

### MEETING OF MARCH 31, 2017

President Lee Bollinger, the chair, called the Senate to order shortly after 1:15 pm in 104 Jerome Greene Hall. Fifty-five of 98 senators were present during the meeting.

**Minutes and agenda.** The minutes of February 24 and the agenda were adopted as proposed.

**President's remarks.** The president invited questions. Sen. Kainen Bell (Stu., SW) said Muslim students were afraid because of the hostile climate created by the Trump administration, and were requesting support from the University. The *Spectator* reported that they have made a specific request for a religious life advisor. Sen. Bell asked for the president's response to this request, and about next steps to provide resources to support Muslim students.

The president said that, as senators undoubtedly knew, he had provided funding for this service in recent years. He said people in his office were now working with people in Religious Life and elsewhere to address this issue. He said it would come as no surprise that he was highly sympathetic to the effort to equalize the services provided for different campus groups. The president said he could not say more at that point.

#### **Executive Committee chair's remarks**

*University Judicial Board appointment.* Executive Committee chair Sharyn O'Halloran (Ten., SIPA) announced the appointment of Jennifer C. Brown to the University Judicial Board, the University-wide panel that hears charges of violations under the Rules of University Conduct and provides sanctions. Ms. Brown, a librarian who is Emerging Technologies Coordinator in the Science and Engineering Library, would serve as an alternate in one of the Non-Instructional Officer UJB seats.

#### **Committee reports**

*Alumni Relations.* Committee co-chair Sharon Liebowitz (Alumni) and Sen. Joshua Schenk (Stu., CC) jointly presented a report about a joint initiative between the Student Affairs and Alumni Relations committees called CU there! They referred to [slides](#) projected on screens.

In response to an inaudible comment from Sen. Ronald Breslow (Ten., A&S/NS), Sen. Schenk said the idea for CU there! came to him during his stint as an intern the previous summer in Washington, D.C. A fellow intern, a Penn student, was frequently contacted by her alumni network. He wished for the same kind of outreach from Columbia alumni.

In response to another comment from Sen. Breslow, Sen. Liebowitz said the Columbia Alumni Association was now 300,000 strong and thriving.

Sen. Susan McGregor (Non-tenured, Journalism) asked if CU there! would also connect alumni to alumni. Sen. Schenk said the primary purpose of CU there! was to connect current students with alumni. There are other programs for recent graduates.

Lisa Douglas, who works with CAA Regional Clubs, said her team can connect any alumnus to more than 100 regional clubs around the world.

*Student Affairs on mental health initiatives, space recommendations and the student quality-of-life survey.* SAC co-chairs Sean Ryan (CC) and Grace Kelley (Nursing) presented the report.

Mental health. Sen. Ryan expressed appreciation for President Bollinger's recent announcement of a steering group on mental health, to be led by Columbia College Dean James Valentini, that will rely on the guidance of the Jed Foundation, which Sen. Ryan characterized as the premier non-profit devoted to issues of student mental health. Sen. Ryan said Dean Valentini would be following up on the president's email early in the following week appealing for broad community involvement in this effort. He said it was particularly important for students to bring in students from the vulnerable communities that had been identified—LGBTQ, international, and disabled students, as well as students of color. He said SAC earlier that day had had an inspiring visit from Dr. Melanie Bernitz, Associate Vice President and Medical Director for Columbia Health.

Space. Sen. Schenk and SAC staffer Dante Mazza referred to [slides](#) projected on screens as they began a presentation called "Reimagining Lerner," about a SAC planning effort under way to redesign parts of Lerner Hall as a physical space better suited to build a student community.

At this point Sen. Ryan invited Brennon Mendez, vice-president of the Columbia College Class of 2017, to join him at the front of the room, along with Columbia College Student Council member Grant Pace (CC '20); Cristen Kromm, Dean of Undergraduate Student Life; Linda Aquino, Associate Dean for Multicultural Affairs; Chris Woods, Associate Director for LGBTQ Outreach and Multicultural Affairs, and Scott Wright, Vice-President for Campus Services. Sen. Ryan then announced the addition of dedicated space in Lerner Hall for LGBTQ students and students of color. He said this initiative was an attempt to support these groups, which were identified in the last SAC quality-of-life survey and recent SAC memoranda as vulnerable to mental health problems and suicide. This decision also resulted from the current planning effort for Lerner Hall.

Mr. Mendez said discussion of the need for identity-based groups on campus began years ago, but he and fellow student Grant Pace spearheaded the present initiative last fall. He said the current space on campus for LGBTQ students, since 1972, has been the Stephen Donaldson Lounge. It was created in the basement of Furnald in a room that had formerly served as a utility closet. He noted the irony of a literal closet as the space for the first

collegiate LGBTQ lounge in the nation. He said that in 2017, by contrast, such a space should proclaim its visibility, accessibility and centrality. To that end students joined a deliberative process that enabled administrators from Undergraduate Student Life, Facilities and Multicultural Affairs to find the spaces that would best support identity-based student groups. In the fall of 2017 the fifth floor of Lerner will be renovated to swap the space now dedicated to the Office of Student Life with that now dedicated to the Office of Multicultural Affairs. This will allow more space for identity-based programming and allow Chris Woods, the Associate Director of LGBTQ Outreach, to move his office into Lerner. During business hours Lerner 505 will serve as a staffed lounge space, with Multicultural Affairs administrators available to support students in an intersectional-identity-conscious way. This plan will maintain existing student conference spaces, with identity-based groups receiving priority in room reservations. In addition, two rooms on the fourth floor of Lerner, 476A and B, will be named event spaces dedicated to the LGBTQ community and communities of color. Only identity-based groups that support these communities will be able to book these rooms during student reservation times, which are after 5 p.m. on weekdays and throughout the weekend, in much the same way that performance groups are already uniquely able to book certain theatrical spaces. Mr. Mendez said this system assures particular spaces for particular student groups, allows Lerner to be used to its maximum potential, and recognizes the invaluable role that identity-based student groups play in supporting marginalized communities on campus. During business hours this space will remain available for booking by all student groups, just like any other comparable space in Lerner. Finally, Mr. Mendez said, to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Columbia Queer Alliance's founding of the first collegiate LGBTQ organization in the country, the Stephen Donaldson Lounge will be moved from Furnald to Schapiro Residence Hall, coming "out of the closet" and into a larger room above ground with windows and a patio. The new location ensures that the lounge is secure and accessible 24/7, accommodating GS and commuter students who don't have residence hall access, as well as disabled students. Mr. Mendez expressed pride in the group of student leaders who supported this initiative as well as his gratitude to the administrators who were enacting the students' vision.

Sen. Ryan also praised student leaders for their work on this project. He said figuring out better ways to take care of LGBTQ students and students of color—two communities that are at higher risk for mental health problems—is a priority for SAC. He said the changes will improve student quality of life and bring together the student community more tightly. Sen. Ryan also expressed appreciation for the work of key administrators. He mentioned VP for Campus Services Scott Wright, who went to look at similar facilities at peer institutions during the previous week, and brought back valuable information on best practices.

Sen. Ryan said SAC contributed to this effort by elevating the conversation, and connecting it to other conversations in progress about space and mental health. He said this joint deliberative effort offered a model of effective cross-functional work, with SAC and the Senate serving as a connector.

Sen. Schenk now resumed his presentation on renovating Lerner. Along with the dedicated space for the two identity-based groups, another short-term goal of the project was the creation of a student food bank. Over the past year a lot of work had been committed to this effort, but the problem of actually creating a space remained. One proposed solution is to use a room now used for dining storage on the fifth floor of Lerner as the permanent location of the student food bank.

Sen. Schenk also listed two medium-term recommendations:

1. A non-denominational space for meditation and prayer
2. A central student lounge. Lerner now has a few small spaces

where students can gather, such as the piano lounge, but they need a large recreational space where people can come together, either for events or just during the day. The recommendation is to create a three-story lounge on 200, 300 and 400 levels of Lerner. He showed illustrations of the proposed space. It would take over what are now reservable spaces for student groups on the 200 level, and mailboxes and a package center on the 300 and 400 levels whose removal is already in process. He thanked Kavin Chada, a high school student and son of Sen. Jeanine D'Armiento (Ten., P&S), for the proposed redesign of the space. He then provided a brief video tour.

Sen. Schenk concluded his presentation with one long-term recommendation: to unite student health services that are now scattered throughout Lerner and John Jay into a single space in Lerner, including a pharmacy. The plan would provide easier access to health care, and free up additional space for student use.

In response to a questions from Sen. Breslow, Sen. Schenk said campus space in New York City will always be constrained, in contrast to peer institutions such as, say, Brown, where student space seems to abound. He said the SAC recommendations offered a way to maximize the space Columbia has.

In response to a question about other possible student spaces on campus, Sen. Schenk said SAC would be looking at that question next. He mentioned Uris Hall and extension and Manhattanville as possible opportunities.

Student quality-of-life survey. Sen. Kelley summarized the routine that has developed through three iterations of the student survey. SAC devotes one year to developing the next survey instrument, sending it out, and collecting the data. In the following year SAC analyzes and presents the results, and uses them to inform policy recommendations for the University. She said the recommendations that the Senate had just heard followed directly from the findings of the last survey.

Sen. Kelley said SAC was now finalizing the latest edition of the survey, working closely with Modupe Akinola, Sanford C. Bernstein Associate Professor of Leadership and Ethics Management at the Business School. Prof. Akinola had been involved with the student surveys from the start in 2013, and had helped to improve the data collection while maintaining the consistency of the enterprise over time, to make comparisons meaningful. Sen. Kelley hoped to have the survey out in the field within a few weeks.

Sen. Suzanne Goldberg, EVP for University Life, announced a series of wellness days during the week of April 15, which she described as complementary to the effort SAC and other groups were undertaking on mental health. She said student organizations and others were co-sponsoring this initiative, in partnership with Columbia Health, Athletics, Undergraduate Student Life and other groups.

The president thanked students for their hard work.

*Advisory Committee on Socially Responsible Investing* (Prof. Jeffrey Gordon, chair). The president, in his introduction of Prof. Gordon, mentioned the Trustees' recent decision to adopt the ACSRI's recommendation to divest certain types of coal from the University's portfolio. He said this decision followed a long process that started with proposals from within the University, followed by an extensive review by the committee. He thanked the committee for its important work over time, and he thanked Prof. Gordon for what he called a heroic contribution as chair.

Prof. Gordon said ACSRI had worked on fossil fuel divestment since 2013-14; he had served as chair for the last three of those four years. The committee's first main action was to consider and reject a student proposal for divestment from all large fossil fuel producers, including oil and gas. Second, the Committee made its own proposals relating to fossil fuels and to the University's activities as a shareholder. Third, ACSRI presented to the Trustees a package of five different proposals that the Trustees considered this spring. Prof. Gordon said he thought the Trustees wanted to wait to act, and to consider all of the Committee's proposals at once.

Prof. Gordon said the Trustees adopted two of the five proposals and endorsed a third. They adopted a committee recommendation of divestment from producers of thermal coal, defined as firms that had 35% or more of their sales from thermal coal, the kind used in electricity production. The Trustees also adopted the committee's recommendation that the University sign on to the CDP (formerly the Carbon Disclosure Project), an initiative designed to force all firms to disclose their carbon activities, or footprint, so that shareholders can monitor their activities more easily.

A third proposal, to set up an entirely fossil-fuel-free fund for alumni who wanted to give that way, did not win Trustee approval. After consulting with the Development Office the Trustees decided that this was not a necessary step, and that it would involve significant administrative costs. Prof. Gordon said the proposal might be revived if alumni demand were to grow. An earlier committee proposal—that the University send a letter to its investment managers with instructions about how to handle fossil fuels—fell by the wayside after the recent divestment decision was made. Prof. Gordon said the investment managers will take the divestment actions of the Trustees as a signal.

Finally, the ACSRI said that because divestment is too narrow a perspective for considering the University's total engagement with the climate change issue, a committee should be convened to put forward a plan including other actions that the University

might take, such as reducing the University's own CO<sub>2</sub> footprint, pursuing new types of research, carrying out additional outreach, analyzing the impacts of fossil fuels, etc. This proposal was really a call to President Bollinger, which the Trustees endorsed. Prof. Gordon said the feedback he received was that the Trustees were sensitive to the claim that if Columbia is calling on others to address climate change in a certain way, then the University itself should take seriously its responsibility to shrink its own footprint and do more.

Prof. Gordon explained the committee's decision to focus on coal, and not other fossil fuels. He said this approach resulted from the proposal from 25 Earth Institute faculty that emerged after the student proposal for total divestment of fossil fuels was voted down by ACSRI. The Earth Institute faculty group called for divestment from coal producers and effectively questionnaires for all other fossil fuel producers, about how they were adjusting to the possibility of a reduced CO<sub>2</sub> environment in their businesses.

Prof. Gordon said the ACSRI limited the scope of the coal demand to thermal coal for three main reasons. First, coal is the worst of the CO<sub>2</sub> emitters per unit of energy created. Second, coal is used so broadly that unless there are serious reductions, it will be impossible to achieve the level of CO<sub>2</sub> reduction required to avoid breaking the 2-degree Centigrade barrier which the scientists say presents the greatest threat of catastrophic climate change. And third, in its main use, the generation of electricity, coal can be replaced with gas, with solar, with wind, and precisely because we are not prepared to give up cars we really cannot target oil. Because we want to reduce the amount of coal used in electricity generation, we can't target gas. So ACSRI followed the Earth Institute faculty suggestion to focus on coal, but made the additional decision to focus on thermal coal as the divestment target of the University. The committee's rationale was, first, that coal is special in the ways Prof. Gordon had described. Secondly, the committee recognized that this was symbolic speech, since Columbia owned perhaps \$10 million worth of coal assets out of an endowment of \$9 billion. If the University were to sell these holdings somebody else would buy them, and it wouldn't change the behavior of the firms whose stock is sold. But Prof. Gordon affirmed that such a divestment is significant symbolic speech, saying that because of the existential gravity of the threat of climate change, Columbia is prepared to take this self-restraining act, partly as a way to signal that it is standing up for climate change science, a discipline which this university has helped to establish, and the use of such science in public policy debate is part of the role the University plays in a democratic society.

Prof. Gordon stressed two key issues: (a) coal is different and especially dangerous, and (b) the symbolic speech implications, which signal to the broader community the University's great concern about how climate change science is being denied in current public debates.

Prof. Gordon said these were the committee's arguments. He said the Trustees put out their own press release, and may have wanted to shape their own message somewhat differently. He invited discussion.

The president said he endorsed the committee's recommendations. He noted that it is very difficult to justify with logic any line that one might draw. He reaffirmed Prof. Gordon's point that the divestment decision was an act of symbolic expression whose supporting arguments might have effects in the broader debate about climate change. He said there are many different ways to understand this problem. But the proposal made a lot of sense, and he and the Trustees felt that this was important to endorse. He reminded senators that it is very unusual for the University to adjust its endowment policy and investment policy based on social and political concerns. He said divestment from companies doing business in South Africa under apartheid in the 1980s was a classic precedent. This was followed by divestment from cigarette manufacturers, then by divestment from companies doing business in Sudan because of genocidal acts, and then by divestment from private prisons because of a belief that their business model encouraged incarceration, a condition that the University decided was inconsistent with its principles. It was also relevant that investments in private prisons constituted a tiny portion of the University's endowment. The president concluded that over a span of 30-40 years, the University has only opted for divestment on a handful of occasions.

The president said that for all the reasons Prof. Gordon had presented, it seemed appropriate now to express something. He added that many people in the University had worked on this issue, and that there are sometimes strong differences of opinion about what step to take. The president said he did not want to ignore the difficulties of debating and discussing and deciding such issues. One thing he was sure of was that there had been an extremely careful deliberative process with well-intentioned and intelligent people thinking about these issues over a long period of time, and an institutional response in complete good faith, recognizing the complexity of the issue.

Sen. Breslow said the problem with coal is not whether it's clean or dirty. He said President Trump believes that the solution is to produce clean coal, but that's irrelevant. The problem is that burning coal means all of the energy comes from the production of carbon dioxide. Burning hydrocarbons means a good fraction of the energy comes from the production of water, because hydrogen is getting burned along with the carbon. That's why coal is the worst fuel to use.

Sen. Andrew Boyd (Stu., Arts) said that the decision to divest from thermal coal was a great step forward. He asked if there was also a plan to redirect funds currently invested in coal into renewable sources of energy.

Prof. Gordon said ACSRI would not make such a recommendation. He repeated that the University's \$10 million investment in thermal coal is very small in context. He assumed that part of an overall investment strategy would be to invest some part of the endowment in renewables, just because they are a growing share of the economy. In an endowment that looks for diversity across the economy, there's bound to be considerable investment in renewable energy producers, but ACSRI has not proposed tracking the reinvestment in renewables of funds once invested in coal.

President Bollinger offered a framework for such considerations. He said Columbia's mission is to advance knowledge through research and to teach the next generation of students. It relies on the endowment to make as much money as it possibly can over time to support that mission. That's why there is a great reluctance to resort to divestment. Generating new ideas, new information, new science, new thoughts—that's Columbia's mission.

The president repeated that the purpose of the endowment is to make money. Occasionally, rarely, the institution will take a different position on the endowment if a number of conditions are met—that great moral questions are at stake, that certain types of investment implicate the University in an enterprise that is highly problematic, that there is a consensus within the community that it doesn't want to be associated with this enterprise, that there is a particular power of symbolic expression associated with divestment under particular circumstances. The institution weighs all of these considerations, and rarely decides not to consider making money in this way. But the commitment to make money resumes in the wake of a decision to divest. That's why a decision to invest in alternative fuels in the wake of a decision to divest from coal must be based on the returns that the new investments will generate. A decision to divest from coal does not commit the university to invest in alternative fuels.

The president said this was the framework he used in weighing these issues, but the framework itself could be criticized. He said it could be argued that the endowment ought to be spent on things that do good in the world.

Prof. Gordon said his committee consists of students, alumni, and faculty who have volunteered their time and worked very hard during his tenure as chair. He said the reports the Senate had received reflect this seriousness and, he hoped, a community consensus.

*Annual update on NROTC.* Sen. Jeffrey Kysar (Ten., SEAS), chair of the Provost's Advisory Committee on NROTC, offered his fifth annual update since the reestablishment of the officer training program at Columbia. The program operates under a cross-town agreement with SUNY Maritime, which is located near the Throgs Neck Bridge in the Bronx. There's also an office in Lerner Hall where the officers meet with the Columbia students on this campus.

Sen. Kysar introduced Captain Heedong Choi, head of Columbia's NROTC program, as well as Captain Mark Rothrock of the Marine Corps. These two officers are responsible for the eight Columbia students on campus who are affiliated with the Naval ROTC. Five of the students are working toward commissions as Navy officers, and one toward commissioning as a Marine Corps officer. Two more students working toward their commissions are already enlistees, one in the Navy, the other in the Marines. The students are enrolled in Columbia College, the Engineering School, Barnard, and General Studies. Since the Naval ROTC was reestablished five years ago, three students have been commissioned as officers in the Navy or the Marines. The first such student had been an enlisted sailor in the Navy and she's now a naval aviator after her

commissioning. The second one was an enlisted Marine and is now a Marine Corps officer. A third started here as a first-year student and after four years this past May was commissioned as a Naval officer. In May of this year the University will reestablish the custom of commissioning the officers the day after University commencement. On that day this year, three students will be commissioned into the military forces: one as a Naval officer, one as a Marine Corps officer, and one as an Air Force officer. Sen. Kysar explained that Columbia also has students taking part in the Air Force ROTC program based at Manhattan College and in the Army ROTC program based at Fordham.

Sen. Kysar said some Columbia students join ROTC when they first arrive on campus, but they may join NROTC as sophomores or juniors as well. Enlisted sailors or Marines who choose to pursue NROTC typically enter Columbia through the School of General Studies. An additional entry point had been established in the last year, through a program called Seaman to Admiral in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, or STA21. The new program is focused on enlisted sailors who are trained to operate nuclear reactors on submarines and other types of ships. In this program, enlisted sailors are admitted to the School of Engineering and Applied Science. Sen. Kysar noted that Columbia is the only private university in the country that provides this program for the Navy.

President Bollinger thanked Sen. Kysar. He adjourned the meeting at about 2:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Mathewson, Senate staff