



Free City College Oversight Committee

Minutes



Members: Jenny Lam (Co-Chair), Shanell Williams (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, Vick Van Chung

Date and Time: Monday, April 12th, 2021 10am-12pm
Location: Zoom Webinar Meeting, [click here for link](#).

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

- A. Meeting called to order at 10:03am
- B. Jasmine Dawson, Senior Manager, presented that due to the COVID-19 health emergency City Offices are closed. Members and employees will be participating in the meeting remotely.

II. Adoption of the Agenda

- A. Agenda unanimously adopted.
- B. Member Comments
 - Member Ford raised a question raised: The minutes were missing of the last meeting. Director Su offered to share the minutes after the meeting. City Attorney David Ries recommended approving the minutes at the next meeting.

III. General Public Comment

- A. No general public comment.
- B. Member Messer received permission to share a statement from a student on Free City and stated what it meant to her. The letter stated that for years the student experienced housing issues due to escaping from an abusive relationship and last year she was able to secure stable housing. She was living with a friend also experiencing housing issues but secured public housing and the friend shared that the local community college offered free tuition and encouraged her to enroll. Now at 31 she is enrolled thanks to the Free City grant and because the cost to attend is higher than she can afford, she watched her friends struggle and often end up in debt. She said without this grant she would not have been able to attend college. She concluded by thanking everyone and said that this has been so important to her. Member Messer also shared that a lot of instructors spend time hearing from students who's valued Free City and that the Committee doesn't often hear these stories.

IV. Update from Crowe

- A. Update from Mark Maraccini, Project Partner, and Aaron Coen, Project Manager, from Crowe, the firm that audits the Free City program. Their presentation on the Performance Audit shared the status. They opened by sharing their long history doing internal and external audits for institutions of higher education including federal and state compliance audits. They shared that this audit was for the period of August 1, 2019, to August 31, 2020, 13 month period, mainly to cover for the semesters Fall 2019, Spring 2020 and Summer 2020. Audit has three main objectives whether FCC funds used in accordance with the MOU, determine whether unspent funds were returned to the Program fund, and whether City College has reasonable controls for determining that financial and operational activities over the program are properly performed. Note: If there is a compliance item not found they will point to/recommendation around or strengthen controls. And several non-audit procedures which include preparing a cost analysis for FY under audit and provide recommendations to help program sustainability and look at how federal/state aid is being leveraged in conjunction with the Free Tuition Program, calculate the percentage of the total budget that is tuition and what is percentage is used to grant to students, assess DCFY's management and monitoring of the MOU, and



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make recommendations for this monitoring throughout the program, and lastly how much revenue is generated from the program.

B. Member Comments

- Member Chung asked who was involved in the non-audit procedure settings. Crowe responded that they worked through the City and DCYF to develop the non-audit procedures. Member Chung commented that they thought the Committee could be additional eyes, even though the settings are OK, on what the procedures would look like. Crowe agreed and shared that this is the first audit, these will be done annually, and that procedures are intended to give additional analysis, and this could be built into future audits. And with more time the objectives would be more enhanced.
- Member Cooper Wilkins commented about the terminology about the non-audit wording. Wanted to know how we distinguish between students who get grant money and tuition money because they are all grant funds. She shared that the terminology of grants and tuition could be confusing. Crowe responded that their process may be dated and said for the final report they could modify the language. Clarified to look at how students are utilizing the program along with other state and federal funding.
- Member Ford asked about the reserves and how much we are putting in the reserves because this is key to our ongoing economically troubling times with the City and state. Wondering if it's an audit question or a financial question. Crowe responded that this is not an audit objective, while important, they are looking at things through non-audit analysis and trying to better understand program needs and what needs to go into the reserves. Member Ford asked where she could find this information, how much being put into reserves and how healthy it is. Mendy offered to find out the reserves amounts and offered to send to the Chairs.
- Supervisor Gordon Mar asked clarifying information based on audit dates. Crowe clarified the context error that the calculation is for the audit period. Asked to understand the additional reserves. Crowe shared that the objectives look at the grant program and administrative portions. Supervisor Mar asked what the timeline was for completing this first audit and creating report for Committee.
- Crowe shared that there are still in the information gathering and learning phase of the audit. Met with TSA and DCYF initially and then developed audit program and after it was approved, they began interviewing City College staff and staff that touched the FCC program. They gathered as much as they could and as much information as they could while performing the audit. Conducted interviews which informed data requests with the City and added more questions, some outstanding questions but most are from recent data submissions. Next steps are to get all information from City College and check internal controls to satisfy goals and objectives. Will work through non-audit procedures and working closely with City College and the City and will share a draft report and then a final report. Still have a lot of work to do and still learning. Starting detail testing phase. On track for mid-May to have initial observations and findings/draft report. Some internal reviews and with City and before present to the Committee. Crowe shared they would vet any findings and recommendations with the City College and make sure underlying facts are correct and 100% accurate.
- Member Messer asked about the process and how its connected to some of the other work that's been done to understand how FCC been operating. Interested in interviews and wondered if they looked at the annual report from a few years ago which also made recommendations and how to strengthen program and its operations. Crowe responded that they have been looking at the materials and confirmed as part of their data gathering. This data was incorporated. Offered to also incorporate any previous findings. Member Messer encouraged Crowe to look at previous report because it would help with context.
- Member Chung asked if there was room to interview students and that this would be a great non-audit objective. Worried about unintentional burden we put on students if they miss a deadline. Crowe responded that in a future audit this step could be built in to solicit feedback from students. City and Committee can



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make this recommendation for future audits. Member Messer confirmed this was an original recommendation.

- Member Messer asked how much revenue is being generated by FCC program and how will this be measured. Crowe responded this is difficult to come up with, doesn't have an anchor, the exact number and tracking this metric. Offered to look at those components. If can't look at them this year can at least make recommendations for next year and look at them from an audit standpoint. Looking at better ways and tracking and monitoring so it can be analyzed. Alisa concluded that this is important to measure impact on students. Crowe is hopeful to have good recommendations and better monitor features and report back the important items.

C. Public Comment

- No public comment.

V. Final Presentation of Annual Report

A. Member Cooper Wilkins and Liz Leiserson shared the CCSF Free City College Annual Data report for 2019-2020. Looked at the two semesters impacted by COVID-19, don't know what all of it means. Majority of students are FCC. Shared data on who students, trends on demographics of students over time, financial aid metrics data, retention and drop rates, annual unit load, academic progress, outcome: degrees and certificates and additional data and next steps. Member Cooper Wilkins also shared potential opportunities to close the equity gaps including engaging in targeted outreach.

B. Member Comments

- Member Chung encouraged us to not eliminate broad outreach and expand book loan access program. Asked if demographics analyzed by total residents in a neighborhood. Wanted to better understand data points. Also asked about FAFSA info and does the data include students who may not qualify. Liz responded because she was trying to understand the reasons why students drop. Added that we could set different targets and for she would need to FAFSA definition, can follow up to confirm.
- Member Wu was thankful for the report and shared what stood out for him was the 10% decline in financial aid application. Shared there are conversations about simplifying the FAFSA, that the state is looking to remove the age eligibility, and there needs to be incentives for students to complete applications and unlock tuition costs. Wondered if more disaggregated could be made publicly – specifically for other ethnic groups like Pacific Islander. Liz shared the groups come from standard reporting requirements and that it is complicated to compare with the City's demographics.
- Member Fong question about financial aid metrics, particularly the younger students. Are you seeing trends with younger students not completing the applications? Liz offered to follow up.
- Supervisor Mar questioned Lisa's opportunities to address equity gaps. Asked what the process is for exploring the ideas presented. Other question includes whether these require budget. Can we pull from the grant or the reserves? Member Cooper Wilkins responded that the last recommendations she could reach out to the group to get a scope of work and see if the work aligns with the approaches and could explore partnership if financially feasible. There are some no cost recommendations and those could be leveraged. Supervisor Mar asked about pilot incentives for students. Member Cooper Wilkins said she would see what resources are available and pointed to many things that are also already underway and would explore what's available to additional students. Supervisor Mar then asked for the financial report to understand how the expenditures on the program match the actual grant amount because City's amount increased from \$15M. Would like to see a report on the status and revenues. Director Su responded that in the next meeting would spend time to go through the financials to see how much funding has been spent and the reserves. Asked for us to investigate doing an equity audit. Would bring a full financial report and budget.



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- Member Messer commented about retention and wanted to lift the stories of what free education makes possible for students. Also commented about more conversation about pilot incentives and how Committee could shape this. Suggestion to the Committee to help students who get into debt and it's a barrier and can we figure out how it impacts students and how we want to address it. Request to meet sooner and work on these questions in the interim. Director Su offered scheduling is hard with the holidays.
- Member Chung shared there is a lot of work to serve the equity populations. Shared that we need to consider operational costs and not have an unintentional divestment of funds. Wants to second the idea of meeting more frequently. Mentioned the cuts and layoffs and wants to know if reserves can help bolster enrollment.
- Member Ford asked about Committee work and to help the work move forward. Consider breaking up into subcommittees and to meet more frequently. Chair Lam offered to check in with Co-Chair Williams to find ways to advance the work. Excited about the recommendations and opportunities.
- Chair Lam asked what about the implications with the decrease of FAFSA and this ongoing trend. Member Cooper Wilkins responded that the more students who complete it, the more funding they get. She shared there are things that students are eligible for and may be missing out on opportunities. This is a national trend and students may be putting off completing the FAFSA and deciding to go right into the workforce. Students don't know that there may be more support if they go full time. Outreach office is making this information available but with COVID-19 there are many articles about the lost generation – students who never completed the FAFSA. Goal continues to be to get students living wage jobs. Chair Lam asked what statistics for SFUSD students are going to City College. Liz shared that about a quarter of SFUSD students show up to City College and in terms of trends there's not a direct connection or major shift. There is an increase in dual enrollments. Member Fong shared that the numbers may be higher. Current students are submitting a FIRPA block so its hard to tell where students are going. So, it's harder to track students. Feels that closer to 40% of students are enrolling in City College.
- Chair Lam shared that we need to follow up pilot incentive and the equity audit.

VI. Update on Free City College Fall 2020

- A. Member Cooper Wilkins reported out that she developed enrollment metrics term over term. She shared this for the Fall and shared that it looks like it does for other semesters. Showed data in drops in enrollment and units earned.
- B. Member Chung shared that at last Board of Trustee' Student Success Committee Vice President Vogel gave a breakdown of percentages for students and what grade they received, withdrawals and subjects. Liz shared they are not seeing big changes. Note: Member Fong shared in the chat two years of data and clarified what the FIRPA block means.
- C. No public comment.

VII. Future Agenda Items

- A. Financial update FCC expenditures and looking at equity recommendations and scope and the incentive pilots being explored. Chair Williams asked to see demographic data on students as well. Members Chung and Ford asked for committee exploration work. Member Cooper Wilkins also asked to look at minutes from the last several meetings and wanted to pull out past recommended agenda items. Member Ford requested copies of all materials and documents.
- B. No public comment.

VIII. Adjournment

- A. Meeting adjourned at 12:00pm.