

Draft Minutes of the One Hundred and Seventieth Meeting of the College Council
Formed on November 14, 2002

Date: Thursday, March 20, 2025, 2:30pm – 3:25pm

Location: 1P-119 & Zoom Meeting

CC Members in Attendance

Zaghloul Ahmed, Jane Alexander, Neo Antoniadis, John Arena, Banu Aslanertik, Michael Batson, Warrick Bell, Alan Benimoff, Vandana Chaudhry, Florette Cohen, David Curcio, Debbie DeSimone, Chiarra Ferrari, Valerie Forrestal, Kenneth Gold, Hernan Green, Orit Gruber, Roshen Hendrickson, Michel Hodge, Susan Holak, Eric Ivison, Emma Johnson, Burnett Joiner, Wilma Jones, Patricia Kahn, Sylvia Kahan, Catherine Lavender, Timothy Lynch, Lisa Manne, Tara Mastrorilli, Lee Papa, Michael Paris, Ralf Peetz, Jonathan Peters, Greg Philips, Angelina Raio, Adrian Rosales, Tobias Schaefer, Alex Scott, Carlos Serrano, Suzy Shepardson, Susan Smith-Peter, Carles Solà Belda, Michael Steiper, Sarolta Takács, Barbara Teater, Muhammed Tekanyi, John Verzani, Robert Wallace, Siona Wilson, Cindy Wong, Mark Zdziarski, Sarah Zellikovitz.

CC Members Via Zoom

Thomas Chen, Rosane Gertner, Alfred Levine, Thomas Tellefsen, Simone Wegge, Kelly Zyko

CC Members Absent: Probal Banerjee, Ismael Garcia-Colón, David Kritt, Anatoly Kuklov, Philippe Marius, Joseph Frusci, Mark Aaron Polger, Randelle Sasa, Allen Tesdall, Mark White.

Guests In-Person

Cheryl Adolph, Michael Anderson, Jason Bishop, Darlene Blanco, Jasmine Cardona, Jessica Collura, Jonathan Cope, Kate Cumiskey, Emmanuel Esperance, Katrina Fama, Gene Fellner, Stephen Ferst, Intissar Hasan, Koby Kohulan, Nicola LaMassa, Jackie Lamberti, Michael Lederhandler, Mark Lewental, Blerina Likollari, Carey Manifold, Susan Massara, Dan McCloskey, Christine McEvelly, Ana McGuire, Laxmi Ramasubramanian, Lisa Rodriguez, Lisa Roe, Terri Sangiorgio, Ruth Silverberg, Amy Stempler, Nelly Tournaki, Dana Trimboli, Rosemary Vitale.

Guests via Zoom

Vincenza Albarano, Manuel Alongi, Barbara Cohen, DeSyre Collier, Celeste del Maestro, Danielle Dimitrov, Catherine Ferrara, Antonio Gallego, Stephanie Gonzalez-Allen, Doriann Hyland, Michele Karpeles, Jane Kisto, Lisa Korchma, Jackie Lambert, Anna Lamberti, Lynne Lacomis, Thomas Lauria, Andrew Leykam, Jane Marcus-Delgado, Mary Murphy, Leonardo Pignataro, David Pizzuto, Carly Racioppi, Janine Scotto, Jessica Stein, Emma Tacopino, Joyce Taylor, Brenda Valentin

- 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**

Good afternoon. This has been an extraordinarily busy month for faculty governance leaders as we confront challenges to academic freedom elsewhere in NYC.

I want to announce that we will no longer be taking questions from observers on zoom, not to stifle debate but to manage the time better and be more consistent with the NY Open Meetings Law. I remind Council members that the zoom option is meant to be used periodically when the need arises and not as one's usual manner of joining the meeting. The Executive Committee met with President Lynch, Provost Steiper, and Chief of Staff Collura on March 11th for its monthly consultation.

We opened by discussing the plans for commencement—Wednesday, May 28—focusing on the status of departmental/divisional ceremonies. The College is continuing the plan implemented last year, which worked well for most units. We shared some ideas generated during the search for a VP for enrollment management and were pleased to learn that the College is already engaged in these activities. We confirmed that the 2017 CUNY legal guidelines for Title VI were still in place. We considered implementation of new policies for animal care costs at CSI. We discussed the proper governance procedure for proposals involving reorganization at the College and made some requests to which the Administration agreed: a floor plan for the upcoming Career Fair and the sharing of the CSI organizational charts.

I now turn to the College's Strategic Plan, which was shared with you all through the College's intranet and is displayed on the screen now. The floor is open for questions and comments, briefly stated with no preambles please. Where a response is called for, I'll direct them to the appropriate person.

The first speaker prefaced that his comments were from last month's CC when he was on zoom and was not allowed to speak. He raised concerns about the safety of students on campus, particularly international students on visas and the need for a more robust mechanism to protect our students. He applauded the efforts of the faculty senate's chair for her message on defending students' rights. He called for our governance leaders and the CSI administration to take a more active role in defending students, in light of the recent incidents involving students like Mahmoud Khalil and others at other universities.

Speaker #2 noted the numerous sub points for each priority in comparison to the last strategic plan and wondered how many differentiated parts to which we were expected to pay attention. Chair Gold responded that while each of the priorities had been created by different groups with different styles, the current presentation ensured consistency and clarity in the document.

Speaker #3 expressed satisfaction with the revised strategic plan regarding professional development for staff, but he suggested the addition of an initiative that would encourage and support departments and offices to promote higher education industry practices.

Speaker #4 asked whether the strategic plan included provisions for space for student associations and specific activities. Chair Gold responded that while uncertain about such specifics, space issues were addressed in Priority V which focused on facilities and infrastructure.

With no other comment or feedback, Chair Gold reminded everyone that the strategic plan had a focus of five priorities and that it may not have captured every aspect of college activities. Nevertheless, he encouraged members to email any additional information to be included in the final review.

IV. President's Report – Timothy Lynch

President Lynch greeted everyone on this birthday of spring (or the last day of winter, depending on one's location). He began his report with updates on the financial situation, noting the receipt of a mid-

year financial report from CUNY that projected CSI having a \$3.8 million deficit for fiscal year '25, a significant improvement from a \$6 million initial projection and a \$13.5 million structural deficit in fiscal '23. The improvement was attributed to increased enrollment and retention. He thanked everyone for their collective efforts in achieving this financial progress.

Next on his agenda was to discuss the Strategic Plan; however, he was grateful that Chair Gold had taken the initiative to have it discussed earlier, as part of his report. He encouraged recommendations for any improvements to be sent through Chairperson Gold, who would forward them to the Institutional Planning Committee (IPC). The IPC will meet on April 4, and timely feedback would be appreciated. President Lynch expressed pride in both the product and the collaborative process that led to completing the strategic plan, emphasizing shared governance.

President Lynch reminded everyone about the upcoming annual gala on April 24th - "Spring into Giving," with several distinguished honorees, including Professor Allen Benimoff. He encouraged everyone to attend, if one's calendar and budget allowed.

President Lynch addressed concerns about the political climate, noting that there had been no substantive changes to operations at CSI since January 19, [2025]. He emphasized that there has been no stop work orders, no decreases in funding, nor requests from law enforcement to access student records. He acknowledged the desire for bold statements, but he believed that they were unnecessary at this time and could harm the institution's position, if a response was required. In essence, he wished to maintain a cautious approach to public statements. In the meantime, he remains in close collaboration with the CUNY central office, the New York State Attorney General, and higher education colleagues.

Q&A

Speaker #1 inquired about the mid-year report, specifically whether it included additional funds for the tradesmen contract. President Lynch deferred to CFO Serrano who confirmed that the report does include the extra funds and that an accommodation to address the additional expense had been reached with CUNY.

Speaker #2 asked if the administration would share information about protest activity with officials, to which President Lynch responded negatively but appreciated the question.

Speaker #3 asked whether President was coordinating with other campus presidents and the Chancellor to issue a collective statement against authoritarianism. President Lynch responded that it was a topic of conversation at virtually every meeting of the Council of Presidents or with the Chancellery, but there were no plans at this current moment to issue a collective statement.

V. Professional Staff Congress (PSC) Report – Jason Bishop

Hello everyone! We've had two meetings in the last two weeks – our chapter meeting with PSC President James Davis last week and the PSC Emergency Townhall last week – so I do not have any new announcements to share today that weren't discussed at those two meetings.

But in case you missed those, a quick recap. First, as we all know, there are new things in the news to be concerned about every week – indeed, almost every day. I want to point out that the PSC has doubled down, explicitly, on its values, as described in detail at Tuesday’s town hall. And, as we were just reminded by President Lynch, CUNY has (admittedly more quietly) maintained its values as well – as evidenced, for example, by the ongoing support for students and other members of the community with concerns related to immigration status (this includes the ongoing Know Your Rights campaigns, and I note the workshop hosted by CSI tomorrow). As I have announced in various emails, there are also working groups you can get involved with in the chapter and also in the central PSC.

Another concern has been about the contract – when will we see our raises, backpay, and signing bonus?! The best answer is still the one I gave at the start, which is we should see the financial part of our contract implemented this semester, but it will likely be closer to the end of the semester than the beginning. At this point, my understanding is that it’s now out of CUNY hands finally; our raises now need to be processed by the comptrollers, and this takes some time. Remember that we are a 30,000-member union and a large portion of the membership are part time faculty who work irregularly and/or on multiple campuses, which makes the calculation and disbursement complicated. But we have no expectation that this will go past May, and maybe sooner. Of course, I’ll let everyone know as soon as I know something different.

And remember also that we have a chapter election coming up! Prof. Jay Arena (Sociology and Anthropology) is leading the Fight to Win Slate and Prof. Jonathan Cope (Library) is leading the New Caucus Slate. Voting will open and take place over the course of April – please make sure to participate in this election.

Q&A

Speaker #1 mentioned the initiation of a petition sent to CSI staff and faculty in protest of the detention and threat of deportation against Mahmoud Khalil nationwide. The petition urged President Lynch to take a public stand against this issue and other threats to free speech on campuses, nationwide. He encouraged everyone to sign and forward it to others who might be interested. Jason Bishop added that those who had not received the petition could reach out to him to get the link.

Speaker #2 expressed anxiety about the contract, including below-inflation wage increases and the lack of a deadline for these increases and bonuses. He also asked why there was no commitment in the contract for CUNY to implement the contract by a specific date. Jason Bishop acknowledged that he could not answer why such a commitment was not included in the contract but emphasized that the focus was now on the State and City to fulfill their part. Speaker #2 added that he was the lead for the “Fight to Win” slate, a new CSI PSC slate running in the upcoming election and he encouraged participation from everyone.

Jason Bishop took the opportunity to introduce the CSI PSC Election Slates:

- Jay Arena from the Sociology and Anthropology Department, head of Fight to Win slate
- Jonathan Cope from the Department of the Library, head of New Caucus slate

He noted that the election was expected to take place in April and encouraged everyone to participate.

VI. Report from the Administration – Provost & Senior Vice President, Michael Steiper on Retention Initiatives and Outcomes

The presentation by Provost Steiper focused on first-year student retention, which at present is at 67%, with ongoing efforts to further improve this metric. He highlighted that 43% of associate students and 23% of bachelor students left after one year, while 52% of bachelor students and 15% of associate students graduated after six and three years, respectively. CSI is leveraging data dashboards, coordinating activities across the college, and adopting standard practice strategies to increase retention rates. The use of tools like Navigate CSI was emphasized to improve communication and case management among faculty and staff to benefit students. For example, Navigate CSI appointments increased from 14,000 in 2023 to 23,000 in Fall 2024, boosting retention from 67% to 79%. Progress reports, which alert students about academic performance, have also significantly improved retention rates. He emphasized the importance of continuous improvement and data-driven strategies to enhance student success. He thanked individuals in Academic Affairs and all departments for their contributions to retention efforts and encouraged continued participation.

In response to bundled questions, Provost Steiper confirmed that data is available to explore ways to better understand the reasons why students transfer or drop out and develop targeted retention strategies to address those issues. He promised to investigate why some students are not responding to emails sent through the Navigate CSI system and determine if there were ways to improve communication and engagement. He also promised to review the data on the percentage of first-year students taught by full-time versus part-time faculty and consider any implications for retention efforts. In the meantime, he encouraged faculty to submit progress reports, as they have a significant impact on student retention.

The slide presentation is attached to these minutes.

VII. Reports of the committees of the College Council

a. **Committee on Organization – No report**

b. **By-Laws Committee – Kenneth Gold**

We met and began to share ideas for new language for the bylaws in needed areas. The proposal approved last year is with CUNY and hopefully will be approved at the Board of Trustees' April meeting.

c. **Administrative Review and Evaluation Committee – Cindy Wong**

Cindy Wong briefly reported that the AREC Committee met with the Student Government leaders, a meeting where they learned quite a lot.

d. **Institutional Planning Committee – No report**

e. **Budget Committee – Kenneth Gold**

The CUNY mid-year financial report has been made public and last week several committee members participated in a CUNY budget workshop. The committee expects to meet with the administration in the

next few weeks to review the FY 25 numbers and participate in the College's preparation of its FY 26 budget.

f. **Facilities Committee – No report**

VIII. Student Government Report – Adrian Rosales

The President of the Student Government, Adrian Rosales, reported on the following:

- The food pantry position, funded by Student Government, has been posted and, to date, has received over 100 applications.
- Student Government was pleased to partner with the Center for Career and Professional Development for the Suit Up event sponsored by JC Penney. 40 people signed up via Handshake and over 50 people attended the event on March 18th.
- The CSI pop-up shop on March 19th raised over \$400. Another is planned for April 30th during Spirit Week.
- Student Government leaders met with College Council members of the Administrative Review and Evaluation Committee to discuss enrollment. Alex Scott and Emmanuel Esperance were also present.
- Other upcoming student events mentioned were: The Knowledge Hub, "Know Your Rights" webinar, the Hispanic Leadership Conference, (Spanish Club has invited top performing Hispanic students to campus to hear from panels of students) and the Career Fair on March 26.
- The nomination period for student government elections closes on March 21; and a panel event for presidential and vice-presidential candidates has been scheduled for April 1. He appealed to Faculty to give incentives to students to attend these events
- Spirit week will take place on April 28th through May 2nd and the theme is "United We Celebrate."

IX. HEO Steering Committee – Suzy Shepardson

Co-Chair of the HEO Steering Committee, Suzy Shepardson, gave the following report:

Happy first day of spring everyone, and T-minus 7 days until Opening Day for Major League Baseball—may the odds be ever in your favor for the teams you support!

- On March 17th, we held our first open meeting for HEOs since pre-COVID, and a small but mighty group focused its discussion on the HEOSC's function and role in College governance, ways for HEOs to get involved in the governance process, and areas where the HEOSC can provide support and serve as a resource.
- Please note that the deadline for HEOs to respond to our anonymous survey is 5:00pm on Friday, March 21.
- Next week, we'll review the information shared by our colleagues, in preparation for the Committee's meeting with President Lynch and members of his Cabinet on Tuesday, April 1.

X. Auxiliary Services Corporation Report – No Report

XI. Old Business - None

XII. New Business - None

Meeting was adjourned at 3:30pm

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