

GSAC/ASGC Plenary Meetings 2017-2018

Meeting Agenda

April 24, 2018; 6:30 PM

Philosophy Hall, Room 301

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

- I. Sign-in
- II. Approval of March 2018 Minutes (President)
- III. Presentation by David Austell, ISSO Director
 - A. Events this past year (update):
 1. 4 locations: main = International House North;
 - a) in 3 years, from 14 staff to 31; 10 international student advisors see students every day; closed Wednesday, but other than that, open to public; constantly open to any student through email, private cell phone (even sleep with) ~ can be contacted quickly 24/7
 - b) Compliance team: ISSO specifically deals with federal system with international students ~ how colleges and universities communicate information about international students to the government (required after 9/11). Data going into the system is primarily biographic data; however, when a student asks for a benefit like work authorization, that's also put into the system; 5 people ONLY work on that data system.
 - c) Population = the third largest in the US; around 15,000 international students, about 12,000 full time and about 3,000 are in optional training after work authorization.
 2. Manhattanville and CUMC also have campuses
 3. New website, new data system that's very robust; students can request benefits directly through website (extensions, trainings, etc...) all handled online. At CUMC, 4 full time staff (previously only 2). Also, very close to launching data system Compass at CUMC → means students there will be powerfully supported.

- B. Executive orders/proclamations: no new updates on this; current state = supreme court is allowing executive orders with additional judicial involvement; with students from the countries nearly banned via executive orders, cautioning from leaving the country. Even other students from other countries, working closely with them to make sure very conservative with international travel.
- C. Questions:
1. Q: How many students are affected by the executive order? A: Don't have the exact numbers; largest population is from Iran; total number might be around 100. Lots of people are concerned.
 2. Q: Heard a complaint from an international student who said he can't get CPT because it's not allowed by GSAS A: CPT for international students is curricular training - used in two ways: 1) required internships, 2) elected internships when connected with a course. There are courses within GSAS that have CPT connected, but please have student contact David directly.
 - a) Q: Heard recently there was a change in the law that social sciences are considered "sciences," and so have a longer OPT (more limited in Humanities) A: Talking about STEM extension of OPT, done by Homeland Security. Commonly used by students for 12 months after program, for STEM fields: immigration said that they could have a 24 month OPT (started 2 years ago) ~ these are related to Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics. There are other STEM fields starting to surface — such as architecture — maybe even fields of the arts related to technology (got a question about that recently). There are specific codes for majors related to this policy and the policy. There will be more questions about that.
 - b) Q: Heard complaints from international students that can only get stipend checks in person from the registrar; can't get direct deposit (including if go abroad). A: (from multiple international students) That shouldn't be a problem, have not had that concern

IV. Announcements (President)

- A. Service Awards - only 1 recipient in attendance: Jennifer Reynolds-Strange, MA student from East Asian Languages & Cultures ~ pushed the Master's Students' agenda and helped out a lot with GSAC/ASGC this year. Other recipients: Viviana Rivera-Burgos, PhD Student from Political Science; Dora Arenas, Administrative Assistant from Department of Sociology.
- B. Faculty Mentoring Awards - 2 faculty: Pamela Smith from History and Tonya Lee Putnam from Political Science - awards will be given out at convocation

C. [New GSAS Student Senators](#)

- 1. Did not run elections because only 1 nomination for each of the three spots
- 2. Mike Ford for Humanities; Andrew Hsu for Pure Sciences; Sally Xing for Social Sciences ([campaign platforms are available online](#))

D. [Carbon Neutrality Resolution](#)

- 1. Roosevelt Institute (on campus think tank on progressive policies - asked us to sign resolution) — consult plenary first
- 2. If we decide to support this resolution, they can use that support (with EGSC, Undergraduate Council, TC Senate, and more) when approaching the new Senate.
- 3. Q: What's the cost to us for signing the resolution? A: So far, none. It's just about helping the effort at now, but perhaps ASGC might use carbon neutral vendors in the future for our events
- 4. Vote → passed; we will support this effort in the senate

- E. Thank You Party for DRs at Arts&Crafts tonight (after plenary meeting)

V. New ASGC Executive Board

VI. New Department Representatives and MA Representatives process (VP Communications)

- A. [Fill out the form](#) for new representatives (if not staying on as department rep)

- B. If leaving Columbia and do not have successor, please notify the Communications Chair
- C. There will be some changes to the Representatives registration and appeal process, especially with the inclusion of MA representatives

VII. Student Groups (VP Admin)- Re-recognition of Old GSAC student groups ~ recognized more than 5 years ago, so re-introducing to assembly

- A. Women in Science at Columbia (Presentation): focus on hosting events focused on professional development of female scientists in academic and non-academic careers; ex/ Ask Professor at Lunch; Graduate Research Symposium; Girls Science Day
- B. Careers in Chemistry (Presentation): Columbia Chemistry Career Committee - C4; students and postdocs that create events for chemistry and sometimes engineering students for careers, etc... ; ex/ alumni talk about what steps they took to get their jobs, what they do in day to day lives, etc...; membership is focused on chemistry but sometimes people come from engineering, IBM; Q: would chemical engineering be more focused on industry, as opposed to GSAS chemistry which is more academic? A: We serve interests in Chemistry PhD students outside of academia because there's already a lot of information out there on academic jobs but not a lot otherwise.
- C. Medieval Colloquium (Presentation) - biweekly workshops for students to come and workshop events with peers; bring about 4 speakers to campus over course of the year, depending upon how far they are coming from; a lot of attendees come from GSAS as well as wider community in NYC; Q: Which departments do you draw from? A: A lot from English, all language departments; this year, a lot of students from French, History, Religion coming to workshops

- D. CU Biotechnology Association, Khorlo Tibetan Studies Graduate Student Group (recently approved into group, so will not be revoked on)

VIII. Committee updates

A. Alumni & Career Development

- 1. Updates - please fill out alumni form (in weekly newsletter)

B. Budget & Finance

- 1. Travel Grants Application Statistics - had exactly the right amount of money for the applicants who applied — huge success this semester! We are funding based upon this year's budget, so even those groups leaving in this transition, they are still eligible.
- 2. [ASGC Budget](#) - tentative budget for next year ~ things are staying mostly the same.
 - a) Got an influx of around \$130,000 from GSAS. Anticipate carrying over of about \$5,000.
 - b) Increase with steering committee stipends because of increase in officers; also, plenary meeting budget is higher because of increase in attendance.
 - c) NAGPS fund for sending students to lobby; last year, put several thousand aside for hosting the Ivy+ conference in a few years' time.
 - d) Communications and media went up for new "swag" as ASGC and the newsletter. Events are the same - MA events has its own budget for Masters' students specific events.
 - e) Student groups' funding went down because many were de-recognized or shifted to other places (engineering, etc...)
 - f) Get in touch with Sarah A. or Mike if have any strong concerns or issues with this budget
 - g) Will vote on in the fall

C. Culture

1. NYC Ballet - Balanchine Black and White, April 24, 7PM
2. Sleep No More. May 2018 - most popular event (second week of May)

D. Quality of Life

1. GSAS-GSAC/ASGC resource guide for students - still in the works with the Dean's office; will be asking them next week on the anticipated date for publishing it on the website → will look through to see how it goes
2. Quality of Life Survey Report - nearly done; just needs conclusion. Currently 140 pages of data. Lots of graphs, colors, information (**Later Note: the report has now been uploaded and is available here**)

a) highlights :

- (1) need more MA representation - not many filled out survey; have unique issues from PhD students (housing, age, funding, etc...)
- (2) Can use data to improve some of issues people are having academically, services, etc...; what people like, don't like; ex/ the more advisors spend time with students, the more satisfied students are → information to share with the administration
- (3) Minority groups, specific concerns; ex/ international students, parents, etc...; in our data, 2.4% are affected by "travel ban," and about same amount aren't sure if they're affected or not.

b) finances:

- (1) about 80% of PhD students pay more than 30% (that's the federal recommendation for the most you should spend on rent); more than 50% pay 50% or more → more data to bring to administration to demonstrate why paying the internet fee is insufficient

c) union:

- (1) lots of questions and comments on the union

- (2) question on whether students felt the administration would help students without the union, most people said “no” ~ many people were just mistrustful of the administration as opposed to super pro-union
3. Major thanks to committee for time, help, and dedication to this project
4. Should be published around Friday; will hand out sweepstakes Amazon cards ~ will go out at end of week.

E. Social

1. Dear Evan Hansen 4/25/18 2PM
2. Grading Day 5/8/2018 - cosponsored with CTL at Butler 212; 11:30 am -6:00 pm ~ coffee, food, quiet room, and grading! Room can only hold 32 people, can sign up for slots

IX. External Representatives Updates:

1. Health (Morningside, CUMC)
2. Libraries - reminder: graduate grading room
3. Graduate Workers of Columbia (GWC)/Union - on strike! Picket lines 11-3 until Monday the 30th. Then not on strike. On Thursday, picket line is at CUMC, but there will still be a smaller one on Morningside. Bollinger is having a “Freedom of Expression Event” on Wednesday and Thursday
4. Office of University Life Events Council - if you want to be on the council, can apply (in newsletter); due tomorrow
5. Disabilities - what came out of student disability survey — widely received as very effective; keep working to improve quality of life with

students with disabilities

6. ISSO

X. New Business (Open Forum)

XI. Committee meetings & Adjournment (President)