SENATE PLENARY MEETING

1 February 2013

President Lee Bollinger: I don’t know why I’m the only one up here. So let’s just get started. We need a motion for adopting the agenda.

Q: So moved.

Bollinger: Fantastic. Any objections? Motion to adopt the minutes. Any comments on the minutes? Any corrections? Any objections? Yes?

Q: I can’t hear you.

Bollinger: I’m sorry. Does that help? Just for the record, I haven’t said anything important. So, any comments on the minutes? Then the minutes are adopted?

You know, I started out the new semester -- there was a lot of excitement around the institution, a lot of ways. As you know, we have, in the report today, there’s an important step in the globalization of the university “theme.” We have eight centers up and running now, a lot of activity beginning, a lot of thinking is going on. That’s the right way to do this. We have to be very flexible. We have to create this as we go. But the eight centers are really operational, and Ken Prewitt has done a great job of bringing to this point. Safwan Masri has taken over and done a great job of building on that. We have faculty committees for every center. We have advisory
boards. And, as I said, we have faculty committees and groups thinking about what it means to be a global university, and how we will do that for our students and faculty. We have the report from the Senate, which is a great addition. We just returned from launching the Nairobi Africa Center, and the launches are to be an official way of trying to draw in local government officials, NGOs, universities, and the business community, into helping us think about how Columbia can engage with the world. It is important that we always distinguish between what other institutions are doing and we’re doing. As I always say, we’re not doing the branch-campus model, where there is a separate faculty and separate student body; we’re approaching this from the standpoint of the world has changed. There are great global issues to be confronted, a great university has to engage with those. We don’t know enough yet about the world. We need to help ourselves learn more. We need to approach this in the spirit of -- we need to educate ourselves as well as make contributions. That’s the approach we’re following.

I think the other thing we’re doing is that there are several searches underway. We have a search for the dean of the School of Dentistry. We have a search underway for the new dean of SEAS -- the School of Engineering and Applied Science. Also for the School of Journalism, for SIPA, and now also Arts and Sciences -- an EVP for Arts and Sciences. All of those are progressing really well. I’m very, very pleased about where we are. John Coatsworth is working on those; we’re working on those together. But I think each of these will be completed, and we will make the appointments of new deans, we expect by the end of this academic year. So everything is progressing there.

Any questions? Any comments that anybody would like to make? Great. Sharyn.
Sharyn O’Halloran: Thank you very much. I want to make a few very quick comments. Online learning -- the task force is working away. Actually, I just came back from the Department of Computer Sciences retreat up in Tarrytown, where we had a very nice panel on online learning and its state of play, bringing in several professors, one from Princeton and one of our own, one that had actually mounted a course in Coursera and what his experiences were, then one who was going through the current throes and pains of actually doing it, and what we’re learning in the process. I think that’s very nice. Then a presentation -- Sree made a presentation as well, the continuing education.

So, as you can see, this is an area that’s being hotly discussed across the institution, and, again, the task force is working with it. There’s a very large umbrella group that is looking at this from many dimensions, from the interest of the students, faculty, and staff, and they will be producing a report that will take into account each of those views, as well as the opportunities and challenges that this new technology offers, for us to reach the “missions” of the university, with regard to the various audiences we have, and improving our own pedagogy of what we do here so well at Columbia.

In addition, we have diversity initiatives. Andrew Davidson will be reporting next plenary about this, and some of the strides that have been taking place in the provost’s office. I am going to stop right now, because I’m going to give the global initiatives report.

Q: [Inaudible]
O’Halloran: Thank you very much. Also, the provost is putting together a faculty advisory committee, distinct from the Senate broad-based committee. Hopefully, there will be interaction between yourself and Sree. We’ll all working to coordinate on those types of topics, of IP -- intellectual property. One of the interesting things is that people are now really viewing the new media as the new textbook. So the question “Who owns the textbook?” is a hotly debated context subject right now, within a variety of different contexts. So I think this is a great opportunity for us all to be thinking about these important issues.

Any other questions? Okay.

So this is the report, the final report of the Global Initiatives Task Force. I would like to thank the committee. It was a very hard-working committee. They did a very good job. I appreciate the opportunity to report their findings to you. This really has been a report that’s taken place within a larger conversation that is going on throughout the university, not only about global centers but where we position ourselves within a global world, or how we exchange ideas in the global world; the extent to which we have a global core; the extent to which we have an international exchange program with our students; and so on. So there are a lot of conversations going on throughout the university on this topic, all relevant and important, and this report, really, is an overview of much of that, but just takes one particular cut. Most of the work will be ongoing, and appropriately so.
The work is conducted, again, by the joint task force of faculty, students, and alumni across the institution. I want to thank, in particularly, Matt Chou, Richard Sun, and Jenna Miller for their hard work on drafting this report.

Just to give you a brief overview -- the starting point of our thinking really is to understand that Columbia University is the quintessential global university, and it has been -- comparative methods of investigation and pedagogy are deeply ingrained in our research and educational work of the faculty and students, and all, really. What we do find, in evaluating this whole panoply of different activity, is that Columbia’s current global initiatives are overlapping, or duplicative; that there are many conflicting lines of authority that isolate into dispersed silos -- which make -- how shall we say? -- making information flows difficult. Sometimes it’s hard to know even how to start the process, if you want to do something like go to Nairobi.

The purpose of this group was to examine the ways in which to improve Columbia’s global initiatives, especially within the context of the new global centers. Here, just to give you a brief outline of some of the thinking, is, first of all, when we talk about how to rethink some of the global initiatives, it is really important for us to preserve the decision-making independence of the deans and the faculty, unifying, where appropriate, some of the dispersed, administrative lines of authority and logistical functions, under some central organization, whether it’s a provost, or a president’s office, or what have you. Increasing staff and the resources to execute these types of changes, to make them doable; and, just to go on down, increasing the global centers’ presence and awareness, and providing meaningful and appropriate oversight and governance.
Now just to start off where we are -- this is sort of a current, simplified structure of a global initiative, as it now stands. What you see is that there is an enormous amount of activity going on. Many of it is overlapping, many of it is integrative. That’s fine. That’s great. Many offices and parts of the university are involved in global initiatives, as appropriate. However, if you wanted to get something done within this context, sometimes it would be difficult. In addition, if you look at the current areas of responsibilities and focus, there are overlapping areas of responsibilities. We can just look at the different stakeholders -- faculty, students, and alumni -- as well as the different institutional priorities here -- research, public relations, budgeting and finance. And if you just look at the different bands, you can see they cross over many areas. Many of the different offices will be crossing over multiple areas, leading to, again, the overlapping, duplicative, and sometimes conflicting lines of authority. So this will get these overlapping jurisdictions, will make difficult to get things done.

In addition, if you look at the various global functions, the administrative functions broken down, again, by your stakeholders and your institutional priorities, you can see that a coordinated activity is sometimes difficult. The faculty is, appropriately so, responsible for research and scholarship; faculty development programs; cross-faculty initiatives. Student affairs deals with the study-abroad programs; or career development; admissions events. Alumni, again, does its alumni programming. On the research side of the institutional parties, you have visas, and the logistics of visiting scholars, joint degrees, and so far under institutional, and on down the line. The basic insight is that it’s very difficult, with these overlapping jurisdictions -- and with the panoply of offices involved -- to actually do the things that you want. We’re allocating a
significant amount of time, resources and effort to having a very broad-based, global sets of initiatives. It’s not clear that the allocation is always the optimum.

Therefore, there is a proposed -- one of the opportunity areas that the report finds is just an opportunity to think about consolidating some of these activities. Really, it’s either centralizing, again, to reflect both the exclusive and share domains -- that is, the exclusive domains of, properly, of instruction and curriculum belong with the faculty, the schools and the deans, as is appropriate. But also there are some shared domains where, really, consolidation of logistical functions would make a lot of sense -- such as the issuing of visas; doing information sharing; knowing how to access different opportunities and different on-site or foreign sites and so forth. Okay.

What’s being proposed here is Option A, B, C. I could come up with D, E, and F, as you wish. But, really, what you’re looking for in any of these types of rethinking of the organization is threefold. First, you want to increase accountability, transparency, and information flow, all toward the design to align our resource allocation decisions with the overall objectives of teaching and research of the university. Okay? Again, so whether it’s a provost, a president, a VP of this -- we could come up with endless -- that’s the goal and the objectives in thinking about this. That was one of the opportunity areas that the committee found.

Now, again, when we slice into this, one of the biggest initiatives and biggest investment areas that has taken place has really been the introduction of the global centers. This has created an enormous amount of opportunities for the university. When we think of what those opportunities
-- and this comes from a lot of the thinking and experiences that people have had -- that it will manage the global centers can play a powerful role in research educational outreach mission of the university. Okay? They could provide regional sites for students in blended programs; that is, a mix of online as well as face-to-face relationships. Sites to anchor -- again, our distance and our learning initiatives. They can be regional sites for conferencing, and video recording at conferences and so forth; and also, sites to maintain and expand our alumni relations.

In addition, when you look at it, for the organizational structure -- the centers, however, must be clear to all the stakeholders, including the faculty, students, and alumni. We can see, under a lot of the work that has been going on, both under Ken and now under Safwan, there has been a move to do just that. We can see that the global centers are innovative and cost-effective mechanisms. Here we have the eight global centers, as President Bollinger stated -- the square-footage, staff, funding models, etc. -- and under each you have an evolving business plan around sustainability, that I think is very appealing. Also, when we think of this strategy of the global centers, in relationship to our peers, we can look at this comparative study here. Columbia is on top, and the light blue is a school-administered study-abroad program. The darker blue is a research center. The very dark blue is both. Then the triangle is a satellite campus.

What you can see is that Columbia has been very effective in insuring that we have coverage in all the dominant continents. This is something that is quite distinct from all of our peers. We do have both a school-administered study-abroad program and research, centered in Europe and Asia, Reid Hall obviously being the one in Europe. If we look at the other peers, most of them have either been research centers (as in Harvard), which are mostly available to faculty only. So
when we think about covers, when we think about effectiveness, when we think about having a presence, when we think about availability of faculty and students, and our alumni, the research centers do appear to be a very good innovative and cost-effective way for us to move forward.

Now with opportunities always come challenges. There are a series of questions that follow from conversations and people’s views, things like how are they managed? Most of this is sorting itself out over time. I think these are more questions for people to consider, as opposed to stark criticisms, either about the approach or how things are going now. Are there significant differences among the centers’ capabilities, and if so, why? Is there effective oversight? And here we see the development of governance -- advisory boards that are taking shape. I think this is a good answer to this. Who is the gatekeeper of these activities determines what research takes place and what doesn’t, etc., etc. So these are the types of questions that emerged during the conversations, that were ongoing with the committee.

The upshot, then, is that there needs to be a transparent system for clear decision-making lines, so people know how to access these centers, know where to go to either find resources or to work in a collaborative nature if they want to use the centers, and thinking through exactly what the logistics would be.

These are some of the things we found out with the survey that was conducted. This went out to both faculty and researchers as well as students. So when you think about that, about how people view the global centers, this, again, is just a survey. The light areas are “Were you unfamiliar, somewhat familiar, familiar, or very familiar.” You can see that, in fact, the knowledge of the
global centers is relatively low among our population. We talk about it all the time, so we think that everyone knows. However, when you survey, you find that 68% of the faculty and over 80% of the student body are really not familiar at all with the global centers. We do find this, for the faculty, about 14% are actually either very familiar, or somewhat familiar. Then, in the student body, it’s much smaller, about .05%, in total. What we find is that the community is actually very open to the possibility of using the global centers. Again, about 63% of the faculty -- although they don’t have any plans to use the centers -- would be open to doing so. Sixty-five percent of the student body expressed that. But what you also see is that about a third of the faculty and students see New York as the primary base, as where they would actually get most of their work done. We hate to think of this, but we actually have a ninth global center -- Columbia, Columbia campus, proper. Most people would say that New York City would be a global center. In some ways, a third of the population would find what they do best served by staying in New York City. That, I think, is an important understanding, as well. We have many students who come here to study for exactly to be in this location, exactly for these contacts; to have these contacts and these opportunities, that are offered by the Columbia campus. Also, we see that there is an appreciation of the various capabilities, but it’s different among the populations. For example, for faculty and researchers, the most important aspects of the global centers is really the networking opportunity. I think that’s something that they can’t form by themselves, as independent researchers, and in having this infrastructure there is really a way to facilitate that discourse.

For students, the dimensions are much more dispersed. The research and field work is very important. Say, if you’re a graduate student doing field study, having a global center of base is
really important in the area, just as blending learning opportunities is also an important
opportunity, in addition to networks, as well as additional time to pursue other types of interests,
not being solely attached to Columbia proper.

So what are the recommendations that follow from here? Really, we’re just going to break them
down into some structural stuff, such as separating power, centralizing information, and so forth.
So just the separation of responsibilities, to better utilize the resources; to allocate the global
initiatives throughout the institution, to be more in line with our overall goals and objectives. So,
again, the deans and the faculties will remain their exclusive domain over negotiation
establishment and everything to do with the educational part of the university, of the endeavors,
but centralizing administrative tasks, including the logistical concerns about hosting visiting
scholars, getting visas, etc., would make a lot of sense. Also, centralizing the information that’s
available would be important, so that there is a one-stop shopping to shop, where you can get
ideas of everything that’s going on at Columbia -- international programs, the global centers,
etc., would really be helpful to people, especially as they think about how their own research and
教学 could be enhanced by these new opportunities, or what we currently are doing.

Also, look at new program to extend the global reach, such as the use of distance and online
learning. I think it’s important to build these broad-based advisory groups as a way to bring in
the various constituencies, into thinking hard about the overall global initiatives of the university,
both the global centers and other respects of the curriculum, and the opportunities that we offer
our faculty and students.
So what’s the timeline? Possible. Obviously, launching -- we have a global [unclear] portal that is under development, and I think that would be a good place to bring that forward, with centralizing a lot of the information. The advisory governance structure is currently underway, and being developed and expanded. There is obviously discussion about financing a faculty research pool, which I think would be enhancing, as well. In the next stage, we could think about experimenting with some of the distant, online learning models, looking at portals of knowledge where we bring faculty, research, with private/public partners I think is a rich area. Then aligning the global centers’ missions, again with the overall priorities as they develop over time.

Now whether we consolidate the oversight in various functions, and look at the structural functions really has to do with how the global centers evolve over time; how they reach maturation; the development of their endowments; and where the appropriate lines reside. Then, at the end, looking at, now, once we have this in place, how can we build off of this to expand our menu of options?

So that’s where we are. Any questions?

Bollinger: I just wanted to say -- this is really so helpful, to have a number of people from the Senate and Sharyn think these things through and make recommendations. Because all of this is creating something -- we are responding as an institution to a new reality. I mean, the world has and is changing, and we’re trying to respond to it in ways that we think are consistent with our identity as a university, consistent with our mission, and this has been the result of conversations going on in informal, ad hoc to be sure, but also systematic. Conversations have been going on
for a number of years. We’ve built this up, and built this up, and in the course of this, as I said, very important -- we’ve rejected a number of other approaches. That’s not for us. There are theories about why the other approaches are good, but we’ve selected the course that’s before us, that I think comes out of the institution, and poses incredibly exciting opportunities for our faculty and our students, our alumni, our prospective students, to be out there in the world, doing work and learning about the world, and contributing.

So it’s an organic process, and something like this, a serious look coming from this angle, offering suggestions, is just fantastic. We also have other parts within Arts and Sciences. The EPPC (Educational Policy Planning Committee) is also looking at the undergraduate curriculum, and experience, and the global centers, and that’s great. So I just want to thank everybody who’s been involved in this, Sharyn, for that wonderful work.

O’Halloran: Safwan is also here, and he was a very good partner. So if we have any questions --

Bollinger: And Safwan Masri, from the Business School, has been working on this with the Amman Center, and then the global directors, and now the vice president in charge of this.

Ronald Breslow: Okay. Yes. I was a little bit concerned that so many of the faculty have no idea about this whole thing. Now there has to be an effort to do something about that. I would say, if the faculty don’t know about this, we’re not going to get the maximum use of this facility. So there has to be a decent plan for making sure that they find out what the opportunities are. That really means some kind of a publication that gets in their hands. What is the plan for that?
O’Halloran: Well, again, you have a plan. There is a global, on the common -- is it called -- the common portal -- that is going to have a list of the current inventory of all the online -- I just gave the online talk down at the Computer Science Department, so I’m still in online. But now we move on to global centers. Of all our global initiatives -- and that’s an evolving list that’s constantly changing -- but that’s a place where you’ll be able to click, and go and find what’s going on. Also, Safwan is working on the website of the global centers, and I know you’d like to speak to that.

Breslow: That requires action by the people, to go look for the information. I’m saying that we need publicize it to the people who are not going to go looking, and they don’t see any reason why they should do so.

O’Halloran: One of the good things about this survey is that actually it raised everyone’s awareness of the global centers. So doing things like this -- having conversations around this --

Bollinger: It’s changing by the moment. Every single week there is new -- I don’t know when this survey was done, but I’ll bet over the past two months there’s been much greater awareness. There are now faculty committees that didn’t exist before. Safwan. Go ahead.

Safwan Masri: [Unclear]

Bollinger: That sounds good.
Q: [Inaudible] Is that something we’re considering? To connect with Oceania?

Bollinger: Yes. The big issue for us is how many global centers will we have? We’ve decided, for now, eight is sufficient to give us the base, for now, experiencing this, and seeing what happens. Actually, it takes a fair amount of work to set up a global center, so we don’t want to have our work diverted by setting up multiple, multiple more. That said, we’re not opposed to having this part of the ongoing process. A lot of people would like to see a global center in Japan. There are a number of people who would like to see a global center in Berlin, Moscow, and on and on, where we’re not. We’re going to have to digest that issue over time. Of course, a lot of this is a combination of factors, like where are faculty working, and where might that faculty work brought in people who otherwise wouldn’t get there. So there are a lot of things to think about. But that’s our framework now.

Daniel Savin: Daniel Savin, Astrophysics. I have a question about the student responses. There are only about 100 students who responded to the survey, so I think this is really an unfortunate, poor snapshot of the students’ needs. I wanted to ask what kind of effort will be done to get a better sampling of what the students’ needs are.

O’Halloran: This is being over-sampled on the high-knowledge base, because this went out to all the council members only. This is how the students wished to handle that, as opposed to a blast of all 27,000 students. So it was actually a high response rate, given that it went to the student councils (and there are lots and lots of these). That’s why they were asking. So the fact that so
few of very active students knew about the global centers is actually even -- at that point -- and it’s a snapshot. That’s a fair statement. This is a snapshot. At that point, it’s actually a strong statement that we do need to work harder on getting the word out, letting students know how they can use this, and why it’s in their interest. So it wasn’t a poor response rate; it was how we did the sampling. Of that body, we got a fine response rate. But I do appreciate your statement. I do.

Samuel Silverstein: Sam Silverstein. Sharyn, if you had to put up on the board, right now, one place where faculty could get information, and one place where students could get information, could you do that?

O’Halloran: For faculty, I would go to Safwan, very clearly, because he is, I would say, a primary depository of the knowledge of what the global centers are most actively doing. Soon this will be common knowledge. And also what the other parts of the university are doing, simply because he’s going around, talking so much. That’s my theory.

On the student side, Safwan could give you a quick statement; but, really, we have the Global Scholars Program, the exchange programs, right now. That’s the place that probably has the most student knowledge that I would direct them to.

Silverstein: So, as a point of departure, wouldn’t it be useful to have those two foci emphasized, so that at least, from the beginning, there’s some central diffusion of similar information?
O’Halloran: This is partly why bringing it into a position on which would deal with the global initiatives (not centers, initiatives) across the board I think is important. I also think there is a lot of opportunity to have faculty-student exchanges. The Global Scholars Program I think is a wonderful example of how they could be utilizing the global centers. I think the online distance learning, and doing field work and so forth, and bringing that to [unclear] -- so it’s not just that there are faculty and students; if you bring it together, there’s a lot of interaction that can take place.

Silverstein: I understand that. But the most important thing I think people can take from this meeting, and from your comments, and from the president’s comments, is a source to go to, as a first step.

O’Halloran: Yes. I think we’re saying that same thing. I do believe we’re saying the same thing. That’s correct. I must have misunderstood you. I thought you were saying you wanted to bifurcate --

Silverstein: No, I don’t want to bifurcate anything. But there is also Ron’s point about information. But you have to start someplace --

O’Halloran: That’s correct.

Silverstein: -- so those are in the two groups that have points of departure, and at least we have two points of departure, then from that can evolve all kinds of other things.

Masri: [inaudible] widely disseminate the membership of the faculty steering committees, because one of the ideas behind the faculty steering committees that might be easier, more conducive, or preferable, to talk to somebody who is a colleague in your department, on your floor, who happens to be on a faculty steering committee. Or, if you’re interested in a particular center. The other thing I should say, on the graduate students in particular, is that we work very closely with the Office of Global Programs, Michael Pippenger’s office. So everything that is undergraduate programming coordinated we do with them.

O’Halloran: Okay. Good. Great. Thank you very much, and thank you very much to the committee. [Applause] So we’ll just keep the ball rolling. Next we have a Student Affairs report. Aly? Do you have a [unclear]? He’ll be talking about the quality of life survey.

Jiwani: Okay. Hi. My name is Aly Jiwani. From SIPA. And this is Ashley Martin. She is a Ph.D. candidate from the Behavioral Research Lab over at the Business School. We’re going to be presenting a new initiative, the quality of life initiative. The Student Affairs Committee, as you know, represents all 28,000 students across Columbia’s twenty schools and affiliated institutions; therefore, it is uniquely positioned and mandated to improve student quality of life. Senators also got franking privileges last semester, last year, giving us the ability to communicate with our constituents. So, under these two broad principles, we’ve conceptualized a new initiative, which is designed to collect student feedback in an institutionalized fashion, every two years.
Currently, several schools at Columbia administer local student lifestyle surveys of their own, or exit surveys for graduation, or variations of the above, for specific, one-off needs. But there is no comprehensive, campus-wide data collection mechanism to assess quality of life for Columbia students; therefore, our efforts, as a policymaking body, have been one-off. They’ve been incremental, and they’ve sometimes been reactive, and based on immediate needs as opposed to comprehensive, well-strategized approach on real feedback from lots of respondents.

So we’re envisioning a university-wide survey for the first component of the initiative, that is going to be designed to capture student quality of life, through qualitative and quantitative elements. Now the results and the feedback from the survey are going to drive recommendations, that will inform conversations with administrators and any policy recommendations, to improve student quality of life. The survey is envisioned to occur once every two years, which means that there will be ample time to follow up on the feedback we get from the survey, and take appropriate measures to make policy fixes in those areas. One thing the survey is not looking to do is evaluate the performance of campus offices or services. I think the individual offices and services have their own metrics and methodologies that they use to assess the performance periodically, and we’re not looking to upend that role. What we are looking is to focus on common themes that we believe affect every Columbia student, whether you’re an undergrad or grad student or Ph.D., focus on certain commonalities and certain themes that are common across campus. The idea is to get minimum actionable data from the survey, that will then drive, perhaps, further investigations into those specific categories.
Let’s talk a little bit about the survey design. We’re partnering with the Behavioral Research Lab at the Business School, with a couple of Ph.D. candidates and a couple of professors there, who specialize in stress management, specialize in human behavior. They’re helping us with the survey design. There are going to be four parts in each category. They’re looking at a dozen different categories that we think affect student quality of life. We want to know what the student satisfaction level is, generally, with that category. We’re going to ask students how important that particular category is; their own assessment of quality of life; and then we want to get into certain specific certain, objective, if you will, questions, under those categories. Finally, have a qualitative box for each category, to ask students for recommendations of what they think should be done to improve their quality of life in that category, to preserve, sort of, the integrity of the survey design. The order in which the categories appear to different students, different respondents, are going to be randomized to avoid bias. There are also going to be some overall quality-of-life skills toward the end. The idea here is for those who are able to interact with student responses on these category, to really get interesting information on what students feel about these different things. You can see here, in the [unclear] administration; family life; libraries; base housing. These are all things that students think of when they think of their quality of life, when they’re at Columbia.

There is also going to be a policy addendum toward the end, which will change from cycle to cycle, which I think the committee can use, or the Senate can use to pretty much ask students questions on whatever is pertinent for that time -- perhaps a question on the global centers and their reach, what students feel about that, for this cycle; or, a question on the smoking policy; or
whatever is on the table. This is our chance to simply have a large sample, responding sample, to find out what students think.

We’re going to be partnering with the Behavioral Research Lab. We are partnering with them on the survey design. We’re going to be consulting the Stats Department, to make sense of the data once we have the database. We’re looking for the Senate office to be the owners of the data. Obviously, the results will be published to the community, with access for the provost’s office, the president’s office, as well as the local student councils to be available to their schools. We are set to launch the pilot on this initiative in a couple of weeks. We’re looking for the pilot to go to about 200 students across Columbia. We want to make sure we have a diverse response pool, and we’re going to use the next month, in March, to improve the survey, based on the feedback we get from the pilot. We’re looking for the hard launch of the survey, the first iteration of the survey, the 2013 iteration, to be sometime in early April. The idea is to use next year for analysis and recommendations.

O’Halloran: Thank you very much. We did meet with the provost’s office and reviewed some of the survey questions, the pilot, and they, too, will be a partner in this process, and thinking hard about both how to structure and the best use of this data over time -- because that will help the students formulate an agenda that can be most effectively implemented. So I want to thank the provost for that, and, as he leaves -- and have an enjoyable weekend. But any questions to the students -- and who worked incredibly hard on this. I just really want you to understand. They put in an enormous amount of time and effort, and they are being very collaborative, across the institution, with all the other survey people who do surveying.
Daniel Savin: Well, first of all, I wish something like this had existed when I was an undergraduate here, back in the last millennium.

One of the things I’m concerned about is the long-term implementation of this program, because this is something that’s a really great idea, but it’s going to extend the tenure of most students here at the university. So what do you have in place to insure that corporate memory continues from cycle to cycle, so people can really follow up, and see that things are changing.

Jiwani: This where the institutional partnership that Professor O’Halloran mentioned is important. Because the students “cycled” are going to be gone in two years -- you’re right -- but I think partnerships with the vice provost’s office, Roxie Smith’s office, is going to insure that this is something that’s important to administrators, as it is important to students, to insure continuity. Plus, we have the Senate office that will sort of serve as the institutional memory body, to inform future iterations.

Now the survey is not designed in a way -- it won’t change much from cycle to cycle. I think the value of such a survey is the longitudinal analysis that we can get from this, sort of deviation from the “main line.” So this year was really the hard work. I see, perhaps, tweaks in subsequent cycles, but that’s a good point. We’ve given a lot of thought to that, and, obviously, we want to insure that it institutionalizes, and just doesn’t come up as a one-off thing.

Savin: I would just suggest that there be a very clear office administrator or person at Columbia who has that long-term responsibility, to insure that there is continuity. I know the students mean
very well and such, but, unfortunately, when we graduate we move on and we don’t look back. That knowledge gets lost. Unless someone is actually responsible, personally responsible, who’s here for a long tenure, there won’t be a success to this program.

O’Halloran: Right now we have Lucy Drotning, again, in the provost’s office, who is like the VP of Institutional Research. She has managed most of the surveys. Again, she was at the meeting, and we will work with her, and that staff to make sure that there’s a consistency, and it’s aligning, and she would be the partner, the administrative partner, with the Senate, the student senators, over time. So I think that, right now, would make the most sense. Again, it changes, but right now I think the most appropriate partnership is. I hope that answers your question. Okay. Yes?

Breslow: There are great pluses to this thing and one minus, which I’d like to mention. The great plus, of course, is that we would all love to have that information, so we could do something about it. When things are problems, we actually have to work on them. It would be great to have that. What I would hate to do is to open up the New York Times one day and see, “Students Hate Life at Columbia. Wish They Were Somewhere Else.” I mean, I really don’t want to see that, if you can somehow prevent that from happening. I think it would be a shame, because the bad news is always the news they publish. Nobody’s going to publish headlines, “Hey, People Love Columbia.” Forget it. They’re not going to publish that. They will publish anything they can see that might be negative. So I don’t know how you’re going to handle that in such a way that it doesn’t become a public thing. But I think you ought to think about it -- because, really, where
it’s going to play the positive role is here, telling us what we have to do to straighten out. That would be great. Just so we don’t have the *New York Times* publishing an attack.

Jiwani: The raw data is going to be held by the Office of the Senate, but I think the advocacy power of such a survey depends on widespread dissemination. So I’m not sure how you can widely publicize the aggregated results from the survey to the Columbia community, and prevent the press from picking up on it. I think the best we can do is to insure the integrity of the survey; to make sure that the questions are, in fact, getting to what we want to ask; they’re not leading or biased in any one way. I’m not sure, besides -- the survey is going to be confidential and anonymous (I should have mentioned that before), with the database resting in the ownership hands of the Senate manager.

O’Halloran: And there’s no question that just says, “Do you hate Columbia?” They’re usually very specific to the dimensions. So the worst that will come up is, “People think the shuttle service at Columbia --” I don’t know this. This is just conjecture, and anybody who feels deeply about the shuttle service, I completely apologize, but -- “think it’s not adequate,” or something like that. So it’s not going to get to an overall assessment -- which is you want the headline number -- 80% of the students say they hate being here. That’s what you’re concerned about. You won’t see that, because that’s not a question we’ll ask.

Breslow: You can probably get that in every institution if you phrase your questions right.
O’Halloran: Well, the point is to make sure that -- in some ways, that’s not a very useful question, when you want -- for an agenda, and for them to have a legislative agenda, is to understand what are the concerns that they have on a series of life-quality dimensions. Those have been standardized across many of the life-quality surveys out there, and they’ve utilized those benches. So they’ve done a metadata-study, if you will, to get these. We can make sure there’s nothing like that, but yes, people could say, “We think the food could be better.” In fact, they have. Some people have. Not me. I appreciate that point, though. You don’t want it to be misused. But it’s important to get the information. Right?

Ashley Martin: If I can just add something. We looked at a bunch of different schools that were launching similar initiatives, as well -- Stanford, NYU, Harvard all have their data summarized online, and you can see the dissatisfaction, if you will, of the students, and it hasn’t seemed to become a widespread thing. I think, in general, students are stressed, and there are widespread issues with universities in general, maybe. I’m not sure. But this is no different than the other schools that are doing this also. I just thought I’d --

Silverstein: As you remember, Harvard has these surveys constantly, but Bok created the assessment seminar about ten years ago, I think, and looked at the quality of student life. That was a very constructive activity, and did contribute, at the margins, to many good things at Harvard. You might look at Richard Light’s report of that seminar, because it was a beautifully done piece of academic research.
But I wanted to ask you a question, as well. Among the issues here is the coordination of all the surveys that are done by various offices throughout, and schools throughout, the university, and to ask, number one, is there a way, or do you have access to all of those, so that you can better understand, in analyzing these data, what the relationship is between the way you collect the data and what it says, and what each of the individual services, schools, and other survey makers collect, and their interpretation of their data? Is there a way to bring all of this together now? You say there’s an office that is in charge of this, in the provost’s office. So how does one bring this together, to get a comprehensive view of what is the same and what is distinct, in different parts of the university?

Jiwani: One quick comment on the survey design. There are going to be multiple versions. There is going to be branching, so to speak, in the survey design, such that specific versions of the survey go out, if you’re an undergrad, versus a grad student, versus a Ph.D., roughly speaking. Secondly, I just wanted to confirm that the center, the administrator of the survey, is going to be sort of a unified Senate effort. So the Senate will get all the data, uniformly, from all the schools, tagged by school, such that we can analyze the results per school.

Silverstein: But that’s not my question.

Jiwani: Sorry.

Silverstein: My question is, we are by no means the only collector of academic data at this institution. There are multiple surveys, both internal and external. There are graduate-student
surveys conducted by others. There is the AAMC survey in medical school, exit survey. There are many ways and types of data. But it would be extremely powerful if you had access, in a central place, to all of these different kinds of information that others and we are collecting about ourselves, to ask how these fit together. We’ll derive many important insights from both the questions they ask and the idiosyncrasies that that have to do with one or another constituency at the university. So I think it would be prudent, actually, to see whether that can’t be engineered into this -- not to make this a more massive enterprise, but to give you access, right from the get-go, to this huge amount of data, which may or may not be well digested. I don’t know.

Jiwani: In our research we found that although multiple, local versions of student satisfaction surveys and exit surveys, like you mention exist across the university -- one problem is that we only have access to the results, to the published reports from the surveys. We don’t have access to the raw data, which was one of the rationales for launching this as a new, independent initiative, because what we’re interested in doing is seeing how the different variables interact with each other. Without having access to the raw data of these local surveys, we just can’t get the insight that we want to make, sort of insights and recommendations at a policy level. However, after we get the results from our survey, there is definitely room and potential to compare where our results stand with other versions of local surveys, and see whether there is commonality, discrepancies -- if there are commonalities, that’s actually good, because that just confirms the findings, our conclusions, so to speak. If not, we can investigate that further -- why that is the case. Very good point.
O’Halloran: But on the university-wide surveys, like the health one, they are coordinating with the Student Health and so forth, on their surveys, to make sure it’s not duplicated questions, and that they’re enhancing [unclear]. I think that’s some of the things they’ll be doing already. But that’s a very good point. That’s a good point.

Okay. Thank you very much. We really appreciate it, and we look forward to your ongoing efforts. Next we have a resolution in global thought. Jim Applegate from Education will be discussing it, of course. This is for a vote.

James Applegate: The resolution you’ve got before you is a resolution to approve a Master of Arts degree in global thought. The degree is offered by the Graduate School of the Arts and Sciences. The group of faculty who will provide the intellectual support for this program is a group that was put together by the president within the past few years, called the Committee on Global Thought. It’s an interdisciplinary group drawn from several Arts and Sciences departments, as well as a number of the professional schools. The departments and schools that support it, in which departments the faculty members reside, are ones you will not find surprising: history; political science economics, in the Arts and Sciences; the Law School; the Business School; the School of Public Health -- and I apologize to the ones I’ve left out. This is a one-year master’s degree program, Master of Arts program. It’s thirty points, which is ten courses taken in two semesters, a full year of full-time study at Columbia. The structure of the program is that, of the ten courses, there are three foundational courses, which are courses that are put together by the faculty on the Committee for Global Thought. There is a detailed syllabi for these courses, reading lists and the like, faculty members with names attached to them, were
part of the proposal. The three courses are Global Governance, Global Political Economy, and Global Culture and Politics, Issues in Secularism, Diversity and Identity. Roughly speaking, the broad topics are sort of international law, the United Nations, and the like -- economics, finance, the international economy, and culture and politics. I think it’s fairly self-explanatory.

That’s three of the ten courses. There are, then, five courses from an approved list of courses. These courses are already being taught, for the most part. Then there’s a master’s thesis, which is the remaining two courses. The support for this -- there’s a faculty director, a Columbia faculty member, who’s already agreed to do it. There’s a program director, a Ph.D. position, who will both teach in the program and also supervise and administer it. And, of course, you have your thesis advisor for your master’s degree. For me, one of the key pieces of this was the [unclear] the preexisting group of about a dozen very distinguished faculty members on the Committee for Global Thought, who have already signed on, to make sure that this works. So this was reviewed by the Education Committee. We thought it was one of the strongest master’s degree programs we’d seen, and we support it.


Brendan O’Flaherty: I’m wondering whether any of the courses are in the economics department, at the graduate level.

Applegate: I think so.
O’Flaherty: I’m the director of graduate studies in the economics department, and we haven’t been consulted.

Applegate: I have a list of the courses here. I haven’t memorized it. It looked like a very reasonable set of very strong courses.

O’Flaherty: Yes. But we have enrollment requirements and classes that are full.

Applegate: Okay. There are no economics courses on the list. You bring up a very important point, and that is student access to classes with limited enrollment. The committee -- this is something that comes up on a regular basis in the Education Committee. We always ask about it, but we didn’t have to in this case, because they thought of it already. We’ve either gotten written agreements among deans’ departments about having access to the students in this program -- they’re going to start with fifteen per year. They don’t expect huge demands, because they’re not all going to take the same courses, except for the three foundational courses. But they’ve thought of this already, and are in the process of dealing with it. A lot of the courses are taught by faculty members on the Committee on Global Thought, or postdocs connected with this effort, so they can insure the positions of the courses.

We now have on the agenda, just for review and discussion -- because this is still ongoing by the task force, who is doing an enormous amount of work which we’re deeply grateful for. We’ll be talking about the smoking policy. We had a town hall meeting, and Dan O’Flaherty will just be giving us a brief update. It’s for discussion only, and you can come here. Come on, Dan. You can do it. No one’s going to throw things, Dan. You know that this is a long-debated issue, and one that the Senate has had much discussion around. And Dan has taken on the task of the smoking task force, and it’s currently under consideration [unclear] current proposals.

O’Flaherty: Hi. I’m new to the Senate -- which is probably why I’m here. The smoking task force has been meeting for the last few months, considering various things. Dr. Lee is the chairman of the task force, but he’s operating this afternoon. We’ve tried to come to a consensus within the committee, and we think we have the beginnings of a consensus. We are not done with our work, but we promise -- cross our hearts and hope to die (really hope to die) -- that we will get done on time.

First, what we are putting forward we’re calling a Smoking Reduction and Control Policy. It is not a ban policy, it is a policy on reduction and control. It has three components. The first is an active smoking cessation program for every constituency within the university. Some of them, we know, are in place; we have to make sure they’re in place for all of them. Second is active publicity and implementation, once the thing happens. Some of the members have distinct plans; we’ve been talking a lot about that. The third part is that smoking would be permitted only in designated areas, those areas to be designated very carefully. This is the beginning of the policy.
We’re going to flesh it out more. We’ve had some discussions; we’ve had some disagreements, but the members of the task force are, for the most part, on board with this. It’s vague, but we’ll make it sharper as we go. We do not intend to overstep our bounds, we intend to respect the prerogatives of the administration. We are not going to be drawing lines designating which square foot is good and which square foot is bad. That’s why we’re going to get done on time.

O’Halloran: Any questions -- brief questions -- right now? Yes.

Daniel Savin: One of the issues I see with the current policy is the lack of enforcement. So one of the things I would ask is if the task force does return a recommendation to have designated smoking areas, that along with that they also include a proposed mechanism for enforcing the non-smoking in the other areas of campus. I walk down campus and I see people leaning next to the no-smoking signs, smoking. So I think that’s a big issue. That will determine whether or not the policy succeeds.

O’Flaherty: We will talk about enforcement. Again, we can only recommend to the administration. The University Senate has not given us permission to use their drone force yet.

O’Halloran: Nor is it likely. However, clearly, enforcement. The other part of this is also encouraging cessation programs, making those widely available to people; also making sure the signage is clear. If it’s big enough, you can’t hide it when you’re standing -- so those are the types of things that will help enforcement, and change the culture toward one that really respects people’s rights, in a reduced-smoking environment.
O’Flahery: We will be thinking about that, especially in the ideas of changing the culture. There are quite distinct limitations on what the university can do, and we want to work within those.

Student: How much of the feedback from the town hall is being incorporated? Have you guys met since the town hall, and how much of that is being considered? Was it productive? Was it what you expected to hear? Can you comment on that?

O’Flaherty: I can comment on it personally, not for the task force. We have not met, I can say. We’ve been trying to meet, but there are a lot of schedule problems. A lot of it was stuff that we expected to hear, but we have some new, I think -- a lot of specific comments. For instance, the Lamont issue was very informative; the feelings about smoking reduction and so on; the repetitious -- again, the issues of enforcement; the problems of enforcement. Some of it was new. I’m not sure that people at the town hall understood precisely where we were going, because there are some things that are new in this world, and I think part of the reactions at the town hall were to previous debates, not to what’s on the table now. But that takes time. I’m not upset about that.

Sam Silverstein: It seems to me that the university should end up with a policy that says that it recognizes smoking as one of the most serious health hazards in the world, to everyone, both smokers and nonsmokers; and that if you do not come up with a university-wide ban on smoking, and make it explicit in that statement -- something to the effect that we are making sincere efforts to help people who are addicted to cigarettes break the habit -- I think the
university ultimately needs to come down on the side of a clear statement that this is a disastrous public health menace.

O’Halloran: I think that’s important. One more question.

Jessica Angelson: Jessica Angelson, Nursing School. With all due respect, I feel that I have to disagree with that statement. I feel that for the university to come down in that way, to make that kind of statement, is a gross over-step of its rights and responsibilities. I would strongly discourage the university from taking that tack, and I would agree that issues and enforcements surrounding the resolution that we currently have continue to be some of the most pressing issues. I continue to be a little bit unclear about how if, as you say, this task force wouldn’t get involved in saying beyond this line, this is what’s acceptable, and beyond this line this is not acceptable. I’m not sure how it would amount to a different policy than what we have presently, if the task force would be recommending, literally, specific areas in which it was exactly clear this was where smoking could take place. That would be different. So I want to voice my objection to that statement, and also a plea for some clarity on distinguishing this resolution from the present policy.

O’Flaherty: The distinction, one, is heavy emphasis on cessation. Two, a serious discussion of implementation that we hope to have. And three, a more nuanced presentation of which areas are and are not acceptable. As far as not drawing absolute lines, I think we will provide guidance to the administration on how to draw lines on either procedures, or principles for drawing lines. But there are only five of us. We have lives, and the members of the Senate have lives, too. Drawing
every line throughout the campus is not something we are capable or willing to do in the next month.

O’Halloran: And there are some things we will not be able to deal with immediately, such as some of the codes, the building codes; such as the infrastructure -- whether you could actually build something there. There’s a lot that has to go into play. So bringing in, delegating that authority with some clear criteria I think will be one of the best things we can do, as well as having the task force follow up, working with Facilities, etc., to come up with feasible locations where possible. Right now, we don’t know. I don’t think the task force knows, and I don’t think Facilities hasn’t really sat down and looked part, by part, by part. That would be a difficult exercise. So my sense is we can still move forward -- and we should -- whatever the task force -- when the resolution comes forth, we will debate that and move forward. But these are some of the considerations they have ongoing, which, I think, are appropriate. And I do respect your opinion, and I thank you very much.

Okay. I’m going to say we have closure for today. Thank you very much, and we are adjourned.

[End of meeting]