President Lee Bollinger: Shall we begin? We need a motion to adopt the agenda. (First, second). Any opposed? Passes. We need a motion to adopt the minutes. (So moved. Second.) Any comments on the minutes? Any objections? Passed issue unanimously.

Not much for me that’s new. I will have some major gifts in the next few weeks, which will be very important to the university. There are lots of things happening, lots of things going on, but you’ve heard me talk about them before. We have a big agenda, and I’m happy to take questions. We really do want to have time for any discussion that comes up. Absolutely. Okay. I’m turning it over to Sharyn for the Executive Committee report.

O’Halloran: Thank you. So, as you know, the Task Force for Online Learning has continued to do its work, and the Arts and Sciences just had a meeting that focused on the online learning, as well -- myself, Jim, Sree, and others were there, and we participated. I think we had a very effective and good conversation, so I’m glad to see that this is going forward.

Global initiatives -- there’s a draft report circulating, both to the committee and several other committees with jurisdiction and interest. Any comments and feedback will be very welcome. Safwan Masri will be making a presentation on the global centers today. I will be making that presentation on February 1. So any comments or feedback prior to that, or a couple weeks prior to that, will be very helpful.
Now the Student Affairs Committee would like to give a very brief report. Just stand up.

Eduardo Santana: We just wanted to reach out and communicate with all the people who have been working on [unclear] really briefly, to be “responsible” and “communicate” things that we’re working on, in case there are any questions, or anything [unclear]. These are initiatives [unclear]. So, first of all, [unclear] course evaluation [unclear] resolution encouraging all the recommendations that are [unclear] where the Student Affairs Committee [unclear] and how that would help [unclear] Manhattanville [unclear]. We have this [Unclear] initiative [unclear].


All right. So now what we will have is a conversation about the impact of the fiscal cliff on our research enterprise. We have two speakers, Michael Purdy, who’s the EVP of Research, as well as Loftin Flowers, from the Office of Government and Community Affairs.

Loftin Flowers: Thank you, Sharyn. Thank you for having us today. I’m glad to be here, and glad to be able to continue our communications internally, about the fiscal cliff -- what, exactly, it is, and what it might mean for research universities and for Columbia in particular. I know we were a late addition to the agenda, so we’re going to be very brief, and hopefully leave time for some discussion afterwards. Michael is going to speak, in some detail, about our internal planning. But before he does that, I wanted to give just a little bit of context, explaining what exactly this cliff thing is that folks are talking about, and, really, how it is that we got to where we are today.
I wish it were rosier news, but we are where we are, and I do think a bit of look-back is instructive, in terms of elucidating where we might be going in the next fiscal year.

Going back to August of 2011, as part of the bipartisan agreement to raise the country’s statutory borrowing limit -- the debt ceiling -- the White House and Congress cut a deal, called the Budget Control Act, which is essentially what has set up this cliff as it is, as it faces us today. That deal, among other things, created a super-committee tasked with finding about $1.2 trillion in savings over ten years. As we remember, looking forward to the fall of last year, that committee failed famously in doing its work, and left us with a fallback mechanism that was part of the Budget Control Act, called sequestration -- which is, essentially, across-the-board, mandatory spending cuts, to the tune of about $1.2 trillion that will be split evenly between defense spending and non-defense discretionary spending.

Not much happened by way of progress toward a resolution to all of this over the last year. We were all waiting on the election and the outcome of it, which was assumed to have some bearing on our resolution here. As we know, the election resulted in the reelection of the president. The Republicans have maintained control of House, the Democrats have maintained control of the Senate; in other words, the status quo. We are where we were before the election, broadly speaking, although Democrats picked up a few seats. The president ran, among other things, on not renewing the tax cuts for the higher-income brackets, and that’s obviously a big piece of this. So while it was a status-quo election on the one hand, it is perceived that the president, the White House, the administration have more leverage than they did pre-election.
Currently, today, we are in the midst of a lame-duck session of Congress, and as we all can read in the paper, there are negotiations ongoing toward a possible resolution to all of this. We can sit up here for hours and speculate about what might or might not be happening. I don’t think that’s the best use of our time -- though we’re happy to speak a bit about that in Q&A, if it’s useful.

Most recently, we have learned that while there was not a lot of communication going on between the White House and Congress for a couple of weeks. Boehner and Obama are sort of the leads for either side; they seem to be talking now with some regularity. Their staffs, we know, are working around the clock, as the time ticks off here.

Just to go through, very briefly -- other parts of this fiscal cliff that are facing us at the end of the year -- the sequestration (which I’ll talk a bit more about in just a second). As I mentioned before, the expiration of the Bush tax cuts are a big piece of this conversation. The payroll tax holiday expires, and you can see a few more there. Meanwhile, back in the fall, Congress passed a continuing resolution which runs the government at current levels through March of next year, at which point we may or may not be going through a whole other conversation around budget control in the out years. But, at any rate, the government is funded at current levels through next year -- through March 27 of next year.

Just a quick look at what the sequestration -- what the sequester might look like for defense and non-defense discretionary spending. It’s really this first category -- non-defense spending -- which is of interest to us in this room. All federally funded research and development comes from that side of the ledger. It’s looking at about an 8.2 percent cut across the board. You can see
the other numbers there. This likely impacts in the initial year. This is a bit of a longer-term
projection, looking at where we are today, facing reductions with some stability in the out-years,
under current law, under the Budget Control Act. You can see the drop-off there, under
sequestration. It’s a pretty stark picture.

That’s the end of my portion of this. I’ll turn it over to Mike, and we can answer questions
afterwards. Thank you.

G. Michael Purdy: Thanks, Loftin. As for what’s happening down in D.C., obviously what we’re
interested in is what it means for us here. That’s what I want to talk about, for just a few minutes.
There are four pieces to what we’re doing. Obviously, we’ve got to do some budget planning,
some contingency planning for what happens if we see a significant reduction in federally
supported research funds coming in. We’ve got to stay in touch with what’s going on in
Washington, so we don’t get surprised by anything. We’ve got to work with our sister
institutions, and advocate for the proper priority for protecting the nation’s university-based
research enterprise, that is so important to the national economy. Last, but by no means least,
we’ve got to keep good communications internally, within the university, so leaders and faculty
and staff know what’s going on.

But the impact will be extremely heterogeneous across the university, as I’m sure you would
expect. What this PacMan diagram shows -- the red segments of the pies, the percentage of total
revenue of the school, that comes from the federal government -- so, not surprisingly, you can
see that the schools uptown, the medical center -- Public Health, Physicians and Surgeons,
Nursing, Dentistry -- are significantly exposed. On Morningside, the Earth Institute, Engineering, Arts and Sciences, that are the primary folks who are exposed. So any planning we do here has got to be at the school level, but we want to keep it coordinated so we can assess the impact university-wide.

It was more than nine months ago now that we got sufficiently concerned about this, that we established this very high-level, university-wide task force, with representation from the key schools that are going to be most impacted, to start the process of thinking about how we’re going to prepare for this. Like all great task forces, the first thing they did was to establish a working group, to actually do the work -- which consists of the lead budget folks from the affected schools. This group is operating under the chairmanship of Nancy Johnson, who’s head of our budget office here at the university. They’re working on putting together scenarios for minus-five-percent cuts, minus-ten-percent cuts, and another model, which is flat funding, but with a fifty-percent reduction in indirect cost recovery. Because we think there’s a possibility that agencies under pressure may try to retain the buying power that funds the research, by making arbitrary cuts in indirect costs. That, of course, will be particularly painful for us, so we need to look at the impact of that, and understand it.

So this group is going to be looking at what our early vulnerabilities might be in the mid-fiscal ’13 timeframe, but also looking at longer-range forecasts, as part of the FY-14 budget process. That work is ongoing, as we speak.
One of the key issues here, in understanding the impact on us, is very difficult to assess.

Although this is a cliff, in that it is an immediate, approximately 8.2 percent reduction, if it comes into effect on January 2\textsuperscript{nd}, is that really what the university is going to feel? I don’t think it is. I don’t think that cut is going to translate into an instant cut for us at all, because the large majority of our research grants are multi-year research grants. NSF grants have a mean duration of 2.7, 2.8 years, so a lot of the federal funds that we’re using right now, this fiscal year, have already been obligated.

Now how the agencies are going to decide between reductions in grants that have already been funded but not obligated, versus reductions in new grants, we don’t know. There’s no way of knowing that right now. But I think the reality, most likely, in my opinion, will be that if this comes into effect, and if they don’t fix it -- if it stays in effect and they don’t fix it -- what we will see is an eight-percent reduction, but an eight-percent reduction over one to two years. So that will allow us, with the planning we’re doing, to adapt to this, if need be. But we’re all working very hard to try to stop this from happening.

Maxine Griffith’s folks, from the Office of Government Affairs, and myself, are staying very closely in touch with what is going on in D.C. We have consultants down there who are very much on the inside, who keep us informed about developments. We’re working closely with our sister institutions to advocate for a sensible solution to this problem. President Bollinger has signed on to innumerable letters over the past six to nine months, to leaders, national leaders, along with presidents of other major universities, trying to get our voice heard.
Last, we’ve got to, over the next several months, substantially increase the amount of communication we’re doing internally. Maxine’s office and mine organized this brown-bag session a week or so, where we brought our consultants up here from D.C., to talk to a faculty group. That was very successful. We had a good turnout, and a very good discussion. We probably need to do this again in the coming months, along with all the usual communication that we do, meeting with department chairs, my online newsletters, and those types of things. I’ll be happy to come back here and talk to you again, if you think that might be useful in the future.

So let me end there, and refer all your questions to Loftin.

O’Halloran: Sam?

Samuel Silverstein: Assuming the cuts take place over a period of [unclear], does that mean that there will be any [unclear] to reduce personnel, between now and [unclear]? The reason I ask that is very simple. [Unclear] many people have assumed that everything in their lives will [unclear].

Purdy: That is precisely the kind of detailed thing that Nancy’s working group will be looking at. Because, I mean, the answer to your question varies hugely, depending on not only which school but which group. That planning needs to be done at the school level, because the individual schools know the dependencies of the various groups. The answer will depend on where the funding of a particular group comes from. Some folks live on three-, four-, five-year-long grants. Other folks live off lots of short-duration grants. The folks with short-duration grants are going
to be much more vulnerable to this than the other folks. So there’s no simple, single, universal answer to your question, Sam. But you remind me, with that question -- that gives me an opportunity to compliment you. Because I gave a presentation on this subject to the trustees over the weekend, and one of the ideas that one of the trustees came up with is that we should be thinking about contacting some of our high-profile alumni, and asking them to reach out directly to congressional leaders, with whom they have special relationships, to make the argument to the importance of university-based research -- which let everybody know precisely the suggestion that Sam made to me a few days earlier. So that idea has got some traction.

Silverstein: Thank you. There are many research associates who have assurance that their salaries are guaranteed on a yearly basis. How does that play out in this scenario?

Purdy: Well, I tried to answer that with my previous response, but obviously it wasn’t good enough. Let me try that again. There’s no question -- the university has made commitments on term appointments, and the university will honor those commitments. Whether there are some research groups that are going to have their funding reduced enough by this process, so that they are unable to support all their federally funded folks through the end of June -- I don’t know the answer to that question off the top of my head. That is precisely the kind of thing that Nancy’s group will get out of the woodwork, so that over the next few months we’ll have that information, that we’ll be able to work with.

Silverstein: Then a large number of [unclear]. So the university, I assume, will continue to support those graduate students, even if [unclear].
Purdy: The university doesn’t have a large suitcase full of cash that it’s going to --

Silverstein: I know that.

Purdy: -- and my prediction is that the impact that we will feel, as I said, will be over a one- to two-year period, and what that will do, if it happens, is force our PIs to bring on maybe one new graduate student next year, instead of two. I think we’ll have time. I think we’ll have time to adapt to the new, reduced regime. I don’t think it’s going to be a cliff; I think it’s going to be a ramp.

Another voice: We’re talking about commitments, real commitments of much less than [unclear]. I have a four-year grant from NASA, which says that its funding will be continued, provided the money is made available [unclear]. It’s always that. [Unclear] You can’t just say somehow the government is going to do it because they said they would. They always have that [unclear].

Purdy: They absolutely do. But they are also a responsible bunch of folks. Because they can doesn’t mean they will. That was my only point.

Another voice: [Unclear] student financial aid, and would that be cut as well as [unclear]?

Purdy: Since that is a really good question, I’ll let Loftin answer it.
Flowers: The potential impacts -- there are potential impacts. They are less severe, on the financial aid front. As part of the Budget Control Act, a number of programs were exempted from sequestration. The Pell grant program was one of those. There are some other federal funding programs that would be vulnerable at the 8.2 percent level – SEOG, the student opportunity grants, would be one of them; the federal work study; there are a couple of other ones, but nothing relative in size and scope to the Pell Grant program, which is exempt.

Bollinger: Was there a question over here? Bob.

Robert Pollack: Let me ask you a similar question, but in another direction. When you set the bar for what a university commitment is, that is not sensitive to [unclear] -- are there any university commitments that any constituencies [unclear], regardless of [unclear]. Name one.

Purdy: Hang on. I’m not sure what you’re asking.

Pollack: I’m asking whether anyone [unclear] understanding of their position at Columbia University, regardless of the cliff; or, whether, in fact, it’s not just graduate students, or people on soft money, or any other constituency of the university whose employment and income are subject to reconsideration if the cliff happens. Is there any constituency that is not subject to consideration?

Bollinger: Bob, that’s an extremely clever question --
Pollack: Thank you. [Laughter]

Bollinger: -- which we are clever enough not to answer in this context, I think. I mean, obviously we all live in an environment where we think the world will continue pretty much as it is, and we make a lot of commitments in that universe. I think most of us believe -- I would bet -- in this room, what Mike, and Loftin, and others are really admirably preparing for, over many months -- most of us believe that’s not going to happen. So the world will not fall apart in January, and I think there is a sense that, okay, if the unfathomable became fathomable, and really happened, we’d really have to sit down and think about the institution in a very, very careful -- and at that point, there would be need for broad discussions about things. But I don’t even feel prepared to begin to answer the question you’re properly -- it’s a great question. It’s just not one that I think we’re prepared to answer in this context.

I really think Mike, with the help of people like Loftin and Maxine -- Mike has really done a fantastic job on this over the many months. There’s nobody better in the university that we could trust, to kind of get this organized and make the plans, to bring in the people, and get this going. Mike’s lived his life in this realm, as have several people in this room, and he has the kind of feel and touch for this that we really need. So, on behalf of all of us, Mike, thank you very much, and Loftin.

Another voice: If in fact, as of January 2nd, this happens [unclear], is there anything that will actually happen in the university, the first two weeks of January, the first three weeks of January? Will there be anything that we need to do, to think about, file [unclear], rebudget --
Purdy: No. I think no. The first two weeks of January we won’t even know what the agencies are going to do. It’s going to take time for the agencies to figure out.

Q: [Unclear]

Bollinger: Okay. Now thank you very much. We have two items of new business to take care of before we go on to the reports. The first is to establish a new Department of Systems Biology. Jim, are you taking that?

James Applegate: Yes. The first resolution you have before you is to create a new Department of Systems Biology in the medical school. Systems Biology is an emerging discipline, which is kind of the intersection of experimental and computational methods in biology. The driving force behind this is really the development of numerical methods in biology, both for use in essentially big data coming from genome sequencing, proteomics, and things like that. They are also computational methods that are actually predictive. This is somewhat more along the line of what goes on in the physical sciences, and what’s traditionally gone on in the life sciences. The justification -- the rationale for a department is that this is something that’s been done with a series of centers in the medical school, which have been very successful over the last decade or so. The rationale for a department is that, essentially, they feel a strong need to have graduate programs and essentially train people in the field. The biological and life sciences training is in fine shape, but [unclear] over recent years. For people with mathematical/theoretical training on the physical sciences, with the problem that if you hire a postdoc, say an itinerant physicist, such
as myself, it takes a couple of years to get the person up to speed in the lab and biology and life sciences. The hope was to be able to train graduate students, to attract and train the best researchers in the field, so they’ve got both a quantitative background as well as a life sciences background [unclear] the program has justification. It’s been reviewed by the Education Committee, and we think it’s very strong. Thank you.

Bollinger: Any discussion?

Another voice: One question. Obviously, it’s a research program. That’s great. What about the teaching? Where is that going to be done, and what sort of [unclear]?

Applegate: People who are currently at the medical school in these various institutes -- centers, excuse me -- will continue to do that. There is also a discussion of collaborative stuff going on with people on the Morningside campus, both arts and sciences, and engineering.

Another voice: Do they actually now teach?

Applegate: There are some people who now teach it, and there are plans to hire more faculty.

Bollinger: Ready for a vote? So the resolution is to establish a new Department of Systems Biology, recommended by the Education Committee. All in favor, raise your hands. Any opposed? Passes unanimously. Thanks, Jim.
The next resolution is to establish the Ph.D. in Education Policy. Now we have Letty.

Letty Moss-Salentijn: This program has been proposed to train graduates who can become policy advisors, research for school systems, and government agencies, foundations and private agencies. They will have a strong background in education policy, but also in analytical methods to help develop policies for the field of education. This is an interdisciplinary program that is offered under the umbrella of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, but is taught at Teachers College. The review by the subcommittee of the Education Committee was strongly positive. They spent a lot of time looking into this very carefully, and they came back with a very strong, positive recommendation to accept this program.

Bollinger: Thank you, Letty. Any discussion of this needed? Sam?

Silverstein: I just want to say I was part of the subcommittee, and this is one of the strongest groups, policy groups, and [unclear] very strong.


Now we go on to two reports. The first is by Safwan Masri, who is the Vice President for Global Centers. Safwan, come on up. Let me just introduce this.
So a number of years ago, universities -- us included. I was trying to lead the university in this -- universities began thinking about what globalization means for higher education. Globalization is many things, but it certainly is a much more integrated world economy, such that everybody, including the United States, is interdependent. It’s quite extraordinary, what’s happened in terms of economic dependency, as a result of world trade and opening to markets, and other fantastic changes like the internet, and the possibilities of global communication that really transform life. Then the ease of travel, and so on.

So this is a new world that we’ve entered. It’s had profound effects on things like environment, climate change, our awareness of poverty and disease, and the possibilities of doing things to help people, but also doing things to prevent -- the need to prevent things from hurting people, like the spread of disease. People like me, who are interested in freedom of speech, and press, and information, suddenly find our fields expanded to a global basis, and we all have to kind of take account of this. Whatever your field is, almost whatever your field is, you realize that the new world touches upon it in many ways, and in some places, in some ways, completely recasts it. Then there are entirely new issues to be faced, and new problems, and new fields to be invented. A number of universities have followed the standard course, and just more interconnections with universities around the world -- study abroad programs for students, and exchange programs with faculty and the like. All those things are good, and we’ve done more of those. We already have dozens, maybe even hundreds, because in an institution like this -- in fact, we don’t even know all the things that are going on of this nature.
Another set of universities have established branch campuses. Some of the most famous here are NYU, Abu Dhabi, and Shanghai. These are separate faculties, separate student bodies, frequently in places -- always in places -- that have lots of money to help support those, and pay for them to the home institution, because they’re very expensive to do. You have to go to places where people have a lot of money -- hence, the Emirates; hence, Singapore, in the case of Yale, with the liberal arts college.

After a lot of thought and consultation and so on, three years ago I decided -- we decided -- we were going to follow a different route, and we were going to set up -- we couldn’t just stay here. We couldn’t just continue to do as we were doing. We really had to face the fact that we didn’t know enough about the world, and we needed to engage with the world more, not only to share our expertise, but to learn. So we decided to set up centers, so called, around the world. There are offices, there are building facilities, but very limited, and usually provided for, paid for, by regional people in the region. So they are very flexible. We can get out of the arrangements if it doesn’t work. We’re very, very open to the possibilities of change. Then we have outstanding people running these centers, and Safwan was the first. We set it up in Amman, Jordan, for the Middle East center, and Safwan took this on. Safwan had been in the Business School (still is), was vice dean under Meyer Feldberg [NAME OKAY?], and took on this task of setting up the first sort of global center in Amman, for the Middle East region. It has had fantastic success. Many, many more faculty and students have engaged with the Middle East and globalization through the Amman center, as a result of Safwan’s leadership, than had ever been true before, at the university. We built on that, taking the one place we do have, had had for many years -- Reid Hall, in Paris -- and decided to turn that into the European center. It is a facility, a wonderful
facility, in the middle of Paris. We hired Paul LeClerc, who was the outgoing president of the New York City Public Library and a Columbia graduate, a very distinguished person. He’s our leader there. We have one in Istanbul, one in Nairobi, which we’re going to open in January, formally. It’s already up and running, but this will be the formal introduction. Then in Mumbai and Beijing, and Santiago and Rio. That’s the network of eight. They’re not simply for work in each of those cities; they’re work as part of an effort to understand globalization. Our thesis is, “You can’t understand China without understanding Africa, and vice versa. And you can’t understand Latin America without understanding Europe.” There are things happening at an interconnected level that we need, as a great institution, to study, to reflect on, to review, to analyze.

Ken Prewitt was the first vice president for the global centers whom I appointed, and Ken did a fantastic job of getting us to this point. Then, last summer, Safwan agreed to move into this role. Already, he’s done so many things, trying to set up faculty committees, advisory committees for each one. He’ll talk about this, and many other things. But it is now ready. It’s there. It’s for us to utilize. There are many ways in which they are already being used, and we’re trying to help sponsor various faculty groups and schools to do this. But our belief is that over the next five to ten years, this will have a transformative effect on our students, on our faculty, and on our research. Safwan is our leader here, and it’s a great pleasure to have him here today, to speak to the center. Safwan.

Safwan Masri: Thank you very much, Lee. Good afternoon, and thank you, Lee, for the great context and introduction to this. I’m going to keep my presentation very brief, and perhaps
engage in the conversation, and try to address some questions that many of you may have. As President Bollinger pointed out, this is a new initiative. It’s a novel initiative. We don’t know of any other university that has attempted to do anything like this, of this scale, that serves the entire university, and the purpose of which is to really learn about the rest of the world, and engage in contributing to the solution of global problems. The University of Chicago has a center in Beijing, through which they’re trying to do things differently. Harvard has a number of centers around the world, but they are focused on the business school. So with any model that’s different than the branch campus model, we see attempts that are much more limited in scope and depth than what we have been trying to do here, with these centers.

I see a lot of familiar faces in the audience, and I know that some of you have traveled to the centers and have experienced them. So I hope that you will have a chance, and feel free to contribute to the discussion.

So with the background that the president has given us -- and, as he pointed out, we have eight centers now, fully operational, around the world. We will officially launch the Nairobi center in January, but it’s been up and running for almost a year. Rio is just getting off the ground, and we will launch it officially in March of this coming year. The leadership of these centers -- we have great, permanent leaders in each of the centers. For the past two years we have had some positions that have been held by interim directors, until we searched for permanent leadership. Let me just give you an idea who they are. Very recently, we appointed Joan Kaufman, after a year-long search, aided by a search firm. Joan we hired from Harvard. She’s a public health expert, who spent more than a decade in China. She’s worked with the Ford Foundation, and
other stints with the United Nations. She’s now based in Beijing, running that center. She has an academic background. She’s worked at universities. She understands a university’s work, but she also understands China, understands East Asia, and is very well respected there.

Paul LeClerc -- the president mentioned Paul as the head of the Paris center. I met with Paul this morning. Paul’s continued efforts are to further European eyes, if you will, at the Paris center. We have had [unclear] what’s for about a decade. It’s been very French focused. It’s been very much focused on facilitating study abroad programs and exchange programs, and now we’re trying to get faculty traction there, through research programs and through getting sort of exposure and doing programs throughout Europe.

In Mumbai we have Nirupam Bajpai, who is a senior researcher with their institute. He has been with their institute for about a decade, and he’s running the center that’s based in Mumbai. One of the questions that often comes up is, why are we in Mumbai? Why aren’t we in Delhi, for example? That question comes up with a few other centers, and I usually say it’s a combination of where the donors are, where we’ve been invited to set up a center. Serendipity also plays a role, and these centers are regional. So the fact that we are in Mumbai does not mean that we do not -- if anything, actually, it does mean that we are there to support activities and faculty and student programs throughout India and South Asia.

Ipek Sem Taha is a graduate of Columbia, with degrees from the Business School and from SIPA, of the early 1990s. She’s a very accomplished journalist and entrepreneur. She is incredibly expert and familiar with Turkey and Istanbul. She has lived there for most of her life,
but with a very global sort of underpinning to her experiences. She’s running the Istanbul center. Karen Poniachik, who is a SIPA graduate, former minister of energy and mining in Chile, is running the Santiago center. Belay Ejigu Begashaw is a former minister of agriculture in Ethiopia, a Ph.D., a senior researcher with the Earth Institute. And Tom Trebat is one of our own faculty, who ran the Institute for Latin American Studies for the past five years, and he just moved on to Europe, to head our operation over there.

The centers vary widely, and much of what we’re doing and how we’re doing it is opportunistic. It is really predicated on organic growth, and as the staff grows, the activities grow. As the activities grow, the staff grows. But you see the great diversity. So, for example, in Europe, with Reid Hall, we have 23,000 magnificent square feet, a staff of 14. In Amman, we have 45,000 square feet of space, which we don’t pay for, with 33 employees. In Africa, we have 35 employees, some of them working with Millennium Development Villages, and the Earth Institute project that is now under the global center in Nairobi.

I should say something, also, about the steering committees and the government. When I came into this position, this past July, the president and I, and others, talked about do we limit the growth for the time being. The conclusion was, yes. For the next couple of years, we are probably not going to add any new centers. The question keeps coming up. I keep getting emails from people all over the world, to want us to set up a global center there. They have the money, and oftentimes they have the facilities. We say that we will probably go, in the medium to long run, but in the short to medium term, we really want to bring stability into this network -- get the network firmly on its feet; insure its financial viability and sustainability in the long run; engage
more faculty, innovate more programs working with faculty for our students, and really focus on
network-wide collaborations, and on conversations, and ideas, and concepts about anything from
campus that deals with global problems, be it global health, the future of cities, the global
economy, press freedom, and organize ourselves so we can leverage these centers to work on
some of these things.

So on the first priority, bringing stability into it, one of the most important things is to streamline
some of the operations of these centers, and bring strong governance into the centers. So we now
have faculty-student committees for each of the centers, and they are led by a distinguished
faculty. For East Asia, Merit Janow, who is at the Law School and SIPA, heads that faculty
steering committee. For South Asia, Sheldon Pollock runs the steering committee; Tim Mitchell,
who runs the one for Amman. Holger Klein, the one for Istanbul. Mark Mazower runs the one
for Paris. Jose Ocampo runs the joint faculty steering committee for Santiago and Rio and
Mahmoud Mamdani runs the faculty steering committee for Nairobi. Each of these committees is
about 12 faculty members from throughout the university, to present the various disciplines.
They have started to meet, they give strategic guidance, and some level of oversight over these
centers, working very closely with the directors who present current and future activities.

The global centers have been working with not only the students and the faculty, but they also
work as outreach posts for the university. So through the centers we have been able to build and
leverage relationships with alumni around the world, and have been able to discover alumni that
we did not know existed, or whom we have lost track of. We have been able to attract students
from places we have not before. We have been working with admissions, for example, at the
College, to try to reach out to various teachers. For example, last year, the College organized a trip to China, I think it was the first one that we at least know of, it was a very concerted effort, aided by the global center, to a number of high schools throughout the country. From Santiago, we have tens of students who are here, fully funded by the Chilean government. From Jordan, we have ten students who are getting their master’s in social work -- again, fully funded by various donor agencies. We hope to bring in five every year -- not to mention the undergraduates, and the other types of students who are here.

The job of a director of a center is, to a very large extent, to be a matchmaker. So when I look at my role as director of the Amman center, I bring into that position my knowledge of the faculty, and of Columbia University, and I marry it with my knowledge of the Middle East region, and the networks and contacts that I have in the Middle East region. So the first couple of years I knocked on doors all around campus, saying, “We have this center in Amman. This is what it can do. How can we interest you?” Wafaa El-Sadr was one of those people whose doors I knocked on, and Wafaa said, “Well, I have ICAP, and we meet once a year. Our next meeting is coming up in a few months. Can your center host that meeting, host that workshop?” We did, and we had a best possible event, and Wafaa has been back to Jordan now, and traveled in the region a few times after that, and is working with us on a number of programs, with the Mailman School of Public Health.

The other half of my time I spent traveling in the region and talking with NGOs -- with government agencies; with academic institutions. I’ve identified areas of concern, areas of priorities that might interest our faculty, but might provide a good platform for our students to
learn from, and to re-engage them. Then you try to bring the two together. Of course, if there is a great idea, and there is a need for it, and that idea helps engage our faculty in a way that contributes to our learning, or to our students, to our learning about the rest of the world, and it needs funding -- part of the job of the director is to work with the units here on campus that have that interest, on trying to find the funding sources.

So I’ll run through with you a few examples. I have a long list. I know everybody has it -- a 14-page document that provides an overview of the centers -- which I’m sure you’ve all read -- and that gives you sort of a bit more detail about each of the centers. But it’s a sampling.

In the area of economics -- we have been engaged now for three years in a very important dialogue that takes place every September at the Summer Palace in Beijing. Merit Janow has been leading the efforts from here, and it’s involved a number of economists, bringing together American economists, and Chinese economists, with proceedings that are highly publicized and distributed and are meant to have an impact on policy toward Chinese-American economic relations. A speaker series, a very important way for us to showcase the best of what Columbia has to offer, get Columbia faculty to visit some of these centers, and help us connect with the communities that we’re in. So, for example, the Weatherhead Forum in Beijing brings about five or six faculty members through the Weatherhead Institute, at the beginning of the year, up to Beijing. **We have a very successful public speaker series, at which we had faculty from Rashilda Hardey,” [phonetic] to “Gath Mespevac,” [phonetic] to Saskia Sassen, from among the faculty personalities from around the world, who have come in and talked at the center. [?????????????]**
In the area of urbanization and environment – the Urban China Initiative was a very important project which is going on in partnership with Chinghua University in China, funded by McKinsey, and involves faculty from GSAPP -- the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation; conferences and research papers, and so on. Some courses of these are by field, but mixed in with them are a few courses. Let me talk for a second, then I’ll use one more example, and then I’ll stop.

The Global Scholars Program is a new, innovative program that has allowed about a dozen students to travel to Europe, spend a few months there under the tutelage of Victoria de Gracia, working on research papers, and interning in various places in Europe, on the various fields. So each student had a different topic that they were working on. Last summer, we had about 11 students who spent two weeks in Beijing, two weeks in Shanghai, and then two weeks in Mumbai, traveling with their faculty, primarily from Weatherhead, but also from the South Asia Institute, working on research projects -- on urbanization in cities and so on, in groups, and interacting with counterparts and peers from universities in those different locations. It’s a hugely successful program. It’s going to run again this coming summer, and it’s going to involve China, again, but this time Santiago as the third city.

The summer ecosystem experiences for the undergraduates’ program. That has run now twice, in Jordan, where students spent six weeks with their faculty, studying different ecosystems in the country, from the Gulf of Aqaba, studying marine biology, to the north to the desert. This coming year we will have two cohorts, one in Istanbul and one in Amman, going on
simultaneously. We do a lot of executive education, capacity building. We work with the School of Continuing Education, but also working with Teachers College. We’ve been in Jordan, through a partnership we’ve set up with the [unclear] Academy -- more than 5,000 public-school teachers. With the School of Social Work, we’ve seen more than 450 social workers. That has resulted in a research team that was funded by UNICEF, that’s involving three of our faculty members. Every faculty member who has traveled to any of these centers, to engage in an executive education type of training has, of course, benefited tremendously from learning about the environment they’re working in, and the differences and similarities.

I think I’ll stop here, Sharyn, and see if there are any questions. Just one more. It’s too tempting. This is one I’m really very happy about, and I’m meeting with Lila and with Jean, later on today. So Lila Abu-Lughod and Marianne Hirsch, and Jean Howard, and now Judith Butler, have been working on women creating change, as an agenda of the Center for Social Difference. They started a couple of years ago with a multi-day workshop in Amman, on women and Sharia. Now, this coming year, they will have a workshop in Mumbai, focusing on women and Islam, and urban settings, and empowerment. They are going to be doing a different one with a different focus in Paris, and another one in Istanbul.

These are the kinds of things that had we not had global centers out there, wouldn’t happen, or wouldn’t happen as easily. But because of the global centers, not only do we have a home -- at which we can host these kinds of activities -- but we have the ability to help bring together experts and scholars from the region, with their counterparts from Columbia and elsewhere, to
have meaningful conversations about important issues in the world, with the hope that these will result in important findings, and so on.

O’Halloran: I want to thank Safwan, this is great. You’re doing a fabulous job. He was very helpful in the Global Initiatives Review, providing comments. So thank you very much. Any questions at this point?

Daniel Savin: Are any of these centers operating in countries that are not known for being open and transparent? How are we ensuring that Columbia’s resources and opportunities are being allocated in a fair manner under these conditions?

Masri: One that I think we all considered very carefully, and put up front and center in thinking about how we set up in all of those cities. First of all, we’re fully independent, fully autonomous, legally and otherwise, in all the cities we are in. We have full control over what we do. We exercise all the intellectual freedom that we need to exercise. We haven’t encountered any issues, in any of those places. Of course, there are some limitations, so you can’t really talk openly about press freedom issues in China -- and I think that’s something that the president can address better than I. You have to just be clever about how you do certain things, so that you accomplish your mission, and you move things forward without compromising any of it, and you deal with the constraints that we deal with anywhere in the world.

Bollinger: We know that the world is both not everything we would like it to be, and we know that helping to make the world a wonderful place -- while listening to what other people -- we are
in the process of, probably, another phase, a new stage of making the world. That is happening by business people, by finance people, by investors. Things are happening in the world that are of massive significance to what global society looks like. That happens in a world, as they said, in which there are a lot of regimes, a lot of countries, that have very different views than we do in this country, and as a university. And there is a profound question that is posed. Do you want to stay right here and not be out there, and try and engage from here? Or, do you want to be out there, and try to engage from there? The classic problem. There is nothing fundamentally new about that, except the new circumstances that drive the issue.

Our feeling is -- at least my feeling is -- we will go out there. We are a university. We have certain core, fundamental values that we cannot compromise. We will engage with the world. We will listen to the world, because part of this is discussing, debating, being willing to change our minds on a lot of issues. But the beauty of this approach is that if, at any point, we feel we are being asked to compromise fundamental values, we can leave immediately. We do not have heavy investments in any of these centers. They’re funded almost overwhelmingly by local donations. The other part about this is, we’re not putting university resources in it; we are raising funds to support them, and they’re not that expensive. But it’s not been a drain on the university budget, and it’s not that much money. We really have the flexibility. We’re not owning space. We’re not committed to a group of people who have three more years to go before they get their degree, sort of thing.

So far we have not encountered a situation that I would say is anywhere close to being asked to compromise our values. Safwan has said something that I think I will have to disagree with. I
would say almost anything about freedom of the press, or freedom of speech, in China. I’m smart enough not to make problems that are counterproductive. But I feel that I would say virtually anything, and I have said things very strongly in different places around the world, that disagree with our principles, or even international norms, not just our principles. I’ve said these things around the world.

So that’s a very important question. That’s my answer to it, and we have to continue thinking about this all the time.

Masri: There is no disagreement -- and I’ve been there, when Lee has said those things. But how high we carry a banner about a certain topic at a specific time, in a specific context, depending upon what you want to accomplish -- there are ways to be very clever about it, and to get results.

Ronald Breslow: When I look at the map, and I think of all the places where [unclear]. What about Shanghai? It’s a much more [unclear] place from [unclear]. [Laughter]

O’Halloran: You have Chileans representing the Argentines.

Breslow: I wonder, as you go [unclear], do you get two types of places to stay? [Unclear]

Masri: Yes. All the time.
Bollinger: All the time. All the time. Maybe ten years from now we’ll have 20 centers. Right now we’ve got -- as Safwan said, rightly, there’s a little bit of serendipity here -- a little bit of where the donors are, and a little bit of what makes sense in terms of ease of travel and lots of different things; whether we have intellectual roots there already; whether faculty are already doing work there. A lot of things like that. But yes, we do get this all the time.

Another voice: [Inaudible]

Bollinger: Yes. We also are thinking about online education, and we’re thinking about the School of Continuing Education. Different schools have their own online programs. There are a lot of things going on already at the university, where we’re thinking about it in a much bigger way. Of course, we imagine, at some point, the combination of the centers and online education may be a wonderful way to continue this process about learning and contributing. So we welcome any thoughts like what Wafaa just offered -- that there are people in X place, who would really like to get some of the knowledge that Columbia has to offer. As I said at the beginning, we decided not to do branch campuses; on the other hand, there are different ways of engaging educational ventures other than just by having a huge new campus in another country.

So this is a very, very big thing, and we have an obligation both to learn about the world, but to contribute to the world, and make it a better place. That’s the privilege that we have. We don’t have to think about profits. We don’t have to think about political power. We don’t have to think about being nice. We just have to work on making the world a better place, and insofar as this fits into that, we’ll want to explore it and do it.
O’Halloran: I also just want to mention one thing within this -- that the Arts and Sciences -- I see that Kathy Popkin and Jack Snyder are here. They’re working on the global centers, and the way they can be used for our study abroad programs, using, again, online money -- distance, hybrid models, and being creative with this new resource. So, thank you.

Bollinger: The new EPPC Committee of Arts and Sciences is a fantastic development to focus on curriculum and education, and it’s taking both of those subjects back, as “Susan” [WHO?????] said.

But if you just look at what Safwan put up there about what’s already happening -- he could have gone on, and on, and on, about things that are already -- and you can just imagine how fertile this is for faculty and students who are interested in understanding the world better.

Masri: I just want to say two things on that. Kathy and Jack and I have been having wonderful conversations with them, and, indeed, looking forward to coming up with things together. Some things have been easier and more obvious. For example, our professional schools have jumped on the bandwagon and taken this on. The focus really, now, is to engage the Arts and Sciences faculty through the centers. As far as the students are concerned, to really think beyond Reid Hall. Reid Hall presents us with a comfort zone, because we’ve been there for 60 years, and we know Paris, etc., etc., so many of my conversations have been really focusing on, “What can we learn through the Istanbul center? What can be done through the thousand-square-foot Santiago
office, that has access, in its same building, to facilities that are very comparable, to what we have here on campus? The good stuff we have on campus.

Bollinger: Thank you, Safwan, so much, and thank you for taking on this role so beautifully.

We now have a report from Anne, who’s the Executive Vice President for Finance, on the ARC accounting system. We are incredibly fortunate to have Anne Sullivan as our EVP for finance. She’s the best in the country, and we all, including the trustees, especially, take great comfort in having Anne’s expertise in dealing with all these really important matters. So Anne, thank you very much.

Sullivan: Thank you. I appreciate this report.

I’m here just to give a brief update on ARC, which is accounting and reporting at Columbia, the financial system that we went live with in July. I was asked to come and speak to you, and was guessing a bit in what people might be interested in hearing. Does the meeting end at 3:30? I’ll try to be concise. I just didn’t want to zip through it too quickly.

Let me tell you what I was planning to talk about today, but as I have found in discussions around the system, sometimes folks will have very specific questions about ways in which their department may have interacted with the system. I did bring with me a number of folks from my team, and I’d be happy to take some more specific questions. I’ll be happy to take broad ones, but also happy to take some specific questions after the meeting, if that would be helpful.
But I do have with me Paul Reedy, who helped to implement the system as a project manager, and now is running the support team that is supporting the application, as well as the help desk that we have available for users. Kate Sheeran, who is here, who managed the change-management effort in all the communication with our users, and continues to do so. She can also, as well as I, take some questions on our process for working with users of the system, now that we’re in more of approaching a stabilization mode. I won’t say that we’re quite there yet. And Joe Harney,” who runs procurement, and because the system does include our procurement applications -- I thought there may be questions that relate to his arena.

But first, let me just remind you what ARC is. It’s a financial system that is fairly broad. It includes procurement processing; that’s everything from creating a requisition; creating a P.O.; creating a voucher; processing travel expense, and so on, as well as our general ledger. So moving money around the university -- which many of our departmental administrators do quite often, from what used to be from account to account, now we say project to project. Then, also, reporting through our financial data store. So we did, essentially, have to revamp our reports and relaunch them, with the launch of a new system, because we changed the structure, really the architecture, of our accounting information. So we needed to essentially retrofit all our reports to reflect those changes.

This system -- it’s based on PeopleSoft financials and application, and it’s fully integrated with our HR system, which is one of the advantages -- that we do have information that passes more seamlessly, that is HR-related, and then results, certainly, in charges and expenses in the
university system. So it makes it easier for us to have that information, all within one integrated system. We are also fed information from other systems. They feed into ARC. They’re not part of PeopleSoft, but, certainly, our gift system advance, “Info-Ed,” where much of our grant information resides, and all the attributes related to a grant, come over into our general ledger and student information systems. Those are just three examples, and we had in excess of 50 large systems that actually feed the system. So part of our implementation effort was making sure that their systems could both send and receive data from ARC.

The improvements that we anticipated -- and I will say that I still have faith that we will realize them. Some of them we actually already have. Others, I think, do require a little bit more familiarity on the part of our user base, to take full advantage of them. Part of what you’ll hear from me today is how we plan to work with users, to really help them take advantage of what is in the PeopleSoft application. It’s greater flexibility in the way that we redesigned our chart of accounts structure. We did this with very broad representation, in part from users around the university. It does afford much, much more flexibility in reporting, for example, reporting by PI, and the ability to combine information from across multiple projects in the university that have common attributes -- not just, really, in the university, but even within a department. These are really benefits, frankly, from a department level, not so much from mine. But much more flexibility to combine and slice and dice data, than what we had in our previous system.

A lot more transparency in terms of the status of a transaction at a point in time. You can tell whether or not it’s waiting for someone’s approval in the system, whereas before you would send it off, but you didn’t know whether or not somebody had approved a particular transaction. So
there’s much more transparency about where a transaction is in its life cycle, as well as the documentation and the associated information all in one place. For example, the documents that might be associated with a particular voucher -- the purchase order for that particular voucher are all in the same system, whereas before they were basically spread across three to four different systems.

So there is certainly efficiency inherent in that model, and we’re on our way to realizing it. So what I wanted to talk to you about was kind of what the system status is now. We did, as many of our peers did, when they implemented systems like this, experience our first share of hiccups in the days and weeks, I would say, really, the first two months, after “go live.” We’re approaching what I would call now a much more stable period, so I wanted to update you. Because I think folks hear a lot of noise in the beginning, of launching a system like this, and not necessarily the good news once things have settled down.

So the basic transaction functionality in the system is working very well. You can set up a vendor. You can process a voucher. You can process a requisition, and so on, and cost transfers, which, actually, from a speed perspective, were affecting us about two months ago. That performance is much improved. And our processing on the central side has certainly stabilized. In the very beginning, we did have some issues with cleaning up some of the data that we had converted, in terms of a very large vendor file, and making it easier for folks to find vendors. We had to do some follow-on cleanup on our side, but that backlog has essentially gone away, and now the vendor setup process is what I would call pretty routine.
P-Card access was also an issue for us in the beginning, so you may have heard about that. But we’ve caught up now, in terms of making sure that everyone who needs to have access to a P-Card can and does. The cost transfer functionality, the performance I alluded to earlier, was something that caused us some problems, and, thankfully, has been much improved. Folks have said it’s even better than it was in the old system, so that’s a positive. Basically, our voucher and our requisition processing times have really stabilized. So if you’ve heard concerns about that back in May, and July, August, September time frame, this is where – I’m hoping that you’re at least not hearing the concerns anymore. As I say, I don’t think it’s very frequent. The good news always kind of loops back [unclear] now things have gotten better. But if you haven’t, again, I’d love to hear about it afterwards, for sure.

There are certain aspects of basic transaction processing that have required a lot of kind of refreshing and retraining, so we continue to reach out to users on these points. There are some things that are very different about this system that were not in the old system. One of them is that every transaction is subject to what we call a budget check, and there is a good rationale for that. It’s actually accomplishing a security objective for us, to make sure that someone in history isn’t charging someone in physics’s project. So there’s a reason we set up the system this way, but it is something that is new for administrators, so you might hear an administrator say, “Gosh, every transaction has to go through a budget check, and I have to be aware of that.” And that’s true. That is new, and it is by design.

Approvers also need to get used to, in this world, really managing a work list and a queue of work that I think, in the previous system, was pushed to them a little bit more directly -- where
Susan might send something to Joe, and he might then know to process it, as opposed to Joe just checking his work list every day, and not waiting for something to pop up from Susan. It’s just a difference in terms of approach, about how people approach the work they need to do. That is something we’ve found has taken some time for our administrative community to get used to.

Another thing that is new -- and we’re now actually focusing on communications that will help remind people of this -- that transaction status, while it is more transparent, also requires monitoring. So if something gets stuck in budget-check, you need to go and fix it. We’re developing new ways to push out reminders to people, if we’re finding that they have queues of transactions that are built up.

We have made, based on a lot of feedback we’ve received, over the last few months, a number of key enhancements and fixes. I actually have a few pages at the end of this, if folks are interested in hearing about the detail. Some of the ones that were more important to people, that we fixed as early as we could, was to make some of the P-Card data much more transparent. Also, to develop a sub-award report. We had a lot of concerns, I think appropriate concerns, from the research community, that they weren’t able to get the right amount of detail on sub-awards. So we have launched a new report on that front. Also, as I mentioned, the cost-transfer performance, I think, was hindering quite a bit, our appropriate accounting on the research side.

We do have, still, a few key system-generated entries that we are still working on. This is just to give you a flavor of the fact that the system -- some of them just popped up, actually, within the last two weeks, that weren’t problems before. Now we’re looking into the logic, to try to figure
out what the issue is. An example is, we are now experiencing some issues in terms of revenue on projects that have foreign currency translation. It’s an example where something will pop up. We’ll let the user community know. We’ll get back to work on it, and often it takes us about a week to do both the diagnosis, the cleanup of the old data, and then, if we need to, a reconfiguration of how the system is working.

But we do have a few things that will continue to -- they’ll pop up, we’ll work on them, we’ll let folks know. I don’t think this is anything unusual in terms of what we’ve seen, in terms of scale. We have gotten a lot of good feedback, as I said, peer institutions who have gone through this, and our implementation partners Accenture about whether what we’re experiencing is unusual. I think it’s actually just part of just working through the implementation of a new system.

So I’m happy to say that our November data -- although it’s about a week later than it would have been in the old world -- is clean, as of the end of this week. So just to give you an example -- I think this many months into a new system implementation, we’re happy with that; that a few weeks after month’s end, we can say, “Okay, the data’s fine, and workable.”

One thing we have been trying to do is to keep our users very well informed about issues, whether they’re bugs or enhancement requests that folks have had, and where we are in the queue of either fixing something, or just developing a new report that someone has asked for. So we do post a list of these things. I’ve just shown you here what the link is, but there’s a prominent link to this on the finance gateway, which is the finance website -- it’s
finance.columbia.edu. Also, through the ARC portal, where you can click on this list, and basically, if you were to click where that red circle is, it would bring up for you a list of other reports or system fixes that are in the queue.

So if someone is experiencing a problem, they can go to the list and say, “Okay, do I need to log this as an incident, or is it something that the team is already aware of, and are already working on?” We update this list very frequently, about once every week to ten days. We do get the assistance of school senior business officers in prioritizing this list. So we’re not just making the judgment call ourselves, as to what we think the most important thing would be to fix -- although there are some things that obviously strike us as critical in the moment. But we do meet with school senior business officers, particularly around new report development, get their feedback as to which reports are most important for us to put in the queue, so we know in what order to work through things.

One thing I wanted to talk about next is just training and communications. We did a fair amount of training leading up to the system go-live. Every user had to be trained in order to have access to the system. We also conducted a series of forums for about nine months prior to going live, where we were walking through what the business process changes were, not just really the system, but the business process changes that accompanied going live with the new system. But after going live, on July 1st, we have also held a series of open forums, to get feedback from users about their experience; to take their questions and concerns; to tell them where we are in terms of updates and fixes; and also to just remind them where to go for help, in the regular day-to-day. We conducted six of those meetings on the Morningside campus, and six uptown, about
every, I would say, at least monthly, but more frequently than that, as you can tell, since there were six meetings between July and October.

We also held a series (actually over 100) of what we called transaction support office hours, where we had office hours where folks could come and bring their work, and we would actually help them through an issue. We stopped that practice in September, but you’ll hear from me in a moment that we’re going to restart that again, in the new year, just based on user feedback on how helpful it was to be able to bring in a transaction, and say, “I’m stuck. I need some assistance working through this in the new system.”

We also had a primary focus on this campus with Arts and Sciences and with SEAS, to make sure that the departmental administrators for those two schools had some additional support. Folks uptown kind of ran a similar process for administrators, within P&S, really with a focus on research-intensive departments. So we held a series of sessions that were just for administrators in Arts and Sciences and SEAS. Four, I believe, were open to all administrators, and three just focused on science departments. Then we held another series of forums for the day community on the Morningside campus.

But here’s what we’re hearing now. I just want to give you a sense of kind of where we are in the life cycle. Folks, a lot of what we were hearing about in the beginning were questions from folks about how to do something in the system. “Where do I go to find something? How do I do a transaction?” And so on. Now we have a user base that’s much more familiar -- which is good. They’ve been in the system, and now they’re developing strong opinions about how it’s working,
which is a good thing. So the feedback as really changed for us, from a how-to to a request for changes, or feedback for us on how folks think the system is working, relative to how the old system worked. And here is where we’re hearing some concerns. We’re hearing some concerns just around transactions being burdensome, in terms of taking more time, more clicks, or more time to wait for the system to actually process. We have heard that the process for P-Card reconciliation is time-consuming -- which, as one who reconciles P-cards, I will tell you I think it’s a little bit more around business process than it is about the system; that there is more for us to dig into on that front.

We’ve heard that certain reports are taking too much time to deliver, and we’re hearing, also, that users need some more information about when to use which report. So we’ve developed what we call job aids, that are posted for that, but I think folks are finding that they would like even more guidance in terms of say, if you’re in the middle of a particular process, this is the report to use.

So let me tell you a little bit about what we’re doing, based on this feedback, because some of it is specific enough that we can act, and some of it is not. So where it’s not, we want to dig in further. We have been spending a lot of time monitoring the system, to improve just basic system performance. We conduct online monitoring, and we’ve basically been looking at what reports are taking up more processing power than, really, the system can handle. We’ve been pruning those reports, and basically taking them off the system where we don’t think that they’re needed. We have been adding -- and I think this weekend, Paul, right? Aren’t we adding more server capacity? We’ve also heard from folks that the 15-minute time-out was burdensome, with this
system in particular, because if you’re looking up documentation that relates to a transaction, 15 minutes hasn’t been adequate in terms of time, where the system will time out, if you’re not actually commanding it to do something else. It’s a security provision, to prevent somebody from walking away from their desk, and having somebody else come over to their desk and transact under their login. But I think we’ve found this really not to be adequate, so we are extending that time-out provision to 30 minutes -- which I think, from what we’ve heard, will be a big help.

Then the piece of it that you get to beyond system performance -- which, I would say, we’re really making some good progress on -- are questions like why does something take longer than it did for me in the prior system? That’s where general comments for us are difficult to act on, and, really, where we’re taking the next step, to see where we can get some much more tangible and concrete feedback from users, particularly in research departments.

So there are a couple of things we’re doing. I’ll come back to the first point in a moment. I already mentioned it before, but if you could just pop down to the second bullet point. We’re going to be conducting an effort across three different schools -- Arts and Sciences, Engineering, and P&S -- to meet with departments that are essentially -- we’ll call them, for the moment, representative departments -- departments where both the D.A. and the chair are willing to spend some hands-on time with us as a team, to really walk through some basic processes that they’re conducting every day, so we can understand better, on a more detailed level, where things are not working as optimally as they should, or where, as a reference point, the old system seemed to be better; or, even disregarding the old system, how could something be improved? How could somebody’s work life actually be made to be more efficient?
These meetings are ones that we’re setting up early in the new year. I’ve had some great feedback from chairs in these departments. We just met with the Arts and Sciences chairs two days ago, to talk about the strategy. I think folks really welcomed it, because it really does require us to kind of sit down and be one-on-one with a D.A., to understand better not just the issues they’re having but also, on the more positive side, what could we provide that would make their work life much more efficient? How do we take advantage of what is in the system, to really get them to the next level of productivity, so they don’t feel, certainly, hampered by it but, instead, excited by it -- which we hope they will.

So the idea is to go through this process in January, and then to be reporting back. There are a number of different forms, for science chairs’ meetings in particular, but then if it’s of interest to the broader chair meetings for these schools. Our sense is that if we can crack the nut on what is hampering productivity for research-intensive departments, which tend to be, one, more complex, and two, frankly, more focused on monthly reporting than some other departments. We can kind of crack the nut there, and then make sure that the learning is shared, certainly, more broadly. But we found that the feedback we’re getting at this point has been a little bit too general, from the user community, for us to act on. So I really think that these kinds of focus groups are going to be critical, for us to understand what to do next.

Two other things we’re doing, as I mentioned before, is to reinstate the transactions support office hours that we did have in the months just after go-live, so that folks would have a place to come, one day a week, bring in their transactions, and say, “I’m having difficulty with a
particular issue.” We still do have a help desk that runs five days a week, where someone can call in an issue, or they can send in a web form inquiry for help. That’s not going away. This is just a little bit more hands-on attention. The other thing we’re doing is that we’re reviving what we had in the pre-go-live days, of a reporting task force. Because now we’re getting to the point where people are asking for just enhancements and tweaks to reports, not necessarily wholly new reports. But we want to make sure that we get broad feedback, as we go through the next generation of report development.

O’Halloran: Okay. Great. Thank you. So let’s open the floor for questions.

Ronald Breslow: I think this is great, what you’re doing. But if I could give you a specific problem that I have. [Unclear] I haven’t seen a report on [unclear] that I’ve worked on in months. It used to be that every month I got a report, [unclear], what was the original amount of money, what had been spent, what had been committed. It came in on a regular basis. I have no idea where any of “my money” is. It’s been three months. [Unclear] in the department, and they say, “We don’t know either.” So I don’t know what’s -- that sounds to me like a specific problem.

Sullivan: That does sound like a specific problem.

Breslow: I don’t know what the problem is. Is it in our department? There are some reasonably smart people there, maybe not smart enough. I don’t know what the problem is. But I tell you,
this is really [unclear], because I’m running a research program, and I don’t know if we have any more money left. I have no [unclear].

Sullivan: We have developed reports that were analogous to the reports in the old system, specifically around sponsored projects, so that one should be able to call up a summary of the activity on a particular report. We have one called a Sponsored Project Financial Report. So for every individual grant, you can get a summary.

Breslow: So I can go in and do it myself.

Sullivan: If you already have system inquiry access -- which I don’t know if you do. But some faculty do, as a matter of fact. But if not, an administrator should be able to do that.

Breslow: So this sounds not so good. In other words, many things sound very nice [unclear] I think it’s great. But, in fact, in terms of where I interact with you, that’s the one place. The other place where I interact with you is [unclear] very hard to [unclear] take a long time for a request to actually get processed. I don’t know what that means, either. All I know is that [unclear]. That’s only a day or so. I have no idea how long that process is. But [unclear].

Sullivan: I don’t disagree with you that that is the case, then we have a problem. It’s not that I have a different definition of “problem” than you do.

Breslow: No, [unclear].
Sullivan: Is it Amelia, who’s your D.A.?

Breslow: Amelia is [unclear] and Carlos is [unclear]

Sullivan: Because I think Amelia -- I should circle back to you on that, because I think she has a pretty good grasp, actually, of what’s available, from a reporting standpoint, and to try to understand whether she thinks there’s something in the data that gives her pause, about giving you the report.

Breslow: [Unclear] all the time. I say, “Look, where are my reports?” And she says, “We don’t know.” [Unclear]

O’Halloran: Okay. So we have a specific task?

Sullivan: I can follow back up on that.

O’Halloran: Okay. An action item. All right. And that’s Ron from Chemistry. Dan, and then --

Daniel Savin: I just follow up the first point that [unclear] physics lab. I have half a dozen research grants, and I used to get this wonderful monthly report, which [unclear] I ever got trained to use ARC. I spent over an hour, and I wasn’t anywhere close to having printed out all the information here. I don’t have the time to spend, doing that. Administrators don’t have the
time to spend doing that. What we need is this report printed out and sent to us, so we can go through it rapidly, and see if there are any mis-spending; see if there are any over-spending, or whatever. We don’t have the time to work with ARC in its current state, to try to generate this report ourselves. Nor do our administrators.

O’Halloran: So the time to completion, to replicate the specific information, to know expenditures and existing revenue, and whether there are actually errors.

Sullivan: Well, there are a number of them that have the blue cover, so I’ll follow up with you afterwards about which report [unclear].

O’Halloran: So okay. Blue reports. [Cross talk] We want specific action items, right?

Julia Hirschberg???: [Unclear] We still can’t do our monthly reporting, because we still can’t separate out the [unclear] and we still can’t separate out the different payroll types [unclear] it’s been what, a month? And we’ve got [unclear] they keep saying, “We’ll fix this,” and “We’ll fix this,” but people are [unclear] ever be able to do our reporting in an accurate way? In our school we have [unclear] every Tuesday to do [unclear] reporting, and they can’t [unclear] wing and a prayer and hope it’s right. [Unclear]

O’Halloran: Oh, you are. You are in there. You are. Andrew already volunteered you, actually.
Q: What we want to do is sit down with you and our very smart D.A.s, who are not stupid, although they have been told that.

Sullivan: Not by me.

Q: It is my understanding that [unclear] sit down with you and go over what [unclear] used to take an hour, and take two days [unclear].

Sullivan: I think that’s where we need the level of interaction.

O’Halloran: Okay. We’re going to be following up. You’re going to be on the task force.

Sullivan: She already is.

O’Halloran: Additional people to give specific comments, specifically around the reporting. Great.

Sullivan: Just let me say one thing, but it doesn’t take away from what I agree with you is a critical next step. We will be doing that, there’s no doubt. I think that’s where we need to get to. It’s the next level of feedback and just detail.

The reports that we currently have were designed by D.A.s, in science departments, to replicate what they had in DARTS. So this is why we actually do need to sit down with folks and say,
“You told us what you wanted on the report. What isn’t it doing for you?” I didn’t want you to think they were designed in a vacuum; they were actually designed with that in mind. If it’s not -

Q: It’s not easy for a D.A. to know --

Sullivan: I think some of them were involved in the process. But, regardless, we’re still undertaking the next step. I just don’t want folks to think we’ve done this in a vacuum.

O’Halloran: Okay. So we’ll take names, offline -- so additional questions or comments? Yes. Sorry.

Another voice: I’m not volunteering to be [unclear] -- but as you know, [unclear] some of the issues that have come up [unclear] face in particular, but I have a question for Anne. Are you considering [unclear] enable to present some of the larger offices [unclear] financial system [unclear] to be able to access [unclear] --

Sullivan: To interface with it directly? That is our hope. Obviously, we want to make sure that wrinkles we can work out --

Q: [unclear] That would be fantastic, but I think we need [unclear].
Sullivan: Yes. It certainly is our hope. So we have international sites that don’t interface and they don’t [unclear] the old system interface with the system directly.

O’Halloran: Okay. So you have that contact. You know what that is. Additional questions? This is the time, guys.

Sullivan: You can catch me afterwards.

Q: [Unclear]

O’Halloran: We do. We very much -- okay. One more time [unclear].

Q: [Unclear]

Sullivan: That practice actually wasn’t common for most of our peer institutions, and moved over to a new system. Obviously, our reporting environments, our legacy reports are there, with our legacy data. But, obviously, being able to transact in more than one system is not -- you really can’t run the two in parallel; you have a system of record. So we decided not to do that, and I think, when we looked back to the implementation plans and successes of other institutions who have gone through that, that wasn’t a critical element.

Another voice: Some people are suing for millions of dollars -- I’m saying there have a lot of problems [unclear].
Sullivan: Well, ARC is a Columbia-branded name, so hopefully not with ARC. But with a PeopleSoft financial product -- we had the benefit, if you will, of coming about ten years after the wave of institutions who implemented one of the first kind of generations, of PeopleSoft and then Oracle purchased PeopleSoft and it really moved through, I think, a pretty significant transition, particularly in terms of functionality, on the grant side. So we talked to some of the later implementation partners, as we were going through this -- Michigan, Northwestern, and others -- and I think learned quite a bit from their implementation processes. But we had not heard -- and I don’t regret, frankly, because I think the complexity of having to run two systems at one time, with our operation, would have really been daunting. I think from the reporting side, having to retrofit, for example, a DARTS report, versus saying, “How do we take the characteristics of a DARTS report and replicate it in a new reporting environment?” It would have been just as complex, because our entire chart of accounts structure changed. The architecture of our account structure completely changed. So having to retrofit a DARTS report would have been not only expensive, but something with a very short life. What we did, instead, was sit down with departmental administrators and say, “What are the aspects that you need to have in a DARTS report, and let’s recreate that for the new environment.” So we do have reports that are meant to mimic DARTS, essentially exactly, save the change of account structure. But this is the time where, if it’s not working, we want to know why it’s not working. I don’t mean to be argumentative; I was more just commenting on the process, which was an inclusive one, and which is why, I think, the fix needs to be an inclusive one. When we thought about what we needed to do next, we said, “Well, what we really have to do is sit shoulder to shoulder with someone in the department, and really understand what it is that is impeding the system.”
Q: [Unclear]

O’Halloran: All right.

Sullivan: This is the reporting side.

Breslow: We need it, in order to be able to function in a sensible way, not spending more time.

O’Halloran: All right. Well, thank you very much, Anne, and your team. We really do appreciate it, and we look forward to ongoing communication on that issue. Thank you.

All right. We are adjourned.

[End of meeting]