



# ARTS & SCIENCES GRADUATE COUNCIL

Upcoming Plenary Meetings:

February 19  
March 26  
April 30

## Meeting Agenda

January 29, 2019; 6:30 PM

Philosophy Hall 301

<https://council.gsas.columbia.edu/>

### 1. Sign-in & Welcome

- a. QoL chair (subbing for Communications Chair) announces plenary keyword (barbecue) for sign-in.
- b. Vote to approve December minutes.
  - i. Approved. No opposition.

### 2. Presentation by Ashley Sassani, Assistant Director, International Risk Management (aka Global Travel)

- a. Columbia Travel Requirements: All information below is listed at [globaltravel.columbia.edu](http://globaltravel.columbia.edu)
- b. Columbia facilitated or recognized travel: not overseen by Columbia but may be partially funded or arranged by Columbia, or may earn an academic credit, or may be organized by a student group, or connected to research.
- c. ITPP Requirements for all such travel: Maintain health insurance that provides for routine and emergency care abroad. Other requirements are tiered by location's risk rating.
- d. All such travel must be registered with ISOS TravelTracker/MyTrips online. After registering, you'll be able to access the pre-trip certification form. Check with your department to find out if pre-trip certification is required.
- e. Can download app to check in at different locations.
- f. Receive text messages, emails, and push notifications in the aftermath of large-scale emergencies (hurricane, earthquake, tsunami, coup, terrorist attack).
  - i. Question: How localized are these notifications?
  - ii. Answer: Depends on scale of the emergency..
- g. ISOS: 24/7 emergency service provider, includes medical, travel, and security assistance. Now also includes up to 5 sessions of counseling services.
  - i. Question: If you don't log your trip, can you still access these services?
  - ii. Answer: If you don't log your trip, you can be disciplined by your Dean. But yes.
- h. Mila: What if you are arrested?
  - i. Answer: Call the embassy.
  - ii. Follow-up: What if you're a citizen of the country where you're arrested?
  - iii. Can still contact ISOS for legal services. They're not lawyers, but they can give you legal advice.
- i. Question: Have you had any issues communicating with students in China?

- i. Answer: Not in the six months I've been here, but it's something we're monitoring.
- j. Question: Who are the agents responding? Are they affiliated with Columbia?
  - i. Answer: No, but they are dedicated scholastic representatives, familiar with academic as opposed to business travel.

### 3. Announcements (President)

#### a. Reminder about new date for February Plenary (2/19)

#### b. International Tax query

- i. Sarah: Gathering information about problems with Columbia's software to pay state taxes. If you've had problems with this reach out to Kate.
- ii. Mila: If you're a grad student on an F-1 visa you're a non-resident for federal taxes. If you use Columbia's services (Sprintax) to pay taxes they'll classify you as a non-resident for federal taxes, but has been mistakenly counting people as residents for the purposes of state taxes (by calculating the number of days you've been in New York). But the IRS confirms that if you are a non-resident for federal taxes you are a non-resident in New York state. State taxes are much higher for residents. Working on asking Columbia to follow up with Sprintax. *[Since the Plenary Meeting, Mila has been following up on this information with the IRS to confirm international students' non-resident status in New York state. There may be an update or change to this information in the February meeting.]*
- iii. International Student Rep: I went to meet with David Austell on Monday and showed him Mila's email. He said they were well aware of the situation, that it had been raised with them before, that it was a sticky situation, and that there would be tax seminars for international students to ask questions of the CEO and CFO, but he didn't feel confident to give me an answer about whether international students would be receiving reimbursements. Offered to come to next plenary.
- iv. Mila: I've been to those and they usually deflect these questions, but please spread the word about this to international students in your department. David Austell and Sprintax both usually won't give definite advice because tax law varies by country-specific treaties.

#### c. Nous Cafe

- i. Sarah: New menu with lower prices should be arriving soon.

### 4. Resolution regarding Ivy+ (Vice President) → Approved

- a. *"ASGC supports Columbia University's continued inclusion and involvement in the Ivy+ Graduate and Professional Student Government Group, including organizing and participating in its annual summit. ASGC also affirms that the ASGC Executive Board represents Columbia University in all decisions related to Ivy+, in perpetuity, and can make decisions on behalf of ASGC and Columbia University without their express consent."*
- b. Andrew: We're part of this organization; last year we met at Cornell. We've been trying to decide on who is included, but there is uncertainty about whether University of Chicago should be included. Each school is going back to the plenaries and asking

whether the executive board has their support in representing them to make decision on the future of Ivy+. I.e., do we have the authority to vote on whether or not to include the University of Chicago in this group? We are therefore asking you to vote on the resolution listed above.

- c. Sarah: Clarification: This has always been the case, but this year Ivy+ is formalizing a constitution.
- d. Kate: Does the change from GSAC to ASGC affect this—should representatives outside of GSAS be in attendance?
- e. Andrew: GSAS is the default program overseeing all the rest, but we've been reaching out to other schools to ask their delegates to attend.
- f. Question: Where does the money come from?
- g. Answer: From the GSAS office, not from ASGC.
- h. Voted to approve resolution. No oppositions, no abstentions.

## **5. Committee updates**

### **a. Alumni & Career Development**

- i. Spring Events: Headshots, Larger Alumni-Student end-of-year event TBD
  - 1. Free headshots for ASGC students and a larger event at the end of the spring semester.

### **b. Quality of Life**

- i. Summer gym memberships—going to look into offering them for those teaching/TAing for Columbia in the summer.
- ii. Quality of Life survey
- iii. People in Biological Sciences should be able to get access to VPN services in the first-year.

### **c. Events**

- i. Brandon: No events planned, open to suggestions.
- ii. Mila: Two operas—La Traviata and the Valkyries, the Book of Mormon, To kill a mockingbird, two smaller events at La MaMa, Brooklyn Nets game. Sleep No More in spring, and looking into booking one more musical. Ticket sales will start in February.

### **d. Finance**

- i. We received 26 travel grant applications in the winter cycle. The committee is currently reviewing them and will send out results within the next week or two.
- ii. The deadline for the next cycle is April 26.
- iii. Deadline for Student Initiative Grants is February 23.
- iv. Department representatives are asked to communicate these opportunities to their constituents!

### **e. Masters Affairs**

- i. MA Rep meeting Thursday, Feb. 7th, 5pm, Room TBD - Survey to be sent out to MA Reps & circulated (through Reps) to MA students in each department.

1. Feedback about network events, career development and the like that are specific to Masters Students.
- ii. Goal for MA Representation from each department

## 6. External Representatives Updates:

### a. Health

### b. Libraries

- i. Sat in on senate library meeting, and apparently there's a relamping program to fix all broken lamps and install new lamps. Also a reminder that the GSAS grading room is under-utilized. Will include link on how to get there and how to use it in the next newsletter. (Butler Library, Room 2M11.)

### c. Graduate Workers of Columbia (GWC)/Union

- i. Amelia: Bargaining Committee Election coming up Feb 6-7, voting on 5 open positions. All unit members can vote as long as they've filled out [an Authorization Card](#), which they can do the day of the vote or by clicking on the link.
- ii. Voting will be open at the following times and places:
  1. Morningside: Feb. 6, 7; 10am-6pm, Nous Café/Graduate Student Center (Philosophy Hall)
  2. CUMC: Feb. 6, 7; 10am-6pm, Hammer Health Sciences Building Room LL1-104
  3. Lamont: Feb. 6; 10am-2pm, Cafeteria
  4. Manhattanville: Feb. 7; 10am-2pm, The Forum (in the cafe)

More information is available [online](#). A group has formed a caucus, [C-AWDU](#) (Columbia Academic Workers for a Democratic Union - [FB page here](#)). Three general body meetings being held this Wednesday, with discussion about whether to include a referendum on open bargaining on the ballot. [Please note that since the Plenary, two more caucuses have formed: [United for a Strong Contract](#) and [GWC for an Anti-Slate: Seeking Consensus and Real Unity](#).]

- iii. Happy Hour Thursday at La Floridita to meet candidates.
  - iv. GWC meetings this semester have been moved to Wednesdays at 6pm. Join the listserv to find out location by [signing up on the GWC website](#). If unit members haven't filled out bargaining surveys yet (to explain which issues are most important to them), they can do so online by [going here](#).
  - v. Question: Has the UAW explained why they engaged in negotiation on our behalf?
  - vi. Answer: Not really. Beverly Brakeman said she thought this would be best for us.
  - vii. Question: Do you think we can still trust the UAW?
  - viii. Answer: I think we have to work with what we have, and our Local is great—we have a lot of support from other workers on campus.
- d. **Interschool Governing Board (IGB)**-- appointment of 2 new representatives

- i. Andrew: Because Darold is now a senator, we can nominate two new representatives. This counts as your volunteer service for ASGC—if anyone wants to do it, it's every other Monday at 7pm (free food). The IGB recognizes student groups that are interschool in nature, can give input into events being put on for graduate students.
  - ii. No volunteers. If interested, get in touch with Andrew.
- e. Disabilities (SSD)**
  - i. Reviewing means of requesting accommodations online, identifying parts of campus that are inaccessible, reviewing Core to include disability studies.
- f. ISSO**
  - i. Other updates from Monday meeting: ISSO office being renovated—there will be four more international student advisor posts (which we can apply for). The ratio of advisors to students will be more in line with other schools, such as NYU—1 advisor for every 1000 students. If you're planning on applying to OPT, you should start that soon, because the process generally takes a few months.
  - ii. Question: Can you include the information from your conversation with him in the ISSO newsletter?
  - iii. Answer: Yes, but I think what he's said to me doesn't get us far, and we should wait until he's had to respond to a larger group of people.
  - iv. Clarification of comment from department rep: The ISSO does not allow us to call them. There is no way to speak with a representative from the ISSO. The phone number only presents recorded information. The only way to speak with them is either to go in person or to send them an email, to which they often reply in a few days (often times too late for sensitive or urgent issues). I therefore would like you to speak on behalf of the many grad students like me to the ISSO and have them open a line of communication with the desk.
- g. University Life Events Council**
- h. PhD Council/ ECGSAS**
- 7. Senators' Updates (Andrew, Mike, Darold)**
  - a. Undergraduate student romance policy was never approved by Office of General Counsel, who changed the language—was reapproved over the summer without notification, to the dismay of many senators. It's not being rewritten—attempting to include a graduate student romance policy as well, but there's some distrust of the administration right now. It's being written without faculty and administrative input right now, and will be sent to Spectator in the next few weeks.
- 8. New Business (Open Forum)**
- 9. Committee Meetings & Adjournment (President)**

**ASGC plenary meetings are conducted in the style of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (10th Edition)***

Obtain the floor (the right to speak) by being the first to raise your department placard when the person speaking has finished. You must be recognized by the Chair before speaking.

- No member can speak twice to the same issue until everyone else wishing to speak has spoken to it once.
- The agenda and all committee reports are merely recommendations. When presented to the assembly and the question is stated, debate begins and changes can occur.