

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

UNIVERSITY SENATE
STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Dear candidates for the University Senate,

Congratulations on your interest! The University Senate is Columbia University's highest legislative and policy-making body, second in governance only to the Board of Trustees, with representation from all of Columbia's constituencies, including faculty, students, administration, research officers, and alumni. The Student Affairs Committee, a body of twenty-five elected Senators and observers, represents all 30,000 students from all of Columbia's nineteen constituent and affiliated schools.

Service at the highest levels of University governance is a serious process, and the privilege of representing one's school is a great honor. We have put together this document to give you an idea of the expectations commensurate with the office. We hope this will serve as a guide as you assess your candidacy and progress in your leadership here at Columbia University.

Keep in mind that as a University Senator, you are co-equal in rank and position as with any other member of the Senate, including senior faculty and administrative leaders. Your personal conduct, at all times, should reflect the highest standards of professionalism. You should feel free and open to engage in substantial matters with broad implications across the entire University. Remember that as a Senator, you are not a "student leader of the University", but rather a "University leader who happens to be a student".

Some of you are currently active in your respective student councils. We applaud your involvement, but ask that you keep conscious and try to avoid any "role confusion" between your potential future role as a Senator, accountable to your constituency and to the student body across the University at large, and your role as a council member accountable to your council leadership. The Senate is a policy-making body, not a student council. As a University Senator, you will be working with Senators from across all the schools of the University, sometimes addressing matters that have little direct relevance to your constituency.

Some Senators have addressed this by serving as observers on their council, while others take on very limited responsibilities. How you address your role on your respective council while simultaneously serving as a Senator is ultimately up to you and your council. The Student Affairs Committee prizes its positive relationships with the student councils, and strives to do all it can to alleviate any possibility of role confusion and conflict of interest.

The following are the standards University Senators should expect from each other as colleagues, leaders, and mentors. We begin with a list of concrete expectations that all Senators are—at very minimum—expected to deliver. These standards are not meant to be all-inclusive or restrictive, but instead a framework that will foster respect, understanding, and trust while promoting individual initiatives and accomplishments. However, these are clear expectations that you may have of other Senators and they will have of you.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

UNIVERSITY SENATE
STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

As a University Senator and university leader, you will be expected to dedicate a substantial amount of your time to Senate activities. We have assembled the following concrete expectations which should serve a minimum standard for all full-time students who take on the role.

Senate Meetings: You are expected to attend all plenary meetings and all meetings of the Student Affairs Committee, which fall on the same day, usually a Friday. The Student Affairs Committee also hosts a leadership retreat at the beginning of the fall and spring semester, holds occasional special meetings to discuss pressing issues, and hosts the Board of Visitors once per year. Attendance at all of these meetings is mandatory.

Committee Service: You are expected to serve on at least one standing committee of the Senate apart from the Student Affairs Committee. These committees meet monthly, at different times. You are expected to report regularly on the activities of the standing committees and your personal involvement back to the Student Affairs Committee. Attendance at all of these meetings is mandatory.

Notice: In unusual and exigent circumstances, absences from Senate plenary and committee meetings are unavoidable. In these rare cases, you are expected to inform the all of the committee chairs and Senate staff involved promptly and in advance.

Initiatives: The Student Affairs Committee takes on a number of substantial initiatives each year, some of which are multi-year in tenor. We expect you to take active and substantive roles in advancing these initiatives. These initiatives have the ability to dramatically alter student life and advance student interests at Columbia University.

Time: A conservative estimate of the time commitment required for all of these concrete responsibilities is 15 or more hours per month, substantially more if you serve in any leadership roles within the Student Affairs Committee or the Senate as a whole.

We have assembled this document to clearly communicate the high standards and expectations commensurate with University Senate service. We hope they are useful to you, both in assessing, and in advancing, your candidacy. Keeping the best interests of your constituency at heart and in mind is essential to successful Senate service. Should you have any further questions about the Senate, it would be our pleasure to address them. Please write to us at asksenate@columbia.edu.

With the very best wishes for your continued success, we remain,

Sincerely yours,

The Student Affairs Committee of the University Senate