



Free City College Oversight Committee Meeting Minutes



Members: Hong Mei Pang (Co-Chair), Alan Wong (Co-Chair), Win-Mon Kyi, Heather Brandt, Patrick West, Calvin Quock, Maria Su, Dr. Lisa Cooper Wilkins, Alisa Messer, Jill Yee, Conny Ford, Malinalli Villalobos

Date and Time: Thursday, June 27, 2024, 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
In-Person Location: City College (Main Campus) - Multi-Use Building, Rm 330
50 Frida Kahlo Way, San Francisco, CA. 94112

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

- A. Meeting called to order at 10:03 AM.
- B. Members Present: Hong Mei Pang (Co-Chair), Alan Wong (Co-Chair), Calvin Quock, Maria Su, Dr. Lisa Cooper Wilkins, Alisa Messer, Jill Yee, Win-Mon Kyi, Heather Brandt, Conny Ford, Malinalli Villalobos
- C. Member(s) Absent: Patrick West
- D. Co-Chair Pang and Member Ford joined remotely under just cause in accordance with AB 2449. Co-Chair Pang did not have anyone present in the room where she joined the meeting remotely. Member Ford's husband and granddaughter were present in the room where she joined the meeting remotely.

II. Adoption of the Agenda

- A. Agenda adopted.
- B. Member Cooper Wilkins motioned.
Member Villalobos seconded.
- C. No Member Comment
- D. Public Comment: Angelica Campos shared that this is sudden news that this is happening. Hopes the committee does their best to defend and fight for Free City. Free City benefited them in getting to their goals and will be transferring (recently graduated). Would like to see it continue for others, especially for the elderly and disabled. Think about them when fighting to keep funding for Free City.

III. General Public Comments

- A. No Public Comment

IV. Review and Approval of April 2024 Minutes

- A. Minutes approved with Member Messer's amended comment under VII. Unfinished Business, B. 1.
- B. Member Ford motioned.
Member Brandt seconded.
- C. Member Comment: Member Messer shared that she emailed the Free City College Oversight Committee Secretary to amend her comment under VII. Unfinished Business, B. 1, from "it was at a time when I really didn't think that the college needed millions of dollars. Our students needed millions of dollars", to "this funding is for students, not the college".
- D. No Public Comment

V. Update on Free City College Budget

- A. Member Su acknowledged and apologized that the changes came at the last minute with very little notice. The

City (San Francisco) is facing an \$800 million budget deficit. The City went through several rounds of budget hearings that resulted in the Board of Supervisors passing a preliminary proposal at the Budget and Appropriations Committee meeting to move forward with a preliminary budget that will then be presented to the full Board in a few weeks. Hopefully, the Board will approve by the end of the month. Acknowledged Interim Chancellor Bailey who was present at the meeting. Shared the impact the changes have on the Free City allocation:

- The way the audits are structured, the City is behind in how much is allocated and how much is unspent. The big change here, which everyone is concerned about, is Year 6 and Year 7. Year 6 (FY 24-25) the allocation will decrease to \$9.3 million and Year 7 (FY 25-26) the allocation will decrease to \$7.2 million.
- Unfortunately, we don't have Year 3 expenditures yet. The only way the City can understand and confirm Year 3 or any of the expenditures is by the audit the Controller's office produces, which is two years behind the current year. This means that the most current audit we have is Year 2. We hope Year 3 will be released in a couple of months and we don't have any other confirmed numbers, but we have projections. These annual fiscal audits occur because it is part of the MOU. The Controller's office helps us determine the effectiveness, efficiency and appropriateness of the use of funds.
- What we're projecting, based on our last conversation with Crowe (consulting firm who works with the Controller office to complete the audits), is that the Year 3 projected unspent funds that the College has will be around \$7.6 million, Year 4 - \$8 million, Year 5 - \$8 million. We are using headcount data that the college shared with us as well as just projections for out years.
- To ensure we don't continue to build up the unspent reserve (we're looking at 23.6 million in unspent funds that's sitting at the college) the City has proposed in Year 6 to reduce the allocation down to 9.3 million. We are projecting that the college will have around \$400,000 in unspent funds.

B. Member Comments:

- Member Ford shared it does not look like we will run out of funds this year, but what happens next year if we do? What are our options to regain some of this money? Should we not be able to pay for Free City for everyone? Member Su responded what we're doing is making sure that we don't continue to build a larger unspent fund amount that's why there was a reduction in allocation, however, if the college determines that they are now needing more than 9.3 million or more than 7.2 million in Year 7, they have the 23.6 million in unspent funds to use. They have not been transferred over to the City yet, primarily because we can't transfer those funds without an audit.
 - Member Ford asked what is the procedure? Will the City be required to do anything with the 23 million or can we still preserve that for the next couple of years? Member Su responded that based on the MOU, starting Year 5, the reserve caps out at 50% of the allocation. (budgets wise we are not at year 5 yet). Unspent funds are funds sitting here in the college because the City directly allocated those dollars to the college. Once the audit happens and it's determined that there are unspent funds, they are transferred into the reserve.
- Member Yee asked is it accurate to say that rather than the budget getting slashed, the year 6 budget accurately reflects what the college's need is given the fact that the money has been unspent? Member Su responded yes, based on five years of historical data of running this initiative, we do see a consistent amount of dollars left on the table because of under enrollment. Member Yee responded that we would have sufficient funding based on actual need. Member Su responded, yes, the Board and Appropriations Committee did pass first round approval of the budget without any changes to the Free City allotment.
- Member Messer asked a clarifying question, we thought the additional allocations for student debt relief (example) were coming from the reserve, but it was an additional allocation? Member Su responded in the budget world, any type of money that's allocated to revenues is revenues. In our budget world the college now has 18.9 million to use because there was an allocation of 2.1 million. The source of the 2.1 million came from the reserve. Member Messer responded when we've been talking about the reserves, there are two different pots. The unspent funds sitting at the college and the reserves sitting with the City; and we're two years behind on the audit, which would push it back to the official reserve, which is sitting with the City.

- Member Quock shared that in their language (Controller's office) they consider it as one reserve within the general fund. Member Su stated for simplicity it's better for us to think of it as these two separate parts. Member Messer shared that's helpful and that some things make a lot more sense. Asked to revisit the Annual Headcount slide. Acknowledged that enrollment is down starting in 2020 when we had a global pandemic. This enrollment is the lowest I think it will ever be. This was an exception and a strange one. It will never cost this little ever again. The city's goal is to increase the funding based on increased enrollment. Member Cooper Wilkins interjected to introduce Micheline Pontious, Institutional Research Analyst to clarify some of the ways we've been talking about enrollment, headcounts and using the terminology interchangeably.
- Micheline Pontious shared that when we look at the annual student headcount, compared to the recipients, the Free City count is closer to what it looks like in a term, not a year. So, when we look at the annual student headcount, that is a unique count of students. The students enrolled in three terms in a year, they are only counted once for the annual headcount but for Free City students, if they're enrolled two to three times in a year, they now would get funding two to three times a year. The count would come out closer to 43,000 students. This would be an undercounting of what that projection should look like. If we're going to do a projection of what we're going to spend, can we do it based off the duplicated counts of projected enrollment instead of the unique headcount, we'll get a closer of what we're going to spend. Member Su responded that she looked at the term breakdown but didn't see how it broke down that way.
- Co-Chair Pang provided a time check. We exceeded the time allocated for this item. Asked for any other committee member questions before we moved to public comment. Member Brandt moved to extend the time on this item. Member Messer seconded. Co-Chair Pang agreed to extend the item for five minutes.
 - Micheline Pontious continued with a review of the Enrollment Metrics Report (Summer 2023, Fall 2023 and Spring 2024) to show the actual number of Free City students instead of the unique count of 17,000 students that was projected. Member Su shared (based on what was shared) that it looks like 28,643 students. We need to think about how we do this in budget world because your school years do not line up with the fiscal years. Micheline suggested we can do a trailing summer instead of the beginning of summer for projections. The problem with the original projections is that we're looking at unique counts for trying to budget how many students are getting it when those students attend more than one semester. Many of those students attend more than one semester, so they should be counted more than once.
 - Mendy Ma, DCYF's Budget and Contracts Manager, asked how this duplicate count compares to the Free City College enrollment for FY 21-22. We should have an apple-to-apple comparison if we are using the duplicated counts for the current year. We need to use the duplicated count number for FY 21-22. This will give us a better comparison for the projection.
 - Co-Chair Pang shared that there's a follow up that needs to be had to line up the enrollment metrics that's more reflective of the school year in relation to the fiscal year planning that we can work on before the next meeting.
 - Member Messer shared that however we count, we need to count correctly. The pandemic years are the absolute lowest that our enrollment will ever be. It will never cost this little ever again. Does not make sense to use this to project future enrollment.
 - Co-Chair Pang shared what she heard both from Member Su and the City's commitment is that in the event of increased enrollment, which we're all very hopeful about, we would allocate necessary funds to be able to meet the need. Also, that we will be allocating dollars to accurately resource a program based on the current enrollment for fiscal responsibility but also as it relates to the required funding. We are committed to providing the required funding for eligible uses outlined in the MOU.
 - Co-Chair Wong shared some history on Free City College and shared that the purpose of Free City College is to provide free enrollment for all students of all ages, backgrounds and income levels. Education is a right for everybody. So as the defender of the institution of City College, I'm always

going to be an advocate for our students, our community, and to push for the best. I've been informed that later this year, there's a desire to renegotiate the MOU so that only certain classes will be considered for tuition, free enrollment. That will obviously hurt the enrollment numbers of City College at a time when we're trying to gain stability for the college, grow our enrollment and gain revenue. I think it's important to point out that we, as an institution, are interested in protecting the fundamental right for all our students to have tuition, free enrollment, and in preserving the overall principle of the MOU going forward. That's been minimally discussed at this meeting and that's a principle that we absolutely need to maintain at City College, and we will fight for.

- Co-Chair Pang appreciated the history around the program and shared as we continue to have conversations, how do we redesign the MOU to make sure that we are making these investments and creating programmatic parameters that would support the college, not just in relation to student equity, but also learning outcomes. That is an extended conversation we can have. Just to clarify, the intent is for intended uses, eligible uses outlined in the MOU at this moment and based on what the enrollment actuals are going to be. This benefit is very much available to students who are eligible in the upcoming year, and there is no plans to roll that back. Emphasized that we would want to prevent any sort of chilling effects on the students who may benefit from this program.

C. Public Comment:

- M. Mendez, who works at CCSF's (City College of San Francisco) Students Making a Change program, with Black and Brown students of color, shared it is outrageous and concerning that the city is taking back money from the reserves. Using numbers based on incorrect number counts and pandemic numbers is not beneficial. This should not be an option that is on the table to take back.
- Mateo, with Coleman Advocates, shared Free City College students were the warmest nicest people because they knew that they could go to CCSF due to it being free. Hearing that we are using wrong projections and pre-pandemic numbers to go to the police. Free City College is a proud achievement for SF, please do not take it away.
- Melissa, student at CCSF, shared representing other students like themselves. From Mexico and qualified for Free City College. Has more opportunities due to Free City College. Why are we looking to spend the money elsewhere when there are students who need the money here. Money does not need to go to the police. Continuing their education, now has a voice and is working.
- Unknown member of the public shared that the miscommunication between the City and CCSF is outrageous. It is the budget workers' job to be able to explain this in simple terms. This should be going towards paying for professors. We should talk about why students are going to City College of San Mateo. We should listen to working class people. We should not slash funds and we should make the mayor not slash the funds.
- Interim Chancellor Mitchell Bailey shared that we recognize that while we are trying to support all parts of our community, we still need to support those most in need. We need to have more clarity on all parts so that we can work on the issue of how to support every single student. This is a critical element.
- Thea Selby, former trustee and still passionately involved with the CCSF Transit student pass, shared before this came up, they were going to ask if there is a possibility of using some of the funding towards transit passes for students. But hearing this news, this is the wrong direction for the city to be going down. This money was never for anything other than city college. We should not cave in and let the city think that this is acceptable. This money is about being able to serve the students in San Francisco. Also, have been seeking funding for fair free transit passes, Senator Padilla has put in a proposal for funding \$1 million for students to receive fair free transit passes.
- Angelica Campos shared it is important that Free City College stays in the city budget. This is important for the elderly and other youth. Classes can be used for safety and for being able to get away from hate. It would be a very big mistake to base funding decisions on the pandemic numbers.

VI. Equity Impact Discussion & Planning

- A. Dr. Cooper Wilkins appreciated the passion around the budget discussion and shared we're all here to help support the success of our students. The presentation represented both a look at the great work, guided by this committee in terms of thinking about how we continue to move forward in an attempt to align some of this work with the Colleges Equity Plan and how we think about ensuring that our most disproportionately impacted students can best be served. It is also a look forward as we continue to leverage the great work that this committee did in establishing equity impact. Saw progress in this past year, but also look forward to potential ways that we can implement initiatives that will help support our students and provide them with greater services. Introduced Micheline Pontious, CCSF Institutional Research Analyst and Kelley Karandjeff, External Consultant, who has been along on this journey as we've been discussing equity to share in presenting.
- Defined "Student Equity".
 - Reviewed CCSF's commitment to equity (Hyperlinks under each commitment will take you to CCSF's website for more information via the presentation by email/on website).
 - Reviewed the Student Equity Focus Populations, including the SEA populations by metric. The goal is to continue to support all populations in surveying our students. Just wanted to sort of stress the notion around equity for us is as much as we understand how important it is to elevate the success of all of our students. A program like Free City does that because it ensures there is no barrier to accessing the institution. Their additional services support the needs that a lot of our disproportionately impacted students could benefit from. To ensure that we close what we call opportunity gaps, where we see a wide variety of needs, as an institution we want to do a better service understanding what those needs are and then deploy resources to help support that.
 - Reviewed the 23-24 Free City Participation data, including the enrollment metrics (duplicate slides were included under this section. Will provide the correct slide to include in presentation/meeting packet).
 - Reviewed the progress of Free City's Equity Plan.
 - We did a couple of different retreats to establish some important goals, strategies and actions, outlining some aspirations for over the next three years, and then how we decidedly had to focus on recent awareness in our effort to improve or increase the number of use users of this program. We are focused on the Free city process, program design and our own institutional efforts to strengthen students as they progress through Free City and beyond.
 - We met regularly as a subgroup that helped to focus on several things related to improving the process and program design. We engaged a work group to focus on Free City awareness, and then conducted our first round of focus groups, hearing directly from our Free City students.
 - We did four sessions (focus groups) with students, just under 30 participants, and they ranged in terms of their engagement with Free City. All were eligible. Most who participated were receiving tuition waivers. It is the beginning of a series of student experience research activities that we're conducting over the next few years as part of this equity planning process. They're informative. They're not conclusive. It was a small group of students, but it is useful to hear directly from students.
 - Some of our accomplishments include the launch of a marketing campaign in Spring 2024. We wanted to focus on letting the students know who got the debt relief that dated back to the fall of 2017 through the fall of 2022. Our concern was being able to reach those earlier enrolled students because with so much time that has passed, phone numbers change, emails change, and as much as the college did to try to advertise that or promote that with those students through those channels, we knew we wouldn't reach everyone to let those students know they had this opportunity to come back to the college and enroll again. The campaign would also serve a dual purpose in letting everyone in the City know about Free City. We also wanted to explore opportunities for improving the program awareness through student research and getting ideas from the students about what might work best and at the beginning of each term, identifying

- students for Free City who had not yet applied or selected no, to complete a Free City application.
 - Tim Huynh (ASIR) provided the marketing update and shared that the Fresh Start Relief Program was focused on educating people about the recent debt relief, fine tune the messaging and tell people who might have benefited from this. Shared the targeting advertisements that were done. There were 2.12 million impressions, 16,000 clicks, 268 reacted and had a call to action. Also did traditional marketing, such as bus ads and had digital screens in high trafficked areas. The goal is to move it forward for the Fall campaign.
 - Students recommended (marketing) everything from digital, direct mail, community outreach through community organizations to a person-to-person approach and outreach directly to high schools, really amplifying the fact that Free City has a high value proposition attached to it, like free training for high wage jobs and free tuition for the first two years of your bachelor's degree.
 - We have some accomplishments around improving the process by looking at the revamping of the application and making it a bit clearer. The previous application never said that when you apply for Free City, you would get free tuition. We've made that message fundamentally clear.
 - Hosted several workshops focused on our Free City students to help them understand the importance of potentially completing FAFSA and that they understood better what their full financial aid picture could look like.
 - Reviewed the most up to date numbers of the outstanding debt relief. We had 84 for the Summer term return and we have 210 in counting return as students continue to register for the Fall semester.
 - Thinking about how we can use the remaining debt relief funds; having an actual dedicated program coordinator that can help negotiate the various parts of Free City and also connect students to all the support programs and services that exist at the college.
 - In the interest of time (11:55am), Co-Chair Pang requested to take public comment and table the committee discussion (member comments) on this for our next meeting as unfinished business. The Free City College Oversight Committee Secretary suggested we take action on this request and vote to table the committee discussion. Member Ford moved to table the discussion. Member Messer seconded. Committee discussion tabled for our next meeting as unfinished business.
 - Member Messer shared that it makes sense given the circumstance but feels like a broken record. These are the conversations we need to make time to have. If we can't make them in this committee, I don't know when we can make them. I do think that's the right way to proceed today but it's an ongoing issue that we have had in the oversight committee that hasn't enabled us to dig into these very essential questions about what we're trying to do with the program.
 - Co-Chair Pang suggested we continue this item as part of the future agenda when we meet next as a body. Member Messer seconded the suggestion and would like to carry the discussion over on the benefits of Free City as well through the equity committee and our conversations.
- B. Member Comments
- Member Villalobos shared it is very positive to show that we had a lot of impressions (marketing), and it should indicate a higher enrollment.
- C. Public Comment
- (Did not note name) Budget cuts are very distressing because we can see that Free City College is doing a lot of great work, and despite the pandemic, 70% of our students benefit from Free City College.
 - Kira shared that they would not be at San Francisco State without Free City College about to graduate. The only way she was able to attend the university was due to Free City College and the funds should be going to students who have needs.

VII. Unfinished Business

- A. The Free City College Oversight Committee Secretary shared that committee members are allowed to attend remotely (AB2449) if attending a conference related to the work of this committee. If you should need to attend remotely under this circumstance or due to an emergency or other just cause circumstances detailed in AB 2449, please email Co-Chairs Pang and Wong and CC the Free City College Oversight Committee Secretary, if possible, a week in advance with your request. Members cannot join remotely as a member of the public. Our committee is required to meet in person and AB 2449 shall not serve as a means for any member of this committee to participate in meetings remotely on a consistent basis. Committee members are required to meet in person. AB 2449 should not serve as a means for any member of this committee to participate in meetings remotely on a consistent basis.
- B. Member Comments
 - Member Brandt asked if it needed to be noted on the agenda as a standing item in case you need to approve of individuals who are attending remotely under Just Cause. The Free City College Oversight Committee Secretary responded it does not have to be on the agenda. Sending the request is suffice and to open the meeting acknowledging that we have members joining us virtually via AB2449.
 - Member Villalobos asked if it's not possible to give notice a week in advance, is it ok to do within the week. The Free City College Oversight Committee Secretary responded if it's an emergency, I cannot say, give us a week in advance. Also noted that we have to have quorum in person. Quorum must be met in person in order for us to proceed with the business of the committee.
 - Member Ford shared she was thankful to be at this meeting, even though still testing positive with COVID. I had to fill out a form, but I did, and I was helped. I've been glad to be here and learned a lot. Looking forward to being healthy and well for our next meeting in person.
 - Co-Chair Pang echoed those sentiments. Also, at home recovering from COVID, so really appreciate the accommodation.
- C. No Public Comment

VIII. Future Agenda Items

- A. Co-Chair Pang shared that the future agenda items include the continuation of the equity impact discussion and planning from today, that was led Dr. Lisa Cooper Wilkins and the continued conversation on the benefits of Free City College as it relates to the equity committee that will be led by Member Messer.
- B. Member Comments
 - Member Brandt asked for clarity on whether we'd be revisiting updates on the Free City budget. Co-Chair Pang responded that it can be included as part of our future agenda.
 - Co-Chair Wong shared that we would all benefit from regular updates on the Free City College budget. Had we been able to identify some of these opportunities early on, we could have proactively used the funding. Co-Chair Pang responded that we can plan to incorporate updates that will provide greater clarity and transparency in upcoming meetings and discussion items about the budget and funding.
 - Member Messer understood that we had intended to have a longer retreat this summer that maybe was going to happen today or at another point. Wondered if that's something that we can schedule with enough time to dig into these things and continue to do that work in a way where the committee is more engaged. Co-Chair Pang responded that we could follow up on a retreat when we engage in the planning conversation.
- C. No Public Comment

IX. Adjournment

- A. Member Cooper Wilkins motioned.
Member Villalobos seconded.
- B. The meeting adjourned at 12:11 PM.