosophy Department organizing annual conference (25+ students in-person, plus many more joining remotely). Providing food and materials. Program contributing \$600 to bring a speaker to campus.
 - Committee conducting email vote this week to determine if we will allow funding
- Working with another potential grantee on a website hub for teaching materials (use incentives so students add their materials and build out the site); organized by students in the GC Music program, would be a year-long grant and project (around \$400)
- Revised website content and working on social media promotions; thinking about putting up flyers at the GC w/ grant application dates (every third Friday).

- From last year, I would like to return to the idea of an in-person or virtual ‘DGSC tour’ of programs/departments sharing DGSC resources with students by presenting at student associations, conferences, etc.
 - Question: What does everyone think of reviving that idea? Would anyone be interested in working with me on it? From last year, I put together a brief agenda and powerpoint (~5 minutes).

Announcements:

- This semester, grant proposals are due the third Friday of September, October, and November
- First grant deadline of the semester is this **Friday, September 16**
 - **Important note:** If DGSC Works is not operating by then, please ask potential grantees to email me and I will set up a separate application process for them that mimics works)

Discussion

IW: I’m fine with putting together something like that. My question is, do you imagine this as a rotating five minutes. What would it look like? What would these meetings looking like? I’m thinking about this because I did a meeting last night with first year students from my program.

ALG: Those are great questions. I don’t have an immediate answer. It fell on my plate last year because everyone was stretched. Talk about grants, talk about everything. We can connect offline and talk about it.

B. Officer for Governance & Membership (Ian Williams)

Updates:

- Educational Psychology does not have a representative. The former representative reached out to us about this; I shared the petition and process with him but have not heard further updates.
- There are several new programs (Astrophysics, Neuroscience - any others?) that we are waiting on hearing back from Elise at the GC about. Jonathan reached out to her last week, and I followed up this week.
- Related to student services - I offered to help develop some infrastructure for documenting and triaging support for students, using some of my previous experience in crisis response work as a model. Is anyone interested in reviewing existing protocols and developing some proposed policies and protocols?

- I discussed with Chris the idea of creating a PowerPoint for program reps to introduce the DGSC with some of the same information we share in the brochures

Announcements:

Discussion:

CC: Polling might be a little extra work for us during the meeting, especially plenary. Usually if someone disagrees there's opportunity to say "nay" but I'm open to discussing more/seeing what others think.

SRA: According to Roberts Rules, if you don't oppose then you've voted yes, essentially. We can check on these. It's a good idea for people to get involved, but I'm not sure that's ok with our bylaws

C. Officer for Health & Wellness (Katherine Rivera Gomez)

Updates: Currently finalizing the calendar for yoga to be provided through January intersession. Meeting with committee members on Monday to discuss future plans and delegate roles.

Discussion:

CC: Tell me if you need any help talking to OSA.

D. Officer for Outreach (Natalia Lara)

Updates: Organized a welcome party for all international students. Working with an international student on how to create a centralized resource where all students can check for social events happening in NYC. Many students expressed interest in having more parties like this, so I'll be working with the officer for student life and services to have hopefully one event a month.

Discussion:

SRA: I want to congratulate Natalia and Sayantika for this event! Everyone at the GC who learns about it feels energized and motivated to see how students back are coming in-person.

NL: Thank you!

SRA: A possible idea would be a collaboration with Katherine to talk with international students on insurance.

NL: That would be great!

KRG: Yes, I also would like to do so. I will get in touch.

E. Officer for Student Life & Services (Sayantika Mondal)

Updates: Helped Natalia with the welcome party for international students. Had a zoom meeting with the social media representative about using the DGSC social media platform to create some sort of housing resources. Planning to have semi regular board game nights (twice a month) starting this month. Also I have plans for some other events for the semester and potentially put together a list of resources/ free events for students. Off hour access. (revert back to pre Covid rules)

Discussion:

IW: By off hours, what does that look like? What are those times? Are there any plans on GC administration to resume that?

SM: Before, APO or EO would put you on a list. I don't just want to give everyone access, but I think there should be a method for people gaining off hours access. Maybe this is a security issue? Would they have to hire and pay more people to keep the building open?

F. Officer for Library & Technology (Daniel Okpattah)

Updates:

Had a meeting with the Chief Librarian and Elvis Bakatis. We discussed a few stuff and they are as follows:

1. Ensuring that there is an open tour for incoming and new students in the library.
2. Allocating one of the DSGC rooms for zoom conference meetings since there are no space in the library for conference meetings or group discussions
3. Ensuring that reminders are sent to students about various library activities
4. Dissemination of information to students on how to navigate the Mina Rees online library.
5. No meeting with the IT department yet.

Discussion:

SRA: Room 5396 would be the best place, but it has connectivity issues.

DO: How can these rooms be allocated if students want to use them?

SRA: We will discuss this in New Business.

DO: How can the student government come to the aid of students with color printing?

CC: We have a color printer on the 5th floor, at the Computer Hub.

IW: IT has is understaffed.

JH: I want to serve on the CIO Search Committee.

V. New Business

Silvia Rivera Alfaro makes a motion to add an item to the agenda; the dechartering of organizations.

Seconded: Eric

Vote: unanimously

A. Dechartering organizations for inactivity

Motioned: Silvia (SRA)

Seconded: Eric (EB)

1. Association for Critical Theory (ACT)
2. Collective of Critical Transport Scholars (CCTS)
3. Comp Comm
4. CUNY Materials Research Society (MRS)
5. CUNY STEM Outreach
6. CUNY Women In Science, Technology, Engineering and Math
7. Food Studies Collective
8. Frame
9. GC-ISO: GC Chapter of the International Socialist Organization
10. Global Studies Collective
11. Hunter Alliance of Cross-Disciplinary Sciences (HACS)
12. Mise en Scene
13. Prison Studies Group
14. Puerto Rican Studies Group (PRSG)
15. QUNY
16. South Asian Students and Scholars (SASS)
17. SPTSA: Social and Political Theory Students Association

Voted: unanimously

B. Room Exception for History Program Conference on March 31, 2023 (voting)

Motioned: Silvia (SRA)

Seconded: Eric (EB)

Vote: unanimously

C. Room Reservation Policy

SRA: Please read the room policies <https://cunydisc.org/services/rooms/>

CC: Move this to email.

D. Steering and Plenary Meeting Logistics

- Discussion: hy-flex steering meetings?

IW: Let's improve microphone sound and audio. Let's create a protocol. We should get a conference microphone.

SM: I think it works pretty well

NL: If we do in person let's have some food.

CC: Yes, we will start next time.

NL: Should we communicate when we are coming in person?

CC: We can order via app with those who are here.

SRA: I second Natalia's idea on snacks or something.

IW: Does the IT department have any tech for hyflex that we could reserve or request?

SM: Could we get a reminder?

CC: I sent a reminder yesterday. We can send a Whatsapp message.

SRA: We can use Room 5489 for the meetings.

EB: Having *commoners* from outside would help people to get to know what you do.

VI. Announcements

CC: Fri 23 4:30 p.m. First Plenary

VII. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn: Chris

Seconded: Silvia

Voted: unanimously

Meeting is adjourned a 6:29 PM