Meeting Minutes of the Governance Council

Wednesday, March 29, 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 meeting at 1:35 pm, and made a motion to accept the minutes from the February 15, 2023, meeting.

Glen reminded all in attendance that there are three (3) upcoming positions to fill on the Governance Council. Those interested can be nominated by someone or can self-nominate. Elections are ongoing with the winners being announced at the last Governance Council meeting of this year.

Glen then turned the floor over to the Dean for his report.

1. **Dean’s Report**

The Dean welcomed all to the meeting, glad for the members in attendance.

The Dean opened discussing ongoing meetings at Central regarding student enrollment and next years’ budget. Some CUNY schools are in better financial shape than others. Central has already asked us for a $325k budget cut this year, which we attained easily.

Central has additional financial expectations for our School, and Susan and Karen will present more on this. Those schools that seem to be doing “ok” are being asked to cut 5.5% of their budget next year. Larger cuts up to 7.5% are being imposed on schools “… not doing so ok.”.

CUNY is at the point where we will know what the Governor’s budget is and what CUNY’s allocation will be, and what SPH will receive from that, based on our student numbers.

A 3.5% increase in tuition was suggested by the Governor, but this increase in tuition will not be supported by the legislation in Albany. SUNY Schools received a more favorable allocation, and CUNY needs more support from the state.

Nationwide, community colleges are suffering the biggest drop in enrollment, with 20% to 25% decreases in applications. A significant number for any institution.

At the same time the City is showing problems with its budget. Flight from the city has led to a significant drop in tax revenue. As the City funds Community Colleges, they are suffering the most.

CUNY has instituted an ad campaign targeting areas where community colleges are located to drive enrollment. It seems that the ads have made a measurable difference in the number of applicants.

CUNY has reinstituted the VRB, to include RF positions, which was nonsensical. Changes have recently been made and RF positions will no longer be included. Our internal VRB will continue to monitor our hires.

Faculty can be proud of their contribution, which will be explained by Karen in more detail. Reallocations of tax-levy funds to indirect cost accounts/monies has helped SPH a lot, up to $700k. This gives us less to spend on other “luxuries”.

Congratulations to the Budget Committee for understanding the budget so fast. Their report will be read today. We are cautious that this year we need to spend less to meet financial obligations.

Moving on to enrollment, the Dean mentioned that the Admissions Report on enrollment is “discerning”, and he is hoping to translate more applicants into acceptances to maintain student enrollment levels. This will be done by investing aggressively in scholarships to master level students to enhance their acceptance rates. This is a new social experiment and we will see how it works. My hope is that this measure provides one of the stronger classes SPH has ever had. In the past, when these types of scholarships have been offered, we have seen a forty percent (40%) acceptance rate.

We are also working on other things. The “4+1” initiative, most popular with Macaulay Honor’s students, will fill a gap in enrollment, in addition to two (2) other programs. One with Egyptian physicians who specialize in cancer research, up to ten (10) will enroll in our certificate program; a proposal to create a specialized certificate in data science for advanced students, and the University of Alcala, where we hope to receive more students from.

A special thanks to Sergio who is dedicating time to marketing and communications. We hope these efforts “…bear fruit.”

We hope to land four (4) strong faculty members to join our faculty. Interviews are continuing and, based on the presentations I have seen, I know we will select four smart and energetic members to join our faculty. We definitely still have the intention of hiring in Nutrition and in EPI/BIO statistics in the area of Informatics to replace Jose's departure. I’m working with the Chairs to get this done.

Our new University Provost, Wendy Hensel, will be on campus on Thursday, April 20, 2023 to hear from our community and to talk about the plans of her office. She will be meeting with small groups of students, faculty and senior leadership, and then with our full community at a Town Hall at 3:30 p.m. I encourage attendance to enfranchise her and inform her on public health.

Commencement is scheduled for May 30, 2023 at 2:00 pm at the Apollo. Pending BoT approval, Dr. Peter Jay Hotez will be the Honorand and Keynote Speaker, and Former Assemblyman Richard N. Gottfried will receive the Champion of Public Health Award. More details to come on planning.

Every week I hear about new successes in research applications. I am very happy to see these applications; good things are happening at our School. Some faculty are bringing good will from foundations that are sending us gifts that make a difference.

I have fielded questions on plans for class size and teaching assistance in the classroom. As it turns out, the new policies in effect make very little difference to what we are already doing.

We need to make these changes, as there is a focus on decreasing Adjunct faculty. The utilization of Adjunct needs to decrease.

In closing, the Dean thanked Everyone for the work they do, telling All that we will get through this together…

Nick brought up questions about equity concerns with providing scholarships based on GPA. The Dean mentioned that he had the same concerns, but this was the easiest way to grant scholarships is to use a merit-based scholarship. Lynn added that we were offering financial aid to students with lower GPAs as well. The Dean added that he would monitor and report back, once we had the information from the incoming class.

With this, the Dean closed his report…

1. **GC Committee Matters**

**Admissions Committee**

Admissions Committee Chair, Dr. Ghada Soliman (EOGHS) was given the floor.

Ghada thanked the Admissions Committee and the Admissions Department for their work done for admissions and student enrollment, and reminded the attendees that the deadline for applications is April 1, 2023.

Please review all applications that are ready to review in Departmental queues. There is an increase in scholarships with GPAs greater than 3.5, with one hundred (100) awarded so far, and twenty-six (26) having been accepted; for the second level scholarship, for students with a 3.3 – 3.5 GPA, sixty-four (64) scholarships have been awarded with thirteen (13) accepted so far.

We have had recent virtual and in-person open houses. Thank you to all who participated. The Admissions Office is planning a Departmental – Specific event for newly admitted students for the last week in March. Hopefully this will help move more applicants into the enrolled/accepted category.

We have several Recruitment/Open House/Information Sessions scheduled from April to August.

with this last statement, Ghada closed her session.

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

Governance Council Chair Glen Johnson took the floor and explained that Ilias was unable to attend today’s meeting, but was going to share some information Ilias provided for the Council.

* The Committee completed first-year appointments, reappointments and Fellowship Leave requests. Thanks goes out to Department Chairs and Department A.P.T. Committees.
  + Anyone thinking of promotion or tenure next year needs to discuss their plans with their Department Chair now.
* A reminder was sent out that annual reviews are due by April 30, 2023. Please update your Digital Measures information.
* Finally, regarding the Coache Faculty Survey; our participation rate is “ok”, but we can do better. We are a small school, please complete your survey, it will only take twenty (20) to thirty (30) minutes. Please reach out to Ilias if you missed the link on need any information.

With this, Glen closed the A.P.T. Committee session.

**Budget Committee**

Budget Committee Chair, Dr. Karen Florez (EOGHS) was given the floor.

Karen opened her session stating that her presentation is going to focus on the savings plan the Dean mentioned earlier, giving more details than less, with a bit of context around the structural deficits that the school is experiencing. Questions would be taken at the end of the presentation.

Susan joined Karen at the podium to assist with the presentation.

Starting with background information, Susan mentioned a “structural deficit” where declining enrollments, unfunded expenses, inflation and the “Tap Gap” have all contributed to CUNY budgetary shortfalls.

FY ’23, CUNY asked each school to come up with a two to three percent (2% - 3%) savings plan for this year to accrue seventy-five million dollars ($75m); and for next fiscal year schools must come up with a five to seven percent (5% - 7%) savings plan to accrue one hundred million dollars ($100m) in savings.

Based on SPH’s FY ’24 budget, this works out to eight hundred-ninety-four thousand dollars ($894k). We are anticipating that our FY ’23 budget of sixteen million two hundred fifty-eight dollars ($16.258 m) will be eight hundred-ninety-four thousand dollars ($894k) less.

As earlier stated by the Dean, CUNY is particularly focused on reducing Adjunct costs, partly offset by the hiring of five hundred ninety-five (595) new faculty, (SPH is hiring four (4) new faculty members), and increasing collection rates.

The University asked SPH to increase revenue, (SPH plans to do this through increased enrollment and collections, utilizing other enrollment and retention initiatives, and using non-tax levy funds from indirect cost recovery accounts and the SPH Foundation), and to reduce expenses (by reducing payroll, and reducing expenses by using less Adjuncts, OTPS and part time employees).

An analysis was also done for FY '22, '23 and '24, comparing courses taught by full-time faculty and Adjuncts.

Karen returned to the podium to further the discussion on the SPH savings plan.

Karen stated we reached the target given to us and submitted the plan to CUNY Central. It was reviewed by numerous bodies, of the SPH community, including the Budget Committee, Deans Department Chairs and PhD directors, but it still needs to be approved by CUNY.

There were two (2) fundamental items organizing the thinking around the savings plan. One was just the shear structure of the savings plan that was asked of us from Central. The second aspect of this exercise was to maintain high quality experiences for students.

Starting with enrollment, as the Dean said earlier, this is one of the main areas we are hoping to increase by increasing outreach with programs, reconnecting with students and increasing the amount of available MPH scholarships. This three (3) pronged approach to the savings target meets the mission and values of our school, and it also meets the requests from Central.

When it comes to collections, SPH does very well, maintaining a ninety-nine percent (99%) collection rate. It's about maintaining that rate. In the plan we also mentioned that SPH would offer payment plans for past due balances. Only as a last resort would SPH sent a student into collections

Susan was given the podium for the next part of the Budget Committee presentation.

Susan stated we are allocating new money from non-tax levy sources to address the eight hundred-ninety-four thousand dollars ($894k) savings target.

This includes one hundred fifty thousand dollars ($150k) from the SPH Foundation. This is new non-tax levy money that will fund MPH and doctoral scholarships that previously came from tax-levy funds. This, plus six hundred fifty- thousand dollars ($650k) from indirect cost recovery accounts will fund not only scholarships but existing Graduate Assistant costs and faculty start-up package costs. This totals eight hundred thousand dollars ($800k) from non-tax levy sources.

PS Regular, in "CUNY-speak" means full time staff and faculty. Our goal is not to reduce our full time faculty and staff. We plan to shift salaries for Graduate Assistants to indirect cost recovery accounts, hiring four (4) Assistant Professors and backfilling existing vacancies.

For Adjuncts, we will analyze class enrollment and consolidate sections of required courses with low enrollment. As we are no longer bound by the 70% - 30% on-line/in-person class ratio, it could mean more classes will be on- line. Departments should really take a close look at the frequency and modality of elective courses, because there have been some elective courses with very low enrollments.

With all of these measures combined, we will be able to reduce the number of courses taught by Adjuncts by seventeen percent (17%) resulting in a cost saving of one hundred fifteen thousand dollars ($115k).

Karen returned to the podium to discuss Temporary Services, and told the Council members the savings plan for this section is to increase the minimum class enrollment to request a Teaching Assistant to thirty-five (35) students, and to assess college assistant positions and other temporary service positions for a savings of ten thousand dollars ($10k).

In terms of OTPS, the shifts of MPH and doctoral scholarships to indirect cost recovery accounts, reducing non- essential travel and eliminating non-recurring expenses will help to reduce the budget drastically.

Susan returned to the podium to discuss the SPH teaching analysis done for FY '22 through FY '24. Looking at enrollment, number of sections, number of teaching hours, average class size broken out by whether the faculty was full time or an Adjunct.

In the past three (3) years, (estimates were used for FY "24), between one hundred eleven (111) and one hundred nineteen (119) sections were taught by our full-time faculty. Forty-three (43) faculty have been teaching each of those years with two (2) or three (3) courses taught by each full-time faculty member over the entire academic year.

Adjuncts teach more than forty percent (40%) of our classes and average class sizes for Adjuncts have been slightly higher.

Susan went on to say we submitted our saving proposal to the University on March 17th, and we are waiting feedback. We're also waiting to see what the CUNY and SPH tax levy allocations will be for FY '24 based on the State budget, which is due the first, and the city budget which is due July first.

Also, we are planning to now start drafting the FY '24 budget. This financial plan will be based on what we anticipate to be our enrollment, tuition, revenue, and tax levy allocations. This is an ongoing process...

It's important that we continue to implement strategies to increase enrollment and revenue and decrease non- essential tax levy expenses with the goal of minimizing any significant negative impact on the quality of academic programs and student experiences.

Karen added that that is exactly the message we wanted you to leave with. Enrollment and our individual contributions, and making sure that we're all reviewing applications in a timely manner.

Susan returned to discuss new hires, and said do everything you can to recruit qualified candidates to come here.

Faculty must be hired by the beginning of the fall semester or we may not have the chance to fill those faculty positions.

Karen spoke to transparency, and moving items funded with tax-levy funds to with non-tax levy funding is something we want to be mindful of and keep doing. That is the reason for all of the details in this presentation, and should trickle down to every aspect of the school.

Susan added that we are all in this together, and the health of SPH is our collective responsibility. We all have a role to play.

Karen closed stating that the Committee is looking at this exercise, and others, within the framework of the SPH's mission and values. Everyone is making sacrifices to meet our goals.

Karen thanked all for their patience, and asked to hear from the attendees regarding this dense and "not-so-fun" topic.

Opening the floor to questions, Suzanne asked if the rent for the new accommodations on the eighth floor were part of the SPH budget, or if it is a cost that Central pays for.

Susan specified that that the 16 million dollars that we get from the tax levy allocation is our operating budget. It does not include rent except for the eighth floor east. The Dean added our research enterprise was growing quickly, and most of the research was located on the sixth floor. The PI's said they needed more space. We entered into negotiations with the University to allow us to spend part of our indirect cost recoveries to rent the additional space. That particular space is the only space that is paid by our own money that comes to us from indirect costs.

The good news is this is research infrastructure. It allows us, in our next turn of negotiations with the Federal Government, to increase our indirect costs.

Suzanne then asked how is hiring full-time faculty considered a cost saving over hiring Adjuncts. The Dean responded that the only way it is a cost saving is if you are eliminating sections. It's only a cost saving if it's by eliminating sections for us. Susan is right, other colleges and schools have a different story.

Jean thanked the Budget for the detailed presentation and conveying the message well, and asked if anything had to be cut to compensate for the switch to non-tax levy finding. The Dean answered that he had been using his account as a savings account, and doing so allowed SPH to "...cover what needs to be covered..." and help SPH during this tough financial time.

Sean asked if the money transferred to the RF remains in the purview of the Budget Committee. Karen answered and said, per our bylaws, the Budget Committee is only allowed to look at tax-levy funding.

Sean made mention of time considerations and the Budget Committee's presentation exceeding their time allotment.

Ghada asked if there is a plan to resurvey the students to get their pulse when they need in-person classes. Is there an opportunity to revisit the ratio between on-line and in-person courses? The Dean said we will always remain an in-person school, we will continue offer on-line course, but if they do not fill, they do not fill.

Nick added that we need to remember the long term solution to the problems we've been talking about is to support our union, write to our elected officials, and to mobilize students to get CUNY the resources it needs. The Dean agreed with Nick and said we are in a privileged situation compared to many public higher education institutions.

Luisa brought up CUNY spending seven and one-half million dollars ($7.5m) to develop on-line classes, and the Dean mentioned that these monies may have been Feral monies that had to be used, some of which went to the current CUNY campaign to bolster enrollment of community colleges.

With this last exchange, the Budget Committee closed its presentation and surrendered the floor.

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

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

In the interest of time, and given the length of the Budget Committee's presentation, Susan passed on her Associate Dean's report.

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

Before Lynn took the floor, Glen pointed out that Dr. Michele Kiely, Associate Dean for Research, was not present for today's meeting but a note from Michele was sent out with the agenda for today's meeting that should be read.

Lynn took the floor and began alerting All to what would be going on in Student Affairs for the busy month of April.

Kicking off next week is Public Health Week which overlaps at the same time as our spring break. Our GSJ will have some things that they'll be sharing in social media and some upcoming events.

It will also be Disability Awareness Month and Sara Ingram is busy with a committee of students planning those activities.

There will be a Health and Wellness Week in April, so Sherry Adams and her team are planning that.

And, after spring break, and Hannah and her team are working on our first career fair in a while. So stay tuned. April is gonna be busy...

Our GSGA and student clubs are also hosting a number of events. Last week we actually started with film screening related to black maternal mortality, called after Shock. Tonight, the LGBTQ Plus Association of SPH and the Student Government are hosting a transgender health and rights virtual panel at 6:00 pm, in honor of Trans Disability Day.

Probably most important to all of us is the student elections. I want to stress how important it is for our students to be a part of our school and our governance. The call for nominations will go out today to solicit nominations for student government and the Governance Council. Please encourage student to self-nominate for the many positions we have available.

We also are still looking to recruit three (3) students for positions that were vacant for this semester.

Thanks to all of you for supporting our students.

A question was asked regarding the School being open during the easter week. Susan responded "yes" and said the School would be open until 6:00 pm.

The Dean expressed his happiness in seeing how many of the Assistant Professor applicants got their doctoral degrees with SPH, and hoped they do well in the application process.

Lastly, the Dean discussed how Nick accepted an assignment from him that will be in the SPH annual report this year concerning the history of our School, and asked anyone coming from Lehman, Brooklyn, the Graduate Center or Hunter to share any historic photos or information concerning SPH as the school was evolving and developing.

With this the Student Affairs and Alumni Relations session was closed.

**VI. Adjournment**

At this point the meeting was adjourned at 3:10 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Arthur McHugh.