**Meeting Minutes of the Governance Council**

Wednesday, October 18, 2023 1:30-3:30pm

Room 708, Auditorium; Chair: Glen Johnson

**Call to Order and Approval of the Minutes**

Glen Johnson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:40pm. He requested and received approval of minutes from the September 12, 2023 meeting. Glen welcomed Rachael Piltch-Loeb, a new Assistant Professor in the Environmental, Occupational, and Geospatial Health Sciences Department and Thomas Rouyard, a new Assistant Professor in the Health Policy & Management Department.

**Certifying the CIMH**

Glen called for a motion to hold the vote to certify the Center for Innovation in Mental Health (CIMH) at CUNY SPH. The certification was approved with forty (40) yes votes, one (1) no vote, and one (1) abstention.

**Committee on Equity and Inclusion Election**

Glen tabled the election for a non-tenure track faculty representative to the Committee on Equity and Inclusion, pending nomination of an eligible faculty member.

**Dean’s Report**

Dean Ayman El-Mohandes encouraged in-person attendance for future Governance Council meetings and welcomed the new faculty members. He remarked on the evolving situation in Israel and Gaza and the unfolding public health crisis.

Next, Ayman shared highlights from a recent speech by Chancellor Félix V. Matos Rodríguez he attended, noting that the meeting was positive, though largely focused on undergraduate education. CUNY Central is still facing budget, admission, and retention challenges, and the Chancellor shared opportunities to improve retention across the CUNY system. Ayman noted that compared to many other CUNY schools, SPH revenue and admissions numbers exceeded expectations with a 25% increase in fall enrollment. He thanked the SPH Admissions, Advisement, Registrar, Financial Aid, and Bursar staff for supporting the growing student body. CUNY Central continues to strengthen its marketing initiatives, and Sergio Costa and Sumana Chandra are complementing CUNY-wide marketing strategies with SPH-specific materials. Efforts are having a visible effect on enrollment, particularly with online, out-of-state, and international students. Ayman shared that revenue increased about 5% from last fall, due in part, to students taking more courses. Ayman added that, at this point, spring admissions data is strong. The School will conduct an analysis on the impact of scholarships related to both enrollment and student performance.

Finally, Ayman shared that CUNY Central is working to update its policies on hate crimes. New requirements and policy decisions are forthcoming, including prevention training and reporting requirements. The School will continue to share all relevant updates at future meetings.

**Admissions Committee Report**

*Ghada Soliman, Curriculum Committee Chair*

Ghada Soliman shared the newest Admissions Committee report, noting that Chris Palmedo is filling in for Spring Cooper while she is on sabbatical. The Committee recently met and discussed admissions guidelines and a review of application timelines. Ghada encouraged faculty to review their new applications as soon as possible in SOPHAS, emphasizing that scholarships are only awarded upon admission to the program. Additionally, Ghada reminded the Council of upcoming recruitment events and encouraged faculty attendance.

Mary asked how scholarships are awarded to ensure equitable allocation. Ayman noted that students cannot be awarded scholarships until they are accepted by the department and School, and the award is based solely on GPA criteria.

**Curriculum Committee Report**

*Sean Haley, Curriculum Committee Chair*

Sean Haley opened his remarks by circling back to questions from the September 12th GC meeting, specifically related to EOGHS and qualitative competencies in the core. Sean noted that these conversations are important considerations as the School moves forward with revisions. Sean provided an update on the master’s core curriculum courses (PUBH 610, PUBH 611, PUBH 612, PUBH 613, and PUBH 614), noting the key changes applied to all courses. These include: having one consistent version of each course; strengthening assessment; removing extra credit; matching updated course content to new assessments; delineation of responsibilities in group projects; and, requiring rubrics on graded BlackBoard discussion board assignments.

Sean went into further specifics on each of the five core courses, including an added environmental session in PUBH 610, an added systematic review in PUBH 613, and more significant updates to PUBH 614 including a new textbook, re-organized lectures, and 9 session updates. Sean outlined a timeframe for the creation, review, and rollout of the new courses with a goal to implement for the spring 2024 semester (for all core courses but PUBH 614, which will follow a slightly different time frame for implementation).

Mustafa Hussein asked about creative freedom within the core courses. Sean noted that quality control is important to maintain CEPH compliance, but instructors will still have some flexibility around how classes are taught. Sean added that we might be able to add additional assessment options for faculty to choose from. Mustafa expressed concern that the added EOHS competencies in PUBH 610 can limit the time spent on the US health care system, which already feels rushed. Terry Huang noted that some of these changes are slight, and a more robust update will come after our CEPH accreditation. Terry added that it is crucial for all instructors – full-time or adjunct – to fulfill these minimum requirements. Susan Klitzman shared that readings can be updated and changed as needed, but each competency needs a clear assessment. Faculty further discussed the role of the core in preparing students for their capstone projects.

**Assessment Committee Report**

*Sheng Li, Assessment Committee Chair*

Sheng Li presented data from the Spring 2023 alumni survey. The School’s alumni survey is conducted annually one-year post graduation. Sheng noted that 99% of graduates who took the survey would recommend the school to others, and presented data related to school impact on employment, income, and sector.

Ayman said the data was encouraging and non-for-profit jobs help to fulfill the School’s mission as a public school of public health. Ayman also pointed out that salary data can be misleading to students, as it is only an average, and recommended including a range, mean, and standard deviation if sharing this data. Mustafa asked if we compare employment data from current students to post-graduation outcomes; Sheng explained that while this survey does not get at that point specifically, the data can be compared to other student surveys, such as the Current Student Survey to explore trends.

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Report**

*Sasha Fleary, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Co-Chair*

Sasha Fleary shared that the CEI survey has been temporarily paused. A new survey will be shared with the community soon, and encouraged those who completed the first survey to re-take the new one.

**Budget Committee Report**

*Karen Florez, Budget Committee Chair*

Karen Florez presented the School’s financial plan, which projects the next five fiscal years, as requested by CUNY Central Office. The plan projects a modest annual growth in enrollment and tuition. Most importantly, maintaining program quality and meeting faculty and student needs is crucial. Karen noted that fluctuations in student enrollment are a particular challenge in projecting revenue.

**Associate Deans’ Reports**

*Terry McGovern, Senior Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs*

Terry McGovern attended the Academic Council Meeting today, where they were visited by The National Group, a firm representing CUNY in Washington D.C. to lobby for funding. She asked for examples of white papers, which she will share with the community. On the Academic Affairs side, Terry noted that she is hearing about pain points from faculty and staff, and will be working through resolutions in the near future. Finally, Terry noted that a reproductive justice group will be meeting, and she encourages all interested to reach out to join. Additionally, Terry would like more collaboration in the global health field to see where faculty are working; she encourages faculty working in global health to reach out directly. Finally, Terry noted that she will be attending future department meetings to connect and collaborate with faculty.

*Susan Klitzman, Senior Associate Dean of Administration*

From the Office of Administration, Susan Klitzman had Mohit Arora, Director of Technology, discuss IT staff restructuring and cyber security. Mohit shared information on a recent ransomware attack at Baruch College. Baruch needed to move all classes online for about a week and are still in the process of recovering their data. Mohit shared that there has been a large increase in these attacks in higher education institutes in 2023, and CUNY is ramping up cybersecurity, including increased training and coursework, in response. Mohit noted that increased security measures may impact remote work in the future, and there will be more multi-factor authentication (MFA) requirements for system access. Mohit added that SPH data is backed up, so recovery is an option.

Diana Romero asked about impact on SharePoint data with personal data elements that has been approved in the past; Mohit stated that access should be unaffected. Heidi Jones asked if Blackboard will continue to be used across CUNY, and Mohit stated that goal is to migrate to Brightspace in 2024, though security remains a concern. Sergio added that Spring 2025 is the goal for full implementation.

*Lynn Roberts, Associate Dean of Student Affairs & Alumni Relations*

Lynn Roberts shared some recent announcements, including added funds for spring 2024 students. She noted that there are over 200 RSVPs for the Spring 2024 Open House and encouraged faculty to attend. A recent student meet-and-greet with Terry McGovern was also well received. Additionally, Lynn is still looking for a CHSS representative for the GC meeting. She added that CUNY Central trainings on students with disabilities are forthcoming.

Zaire Ali, President of the Graduate Student Government Association (GSGA), presented to the GC and thanked his colleagues for completing the GSGA budget ahead of schedule. GSGA is hosting a townhall in early November, which is open to all students for feedback and collaboration, as well as an open meeting on student clubs.

**Other Business**

Sean Haley asked the Council to consider tweaking the GC meeting format for future sessions. Glen asked if Sean is suggesting opportunities to add conversations on public health and higher education. Nick Freudenberg recommended reserving fifteen or twenty minutes at the start of the meeting for such discussion, which would be beneficial to the community. Ayman noted quarterly events focused with longer (possibly forty minutes) of in-depth discussions could work, too. Heidi agreed that this would be a positive use of GC time and would foster a sense of community. Diana noted that having small group meetings could be more productive and encourage participation. Nevin Cohen added that including the discussion topics ahead of time can help attendees come prepared with thoughts and feedback. Stacey Plichta recommended making meetings more interactive. Mohit suggested moving the Associate Dean Reports before the Committee Updates for staff who are unable to attend the full meeting.

Suzanne McDermott tabled discussion on School policies related to hybrid-track students taking online-only courses.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, Glen adjourned the meeting at 3:29 pm.

Minutes submitted by Matt Paczkowski