



DOCTORAL AND GRADUATE STUDENTS' COUNCIL

The Graduate Center, CUNY
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Steering Committee Information Meeting

Summary

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February 17th, 2023

2:00PM

Attendance

Present: Katherine Rivera Gómez, Bryce Barthuly, Christopher Cambell, Alex Jiang, Silvia Rivera Alfaro, Jonathan Hanon

Remote attendance via Zoom: Parisa Osmanovic, Ian Williams, Daniel Okpattah

Absent: Sayantika Mondal (excused)

No quorum due to NY public meeting law not allowing us to count online attendance for quorum. Therefore, we held an informational session.

Meeting Chair: Chris

Minutes: Alex

Minutes Assist: Silvia

Meeting began at 2:00pm without quorum

I. Approval of Agenda

Motion to Approve:

Seconded:

Vote:

II. Approval of the Minutes of the 2 December 2022 Meeting

Motion to Approve:

Seconded:

Vote:

III. Executive Committee Reports

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

Updates:

-Dining Commons: As I informed you in an email on Feb 13th via email, we made the executive decision to support Reclaim the Commons during the past two weeks. As you remember, we as the Steering Committee have been discussing serving food in this space since last semester, so we joined the effort to respond to the student initiative that responds to a lack of solutions to the urgent topic. As you also know, on Feb 9th we had a DGSC-Provost meeting. In this meeting we focused on the fact that the pantry is a self-organized space and we won't make decisions on behalf of the students and insisted that the senior administration really have to get in conversations with the community. We also emphasized that this student initiative is a response to the precarity of our conditions as GC students. As you know, we will have the organizers of Reclaim the Commons in the plenary and we will be voting on a resolution to define the position of the DSGC on the demands.

-Chartered Organizations: Many organizations were unable to reach the number of signatures required due to the delay on opening the rosters I faced last semester due to the problems with Works. Therefore, I made the discretionary decision to waive this requirement for Fall 2022.

-Lounge: I have created an email thread on the topic of the DGSC lounges with the subject "DGSC Lounge", please reply to it with ideas. For now, we are talking about renovating the lounges (5495 and 5396). We still need to know from what budget these renovations would come from and I would have to coordinate with the Provost Office on this regard. I will follow up on this topic at our next Steering meeting.

Discussion:

-Jonathan: Is renovations of the DGSC lounges something we could do with the surplus?

-Katherine: Aren't they checking the space in the building?

-Chris: Do we rent the space?

-Jonathan: We rent the space but it is entirely covered by the GC administration.

-Chris: I am not sure about the surplus yet. We will follow up on this with Brian Peterson in our upcoming meeting.

-Jonathan: It could be possible. However, we still will need to take it to the College Association.

-Chris: Brian suggested that we meet with the College Association in March.

- Silvia: We might think of fridge and couch, for example.
- Chris: If we submit our proposal by July first we will get the fund by fall semester.
- Parisa: I have discount subscriptions and I can help with buying stuff.
- Chris: do we have to go through CUNY Buy?
- Jonathan: Not sure, that might be a large purchase. Let's go through the business office. If we don't want to do reimbursement then we still need to go through the business office to get them registered.
- Parisa: Is there a cap for reimbursement? If items are cheaper at Costco then it's better for us to buy from Costco directly.
- Jonathan: not sure, let's talk to the business office.

B. Co-Chair for Communications (Christopher Campbell)

Updates:

- **Surplus:** We've decided to move forward with a Request for Proposals that will be sent out at the beginning of March. We'll form a committee to review the proposals to determine who will receive funds, how much. Award letters will be sent out in May. The goal is to spread this process over the course of three years.
- **The Advocate:** In the process of hiring a new editor. They have a call for contributions for their upcoming issue.
- **Winter Party:** Was a big success! Over 100 people attended. All of the food was eaten. Security and Facilities were happy with us! I'll let Sayantika explain more.

Discussion:

No discussion.

C. Co-Chair for Business (Jonathan Hanon)

Updates:

- Spending DGSC Funds - Business Office is finally working with us
 - Reimbursements happen under new protocol, but are happening. They can no longer be by direct deposit, all reimbursements are "single pay" by check.
 - The caterer was paid a bit late, but they're finally coordinating directly with the Business Office.
 - Stipends should still be coming in regularly. Let me know if there are any issues.

Announcements:

Discussion:

-Parisa: Thank you Jonathan! Is there something we can do procedurally to push back to get reimbursements back to direct deposit rather than by check?

-Jonathan: This is a CUNY central policy under CUNYbuy, Single pay voucher cannot be by a deposit.

D. University Student Senate Delegate (Alex Jiang)

Updates:

- First USS meeting is next Sunday (2/26)
- Zhuo is now the VC for Graduate Affairs
- There is a policy conference this weekend at Albany, Zhuo is attending
- Zhuo and Jonathan are planning on bringing in a resolution next Sunday on our cafeteria, and potentially a resolution on CUNY wide cafeteria issue.
- Elections finished in December, but there are three vacancies - VC for Legislative resigned, two other VCs graduated from Community Colleges.

Announcements:

Discussion:

E. University Faculty Senate Liaison (Parisa Montazaran Osmanovic)

Updates:

- First meeting of the new year will be 2/21.
- Surplus: We'll meet to talk about the timing. We've gotten positive feedback from the Business Office in terms of progress. It's a quick time crunch. My biggest goal in terms of the surplus is establishing a concrete yet malleable bullet point scheduling between Chris and I in terms of knocking the project out, gathering more information, and making sure that every single student is aware of this money because it's their money.

Announcements:

Discussion:

IV. Steering Officer Reports

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

Updates:

- Wellness Center purchased Care Solace – currently offering their confidential services to Graduate Center staff, faculty and their families as an added benefit with no extra cost.
Care Solace helps individuals find mental health providers and substance use treatment centers. A dedicated Care Companion will help to research options, secure appointments and follow up to make sure the provider is a good fit. The Care Companion team is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Support is available in 200+ languages.
Should you have any questions about Care Solace or want to begin the process, please contact 1-888-515-0595.
- Yoga is in full session via Zoom on Mondays 8:00am and Thursdays 7:30pm
Until May 1st, 2023
- NEW!: Improv Theater and Movement classes Thursday Evenings - 4-6pm
February 23, March 2, 16, 23 (more classes might be available upon attendance)

Discussion:

Chris: Is this an acting class?

Katherine: Yes, it is.

Chris: In our OSA meeting, Silvia proposed to Bill McGowan to hold an information session to have people come and he'll answer questions about health insurance from the floor.

Alex: Can we do that every semester? I've heard of students who don't want to go to the hospital for serious issues because they feel it won't be covered.

Silvia: We used to have Navigating NYSHIP, but there was a problem with it that there were too many slides with administrative information, without space for questions. We suggested that similar to what Alex said about students being afraid to use insurance.

Ian: Does anyone have any details about settlement regarding health insurance premium? They won't charge above a certain percentage and GC would make up the rest but NYSHIP are still charging the full amount. There was a huge rate jump when I put my wife on the insurance.

B. Officer for Governance & Membership (Ian Williams)

Updates:

By the numbers

- Current reps: 38
- Current vacancies: 26
- December 2022 attendance: 27

Resignations

- Vicki Li resigned from the Linguistics rep on 2/10/23

Petitions for Reps

- Margaret Matte expressed interest in serving as the Linguistics rep; she plans to bring a completed petition to Plenary.
- Jianing Qi submitted a completed petition to create a second Computer Science rep.
- A few students expressed interest in other programs (MALS & WGS). They have been sent petitions and the process was explained.

Constitution & Bylaws Committee

- Met in December; no concrete recommendations at this time.
- Will plan to convene in March and discuss affiliate issues previously mentioned by Silvia.

Announcements:

Discussion:

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

No report.

D. Officer for Library & Technology (Daniel Okpattah)

Updates:

1. Success with the extension of library hours
2. Search for the the new Vice President of IT and Chief Information office ongoing
First meeting was held on 02/16/23 which I was not aware of but that was due to miscommunication with Julie Vanegas which has been resolved.

I will meet with Smale Maura on Friday, 24th February, 2023 for a debrief on what transpired on 02/16/23.

Discussion:

Jonathan: Context on miscommunication with Julie Vanegas.. I went to ask about the search committee, and I was told that Daniel is on the committee, which is great, but I think it would be better if we are also informed of the process. The Office of Finance and Administration's miscommunication is that they used an email without asking for where to send things to. Daniel is the person who is supposed to serve on this committee, but it would have been nice if the OFA told us so Daniel can properly serve on the committee.

Silvia: Daniel you have been doing a great job for getting us additional hours! The president should have told us that students are involved in the process of getting that extended hour.

Daniel: Thank you all for putting this on the agenda!

Chris: Thank you, Daniel!

E. Interim Officer for Funding (Bryce Barthuly)

Updates:

- Upcoming funding application deadlines this spring semester:
 - Today, February 17th
 - Friday, March 17th
 - Information and Future Deadlines can be found via <http://cunydisc.org/grants>
- Recently approved grants include (January 27th):
 - Math Weekly Afternoon Tea (\$700)
 - Where is Academic Work (\$700)
 - Graduate Students in Music (GSIM) Conference (\$500)
- The grants committee will convene to review new/revised applications
 - Date and Time is TBD

Discussion

Chris: Thank you for joining the steering!

F. Officer for Outreach (Vacant)

No report.

V. New Business

VI. Announcements

VII. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn:

Seconded:

Voted:

Meeting is adjourned at 2:58 without quorum.