



**Columbia University
Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation
Student Council (GSAPPSC)
Handbook**

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INTRODUCTION

Hello and welcome to the GSAPP Student Council. The GSAPP Student Council (GSAPPSC) is the student body's liaison to GSAPP administration. Student life is best served through dialogue as we strive to enhance the GSAPP community. To that end, please get in touch with us when you have anything you'd like to share about the student experience. Our email address is gsappstudcouncil@columbia.edu. We look forward to hearing from you.

MEMBERSHIP: OVERVIEW + EXECUTIVE BOARD

The GSAPP Student Council comprises 25 students, including GSAPP's student representative to the University Senate, 20 program representatives, two dual degree representatives, and two student organization representatives. GSAPPSC is led by the Executive Board, whose various responsibilities are assigned below.

Executive Board

The Executive Board is composed of the GSAPPSC president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary. Together, these officers exercise the day-to-day responsibilities of the GSAPPSC, including presiding over meetings, accounting for student funding, maintaining GSAPPSC records, and serving as primary liaison to the GSAPP faculty and administration. Members of the Executive Board are elected each fall by GSAPPSC representatives. The GSAPPSC President presides over the Executive Board.

1. President

The President shall be the chief executive officer of the GSAPPSC. They shall represent the GSAPPSC at official functions and serve as the Administration's primary student liaison. In addition, they shall preside over GSAPPSC and Executive Board meetings, prepare and distribute the agenda for GSAPPSC meetings, and call meetings of the Executive Board and meetings of the GSAPPSC. They shall also coordinate the complaints and suggestions to and reports from GSAPPSC members.

2. Vice President

The Vice President shall preside over the GSAPPSC Executive Board in the absence of the President and shall succeed to the office of the President in the event a vacancy arises. In addition, they shall preside over the Student Life and Social Activities Committee as Chair. Their duties shall include, but not be limited to, supervising the organization of social activities and supervising the publicity of GSAPPSC activities.

3. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be the chief fiscal officer of the GSAPPSC. They are responsible for the appropriate Administration of University funds allocated to the GSAPPSC and ensuring adherence to University policies and procedures. The Treasurer is responsible for collecting and distributing funds as authorized by vote of the GSAPPSC or Executive Board. They shall keep complete records of all financial transactions according to University and School policy. They shall make monthly written financial reports to the GSAPPSC and Senior Associate Dean of Administration and Faculty Affairs.

4. Secretary

The Secretary shall be in charge of keeping all records except those relating to fiscal matters under the purview of the Treasurer. They shall keep minutes of all GSAPPSC meetings and post a copy of the same as soon as approved by the members. They shall be in charge of the administration and execution of GSAPPSC correspondence and be responsible for the orderly transmission of all GSAPPSC records and history to the newly-elected Secretary. They shall be responsible for keeping track of attendance by GSAPPSC members at meetings and internal GSAPPSC standing and ad hoc committee meetings. They shall assist in the orderly operation of meetings and elections and preside over all Election Commissions designated by the President.

They shall keep complete records and provide monthly written copies of these records to the GSAPPSC and Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs.

The above officers shall constitute the Executive Board. The President or any member may call a meeting of the Board, but at least three members must be present to conduct business. Officers may be removed from office by two-thirds (2/3) of the GSAPPSC present at a Special Meeting called for such purpose and at which a quorum exists and approval from Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs. In addition, members of GSAPPSC may be removed by the Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs from a position if they violate Columbia University policies or procedures. In the event of a vacancy, except for the Presidency, a successor shall be elected from the GSAPPSC within 2 months.

MEMBERSHIP: REPRESENTATIVES

Program Representatives:

Program representatives attend regular meetings with their program director and/or program managers in addition to GSAPPSC regular meetings.

M.S. Advanced Architectural Design		2
M.S. Architecture and Urban Design		1
M.S. Real Estate Development		2
M.S. Critical, Curatorial & Conceptual Practices	1 st Yr	1
M.S. Critical, Curatorial & Conceptual Practices	2 nd Yr	1
Master of Architecture	1 st Yr	2
Master of Architecture	2 nd Yr	2
Master of Architecture	3 rd Yr	2
M.S. Historic Preservation	1 st Yr	1
M.S. Historic Preservation	2 nd Yr	1
Ph.D. (HP, UP, Arch)		3
M.S. Urban Planning	1 st Yr	1
M.S. Urban Planning	2 nd Yr	1
		20= Program Representatives

Dual Degree Candidates

2

Candidates from any of [GSAPP's dual degree programs](#) are eligible to serve. Dual Degree Representatives attend regular meetings with their program director and/or program managers in addition to GSAPPSC regular meetings.

University Senate Representative

1

The Columbia University Senate is a university-wide policy-making body representing faculty, researchers, students, administration, administrative staff, librarians, and alumni. The [Senate](#) makes policy on a range of issues that affect the entire university. Senators attend monthly Senate meetings, provide updates, and take questions at the monthly plenary meetings.

Student Organization Representatives

2

[Student Organizations](#) at GSAPP support our community and enhance the academic experience. Representatives from any of the All GSAPP student groups are eligible to serve. Student Organization Representatives attend regular meetings with their student groups in addition to GSAPPSC regular meetings.

25 = Total Voting Members

PURPOSES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

GSAPPSC Purposes

As the representative body for all GSAPP students, the GSAPPSC is active in many aspects of student life including student-administration relations, student group funding, and school-wide social activities. We strive to:

1. Serve as a representative body to discuss the quality of life of the students;
2. Maintain a dialogue with the Administration of GSAPP, listen to and represent the students on all Student Committees, and advocate student interests and inform the students when appropriate;
3. Discuss matters concerning the broader University community, and present and support conclusions to the University Senate through the GSAPP Senator;
4. Promote the social and general welfare of the students, and foster a sense of friendship and respect among the members of the student body, within GSAPP and in our larger university community and neighborhood;
5. Act to develop and implement programs advancing student aspirations and concerns, and serve the student body by organizing services and activities.

GSAPPSC Representative Responsibilities

1. To represent the entire student body diligently and faithfully;
2. To listen to student concerns and voice those concerns before the GSAPPSC;
3. To help foster an environment of cooperation, community and respect among the members of the student body;
4. To attend all mandatory GSAPPSC committee and general meetings and functions commensurate with GSAPPSC attendance policies; and
5. Assist and participate in GSAPPSC functions, including but not limited to approval of funding to student groups and committees and social functions.

ELECTIONS

At the beginning of each Fall and Summer semester, all students will receive an email about submitting a candidate statement to run for open GSAPPSC elections. GSAPP enrolled students are eligible to vote. If you have any questions, please email the Secretary.

By no later than mid- September the GSAPPSC shall hold elections (the “Fall Elections”) to determine the members for the upcoming year for the MArch, MSCCCP, MSHP, MSUP, Ph.D., Dual Degree Candidates, and Student Organization Representatives, except the three-semester program seats to be elected in the Summer Elections.

By no later than mid-June, the GSAPPSC shall hold elections (the “Summer Elections”) to determine the MSAAD, MSAUD, and MSRED members for that year.

Election Commission

Before each election, the President, with the advice of the Executive Board, shall appoint an Election Commission of 3 members, over which the Secretary shall preside. If the Secretary is a candidate for office in that election, the President shall designate another member to preside over the Commission. The Election Commission shall conduct the above elections. No student serving on the Election Commission may be a candidate in that election. Any member of the Executive Board may serve on the Election Commission if not running for further elective office.

Election Commission Authority

The Election Commission shall administer all elections of GSAPPSC members and the GSAPP representative to the University Senate. The Commission may prescribe rules to ensure orderly and accurate voting. A majority of Commissioners shall constitute a quorum to conduct business, tabulate ballots, certify results, and adjudicate disputes. The GSAPPSC may reverse a decision of the Election Commission by a two-thirds (2/3) vote.

Voting and Voting Threshold

Eligible voters (enrolled GSAPP students) may vote only once. A plurality of votes shall be sufficient to elect GSAPPSC members. The election of the GSAPP’s representative to the University Senate shall be governed by the University Statutes and University Senate Elections Code.

Tabulation of Ballots

Tabulation shall be performed by members of the Election Commission in a manner agreed to by the GSAPPSC and the Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs, and may not commence until all voting has ended.

Certification of Results

Within twenty-four hours after the recount request deadline, the Election Commission shall certify in writing that the election results are accurate, and obtain approval from the Associate Dean of Academic

and Student Affairs. The certified tabulation shall be retained by the GSAPPSC Secretary and entered into the GSAPPSC's permanent records.

Announcement of Results

The Election Commission shall announce the results of the elections to the entire student body within twenty-four hours after all voting has ended and the Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs has certified results.

Election of Executive Board

Within ten days after the Fall elections, by secret ballot and by majority vote with run-off elections if necessary, the following officers shall be elected in the following order: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary. The officers shall serve from their election until the subsequent election of officers.

A vote of the majority of incoming eligible GSAPPSC members present at the Executive Board election is required to elect the Executive Board members. All officers except the Secretary and the President may speak on the floor during the election meeting. If either the President or the Secretary is running for elective Executive Board offices then the next highest ranking Board member(s) (Vice President then Treasurer) shall serve as substitute(s) for either person for purposes of these elections during the election meeting.

ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

No person shall be a GSAPPSC Representative who will not be in residence at GSAPP for at least one full academic semester during the year for which they are elected. Only currently enrolled students in good academic standing may be members of GSAPPSC. Alumni are not eligible to serve on GSAPPSC.

Terms of Office

Representatives elected in the Fall begin their term of office on September 15, when new officers are elected. A term ends on May 15 or when the representative graduates.

Representatives elected in the Summer begin their term of office on June 15, when new officers are elected. A term ends on May 15 or when the representative graduates.

In the event of a vacancy on the GSAPPSC, the Secretary shall hold a special election to fill the seat within 14 days or as soon as practicable, as determined by the Executive Board .

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required at all Regular, Special or Emergency GSAPPSC meetings, internal GSAPPSC Committee meetings, and other events or meetings designated as compulsory.

Absences may be excused

A representative's absence shall be excused when notice of the absence is given to the Secretary before the event or meeting to be missed or, if advance notice is not possible, as soon as practicable. Valid excuses include, but are not limited to, out-of-town job interviews, illnesses, and personal emergencies. Questions of excusability shall be decided by the Executive Board and the Office of Academic and Student Affairs. Confidential medical excuses may only be addressed with the Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs and not be discussed with other students.

Three unexcused absences or ten total absences by any member in a single academic year may result in the Executive Board's review of the Student Representative's continued membership. Records of attendance shall be kept, and the GSAPPSC and its Executive Board shall enforce the attendance requirements and are authorized to review the membership of any GSAPPSC Representative who violates attendance policies. A majority vote of the entire Executive Board and the approval of the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs shall be required to expel a member.

Training

GSAPPSC members are required to attend leadership training. Information to be distributed by the Office of Academic and Student Affairs annually.

Specific training for particular committees: i.e. "event ideas/ protocol for student groups" "criteria for honorariums" "criteria for funding student groups" .

MEETINGS + SCHEDULES

GSAPPSC Meetings

The GSAPPSC holds three types of meetings during the school year:

1. Regular Meetings

- typically are held every other week in 114 Avery Hall (under normal circumstances).
- A Regular Meeting of the GSAPPSC is one in which routine business of the GSAPPSC is conducted. Regular Meetings shall be held at least twice per month during the academic year except during May and December, and they may be held more frequently as determined by a majority vote of the Executive Board. The GSAPPSC may address any topic typically reserved for a Special Meeting during any Regular Meeting of the GSAPPSC.

2. Special Meetings

- are called as needed to discuss matters requiring specific attention.
- A Special Meeting of the GSAPPSC shall be called to discuss issues that need specific attention. Such issues include expulsion and budget allocations. A Special Meeting may be called by either the President, any two (2) members of the Executive Board, or one-third (1/3) of the GSAPPSC. Written notice of the meeting shall be placed in each GSAPPSC's electronic mail or their equivalent, at least seven (7) days in advance.

3. Emergency Meetings

- are called as needed to discuss urgent matters requiring immediate attention.
- An Emergency Meeting of the GSAPPSC shall be called to deal with urgent issues that require immediate attention. An Emergency Meeting may be called by either the President, any two (2) members of the Executive Board, or one-third (1/3) of the GSAPPSC. The meeting shall be preceded by as much notice as possible, and in the event that the meeting is called by one-third of the GSAPPSC, such notice shall not be less than twenty-four (24) hours. Notice may be given by phone, electronic mail or in person, and an attempt must be made to notify each GSAPPSC member.

Prohibited Dates for Meetings

No Regular or Special Meetings shall be convened on weekends, holidays, or during University vacation periods. No Emergency Meetings shall be convened on holidays or during University vacation periods.

VOTING, MINUTES + COMMUNICATION

Emergency Authority

In the event of an emergency that requires immediate action before the GSAPPSC can meet, including emergencies arising during University vacation periods, the President, with the advice and consent of the Executive Board when possible, shall act for the GSAPPSC. In such an event, the President shall inform the GSAPPSC of her or his action(s) as soon as practicable.

Quorum

All meetings of the GSAPPSC, whether Regular, Emergency, or Special, shall require a quorum of at least one-half (1/2) of the GSAPPSC in order to conduct business. All members of the GSAPP community may attend GSAPPSC meetings but may not vote.

Voting Thresholds

Votes of the GSAPPSC shall pass if supported by a majority of the members present at a meeting at which a quorum exists. Votes may be taken by voice or by show of hands, but any GSAPPSC member may require that the tally be recorded for a show of hands, and one-fifth (1/5) of the GSAPPSC may require a roll call vote.

Presenting at GSAPPSC Meeting

Students and committee leaders/ representatives interested in presenting to the GSAPPSC at a meeting should email the GSAPPSC Secretary, gsappstudcouncil@columbia.edu to request to be added to the agenda at least 48 hours in advance of a meeting.

Communication

All scheduled regular meeting dates will be posted after the Fall elections.

Minutes

Meeting minutes are taken by the Secretary of the Executive Board. The minutes and presentations from these meetings are posted on the School's (GSAPP'S) internal intranet site for internal student use and reviewed by the Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs. Please note that no direct quotes from GSAPPSC Meeting Minutes may be taken for internal or external publication.

COMMITTEES

GSAPPSC Committees

GSAPPSC representatives chair or sit on at least one student-led committee committed to optimize each and every facet of the students' university experience.

Committee Service Required

The University Senator and internal GSAPPSC committee chairs shall serve on at least one (1) standing GSAPPSC committee. All other GSAPPSC members shall also serve on at least one (1) committee. Refusal to satisfy the provisions of this Section may be grounds for review of the GSAPPSC's membership.

Selection of Committee Members

Membership on GSAPPSC committees, both standing and ad hoc, shall be open. The Executive Board shall appoint members only to those internal GSAPPSC committees for which there are fewer than three members. Committee assignments shall be made no later than mid-October.

Committee Chairs and Reporting

The Chair of each internal GSAPPSC committee shall be chosen by the President with the advice and consent of the Executive Board. Committees shall report and make recommendations to the GSAPPSC and their actions are reviewable by the GSAPPSC.

Duration of Committee Service

Members of Committees shall continue to serve in their capacity as committee members through Commencement Day of the academic year for which they were elected or appointed.

Committee Reporting Requirements

The Chair or a Co-chair of each GSAPPSC Committee, shall report to the GSAPPSC on matters before their Committee at each Regular Meeting of the GSAPPSC. These individuals shall also submit a report of their Committees' activity to the outgoing Secretary within fourteen days before new officers are elected. The incoming Secretary shall provide copies of these reports to the Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs and respective Committee members chosen in the fall.

Standing Committees

The internal standing committees shall include, but not be limited to Student Life and Social Activities, Budget, Student Health + Wellness, and Open House & Orientation and as described below:

1. Student Life and Social Activities

- Organizes and publicizes all GSAPPSC Social Events working closely with the Events Office and student groups
- By virtue of the position, the GSAPPSC Vice President serves as chair of the Social Committee.
- Certain duties may be delegated to subcommittees, but the Student Life Committee shall retain ultimate responsibility for these events and associated budgets (under the supervision of the GSAPPSC Treasurer). The Committee shall follow an alphabetical rotation system for the entire GSAPPSC when assigning duties associated with its events or any other system that they deem appropriate. If a GSAPPSC member is unable to work their turn at an event, they shall work the next turn at an event, and the next person on the GSAPPSC list, alphabetically, will take their place.

- Sub-committee: 6on6
- Sub-committee: Commencement

2. Student Health + Wellness Committee

- Focuses on health and accessibility in order to improve the student experience for everyone.
- Promote a healthy classroom environment and studio culture.

3. Orientation and Admitted Student Committee

- The Orientation and Admitted Students Committee shall be responsible for coordinating orientation events and programs for entering first year students as well as planning GSAPPSC related activities.
- Committee co-chairs are selected in the Spring and committee members, if any, are chosen the following Fall.

a. Composition

The Committee shall consist of one Chair. Within fourteen days after new officers are elected, the incoming President, with the advice and consent of the incoming Executive Board and in consultation with the outgoing chair, shall choose Committee chairs are selected in the Fall. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner and by a student from the same class as the individual vacating the position.

4. GSAPPSC Budget Committee

- The GSAPPSC Budget Committee shall allocate and distribute the funds to Student Organizations
- By virtue of the position, the GSAPPSC Treasurer serves as Chair of the GSAPPSC Budget Committee.

a. Budget Procedures.

Before the budgeting process begins, the Treasurer shall present to the GSAPPSC the detailed procedures that will be used by the GSAPPSC Budget Committee to allocate funds to student groups and the structure of the standardized forms that will be used as funding applications and funding appeals. These procedures and standardized forms require the pre-approval of the Senior Associate Dean for Administration & Faculty Affairs.

b. Application for Funds

At the beginning of each semester, the GSAPPSC Budget Committee shall solicit funding requests from all recognized GSAPP Student organizations. Each organization shall be informed of the application and appeals process. This information shall include the standards that the GSAPPSC Budget Committee will follow in allocating funds . The recognized organizations shall be given at least one week after notification to submit funding applications.

c. Allocation

Budget allocations to student organizations and/ or student events shall be made by July 30th and October 31st. Funds may not be carried over from year to year and must be expensed by June 30th –end of the fiscal year. The GSAPPSC Budget Committee members shall have one week to review funding request applications. In drafting an allocation budget proposal, the GSAPPSC Budget Committee shall take into account, among other

things, the size of the organization, its past performance, its fiscal responsibility, whether or not its programs will be held at GSAPP, and the impact of the organization's events and programs on the GSAPP community. The Committee shall not discriminate against groups on the basis of their political, social or religious goals or beliefs. The Committee shall not allocate funds to any organization that is not open to every member of the GSAPP community, nor shall it allocate funds to any event that is not open to every member of the GSAPP Community. Organizations and individuals receiving funds from the GSAPPSC shall be under an obligation to publicize all events of the organization in a manner reasonably calculated to give notice to all members of the GSAPP community.

d. Approval of the Allocation GSAPPSC Budget

When the allocation budget proposal is completed by the GSAPPSC Budget Committee, it is to be submitted to the Senior Associate Dean for Administration and Faculty Affairs before the funding proposal is distributed to the GSAPPSC before the next general meeting. The GSAPPSC may accept, reject or amend the allocation budget by majority vote of the GSAPPSC members present.

e. Appeals Process

After the Senior Associate Dean of Administration and Faculty Affairs, as well as the GSAPPSC, approves the budget, the Treasurer shall inform the student organizations of their fiscal year allotment. If a group is dissatisfied with its allocation, the group may appeal to the GSAPPSC. The appeal must be made within one week of the notification of the allocation budget and considered by the GSAPPSC at the next general meeting. After the GSAPPSC considers and votes upon all appeals submitted pursuant to this section, the allocation budget shall be final.

f. Distribution of Funds

Following the GSAPPSC allocation budget, the Treasurer working closely with the GSAPP Finance Office will distribute funds in accordance with University policies and procedures. All related payment requests are to be prepared, approved and submitted by the Treasurer. The Treasurer is responsible for monitoring individual student organization budget allocations and reconciling expenses with the GSAPP Finance Office on a monthly basis.

g. Audits

The GSAPP Finance Office will review the Budget Committee's records on an annual basis to ensure compliance with University policies and procedures.

h. Access to Information

The GSAPPSC Budget Committee shall publicize and explain the budgetary process. Committee meetings shall be closed, but the Committee must keep financial records.

5. Alumni + Development

- Guarantees the smooth operation of students' last year of GSAPP transitioning into alumni.
- The alumni Committee works closely with the GSAPP Alumni and Development office to foster connections with alumni.

- In particular, the GSAPP Alumni Committee is in charge of helping the Alumni Office coordinate a series of social events for students. The committee will be composed of at least three members; the GSAPPSC representatives and other members of the student body.

Ad Hoc Committee

The focus of the Ad Hoc Committee is to be determined by the GSAPPSC annually and reflect an issue or need at the forefront of student life each year. Proposals for Ad Hoc Committees require approval from the Senior Associate Dean of Administration and Faculty Affairs and the Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs before a vote may proceed. A fall vote of the GSAPPSC within the first two weeks of all elected positions being filled shall determine the Ad Hoc Committee for the academic year.

REVENUES + EXPENDITURES

No person shall spend funds from the GSAPPSC account for their personal benefit. Reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred on behalf of the GSAPPSC and in furtherance of its purposes require preapproval of the GSAPP Finance Office.

For the purposes of this policy:

- “approval by the GSAPPSC Executive Board” means that a majority of GSAPPSC Executive Board members votes in support of the expenditure.
- “approval by the GSAPPSC” means that a majority of GSAPPSC members voting when quorum is met support of the expenditure.
- “Committee Chair(s)” means both any individual or group of individuals who has been given spending authority.
- All GSAPPSC budgets must get final approval from GSAPPSC Budget Committee and the GSAPP Finance Office

GSAPPSC Budgeted Funds

Each year, the GSAPPSC shall hold a Special Meeting for the purpose of determining, in accordance with instructions promulgated by the Senior Associate Dean of Administration and Faculty Affairs, the preliminary budget for the following academic year.

Expenditures by GSAPPSC

The GSAPPSC shall exercise exclusive control over the spending of funds with the approval of the Senior Associate Dean of Administration and Faculty Affairs. The GSAPPSC shall spend such funds to further the purposes of the entire GSAPP Community. In addition, the GSAPPSC may, at its discretion, delegate the right to spend GSAPPSC funds to students and student organizations who apply to the GSAPPSC for such right. Once a disbursement of GSAPPSC funds has been authorized, the Treasurer shall execute such disbursement on behalf of the GSAPPSC.

Spending Authority

Committee Chairs have authority to expend GSAPPSC funds only if the expenditure is listed in the Committee’s approved budget.

1. (i) Committee Chair(s) must submit each spending request to the GSAPPSC Executive Board via email for approval.
2. The Treasurer is the sole member of the GSAPPSC to email Academic and Student Affairs and the GSAPP Finance Office to request and document the spending of GSAPPSC funds.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the GSAPP Student Council Handbook is to provide all students an informative guide regarding policies and regulations to support student governance. Students are responsible for adhering to the information provided in this handbook.

Don't hesitate to contact GSAPP Student Council (GSAPPSC) when you have anything you'd like to share about the student experience. Our email address is gsappstudcouncil@columbia.edu