

Faculty of the Grove School of Engineering

City College of New York, CUNY

Minutes of the Meeting of October 9, 2025, DRAFT

Attendance:

Biomedical Engineering: Marom Bikson, Luis Cardoso, Mitchell Schaffler, Sihong Wang. (4 out of 10)

Chemical Engineering: Marco Castaldi, Dean Alex Couzis, Lane Gilchrist, Mitchell Goldberg, Ilona Kretzschmar, Jason Madinya, Charles Maldarelli, Ian McCrum, Jeffrey Morris, Carol Steiner, Raymond Tu. (11 out of 15)

Civil Engineering: Anil Agrawal, Vasil Diyamandoglu, Reza Khanbilvardi, Yiqiao Li, Hansong Tang, Ardavan Yazdanbakhsh. (6 out of 17)

Computer Science: Saptarashmi Bandyopadhyay, Nelly Fazio, Irina Gladkova, Erik Grimmelmann, Michael Grossberg, Akira Kawaguchi, Arthur Paul Pedersen, Jie Wei, Jianting Zhang, Zhigang Zhu. (10 out of 21)

Electrical Engineering: Ahmed Mohamed, Fred Moshary, Tarek Saadawi, Samah Saeed, Sang-woo Seo, Umit Uyar, Yingli Tian, Associate Dean Ardie Walser. (8 out of 24)

Mechanical Engineering: Feridun Delale, Jing Fan, Peter Ganatos, Jacqueline Li, Yang Liu, Prathap Ramamurthy, Ali Sadegh, Ioana Voiculescu, Hongui Yu. (10 out of 15)

Voting Faculty attending: 49 out of 102

Staff/Guests: Provost Liss, Assistant Dean Rawlins Beharry, Jonathan Akeley, A.H. Rezwanuddin Ahmed, Muad Alody, Sam Fenster, Mitch Gershonowitz, David Santoro, Lisa Taylor, Marain (sp?) Nolan, Gizem Derya Demir, Yesim Kokner, Omar Green, Val Rutstein, Maria Velazquez. (15)

Total was 64 attending.

Dean Couzis welcomed attendees and began the meeting at 12:40 PM.

1. Approval of Previous Minutes – Meeting of May 8, 2025

Dean Couzis asked for a motion to adopt previous meeting minutes. The proposed was accepted and unanimously approved.

2. Tribute to Professor Michal Piasecki: The Dean asked Professor Vasil Diyamandoglu to pay tribute to Professor Michael Piasecki.

Professor Piasecki joined the Civil Engineering Department in 2010. He was known for his expertise in Hydrology and involvement in the Environmental Crossroads Initiative. He taught in the department and remained associated with his research efforts. He was the first faculty member to have an electronic monitor outside his door, which changed his schedule and told us where he was. He never lived in New York but commuted to and from Philadelphia for 15 years. He was an avid motor cyclist and rode his bike to work. He became more engaged in the department post-pandemic and assisted in the search for one of our faculty members. He also joined the executive committee of the department and ran for department chair in May 2025. He passed away from natural causes after a trip to Germany. He is survived by his family in Philadelphia. Efforts are underway to connect with his family and invite them to campus. He was a gentle giant with a great sense of humor, and we will surely miss him.

3. Communications by the Provost – The provost Tony Liss provided updates on enrollment and financial aspects.

Financial & Enrollment Highlights and Challenges:

- Provost Liss reported that there is record enrollment across the campus.
- There are approximately 31 faculty searches underway across the campus (the maximum in over a decade).
- The financial picture looked very sound with a \$4.5M surplus for FY25 (originally projected at \$1M). This is as a result of better financial management on campus and better collaboration between the different offices than before.
- He also reported that CUNY wants the college to have a surplus in the Reserve fund (CUTRA) account which is now at \$5M, with a goal of \$8M to protect us when there is a deficit.
- Improved financial tracking and interdepartmental collaboration.
- He also reported that the government will not pull back funding that has been allocated to CUNY.
- He also highlighted the fact that there will be challenges with hiring and potential future budget risks due to federal/state funding uncertainties.
- There will also be challenges with space constraints as the labs in Marshak need to be refurbished before we hire new faculty. The process to get the labs updated and ready for use will take time.
- The college was in a better place in terms of space overall, but most labs were empty or needed to be refurbished. Transition of space management has been assigned to Jorge Yafar, who is now the Head of Facilities.

Unsponsored Research Policy Discussion

Concerns were raised about lack of workload credit for unsponsored research.

Provost Liss clarified:

- Only sponsored research with funded release time counts officially.
- The standard practice was to put down three hours of unsponsored research on individual's workload report, and that cost the college half a million dollars per year in adjunct replacement costs.
- A memo was distributed about restarting unsponsored research in a limited way that would be funded by indirect cost returns so that it would not affect the college budget. It will be done on a limited scale, and plan is to grow the program from approximately 10 per year to about 30 per year.
- Faculty must apply for these research projects and report outcomes to qualify for credit.

Professor Agrawal mentioned that PSC-CUNY has a research proposal solicitation that primarily funds release time. The proposal is due in December 2025.

Faculty Hiring Breakdown

- Provost Liss reported that the distribution of the 32 faculty lines was: 10 – Colin Powell School, 6 – Engineering, 5 – Science, 5 – Humanities, 1 – Library, 2 – Education, 1 – CWE and one was already hired.
- In response to a question on the selection process, Provost Liss stated that the major criteria used to decide on allocation of these faculty lines were enrollment credits, faculty-to-major ratio and attrition. He also stated that changes in numbers of faculty as a percentage of the faculty, as an absolute number, was used. Research funding was not a factor that was considered.
- The question was raised by Prof. Fred Mosharey. He asked about the new lines compared to replacement for those who left last year. Provost List responded that there was an increase of 10. Overall, 22 faculty lines were lost and 32 will be filled. It was also reported over a 10-year period that the college lost 50 faculty lines.

4. Communications by the Dean

Dean Couzis reported that to be able to build a faculty body that works and is efficient, there needs to be infrastructure that also supports the students. In the past, infrastructure was lost, such as advising, HR, financial aid, acquisition, purchasing, and facilities. We are now in a better position.

- Enrollment at the college has increased by about 8%.
- Engineering enrollment – 414 freshmen this year, in comparison to 400 a year ago and 380 the year before, coming from 172 in the fall of 2022.
- Engineering enrollment increased from 2,472 to over 2,800 students.

- Undergraduate enrollment rose 14.5% year-over-year, from 2,000 to 2,300.
- Early admissions contributed significantly to growth.
- Retention remains a concern (~25% attrition).
- Internal transfers and undeclared students also impact numbers.
- There are approximately 17,000 students at the college in total.
- Work needs to be done to increase the number of graduates and PhD students.

The closure of the government has resulted in a new set of requirements or limitations on how funds are spent. There is no anticipated reduction in the budget for this school year, so the hiring process will continue. The tuition collection efficiency rate went from 95% to 97%. As a result of that we were projecting a \$1.1 million in surplus but ended up with a \$4.5 million surplus which puts the college in a good position, with incentives like merit increases, number of lines and other things.

The Dean reported that several new faculty had been hired and he asked Chairs of departments to introduce them.

- Chemical Engineering:
 - Prof. Ian McCrum – NSF Career Award recipient, catalysis expert.
 - Prof. Jason Madinya – Computational polymer physics, NSF GRP fellow.
- Computer Science:
 - Prof. Bandyopadhyay – AI and autonomous systems.
 - Prof. Arthur Paul Pedersen – AI, natural language inference, social intelligence.
 - Joined as a Lecturer - Dr. Allison Gunby-Mann
- Mechanical Engineering:
 - Dr. Gizem Derya Demir – PhD from CCNY.
 - Dr. Yesim Kokner – PhD from CCNY, teaching multiple lab and design courses.

5. Report from GSOE Executive Committee – GSOE Ranking/Strategic Planning Presentation

Prof. Ibrahim Habib, professor of electrical engineering and chair of the GSOE Executive Committee, made a presentation on strategic planning for the GSOE to enhance graduate programs to achieve R1 status. The goals of the strategic plan are to improve GSOE's national ranking, currently 120 out of 166 and develop and analyze the data as to how to improve our ranking. Out of the strategy specific plans, mechanisms need to be developed and implemented to take us to the desired position of in the 100s. Goals and Objectives of the strategic planning are:

- Reach Top 100 in U.S. News rankings.
- Improve educational and research capabilities to reach R1 classification, and support our community with new, strong and vibrant programs.
- Enhance visibility through industry and community collaboration.
- Increase faculty to 160 over 5 years.
- Graduate 50+ PhD students over 5 years.
- Allocate budgets to be used to support fellowships, TAs, tuition waivers and reallocation of grants back to the departments.
- Increase admission of students or engineers in the local area.
- Launch new interdisciplinary programs (AI, cybersecurity, healthcare systems).

6. Old/New Business - High School Outreach

Dean Couzis mentioned that Prof. Anil Agrawal initiated outreach at Brooklyn Tech leveraging the alumni we have over the years. There were two events that were held in conjunction with Brooklyn Tech, one was a workshop, and the other was a visit paid to the school to do a presentation. The workshop was held at the CCNY downtown campus at 25 Broadway and had around 100 high school students from different NYC high schools. Deans Couzis, Walser, Beharry and Annette also visited Brooklyn Tech. The goal of the outreach is to connect with the alums for support and also to increase recruitment and visibility and provide a pipeline for students to attend CCNY. Initiatives are underway to identify and connect Brooklyn Tech students and alums.

7. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was proposed and approved. The meeting adjourned at 1:57 PM.

Respectfully submitted

Anil Agrawal
Professor and Chair of Civil Engineering
Secretary of the GSOE