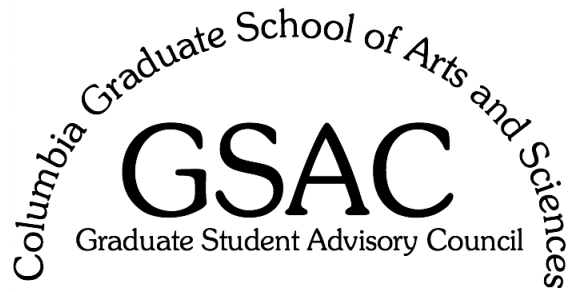


Minutes from GSAC Plenary
Feb 18, 2013



Social Update

Ms. Tisdale

Skiing

Ski trip is this coming Saturday. It's sold out.

Poker Night

Joint with the engineering school. Will be hosted soon, but does not have a definite date yet.

Interschool Social

GSAC, Engineering, SIPA, TC – will be in March, large interschool social downtown. \$5-\$10 tickets will be sold for the event.

Future Events

May host tickets to a Knicks game soon; co-sponsored with the Engineering school as well. The game is March 19th. A small number of tickets will be available. Will poll department reps to determine the best way to allocate these tickets.

Alumni & PR Update

Ms. Chakrabarti

Student Alumni Networking

Open to all PhD and Masters students. Will be held on Feb 26 at 6:30 pm. Need to pre-register for the event, can be found on our facebook page.

CCE Events

February 28th - identify your skills as a PhD workshop.

NAGPS NE Regional

Columbia is a member of the northeast region of this group. The NAGPS lobbies for graduate students – i.e. stipends, family issues, etc. Conference is March 14-16.

Three members of the executive board will represent Columbia.

Website Design

We've talked to one company so far, but we are looking into several companies for a bidding process. Eventually we will design on a mockup and start working on a new website.

Budget and Finance

Mr. Hendricks

Spring 2014 SIG Applications

Had \$18,000 requested in funds. Ultimately \$11,415 were distributed. Funds were distributed relatively evenly. Almost all groups were funded, with the exception of a group that submitted during the wrong cycle. New process works much better for the finance committee of reviewing all the SIG grants at the same time.

Vote to approve SIG funding:

Approve: 16

Disapprove: 0

Abstain: 0

The budget is approved.

Spring 2014 STG Applications

A new application has been designed by the finance committee. The only thing that has changed is on page 3, adding questions to differentiate between students who have and do not have access to outside funding. This is following the decision at the December plenary meeting.

Vote to approve application:

Approve: 16

Disapprove: 0

Abstain: 0

The travel grant application is approved.

Budget update

We've spent 53% of the budget.

GSAC Update

Mr. Cavosoglu

Faculty Mentor Awards

These are due this semester. We will be nominating a committee to evaluate these soon.

GSAC Senate & Steering Committee Election Mixer

Elections will be held at the March Plenary. We will have a mixer within the next month to recruit those who may be interested in these positions.

GSAC Quality of Life Survey

Questions:

What can be done about dissatisfactions students have?

The last quality of life survey led to GSAC getting \$1000 top up stipends for student parents. Organized additional data to go to library services that led to more graduate only spaces in libraries.

We may need to replace the Quality of Life chair sooner than the new election cycle. The current Quality of life Chair's other commitments are preventing her from putting enough time into work on the new survey.

New questions need to be designed for a new survey that we want to release this year. There are certain areas that have not been touched upon by previous surveys, and this needs to be determined and included in a new survey. There would be a interim individual instated immediately, and then elections would take place as normal the following month.

No one from the departmental representatives nominates themselves.

Motion for the executive committee to select an interim individual to work on the survey over the next month, based on a pool of applicants. Motion seconded.

Vote:

Approved: 16

Disapprove: 0

Abstain: 0

Note: There is a statistical consulting group that can be contacted for advice on survey design.

The executive committee selected a interim QoL chair who will design the survey for a delayed release in late April.

Library Exploratory Committee

They are polling the graduate students in their departments on how the graduate students use the libraries. An external review committee will also be collecting this information.

Open Forum

Renewed concerns about housing. There is difficulty in contacting Columbia housing.

Question: Could we ask the university to hand out subsidies for apartment housing, and that will reduce graduate students' tax brackets? This would be complicated, but we will follow up on this idea.

Look into how Columbia actually determines the market rates for this area of Manhattan.

Stipends for doctoral students will increase by 4.6% for the next academic year.

Thought on comparing housing rates at Columbia with other NYC universities. Could be included in our future quality of life survey.