

**COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SENATE TOWN HALL**

**Rules of University Conduct**

**October 17, 2014**

*Christopher Riano*

00:00:01

All right. Good afternoon, everybody. We have quite the full house here and I appreciate that. If there's any place free speech is okay it's definitely in this room today.

I want to take a quick second and ask all of my fellow members of the Rules of University Conduct Committee to just introduce themselves and where they come from at the University.

*Lindsey Dayton*

00:00:31

I'm Lindsey Dayton. I'm in the History Department. I'm a graduate student in GSAS.

*Sejal Singh*

00:00:37

My name is Sejal Singh, I'm the VP of Policy for CCSC. I'm a senior in the College.

*Zila Acosta*

00:00:46

Hi, I'm Zila Acosta, CC11, Class of 2015 for the Law School, and I am the co-chair of the Student Affairs Committee of the University Senate.

*Dan Richman*

00:00:57

I'm Dan Richman, I'm on the Law School faculty.

*Christopher Riano*

00:01:00

And my name's Christopher Riano, I'm a lecturer in constitutional law and government here at Columbia, and I believe I graduated in '07 from GS. It feels like longer than that.

Perfect. I first just want to take a very quick moment and allow two students who sit on the Committee to make a brief introduction.

*Jared Odessky*

00:01:33

Hi, everybody, welcome, thank you for coming. My name is Jared Odessky.

*Sejal Singh*

00:01:36

And my name is Sejal Singh. We're the two undergraduate members of the Rules Committee of the University Senate, and we are very excited to see all of you here today.

*Jared Odessky*

00:01:45

So all University Senate Committee deliberations take place behind closed doors. We advocated to make this in particular an open process, or as open as the Senate allows. So that's the Town Hall format that brings us here today. This is the first of a possible three Town Halls for the Rules this year. We'll have one more this fall on Monday, November 10<sup>th</sup> before the Committee makes a final decision about possible rules changes. And if the Committee does decide to alter the Rules, proposals will be presented before another Town Hall early in the spring.

*Sejal Singh*

00:02:17

We hope that moving forward this revision is guided by your input and is completely open to the public. Jared and I are unequivocally committed to a process which is fair, neutral and trusted by the community. Our goal is ensure that the rights of students, faculty and staff to free speech and association are fully protected under the Rules of University Conduct. Protests and dissent are a vital part of Columbia's culture, history and tradition, and we deserve rules which reflect those values. The two of us are available outside this forum to hear any concerns and feedback, so please feel free to contact us at any point in this process. Thank you.

*Christopher Riano*

00:03:07

Excellent. And I just want to take a couple of seconds to make a brief introduction on behalf of the Committee to everybody in the room today publicly on the record. I do note that everything that is said today is on the record and will be publicly transcribed and available. And I want to take a quick moment and say "thank you" to everybody who's in the room today. Of any process and procedure at Columbia among our most cherished must be our protections that relate to free speech, free debate, and the freedom to assemble. As an independent committee we are charged with representing all members of our University as we look at the current place the Rules of Conduct occupy at Columbia. The Committee as a whole and I in particular cherish and celebrate our culture of discourse and discussion, traditions that establish our standing as one of the world's great centers of inquiry and debate. It would be disingenuous, however, to review the Rules without opening our discussion of them to the University at large. I want to emphasize, we have taken no vote or stance on if we will make any recommendation for

possible changes to the Rules of Conduct. Instead we are here to listen and engage a community forum about the Rules as each of us here today see[s] them at the University. The Committee has noted, just like many members of the community, areas within the Rules that may be outdated, anachronistic, and not fully protective of the rights we have come to expect as members of this University community.

Today we are here to begin a process of collaboration with our fellow students, faculty and staff about the Rules of University Conduct. The Committee welcomes any comment or question, either publicly or in private – as you’ll note there were cards handed out to contact us. As we continue to discuss ways in which we can facilitate our extraordinary culture of free speech and debate, while ensuring all members of our community enjoy access to that same freedom.

Now, instead of the five of us sitting here and talking to you, we actually want to hear from you on your thoughts and comments, (a) both on whether we should revisit the Rules of University Conduct, because as I’ve said we have not made that decision, and (b) if there’s items within them that you find to be particularly important to facilitating the culture that we cherish here at the University. And with that I open the floor to any comments and/or questions, both from students, faculty, staff, and any other member of the University community.

Come on down. And please, because everything is on the record today, I would appreciate if you would make sure to state your name and your affiliation.

Thank you.

*Jordana Narin*

00:06:09

Hi, my name is Jordana Narin, and I’m the Media Director for the Columbia Democrats. So my question is for the Chair of the Committee, Mr. Riano. So while the Rules, technically they apply to the entire

Columbia community, they've only been used to – they've only ever been used to prosecute students, and specifically they've most only been used to punish undergraduate students. So my question is will undergraduate students be a part of the drafting process directly?

*Christopher Riano*

00:06:40

I think that's actually an excellent question. One of the things that we actually have been emphasizing within the Committee is if we actually do decide to make any changes that in many ways we're all going to be working together to really be a committee of the whole that works on the drafting. I could not be happier with the student representation that we have on the Committee. I think that we have five truly involved and excellent students, and I'm thrilled with the work that they've already put into it, and I'm really looking forward to the continued work that they provide as we move forward.

*Jordana Narin*

00:07:11

So that means that the two undergraduate students on the Committee right now will be a part of the drafting process?

*Christopher Riano*

00:07:15

Everybody will be a part of the drafting process should we make that decision.

*Jordana Narin*

00:07:18

Okay. Thank you.

*Christopher Riano*

You're welcome.

That can't possibly be the only question that people have.

*Gabriela Pelsinger*

00:07:44

Gabriella Pelsinger. I'm a member of Columbia Prison Divest. I think following up on Jordana's questions, while I'm really glad those undergraduates will be part of the reform process, this reform process is potentially like overhauling – is potentially structural and will be overhauling kind of I guess like the way things have been running for a long time. Is there a way for other undergraduate students to be invited into the process? Can other students, can more of the community be participating in this drafting process?

*Zila Acosta*

00:08:21

If we decide to overhaul the process based on feedback and what people are desiring that's what Chris was talking about when he was mentioning the three Town Halls. So ideally we would do the drafting with the two undergrads within our committee, propose it, and then have another Town Hall and get substantive feedback and meet with whatever groups want to meet to discuss the rules, get their feedback into the drafts, and then propose it again, and kind of move through that process. We're hoping to make sure that we have a public proposal that – for feedback before anything takes place at the Senate level. That includes the broader community. So I – I won't speak for anyone, but I don't think we can – we'll have a drafting process that includes everyone, but through the proposal that will happen.

*Gabriela Pelsinger*

Okay. Thank you.

*Christopher Riano*

00:09:09

And I just want to add to that definitely, just like I said, even if people don't want to publicly speak at the Town Hall we're going to be able to be contacted through the Senate through the entire process as we move forward. So it's not hard to get in touch with all of us.

*Gabriela Pelsinger*

00:09:22

But there's no opportunity to add new undergraduate students to the Rules Committee because of why?

*Christopher Riano*

00:09:39

I think that's a fair question. The Rules Committee is established by statute within the University so there are certain seats that are allotted for certain, you know, constituencies. I think one of the things that we did very early on was allow the five student seats to be flexible and allow actually the students, and especially the Student Affairs Committee, which is the University Senators that sit on the University Senate, to choose the students that sat on the Committee. And that happened both last spring and in the fall, is that right?

*Gabriela Pelsinger*

00:10:10

But if there is a decision to potentially overhaul the existing rules, do you think there's a possibility to maybe like given the gravity of that change potentially look into inviting new undergraduate students into the Rules Committee?

*Zila Acosta*

00:10:28

I mean if students really, really want to be a part of the Rules Committee we can try and revisit. I mean the question – the question at that point will be when can they come in, because like I said, right now is the time to kind of decide if we’re taking this on to overhaul it, what are we overhauling, what are the goal-- we kind of have general goals of what we think the rules should have, and I think we can agree on those, and so the question is what do students feel need to be overhauled? And if students want to be part of that process I think there are many ways to do that. If students feel really, really strongly that we want to appoint another student that continues substantively to drafting we can talk about it, yeah.

*Gabriela Pelsinger*

Great. Thank you.

*Christopher Riano*

Absolutely.

*Shev*

00:11:27

My name is Shev, CC18. If a dean or other administrator in charge of the – of the administrative punishments being conducted happens to have a personal like relationship with the student – I’m not talking about just – but happens to know a person outside of the punishment process, what protections are there in place to make sure that there are no biases that could potentially manifest?

*Zila Acosta*

00:12:09



Are you talking about Dean's Discipline or are you talking about the Rules of Academic Conduct going to...?

*Shev*

00:12:16

Just the whole internal administration – administrative punishment process.

*Christopher Riano*

00:12:23

So we don't have any jurisdiction over the questions of Dean's Discipline itself. We have jurisdiction over questions of the Rules of University Conduct broadly. I know that Dean's Discipline can be part of that, right? But when it comes to actual Dean's Discipline, something that we actually talked about already is the fact that at every school it's actually quite different, and it's not something that's really in our purview as a Committee. If it's about questions of the actual Rules outside of Dean's Discipline it might be something that we'd look at, but I think – it sounds more like your question may be detailing Dean's Discipline.

*Shev*

00:12:58

I should rephrase my question. I don't want to specifically refer to Deans, I'm talking about any administrative member who is in charge of any form of punishment for the students and like...

*Sejal Singh*

00:13:12

I'm sorry. Are you referring to a possible internal process? I know that the Committee is revisiting the existence of the external process and

considering an internal one. Are you referring to that hypothetical internal process, or Dean's Discipline as it exists right now?

*Shev*

00:13:25

The hypothetical internal process.

*Christopher Riano*

00:13:33

I can be honest. It's not something we've actually talked much about because it's--at this point--because we haven't decided how exactly we want to engage with the Rules. We've actually spent most of our time deciding -- the first three meetings we're deciding (a) are we going to engage with the Rules, and since then it's been how to set up the Town Halls. So it's actually a great comment because it's something that I think we should be considering if we do make that jump, and it's something that I now am happy to have on the record that's something that we can look at.

*Shev*

00:14:00

If -- if you do I'd actually like -- I hope that you would consider this in following meetings, but if you do will you -- will you ask for students' input on this specific issue?

*Zila Acosta*

00:14:11

Just to be clear, so students' input on the potential of any internal process that an administrator is in charge of, yes? So like any internal administrative process that has to do with the Rules that an administrator would handle, right?

*Shev*

00:14:28

Okay. Thank you.

*Abby Porter*

00:14:37

Hi. My name is Abby Porter, and so Sejal brought up the internal versus kind of the external process. And I can imagine one of the arguments for not having an external process is that it's costly to students, that the University can obviously hire more expensive lawyers and more effective representation, but I'm wondering if there's a way for the University to help seek pro bono lawyers for students going through the external process. I can imagine there's a lot of lawyers who really would want to be helping students go through this internal—external—process, and I think that it's much more transparent and more valuable to the process than internal. So I'm wondering if that's something the Rules Committee is thinking about putting into the Rules.

*Christopher Riano*

00:15:21

I can say that it's definitely something that we have talked about, but it's not something that we've gotten to the point where we've actually formulated any sort of decision, informally or formally, about that.

*Zila Acosta*

00:15:31

But as I take your suggestion, your suggesting that you think an external process would be potentially more beneficial than that, that the prohibitive aspects would be legal and if the University could consider taking that on, the legal expense, or getting – facilitating pro bono lawyers?

*Abby Porter*

00:15:49

Right. I mean from – from the Law School or professors from – even law students possibly. I just think that noting some of the different – some of the issues that people – students have brought up with Dean’s Discipline recently about not having witnesses allowed to be present, not having evidence allowed to be presented, I think an external process, especially for something like this, would be much more beneficial.

*Zila Acosta*

Thank you.

*Christopher Riano*

Thank you.

*Bennet Wilcox*

00:16:20

Hi, my name is Bennett Wilcox. I’m a member of the International Socialist Organization. I think that the issue of an internal versus an external review process is one that all of us are very interested in, and I think that the potential switch to an internal review process is frankly very concerning to a lot of the people behind me. How can we expect, given the situation, administrators and deans to – to uphold free speech of students that directly criticizes them? I mean for example we had the No Red Tape protest recently that, you know, directly – that, you know, directly criticized the people who would be judging them in a, you know, in this hypothetical review system, so, you know, obviously the administration has a – has an incentive to shut down student protests, so how can we expect that free speech to be upheld?

*Daniel Richman*

00:17:27 00

I just wanted to add one comment, which is, you know, you're assuming that – that outsiders will be more open to dissent within the University than insiders. And that may be exactly the wrong way to think about this. I know a lot of lawyers in the outside world, and I know a lot of administrators in the inside world, and I think that, you know, one of the things that's really impressed me about Columbia is the commitment of administrators and faculty to--to dissent at a level that I don't think my colleagues in the Bar would take to.

*Zila Acosta*

00:18:03

I'll take your comment as to say a switch to an internal system is concerning, and you believe there's an inherent conflict of interest there if there was to be a switch to an internal process.

*Bennet Wilcox*

00:18:16

I do. I mean you can – you can say that an external review process will look poorly on dissent all you want, but you can not, you know, ignore the absolutely incentive that the administration has to protect its own image. And part of that does conflict with student free speech.

*Zila Acosta*

Thank you.

*Marcus Hunter*

00:18:38

Hi, Marcus Hunter. I'm CC, a senior. So my question is another follow-up question. I want to ask about the representation in the drafting process and the disproportionate amount of students from under-represented

and marginalized backgrounds, namely queer, Black, southeast Asian, Chicano, and low-income students who historically throughout Columbia's famous history of, you know, encouraging discourse have been subject to incarceration, judiciary processes that directly silence and inhibit their ability to speak about the issues that are brought up in these Rules of Conduct. And so I'm wondering what steps does the Committee take in ensuring that these – that these communities are actually represented and advocated for when the structural policies that are enacted in the University actively work to dismiss and mitigate their claims and the validity of their struggle?

*Christopher Riano*

00:19:48

I'm sitting here as a member of a minority myself and I'm thinking yeah, I absolutely understand that. So, I think that one thing that we've really done, and I – I will stand behind this, I actually am quite proud of who we have on the Committee. I think we have a great cross-section of people who have really done amazing things at the University and will continue to do amazing things at the University, and we have a great cross-section of people that represent many different minority groups, both from the student side as well as from the faculty and administrative side. And so I think that's absolutely – absolutely critical because you make a very good point. That's a piece of our history that's very tangible and very important here at Columbia.

*Zila Acosta*

00:20:30

I'll also add, I want to add as one of the students on the Committee I – there can always be more diversity in these representations, we don't represent literally every single person. If you look for a member of your community on every committee it's not going to necessarily be

represented. But I will tell you this: personally I am 100% committed to making sure those bodies and those constituencies are heard, and I think every student feels that way, and every faculty member does too. So not to say that's sufficient, but I will say that we feel that commitment very deeply.

*Marcus Hunter*

00:21:01

Thank you. And I just want to emphasize my question is not about necessarily diversity in terms of representation but actually what policies are put in place that ensure that the people who are affected by these policies are represented and actually treated fairly and justly. I'm thinking like particularly about Manhattanville. I also represent CPD. We had two members of the community come in and speak with us about the – the effects that our occupation of Harlem is having on their communities. And I'm wondering where is their voice in this struggle, especially when people of color or students from Harlem or from the area are actually being affected by these – by these decisions that the Committee is making. So it's not about like having a multicultural advisory board.

*Marshall Bozeman*

00:21:59

Hi. Thank you for having this Town Hall. My name is Marshall, I'm a sophomore in the College. And we've been talking – we've been talking a lot about whether or not the process should be internal or external. I was wondering if the Law School faculty would be available to students in these proceedings to act as an advocate, and perhaps tenured faculty who specialize in First Amendment procedures.

*Zila Acosta*

00:22:30

Well, since we haven't decided if an internal or an external process would occur that hasn't been discussed. But I think you're the second or third person to bring that up, so I've taken note.

*Marshall Bozeman*

00:22:39

But I think most people are in agreement that an internal process is on its face going to be biased because of the people involved. So – and a lot of times people talk about, you know, the efficiency of an internal process, but this is a way of using our resources in a way that maintains the objectivity of the system.

*Zila Acosta*

Thank you.

*Lena Rubin*

00:23:10

Hi, I'm Lena Rubin. I'm here with the CU Democrats. And I just wanted – I wanted to ask a question about the – the current internal discipline that exists because I know that external judges and judicial systems in the past used to – to preside over these cases have expressed the – the limited nature of the punishments that currently exist for students, which includes suspension and exclusion only, and suspension is the minimum punishment. So taking those considerations into effect, what will you do to provide more comprehensive forms of punishment or of discipline for students?

*Christopher Riano*

00:23:50



I can definitely say that while we haven't – again, we haven't made any decisions to enter into actual deliberations about changing the Rules, that is something that we have discussed as a committee in a general sense. And we have taken note of that in a general sense too.

*Lena Rubin*

00:24:03

Have you had any ideas about alternative forms of punishment that you could enact?

*Christopher Riano*

00:24:08

I can honestly say we haven't discussed any.

*Lena Rubin*

Okay. Thank you.

*Myles Hilton*

00:24:16

Hi. I'm Myles Hilton, I'm a sophomore at Columbia College. I'm asking this question for a friend who for reasons that will become obvious isn't comfortable voicing this herself. I recently went through an adjudication process through the gender- and sexual-based misconduct office which I did feel was mishandled by the deans overseeing it. One of my natural reactions to seeing my future at this school treated as a liability was anger towards those deans, the same deans who would decide whether to suspend or expel me under the Rules if an internal process if I protest their very mishandling of my case. Why would I trust them to treat my case fairly and objectively when they treated my sexual assault so callously?

*Zila Acosta*

00:25:23

So I'll take that one. So to know honestly, like I said, I feel terrible to keep saying this, we haven't made a decision either way. But I will add that to the list of reasons you all feel it shouldn't be an internal process for deans. Okay?

*Myles Hilton*

Thank you.

*Sean*

00:25:43

Hi, guys. My name is Sean and I'm a sophomore in the College. You know, just conceptually I'm trying to figure out if you – if – if these Rules were to be tightened up in a way to more easily crack down or discipline – discipline students for protest activities, how is it possible to make it easier to suspend or expel students and at the same time create a campus atmosphere where we're able to show dissent against the University? Wouldn't tightening up the Rules essentially shut down protests at the University altogether? I'm wondering how it's possible to basically tighten the Rules and at the same time maintain the dialogue that the University – a university community necessitates?

*Christopher Riano*

00:26:28

Well, in some ways one of the things that – and – and I think I even was quoted about this recently – is that the Rules don't even contain a statement about how important free speech is on campus in the beginning, like they probably should. And as opposed to discussing again the Rules of Conduct, discussing the parentheses, kind of the outside pieces and saying we celebrate our campus traditions. Listen, I was just

at Princeton this week. Princeton is not Columbia. This place is so much better. This place is a place that celebrates dissent and debate. And you know what? We should have a place where you can sit out in Low Plaza and, you know, say what you want to say and not have to worry about the Rules coming down on you. I think that's something that we've – I think that's something that we've really looked at in an abstract sense, is saying, you know, reading the Rules right at the beginning, again, it doesn't even say something about how much we should celebrate free speech at Columbia. So I think, you know, considering that we haven't made any decision whether we want to change or even engage with the Rules in actual editing, I think it's critical to keep in mind that should we even do that, you know, I think it's a pretty strong consensus at the Committee that we would want to make it so it's not a tightening of free speech. I think in some ways the Rules are somewhat ambiguous and vague, that could prohibit free speech, which I don't think anybody on the Committee wants to see happen.

*Sean*

00:27:48

So just to be clear. You are interested in codifying and writing the fact that the community is interested in dissent and free speech on campus.

*Christopher Riano*

00:27:56

I – I think that the fact that it's not in the Rules is – is actually a problem.

*Sean*

Okay, thank you.

*Christopher Riano*

I do.

*Zila Acosta*

00:28:01

And also I just wanted to mention, if people also had thoughts about affirmative rights they'd like to see included I'd love to hear feedback about that.

*Christopher Riano*

00:28:08

We'd absolutely love to have comments on that.

*Zila Acosta*

00:28:08

It doesn't always have to be you can't do this, it can also be we as students should have the right to this and as faculty and members of the community.

*Christopher Riano*

Absolutely, absolutely.

*Hadil Ayub*

00:28:21

Hello, my name is Hadil Ayub, I'm with the Students for Justice in Palestine. Last year, when Students for Justice in Palestine hung up a pro-Palestine banner at Barnard, donors called the University threatening to withhold their donations unless Barnard took the banner down. Even though every other student group on campus has always been able to put their banners up, the University took ours down because of pressure from these donors. They specifically discriminated against pro-Palestine speech on campus. How can we know that that

pressure won't affect all internal processes? How can we know – how can we know that administration will be neutral towards controversial speech? Every year I stand on College Walk protesting Israeli apartheid and the occupation of Palestine, where I grew up. If I were expelled or suspended for chanting during Israeli apartheid week, because under the current rules that's not apparently problematic, which is entirely – which is entirely possible under the current rules, my visa would be immediately revoked, I would have to immediately return to the jurisdiction of the Israeli authorities who could jail me for my opinions and for speaking them on this very campus. How can you justify getting one of your students deported, ruining one of your student's lives, for exercising their free speech in a nondestructive way? Thank you.

*Zila Acosta*

I added that to my list.

*Hadil Ayub*

I appreciate that.

*Zila Acosta*

Thank you.

*Sejal Singh*

00:30:56

Can I ask a clarification question? Your concern is an internal process would be biased against certain content and not just against the like time, place and manner of communications, right?

*Hadil Ayub*

Absolutely, absolutely.

*Zoe Ridolfi-Starr*

00:31:16

My name is Zoe Ridolfi-Starr, I'm a senior in the College and a member of No Red Tape Columbia. I'm also one of the twenty-eight complainants in the Title IX and Clery Complaints against Columbia University. On April 24 of this year, we filed those complaints against the University. On April 25<sup>th</sup> a high level administrator personally called a fellow student and told them that I was a liar, I was a disruptive presence, I was destructive to proper communication within the Columbia community, and that I should be prohibited from any and all future meetings concerning sexual assault policy at Columbia. These are the administrators that you all are so confidently sitting in front of us, assuring us are deeply committed to protecting free speech. Since then other high level administrators have looked me face-to-face and explicitly said that they suggest toning down the critical nature of our public comments and if we want to keep being invited to meetings. Others of them – others of them have personally called me into their office to inform me that they have videotapes of members of my organization putting up flyers and red Xs, and that under the current Rules of Conduct that we're discussing today that could be considered various degrees of violations and subject us to suspension or expulsion. It's unacceptable, it's unacceptable, both the vagueness of these policies and the idea that an internal process could ever fairly treat us, given the level of censure and retaliation that we are experiencing today. I would love to tell you exactly who those administrators are, but I can't because I'm still afraid they will retaliate against me. Please consider that as you discuss.

*Chris Kerry*

00:33:42

Hello, my name is Chris Kerry, I'm a senior in Columbia College and I'm here on behalf of Gender Revolution which is a trans-student group on

campus. So we've been talking a lot about the internal and the external process. And one other thing that I'd like to bring up is the fact that the internal – the external process affords you much more kind of rights and due process than the internal process. Where in the external process it's a public hearing, you have an outside – outside judge who's there. You also have legal representation, you can introduce witnesses, introduce evidence, and really have a full hearing whereas it's not clear that that's true about the internal process. However, the external process as it currently stands only allows you to be found either not guilty or be suspended or expelled. And even the judges that have been involved in those hearings have said that it's frankly ridiculous that they don't have other punishments at their fingertips that they can use in cases where suspension or expulsion just isn't an appropriate reaction to whatever the students were involved in. So how do we ensure that students aren't discouraged from going through like a really transparent trial process in the external process because they feel that there is some evidence against them and that will mean they will automatically be suspended and expelled? How do we kind of broaden the range of available punishments in a way that is not just beneficial for students but also beneficial just for the kind of trust in the University and trust in the process and the ability to have transparency?

*Zila Acosta*

00:35:31

So I think you might be the second person to bring up having a wider array of possible punishments and sanctions in the external process, so maintaining an external process and then broadening the array of possibilities, yes? That's the suggestion. Okay.

*Eric Weimer*

00:35:49

Hi, my name is Eric Weimer. I'm CC16 and I'm a friend of many groups up here, but I would like to come as a student or a former-student of President Bollinger's Freedom of the Press class, because looking at that class there are two points that I think he has taught me to find very troubling. The first was actually explained so articulately by the student before me, and it's the idea that checks and balances really matter, that it really matters that you have proper incentives in place to make sure people act right rather than just relying on benevolent administrators. And this makes me very mistrustful – it makes me disagree with Professor Richman's statements that the administration's interests – that the administration does have our best interests in mind. Because if so why would they pretty much set up a process that amounts to prison plea bargaining to try and incentivize us to choose Dean's Discipline, why would they not have trust in the external process? That is very troubling. The second bit is that fine language is absolutely paramount when writing this stuff, and that broad language can be abused in so many ways. So I'd like to turn to Section 443, Number 8. Now besides so many other pieces of broad language, such as the idea that causing a noise which would disrupt classroom activities violates university conduct, which means every time I were to just walk onto Low Plaza and yell I would immediately be subject to sanction, according to that language. That is only a simple violation. What really worries me are the serious violations that can cause huge punishments. And Number 8 says "continues for more than a very short period of time to physically prevent," not just a short period of time but a very short period of time. I believe that in Dean's Discipline process the Dean could use almost any period of time he would like from five seconds to five hours to constitute a very short period of time, and that is extremely troubling.

*Gabriella Pelsinger*

Hi, I'm still Gabriella.



*Asha*

00:38:20

We have – have two – two really good questions, but I’m Asha and I’m also affiliated with the Columbia Prison Divest campaign.

*Gabriella Pelsinger*

00:38:29

So the surveillance apparatus at this University is fundamentally different from how it was in 1968 when these rules were different-- were written. And so we’d like to talk about standards of evidence that are used in the disciplinary process. I’m curious as to knowing what standards of evidence currently exist for things that can be introduced in the disciplinary process, both internal and external, specifically I think also bringing in Columbia e-mails and Columbia internet. Because Columbia University owns the network, the internet network, on which pretty much all communications within this campus take place, I’m – I’m wondering whether there are any restrictions on the kind of amount that they are able to collect from any communications that happen on that network, whether it’s I guess using the Columbia University e-mail or even sending an i-message that uses Columbia University internet. So what are the current standards of evidence?

*Daniel Richman*

00:39:29

Can I just ask a question? Are you thinking both in terms of – of evidence collected by the University and collected by the student involved, or...

*Gabriella Pelsinger*

00:39:38

I guess I'm interested in the kind of information that the University collects and how they may be using that in disciplinary processes, and if there are any restrictions on the kinds of evidence they are allowed to introduce, and the places from which they harvest that evidence.

*Daniel Richman*

00:39:58

So you don't mean standards of evidence as much as – as types of evidence that the University has access to.

*Gabriella Pelsinger*

00:40:07

Sure. So are there – are there... What can they use?

*Christopher Riano*

00:40:12

I don't know about the Dean's process I can say this. This is actually something that we've talked about in committee only to the point where we've thought about where do these kind of boundaries exist when it comes to the Rules of University Conduct, and it's been a very like service level discussion because it's actually come up that this is now something that is important that was actually not that important when the Rules were written in '68, and it's something that I'm glad people are bringing up because it's something that I want to – I'm glad that it is already being considered in the general populace as something that we should be thinking about.

*Sejal Singh*

00:40:43

Can I ask what sort of standards – what sort of protections of your private communication would you want to see written into the rules?

*Gabriella Pelsinger*

00:40:51

I mean I'd like to know that my e-mails aren't being read or used against me. I'd like to know that a kind of private communication that happens through an i-message to another student is being – isn't being collected and used against me. I think there are a variety of ways in which... And also I guess...

*Asha*

00:41:19

Yeah. I also would just add onto that like fewer cameras on campus, like the amount to which we're surveilled, I can't look ten feet anywhere on this campus and not see a camera. But just – just adding onto that, so there's like – there are – there are two instances that I want to bring up. One in which a student group that was in this disciplinary process requesting footage from those campus and being denied – footage from those cameras and being denied access. And I think the question about information collected on the part of the students versus information collected on the part of the University is kind of irrelevant because students are never going to have the capacity to be collecting information about the University to the extent that the University is going to have in the opposite direction. And, you know, risk being threatened in ways that students have been for releasing information that they do have access to. And – and another thing is with the piece about surveillance, and I know this may deviate a little bit from the specific, you know, writing of the Rules, but it is relevant, is the way in which what came out last year about the Muslim Students Association being surveilled by the NYPD and Columbia's participation in that – and Columbia's participation in that. And so I think in addition to, you know, the Rules that discipline students for protest, I think there needs to be with that, right, like some

– something in writing that protects – protects us from being surveilled in that way, and protects us from – so we’re talking about an internal process, we’re talking about things that are supposed to be, you know, adjudicated and – and decided upon things that happen on this campus, and what does it mean that the University is not only surveilling us themselves for things that can be used as evidence within the internal process, but also allowing the NYPD to be surveilling students and – and the protection of freedom of speech is not just within the University but we should have protections of our freedom of speech from – from the outside as well.

*Zila Acosta*

00:43:54

So just to be clear. You’re suggesting we be having restrictions on evidence, the way evidence can be gathered, who can gather what evidence, and then may be affirmative rights as well to what rights students should have and what relationship they should share with the University like at a bigger level?

*Asha*

00:44:11

Absolutely. And not only evidence that – that the University uses in this disciplinary process, but who the University releases surveillance and evidence that they collect about students to.

*Dagin Brown*

00:44:32

Hi. I’m Dagin Brown from Columbia College and Columbia Prison Divest and ISO. And I wanted to have sort of a clarification. The reason that the Rules of University Conduct are sort of being revised right now is

because one of the supervisors who sort of like heads it, he's stepping down, right? Am I correct in that?

*Christopher Riano*

00:44:56

I think that – that's part of the reason that we've started to look at this, yes.

*Dagin Brown*

00:44:59

Okay, yeah. I kind of just wanted to clarify for the students, so that supervisor has been sort of I guess lenient in the way that he's been using these Rules and stuff. Yeah, he's nodding his head 'cause he knows. He's been very – disagreements aside, I mean yeah, there's some awful stuff that's happening, but he's been pretty leni-- I'm not trying to defend him – he's been pretty lenient in it though. My – my fear is saying that right now as the language stands in the Rules of University Conduct it's very vague, it can be used to make arbitrary decisions as a fellow pointed out earlier. And so I'm just making an affirmative call to say we need to have very – we need to have tighter language, we need to have language that is clear and delineates very certain rights that we have and having affirmative rights. Because whoever this new supervisor who's going to come in is, we'll see if we like him or not. And I also want to ask do the students have any say in who the new supervisor will be?

*Christopher Riano*

00:45:59

I actually just want to – I just want to kind of piggyback on that. And I'm sure that the full audience will answer this question as well as yourself, please. But it's – I'm getting the feeling that most of the people in the

room do expect us to address the Rules of University Conduct at this go-round. Is that the feeling that I'm getting?

*Dagin Brown*

00:46:15

I mean – no, that's like a fair question. I mean I would say that only because the Rules of University Conduct now are so ambiguous and so vague and we just want them tightened. Can I get like a “yeah” from people?

*Christopher Riano*

00:46:27

I just wanted to clarify that because I think that that's an important first step, you know, as a committee for us to start to consider.

*Dagin Brown*

Definitely. Yeah, we're all on that same page now. That's cool. So who is the new supervisor who's going to be coming in and do students have a say in how that happens or like who gets like voted in?

*Zila Acosta*

00:46:44

So I have no idea who the new person is. And I don't believe a process has been announced yet as to how that's going to happen. But absolutely students should be involved. And I 100% support that. And literally e-mail me. Students should definitely be involved. I really, really believe that. And yeah, yeah, I totally agree.

*Dagin Brown*

00:47:07

And okay, as a last thing, I would sort of have like a call to action and everyone in the audience, because I can't do this all on my own, but like sort of actually articulating what exact rights that we want and telling this group of people right here. Not just say like "We need to change things, they need to get tighter," but like actually saying things that you know because I haven't – unlike some of the people who have spoken already I haven't experienced the – the administration yet. And for the people – for the people who have and know what awful things that they have been able to do under these Rules – or not awful, I don't know, the things that they've been able to do under the Rules of University Conduct, making sure that they're not able to do them again by articulating very specific affirmative rights.

*Christopher Riano*

00:47:50

And I can tell you we absolutely welcome that, we welcome everybody participating. We would love to have more people participate and tell us what they think, especially as we continue this process, hence why we're opening this up.

*Dagin Brown*

00:48:02

Yeah, cool. Oh, one...

00:48:06

*Daniel Richman*

Can I just jump in and – and – and take your – your invitation to your – your colleagues. You know, people want to be on the drafting committee. Drafting committees are awful places to be. What you want to do is propose language. If you – the more – and – and you're exactly right. It doesn't matter who's doing the drafting if you get – it does matter, but I

mean the size of a committee, if you actually want the rules to change, and I think you're quite right that given – given the changes, it is in your interest to say get a new set of Rules in, but those set of Rules have to be written and they're not going to be written by a group that's just having ideas tossed around. Language proposed, and it doesn't have to be perfect, and don't think that you need to be a lawyer. Lawyers can't draft or – or many lawyers can't draft, seriously. If you get your actual ideas in writing to this Committee you'll be spectacularly helpful.

*Christopher Riano*

And that goes for everybody. Absolutely.

*Dagin Brown*

All right. Thank you.

*Becca Breslaw*

00:49:08

My name is Becca Breslaw. I'm a sophomore at Barnard, and I'm a member of No Red Tape and SWS, Student Worker Solidarity. I have a couple of things. So one was going to talk about the vagueness of the language in violation and sanctions, specifically the endangering property on University facility. So an example of that would be the action that No Red Tape did with putting the tape. So like proposals for that language. And then with regard to the noise violations that Eric was talking about, like that really worries me as a student with regards to the stand-up survivors action that happened earlier in this semester. And one thing briefly interrupting University functions and going into administrative offices to clarify, the reason that students go into those offices is because they've tried to make meetings with those people and they wouldn't take meetings with them. That's why people do that. And



also I was just wondering with regards to the Rules how contract negotiations play into this and like union representation on campus?

*Zila Acosta*

Can you clarify what you mean by that?

*Becca Breslaw*

00:50:30

Just like with regards to unions, contract negotiations and campaigns that are happening, like how these Rules would affect staff members and representatives of different unions on campus? So if you could clarify that. Specifically with regard to flyering, because over the summer I was involved in some flyering for a union on campus, and we were told not to go inside, we had to wait around the gates. So I was just wondering like with regards to how...

*Zila Acosta*

Inside where?

*Becca Breslaw*

00:51:01

Like we weren't allowed to go on campus, we were outside of the gates. So I was just wondering like with regards – is there like a procedure for handling contract negotiations under these Rules?

*Lindsey Davenport*

00:51:11

I can't speak to that – the flyering issue. I can find out a little bit about that. But generally union contracts on campus have their own clauses and their own rules governing the kind of protests, and those are, you know, maybe in opposition to the rules that we have in front of us, those

are usually positive rights for them, you know, for what they're allowed to do. So I think the issue is really about what students and workers are able to do together, because there's kind of a disjuncture, right, between what students are able to do in support of workers, often because the same admins are not listening to the workers either. Yeah, so that's the little bit that I know. I know, for example, 2110's contracts have clauses in them protecting their right to organize. And I think another piece of this that we're kind of missing, which is that these rules govern our – our activity on campus, but if you look into the rules of what's governing our activity around the campus we're basically prohibited from doing almost anything because we're within really close range of schools, of other buildings that, you know, New York City disallows you from having any – making noise or protesting or whatever. So just another thing to add that the – the rules governing both the workers and the students on campus, and protecting those rights, the right to protest on campus, is really important because the right to protest around campus is very, very small, they're very weak.

*Becca Breslaw*

Thank you.

*Celia Cooper*

00:52:45

Hi, I'm Celia Cooper, CC15. And kind of going back to the difference between the external process and the Dean's Discipline processes as they stand right now, can – I know that the Dean's Discipline is like super opaque, so can you actually just clarify the differences between these two?

*Sejal Singh*

00:53:06

So the process differs from school to school. I can talk about the CC and SEAS process, is that what you're interested in?

*Celia Cooper*

Well, yeah. I don't know the first thing about it.

*Sejal Singh*

00:53:14

So maybe to clarify the difference between the external and internal process, if a student is accused of a violation of the Rules they have an option of going through the Dean's Discipline process or the external process. Under Dean's Discipline cases are usually very – they're resolved very quickly, they're usually within two weeks. However, you don't have a right to an attorney or the right to bring witnesses, as several students have claimed. What you do have – what you do have the opportunity to do is review the charge against you and sort of make a brief statement. That's pretty much your only opportunity to present evidence in your defense.

*Celia Cooper*

00:53:50

Okay. And sort of a follow-up question to that. I know that kind of an issue with the external process has been sort of its cost and its difficulty and its length. So going forward if there was to be a new internal process would it be modeled after Dean's Discipline?

*Sejal Singh*

00:54:05

That's something that the Committee has definitely discussed, yes.

*Celia Cooper*

Okay.

*Helen Caine*

00:54:15

Hi, I'm Helen Caine, Barnard College. And I have a question from the ISO. In 1992, seven students were prosecuted under the Rules in conjunction with protests about the University's plan to demolish the Audubon Ballroom where Malcolm X was shot, and the University's plan to drastically cut financial aid and end need-blind financial aid for all students. Students who protested were charged with blockading entrances to Hamilton Hall, even though they only blocked one door and Hamilton has three doors. Students were still able to get to class and University function was not disrupted, which kind of begs the question what is the definition of University functionality being disrupted? But several students were ultimately suspended for blocking one door. How are these kind of punishments appropriate and how can students feel that their freedom of speech is being protected if they could be suspended for – for blocking a door?

*Zila Acosta*

00:55:22

And I think that's added to the list of reasons you all are saying the Rules are too vague and they need to be reexamined and rewritten.

*Alex Hastings*

00:55:34

Hi, my name is Alex Hastings. I'm a junior at Barnard College. I also had some questions about the Dean's Discipline process, specifically about like reviewing your file if you get called in for a hearing. Can you guys – or can you all describe what that might look like, or do you know?

*Sejal Singh*

00:55:57

Sure. I don't have a lot of the details. As someone said earlier it is a pretty opaque process. Essentially you're called in, you have the opportunity to review sort of the allegation that's against you and the evidence that's against you. You don't have the opportunity unfortunately to challenge any of the evidence the way you would in a gender-based misconduct process. And because it is sort of over two weeks there isn't a lot of time for you to do discovery in the first place.

*Alex Hastings*

00:56:24

Does review mean you get to look at it?

*Sejal Singh*

Basically yes.

*Alex Hastings*

00:56:28

I guess I was wondering if people on this Committee were considering reviewing this process. Someone close to me last year was called in for an OJA hearing under completely ridiculous circumstances. They weren't allowed to take pictures of their file, they couldn't take it, they had to write down everything in the file. They weren't told that they could have someone advise them during this process, and it was pretty apparent that the people who were reviewing their case had already made a decision before the whole process had even started. And the only reason I know this is because I'm close to this person. They're aren't really – at least to me it doesn't seem like there's mechanisms to like hold this people accountable to like have transparency for this. And it's like scary thinking that like someone you're close to here, or like people you love

here, are like disposable and like could just be – go through a process for like no reason at all. So I guess the recommendation I would have would be to go through the OJA process as well, or the Dean’s Discipline process also, since in the like Rules of Conduct it says that minor violations are de facto – like go through Dean’s Discipline process which is completely internal. So it kind of would make sense if we’re reviewing these rules to also review – to also review the Dean’s Discipline process.

*Sejal Singh*

00:57:58

Can I ask, are you suggesting that we review both Dean’s Discipline and the provision that says that all minor violations have to go through Dean’s Discipline, or just one or the other?

*Celia Cooper*

00:58:08

Yeah, I guess.

*Zila Acosta*

00:58:10

So unfortunately Dean’s Discipline is outside of our jurisdiction, but we – we – it is within our power to examine the clause that would automatically make you go through Dean’s Discipline.

*Christopher Riano*

00:58:19

That would be correct, yeah.

*Celia Cooper*

00:58:25

And one other question I guess is just I had other questions that I would've like specifically like to address to other people on this Committee. And I also understand like having administrators here might make it not as comfortable for people to bring criticism, but how can we know that like our concerns are going to be going to other people on the Committee and like administrators?

*Christopher Riano*

00:58:51

I think that's actually a great question. So not only do we have obviously the anonymous way to discuss questions or comments that they have with us, actually I've got multiple Committee members in the room in the front who even if they're not on the panel today are actually here and listening to everything. Our Town Halls also will have different people up front, so it's not going to be all the same Committee members up front for each of the three Town Halls/possibly four Town Halls. So we've decided that we're definitely going to rotate people in and out. But one of the things that I would definitely say is if somebody's uncomfortable, our – with saying something publicly because of administrative, etc., definitely feel free to get in touch with us either via e-mail or it's always possible to e-mail one of us and say you want to speak with us personally. So I know especially when it comes to students, the five students on the Committee have been very, very open and said that they definitely are willing to speak with students one-on-one.

*Zila Acosta*

00:59:42

I think student on the Committee commits now. If anyone wants to meet with us we're happy to meet with you, period.

*Celia Cooper*

Thank you.

*George Aumoithe*

00:59:55

Hello, my name is George Aumoithe. I am a graduate worker here at Columbia University in the Department of History. A lot of us have – shall I stand up? – all right. A lot of us have lined up and queued and introduced ourselves, so I'd like – I'm actually curious if the other Committee members in this room could stand right now and name themselves.

[Inaudible.]

01:00:44

Okay, so that's eight out of fifteen. So we've had a number of comments as to the composition of the Committee, so one of my questions is who is on this Committee? Maybe this information is publicly accessible, but who's on the Committee, when do you meet, how often do you meet, and where do you meet? I think that should all be basic information.

01:01:13

But I think my real ask is, it seems that, you know, I'm sure you all are really, really nice people that I could trust, but the factor of the – the fact of the matter is you all work in a structure, right, so you're not just – you're not just individuals who are beneficent people, but you're accountable to a larger structure, right? And as a historian I can't help but think about the past, and you know, that word University Senate. I don't know if a lot of people here know about the history of university senates, but they're an innovation that followed a year in 1968 largely wherein universities sought to bring in a lot of the protest and discontent in college environments and instrumentalize it into an official body that the University ostensibly controls, right. So I'm wondering whether this



needs to be a special committee, like I'm wondering whether you all are the right people to continue on with this process, because I want to trust that everything that you're writing down on a list will get delivered and adjudicated thoroughly, but I just can't trust you, because – not because of your personally but because of the structure that you're in, right. So I wonder if it's a good idea... I'm – I'm wondering if it's a good idea or whether there's a precedent for establishing a special committee.

*Daniel Richman*

01:02:44

I would never be a senator, I would kill myself.

*Zila Acosta*

01:02:48

What do you mean by special committee? Like what are you envisioning?

*George Aumoithe*

01:02:51

So, you know like usually like if something major or controversial happens there are preexisting committees, like in the House of Representatives here in the United States that handle business regularly. There's a Rules, there's a Ways and Means Committee, there's a Rules Committee, Finance, blah, blah, blah. Sometimes something controversial happens that requires extended discussion and a much more open format, right. Presently the format of your committee is closed meetings, we don't know where, we don't know who, we don't know when, we don't know how often. So what I'm wondering is whether it's a good idea to turn this process over, the deliberative portion at least, before you make the rules, over to a special committee so that there can be some student input and some assurances that everything really is getting aired out and...

*Christopher Riano*

01:03:43

So I actually can comment on a couple of things. It is public when we meet, it's on the senate website. Our committee composition is public. It's also on the website.

*George Aumoithe*

When do you meet?

*Christopher Riano*

01:03:52

It's on the calendar at columbia.edu, it's on the calendar. And our composition – actually I just – I tried to make it – I checked it like a week ago to make sure our composition was accurate. As well publicly available on the senate website as well. And in some ways we actually are somewhat of a special committee because we have a large number of non-senators on the committee, which is very rare for a senate committee, which I think was somewhat purposeful because we wanted to really get a cross-section of the University community and maybe not the same faces you might see constantly within the Senate all the time.

*George Aumoithe*

01:04:24

So no?. You won't reconstitute something or you won't – is there no alternative structure that we could continue this conversation in?

*Zila Acosta*

01:04:33

Honestly I'm just not quite sure what your envisioning, but I'm happy to hear if you want to...

*George Aumoithe*

01:04:40

Well, it seems like if you're going to make the decision to either go forward with an internal versus external review process, once you make that decision which then suggests that you need to make changes, is there a spot in that moment where you can have this conversation continue?

*Zila Acosta*

01:04:54

So you're envisioning – so – so right now the current process to do somewhat I think what you're describing is to have the Town Halls after a proposal is made of these, and to incorporate substantive changes from those Town Halls. For instance, I'm envisioning, hypothesizing, a little dangerous but, if you – if we put forth a proposal and everyone says this is absolutely crazy, how could you do this, this is not what we meant when we said we want affirmative rights, that's not what we meant at all. And then if – if we get it wrong and people disagree that's what we envisiond having those additional Town Halls. So there wouldn't be a process. Right now the way we're envisioning it there would absolutely not be a process where we put forth something, having taken in we as – what we interpret as your feedback, and not going back to you a second time. Like and – and making sure this is what you envisioned. So that's the process right now. I don't know if that addresses.

*Sejal Singh*

01:05:55

I think we can commit for the Committee we will not make any changes without putting them before the community before we pass anything or put it before the Senate. And I'm more than – and I'm more than happy

to hold policy workshops with any student who's interested in hearing what changes are on the floor, and we're more than happy to work with any student, like group of students, who wants to like have substantive feedback.

*Caleb LoSchiavo*

01:06:22

Hi, my name is Caleb LoSchiavo. I'm a senior at Barnard. I'm a part of a couple of groups who have spoken here and I'm a supporter of a lot of other groups. So people already have mentioned the incident in the early '90s and Ben Jealous wrote an Op-Ed about this in *The Spectator* which I'm going to read a brief snippet of about the Dean's Discipline process. He says it, "Can be a very scary and confusing process. It does not allow you to have an advisor. The deans often encourage you to answer questions which need not be answered according to the rules. No form is provided for you to present evidence for the purpose of rebutting any erroneous allegations that may have arisen during your hearing, and your fate lies in the hands of two individuals, at least one of whom you probably have met for the first time." And then goes on – he then goes on to say that these rights are existing in a formal hearing. So my question is two-fold here. I guess one is the Dean's Discipline process we've talked a lot about how these people don't oversee changes in that. Can you speak to how we would go about pushing for changes in that process?

*Zila Acosta*

01:07:38

So one thing I do know about the Dean's Discipline process is that it is actually different at every school. So one of the things would be it needs to be a school-by-school initiative. I'm sure students could group together to push for change, but it is different at every single school. So the changes would – I imagine you would want to see would be different

at every place, so it kind of would need to be structured in that way, if that's helpful.

*Caleb LoSchiavo*

01:08:03

And then the second question is can we make sure that rights like being able to have witnesses on your side and being able to present evidence for your case are preserved in the Rules?

*Christopher Riano*

01:08:13

You know what? I would reiterate actually what Zila said previously. While we don't control Dean's Discipline at all, we have no jurisdiction over Dean's Discipline, in part because it is different at every school, we do control where – you know, and we do have input on what happens under the Rules and whether that does go to Dean's Discipline or some sort of other structure. So I'm – I'm noticing that as something that's being brought up more and more, and that's a good thing for us to hear, so I'm glad that people are bringing it up, and it's definitely something that we'll discuss.

*Caleb LoSchiavo*

Thank you.

*Damon Hart*

01:08:50

Hi. My name is Damon Hart. I'm affiliated with the BSO and CPD. I guess the first thing that I want to sort of reiterate is the broadness of text, which I'm sure you guys are tired of hearing but I'm going to do it anyway. So in terms of the word "disruptive" and how it's employed in the Rules, again, like that's a broad term, and I'm just wondering how we

can sort of define “disruptive” I guess more clearly because I know that a lot of these groups here are – were involved with protest and I’m not an – I’m not an expert on anything, I would say, but I would say that the point of a protest is to be heard and is to sort of disrupt something generally. The second thing I want to go over is the – the sort of issue in warnings, so the Rules state that if you get a warning and you cease your activity you can still be prosecuted. My question is why – this is just a simple question – why can’t a warning be considered a warning?

*Zila Acosta*

01:10:07

So you’d like to see if that Rule were to be rewritten, say, a situation where a warning would be just that, a warning. And then if – if it were explicitly – do you take issue with the fact that a warning could be used as something else, or would – my question, sorry, I’m being a little vague – is would you want a situation where warnings are warnings and maybe a warning that could lead to something else is called something else? Like that clarity?

*Damon Hart*

01:10:35

Yeah, just have a warning be a warning. And...

*Zila Acosta*

01:10:39

And if something else that maybe is discretionary then it be labeled as such. Okay.

*Damon Hart*

Absolutely.

*Sarah Kravinsky*

01:10:54

Hi, my name is Sarah Kravinsky. I'm a first year at Columbia College and also a member of Student-Worker Solidarity. I wanted to ask another question about how the changes in the Code of Conduct could affect campus workers. After Emma Sulkowicz began her now famous senior thesis, which protests how the University handles sexual violence hearings, desk attendants at Barnard were warned against letting students take their mattresses out of their buildings, supposedly because the mattresses are the property of the University. Although campus union contracts often broadly stipulate the right to protest, we're afraid that it's possible that that right could be pushed aside if the Rules of Conduct aren't further clarified. So I wanted to ask what you'll do if the Rules are redrafted to make sure not only that workers can agitate for their own labor rights, for their own struggles, but that they're not unfairly blamed for dissent on campus? I'd also like to suggest, given this – I'd also like to suggest, given this kind of warning being made to campus workers, that the Rules of destruc-- concerning destruction of University property are revisited.

*Dorian*

01:12:21

Hi, my name is Dorian. Excuse me, I'm still recovering from a cold and a general lack of sleep. I'm a senior in the College, I'm also a member of the Coalition Against Gentrification as well as the International Socialist Organization. And I have one comment and then a couple of proposals. So the first comment is that I think there are two separate issues at stake. One is the language we use to write these protocols, and the other is the way that the protocols are actually enforced on a day-to-day basis, or a case-by-case basis. And I think that once you make that distinction we're able to distinguish between how things look on paper and how, you

know, what effects they have in reality. On paper they advocate for the free speech of all students at the University, but in reality they're designed to manage and control those students who actually have a reason to dissent, which are at Columbia a minority. And if you look at the history of these documents it's very easy to tell that when are the Rules written? They're generally written after uprisings or protests, 1968, where several Black students were expelled for trying to defend Morningside Heights from demolition due to Columbia's plan to build a gym there which they called the Gym Crow, G-Y-M, the second being the occupations of Hamilton Hall between the late 1980s and the early 1990s when Columbia threatened to demolish Audubon Ballroom, which was mentioned earlier, which is now a Chase bank due to the gentrification of the area caused by Columbia's Medical Center, and the third was in 2007 when five students went on hunger strike to oppose the Manhattanville expansion and Columbia decided that as soon as students go on hunger strike they're taken into custody and closely monitored and not allowed to issue public statements or continue participating in protests. So I want to make a couple of proposals in response to this because I feel it's important for us to approach the issue a little differently. I think it's far more sensible instead of reviewing protocol about student activity to write documents that review the protocol of the administration's handling of free speech. That's... If – if we're actually concerned with preserving a safe political and intellectual environment that's the most urgent task we have ahead. But there's also one more thing, and that is to realize that it's not just Columbia students who are the objects of Columbia's administrative and policing activities, it's also the surrounding communities. And we have to address that. One – one immediate thing that can be done, and we should probably consider this in whatever documents we write in the future, is to bar any officers who previously served in the NYPD from leading or joining Columbia Public Safety. Right now – right – today several of the leaders



of Public Safety were previously leaders of the 13<sup>th</sup> Precinct which handles west Harlem. The implication is, as they've openly admitted, that they helped plan the police raids that happened this year on June 4<sup>th</sup> in west Harlem, using Columbia equipment. Now that is completely inappropriate and Columbia has to decide definitively whether it's going to be a public or a private institution. Bollinger during the expansion process called it a public institution, but when they looked to revise internal rules they suddenly transform again into a private institution. So we have to start thinking about this much more rigorously and completely reverse the process so that the object is the administration and the Columbia Public Safety program rather than Columbia students, who frankly are doing a wonderful job thinking critically about their environment. I don't think they need any further review.

*Zila Acosta*

01:16:37

Quickly just to respond to him, I did want to say that the Rules do apply to every member of the Columbia community. So in suggestions and rewriting I'd like, you know, we did – people did give a call for rewriting, so if you have suggestions as well, keep in mind these Rules apply to everyone, and if that's – when we're rewriting them we should consider that.

*Alay*

01:16:58

Hi, my name is Alay. I'm a senior advisor for the Columbia Muslim Students Association. And I'm also, of have been, part of a coalition that was established during my freshman year against NYPD surveillance on campus, which is now on hiatus because nothing came out of our conversations with the University. So this is less of a question because, again due to my experience, I have little faith in the University providing

me with answers and more of a statement that should be taken into consideration. Right now we're discussing the internal and external processes when dealing with student – student conduct at Columbia, but I would like to point to the University's conduct when dealing with students as well as external organizations such as the NYPD that have the potential to indict students for exercising the right to their free speech. So that said, as a part of the NYPD Coalition one of the things that we wanted was an external investigation about – like dealing with Columbia's relationship with the NYPD, because there have been various past signs that the University is very well like connected with the NYPD, not to mention what Dorian just mentioned with Public Safety officers being part of the NYPD. The 2010 Operation Ivy League where NYPD was present on campus and constant NYPD recruitment on campus. So yes, we know that NYPD has been on campus, has surveilled students, that's a potential. And coming from a student group that is definitely under NYPD surveillance, it's kind of like terrifying to know that if I were to say anything or protest and exercise my right to free speech that I could be put under a process by the University for doing so. That further marginalizes my voice, and that also like negates any like possibility that like anything will come out of like protesting the NYPD or protesting the University's relationship with the NYPD. So what came out of those conversations, and I was part of every single one of them, with President Bollinger's fireside chat, constant conversations with Provost Coatsworth, they offered to have an internal investigation. And I guess this kind of points out the University's failure in doing internal anything that would possibly like impact them negatively. It's been two years since my last conversation with Provost Coatsworth and nothing has come out of whether or not NYPD surveilled students on campus, and if any students who were part of those communities will have any protection under the University. So that's all I wanted to say. Thank you.

*Anika*

01:20:04

Hi, I'm Anika. I'm a – wow – I'm a junior at the Columbia College. I forgot how old I was. I'm – I like to film things and I particularly filmed protests and actions that happen on campus and off campus. And I guess I was looking through the violations and I didn't see anything that pertained to the recording of events that might be construed as violations. And I'm guessing that this might be because that might not have been as big a concern in the 1960s. But since iPhones, this is an age of iPhones where not only participants in protests but passersby, journalists, really anyone with any kind of basic technology might be – might be construed as violating the Rules particularly because of the last two violations, which are anyone who aids and abets others or other groups in a simple violation or a serious violation is subject to them. And also in the fact that in the beginning it doesn't just say that any group that's protesting, but such a person individually or with a group incident to a demonstration would allow for kind of anyone on campus who's recording something to be in violation. So I guess a protection to record.

*Christopher Riano*

01:21:19

No, thank you actually for bringing that to our attention, because I don't think that that's something that we've really thought too much about, and I appreciate that.

*Robby Lemon*

01:21:31

Hello, I'm Robby Lemon. I'm a senior in Columbia College, I'm representing Gender Revolution which is the University's trans student advocacy group, and also Everyone Out Against Homophobia which is self-explanatory. I have two questions. The first is of a trust but verify

nature. Is your next meeting the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November from 4:30 to 6:00 in Room 407 of Low Library? Thank you.

*Christopher Riano*

It's not.

*Robby Lemon*

01:22:09

My guess is that...

*Christopher Riano*

I'm glad you verified that because all of us thought it was. I assume that will be fixed shortly once we have that meeting.

*Robby Lemon*

Please do that.

*Christopher Riano*

I know it'll be on the calendar.

*Robby Lemon*

01:22:23

And then the second one is a little bit more philosophical. So given that these Rules were first drafted in 1968 after protests by students shut down the University, I think it would be fair to say that they were drafted in a spirit of like fear of students, really fear-- viewing us as though we were always like in need of punishment or control. I also think that it would be fair to say that like perhaps the vagueness in language or the lenience of execution of these Rules comes from that same place of fear, since if the University, you know, moves too far we might shut the school down again. But it's been a long time since 1968, right? And so it sounds

to me like we're moving towards thinking about revision, and there are a couple of paths that this revision could take place. And so here's my question. How can we ensure that this revision is motivated by concern for protecting students from this Rule and protecting free speech and not as a way of clamping down on us before we get too rowdy?

*Zila Acosta*

01:23:27

In terms of ensuring that I think it's hard to know what's in someone's mind, but I think we've all committed to that. I completely agree with you. I think these Rules need to be focused on building community, empowering every member of our community to have – to know what their rights are, to be able to turn to a piece of paper and say, “No, I have this right that's protected. We made these Rules, they exist to protect every single one of us,” and particular students. I'm a student, I want those rights too. So absolutely. Thank you.

*Asha*

01:23:59

So my question kind of pertains to that point as well. I just want to ask how many administrators are here?

*Christopher Riano*

I think one.

*Asha*

01:24:23

Okay. So – sorry? Yeah, so I guess I would like to pose the question what does that say about administrators' commitment to freedom of speech, that there's only one of them here? And – and then right, to just – what challenge does that make to their role in this disciplinary process? People

organize because Columbia is doing something that isn't working for them. And – and the – and the first thing that like all of us ask – I'm in Columbia Prison Divest, right, we sent – we sent President Bollinger a letter, a lot of them. So the first thing we ask is meet with us, like talk about – like for an administrator to meet with a group of students that have demonstrated they have support on campus for their issue, and meet with us to discuss our concerns. It's been eight months, and I have met with President Bollinger. I've sent him letters physically, I have, you know, sent him a photo collage of student groups, I have addressed him personally seeing him on campus, I – I addressed him at the fireside chat. The only time President Bollinger has made eye contact with me was when we were in a room of 300 people during a Q&A and he had no other choice. And so – so to get to my like real question, right, is what does it mean that in this – in this structure for like protecting freedom of speech that the only place where – where administrators or deans actually have to do something is when they're trying to punish us? And can there be something in these Rules that like affirms our right to be heard by – by administrators? And I will like, you know, I'm – I'm consistently deferred to the process that Columbia has that the Advisory Committee on Social Responsible Investing is supposed to deal with these things. In that period of eight months like every – every communication has taken a ridiculous amount of time to – to come back to us. In that period of time we came back to school and there was no committee, there was no coordinator, there was no chair, and all of the seats had not been filled, and that committee doesn't have the power to meet our demand, they don't have the power to divest, and they've never made a suggestion to the Board of Trustees suggesting divestment, which is what they're created to do, and they've never done that. So it's clear that we have all these bureaucratic processes that we're deferred to that don't work, and there's no way that students have institutionally to actually just sit down and even negotiate with an administrator and

nothing more than that. So – so my suggestion is that the Rules should include like some right of students to negotiate, to sit down, not in a Town Hall, not like by, you know, running after them when they're like walking to class, because we've figured out your routes of where you walk. But there should be some institutional way, and there should be some protocol. Like if I send an e-mail to President Bollinger, if it's signed by this many students, if I have twelve hundred signatures saying people support my issue I think I deserve a meeting. And – and...

*Cammy*

01:28:24

Hi, I'm Cammy. I'm part of the International Socialist Organization as well as No Red Tape. I wanted to ask each time these Rules have been changed it's been because the review process has been initiated from central administration. Is there any way students, faculty and staff can call for review of these Rules?

*Lindsey Dayton*

01:28:53

I'm not a senator, I'm a student activist, and I'm not usually the Rules activist, meaning I'm not the one who looks at the Rules and kind of keeps everyone in line. I'm like the one pushing everybody to go do more. But when I actually read the Rules I was very disturbed, and that's why I'm here, right. And I think that the way for students and faculty and everyone to call for a review of the Rules is this, right, is exactly what you're doing, voicing your concerns and giving us really specific things that you want to see changed, and an argument for why, right. Because I have ideas in my head and they come from the same kind of experience of frustration that you're voicing, right? So that's sort of – I just wanted to put that out there.

*Caitlin Lowell*

01:29:40

Hi, I'm Caitlin Lowell. I'm a senior in Columbia College and the President of Columbia Queer Alliance. I was looking through the Rules and on page 7 I saw something that was quite worrisome. It's called the Reserve Clause, and it says "Disciplinary matters not specifically enumerated in these Rules are reserved in the case of students to the Deans of their schools or their delegated authorities and to the regulation and mechanisms they have established. In the case of faculty and staff to the President of the University or his delegated authority and to the regulations and mechanisms that have been established to deal with such matters." And I think it's reasonable to say that that's quite worrisome because this is far too broad of a reserve clause, since it allows Deans or central administration to prosecute for free speech activity that sits outside of the Rules, it should be made clear that all conduct related – conduct related to free speech activity is out of the hands of the Deans, and are you planning on addressing this?

*Christopher Riano*

01:30:37

Actually I think that's a great point, I think it's an excellent point, because I – I – I think that, you know, as we've been tackling and looking at this again with an eye towards if we decide, I think once again you bring up a great point about language, right. Language is consistently troublesome in some of the Rules, and I think that that's an important thing for us to be thinking about.

*Zila Acosta*

01:30:59

And that was something that was raised already and is in discussion, so thank you for bringing it up.



*Caitlin Lowell*

01:31:03

So you're already considering revising this language? Thank you.

*Milika*

01:31:12

Hi, I'm Milika. I'm a sophomore at Barnard. So a point was brought up earlier about adding a broader range of sanctions or punishments while upholding external processes. And as long as you're writing down points for your meeting I just wanted to introduce some evidence to further that point. So this is from the Frequently Asked Questions on gender-based misconduct and sexual assault at Columbia. So "Sanctions on a student determined to have violated the policy may include a reprimand, warning, changing the respondent's academic schedule, disciplinary probation, revocation of honors and awards, restricting access to University facilities or activities, community service, issuance of a no contact order, moving the respondent's residence, dismissal or restriction from University employment, removal from student housing, suspension, limited or indefinite, expulsion or the revocation of a degree. In addition, students found responsible – blah, blah. The University may also recommend counseling or other support services." In constant, Section 443, part C of the Rules states, "A respondent who is found guilty of a serious violation of these Rules shall be sanctioned by censure, suspension or dismissal." So in theory the act of protesting the sexual assault policy on this campus can get you expelled more easily than actually committing sexual assault on this campus.

*Josie Lichten*

01:33:03

Yeah, yeah. My name is Josie Lichton. I'm a freshman at Barnard College. And first of all I have a question about the Rules as they currently stand. If you could turn to Section 445, part D, Hearing Officer. The Rules state that "A Hearing Officer will be appointed from without the University and should be chosen for their professional competence and experience in the conduct of hearings." Good. But then it says that "A person with full or part-time affiliation with the University as faculty, staff – faculty, student or staff shall be considered within the University for the purposes of these Rules; a person whose only direct affiliation is as an alumnus shall be considered from without the University." I'm confused as to what that means, first of all. Could one of you explain that?

*Sejal Singh*

01:34:03

So this Hearing Officer can't be someone from within the University, so faculty, staff, anyone from within the University as defined here can not be the Hearing Officer, it has to be an external person with no formal ties to the University.

*Daniel Richman*

01:34:19

So these are lawyers or...

*Josie Lichton*

01:34:25

I understand that. What I don't understand is that a person with a full or part-time affiliation with the University as faculty, student or staff shall be considered from within the University for the purposes of these Rules.

*Daniel Richman*

01:34:37

I'm not great at interpreting language that's not in front of me, but I believe it means that adjuncts and – and regular faculty or anything in that range can not be named as the Hearing Officer. The Hearing Officer has to be from outside.

*Josie Lichten*

01:34:49

Wait, can I get this straight? You are the committee rewriting the Rules and you do not fully understand what these mean.

*Daniel Richman*

01:34:56

You've got them in front of you and I have them at my office.

*Josie Lichten*

01:35:00

What this is saying is...

*Sejal Singh*

01:35:01

I can clarify, yes. That is in fact what it means, it means that no person who teaches here, full or part-time, so okay, so the Rules earlier prohibit anyone “from within the University from being the Hearing Officer,” and so they – because it was written in a very legalistic kind of way, “from the University” later is defined as anyone who's a faculty member, a part-time faculty member, an adjunct, a staff member, etc. So the point is that the external Hearing Officer has to be someone without formal ties to – to the University. And they're usually judges.

*Zila Acosta*

01:35:33

And they're using the word "without" there to contrast from "within," so they use the language then to say someone associated and without, obviously, as you can understand.

*Josie Lichten*

01:35:42

Okay, that's really helpful to me, but this is the first chance I've ever gotten for someone to explain this to me. And that in itself is really problematic. I highly recommend when you do redraft the Rules that you hold like at least semesterly, informational meetings so people actually understand like what the Rules say. Because no one has ever like explained to me as a freshman, now in my third month here, what the Rules mean. And I feel like that's probably a pretty important thing to explain to students. So the other thing I'd like to bring to your attention is in Section 443, Violations and Sanctions, Clause 18, that "A properly identified delegate regulating the location of demonstrators or others within the vicinity" blah, blah, blah, basically the delegate goes there and has the right to say "You need to move if you're hurting someone or if you're blocking, if you're violating the Rules." And then in Section 44-- back to Section 445A, "The delegate..."

*Zila Acosta*

I'm sorry. Really quickly, can you tell me where you were reading from? I'm trying to follow along with you. So you were on 18 where?

*Josie Lichten*

01:37:02

443.18, the section about delegates being able to tell protestors that they need to, you know, do whatever. And then in Section 445 Part A, it says that the delegate is appointed by the Dean of schools. And so I personally

feel like that might be a bit of a conflict of interest, if the people going to protest and deciding whether or not protests or actions are within the Rules are people directly affiliated with the deans of schools and not coming from a place of – not coming from a perspective of students, faculty, staff, whatever. So when you do, if you do, decide to overhaul the Rules I would highly recommend that you consider changing that so that the people actually going and enforcing the Rules aren't just like elected by the deans.

*Zila Acosta*

01:38:00

Would you suggest some type of nomination process or ratification process by the larger body or...

*Josie Lichton*

01:38:07

I don't think that I formulated my opinion that far, but I think that's definitely one way to consider it. Thank you.

*Anta Terray*

01:38:22

Okay, my name is Anta Terray. I'm a member of the International Socialist Organization and Students for Justice in Palestine. So earlier, Christopher, you had mentioned that – you made a comment that the Rules are now under reevaluation partially because this man is stepping down. I think you were very right to say “partially” because I find it incredibly interesting that the Rules are only now under reevaluation after powerful demonstrations by CPD, by SJP and by No Red Tape. And – but something I – I think this is one really good indication that the University is hearing us, but something I do not want to hear is that this University has our best interests in mind. And when we talk about

affirmative rights one thing that I would like, of course, is the right to assemble, the right to protest, and when required because of this – the controversial nature of some protests, free security to protect our freedom and our speech should be provided, because one – because currently a way that the University punishes these controversial campus groups is by giving them tiny budgets and forcing them to buy their own security. One – this is simple, there is an inherent – sorry. There is an inherent bias, this University wants to protect not the rights of the students but the rights of its image, and an internal process would only further attempt to silence and quiet students who are protesting this University’s complicity in fostering a violently racist and sexist society. Thank you.

*Zila Acosta*

01:40:23

Thank you. And I just want to point out that that issue has been raised at the Student Affairs Committee level as well, the issue of charging student groups based on content. So thank you for raising it here as well.

*Dan*

01:40:38

Hi, I’m Dan. I’m a junior in CC, I’m the opinion editor at *Spectator*. I just wanted to have one clarification. For the external process *Spectator* previously published an Op-Ed by Ben Jealous that said that witnesses in the external process waive their Fifth Amendment rights. I couldn’t find that in the Rules now, but could you clarify about that?

*Daniel Richman*

01:41:00

I've got to say that's a nonsensical statement. I don't understand what it means and I know the Fifth Amendment. You know, when you waive your Fifth Amendment rights, when you speak you're speaking.

*Dan*

01:41:11

Well, my point is I think that if you waive someone's Fifth Amendment rights if they're asked – if they're asked a question they cannot avoid that with the Fifth Amendment.

*Daniel Richman*

01:41:20

Well I think – I think the problem I'll bet he's referring to is it's not that you can't be – you can't be forced to speak, there's no coercion in that sense, but – but the question is whether an adverse inference is going to be drawn from your failure to speak. And that I suppose – I suppose is where he's coming from, or do you think differently?

*Dan*

01:41:39

Okay, but I – I just couldn't find in the Rules now.

*Daniel Richman*

01:41:42

It wouldn't be in the Rules.

*Dan*

Okay, so that's just something implicit in the fact that it's an external process.

*Daniel Richman*

01:41:49

It's an odd reference to the Fifth Amendment I gotta say.

*Sejal Singh*

01:41:54

So one of – maybe this will help clarify your question. So one of the issues with the external process is there aren't a lot of codifications of what that process looks like in the Rules themselves, and there's a lot of discretion in the hands of the rules administrator and in the hands of the external arbiter as to what rights people have in general. People have gotten a lot of rights to the rules of evidence, a lot of rights under the process, but that is not codified. Is that something that you would like to see?

*Dan*

01:42:22

Yeah, I think that, you know, clearly stating what rights people have and don't have under the external process is, you know, extremely important, especially if you're actually going to, you know, take the financial steps of getting a lawyer and going through with that. So thanks.

*Caleb LoSchiavo*

01:42:41

Hello, I remain *Caleb LoSchiavo*, senior at Barnard College. To specify from earlier I am involved in Gender Revolution, the trans student group at the University, and Everyone Out Against Homophobia, still self-explanatory. So it was mentioned earlier that the Rules apply to all members of the University community. And so in light of the discussion of sort of the discrepancies between the language of the Rules and how the Rules are actually enforced, I was wondering if you could maybe



speak to any non-student members of the community who have been held accountable to the Rules for any potential violations?

*Sejal Singh*

01:43:23

Actually the only people who have ever been prosecuted under these Rules are students, and very much primarily undergraduate students.

*Caleb LoSchiavo*

Okay. Thank you.

*Nick Juravich*

01:43:37

Hi, my name is Nick Juravich. I'm a graduate student in the History Department, fifth year now I guess. So like so many other things on campus, we've heard a lot of undergraduate voices, undergrads take the lead on these issues, oftentimes grad students follow. You guys are awesome. And so to follow on from what has already been said so eloquently, I wanted to just point to a few things. First, in the handout, this is a sort of history of the Rules, we have the statement "The milder penalty of censure" this is on the second page, it's talking about the formal and expensive hearing process, and we have this statement, "The milder penalty of censure would only be available if the student chose to submit to Dean's Discipline, an added incentive to take the less expensive route." And I've got two separate problems. That – that deeply concerns me at two levels, I guess. The first is that there's a real intimidation there, right? Go ahead and take the external hearing and keep your rights but there's a higher threat of what could happen to you. That needs to be excised. And moreover, this – this language of sort of expense, given the massive endowment Columbia has, given the wealth coming into this university, justice is expensive. Okay, I think we can

afford it. So I – I really would like to see that excised as well. One final thing while I’m up here. If you read the *Spec*, if you listen to students here today, students are the only people charged under this code, they’re not the only ones who commit misconduct, and frankly the word for some of what administrators have done, misconduct is kind of a light word. And so I would – I – I – I would hope – I would really hope that if you’re creating new Rules that there’s a positive process created for students who have suffered under the misconduct of administrators to bring charges against them under these new Rules.

*Zila Acosta*

01:45:28

So you’re suggesting a formalized process for that?

*Nick Juravich*

01:45:31

For students it would have to be external because obviously you can’t go through the administrators to charge them themselves. But yes, a process by which students could bring charges against administrators when things like what we’ve heard today happen. It’s only fair.

*Alma Igra*

01:45:51

Hi, my name is Alma Igra, I’m also a PhD history student and a TA, so like Nick I’m also concerned, you know, both as a student but also as an employee in this university. And I wanted to offer two things. One is our positive right to protest, and protest should be broadly defined as publicly disagreeing with University policy. This should be our right both as employees and as students, graduate students. The second thing that I wanted to offer is that any group of thirty or more can petition to meet the President of the University.

*George Joseph*

01:46:40

Hi, my name is George Joseph. I'm a member of Student-Worker Solidarity. So I'm disappointed that no people from the OJA, Office of Judicial Affairs, are here because they are very complicit in targeting student activists on a completely arbitrary basis. And I have a personal experience to speak for that. Last year Robert Hornsby was – our communications director was upset with an article I wrote about in an outside publication. And then a few months later I was working on a story for *The Spectator* and they charged me with pretending to be a *Spectator* reporter, even though I was a *Spectator* reporter. And I showed them six e-mails in which I was referred to as the reporter on this story by editors at *The Spectator*, and they still gave me a disciplinary warning, and they even mentioned it was part – in part because of my larger pattern of irresponsible journalism, which is completely political. So obviously... We as students, and I figure administrators too, know that this whole judicial system is a complete joke. And we want funding for us to make sure that we get independent and legal resources in order to deal with this bullshit. So thank you.

*Christopher Riano*

01:48:22

So I have to bring to a close - I was just informed that a class starts in ten minutes in this room. But I would prefer to have people who've already queued up speak, because I definitely want to get people on the record before our next two Town Halls. So please go right ahead.

*Maria Moradia Maes*

01:48:36

Hello, I am Maria Moradia Maes and I am a sophomore in Columbia College. I come to you before – before you today not only as a student of Columbia University but as one who shares New York City with millions of other people, and one who – another human being who hopes to be treated in an equitable system. So I would like to call attention to two events, just kind of for a comparison, I suppose. So last year I celebrated Cinco de Mayo with the Chicano Caucus on the Loeb – no, the Butler Plaza. And we showcased the talents of mariachi singers and folklorico dancers. Now under this – what was it? – on page 6 Clause 12, a noise that substantially hinders others in the normal academic activities, the song of a five-year-old boy singing “Cielito lindo” could be considered for this and, you know, Chicano Caucus could’ve faced repercussions for having tried to share our culture. And because of this I don’t feel safe to share my culture, like there is a – what is it? – a criminalization of the celebration of my culture here on this campus. And we are looking, we’re – we’re trying to strive to find like we – we live in this place where we’re supposed to have this freedom of speech, this freedom of expression, but if we don’t feel safe here on a campus that’s supposed to help us to grow and to know ourselves more in that way, how are we expected to do that? So – but then again, so like that’s what – I mean formally like it could’ve – those Rules could’ve been implemented, but thankfully we were able to continue in our celebration and have a good time. However, what was it, last week with the Native American Council we were trying to put up flyers for indigenous peoples, oh no, this was just this past week. And so we were confronted by three Public Safety officers as we were trying to post flyers on the Alma Mater. One of them said that that was graffiti, and that – he said, “Does this look natural to you? Does this look right?” by having a poster – a flyer posted onto the Alma Mater. And so the fact that – and he – he furthermore said that one of the students had to put is safety at risk to take that poster down, to climb on top of the Alma Mater before them and take it down under the threat of being punished

by taking his record and looking at the video surveillance of the students who put the – the flyers on the Alma Mater. When during ??? the first years love putting glow sticks all over the Alma Mater, just in celebration of their time here. And so because of this I'd like to just call to mind again what every-- a lot of other people have been saying about the selective application of these Rules of Conduct, and that the people – like not only do the administrators need to be subject to these Rules of Conduct but also like Public Safety. If they're the ones who are supposed to be like on the ground enforcing them, who's enforcing them and making sure that they are actually doing what – I mean we're all supposed to be subject to here? But then additionally that – to – to have students actually work at the like – this is like I guess a specific suggestion, maybe to have like a board of students work at the same level of the University Senate and to have those students chosen by other students as well to be modifying these Rules of Conduct and to actually not just like for this revision process that hopefully will be taking place, but just to have a longstanding student board like purely of students to like address with – address issues such as this.

*Iliana*

01:52:42

Hi, my name is Iliana and I'm a member of Barnard Columbia Divest for Climate Justice. BCD has over sixty faculty signatures, however we don't have more because a lot of professors are scared of being associated with anything that opposes the administration. So I would just like to see something specific that says that professors, especially non-tenured professors, are – are not at risk of unemployment or should not fear any discrimination for supporting... that they shouldn't fear supporting the student cause.

*Brennan Mendez*

01:53:27

Hi, my name is Brennan Mendez. And I'm a sophomore in the Columbia College. I'm also vice-president of the Columbia Queer Alliance. Oh sorry. Brennan Mendez, I'm the vice-president of the Columbia Queer Alliance. And my – and my question is a few weeks ago I attended the World Leaders Forum and heard the President of the Philippines speak, and during the Q&A portion of the event several people briefly interrupted to raise legitimate concerns about human rights violations in the country. When we elevate world leaders on a pedestal at events such as these, heckling is one of the few ways that people can express disagreement, and this should be clearly protected under the Rules. It was a one-minute interruption and it didn't really inhibit anyone's ability to speak, so how is this punishable?

*Zila Acosta*

01:54:20

I'll take a second to respond because I want to get to the last person. So that is something you're suggesting that we should revisit, especially in the definitions, and you would say – you wouldn't consider that an interruption that...

*Brennan Mendez*

01:54:32

No, because it did not disrupt the flow of events at all. And I think heckling is something you should definitely keep in mind and definitely protect in the Rules.

*Zila Acosta*

Okay. Thank you. And then the last person.

*Sam*

01:54:44

I'm Sam, I'm a sophomore in CC. And I – I would say I've like learned a lot from this Town Hall and what I'm about to say is like a little bit hypothetical because I'm not that involved in any activist stuff on campus. But I would say it's – it's pretty hard to methodically go through the Rules in a Town Hall, and if that's the only communication that like the general student population has it does still feel a little removed. So like one possible suggestion, just kind of hypothetical, but if like some kind of coalition of activist groups, which are the ones who are most affected by this, could do like a track changes of the Rules and send it and have it like we can see exactly how much of what they changed actually got into the final Rules, I think that would be cool.

*Zila Acosta*

I don't think there's going to be anything left. Thank you.

*Christopher Riano*

01:55:58

In my last about like literally thirty seconds, I want to say thank you to everybody for coming. I would love to see everybody again at our next Town Hall. We're going to be transcribing this and getting everybody's opinions very quickly and we look forward to seeing you next time.

01:56:12