MEETING OF OCTOBER 19, 2018

In the absence of President Lee Bollinger, Executive Committee chair Sharyn O'Halloran called the Senate to order shortly after 1:15 pm in 106 Jerome Greene Hall. Fifty-seven of 94 senators were present during the meeting.

Minutes and agenda. The minutes of September 21 and the agenda were adopted as proposed.

Executive Committee chair's remarks.

University Judicial Board appointments. Referring to a statement that had been distributed, Sen. O'Halloran said the Executive Committee had approved three new appointments to the UJB, a panel that hears cases involving charges of violations pressed under the Rules of University Conduct:

1. Erica Diaz, SEAS; student member.
2. Brett Dignam, Clinical Professor of Law; faculty member.
3. Robert Kass, Hosack Professor of Pharmacology and Alumni Professor of Pharmacology (in Neuroscience); UJB chair.
4. Donna Farber, George H. Humphreys, II Professor of Surgical Science (in Surgery); faculty alternate.

Annual Committee Reports.

Information and Communications Technology. Co-chair Julia Hirschberg presented the report; these minutes record discussion and questions about the report.

During her summary of the state of Student Information Systems (SIS), Sen. Hirschberg asked CUIT VP Gaspare LoDuca for an update on the workaround that CUIT will provide for a couple of years until a completely new system is in place.

Mr. LoDuca said the first appointment of the course management piece will be next February, enabling people to submit new courses to the Registrar for approval. In November CUIT will be planning the larger sections of registration and the new student accounts will be rolling out starting in February over a period of a 24-30 months.

Responding to a question from Sen. Hirschberg, Sen. Henry Spotnitz (Ten., P&S), a member of the IT Committee, said he was impressed with the new PI dashboards developed at CUMC to track grant expenses.

Sen. Hirschberg explained that the new dashboards are not a substitute for Accounting and Reporting at Columbia (ARC), but a friendlier way of getting access to ARC information so that people can actually understand it.

Sen. Susan McGregor (NT, Journalism) asked for guidelines on the new GDPR protocols for data privacy that campus groups can apply to their websites.

Mr. LoDuca said the CUIT website offers an explanation of the GDPR data privacy protocols and Columbia's efforts to comply with them.

Sen. Greg Freyer (NT, Public Health) said he is forbidden to share his calendar with someone from the Morningside campus. He understood that the two campuses are on different systems, but said basic sharing would enable the university to function more efficiently.

Mr. LoDuca that in general such communication is not possible because of concern that Privileged Health Information (PHI) may be inadvertently shared. It's not a technical problem as much as a policy issue.

Sen. Suzanne Goldberg, EVP for University Life, commenting on Sen. Hirschberg's discussion of cyberbullying in her report, explained that there are a number of places where students and others can go if they're concerned about bullying or other incidents that might implicate a University policy about how people treat each other. To simplify matters, the University Life website has a "report an incident" button that students, faculty, or staff can use. She asked senators to share this information more broadly. There's also a similar button on the University Life app, which Sen. Goldberg encouraged senators to download.

Libraries and Digital Resources Committee. Committee co-chairs Arthur Langer (Nonsen., NT, SPS) and Sen. McGregor presented the report, along with Ann Thornton, Vice Provost and University Librarian. The report is available here. There was no additional discussion of the report.

Diversity Commission. Co-chairs Shantanu Lal (Nonsen., NT, CDM) and Zoha Qamar (Stu., SEAS Undergrad) presented the report; these minutes record only related questions and discussion.

At the end of the report, Sen. Hirschberg asked for actual numbers and percentages of underrepresented minority (URM) students in different schools at different times.

Prof. Lal agreed to post these data in a revised report.

Sen. McGregor noted Prof. Lal's remark during his report that there is a lack of consistency in how the schools or departments are collecting information on students' race and ethnicity. She asked how the information is collected.

Prof. Lal said the information is collected not during the application process but at enrollment. It is reported then to individual schools—self-reported by students as they're admitted—and then manually inputted into SIS by school-level administrators. The results go to the Provost's Office and eventually to the Commission.

Sen. McGregor asked what kind of messaging students receive about how to report. Is it clear to them what the information will be used for? Some might be reluctant to report if they don't know the purpose of sharing the information.

Prof. Lal said the information is often filled out before the students even get to Columbia. For examples, all applicants to dental schools actually apply through the American Dental Student Association, and that's when the information is collected. Schools often also have a second time point when they collect the data again. Prof. Lal said he has wondered which of these responses is actually being recorded in SIS. He said there is significant variation among schools. He called for standardizing procedure for collecting the information.

Sen. Shelley Saltzman (NT, SPS) asked if the Commission would at some point collect data on international students.

Sen. Lal said the federal government requires universities to provide data only on U.S. and permanent residents. But the Commission has said that in order to get a sense of the health or the climate of an institution and to make informed policy decisions, one must consider international student data as well. He noted that there is no simple way to identify race and ethnicity for international students.

Sen. O'Halloran said it would be helpful to present the gist of the report with the data in a PowerPoint slide, for posting on the Senate website.

Report from Human Resources on the benefits package for officers in 2019. Michael Bloom, associate vice president for benefits and compensation, in the Office of Human Resources, presented the report. He also acknowledged the work of the Senate Benefits Subcommittee, which meets with him and other administrators and offers recommendations and feedback on benefits programs.

Sen. Nachum Sicherman (Ten., Business) asked why the tool for calculating the costs of various premium plans will not be available until 2020. He also asked whether the new system will be automated, enabling officers to tell quickly how much various health plans might have cost them in the past year.

Mr. Bloom said the system will be automated in that way, but the vendor will need more time to prepare the refinement Sen. Sicherman had mentioned for use by 2020. He said the new system will be user-friendly and intuitive.

Sen. Jeanine D'Armiento asked if changes have been made in prescription drug plans.

Mr. Bloom said the pharmacy benefit manager, Optum Rx, goes through a formulary assessment twice a year. A therapeutic committee of pharmacists, medical doctors and other professionals determines which drugs should be excluded from the formulary and which should remain.

Sen. D'Armiento asked whether Columbia has any control over this assessment process. Mr. Bloom said it does not.

Sen. D'Armiento asked if Columbia just picks the pharmacy company and hopes for the best.

Daniel Driscoll, VP for Human Resources, said all benefit plans have a formulary of this kind. The pharmacy manager alerts the client institution about any significant changes in plans.

Sen. D'Armiento understood that Optum Rx requires anyone who opts for a 90-day prescription to get it through them. Where did that rule come from? Should Optum Rx be allowed to impose such a rule?

Mr. Driscoll said Columbia was considering altering this provision, for example in partnerships with Walgreen's or CVS.

Sen. Eli Noam (Ten., Bus.) asked for some quantitative measures that would make it possible to compare Columbia's benefits package with those of peer institutions.

Mr. Driscoll said Columbia does regular benchmarking with Ivy Plus and other peers. It's particularly important for Columbia to make sure it is offering a fair benefits package. He felt comfortable saying that Columbia is well-positioned among Ivy Plus institutions. He offered to talk more about this at another meeting, perhaps with the Benefits Subcommittee.

Sen. O'Halloran thanked Mr. Bloom and Mr. Driscoll for the presentation, and adjourned the meeting shortly before 2:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Mathewson, Senate staff