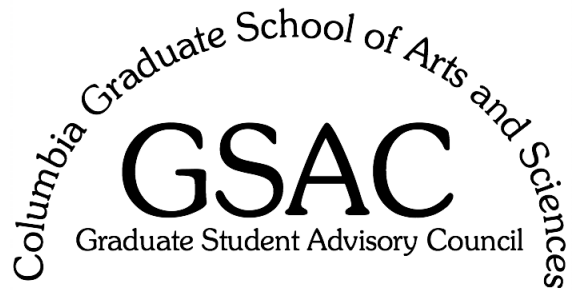


Minutes from GSAC Plenary
Sept 17, 2013



GSAS Teaching Center Update

Mr. Phillipson talked about the GSAC Teaching Center. Thursdays from 12-1 there are meetings about teaching for graduate students. They take place in 208 Bulter.

CU Public Safety Update

Mr. Morales addressed concerns about public safety at Columbia. He handed out two brochures on Rights and Responsibilities of Public Safety and a summary report for 2013. Columbia is the safest urban and Ivy League school in the nation. Surveys began in 2004 to assess campus safety nationwide. Also ranked top among schools for emergency response – one of 7 schools to receive an A in 2008. They run table-top, scenario exercises and coordinate with the police department and homeland security. Security booths are present on Broadway, Amsterdam, also work with Manhattan School of Music security. Crime stats are posted on the public safety website, and are available in a brochure (handed out) for all students and faculty. Evening shuttles (6pm-4am) run from 106th-135th street and also on the other side of Morningside Park for all students. The shuttle can also take students to the A,B subways lines. There is also a walking escort service beginning each night at 7 pm. All crimes are reported on the public safety website; there is also a service for email and text alerts. There is coordination with the local police department to identify criminals caught on security camera using facial recognition capability. All Columbia shuttle buses are equipped with GPS, students can track the bus online or using an app on their phones.

Also addressed initiative by the university to encourage people to report sexual harassment offenses more frequently. There are outreach programs to encourage reporting of these crimes.

Red Lion program – businesses nearby campus with the red lion sticker will call public safety if a student feels unsafe.

Non-emergency number public safety: 212-854-2797

Emergency number public safety: 212-854-5555

Public safety website: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/publicsafety/>

Finance Update - Mark Hendricks

Two deadlines – Student Initiative Grant deadline, October 1 for all groups. Pending approval, there are 10,000 allotted in the budget. Travel Grant deadline is October 11.

Annual Budget proposal:

Changes:

1. Overspent on travel grant last year. Cutting out \$1000 for this year and expect to add \$1000 next year.
2. Orientation events have been run already, they cost \$4000. Were very well attended, may possibly be given more money next year.
3. Alumni committee asked for increase of \$3000.
4. Ivy Summit has increases from \$1000 to \$10,000. Ivy summit is a meeting of graduate student councils from various schools. This year we are hosting the event, which explains the large increase in budget. Looking for other sources of funding currently.
5. LUMEN, we are hoping to have the conference again this year, but turn it into a TED conference. Increasing the budget by \$1000.
6. Expected balance is lower this year than in previous years. We've realized it's better to try to zero out the account because it could potentially negatively affect requests for additional funding.

Questions:

The amount for the stipend levels and the percentage of the budget that they constitute. Is this reasonable?

Standard is for 10% of the budget to be spent on Steering Committee stipends.

Ivy Summit – what exactly is it being spent on?

Space is booked at Columbia, it will come to between \$2000-3000 based on security requirements.

Food and hotels will come to \$6000-7000.

GSAS deans have said that they will provide \$5000-\$10000 additionally than what is proposed in the budget.

Travel grants. GSAS has requested that we slowly wind down our GSAC travel grants. GSAS provides travel grants, but they require matching funds from the students' departments. Worry is that if GSAC defunds the travel grants this could pose a problem for student departments that cannot match funds.

Motion for vote to approve budget - Mark

Motion is seconded - Hamdi

Vote for budget approval:

1 abstention

All rest vote for approval

GSAC Update – Hamdi

Festifall will occur on Saturday, Sept 21; raindate is Sept 22. GSAS budget is \$1400. Open to all 14 graduate schools at Columbia.

Looking for volunteers for searching for the Outstanding TAs Awards.

Travel grants have been approved. Department reps should encourage students in their departments to attend. Up to 6 grants will be approved. We get anywhere from 20-50 applications.

Philosophy 303 – renovations are supposed to be starting at the end of September. It's supposed to open at the start of Spring 2014. It has been delayed, construction should have started during the summer, but as of today it still has not started.

Ivy + summit – we host this year. Every 9 years we host. It is hoping that after this year each school will contribute \$1000-\$2000 to the budget so it will not be such a burden to the hosting school. Open for department reps to participate.

TEASE – coming back October 3 this semester.

Open Floor:

Online Communities

Discussion of online forums for conversation between students. Proposal for creating google groups for graduate students at Columbia to discuss topics of interest.

Concern that GSAS may be too diffuse for a forum to work effectively.

Proposal put to a vote. Seconded.

Votes for establishing web presence: 2

Votes for joining the communications committee and making a more detailed proposal: wins

Quality of Life – Sophia

Request for volunteers to work on the Quality of Life Committee.

Housing at Columbia

Concern that undergraduates have more flexibility in choosing their housing situation than graduate students do. Proposal for housing to come to a future meeting. Discrepancy between how student stipends and housing rents are increasing. Stipends do not increase fast enough for apartment rents for Columbia students. Currently faculty housing rate (increase of ~2%) increases is less than graduate student housing rates (annual increase of ~4%).

Motion to establish a subcommittee focused on housing. Seconded. Motion approved.

Description of Committees by the Advisory Committee.

Alumni/Communications, Budget, Arts, Quality of Life, Social, TEDx.