Meeting Minutes of the Governance Council

Wednesday, April 26, 2023

1:30 pm – 3:30 pm; Room 708, Auditorium

Chair: Glen Johnson

1. **Call to Order, Approval of the Minutes and Vote**

Governance Council Chairperson, Glen Johnson, welcomed everyone to the last Governance Council meeting of the year at 1:30 pm, and made motion to approve the minutes of the last Council meeting.

Sean Haley made a point of order regarding the length of time spent on the Budget presentation. With Sean requested correction, Glen made a motion to accept the prior meetings’ minutes with the correction, and the minutes were accepted.

On behalf of the Governance Council, Glen thanked both Sapphire Howard and Arthur McHugh for their service to the Council as their terms were expiring at the end of May.

Glen mentioned that a new Secretary needs to be elected before the next Governance Council meeting, and, with the expansion of our staff, as interpreted by the Governance Council Bylaws, three (3) new staff representatives are required.

Glen introduced the three (3) new members, Lauren Fowler (Academic Affairs), Julie Katz, (SPaR), and Paulo Lellis, (Office of the Dean). Mohit Arora (Information Technology) and Matthew Paczkowski (Academic Affairs) will continue as Representatives, and Lea Dias (Student Affairs) and Margaret Krudysz (Admissions) will continue as Alternates.

The only remaining unfinished business is an opening for a Staff Representative on the Committee for Equity and Inclusion.

With this last bit of information, Glen then turned the floor over to the Dean for his report.

1. **Dean’s Report**

The Dean welcomed all to the meeting, and joined Glen in welcoming three (3) newly elected staff representatives to the Governance Council, and thanked Sapphire and Arthur for their service to the Council.

The Dean, noticing Betsy Eastwood in attendance, thanked her for her twenty (20) years with CUNY and service to our School and she is planning to go on travia leave in the fall.

Betsy was given the opportunity to address the Council and said she would miss us all. The Dean stated that Betsy would always be a member of our family and hoped Betsy would visit us frequently.

The Dean thanked everyone for the recent US World and News Report, ranking schools of public health.

CUNY SPH is ranked #15, out of 195 ranked schools and programs in public health and out of 235 schools and programs in existence; #17 in health policy, leading the tri-state area, a position CUNY SPH has held for the past three (3) years; and we are ranked #6 out of 129 public schools and programs of public health.

Reporting on the CUNY’s budget situation, the Dean stated that due to enrollment declines across the board, but especially at community and senior colleges, there are ongoing concerns about CUNY’s fiscal stability.

CUNY is qualifying each school’s stability by looking at how many students are enrolled in the upcoming semester.

Looking at SPH’s numbers, and the number of students graduating, the Dean hope to recruit as many students as we are losing over the course of one (1) year, and, as the quality of our students improves, they will enroll in a larger number of credits, which will directly be reflected in our tuition.

The Dean continued discussing CUNY financial instability, mentioning:

* CUNY has reinstituted the Vacancy Review Board (VRB); adding that their review procedure should be somewhat easier as “budget-neutral” positions being replaced, the four (4) faculty members we are currently recruiting and Research Foundation (RF) positions will not be subject to VRB review.
* CUNY SPH has been asked to cut a total of five- and one-half percent (5.5%) from this year budget. We have been able to do this by moving expenses from the tax-levy side to the RF side, which Karen, from the Budget Committee, reported on in the last meeting. We are achieving this saving through this revenue transfer, and if the School was not successful and productive, we would have a significant problem this year. Schools not doing as well as SPH have been asked to cut seven percent (7%) of their budget this year, in addition to the two percent (2%) cut last year. The thirty million dollars ($30m) in research expenditures has helped immensely, and the Dean is grateful for the effort it took to reach this amount.
* SPH is trying to reduce the Adjunct faculty budget in each department. Department Chairs will use their discretion to determine the best way to cut back on their adjunct budget(s).
* SPH is also raising the “cap” on students to thirty-five (35) per class before a Teaching Assistant (TA) is allowed. The Dean understands that this adds additional pressure on faculty, but hopes this will be done as “… gently as possible.”
* Our current enrollment numbers are down slightly, one-to-two percent (1% - 2%). That is not bad, but SPH promised a one percent (1%) increase in enrollment for the fall semester. We are still hoping that we can attain that goal, and the newly instituted Scholarship Policy, reinvesting one-half million dollars ($500k), will help. No new doctoral fellowships will be offered, and we expect that fifteen (15) doctoral student, in various programs, will be returning.

Moving his report away from the budget, the Dean mentioned that we have been receiving and interviewing applicants for the four (4) Assistant Professor positions we have available, one (1) Assistant Professor in each department.

The Dean thanked the Search Committee for these positions, led by Elizabeth Kelvin, who chaired the Committee, and reiterated his commitment to fill positions in Epidemiology, Informatics and Nutrition.

The Dean thanked all in attendance for the Town Hall Meeting with Executive University Provost Wendy Hensel. V.C. Hensel was very impressed with our School, faculty and students. These visits from the University’s Senior Leadership allow for the University to recognize you and know what SPH is all about. You are a model success and of very high-quality performance, and you are immediately noticed. She left totally amazed.

Continuing his report, the Dean recognized the this has been a difficult, transitional year for SPH. Learning that we need to do what is in our best interests.

Commencement is May 30th, at 2:00 pm at the Apollo. The honored and keynote speaker is Dr. Peter Hotez, dear friend, colleague and Nobel Prize nominee. We are happy to recognize him. The Champion of Public Health Award will go to former Assemblyman Richard Gottfried, a man who has served public health in New York City very well. The Dean closed his session reiterating that these public meetings must be held in-person, per mandates from both the City and State, and thanked all in attendance.

With this, the Dean closed his report…

1. **GC Committee Matters**

**Curriculum Committee**

Curriculum Committee Chair, Dr. Sean Haley (HPAM) was given the floor.

Sean gave an update on the plan to update the core. Three (3) sessions in six-ten (610), six-eleven (611), six-twelve (612), and six-thirteen (613), with six-fourteen (614) getting a complete re-do. The intention is to do this over the summer, using all of the great feedback received, which happened to be aligned with what alumni had mentioned.

Those changes are under way, with the intention of “going-live” in the spring.

The main item on the agenda is EOGHs 641. The intention is to change the pre-requisites and the course description.

A motion was made to vote to approve the request. The voted was seconded, and the vote was initiated. Those in attendance utilized the ballot on the back of the distributed packets, and those not in attendance were allowed to vote virtually.

The votes were collected from those in attendance, and the Curriculum Committee’s session was closed.

**Appointments, Promotions and Tenure (A.P.T.) Committee.**

Appointments, Promotions and Tenure Committee Interim Chair, Dr. Ilias Kavouras (EOGHS) was given the floor.

Ilias greeted All in attendance, and stated that his was his last meeting as Interim Chair as Dr. Christian Grov, would be returning to the position.

Ilias thanked the Department Chairs for their effort which made everything run smoothly and timely for appointments and fellowship leaves.

Ilias reported that the Committee would be meeting tomorrow to decide on and finalize the calendar for the next academic year.

Once approved it would be released to the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and faculty.

Town Hall/Drop In Meetings will continue at the beginning of the semester.

Ilias mentioned that if any faculty had any issues, they should feel free to discuss with their respective Department Chair or any member of the A.P.T. Committee.

Ilias thanked everyone for a productive semester and closed the A.P.T. Committee session.

**Assessment Committee**

Assessment Committee Chair, Dr. Sheng Li, (Epidemiology and Biostatistics), was given the floor.

Sheng stated that the eight (8) member Assessment Committee met last week to discuss two (2) issues. The first issue was the Employer Survey, to identify employers of SPH graduates for CEPH compliance.

The second issue Sheng discussed was the recent Student Survey, which covered the period from Fall 2022 – Spring 2023. With 301 students responding, the majority of our students are very, very satisfied with our School and the services provided; with cost/affordability, courses offered and distance learning options being the three (3) top reasons for students choosing to come to SPH.

Sheng pointed out that the student response on this recent survey was lower than in previous years, potentially due to the COVID pandemic.

The data collection from survey is ongoing and a more detailed look into the data will be done for presentation at a later date.

Sheng then ended his session.

**IV.**  **Associate Deans' Reports**

**Dr. Susan Klitzman, Sr. Associate Dean for Business and Administration**

Susan shared the floor with Mohit Arora, Director of Information Technology. Mohit proceed to give updates in the Information Technology Department.

The updates are:

1. Hiring three (3) I.T. staff members for the HelpDesk,
2. Re-structuring the I.T. Department into two divisions with Michelle Finn taking over the HelpDesk and appointed Director of Client and Application Services, and Atif Baig appointed Director of Infrastructure Services.
3. Deployment of Eduroam, a secure Wi-Fi access roaming service at CUNY and SPH.
4. Deployment over the summer of a password domain account self-management tool to enable staff to re-set their own passwords.
5. Pilot tests of Adobe Sign, DropBox sign and Docusign, all e-signature tools are being initiated.

Mohit answered several questions regarding the use of the e-signature tools, and returned the floor to Susan.

Susan thanked the I.T team for the efforts during the transitional period we were in, and asked the audience for feedback to know where we need concentrate our efforts for better service.

Susan thanked all for their efforts to keep our campus safe during COVID, and mentioned that CUNY is suspending all vaccination and testing requirements as of May 23th. We will continue to keep the SPH community updated on policies as the emerge.

Susan moved forward to discuss Asset Management. Emails are being sent out from our Campus Facilities Department to set appointments to have your electronic devices scanned before the summer break.

For the summer, there are no in-person scheduled classes, so after Commencement we are returning to our summer schedule where the campus will be open Monday - Thursday, from 8:00 am until 6:00 pm. If you need an event accommodated, please contact Campus Facilities.

Susan brought up the financial changes being faced by CUNY and our School. We were asked to reduce our budget by 5.5% this year, but due to increasing expenses, our projected budget is going to be more than this year. Everyone is attendance was asked to do a little "belt-tightening" and think of way to increase revenue and decrease expenses, to include looking at the courses we offer to see how we can be more efficient.

In closing, Susan discussed the summer salary being received from grants, and how those monies are "forwarded" from tax-levy salary with reimbursement coming for the RF for those funds. The reimbursement of those funds to tax-levy funds has been very slow because faculty do not certify their time with the RF on a timely basis.

Susan asked for faculty to be sure to certify their time so SPH can receive its reimbursement funds quicker.

Susan thanked all and said she would be happy to answer any questions.

**Dr. Michele Kiely, Associate Dean for Research**

Michele took the floor and began her session reiterating the need for faculty to charge and certify their effort. It is a federal requirement, and they are easier to complete in a timely manner. Some of these are two (2) years old.

Please reach out to the SPaR staff and they will help you complete your grant certifications.

The post-award policies and procedures were shared, if you did not receive them, please let me know, and I will resend.

Michele then discussed how SPaR is now reviewing grants on a quarterly basis, and encouraged faculty to review their grants twice per year, as it is much easier to correct, if needed.

Michele then shared a presentation, covering the past 3/4th of the year. One hundred forty-four (144) new grants

were awarded. Forty percent (40%) are federal grants, eleven percent (11%) are city, twenty percent are foundation or private grants, and twenty-nine percent (29%) are internal, either from CUNY or the School.

Michele discussed the faculty, or SPH staff members receiving those grants, and the totals by funding source.

Michele congratulated all on an amazing year in grant funded research, and relinquished the floor.

**Dr. Lynn Roberts, Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Alumni Relations**

Lynn took the floor and began her session calling attention to her team's led events, many of them student led and implemented.

* Wellness Week was just completed, led by Sherry Adams and several of our partners at Healthy CUNY and outside presenters.
* Disability Awareness month began Monday, with a student led panel, sharing how they can support each other. A Student Town Hall taking place today for Student Awareness Month as well.
* The GSGA hosted films and screenings with various other student clubs.
* The Comprehensive Exam Panel planned by students, doctoral students in collaboration with our faculty was a huge success.
* Our student leaders also met with our University Provost last week.

A "de-stressing" event is planned for finals week, and a film screening is being done in collaboration with the Food Policy Institute to raise awareness about corporate influence and "pouring rights" is also being planned.

Student elections are still being completed, and we had to extend the time in order to get more nominations. Lynn extended nominations, through midnight tonight, with students being able to nominate themselves, and asked those in attendance to encourage any students they know to nominate themselves, stressing several areas of need.

With this statement, Lynn closed her session.

**V. Other Business**

Drs. Emma Tsui and Spring Cooper (CHaSS): Public Health Education Now, oral history project

Emma and Spring were given the floor to discuss their project, an oral history project. Introducing Aya El-Said, an MPH graduate from 2022, Emma discussed the oral history project, conducted in collaboration with three (3) other MPH graduates from Aya's 2022 class.

Analyzing the student interviews that we done, Emma and Spring, shared what they learned from those interviews and they are hoping to enlist faculty expertise to brainstorm together and discuss a response to the findings.

Sharing background on the project, Public Health Education Now, with a goal to explore student, faculty and staff experiences of public health teaching and learning, for the period from 2020 to 2022, Emma and Spring asked those in attendance to listen to a student's audio excerpt to provide perspective. Emma would then summarize. top level findings and requested we move into small discussion groups afterwards.

The core question being asked asking was, what did it mean to us to teach and or learn public health during this

time at the intersections of the epidemics of COVID-19 and structural racism.

Before listening to the student's excerpt, Emma cautioned the audience that this had the protentional to be upsetting.

After listening to the excerpt, Emma called attention to different themes: First, that students are learning and experiencing public health and public health problems at the same time. Second, this sense of lack of support, especially for remote students, and third, that public health education has the potential to touch on student's lived experiences without acknowledging what that is.

Summing up their findings, Emma and Spring see this work as offering an important view of students as what we're calling survivor learners. Public health students have always been motivated by addressing public health problems but they are often affected directly by them as well. Typically, we have not taught with these experiences and the potential traumas associated as an orienting frame.

Our experiences are different from those of our students, and students have a wide array of experiences as well, and we see responding to these issues, not solely as the work of faculty or staff, or the administration, but really as a joint effort.

Discussion was encouraged from the group as a whole, before breaking up into smaller groups.

The questions that the groups were asked to discuss were:

* How might we, as a school, respond to these findings?
* What existing efforts at CUNY SPH could be enhanced to address these findings?

Note takers were assigned to each group to aid in information gathering.

A link /QR code was entered for any attendee to add any comments at a later time.

Emma and Spring thanked all for their participation.

**VI. Adjournment**

At this point the meeting was adjourned at 3:25 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Arthur McHugh.