

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF GENERAL STUDIES GENERAL STUDIES STUDENT COUNCIL

Dear Provost Brinkley

Columbia University has a responsibility to its students, a responsibility that reaches further than the grades and diplomas it issues. The University has a responsibility to teach. As a result of the Graduate Students' Strike, many classes have been cancelled and this responsibility is not being fulfilled. These classes include the sections thought by TAs as well as some classes taught by professors. Your decision to not hire substitutes to fulfill the roles of instruction has directly effected the wellbeing of our students.

While we are not taking a stance regarding graduate students' right to unionize, we ask that you address the following concerns: The students in the School of General Studies should not suffer on account of the actions of the opposing sides.

The administration has stated that all students will receive an appropriate grade for the work they have done so far. Additionally, the University is allowing some students to receive Pass/Fail grades for their classes. However, the importance placed upon high grades is irrelevant; it is about the education itself. While we are grateful for the efforts to guarantee that grades are given in a timely fashion, and while we hope that indeed all grades will be given in a timely fashion, we feel that the financial and educational concerns should also be addressed.

Students pay the equivalent of \$926 per credit. Multiplying this amount by the number of credits and then breaking the cost down per class reveals that each class that is cancelled is worth \$100 or \$132¹. We ask that the University refund the tuition portion of all cancelled classes. Furthermore, such a refund should not effect the course's credit level and should not effect the number of classes required for graduation, housing, financial aid and honorary recognition. The permission to take affected classes Pass/Fail should not impact the total number of Pass/Fail classes allowed.

Most importantly, the University should be sensitive to the need of our students, many of whom have recently returned to the Academy, after a long leave of absence. We do not want this experience to sour their desire to pursue a higher education. We ask that you reply to us and our student body promptly.

Respectfully,

The General Studies Student Council

¹ For three and four credit courses, respectively. A semester is calculated to normally have 28 classes for each course.