



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, MARCH 17, 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); Ramesar, Josiah (Graduate Alternate, CUNY School of Law); Fray, Falana (Graduate Delegate, CUNY School of Journalism); Park, Sojung (Delegate, CUNY School of Professional Studies); Patel, Kruitka (Graduate Alternate, CUNY School of Professional Studies); Wearing, Antionette (Graduate Delegate, CUNY School of Public Health); Trevalles, Anna (Delegate, CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies); Davila, Miguel (Graduate Delegate, CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies); Hernandez, Joseph (Delegate, Baruch College); Malachowski, Avrohom (Delegate, Baruch College); Aaron, Kayla (Second Alternate, Baruch College); Shyti, Flavia (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); Pratsевич, Colin (Delegate, Hunter College); Diallo, Kadiatou (Delegate, Lehman College); Attah-Kudadze, Ransford (Delegate, Lehman College); Ramsundar, Sanjay (First Alternate, Lehman College); Asemota, Mathilda (Second Alternate, Lehman College); Elias Andrews, Junior (First Alternate, Medgar Evers College); Doumbouya, Salimatou (Delegate, New York City College of Technology); Hidalgo, Nicholas (Delegate, New York City College of Technology); Barron, William (Delegate, Queens College); Rajkumar, Shawn (Delegate, Queens College); Adams, Brandon (Second Alternate, Queens College); Palka, Julia (Delegate, College of Staten Island); Santos, Jaylee (Delegate, College of Staten Island); Gregory, Petra (First Alternate, College of Staten Island); Ambati, Sweta (Delegate, York College); Polack, Akkeem (First Alternate, York College); Hamani, Djibrilla (Delegate, Borough of Manhattan Community College); Signh, Harileen (Delegate, Borough of Manhattan Community College); Ramirez, Alexis (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); Cisse, Issa (Delegate, Guttman Community College); Gomera, Marielis (First Alternate, Guttman Community College); Martinez, Dainma (Delegate, Hostos Community College); Nemet, Netanel (Delegate, Kingborough Community College); Fletcher, John (Delegate, LaGuardia Community College).

**Delegates Absent:**

Thenor, Ludy (Graduate Delegate, CUNY School of Law); DePaul, Ray (Graduate Alternate, CUNY School of Journalism); Vitkouskaya, Vera (Delegate, CUNY School of Professional Studies); 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); Ali, Zaire S. (Graduate Alternate, CUNY School of Public Health); , (Delegate, CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies); , (First Alternate, CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies); , (Second Alternate, CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies); Johnson, James (Graduate Alternate, CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies); Abdukarimova, Amina (First Alternate, Baruch College); Yafai, Malak (Delegate, Brooklyn College); Ebbin, Carrie (First Alternate, Brooklyn College); Angus, Jordan (Second Alternate, Brooklyn College); Pegues, Malika (Graduate Delegate, 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); Jones, Bianca (Graduate

Alternate, City College of New York); Cronin, Daniel (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, Abigial (Delegate, Medgar Evers College); Louis-Byron, Shania (Delegate, Medgar Evers College); Adelani, Grace (Second Alternate, Medgar Evers College); Djuraev, Daler (First Alternate, New York City College of Technology); Villar, Adrian (Second Alternate, New York City College of Technology); Qasim Raza, Muhammad (First Alternate, Queens College); Aviles, Alyssa (Graduate Delegate, Queens College); Acevedo, Gabriel (Second Alternate, College of Staten Island); Iloansui, Nchebe-Jah (Graduate Delegate, College of Staten Island); McLaren, Tatiana (Delegate, York College); Ramdeen, Payoshni (Second Alternate, York College); Ogunbote, Arafat (Second Alternate, Borough of Manhattan Community College); Fernandez, Krishta (Delegate, Bronx Community College); Ventura, Samantha (Second Alternate, Bronx Community College); Montrevil, Jahsiah (Second Alternate, Guttman Community College); Soto, Orlando (Delegate, Hostos Community College); Hernandex-Ravelo, Yaxeny (First Alternate, Hostos Community College); Sanchez, Jasmin (Second Alternate, Hostos 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); Willis, Davia (Delegate, Queensborough Community College); Wade, Benjamin (Delegate, Queensborough Community College); Miller, Renaediaz (First Alternate, Queensborough Community College).

### **University Student Senate Staff:**

Kasson Mangin, Legislative Director  
Fernando Araujo, Project Coordinator

With 29 voting members present, a quorum was established.

The meeting was called to order at 12:40 PM.

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## **II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

### **AGENDA**

- I. ROLL CALL
- II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
- III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES
- IV. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT
  - A. STEERING COMMITTEE UPDATE
- V. OLD BUSINESS
- VI. NEW BUSINESS
- VII. SPECIAL ELECTIONS FOR VICE CHAIR FOR DISABILITY AFFAIRS
- VIII. RUNOFF ELECTIONS FOR VICE CHAIR FOR LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS
- IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS
- X. ADJOURNMENT

Sen. Barron motioned to approve the agenda.

Sen. Aaron motioned to add the approval of the minutes to the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

The motion to approve the agenda carried unanimously.

## **III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Sen. Aaron motioned to approve the minutes. After minor grammatical errors, the motion carries unanimously.

#### **IV. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

Chairperson Doumbouya announced that William Acevedo has been appointed as Director of Public Relations/Communication and Technology. William will make updating the website his first priority.

##### **Legislative Updates**

The Somos el Futuro legislative conference was a great success. USS members learn from their experiences during the legislative conference in February and were prepared to advocate during this conference.

Chairperson Doumbouya and several USS representatives were part of the model senate. Members represented several representatives.

During the conference NY State Senator Robert Jackson pledged his full support for the USS MetroCard initiative. There were other members who also expressed their support. USS will be working for more public support of the initiative.

##### **March in March for Higher Education**

March in March was a great success. The initiative has been lead by USS since 2016. Coalition partners came together to March over the Brooklyn Bridge to advocate for our student agenda. USS had representation from the NYC Public Advocate's office, representation from NY State Senator Andrew Gounardes, and Assemblyman Harvey Epstein joined the event. Coalition members from NYPIRG and PSC also joined us. The event ended with a reception at NYCCT. USS will use videos and images from the event to promote our agenda on social media and beyond.

##### **Higher Education Action Day**

Higher Education Action Day was also a great success. This was a full lobby day in Albany. USS sponsored buses and transported hundreds of students to Albany to meet with legislators. This was an event spearheaded by USS, NYPIRG, the CUNY Rising Alliance and other coalition partners. Students got a chance to meet with legislators and talk to them about our legislative priorities.

##### **Student Empowerment Day**

Chairperson Doumbouya spoke at Student Empowerment Day, which was an initiative designed to advocate for services for students with disabilities. There were a number of USS representatives at this event as well.

##### **Free Metro Cards Initiative for USS Representative**

The Steering Committee voted to approve \$6,600 for MetroCards for USS representatives. Once the purchase requisition, the USS Steering Committee will draft a set of criteria. The Metrocards will be for members who are active in USS.

##### **Upcoming Events**

USS is planning the USS Retreat. The event will happen around the beginning of the Fall semester.

USS will be planning the second Annual USS Leadership Symposium to help train the next generation of CUNY student leaders.

USS will be planning a end of the year event to celebrate the contributions of student leaders.

### Meetings Summary

There is a special CUNY Board of Trustees meeting coming up. It could be viewed online for those who cannot attend in person.

The NYC Council will be hosting a budget hearing. These hearings are for students and faculty to come out and voice their concerns before our elected representatives. The work of USS members does not end with the events we spoke about earlier. This work continues. Members have to go to city hall and continue our advocacy.

### USS Scholarship Update

Payment distribution for USS Scholarships has been paid off for those who won the scholarship last year. There are a few students who have not been paid because there were students who transferred to a different campus and those students have had their scholarships delayed. The funding of these scholarships is administered by the CUNY budget office and the Office of Student Affairs.

Steering Committee members have been visiting various campuses to table, advocate, and show a presence on behalf of USS.

### USS Communicationsd online

Members had a brief discussion about the tone and communication that has happened recently within USS chat groups. Chairperson Doumbouya emphasized that there is no place within this university for cyber bullying. If a member has been inappropriate online, please know that it will be reported to the appropriate body.

### **A. Steering Committee Update**

*Vice Chair for Graduate Student Affairs, Tinnycua Williams*

VC Williams began by recognizing the CUNY School of Labor and Urban Studies, because they are doing an amazing job. VC Williams recently had the opportunity to tour the campus and meet with the Office of Student Affairs representatives and see some of the constituents that attend the school of labor. She was impressed with the work the student leaders are doing and wanted to take a moment to recognize their hard work. VC Williams also recognized the delegation from her campus, the great City College of New York, for partnering with her during the lead up to March and March. Special thank you to the undergraduate members at City College because they did a great job of leading outreach efforts for March in March at City College.

In terms of academic affairs, VC reported that they recently hosted the first advisory board meeting for online education. VC Williams implored members to lend their testimony to the discussion about the building of online education at CUNY. Brightspace will be the new platform for CUNY online classes, and it is important that members contribute to this platform.

*Vice Chair for Senior College Affairs, Kayla Aaron*

VC Aaron began by congratulating Baruch College on winning the CUNY Athletic Conference for Men's Basketball. In the spirit of celebrating basketball, VC Aaron reached out to the NY Liberty WNBA team for a group ticket quote. She will be forwarding that to the events committee so that USS can plan for an event.

VC Aaron attended Higher Education action day. She joined her student government delegation in leading recruitment efforts at Baruch College. She met with legislators.

VC Aaron attended the CUNY Women's Conference. She got an opportunity to meet with important women representatives at CUNY.

Asante Mitchell, who is a former USS delegate, sent VC Aaron a scholarship opportunity to share with everyone. The scholarship is being given by a nonprofit called the Trinidad and Tobago United Cultural Association. This scholarship information will be sent out at a later date.

VC Aaron attended a meeting at Baruch College to discuss Brightspace and building student awareness about the platform. The goal at Baruch will be to spread the word about the intricacies of the platform through video and other means so that students have a clear understanding of the platform functions.

#### *Vice Chair for Technology Affairs, Sojung Park*

VC Park met with the CUNY CIO and his team to discuss the Brightspace migration. The CUNY central team is interested in having as much student input as possible. VC Park encouraged members to email her with thoughts and concerns so that she could relay them to CUNY central team that is designing Brightspace. VC Park did bring up concerns that were discussed at the tech committee, particularly, issues around audit and individual infrastructure at the local level. There is a lot of variances depending on the campus because every campus is so unique. As members encounter issues, please relay them.

Sen. Hanon expressed concern about them saying you should be looking at each individual campuses, tech, the budgets individually, on your own kind of concerns me, given that when it comes to the budget, submitted to the CUNY central anyway, so pretty have all this information essentially, on file. So the fact that they're trying to tell you get it individually, when they have it on file makes me question, are they really trying to come up with us? Are they just not want to help us?

Sen. Davila stated that the adaptation of tech, the policy, the infrastructure, that adjuncts need to be trained and that those things need to roll out in a way that considers the labor the adjuncts have to contribute. From meetings at the campus, adjuncts have expressed their concern about the university asking adjuncts to do this work without compensation.

Sen. Hanon echoed those concerns and mentioned that full time faculty are paid for providing these kinds of services. Adjuncts, on the other hand, are being asked to do more with less compensation.

VC Williams noted that she empathizes with adjunct faculty and their struggle to be recognized and compensated because she is a graduate student and knows the issues well. The unfortunate part is that the students will be the ones who will have to deal with the consequences of the

internal battle surrounding Brightspace. So it is important in this discussion to remember that students are the ones who will be affected.

*Vice Chair for Fiscal Affairs, Antoinette Wearing*

VC Wearing reported on co-sponsorships and the process. The traffic for co-sponsorships will be directed through the USS website. The fiscal committee will be looking to meet again soon. Lastly, VC Wearing is recruiting members for the scholarship committee. She encouraged members to sign up because your assistance is important.

## **V. OLD BUSINESS**

Sen. Hernandez motioned to ratify the resolution for the Suicide Prevention Act.

Sen. Hanon stated the individuals sponsoring this resolution individually emailed a lot of different student governments and didn't really give any indication about how to follow up with them or any indication about what exactly is being agreed to because the language is currently still ambiguous—in terms of what's being requested on the bill. On important things like training, the representatives were still unclear about what that would look like.

Sen. Hernandez, stated that he was at the meeting where his delegation, the Baruch College Student Government, adopted the resolution unanimously. The reason they adopted the resolution is because they support the message, which is to extend mental health resources in the bill to higher education. Sen. Hernandez stated that this will strengthen our partnership with our counterparts at SUNY because they are behind this resolution as well.

Sen. Davila acknowledged that the language in the resolution seems good. But he must disagree with the resolution. Sen. Davila stated this resolution is a road to nowhere. CUNY does not have the infrastructure for mental health services. Sen. Davila mentioned that he is speaking from experience. The university had nowhere to refer him when he sought out services.

VC Barron stated that the resolution was brought before the student government at Queens College. He was misinformed by the sponsors of the resolution because they told him the resolution was adopted by the student governments that have not in actuality adopted the resolution. VC Barron explained that after pushing back on the request he was encouraged to sign on to the resolution in his capacity as Student Government President, and he saw similar request of his counterparts. This kind of outreach for support was harassing and one of the reasons he is not supporting the resolution.

VC Wearing spoke about the fact that she received an email from the sponsors and with a summary of the bill but not the bill text from the bill. The sponsors did not ask for feedback and input. It was more of a request to sign on to something and not a request to collaborate on an initiative.

Sen. Davila stated that the data that was presented within the resolution was outdated. The data used in the resolution was from 2018 and the reliability of the data could be brought into question.

Sen. Gregory also noted that they will not be able to support the resolution. They, however, would like USS to perhaps work on our own resolution around suicide prevention. This is clearly

a good initiative and USS should take on the same mission and remove some of the distractions that members are expressing concerns about.

The motion to pass the resolution failed by a hand vote: {4 yes, 12 No, 19 Abstentions}.

Sen. Davila brought up the issue of adjuncts. VC Williams noted that the Committee on Academic Affairs will be discussing the matter at their next meeting.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

**VII. ELECTIONS OF VICE CHAIRS**

USSERC Chair Joseph Awadjie made a series of announcements about the election procedures, which will happen using an online voting platform. USSERC agreed to conduct three rounds of voting before the elections.

**A. ROUND 1:**

**Election for Vice Chair for Legislative Affairs:**

Votes for Sen. Joseph Hernandez: 22

Abstain: 12

**Election for Vice Chair for Disability Affairs:**

Votes for Sen. Falana Fray: 32 (Congratulations! Sen. Fray was elected to the position)

Abstain: 2

**B. ROUND 2**

**Election for Vice Chair for Legislative Affairs:**

Votes for Sen. Joseph Hernandez: 24

Abstain: 9

**C. ROUND 3**

**Election for Vice Chair for Legislative Affairs:**

Votes for Sen. Joseph Hernandez: 29 (Congratulations! Sen. Hernandez was elected to the position)

Abstain: 5

USSERC Chair Awadjie stated at the end of the third round that USSERC received a verbal complaint about election irregularities after the third round of voting. They will await a written complaint and address the matter later.

**VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Professor Hernandez announced that his understanding of the PSC contract as it relates to adjuncts, there are now paid office hours for adjunct. Specifically, one hour per class. There is also some concerns about academic freedom as it relates to the implementation of Brightspace.

Sen. Hanon announced that the CUNY Office of Academic Affairs is proposing bylaw amendment to the CUNY Bylaws. They are proposing to change course sizes to increase course sizes to reduce the CUNY budget. When the administration is amending the Bylaws, we have to be careful because this can open up the window for further amendments.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

Sen. Fernandez motions to adjourn the meeting, the motion received numerous seconds. Motion passes unanimously. The meeting is adjourned at 3:54 PM.

DRAFT