

ASGC Plenary Meeting Agenda

January 19, 2021, 6:30 PM

[Zoom Link](#) | password: 467953 | <https://council.gsas.columbia.edu/>



ARTS & SCIENCES GRADUATE COUNCIL

1. Welcome (President)
 - a. Upcoming 2021 ASGC Plenary Meetings (3rd Tuesday of the Month, 6:30 pm):
 - i. February 16, March 16, April 20
2. Guests
 - a. Dr. Melanie Bernitz (Columbia Health) ~ Associate VP and Medical Director
 - i. Giving updates on what we should know heading into the new semester
 - ii. Globally: There have been more than 110 mill. cases and 2 mill. deaths
 - iii. Nationally: The U.S has passed 400,000 deaths, 20% of the world cases
 - iv. During the week of January 11th, there have been 13,231 tests conducted on Columbia's campus. Of that, there were 69 positive tests with a positivity rate of 0.52%. Overall, Columbia University has conducted 115,793 tests. Of that number, 412 have come back positive making for an overall positivity rate of 0.36%.
 - v. The required protocol for returning to campus included
 1. Reading the Enhanced University Health and Safety Policy
 2. Reading and Signing the Health Compact
 3. Taking Safety Training
 4. Self-quarantining, if Required
 5. Getting Tested
 6. Complete the Daily Symptom Self-check
 - a. Daily attestation has been revised slightly with more honest answers
 - vi. Maximum of one test per week (includes voluntary, travel, and random testing)
 1. Getting tested when you're exposed doesn't shorten your illness
 2. If you become symptomatic, then come in to John Jay
 - vii. Reliability of Rapid PCR Test (John Jay) vs PCR (surveillance) test
 - viii. While grad student teaching assistants in hybrid and in person classes are eligible for the vaccine, Columbia does not have any in their possession. You would have to go to the city with proof of your teaching status to get a vaccine.
3. Sign-in Instructions (Communications)
 - a. Sign in: <https://council.gsas.columbia.edu/form/asgc-plenary-attendance>
 - i. Password: 1Spring2021ASGC
 - b. Committees
 - i. If you are not yet signed up for a committee, please use the attendance sheet to indicate your committee choice. Ashley will then connect you to the committee head a few days after today's meeting. If you are already signed up for a

committee, please do not indicate a committee as I already have you counted.
You should be able to skip that question now.

- c. Approval of December Minutes
 - i. Approved unanimously
4. Executive Board Updates
 - a. Alex (President: xxx) spoke about the Teaching Scholars program. He said that Mike should have reached out to most PhD reps about why the school is cutting this program. We will also be bringing this up to administration during tomorrow's meeting. Additionally, Alex spoke about Housing Extensions beyond year seven. GSAS administration is very much in line with us in terms of approving these extensions. However, Columbia Residential informed them that they cannot commit to this extension. If they do approve it, it will be for all students and not just seventh year PhD students. We have invited Columbia Residential to come to tomorrow's meeting to continue this discussion.
 - i. In terms of the Senate, there are two vacancies: Social Sciences Senator and Natural Sciences Senator. Responsibilities for these positions include having the opportunity to represent your fellow departments to the wider University administration, and the expectation that you attend a two hour meeting every month and two hour meeting with the student affairs committee. There are also additional committees that you can join. They deliberate policies that are then brought to the senate floor for approval. You can speak to Mike Ford (current Humanities Senator: mike.ford@columbia.edu) if you have any specific questions on the position. The deadline to submit a nomination is Tuesday, 1/26 at midnight. The campaigning period will then run until Tuesday, 2/2 at midnight. The election period will then run until Tuesday 2/9 at midnight. Next Senate Plenary is 1/29 at 1:15pm. It is open to all Columbia affiliates. There is a particular invitation to those interested in running for the SS or NS seats to attend this meeting.
 - b. VP, Administration
 - i. N/A
 - c. VP, External Affairs: Columbia has already begun to distribute funding for the CARES Act. If you are eligible, you would have already been contacted about filling out your application
 - d. Tea Crnković (Finance Chair: asgc.finance@columbia.edu) shared the status of our Travel Grants & Student Initiative Grants. The next upcoming deadline at the end of the week. There are no applications yet, but students are still more than welcome to apply. Additionally, it remains that only online conferences can be funded per the institution's travel restrictions. You can view more specifics on that rule here: <https://covid19.columbia.edu/content/spring-2021-travel-restrictions>. You can also view the current budget here: <https://council.gsas.columbia.edu/content/annual-budget>
 - e. Dorna Movasseghi (Quality of Life Chair: asgc.qualityoflife@columbia.edu) is gearing up for the Spring QoL Survey. She should be in touch with the QoL committee about next steps ASAP. The process to get the survey underway will be ramped up in February.

- f. Arden Lee (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Chair: ga2448@columbia.edu) discussed that there have been a slow and steady trickle of applications coming in from a variety of departments for the Diversity Initiative Grants.
 - g. Events
 - i. N/A
 - h. Meave Sheehan (Masters Affairs Chair: asgc.masters@columbia.edu) let department representatives know that there are plans in place to have an In Person Photo Session in the near future. There are tents on campus that can be used. She will be advertising this event and further details regarding it in the newsletter starting next week. There is also currently a survey for MA Reps regarding Career Events that is being distributed. This is a chance to ask for what you want in terms of alumni career talks. The survey is not for PhD department reps; however, these reps can contact Meave if they have any specific feedback.
5. External Representatives Updates (VP, External Affairs):
- a. Health
 - i. See above
 - b. Libraries
 - i. Rahim: No official update from the meeting, however we do have six libraries currently available and open for reservations. Reservation can be made for up to four hours at a time. There is also a remote access feature to the libraries that will give you access to materials as if you were physically in the building.
 1. <https://library.columbia.edu/about/news/alert.html>
 - c. ISSO
 - i. N/A
 - d. Graduate Workers of Columbia (GWC)/Union:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qD34YadLqkIFSU2piPXPBOQhI00AxXvxNUryjTH4fw/edit>
 - e. IGB
 - i. N/A
6. New Business (Open Forum)
- a. Updates on GSAS travel grants?
 - i. Will be discussed with GSAS Admin during tomorrow's meeting
 - b. Poetry Session Request
 - i. All GSAS students can submit poems in English translation
 - ii. Limbo Poetry Sessions
 - iii. For questions and comments, please send to limbopoetrysessions.com from 2.15
 - c. Sunny (European History and Politics)
 - i. Conversation on current Tuition Strike taking place
 - ii. Vote to endorse the petition
 1. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Q4uMQzE16kdKjs9xTgGU5MpxwADsFxr53lfxTkW2CB0/edit>
 2. https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VyVxj_kR0MSPzQLj20Rg2jod71sgWb7-cZGehQh4aAl/edit

3. Conversation tabled until Feb. plenary meeting so that we can read the demands letter in full and consult with necessary parties (departments, committees, etc.)
 4. Will our impact be reduced if we wait until the next meeting (since we meet so infrequently)?
 5. possibility of an extraordinary inter-plenary vote (ie before 29th?)
- iii. Poll results:
 1. Yes (Table till Jan 26th): 74%
 2. No (Vote Today): 26%
 - iv. Ashley will send out an email to dept. Reps on the 26th regarding this motion
- d. Student rep ECB
- i. Money taken from department from GSAS
 1. More than other departments
 2. Who should Elissa talk to about this concern?
 - a. Faculty of Arts & Sciences level
 - b. She has financial leeway to push this: Amy Hungerford balances budget for faculty of Arts & Sciences
 - c. Your department chair may also know
- e. Vote to sign onto 1 year extension petition on Jan. 26th
- i. https://docs.google.com/document/d/1VyVxj_kROMSPzQLj20Rg2jod71sgWb7-cZGehQh4aAl/edit
 - ii. Individuals can sign here: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd3Xo1qPdDQhBGlFAs3jFupieTY18CCeXjcLP5Bpku3K0dH3Q/viewform?ts=5ff5e920&edit_requested=true&gxids=7628
 - iii. This letter will be sent out to everyone (Board of Trustees, Chairs of departments, Deans, President Bollinger, etc,)
 - iv. Meant to be vague and speak for the broader graduate campus community
 - v. Princeton, NYU, and Yale have already signed on to similar initiatives
 - vi. Poll results:
 1. Yes: 97%
 2. No: 3%
- f. 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.

ASGC Election Results

On January 26th, 2021 the department representatives from GSAS departments voted in a special ASGC interplenary election on whether the ASGC Plenary should sign onto two different letters: the "[Tuition Strike Demands Letter](#)" sponsored by the Columbia-Barnard Chapter of the YDSA, and the "[Petition for an Extra Year of Funding](#)" sponsored by the GWC and other students. Both measures were passed: the "Tuition Strike Demands Letter" with 70% in favor and the "Petition for an Extra Year of Funding" with 97% in favor.