



ARTS AND SCIENCES

GRADUATE COUNCIL

SEMESTER REPORT

Spring 2019

ASGC EXECUTIVE BOARD:

President: Sarah Arkebauer
Vice President: Andrew Hsu
Communications Chair: Zoë Dostal
Finance Chair: Mike Ford
Quality of Life Chair: Kate McIntyre
Alumni & Career Chair: Debbie Sokolowski
Events Co-Chairs: Milica Ilicic & Brandon Graser
Media Chair: Rogério Shieh Barbosa
Masters Affairs Chair: Amanda Marie Platek

New York, June 2019

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DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATION

REPRESENTATION OVERVIEW

In conjunction with the Masters Affairs Chair there was a significant effort this year to notify masters programs of the new ASGC structure and recruit masters representatives. By the end of the year there were 19 masters representatives and all but one of the PhD positions were filled. Efforts are already underway to confirm Department Representatives for 2019–2020, as of May 8 there are 14 confirmed PhD and MA representatives.

We had 28 PhD reps (out of 29) and 19 MA reps out of 40 total MA programs. 5 of the MA programs are very small or do not currently have any students.

MA/PHD EXTERNAL REPRESENTATIVES

In lieu of joining an ASGC subcommittee, department representatives can volunteer to serve as external representatives to organizations with whom ASGC collaborates. These external representatives include University Senators (Humanities, Sciences, Social Sciences), IGB Board, ISSO, GWC, Libraries (2), Health, and Disabilities. With the exception of 2 of the 3 IGB slots, all external representative slots are currently filled. Thanks in part to the reorganization of the Community Chair position into VP of External Affairs, we intend to

MEETING ATTENDANCE

	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April
PHD	22	24	24	18	26	26	24	24
MASTERS	14	15	10	8	15	15	14	14
TOTAL	36	39	34	26	36	41	38	38

As has been our policy previously, Department Representatives were reminded of the plenary meeting on the day of, and both minutes and a brief review of the highlights were sent out within a few days of the meeting. Attendance numbers held steady for the spring semester, including at our final April meeting. Where last year we also had a meeting in May, this year we ensured all business was finished by April in order to keep the final meeting robustly attended.

COMMUNICATIONS

NEWSLETTER AND WEBSITE

With the reconfiguration from GSAC to ASGC, the newsletter was redesigned to match the new logo. Access to the GSAS mailing lists enabled the newsletter to reach the entire ASGC constituency. Regular newsletters were sent every Tuesday and additional special edition newsletters were sent for announcements such as the Quality of Life Survey. The final weekly newsletter was sent out on Tuesday, May 14. Intermittent newsletters will be sent out during the summer. The ASGC website was regularly updated to create an archive of newsletters, plenary attendance and minutes, and new forms for elections and award nominations.

ADMINISTRATIVE

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS AND RESOLUTIONS

In January, the following resolution was passed by the ASGC Plenary with regards to Ivy+ Graduate and Professional Student Summit:

ASGC supports Columbia University's continued inclusion and involvement in the Ivy+ Graduate and Professional Student Government Group, including organizing and participating in its annual summit. ASGC also affirms that the ASGC Executive Board represents Columbia University in all decisions related to Ivy+, in perpetuity, and can make decisions on behalf of ASGC and Columbia University without their express consent.

This year, we had trouble recruiting and retaining a member in the Community Chair, which was a new position created in the GSAC/ASGC reorganization. After going without a person in this position for some months, we elected to rework the position to better reflect the needs of ASGC now that we have fully transitioned from GSAC. In March, the following amendment was passed by the ASGC Plenary with regards to the former Community Chair:

- * The Community Chair position will be elevated to become the External Affairs Vice President (EAVP)*
- * The Vice President remains next-in-line for President, should there be an unforeseen vacancy*
- * Generally, the role of the Community Chair shall be transferred to the role of the EAVP*
- * The sole responsibility and organizer of outside plenary speakers rests with the EAVP*

- * *The EAVP will lead the Advocacy and Community Committee (ACC). External representatives will all sit on the ACC and will report to the EAVP prior to each plenary.*
- * *The EAVP will be in charging of delegating and filling vacant external representative positions*
- * *The EAVP will lead a delegation of ASGC members to the Ivy+ Graduate and Professional Student Summit as well as any NAGPS Regional or National Meetings*
- * *The EAVP will continue to develop the role to advocate on behalf of graduate students at Columbia University in the national, state, and local levels*
- * *The EAVP will continue to reach out to partner councils and organizations within Columbia University, most notably, GSO (P&S/GSAS Basic Sciences PhDs) and EGSC (SEAS Masters and PhDs)*
- * *The EAVP will work with the Office of Government & Community Affairs and others to develop ways of giving back to the community, including community service activities in conjunction with the ASGC Events Co-Chairs.*

INVITED PLENARY SPEAKERS

- January 2019: ISOS MyTrips, Ashley Sassani and Tristan Tafolla
- February 2019: Office of University Life, EVP Suzanne Goldberg
- March 2019: Columbia Residential, AVP Diego Rivera, Dion Keene, Fabbiola Green | Columbia Food Pantry, Michael Higgins
- April 2019: GSAS Writing Studio, Kate Daloz | Columbia Alumni Association, Michael DiSarno and Genna Fleming

STUDENT GROUP RECOGNITION PROCESS: SPRING 2019

New approved student groups: 2

Rejected student groups: 0

Human Rights Graduate Group (HRGG) (January)

“The Human Rights Graduate Group will promote student participation in social, cultural, and academic events and activities for graduate students involved in human rights at Columbia. It will facilitate communication among and between the Human Rights Studies Masters students and anyone in GSAS who is interested in human rights. The HRGG will consist of two co-Presidents, a Treasurer, and an Executive Board, who will be elected by other Board members. The Executive Board will meet once a month to plan HRGG activities.”

Society for Quantitative Approaches to Social Research (QASR) (March)

“The Society for Quantitative Approaches to Social Research (QASR) is a Columbia University student group. QASR aims to promote the understanding and utilization of quantitative approaches in social science research in both academic and professional circles at large. The Society facilitates social, educational, community service, and career-oriented events to foster opportunities for the application of quantitative methods in the social sciences. QASR is open to current Columbia students from all fields and departments and encourages the creation of connections across disciplines.”

Ivy+ Graduate and Professional Student Summit Updates:

As of May 12, 2019, eight out of the ten graduate and professional student governments have passed the Ivy+ Graduate and Professional Student Constitution and Rules. You can see the Constitution (live document) [here](#). Peter Su from MIT is currently leading the campaign to ensure that all universities pass this before the next summit at Princeton. The two universities that have not passed this yet are University of Chicago, which is currently reorganizing its entire council/ government. They hope to vote on it in late May. Princeton University is currently MIA, and we have not heard from them in recent months.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Yk7GE8SX-LkLLrJSbisH7EbNi1fet4bXxaBUusivqNs/edit?usp=sharing>

NEW INITIATIVES FOR SPRING 2019

- The GSAS/Pure Sciences Senate seat. This has been an ongoing problem since this organization was GSAC. A decade or two ago, this seat represented Engineering PhDs, “GSAS @ CUIMC” PhDs, and Natural Sciences PhDs. When the Engineering School decided on their own to split their two seats into one undergraduate and one graduate, those Engineering PhDs switched over to the Engineering Graduate Senate seat. However, this still left an awkward GSAS @ CUIMC PhDs (or Biomedical PhDs). They are an odd bunch since their departments are technically P&S Basic Sciences Departments. The corresponding faculty members are in P&S. Yet, the P&S Student seat is restricted to those getting an MD degree. This year, we have been in active negotiations with the University Senate and the Structure and Operations Committee to discuss potentially splitting the P&S seats into Clinical Sciences and Basic Sciences. That way, on the student side, we can pave the way into having the MD students have one seat and the PhD students have another newly created seat. However, this looks to be more complicated than we imagined- we first proposed merging the Humanities and Social Sciences seats together, but there was a remarkable pushback from faculty members who opposed this move. However, it is not fair for the GSAS Pure Sciences student senator to represent non-A&S students, especially since this is not how the faculty in the Senate have been set up.
- Students of Arts and Sciences Consortium (SASC). This was an idea borne out of the Ivy+ Summit and based on the model of Harvard (which is organized in a similar fashion to Columbia). SASC brings together council leadership from Columbia College, General Studies, Professional Studies, GSAS, and Arts. We met formally three times, once with the Executive Committee. We expect that the EAVP will take the lead on this next year, recalibrated as to maximize the groups’ effectiveness.
- Increased collaboration with EGSC and GSO. This is the first full year that we only represent students in Arts and Sciences programs. Because EGSC elects their officers every calendar year, it is important to ensure that ASGC interact with the new leadership as we are outgoing. This way we can maximize the amount of

collaborations that we have and to share best practices. GSO does their elections in mid-October, so it is more in-line with ASGC, but we try to extend the same collaboration efforts with their council as well. For EGSC this year, we met for a collaborative dinner with the EGSC President and Vice President, and this was particularly fruitful because they were both PhDs in their second year of study, meaning that we were able to pass on a lot of information to them about best practices at Columbia University.

AWARDS

FACULTY MENTORING AWARDS

ASGC continued the GSAC policy of presenting a faculty mentoring award annually during convocation to two members of Columbia University faculty to recognize excellence in mentoring GSAS students. This award is a student initiative; selections were made entirely by graduate student representatives from GSAS and affiliated schools based on student nomination letters spanning across all disciplines. The recipients of the 2018 awards are:

Amy Starecheski, Director of MA Program in Oral History

Meredith Gamer, Assistant Professor of Art History and Archaeology

CHINWEIKE OKEGBE SERVICE AWARD

ASGC also presented three Service Awards to a combination of graduate students and/or non-students in recognition of their service to the Columbia graduate community. This was the second year the awards were presented under the Chinweike Okegbe Service Award name, and the first year they were presented by ASGC. The recipients of the 2019 Chinweike Okegbe Service Award are:

Afiya Wilson, Student Affairs Officer in the Office of Academic Diversity

Andrew Pun, PhD Candidate in Chemistry

Barbara Rockenbach, Associate Librarian in Research and Learning

ELECTIONS

2019-2020 ASGC EXECUTIVE BOARD

Elections for the 2019–2020 ASGC Executive Board were held during the March Plenary Meeting. The incoming board has representatives from all three divisions, with most members from humanities departments.

President	Alex Cuadrado (Italian)
VP Admin	William Plews-Ogan (Sociology)
EAVP	Mike Loubser Ford (Music)
Communications Chair	Milica Ilicic (Slavic Languages)
Alumni Chair	Matthew Morales (CESR)
Finance Chair	Tea Crnkovic (Chemistry)
Quality of Life Chair	Audrey Amsellem (Music)
Media Chair	Rogério Shieh Barbosa (Music)
Events Co-Chairs	Pierre Devlaminck (Chemistry) and Casey Libonate (Political Science)
Masters Affairs Chair	Amanda Marie Platek (Religion)

FINANCE

Based on our review of the budget this year, we make the following recommendations for next year's budget allocations:

- Review allocations for media, communications, and alumni & career development
- Drastically increase travel funds. Suggested amount: \$55,000
- Slightly increase student initiative funds: Suggested amount: \$18,000
- Drastically increase masters affairs funds: Suggested amount: \$12,000

STUDENT INITIATIVE GRANTS

The number of recognized student groups remains relatively with this year's transition to ASGC. As in previous years, however, the spring semester brought several applications for departmental conferences. We were able to meet 100% of the need.

SPRING	Applications	Awards
Number	16	16
Amount	\$15,485.00	\$15,485.00

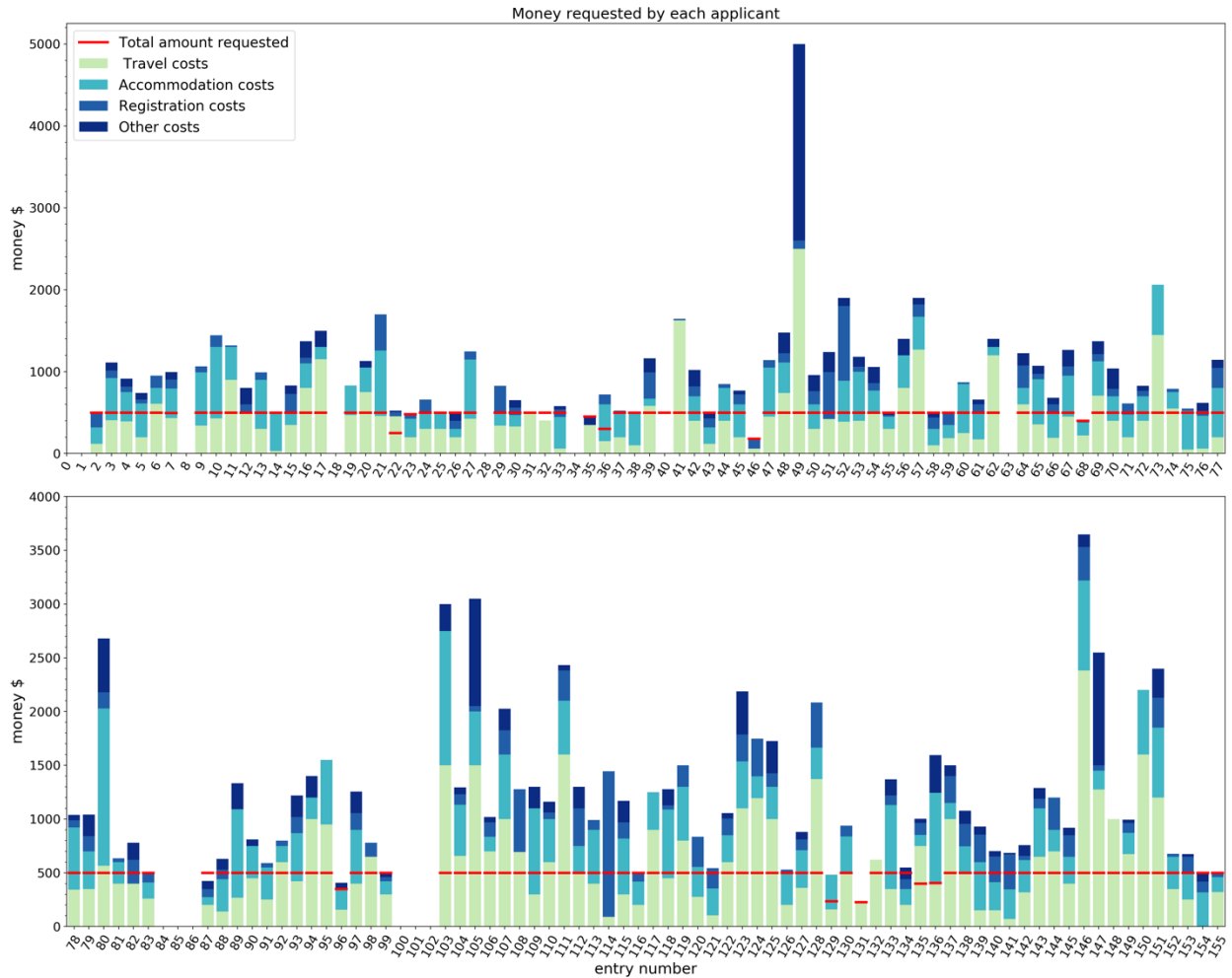
TRAVEL GRANTS

We received a record number of travel grant applications. All eligible applicants were awarded travel grants of 75% of what they requested (reasons for disqualification are previous GSAC or ASGC awards and letters of application received outside the deadlines). Even though applicants were only awarded 75% of what they requested, travel grant demand forced us to spend 130% more than initially budgeted. Funds were taken from carryover funds, events funding, and other small excesses.

	Applications	Awards		Applications	Awards
Summer			Winter		
Number	35	26		27	21
Amount	\$17,447.00	\$9,374.25		\$13,400.00	\$7,800.00
Fall			Spring		
Number	20	17		72	50
Amount	\$9,680.00	\$6,135		\$35,117.00	\$18,087.44
Total					
Number	155	114		Original budget	Overspend:
Amount	\$ 75,644.00	\$ 41,396.69		\$ 18,000.00	130%

Throughout the year, we collected data on how much students actually spend on conference and found, unsurprisingly, that it is considerably more than the \$375 that we were able to offer, or indeed that \$500 that GSAS has historically offered. Students spend an average of \$503.33 per conference, although this varies widely; the standard deviation is +/- \$541.00.

Conference spending statistics for the entire year, broken down by expenditure type:



Travel costs:
 \$527.15 +/- \$432.16 (N=142)
 Accommodation costs:
 \$378.26 +/- \$224.25 (N=126)
 Registration costs:
 \$156.47 +/- \$170.17 (N=117)
 Other costs:
 \$175.86 +/- \$287.12 (N=88)

QUALITY OF LIFE

QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEY

This year's Quality of Life survey was launched on February 12, 2019 and closed on March 25, 2019. This marked the first Quality of Life Survey run by the Arts and Sciences Graduate Council (ASGC) rather than by the Graduate School Advisory Council (GSAC), which formally ceased to exist on April 1, 2018. While GSAC officially represented graduate students at all schools on Columbia's campus, ASGC represents only those departments formally housed under the auspices of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS). This year's survey thus represented a smaller percentage of the graduate student body as a whole, but offered an opportunity for sharper inspection of the specific needs of graduate students within GSAS.

The Quality of Life committee analyzed the results of the survey and finalized the [Quality of Life report](#), sending it to Dean Alonso's office and making it available on the ASGC website, on April 30, 2019. Brief conclusions were presented to the plenary on that same date, and the Quality of Life Chair discussed the results with Dean Alonso's office on May 7, 2019.

HEALTHCARE SURVEY

Following the advocacy of an ASGC departmental representative, the Quality of Life committee, in conjunction with the Graduate Student Organization of CUMC, began circulating a survey about accessing healthcare services at CUMC. This survey, which opened on Thursday, April 4, 2019, specifically targets graduate students who either work at CUMC but have a department housed on the Morningside campus, or who work on the Morningside Campus but have a department housed at CUMC. The survey asks students where they currently receive medical care, and where they would prefer to receive it. Preliminary results, shared with Dean Alonso and Dean Solomon on Thursday, May 9, 2019, show that while few respondents housed at CUMC but working on Morningside wish for access to medical services on Morningside, about half of the respondents housed on Morningside but working at CUMC would prefer access to CUMC's medical services. The full survey report is included in the Appendix.

LEASE EXTENSIONS

After hearing in February from a parent who had requested a lease extension and been told they would be charged an additional 20% in the added month's rent, the Quality of Life Chair and the President communicated the situation to Dean Alonso's office. After reaching out to both the Provost and the housing office, Dean Alonso informed the ASGC in March that the 20% surcharge would not be applied this year, although it could be implemented next year.

INTERNET SURVEY

On October 30, 2018, the Quality of Life Committee launched a survey about internet service in University Housing. Following on an email sent to all GSAS PhD students on March 2, 2018 promising that beginning in Fall 2018 “students residing in university housing will have internet service paid for by the school,” it became clear that this policy in fact applied only to PhD students with Columbia internet service in their buildings. This survey aimed to discover how many students were still forced to pay for internet from an external provider, and to ensure that all those with Columbia internet were not being charged. Out of 151 respondents, 97 said they were still paying for internet from an external provider. Dean Alonso, in a series of ongoing discussions, informed ASGC that Columbia internet was in the process of being installed in Columbia housing. We hope to find it resolved in the Fall of 2019.

GSAS PARENTAL ACCOMMODATIONS REPORT

In October 2018, the Quality of Life Chair worked with parents to create [a report on the state of parental accommodations at Columbia](#), as compared to peer institutions. This report was shared with Dean Alonso’s office, and then sent on to the Provost. A group of parents met with Dean Alonso’s office on November 26, 2018 to share their concerns directly. Unfortunately, in March Dean Alonso informed the ASGC that, because parental accommodations were subject to ongoing contract negotiations with the Graduate Workers of Columbia, the Provost was unwilling to make changes to parental accommodations at this time. The Quality of Life Chair therefore forwarded the report, which had been public on the ASGC website since October, to the Bargaining Committee of the GWC. It should be noted that the report was sent to the Provost months before contract negotiations began.

ALUMNI & CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The signal event for Alumni & Career Development this semester offering free headshot photos with a professional photographer from the Columbia Photography Association. The event took place March 13–14 on the bridge connecting the main campus to the law school and was attended by 65 students. We also continued to work with contacts in the Alumni Association and CCE to build cross-school connections.

MASTERS AFFAIRS

OVERVIEW

The 2018-2019 academic year was the inaugural year of the Masters Affairs Chair role, which was formed in the reorganization of ASGC. The focus this year was threefold: (1) Gather information, concerns and feedback from Masters Departmental Representatives, (2) Use student input in dialogue with the Deans and CCE to creatively problem solve, and (3) Create a cohesive, transferable plan to respond to Masters students' academic, social, financial and career concerns. Beginning September 2019, there will be a designated Masters Committee to ensure continuity of initiatives. The position will be up for reelection in October 2019.

ACADEMIC

ADVISING

Students asked for consistency in academic advising, academic requirements, and thesis advising. The goal was to ensure Masters students—whose tenure is an average of 1 to 2 years—feel supported from enrollment to matriculation.

Solution(s):

- (1) Deans will redistribute “best practices” document across departments. Specific practices can be adapted & adopted by Masters Program Directors.
- (2) Deans will put a date in place (i.e. 15 Aug) for Masters Program Directors to email incoming students and/or make contact with them.
- (3) Potential to have Masters “liaisons” (current students within a Department) who can act as points of contact from August – October.
- (4) MA Chair to identify (through Reps) which departments have Masters Handbooks. The goal is for Masters handbooks to be accessible on the program website. Current list shows approx. half of programs have a handbook.

CROSS ENROLLMENT

The barrier-to-entry is extremely high. Cross-enrolling in other schools (ex. CBS, SIPA or TC) can be challenging to navigate. Students requested the process more comprehensible and more transparent.

Solution(s):

- (1) Richard will work on a chart of dates to make navigating cross-enrollment easier.
- (2) The narrative will also shift (i.e. some schools/classes do not allow cross-enrollment, and departments should educate their students).

CAREER

NON-PHD TRACK OPPORTUNITIES:

Students called for greater communication regarding career options/opportunities for non-PhD track Masters students. Certain programs' Masters students generally enter the workforce upon graduation instead of pursuing a PhD. Students asked for the tools/connectivity to achieve their career goals.

Solution(s):

- (1) Encourage department faculty to share career opportunities with their students. This message has been disseminated to department representatives
- (2) CCE should be a resource used to supplement this process. This has been discussed with CCE and will be addressed at the September 2019 Plenary.

TA/INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES:

Students called for consistency regarding TA/Internship opportunities, as some departments noted their Masters students can be TAs or receive internship funding. Representatives ask that all GSAS students are afforded the same opportunities to advance their careers while students.

Solution(s):

- (1) Deans noted this is a problem of information dissemination, as Masters students can be Reader/Graders, which is not the same as TAs. There is no way for this to be consistent, as different departments have different needs. This is strictly related to pedagogical needs of the department and is inevitably distributed in a somewhat "lumpy" way.

NETWORKING:

Students highlighted difficulties in contacting/networking with alumni. Student discussed greater transparency on LionShare (i.e. an "opt-in" option for alumni on LionShare's network to allow students to contact them & in turn LionShare could show industry, firm, contact info). Another idea is to have Alumni Panels based on industry.

Solution(s):

- (1) Kelly will look into the LionShare program. Kelly/Gayle/Jenn highlighted LinkedIn "Columbia Career Connections" and CU There are the best ways to virtually network.
- (2) CU There attended the May 2019 Plenary, and CCE will attend the September 2019 Plenary to reinforce networking opportunities.

IMPROVE CCE COMMUNICATIONS

Students said Masters career newsletters are often untargeted (or, targeted towards undergraduates) and asked we work with CCE to make the emails are more relevant for GSAS students.

Solution(s):

(1) Kelly to remind students of the searchable database & personalized alerts in the newsletter moving forward.

FINANCIAL/QUALITY OF LIFE

INSURANCE

Students expressed concerns regarding the cancellation of Health Insurance if a residency unit is not selected.

Solution(s):

(1) Richard has enhanced communication extensively during Spring 2019 registration.

WORK-STUDY/JOBS

Students noted Work-Study jobs are often jobs that would be full-time, salaried jobs (i.e. Marketing, Web Design) yet students are paid a fraction of the cost.

Solution(s):

(1) Deans noted there is a limited number of WS dollars a student can receive. There are federal rate guidelines and the rates are transparent on the WS site. It is not “endless money” and there are limits. It is also not a fulltime job, and students are recused of obligations during midterms, finals, et al.

(2) Deans to disseminate information. Also look up federal study scale.

HOUSING

As on-campus housing is sparse, students expressed concern regarding records of income requirements for off-campus housing. Off-campus housing can require records of an income 40x that of the monthly rent, which graduate students rarely have. Often, students are required to post additional months of rent, putting students in a precarious financial situation. Students asked Columbia to work with off-campus landlords to ease this barrier-to-entry/financial requirement (NYU, for instance, will serve as a guarantor for graduate students seeking off-campus housing). Also, streamlining the accommodation website would be helpful for students less familiar with the area/city.

Solution(s):

- (1) Deans to convey the message regarding high fiscal postings/requirements to non-Columbia housing.
- (2) Discussion of incorporating a neighborhood guide on the Columbia housing site.

SOCIAL

CROSS-DEPT SOCIAL EVENTS

Students noted there aren't many community events for Masters students & departments can feel isolated.

Solution(s):

- (1) Masters Chair will plan/host 4x open events per semester. ASGC is increasing the Masters budget substantially to supplement this activity. Fall 2019 events will be as follows: 2 events in September, 1 event in October, 1 event in November.

WORKING GROUPS

SIPA has working groups for different topics that meet every few weeks (e.g. "gender"). Students mentioned this would be a positive way to meet people across departments & have productive conversations.

Solution(s):

- (1) Richard to gather more information on the structure of said groups & to what extent the school administration is involved.

EVENTS

Over the course of Spring 2019, ASGC ran six cultural events, one sports event, and one social mixer for the department representatives. The breakdown of costs and ticket sales are in the table below:

Event name	Tickets purchased	Tickets sold	Ticket price	Fees total	Price total	Sale price	Sale total	Net expenses
Sleep No More, 01/12	25	24	\$135.00	\$0.00	\$3375.00	\$55.00	\$1320.00	\$2055.00
Book of Mormon, 02/21	30	29	\$69.00	\$14.50	\$2084.50	\$45.00	\$1305.00	\$779.50
Die Walkure, 03/25	20	18	\$94.00	\$50.00	\$1930.00	\$45.00	\$810.00	\$1120.00
Brooklyn Nets vs. Toronto Raptors, 04/03	20	20	\$93.50	\$0.00	\$1870.00	\$45.00	\$900.00	\$970.00
The Fat Lady Sings, 04/06	10	1	\$25.00	\$0.00	\$250.00	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$240.00
La Traviata, 04/17	20	18	\$75.00	\$14.50	\$1514.50	\$35.00	\$630.00	\$884.50
City of No Illusion, 04/23	10	9	\$20.00	\$0.00	\$200.00	\$10.00	\$90.00	\$110.00
Department Representative Mixer 04/30	50	50	/	/	\$1430.00	0	0	1430
To Kill a Mockingbird, 05/07	30	29	\$89.00	\$14.50	\$2684.50	\$40.00	\$1160.00	\$1524.50
Sleep No More Spring, 05/07	30	30	\$99.50	\$0.00	\$2985.00	\$55.00	\$1650.00	\$1335.00
TOTAL					\$18323.50		\$7875	10448.5

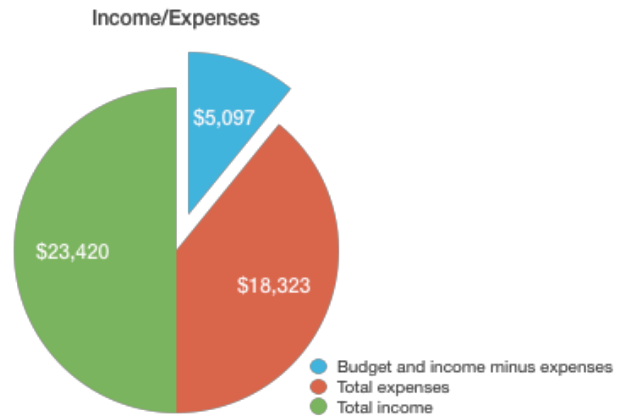
At the end of the Spring semester, there is still \$5097 remaining in the Events budget for the 2018/2019 academic year. As we are transferring our roles to the incoming members of the Executive Board, we are discussing possibilities for using these funds for organizing smaller events during Summer 2019.

Budget Spring: Culture

MONEY IN	
Cultural budget	\$7,500
Rollover from Fall Semester	\$1,545
Social budget	\$6,500
Ticket sales	\$7,875
TOTAL INCOME	\$23,420

MONEY OUT	
Ticket purchases	18323
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$18,323

MONEY LEFT OVER	
Budget and income minus expenses	\$5,097



APPENDIX

Healthcare Survey Report from the Quality of Life Committee, which was shared with the Deans May 9, 2019 and forwarded to Dr. Melanie Bernitz, Director of Columbia Health:

Healthcare Survey Report

Following the advocacy of an ASGC departmental representative, the Quality of Life committee, in conjunction with the Graduate Student Organization of CUMC, began circulating a survey about accessing healthcare services at CUMC. This survey, which opened on Thursday, April 4, 2019, specifically targets graduate students who either work at CUMC but have a department housed on the Morningside campus, or who work on the Morningside Campus but have a department housed at CUMC. The survey asks students where they currently receive medical care, and where they would prefer to receive it. Preliminary results show that while few respondents housed at CUMC but working on Morningside or Manhattanville wish for access to medical services on Morningside, about half of the respondents housed on Morningside but working at CUMC would prefer access to CUMC's medical services.

Of 41 respondents, 6 indicated their department were housed at CUMC and 33 indicated their department has housed on Morningside, with 1 person writing in that their department was housed on the Manhattanville campus, and one indicating both.

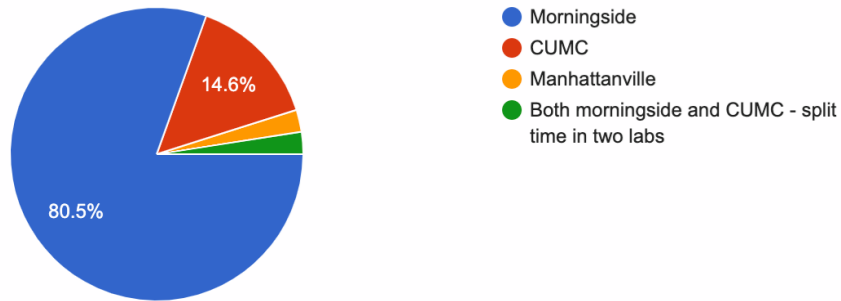
Interest in Healthcare on Morningside among CUMC students

Of the 6 respondents whose departments are housed at CUMC, 3 indicated they worked on the Manhattanville campus, one indicated they worked on the CUMC campus, one indicated they were not currently working, and one left the question blank. Four of the 6 respondents live in Morningside Heights and 2 live near CUMC.

Only one respondent whose department is housed at CUMC, and who works on the Manhattanville Campus, indicated they would prefer to receive medical care at John Jay (for both routine and urgent medical care).

On which campus is your department housed?

41 responses

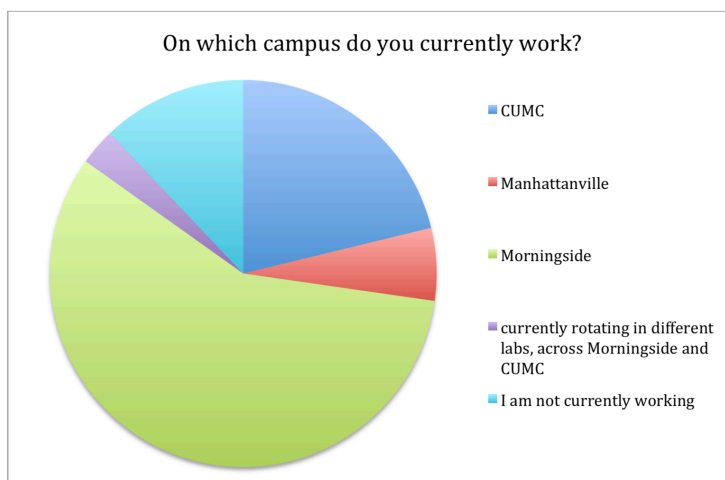


One comment requested access to a primary care provider outside of Columbia medical services. One comment from a respondent at CUMC indicated why the interest in receiving care at John Jay was relatively minimal:

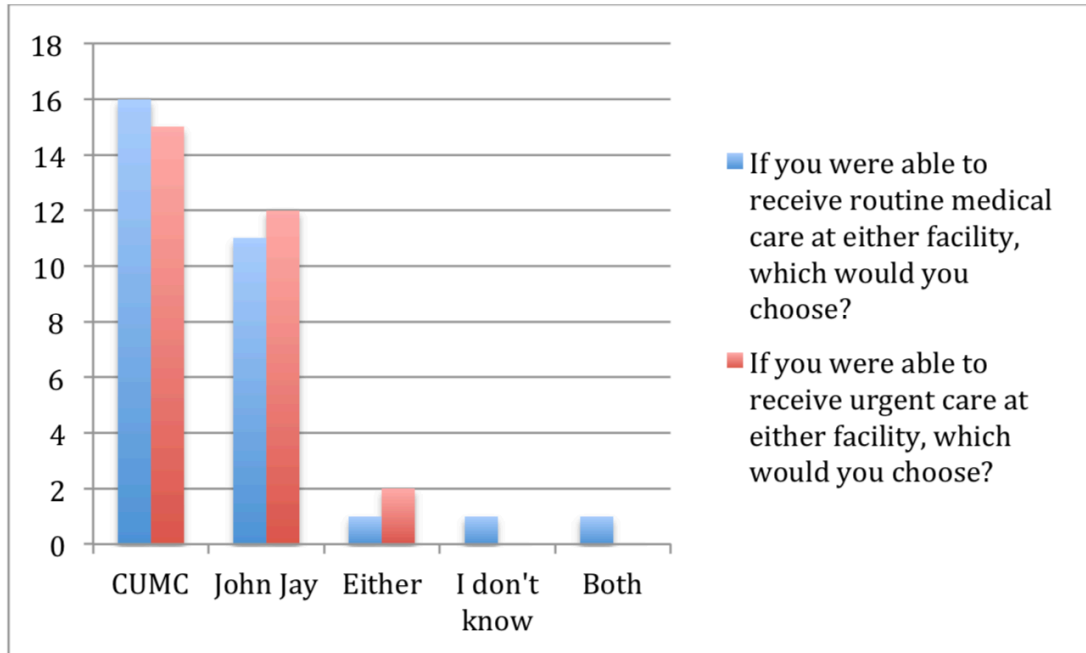
My grad student friends who have to use John Jay say that it is terrible: Tough to get appointments. Doctors/Nurses don't follow up to report lab results. Facility is crowded. Staff is rude. On the other hand, my experience at the CUMC student health center has been amazing, especially compared to other primary care centers I have used prior to be at Columbia. I will continue to use CUMC. I also support any action taken to get the grad students at the Morningside campus access to a better primary care center.

Interest in Healthcare on CUMC among Morningside students

Of the 33 respondents whose departments are housed on the Morningside campus, 19 also work on the Morningside campus, while 7 work on the CUMC campus and 2 work on the Manhattanville campus. 4 respondents indicated they were not currently working, and 1 indicated they rotated between labs at both Morningside and CUMC.

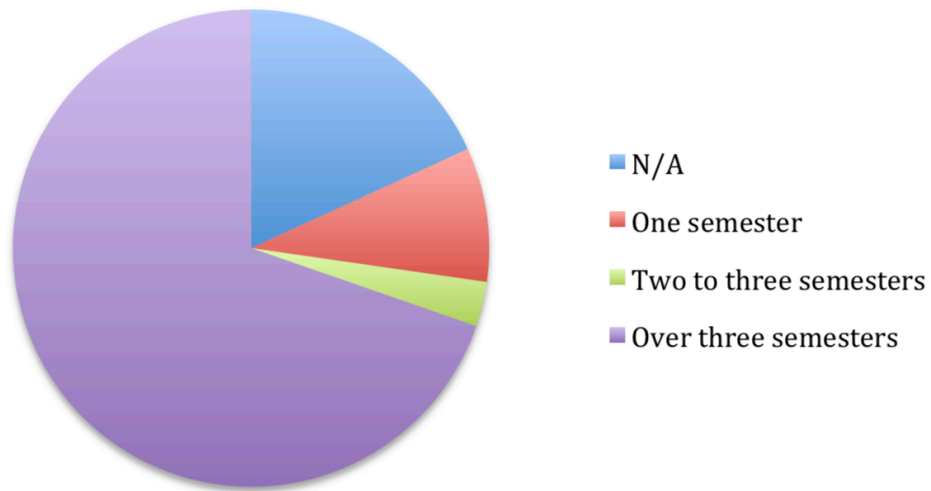


Taking all these respondents together, 16 indicated they would prefer to receive routine medical care at CUMC, while 15 indicated they would prefer to receive urgent medical care at CUMC. 11 indicated they would prefer to receive routine medical care at John Jay, while 12 indicated they would prefer to receive urgent medical care at John Jay. One wrote in that they were fine with either for routine medical care, while two were fine with either for urgent medical care. One indicated they did not know which they preferred for routine medical care and one indicated they would like access to both for routine medical care.



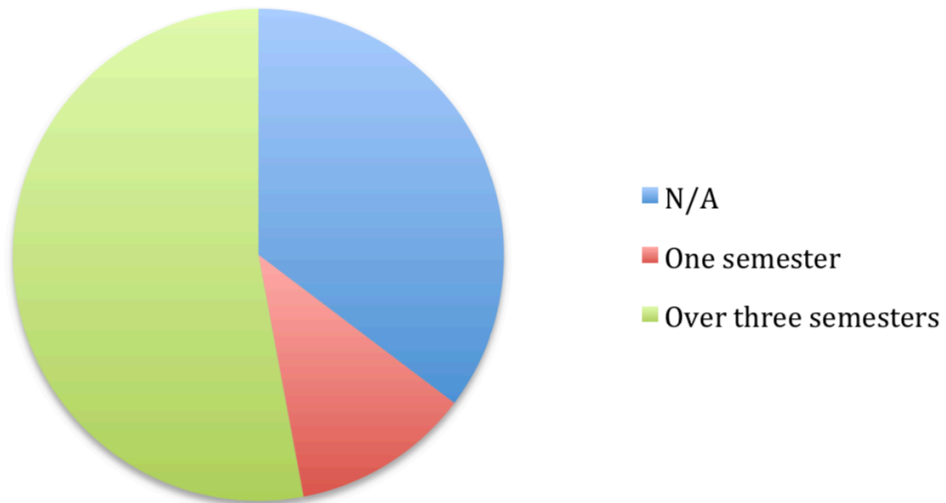
Of these 33 respondents, 23 (70%) had appointments over three semesters, while one had an appointment of 2 or 3 semesters, 3 (9%) had appointments of one semester, and 6 indicated the question was not applicable.

How long is your RA or teaching appointment?



Of only those who expressed interest in access to CUMC, 9 indicated appointments of over three semesters, two indicated one-semester appointments, and 6 indicated the question did not apply.

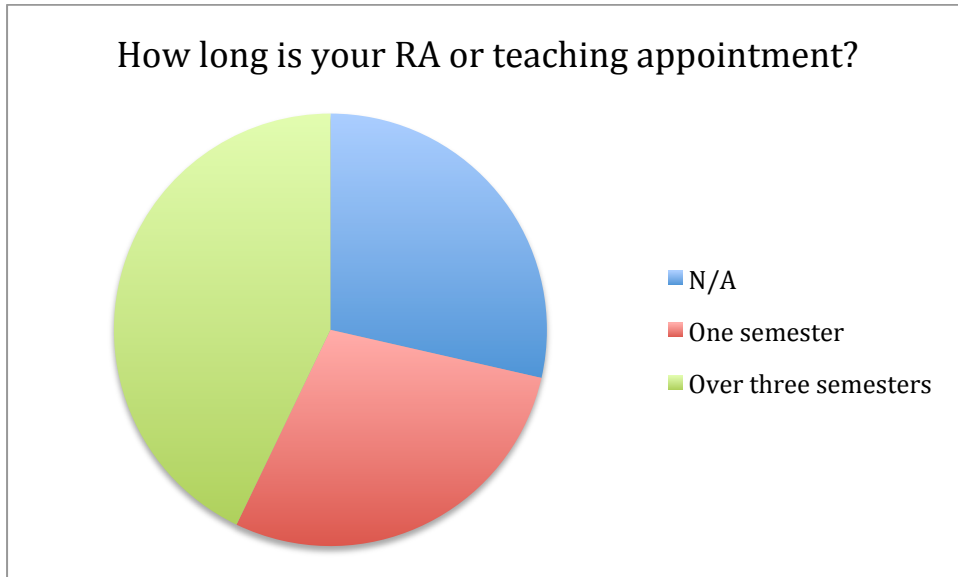
How long is your RA or teaching appointment?



Universal desire for CUMC medical services among those working at CUMC with departments housed on Morningside:

Limiting respondents to only the 7 who work on the CUMC campus, with departments housed on Morningside, all 7 preferred to receive both routine and urgent medical care at CUMC, though 1 preferred to have access to both CUMC and John Jay for routine care.

Of these 7, 3 had appointments over three semesters, 2 had one semester appointments, and 2 indicated the question was not applicable.



Manhattanville and Rotating Students

Of these two students, one currently receives medical care from CUMC and one currently receives medical care from John Jay. The one currently receiving medical care at John Jay would prefer to use CUMC for both routine and urgent medical care, while the one

currently receiving medical care at CUMC prefers CUMC for routine medical care and prefers John Jay for urgent medical care.

Comments from students on Morningside Campus

Comments from students in departments housed on the Morningside campus were universally critical of the services at John Jay.

Many comments indicated issues with the appointment system:

Hard to get appointment at John Jay. I joined a lab at CUMC so it would be much easier to go to the doctor's office there.

It has been impossible for me to get an appointment through the online system at John Jay. Every appointment has required multiple phone calls and in-person visits (which each require a subway trip) to get it scheduled.

*Wish you could make appointments in advance
The telephone and online scheduling system needs to be vastly improved!!!*

I'm a Morningside student and my biggest problem with Columbia health service is the lack of capacity. It is very hard to get an appointment. If giving us access to CUMC would increase capacity, that would be GREAT.

the appointment system is a disaster

It is clearly understaffed/underfunded. It is practically impossible to get a medical appointment. I have to spend days and days trying to refresh the appointments page to see if any is available and, honestly, I don't have the time. There are several health issues that I'm suffering that I'd like to talk to a doctor about, but I cannot spare the time to try to check time and again on the website. I know I'll just have to wait until next month to be able to do that. And this only adds to the stress I have as a PhD student.

Health services at John Jay does not meet my needs as a long-term PhD student.

Appointments are very hard to get, and it is difficult to see the same provider on a regular basis. Getting a referral for an outside provider is actively discouraged by providers. Please give me real health insurance.

Some comments indicated that John Jay was understaffed, compounding the difficulty in obtaining an appointment:

John Jay is incredibly understaffed. My experience at John Jay have been terrible to say the least. Waiting times of 2 hours PAST scheduled appointment times are common practice. Providers have forgotten to follow-up with testing results because they were too busy and forgot. I have been treated by john jay providers who do their ultimate best to give quality care, but the system is incredibly flawed. Also, the building it's in is cramped and some procedures need more spaced than is currently available.

John Jay is very understaffed and inefficient

John Jay is so under-resourced I sometimes go without care because it takes so long for me to get an appointment.

A couple comments indicated general issues with medical services:

The health services at John Jay are abysmal and they do not know how to deal with graduate students, who are functional adults, often with families and children of their own, and not undergraduates who need to be supervised.

The healthcare offered in general is subpar at best

A few comments indicated difficulty specifically with working on campuses other than the ones on which one receives medical care:

I had a workplace accident in which I sought medical attention. It was unclear as to which campus I was supposed to get treated at, and when I called to get information, I was directed back and forth. Luckily, I called first and didn't have to travel back and forth, but it is unacceptable that people on both campuses can't get this information straight.

I did a rotation uptown in fall 2017 and needed urgent medical care, but was turned away from CUMC student health and referred to the Morningside campus. This is unacceptable.

It makes it really difficult that the doctors on the Morningside campus tend to have connections with doctors in the immediate area and not near CUMC. This makes it more difficult for me since these referrals are to doctors I go to on a weekly basis. This really cuts into my work as I have had to miss important lab events because I need to be traveling to and from my doctors appointments.

Finally, one respondent simply indicated:

The ability simply to be able to access both would be nice...

Conclusions and suggestions

There is a clear call for improvements to services at John Jay in general, and, as the 2019 Quality of Life survey also shows, to reform the appointment system in particular. This particular survey, however, aims to address the needs of students who work on one campus while receiving care at another, generally because that is where their department is housed.

Likely because of concerns about the quality of care at John Jay, the desire to access medical care on the Morningside campus when one's department is housed at CUMC is minimal. By contrast, those working at CUMC but receiving medical care at John Jay indicate a universal desire to access both routine and urgent medical care at CUMC. The length of work appointments suggests that this access would need to be relatively long-term.

Though the sample size of this survey is small, its results suggest that graduate students would benefit greatly from access to medical care on the campus where they are

employed. The Quality of Life Chair encourages GSAS to review its own records of students for whom this is true, and to work with Columbia Health to implement a pilot program allowing students to opt-in to receiving care on the campus where they are employed, rather than the campus where their department is housed.