



ARTS & SCIENCES GRADUATE COUNCIL

Guest Presentation

1. Presentation: Dr. Melanie Bernitz, Dr. Michael McNeil (Columbia Health)

The first of this month's presentation was given by Columbia Health's Dr. Melanie Bernitz and Dr. Michael McNeil. Melanie first gave an overview regarding the COVID-19 crisis, specifically around campus and the continued monitoring of the situation. The first advisory meeting, focused on the progression with the expansion of travel restriction, occurred in late January. In March, as there were several cases in NYC, classes were cancelled to allow for a smoother transition to online teaching. The undergraduates were also asked to return home, if possible, to allow for social distancing.

Dr. Bernitz stated that essential services, such as healthcare, are still being provided. Medical services are still open, and students requiring on-site consultation can be given referrals. Counselling services are now fully virtual and are available to anyone requiring the services (Dr. McNeil commented that students could schedule a session on their [website](#)). The Sexual Violence Response offices are still available 24/7 via the Helpline (212-854-4357) and are offering virtual programming alongside Alice! Health. Lastly, Disability Services is currently busy with transitioning to online classes, housing, academics, and etc., but are available by phone (212-854-2388) as well as email (disability@columbia.edu).

Dr. McNeil shared information about government support around COVID-19: hospitalization is covered, capacity was expanded for those who may need a referral for proper care (including referral renewals which are conducted mostly through secure portals), and other pieces relating to specific insurance coverage, such as a team available to help and, to an extent, simplify claims and waived copay related to COVID-19. He directed the plenary towards the [FAQ section](#) pertaining to COVID-19 issues. He concluded that their website, health.columbia.edu, has an online directory of phone numbers and references for students.

2. Question & Answer Period
 - a. Q: During the beginning of the crisis, there were reports on whether members of the Columbia community tested positive for the virus, but has since stopped. There are still many students living on campus, so why is this number not being communicated?
A: Dr. Bernitz responded that during the beginning of the crisis, they communicated when there was a suspected case. However, as the community saw widespread transmission, this became an increasingly challenging task. Currently, residents are notified of any outbreaks via CU Health partnered with the local health departments; CU Health does not diagnose and only receives notification from Public Health. The Department of Public Health has since indicated that any potential carrier should be isolated. She further explained that as the virus became more and more widespread, contact tracing became too difficult; many people were exposed in their day-to-day lives and it is impossible to keep a record of every individual impacted in our

community. While it is important to communicate this information, it is not possible. Dr. Bernitz recommended that students continue assuming that everyone has been exposed to COVID-19 and that every individual should monitor themselves vigilantly for symptoms, such as difficulty breathing or coughing. Additionally, the method of, and guidance surrounding, testing has changed, and only individuals that are severely ill will be tested. There are many known cases in our community, and the best advice for a student with symptoms is to report to CU Health so they can guide them.

Dr. McNeil added that the COVID-19 Hotline (212-854-9355) has direct access to individuals trained specifically for COVID-19-related issues. He elaborated that there are many guidelines on the [FAQ section](#) of the website for patients recommended to isolate. There is a rapid shift in information requiring a rapid shift in thinking as well. The focus should be on how an individual can protect themselves and those around them.

Dr. McNeil listed several resources: <https://covid19.columbia.edu/> for a website dedicated specifically for COVID-19 issues and resources, [FAQ](#) for general guidelines, and health@columbia.edu for specific questions or issues.

Any questions can be directed to CU Health or asgc@columbia.edu and ASGC will forward your issue.

3. Presentation: Gaspare LoDuca, Alan Crosswell (CUIT)

The second presentation was given by Gaspare LoDuca, Alan Crosswell, and several other members of the CUIT team. Gaspare first explained that CUIT was the largest IT shop at Columbia with 350 staff; most schools have some form of localized IT support. They support most of the major systems, including Canvas, SSOL, and network security. Gaspare then spoke about COVID-19. CUIT was tasked with transitioning the entire university online in less than a week, which was a unifying event. There are nearly 100 people answering Health desk calls and 120 people teaching classes via Zoom, and the first online day consisted of 4000 Zoom sessions of which approximately 2000 were classes (many instructors have converted to pre-recording the lectures, as time-zones are an issue). Gaspare thanked the [Center for Teaching and Learning](#) for their incredibly helpful guidance on the online transition.

The network capacity has never been challenged to this extent, but the bandwidth has held strong! Alan commented that students interested in learning more about Zoom could refer to the [CUIT website](#). Gaspare also stated that the labs are [remotely accessible](#) and that malware software is available for free; faculty and staff are now able to access the software. People without access to machines also have the option for virtual desktops.

4. Question & Answer Period

a. Q: In an email earlier that day from the CORE office that there was an issue with Zoom hackers, *bombers*, and that the recommended solution was to use a password. Could you explain how people are able to get into Zoom? If they are able to get in already, can they not hack the passwords?

A: Gaspare clarified that Zoom bombers are typically (trolls) not in the community. The implementation of passwords is usually enough to deter 99% of bombers blowing up the session. However, this issue is receding. He concluded that they were typically trolls, rather than hackers.

Gaspare later added that there are several technical options you can set and they are moving to make these changes the default settings for meetings by the end of

the week of their discussion (April 3). You can get more information about the University Zoom support on both the [CTL website](#) and the [CUIT website](#).

b. Q: I am concerned about Zoom's privacy policy, especially in light of news reports as of late. How are we protecting our data from mis-use from Zoom?

A: Gaspare spoke with the in-house legal team at the University and had them review the contract once again. Then, during their live call, the team clarified that Zoom does not own any meeting content, streaming or otherwise. They are also not permitted to use or sell our data. The language is clear and the Office of General Counsel continues to believe we have a contract with favorable terms and conditions.

c. Q: Who owns the recordings in Zoom? The University, Zoom, or the instructor?

A: Certainly it is not Zoom. There are policies that govern lecture / materials ownership and after consulting Soulaymane Kachani (Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning) on this topic, Gaspare summarizes

- For full-time Officers of Instruction, the videos are co-owned by the instructor and the University and neither party can use them without written approval from the other. Approval from the university means written approval from the Dean of the school of the instructor and then from Soulaymane Kachani on behalf of the Provost.
- For part-time instructors (e.g. adjuncts), the videos are owned by the university.

If you would like to discuss what this means for you and your constituents Soulaymane is the right person to reach out to. He has always been an excellent colleague and was very clear that he would be very happy to have a discussion with anyone who would like to reach out.

d. Q: How is the procurement process for all CUIT systems made and is there any input from faculty, students, and staff?

A: CUIT supports a lot of different systems, but there is input from faculty, students, and/or staff. For example, faculty looked at vendor demos alongside the Provost office and were a significant influence in the requirements and design decisions for the faculty hiring software. Stakeholders are always brought to the table for the process.

e. Any further questions can be forwarded to CUIT via asgc@columbia.edu, or directly to askcuit@columbia.edu.

Approve Minutes from February Plenary - Approved Unanimously

Vote on Constitutional Changes (See Appendix) - Approved Unanimously

Announcements

1. The elections for ASGC Executive Board happened at the end of the plenary. Results are listed below.
2. The university Senate elections results were announced: Mike Ford (Humanities) & Andrej Arpas (Social Sciences).
3. The nominations for the [Chinweike Okegbe Service Award](#) and the [Faculty Mentoring Award](#) were due 11:59 PM the night of the plenary. The Award Committee Meeting was on Wednesday

at 12 pm, and representatives interested in participating were invited to [email](#) Alex Cuadrado (ASGC President).

4. The ASGC website was updated with the [COVID-19 Concerns](#) page, and many of the updates from GSAS were from the direct results of the form.
5. ASGC has increased its support of the [Food Pantry at Columbia](#) and is looking into the possibility of giving direct aid to students in need. This is currently in progress and updates will be announced shortly.
6. Instructors concerned with course evaluations, due to the transition to Zoom, were invited to email Alex (asgc.president@columbia.edu) who will convey all concerns at the Thursday meeting.

Committee updates

1. Will Plews-Ogan (ASGC VP Administration, asgc.vpadministration@columbia.edu) informed the plenary about volunteering and donation opportunities to help combat the COVID-19 crisis. The (currently) five major opportunities, all listed on the [ASGC COVID-19 webpage](#), included: volunteer tutoring for CUMC doctors, nurses, techs, etc. (some of whom cannot return home) working with COVID-19 patients whose children need tutoring support, [COVID-19 Student Services Corps](#) at Mailman, and [Columbia Researchers Against COVID-19](#) including lab work against COVID-19. Will requested more ideas that may help the community and emphasized that your health and safety takes priority. Do not put yourself and those around you at risk by going out there.
2. Tea Crnković (ASGC Finance Chair, asgc.finance@columbia.edu) updated that students can either use awards to cover cancellation costs if they had any or for future conferences without having to apply again. For Student Initiative Grants, there have not been any complaints regarding the situations. She concluded that there is a significant portion of the budget remaining and will most likely be used to support the COVID-19 crisis.
3. Audrey Amsellem (ASGC QoL Chair, asgc.qualityoflife@columbia.edu) stated that the Quality of Life survey had 548 responses, which is 230 more than the previous year's, and three representatives received the gift card. She also mentioned the ongoing conversations with Columbia Residential, including issues regarding changing the wording from prioritized entry to guaranteed entry, finding a way to help students who are not on campus and how to store their belongings, and summer rent from the COVID-19 forms.
4. PJ Robinson (ASGC Events co-Chair, asgc.events_cochair2@columbia.edu) announced that all in-person events have been cancelled. Instead, there are two virtual events held. First, there was a virtual book club, with [Book Culture](#), for the book, *Girl, Woman, Other* by author Bernardine Evaristo, which was mailed to the addresses of those who chose to participate. Second, there is an ongoing virtual Dungeons & Dragons campaign over Zoom and an online platform. If you have a virtual event suggestion, contact the event chairs!

External Representatives Updates

1. Laura DiNardo and Rahim Hashim (Libraries Representatives, dfd2113@columbia.edu and rh2898@columbia.edu) informed the plenary that the next meeting will be held on Friday with a focus on online services availability and e-books. They invited any questions or concerns. Roger

Creel thanked the Libraries for their continued work and fulfillment of library requests. They have been very helpful with ongoing research and he encouraged keeping the avenues available.

2. Amelia Spooner and Dominic Walker (GWC Representatives, ajs2144@columbia.edu and dtw2120@columbia.edu) stated that bargaining occurred up to the COVID-19 crisis. The university has been regressively bargaining with regards to harassment, discrimination, and third-party mutual arbitrators. While originally the university refused to hear the proposal at all, they allowed for the third-party mutual arbitration process. Since then, they have not discussed grievances in the contract. The committee is working to iron out the disagreements and wants to support workers' rights as much as possible. The next bargaining meeting was held the day after the plenary from 1 PM - 5 PM via Zoom. Regarding COVID-19-related issues, the committee demanded the university to provide alternative housing for International House and provide accommodations for removing belongings, as the university currently encourages leaving but will not financially support the students. Furthermore, it is becoming more and more uncertain how students will pay rent to the same university they work for. Amelia referred to the [petition](#) surveying students' rent situations as well as more information regarding housing situations. The [Union website](#) contains more information on the status of the strike, bargaining, and upcoming dates.
3. Korina Baraceros (IGB Representative, kb3043@columbia.edu) announced that there was a Zoom meeting last week, including new student organizations joining IGB and the IGB executive board election on April 26.

Senators' Updates

1. Mike Ford (Humanities Senator, gsas.humanities_senator@columbia.edu) spoke on students' concerns across different schools, including international students' concerns. Mike invited students to continue communicating their concerns.
2. Weitao Zhu (Natural Sciences Senator, gsas.pureschi_senator@columbia.edu) explained that the situation has been difficult emotionally and physically, and that there are many channels for advocacy. The senators and student affairs committee will always be here to support the students.

Election order swapping DEI and QoL - Approved Unanimously

The original election order was Quality of Life, then Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, but swapping the order allowed for a smoother election process.

ASGC Executive Board Elections Results

1. **President - Alex Cuadrado**
2. **Vice President, Administration - Laura DiNardo**
3. **Vice President, External Affairs - Bhargav Gopal**
4. **Finance Chair - Tea Crnković**
5. **Communications Chair - Emily Paull**
6. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Chair - Arden Lee**
7. **Quality of Life Chair - Dara Huggins**
8. **Events Co-Chairs - PJ Robinson and Pierre Devlaminck**
9. **Master's Affairs - Meave Sheehan**

10. Media Chair - Davida Rios

New Business (Open Forum)

Dara Huggins brought attention to an incident at a restaurant near campus where an Asian-American was discriminated against. She explains that such aggression and hostility towards Asian-Americans has no place on campus and that there needs to be more of an effort to flag those locations. Because these locations are no longer a safe haven, she questions whether this is an issue for Public Safety.

Alex suggests Dara bring the issue up with GSAS, if she has not already, and also to University Life. There will also be an update on the next newsletter.

Adjournment

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.

Appendix: Proposed Constitutional Changes

Proposed to be voted on at the March Plenary.

These changes accomplish three things:

- Creation of a DEI Chair and Committee
- Redistribution of Alumni Chair duties to the VP, Administration and Media Chair
- Cleaning up obsolete wording regarding the transition from GSAC to ASGC (2018)

Description of the DEI Position

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Chair Responsibilities shall include

1. Responsible for directing the DEI committee towards the goals of encouraging diversity, equity, and inclusion for graduate students and across the university.
2. Act as a liaison between ASGC and DEI-focused student groups by attending their board meetings.
3. Convey student grievances to the ASGC Executive Board and the GSAS Administration.
4. Report on DEI-related advocacy and activities (including programs organized by student groups) at plenaries, Executive Board Meetings, meetings with GSAS Administration, and through the ASGC Newsletter.
5. Work with the Quality of Life chair to ensure that the annual QoL survey addresses issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
6. Advocate for DEI issues at the GSAS and University-wide levels (such as the Diversity & Inclusion Task Force)
7. Administer Diversity Initiative Grants (which supplement, rather than replace Student Initiative Grants) to student groups and departments that sponsor DEI-related events.

	Current	Proposed
Con. IV.1	The Executive Board shall consist of the following Offices: President, Vice President (Administration), Vice President (External Affairs), Communications Chair, Finance Chair, Quality of Life Chair, Alumni Chair, two Events Co-Chairs, Media Chair, and Master's Affairs Chair.	The Executive Board shall consist of the following Offices: President, Vice President (Administration), Vice President (External Affairs), Communications Chair, Finance Chair, Quality of Life Chair, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Chair, two Events Co-Chairs, Media Chair, and Master's Affairs Chair.
Con. IV.3	The Executive Board, except for the Master's Affairs Chair, term shall begin May 1st and end April 30th. Officers serving the 2017-2018 school year, will remain ex-officio officers to the new student group, ASGC, through the end of the 2017-2018 academic school year.	The Executive Board, except for the Master's Affairs Chair, term shall begin May 1st and end April 30th.
Con. V.2	Standing committees include: Community Committee, Budget and Finance Committee, Quality of Life Committee, Alumni Committee, Events Committee, Master's Affairs Committee.	Standing committees include: Finance Committee, Quality of Life Committee, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, Events Committee, Master's Affairs Committee.
Con. VI.7	In March 2018, the GSAC Plenary will hold elections for the Executive Board of the Arts & Sciences Graduate Council (ASGC) in accordance with the ASGC Constitution & ASGC Bylaws. Positions include: President, Vice President (Administration), Vice President (External Affairs), Communications Chair, Finance Chair, Quality of Life Chair, Alumni Chair, two Events Co-Chairs, Media Chair, and Master's Affairs Chair.	[cut obsolete section]
Con. VIII.1	Should any external group request a representative of the academic graduate student body, the executive board shall discuss this request and shall decide whether to provide representation to the group in question. The Community Chair will inform the ASGC about their actions at the following ASGC meeting.	Should any external group request a representative of the academic graduate student body, the executive board shall discuss this request and shall decide whether to provide representation to the group in question. The Vice President (External Affairs) will inform the ASGC about their actions at the following ASGC meeting.
Con. IX.11	In the event of a vacancy in the Office of the President, the Vice President shall immediately become the President and the Office of Vice President shall become vacant.	In the event of a vacancy in the Office of the President, the Vice President (Administration) shall immediately become the President and the Office of Vice President (Administration) shall become vacant.
Con. X.17	Section 17: All current GSAC sponsored groups, including student interest groups and departmental government groups will no longer be recognized by GSAC as of March 31st 2018. All current GSAC sponsored groups must re-submit for recognition under ASGC's constitution to GSAC's vice president prior to April 1st 2018.	[cut obsolete section]
Con. X.18	Section 18: April 1st 2018, all remaining GSAC funds and GSAC property will be transferred to the Arts & Sciences Graduate Council (ASGC), this includes, but is not limited too, website access and ownership, mailing list access and ownership, officer email access and ownership, GSAC specific paraphernalia, and all Funds.	[cut obsolete section]
By-Laws I.3	Section 3. Vice President responsibilities shall include:	Section 3. Vice President (Administration) responsibilities shall include:
By-Laws I.10	Section 10. Community Chair responsibilities shall include:	Section 10. Vice President (External Affairs) responsibilities shall include:

	<p>Section 7. Alumni Chair responsibilities shall include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Responsible for directing the Alumni committee activities towards improving Alumni participation while fostering growth of future alumni relations with current students. 2. Coordinate an internal document of past GSAC and ASGC officers and DRs with up-to-date contact information. 3. Communicate the needs of graduate students to the Alumni Board. 4. Coordinate with the Alumni Board to plan events related to the professional development of graduate students, including alumni networking events and professional skills events. 5. Maintain ASGC LinkedIn Page fostering Alumni engagement with Current Students 	<p>[Alumni Chair position and Alumni Committee dissolved; items 1-4 move to Vice President (Administration); item 5 is already under Media]</p>
<p>New By-Laws section to be added that describe the DEI Chair:</p>		<p>Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Chair Responsibilities shall include</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Responsible for directing the DEI committee towards the goals of encouraging diversity, equity, and inclusion for graduate students and across the university. 2. Act as a liaison between ASGC and DEI-focused student groups by attending their board meetings. 3. Convey student grievances to the ASGC Executive Board and the GSAS Administration. 4. Report on DEI-related advocacy and activities (including programs organized by student groups) at plenaries, Executive Board Meetings, meetings with GSAS Administration, and through the ASGC Newsletter. 5. Work with the Quality of Life chair to ensure that the annual QoL survey addresses issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. 6. Advocate for DEI issues at the GSAS and University-wide levels (such as the Diversity & Inclusion Task Force) 7. Administer Diversity Initiative Grants (which supplement, rather than replace Student Initiative Grants) to student groups and departments that sponsor DEI-related events.
<p>New By-Laws section to be added that describe the DEI Committee:</p>		<p>Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chaired by the DEI Chair. 2. Communicate the needs of students to the ASGC Executive Board. 3. Maintain relationships with student groups and consider ways to promote DEI advocacy. 4. Evaluate and disburse Diversity Initiative Grants. 5. Maintain relationships with GSAS Administration and OADI. 6. Work with the Quality of Life committee to ensure that the annual QoL survey addresses issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
<p>By-Laws II.6 & 8</p>	<p>[Describe the duties of the defunct Alumni and Community committees]</p>	<p>[cut obsolete sections]</p>
<p>By-Laws II.12</p>	<p>Section 12. All current or past ad hoc committees voted on by GSAC will terminate March 31st 2018.</p>	<p>[cut obsolete sections]</p>
<p>By-Laws IV.2</p>	<p>Section 2. The order of elections in March shall be: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Finance Chair, Community Chair, Quality of Life Chair, Media Chair, Events Co-Chairs, Alumni Chair.</p>	<p>The order of elections in March shall be: President, Vice-President (Administration), Vice President (External Affairs), Finance Chair, Communications Chair, Quality of Life Chair, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Chair, Events Co-Chairs, Media Chair.</p>