



Free City College Oversight Committee Meeting Minutes



Members: Eileen Mariano (Co-Chair), Alan Wong (Co-Chair), Win-Mon Kyi, Heather Brandt, Patrick West, Calvin Quock, Maria Su, Dr. Lisa Cooper Wilkins, Alisa Messer, Christopher Brodie, Jill Yee, Conny Ford, Malinali Villalobos

Date and Time: Friday, October 6, 2023, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
In-Person Location: City College (Main Campus) - Multi-Use Building (MUB),
Rm 140 50 Frida Kahlo Way, San Francisco, CA. 94112

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

- A. Meeting called to order at 10:05 AM.
- B. Members Present: Eileen Mariano (Co-Chair), Alan Wong (Co-Chair), Win-Mon Kyi, Heather Brandt, Calvin Quock, Maria Su, Dr. Lisa Cooper Wilkins, Alisa Messer, Conny Ford, Malinali Villalobos
- C. Members Absent: Patrick West, Christopher Brodie, Jill Yee,

II. Adoption of the Agenda

- A. Agenda adopted.
- B. Member Villalobos motioned.
Member Ford seconded.

III. General Public Comments

- A. No public comment.

IV. Review and Approval of April 2023 Minutes

- A. Minutes approved.
- B. Member Villalobos motioned.
Member Messer seconded.
- C. Member Comments
 - Member Messer asked if there will be discussions on the growth of outstanding fees and non-audit procedure #4. Co-Chair Wong responded yes. The non-audit procedure #4 discussions will be held under the Year 2 Audit Update.

V. Outstanding Fees Update

- A. Update provided by Dr. Lisa Cooper Wilkins.
 - Provided an overview of the Free City Debt Program.
 - The process of applying the fee relief to student accounts began on August 22nd. Students were notified via email and text. The terms for eligibility were explained.
 - All FCC fees a student could accrue are covered under this relief. Fees accrued from other financial aid programs are not covered.
 - No refunds will be issued for students who have already paid. The relief is for students who have an actual outstanding balance.

- Holds will be automatically lifted once the funds have been applied. They are working in reverse chronological order.
- Fee Processing Updates
 - As of last Friday (September 29th), 5,270 students have received relief. The goal is to finish processing well in advance of Spring 2024 registration.

B. Member Comments

- Member Villalobos asked what the number is as of this morning. Member Cooper Wilkins stated as of last Friday, the number was 5,270 plus, with 1000 being processed per week.
 - If we can't reach students by email, what other methods will we try? CCSF is reaching out to all emails on file and did a second press release. The FCC marketing campaign is aiming to also let people know about it.
 - <https://www.ccsf.edu/news/debt-relief-underway-thousands-city-college-students-free-city-program>
- Co-Chair Wong asked why they are only processing 1000 a week. Member Cooper Wilkins shared that it is because of the different fees that are involved and students' accounts. There is some extra work that needs to be done.
- Member Ford asked how confident are we in reaching out to all the students. What is the percentage of people we reached out to? Member Cooper Wilkins stated that CCSF is fairly confident in the outreach but also taking extra steps.
- Member Messer asked if we could send a postcard to the addresses on file of the students. Member Cooper Wilkins suggested letters.
- Member Brandt shared that it is great it is debt relief and not debt reduction. It is unfortunate that we aren't covering Fall 2022-Present because there are some students that we are missing. When is the earliest registration date? Member Cooper Wilkins stated priority registration begins the Monday after Thanksgiving.
- Member Villalobos asked what happens to students if their debt isn't cleared. Does it go to collections? Member Cooper Wilkins shared that CCSF is required to participate in the Chancellor's Office Offset Program and to inform students that their debt may be sought by the State to be repaid. Technically, some student's debt did not go to collections.
- Co-Chair Wong asked where the money (funds to pay the student debt) goes once received from CCSF. Member Cooper Wilkins shared it goes to an account designated for the fund.

C. No Public Comment.

VI. FCC Year 2 Audit Update

A. Update provided by DCYF.

- Shared the new Expense Request and Review form, Appendix A, and process to address audit finding #1.

B. Member Comments

- Co-Chair Wong asked have we heard anything about the Board of Supervisors wanting to have a hearing on our FCC finances. Member Su stated Supervisor Chan called for a hearing to understand more about the two special funds, SFUSD's Public Education and Enrichment Fund and the FCC fund. She submitted the request at the end of their board calendar. Will let CCSF know once it is scheduled. It is also unknown what questions will be asked and what she'll be looking for. Initially, it was to understand the way the dollars are being managed. There probably will be a partnership between CSSF and DCYF coming to present. The structures that we are putting in place show that we have oversight, we're organized and we're managing these dollars in the best way.

- Co-Chair Wong shared he will encourage CCSF's administration to participate. In the past CCSF may have been shy to participate. Member Su stated DCYF has a fantastic relationship with CCSF senior leadership and Dr. Cooper-Wilkins.
- Co-Chair Wong shared he feels very confident that DCYF or CCSF, or both can respond.
- Member Brandt asked in a worst-case scenario, if an expense is not approved where do the funds come from? Member Su stated these are funds external to CCSF. For example, the marketing campaign. In the event we do not approve, the decision is final.
 - Member Brandt clarified it was in relation to payroll (CCSF) that was mentioned. The Free City College Analyst shared that if we don't receive the proper documentation that could be a cause for denial.
 - Member Cooper Wilkins shared that in a prior audit, something was paid for using the fund and CCSF had to pay it back.
 - Member Messer asked if we could talk about outstanding fees and Non-Audit Procedure 4. The Free City College Analyst read Non-Audit Procedure 4. Member Messer shared that it's not just about revenue but what are the actual benefits of Free City to students and the City. Try to capture those non-financial benefits. Would like to share more policy ideas in a discussion. This could be a potential agenda item.
- Member Ford asked how much the public knows about the student debt relief. Was it published in major newspapers? Did we give the Mayor a thank you note?
 - Member Su shared it was published in the Chronicle. Requested we send it to Member Ford. <https://www.sfchronicle.com/sf/article/city-college-san-francisco-18288129.php>
 - Member Brandt agreed it should be more visible.

C. No Public Comment.

VII. 22-23 Annual Report

A. Presented by CCSF Staff, Kelly Karandjeff and Micheline Pontious.

- Thank you to my excellent collaborators, Dr. Lisa Cooper Wilkins, and Micheline Pontious!
- The annual reports are caught up. Will typically see reports from the prior academic year in the Fall.
- Not much has changed, and this will likely be the last of its kind due to the equity planning work the committee is doing. Some of the metrics we will be tracking may look different in future reports.
- The data and the findings from this last year are very supportive of the equity planning work the committee is engaged in. The four big goals:
 - Increasing use of Free City particularly amongst the equity population.
 - Reducing students' financial burden.
 - Expanding students' use of financial supports.
 - Fostering Free City participants' financial literacy.
- Reviewed how Free City is administered to students.
- Good news, in this last year, enrollment stabilized, and students' use of the Free City program held steady compared to the prior year.
- Students use term by term was aligned to the annual rate of participation.
- The students' use of the cash grant option has been very stagnant, they are mostly using just the waiver.
- There might be opportunities to have students submit a FAFSA, so they receive more support. There is a larger portion of people who are receiving the CA College Promise Grant.
- Participation by age really didn't shift much. Something for the committee to think about in planning outreach, engagement, and marketing.

- Some key equity groups continue to lag behind their peers in terms of using the programs. Students aged 25-50, male students, and other equity groups by race and ethnicity continue to have lower rates of participation.
- Free City participants take slightly more units compared to their non-Free City peers (part-time) and they pass at slightly higher rates at least in this last academic year.

B. Member Comments

- Member Cooper-Wilkins asked can we see if the number of students who received a Pell Grant is the same as the number of students who were offered one but didn't accept it. Micheline Pontious responded that it can be done with Financial Aid.
- Member Messer asked at what point during our Free City College work, did we combine the cash grant with the promise grant. Kelly Karandjeff asked a clarifying question on linking the eligibility for the cash grant to the Promise grant. Co-Chair Wong shared It was changed in 2019.
- Member Brandt asked how many people were accessing the FCC grant prior to the additional requirements being implemented. Financial aid considers the federal poverty level and not what it means to be Bay Area poor. Students may not be applying for these grants because they're afraid if life is difficult and they must repay their tuition, they will be unable to afford to repay the grants. Member Cooper-Wilkins shared it's not always the case they have to repay the grant. There are different rules.
- Member Brandt was curious about other parts of our equity groups: former foster youth, system-impacted, unhoused. Are there intersectional approaches to gathering that information?
 - Kelly Karandjeff shared data that showed equity students have a lower participation rate than non-equity students. It does raise questions about those intersections. A data point that is being looked at but wasn't included (need to do more work on it) is SF residency. Equity populations may be more likely to live outside the City.
- Member Su asked do we know what types of classes Free City students are taking. It would be interesting to see the types of classes and overlay that with age. Kelly Karandjeff responded they have not looked at that data.
 - Examples of types of classes: core classes needed to transfer, career pathways, enrichment, and life-long learning. Micheline Pontious responded that the number of students in Free City and non-Free City is going to be a combination, but that's something we can show.
 - Member Brandt asked if it's possible to collect data on student parents with the passing of AB2881. Micheline Pontious responded that City College just started collecting student parent data because of the new requirement for priority registration. This will be the first semester where student parents can have early enrollment.

C. No Public Comment.

VIII. Unfinished Business

A. Appeals process for students who drop out of FCC due to circumstances.

- Member Brandt inquired about creating a process where students can explain why they needed to leave from taking classes so their fees can be covered, despite having to drop classes for unforeseen circumstances. Member Cooper-Wilkins shared that currently, CCSF does it on a case-by-case basis, but students would have to make that request themselves. However, it can be made more accessible.
 - Member Villalobos shared that when life events are happening, having to repay FCC will be the last thing on students' minds.
 - Co-Chair Wong shared it could be that students are also unaware of how to drop a class.

- Member Messer asked how we can think about making this a better experience for students. Our students deserve additional chances to not build up debt. The committee should figure out what that looks like, propose it, and make it happen.
- Member Su asked a clarifying question on the BOG waiver having provisions that allow students to drop whenever. Member Cooper Wilkins responded not whenever, but for certain circumstances. Member Su shared that the committee should look into that (BOG waiver provisions) and align it with Free City.

B. Support for Students with Barriers

- Member Cooper-Wilkins shared that many of the barriers Member Brandt raised in the past were built into the equity discussions and planning.
- Member Brandt expressed interest in seeing the student-parent population data incorporated (CCSF has begun collecting the data). Thinking of appeals and how to better support students when situations happen.
- Member Kyi shared that the committee should consider language in media (example, CCSF website) and in helping students navigate. CCSF is such a diverse population, with different migrant communities, political asylees, and various ranges of citizenships (also, consider in equity populations).

C. Marketing Campaign

- Dr. Lisa Cooper Wilkins presented a three-year marketing campaign project.
 - Marketing approach that shares information about Free City (outreach) and in-reach to current students to let them know they can be eligible and apply.
 - The three-year plan will assist with addressing current challenges and opportunities.
 - The marketing process includes research to analyze the approaches being used and collaboration where we would leverage a partnership between Free City and CCSF. For example, there is a class of students who would love to analyze the data. There are many offices who can support (Institutional Research Office and the Outreach Office) and students in different areas who can lend their expertise.
 - Be consistent in building our brand and getting the information out. Engage our actual Free City students as creatives. Began outreach to a network of students to garner interest.
 - Leverage our social media channels. Currently, we do not have TikTok or YouTube channels. This approach will widen our access to people who may not know about Free City.
 - Offer traditional and digital approaches.
 - Geofencing allows us to focus on a particular area. Information will be shared with people in that area.
 - Use some newer approaches like augmented reality (AR)
 - By taking a wide range of approaches we are more assured of reaching our intended audiences.
 - Shared next steps, including presenting the project to the board. The marketing firm has worked with CCSF on prior marketing campaigns.
- Co-Chair Wong asked how much it will cost. Member Cooper Wilkins shared that the cost covers a full-service contract for 3 years. Provided an estimate of the cost. Think of it as an investment for the long term and it includes printing.
- Member Messer asked will this be a complete rebranding. Member Cooper Wilkins responded no; this will build off what we currently have.

IX. Future Agenda Items

- A. Marketing
- B. Equity Subcommittees
- C. Outstanding Fees

- How do we move the needle forward?
- Leftover funds? Can we cover the present outstanding fees?
- **UPDATE:** 6,707 students received (outstanding fees) relief. \$863,205.62 total spent.

X. Adjournment

- A. Member Ford motioned.
Member Cooper Wilkins seconded.
- B. Meeting adjourned at 11:40 AM.