

**COMMITTEE ON
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY**

ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016

The committee met seven times during 2015-16.

In September, CUIT Director Gaspare LoDuca, a member of the committee, gave an update on major IT initiatives at the university. The Canvas learning management system was being considered as the successor version of CourseWorks. He also reported on PawPrint, the revamped Columbia printing system on Morningside campus, that allows users to print to any print station in the system. PawPrint has resolved many student complaints about printing. Mr. LoDuca also reported that the university was increasing the number of wifi locations, strengthening computer and internet security, and working on improvements to ARC, the university financial reporting system.

At the same meeting, Austin Wanta of the registrar's office reported that Vergil, the course registration system developed under registrar Barry Kane, had been launched the preceding March and had proved to be an effective and stable system.

In October, three student app developers spoke to the committee: Michael Ouimette, CC '16, editor in chief of the Columbia Spectator; Daniel Friedman, CC '16, vice president and publisher of the Columbia Spectator; and Dan Schlosser, SEAS '16, of the executive committee of Columbia's Application Development Initiative (ADI).

Mr. Friedman reported that he had redesigned the Spectator site the preceding summer. Spec now offered diverse products: Courses@CU, a course guide; The Shaft, a housing app; Eat@CU, a restaurant guide and rewards program; and Orientation, a general guide for new students.

Mr. Schlosser spoke about the group Campus Data, a collective of six universities that promotes open data, and about Columbia's Application Development Initiative (ADI) (adicu.com), the student tech club at Columbia, now in its sixth year of open data initiatives. The three students said they found it difficult to get data from the Columbia administration, which they had been seeking to develop various ideas for apps.

In December the committee heard from James Bossio, Assistant Vice President of Infrastructure Services; Medha Bhalodkar, Assistant Vice President of Security and Identity Management; and Joseph Rini, Director of Infrastructure Engineering and Network Support Services; as well as Gaspare LoDuca, about various infrastructure upgrades. These initiatives concerned information security, high-speed computing, improved document management to help eliminate paper, and increased server storage capacity. Hundreds of wireless access points were being added to campus-wide coverage.

The university is also exploring a replacement for the ROLM telephone system that was installed in the 1980s. It's anticipated that ultimately most university office workers will not have desktop telephones and will be able to answer university phone lines on their cell phones. But the future system will provide a unified communications platform with various digital services in addition to telephony, and will be hosted by an outside vendor.

Preserving data security continues to be a huge effort, both in providing secure storage and in educating the university community about safe computing. The institution is under continual siege from hackers worldwide seeking access to databases and to UNIs for identity theft.

The January meeting featured a presentation by Davida Sobers, Systems Analyst A, Human Resources, and Durelle Hill, Assistant Director, Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, concerning recent upgrades to RAPS (Recruitment of Academic Personnel System). This program is used for hiring faculty, professional and staff research officers and some postdoctoral researchers for full-time positions. All the departments use it and many users have found it inadequate in a number of ways. The system has been improved, and is now more searchable and able to track letters of recommendation; some navigation problems have been corrected.

The February meeting, held jointly with the Education and Libraries committees, was devoted to a presentation by Kathy Takayama, then director of the Center for Teaching and Learning. She discussed various CTL initiatives, including ways of breaking up large introductory lecture courses into small groups.

The March meeting was devoted to a discussion of upgrades to ARC, the university's financial system, with Gaspare LoDuca; Milca Meyer, Project Director, CUIT; and Paul Reedy, Assistant Vice President, Finance Service Management. ARC has been the subject of numerous complaints from users, many of which have been addressed since its initial rollout, though more remains to be done. CUIT has established advisory committees at every level of users and has been working to understand the problems users have encountered and to upgrade the system to eliminate the need for the various workarounds users have created.

The committee's April meeting included another presentation by Dr. Takayama, going more deeply into the issue of "stereotype threat" and its effect on women students in STEM fields, as well as interventions Dr. Takayama had studied that give women more confidence in those fields. Then Sen. Soulaymane Kachani of SEAS introduced his new associate, Sandesh Tuladhar, Director of Online Learning. They discussed the status of online learning at Columbia, which includes long-established distance learning programs at SEAS and some recently developed and forthcoming MOOCs undertaken in collaboration with Coursera and EdX.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Hirschberg and Matthew L. Jones, co-chairs

Information and Communications Technology Committee 2015-16

Ten.	Julia Hirschberg, co-chair	SEAS	senator
Ten.	Matthew L. Jones, co-chair	A&S/SS	senator
Ten.	Itzik Pe'er	SEAS	nonsenator
Ten.	Henry Spotnitz	P&S	senator
Nonten.	Open		
Stu.	Cameron Robertson	GSAPP	senator
Stu.	Ryan Monell	SPS	senator
Libraries	Ian Beilin	Libraries	senator
Admin. Staff	Janie Weiss	CUMC	senator
Research Officers	Nancy J. LoIacono	Research Officers - Professional	senator
Admin.	Ellen Binder	Admin.	nonsenator
Admin.	Gaspare S. LoDuca	Admin.	nonsenator
Alum.	Stephen Negron	Alum.	nonsenator