

THE COLLEGE OF STATEN ISLAND
CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Minutes of the 182nd Meeting of the Faculty Senate

Thursday, September 18th, 2025 from 3:30 to 4:23pm in 1P-119.

Faculty Senate (FS) Members in Attendance:

Zaghloul Ahmed, Neo Antoniades, Paul Archibald, John Arena, Comfort Asanbe, Banu Aslanertik, Alan Benimoff, Paolo Cappellari, Vandana Chaudhry, Andrew Colbeck, David Curcio, Debbie DeSimone, Valkiria Duran-Narucki, Gene Fellner, Valerie Forrestal, Rosane Gertner, Kenneth Gold, Susan Holak, Eric Ivison, Shin Jin, Emma Johnson, Wilma Jones, Carlo Lancellotti, Catherine Lavender, Robert Lovering, Timothy Lynch, Lisa Manne, Dan McCloskey, Christine McEvilly, Halil Ege Ozen, Michael Paris, Jonathan Peters, Mark Aaron Polger, Sarah Pollack, Susan Smith-Peter, Sarolta Takács, Allen Tesdall, Christina Tortora, John Verzani, Simone Wegge, Siona Wilson, John Wing, Cindy Wong, Mark Zdziarski

Faculty Senate Members via Zoom:

Nathalia Holtzman, Alfred Levine

Guests in Attendance:

Cheryl Adolph, Hayley Augustine, Michael Batson, Fausto Canela, Jasmine Cardoza, Jessica Collura, Chrystal Deosaran, Veronica DiMeglio, Aleks Dudek, Jennifer Durando, Ali Elkomy, Emmanuel Esperance, Katrina Fama, Stephen Ferst, Hernan Green, Ruta Gordon, Orit Gruber, Michelle Karpeles, Koby Kohulan, Anna Lambert, Jackie Lamberti, Michael Lederhandler, Carey Manifold, Aliza Martini, Susan Massara, Ralf Peetz, Laxmi Ramasubramanian, Terri Sangiorgio, Lisa Roe, Donna Scimeca, Suzy Shephardson, Amy Stempler, Dana Trimboli, Rosemary Vitale, Rhoda Wilson

Faculty Senate Members not in Attendance:

Carles Solà Belda (absence with excuse), Ismael Garcia-Colón, Aris Efting, Yumei Huo, Anatoly Kuklov, Philippe Marius, Madona Shaker

Meeting called to order at 3:30pm by Chair Susan Smith-Peter.

I. Approval of the agenda.

Motion moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.

II. Approval of the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Senate of May 15th, 2025.

Motion moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.

III. Executive Committee Report (See Appendix A)

IV. Elections

Nominations were opened for Chair of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. Deborah DeSimone was nominated and accepted the nomination. Michael Paris was also nominated and accepted the nomination. There were no additional nominations and Susan Smith-Peter closed the nomination. Members of the Faculty Senate voted by paper ballot. Deborah DeSimone received 28 votes, Michael Paris 11 votes, there were two invalid ballots and one write-in ballot. Deborah DeSimone was elected as Chair of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and took over the meeting.

Comfort Asanbe thanked Susan Smith-Peter for her work as Chair, Deborah DeSimone reiterated and stated that Susan Smith-Peter's led the Faculty Senate during tumultuous times for our country and did a beautiful job.

Deborah DeSimone then called for nominations for the vice chair position. Lisa Manne was nominated and accepted the nomination. There were no other nominations for the vice chair position. With no other nominations, Valerie Forrestal cast the official vote for Lisa Manne.

Deborah DeSimone then called for nominations for the secretary position. Simone Wegge nominated Michael Paris who appreciated the nomination but declined. Michael Paris nominated Simone Wegge who respectfully declined the nomination. With no other nominations for this position, Deborah DeSimone moved to the at-large position. Alan Benimoff was nominated and accepted the nomination. With no other nominations, Valerie Forrestal cast the official vote for Alan Benimoff.

Deborah DeSimone went back to ask for nominations for the secretary position. There was discussion about the importance of this position and that there is also administrative support available for the secretary. Michael Paris nominated himself for the position and his nomination was seconded. A question from the floor was posed whether a dean, who is a member of the Faculty Senate, could hold the position. After consultation, it was determined that any member of the Faculty Senate can hold this position. Sarolta Takács nominated herself and the nomination was seconded from the floor. Michael Paris withdrew his nomination, and Valerie Forrestal cast the official vote for Sarolta Takács.

V. Interim Provost's Report, Dr. Nathalia Holtzman (See Appendix B)

VI. Consent Agenda for Thursday, September 18th 2025:

UNDERGRADUATE

1. Department of Computer Science

a. Change in existing course: CSC 326 Data

GRADUATE – N/A

NEW COURSES

UNDERGRADUATE – N/A

GRADUATE – N/A

CHANGES IN EXISTING COURSES

UNDERGRADUATE – N/A

GRADUATE – N/A

The consent agenda was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.

VII. University Faculty Senate Report (Dr. John Verzani)

Board Chair William Thompson visited the University Faculty Senate.

(<https://www1.cuny.edu/sites/cunyufs/committees/plenaries/2025-september/>)

- i. Changes in the reporting structure for General Counsels (dual reporting to President and General Counsel of the University), new guidelines to be in place by November.
- ii. Brooklyn College faculty issue (four adjuncts not reappointed and five full-time faculty being questioned).
- iii. Following from the Brooklyn College issue, how can faculty safely protest? Board Chair Thompson said that guidance will be forthcoming.
- iv. [Mutual Academic Defense Compacts](#), coordination between CUNY and SUNY were already happening informally.
- v. CUNY Interim Provost's visit and updates on various initiatives, including [CUNY Beyond](#) and CUNY 360, focusing on student success, five campuses were involved in the analysis, guidance and best practices will be forthcoming.
- vi. Importance of AI within operations and instruction as well as an update that there was a change of leadership, duties were taken over by Evan Silverman.

VIII. Reports of the Committees of the Faculty Senate

- b. Academic Facilities Committee: N/A
- c. Academic Freedom Committee: N/A
- d. Academic Technology Committee: N/A
- e. Admissions Committee: N/A
- f. Course and Standing Committee: N/A
- g. Faculty Personnel Policy Committee: N/A
- h. Library Committee: N/A
- i. Research Committee: N/A

IX. Old Business

N/A

X. New Business

Resolution, to be presented to the CSI Faculty Senate, for a vote on the question whether the COR 100 Course is “in” the American Studies Program, within the meaning of the CSI Governance Plan.

Presented by Michael Paris, Associate Professor, Director of the Legal Studies Institute, Pre-Law Advisor for the College, Faculty Senate Member at Large

September 11, 2025

WHEREAS, Core, or COR 100, is neither a department nor a program within the meaning of the CSI Governance Plan, but merely a course; and

WHEREAS, in April 2025, the Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences purported to “move” COR 100 “into” the American Studies Program, with COR 100 to be supervised by the American Studies Advisory Committee; and

WHEREAS, the sponsor of this Resolution (Professor Michael Paris) contends that, under our Governance Plan, a course cannot be deemed to be in or considered to be ‘in” a program or department unless that course is part of the department’s or program’s curriculum; and

WHEREAS, COR 100 is not part of the American Studies curriculum;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the COR 100 course is not “in” the American Studies Program, within the meaning of the CSI Governance Plan and that COR 100 remains merely a course that is not housed within a department or a program.

There was not enough time for Michael Paris’ resolution to be discussed. Deborah DeSimone agreed to work with Michael Paris on how to discuss the matter at the next Faculty Senate meeting.

XI. Adjournment at 4:23pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Sarolta A. Takács, Secretary

Appendix A

Dr. Susan Smith-Peter, Chair, Faculty Senate

Faculty Senate Executive Committee report for September 18, 2025

As this is my last Faculty Senate Executive Committee report as chair, I would like to thank everyone who worked with me at the college, including faculty, administration, and staff. I am grateful to everyone who put the needs of the college first and was willing to work together to strengthen CSI.

Last May, we passed the mutual defense pact and over the summer I and my vice chair Lisa Manne convened a Mutual Defense Pact Working Group, consisting of members of the faculty and a representative from the administration. We agreed on a theme for CSI, that of higher education as a public good. President Lynch has expressed his willingness to use this as a theme of communications.

Staten Island is the crucial audience for this theme. CSI has done a great deal to help the borough, and we need to reach out to the community and show how we've done this – in nursing, geology, history, education, business, and many, many other ways. While it can seem difficult to reach people nationally, Staten Islanders do feel, often rightly, that they are part of the forgotten borough, and so there will be people who are interested and even proud to be targeted for this message.

As much as possible, I hope that the coming years will continue to see us as united as we were in May, when we passed the mutual defense pact. Those who seek to degrade the American higher education system, which until now has been the best in the world, hope to do so partly by dividing faculty, particularly along the fault line of scientists and humanities professors. We will need to come together to help defend the college as a whole in order to be effective.

At the meeting of the FSXC with the provost on September 11, we welcomed the new provost, Nathalia Holtzman, and discussed strengths and weaknesses at the college. We noted that new initiatives were not always integrated with a larger plan or given the follow up attention that is needed. We asked that the deans' offices be given more resources and ability to make decisions within their sphere. The provost agreed that it makes sense to look at workflow and related questions.

We proposed that there be a Provost's Lecture Series that would highlight faculty who are outstanding examples of higher education as a public good. Each division could choose a faculty member who has made Staten Island better and then the community could be invited to come onto campus to see the good work we're doing here. The provost was excited by the idea and said that it could be implemented on a smaller scale in the fall and more widely in the spring. Such initiatives help to create a community that is invested in the success of the college.

We noted the creation of the Mutual Defense Pact Working Group and the idea of higher education as a public good, and the provost also agreed that the theme is an important one. This led to a discussion of how social media could be used for this, perhaps by having interns work on posts with that theme. We agreed that people prefer to follow individuals rather than receive announcements, and that

CSI could expand its reach on social media by engaging more students to take part, perhaps by having a contest for best video with CSI gear as a possible prize.

We discussed the cuts to release time for running programs, which took place widely across the college at CUNY Central's request. The deans mentioned the need to balance the ability to staff important programs with CUNY Central's requirement to cut the overall amount of release time at CSI.

We shared the concerns of many faculty with the pre-recorded speeches at commencement and noted that there would be questions about it at College Council. Some departmental ceremonies were held in spaces that were too small to accommodate those in wheelchairs and we asked that the largest departments be given options outside of 1P to free up space inside it.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Smith-Peter

Chair, Faculty Senate

Appendix B

Interim Provost Dr. Nathalia Holtzman – Report to Faculty Senate, September 18, 2025

Opening / Introductions

Good afternoon, colleagues, congratulations and thank to Deb and the whole faculty senate committee, I look forward to working with you. I also want to thank Susan for all her work leading the faculty senate. I'm so pleased to join you for today's Faculty Senate meeting. While I regret that I am joining remotely, I had longstanding annual leave plans made before formally committing to my role here at CSI. Moving forward I will be attending in person and encourage of you to do the same. That said, my first month has been truly wonderful, filled with inspiring conversations, new collaborations, and a deeper appreciation for the sense of community on this campus. I look forward to being with you in person at our next Senate meeting.

By way of introduction, I've been part of CUNY for 20 years. I began as a Biology faculty member at Queens College, and have also been on the Graduate Center faculty in Biology and Biochemistry. Over the years, I've served as Deputy Executive Officer for the PhD Program, Associate Director for the Center for Teaching and Learning, among other university roles including department chair, and most recently, Associate Provost for Innovation and Student Success. So while I am not from Staten Island, I am very much from CUNY, and I know the systems, the culture, and yes, all the acronyms that come with it. I look forward to learning more about CSI. I greatly appreciate the commitment governance and transparency I have witnessed thus far at CSI.

Accolades

I know my predecessor routinely used this time to applaud faculty accomplishments. Going forward, I will continue to champion these achievements through **monthly newsletters, web postings, press releases, and a spring reception** to celebrate tenure, promotion, and significant awards.

This change will allow us to give faculty accomplishments the visibility and recognition they deserve, while also giving me time in this forum to focus on larger issues that affect us collectively, such as **academic freedom, support for students, faculty workload, and the future direction of CSI within CUNY.**

President follow up

I also want to echo President Lynch's remarks about our strong enrollment this fall. We are over 11,400 students, a level greater than any post-COVID year. Our average class size is up per section, and full-time faculty are spending more time in the classroom which is a great way to serve our students. And thanks to your commitment, we have already reached over 95% completion rate for Verification of Enrollment rosters, a remarkable accomplishment that directly supports our students' financial aid and academic progress.

Next slide- Memorials

I want to thank Ken Gold for sharing the memorials during the college council and we shall move to the recognition of the New faculty.

Next slide- New Faculty

It is also my great pleasure to welcome 18 new faculty members, 4 in spring and 14 this fall, who have joined CSI this fall across multiple departments and schools. Their names are listed here. Their expertise ranges from Accounting and English to Nursing, Computer Science, Social Work, and more. The fact that we are welcoming such a strong cohort across so many disciplines is a powerful sign of the vitality and growth of this institution.

I encourage you to reach out to these colleagues, invite them into conversations, and help them feel the strong sense of community that defines CSI.

In addition, we have heard the request for a new faculty dinner and are working to host such an event mid semester.

Academic Freedom & Freedom of Speech

At CSI and across CUNY, we are committed to academic freedom and free speech. Faculty, staff, and students have the right to express their views, engage in debate, and explore ideas freely—rights that are central to scholarship and democracy, and to the education we promise our students.

That said, not all speech is protected. True threats, harassment, incitement to violence, defamation, or disruption of teaching and campus operations fall outside these protections. CUNY also applies time, place, and manner standards to ensure that expression does not interfere with learning, safety, or the rights of others.

I will partner with the CTL&PD to provide additional opportunity for conversation, training and guidance, in the meantime, additional guidance can be found on the CUNY webpage. At CSI, we will always protect academic freedom and the open exchange of ideas, while ensuring our campus remains a space of respect, safety, and learning.

Next slide- Religious Holidays & Student Accommodations

A reminder: in accordance with CUNY policy, faculty should reasonably accommodate students whose religious observance conflicts with class attendance, exams, or assignments. Students should provide advance notice, and faculty are asked, to the extent possible, to avoid scheduling major assessments on these dates.

For this semester, please note the following:

- Rosh Hashanah – September 22–24 (no classes scheduled)
- Yom Kippur – October 1–2 (no classes scheduled)
- Indigenous People's Day – October 13 (College closed)
- Diwali – October 20 (no classes scheduled)
- Thanksgiving Break – November 27–28 (College closed)

Please encourage students to communicate their needs early so that we can support them fully. If you or your students have questions or concerns, please reach out to the office of student affairs.

Next slide- Closing & Looking Ahead

Thank you again for your dedication and commitment to CSI. In the months ahead, I look forward to strengthening faculty support for teaching, scholarship, and grant activity.