

Meeting Minutes

October 16, 2018; 6:30 PM



ARTS & SCIENCES GRADUATE COUNCIL

Philosophy Hall 301

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

Upcoming Plenary Meetings:
October 16
November 13
December 11 <input type="checkbox"/>

1. Sign-in & Welcome

- a. **Vote to approve September minutes** → Approved

2. Presentation by Stephanie Jennings, Senior Health Insurance Specialist (Columbia Health)

- a. Stephanie Jennings came as part of an initiative to ask more students groups on campus about what they like or would like to change about the student health insurance. The feedback will go to senior leadership and will be used to formulate the 2019-2020 health insurance plane.
- b. First question from Stephanie: Thinking about the student health insurance plan, or your own, what do you find most important?
 - i. Vision care is not sufficient.
 - ii. Several concerns voiced that care should be based on what the doctor thinks is important, not dependent on financial concerns. Students have been told that things such as long-term physical therapy as recommended by the doctor is not covered, so health needs are inhibited by financial reasons and not care needs. Similarly, reps recounted that after receiving treatment the doctors approved or they were told that it would be covered they were later told that it wasn't covered, resulting in high bills and appeals etc., a demoralising process when trying to focus on school. There is an overall lack of accountability within the Columbia system as patients are frequently misinformed, resulting in later unanticipated costs.
 1. Stephanie responded that the student health insurance plan covers an unlimited in terms of number of visits, but when you go off campus the physical therapist is required to provide notes about progress and that might be the problem. Acknowledged the need to more clearly communicated policies to health services to prevent the dissemination of incorrect information and overall addressing a lack of clarity and miscommunication.
- c. Second question from Stephanie: What appeals most to you when you're managing your health care costs? For example, would you prefer lower premium and out of pocket cost?
 - i. International student issues with understanding basic terms of American insurance systems.
 - ii. For MA students, cost of the premium is prohibitively high. Chose to go on Medicaid instead.

- iii. Keeping copays low is crucial for doctoral students, for most of whom the premium is covered.
- iv. Student health usually refers you to another place, which means you pay the copay most of the time when you're sick.
- v. Another thing that's great that contraception and IUDs are free that we would like to keep free.
- vi. Desire for dental care for doctoral students. It's \$300 for an appointment.
 - 1. Stephanie responded that's outside the scope of her purview, but would still take back to committee.
- vii. It would be better to get electronic referrals without having to wait for an appointment at student health.
- viii. It is incredibly difficult to get a referral for an in-network doctor.
- ix. Process of referrals incredibly difficult for students who live off-campus.
- d. Please contact Stephanie, the Quality of Life Chair (asgc.qualityoflife@columbia.edu) or the External Health Rep (Alyssa Manz, asm2215@columbia.edu) with more questions or concerns.

3. Announcements (President)

- a. **Vote to amend Recognized Constituent Departments** → Approved
 - i. Due to a clerical error, the following programs were accidentally included in the new ASGC constitution. Voted to remove the programs from the constitution
 - 1. Japanese Pedagogy MA
 - 2. Journalism MA
 - 3. Biomedical Informatics MA
 - 4. Dental Sciences MA
 - 5. Biochemistry and Molecular Biophysics PhD
 - 6. Applied Physics and Applied Mathematics PhD
 - ii. Vote: Approved, No Opposition or Abstentions

4. Open Officer Positions — ELECTIONS (President)

- a. **Events Co-Chair** → Elected Brandon Graser
 - i. Candidate gave statement
 - ii. Q&A: What are some events that you would like to plan? Depending on budget, wants to maximize sharing knowledge about campus for incoming new students.
 - iii. Closed discussion.
 - iv. Vote: Approved, 1 Opposition, 3 Abstentions
- b. **Masters Affairs Chair** → Elected Amanda Platek in absentia
 - i. Amanda Platek notified committee that she would not be able to attend this meeting but would still like to be considered for the position of MA Affairs Chair. The Communications Chair therefore read her statement, but there was no Q&A. The other candidates were not present and did not notify the committee that they would be absent. Therefore their nominations were not considered.
 - ii. Vote: Approved, No Opposition or Abstention
- c. **Community Chair** → TBD

- i. Nominee was not present and did not notify the committee that they would be absent. Therefore his nomination was not considered and the position is still open.

5. Voting on [2018-2019 Budget \(President and Finance Chair\)](#) → Approved

- a. Finance Chair not present.
- b. Brief discussion of source and purpose of ASGC budget.
- c. Major differences from last year: Increase in budget for Plenary Meeting catering due to increase in Department Reps; Ivy Plus significantly less because Columbia has committed majority of money; increase in travel grants; less for student initiative events because ASGC now serves only GSAS students.
- d. Vote: Approved, No Opposition or Abstentions

6. Committee updates

a. Alumni & Career Development

i. Alumni events survey

1. Passed around very brief survey developed with GSAS Alumni Coordinator. GSAS has a lot of funding to put on more events, would like ASGC to generate ideas for more events.

ii. 3MT applications now open

1. Summary of event, link here:
<https://gsas.columbia.edu/student-guide/professional-development/3mt-competition>

b. Quality of Life

i. Internet in UAH

1. Following up from last Plenary Meeting: Spoke with Dean Alonso, free internet will be rolled out over the next 12-18 months as Columbia installs internet in all buildings. Only Columbia internet is free, there are no plans to reimburse private internet plans at this time.

ii. Retirement policies

1. Following up from September PM: GSAS Deans will talk to HR about improving website or GSAS website to clarify retirement options. No current plans to improve retirement.
2. Options: 403B account, no match from Columbia or IRA through Columbia

iii. Parental accommodation policies

1. Delivered report to GSAS Deans with data from parents across departments. ([Link to Report](#))
2. Brief summary: Currently get 12 weeks paid leave, sometimes extended to full semester, sometimes not, department dependent. Also option to take additional unpaid semester of leave. This unfunded semester is impossible for international students or students who can't self-fund.

3. Offered a range of suggestions (see document). At this time, GSAS committed to clarifying language on their website and taking a closer look at other possible improvements, but cannot promise significant changes.
4. Parents-to-be can always go straight to GSAS and circumvent their department.

c. Events

- i. October 17th The Red Violin feat. Joshua Bell (SOLD OUT)
- ii. October 26th Watermill at BAM (on sale)
- iii. October 29th Tosca at The Met (on sale)
- iv. November 1st Book of Mormon (on sale October 17th)
- v. November 3rd I Hunger for You at BAM (on sale October 19th)
- vi. November 7th My Fair Lady (on sale October 23rd)
 1. Department Reps need to spread the word more about events because currently only a few departments are purchasing tickets repeatedly.

7. External Representatives Updates:

a. Health

- i. No updates; very undergrad focused, please contact with concerns. Next meeting next Wednesday, October 24. (Alyssa Manz, asm2215@columbia.edu)

b. Libraries

- i. Thinking about adding more art to library spaces (Alex Cuadrado, a.cuadrado@columbia.edu and Rahim Hashim, rh2898@columbia.edu)

c. Graduate Workers of Columbia (GWC)/Union

- i. Planning a strike, weekly meetings 6:00-7:30pm on Tuesdays in Lehman Center, International Affairs Building (SIPA), Room 406. Location subject to change. (Amelia Spooner, ajs2144@columbia.edu)

d. Interschool Governing Board

- i. Have had first meeting, nothing to report. (Darold Cuba, dbc2133@columbia.edu)

e. Disabilities

- i. Nothing to report, working on scheduling meeting, please email with questions or concerns. (Claudia Kelley, crk2154crk2154@columbia.edu)

f. ISSO

- i. Nothing to report, but if international students want to meet please contact with questions or concerns. (Rebecca McGilveray, rlm2203@columbia.edu)

8. Senators' Updates (Andrew, Mike, Sally)

- a. Mike and Sally not present.
- b. Working on loosening restrictions about sharing on Google Drive beyond Columbia community.

- c. Developed My Grants tool (<https://mygrants.columbia.edu/>) feeds in data from all sponsored projects mapped onto calendar year - all PIs should know how much money they have through this new tool.
- d. Disabilities Committee working on integrating disabilities into Core and trying to see if Braille and ASL can be used to fulfill foreign language requirement; new student group for students with chronic diseases - undergrad focused but grads should also be able to join.
- e. Trying to get more IGB funding, especially from uptown campus. Looking to combine and share spaces from all campuses and to host more events that are open to the public.
- f. Undergraduates want to have a networking and career fair to hear from graduate and professional students at Columbia, so looking at event to integrate students like us in a career fair.
- g. Working with public safety to publicize what kind of CUID access we have to eliminate confusion, would be accessible by logging in with UNI.

9. New Business (Open Forum)

- a. Amelia Spooner (History PhD Rep) and Mia Cecily Florin-Sefton (English PhD Rep): “Proposal to retract and replace ASGC’s informal neutrality policy vis-à-vis the Graduate Workers of Columbia (GWC-UAW)” → Approved
 - i. [Link to Background Information and Approved Proposal](#)
 - ii. Amelia and Mia passed out copies of the proposal and brought a rep from the Bargaining Committee to answer questions.
 - iii. Discussion/Q&A
 1. ASGC Executive Board affirmed that because nothing ASGC does is legally considered Collective Bargaining, retracting neutrality would not affect what ASGC does for students. However, neutrality was adopted in part to make sure that ASGC could fully support students who are not pro-Union. Reiterated that ASGC remains committed to representing all students, regardless of their stance on the union.
 2. The proposal accommodates this need in the language by affirming that ASGC and Union have different roles, but ASGC recognizes the democratic vote and therefore this other body (Union).
 3. Part of the rationale of neutrality at the time was before elections, and GSAC board didn’t want to influence the vote. Now that the vote has happened, up to Plenary to decide on ASGC’s position.
 4. Union wants people who don’t agree with union to come and voice their concerns. Union meetings open to absolutely everyone.
 5. Collective Bargaining is a legal term that ASGC cannot do. Key part of language in proposal. This is about collaborating between two very effective bodies, there is no logical way in which these two processes are contradictory.
 6. Question regarding initial Union vote turn out to understand just how many people are supportive of the Union. Please see Union website for

more information about the history of unionization at Columbia and voter turnout: <https://columbiagradunion.org/>

- iv. Motion to vote on the proposal this Plenary Meeting → Approved
 - 1. Approve: 17 Oppose: 10 Abstain: 5
- v. Vote to approve proposal → Approved
 - 1. Approve: 21 Oppose: 8 Abstain: 3

10. Committee sign-ups & 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.