

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

**HELD**

**FEBRUARY 20, 2015**

**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  
Nicole Ponzio, Vice Chair for Graduate Affairs  
Eber Blanco, Vice Chair for Community College Affairs  
Melissa Carreño, Vice Chair for Disability Affairs  
Emelyn Fernandez de Guzman, Vice for International Student Affairs  
Claudia Wald, Vice Chair for Technology Fee Affairs  
Lauren Crawford, Vice Chair for Part-time and Evening Affairs  
Donavan Borington, Vice Chair for Fiscal Affairs

**University Student Senate Staff:**

Fernando Araujo, Executive Director  
Robert Agyemang, Legislative Director  
Cruz Garcia, Budget Director

**I. Roll Call**

With 8 voting members present, a quorum was established. Chairman Awadjie called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM.

**II. Approval of the Agenda**

- I. Roll Call
- II. Approval of the Agenda
- III. Approval of the January 23, 2015 Minutes
- IV. Chairperson's Report
- V. Budget Modification
- VI. Funding Proposals
  - Somos el Futuro
  - Co-sponsorship Form
  - Disability Conference
- VII. Vice Chair's Report
- VIII. Announcements
- IX. Adjournment

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

### **III. Approval of the Minutes of January 23, 2014**

VC Wald motioned to approve the Minutes of January 23, 2015 with minor amendments; the motion was seconded by VC Borington. The motion carried unanimously: {8 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions}.

### **IV. Chairperson's Report**

Chairman Awadje reported that he has been in contact with the York College administration to see if a collaboration with York is possible for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of "Bloody Sunday" in Selma.

Chairman Awadje thanked all the members of the Steering Committee for their participation in the New York State Black, Puerto Rican, and Asian Legislative Conference. The conference was a major success. All of our students enjoyed themselves and they got a chance to network and learn from the conference.

Chairman Awadje reported that he has been in communications with the CUNY Office of City Relations in reference to an upcoming hearing with the New York City Council. Chairman Awadje stated that he will testify at this hearing on March 6, 2015 with respect to the upcoming city budget.

Chairman Awadje announced that USS members will be joining him at the Inauguration of Assemblywoman Seawright.

Chairman Awadje announced that he and other members of the Steering Committee met with the SUNY Assembly to discuss avenues of partnership in the near future.

## V. Budget Modification

VC Borington introduced USS.F.RES.5, which is a budget modification at allocating more funding for the Travel Line. (See attached resolution).

### USS. F. RES. 5

#### BUDGET MODIFICATION

February 20, 2015

Vice Chair for Fiscal Affairs Donavan Borington

Submitted to University Student Senate Steering Committee.

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WHEREAS, USS has allocated funding to support travel for conferences, seminars and advocacy events; and

WHEREAS, the USS Steering Committee has agreed to invite more students to participate in events that require travel outside of the New York City and New York State; and

WHEREAS, this would require more funding to be allocated to the USS Budget Travel line item 6900 to support this request; and

WHEREAS, this additional funding shall be transfer from line items 7400,7401, and 8100 within the USS Budget; and be it

RESOLVED, \$8,500 from line 7400, \$6,300 from line 7401 and \$7,500 from line 8100 be transferred to line 6900 totaling an amount not to exceed \$22,300.

Below is a breakdown of the lines modified by USS. F. RES. 5

Line Item #	Description	FY15 Approved	Modification	FY2015 after modification
7400	Conferences & Seminars	\$85,000.00	(\$8,500)	\$76,500.00
7401	Cultural Activities & Special Events	\$63,539.84	(\$6,300)	\$57,239.84
8100	Standing Committee	\$75,000.00	(\$7,500)	\$67,500.00
	<b>Total Transfer</b>		<b>\$22,300.00</b>	
6900	Travel	\$15,000	\$22,300.00	<b>\$37,300.00</b>

VC Borington motioned to approve the budget modification entitled USS.F.RES.5; the motion was seconded by VC Ponzio. The motion carried unanimously: {8 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions}.

## **VI. Funding Proposals**

### **Somos el Futuro: USS.F.RES.6.**

Director Araujo presented a proposal for the funding of the Somos el Futuro Legislative Conference. He also gives an overview of the programming for the conference. (See attached proposal).

### **USS. F. RES. 6**

## **SOMOS EL FUTURO LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE FUNDING PROPOSAL**

**February 20, 2015**

**Executive Director Fernando Araujo**

**Submitted to University Student Senate Steering Committee.**

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### **1. About the Somos el Futuro Legislative Conference**

#### **The Somos el Futuro Spring 2015 Conference (From the website)**

The Somos el Futuro Spring 2015 Conference is approaching fast. This event serves as a platform for legislators, scholars, business and labor leaders to address issues that impact the Hispanic community. The funds collected from the conference will benefit the Somos el Futuro Hispanic Leadership Institute. The HLI's programs aim to create opportunities for the Hispanic youth of New York State that will facilitate their professional development, growth, and future success.

The conference will begin Friday March 20th through Sunday the 22nd at the Empire State Convention Center in Albany.

#### **Task Force History**

New York State began to elect Hispanics to political office as early as 1937 with the election of Oscar Garcia Rivera to the New York State Assembly. Unfortunately, he only served for three years and it took 13 more years before we saw another Latino in the state legislature. Thereafter, Latinos were elected to the state legislature sporadically and it was not until the late 1970's that we saw five or more Latinos serving in the State Legislature at the same time. Nonetheless, the Hispanic population in New York State was steadily growing. In 1970 Hispanics made up 8% of the overall state population.

By 1980 the Hispanic population had grown to 11.4% and in 1990 it was at 12.3%. In twenty years, (approximately one human generation) the Hispanic population has grown by approximately one million people. Hispanics in New York State were primarily of Puerto Rican descent although there are many other Hispanics that have migrated and/or immigrated to New York. In fact, all Hispanics elected to the State Legislature were of Puerto Rican descent until 1997, when we elected our first Dominican Assemblyman.

By the mid 1980's there were approximately 2 million Hispanics in the State and over one million were Puerto Rican. At that time at least 80% of the Hispanic population was from the downstate area and could be found mostly in New York City. It was during this time that Assemblymen Hector Diaz and Angelo Del Toro met with the speaker of the Assembly, Stanley Fink, to begin to discuss the creation of an official legislative body that would focus on the needs and concerns of the State's growing Hispanic community.

In December of 1986 the Assembly elected a new speaker, Mel Miller. At this time Assemblyman Vito Lopez had been elected to office and he joined Diaz and Del Toro in their quest to create a Latino caucus. Their intent was supported by Assemblyman Jose Serrano and longtime community activist and Assemblyman Jose Rivera. Shortly thereafter, Assemblyman Herman Farrell Jr. joined their crusade along with newly elected member Israel Martinez. They met with Speaker Miller to discuss and negotiate the best way to create such a legislative body.

They were advised to develop the empirical evidence necessary to demonstrate that Latinos were underrepresented in government and had unique needs that were not being met by contemporary legislative committees, commissions, caucuses or task forces.

The legislative session in 1987 began with a very enthusiastic agenda for the Hispanic members of the State Legislature, the potential creation of a Puerto Rican Hispanic caucus. They began collecting data about Latinos that would help convince the legislature that a caucus was necessary. The effort appeared to be focused in the Assembly, because they had more Latinos members than the State Senate. In fact, there were only two Latinos elected to the State Senate in the mid 1980's, Olga Mendez and Israel Ruiz. They concurred with the opinions of their colleagues in the Assembly and joined in the effort to create a legislative body in both houses that would focus on Latino issues in New York State. They began meeting on a regular basis and dedicated many sleepless nights and weekends to developing lobbying strategies and presentation techniques that would help them effectively introduce this information.

Before the 1987 legislative session closed their arduous work along with their passion, professional and personal commitment to the Hispanic community resulted in the creation of the New York State Assembly and Senate Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force. It was created and distinguished from the Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus, for its intent was that it would be agenda driven (of course agenda was a Hispanic agenda for New York State). Thus, membership was not limited to Latino elected officials but was determined by the demographics of the respective districts. If 20% or more of the constituents of an Assembly or Senate district are Hispanic, the Assembly person or Senator are automatically eligible to be a member of the Task Force. The New York State Assembly allocated \$1 million to the Task Force and by 1988 the first Somos Uno annual weekend conference was held in Albany, New York, the following year the conference name was changed to Somos El Futuro, and since 2008 it has been simply SOMOS.

Today there are 59 members in the Assembly and 16 in the Senate. The Latino members are the Executive Members and they drive the agenda of the Task Force. Currently, of the 17 Executive Members, 12 are in the State Assembly and 5 are in the State Senate. In twenty three years, the Task Force has had five (5) chairs and eight (8) executive directors.

## **2. CUNY goes to Albany**

The City University of New York has been well represented at the Somos el Futuro legislative conference for many years. The CUNY central administration, along with students, faculty, and administration from all the CUNY campuses, will travel to Albany to participate in the 2015 conference. The conference is a two day event and it provides students with the opportunity to network, learn, advocate, and critically engage in professional development.

In addition to the CUNY community, we can expect numerous legislators and dignitaries, companies and organizations, colleges and universities, students and higher education professionals to participate in the legislative conference. The most important event for members of the CUNY community is the CUNY Luncheon, which will be hosted on Saturday, March 21, 2015 at noon. There will be representation from the whole University at this event. All members of the USS delegation will be required to attend the luncheon.

In 2014, for the 2014 Somos el Futuro Legislative Conference, USS teamed up with the organizers during the conference. CUNY students assisted conference organizers, legislators, and panelist throughout the weekend. Many students assisted with the workshops and seminars. USS will continue this partnership with the Somos organizers during the 2015 conference. This opportunity further engages our students and provides them with the opportunity to work hands on with elected officials and panelist during the seminars and workshops at the conference.

Andres Rivera, Somos el Futuro Executive Director, has agreed to provide all of the 40 USS volunteers with free access to all the events associated with the conference, including the gala. He is also open to having USS host a workshop on an issue that is relevant to students.

### 3. USS Schedule

#### 28TH Annual Somos el Futuro Spring Conference USS Schedule

##### **Friday, March 21, 2014**

USS Departure from NYC to Albany 10am-12pm

@John Jay College

Check In 3:30-4pm

@Ramada Inn

USS Dinner 6-8pm

@Ramada Inn

Welcome Reception 6:30-8:30pm

@ City Hall hosted

NYS Republican Party 8:30-11pm

@Hilton Albany

NYC Council Reception 9-12am

@Hilton Albany

##### **Saturday, March 22, 2014**

Breakfast 6-9am

@ Ramada Inn

Labor Breakfast 8:30-9:45am

@ Heart Lounge

Morning Workshops 9:45-11:45

@Empire State Plaza & LOB

\*CUNY Luncheon 12-1:00pm

@Liberty Lounge

\*USS Workshop 1-2pm

@Well of LOB

Sponsored Receptions 4-5:30pm

@Empire State Plaza

28th Annual Somos El Futuro Gala 7pm

@Empire State Plaza

Post Gala Reception 11pm-2am

@Heart Lounge

##### **Sunday, March 2, 2014**

Breakfast 7-9am

@Ramada Inn

Checkout at Noon

@Ramada Inn

Farewell Reception 1-3pm

- @Heart Lounge (Volunteers will receive recognition certificates)

#### 4. Budget Breakdown

Vendor	Description	Quantity	Cost
Ramada Plaza Hotel	Lodging: Friday (3/20) to Sunday (3/22)	40 rooms	\$8,000
Ramada Plaza Hotel	Dinner: Friday & Saturday Lunch: Monday Breakfast: Complimentary	75 attendees, includes COSA and public safety	\$3,000
Avianna Transportation	Charter Bus to and from Ramada Plaza	2 buses	\$4,700
NYSABPRL Inc.	Gala Tickets at \$250	30 Gala Tickets	\$7,500
Miscellaneous	Unexpected expenses	N/A	\$3,000
Total Expenses			\$26,200

\*these figures are estimates based on current market rates. They may vary slightly. Expenses will not exceed approved amounts.

VC Borington recommends that an additional \$2,000 be added to the miscellaneous expenses for promotional materials for the conference.

VC Borington motioned to approve the Somos el Futuro Legislative Conference Funding Proposal of \$26,200; the motion was seconded by VC Ponzo. The motion carried unanimously: {8 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions}.

## **Students Building this Bridge Together Disability Conference**

VC Carreño presented a proposal for the Students Building this Bridge Together Disability Conference. (See attached proposal). The proposal is titled USS.F.RES.7. VC Carreño reviewed the proposal with the Steering Committee members.

### **USS. F. RES. 7**

## **BUILDING THIS BRIDGE TOGETHER DISABILITY CONFERENCE FUNDING PROPOSAL**

**February 20, 2015**

**Vice Chair for Disability Affairs Melissa Carreño**

**Submitted to University Student Senate Steering Committee.**

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### **Section 1: Basic Information of the Event**

- ❖ Title of the Event: Disabled Nation  
“Students Building Bridges Together”
- ❖ Location: John Jay College Criminal Justice New Building East End Cafeteria
- ❖ Date of the Event: April 9<sup>th</sup> 2015
- ❖ Direct Funding or Event Collaboration Between Departments for the Event: USS & JJAY SGA & CCSD
- ❖ Duration of the Event: 9am – 5Pm hour
- ❖ Estimated number of attendees: 250

### **Section 2: Purpose, Cost, & Collaborations for the Event**

- ❖ Mission Statement: This conference is to educate students, administration and faculty about employment, rights and advocacy for people with disabilities. This will facilitate a student panel to speak about their experiences and accomplishments in bridging the gap created by the social norms. This conference is to open to all CUNY students and will be sponsored by USS in collaboration with John Jay College of Criminal Justice Student Council and CCSD.
- ❖ Target Population (optional): CUNY Students with Disabilities.
- ❖ Prominent Guests:
  - President Travis
  - Vice Chancellor Sanchez
  - Dean Rosa
  - USS Chair Joseph Awadjie
  - \*Board of Trustees
  - Mayors Disability Commissioner
- ❖ Entire Cost of the Event: \$
- ❖ Collaborating Departments, and/or Student Organizations:
  - University Student Senate



- John Jay College of Criminal Justice
- CUNY Coalition of Students with Disabilities
- ❖ List of Shared Costs:
- ❖ University Student Senate – \$5,670
  1. Advertising & Promotion – \$570
    - a. Pins - \$ 80
    - b. Pens - \$90
    - c. Bags - \$400
    - d. Raffle Gift Cards - \$75
  2. MBJ refreshments - \$5,000
    - Contingencies - \$3,000

### **Section 3: Contact Information of the Organization and/or Representative**

- ❖ Person-in-Charge: Melissa Carreno and Grace Agalo-os
- ❖ Information of Collaborators (Name, Department/Organization, E-mail): USS & JJAY SGA & CCSD
- ❖ List of Volunteers during the Event (Names and Duties): CCSD
- ❖ Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_, 2014.

### **Section 4: Details on the Preparation of the Event**

- ❖ Timeline for before the Event:

9:00 am – 10:00 am – Breakfast  
 10:15 am – 11:15 am – ACCESS VR/CUNY Leads Employment & Disability  
 11:30 am – 12:30 pm – NYC Human Rights Commission: Disability Rights in NYC  
 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm – LUNCH  
 1:35 pm – 2:35 pm – GrassRoot Advocacy – Branding yourself as Disability Rights in NYC  
 2:40 pm – 3:15 pm – KEYNOTE SPEAKER  
 3:30 pm – 4:30 pm – Student Panel “Closing the gap between perception and reality”

VC Borington amended the proposal by adding an additional \$2,500 in the contingencies line.

VC Ponzo motioned to approve USS.F.RES.7 for the funding of the Students Building this Bridge Together Disability Conference with a total of \$8, 570; the motion was seconded by VC Borington. The motion carried unanimously: { 8 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions }.

### **Co-sponsorship Form**

VC Borington announced that the co-sponsorship form for 2015 has been updated and is ready for distribution to the local campuses. The form will be available at the USS website.

## **VII. Vice Chair’s Reports**

VC Wald

VC Wald reported that the Title IX workshop she has been working on for the CCNY’s Women’s Leadership Summit is going great. She requested that members attend if time permits.

VC Wald is also working on a public relations effort to deliver safe sex messages to CUNY students. Specifically, the messages will be directed at promoting affirmative consent.

VC Wald has also been in communication with the Graduate Center delegation about the issues they had with the mailing.

VC Ponzo

VC Ponzo has been working with the Graduate Center delegation about their priorities. VC Ponzo explained that for many graduate students at the Graduate Center, because they are adjuncts, their concerns often align

with those of CUNY faculty. Sen. Silvia asked that USS lend support to the Graduate Center. She was not specific in her request for support. VC Ponzo stated that she would like to see USS support in any way that we can. The Steering members agreed.

#### **VIII. Announcements**

There were no announcements.

#### **IX. Adjournment**

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, this University Student Senate Steering Committee meeting was adjourned at 8:15 P.M.

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Chairperson,  
Joseph Awadjie

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Recording Secretary,  
Fernando Araujo