

Committee on External Relations and Research Policy

Annual Report 2014-2015

The Committee on External Relations and Research Policy addressed a diverse range of topics during the 2014-15 academic year, ranging from federal government research issues to the University's relationship with the local community. A diverse group of University officials met with the Committee to discuss these topics.

Federal Funding for Research: The Committee remained concerned about the flat to declining (in real dollars) federal funding for research and the growing competition for such funds. This impacts on both Columbia's external relations with federal agencies and its research policies. Rudi Odeh-Ramadan, Associate Vice President for Research Administration, updated the Committee on Columbia's topline federal funding for the past academic year and provided some insights into grant application success rates. This was in response to Committee concerns that research funding may not be keeping up with expenditures and that continuing writing and re-writing of grant applications may be detracting from teaching and even doing research itself. Dr. Odeh-Ramadan will update the Committee on research funding and follow-up with answers to some Committee members' specific questions later this year. Provost John Coatsworth and Executive Vice President for Research Michael Purdy met with the Committee and answered a broad range of questions. They acknowledged the importance of federal research funding to the University. The Committee further discussed with the Provost what some members felt may potentially be a growing divide between the medical center, which is highly dependent on NIH grants and has a very financially-focused approach to research, and the rest of the University. There was also a brief discussion about how the relocation of many scholars to the Greene Science Center will impact upon the medical center's research activities and reputation.

Community Relations: Maxine Griffith, Executive Vice President for Government and Community Affairs and Special Adviser for Campus Planning, Flores Forbes, Associate Vice President for Strategic Policy and Program Implementation, and Victoria Mason-Ailey, Associate Vice President for Planning and Community Affairs, updated the Committee on Columbia's community relations and the Community Benefits Agreement. Plans for the retail space in the Greene Science Center and how vendors would be selected were discussed also. The Committee hopes to be updated on these topics again this year.

Research Policy: Naomi Schrag, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance, and Henry Spotnitz, George H. Humphreys, II Professor of Surgery and Chair of the Drafting Committee, discussed the revised university policy on institutional conflict of interest in

research, of which the Committee favorably approved. Committee Member Nancy Reame, Professor of Nursing, updated the Committee on Columbia's efforts in the Federal Demonstration Partnership, a cooperative initiative among 10 federal agencies and 155 institutions that work together to streamline the administration of federally sponsored research. Many Committee members raised the issue of the increasing burden of research compliance matters, including effort reporting, and what steps the University could take to streamline the administrative burden placed upon faculty members. The Committee discussed also policies regarding authorship and heard from Joel Roselin, Assistant Director of Research Compliance Education. The Committee did not reach a consensus on its role in addressing authorship policy issues and may pursue this matter in 2015-16.

Submitted by

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 Committee Chair

External Relations and Research Policy Committee 2014-2015

Ten.	Howard Worman, CHAIR	P&S
Ten.	Jeanine D'Armiento	P&S
Ten.	Zoltan Haiman	A&S/NS
Ten.	Francis Y. Lee	P&S
Ten.	Eli Noam	BUS
Ten.	Brendan O'Flaherty	A&S/SS
Ten.	Nancy Reame	NURS
Nonten.	William Duggan	BUS
Nonten.	Alice Heicklen	A&S/NS
Stu.	Melissa Martinez Larrea	SIPA
Stu.	Ramis Wadood	CC
Off. Res.	Francesco Lotti	
Off. Res.	Mariangels de Planell Saguer	
Admin.	Naomi Schrag (<i>n-s</i>)	
Admin.	Karen Jewett (<i>n-s</i>)	
Alum.	Gerald Sherwin (<i>n-s</i>)	

n-s = non-senator