

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

Date: Thursday, December 19, 2024, 2:30pm – 3:25pm

Location: 1P-119 & Zoom Meeting

CC Members in Attendance

Zaghloul Ahmed, Neo Antoniadis, Karen Arca-Contreras, Comfort Asanbe, Banu Aslanertik, Michael Batson, Warrick Bell, Alan Benimoff, Andrew Colbeck, Brian Cortijo, David Curcio, Debbie DeSimone, Valkiria Duran-Narucki, Valerie Forrestal, Kenneth Gold, Hernán Green, Michel Hodge, Susan Holak, Emma Johnson, Burnett Joiner, Wilma Jones, Alfred Levine, Sharon Loverde, Timothy Lynch, Lisa Manne, Tara Mastrorilli, Ralf Peetz, Jonathan Peters, Greg Philips, Angelina Raio, Adrian Rosales, Alex Scott, Carlos Serrano, Suzy Shepardson, Susan Smith-Peter, Carles Solà Belda, Michael Steiper, Sarolta Takács, Thomas Tellefsen, John Verzani, Robert Wallace, Siona Wilson, Mark Zdziarski, Sarah Zelikovitz.

CC Members Via Zoom

John Arena, Thomas Chen, Joseph Frusci, Rosane Gertner, Patricia Kahn, David Kritt, Vincent Mirabella, Tobias Schaefer, Barbra Teater, Simone Wegge, Kelly Zyko

Guests In-Person

Cheryl Adolph, Stephanie Allen, Michael Anderson, Jessica Collura, Aleks Dudek, Emmanuel Esperance, Yoelda Ira, Jackie Lamberti, Carey Manifold, Susan Massara, Michael Paris, Keith Pisons, Laxmi Ramasubramanian, Lizbeth Rodriguez, Lisa Roe, Amy Stempler, Dana Trimbolo, Brenda Valentin, Rosemary Vitale.

Guests via Zoom

Stephanie Allen, Manuela Alongi, Sharon Christian, Celeste del Maestro, Antonio Gallego, Catherine Ferrara, Doriann Hyland, Andrew Leykam, Michele Karpeles, Mark Lewental, Christine McEvilly, Mary Murphy, Leonardo Pignataro, Jessica Pizzolo, David Pizzuto, Carly Racioppi, George Wang.

- 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, everyone. I trust the semester is winding down smoothly for you all. The Executive Committee met with President Lynch, Provost Steiper, and Chief of Staff Collura on December 10 for its monthly consultation.

We opened with a conversation about CSI and higher education in the current political climate. We shared our impressions of the UFS session on academic freedom, which several members of the XC and the administration attended. We are pleased that the Center for Teaching, Learning and Professional Development received funds to host some Spring 2025 constructive conversations on important issues that face faculty and staff, including but not limited to academic freedom. We congratulated the administration for successfully navigating some negative social media posts about the college. The president rightly noted that the inhospitable climate for higher education has shifted from criticisms about the return on investment to an assault on higher education's so-called left-wing ideology.

I have continued to think about this conversation over the past ten days and want to share some thoughts that are my own and do not represent the rest of the XC. I urge that faculty and staff be cognizant of the reality that people can surreptitiously record you and easily post sound bites on social media. Whether what you said was taken out of context or not doesn't really matter if you don't want your privacy upended. It does matter if your basic rights are clearly at stake, in which case I do not suggest a cautious response to accusations and encourage you to reach out to governance and union leaders if the need arises.

There are tactics from 20th century history that are instructive for our times, whether it is left wing organizations coming together to forge the Popular Front during the growth of fascism in the 1930s or the deliberateness of Montgomery, Alabama civil rights activists to rally around Rosa Park's heroic stance after passing on earlier similar incidents on public buses. It is a time to make sure our own house is in order; to ask ourselves if certain norms in higher education that perhaps we've never even thought about may violate state law or otherwise reflect poorly on the College as well as ourselves if they were made public. We need to engage in self-reflection because the gaze of others who would surely harm the College and its faculty or staff is upon us.

Moving on to other topics, we spoke generally about the College's need for a more coordinated marketing and public relations strategy. We encouraged making that need a focus in the search for a Director of Marketing and Communication that is just getting underway. To that end we asked that a faculty member sit on the search committee, which is not typical since the Director is not an ECP position. I am pleased to report that the President agreed to this request. Following up on an issue raised here last month, we brainstormed on how best to operationalize a weekly email listing all the upcoming events at the College, which the Administration is willing to do. We also discussed another email that was eliminated—the condolences from HR when a faculty or staff member suffers the loss of an immediate family member. President Lynch made the decision to stop those emails for several reasons that were not unreasonable. We pointed out that such emails did help forge important bonds among employees and since the President indicated that he is standing by the decision, we will continue to think about alternative ways to share the information and will broach the topic again next year. We also noted that the change was not communicated to the campus community, which blindsided some members whose parents had passed away.

Finally, we received updates on several issues: Regarding transportation, the College has submitted a grant proposal to fund the campus loop bus service. It has also been told by CUNY not to invest in a ferry shuttle since local buses already provide that service. There are small funds available to support the faculty searches now underway. Noting the importance of doing national searches well, the XC urged that at a minimum each search should be able to bring in one long-distance candidate. The Provost is confident that the allocated funds will allow for that.

I wish you all a pleasant holiday season and a happy new year. Any questions?

IV. President's Report – Timothy Lynch

President's Report – Dec 2024

Before starting his report, President Lynch made one correction to Chairperson Kenneth Gold's report for the record. He stated that CSI was never told by CUNY not to pursue a shuttle to the ferry. That was

simply an observation that was made by a former member of the Board of Trustees who had previously chaired the MTA. It was never a directive from the University.

President Lynch began his report with the news that there was a tentative agreement, finally, between the City University of New York and the PSC. This agreement was pending ratification by members of the PSC, one that was long overdue, and richly deserved by members. He thanked all for their patience, but more importantly, for everyone's advocacy on behalf of themselves and of their colleagues. He looked forward to some continued labor peace; qualifying "continued," because he appreciated the conversations that he has had with local PSC leadership, which have been fruitful, productive and always cordial. He extended his thanks to Jason Bishop, *in absentia*.

President Lynch gave the following additional updates on the strategic plan, enrollment, and transportation:

Strategic Plan: President Lynch reported that he had just this morning sent the final draft of the strategic plan to Chairperson Kenneth Gold and Professor Smith Peter, along with Jason Bishop for their review. The expectation was that the final draft, inclusive of pictographs, data points, and faculty vignettes, would be made available to this body for consideration and, hopefully, ratification early in the spring term. He was grateful to all who had had a part in getting us to this point and he was very pleased and proud of not just the product, but even more importantly, the process, which was inclusive, collaborative, and consultative.

Enrollment: He noted that CSI's enrollment was strong and moving in the right direction. Enrollment for the January intersession was up over 8%, while enrollment for the spring semester was up a tick. Applications for Fall 2025 were already in the double-digit percentage as of this morning. He hoped that those applications would be converted into deposits and matriculants and he thanked all whose efforts had brought us to this stage.

Transportation: He reported that CSI continues to engage with local elected officials, the MTA, and the Department of Transportation, seeking grant funding and other solutions to ongoing challenges with transportation. He looked forward to us hearing from the COM 450 students who were to present shortly on the transportation research project that they had conducted.

In closing, President Lynch wished all a happy and healthy holiday season, a Merry Christmas, a Happy Hanukkah, blessed Kwanzaa, and a joyous New Year.

No Questions.

V. Professional Staff Congress (PSC) Report – Michael Batson

On behalf of Jason Bishop, Michael Batson reported that negotiations between the PSC and CUNY on a new Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) had been reached and that the Delegate Assembly (DA) would be voting on it that evening. If the DA approves the MOA, it will go out to the members for a ratification vote within the next week to ten days, with voting concluding in early January.

The report included a summary of the highlights of the MOA:

- 13.4% salary increases over 56 months. The additional months at the end (beyond 48) are used to generate cash for the package that is being used for equity pay for some of the lower-paid titles and to put money on the top steps in the salary schedule. Due to compression, almost half of members are at the top step and therefore do not see any salary increases other than through contractual increases.
- Retroactive pay back to March, 2023.
- A ratification bonus for all full-time employees (\$3,000) and part-time employees (pro rata) who are on payroll
- Additional equity raises above and beyond across-the-board raises for faculty and professional staff in the College Laboratory Technician series, Assistants to HEO, and CLIP and CUNY Start Instructors
- Teaching adjunct salary increase to a minimum of \$7,100 per 3 contact hour course and \$9,467 per 4 contact hour course, professionalization of teaching adjunct role, and increases to the non-teaching adjunct hourly rate
- Graduate Assistant minimum salary increases totaling 29.2% for Grad A and 43.6% for Grad B along with significant raises for the C and D titles.
- Additional \$1250 salary increases for members who are on the top step of a salary schedule who are not already receiving an equity raise greater than \$1250, effective March 1, 2027
- Paid parental leave program expanded from 8 weeks to 12 weeks and inclusion of foster parents, effective March 1, 2025
- PSC-CUNY Awards maximum award increased to \$7,000 and \$15,000, depending on category of application
- Post-tenure reassigned time pilot program for tenured Assistant and Associate Professors to pursue scholarship
- CLT and Senior CLT at the top salary step will be eligible for a \$2,500 Salary Assignment Differential
- HEO Assistants will be eligible for Advanced Degree Differentials, effective March 1, 2027

The report also addressed the inability of the sides to come to an agreement on remote work. While CUNY communicated during negotiations that they had no intention of changing the current arrangements, they would not put remote work language in the contract, especially because as of early December, the Governor signaled the possibility of ordering state workers back to their offices/worksites.

Finally, the report also highlighted the fact that proposed MOA does not include many of the demands that CUNY originally made, such as no retroactive pay and retirees losing access to their emails.

Q&A

Comment: A member expressed their appreciation of the return of the three-year hire for adjuncts and for the 13% raise we all will be getting over the next three years. Prof. Batson added that in terms of equity, the adjunct pay rates will increase as of Spring 2026. going from \$5,500.00 to \$6750 per course. By 2027, they will be getting \$7100.00 per course. That will be a 29% raise for adjunct lecturers.

Another comment made by a member was to state that many others in our union are not pleased with the outcome, and hence will be voting NO. One issue, among many, was the increase in job insecurity for contingent faculty which has been reduced from three to two-year appointments, and also much harder to even qualify for it. Another issue is the pay increase of 13% plus, which if you break that down

by year, including the nine months that we do not get any raise, works out to 2.8% per year. That is a major pay cut in the face of the massive inflation. So, I say vote NO.

Another question that was raised was whether NY State would contribute extra funds for the increase in pay. Prof. Batson stated that except for the bump in adjunct pay, all of it has been slated for the governor's executive budget for New York State to cover.

Another comment by a member was to inform the body that the information session webinars that were scheduled to start on Friday, Dec 20. The member urged everyone to vote YES as it was a good deal.

VI. Report from the Administration –

In lieu of a report from the Transportation Taskforce by Interim Vice President Michel Hodge, Chair Kenneth Gold introduced five students and instructor of COM 450 (Senior Seminar in Communications Research) to present their research findings on “The State of Transportation to CSI in Fall 2024.” Members included: An Xian Chen, Brandon Flores, Ryan Irizarry, Nabiswa Mwesiga, Daniel Rivera-Salazar, and their instructor, Prof. Emma Johnson.

Attached, please find the slide presentation. To summarize, their research project included two anonymous digital surveys, a literature review, content analyses of coverage about transportation in *The Banner* and websites of Senior CUNY Colleges, and structured observations at the various bus stops on campus. Their findings and conclusion are reproduced below:

Findings - Weekday Behavior

Most people were waiting for the bus to appear. ● Almost always too many people to fit in the shelter (weekends very quiet) ● When the bus arrives at the main campus stop, there is a crowd trying to get on, but they do maintain some organization (not quite a line) ● We often observed people rushing/running to the bus ● Most common behavior we observed: people spend their time using phone during the wait time, very little interaction ● Buses arrive frequently, but often deviate from the schedule, running between 4 and 30 minutes behind.

Findings – Fare Evasion

We observed fare evasion to be nearly universal ● Back doors are often open, and students enter at front and back. ● There did not appear to be an attempt to collect the fares ● The amount of passengers trying to board may make it impractical to collect fares in a timely manner ● Our observers who are regular bus-riders note that this is not inconsistent with what they see in other locations on Staten Island

Conclusion:

Transportation to and around the campus is a persistent problem for CSI. We believe that CSI and CUNY should advocate for better service from the city, but that we should also take action where we can given the potential impact on student engagement, success, and retention. ● We are surprised to find little existing research about transportation patterns and needs on campus. We think that it would help guide policy and priorities to have more information. ● There is a communication mismatch: even when the college is providing timely and accurate information, it is not penetrating the broader community. We expect that this is not limited to issues of transportation, and we think this warrants further study.

Q&A

A member first thanked the students for their time and efforts in conducting this research and producing this report. They asked whether the students had any ideas for solutions to move forward. In response, the students noted that from observing student behavior, emails were not effective. Also, they noted that access to transportation information on the CSI website was not being promoted well. A good example was how well the Navigate CSI platform has been promoted. Their best recommendation was for CSI to increase the focus and relevance of emails.

Another question that was asked of the students was how to communicate this transportation issue to CUNY central. In response, the student who works as a team manager for a basketball team recommended an improvement in communication style. For one, he suggested that just like their games which are being broadcasted through social media, information about transportation should be channeled through social media apps as many are less inclined to check their emails. During their observations, they also noticed students tracking buses through apps.

Last was a comment from a professor whose research focuses on transportation in New York City. He mentioned that he has been pursuing the MTA recently about the fare evasion problem, and it has been difficult to get the data. He also mentioned that Staten Island has unfair collection by route. In addition, Staten Island has the worst performance between the number of buses scheduled and the number of buses that arrive. Staten Island was at the bottom of the pack in October with ~87% of the buses that were scheduled actually arriving on site. The city average is 94%. Staten Island has significantly worse performance from the MTA than we should.

VII. Reports of the committees of the College Council

- a. **Committee on Organization** – No report
- b. **By-Laws Committee** – No report
- c. **Administrative Review Committee** – **Cindy Wong**

Chairperson Kenneth Gold read a note from Committee Chair Cindy Wong, who was unable to be at the meeting. AREC continues to write up its report from its work last year and will strive to complete the work by spring break.

- d. **Institutional Planning Committee** – **No report**
- e. **Budget Committee** – **Kenneth Gold**

The committee met with the administration to discuss the first quarter numbers in the current fiscal year. The College's projected deficit has increased because, as it did last year, CUNY has inserted the cost of a new contract (not with the PSC but with 1199/DC 37) into the College's expenditures. AVP Serrano reviewed the forecast over the next 3 years—which he presented to this body last month. I remain confident about where we'll land this year but am uneasy about our ambitious target for FY26. After the meeting, the committee discussed ways of fulfilling the first part of its charge, which is to

participate in the formation of a budget. Initial conversations with the administration to do so have been positive.

f. **Facilities Committee – No report**

VIII. Student Government Report – Adrian Rosales

The President of the Student Government Association reported on the following:

- The Student Service Fair went well! We saw a great amount of foot traffic and engagement present. Groups on campus were well represented and there seemed to be some fruitful conversations going on. Food trucks present, La Tortuga & Country Donuts, were a huge hit!
- VP Ashley and I have been on calls with DeSimone & Scimeca and others regarding the revamp of the Core 100 course to involve essential skill development. Very fruitful conversations, progress being made.
- Student Government will start paying for a part-time person to staff the food pantry to allow it to be open for longer. We are very happy and proud of that.

IX. HEO Steering Committee – Suzy Shepardson and Angelina Raio

Joining me today is Angelina Raio, our elected co-chair, who you will be seeing regularly moving forward.

Committee members attended the PSC-CUNY 2024 election debrief in November (in lieu of our regular meeting, since they were held at the same time), and we've set up a plan for doing outreach to the HEO community to reintroduce the HEOSC and its role under governance, assess their specific areas of interest, topics they would like to learn more about, and concerns they have, and then use that data to help both with setting up future events and ensuring that we are representing them to our best ability in various venues (such as meetings with President Lynch and his Cabinet).

On behalf of the Steering Committee, Angelina and I would like to wish you and your families a peaceful holiday season and a prosperous, productive, peaceful New Year!

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 Council of the College Council