

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

**HELD**

**NOVEMBER 10, 2017**

**AT JOHN JAY COLLEGE CONFERENCE ROOM  
AT 555 WEST 57<sup>TH</sup> STREET—BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN**

**I. ROLL CALL**

There were present:

**Present Steering Committee Members:**

John Aderounmu, Chairperson; Yssed David Tobo, Vice Chair for Legislative Affairs; Cyrille Njikeng, Vice Chair for Graduate Affairs; Jeniffer Fernandez, Vice Chair for Senior College Affairs; Mauricette Gbenenoui, Vice Chair for Community College Affairs; Brandon Clarke, Vice Chair for Part-time and Evening Affairs; Laneika Lyons, Vice Chair for Technology Fee Affairs.

**Absent Steering Committee Members:**

Kawthar Abdullah, Vice Chair for Disability Affairs.

**University Student Senate Staff:**

Fernando Araujo, Executive Director; Donovan Borington, Legislative Director; Cruz Garcia, Budget Director

**Others Present:**

Jasper Diaz, Delegate, Baruch College; Fatime Urice, Delegate, John Jay College; Wali Ullah, Delegate, Bronx Community College

With six members present, Chairperson Aderounmu called the meeting to order at 6:40 PM.

**II. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

- I. Roll Call
- II. Approval of the Agenda
- III. Approval of Minutes
  - A. Minutes of the September 18, 2017 Steering Committee Meeting
  - B. Minutes of the August 21, 2017 Steering Committee Meeting
- IV. Chairperson's Report
- V. Vice Chair's Report
  - A. Vice Chair for Legislative Affairs Report
- VI. USS Committee Appointments

VII. USS Resolution 1718 SC-01: MOE Bill

VIII. USS Budget

IX. Announcements

X. Adjournment

VC Tobo motioned to approve the agenda; Sen. Njikeng seconded the motion. The motion carried: {0 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions}.

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

A. Minutes of the September 18, 2017 Steering Committee Meeting

B. Minutes of the August 21, 2017 Steering Committee Meeting

Sen. Gbenenoui motioned to approve the Minutes of August 21 2017 and September 18, 2017; Sen. Lyons seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously: {0 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions}.

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

Chairperson Aderounmu reported that he delivered a strong statement against the tuition hikes that were proposed at the CUNY Board of Trustees meeting of October 23, 2017. He also gave a statement explaining to the Board that it is important for students to be included in the conversation regarding the CUNY Board of Trustees policy. At the Board of Trustees Student Affairs Committee that followed the Board Meeting, Vice Chancellor Martinez announced that there will be two groups working on the student activity fee policy: a smaller working group and the larger task force that was mandated by the Board.

Chairperson Aderounmu reported that on November 6, 2017, he accompanied former USS Chairperson, Chika Onyejiukwa, at steps of New York City Hall to receive a proclamation from the New York City Council for USS's work surrounding the celebration of the centennial anniversary of women's suffrage in New York State. That same day he also attended the ABNY breakfast with Chancellor Milliken and other members of the Board.

Chairperson Aderounmu reported that he has called for a meeting of the Council of Presidents. The body will convene and student government presidents will be brought up to speed on CUNY related matters and will share ideas and advice for current and future projects.

Chairperson Aderounmu charged USS Steering members with convening meetings with student government presidents and delegates on local campuses as soon as possible. Each school has been assigned to a Vice Chair and the hope is that each will receive an in person visit from a Vice Chair within the Fall semester.

### **V. VICE CHAIR'S REPORT**

A. VICE CHAIR FOR LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS REPORT

### **VI. NOVEMBER PLENARY MEETING**

Chairperson Aderounmu announced that Steering members should take time to carry out their assignments before the November Plenary.

## **VII. USS COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS**

Chairperson Aderounmu announced that after consulting with members of the USS Steering Committee and USS Staff, USS delegates have been appointed to the USS Standing Committees.

## **VIII. USS RESOLUTION 1718 SC-01: MOE BILL**

### **R E S O L U T I O N**

To: Steering Committee, University Student Senate, CUNY  
From: Donavan Borington, USS Legislative Director and Secretary to the Plenary  
Date: November 10, 2017  
Title: Resolution 1718-SC01: Enhanced Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Bill

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WHEREAS, on Sunday, March 12, 2017, City University of New York, University Student Senate (CUNY, USS), the duly elected student government representing the interests of 500,000 CUNY students adopted the [CUNY State Budget Allocation FY2018 Resolution](#), which called on the New York State (NYS) Legislature to adopt bill A00934 (Assembly)/S1596 (Senate), Enhanced Maintenance Of Effort (MOE); and

WHEREAS, the enhanced MOE bill would provide CUNY the necessary state funding each fiscal year to cover mandatory costs such as, but not limited to, collective bargaining, salary increments, fringe benefits and other non-personal service costs such as utility costs, building rentals and other inflationary expenses, which would prevent the necessity for tuition increases and budget gaps; and

WHEREAS, the enhanced MOE bill was amended in both houses, [A00934A](#) (Assembly)/[S1596A](#) (Senate) and on June 20, 2017, the NYS Assembly adopted bill A00934A with [143](#) of the 150 members voting in favor and the NYS Senate adopted bill S1596A with all [63](#) members voting in favor; and

WHEREAS, as of October 23, 2017, the CUNY Administration nor the Board of Trustees has released a statement or adopted a resolution expressing support of the MOE bill and New York State Governor Andrew M. Cuomo has not signed the enhanced MOE bill into law; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that we, the CUNY [USS Steering Committee](#), consisting of the elected officers of USS call on NYS Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to sign the enhanced MOE bill into law; and be it further

RESOLVED, that CUNY USS Steering Committee calls on the CUNY Campus student governments, [USS 2017-2018 Delegation](#), CUNY Administration and Board of Trustees to issue a statement and/or adopt a resolution requesting NYS Governor Andrew M. Cuomo sign the enhanced MOE bill into law to expand access and improve the quality of higher education for all New Yorkers; and be it finally

RESOLVED, that in the event the MOE bill is vetoed by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, CUNY USS calls on the NYS Legislature to enact the MOE into law in accordance with Article IV, Section 7 of the [New York State Constitution](#) (Reconsideration after veto).

Sen. Tobo motioned to approve the USS Resolution 1718 SC-01: MOE Bill; Sen. Njikeng seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously: {0 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions}.

[Date]

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of New York State  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

Thank you for focusing national attention on the need for tuition-free college education, and for funding the first generation of Excelsior Scholarships. Increasingly, as you have said, “A college education is not a luxury – it is an absolute necessity for any chance at economic mobility.” Now you have an opportunity to take the crucial next step toward making New York State the national leader in higher education policy.

The CUNY/SUNY maintenance of effort (M.O.E.) bill (A.934A / S.1596A) will soon come to your desk. As New Yorkers and leaders of community [and faith] organizations, we call on you to sign the bill into law. Doing so would fulfill the promise of Excelsior and ensure academic quality for the two million students who depend on New York’s public university systems each year.

SUNY and CUNY are New York’s most powerful engines of economic mobility. They literally change lives. The landmark study of the effect of a college degree published last year shows that [number of] SUNY and CUNY colleges are among the top ten most effective colleges nationally in enabling graduates to move out of poverty. And the impact of a college education goes beyond the economic, opening doors for students to become engaged in civic and cultural life.

Enrollment in both systems has ballooned over the last decade as more students—especially low-income, minority, rural and first-generation students—have set their sights on a better life and applied for college. Now the Excelsior Scholarship, which is projected

to cover unmet tuition for 23,000 students this year, is driving applications and enrollment even higher.

New York's public university systems need increased investment to meet the growing demand. Their funding has still not recovered from the Great Recession of 2008. CUNY and SUNY need investment to cover basic inflationary costs of personnel, rent, energy, and materials. These mandatory operating costs continue to rise, even as the new leadership of SUNY and CUNY enact efficiency measures. Without adequate state funding, both systems have relied on raising tuition and cutting academic resources to pay for unfunded costs. As a result, SUNY and CUNY students have had to pay more—and borrow more—to attend college. Many have been unable to register for the courses they need in order to stay on track for graduation because budget shortfalls have forced reductions in class offerings.

Current law authorizes tuition increases of up to \$200 per year until 2020-2021, but requires only that the state allocation for the public universities for each of those years be no less than it was in the prior year. The MOE bill, passed with unanimous bi-partisan support in both the Senate and the Assembly, would instead cover the true operating cost increases for SUNY and CUNY.

By signing the MOE you can ensure that our public colleges and universities—and our public teaching hospitals—will have the funding they need. Reliable state investment will allow SUNY and CUNY to manage the growing number of students. It will mean smaller classes, better advisement, and robust student services—all proven to increase rates of on-time graduation. It will boost our economy, strengthen our state and local tax base, modernize our workforce, and make life better for all New Yorkers.

The strongest way for New York State to demonstrate the commitment to higher education you have championed is to invest in the public university systems. Without stable investment in CUNY and SUNY, the vision of higher education you have offered will be undermined. Even in an era of fiscal restraint, no investment is surer than investment in higher education.

On behalf of the [millions/hundreds of thousands] of New Yorkers whom we represent and serve, and who count on SUNY and CUNY, we urge you to sign the maintenance of effort bill.

Signed:  
Organizations, Names, Titles

Sen. Tobo motioned to approve the sign on letter to Governor Cuomo on the Maintenance of Effort legislation; Sen. Njikeng seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously: {0 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions}.

**IX. USS BUDGET**

Cruz Garcia, USS Budget Director, gave an overview of the USS budget. Members reviewed the budget that was adopted last year and the current USS budget.

Please see attached presentation.

**X. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT**

Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, this University Student Senate Steering Committee meeting was adjourned at 8:00 P.M.

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*Chikaodili Onyejiukwa, USS Chairperson*

*Date*

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*Fernando Araujo, Secretary to the USS Plenary*

*Date*