

# 2020 Quality of Life Survey Report

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## Introduction

The ASGC Quality of Life Survey is distributed annually to Columbia's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences student body. The survey has been administered for nearly a decade, formerly by GSAC, and since last year, by ASGC. 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 comprises 15 sections. Notable changes in this year's survey design include an emphasis on privacy and anonymization. Respondents were assigned a unique subject ID through the use of timestamps, which was stored separately from respondents' UNIs. As in previous years, UNIs were only used for the purposes of selecting raffle winners. However, the committee warned respondents that complete anonymization is not always achievable. While our committee felt strongly that collecting demographic data is essential to advocating on behalf of underrepresented groups on campus, we recognized that demographic data (e.g., race, gender, and/or program) can, in some instances, make certain students more easily identifiable than others. Survey answers were not shared beyond designated members of the ASGC Quality of Life Survey Committee, and only two committee members had access to the de-linked UNIs for the purpose of setting up the raffle. This confidentiality statement was communicated to students in the email advertising the survey.

The content of the survey was slightly altered from last year's survey. This year's survey coincided with GSAS's one-time Survey of PhD Students, which focused on student experiences in their departments. Thus this survey asked fewer questions about departmental life than in previous years. Students still had the opportunity to express themselves regarding their departmental life through the academic life section and in the general remarks, and many took that opportunity. The section on ASGC was also removed, with a plan for a separate ASGC survey to be sent out. Other changes include the removal of the question about "birth sex" to only leave a question about gender identification, for which we gave the option of selecting "all that apply" to respondents. Two questions about teaching requirements were added in the academic life section, offering students the opportunity to express themselves on the content of the courses they teach. In the health section, questions about stress levels, factors and remedies were added, as well as a question about dental care. The section about Violence, Harassment and Discrimination was reformatted for clarification, and bullying was added to the list of violences. The section about international students was expanded to include a question about ISSO specifically, and the section on campus resources now includes the GSAS Writing Studio. In general, questions were rephrased to adapt to new situations.

This year's survey especially focused on cross-section analysis, extending previous efforts on analyzing results with demographics data. It is also important to note that this survey was distributed at the very early onset of the COVID-19 crisis. Results should thus be interpreted with this in mind.

The survey was distributed through the ASGC newsletter on February 7, 2020. The survey was also advertised by ASGC department representatives, and by GSAS, through their newsletter and with an individual email. The Quality of Life Committee would like to express their gratitude to GSAS and to ASGC departmental representatives for advertising and advocating for the survey. ASGC offered an incentive to encourage participation by offering respondents the option of entering a sweepstake that offered twenty \$100 Amazon gift cards. The Quality of Life Chair coordinated with departmental representatives to organize survey fill out sessions, providing free breakfast or lunch to participants. To encourage departmental representative promotion of the survey, each representative was entered into a sweepstake of departments with high response rates to win one of three \$200 Amazon gift cards. The winners of both sweepstakes were announced on March 23rd. The survey closed on March 15th with a total of 548 responses. This represents a significant increase from last year's response rate of 336 responses.

The data was processed and analyzed by members of the Quality of Life Committee, signed below, and the executive board of 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 following this introduction, in order to ease readability for those in need of only general conclusions. The executive summary includes a series of recommendations, made when appropriate, to various bodies within the university to improve the quality of life of GSAS students and to serve as the basis for advocacy in the upcoming year.

Quality of Life Chair

Audrey Amsellem, Music, PhD

Quality of Life Committee

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## Executive Summary

### Demographics

The survey closed with a total of 548 responses. Of these, 3 were double submissions and 3 were nearly blank, leaving 542 valid responses. The breakdown is 180 MA and 362 PhD students. This represents a significant (61%) increase from last year's response rate of 336 responses. GSAS has 3715 students (1866 Masters, 1849 PhD, as of Fall 2019), thus the survey has a 14.6% response rate. Although there are significantly more MA students represented in this survey than in previous years (78 last year, 68 the year before that), MA students remain underrepresented in comparison to PhD students. In both the MA and PhD programs, about 60% of respondents were in the Humanities, and about 40% were in the Sciences.

The gender distribution in the sample is skewed toward those who identify as females. LGBTQ students are proportionally well represented, with 71% of respondents identifying as straight. The strong majority of respondents are White, with about 30% identifying as Asian or Asian American, 8% identifying as Hispanic or Latino/a/x, 6% identifying as Black or African-American, 3% identifying as Middle Eastern/North-African, and under 1% identifying as American Indian or Alaska Native. This raises concerns about the extent to which this survey might be able to address concerns specific to racial and ethnic minorities. ASGC is taking steps towards prioritizing responding to and better representing the concerns of students from underrepresented groups with the creation of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Chair.

### Academic Life

Students are generally satisfied with their departments/programs and advisors. The main issues stem from a lack of transparency, support, and clear communication between the administration, departments, and students. Clarity is needed on degree requirements (a quarter of the students believed that the degree requirements were not clearly communicated to them), as well as on Chapter Meetings (now Dissertation Progress Meetings). 60% of PhD students noted that they were unsure of or unaware of the chapter meeting policy. 30% of students in years 5 or above did not have Chapter Meetings in the Fall of 2019. For students who had meetings, a vast majority found them useful.

Over half of the students reported being satisfied with channels of communications and opportunities for students voices to be heard for academic and administrative matters. The remaining students believe that there should be some change that allows for their voices to be heard more clearly and anonymously.

The satisfaction levels for the available work spaces have median satisfaction. Students generally spent too little time dedicated to their own research, while a significant portion of students believed they spent too much time on classes, teaching, administrative work, and other employment. The biggest issue, from the comments, seems to be the lack of financial support,



requiring students to hold jobs that take time away from academics and research.

The vast majority of students were in good academic standing, and those that were found not in good academic standing were generally satisfied with Columbia's response to the situation.

The Quality of Life Committee and the ASGC Executive Board make the following recommendation:

- (1) GSAS should reinforce to departments and faculty the mentor-advisee expectations.

## Housing

Housing, and in particular, rent payments, are a significant source of stress due to students' lack of financial confidence and support from Columbia. According to the results of the survey, approximately an equal number of students live on campus as they do off campus. There also seems to be a significant difference between the distribution of Masters and PhD students' percentage of income spent on rent: the average Masters student spent over 50% of their income on rent while the average PhD student spent over 30%.

The median satisfaction with the housing provided by Columbia was 5 (neutral) for Masters students and 7 (good) for PhD students. The subsequent question asked for students' experiences with Columbia Residential, which was distributed more uniformly throughout, approximately  $\frac{1}{3}$  of students not satisfied with their interactions with Residential, while Columbia Residential seems to be able to resolve the majority of students issues.

Comments regarding students' experiences with housing calls for both increased advocacy for Masters students' housing, as well as improved communication from Residential. Students commonly asked for fairer rent, as the increase in Columbia Residential's rent has outpaced the annual increase in stipends. Other issues included lack of clarity regarding housing policies, outdated information on the Residential website, as well experiences with homophobia, issues with housing quality and needed renovations, and the lack of ability to choose unfurnished housing.

The Quality of Life Committee and the ASGC Executive Board make the following recommendation:

- (1) Columbia Residential should establish, beginning in the Fall of 2020, a Columbia Residential Advisory Committee which brings together student representatives from the different schools which it serves. Similar committees exist for Columbia Health and Libraries.

## Health

Only about 40% of respondents believe that Columbia provides adequate resources for physical health, and only 45% that the university provides adequate mental health resources. The majority of respondents are also not satisfied with the appointment system for medical services. In the comments, numerous students expressed how difficult it is to get an appointment through this

system, and the lack of choice for time. Once students have an appointment, they rate their experience more positively: wait times are satisfactory, as is the quality of the staff.

On the other hand, the appointment system for CPS satisfies most students. The availability of appointments, wait time and quality of the staff are also well rated. Several commenters however described CPS as “understaffed” and asked for more in-network care providers.

The majority of respondents are not satisfied with Columbia’s insurance policy, and the majority of students do not have access to adequate dental care. In the comments, numerous respondents asked for dental and vision coverage as part of their insurance, and asked for the 100 plan back. Over 45% of respondents do not believe that stress is addressed as an issue by the university. The vast majority of commenters called for improving current resources rather than creating new ones. Some comments also identified stress as a symptom of structural issues and called for departmental solutions, in addition to additional funding, adequate health insurance, and a better gym.

A small portion of students have requested medical or personal leave from the university. Respondents are generally satisfied with the process of taking a leave, and a bit less so with the process of returning, expressing in the comments that their department did not adapt to their situations. Some commenters also requested clarity on the process, particular on how taking a leave affects their finances and their degree timelines.

The Quality of Life Committee and the ASGC Executive Board make the following recommendations:

- (1) ASGC and the Health Committee should bring the dissatisfaction with the appointment system to the attention of Columbia Health.
- (2) GSAS should recommend departments to promote departmental level conversations around stress and work life balance

### **Disability**

About 9% of survey respondents identified as having a disability. Of these students, 17% report experience disability-related discrimination at Columbia, and 28% report experiencing violence, discrimination and/or harassment at Columbia. Students with a disability appear to experience violence, discrimination, and/or harassment at a higher rate than the general survey population. Students are neutral or slightly negative about disclosing their disability to the university or their department, and a quarter of students are “not at all” comfortable disclosing. About half of students with a disability have sought assistance from ODS. Students’ experiences with support from ODS and their home departments are mixed. Half of the comments criticized ODS specifically.

The Quality of Life Committee and the ASGC Executive Board make the following recommendations:

- (1) ASGC should create an anonymous complaint portal to collect student complaints

- and grievances and convey these directly to ODS.
- (2) The OADI should work with departments to foster an inclusive, respectful culture that supports students with known or private disability. Some departments lack this.

### **Diversity and Inclusion**

In line with last year's report, the experiences of women and/or underrepresented minorities on campus continue to differ from that of their male and/or White and Asian/Asian-American counterparts. Specifically, perceptions of departmental and university-wide commitment to diversity and inclusion greatly differ, such that students who identified as male, White, and/or Asian/Asian-American reported more favorable experiences than their peers. Further, genderqueer/non-binary/gender non-conforming students continue to be underrepresented in our data, a byproduct of underrepresentation on campus.

This report emerges as the Columbia community, and the world, is entrenched in the Covid-19 pandemic. It is therefore important to note that not all members of our campus community are equally affected. Asian/Asian-American students and residents have increasingly been subjected to both physical and verbal racial violence and xenophobia in response to misconceptions about the coronavirus. Further, especially marginalized and economically disadvantaged communities (e.g., Black/African-American, Indigenous American, non-White Hispanic/Latinx) are disproportionately represented in the coronavirus mortality statistics. Much like in other areas of the U.S. healthcare system, access to coronavirus testing and treatment continues to be stratified along racial and socioeconomic lines. The committee recognizes these truths and therefore reports them alongside our own data.

The Quality of Life Committee and the ASGC Executive Board make the following recommendations:

- (1) GSAS administration (not just those within the Office of Academic Diversity and Inclusion) and the future ASGC Executive Board Members, should carefully review students' written remarks on the efficacy of Columbia's current diversity and inclusion efforts. A summary cannot fully capture the nuance of students' disparate experiences on campus, which is one reason this section of the report was created.

- (2) Special care should be taken in addressing COVID-19-related concerns, the burden of which is disproportionately felt by students of color, students with disabilities, and/or students with financial insecurity (among other marginalized groups). These concerns include, but are not limited to, housing (e.g., Columbia Residential) and food insecurity; racism and xenophobia (e.g., Asian/Asian-American students being physically and verbally assaulted, including at Columbia 'Safe Havens'); and access to health services.

## **Violence, Discrimination, and Harassment**

About 20% of survey participants reported either having directly experienced, or having been affected, by instances of violence, harassment and discrimination at Columbia. Out of these students about 40% have directly experienced violence, harassment and discrimination, in the form of gender-based misconduct (36%), sexual harassment (23%), racial discrimination (23%), bullying (12%), followed by violence based on sexual orientation, sexual violence, disability-based violence and finally transphobic violence. Of those indirectly affected, the majority of respondents witnessed racial discrimination (41%), followed by gender based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, bullying, disability-based discrimination, transphobic and based on sexual orientation.

About 30% of those who experienced the effects of discrimination and harassment reported experiencing *at least* two forms. Of the participants who reported violence, discrimination and harassment on multiple fronts, about half recorded either having experienced or been affected by racial discrimination.

Over 70% of all persons to experience instances of violence, discrimination and harassment identified as female, genderqueer or gender non-conforming. Participants who identified as LGBTQIA were 1.5 times more likely to experience or be affected by instances of violence, harassment, and discrimination than those who identify as straight/heterosexual. It is also striking that 60% of all persons who identified as non-binary or gender-nonconforming reported having experienced discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

It is striking that participants who identified as Black/African American, Hispanic, or Latino/a/x were two times more likely to having experienced or having been affected by instances of violence, harassment, and discrimination than those identifying solely as White. Furthermore, 35% of participants who identified as Black/African-American reported having experienced or having been affected by racial discrimination.

The majority of respondents that were the targets of violence, harassment or discrimination, identified a faculty member in their program as the perpetrator, and graduate students were the second largest group reported.

Of the students who experienced some form of violence, harassment or discrimination, only 18% recorded that they had ever reported such an incident to Columbia. Lastly, a majority of persons who reported some form of violence, harassment and discrimination at Columbia do not believe 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.

The ASGC Executive Board and the Quality of Life Committee make the following recommendations:

- (1) Improve the system to report instances of violence, harassment or discrimination to foster trust with targets of these violences.
- (2) Control the hiring of faculty with history of violence, harassment or discrimination.

### **International Students**

The survey's results show that respondents' experiences as international students differ widely depending on their race and/or ethnicity. Those who identify as Asian/Asian-American are more likely to be affected by recent immigration policies. Those who identify as Hispanic or Latino/a/x, are the most likely to experience harassment or discrimination at the border closely followed by Black/African American, Middle Eastern/North African and Asian/Asian American, in stark contrast to those who identify as White/European-American.

The majority of respondents are pleased with Columbia's resources for international students, although the satisfaction rate has decreased from last year. The vast majority of international students have not taken advantage of Columbia's resources for non-native English speakers. Those who have are satisfied with the resources, although multiple people in the comment section decried the lack of available appointments at the Writing Center.

The majority of respondents found Columbia to be welcoming to international students, although several students described their unfamiliarity with US culture as a significant barrier to inclusion. The majority of respondents are pleased with ISSO services. In the comments, students asked for tax filing help, and decried their lack of ability to access information.

The ASGC Executive Board and the Quality of Life Committee make the following recommendations:

- (1) International students should be taken into account in discussions about inclusion and diversity. This work should be coordinated between ISSO and ODCI, and should address integration.
- (2) ISSO should improve accessibility through establishing a direct phone line and increasing staff, including hiring advisors with legal training.
- (3) ISSO should communicate to its students their current tax filing resource, as many students seemed unaware of the service.

### **Parental Accommodations**

A total of 6% of respondents are parents. 67% of parents believe that Columbia doesn't provide enough resources and services. Roughly half of the parents have used parental accommodations or have taken a leave, around 60% receive childcare subsidies and around 20% have used Back-Up Care. Numerous respondents commented on the high cost of childcare in New York

City, and expressed that the \$2000 subsidy wasn't enough. Many asked for affordable on campus childcare services, such as a daycare. Several commenters didn't know what Back-Up Care was. Some commenters also expressed that childcare costs deter would-be parents from having children.

The Quality of Life Committee and the ASGC Executive Board makes the following recommendation:

- (1) Ask University Life to increase communication on existing services such as Back Up Care. One document that lists all parental resources and recommended outside services could be distributed to each parent, as opposed to the [current format of information request form](#).
- (2) GSAS should maintain and continue to expand parental support

### Campus Resources

We asked students about seven services: Libraries, Center for Career Education (CCE), Health, Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS), Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), Fitness Centers, and GSAS Writing Studio.

The libraries are heavily used. Fitness Center, Health Services, CPS, and CTL have fewer frequent users. CCE and the GSAS Writing Studio are poorly used. The fitness centers and GSAS Writing Studio have smoother distributions of frequent and occasional users.

A majority of respondents who have used the services are satisfied with each service, except for the Fitness Centers. The GSAS Writing Studio (opened Fall 2018) has the highest satisfaction rate and attracts repeat users. Libraries, GSAS Writing Studio and CTL have high percentages of "very satisfied" users. Commenters did decry overcrowded libraries and a desire for more quiet space, accessible seating, and carrels. Health Services appointment system was criticized for its lack of flexibility, and the gym drew routine criticism on overcrowding; broken equipment, and the cost of lockers, towels and group fitness classes. The GSAS Writing Studio was particularly praised in the comments.

The Quality of Life Committee and the ASGC Executive Board makes the following recommendation:

- (1) ASGC should bring some student complaints to Dodge (broken equipment...)
- (2) ASGC and the Health Committee should bring student complaints to Health Services (appointment system...)
- (3) Continue to support the Writing Studio while continuing to seek space for GSAS students to work and write, including for MA and pre-dissertation writers.

### Funding

Funding and financial wellness are some of the key influences in the graduate student quality of life. Incredibly, only 22% of PhD students relied solely on funding through Columbia, while a stunning 4% of Masters students relied solely on funding from Columbia. Approximately half of all Masters students reported having taken out a loan to finance their program, with a median amount of between \$50,000 and \$75,000. The median Masters student felt that they were not

financially stable, and the median PhD student felt mildly financially stable, both of which need to be improved. A significant fraction of students experienced issues with reimbursement, and the most common feedback from students included poor communication, system issues, and administrative/logistic complaints. The open write-in submissions in the last two questions shed light on the growing inaccessibility of graduate education at Columbia; the majority of students' sources of stress were due to their financial instability, as well as their ability to make rent payments in a timely manner.

- (1) GSAS should address the issue of late pay and late reimbursement and ensure that the process for pay and reimbursement is streamlined, such that the financial insecurity many graduate students are facing is not additionally burdened by unpredictable income.

### **Unionization**

Respondents were largely familiar with the Graduate Workers of Columbia (GWC) union and its bargaining process. Additionally, the majority of respondents reported feeling that a contract and recognized union would improve their quality of life. All the same, the majority of respondents are not at all satisfied with the Columbia administration's response to unionization and bargaining. These data suggest a disparity between graduate students' needs (for improved quality of life) and the Columbia administration's desire to bargain. These data also suggest that respondents are feeling uncertain about ongoing negotiations, with many being unsure if they are satisfied with either the union or Columbia's bargaining. This uncertainty is perhaps symptomatic of a general lack of information about graduate student's rights as workers, which is one issue that the union rallies to address.

The Quality of Life Committee and the ASGC Executive Board makes the following recommendation:

- (1) Good faith bargaining is essential to moving the university forward. The primary recommendation is for Columbia to commit to bargaining in good faith with GWC, which would demonstrate a true commitment to improving graduate students' quality of life.

### **General Comments**

In their closing comments, respondents raised a range of issues, many overlapping, at the departmental, school, and university level. The central concerns raised across levels are insufficient funding, lack of commitment to diversity and inclusion, including through accessibility initiatives, lack of effective measures against sexual assault and gender-based misconduct, and the poor state of fitness facilities.

At the departmental level, the major concern is the lack of communication and transparency. Many students commented on a culture of opacity, as well as not receiving clear directions for



degree requirements. These are the same demands as in last year's survey. Funding was also an important source of grievances, including several comments about the lack of effective communication surrounding funding availability, lack of departmental funds and significant delays in reimbursing expenses. Many students commented on the lack of faculty availability for students, decrying a lack of effective mentoring. Students expressed the need for their department to develop community building initiatives and opportunities to socialize, as well as organize events around mental health and well being. Numerous students expressed asked for inclusion initiatives, and for hiring diverse faculty members and graduate students. Students also requested appropriate communication of job prospects, and more workspaces. Several students demanded a safe climate from sexual and gender based discrimination, and asked that policies be in place to control the hiring of faculty with a history of sexual misconduct.

At the GSAS level, the majority of comments regarded funding. Students asked for an increase in stipend and a lowering of tuition, and PhD students expressed a need for 6<sup>th</sup> year and 7<sup>th</sup> year guaranteed funding. Students asked GSAS to improve communication and transparency, by clarifying degree requirements and addressing 6<sup>th</sup> year funding ambiguity. Several students also asked for career-focused initiatives to prepare students for the job market. Students commented on their current insurance plan and asked for improvement, requested additional workspaces, affordable housing, better parental accommodations, and more social events and more community building initiatives. Many students insisted on a commitment to diversity and inclusion. Students also demanded protective measures against gender-based misconduct and sexual assault, and asked for a serious upgrading of accessibility on campus.

At the university level, the majority of comments addressed funding, the need for good faith bargaining with the union, improvement of Dodge Fitness Center, affordable and improved housing offers, wider insurance coverage, increased availability of workspaces, and a serious commitment to inclusion and diversity at both the student and faculty level. Respondents also asked Columbia to foster community through events across departments. Some students made a call for enhancing public safety measures, and respondents called for improved accessibility on campus.

In the general closing comments, the most common concerns were health care and the gym. Several students noted that both their physical and mental health had declined since enrollment at Columbia. Many students asked for improved fitness facilities, through renovations and affordable classes.



## Demographics

### Section Overview

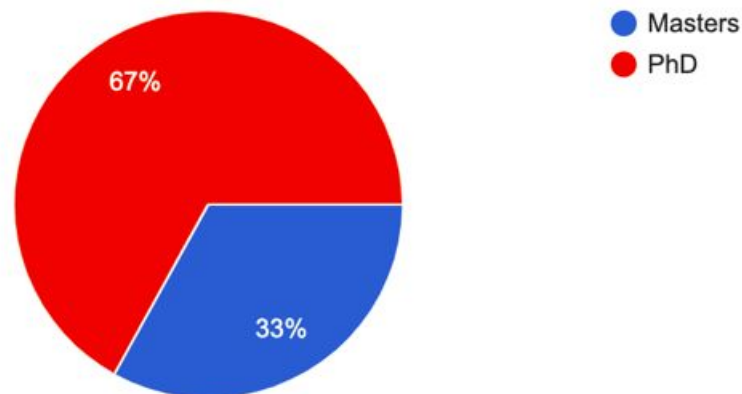
All respondents were invited to complete a set of demographic questions, including program type, year of study, gender, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, age, and religious affiliation(s).

### Program Type

This multiple choice question asked participants whether they were enrolled in a Masters or Ph.D. program.

What type of program are you in?

545 responses

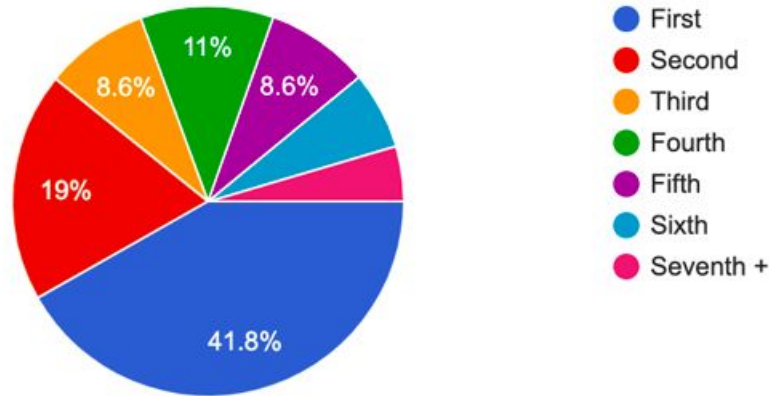


Of 545 total responses, 365 (67%) of respondents were in a Ph.D. program and 180 (33%) were enrolled in a Master's program.

### Year of Study

## What year of study are you in?

546 responses



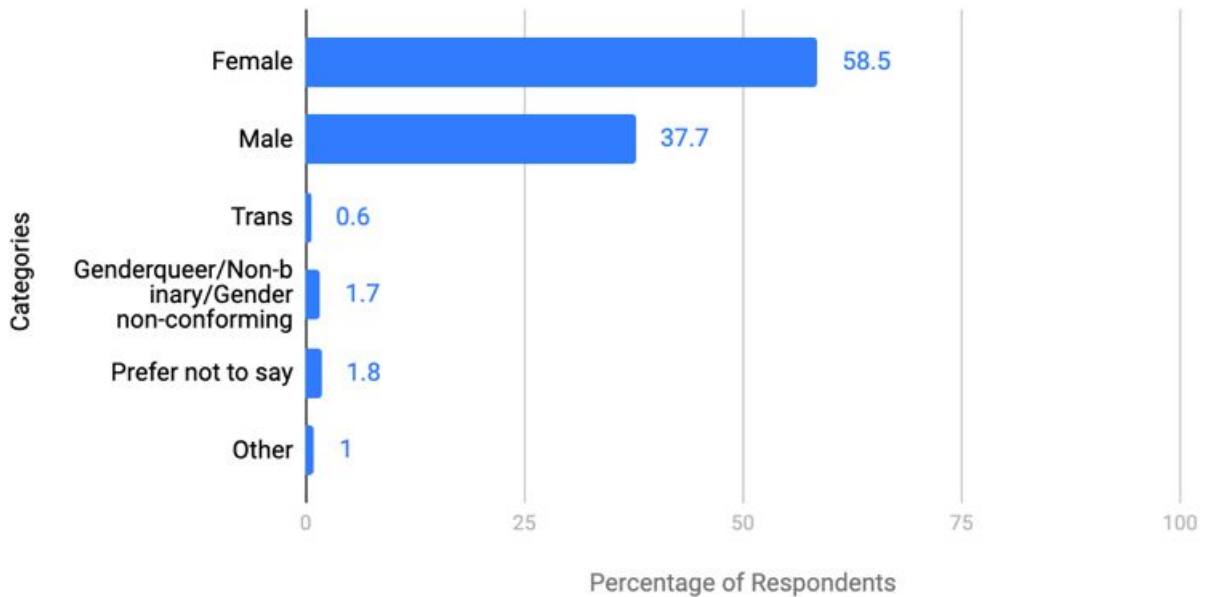
Of 546 respondents, 228 (41.8%) were in their program's first year; 104 (19%) were in their second; 47 (8.6%) in their third; 60 (11%) in their fourth; 47 (8.6%) in their fifth; 35 (6.4%) in their sixth; and 25 (4.6%) in their seventh or higher program year.

## Gender

This multiple response question asked participants to select all options that described their current gender identity. Options included female, male, trans, genderqueer/non-binary/gender non-conforming, or other (text response). Participants were also able to select 'prefer not to say'.

## Gender

What is your current gender identity? (N = 544)



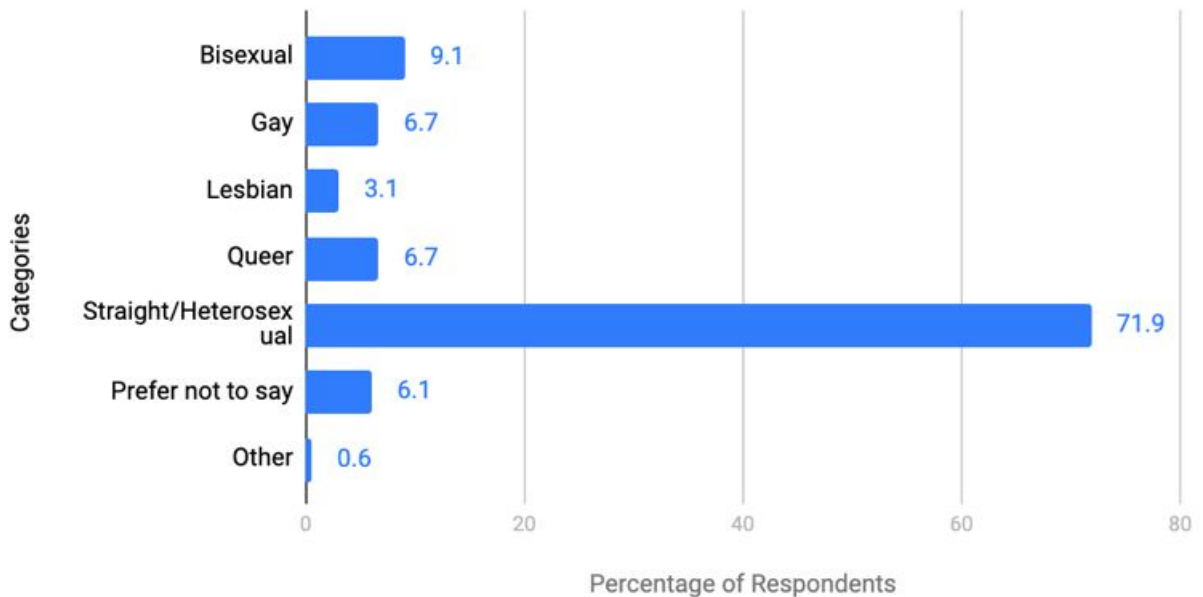
Of 544 respondents, 318 (58.5%) identified as female, 206 (37.9%) identified as male, 9 (1.7%) identified as genderqueer/non-binary/gender non-conforming, and 10 (1.8%) preferred not to say. Of the five respondents (1%) that selected 'other,' 1 respondent identified as genderfluid, 2 respondents identified as agender, and 1 respondent identified as female/genderqueer; 1 respondent also explicitly identified as male.

### Sexual Orientation

This multiple response question asked participants to select all options that described their sexual orientation. Options included bisexual, gay, lesbian, queer, straight/heterosexual, or other (text response). Participants were also able to select 'prefer not to say'.

## Sexual Orientation

What is your sexual orientation? (N = 541)



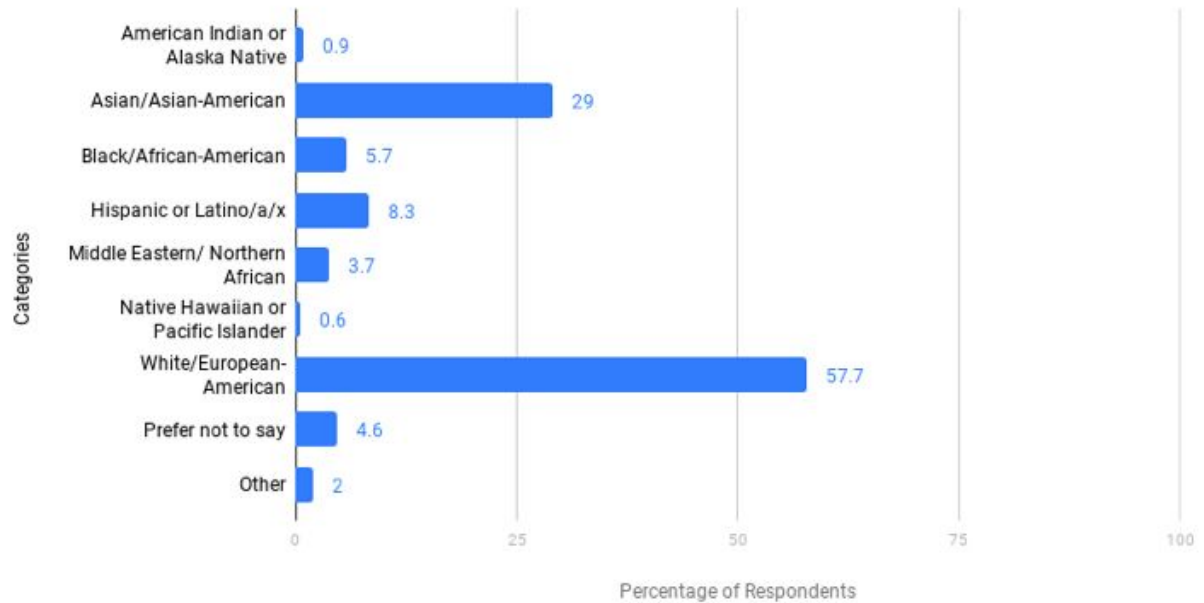
Of 541 respondents, 49 (9.1%) identified as bisexual, 36 (6.7%) identified as gay, 17 (3.1%) identified as lesbian, 36 (6.7%) identified as queer, 389 (71.9%) identified as straight/heterosexual, and 33 (6.1%) preferred not to say. Of the three respondents that selected 'other', 3 (100%) identified as asexual.

## Race and Ethnicity

This multiple response question asked participants to describe their race and/or ethnicity using discrete categories. 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". Participants could also write in a response via the 'other' option.

## Race/Ethnicity

Using the following racial/ethnic categories, how would you describe your race/ethnicity? (N = 541)



Of 541 respondents, 5 (0.9%) identified as American Indian or Alaska Native, 157 (29%) identified as Asian/Asian-American, 31 (5.7%) identified as Black/African-American, 20 (3.7%) identified as Middle Eastern/ Northern African, 3 (0.6%) identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and 312 (57.7%) identified as White/European-American; 45 (8.3%) of respondents identified as Hispanic or Latino/a/x. 25 respondents (4.6%) preferred not to state their race/ethnicity.

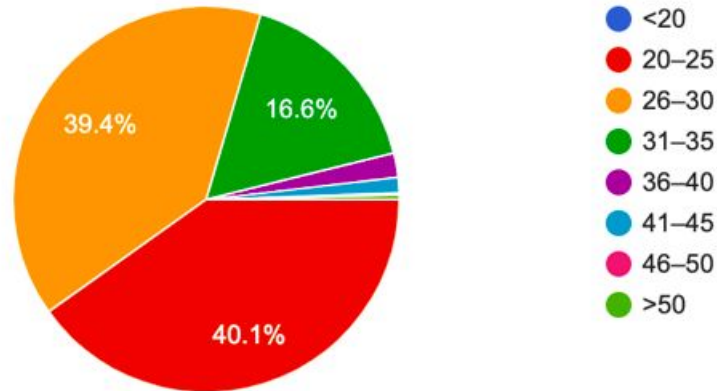
Of the ten respondents (2%) who selected 'other', 1 respondent identified as multi-racial/ethnic, 3 identified as South Asian or Indian, and 2 identified as Caucasian or European; 3 respondents identified as African.

## Age

This multiple choice question asked participants about their current age.

## What is your age?

543 responses



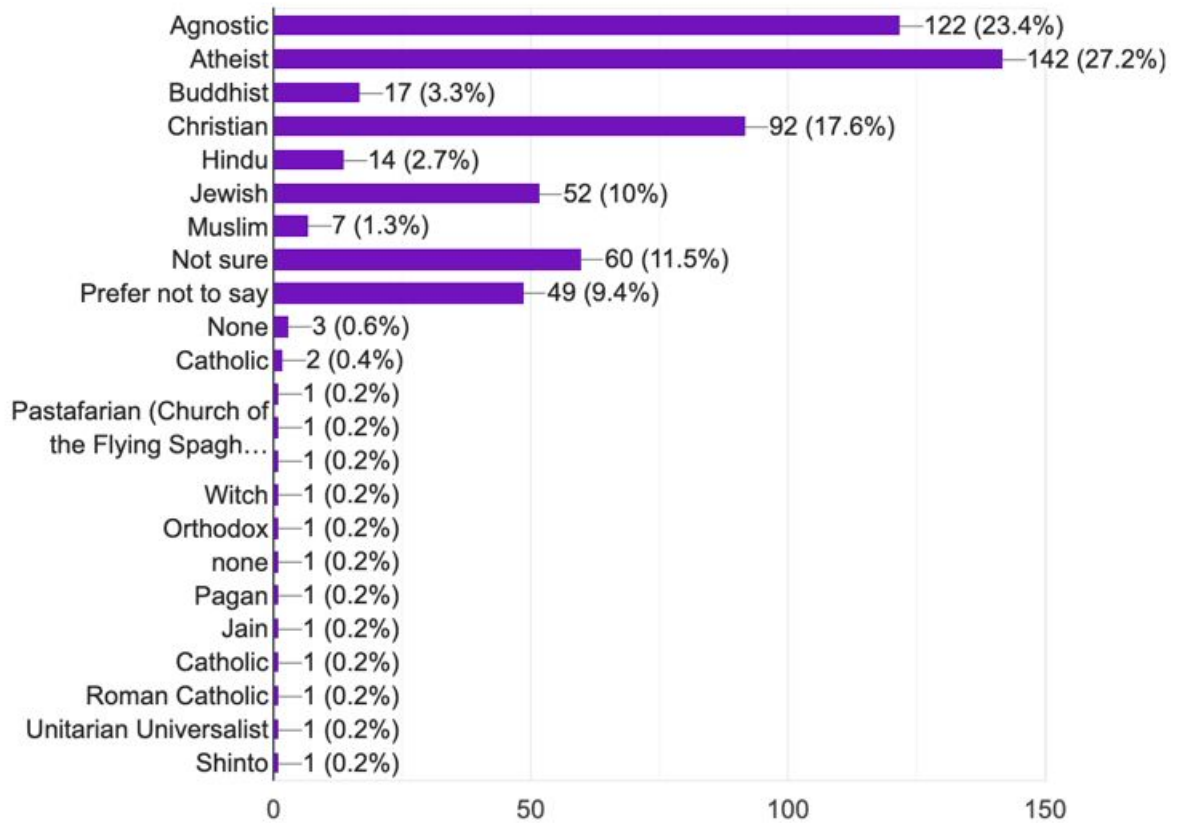
Of 543 respondents, 218 (40.1%) were 20-25-years-old; 214 (39.4%) were 26-30-years-old; 90 (16.6%) were 31-35-years-old; and 21 (3.9%) were 36-years-old or greater.

### Religious Affiliation

This multiple response question asked participants about their religious affiliation(s). Options included Agnostic, Atheist, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Not sure, Prefer not to say, and Other (text response).

## What (if any) is your religious affiliation?

522 responses

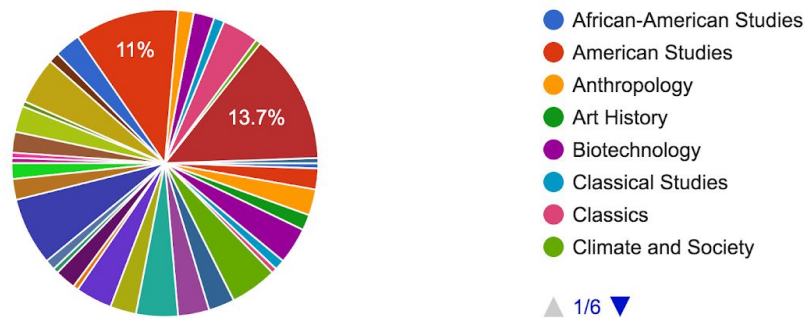


Of 522 respondents, the majority of respondents identified as Agnostic (23.4%) and/or Atheist (27.2%). 17.6% of respondents identified as Christian, 10% identified as Jewish, 2.7% identified as Hindu, and 1.3% identified as Muslim. 11.5% of respondents were unsure of their religious affiliation(s) and 9.4% preferred not to say. Other identified religious affiliations included Shinto, Jain, Deist, and Unitarian Universalist.

## MA Programs

Please select your program

182 responses



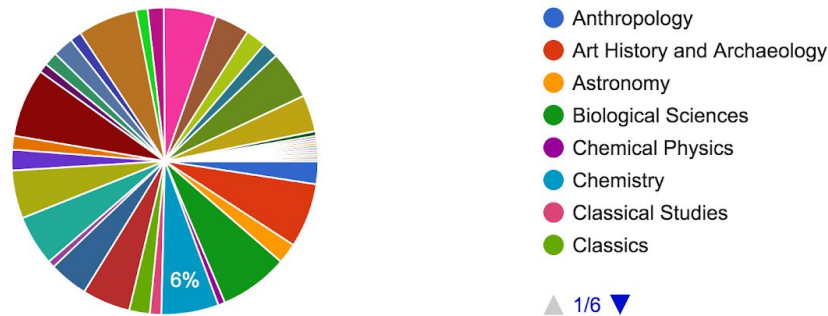
182 respondents are in MA programs, which represents a significant increase in MA representation from last year's survey, in which 75 respondents were masters students. Of the 182 respondents, 13.7% were from Statistics, 11.5% were from Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences, 7.3% from Human Rights Studies, 5.1% from Oral History, 4.9% from Climate and Society, 3.8% from Biotechnology, 3.8% from Sociology, 3.8% from European History, Politics and Society, 3.3% from Ecology, Evolution and Conservation Biology, 2.7% from Anthropology, 2.7% East Asian Languages and Cultures, 2.7% from English and Comparative Literature, 2.2% from American Studies, 2.2% from Russia, Eurasia and East Europe: Regional Studies, 2.2% from Global Thought, 2.2% from International and World History, 1.6% from Islamic Studies, 1.6% from Regional Studies, 1.1% from Classical Studies, 1.1% from Russian Translation and Slavic Languages, 1.1% from History and Literature, 1.1% from Philosophy, 0.5% from South Asian Studies, 0.5% from Jewish Studies, 0.5% from Italian Studies, 0.5% from Latin American and Iberian Cultures, 0.5% from Classics, 0.5% from African American Studies, 0.5% from French and Romance Philology. About 60% of respondents are in the Humanities, and about 40% in the Sciences.

## PhD Programs



Please select your program

414 responses



Out of 414 responses, 7.2% were from History, 7.2% were from Biological Sciences, 6.8% were from Art History, 6.3% were from Music, 6% were from Chemistry, 5.6% were from Political Science, 5.3% from Economics, 5.1% from Earth and Environmental Sciences, 5.1% from English and Comparative Literature, 5.1% from Sociology, 4.1% from East Asian Languages and Culture, 3.9% from Statistics, 3.6% from Psychology, 2.4% from Anthropology, 2.2% from Religion, 2.2% from Mathematics, 2.2% from French and Romance Philology, 2.2% from Classics, 2.2% from Astronomy, 1.7% from Physics, 1.7% from Slavic Languages, 1.4% from German Languages, 1.4% Latin American and Iberian Cultures, 1.2% from Classical Studies, 1.2% from Middle Eastern, South Asian and African Studies, 1.2% from Philosophy, 1% from Italian, 0.7% from Chemical Physics, 0.7% from Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Body, 0.5% from Theater and Performance and 0.2% from Regional Studies.

About 60% of respondents are in the humanities, and about 40% are in the sciences.

## Academic Life

### Section Overview

This section has two main focuses: 1) the graduate students' relationship with their advisors and departments, 2) the use of and satisfaction with time and workspaces.

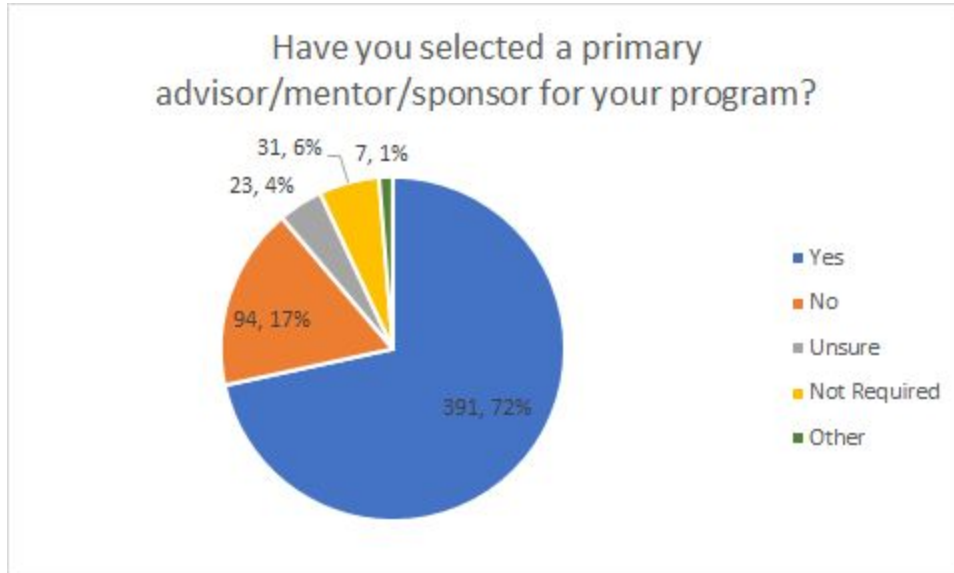
### **Advisor Relationships and Department Culture**

Have you selected a primary advisor/mentor/sponsor for your program?

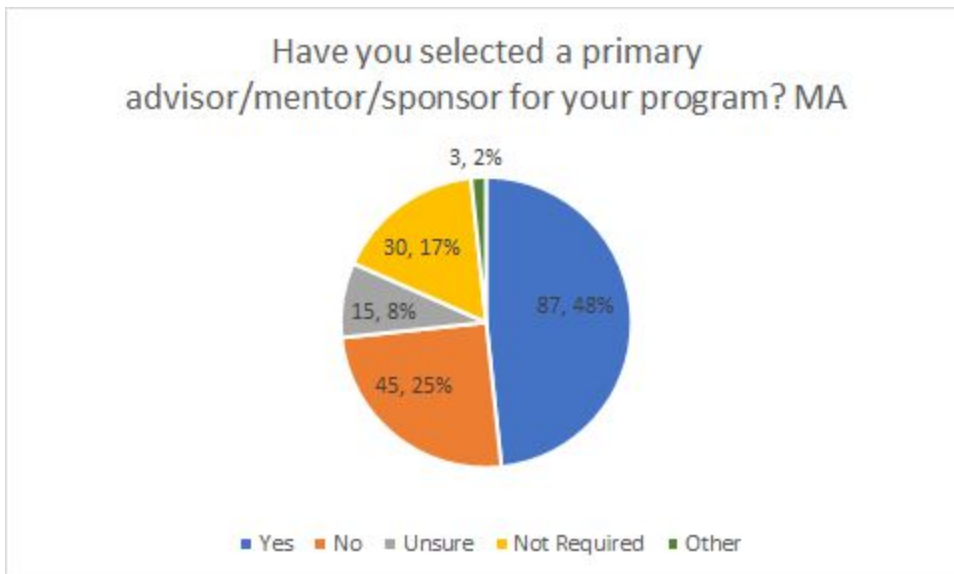
This question had choices: "Yes," "No," "Unsure," "Not required for my program," and "Other".

Of the 547 total responses, 72% indicated "Yes," 17% indicated "No," 4% indicated "Unsure," and around 5.7% of students were not required to have an advisor/mentor/sponsor. The

remaining 1% indicated that they were considering switching advisors, shared advisors with others in the program, had an unofficial advisor, were not yet required to have selected an advisor, or were assigned an advisor.

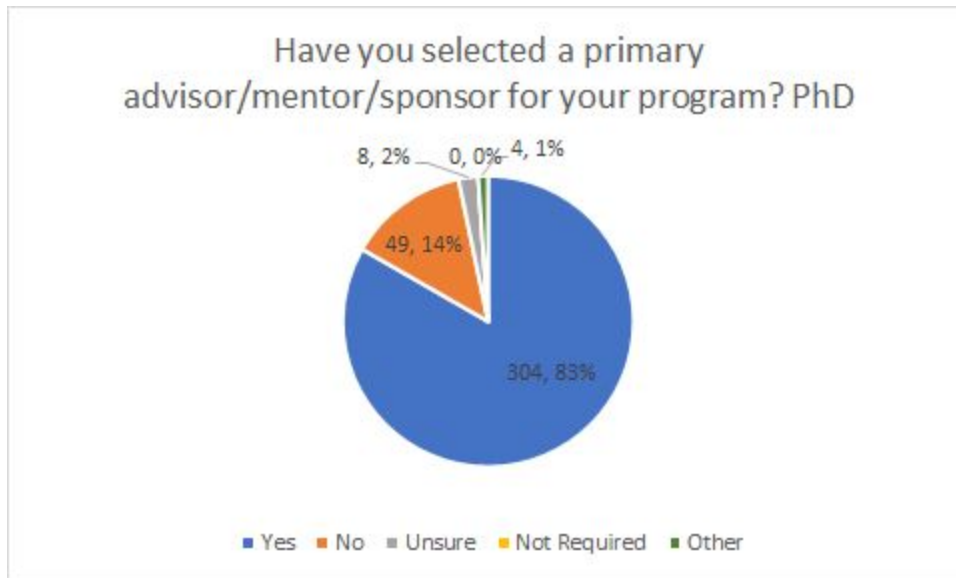


Of the 180 Masters students’ responses, 48% indicated “Yes,” 25% indicated “No,” 8% indicated “Unsure,” and around 17% of students were not required to have an advisor/sponsor/mentor. The other 1.7% of students responded that students in the program shared advisors or were assigned an advisor.



Conversely, of the 365 PhD students’ responses, 83% indicated “Yes,” 13% indicated “No,” 2% indicated “Unsure,” and no student indicated that it was not required for their program. The

remaining 1% of students noted that they had informal advisors, may be switching advisors, or were not yet required to have selected an advisor.



Of the 208 PhD students past their second year of study, 97% indicated “Yes,” 2% indicated “No.”

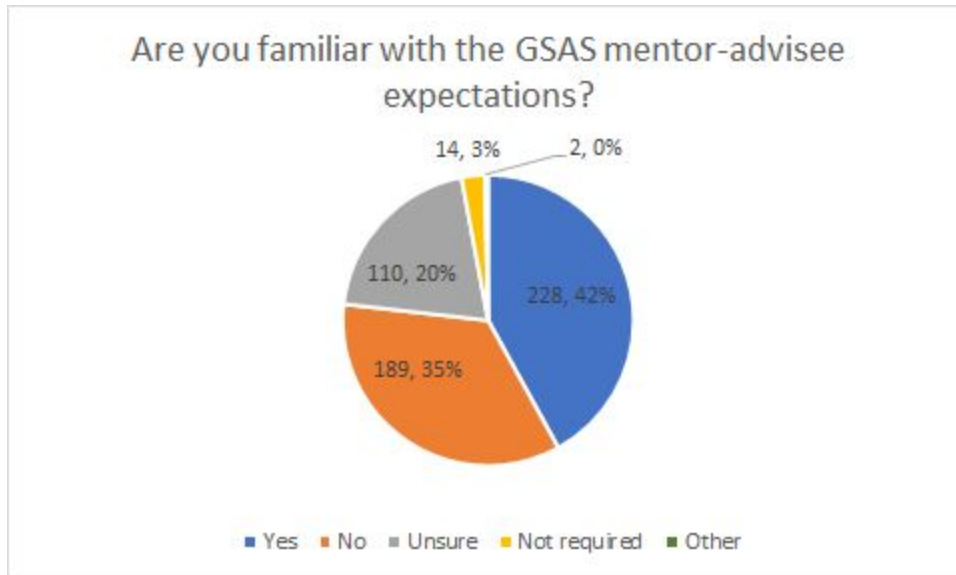


Conclusions: The results are as expected: the Masters programs often do not require advisors, and several years into the PhD program, the vast majority of students have selected an advisor.

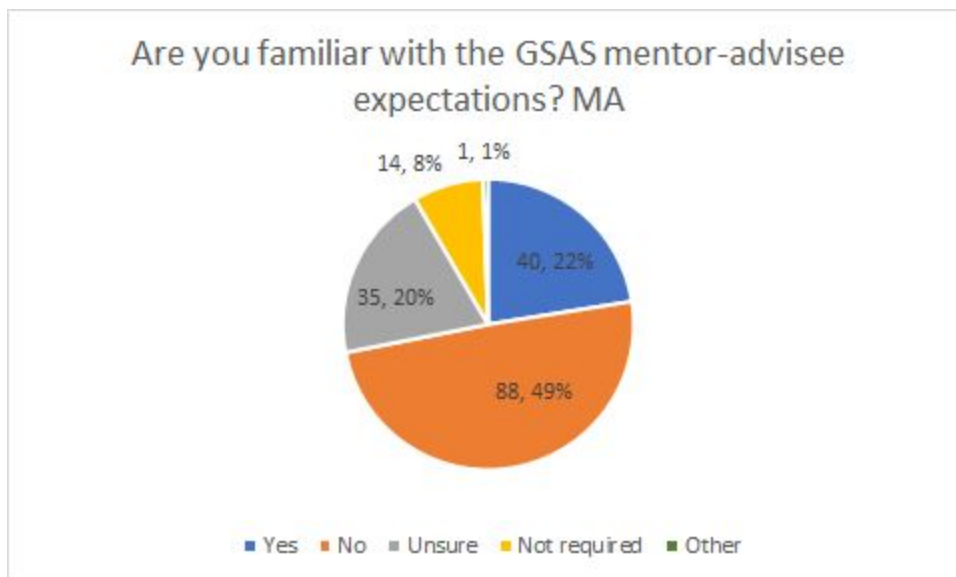
Are you familiar with the GSAS mentor-advisee expectations?

This question had choices: “Yes,” “No,” “Unsure,” “Not required for my program,” and “Other”.

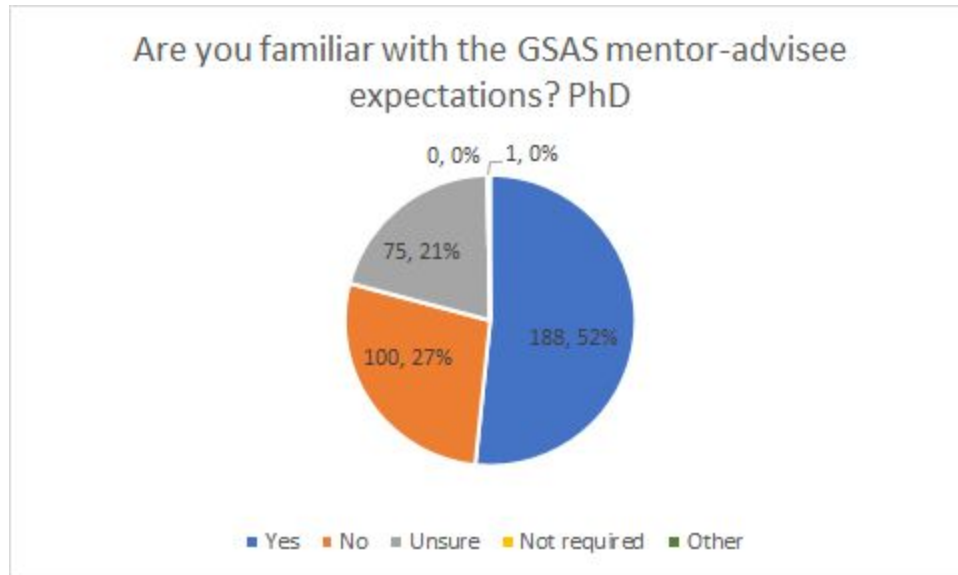
Of the 544 total responses, 42% indicated “Yes,” 35% indicated “No,” and 20% indicated “Unsure.” 2.6% of students responded that it was not required for their program, and the remaining 0.4% of students responded that their advisor was chosen for them or that it is not enforced.



Of the 178 Masters students’ responses, 22% indicated “Yes,” 49% indicated “No,” 20% indicated “Unsure,” and around 8% of students were not required to have an advisor/sponsor/mentor. The other 0.6% of students responded that students were assigned an advisor.



Of the 364 PhD students' responses, 52% indicated "Yes," 27% indicated "No," 21% indicated "Unsure," and no student indicated that they were not required to have an advisor/sponsor/mentor. The other 0.3% of students responded that it is not enforced.

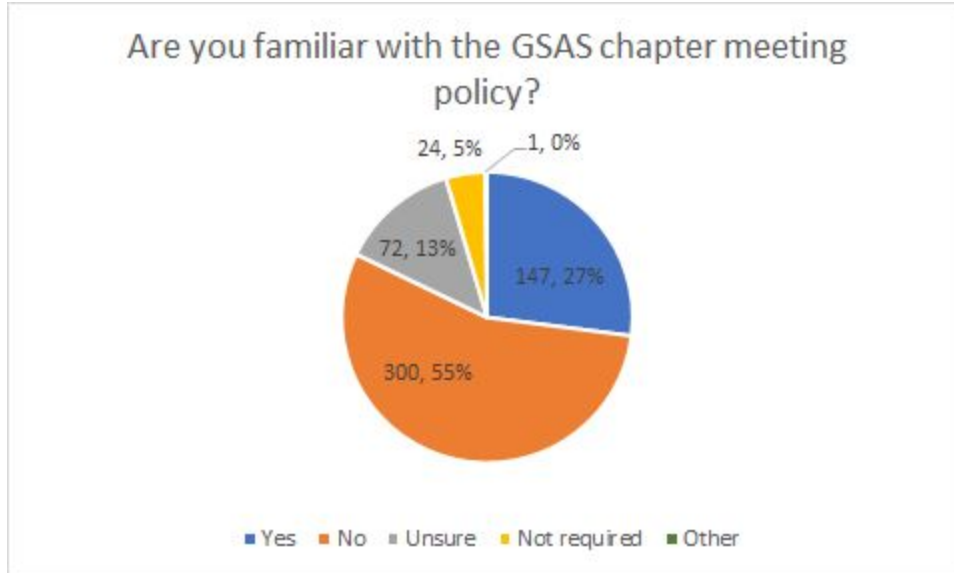


Conclusions: Nearly 70% of the Masters students and half of the PhD students indicated that they were not aware or unsure of the policies. Thus, the results suggest that there should be some clarification regarding the GSAS mentor-advisee expectations. However, because it is much less likely for a Masters student to have an advisor, the disparity between the responses is to be expected.

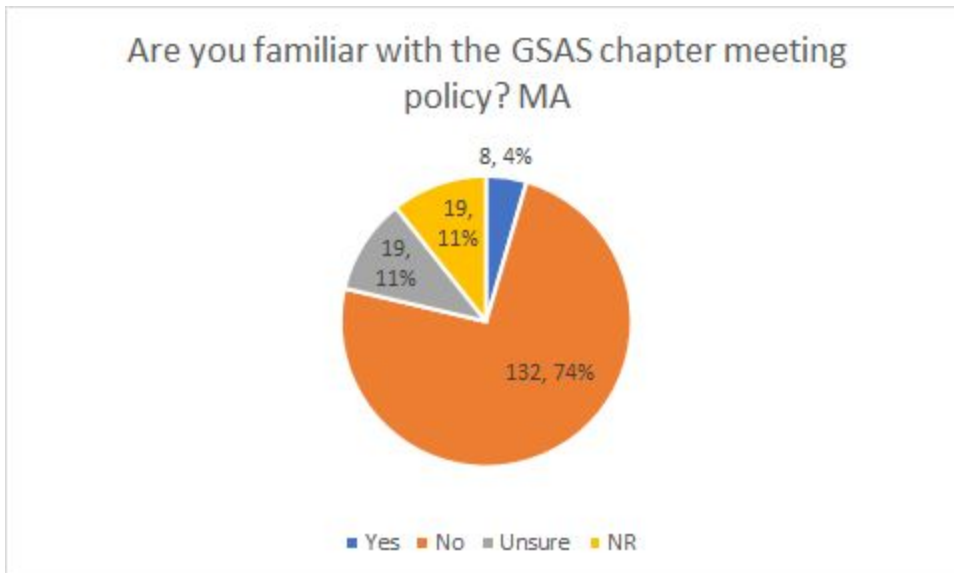
#### Are you familiar with the GSAS chapter meeting policy?

This question had choices: "Yes," "No," "Unsure," "Not required for my program," and "Other".

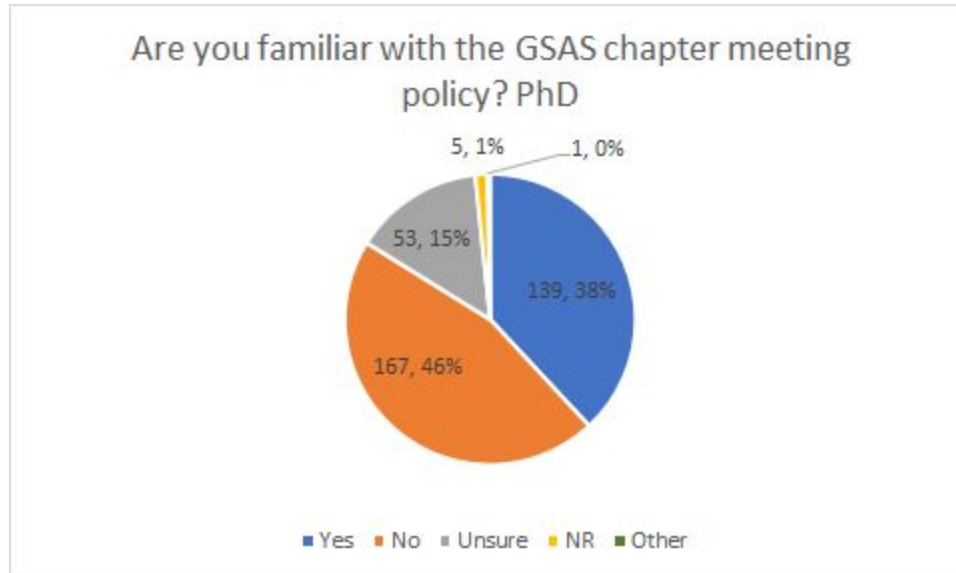
Of the 544 total responses, 27% indicated "Yes," 55% indicated "No," and 13% indicated "Unsure." 4% of students responded that it was not required for their program, and the remaining 0.2% of students responded that it was likely not required for their program. Last year, 31% of respondents were familiar with the policy, indicating the need for increased communication on the policy.



Of the 178 Masters students’ responses, the vast majority of students (95.5%) responded “No,” “Unsure,” or “Not required for my program”. 8 students responded that they were familiar with the policy.



Of the 365 PhD students’ responses, an alarming 38% indicated “Yes,” while 46% indicated “No,” 15% indicated “Unsure,” and 1% indicated that it was not required for their program. The remaining 0.2% of students responded that it was likely not part of their program. These are the same numbers as last year, indicating that communication and clarification of the policy is needed.



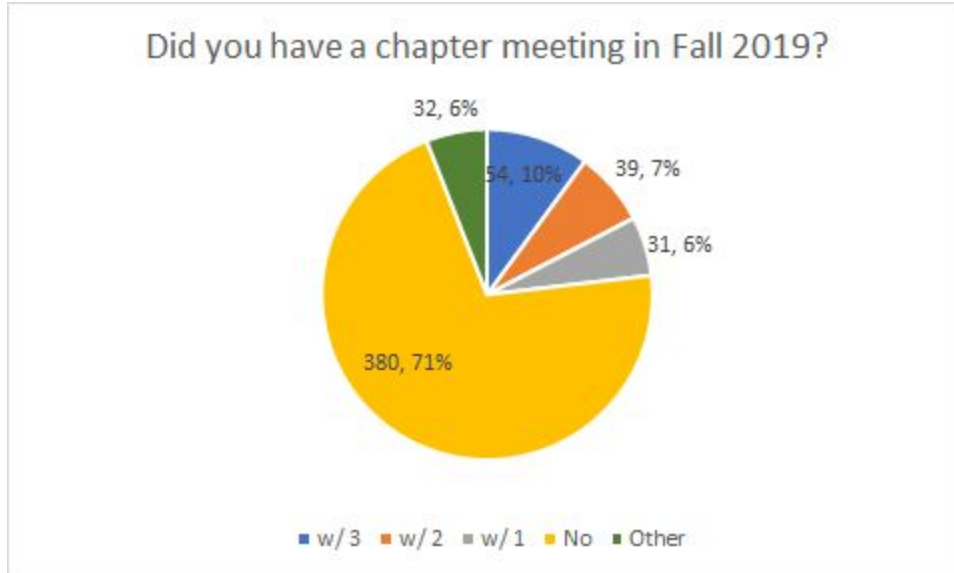
Conclusions: As to be expected, the majority of Masters students were not aware of, unsure of, or were not required to follow the policy. However, over half (60%) of PhD students noted that they were unsure of or unaware of the chapter meeting policy. This suggests that there should be improvements in the communication of the chapter meeting policy.

### **Fall 2019 Chapter Meetings**

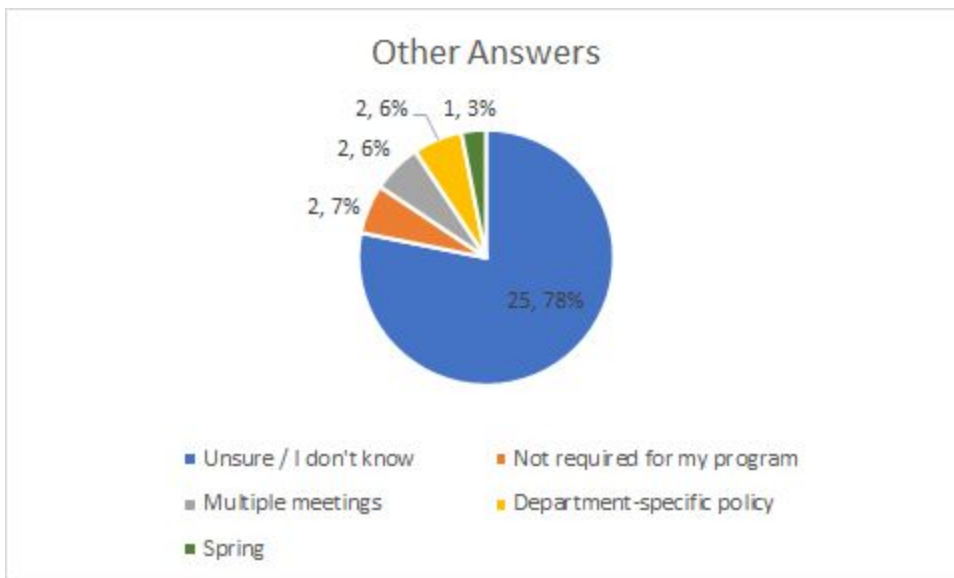
#### **Did you have a chapter meeting in Fall 2019?**

This question had choices: “Yes, with 3 committee members,” “Yes, with 2 committee members,” “Yes, with 1 committee member,” “No,” and “Other”.

Of the 536 total responses, 10% indicated “Yes, with 3 committee members,” 7% indicated “Yes, with 2 committee members,” 6% indicated “Yes, with 1 committee member,” and 71% indicated “No.” The remaining students' responses indicated that they were unsure, they did not know or remember, they did not know what a chapter meeting was, that meetings occur in the Spring, or that it was not required for their program. This represents an increase in meetings from last year, 80% did not have a chapter meeting in Fall 2018, while 20% met with at least one advisor.



To further study the responses, the “Other” responses were broken down by category: 78% of students were unsure, unaware, or did not know what the meetings were, 7% indicated that it was not required for the program, 6% had multiple meetings, 6% had department-specific policies, and 3% indicated that meetings occur in the Spring semester.

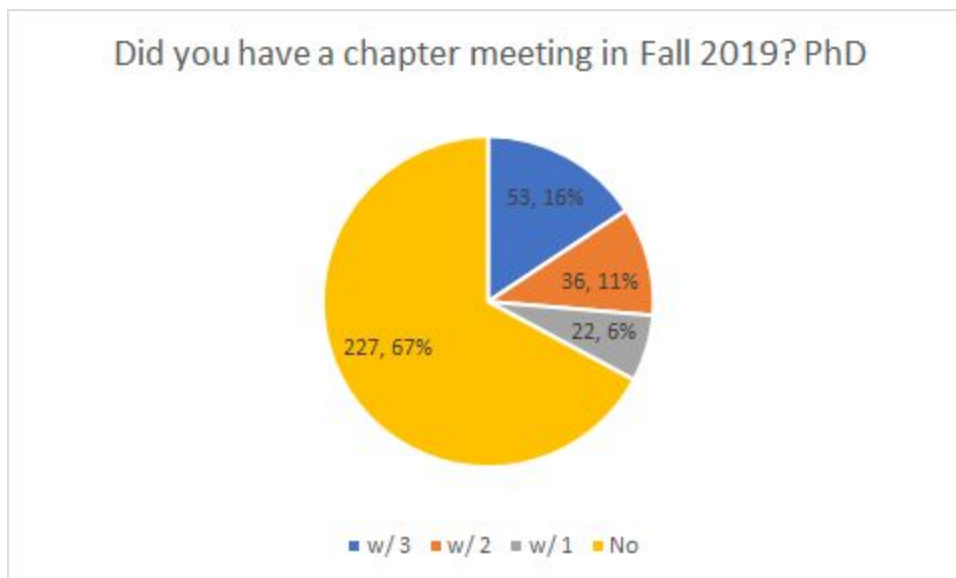


Omitting the “Other” responses, of the 165 Masters students’ responses, 1% indicated “Yes, with 3 committee members,” 2% indicated “Yes, with 2 committee members,” 5% indicated “Yes, with 1 committee member,” and the remaining 92% indicated “No.”



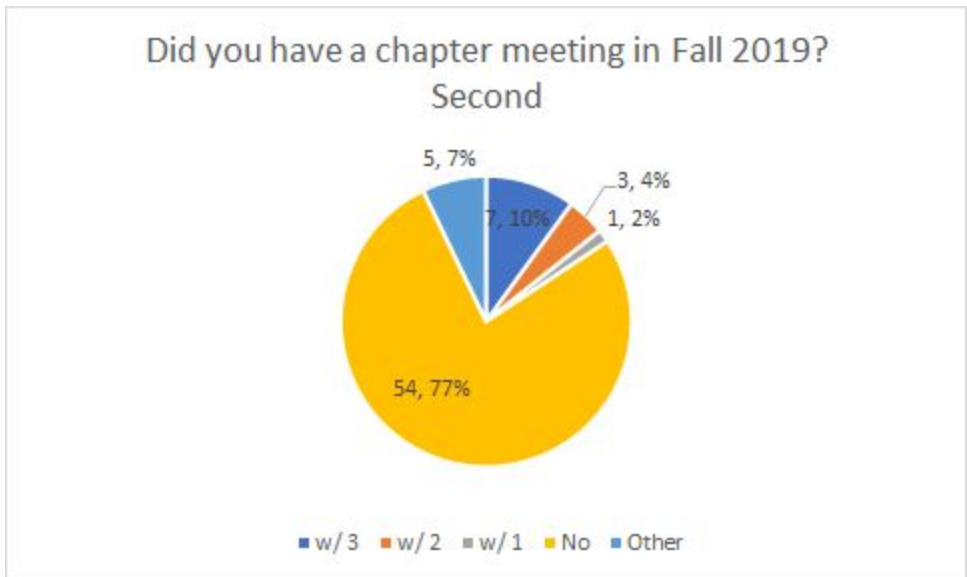
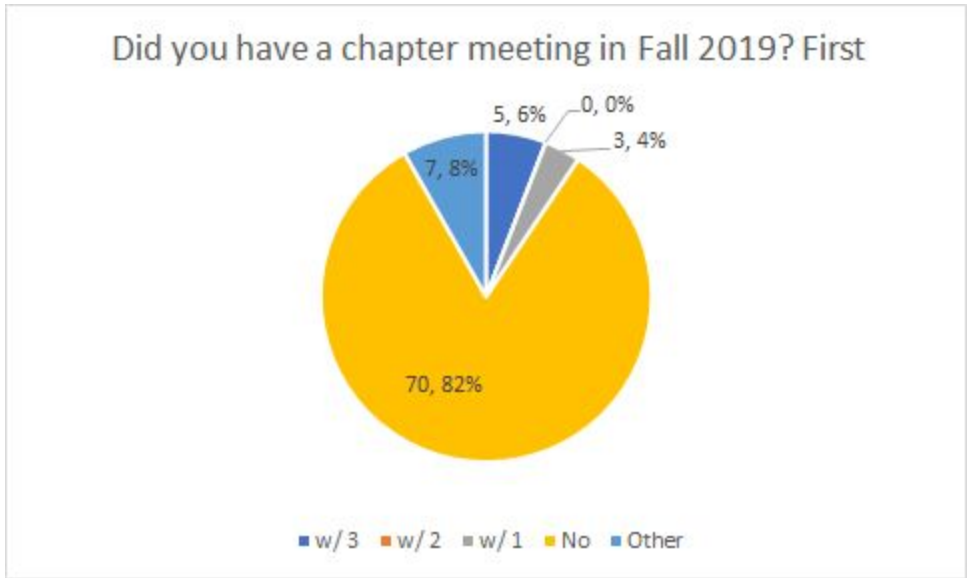


Similarly, of the 338 non-“Other” responses, 16% indicated “Yes, with 3 committee members,” 11% indicated “Yes, with 2 committee members,” 6% indicated “Yes, with 1 committee member,” and the remaining 67% indicated that they did not have a meeting in Fall 2019. Last year, of PhD student respondents (N=256), 75% did not have a chapter meeting in Fall 2018, while 25% met with at least one advisor, representing an increase in chapter meetings.



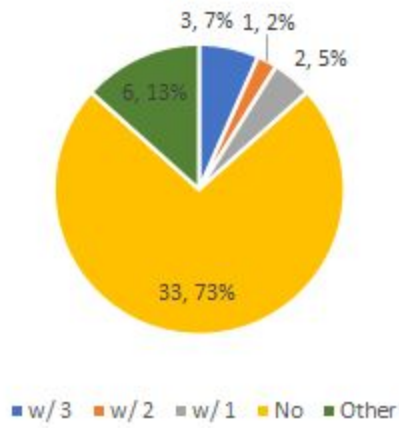
However, as the year of study of a PhD student will likely influence their knowledge of chapter meetings as well as their attendance, consider the following statistics stratified by year. There is

a negative trend between a student's year of study and the proportion of "No", as well as "Other", responses.



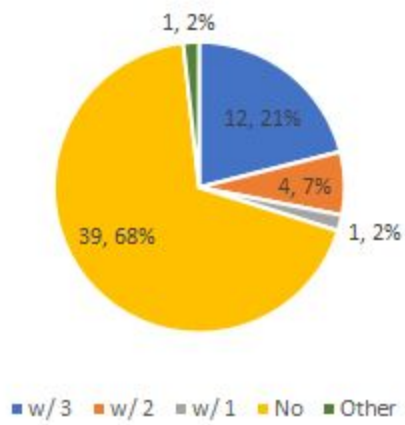
Did you have a chapter meeting in Fall 2019?

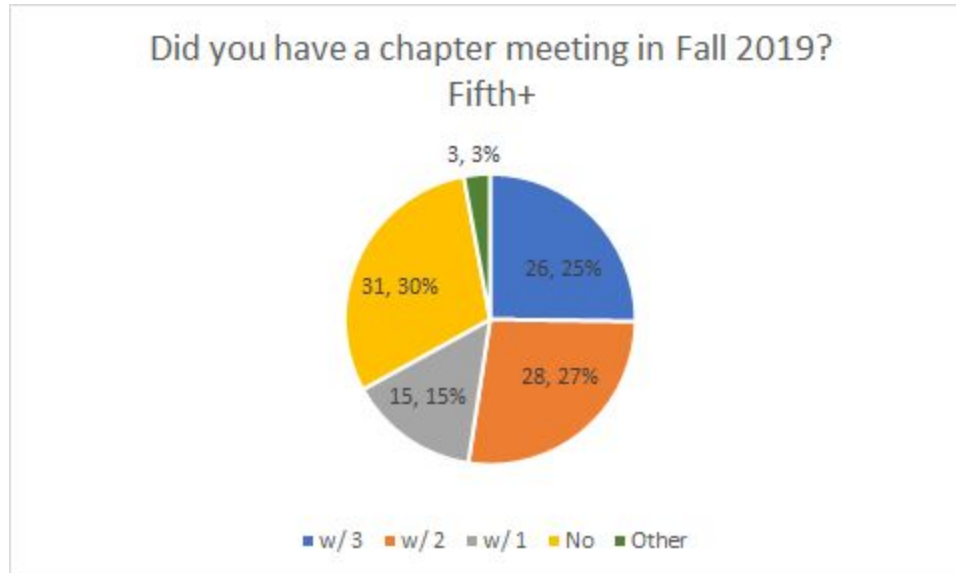
Third



Did you have a chapter meeting in Fall 2019?

Fourth





Conclusions: As expected, virtually all the Masters students indicated that they did not have a chapter meeting in Fall 2019. Surprisingly, approximately  $\frac{2}{3}$  of PhD students indicated that they did not. However, once the data was categorized by year, there was a clear trend between a student’s year of study and awareness and participation in chapter meetings. Based on the decreasing number of “No” and “Other” responses, in conjunction with the decomposition of the “Other” responses, it is plausible to believe that early PhD students have no need to be cognizant of the chapter meetings.

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

This question was based on a 1 (Very difficult) to 5 (very easy) scale.

Of the 304 total responses (228 PhD, 76 Masters), 38 students found it very difficult, 26 found it difficult, 128 found it neither difficult nor easy, 51 found it easy, and 61 found it very easy.

Comments:

*It's hard to schedule these meetings and often more effective/efficient to meet 1-on-1.*

*It's a problem that the scheduling has to be taken care of by the student because professors have heavy schedules and don't always reply right away. Scheduling a meeting with three of them is always stressful.*

*There is nothing students can do to make sure faculty members prioritize them. I spent a month scheduling one for Spring 2019 and a committee member still dropped out at the last minute. GSAS needs to put pressure on faculty to give timely feedback to students, not on students to*

*chase down unwilling faculty members.*

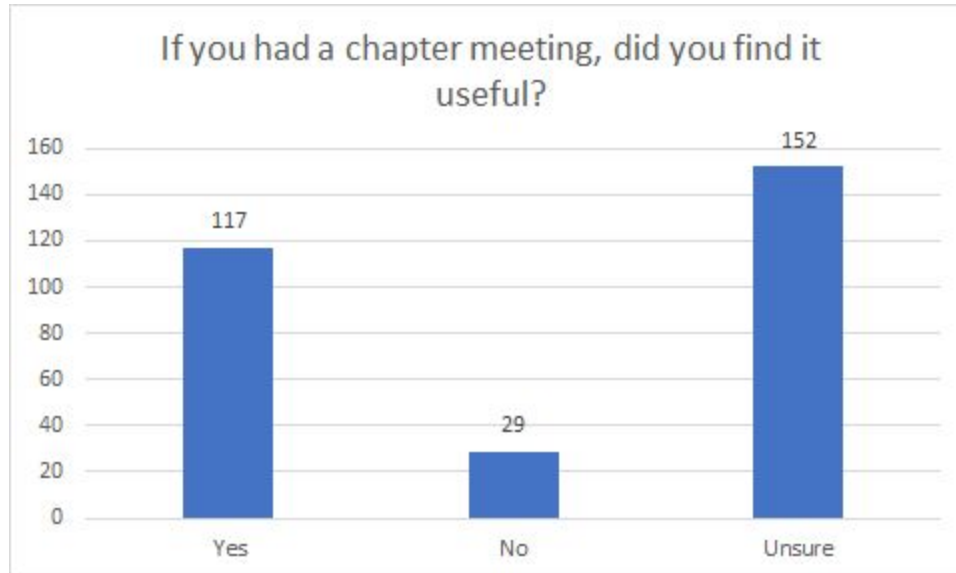
*Scheduling is the hardest part. Faculty are actively not helpful (e.g. not responding to emails, rescheduling), which shows they don't view it as a priority.*

*I wish the meeting time was decided months in advance to ensure all members would be there and would be prepared to provide feedback.*

If you had a chapter meeting, did you find it to be valuable?

This question had choices: "Yes," "No," or "Unsure."

Of the 298 total responses (219 PhD, 79 Masters), 117 students found it useful, 29 did not find it useful, and 152 were unsure.



Although a significant fraction (39%) found the meetings useful, an even larger portion of students (51%) were unsure. However, if we filter these results to include only those who have had a chapter meeting in the Fall of 2019 (125), we found that the vast majority are satisfied (84.9%), with only 12 (7.9%) who did not find the meeting useful, and 9 (7.2%) that were unsure.

Any other comments about the chapter meetings? (e.g., what do you find confusing about the policy and/or what changes would you suggest in its implementation?)

There were 84 total submitted comments.

Of these, 20 students reported that they were **unsure** of what chapter meetings were, that they had **never heard** of chapter meetings, were **confused about the difference between chapter meetings and committee meetings**, or that the **language was confusing**.

The majority felt that the policy should be changed and/or was ineffective.

Comments regarding GSAS's involvement:

*Should not be required or overseen by GSAS.*

*If a supportive regular semesterly meeting is the goal, perhaps GSAS could proactively suggest a range of formats (not just 'chapter meeting') robustly communicated to students and faculty as being equally valid and valuable and not just exceptions or backup formats in case of failure to produce a chapter.*

*I feel that all GSAS has done on the student side to make chapter meetings easier and more useful is to have Richard S send us a semi-annual email about Doodle polls. This does not resolve the fundamental problems of faculty not being compensated for the number of graduate students they advise, nor the larger challenges of scheduling on such a busy campus. (Doodle cannot, in fact, add more hours to the day.) Richard's emails make it sound as if GSAS just thinks graduate students are bad at scheduling. It signals to me that GSAS does not want to commit actual time, money, or effort to improving our advising experience and instead wants to shift the blame for insufficient advising onto students.*

*It should not be on the student to chase after committee members; I think this creates added stress since GSAS emails make it seem like students will be penalized for failing to schedule a meeting. I also think that, while encouraging students to meet regularly with faculty is good, every semester may be too frequent in the early stages of dissertation research when students don't have writing to share and are still in the exploratory stages of research.*

*I do not find GSAS "friendly reminder" emails useful as they force a chapter meeting at times that are not necessarily productive.*

Comments regarding possible policy changes:

*I would prefer written comments on drafts in addition to the oral comments and questions at the meeting ... and it would be helpful if comments were categorized as edits that need to be made in preparation for the defense, and the edits/further research, etc. that the project might take as it progresses toward publication.*

*Please reduce this requirement to once a year. It takes a great deal of time and herding to schedule a meeting like this – time that could be better spent working on the dissertation or meeting with the committee members individually.*

*I think the new policy is well-intentioned and could work given a few tweaks. One of its major shortcomings is its one-size-fits-all implementation. I was previously in the field and had not yet started writing. At that point, it makes sense to have regular meetings with my primary advisor but it does not make sense to meet with an entire committee. The issues with finding an appropriate software to organize a meeting and dealing with the time difference have made the attempted meetings during my fieldwork largely a waste of time. Now that I am back on campus and writing, I think it makes more sense to have committee meetings where I share my work.*

*Requiring these chapter meetings even during years in which students are not taking Columbia*

*funding (especially when they are working full time at external fellowships) makes dissertation progress extremely taxing. The requirement essentially discourages students from seeking outside funding, which is damaging to job prospects. This part of the chapter meeting policy must be revised.*

*Add a section where committee members ask about your career aspirations and give feedback towards attaining that career.*

*Chapter meetings should be explicitly about both the progress on a particular chapter and the progress for graduate students, particularly as they prepare for their future careers. This could include discussing a timeline or process suggestions for submitting a chapter for publication.*

*I think that UNTIL the university is able to encourage faculty members to take seriously their duties as guides and mentors, it is unreasonable to ask PhD students to pursue these meetings. In a context of faculty negligence, the emails about chapter meetings feel doubly punitive, and wholly discouraging. As one of VERY FEW mothers in my program, I feel it will be a victory if, despite the total apathy of my mentor, I am able to finish the dissertation. Adding these arbitrary deadlines doesn't encourage connection to the absent mentor; instead, it places the burden of contact on the neglected and reinforces a feeling of alienation from faculty and institution. It is my strong belief that this is NOT the way to encourage faculty responsiveness.*

*I would suggest a policy where students have a professional guidance adviser who is separate from her academic adviser; this may alleviate issues where the student cannot go to her adviser for any number of reasons, and would offer students more support.*

*While it is beneficial to be able to meet with one's entire committee, I have not found the chapter meetings helpful. There seem to be different expectations (from faculty and students) about what is expected during these meetings. My first chapter meeting was held only a couple of months after my proposal defense; I had certainly not completed a chapter by that time. If framed as a progress meeting, I think it would be much more helpful. I also don't feel like meeting with my whole committee actually does much — I have gotten much better feedback by speaking with each of my committee members individually.*

General comments:

*Chapter production does not work on such a strict timeline when you are doing archival research in multiple locations and may be working on multiple chapters at once.*

*I like the idea of some accountability in dissertation writing and research. In practice, the*



*meeting policy did not work for me. I do think it's important to submit work AND receive feedback to an advisor every semester, an exchange going in both directions -- but I think dissertation writers actually really need physical and mental distance from their department and committee members for significant periods of time when they are developing their own research. This separation is crucial to success; too much involvement with your readers makes it more difficult, not less, to make progress on the dissertation.*

*I think the idea of enforcing a policy for feedback is good, but the way it's been designed makes no sense for phd students who have a year or two of "field research" and then time for write-up.*

*For me, the strict formal expectations around chapter meetings do not result in productive discussions of my research and writing. The policy should be more flexible and consider informal / alternatively structured meetings with faculty as equally valuable opportunities for feedback. Additionally, the emphasis on chapter meetings should also go hand in hand with departmental activities (informal and academic) that build student-faculty relationships.*

*I don't know if we should be expected to have a formal chapter every time we meet (if the requirement is every semester). It would be helpful if each department would publish a list of acceptable documentation / topics to cover in a dissertation progress meeting (for transparency and equal expectations across sub fields).*

*Where does the summer fit in - that needs to count as a "semester" or something, as once one is writing the dissertation, the semester divisions are meaningless. Would make more sense to fit with a timeline e.g. a meeting roughly every 6 months. Faculty are still very resistant in my experience.*

*The focus instead should be on ensuring that advisors/readers are attentive to their students when the student needs them to be (and this varies case by case). I am extremely lucky in that my advisor is present for me whenever I need her to be (for recommendations, revisions to my writing, etc.), but no one I've spoken to (~10 ppl in various disciplines across the humanities and social sciences) have benefited from chapter meetings. The same power dynamics plague chapter meetings as plague all student-advisor interactions. The problem lies THERE. Forcing students to produce mediocre work on an arbitrary deadline (different disciplines work very differently from one another) creates only unnecessary busy-work for students. It does not address the fundamental issues.*

Others felt that the policy was helpful:

*The DEES chapter meeting list is very straightforward, good for going through the requirements*

*of the program and reviewing progress in research.*

*I think they are a painful but great strategy for progress.*

*These made a huge difference in my progress. Having the input of two readers simultaneously (During which they had to hear each other's feedback and come to a consensus) streamlined and made the process much clearer and easier.*

### **Advisors and Mentees**

#### **Do you feel that your advisor meets the expectations for mentors?**

These questions had choices: “Yes,” “No,” “Unsure”, and “Other”.

Of the 466 total responses, 65% felt that their advisors met expectations, 12% felt they did not, 19% were unsure, and the remaining 4% commented that one of their advisors did while the other did not, that in general their advisor did, felt that there was a lack of genuine support, or that there is frequently poor communication.



#### **Do you feel that you meet expectations for advisees?**

Of the 463 total responses, 65% felt they met expectations for advisees, 4% felt that they did not, 29% were unsure, and the remaining 2% indicated that it was not clear what was expected of them or that it was not yet applicable.

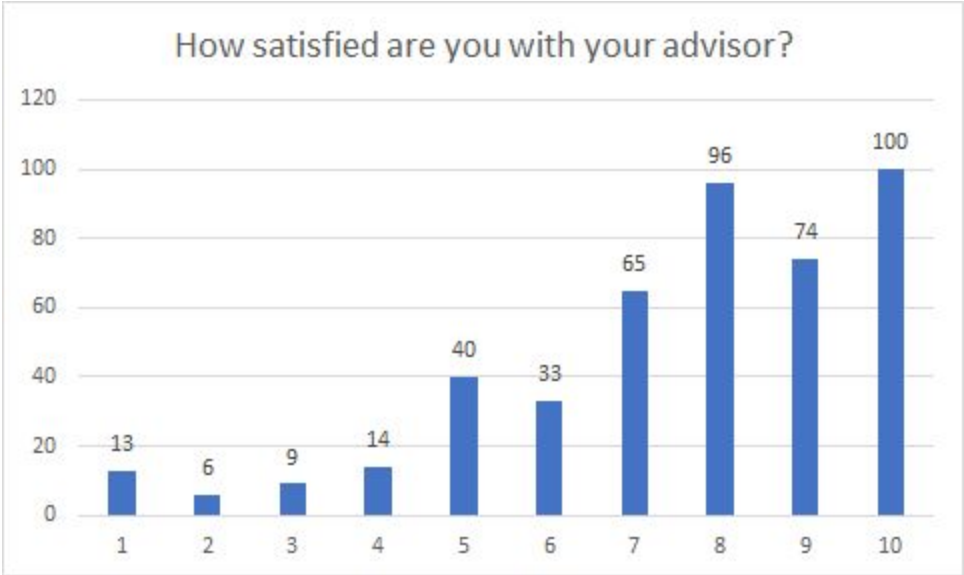


Conclusions: A similar portion of students feel that their advisor met the expectations for mentors and that they met expectations for advisees. However, more than 30% were not confident in either question, suggesting that there is a significant, negative culture surrounding students' academic lives.

How satisfied are you with your advisor?

This question was based on a 1 (Not at all) to 10 (Very) scale.

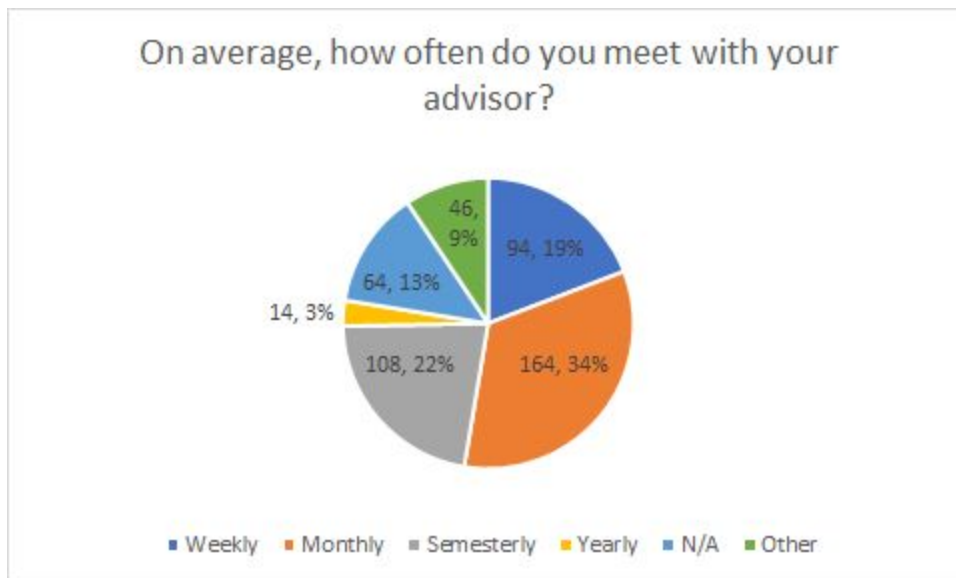
Of the 450 total responses, the majority of students, 6% were not satisfied (1 - 3), 34% felt neutral (4 - 7), and 60% were satisfied (8 - 10). The median satisfaction was 8.



On average, how often do you meet with your advisor?

This question had choices: “Once per week,” “Once per month,” “Once per semester,” “Once per academic year,” “Not applicable”, “Other”.

Of the 490 total responses, 19% reported that they met weekly, 34% met monthly, 22% met semesterly, 3% met yearly, 13% indicated “Not applicable”, and the remaining 9% indicated that they communicated frequently with their advisor via email, met once every two weeks, met regularly, 2-3 times per semester, or that their advisor was on leave.

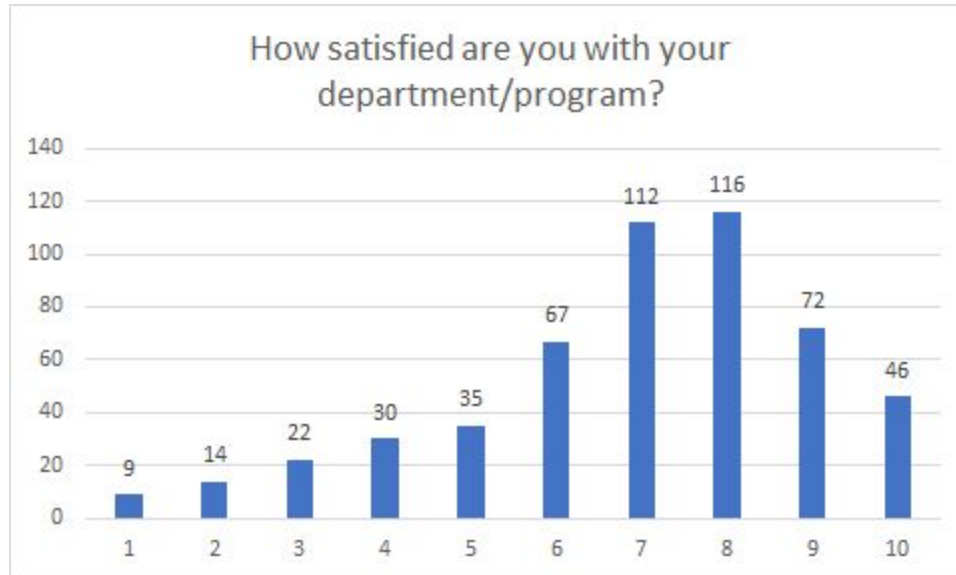


**Department Satisfaction**

How satisfied are you with your department/program?

This question was based on a 1 (Not at all) to 10 (Very) scale.

Of the 523 total responses, 9% were not satisfied (1 - 3), 47% were neutral (4 - 7), and 45% were satisfied (8 - 10). The median satisfaction was 7.



Have the requirements for your degree been clearly communicated by your department/program? This question had choices: “Yes,” “No,” “Unsure,” and “Other”.

Of the 536 total responses, 73% indicated that the requirements were clearly communicated, 17% reported that they were not, 8% were unsure, and the remaining 2% indicated that although they understood the fundamental requirements, there was some confusion, that not all faculty were up-to-date with the requirements, that there is not sufficient notice, or that they have been improving.

Comments:

*Unclear and inconsistent expectations across sub fields; very little support to prepare for major requirements (qual paper; comp exams; diss proposal; progress meetings) and career advice.*

*I wish expectations and requirements were clearly laid out to all students from the start of the PhD. It has been very frustrating to have to cobble together received wisdom from more advanced students and from other sources. Half of the time, the higher-ups in the department don't actually know anything about requirements or how people actually proceed through the program (and give incorrect advice as a result). In my department, we have not had a graduate handbook during my entire time as a graduate student at Columbia (5+ years). This, in my opinion, is a travesty.*

*My advisor is fantastic, but I find communication from the department frustratingly vague. Even when expectations are communicated, they are frequently changed at the last minute and so it is*

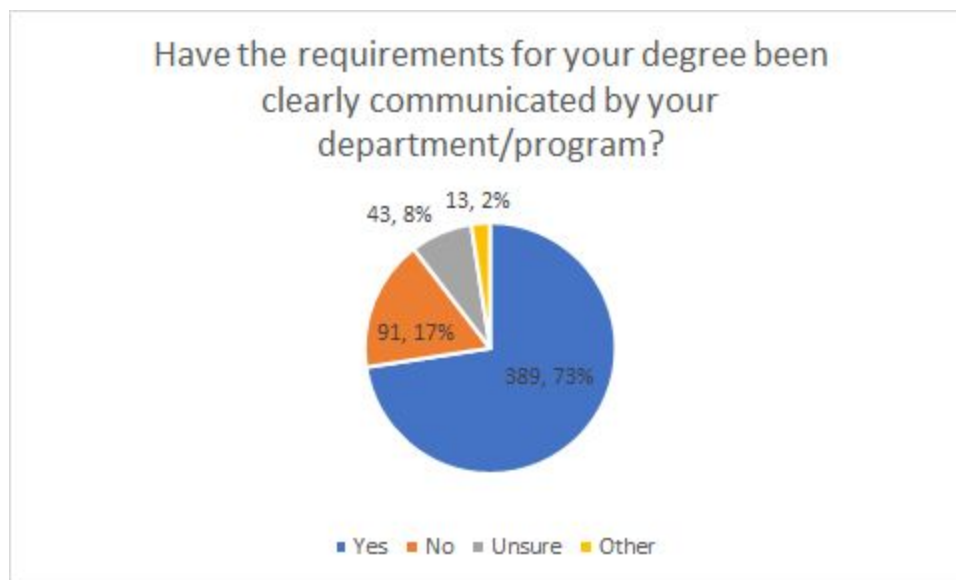
*very difficult to predict what the department's expectations will be.*

*The department is unorganized, we are not told clearly what we are expected in terms of bureaucratic steps, such as when to submit an MA thesis.*

*There was a "hidden deadline" on self designing that was never properly communicated. All in all, I found this disappointing.*

*My department should be required to have a graduate student organization so that concerns can be voiced in an official manner and without fear of retribution.*

*There is a severe lack of transparency between faculty and students, and key information regarding deadlines and exam requirements/expectations are not communicated to students in a timely fashion.*

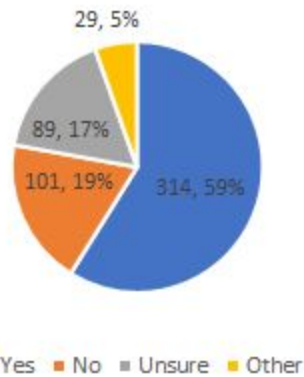


Do you feel that there is a channel/mechanism for students' voices to be heard on academic and administrative matters within your department?

This question had choices: "Yes," "No," "Unsure," and "Other".

Of the 533 total responses, 59% responded "Yes," 19% responded "No," 17% were unsure, and the remaining 5% indicated that there has been movement, that there is an ineffective channel, that it does not have much use, or that the department stonewalls and does not listen to the students' voices.

Do you feel that there is a channel/mechanism for students' voices to be heard on academic and administrative matters within your department?



Conclusions: Slightly over half of the students reported their satisfaction with the existing means of communication. The remaining students believe that there should be some change that allows for their voices to be heard more clearly. Furthermore, the proportion of satisfied students last year (63%) is greater than this year's, suggesting that there is a call for increased advocacy on behalf of the students.

Comments:

*Channels for feedback need to be formalized and anonymized, currently concerns are usually only voiced during the town halls (once per semester), but not much usually comes of sharing concerns in that forum. We are told to go to the DGS or Chair with concerns on a needs-basis, but that is not comfortable for most students in the department.*

*Channels exist for students' "voices to be heard," but no effective mechanisms exist for students to have meaningful input.*

*I do feel that there are channels for students to be heard in my department at the semesterly town halls, though it is not always clear that next steps are taken to follow up on the concerns students raise at these events. More transparency from the department in this regard would be welcome.*

*Departmental materials are not easy to find, often not up to date.*

*The requirements for my department are extremely confusing. After 6 months and countless emails exchanged, I am still unclear on certain/most policies.*

Do you have any comments about your advisor or your department?

There were 131 total submitted comments.

These comments included the fact that many advisors were too busy or did not communicate satisfactorily:

*My advisor has too many things going on and does not prioritize me or my work.*

Some noted that the department did not support the students' career paths:

*Lacking in career/internship services.*

Many comments were addressed to the departments:

*I think my department has prepared me well to meet the degree requirements, but those degree requirements are not closely related to producing published work or succeeding in the profession.*

*...those in power do everything they possibly can to maintain it. Only the most egregious example: my department has handled gravely serious issues like sexual assault allegations against tenured faculty with characteristic shallowness of conviction.*

*Needs to modernize & revise its degree/program structures, and have a more thorough pedagogy training*

*...unfortunate proportion of professors who, having written the same book four different ways to secure tenure, now contribute nothing to the department in terms of raising undergrad enrollment, offering large lectures to secure enough teaching spots for grad students, or standardising course offerings to make the major appealing... Our dept head has told us this is in large part because we are under immense pressure from GSAS deans as a financially non-performing department to justify our existence-we constantly find ourselves fighting for the most basic things..*

*We need Ph.D. offices in Architecture. This has been a common complaint across the years.*

*My advisor is the reason I'm still in the program; my department is improving but I feel like it's too late for me to actually reap the rewards of those improvements. I hope the improvements continue, especially for teacher training, dissertation support, professional development,*



*graduate seminars/education.*

*In my department, there is a very toxic culture that permits bullying, harassment, and racism. I personally have experienced senior staff whistling at me (like the whistle women receive the street), commenting on my physical figure, and touching my hair/body without permission. Even with witnesses present or with me reporting these incidents, this behavior is not called out as inappropriate because there is a dominant culture that this type of behavior is okay or is part of the experience for women. I came here to Columbia to be a leading scholar in my field and my department is teaching me that, while I may become a great scholar, I will still be treated as a sexualized object or at least as someone without bodily autonomy. Further, bullying behavior by senior staffers of speakers not being kept in check fosters a community in which this kind of behavior is accepted and almost expected of senior level scientists. People do not feel encouraged to be active bystanders because there is no guarantee against retaliation in a department that operates as an independent entity, even more so because of physical separation from the main campus. Also, conflicts with people in this independent administration within the department are hard to resolve or even address because of 1) the lack of power/position of graduate students and 2) a somewhat common lack of willingness of senior staff to ally with students in these situations. These interpersonal conflicts can also have real consequences for the academic progress of graduate students. For example, when trying to access grant funds allocated to me, I was told by a finance administrator that I was not a special case and that, if I really cared about my work, I would pay for it myself or I would ask my parents for money. On a separate occasion, a high-level administrator told me that I was being entitled for wanting my name to be on a proposal I wrote. This kind of toxic behavior is pervasive and particularly affects graduate students who are in a very tenuous position in the university and in their career.*

Comments about advisors:

*I wish there was a way of ensuring advisors fulfill their duties without it being a top-down imposition that they resist. I think it's OK for each relationship to be different - not everyone wants or needs an advisor who is constantly on their case. But the expectations being the bare minimum that's needed - how to get that to happen without souring the relationship?*

*We have advisors who harass students in this department, but some of the forms of harassment do not meet Columbia's protected categories, so Columbia offers students no real assistance. We need a new process to deal with these faculty.*

*My advisor is almost never present to the extent that over the course of an entire year of tracking her time in office and time with me, it totaled to under 3 hours of interaction time with me... She actively lies to her students and emotionally abuses/gas lights students to split people apart and*

*try to fight each other... My time in this lab has made it so that I never want to pursue anything in academia just so that I never have to interact with my boss every again in any capacity -- because if I wish to pursue anything in academia, she will have to play a role for a postdoc, for a faculty position, for a tenure review. The negligence, the paranoia, and the active degradation of graduate student well-being taking place in this lab is an affront to the entire University.*

*Advisors should have to undergo training about how to be productive and constructive mentors to graduate students and other supervisees. I personally have been laughed at, dismissed, or talked over many times by my supervisors, to the point where other people have noticed and commented to me. It is not beneficial training to graduate students for them to feel demeaned in the academic setting in which they are to grow. Also, when a graduate student has become the authority and knows that they are correct, advisors behaving in this way undercuts their confidence and does a disservice to the student and the academic field. In my department, I have found this kind of diminishing relationship to be particularly common for female students.*

*My advisor is on leave but is very much still available and incredible.*

## General Comments

*There is a lack of understanding about mental health issues, and while this might not be intentional, it prevents many faculty from understanding the special needs different students might have.*

## **Courses and Teaching**

Have you ever taught a course or served as a teaching assistant at Columbia?

56% of students reported to have taught a course or served as a teaching assistant.

If you responded yes, how do you believe that decisions should be made about the content of courses? What principles do you see driving these decision-making processes at present, and what principles should inform them in the future?

There were a total of 149 comments. The comments showed there seemed to be a disparity among departments in how graduate students are involved in the design of the course content. Overall, a small majority of respondents argued that decisions on course content should involve graduate students, and that the process of curricular design should be cooperative. The rest of the commenters believe that faculty and departments should control the content of the course. Several respondents mentioned that course content is static. A few comments described the

question as vague and not applicable to all courses.

Students think curriculum and syllabi should be designed in consultation and collaboration with instructors, with various degrees of collaboration represented:

*Graduate student instructors and faculty members should meet before the start of the semester to discuss the syllabus. At present we inherit syllabuses from previous instructors but there is pretty much zero follow-up with us unless we ask specifically to meet. In the future there should be meetings to discuss overhauling the curriculum.*

*Reasoned feedback on course content should play a role in shaping the course.*

*Regular meetings with grad students, and regular meetings with the grad rep and faculty, and, if needed, meetings with all grad students and faculty to discuss current issues*

*Content decisions should be made by the course instructor. These decisions should reflect a broader departmental understanding of what is being taught and why. Art Humanities is in the process of being updated, and the content of the new course will hopefully reflect more recent scholarship and address questions of diversity and representation.*

*It's at the discretion of the professor, which I have no problem with. That said, I've TAed classes whose content was well selected and others where I found the content objectionable. I don't know the solution for this, but it's a recurrent issue...*

*I've felt like I've had sufficient freedom to make choices on course content for the courses I've TA'd or taught, though for [course] the administration handled the recent syllabus overhaul extremely poorly and to the course's overall detriment. For that course, there should be more grad student feedback/input.*

*I believe that the content of courses should be reviewed every 2-3 years, ideally with the input of at least one other person beyond the instructor (e.g., a PhD student TA, another faculty member in the department).*

*More communication with TA's about why professors design the syllabus in the way they do.*

*It should be a conversation between the professor and the TAs. The professor should build their syllabus as they see fit, but then offer the TAs the chance to give their feedback regarding the texts they have to discuss with the students.*

*The instructor should be responsible for designing the course AND for instructing teaching assistants the content as well as effective pedagogical techniques.*

*It should be primarily up to the teacher of the course, but focused on material that is broadly applicable. Right now, I feel that introductory courses are primarily taught according to what is in the book, which is not always sensible.*

*There should be ongoing development meetings for faculty, teachers and coordinators teaching the course at which decisions about content and sequence are made.*

*Having taught Music Hum numerous times, I believe that the principles informing the current selection of pieces are motivated by a desire to provide students with "exposure" to pieces of music that have been judged to be masterworks. I see at least two major issues with the syllabus in its current form: the first is the often-discussed issue of stipulating what masterpieces are, and what genres should be studied. Currently, only western classical music and jazz are included, implying a lack of aesthetic value in other genre categories (e.g. "There are no masterpieces of hip hop.") Second, and perhaps more urgent, is the lack of specificity with regard to the skills and content knowledge students are expected to gain from taking this class. The syllabus stipulates a number of pieces that need to be covered, without indicating what students should learn about them. Given the range of possible skills that could be developed in this class, it is crucial that we specify what our learning objectives are. Perhaps in doing so, we might also be able to clarify the relative value of certain works on the syllabus and open a discussion as to whether pieces of music from other genres might also be suitable to teach those skills. In the future, I hope that course content can be structured in consultation not only with graduate student instructors, but also with CTL staff members so that the course can be designed with pedagogically-sound principles in mind.*

*They're decided by the Professor. Maybe there should be more of an expectation for TAs to give course feedback.*

*The should reflect the world and our student body. It cannot and should not only be the Western Canon.*

*Professors should design their courses based on their expertise. Some consultation with TAs would be nice in the future*

*Cooperation between faculty, TAs, and undergrads; pushing inclusivity even when not everyone*

*is comfortable. That's how attitudes change and racism is fought*

*I teach in University Writing. I feel that it's a poorly designed class and I am given no control over its structure (eg 2 essays vs 3 vs 4, etc).*

*More input for grad students, clearly. Currently courses are taught based on whatever per projects faculty seem to have.*

*Grad student input should be taken into account.*

*The faculty and admin decide absolutely everything. I believe graduate students should have just as much say - perhaps even more, because there are more of us - than faculty, about funding priorities, TAs, curriculum design, etc. Faculty love to complain about faculty meetings. Maybe we could spread the duties a little more broadly, pay us, the graduate students, more decently - allowing us to work together to improve the department.*

*People who teach a course should be able to have some say in what they teach. For now, the core office and some senior members of the department decide the content of the course and police graduate students to make sure their curriculum is taught. This is a difficult situation to manage and a source of a lot of conflicts. Graduate students should be at least consulted.*

*Ideally, TAs would have input in designing the course syllabus. The Columbia music department also needs to take a more proactive role in challenging the Eurocentricity of the current curriculum.*

*The teachers of the class should be able to change a little bit the contents of the class*

*Mostly the professor should choose how they want to teach the material with input from their TAs.*

*Informal collaboration has seemed to be effective in my case and should continue to be so*

*They should be made collectively, but at the moment they are made in a hierarchical manner*

*Tough question to answer thoroughly--it obviously depends on the course. I've felt like I've had sufficient freedom to make choices on course content for the courses I've TA'd or taught, though for Music Hum the administration handled the recent syllabus overhaul extremely poorly and to the course's overall detriment. For that course, there should be more grad student*

*feedback/input.*

*In a fully open and democratic/inclusive process that includes grad TAs/instructors, undergrad students, and a mix of senior/junior faculty AND adjuncts who have taught the course for substantial semesters. I don't think course content should just rotate every few years. One of the biggest things is freedom for individual instructors to tailor courses to their strengths and to what they believe will best serve students, but balanced with consistency. The decisions about what might constitute the "core" necessities of a given course should be considered in the open process, and not based just on tradition/canon/this is how it's always done. There's not enough discussion about what the purpose/goal is of a given course: we get bogged down in the details of how to teach this or that content, and not thinking long-term. How does course X fit in with the wider curriculum at Columbia? What do we want students to actually be able to do/know at the end? But in real terms, not the vague "awaken their interest in XYZ" that's normally on syllabi. I think this forms part of a bigger conversation about the purpose of higher ed today: universities should encourage wide and imaginative thinking, not just oriented towards certain career prospects. There has to be a value in the education we provide, and yes, we can measure that by \$, and be aware of the realities, but I think what we teach has to be informed by what kind of young graduates we want to send into the world. Big picture!*

*Discussions among faculty and their TAs.*

While others believe the curricular decisions should be made principally by departments and faculty:

*At the graduate course level, the content of a course is almost wholly dependent on the instructor. I wish that, in those cases, there was more input into content from other sources (department administrators or instructors with more explicit educational training, maybe).*

*The department should provide syllabus for courses.*

*Faculty should be the primary content-determiners.*

*is this an attempt to make the grad students not only responsible for TA responsibilities but also the actual faculty's actual job of designing their own damn courses?*

*I am an RA for an undergrad lab. The professors who are teaching the course should decide on the content of courses. However, the RA/TA should be welcomed to voice their opinions.*

*The professor should decide course content and ask for input if they want to. I also think a lot of*

*consideration should be made to the course level and who will be in the course (mainly majors v. many non-majors). The goal should be on teaching students the main ideas and theories without getting too bogged down on technical work and jargon while exposing them to higher level writing and thinking.*

*Professors should be in charge of content, but be explicit in encouraging TAs to think about pedagogy and course design.*

*I don't feel the need to be included in decisions about the content of courses as a graduate student. However, I do believe professors should consider the availability of TAs qualified to teach the course when determining course sizes. I am not sure what principles drive the decision at present.*

*This question is both too broad to understand and also potentially quite leading (as you are assuming that my experience as a TA qualifies me to weigh in on the decision-making that should be the purview of tenured faculty, who have earned their PhDs). Are you looking for some "woke" response like "I think diversity should drive curriculum development" or "students should have input into syllabus requirements"? Well, then, sorry to disappoint. Faculty should make decisions about the content of courses, and TAs should fall into line and learn. We're still paying our dues.*

*Professor decision*

*I believe the content should be determined largely by the professor teaching the course, with input from department heads who have a better understanding of the general course offerings and what content is missing/could be improved upon.*

*I think student course evaluations at the end of the semester are an important way for course content to be altered, but I think many professors disregard these.*

*If I'm the TA, especially for a large survey course (the only type of class I have TAed), then I think the faculty member is responsible for dictating the content of the course. It's their class, I'm here to assist. If a TA has a section I think they should have some freedom to run the section as they see is fit, with feedback and guidance from faculty member about what needs to be covered and other expectations for the section. This makes their experience teaching more meaningful*

*A few students commented on the fact that syllabi seem to remain static and unchanged:*

*I largely see courses as being continuations of what has been done in the past. There are some attempts to allow for variation in material, but they still tend to be very classic and not particularly innovative in their approach. I believe that more should be done to allow students to engage in class material outside of standard reading responses, term papers, and examinations. I think that more can be done with TAs to encourage scaffolding and structure in course layouts that provides greater clarity and support for students.*

*Decisions should be made to be in line with the student needs. Currently, I see tradition and an inertia to change.*

*The same content is taught year after year, and while the basics of organic chemistry do not change, the experiments can, which would make it exciting for the students as well as those teaching it year after year.*

*The present principles are "let's just keep everything the way it is and hope it's all fine." The principles should be "let's think about what are good ideas and then do them."*

*Decisions about course content seem to be made on "this is how we've always done it." Content is valued over learning goals.*

*This is a huge question, but all I'll say here is that most courses appear to have fairly static content once the syllabus is determined once, and then the instructor just coasts. Course content and implementation should be iterated on every semester to maximize student learning.*

*...most courses appear to have fairly static content once the syllabus is determined once, and then the instructor just coasts. Course content and implementation should be iterated on every semester to maximize student learning.*

*The content of my course is largely determined by the faculty who act/have acted as area chair for the course. That said, graduates students have quite a lot of flexibility as to HOW we teach the course.*

*Students asked for transparency on how curricular decisions are made:*

*I don't know how this is decided at present. I would appreciate more clarity from the department.*

Students also submitted comments regarding TAs and their roles in courses, asking for transparency on assignment, and clear communication of duties:



*Transparency about how TAs are assigned to courses and how course content decisions are made:*

*More communication with TA's about why professors design the syllabus in the way they do.*

*I think the Professor should construct the course but there should be more Professor-TA interaction to understand what their expectations are of the TAs each week.*

Asked for more teaching guidelines:

*I am teaching my own course -- I think the vagueness of the syllabus is actually advantageous to my teaching the class; I WISH there was a way to get data from an online resource regarding listenings, readings, assignments, tests, rubrics, essay prompts, etc. WE REALLY NEED THIS.*

*Offered comments on the TA/Professor relationship:*

*The prof I TA-ed for was outright abusive - too high expectations, gaslighting, etc. This is a common experience with this prof. All students complain - nothing gets done about it. This class also has a lot more requirements compared to the other sections - department just doesn't seem to care.*

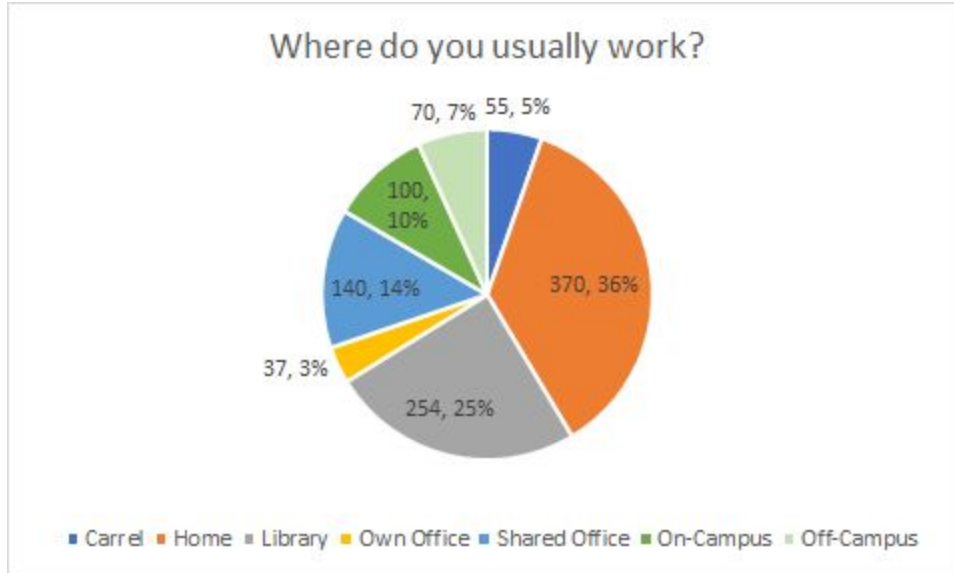
*Currently, being a TA just means doing the grunt work that professors don't want to do. Actually teaching - or learning how to be a good teacher - never happens. If being a TA is not a learning experience, it is WORK and shouldn't be a part of our TRAINING.*

## **Work Environment**

Where do you usually work?

This question had choices: "Carrel," "Home," "Library," "Own office," "Shared lab or office," "Other on-campus location," and "Other off-campus location," with the possibility of choosing multiple options.

Of the 532 total responses, there were 1026 different locations indicated from most common to least: home (36%), library (25%), shared lab or office (14%), on-campus (10%), off-campus (7%), carrel (5%), and own office (3%).



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

This question was based on a 1 (Not at all) to 10 (Very) scale.

Of the 528 total responses, 17% of students were not satisfied (1 - 3), 44% were neutral (4 - 7), and 39% were satisfied (8 - 10). The median satisfaction was 7.



Do you have any comments about the work space(s) available to you?

There were 190 total comments submitted.

Comments regarding availability:

*Too few, too cramped.*

*Works spaces are difficult to snag in the library (Butler). Other libraries that I've studied at on campus (e.g., SIPA) are not generally well-maintained.*

*I don't understand why UW shares offices with the Writing Center. These are both huge and popular services, especially the Writing Center! This institution has so many resources. They need their own space.*

*There are far too few work spaces, especially those reserved for MA students.*

*I wish more spaces were open 24 hours.*

*Graduate students often find themselves unable to work in the campus libraries around midterm and finals because of the dramatic uptick in undergraduate presence in these spaces. It might be useful to have some dedicated areas for graduate student use during these times of the semester.*

*I wish we had a TA lounge or something to hold office hours and not have to fight for a table.*

Commuters:

*It would be swell if commuter students were given lockers in Butler in a better way than a random lottery.*

*The shortage of lockers or places to secure belongings impacts me daily.*

General comments

*I wish there was a microwave in the graduate students lounge.*

*Columbia as a whole could use more collaborative work spaces...*

*The GSAS Writing Studio is a most welcome addition, but overall space for graduate students is insufficient, and the space needed for the healthy functioning of a department is completely lacking.*

*The GSAS writing Studio is great and there's actually space there to work.*

*Renovation of Fairchild classrooms could really improve learning environment (ie. seeing the board, having projectors that work, even painting the walls with lighter colors that are not so*

depressing).

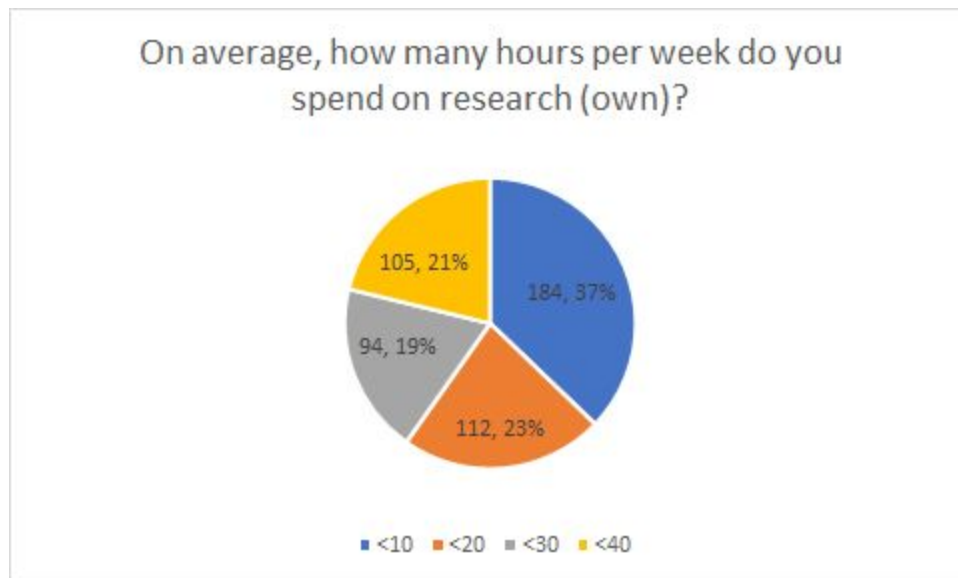
*Especially in teaching years, offices should be made much more available to PhD students. It is impossible to do much teaching work on campus (especially grading) without offices.*

*I realize that it is difficult to find space in New York City. However, I believe having an office where I can store my books, set up a wide screen, and find space every day would significantly improve my productivity. I currently work in the graduate student lounge in the department but even there the internet connection is often weak. In other spaces, it is often hard to find an open seat. Not having a reliable place to go every day adds unnecessary complications to the writing process.*

On average, how many hours per week do you spend on each of the following? Research (own), RA work, Classes, Teaching, Administrative Work

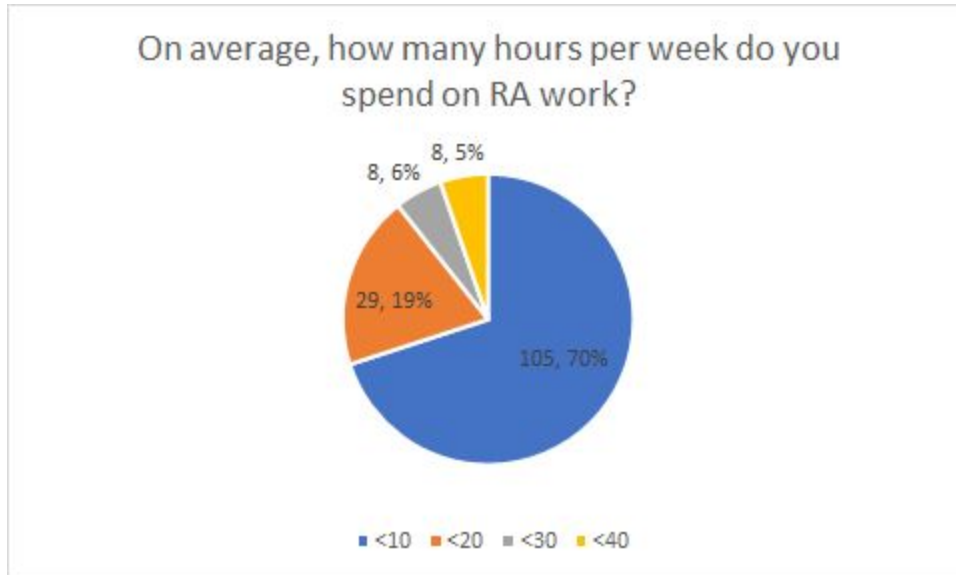
Each category had the options: 1-10, 11-20, 21-30, 31-40, and N/A

Research (own): There was a total of 495 responses (28 omitted N/A), of which 37% indicated that they spend between 1 and 10 hours, 23% between 11 and 20, 19% between 21 and 30, and 21% between 31 and 40.

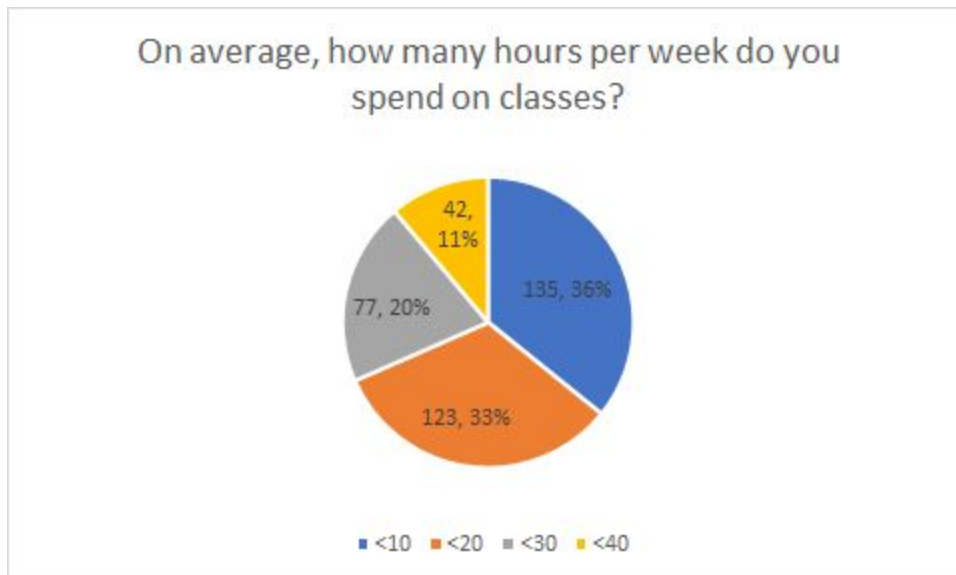


RA work: There was a total of 150 responses (311 omitted N/A), of which 70% indicated that they spend between 1 and 10 hours, 19% between 11 and 20, 6% between 21 and 30, and 5%

between 31 and 40.

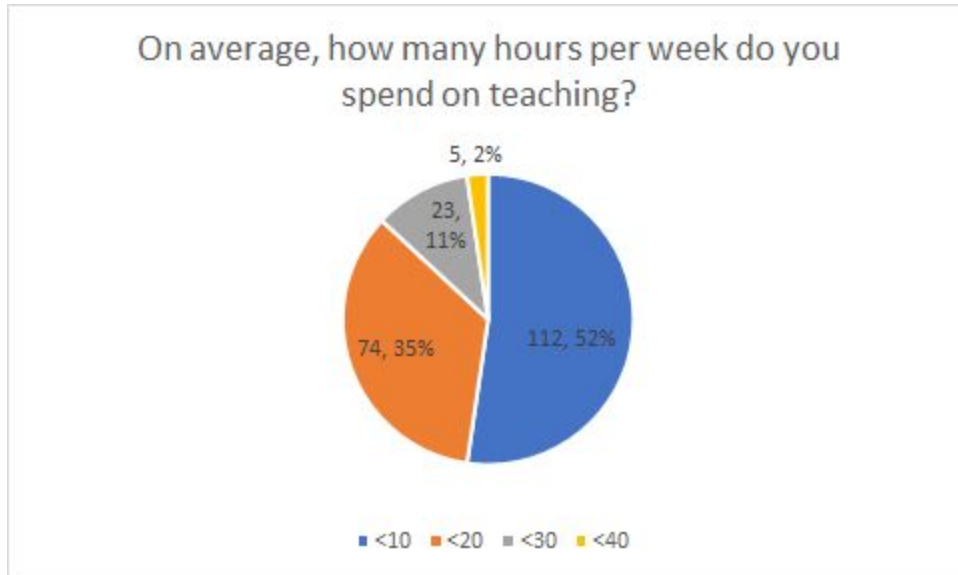


Classes: There was a total of 377 responses (138 omitted N/A), of which 36% indicated that they spend between 1 and 10 hours, 33% between 11 and 20, 20% between 21 and 30, and 11% between 31 and 40.

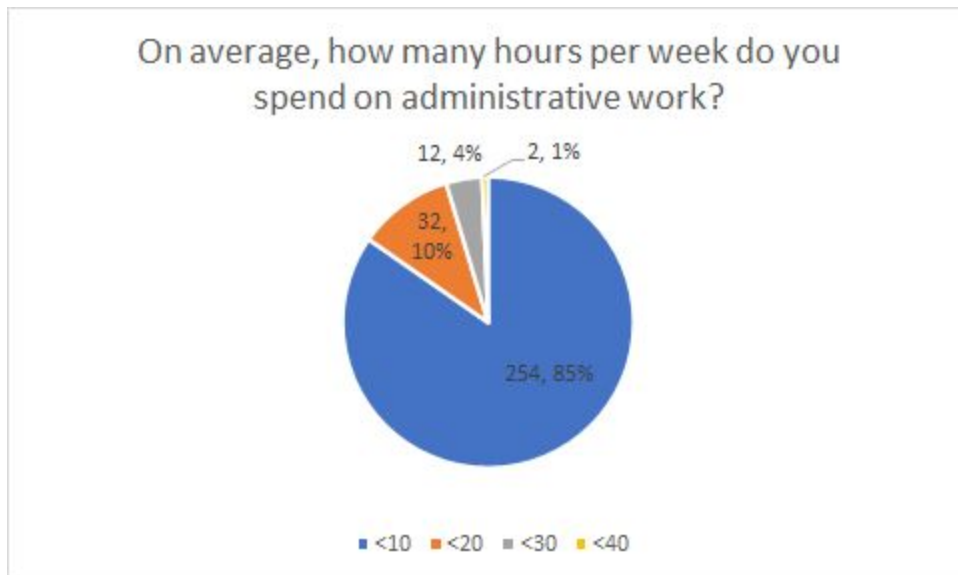


Teaching: There was a total of 214 responses (253 omitted N/A), of which 52% indicated that they spend between 1 and 10 hours, 35% between 11 and 20, 11% between 21 and 30, and 2%

between 31 and 40.



Administrative Work: There was a total of 300 responses (172 omitted N/A), of which 85% indicated that they spend between 1 and 10 hours, 10% between 11 and 20, 4% between 21 and 30, and 1% between 31 and 40.

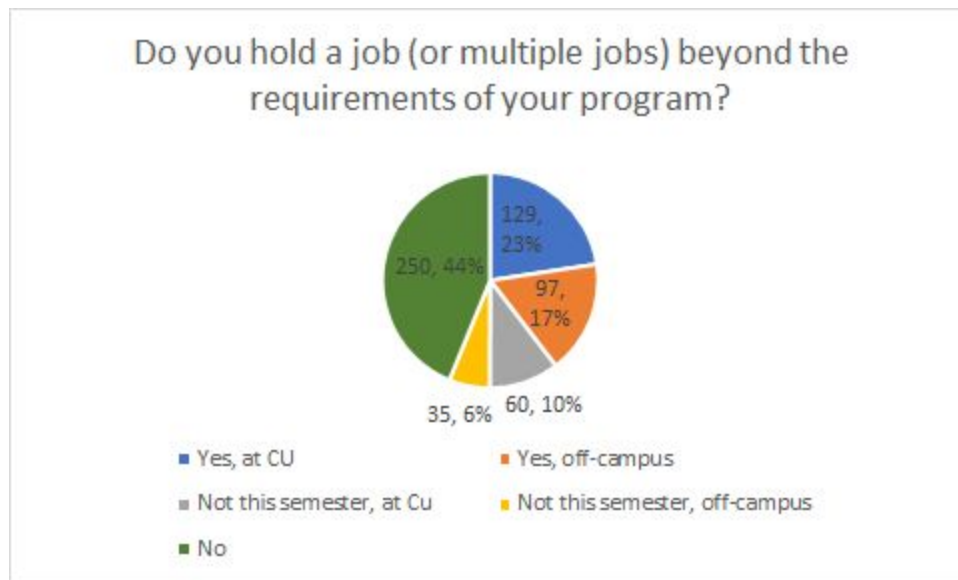


Do you hold a job (or multiple jobs) beyond the requirements of your program?

This question had choices: “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,” “No,” and “Other”, with the option to choose multiple choices.

There were 537 responses, and 571 total submissions: 44% of students have not held such jobs, 23% at Columbia, 17% off-campus, 10% at Columbia in the past, and 6% off-campus in the past.

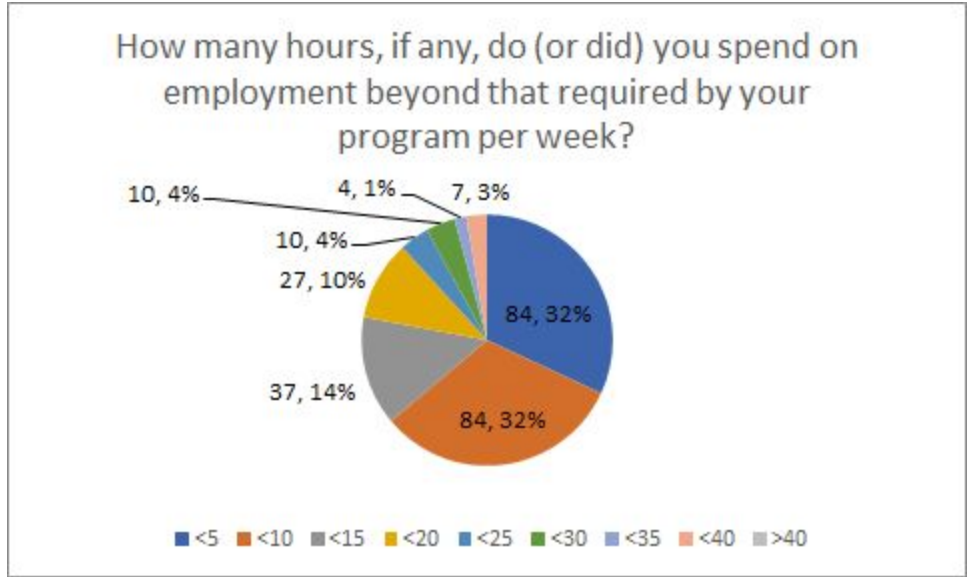
One student commented that they wanted a job, despite their international student status.



How many hours, if any, do (or did) you spend on employment beyond that required by your program per week?

This question had choices: 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21-25, 26-30, 31-35, 36-40, >40, and N/A.

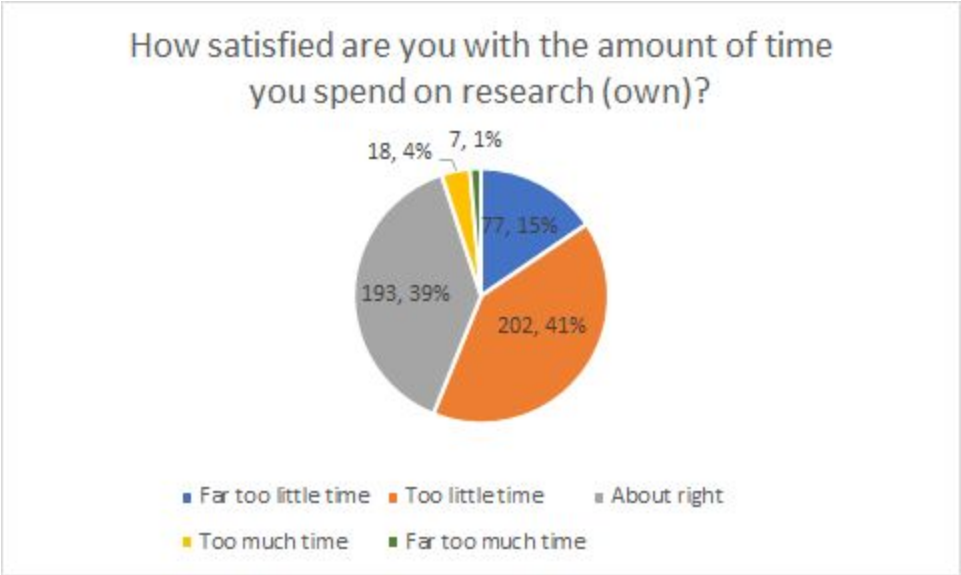
There were 263 responses and 227 N/A responses. Considering only the numeric submissions: 32% indicated that they worked between 1 and 5 hours beyond required by their program, 32% between 6 and 10, 14% between 11 and 15, 10% between 16 and 20, 4% between 21 and 25, 4% between 26 and 30, 1% between 31 and 35, and 3% between 36 and 40. No student spent more than 40 hours per week on employment beyond that required by the program.



How satisfied are you with the amount of time you spend on each of the following? Research (own), RA work, Classes, Teaching, Administrative Work, Other employment

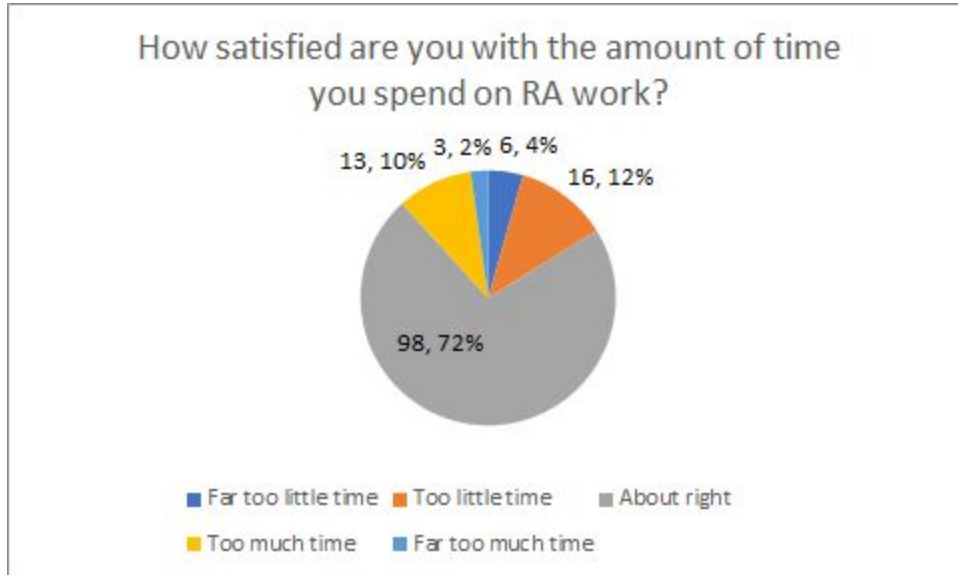
Each category had the choices: Far too much time, too much time, about right, too little time, far too little time, and N/A

Research (own): Of the 497 responses (26 omitted N/A), 15% indicated far too little time, 41% too little time, 39% about right, 4% too much time, and 1% far too much time. The majority (56%) of students would like to spend more time on their own research.

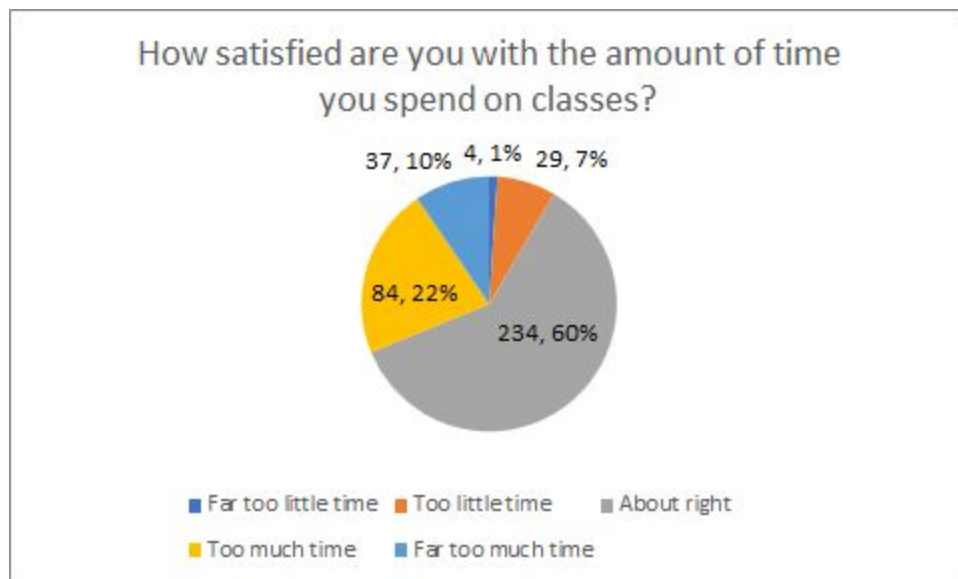




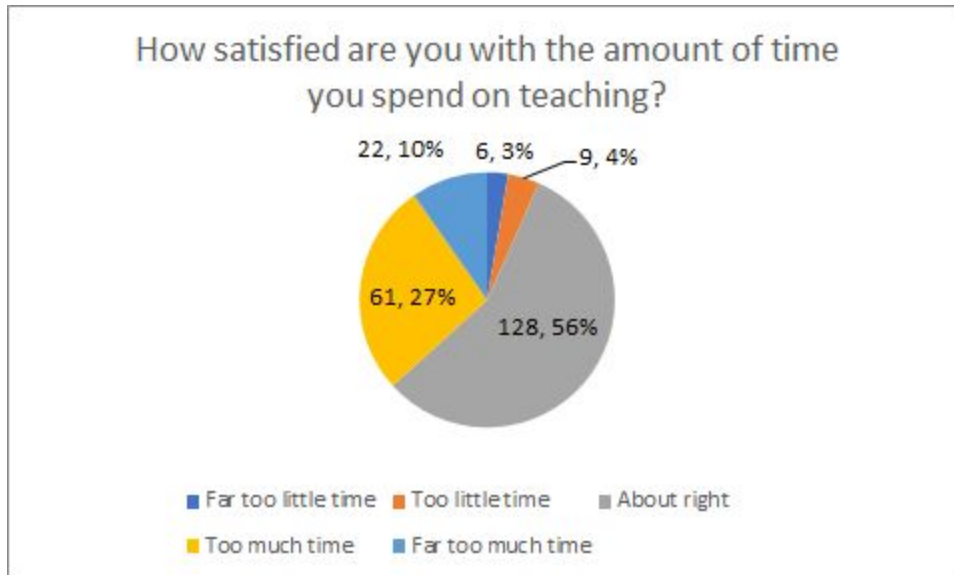
RA work: Of the 136 responses (355 omitted N/A), 4% indicated that they spend far too little time, 12% too little time, 72% about right, 10% too much time, and 2% far too much time. Thus, it is clear that RAs tend to be satisfied with their workload.



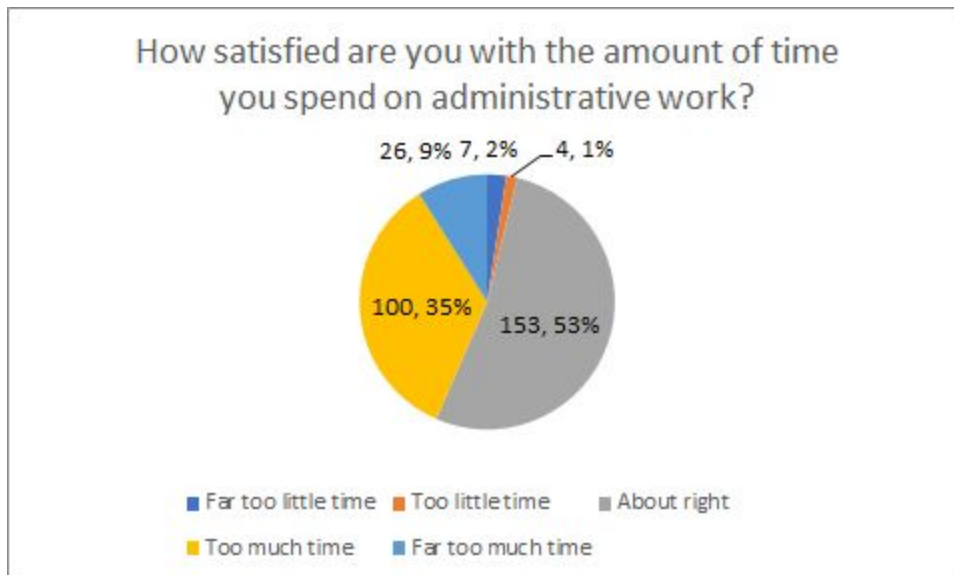
Classes: Of the 388 responses (138 omitted N/A), 1% indicated that they spend far too little time, 7% too little, 60% about right, 22% too much time, and 10% far too much time. This suggests that students are generally satisfied with their course load, while approximately 1/3 of students are spending more time than they would like.



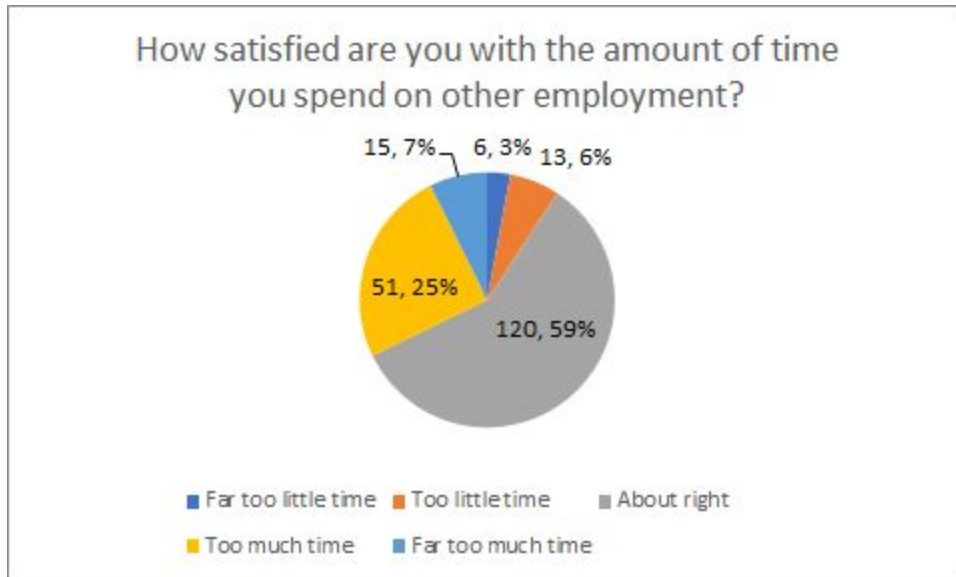
Teaching: Of the 226 responses (274 omitted N/A), 3% indicated that they spend far too little time, 4% too little, 56% about right, 27% too much time, and 10% far too much time. This suggests that students tend to be satisfied with their teaching positions, while 37% are spending more time than they would like.



Administrative work: Of the 290 responses (202 omitted N/A), 2% indicated that they spend far too little time, 1% too little, 53% about right, 35% too much time, and 9% far too much time. This suggests that students are generally satisfied or are spending more time than they would like on administrative work.



Other employment: Of the 205 responses (292 omitted N/A), 3% indicated that they spend far too little time, 6% too little, 59% about right, 25% too much time, and 7% far too much time. Thus, students are generally either satisfied or spend more than they would like on other employment.

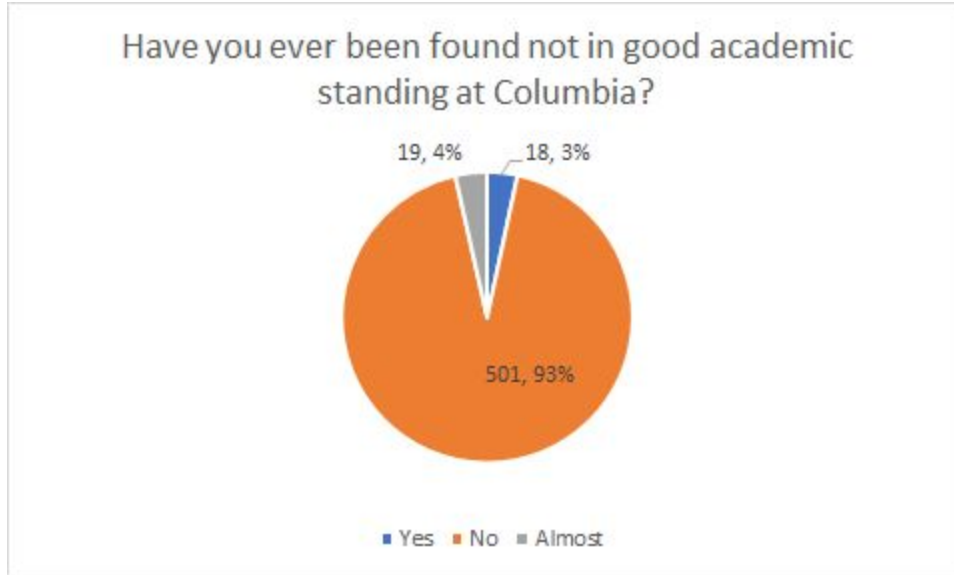


### **Academic Standing**

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

This question had options: “Yes,” “No,” and “Almost.”

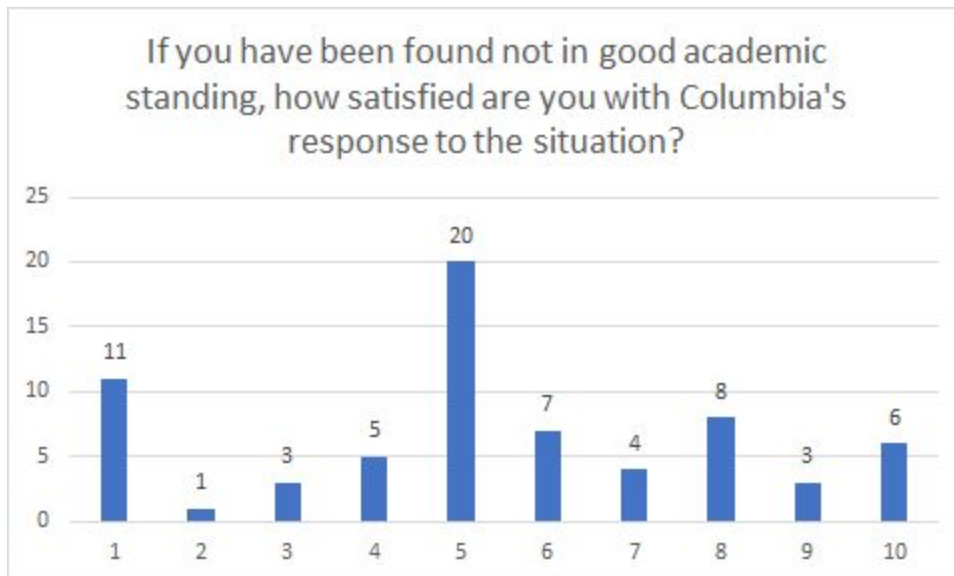
Of the 538 responses, the vast majority (93%) indicated that they have always been in good academic standing, and 3% indicated that they have been found not in good academic standing, and the remaining 4% were almost found not in good academic standing.



If you have been found not in good academic standing, how satisfied are you with Columbia's response to the situation?

This question was based on a 1 (Not at all) to 10 (Very) scale.

Of the 68 responses, the satisfaction seems to be quite far spread out, with most students neutral. The median satisfaction was 5.



Do you have any other comments about academic life at Columbia?

This question had 64 responses.

Comments regarding classes:

*I wish I had more time for research and that classes considered and accommodated the demands of research.*

*Cross registration is too difficult and I feel like my program gets shafted for electives*

*Spend about 60-70 hours a week on schoolwork which leaves little time for anything else.*

*I wish there was less emphasis on classwork and more of a way to balance research and classes. I wish that there was more support to balance research and classes. A lot of the 1st and 2nd year students that I talk to in the [program] seem to be losing sleep and not balancing anything.*

*Disappointed with the quality of Master's level courses. Many have demanding reading lists but professors are disorganised and expectations in class are low. Many classes have not felt like a step up from undergraduate study.*

*Smaller classes would be better for learning.*

*I am not teaching this semester, but every semester I have taught, I have spent FAR more hours on teaching prep, grading, student meetings, etc. than that officially "mandated" by the graduate school (one semester, it was upwards of 35 hours a week). This is the same for many other graduate students who teach their own classes. There is almost no way to get one's own work done during that time. GSAS/my department needs to recognize this fact and provide 6 years of guaranteed funding for graduate students in departments that historically have a higher teaching load (e.g., foreign language departments).*

Comments regarding teaching:

*Teaching assistantships suck way more time away from schoolwork than the university is willing to recognize. It is frequent that I need to place teaching assistantship duties over my own schoolwork*

*I believe my students deserve an education comparable to the one I received in undergrad. I don't see this institution giving them that education. My students repeatedly tell me that I'm their*

*most effective teacher and that my class is their best. While that's nice to hear, it's also incredibly disheartening because I am their lowest paid instructor and least respected in this institution.*

Comments regarding stress:

*It's very stressful and I think that it's quite toxic.*

*Interactions with other parts of the Columbia administrations often negatively affect my academic life. Most recently, I have been in prolonged discussion with housing about my eligibility status. These frequent issues that often require significant time and effort to resolve create substantial distractions.*

Comments regarding financial status:

*Doing work (at Columbia or elsewhere) beyond the teaching/research requirements of the program is financially necessary for me and many or most of my friends.*

*Structural (financial) privilege or lack thereof is the biggest barrier I see to successful completion of graduate work at Columbia.*

General comments:

*Very happy with the department.*

*It's a privilege to be here. Far too often, those of us who are satisfied with our Columbia do not have an opportunity to say so, leaving the space to be filled by the most dissatisfied among us. This gives the impression that the graduate student body is largely unhappy, which I do not believe to be the case.*

### **Section Summary and Remarks**

There seems to be a lack of communication for early-PhD students regarding some of the GSAS policies, including Chapter Meeting policies, as well as the degree requirements, as can be seen from the fact that around a quarter of the students believed that the degree requirements were not clearly communicated. Students are also generally satisfied with their departments/programs and advisors, but many students voiced their comments regarding their current status at Columbia, ranging from issues such as lack of organization in the department, lack of communication between advisors and mentees, and lack of space. The main issues stem

from the students' perceived lack of transparency, support, and clear communication between the administration, department, and students.

Many students are also unsatisfied with the current work environment and teaching culture. The satisfaction levels for the available work spaces are similarly distributed, though median satisfaction was above-average. Students generally spent too little time dedicated to their own research, while a significant portion of students believed they spent too much time on classes, teaching, administrative work, and other employment. The biggest issue, from the comments, seems to be the lack of financial support, requiring students to hold jobs that take time away from academics and research.

The majority of students (93%) were in good academic standing, and those that were found not in good academic standing were generally satisfied with Columbia's response to the situation.

## Housing

### **Section Overview**

This section addresses issues in housing, such as location, finances, and commute, as well as their experience with Columbia Housing.

### **Housing Status**

#### **Do you live in Columbia housing or off-campus?**

This question had choices: "Columbia housing" and "Off-campus housing."

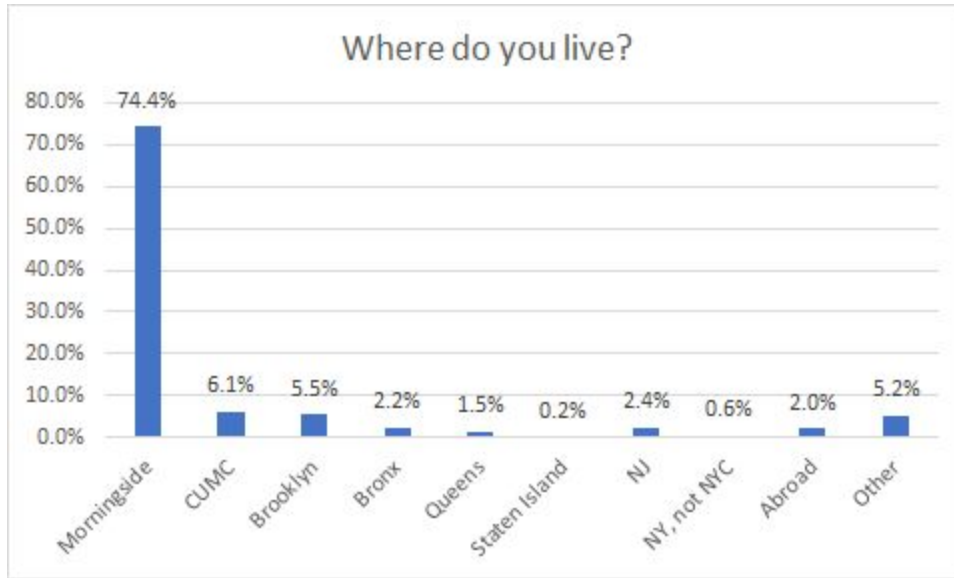
There were 545 responses consisting of approximately equal responses (50.5% Columbia housing and 49.5% off-campus housing).

#### **Where do you live?**

This question had choices: "Morningside Heights/Harlem (or surrounding neighborhoods)," "Near CUMC/Washington Heights (or surrounding neighborhoods)," "Brooklyn," "The Bronx," "Queens," "Staten Island," "New Jersey," "New York outside of NYC," "Abroad," and "Other."

Of the 543 responses, the majority (74.4%) lived in Morningside Heights/Harlem (or surrounding neighborhoods), while 6.1% lived near CUMC/Washington Heights (or surrounding neighborhoods), 5.5% lived in the Brooklyn, 2.2% lived in the Bronx, 1.5% lived in Queens, 0.2% lived in Staten Island, 2.4% lived in NJ, 0.6% lived in NY outside of NYC, 2% lived

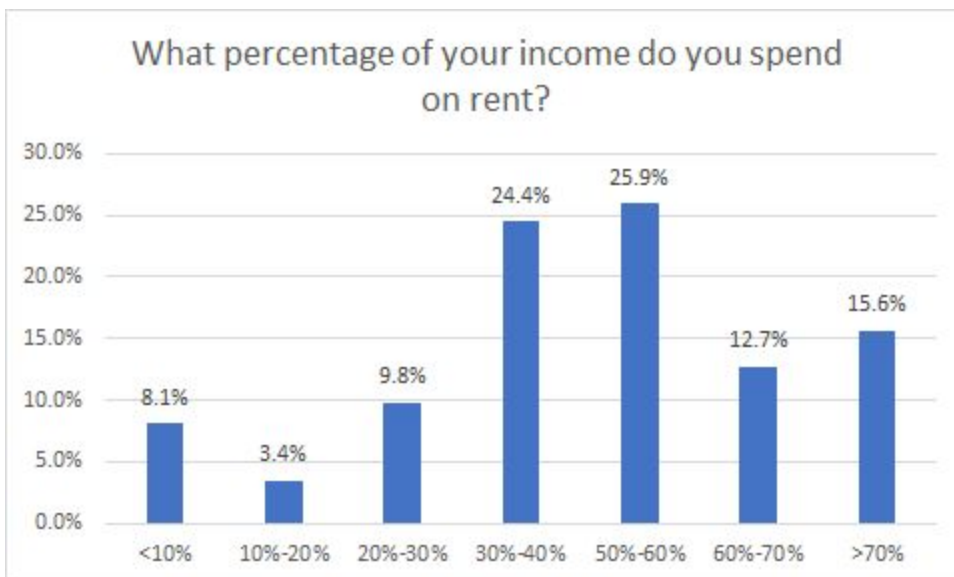
abroad, and the remaining 5.2% responded other, with comments ranging from Midtown, the Financial District, Manhattan, Virginia, and other areas.



What percentage of your income do you spend on rent?

This question had choices: <10%, 10%-20%, 20%-30%, ..., 60%-70%, and >70%.

Of the 409 total responses, 8.1% responded that they spend less than 10% of their income on rent, 3.4% spend between 10% and 20%, 9.8% spend between 20% and 30%, 24.4% spend between 30% and 40%, 25.9% spend between 50% and 60%, 12.7% spend between 60% and 70%, and the remaining 15.6% spend over 70% of their income on rent.

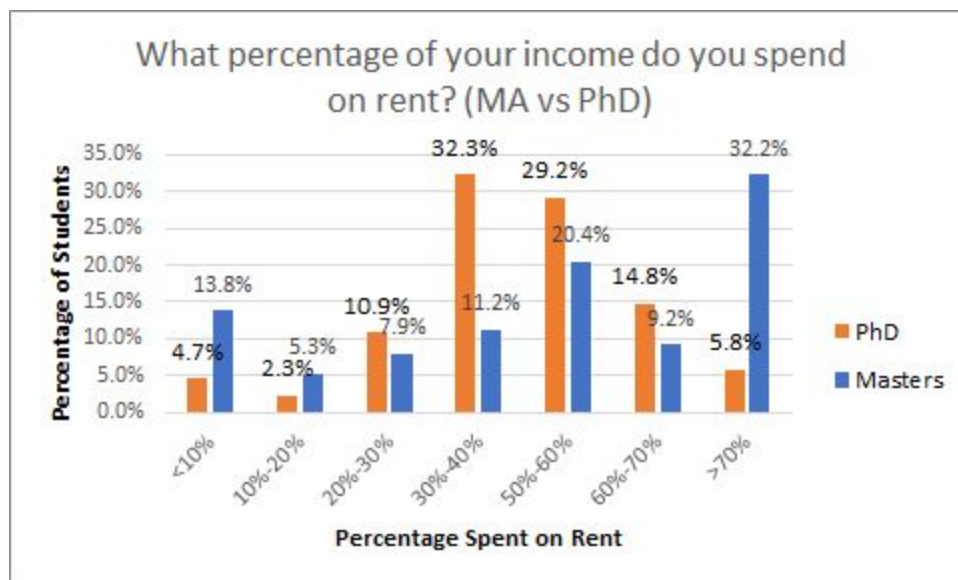




To better understand the responses, consider first the Masters students' responses (N = 152). Interestingly, there is not a clear, centered distribution in the responses. 13.8% of students spend less than 10% of their income on rent, 5.3% spend between 10% and 20%, 7.9% spend between 20% and 30%, 11.2% spend between 30% and 40%, 20.4% spend between 50% and 60%, 9.2% spend between 60% and 70%, and the remaining 32.2% spend over 70% of their income on rent. **The majority of MA students spend over 50% of their income on rent.** The median percentage was between 50% and 60%.

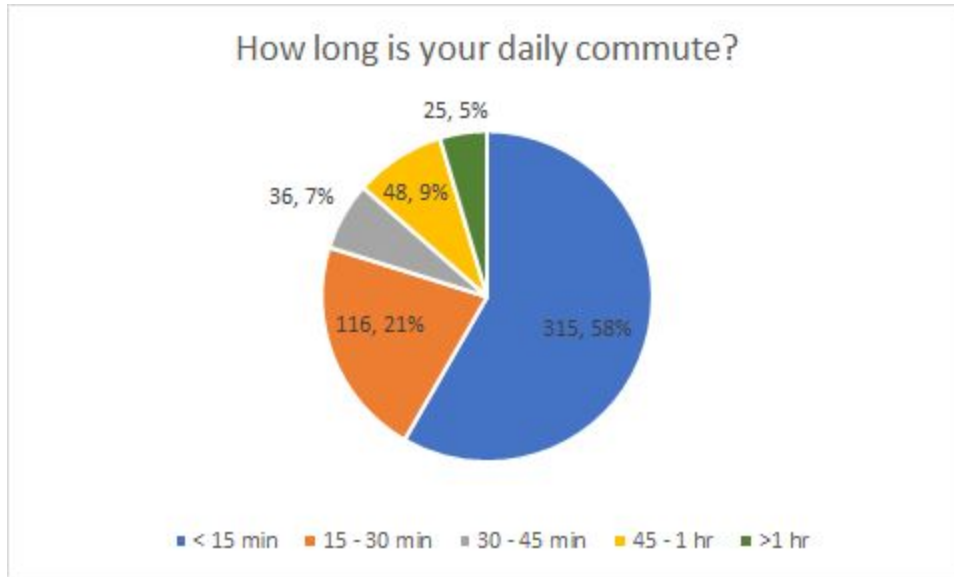
Of the PhD students' responses (N = 257), there seems to be a clearer distribution. 4.7% of students spend less than 10% of their income on rent, 2.3% spend between 10% and 20%, 10.9% spend between 20% and 30%, 32.3% spend between 30% and 40%, 29.2% spend between 50% and 60%, 14.8% spend between 60% and 70%, and the remaining 5.8% spend over 70% of their income on rent. The median percentage was between 30% and 40%.

There seems to be a significant difference between the distribution of income spent between PhD and Masters students: the distribution for PhD students is more centered and approximately normal with mean 40%, while the distribution for Masters students is weighted more heavily on the tails, as 46% of students either spend less than 10% or more than 70%.



How long is your daily commute?

This question had choices: “Less than 15 minutes,” “15-30 minutes,” “30-45 minutes,” “45 minutes to 1 hour,” and more than 1 hour.

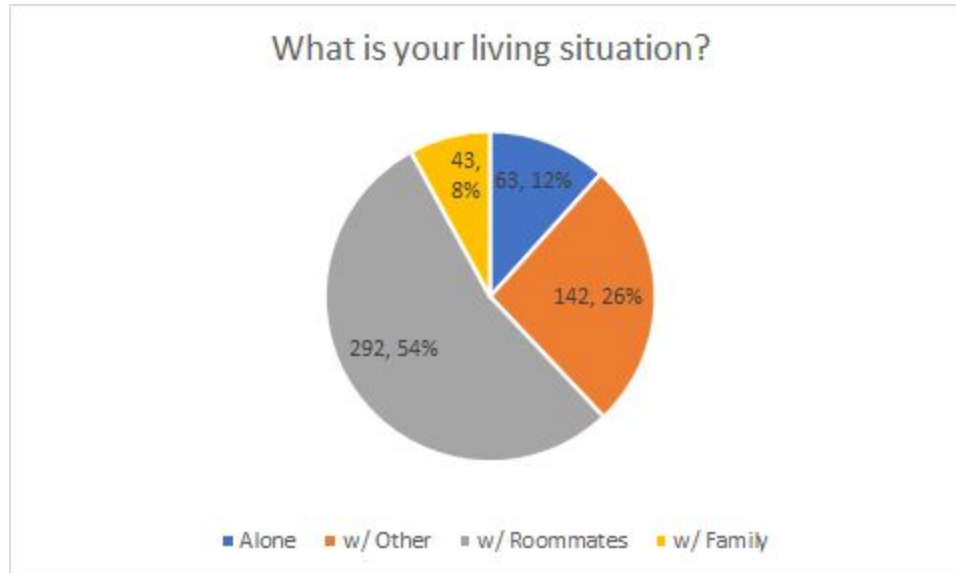


Of the 540 total responses, the majority (58%) spent less than 15 minutes on their daily commute, 21% spent between 15 and 30 minutes, 7% spend between 30 and 45 minutes, 9% spent 45 minutes to 1 hour, and the remaining 5% had a daily commute longer than an hour.

What is your living situation?

The choices were: “Apartment or house alone,” “Apartment or house with significant other,” “Apartment or house with roommates,” “Apartment or house with family,” or “Other.”

There were 540 total responses (omitting 4 N/A), which shows that 12% live alone, 26% live with their significant other, 54% live with roommates, and 8% live with their family. The results are not surprising, as the majority (74.4%) live in Morningside Heights/Harlem (or surrounding areas), with approximately half of all the students living in Columbia Housing apartments. The remaining 4 indicated that they lived in the International House.



Do you have any comments about housing?

There were 169 submitted comments.

The comments generally addressed that the housing was old and/or needed to be renovated:

*Units should be renovated; central air/heat, dishwashers.*

*Houses are very old...*

Some mentioned that it was too expensive, or that they wanted more off-campus housing resources:

*It's very expensive, and not very many options.*

*It would be great if there was more information about finding off-campus housing, such as guides to nearby neighborhoods, recommendations of areas that are more/less safe, etc.*

Several Masters students also advocated for increased support:

*You should offer it to MA students.*

*It would be great if MA students could stay in Columbia housing for more than a year even if their program could be completed in a year, as long as they continue taking a full class load. MA students not being allowed University housing is ridiculous and discriminatory.*

Some commented on the process on issues such as transfers, gender, rent, payment, or parental accommodations:

*Transfers are so unnecessarily difficult. I have been waiting for months and it's still not clear if I will get a transfer.*

*As a nonbinary student I found the process of getting Columbia housing to be frustrating, difficult to navigate, and disheartening—the availability of gender neutral housing was limited to individual dorm rooms and I ended up in female-only housing.*

*After the first year of not accepting the housing lottery, I did not receive any future assignments at all.*

*I did not receive housing until a week before classes started. All housing units should be assigned and students should be notified well in advance so that they have time to prepare.*

*It is very frustrating that housing is billed through the same system as stipend payments.*

*Rent increases on Columbia housing need to slow down. My apartment costs \$250 more/month than it did when I moved in – this in a time for a rent-freeze for rent stabilized apartments throughout the city. Columbia should cap its increases to those suggested by the rent stabilization board. They know how much money we have; they know what it means to ask more of it from us.*

*There are not many options for non-traditional students.*

*Two-bedroom apartments should be made available to grad parents with 1 and 2 children. Right now, it is pretty much impossible for a grad starting a family to get one. Urgent need to update GSAS and CU housing policy regarding new parents: Parents who got a parental leave during their school years and therefore got an extension towards their degree's completion, should be able to stay in their Columbia housing apartment for this period as well.*

*The selection process to be placed into housing was a bit more stressful than I thought was necessary.*

Few submissions were addressed to their issues with their roommates:

*I currently have a really disrespectful roommate, and the housing office has not been super helpful with the situation.*

*Roommates should be forced to clean every once in a while. Mine have never cleaned since I moved in on september 2019.*

*I've tried to request other GSAS students as roommates (as opposed to GS/SIPA/Arts students who often throw many parties) but this has not been accommodated.*

Many comments also advocated for the option to live in unfurnished apartments:

*I would like to have the option to have an unfurnished room in a furnished apartment unit.*

General Comments:

*The door-to-door pickup for trash has been extremely helpful. The Columbia facilities people are extremely efficient and I enjoy working with them to fix problems in my apartment.*

*I would like to have the option to have an unfurnished room in a furnished apartment unit.*

*I have a cat; thus, I cannot enroll in Columbia housing (according to current rules). Off-campus housing is not only way more expensive, but comes with a whole host of stressful logistics. I would be appreciative if Columbia offered a pet-friendly option.*

*All units should be unfurnished, columbia furniture is awful and twin extra long beds are oppressive.*

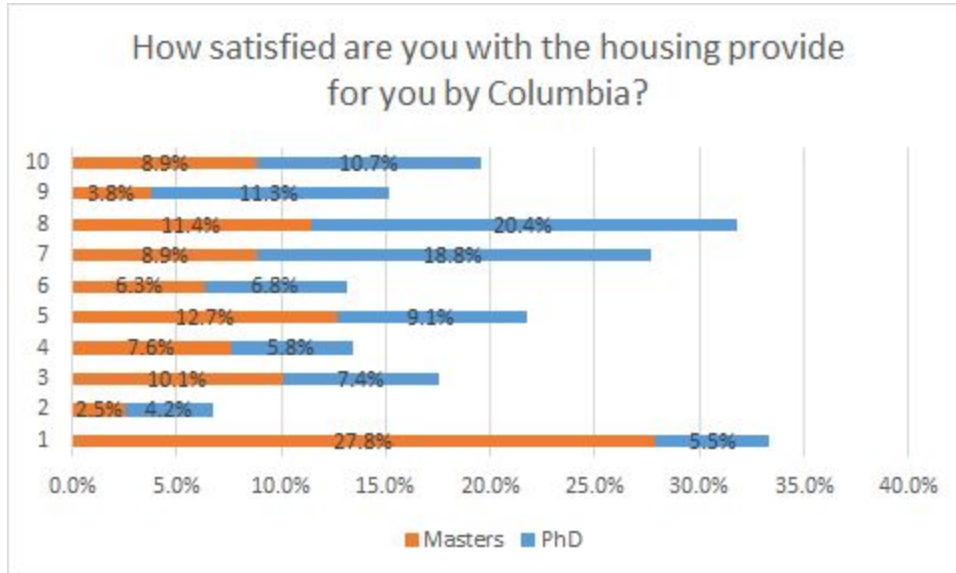
*I strongly suggest providing a floor plan when selecting housing, because I didn't know my living room and kitchens were so small until I moved in.*

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

This question was based on a 1 (Not at all) to 10 (Very) scale.

Of the 79 Masters (20% of total) and 309 PhD (80% of total) students' responses, 8.9% and 10.7% (respectively) are very satisfied (10), 3.8% and 11.3% indicated a satisfaction of 9, 11.4% and 20.4% indicated a satisfaction of 8, 8.9% and 18.8% indicated a satisfaction of 7, 6.3% and 6.8% indicated a satisfaction of 6, 12.7% and 9.1% were neutral (5), 7.6% and 5.8% indicated a satisfaction of 4, 10.1% and 7.4% indicated a satisfaction of 3, 2.5% and 4.2% indicated a satisfaction of 2, and the remaining 27.8% of Masters students and 5.5% of PhD students were

not at all satisfied. Overall, there seems to be much more variance in the satisfaction for Masters students than for PhD students. **The median satisfaction was 5 for Masters students and 7 for PhD students.**

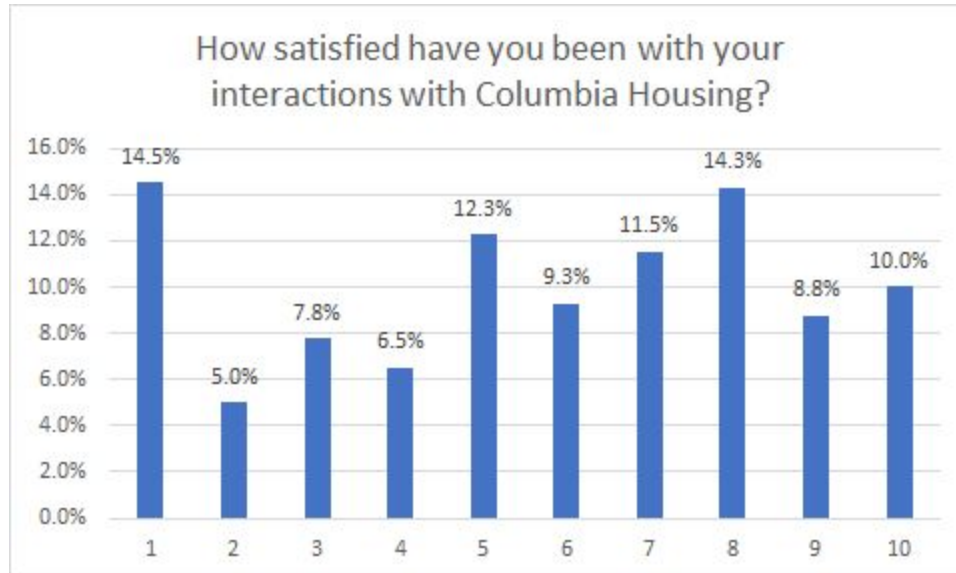


Conclusions: Based on the comments as well as the results of this question, there is a call for increased advocacy for Masters housing support. While PhD students were on average satisfied, Masters students were not. The lack of funding for Masters students may also influence these results.

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

This question was based on the same scale as above, 1 (Not at all) through 10 (Very).

Of the 399 responses (88 Masters, 310 PhD), the median satisfaction was 6, while the mode was 1. 14.5% indicated that they were not at all satisfied (1), 5% indicated 2, 7.8% indicated 3, 6.5% indicated 4, 12.3% indicated neutral (5), 9.3% indicated 6, 11.5% indicated 7, 14.3% indicated 8, 8.8% indicated 9, and the remaining 10% indicated that they were very satisfied (10). The data was weighted more on the higher (satisfied, >5) side, but **approximately 1/3 of students were not satisfied with their interactions (1 - 4).**



Conclusions: The discrepancy between the median and mode seems to suggest that the main source of dissatisfaction comes from a common, systemic issue: many students' interactions with Columbia Housing came from issues that left the student feeling dissatisfied, which is supported by the comments above. However, Columbia Residential seems to be able to resolve the majority of issues.

Do you have any comments about Columbia Housing?

There were 134 submitted comments.

One key theme was the lack of transparency and clear communication:

*The breakdown on rent payment is totally unclear, when do I pay? Is it part of my tuition payments? On the payments listing to the university housing rent isn't even listed as "rent" or "housing."*

*Apart from the apartment selection process, which was extremely confusing and very stressful, I am very satisfied with my apartment!*

*I didn't like the housing portal where there was only one hour on a random day that I was allowed to choose housing; it inconvenienced my roommate who could not access the spreadsheet while she was in China and so I had to pick the housing for both of us. I did not like the fact that there was no information given on what would be in the furnished room, including what size bed would be available. I did not like that it's not possible to see the floor plan before moving in.*

*Housing selection system boils down to luck. Would be nice if there were more detailed descriptions, and photos of each room.*

*Lack of communication about building affairs.*

*They are openly angry at students for asking for clarifications of policies.*

*There are no formal mechanisms in place for when difficult situations arise. Serious damage was sustained to my apartment after a structural issue wasn't taken seriously. It took months to get resolved and it was very difficult to get a hold of people. The website is incredibly outdated and not helpful at all.*

Others talked about the quality of their housing or housing options:

*My apartment is in pretty bad shape; I feel like CU should do a better job about renovating apartments. (e.g. had a leak break through our ceiling last year, it still hasn't been fixed and maintenance keeps rescheduling.)*

*Repairs are not done as quickly as I'd like.*

*It is insane to me that graduate students aren't able to give back or do away with furniture in furnished apartments if they want to. We aren't undergrads and this is not a dorm; I have no idea why the housing office cares so much about the furnishings because they are low-quality. I wasn't even allowed to put them in a storage unit when I lived in Columbia housing.*

*My heating was not working in my living room for the majority of the winter season. It literally only turned on and started working properly at the end of February. I called the emergency service number for Columbia housing multiple times and was directed to my super each time, which prolonged the resolution of many issues in my apartment. This was incredibly inefficient and as a result my roommates and I were without heat for some of the coldest days of the season, which is frankly unacceptable.*

Again, there have been comments for increased support for Masters students from Columbia:

*Columbia Housing is not affordable for Master's students who are not receiving a stipend for their research.*



*There's no reason that people who are doing a one year program at Columbia should be denied housing while many many others get housing.*

Comments regarding policies:

*I said this last year, but my partner and I experienced homophobia at UAH when applying for couple's housing.*

*Some of their policies are truly heartless - making students pay a \$1k cancellation fee to leave housing outside their stated contract, for instance.*

The remaining comments discussed the high cost of Columbia Housing:

*The rent is outrageous in comparison to my funding.*

General Comments (including those regarding supers):

*My super was excellent, but the rest of my experiences with Columbia Housing were pretty sub-par...*

*My super [name] is awesome.*

*Custodians are very kind and responsive.*

*Columbia Housing responded poorly to an unlivable roommate decision several years ago. I hope that it takes students' concerns more seriously now.*

### **Section Summary and Remarks**

It seems that housing, and in particular, rent payments, are the biggest source of stress due to students' lack of financial confidence and support from Columbia. According to the results of the survey, approximately an equal number of students live on campus as they do off campus. There also seems to be a significant difference between the distribution of Masters and PhD students' percentage of income spent on rent: the average Masters student spent over 50% of their income on rent while the average PhD student spent over 30%. The overall commute time was typically under 30 minutes, with 21% of students' daily commute lasting over 30 minutes.

Comments regarding students' experiences with housing calls for both increased advocacy for Masters students' housing, as well as improved communication from the administration. The median satisfaction with the housing provided by Columbia was 5 (neutral)

for Masters students and 7 (good) for PhD students. The subsequent question asked for students' experiences with Columbia Housing, which was distributed more uniformly throughout. This may suggest that the main source of dissatisfaction stems from a systemic issue.

Students commonly asked for fairer rent, as rent payments have been steadily increasing relative to the stipends and financial support given from Columbia. Other issues included lack of clarity regarding housing policies, outdated information on the Housing website, as well experiences with homophobia, issues with housing quality, and the lack of ability to choose unfurnished housing.

## Health

### Section overview

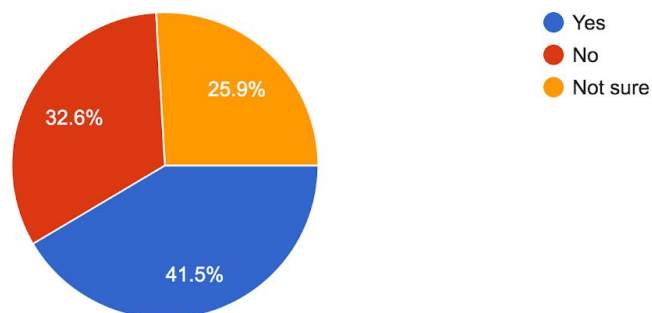
The goal of this section was to gauge respondent's feelings about the resources provided by Columbia to support their physical and mental health, and their feelings about the process of medical leave, when applicable. The same questions were asked about CMS and CPS.

### Physical Health Resources

This is a multiple choice question that asked if respondents felt that Columbia provided adequate resources related to physical health for students. Options offered were "Yes" "No" "Unsure"

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

540 responses



Out of 540 respondents, 224 (41.5%) believe that Columbia provides adequate resources for physical health, while 176 (32.6%) did not. 140 (25.9%) were unsure. This is a slight decrease in satisfaction from last year, in which 43.2% thought that there are adequate physical health resources and 33% did not.

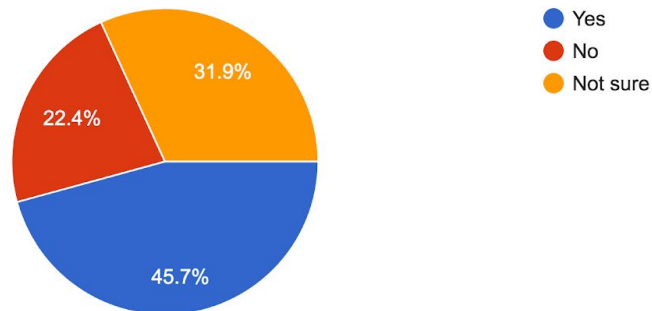
The same question was asked for mental health.

### **Mental Health Resources**

This is a multiple choice question that asked if respondents felt that Columbia provided adequate resources related to mental health for students. Options offered were “Yes” “No” “Unsure”

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

540 responses



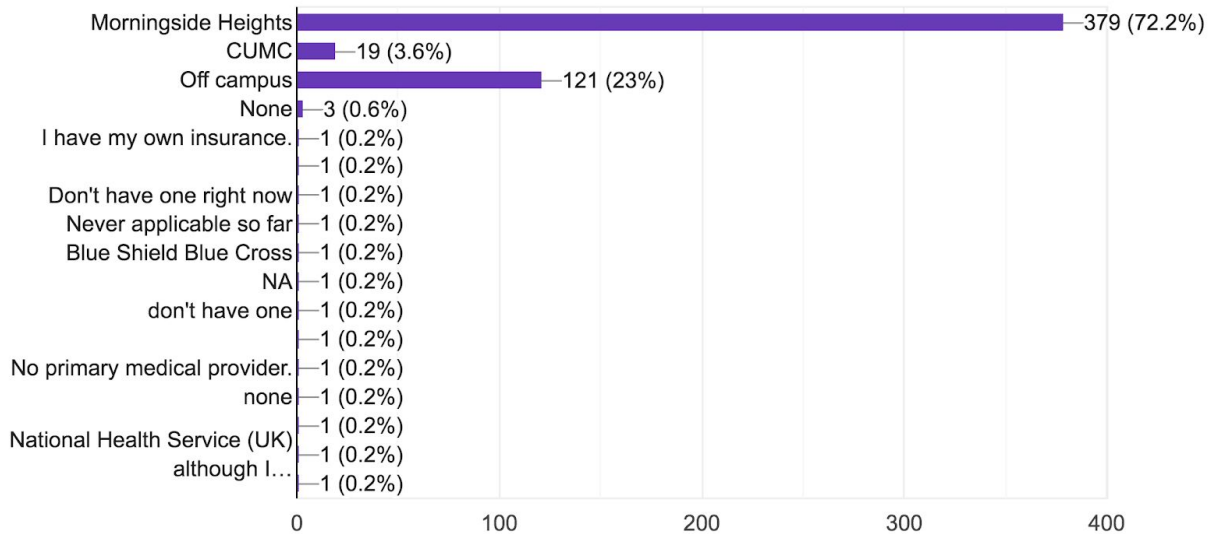
Out of 540 respondents, 247 (45.7%) replied that there are adequate resources for mental health, while 121 (22.4%) did not, and 172 (31.9%) were unsure. This shows that respondents believed that there are better resources for mental health than they are for physical health.

### **Medical Care Provider**

This was a multiple choice question that asked students who was their medical care provider. Options offered were “Morningside Heights” “CUMC” “Off campus” or “Other”

## Where is your primary medical provider?

525 responses



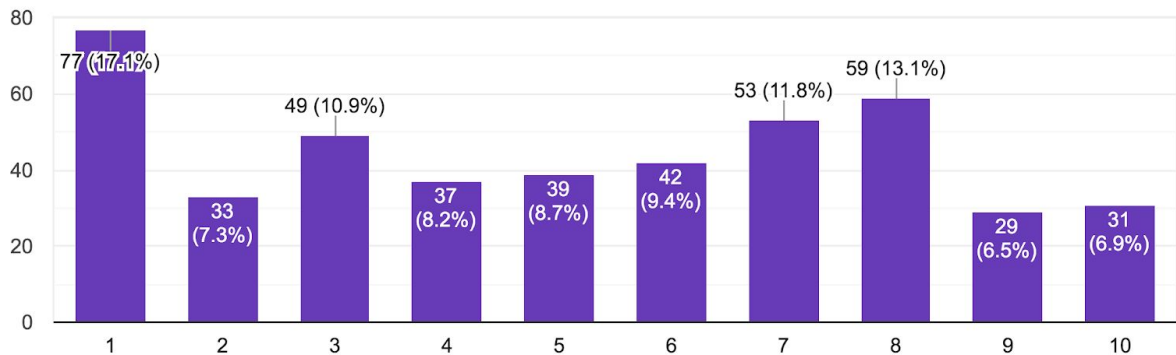
Out of 525 respondents, 379 (72.2%) receive care on the Morningside Heights campus, while 126 receive care off campus, 26 receive care at CUMC, and 11 respondents have no insurance.

### **CMS Appointment System Satisfaction**

This was a weighted question that asked students to rate their satisfaction of Columbia's Medical Services appointment system on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "not at all," and 10 being "very much so."

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

449 responses



Out of 449 responses, 77 (17.1%) of students were “not at all” satisfied with the appointment system. 235 (52.3%) respondents rate the appointment system 5 or lower, while 140 (47.7%) rate it 6 or above. The average is 5.12 and the median is 5. Despite that average rating, the spread above indicates that satisfaction with the appointment system seems to vary widely.

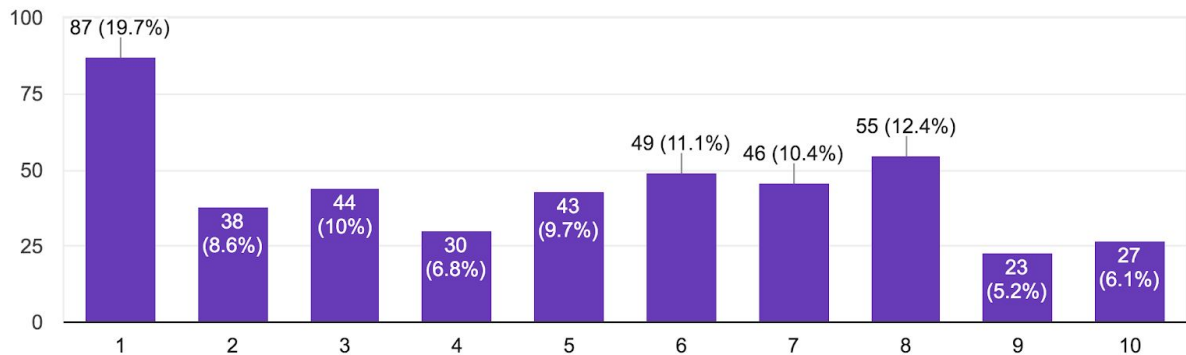
While the majority of respondents are not at all satisfied, there is an increase in satisfaction from last year’s survey, in which 57.4% of respondents rated the system 5 or lower, and 42.6% rated it 6 or above.

### **Columbia Medical Appointment Availability**

This was a weighted question that asked students to rate their satisfaction of Columbia’s Medical Services available appointment times on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being “not at all,” and 10 being “very much so.”

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

442 responses



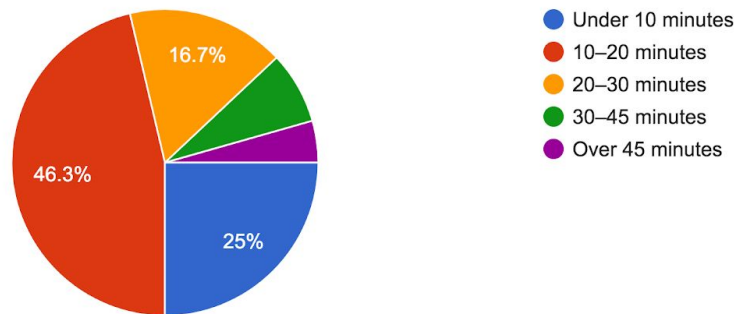
Out of 442 responses, 87 (19.7%) were not at all satisfied with appointments times. 54.8% of respondents rate the availability of appointments 5 or lower, while 45.2% rate it 6 or above. The average is 4.8 and the median is 5. As in the previous questions, this represents an increase in satisfaction from last year's report, in which 62% of respondents rated the availability of appointment at 5 or lower, and 38% at 6 or above.

### CMS Wait time

This is a multiple choice question that asked respondents how long they wait to be seen. Options offered were "Under 10 minutes" "10-20 minutes" "20-30 minutes" "30-40 minutes" "Over 45 minutes."

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

408 responses



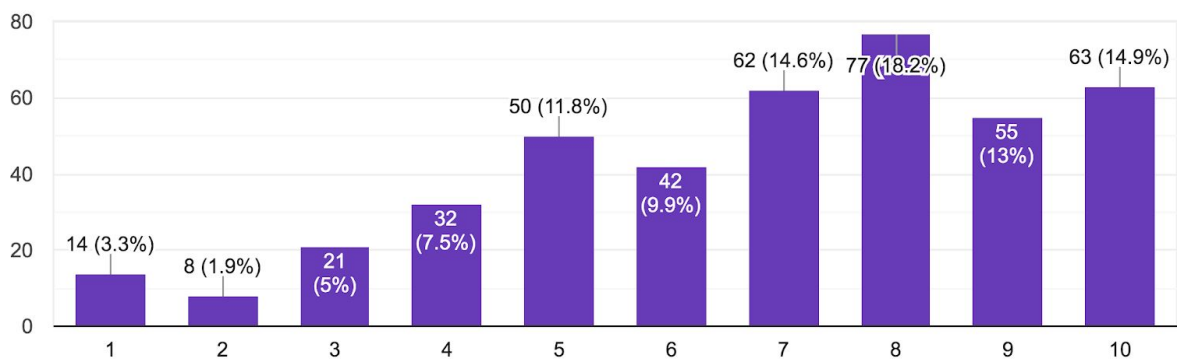
Out of 408 students, 189 (46.3%) wait between 10 and 20 minutes to be seen. 291 (71.3%) students wait under 20 minutes, while 117 (28.7%) respondents waited over 20 minutes to be seen. This is a small increase from last year’s report, in which 24.9% of students reported waited over 20 minutes.

### Quality of Staff at CMS

This was a weighted question that asked students to rate their satisfaction of Columbia’s Medical Services staff on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being “not at all,” and 10 being “very much so.”

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

424 responses

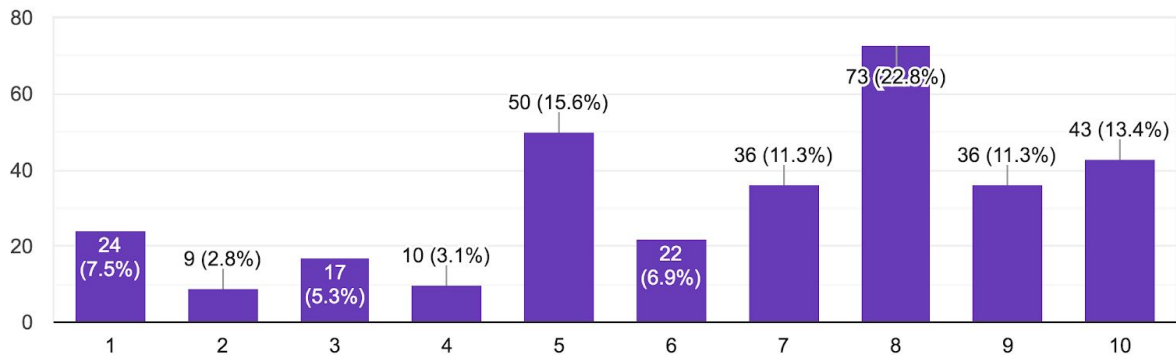


Out of 424 responses, 77 (18.2%) reported an 8/10 satisfaction with the staff at CMS. Only 29.5% gave the staff a rating of 5 or lower, while 70.6% gave the staff a rating of 6 or above. The average is 6.8 and the median is 7, showing that students are satisfied with the staff. This represents an increase in satisfaction from last year, in which 66.9% of respondents gave the staff a rating of 6 or above, and 33.1% a rating of 5 or lower.

### CPS Appointment System Satisfaction

This was a weighted question that asked students to rate their satisfaction of Counseling and Psychological Services appointment system on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being “not at all,” and 10 being “very much so.”

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



Out of 320 responses, 73 (22.8%) students rated CPS's appointment system an 8 out of 10. 65.7% of students rated the system 6 or above, while 34.3% rated it 5 or below. This distribution shows that students are usually satisfied with CPS's appointment system. The average is 6.5 and the median is 7. This is a significant increase from last year's report, in which 58.7% of respondents rated the appointment system a 6 or higher, and 41.3% rated it a 5 or lower.

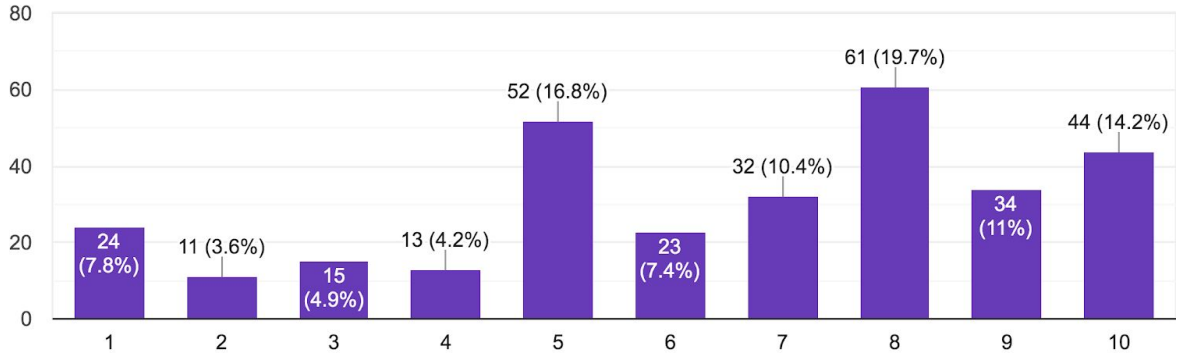
### **CPS Appointment Availability**

This was a weighted question that asked students to rate their satisfaction of CPS available appointment times on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "not at all," and 10 being "very much so."



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

309 responses



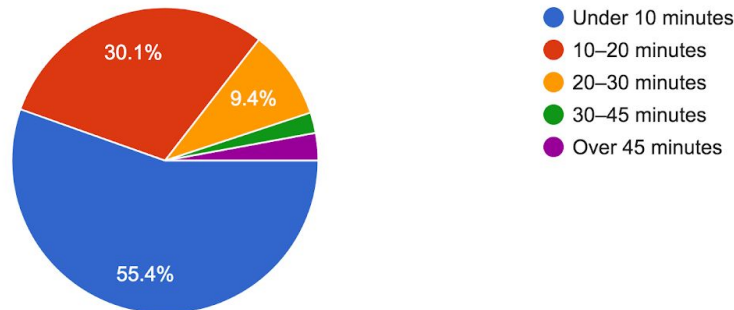
Out of 309 responses, 61 students rated the availability of appointments an 8 out of 10. 62.7% gave the availability of appointments a rating of 6 or higher, while 37.3 gave it a rating of 5 or lower. The average is 6.4 and the median is 7. This also shows an increase in satisfaction, as last year, 55.4% of respondents gave the availability of appointments a rating of 6 or higher.

**CPS Wait time**

This is a multiple choice question that asked respondents how long they wait to be seen at CPS. Options offered were “Under 10 minutes” “10-20 minutes” “20-30 minutes” “30-40 minutes” “Over 45 minutes.”

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

276 responses

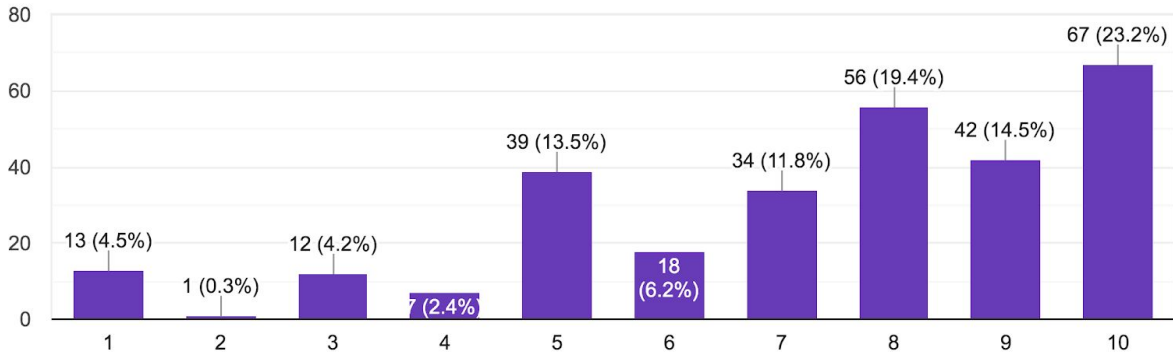


Out of 276 respondents, 236 (85.5%) reported waiting less than 20 minutes, while 23.4% reported waiting over 20 minutes.

## Quality of Staff at CPS

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

289 responses



This was a weighted question that asked students to rate their satisfaction of CPS’s staff on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being “not at all,” and 10 being “very much so.”

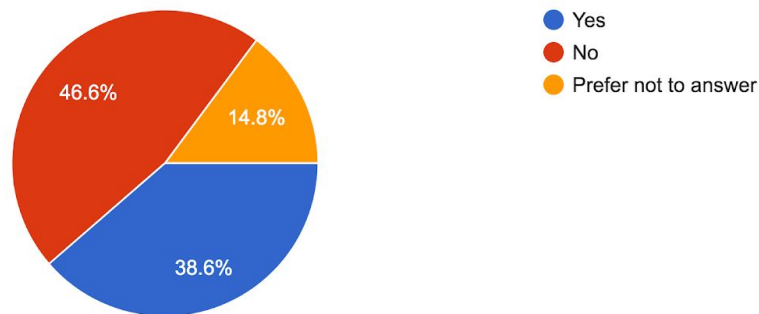
Out of 289 responses, 23.2% of respondents were very satisfied with the CPS staff, given them a rating of 10. 75.1% of respondents gave the staff a rating of 6 or higher, while 24.9% gave it a rating of 5 or lower. The average is 7.3 and the median is 8.

## Stress at Columbia

This is a new question on the survey. This is a multiple choice question that asked if respondents felt that Columbia addresses stress in its policy for well being. Options offered were “Yes” “No” “Unsure”

Do you believe Columbia University is addressing stress in its policies for students well being?

466 responses



Out of 466 responses, 217 (46.6%) students do not believe the university is addressing the issue of stress among graduate students. 180 (38.6%) students believe stress is addressed, while 69 (14.8%) were unsure.

As a follow up question, respondents were asked to answer in their own words the following question: **“What steps could the university take to reduce stress among the student body?”**

173 students offered comments, addressing various stress factors and remedies. The vast majority of these comments called for improving current resources rather than creating new ones. Some comments also identified stress as a symptom of structural issues in which stress is valued as a necessary part of an elite education. These comments detailed the pressure of performance and advocated for change in the culture. A couple of comments displayed this belief by affirming it. A significant amount of comments brought up that stress is a departmental issue, either because it is imposed by their professors and advisors with unrealistic expectations and lack of work-life balance, or because departments and academic culture within departments refuse to acknowledge stress. Respondents felt that there is no actual discussion about stress within their departments. Funding and health insurance are a major source of stress for these respondents, as well as a lack of access to affordable or free gym classes. Several respondents complained about the state of Dodge Fitness Hall, and noted that improvement of the fitness facilities would be a simple remedy to their stress levels. While some respondents identified academics as the culprit for their high level of stress, others identified general quality of life. It is also important to note that this is a relatively high response rate for a written question. Comments about housing for example, earlier in the survey, had less responses.

Forty-two students requested better funding, either through stipend increase or lowering tuition. Two students asked for timely pay.

Twenty-one students asked for better fitness resources: Twelve students addressed the need for an improved gym, eight students asked an increase in free workout options (four of which specifically asked for free yoga classes), three students complained about the high price of classes.

Twenty-one students asked to lessen the workload, from both coursework, exams or fellowship assignments.

Thirty students commented on current mental health resources. Six respondents described CPS as understaffed, three students asked for in house psychologists instead of being referred outside of the university. Three students brought up the need for drop in hours. Two respondents commented on the \$20 copay for seeing a psychologist outside of Columbia, and noted this is a steep cost on the long term. Two students noted it they had to wait over a month to see someone at CPS. Two asked for better couple counseling services.

Twenty one students argued that stress is part of a larger structural problem and is embedded within the Ivy League culture of achievement, in which the pressure of performance trumps over student well being. Many respondents expressed that this issue should be solved at the departmental level, asking for departmental workshops to promote mental health and discuss coping mechanisms for stress, three respondents thought mental health should be addressed during orientation. Four respondents called for improved work life balance.

Eighteen students addressed the need to enhance current insurance benefits, five of which requested dental care, and two vision care.

Thirteen respondents commented on the faculty/student relationship and identity this relationship as a major culprit for stress. Several commenters insisted that the issue of stress is not addressed by faculty, and called for an improvement of the relationship between professors and graduate students, particularly with student's advisors and PI's. Respondents have commented that their advisors are expecting too much from students and are not mindful of work-life balance, some even referring to their advisor as "abusive." One commenter suggested that training for faculty would be beneficial to solve this issue.

Tied in many comments to the issue of relationship between students and faculty is the necessity to improve communication. Ten students commented on this issue, noting the need for clear expectation from their advisors.

Nine respondents asked for a union contract, and for good faith bargaining from the university.

Eight students asked for improved housing by making rent more affordable, increasing single housing, month by month rent payment, and improving safety.

Seven students asked for protective measures against violence and discrimination. Three respondents called for effective recourse for victims of sexual harassment or abuse and two asked for policies that protects students from bullying, violence, harassment and discrimination. Two asked for measures that promote diversity and inclusion.

Seven students expressed that acknowledgement of stress from their department or faculty would go a long way to alleviate the pressure and would help fight the stress stigma. These comments often encourage conversation and a bottom up approach.

Seven students requested more events. One of which asked for more events with free food, one free coffee, one for more ASGC events, and one for more intradepartmental events.

Five students commented on physical health resources, three commenters decried the lack of competency of the medical staff on campus, one respondents asked to improve the referral system, and one the appointment system so that appointments can be made in advance.

Four respondents asked for an increase in resources available for parents, including affordable childcare facilities.

Three respondents asked for career development resources, and improvement of job placement rate.

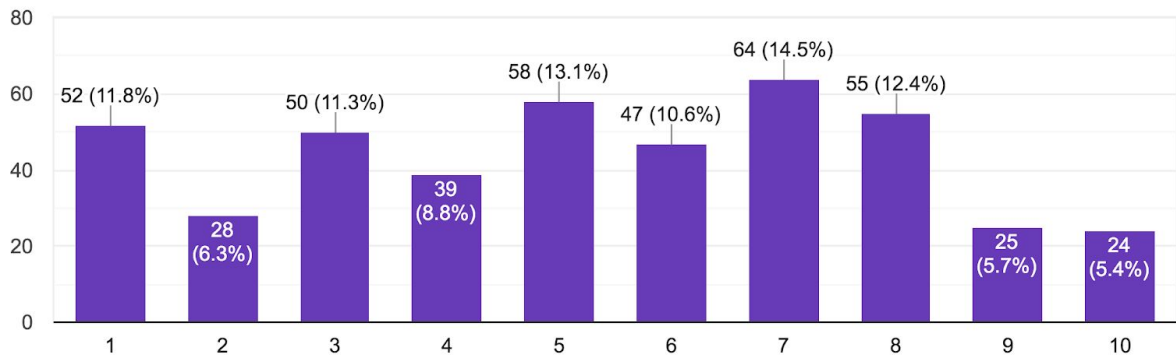
Three students responded that stress is a part of the Ivy League ethos and that it is the responsibility of the student.

### **Insurance**

This was a weighted question that asked students to rate their satisfaction of Columbia's health insurance on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "not at all," and 10 being "very much so."

### How satisfied are you with the insurance offered by Columbia?

442 responses



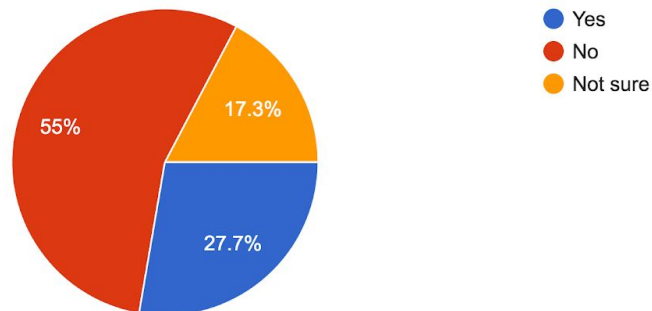
442 students responded, of which 64 (14.5%) rated Columbia's insurance a 7. 51.3% of respondents rated the insurance a 5 or below, and 48.7 a 6 or above. The average is 5.29 and the median is 5. Despite that average rating, the spread above indicates that satisfaction with the insurance seems to vary widely. These results show a decrease in satisfaction with the insurance policy, as 53.6% of respondents rated the insurance 6 or above last year.

### Dental Care

This is a new question on the survey. This is a multiple choice question that asked if respondents have access to sufficient dental care. Options offered were "Yes" "No" "Unsure"

### Do you currently have access to sufficient dental care?

509 responses



Out of 509 respondents, 280 (55%) students do not have access to sufficient dental care, while 141 (27.7%) do and 88 (17.3%) are unsure.

Do you have any other comments about how Columbia could improve physical or mental health resources? 189 students offered a written response.

A total of ninety students complained about Columbia's **health insurance**. Forty one requested **dental coverage**, including two who complained about the quality of care at CU dental. Twenty four students requested **vision coverage**. Seven students asked for a **return to the 100 plan**, seven asked for the insurance to be more affordable, including lowering co-pays, and two respondents asked for their insurance to have a wider coverage.

Twenty one students complained about **fitness resources**, including six who described the gym as too small and crowded, four who asked for cheaper classes, three who asked for the gym to be renovated.

Twenty one students addressed **primary care** at Columbia. Twelve of these were unsatisfied with the current **appointment system** for medical services, detailing how difficult it is to get an appointment. Three students described the staff at CMS as rude, and two described CMS as understaffed. Two respondents decried the complicated and time consuming referral system.

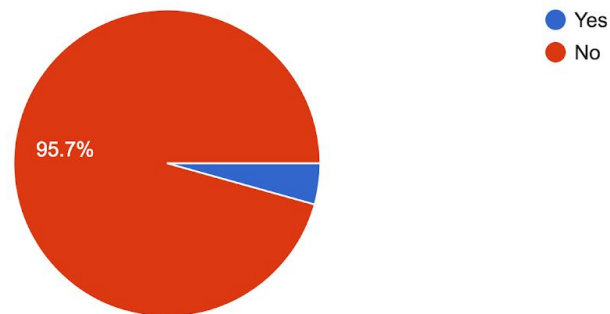
Fourteen students addressed **mental health resources**, six of which asked for a larger in-network providers, two complained about the time it takes to get an appointment, and one complained about the long wait time once at the office. One student requested no copay.

### **Medical Leave**

This is a multiple choice question asking students whether they had ever requested medical leave. Options offered were "yes" or "no"

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

508 responses



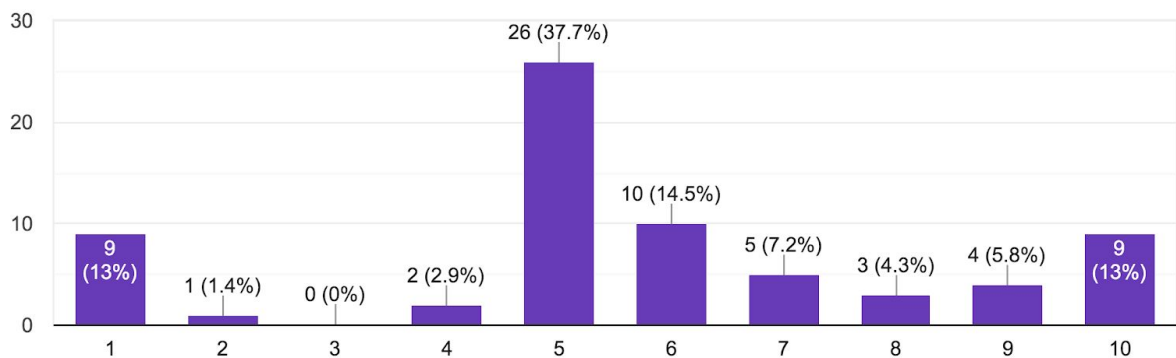
Out of 508 students, 22 (4.3%) had requested medical or personal leave.

### Satisfaction with leave process

This follow up question asked students to rate their satisfaction with the leave request process.

How satisfied were you with the process for requesting leave?

69 responses



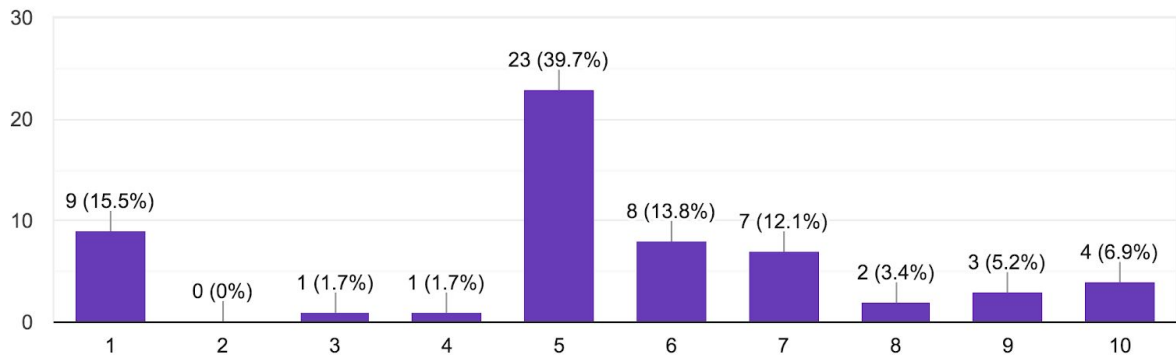
Responses were filtered to include only those who have responded “yes” to the previous question. Out of the 22, the average satisfaction rate is 7.36 and the median is 8.

### Satisfaction with Returning from Leave:



### How satisfied were you with the process of returning from leave?

58 responses



Responses were filtered to include only those who have responded “yes” to requesting medical leave. Out of the 22, the average satisfaction rate is 6.22 and the median is 7.

To the question, “**Do you have any other comments about how Columbia could improve the process of taking personal or medical leave?**” 23 students offered a written response. A few of the respondents did not in fact take a leave, although they express they would have if the policies were more accommodating to their situation.

The operative word was clarity. Students requested **clarity on the process**, particular on how this **affects their finances** and their **degree timelines**, and on extended parental leave. Three students noted that their departments were not accommodating upon their return. One of these students recommended a system of gradual re-entry to accommodate people who are still in recovery. Three students noted they didn’t take a leave because they would lose their housing, although they think the leave was necessary for their well being. One student noted that students on leave should still be able to have access to campus resources, and one that returns from leave be allowed during the summer so that resources can be accessed then. All comments are pasted below:

Dental care should be part of the offered package

Status of progress after return from parental leave should be made more clear. I took a term off after giving birth but am still somehow treated as if I am on the same track as my cohort mates who have never paused in their progress.

Don't make us lose health insurance, have a system for gradual reentry into a program that accommodates the time it takes to recover based on the severity of the illness a person is recovering from.

Make it easier.

I should have taken leave while caring for a parent, but was encouraged not to because the process was understood to be more punitive than helpful.

Make sure department chairs know the policies and can explain them to students.

If you need to take a leave, you lose your Columbia housing, which is why I've never taken a leave (although I probably should have).

We need paid leave that doesn't eliminate our funding.

Make the policies concerning extended Parental leave more clear -- can you take a LOA?

Reinstating the 100-Plan healthcare plan (the Graduate Student Union, I believe, has good proposals in this regard...)

For Ph.D. students, there should be a possibility of returning from leave during the summer. We often do not take courses but we may conduct research as part of our programs during the summer. In this context, we need access to the libraries and to campus resources.

Don't ban people from campus while they're on medical leave. Cutting people off from their support networks when they're already vulnerable is unnecessarily cruel and diminishes the chances of a successful return.

It was difficult to understand how the leave affected my financial standing (the policies were unclear and didn't make sense)

Clear guidelines

There needs to be more understanding of how leave affects you when you return, and that certain other accommodations need to be made, or other requirements postponed.

I almost requested leave, but decided against it because I found out that I would lose my housing. How does Columbia expect someone going through a personal crisis (in my case, the end of a 10-year relationship) to be able to pack up all their belongings and leave the one place - their HOME - that provides a sense of refuge from the chaos? It is absolutely vile that this is the

university's policy. This policy is designed to make students leave and never come back. If it weren't for my advisor, I would likely have dropped out.

I believe the policy only lets you take a leave after your first year for a personal leave. I would have very much liked to take one after my first semester to take more time to think about whether I wanted to be here after having a horrible first semester. I don't quite understand why I wasn't allowed to take one after a semester.

It would have been nice to have someone to talk to about the transition back - most of the professors acted like nothing had happened, and my advisor became irrationally angry with me for not producing an adequate dissertation chapter after an extremely distressing life event. A few months after a death in my family, he told me I would have to leave the program if I didn't produce better work, as he shook with anger. In hindsight, I can see this as incredibly inappropriate and bizarre behavior, but at the time I didn't question it. It would have been nice to have a third party to talk to.

My maternity leave was handled well. No complaints.

### **Section Summary and Remarks**

Only about 40% of respondents believe that Columbia provides adequate resources for physical health, and only 45% that the university provides adequate mental health resources. The majority of respondents are also not satisfied with the appointment system for medical services. In the comments, numerous students expressed how difficult it is to get an appointment through this system, and the lack of choice for time. Once students have an appointment, they rate their experience more positively: wait times are satisfactory, as is the quality of the staff.

On the other hand, the appointment system for CPS satisfies most students. The availability of appointments, wait time and quality of the staff are also well rated. Several commenters however described CPS as “understaffed” and asked for more in-network care providers.

The majority of respondents are not satisfied with Columbia’s insurance policy, and the majority of students do not have access to adequate dental care. In the comments, numerous respondents asked for dental and vision coverage as part of their insurance, and asked for the 100 plan back. Over 45% of respondents do not believe that stress is addressed as an issue by the university. The vast majority of commenters called for improving current resources rather than creating new ones. Some comments also identified stress as a symptom of structural issues and called for departmental solutions, in addition to additional funding, adequate health insurance, and a better gym.

A small portion of students have requested medical or personal leave from the university.

Respondents are generally satisfied with the process of taking a leave, and a bit less so with the

process of returning, expressing in the comments that their department did not adapt to their situations. Some commenters also requested clarity on the process, particular on how taking a leave affects their finances and their degree timelines.

The Quality of Life Committee and the ASGC Executive Board make the following recommendations:

- (1) ASGC and the Health Committee should bring the dissatisfaction with the appointment system to the attention of Columbia Health.
- (2) GSAS should recommend departments to promote departmental level conversations around stress and work life balance

## Disability Services

### §7.2 Who reports disability?

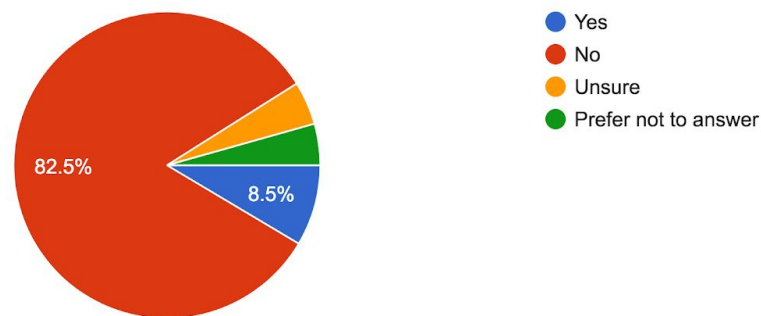
**43 of 504 students (~9%) self-report a disability. A similar number of students said “Unsure” or “Prefer not to answer”. The ratio of self-reported physical versus mental disability is about 1:2 or 1:3.** Of 17 students reporting physical disability, 7 (~40%) also report mental disability.

15 MA and 28 PhD students report disability.\* There are 23 males, 15 females, 4 gender non-conforming, and 1 unknown gender.\*\*

\* Compare to full survey: 180 MA, 362 PhD responses.

\*\* Compare to full survey: 312 female, 203 male, 15 genderqueer/fluid/trans, 12 no response.

In the previous section, all survey takers were asked: **“Do you identify as having a physical or mental disability?”** Results from that question are duplicated below.

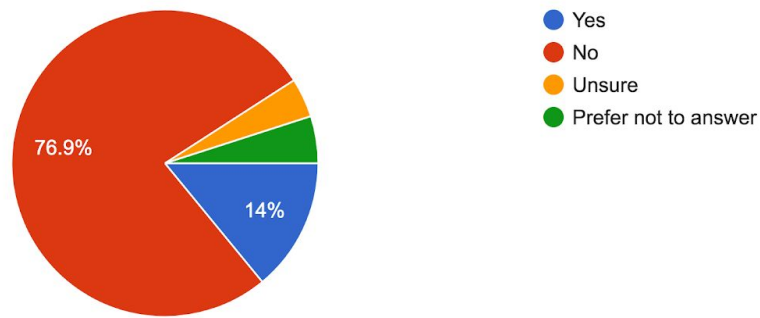


Yes 43 8.5%

Unsure	23	4.6%
Prefer not to answer	22	4.4%
No	416	82.5%
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Total	504	

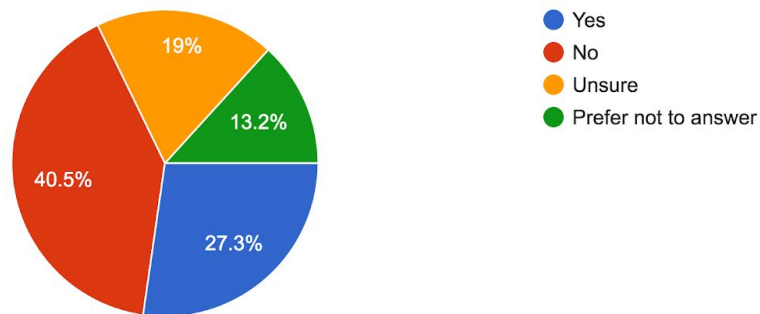
The 416 “No” repliers bypassed Section 7 on disabilities. **The remaining 132 survey takers (including 44 blank answers) were shown all questions about disability and Disability Services.**

**Do you identify as having a physical disability?**



Yes	17	14.0%
No	93	76.9%
Unsure	5	4.1%
Prefer not to answer	6	5.0%
<hr/>		
Total	121	

**Do you identify as having a mental disability?**



Yes	33	27.3%
No	49	40.5%
Unsure	23	19.0%
Prefer not to answer	16	13.2%
<hr/>		
Total	121	

Prefer not to answer	16	13.2%
Total	121	

### §7.3 Effect on work and life?

The following section considers two groups.

**“All responses”**: all 132 students who were shown the disability questions.

**“Disabled only”**: the 43 students who explicitly reported a “physical or mental disability”.

The **“All responses”** group includes students who reported “Unsure” and “Prefer not to answer” for disability; these students gave vital feedback on ODS and their experiences.

**Students are neutral or slightly negative about disclosing their disability to the university or their department** (mean 4.9, median 4, stdev 3.2, N=42)\*. **Of disabled students, 11 of 42 (26%) are “Not at all” comfortable disclosing.**

**7 of 43 (17%) of disabled students have experienced disability-related discrimination at Columbia.** Students who are “Unsure” or “Prefer not to answer” for disability are also more unsure about whether they have experienced disability-related discrimination.

**Students’ disabilities affect their research and graduate duties to varying extents;** the data do not seem to cluster at extrema. For research, the mean score is 5.44 (median 6, stdev 2.9)\*\*; for teaching and other duties, the mean score is 5.2 (median 5, stdev 3.0)\*\*.

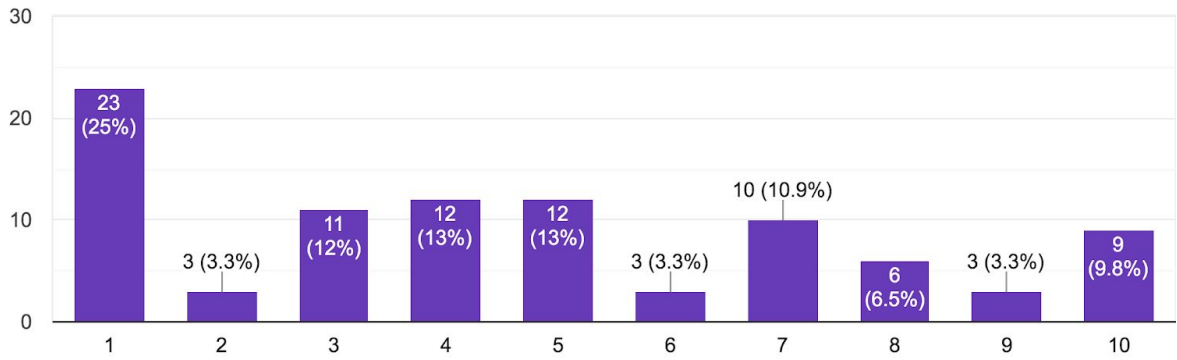
\* On a 1-10 scale where 1 = “Not at all”, 10 = “Very”.

\* On a 1-10 scale where 1 = “Not at all”, 10 = “Very much”.

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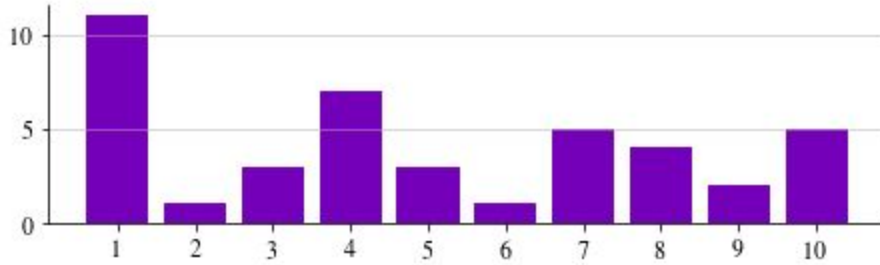
**Do you feel comfortable informing the university/your department of your disability without fear of discrimination? (1 = Not at all, 10 = Very)**

All responses:



1 to 3 (Not at all)	37	40.2%
4 to 7	37	40.2%
8 to 10 (Very)	18	19.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>92</b>	

Disabled only:

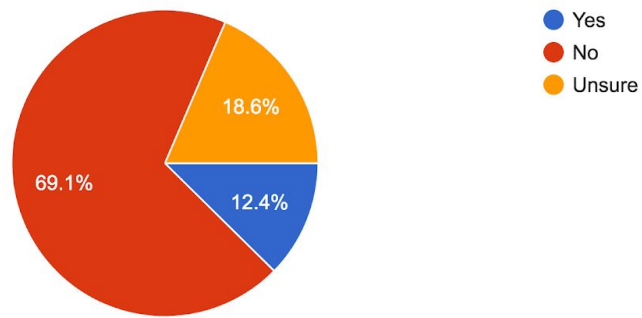


1 to 3 (Not at all)	15	35.7%
4 to 7	16	38.1%
8 to 10 (Very)	11	26.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	

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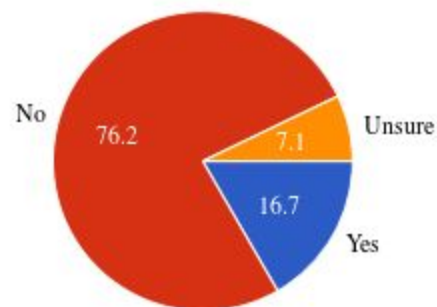
**Have you had any experiences with discrimination based on your disability at Columbia?**

All responses:



Yes	12	12.4%
No	67	69.1%
Unsure	18	18.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	

Disabled only:



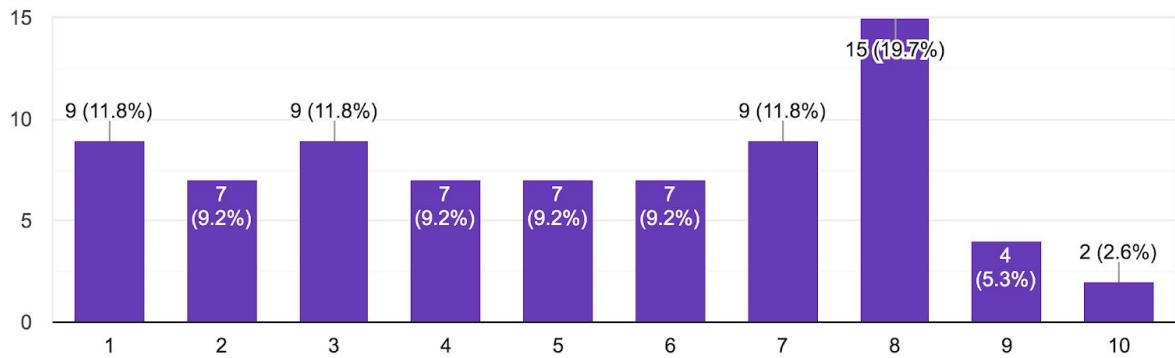
Yes	7	16.7%
No	32	76.2%
Unsure	3	7.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	

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**To what extent does your disability affect your *research*? (1 = Not at all, 10 = Very much)**

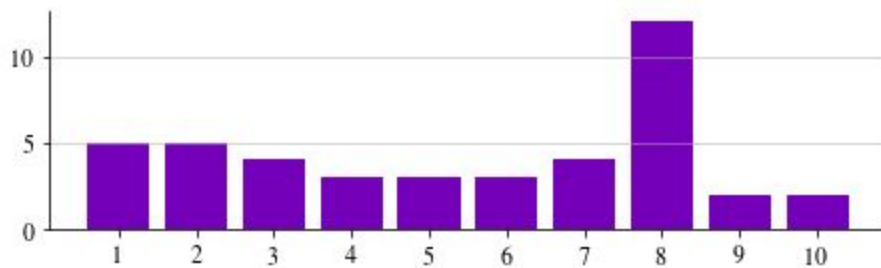
All responses:





1 to 3 (Not at all)	25	32.9%
4 to 7	30	39.5%
8 to 10 (Very much)	21	27.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	

Disabled only:

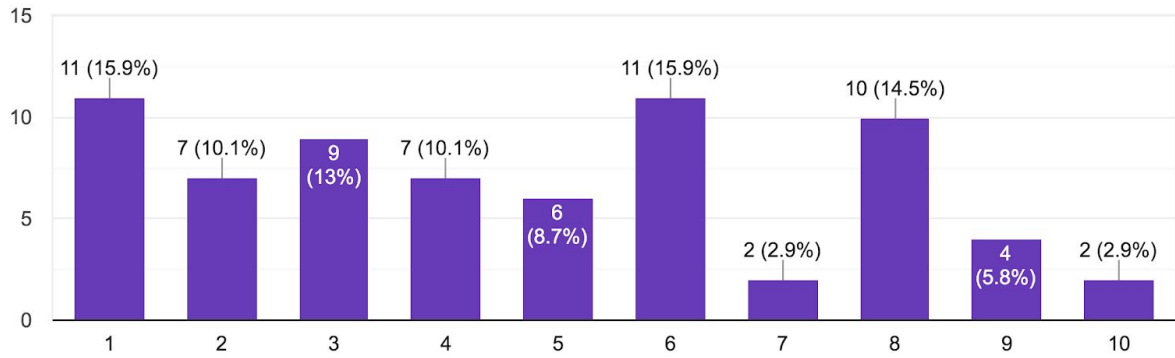


1 to 3 (Not at all)	14	32.6%
4 to 7	13	30.2%
8 to 10 (Very much)	16	37.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	

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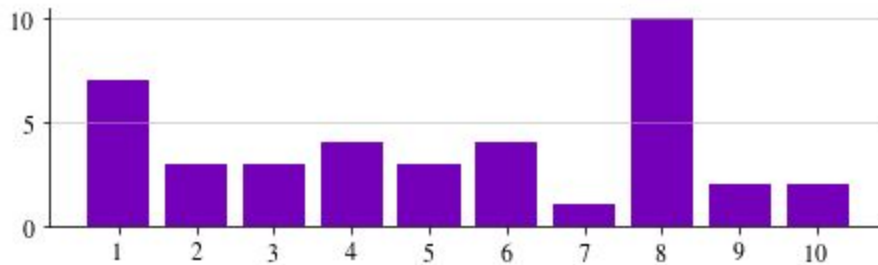
**To what extent does your disability affect your *teaching and other non-research responsibilities*? (1 = Not at all, 10 = Very much)**

All responses:



1 to 3 (Not at all)	27	39.1%
4 to 7	26	37.7%
8 to 10 (Very much)	16	23.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	

Disabled only:



1 to 3 (Not at all)	13	33.3%
4 to 7	12	30.8%
8 to 10 (Very much)	14	35.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	

#### §7.4 Violence, Discrimination, Harassment

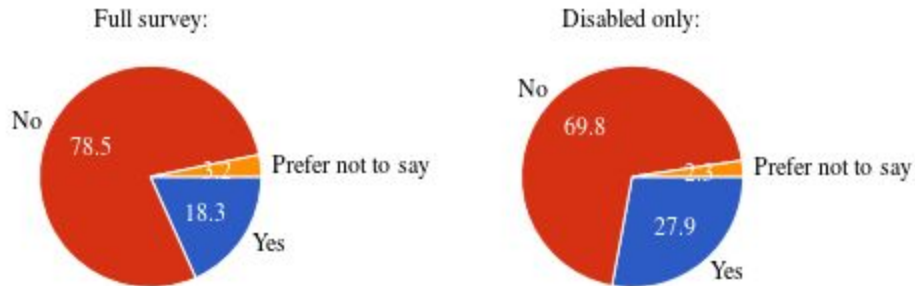
**Disabled students appear more likely to report experiencing or being affected by violence, discrimination, and/or harassment (28% +/- 7%)\* compared to the full survey population (18% +/- 2%)\*. Of those affected, a higher proportion of disabled students report being directly affected (59% +/- 12%)\*\* versus the full survey population (38% +/- 4%)\*\*.**

Below, the group “Disabled only” is defined in §7.3 of this report.

\* Uncertainties are  $\sqrt{\text{variance}}$  of binomial distribution with  $p=0.28$ ,  $p=0.18$  for disabled students and full survey population respectively.

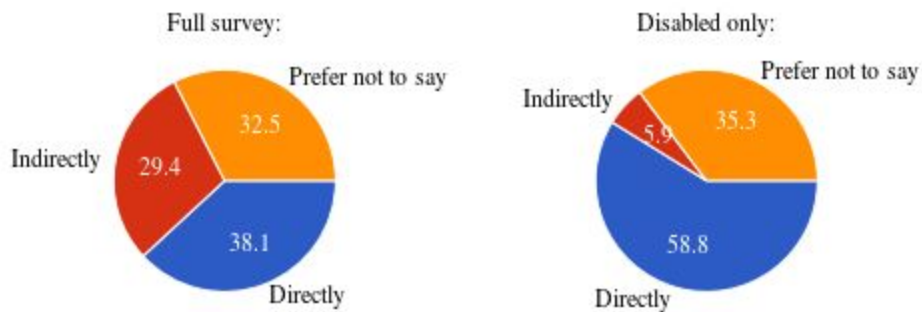
\*\* Uncertainties are  $\sqrt{\text{variance}}$  of binomial distribution with  $p=0.59$ ,  $p=0.38$  for disabled students and full survey population respectively.

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



	Full survey		Disabled only	
Yes	98	18.3%	12	27.9%
No	421	78.5%	30	69.8%
Prefer not to say	17	3.2%	1	2.3%
Total	536		43	

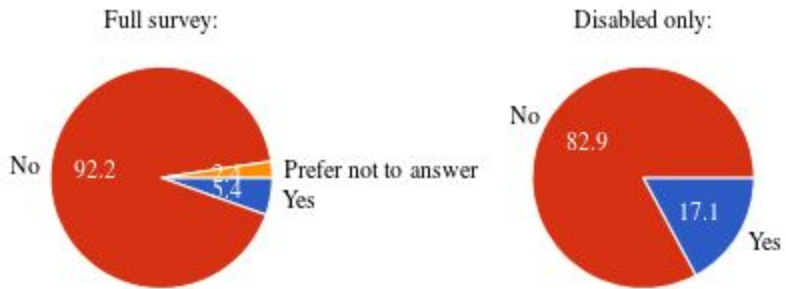
**If you responded yes to the previous question, have you been affected directly or indirectly by violence, discrimination and/or harassment?**



	Full survey		Disabled only	
Directly	61	38.1%	10	58.8%
Indirectly	47	29.4%	6	5.9%

Prefer not to say	52	32.5%	1	35.3%
Total	160		17	

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



	Full survey		Disabled only	
Yes	23	5.4%	6	17.1%
No	391	92.2%	29	82.9%
Prefer not to answer	10	2.4%	0	
Total	424		35	

§7.5 Are needs met?

**About half (20 of 43) of students with self-reported disability do seek assistance from ODS.**

**Students’ experiences with support from ODS and their home departments are mixed.**

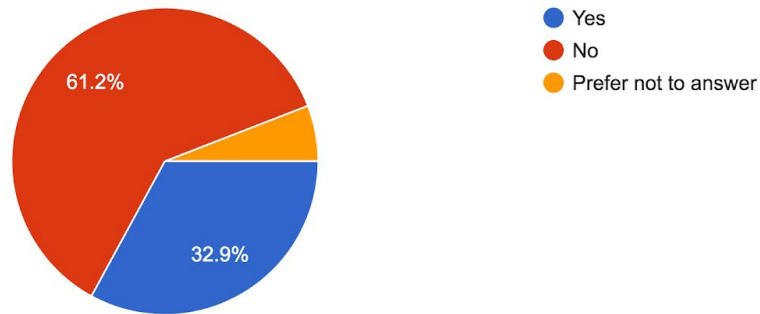
Those who use ODS, regardless of self-reported disability (in this survey), report mean satisfaction of 5.4 (median 6, stdev 3.2)\*. For their home departments, students’ mean satisfaction is 5.5 (median 7, stdev 3.2)\*.

Below, the groups “All responses” and “Disabled only” are defined in §7.3 of this report.

\* On a 1-10 scale where 1 = “Not at all [satisfied]”, 10 = “Very [satisfied]”.

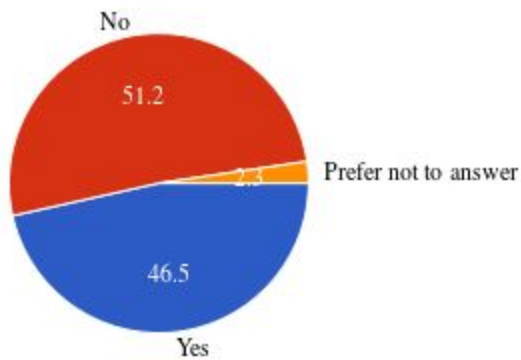
**Have you sought assistance from the Office of Disabilities Services?**

All responses:



Yes	28	32.9%
No	52	61.2%
Prefer not to answer	5	5.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	

Disabled only:

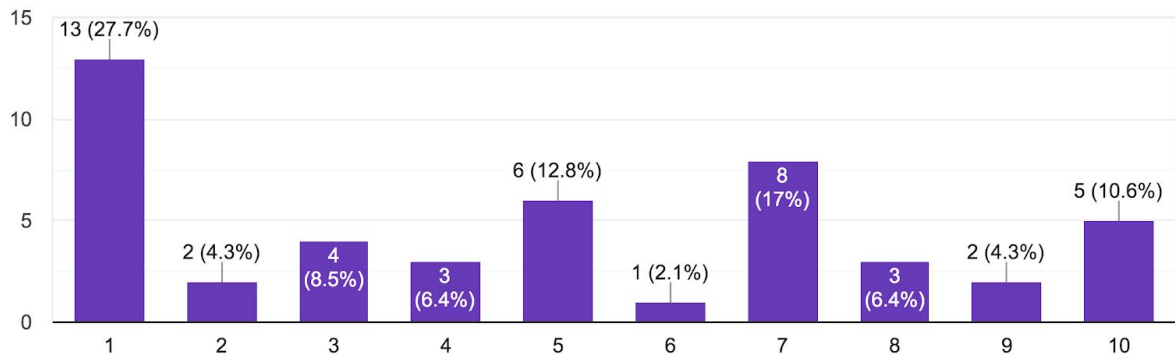


Yes	20	46.5%
No	22	51.2%
Prefer not to answer	1	2.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	

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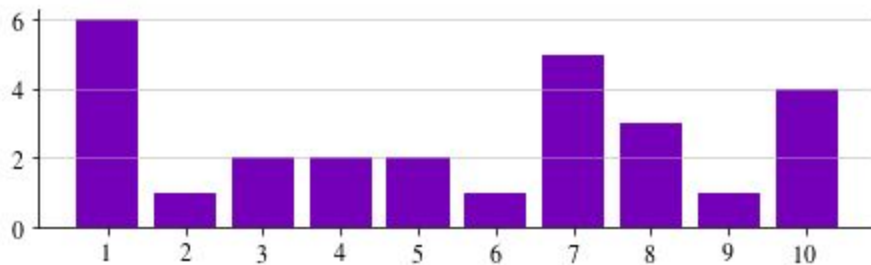
**How satisfied are you with the services offered by the Office of Disabilities? (1 = Not at all, 10 = Very)**

All responses:



1 to 3 (Not at all)	19	40.4%
4 to 7	18	38.3%
8 to 10 (Very)	10	21.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	

All those who replied “Yes” to “Have you ever sought assistance from [ODS]”, whether or not they self-reported disability:

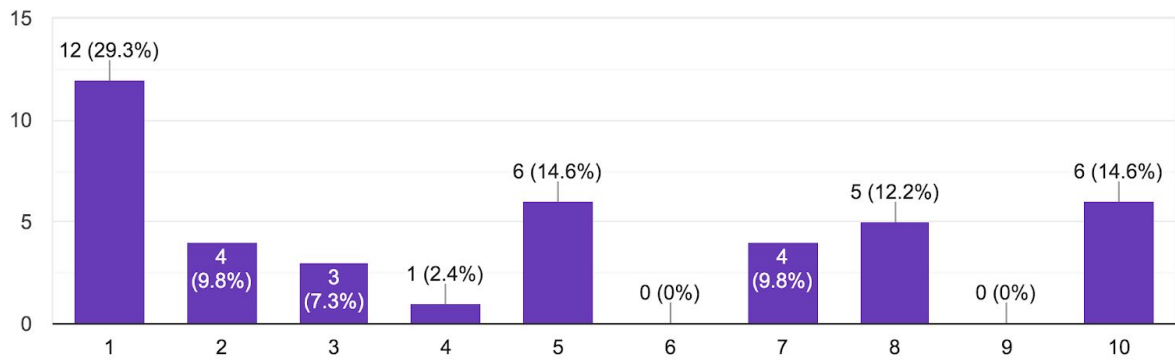


1 to 3 (Not at all)	9	33.3%
4 to 7	10	37.0%
8 to 10 (Very)	8	29.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	

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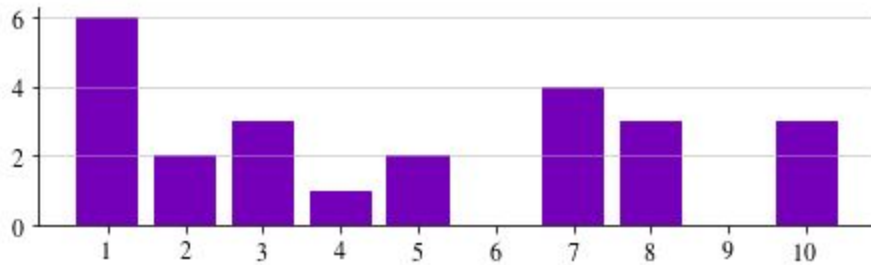
**Do you feel that the accommodations offered by the Office of Disabilities cater to the specific needs of graduate students? (1 = Not at all, 10 = Very much)**

All responses:



1 to 3 (Not at all)	19	46.3%
4 to 7	11	26.8%
8 to 10 (Very much)	11	26.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>	

All those who replied “Yes” to “Have you ever sought assistance from [ODS]”, whether or not they self-reported disability:

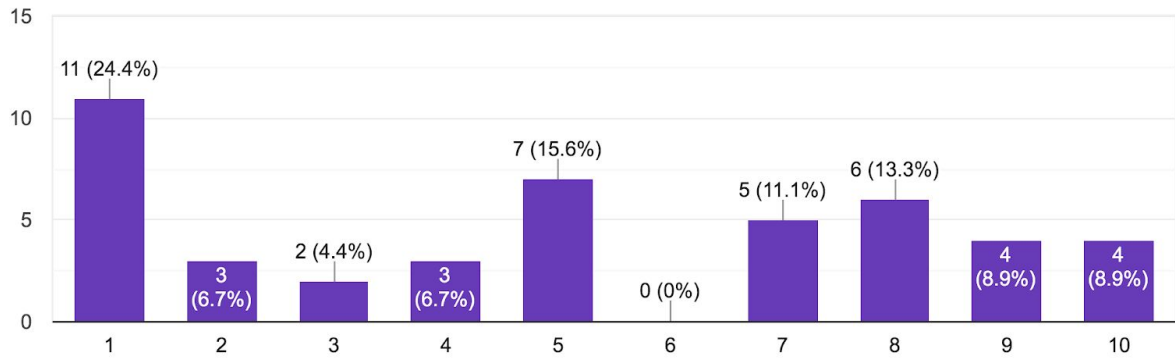


1 to 3 (Not at all)	11	45.8%
4 to 7	7	29.2%
8 to 10 (Very much)	6	25.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	

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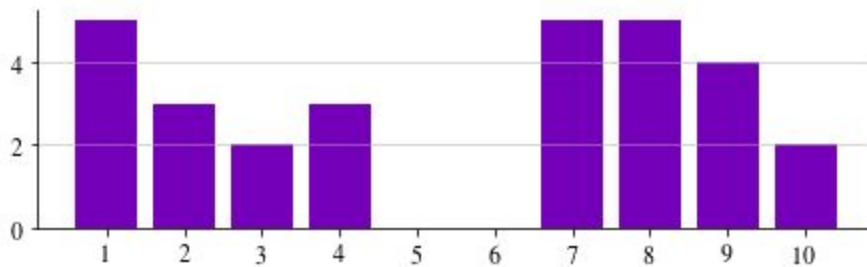
**How satisfied are you with the support and respect for necessary accommodations in your home department? (1 = Not at all, 10 = Very)**

All responses:



1 to 3 (Not at all)	16	35.6%
4 to 7	15	33.3%
8 to 10 (Very)	14	31.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	

Disabled only:



1 to 3 (Not at all)	10	34.5%
4 to 7	8	27.6%
8 to 10 (Very)	11	37.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	

#### §7.6 Students' comments

20 responses received. 17 printed below; 2 were "N/A" and "No"; 1 was negative and not-constructive. **Half of the comments criticized the Office of Disability Services (ODS) specifically.**

**Prompt: Do you have any other comments regarding accommodations for disabilities at Columbia?**



## §7.6.1 Disability Services (9)

*The disability office is a total joke. They offer no services and they don't help communicate with either GSAS or the home department. They just waste your time taking down your story and taking notes and then doing nothing. Useless.*

---

*I gave up on the process of trying to get accommodations through Disability Services because the accommodations don't feel applicable for me as a grad student.*

---

*Fairly focused towards undergraduates and classes, not always relevant to the experience of graduate student. The disability services is not suitable for issues of accessibility to on-campus locations and resources. I work primarily at Lamont and find the campus very inaccessible and have been unable to get support from the university or Disability Services.*

---

*Having dealt with ODS both as a student and an instructor, I have found them to be unhelpful in the first case, and plainly hostile in the latter. When I sought support for my own disability, they basically said they were sorry I was struggling and wished me all best; fortunately, my department is supportive, and I have since received medical care that greatly alleviated the symptoms that affected my work. Last year, I had a student in my class who reported being on the autism spectrum, and needed support. However, he did not ask for any accommodations that were beyond what I would reasonably offer to someone who was simply shy, just for the sake of the class running smoothly. I did not press him for official documentation, seeing as whether he files for accommodations formally is really not my business (not in the least because I personally sympathize with students who don't want to set foot into ODS's offices). However, at the end of the semester, I realized I could have done a better job supporting him. I sought advice from ODS as to how to act better if I have a student with a similar condition in the classroom in the future. I was berated on the phone for 10 minutes for not bringing it to them sooner and not pushing him to put me in touch with them directly. Despite my requests that our conversation be kept confidential, they put it on my student's record and said they would talk to him about his problematic behavior. I felt like I violated his trust, and in addition was made to feel like an utter villain simply for trying to extend support to someone who needed it. I avoid any dealings with the ODS unless absolutely inevitable.*

---

*We should not have to pay for any evaluations to qualify for disability services.*

---

*The ODS has consistently been failing to meet simple needs and I often have to go around them and fulfill my request myself. How is it so difficult to buy a desk that does not have a chair attached to it, wide enough for a wheelchair? It took them until October to get something sub par*

*when I informed them of my needs in April. If I request to have automatic door buttons, they do not believe me at face value that I truly need access to that room and instead will go to my advisor to ask if I need it, as if I am a child. There is too much bureaucracy that barely anything gets done and when it does, it takes months to happen, which is a ridiculous amount of time to wait, especially if it impedes on my work.*

---

*The Morningside campus is inexcusably inaccessible, and ODS doesn't provide for the needs of graduate students, for whom things like "more time on exams" are largely irrelevant. What we need as grad students is advocacy and mediation of dealings with potentially unsupportive advisors.*

---

*I had to jump through an inordinate amount of hurdles to get my accommodations recognized by the University. Disability Services seems to operate as if they are attempting to screen out individuals with disabilities so that they do not have to deal with the real problems that students face. Yet, as a student you have to be overly accommodating to them for fear that they might not process your information. I have not felt respected.*

---

*While I have not reached out to the office of disability services I had some contact with them/familiar with their services and attitudes to disability through friends and the students I taught. I have found them to have a very narrow understanding of mental disability and ill equipped to handle the complexities of Mental Health/Illness of students. All in all, it seems that the university prefers that students who are experiencing mental health challenges either take a leave of absence or drop out. The people who I know that had mental health issues and were able to stay in Columbia did it IN SPITE of the university/disability office, and definitely not with their help.*

---

#### §7.6.2 Department culture (4)

*I've always been too afraid to officially register my disability (it's neurological and non-visible so nobody will know I have it if I don't tell them) because of horror stories about backlash from faculty and others in my department. Lots of stories about students with disabilities not being offered the same opportunities as non-disabled students (research posts, etc.) because faculty feel that disabled students can't handle the workload in the same way that non-disabled students can*

---

*The professors don't seem very respectful of disability accommodations. For example, I get time and a half for exams. My professor made plans for me to take the exam in her office- and then held meetings while I was taking an exam in her office. My disability deals with problems with attention, so this probably made me perform even worse than if I didn't get the extra time. In*

*general, I do not ask ODS to reveal my disability status to my professors because I am worried that they would judge me.*

---

*I have never felt comfortable disclosing my disability to Columbia or the department. This is in part because the (now former) administrator at the time would routinely shout out students' and faculty's personal and confidential information across the department for everyone to hear. There are also certain faculty members who have made disparaging comments generally that have resulted in my discomfort in sharing anything.*

---

*Faculty should not have the right to challenge disabled students on their accommodations*

#### §7.6.3 Miscellany (4)

*I think Columbia could do a better job of using principles of universal design for learning to make courses more accessible for students even if they do not have an accommodation. For example, having scanners that ensure that PDFs have OCR and requiring that all readings posted to Canvas meet this standard would help students access this material even when they are waiting on their accommodations (a situation that happened when I was a TA; my student had to wait a month before being able to have PDFs that his reader could read). Other simple and effective standards of accessibility could be put in place, such as mandating that videos screened have subtitles. I don't think instructors do a good enough job of making materials accessible to students. There should be training on this matter.*

---

*Why did you get rid of the best healthcare option for students with disabilities?*

---

*apart of the housing problem.*

---

*I have no good suggestion but there is no way one can be accommodated in Hamilton. People need to wait 20 minutes to get on an elevator. That building is too busy*

#### Summary and recommendations

**About 9% of students (43 of 504) self-report a disability.** A similar number of students said “Unsure” or “Prefer not to answer”.

**Of the 43 disabled students:**

**7 (~17%) report experiencing disability-related discrimination at Columbia, and 12 (28%) report experiencing violence, discrimination, and/or harassment at Columbia.**

Disabled students appear to experience violence, discrimination, and/or harassment at a higher rate than the general survey population.

**About half (20 of 43) disabled students have sought assistance from ODS.** Their satisfaction is neutral on average, with both not-at-all satisfied and very satisfied responses.

**Recommendation: bring some student complaints to ODS.**

*“I sought advice from ODS as to how to act better if I have a student with a similar condition in the classroom in the future. I was berated on the phone for 10 minutes for not bringing it to them sooner and not pushing him to put me in touch with them directly. Despite my requests that our conversation be kept confidential, they put it on my student's record and said they would talk to him about his problematic behavior.”*

*“The ODS has consistently been failing to meet simple needs and I often have to go around them and fulfill my request myself. . . . It took [ODS] until October to get [a] sub par [wheelchair-accessible desk] when I informed them of my needs in April. If I request to have automatic door buttons, they do not believe me at face value that I truly need access to that room and instead will go to my advisor to ask if I need it, as if I am a child.”*

**Recommendation: work with departments to foster an inclusive, respectful culture that supports students with known or private disability. Some departments lack this.**

*“I've always been too afraid to officially register my disability (it's neurological and non-visible so nobody will know I have it if I don't tell them) because of horror stories about backlash from faculty and others in my department.”*

*“I have never felt comfortable disclosing my disability to Columbia or the department. This is in part because the (now former) administrator at the time would routinely shout out students' and faculty's personal and confidential information across the department for everyone to hear. There are also certain faculty members who have made disparaging comments generally that have resulted in my discomfort in sharing anything.”*

*“When I sought support for my own disability, [ODS] basically said they were sorry I was struggling and wished me all best; fortunately, my department is supportive, and I have since received medical care”*

## Diversity and Inclusion

### Section Overview

The 2020 Quality of Life Survey will be the second annual survey to include a Diversity and Inclusion section. Changes include removal of items related to the 2019 Report on Faculty Diversity and slight grammatical adjustments. Axes are no longer truncated.

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.

Our committee also recognizes that collecting demographic data is an essential step in advocating on behalf of marginalized and underrepresented groups on campus. To that end, 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 multi-racial 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.

To what extent do you feel that Columbia is committed to diversity and inclusion at the (a) student level and (b) faculty level?

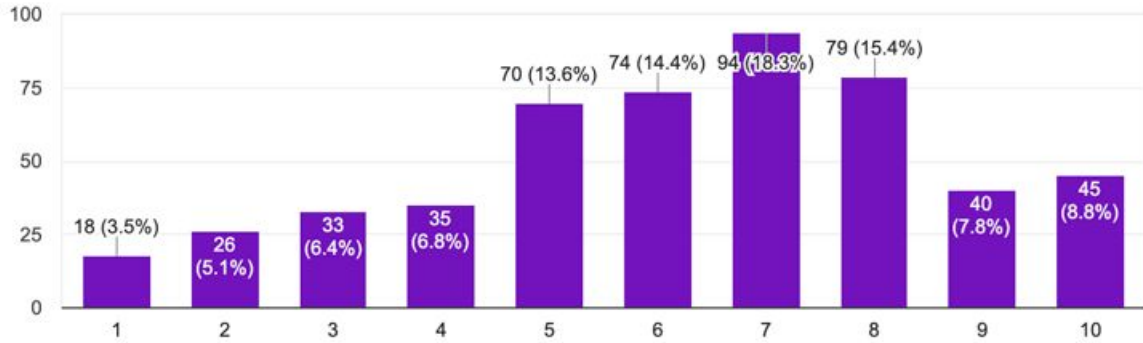
This multiple choice question was presented as two separate items. In either case, students responded on a scale of 1 (Not at all) to 10 (Very much so).

### Student Level

Respondents perceived Columbia as being moderately committed to diversity and inclusion at the student level, with the 48.1% of participants reporting between 6-8 (out of 10). Less than 25% of students responded with 4 or lower, with 3.5% reporting that they do not feel Columbia is committed to student diversity and inclusion at all.

To what extent do you feel that Columbia is committed to diversity and inclusion at the student level?

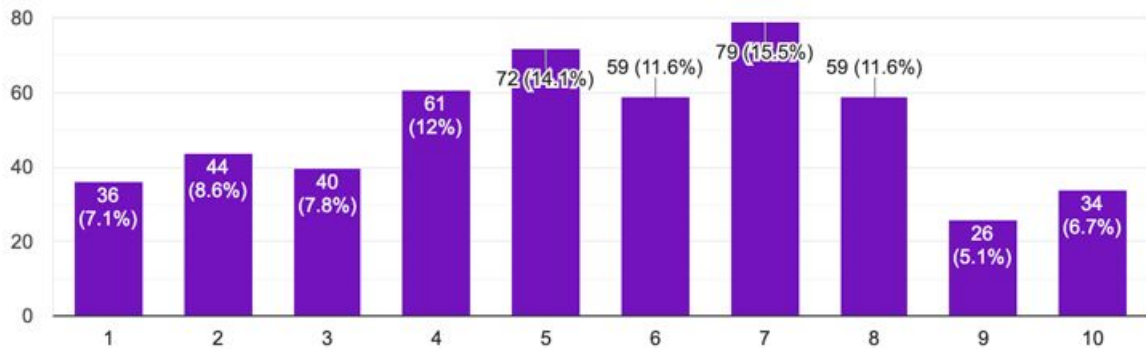
514 responses



## Faculty Level

To what extent do you feel that Columbia is committed to diversity and inclusion at the faculty level?

510 responses

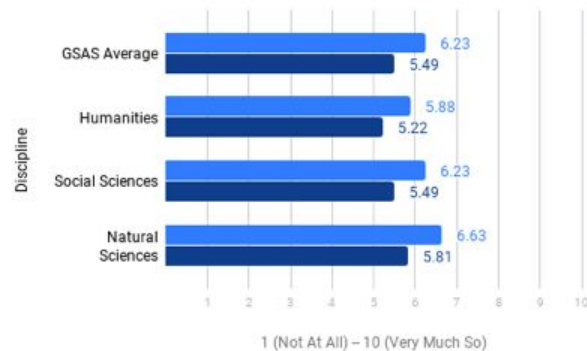


Approximately half of participants responded with a 6 or greater, suggesting that respondents perceived Columbia as being somewhat committed to faculty diversity and inclusion. On either extreme, 7.1% of participants responded with a 1 (not at all); 6.7% responded with a 10 (a great deal).

## Overall and Discipline-Specific Averages

### To What Extent Is Columbia Committed to Diversity and Incl

N ~ 510



On average, when asked whether they feel Columbia is committed to student- and faculty-level diversity and inclusion, GSAS students responded with ratings of 6.23 and 5.49, 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: 5.88; Faculty: 5.22), Social Sciences (Student: 6.23; Faculty: 5.49), and Natural Sciences (Student: 6.63; Faculty: 5.81). 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

There was a statistically significant difference between Black/African-American or non-White Hispanic/Latinx (Mean: 4.76, SD: 0.38) and Asian/American (Mean: 6.90, SD: 0.25), White (Mean: 6.20, SD: 0.14), or multi-racial (Mean: 6.00, SD: 0.44) respondents' confidence in Columbia's dedication to diversity and inclusion. Respondents who identified as Black/African-American or non-Hispanic/Latinx were least confident in Columbia's commitment, on average ( $p < .05$ ). Asian/Asian-American participants were most confident ( $p < .05$ ).

In terms of faculty-level diversity and inclusion, Black/Latinx respondents (Mean: 3.93, SD: 0.41) were least confident in Columbia's commitment to faculty diversity and inclusion, on average ( $p < .05$ ). Between multi-racial respondents (Mean: 5.24, SD: 0.48), Asian respondents (Mean: 6.35, SD: 0.26), and White respondents (Mean: 5.25, SD: 0.15), Asian/Asian-American respondents were most confident in Columbia, on average ( $p < .05$ ).

Reporting by gender, women (Mean: 5.97, SD: 0.21) were less likely than men (Mean: 6.77, SD: 0.17) to feel that Columbia was committed to student-level diversity and inclusion ( $p < .05$ ). In

terms of faculty-level diversity and inclusion, women (Mean: 5.20, SD: 0.23) were statistically less likely than men (Mean: 6.09, SD: 0.18) to feel that Columbia was committed ( $p < .05$ ). Due to limited sample size, statistical differences did not arise for GQNBNC respondents.

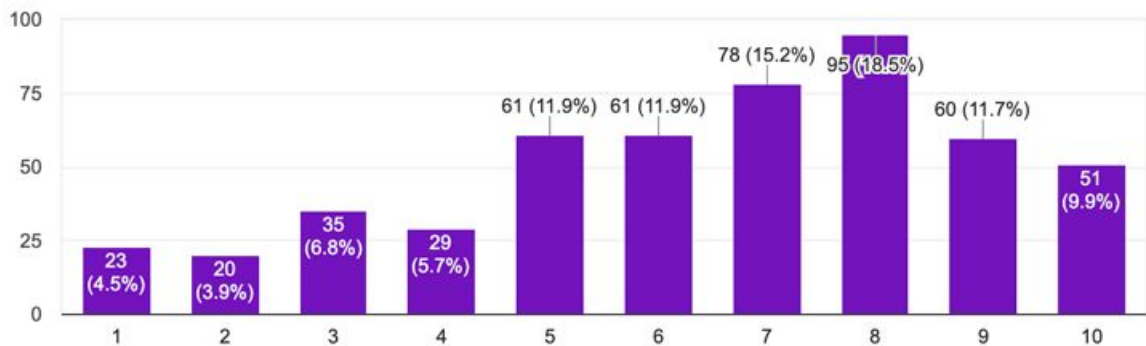
To what extent do you feel that your department is committed to diversity and inclusion at the (a) student level and (b) faculty level?

This multiple choice question was presented as two separate items. In either case, students responded on a scale of 1 (Not at all) to 10 (Very much so).

### Student Level

To what extent do you feel that your department is committed to diversity and inclusion at the student level?

513 responses



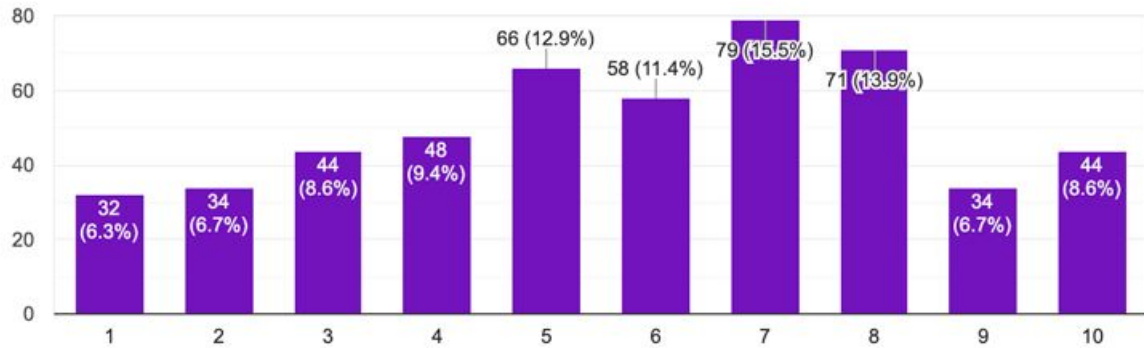
Respondents perceived their departments as being moderately committed to diversity and inclusion at the student level, with the 57.3% of participants reporting between 6-9 (out of 10). Less than 25% of students responded with 4 or lower, with 5.5% reporting that they do not feel their department is committed to diversity and inclusion at all.

### Faculty Level



To what extent do you feel that your department is committed to diversity and inclusion at the faculty level?

510 responses

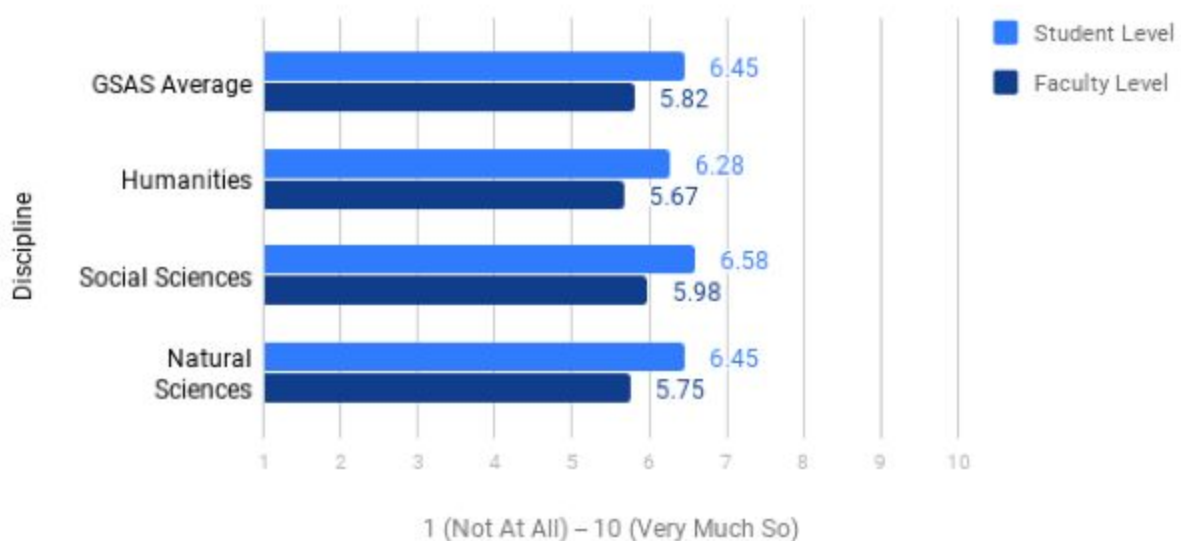


Respondents perceived their departments as moderately committed to faculty diversity and inclusion – 40.8% reported between 6-8 (out of 10), with 10 suggesting their departments are very committed. On either extreme, 6.3% of participants responded with a 1 (not at all); 8.6% responded with a 10 (a great deal).

#### Overall and Discipline-Specific Averages

### To What Extent Is Your Department Committed to Diversity and Inclusion?

N ~ 510



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 6.45 and 5.82, 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: 6.28 ; Faculty: 5.67), Social Sciences (Student: 6.58; Faculty: 5.98), and Natural Sciences (Student: 6.45; Faculty: 5.75). In raw averages, respondents from the Social Sciences expressed the most confidence in their departments' commitment to diversity and inclusion at either a student or faculty level. Respondents from the Humanities were least confident in their department's commitment to diversity.

### A Note on Identity

Statistically significant differences emerged between Black/Latinx (Mean: 5.29, SD: 0.41) and both White (Mean: 6.40, SD: 0.15) and Asian (Mean: 6.92, SD: 0.26) 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: 6.97, SD: 0.47), White, and Asian respondents did not statistically differ (in all cases,  $p > .05$ ).

Black/Latinx respondents (Mean: 4.55, SD: 0.42) were statistically less confident in their department's commitment to faculty diversity and inclusion, as compared to Asian (Mean: 6.49, SD: 0.27) respondents ( $p < 0.5$ ). Black/Latinx respondents' results did not statistically significantly differ from that of multi-racial (Mean: 5.89, SD: 0.48) or White (Mean: 5.72, SD: 0.16) respondents.

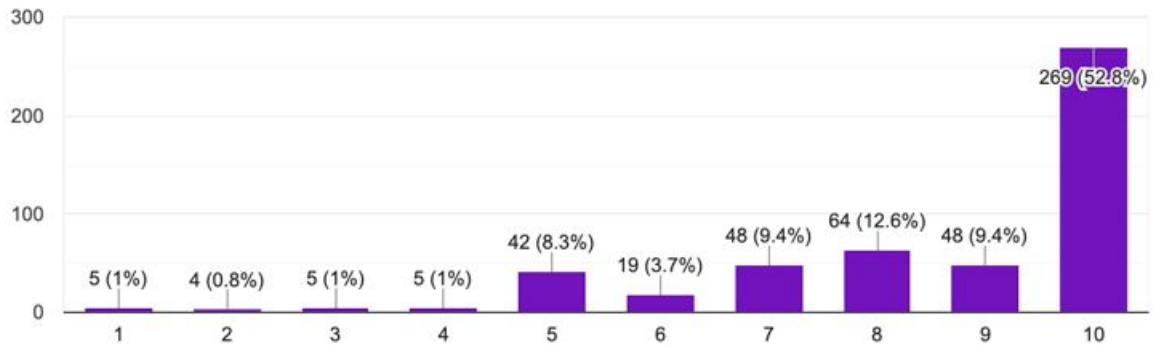
By gender, women were less confident in their departments' commitment to both faculty (Mean: 5.54, SD: 0.24) and student (Mean: 6.21, SD: 0.22) diversity and inclusion, as compared to men (means: 6.39/7.03, SDs: 0.19 /0.18, respectively) ( $p = 0$ ). GQNBNC respondents (Mean: 4.33, SD: 0.82) did not statistically significantly differ from female-identifying respondents.

### To what extent do you support efforts towards increasing diversity and inclusion on both the student and faculty level at Columbia?

In a single item, students reported the extent to which they supported 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).

To what extent do you support efforts towards increasing diversity and inclusion on both the student and faculty level at Columbia?

509 responses

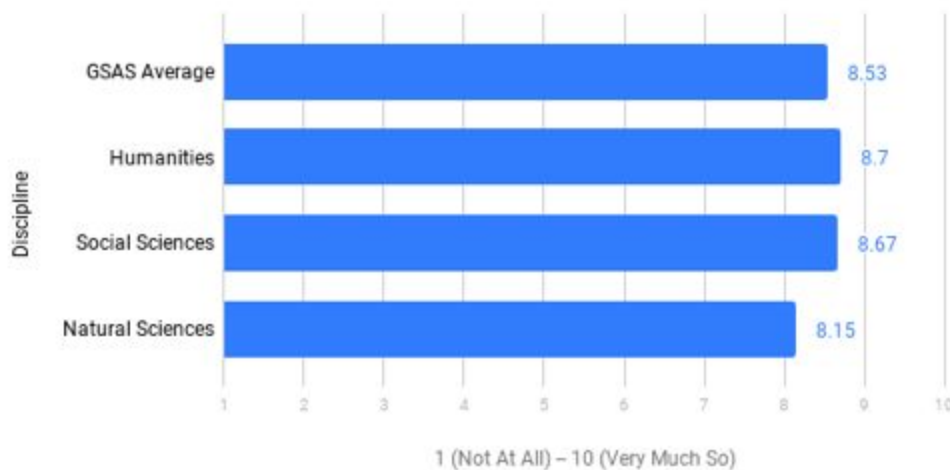


The majority of respondents reported supporting efforts towards increasing diversity and inclusion at a student and faculty level: 52.8% responded with a strong 10, with 12.6% and 9.4% responding with an 8 or 9, respectively. 3.8% of students chose a 4 or lower in their support for these efforts, with 1% of students reporting that they do not support diversity and inclusion efforts at all.

### Overall and Discipline-Specific Averages

#### Students' Support for Diversity and Inclusion Efforts

N = 509



On average, respondents responded with moderate-to-strong support for diversity and inclusion efforts (Mean: 8.53). Discipline specific averages: Humanities (8.7), Natural Sciences (8.67), and Social Sciences (8.15).

### A Note on Identity

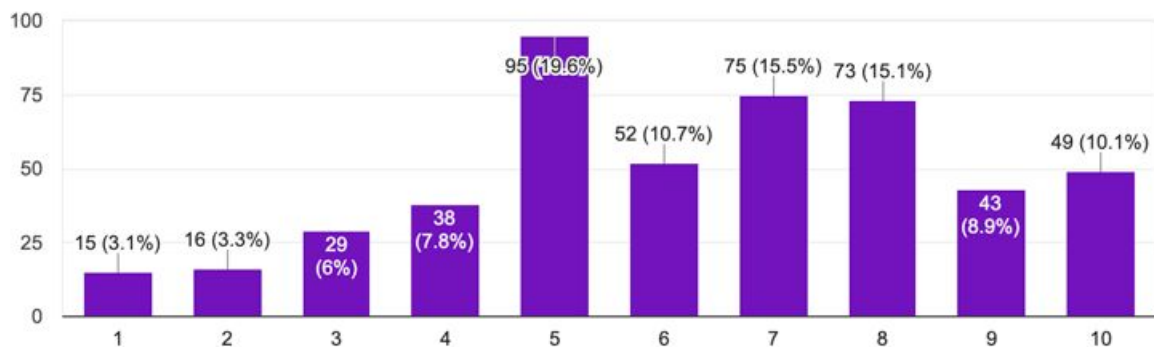
There were no statistically significant racial differences in respondents' support for diversity and inclusion efforts. There were, however, statistically significant gender differences, such that women (Mean: 8.87, SD: 0.18) as compared to men (Mean: 8.10, SD: 0.14) expressed greater support for diversity and inclusion efforts ( $p = 0$ ).

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

This multiple choice question was presented as two separate items. In either case, students responded on a scale of 1 (Very Low) to 10 (Very High).

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

485 responses

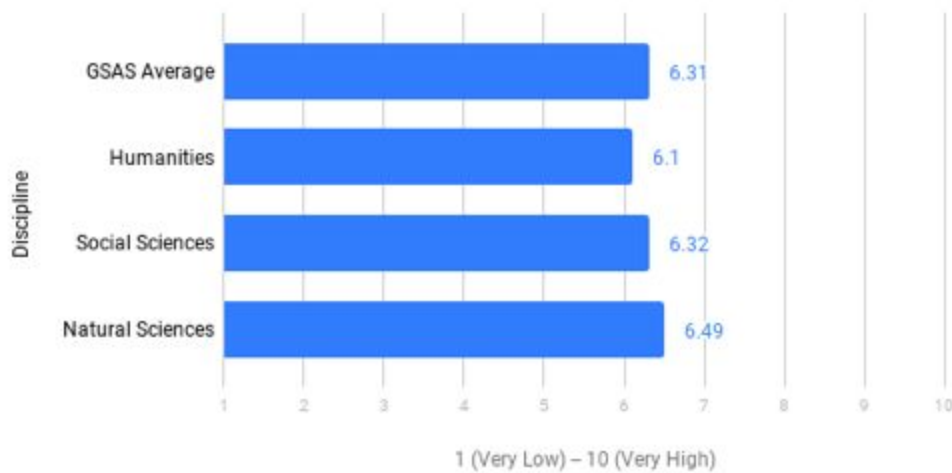


In ranking Columbia alongside its peer institutions in terms of its commitment to diversity and inclusion, the majority of respondents gave Columbia a ranking of 5 (19.6%), 7 (15.5%), or 8 (15.1%), a fairly moderate peer ranking. 20.2% of respondents ranked Columbia with a 4 or lower, with 3.1% ranking Columbia with the lowest possible score.

### Overall and Discipline-Specific Averages

## Comparison to Peer Institutions

N = 485



In comparing Columbia to its peer institutions in terms of its commitment to diversity and inclusion, respondents ranked Columbia a 6.31, on average. Out of the Natural Sciences (6.49), Social Sciences (6.32), and Humanities (6.1), Natural Sciences rated Columbia the highest.

### A Note on Identity

Compared to Black/Latinx respondents (Mean: 5.49, SD: 0.40), Asian respondents assigned Columbia the highest comparative ranking, on average ( $p < .05$ ). Multi-racial respondents (Mean: 6.14, SD: 0.46), White (Mean: 6.18, SD: 0.15), and Asian respondents did not significantly differ from one another, statistically. Men (Mean: 6.69, SD: 0.17) ranked Columbia higher than women (Mean: 6.31, SD: 0.22), on average ( $p = 0.5$ ).

### Do you think efforts undertaken by the administration on diversity and inclusion are moving in the right direction?

There were a total of 170 responses to this open-ended question. Sample responses are grouped thematically.

Affirmative responses generally included messages of support for current diversity efforts and/or campus diversity:

*Yes, I like the establishing of the University Life Office.*

*I think theyre fine, I am really impressed with the diversity of background, thought, identity here at Columbia. It provides great atmosphere to discussions.*

*From what I have seen, yes. I very much appreciate that Columbia has an active initiative to increase diversity of the faculty. I also think the Provost Diversity Fellows program, aimed at increase diversity of graduate students and thus increased diversity of faculty down the road, is a great program and if anything should be expanded.*

Negative responses either centered on disagreement with diversity and inclusion efforts, such as in these excerpts...:

*No. It's all based on a warped understanding of identity. What about our identities as scholars? What about class? what about disability? Diversity and inclusion, words I've come to hate because of how stupidly they are employed here and elsewhere, are deeply important and the conceptual laziness around these terms does more harm than good.*

*Too much diversity is also a thing. There are hardly any American graduate students at Columbia these days*

*I don't think we should prioritize diversity over ability. I don't see the point of hiring a not so good minority instead of hiring the good sufficient majority. Even though I'm a minority*

...Or negative responses focused on disappointment and concern over the efficacy of Columbia's current efforts, such as in these excerpts:

*No. Columbia consistently denies tenure for our faculty of color and only our white faculty get tenure.*

*I think the Office of Academic Diversity and Inclusion does a great job, but the administration as a whole is not moving in the right direction.*

*Not at all -- too little real effort; Columbia supports diversity in name, so long as it comes at absolutely no cost to the university or established racial, gendered, and class hierarchies (so in short: it doesn't support diversity).*

There were also respondents who were less certain in their attitudes:

*This is a difficult question to answer because of the coupling of "diversity" and "inclusion." Objectively, my department's grad cohorts (and, very very slowly, its faculty) are becoming more diverse--cohorts are substantially less white and cisgendered than they were even when I started here. But I haven't seen meaningful efforts at "inclusion," which would involve another level of*

*effort to address the unique challenges that BIPOC students, queer students, etc. face. So the answer is sort of "yes and no."*

*I don't know what those efforts are. I do know that the university's reaction to the coronavirus situation has contained a lot of coded racism towards Chinese students, which is not okay.*

*Who knows? What are these efforts? There is a taskforce, sure. But if the culture doesn't support different ways of existing, then what use is the taskforce?*

Other respondents provided recommendations:

*Yes, but we should also pay attention to socioeconomic status/legacy status. It is really hard to be a first-gen grad student, or a student previously unfamiliar with Ivy League school systems.*

*It takes money. Give departments money to support URM students in meaningful ways. Pay URM faculty for the time they spend mentoring students and serving on committees. Put more money into faculty searches and require that students have a say.*

*Hiring Dean Celina Chatman Nelson was a step in the right direction, but the Columbia administration must do more to address the concerns of students of color at GSAS.*

*No. They need to have more scholarships for people from disadvantaged backgrounds.*

*No. OADI is a step forward, but when the university does not take serious the task of hiring, retaining and promoting diverse faculty, the university will always be hostile to minority groups.*

**Do you have any additional comments on diversity and inclusion at Columbia?**

There were a total of 88 responses to this open-ended question. Sample responses are shared below.

*Look, this survey, like the ten million others that we're sent over the course of the year, is a way of normalizing how badly Columbia does on these issues. They are forever looking for proof of things they know to be a problem already so they don't have to do anything about them. It's another way to delay. I'm sick of answering these questions, but I keep doing it because to ignore it is to be seen as being indifferent or having no problems. So to be clear: yes, Columbia sucks at issues of inclusion. Yes, Columbia is racist, classist, and sexist. And no, I don't think ASGC will do anything about it, just like they've done nothing to speak of in the past. But to be clear--you SHOULD. And shame on administrators for putting you in a position where you're to manage the issues that they've created structurally and culturally.*



*It's not that hard...concretely the university should improve working conditions for faculty of color and give \*adequate\* training to all staff, students and faculty on how to eliminate structural racism from the classroom & workplace.*

*There's too much to say about it. For now, I will emphasize again the point that the implications of gsas' health coverage policy are nothing short of a gender-based discrimination towards pregnant women, new mothers, and women who otherwise need to see providers more often than men due to women's health related issues.*

*More scholarships should be given to domestic students of color not just international. Also more professors of color*

*I believe more work needs to be done on how to retain diverse members of the academic community. I believe that conversations about diversity are often shallow and only for keeping up appearances.*

*I believe more work needs to be done on how to retain diverse members of the academic community. I believe that conversations about diversity are often shallow and only for keeping up appearances.*

*More scholarships, more \*academic\* fellowships, more tenure lines, are the way to foster real diversity and inclusion. \*Not\* the hiring of administrators.*

*Certain faculty members of my department tend to perform wokeness (claiming to advocate for inclusivity for women, gender-queer, and minority students) but often time ignore the actual problems of students in the department. Reports of sexual harassment went unreported, the department has never done anything to address what has (at times) been the severe class-related discomfort and economic anxiety felt by certain graduate students from lower- and middle-class socioeconomic backgrounds (incl. funding problems), the DGS never responds to important emails, etc.*

*They need to clarify what they mean by "diversity." Do you want a colorful campus? Or do they want a colorful campus WITH the diversity of different lived experiences/backgrounds (low income students). Low income students have a lot to offer too and Columbia STILL fails in adding their thinking to the marketplace of ideas.*



*The lack of diversity at Columbia (particularly at the graduate & faculty level) almost deterred me from choosing Columbia for my PhD. Compared to competitive graduate programs, diversity is lacking and as a result minority students that do attend do not feel represented by their peers & faculty.*

*I'm unsure on the "strategy" of these efforts. I don't think bringing more people who identify as a certain race or identity is the be-all-end-all of diversity and inclusion. It's more of the TOPICS covered and the CONVERSATIONS we have in classes and sessions.*

*Obviously there is a lot to be done, but I do get that impression that Columbia has put this issue a little more front of mind than other similar institutions, and I appreciate that.*

*Treat quarantined students nicely please*

*I'm sometimes a bit bewildered by the dominance of purely US perspectives on diversity; as an international student, they are not always as self-evident as they're made to seem, and, importantly, they appear somewhat parochial in their very US-specific framing of issues and given the university's global outlook.*

*As a TA, I've known many students at the graduate and undergraduate level. I'd suspect that most arrived here from class backgrounds that make them relatively comfortable in academic settings. I believe that not only should Columbia recruit more transfer students and those from working class backgrounds, but it should also provide department specific classes meant to learn how to meet that majors goals and practices. TAs, for example, often expect that students know how to participate in seminar, write certain assignments, and so on. And faculty are often worse in their presumption about student ability. But rather than ask TAs to squeeze in that training, there should be major specific prep courses to do this work.*

*The school needs to think seriously about socio-economic diversity and whether they foster an environment of inclusion, which, at present, I don't think is the case.*

*Columbia's definition of diversity is narrow and mostly focuses on gender, race and sexuality. and even within this definition, the diversity and inclusion I see are ranked and segregated. I think there needs to be more diversity in faculty ,student and staff at Columbia. I find it disturbing that all the maintenance and low-rank health staff are POC and that there are less and less of them in higher positions. I also believe that diversity goes beyond race and gender. I would like to see more women who are mothers among faculty and students, I would like to see more openly disabled people on campus etc.*

*Columbia has discriminatory policies for its international M.A. students. They are treated as cash cows and Columbia has made specific and unethical rules only to extract money from its international students.*

*Based on the lack of retention of diverse faculty members and the experiences of students of color, Columbia is far from an inclusive place. Making a place inclusive requires changing the culture to make sure that the individuals Columbia is recruiting feel welcome and are supported enough to thrive. To that end, the culture needs to shift for those with power to call out incidents, like having white academics call out macro or microaggressions that they see occurring against their underrepresented peers. It should not always be the responsibility of the underrepresented people to call out the system that abuses them, especially if they do not feel like their concerns will be considered valid. This kind of change would require extensive training in common workplace interactions that are actually microaggressions or discriminatory, as opposed to only focusing on egregious occurrences that are more obvious to identify. I experience racism via microaggressions or some form of minor, regular gender-based harassment on a weekly basis. Confronting people or reporting this behavior has done little good for me and, in fact, has backfired in some cases. To me, this negative response shows me that, however much Columbia and my department say that they support diversity and inclusion, I will not truly feel welcome and valued in this community.*

*the bureaucracy is stifling and yall need to stop passing every decision on diversity through 50000 white guys' hands before you make a tiny meaningless decision*

### Section Summary and Remarks

In line with last year's report, the experiences of women and/or underrepresented minorities on campus continue to differ from that of their male and/or White and Asian/Asian-American counterparts. Specifically, perceptions of departmental and university-wide commitment to diversity and inclusion greatly differ, such that students who identified as male, White, and/or Asian/Asian-American reported more favorable experiences than their peers. Further, genderqueer/gon-binary/gender non-conforming students continue to be underrepresented in our data, a byproduct of underrepresentation on campus.

Note: This report emerges as the Columbia community, and the world, is entrenched in the Covid-19 pandemic. It is therefore important to note that not all members of our campus community are equally affected. Asian/Asian-American students and residents have increasingly been subjected to both physical and verbal racial violence and xenophobia in response to misconceptions about the coronavirus. Further, especially marginalized and economically disadvantaged communities (e.g., Black/African-American, Indigenous American, non-White Hispanic/Latinx) are disproportionately represented in the coronavirus mortality statistics. Much

like in other areas of the U.S. healthcare system, access to coronavirus testing and treatment continues to be stratified along racial and socioeconomic lines. The committee recognizes these truths and therefore reports them alongside our own data.

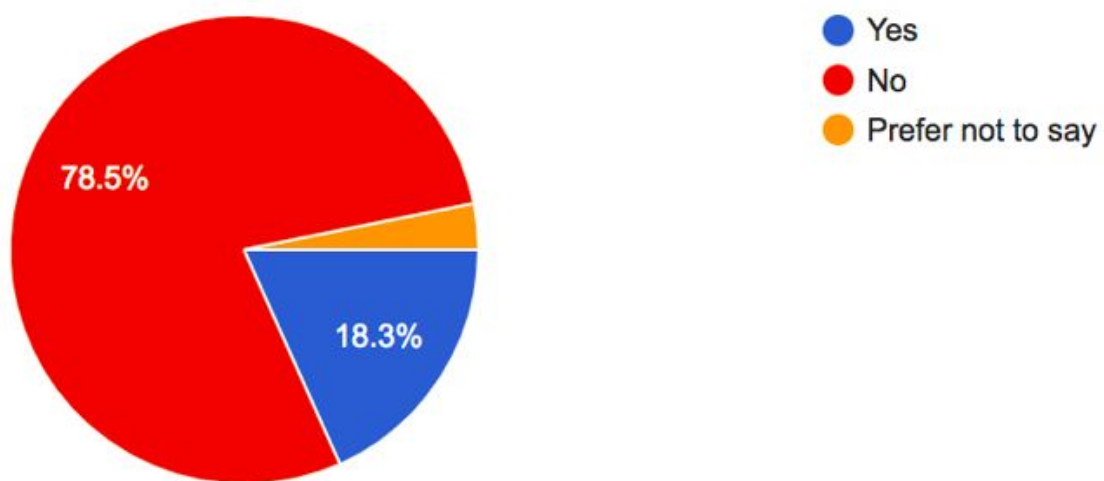
## Violence, Discrimination and Harassment

### 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 the most vulnerable groups and those most likely to report instances of violence, discrimination and harassment to the Columbia administration.

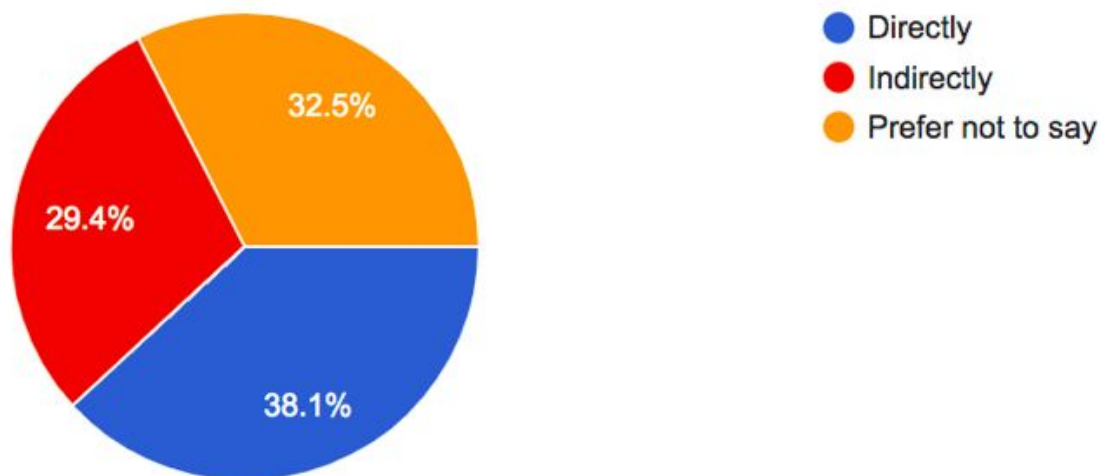
### Have you experienced or been affected by discrimination, harassment, or violence at Columbia?

This was a multiple-part question that inquired specifically about experiences of sexual harassment or discrimination on the basis of either race, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability. Respondents were first asked whether they had experienced or been affected by violence, discrimination, and/or harassment at Columbia. Available answers included “Yes”, “No”, and “Prefer not to answer”.



98% of survey respondents answered this question, of which 78.5% responded no, 18.3% responded yes, and 3.2% demurred.

Participants were then asked to specify, if they responded “Yes” to the previous question, whether they had been affected directly or indirectly by violence, discrimination and/or harassment. Though only 115 students responded either “Yes” or “Prefer Not to Say” to the previous question, 160 students responded to this question, of which 38.1% (61) responded “Directly”, 29.4% (47) responded “Indirectly”, and the remaining 32.5% (52) preferred not to say.

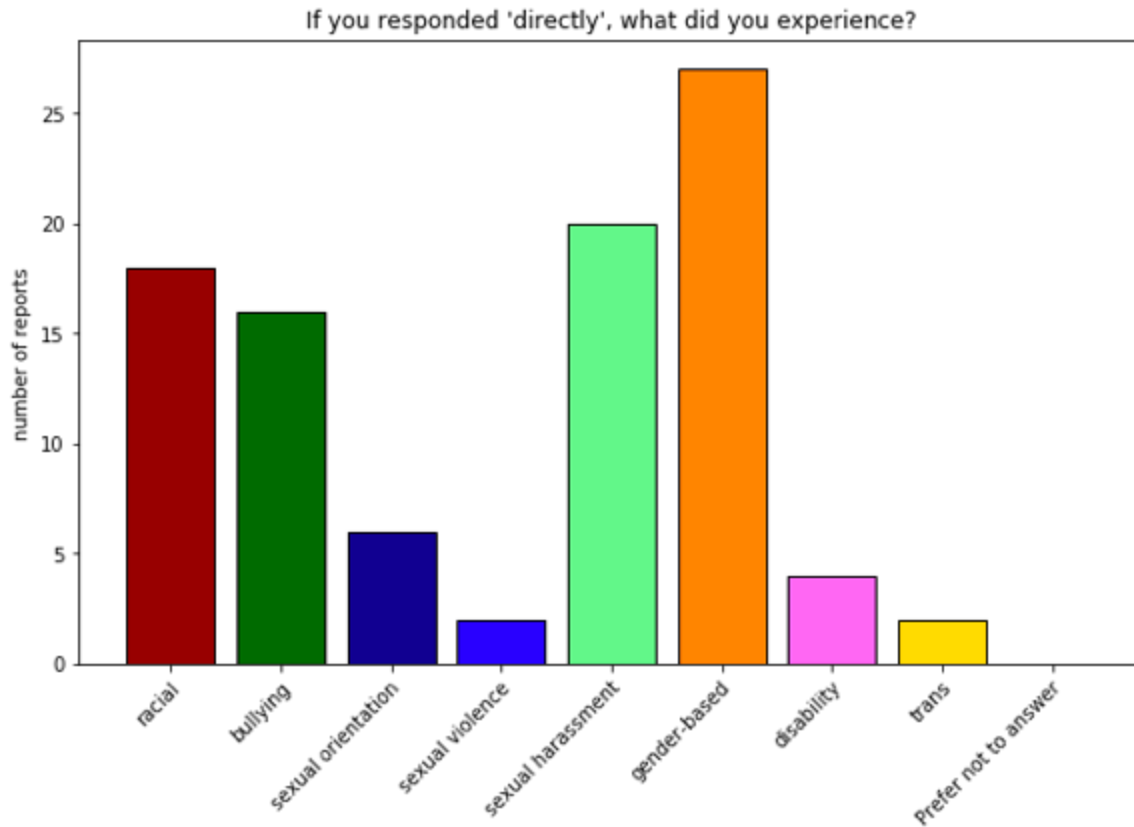


Those who answered “Directly” or “Indirectly” were then asked a multiple-choice question about what they experienced. Respondents could write their own answer or choose from a list of options:

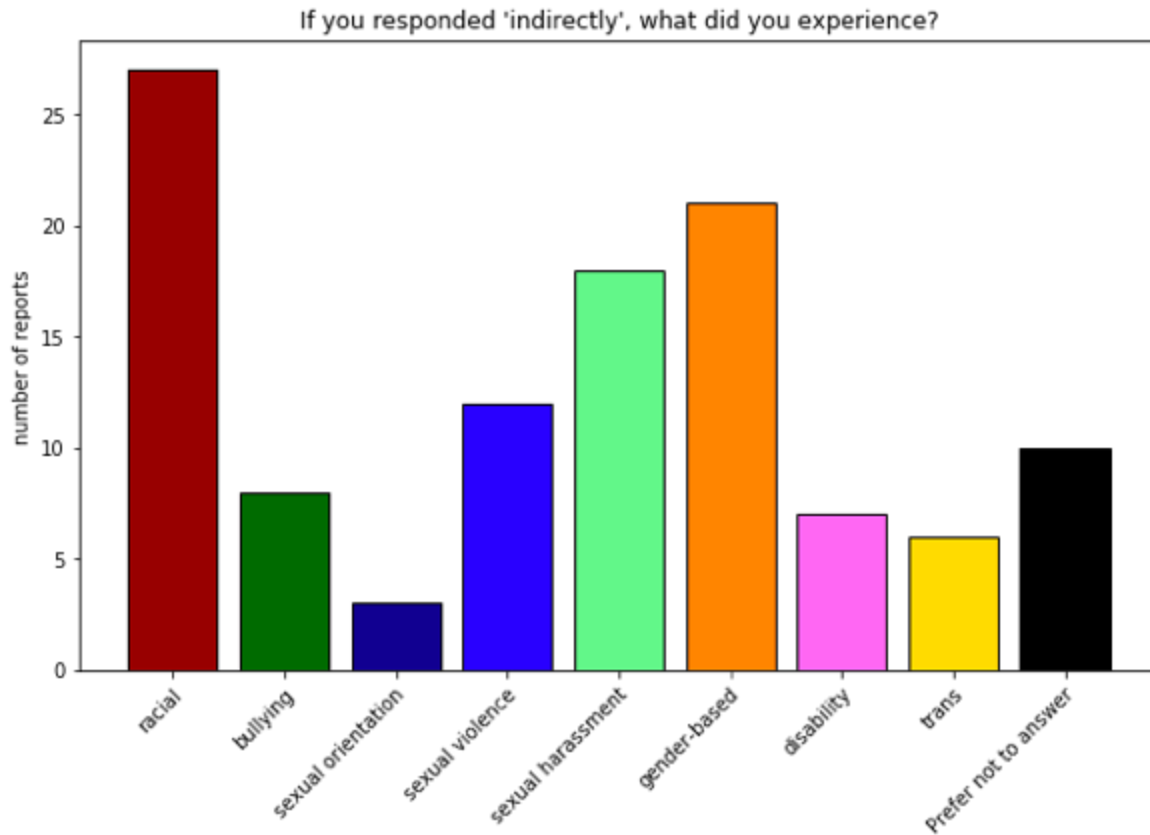
- + I have experienced bullying at Columbia
- + I have experienced sexual harassment at Columbia
- + I have experienced sexual violence at Columbia
- + I have experienced racial discrimination, harassment, and/or violence at Columbia
- + I have experienced gender-based discrimination, harassment, and/or violence at Columbia
- + I have experienced discrimination, harassment, and/or violence at Columbia because of a disability
- + I have experienced discrimination, harassment, and/or violence at Columbia because of my sexual orientation
- + I have experienced discrimination, harassment, and/or violence at Columbia as a trans or gender-nonconforming person

+ Prefer not to answer

Out of 77 responses of “Direct”, eighteen of those surveyed twenty reported experiencing sexual harassment; sixteen bullying (21%); and two sexual violence (3%). Eighteen respondents reported experiencing discrimination, harassment, and/or violence because of race (23%); twenty because of gender (35%); six because of sexual orientation (8%); four because of disability (5%); and two because of their identities as trans or gender-nonconforming (3%).



Out of 65 responses of “Indirect”, eighteen of those surveyed (28%) reported experiencing sexual harassment, eight bullying (12 %), and twelve sexual violence (19%). Twenty-seven respondents reported experiencing discrimination, harassment, and/or violence because of race (41%); twenty-one because of gender (32%); three because of sexual orientation (5%); seven because of disability (11%), and six because of their identities as trans or gender-nonconforming people (4.6%).



In addition to the plotted responses, respondents wrote in incidences of direct and indirect harassment, discrimination, and/or violence based on accent, political bent, religion, and family status (e.g. parent). **We suggest that future surveys include options for ‘Nationality,’ ‘political orientation,’ ‘religious affiliation,’ and ‘family status’ to include these experiences explicitly.** Respondents also pointed out microaggressions and commented, “We are ALL affected by these things, whether we experience them directly or not. Any other position is disingenuous. White supremacy and patriarchy shape all of our experiences.”

A cross sectional analysis reveals an even more troubling picture of discrimination, harassment, and violence at Columbia. While more than 2/3 of students answered “No,” 30% of those who replied “yes” reported having experienced or being affected by at least two forms of harassment or discrimination.

Of the 43 participants who reported violence, discrimination and harassment on multiple fronts, 20 recorded either having experienced or been affected by racial discrimination (47%). More than a third of students who identify as Black/African American experienced racial discrimination, and 23% of those students also experienced gender discrimination. Participants who identified as Black/African American, Hispanic, or Latino/a/x were two times more likely to report having experienced or having been affected by instances of violence, harassment, and

discrimination than those identifying solely as White/European-American, and **ten times more likely to experience racial discrimination, harassment, and violence than those identifying solely as White/European-American.**

Furthermore, while 62% (341) of participants identified as female, genderqueer or gender non-conforming, 73.5% of all persons to report instances of violence, discrimination and harassment identified as female, genderqueer or gender non-conforming. Students who identified as LGBTQIA were 50% more likely (23.3% vs. 15.7%) to report having experienced or having been affected by instances of violence, harassment, and discrimination than those who identify as straight/heterosexual. It is also important to note that 60% of all persons who identified as non-binary or gender-nonconforming reported reported experiencing discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

### **If you have experienced violence, harassment, or discrimination at Columbia, who 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

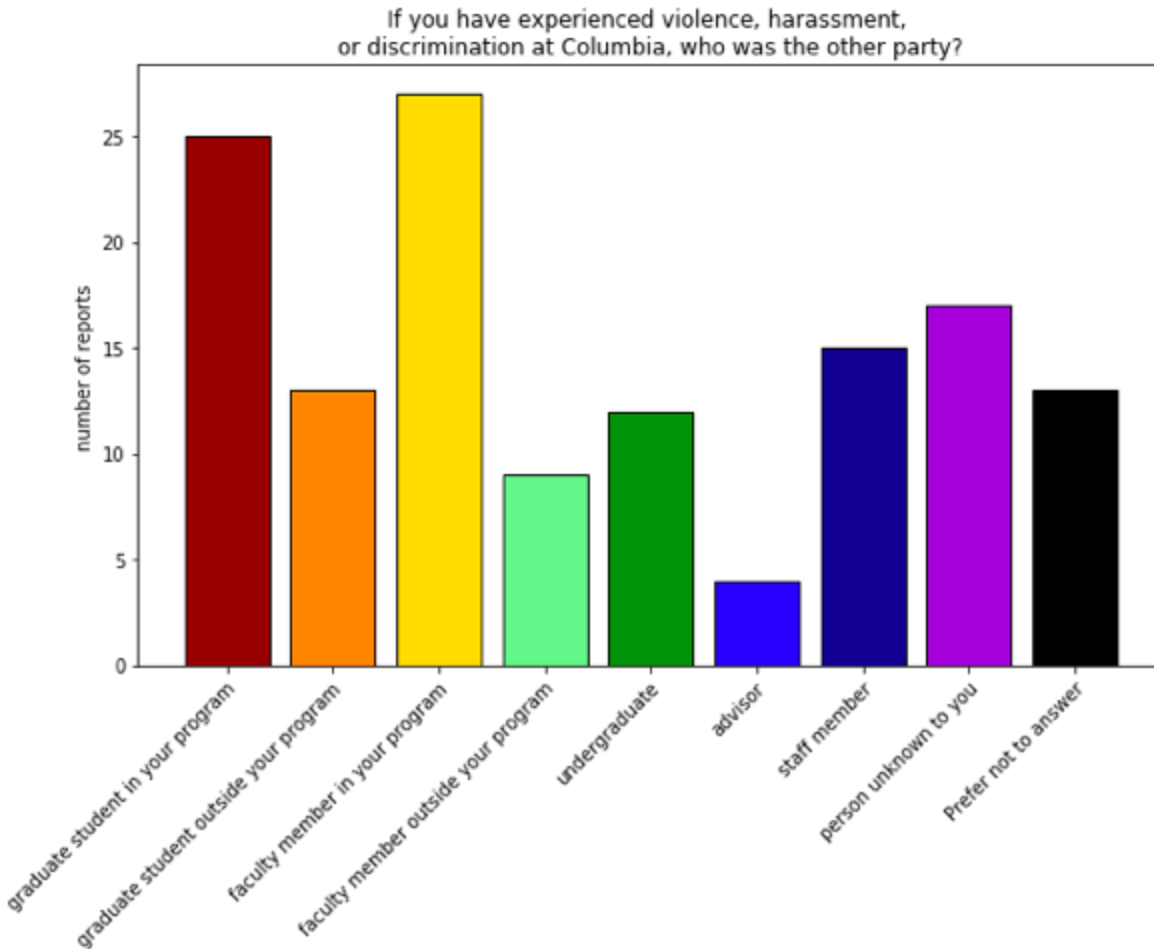
your advisor

an undergraduate

another staff member at Columbia

a person unknown to you

Prefer not to answer

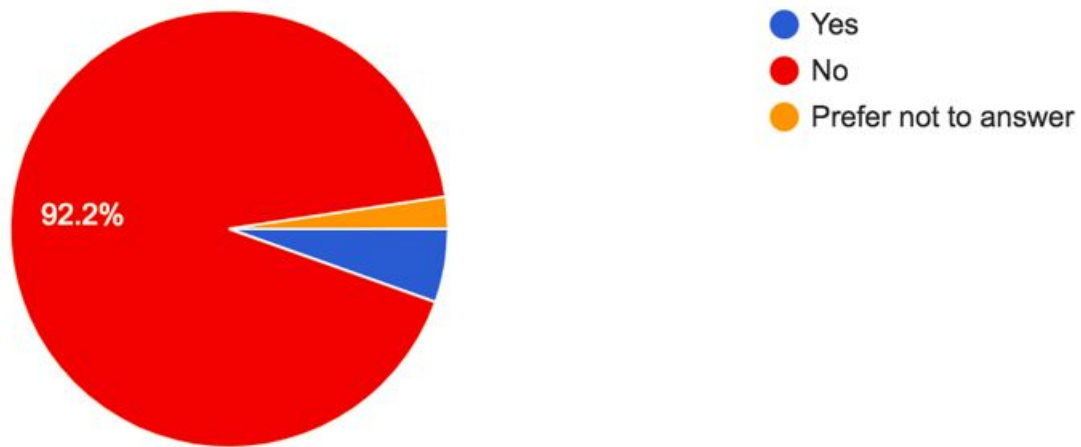


Of the 100 students who answered this question, a plurality (27%) reported a faculty member in their program, with graduate students the second largest group reported (25%). 29% of students who answered this question reported two or more sources of violence, harassment, or discrimination.

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

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





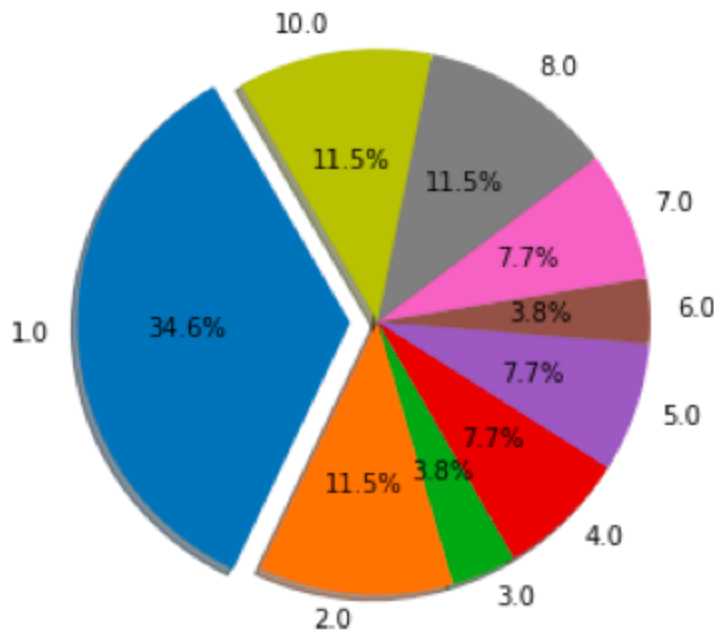
Of the 23 students who reported reporting an incident of violence, harassment or discrimination to Columbia, 14 identified as “White/European-American” (60%), 4 identified as “Black/African-American” and only 1 identified as “American Indian or Alaska native”, “Hispanic or Latino/a/x”, or “Middle Eastern/North-African”. This despite the fact that, of the 98 students who reported in the affirmative to Question 1, only 42% identified as solely as “White/European-American”.

A cross-sectional analysis of these data reveals that 18% of people who experienced violence/discrimination reported such an incident to Columbia. Of those, 61.0% identify solely as White/European-American, while 47% of total respondents identify solely as White/European-American.

**If you have ever reported an incident of violence, harassment, or discrimination to Columbia, how satisfied were you with the 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 36 people responded to this question, 9 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.

If you have reported an incident of violence, harassment, or discrimination to Columbia, how satisfied were you with the 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=389.

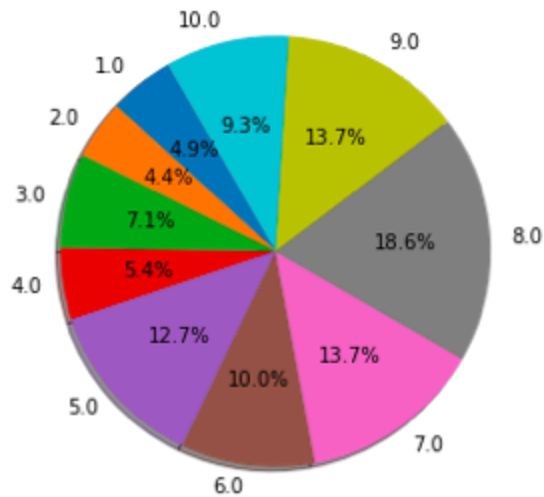
Thirteen people rated their satisfaction with Columbia’s response to harassment reports from the perspective of the accused. However only one of those responses were valued as the question referred specifically to people who have first-hand experience of the administration's response in such situations. That person preferred not to answer.



**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=408

**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?**

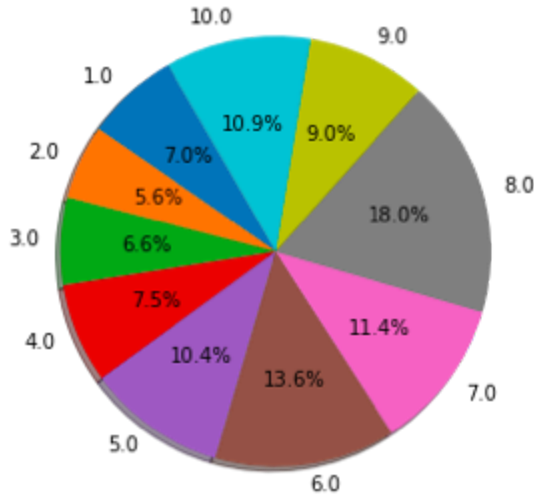


62.0% of persons who reported violence/harassment/discrimination on balance disagree that Columbia is committed to making an environment free of harassment and discrimination.

**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=412.

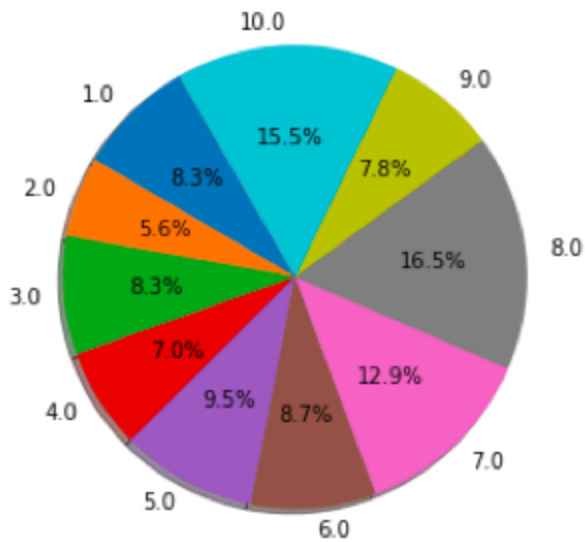
Do you feel that resources for reporting violence, discrimination, or harassment at Columbia are appropriately publicized?



**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 feel comfortable reporting violence, discrimination, or harassment at Columbia?



61.0% of respondents were more than 5/10 comfortable reporting discrimination/harassment. 74.0% of respondents who were less than 4/10 comfortable reporting discrimination/harassment were women or gender non-conforming.

**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. 56 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 commented that Columbia’s Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action is a corrupt institution designed to make the university look good and avoid liability. Real change, they contended, will only come with unionization and a GWC contract.

Students felt that the university would rather protect its reputation and tenured faculty than protect the victims of harassment and assault. Respondents pointed out that the administration routinely suppresses substantiated reports of faculty misconduct, with the result that students often hear about their own professors’ misconduct only through news media like the New York Times. Multiple students described incidences where their students at Barnard and/or Columbia reported sexual harassment and rape but were ignored, shamed, and belittled. Several students wanted bystander training to be publicized more and expressed confusion about whether their TA status required them to report if an undergrad student or fellow grad student tells them sensitive information.

Below are a sample of representative comments:

*"Faculty members in my department have assaulted students and the department has essentially placed a gag order on it. Those faculty members still have their offices, still get paychecks, etc. Students were never formally told anything about the disciplinary procedures, investigations, etc. So it's hard to feel that it's safe to report when this is the status of known offenders in our department. "*

*"If Columbia is serious about dealing with harassment and discrimination, they should bargain with the Union on these items to provide better protections."*

*"I would like resources to support survivors beyond reporting. The punitive model does nothing to address the root causes of harm—for that you need a way to hold faculty accountable AND CREATE CHANGE IN THE CONDITIONS THAT MAKE THAT HARM POSSIBLE well before they reach the threshold of reportable violence."*

*"Columbia, like most other universities, doubles down to protect abusers. Given their actions at the bargaining table, I have no faith that this will change."*

### **Violence, Discrimination, and Harassment: overview**

According to the above survey data, 18% 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 notable that 30% of those who experienced the effects of discrimination and harassment reported experiencing *at least* two forms. This statistic warrants further cross-sectional, intersectional analysis across different subgroups.

Of the 43 participants who reported violence, discrimination and harassment on multiple fronts, 20 recorded either having experienced or been affected by racial discrimination (46%). It is notable that, while 62% (341) of the total participants identified as female, genderqueer or gender non-conforming, 73.5% of all persons to report instances of violence, discrimination and harassment identified as female, genderqueer or gender non-conforming.

It is striking that participants who identified as Black/African American, Hispanic, or Latino/a/x were two times more likely to report having experienced or having been affected by instances of violence, harassment, and discrimination than those identifying solely as White/European-American. Furthermore, 35% of participants who identified as Black/African-American reported having experienced or having been affected by racial discrimination.

Similarly, **participants who identified as LGBTQIA were 1.5 times more likely (23.3% vs. 15.7%) to report having experienced or having been affected by instances of violence, harassment, and discrimination than those who identify as straight/heterosexual.** It is also striking that **60% of all persons who identified as non-binary or gender-nonconforming reported having experienced discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.**

Of the 98 survey participants who reported experiencing some form of violence, harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity only 18 (18%) recorded that they had ever reported such an incident to Columbia. Of those, 61% identified as White/European-American despite the fact that only 47.5% 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, with 61% of respondents >5/10. However, for the answers scaled “4” and “below”, ~74% identified as female or gender nonconforming. It is also noticeable that, when asked to identify their relationship to their harasser, only four participants named their graduate advisor, yet 27% identified a faculty member in their program.

Lastly, a majority of persons who reported some form of violence, harassment and discrimination at Columbia (62%) 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.

## **International Student Services**

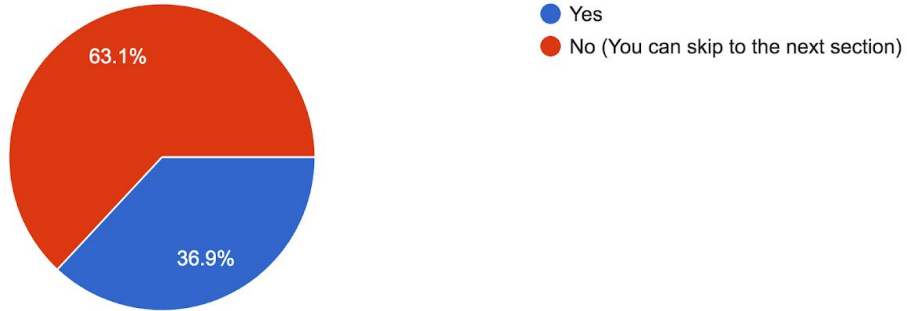
### **Section overview**

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

### **International Students**

Are you an international student?

536 responses



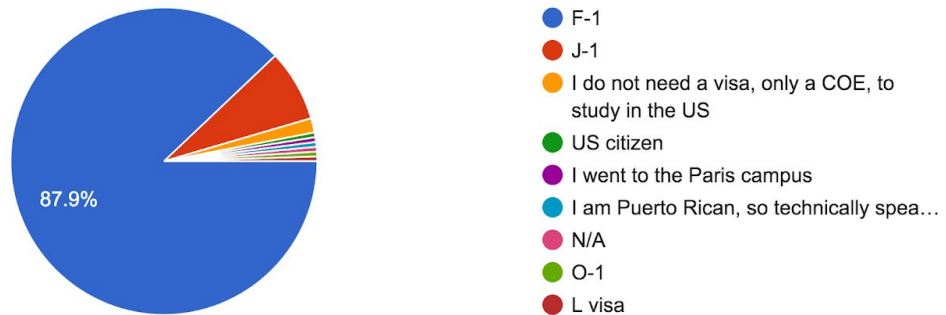
Of the 536 respondents, 198 (36.9%) identify as international students.

### Visa Types

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.

What type of visa do you require to study in the US?

199 responses



Of the 199 respondents, 175 (87.9%) students require an F-1 visa, 15 students (7.5%) hold a J-1 visa, 3 (1.5%) require a COE. 1 student requires an L-visa and 1 student an O-1 visa. The remaining 4 respondents do not require a visa for the US.

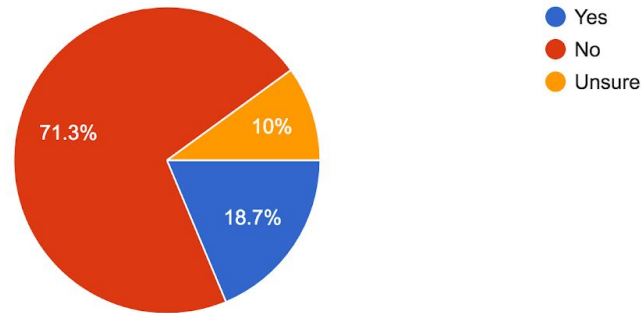


### Have you been directly or indirectly affected by any of the recent immigration policies?

This is a multiple-choice question that asks whether the students have been directly or indirectly affected by any of the recent immigrations policies. Options offered were “yes,” “no,” and “unsure.”

Have you been directly or indirectly affected by any of the recent immigration policies?

230 responses



Of the 230 respondents, 164 (71.3%) indicated that they had not been affected, while 43 (18.7%) indicated that they had, and 23 (10%) were unsure. There is a 12% increase in students affected by recent immigration policies from last year’s report.

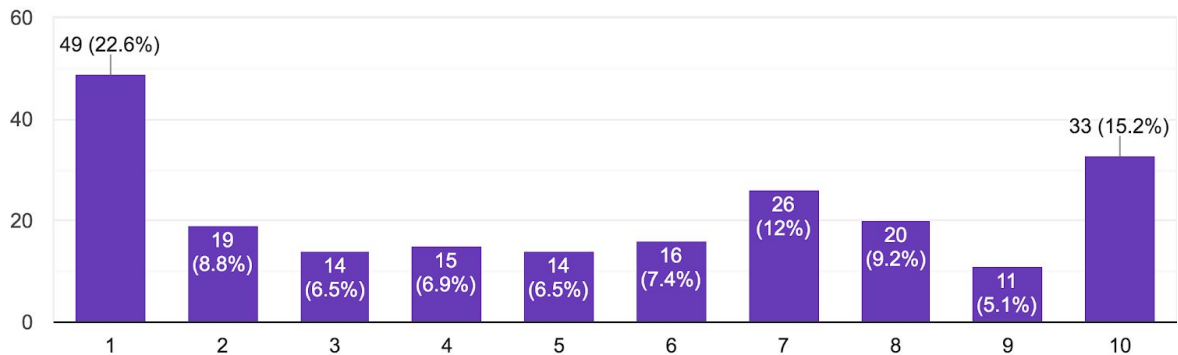
Of the respondents who have answered they were affected by the recent immigration policies, 33 identified as Asian/Asian American (representing 21% of all respondents who identify as Asian/Asian American), 2 identifies as North African/Middle Eastern (representing 11.7% of all respondents who identify as North African/Middle Eastern), 1 identifies as Black/African American (3.22% of all respondents who identify as Black/African American), 1 identifies as Hispanic/Latino/a/x (2.4% of all respondents who identify as Hispanic/Latino/a/x), 1.9% (5 out of 260) of those identify as White/European American.

### 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.”

Are you concerned that you will be affected by future travel restrictions?

217 responses



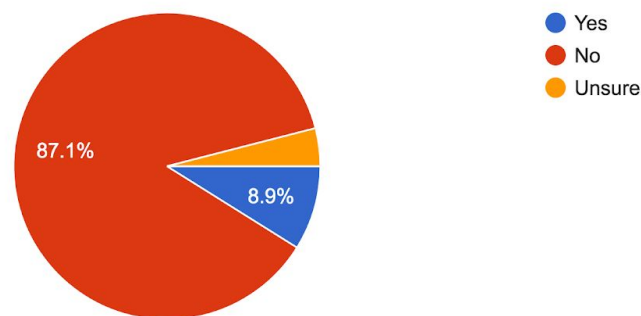
Of the 217 respondents, 49 (22.6%) rated their concern at 1 out of 10 and 26 (12%) percent rated it as 7 out of 10, while 33 (15.2%) rated their concern at ten out of ten. The average is 5.1 and the median is 5. This is an increase in concern from last year's report, in which the average was 4.69 and 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."

Have you been harassed or discriminated against when crossing the US border?

225 responses



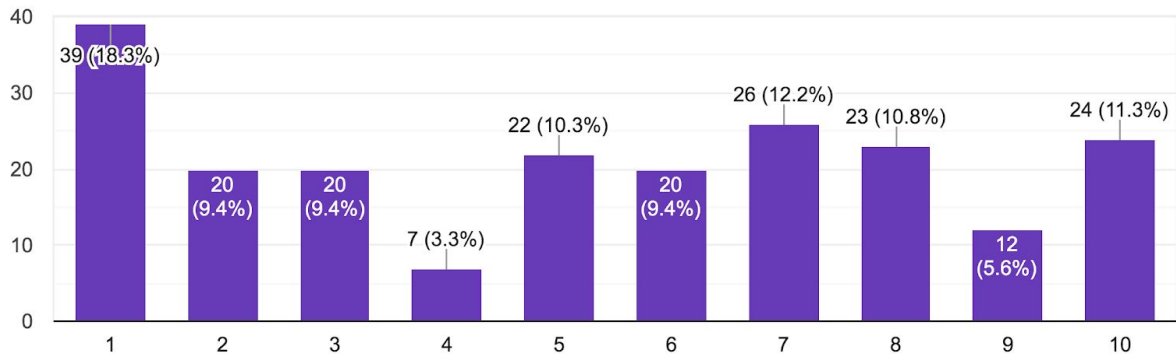
Of the 225 respondents, 196 (87.1%) indicated that they had not experienced harassment or discrimination at the US border, while 20 (8.9%) indicated they had and 9 (4%) were unsure. This is a decrease in harassment at the border from last year's report, in which 13% of respondents indicated harassment at the border.

Crossing these results with race and ethnicity data, we find that 9.75% (4 respondents out of the 41) of those who identify as Hispanic or Latino/a/x, 6.45% (2 out of 31) who identify as Black/African American, 5.88% (1 out of 17) respondent who identifies as Middle Eastern/North African, 4.45% (7 out of 157) students who identify as Asian/Asian American and 2.30% (6 out of 260) students who identify as White/European-American, experienced harassment or discrimination at the border.

**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.”

Are you concerned about harassment and discrimination when crossing the border?  
213 responses



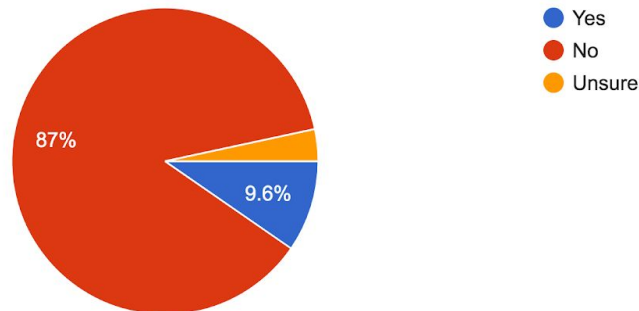
Of the 213 respondents, 39 (18.3%) rated their concern as a one out of ten, but 24 (11.3%) rated their concern as a ten out of ten. The average is 5.1 and the median was 5. Despite that average rating, the spread above indicates that concerns about harassment and discrimination while crossing the border 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.”

Have you had issues obtaining proper documentation for your visa status?

208 responses



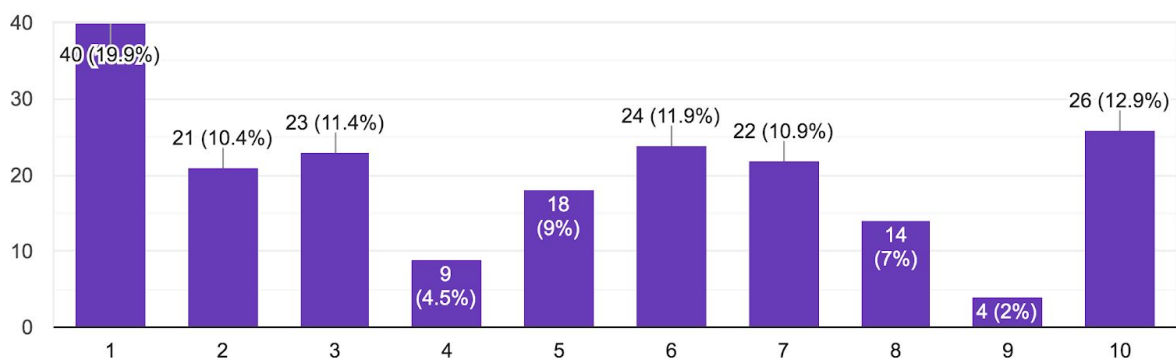
Of the 208 respondents, 181 (87%) had not had issues obtaining proper documentation for their visa status, while 20 (9.6%) had and 7 (3.4%) were unsure. This represents a slight increase of 1.6% in issues to obtain proper documentation for visa status from last year's report.

### 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."

Are you concerned about obtaining proper documentation for your visa status in the future?

201 responses



Of the 201 respondents, 40 (19.9%) ranked their concern at 1 out of 10, 26 (12.9%) ranked their concern at 10 out of 10. The average was 4.89 and the median was 5. Despite that average rating, the spread above indicates that concerns about obtaining proper documentation for visas in the

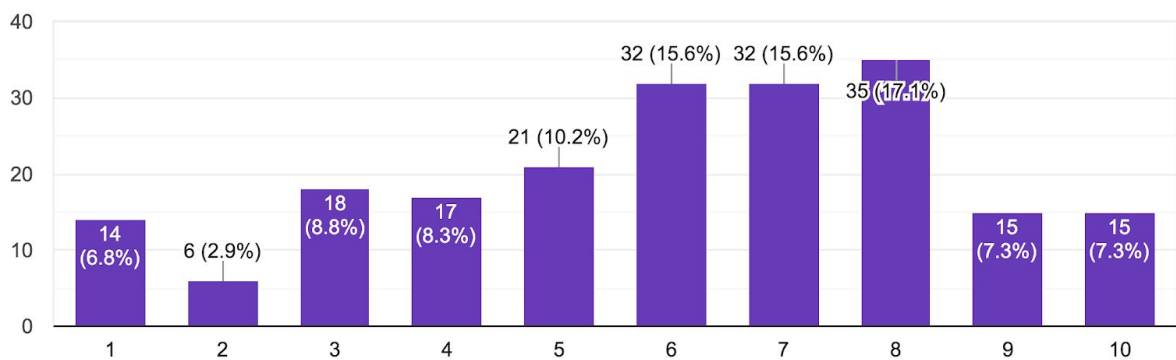
future vary greatly. There is an increase in concern from last year, in which the average was 4.20 and the median was 3.

### International Student Resources

This is a scaled 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.”

Do you feel that the resources available to international students at Columbia are adequate?

205 responses



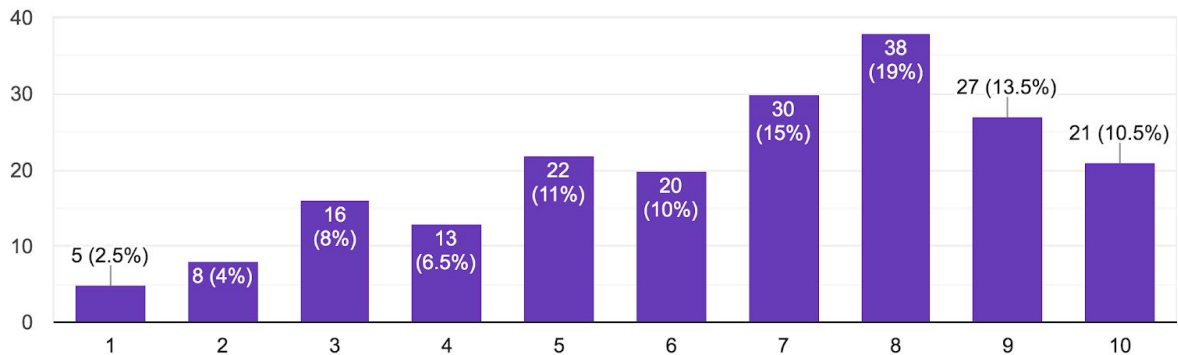
Overall, 37% of respondents gave the resources for international students at Columbia a rating of 5 or below, while 62.9% of respondents gave these resources a rating of 6 or above, with an average of 6.01 and a median of 6. This represents an overall decrease in positive ratings from last year, in which the average was 6.68 and the median was 7.

### ISSO

This is a scaled question that asked respondents to rate their satisfaction with ISSO on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is “not at all,” and 10 is “very much so.”

How satisfied are you with the services provided by ISSO?

200 responses



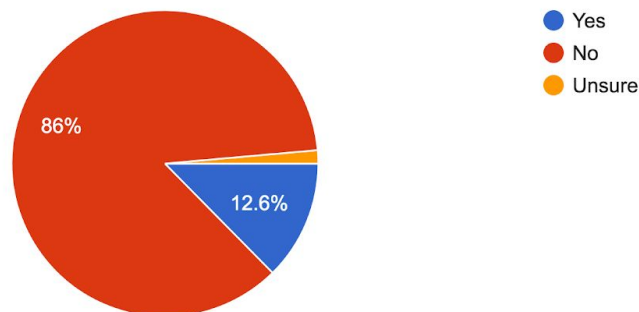
Out of 200 responses, 38 (19%) rated ISSO an 8 out of ten. 32% of respondents gave ISSO a rating of 5 or below, while 68% of respondents gave ISSO a rating of 6 or above, with an average of 6.59 and a median of 7.

### 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.

Have you ever taken advantage of Columbia's resources for non-native English speakers (e.g. writing center, ESL classes)?

214 responses



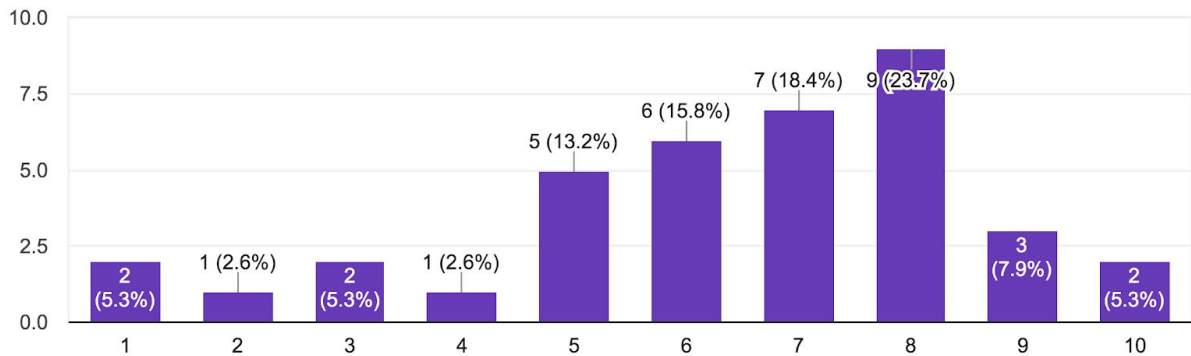
A large majority (184 students or, 86%) have not taken advantage of Columbia's resources for non-native English speakers. Only 27 respondents (12.6%) have used these resources.

### Adequacy of resources for non-native English speakers

This was a scaled question 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 they have been removed from the summary below.

If you have taken advantage of resources for non-native English, did you feel they were adequate?

38 responses



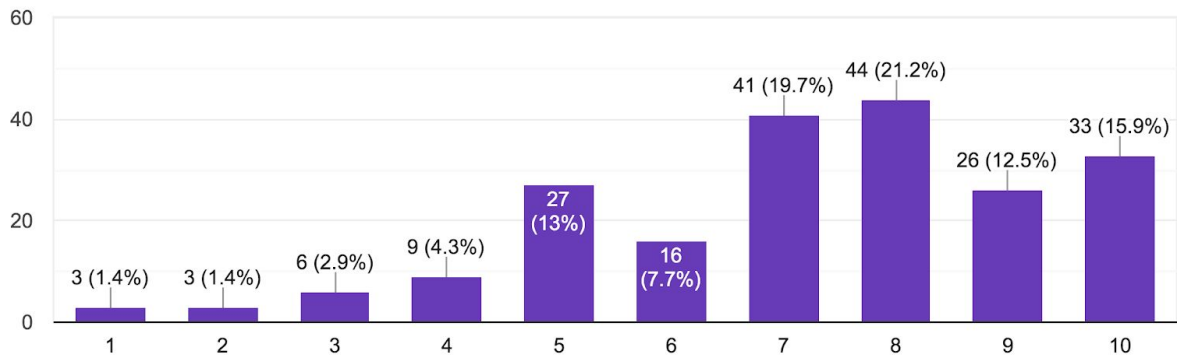
The average rating was 6.9 while the median was 7.

### Is the Columbia community welcoming to international students?

This is a scaled 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.”

Do you feel that the Columbia community is welcoming to international students?

208 responses



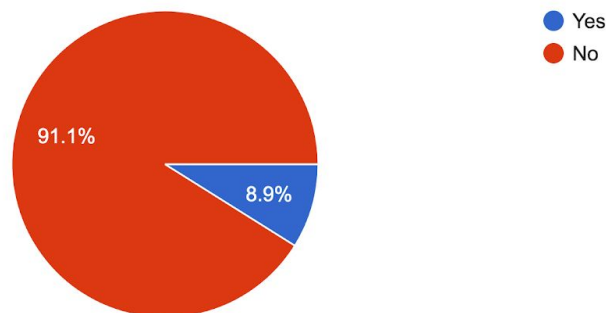
Out of 208 responses, only 23% of international student respondents found the Columbia community unwelcoming (ratings 5 and below), while 77% found it to be welcoming (ratings 6 and above), with an average rating of 7.19 and a median of 7.

### 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.”

Have you had any issues with your immigration status that Columbia helped resolve?

191 responses



Of 191 respondents, 175 (91.1%) had not had an immigration status issue that Columbia helped resolve, while 17 (8.9%) had.

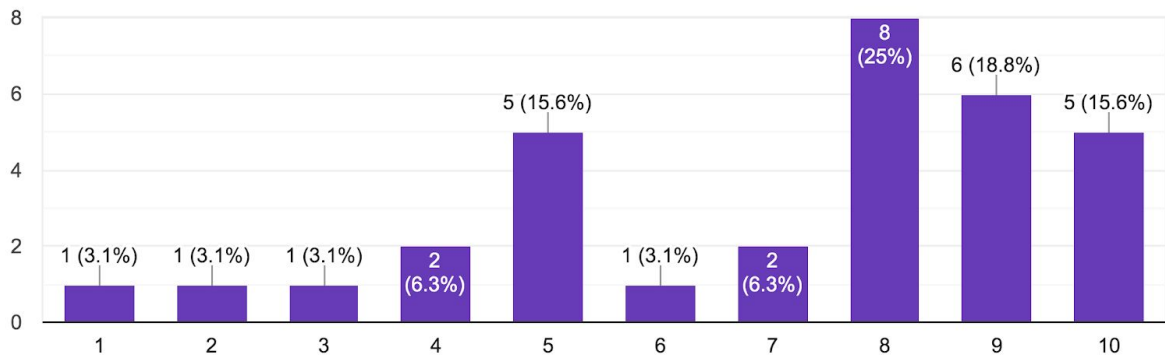


### If yes, how satisfied were you with Columbia’s response to your issue?

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 summary analysis below the chart.

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

32 responses



The average rating was 7 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 41 respondents wrote comments.

Comments were mainly directed at ISSO, but also described the quality of life of international students at Columbia, particularly as it pertains to inclusion.

Speaking of **ISSO**, seven students requested help with filing taxes, and three respondents requested legal support, including having more advisors with legal training. Five students decried a lack of access to information. Three students decried the lack of ability to reach ISSO by phone and the slow turn around over email. Three students requested help with CPT guidelines. Two comments mentioned how far away the ISSO office is. Two students described ISSO as understaffed. Two students made positive comments on the quality of the staff. Two students decried the lack of resources provided by ISSO noting that they didn’t find the orientation helpful. Two students requested financial help with moving from abroad. Two students mentioned the lack of funding and decried work restrictions. One student decried having received incorrect information from ISSO. A student requested that ISSO be open everyday of

the week including Saturdays, as well as decried the “outdated” website. One comment described the International student fee as an “unfair financial burden.”

One student regrets that international students are not taken into account in discussions about **inclusion and diversity**. The issue of unfamiliarity with US academia, and US culture in general, was also brought up by five respondents in total. Students brought up their lack of familiarity with US healthcare system, insurance and taxes, and requested workshops to familiarize incoming international students with multiple facets of American culture. One student specifically requested workshops on writing in academic English during the first semester. Two students found the writing center a helpful resource, but found it difficult to get an appointment there, one of which also decried the lack of availability of ESL classes and international thesis writing class. A student decried the lack of awareness of faculty on the various issues faced by international students, resulting in additional burdens for these students.

I have found that getting in touch with higher-up ISSO staff directly to be more helpful than going to walk-in hours.

The university should provide in-house legal aid for immigration issues to all students and reimburse students affected by discriminatory immigration policies and sudden changes in immigration policy for outside legal fees incurred to maintain student status.

I would like to know if Columbia has clinics that provide legal help for international students with visa/ immigration applications.

It is also very difficult to apply to grants as an international student. This is not a Columbia problem, but something that the academy in general needs to focus on changing.

I think that the response from Columbia and Barnard to the coronavirus scare has been inappropriate

ISSO is so far away, but staffs are nice!

To my mind, international students often disappear from view in discussions about inclusion and diversity. One issue here of course is simply language. It is harder for non-native speakers to speak in seminars, write papers in little time, etc. I don't always see that fully reflected in discussion on campus. Adding to that, many of us are not familiar with US academic culture -- for instance, in many countries, office hours are a much more formal occasion to talk through paper drafts, etc., but definitely not one where you would just go to introduce yourself and casually chat with a professor. I feel that US students are at a major advantage here. Lastly,

family and friends outside of the Columbia world are a resource many international students cannot draw on. This can have substantial emotional but also financial implications. Columbia should take that more into consideration. One practical way would be to provide international students moving from abroad with a one-time moving allowance.

ISSO is massively understaffed. They also need to hire lawyers who can give legal advice.

I think that Columbia (or each department) should hold workshops for incoming international students explaining not just US American academia (and its expectations), but also US American and New Yorker culture in general. That would have helped a lot incoming anxieties and lack of general confidence.

Could do with more help understanding systems in the US such as healthcare/insurance; taxes etc.

Have received incorrect information before from ISSO..... Just the general American immigration policy for students is horrible; particularly those with partners.

For non-english native students Columbia should include a class on writing in academic english.

I have the opportunity to be accepted in one this semester, but I would very much rather have this class at the beginning of the first term here.

I found the Writing Center very helpful but I was only able to use it twice because it is almost impossible to get an appointment. The demand is by far greater than their resources.

The ISSO should be open every day of the week and perhaps Saturdays until 12/2. We work during the week! Also the ISSO web page is super outdated, and help with tax issues is not provided.

ISSO should be contactable by phone. At the moment, all we get is a list of where to go to the website, or told to show up in person. I had a pressing issue with a CPT application and was ill, so I couldn't show up in person. I sent multiple emails, but they say there's a five-day turnaround.

Also, the F1 visa is very restrictive. My degree is in composition, and I am therefore supposed to have a professional life as a music composer. My American colleagues can and do accept paid commissions frequently, and as professional composers, we are all expected to. This puts the international composers at a huge disadvantage. Upon graduating, we need proof of a vibrant professional career, in order to get an academic position. Recently, some steps have been made

to fix this, by allowing us to take a commission through CPT, however, we are only allowed one per semester, and only for four semester, therefore still putting us at a disadvantage.

It is absurd that Columbia does not allow GSAS international students to participate in off-campus internships through CPT. For students interested in non-academic careers, internships are critical for gaining job experience and increasing their chances of landing an entry-level position in the industry.

The no. 1 hurdle is taxes, and the fact that Columbia provides zero support is not ok. Retirement funds is another issue where Columbia should do much more for everyone, and particularly international students who are unfamiliar with the American system.

ISSO doesn't seem to be much of an expert on various immigration related problems

Tax issues are impenetrable for international students. ISSO is unable to provide help on such services, and they are unaffordable on our current stipends. We need tax advice.

I imagine that the welcome felt is dependent on a number of factors, from country of origin to facility in English. Being anglophone Canadian, I'm sure that my experience differs significantly from international students who are more remarkably 'international'

I wish ISSO was more forthcoming with helping students with their visa issues. There is not a lot of transparency.

More resources on tax preparation would be nice

The university's response to the coronavirus is disappointing

International student fees are an unfair financial burden for international students. None of my US citizen colleagues have to spend that money.

Getting to speak with someone empowered to help you at the ISSO (for anything beyond the simplest matters) requires extensive departmental support, follow-up emails, and cajoling. It shouldn't be that difficult.

I wish it would be more clear to international students as to what are the difference between F-1 and J-1 visa.

Yes, international students are great and they enhance community life.

It pains me, however, to see international students who go on to work at the university when I know that sometimes equally qualified U.S. students are graduating with 50 grand in debt or

more and not getting such jobs. I'm thinking of two students who graduated from my degree program. One got a full-time job at the university and was able to "work from home" for a week over the winter break, answering emails in another country. The other, a U.S. student, told me she'd taken out private loans for our M. A. program and was filling out applications to work retail jobs, as of last Thanksgiving. Unfortunate, to say the least.

Although seriously understaffed, ISSO is doing a good job. But the isolated location as well as the under-staffing of the ISSO both show that Columbia does not care about its international students at all. Other indications include the exception rules for GSAS's international students to take one Residence Unit to qualify international students' full-time status (the real purpose is to charge over \$29000 each semester) as well as the mandatory enrollment in Columbia Health (in order to share premium from Aetna to support Columbia's own promise for local hospital as well as its own Student Health Service) are both examples for Columbia's attitude towards its international students. Columbia only cares about the money of its international students. This negative image has started to circulate abroad because of the bad experience from its international students.

Incoming international PHD students should be financially supported to cover their relocating to New York

there's a travel ban on Chinese students, and because of that I do not dare to go back home and renew my visa, in the fear that the administrative processing time would be too long or even my visa being rejected.

ESL classes and the writing center are always full and almost impossible to get into. So I haven't made use of any, because I haven't been able to get in. Also, the only international thesis writing class that was offered, was offered during class hours, without any alternatives.

There is little support in the transition period, getting an SSN, understanding what tax documents will be needed, there is no support for off-campus housing, most staff isn't informed about the potential issues. There is no consideration for how international travel potentially affects our financial situation. Getting stipends is an issue at the beginning for international students.

Columbia could pay for the verification of academic records, which costs a few hundred dollars, only to international students

More help with taxes for students who have been in the US for more than 5 years and need to pay as residents would be helpful. And I have called the ISSO office before and no one picked up or the voicemail inboxes were full. This is not helpful for students who are trying to get in contact with the ISSO.

My responses above are related to a friend's experience - where ISSO didn't file his paperwork for OPT on time, and he had to leave the country immediately. It was a shitshow.

I wish the ISSO was more help to international students. They are not as resourceful and their student orientation was very poor...

At the departmental level, faculty should be more aware of issues faced by international students. Faculty are often ignorant of the visa application process and the additional stress experienced by international students.

Columbia takes for granted certain norms about learning, interacting and studying here. Many of them were not familiar to me when I came here, and there was no resources to help me identify and learn these norms.

I need more help from ISSO when it comes to taxes

A lot of ISSO activities are aimed for undergraduates. Grad students are left to their own devices. If ISSO can put much more effort on the cpt/opt things like guiding international students to get familiar with it will be much better. Since internship and fulltime job are crucial for international students.

International students at Columbia are disadvantaged across the board. We can't apply for the same fellowships, nor can we work off campus. The stipend is not enough money for any of us to live on over summer, and for me this means that I have to move home, because I can't afford to live here without working a part-time job through summer.

I really feel as though Columbia needs to work on opening up fellowship opportunities for international students. I also know that we probably can't change the immigration rules but the ability to work here would save huge, annual upheavals for many of us.

### **Section Summary:**

The survey's results show that respondents' experiences as international students differ widely depending on their race and/or ethnicity. Those who identify as Asian/Asian-American are more likely to be affected by recent immigration policies. Those who identify as Hispanic or

Latino/a/x, are the most likely to experience harassment or discrimination at the border closely followed by Black/African American, Middle Eastern/North African and Asian/Asian American, in stark contrast to those who identify as White/European-American. (To note that this survey took place pre-Covid19)

The majority of respondents are pleased with Columbia's resources for international students, although the satisfaction rate has decreased from last year. The vast majority of international students have not taken advantage of Columbia's resources for non-native English speakers. Those who have are satisfied with the resources, although multiple people in the comment section decried the lack of available appointments at the Writing Center.

The majority of respondents found Columbia to be welcoming to international students, although several students described their unfamiliarity with US culture as a significant barrier to inclusion. The majority of respondents are pleased with ISSO services. In the comments, students asked for tax filing help, and decried their lack of ability to access information.

The ASGC Executive Board and the Quality of Life Committee make the following recommendations:

- (1) International students should be taken into account in discussions about inclusion and diversity. This work should be coordinated between ISSO and ODCI, and should address integration.
- (2) ISSO should improve accessibility through establishing a direct phone line and increasing staff, including hiring advisors with legal training.
- (3) ISSO should communicate to its students their current tax filing resource, as many students seemed unaware of the service.

## Parental Accommodations

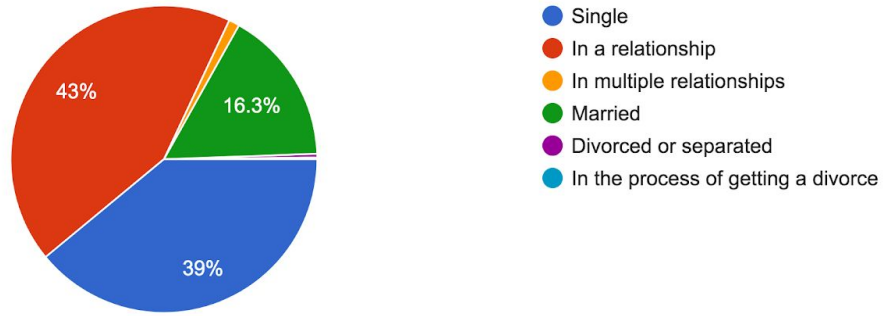
§11.2 How many parents?

**33 of 533 (6.2%) respondents have children.** Of these 33, 1 is single, and 32 are married or in a relationship. There are 12 MA and 21 PhD parents.\* There are 17 males, 15 females, and 1 unknown/unstated gender.\*\*

\* Compare to full survey: 180 MA, 362 PhD responses.

\*\* Compare to full survey: 312 female, 203 male, 15 genderqueer/fluid/trans, 12 no response.

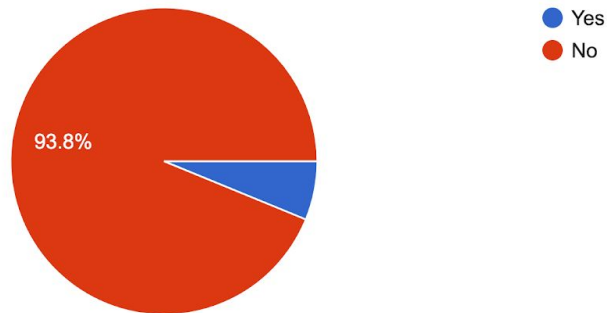
**What is your relationship status?**



Single	206	39.0%
In a relationship	227	43.0%
In multiple relationships	6	1.1%
Married	86	16.3%
Divorced or separated*	3	0.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>528</b>	

\* Includes “In the process of getting a divorce”

### Do you have children?



Yes	33	6.2%
No	500	93.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>533</b>	

### §11.3 Do resources meet needs?

**22 of 33 parents surveyed don't feel Columbia provides enough resources and services.**

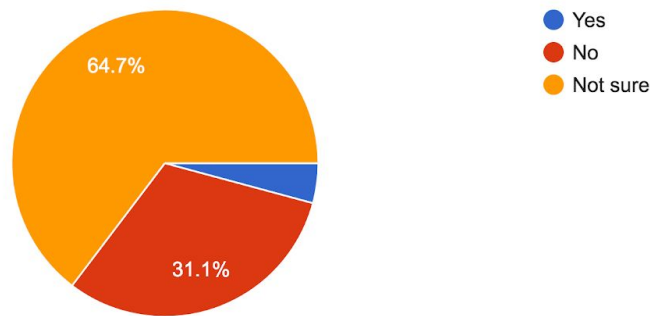


**Roughly half of the parents (16 of 33) took parental accommodations or leave; ~63% (19 of 30) took the childcare subsidy; ~23% (7 of 30) used Back-Up Care.** The 16 leave-takers comprise 9 females, 6 males, 1 “prefer not to say”, and 0 genderqueer (compare to full survey: 315 female, 204 male, 10 “prefer not to say”, 15 genderqueer).

**Parents are neutral to satisfied about parental accommodations/leave (mean 6.4, stdev 3.1, N=19)\* and Back-Up Care (mean 6.4, stdev 3.2, N=7)\*.**

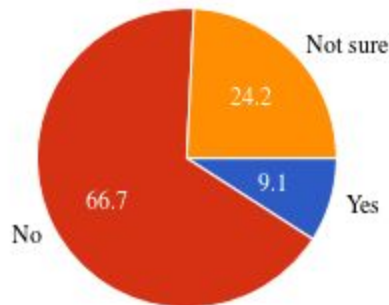
\* On a 1-10 scale where 1 = “Not at all satisfied”, 10 = “Very satisfied”.

**Do you feel that Columbia provides enough resources and services for you as a parent? (both parents and non-parents)**



Yes	7	4.2%
No	52	31.1%
Not sure	108	64.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>167</b>	

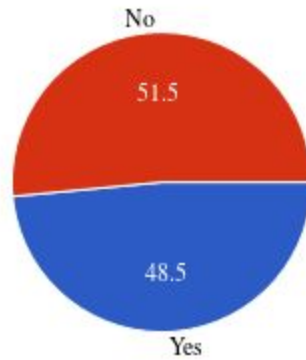
**Do you feel that Columbia provides enough resources and services for you as a parent? (PARENTS ONLY)**



Yes	3	9.1%
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No	22	66.7%
Not sure	8	24.2%
Total	33	

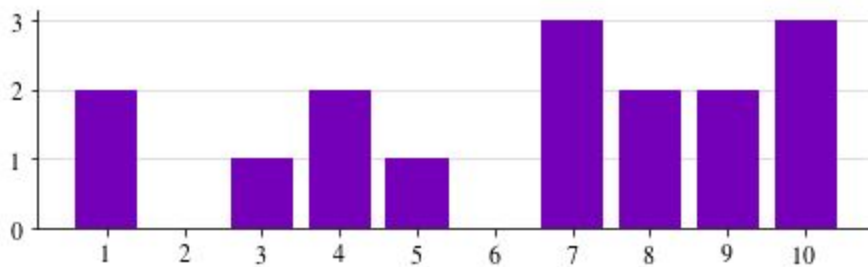
**Have you ever requested parental accommodations or leave? (PARENTS ONLY)**



Yes	16	48.5%
No	17	51.5%
Total	33	

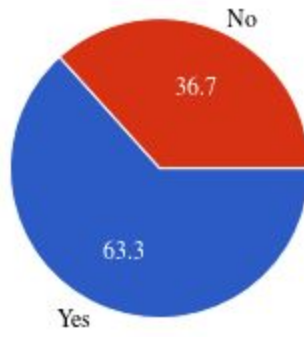
**If you have requested accommodations or leave, how satisfied were you with Columbia's response? (1 = Not at all, 10 = Very)**

One parent didn't answer; one student who reported no children answered (elder care or something else?).



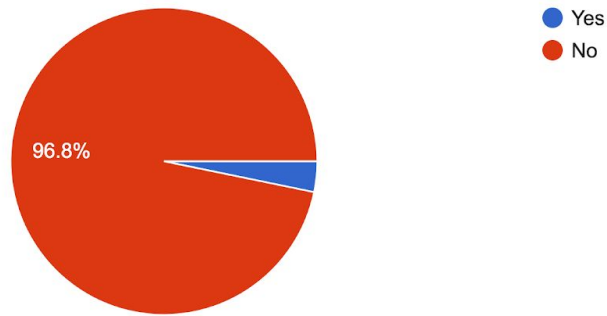
1 to 3 (Not at all)	3	18.8%
4 to 7	6	37.5%
8 to 10 (Very)	7	43.8%
Total	16	

**Have you ever received Columbia's childcare subsidy? (PARENTS ONLY)**



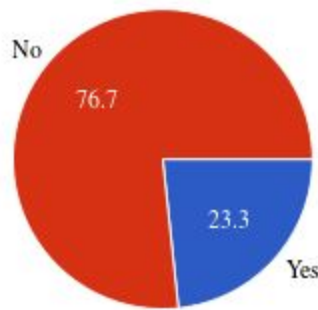
Yes	19	63.3%
No	11	36.7%
<hr/>		
Total	30	

**Have you ever used Columbia's Back-Up Care service? (both parents and non-parents)**



Yes	7	3.2%
No	210	96.8%
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Total	217	

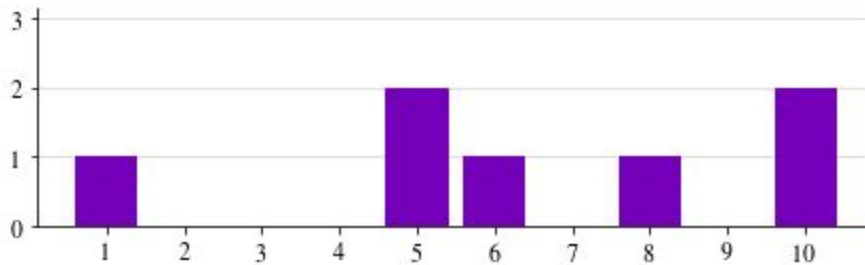
**Have you ever used Columbia's Back-Up Care service? (PARENTS ONLY)**



Yes	7	23.3%
-----	---	-------

No	23	76.7%
Total	30	

**If so, how satisfied were you with the service?**



1 to 3 (Not at all)	1	14.3%
4 to 7	3	42.9%
8 to 10 (Very)	3	42.9%
Total	7	

§11.4 Students' comments

30 students gave feedback. Some students' feedback was split by topic (marked by *[SPLIT]*) to yield 35 comments.

**Most comments focus on childcare cost, as in previous years.** The stipend is seen as not enough to make a difference. Parents would like on-campus and/or much more subsidized childcare. The cost of childcare and absence of Columbia support deters non-parents from having children while a graduate student here.

**Three comments report negative, disrespectful department culture towards student parents.**

**Prompt: Do you have any other comments about your experience as a parent at Columbia?**

§11.4.1 Childcare cost (12)

*Columbia's back-up care service is perfectly fine, but what is needed is affordable childcare.*

*Yes. Columbia's resources are insufficient. There is not enough help for parents. Child care near campus sponsored by Columbia is \$17,000. Subsidy is \$2,000. How am I to do this without being bankrupt after a year? I am very sad that Columbia does not seem to care more about student parents.*

---

*The childcare stipend is not nearly high enough (covers about 1 month of childcare in a center). The Columbia-affiliated centers do not reserve space for us and are way too expensive. We arrive in NYC to start our programs (in the fall) at the wrong time for childcare applications and are left in limbo are first year upon arriving.*

---

*Columbia is not very accommodating and their help with daycare is inadequate. At other institutions fellow graduate students receive much more help. Here we are given a list of affiliate daycares however no financial help.*

---

*Columbia needs to provide actual childcare. The cost of childcare in this country is insane, and it is impossible to pay for it on a student stipend. Anything less than full coverage for childcare is not cutting it. Columbia especially needs to provide childcare resources for student parents while they are abroad doing research.*

---

*The fact that there is no subsidized childcare options at CU is a disgrace. ("Subsidized" affiliated childcare options cost more than yearly stipend!). **[SPLIT]***

---

*Child care subsidy is NOTHING for 20Thousand dollar daycare tuition at Columbia Affiliate Daycare CLC. Columbia should subsidize this tuition!*

---

*I am preparing to take parental leave for the first time once our baby is born in March. The childcare subsidy will be nice but it is only a drop in the bucket. Until we can rely on the NYC Universal pre-K program the only real and consistent option is to use a daycare. But daycares in this area charge around \$3,000 per month for childcare. That is just unaffordable.*

---

*Columbia needs to support parents way more than it does. Childcare is incredibly expensive. Columbia affiliated childcare centers are an average of \$2500 per month if you enroll your kid full-time whereas we only get a 2000 subsidy. It should be much more subsidized than it is. It is a huge financial problem for us.*

---

*The childcare stipend is not nearly enough. It does not cover an adequate portion of full time quality childcare and given how low graduate students stipends are, puts people in very difficult situations.*

---

*It would also be very helpful to have free quality childcare on campus.*

---

*GSAS childcare subsidy, remains much lower than most of other schools' subsidies. See also my earlier comment on housing, healthcare, and gender-based discrimination. [SPLIT]*

---

*Better housing policies and more consideration to families, subsidy is not relevant to the cost of leaving in this neighborhood. [SPLIT]*

---

#### §11.4.2 Services, other (3)

*What are these services???? My wife and I complain to each other how there seems to be no care / programs set up for students with families. Other universities have programs where wives can even attend classes (UPenn), we cant even find a family event listing. I dont even know what "Columbia's Back-Up Care service" is??*

---

*Health insurance for children should be much more affordable. [SPLIT]*

---

*Most student functions seem to be bar related, in my experience. I am not so excited about going to a bar with a toddler.*

---

#### §11.4.2 Parental leave (3)

*The parental accommodation policy is written to be misleading -- there is no paid leave, because the leave is still counted against the overall funding limits. This means that parents still have to make the same progress toward degree, even while they are on leave.*

*Unfortunately, by the time parents have discovered the real meaning of policies, it is too late, and they are too busy to advocate for themselves.*

---

*Full semester of parental leave would make most sense*

---

*Also, as someone who had external funding for the year of my parental leave, I ended up losing much of my gsas funding, while also not enjoying extra parental leave benefits, while peers who are/were exclusively on gsas funding, eventually enjoyed more gsas funding and accommodations. So as of now, new mothers with external funding for the year of their pregnancy eventually get penalized for their "success" in allocating these funds when it come to parental accommodations at GSAS. [SPLIT]*

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#### §11.4.3 Dept/admin culture (4)

*A shift in attitude about family is required within the humanities. I have heard faculty members in my department say debasing and shameful things about women choosing to have children*

*during the doctoral work. Because of the gender make-up of faculty, and because of the way that things have been for women academics in previous generations, there were very few models for successful academic work undertaken in the context of family life. My own advisor has been negligent at best and disrespectful at worst since my maternity leave. I would never encourage someone hoping to become a parent to pursue doctoral work in my department.*

---

*I felt very supported in my maternity leave and when I was pregnant, and then not at all since returning to school. My advisor has been supportive, but my department has no policies or understanding of how being a parent affects my ability or timeline for my work.*

---

*Received negative comments from faculty about having a family. Almost left the program.*

**[SPLIT]**

---

*that's funny. beyond the small policies that were mentioned above, Columbia has no policies or support, nor does the university care for mothers who are graduate students. Clearly, at least in GSAS, they prefer we did not exist. I have had enough bad experiences with discrimination that was based on parental status (which were illegal, BTW) that Columbia "investigated" and somehow dismissed. I have heard from many other mothers of terrible experiences because of their parental status. The common thread in all was that we were told we do not belong here. BTW, men who are fathers, do not experience the same discrimination. obviously. two ways to change this would be to intentionally recruit more graduate students who are mothers as well as faculty who are mothers.*

#### §11.4.4 Miscellany (3)

*Housing debt is now - by the way of suspended registration - jeopardizes your family healthcare. If you do not register by a specific date your healthcare is terminated). This is just pure evil. How is this even a policy? And then you ask questions about stress?! When your child loses insurance because you are late on your rent payment - that's the type of stress that can push you to leave academia altogether. **[SPLIT]***

---

*Another aspect that could be improved is parent phds should be able to have their teaching schedule preferences accepted by departments. It's not like there are so many parent-phds that this would be a problem. In my department for instance, I am the only parent that will be teaching in Fall 2020. **[SPLIT]***

---

*So far, so good! Everyone has been understanding and helpful thus far. Insurance for the baby has been critical.*

§11.4.5 Non-parents' comments (10)

*I'm not a parent, but I have friends who are, and watching what they've had to deal with has been eye opening.*

---

*Although I don't have children yet, my husband and I plan to start a family while I am at Columbia, and I am very concerned about how we will make ends meet given the cost of childcare in this neighborhood. I really think that the university should offer discounted, on-campus childcare services in its affiliated facilities (e.g., Barnard Toddler Center). The current childcare subsidy is not nearly enough.*

---

*The childcare stipend is much too meager given the skyrocketing childcare costs in NY*

---

*I was told not to get pregnant by a GSAS staff member because I'd already taken too much medical leave.*

---

*I am not a parent, but I have had to do substantial care work for an elderly parent during my time at Columbia. Any of these kinds of services at all would have been extremely helpful.*

---

*\$2000 isn't adequate financial support for parents and a lot of people have to forego having children because it's not financially viable while in grad school.*

---

*My partner and I do not feel we could support children with the paltry resources offered by Columbia.*

---

*\$2000/year for childcare subsidy is not enough to cover childcare expenses almost anywhere in the city!*

---

*What is Back-Up Care service?*

---

*I find it impossible financially to have children while a student here and that is a sad choice to have to make.*

**Section Summary and Remarks**

**33 of 533 (6%) respondents have children. 22 of 33 (67%) parents surveyed don't feel Columbia provides enough resources and services. Roughly half of the parents (16 of 33)**



took parental accommodations or leave; ~60% (19 of 30) took the childcare subsidy; ~23% (7 of 30) used Back-Up Care.

**Childcare cost deters would-be parents and is a major challenge for current parents.**

**Recommendation: maintain and continue to expand parental support.**

**Recommendation: work with departments to foster an inclusive, respectful culture that supports student parents.** This includes hiring mothers as faculty, postdocs, and graduate students.

*"A shift in attitude about family is required within the humanities. I have heard faculty members in my department say debasing and shameful things about women choosing to have children during the doctoral work... I would never encourage someone hoping to become a parent to pursue doctoral work in my department."*

*"I felt very supported in my maternity leave and when I was pregnant, and then not at all since returning to school. My advisor has been supportive, but my department has no policies or understanding of how being a parent affects my ability or timeline for my work."*

*"Received negative comments from faculty about having a family. Almost left the program."*

*"I have had enough bad experiences with discrimination that was based on parental status (which were illegal, BTW) that Columbia "investigated" and somehow dismissed. I have heard from many other mothers of terrible experiences because of their parental status. The common thread in all was that we were told we do not belong here. BTW, men who are fathers, do not experience the same discrimination. obviously. two ways to change this would be to intentionally recruit more graduate students who are mothers as well as faculty who are mothers."*

## Campus Resources

Usage and opinion

**We asked students about the GSAS Writing Studio (opened Fall 2018) for the first time.** The Writing Studio is the least used (~68% of respondents never visited) of all seven services that we consider.

**For the other six services, usage and opinion patterns look similar to last year’s data (Spring 2019 QOL survey, pp. 146-147).**

**Are CCE and CTL changing in user\* percentage? Probably not more than ~5% level.**

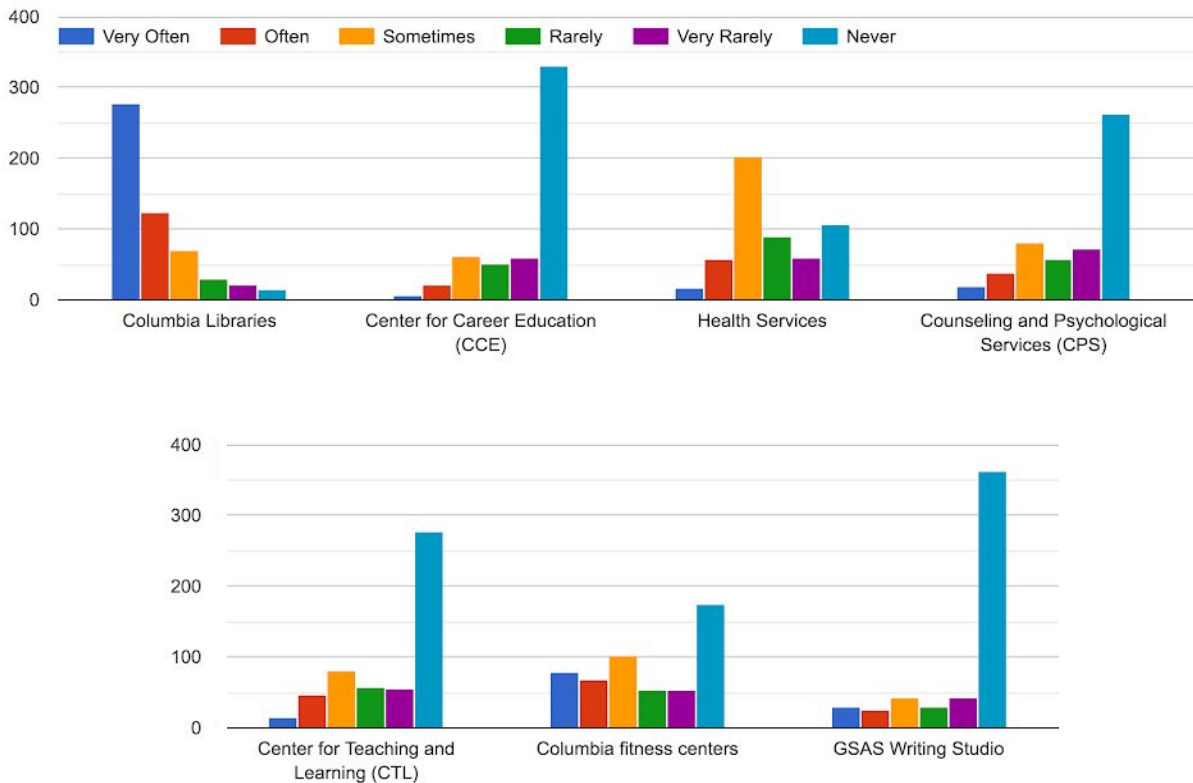
CCE drew 37.5% (+/- 2%\*\* ) of respondents; last year was 35.6% (+/-3%\*\*).

CTL drew 48.0% (+/- 2%\*\* ) of respondents; last year was 51.3% (+/-3%\*\*).

\* Respondents that report more usage than “Never”.

\*\* Uncertainties are sqrt(variance) of binomial distribution with p=0.36, p=0.50 for CCE, CTL respectively.

**How often do you use the following services at Columbia?**

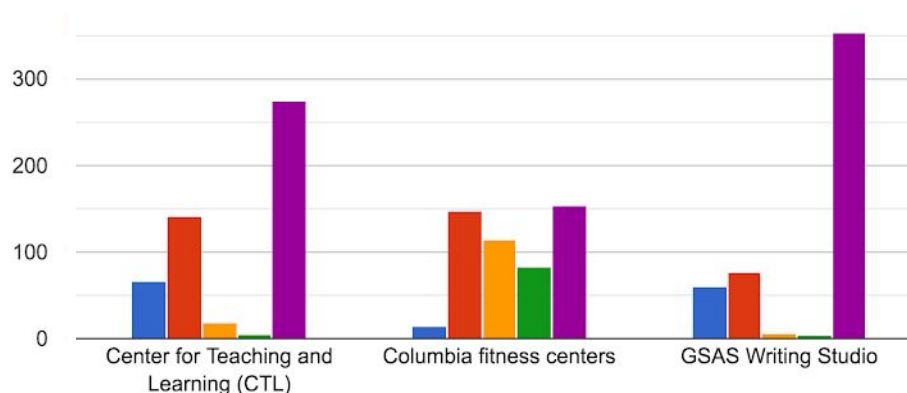
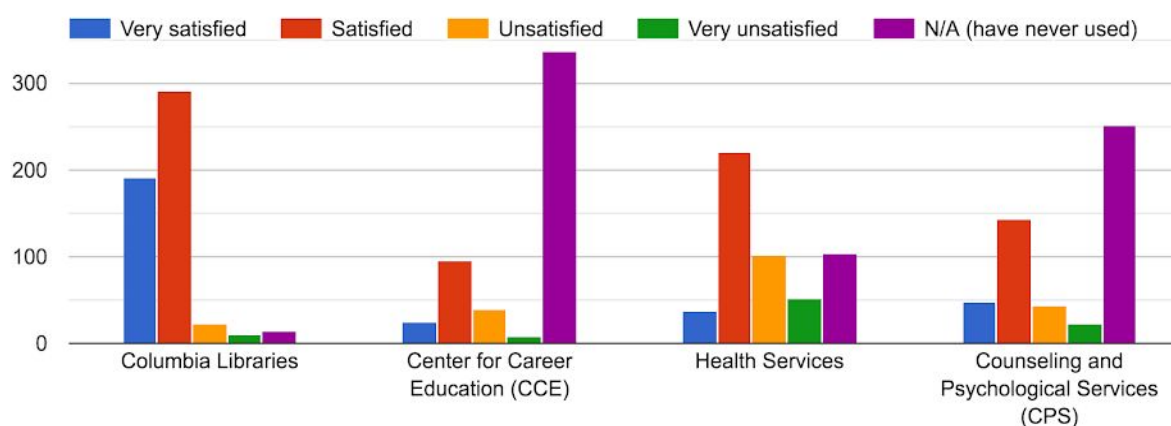


	<b>Libraries</b>		<b>CCE</b>		<b>Health Svcs</b>		<b>CPS</b>	
Very Often	278	51.6%	6	1.1%	17	3.2%	19	3.6%
Often	123	22.8%	21	4.0%	57	10.7%	38	7.2%
Sometimes	70	13.0%	61	11.5%	202	38.0%	81	15.3%
Rarely	30	5.6%	51	9.6%	90	16.9%	57	10.8%

Very Rarely	22	4.1%	60	11.3%	59	11.1%	72	13.6%
Never	16	3.0%	331	62.5%	107	20.1%	263	49.6%
Total	539		530		532		530	

	CTL		Fitness ctrs		Writing studio	
Very Often	15	2.8%	78	14.6%	29	5.5%
Often	47	8.8%	69	12.9%	25	4.7%
Sometimes	82	15.4%	103	19.3%	43	8.1%
Rarely	57	10.7%	53	9.9%	30	5.6%
Very Rarely	55	10.3%	54	10.1%	42	7.9%
Never	277	52.0%	176	33.0%	362	68.2%
Total	533		533		531	

### How satisfied are you with the following services at Columbia?



	<b>Libraries</b>		<b>CCE</b>		<b>Health Svcs</b>		<b>CPS</b>	
Very satisfied	191	36.0%	24	4.8%	38	7.4%	48	9.4%
Satisfied	292	55.1%	96	19.0%	221	42.9%	144	28.2%
Unsatisfied	22	4.2%	40	7.9%	102	19.8%	43	8.4%
Very unsatisfied	10	1.9%	8	1.6%	51	9.9%	23	4.5%
N/A (have never used)	15	2.8%	337	66.7%	103	20.0%	252	49.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>530</b>		<b>505</b>		<b>515</b>		<b>510</b>	

	<b>CTL</b>		<b>Fitness ctrs</b>		<b>Writing studio</b>	
Very satisfied	67	13.3%	14	2.7%	60	12.0%
Satisfied	141	27.9%	147	28.7%	78	15.6%
Unsatisfied	18	3.6%	114	22.2%	6	1.2%
Very unsatisfied	5	1.0%	84	16.4%	4	0.8%
N/A (have never used)	274	54.3%	154	30%	353	70.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>505</b>		<b>513</b>		<b>501</b>	

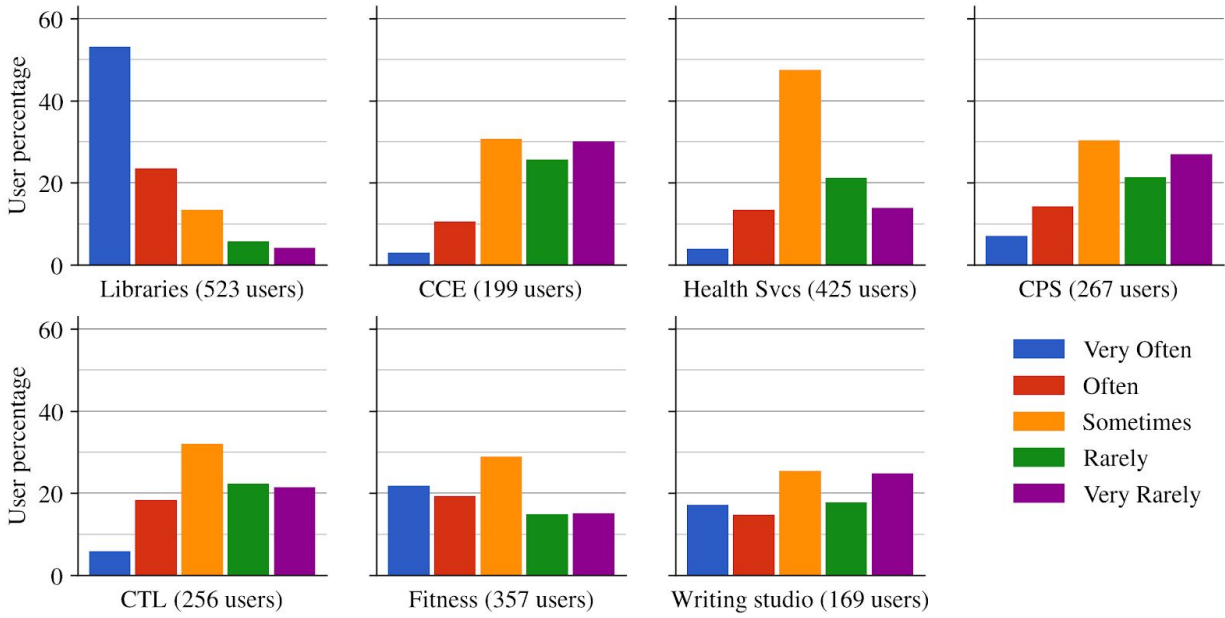
### §12.3 Usage and opinion (users only)

We normalize the data from §12.2 to show relative usage and opinions among users only; i.e., we exclude “Never” and “N/A (have never used)” responses.

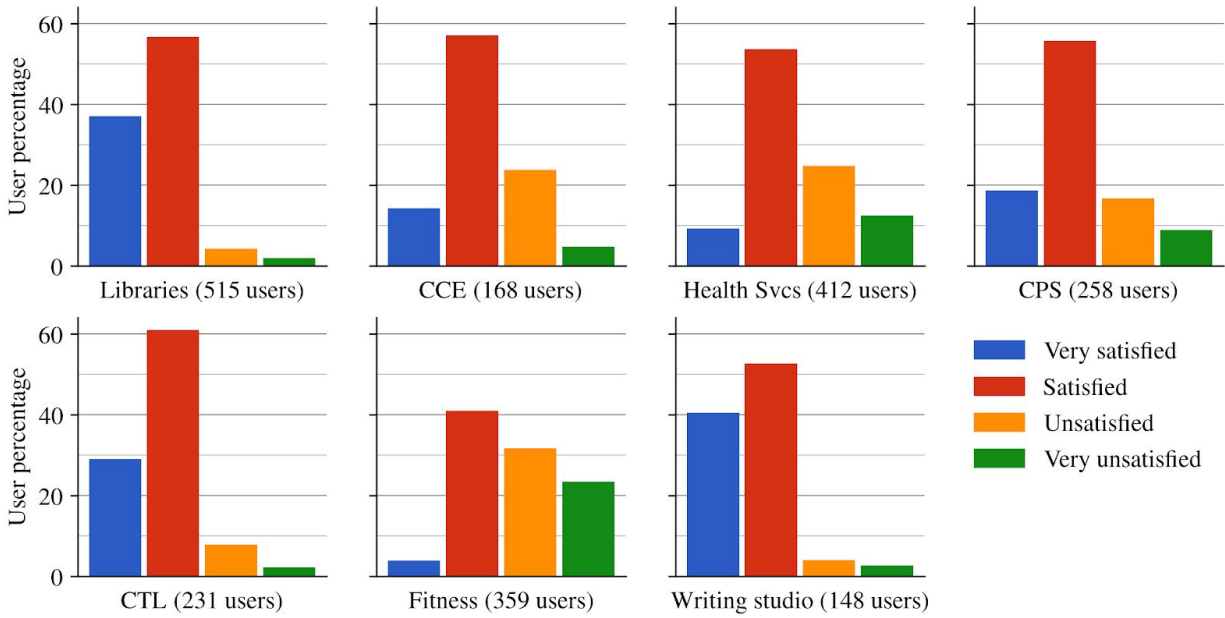
**The usage patterns appear to form three groups.** The libraries are heavily used. CCE, Health Services, CPS, and CTL have fewer frequent (“Very Often”, “Often”) users. The fitness centers and GSAS Writing Studio have smoother distributions of frequent and occasional users.

**All services, except Fitness Centers, have >50% of users “Very Satisfied” or “Satisfied”. The Libraries, GSAS Writing Studio, and CTL have high percentages of “Very Satisfied” users.**

**How often do you use the following services at Columbia? (percentage, users only)**



**How satisfied are you with the following services at Columbia? (percentage, users only)**



§12.4 Students' comments

107 students gave feedback. Some students mentioned multiple services; their responses were split by service (marked by *[SPLIT]*) to yield 125 comments.

**Students shared positive comments and thanks for the Libraries (3 of 23), CPS (2 of 5), CTL (2 of 4), and GSAS Writing Studio (~7 of 15). Two commenters praised group fitness classes.**

**Libraries drew complaints of overcrowding. Students desire more quiet space, accessible seating, and carrels.**

**Health Services' appointment system was criticized (8 of 10 comments).** Students desire an online system that is not limited to same-day appointments.

**The gym (Dodge, namely) drew routine criticisms on overcrowding; broken equipment; cost of lockers, towels, group fitness classes; and more.**

**The GSAS Writing Studio was particularly praised.** The 15 comments criticized lack of available space (5), lack of access / space for MA students (3), and workshops/events taking up writing space (2).

**Prompt: Do you have any comments about your experiences with any of the above Columbia services (or a service not mentioned)?**

§12.4.1 Libraries (23)

*The wifi at Lehman Library (social sciences library) is so broken! It always goes slow and interrupted. Please fix it.*

---

*The library should institute a policy where we can get an itemized receipt for books returned where it's default and doesn't require an entire page per book. I've returned books and had them listed as still with me for months until I've raised stinks about it. When I do, the burden is placed on ME to prove I've returned a book, something which is patently unfair when we aren't given any receipt or means of proving this. Either the burden should be on the libraries or we should get receipts. You can't have it both ways.*

---

*Library too crowded*

---

*The focus on collaborative spaces in the libraries at the expense of silent rooms for deep focus is misguided. Collaboration can take place in many spaces on and off campus, while the opportunities for deep focus are limited.*

---

*Returned a book to library once, which after a few months still appeared in my account; had to retrieve it from the stacks and return it once more; no body could explain what happened*

---

*Need more library space around finals*

---

*I love the library system! Thank you so much for having Scan and Deliver as an option!*

---

*I think there should be more of the library available to alumni, at least the digital content*

---

*There is never any space in the library.*

---

*Grad students should have guaranteed access to carrels*

---

*need more disability seating in the libraries, especially during finals*

---

*Using library services is tedious. The services are not sufficient in terms of workspaces. Sometimes it is difficult to obtain specific books and I rely a lot on Borrow Direct. But the librarians are fantastic.*

---

*There are not enough available spaces in the library for the student body*

---

*Libraries are EXCELLENT esp opening hours*

---

*The libraries are too crowded (see carrel complaints above) and running of software from 1998. Also, what on earth is CTL doing in the library? Why is so much administration housed in Butler? Could this be a reason why there is no space on campus for graduate students to work?*

---

*At the risk of sounding like a cranky elder: too many of the "quiet" study spaces in the libraries are not quiet.*

---

*Butler helps me learn a lot. I love the environment in Butler.*

---

*The libraries are not big enough to accomodate all students. [SPLIT]*

---

*Libraries - not enough spaces for grad students. [SPLIT]*

---

*Predictable answers: I wish there was more space to work in libraries [ . . . ] [SPLIT]*

---

*I am satisfied with the services available at the libraries but there should be more working spaces and designated carrels for PhD students. [SPLIT]*

---

*libraries should have longer hours for all rooms, [SPLIT]*

---

*need reservable small group/study spaces in the libraries. Need PhD only spaces in the libraries [SPLIT]*

---

#### §12.4.2 CCE (5)

*CCE was not very helpful in providing assistance with non-academic career counseling.*

---

*CCE was very resistant to helping address student career educational needs at Lamont. I tried to help organize an event and was dismissed as not being worth their time when they could be meeting with other students at Monringside.*

---

*CCE feels like it is exclusively for STEM and finance/consulting. [SPLIT]*

---

*CCE doesn't deal with academic careers because that's supposed to be done by your department, but that should be maybe more integrated so there isn't such a gulf between academic and "non-" academic careers. [SPLIT]*

---

*CCE is helpful but it can be difficult to make appointments. I wish there was a way to get advising online. [SPLIT]*

---

#### §12.4.3 Health Services (10)

*The only time I tried to use health services, I couldn't get an appointment in the timeframe needed, so I had to schedule a meeting with a doctor off-campus.*

---

*Columbia Health Services really aren't a good substitute for actual specialized care. The women's health especially is pretty mediocre and it would be worth them advertising that more clearly.*

---

*the Health Center needs to make an EASIER ONLINE APPOINTMENT SYSTEM that doesn't only offer SAME DAY!*

---



*Health Services can improve on patient care immensely, including making sure each patient's concerns are private (nurse did not close the door when speaking about personal history), and understanding the patient's history (doctor did not review last visit chart and asked redundant questions, wasting time in the 20 minute appointment).*

---

*Omg PLEASE make the Health Services website for Morningside function better! I don't get why we can't choose our appt time from a calendar instead of signing on every day to try to make an appt (which fails 80% of the time). Most of my appts I've gotten bc I've walked in and asked for one in person. I am able to do that bc I am on campus. I can't imagine what it's like for people who live off-campus.*

---

*Getting an appointment at the health center is a nightmare. I prefer the previous system where you could make an appointment for several days in advance. Also, the system has been terrible for my (non-affiliate) spouse. He has regularly been left on hold for 30-45 minutes while trying to make an appointment. He despises the health system's treatment of dependents, and as a result actively avoids using the health center.*

---

*Health services is frustrating to schedule appointments with. [SPLIT]*

---

*Would love if you could schedule physicals ("well visits") more than 24 hours in advance at Medical services. [SPLIT]*

---

*You can almost never get same day appointments from the Health Service unless you are almost dying, then you are much better off to go to an ER at a hospital. Also, why are there no specialists on campus? It is a shame that Columbia is charging this much money for its Health Services but cannot provide health service at the standard it should be offering. [SPLIT]*

---

*and I wish the health center system for appointments was more efficient [SPLIT]*

---

§12.4.4 CPS (5)

*I called CPS once and when I couldn't make an appointment time I was told that I should take my mental health seriously (I was having suicidal thoughts--isn't calling to make an appointment taking that seriously?) Then when I called and left a crying message on the phone because I felt so judged, no one ever called me back. I don't understand how people who are supposed to be responding to vulnerable people in need of support can be so callous and judgmental. I have not, nor will I ever, seek help there again. I wish I knew had known at the time who I could have talked to about my experience.*

---

*There should be more on-campus appointments with CPS professionals. [SPLIT]*

---

*CPS is understaffed but the staff members do wonderful work. [SPLIT]*

---

*CPS needs space/hours/provisions just for grad students. [SPLIT]*

---

*I like that CPS provides relationship and procrastination workshops. [SPLIT]*

#### §12.4.5 CTL (4)

*The CTL is amazing!*

---

*I have been very disappointed with the quality of programming at CTL. While I believe teacher training is essential and I believe there needs to be more of it at Columbia, CTL's small team provides repetitive and uninspired workshops, and lacks a diverse range of methodologies and voices. The staff also appears to lack degrees in education or have a solid understanding of pedagogical scholarship, referring regularly to limited and dated selection of materials.*

---

*wish CTL had more (or more obvious) things for people that haven't taught yet. Seems like most things are for people currently teaching or with some experience*

---

*gsas writing studio and CTL are a blessing [SPLIT]*

#### §12.4.6 Fitness Centers (61)

*Dodge Fitness Center should offer free locks, reusable rags (instead of paper towels) to wipe down machines, and invest in more machines.*

---

*The Dodge is far too small with far too little machinery for current usage.*

---

*The gym is awful - equipment is really old and worn out and the gym is too small. The space issue I can sympathize with but get some decent equipment in there please.*

---

*I wish we had more gym space. But I understand our limited space for fitness is not necessarily something that can be fixed - it is a function of being in the confined environment of the city, and the progressive mafia's inhibition of Columbia's development in the area.*

---

*The gym is too small*

---

*Gym classes are way too expensive for students*

---

*The gym is overcrowded most of the time and some of the equipment could be updated. We could definitely use more space. I also think it's pretty silly that I have to pay extra for a towel.*

---

*-There aren't enough facilities in the gym for all the members of the community that want to use them, especially in the weight-lifting sections. When an athletic team is in there for practice, it basically takes up all the space available.*

*-I wish there were more free weights in the lower ranges (10-12 lbs) to make weightlifting more accessible to all members of the community. It's a very male-dominated space, so having a more accessible entry point would be beneficial to people who don't identify as male and/or who are new to weightlifting.*

*-I wish students were also able to use the gym facilities at Bard on the CUIMC campus and the facilities on the Morningside campus without having to pay twice. It would be helpful for commuters.*

---

*As mentioned previously, the gym is frequently so crowded as to be unusable. I have gone there numerous times only to have to wait over 30 minutes to use a machine.*

---

*Better gym and more equipment. Cardio policy is not good nor does any one abide by it*

---

*The gym is extremely crowded, however I'm not sure that this can be easily resolved apart from building a larger gym!*

---

*I think it is unfair that graduate students have to pay for the gym during the summer.*

---

*The gym sucks. Have you seen Stanford's gyms? Harvard's gyms? Yale's gyms? They're way better.*

---

*Dodge fitness center is terrible. It's dirty and there are never cardio machines available.*

---

*That gym is a joke*

---

*Dodge Gym is literally the worst gym I have ever used in my life. It was time to build a new gym like 20 years ago*

---

*There aren't that many cardio machines, so when one breaks, let alone several, that is a major inconvenience. There are at least three broken ellipticals, they have been broken for months. It's very annoying to my initials down for a reservation when it's busy, get to the machine, and then realize that every time I push down on one of the pedals there is a sharp jolt and therefore I cannot use that machine.*

---

*It would be better if the fitness centers had more equipment available to regular members/students. Namely, more area for weights and resistance machines.*

---

*Dodge is always crowded and their facilities could be greatly improved.*

---

*Wish we had a bigger and nicer fitness center!!*

---

*The fitness center at Dodge is often overcrowded*

---

*I take yoga classes at Dodge Fitness Center and am very happy with them!*

---

*The gym could use a revamp*

---

*The gym should open earlier on weekends, and not close during the long breaks.*

---

*Group fitness pass should be covered by PhD stipend*

---

*I really wish Columbia would upgrade their fitness facilities for students. Dodge is far too small given the number of students looking to use the facilities, which is clear based on the fact that students can only use a machine (e.g., a treadmill) for 30 minutes at a time and must sign up for it far in advance. Further, the fact that basic items like towels are not available for all students is just terrible.*

---

*The gym needs to have better ventilation.*

---

*We need real soccer goals in the Dodge fitness center. What we are using now are too small.*

---

*The fitness center is an atrocity. Terrible system. Feels nasty in their and does not encourage me to work out at all. Its so confined.*

---

*The gym could definitely be improved. There are so many broken machines, which makes it really hard to work out most of the time as the gym itself is always very busy.*

---

*the gym is too small and there isn't enough equipment*

---

*The gym is way too small. There needs to be more workout space as it currently jammed into hallways circling the basketball court. Fitness classes and lockers should be free.*

---

*not enough space in the gym for the amount of traffic*

---

*Dodge Fitness Center in particular is not at all adequate to handle the number of students that Columbia has. (Could potentially be solved with 24-hour access so it's less crowded?) It also needs major renovations.*

---

*Our gym sucks! Please invest in better equipment, cleaning and ventilation*

---

*The fitness centers do not offer adequate space or equipment for the number of students and community members who use them regularly.*

---

*The fitness center is too small for such a big student population. It is crowded at all hours, and doesn't have enough equipment for everyone.*

---

*The gym should be much bigger given the how many people there are on any given day.*

---

*The gym is terrible. There are only two bench presses for the entire Morningside Campus...*

---

*The fitness center is tiny!*

---

*Improve the facilities at the fitness center please!*

---

*Gym is tragically small.*

---

*Dodge Fitness Center is overly crowded at most hours during the school year. Expansion is needed.*

---

*The gym should be expanded, or maybe build another one. It is too small and crowded*

---

*The machines in he gym are somewhat old and the directions in the gym are not clear. It is hard to find where is which room and where to find particular training equip*

---

*Fitness center should provide more instruments for strength exercise, too many people waiting for an instrument at a time. They should do a survey on the most popular instrument and buy*

---

more of them.

---

*I find it frustrating that when using the gym I have to purchase something extra to do most of the things I want to do at the gym. I wish that at least a locker was something we didn't have to pay extra for.*

---

*dodge fitness center is always over crowded...*

---

*Please improve your gym*

---

*The fitness center is overloaded. So many people*

---

*The gym is too small*

---

*The gym is too crowded to use*

---

*The gym is always quite crowded. Not sure what can be done about that short of opening a second gym.*

---

*Also, the Columbia fitness center is always packed--it's difficult to get a spot in a class or to use a machine. [SPLIT]*

---

*The fitness center is out of date and I think that fitness classes should be paid for by GSAS. [SPLIT]*

---

*Also, I wish that group fitness classes at Columbia were more affordable. [SPLIT]*

---

*Dodge fitness far too small to serve student population and needs modernization badly. [SPLIT]*

---

*Predictable answers: I wish there was [ . . . ] more space at the gym. I do enjoy the fitness classes at the gym though! But I am sort of surprised that the semester pass for the classes is so expensive. I know many similar schools just let you take the classes for free (my assumption is that space is so limited that charging for a pass is the means by which to keep attendance small enough to accommodate?). [SPLIT]*

---

*The gym should have more treadmills and equipment and bigger studios, especially for fitness classes with a lot of students. [SPLIT]*

---

*the gym should be 24H [SPLIT]*

---

---

*Need additional open swim hours at the pool, [SPLIT]*

§12.4.7 GSAS Writing Studio (15)

*I loved the GSAS writing studio when it first opened but they have severely restricted the opportunities for student work time that isn't structured on their terms (forcing you to meet with their "counselors" and do these pointless meditating and group counseling sessions if you want to go to their writing events). This university is so desperately in need of space for graduate students to work and it made me very sad to essentially lose some of that space in the name of corporate-speak writing therapy instead.*

---

*It's unclear whether MA students have access to the GSAS writing studio.*

---

*There's a GSAS writing studio for doctoral dissertation students, a writing center for undergraduate students, but what about a writing center for pre-exam PhD students or MA students who aren't working on a dissertation and are not undergraduate students? These students (myself included) are taking classes and writing term papers, and it would be nice to have some writing assistance for this population as well.*

---

*GSAS Writing Studio is great!*

---

*It would be nice if the writing studio had more space*

---

*The new GSAS Writing Studio is great!*

---

*The wait times for GSAS writing studio at times are so long that it is unusable.*

---

*I really liked using the Writing Studio to have group writing time but now they have workshops that take up those rooms at all the times I'm free. Maybe they need more space (preferably an accessible one)?*

---

*the gsas writing studio seminar room is freezing. it's difficult to work in there.*

---

*Love the GSAS writing studio.*

---

*GSAS Writing Studio is the best thing that ever happened to Columbia. It is a WONDERFUL service, and I will support it in every way I can (even financially, if it comes to that)*

---

*The GSAS Writing Studio has been wonderful. [SPLIT]*

---

*Writing studio is awesome just needs expanding. [SPLIT]*

---

*GSAS Writing Studio is only for PhD students. Where should the MA students go for writing support? [SPLIT]*

---

*gsas writing studio and CTL are a blessing [SPLIT]*

§12.4.8 General comments (2)

*All these places are overcrowded except the GSAS writing center.*

---

*Columbia has \$10 billion dollars lying around. Use a tiny tiny amount of it to improve health/psych services/gym services!*

### **Summary and recommendations**

We asked students about seven services: the Libraries, Center for Career Education (CCE), Health Services, Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS), Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), Fitness Centers, and GSAS Writing Studio.

**A majority (>50%) of users\* are satisfied with each service, except for the Fitness Centers. The GSAS Writing Studio (opened Fall 2018) is satisfying its users and attracting repeat users.** The Libraries, GSAS Writing Studio, and CTL have high percentages of “Very Satisfied” users.

**Recommendation: bring some student complaints to Fitness (broken equipment) and Health Services (appointment system).** Share other constructive suggestions and complaints if possible.

**Recommendation: continue to support the Writing Studio and share students’ feedback with Writing Studio staff.** Continue to seek space for GSAS students to work and write, including MA and pre-dissertation writers.

\* Respondents who report usage or opinion above “Never” or “N/A (have never used)” respectively.



## Funding

### Section Overview

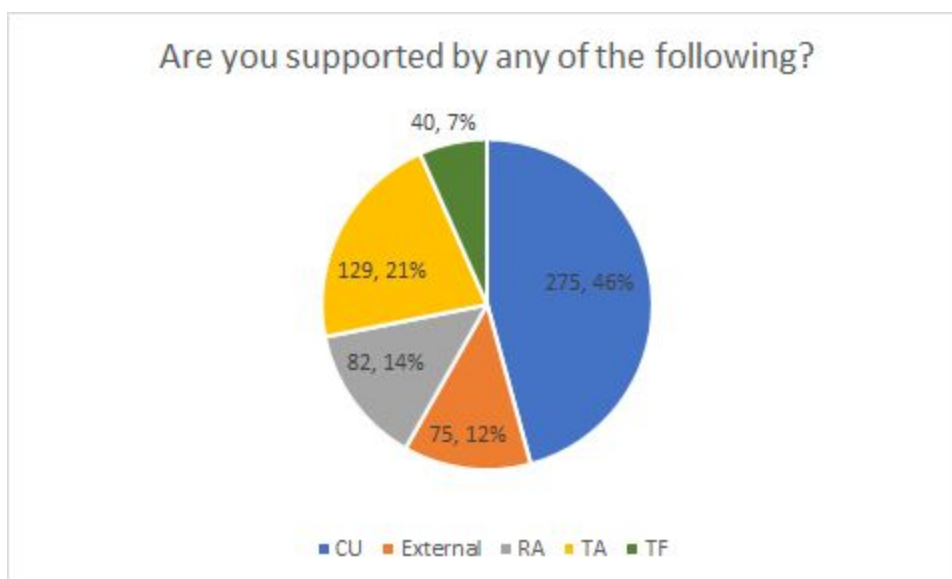
This section focused on students' sense of financial stability, as well as their (various) sources of funding. The questions addressed summer funding options, fellowships, loans, and stipends.

### Fellowships

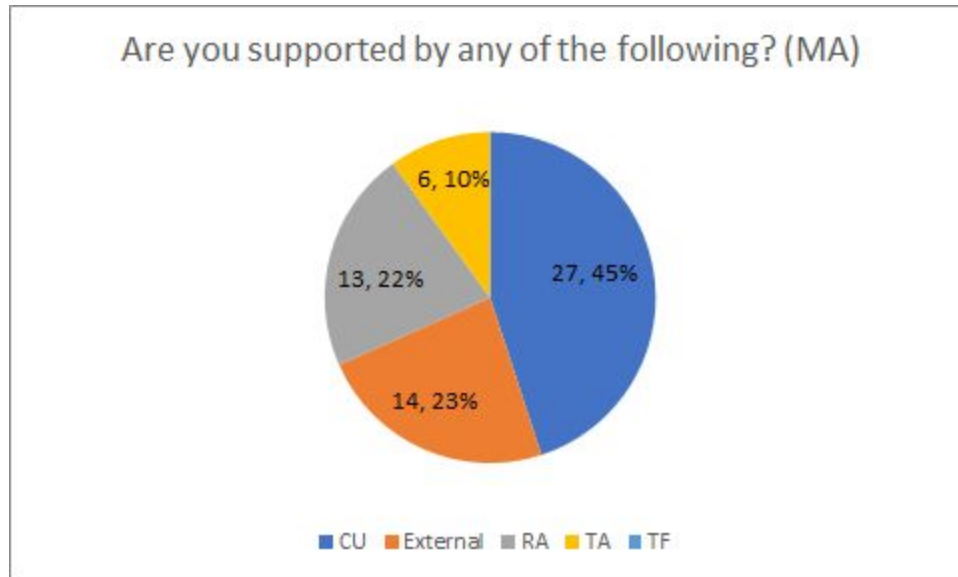
#### Are you supported by any of the following?

The options for this question were: "Columbia Fellowship," "External Fellowship," "Research Assistantship," "Teaching Assistantship," "Teaching Fellowship (sole instructor)," and "Other," with the option to check multiple answers.

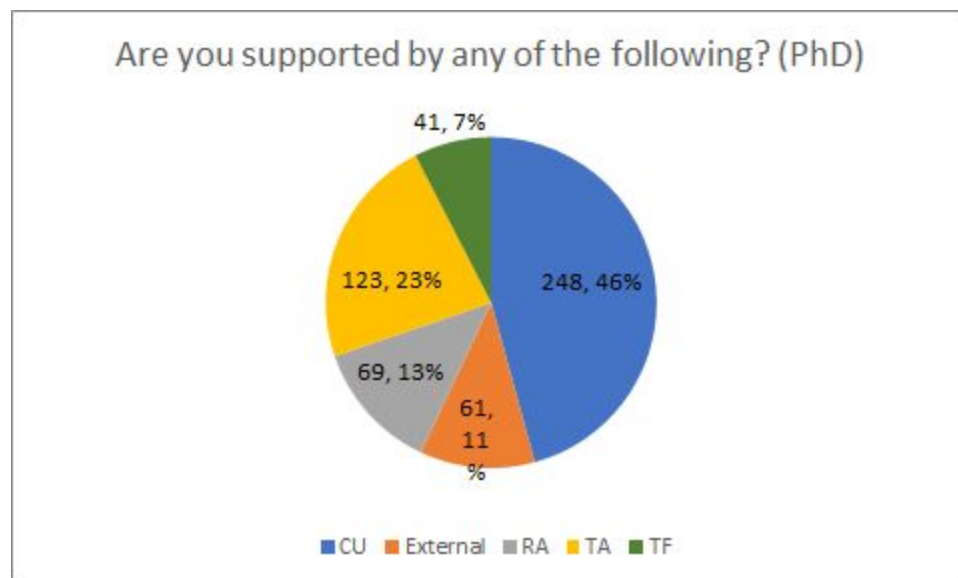
Of the 412 students that responded, there were 601 total submissions, omitting the 8 "Other" submissions. The chart below shows that 46% of students were supported by a Columbia fellowship, 12% by an external fellowship, 14% were RA's, 21% were TA's, and 7% were supported by teaching fellowships. Of the remaining write-in submissions, students indicated that their employer paid for their tuition, were supported by a GSAS (department) scholarship, had a full fellowship in their first year followed by a teaching fellowship in subsequent years, had a government fellowship, were in a work study program, had an international fund/grant, or that they had an army academic fund.



Considering only the Masters students' responses (N = 61), there were 60 total submissions. The results show that 45% of Masters students were supported by a Columbia fellowship, 23% by an external fellowship, 22% were RA's, and the remaining 10% were TA's. There were no Masters students that indicated that they were supported by a teaching fellowship.



Of the PhD students' responses (N = 351), there were 542 total submissions. The results show that 46% of PhD students were supported by a Columbia fellowship, 1% by an external fellowship, 13% were RA's, 23% were TA's, and the remaining 7% were supported by a teaching fellowship.

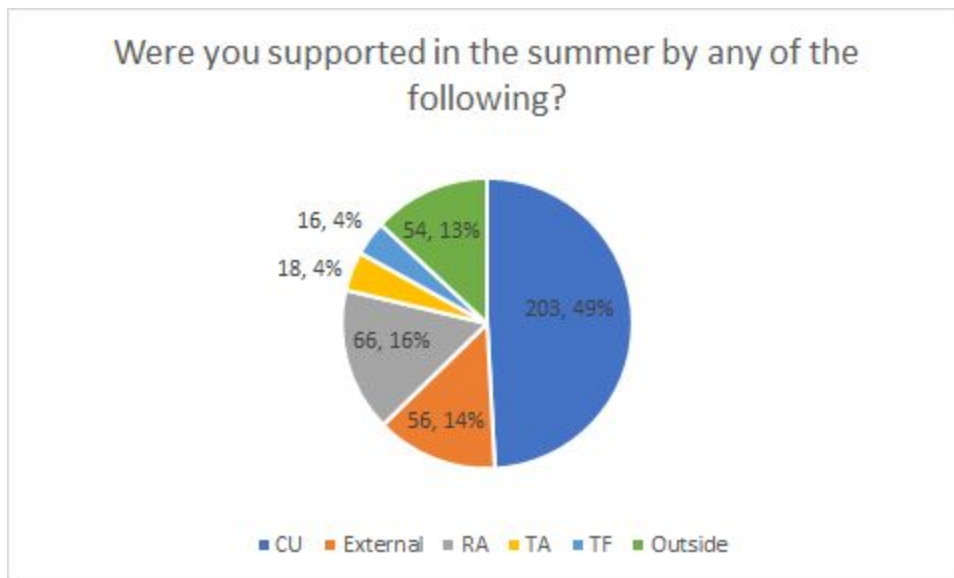


Conclusions: It seems that there were a comparable number of students, both Masters and PhD, that were supported by a Columbia fellowship, while significantly more Masters students were supported by either an external fellowship or a research assistantship. Significantly more PhD students were TAs and, as expected, teaching fellows.

Were you supported in the summer by any of the following? (select all that apply)

This question had choices: “Columbia Fellowship,” “External Fellowship,” “Research Assistantship,” “Teaching Assistantship,” “Teaching Fellowship (sole instructor),” “Outside Employment/Internship,” and “Other,” with the option to check multiple answers.

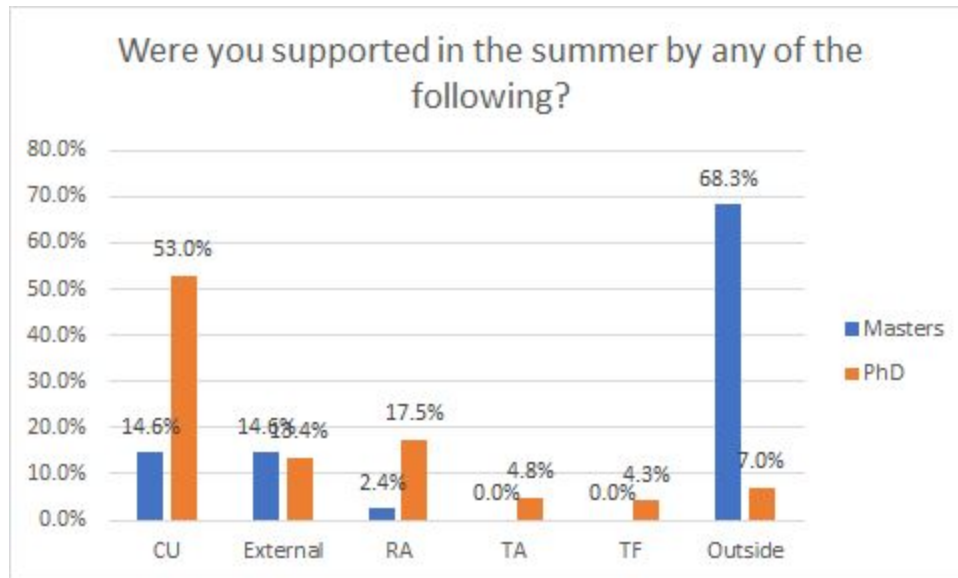
There were a total of 346 students that responded to this question, with 395 total submissions, omitting the 12 “Other” submissions. The chart below shows that 49% were supported by a Columbia fellowship, 14% by an external fellowship, 16% were RA’s, 4% were TAs, 4% by teaching fellowships, and 14% by some outside employment or internship. The write-in submissions indicated that that they were not, but needed one, were supported by their parents, worked as freelancers, applied to teach for the summer, were supported by an external program, taught at other institutions, or that they were supported by the summer stipend, which was not enough to cover rent. Few students also commented that their Columbia fellowship was not enough to cover their rent or barely covered their rent.



Considering only the Masters students’ responses (N = 42), there were 41 total responses, omitting the “Other” submissions. The chart below shows that 15% were supported by a Columbia fellowship, 15% by some external fellowship, 2% were RA’s, and the remaining 68%

were supported by outside employment/internship. There were no students who were supported by any form of teaching work.

Of the PhD students' responses (N = 304), there were 372 total submissions. The chart below shows that 53% were supported by a Columbia fellowship, 13% by some external fellowship, 18% were RA's, 5% were TA's, 4% were teaching fellows, and the remaining 7% were supported by outside employment/internship.



Conclusions: As expected, the sources of funding for Masters and PhD students are vastly different; Masters students depend mostly on some outside employment or internship, while PhD students depend primarily on the various fellowships and research work.

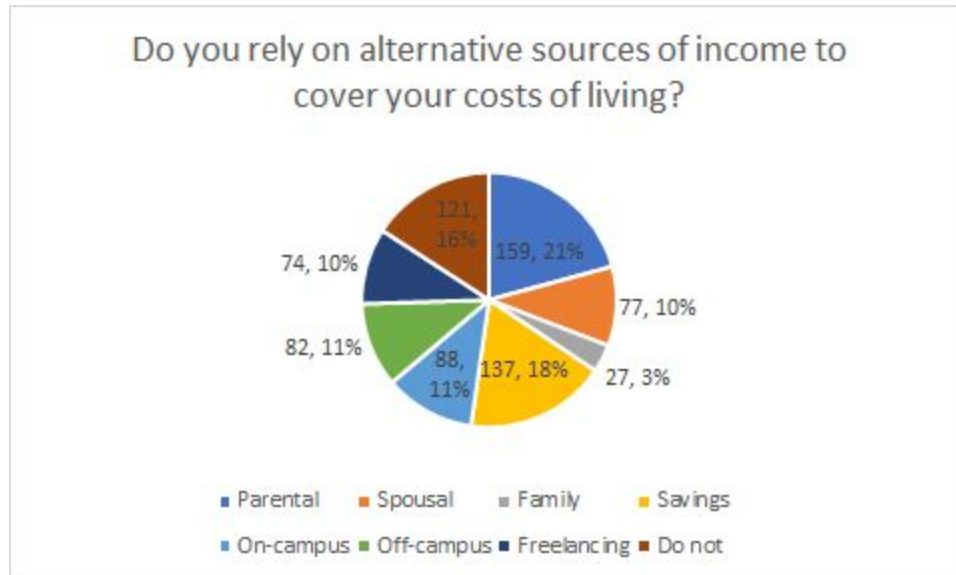
### **Sources on Income/Financial Support**

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

This question had choices “Parental support,” “Spousal support,” “Other family support,” “Savings from previous employment,” “Alternative employment on campus,” “Alternative employment on campus,” “Freelancing,” “I do not rely on any additional sources of income,” and “Other.”

There were 493 total responses, with 765 total submissions, omitting the “Other” submissions. The chart below shows that 21% were supported in part by their parents, 10% by their spouse, 3% by other family members, 18% by savings from previous employment, 11% by alternative

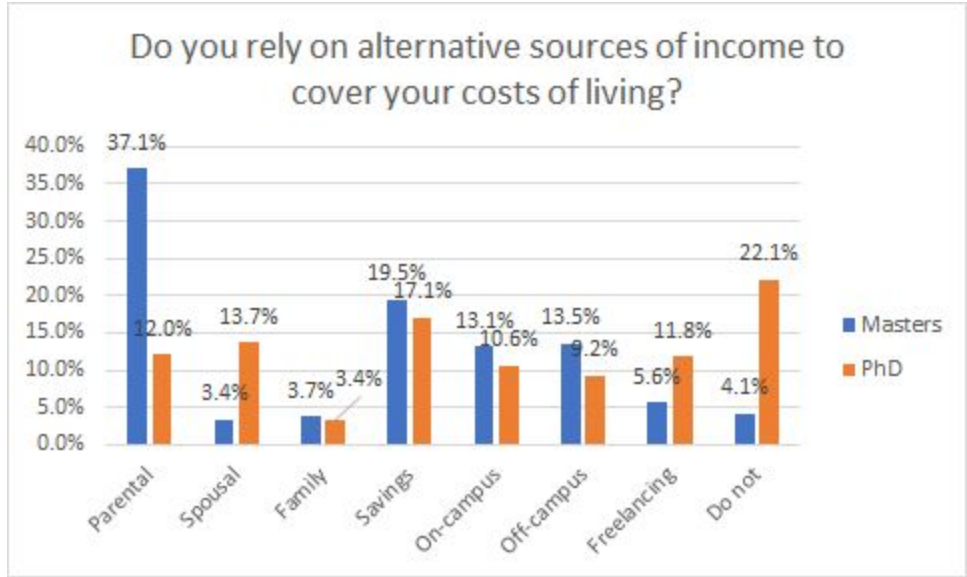
employment on campus, 11% by alternative employment off campus, and 10% by freelancing work. The remaining 16% did not rely on alternative sources of income. The write-in submissions included credit cards, loans, other Columbia fellowships, teaching assistantship beyond their requirements in the department, and full time army paycheck.



Considering only Masters students’ responses (N = 159), there were 267 total submissions. From the chart below, 37.1% relied on their parents, 3.4% relied on their spouse, 3.7% relied on other family members, 19.5% relied on their savings from previous employment, 13.1% relied on an alternative on campus job, 13.5% relied on an alternative off campus job, 5.6% depending on freelance work, and the remaining 4.1% did not rely on alternative sources of income.

Of the PhD students’ responses (N = 334), there were 498 total submissions. From the chart below, 12% relied on their parents, 13.7% relied on their spouse, 3.4% relied on other family members, 17.1% relied on their savings from previous employment, 10.6% relied on an alternative on campus job, 9.2% relied on an alternative off campus job, 11.8% depending on freelance work, and the remaining 22.1% did not rely on alternative sources of income.

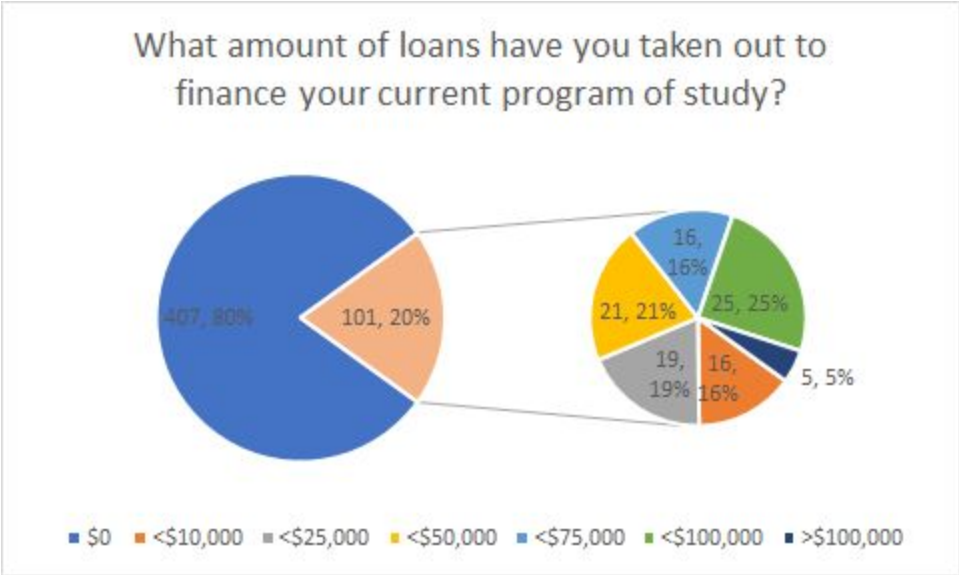
Conclusions: Again, as expected the alternative sources of income are different for Masters and PhD students. As Masters students tend to be younger (median age is between 20 to 25) than PhD students (median age is between 26 to 30) in addition to the fact that Masters students have less funding opportunities (including stipends), it is plausible to believe that they may be more dependent on others, ie. family, parents, loans, etc. This is clearly demonstrated in the chart below, as three times more Masters students rely on their parents than PhD students by proportion.



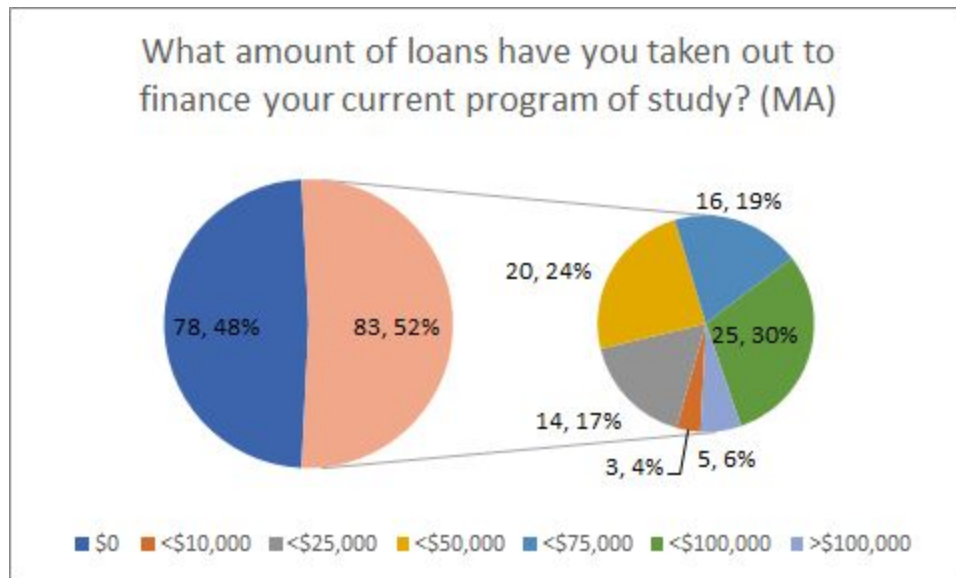
What amount of loans have you taken out to finance your current program of study?

This question had choices: \$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.”

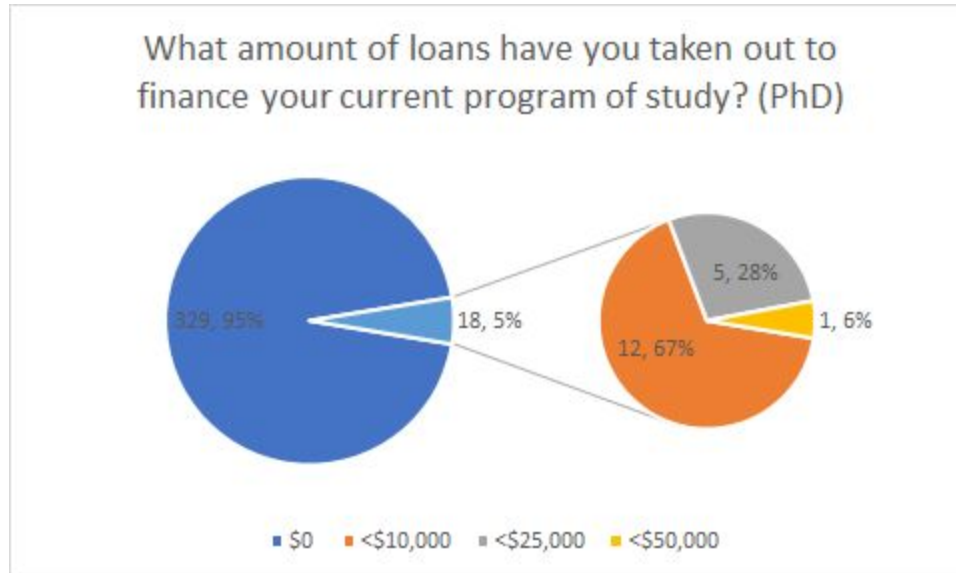
There were a total of 508 responses, of which 80% of students indicated that they had not taken out a loan. Of the students that did take out a loan to finance their program of study, 16% took out less than \$10,000, 19% took out between \$10,000 and \$25,000, 21% took out between \$25,000 and \$50,000, 16% took out between \$50,000 and \$75,000, 25% took out between \$75,000 and \$100,000, and the remaining 5% took out more than \$100,000.



Considering only the Masters students' responses (N = 161), approximately half took out loans and half did not. Of those who took out a loan to finance their program, 4% took out less than \$10,000, 17% took out between \$10,000 and \$25,000, 24% took out between \$25,000 and \$50,000, 19% took out between \$50,000 and \$75,000, 30% took out between \$75,000 and \$100,00, and the remaining 6% took out more than \$100,00. The median Masters student's loan was between \$50,000 and \$75,000.



Of the PhD students' responses (N = 347), 95% did not take out a loan to finance their degree. Of those that did, 67% took out a loan less than \$10,000, 28% took out between \$10,000 and \$25,000, and the remaining 6% took out between \$25,000 and \$50,000. The median loan was less than \$10,000.



Conclusions: It is significantly more likely for a Masters student to take out a loan than it is for a PhD student. This is likely due to many different factors, including age and funding. Of the Masters students that took out a loan, the median amount was between \$50,000 and \$75,000 compared to the PhD median of less than \$10,000.

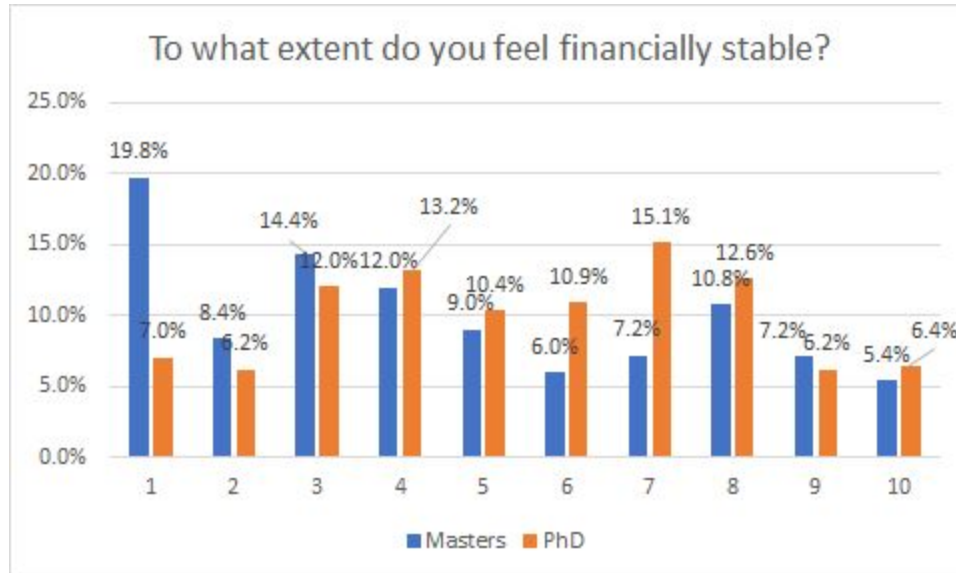
To what extent do you feel financially stable?

This question was based on a 1 (Not at all) to 10 (Very) scale.

There were 524 total responses, of which 167 were Masters and 357 were PhD. As can be seen from the chart below, Masters students feel less financially stable than PhD students, and the distribution is weighted more heavily on the lower (not stable) side. Conversely, the distribution of PhD students is more normally spread out centered around neutral. The median Masters response was 4 and the median PhD response was 6.

Conclusions: Masters students feel less financially stable than the PhD students. This may be due to several reasons, including lack of funding opportunities that lead to half of all Masters students taking out loans to finance their program. However, PhD students on average only believe that they are slightly financially stable.

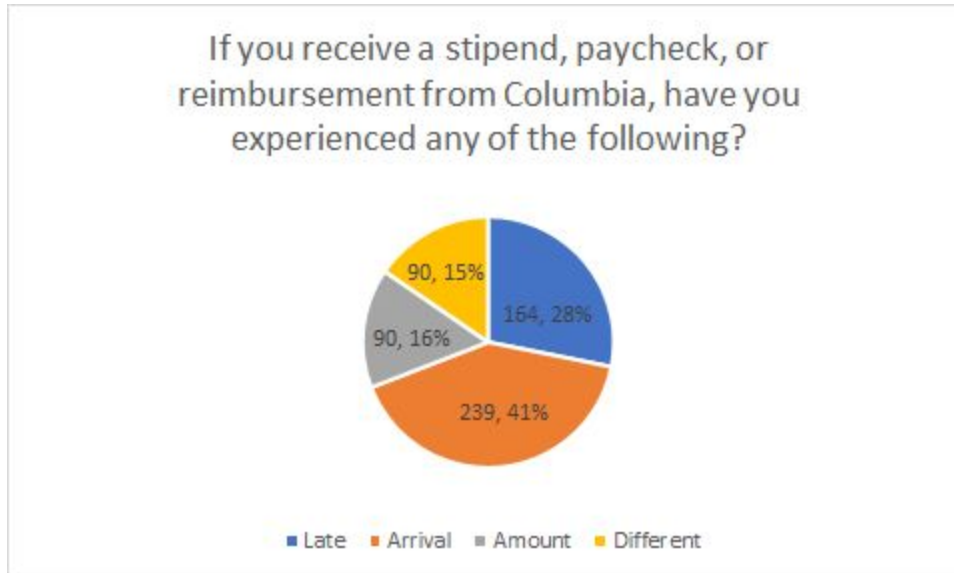




If you receive a stipend, paycheck, or reimbursement from Columbia, have you experienced any of the following?

This question had choices: “Late payment,” “Uncertainty about when payment will arrive,” “Uncertainty about payment amount,” “Payment amount different than expected,” and “Other,” with the option to choose multiple choices.

There were 299 responses, with 583 total submissions, omitting the “Other” submissions. Of these submissions, 28% included “late payment”, 41% included “uncertainty about payment amount”, 16% included “uncertainty about payment amount”, and 15% included “payment amount different than expected.” The write-in submissions noted that payment was disorganized in January, that they had received wrong checks, that payment was withheld due to enrollment, that all the options have occurred during their academic career at Columbia, that they had not received payment until significantly later, or that they do not have access to health insurance for months into the semester due to slow processing.



Conclusions: There seems to be a significant number of students experiencing difficulty receiving stipends, paychecks, or reimbursements, and many students indicated that all the issues listed have happened to them. Some have noted that there is also a lack of communication as well as occasional errors.

If you have experienced late pay in the past, can you detail the circumstances?

There were 103 comments submitted.

Several comments addressed their reimbursement for RA/TA work:

*Beginning research assistantship in late August... not receiving payment until December.*

*For my research assistantship. The first 2 pay-checks were late by about a month. Got both of my checks at the end of the semester when I had been working for already 2 months.*

*I was switching from teaching assistantship to an external fellowship and my payment was delayed by months.*

*I was told explicitly that tax money would not be taken out of my TA Assistantship stipend but then it was. This inconsistency made it difficult for me to estimate how much of my stipend I would need to set aside for taxes.*

Others addressed the poor communication:

*Errata in fellowship and TA comp disbursement, requiring repeated followup with late resolution.*

*I was not informed or counseled on the correct RU to take after returning from medical leave.*

One recurring theme was regarding the tech and administrative issues:

*Expectations for payment were withheld due to the fact that I was not enrolled for the semester (I have no reason to enroll because I'm graduating).*

*Columbia's system seems to have broken down a few times and not paid students on time.*

*Understanding my SSOL E-Billing is a nightmare.*

*CU had some technical issues. (And yet I had to pay my rent somehow, because the housing office did not care about the technical issue that caused a delay in payment).*

*In summer 2018, the university changed the way summer teaching assistantships were dealt with because it was shifted to SPA, so the funding system also changed. SPA and my department did not appropriately communicate about this, so I had a "double appointment" issue which resulted in both my regular stipend and my TA payment being late. This affected other students as well.*

*It is always the same reason - the staff is overwhelmed and they were not expecting the rush.*

*Virtually no communication was given about the disbursement of Spring 2020 stipend in January.*

*It was not communicated that I would be receiving reimbursement versus being sent the money outright. Then I had to go through the hassle of collecting receipts for purchases and was not reimbursed for the purchases I could not find proper receipts for.*

*Reimbursements (sometimes hundreds or thousands of dollars, as for university related travel expenses) that come after months and have no clear turnaround timeline are a big problem.*

*My first paycheck in my first semester at Columbia was several weeks late. I received no communication about it, and other students in my program were all paid at inconsistent times. In a different semester, my stipend was delayed due to problems with various digital systems on Columbia's end.*

*There was a problem processing my paperwork because of multiple appointments. No one in my department explained to me where the issue was coming from until we were halfway through the semester (when I was supposed to be paid every two weeks for work I was doing for the entire semester).*

*It was always about bureaucratic failures within Columbia systems: offices forgetting to file documents, questions not being answered, etc.*

*For the last three years I had a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship. Because of this, I was apparently "fired" from the University for three years. When that ran out in summer 2019, I was "re-hired" even though I continued to work for Columbia this entire time. I had to re-apply for everything payment-wise. This resulted in my first paycheck coming 6 weeks later than it was needed, because of administration ridiculousness.*

Many students also experienced difficulty with rent payments due to late payments:

*Several times, Columbia has not managed to make beginning-of-the-year (January) stipend deposits available when they should be. In several cases, this has put the first required payment for housing BEFORE the arrival of the check.*

*My whole program waited for two months for our paychecks. People were really struggling to get by.*

Other Comments:

*A scholarship I received originally did not appear on my Fall 2019 bill.*

Do you have any other comments about funding or finances at Columbia?

There were 118 total submitted comments.

Comments advocating for Masters students' financial support were the most common submission:

*...no scholarship opportunities for masters students*

*It would be nice if they could provide some funding in the form of merit scholarships for its MA students.*

*Making more fellowships available to MA students at a value realistic to living in New York and attending Columbia would greatly decrease student stress and allow us to focus more attention on our research.*

*It would be great if MA students could qualify for internal funding and if the tuition increases would let up a bit.*

Many comments addressed issues regarding PhD students' financial wellness:

*Why did GSAS stop 8th year funding possibilities? My advisor has never had someone finish before 7 years.*

*PhD students at NYU earn around the same stipend and do not have to TA. At 31, I have zero savings and do not feel financially stable... Princeton receives far higher stipends for a place with a lower cost of living.*

*We need guaranteed years 6 and 7 funding.*

Two other common topics were regarding the housing and financial offices:

*There should be CLEAR dates on when we receive our stipends...*

*On top of that, we are essentially penalized for winning outside fellowships, by reducing the amount they are willing to pay to us.*

*Paperwork, especially those related to taxes, are difficult for a foreigner like me.*

*What I am being billed for and what I am actually paying for when I pay (rent) is totally unclear and housing and finance never seem to have an answer.*

*It's really challenging to get in touch with an actual person when there are issues / questions about finances at Columbia, which tends to make a stressful situation even more frustrating. It would be great if those resources were easier to access.*

*I am dropping out of the program because there is not enough financial help. I am succeeding in classes but cannot afford the program.*

*Columbia should divert some of its endowment to lowering the cost of campus housing.*

*While I feel fairly secure financially (and I receive slightly more due to an external fellowship), I also realize that rent is very high in New York and the situations of graduate students can easily change: I cannot afford to risk a large health care bill (so I don't use any health services!), and certainly could not afford to start a family while in graduate school. By far the biggest budget commitment is rent, which I hope the university is able to re-assess in its own properties.*

Other Comments:

*There should be more financial help (need-based).*

*Because I'm paid for both my teaching work AND my work at the Writing Center, I have no way of separating them out to double check each amount. They arrive as a lump sum.*

*For students, who receive health and/or dental insurance through their spouse, and elect NOT to use Columbia insurance, Columbia should give such students the value of the insurance as a check. This is fair, since Columbia calculates the value of the insurance in the total value of the fellowship/student funding.*

### **Section Summary and Remarks**

Funding and financial wellness are some of the key influences in the graduate student community. Incredibly, only 22% of PhD students relied solely on funding through Columbia, ie. TA, RA, TF, fellowships, and external fellowships, while a stunning 4% of Masters students relied on funding through Columbia. Approximately half of all Masters students reported having taken out a loan to finance their program, with a median amount of between \$50,000 and \$75,000. The median Masters student felt that they were not financially stable (4) and the median PhD student felt mildly financially stable (6), both of which needs to be improved. A significant fraction of students experienced issues with reimbursement, and the most common feedback from the student were poor communication, system issues, and administrative/logistic complaints. The open write-in submissions in the last two questions shed light on the growing inaccessibility of graduate education at Columbia; the majority of students' sources of stress were due to their financial instability, as well as their ability to make rent payments in appropriate time.

## Unionization

### Section Overview

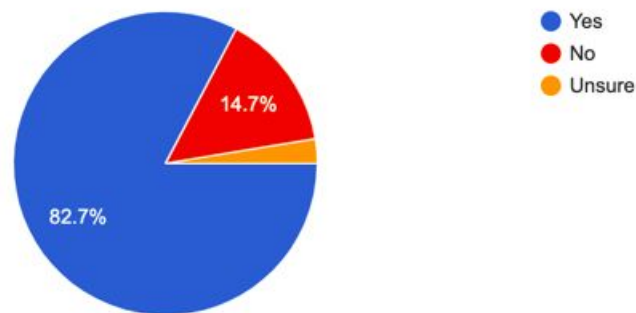
This section asked respondents to reflect on the newly formed graduate student union. Questions pertain to students' knowledge and perceptions of the union itself, in addition to students' attitudes about Columbia administration's response to union efforts.

#### 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".

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

538 responses



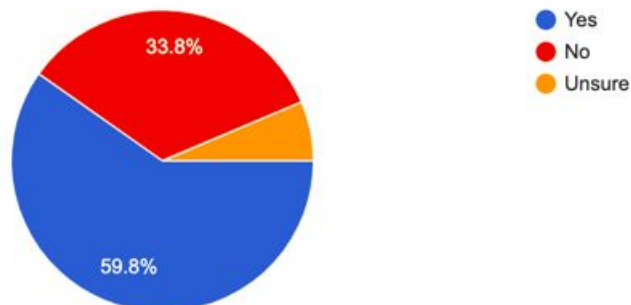
Of 538 respondents, 82.7% were aware that graduate students at Columbia had formed a union; 14.7% of respondents were unaware of the union; and 2.6% were unsure.

#### Are you following the ongoing bargaining negotiations between the union and Columbia?

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

Are you following the ongoing bargaining negotiations between the union and Columbia?

532 responses



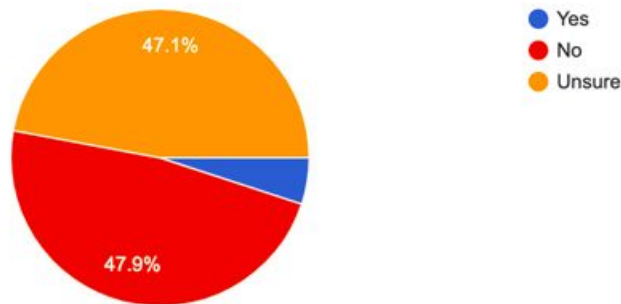
Of 532 respondents, 59.8% reported that they were following the ongoing bargaining negotiations between the union and Columbia; 33.8% were not following the negotiations; and 6.4% were unsure.

### Are you satisfied with Columbia's bargaining process?

Of 495 respondents, 5.1% were satisfied with Columbia's bargaining process; 47.9% were unsatisfied with Columbia's bargaining process; and 47.1% were unsure.

#### Are you satisfied with Columbia's bargaining process?

495 responses

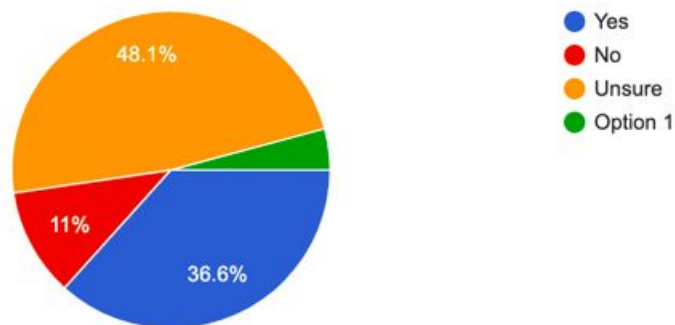


### Are you satisfied with the union's bargaining process?

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

#### Are you satisfied with the union's bargaining process?

453 responses



Of 453 respondents, 38.6% were satisfied with the union's bargaining process; 11% were unsatisfied with the union's bargaining process; and 48.1% were unsure. *Note: Due to an erroneous response option, 5.1% of respondents' data were unusable.*

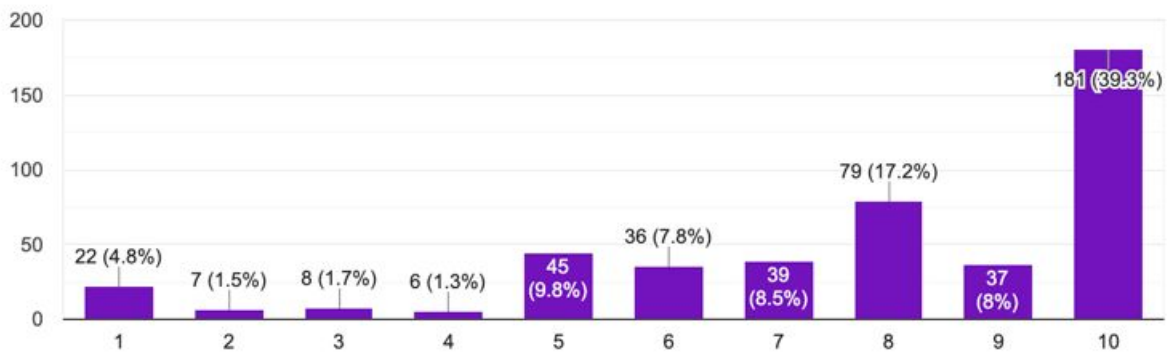


### Do you feel that having a contract and a recognized union will improve your quality of life?

This scaled question asked participants whether they feel having a contract and recognized union would improve their quality of life. Participants responded on a scale of 1(not at all) to 10 (a great deal).

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

460 responses



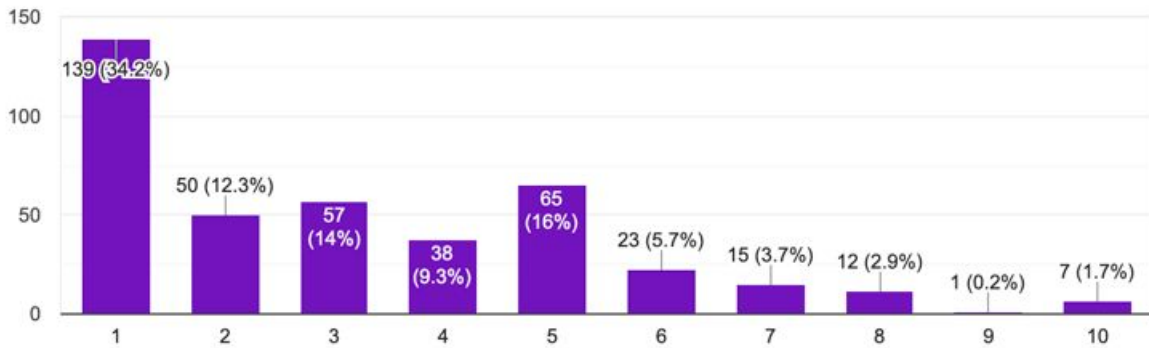
Of 460 total respondents, the majority reported feeling that a contract and recognized union would improve their quality of life -- 80.8% of participants responded with 6 or greater. 39.3% of respondents indicated that their quality of life would be improved 'a great deal', while only 4.8% of participants indicated that a contract and recognized union would 'not at all' improve their quality of life.

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

This scaled question asked participants to rate Columbia administration's response to the issue of unionization. Participants responded on a scale of 1(very bad) to 10 (very good).

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

407 responses



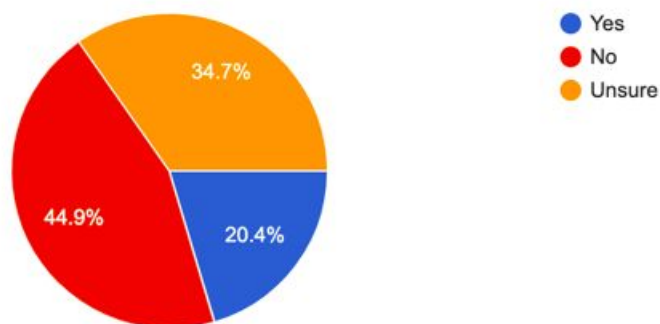
Of 407 total respondents, the majority reported dissatisfaction with Columbia administrations' response to the issue of unionization -- 69.8% of participants responded with 4 or lower. 34.2% of respondents indicated that Columbia administration's response has been 'very bad', while only 1.7% of participants indicated that the response has been 'very good'.

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

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

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

481 responses



Of 481 respondents, 20.4% reported feeling that the Columbia administration is committed to improving their quality of life and working conditions regardless of unionization. 44.9% of

respondents indicated that they did not feel that the administration was committed to improving quality of life and working conditions. 34.7% were unsure.

### Do you have any other comments about unionization at Columbia?

Participants were invited to share their general comments on unionization at Columbia using a free response format.

Of 82 total respondents, a number of responses expressed extreme disappointment with the Columbia administrations' response to unionization and approach to bargaining.

*The administration has not come to the bargaining table in good faith, and continues to be resolutely obstinate when it comes to the issues that matter most to us as graduate workers, such as fair compensation, decent health care, protections for international students, and real recourse for harassment and assault. Furthermore, they have often changed locations or cancelled bargaining sessions on short notice, or simply not shown up, and their negotiators have been seen sleeping during negotiations. This sort of conduct is unacceptable and demonstrates with utmost clarity just how little the administration cares about our wellbeing as students and our rights as workers.*

*Columbia's response to unionization has been a disgrace and continues to lead to low morale among graduate students.*

*Shame on Columbia for dragging their feet on bargaining with GWC. We need a union contract with real recourse and comprehensive improvements to our healthcare. Anything else is inadequate. Columbia has proven that it will do very little other than make symbolic efforts to respond to our issues in the absence of a union.*

*Even as someone who doesn't care very much about unionization, I still think trying to thwart unionization efforts makes the administration look like a villain.*

*I did my MA at a university with a strong graduate union and it had a hugely positive effect on our quality of life. I feel the difference at Columbia. At my previous institution, issues of late pay, unclear pay, etc would have never happened. Especially in the bargaining for health insurance, the Columbia administration has been ungenerous and outright cold--they admit that the change to the health plans this year was a cost-saving measure, despite the fact that it financially burdens students with chronic illnesses.*

There were a number of messages of support for (a/the) union and its efforts. Some respondents also reflected on specific needs that the union might help advocate on behalf of.

*We need an actual, formal, independent grievance procedure to address sexual assault, in addition to the university's Title IX office. It is a very, very bad look to oppose this demand.*

*I do not fully support unionization, but health care is the most important benefit I hope to earn through this process. Please keep fighting for that, first and foremost! Let the paid time off, desk space, etc. go so that we can have dental insurance.*

*Go get 'em! Thanks for fighting for unionization!*

Others expressed their disapproval of the union and its bargaining tactics. For some of these respondents, there was concern about being ostracized for their views.

*I answered "very bad" to the question above "How would you rate the Columbia administration's response to the issue of unionization?" because I think Columbia should never have recognized or bargained with the union. I feel sad to see the administration of this prestigious institution prostrate itself to the aggressive, underhanded, and coercive tactics of this entitled group of students.*

*The union people are extremely annoying. Columbia should not give them an inch.*

*As someone not in support of the union (especially in a humanities dept) I feel that I have to stay quiet. I would be harassed or ostracized if I were to be public about my non-support of the union.*

## Section Summary

Respondents were largely familiar with the union and its bargaining process. Additionally, the majority of respondents reported feeling that a contract and recognized union would improve their quality of life. All the same, many respondents expressed concern about Columbia administration's response to unionization and bargaining. These data suggest a disparity between graduate students' needs (for improved quality of life) and the Columbia administration's desire to bargain. These data also suggest that respondents are feeling uncertainty about ongoing negotiations, with many being unsure if they are satisfied with either the union or Columbia's bargaining. This uncertainty is perhaps symptomatic of a general lack of information about graduate student's rights as workers, which is one issue that the union rallies to address.

## General Remarks

### Department

When asked to finish the sentence “Something my department could do to improve my quality of life is...” 225 participants offered comments.

A total of 62 students requested better **communication** from their department and emphasized the need for **transparency**. Although most of these comments demanded a general increase in communication and transparency (35), ten of these were directed towards clearer requirement guidelines and degree timeline milestones, as well as clarity on exams (1), on fellowship assignments (1), and on sexual misconduct (1). Four students ask their department to take into account graduate student voices. Two students demanded increased communication between staff members. Two people requested a complete student handbook and one student an anonymous forum for feedback within the department. One student specifically complained about their DGS and the lack of communication with them.

48 students discussed **funding** issues. Seventeen demanded an increase in stipend. Nine students asked for an increase in effective communication and transparency surrounding funding. Seven students demanded more grants and financial aid, and five students the extension of the time of guaranteed funding. Four students asked for an increase in travel/conference funding. Three students specifically complained about significant delays in reimbursing expenses. Two students requested lower tuition, one student asked for an increase in work study pay. One respondents requested an increase in the Summer stipend.

31 students requested an increase in **faculty presence and availability for feedback**. Ten students decried the current lack of effective mentoring in their department, one of which noted this was particularly an issue with senior faculty. Four students complained about the quality of the faculty in their department. Four respondents decried that PhD students get more support from faculty than MA students. A total of five students wanted more faculty hires, two of which asked that more junior faculty be hired. Two respondents requested more personal support from faculty, and one student asked that less professors be on sabbatical at the same time. Four respondents requested a required advising meeting.

Twenty-Six students shared their thoughts on **departmental events and activities**. Twelve students expressed the need to develop community building initiatives and opportunities to socialize. Five students asked for their department to conduct mental health initiatives, and two students specifically addressed initiatives to reduce stress. Two students asked for training for academic publication. Two students discussed how important these events are for first years and

two other students requested events to be held at a more accommodating time. One student in Lamont noted the including across departments for students in Lamont. One student recommended promoting interdisciplinarity among departments. One student asked that halal food be provided at their department event.

A total of 21 students expressed themselves on **diversity and inclusion**. Three students made general demands about promoting inclusion and diversity. Five students requested diversity initiatives at the faculty level and four students at the graduate student body level. One student asked to have more diverse invited speakers, and one student demanded that their department provide for diversity and inclusion training.

Seventeen students requested appropriate **communication of the reality of the job market** and what the field looks like, including for non academic jobs (3), and two asked for the development of internship opportunities. Four students requested a departmental career development workshop and one student a career fair.

Seventeen students asked their department to provide adequate **workspace**, two of which specifically mentioned lacking a space to hold office hours. Three students asked for improved lounge space for students, and one student mentioned the need for a space for students to share their work. One respondent thought that construction work should be coordinated to not disrupt work.

Sixteen students expressed themselves on the topic of **coursework**. Four students requested a reduced course load, three students asked for more course offerings, two to allow priority of registration to students who are close to graduation, and two students addressed the need for more flexibility in curriculum. One student asked for more electives. One student requested more classes with tenured professors as opposed to lecturers, and one student asked for smaller class sizes. One asked for no coursework requirement past the qualifying exams and another recommended 3 hour seminars, instead of 2. Four students wished for a reduced work load for TA's.

Seven students demanded a **safe climate from sexual and gender based discrimination**, three of which specifically mentioned that policies should be in place to control hiring of faculty with a history of sexual misconduct.

Four students noted they loved their departments and didn't see a necessity for improvement.

## GSAS

When asked to finish the sentence “Something that my school/dean could do to improve my quality of life is...” 149 students offered comments

Forty-six students addressed **funding**. 25 students requested an increase stipend, and seven students addressed the need for 6<sup>th</sup> year and 7<sup>th</sup> year guaranteed funding. Six students asked for an increase financial support for MA students, and two students asked for their tuition to be lowered. Five students asked for more scholarships. Two students requested additional travel funding opportunities. One student complained about punitive policies for students who don't finish in 7 years, and one asked for timely payment.

Seventeen students asked GSAS to improve **communication and transparency**. Four respondents asked for clarification of requirements for the PhD. Three students asked specifically for better communication about 6<sup>th</sup> year funding ambiguity. Three students asked GSAS to encourage interdisciplinary communication. Two students asked for clarification of the chapter meeting process. One student asked for transparency of fellowship assignments, one for clarity of course offering, and one for clarification of department specific requirements.

Ten students asked for GSAS to be more supportive of the **union**.

Nine students asked for **career-focus initiatives** and for GSAS to confront the dire reality of the job market, two of which asked for interview prep and two for including networking events and job talks. Two students asked for **lower acceptance rates** to increase chances in the job market

Six students commented on their current **insurance plan** and asked for improvement, one student specifically brought up the return to the 100 plan, and one student asked for better dental coverage.

Six students requested additional **workspaces**, two of which asked for guaranteed carrels.

Six students offered comments on **housing**, three of which asked for affordable housing, one for increase in availability of housing and for a more personalized selection process. One respondent asked for more accommodating housing for parents.

Five students commented on **parental accommodations**, asking for better resources. Two asked for longer parental leave. One respondent mentioned childcare, and another the need to increase childcare subsidies.

Five students asked for more **social events**, including ASGC events, and three students would like to see more community building initiatives. One asked that university life events be more tailored to grad students.

Four students insisted on a **commitment to diversify** the faculty and graduate student body, better address the needs of low-income students, students of color, and “those who do not fit the Ivy League stereotype.” Two respondents asked for a commitment to fight racial discrimination.

Four students addressed **gender-based misconduct and sexual assault**, two of which asked for an investigation of sexual misconduct cases in their departments.

Two students probed for a serious upgrading of **accessibility** on campus. One of the respondents referred to accessibility as an “afterthought” for Columbia, rather than a commitment.

Two students solicited more **mental health** support, and two others improved access to **health care**.

Two respondents asked for more **teaching opportunities**, including across departments.

Two students asked for **tax filing** help.

Among individual comments that were made, one student asked for decreasing the workload from coursework, one for no late classes, one for no restriction on class registration, one for departmental specific policy on chapter meetings, one student asks GSAS to ensure the fairness of departmental requirements, one student asked to be charged per credit. One respondents asked to allow non academic work to stand in for fellowship assignments, one asked that they have two DGS’s, one asked for increase safety on campus and in Morningside Park, one to take into account grad students voices, one to extend teaching scholar program to the summer, one spoke against gentrification and Columbia’s expansion into Harlem, one to have a line of reporting for grievances with required follow up, one for a better gym, and one is happy with GSAS’s work.

## Columbia

When asked to finish the sentence “Something that Columbia could do to improve my quality of life is...” 227 students provided comments

Fifty-three students requested an increase in **funding**. Six respondents asked for guaranteed funding beyond fifth year.

Thirty-nine students demanded that Columbia **bargain in good faith with the union**.



Twenty-Six respondents asked for improvement and expansion of **Dodge Fitness center**, five asked for cheaper gym class, and one for free lockers.

Twenty-two students provided comments on **housing**. Sixteen requested more affordable housing. Other comments ask for more single room housing options, and housing options in general, including for non-furnished units, an improved system for roommate grievances, GSAS only housing, international student specific housing, and a reporting system for housing grievances.

Twenty students asked for better health **insurance**, including two who requested to get the 100 plan back. Eleven students requested dental insurance 11 and one student eye insurance. Two students want better **mental health** resources.

Eight students commented on the lack of **workspace**.

Six respondents asked Columbia to commit to **inclusion and diversity** at both the student and faculty level.

Five students asked that Columbia foster community through **events across departments**.

Four students made a call for enhancing **public safety** measures, specifically in Morningside Park.

Three respondents called for improved **accessibility** on campus, the current accessibility options do not meet the needs of disabled students.

Three requested **transportation vouchers** for those living off campus.

Three students asked for improvement of **parental accommodations**, including an increase childcare subsidy, and accommodations regardless of gender.

Two students demanded a commitment to **fighting sexual harassment**, with specific call to “fire sexual harasser.”

Three asked for **free or cheaper coffee**, and two for healthier and cheaper **dining options** on Campus. Two asked to create more **outdoor sitting**. Two called for **building renovations**, including libraries.

Two called for Columbia to **divest from fossil fuels**.

Two respondents asked that **students' point of views** be taken into consideration.

Among individual requests was one request for shorter timeline of study, one student asked for help filing taxes, one for reduced teaching workload, one for more affordable printing, one that at least one dining hall remain open during holidays, one for increase stress management resources, One for more group work spaces, one asked that CPS be appropriately staffed, one called to improve the referral system for students and their spouses, one to get the CCE to be more supportive of humanities students interested in non-academic employment, one asked to enforce rules in library to prevent desk monopolization, one for better library access for alumni, one for access to the CUMC library, one for improved work life balance one for timely disbursements and one asked to remove ISSO fee and one to remove GRE requirement.

#### **Additional Comments:**

When asked “**Do you have any other comments or feedback about quality of life at Columbia?**” 52 students provided comments, 21 of which were constructive.

Seven students asked for better **health care**, two of which noted that their physical health had declined since they have been at Columbia and two others their mental health had declined since enrollment.

Four students demanded a better **gym**. Three students noted being happy at Columbia. Two students decried the **workload**. One student asked for mechanisms to protect student from **discrimination and harassment**. One student asked for increased **public safety** measures, and that a question on public safety be added to the survey. One student asked for better communication of resources available such as **ISSO services and the food pantry**. One student asked for an improvement of **sustainability** efforts, particularly on reducing food waste. One student asked for **free coffee** on campus.