THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
USS
UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENATE

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MINUTES OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENATE OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

HELD

NOVEMBER 21, 2014

AT JOHN JAY COLLEGE STUDENT GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE ROOM AT 899 10TH AVENUE—BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

There were present:

USS Steering Members:
Joseph Awadjie, Chairperson
Lucas Almonte, Vice Chair for Legislative Affairs
Donavan Borington, Vice Chair for Fiscal Affairs
Nicole Ponzo, Vice Chair for Graduate Affairs
Oscar Martinez, Vice Chair for Senior Colleges
Melissa Carreño, Vice Chair for Disability Affairs
Emelyn Fernandez de Guzman, Vice for International Student Affairs
Claudia Wald, Vice Chair for Technology Fee Affairs

University Student Senate Staff:
Fernando Araujo, Executive Director
Robert Agyemang, Legislative Director
Cruz Garcia, Budget Director

Guest:
Zak Ivkovic, CUNY Athletics Executive Director
Steve Klienberg, USS Policy Analyst

I. Roll Call

With 8 voting members present, a quorum was established. Chairman Awadjie called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

II. Approval of the Agenda

I. Roll Call
II. Approval of the Agenda
III. Chairperson's Report
  A. Report from CUNY Athletics
  B. Article XV Progress Report
  C. Meetings
IV. USS Budget
V. Announcements
VI. Adjournment

VC Ponzo motioned to approve the agenda; the motion was seconded by VC Almonte. The motion carried unanimously: {8 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions}.

III. Chairperson's Report

CUNY Athletics Report

Chairman Awadjie welcomed members to the meeting. He introduced and yielded the floor to Zak Ivkovic, the Executive Director for CUNY Athletics, whom will present a report on the activities and goals of CUNY Athletics.

Mr. Ivkovic began by thanking the members of the Steering Committee for their service. He also thanked USS for being one of the primary sources of funding for CUNY Athletics. USS contributes over $100,000 in funding by way of the USS fee to CUNY Athletics. The rest of the funding for CUNY Athletics comes from the CUNY Central, membership dues, and sponsorships. CUNY Athletics has received over $250,000 in sponsorship funding this year.

CUNY Athletics is seeking, Mr. Ivkovic continues, to increase the involvement of everyday students in athletics. This goal is being accomplished by hosting athletics intramurals on CUNY campuses designed to attract the average student. The events include handball, chess, table tennis, dodgeball, volleyball, indoor soccer, basketball, kickball, 5K/10K run, Golf Championship, and a CUNY Special Olympics for students with disabilities, which is one of the new additions. These events aim at serving a wider portion of the CUNY student body, while encouraging students to have a more active lifestyle. Student clubs and organizations can be instrumental in helping students get involved in athletics activities.

Mr. Ivkovic remarked on the success CUNY student athletes have displayed through the years. Graduation rates at the senior and community college levels vary between four to six percent higher than the general student body. This is because the Athletic programs are a motivating factor in the academic success of our students.

CUNY Athletics is working to host another good well tour, which is a chance for students involved in CUNY Athletics to travel places and engage in community service and leadership training. Student Athletes will also get a chance to develop their leadership at the national athletics conferences.

Chairman Awadjie thanked Mr. Ivkovic for the presentation and his service. Mr. Ivkovic stated that he will be at the next Plenary to give a similar presentation.

Article XV Report

Chairman Awadjie reported that there has been an outpouring of support for the resolution the USS Steering Committee adopted at the previous meeting. There are nine Student Government that have adopted the resolution thus far and there will be more to come. There are nineteen students signed up to testify at the Board of Trustees. Councilwoman Inez Barron, Chair of the Higher Education Committee for the New York City Council, has sent the Board of Trustees a letter of support for our resolution—the letter has been signed by an additional twenty councilmembers.

Chairman Awadjie stated that he is happy with the support and will continue to work to have the proposed amendments to Article XV modifies to include students right to remain silent without the assumption of guilt during a disciplinary hearing and to limit the authority of college presidents upon appeals.

USS Meetings

Chairman Awadjie distributed a schedule of USS meeting dates. This list is tentative and subject to change, but it provides a working framework for the meetings members should expect.

IV. USS Budget

VC Borington presents the body with a copy of the FY2015 USS Budget draft that he has composed after hosting four budget hearings. (See attached document).

VC Borington motioned to go into executive session; the motion was seconded by VC Ponzo. The motion carried unanimously: {8 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions}. (The motion was made at 5:59 PM)

The meeting resumed at 7:20 PM.

Chairman Awadjie excused himself from the meeting. He had to attend an event with Chancellor Milliken. VC Almonte will Chair the rest of the meeting.

There is a fifteen minute recess.

VC Borington motioned to approve the proposed FY2015 budget; the motion was seconded by VC Ponzo. The motion carried unanimously: {7 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions}.

V. Announcements

VC Carreño announced that the Cover CUNY initiative she has been going great. Thought the goal was 40, she has received e-mails from 100 students whom are interested in volunteering for the initiative. She will be working with VC Borington to secure promotional items to promote the Cover CUNY and get students to register for health insurance.

Director Araujo announced that Steering members should be should be prepared every other Steering meeting to give reports to the Plenary about the progress of projects and initiatives that they are either leading or participating in.

VC Almonte announced that USS, which is part of the nineteen member TAP Coalition, will be testifying at the December 10, 2014 Joint Legislative Hearing in Albany. VC Almonte, Mr. Agyemang, and Mr. Kleinberg have been conferencing with the organizers of the TAP Coalition. The focus of the conversation has been around the DREAM Act. The feeling is that if Governor Cuomo does not include it in the Governor's budget, then the act will not pass. Thus, the next six weeks will be about letting the governor know that this is a priority to New Yorkers, specifically, students.

VI. Adjournment

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, this University Student Senate Steering Committee meeting was adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

Chairperson,
Joseph Awadjie

Recording Secretary,
Fernando Araujo