RESOLUTION

To: Senators, University Student Senate, CUNY
From: Steering Committee, University Student Senate, CUNY
Date: March 4, 2018
Title: Adopted Resolution 1718-P12: CUNY Student Activity Fees (SAF)

WHEREAS, on February 26, 2018, in an effort to reform the CUNY student activity fees (SAF) and the process of chartering registered student organization, the Student Affairs Committee of the CUNY Board of Trustees introduced a set of proposed amendments to Article XV and XVI of the CUNY Bylaws and the CUNY Fiscal Accountability Handbook,

WHEREAS, the purpose of student activity fees, as the name suggests, is for CUNY students to have the power to fully govern their fees; this power includes students’ ability to determine the amount of the fee, the allocation of the fee, the spending of the fee, and the review of any fee expenditures—as is currently outlined in the CUNY Bylaws,

WHEREAS, the proposed amendments represent a radical departure from the student centered student activity fee governing structure outlined above, and would usher in a new structure which puts the interest of the college administration ahead of the interest of CUNY students,

WHEREAS, because the language in the proposed amendments is vague, lacks detail, and is at times contradictory, all of the resulting implications of the proposed amendments remain irresponsibly unclear,

WHEREAS, if the SAF amendments are adopted, CUNY student organizations, including but not limited to NYPIRG, student veteran organizations, radio stations, yearbook organizations, disability organizations, LGBTQ organizations, and student newspapers which have funds earmarked to them directly by the students on their campus, will have their earmarked funding eliminated,

WHEREAS, the proposed amendments seek to infringe on students’ rights to self-govern by restricting the allowable categories of SAF expenditures; the amendments also seek to eliminate a student majority budget committee on college associations, which exercises a great deal of authority over SAF; the student governing authority would be transferred to a college association where students are in the minority,

WHEREAS, there are currently approximately $30 million dollars of earmarked SAF at the CUNY College associations, which is a collection of funds which students allocate for specific campus organizations and activities,
WHEREAS, because the proposed amendments do not mention surplus allocations, a substantial amount of student funds will not have clear governing guidelines.

WHEREAS, while the proposed amendments would result in a drastic overhaul of campus life at CUNY colleges, the CUNY administration has failed to promptly and adequately engage CUNY students in a clear and meaningful discussion about the proposed amendments.

WHEREAS, the Office of the General Counsel cited legal concerns as the impetus for the proposed SAF changes, but has not released a legal memorandum highlighting the reasoning and providing legal justification for these proposed changes.

WHEREAS, the CUNY administration is seeking to adopt the proposed amendments during the Spring 2018 semester, with the intention of implementing the changes during the 2018-2019 academic year.

RESOLVED, that the University Student Senate of the City University of New York calls on the Board of Trustees to halt this proposal and begin to meaningfully engage students in the process of any proposed SAF changes—through town halls, campus visits, and meetings with elected student leaders at each campus.