

GENERAL STUDIES STUDENT COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
September 20th, 8:15PM

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the *General Studies Student Council of Columbia University* will hold a *REGULAR* meeting on *September 20th, 8:15 PM*. 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 President 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 Executive Board 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 Emily Robinson	P	Treasurer	
VP of Policy Nasser Odetallah	P	Senior Class Treasurer	
VP of Finance Simas Chacar-Palubinskas	P	Chief Negotiator	
VP of Communications Catherine Sun	P	Technology Chair	
VP of Campus Life Maya Platek	P	Social Media Representative	
Chief of Policy Kyle Gordon	P	*Outreach Associate	
Chief of Finance		Senior Class President Garrett Gregor-Splaver	P
Chief of Communications		Senior Class VP William Grugam	P
Chief of Campus Life Evan Rork	P	First Year Class President	
University Senator Bruce Goumain	P	First Year Class VP	
Veteran Students Rep		JTS Rep Joshua Brunnlehrman	P
Diversity and Equity Rep		International Students Rep	
Family & Working Students Rep		Dual BA & Joint Program Rep	
Students with Disabilities Rep		Alumni Affairs Rep	
*Legislative Assistant		Community Service & Sustainability Rep	
*Legislative Assistant		*Campus Life Associate	
*Legislative Assistant		*Commuter Students Representative	
*Advisor Sean Trulby		*Advisor Jawad Cipriani	
		Voting Members: 10 / Quorum: → 7 / Total: 10	

C. Adoption of the Current Agenda for September 20th , 2022 -> Pass/Rejected

1. Motion Passes/Fails- **Motion Passes**

II. REPORTS

A. President

1. Welcoming Remark
 - a. Thank you all for coming tonight! We have a lot of events planned this year!
2. Attendance Policies
 - a. We are really prioritizing in-person attendance as Covid restrictions have lifted and it is very important to attend in person so we can build better collaboration and connections
 - b. Check emails for updates on attendance policy
3. Council Updates
 - a. We have created a few non-voting roles to help benefit and facilitate each committee
 - i. Commuter student representative
 - ii. Outreach Associate
 - iii. Campus Life Associate
 - iv. Additional Policy Assistant Role
4. Public Comment: Equality for GS
5. Public Comment: International Students Seeking for Solidarity

B. Policy Committee

1. Committee Introductions
 - a) Nasser: Introducing himself as VP of Policy and Kyle as Chief of Policy and Bruce as University Senator.
 - b) We are creating a new non-voting role, as we need a few extra hands
 - c) Policy Committee's past accomplishments: coordinate food pantry, GS subsidized meal plans, PDF policies during Covid
 - d) Policy Committee goals for the year: expand GZ subsidized meal plan, GS Credit Cap, continue support of the metro card program, registration waitlist system improvement

C. Communications Committee

1. Committee Introductions
 - a) Cat: The Comms Committee helps relay information to the GS student body. We are in charge of our GSSC website, Social Media pages, and assist in your Weekly Newsletter.
 - (1) Comms aims to work on various expansions this year
 - (a) Social media inclusivity
 - (b) Website updates
 - (c) Introduce new interactive content

D. Finance Committee

1. Committee Introductions
 - a) Simas: This is my third year in GSSC as VP of Finance, this year I'm excited to continue some of our four school initiatives, and continue to support GSSC events.
 - b) At the beginning of the year we already worked with F@CU
 - c) At the next meeting we will be adopting our budget and formally publishing our co-sponsorship form
 - d) Don't hesitate to reach out with any questions!

E. Campus Life Committee

1. Committee Introductions

a) Maya: This is my first semester on GSSC

(1) Introducing Evan as Chief of Campus Life, Joshua as JTS rep, Liam Senior Class VP, and Garrett as Senior Class President,

(2) I am very excited because of we have no more covid restrictions

(3) I will be conducting office hours where GS students can come to me with ideas and we can aim to bring it to reality

F. University Senator

1. Presentation of the Senate

a) Bruce: my role will be to not only advocate for GS, but to also keep us updated on the university level, the Senate meets once a month on Fridays,

b) 111 senators including graduate schools and faculty and administration,

c) Our goal is to push for policies to help push for

(1) Expansion of GS financial aid

(2) Counseling and psychological support

(3) Expanding dining and seating

(4) Expanding alumni and relations

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Emily wants Pizza

1. Emily: Want to prepare Pizza for our next meeting!

a) Joshua: Do we have a budget yet?

(1) Simas: we do have a preliminary budget

2. Motion for \$200 budget for Pizza.

a) Motion Passes

B. Nominations

1. Policy + Legislative

a) Diversity and Equity Representative

(1) Marie: Sorry for not being there in person, senior, and a community college transfer, aside from NSOP and a couple of panels this is the first time I get to serve the GS body. I am honored to be nominated for this position. I envision this role as one that forms the bridge between the student body and action. In my interview, I spoke about unspoken parts of mental awareness and wanting to work on implementing an excused absence for mental exhaustion and health. Also want to make the campus more accessible. Super excited to be in this role and get to work with the Policy Team.

b) Health & Wellness Representative

(1) Allison: Third and hopefully last year at GS. Volunteered before mostly in Education and is part of the GS RA. I am very excited to come work with GSSC if confirmed. Want to improve connections with affiliates such as TC. Want to work on sublet improvements and dining accessibility. Making it important to make awareness of insurance policies.

c) Student Services & Academic Affairs Representative

(1) Rubaab: Senior majoring in Human Rights, part of the Dual Degree with Sciences Po. Joined GSSC last year and loved being a part of the team and initiatives, especially CPS and expanding the accessibility of mental health support. This year I have big shoes to fill, and I hope I can continue to build on the work from last years such as credit cap, registration, and also access to dining and everything that was already initiated last semester. We got the gears

rolling and I want to see that improve. I also want to improve the accessibility of information to the GS students, such as creating infographics and posters!

d) Students with Disabilities Representative

(1) Rachel: I have leadership position experience and last year I worked with the Zuckerman Institute and have been on the Karate Team. I have published an anthology of my experiences with disabilities. Should I be confirmed I would love to partner with the Diversity Rep to increase accessibility and to increase transparency and communication and how to acquire accommodations and the process. Also work to increase alt text from our social media pages, to create an anonymous Google doc where students can report their frustration, and lastly to partner with Campus Life Committee to reimplement a therapy dog day event.

e) Legislative Assistant

(1) Maria: Last semester at GS, very excited to be graduating soon, she/her pronouns. Some of the things I am passionate about is advocating for underrepresented communities. I have a lot of experience advocating and getting things done. Also love to advocate for people who need help and CPS and other resources on campus for students who are struggling with mental health and other personal issues. Also look forward to working with the financial office to lower the age profile of the CSS as we have many students who are not currently qualified.

2. Finance

a) Chief of Finance

(1) Su: I love attention. I love being in a group and participating and I love being here. What I am concerned about is my lack of experience in the role of Chief of Finance, but I can guarantee that it will not hinder the group. My goal is to just not mess up.

b) Treasurer

(1) Kris: Dual BA, even though it is my first semester here. I think it's important to gather resources and initiatives as finance allows the policy to move forward so they know what resources are available to them and make sure..

c) Senior Class Treasurer

(1) Rebekah: I have a sense of finance background and have always valued community and organizing and founded a non-profit organization and received a Presidential Volunteer Award from Obama twice. I can help with contracts and budgeting which is what I intend to do as Treasurer. If confirmed, I'll be happy to help GSSC and work with the wider GS community.

d) Chief Negotiator

(1) Jennifer: When I thought of being a part of a community, I wanted to function in something that I have a lot of passion for, which is why I applied for this role. I know I'm not only going to be working on numbers only but with people too.

3. Communications

a) Chief of Communications

(1) Jessica: Bond with GSSC is because I had so many classes with previous GSSC members (Nick and Cat) who were so passionate about their jobs so they were constantly feeding information to me in class, and because of this I joined many events which have fueled my passion to join in GSSC. For my goal in GSSC, we notice that there are individuals who are not on Instagram and we want to expand our social media platforms and engagement, to be transparent to the GS community.

b) Social Media Representative

(1) Faith: second year on GSSC. Social media has always been a passion for me. Last year I found out that my passion lies in comms and I'm excited

(a) Evan: why did you leave campus life

(i) Faith: I just told you! It's a better career move, I'm going into product design.

c) Outreach Associate

- (1) Haya: I'm part of the JTS joint program. I'm very excited to be part of the GSSC, in high school I have been part of many leadership clubs. By being an outreach associate, by making students post and finding interesting ways to use social media by not just to advertise but to also hear back from the community to see what we can do better and implement.

4. Campus Life

a) First Year Class President

- (1) Robert: First year and am excited to work with the council. I envision to strengthen the role to build the community and to keep the community together as people spread apart and work towards their own goals. I aim to get as many group chats available.

b) First Year Class Vice President

- (1) Jule: 18, as a child I was in and out of hospitals and never really went to high school, when I turned 15, I was given the opportunity to start classes in my private college and after 2 years I got my associates at 17. I had my last surgery in January of this year and went to study abroad. Now I came here hoping to be great. Worked two years in a non-profit to help individuals with addiction, and which felt nice to be a person to stand up for people and be an advocate.

c) Dual BA & Joint Program Representative

- (1) Ann: It is a big transition from a Dual BA to New York. I have had leadership experiences and love to be involved.

(a) Evan: will you commit to be part of the second Dual BA and JTS Trivia Night?

(i) Ann: Of course!

d) Alumni Affairs Representative

- (1) Kat: studying political science, the real reason why I'm here is because I wanted to find my spot on campus as I have been on student council in high school too. I'm loving my position as my parents are both Columbia Alumni so I have watched them receive benefits such as job affairs and dinners, and as a student, I have not heard of many alumni resources, so I want to make sure GS students are aware of what comes after graduation.

e) Community Service & Sustainability Representative

- (1) Selin: Dual BA of Sciences Po. been to many policy meetings for environmental and sustainability services. My main ideas include reducing the amount of food waste on campus, by making a compost initiative and gardening ideas. It would be nice to have a couple of presentations so students can get ideas on how to stay involved. We can also create a contest to help GS students get more engaged to get involved to stay sustainable.

- (2) Ranni: I'm an international student, sophomore, so it is my second year in GS, I am a neuroscience major and pre-med. I served in the army for two years and interviewed army candidates and heard stories of people from very diverse backgrounds. And I learned a lot of working in a team that is very dynamic and being more sensitive to make things work during covid. I was part of the student council in high school where we made events such as making a fair arranged by each class and all donations were raised went to cancer associations that helped me stay involved in the community. When I came to Columbia I didn't know how to stay involved in the community so as a community service and sustainability rep, I would love to make people aware of opportunities.

(a) Maya: speak to your ideas

(i) Ranni: to form groups and specific organizations for events and lets students sign up, such as making packages for the homeless, mainly to make the community more accessible. And for sustainability, it might be very good to have a second-hand fair.

f) Commuter Representative

(1) Sean: I am a senior, but only my second year here. I am a community college transfer. My background is that from day one I have been a Commuter, I live on Long Island right now and went to Stony Brook. When I found out that I got in, I always knew what it was like to balance a commute and school, and I did not expect the intensity of the two-hour commute. I normally commute 2 hours to school one way, and a third of a quarter of my day is on transportation along with trying to balance everything in my life. A reason why I want to apply is that I don't want commuters to feel alone.

g) Campus Life Associate

(1) Lily: second year of the JTS program. Graduated 2020 and did a year in Israel working as a teacher's assistant and this year as a supervisor in California. I love to dance! This is why I want to incorporate dance into every activity this year. I want to break boundaries where we can meet people with different backgrounds and strengthen ties.

C. Mario Kart Event

1. Evan: October 7th in the Satow Room.

a) Prizes: 1st place \$100, 2nd place \$50, 3rd place \$25

b) Motion to allocate \$425 to the GSSC Mario Kart Tournament

(1) Motion Passes

IV. STANDING BUSINESS

A. No Updates

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.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

This segment of the meeting is reserved for all non-Council members desiring to address the General Studies Student Council on any matter of concern. 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. (Brown Act §54954.3)

1. Equality for GS

a. Antonio: Our objective is to demand parity of financial aid of the three Columbia University undergraduate programs

i. Columbia University offers substantial Financial Aid to Columbia College and SEAS including

1. Full tuition coverage for students and families who receive under \$150,000 per year- a deal that GS students simply do not receive
2. GS students receive 20000 less per year in aid than CC and SEAS, a gap that increases by 40,000 in just first-year students alone

a. This disparity is compounded by the cost of GS to be \$8000 higher than CC and SEAS (2021)

3. The fault here doesn't lie within the School of General Studies, it lies within the unequal financial aid policies of Columbia University.
 4. We are here today to ask for the GSSC support by sharing our message with the wider student body. We know that with your help, we can reach out to other student government organizations and most importantly every single GS student. The School of General Studies cannot take pride in its diversity without addressing the specific financial needs of its most diverse students because access to Columbia University without support is not an opportunity, but can turn this experience into a burden.
- b. Pooja: Senior at GS, co-chair of YDSA, for the past few weeks, we have been working extensively with GS for Equality to help realize their demands
- i. Columbia's \$18.4 Billion endowment means that it is well-positioned to bring equitable funding for GS, the demands brought to you by Equality for GS today are incredibly feasible and
 - ii. YDSA is continuing to work working to mobilize our general membership across the undergraduate and graduate at Columbia as well as our connections with unions and other social activists on this campus to get real results for the students at The School of General Studies
 - iii. I sincerely hope that GSSC will formally support Equality for GS by making the school accessible to everyone who needs it.
2. Solidary for International Students
- a. Petition to demand Columbia health to allow International Students to waive their health insurance
 - i. After rounds of communication with Columbia Health and other schools on campus, we represent more than 12000 International students at Columbia University who have agreed that current insurance waiver policies targetting international students is discriminatory and unfair
 - ii. The financial exploitation of our nationality denies our rights to choose unfair access to affordable health care and goes against Columbia's values of inclusion equity and accountability
 - iii. Main Concerns and simple facts:
 1. Columbia health puts unnecessary hurdles for international students to waive school insurance plans, even if international students have qualified and superior insurance plans
 - a. Employer insurance
 2. Domestic students can waive the Columbia insurance plans easily and successfully, statistically, most Columbia students waive the insurance plan because of its unreasonable cost
 3. All international students are required to opt into the Columbia plan
 - a. A high-cost plan that routes funding back to the University Health system
 4. The price for the Columbia Health plan is high compared to the market (\$4189 + \$1300 health services fee), meanwhile, there are plenty of insurance plans offered by NY state and credible insurance companies on the market at free or low cost.
 - iv. Most other universities including Yale Princeton UPenn Brown and allow international students to choose insurance plans outside of the

school. NYU allows international students to waive the school insurance with different insurances on the market

- v. So far, our petition has gathered 777 signatures of Columbia students from different schools and countries, including domestic and international students
- vi. Joshua: What are you asking from us?
 - 1. Frank: Asking GSSSC to send out a statement of support.

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