

Meeting Agenda

September 12th 2017; 6:30 PM

Alfred Lerner Hall, Room 569

<http://gsac.columbia.edu/>

I. GSAC Introduction:

A. Steering Committee changes

1. Changed roles: Lisa Kahl moved from VP of Administration to President; Sarah Joseph moved from President to Social Chair; Frank Cusimano moved from Social Chair to Alumni & Career Services Chair
2. New to board: Andrew Hsu is the new VP of Administration; Abigail MacBain is the new VP of Communications; Milica Ilicic is the new Quality of Life Chair
3. Continuing in roles: Sarah Arkebauer remains as Budget & Finance Chair; David Mejia remains as Culture Chair

B. Description of GSAC

1. Student Government for GSAS, including PhD & MA; also, PhDs in other departments, b/c Dean Alonzo confers degrees for all PhDs
2. Representatives from all departments; showed flow chart demonstrating which departments send us representatives
3. As of last year (for this year), upped MA representation to 3
4. Committees (5) ~ select which to join later in the meeting
5. Student Groups; cultural and social events, etc...

II. Department Representative Responsibilities:

- A. Attendance: must attend or send proxy to all meetings; 1 absence permitted
- B. Participate in one committee or serve as external representative
- C. Participate in one volunteer event per year (FestiFall, committee event, cultural/social event, etc...)
- D. Attending keeps department in good standing and thereby eligible for travel grants and student initiative grants
- E. Representatives and attendance kept track of here:

<http://columbiagsac.wpengine.com/gsac-administration/department-representativ-e-list/>

- F. Representatives must sign in for Plenary Meetings on own computer/mobile device, here:
<http://columbiagsac.wpengine.com/gsac-administration/agendas-signin-minutes/>
(sign-in sheet will be removed day after meeting)
- G. Representative participation essential to make sure that each department has a voice weighing in on policies and decisions as well as active as liaison back to fellow students to communicate relevant deadlines and opportunities

III. Food Bank:

- A. Chelsea, postbacc with Med School; vice chair of development for CU food bank

- B. Food Bank serves both undergrads and grad students to combat food insecurity on campus
- C. Location on campus: Lerner, down the hall from current meeting room; sequestered and private, room 582
- D. Currently working on notifying people that the group exists and there will be upcoming events
- E. Upcoming Event: Empty bowls; crafting pottery (donated), will have fundraising event for people to eat out of and take home the bowls. The ticket = pay for food, etc... Performance groups and such will be there too. Always looking for help with open hours and donations. Also open to having us do a food drive for them.
- F. Email: thefoodbank@columbia.edu (way to join mailing list, as volunteer, other...). Also, newsletter & "Contact Us" link from website. There's also a volunteer link. If want to be part of particular committee, etc... listed there.
- G. Currently 3 committees open to applicants → can access from Facebook page. Facebook page = thefoodbankatcolumbia
- H. Q: Do you have to apply to be part of the food bank? A: No. Only minimum requirement from volunteers = sign confidentiality clause. Ensure it's kept confidential and no one is castigated for either taking part of or volunteering with.
- I. Open hours: Wednesday 4-6, Saturday 12-3. People can come and grab food.

IV. **Student Group Approval:** Columbia University Science Policy Initiative (CUSP):

- A. Founded around January for ways to get involved with science policy and advocacy; now have over 100 people on mailing list.
- B. Six officers to plan events; interested in outreach and working to network with policy groups and grad student groups across the country.
- C. Encourage people to reach out to local communities to demonstrate what scientists do on a daily basis.
- D. Also working to bring speakers to campus. Brought people in for Science March to discuss activities, etc... Also, promoting scientists to run for office group came to speak. Organized bussing to March for Science; worked with GSAC and other groups.
- E. Working on a variety of fronts to get students involved with science policy, but not yet have official recognition from GSAC
- F. Q: Are you open to students who are not in the sciences? A: Yes, absolutely.
- G. Mailing list has people from med campus, undergrads, etc... Nature of original founders = main focus is medical campus, but interested in anyone who wants to be a member to join, looking to expand
- H. Student group deliberations are off the record, but a relevant question arose: What does approving a group entail:
 1. In order to be an official group, has to be recognized by a council/school(GSAS)/governing board, etc...
 2. Without approval, no access to reserving rooms, not able to apply for student funding (up to \$500/semester)
 3. Also, financial prizes/funds that they can apply for

I. Result: approved, all in favor, no abstentions

V. Announcements (President)

A. GSAC Goals:

1. MAs are underrepresented; working with Dean to figure out ways to disentangle overlapping messiness.
2. Part of problem = GSAC funding comes from GSAS funding; other groups don't contribute to our funding, but we still allow others to participate with our events. Working with deans from other schools to get everyone who has access to GSAC contributes to GSAC.
3. Want to work more closely with GSC; currently, they only do FestiFall, but we are hoping they will expand to cover all of the grad students ~ better Columbia Grad Community.

B. VP Admin Update:

1. External Presentation Survey: Ideas of which groups to bring in to talk to us (and bring us swag)!

C. Communications update:

1. Newsletter redesign and website update ~ looking for helpers (can take place of committee/external rep requirement)

VI. Engineering (SEAS) Update

- A. Withdrew ability to take part of our events b/c Engineering does not contribute to our events and also they are very well organized
- B. We will still do mixers and such together. They're OK with this; change will be formalized next month.

VII. Committee Updates:

A. Alumni & Career Development:

1. Working with CCE to do more activities to help support career
2. Alumni outreach: really want to reach out to alumni, especially with MAs and PhDs ~ spend much more time on campus than undergrads, but less likely to contribute back to school. Want to work on that.
3. For alumni, how can we make sure that when students leave, they feel like they were actively engaged and got a lot out of this → in order that in 10 years from now, future students feel like they are part of the Columbia community and will want to give back.
4. Updates: leadership luncheon with CCE (Center for Career Education).
 - a) 3 Posts on Facebook Page: -Lionshare profile checklist: tailored information for what you want to do in the future (make sure you're only getting what you WANT). - multi year plan to make sure you're on track for a job.
 - b) Some ideas: talk to alumni, etc... Resumania (tomorrow); Job fair for international students; power pack lunches. Info on interview tips, etc... Different topics on different days. Look to see what topics/day.
 - c) CCE will be here next month.

B. Budget:

1. Job as chair = approve student grants and travel initiatives
2. Reps can get volunteer hours by participating
3. Constituency can't apply for grants if reps don't come to events!
4. Budget updates:
 - a) Getting \$107,000 from GSAS; also, found about \$20,000 in previous years' budgets. Allocated funds similarly to last year. Added more money for plenary meeting budgets (get more people to come!), Ivy Summit, Ivy+ savings for our own hosting in a few years
 - b) New budget line item for Communications: new swag, newsletter costs, Social: increased some funds; anticipate lowering some costs b/c cosponsoring with Engineering following split; Culture: budget increased. Quality of Life, etc... stayed same. Student Initiative and Travel Grants increased ~ currently approve about 40%, want to up that. update on how travel grants work; Alumni & Career: similar. Didn't spend much last year in part b/c didn't have a chair for part of last year. Misc: cushion of about \$10,000 carryover.
 - c) Wanted bigger buffer b/c still not final budget from GSAS; final number will be between \$105,000-110,000 → please vote to approve
 - d) Q&A before budget vote
 - (1) Q: There was a big increase in student activities fee; doesn't match numbers except for "new income." A: Our income is based on fee from LAST year but student numbers from THIS year. Most of the fee goes to other groups. We always ask for more but they will only give us a certain amount; but if we can get some other students' fees (other schools), we could get more. This is still a pretty big increase from previous years. Still, hands are somewhat tied in terms of how much we can get - tied to enrollment
 - (2) Q: So, if we know how many other people get "a piece of the pie," do we know that it all builds up to the "whole pie?" A: We don't know who gets what. But we actually have more awareness of where our money comes from as compared with a lot of other groups. We're trying to clean up our budgeting and accounting, which hasn't always been done well in the past. Should keep stable in future years b/c tied to enrollment, not whims of administration. Keep in mind, this is still a good amount, especially when about half of the students who take advantage of our stuff

aren't in GSAS. That hurts our negotiation. Still, the formula they gave us works in our favor.

5. Budget Vote Result: approved, all in favor, no abstentions

C. Culture:

1. organize cultural events, buy tickets, sell tickets (subsidized)
2. few upcoming events:
 - a) 9/29: Sleep No More (still not confirmed)
 - b) 10/25: Joshua Bell
 - c) 11/2: White Light Festival
 - d) 11/15: Other White Light Festival

D. Quality of Life:

1. Based on QOL survey - based on last year, want to do things like a resource handbook, also really want to look into maternity leave policies (some could be relatively easily fixed) → assemble committee to do various things

E. Social:

1. Events & Results of survey
 - a) Groundhog Day on Thursday;
 - b) Social Survey:
 - (1) 103 people took it, that helped with Orientation events
 - (2) Midtown and morningside preferred
 - (3) more Broadway than bars
 - (4) 10/13: Mystery Room (escape the room)
 - c) if volunteer and come up with idea that is accepted, can go for free

VIII. External Reps

- A. Some issues communicating with organizations last year; trying to improve communication with the external groups
- B. New Appointments:
 1. Health (CUMC): Daniel Roybal
 2. Libraries: Amelia Spooner; Alex Cuadrado
 3. Union: Kate McIntyre
 4. IGB: Andrew Hsu; James Martin; Jade Le-Cascarino
 5. Disabilities: Benjamin Young
 6. Interschool/professional school: (restart) 2 spots, no takers; still open
 7. ISSO: Pedro Baldera-Aguayo (continuing); volunteer for open spot, but did not get name - waiting for email

IX. Senator Updates

- A. 2 out of 3 GSAS Senators present
- B. Brief update from last year: Natural Sciences; started subcommittee to look at DACA; appointed students to judiciary board; proposed redesign of Lerner for minority and LGBT groups (starting on this year); main theme for this year is DACA and own QoL survey → redo to increase participation

- X. **New Business:** (time for Department Reps to talk to us) - can also submit on link, please tell fellow students about this:
<http://columbiagsac.wpengine.com/student-issues/student-issues-contact-form/>
- A. Q: Don't understand issues with Morningside Students not being able to access stuff at Medical Campus and vice versa; also, hours for gym uptown is not as friendly; fees can be different for diff. years (loophole?) A: We were made aware of that; not sure what the situation is but think it's b/c of dean uptown; some policies are being more stringently adhered to, so probably reason for change; we will raise this with our dean and reach out to others; there's some clear miscommunication about who can access what gyms
 - B. Q about newsletter: will the travel grants be posted? A: Yup, definitely; newsletter is OPT IN, so let people in your program know about our FB and our newsletter, etc...
- XI. **Break up to join the independent committees** (Alumni & Career Development; Budget & Finance; Culture; Quality of Life; Social)

Next Meeting is October 10, 2017 at 6:30 PM in Lerner 477 (Note: This is a different room and will remain our meeting space for the rest of the semester)

Student Initiative Grants are due October 13