

MEETING OF FEBRUARY 5, 2016

Lee Bollinger, the president, called the Senate to order shortly after 1:15 pm in 407 Low. Fifty-nine of 100 senators were present during the meeting.

President's remarks. The president asked for a moment of silence to remember the three Columbia students who were killed in a bus accident in Honduras while visiting there as part of a program called External Brigades, which does good works in Central America. The three students were Olivia Riley Erhardt, Daniella Nicole Moffson and Abigail Flanagan. A number of other students suffered significant injuries.

There was a moment of silence.

The president said the response to the tragedy throughout the administration was outstanding. He particularly recognized Dr. Samuel Seward, Medical Director of for Health Services; Prof. Robert Bristow, and Dean of Career Education Kavita Sharma, who he said quickly went down to Honduras, and helped a great many people.

Executive Committee chair's remarks. Sen. Sharyn O'Halloran (Ten., SIPA) was pleased to announce that the faculty quality-of-life survey, just ended, had a strong response rate—33 percent of the faculty completed surveys, and over 40 percent at least started them. She said these numbers mean that faculty are deeply engaged in the institution, and eager to suggest ways to improve it. She said the data highlights would be presented at the April 1 plenary, along with a more detailed breakdown on April 29. She thanked the provost's office for its close cooperation with the project.

Sen. Daniel Savin (Research Officers) asked about the smoking policy that the Senate passed more than a year ago. He said there didn't seem to be any changes in the behavior of smokers since the policy was adopted. The designated smoking areas provided for in the policy are poorly marked, and the community doesn't seem to be well educated about the new policy. He asked what the plan was going forward.

Sen. O'Halloran said she had noted the same problems. An implementation committee would be reporting to the Senate next year on how the policy is working.

Sen. O'Halloran added that a quality-of-life survey for research officers will be tested in the first half of the spring semester and rolled out in the second half.

Update on the student quality-of-life survey. Sen. Ramis Wadood (Stu., CC) said the full report was nearly complete, and would be released within the next two weeks.

Sen. Wadood added that the Student Affairs Committee voted that morning to issue a statement supporting the installation of a plaque recognizing the Lenni Lenape peoples as the inhabitants of the land on and around Morningside Heights before the arrival of European settlers. He said this initiative has received support, not only from students but also from faculty and administrators who have seen the plaque proposal. He said SAC would be updating the Senate on this project later in the semester.

To his own earlier remarks, President Bollinger added a special thanks to all of the students, for how they treated each other through the grieving process for the three students who died in Honduras.

Resolution to Strengthen Appointments for Non-tenure-track Faculty on the Morningside Campus (Faculty Affairs). Sen. Letty Moss-Salentijn, co-chair of Faculty Affairs, presented the resolution, which the committee had unanimously endorsed on January 29. She said there is a significant and growing fraction of full-time nontenured faculty who have renewable appointments but are not eligible for tenure. They comprise almost 30 percent of the full-time Morningside faculty, and over 75 percent of the full-time CUMC faculty. The titles of these faculty are listed on the first page of the FAC proposal, Sen. Moss-Salentijn said. Many of them are involved in research, and therefore part of the central mission of the university.

Sen. Moss-Salentijn said her committee's main concern was that these faculty, even those with many years of service, are on one-year contracts, and subject to termination on short notice. This is really not satisfactory, especially considering the time they have put in and the regular reviews they have undergone. She said she found it disappointing that the university does not reciprocate this commitment by giving these faculty a somewhat more generous notice period. The committee recommended allowing 18 months' notice for people who have been at Columbia more than seven years, and two years' notice for people who have been here more than 12 years. Sen. Moss-Salentijn said the committee felt strongly about this issue, particularly after having dealt with grievances from faculty with more than 25 years of service who were terminated with six months' notice.

Sen. Moss-Salentijn asked for discussion of the proposal, noting that it did not address notice periods at the Medical Center. But she said the committee would take up that question later.

The president invited the Provost John Coatsworth to comment.

The provost said he had been working with the committee on the proposal. He said the proposal was the beginning of a conversation, but it was an important conversation to have.

Sen. Anne Taylor (Administration), Vice President for Faculty Affairs and Career Development at CUMC, said she understood the impetus for the proposal, but said one unintended consequence of it might be a shift in hiring practices that will increase the proportion of part-time faculty. This outcome has been discussed in the literature and at educational forums. She asked if the committee had looked at peer institutions: Have there been shifts of this kind? What have the outcomes been?

Sen. Greg Freyer (NT, Public Health), one of the main drafters of the policy, said it generally was in keeping with what other universities have given to their non-tenure-track faculty. But he didn't think the issue was fundamentally about what other institutions are doing. It was more about respect for the faculty here at Columbia. He said he too was concerned about unintended consequences, but he was more concerned to see that non-tenure-track faculty get the recognition and support they deserve.

Sen. Robert Pollack (Ten., A&S/Natural Sciences) agreed with Sen. Freyer. He said the Columbia faculty was not unionized, but the comment before Sen. Freyer's was suggesting that the University would have to do something akin to calling upon strike breakers. In fact Columbia does not hire part-time people when it can hire full-time people because it wants the greater commitment. And since the NTT faculty have made that greater commitment, the University has an obligation in return to provide a greater degree of security, so that a person is not worrying about what the next job will be.

Sen. Savin asked to have the resolution expanded to include the professional research officers, whose accomplishments parallel those of the regular instructional faculty in the University Handbook, but also the staff research officers. Both of these groups, like the non-tenure-track faculty, have also made long-term commitments to Columbia. For instance, he himself had been here 20 years, with many colleagues with similar service. Currently there is no formal policy on how much time the University must give a research officer whose position is not going to be renewed, but a year's notice would be an important advance. Currently research officers are lucky if they get three months.

The president said the question is whether to make this recommendation to the provost's office for consideration. He repeated the provost's remark that this is the beginning of a conversation but of an important conversation. He said the resolution expresses the sentiments of the Senate, but he assumed that in the discussion now starting, this resolution is also not the necessarily the Senate's last word on the subject. With that understanding, the president called for a vote.

By voice vote the Senate then approved the resolution unanimously, without any abstentions.

Resolution to Establish the Institute for Ideas and Imagination (Education), with Prof. Mark Mazower (History) and Paul Leclerc, director of the Paris Global Center. Sen. Moss-Salentijn, speaking now as co-chair of Education, said she and co-chair James Applegate, serving as the review subcommittee for this proposal, had lunch with Profs. Mazower and Leclerc, and discussed the proposed institute. They then recommended it to the Education Committee, which unanimously approved it for Senate action. She invited the two proponents to speak to the proposal.

Prof. LeClerc outlined the deliberations. He stressed that the whole initiative was conceived and developed by a broad group of distinguished faculty. The first order of business was to ask the faculty steering committee of the Paris Global Center (chaired by Prof. Mazower) to develop a strategic plan. The first meeting was in February 2015. President Bollinger accepted the group's plan for exploring the feasibility of such an institute. The academic content and orientation of the proposal were very much Prof. Mazower's.

Prof. Mazower said the proposal over the last year has been enriched first by a series of lunch conversations with faculty around the University; second, by consultations with Michael Pippenger, Dean of Undergraduate Global Programs, about how the proposed institute, which is really an institute for advanced study, could also help to educate undergraduates, both in direct and (most importantly) indirect ways; and third, through a series of important conversations with people at the Mellon Foundation which resulted in a very significant gift to the Institute. But of particular importance was the extent to which the institute would become a meeting place for Columbia faculty, Columbia students and interesting thinkers from outside America. That became an integral part of the conception—that the institute would be part of Columbia but not in America.

Prof. Mazower outlined the founding idea of the Institute. He said America has the best universities in the world. But they also benefited from a 50-60-year period in which America was the world's unchallenged hegemon. This state of affairs can lead to a kind of intellectual inertia in which one presumes to know how knowledge should be defined. But everyone is aware that the world is changing now pretty fast. This state of affairs is an opportunity for Columbia faculty to challenge themselves and shake up curricula, thereby making themselves more responsive to these changes. The proposed institute is an integral part of that process.

Sen. Ian Lipkin (Ten., SPH) asked what it meant to say that the 14 fellows in the program of the proposed institute will be at an "early stage in their career." Does that mean that only young faculty can be in this group?

Prof. Mazower said the fellows did not all have to be young faculty. Seven of the 14 residential fellows will be from Columbia; the other seven are not only not from Columbia, but also not from the United States, and also not necessarily academics. The idea is to support as many people early in their careers as possible, including post-docs, tenure-track faculty, perhaps also newly tenured faculty. At the same time, the group of fellows should represent a range of ages.

Sen. Richard Smiley (Ten., P&S) asked what the proposal meant by a "conceptually driven science" as opposed to other kinds of science. Prof. Mazower offered a short answer: a conceptually driven science is one whose researchers don't need a laboratory.

The president said the institute represents a deliberate attempt to be self-reflective and self-critical about the very premises and organization of knowledge, a problem that does not get the attention it deserves. The effort to engage people from around the world in that project seems highly desirable at this moment in history because of the geopolitical transformation now underway.

The president said it's impossible to know what will come out of an effort like this, but there is reason for optimism. One bright sign is that Prof. Mazower will be able to devote much of his energy to this project. The institute is lodged in Paris at the Global Center for Europe, but it's truly global in its operation and its scope.

The Senate then voted unanimously to establish the Institute for Ideas and Imagination.

Resolution to Approve a Doctor of Medical Science in Dental Medicine (College of Dental Medicine). Sen. James Applegate, the other co-chair of Education, said the resolution was for discussion only at the present meeting because, as the committee learned from Parliamentarian Howard Jacobson a couple of days earlier, it concerns a new kind of degree in the faculty of Dental Medicine, and therefore requires a statutory amendment, which requires a three-fifths majority of all incumbent senators to pass.

Mr. Jacobson briefly explained his ruling on this point.

Sen. O'Halloran said three-fifths of the total membership would be 60 of 100 current senators. The staff member said 58 senators were now in the room. The president concluded that the measure would not be voted on that day.

Sen. Applegate said the proposed credential is a doctoral-level degree intended for practicing dentists who intend to go into faculty roles in dental schools. The demand comes both from the United States and also particularly from overseas, where a PhD-level degree is required for all academic career. The proposed degree is the highest one Columbia awards in dentistry.

Sen. Applegate said the program builds on some half-dozen existing Columbia programs for specialized clinical training, which range in length from two years to six years. These programs are successful, and lead to master's degrees or certificates. An applicant for the doctoral degree would be admitted to one of the certificate programs *and*, by a separate admissions committee, to the doctoral program. The new program will require three years of work beyond the existing programs. Candidates would do rotations through various labs to identify a thesis topic and/or advisor. A thesis proposal in the format of a training grant proposal to the National Institutes of Health would follow, and the remaining years in the program would be devoted to research in the lab under the thesis advisor, along with significant additional course work.

Sen. Applegate said Education had favorably reviewed the program. He wished there were two more senators present so the Senate could approve it.

Sen. Freyer asked what kinds of research would be covered in this degree program. Could it be epidemiological or population-based as well as lab-based research?

Sen. Moss-Salentijn said this program involves only lab-based research; other kinds of research go on in other Dental School programs.

There being no further discussion, the president adjourned the meeting shortly before 2 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Mathewson, Senate staff