

**Meeting of the Governance Council**  
Wednesday, October 22, 2025, 1:30-3:30 PM  
Room 708, Auditorium; Interim Chair: Emma Tsui

**Attendance:**

The following Voting Members of the Governance Council (GC) attended: Besnik Berisha, Juliana Bol, Jennifer Cadenhead, Nevin Cohen, Spring Cooper, Rosemary Farrell, Sasha Fleary, Lauren Fowler, Ann Gaba, Kimberly Garrett, Elizabeth Geltman, Renee Goodwin, Jean Grassman, Christian Grov, Terry Huang, Mustafa Hussein, Glen Johnson, Heidi Jones, Davinder Kaur, Elizabeth Kelvin, Susan Klitzman, Philip Kreniske, Meg Krudysz, Jeffrey Lazarus, Bruce Lee, Matthew Lootens, Meredith Manze, Pedro Mateu-Gelabert, Chinasa Mbanugo, Suzanne McDermott, Theresa McGovern, Christopher McLaughlin, Sehyun Oh, Chris Palmedo, Rachael Piltch-Loeb, Stacey Plichta, Lynn Roberts, Nash Rochman, Diana Romero, Nasim Sabounchi, Zachary Shahn, Ghada Soliman, Emma Tsui, Levi Waldron, Karmen Williams, Katarzyna Wyka, Constantin Yiannoutsos

The following Alternate Members of the Governance Council (GC) attended: Sapphire Howard

The following Non-Voting Members of the Governance Council (GC) attended: Ayman El-Mohandes, Mollie Braaten, Louie Cao, Naana Dei, Lea Dias, Annie Dunlap, Alexis Feinberg, Lynn Francis, Jason Gaines, Jessica George, Sara Ingram, Seeraj Kadura, Jennifer Keane, Patti Lamberson, Hannah Stuart Lathan, Chloe Lecat, Paulo Léllis, Cesar Leon, Maya Lloyd, Arthur McHugh, Emanuel Mejía, Yesenia Mena, Victor Oren, Roxanne Towler, Joanna Warchol

**Call to Order: Mission Minute and Approval of September 2025 Minutes**

Emma Tsui, Interim Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:32 PM.

Emma opened the meeting by expressing her immense thanks to Paulo Léllis, Emanuel Mejía, Christopher McLaughlin, the IT team, and the Facilities team for all the support they provide before and during the Governance Council meetings so that the GC operates so smoothly.

Emma then put forth the September 2025 minutes for approval. Hearing no objections, they stand approved as presented.

For the Mission Minute, Sasha Fleary highlighted that the CHSS department strategic plan that was included a point on helping MS students who want to pursue a terminal degree. The department felt it should perhaps be a schoolwide initiative and partnered with the Career Services team to put together a workshop each semester over the last couple years that addresses relevant aspects of seeking a doctorate.

Sasha expressed her gratitude to the faculty who attended last week's event on writing the Personal Statement and took the time to answer all the questions that students had. She noted that a student who had applied to doctoral programs previously told her that they felt seen and valued here at CUNY SPH. That response gets to the essence of what we do here at CUNY SPH.

## **Dean's Report**

Dean Ayman El-Mohandes began by commending Diana Romero for taking on the responsibility of serving as the new Director of the Center for Immigrant, Refugee, & Global Health (CIRGH). He also thanked Kathleen Cravero and Jim Sherry for their leadership of CIRGH and bringing it to where it is today. He then introduced two staff members from the SRJ Hub, Naana Dei and Chloe Lecat, and thanked them for the contributions they are making to the Hub and school writ large.

Ayman continued by noting the ongoing federal government shutdown, which has led to the further furlough of federal employees. He also noted that the school also has employees who are funded by federal grants and contracts. Ayman stated that the University Research Foundation and senior leadership agreed that the university would protect these employees from financial impacts of a government shutdown for at least two months, totaling four pay periods. Each of the schools would commit to setting aside funds to cover this cost and the university would reconvene to discuss should the shutdown last beyond that period of time,

Ayman shared that CUNY SPH's commitment to this effort is not insignificant, totaling \$600,000. He also stated that the University RF did not know whether they will receive retroactive payments from the federal government. There is a possibility that the expenses incurred during the shutdown period will not be reimbursed.

Ayman also stated that the school is still drawing down on invoices submitted to the government on federal grants and that the federal government is transferring money for these submissions. He was interested in knowing when the work was completed related to the submitted invoices, given the time lag typically involved. Ayman then asked the President of the RF for some additional information and was told that 44 invoices have been submitted and reimbursed at least a few of them cover work dates after the start of the government shutdown on October 1<sup>st</sup>.

Ayman then commented that he has been told that there is a freeze on both new hires and OTPS spending on federal grants until the shutdown is resolved. He clarified that this moratorium is on grants spending, but it does not apply to 9<sup>th</sup> ledger account accumulated funds. Ayman did, however, urge caution with spending those funds.

Ayman reminded everyone that while there were no distributions back to the Centers, Institutes, and PI during the second half of the last fiscal year, that policy has been changed to a 50% distribution until the end of the calendar year. He noted that in December 2025, they should be in a position to make a determination on these distributions for the rest of this fiscal year.

Ayman concluded his remarks by highlighting that the Chief Editor of *Nature Medicine*, Ben Johnson, will be speaking during the Grand Rounds on November 11<sup>th</sup>.

Heidi Jones asked a question to clarify whether any of the two months of reserve funding have been touched since the funds have been flowing thus far. Ayman thanked her for this question and said that not one dollar from the reserves has been spent, which is wonderful – and that it is possible that we may not have to touch these funds at all. Ayman also applauded the university for taking that initiative in order to protect our employees.

## **Old Business**

### *Resolution on Virtual Meeting Attendance*

Emma Tsui started with an overview of the topic and the steps that the Governance Council and school have taken so far this year. She highlighted the vote that was taken on the amendment to the Governance Plan in the spring, which did not receive a sufficient number of votes in favor to clear the 2/3rds requirement of all Voting Members of the Governance Council in order to pass. She noted feedback that she has received regarding the ongoing need for such a policy and confusion about whether remote meeting attendance is possible. The goal is to ensure all understand the current status of this matter.

Emma highlighted that key concerns for reopening this discussion on virtual meeting attendance revolve around creating options to participate for student members who live elsewhere and/or work full-time and for members who face unexpected circumstances but would like to participate in the meeting. She stressed that for qualifying issues or illnesses, it may be appropriate to seek a disability accommodation from Human Resources. Any accommodation from HR is always available and is outside the scope of the amendment being considered.

Donna Canfield then shared draft language for amending the Governance Plan. She noted that any amendment would be subject to provisions of New York state law and must be approved by a resolution of the CUNY Board of Trustees.

Liz Geltman asked whether the language in the proposed amendment could be revised from “College Council” to “Governance Council” to reflect the name of this body. Donna said that this revision can be made for consistency.

Suzanne McDermott asked for clarification as to what constitutes quorum. Emma noted that 51% of the Voting Members being present satisfies the requirement for quorum.

Donna continued and stated the steps for this process. First, if someone makes a motion to do so, the Voting Members could vote to amend the Governance Plan. Then, if the motion passes, we would then forward the amendment, the draft resolution, and the draft procedures to the CUNY Office of the General Counsel (OGC) for comment and review, who would then forward them to the CUNY Board of Trustees for their review and voting. Donna said that we could do additional work on the resolution and procedures before forwarding them to the OGC and that the OGC may suggest changes.

Emma then covered the proposed definition of “extraordinary circumstances” – which includes disability, illness, caregiving responsibilities, full-time remote work approval, a non-CUNY SPH work site and/or online only student status for elected student members, and an unexpected factor or event precluding physical attendance. The circumstance relating to students has been updated since the previous discussion in the spring.

Emma then reviewed previously discussed pros and cons of the policy and requested that any further discussion build on this information as a baseline. She also explained the implications of implementing virtual meeting attendance, including the need for a quorum to be able to hold a meeting and that all meetings would need to be made available to the public in person and online. A meeting link would need to be publicly accessible, and to the extent practicable, meetings would need to be recorded and those recordings maintained.

Liz Geltman asked about the requirement for recording meetings and maintaining these recordings. Donna stated that these requirements are in the law in Section 103-A and that in May 2025, Governor Hochul amended the Freedom of Information Law with the requirement that meetings be maintained for at least five years.

Diana Romero asked whether the circumstances allowing for remote attendance must be explicit and cited conference attendance as a professional responsibility that may preclude in person attendance. Emma said that conference attendance has been initially excluded as an example in the draft resolution given concerns about the ability to reach quorum, noting that this example is something that we could consider amending or building into the draft resolution.

Mustafa Hussein asked whether this procedure requires Voting Members to declare their intention to attend the meeting in person prior to the meeting. Emma said that this is something that we could work out in the procedures and that it may be a wise process.

Suzanne McDermott asked why the proposed definition of “extraordinary circumstances” includes disability and illness as qualifying examples. Donna shared that not every illness necessarily qualifies for an accommodation under the ADA.

Ghada Soliman asked who authorizes an illness under these procedures. Emma noted that there is a skeleton for the process written into the resolution and that an ad hoc committee may be appropriate for fully considering how this process could work best and deciding how it will work.

Christian Grov spoke in favor of the amendment and noted that it will allow students who are Voting Members but are not able to attend in person to participate and vote in the meetings. He also said that part of the inability to have a larger meeting attendance to meet certain thresholds is because students are unable to attend under the present meeting requirements.

Susan Klitzman spoke in favor of the amendment for students but asked for clarification if this will apply to faculty and staff. She noted that CUNY governance is meant to be a participatory process and that an active in person presence is important and required. The in-person element is intended to reflect how the CUNY Board of Trustees and State Legislature operate. Susan expressed concern that this process is going to change engagement and the spirit of governance.

Jessica George spoke in favor of the amendment, seconding Christian's comments. She also shared that many students do not have flexibility in terms of leaving their work place for a period of time to attend the Governance Council meetings and that they are enthusiastic about participating in the GC.

Jeff Lazarus asked if there is any way to do this change on a trial basis. Emma noted that while this is an excellent idea, unfortunately it is not possible.

Lynn Roberts spoke in favor of the amendment, particularly as it pertains to students. Along with the previous statements from Jessica and Christian, she said that the current requirements are a barrier to recruiting students to serve in these positions. Lynn also thinks it is important that representatives can come from our entire pool of students, including those who take classes fully online and those who do not live near our campus.

Diana Romero asked whether it was possible for the policy to apply only to students. Emma said that her understanding was that that is not possible. Donna Canfield clarified that such an approach might be possible.

Levi Waldron commented that some of the concern about remote attendance seems theoretical. From his own experience, he would attend meetings remotely when he is not able to attend in person due to circumstances such as travel. Under the current policy, he is not able to attend the GC meeting and this amendment would create opportunities for people to attend who otherwise cannot currently.

At this point, the discussion had exceeded the allotted time and Emma asked the Governance Council how it would like to proceed. Emma asked Christopher McLaughlin to provide information on the current number of Voting Members on the GC and their attendance at this meeting. He replied that there are presently 60 Voting Members and that 47 had signed in for the meeting.

Christian Grov made a motion to call the question so that the body could then move to voting on the amendment. Ghada Soliman seconded the motion, which was approved by general consent.

Christian Grov then made a motion to amend the Governance Plan as proposed, which was seconded by Glen Johnson. The motion was approved: 40 voting Yes, 6 voting No, and 0 abstentions. Please see the Appendix for a full vote tally.

## **Committee Reports**

### *Budget Committee, Heidi Jones*

Heidi started by reviewing the committee's membership and duties per CUNY SPH's bylaws. She highlighted the three funding streams coming into the school and reminded everyone that the Budget Committee reviews the Tax Levy budget.

Heidi thanked Theresa Matis for all her work compiling the budget information and presenting it in a clear fashion. She pointed out the budget implications of retirements, where people are paid while on travia but a new person must take on the duties and a search committee must also commence – both of which must be paid for while someone is on travia. Heidi also noted that the school in the spring semester typically only collects 92% of the revenue amount that it does in the fall semester.

Mollie Braaten commented that enrollment increases have a positive impact for the budget and asked if these increases take into account any effects on staffing levels. Heidi shared that the school is trying to maintain a 15:1 student:faculty ratio but that the school should also think about this impact on staff. Ayman El-Mohandes said that most schools maintain that 15:1 ratio. He also noted that CUNY SPH has a large proportion of part-time students and a large and growing percentage of students who are enrolled online. The online aspect requires us to consider the IT needs and automated functions that may be scaled up. Susan Klitzman also highlighted that the school has more than doubled its full-time staff and more than quadrupled its adjuncts since its establishment.

### *Committee on Equity and Inclusion (CEI), Rosemary Farrell*

Rosemary discussed that the CEI is seeking a proposed change to the bylaws so that the committee can achieve full membership among faculty. The proposed change maintains the requirement for departmental representation but creates some flexibility in terms of faculty rank in its membership.

Besnik Berisha made a motion to approve the change, which was seconded by Rachael Piltch-Loeb. The motion was approved: 38 voting Yes, 0 voting No, and 2 abstentions. Please see the Appendix for a full vote tally.

### *Assessment Committee, Nash Rochman*

Nash provided an overview of four key questions from the annual alumni survey. He encouraged everyone to review the full survey results that were shared prior to the GC meeting. After reviewing the response trends to the four questions, Nash suggested that the GC consider two possibilities: 1) given the disconnect between general student satisfaction and public health job placement, an intervention might be warranted; 2) the alumni survey may benefit from a reformulation.

Constantin Yiannoutsos asked if we can differentiate between the availability of public health-related positions and the preparation offered for those positions, in light of the fact that the school may prepare students for these positions – but public health-related jobs might not be available to be filled. Nash said that this is an excellent point given that there have been changes in the market for these positions since the pandemic; these changes are borne out in the survey responses to the relevant questions, despite the consistently strong sentiment expressed as it relates to the school itself.

## **Associate Deans' Reports**

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

Terry began with an overview of new programs and certificates, with the SRJH MPH ready to launch in the spring, while the POPHI MS, two EOGHS Advanced Certificates, and Global 4+1 program are all going to the

CUNY Board of Trustees for approval on October 27<sup>th</sup>. Programs that are in discussion or development include the DrPH, Mental Health Task-Sharing certificate, Midwifery program, and the Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response certificate. She noted that CUNY Central is very interested in the details and costs of new certificates and programs and is requesting more information, as they are rightfully concerned about programs that will lose money in the current fiscal environment.

Terry then shared that the school has received money from CUNY Central to help with online learning and that they want to be involved with helping SPH succeed with these efforts. Terry continued with an update on the Fieldwork and Capstone Taskforce, which has met with the department chairs and the Curriculum Committee to discuss challenges and opportunities, as well as to collect feedback.

Terry concluded by encouraging anyone who is interested to attend the Launch Event for the Byllye Avery Endowed Professorship on October 30<sup>th</sup>. It is a significant accomplishment, and we should take the occasion to celebrate it. 190 people have RSVP'ed so far, and please reach out to Terry if you would like to join.

*Arthur McHugh and Jennifer Keane on behalf of Susan Klitzman, Senior Associate Dean for Administration*

Arthur announced that a series of workshops will be held in the fall and winter to support best practices in hiring, onboarding, and performance management. The first is next Tuesday, October 28<sup>th</sup>, and the next will be in February. This series will be hosted using a hybrid format.

Arthur then provided an overview of the required compliance trainings, which are mandated by the state and must be completed by May 2026. He also noted the ethics training, which is required by COELIG, must be completed by December 31<sup>st</sup>.

Arthur concluded by sharing that the Open Enrollment period is in November. If employees do not want to make any changes for 2026, then they do not need to submit any forms.

Jennifer reminded faculty to submit the Multiple Position Form if it applies to them. This form is available via CUNY SPH SharePoint and is not in the CUNY Central system. She also reminded staff about the HEO/CLT Professional Development Fund; the deadline for applying is November 1<sup>st</sup>.

*Elizabeth Kelvin, Interim Associate Dean for Research*

Elizabeth shared that SPaR has the funded grant list is available on SharePoint for all SPH-funded grants. SPaR has also started a weekly newsletter for sharing information. They plan to create an archive so that all these communications will be available in one location.

Renee Goodwin asked if there is any update on NIH funding, specifically if there is current advice for submitting grants and whether submissions are being reviewed. Elizabeth responded that submissions should continue as normal, however they will not be reviewed until the federal government reopens. She also noted that NIH has not explained what they will do with international subcontracts and that SPaR is looking into funding opportunities through foundations – however these opportunities are becoming a lot more competitive.

*Lynn Roberts, Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Alumni Relations*

Lynn opened by sharing information on the CUNY Immigration Assistance Program (CIAP), which is being privately funded. CIAP will support faculty, students, staff, or their families should they be detained and connect those impacted to a free consultation.



Lynn also highlighted the 2026 Ferguson RISE Fellowship and encouraged CUNY SPH students to apply. She also noted that faculty can participate as mentors and that the fellowship requires a match between a fellow and a mentor.

Jessica George, GSGA President, shared that the GSGA is hosting a town hall next Tuesday, October 28<sup>th</sup>, at 7:30 PM. The goal is to hear from students about the events they would like to see and activities they would like to carry out this year. She also noted that the GSGA will host voter registration tabling immediately after the Governance Council meeting concludes.

Jessica thanked the active student clubs for their various activities so far this semester. She mentioned that two additional clubs are in the process of forming and are pending approval. Jessica noted that the Queer and Trans Health Justice Network is relaunching and will host its next meeting on October 30<sup>th</sup> in Room 503.

*Ghada Soliman, Interim Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs*

Ghada shared a reminder for faculty to email Arthur McHugh if they will be requesting sabbatical or to learn when they are eligible for it. She also noted that for faculty who will be applying for tenure or promotion in the 2026-2027 Academic Year, they will need to make sure their Watermark CV is up to date. Ghada thanked Alexis Feinberg for all the improvements she has made in Watermark. She also reminded faculty to start thinking about who their external reviewers will be for this process. Ghada concluded by reminding faculty to check the APT calendar for all relevant deadlines.

### **New Business**

*Ad Hoc Committee for Procedures on Remote Attendance*

Since the earlier vote on the Amendment passed, Emma Tsui put forward the idea of creating an Ad Hoc Committee that could determine the procedures and processes for permitting remote attendance for Governance Council meetings under exceptional circumstances. Emma noted that the composition of this Ad Hoc Committee membership could occur in consultation with the Steering Committee and that the Ad Hoc Committee could report back to the GC at a future meeting.

Heidi Jones then made a motion to create an Ad Hoc Committee that will be responsible for drafting procedures for requesting approval of remote meeting attendance, which was seconded by Ghada Soliman.

Liz Geltman asked whether this Ad Hoc Committee will be the decision maker in terms of the procedures for granting approval for remote attendance. Donna Canfield clarified that the procedures would become part of the bylaws, changes to which are approved by a majority vote of the Governance Council.

Ayman El-Mohandes noted that part of the Ad Hoc Committee's work will be to ensure that the procedures affirm compliance with the relevant policies that exist.

The motion put forth was approved: 40 voting Yes, 0 voting No, and 0 abstentions. Please see the Appendix for a full vote tally.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Emma Tsui adjourned the meeting at 3:32 PM.

Minutes submitted by Christopher McLaughlin

## **Appendix: Meeting Vote Results**

### **Governance Plan Amendment for Permitting Remote Meeting Attendance:**

Yes (40): Juliana Bol, Jennifer Cadenhead, Nevin Cohen, Spring Cooper, Rosemary Farrell, Sasha Fleary, Lauren Fowler, Ann Gaba, Kimberly Garrett, Elizabeth Geltman, Jean Grassman, Christian Grov, Terry Huang, Glen Johnson, Heidi Jones, Davinder Kaur, Elizabeth Kelvin, Philip Kreniske, Meg Krudysz, Jeffrey Lazarus, Bruce Lee, Matthew Lootens, Meredith Manze, Pedro Mateu-Gelabert, Chinasa Mbanugo, Theresa McGovern, Christopher McLaughlin, Sehyun Oh, Chris Palmedo, Rachael Piltch-Loeb, Stacey Plichta, Lynn Roberts, Nash Rochman, Nasim Sabounchi, Zachary Shahn, Ghada Soliman, Levi Waldron, Karmen Williams, Katarzyna Wyka, Constantin Yiannoutsos

No (6): Besnik Berisha, Renee Goodwin, Mustafa Hussein, Suzanne McDermott, Diana Romero, Mary Schooling

Abstain (0): None

### **CEI Bylaws Change for Faculty Membership:**

Yes (38): Besnik Berisha, Sasha Fleary, Meg Krudysz, Davinder Kaur, Rachael Piltch-Loeb, Glen Johnson, Jean Grassman, Nevin Cohen, Zachary Shahn, Meredith Manze, Ann Gaba, Kimberly Garrett, Stacey Plichta, Sehyun Oh, Pedro Mateu-Gelabert, Heidi Jones, Lauren Fowler, Bruce Lee, Matthew Lootens, Spring Cooper, Christian Grov, Lynn Roberts, Philip Kreniske, Chris Palmedo, Jennifer Cadenhead, Katarzyna Wyka, Ghada Soliman, Nash Rochman, Rosemary Farrell, Christopher McLaughlin, Elizabeth Kelvin, Susan Klitzman, Jeffrey Lazarus, Mary Schooling, Chinasa Mbanugo, Mustafa Hussein, Karmen Williams, Suzanne McDermott

No (0): None

Abstain (2): Constantin Yiannoutsos, Renee Goodwin

### **Creation of Ad Hoc Committee for Procedures on Remote Meeting Attendance:**

Yes (40): Nevin Cohen, Besnik Berisha, Meredith Manze, Meg Krudysz, Davinder Kaur, Rosemary Farrell, Terry Huang, Sehyun Oh, Chris Palmedo, Nash Rochman, Sasha Fleary, Stacey Plichta, Kimberly Garrett, Ann Gaba, Lauren Fowler, Pedro Mateu-Gelabert, Jean Grassman, Spring Cooper, Heidi Jones, Elizabeth Geltman, Glen Johnson, Matthew Lootens, Nasim Sabounchi, Elizabeth Kelvin, Suzanne McDermott, Zachary Shahn, Theresa McGovern, Lynn Roberts, Mary Schooling, Mustafa Hussein, Jeffrey Lazarus, Bruce Lee, Chinasa Mbanugo, Christopher McLaughlin, Susan Klitzman, Ghada Soliman, Katarzyna Wyka, Constantin Yiannoutsos, Levi Waldron, Karmen Williams

No (0): None

Abstain (0): None