Meeting Agenda
November 14th 2017; 6:30 PM
Philosophy Hall, Room 301
http://gsac.columbia.edu/

1. Sign-in

2. Approval of October 2017 Minutes (President) → approved

3. Presentation by Columbia Arts Initiative → check out Flickr and Instagram pages.
   a. Speaker background: from Cooper Union; dedication to investing in brilliant people and minds and giving them access to the arts. Columbia really values the Arts.
   b. Programs & History: started in 2004 by President Bollinger. Reasoning = there are so many arts here on campus; Arts Initiative = one stop shop - networking, events, etc… Learn about culture at Columbia and across the city. Both through partners and through discounted tickets.
   c. The Tic: Lerner Hall; they buy hundreds of discounted tickets (group sales) so can get the lowest prices for various productions. Pass discount on to students. Sell out of 75% of inventory on first day. Dear Evan Hansen sold out within a minute. Be diligent about getting on the web - 1:00 release, first Friday of school. Next batch = Friday after Thanksgiving.
   d. Passport to Museums: with CU ID and valid sticker, can get into 30 museums throughout the city.
   e. Columbia Night: partner with alumni affairs and buy tickets to performances connected to alumni or faculty (often in show). Example: M. Butterfly (written by playwright concentration head and with alumnus performing). Afterwards, had personal and behind the scenes conversation with the arts. This Thursday: playwright for Junk. Currently working on upcoming events, so let know if aware of Columbia alumni connected with any shows.
   f. Arts Link: professors who want to bring students out to museums as part of the curricuulum
g. Grants: productions, dances, plays, etc... ~ non-curricular
h. Museum Meetups: behind the scenes talks with professors or employees ~ often pieces were created by Columbia students or teachers. Ex/ Storm King, Queens Museum, Met, MOMA, Japan Society, etc...
i. Q&A:
  Q: Any +1 possibilities for guests going to museums? A: No, but most universities do have student rates. CUNY has a similar system, but not so much for NYU.
  Q: Is your info on Flickr? A: Our info is on the website.
  Q: Is Artslink open to grad student instructors? A: Yes! Example, if you want to talk about artwork at MOMA for a French class, just give me the information and we will set it up and provide a $5 subsidy for each department; oftentimes, graduate students will use department budget to pay for the rest of it or might still pass off modest student fee.

4. Announcements (President)

1. Vote on creation of Ad hoc Committee on Reorganization of Student Representation in GSAS
   a. recap of what the proposal is: ad hoc committee to explore option of splitting into 2 groups.
   b. Timeline: meet every other week; generate 2 proposals in first month (ideas for how to restructure); present these proposals at December meeting; have 1 month of discussion and other suggestions; prepare formal, final proposal for how to reform graduate government in January; 1 month to take back to constituents; vote in February → present 2 months early so lots of time for feedback
   c. Tonight’s vote: whether or not to form ad hoc committee. → approved (1 abstention, 0 opposed)
   d. Ad hoc committee: composed partially from steering committee and also students, including non-GSAS students (especially for the doctoral council);

2. Proposed US tax reforms - Tax Reform Action Day (tomorrow, 2-4PM, 302 Philosophy)
   a. Sarah A read out our statement about the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act; linked in today’s newsletter. If approved, tuition waiver would put our tax burden up to $13,000, or 40% of our stipend.
   b. Q&A:
   Q: Is this in coordination with other universities? Could there be attempts to coordinate with others? A: NAGPS is the overriding body leading the effort. They have a lobbying arm that goes to congress. We’re doing sympathy actions with them. The other Ivies are doing the same thing.
   Q: Is there a good reason to come for just the first 30 minutes [of the Tax Reform Action Day] if you can’t do the full 2 hours? A: Yup, we’ll have the materials there, so come when you can. Even if you can’t make it, we’ll put the same information out on the Facebook page. Also, put this on your Facebook page!
   Q: Why is it necessary that we get the tuition and the waiver, etc...Why not just free? A: Hard to say, but probably has to do with how university gets federal
funds - demonstrate costs involved with education PhD students, etc... “Weird accounting trip,” but it’s a tax benefit for the university to say that they’re funding us.

Q: So, the university is making money on our costs? A: Yup. Also, Cornell has a way around this for how they categorize tuition but they don’t get a tax benefit.

Q: Any indication that Columbia would change how they look at tuition, etc...? A: The university is clearly demonstrating that they are on our side, but we still don’t know what’s going on. Hopefully the university will stand up

3. **Conference at Trinity College Dublin, Ireland**
   a. Last year, we funded someone to go to this conference to present.
   b. This year’s theme is Knowledge and Memory; scope is super broad, so anyone could go.
   c. Timing = days leading up to St. Patrick’s Day.
   d. We are advocating for any student to attend~ MA/PhD student included. Any field.
   e. We are extending deadline for travel grants specifically for this conference by a week.

4. **Summary of Ivy+ Summit**
   a. Collection of graduate student organization representatives from Ivy League universities, MIT, and Chicago has also been invited, although Chicago not technically a member yet.
   b. Comparison of how each of us runs our student governments, how deal with administration, etc...
   c. This year, decided to come up with a constitution (note: we only meet 1x a year, but deans have their own version where they meet 3x a year)
   d. GSAC Plenary will have to approve this constitution
   e. MIT is particularly actively involved and send people to The Hill; if anyone is interested in doing something like this or another opportunity, can suggest, esp. with ad hoc committee.
   f. Similar groups focused on Title 9, etc...
   g. Harvard went through something similar with their own reconstruction last year, so we can ask them how they went about it.

5. **Suspension of student group CU-Asia**
   a. Violated policies 2x, so now suspended. If have questions, come speak later.

6. **Update on plenary meeting location**
   a. December will be there; for Spring, we’re seeking out some other options.

5. **Committee updates**

1. **Alumni & Career Development**
a. Past: LinkedIn Workshop and Headshot Session ~ photography club came to do headshots; information for how to use LinkedIn for job outreach, etc... Had 49 students show up, which was really good compared with past years. Co-sponsored GSAC and CCE.

b. Past: Virtual Networking Hour - Alumni/Student
   a. Just specified STEM and Humanities, but only STEM alumni showed up.
   b. This is sort of our “beta” test, if successful, will try to do 2x a year. Participants logged in with Brazen. About 29 alumni and 40 students (wanted more students, but still initial try out). Haven’t received final statistics for how many alumni spoke with, how many students stayed online, etc...
   c. Sent out survey for how could do better.

c. Spring: International Student Seminars
   Networking, job search, resumes~ especially for students who are looking for jobs overseas. Will do some job searches just for international students.

d. Spring: Alumni Ted Style Talks ~ about 15 minute webinar about experiences at Columbia and how using in their careers. Good resource for anyone who wants to have those style of networking opportunities with alumni but who don’t necessarily want to meet alumni directly.

e. Spring: Yearly Alumni/Student Yearly Event w/Social Committee ~ did same thing last year; planning to do at the end of spring. Feel free to come talk to Frank if interested in helping out or planning.

2. Budget & Finance

   a. Travel Grant Applications due 11/17
      i. For January - June conferences.
   b. Committee will meet after Thanksgiving; responses sent in December.
   c. B/c want to encourage students to apply to the Trinity College conference, have extension for those applicants until following Friday (11/24)

3. Culture

   a. White Light Festival: Jordi Savall: The Routes of Slavery (Nov. 15)

   b. Farinelli and the King, starring Mark Rylance (Feb. 22)
      i. Sold out super quickly via Arts Initiative, so we got tickets too.
      ii. Will sell in January.
4. **Quality of Life**

   a. **GSAS/GSAC resource guide for students**
      i. Particularly working with GSAS handbook; exists but is useless. Going through carefully as well as similar such handbooks existing throughout the various departments → annotate what we find to be incomplete, unclear, and what we want to see in an revamped handbook.
      ii. Trying to get as much information from students as possible; there’s a link on website to give feedback (straight to Milica). Anything from housing, leave, etc… leave. Please write with situations so we can do as good a job as possible.

   b. **Focus group luncheons**
      i. Hoping to have one this semester and another two or so in the semester.
      ii. Small event for groups of students with some snacks and such (for December, want to have an event for parents); maybe later, for those with disabilities or who have taken leave, etc… Want to invite people who belong to these groups and share their experiences (good or back) and how they navigated Columbia bureaucracy. Improve the existing resources.
      iii. Please keep a close lookout for the newsletters and when luncheons are announced, please reach out to people in department (especially if you know they meet in these categories) to participate in these luncheons.
      iv. We’ll keep trying to improve these policies next year as well.

5. **Social event at Hex and Co. last week, super fun; $5 off for students; pretty empty on Thursdays, so that’s a great time to go.**

   a. **Tax Reform Action Day, 11/15 2-4PM, Philosophy 302**
      i. Will have materials and such in the conference room to voice opposition to Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

   b. **Bronx Choice Pantry, 11/16, 8AM-12.30PM**
      i. Will be bringing fresh pastries; please volunteer!
      ii. Still looking for some department reps.
      iii. Packing groceries for families in need.

   c. **Mixer with Teachers College - Unite for Puerto Rico, 11/17, 7-10PM**
      i. Instead of having tickets going to off-setting event at Harlem Tavern, all of costs will go to Puerto Rico.
      ii. Most of information about Puerto Rico has been removed from FEMA website; still a massive disaster. This is a good way to give back to Puerto Rico. Will collect money and goods at the door.
      iii. Money going straight to Unite for Puerto Rico.
iv. If don’t want a drink ticket, can just donate a dollar or an item and come hang out.

d. Save the date: Holiday Party @ The Attic, 12/15, 7PM
   i. Release date for Star Wars, so can come and have great time at rooftop bar and then go straight to Star Wars.
   ii. Will have guest tickets available.
   iii. $15 for students for open bar; if don’t want open bar, $5 for just sliders. Guest tickets = $10 for just food or $20 for open bar and food.
   iv. Let me know if any groups want to co-sponsor for this event.

6. **External Representatives Updates:**

1. **Health (Morningside, CUMC):**
   a. Updates to website (initial testing in January); hopefully active in February or March. This does NOT affect the appointment scheduling system, just the website.
   b. Uptown: now they have access to both Gold and Platinum plans (previously only had access to one)

2. **Libraries:**
   a. Report WIFI problem spots to CUIT, temperature in study spaces, density tracker
   b. Trying to find all the corners, especially in Butler, to see where Wifi doesn’t work.
   c. Trying out temperature differences. Playing around with having different temperatures in different spaces, but hasn’t been labeled or announced. Let representatives know feedback.
   d. Working on a “density tracker” to see how empty/full libraries know.

3. **Graduate Workers of Columbia (GWC)/Union:**
   a. Bargaining rally (last Wednesday), petition to negotiate recourse against sexual harassment (email krm2152@columbia.edu to join Sexual Harassment Working Group, meets Wednesdays, 7pm)
   b. Good turnout.
   c. Union reps have launched a petition to negotiate real recourse against Sexual Harassment; supported by several other Ivies. Sexual Harassment Working Group, meet Wednesdays at 7. Email Kate for more information and meeting spot.

4. **IGB**
   a. Recognized 2 additional clubs: Saudi Student Association and Kung Fu Club.

5. **Disabilities**
   a. SDS had first meeting earlier this month
b. Things to focus on: dedicated testing space for students who need more time; having an online portal for requests; public safety pick up and drop off spot for students with disabilities (should be a matter of finding a program that does this and piggyback off of theirs); disability advocacy meeting, especially for students coming into NYC who have disabilities; SDS quality of life survey that will go around (when have done this before, results show students with disabilities have significantly lower quality of life; many never register with SDS); focus on having committed student group dealing with autism spectrum disorders and providing resources to community; feedback from TAS coming from students → Courseworks doesn’t have accessibility for students with vision impairment. Have reached out to CUIT — probably any institution that uses Courseworks has same issue.

c. What everyone can do: help with visibility. Look around and see where there’s a lack of accessibility and lack of classroom adaptations, etc.. If you have seen those, please reach out after meeting or via email (on website). Just knowing where the problems are is a huge step towards fixing it.

d. Q&A
Q: can anyone join Autism Spectrum Group? A: Focused on friends/family and those with autism, but anyone interested is welcome.

6. ISSO: Travel Signatures (Lerner Hall, 11/15, 12-3PM), Information Session on Employment-Based Visa Options (Faculty House, 11/15, 11AM-1PM)
a. Met with David; very willing to come and talk about any issues and such (especially with how MAs can be negatively affected with fees, etc...).

b. David is trying to work on the website and make everyone visit the website → perhaps as a feature in our newsletter

7. Senators’ Updates
a. (Social Science Senator’s own experiences; 2 senators missing)
Three major initiatives: campus planning - improve bike storage on campus (especially at the New Campus); also, issue with theft; student affairs - free speech on campus, especially in classroom; many students unhappy with ambiguous language in statement; senate gave suggestions on how to rewords some parts; chair of subcommittee that identifies problems related to DACA or undocumented students → super productive meeting, with DACA and undocumented student point person. She has built great website for these students; working on collaborating with a couple of law firms in NYC willing to pro bono represent students. Undergrad problem more than grad student problem.

b. Please take information heard in and bring it back to your constituents

c. Abby will send update on important details mentioned

8. New Business (Open Forum)
1. Q&A
Q: Did you have alcohol at your recruitment visit? (*the majority raised hands; no one raised hands that they had not*)
Q: How many departments have a structure where there’s a student representative or an organization where there’s someone official who liaises between students and administrative side? (*numerous students raised their hands, but several also raised their hands that they did not have this*) A: Some departments are really well organized like that, like English with its Council, but some are not.

2. Other point: something we pushed for last year was that we have TA opportunities open to us if there are openings in other departments. Still interest? → Yes

3. Looking ahead: Social bought around 39 tickets for Dear Evan Hansen → be prepared!

4. Senator: had a representative from campus meal plan person; everyone is eligible to have meal plans, so now you know.

9. Committee sign-ups & Adjournment (President)