

THE COLLEGE OF STATEN ISLAND
CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Minutes of the 183rd Meeting of the Faculty Senate

Thursday, October 16th, 2025, from 3:25 to 4:27 pm in 1P-119.

Faculty Senate Members in Attendance:

Zaghloul Ahmed, Neo Antoniadis, Paul Archibald, John Arena, Comfort Asanbe, Banu Aslanertik, Alan Benimoff, Paolo Cappellari, Vandana Chaudhry, David Curcio, Deborah DeSimone, Valkiria Duran-Narucki, Gene Fellner, Rosane Gertner, Kenneth Gold, Susan Holak, Nathalia Holtzman, Eric Ivison, Emma Johnson, Burnett Joiner, Wilma Jones, Anatoly Kuklov, Carlo Lancellotti, Catherine Lavender, Alfred Levine, Rob Lovering, Timothy Lynch, Alan Lyons, Lisa Manne, Dan McCloskey, Christine McEvilly, Halil Ege Ozen, Catherine Paradiso, Michael Paris, Jonathan Peters, Sarah Pollack, Carles Solà Belda, Sarolta Takács, Christina Tortora, John Verzani, Simone Wegge, John Wing, Cindy Wong, Mark Zdziarski.

Faculty Senate Members via Zoom:

Madonna Shaker, Siona Wilson

Guests in Attendance:

Michael Anderson, Stefan Charles-Pierre, Thomas Chen, Sharon Christian, Jessica Collura, Jonathan Cope, Chrystal Deosaran, Danielle Dimitrov, Aleks Dudek, Jennifer Durando, Emmanuel Esperance, Katrina Fama, Erlan Feria, Ruta Gordon, Tom Lauria, Michael Lederhandler, Carey Manifold, Susan Massara, Ralf Peetz, Terri Sangiorgio, Donna Scimeca, Suzy Shephardson, Jessica Stein, Amy Stempler, Dana Trimboli, Brenda Valentin, Rosemary Vitale, Rhoda Wilson.

Faculty Senate Members not in Attendance:

Jane Alexander (sabbatical), Andrew Colbeck, Aris Efting, Valerie Forrestal, Ismael Garcia-Colón, Yumei Huo, Philippe Marius, Catherine Paradiso, Allen Tesdall.

Meeting called to order at 3:25pm by Chair Deborah DeSimone.

I. Approval of the agenda.

Motion moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.

II. Approval of the minutes of the meeting of the Faculty Senate of September 18, 2025.

Motion moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.

III. Executive Committee Report (See Appendix A)

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

Dr. Holtzman answered questions from the floor. Asked about academic freedom and how CSI will defend it amid national attacks on professors (e.g., recent cases where faculty faced backlash or threats for classroom content), the interim provost affirmed that academic freedom is essential but also contextual,

noting limits based on course relevance. She outlined a twofold response: Protecting faculty rights and ensuring individual safety in coordination with Public Safety and NYPD, if needed.

There was a question why there was no public statement from CUNY or CSI supporting recently dismissed faculty elsewhere who had spoken on sensitive topics. Dr. Holtzman replied that she could not comment on individual HR cases but noted that public reporting may not always reflect internal reasons. She acknowledged the concern about perceived administrative silence and said she would raise the issue of faculty morale.

Asked how faculty engagement in non-classroom settings (talks, events, student groups) is protected. Dr. Holtzman answered that context matters; meaningful academic engagement is generally covered, but off-campus or social-media activity may not always fall under institutional protection.

A recommendation from the floor was to cite the official AAUP definition of academic freedom in communications. On the question of First Amendment vs. academic freedom at a public institution, and how CUNY protects free speech, Dr. Holtzman said she would consult with CSI's Legal Counsel to provide an authoritative explanation on the relationship between First Amendment protections and academic-freedom rights.

As for PSC-CUNY Grant Application Deadline, December 15, 2025, Dr. Holtzman clarified that December 15th is the CUNY-wide date and recommended internal submission by December 1–8, 2025 for routing and obtaining necessary signatures.

Regarding new federal accountability standards, part of the “Big Beautiful Bill,” in connection with programs whose graduates earn below median high-school salaries after four years post-graduation. Concern was expressed that tracking salaries of our graduates risks valuing income over intellectual or creative pursuits. Asked whether CSI could collect broader data reflecting career satisfaction or social impact, Dr. Holtzman agreed on the philosophical tension and confirmed that CSI and CUNY Central will analyze four-year post-graduation earnings to comply with federal rules but will also explore more holistic data and support for under-earning fields.

Asked how the forthcoming faculty-handbook timelines (tenure, promotion, etc.) align with the PSC contract, bylaws, and CSI governance plan, Dr. Holtzman responded that the new online timeline is intended to consolidate, not replace, existing policies and will reference those governing documents.

Dr. Holtzman acknowledged the suggestion that prior certification initiatives should be examined for lessons learned when developing partnerships with NYPD/FDNY for continuing-education programs.

Asked about the storage and disposal of old promotion and personnel files containing personal data, Dr. Holtzman committed to following up with her office to confirm CUNY's mandated retention policies and share them with departments.

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

There was no new plenary session since the last report. The next UFS plenary is scheduled for October 28, featuring interim university provost Alicia Alvero as guest speaker. Faculty may attend via Zoom or in person (42nd Street location; lunch provided).

It is expected that there will be questions concerning the “start-of-term email” from the provost’s office and its section addressing academic freedom.

Dr. Verzani noted that multiple faculty bodies have already issued statements in response:

- BMCC Academic Freedom Committee
- UFS Academic Freedom Committee
- PSC Academic Freedom Committee
- The new CUNY Alliance to Defend Higher Education which released its own statement.

The UFS itself has not yet issued a statement but may do so pending internal discussion. Dr. Verzani emphasized that academic freedom remains a live issue across campuses, including CSI. He connected these university-wide debates to CSI’s own forthcoming resolution on academic freedom and the national “Compact for Higher Education.”

Dr. Verzani also provided updates on the Freedom of Expression and Expressive Conduct Committee, co-chaired by him at the Chancellor’s request. There are ongoing efforts to reconcile First Amendment, Title VI, and academic-freedom principles within CUNY. Dr. Verzani cautioned that CUNY’s new Title VI settlement with the U.S. Department of Education will soon require faculty training videos addressing discrimination, hostile-environment standards, and faculty obligations under federal law.

Discussion followed about how these mandates intersect with campus resolutions defending academic freedom. Dr. Verzani remarked that language in the provost’s welcome-back email attempted to include Title VI compliance language but “landed poorly” with many faculty. He noted that the university’s policy on academic freedom (Manual of General Policy § 1.02, from 1946) is outdated and should be revisited to align with modern AAUP definitions.

A Board of Trustees item that is upcoming is the proposed change to presidential authority—future faculty-level appointments will require review by departmental P&B committees before approval. The discussion also mentioned possible changes to interim appointment waivers, which could allow presidents to make direct temporary appointments without full searches. Dr. Verzani stated his opposition to any reduction of faculty participation in hiring.

VI. Consent Agenda:

DEGREE CHANGES UNDERGRADUATE

1. Department of History
 - a. Change in existing degree: History BA & MHC History BA

GRADUATE

1. Department of Curriculum & Instruction and Department of Educational Studies
 - a. Change in existing degree: Adolescence Education: Biology MSED (Sequence 2/AB122-MSED)
 - b. Change in existing degree: Adolescence Education: Mathematics MSED (Sequence 2/AM122-MSED)

NEW COURSES

UNDERGRADUATE

1. Department of Psychology
 - a. New/experimental course: PSY 317 Physiological Psychology: Drugs, Behavior, and the Brain

GRADUATE

1. Department of Social Work
 - a. New course: SWK 6XX Spirituality in Social Work

CHANGES IN EXISTING COURSES

UNDERGRADUATE – N/A

GRADUATE – N/A

Motion moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.

VII. Item not on the Consent Agenda for Thursday, October 16th, 2025

New Degree/Notice of Intent

- a. Department of Physical Therapy
PhD in Human Movement and Rehabilitation Sciences

Motion moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.

VIII. Reports of the Committees of the Faculty Senate

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

IX. Old Business

Dr. Michael Paris and the Faculty Senate Executive Committee agreed that the resolution brought by Dr. Michael Paris 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 will be discussed at the November meeting after the Interim Provost’s Report.

X. New Business

Resolution brought to CSI Faculty Senate on the "Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education”:

WHEREAS the "Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education” comprises ten conditions on federal funding, which threaten interference in admission decisions; entail the surveillance of community members’ personal views; demand changes in universities’ governance structures and the closure of units deemed ideologically suspect; require that institutions commit to the use of force against campus protest and to the enforcement of specific definitions of gender; create unacceptable constraints on students’ programs of study;

limit international student enrollments; and essentially commit to an annual performance of loyalty in order to receive federal funding; and

WHEREAS, the core mission of US higher education writ large – the production of knowledge, the education of students, and service to society - is currently at grave risk, since the Compact and other such agreements would destroy the foundational principles of US higher education, which are academic freedom and institutional autonomy; and

WHEREAS, the AAC&U, the AAUP, and other academic coalitions have issued strong statements opposing the spirit and letter of the Compact;

BE IT RESOLVED that the CSI Faculty Senate opposes any capitulation on the part of CUNY / College of Staten Island to these or similar demands on the part of the federal government that undermine constitutional rights, democratic principles, faculty governance, institutional autonomy, and academic freedom.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the CSI Faculty Senate calls upon the College and University administrations to actively practice and defend shared governance by:

- briefing their respective Faculty Senates on communications received from federal authorities regarding institutional policies, agreements, or conditions for federal funding,
- and establishing a transparent process for faculty review and input before responding.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the CSI Faculty Senate calls upon the College and University administrations to join with other institutions of higher education in collective opposition to federal intrusion into academic matters, in the spirit of the CSI Senate's April 2025 Resolution supporting a Mutual Academic Defense Compact among institutions of higher education; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the CSI Faculty Senate stands in solidarity with faculty at any institutions of higher education facing governmental pressure to compromise academic freedom or institutional autonomy. We call upon faculty senates and academic organizations nationwide to adopt similar resolutions defending the foundational principles of American higher education.

The resolution was moved and seconded. The question was called and the resolution passed by a majority of the votes.

Dr. Lisa Manne explained that the resolution was developed as a CSI Faculty Senate statement repudiating the “Compact,” which poses threats to academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and shared governance. The “Compact’s” conditions on federal funding, she noted, would permit federal interference in admissions, curriculum, and campus discourse — demanding ideological conformity and annual “loyalty performances” in exchange for continued funding. Dr. Manne emphasized that while the “Compact” was initially sent to nine universities, its scope had since expanded nationally.

This resolution was based partly on statements issued by the University of Washington and Northwestern University, with review input from Dr. John Verzani and others.

Dr. Manne read the resolution into the record. Faculty Senate members expressed general support, with a minor editorial suggestion, i.e., replace “between” with “among” in the second-to-last “Be it resolved”

clause. Questions arose about coordination across CUNY and SUNY systems. Dr. Manne confirmed that while each college is issuing its own statement, coordination exists through shared templates and that SUNY has called upon all state and city universities to adopt similar measures. She agreed that a CUNY-wide resolution would have greater collective force. Dr. Verzani noted that the University Faculty Senate (UFS) is considering such a unified statement.

Motion moved, seconded, and passed with two abstentions.

The adopted resolution will be submitted to the national repository of higher education statements defending academic freedom.

XI. Adjournment at 4:27 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Sarolta A. Takács, Secretary

Appendix A

October 16, 2025

Faculty Senate Executive Committee Report

Happy Thursday to all! I am pleased to present this report of your Faculty Senate Executive Committee. We met with the Provost and the Deans on Tuesday, where the conversation covered a number of issues, chair's requests, and the Committee's academic, short term, and long term goals.

We asked Dr. Holtzman to begin the conversation by sharing her impressions of CSI and any areas of interest she'd like to focus on in the coming months. Dr. Holtzman hopes to create a community which includes centers of excellent, a community in which faculty feel valued, seen, and supported; a community in which the students, faculty and staff are engaged... *and* committed to engaging with the broader community. She'd like to better understand our D/Fail/Withdraw policies and our retention rates, to more effectively support students. She complimented the faculty and expressed her desire to learn more about our research. However, Dr. Holtzman cautioned that CUNY continues to mark CSI as a "campus of financial risk," which necessitates a level of "Fiscal Conscientiousness" in future planning.

The conversation then moved to various pressing issues. First and foremost, we asked how the Provost and Administration plan to support and protect Academic Freedom on campus and any individual member of the faculty, should one of our faculty be accused of using academic freedom as a cover to indoctrinate students into far-left or far-right ideology. We were informed that the Provost, Deans, and chairs will work together to support an individual faculty member; that security will be notified to provide protection of any individual faculty member. The right of this body to pass resolutions in support of academic freedom was discussed as was the need to welcome *all* viewpoints on campus, noting that Turning Point hopes to start a chapter at CSI. Finally, we shared with the Provost a resolution to be read on the floor of the senate later in this meeting and thanked her and the Dean for their support.

We discussed the need for a cultural shift to value service, particularly once a professor achieves tenure and promotion. Past efforts made were acknowledged, but the XC pressed the Provost to work closely with the Deans and chairs to move the culture in this direction. As John Verzani noted last month, when faculty is disengaged, shared governance is at risk.

The committee brought items submitted by the chairs to the Provost. We asked the Provost about the use of and policies regarding AI, which impacts learning, teaching, research, and work in general. The Provost noted that there are no CUNY or CSI policies on AI, though there is support and guidance. The work of Wilma Jones and the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Professional Development, as well as the Academic Technology Committee, was noted with appreciation. Finally, the need for clear statements by faculty on their syllabi, defining the expected and prohibited uses of AI in their class, was discussed.

We asked whether there were any changes to the policies regarding ICE on Campus, and learned that there are none but that the Provost will resend the policy to the faculty & staff. We also asked if the Ferry Shuttle might be reinstated, only to learn that no it will not, though negotiations with the MTA are ongoing. Finally, we asked if the one class in-person policy would continue, and if there is a push for full-time

faculty to teach undergraduates. The Provost explained that there is no focus on undergraduates or graduates but that the policy will continue, given that (1) it helps build community and (2) that the Faculty Handbook stipulates that a faculty are expected to teach one course at the College per semester. The interim Provost asked faculty to articulate their specific concerns regarding the policy, noting that a process for providing accommodation does exist. Please CC the FSXC members on your emails to Dr. Holtzman.

We ended the meeting talking about our three major academic goals for the next two years. They are:

Exploring Continuing Education and how the faculty, departments, Deans, and Provost can collaborate with Continuing Ed to identify courses needed for certifications, certificates or degrees for the NYPD, NYFD, and other initiatives.

Improving associate's degree offerings to better serve the SI community and build 2+2 avenues to Baccalaureate Degrees.

Finally, and most importantly, we hope to focus on re-envisioning General Education and the creation of a First Year Experience. We look forward to working with the Committees of the Faculty Senate as well as all the administrative offices (CAAS, OAS, WAC) that work with Freshmen to make their first year at CSI not just transitional but transformative.

Thank you. I promise not to be so long winded next time!

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah De Simone, Chair

Appendix B

Opening / Welcome

- Warm, personal start: first meeting in person after earlier remote ones.
- Express gratitude for the collegial, student-centered culture of CSI.
- Set tone: partnership, transparency, and shared commitment.

Academic Affairs Website & Workflow Updates

- Announce launch of new Academic Affairs website.
- Centralizes: tenure, promotion, distinguished professor, sabbatical deadlines.
- Purpose: clarity, transparency, and workflow consistency.
- Highlights support for department chairs and smoother faculty advancement.
- Broader message: faculty success = institutional strength.

PSC-CUNY Research Award Program

- Encourage participation in PSC-CUNY Research Awards.
 - Deadline: Dec 15, 2025 @ 11:59 PM EST internal deadline at least one week early
 - Funding: Track 1 up to \$7K | Track 2 up to \$15K
 - Period: July 2026–June 2027 (6-month extension optional)
- Key source of faculty research support.
- Invite collaboration with Sponsored Programs or Academic Affairs.

Federal Student Loan Regulations & Program Review

- Context: new federal accountability standards ('Big Beautiful Bill').
- Applies to programs where graduates earn below median high-school salaries 4 years post-graduation.
- CSI working with CUNY Central to review graduate earnings four years post-completion.
- Framed as:
 - Not compliance alone, but chance to reflect and improve.
 - Goal: enhance earning potential and career outcomes for CSI students.
 - Links to experiential learning, curriculum alignment, and workforce pathways

Honorary Degree Nominations

- Announce call for honorary degree nominations (email should be in your inbox).
- Encourage nominations reflecting CSI's mission, service, and excellence.
- Reaffirms faculty role in shaping institutional values and recognition.

Upcoming Institutional Dates & Holidays

- Highlight important academic calendar and CUNY system events:
 - Oct 20 – No classes (Diwali)
 - Oct 24 – Monday schedule
 - Oct 29 – Chancellor's State of the University (11 AM)
 - Nov 27–28 – Thanksgiving Break