



University Student Senate  
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**MINUTES OF THE PLENARY MEETING OF THE  
UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENATE OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK  
HELD  
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2024  
AT THE GUTTMAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**I. ROLL CALL**

Upon a roll call the attendance recorded was as follows:

**2023-2024 Delegates & Alternates:**

**Delegates Present:**

Barenboim, Eric (Graduate Delegate, CUNY Graduate Center); Hanon, Jonathan (Graduate Alternate, CUNY Graduate Center); Fray, Falana (Graduate Delegate, CUNY School of Journalism); Park, Sojung (Delegate, CUNY School of Professional Studies); Vitkouskaya, Vera (Delegate, CUNY School of Professional Studies); Patel, Kruitka (Graduate Alternate, CUNY School of Professional Studies); Davila, Miguel (Graduate Delegate, CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies); Hernandez, Joseph (Delegate, Baruch College); Aaron, Kayla (Second Alternate, Baruch College); Yafai, Malak (Delegate, Brooklyn College); Ebbin, Carrie (First Alternate, Brooklyn College); Pegues, Malika (Graduate Delegate, Brooklyn College); Imran, Khizar (Delegate, City College of New York); Arias, Miguel (Second Alternate, City College of New York); Williams, Tinnycua (Graduate Delegate, City College of New York); Jones, Bianca (Graduate Alternate, City College of New York); Cronin, Daniel (Delegate, Hunter College); Ramsundar, Sanjay (First Alternate, Lehman College); Doumbouya, Salimatou (Delegate, New York City College of Technology); , Nicholas (Delegate, New York City College of Technology); Djuraev, Daler (First Alternate, New York City College of Technology); Villar, Adrian (Second Alternate, New York City College of Technology); Barron, William (Delegate, Queens College); Gregory, Petra (First Alternate, College of Staten Island); Iloansui, Nchebe-Jah (Graduate Delegate, College of Staten Island); Ambati, Sweta (Delegate, York College); Hamani, Djibrilla (Delegate, Borough of Manhattan Community College); Signh, Harileen (Delegate, Borough of Manhattan Community College); Ogunbote, Arafat (Second Alternate, Borough of Manhattan Community College); Fernandez, Krishta (Delegate, Bronx Community College); Ventura, Samantha (Second Alternate, Bronx Community College); Cisse, Issa (Delegate, Guttman Community College); Gomera, Marielis (First Alternate, Guttman Community College); Martinez, Dainma (Delegate, Hostos Community College); Soto, Orlando (Delegate, Hostos Community College); Sanchez, Jasmin (Second Alternate, Hostos Community College); Fletcher, John (Delegate, LaGuardia Community College); Willis, Davia (Delegate, Queensborough Community College); Wade, Benjamin (Delegate, Queensborough Community College).

**Delegates Absent:**

Thenor, Ludy (Graduate Delegate, CUNY School of Law); Ramesar, Josiah (Graduate Alternate, CUNY School of Law); DePaul, Ray (Graduate Alternate, CUNY School of Journalism); Fernandez, Genesis (First Alternate, CUNY School of Professional Studies); Horton, Amber (Second Alternate, CUNY School of Professional Studies); Resaul, Goseema (Graduate Alternate, CUNY School of Professional Studies); Wearing, Antionette (Graduate Delegate, CUNY School of Public Health); Ali, Zaire S. (Graduate Alternate, CUNY School of Public Health); Trevalles, Anna (Delegate, CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies); Johnson, James (Graduate Alternate, CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies); Malachowski, Avrohom (Delegate, Baruch College); Abdugarimova, Amina (First Alternate, Baruch College); Shyti, Flavia (Delegate, Brooklyn College); Angus, Jordan (Second Alternate, Brooklyn College); March, Sophia (Graduate Alternate, Brooklyn College); Garcia, Jessica (Delegate, City College of New York); Mohiuddin, Abdullah (First Alternate, City College of New York); Pratsevich, Colin (Delegate, Hunter College); Mikhaylov, Avi (First Alternate, Hunter College); Sokolov, Juniper (Second Alternate, Hunter College); Pineda, Kelvin (Delegate, John Jay College of Criminal Justice); Qudusi, Aiisha (Delegate, John Jay College of Criminal Justice); Diallo, Kadiatou (Delegate, Lehman College); Attah-Kudadze, Ransford (Delegate, Lehman



College); Asemota, Mathilda (Second Alternate, Lehman College); Diallo, Abigial (Delegate, Medgar Evers College); Louis-Byron, Shania (Delegate, Medgar Evers College); Elias Andrews, Junior (First Alternate, Medgar Evers College); Adelani, Grace (Second Alternate, Medgar Evers College); Qasim Raza, Muhammad (First Alternate, Queens College); Rajkumar, Shawn (Delegate, Queens College); Adams, Brandon (Second Alternate, Queens College); Aviles, Alyssa (Graduate Delegate, Queens College); Palka, Julia (Delegate, College of Staten Island); Santos, Jaylee (Delegate, College of Staten Island); Acevedo, Gabriel (Second Alternate, College of Staten Island); McLaren, Tatiana (Delegate, York College); Polack, Akkeem (First Alternate, York College); Ramdeen, Payoshni (Second Alternate, York College); Seydou, Aichatou (First Alternate, Borough of Manhattan Community College); Anazco, Angel (Delegate, Bronx Community College); Aviles, Linmi (First Alternate, Bronx Community College); Ruiz, Samantha (Delegate, Guttman Community College); Montrevil, Jahsiah (Second Alternate, Guttman Community College); Hernandex-Ravelo, Yaxeny (First Alternate, Hostos Community College); Nemet, Netanel (Delegate, Kingborough Community College); Bennett, Riquelme (Delegate, Kingborough Community College); Brunson, Adalah (First Alternate, Kingborough Community College); Bennett, Riquelme (Second Alternate, Kingborough Community College); Rijal, Diya (Delegate, LaGuardia Community College); Lenes Arreola, Carolina (First Alternate, LaGuardia Community College); Miller, Renaediaz (First Alternate, Queensborough Community College).

**University Student Senate Staff:**

Kasson Mangin, Legislative Director  
 Fernando Araujo, Project Coordinator

With 32 voting members present, a quorum was established.

The meeting was called to order at 12:25 PM.

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**II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**AGENDA**

- I. ROLL CALL
- II. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES
- III. CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT
  - A. STEERING COMMITTEE UPDATE
- IV. OLD BUSINESS
- V. NEW BUSINESS
- VI. USS NOMINATIONS
- VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS
- VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Sen. Aaron motioned to remove the runoff elections from the agenda because USSERC did not have a quorum. The agenda was approved unanimously after it was agreed to remove the runoff elections for Steering members.

**III. CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT**

*Higher Education Action Day*

USS Agreed to co-sponsor higher education Action Day on February 28, 2024. USS will be paying for the buses, which will cost \$14,000. Previous estimates were for \$19,000 so our organization was able to save some funds. If you RSVP for higher education Action Day, you should have already received a follow up email from Meghan from NYPIRG and NYPIRG will be responsible for giving you more information about the bus pick-ups on that day. Buses will pick up students from all five boroughs, we currently have about 600 students RSVPs for this

event. We are excited about the participation thus far.

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#### *TedEx CUNY*

USS will be cosponsoring TedEx CUNY for an amount of \$2,999. The funds will go towards covering equipment and rental for a theater and equipment rental.

#### *CUNY Coalition for Students with Disabilities*

USS is co-sponsoring the CUNY Coalition for Students with Disabilities empowerment day. USS will be promoting and participating in this event.

#### *Metrocards for delegates*

The Steering Committee passed a resolution to purchase up to \$6,600 for MetroCards for our delegation, with the goal of promoting our legislative goals by making it easy for us to move around the city to either attend tabling events or to attend the different initiatives or activities for USS. Metrocards will be given to members strictly based on their participation in USS events.

#### *Director of Public Affairs, Communications, and Technology*

The second resolution that the Steering Committee passed is to create the position of Director of Public Affairs communication and technology for USS. The goal will be for this individual to focus on the website and public relations for USS. Though it involves marketing, this position is not a marketing position. It is designed to shape the branding of USS because our organization is involved in several partnerships and initiatives. The Chairperson will appoint someone by the next plenary.

Both initiatives adopted by Steering are pilot initiatives designed to be for this year only. If successful, we hope that future delegations will adopt them as well.

Lastly, related to staff, Kasson Mangin will serve as Legislative Director. USS is still fielding candidates for the position of Executive Director.

#### *CUNY Board of Trustees adopts new schedule to recognize more cultural holiday CUNY*

Students will no longer have class on Eid al-Adha, Eid al-Fitr, Diwali and Lunar New Year. The Board of trustees has designated them as official holidays on the CUNY Academic calendar starting on the 2025 - 2026 Academic Year. This decision represents our tireless advocacy for years as Students in USS and beyond. Knowing that the many CUNY students who celebrate Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, Lunar New Year and Diwali will finally now have their holidays formally recognized with classes not being held on those days is a huge step towards equity.

This an issue which USS and several student governments have been championing for years. Thank you to all the student leaders who made it happen.

#### *Legislative Agenda*

USS had a training at our last session to gear our students for the upcoming legislative session. We are advocating for several initiatives, including, student wellbeing initiatives, CUNY cares, academic advisement, supporting CCSD and advocating for more resources for accessibility on our campuses, the new deal for CUNY, as always, and we are supporting collective bargaining because if we want great education we need to invest money in our faculty.

Our primary campaign, one that is off to a great start, is our free MetroCard for CUNY students initiative. We have launched a campaign for students to share their stories about the difficulties

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and cost of commuting in NYC. This initiative has been shared on social media platforms and is getting a lot of traction.

#### *NYSABPRAHL Legislative Conference*

USS delegates did a great job during this conference. Students met with legislators and were able to send a unified message about our agenda. Particularly, our free MetroCard initiative. We have heard from legislators that the initiative could be introduced in the conference this legislative session. This could be the beginning of the momentum we need to adopt this initiative into the budget.

#### *Somos el Futuro Legislative Conference*

This legislative conference is coming up soon and we encourage delegates to sign up.

#### *March in March*

This is a USS initiative and rally that we have annually. The goal is to build momentum as we build awareness for our legislative initiatives. We are leaning on you to help get the word out. The goal is to involve more student governments. We are going to invite them to join us and get them to join. The march will be on March 15 and it will go from City Hall to Brooklyn Borough Hall.

#### **IV. USS BUDGET FOR FY 2024**

Chairperson Doumbouya announced that the budget is part of old business and has been discussed at length and adopted by the Steering Committee.

Sen. Barenboim motions to approve the budget as presented, the motion is seconded by Sen. Barron. The motion passed: {30 Yes, 1 No, 2 Abstentions}.

#### **V. NEW BUSINESS**

Sen. Fernandez inquired about ways to increase Veteran student representation within the university. There is no current role within USS dedicated specifically to veterans' students. She clarified that these students are different from nontraditional students and should have a specific role within the CUNY student leadership to advocate for them.

Sen. Aaron noted that there are Veteran Student Organizations on the local campuses and those are great resources for students. Every campus has a Veteran Coordinator on their campus. In addition to that, there is often a Veteran Students Organization. If there is something specific that needs to be addressed as far as veterans' students are concerned, it could be brought to a specific USS committee.

Sen. Pegues stressed the point that Veterans have specific concerns that require advocacy.

Sen. Gregory mentioned that a similar discussion is happening at CSI. At CSI, Veteran students fall within the umbrella of nontraditional students. This makes sense for USS at and student

leaders generally because it offers flexibility to tackle several different concerns. If this is not clear within the guidelines of USS as to how it is addressed at the university level, then it should be clarified.

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Prof. Fernandez points to a university report done at CUNY about a decade ago which recommended simplifying services by having them come together and provide a central place for veterans to go at the local campus. Veteran students continue to be a neglected population within our university.

Sen. Doumbouya noted that this issue will be referred to the committee for further discussion.

## **VI. NOMINATIONS**

Prior to beginning the nominations, the delegation must agree on a nomination procedure.

Sen. Aaron, after accepting a friendly amendment from Sen. Barenboim, motioned to have a 1 minute nomination and 2 minute acceptance speech per candidate with 5 total questions from the delegation.

Sen. Williams nominated Sen. Farlana Fray. Sen. Williams delivered a nomination statement. Sen. Farla delivered an acceptance statement.

## **VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Project Coordinator Araujo thanked members who participated in the Albany Legislative conference in February. He encouraged students to RSVP for the upcoming Somos el Futuro legislative conference.

Chairperson Doumbouya announced that the procurement deadlines for USS have been lifted. The procurement deadlines that are associated with the CUNY fiscal year do not align with that of the University Student Senate. Chairperson Doumbouya talked to members of the CUNY administration about how this is impractical and poorly serves student leaders trying to carry out their agenda.

Sen. Aaron met with the procurement director and reported that the process works but it is a fairly slow process. She is working to involve student representatives in the process so that they are aware of where in the chain of events is within the procurement process.

Sen. Hanon reported that the Graduate Center has students involved in the process of putting things through CUNY Buy. It is important for students to have access to the chain of events that happen within the procurement process.

Chairperson Doumbouya announced that there is USS related merchandise at the office available for pickup at the USS office.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Sen. Fernandez motions to adjourn the meeting, the motion received numerous seconds. Motion passes unanimously. The meeting is adjourned at 1:54 PM.

