

ASGC Plenary Meeting Agenda

January 28, 2020, 6:30 PM | Philosophy Hall 301 | <https://council.gsas.columbia.edu/>



ARTS & SCIENCES GRADUATE COUNCIL

Spring Semester Plenary Meetings
January 28, 6:30 pm
February 25, 6:30 pm
March 31, 6:30 pm
April 28, 6:30 pm

Guest Presentation

1. Presentation: Joseph Greenwell

Joseph Greenwell, VP of student affairs of University Life (jg4233@columbia.edu), presented at this month's plenary. Joseph stated that OUL is a division responsible for overseeing student experiences across the institution, as well as bridging and building student relationships across all communities in partnership with GSAS students through 3 lens: equity and inclusion, wellbeing (including sexual respect), and gender-based misconduct and prevention. Joseph spoke about his background and of the importance of a student's sense of belonging in the community. He also stated that mental health is a critical issue that needs to be destigmatized; through the wellbeing lens, Joseph works on how to best support students through programming, prevention, and helping navigate complex situations including, but not limited to: imposter syndrome, academic and social struggle (he emphasized that it is important to figure out the transition process for new students as well as supporting them), and finding one's passion and pathway (ie. figuring out how to get past roadblocks of all shapes). Campuses should celebrate diversity of students and its students should be comfortable with themselves.

Joseph then spoke about the specifics regarding his responsibilities. On the department-wide level, he addresses student conduct (including community standards and adjudications), student life (including initiatives around equity, inclusion, and belonging, creating spaces for students to release and have a good time, ie. Low Lounge where GSAS holds a film series and other fun events, and wellness programming such as Zumba), religious life (supporting faith and spiritual communities on campus and inter-faith conversations), and community impact (including community service work throughout the surrounding areas with over twenty programs and services dedicated to helping youth and adults to give back to the community). He highly values students' inputs and would like to work with the students of GSAS to enhance the quality of life and experience overall. Joseph invited students to contact him for general wellness (jg4233@columbia.edu), while school-specific issues should be addressed to the school dean.

Lastly, Joseph addressed the student wellbeing survey, regarding three major areas: campus climate, sense of belonging and wellbeing, and sexual respect. The administration collects the data anonymously via an encrypted platform [DataStat](#) and analyzes it from an institutional standpoint. The survey will be open February 10 and closes on March 6. Weekly prize drawings will occur on Mondays (February 17, February 24, March 2, and March 9) for chances to win one of 125 \$200 gift cards, two tickets to [Hamilton](#) (Thursday, April 23 at 7 PM), two tickets to

[Hadestown](#) (Thursday, April 16 at 7 PM), four tickets to a Yankees game (Sunday, April 19 at 1:05 PM against Cincinnati Reds), four tickets to a Knicks game (Sunday, April 5 at 5 PM against Miami Heat), an Oasis Day spa package in NYC, monthly healthy treats via mail for a year, physical fitness package with Life in Motion and Cyc, unlimited Metrocards for four months, \$500 Columbia bookstore voucher, and electronics such as Apple iPad or AirPods and the Samsung tablet and wireless earbuds. Winners are drawn randomly every week through DataStat until the end of the survey, so students interested should complete the survey as soon as possible!

2. Question & Answer Period:

- a. Q: Some of the things addressed in the presentation are not necessarily things graduate students may be very involved with. Can GSAS students still participate?

A: Joseph clarified that all students are welcome. He invites students worried about graduate student inclusivity to contact him and they will try to adjust their events! OUL heard about parents' experiences that wanted kid-friendly events, so they are working on making the events all-inclusive.

- b. Q: Could you specify the deans' discipline as an academic conduct?

A: The office partners with deans in certain kinds of conduct. In gender-based conduct, OUL works for all schools, though in different ways depending on the school. For example, they may be more consulting-focused, supporting, etc. so that the solutions are more catered to the students. Often times the deans are involved which leads to how to better educate students on issues such as academic honesty, which may be different for students from different countries, as well as addressing certain policies that students may struggle with.

- c. Q: Regarding the financial literacy course [iGrad](#), do they sell information to a third party?

A: Joseph responded that although he believes the answer to be no, he needs to check again. The financial literacy course is an example of OUL's response to students' comments. iGrad is a free tool and it is free for life! He invited students to contact him about their experiences with it.

- d. Q: What resulted from the QoL survey from two years ago?

A: iGrad and welcome week resulted from the comments regarding the different experiences in orientation and transitioning period, as there should be a consistent experience across the schools. The data for the 2018 Well-Being Survey is available [online](#).

Minutes from December Plenary - Approved Unanimously

Advocacy Updates

1. Alex Cuadrado (ASGC President, asgc.president@columbia.edu) announced the free tax prep available for students. In collaboration with the Columbia Law School, there will be help available for students! The session is vetted by the IRS, and more information will be included on the weekly ASGC Newsletters. Drop-in hours occur on Sundays from 1 PM - 6 PM on February

9, February 16, February 23, March 1, March 8, March 22, March 29, April 5, April 12, and April 19.

2. Alex also updated the plenary regarding an issue that was brought up by a student last month with cross-registration. The GSAS deans requested ASGC to ask the plenary whether this was a timing issue or if after add/drop, the issue has been resolved. The deans can talk to SIPA to try and come to some resolution. This issue is currently in motion.
3. There will be several upcoming surveys: ASGC QoL, CoDE, and OUL. The ASGC QoL committee will be releasing a survey that ASGC can then bring to the deans. Results are completely anonymous. For more information, reach out to the QoL Chair Audrey Amsellem (asgc.qualityoflife@columbia.edu). The Committee on Doctoral Education is a GSAS survey crafted by GSAS specifically for PhD students. The results will go directly to Dean Alonso, who will sit with each department chair and talk about the results. This survey is strictly regarding the academic situation! The results will be anonymised by department.
 - a. An attendee raised a question: If there is a very specific issue, how will it be anonymized?
 - b. A: Alex responded that the questions will be an agree/disagree scale and will also contain a box for written comments. Only the deans will have access and they will ensure anonymity. If a student feels uncomfortable responding to certain questions because confidentiality will be implausible, contact Dean Alonso. Alternatively, students may contact ASGC and we can help identify you as an anonymous individual!
4. There have been many emails regarding the SIS System failure. When ASGC spoke with the deans, they clarified the issues that arose as a result of patches issued 20 years ago. If anyone still has not received their stipends, they should reach out to ASGC.
5. There has been some feedback regarding the new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion position. Students interested in discussing further should contact ASGC.

Committee updates

1. Tea Crnković (ASGC Finance Chair, asgc.finance@columbia.edu) announced the results of the travel grant application last Friday: all but 1 applicant received the grant. Most of the applicants were PhD students, with some MA students. There is still around 23% for the last application window, and the next upcoming deadline is the student initiative grant. The deadline is the end of February, and representatives should encourage student groups and departments to apply. She clarified that any student group approved by ASGC can apply, and graduate conferences also qualify. The spending and updated budget is available online. For more information regarding the grants, visit the ASGC website for [Travel Grants](#) and [Student Initiative Grants](#).
2. Audrey Amsellem (ASGC Quality of Life Chair, asgc.qualityoflife@columbia.edu) announced the ASGC QoL survey that will soon be released. Some of the incentives included \$100 Amazon gift cards, and the department representative whose department has high responses (by rate) will receive a \$200 Amazon gift card. Additionally, one committee member is on leave, and because most of the work is on data processing, department representatives who have not yet joined a committee are invited to contact Audrey.
Audrey also announced the OPT Workshops that will take place on February 11 and February 19 at 8 PM. More information will be included in the ASGC Newsletter.

3. The events co-chair Pierre Devlaminck (ASGC Events, asgc.events_cochair1@columbia.edu) announced that West Side Story sold out quickly. A student brought up that the lead dancer has allegedly been involved with allegations of sexual harassment. The events co-chairs will discuss further on how to proceed. Così fan tutte tickets will be opening soon and will be included in the ASGC Newsletter. There is also a ski trip, that was very popular years ago, and tickets will include buses. Updates are pending. There will also likely be another Wine & Cheese event in April and some more sporting events. There are thoughts about maybe having a ball near the end of the semester. Students interested in opportunities for social events are invited to contact the co-chairs (Pierre Devlaminck and PJ Robinson asgc.events_cochair2@columbia.edu).
4. Mike Ford (ASGC VP External Affairs, asgc.vpexternalaffairs@columbia.edu) announced that the NAGPS Legislative Actions Days will be on March 13 - March 17 in Washington DC. Students will have the opportunity to receive training on how to advocate to members of congress and staff on pressing issues. Saturday and Sunday will include training and Monday and Tuesday will be spent talking to congressional staff. Columbia will be sending delegates, and there will be an application form in the ASGC Newsletter. ASGC will pay for the bus ride, registration, etc. This is an amazing opportunity for those interested in higher education policy, and students who would like to address certain issues but are not able to attend are invited to contact Mike.
5. Salihah Evans (ASGC MA Affairs, asgc.mastersaffairs@columbia.edu) announced that the next event will be headshots! Details will be posted soon. Anyone on the committee or interested in joining were invited to stay after the plenary to discuss. Alex also mentioned a request: the alumni board requested 1 PhD and 1 MA student to present at the board meeting. There will be another board meeting in late May. Students interested should contact Alex (asgc.president@columbia.edu).

External Representatives Updates

1. Bhargav Gopal (Health Representative, bg2600@columbia.edu) announced that there will be free vaccine days. For attendees not present during the Fall, there will be kits for drug overdoses. For more information, visit the [health website](#).
2. Laura DiNardo (Libraries Representative, lfd2113@columbia.edu) updated the plenary regarding writing studio access for MA students. Dean Alonso has also been thinking about how to create opportunities for MA students, and more information will be coming soon.
3. Amelia Spooner (GWC Representative, ajs2144@columbia.edu) announced some updates. The ongoing bargaining with the university has not been going well, but there will be a general body meeting on Thursday, January 30, at 420 116 St. Members of the bargaining committee will be attending to discuss the framework agreement. More information is available on the [GWC website](#). There will also be an organizing meeting after the general body meeting from 4 PM - 6 PM. For more details, go to the homepage for a [document](#) that has been published online. The committee is preparing to go on strike and are hoping that the threat of a strike will help movement. Students with concerns about their department regarding the union are invited to contact the committee as soon as possible so that they can prepare.

Senators' Updates

1. Weitao Zhu (NS Senator, gsas.puresci_senator@columbia.edu) updated the plenary about the possibility of a joint newsletter between science divisions of GSAS and other schools. There are discussions regarding a cluster of departments and will likely be a trial. Students interested are invited to contact Weitao.
2. Mike Ford (Humanities Senator, gsas.humanities_senator@columbia.edu) announced that the senate will be meeting on February 7. The Student Affairs committee of the senate may create a task force on sustainability on campus.

New Business: Open Forum

Meeting Adjourned

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.