

**INTERIM REPORT OF THE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SENATE
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
FOR 2005-2006**

One of the recurring issues faced by the Physical Development Committee is to understand the various forces and considerations that determine how academic planning and space considerations, and capital projects intersect. At a university laboring under a long history of space constraints, how is it determined whose space needs get met when? How does a new facility successfully evolve from awareness of need to the allocation of funds, hiring an architect and ordering materials?

In recent years, in the course of its regular business, the committee has struggled with these questions. This year, we focused on analyzing these issues systematically, in order to construct a schematic model – no matter how imperfect – of the process. We saw several potential benefits in doing so – all of which are magnified by the impending Manhattanville development. Establishing the process would:

- Give all members of the University community a clear sense of how priorities are set and important resource allocations are made.
- Provide the President and Administration with a useful tool in communicating with University constituencies regarding physical development issues.
- Support vigorous and fair competition for scarce resources among all sectors of the University community by making “the rules” more transparent.
- Allow for comparison with peer institutions and general best practices, and for suggestions and improvements.
- Provide a framework for a Senate role in the physical development process.

For this task, the Committee decided to focus on the Northwest Corner science building as a case study. In our six meetings we spoke to the following people, who have played key roles in different parts of the planning cycle for the Northwest Corner:

- Prof. John Morgan, member of two of the committees that first identified the need for a new science building in 1999-2000
- David Hirsh, Executive Vice President for Research, who led the effort to crystallize the programmatic vision for the building

- Prof. Ann McDermott, Associate Vice President for Science Initiatives, who has been responsible for communicating with faculty about the project, and for determining the building features needed to support the programmatic vision.
- Joseph Ienuso, Executive Vice President for Facilities Management, who is responsible for the physical process of design, budgeting, construction and maintenance of the building. (In a second visit, Mr. Ienuso detailed the reorganization of his office.)
- Albert Horvath, Executive Vice President for Finance, who is responsible for developing and executing the financing of the building's construction.

All of these individuals was exceptionally forthcoming in their comments to the committee, and provided detailed information regarding the academic planning and physical development process from their perspective.

Having collected its information, the committee will now work over the summer to analyze its data and produce its findings, which are expected to include a descriptive schematic of the physical development process, strengths and weaknesses of the process with proposed improvements, and recommendations regarding the Senate's role in the process. The Committee looks forward to sharing its findings with the full Senate, the Administration, the Trustees' Buildings and Grounds Committee, the faculty and the larger University community.

Respectfully Submitted,

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