

## Executive Summary

In the wake of the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”, the Task Force on Military Engagement was constituted with a mandate to inform the Columbia community and facilitate a debate, with a view toward providing the University Senate with adequate information to revisit policy regarding Columbia’s relationship with the U.S. military, with a particular focus on the question of the Reserve Officers Training Corps.

To that end, the Task Force conducted a broad three-pronged process involving public hearings, the receipt and publication of written statements, and targeted survey. Out of 11,629 eligible students, 2,252 completed the survey. Transcripts of the hearings and the e-mail record can be found in Appendices III-VIII. The hearings and statements frequently touched on issues of discrimination, perceptions of the military, opportunity and diversity, financial considerations, and intellectual diversity and academic freedom.

The opinion survey was administered to students of Columbia College, the undergraduate program in SEAS, the School of General Studies, Barnard College, and the School of International and Public Affairs—schools that have had any level of ROTC participation in the last five years. The survey revealed that 60% of students who responded approved of “a return of ROTC to Columbia’s campuses”, and 79% approved of “Columbia allowing the participation of Columbia students in ROTC, whether on- or off-campus.”

Following deliberations on the findings of the survey and of the statements made during the hearings and received via e-mail, as well as additional study on Columbia’s pre-existing military engagement and ROTC’s implementation at our peer schools, the Task Force unanimously formulated findings and recommendations for the University Senate:

- Our current relationships with the military enrich the Columbia community.
- Columbia’s relationship with ROTC is an issue of concern and the matter should be addressed formally by the University Senate at present.
- Columbia should actively support the endeavors of individual students to participate in ROTC programs, whether on- or off-campus.
- If ROTC is to return to Columbia, the faculty and Deans must retain full jurisdiction over questions of academic credit, appointments, and governance.
- The Task Force believes Columbia's non-discrimination policy is deeply important to Columbia’s identity and expresses shared values of fostering a tolerant and open community.

## **ROTC at a Glance**

The Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) is a voluntary program that offers students opportunity to be commissioned as officers in the three branches of the US Armed Forces. ROTC programs can also offer scholarships—up to and including full tuition, books, and monthly stipend—in return for 4-8 years of military service following graduation.

Students who choose to participate in ROTC—they elect only after university admission under normal procedures—remain students as they are not commissioned as military officers until after graduation.

## **ROTC at Columbia University**

The history of Columbia with ROTC and similar such programs date to before the Second World War. During WWII, Columbia produced more naval officers than any institution except the US Naval Academy in Annapolis.

- In the Vietnam area, deliberations on the future of NROTC at Columbia were summarized in the report of the Joint Committee on NROTC, chaired by Harvey C. Mansfield, Professor of Government and submitted on March 13, 1969.
- The 1969 Mansfield report identified a set of conditions for NROTC to continue at Columbia. These included:
  - All degree credit must be determined by the deans, faculties, and appropriate Committees on Instruction; Columbia retained the right to deny credit towards a Columbia degree for ROTC courses
  - Faculty titles be governed by appropriate Columbia criteria, and
  - Columbia retained control of its space and other resources.
- In 1969, Columbia parted company with NROTC, when agreement with the US Navy could not be reached on these issues raised by Mansfield report.
- On January 23, 1976, the University Senate adopted a resolution approving the findings of the Tien Special Committee report, which stated that any arrangement between the Armed Services and the University is subject to the approval of the University Senate and reaffirmed the conditions of the Mansfield report.
- In 2005, the University Senate revisited its relationship with the Armed Forces and voted not to recommend the return of ROTC by 53-10. The key concern was the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

## **Current Military Engagement at Columbia**

Columbia currently engages the military in a number of ways.

- **Yellow Ribbon Program:** 300+ veterans attend Columbia—highest in the Ivy League—in part due to Yellow Ribbon federal tuition benefits for veterans.
- **Eisenhower Leader Development Program:** Teachers College and West Point run a joint psychology/leadership MA program for active-duty officers at West Point.
- **College of Physicians and Surgeons:** Doctors entering Armed Forces residencies are commissioned as officers. Also, active-duty military doctors are on the faculty.
- **Law School:** Military recruits for its JAG Corps at Columbia Law School.
- **GSAS – Political Science:** West Point sends newly graduated officers to GSAS frequently to earn PhDs in political science. West Point sponsors tuition, stipend, and fees, and officers begin service obligation after completing PhDs.
- **Military Research:** Columbia takes advantage of DoD Basic Research Funding and many faculty and researchers have won such grants.

## ROTC at Peer Schools

- **Brown** – off-campus consortium arrangement at Providence College. No credit.
- **Cornell** – fully and formally sponsors ROTC programs on-campus.
- **Dartmouth** – on-campus Army ROTC, consortium arrangement with Norwich University. PE only credit. Dartmouth offers logistical and financial support.
- **Harvard/MIT** – off-campus consortium arrangement at MIT. No academic credit.
- **Princeton** – on-campus consortium arrangement with Rutgers. Status of an extracurricular activity. No academic credit, but logistical and financial support.
- **UPenn** – on-campus NROTC. Some schools at Penn grant credit, others do not.
- **Yale** – off-campus consortium arrangement at U New Haven/U Conn. No credit.

## Statement of the Task Force

The Task Force unanimously states:

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- Columbia's relationship with ROTC is an issue of concern and the matter should be addressed formally by the University Senate at present.
- Columbia should actively support the endeavors of individual students to participate in ROTC programs, whether on- or off-campus.
- If ROTC is to return to Columbia, the faculty and Deans must retain full jurisdiction over questions of academic credit, appointments, and governance.
- Columbia's non-discrimination policy is deeply important to Columbia's identity and expresses shared values of fostering a tolerant and open community.