

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

Date: Thursday, October 26, 2023, 3:30pm – 4:25pm

Location: 1P-119 & Zoom Meeting

CC Members in Attendance

Zaghloul Ahmed, Winsome Alston, Neo Antoniadis, Comfort Asanbe, Warrick Bell, Alan Benimoff, Heidi Bertels, Jason Bishop, Cynthia Chris, Thomas Chen, Katie Cumiskey, David Curcio, Valerie Forrestal, Kenneth Gold, Hernan Green, Orit Gruber, Anusha Harris, Sheila Harris, Michel Hodge, Susan Holak, Burnett Joiner, Wilma Jones, Sylvia Kahan, Patricia Kahn, Catherine Lavender, Michael Levitas, Timothy Lynch, Sharon Loverde, Lisa Manne, Mohammad Moussa, Nabiswa Mwesiga, Natalia Pankratova, Lee Papa, Ralf Peetz, Jonathan Peters, Greg Philips, Keith Pisons, Sarah Pollack, Alexander Scott, Carlos Serrano, Suzy Shepardson, Susan Smith-Peter, Carles Solà Belda, Michael Steiper, Sarolta Takacs, Thomas Tellefsen, Mikael Vejdemo-Johansson, John Verzani, George Wang, Simone Wegge, Siona Wilson, John Wing, Cindy Wong, Mark Zdziarski.

CC Members Via Zoom

Alyson Bardsley, Vandana Chaudhry, Deborah DeSimone, Maryann Feola, Rosane Gertner, Yumei Huo, Susan Imberman, Alfred Levine, Jane Marcus-Delgado, Mary Murphy, Don Selby, Ruth Silverberg, Mark White, Sarah Zelikovitz.

Guests In-Person

Chrisanthi Anastopolou, Michael Anderson, Karen Arca-Contreras, Michael Batson, Susan Brillhart, Stefan Charles-Pierre, Jessica Collura, Brian Cotijo, Sharon Christian, Danna Curio, Nina DelGatto, Aleks, Dudek, Emmanuel Esperance, Katrina Fama, Stephen Ferst, Neila Green, Marianne Jeffreys, Michael Lederhandler, Mark Lewental, Jennifer Macchiarola, Susan Massara, Tara Mastroilli, Leonardo Pignataro, Chang Hui Shen, Amy Stempler, Brenda Valentin, Rosemary Vitale, Jonathan Wesley

Guests via Zoom

Manuela Alongi, Vincenza Albarano, Cesar Arena-Mena, Maria Bellamy, Marta Cabral, Barbara Cohen, Christine Cohen, Linda Conte, Brian Cotijo, Celeste Del Maestro, Rafael de la Dehesa, Veronica DiMeglio, Danielle Dimitrov, Jennifer Durando, Catherine Ferrara, James Hamilton, Novina Hermoso, Elias Hollander, Doriann Hyland, Jane Kisto, Michele Karpeles, Koby Kohulan, Lisa Korchma, Lynne Lacomis, Thomas Lauria, Eileen Parathyras, Caterina Scarimbolo, Jannine Scotto, Byron Taylor, Joyce Taylor, Ezra Vario, Shuqun Zhang

- I. **Approval of the proposed agenda** – approved with two changes: Removal of “IV. Election of Executive Committee Member-at-Large Seat” and modification of end time of meeting to 4:25pm instead of 4:30pm
- II. **Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting** – approved with no changes
- III. **Executive Committee of College Council Report – Kenneth Gold**

Good afternoon. It is good to see you all. From my vantage point, the College is on a positive trajectory but faces some significant issues. The Executive Committee met to discuss the latter with President Lynch, Provost Steiper, and Chief of Staff Collura on October 10.

Before I begin, I would like to ask for a moment of silence for Bob Brandt, who ran the English Department's Writing Center for over 25 years. *Pause.* Thank you.

The challenge we immediately face is a structural budget deficit of at least \$8,000,000 for FY24. You may wonder how that can be the case when we ended FY23 with nearly no deficit. So did we. We ideally would have AVP Serrano presenting on the budget today, but CUNY has been slow to respond to the College's budget submissions, so we're waiting until November. In the interim, the largest factors accounting for the deficit are the depletion of federal COVID funds, the expense of contractual salary increases that went unfunded by the state, and looming cuts in the city's allocations for CUNY. What's most troubling to me are two facts: First, with all the attrition in faculty and non-faculty positions over the past five years, personnel costs continue to account for well over 90% of our budget. Second, the College remains with a deficit at the end of a three-year fiscal plan recently submitted to CUNY despite all the good work we've done and will continue to do.

We also reviewed how the College responded to flooding on Friday, September 29 and discussed weather emergencies in general. One challenge we raised is the unevenness in localized decisions to close offices within the College. It is a thorny issue because the rationale of flexibility based on the nature of the work in a specific office is complicated by power dynamics.

I will also mention that we discussed the need for a governance approval process for the CUNY online programs. Since that's more obviously an issue for the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate and it came up at its consultation with the Provost and Deans, I expect the Chair of Faculty Senate will share the outcome. I did establish that the College Council's IPC committee will also consider proposals, an especially useful result now as it leads us through a strategic planning process.

Finally, we discussed two ways in which the College honors its employees and benefactors. Administration of the Dolphin Awards, which the joint executive committees managed last year, will return to the Administration after a working committee of faculty and staff reviews and amends as needed the process of awarding them. The Celestial Ball will be moved to the Spring so that it does not compete with other end-of-the-year fundraising activity. When we urged the inclusion of an honoree from within the College, President Lynch noted that last year's honorees were all College employees or retirees so that this year's event will feature Staten Islanders from the community.

Q&A

A question raised was raised about how CUNY makes budget decisions on square footage?

Kenneth Gold's responded that given that he has heard contradictory statements to this question, he would rather we learn more about this from Carlos Serrano's presentation, next month. The President interjected that interior square footage is one of many variables that is used in determining the funding model of a college's budget. He added that there are conversations currently taking place to modify the allocation model that will recognize the unique circumstances of each campus. However, he stressed that enrollment was the major determinant for funding allocation.

IV. President's Report – Timothy Lynch

President Lynch prefaced his remarks by saying that he would focus on a few large themes: student engagements, community enhancements, staff encouragement; and a little bit about where we stand in terms of strategic planning and issues that are related to the ongoing situation in the Middle East and the campus' response to those.

In terms of student engagement, President Lynch spoke about his meeting with student government leaders, along with Vice President Hodge, and the provost. He found that Students were desirous of activities outside the classroom and within the classroom--appreciative of clubs, organizations, undergraduate research activities, apprenticeships, internships, and the like. He thanked faculty and staff for providing those opportunities for students and urged anyone who might need assistance in escalating or amplifying such opportunities to bring that to his attention. Student engagement is important, and he would like to continue on that very positive trajectory. Just yesterday, Vice President Hodge and President Lynch, along with some others, attended the annual career fair hosted at the Hilton Hotel on Staten Island where over 75 agencies or employers were in attendance. Over 300 students participated in this event. President Lynch expressed that it was amazing to see our students very comfortably engaging with potential employers and taking headshots for LinkedIn. He came away really impressed but also knowing that this absolutely validated the work that CSI was doing in positioning our students for the next steps in their career.

Another example of student engagement will happen on Tuesday, November 7, 2023, when there will be an official unveiling of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) public artwork. This artwork, all done by students, will be on display in the atrium of 1P, under the direction of Professor Dianne Hebbert. He found the works really impressive and sees these students as our best advocates.

President Lynch announced that CSI will host an Open House in 1P and across our campus on Sunday, October 29, 2023. He expressed his thanks, in advance, to those faculty and staff who will be making themselves available to meet with prospective students. He planned to attend, just as he did on Accepted Students Day in the spring. It was wonderful to speak to students and to their parents, to talk about all of the wonderful things at CSI.

In terms of community engagement, President Lynch announced the following events: 1) On Wednesday, November 8, 2023, CSI will participate in a nationwide event to celebrate first

generation students, many of whom are found amongst our student population and many of whom are found amongst our faculty, staff, and administration (like himself). He expressed thanks to Jennifer Durando and others who will be taking the lead on this event. He planned to be there to support our students and to share his story about the transformative power of public higher education, particularly within CUNY. 2) Another initiative of community engagement came out of a meeting that the administration had with the HEO Steering Committee concerning a desire to reinvigorate some spirit activities and school pride. One idea that came out of the meeting includes wearing blue on the first Thursdays of each month, a show of spirit that instills pride in the work that we do every day.

President Lynch mentioned that right after this meeting he was headed to the Graduate Center for a reception to celebrate the work of the BRESI scholars and fellows, several of whom are CSI faculty. He hoped that Dr. Wesley, if his schedule allows, might also celebrate these initiatives to bring attention to black, race, and ethnic studies within the university and beyond.

Re: Strategic Priorities, President Lynch mentioned that he would talk more about the strategic planning process during his report from the Institutional Planning Committee.

President Lynch then turned to the situation in the Middle East that have left us all transfixed -- the horrific attacks by Hamas and the counter attacks by Israel into Gaza. There have been protests on many college campuses, at CSI, and the university at large. Some have criticized the University and us at CSI for allowing the protests to occur, for not making strong statements, vis-a-vis one side or the other. He prefaced his position with "Sunlight is the best disinfectant." He stated that, "As an institution of higher education, we are obliged really to the exchange of ideas. And as long as these ideas are exchanged in a way that is not disruptive for the educational process--if individuals want to march in protest, if they want to hold a prayer vigil, if they want to do something in between--we as an institution should allow it and encourage these kinds of conversations and the discussions. We are committed to the protection of freedom of expression. We're committed to the protection of First Amendment rights." He concluded by saying he was ready "to take the heat if there's any that's coming my way for that."

Q&A

Question was raised again about CUNY not being transparent about how it distributes funds to each college. President Lynch stated that the funding model is largely, but not exclusively, dependent upon enrollment.

Another question raised sought whether the funding model was a dollar amount per student. President Lynch deferred the question to Carlos Serrano who stated that there was no formula but there was a revenue target that we have to meet every year; however as the President had stated, much of the funding is generated from revenue brought in by enrollment -- undergraduates, graduates, in-state, and out-of-state -- with additional funding from tax-levy funds like ASAP.

A comment added was that a campus like ours which has not met its revenue targets for the past 8 - 10 years, has had fewer resources to handle structural changes.

Another question raised wondered how CUNY deals with funding a campus like ours with a large footprint of 204 acres as compared to others with smaller footprints. President Lynch responded by saying that the answer he has gotten to that same question was that rent is exorbitant for CUNY Colleges in Manhattan as opposed to suburbia, where CSI is located.

Another comment was made, but inaudible due to unstable internet connectivity.

V. Professional Staff Congress (PSC) Report

Greetings to everyone on this 240th day that PSC members have been working without a contract at CUNY. And thank you to those who remembered to wear red today—PSC members of all titles are wearing red every Thursday until we have a new contract with CUNY management! And I want to remind you all that we are not a small union, we are a large union—with over 30,000 members doing the work that makes this university run. As discussed in a recent study by the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies (and as discussed in the recent issue of *The Clarion*), we're part of a larger labor movement in the United States, with membership in unions on the rise across many industries and sectors. Another thing that is on the rise, which I'll have to point out, are strikes.

Just a few quick updates:

- First, I want to thank President Lynch and his administration for meeting with the chapter leadership last week. At our labor management meeting we discussed a number of issues. While we have not been able to come to a satisfactory agreement on all these issues just yet, I do believe we're making progress on most items and will continue to work in good faith at our next LM meeting on November 30th.
- Are there workplace safety issues—moisture, mold, air quality problems, rodents—in your department or office? Please put in a work order with campus facilities immediately. If you do not feel your issue is being dealt with expeditiously, please contact the chapter chair (Jason Bishop) or grievance counselor (Alyson Bardsley) of our chapter.
- Finally, please consider joining us and your colleagues on December 2nd (1-3pm) for the "Sing out, Shout out" demonstration that will begin at the NYC office of Governor Hochul. And if you can make it, please let the PSC know you're coming by RSVPing here.

VI. Reports of the committees of the College Council

a. Committee on Organization – None

b. By-Laws Committee – Kenneth Gold and Catherine Lavender

Kenneth Gold and Catherine Lavender, members of the By-Laws Committee, presented the proposed draft of the By-Laws, illustrating a series of small changes for the Council to consider. These proposed changes were largely focused on clarifying terms and

procedures and codifying existing practices that can be found as the “Governance Plan Draft 10/20/23” here: https://applications.csi.cuny.edu/campus_info/

They extended an invitation to all to attend upcoming Town Hall meetings about the proposal. An online meeting will be held next Wednesday, November 8 from 2:30 – 3:30 and another in person will be held on Tuesday, November 14 from 2:30 – 3:30 in 1P 119. Feedback can be sent to BYLAWS@csi.cuny.edu.

c. Administrative Review Committee – None

d. Institutional Planning Committee – None

e. Budget Committee – Simone Wegge, Chair

Good afternoon, everyone. I explained at our September meeting that we were all grateful and very pleased that our operating budget deficit was close to zero for fiscal 2023, which ended on June 30th.

Going forward, with fiscal 2024, which started on July 1st, the situation is different. In contrast to fiscal 2023, the operating budget for fiscal 2024 is estimated to be \$8 million in the red; note that this is the first year since 2020 or so that we do not have federal Covid money. Our operating budget is our main budget and consists of about 95% of personnel costs.

The Executive Committee of the College Council has asked our CFO, Carlos Serrano, to present more details, both on fiscal 2023 and fiscal 2024 at the November College Council meeting; we would have scheduled this for today, but he is waiting for CUNY Central to provide more information and guidance

f. Facilities Committee - None

**VII. Student Government Report – Anusha Harris
(awaiting report to be submitted)**

VIII. Higher Education Officer Steering Committee Report - Suzy Shepardson

Suzy Shepardson, co-chair of the HEO Steering Committee thanked the President and his cabinet for facilitating the HEO meeting in September. She also noted that the President, Jason Bishop, and Kenneth Gold had covered topics from on the HEO Steering Committee report.

IX. Auxiliary Services Corporation Report – Read by Kenneth Gold, on behalf of Robert Wallace

The Staten Island Breast Cancer Research Institute lunches in the Park Café were a success. Thank you to Dr. Gerstle, Jodi Merendino and their teams and all who participated. In November, look for the traditional Thanksgiving Buffet to be held in the Park Café.

In a continuing effort to expand food options, we recently installed a Farmer's Fridge in 1C. This vending machine offers a variety of fresh, convenient, and healthy food options including salads, bowls, and sandwich wraps. A second machine will be installed in the Center for Performing Arts soon.

Prior to the start of the fall semester, we completed re-striping of all our parking lots, and we recently replaced over 40 signs related to parking/no parking zones.

The remote Dolphin Dash Mobile Store with convenient pick up in the Campus Center started continues to operate this fall. We carry school supplies, electronics, toiletries, spirit gear, some apparel and scantrons! We will be meeting with Student Government representatives soon to discuss expanded CSI apparel options.

X. Old Business - None

XI. New Business – None

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