

Meeting of the Governance Council
Wednesday, February 25, 2026, 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, Luisa Borrell, Ryan Chan, Spring Cooper, Rosemary Farrell, Sasha Fleary, Ann Gaba, Renee Goodwin, Jean Grassman, Christian Grov, Mustafa Hussein, Glen Johnson, Heidi Jones, Davinder Kaur, Elizabeth Kelvin, Susan Klitzman, Philip Kreniske, Bruce Lee, Pedro Mateu-Gelabert, Suzanne McDermott, Theresa McGovern, Christopher McLaughlin, Sehyun Oh, Christopher Palmedo, Brian Pavilonis, Rachael Piltch-Loeb, Stacey Plichta, Scott Ratzan, Lynn Roberts, Diana Romero, Thomas Rouyard, Nasim Sabounchi, Mary Schooling, Zachary Shahn, Ghada Soliman, Chloe Teasdale, Emma Tsui, Levi Waldron, Katarzyna Wyka

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

The following Non-Voting Members of the Governance Council (GC) attended: Moaz Abdelwadoud, Mollie Braaten, Louie Cao, Naana Dei, Annie Dunlap, Ayman El-Mohandes, Alexis Feinberg, Abigail Goldberg, Danielle Greene, Ansley Hobbs, Arielsela Holdbrook-Smith, Seeraj Kadura, Chloe Lecat, Cesar Leon, Maya Lloyd, Jose Mazariego, Matt Paczkowski, Roxanne Towler

Call to Order: Approval of December 2025 Minutes and Mission Minute

Emma Tsui, Interim Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:36 PM.

Emma opened the meeting by noting that there will be a couple presentations. She also shared that if during this or future meetings there is a request to add an item during the New Business portion of the meeting, we will be sure to take a vote to that item to the agenda. Emma apologized for the confusion surrounding this during the December meeting.

Emma reminded all in attendance that the final GC meeting of the semester will be moved to May and asked that everyone please be sure to use a microphone when speaking during the meeting.

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

For the Mission Minute, Suzanne McDermott wanted to acknowledge and thank Seeraj Kadura for everything he has done to ensure that Brightspace is working so well. Suzanne wanted to similarly thank the HelpDesk team for their dedication and professionalism, as they do so much to make our school run well every single day.

Dean's Report

Dean Ayman El-Mohandes began by sharing that CUNY Central has provided initial results of the student climate survey with COPS. The results are generally positive and CUNY SPH is aligned with the University overall. The

main issue the survey identified was when students were asked about when they want or need to submit a complaint, they were not sure how to do so. As a result of this finding, the school will submit an action plan to the University in early March to explain how it is addressing this issue. As part of this effort, SPH will circulate information to students informing them that they have the right to submit a complaint and explain how to do so.

Ayman then commented that the University's leadership is aware that the Workday transition at the Research Foundation has not been an easy one and is trying to learn from it in light of the University's upcoming transition to the platform in 2027. Early training will be one priority. He also asked Center directors and administrators to submit any issues that they become aware of to Susan Klitzman and himself so they can take them to RF, noting that RF administrators were also learning how to use Workday at the same time as everyone else.

Ayman recently met with the Chancellor, who noted his pride in all the work the school is doing. Ayman thanked Sumana Chandra for all her hard work on the CUNY SPH Annual Report, as the Chancellor was very impressed.

Ayman continued by highlighting that the school has enrolled 149 4+1 program students so far and the results have been encouraging. 80% of these students have graduated or are currently enrolled. Many CUNY Colleges are now engaged in this program. Ayman thanked Matt Paczkowski for all his work on this, which led to 27 admissions and 22 matriculations in Spring 2025, doubling the previous year's results. He also thanked Brian Pavilonis, Lynn Roberts, Meg Krudysz, Moaz Abdelwadoud, and Robyn Gertner for their continued efforts toward the program's success. The Chancellor noted his interest in fundraising to support these students for when they reach the point in the program where they are required to pay graduate school-level tuition.

Ayman concluded his remarks by expressing his sincere gratitude to Terry McGovern for her dedication to justice in public health, particularly in terms of fundraising for the Byllye Avery Endowed Professorship. Terry has decided that she would like to dedicate her focus in the next phase of her career to her work related to the United Nations, particularly with regard to gender rights and human rights. He shared that in order to do so, she will be moving to a senior faculty role in the CHSS department following the spring semester. While Ayman is sad to see her leave her role as a Senior Associate Dean, he is filled with gratitude that she will remain with the school. A search to fill this position will begin on March 1st, and Christian Grov will chair the search committee. When the position becomes vacant, Ayman will serve in an interim position until it is filled.

Old Business

Kips Bay Update, Louie Cao

Louie started by acknowledging Ghada Soliman, Susan Klitzman, and Chris Palmedo for their continued service to the committee that has been working on this project for the last couple years.

Louie reviewed slides showing the layout of SPARC Kips Bay, which have been previously shared with the GC. The overall project will encompass three buildings and house several other organizations beside CUNY schools. He noted that the architects have focused mostly on the overall design of the space and not necessarily the specific utilization of all areas of the campus. The utilization decisions will come at a later date and the current decisions that are being made are related to architectural matters.

Chris Palmedo shared that the committee members across schools are aware that technology and the related uses and needs will be different by the time the new campus opens in 2030. Susan Klitzman also commented that CUNY SPH will have the ability to repurpose some of our allocated space in order to meet our needs.

Heidi Jones asked whether we are operating under the premise that each faculty member will still have their own office. Susan noted that the school should think critically about this and take it into consideration when think

about space utilization overall and making related decisions. Renee Goodwin suggested that we consider this holistically, particularly with regard to teaching classes in-person versus online.

Chloe Teasdale asked how the campus move will impact our students and research, along with the school's legacy and relationships in Harlem. Sapphire Howard asked if the cost difference between the current 125th Street campus and the SPARC campus location is known. Susan shared that CUNY Central pays for the school's current lease, except for a small percentage of the space on the 8th floor – which is paid for by research indirect cost funds. She noted that the SPARC Kips Bay project is being paid for with state and city capital funding. Ayman El-Mohandes shared that he would like CUNY Central to direct those lease funds toward programming once the school relocates to Kips Bay.

Update on Hybrid Meetings Resolution, Emma Tsui and Donna Canfield

Emma began by reminding everyone that a vote to change the Governance Plan for remote attendance in extraordinary circumstances was approved at the October GC meeting. Before any change is implemented, however, approval is required from the CUNY Board of Trustees (BoT). She continued by sharing that Donna just received minor comments about what CUNY SPH submitted and has already addressed them. As such, the amendment has been added to the BoT's March/April meeting cycle for further action.

In conjunction with the BoT requirements, Emma noted that CUNY SPH must approve changes to the bylaws. The ad hoc committee created for this purpose met in December but has held off on finalizing draft procedures pending feedback from CUNY Central Legal and the BoT Education Committee. Having now received their comments, the ad hoc committee will meet again soon to consider the revisions to the bylaws.

Faculty Mentoring Update, Emma Tsui

Emma shared that a 14-day writing challenge will take place March 9-22. The purpose is to develop a daily writing habit that is key to producing scholarship. It is free and open to faculty, adjuncts, and doctoral students. Participants will commit to writing at least 30 mins a day, Monday through Friday, for the 2 weeks of the challenge. Writing is understood broadly and includes anything that moves participants forward professionally, and can include items like a grant proposal or an abstract.

Emma also shared that there is a weekly faculty writing hour on Fridays from 10:30-11:30 AM and that a mid-career peer mentoring group has been created. She concluded by noting NCFDD has many resources available.

Committee Reports

Curriculum Committee, Mary Schooling

Proposed Deletion of Previous Core Course Numbers:

Mary noted that these courses have been listed on the books for six years but have not been taught over that period of time. The committee wants to remove them from the books in order to prevent any confusion, particularly for students when they are registering for new courses each semester.

Chloe Teasdale made a motion to approve the deletions, which was seconded by Besnik Berisha. The motion was approved: 37 voting Yes, 0 voting No, and 0 abstentions. Please see the Appendix for a full vote tally.

Proposed Change to Academic Appeals:

Mary shared that a clarification is needed in the academic appeals policy. The issue is that if a student appeals a grade in their last semester before graduating, then they cannot graduate until the following semester. The goal of the language change is to simplify and clarify the matter.

Ayman El-Mohandes stated that he thinks the current policy is coercive and goes against the interest of students.

Robyn Gertner noted that it is CUNY policy that a grade cannot be changed once a student graduates and that CUNY SPH cannot change it. She further stated that if a student does appeal in this scenario, they would have to pay the maintenance and matriculation fee and that this change is intended to clarify this point for students.

Lynn Roberts shared that this vote appears to be geared toward transparency. Brian Pavilonis then asked how many students affected by this situation, as it applies only in a student's last semester. Robyn shared that the school just had the first case where this occurred since the school started in 2016.

Ayman then asked whether the school could enact an emergency policy in order to consider a student's needs should this occasion arise. Danielle Greene then clarified that it appears that the GC is considering two important aspects related to the core issue: 1) the importance of transparency and clarifying for students precisely what the current policy is; and 2) whether CUNY SPH can enact a special policy for students who would be impacted negatively by the current policy with regard to when they can graduate.

Brian shared that the appeals process is lengthy and requires faculty to collect and review a lot of information. He asked whether it would be possible to complete the appeals process within a couple days so that it would not affect a student's ability to graduate in the same semester. He further asked whether the school is going to mandate that faculty complete the process on such a timeline.

Heidi Jones then asked if CUNY SPH can waive the fee during the appeals process. Molly Ghosh clarified that the school unfortunately cannot waive the maintenance fee, as it is required by the university.

Having reached the end of the discussion time for this agenda item, Luisa Borrell made a motion to table the item, which was seconded by Jean Grassman. The motion to table was approved by acclamation.

Associate Deans' Reports

Terry McGovern, Senior Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs

Terry began by thanking the Dean for his kind words earlier and is excited to continue working with everyone in her new capacity. Mollie Braaten then shared that she is developing a tool a project management tool in Academic Affairs that is based on their experience with the SRJH program. It will be on SharePoint. The tool can be customized and will be based in Microsoft Excel. Mollie is happy to meet with anyone to go into further detail.

Susan Klitzman, Senior Associate Dean for Administration

Susan reminded everyone of the annual compliance trainings, most of which are available on Brightspace. She also noted that the annual staff evaluations are due on April 1st. Susan mentioned the evaluation conference that is required and suggested completing this step in the very near future if you have done so already. She concluded by announcing an active shooter table top exercise will take place on March 25th from 9:30-11:30 AM.

Ghada Soliman, Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs

Ghada congratulated all the faculty who received the CUNY AI awards; SPH faculty received roughly one quarter of the total university award that was available. She reminded everyone that the Faculty Award nominations are due on March 20. There is a new award this year for Adjuncts who have taught three or more semesters. Ghada noted that Seeraj Kadura is doing a lot to help with accessibility and compliance in Brightspace and that support services are also available to assist with this important requirement as well.

Lynn Roberts, Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Alumni Relations

Lynn announced that an Admitted Students Day will take place on March 24th and that Epsilon Chi induction is on April 23rd. The GSGA will also host a Student Celebration, which is tentatively scheduled for April 25th. Lynn also shared that the RISE Fellowship received 231 eligible applications, with 44 applicants indicating CUNY SPH as their first choice. She is still recruiting faculty mentors who are willing to serve and thanked Denis Nash and Nash Rochman for their willingness to serve in this capacity.

Ryan Chan shared that the GSGA held a town hall the previous week, which was well attended. There were key takeaways around the themes of course flexibility, community, and governance. International students had questions about student visas and work clearance, and many students indicated a need for practical support – such as how to approach the job market and pointers on their resumes. Ryan also announced that there will be a free CPR training on February 26th and a free Narcan training on March 17th; all are welcome to join. He concluded by sharing that TedX CUNY 2026 took place recently and that there will be a playback of it on April 17th.

Elizabeth Kelvin, Interim Associate Dean for Research

Elizabeth shared that the Student Research Expo is March 24th where students can present their work that has been presented at conferences over the past two years. They are welcome to email Elizabeth an electronic version of their poster if they cannot attend in person or send her the URL of the conference abstract book if it was an oral presentation. The SPaR staff is initiating office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00-11:00 AM, which will be hosted on Zoom. If questions arise that cannot be answered there, SPaR will forward them to RF CUNY.

New Business

ADA and Title II Compliance in Online Learning Environments, Dee Kaur

Dee started by sharing that these compliance requirements apply to the school's website, social media, and anything considered to be an online asset of the school, not solely online classes. She noted that failure to comply could result in actions up to and including federal fines or loss of funding. The school is being asked to be proactively compliant with the requirements. Dee shared that the key is taking reasonable, documented steps to ensure compliance and that specific trainings on a variety of topics are available online.

Dee then highlighted the 3Rs framework for compliance: Retire, Replace, Remediate. Major areas of focus under the 3Rs are: alt text, links, audio/visual (A/V), headings, tables/graphs, and PDFs. Dee noted that each focus area will have a dedicated training. She noted that for A/V, while transcripts are not currently mandated, this may change in the future.

Dee stated that the compliance policy goes into effect on April 24th. Any content shared before that date is not subject to the requirements – but everything shared from that day forward is. She stressed the importance of documenting the improvements that you are making and that a PDF checklist and a more detailed Excel spreadsheet are available to assist.

In discussing ADA alignment at CUNY SPH, Dee said the school has adopted the OSCQR rubric and standards. She said that the Core Courses have received Ally scores of 94-98%, which is good, while also caveating that the school has not yet received threshold requirements yet from the federal government. Dee concluded her remarks by sharing that 2 EOGHS courses are in the development cycle currently.

Seeraj Kadura then gave an overview of the Ally tool, which is built into Brightspace. Ally explains accessibility issues and how you can address them. He then showed an example for the PUBH 613 course, which was positively received by the members in attendance.

Glen Johnson asked whether there is a minimum Ally score that is required. Dee shared that she has not received guidance for this yet but did find some information from SUNY indicating that scores should be 85% or higher.

Trash Audit, Louie Cao

Louie announced that it will take place on March 31st. The audit is required by New York State and involves taking pictures of items disposed of in our trash. He is happy to have anyone who is interested participate in this event. Louie asked that GC members please contact him in advance so he can plan accordingly.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Emma Tsui adjourned the meeting at 3:31 PM.

Minutes submitted by Christopher McLaughlin

Appendix: Meeting Vote Results

Deletion of Previous Core Course Numbers:

Yes (37): Besnik Berisha, Juliana Bol, Luisa Borrell, Ryan Chan, Spring Cooper, Rosemary Farrell, Sasha Fleary, Ann Gaba, Renee Goodwin, Jean Grassman, Christian Grov, Mustafa Hussein, Glen Johnson, Heidi Jones, Davinder Kaur, Elizabeth Kelvin, Susan Klitzman, Philip Kreniske, Pedro Mateu-Gelabert, Suzanne McDermott, Theresa McGovern, Christopher McLaughlin, Sehyun Oh, Christopher Palmedo, Brian Pavilonis, Rachael Piltch-Loeb, Stacey Plichta, Scott Ratzan, Lynn Roberts, Diana Romero, Thomas Rouyard, Nasim Sabounchi, Zachary Shahn, Ghada Soliman, Chloe Teasdale, Levi Waldron, Katarzyna Wyka

No (0): None

Abstain (0): None