

Plenary Meeting Minutes

October 14, 2019, 6:30 PM | Philosophy Hall 301 | <https://council.gsas.columbia.edu/>



ARTS & SCIENCES GRADUATE COUNCIL

Upcoming Plenary Meetings

November 12, 6:30 pm

December 10, 6:30 pm

Guest Presentation

Kelly Ahn from CCE was scheduled to give a presentation, but was not in attendance.

Minutes From September Plenary Approved (approved unanimously)

Amendment to the ASGC Constitution and By-Laws (approved unanimously)

The Language in the ASGC Constitution and By-Laws have been amended: “good standing” has been replaced to “eligible/ineligible” or “active/inactive” in order to avoid confusion with GSAS’s use of the term “good standing.”

Former Constitution	Proposed Amendments
Art. III, Sect. 4: Failure of DRs to meet the tasks outlined in the By-Laws (Article III) will result in a status of bad standing for the respective department.	Failure of DRs to meet the tasks outlined in the By-Laws (Article III) will result in an inactive status for the respective department.
Art. III, Sect. 5 A department in bad standing is ineligible to apply for ASGC funding.	An inactive department is ineligible to apply for ASGC funding.
Art. IV, Sect. 5: Only graduate students from departments in good standing and whom will be registered as a student for the entire term shall be considered for officer election to the Executive Board.	Only graduate students from active departments and who will be registered as a student for the entire term shall be considered for officer election to the Executive Board.
Art. VI, Sect. 1: Each GSAS PhD and GSAS Masters Program, in good standing , is entitled to one vote.	Each active GSAS PhD and Masters Program is entitled to one vote.
Art. VI, Sect. 3: Departmental statuses of departments with responsive DRs or new DRs are reset at the beginning of the Fall and Spring semester to good standing.	The status of inactive departments with responsive DRs or new DRs is reset to active at the beginning of the Fall and Spring semester.
Art. VIII, Sect. 6: A simple majority of departments in good standing shall constitute quorum except when voting on Constitution or Bylaw amendments, as outlined by Article VI, section 5. Once quorum is determined, the presiding Executive Board officer calls the meeting to begin.	A simple majority of active departments shall constitute a quorum except when voting on Constitution or Bylaw amendments, as outlined by Article VI, section 5. Once a quorum is determined, the presiding Executive Board officer calls the meeting to begin.
Art. IX, Sect. 1 Department Representatives can be selected by any of three methods, outlined below: 1. Direct election by all graduate students within a department (who are in good standing). [...]	Department Representatives can be selected by any of three methods, outlined below: 1. Direct election by all graduate students within a department (who are in good standing as defined by GSAS). [...]
Former By-Laws	Proposed Amendments

<p>Art. II, Sect. 2: ASGC meetings shall not serve the following purposes: 1. Involvement in the internal affairs of any particular department student governments. 2. Involvement in the internal affairs of any particular student group, however ASGC maintains the right to award Student Initiative Grants, determine good-standing, apply sanctions to groups in bad-standing, and revoke official recognition of student groups.</p>	<p>ASGC meetings shall not serve the following purposes 1.. Involvement in the internal affairs of any particular department student governments. 2. Involvement in the internal affairs of any particular student group, however ASGC maintains the right to award Student Initiative Grants, determine the eligibility of departments and groups to receive ASGC-funded grants, apply sanctions to student groups in violation of ASGC policies, and revoke official recognition of student groups.</p>
<p>Art. III, Sect. 2 Failure of a Department Representative to meet all of the aforementioned tasks (Article III, section 1) will result in a status of bad standing of the respective department. One meeting per semester will be considered an acceptable absence; any more will result in bad-standing status. A department in bad standing is ineligible to apply for ASGC funding.</p>	<p>Failure of a Department Representative to meet all of the aforementioned tasks (Article III, section 1) will result in an inactive status for the respective department. One meeting per semester will be considered an acceptable absence; any more will result in an inactive status. An inactive department is ineligible to apply for ASGC funding.</p>

Election of Salihah Evans as new MA Affairs Chair (elected unanimously)

Announcements

- Open Officer Positions: The The Media Chair position on the ASGC Executive Board will up for election at the December plenary.
- Mark Hawkins (SFS) will be visiting the November Plenary, department representatives were invited to prepare questions.
- Following the December Plenary, there will be a department representative appreciation party at Arts & Crafts.

Student Group Recognition (Will Plews-Ogan, ASGC VP, Administration, asgc.vpadministration@columbia.edu)

Columbia Physics Graduate Council was approved unanimously.

The council, open to all students in the GSAS community, will be led by Andrew Liu, the current department representative for physics.

- The council was incorporated informally as a group, but there was insufficient funding for graduate students.
- The council will be inclusive to people of all backgrounds.
- The council will be partnering with Spectra, another physics organization for including minorities in physics.
- Questions and Answers from the floor:
Q: What efforts will be taken to reach out to students interested in physics, but not studying physics?
A: The co-chair Bárbara Santiago responded that they will coordinate with people from applied physics, geophysics, and other departments. Any students from other departments are more than welcome to attend the events, and the council wants to get the physics community to be more social.
Q: How would a student join?
A: Andrew referred to the Facebook page - [Columbia Physics Council](#), where events and updates are posted regularly. The mailing list will be available on the Facebook page as well.
- A representative suggested that the council change their name to reflect that the organization is a club, and not a governing body. ASGC made this recommendation officially.

Advocacy Updates (Alex Cuadrado, ASGC President, asgc.president@columbia.edu)

- Columbia Residential:

- a. Some students have been double-paying ConEd for utilities, and the deans are contacting Columbia Residential to reimburse these students.
 - b. Some tenants have experienced power shutoffs. ASGC can anonymously inform the deans about any issues the students have, so please do not hesitate to [reach out!](#)
 - c. All but five of the buildings of Columbia Residential will have WiFi installed. The residents of the other five that will have to pay for Spectrum. However, the implementation is behind schedule on most buildings.
 - d. Columbia Residential reimburses \$25 to the students for the cost of the rent payment plan. The president, Alex Cuadrado (asgc.president@columbia.edu), told the plenary to contact him if a student has not been reimbursed by the end of the semester. ASGC is requesting Columbia Financial Services to include this information on the website
 - e. Members believe that there should be a Columbia Residential Committee, similar to other student advisory committees, that meets with Columbia Residential regularly.. There will be updates, possibly by the next plenary meeting. Contact Mike Ford (asgc.vpexternalaffairs@columbia.edu) or
 - f. Alex Cuadrado (asgc.president@columbia.edu) if you are interested.
- ASGC will be working with ISSO to offer OPT workshops for International students. Some students have requested legal advice from ISSO, but it is not permitted by the law.

Committee Updates

1. Tea Crnkovic (ASGC Finance Chair, asgc.finance@columbia.edu) gave an update regarding Student Travel Grants and Student Initiative Grants.
2. Pierre Devlaminck (ASGC Events Co-Chair, asgc.events_cochair1@columbia.edu) encouraged the Plenary to check newsletters for upcoming events.

External Representative Updates

1. Health Updates - Bhargav Gopal (bg2600@columbia.edu): There will be a free flu shot workshops around campus. The Student Health Council encourages usage of the available services on campus. For more information, refer to the Health [website](#).
2. Libraries Updates - Laura DiNardo (lfid2113@columbia.edu): There will be a revamp on the technology and resources available at the libraries. The representative requested that students interested in any software or databases to contact her.
3. Graduate Workers of Columbia (GWC)/Union - Amelia Spooner (ajs2144@columbia.edu)
 - a. The bargaining committee will be submitting changes to the stipend. The representative requested students to submit comments to gwc.bargaining@gmail.com by tomorrow afternoon, October 15. The next bargaining date is Friday, October 18, and then on Wednesday, October 23
 - b. There is also a new National Labor and Relations Board (NLRB) rule. It is unclear as to whether the framework agreement would still apply, but there is still an initiative to submit comments to NLRB. There will be a session to draft unique comments in the Graduate Student Lounge, 301 Philosophy Hall. For more information, contact ap2118@columbia.edu or visit gradsfightback.org
 - c. The general body meetings will be on Tuesday, October 29, and Thursday, October 31.
4. Interschool Governing Board (IGB) - Frank Gutierrez (fg2462@columbia.edu)
 - a. IGB announced that the first meeting will be held on Monday October 21.
5. Senators' Updates
 - a. Andrew Hsu has successfully defended his thesis; there will be an election for the Natural Sciences senator seat. There are currently 2 nominees: Weitao Zhu (Mathematics) and Lisa Kahl (Biological Sciences). Mike Ford (asgc.vpexternalaffairs@columbia.edu) requested the representatives to encourage their constituents to vote during the voting period.
 - b. Social Sciences - Darold Cuba (dbc2133@columbia.edu)

- i. The libraries are compiling a proposal for the Senate's 50 anniversary. There is interest in holding a podcast, and interested students are encouraged to contact Darold Cuba (dbc2133@columbia.edu).
- ii. The senate will also reinforce the university's stance on democratic participation, aiming to help people vote in the upcoming elections, and reaffirm their values.

New Business: Open Forum

- Department of Art History
There was a request for more support for MA students writing their theses. The GSAS Writing Studio was initially for PhD students working on their dissertations, but ASGC will discuss the issue during the meeting with the Deans. However, there is also a University Writing Center, located in 301 Philosophy across the Graduate Student Lounge, open to all students and faculty.
- It was brought ASGC's attention that people with degrees from abroad may be required to check their transcripts, ie. need to send sealed copies, but some universities are given the sealed copies. Unfortunately, Columbia only accepts sealed copies directly from the schools. For further information or thoughts, contact Alex Cuadrado (asgc.president@columbia.edu).
- There was interest on the status on Uris Hall. However, there are no updates yet.
- A student expressed their interest in the Food Pantry. For more information, see <https://thefoodpantry.studentgroups.columbia.edu>

Meeting Adjourned