



Office of the 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**

**JUNE 09, 2016**

**AT CENTRAL OFFICE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS CONFERENCE ROOM  
AT 555 WEST 57<sup>TH</sup> STREET—BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN**

There were present:

**USS Steering Members:**

Joseph Awadjie, Chairperson  
Shirley Jackson, Vice Chair for Graduate Affairs  
Japneet Singh, Vice Chair for Senior College Affairs  
Nicholas Asamoah, Vice Chair for Community College Affairs  
Dexter Robers, Vice Chair for Disability Affairs  
Katherine Gutierrez Rios, Vice for International Student Affairs  
Taisha Pagan, Vice Chair for Part-time and Evening Affairs  
Sandra Okeke, Vice Chair for Technology Fee Affairs  
Zulfiqar Soomro, Vice Chair for Fiscal Affairs

**University Student Senate Staff:**

Fernando Araujo, Executive Director  
Lucas Almonte

**Guest:**

Melissa Carreño, Former VC for Disability Affairs

**I. Roll Call**

With 8 voting members present, a quorum was established. Chairman Awadjie called the meeting to order at 6:10 PM.

**II. Approval of the Agenda**

- I. Roll Call
- II. Approval of the Agenda
- III. Approval of the April 01, 2016 Minutes
- IV. Chair's Report
  - CUNY in the Arts
  - Meeting with the University Treasurer Office
  - Kalief Browder Memorial Scholarship Update
  - Voter Advocacy Date
  - Dates for Future Steering Committee Meetings

- BOT Public Hearing
- V. Resolution of Commendation for Supporters
- VI. Resolution Supporting Voting Reform Bills
- VII. CUNY's Got Talent Show Proposal
- VIII. Disability Conference Proposal
- IX. Announcements
- X. Adjournment

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

### **III. Approval of the April 1, 2016 Minutes**

VC Roberts motioned to approve the April 1, 2016 minutes; the motion was seconded by VC Gutierrez. The motion carried unanimously: {8 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions}.

### **IV. Chair's Report**

Chairman Awadjie reported on a meeting he and Director Araujo had with the University Treasurer's Office. He was informed at the meeting that the budget office will conduct audits for the previous 3 fiscal years. The University Treasurer, Thomas Zhou, suggested that USS earmark funding to pay for said audits. Also, there appears to be a gap between the collected USS fees and the projected USS fee. This gap appears to have been caused by a growing number of students that are being exempted from paying student activities due to the fact that they are part of a program that waves their fees. The UTO will be investigating the matter more closely.

Note: VC Okeke joined the meeting at 6:20.

Chairman Awadjie reported that it would be great for USS to be involved in promoting the CUNY in the Arts initiative. This program, which is ran by the central office, provides CUNY students with opportunities to enjoy and learn from cultural institutions. There will also be opportunities for employment, internships, and other professional opportunities. More information will be disseminated to the delegation as it rolls in.

Chairman Awadjie yields the floor to Director Araujo to give an update on the Kalief Browder Memorial Scholarship. Director Araujo reports the committee for the scholarship was thankful for the suggestions and input USS has provided. There will be 3 students on the committee; the scholarship will target full-time students; the student who receives the scholarship will get \$5,000 to help cover two semesters of their study.

Chairman Awadjie yields the floor to Director Almonte to discuss the upcoming Voter Advocacy Day initiative. The event is scheduled for the May 3, 2016. The goal is to take 50 CUNY students to meet with legislators in Albany.

Chairman Awadjie announced that there will be a doodle set up to coordinate future meeting dates.

Chairman Awadjie introduced two resolutions that will be on the agenda for the April USS Pleanary meeting: a Resolution of Commendation and a Resolution Supporting Voting Reform Bills. (see below).

## V. Resolution of Commendation

### UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENATE RESOLUTION OF COMMENDATION

APRIL 15, 2016

#### UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE

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WHEREAS, On May 3, 2015, the University Student Senate (USS) of the City University of New York (CUNY) unanimously adopted a resolution calling for a tuition freeze and a genuine maintenance of effort (MOE) bill; and

WHEREAS, Following the adopting of the resolution, the CUNY USS campaigned for a tuition freeze at CUNY; and

WHEREAS, On April 1, 2016, the state legislature adopted the state's Fiscal Year (FY) 2016-17 budget, which included a provision freezing tuition at CUNY for the academic year and fully restored the proposed \$485 million funding shift; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That on this seventeenth day of April, 2016, the members of the CUNY University Student Senate do hereby highly commend and offer our deepest appreciation to the state legislators and Governor Andrew M. Cuomo for adopting a state budget that freezes tuition rates at CUNY for FY 2016-17; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the members of the CUNY University Student Senate offer a special acknowledgement for supporting our rally and march across the Brooklyn Bridge on March 13, 2016 to:

Assembly Member Charles Barron  
Assembly Member Rodneyse Bichotte  
Assembly Member Michael Blake  
Assembly Member Richard Gottfried  
Assembly Member Diana Richardson  
Assembly Member Jo Anne Simon  
Assembly Member Latrice Walker  
New York City Council Black, Latino, and Asian Caucus  
Councilwoman Inez Barron  
Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams  
Brooklyn Deputy Borough President Diana Reyna  
Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer  
Manhattan Deputy Borough President Aldrin Bonilla  
CUNY Professional Staff Congress  
United Students Against Sweatshops

## VI. Resolution Supporting Voting Reform Bills

### UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENATE RESOLUTION SUPPORTING VOTING REFORM BILLS

APRIL 15, 2016

#### UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENATE STEERING COMMITTEE

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WHEREAS, New York faces a voter participation crisis; and

WHEREAS, Nearly two million voting age citizens in our state are not registered to vote, and New York consistently ranks near the bottom in voter turnout<sup>1</sup>; and

WHEREAS, In 2014, just 20% of New York's voting age citizens voted—46th in the nation<sup>2</sup>; and

WHEREAS, We need fundamental change to make the way we vote reflect the way we live our lives today; and

WHEREAS, On May 3, 2016, Vote Better NY, a coalition of advocacy organizations, will host the second annual Voter Advocacy Day in Albany, New York to advocate for three bills currently introduced in the state legislature; and

WHEREAS, The Early Voting Act ([A8582/S3813A](#)) New Yorkers would establish a two-week early voting period including Saturdays and Sundays to ease long lines on Election Day and give voters flexibility as they juggle work and family obligations; and

WHEREAS, The Voter Empowerment Act ([A5972/S2538A](#)) would:

- Make it the government's responsibility to ensure that every citizen who wants to be registered is a registered voter;
- Allow agencies who interact with voters to automatically register them with the Board of Elections—unless a voter opts out;
- Expand online registration, so that more people can register and update their information online;
- Update a voter's registration automatically if he or she moves within the state.

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<sup>1</sup>New York City Campaign Finance Board, "Voter Day Fact Sheet," 2. Nov. 2015. Web. Available at: [https://www.nycfb.info/PDF/nyc\\_votes/VoterDayFactSheet.pdf](https://www.nycfb.info/PDF/nyc_votes/VoterDayFactSheet.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> See *id.*

- Allows 16- and 17-year-olds to preregister so that their registrations turn active once they turn 18;
- Create an Election Day failsafe for voters who show up at the polls to find they are not registered, so they will be able to cast a regular ballot;

WHEREAS, the Voter Friendly Ballot Act ([A3389](#)) would create a ballot that is easier to read and understand so that every voter can cast a ballot that counts, by setting clear requirements for how ballots should look; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the University Student Senate (USS) of the City University of New York (CUNY) hereby support Early Voting Act ([A8582/S3813A](#)), the Voter Empowerment Act ([A5972/S2538A](#)), and the Voter Friendly Ballot Act ([A3389](#)).

## VII. CUNY' Got Talent Proposal

### UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENATE

#### FUNDING PROPOSAL: CUNY'S GOT TALENT 2016

APRIL 15, 2016

TO THE USS STEERING COMMITTEE

#### Overview of CUNY's Got Talent

CUNY's got talent is a show that aims at promoting the talents of CUNY students. Most CUNY schools will send one act to the show and approximately 500 students will attend.

#### BUDGET BREAKDOWN

2016 C.U.N.Y Got Talent Budget	Unit Amount	Price / Quote	
Event Coordinator / Backstage Manager - Kato McKessey {\$1,200.00} / Keri Franklin {\$200.00}	1	\$1,400.00	
Videographer/Editing Staff/Services - Brandon Kelly	1	\$2,500.00	
Photographer - Jose Dessources	1	\$375.00	
Male Host - Jason Negron {\$500.00} / Tawasi Clarke {\$500.00}	2	\$1,000.00	
Female CUNY Student Host - Danielle James	1	\$250.00	
Graphics Design - Christopher Khan	1	\$650.00	

Online/New Media Coordinator - Moses Merisier	2	\$731.50	<b>\$350.00 per week + {4.5% State Tax} \$31.50</b>
DJ / Sound Engineer - Tawasi Clarke/DJ Official Vibez	1	\$1,700.00	
Lighting Designer- Stephen Petrilli	1	\$1,200.00	
Photo Booth Guy - Kenneth Vargas		\$600.00	
Venue-Hunter College		\$4,276.71	
Trophies (1st, 2nd, 3rd place)	3	-	
Food {for Backstage - Performers / Event Staff / Judges / Hosts / DJ / Camera Crew }			
Judge #1 - Robyn Green	-	Free	
Judge #2 - Zeeshan Saroya	-	Free	
Judge #3 - Shirley Jackson	-	Free	
Judge #4 - MCU Representative	-	Free	
Judge #5 - VC Sanchez will Provide	-	Free	
Miscellaneous Expenses		\$3,000	
<b>Total Event Budget:</b>		<b>\$17,683.21</b>	

VC Roberts motioned to approve the \$17,683.21 CUNY's Got Talent proposal; the motion was seconded by VC Gutierrez. The motion carried unanimously: {9 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions}.

## VIII. USS Disability Conference

UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENATE  
FUNDING PROPOSAL: Disability Conference  
APRIL 15, 2016  
TO THE USS STEERING COMMITTEE

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USS Differently Able Conference Buliding Bridges Together

Give aways

Item	Price	Qty	Setup Fee	Shipping	Total Cost
Tshirt	\$5.50	150	35	39	\$899.00
Hoddies	\$12.49	50	35	34	\$693.50
Pens	\$0.71	250	45	29	\$251.50
USB	\$4.79	200	44	37	\$1,039.00
Umberlla	\$7.52	100	62	98	\$912.00
Notebook	\$2.79	200	45	98	\$701.00
Raffels	Tablets, gift cards				\$600.00
					\$0.00
	Breakfast				
Food	And Lunch				\$5,000.00
Contigency	Misc.				\$1,000.00
Raffel					\$0.00
					\$0.00
Honnary gifts					\$1,000.00
					\$0.00
Total					\$12,096.00

VC Jackson motioned to approve \$12,096.00 in funding for the USS Disability Conference; the motion was seconded by VC Gutierrez. The motion carried unanimously: {9 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions}.

**IX. Announcements**

There were no announcements.

**X. Adjournment**

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, this University Student Senate Steering Committee meeting was adjourned at 6:40 P.M.

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Chairperson,  
Joseph Awadjie

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Recording Secretary,  
Fernando Araujo