

MEETING OF MAY 1, 2015

President Lee Bollinger called the Senate to order shortly after 1:15 pm in 1501 IAB. Seventy-five of 93 senators were present during the meeting.

Minutes and agenda. The minutes of April 2 and the agenda were adopted as distributed.

Committee reports. Because of a sense of urgency about holding a valid vote on the resolution to establish a new set of Rules of University Conduct while a supermajority—three-fifths of all incumbent senators—was present, the president skipped over agenda items for his own remarks and those of Executive Committee chair Sharyn O’Halloran (Ten., SIPA). He allowed time for a brief report from the Commission on the Status of Women only because the presenter, Prof. Maya Tolstoy, could not stay past 1:30.

Commission on the Status of Women. Prof. Tolstoy, an associate professor in the Dept. of Earth and Environmental Sciences, gave a brief overview of a brand-new 51-page [report](#) on a subject that the Commission had first presented to the Senate in November 2001, in a report called “Advancement of Women Through the Academic Ranks of the Columbia University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences: Where are the Leaks in the Pipeline?” The new presentation analyzed a decade’s worth of subsequent data (for the years 2004-13) on the academic pipeline.

Prof. Tolstoy focused her remarks on a [set of slides](#) displaying data from seven tables and 16 figures accompanying the new report.

Sen. O’Halloran thanked Prof. Tolstoy for the report, and said there would be follow-up discussion in the fall. She added that the Senate was now planning a quality-of-life survey for faculty, to be sent out in the fall, and that she wanted to discuss issues Prof. Tolstoy had called for including in a survey of female faculty.

The president also thanked Prof. Tolstoy for the presentation, which he said offered exactly the kind of analysis the university needs in its continuing effort to expand faculty diversity. He said recent diversity initiatives that the university has undertaken are important, but the report makes clear how much work remains to be done. He said Columbia can take pride in recent advances in some areas, but other problems still have to be fixed.

New Business.

Resolution to Approve New Rules of University Conduct. Prompted by the president, parliamentarian Howard Jacobson explained the rule requiring a supermajority to support new Rules, which would amend the University Statutes. Shortly thereafter, Senate staff indicated that 56 senators were needed to meet the three-fifths threshold, and 70 were in the room.

Christopher Riano (Nonsen., NT, SCE) called attention to his [letter to the Columbia community](#), which was included in the packet. The letter thanked the Rules Committee for its work, and singled out three essential members: Sens. Zila Acosta (Stu., Law), Angela Nelson (Research Officers), and Jared Odessky (Stu., CC).

Mr. Riano thanked the Student Affairs and Faculty Affairs committees for co-sponsoring the [new Rules](#) that were now before the Senate. With this broad level of agreement, he said, there was an opportunity for the first time in more than 40 years to establish a fundamentally different system that is fairer to all parties, with better due-process protections, with a new preamble that affirms Columbia's unique commitment to free speech and expression. Mr. Riano said he had no more to add, but he invited questions.

The president asked if it would be useful to outline the main differences between the new proposed Rules and the current Rules. Sen. O'Halloran said those differences had been outlined at more than one Senate meeting. To laughter, the president said the sense seemed to be, The less knowledge the better. Sen. O'Halloran said the Senate was highly informed about the Rules, after a painfully detailed learning process.

Sen. Ronald Breslow (Ten., A&S/NS) asked how the new Rules compare to those at peer institutions.

Mr. Riano said the new Rules would bring Columbia much closer to parity with its sister institutions, and with higher education as a whole. Many peers have a judicial board representing the key constituencies—faculty, students, and staff. The Rules Committee had pushed hard for the idea that since the Rules apply to everyone in the Columbia community, then everyone should be represented in the adjudication process.

The president asked if the deans supported the new Rules. Mr. Riano said the deans were still involved in the process. Deans make up the entire appeals board under the new Rules, a panel that resembles an existing board of “neutral” deans to hear certain discrimination complaints. The Rules Committee has tried to assure participation for the entire community.

Sen. O'Halloran said she had received positive responses to the new Rules from Dean Lee Goldman of P&S, who said he had read several drafts, and SEAS Dean Mary Boyce. Sen. O'Halloran had also received a note of thanks from Barnard.

The president asked if the new Rules account adequately for the interests of the campus press. Mr. Riano said the committee had devoted a good deal of time to this question. It concluded that nowadays, with cell phones and blogging, everyone can be press in some sense. Though the new Rules briefly and explicitly mention press coverage of demonstrations, the committee didn't see how to distinguish a designated press corps.

Sen. Marc Heinrich (CC), a co-chair of the Student Affairs Committee, said the need for some special protections for the press was an issue of considerable concern to his committee. SAC had endorsed the current resolution because the Rules Committee had satisfactorily addressed its main reservations about the new Rules. But the question of the press might need to be revisited.

Mr. Riano said the proposed system was certainly not perfect, but he felt strongly that it was a vast improvement. He said there certainly could be room for further improvement.

The president understood that if the Senate were to endorse the proposed Rules, they would then go to the Trustees for final approval. He said parts of the document needed what he called minor editing, particularly some statements about freedom of speech that were not quite right. He said the essence of the document good and fine, but there was some more drafting to do.

Mr. Riano said the committee also wanted a few more minor, non-substantive edits.

Sen. O'Halloran said the committee anticipated taking some more technical edits and minor friendly amendments.

The president asked for further discussion. There was none. He then put the [resolution](#) to adopt the new Rules to a vote. By show of hands, the Senate approved the resolution by a vote of 63-0, with one abstention. There was applause.

Executive Committee chair's remarks. Sen. O'Halloran listed several current initiatives:

1. Later in the meeting, the annual report of the Presidential Advisory Committee on Sexual Assault, from two PACSA members, Sen. Zila Acosta and Prof. Bruce Kogut of the Business School.
2. Work would proceed over the summer on analyzing the data from the latest student quality-of-life survey and preparing the public report.
3. A faculty quality-of-life survey, based on an MIT survey that focuses in some detail on issues of department life that Prof. Tolstoy had mentioned in her report. The quality-of-life survey, scheduled to go out in September, would take about 15 minutes to fill out.

A senator commented, inaudibly.

4. In addition to the faculty quality-of-life survey, the Senate will look more closely in the fall at the updated Pipeline Report, and will take up its recommendation to have similar studies of other Columbia schools, including those of the Medical Center. She said Sen. Jeanine D'Armiento (Ten., P&S) would work with the Commission on the Status of Women on this project.
5. External Relations would continue its investigation of long-term trends in external funding for Columbia research.

More new business.

Resolution Concerning Summer Powers. The Senate unanimously approved the [resolution](#), which delegates the Senate's regular powers to the Executive Committee during the summer months when the Senate is not in session.

Resolution to Honor Stephen A. Rittenberg on his Retirement. The [resolution](#) was read aloud by Sen. Letty Moss-Salentijn (Ten., CDM), who had worked with Vice Provost Rittenberg for years in her roles as chair of both the Education and the Faculty Affairs

committees. At the end there was applause. Because of other obligations Dr. Rittenberg could not be present at the meeting.

More committee annual reports.

Presidential Advisory Committee on Sexual Assault. PACSA co-chair Suzanne Goldberg, who had been appointed Executive Vice President for University Life since her last visit to the Senate in October, introduced PACSA members Bruce Kogut of the Business School and Sen. Zila Acosta. They summarized [PACSA's annual report](#).

Sen. O'Halloran said one of the feedback mechanisms in the PACSA report was an excellent website that Alison Ewing of the president's office had produced. Sen. O'Halloran said the site wasn't quite live yet, but a link had been circulated. She invited suggestions from senators.

Student Affairs. There was no written annual report. But co-chairs Zila Acosta (Law), Marc Heinrich (CC), and Will Zvara (Bus.) spoke informally about SAC's accomplishments.

Sen. Acosta said SAC produced a new set of committee by-laws, and expanded relationships with the offices of the president and Suzanne Goldberg. The committee also heard presentations from graduate student TAs seeking union representation, from Columbia Prison Divest, and from the Lion Credit Union, among other groups. Student senators had also played active roles on the Rules Committee, and she and Sen. Heinrich had sat on PACSA. She also listed initiatives on the following topics:

- International students—Sens. Heinrich (CC), Emily Moore (SEAS-Grad), and Melissa Martinez Larrea (SIPA);
- Student mental health—Sen. Ramis Wadood (CC) and Senator-elect Sean Ryan (CC);
- Diversity Commission, now a permanent subcommittee of the Executive Committee—Sens. Wadood and Jillian Ross (SEAS-Undergrad);
- Family Support Network, now formally a SAC subcommittee—Sens. Katharine Celentano (GS) and Paco Kang (P&S);
- Sustainability—Sen. Alex Beecher (GSAS/Natural Sciences);
- CUIT issues—CC Sens. Heinrich and Jared Odessky.

Sen. Zvara added that the student quality-of-life survey was a success this year, with more than 8,000 respondents—a one-third increase in responses from the first survey in 2013.

Sen. Heinrich, who will be sole chair of SAC in the coming year, thanked Sens. Acosta and Zvara for their leadership this year, to applause. He listed a few additional highlights of SAC's upcoming agenda that were not previously mentioned:

- Analyzing the data from the quality-of-life survey to make policy recommendations. This was a useful process after the first survey, leading to new sensitivity training for Columbia Public Safety and to improvements in the Office of CUIT.
- Reviewing the Morningside Student Space Initiative, which will incorporate student opinion on the best use of space to be vacated as Columbia units move to Manhattanville.
- Supporting renovation plans for the Dodge Physical Fitness Center.
- Working closely with EVP for University Life Suzanne Goldberg on crafting the roles her new office will play.

- Follow-up on open course evaluations.
- Student Governing Board issues.

Education. Co-chair Letty Moss-Salentijn listed the highlights of the committee's [annual report](#), focusing on five-year program reviews, and on guidelines for joint degree and certificate programs.

Faculty Affairs. There was no written report, but Sen. Moss-Salentijn, speaking now as FAC co-chair, offered updates on two issues the committee had raised at the previous plenary.

1. [The role of anonymous comments in teaching evaluations and Title IX investigations](#). An FAC subcommittee had held a follow-up meeting with a small group of members of Student Affairs on April 24. The meeting reached some reasonable tentative agreements, to be pursued further in the coming year, about how to make sure anonymous qualitative comments in course evaluations don't unfairly damage the reputations of faculty in Title IX investigations—an outcome that students could not have anticipated when they successfully presented a Senate resolution calling for open course evaluations in 2012, before Title IX took on its current role in university life.
2. [A proposal to strengthen nontenured appointments](#). Sen. Greg Freyer (NT, Public Health) had presented a [proposal](#) calling on the University to make stronger commitments to long-serving nontenured faculty in the form of longer notice of non-renewal. Discussion of this issue continued at the April 24 Faculty Affairs meeting with P&S Senior Associate Dean Anne Taylor. Sen. Moss-Salentijn said some worthwhile suggestions were made there, but this discussion will likely continue for a longer time.

Housing Policy. An [annual report](#) had been distributed, but there was no additional presentation.

Sen. O'Halloran thanked the Senate for a productive year. The president adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Mathewson, Senate staff