



Associated Students of Columbia University

G.S. STUDENT COUNCIL

Website: <https://gssc.gs.columbia.edu/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/yourgssc/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/yourgssc>

Contact Email: GSSC@columbia.edu

Meeting Location:

<https://columbiauniversity.zoom.us/j/91508578336>

GENERAL STUDIES STUDENT COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

March 1st 8:15PM

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the **General Studies Student Council of Columbia University** will hold a **REGULAR** meeting on **March 1st** at **8:15PM**. The meeting information is noted below. The General Studies Student Council reserves the right to suspend the orders of the day if necessary to conduct business. All General Studies Student Council meetings are held in locations that are wheelchair accessible. Other disability-related accommodations will be provided to persons with disabilities upon request. Persons requesting such accommodations should notify the General Studies Student Council Chair at sat2198@columbia.edu no less than three (3) working days prior to the meeting. The General Studies Student Council will make efforts to meet requests made after such date, if possible. Please also contact the General Studies Student Council Chair for any agenda related questions.

I. ORDER OF BUSINESS

A. Call To Order

B. Roll Call (* → indicates non-voting | ~ → indicates Interim Position)

OFFICERS	STATUS	OFFICERS	STATUS
*President Serengeti Timungwa	P	VP of Finance Simas Chacar-Palubinskas	P
Chief of Finance Alan Han	P	VP of Policy Nasser Odetallah	P
Chief of Policy Stephanie Pierre	P	VP of Campus Life Cole Wagner	P
Chief of Campus Life Emily Robinson	P	VP of Communications Brian Laurito	P
Chief of Communications Siena Iwasaki Milbauer	P	Veteran Students Rep Alejandro Rojas	P
Int'l Students Rep Carol Chen	P	University Senator Jeremy Wahl	E
Senior Class President Rachel Harris	P	Senior Class VP Nick Li	P
Senior Class Treasurer Garrett Gregor-Splaver	P	1st Year Class President Faith Grady	P
1st Year Class VP Han Qing	P	Health & Wellness Representative Bruce Goumain	P
External Events Chair		Family and Working Students Rep Shatize Pope	P
Alumni Affairs Rep Mike Kim	P	Dual B.A./Joint Program Rep Evan Rork	P
Community Services & Sustainability Rep		Treasurer	
JTS Rep Josh Brunnlehrmann	P	Student Services/Academic Affairs Rep Andre	P

		Moutafov	
Diversity & Equity Rep Rubaab Poonawala	P	Students w/Disabilities Rep Erin O'Bannon	U
Tech Chair Catherine Sun	E	Social Media Rep Lisa Cardoso	P
*Legislative Assistant Ferdinando Castro Gonzalez	P	*Legislative Assistant Kyle Gordon	P
*Advisor Sean Trulby		Chief Negotiator Katie Peters	P
*Advisor Ashley Johnson		Voting Members: 28 / Quorum: → 19 / Total: 26	

C. **Adoption of the Current Agenda for March 1, 2022 -> Pass/Rejected**

1. **Pass**

D. **Adoption of Meeting Minutes from February 15, 2022**

1. **Pass**

II. **REPORTS**

A. **President**

1. GSSC Town Hall with the Deans

- a. Welcome Dean Rogers and Dean Rosener, awaiting Dean Rosen-Metsch
- b. We've been trying to have town halls more, but weren't able to with covid limitations for a while. But this town hall is a great indication of a slow return to normality
- c. **Dean Rosen-Metsch:** Glad to be back in person; Class of 2022 will have a great Class Day on Monday, May 16th; wants to make sure everyone is taking good care of themselves during exam season
- d. **Question:** What are the most recent developments as it relates to Class Day and grad events for seniors?
 - i. **Dean Rogers:** We are in person for Class Day, hoping to have full event for Class of 20, 21, and 22; the planning process is underway
 1. We were set back by ongoing pandemic but as things stand currently, we are looking to have the biggest GS Class Day we've ever had
 2. We had to make promises back in 2020 when we had to go remote; now that we are able to be in person, we've promised 2020 and 2021 that we will celebrate them and that is the plan
 3. The full spectrum of events will have details coming out in the coming weeks and months.
- e. **Question:** Latin Diplomas; why don't GS graduates receive their diplomas in Latin? Are there conversations to change this?
 - i. **Dean Rosen-Metsch:** Has been Dean for four years, has heard this for a long time; perspective is formed as both Dean and Alumni; outside of CC and Barnard, the rest of the diplomas at Columbia University are in English; we have used the same diploma as all the other schools at Columbia

1. Was previously brought up under Dean Awn; Under review years ago, was decided that we would keep it the same as it has been for 75 years
2. If this is something that GS students feel strongly about and after we've conferred with alum, GSSC could take this up
 - a. Can't be something to be done lightly as it would create changes between current students and alumni
 - b. Need to consider why it matters to have the same degree as CC, would be a big process to undertake
- ii. **Dean Rogers:** I took place in those conversations with Dean Awn and before that, with the University Senate to talk about diploma standardization
 1. That convo led to most of the schools having English diplomas, only two having Latin going back to their founding
 2. Would need the student body to consider
- iii. **Simas (follow up):** I know that this was put to a vote at one point and students voted in favor of Latin; sharing own perspective: looking to the history of GS, students have always been looking for access to the same resources that other students have access to; we take the same classes with the same requirements; symbolically important for GSers' equal work to be recognized with equal acknowledgement/diploma
 1. **Dean Rosen-Metsch:** My question would be, if this is something that students feel strongly about, we assess that and then we can discuss changes
- f. **Question:** Student life; how do students who missed orientation stay engaged within the community and form bonds similar to the ones that folks who participated in orientation got to build (since many of folks' friends are made during orientation)?
 - i. **Dean Rosen-Metsch:** Orientation is very special; the majority here probably started online due to Covid; If students missed orientation, they're welcome to back to orientation (we do it once in the Fall, once in the Spring)--flexibility is one of the great things about GS
 1. The GS Lounge will become the Peter J. Awn Lounge and is a great place to meet people; GS specifically also has about 20 clubs, around 500 for University as a whole
 2. Clubs and extracurriculars
 3. Peer mentors
 - ii. If you know of a student who doesn't have a group of people or a sense of belonging, I encourage folks to get in touch with GSSC and student leaders, admin leaders, and participate in campus events. If someone wants a community, this is a very warm community.
- g. **Question:** Childcare – Why aren't there more subsidized/free childcare options through the university?

- i. **Dean Rosen-Metsch:** We are very aware of this issue. For GS'ers, this is a different situation than other undergrad colleges because we are much more likely to have parent students.
 - 1. We work to plan events and create spaces where families can come. We had these discussions pre-covid where students had come to us and asked for financial support from the institution. And we were looking into that but we paused because all money that we fundraise we try to give to students for financial aid. Raising funding for financial aid is the highest priority; trying to do better each year but we have a long way to go.
 - 2. So we have sometimes been hesitant to designate money to other areas; instead we try to designate scholarships to parents and support in other ways
 - ii. **Dean Rogers:** Working closely with the financial office, we know this is a complexity some students have to navigate alongside educational expenses and student life. We don't have easy answers. Raising more money and supporting GS students more fully through financial aid is what we are leaning into.
 - 1. We do have resources and will share with Serengeti and e-board. These (Office of Work Life, Provost's Office) can help, but they are not the full answer. We're still working on it.
- h. **Question:** Advisors – Availability of academic advising varies wildly from advisor to advisor. What is the GS admin doing to boost the academic advising services so everyone can have solid access?
 - i. **Dean Rosen-Metsch:** I've conferred with Dean Delva; your GS advisor is extremely important to your experience, we want you to have the best advisors possible – we're very proud
 - 1. Are currently in the process of hiring a new advising (so we are currently down 1 advisor)
 - 2. Advisors also do graduate coaching, international student advising, supporting other GS programs (not just doing 1-1 advising)
 - 3. However, if any students are not having a positive experience with an advisor, it's important that the administration knows about that; you can write to Dean Josh Edwin, to Dean Delva, or myself to inform
 - 4. Students can ask to have another advisor
 - 5. We want to make sure that you are having a good academic experience; many of our advisors have 2-3 hundred students but supporting GS students is the most important part of their job and their commitment to the student experience is full and crucial.
 - i. **Question:** Dual BA students generally have kitchens but are without meal plans; in need of lunch options (but lunches are not subsidized in any way); Uris Deli became a sub shop and prices increased
 - i. **Dean Rogers:** It's difficult to answer the specific question around the specific cost of the change (Uris deli to sub shop). But we

have worked very closely with Columbia Dining and they have been supportive of GS students and our request of how to lower the cost and access to food for students struggling with food insecurity.

- ii. We haven't fully figured it out; but this also relates to better financial aid. The GS meal plan does lower the cost (believes it is about \$7 a meal now).
 - iii. The change around Uris the idea behind the change would improve some congestion issues; it was hoped to be an improvement
 - iv. Some may have issues but Dining made a change based on the feeling that there was a need for that change; they are open to conversations; Deans see their role as advocating for GSers so you can always talk with them
- j. **Question:** PDF grading; last semester Committee on Instruction approved students to PDF course up until the last day of classes. Is that something the Committee is considering implementing permanently?
- i. **Dean Rosner:** The topic of PDF grading has received lots of attention since the beginning of the pandemic, this was when the committee started to hear from students about their issues and considered how to work with them to mitigate stress; you've see the statements that came based on these changes;
 - 1. Complicated conversations because faculty and committee see pluses and minuses to expanding PDF policy
 - a. You can take 1 course PDF per semester, not a major or core class; taking PDF classes can relieve pressure but it can make your transcript read in a different way for grad schools/employers. It can also compromise learning experiences according to faculty.
 - 2. We've had 1000s of hours of debates and in the recent semesters, the committee felt that it was important to extend PDF guidelines to meet the unusual circumstances. Conversations continue because we are still not back to normal
 - 3. At this point, the Committee would likely have serious concerns about making these changes permanent. They felt that before the last two years, they were happy with the grading policies. However, every semester things are reassessed and the committee tries to come up with a solution to meet the current circumstances.

a) **Updates:**

- (1) **Dean Rosen-Metsch:** Fundraising around financial aid is highest priority; helps support our goals of academic excellence, meeting 100% need; last year, we raised almost \$15 million in Financial Aid (normally, we raise around \$5-6 million)

(a) Part of that increase comes from Student Support Initiative with overall goal for University of raising \$1.4 billion

- (i) For us, it's all for financial aid; want to offer more full cost attendance scholarships (were able to have a couple last year; hoping for more in the future); want to meet full need for veterans, deepen support for students with highest needs
- (ii) Created a fund to support students had been displaced during withdrawal from Afghanistan
- (iii) Want to take advantage of our special place at Columbia and in higher ed; in the future, we want to approach how we recruit from community colleges, develop specific scholarships
- (iv) Bringing on new staff on Alumni and Development whose background is foundation work; want to improve and strengthen financial aid

(b) Also in 75th anniversary of GS; as part of that, we want to have in-person events to celebrate while recognizing alumni accomplishments from around the world

- (i) We've commissioned a book on the history of GS (similar to past works from Barnard, SEAS)

(c) Will soon share updates on Class Day, speakers, etc.

(2) **Dean Rogers:** Excited for coming weeks and months, being able to share information

(a) As admin: We're constantly figuring out how to meet the GS student body's needs. We are a team that is very committed to the school, mission, and students. Given what we've just gone through, and we're not yet back to normal, but I'm grateful to have this dedicated admin team and the best students on campus. Please raise your hand when you have feedback and frustrations, we are ready to work with you. This has been a complex couple of years but we have a good path ahead and are feeling pretty optimistic.

(3) **Dean Rosner:** GS is many things to all of us, but GS is a school!

(a)

(b) One update is new undergrad major, **Cognitive Science**, available to CC, Barnard, and GS students

- (i) Brings together linguistics, science, philosophy
- (ii) Proposing major in two year long process, glad to be able to announce it and opening it up to students

(c) Another update is we are opening major open house period; all departments will be putting on events, most of these events will be happening in-person

- (i) Choosing a major is the most important academic decision you'll make at GS; attend as many of these events as you can

- (d) Two more things on pursuit of access:
 - (i) More GS students in Literature Humanities than ever before in the history of the school; in both classes with CC students and in GS-specific sections
 - (ii) Undergrad research is very important, allows students to strike out on their own, historically there have been more opportunities for CC's students; we've been trying to work to support STEM study (specifically psychology and neuroscience) with stipends/housing
- b) Conclusion of town hall: Thanks for coming and continuing to be receptive to GSSC and the GS student body's needs and communications
- c) **Dean Rosen Metsch:** Thank you Serengeti for your leadership. We always go into the work with the approach of making a better GS everyday. We want to work together to take this school to new heights. To the graduates, congratulations, you are Columbians for life.

B. Policy Committee

1. CPS Meeting Recap
 - a) Meeting with Doctor Goldfield (Clinician who works with GS admin); Nasser, Bruce, Erin, and Rubaab all attended
 - b) Discussing student concerns collected over the previous semester
 - (1) First, there were worries last semester about long waiting period
 - (a) Last semester, they were down clinicians AND they had the largest number of students who needed support
 - (b) Current waiting period is under a week!
 - (2) For particularly sensitive cases (such as mental health), students can be prioritized if they reach out
 - (3) Concerns regarding 24 hour phone line that comes from CPS, people last semester had expressed that they had been deterred from using it
 - (a) Columbia Physicians don't run it (partner with another service) but they will be addressing it
 - (4) Expansion (in relation to wait times)
 - (a) Did not know about expansion, but are already in the process of hiring new people and will expand to meet increased need
 - (b) Recruited 3 new people who are specifically trained in different areas of diversity in mental health (looking not just for more staff, but a diversity of specifications)
 - (5) To connect with CPS, walk in, group session, email them
 - (a) How do we get this info out there more effectively?
 - (b) Talked about some ideas such as flyers, events to get more info out there
 - (6) Initiatives on the GS end; meeting with Dean Griffiths to discuss
 - (7) Serengeti: Does CPS have their own Instagram?
 - (a) Don't know; might be an idea worth floating

- (8) University Studies talk from CPS isn't given to Dual BA students who don't take U Studies; so they will work on getting info to Dual BA students as well
- 2. Upcoming Dean/CCSC Policy Meetings
 - a) In the midst of scheduling meetings with Deans; will speak with Dean Rosner tomorrow about PDF, expansion
 - b) Meeting with Dean Rogers over Spring Break to discuss financial aid, dining
 - c) Meeting with Dean Delva to discuss meeting with advisors
 - d) Scheduling meeting with CCSC to discuss CC-SEAS expansion

C. Communications Committee

- 1. No Updates

D. Finance Committee

- 1. No Updates

E. Campus Life Committee

- 1. Glass House Rocks Thank Yous
 - a) Huge thanks to Glass House Rocks volunteers
 - (1) Thanks to Faith for merch
 - (2) Rae for designing merch
 - (3) Emily for handling a food situation
 - (4) Erin handling the mechanical bull queue
- 2. Snack Attacks Volunteers
 - a) Next week, 11:30-1 pm
 - b) Need volunteers to come and help
 - (1) Forms have been sent in Slack
- 3. Save the Date Announcement for Gala
 - a) April 16th, 7-11pm
- 4. MilVets x GSSC Mixer at Mels
 - a) April 1st
 - b) Ticketing system released forthcoming
- 5. MetroCard Update
 - a) Emily: Good news—applications have closed; tickets will be going out soon; 60 people applied which means we can give out all 50 MetroCards that we purchased and help these commuter students!
- 6. Highline Tour Proposal
 - a) Garrett: If you are free on Saturday (March 5th); Highline tour

F. University Senator

- 1. No Updates

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Election Commission Chairperson Nominations

- 1. ECAC has been working on recruiting a Chairperson, they'll be responsible for nominating commissioners and together will be conducting Spring GSSC elections; there are two candidates:
 - a) Savannah Eklund

- (1) Junior, studying medical humanities, minoring Russian language and literature. Started at GS in spring 2019.
- (2) Active in campus community (Treasurer in largest student-run dance group, volunteered as an OL, wants to be more involved in GS Community–thinks this would be a good role)
- (3) GSSC plays a critical role in our community; advocates fiercely for students; helps foster a community through events
 - (a) Need to ensure sanctity of elections to ensure that students can choose the best leaders
 - (b) Need to recognize and uphold the important role of GSSC, ensure that elections are fair and what GS students deserve
 - (c) An honor to give back, would be a unique and important opportunity
- (4) Utmost respect for fair and open elections for GSers, want to engage all of student body
- (5) **Question from Serengeti:** Speak to time management skills, workload this semester (as being on the election commission requires ability to keep track of a lot of deadlines)
 - (a) Does not have a significantly heavy workload this semester; also, has been active in the community including on e-boards of student orgs, worked prior to the pandemic (knows how to manage extracurricular deadlines along with coursework, and how to prioritize elections)
- (6) **Follow Up question:** What work were you doing pre-pandemic?
 - (a) Worked as dance instructor, freelance dancer/actress
- (7) **Follow-up question:** Are you aware that if you do serve in this role, you can't be on GSSC next year?
 - (a) Yes, I know!
- (8) **Follow-up question:** If you were not to be nominated for chairperson, would you be willing to be a commissioner?
 - (a) Yes!
- (9) **Emily:** We do not always see amazing voter turnout. What is your engagement plan?
 - (a) While I don't have specific plans, want bigger social media and in-person push to allow people to know when elections are happening and increase turn out

b) Jane Jeong

- (1) Senior in GS, major is human rights and history concentrator
- (2) Served as GSSC President last year, previously Equity chairperson
 - (a) Knows how important the integrity of elections is; we're all here because of the importance of student advocacy and the strength of GSSC
 - (b) Believes she can bring experience (time management), having been on the other side of elections (as a previous member of ECAC), knows how important timelines are,

has established relationships with admin that we have to work with for elections

- (c) Would want to immediately work on interviewing commissioners to EC, currently only have around 2 months to create election timeline, get comms up

(3) **Serengeti question:** How will you increase turnout? If you weren't appointed as chairperson, would you be interested in commissioner?

- (a) EC has budget that isn't usually used, larger rollover; we could put together food and information sessions
- (b) Once candidates are selected, getting information out there
- (c) Collab with GSSC comms to get word out (perhaps own instagram page)
- (d) Emphasis on physical, in-person events

B. MilVets Headshots Opportunity

1. **Ebonnie:** VP of MilVets, submitting request for funds for headshots, 2 2-hour shoots over the span of 2 days, \$400 dollars (\$200 per day) and covers 20-30 students per days, and includes photo enhancement and editing
2. Could cohost the event with GSSC but would increase costs; am definitely open; because of social distancing guidelines would increase costs though because days would be extended
 - a) **Rae:** Can senior class co-sponsor this event?
 - b) **Simas:** Do you have any figures for increased costs?
 - (1) With more students, we'd probably have to add more days
 - c) **Simas:** Will they be reserved spots?
 - (1) Yes, they will be reserved (are not reserved yet)
 - d) **Nick:** Who is the vendor? Is it Prestige photography? Are there costs for Individual students or is this all covered in our sponsorship?
 - (1) The photographer is a Columbia student, would be a flat fee, no additional costs for students who participate
 - e) **Nick:** With Columbia student, do we have to worry about vendor set up?
 - (1) That will be up to MilVets after they receive our funding
 - f) **Nasser:** This is a great idea but don't want to hijack event from MilVets. Have you had a number of people already express interest and that's how you've decided on two days?
 - (1) We haven't conducted any polls but always have a good turn out
 - g) **Serengeti:** There are some concerns about Senior headshots as we approach graduation; do you think this is something MilVets would be willing to collaborate on (allowing non-MilVets to join in)? Potentially having MilVets and non-MilVets tickets (and we could use allotted numbers of spaces for particular groups)
 - (1) We'd be totally willing to collaborate; open to different registration process and a discussion with GSSC

IV. STANDING BUSINESS

V. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE FLOOR

This time is reserved for any General Studies Student Council Members to make announcements on items not on the agenda. A time limit of three (3) minutes per speaker and (25) twenty five minutes total shall be observed. **NO** action will be taken and the total time limit for this item shall not be extended.

A. Evan: Been working students about ongoing crisis in Ukraine, trying to project that Ukrainian flag on campus

1. Spoke with President's Office, seems like it'll be going forward
2. Hoping to present/vote on a statement next week
 - a) Circulate to council at least 24 hours before
3. There will be a rally at some point in the next week
 - a) Knows Ukrainian Club appreciates GSSC's support
4. Hoping for us to share things on social media/newsletters
 - a) Email to gssccommunications@columbia.edu

B. Question from Andre: Have there been any updates on the GS flag?

1. **Faith:** It has been brought to the attention of maintenance

C. Question from Nick: If someone wants to apply for co-sponsorships, how does that work?

1. There should be a form on the website
2. Also email gsscfinance@columbia.edu

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

This segment of the meeting is reserved for persons desiring to address the General Studies Student Council on any matter of concern that is not stated on the agenda. A time limit of three (3) minutes per speaker and ten (10) minutes per topic shall be observed. The law does not permit any action to be taken, nor extended discussion of any items not on the agenda. The General Studies Student Council may briefly respond to statements made or questions posed, however, for further information, please contact the General Studies Student Council President at sat2198@columbia.edu for the item of discussion to be placed on a future agenda. (Brown Act §54954.3)

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

This closed session is reserved for any General Studies Student Council Members to discuss and possibly take action on voting in the nominees for various, posted, council vacancies. The public, and the nominees, will be asked to step out of the room while the council conducts this business.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT