

**A FRAMEWORK FOR TOWN HALL MEETINGS
AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY**

In compliance with the University Senate's resolution, adopted unanimously on March 30, 2018.

1. The purpose of the town halls is to provide a University forum for the discussion of controversial outside speakers' presentations, that have raised controversy in the Columbia community.
2. Such events would be called and directed by a Board on Town Halls (BoTH).
3. BoTH consists of seven members: three students (to include both graduate and undergraduate students), one tenured faculty member, one nontenured faculty member or research officer, one alumnus, and one administrator. There shall be two alternate members (one student and one faculty member) to take the seats of, respectively, a student or non-student member who cannot attend a meeting. Members are appointed by the External Relations Committee, or a subcommittee thereof, for two-year terms. They need not be University Senators. (See appended list of current members.)
4. BoTH will create its own procedures, subject to several principles:
 - a. Town halls are exceptional events and should be conducted only where an existing controversy warrants a University-wide meeting. Its purpose should not be to merely generate attention to issues or causes. BoTH anticipates no more than two or three town halls in the course of any given academic year.
 - b. Town halls should reflect the University's values of civility in discourse, balance in perspectives, diversity in participation, and respect for knowledge.
 - c. Any member of a recognized group on campus, or any individual member of the Columbia community who can collect at least 20 signatures for such a request, can petition BoTH to call a town hall.
 - d. Presumptively, only members of the Columbia community may attend. Peaceful expression shall be protected but not disruptions.
 - e. The program for town halls will be set by BoTH and conducted in a timely fashion.
5. BoTH will report to the University Senate and its functioning will be reviewed every two years by the External Relations Committee of the University Senate.
6. The logistics of town hall events will be organized with the active support of the Office of University Life. A modest budgetary support will be provided by the

University, as agreed by the University President. It is anticipated that each town hall will cost approximately \$3,500 to produce, similar to the cost of a single Senate plenary.

Here is the full list of members, including their affiliation and constituency:

MEMBER	AFFILIATION	CONSTITUENCY
Megan Mroczkowski, Chair	P&S	Nontenured faculty or research officer
Matthew L. Jones	A&S	Tenured faculty
Dennis Mitchell	Administration/School of Dental Medicine	Administration
James Piacentini	Architecture	Graduate student
Joshua Schenk	CC	Undergraduate student
Maria Fernanda Avila Ruiz	SIPA	Graduate student
Catherine Michaelson	Barnard, Business School, SIPA	Alumna
Musa al-Gharbi	GSAS	Student (Alternate)
Lori Damrosch	Law	Faculty (Alternate)

Member biographies:

Megan Mroczkowski
University Senator; Vice Chair, External Relations Committee

Megan Mroczkowski, M.D., is assistant professor of psychiatry at CUMC and program medical director of the Pediatric Psychiatry Emergency Service at the Morgan Stanley Children’s Hospital of New York-Presbyterian. She serves on the External Relations and Research Policy Committee. Her research includes studies of mental health in juvenile justice and emergency psychiatric care for suicidal adolescents. She received her B.S. from the University of Michigan and her M.D. from the Michigan State University College of Human Medicine.

Matthew L. Jones

University Senator; co-chair, IT Committee; member, Budget Review Committee and Benefits Subcommittee; member, SPS Subcommittee

Matthew Jones is a Professor of Contemporary Civilization and History. On the Senate, he serves on the Budget Review Committee, the Information and Communications Technology Committee, and the Benefits Subcommittee. Sen. Jones received his B.A. and Ph.D. from Harvard University. He was a Guggenheim Fellow for 2012-13, and a Mellon New Directions fellow for 2012-15. His publications include “Querying the Archive: Data Mining from Apriori to Page Rank,” in L. Daston, ed. *Archives of the Sciences* (Chicago, 2016); *Reckoning with Matter: Calculating Machines, Improvement, and Thinking about Thinking from Pascal to Babbage* (Chicago, 2016).

Dennis Mitchell

Vice Provost for Faculty Diversity and Inclusion; Professor of Dental Medicine (Community Health and Periodontics) at the Columbia University Medical Center; Senior Associate Dean for Diversity, College of Dental Medicine (non-senator).

Dr. Mitchell serves on the Senate Commission on Diversity. He previously served as director of the Harlem component of the Community DentCare Network for Columbia, and as director of research and community dentistry at the Harlem Hospital Center. He earned a B.S. at Cornell, a D.D.S. from Howard University, and an M.P.H. from Columbia.

James Piacentini

**University Senator; Vice Chair, Student Affairs Committee, University Senate
Former member, Senate External Relations Committee**

Currently pursuing dual master’s degrees in architecture (M.Arch.) and Urban Planning (Ms.UP) at Columbia University’s Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation in New York City. He recently completed a Fulbright Scholarship funded research project at La Sapienza University in Rome, Italy, focused on urban planning and development. He also has professional experience in architectural design, real estate development, and as an online copywriter.

Joshua Schenk

Columbia College student

Recent co-chair, Student Affairs Committee of the University Senate

Josh Schenk was born and raised in Los Angeles. He is a senior majoring in political science and focusing on electoral politics. Throughout his three years at Columbia, Josh has been active in student government as president of his class, a University Senator for Columbia College, and co-chair of the Student Affairs Committee. Josh has interned for the United States Senate, Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign and personal office, and Let America Vote. Last summer, he was an intern at the ACLU in Southern California.

Maria Fernanda Avila Ruiz
Student university senator for SIPA

Maria Fernanda Avila Ruiz is a public policy analyst focused on P-12 education and sustainable development policies. She has a B.A. in political science and a B.A. in economics, both from Universidad de los Andes, Colombia. She has worked in the Colombian public and private sector and has volunteered in several NGOs and political campaigns both in her home country and abroad.

Catherine Michaelson
Alumna
President, Michaelson Associates LLC

Catherine S. Michaelson holds three degrees from Columbia: a B.A from Barnard College in Oriental Studies, an M.I.A. in East Asian Studies from the School of International and Public Affairs, where she was an International Fellow and an editor of the Journal of International Affairs, and an M.B.A. from the Columbia Business School. She has been very active in alumni affairs for over thirty years, primarily for Columbia Business School. In 1995, Columbia University honored her with a Medal for Distinguished Service to Education. In her professional life, she has been president of Michaelson Associates LLC, a legal search firm doing primarily partner and senior placements since 1982. For the last sixteen years, she has also counselled the 2Ls at Harvard Law School.

Alternates:

Musa al-Gharbi, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Department of Sociology. Also a columnist on academic issues.

Lori Damrosch, Law School. Hamilton Fish Professor of International Law and Diplomacy.

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION
ON CAMPUS**

WHEREAS, we, as representatives of the University community, are concerned about the strengthening forces outside and inside the University advocating restrictions on freedom of expression; we seek to protect and strengthen the University's reputation for addressing divisive issues in a principled way, in an environment that nurtures research and intellectual discourse; and we support the principles that enable the University to achieve its full purpose — the freedom to think, teach, listen, speak, speak out, learn, and prepare for global citizenship; and

WHEREAS, we respect and protect the need of all persons, including members of minority and historically marginalized groups, holders of unpopular viewpoints, and those subject to social injustice, to speak, hear, and be heard; and we recognize the importance of civility, diversity, sensitivity, and physical and psychological safety, as well as respectful listening; and

WHEREAS, rights of expression on campus extend to members of the University community and to their invited guest speakers; the occurrence of non-official communication on campus by any individual or group does not imply an endorsement by the University and its community; and the University may always set greater protections for free expression than those prevailing outside; and

WHEREAS, the historical trend of expanding rights of expression beyond governmental units to other societal realms has only partly reached private universities, and in consequence these rights are open to ad-hoc interpretations and applications; we therefore seek to establish principles based not on a particular divisive incident but on a wider consideration of the character of our institution; these principles must guide rules for University life as well as their application in specific cases, and they establish a reference standard for balancing conflicting rights with each other, and with other compelling countervailing concerns; and

WHEREAS, we affirm our commitment to the Affirmative Statement regarding expressive activity in the preamble to the Rules of University Conduct, Section 440, and to the February 2, 2018 Resolution Concerning the Principle of Academic Freedom, which the Senate adopted to govern venues of teaching and learning, and which we now augment by addressing issues of freedom of expression in other University activities and venues; and

WHEREAS, the mission of the University includes its role as a forum to debate questions of concern to the whole university, including the nature of freedom of expression itself; and it is therefore our responsibility to establish a mechanism to discuss such issues publicly,

NOW, THEREFORE, we affirm that the First Amendment principles protecting and interpreting (as well as limiting) the rights of speech, assembly, and protest that govern the public sphere and public universities also apply, presumptively, in this University to similar activities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, to foster vigorous discussions on issues of concern to the University community, including controversial topics, individuals, and events, the University Senate create and appoint a steering committee, composed of its major constituencies, with a substantial representation of students, and with the recommended administrative and financial support of the University, to organize town hall meetings to debate issues of special importance; and that such steering committee consider proposals for such meetings from campus groups, including those aggrieved by the inclusion or exclusion of a public speaker or event.

Proponents:

External Relations and Research Policy Committee
Student Affairs Committee