



# Free City College Oversight Committee

## Minutes



**Members:** Eileen Mariano (Co-Chair), Brigitte Davila (Co-Chair), Dr. Lisa Cooper Wilkins, Nikki Hatfield, Win-Mon Kyi, Angelica Campos, Supervisor Gordon Mar, Jennifer Fong, Maria Su, Alisa Messer, Christopher Brodie, Tyler Wu, Conny Ford, Malinalli Villalobos, Calvin Quock

**Date and Time:** Wednesday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 3:00pm-5:00pm

**Location:** Zoom or Join by Telephone: 1-669-900-6833; Webinar ID: 825 3540 5259

### I. Call to Order and Roll Call

- A. Meeting called to order at 3:06 PM.
- B. Members Present: Calvin Quock, Angelica Campos, Joana Feit, Alisa Messer, Eileen Mariano, Maria Su, Supervisor Gordon Mar, Win-Mon Kyi, Chris Brodie, Conny Ford, Dr. Lisa Cooper Wilkins, Brigitte Davila
- C. Members Absent: Tyler Wu, Nikki Hatfield, Malinalli Villalobos

### II. Adoption of the Agenda

- A. Agenda adopted.
- B. Member Messer made a comment thanking DCYF for ensuring FCC meetings were back on schedule.
- C. Member Davila motioned; and Member Ford seconded.

### III. General Public Comments

- A. No public comment.

### IV. Resolution to Allow Teleconferenced Meetings Under CA Government Code Section 54953(e)

- A. Resolution adopted.
- B. Member Feit motioned; and Member Su seconded.

### V. Review and Approval of March 2022 Minutes

- A. Minutes approved.
- B. Member Comments & Questions:
  - Member Mar thanked DCYF and Co Chair Mariano for keeping the FCC meetings regularly scheduled for making sure the documents were well organized on the DCYF website.
- C. Member Mar motioned; and Member Su seconded.

### VI. City College Update & RP Group Update

- A. Dr. Lisa Cooper Wilkins shared an update on the FCC Spring Program Participation Report, FCC Spring Enrollment Metrics and Financial Aid Updates. She then introduced Priyadarshini (Priya) Chaplot and Giovanni Sosa of The RP Group (Research, Planning & Professional Development for California Community Colleges) who gave an update on their report which includes the national landscape of Promise Programs and best practices. The report is working to advance the learning of the Annual Report completed in Fall 21' that looked at the '19-'20 Year. They are seeking to support the learning for FCC in its efforts to meet the needs of a variety of students. They gave an overview of the project which included determining what opportunities exist for the FCC program that can contribute to closing CCSF's equity gaps for students who are from disproportionately impacted groups. Their report will include identifying program improvement (design considerations) and additional data to better understand the impact of the FCC program and offer input on ways to evaluate the program. It will include measuring the differential impact on students, evaluations of

previous reports, and scanning similar programs throughout the country. The report is expected to be completed by the end of June. Lastly, RP Group presented on data points and findings that they have access to and shared viable research questions, planned activities, and the features of similar programs.

#### B. Member Comments & Questions

- Member Mariano opened the discussion and Member Su thanked the RPG Group. She asked them to share best practices they saw across the country and to elaborate on whether it confirms her interpretations of the Promise work, and the commitments from City's to support their public-school students going into post-secondary.
- Priya responded that they are trying to look at a variety of programs that prioritizes students and that have no eligibility requirements. She stated they are noticing the different features to the students' experiences and that tuition assistance factors in to help students enter and stay in school. In many cases students are being asked to do other things. For example, a FAFSA completion is a requirement for access to the funds and there are cases where students have to meet with an advisor from the beginning in order to build a comprehensive education plan or will have a coach assigned throughout the student's journey. Priya stated that with the volume of FCC it may not be possible to have high touch supports that make an impact, but there are opportunities to think about students from disproportionate groups or equity groups which are the institution's priority. She added that FCC needs to think about prioritizing holistic supports. Member Su shared that this was helpful and that with the data shared earlier while students are completing courses, and with the uptick in student completions, that the students who are completing are not within the equity group. Member Su shared that the Committee needs to think about how to share resources for students who are historically marginalized both in public school and in the higher education public system.
- Co-Chair Davila thanked RPG Group for the report and shared that she liked the ideas for opportunities to offer high touch support for students to get them through and asked about national research findings and whether there were other cities like San Francisco.
- Priya responded that they are still completing the literature review and trying to find balance between programs that are bringing in students from the high schools that are in city-based programs and focused on high schools. They are also balancing this with research studies and looking broadly at Promise programs and their impact on equity. Additionally, there are programs that mimic FCC because they are city-based and there are also programs that because of the expanded nature of the students, the Committee can look at them by place instead of by high school. Co-Chair Davila asked if Long Beach was a city being reviewed and Priya offered that they are on the list. Chair Davila asked that while it is helpful for students to complete the FAFSA what do they do about undocumented students because while it was an initial challenge it will continue to be a challenge for FCC. RPG Group responded that they would add this to their list of questions and find out how they are completing the applications because they know there are programs that are open to students who are undocumented. They added that there are programs that are looking at ways of putting together holistic supports for students who have a variety of needs, and they know it is possible and will try to bring this design forward. Co-Chair Davila asked if they looked at El Paso, TX because their high school students can earn a four-year degree after two years. RPG added this to their list.
- Member Messer thanked RPG Group and Member Wilkins Cooper. She expressed that the FCC program overall is understudied and under considered and added a major difference is full time and part time students are included as well as returning students. And in terms of overall impact including recent high school students there is no restriction on how recently you must have been through high school. And that CCSF has a significant number of students that are coming back to retrain. She asked for other things to be considered and studied when supporting more students rather than fewer, and not narrowing options. Member Messer also asked that for their literature review RPG Group also look at the research completed at the inception of FCC including program comparisons and to look at the more recent detailed Annual Report which is on the DCYF website. She also added that Michelle Miller Adams' book "The Path to Free College" has a lot of information and she's thrilled to have professional researchers helping work on the data and offered her support and resources as she's been working on this for the past 7 years. RPG Group agreed and is happy to

make the connection and accepted the offer of support. Lastly, Member Messer offered that in the earlier iteration of FCC, they completed an extensive survey monkey of students, and it has a lot of data to build on and that she had been wanting to share this with Member Cooper Wilkins.

- Member Mar thanked the RPG Group and City College and then asked about the overall frame of the research and evaluation. He shared that it seemed like the report is more focused on equity and wanted to know to what extent was FCC advancing their equity goals for City College and City. Member Mar asked what other lenses or considerations can be included in the overall research such as bolstering enrollment and retention overall to help address the challenges of the enrollment decline and its impact on CCSF's sustainability. Member Mar agreed with the other goal, also addressed by Member Su, of building the pathway from public high school to City College especially given that the high school population is overwhelmingly the same as the equity population.
- Member Cooper Wilkins responded by sharing that part of the impetus for engaging the RPG Group was a desire to better document the impact of equity because this wasn't the frame that was used when the FCC program was established and that therefore there is a seemingly decided focus on equity. Member Cooper Wilkins also added that part of what she's hearing in the preliminary analysis is that this is an opportunity to consider other topic areas and that it wasn't the initial way they engaged the RPG Group. Priya added that this doesn't exist in a bubble and that the FCC is both an access and retention strategy and is in concert with other City College programs and underscores the equity context. Priya added that they are unearthing areas that need more time and exploration and looking at what other programs FCC students are going into and how these programs connect to the viability in terms of career and transfers into other institutions. RPG Group's report will also offer points of further reflection where data is concerned and build on what's already been seen and will identify other research questions. They closed with exploring terms of consecutive enrollment, overall units earned and will look to answer some of the retention-oriented questions by using the data they have access to.
- Member Messer added that as we think about what's particular about FCC's program that we have a broader view and in some cases a view that is not entirely about equity. She offered that for example there are full time and part time issues and that part of CCSF's mission is lifelong learning and that this is a piece of what FCC does. And this is not everybody's priority but is a priority of the college and of FCC. She continued that it is not only about high school, transfer and completion for many and that she thinks this is a "both/and" and not an "either/or." And that like many other efforts in the state this begins to narrow down student possibilities in ways that many at CCSF want to not see narrowed, and this has been an explicit conversation at the college and in SF and she wanted to lift this up. She shared that FCC was conceived in a way that did not only go down one path and that this makes it a little bit of an outlier and that many thinks this is a good thing for SF and education in SF. Member Messer concluded that she did not want this to get lost as these conversations continue.
- No public comment.

## **VII. Discussion of Free City Funds**

- A. Member Su provided a refresher on FCC Reserve Fund from Controller's Office presentation that was shared in March. Bringing back the conversations from March where they committed to having an intentional strategy on how to use the Reserve Funds. That it was important to hear the plans of FCC regarding their best practices and how other cities are utilizing these supports and funding for college. Member Su reminded everyone that FCC is allocated for the next 7 years and had started out at \$15M and now has a slight increase. That FCC will have a base of \$16.4M and then it grows with a little inflator inside. Member Su reminded everyone of what's inside the Reserve Fund now and currently there is \$5.3M. This was built when Supervisor Kim allocated \$2M into the Reserve Fund just in case there was an increase in student enrollment. When the pandemic hit the college did not see that increase but saw a decrease in students and thus had \$4.3M of unspent funds in the FCC allocation, which then got rolled into the Reserve Fund. And where we are now, there is \$5.3M in the Reserve Fund because there was \$1M appropriated from the Reserve Fund to support programming for City College. Member Su stated that if we continue with the current enrollment patterns, we will be looking at another large amount of funds that will be moved over to the Reserve Fund.

B. Member Su stated that we needed to be mindful and that once the Reserve Funds hits its cap, then all funds fall back into the General Fund which is what is prompting these conversations. Member Su added that while the Committee still has oversight on Reserve Funds, they need to make sure we allocate or suggest how to use funds to support FCC. Member Su reminded the Committee that once funds are deposited into this fund from Year 1 to Year 4, and then starting in Year 5, there is a cap that gets created. So, from Year 5 to Year 10, 50% of all unspent funds are not eligible for billing and will get deposited into the reserve until there is a cap. The cap is equal to 50% of the annual funding allocation and we are looking at a \$8M cap. Member Su shared those withdrawals can be appropriated to support FCC programs as outlined in the MOU and are subject to the authority of the Mayor and the Board. Member Su discussed the parameters that we want these funds to be held accountable to which were enrollment fees and grants related to FCC, associated with FCC, to be fiscally sustainable and properly resourced with infrastructure and support. Member Su reminded the Committee of a couple of previous proposals for the Reserve Fund use including equity-based projects, bolstering enrollment and retention, financial support, lifelong learning, recovery of students from the pandemic and support for undocumented students. Member Su concluded by reminding the Committee to be intentional in how to prioritize the usage of these funds and right now there are a couple of things that are shovel ready as we wait for RP Group to share their findings. She added that she has heard about projects in existence and is excited to hear more about Promise. Adding that there is an existing project between SFUSD and City College that was able to support 800 SFUSD students who fall into the equity group and the program helped them move into City College, which is in alignment with what the Committee talked about in terms of moving more students into the college and providing wrap around supports. Member Su asked the Committee to think about promising practices that will help meet the equity agenda and bolster enrollment and help keep students at the college and in programs that provide the type of wrap around supports that are needed. Member Su reminded everyone that these are just conversations and that we would continue to have these conversations as we move through the process.

C. Member Comments & Questions

- Member Ford thanked Member Su for her summary. Member Ford said that she wanted to see the outstanding fees that everybody talks about and is in support of paying student's outstanding fees but needs to know the report. Member Ford reminded the Committee that it would be good to have a report of how much fees are outstanding for FCC students and to look at the report during the pandemic's timeframe. Member Ford shared that this would help students who have nagging fees that they may not be aware of, and that support could help students be more financially solvable.
- Co-Chair Davila thanked Member Su for the presentation and expressed feeling heartened that we have a program right now that will help get students through City College and then transferred in that could provide them with a job afterwards. Co-Chair Davila added that she liked the idea of getting rid of the outstanding fees that students did not know they had and that this is a big problem that prevents registration. She concluded that she is aware that the Chancellor is working on this.
- Member Feit asked about the fees and shared that SFUSD must deal with fees, and this blocks students from registering and that a lot of times it may be undocumented students or a student doing an international travel, like a semester abroad. She shared that when students have their first encounter with CCSF and when they encounter these barriers, and it's their first experience at 17 or 18, it impacts their desire of wanting to go to CCSF. And that in speaking with other dual enrollment programs, they shared ways to get around this such as covering the fees for any dual enrollment student no matter the type of student. So not asking for VISAs, etc. and offered that the school district can provide a letter saying that the student is in good standing. Member Feit also shared that while last summer was awesome, this summer they have over 1,900 students that have applied to do a summer program. However, they do not have the funds to place more than about 600 students and that almost all programs are associated with a City College course. Member Feit asked about the Reserve Fund, adding that in 2019 this was the height of their program's matriculation from dual enrollment students and transitional studies students into CCSF. And this year, of the 800 who participated in dual enrollment and matriculated, over half matriculated into CCSF, but this has been a consistent decline because of the pandemic. Member Feit added that services provided as a dual enrollment program could present as an opportunity for the students and have an impact on the matriculation and increase the enrollment for City College.

- Member Mar thanked Member Su and then shared an update and summary of past discussions and parameters and use of the funds. He was pleased that working with the Controller's Office provided a clear picture of what's currently in the Reserve Fund and what we can expect looking ahead. Member Mar asked whether DCYF and the Controller's Office had a projection of how much the Reserve Fund is going to grow this year given the enrollment decline and as it continues to decline at City College, especially given the increased allocation that the City made. And that according to the MOU we don't have to send the money back to the General Fund until next year, if it's over the cap, but it seems that we will exceed the cap this year. And it seems there are some urgent needs such as financial relief for students who have extra fees and opportunity to support early college this summer to allow hundreds of high school students to enroll at City College classes. He asked Member Su for more clarification on projections and whether we can access it to address the urgent priorities that have been discussed. Member Su responded that if enrollment remains the same as what it was in 19-20, we are looking at another \$4.3M of unspent funds. And enrollment numbers may decrease even more. And if it is just \$4.3M, we are already over the cap of the \$8M that is from last year and we will have this year, and then we will have next year, and it will take a while before CCSF can bring their enrollment numbers back up. And that every year we will experience the unspent funds that keeps getting sent over to the Reserve Fund. Member Su shared that while I agree, yes, we want a reserve, there are immediate needs that are actual strategies that can help build enrollment for the college. Member Su added that there are some things we can explore.
- Member Campos shared that the information was straight forward.
- Member Brodie echoed the need to use funds to pay for fees and asked about next steps and how we would make this possible and added that it does not make sense to turn students away that have fee balances when we can help them out.
- Member Messer expressed support and shared that this is something that turns potential students away. While she understands that some people thought students would just sign up for classes and not be serious, this is not what the data shows. The Board of Governor's Fee Waivers do not say that you must pay it all back, it is complicated and becomes an obstacle and fees were already an obstacle for students before FCC. She shared that we have compounded it with FCC, and this also impacts equity. Member Messer shared that FCC is specifically about financial assistance for students which is narrow and is not enough to help students succeed. That it is done in this way and is about financial support to students and FCC has never been intended to run programs. It does not mean we should not get there, but now this is not her personal vision. She shared that we are trying to support students and the college should be doing so many things to support students, but this is really a financial aid program. Nobody could have predicted the pandemic and there have been several significant policies that have contributed in addition to the pandemic to the declining enrollment. And, what's happening in San Francisco in general and there are so many other pieces. Member Messer shared that on the one hand she appreciates this idea of shovel ready programs but on the other the other hand, shovel ready still costs students and they have incredibly high amounts of unmet needs and cannot afford fees. Member Messer shared that there are some students taking her 20-hour class this semester and who literally don't have more than 5 or 6 hours a week in their schedules, when they schedule it out, and only sleep about 6 hours a night. And they make decisions about what classes they can or can not take or when they must pick up more work or not just to survive in San Francisco.
- Member Messer added that she does not want the Committee to lose track that even though there are fewer students, those students have greater needs especially in the context of the pandemic. She shared that she knows that DCYF is looking at what that means for families right now and what the impacts are. She added that if we are looking at dual enrollment programs and how there is need, there is also need in other places. For instance, in her Department, English, nearly 40% of her colleagues are getting laid off and that it is not just to meet lowering enrollment. She shared that they are going to have over-full classes and that all summer school classes are completely full and wait listed. And that there is no more space for the students to take the English classes that are what helps them get their degrees. She shared that she is teaching these classes and is not teaching lifelong learning. She added that the College is cutting programs and she does not know that FCC is

the place to replace programs that it is cutting. That the Committee needs to make sure that the College continues to support the programs that are needed. Member Messer concluded that there are a series of contradictions in there and just wanted to name them because right now the Committee is looking at the College that is serving a dwindling number of students which means there will be more numbers of dwindling students as more classes are cut. She shared that if we are looking at reserves and what to do with the reserves in terms of the program, that this should be part of the consideration. She added that FCC is about supporting students financially and not covering the College's program needs. Whether they be summer English classes or dual enrollment.

- Co-Chair Davila shared that the shovel ready projects might be a good idea because they are ready to go. She added that if the money can be used to relieve the student's debt because of the pandemic it would be good. She added that this has been a difficult time and they have lost 50 % of their students and that these projects are a good way forward. Member Feit reiterated her stats and said that there are 800 students who applied through dual enrollment and 600 have had their costs covered. And there are 1900 so far that have applied. Co-Chair Davila responded that this was fantastic and that it would increase enrollment and as soon as enrollment increases, they could expand classes. Co-Chair Davila concluded that we should not forget the students who had fees that they didn't pay, or they had costs associated with FCC.
- Co-Chair Mariano closed out the discussion and thanked everyone. She offered that the Committee thinks about shovel ready programs versus new programs, versus no programs at all, and think of ways to support the college and increase enrollment. She added that every idea has centered on equity, and it seems like the Committee agrees and that this is one of the top priorities. Co-Chair Mariano concluded that for the next meeting the Committee will narrow down this list to see if we can come to an agreement on a program or set of ideas that we can recommend.

D. No public comment.

#### **VIII. Future Agenda Items and Member Comments**

A. Co-Chair Mariano shared that DCYF would work to determine the calendar for the rest of the year for FCC. There are a few items that have been requested to come up in these meetings such as FCC outreach and recruitment efforts, forecast of expenditures and invoices, FCC student's outstanding fees, and the annual report and some of this came up in the meeting today but there are pending agenda items. For future agenda items the Committee will plan on continuing this discussion on the use of the Reserve Funds. Co-Chair Mariano then asked if the Committee had other agenda items to add.

B. Member Comments & Questions

- Member Ford asked who tabulates the fees and where does the information come from. Member Cooper Wilkins responded adding that there are two different things to consider. She shared that the College is looking at the figure holistically for all students and then for the FCC students. Their financial staff, Rebecca Chavez, who could not be on the call typically helps them get financial data as it relates to FCC. CCSF can get this data and break it down over semesters. She noted that there was a period during COVID where there was a suspension of requiring students to pay the fees, but that effort has since been sunset. She added that it would be helpful to see over time how much the fees build up and added that there are many colleges that have figured out the strategy to forgive these fees. And this opens the possibility for students to come back and complete credentials, particularly if it's just a few units that a student has left. She added that maybe the amount owed in comparison is so small that we can support the students in finishing the program. Member Cooper Wilkins offered to explore this with Vice Chancellor Al-Amin to make sure that they can get that data so that it is available for the next meeting.

C. No public comment.

#### **IX. Adjournment**

A. Meeting adjourned at 4:47 pm.