

2019 Quality of Life Survey Report

Table of Contents

Introduction	6
Executive Summary.....	8
Basic Information	8
Academic Life	8
Funding.....	9
Housing.....	10
Health and Medical Services	11
Diversity and Inclusion	11
Violence, Discrimination, and Harassment.....	12
Parental accommodations and relationship status	13
International Student Services.....	14
Disability Services	14
Campus Resources	15
Arts and Sciences Graduate Council.....	15
Unionization.....	15
Final Comments	15
Basic Information.....	17
Section overview.....	17
Masters or PhD Program	17
Year of study	18
Sex.....	18
Gender	19
Sexual orientation	19
Race and ethnicity	20
Age	21
<i>Masters students.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>PhD students.....</i>	<i>21</i>
Religious affiliation	22
MA Program Information.....	22
<i>MA Type.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>MA Program.....</i>	<i>23</i>
PhD Program Information	25
<i>PhD Type.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>PhD Program</i>	<i>25</i>
Section summary and remarks	27
Academic Life	28
Section Overview	28
Advisor Relationships and Department Culture.....	28
<i>Selection of primary advisor.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Familiarity with mentor-advisee expectations.....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Familiarity with chapter meeting policy</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>Fall 2018 Chapter Meetings.....</i>	<i>33</i>

<i>Expectations for mentors and advisees</i>	39
<i>Satisfaction with advisor</i>	40
<i>Meetings with advisor</i>	40
<i>Satisfaction with department or program</i>	41
<i>Program requirements</i>	41
<i>Mechanism for student voice in department</i>	42
<i>Comments about advisor/department</i>	42
Work and research: spaces and time	47
<i>Campus</i>	47
<i>Concrete type of workspace</i>	47
<i>Satisfaction with workspaces</i>	48
<i>Weekly work/research time</i>	49
<i>Work beyond program requirements</i>	49
<i>Satisfaction with amount of work/research time</i>	51
<i>Academic standing</i>	52
<i>General comments on academic life at Columbia</i>	53
Section summary and remarks	55
Funding	57
Section overview	57
Fellowship Type	57
Alternate income sources	58
Loans	59
Summer Funding	61
Financial Stability	63
Late and inaccurate stipends and paychecks	64
Comments	65
Section summary and remarks	65
Housing	66
Section overview	66
Columbia housing or off-campus housing	66
Housing location	67
Rent as percentage of stipend	68
Length of commute	69
Living situation	70
Satisfaction with housing	72
Satisfaction with the Columbia Housing Office	72
Comments:	73
Section summary and remarks	74
Health and medical services	76
Section overview	76
Health Resources	76
<i>Physical Health Resources</i>	76
<i>Mental Health Resources</i>	81
General comments	91
Section Summary and Remarks:	94
Diversity and Inclusion	95
Section Overview	95

Do you feel that Columbia is committed to diversity and inclusion at a (a) student and (b) faculty level?	95
<i>Student Level</i>	95
<i>Faculty Level</i>	96
<i>Overall and Discipline-Specific Averages</i>	97
<i>A Note on Identity</i>	97
Do you feel that your department is committed to diversity and inclusion at a (a) student and (b) faculty level?	98
<i>Student Level</i>	98
<i>Faculty Level</i>	99
<i>A Note on Identity</i>	100
Do you support efforts towards increasing diversity and inclusion at both a student and faculty level?	101
<i>Overall and Discipline-Specific Averages</i>	102
<i>A Note on Identity</i>	102
Compared to peer institutions, how do you think Columbia ranks in its commitment to diversity and inclusion (1 = Very low, 10 = Very high).....	103
<i>Overall and Discipline-Specific Averages</i>	104
<i>A Note on Identity</i>	104
Have you read Columbia's latest report on faculty diversity (Yes, No, Unsure)?	105
<i>Overall and Discipline-Specific Averages</i>	105
<i>A Note on Identity</i>	106
Do you have any additional comments about diversity and inclusion at Columbia (open-ended)?	106
Section Summary and Remarks.....	108
Violence, Discrimination and Harassment	110
Section overview.....	110
Have you experienced or been affected by discrimination, harassment, or violence at Columbia?	110
If you have experienced violence, harassment, or discrimination at Columbia, was the other party:.....	112
Have you ever reported an incident of violence, harassment, or discrimination to Columbia?	113
If you have reported an incident involving violence, harassment, or discrimination to Columbia, how satisfied were you with their response?	114
Have you ever been reported and/or been subject to disciplinary action for violence, harassment, or discrimination?	115
If you have been reported and/or been subject to disciplinary action for violence, harassment, or discrimination, how satisfied were you with Columbia's response?	116
Do you feel that Columbia University is committed to providing a working, learning and living environment free from discrimination, harassment, and violence and to fostering a nurturing and vibrant community founded upon the fundamental dignity and worth of all of its members?	116
Do you feel that resources for reporting violence, discrimination, or harassment at Columbia are appropriately publicized?	117
Do you feel comfortable reporting violence, discrimination, or harassment at Columbia?	118
Do you have any comments about violence, harassment, or discrimination at Columbia?	119
Section Summary and Remarks.....	119
Parental Accommodations and Relationship Status	121

Section overview.....	121
Relationship Status	121
Children	122
Resources for Parents.....	122
Parental Leave	123
Satisfactions with parental accommodations.....	123
Childcare subsidy.....	124
Back-Up Care Service	124
Satisfaction with Back-Up Care service.....	124
Comments.....	125
Section summary and comments.....	126
International Student Services	128
Section overview.....	128
International student.....	128
Visa required to stay in the US.....	128
How often do you need to renew your visa?	129
Directly or indirectly affected by travel bans?	129
Concerns over future travel restrictions.....	130
Harassment or discrimination at US border	130
Concerns about harassment and discrimination at the border.....	130
Issues obtaining proper documentation for visa.....	131
Concerns about obtaining proper documentation in the future.....	131
Are resources available to international students at Columbia adequate?	132
Using Columbia resources for non-native English speakers	132
Adequacy of resources for non-native English speakers	133
Is the Columbia community welcoming to international students?.....	134
Outstanding issues with immigration status that Columbia helped resolve	134
If yes, how satisfied were you with Columbia’s response to your issue?.....	135
General comments.....	135
Disability Services	137
Section overview.....	137
Physical disability.....	137
Mental disability.....	138
Comfort with informing the university	138
Experiences of discrimination.....	139
Disability affecting research.....	140
Disability affecting teaching and other non-research work	141
Office of Disability Services	141
<i>Seeking assistance from ODS.....</i>	<i>141</i>
<i>Satisfaction with ODS.....</i>	<i>142</i>
<i>ODS accommodations catering to specific needs of graduate students.....</i>	<i>143</i>
<i>Satisfaction with support of accommodations in home department</i>	<i>144</i>
General comments.....	145
Section summary and remarks	145
Campus Resources	146
Section Overview	146
Frequency of Use of Columbia Services.....	146
Satisfaction with Columbia Services.....	147

Comments	149
Section summary and remarks	150
ASGC	151
Section overview.....	151
Are you aware of ASGC and what it does on campus?.....	151
Do you feel that ASGC plays an important role at Columbia?.....	151
Newsletter	152
General comments.....	153
Section summary and comments.....	154
Union	155
Section overview.....	155
Are you aware that Columbia has agreed to begin bargaining, with certain conditions?....	155
Bargaining and ASGC's Role	156
Do you feel that having a contract and a recognized union will improve your quality of life?	
.....	157
Columbia's response to unionization.....	158
Do you feel that the Columbia administration is committed to improving your quality of life and working conditions regardless of possible unionization?	158
General comments.....	159
Section summary and remarks	159
General remarks	160
Department.....	160
School and Dean.....	160
Columbia	161
Final comments.....	162
Conclusion and suggestions.....	164

Introduction

This marks the first Quality of Life Survey run by the Arts and Sciences Graduate Council (ASGC) rather than by the Graduate School Advisory Council (GSAC), which formally ceased to exist on April 1, 2018. While GSAC officially represented graduate students at all schools on Columbia's campus, ASGC represents only those departments formally housed under the auspices of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS).

While other graduate student advisory bodies have formed to represent other graduate students at other schools, ASGC has formally inherited the responsibilities of the annual Quality of Life survey. This survey was managed for nearly a decade by the Quality of Life Committee of GSAC, and is now managed by the Quality of Life Committee of ASGC. This year's survey thus represents a smaller percentage of the graduate student body as a whole, but offers an opportunity for sharper inspection of the specific needs of graduate students within GSAS.

Following the findings of this year's survey, future Quality of Life Committees may choose to tailor the questions more specifically to the needs of GSAS students. In order to maintain continuity with the surveys of previous years, this survey aims to preserve the format of the previous year's survey design as much as possible. Notable changes in this year's survey design include expansions to the Basic Information section of the survey, to distinguish between sex and gender, to include nonbinary gender options, and to allow respondents to select from a range of LGBTQ+ options. This survey also includes expansions to the Health and Medical Services section, with new questions on the appointment systems for medical services, including counseling and psychological services. The section on unionization has also been expanded, following the University's commitment to bargain with the union and the adoption of a pro-union stance by the ASGC, in accordance with a vote by department representatives. The expanded section includes questions about bargaining priorities and about ASGC's role in relation to the contract negotiation process. Finally, this survey includes expansions to the Violence, Discrimination, and Harassment section and the addition, remarkably for the first time, of a Diversity and Inclusion section. These last changes have sharpened the survey's focus on questions of equity and justice within the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, in an effort to better address the needs of those whose Quality of Life is most regularly threatened.

As in previous years, the data collected through this survey is summarized in this publicly available report, and will be used as the basis for graduate student government advocacy in the following year.

The survey was distributed through the ASGC newsletter beginning Tuesday, February 12, 2019, and was also sent through department listservs with the assistance of ASGC department representatives. The ASGC offered an incentive to encourage participation by offering respondents the option of entering a sweepstakes that offered ten \$50 Amazon

vouchers, and one \$150 voucher. The winners of the sweepstakes were announced on April 4th. The survey closed on March 25th with a total of 336 responses. While the number of responses represents a decline from last year, when 405 graduate students participated in the survey, this decrease is likely explained by the decrease in the number of students represented by ASGC, as opposed to GSAC. The data was processed and analyzed by members of the Quality of Life Committee, signed below, and the executive board of the ASGC had the opportunity to offer comments on a draft of the report. The resulting report contains the statistical breakdown of answers to each question, summaries of each section, and analyses and summaries of questions that required extended comment. An executive summary of all sections is included immediately following this introduction, in order to ease readability for those in need of only general conclusions. Following section-level analysis, the report closes with general conclusions and suggestions for the coming year.

Quality of Life Chair

Kate McIntyre, English and Comparative Literature

Quality of Life Committee

Laura Charney, Human Rights

Mia Florin-Sefton, English and Comparative Literature

Dara Huggins, Psychology

Jane Kamjing Traynor, East Asian Languages and Cultures

Justin William Houston Wiggins, Middle East Institute

Executive Summary

This section, new to this year, presents the summary for each section in order to highlight general findings in an easily digestible form. These summaries can also be found at the end of each section, following presentation and analysis of data.

Basic Information

Overall, the demographic breakdown reflects a continued underrepresentation of Masters students in ASGC. The number of Masters student participants has increased by 10 (from 68 to 78) since last year. However, it is worth noting that with the overall decrease in number of students represented by ASGC, as opposed to GSAC, the number of respondents overall has decreased from 405 last year to 336 this year.

The ASGC Executive Board has been addressing the matter of Masters Student representation, including adding a Masters Affairs Chair to the board. Reaching out to MA programs so that every program is represented will remain a priority. The sample of PhD students, on the other hand, is both robust and well balanced in terms of distribution across departments.

The gender distribution in the sample is skewed toward female (60.5%) and the strong majority of respondents are White (61.5%), with 28.4% identifying as Asian or Asian-American, 9.2% identifying as Hispanic or Latino/a/x, 5.5% identifying as Black or African-American, and 3.1% identifying as Middle Eastern / North-African. This raises concerns about the extent to which this survey might be able to address concerns specific to racial and ethnic minorities. ASGC should prioritize responding to and better representing the concerns of Black and Latino/a/x students in the coming years. LGBTQ students are proportionally well represented, with only 76% of respondents identifying as straight.

Over half (51.8%) of respondents do not express an affiliation with an organized religion, identifying as Agnostic or Atheist instead, with 22% of those who are religious identifying as Christian, 8% identifying as Jewish, and other represented religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam) below 3% each.

The majority of survey respondents are in their twenties across both groups; however, Masters students are on the whole younger than PhD students, which may bring about differences in needs and priorities when it comes to quality of life for those two groups.

Academic Life

This section has two main focuses: a) the graduate students' relationships with their advisors and departments, and b) the use of and satisfaction with work time and workspaces.

Respondents are generally satisfied with their advisors and their departments, although only 69% were sure their advisor met the requirements for mentors. With 22% uncertain, some of this may be the result of a general lack of awareness of GSAS standards for mentorship. Only 49% of respondents indicated they were aware of GSAS mentor-advisee expectations. This general lack of awareness extends to the new chapter meeting policy, which only 1% of Masters student and 38% of PhD student respondents were familiar with.

The effectiveness of the chapter meeting policy is unclear at this point; of PhD students beyond their fourth year, 43% did not have chapter meetings in Fall 2018, but we do not have data on what percentage held such meetings before the policy was implemented. Responses to the policy, among those who are aware of it, have been mixed, with several grateful and several critical responses. The critical responses tend to highlight the unnecessary rigidity of the policy, indicating it should be adjusted to match the requirements of individual departments, with some responses also pointing out that the policy leaves the responsibility for scheduling meetings with graduate students, without offering support for those whose advisors do not respond.

Dissatisfaction around mentors and departments focuses primarily on a perceived lack of support, communication and transparency within the departments.

There are varying levels of satisfaction with available workspace, and qualitative comments suggest that access to 24-hour department lounges may explain some of the variation. Cleanliness, temperature, and access to natural light were topics of complaint in carrels, although many comments also expressed gratitude for their carrel access.

The majority of students seem to feel that they spend about the right amount of time on university-related work, but a slight majority also feel they spend too little time on their own research, and a significant minority of respondents felt they spent too much time on teaching duties, administrative work, classes, or other employment. Better funding would alleviate the last of these; over half of respondents currently hold employment beyond the requirements of their program, or have held such employment in the past. The funding section of this report will shed more light on this issue.

Very few respondents have ever been in or close to bad academic standing, and those who have generally attribute this to bureaucratic failings on the part of the registrar or department administrators.

Funding

Funding issues are at the heart of graduate students' quality of life. 52% of PhD students feel relatively financially stable, as compared to only 38% of MA students, though neither is an acceptable figure. Though the amount of economic precarity experienced by graduate students varies, it is remarkable that over a quarter of respondents rely on parental support, with 13% relying on spousal support and 6% relying on other family support. With only 26% of respondents living on Columbia's stipend alone, this section raises significant concerns about the accessibility of graduate level education at Columbia

for low-income students. This is particularly pronounced for MA students, who are far less likely to receive funding from Columbia and far more likely to take out loans while in graduate school. Issues with late payment and uncertainty about payment amounts contribute to a general sense of economic precarity, and should be addressed by clarifying the internal causes of late and uncertain payment within Columbia's bureaucracy to make the process more transparent and give graduate students greater access to information about and control over their finances.

Housing

Masters students are far less likely than PhD students to live in Columbia housing, with the percentages at 17% and 71%, respectively. PhD students are only slightly more likely than Masters students to live in or near Morningside Heights, at 78% of PhD students and 70% of Masters students.

Masters students are more likely to spend over half of their income on rent, at 40.63%, as compared to 33.2% of PhD students. It should be noted that all respondents who spend over 50% of their income on rent live outside of Columbia housing. Still, those in Columbia housing do spend up to 50% of their income on housing.

Masters students were more likely to have commutes over 15 minutes, at 58% percent, as compared to 32% of PhD students. 24% of Masters students, as compared to 13% of PhD students, have commutes over 30 minutes.

The majority of both Masters students (55%) and PhD students (57%) live with roommates. PhD students, at 30%, are slightly more likely to live with a significant other than Masters students, at 24%, while Masters students, at 14% are slightly more likely to live alone than PhD students, at 10%.

Respondents were generally satisfied with the housing provided by Columbia, with 64% ranking it at 6 out of 10 or higher. Still, a significant minority indicated dissatisfaction, with 36% ranking it 5 out of 10 or lower. Respondents were less likely to be satisfied with the Columbia Housing Office, with 56% ranking it 6 out of 10 or higher and 44% ranking it 5 out of 10 or lower.

Respondents called for both lower rents and more transparency regarding how rent is determined, and in particular how the rent of different units managed by Columbia Housing is decided. Comments indicated a range of issues with the housing itself, including complaints about construction, couples housing, furnishings, roommate matching, and subpar move-in conditions. Some comments expressed appreciation for newly free Columbia internet, while others indicated that they were still forced to pay for internet from an outside provider, with no adjustment to their rent, and no indication of when the inequity might be addressed.

Comments expressed difficulties navigating the strict hours and policies of the Columbia Housing Office, and described a generally unresponsive and unsupportive office. Respondents criticized the opaque transfer process, again suggesting more transparency

about how decisions are made within the office might alleviate some frustrations. One respondent reported being subjected to homophobic questioning during the couples housing application. Respondents also indicated a desire to be able to pay rent online. In general, respondents expressed concerns about the availability of housing, particularly for Masters students, students with families, students returning from leave, and students beyond their 7th year.

Health and Medical Services

Overall, graduate students are either dissatisfied with the available resources for their physical and mental health, or are not quite sure whether they are sufficient. This suggests that room for improvement in this matter is substantial, and many potential improvements are articulated in student comments. In all, the results of this section indicate that students are potentially underutilizing the existing resources, or are having negative experiences when they do make use of them. Especially important is the issue of resources designed to meet the specific needs of graduate students, which would take into account the realities of their academic and personal lives. More specifically, it appears that there are concerns with the appointment system for both Medical Services and Counseling and Psychological Services in addition to concerns about dental and vision coverage. The process of taking a medical leave has been very complicated for several respondents and there seems to be confusion as to what the process and policies are. There are also complaints about specific members of the Health Services apparatus that warrant investigation to ensure the best possible care is given to students.

Diversity and Inclusion

In essence, we asked GSAS students one simple question: fifteen years and \$185 million later, how is Columbia doing in terms of diversity and inclusion? In response, our students expressed that there is much work to be done – and soon.

As of 2018, only 7.2% of Columbia faculty are underrepresented minorities – a 0.3% increase from 2008, but a 1.1% decrease from 2016. With retention of underrepresented minorities being a central element of the ‘inclusion’ aspect of ‘diversity & inclusion’, these data are expressly underwhelming. Looking more closely at faculty racial/ethnic representation, Hispanic/Latinx (3.9%) and Black/African-American (2.9%) faculty are still sorely lacking in numbers. Current statistics indicate an only 0.1% increase in both Hispanic/Latinx and Black faculty since 2008. Furthermore, for both groups, faculty representation has fallen by 0.5% since 2016. Indigenous and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander representation is not even high enough in numbers to be published in Columbia’s report. Notably, the only non-White racial/ethnic group for which representation has increased by greater than 1% is Asian/Asian-American faculty. Since 2008, when Asian/Asian-American faculty were 8.4% of GSAS full-time faculty, Asian/Asian-American representation has increased by 2.5%, making their current representation 10.9% of full-time faculty.

What do the numbers look like for underrepresented minority students? Similar, but possibly worse. As of 2018, only 1.8% of GSAS students are identified as Black/African-

American, 3.7% are Hispanic/Latinx, and .03% are Indigenous/Alaskan Native. More concretely, out of 3785 GSAS students, 70 are Black, 140 are Hispanic/Latinx, and 1 is Indigenous/Alaskan Native. Overall, with 29% students identified as racial/ethnic minorities, GSAS actually boasts the lowest percentage of minority students out of all Morningside Graduate & Professional and Medical Center Graduate Schools. Comparatively, 5.8% of GSAS students identify as Asian/Asian-American and 24% identify as White.

With these data in mind, it should come as no surprise that students – underrepresented minority students, in particular – expressed disappointment at the state of diversity and inclusion at Columbia. Women, who are 41% of all GSAS faculty, also echoed this concerned sentiment, on average. If data were published on representation of LGBTQ and GQNBNC faculty, we might expect similarly disappointed sexual and/or gender minority students. Importantly, given that these identities are not always mutually exclusive, an intersectional lens would call upon us to consider how students who exist at the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, disability status, socioeconomic class, and/or religion are uniquely underserved and underrepresented on this campus.

A new academic year on the horizon, time will tell whether students' attitudes and experiences shift for the better. Until then, the 2018 Quality of Life Report on Diversity and Inclusion suggests a graduate student body that needs and wants Columbia to do better for its students, do better for its faculty, and do better for themselves. In GSAS's own words, "*Columbia will be a stronger institution... if we create an intellectual collective that is reflective of the disparate experiences of its constituents.*" So, let's make Columbia stronger -- but more importantly, let's make Columbia more inclusive of the people driving that strength.

You can click [here](#) to read the GSAS statement on diversity and inclusion, [here](#) to access the 2018 faculty diversity data, and [here](#) to access 2018 student diversity data.

Violence, Discrimination, and Harassment

According to the above responses 29% of survey participants reported either having directly experienced, or having been affected, by instances of violence, harassment and discrimination at Columbia. While the range of choices and experiences makes it hard to devise conclusive statistics of the exact demographics, it is noticeable that 37% of those to report experiencing the effects of discrimination and harassment, recorded experiencing *at least* two forms. These statistics imply that it would be worth doing further cross-sectional, intersectional analysis across different subgroups.

Of the 36 participants that reported violence, discrimination and harassment on multiple fronts, 19 recorded either having experienced or been affected by racial discrimination (53%). It is also important to note that, while 205 (54%) of the total participants identified as female, genderqueer or gender non-conforming, 74% of all persons to report instances of violence, discrimination and harassment identified as female, genderqueer or gender non-conforming. Thirdly, it is particularly striking that **over half of the participants who identified as Black/African American reported having experienced**

or having been affected by racial discrimination, and nearly half of all persons who identify as non-binary or gender-nonconforming reported having experienced discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Of the 96 survey participants who reported experiencing some form of violence, harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity only 31 (32%) recorded that they had reported the incident to Columbia. Of those that said they had reported the incident, 61% identified as White/European-American, despite the fact that only ~50% of all survey participants identified as White/European-American.

To the scaled question of how comfortable respondents felt reporting instances of violence, discrimination and harassment the range was dispersed pretty evenly. However, for the answers scaled “4” and “below”, ~60% identified as female or gender nonconforming. It is also noticeable that, when asked to identify their relationship to their harasser, no participant named their graduate advisor, despite the fact that the largest majority of participants (~20%) chose the option: “prefer not to answer”.

Lastly, a large majority of persons who reported some form of violence, harassment and discrimination at Columbia did not agree that Columbia is committed to providing an environment free of harassment and discrimination. Many also took the opportunity in the comments section to convey their dissatisfaction and conviction that Columbia’s priority remains to protect its reputation and the status of tenured professors. Additionally, several participants commented on the failure of Columbia to adequately address and respond to the several instances of racial harassment, anti-semitism and violence on campus over the past year.

Parental accommodations and relationship status

A slight majority of MA respondents are single, but significant percentages are in relationships or married, while a strong majority of PhD respondents are either married or in relationships.

In keeping with last year’s findings, parental support at Columbia is seen as woefully insufficient. The vast majority (96%) of respondents do not have children, with several qualitative comments suggesting that insufficient resources at Columbia are preventing them from becoming parents. Of the small number of parents at Columbia, the vast majority feel that the resources available to them are inadequate, with only 8% believing resources are adequate. Parents are, with a few exceptions, satisfied with Columbia’s management of the resources that do exist. A strong majority (71%) of parents have made use of the childcare subsidy, and many comments indicated it should be increased. Parents (71%) had not used the Back-up Care service, and those who had reported varying levels of satisfaction. Every comment from a parent indicated the need for more childcare resources.

International Student Services

Of the survey participants, 36% identified as international students. A strong majority (84%) of the self-identified international students require a F-1 visa, while 12% require a J-1 visa. 75% of international students are required to renew their visa every 4+ years, but 17% are required to renew it every year. 87% of the international students who participated in the survey indicated they have not had issues obtaining proper documentation for their visa. Of the participants, a strong majority (85%) have not taken advantage of Columbia's ESL resources and class offering. A common response left in the comments section is that tax support for international students is lacking.

86% of international students who participated in the survey reported not being affected by the recent travel bans. Concern over future travel restrictions varies, with responses clustered at either pole, suggesting that it is either not at all concerning or extremely concerning, depending on individual circumstances. (ASGC did not solicit information about countries of origin or citizenship.) A majority (80%) of respondents reported not experiencing harassment when crossing the US border, however 20% either have experienced harassment or were unsure if they have, and the average concern about future harassment was 5 out of 10.

Respondents generally feel that Columbia is a welcoming place for international students, although specific experiences vary.

Disability Services

Only 2.5% of respondents identified as having a physical disability, while 8.6% identified as having a mental disability. Those with physical disabilities were more likely to feel comfortable informing the university and their department of their disability, with an average comfort rating of 5.88 out of 10, as compared to an average comfort rating of 3.67 out of 10 for those who identified as having mental disabilities.

Those with physical disabilities were also, however, more likely to say they had experienced discrimination, with fully a quarter of respondents reporting discrimination on the basis of physical disability. 12.5% of those with mental disabilities indicated that they had experienced discrimination on the basis of their disability, with 21% unsure.

Those with physical disabilities were more likely to seek support from the Office of Disability Services, although 25% had not. Among respondents who identified as having a mental disability, a majority (56%) had not sought support from ODS. However, among those who had sought support from ODS, those with physical disabilities were less likely to be satisfied than those with mental disabilities. There is a general sense that ODS is not designed to address the specific needs of graduate students, and comments also suggest distrust that department faculty will adhere to any demands set by ODS.

Campus Resources

Columbia's libraries are by far the most used resources on campus, and respondents are generally satisfied with the libraries, though a few respondents complain of overcrowding and uncleanliness. Very few graduate students use the Center for Teaching and Learning, but those who have tend to be satisfied or highly satisfied, leaving positive comments and asking for more long-term and integrated training for teachers. The Center for Career Education is also very underused, and while those who have used it tend to be satisfied, comments reveal a sense that it is not designed for the needs of graduate students.

Graduate students experiences with medical services, including Counseling and Psychological Services, reveal difficulty obtaining appointments and under-resourced psychological services.

There is a strong call among respondents for improvements to Columbia fitness centers, citing overcrowding, insufficient equipment, and uncleanliness.

Arts and Sciences Graduate Council

While respondents are generally happy with what ASGC already does, there is a perception that ASGC is hampered in its ability to create meaningful change. While 62% of respondents are aware of ASGC, only 38% feel it plays an important role on campus. Respondents suggest engaging students more directly in order to better represent them and working to address racism at Columbia.

Unionization

Support for unionization remains strong among graduate students, as does criticism of the university's response to graduate worker unionization. Faith in the university's commitment to improving graduate student quality of life without unionization is weak (17.7%). A majority of respondents approve of the ASGC's shift from neutrality to support for the union, with comments about what role the ASGC should play primarily indicating a desire for ASGC to serve as a conduit for information between the union and the graduate student body.

Final Comments

In their closing comments, respondents raised a range of issues at the departmental, school, and university level. At the departmental level, the strongest call was for more transparency and organization in communicating requirements and for improved mentorship. Respondents also expressed a strong desire for more women and faculty of color, particularly Black faculty, in their departments, as well as improvement to department climates that are tolerant of both racism and sexual harassment. Respondents also asked for more work space and better funding for conferences and for research-related travel.

By far the largest concern at the GSAS level was funding, often with a particular emphasis on funding for years 6 and 7 and summer funding. Respondents also

emphasized the importance of school-wide efforts to improve diversity and inclusion, by hiring more faculty of color and better supporting students and faculty of color already at Columbia. Respondents also called on GSAS to voice support for the union.

At the university level, there were strong calls for increased funding and decreases in rent, followed closely by calls for improvements to the fitness center and to medical insurance. Several comments also called on the university to bargain fairly with the union, and several more called on the school to better support its students and faculty of color.

In general closing comments, the most common concern described was improving diversity and inclusion at Columbia, particularly for students of color.

Basic Information

Section overview

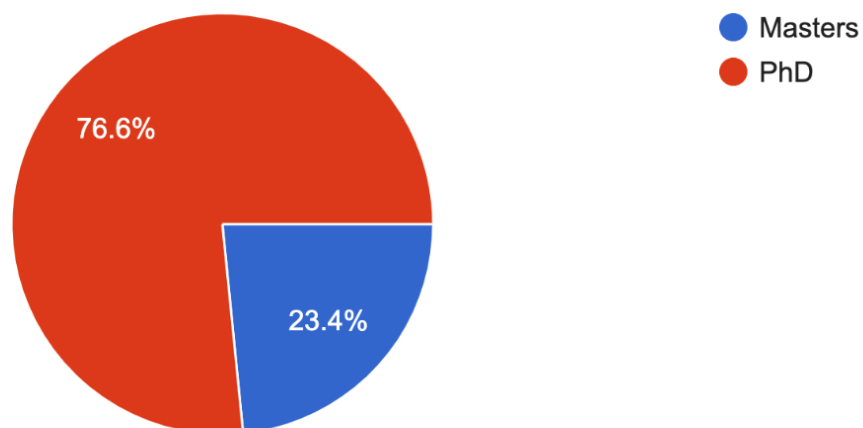
The demographics section of the survey consisted of three sub-sections: the first one applicable to all students, followed by separate designated sections for Masters and PhD students, respectively. The statistical and numerical overviews of answers to questions are found below, along with comments and analysis.

Masters or PhD Program

This is a multiple-choice question. Options offered are “Masters” and “PhD.” N=333.

What type of program are you in?

333 responses

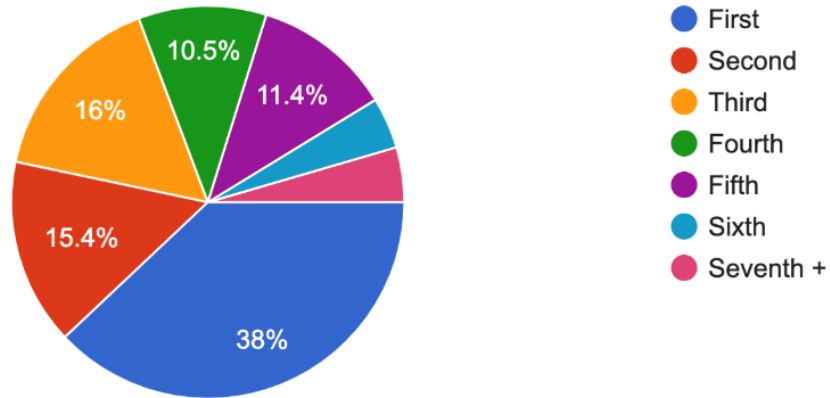


Of 333 responses, 255 (76.6%) are PhD students and 78 (23.4%) are Masters students.

Year of study

What year of study are you in?

332 responses

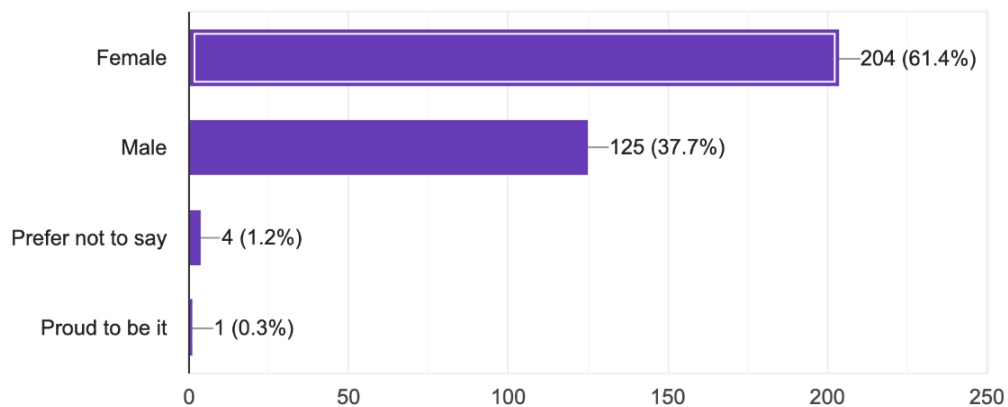


Sex

This is a multiple-answer question. Options offered are “Male,” “Female,” “Prefer not to say,” and a write-in “Other” option. N = 332.

What sex were you assigned at birth, on your original birth certificate?

332 responses



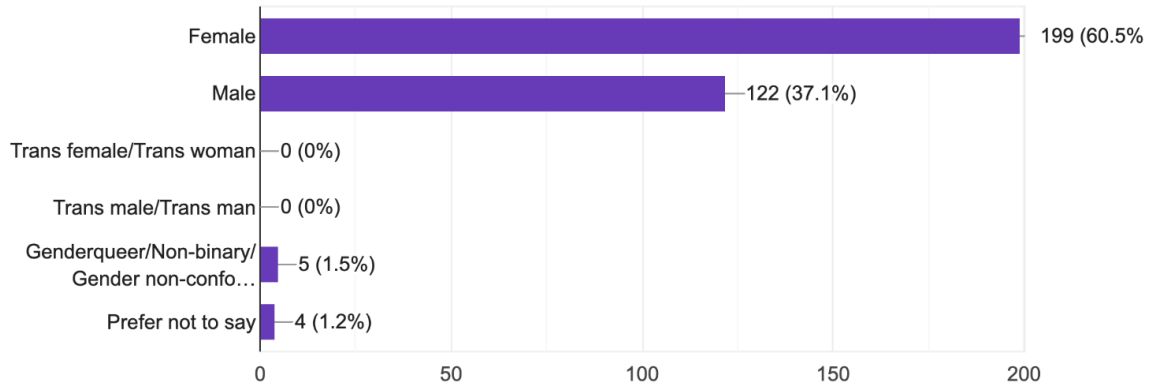
Of 332 respondents, 204 (61.4%) identified their sex as female. 125 (37.7%) identified their sex as male, while 4 (1.2%) preferred not to disclose the sex they were assigned at birth. Only one respondent used the write-in option, indicating “Proud to be it.” This respondent also identified the sex they were assigned at birth as male, and it is unclear whether they are proud to have been assigned that sex or proud to have a gender identity that accords with that assigned sex, or both.

Gender

This is a multiple-answer question. Options included “Male,” “Female,” “Trans female / Trans woman,” “Trans male / Trans man,” “genderqueer/non-binary/gender non-conforming with the option to write in another answer. N=329.

What is your current gender identity?

329 responses



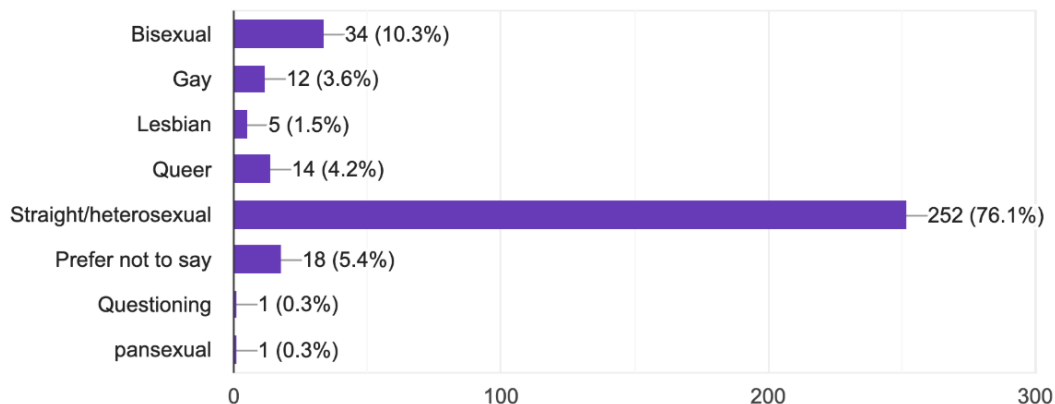
Of 329 responses, 199 (60.5%) identified their gender as female, 122 (37.1%) identified their gender as male, 5 (1.5%) identified as genderqueer/non-binary/gender non-conforming,” with 4 respondents preferring not to disclose their gender.

Sexual orientation

This is a multiple-answer question. Options included “Bisexual,” “Gay,” “Lesbian,” “Queer,” “Straight/heterosexual” and “Prefer not to say,” with the option to write in another answer. N=331.

What is your sexual orientation?

331 responses



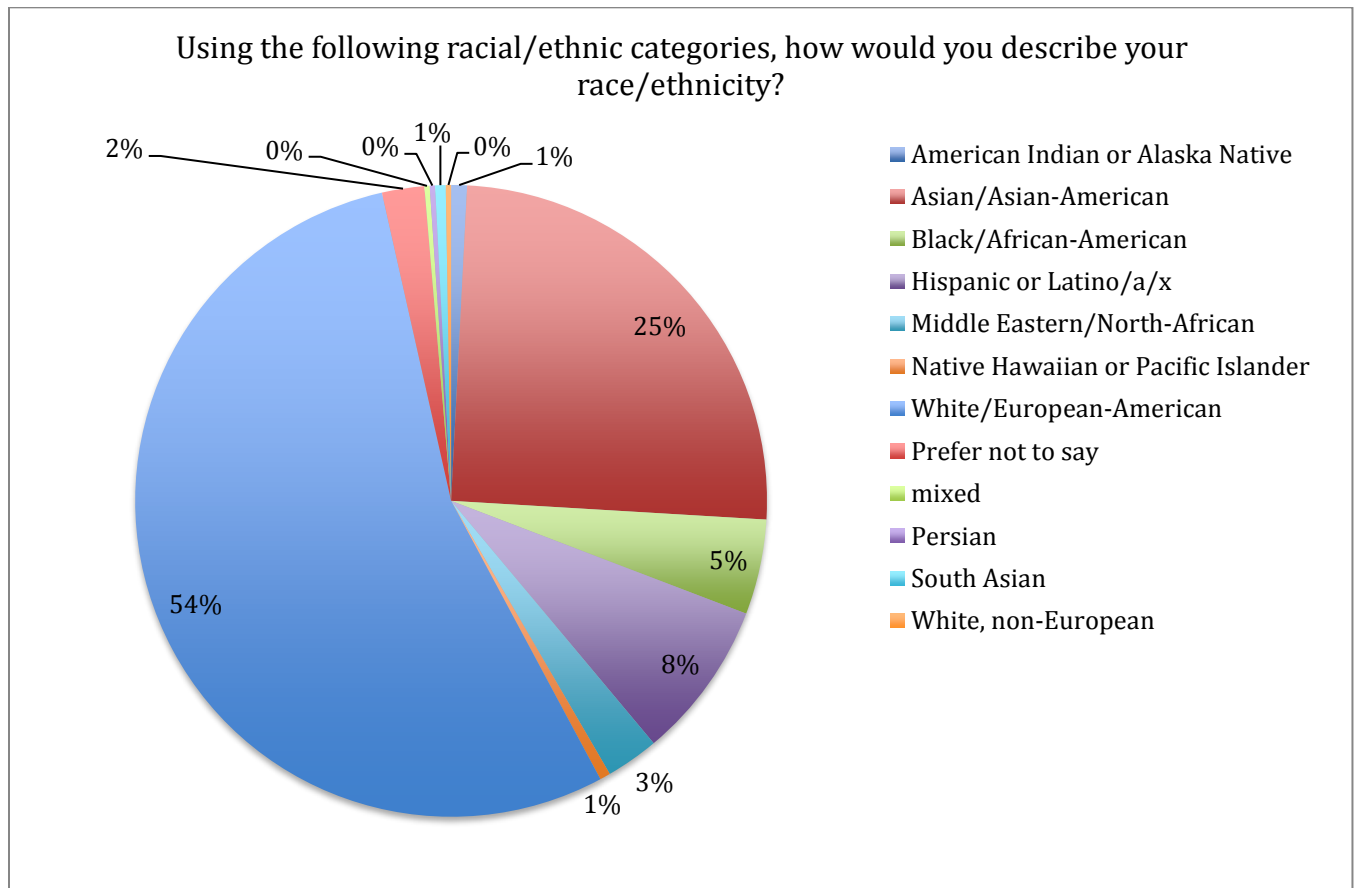
Of 331 respondents, 252 (76.1%) identify as straight or heterosexual. 34 (10.3%) identify as bisexual, 12 (3.6%) identify as gay, 5 (1.5%) identify as lesbian, 12 (4.2%) identify as

queer, and 18 (5.4%) preferred not to disclose their sexual orientation. Two respondents used the write-in option, indicating “questioning” and “pansexual.”

Race and ethnicity

Respondents were first asked how they would describe their race/ethnicity in an open response question, and then asked to describe their race/ethnicity in a multiple-answer question, where options included “American Indian or Alaska Native,” “Asian/Asian-American,” “Black/African-American,” “Hispanic or Latino/a/x,” “Middle Eastern/North-African,” “Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander,” “White/European-American,” and “Prefer not to say,” with the option to write in another answer.

While the many respondents to the open answer version (N=279) used categories available in the multiple-answer version, many also took the opportunity to provide more precise descriptions, with one person simply responding “I wouldn’t.” More precise descriptions included Afrotlatino/a/x, Ashkenazi, Biracial, Brazilian, Chinese, Dominican, Eastern Mediterranean, Indian, Japanese, Jewish, Lebanese/ Syrian Armenian, mestizo, Mexican, mixed, Nepali, Pakistani, Persian, Russian, South Asian, South-east Asian, and Vietnamese, with many respondents indicating multiple racial and ethnic identities.

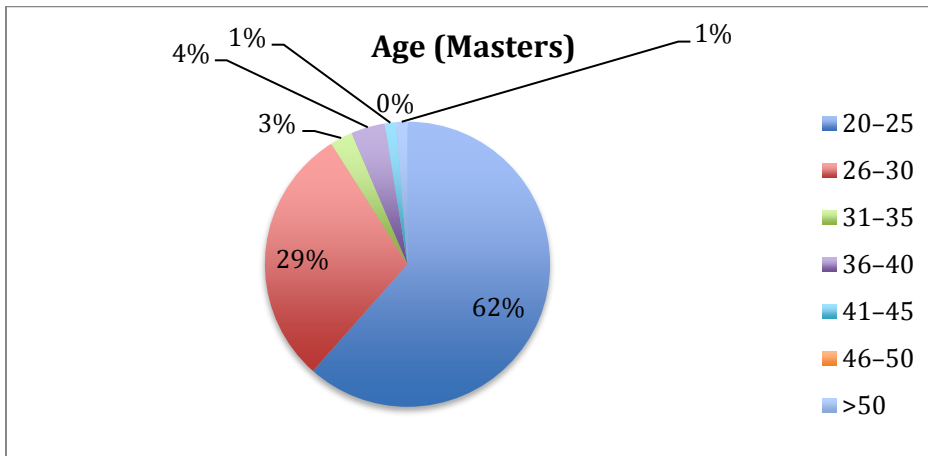


Of 327 respondents, 201 (54%) described their race/ethnicity as White/European-American. 93 (25%) described their race/ethnicity as Asian/Asian-American, 30 (8%) described their race/ethnicity as Hispanic/Latino/a/x, 18 (5%) described their race/ethnicity as Black/African-American, 10 (3%) described their race/ethnicity as Middle Eastern/North-African, 3 (1%) described their race/ethnicity as American Indian or Alaska Native, and 2 (1%) described their race/ethnicity as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. 8 respondents (2%) preferred not to describe their race/ethnicity and five respondents wrote in another answer. Of those 5, two wrote South Asian, one wrote Persian, one wrote mixed, and one wrote White/non-European.

Age

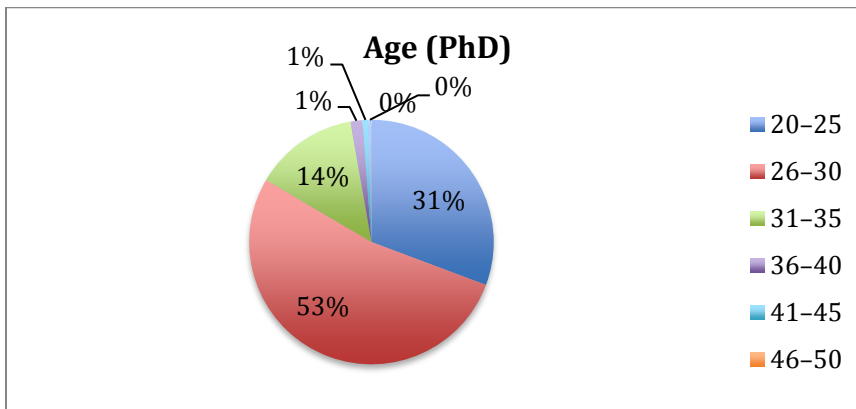
This was a multiple-choice question. Options were 20–25, 26–30, 31–35, 36–40, 41–45, 46–50, and >50.

Masters students



Of 78 Masters student respondents, 48 (62%) were 20–25. 23 (29%) were 26–30, 2 (3%) were 31–35, 3 (4%) were 36–40, 1 was 41–45 and 1 was over 50.

PhD students



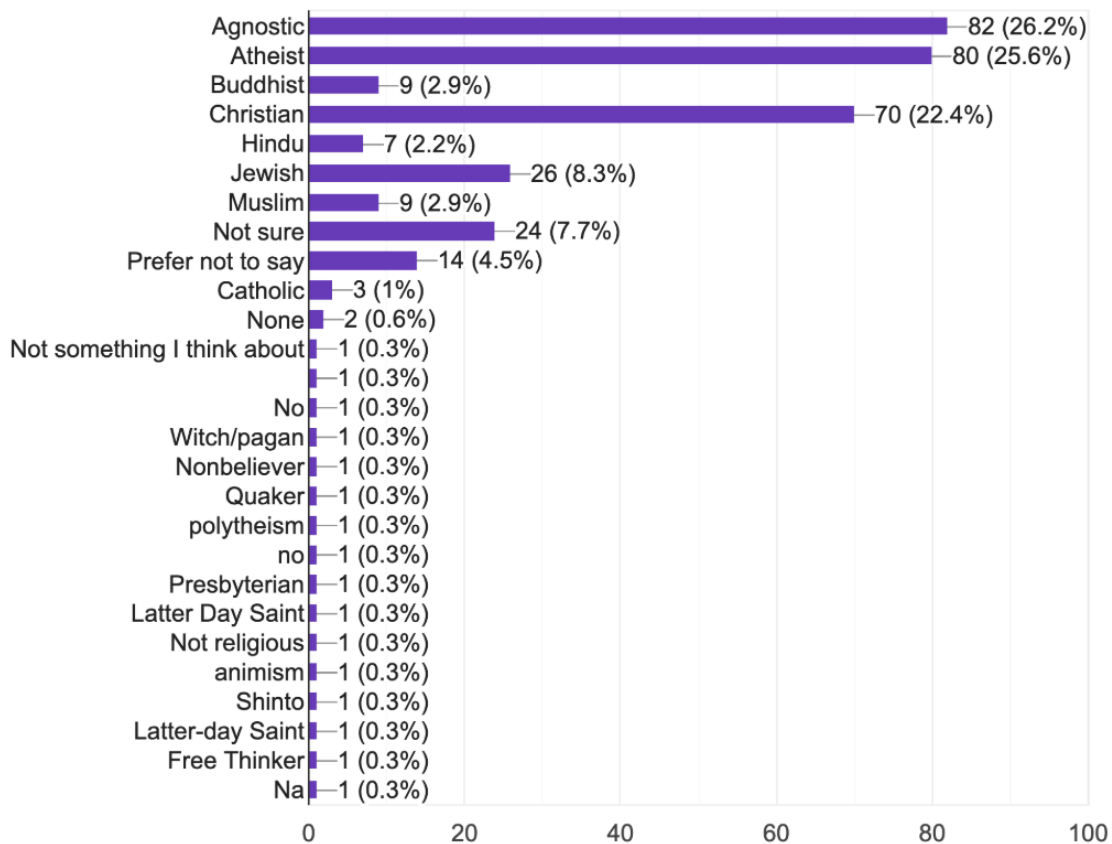
Of 254 PhD respondents, 134 (53%) were 26–30, with 78 (31%) between 20 and 25. 35 (14%) were 31–25, 4 (1%) were 36–40, 2 (1%) were 41–45, and 1 (<1%) was above 50.

Religious affiliation

This was a multiple-answer questions. Options were “Agnostic,” “Atheist,” “Buddhist,” “Christian,” “Hindu,” “Jewish,” “Muslim,” “Not sure” and “Prefer not to say,” with the option to write in another answer. N= 313.

What (if any) is your religious affiliation?

313 responses



Of 313 respondents, 82 (26.2%) were agnostic and 80 (25.6%) were atheist. 70 respondents (22.4%) were Christian, 26 (8.3%) were Jewish, 9 (2.9%) were Buddhist, 9 (2.9%) were Muslim, and 7 (2.2%) were Hindu. 24 (7.7%) were not sure, and 14 (4.5%) preferred not to say. 18 respondents wrote in other answer, with three writing “Catholic,” two writing in “Latter-day saint,” one writing in “Presbyterian,” one (cut off from graph) indicating “Christian family and upbringing,” one writing in “Quaker,” one writing in “Shinto,” one writing in “animism,” one writing in “Free Thinker,” one writing in “polytheism,” one writing in “Witch/pagan,” and six writing in some version of not religious.

MA Program Information

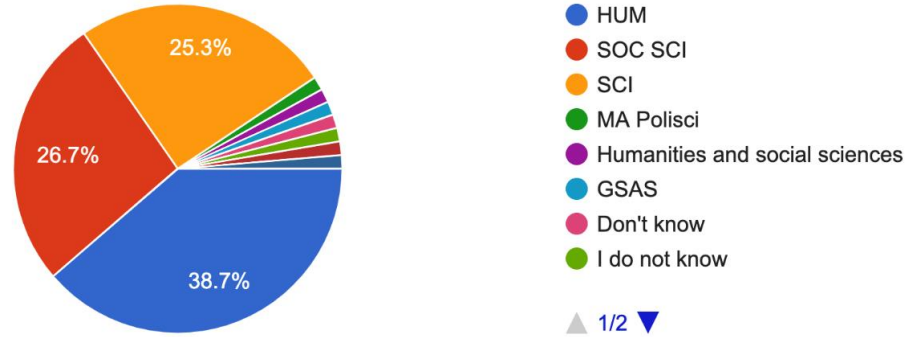
This section asked participants to identify their MA program type and their department or program. Only those who indicated they were MA students in the Basic Information section saw this section.

MA Type

The first question asked participants to identify their MA program. Options were “HUM,” “SOC SCI” and “SCI,” with the option to write in another answer. N=75.

MA Type

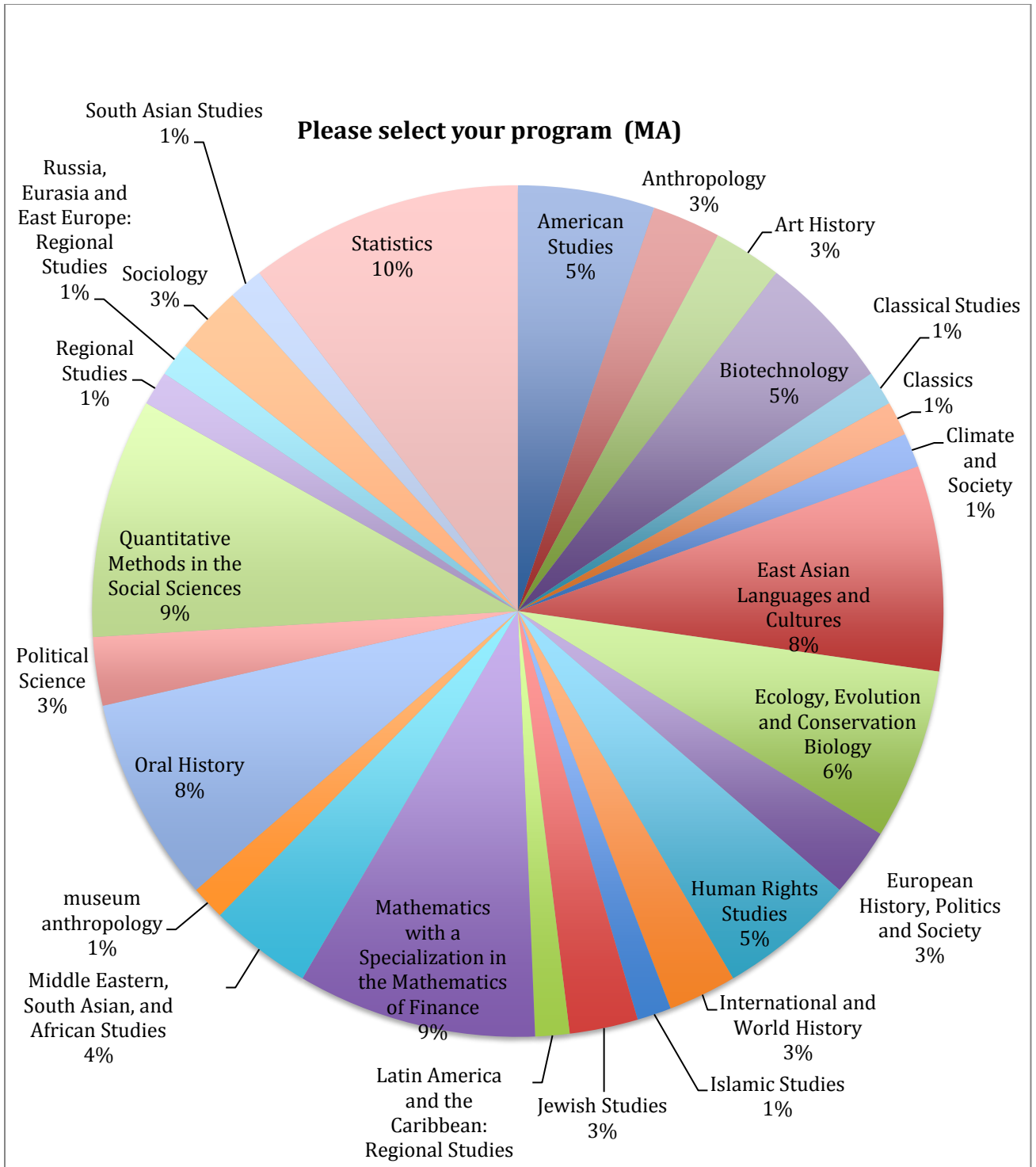
75 responses



19 (25.3%) of respondents indicated that their program was in the sciences. 20 (26.7%) indicated their program was in the social sciences. 29 (38.7%) indicated their program was in the humanities. The remaining 7 respondents (9.3%) wrote in an answer, with two people indicating uncertainty, two people identifying their specific programs (Political Science and History), one person writing in “GSAS,” one person writing in “Humanities and social sciences,” and one person writing in simply “MA.”

MA Program

The second question asked respondents to identify their program or department. Options included: African-American Studies; American Studies; Anthropology; Art History; Biotechnology; Classical Studies; Classics; Climate and Society; Earth and Environmental Science Journalism; MA in Regional Studies; East Asian Languages and Cultures; Ecology, Evolution and Conservation Biology; Economics; English and Comparative Literature; European History, Politics and Society; French and Romance Philology; Germanic Languages; Global Thought; Latin American and Iberian Cultures; History and Literature; Human Rights Studies; International and World History; Islamic Studies; Italian; Jewish Studies; Latin America and the Caribbean: Regional Studies; Mathematics with a Specialization in the Mathematics of Finance; Medieval and Renaissance Studies; Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies; Oral History; Philosophical Foundations of Physics; Philosophy; Political Science; Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences; Religion; Russia, Eurasia and East Europe: Regional Studies; Russian Translation/Slavic Cultures/Slavic Languages; Sociology; South Asian Studies; Statistics. Participants also had the opportunity to write in another answer. N= 77.



Of 77 respondents, 4 (5%) were from American Studies, 2 (3%) were from Anthropology, 2 (3%) were from Art History, 4 (5%) were from Biotechnology, 1 (1%) was from Classical Studies, 1 (1%) was from Classics, 1 (1%) was from Climate and Society, 6 (8%) were from East Asian Languages and Cultures, 5 (6%) were from Ecology, Evolution and Conservation Biology, 2 (3%) were from European History, Politics and

Society, 4 (5%) were from Human Rights Studies, 2 (3%) were from International and World History, 1 (1%) was from Islamic Studies, 2 (3%) were from Jewish Studies, 1 (1%) was from Latin America and the Caribbean: Regional Studies, 7 (9%) were from Mathematics with a Specialization in the Mathematics of Finance, 3 (4%) were from Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies, 1 (1%) was from Museum Anthropology, 6 (8%) were from Oral History, 2 (3%) were from Political Science, 7 (9%) were from Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences, 1 (1%) was from Regional Studies, 1 (1%) was from Russia, Eurasia and East Europe: Regional Studies, 2 (3%) were from Sociology, 1 (1%) was from South Asian Studies, and 8 (10%) were from Statistics.

PhD Program Information

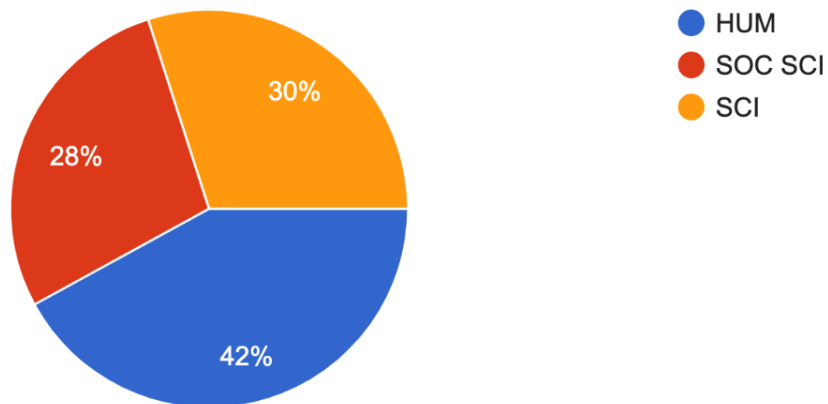
This section asked participants to identify their PhD program type and their department or program. Only those who indicated they were PhD students in the Basic Information section saw this section.

PhD Type

The first question asked participants to identify their MA program. Options were “HUM,” “SOC SCI” and “SCI,” with the option to write in another answer. N= 257.

PhD Type

257 responses

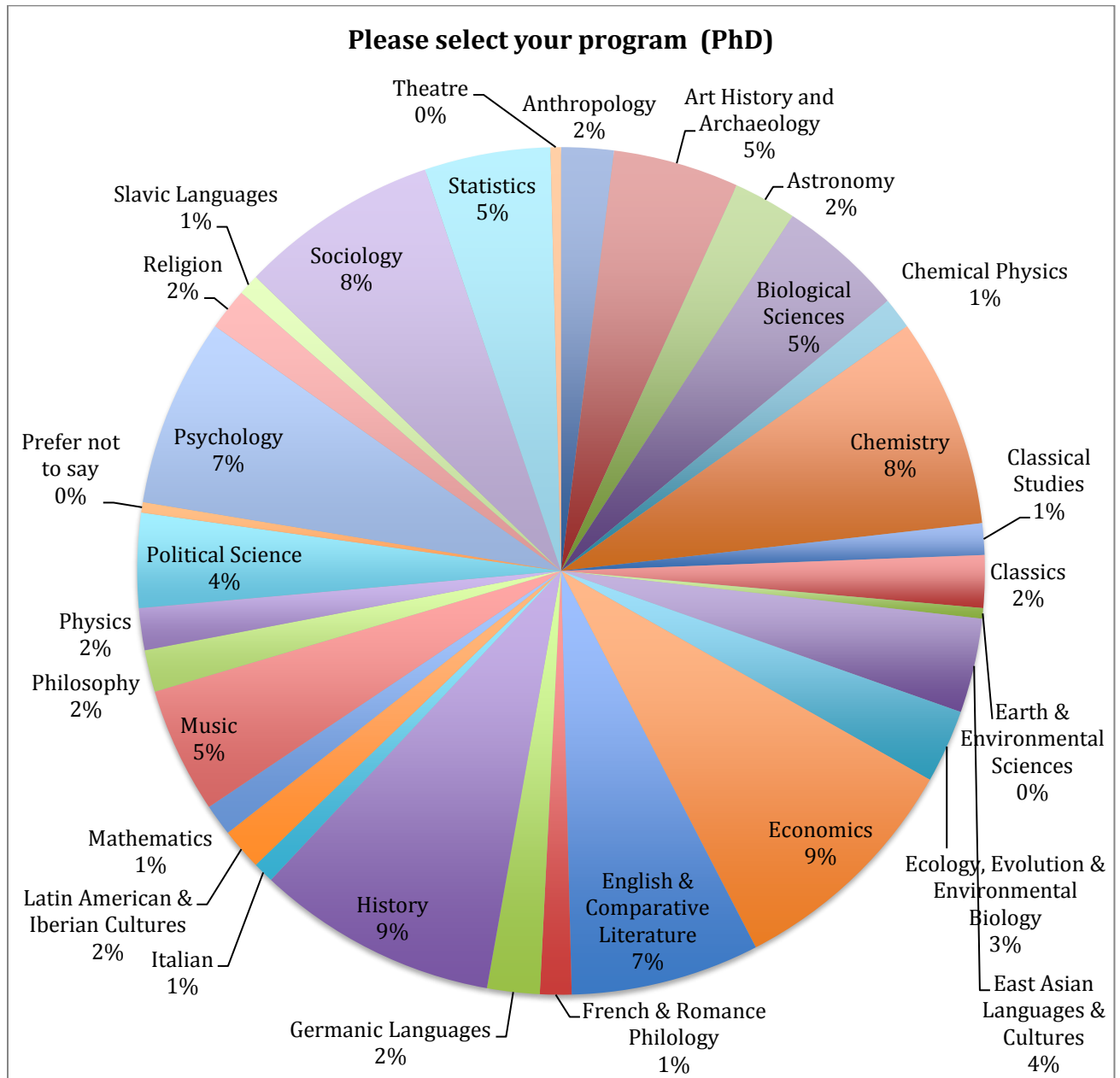


Of 257 respondents, 72 (28%) were in the social sciences, 77 (30%) were in the sciences, and 108 (42%) were in the humanities.

PhD Program

The second question asked respondents to identify their program or department. Options included: Anthropology; Art History & Archeology; Astronomy; Biological Sciences;

Chemical Physics; Chemistry; Classical Studies; Classics; Earth & Environmental Sciences; East Asian Languages & Cultures; Ecology, Evolution & Environmental Biology; Economics; English & Comparative Literature; French & Romance Philology; Germanic Languages; History; Italian; Latin American & Iberian Cultures; Mathematics; Middle Eastern, South Asian, & African Studies; Music; Philosophy; Physics; Political Science; Psychology; Religion; Slavic Languages; Sociology; Statistics. Participants also had the opportunity to write in another answer. N= 249.



Of 249 respondents, 5 (2%) were from Anthropology, 12 (5%) were from Art History and Archaeology, 6 (2%) were from Astronomy, 12 (5%) were from Biological Sciences, 3 (1%) were from Chemical Physics, 20 (8%) were from Chemistry, 3 (1%) were from Classical Studies, 5 (2%) were from Classics, 1 (>1%) was from Earth & Environmental Sciences, 9 (4%) were from East Asian Languages & Cultures, 7 (3%) were from Ecology, Evolution & Environmental Biology, 23 (9%) were from Economics, 18 (7%) were from English & Comparative Literature, 3 (1%) were from French & Romance Philology, 5 (2%) were from Germanic Languages, 23 (9%) were from History, 2 (1%) were from Italian, 4 (2%) were from Latin American & Iberian Cultures, 3 (1%) were from Mathematics, 12 (5%) were from Music, 4 (2%) were from Philosophy, 4 (2%) were from Physics, 9 (4%) were from Political Science, 1 (>1%) preferred not to say, 18 (7%) were from Psychology, 4 (2%) were from Religion, 2 (1%) were from Slavic Languages, 19 (8%) were from Sociology, 12 (5%) were from Statistics, and 1 (>1%) was from Theatre.

Section summary and remarks

Overall, the demographic breakdown reflects a continued underrepresentation of Masters students in ASGC. The number of Masters student participants has increased by 10 (from 68 to 78) since last year. However, it is worth noting that with the overall decrease in number of students represented by ASGC, as opposed to GSAC, the number of respondents overall has decreased from 405 last year to 336 this year.

The ASGC Executive Board has been addressing the matter of Masters Student representation, including adding a Masters Affairs Chair to the board. Reaching out to MA programs so that every program is represented will remain a priority. The sample of PhD students, on the other hand, is both robust and well balanced in terms of distribution across departments.

The gender distribution in the sample is skewed toward female (60.5%) and the strong majority of respondents are White (61.5%), with 28.4% identifying as Asian or Asian-American, 9.2% identifying as Hispanic or Latino/a/x, 5.5% identifying as Black or African-American, and 3.1% identifying as Middle Eastern / North-African. This raises concerns about the extent to which this survey might be able to address concerns specific to racial and ethnic minorities. ASGC should prioritize responding to and better representing the concerns of Black and Latino/a/x students in the coming years. LGBTQ students are proportionally well represented, with only 76% of respondents identifying as straight.

Over half (51.8%) of respondents do not express an affiliation with an organized religion, identifying as Agnostic or Atheist instead, with 22% of those who are religious identifying as Christian, 8% identifying as Jewish, and other represented religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam) below 3% each.

The majority of survey respondents are in their twenties across both groups; however, Masters students are on the whole younger than PhD students, which may bring about differences in needs and priorities when it comes to quality of life for those two groups.

Academic Life

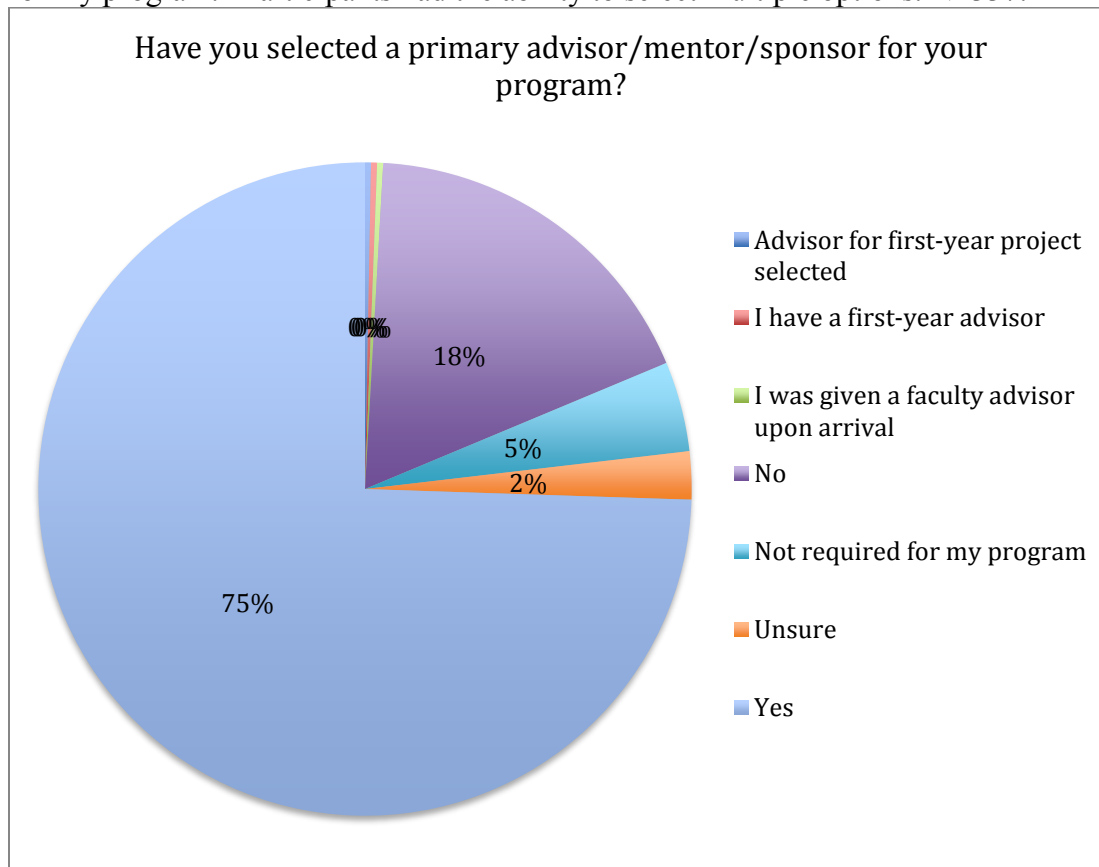
Section Overview

This section has two main focuses: a) the graduate students' relationship with their advisors and departments and b) the use of and satisfaction with time and workspaces.

Advisor Relationships and Department Culture

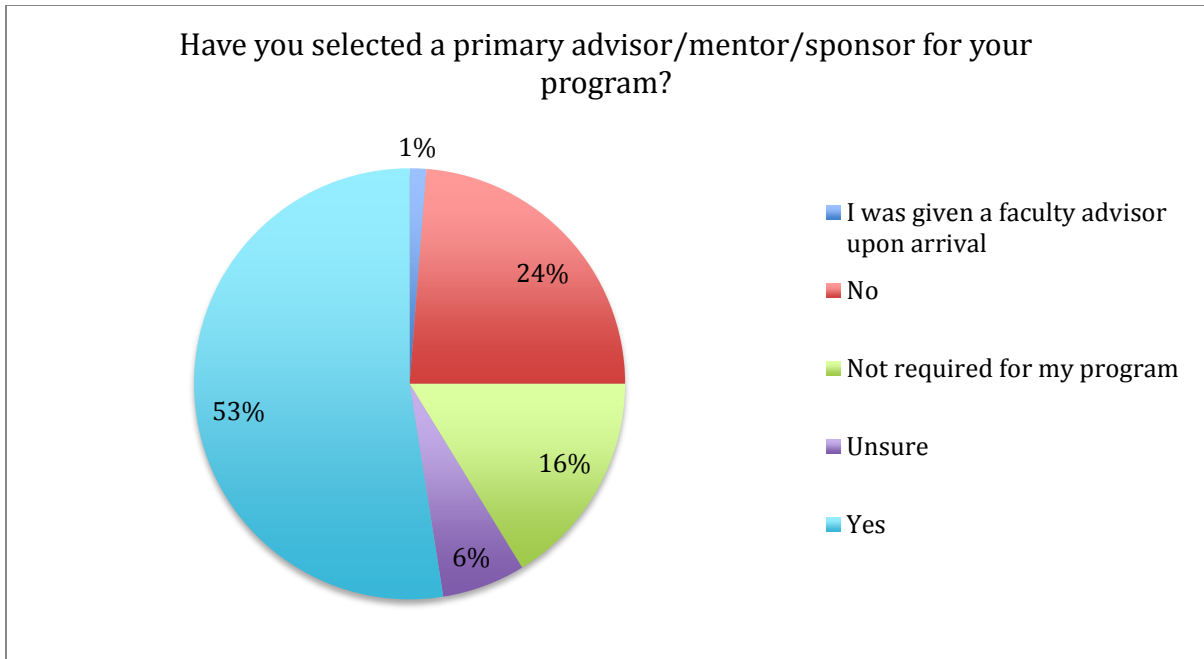
Selection of primary advisor

This is a multiple-choice question. Options are “Yes,” “No,” “Unsure,” and “Not required for my program.” Participants had the ability to select multiple options. N=337.

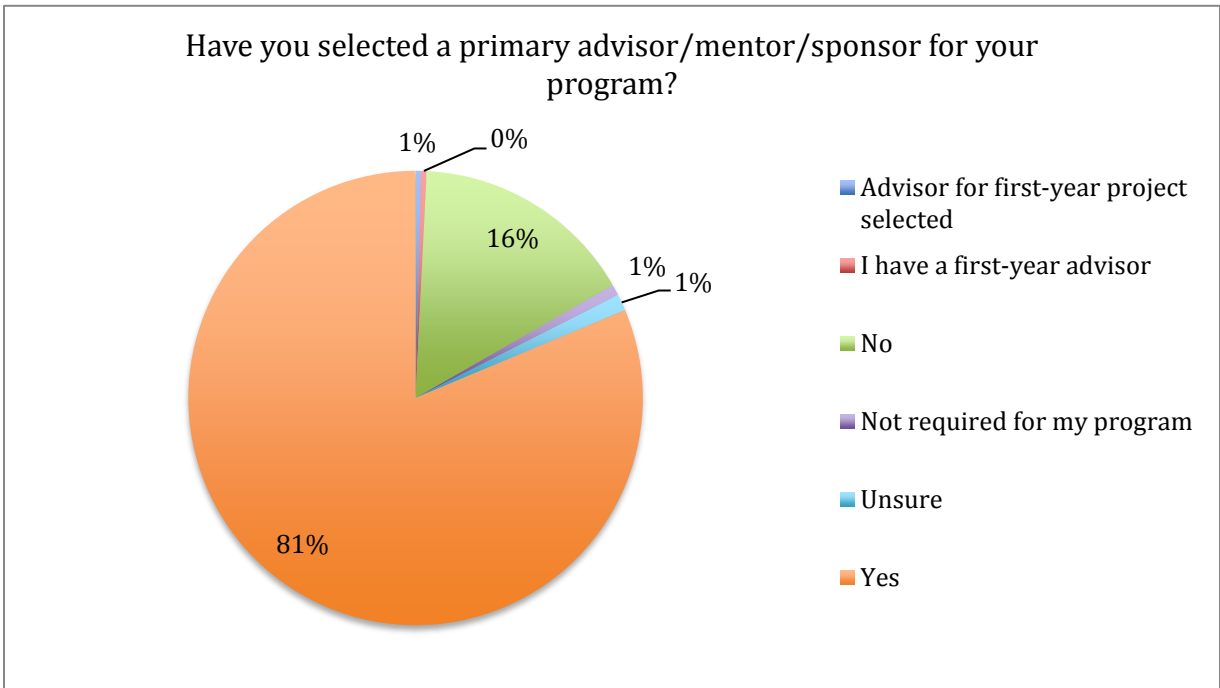


Of the respondents, the majority (74%) had selected a primary advisor, while 18% had not. 5% of respondents indicated that an advisor was not required for their program, and 2% were unsure.

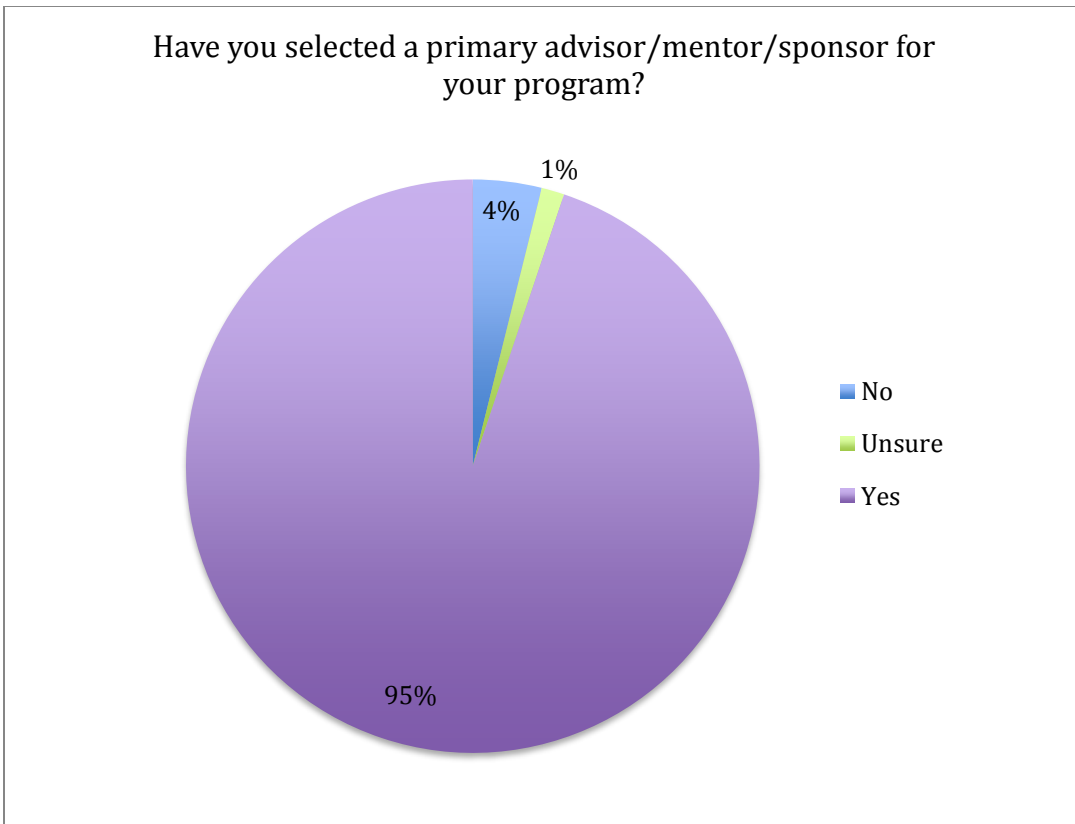
Among Masters students alone (N=80), participants were less likely to have identified a primary advisor, with 53% reporting that they had done so. Masters students were more likely to say that their programs did not require an advisor, at 16%, and more likely to be unsure as to how to answer the question.



Conversely, PhD students (N=257) were more likely to have identified a primary advisor. 81% of PhD students had selected an advisor, 28% more than the percentage for Masters students. Only 16% of PhD students had not selected an advisor, and less than 1% were unsure or said that it was not required for their program.

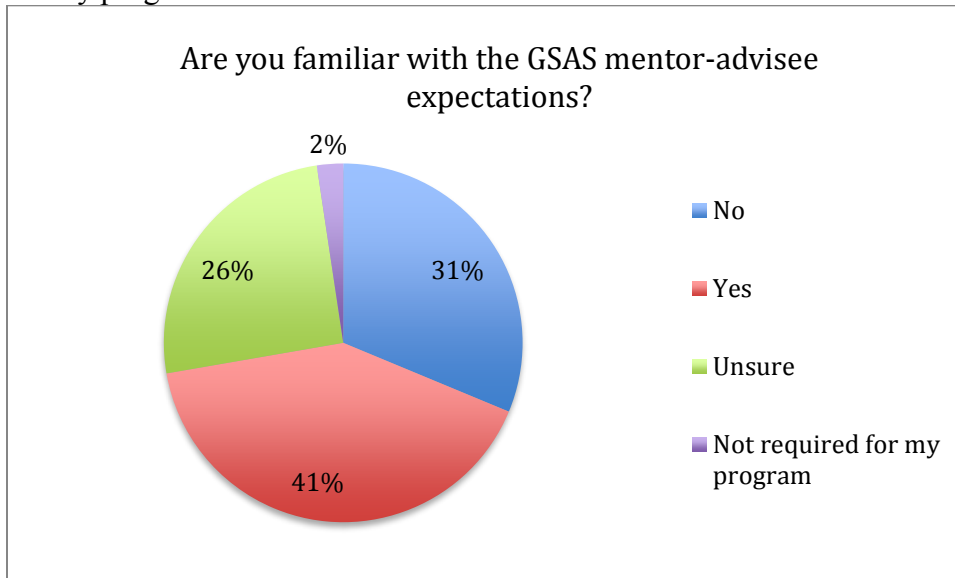


Of PhD students past their second year (N=155), 95% had selected a primary advisor. Only 4% has not, with 1% unsure. No PhD student beyond their second year indicated that this was not a requirement of their program.



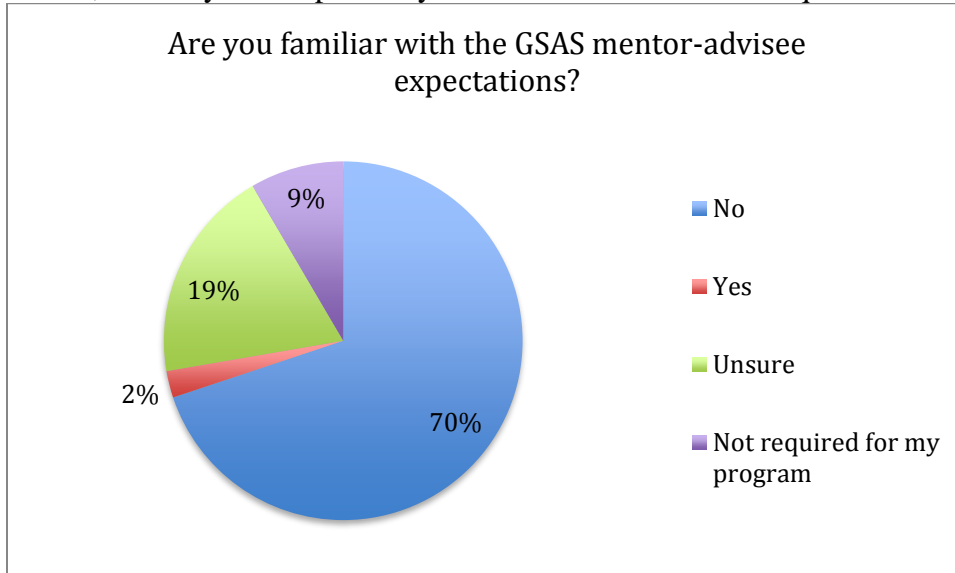
Familiarity with mentor-advisee expectations

This is a multiple-choice question. Options are “Yes,” “No,” “Unsure,” and “Not required for my program.” N=342.

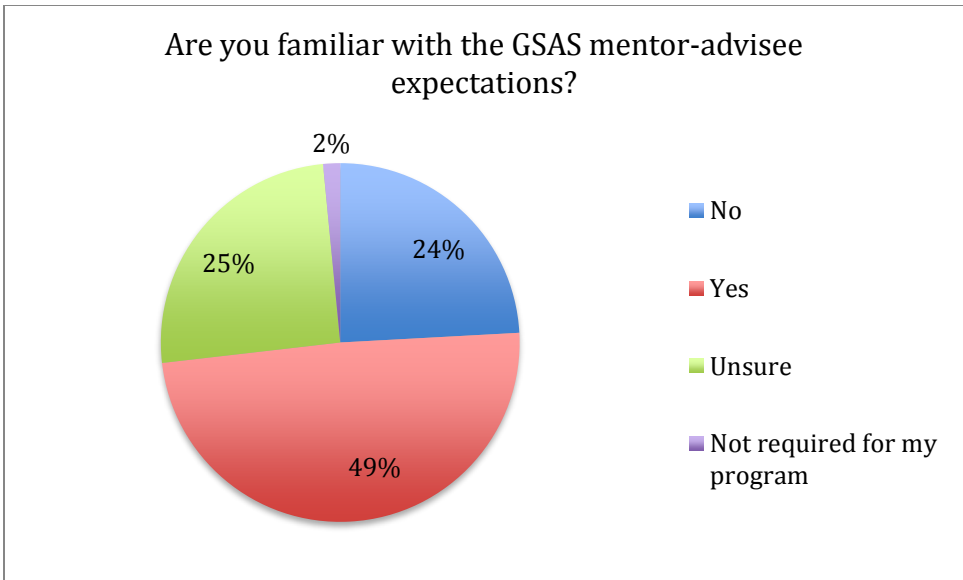


Over half of respondents were not confident about their familiarity with GSAS mentor-advisee expectations, with 41% percent of respondents answering yes, compared with 31% answering no and 26% unsure.

Among Masters students alone (N=82), the contrast is much starker. 70% of Master students said they were not familiar with GSAS mentor-advisee expectations, 19% were unsure, and only 2% responded yes. 9% said this was not a requirement of their program.



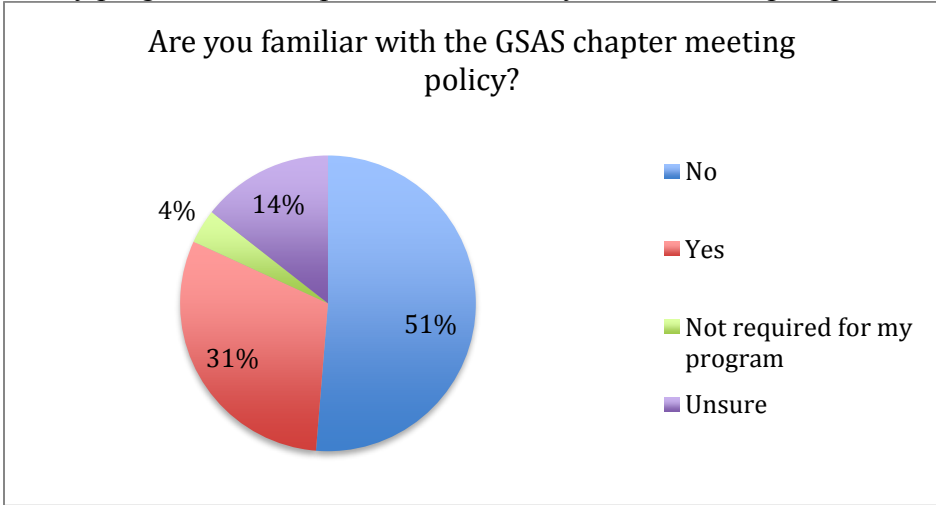
Among PhD students alone (N=261), 49% of respondents said they were familiar with GSAS mentor-advisee expectations, with 25% unsure and 24% indicating that they were not familiar with the expectations. 2% of PhD student respondents indicated that this was not a requirement of their program.



These results indicate that mentor-advisee expectations are in need of clarification for all graduate students, but that students in Masters programs in particular are unlikely to have clear expectations.

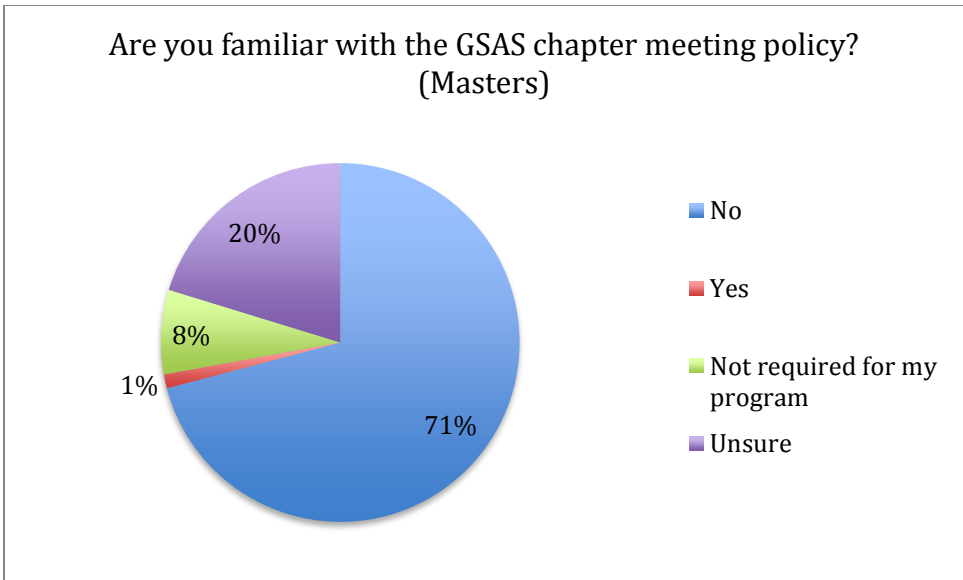
Familiarity with chapter meeting policy

This is a multiple-choice question. Options are “Yes,” “No,” “Unsure,” and “Not required for my program.” Participants had the ability to select multiple options. N=347.

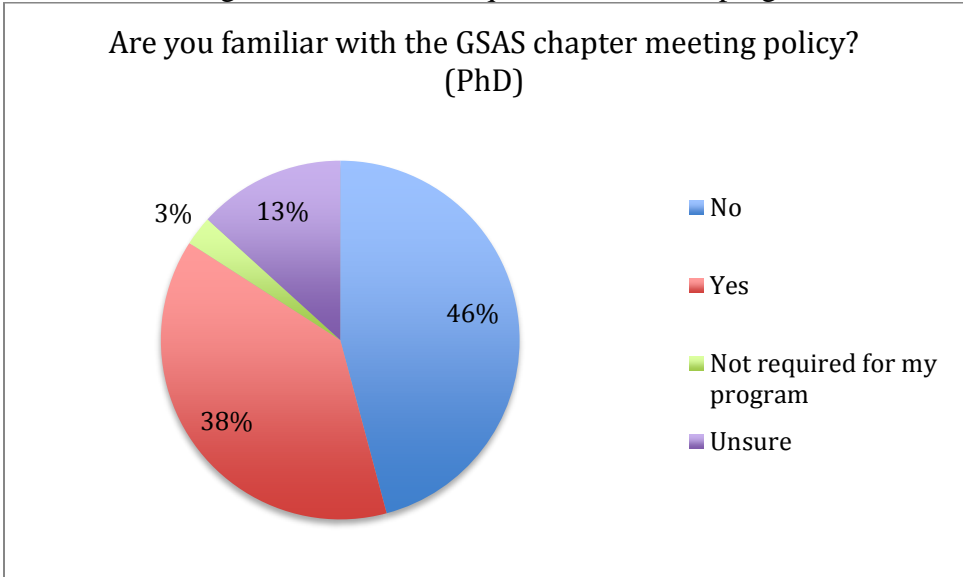


Only 31% of respondents indicated that they were familiar with the GSAS chapter meeting policy. 51% said they were not, while 14% were unsure, and 4% said it was not required for their program.

Among Master students alone (N=81) only 1% were familiar with the policy, with 71% answering no, 20% unsure, and 8% indicating that it was not a requirement of their program.



Among PhD students alone (N=264), 46% indicated that they were not familiar with the GSAS chapter meeting policy, with 38% indicating that they were familiar, 13% unsure, and 3% indicating that it was not a requirement of their program.

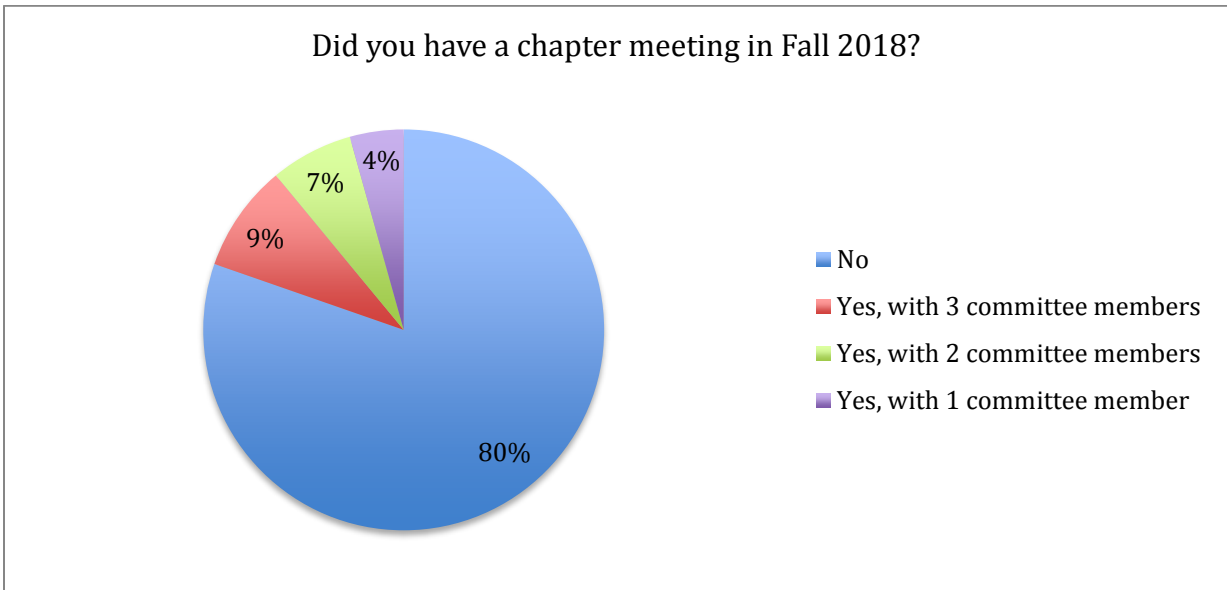


These results suggest that improved communication and clarification of the policy is needed.

Fall 2018 Chapter Meetings

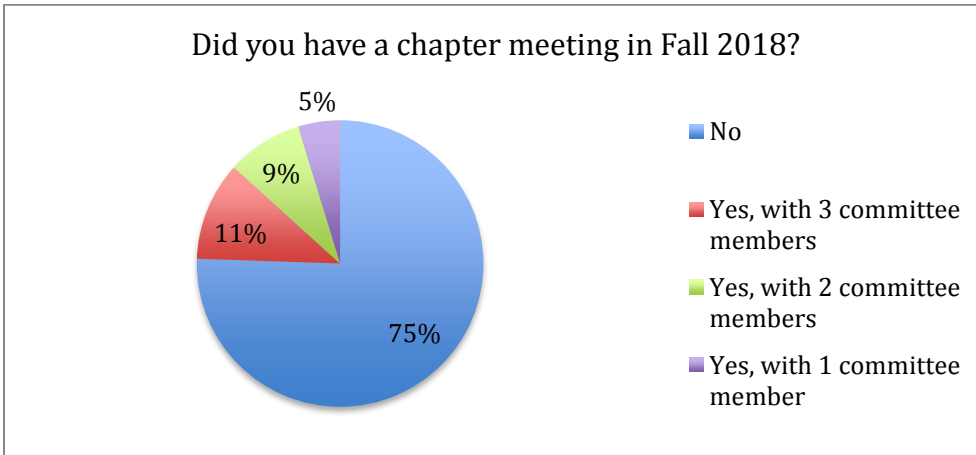
This is a multiple-choice question. Options were “No,” “Yes, with 3 committee members,” “Yes, with 2 committee members,” and “Yes, with 1 committee member.”

Respondents had the option of writing in their own response, and while these responses have been stripped from the graph below to reduce noise, 19 respondents, or 5.7%, wrote in some version of “Unsure.” N=333.

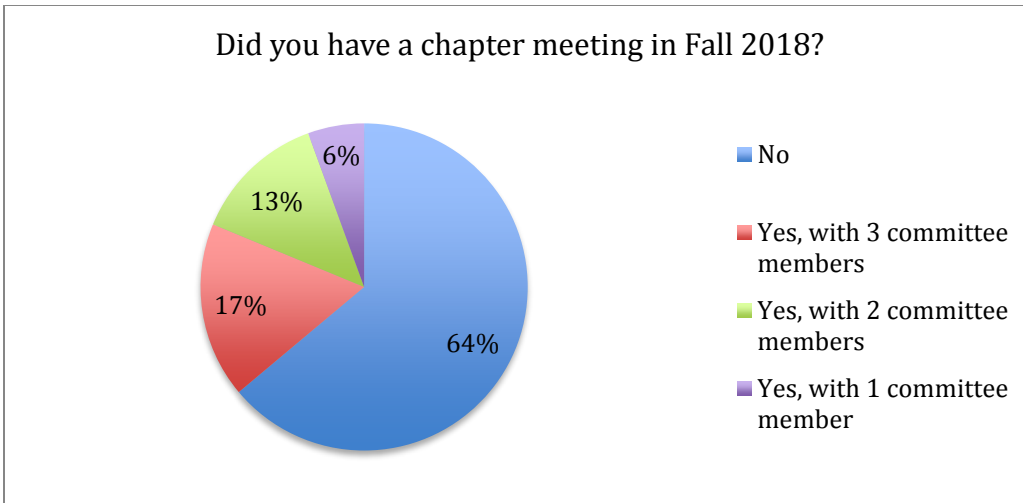


Taking all respondents, 80% did not have a chapter meeting in Fall 2018, while 20% met with at least one advisor.

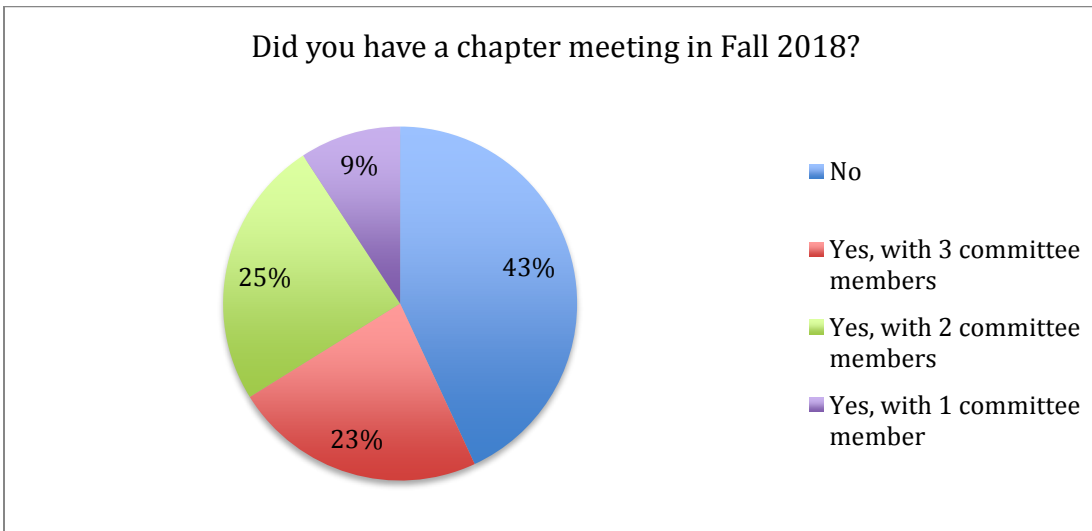
Of PhD student respondents (N=256), 75% did not have a chapter meeting in Fall 2018, while 25% met with at least one advisor.



Of PhD students beyond their second year (N=155), 64% did not have a chapter meeting in Fall 2018.



Of PhD students beyond their fourth year (N=67), 43% did not have a chapter meeting in Fall 2018.

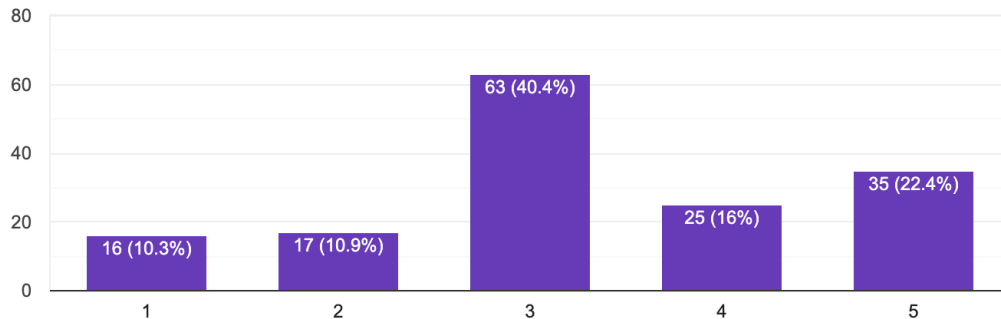


In comments, many students who had not had chapter meetings indicated that they were unaware of or confused about the policy, or that the policy did not apply to their program. A few indicated that they had attempted to schedule a chapter meeting, but that their committees had not responded.

How easy was it to schedule the meeting with your committee?



156 responses



Respondents (N=156) indicated varying levels of ease in scheduling meetings, with an average of 3.3 out of 5 and a median of 3 out of 5.

Comments about the chapter meeting policy ranged from strongly supportive to firmly critical. Some felt the policy was unnecessary, or even harmful:

The policy tries to micromanage both my work and the input of my advisers. I find one-on-one regular meetings way more helpful.

The new expectation to have chapter meetings neither mirrors real dissertation progress nor brings students and their advisors closer together. It feels like an additional burden and not a productive one, either for the mentor-mentee relationship or for the production of quality academic work.

I think whether a chapter meeting occurs or how often it does so should be up to the student and their advisor. GSAS does not need to involve itself in such things.

I understand that the policy is meant to encourage mentors actually work with their students. But forcing chapter meetings also seems to stress many students out, who now feel they have to find a way to adjust their schedule to meet the schedule as it's emailed to them.

My chapter meeting was useful, but I find that this new structure is adding to the bureaucratization of the university.

Unnecessary formal requirement. One-on one meetings with my committee are always more productive.

Some suggested adjustments to accommodate the needs of different committees, different stages of the program, and different program structures:

I think chapter meetings are a good idea, but were not well implemented. It doesn't make sense, for example, to meet every semester if a chapter has not been completed. It also doesn't make sense to meet the first semester post-prospectus.

Expectations should be made clear and agreed upon between candidate and committee; the work expected should be USEFUL to the candidate; concept of a different "chapter" a semester is unreasonable

I just don't like how this is a requirement. I appreciate that there is a measure to check students' progress, but it seems too monitored, too regimented. Also my three main readers work at three different universities, so it's hard to schedule something so formal!

I love the requirement for regular meetings and feedback, as well as for completing a tangible piece of work each semester. However, having a "chapter" each semester does not make sense in all cases, especially in my situation: the research phase of the dissertation. I am doing research abroad, and it feels like a waste of time to be producing a polished piece of writing when I should be focusing on the archives. How about presenting research notes, annotated lists of sources, updated dissertation/chapter outlines, or lists of unanswered questions and next steps based on what I'm currently finding? There must be more useful formats to present my work and receive advice on what I am actually currently doing, rather than edits on a chapter that will be revised anyway.

I believe it's a difficult policy to implement in the first semester after defending the dissertation proposal. I understand the logic behind the chapter meetings in general, but in my experience, it is unlikely for a PhD candidate to begin writing while initiating the research process, especially for students who go abroad and must settle into their life in an entirely different country in order to begin their research.

Chapter meetings every 6 months is too frequent for the sciences. Since we work in labs and usually see our PIs regularly, chapter meetings once a year are completely sufficient. I understand that it is useful for students in the social sciences and humanities who might not meet with their advisors as frequently. But the policy should be changed for anyone who works in a lab space/ for students in the sciences.

Language of "chapters" is somewhat awkward in Economics, where dissertations are generally thought of as a collection of three (possibly unrelated) papers. Work on these papers almost always proceeds in parallel rather than in series.

Some felt faculty should be better informed about, and even compensated for, the required meetings:

My advisors didn't have a clear idea of what the expectations of the meeting were.

Faculty were unaware of policy. They do not seem to support it because they do not think it is necessary.

I appreciate the push to keep everyone accountable and on track. However, it would be hugely helpful for GSAS to clarify its expectations for these meetings, and for all faculty and students, at least within a department, to be on the same page about these expectations.

Not telling the faculty about them was a big mistake - most faculty in my department, including advisor, hadn't heard about them until we mentioned it, so most people didn't have one. I found it useful but it could be adapted.

GSAS should ensure that all faculty receive additional compensation for supervising graduate student dissertations, in exchange for holding them more accountable for attending these meetings.

Some felt the burden of scheduling the meetings should not fall to graduate students, suggesting instead that advisors should be responsible for scheduling them:

It would be nice if it was up to our supervisors to schedule these instead of the students

I don't really know what a chapter meeting is, and I doubt the members of my committee know about it either. If GSAS is serious about them happening, then the faculty should be informed (ideally in person given that emails will likely not be read), and the onus/consequences of having/not having the meetings should be jointly on the faculty and students, not just the students, to make sure it actually happens.

...although I am extremely in favor of enforcing at least one meeting per semester between PhD candidate and advisor, I find that the new policy puts the onus on the graduate student to schedule the meeting, which does not actually increase the accountability of the advisor. Policy or no, it remains altogether too easy for advisors to be unresponsive to a student's emails and unaware of the student's needs.

It is nearly impossible to get all of my committee members together in one room, or even at the same time (i.e. over Skype). One of my committee members always provides extremely helpful and thoughtful feedback; while my main advisor has recently taken to "dictating" to me how he would have written the particular piece/chapter I am working on without engaging carefully or closely with what I have actually written. It is infuriating and demeaning.

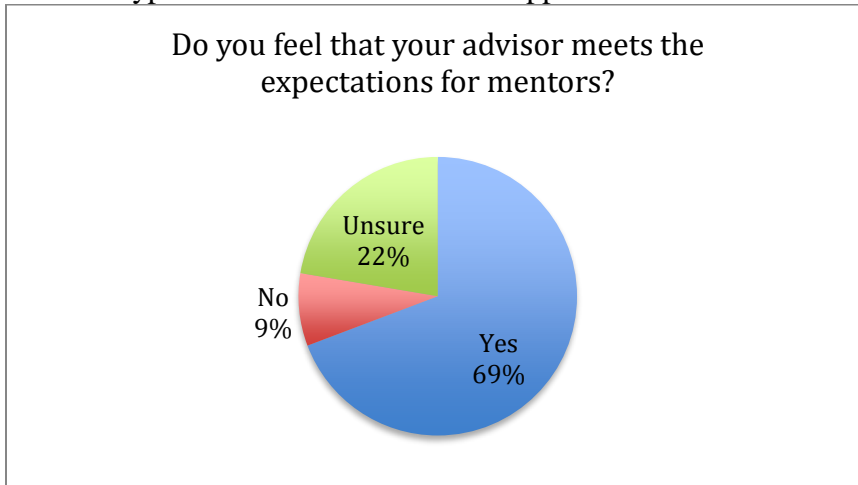
department administrators / staff should handle the work of scheduling; the burden should not be on students to herd wayward faculty

Placing the labor of coordinating the meetings on the graduate students doesn't solve the problem, particularly as there still doesn't appear to be any mechanism for holding

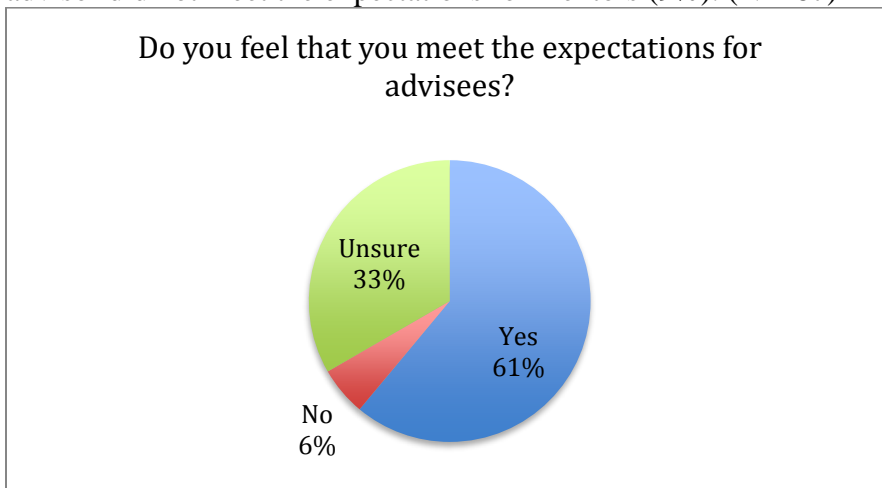
faculty accountable. If faculty aren't responding to student requests for meetings, asking the students to request a meeting changes nothing.

Expectations for mentors and advisees

Respondents were asked whether they felt their advisor met the expectations for mentors. Possible answers were “Yes,” “No,” and “Unsure,” with the option to type in another answer. Typed-in answers have been stripped from the charts to reduce noise.



The majority of respondents indicated that their advisor met the expectations for mentors, with 69% responding yes. However, significant numbers were unsure (22%) or said their advisor did not meet the expectations for mentors (9%). (N=287)



Respondents were then asked whether they felt they met the expectations for advisees. Possible answers were “Yes,” “No,” and “Unsure,” with the option to type in another answer. Typed-in answers have been stripped from the charts to reduce noise.

Although still in a majority, slightly fewer respondents were confident that they met the expectations for advisees, with 61% responding yes. Fewer respondents were certain they did not as well, with only 6% responding no. 33% of respondents were unsure whether they met the expectations for advisees, suggesting that graduate students have a clearer sense of what is expected of their advisors than of what is expected of them. (N=290)

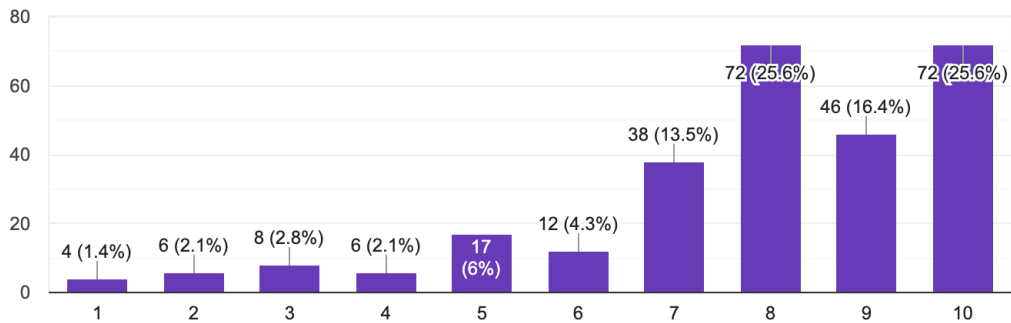
Satisfaction with advisor

Respondents were asked to rank their satisfaction with their advisor from 1 to 10, with 10 being highly satisfied.

How satisfied are you with your advisor?



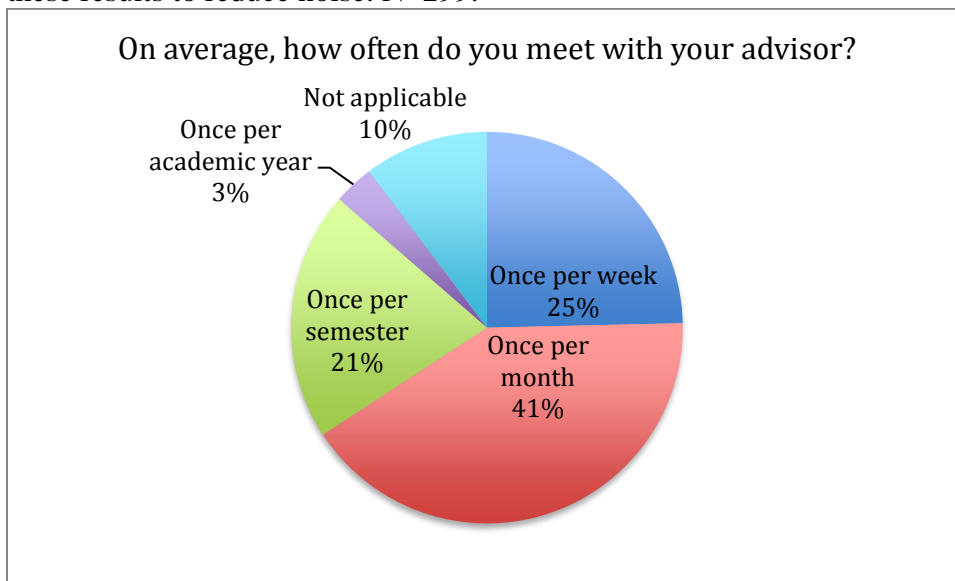
281 responses



The majority of respondents reported being satisfied with their advisors, with an average of 7.8 out of 10 and a median of 8 out of 10. 73% of respondents ranked their satisfaction at over 5 out of 10. N=282.

Meetings with advisor

Respondents were asked how often they met with their advisor. Possible answers were once per week, once per month, once per semester, once per year, and not applicable, with the option to write in another answer. Write-in answers have been stripped from these results to reduce noise. N=299.



25% of respondents indicated that they meet with their advisors once per week, 41% once per month, 21% once per semester, and only 3% once per year. 10% of respondents indicated that this question was not applicable to their situation.

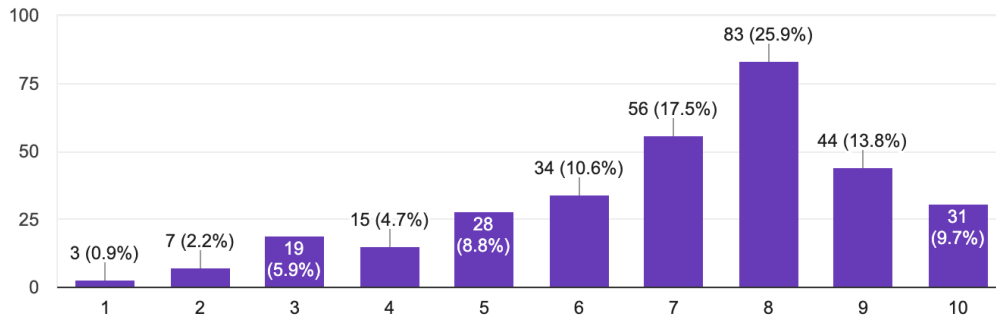
Satisfaction with department or program

Respondents were asked to rank their satisfaction with their department or program from 1 to 10, with 10 being highly satisfied.

How satisfied are you with your department/program?



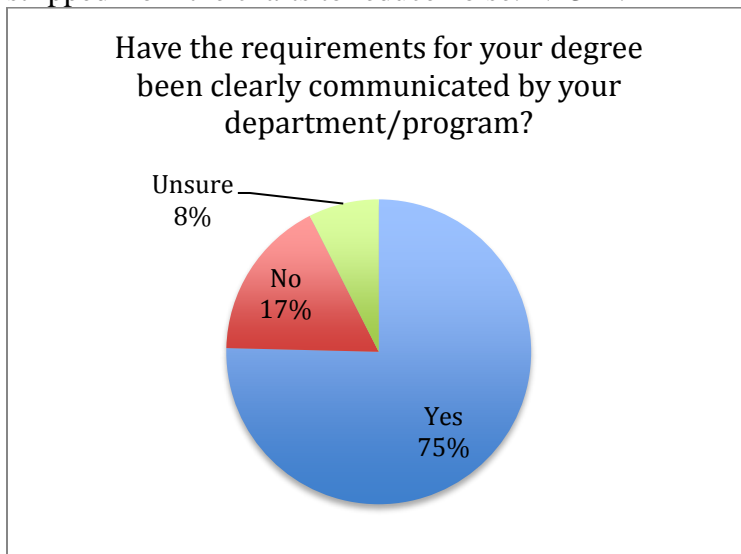
320 responses



Respondents indicated general satisfaction with their departments as well, with an average and a median of 7 out of 10. 73% of respondents ranked their satisfaction over 5 out of 10. N=320.

Program requirements

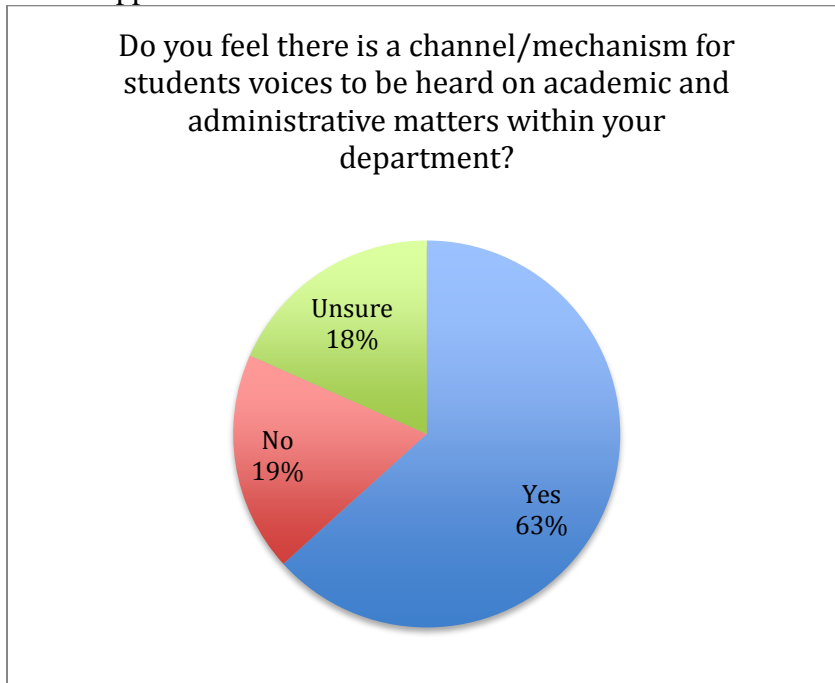
Respondents were asked whether the requirements of their degree had been clearly communicated by their department or program. Possible answers were “Yes,” “No,” and “Unsure,” with the option to type in another answer. Typed-in answers have been stripped from the charts to reduce noise. N=321.



75% of respondents indicated that requirements had been clearly communicated, with 17% indicating that they were not, and 8% unsure.

Mechanism for student voice in department

Respondents were asked whether there was a mechanism for student voices to be heard on academic and administrative matters in their department. Possible answers were “Yes,” “No,” and “Unsure,” with the option to type in another answer. Typed-in answers have been stripped from the charts to reduce noise. N=324.



With 63% reporting such a mechanism in their department, 19% indicating that there is not, and 18% unsure, this represents an improvement over last year’s numbers, when only 50.9% indicated that such a mechanism existed. These numbers may, however, have been affected by the shift in ASGC’s representation; a clearer trend will become visible next year.

Comments about advisor/department

There were 58 comments ranging widely in substance. Many respondents took this opportunity to praise specific advisors, while others offered criticism.

Some asked for clearer departmental requirements, with some referring to the pressure of the job market:

We do not have clear guidelines for graduate students (e.g., no graduate student handbook). Our DGS also fails to respond to student emails about important topics (e.g., funding eligibility, degree requirements, teaching observations, etc.).

Would prefer clearer outlines for requirements and expectations. The info session at the beginning of the year could have been a lot more clear, it is frustrating to figure things out on my own and I feel the program advisors are not knowledgeable as they could be

It would be nice to have more clearly laid out advisor/advisee expectations, but perhaps this is too individualized for effective blanket statements.

My department could be a lot more organized and do a better job of setting clear guidelines for students.

Sometimes I feel like there needs to be more guidance from within and outside the department. I felt confused throughout my academic year.

The expectations for MA mentors has not been clearly communicated so I am unsure of what is expected of me and what I should expect.

*The department needs to be more transparent about what awaits us after we graduate, as soon as the first day of orientation. When I joined I had no idea I would be expected to have several publications under my belt and that a good dissertation was not enough for a job. This has left *many* students in difficult and compromising positions during their final years of the program.*

Degree requirements are out of date on the website, and information we receive from the faculty is always inconsistent (e.g. exam format, whether exam is closed-book or open-book, etc.). This is a major source of confusion and frustration for students every year.

Some criticized mentorship in their departments. These comments were often marked by concerns about the academic job market.

Faculty often believe they are fulfilling their duties when they are not; they don't respond to our emails, but I think they simply forget about it, and so don't think of themselves as ignoring their advisees or failing in their responsibilities, even that is factually what is happening. There are open secrets in my department about who is bad to work with; faculty are aware that other faculty members aren't fulfilling their responsibilities, but there have been no moves to address the issue, despite years of advocacy by our department Graduate Student Council. The line the Chair and DGS always return to is that there's no way to force tenured faculty to do anything (though it's worth noting that the Chair and DGS are sometimes among the faculty failing to live up to their responsibilities).

I feel as though maybe my advisor has too many advisees, where her attention towards me - especially in this crucial writing phase - is waning

I have not felt well-mentored over the last year plus as I've been trying to finish up and look for jobs. With the exception of one of my wonderful committee members, who has been incredibly kind in her honesty and advice (she does not always compliment

everything I do, to be clear, and can in fact be quite critical, but I feel like she actually engages with what I think and have produced, and her criticisms are constructive and respectful), I feel like I have been floundering to figure out what, exactly, the expectations are for interviewing, public job talks, etc. The feedback I have received to my questions from my own advisor has been incredibly vague and thus incredibly unhelpful (i.e. don't be a boring conversation partner, don't read your talk in monotone, etc. -- things that I would never, ever do anyway). It would be helpful if my department would take job market preparation more seriously throughout the final years of the PhD.

i hope gsas puts more pressure on the department to focus on bringing more funding to students as well as more preparation to complete our degrees in a timely manner while also preparing us for the job market. severely lacking!

No one gives real guidance to graduate students

The culture of my department is really isolating, and it feels so frustrating and demeaning to have to send many emails just to get a response on an issue like setting up a chapter meeting. Also, there should be much more preparation for non-academic jobs!

There is no real mechanism to complain about subpar treatment by faculty. What does one do if what one has experienced is not sexual harassment or discrimination, which the university has mechanisms to report, but simply disrespectful, uncollegial behavior? So far as I know, the department has no clear guidelines and expectations about faculty's relations with students, and those vary a lot. Five of my colleagues have shared stories of poor treatment by a particular faculty member, to corroborate my own story when I privately told it. Also in private, one professor called this colleague ""toxic"" when I mentioned some of what had happened to me. Some of these incidents have also been publicly shared by students at a student-faculty department meeting. Sadly, none of this changes much. While being heard by the few faculty who chose to attend the meeting is a nice gesture, it doesn't restoratively address what happened, nor prevent it from happening to many others in the future. Bad behavior is left to continue; it is a widely known and passively accepted fact in the department. Faculty receive no feedback on their treatment of graduate students, and the message everyone is getting is that it doesn't really matter.

I believe what is needed here is just more open communication and education. I think it is a genuine misunderstanding on part of this faculty member that their job is to police entry into the discipline by putting down, shaming, punishing and intimidating graduate students whenever possible. Rather, as I understand it, we are junior colleagues who it is the faculty's job to support, advise, and uplift. If this faculty member thinks that our teaching practices can be improved, or we can give better presentations, or we have made a mistake in or outside of class, etc., the response shouldn't be castigation and public shaming, but more attention and constructive criticism. It is depressing that a Columbia faculty may not be familiar with such elementary principles of pedagogy; on the other hand, I prefer to believe that people simply do not know, rather than that they are genuinely asocial and awful. But, some mechanism has to be put in place for this

conversation to ever happen, and for this feedback to be communicated and implemented. Otherwise, we'll be left with passive listening to many more disappointed students over the years. Others will silently leave the program, as has happened.

Some suggested that conflicts of interest could arise if an advisor also holds other positions in the department

It's a really awkward position that my advisor is both the head of the department and my professor for the department's one core class. It's too many different kinds of relationships to have with one person- and if I have any problems with them in one capacity it's not easy to talk to them about it in their other capacity.

Some indicated that student voices, regardless of the existence of a mechanism to convey them, were not being heard by the department.

i don't feel that the department is receptive to student's perspectives about things like TAing and how to improve the grad student experience

I think in general the department is willing to listen to us, but at the same time sometimes it takes multiple attempts for them to budge on something. So overall, they want to help and want to make sure that we succeed, but other times something major has to go wrong for an issue to be addressed.

...the department at large is uncoordinated, not transparent in its expectations, unrealistic in its work expectations of graduate students, and dismissive of graduate student pleas for better/more

we (the students) once organized a survey to get formal feedback from students and sent it to the faculty. Were told explicitly by faculty not to send the survey again. So it is not just about not having a channel, but actually that attempts to forge a channel have been actively shut down.

There should be a way to make voices heard that don't privilege the system you might be complaining against - i.e. in small departments it's pretty hard to bring up criticisms.

Some indicated a department climate of sexual harassment

In general, I find the department to be very good, but we have a couple known sexual harassers in the faculty about whom nothing is being done.

Some indicated a racist department climate

its a very all white perspective on the field and experience of working within this department. I feel like token things are done but they seem placative rather than address the racism in the curriculum, in some professors and students

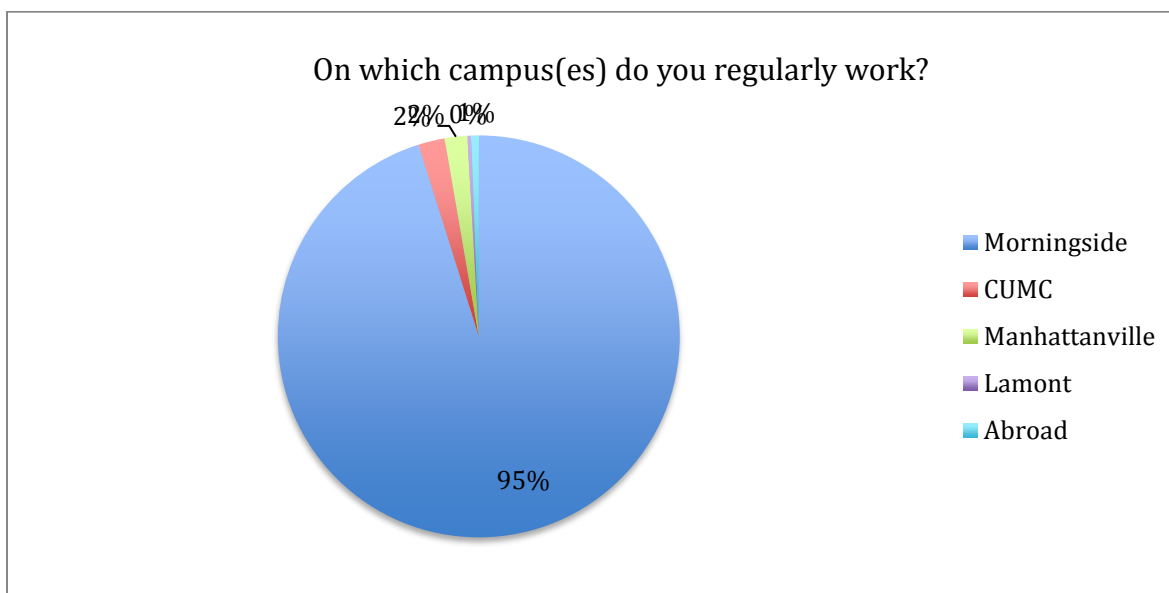
My department has little investment in racial diversity and inclusion at the curricular, graduate and faculty levels.

My department seems to be living in the dark ages in terms of inclusivity

Work and research: spaces and time

Campus

Respondents were asked on which campuses they regularly worked. Options were “Morningside,” “Manhattanville,” “CUMC,” and “Lamont,” with the option of writing in another option. Two respondents used this option to indicate that they were abroad. N=330.



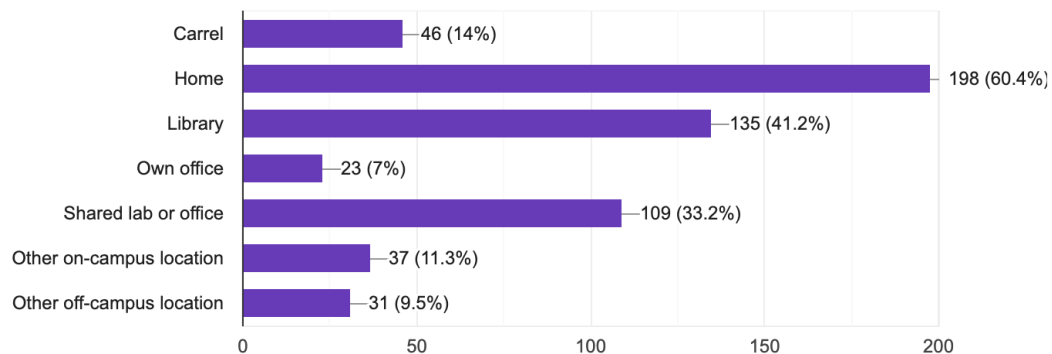
At 95%, a strong majority of respondents regularly work on Morningside. Only 2% regularly work at CUMC, 2% at Manhattanville, and less than 1% at Lamont or abroad. The shift to 95% from last year’s 77.7% is likely due to the shift in ASGC’s representation.

Concrete type of workspace

This is a multiple-answer question. Options include “Own Office,” “Shared Lab or Office,” “Library,” “Carrel,” “Home,” “Other on-campus location,” and “Other off-campus location.” N=328.

Where do you usually do work?

328 responses



60.4% of respondents do at least some of their work at home, 41.2% in a library, 33.2% in a shared lab or office, 14% in a carrel, 11.3% in another on-campus location, and 9.5% in another off-campus location. The rarest option was working in an office of one's own, at 7%.

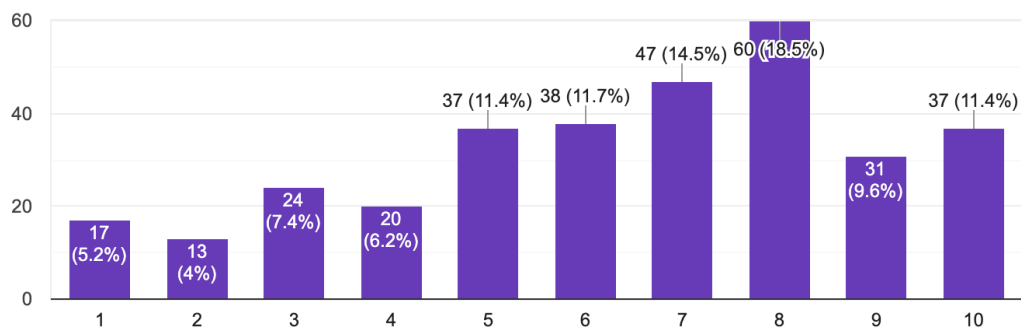
Satisfaction with workspaces

This is a scaled question. The scale ranges from 1 (“very unsatisfied”) to 7 (“very satisfied”). N=324.

How satisfied are you with the work space(s) available to you?



324 responses



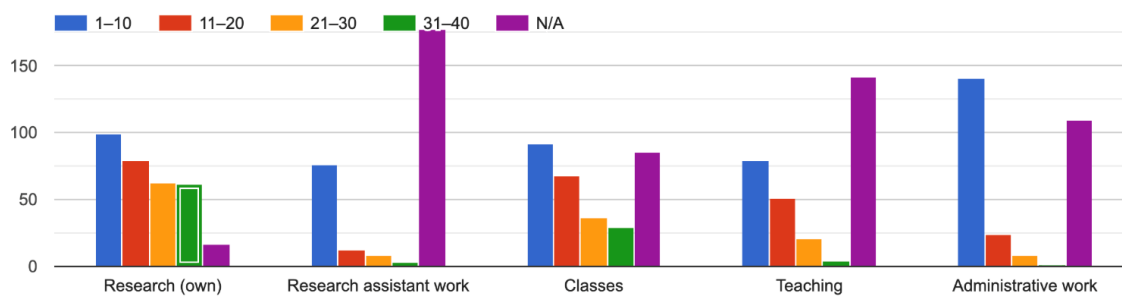
Respondents indicated varying levels of satisfaction, with an average of 6.4 out of 10 and a median of 7 out of 10. However, over a third (34.2%) of respondents reported their satisfaction as 5 out of 10 or below, suggesting workspace satisfaction, and perhaps access, varies significantly. In keeping with this finding, nearly all of the 102 comments indicated a lack of available workspace. In particular, they report overcrowded library spaces and insufficient common areas for graduate students. Many comments requested larger department lounges for graduate students, or lounges with 24/7 access. Responses often indicated appreciation for carrels among those who possess them, although several

respondents indicated that carrels are sometimes too dark, dirty, or cold. Two respondents indicated an appreciation of the new GSAS Writing Studio.

Weekly work/research time

This is a multiple-choice grid question for which “Average work hours per week” (split up into six blocks, namely 0, 1-10, 11-20, 21-30, 31-40, and N/A) are assigned to five different types of work/research, namely “Research (own)” (N=320), “Research assistant work” (N=277), “Classes,” (N=311), “Teaching,” (N=297), and “Administrative work” (N=283).

On average, how many hours per week do you spend on each of the following?



Of the 320 respondents who volunteered information about their weekly research time, 5.31% marked it N/A, 30.94% spend 1-10 hours, 24.69% 11-20 hours, 19.69% 21-30 hours, and 19.38% 31-40 hours.

Of the 277 respondents for “Research assistant work,” 63.90% marked it N/A, 27.44% spend 1-10 hours, 7.34% 11-20 hours 2.89% 21-30 hours, and 1.70 % 31-40 hours.

Of the 311 respondents for “Classes,” 30.87% marked it N/A, 29.58% spend 1-10 hours, 21.86% 11-20 hours 11.58% 21-30 hours, and 9.32% 31-40 hours.

Of the 297 respondents for “Teaching,” 68.60% marked it N/A, 26.60% spend 1-10 hours, 17.17% 11-20 hours 7.07% 21-30 hours, and 1.35 % 31-40 hours.

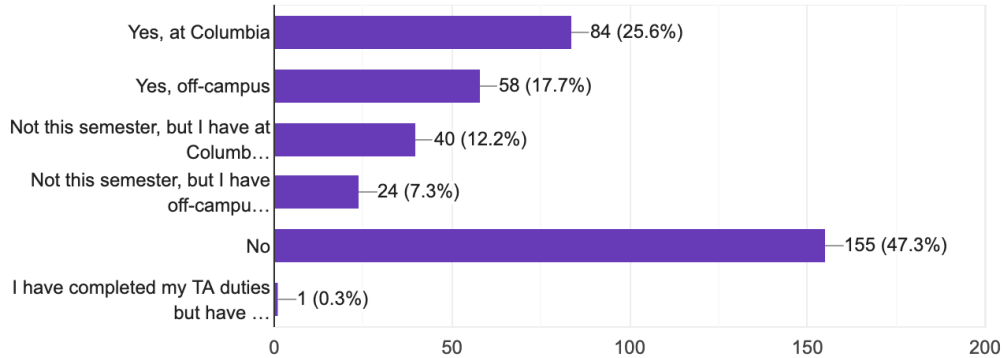
Of the 283 respondents for “Administrative work,” 38.87 % marked it N/A, 49.82% spend 1-10 hours, 8.48% 11-20 hours 2.83% 21-30 hours, and 0% 31-40 hours.

Work beyond program requirements

This is a multiple-answer question asking students whether they hold a job (or jobs) beyond the requirements of their program. Options include “Yes, at Columbia,” “Yes, off-campus,” “Not this semester, but I have at Columbia in the past,” “Not this semester, but I have off-campus in the past,” and “No,” with the option to write in another answer. N=328.

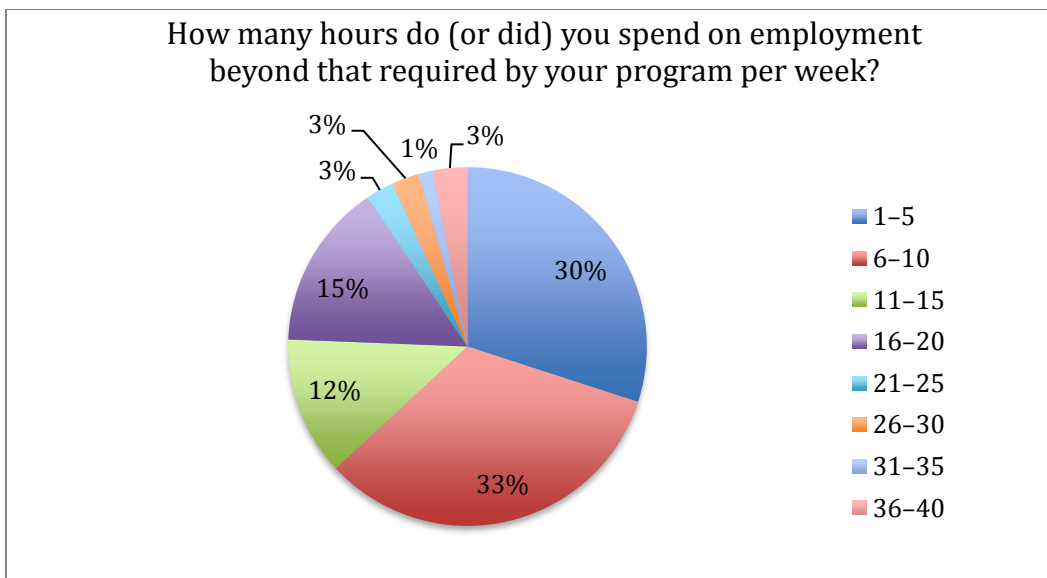
Do you hold a job (or multiple jobs) beyond the requirements of your program?

328 responses



Over 50% of respondents hold jobs beyond the requirements of their program, with only 47.3% indicating that they did not. 25.5% of respondents currently hold additional jobs at Columbia, 17.7% hold additional jobs off campus, 12.2% have held additional jobs at Columbia in the past but not this semester, and 7.3% have held additional jobs off campus in the past but not this semester (Spring 2019). The numbers did not vary significantly between Masters and PhD students.

Respondents were then asked how many hours they spent on employment beyond that required by their program each week. Options included 1-5 hours, 6-10 hours, 11-15 hours, 16-20 hours, 21-25 hours, 26-30 hours, 31-35 hours, 36-40 hours, over 40 hours, and N/A.



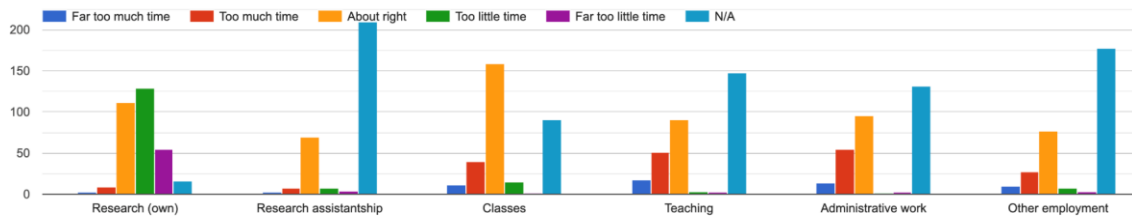
Of respondents who have held employment beyond that required by their program, 30% work 1-5 hours per week, 33% work 6-10 hours per week, 12% work 11-15 hours per

week, 15% work 16-20 hours per week, 3% work 21-25 hours per week, 3% work 26-30 hours per week, 1% work 31-35 hours per week, and 3% work 36-40 hours per week. No respondent indicated that they work over 40 hours per week.

Satisfaction with amount of work/research time

This is a multiple-choice grid question for which levels of satisfaction with weekly work time (split up into five scaled blocks ranging from “not enough time” to “way too much time” with “about right” in the middle) are assigned to the five different types of work/research from the prior question, namely “Research” (N=323), “Research assistantship” (N= 300) “Classes” (N=315), “Teaching” (N=312), “Administrative Work” (N=) and “Other Employment” (N=).

How satisfied are you with the amount of time you spend on each of the following?



Of the 323 respondents who volunteered their satisfaction with their weekly research time, 4.95% marked it N/A, 0.62% said they spend far too much time, 2.78% said too much, 34.67% said about right, and 39.94 % said too little, and 17.03% said far too little.

Of the 300 respondents for “Research assistantship,” 70% marked it N/A, 0.66% said they spend far too much time, 2.67% said too much, 23% said about right, 2.33% said too little, and 1.33% said far too little.

Of the 315 respondents for “Classes,” 28.57% marked it N/A, 3.49% said they spend far too much time, 12.70% said too much, 50.48% said about right, and 4.76% said too little.

Of the 312 respondents for “Teaching,” 47.44% marked it N/A, 5.45% said they spend far too much time, 16.35% said too much, 29.17% said about right, 0.96% said too little, and 0.64% said far too little.

Of the 299 respondents for “Administrative work,” 44.15 % marked it N/A, 4.68% said they spend far too much time, 18.39% said too much, 32.11% said about right, and 0.67 % said far too little.

A majority of respondents (56.97%) feel they spend too little or far too little time on research. While some of this time might be provided by reducing the demands of teaching or administrative work, where respondents were most likely to say they spend too much time, the percentage who believe they spend too much time on other work was significantly lower than the percentage who believe they spend too little time on research.

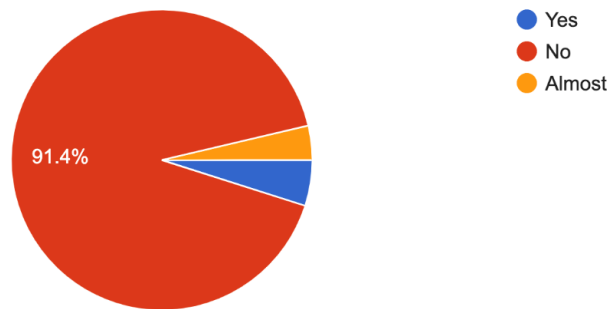
Considerations of campus culture and the broader academic job market may be relevant in explaining this response.

Academic standing

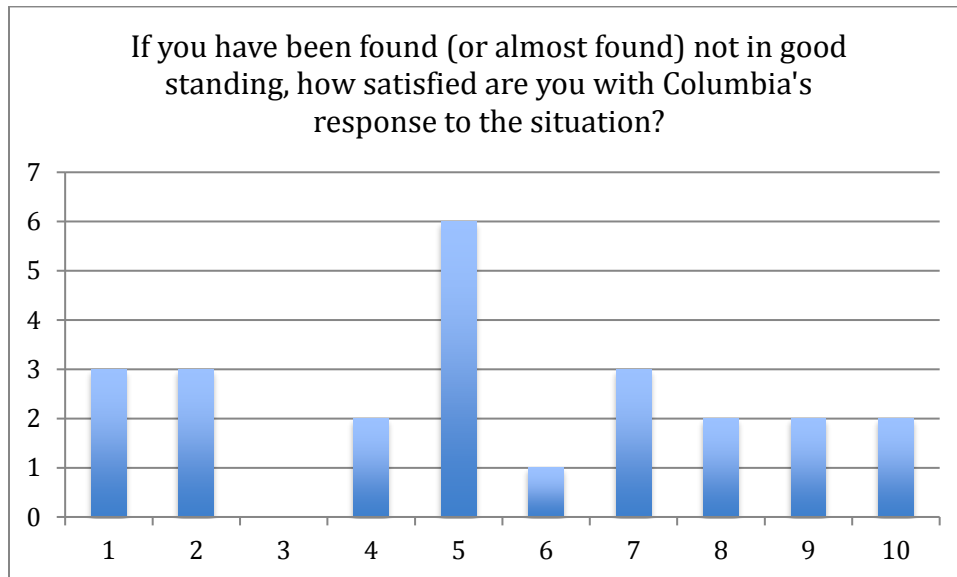
This is a multiple-choice question. The three options are “Yes,” “No,” and “Almost.” N=325.

Have you ever been found not in good academic standing at Columbia?

325 responses



The vast majority of respondents have never been found not in good academic standing at Columbia. Those who answered “No,” or “Almost” were asked how satisfied they were with Columbia’s handling of the situation, on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being highly satisfied.



Responses ranged widely, and the sample size is quite small (N=24). The average was 5.33 out of 10 and the median was 5 out of 10.

General comments on academic life at Columbia

Of 45 general comments in this section, topics included wages and funding, workspace, departmental expectations and advising, good standing, teaching assignments, and department and university culture.

Wages and funding

Columbia needs to pay us better for the work we do.

Columbia needs to raise its wages for on-campus jobs for PhD students. In my on-campus job we make 1/5 of the market rate. Even raising our wages by \$5 an hour would make a difference.

I hope we can start analyzing the amount of money spent on "administration" and channel that toward students!!

The lack of sixth and seventh year funding for PhD students does not take into account the realities of the requirements of most programs offered at the university. The university should admit less students and support those it has already admitted and committed to. If this is not something the university would do, then it needs to provide significant support to helping students receive grants.

Workspace

I desperately wish there were more carrels. Nous is good, but private carrels for more than one or two grads a department would be so so helpful.

...Columbia needs to channel more money into facilities...because most institutions are not this cramped or shabby. Half the water fountains don't even have enough pressure to get the stream to your face right next to the spout.

Departmental expectations and advising

...it would be nice to have clearer expectations at the beginning of the first semester: what is it we need to focus on, are we expected to do every single reading or do we have some choice, what is expected of the writing assignments etc.

The main issue for me about academic life at Columbia is the lack of accountability of advisors and faculty more broadly. Even several years in, it is difficult to sustain the attention of my advisor. I find that my advisor is supportive at appropriate times (i.e. submitting letters of recommendation) but I have not found a mentor relationship there and have had to seek it elsewhere.

Good standing

Entire cohort lost good standing status for a summer because dept told us the MA paper was due June 1 but GSAS wanted all MA requirements done by end of 4th semester, and there was no communication between dept and GSAS.

I was found in poor academic standing while on medical leave and told my time to the mphil was too long after being hospitalized for an extended period of time. GSAS used this as justification to deny me my fifth year of funding.

Teaching assignments

Course TAs should be distributed farther in advance to allow planning for other work and the process should be more transparent to PhD students.

I think professors should go through training every couple of years on how to work with their teaching assistants. Expectations are not always clear. I think it's beyond ridiculous how TA's are responsible for coordinating section times...

Teaching appointments vary tremendously on a case-by-case basis (language instructorships being an extreme case in terms of the amount of time and labor, especially compared to TAs), and yet they are paid the same as smaller workloads, and students are expected to meet their other obligations (research, classes, exams etc.) at the same pace as the students in departments that do not require language teaching or individual instructorships.

The mandatory requirement to be a TA is a nightmare.

Too much work TAing to the extent of no time to do my own work.

Department and University culture.

Columbia's bureaucracy is really hard to deal with and it's demoralizing

Extremely competitive, stressful, insensitive, and dismissive university/department culture

Great intellectual environment, wonderful professors, great library

I am happy with my academic life at Columbia.

I think academic life at Columbia can feel unnecessarily isolating, and directionless.

I would not recommend the Columbia program to anyone considering graduate work in my field. We seriously lack community, professionalization opportunities, and clear guidance in both the academic and administrative realm. I feel we are less prepared than peers at other institutions to produce work at a high level and to eventually enter the job

market. I have also had unpleasant and dispiriting experiences with one of my department's faculty members, in particular.

It is a fantastic place, but a lot of independent studies are required (or lacking guidance)

it is very isolating. we need more formal mechanisms to write, learn, and study together

It's truly the worst-run university I have ever been to (or seen)

*More resources need to be devoted to mental health, it's unacceptable that 6 Columbia students committed suicide last year. i know how difficult it can be working with CPS and if reaching out for help prevents suicide, CPS is not making it easy for students
Some professors in other departments are so unethical that they use the research ideas of the students or disclose these ideas to other senior professors to please them. I feel some workshops related to academic ethics should be given to junior faculty members*

The hardest part about academics here is how difficult it is living in New York and the impact that that difficulty has had on my studies. There don't seem to be many support mechanisms for people who end up not jibing with life in Manhattan. (Or, possibly, no one seems willing to acknowledge that there are major problems with how people live here.) As a result, I frequently feel trapped and distracted from my work.

Section summary and remarks

This section has two main focuses: a) the graduate students' relationships with their advisors and departments, and b) the use of and satisfaction with work time and workspaces.

Respondents are generally satisfied with their advisors and their departments, although only 69% were sure their advisor met the requirements for mentors. With 22% uncertain, some of this may be the result of a general lack of awareness of GSAS standards for mentorship. Only 49% of respondents indicated they were aware of GSAS mentor-advisee expectations. This general lack of awareness extends to the new chapter meeting policy, which only 1% of Masters student and 38% of PhD student respondents were familiar with.

The effectiveness of the chapter meeting policy is unclear at this point; of PhD students beyond their fourth year, 43% did not have chapter meetings in Fall 2018, but we do not have data on what percentage held such meetings before the policy was implemented. Responses to the policy, among those who are aware of it, have been mixed, with several grateful and several critical responses. The critical responses tend to highlight the unnecessary rigidity of the policy, indicating it should be adjusted to match the requirements of individual departments, with some responses also pointing out that the policy leaves the responsibility for scheduling meetings with graduate students, without offering support for those whose advisors do not respond.

Dissatisfaction around mentors and departments focuses primarily on a perceived lack of support, communication and transparency within the departments.

There are varying levels of satisfaction with available workspace, and qualitative comments suggest that access to 24-hour department lounges may explain some of the variation. Cleanliness, temperature, and access to natural light were topics of complaint in carrels, although many comments also expressed gratitude for their carrel access.

The majority of students seem to feel that they spend about the right amount of time on university-related work, but a slight majority also feel they spend too little time on their own research, and a significant minority of respondents felt they spent too much time on teaching duties, administrative work, classes, or other employment. Better funding would alleviate the last of these; over half of respondents currently hold employment beyond the requirements of their program, or have held such employment in the past. The funding section of this report will shed more light on this issue.

Very few respondents have ever been in or close to bad academic standing, and those who have generally attribute this to bureaucratic failings on the part of the registrar or department administrators.

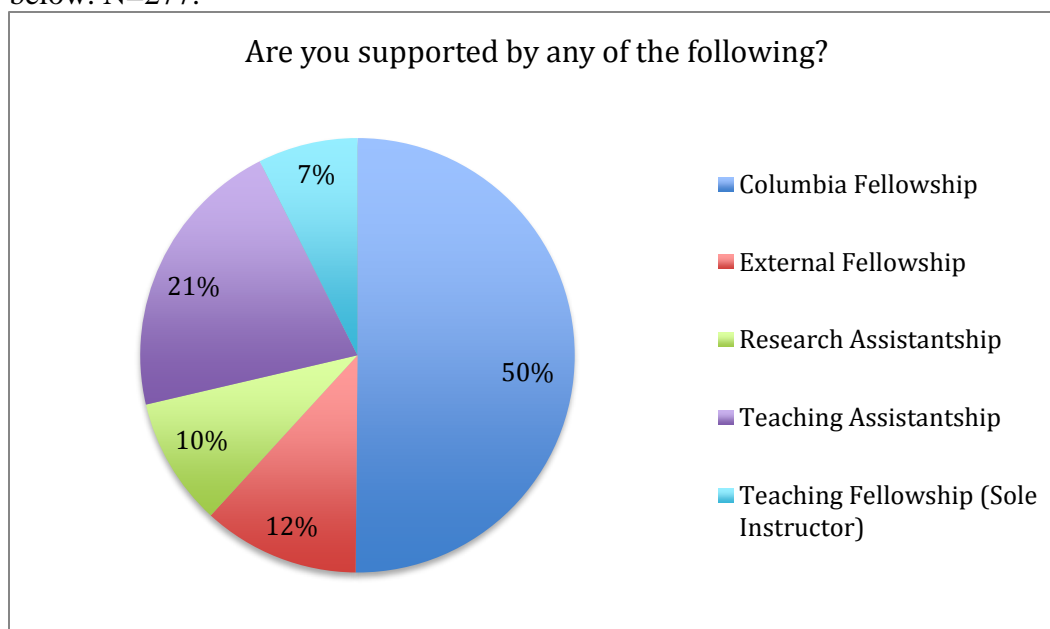
Funding

Section overview

This section focused on forms of funding offered to MA and PhD students through Columbia as well as other means by which MA and PhD students support themselves financially. Respondents were asked about their general sense of financial stability, their summer funding options, and payment uncertainty they have experienced at Columbia.

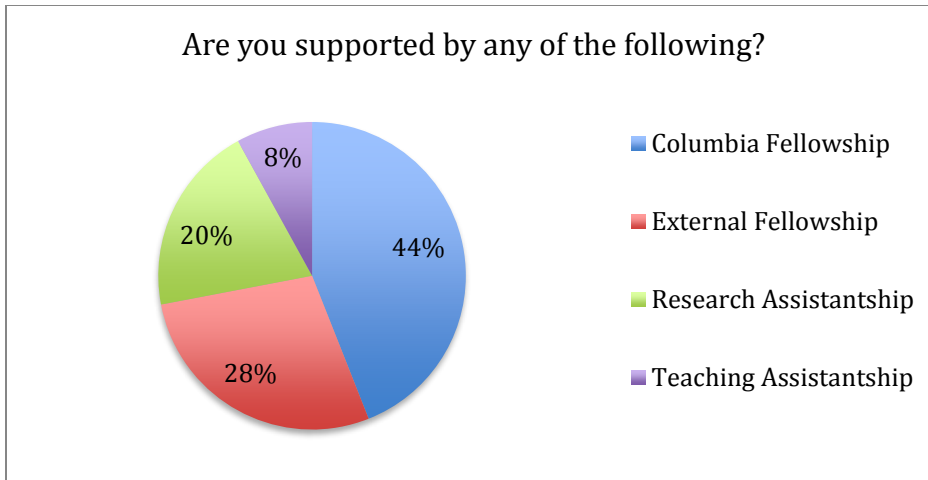
Fellowship Type

The multiple-answer question posed was “Are you supported by any of the following?” Respondents could choose among “Columbia Fellowship,” “Research Assistantship,” “Teaching Assistantship,” and “External Fellowship,” with the option to write in a response. For the sake of clarity, write-in options have been removed from the chart below. N=277.



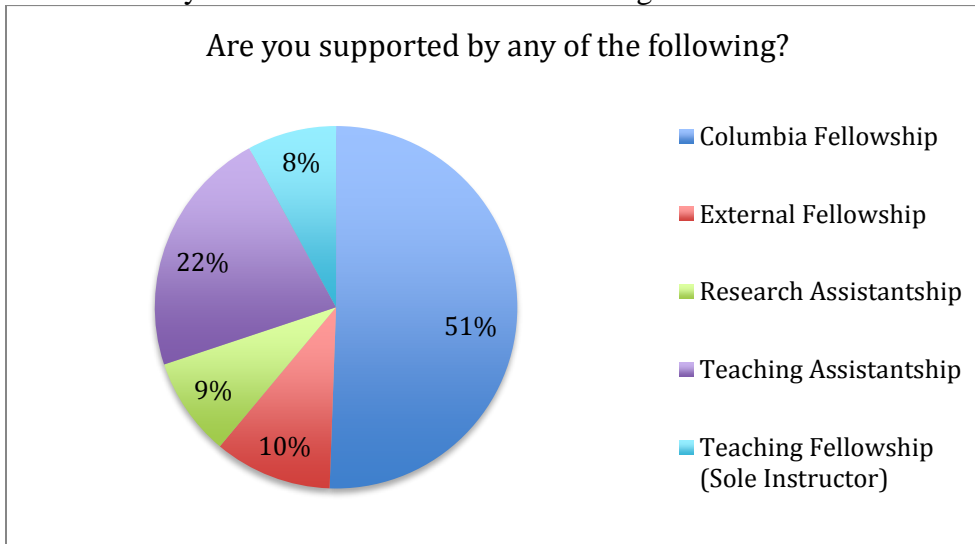
50% of respondents were supported by a Columbia fellowship, with 21% working as Teaching Assistants, 10% working as Research Assistants, 7% working as sole instructors, and 12% supported by external fellowships.

For Masters students alone, the number of responses was low (N=26), suggesting that many Masters students are not supported by any of the listed funding sources.



Of those respondents, 44% were supported by Columbia Fellowships, 28% were supported by external fellowships, 20% were working as Research Assistants, 8% were working as Teaching Assistants, and none were working as sole instructors.

PhD student responses were much more common (N=251), suggesting that PhD students are more likely to receive these sources of funding.



Of PhD student respondents, 51% are supported by a Columbia Fellowship, 22% work as Teaching Assistants, 10% are supported by external fellowships, 9% work as Research Assistants, and 8% work as sole instructors.

These results suggest the need for additional funding sources for Masters students at Columbia.

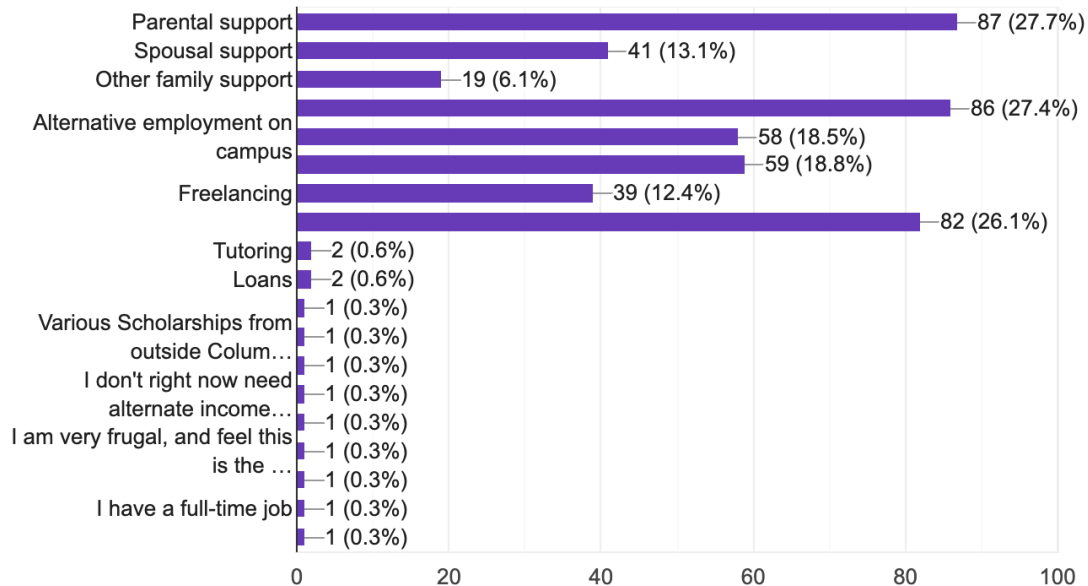
Alternate income sources

This is a multiple-answer question, with the options “Parental support,” “Spousal support,” “Other family support,” “Savings from previous employment,” “Alternative employment on campus,” “Alternative employment off campus,” “Freelancing,” and “I do not rely on alternate sources of income.” Respondents had the option to write in other income

sources; these responses included tutoring, loans, full-time work, the GI bill, and skipping meals. N=314.

Do you rely on any alternate sources of income to cover your costs of living? (Check all that apply.)

314 responses



Only 26.1% of respondents indicated that they do not rely on any alternative sources of income. 27.7% rely on parental support, 13.1% of spousal support, 6.1% on other family support, 27.4% on savings from previous employment, 18.5% on alternative employment on campus, 18.8% on alternative employment off campus, and 12.4% on freelancing.

All Masters students indicated that they relied on alternative sources of income.

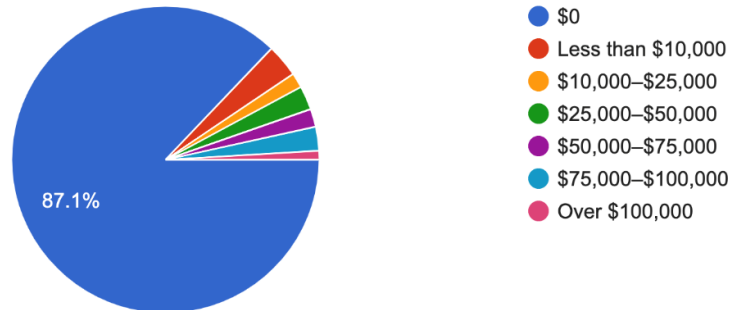
These results indicate that the vast majority (73.9%) of Columbia graduate students are unable to meet their costs of living through Columbia's funding alone.

Loans

This is a multiple-choice question. Options are \$0, Less than \$10,000, \$10,000-\$25,000, \$25,000-\$50,000, \$50,000-\$75,000, \$75,000-\$100,000, and over \$100,000. N=318.

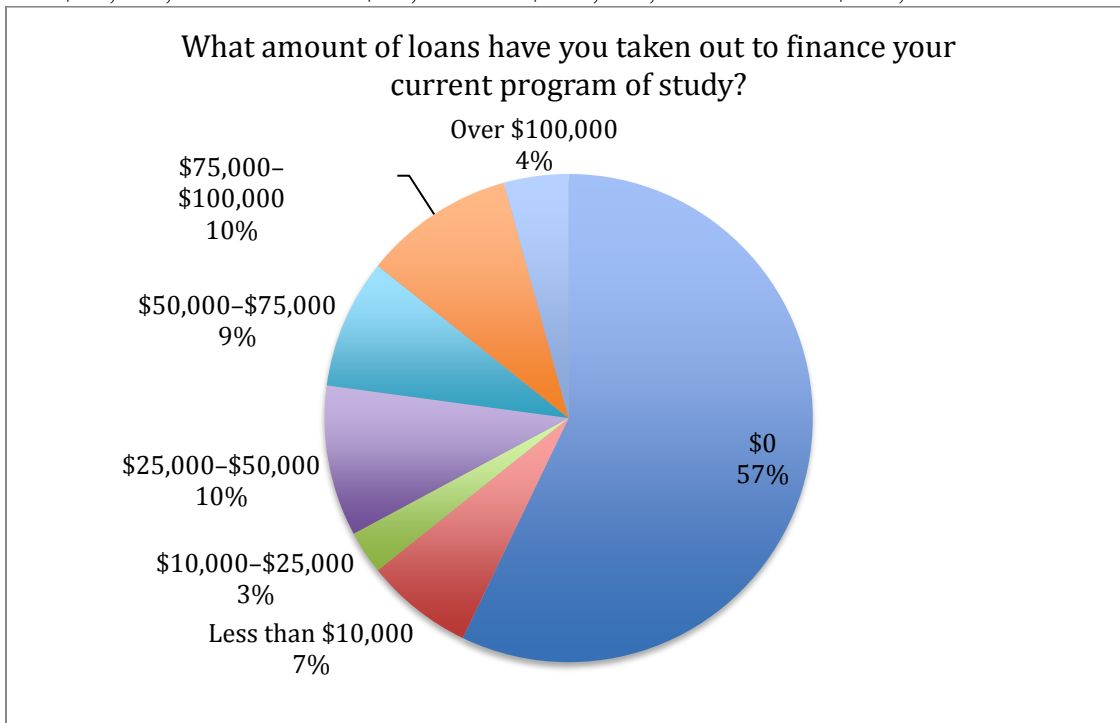
What amount of loans have you taken out to finance your current program of study?

318 responses

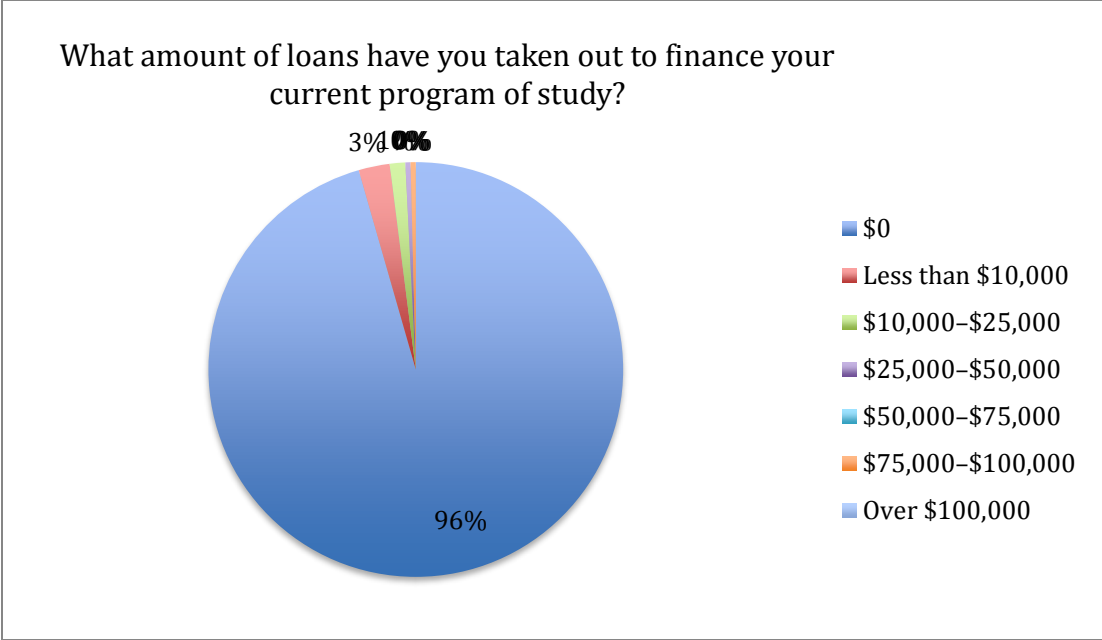


Across programs, the majority of respondents (87.1%) have not taken out loans to finance their current program of study.

Masters students were more likely to have taken out loans, with 43% taking out loans. (N=70) The amount of loans taken out varied, with 7% taking out less than \$10,000, 3% between \$10,000 and \$25,000, 10% between \$25,000 and \$50,000, 9% between \$50,000 and \$75,000, 10% between \$75,000 and \$100,000, and 4% over \$100,000.

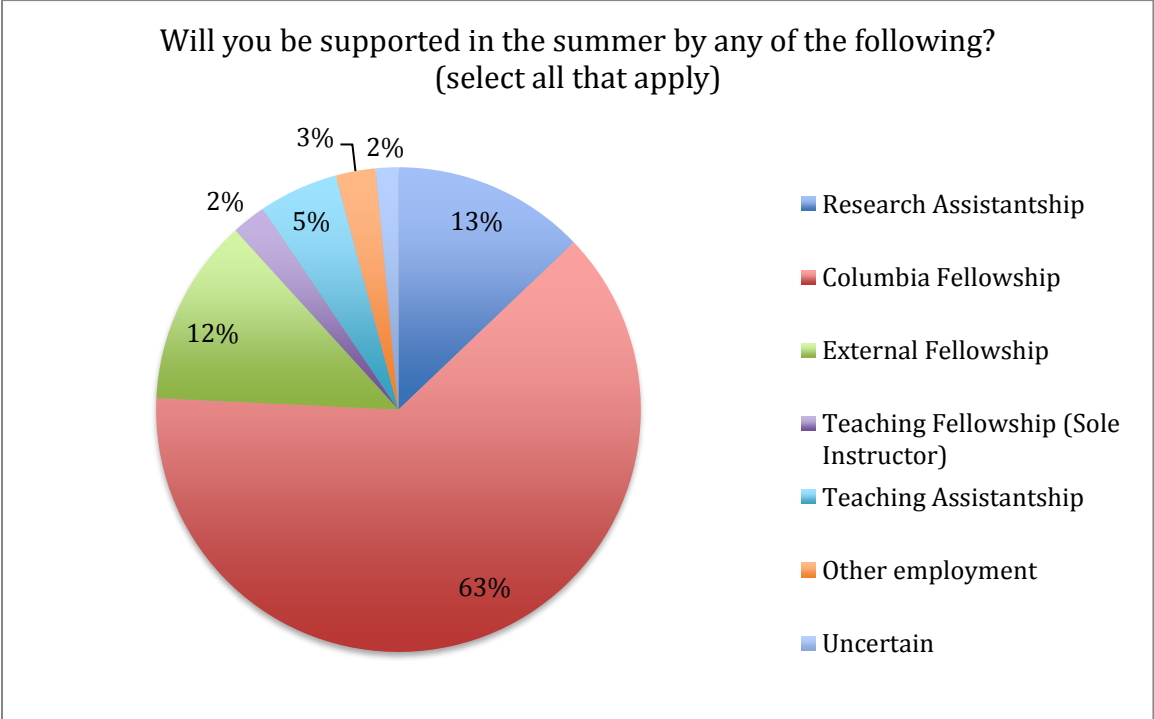


By contrast, 96% of PhD students have not taken out loans to finance their current program of study. Of the 4% that have, 3% have taken out less than \$10,000, 1% have taken out \$10,000-\$25,000, and less than 1% have taken out over \$25,000.



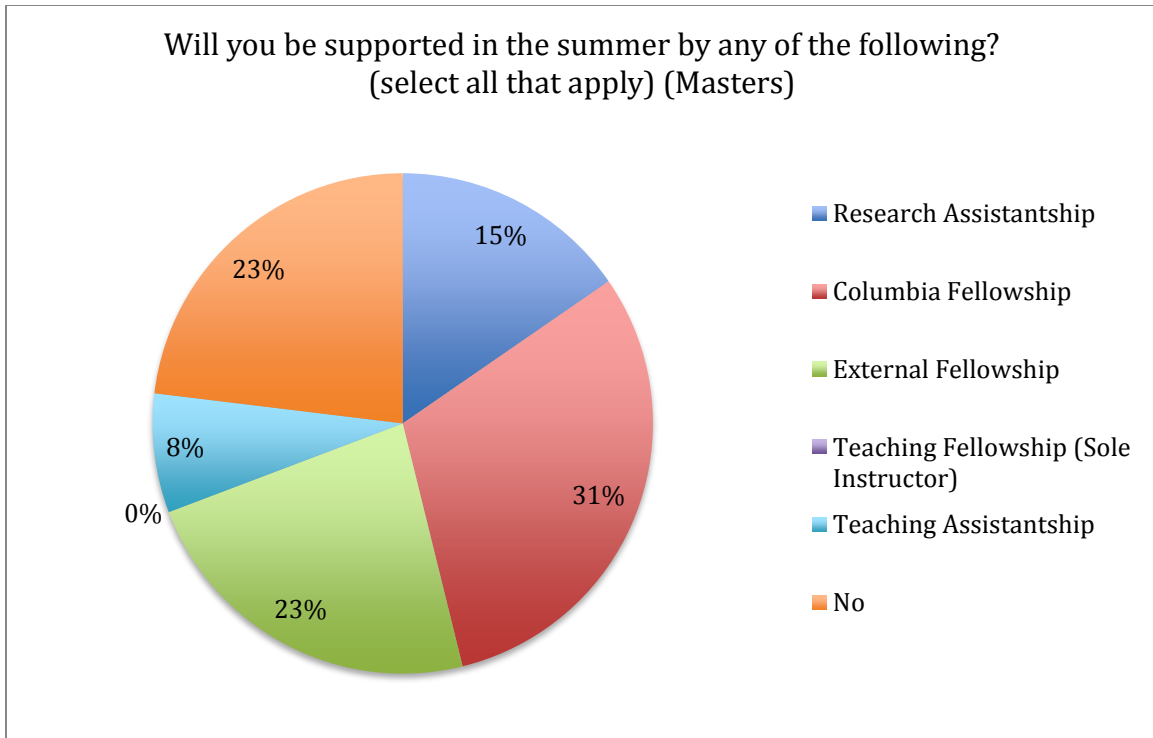
Summer Funding

The multiple-choice question posed was “Will you be supported in the summer by any of the following? (select all that apply).” Respondents could choose among “Columbia Fellowship,” “Research Assistantship,” “Teaching Assistantship,” “Teaching Fellowship (Sole Instructor),” and “External Fellowship,” with the option to write in a response. The majority of the write-in responses could be described as “other employment” or “uncertain” summer income, and are represented in the chart below. N=237.



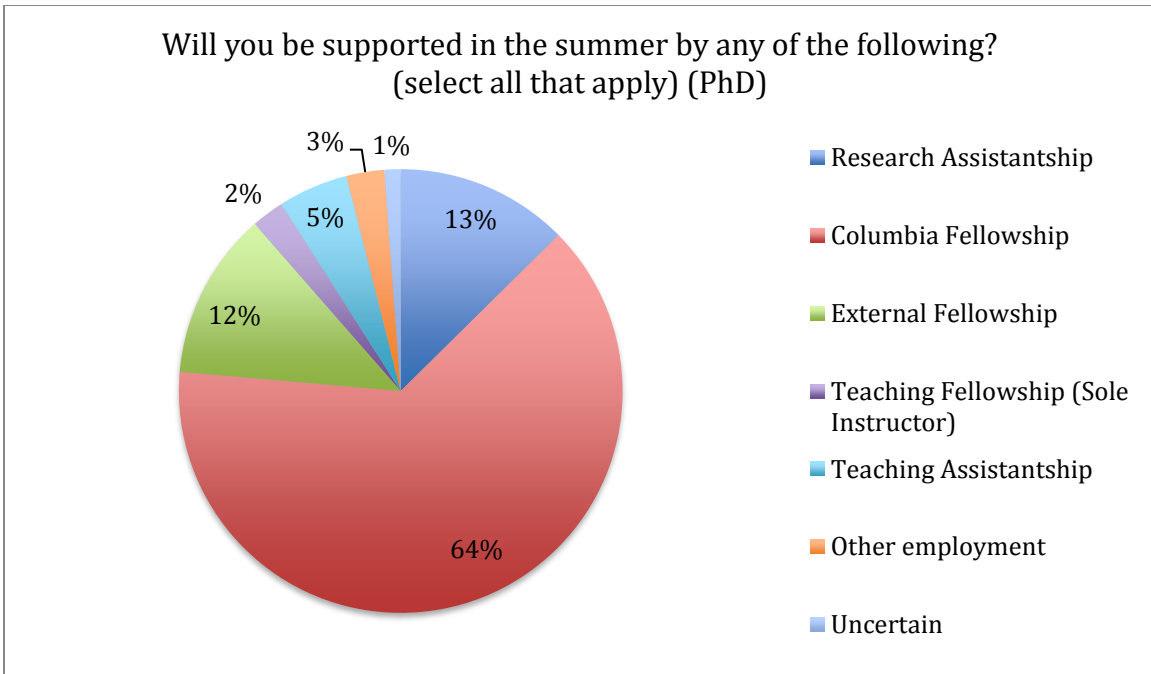
Of all respondents, 63% indicated that they would be supported by a Columbia Fellowship, 13% indicate that they would be working as Research Assistants, 12% indicated that they would be supported by external fellowships, 5% indicated that they would be working as Teaching Assistants, 2% indicated that they would be working as sole instructors at Columbia, 3% indicated that they would be seeking other employment, and 2% indicated uncertainty about how they would support themselves over the summer.

For Masters students alone, the number of responses was low (N=14), suggesting that many Masters students are not supported by any of the listed funding sources.



Of these respondents, 23% indicated that they would not be supported by any of these funding sources. 31% indicated they would be supported by a Columbia Fellowship, 23% indicated they would be supported by an external fellowship, 15% indicated they would be working as Research Assistants and 8% indicated they would be working as Teaching Assistants.

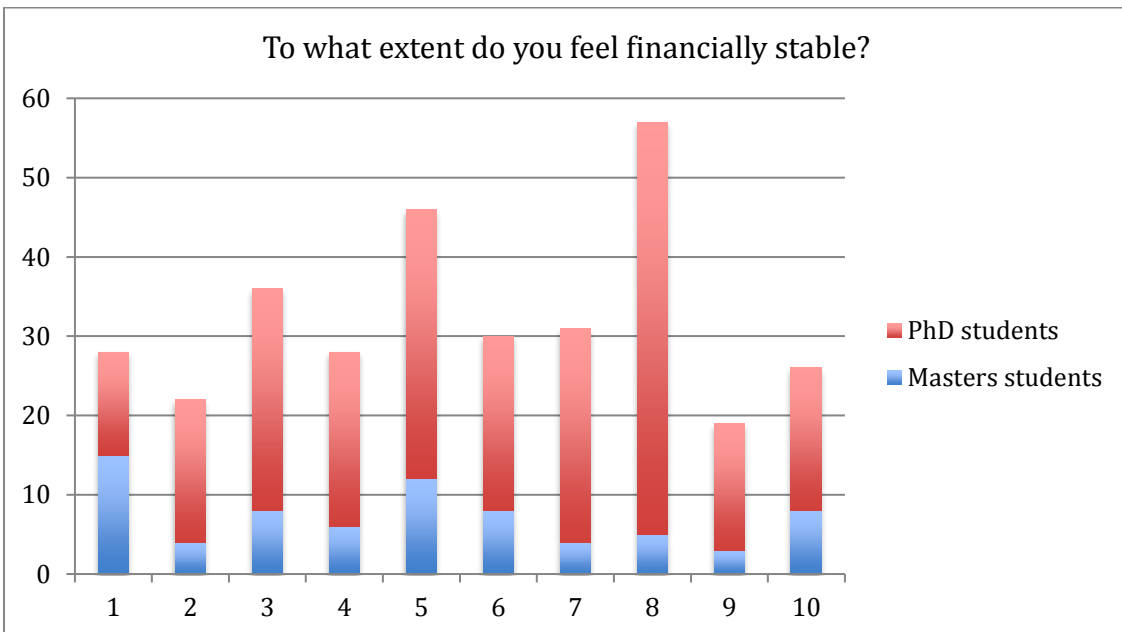
Among PhD students (N=223), 64% of respondents indicated they would be supported by a Columbia Fellowship, 12% by an external fellowship, 13% as Research Assistants, 5% as Teaching Assistants, 3% through other employment, 2% as sole instructors, and 1% were uncertain about their summer income source.



These findings suggest that funding disparities for PhD and Masters students are heightened in the summer.

Financial Stability

The scaled question was “To what extent do you feel financially stable?” Respondents could choose one number between 1 and 10 inclusive, which are all placed on a horizontal continuum. “1” is indicated as being “Not at all” and “7” is indicated as being “Very much so.” N=323.

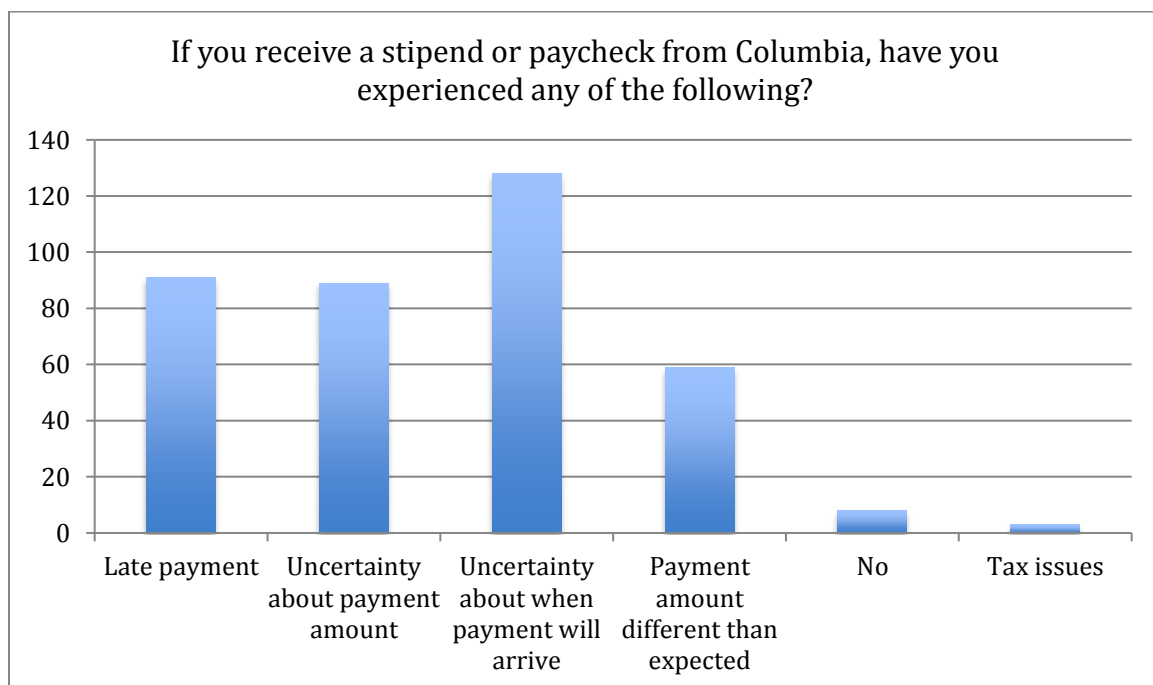


Across all respondents, the average reported financial stability was 5.59 out of 10 and the median was 6 out of 10.

Masters students (N=73) reported an average of 4.85 and a median of 5; PhD students (N=250) reported an average of 5.808 and a median of 6. Notably, while 54% of PhD students reported their financial stability at over 5 out of 10, only 38% of Masters students did so. Masters students' responses were also more polarized, with 20% of Masters students listing their financial stability at 1 out of 10, and 11% listing their financial stability as 10 out of 10.

Late and inaccurate stipends and paychecks

The multiple-choice question posed was “If you receive a stipend or paycheck from Columbia, have you experienced any of the following? (select all that apply).” Respondents could choose among “Late payment,” “Payment amount different than expected,” “Uncertainty about when payment will arrive,” “Uncertainty about payment amount,” with the option to write-in a response. Several of the write-in responses were “no” or referred to difficulties filing taxes as an international students, and are included in the chart below. N=178.



51.12% of respondents indicated that they had received late payments from Columbia. 50% indicated uncertainty about their payment amount, 71.91% indicated uncertainty about when their payment would arrive, and 33.15% had experience a payment amount that was different than expected. As these figures suggest, the majority of respondents had experienced multiple payment problems.

Comments

The 82 responses to the closing question “Do you have any other comments about funding or finances at Columbia?” were almost uniformly critical. Topics of criticism included the cost of the MA, late payment, taxes, reimbursement, insufficient childcare stipends, and, above all, funding that does not meet the cost of living in New York.

12 of the 82 responses indicated the need for more funding for MA programs, and 18 indicated the need for better funding overall, with one respondent expressing a sense that “Columbia neglects the students that do not come from wealthy families” and two mentioning the need for guaranteed 6th and 7th year funding. 7 respondents indicated that summer funding is insufficient, with multiple respondents pointing out that the summer stipend does not cover the cost of three months rent in NYC. 7 respondents indicated a high degree of dissatisfaction regarding late pay and uncertain payment. 3 respondents indicated the need for faster reimbursement, and 4 mentioned taxes, with 3 of the 4 requesting that taxes be withheld from stipends. One respondent mentioned losing health insurance due to unpaid rent, making them unable to acquire medication. Two respondents believed funding was sufficient.

Section summary and remarks

Funding issues are at the heart of graduate students’ quality of life. 52% of PhD students feel relatively financially stable, as compared to only 38% of MA students, though neither is an acceptable figure. Though the amount of economic precarity experienced by graduate students varies, it is remarkable that over a quarter of respondents rely on parental support, with 13% relying on spousal support and 6% relying on other family support. With only 26% of respondents living on Columbia’s stipend alone, this section raises significant concerns about the accessibility of graduate level education at Columbia for low-income students. This is particularly pronounced for MA students, who are far less likely to receive funding from Columbia and far more likely to take out loans while in graduate school. Issues with late payment and uncertainty about payment amounts contribute to a general sense of economic precarity, and should be addressed by clarifying the internal causes of late and uncertain payment within Columbia’s bureaucracy to make the process more transparent and give graduate students greater access to information about and control over their finances.

Housing

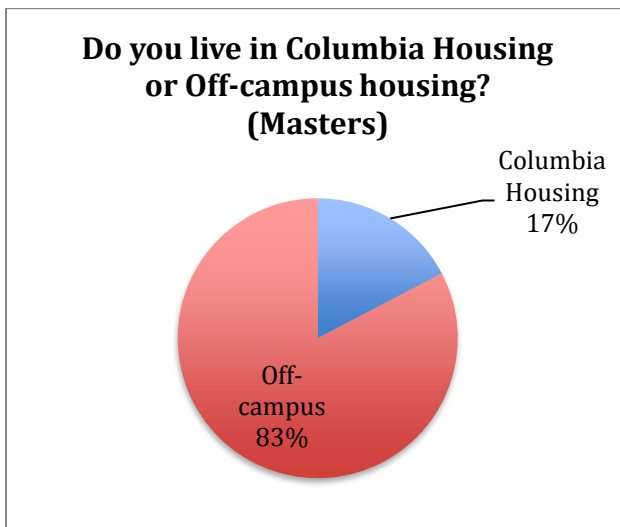
Section overview

The questions in this section address 1) general housing issues, like location, cost of rent, and commutability, and 2) experiences in Columbia housing and with the Columbia Housing Office.

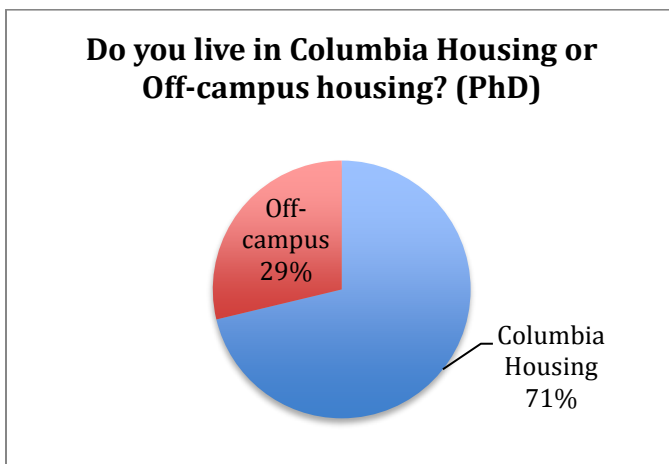
Columbia housing or off-campus housing

Asked whether they lived in Columbia housing or off-campus, respondents were given the options of selecting “Columbia Housing” or “Off-campus housing.”

Total Respondents: 329, Masters Respondents: 75, PhD Respondents: 254



Of the 75 Masters respondents 17.33% (13) responded that they lived in Columbia Housing and 82.67% (62) responded that they lived off-campus.

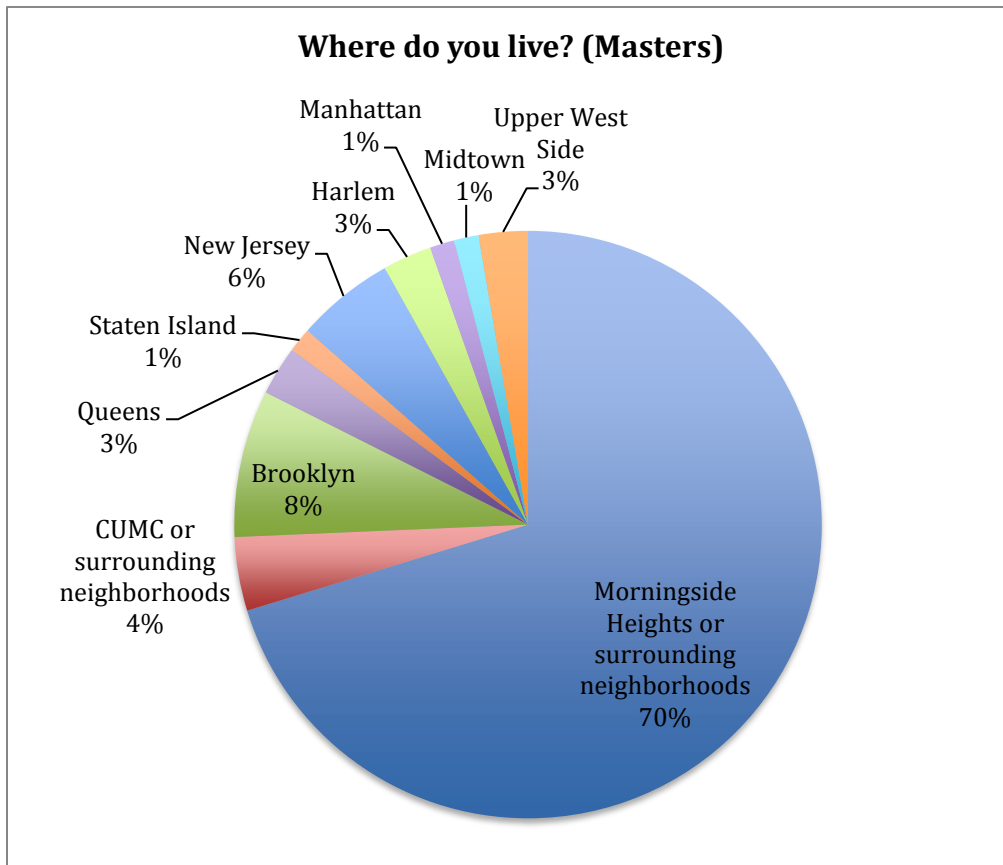


Of the 254 PhD respondents 71.26% (181) responded that they live in Columbia Housing and 28.74% (73) responded that they live in off-campus housing.

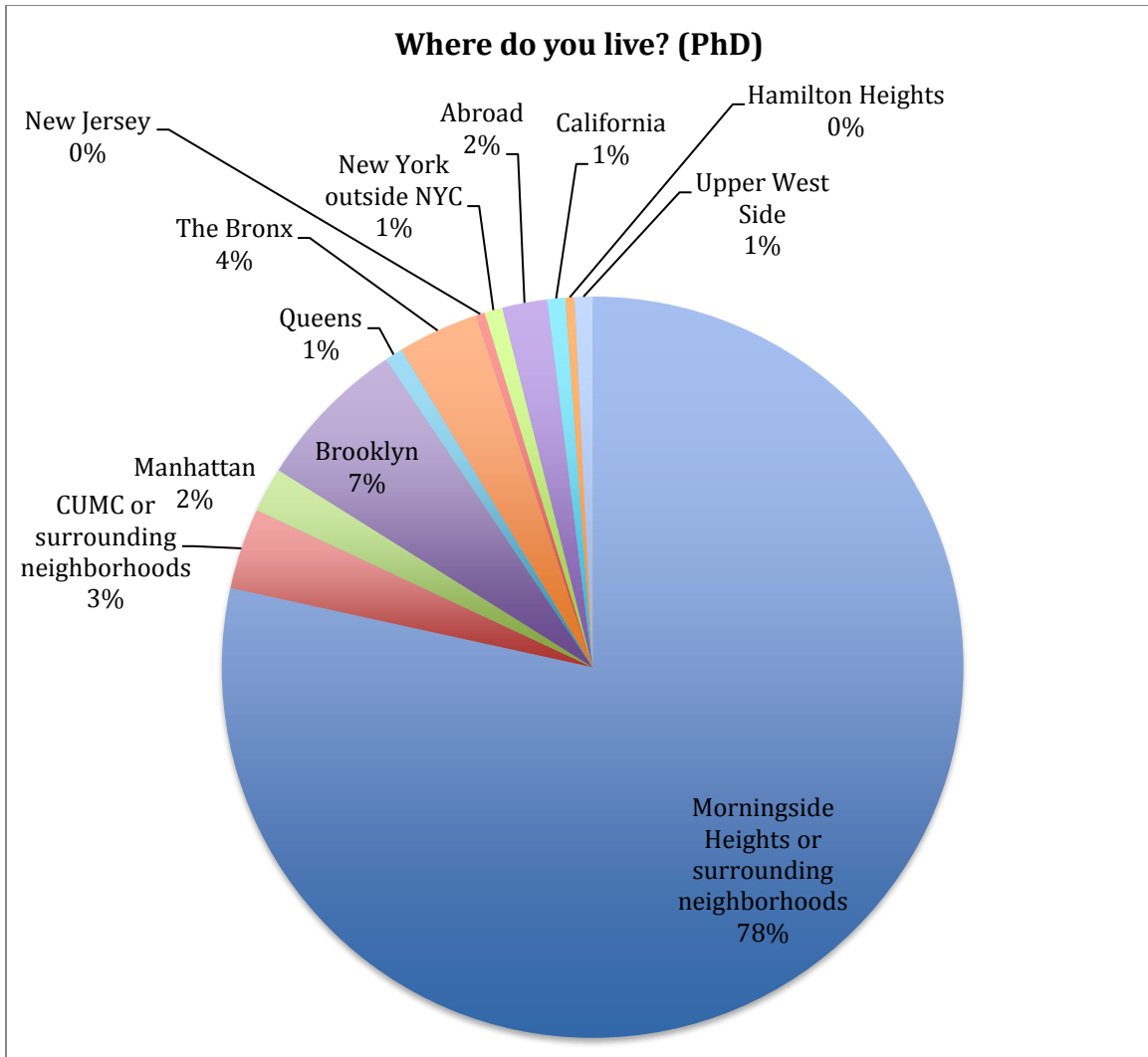
Housing location

Asked where they live, respondents were given the options of selecting “Morningside Heights or surrounding neighborhoods,” “CUMC or surrounding neighborhoods,” “Manhattan,” “Brooklyn,” “Queens,” “The Bronx,” “Staten Island,” “New Jersey,” “New York state outside of NYC,” or “Other,” which would provide respondents the option of writing in a response.

Total Respondents: 328, Masters Respondents = 79, PhD Respondents = 252



Of the 74 Masters respondents 8.11% (6) responded that they live in Brooklyn, 34.05% (3) responded that they live in CUMC or surrounding neighbourhoods, 2.70% (2) responded that they live in Harlem, 1.35% (1) responded that they live in Manhattan, 1.35% (1) responded that they live in Midtown, 70.27% (52) responded that they live in Morningside Heights or surrounding neighbourhoods, 5.41% (4) responded that they live in New Jersey, 2.70% (2) responded that they live in Queens, 1.35% (1) responded that they live in Staten Island, and 2.70% (2) responded that they live in UWS.

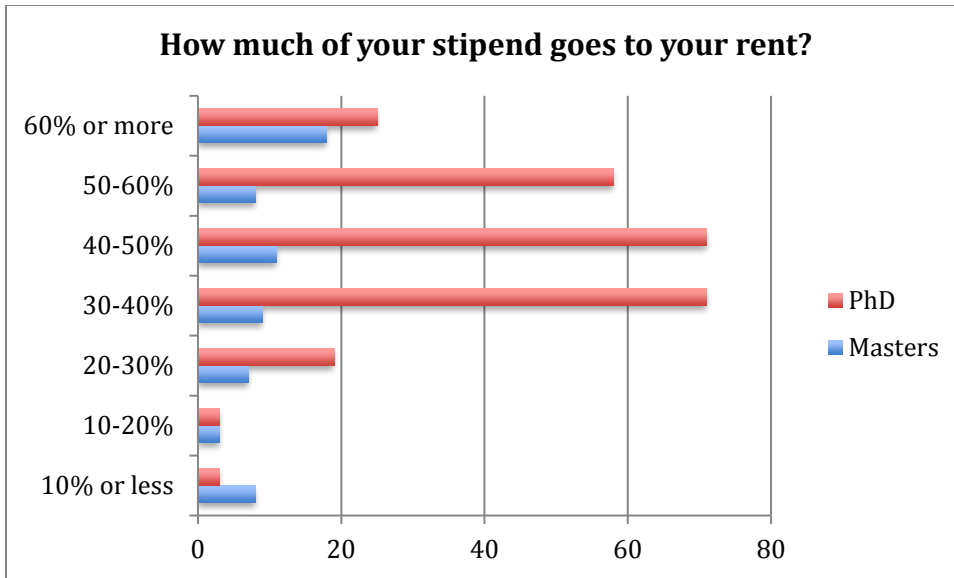


Of the 254 PhD respondents 1.97% (5) responded that they live abroad, 6.69% (17) responded that they live in Brooklyn, 0.79% (2) responded that they live in California, 3.54% (9) responded that they live in CUMC or surrounding neighbourhoods, 0.40% (1) responded that they live in Hamilton Heights, 1.97% (5) responded that they live in Manhattan, 78.74% (200) responded that they live in Morningside Heights or surrounding neighbourhoods, 0.40% (1) responded that they live in New Jersey, 0.79% (2) responded that they live in NY outside of NYC, 0.79% (2) responded that they live in Queens, 3.54% (9) responded that they live in The Bronx, and 0.79% (2) responded that they live in UWS.

Rent as percentage of stipend

Asked what percentage of their stipend went to rent, respondents were given the options of selecting “10% or less,” “10-20%,” “20-30%,” “30-40%,” “40-50%,” “50-60%” or “Over 60%,”

Total Respondents: 314, Masters Respondents = 64, PhD Respondents = 250



Of the 64 Masters respondents 12.50% (8) responded “10% or less,” 4.69% (3) responded “10-20%,” 10.94% (7) responded “20-30%,” 14.06% (9) responded “30-40%,” 17.19% (11) responded “40-50%,” 12.50% (8) responded “50-60%,” and 28.13% (18) responded “60% or more.”

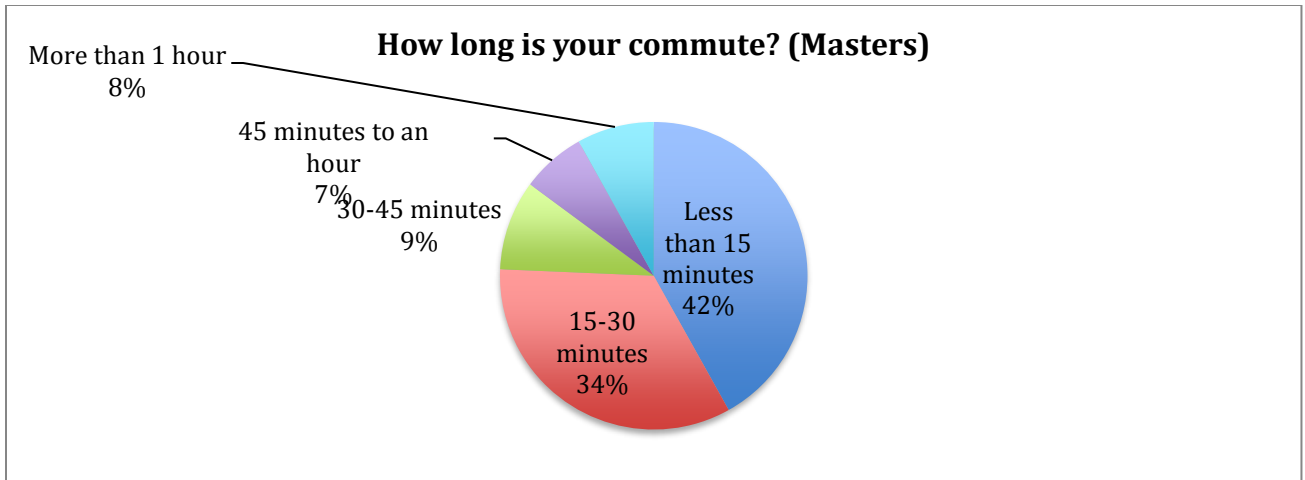
Of the 250 PhD respondents 1.20% (3) responded “10% or less,” 1.20% (3) responded “10-20%,” 7.60% (19) responded “20-30%,” 28.40% (71) responded “30-40%,” 28.40% (71) responded “40-50%,” 23.20% (58) responded “50-60%,” and 10.00% (25) responded “60% or more.”

It should also be noted that all respondents who indicated they spend 50% or more of their stipend on rent live in Off-Campus housing. However, it should also be noted that students in Columbia Housing do pay up to 50% of their salary to their housing costs (rent).

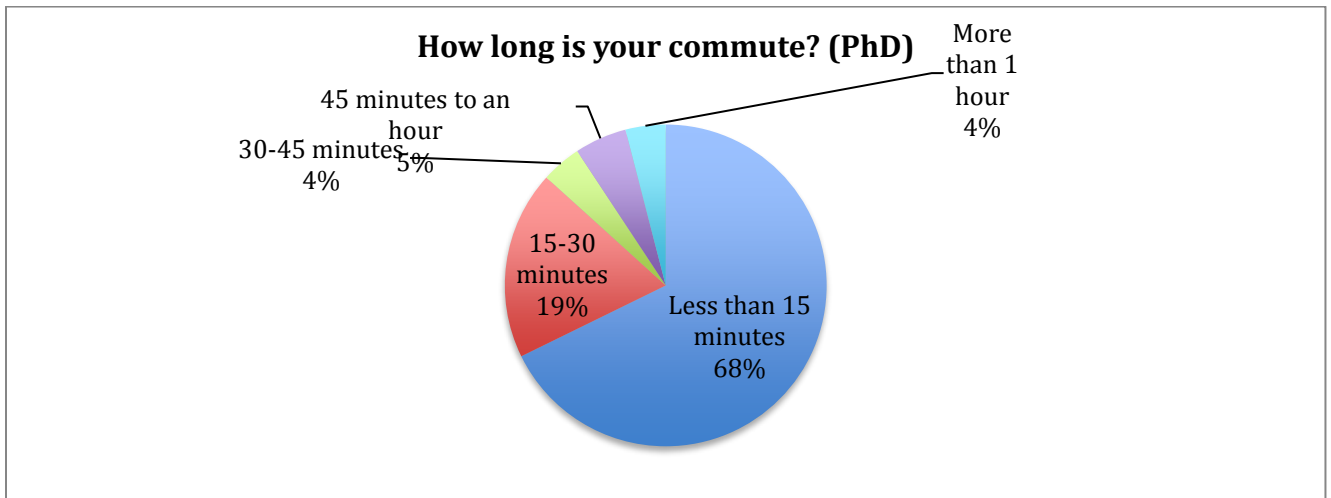
Length of commute

The respondents were given the options of selecting “Less than 15 minutes,” “15-30 minutes,” “30-45 minutes,” “45 minutes to an hour,” or “More than 1 hour.”

Total Respondents: 322, Masters Respondents = 74, PhD Respondents = 248



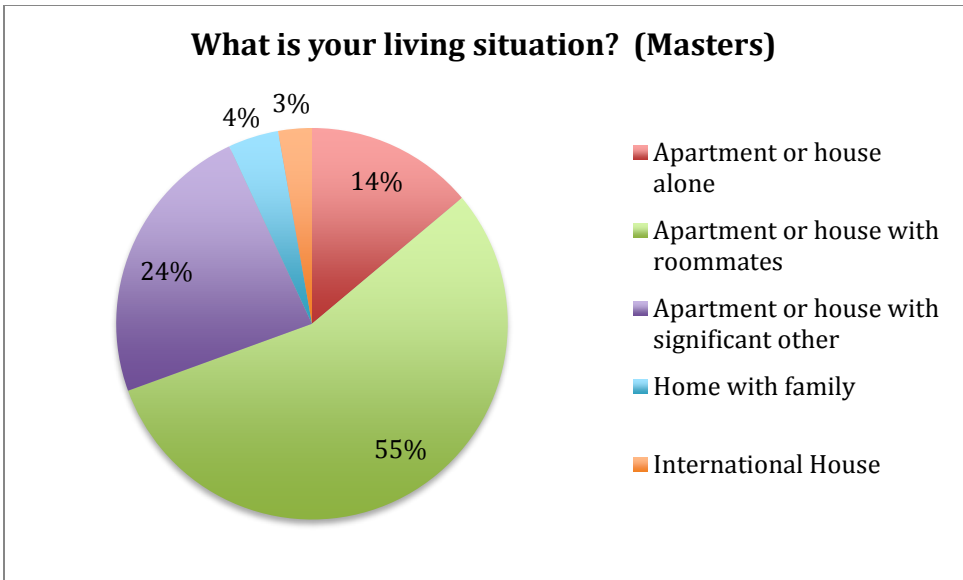
Of the 74 Masters respondents 41.89% (31) responded “Less than 15 minutes,” 33.78% (25) responded “15-30 minutes,” 9.46% (7) responded “30-45 minutes,” 6.76% (5) responded “45 minutes to an hour,” and 8.11% (6) responded “more than 1 hour.”



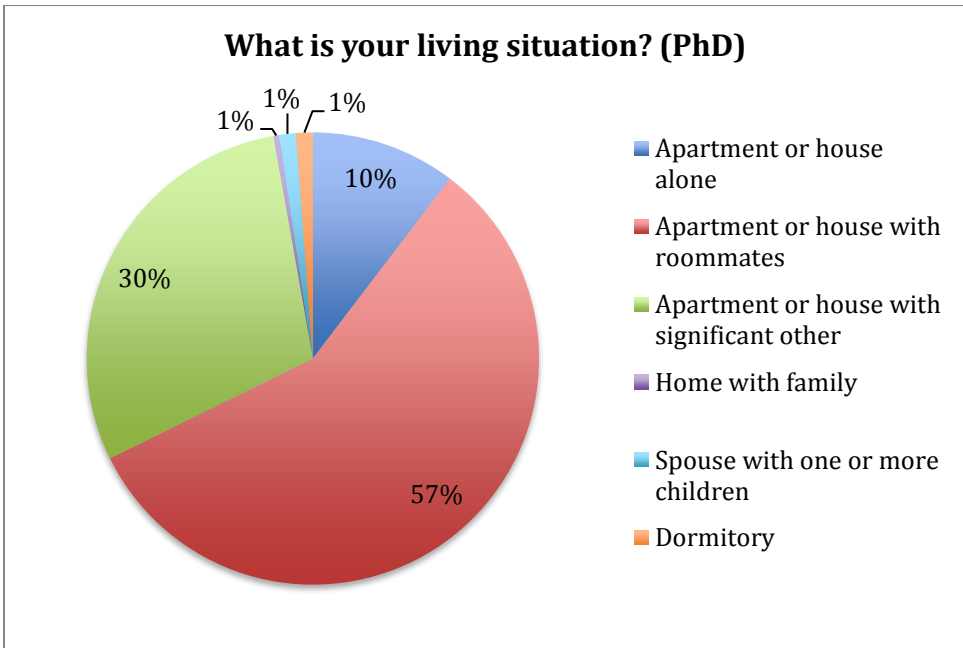
Of the 248 PhD respondents 67.74% (168) responded “Less than 15 minutes,” 18.95% (47) responded “15-30 minutes,” 4.03% (10) responded “30-45 minutes,” 5.24% (13) responded “45 minutes to an hour,” and 4.03% (10) responded “more than 1 hour.”

Living situation

Asked “What is your living situation?”, respondents were given the options of selecting “Apartment or house alone,” “Apartment or house with roommates,” “Apartment or house with a significant other,” or “Other,” which would provide respondents the option of writing in a response.



Total Respondents: 323, Masters Respondents = 70, PhD Respondents = 253
 Of the 72 Masters respondents 13.89% (10) responded “Apartment or house alone,” 55.56% (40) responded “Apartment or house with roommates,” 23.61% (17) responded “Apartment or house with a significant other,” 4.17% (3) responded “Home with family,” and 2.78% (2) responded “International House.”



Of the 251 PhD respondents 10.36% (26) responded “Apartment or house alone,” 57.37% (144) responded “Apartment or house with roommates,” 29.48% (74) responded “Apartment or house with a significant other,” 0.40% (1) responded “Home with family,” 1.20% (3) responded “Spouse with one or more children,” and 1.20% (3) responded “Dormitory.”

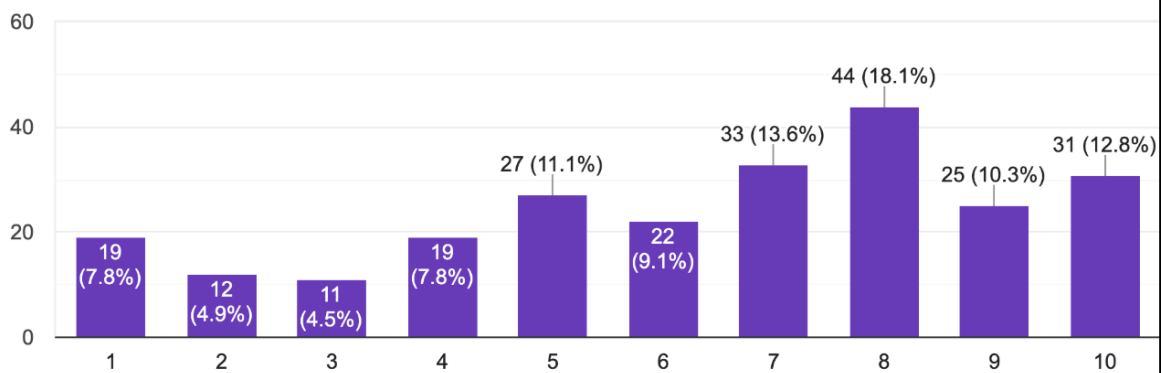
Satisfaction with housing

Asked “On a scale of 1-10 how satisfied are you with the housing provided for you by Columbia?”, respondents were given the options of selecting a number from 1 – 10 to identify their satisfaction with their housing situation with 1 being “Very Dissatisfied” and 10 being “Very Satisfied.” Note that some respondents who indicated they did not live in Columbia housing responded to this question. Their responses have been included on the grounds that they may have lived in Columbia housing in the past, or may have wished to live in Columbia housing.

Total Respondents: 243, Masters Respondents = 29, PhD Respondents = 214

How satisfied are you with the housing provided for you by Columbia?

243 responses



Of the all the respondents 7.82% (19) responded “1,” 4.94% (12) responded “2,” 4.53% (11) responded “3,” 7.82% (19) responded “4,” 11.11% (27) responded “5,” 9.05% (22) responded “6,” 13.58% (33) responded “7,” 18.11% (44) responded “8,” 10.29% (25) responded “9,” and 12.75% (31) responded “10.”

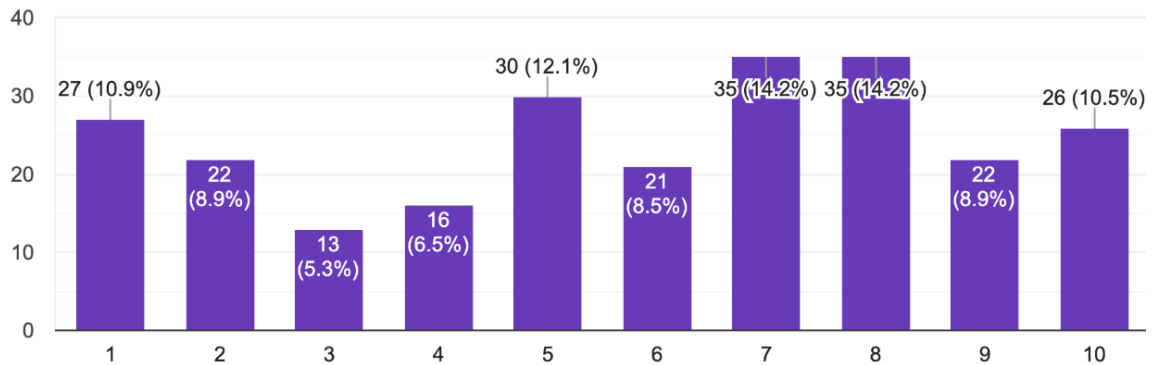
Satisfaction with the Columbia Housing Office

Asked, “On a scale of 1-10, how satisfied are you with the Columbia Housing Office?”, respondents were given the options of selecting a number from 1 – 10 to identify their satisfaction with the Housing Office with 1 being “Very Dissatisfied” and 10 being “Very Satisfied.”

Total Respondents: 247, Masters Respondents = 28, PhD Respondents = 219

How satisfied have you been with your interactions with the Columbia Housing Office?

247 responses



Of the all the respondents 10.93% (27) responded “1,” 8.91% (22) responded “2,” 5.26% (13) responded “3,” 6.48% (16) responded “4,” 12.15% (30) responded “5,” 8.50% (21) responded “6,” 14.17% (35) responded “7,” 14.17% (35) responded “8,” 8.91% (22) responded “9,” and 10.53% (26) responded “10.”

Comments:

Rent:

Overall, the biggest housing complaint among graduate students is that the cost of housing (rent) is too high, particularly in respects to their salaries. Furthermore, some students are particularly disturbed by the rate of Columbia Housing in particular and are doubtful of amount Columbia Housing actually subsidizes the units. Some students feel particularly exploited and trapped by this system (feeling forced to rent from their employer’s purportedly subsidized rates due to the fact that their stipend does not sufficiently account for their housing costs). Students would appreciate more transparency regarding their housing costs.

Living conditions:

Students expressed discontent with the construction on 120th and Morningside. There was concern over the fact that students are being charged the same amounts for apartments that varied in size and quality. Multiple students expressed that they have had no gas in their building and the housing seemed reluctant to provide timely utilities refunds (as their rent had already included utilities). One student expressed that the couple housing policy may be giving them housing security concerns. Some of the feedback expressed dissatisfaction regarding the furnishing of apartments. This may be linked to the negative comments related to the subpar condition of the apartments that upon move-in. Some students are displeased with how the roommate matching is handled as students are often matched with incompatible roommates. Students were happy of the internet fee being

waived, however, some students still do not have internet provided and are still in the dark as to when this might change.

Housing services and administration:

The comments surrounding Housing Services and administrative support are mixed. Some students have found Housing Services to be unresponsive and unresponsive when seeking accommodations. Students in couple or family housing have found negotiating Housing Services strict hours and policies to be incredibly difficult. One student was met with homophobic questioning during move-in for their couples housing. There was desire expressed to be able to pay rent online. There is dissatisfaction regarding the transfer system, and feelings of unfairness and frustration about the process.

Building management and maintenance:

The comments regarding building management and maintenance were very divided. Some students expressed great appreciation and satisfaction with their superintendents and maintenance, while others have found them to be unresponsive and violating of their personal space (ie, entering the apartment unannounced).

Availability

Comments indicated concerns about availability of housing for graduate students, especially those seeking family housing, MA students, students returning after a leave and students entering their 8th year or later.

Section summary and remarks

Masters students are far less likely than PhD students to live in Columbia housing, with the percentages at 17% and 71%, respectively. PhD students are only slightly more likely than Masters students to live in or near Morningside Heights, at 78% of PhD students and 70% of Masters students.

Masters students are more likely to spend over half of their income on rent, at 40.63%, as compared to 33.2% of PhD students. It should be noted that all respondents who spend over 50% of their income on rent live outside of Columbia housing. Still, those in Columbia housing do spend up to 50% of their income on housing.

Masters students were more likely to have commutes over 15 minutes, at 58% percent, as compared to 32% of PhD students. 24% of Masters students, as compared to 13% of PhD students, have commutes over 30 minutes.

The majority of both Masters students (55%) and PhD students (57%) live with roommates. PhD students, at 30%, are slightly more likely to live with a significant other than Masters students, at 24%, while Masters students, at 14% are slightly more likely to live alone than PhD students, at 10%.

Respondents were generally satisfied with the housing provided by Columbia, with 64% ranking it at 6 out of 10 or higher. Still, a significant minority indicated dissatisfaction, with 36% ranking it 5 out of 10 or lower. Respondents were less likely to be satisfied

with the Columbia Housing Office, with 56% ranking it 6 out of 10 or higher and 44% ranking it 5 out of 10 or lower.

Respondents called for both lower rents and more transparency regarding how rent is determined, and in particular how the rent of different units managed by Columbia Housing is decided. Comments indicated a range of issues with the housing itself, including complaints about construction, couples housing, furnishings, roommate matching, and subpar move-in conditions. Some comments expressed appreciation for newly free Columbia internet, while others indicated that they were still forced to pay for internet from an outside provider, with no adjustment to their rent, and no indication of when the inequity might be addressed.

Comments expressed difficulties navigating the strict hours and policies of the Columbia Housing Office, and described a generally unresponsive and unsupportive office. Respondents criticized the opaque transfer process, again suggesting more transparency about how decisions are made within the office might alleviate some frustrations. One respondent reported being subjected to homophobic questioning during the couples housing application. Respondents also indicated a desire to be able to pay rent online. In general, respondents expressed concerns about the availability of housing, particularly for Masters students, students with families, students returning from leave, and students beyond their 7th year.

Health and medical services

Section overview

The goal of this section was to gauge respondent's feelings about the resources provided by Columbia to support their physical and mental health, and their feelings about the process of medical leave, if applicable. While the section was short, it generated a high volume of comments, which shed light on health-related areas where resources are lacking or not well targeted for graduate students.

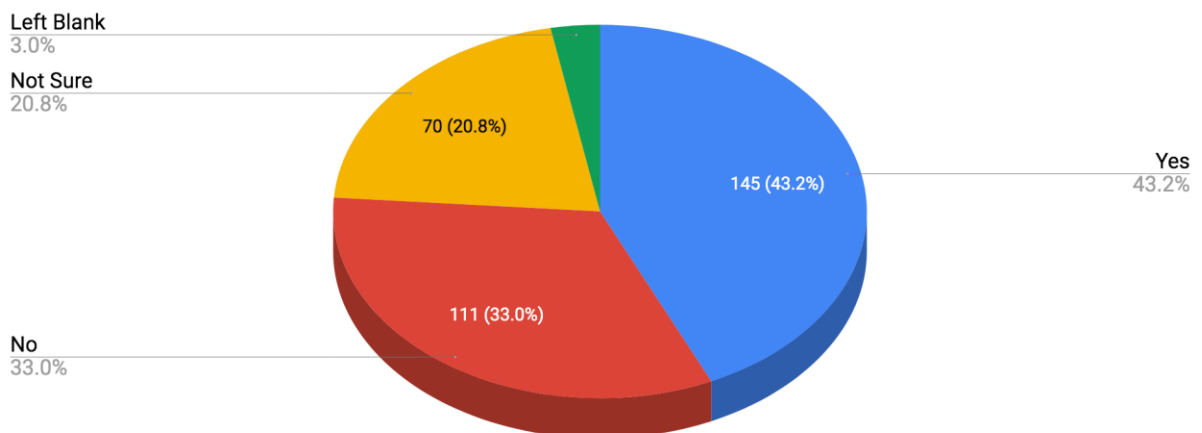
Health Resources

Physical Health Resources

Question #1:

The first question asked if respondents felt that Columbia provided adequate resources related to physical health for students. This was a Yes/No/Not sure question. N = 336

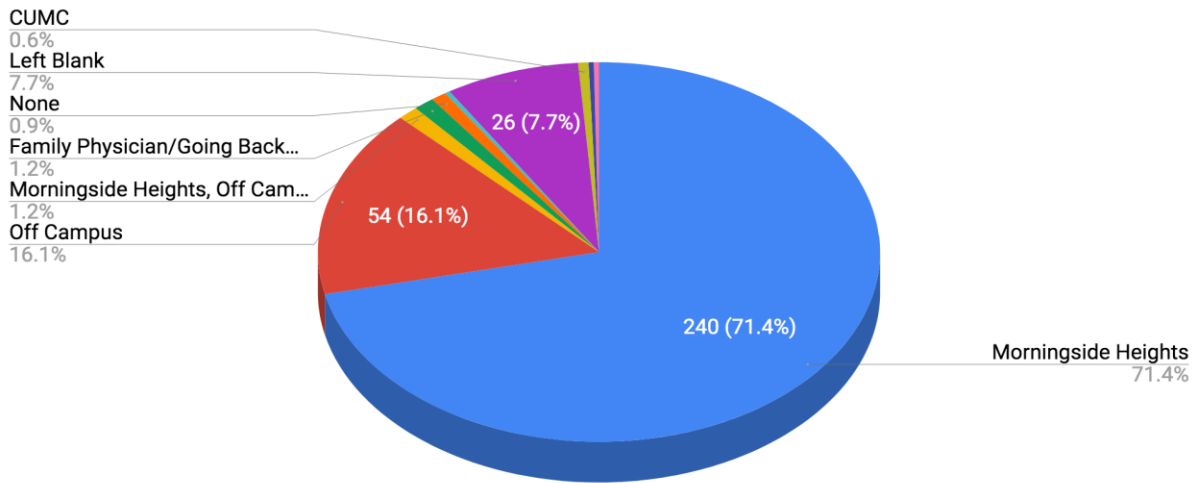
Do you feel that Columbia provides adequate resources related to improving/maintaining your physical health?



These responses suggest that there is room for improvement with regard to resources for physical health. Additionally, it is possible many students are unaware of all the resources available to them given the high number of “Not Sure” responses.

Question #2

Where is your primary medical provider?

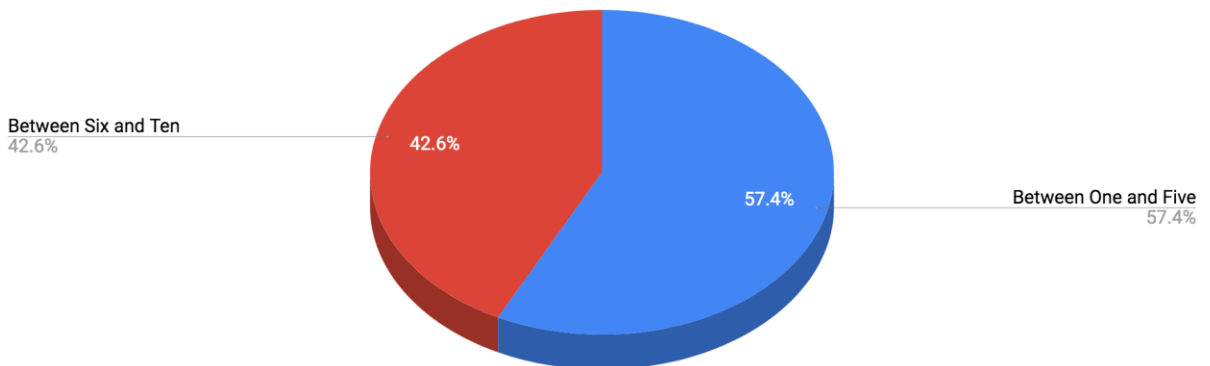


It appears that a significant majority of students have Morningside Heights as their primary medical provider (71.4%) and so investing further in Columbia's medical services on campus is likely to impact many students positively.

Question #3

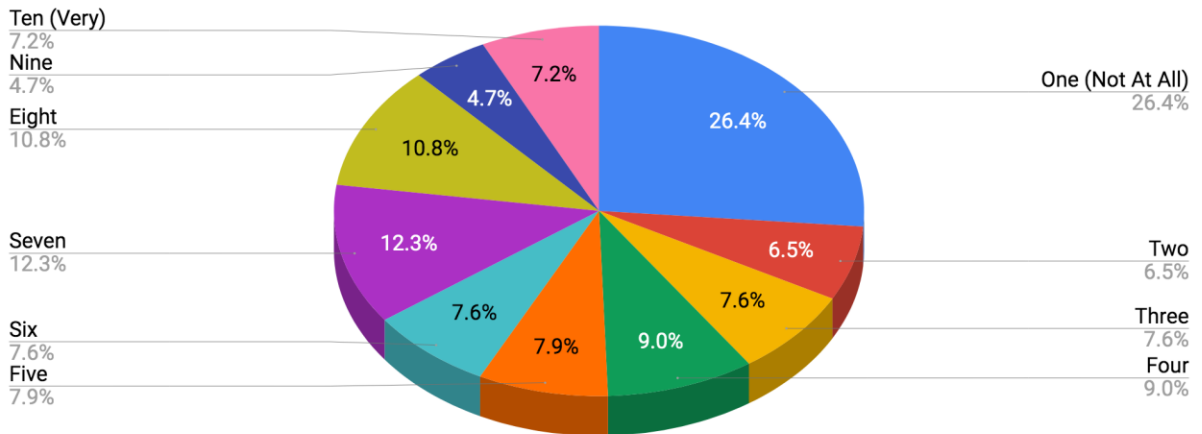
How satisfied are you with the appointment system for Columbia Medical Services?

1 = Not At All, 10 = Very



How satisfied are you with the appointment system for Columbia Medical Services?

1 = Not At All 10 = Very

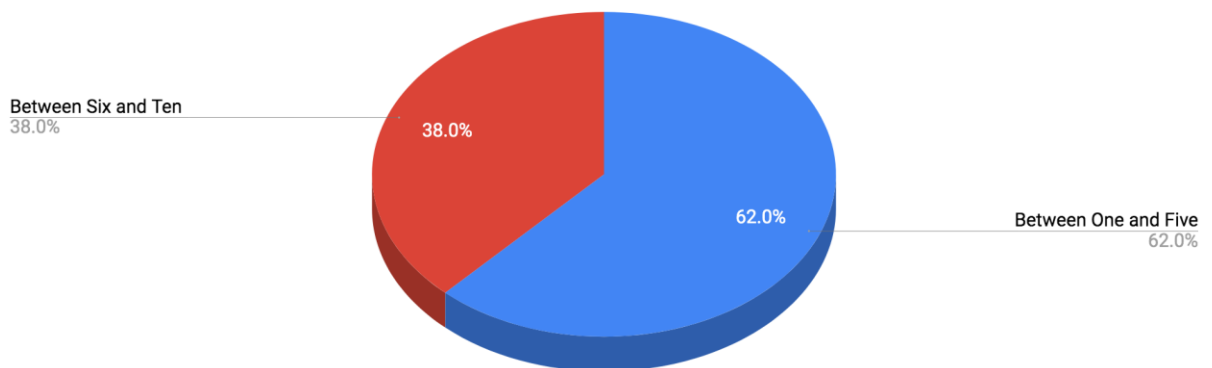


It appears that a majority of students are not satisfied with the appointment system for Columbia Medical Services. Additionally, almost a third of respondents are not happy at all. This suggests the way appointment system could be improved to enhance the student experience. Many students commented at length on this and seem to feel passionately about this issue. See 'Long Form Answer' section below.

Question #4

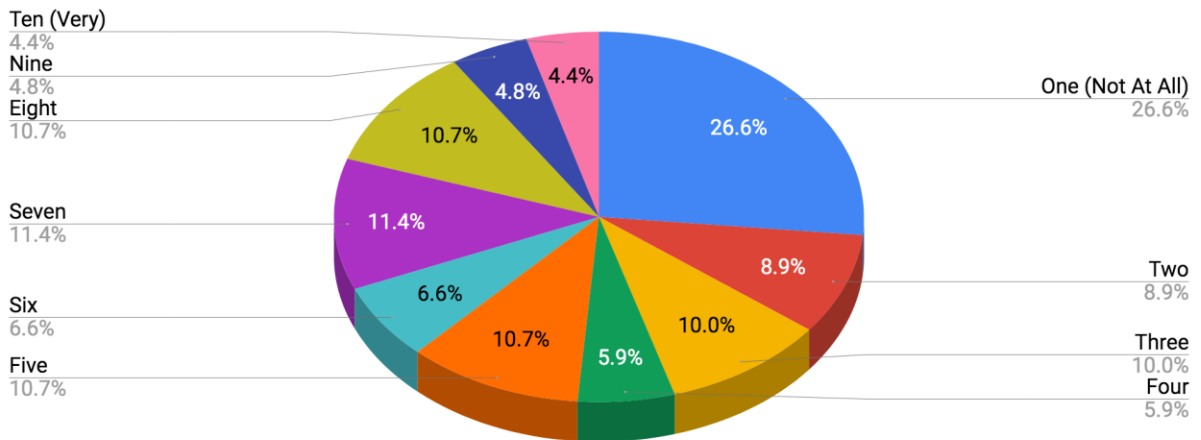
How satisfied are you with the available appointment times of Columbia Medical Services?

1 = Not At All, 10 = Very



How satisfied are you with the available appointment times of Columbia Medical Services?

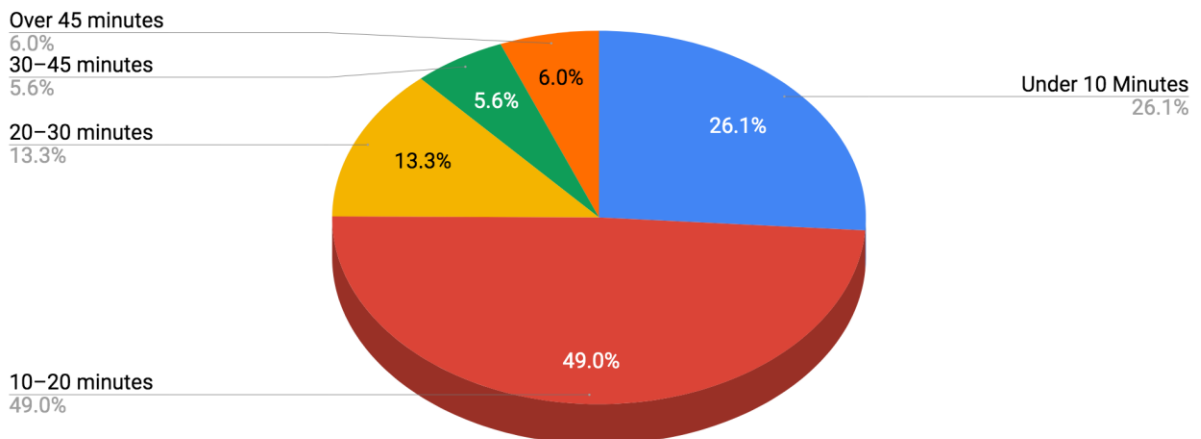
1= Not At All, 10 = Very



It appears almost two thirds of students are not satisfied with the available appointment times of Columbia Medical Services. Similar to the previous question, approximately one quarter of respondents were “Not At All” satisfied. This suggests the availability of appointment times can be improved to enhance the student experience. Many students commented at length on this and seem to feel passionately about this issue. See ‘Long Form Answer’ section below.

Question #5

After making an appointment, how long, on average, have you waited to be seen after the scheduled time of your appointment?

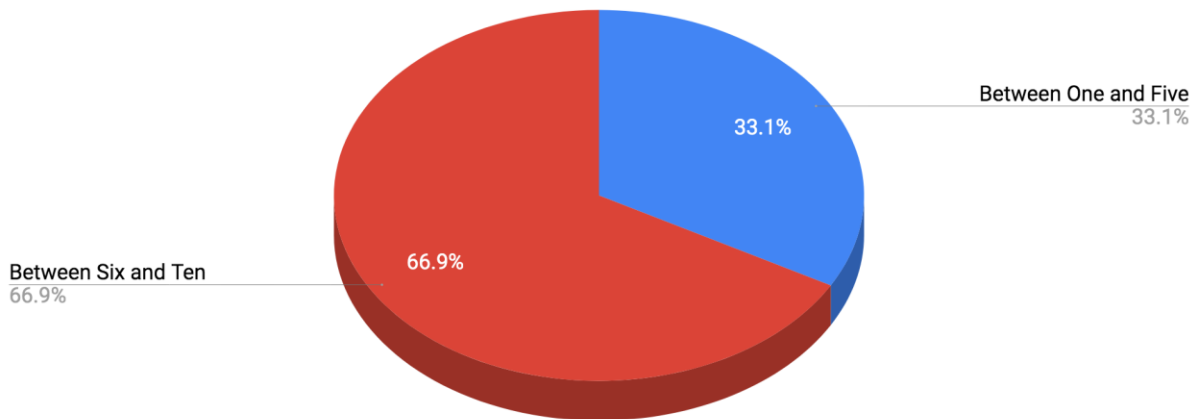


It appears that just under half of respondents reported waiting an average of 10-20 minutes to be seen and about one quarter of respondents waited under ten minutes. This suggests that most of time, students are not waiting excessively to be seen by a doctor once they arrive. However, there is definitely room for improvement because almost one quarter of respondents reported waiting over twenty minutes.

Question #6

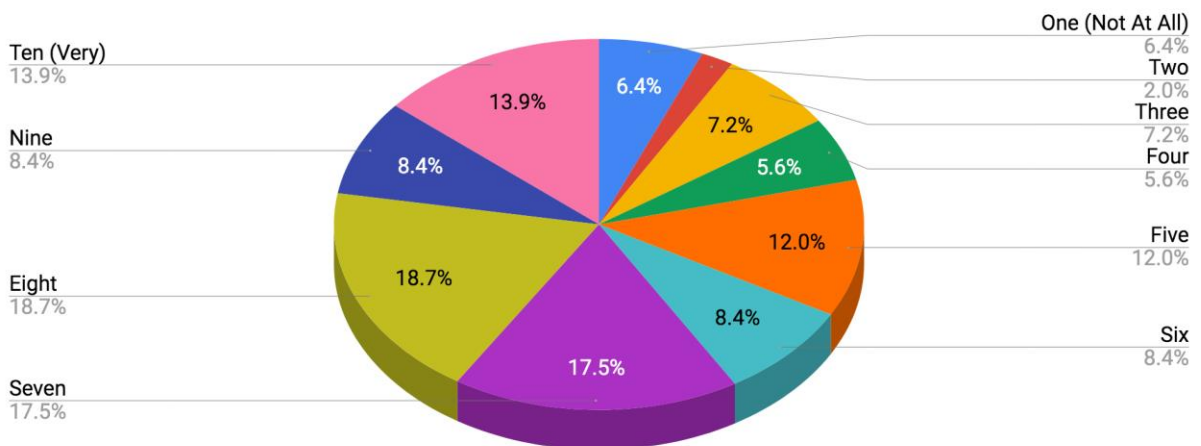
How satisfied are you with the staff at Columbia Medical Services?

1 = Not At All, 10 = Very



How satisfied are you with the staff at Columbia Medical Services?

1 = Not At All, 10 = Very



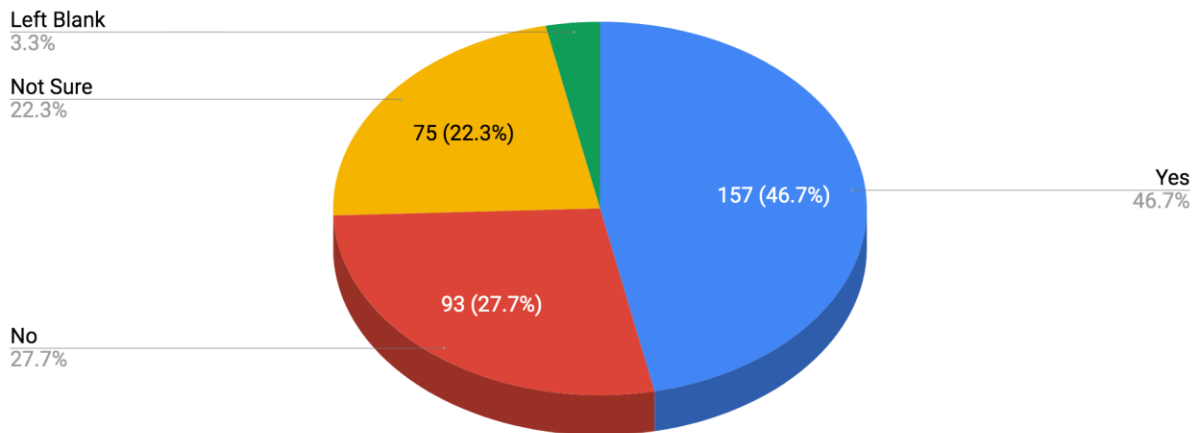
Students are relatively happy with the staff at Columbia Medical Services. Two-thirds of the respondents rated them favorably and even within the unfavorable ratings the

percentage of “Not At All Satisfied” was low, coming in at 6.4%. Students generally feel neutral-positive towards the staff.

Mental Health Resources

Question #7

Do you feel that Columbia provides adequate resources related to improving/maintaining your mental health?

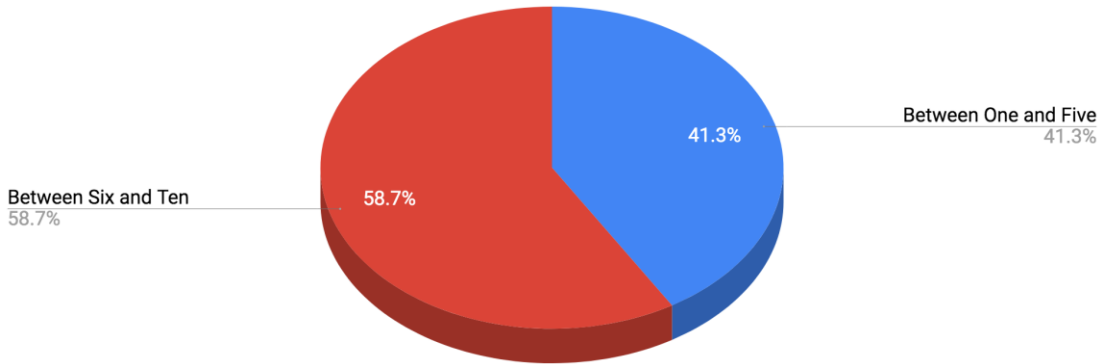


This first question used the same format as the first question in the “physical health” section. The responses were similarly divided. The responses regarding resources, along with the high number of “Not Sure” responses, may indicate that many students are unaware of what resources are available regarding physical and mental health, or that they are not making use of them. N=336

Question #8

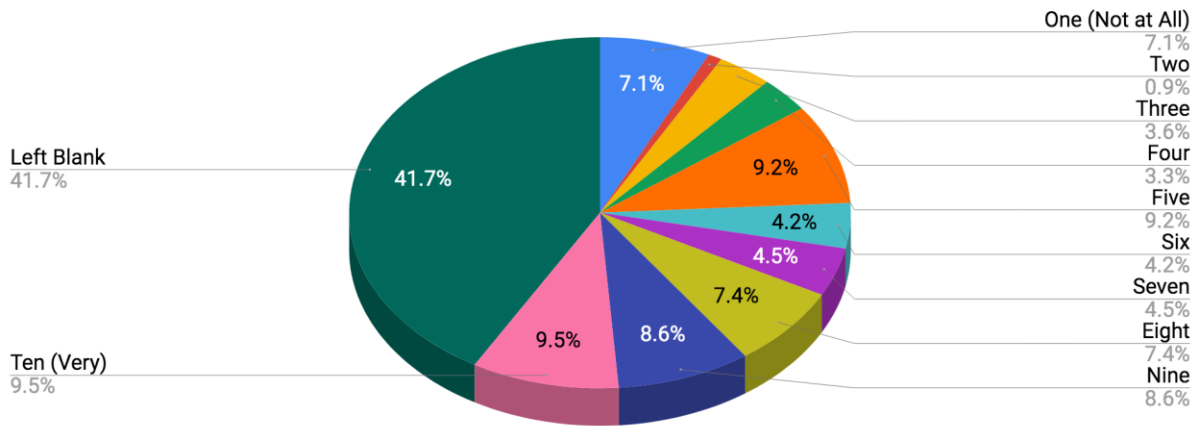
How satisfied are you with the appointment system for Counseling and Psychological Services? (Those that left a response)

1 = Not At All, 10 = Very



How satisfied are you with the appointment system for Counseling and Psychological Services?

1 = Not At All, 10 = Very

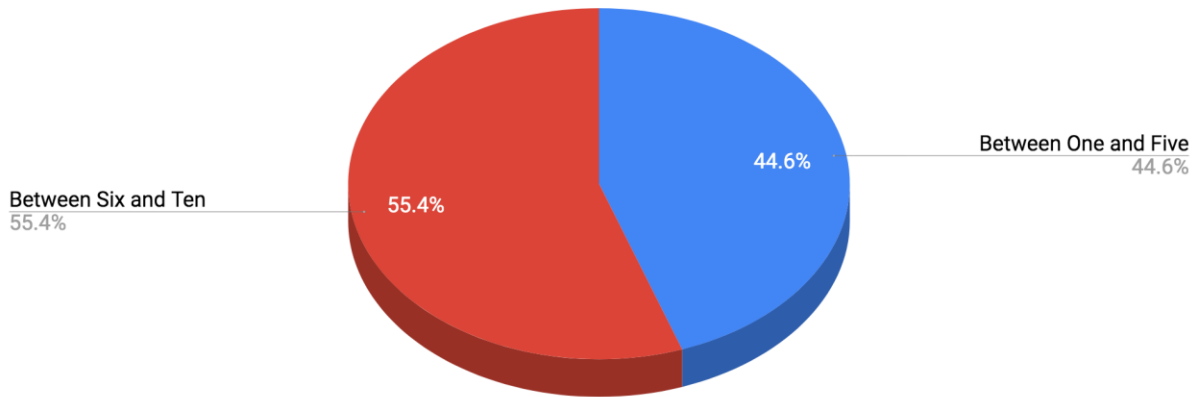


It appears that a majority of students are satisfied with the appointment system for Counseling and Psychological Services. However, 41.3% of respondents were not especially satisfied, ranking their satisfaction between 1 and 5. This suggests the appointment system could be improved to enhance the student experience.

Question #9

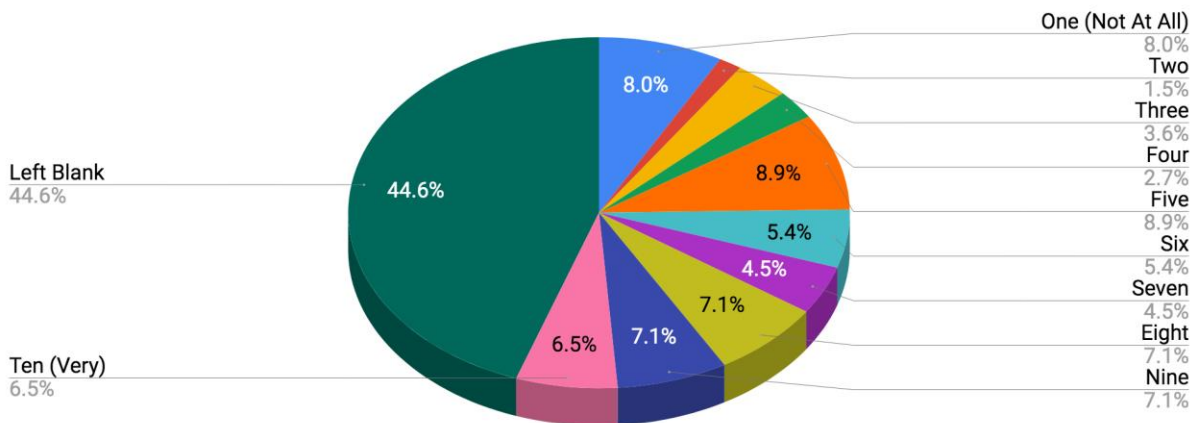
How satisfied are you with the available appointment times of Counseling and Psychological Services? (Those that left a response)

1 = Not At All, 10 = Very



How satisfied are you with the available appointment times of Counseling and Psychological Services?

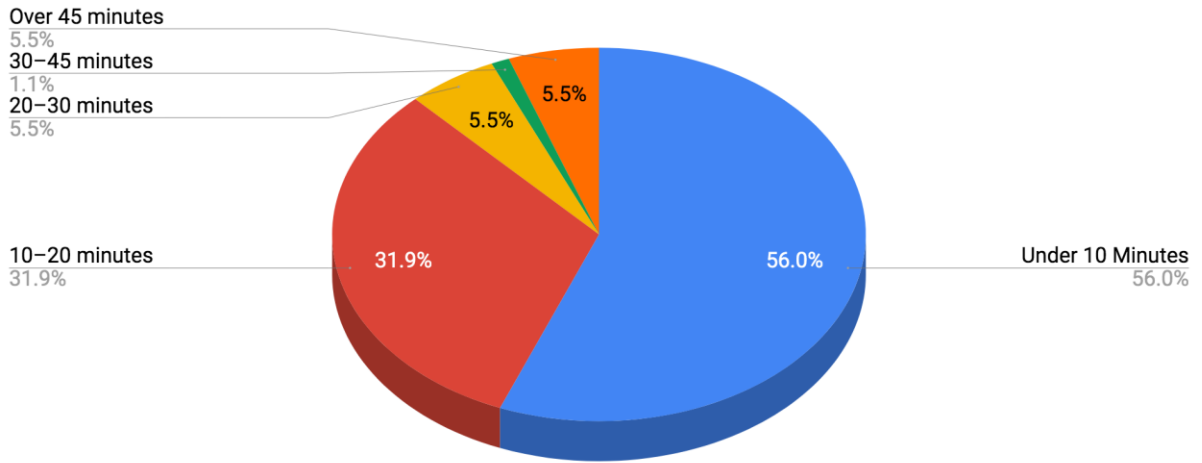
1 = Not At All, 10 = Very



It appears that a majority of students are satisfied with the available appointment times for Counseling and Psychological Services. However, 44.6% of respondents were not especially satisfied, ranking their satisfaction between 1 and 5. This suggests that appointment availability could be improved to enhance the student experience.

Question #10

After making an appointment, how long, on average, have you waited to be seen after the scheduled time of your appointment?

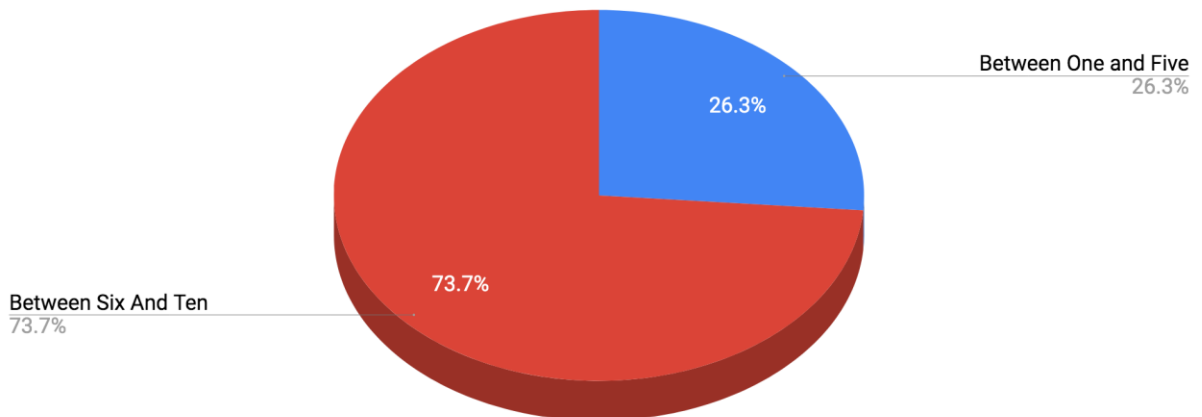


It appears the students who use Counseling and Psychological Services do not often wait long to see their doctor. Over half of respondents reported being seen under 10 minutes and almost 90% reported being seen in under 20 minutes. This suggests CPS is doing a good job of keeping wait times low.

Question #11

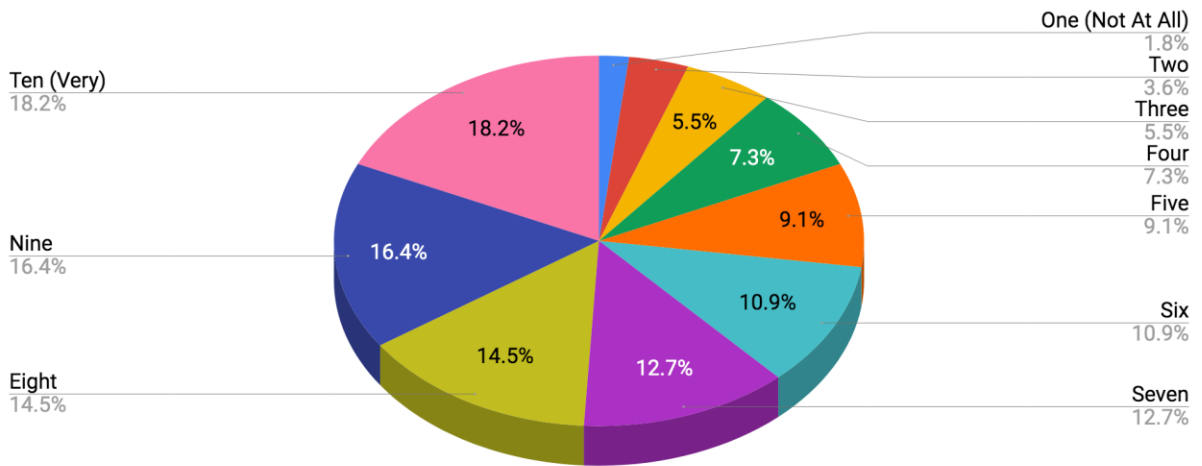
How satisfied are you with the staff at Counseling and Psychological Services?

1 = Not At All, 10 = Very



How satisfied are you with the staff at Counseling and Psychological Services?

1 = Not At All, 10 = Very



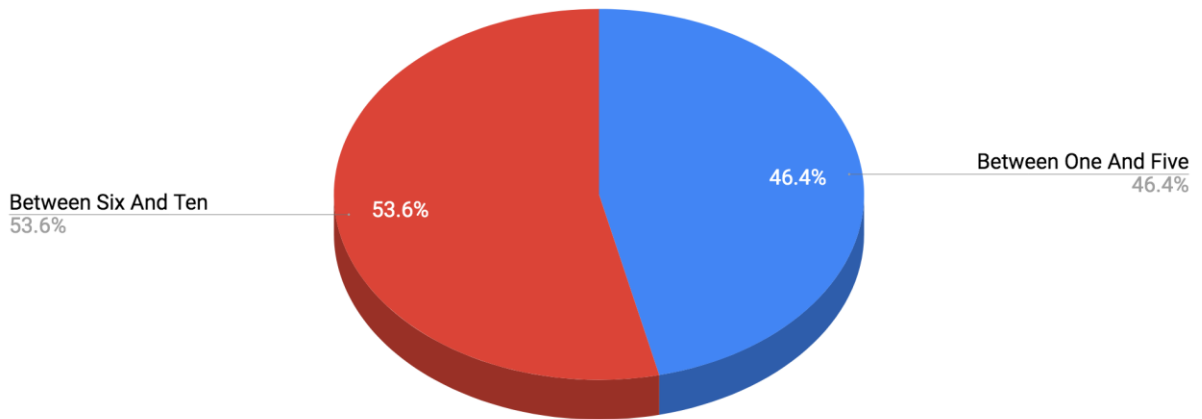
The students who use Counseling and Psychological services appear to be happy with the staff and over two-thirds of respondents reported being satisfied. There were very few “Not At All” responses. This suggests the staff is doing a good job most of the time.

Insurance

Question #12

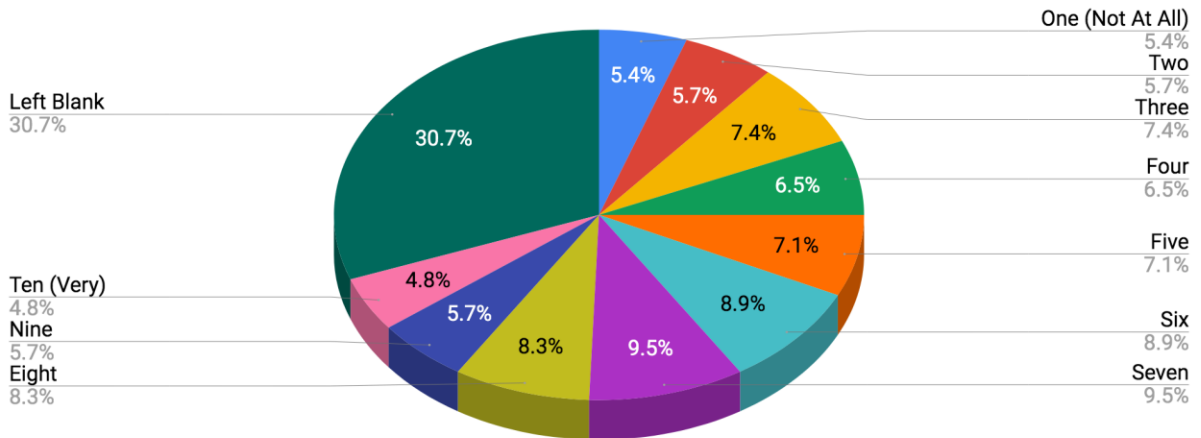
How satisfied are you with the insurance offered by Columbia?

1 = Not At All 10 = Very



How satisfied are you with the insurance offered by Columbia?

1 = Not At All, 10 = Very

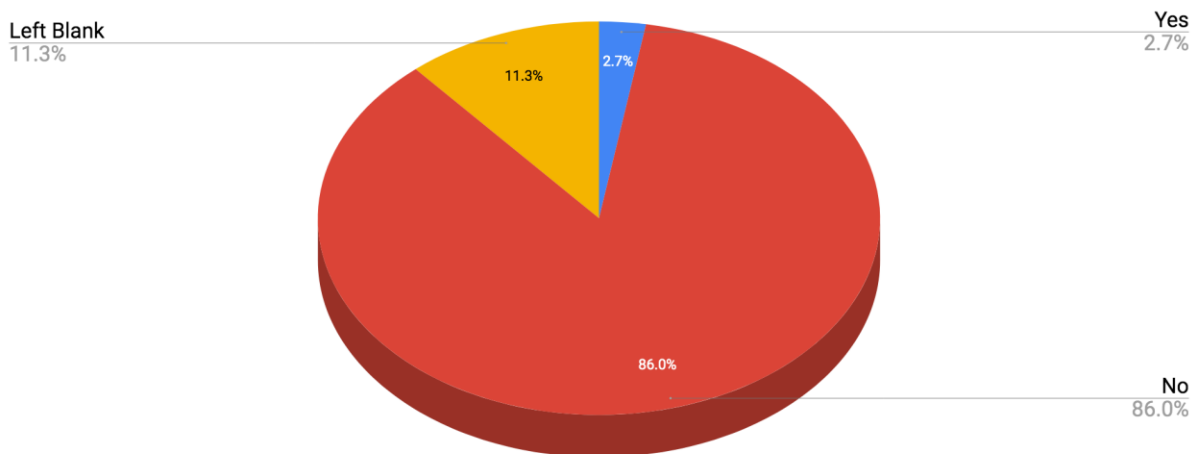


It appears that a small majority of students are satisfied with the insurance offered by Columbia but almost half of respondents reported not being particularly satisfied with the insurance. This suggests that there is room for improvement

Medical leave

Question #13

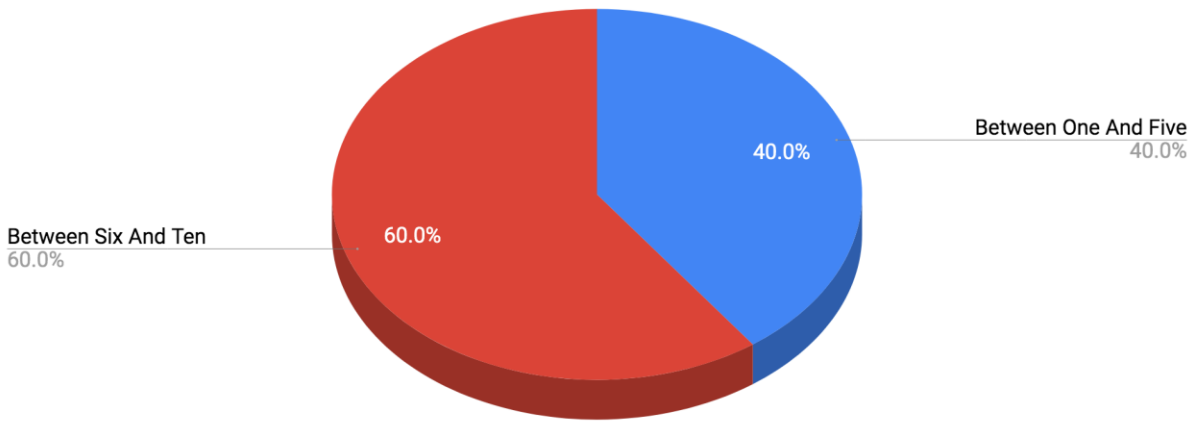
Have you ever requested personal or medical leave from the university?



Question #14

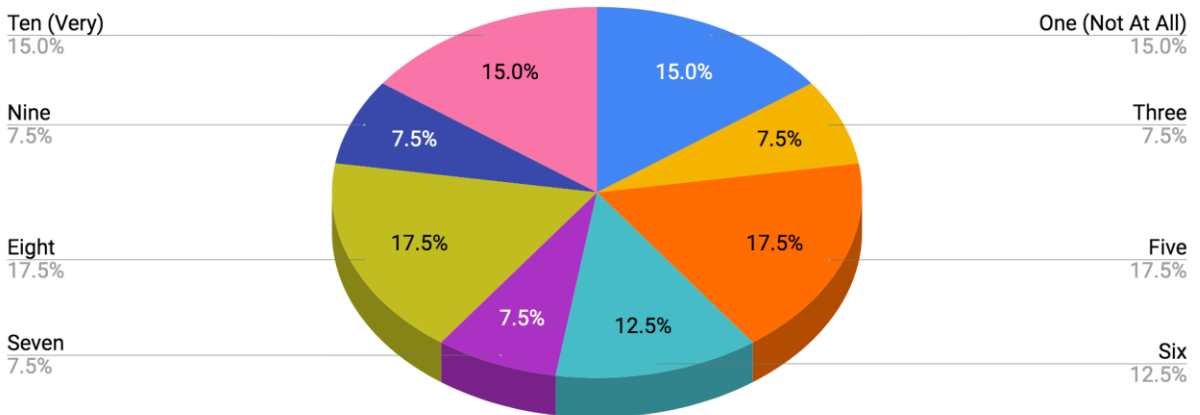
Overall, how satisfied were you with the process for requesting leave?

1 = Not At All, 10 = Very



Overall, how satisfied were you with the process for requesting leave?

1 = Not At All, 10 = Very

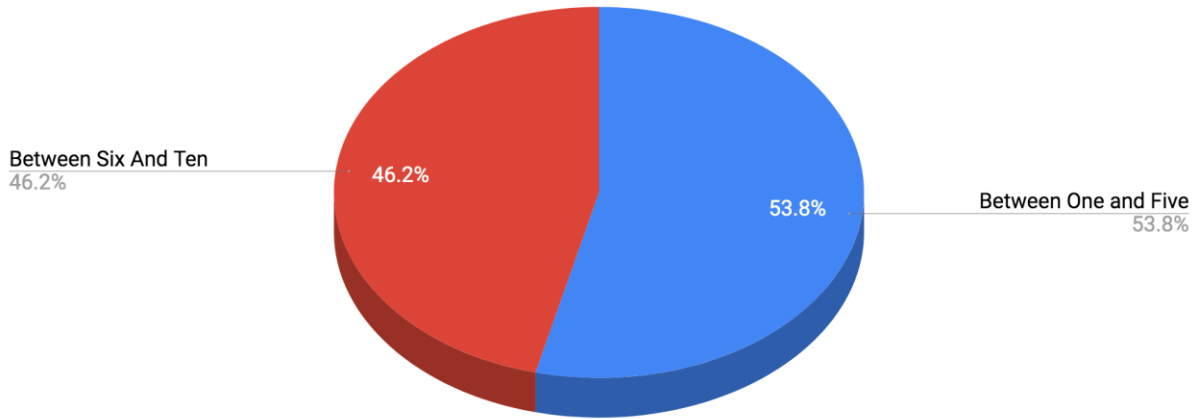


It appears that a majority of students are reasonably satisfied with the process for requesting leave but a significant number are not satisfied. This suggests that there is room for improvement, especially given that several students (15%) responded “Not At All.”

Question #15

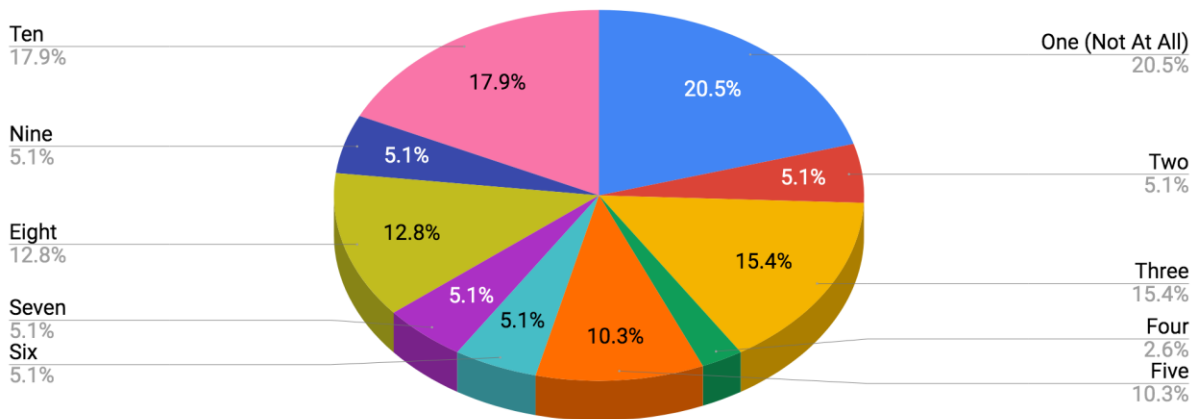
Did you feel that the procedure for requesting leave was clear?

1 = Not At All, 10 = Very



Did you feel that the procedure for requesting leave was clear?

1 = Not At All, 10 = Very

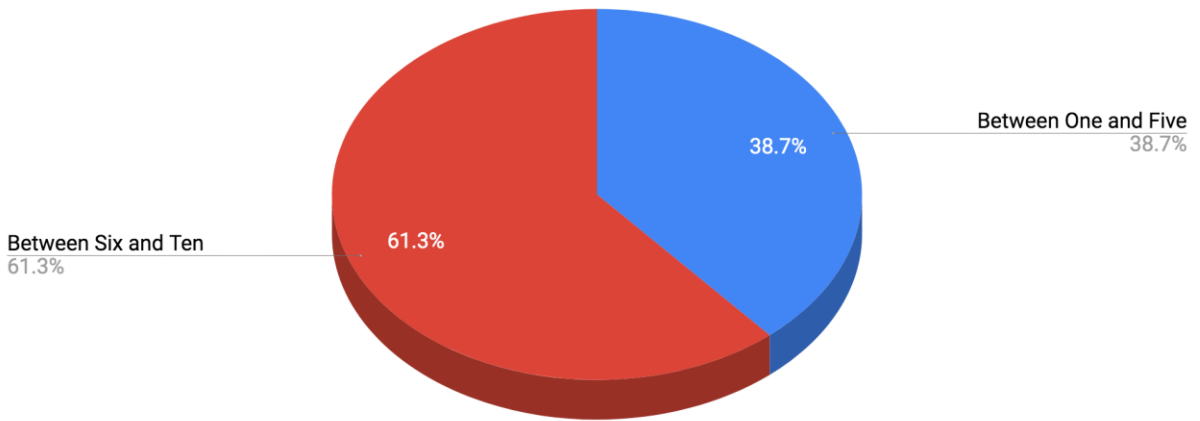


It appears that the procedure for requesting leave could be made clearer. 53.8% of respondents rated between 1-5 and one-fifth of respondents selected “Not At All”

Question #16

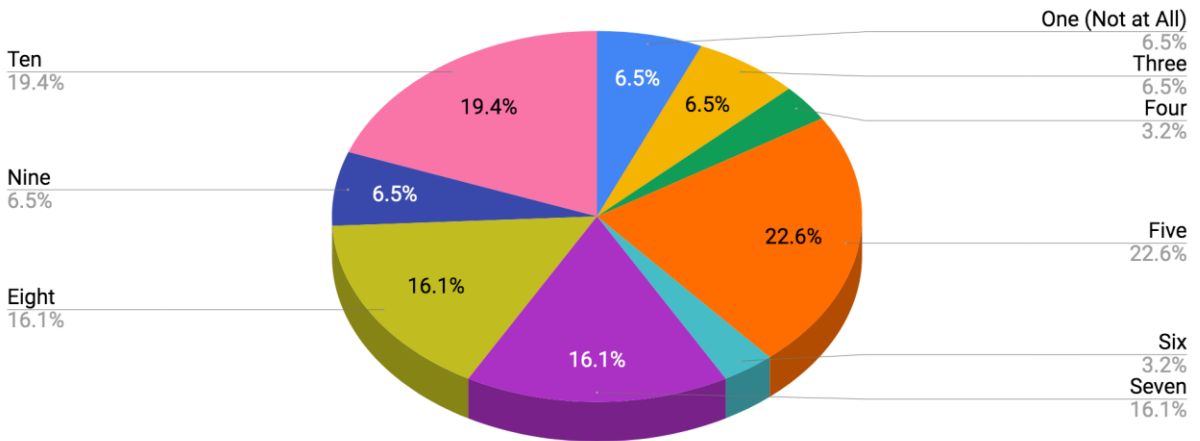
When you requested leave, how responsive were the administrative offices involved?

1 = Not At All, 10 = Very



When you requested leave, how responsive were the administrative offices involved?

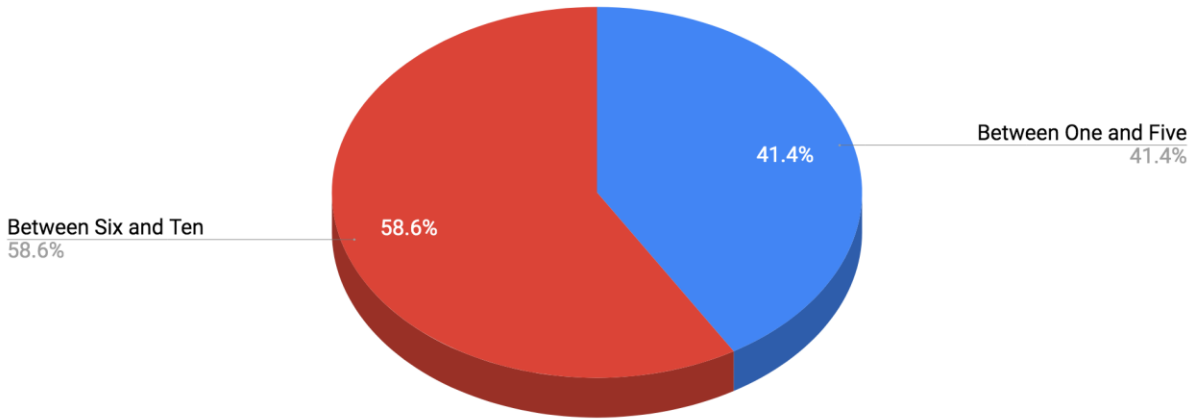
1 = Not At All, 10 = Very



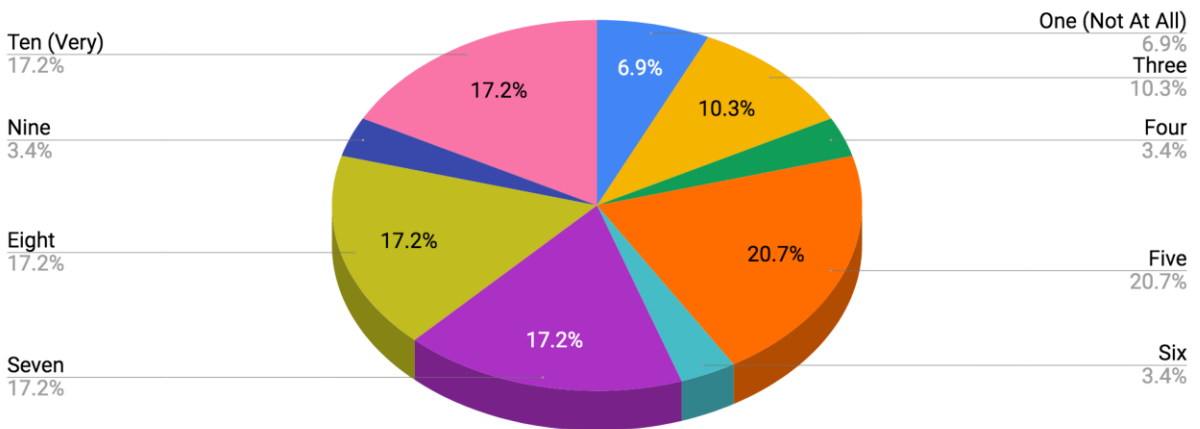
It appears that a majority of respondents interacted with responsive administrative offices when they requested leave. However, over one-third did not. This suggests there is room for improvement to achieve a more uniform response across departments.

Question #17

How satisfied were you with the process of returning from leave?
1 = Not At All, 10 = Very



How satisfied were you with the process of returning from leave?
1 = Not At All, 10 = Very



It appears that while a majority of respondents were satisfied with the process when they returned from leave, over one-third were not. This suggests there is room for improvement to achieve a more uniform response across departments.

General comments

The Health and Medical Services section of the survey also asked two long-form answer questions. The questions and responses are included verbatim below, and may shed more light on the graphs above.

Do you have any other comments about how Columbia could improve physical or mental health resources?

“Include vision and dental support, it is horribly expensive”

“I wish we could have affordable dental plan”

“I have not had appointments, but I am not sure what is available to me through the school's insurance policy and what resources are on campus”

“I would like to have the standard two teeth cleanings per year covered at the very least.”

“Let me count the ways... (1) Fix the atrocious appointment system. (2) Provide better care over weekends and holidays. I had a UTI over a weekend once, and after many hours of back and forth with a nurse, I was told that I needed to go down to the 80s to an emergency clinic in order to get medicine. I KNOW WHAT A FUCKING UTI FEELS LIKE. The nurse KNEW that I had a UTI (based on my symptoms and my past experiences having UTIs) but she was unable to prescribe any medication. I had to call my mom in California (she's a doctor) to get her to prescribe the medicine, then get a friend to go pick it up b/c I was in such pain. And I was supposed to very happily TAKE THE FUCKING SUBWAY TO THE 80s to wait another couple hours to get a prescription??! The nurse was totally unsympathetic, by the way.”

“eye and dental”

“Dental”

“The lady who sits in John Jay main reception is really really rude. its shocking really. she is soo rude. “

“Dental and vision would be great”

“As a sole instructor, I consider myself a Columbia employee. Yet, at the morningside dentist, employee rates do not apply to me, and I am left seeking dental care from free clinics or relying on family to help me cover those expenses. The dental insurance plan available is still, beyond what I can afford.”

“It's pretty hard to make an appointment. I ended up just skipping Columbia's psychological services and going off campus, because I knew the administration would make it mind-numbingly difficult to get help.”

"I have not had the need to use any of the services, but I think they are well provided."

"Not having dental or vision coverage or even the option to get real dental or vision coverage is offensive. I believe the highest level of coverage covers ~10% of dental/vision services? That's a joke."

"Make the appointment system actually work. When I go to the Health Center physically, they tell me to do it online. Online it says calling or going to the Health Center. Nobody ever pick up the call.

The mental health service is only free for the first three times. That is far from enough."

"There is only one gym on campus...that is not the case with other similarly situated universities. Further, CUMC doctors treat students in a very patronizing way."

"I would really like dental insurance to be included automatically."

"We need dental and vision"

"dental and vision are a must! being able to see is critical to being able to read"

"Having to check every 15 minutes to book an appointment 24 hours in advance is ridiculous. It seems like a scheme devised by the university to hide how understaffed the health services are by making wait times harder to track and passing off the responsibility to the students"

"Making an appointment should be 1000% easier, and also maybe grad students should have separate appointment mechanism and/or standard of care. I am an adult (in my 30s!) and feel like I have little control over how I am able to manage my medical care, and having to access care like I am still an undergraduate student is frustrating and impractical."

"Honestly, the insurance is pretty bad. I have to pay \$30 copay for every off-campus doctor visit. I've been charged more than \$100 for a blood test last time. Also making an appointment for on-campus clinic visit through the website is almost impossible. It's called "same-day visit", but even when I log on the website at 4am that day, there is no available time slot for any visit. I always end up calling the office and asking one of the most unkind receptionists I've ever met to make an appointment."

"Regarding staff: Doctors are good, but staff at counter oftentimes rude, disgruntled. Really uncomfortable with them seeing my medical information."

Do you have any other comments about how Columbia could improve the process of taking personal or medical leave?

“I have been thinking about taking one, and the response in my department has been very passive”

“Explain to international students directly and clearly what our options are, and what the implications are of each with regard to finances, housing, health coverage, academics, and immigration. It shouldn't take weeks, and conversations with five different offices/departments, to figure this out when you are already sick or otherwise in a difficult situation. I went through the rounds to find out it was basically impossible in my case to get leave. Thankfully my department was accommodating and things worked out. But the general uncertainty was not helpful at the time.”

“In January 2019, I did inquire about the procedures for medical leave, although I ended up not taking one. I was pointed to a person who is supposedly in charge of leaves; first, she told me that I would lose my insurance -- which turned out to be false (and the policy wasn't changed recently, either); second, she had no clue about the policies for returning the stipend and paycheck amounts I have received so far in the semester, and had to point me to a different administrator. Since insurance and finances are the two key issues when considering requesting leave, this experience really begs the question of what this person is getting paid for, and I wonder how many people have received incorrect or incomplete counsel from her before. In short, staff capable of explaining the actual policy would be most helpful, to start with.”

“DON'T MAKE THEM LOSE THEIR HEALTH INSURANCE WHEN ON A MEDICAL LEAVE!!”

“Parental leave would be less of a burden were there childcare for graduate students available on campus. Furthermore, the available \$2,000 stipend for childcare does not pay for even one month of daycare.”

“Needs to be more clear about when exactly students can return from leave. I was told that as a student coming back from leave I could not be registered as a student during the summer as this was against GSAS rules, but this is stated nowhere in their rules online.”

“I was hospitalized with acute illness so my leave could not be processed in the normal way .My leave was used against me to deny me the funding promised me in my admissions letter. i lost health columbia health insurance after being hospitalized. i could pay for it but through the nose and then told i could not even pay for it.”

“It feels like Columbia doesn't actually care that much about the mental health of its undergraduates which is disturbing”

“I have not once been able to make an appointment with medical services using the online portal in the last year. I have had to either walk in or call and beg to get an appointment. This sends a clear message that the school does not want us to use medical services unless we have a pressing health issue, despite the high medical services fee it charges each student every semester. This has discouraged me from seeking care when I

need it or scheduling routine checkups. I also worry about the fees and copays that quickly add up when sent to a doctor off campus. And so, while there are issues I would like to consult a doctor about, I find that it is not reasonable to do so now. Despite the expense of the system, it seems to be designed less to support students in maintaining their health and more to provide a quick bandaid to immediate health problems.”

“While I have not taken medical leave myself, I know someone who has, and the process was so terrible that they ended up not returning to the program. (Richard Slusarczyk in fact seemed to encourage them not to.)”

“I considered taking leave for health reasons, but you are required to vacate your apartment. Where exactly do they expect me to go? How is that supporting students by making them move out????”

“Just nuke it, start from scratch”

“Parental accommodation is meaningless if it takes away funded semesters.”

Section Summary and Remarks:

Overall, graduate students are either dissatisfied with the available resources for their physical and mental health, or are not quite sure whether they are sufficient. This suggests that room for improvement in this matter is substantial, and many potential improvements are articulated in student comments. In all, the results of this section indicate that students are potentially underutilizing the existing resources, or are having negative experiences when they do make use of them. Especially important is the issue of resources designed to meet the specific needs of graduate students, which would take into account the realities of their academic and personal lives. More specifically, it appears that there are concerns with the appointment system for both Medical Services and Counseling and Psychological Services in addition to concerns about dental and vision coverage. The process of taking a medical leave has been very complicated for several respondents and there seems to be confusion as to what the process and policies are. There are also complaints about specific members of the Health Services apparatus that warrant investigation to ensure the best possible care is given to students.

Diversity and Inclusion

Section Overview

In the near-decade since the ASGC Quality of Life report has been published, there has yet to be a survey of Masters and Ph.D. students' experiences with and attitudes towards diversity and inclusion. Nearing the fifteen year mark of Columbia dedicating \$185 million towards increasing faculty diversity, and tailing the 2018 release of the first report on faculty diversity and equity, the Quality of Life Committee thought it particularly important to proactively solicit graduate student feedback on the efficacy of Columbia's diversity and inclusion efforts. To that end, we asked a series of questions about students' perceptions of both student- and faculty-level diversity and inclusion. Further, given discipline- and department-specific nuances, the report asks students to reflect on their own departments' efforts, in addition to the efforts of the Columbia at large.

In traditional Quality of Life style, the data are shared in full with the proportion of responses per scale point (e.g., 1-10) displayed for each item in the section. However, to better capture key trends in the data, the Diversity & Inclusion section of the report will also report group and discipline-specific averages for each survey item. Additionally, given the importance of identity in perceptions of how inclusive and diverse one's environment is, the data are also briefly discussed with respect to respondents' self-identified gender and race. In these analyses, Black/African-American and non-White Hispanic/Latinxs are analyzed as one group, given the scarcity in numbers. White, Asian/Asian-American, and multiracial respondents are also analyzed. In terms of gender, male, female, and gender queer/non-binary/non-conforming (GQNBNC) respondents are analyzed in three respective groups. For ease of interpretation, axes are truncated.

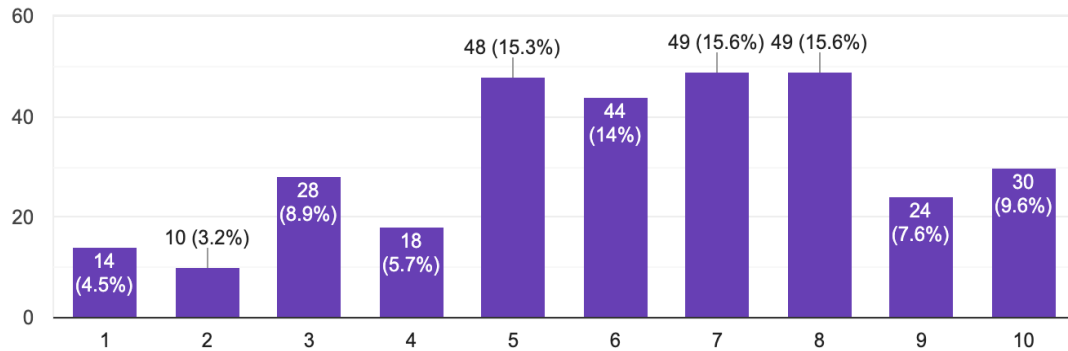
Do you feel that Columbia is committed to diversity and inclusion at a (a) student and (b) faculty level?

This question was presented as two separate items, referring to either the student or faculty population. For both items, students responded on a scale of 1 (Not at all) to 10 (Very much so).

Student Level

Do you feel that Columbia is committed to diversity and inclusion at the student level?

314 responses

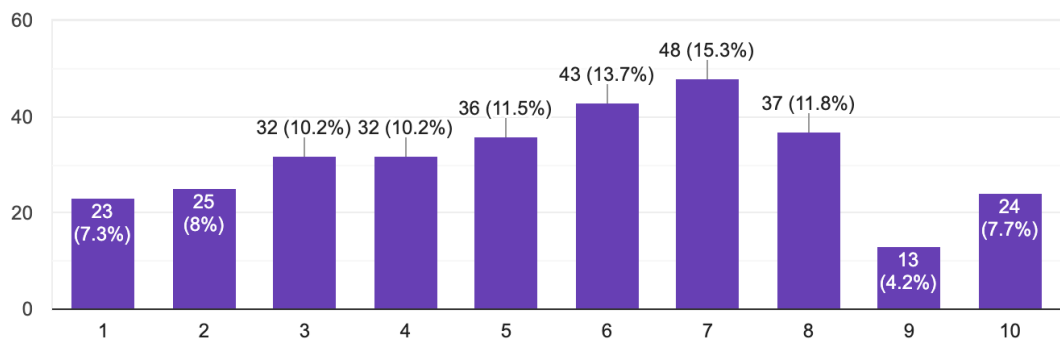


The bulk of respondents reported feeling that Columbia is fairly committed to diversity and inclusion at the student level, with the majority of students (60.5%) selecting 7-8, 5, and 6, respectively. Only 22.3% of students responded with 4 or lower, with 4.5% reporting that they do not feel Columbia is committed to student diversity and inclusion at all.

Faculty Level

Do you feel that Columbia is committed to diversity and inclusion at the faculty level?

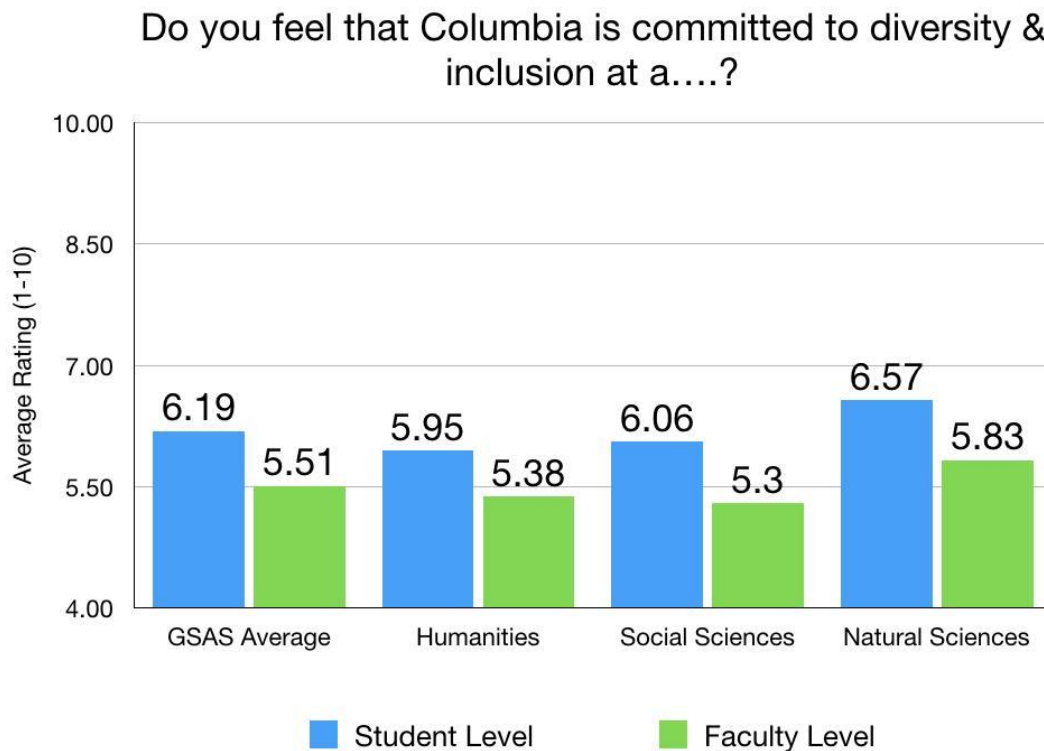
313 responses



In response to whether they feel Columbia is committed to faculty diversity and inclusion, the majority of respondents responded in moderate agreeance: 40.8% of students responded with a 6, 7, or 8. Compared to feelings about Columbia's commitment to *student* diversity and inclusion, however, more students reported little to no confidence in

Columbia’s *faculty* diversity and inclusion efforts: 35.7% of students responded with a 4 or lower, with 7.3% reporting that they do not feel Columbia is committed to faculty diversity and inclusion at all.

Overall and Discipline-Specific Averages



On average, when asked whether they feel Columbia is committed to student- and faculty-level diversity and inclusion, GSAS students responded with ratings of 6.19 and 5.51, respectively. This trend, wherein students are generally less confident in Columbia’s commitment to faculty diversity and inclusion as compared to the student diversity and inclusion, persists across Humanities (Student: 5.95; Faculty: 5.38), Social Sciences (Student: 6.06; Faculty: 5.30), and Natural Sciences (Student: 6.57; Faculty: 5.83). In raw averages, respondents from the Natural Sciences expressed the most confidence in Columbia’s commitment to diversity and inclusion on either level. Comparatively, Humanities respondents were least confident.

A Note on Identity

Respondents who self-reported as Black/African-American or non-White Hispanic/Latinx (mean: 4.59, SD: .46) or multiracial (mean: 5.18, SD: .58) were statistically less likely to feel that Columbia was committed to student-level diversity and inclusion, as compared to Asian/American (mean: 6.96, SD: .32) and White (mean: 6.21, SD: .18) respondents. Black/African-American, non-White Hispanic/Latinx, and multiracial respondents’ averages did not significantly differ from one another ($p = .40$),

but were all significantly lower than Asian/Asian-Americans respondents' ($p = 0$; $p = .02$). Asian/Asian-Americans' average was slightly higher than the White average, but only via marginal significance ($p = .06$).

In terms of faculty-level diversity and inclusion, Black/Latinx respondents (mean: 3.89, SD: .48) and multiracial respondents (mean: 4.06, SD: .63) were statistically less likely than both Asian (mean: 6.53, SD: .33) and White (mean: 5.46, SD: .18) respondents to feel that Columbia is committed ($p < 0$). Black/Latinx and multiracial students did not statistically differ from one another ($p = .83$).

Looking at gender, women (mean: 6.03, SD: .17) were less likely than men (mean: 6.59, SD: .28) to feel that Columbia was committed to student-level diversity and inclusion, but only via marginal significance ($p = .09$).

From the faculty-level diversity and inclusion vantage point, women (mean: 5.11, SD: .18) were statistically less likely than men (mean: 6.27, SD: .30) to feel that Columbia was committed ($p = 0$).

With so few GQNBNC respondents (mean: 4.6, SD: 1.14), average differences could not reach significance.

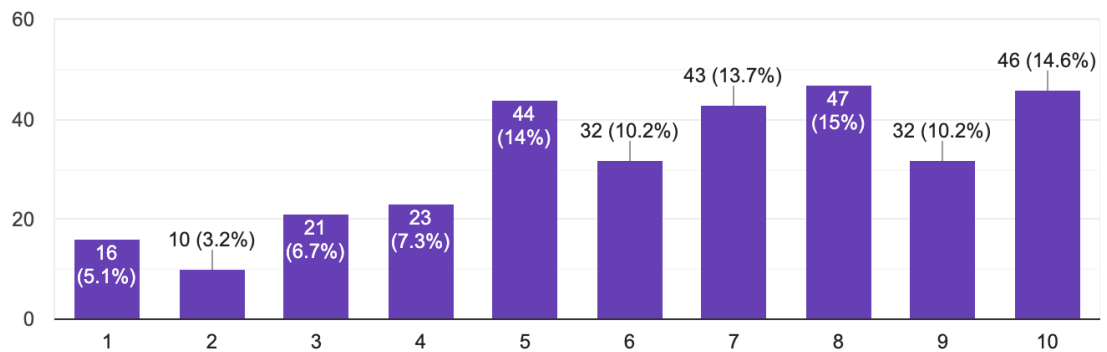
Do you feel that your department is committed to diversity and inclusion at a (a) student and (b) faculty level?

This question was presented as two separate items, referring to either the student or faculty population. For both items, students responded on a scale of 1 (Not at all) to 10 (Very much so).

Student Level

Do you feel that your department is committed to diversity and inclusion at the student level?

314 responses

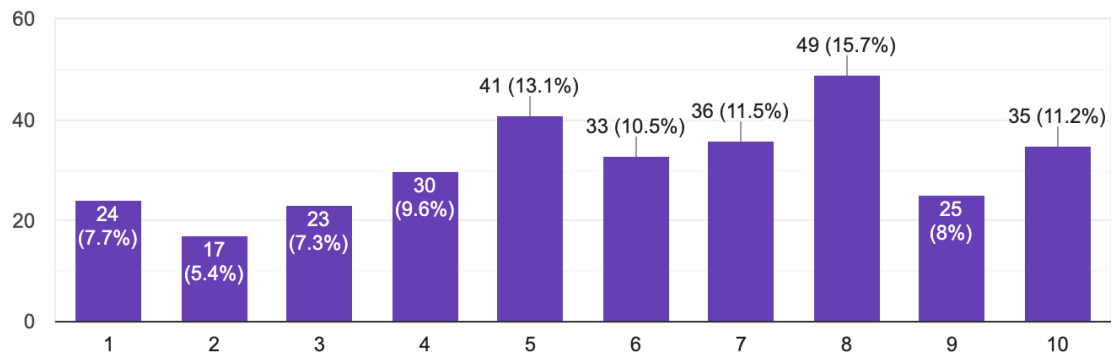


In response to whether respondents feel that their department is committed to student diversity and inclusion, 43.6% of students responded with a 5, 8, or 10 in confidence. 22.3% of students responded with a 4 or lower.

Faculty Level

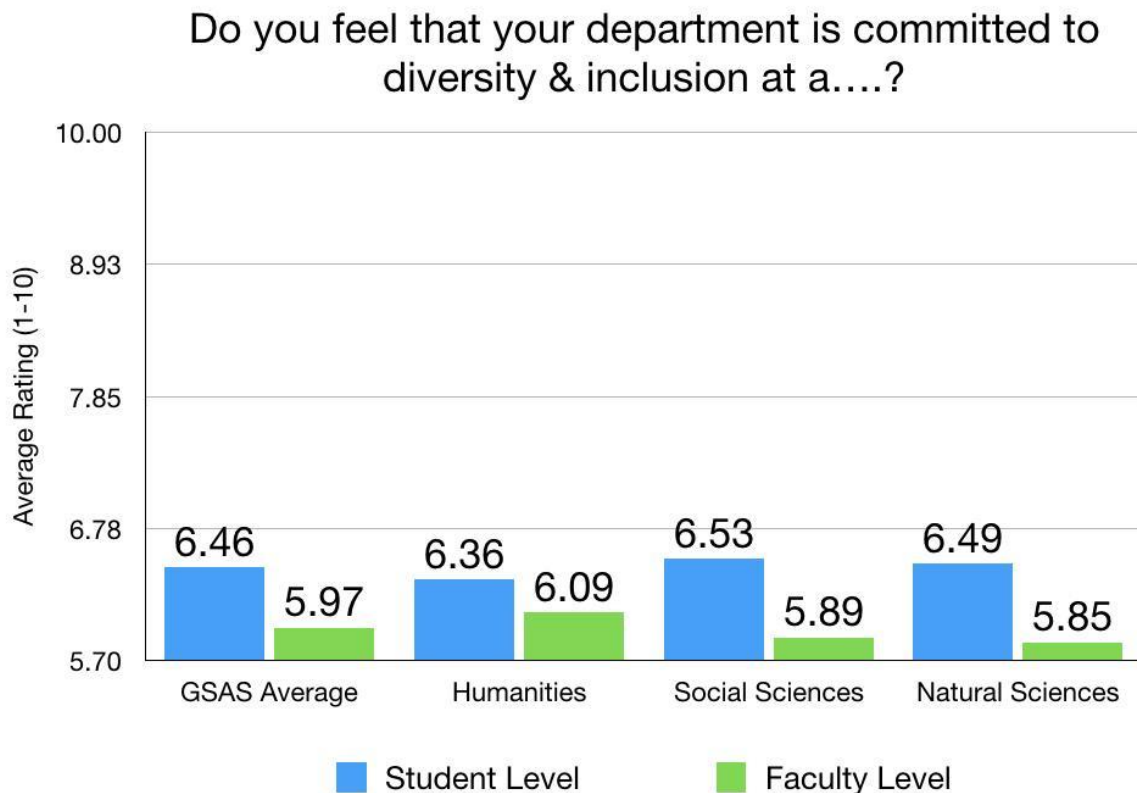
Do you feel that your department is committed to diversity and inclusion at the faculty level?

313 responses



In response to whether respondents feel that their department is committed to faculty diversity and inclusion, students generally responded with slightly less confidence: 40.3% responded with a 5, 7, or 8. 30% of students responded with a 4 or lower, with 7.7% of students feeling that their department is not committed to faculty diversity and inclusion at all.

Overall and Discipline-Specific Averages



On average, when asked whether they feel their department is committed to student- and faculty-level diversity and inclusion, GSAS students responded with ratings of 6.46 and 5.97, respectively. This trend, wherein students are generally less confident in their departments' commitment to faculty diversity and inclusion as compared to the student diversity and inclusion, persists across Humanities (Student: 6.36 ; Faculty: 6.09), Social Sciences (Student: 6.53; Faculty: 5.59), and Natural Sciences (Student: 6.49; Faculty: 5.85). In raw averages, respondents from the Social Sciences expressed the most confidence in their departments' commitment to diversity and inclusion at a student level, while respondents from the Humanities were least confident. Respondents from the Humanities were most confident in their departments' commitment to faculty-level diversity and inclusion, and respondents from the Natural Sciences were least confident.

A Note on Identity

Statistically significant differences emerged between Black/Latinx (mean: 5.03, SD: .50) and both White (mean: 6.41, SD: .19) and Asian (mean: 7.05, SD: .35) respondents, such that White and Asian respondents felt more strongly that their departments were committed to student-level diversity and inclusion ($p = .03$). Multiracial (mean: 6.59, SD: .64), White, and Asian respondents did not statistically differ (in all cases, $p > .10$).

In a similar trend, Black/Latinx respondents (mean: 4.28, SD: .52) were statistically less likely to feel that their departments were committed to faculty diversity and inclusion, as compared to multiracial (mean: 5.06, SD: .66), White (mean: 5.93, SD: .19), and Asian

(mean: 6.91, SD: .38) respondents (in all cases, $p < \text{or} = 0$). Asian respondents were more confident than White respondents about their departments' commitment ($p = .02$).

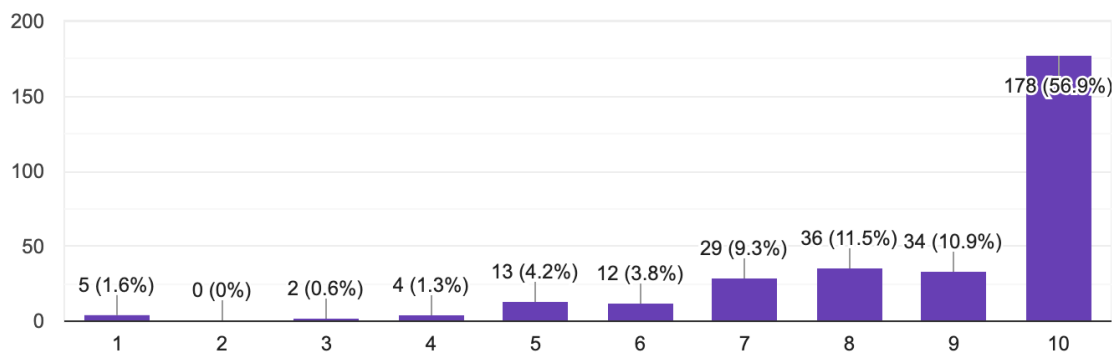
By gender, women were less confident in their departments' commitment to both faculty (mean: 5.55, SD: .19) and student (mean: 6.24, SD: .19) diversity and inclusion, as compared to men (means: 6.79/6.96, SDs: .31 / .30, respectively) ($p = 0$). As compared to men and women, GQNBNC respondents were least confident at the student level (mean: 4, SD: 1.16; $p = .05$). Via marginal significance, GQNBNC (mean: 3.25, SD: 1.33) were also less confident than women that their departments were committed to faculty diversity and inclusion ($p = .09$).

Do you support efforts towards increasing diversity and inclusion at both a student and faculty level?

In a single item, students were asked if they themselves support efforts towards increasing diversity and inclusion on both the student and faculty level. As before, respondents used a scale of 1 (Not at all) to 10 (Very much so).

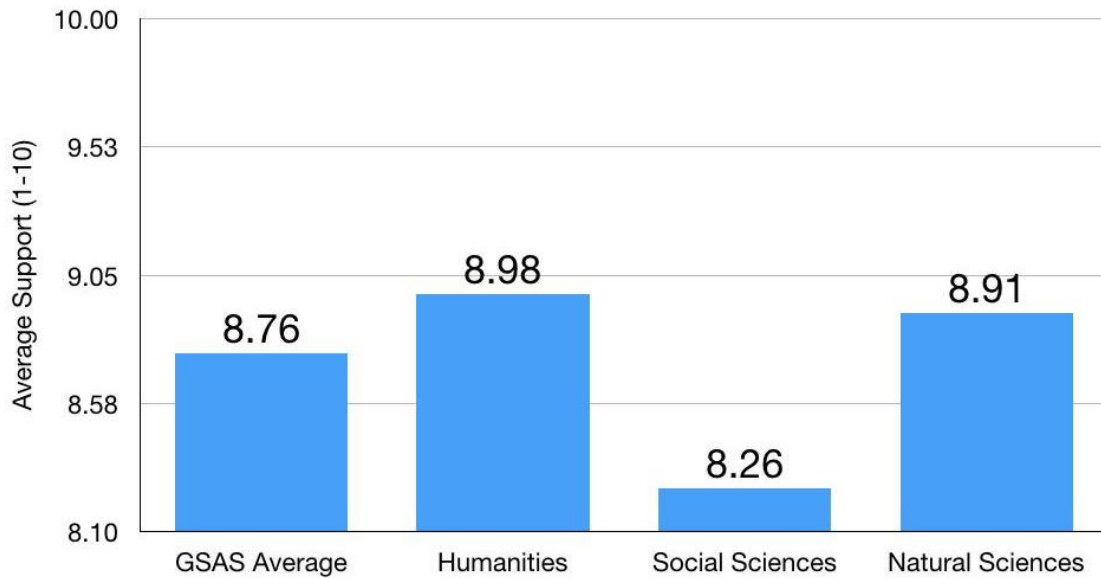
Do you support efforts towards increasing diversity and inclusion on both the student and faculty level at Columbia?

313 responses



The majority of respondents reported supporting efforts towards increasing diversity and inclusion at a student and faculty level: 56.9% responded with a strong 10, with 11.5% and 10.9% responding with 8 or 9, respectively. 3.5% of students chose a 4 or lower in their support for these efforts, with 1.6% of students reporting that they do not support diversity and inclusion efforts at all.

Do you support efforts towards increasing diversity and inclusion at a student and faculty level?



Overall and Discipline-Specific Averages

On average, respondents responded with strong support for diversity and inclusion efforts (Mean: 8.76). The Humanities (8.98), Natural Sciences (8.91), and Social Sciences (8.26) also expressed strong support.

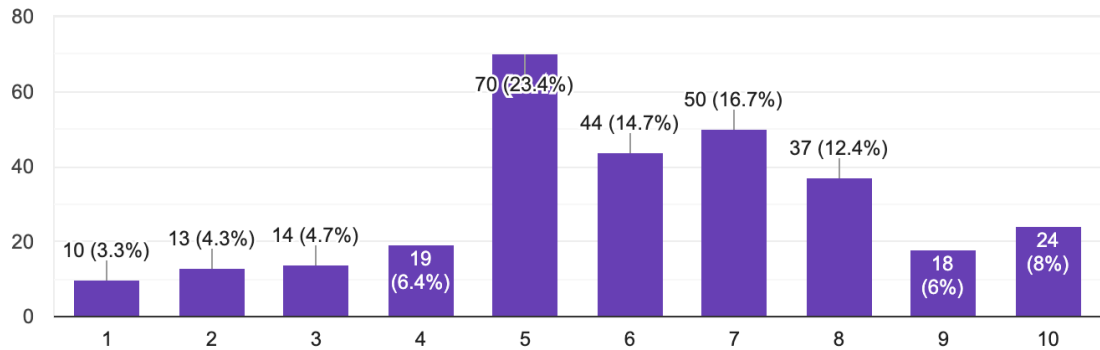
A Note on Identity

There were no statistically significant racial differences in respondents' support for diversity and inclusion efforts. There were, however, statistically significant gender differences, such that women (mean: 9.13, SD: .13) as compared to men (mean: 8.13, SD: .22) expressed greater support for diversity and inclusion efforts ($p < 0$).

Compared to peer institutions, how do you think Columbia ranks in its commitment to diversity and inclusion (1 = Very low, 10 = Very high)

Compared to peer institutions, how do you think Columbia ranks in its commitment to diversity and inclusion?

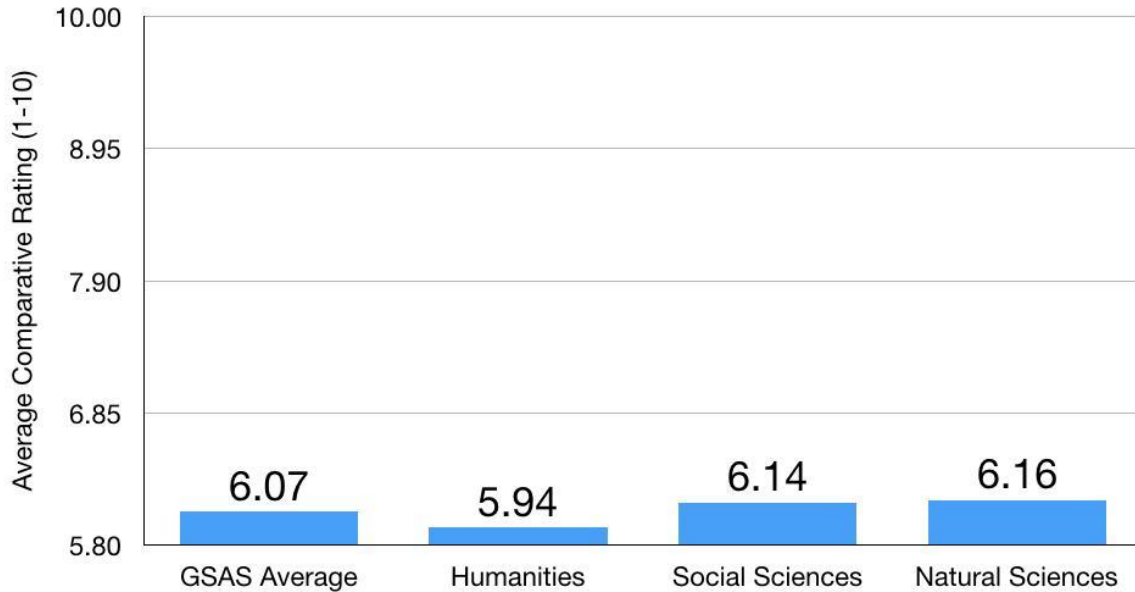
299 responses



In ranking Columbia alongside its peer institutions in terms of its commitment to diversity and inclusion, the majority of respondents gave Columbia a ranking of 5 (23.4%), 7 (16.7%), or 6 (14.7%), a fairly moderate peer ranking. 18.7% of respondents ranked Columbia with a 4 or lower, with 3.3% ranking Columbia with the lowest possible score.

Overall and Discipline-Specific Averages

Compared to peer institutions, how do you think Columbia ranks in its commitment to diversity and inclusion?



In comparing Columbia to its peer institutions in terms of its commitment to diversity and inclusion, respondents ranked Columbia a 6.07, on average. Out of the Natural Sciences (6.16), Social Sciences (6.14), and Humanities (5.94), Natural Sciences rated Columbia the highest. Across all areas, however, Columbia was ranked only moderately.

A Note on Identity

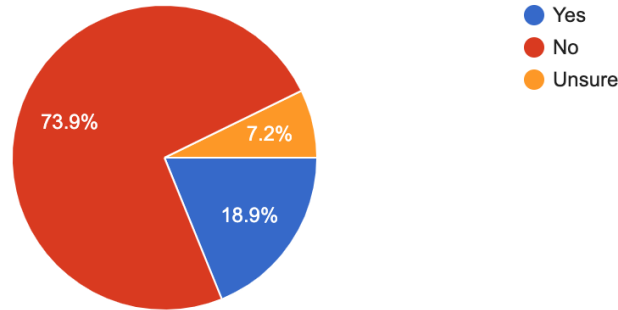
As compared to White (mean: 5.96, SD: .126), Black/Latinx (mean: 5.5, SD: .44), and multiracial (mean: 4.57, SD: .59) respondents, Asian respondents provided higher rankings, on average (in all cases, $p < .05$). White, Black/Latinx, and multiracial groups did not significantly differ from one another, statistically.

Men (mean: 6.65, SD: .27) ranked Columbia higher than women (mean: 5.78, SD: .16), on average ($p = 0$).

Have you read Columbia's latest report on faculty diversity (Yes, No, Unsure)?

Have you read Columbia's latest report on faculty diversity?

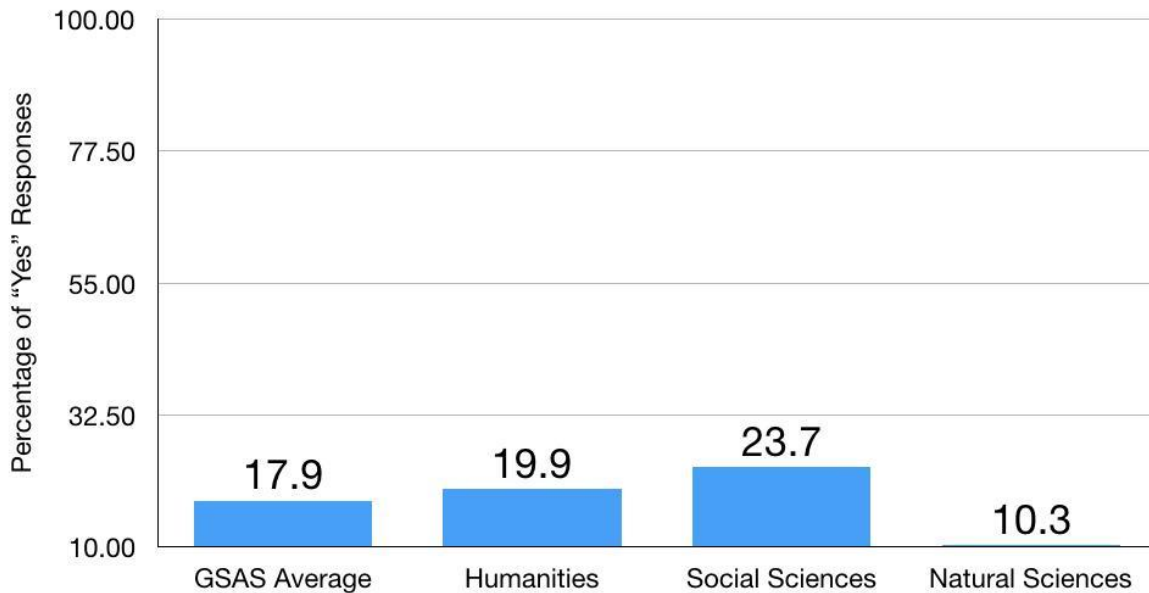
318 responses



The majority of respondents (73.9%) had not read the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Diversity and Inclusion's report on faculty diversity. 18.9% of respondents did read the report, and 7.2% were unsure if they had.

Overall and Discipline-Specific Averages

Have you read Columbia's latest report on faculty diversity?



17.9% of all respondents reported that they had read Columbia's 2018 faculty diversity report. Across areas, the Social Sciences had the highest percentage of readers (23.7%)

and the Natural Sciences had the least (10.3%). 19.9% of Humanities respondents read the report.

A Note on Identity

10% of Asian respondents, 16% of White respondents, 26% of multiracial respondents, and 45% of Black/Latinx respondents reported having read the faculty diversity report.

20% of GQNBNC, 19% of women, and 18% of men read the report.

Do you have any additional comments about diversity and inclusion at Columbia (open-ended)?

There were a total of 52 responses to this open-ended question. Thematically, many comments expressed deep concern with the legitimacy and efficacy of Columbia's diversity and inclusion efforts:

Columbia values the appearance of diversity in its student body but is uninterested in providing its students, faculty, and especially staff with the material resources necessary to create an equitable and just community accessible to people of all backgrounds.

Columbia tends toward the tokenism model, both in their acceptance of students and their hiring of faculty, which means that they have no structural or institutional support for individuals once they arrive, which sets them up to fail

I do not believe increasing faculty and student diversity is a genuine focus for Columbia, but I would rank Columbia on par with comparable institutions (Yale, Harvard, Princeton) in this regard.

faculty/grad students will not change unless there are rules and consequences to their behavior. how can we hold people accountable for microaggressions?

These comments often highlighted the discrepancy between Columbia's diversity initiatives and their inclusion practices:

Diversity and inclusion are separate issues. Columbia is doing very good w.r.t diversity (which depends on hiring and admission decisions), not as much with inclusion (which depends on making everyone feel at home).

Columbia has installed a tokenism model without providing real support for faculty and students of color. Columbia continues to fail its black and brown students shamefully. I have seen no efforts to address these issues in my six years here with the exception of target of opportunity hires—and I have consistently seen faculty of color, including those hired through those searches, denied tenure. Token hires do nothing to address real structural inequalities if faculty and students of color are not given the institutional resources to succeed.

Other comments specifically alluded to concerns about gender and/or race representation and retention:

My department doesn't have a single non-white/non-Asian faculty member and females make up less than 15% of the department, including among grad students. The faculty diversity report obscures the fact that the physical sciences remain dominated by white men. This presents a serious problem for women and minorities that limits participation in these fields and discourages them from seeking academic positions.

the institution pretends to be inclusive but it is just a facade. the majority of people with power (i.e. tenured or tenure-track professors) are white men

Columbia needs to do a better job of supporting and retained junior faculty of color.

Importantly, concerns about campus accessibility and socioeconomic class were also raised:

This is a campus with TERRIBLE and inconvenient disability access, and Columbia has indicated few plans to make the campus and buildings more disability-friendly.

what about inclusion for low-income students? not all of us have wealthy families to lean on. we need better financial support, this city is horribly expensive.

Further, respondents shared concerns about the inclusivity of Columbia's curriculum:

The Core is heavily western-centric. There is no faculty teaching non-western philosophy.

To attract diverse students, Columbia needs to offer a diverse curriculum. Columbia is falling far behind world class institutions in this sense.

Conversely, some students shared their vehement opposition to diversity and inclusion efforts or expressed confusion about what those efforts would entail:

Yeah, I don't support it whatsoever. I think people should be judged on their ideas and content of their character rather than on the color of their skin. I think the obsession with racial diversity is not only morally repugnant in this regard, but will also hold our university back. I gave Columbia a 10/10 on its commitment to these initiatives, because it is DEFINITELY committed to them. In fact, the constant barrage of emails, initiatives, meetings, and so forth is an assault on my senses. So the commitment is there. I just don't agree with it. But, since we are definitely NOT committed to freedom of speech, were I to discuss any of the above with my peers, I would be hounded out of this institution. Yay for anonymous surveys!

What does it even mean to be "committed to diversity and inclusion"? This feels like a meaningless string of buzzwords. I have no idea how to quantify it.

In general, however, respondents seemed to urge Columbia to simply:

Do better

Section Summary and Remarks

In essence, we asked GSAS students one simple question: fifteen years and \$185 million later, how is Columbia doing in terms of diversity and inclusion? In response, our students expressed that there is much work to be done – and soon.

As of 2018, only 7.2% of Columbia faculty are underrepresented minorities – a 0.3% increase from 2008, but a 1.1% decrease from 2016. With retention of underrepresented minorities being a central element of the ‘inclusion’ aspect of ‘diversity & inclusion’, these data are expressly underwhelming. Looking more closely at faculty racial/ethnic representation, Hispanic/Latinx (3.9%) and Black/African-American (2.9%) faculty are still sorely lacking in numbers. Current statistics indicate an only 0.1% increase in both Hispanic/Latinx and Black faculty since 2008. Furthermore, for both groups, faculty representation has fallen by 0.5% since 2016. Indigenous and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander representation is not even high enough in numbers to be published in Columbia’s report. Notably, the only non-White racial/ethnic group for which representation has increased by greater than 1% is Asian/Asian-American faculty. Since 2008, when Asian/Asian-American faculty were 8.4% of GSAS full-time faculty, Asian/Asian-American representation has increased by 2.5%, making their current representation 10.9% of full-time faculty.

What do the numbers look like for underrepresented minority students? Similar, but possibly worse. As of 2018, only 1.8% of GSAS students are identified as Black/African-American, 3.7% are Hispanic/Latinx, and .03% are Indigenous/Alaskan Native. More concretely, out of 3785 GSAS students, 70 are Black, 140 are Hispanic/Latinx, and 1 is Indigenous/Alaskan Native. Overall, with 29% students identified as racial/ethnic minorities, GSAS actually boasts the lowest percentage of minority students out of all Morningside Graduate & Professional and Medical Center Graduate Schools. Comparatively, 5.8% of GSAS students identify as Asian/Asian-American and 24% identify as White.

With these data in mind, it should come as no surprise that students – underrepresented minority students, in particular – expressed disappointment at the state of diversity and inclusion at Columbia. Women, who are 41% of all GSAS faculty, also echoed this concerned sentiment, on average. If data were published on representation of LGBTQ and GQNBNC faculty, we might expect similarly disappointed sexual and/or gender minority students. Importantly, given that these identities are not always mutually exclusive, an intersectional lens would call upon us to consider how students who exist at the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, disability status, socioeconomic class, and/or religion are uniquely underserved and underrepresented on this campus.

A new academic year on the horizon, time will tell whether students’ attitudes and experiences shift for the better. Until then, the 2018 Quality of Life Report on Diversity and Inclusion suggests a graduate student body that needs and wants Columbia to do

better for its students, do better for its faculty, and do better for themselves. In GSAS's own words, "*Columbia will be a stronger institution... if we create an intellectual collective that is reflective of the disparate experiences of its constituents.*" So, let's make Columbia stronger -- but more importantly, let's make Columbia more inclusive of the people driving that strength.

You can click [here](#) to read the GSAS statement on diversity and inclusion, [here](#) to access the 2018 faculty diversity data, and [here](#) to access 2018 student diversity data.

Violence, Discrimination and Harassment

Section overview

This section addressed experiences of harassment and discrimination among the graduate student population, with a special focus on the adequacy of administrative and departmental response. In addition to this, a cross-section analysis looks at the demographics of students who report either having experienced, or being affected, by harassment in order to identify: both the most vulnerable groups, and those most likely to report instances of violence, discrimination and harassment to the Columbia administration.

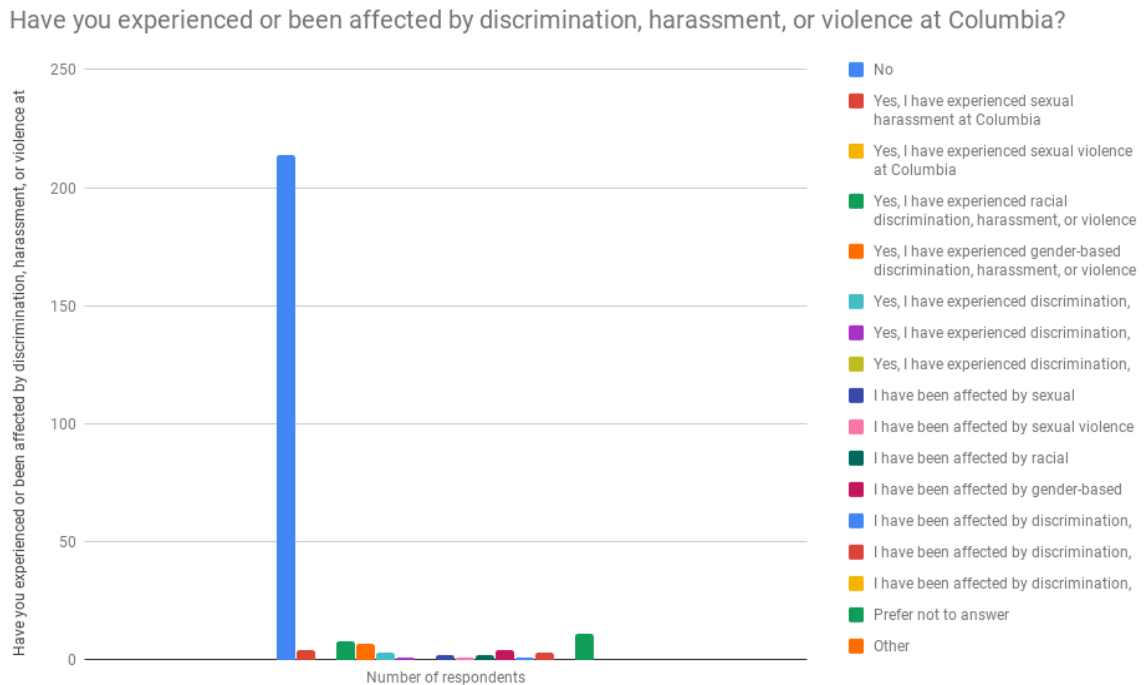
Have you experienced or been affected by discrimination, harassment, or violence at Columbia?

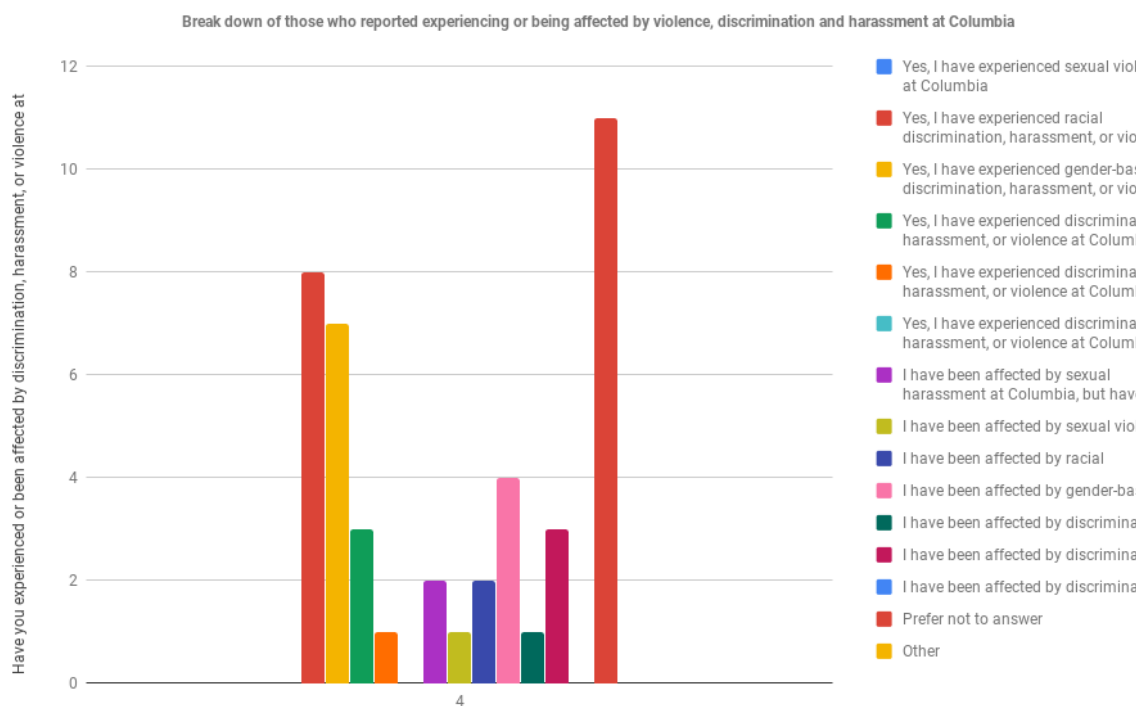
This was a multiple-choice question inquiring specifically about experiences of sexual harassment or discrimination on the basis of either race, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability. Respondents were asked both whether they had experienced discrimination directly, and whether they had been affected by witnessing instances of discrimination, harassment and violence at Columbia. The available answers included:

- No
- Yes, I have experienced sexual harassment at Columbia
- Yes, I have experienced sexual violence at Columbia
- Yes, I have experienced racial discrimination, harassment, or violence at Columbia
- Yes, I have experienced gender-based discrimination, harassment, or violence at Columbia
- Yes, I have experienced discrimination, harassment, or violence at Columbia because of a disability
- Yes, I have experienced discrimination, harassment, or violence at Columbia based on my sexual orientation
- Yes, I have experienced discrimination, harassment, or violence at Columbia as a trans or gender-nonconforming person
- I have been affected by sexual harassment at Columbia, but have not directly experienced it
- I have been affected by sexual violence at Columbia, but have not directly experienced it
- I have been affected by racial discrimination, harassment, or violence at Columbia, but have not directly experienced it
- I have been affected by gender-based discrimination, harassment, or violence at Columbia, but have not directly experienced it
- I have been affected by discrimination, harassment, or violence at Columbia because of a disability, but have not directly experienced it
- I have been affected by discrimination, harassment, or violence at Columbia based on

sexual orientation, but have not directly experienced it
 I have been affected by discrimination, harassment, or violence at Columbia against
 trans or gender-nonconforming people, but have not directly experienced it
 Prefer not to answer
 Other

A cross-section analysis reveals that while the majority of students answered “No”, over half of those that replied in the positive, reported having experienced or being affected by at least two forms of harassment or discrimination. Over half of students who identified as Black/African American reported having experienced racial discrimination, and nearly half of students who identify as non-binary or gender-nonconforming reported having experienced discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Of the 96 students that reported having experienced, or having been affected by, some form of violence, harassment or discrimination 71 identified either as female or genderqueer (74%). N=331.



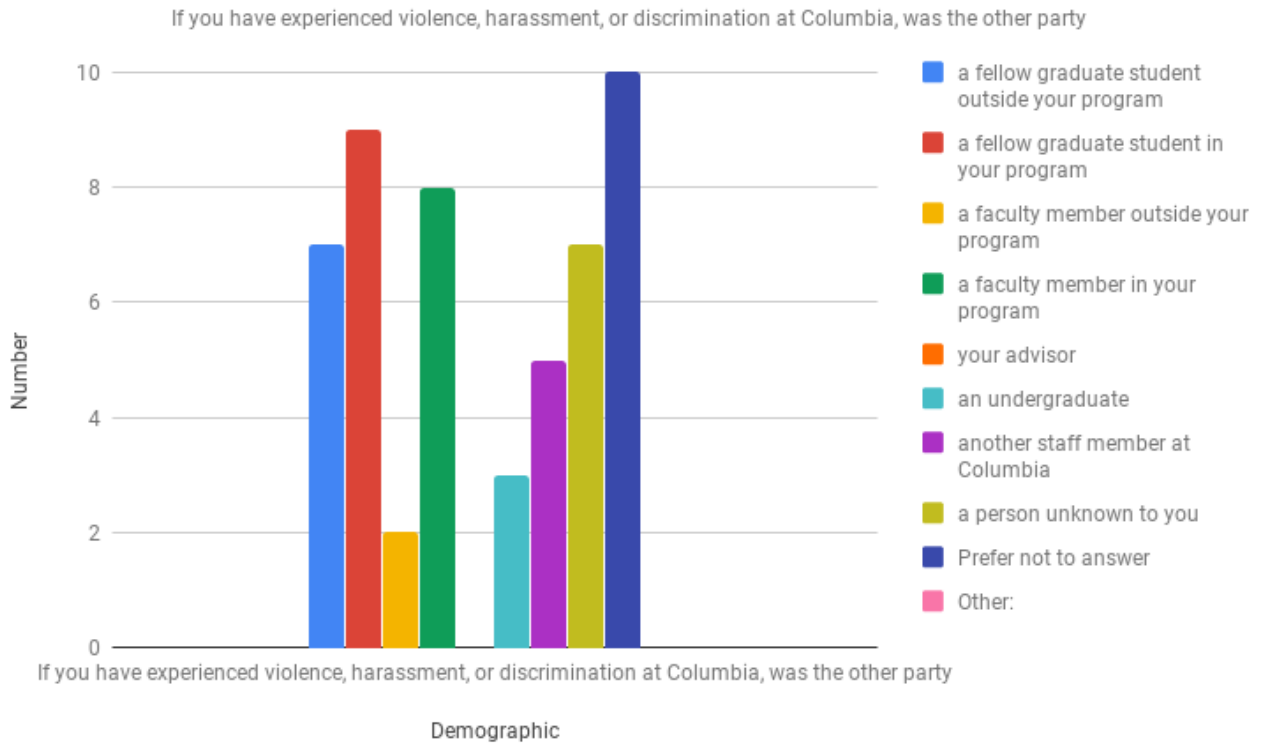


If you have experienced violence, harassment, or discrimination at Columbia, was the other party:

This was a multiple-choice question where students, if they answered yes to the previous question, were asked to identify their relationship to their harassers. Options provided included:

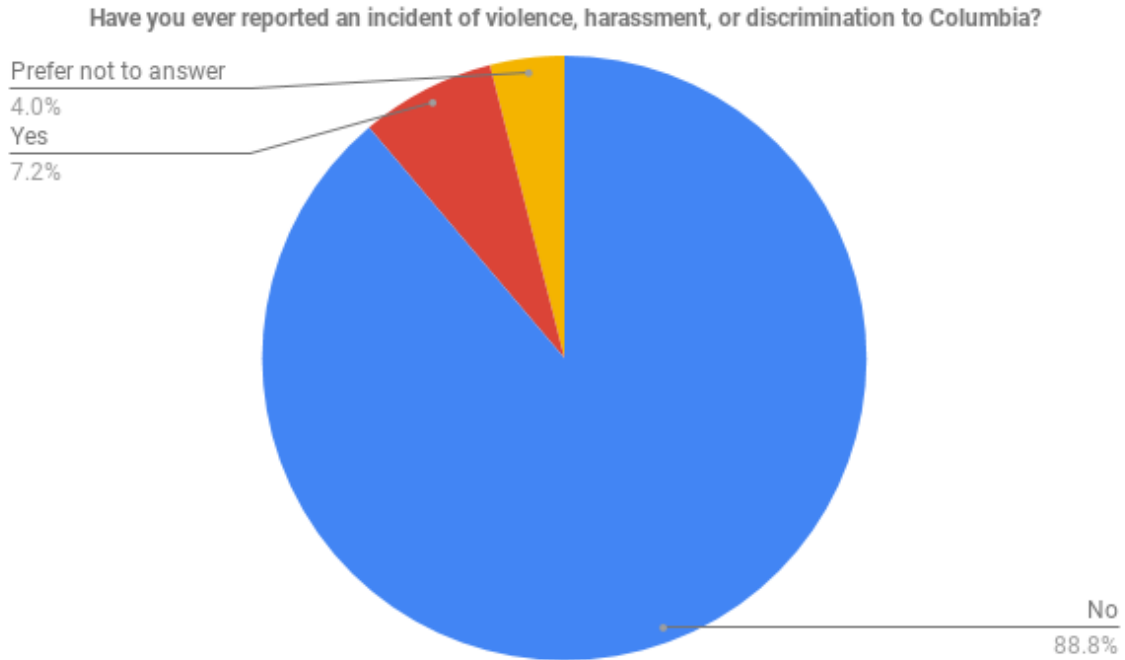
- a fellow graduate student outside your program
- a fellow graduate student in your program
- a faculty member outside your program
- a faculty member in your program
- your advisor
- an undergraduate
- another staff member at Columbia
- a person unknown to you
- Prefer not to answer
- Other:

While no students reported their “advisor,” 10 of the 71 who replied chose “prefer not to answer. N=77.



Have you ever reported an incident of violence, harassment, or discrimination to Columbia?

This was a multiple-choice question asking students if they have themselves ever reported an instance of violence, harassment or discrimination. Options offered were “yes,” “no,” and “prefer not to answer.” N=277

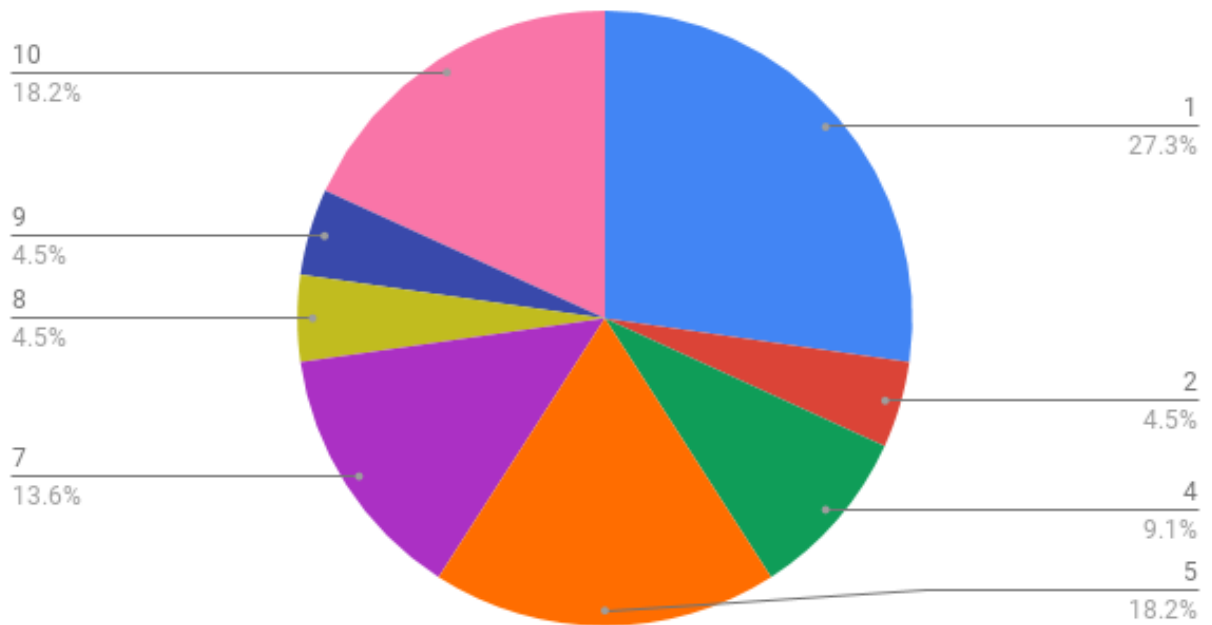


Of the 31 students that reported reporting an incident of violence, harassment or discrimination to Columbia, 19 identified as “White/European-American” (61%), 8 identified as “Asian/Asian American” and only 1 identified as “Black/African-American”, “Hispanic or Latino/a/x”, and “Middle Eastern/North-African” respectively. This despite the fact that, of the 97 students who reported in the affirmative to Question 1, only 55% identified as “White/ European-American”.

If you have reported an incident involving violence, harassment, or discrimination to Columbia, how satisfied were you with their response?

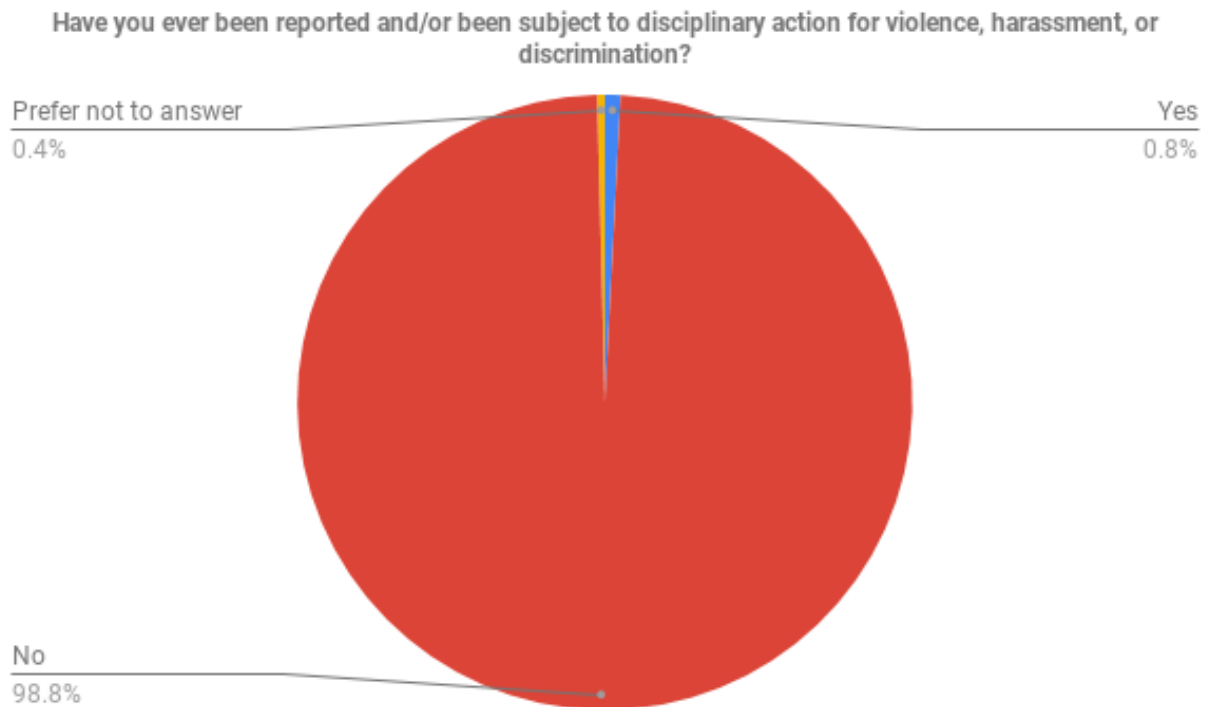
This was a scaled question that asked respondents to rate their satisfaction with Columbia’s response after they had reported harassment or discrimination, ranging from 1 (“not at all”) to 10 (“very”). Although 37 people responded to this question, 15 of them had responded “no” to the previous question on whether they had reported any incidents themselves. The graph below filters out such responses, and only includes responses by those who answered “yes” or “prefer not to answer” to the previous question. N=22

If you have reported an incident involving violence, harassment, or discrimination to Columbia, how satisfied were you with their response?



Have you ever been reported and/or been subject to disciplinary action for violence, harassment, or discrimination?

This was a multiple-choice question asking students whether they were themselves ever reported or disciplined for harassment or discrimination. Options offered were “yes,” “no,” and “prefer not answer.” N=246.



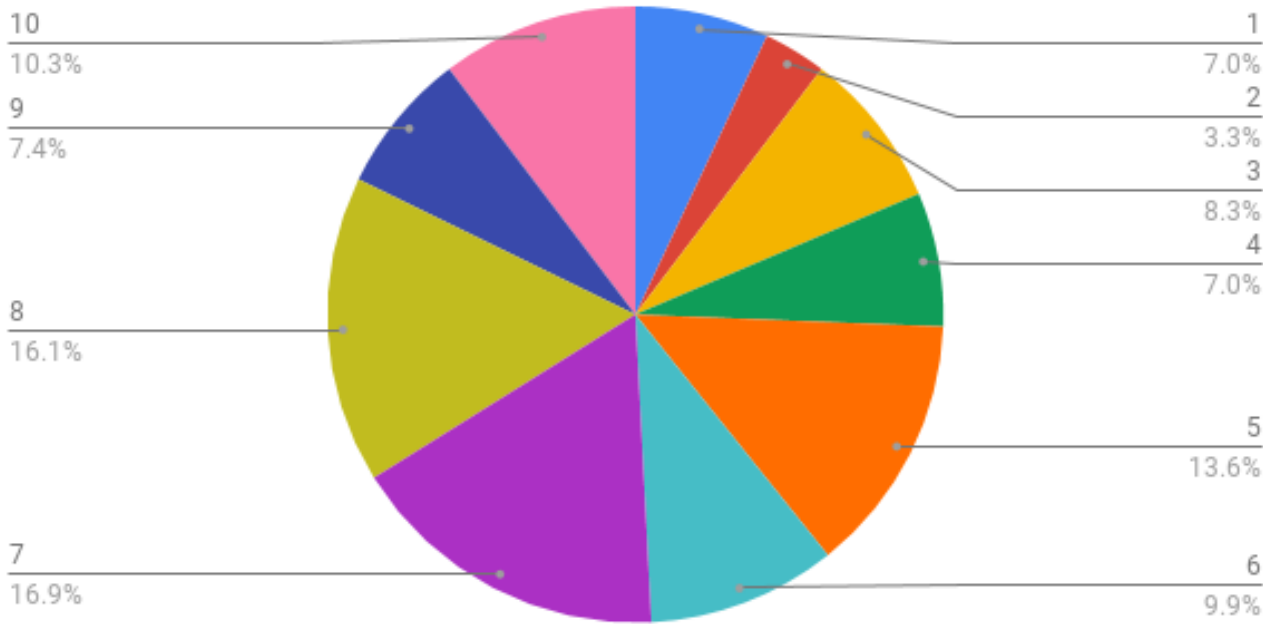
If you have been reported and/or been subject to disciplinary action for violence, harassment, or discrimination, how satisfied were you with Columbia's response?

17 people rated their satisfaction with Columbia's response to harassment reports from the perspective of the accused. However only 2 of those responses were valued as the question referred specifically to the person's who have first-hand experience of the administration's response in such situations. Of those that replied, both reported extreme dissatisfaction with Columbia's response; ranking it 1, on a scale from 1-10. N=2

Do you feel that Columbia University is committed to providing a working, learning and living environment free from discrimination, harassment, and violence and to fostering a nurturing and vibrant community founded upon the fundamental dignity and worth of all of its members?

This was a scaled question that asked respondents about the extent to which they agreed with the statement quoted in the question, on a scale of 1 ("completely disagree") to 10 ("very much so"). N=242

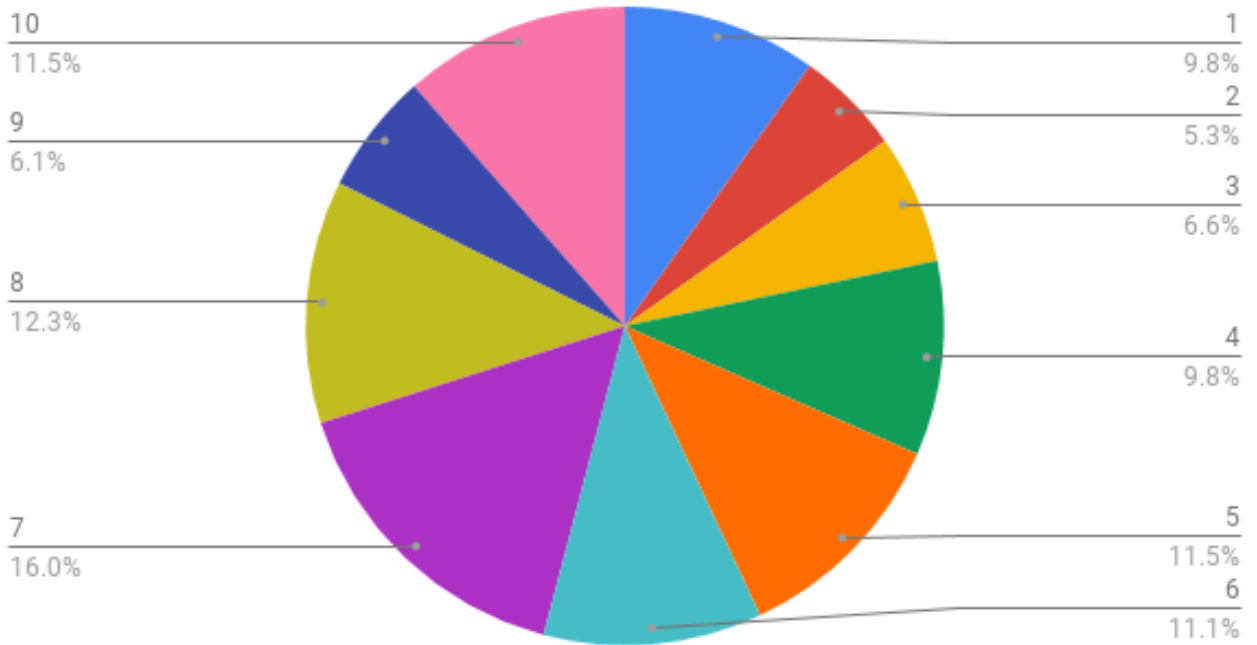
Do you feel that Columbia University is committed to providing a working, learning and living environment free from discrimination, harassment, and violence and to fostering a nurturing and vibrant community founded upon the fundamental dignity and worth of all of its members?



Do you feel that resources for reporting violence, discrimination, or harassment at Columbia are appropriately publicized?

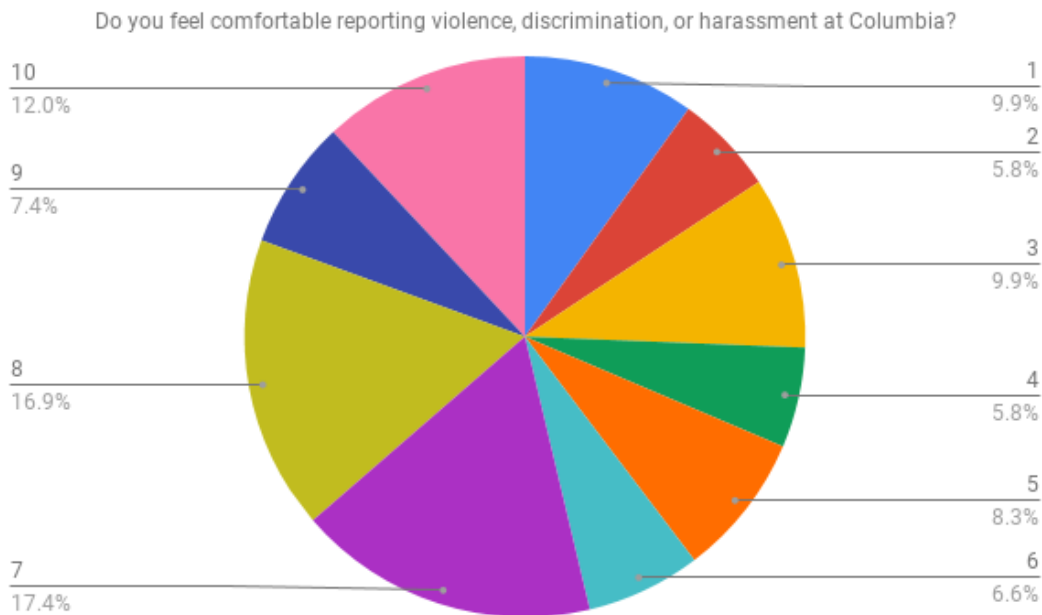
This was a scaled question that asked respondents to judge whether they believe resources for reporting violence, violence and discrimination are appropriately publicized. Respondents were asked to rank the level of appropriateness on a scale of 1 (“not at all”) to 10 (“very much so”). N=220.

Do you feel that resources for reporting violence, discrimination, or harassment at Columbia are appropriately publicized?



Do you feel comfortable reporting violence, discrimination, or harassment at Columbia?

This scaled question asked respondents to rank how comfortable they feel in reporting instances of violence, discrimination and harassment to Columbia. Respondents were asked to rank their response on a scale of 1 (“not at all”) to 10 (“very much so”).
N=242



Do you have any comments about violence, harassment, or discrimination at Columbia?

As in other sections, students were invited to make additional remarks on the topic of this survey section. 26 students used the opportunity, and the vast majority of comments were extremely critical of the administration’s policy and approach for dealing with cases of harassment and discrimination. Several students shared the experience of feeling that the university was much more concerned with protecting its reputation and tenured faculty, then with protecting the victims of harassment and assault. Several respondents also expressed the need for an outlet for reporting “lower-level” instances of discrimination, where they would be able to express concerns and seek advice, without having to engage more formal channels. A couple of students also suggested that the university’s anti-harassment training could be improved, and vehemently stressed the futility of online tutorials. Of those students that did express concerns and dissatisfaction, several also commented on repeated signs of institutional racism. N=26.

Section Summary and Remarks

According to the above responses 29% of survey participants reported either having directly experienced, or having been affected, by instances of violence, harassment and discrimination at Columbia. While the range of choices and experiences makes it hard to devise conclusive statistics of the exact demographics, it is noticeable that 37% of those to report experiencing the effects of discrimination and harassment, recorded experiencing *at least* two forms. These statistics imply that it would be worth doing further cross-sectional, intersectional analysis across different subgroups.

Of the 36 participants that reported violence, discrimination and harassment on multiple fronts, 19 recorded either having experienced or been affected by racial discrimination (53%). It is also important to note that, while 205 (54%) of the total participants identified as female, genderqueer or gender non-conforming, 74% of all persons to report instances of violence, discrimination and harassment identified as female, genderqueer or gender non-conforming. Thirdly, it is particularly striking that **over half of the participants who identified as Black/African American reported having experienced or having been affected by racial discrimination, and nearly half of all persons who identify as non-binary or gender-nonconforming reported having experienced discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.**

Of the 96 survey participants who reported experiencing some form of violence, harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity only 31 (32%) recorded that they had reported the incident to Columbia. Of those that said they had reported the incident, 61% identified as White/European-American, despite the fact that only ~50% of all survey participants identified as White/European-American.

To the scaled question of how comfortable respondents felt reporting instances of violence, discrimination and harassment the range was dispersed pretty evenly. However, for the answers scaled “4” and “below”, ~60% identified as female or gender nonconforming. It is also noticeable that, when asked to identify their relationship to their harasser, no participant named their graduate advisor, despite the fact that the largest majority of participants (~20%) chose the option: “prefer not to answer”.

Lastly, a large majority of persons who reported some form of violence, harassment and discrimination at Columbia did not agree that Columbia is committed to providing an environment free of harassment and discrimination. Many also took the opportunity in the comments section to convey their dissatisfaction and conviction that Columbia’s priority remains to protect its reputation and the status of tenured professors. Additionally, several participants commented on the failure of Columbia to adequately address and respond to the several instances of racial harassment, anti-semitism and violence on campus over the past year.

Parental Accommodations and Relationship Status

Section overview

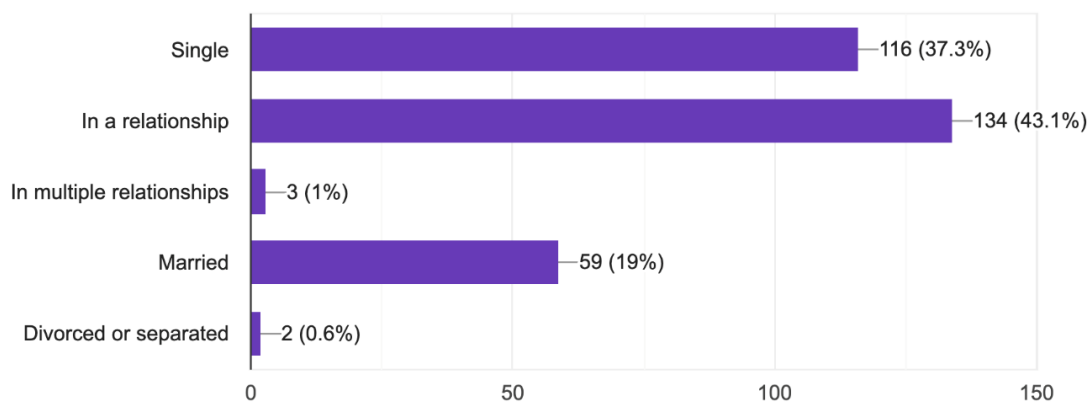
This section focused on relationship status and resources for parents.

Relationship Status

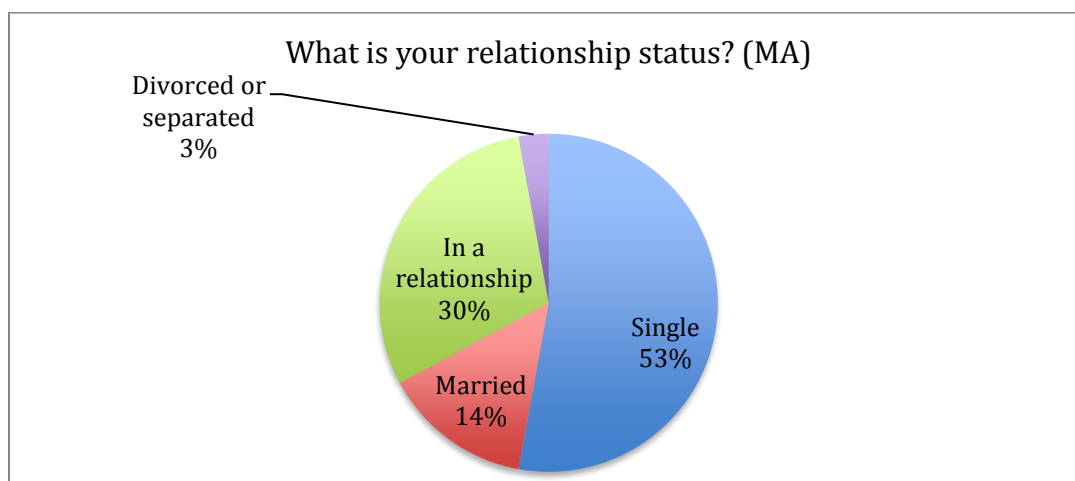
This was a multiple-choice question asking respondents to report their current relationship status. The choices were “single,” “in a relationship,” “in multiple relationships,” “married,” and “divorced or separated.” N=311.

What is your relationship status?

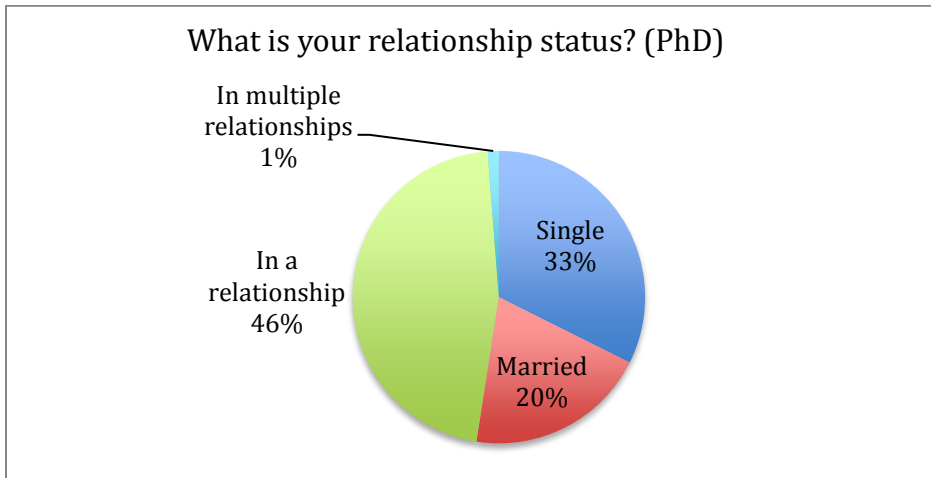
311 responses



37.3% of respondents are single, 43.1% are in a relationship, 1% are in multiple relationships, 19% are married, and 0.6% are divorced or separated.



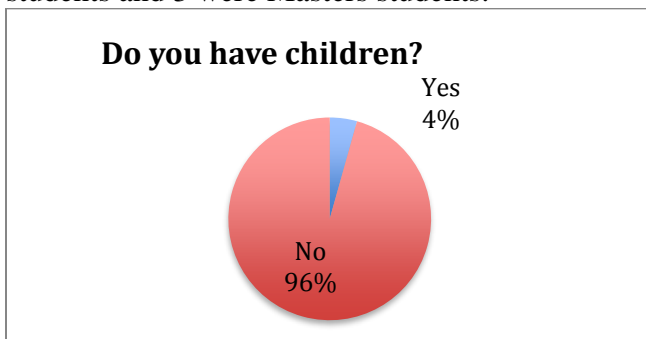
Masters students (N=70) were slightly more likely to be single, at 53%. 14% of Masters student respondents were married, and 30% were in a relationship. Both divorced or separated respondents were Masters students.



Conversely, PhD students (N=241) were more likely to be married (20%), in a relationship (46%), or in multiple relationships (1%). 33% of PhD respondents were single.

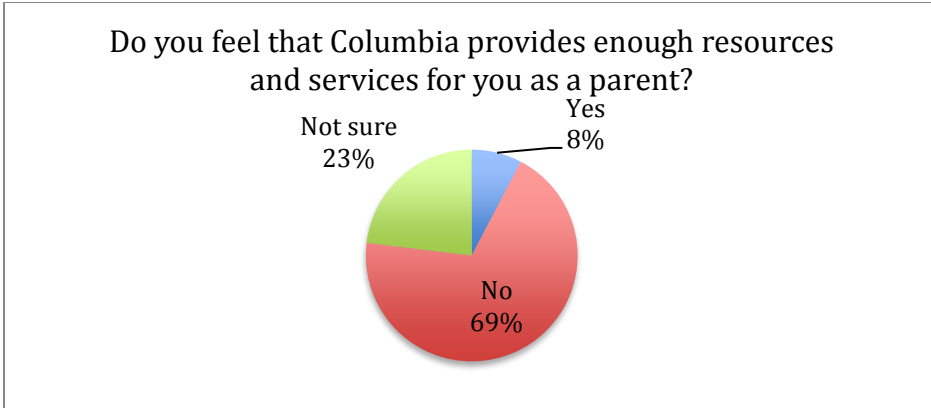
Children

The next question asked if respondents had children. It was a yes or no question, with 322 responses. In total, only 14 people (4%) responded yes. Of these 14, 11 were PhD students and 3 were Masters students.



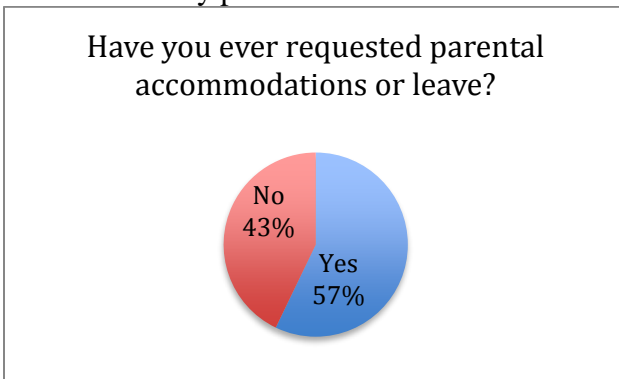
Resources for Parents

The first question for parents was a Yes/No/Not sure question about whether Columbia provided adequate resources for parents. The majority of parents (N=13) responded No, with the next largest category being Not Sure. Only one parent said Yes.



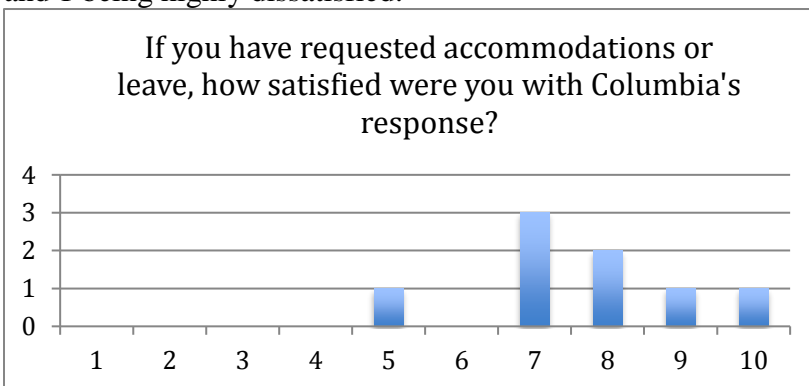
Parental Leave

This yes or no question asked if respondents had ever requested parental accommodations or leave. While 57% responded yes, 43% had not, suggesting that current resources are underutilized by parents. N=14.



Satisfactions with parental accommodations

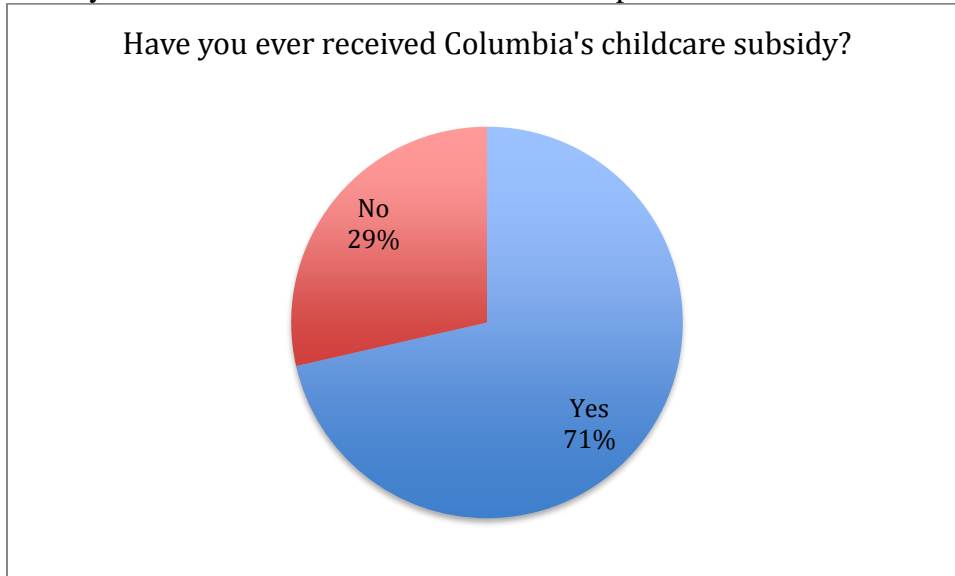
The next question was a satisfaction scale asking respondents to rate how satisfied they were with Columbia's process for leave, if they'd taken it, with 10 being highly satisfied and 1 being highly dissatisfied.



Of the 8 parents who reported requesting leaves, all ranked the process 5 out of 10 or higher, with an average of 7.625 and a median of 7.5.

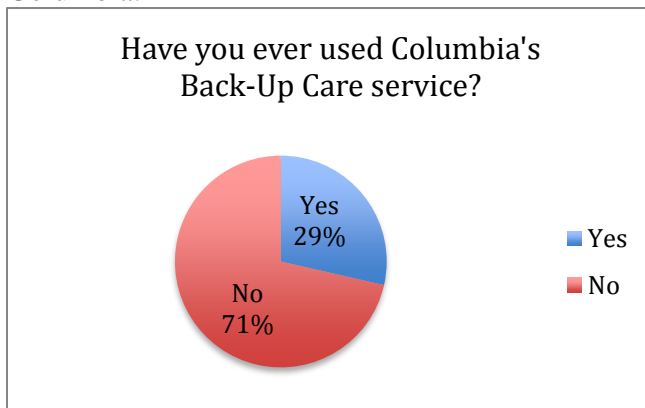
Childcare subsidy

Respondents were asked to answer yes or no to the question “Have you ever received Columbia’s childcare subsidy?” Of the 14 parent respondents, 10 reported receiving the subsidy while 4 had not. Three of these four respondents were Masters students.



Back-Up Care Service

Respondents were asked to answer yes or no to the question “Have you ever used Columbia's Back-Up Care service?” Of the 14 parent respondents, 4 reported using the service while 10 had not, suggesting that the service is underutilized by parents at Columbia.



Satisfaction with Back-Up Care service

Respondents were asked to rank their satisfaction with this service from 1 to 10, with 10 being highly satisfied and 1 being highly dissatisfied. Of the 4 respondents who had used the service, one selected “2,” two selected “6,” and one selected “10.” While these numbers cannot reach statistical significance, they suggest that experiences with the service vary.

Comments

There were 18 comments, from both parents and nonparents. With the exception of one respondent, who indicated their children were grown, the comments from parents uniformly indicated the need for better support both finding and funding childcare.

The childcare subsidy should be way bigger, it does almost nothing to offset the cost of childcare in this country or New York in particular. The backup care is good for travel to a conference, but it is not sufficient as real backup care in the case of an emergency.

There also needs to be some kind of support in place for childcare when a student needs to travel for research. Parental leave should be a full semester. All accommodations need to take into account students with more than one child.

Not enough resources for finding regular childcare (not backup)

Childcare centers should be made available for graduate students who are parents. The timeline for PhD progress should be adjusted in a clear way for parents who take parental leave.

I wish that the childcare subsidy was larger, or that columbia affiliate daycares like CLC were more substantially subsidized by Columbia

Need more child care support, doesn't have to be more money but if columbia had a daycare that was subsidized for PhD students that would help (instead the daycares the university runs cost >\$20,000/year)

While I appreciate the \$2k subsidy, I think it should be more \$5k. The current subsidy barely covers one month of daycare. Additionally, students beyond Year 7 should also be eligible for the subsidy.

The childcare situation is unbelievably bad - we paid \$110/ day for daycare for my toddler in Morningside Heights. There needs to be an affordable option on campus.

Responses from non-parents generally focused on the barriers to becoming a parent at Columbia, both among those becoming parents and among those who felt they could not have children at Columbia. Responses indicated both financial issues and fear of professional retaliation.

Becoming a parent is terrifying to me given the lack of resources and financial stability I have as a grad student at Columbia. I would love to have children, but no longer feel it is tenable if I am to continue by academic career

I am about to become a parent. Columbia is the only school among its peers that does not grant another full year of funding and eligibility to grads with children. Also the childcare subsidy is not even close to enough money for any kind of basic childcare in NYC.

Columbia doesn't provide enough child care at all

I hear maternity leave is not handled well

I may become a parent while at Columbia, and I am not clear on the resources that are available. (I haven't gone looking for them, but I haven't seen anything in the emails or materials that are/were proactively distributed to students at the beginning of the program or school year, for example.) I'm also nervous to ask about these resources as I'm concerned that I may be "flagged" as someone who may use them, which may hurt my academic career.

While I am not a parent, I have friends who are, and know that Columbia's leave policy does not actually allow them additional time to work on their dissertations, and that the childcare subsidy is still less than a tenth of the cost of childcare in NYC. My partner and I want to have children, but have agreed to wait until after graduate school, first of all because we could never afford the cost of becoming pregnant (we are both women, and both graduate students at Columbia) and giving birth on Columbia's insurance, and secondly because we would simply not be able to care for children and complete our degrees. Which is to say, Columbia makes it impossible to raise a child while working on a PhD unless one partner has other employment.

I'm not a parent at Columbia precisely because I don't feel there is enough support to start a family here.

It is impossible even to consider being a parent at Columbia.

One respondent indicated that he did not support parental accommodation. This was the only comment that implied parental accommodations were adequate.

I don't think it's the university's responsibility to take care of people's kids. We make choices in life and should not force others to adapt to meet our needs.

Section summary and comments

A slight majority of MA respondents are single, but significant percentages are in relationships or married, while a strong majority of PhD respondents are either married or in relationships.

In keeping with last year's findings, parental support at Columbia is seen as woefully insufficient. The vast majority (96%) of respondents do not have children, with several qualitative comments suggesting that insufficient resources at Columbia are preventing them from becoming parents. Of the small number of parents at Columbia, the vast majority feel that the resources available to them are inadequate, with only 8% believing resources are adequate. Parents are, with a few exceptions, satisfied with Columbia's management of the resources that do exist. A strong majority (71%) of parents have made use of the childcare subsidy, and many comments indicated it should be increased. Parents (71%) had not used the Back-up Care service, and those who had reported

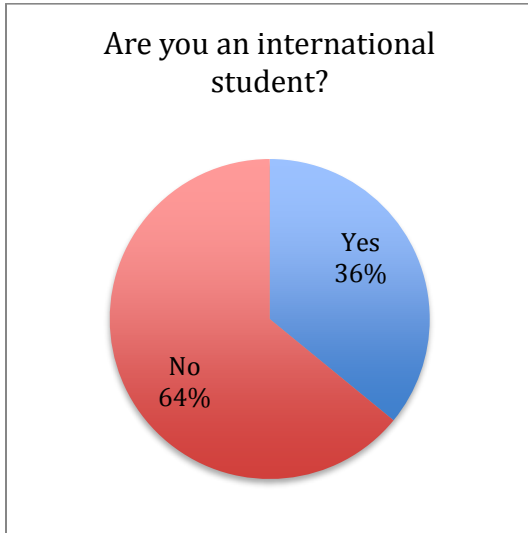
varying levels of satisfaction. Every comment from a parent indicated the need for more childcare resources.

International Student Services

Section overview

This section focuses on the needs of and resources available for international students at Columbia.

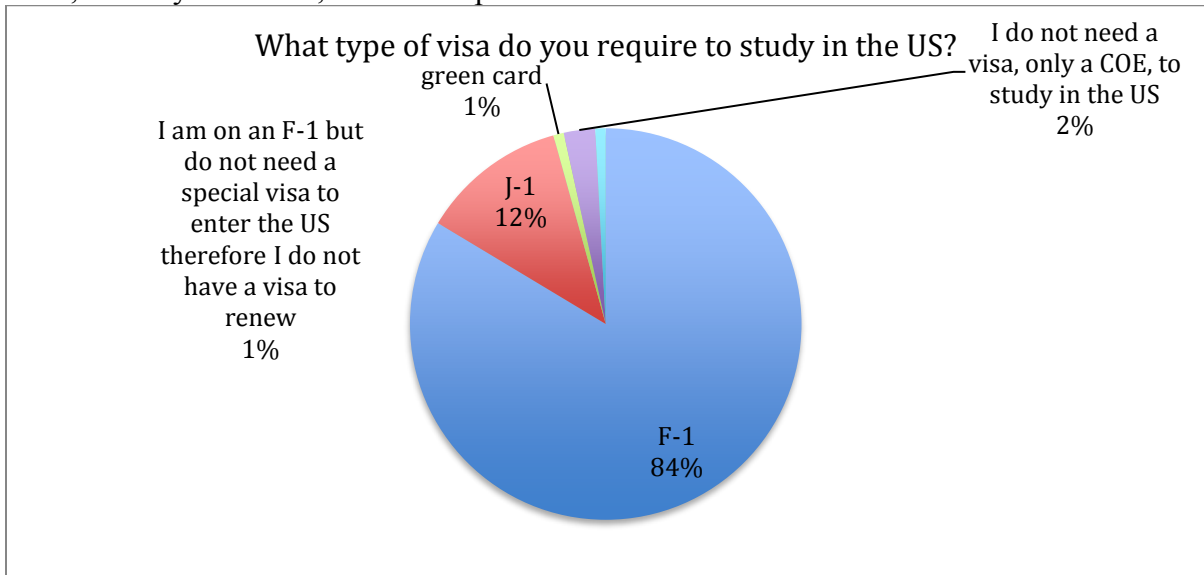
International student



Of the 323 respondents, 116 (36%) identify as an international students. The remainder of the data in this section includes the responses of only those 116 students.

Visa required to stay in the US

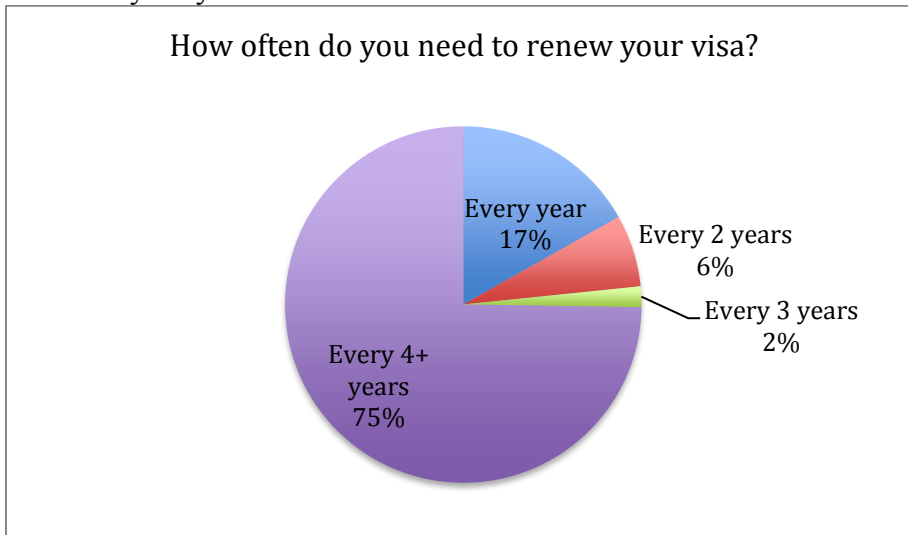
This was a multiple-choice question that asked students what kind of visa they require to study in the US. Options offered included “F-1,” “J-1,” and “I do not need a visa, only a COE, to study in the US,” with the option to write in another answer. N=116.



Of the 116 respondents, 97 (84%) require an F-1 visa. 14 (12%) require a J-1 visa, 3 (2%) require a COE, 1 (1%) has a green card, and one (1%) indicated that they were on an F-1 visa but did not need a visa to enter the US.

How often do you need to renew your visa?

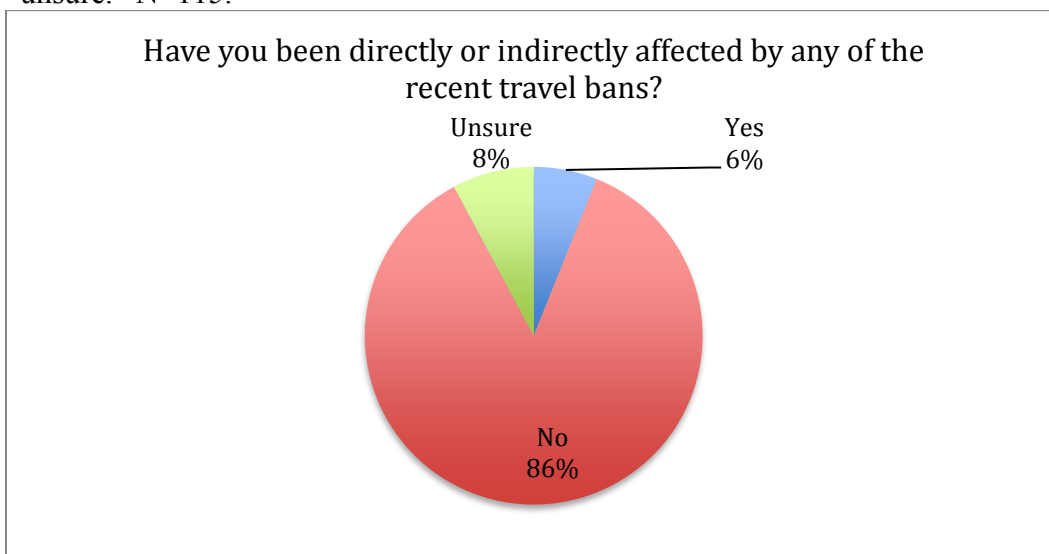
This was a multiple-choice question that asked about the required frequency of renewing the student's visa. Options offered were "every year," "every 2 years," "every 3 years," and "every 4+ years." N= 107.



Of the 107 respondents, 80 (75%) need to renew their visa every 4+ years, 18 (17%) need to renew their visa every year, 7 (6%) need to renew their visa every two years, and 2 (2%) need to renew their visa every year.

Directly or indirectly affected by travel bans?

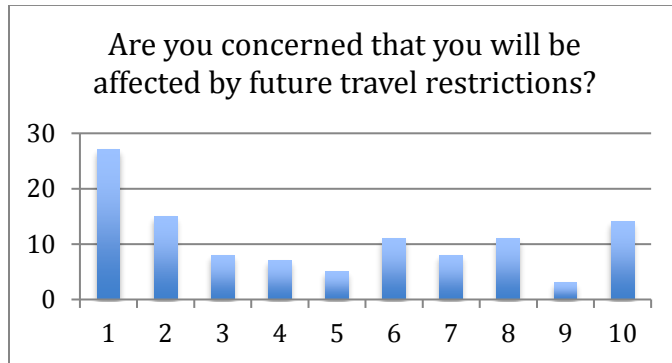
This is a multiple-choice question that asked whether the students have been directly or indirectly affected by any of the recent travel bans. Options offered were "yes," "no," and "unsure." N=115.



Of the 115 respondents, 99 (86%) indicated that they had not been affected, 7 (6%) indicated that they had, and 9 (8%) were unsure.

Concerns over future travel restrictions

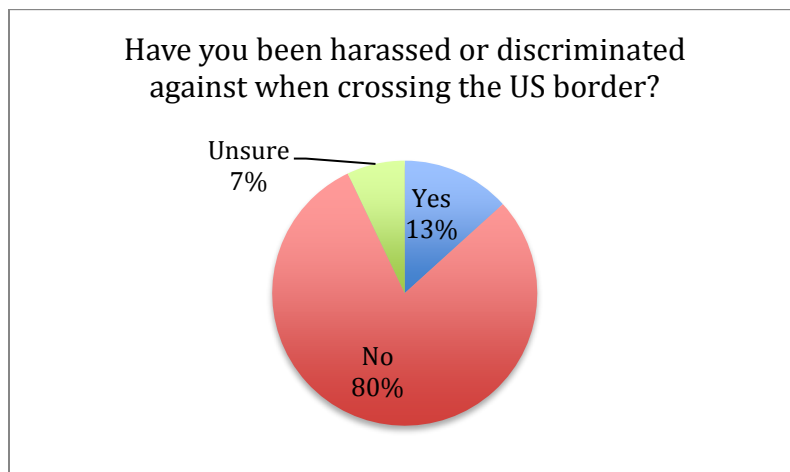
This is a scaled question that asked respondents to rate their level of concern regarding future travel restriction on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being “not at all,” and 10 being “very much so.” N=109.



Of the 109 respondents, 27 (24.77%) rated their concern at 1 out of 10 and 15 (13.76%) percent rated it as 2 out of 10, while 14 (12.84%) rated their concern at ten out of ten. The numbers of responses at these poles were higher than any of the middle-range numbers, though the average was 4.69 and the median was 4.

Harassment or discrimination at US border

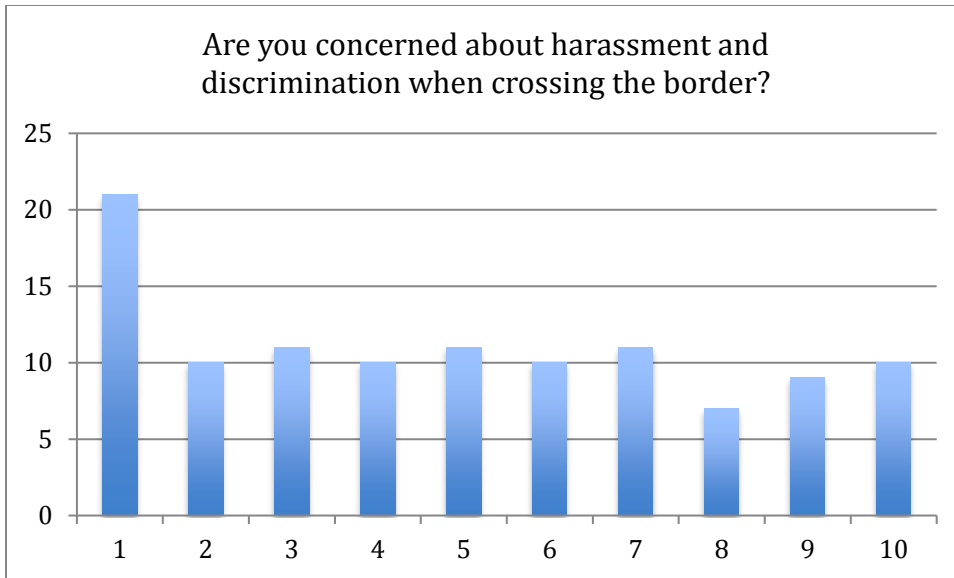
This is a multiple-choice question that asks about personal experiences of harassment or discrimination at the US border. Options offered are “yes,” “no,” and “unsure.” N=113.



Of the 113 respondents, 90 (80%) indicated that they had not experienced harassment or discrimination at the US border, while 15 (13%) indicated they had and 8 (7%) were unsure.

Concerns about harassment and discrimination at the border

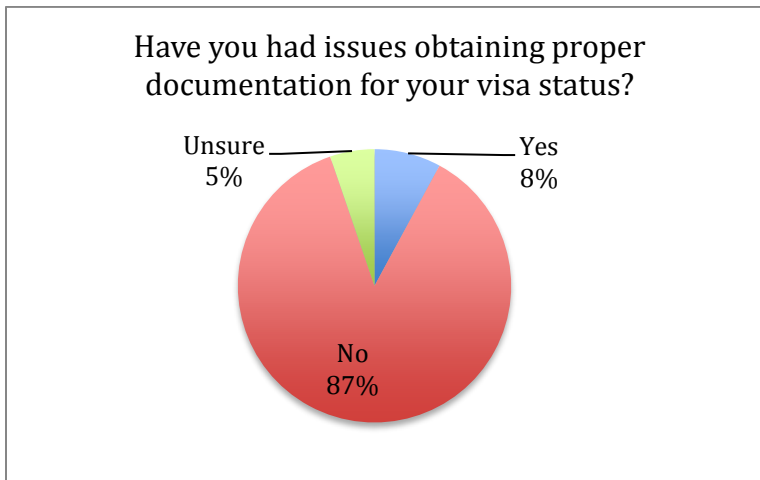
This was a scaled question that asked respondents to rate the level of their concern about possible harassment and discrimination at the US border on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being “not at all,” and 10 being “very much so.” N=110.



Of the 110 respondents, 21 (19%) rated their concern as a one out of ten, but ten (9.1%) rated their concern as a ten out of ten. The average was 4.94 and the median was 5. Despite that average rating, the spread above indicates that concerns about harassment and discrimination while crossing the border seem to vary widely.

Issues obtaining proper documentation for visa

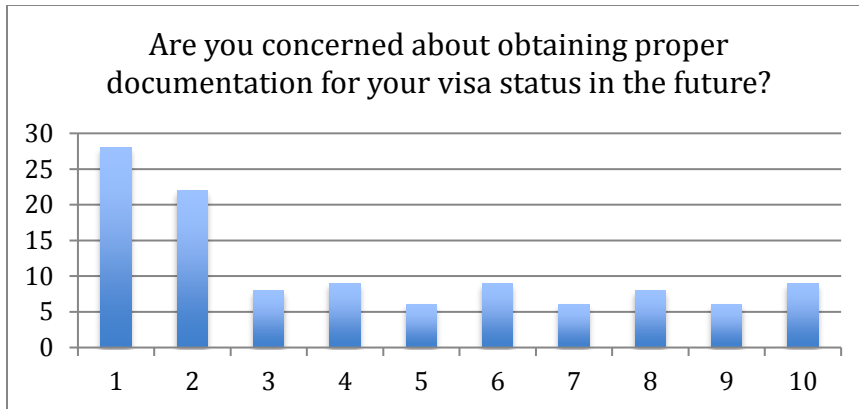
This is a multiple-choice question that asked whether the students ever had issues obtaining proper documentation for their visa status. Answers offered were “yes,” “no,” and “unsure.” N=115.



Of the 115 respondents, 99 (87%) had not had issues obtaining proper documentation for their visa status, while 9 (8%) had and 6 (5%) were unsure.

Concerns about obtaining proper documentation in the future

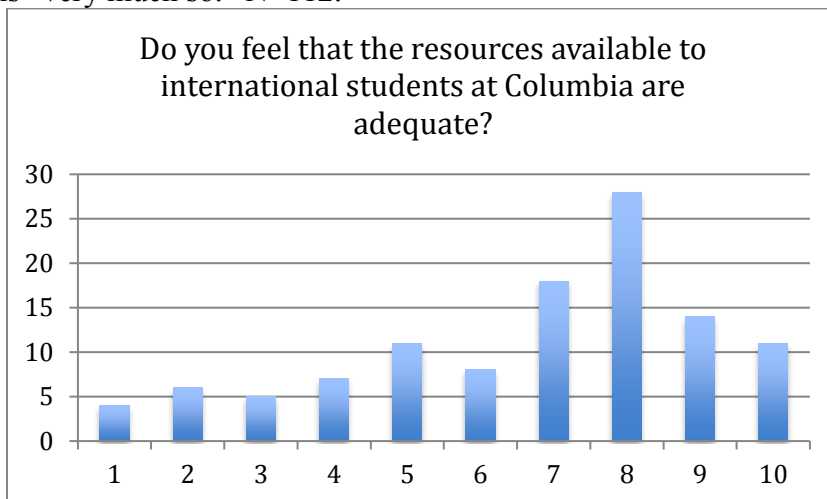
This was a scaled question that asked respondents to rate their concerns about obtaining proper documentation for their visa status in the future on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is “not at all,” and 10 is “very much so.” N=111.



Of the 111 respondents, 28 (25.69%) ranked their concern at 1 out of 10 and 22 (20.18%) ranked their concern at 2 out of 10. The average was 4.20 and the median was 3.

Are resources available to international students at Columbia adequate?

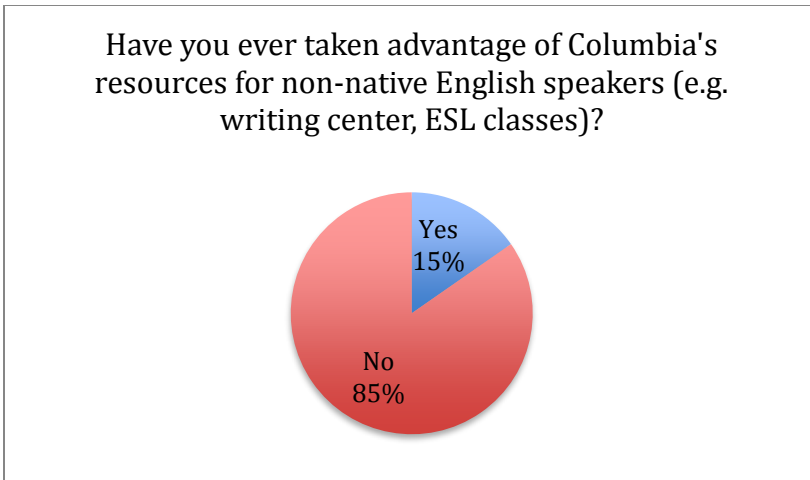
This is a scale question that asked respondents to rate the adequacy of resources available to international students at Columbia on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is “not at all,” and 10 is “very much so.” N=112.



Overall, 29.46% of respondents gave the resources for international students at Columbia a rating of 5 or below, while 70.54% of respondents gave these resources a rating of 6 or above, with an average of 6.68 and a median of 7. This represents an overall increase in positive ratings from last year, though future years will reveal whether the shift in representation from GSAC to ASGC is connected to this trend.

Using Columbia resources for non-native English speakers

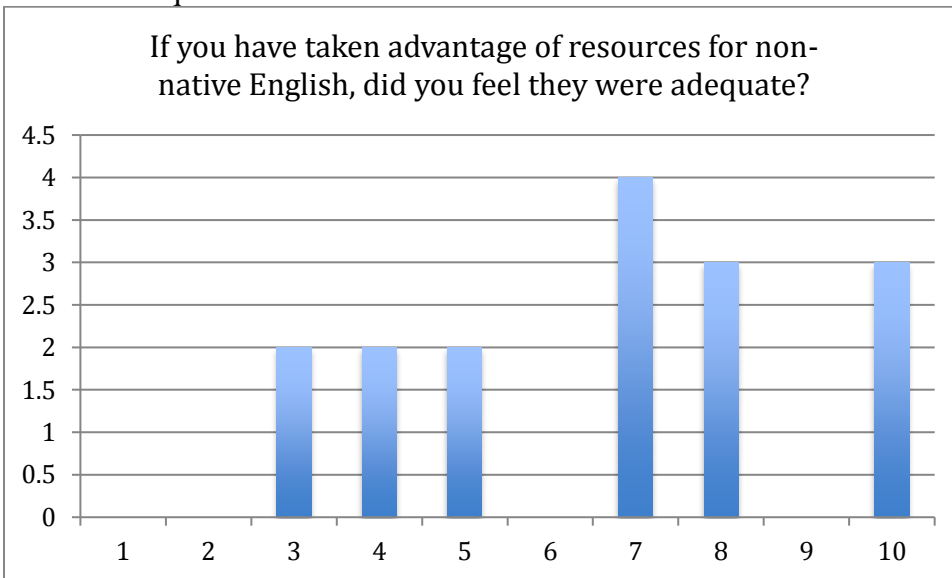
This is a yes or no question that asked respondents whether they have ever used Columbia resources for non-native English speakers. N=111.



A large majority (85%) have not taken advantage of Columbia’s resources for non-native English speakers. Only 17 respondents (15%) have used these resources.

Adequacy of resources for non-native English speakers

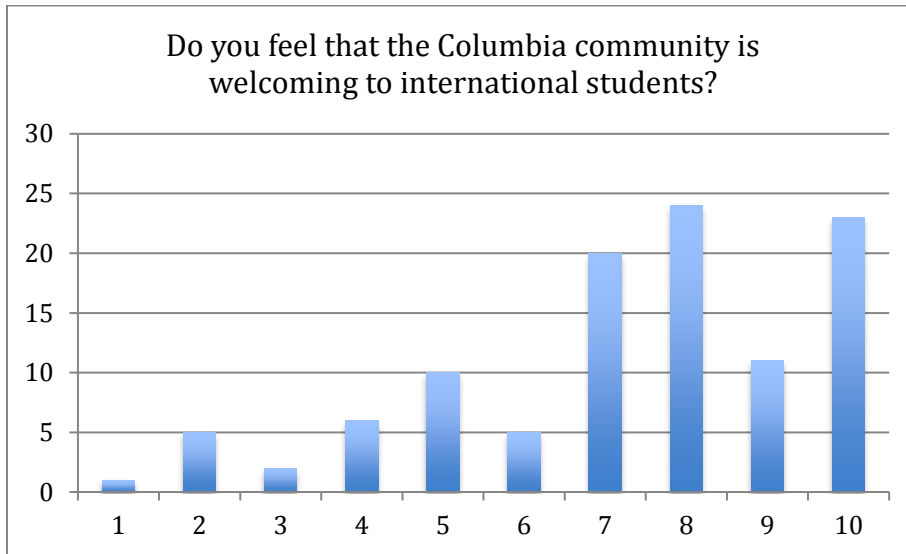
This was a scale questions that asked those respondents who have taken advantage of Columbia’s resources for non-native English speakers to rate their adequacy on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being “not at all adequate” and 10 being “very adequate.” Some people who answered “no” to the previous question still rated these services, but the breakdown shown below only includes those students who reported actually taking advantage of the resources in question. N=16.



The average rating was 6.63 while the median was 7, with 37.5% giving them a rating of 5 or below and 62.5% giving them a rating of 6 or above.

Is the Columbia community welcoming to international students?

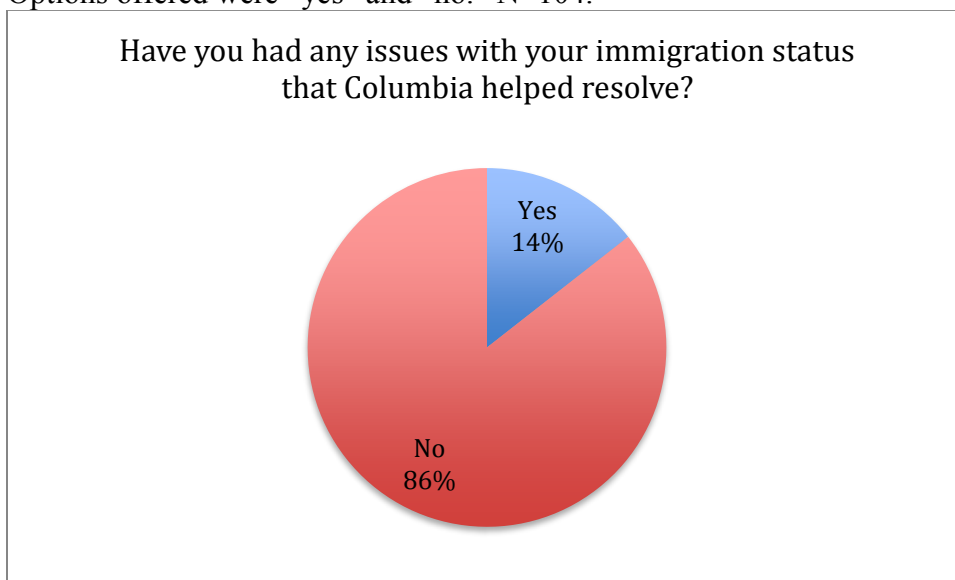
This is a scale question that asked international students to rate their personal impressions of how welcoming they found the Columbia community on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is “not at all” and 10 is “very much so.” N=107.



Overall, only 22.43% of international student respondents found the Columbia community unwelcoming (ratings 5 and below), while 77.57% found it to be welcoming (ratings 6 and above), with an average rating of 7.31 and a median of 8.

Outstanding issues with immigration status that Columbia helped resolve

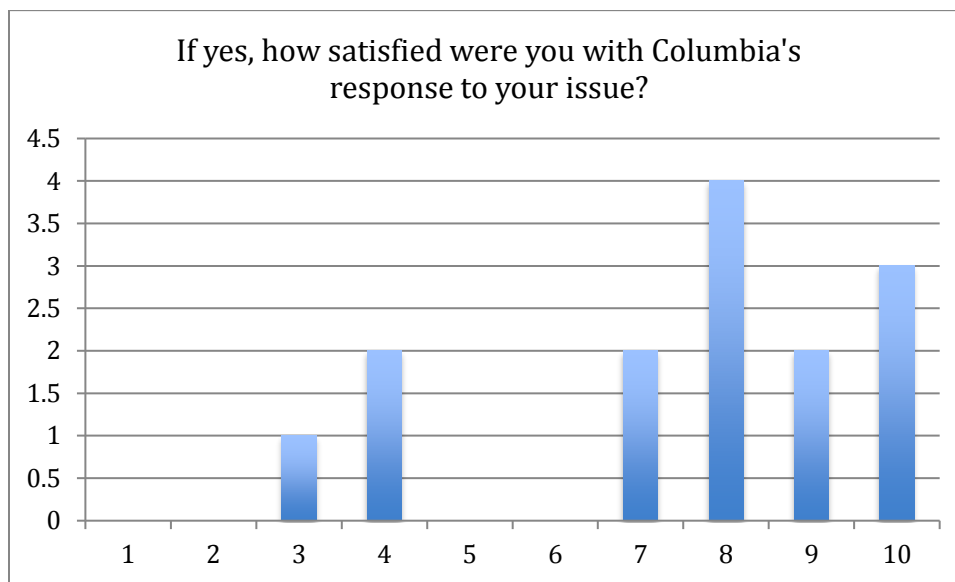
This was a multiple-choice question that asked international students whether they ever experienced any outstanding immigration-related issues that Columbia helped resolve. Options offered were “yes” and “no.” N=104.



Of 104 respondents, 89 (86%) had not had an immigration status issue that Columbia helped resolve, while 15 (14%) had.

If yes, how satisfied were you with Columbia's response to your issue?

This is a scaled question that asked respondents who have sought Columbia's help in resolving an outstanding visa-related issue to rate Columbia's response on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "not at all satisfied," and 10 being "very satisfied." Although some respondents who answered "no" to the previous question did answer this one, they were filtered out in the analysis; only the responses of those students who answered "yes" to the previous question or did not answer to it at all were counted in this instance. N= 14.



Overall, 21.43% of respondents were dissatisfied with Columbia's response (ratings of 5 or below) and 78.57% were satisfied (ratings of 6 or above). The average rating was 7.5 and the median was 8.

General comments

At the end of this section, international students were invited to offer any additional comments on international student issues, and 10 people took that opportunity, many of them addressing more than one issue in their individual comments. Two people mentioned a lack of community, with two more suggesting that Columbia should provide more assistance to international students when they first arrive, particularly with housing. One person expressed a desire for more tax assistance, one person expressed a desire for legal assistance, one person mentioned difficulties obtaining work authorizations, one person mentioned processing fees, and one person expressed dissatisfaction with ISSO, indicating that while some staff are helpful, others "should be fired."

Section summary and comments

Of the survey participants, 36% identified as international students. A strong majority (84%) of the self-identified international students require a F-1 visa, while 12% require a J-1 visa. 75% of international students are required to renew their visa every 4+ years, but

17% are required to renew it every year. 87% of the international students who participated in the survey indicated they have not had issues obtaining proper documentation for their visa. Of the participants, a strong majority (85%) have not taken advantage of Columbia's ESL resources and class offering. A common response left in the comments section is that tax support for international students is lacking.

86% of international students who participated in the survey reported not being affected by the recent travel bans. Concern over future travel restrictions varies, with responses clustered at either pole, suggesting that it is either not at all concerning or extremely concerning, depending on individual circumstances. (ASGC did not solicit information about countries of origin or citizenship.) A majority (80%) of respondents reported not experiencing harassment when crossing the US border, however 20% either have experienced harassment or were unsure if they have, and the average concern about future harassment was 5 out of 10.

Respondents generally feel that Columbia is a welcoming place for international students, although specific experiences vary.

Disability Services

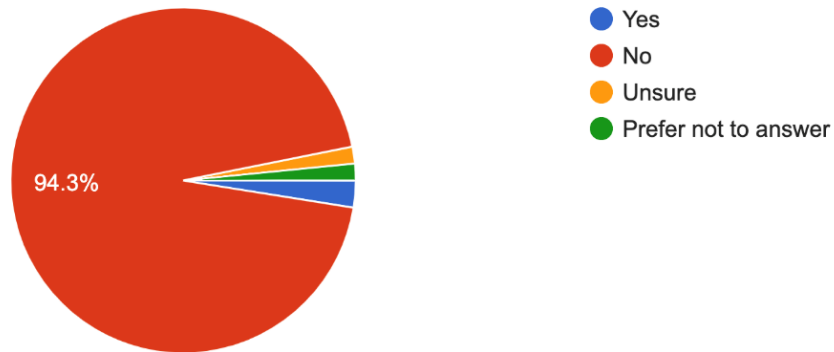
Section overview

This section focuses on the resources available to students who identify as having a disability, with this year's data newly distinguishing between physical and mental disability.

Physical disability

Do you identify as having a physical disability?

318 responses

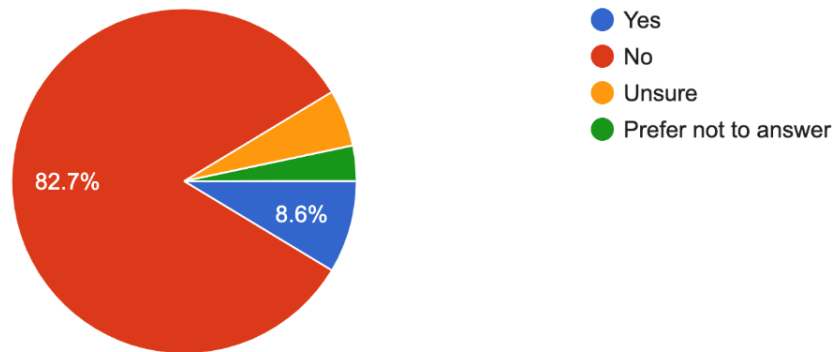


Participants were asked whether they identified as having a physical disability. Options were "Yes," "No," "Unsure," and "Prefer Not to Answer." Of 318 respondents, 300 (94.3%) indicated that they did not, while 8 (2.5%) indicated that they did, 5 (1.6%) were unsure and 5 (1.6%) preferred not to answer.

Mental disability

Do you identify as having a mental disability?

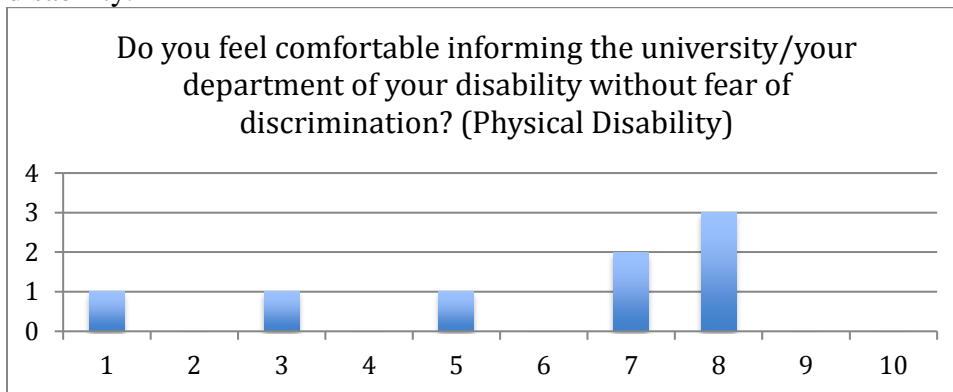
301 responses



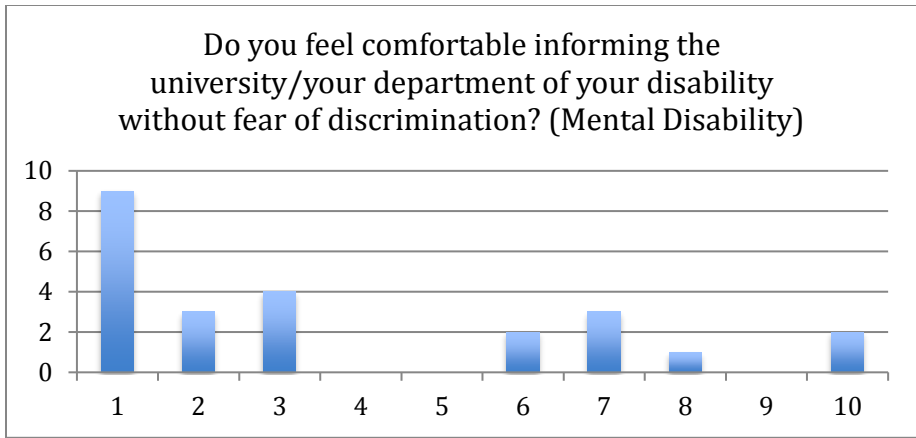
Participants were also asked whether they identified as having a physical disability. Options were “Yes,” “No,” “Unsure,” and “Prefer Not to Answer.” Of 301 respondents, 249 (82.7%) indicated that they did not, while 26 (8.6%) indicated that they did, 16 (5.3%) were unsure and 10 (3.3%) preferred not to answer.

Comfort with informing the university

This is a scaled question. The scale ranges from 1 (“not at all comfortable”) to 10 (“very comfortable”). Although some respondents who did not identify as having either a physical or a mental disability responded to this question, the data present below includes only responses from respondents who explicitly identified as having a physical or mental disability.



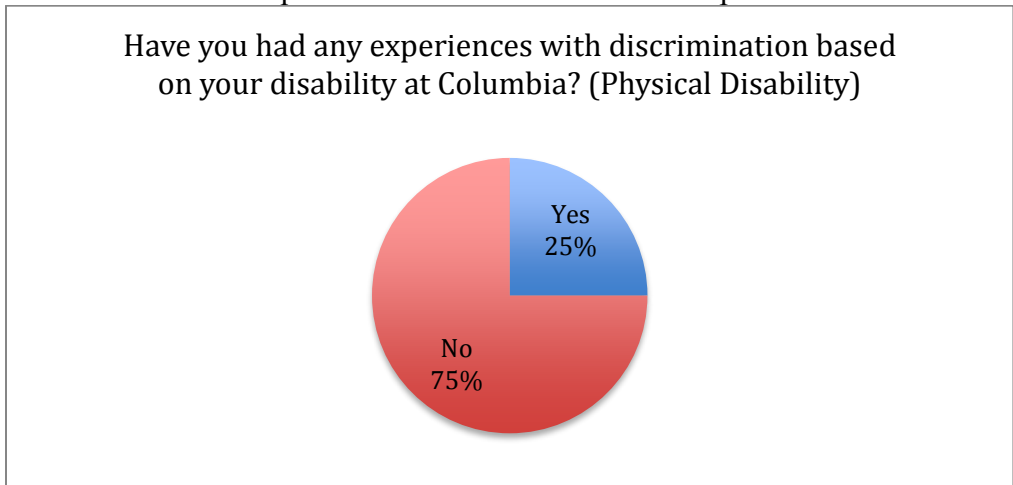
The chart above indicates responses only from those who identified as having a physical disability. Of 8 respondents, one indicated 1 out of 10, one indicated 3 out of 10, one indicated 5 out of 10, 2 indicated 7 out of 10 and 3 indicated 8 out of 10. The average comfort rating was 5.88 out of 10 and the median was 7.



The chart above indicates responses only from those who identified as having a mental disability; note that some respondents identified as having both physical and mental disabilities. Of 24 respondents, 16 (66.67%) indicated a comfort below 5 out of 10 and 8 (33.33%) indicated a comfort of 6 out of 10 or higher, with 9 (37.5%) indicating the lowest possible comfort level. The average comfort rating was 3.67 out of 10 and the median was 2.5. These findings suggest significant discomfort revealing mental disabilities to departments and to the university at large.

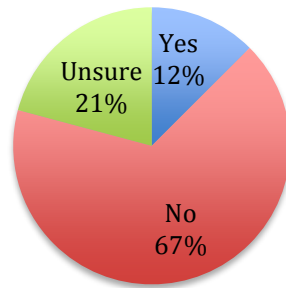
Experiences of discrimination

This is a two-choice question with “Yes” and “No” as options.



The chart above indicates responses only from those who identified as having a physical disability. Of 8 respondents, 6 (75%) indicated that they had not experienced discrimination and 2 (25%) indicated that they had.

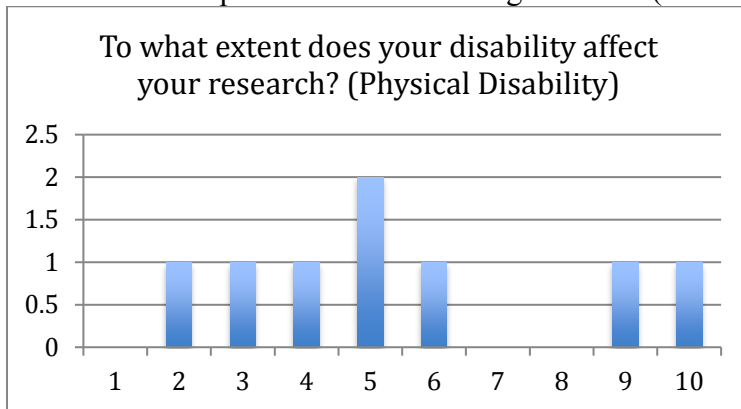
Have you had any experiences with discrimination based on your disability at Columbia? (Mental Disability)



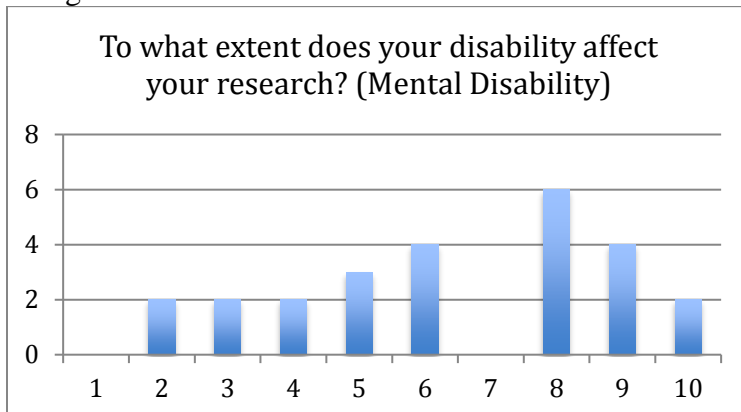
The chart above indicates responses only from those who identified as having a mental disability. Of 24 respondents, 16 (67%) indicated that they had not experienced discrimination and 3 (12%) indicated that they had, while 5 (21%) were unsure.

Disability affecting research

This is a scaled question. The scale ranges from 1 (“not at all”) to 10 (“very much so”).



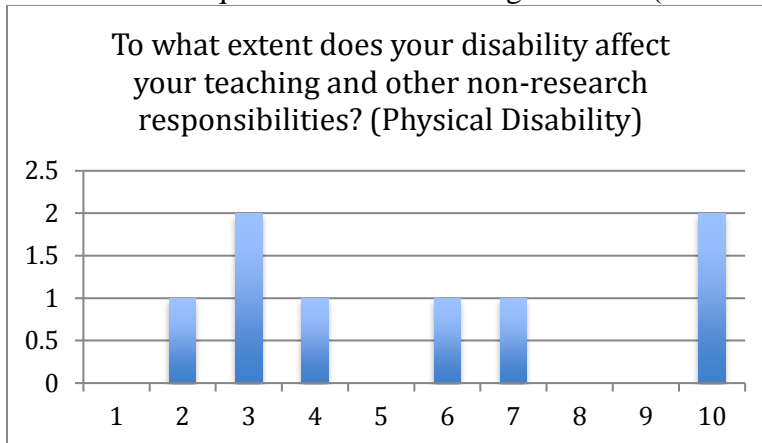
The chart above indicates responses only from those who identified as having a physical disability. Of 8 respondents, 5 listed the effect of their disability of their research as 5 or below and 3 listed its effect as 6 or above. The average rating was 6 and the median rating was 5.



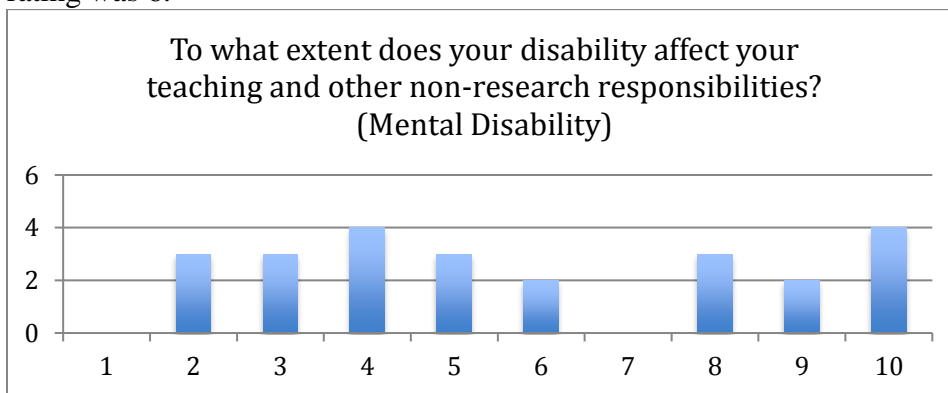
The chart above indicates responses only from those who identified as having a mental disability. Of 25 respondents, 9 (36%) listed the effect of their disability of their research as 5 or below and 16 (64%) listed its effect as 6 or above. The average rating was 5.57 and the median rating was 6.

Disability affecting teaching and other non-research work

This is a scaled question. The scale ranges from 1 (“not at all”) to 10 (“very much so”).



The chart above indicates responses only from those who identified as having a physical disability. Of 8 respondents, 4 listed the effect of their disability of their research as 5 or below and 4 listed its effect as 6 or above. The average rating was 5.86 and the median rating was 6.

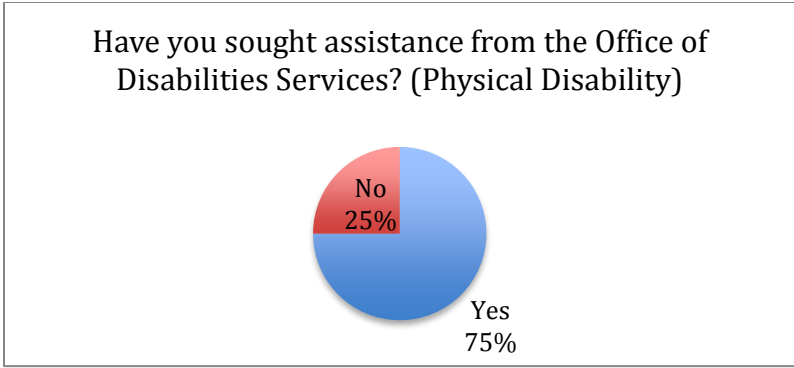


The chart above indicates responses only from those who identified as having a physical disability. Of 24 respondents, 13 (54.17%) listed the effect of their disability of their research as 5 or below and 11 (45.83%) listed its effect as 6 or above. The average rating was 4.33 and the median rating was 3.5.

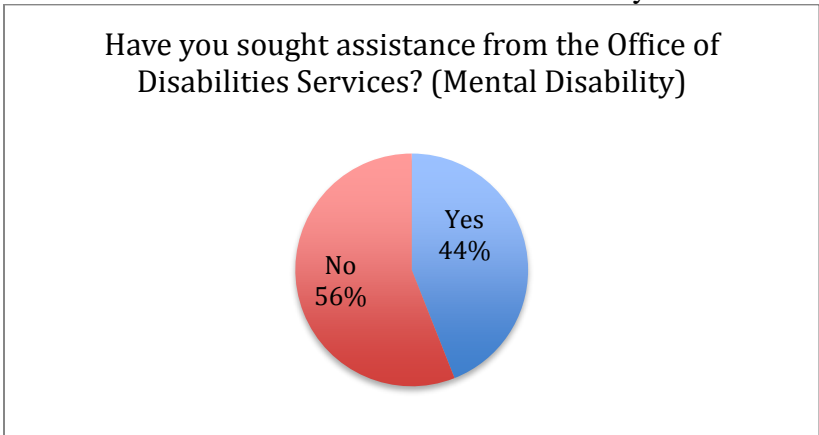
Office of Disability Services

Seeking assistance from ODS

This is a two-choice question with “Yes” and “No” as options.



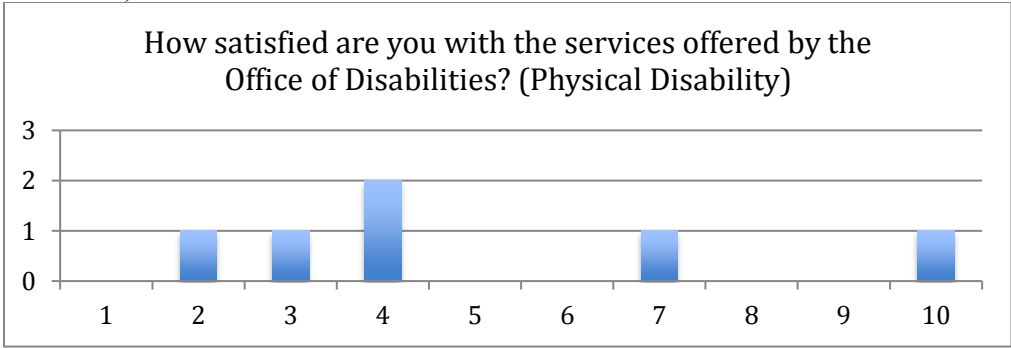
The chart above indicates responses only from those who identified as having a physical disability. Of 8 respondents, 6 indicated that they had sought assistance from the Office of Disabilities Services while 2 indicated that they had not.



The chart above indicates responses only from those who identified as having a mental disability. Of 25 respondents, 11 (44%) indicated that they had sought assistance from the Office of Disabilities Services while 14 (56%) indicated that they had not. These findings suggest that those with mental disabilities are significantly less likely to seek support from ODS than those with physical disabilities.

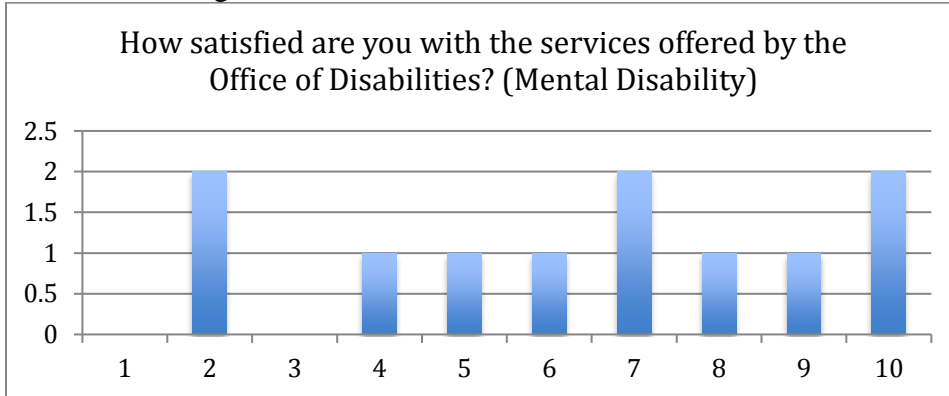
Satisfaction with ODS

This is a scaled question. The scale ranges from 1 (“very unsatisfied”) to 10 (“very satisfied”).



The chart above indicates responses only from those who identified as having a physical disability who had also sought assistance from the Office of Disabilities Services. Of 6 respondents, 4 listed their satisfaction with the office as 5 or below and 2 listed it as 6 or

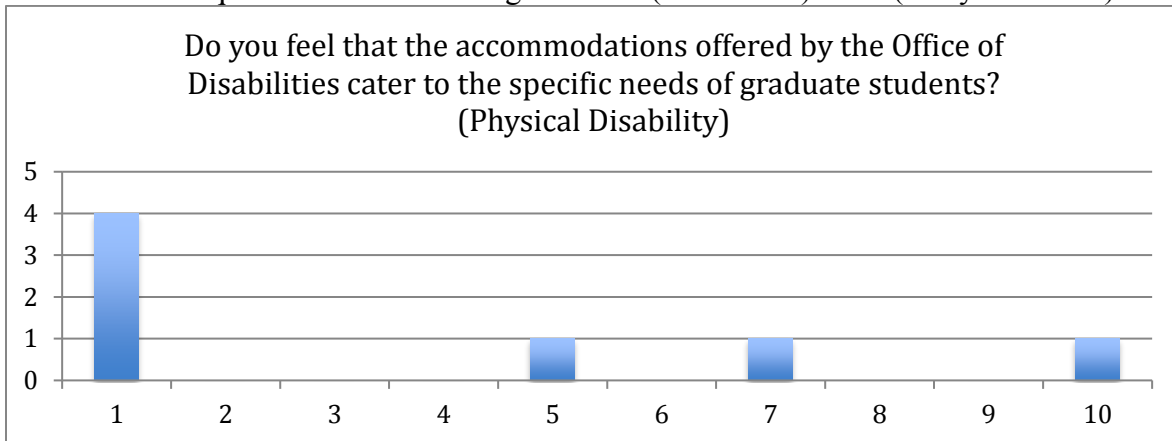
above, suggesting that experiences with ODS are uneven. The average rating was 5.2 and the median rating was 4.



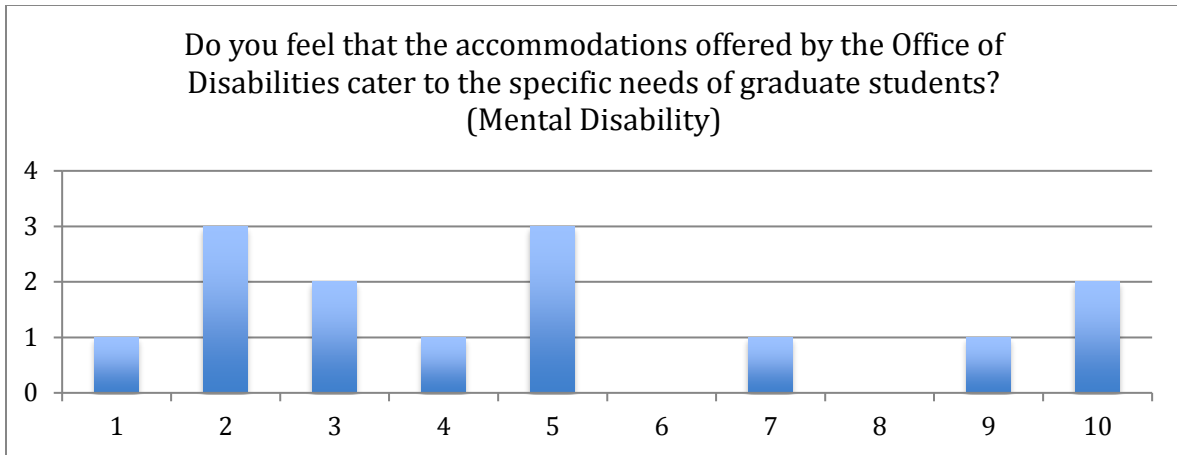
The chart above indicates responses only from those who identified as having a mental disability who had also sought assistance from the Office of Disabilities Services. Of 11 respondents, 4 listed their satisfaction with the office as 5 or below and 7 listed it as 6 or above. The average rating was 6 and the median rating was 6.5, suggesting that despite seeking services from ODS less frequently, students with mental disabilities who do seek out their services are more satisfied than those with physical disabilities who do the same.

ODS accommodations catering to specific needs of graduate students

This is a scaled question. The scale ranges from 1 (“not at all”) to 10 (“very much so”).



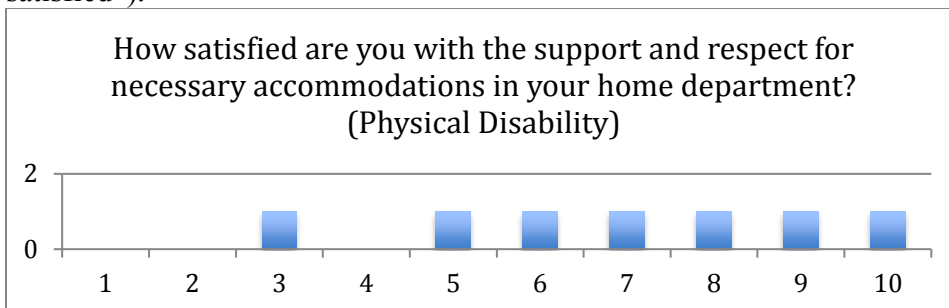
The chart above indicates responses only from those who identified as having a physical disability. Of 7 respondents, over half indicated a 1 out of 10, with an average of 4.17 and a median of 3. Although the number of respondents is low, these findings suggest that ODS should do more to address the needs of graduate students with disabilities.



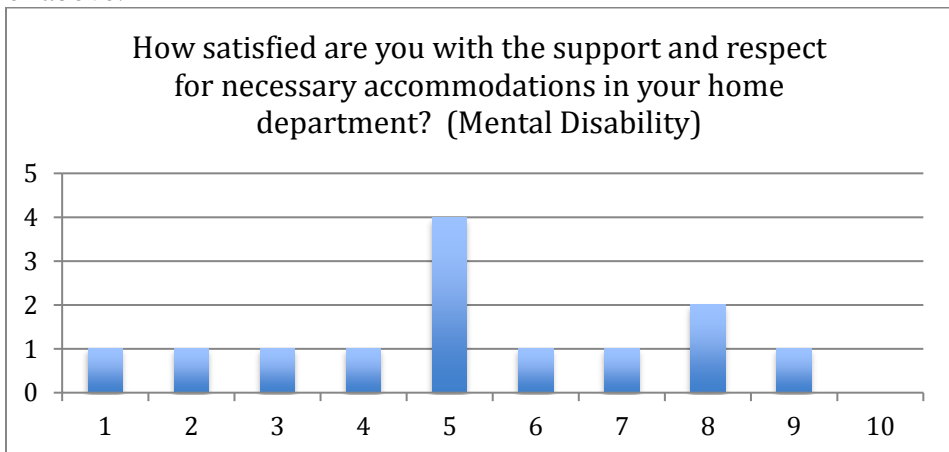
The chart above indicates responses only from those who identified as having a physical disability. Of 14 respondents, ten gave a rating of 5 out of 10 or below and four gave a rating of 6 out of 10 or above, with an average of 3.25 and a median of 3. These findings, too, suggest that ODS should do more to address the needs of graduate students with disabilities.

Satisfaction with support of accommodations in home department

This is a scaled question. The scale ranges from 1 (“not at all satisfied”) to 10 (“very satisfied”).



The chart above indicates responses only from those who identified as having a physical disability. Although ratings varied, of the 7 respondents 2 (28.57%) indicated a satisfaction of 5 out of 10 or below and 5 (71.43%) indicated a satisfaction of 6 out of 10 or above.



The chart above indicates responses only from those who identified as having a mental disability. Although ratings varied, of the 13 respondents 8 (61.54%) indicated a satisfaction of 5 out of 10 or below and 5 (38.46%) indicated a satisfaction of 6 out of 10 or above. The average rating was 4.375 and median was 5.

General comments

Only four graduate students who identified as having either a physical or a mental disability included comments in this section. These four comments are divided between concerns about ODS and concerns about departments. Two commenters indicated being unaware of the services offered by ODS and doubting the accommodations they offer would be effective for graduate students. Two indicated that they doubted professors in their departments would respond appropriately, with one commenter indicating that professors in their department did not follow the instructions of ODS.

Section summary and remarks

Only 2.5% of respondents identified as having a physical disability, while 8.6% identified as having a mental disability. Those with physical disabilities were more likely to feel comfortable informing the university and their department of their disability, with an average comfort rating of 5.88 out of 10, as compared to an average comfort rating of 3.67 out of 10 for those who identified as having mental disabilities.

Those with physical disabilities were also, however, more likely to say they had experienced discrimination, with fully a quarter of respondents reporting discrimination on the basis of physical disability. 12.5% of those with mental disabilities indicated that they had experienced discrimination on the basis of their disability, with 21% unsure.

Those with physical disabilities were more likely to seek support from the Office of Disability Services, although 25% had not. Among respondents who identified as having a mental disability, a majority (56%) had not sought support from ODS. However, among those who had sought support from ODS, those with physical disabilities were less likely to be satisfied than those with mental disabilities. There is a general sense that ODS is not designed to address the specific needs of graduate students, and comments also suggest distrust that department faculty will adhere to any demands set by ODS.

Campus Resources

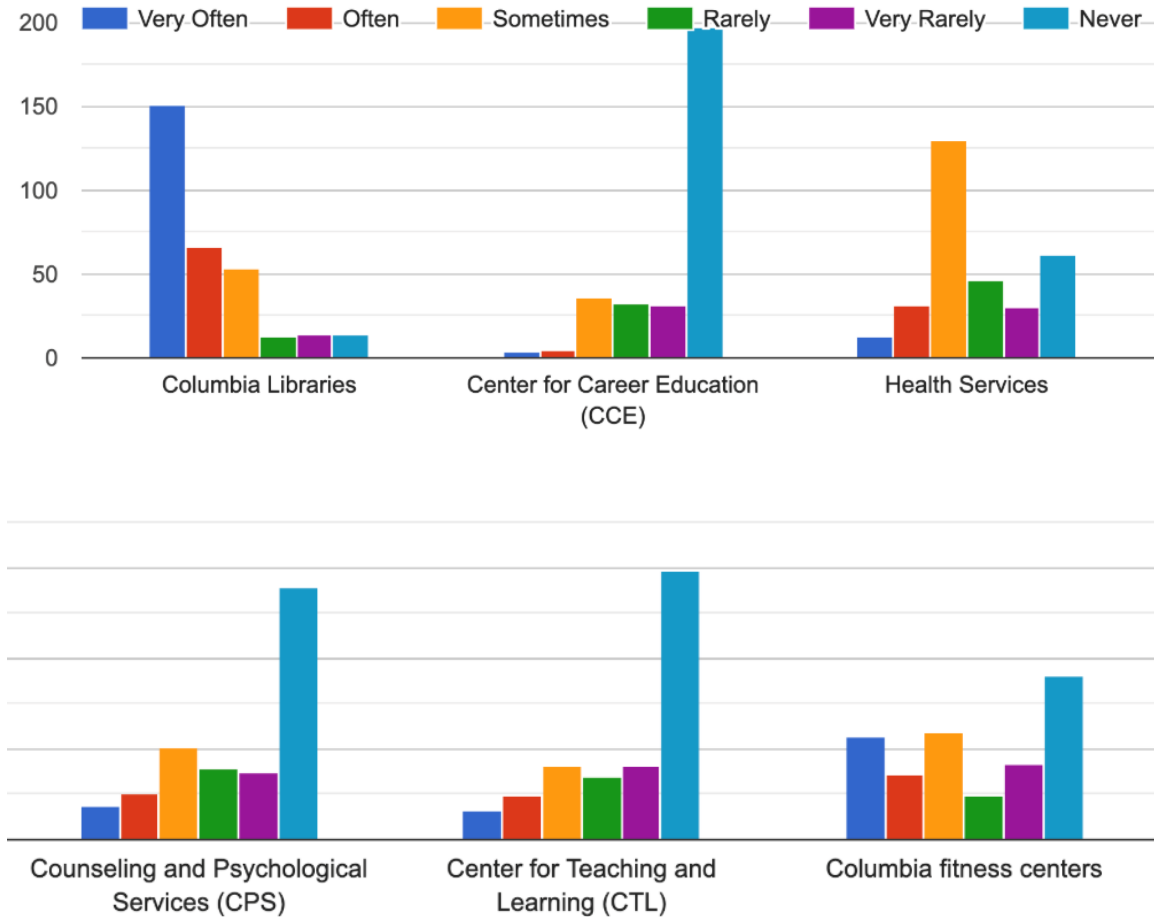
Section Overview

This section has three parts A: Frequency of use of Columbia Services B: Satisfaction with Columbia Services, and C: Comments about campus resources.

Frequency of Use of Columbia Services

This is a grid question that asked Columbia students how frequently they used six different Columbia services: Libraries, CCE, Health Services, CPS, CTL, and Columbia Fitness Centers. Options offered were “never,” “very rarely,” “rarely,” “sometimes,” “often,” and “very often.”

How often do you use the following services at Columbia?



Of 311 respondents, 151 (49%) reported that they use the library very often. 66 (21%) reported they use it often, 53 (17%) use it sometimes, 13 (4%) use it rarely, 14 (4%) use it very rarely, and 14 (4%) say they never use it.

Of 306 respondents, 4 (1%) say they use CCE very often, 5 (2%) say they use it often, 36 (12%) sometimes, 33 (11%) rarely, 31 (10%) very rarely, and 197 (64%) say they never use it.

Of 311 respondents, 13 (4%) report using Health Services very often, 31 (10%) often, 130 (42%) sometimes, 46 (15%) rarely, 30 (10%) very rarely, and 61 (20%) never.

Of 309 respondents, 18 (6%) report using CPS very often, 25 (8%) often, 51 (17%) sometimes, 39 (13%) rarely, 37 (12%) very rarely, and 139 (45%) never.

Of 306 respondents, 16 (5%) report using CTL very often, 24 (8%) often, 41 (13%) sometimes, 35 (11%) rarely, 41 (13%) very rarely, and 149 (49%) never.

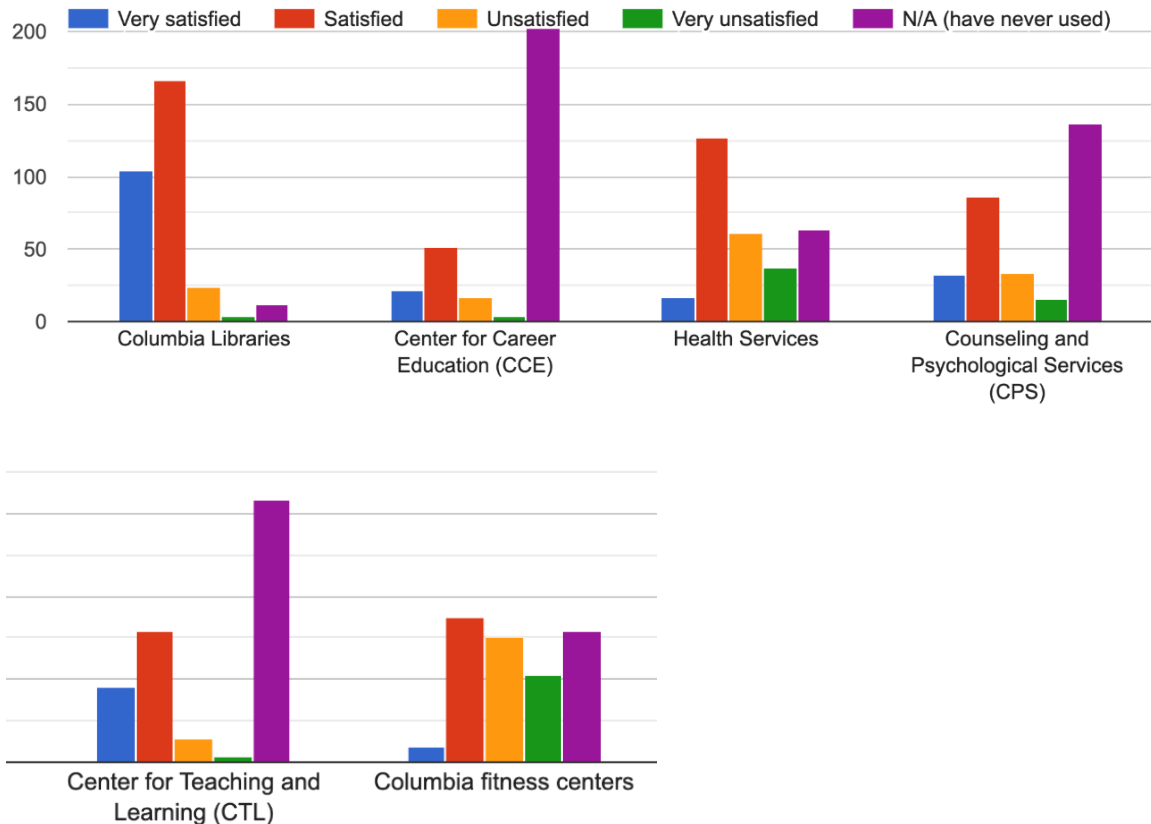
Of 309 respondents, 57 (18%) report using Columbia fitness centers very often, 36 (12%) often, 59 (19%) sometimes, 24 (8%) rarely, 42 (14%) very rarely, and 91 (29%) never.

The above graphs show that the library is by far the most frequently used campus resource, followed by Health Services, and Columbia fitness centers. Counseling and Psychological Services, the Center for Career Education, and the Center for Teaching and Learning are comparatively underused, with between 45% and 64% of respondents reporting that they have never used them.

Satisfaction with Columbia Services

This is a grid question that asked Columbia students how satisfied they were in their use of the six above named Columbia services. Options offered were “very satisfied,” “satisfied,” “unsatisfied,” “very unsatisfied,” and “N/A (have never used). Below is a set of graphs of satisfaction with each particular service.

How satisfied are you with the following services at Columbia?



Of 310 respondents, 104 (34%) indicated that they were very satisfied with the libraries, with 166 (54%) satisfied, 24 (8%) unsatisfied, 4 (1%) very unsatisfied and 12 (4%) reporting they had never used the libraries. The vast majority of respondents use the libraries, and are either satisfied or very satisfied.

Of 297 respondents, 21 (7%) indicated that they were very satisfied with CCE, with 52 (18%) satisfied, 17 (6%) unsatisfied, 4 (1%) very unsatisfied and 297 (68%) reporting they had never used it. While the majority of respondents who have used CCE are satisfied or very satisfied, the vast majority have never used it.

Of 305 respondents, 17 (6%) indicated that they were very satisfied with Health Services, with 127 (42%) satisfied, 61 (20%) unsatisfied, 37 (12%) very unsatisfied and 63 (21%) reporting they had never used it. Respondents are more likely to be satisfied with the library, but few are “very satisfied.”

Of 303 respondents, 32 (11%) indicated that they were very satisfied with CPS, with 86 (28%) satisfied, 33 (11%) unsatisfied, 15 (5%) very unsatisfied and 137 (45%) reporting they had never used it.

Of 299 respondents, 45 (15%) indicated that they were very satisfied with CTL, with 79 (26%) satisfied, 14 (5%) unsatisfied, 3 (1%) very unsatisfied and 158 (53%) reporting they had never used it. Again, while the majority of respondents had not used CTL, the vast majority of those who had were satisfied or very satisfied with the services.

Of 305 respondents, 10 (13%) indicated that they were very satisfied with Columbia fitness centers, with 87 (29%) satisfied, 76 (25%) unsatisfied, 53 (17%) very unsatisfied and 79 (26%) reporting they had never used it. Satisfaction with the fitness centers was roughly split, with 42% satisfied or very satisfied and 42% unsatisfied or very unsatisfied.

Comments

When asked “Do you have any comments about your experiences with any of the above Columbia services (or a service not mentioned)?” 63 respondents offered comments. Some comments mentioned multiple services.

Of the 63 comments, 45 criticized Columbia fitness centers. While two respondents went out of their way to say they had no complaints about the staff, all comments were critical. The primary points of criticism were overcrowding, dirtiness, insufficient equipment, and locker fees.

Of the 5 comments about Health Services, all were critical. Three mentioned the appointment system, with one mentioning that if the appointment system is not improved the referral system should be changed. One mentioned long wait times and one mentioned an unfriendly doctor.

Of the 3 comments about CPS, all were critical. Two mentioned that CPS did not have enough resources, citing an insufficient number of psychiatrists and a desire for more long-term services.

Of the 5 comments about CCE, all were critical. One respondent indicated that CCE was not equipped to help graduate students pursuing academic careers, and one indicated that CCE was not equipped to help graduate students in the humanities. One shared concerns about the app used to sign in to CCE; the app, Handshake, reportedly shares data without the user’s permission.

Of the 6 comments about the Libraries, all were critical. Two mentioned that the libraries were overcrowded, and two mentioned insufficient cleaning, particularly in the restrooms. One indicated a desire for carrels with sunlight.

CTL was the only service to receive positive comments, with one respondent saying “CTL is the best run service at the university hands down.” and another saying “The CTL does great work.” Two commenters wanted more integrated and sustained training for instructors, and one wanted information about the services CTL offers to be presented more clearly.

Section summary and remarks

Columbia's libraries are by far the most used resources on campus, and respondents are generally satisfied with the libraries, though a few respondents complain of overcrowding and uncleanliness. Very few graduate students use the Center for Teaching and Learning, but those who have tend to be satisfied or highly satisfied, leaving positive comments and asking for more long-term and integrated training for teachers. The Center for Career Education is also very underused, and while those who have used it tend to be satisfied, comments reveal a sense that it is not designed for the needs of graduate students.

Graduate students experiences with medical services, including Counseling and Psychological Services, reveal difficulty obtaining appointments and under-resourced psychological services.

There is a strong call among respondents for improvements to Columbia fitness centers, citing overcrowding, insufficient equipment, and uncleanliness.

ASGC

Section overview

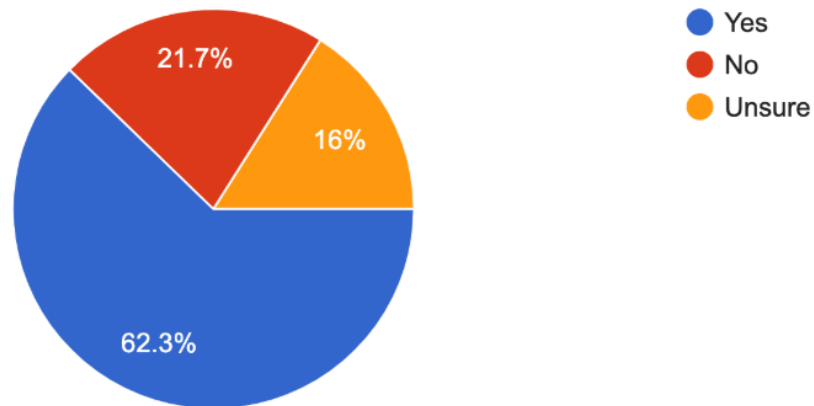
This section focuses on students' awareness of and satisfaction with ASGC, as well as open response questions for students to indicate areas where ASGC is doing well and areas for improvement.

Are you aware of ASGC and what it does on campus?

This is a multiple-choice question. Responses include "Yes", "No", and "Unsure".
N=318.

Are you aware of ASGC and what it does on campus?

318 responses



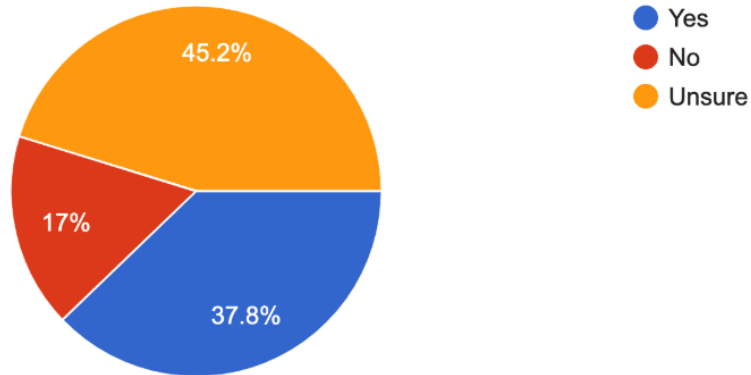
Of the 318 total responses, 198 (62.3%) of students indicated they were aware of ASGC and what it does on campus, 51 (16%) were not sure, and 69 (21.7%) indicated they were not aware of ASGC or what it does on campus. The percentage of respondents indicating awareness of ASGC is lower than the percentage of respondents who indicated they were aware of GSAC in last year's survey (75%) which suggests more work may be needed to clarify the different roles of the newly formed governing bodies.

Do you feel that ASGC plays an important role at Columbia?

This is a multiple-choice question. Responses include "Yes", "No", and "Unsure".
N=283.

Do you feel that ASGC plays an important role at Columbia?

283 responses



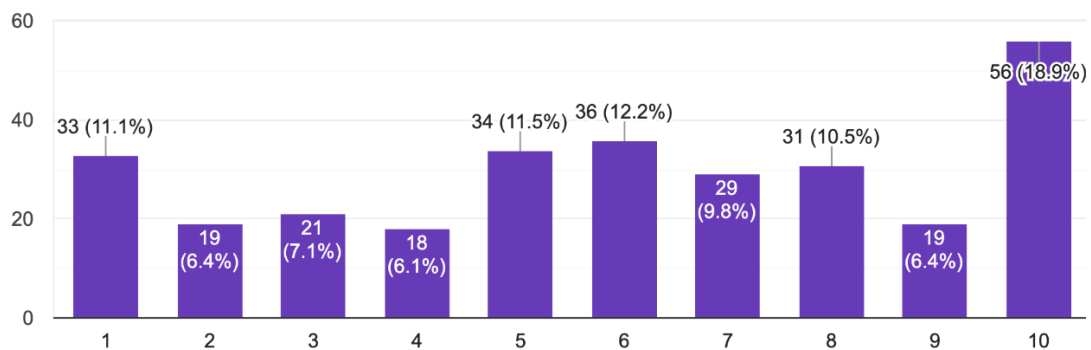
Of the 283 total responses, 107 (37.8%) believe that ASGC plays an important role at Columbia, 48 (17%) did not feel that GSAC plays an important role, and fully 128 (45.2%) indicated they were not sure. Despite the shift in awareness indicated by the previous questions, these numbers are close to last year's (38.9% yes, 19.8% no, 41.8% unsure).

Newsletter

Participants were asked how often they read the newsletter. This is a scaled question, with 1 being "never" and 10 being "every week." N=296.

How often do you read the ASGC newsletter?

296 responses



57.8% of respondents ranked their frequency at 6 out of 10 or higher, while 42.2% ranked it at 5 out of 10 or lower. However, since the newsletter was one of the main methods by which this survey was circulated, it is possible that the sample is not representative.

Participants were also asked how the newsletter might be improved. This was an open comment box. There were 19 comments, often overlapping in their suggestions. Four respondents suggested shortening it, with two of these suggesting sending it less frequently. Two suggested including headlines at the top, and one person suggested including department representative vacancy information at the top. Two people suggested adding graphics in place of text. One person wished the newsletter focused exclusively on academic matters and excluded “shilling for the union” and “gender agendas.” Two people suggested getting rid of it entirely, with one person pointing out that the newsletter does not address the pervasive issue of racism on campus.

General comments

The ASGC section also included an open comment section, which 36 people used to make a range of suggestions.

Seven of these comments touched on events, and three of the seven suggested either publicizing event tickets earlier or creating a system that is not first-come first-serve, such as a lottery system. Other comments touching on events suggested starting a trivia night, increasing wellness opportunities, inviting speakers, and planning more social events during the semester.

Two comments requested that funding for conferences be increased and announced more clearly.

Thirteen comments asked ASGC to both increase awareness of its current role, and the work it accomplishes, and to make more substantive changes in the university. Few of these comments had specific suggestions about what these substantive changes might entail, but one asked that ASGC advocate for more funding for graduate students, and two of these comments mentioned the union as a body already engaged in this work. Seven comments indicated that ASGC should engage more directly with students and with departments, in order to find out how best to represent and advocate for their needs, and one comment asked that ASGC advocate for underrepresented graduate students.

When asked what ASGC does well, 47 respondents offered a range of answers. Many of these answers overlapped: 20 comments mentioned emails and communications as something ASGC does well, 10 comments mentioned events, 6 comments mentioned travel grants, and 6 comments mentioned acting as a liaison to represent student concerns to the administration. One comment criticized ASGC for “Shilling for the union” and “Shilling for gender identity and confusion issues” while one expressed appreciation for ASGC’s recent support of the union.

Five respondents indicated that they did not know what ASGC did well, with one comment referring to it as “a defanged institution that accomplishes little,” and one comment criticizing ASGC’s failure to address racism on campus.

Section summary and comments

While respondents are generally happy with what ASGC already does, there is a perception that ASGC is hampered in its ability to create meaningful change. While 62% of respondents are aware of ASGC, only 38% feel it plays an important role on campus. Respondents suggest engaging students more directly in order to better represent them and working to address racism at Columbia.

Union

Section overview

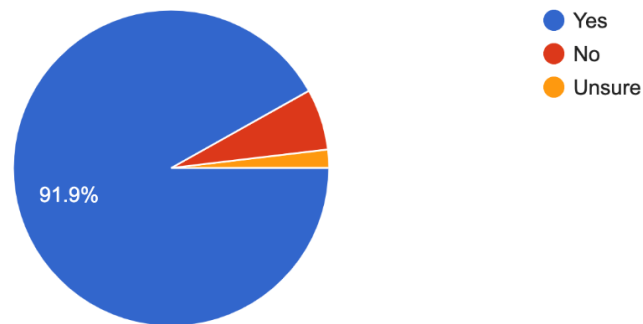
This section relates to the union, including students' perceptions of how the union will impact their own lives, as well as the response from the Columbia administration.

Are you aware that graduate students at Columbia have formed a union?

This is a multiple-choice question. Responses were limited to "Yes", "No", and "Unsure". N=320.

Are you aware that graduate students at Columbia have formed a union?

320 responses



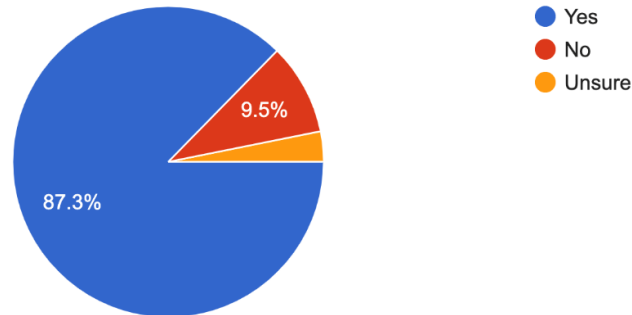
Of the 320 responses, 294 (91.9%) indicated that they were aware of the union, with 20 (6.3%) indicating they were unaware and 6 (1.9%) indicating that they were unsure. The percentage of respondents who indicated being aware of the union was 29.6% higher than the number of respondents who indicated being aware of ASGC's role on campus, but is 2.6% lower than the percentage of respondents who indicated awareness of the union in last year's Quality of Life Survey.

Are you aware that Columbia has agreed to begin bargaining, with certain conditions?

This new question addresses the shift in the administration's response to unionization this year. This is a multiple-choice question. Responses were limited to "Yes", "No", and "Unsure". N=316.

Are you aware that Columbia has agreed to begin bargaining a contract with the union, with certain conditions?

316 responses



Of 316 responses, 276 (87.3%) indicated they were aware of this development, with 30 (9.5%) unaware and 10 (3.2%) unsure.

Bargaining and ASGC's Role

Respondents were then asked a series of open questions about bargaining and the role they would like to see ASGC play with respect to the union.

In response to the question “What would you like to see covered in contract negotiations?” 123 respondents took the opportunity to offer suggestions. Many comments mentioned multiple issues, and the most common concerns involved funding, medical services, housing, and grievance procedures. Of the 123 comments, 46 mentioned increased funding, including guaranteed funding for 6th and 7th year, and 16 mentioned redressing late pay. 45 comments mentioned improved health insurance and 21 mentioned dental or vision insurance, 20 mentioned cheaper and better managed housing, 19 mentioned better support for parents and families, 19 mentioned a better process for addressing sexual harassment, and 13 mentioned implementing a general grievance process.

Several other issues were mentioned by multiple respondents as well: 5 comments mentioned job security, 4 mentioned clear work expectations, 1 mentioned work safety, 1 mentioned improved work spaces, 4 mentioned reduced teaching loads, and 2 mentioned better teacher training. 3 mentioned international student concerns, 3 mentioned tax help or tax withholding, 3 mentioned retirement benefits, and 3 mentioned transportation subsidies, 2 mentioned medical leave policies, 1 mentioned concrete commitments to diversity, 1 mentioned equal pay for equal work, 1 mentioned pay equity across departments, 1 mentioned BDS, 1 asked for transparency in Columbia's budget. 3 of the 123 respondents took this opportunity to voice anti-union sentiments, although none of the comments offered specific criticisms.

In response to the question “What role, if any, would you like to see ASGC play with regard to the bargaining process?” 66 respondents offered a range of suggestions. 29

asked ASGC to support the union publicly, while 14 felt ASGC should not play a role and 8 were unsure. 15 thought that ASGC should act as a channel of communication between students and the bargaining committee, by either sending out emails publicizing bargaining developments or representing student needs to the bargaining committee. 4 thought ASGC might be useful as a liaison between the administration and the bargaining committee. 4 thought ASGC should play a more active role, including suggesting that ASGC send delegates to the bargaining meetings and that ASGC testify to the bargaining committee about the results of the Quality of Life survey results.

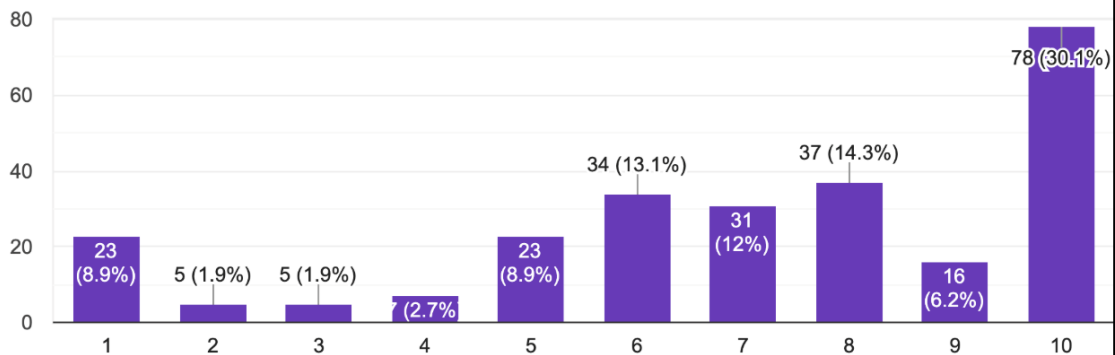
In response to the question “Last semester, after a plenary vote, the ASGC changed its policy from neutral to supportive of the union. How did you feel about the ASGC's former neutral stance?” 115 respondents offered both criticism of the previous stance and support of it. 79 respondents (68.7%) expressed appreciation for the shift toward support and the end to the neutral stance. 28 (24.35%) respondents indicated that they preferred the neutral stance, and 6 (4.35%) were uncertain. One respondent took issue with the framing of the question.

Do you feel that having a contract and a recognized union will improve your quality of life?

This is a scaled question asking participants to rate the amount they feel unionization will improve their quality of life from 1 to 10, where 1 is “not at all” and 10 is “very much so.” N=259.

Do you feel that having a contract and a recognized union will improve your quality of life?

259 responses



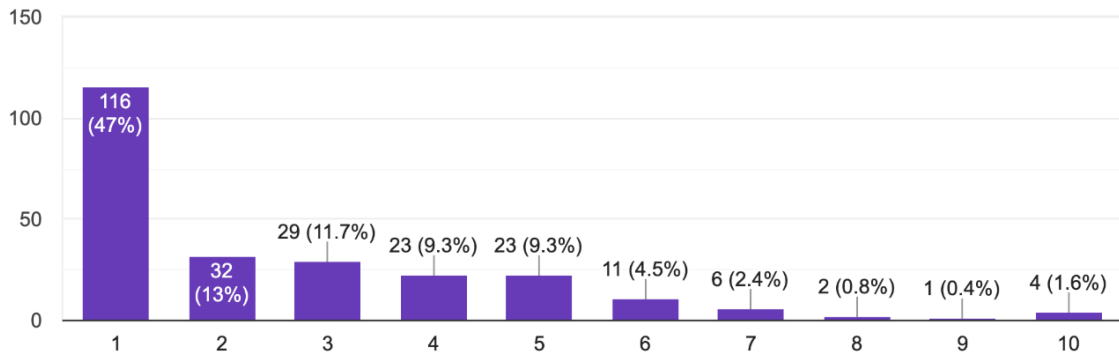
78 respondents (30%) rated their sense of unionization’s improvements for their quality of life at 10 out of 10. 75.7% of respondents gave a rating of 6 out of 10 or higher and 24.3% gave a rating of 5 out of 10 or lower, with an average rating of 7.07 and a median rating of 8.

Columbia's response to unionization

This is a scaled question asking participants to rate Columbia's response to efforts to unionize from 1 to 10, where 1 is "very bad" and 10 is "very good." N=247.

How would you rate the Columbia administration's response to the issue of unionization?

247 responses



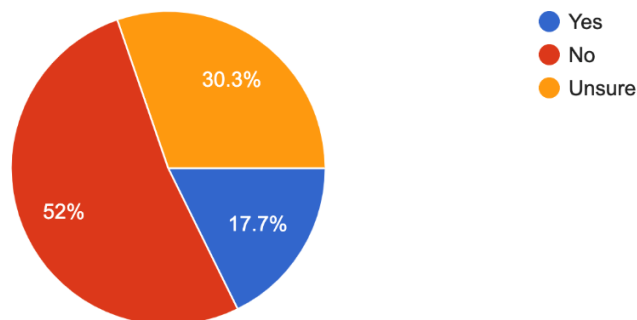
47% of respondents rated Columbia's response at 1 out of 10. 90.3% rated Columbia's response at 5 out of 10 or below and 9.7% rated the response at 6 out of 10 or above.

Do you feel that the Columbia administration is committed to improving your quality of life and working conditions regardless of possible unionization?

This is a multiple-choice question. Responses were limited to "Yes", "No", and "Not sure". N=271.

Do you feel that the Columbia administration is committed to improving your quality of life and working conditions regardless of unionization?

271 responses

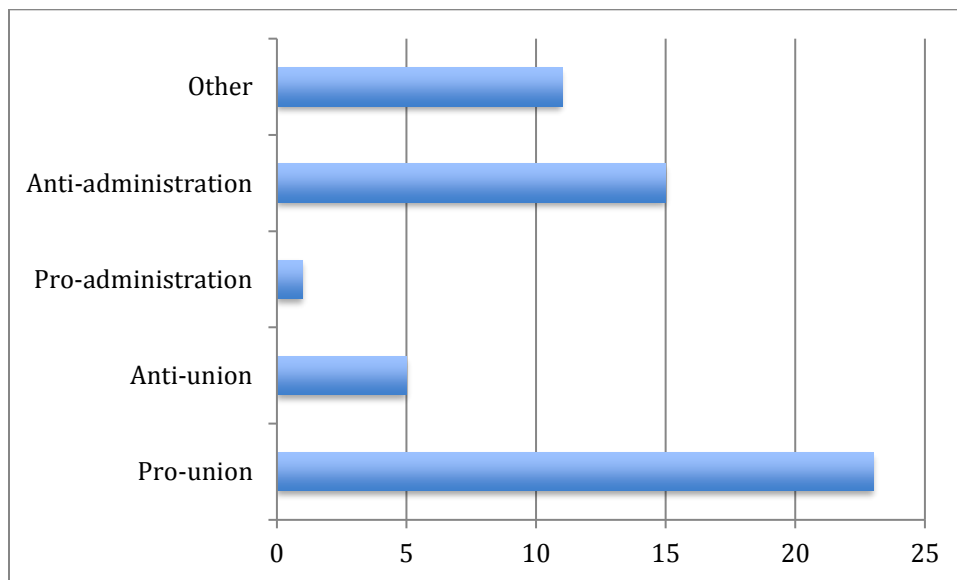


52% of respondents indicated that they felt the Columbia administration was not committed to improving their quality of life and working conditions without unionization. 30.2% were unsure and only 17.7% believed the Columbia administration was committed to improving their quality of life and working conditions regardless of unionization. This

is a slight decrease since last year, when 19.4% answered yes, 50.5% answered no, and 30.1% were unsure.

General comments

Participants were asked whether they had any other comments related to unionization, and 50 responded. Of the 50 comments, 23 (46%) can be categorized as pro-union, 5 (10%) can be categorized as anti-union, 15 (30%) can be categorized as critical of the administration and 1 can be categorized as supportive of the administration. 11 comments addressed other issues related to unionization, with two comments indicating that it seems more relevant to PhD students or students in the sciences, two comments indicating they felt the issue had become unnecessarily divisive, two comments requesting clearer communication from the union, two comments criticizing the personal attitudes of union organizers, and one comment criticizing UAW's treatment of union organizers.



Section summary and remarks

Support for unionization remains strong among graduate students, as does criticism of the university's response to graduate worker unionization. Faith in the university's commitment to improving graduate student quality of life without unionization is weak (17.7%). A majority of respondents approve of the ASGC's shift from neutrality to support for the union, with comments about what role the ASGC should play primarily indicating a desire for ASGC to serve as a conduit for information between the union and the graduate student body.

General remarks

Department

When asked to finish the sentence “Something my department could do to improve my quality of life is...” 118 participants offered comments. Many of these comments overlapped, and many mentioned multiple issues.

Of the 118 comments, 28 mentioned the need for better organization and more transparency in departmental requirements. 21 mentioned the need for better mentorship and improved relationships between students and faculty. 14 mentioned improvements to diversity and inclusion in the department, with a focus on hiring and tenuring more women and faculty of color, especially Black faculty, and admitting more students of color, particularly Black students. Relatedly, 5 comments mentioned a climate of tolerance for racism and sexual harassment in their departments.

13 comments mentioned the need for more work space and social space for graduate students in the department. 12 comments mentioned the need for more funding, particularly 6th and 7th year funding and summer funding. 6 mentioned the need for open conversations about mental health in their department, and 6 mentioned the need for increased social interaction among graduate students in the department.

6 comments mentioned the need for increased research and conference funding. 6 mentioned coursework, with some suggesting specific changes to their department, one person suggesting a survey to ask graduate students what classes they’d like to see, and one person suggesting reduced workloads.

3 comments requested better support for international students, and 3 requested better mechanisms for faculty to listen to students.

2 comments mentioned the need for more in-field teaching, 2 mentioned the need for better training for instructors, and 2 requested reduced teaching loads.

5 comments were purely positive, without offering specific description.

School and Dean

When asked to finish the sentence “Something my school/Dean could do to improve my quality of life is...” 76 participants offered comments. Many of these comments overlapped, and many mentioned multiple issues.

One respondent wrote only: “Dean Alonso and his office are awesome, please forward this to him.”

Of the other responses, 24 concerned funding, with 7 of those explicitly mentioning a need for 6th and 7th year funding. 4 more mentioned the need for more summer funding,

and 7 mentioned needing more funding for travel for both research and conferences. Two respondents mentioned redressing the issue of late pay.

Two comments mentioned the need for better mentorship, and two mentioned the new chapter meeting policy, with one person requesting less rigidity and one person asking GSAS to “create accountability mechanisms for faculty members who don’t fulfill their mentorship obligations *without* putting this work back on the backs of graduate students.”

Six comments mentioned increasing efforts to improve diversity and inclusion, with one respondent specifically asking that GSAS hire more faculty of color, and two asking that they better support students of color and low-income students. One respondent suggested providing students of color and low-income students with need-based financial assistance. One respondent asked for better resources for LGBTQ+ students. One respondent asked for improved policies for both sexual harassment and labor exploitation.

Six comments mentioned supporting the union, with one person asking that GSAS communicate the union and one person asking that GSAS voice support for the union publicly.

Five comments mentioned teaching, with one asking for mandatory inclusive teaching workshops for graduate students, one asking for more in-field teaching options, and two asking for reduced teaching loads. One respondent pointed out that teaching loads are uneven: “Adjustment of workloads: awareness of the fact that TAships are lighter than language instructorships...and making sure that other student obligations are adjusted accordingly; and, ideally, that the extra workload is compensated.”

Three comments expressed a desire for better support for parents, and two mentioned a need for better support for international students, with one commenter suggesting GSAS compare their support services to those of peer institutions.

Three comments mentioned the gym, with one respondent asking that GSAS cover the group fitness pass fee.

Two comments mentioned the need for better healthcare and one mentioned needing a clear sick pay policy.

Two respondents mentioned the need to “make the master’s students feel like a valued part of our scholarly community,” with one suggesting more masters-specific courses.

Columbia

When asked to finish the sentence “Something Columbia could do to improve my quality of life is...” 102 participants offered comments. Many of these comments overlapped, and many mentioned multiple issues.

Of the 102 comments, 19 mentioned inadequate funding, with 4 of those specifically mentioning the need for 6th and 7th year funding. 10 mentioned the need for better medical insurance, and 5 mentioned the need for dental insurance. 14 mentioned improvements to the gym, particularly addressing issues of overcrowding, cleanliness, and insufficient equipment. 2 mentioned addressing issues of overcrowding and cleanliness in the libraries, and one mentioned fixing minor maintenance issues around campus.

5 comments mentioned difficulty navigating bureaucracy at Columbia. 5 mentioned the need for more workspace for graduate students on campus, and 2 mentioned reducing teaching loads.

20 comments mentioned housing, with most of these requesting that rent be reduced. 5 mentioned Medical Services, with all of them citing the poor availability of appointments and two citing the appointment system in particular. 5 mentioned providing more resources for CPS.

8 comments mentioned negotiating a contract with the union. 2 mentioned sexual harassment, with one asking the university to “Fire abusers” and one asking for an anonymous grievance procedure. One mentioned declaring the university a sanctuary campus. Three mentioned providing better support for parents. 6 comments mentioned improving commitments to diversity and inclusion, with one person asking the university to hire more faculty of color, one asking it to support OADI and SOCA, one asking more multicultural programming with a dedicated space, one asking that professors have mandatory and recurring bias sensitivity training, and one asking for an LGBTQ+ support community.

Final comments

The survey closed by asking participants if they had any other comments or feedback about quality of life at Columbia. 35 responded, though 5 of the 35 wrote “n/a” or “no comment.”

Four of the 35 comments were purely positive, including such responses as “I’ve actually been very pleased with my quality of life at Columbia!”

On the other hand, 9 comments were purely negative, including such responses as “Honestly a horrible toxic environment at every level, within every facet” and “Why is it so bad?”

5 of the 35 comments addressed the survey itself, with two respondents simply thanking ASGC for running it, one suggesting improvements to survey design, and two indicating that the survey should be anonymous. (Both the outgoing and incoming Quality of Life Chairs have committed to making future surveys anonymous.)

Substantive comments addressed issues of diversity and inclusion, mental health, lack of community, funding, and the fitness center. One comment mentioned needing 6th and 7th

year funding, and two mentioned improving the Dodge Gym. Of the two comments mentioning mental health, one criticized CPS's handling of cases of chronic depression, which the respondent noted is "a very common problem among graduate students. The other described the significant deterioration of their mental health and that of their peers while in graduate school. Of the two comments mentioning a lack of community, one mentioned feeling "disconnected" and "like no one cares."

The most common substantive issue mentioned in the closing comments was improving diversity and inclusion at Columbia, particularly for students of color. These 4 comments asked Columbia to "address issues of discrimination and harassment," with one respondent explaining: "The power and whiteness are palpable. Please do something to make this place more open to ALL students- and that involves more than just hosting film screenings that portray marginalized identities. Actually change some policies."

Conclusion and suggestions

While a general summary of the findings of each section can be found in the **Executive Summary** of this report, immediately following the introduction, this closing section offers a broad summary and some suggestions for steps to take moving forward.

Across sections, the results of this survey highlight concerns about funding that point to significant socioeconomic barriers in graduate education at Columbia. With only 26% of respondents living on Columbia's stipends alone, the survey's findings show that the strong majority of graduate students must either rely on familial support, an option clearly available only to some, or seek additional employment to supplement their income, leaving them with less time to devote to their work at Columbia. The current funding structure at Columbia thus disadvantages those unable to rely on their families for financial support. Experiences of economic precarity at Columbia are more pronounced for Masters students, for whom funding options are relatively rare.

Respondents suggest that economic precarity is most pronounced when it comes to summer funding and, in the case of PhD students, 6th and 7th year funding. While funding is often the most difficult place to make change, and is certain to be a topic of contract negotiations between the university and the Graduate Workers of Columbia, it is also at the heart of graduate student Quality of Life, and next year's Quality of Life Chair would do well to keep abreast of any developments in contract negotiations. Respondents suggest expanding summer teaching options might help provide more summer funding, and would also offer graduate students more opportunities to teach in their field, but in general, the strong call is for more funding, and for secure funding beyond year 5.

Graduate students also call for stronger mentorship from faculty in their departments. So far, responses to new chapter meeting policy are uneven, with many respondents indicating that faculty were not aware of the policy, and that the responsibility for ensuring a meeting is held ought not fall on the graduate student.

Graduate students also report difficulties obtaining appointments for both Columbia Medical Services and Counseling and Psychological Services, and request a reform to the appointment system and the referral system, with many respondents reporting that Medical Services seem designed for undergraduates, and that an adjusted system may be required to adequately meet the medical needs of graduate students. Respondents also requested dental and vision insurance; it remains to be seen whether next year's optional dental and vision insurance, supplied at a fee, will meet their needs. Responses to this survey should not be taken as a reflection on the new insurance policy, which was announced after the survey concluded.

With many graduate students satisfied with their housing, criticism generally focused on convoluted and unclear policies within the Columbia Housing Office. In particular,

respondents indicated unnecessarily stringent transfer and couples housing application processes, and a general lack of transparency. Finally, respondents who have not yet received the free Columbia internet promised the previous academic year request that their rent reflect this financial disparity, and that a clear timeline for the installation of Columbia internet be announced.

Parental accommodations at Columbia remain drastically insufficient, as the survey results demonstrate. With the majority of parents' qualitative comments focusing on the need for better childcare resources, it seems that a focus for the coming year should be increasing the childcare subsidies and providing better information to connect parents to affordable childcare options. Beyond this survey, the Quality of Life chair circulated a survey for parents in the Fall of 2018. Unfortunately, the Provost declined to make any changes on the grounds that these policies were now subject to negotiation with the union. It is worth noting that the health insurance changes announced in an April 25 email were also subject to such negotiation, but were announced without any contract agreement. Nevertheless, better information about childcare resources could be provided for parents without interfering with contract negotiations.

Responses regarding disability services reveals that discrimination is both an experience and a fear among graduate students with disabilities, and that there appears to be a general sense that ODS is unable to address the particular needs of graduate students. Qualitative comments also indicate that campus accessibility is a continuing problem for graduate students with physical disabilities.

The perception that campus resources are not designed to address the needs of graduate students, as we have seen in the case of medical services and disability services, also extends to the Center for Career Education. In each case, addressing this sense may be a matter of changes in policy or programming, or in better publicizing graduate-student-specific resources, or both. Respondents also complain of overcrowding at Columbia, both in libraries and in the fitness center, which is described as underequipped and unclean.

In general, this survey highlights persistent concerns about racism on Columbia's campus, and about the insufficiency of current diversity and inclusion efforts. Survey respondents highlighted these insufficiencies in qualitative comments across sections, focusing in particular on the need both to hire and tenure more faculty of color, and in some departments more women, and to better support both faculty and students of color once they arrive. The Diversity and Inclusion section reveals significant disparities in respondents perceptions of Columbia's diversity and inclusion efforts, with Black, Latinx and multiracial respondents significantly more likely to feel their department is not committed to diversity and inclusion, compared to White and Asian or Asian-American respondents. Both these disparities and the qualitative comments reveal that respondents of different races have dramatically different experiences at Columbia, and that addressing these inequities should be of primary concern in improving Quality of Life on campus.

Similarly, respondents suggest that Columbia hire and tenure more women in the sciences, and particularly the physical sciences, in order to attract and retain more female graduate students in these fields, and to improve the Quality of Life of those already here.

Addressing the presence of identity-based violence, discrimination, and harassment on campus will be crucial to these endeavors. This year's survey distinguished between violence, harassment and discrimination on the bases of race, disability, sexual orientation, and gender, and 29% of respondents indicated that they either had experienced or had been affected by at least one form. To reiterate, over half of the participants who identified as Black/African American reported having experienced or having been affected by racial discrimination, and nearly half of all persons who identify as non-binary or gender-nonconforming reported having experienced discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. With only 32% of those indicating an experience of violence, discrimination, or harassment also indicating having reported that experience to Columbia, it is clear that Columbia's current mechanisms for responding to these issues are inadequate. Qualitative comments reveal a perception, particularly among those who have experienced identity-based violence, discrimination, or harassment, that Columbia prioritizes its reputation, and that of tenured professors, over the safety of its students. Respondents also suggest that substantive responses to incidents of racial harassment, violence, and anti-semitism, at both the school and university level, are an important step toward shifting campus climate.

While many of these issues require systemic changes on the part of GSAS and the university, ASGC can begin making improvements both by encouraging such changes within GSAS and by working to better represent the interests of underrepresented students. Some respondents suggest working with existing organizations, such as SOCA and OADI, could help ASGC begin to improve its support for underrepresented students in general, and students of color in particular.

The Quality of Life committee commits to using the insights offered by the present survey to guide their advocacy work in the coming year, and to redouble its efforts to engage the graduate student body directly, in order to better represent the needs and interests of graduate students in GSAS.

Kate McIntyre
Quality of Life Chair, ASGC