MINUTES OF THE PLENARY MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENATE OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

HELD

NOVEMBER 20, 2011

AT JOHN JAY COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE—BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 1:15 P.M.

There were present:

2011-2012 Delegates & Alternates:
Antonio Alfonso (Baruch College First Delegate)
Chris Catalano (Baruch College Second Delegate)
Jermaine Morris (Borough of Manhattan Community College First Delegate)
Tricia Warren (Bronx Community College First Delegate)
Eric Sutton (Bronx Community College Second Delegate)
Charles Harding (Bronx Community College Second Alternate)
    Megan Henry (Brooklyn College First Delegate)
    Anthony Cordero (Brooklyn College First Alternate)
    Kafui Kouakou (Brooklyn College Graduate Delegate)
    Hannah-Sophie Wahle (City College First Delegate)
    Muhammad Waqar Arshad (City College Second Delegate)
    Irene Castro (City College Graduate Delegate)
    Kimberly Cervantes (Hostos Community College First Delegate)
    Sandra May Flowers (Hostos Community College Second Delegate)
    Maya Shkolnik (Hunter College First Delegate)
    Rachel Fine (Hunter College Graduate Delegate)
    Jeffrey Aikens (John Jay College Graduate Delegate)
    Atiba Yarde (Kingsborough Community College First Delegate)
    Jennifer Fernandez (Kingsborough Community College Second Alternate)
    Mohammed Samra (LaGuardia Community College Second Delegate)
    Brandon Clarke (LaGuardia Community College First Alternate)
    Olu Onemola (Lehman College First Delegate)
    Ibrahima Souare (Lehman College Second Delegate)
    Samantha Campbell (Medgar Evers College Second Delegate)
    Beatrix Boisette (Medgar Evers College First Alternate)
Zeeshan Saroya (New York City College of Technology First Delegate)
Liliete Lopez (Queens College Second Delegate)
James Robinson (Queens College First Alternate)
Peter Trojan (Queens College Second Delegate)
Oluwadamisi Atanda (Queensborough Community College First Delegate)
Elizabeth Che (College of Staten Island Second Delegate)
Steven McCartney (York College First Delegate)
Zahir Azad (York College Second Delegate)
Christina Nadler (CUNY Graduate Center Delegate)
Colin Ashley (CUNY Graduate Center Alternate)
Carolyn Fakury (CUNY Law Delegate)

Office of Student Affairs:
Dr. Christopher Rosa, Dean of Student Affairs
Charmaigne Worthy, University Coordinator of Student Activities

University Student Senate:
Okenfe Lebarty, Executive Director
Fernando Araujo, Budget Director
Cruz Garcia, Executive Secretary
Kareem Morales, Project Coordinator

Student Election Review Committee (SERC)
Dr. Christopher Rosa, Chairperson
Melissa Kirk, Director for Student Life at Bronx C.C
Daniel Simmonette, Associate General Counsel for Legal Affairs
Natina Smith-McKessey, student rep. from Medgar Evers College

I. Roll Call
With 29 voting members present, a quorum is established and the agenda is initiated. Meeting is called to order at 1:10 PM. (Sen. Campbell and Sen. Boisette came to the meeting after the call of the roll)

II. Approval of the Agenda
   I. Roll Call
   II. Approval of the Agenda
   III. Approval of the Minutes
   IV. Report of the Chairperson
   V. Runoff Elections
   VI. Parliamentarian
   VII. Resolution on December 10th Rally
   VIII. Announcement
   IX. Adjournment

The above agenda was amended. Prior to an amendment by Sen. Clarke, the elections were to take place further down on the agenda, before the announcements.

Chairperson informs the delegation that we will have a conversation about the use of the USS Listserv during the announcements section.
Sen. Robinson motions for the approval of the agenda; Sen. Lopez seconds the motion. The motion carries unanimously (29 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions).

**III. Approval of the Minutes**
The minutes of the October 16, 2011 plenary session are presented to the delegation for approval.

Senator Robinson moves to approve the minutes with the appropriate grammatical corrections; Senator Onemola seconds the motion.

The motion carries unanimously (29 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions).

**IV. Report Chairperson**
Chairman briefs the delegation on a series of meetings he has been having with members of the CUNY chancellery. He is excited about the support that he has received. Vice Chancellor Sanchez and Vice Chancellor Hershenson have pledged to assist USS with our agenda this year.

In an effort to mitigate any confusion about the future plenary meeting dates, Chairman Kouakou presents the plenary with the following meeting dates for their approval:

- December 18, 2011
- January 29, 2012
- February 26, 2012
- March 25, 2012
- April 21, 2012
- May 27, 2012

Sen. Robinson moves to approve the meeting dates as presented; Sen. Morris seconds the motion.
The motion carries (28 Yes, 0 No, 1 Abstentions).

**V. Runoff Elections**
Dean Rosa begins with some introductory remarks on the regulations and procedures of the elections process. Candidates will have to receive a minimum of 23 votes to win an election. Failure to reach this threshold will result in additional runoff elections, until a candidate reaches the mark.

**USS Officers Elections**

1ST RUNOFF ELECTION (31 votes cast)

**Elections for Vice Chair for Legislative Affairs**
Steven McCartney (10)
Antonio Alfonso (18)
Abstentions (3)

No candidate is elected. There will be a runoff for this position.
Elections for Vice Chair for International Student Affairs
Annmarie Schrout-Gayle (17)
Charles Harding (14)

No candidate is elected. There will be a runoff for this position.

After the vote, Sen. McCartney announces that he will withdraw his candidacy in the interest of moving this body towards electing a candidate in a timely fashion. He expresses his gratitude for the support he has received and wishes Sen. Alfonso the best.

2nd RUNOFF ELECTION (31 votes cast)

Elections for Vice Chair for Legislative Affairs
Antonio Alfonso (26)
Abstentions (5)

Antonio Alfonso is elected Vice Chair for Legislative Affairs of the University Student Senate. Congratulations!

Elections for Vice Chair for International Student Affairs
Annmarie Schrout-Gayle (15)
Charles Harding (16)

No candidate is elected. There will be a runoff for this position.

3rd RUNOFF ELECTION (27 votes cast)

Elections for Vice Chair for International Student Affairs
Annmarie Schrout-Gayle (12)
Charles Harding (16)
Abstentions (1)

No candidate is elected. There will be a runoff for this position.

Dean Rosa announces that SERC has concluded that is best that no further runoff elections take place during this meeting. Inasmuch as no candidate received the majority of the votes for the office Vice Chair for International Affairs, further run-off Elections for said office will be determined at the next regularly scheduled meeting of USS.

VI. Parliamentarian
Chairperson Kouakou would like the body to consider Sen. Olu Omenala for the position of USS Parliamentarian. After some inquiries, Sen. Kouakou explains that the parliamentarian will be responsible for mediating disagreements about the proceedings of our plenary sessions. He is to appeal to Robert Rules of Order, the USS constitution, and any other governing documents in advising the USS body.

Sen. Cervantes moves to approve Sen. Onemola as USS Parliamentarian; Sen. Flowers seconds the motion.

The motion carries (27 Yes, 0 No, 1 Abstentions).
VII. Resolution on December 10th Rally

Chairman Kouakou yields the floor to Director Lebarty so that he can brief the body on the purpose and history of the march.

Sen. Clarke speaks about the importance of this resolution. He provides the body with a brief account of the trend of voter suppression going on throughout the country. All people are being affected.

Sen. Robinson suggests that we should draft a resolution that not only speaks about the suppression of young people because all people are being affected by these tactics.

Sen. Shkolnik inquires about the whether we would be providing financial support. Director Lebarty says that they are only seeking an endorsement of support so that USS will be listed as one of the supporters and participants in the march.

Sen. Alfonso makes a motion to approve the following resolution:

*Resolution Endorsing the Stand For Freedom Platform*

WHEREAS, the Stand For Freedom movement is in opposition to anti-voting measures being enacted throughout the country; and

WHEREAS, USS, represents a wide demographic of voters;

THERFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, that USS supports the Stand For Freedom platform as a movement; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that we ask that the focus not be limited to only young voter but, in fact, all citizens of voting eligibility.

Sen. Samra seconds the motion to approve.

The motion carries (27 Yes, 0 No, 1 Abstentions).

VIII. Announcements

Sen. Fine believes that a workshop on decorum and communications can help ameliorate the tone of the conversations on the Listserv.

Sen. Cervantes expresses disgust with the dialogues she has witnessed in the forum.

Sen. Nadler says that not all of the e-mails that have been deemed hostile fit that category. People should be able to express dissent or make inquiries.

Sen. Ashley speaks about how healthy and important dissent. We should be careful not to devalue the opinion of our members. We represent a wide group all voices are important. Sen. Clarke speaks about the importance of thinking about tonality in conversations. Ad-hominem attacks have no place in this forum, but all civil disagreement is welcomed.
Sen. Nadler inquires about what the forum is supposed to be used for. She believes that if were to come to some agreement on what we should use it for, then perhaps we could come to some agreement on how to regulate it.

Chairman Kouakou says that historically the members make of the Listserv what they see fit. There is no manual on what it is supposed to be used for. It is simply a forum for electronic communications.

Sen. Robinson offers an apology for his contributions to the unhealthy debate on the listserv. He vows to make a conscious effort to communicate in a more civil tone.

Sen. Onemola motions to create a committee to create guidelines on the use of the listserv; Sen. Atanda seconds the motion.

Many members express concern about the policing of people’s opinions. Sen. Fakury believes that we should just act like adults.

Motion fails (6 yes, 11 no, 11 abstentions)

There is general agreement the level of discourse needs to be elevated and that this task is the task of delegates as individuals. Chairman Kouakou believes that this conversation alone will be helpful in changing the way we communicate.

IX. Adjournment

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the University Student Senate Plenary session was adjourned at 3:50 PM.

Kafui Kouakou

Fernando Araujo