

University Senate
Committee on Campus Planning and Physical Development
Annual Report 2014-2015

The committee held eight monthly meetings, six led by chairman Ronald Breslow and two led by vice-chairman David King. We generally had guests who presented reports and were involved in our discussions. On occasion we reviewed the proposals by the Physical Assets Committee of the Columbia University Board of Trustees. After a discussion of the supporting arguments for their specific proposals, we were able to vote our support for them.

Among our guests were Safwan Masri, Executive Vice President for Global Centers and Global Development, and Jacqueline Sitterle, Chief of Staff, Office of Global Centers. We heard about the present centers, and the plans for future ones, and broadly discussed the program. We also heard from Prof. Michael Tuts, Chair of the Physics Department, who described the history of Pupin Hall and the current progress of significant renovation, sorely needed. He remarked that contributing to the discovery of the Higgs Boson was simple compared with living and working in an ongoing renovation. Our committee was quite supportive of the need for renovation of such an important facility.

We also had a meeting with two faculty members who work in the Northwest Corner building (NWC), Assistant Professor of Chemistry Luis Campos and Professor of Chemistry Xiaoyang Zhu. They were accompanied by Joseph Mannino, Vice President, Capital Project Management. The two chemists had worked previously in first-rate chemistry departments elsewhere, at UCLA and at University of Texas at Austin. Thus we asked for their evaluation of NWC compared with their previous experiences, and both were enthusiastic about the NWC labs and offices. However, they did bring up a number of areas in which the NWC could be even better. For example, the tile floors in the Campos labs are not solvent-resistant, so spills turn them into adhesive surfaces. Prof. Zhu's work requires very precise control of temperature and humidity, which his labs at Texas had achieved, but the system in NWC is not yet up to that standard. Mr. Mannino indicated that Facilities is working with these scientists to meet the needed standards. In summary, both chemists agreed that their new labs and offices in NWC are very attractive to students, and are admired by visitors.

Another guest was Sharon Colburn, Vice President, Real Estate. Our committee pursued the question of the nature of the retail businesses surrounding Columbia, which contribute to the welfare of both students and nearby resident faculty. Where are the clothing stores for students, for faculty? Compare this with the situation near most other universities, as in Cambridge or Philadelphia or New Haven or Princeton. In Manhattanville the ground floors of the academic buildings are intended to be retail, including restaurants, but is there a plan that involves the needs of our students and locally resident faculty? (I did mention this problem to another faculty member, who said that she has teenage daughters so she is glad that there are not good clothing stores for students nearby!)

We had a meeting with Provost John Coatsworth, and committee member Joe Ienuso, Executive Vice President for Facilities and Operations, also played an active role in presenting plans and information. The fate of Uris Hall is at issue when the Business School moves to Manhattanville. Current plans are to retain Uris as an academic building, and with the cafeteria and the library still functioning. Mr. Ienuso went through all the site plans for Manhattanville in detail. The Business School will have a total of 425,000 square feet, compared with the 200,000 square feet of Uris, so it is much closer to the standard of rival business schools elsewhere. This makes the plan attractive even though leaving the Morningside campus has some drawbacks.

The plans for the conference center are well under way, and the Mind Brain Behavior Building and the Lenfest Center for the School of the Arts should both open early in 2017. With the maximum build-out of Manhattanville it will comprise 6.8 million square feet of space. The footprint is essentially the same size as that of Morningside but Manhattanville has taller buildings. By comparison, the Morningside campus comprises only 4 million square feet.

The guests for our final meeting were Philip Pitruzzello ,Vice President, Facilities, and Carol Becker, Dean, and Jana Wright, Dean for Academic Administration, School of the Arts. In previous meetings some committee members had raised questions about the environmental impact of the construction at Manhattanville, so Mr. Pitruzzello addressed how clean construction is and was achieved. The Environmental Defense Fund uses Columbia's work as an example of best practices.

Carol Becker and Jana Wright were both at the Chicago Art Institute before coming to Columbia. They found that the Columbia School of the Arts had inadequate facilities. The gift by trustee Jerry Lenfest, with a contribution from Katharina Otto-Bernstein and some anonymous large gifts, have made possible the construction of the Lenfest Building to house the School of the Arts. Construction is well underway. They are collaborating with the Mind Brain Behavior building, which is an immediate neighbor. When asked whether the Lenfest building would meet all their needs they replied that they also really need Prentis Hall, across 125th Street, but it would need some renovation. The new building is a great addition, but to meet the standards set by other institutions this additional space is needed.

This concludes our report.

Ronald Breslow, Chair

Campus Planning and Physical Development Committee 2014-2015		
Ten.	Charles Basch	TC
Ten.	Ronald Breslow	A&S/NS
Ten.	John B. Donaldson	BUS
Ten.	Andreas Hielscher	SEAS
Ten.	Frank Lichtenberg	BUS
Nonten.	David King <i>n-s</i>	GSAPP
Nonten.	Lisa Northrop	BAR
Stu.	Mustafa Kaymak	Arts
Stu.	Katharine Celentano	GS
Stu.	Marc Heinrich	CC
Libraries	Aline Locascio <i>n-s</i>	LIBRARIES
Admin. Staff	Jerald Boak <i>n-s</i>	Morningside / Lamont
Research Officers - Professional	Chaim Schramm <i>n-s</i>	Research Officers
Admin.	Joseph Ienuso <i>n-s</i>	Adm
Admin.	Jana Wright <i>n-s</i>	Adm
Alum.	Kurt Roeloffs	Alumnus