

Minutes of the One Hundred and Sixty-Second Meeting of the College Council
Formed on November 14, 2002

Date: Thursday, March 21, 2024, 2:30pm – 3:25pm

Location: 1P-119 & Zoom Meeting

CC Members in Attendance

Zaghloul Ahmed, David Allen, Neo Antoniadis, Comfort Asanbe, Warrick Bell, Alan Benimoff, Heidi Bertels, Jason Bishop, Holly Block, Vandana Chaudhry, Cynthia Chris, Andrew Colbeck, David Curcio, Glenn Garbe Sheehan, Gene Fellner, Christine Flynn Saulnier, Valerie Forrestal, Kenneth Gold, Hernan Green, Patti Gross, Orit Gruber, Michel Hodge, Susan Holak, Burnett Joiner, Wilma Jones, Sylvia Kahan, Patricia Kahn, Luke Katz, Alfred Levine, Michael Levitas, Timothy Lynch, Lee Papa, Michael Paris, Ralf Peetz, Jonathan Peters, Greg Philips, Keith Pisons, Sarah Pollack, Angelina Raio, Alex Scott, Don Selby, Suzy Shepardson, Susan Smith-Peter, Carles Solà Belda, Michael Steiper, Sarolta Takács, Thomas Tellefsen, John Verzani, Robert Wallace, Siona Wilson, John Wing, Mark Zdziarski, Sarah Zelikovitz.

CC Members Via Zoom

Winsome Alston, Alyson Bardsley, Susan Brillhart, Thomas Chen, Deborah DeSimone, Clarissa Domingo, Rosane Gertner, Yumei Huo, Sharon Loverde, Mary Murphy, Ruth Silverberg, Simone Wegge, Mark White, Cindy Wong.

Guests In-Person

Cheryl Adolph, Michael Anderson, Karen Arca-Contrera, Sharon Cammarano, Leanora Chiaruttini, Sharon Christian, Jessica Collura, Brian Cortijo, Danna Curcio, Nina Del Gatto, Michael Dreher, Aleks Dudek, Valkiria Durán-Narucki, Emmanuel Esperance, Koby Kohulan, Jackie Lamberti, Nicole LaMassa, Anna Lambert, Tom Lauria, Michael Lederhandler, Mark Lewental, Chase Licata, Carey Marigold, Susan Massara, Tara Mastroilli, Terri Sangiorgio, Donna Scimeca, Amy Stempler, Brenda Valentin, Rosemary Vitale, Bryan Weber.

Guests via Zoom

Stephanie Allen, Manuela Alongi, Anjail Ameen-Rice, Maria Bellamy, Cesare Barreca, Kristi Brescia, Marta Cabral, Rosita Cam, Stefan Charles-Pierre, Barbara Cohen, Linda Conte, Celeste Del Maestro, Danielle Dimitrov, Jennifer Durando, Catherine Ferrara, Matthew Ganz, Mariya Gershkovich, Amila Goonawardena, Adjevi Gunn, James Hamilton, Eli Hollander, Doriann Hyland, Linda John, Dalia Kandiyoti, Michele Karpeles, Jane Kisto, Lisa Korchma, Lynne Lacomis, Ricky Liu, Jennifer Macchiarola, Steven Milewski, Hung Nguyen, Dina Pattelli, David Pizzuto, Laxmi Ramasubramanian, Caterina Scarimbolo, Janine Scotto, Jessica Stein, Byron Taylor, Joyce Taylor, Stanley Tse, Sep Vakil, Dimitriy Verkhovskiy, Priscilla Villacis, Lenny Wolski.

I. **Approval of the proposed agenda** – approved with no changes

II. **Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting** – approved with no changes

III. Executive Committee of College Council Report – Kenneth Gold

The Executive Committee met with President Lynch, Provost Steiper, and Chief of Staff Collura on March 5 for our monthly consultation. We began by discussing the plans for Commencement. Noting that the 2023 College ceremony lasted less than an hour, we heard about the inclusion of outside speakers and honorary degrees that should give the ceremony more substance and at a more appropriate length of about 90 minutes. The President offered the understandable caveat that there are some variables beyond our control—most notably the number of politicians who show up—and we shared his hope that we don't end up with too many speeches.

We then shifted to the goal of renewing smaller commencement ceremonies where graduates have their names read. We appreciate the effort and recognize the College's fiscal hole, but you'll recall that this topic generated some animated discussion at last month's Faculty Senate meeting because, for financial reasons, the administration is not planning to resume departmental ceremonies in front of the academic buildings. We contended, as several of you did last month, that this plan was ill-advised and would not present the College in a positive light on a day when we have no better opportunity to do so. Unfortunately, we did not persuade the President and Provost to reconsider despite suggesting the use of non-tax levy expenses to cover the additional costs.

We broached several matters related to DEI. We learned that an ad hoc committee to study the HERI results is preparing to meet with the expectation that it has a report ready for the May College Council meeting. We look forward to hearing the upcoming report of the COACHE committee at the Faculty Senate meeting despite the reality that the news is not good. We urged that the strategic plan work on Centering Equity, Inclusion and Belonging, delayed by Jonathan Wesley's departure, get underway and were gratified to learn the overall time frame for the strategic plan now extends to the fall.

In our discussion of the St. George facility, we learned of the willingness of CUNY and NY State to allow subleases, which the administration is now exploring as one means of alleviating our budget crunch. The Dolphin Awards remain a work in progress—an ad hoc committee of faculty and staff met and made some recommendations to President Lynch. The gist of those recommendations was that at the awards committee's discretion, category will not have an awardee if the application pool is slight or incomplete.

We received updates on several matters: CUNY still has not approved our FY 24 budget; the Purchasing Office was reported to be moving ahead on Pos for materials charges though we still hear of other requisitions languishing. President Lynch intends to search for an Executive Director of Institutional Advancement this spring and a VP for Student Affairs and Strategic Initiatives this fall. Conversations with CUNY about the HPCC are ongoing.

IV. President's Report – Timothy Lynch

President Lynch began his report with positive news. He started off by saying that he had been on the road lately meeting with various elected officials, both on and off the Island, including a couple of trips to Albany and one to Washington, D.C. He was pleased to state that the lobbying efforts have certainly paid off and have yielded fruits. Congresswoman Nicole Malliotakis visited on Monday [April 18, 2024] to announce her gift of \$2.9 million to the College of Staten Island for renovations of our science labs. He stressed that this was an important investment for STEM education at CSI and one that would be transformational not just for our students but for our faculty, as well.

At a recent CSI Foundation Board of Directors meeting he attended, it was shared that CSI was in receipt of two large bequests: one from a retired faculty member and the other was an additional contribution to an established endowment. Collectively, they would amount to a little over \$1.5 million dollars. Speaking of fundraising, President Lynch reminded all about the annual 'Spring into Giving' gala planned for the April 18th on Staten Island. He hoped to see many in attendance to celebrate the good work being done at CSI and in support of students' scholarship.

In terms of the current financial projections for CSI, President Lynch stated that CUNY had yet to accept our financial plan. However, CSI's mid-year report projected that we would end the year with a better-than-expected financial situation. At the start of the fiscal year, we were projected to run about an \$8 million deficit, but as of the mid-year report it was projected to run about five-and-a-quarter million dollars. He expected greater clarity at the end of next week, which marked the end of the third quarter.

President Lynch ended his report with a plea. He stressed that it was incumbent upon us all to make sure that we were compliant with our New York State required Ethics Training, as well as the annual trainings for ESPARC, workplace violence, gender-based violence, and domestic violence. He asked that everyone who had yet to do so, make the time to complete these trainings.

Q&A

Kenneth Gold asked whether units, such as Public Safety and Center for the Arts, were involved in the planning for Commencement? President Lynch was pleased to state that departmental commencements, which had not been held for many years due to the pandemic, were returning this year. He said that the plan, a work-in-progress, was to complement our current commencement activities with departmental exercises, mostly using the physical and human resources available to us and operating within budgetary constraints that exist and to provide as meaningful an opportunity for our graduates and their families, as they deserve. That would include using rooms in 1P, as well as the main stage.

Ken Gold followed up with the fact that the concerns were largely about the logistics. President Lynch stated that one of the challenges was that many of the administrators who were involved in this process, (i.e., the vice president for student affairs and strategic initiatives, the provost, and himself), were not at CSI when departmental ceremonies occurred, previously. But he welcomed having a member of the executive committee to join the Commencement Committee and mentioned that a commencement meeting was scheduled for the next day, March 22, 2024, in the President's Conference Room.

V. Professional Staff Congress (PSC) Report

Good afternoon, everyone. Just a few quick updates today from the PSC.

We are almost 13 months without a contract. You should all know that, to my knowledge as of today, CUNY still has no intention of paying our members back pay for this time, and CUNY hasn't changed its position on a number of other issues either. For example, chairs: CUNY management is still bargaining for you exclusion from union representation; that's also true for HEOs in a number of offices. And after thirteen months, CUNY still hasn't come to the table with an economic offer.

But there's more: as highlighted for us by our governance leaders, CUNY management is also engaged in what can only be called a power grab. What kind of power would they like? The power to dissolve programs on CUNY campuses, based on their assessment, not your assessment, of the value of our programs. This would be a very big change in the way we do things at CSI, and across the university.

These issues and others are why it's very important that members of this campus register to testify at the Staten Island Borough Hearing on Monday, April 15th. To do that, you need to register by noon on Friday, April 12th. Testimony is limited to 3 minutes, so this is not a big commitment. But it matters.

Finally, we have one new vacancy on our chapter's executive committee, due to the resignation by Michael Paris (Political Science & Global Affairs), who has been serving as a representative to the delegate assembly. I want to thank Prof. Paris for his service to the chapter, and we are also very grateful to John Lawrence.

And finally, I want to take the opportunity to recognize two PSC members for their outstanding contributions to the college. The first is Melanie McNulty, who is the new director of the Writing Center, housed in the English Department. Following a bleak pandemic period, that Center, which is very important to students across the College, has burst back to life this semester. I also want to recognize Joanne Hollan of the Center for Career and Professional Development; a long-time HEO colleague of ours, Joanne has been working hard to make that office a valuable resource for our students and alumni and doing so during a period of lower staffing levels. We are all grateful to these two PSC members for their service to this institution.

Q&A

A question raised concerned the idea of CUNY taking Chairs out of the bargaining unit, where chairs are elected by their faculty and not appointed by administration. Jason Bishop responded that the union opposes any change in which Chairs would become exempt like members of the administrative staff.

VI. Report from the Administration – Patricia Kahn, Assistant Vice President and Chief information Officer for Information Technology Services.

AVP Kahn gave a presentation on technology services and initiatives taking place on campus over the past year. Before starting her presentation, she acknowledged the team of staff at ITS and thanked them for the incredible work they get done with the limited resources (Slides that accompanied the presentation are attached.) Her presentation covered the following topics:

- Application and Web Development, that covered soon-to-arrive "Danny the Chatbot" and website modifications that includes changing the design of the CSI Homepage and navigation. Expect a new look to go live by June 30th;
- Upgrade of the Local Area Network to replace the fiber throughout the campus (Bldgs 1S & 2S completed) and upgrade of the Wireless with additional access points (6S has received & 0 access points, to date);
- Regular updates about Security measures;
- Training on new technologies;
- the Virtual Reality Lab that promotes VR Ovation, a tool that enhances presentation skills; and
- Smart classroom enhancements that include hyflex technologies.

AVP Kahn concluded with items that were on the horizon, which included: continued fiber upgrades, transition from Blackboard to Brightspace, replacement of the antiquated phone system, single sign on using CUNYFirst login and enhanced security detection and processes.

Q&A

A question was raised about providing more options other than the two-factor authentication for logging-on. Unfortunately, AVP Kahn responded that having the authentication app is the other option, and if that is not available, then reach out to ITS

Another question was about how to report phishing incidents. AVP Kahn responded that one should contact the helpdesk or herself, immediately, and they will block it on the back end. However, the message may have already been out there for longer than one may realize, hence a residual effect. She recommended changing your password as soon as you are aware for further protection.

VII. Reports of the committees of the College Council

a. Committee on Organization – Warrick Bell

Warrick Bell reported that the Committee on Organization sent out requests for nominations for expiring University Faculty Senate (UFS) seats, two weeks ago. March 29th was the deadline for submissions of UFS nominations. There were three seats open, and to date only one nomination had been received. A reminder will be sent via the Provost's Office, and he urged Chairpersons to encourage their faculty to run for seats on the UFS. In addition, in response to a question he received earlier, he mentioned that these seats were not paid positions to serve on the UFS.

b. By-Laws Committee – No report

c. Administrative Review Committee – No report

d. Institutional Planning Committee – Timothy Lynch

President Lynch reported that the IPC met on Friday, March 1, 2024. Items discussed included: i) progress made thus far on the Strategic Plan by each of the working groups affiliated with the five pillars; ii) challenges related to the facility at St George and the HPCC and options for cost-sharing; iii) and concerns raised by the association related to transportation inefficiencies, and the continuation of the CSI shuttle to St George.

A question was raised about the RFP related to bus contracts. President Lynch could not comment on this as they were still being reviewed.

e. Budget Committee – No report

f. Facilities Committee – No report

VIII. Student Government Report – Luke Katz

The President of Student Government Association (SGA), Luke Katz, reported on the following initiatives:

- SGA allocated \$60,000.00 towards renovation of the student lounges in the N and S buildings
- Water bottle fountains had finally arrived on campus and will be installed soon
- SGA was working on a referendum regarding transportation – 800 signatures have been collected, to date.

On a different note, he shared his excitement of meeting Congresswoman Malliotakis when she visited CSI to donate \$2.9 million earlier in the week. He also mentioned that he had been invited to speak at the CSI Foundation and he was thrilled to have met board members such as Jay Chazanoff, the person for whom the Business School he attends is named, and the Editor of the Staten Island Advance, Brian Laline.

Q&A

A question was raised about the referendum, regarding transportation. Luke Katz responded that \$40 out of the total student fees goes to the ferry shuttle service, every semester. For full-time students, that was 30% of their fees; 40% for part-time students. While many students take bus services to CSI, only about 3% of that group ride the ferry shuttle. SGA found that instead of raising the student activity fee to support student groups in grave financial danger, utilizing the \$40 allocation for transportation was the best option.

IX. Higher Education Officer Steering Committee Report - Suzy Shepardson

I bring greetings from my co-chair Winsome, who is unable to join us as she is overseeing administration of that day's NLN testing session and making sure that the Fall 2024 nursing program candidates have a good experience.

At our March 18 meeting, we discussed topics of interest for our upcoming meeting with the president and members of his leadership team: thank you to both President Lynch and Rosemary for organizing the meeting and arranging the Zoom option for a couple of our members.

We also discussed the HEO Scholarship Fund offered through the CSI Foundation, which was created in 2016 by the HEOSC to help support our graduate students. Graduate students have very limited financial aid options (primarily student loans), and the scholarship helps them continue with and complete their degrees at CSI. Contributions to this and other scholarships have a major impact on student retention, persistence, and graduation, and we are looking forward to working with the Foundation to promote donations for these funds.

In the spirit of this semester's HEO Brown Bag Lunch series, we are tossing around ideas for a HEO Hangout activity or get-together, perhaps in collaboration with the CSI Spirit Committee (anyone up for visits with Hope and Schuyler, the therapy dogs?).

Finally, the Labor Management Committee, HEOSC, and Human Resources have begun collaborations on a handbook specifically for new HEO-series employees: we are reviewing samples, and I had an initial meeting today (March 21) with Manuela Alongi. On behalf of the HEOSC, I would like to thank the HEOs

who serve on the Labor Management Committee, especially Terry Mares, Veronica DiMeglio, Byron Taylor (particularly for his deep dive to find sample documents), and Mary Murphy.

Happy Spring!

X. Auxiliary Services Corporation Report – No report

XI. Old Business - None

XII. New Business

Respectfully submitted by Wilma Jones
Secretary, Executive Council of the College Council