

**GENERAL STUDIES STUDENT COUNCIL:  
2025 HOUSING RELOCATION SURVEY REPORT**



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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On Monday, June 30, 2025, members of the General Studies Student Council (GSSC) began hearing reports from GS students regarding an email they received from Columbia Residential that same day. This email, which was sent to GS students living in the buildings known as Nussbaum and The Fairholm, informed students that they would need to leave their current residences by July 25, 2025. Their outlined options were to transfer to another Columbia Residential unit or to find alternative housing. This email provided students with less than a month's notice and did not provide a meaningful explanation for the decision, simply stating that "units will no longer be available for the upcoming academic year."<sup>1</sup>

Limited additional information about the relocation was posted on the Columbia Residential website.<sup>2</sup> As of August 10, 2025, the website included a section "For Student Residents at 600 West 113th Street and 503 West 121st Street." An FAQ-style dropdown included the question, "Why am I being asked to relocate from 600 West 113th Street and 503 West 121st Street for the 2025-26 academic year?" The answer read "These housing assignment modifications are impacting a small number of students across all undergraduate schools, including General Studies. They are necessary to balance the overall housing needs of the student community..." In the weeks and months since the relocation, it has become plainly apparent that the residences once occupied by GS students are now occupied by CC and SEAS students. What were once "Columbia Residential" buildings are now "Columbia Housing," meaning the roughly 160 former GS residents are effectively barred from living there, along with all current and future GS students.<sup>3</sup>

Because there has been no action taken by Columbia administrators to assess the impact this move has had on GS students, the GSSC has decided to launch the GS Housing Relocation Survey, which seeks to assess the impact this relocation has had on GS students. Of the over 50 impacted GS students surveyed, 96% reported being at least "somewhat dissatisfied" with the administration's decision to relocate them along with other GS students, with 69% of those students reporting being "very dissatisfied." When asked about the administration's communication throughout the process, 92% of impacted GS students reported being at least "somewhat dissatisfied," with 68% of those students reporting being "very dissatisfied."

While there were mixed sentiments regarding satisfaction with the new residences provided through Columbia Residential, the GS communities of these new residences are meaningfully less robust than the GS communities that used to exist in Nussbaum and The Fairholm. When asked

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<sup>1</sup> See Exhibit 1.

<sup>2</sup> See Exhibit 2.

<sup>3</sup> See Exhibit 3.



# GSSC

how the GS community of their new residence compared to their previous one, 82% of impacted GS students reported there were at least “somewhat fewer GS students,” with 76% of those students reporting there were “far fewer GS students.”

This survey also assessed qualitative data through testimonials collected from impacted GS students. Some of the major recurring themes in those testimonials were feelings that GS students were treated disrespectfully by administration on the basis of their school, and that this move prioritized the needs of CC and SEAS students over those in GS. Many impacted GS students reported feeling frustrated over the lack of an explanation, poor communication throughout the process, receiving less than a month’s notice, finding Columbia Residential unresponsive or unhelpful following the initial email, and feeling that the compensation of 25 meal swipes fell short.

This report includes the full data set collected by GSSC from September 19, 2025, to October 6, 2025. No answers or testimonials have been omitted.

*This report was unanimously adopted by the General Studies Student Council in a General Body meeting on Tuesday, October 14, 2025.*



## II. FULL SURVEY RESULTS

**Total number of respondents: 51**

\*All 51 respondents responded to a question unless otherwise noted

### **When is your expected year of graduation?**

2025: 2%

2026: 47.1%

2027: 33.3%

2028: 11.8%

2029: 5.9%

### **Which building were you living in when notified to relocate?**

The Fairholm: 41.2%

Nussbaum: 58.8%

### **How satisfied are you by the administration's decision to relocate you along with other GS students?**

Very satisfied: 0%

Somewhat satisfied: 3.9%

Neutral: 0%

Somewhat dissatisfied: 29.4%

Very Dissatisfied: 66.7%



**How satisfied were you by the administration's communication throughout the relocation process?**

Very satisfied: 2%  
Somewhat satisfied: 5.9%  
Neutral: 0%  
Somewhat dissatisfied: 29.4%  
Very dissatisfied: 62.7%

**If you chose to stay within Columbia Residential, how satisfied are you by the new housing provided by Columbia Residential after the relocation?**

Very satisfied: 21.6%  
Somewhat satisfied: 35.3%  
Neutral: 11.8%  
Somewhat dissatisfied: 17.6%  
Very dissatisfied: 13.7%

**If you chose to stay within Columbia Residential, how does the quality of your new unit compare to your previous one?**

Much better: 29.4%  
Somewhat better: 25.5%  
No change: 9.8%  
Somewhat worse: 19.6%  
Much worse: 15.7%



**If you chose to stay within Columbia Residential, how does your new rent compare to your previous rent?**

I am paying less than I was previously: 9.8%  
I am paying the same as I was previously: 82.4%  
I am paying more than I was previously: 7.8%

**If you chose to stay within Columbia Residential, how has your commute to the Morningside campus been impacted?**

Much shorter commute: 2%  
Somewhat shorter commute: 15.7%  
No change: 56.9%  
Somewhat longer commute: 21.6%  
Much longer commute: 3.9%

**How many minutes longer or shorter is your new commute to the Morningside campus?**

\*24/51 respondents

5 minutes shorter: 16.7%  
3 minutes shorter: 12.5%  
1 minute shorter: 12.5%  
No change: 4.2%  
1 minute longer: 4.2%  
2 minutes longer: 4.2%  
3 minutes longer: 12.5%  
5 minutes longer: 20.8%  
10 minutes longer: 8.3%  
16 minutes longer: 4.2%



**If you chose to stay within Columbia Residential, how does the size of your new unit compare to your previous one?**

\*50/51 respondents

Much larger: 16%

Somewhat larger: 32%

No change: 10%

Somewhat smaller: 34%

Much smaller: 8%

**If you chose to stay within Columbia Residential, how do the amenities of your new unit compare to your previous one?**

\*50/51 respondents

Much better: 6%

Somewhat better: 14%

No change: 24%

Somewhat worse: 32%

Much worse: 24%

**If you chose to stay within Columbia Residential, how does the GS community of your new unit compare to your previous one?**

\*50/51 respondents

Far more GS students: 4%

Somewhat more GS students: 4%

No change: 10%

Somewhat fewer GS students: 20%

Far fewer GS students: 62%



**If you chose to stay within Columbia Residential, how does the accessibility of your new unit compare to your previous one?**

Much more accessible: 5.9%

Somewhat more accessible: 3.9%

No change: 54.9%

Somewhat less accessible: 17.6%

Much less accessible: 17.6%

**If you chose to stay within Columbia Residential, how does the view in your new unit compare to your previous one?**

Much better: 7.8%

Somewhat better: 9.8%

No change: 25.5%

Somewhat worse: 19.6%

Much worse: 37.7%

**If you chose to stay within Columbia Residential, how does the ease of doing laundry in your new unit compare to your previous one?**

Much easier: 2%

Somewhat easier: 7.8%

No change: 47.1%

Somewhat worse: 9.8%

Much worse: 33.3%



**Please use this space to write about your experience with the relocation process. Any and all details you provide will aid in the understanding and addressing of this event, so feel free to address all aspects of your experience, including what was not addressed by the previous questions in this form.**

\*40/51 respondents

**Anonymous Respondent:**

The news of relocation came quite close up to the move in date, not really leaving enough time to find a different solutions. Additionally, no requests were accepted regarding roommates preferences, and no reason was provided to justify the need for relocation.

**Hannah H.:**

The relocation process was extremely challenging for me, both logistically and emotionally. Moving is already a significant undertaking, and at the time I had many other responsibilities to manage as well. Being notified with less than 30 days' notice was unreasonable and created unnecessary stress. It felt irresponsible for Columbia Residential to expect students to uproot their living situation on such short notice.

In addition, my interactions with Columbia Residential were discouraging. I reached out multiple times for support and clarification, but the responses I received felt dismissive and unhelpful. Instead of feeling supported during a stressful transition, I felt ignored and minimized. Many of us didn't even know why we were moved out until we saw freshmen students moving in at the beginning of the semester.

I also believe it was inappropriate to terminate a one year contract early simply to make space for other students. This decision undermined the agreement we entered into and left me feeling discriminated against as a GS student. It reinforced the sense that GS students are treated differently and less favorably compared to CC and SEAS students. Many of us feel segregated from the broader Columbia undergraduate community and as though our needs, values, and voices are not given equal consideration.

To make matters worse, the only compensation offered was 25 meal swipes. I think this token gesture fell short of addressing the financial cost, logistical disruption, and emotional burden caused by the forced relocation. It felt dismissive of the real sacrifices students had to make.

Overall, this experience left me feeling disappointed and marginalized. I hope Columbia Residential will take steps to provide greater transparency, more timely notice, and more respectful communication in the future. Most importantly, I hope GS students will be treated equitably alongside CC and SEAS students, so that we no longer feel excluded or singled out.

**Anonymous Respondent:**

movers lost my things and the new apartment is right next to the train tracks, making it hard to sleep. There is also no longer a cleaning service for the common areas of the house.

**Anonymous Respondent:**

I found it utterly ridiculous that GS students were kicked out of our dorms with less than a month's notice and with no official explanation from Housing. The stress that this put me and my entire group of friends in GS that experienced this under is monumental. To have such uncertainty as to where we were going to live for our final year of college was extremely upsetting, and made it clear to us how little GS students are valued at Columbia. My parents were fortunately able to drive up to New York to help me move, but even then it was a stressful and arduous process, and they had to take time out of their schedules to help me. I am overall very unhappy with Columbia Residential and now understand how under-prioritized and undervalued the GS students are to Columbia's administration. It makes me too angry to think about that I tried to push it out of my mind as soon as I moved. My new room is also smaller (which they told me would not be the case), and I am paying about \$50 more per month to live here, although they assured us our rent would be decreased or stay the same. When I inquired as to why, they deflected with vague answers, citing some footnote in the contract I signed when I moved into the Fairholm.

**Anonymous Respondent:**

- GS students we're disproportionately effected, on the long-term, as the majority of students from CC & SEAS lived in Nuss for the summer or school year.

- CU Residential lied or poorly communicated about all units int the building not being available to students in the coming (now current) academic year. There are student living in the building---just no longer any GS students. (Nussbaum has been removed from the CU Residential site and is now only viewable on CU Housing)

- After speaking in person to an official from CU Residential, I was told that the reason behind the relocation was due to Columbias efforts to "reorganize their portfolio" between schools, essentially separating resources and housing availability between schools even further.

- After the original notification of housing change was sent to affected students on Jun 30, there were only 6 days given to (Jun 6 deadline) to decide if we would either be relocated into a different CU residential building or CHOOSE (and I use choose here, because CU Residential made students "decide" whether or not they would terminate their own lease) to find alternative housing. Even if you decided go with CU relocated, you were not given a choice where or when, there was nearly



zero agency given to affected students. With relocation, offers were given by Jul 15th. Meaning roughly two weeks of not knowing what housing would be offered and, again, deciding to either take it or leave it.

- Overall, there was less than a month total (25 days at most) from the original email notification to the move out deadline, for all affected students. I have very limited knowledge of NYC tenancy rights/laws, however, I believe CU Residential is not entirely governed by the same laws. If at least 30 or 60 day notice is NOT required by the school, it seems that the other limit is 5 day notice, although is not applicable to the situation. So, what grounds are CU standing on that protect and justify their actions?

#### "34. REASSIGNMENT

In the event of damage to the Unit resulting from fire, water, steam or other casualty, which in Owner's sole judgment, reasonably exercised, makes the Unit uninhabitable, the Owner may reassign Tenant to another housing accommodation on five (5) days' notice, except in an emergency in which case no notice shall be required. The terms and conditions of this Occupancy Agreement shall govern Tenant's occupancy of the new housing accommodation, and if Owner so requests, Tenant shall enter into a new Occupancy Agreement for the new housing accommodation. If such substitute housing accommodation is not available, Owner may terminate this Occupancy Agreement without any liability or obligation to Tenant."

#### **Anonymous Respondent:**

Receiving an eviction notice by email on summer break and then not hearing back for something like 2 weeks was bullshit. I called residential, I emailed them, I walked up to the residential office itself, and received no communication from anyone, I was stonewalled. I don't have family here, I would not have had anywhere to go if something had gone wrong with the process. I wasn't even sure my response of "yes, I want Residential to relocate me" was recorded because the form was re-released after I'd already submitted my response. So I submitted the new one and hoped it counted still.

It was really unclear if the students LIVING in The Fairholm during summer were actually going to get moving services (based on the wording of the question, something like: "yes, I will move my own things because I am currently in NY". This was very stressful because I would've had to pay through the roof for movers on such short notice, even a month is not really enough time to organize that properly, two weeks would've been potentially not possible.



I still had to pay rent for the Fairholm, even though I technically wouldn't be living IN the building for half that payment cycle. That money mattered to me, because maybe I would've needed it to either hire movers or find somewhere to stay.

This process required a lot of trust from me to residential services to find me a place to live in less than 30 days in the city of NY, I only trusted them because I didn't have a choice. I now understand why some people consider evictions and being de-homed traumatic, this is one of the most stressful things I've been through in my life.

**Anonymous Respondent:**

I have had a horrible experience with the move-out process and had things lost at the previous apartment and Columbia Residential has not been helpful in supporting me.

**Anonymous Respondent:**

This entire experience felt like the university was targeting and isolating the GS community because they were less likely to fight/push back than other undergraduate schools. I am a disabled person who relied on the flat 3-block trek to campus and the 1 trains. Now, my commute to campus and the train requires a steep incline and additional time to allow for taking breaks during the commute due to pain and immobility.

The reason as to why we were forced to move is still unclear and ambiguous. I would like to know why this happened, why the two locations were targeted, and why the original lease agreements were disregarded.

Giving students 48 hours to make major financial and logistical decisions is completely disrespectful and unfair. For most students I've talked to, the options were 1. relocate 2. relocate with a random pairing of either undergrad OR grad students 3. find external housing (A few weeks or 2 days is not enough time to find external housing. The choice was really: Relocate against your will or be homeless.)

**Hendrix Hancock:**

The decision to relocate my building without any reason given was extremely stressful for my family and I. Columbia Residential promised to give me as good or better accommodation, which they did, but the uncertainty added much unnecessary confusion and anxiety. At this point I am happy, but still never learned why the relocation was made, and I'm still unsure whether it was even legal to do, but I do believe it was very unethical for the current tenants at the time and prospective tenants like myself.

**Anonymous Respondent:**

It was awfully timed. I had an extremely hard time getting back to the city to move.

**Sydney Durkin:**

Thank you GSSC for soliciting this feedback. As I'm sure you've heard from others, this was a pretty big surprise to adjust summers around for many impacted students, and I'm no exception. I was already juggling many factors in my head this summer—health struggles, visiting my long-term, long-distance partner, potential summer school to spread out my senior year—and getting the relocation email threw a wrench in all of those in one form or another. The grief of the email, sent 4:57pm on June 30th before an extended July 4th university holiday, was immediate not only for the adjustments needed for the aforementioned, but for the community I had built over the past two years at Nussbaum. While I think most in 600 W 113th can attest to the exceptional kindness of the staff, when I broke my leg in the fall of 2025, I was lucky enough to build personal relationships with residents and employees in the hall who became a family and home when mine were so far away. A building that was in no way ADA accessible became, through the efforts of faculty that sincerely care about the students they interact with, somewhere I could continue to stay and avoid disrupting my semester further. I'd made friends and memories there, and I knew saying goodbye would be hard. It was; my parting with more or less every staff member was very emotional. Now that all of those things have been given some distance, an experience, my thoughts are incredibly polarized. I am now in a privileged enough position where I did not have to approach the university with any further inquiries or follow-up communication beyond the necessary forms, so my experience comes purely from letting the relocation play out and taking the first offered assignment.

The university delivered every promise it made about the conditions of the relocation itself. As a low-income GS student, I'd signed up for one of the cheaper floor plans on campus in the first place. The B2 layout in Nussbaum is, to my knowledge, one of the smallest they offer. While the square footage is similar mathematically, my new unit is square with a much smaller radiator and no windowsill, resulting in a much more utilitarian application of the number. As a GS student who has lived on their own proficiently, I admit living with graduate students in apartment-style housing, as I am now at 523 W 112th, is much more adult. It is convenient to share a kitchen with two people as opposed to ten, and to have a bathroom and common room that is reliably private. I prefer the location, in-between Broadway and Amsterdam, over the corner of Broadway, and do feel overall it is a more mature housing experience befitting the best of the GS journey. I feel my overall mood has improved from more natural lighting, space, freedom and quiet, the 'neighborhood' feel of my immediate surroundings, and that I am no longer jarred, or worse, jeered by hordes of drunk CC sophomores in the elevator late at night.



However, the communication reminded me of the worst parts of how GS can sometimes be positioned at this institution. The timing of the announcement, which I found already to be conspicuous so deep into the summer, ensured very little time for students to plan for and accommodate facilitating the move. I obviously have no understanding of what happened behind the scenes, and can appreciate that the logistics were chaotic, and over-detailing information that is even somewhat precarious is far more treacherous than under-detailing it, same with revealing information. I am only from the middle of the country though, and I can't imagine the struggle international students and students even farther and less well off went through in debating how to get back, or whether they should or could get back at all. Due to the health issues I had, getting my room packed up on my own in the time I was given around the rest of my commitments between then and July 25th wasn't realistic, but there were elements I felt I had to handle independent of movers, leading my mother to have to sacrifice her time and labor to fly out and help as well. These things, while decently disruptive, seem small to what I've heard and can imagine. The chaotic nature of housing placement I empathize with readily. I respect there are elements about the timing that may have been entirely unavoidable, and recognize that the university was quite thorough in providing solutions for these scenarios to the best of its ability. I cannot help but feel that what could have been a mitigating factor is increased transparency, as the lack thereof sends the message, which has been pretty consistent for GS students, that we are an afterthought.

Throughout the process, tracking down a clear reason for the relocation has been murky at best. I had been able to gather, from posters at Nussbaum, that the move was affecting GS students only. From there, I inferred perhaps the intent was to transform Nussbaum into a CC-only hall for a potential GS transition into its own style of housing more aligned with grad student accommodations, as I'd heard many of my friends had ended up in buildings similar to mine. This was perhaps a leap, and charitable, but with new GS-specific housing not too illogical. It was not until talking to more students on campus I began to ascertain that these dorms had been overbooked with CC students, something very much inadequately communicated to relocated students. I can understand why it would not be readily admitted. It strikes me as a deep administrative oversight at best, or again, deep administrative evidence of GS's secondary status at worst. The refusal to name a rationale at all stings regardless of the admitted veracity and rewards of the relocation system as it was designed, because the design underlines the frustrations many have despite the rewards. My new unit may be better, but I signed up for living in a shoebox like 6B2 when I moved to New York, and arguably, this current unit should have been the GS standard from the start. That there was no attempt at a positive, pro-GS PR spin, only bribery to quell symptoms of long-standing frustration, feels confusingly transparent. As a GS senior, it's not the first time I've felt like we've been the checkbook for CC, but it left a sour taste in my mouth. I do want to shout



out the on-ground efforts of everyone during the incredibly hot moving days, and that I am very fond of my new building staff and grateful that my original rent was honored, but it was a summer twist I could have done without.

**Anonymous Respondent:**

I'm still extremely angry towards the university about what transpired this summer. The university holds us to deadlines and standards of conduct, yet it is okay for them to have no ethics as evidenced by this sudden eviction which blatantly broke lease agreements. The people in the administration that made this sneaky midsummer decision to relocate us to make space for CC freshmen, need to be held accountable and fired. I was given an attitude by Jonathan Wiggins the GS Associate Director of Residence Life & Housing for asking for a small three day extension to move out, due to the fact I had a prior contractual obligation to be in Ohio for professional work. Columbia has too many useless incompetent bureaucrats like him working at the university that are never held accountable for their actions. This is why the university is in the state it is in!

**Anonymous Respondent:**

I am more focused on graduating soon. But overall I am satisfied with the new apartment because I have a living room and dining room. I have a lot of sunlight which improved my mental health. My last room was dark with only one window, but this room has a better view with 3 windows which is nice and the park is across the street too. The room is smaller but I don't mind it since I have sunlight, a very close park and less roommates.

**Anonymous Respondent:**

My experience with the relocation process was awful. I was in the Middle East when that happened and was informed of this abrupt relocation 20 days prior to the move-out and basically did not know where I would be living until a few days before move-out. That was even more stressful as I was far from the US and had a subletter who was living in my unit and had left ALL of my belongings in my unit. Columbia Residential provided little to no information and took ages to respond to my concerns, which made it even more stressful. They never offered any compensation for relocating us (which by the way is illegal as we had signed a contract with them, which they breached) except for 25 ridiculous dining hall swipes (which basically costs them 0\$) instead of offering compensation for rent or anything. Worst, I had no other choice than to get my stuff moved by a move-out service while being abroad which means that my most intimate belongings (including underwear, personal items and information) had to be moved by random strangers while I was not there. They lost a couple of my items during the move-out, including things I was personally attached to and Columbia Residential never responded to my emails about it. Throughout this whole process, I felt very disrespected by Columbia Residential and that my concerns were never addressed. They literally



showed no empathy or leeway at all, let alone for students like me who were miles away from the US when this happened.

**Anonymous Respondent:**

I selected Nussbaum because I was hoping for a more social living experience with other GS students. I am a freshman completely new to college, and am now living in an apartment with primarily graduate students. It has been much harder to become part of the community here at Columbia.

**Anonymous Respondent:**

The predominant feeling I experienced throughout the process was of a lack of choice - I was simply told to accept the new unit assignment or terminate my agreement with Columbia Housing. Although I appreciate the decision to keep my rent the same and while being moved from an apartment to a dorm, I made the choice to be in a dorm originally as a considered choice, in order to better meet others members of the Columbia community, GS and CC. However, in being moved to my new location, I, and most people I know, were put with graduate students. I understand that this provides another type of valuable experience, but I know that I and many other Dual BA students were hoping to get to know other Columbia Undergraduates, and to live close to people that we'd formed relationships with over the past 2 years. As such, the decision to spread us out across Columbia Housing locations, without being given the opportunity to give input on our new location, was disappointing, especially after having paid a deposit and signed a lease. At the very least, I would have hoped for some choice between a few different final options, if not the chance to re-choose housing altogether.

**Anonymous Respondent:**

While the staff was great in helping me into the new apartment, the accommodations, though greater are entirely dissatisfactory. While having a single suite mate is reasonable, the apartment itself was not prepared for either of us to move in. Our beds were not yet in the apartment, our toilet is broken still, our light fixture is still damaged, several of our outlets are still unusable, and the apartment itself was not cleaned between tenants. Most of the kitchen remains in a sorry state. Work orders have indeed been put in but since moving in the only improvement or fix thus far has been our beds being in our rooms.

**Anonymous Respondent:**

I am very particular about my living environment. I spent over five hours initially choosing Nussbaum as the perfect fit for me. Although the apartment I was relocated to is nice, it doesn't fully meet my needs and has negatively affected my emotional state. In addition, the new apartment



is more expensive, and my rent was temporarily reduced to match what I paid for Nussbaum. However, I understand that this reduction is likely only for one year, while I had planned to stay at Nussbaum for two. This means that once the rent returns to its regular rate, I will have to move out because I simply will not be able to afford it.

**Anonymous Respondent:**

The relocation process was just very surprising and the email came out of nowhere. While I do really like the apartment I was relocated to (much better than nussbaum strangely) it lacks important features that nussbaum had that were a criteria for me to choose that unit in the first place - my building has no elevator and i live on the 5th floor, i have to go down the street to do laundry, no doorman, so for safety reasons i have to go down the street to get packages. my biggest issue with it is that they gave no explanation and I wonder why it was only GS students... I understand things happen but I guess I would have appreciated if they gave us a chance to reopen the housing portal so that we could choose our new housing units ourselves. that said, i am somewhat lucky compared to my friends because my unit itself is really nice

**Anonymous Respondent:**

It was stressful and a bit annoying to have my housing plan scratched out and be put in a new apartment coming into my first year at Columbia as a dual BA student, during the summer holidays out of nowhere. There was no flexibility in the relocation process and not much information about why we were relocated. As I was able to have priority in the housing selection process, and planned to stay together with my friends - this was not honoured in the process and would have been nice to have these things considered when getting relocated.

**Anonymous Respondent:**

I was mostly devastated by the communication and timeline. The move was sprung on us very last minute, with no legal backing and no guarantees that our new space would be an improvement. Even though we are happy with our new location, the stress of moving and how it was handled by admin would not have been worth it if you gave me a choice in June. The nail in the coffin was being lied to as recently as freshman move-in week when I was looking to return my key and was told by housing that the building was not staffed. We had been told this before, but this time I had just walked by the building and seen check-in signs for incoming students to move in. So...

**Anonymous Respondent:**

I'm in an international student. When i got emailed the notification of having to move out from my unit at Nussbaum I was spending my summer break in my home country. I felt really unsatisfied as I had to re-arrange my return to the US for it to be earlier than expected so I could start packing, also



the panic and anxiety of feeling I was not going to be able to find a new unit was awful during the wait for a new assignment of a unit. This was such a disrespectful act for all GS students affected, as I felt this to be improvised and careless coming from Columbia Residential.

**Anonymous Respondent:**

The previous unit had an elevator, security, and in-building laundry. The new unit has no elevator, 4th-floor walk-up, no security, and no laundry. I am paying the same for far fewer amenities, as well as being farther away.

**Anonymous Respondent:**

The lack of transparency and apology from the administration is really disheartening during such a stressful and strenuous process.

**Anonymous Respondent:**

Cards on the table: the relocation process was beyond stressful since I was TA'ing for Columbia at the Columbia Pre-College Summer Program during the summer, so I was here all summer working with students. My family is all located in California, so I would have no other place to go other than what Columbia Residential has provided for me. The process in which they alerted us of the matter was cruel and unusual. I had renewed my lease until the following Spring and would have moved in the previous Spring if I knew I was going to be haphazardly moved in an utter frenzy in mid-July. Columbia Residential gave us a little over 3 weeks notice, which not only seems illegal, but unconscionable. Now, it is well-established that the building has been changed to a CC-only building, but the lack of information given and only provided once probed was not only an unsavory look, but an egregious set of concrete actions. GS students should have been informed of this change in advance of the summer as I know many people who were home for the summer or who had subletter's renting out their room, etc... and this situation was a nightmare for a multitude of my fellow GS friends. This is just Nussbaum, too. I know many friends at The Fairholm who were also displaced. I think the mandatory, last-minute move was a hellish experience I would not wish on my worst enemies. It was beyond inconvenient, and I would never recommend Columbia Residential housing ever again because of this atrocious experience.

**Anonymous Respondent:**

When you kick out a building full of adults and older students, it's expected that you have some decency to communicate expectations well beyond 1 month. 2 weeks notice is no where enough to MOVE. Because of this, I have been having to couch surfing and pray that I was able to Columbia housing in which I am unable to move into until 24th of September.

**Anonymous Respondent:**

I asked multiple times to be relocated to a unit with my friend. They ignored this request every time, like, they just didn't acknowledge it in their emails back to me. Also I had to fight with them about my room being smaller, I ended up staying in the relocation they gave me because the overall unit was bigger.

**Anonymous Respondent:**

Very little information was provided other than we had to move out by a certain date. No person to contact to ask questions, and emails to Columbia residential took days to reply, and each email chain was a separate person replying so there was never clear communication.

**Anonymous Respondent:**

The process itself was extremely stressful and difficult. The outcome was good, I will admit as I do really love the place I am living in now but the way it was all done was terrible. I had a subtenant at the time and was not sure if I was going to stay with Columbia residential and it caused a lot of problems. I also was out of the country during the summer and they had to pack and move my stuff for me which only worked because I happened to have a friend in New York that went and piled my stuff together. It was extremely stressful and they did not communicate with us about what was happening nearly enough and did not give us enough notice before kicking us out.

**Gezi Fang:**

I raised my concerns with the school, but nothing was resolved. I was assigned housing that is much worse and farther away than my friends', which feels clearly unfair. On top of that, the school refuses to let me switch now, only offering a transfer in October without covering the additional moving costs. This leaves me feeling both disadvantaged and unsupported.

**Viktor Loh:**

CR's movers failed to move all my things the first time round, and when they came back, sent several crucial personal belongings (and one box) to the wrong unit and lost the rest. I thought the belongings and box were totally lost for the first two weeks of school until the tenant finally handed what they had over to my new building's super. All pots, pans, personal mugs, cutlery and dishware left in the kitchen were completely thrown away which was infuriating. The new building's laundry is also not free, which is deeply frustrating as to run a load is five dollars whereas it used to be free at Nussbaum. This has made the overall cost of living more expensive even though they promised to 'freeze the rent'.

**Anonymous Respondent:**

The relocation process is not pleasant as it comes short announced and the new room I moved in is much smaller with one window only. But Columbia University did help me a lot during the relocation process for moving in with free moving help, and the efficiency is high.

**Anonymous Respondent:**

My private bedroom within a shared apartment that I was relocated to is smaller and has considerably less storage space. On the other hand, the size of the apartment itself has increased and now has a living room, so there has been this trade off.

The dryers are working worse than at Fairholm.

In terms of amenities, the apartment did not have microwave which we had in the previous place, and further I no longer had a mini fridge that I had in my previous bedroom.

The residential building is not equipped with a shared area like a common room we had at Fairholm, so it limits the interactions with other residents, and because the housing is mixed (GS students amongst predominantly Masters/PhD students), it further limits the interaction with the GS community.

**Mara Bulzan:**

I was evicted while working two jobs — about 70 hours a week. Already overwhelmed with my personal and professional life, being forcibly removed from my home and my community left me distraught. Fairholm was more than just housing: it was where I met my best friends, my partner, and many of the people who define my Columbia experience. It was one of the very few community spaces GS students had, alongside the lounge.

I was then placed in a building that literally made me cry when I saw it: dark, run-down, and in visible disrepair, with no improvement in location; I had not seen a Residential building that looks quite like this one (I believe 425 W 119). My new room was 50 square feet smaller, yet at the same rent, with the same number of roommates. Instead of the two large windows on the fifth floor facing the beautiful view of Teachers College that I had in Fairholm, I now had a single window facing away from the street on the second floor.

As an international student who has moved three times in the past three years, I begged Residential repeatedly to help me find another space. I was ignored. My calls would not be picked up and the emails were answered within a week. Notably, when I went to speak to a Residential employee, I said: "I am here to talk about the Fairholm evictions"; she corrected me promptly: "Oh, you mean the relocations!". It only shows the misleading communication, the extent to which Residential went



to conceal the real reason why we were moved (probably best summarized as "GS students matter less than CC freshmen"), and the utter lack of empathy.

Only after hiring a legal team and informing Residential of this step was I finally offered a better unit within 45 minutes from my email, one comparable to my original space in Fairholm, after being denied a fair relocation three times. Until then, I felt treated with contempt, disregarded, and uncared for.

This experience has deeply scarred the GS community. The connections and sense of belonging we built in Fairholm cannot simply be replaced, and twenty meal swipes do not compensate for what we lost. Instead, the situation reinforced a broader perception that GS students are valued less than other undergraduates, regardless of our commitment, contributions, or the fact that many of us pay significant tuition.

**Anonymous Respondent:**

Put bluntly, it's hard to take serious the claim that Columbia cares about its GS students at all when they are more than willing to kick them out on a mere whim, for their own convenience. This, combined with the fact that they lost our identities over the summer, an action that can follow us for the rest of our lives, and they only gave us 2 years of credit monitoring (the data will be "warehoused" for 2 years before any bad actors try to use it, of course), paints an ugly picture of Columbia and the administration. They don't care about their students, they don't care about this institution as anything other than a business and they just want to make money. It's extremely shameful and disappointing. It doesn't matter how "understanding" the housing people were being when trying to move us, or any of the bonuses they gave us, they did something illegal because they knew they could force us out without any consequences, and they clearly don't give a shit about students at all.

**Jacob Chuidian:**

I found out that I was being removed from Nussbaum while I was studying abroad in Italy, with less than 30 days' notice. This unexpected news, along with the lack of communication, caused me significant stress and anxiety during an already difficult time. When I returned home, I literally had four days to pack up my room and move out. While I was relocated to another building on the same street, which was convenient, I was forced to move into an unfamiliar apartment without any sense of what to expect. Upon arrival, I discovered that the building had no amenities compared to Nussbaum and that laundry costs nearly \$5 per load.



My biggest concern, however, is my bedroom. I was not given the opportunity to choose a room and was simply assigned one. The room does not meet my needs, as it is situated between two buildings with only a single window, providing very limited sunlight and airflow. Another student who was also removed from Nussbaum was placed in the same apartment, but since he only needed to stay for one month, his assigned room became vacant soon after. I immediately submitted a direct transfer request to his room, as it is far better suited to me, but Columbia Housing has repeatedly denied my request without any explanation.

I am very disappointed with how this situation was handled. Given the disruption caused by being removed from Nussbaum with little notice, I believe I should be given priority for direct and general transfers. It feels as though decisions were made to serve Columbia Housing's interests without adequate consideration for students like myself who were directly affected by the unexpected relocation.

**Anonymous Respondent:**

I'm very happy with my new apartment. I was honestly not hugely impacted by the move. My general feeling is one of neutrality. Things happen, it wasn't the end of my world. Still, I found the experience pretty strange. We were given such short notice about the move, which was unfair. The communication from housing about WHY we had to move was seriously lacking, leading to widespread confusion, gossip, rumors, outrage, etc.. Housing should have been transparent about why they were moving us, even if it meant bad optics. It would have been better for everyone in the long run. Stupid /shortsighted mistake. Also, the people who gave out boxes and packing tape were very (totally unnecessarily) rude. They were on some bizarre power trip about the boxes. It was very weird and cringe.

I love Columbia, and this school has been good to me. But this weird GS vs CC culture stuff is out of hand. You guys (as an institution) are doing a poor job handling it. It's not rocket science. And things like the lack of communication about the relocation really perpetuate this toxic culture of division and favoritism. Be smarter! You need better communications people. If you would have just said why the whole thing was happening and provided the rationale for it, it would have landed much softer and there wouldn't have been such a huge backlash. C'mon, people! Grow up!

**Justin Bates:**

This is a note to Residential. I would like you to read it to them. Thank you, GSSC.

The institution I once trusted has revealed its true face. What you did was despicable, and it is not lost on anyone—including yourselves. You forced students who had signed year-long leases in



Fairholm to uproot, dispersing us across the city under the pretense that the building could not be lived in. Then it became clear: our rooms were handed to Columbia College students because you over-enrolled and ran out of space.

This is not simply a housing shuffle—it is a diaspora. You scattered a community that had just begun to take root, breaking it apart to solve a problem of your own making. And you did so to General Studies students, the very population you ceaselessly insist is “just as valued.” The truth is in your actions: we are not. Like many, I remain only because the diploma you dangle above us carries extraordinary weight. You knew that, and you used it. You leveraged our dependence against us, exploiting the fact that we cannot leave without sacrificing our futures. That is not policy—it is coercion.

I wanted nothing more than to belong. Instead, you made it plain that I do not. That is the lesson I will carry. I believed the message of GS, I believed the promises, and I believed this was finally a place for me. I was wrong.

What makes this all the more bitter is the context. Columbia has been admonished by the federal government to curb antisemitism, to reckon with the ways in which it alienates and endangers vulnerable communities. And yet here you are, fracturing one of your own communities in a manner disturbingly reminiscent of the very history you claim to be learning from. You scattered us, displaced us, treated us as expendable. The rhetoric says one thing; the practice says another.

I am sorry—for myself, for my peers, and for the students who believed Columbia could be their home. For those of us who have known housing insecurity, this decision reopens wounds you knew existed. You knew exactly who we were when you recruited us, and you still chose to treat us this way. The truth is that you knew everything. It was I who did not. And that realization is what hurts most.

### **Anonymous Respondent:**

#### Misleading Emails

I was informed that the building would be repurposed and no longer used for student housing. However, after moving out of my unit, I learned that this was not the case—other GS students who refused to leave were allowed to stay. This was misleading, unfair, and deeply unethical.

#### False Claims



Columbia Residential stated: “Most importantly, to make clear that all students will have an option for equal or better housing at no increased cost.” Unfortunately, my new unit is objectively much worse than my prior housing situation. This has been both hurtful and disrespectful.

My room is less than two-thirds the size of my previous unit.

The bathroom is older and has been under constant repair since I moved in. The toilet and drainage remain unresolved, and another resident has already requested a complete remodel.

Weekly cleaning service, which I previously received, has also been discontinued.

My commute has become significantly longer, adding unnecessary strain to my daily schedule and academic responsibilities.

#### Insufficient Time to Relocate

We were notified on July 10th and expected to vacate by July 25th. This provided only 15 days, which falls short of the basic 30-day relocation standard. As a full-time student during the summer, this placed an undue burden on me and left me with no reasonable opportunity to explore other housing options.

#### Violation of Entitled Privileges

The notice of lease termination was provided after the deadline set in Columbia’s Disability Housing Accommodations Procedures & Guidelines for General Studies and Morningside Students, which states:

June 1st for Fall semester requests

November 1st for Spring semester requests

Because of the delayed notice, I was unable to formally submit updated accommodation requests, effectively denying me access to a process I am fully eligible for.

#### **Anonymous Respondent:**

I was living with my best friends in a space that we had put together in a way that we all appreciated. I was then told that I had to leave my roommates for my last semester at Columbia with less than a month notice to an apartment that is slightly further away from campus. When I asked for any extra accommodation or why I was being moved I was met with rude and unhelpful comments in return.



# GSSC

The fairholm had a common study space and rooms came with extra dressers and a mini fridge as well as having someone come and clean our apartments which is not offered at my new place. This gross mismanagement of students living situations was honestly very disappointing because it felt like I had to sacrifice for the university's mistakes while the university was very unhelpful across all of my questions and requests throughout the moving process. It really left a stain on my last semester here and has made me very disappointed in what is considered to be an elite academic institution.



### III. APPENDIX

#### Exhibit 1 Initial Email Received by Students

Dear [Redacted]

We are reaching out to you with an important update about your housing.

All units at [600 West 113th Street](#) and 503 West 121st Street will no longer be available for the upcoming academic year. As a result, all current residents will need to transfer into another Columbia Residential unit or find alternative housing by July 25, 2025.

We understand that this is not the news you expected, and we truly appreciate your flexibility. We want to assure you that our team is committed to working closely with you to find a solution that meets your needs.

**To help us begin planning your next steps, please submit your preference using the link below by July 6, 2025:**

[Housing  
Preference Form](#)

You may choose to:

Transfer to another Columbia Residential unit, or

Cancel your housing agreement without penalty and move out by July 25

If you choose to transfer:

Your rent for your new unit will be matched to the rate for your current unit

You will receive one housing offer in a shared apartment aligned with your housing preferences

Students may move in on any weekday after your assigned unit becomes available, through July 25th

Columbia Residential will provide an option for professional moving services to students, available on either July 24th or 25th depending on your current building.

If you are subletting your apartment during this period or you will not be in town to complete the move, please reach out for additional assistance to meet the deadline.

A member of our team will follow up with you individually to assist with the transfer or cancellation process. All transfers or vacancies will need to be completed by July 25<sup>th</sup>.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at [residential@columbia.edu](mailto:residential@columbia.edu). Thank you again for your understanding and cooperation.

Warm regards,



Exhibit 2 Screenshots from the Columbia Residential Website: Webpage Titled “For Student Residents at 600 West 113th Street and 503 West 121st Street.”

The image displays three screenshots of a mobile website page. Each screenshot shows a dark blue header with the time 10:46 and status icons for signal, Wi-Fi, and battery. The page content is organized into sections with expandable questions and answers.

**Left Screenshot:**

- Question: Will I still have housing for the upcoming academic year?
  - Answer: Yes! Our aim is to provide students with equal or better housing at no additional cost. No student will lose access to housing.
- Question: Why am I being asked to relocate from 600 West 113th Street and 503 West 121st Street for the 2025–26 academic year?
- Question: What are my options?
- Question: Will my rent increase due to this relocation?
- Question: How are new housing assignments being completed? (with a "back to top" button)

**Middle Screenshot:**

- Section Header: For Student Residents at 600 West 113th Street and 503 West 121st Street
- Text: This page provides answers to frequently asked questions about the upcoming housing transition for residents of 600 West 113th Street and 503 West 121st Street. Our goal is to offer clear information and guidance to help you prepare for the move and understand the support available to you. We will continue to update this page as new details become available.
- Text: If your question is not addressed here, please contact us directly at [residential@columbia.edu](mailto:residential@columbia.edu).
- Question: Will I still have housing for the upcoming academic year?
  - Answer: Yes! Our aim is to provide students with equal or better housing at no additional cost. No student will lose access to housing.

**Right Screenshot:**

- Question: Why am I being asked to relocate from 600 West 113th Street and 503 West 121st Street for the 2025–26 academic year?
  - Answer: These housing assignment modifications are impacting a small number of students across all undergraduate schools, including General Studies. They are necessary to balance the overall housing needs of the student community. Our goal is to support each of you through this transition and minimize the impact wherever possible. We understand this change is unexpected and are committed to handling the transition with transparency, compassion, and close collaboration with the School of General Studies.
- Question: What are my options?
- Question: Will my rent increase due to this relocation? (with a "back to top" button)

Each screenshot also shows a footer with the URL [residential.columbia.edu](https://residential.columbia.edu) and a "Private" indicator.



## Exhibit 3 Article from the Columbia Spectator

NEWS | STUDENT LIFE

### Without explanation, Columbia tells around 160 General Studies students in 600 W. 113th St. and 503 W. 121st St. to vacate their units

Current and upcoming residents of the two buildings received emails on June 30 informing them that they would need to move out in less than a month.



By Asha Ahn / Columbia Daily Spectator

A University spokesperson told Spectator that all individuals affected have been "given the opportunity to select new housing" with matched rent rates.

BY SURINA VENKAT • JULY 13, 2025 AT 2:47 PM

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Article Link:

<https://www.columbiaspectator.com/news/2025/07/13/without-explanation-columbia-tells-around-160-general-studies-students-in-600-w-113th-st-and-503-w-121st-st-to-vacate-their-units/>

Abbreviations:

GSSC: General Studies Student Council

GS: General Studies

CC: Columbia College

SEAS: School of Engineering and Applied Science