

COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND RESEARCH POLICY**ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017**

The Committee on External Relations and Research Policy addressed many issues this year. Here are some of the highlights as well as the committee's concerns regarding certain issues.

Office of Communications and Public Affairs. David M. Stone, Executive Vice President for Communications, and members of his staff reported to the committee on updates and improvements to Columbia's website. There has been an effort to improve the functionality of mobile platforms. There is also an ongoing effort to make sub-level sites more uniform with the parent site (Columbia.edu), and the Office of Communications has established a mechanism for departments, centers and even individual faculty members to create more uniform sites.

Effort reporting. Concerning research policy, the committee had a follow-up to last year's meeting with Provost John Coatsworth, EVP of Research G. Michael Purdy, and others regarding effort reporting and compensation for effort not spent on funded research projects, including time spent writing new grants. This concern is particularly critical for officers of research and also some faculty members at various schools. Prof. Purdy said a lot had been done with respect to concerns previously raised by the committee and distributed a handout with excerpts from a number of documents, which included new language in the Faculty Handbook emphasizing the necessity of departmental funding for time spent writing new grant proposals, teaching, serving on committees and performing other non-sponsored activities. There were also excerpts from the Sponsored Projects Handbook and trainings in research administration that Naomi Schrag, Associate Vice President for Research Compliance and Training, and Prof. Purdy conducted for administrators, chairs and center directors. Ms. Schrag said the new language for the Faculty Handbook would be online by the end of December 2016 and would be printed in the new edition.

Impact of SPS degree programs. In two meetings, the committee addressed how the growth of degree programs at the School of Professional Studies is affecting the University's external reputation as a high-quality academic institution. The committee met with David Madigan, Executive Vice President for Arts and Sciences, and Jason Wingard, Dean of the School of Professional Studies. Our committee also heard from some students from SPS, who alerted the committee to several significant concerns of some master's degree students.

The committee was seriously concerned that the proliferation of degree programs in the School of Professional Studies without adequate academic oversight can threaten Columbia's external brand and reputation. The committee unanimously voted on the attached document to alert the Senate as a whole to questions of academic oversight at the School of

Professional Studies and its effect on the University's external reputation and to urge the Senate to take up this matter in some manner over the next academic year.

Government and community relations. The committee met with Maxine Griffith, Executive Vice President for Government and Community Affairs, and members of her staff. Community relations seemed to be going well with excitement about the opening of the Jerome L. Greene Science Center. The main concern was government affairs, particularly the administration and Congress's plans for research funding. At that time, the consensus was that there were many questions but no clear answers. Serious concern was expressed about potential cuts to next year's budgets for NIH, NSF and other research funding agencies.

Uncertainties in research funding. Rudina Odeh-Ramadan, Associate Vice President for Research Administration, updated the committee this year on research funding across the University. Total costs for all awards to the University in FY 2016 were approximately \$1.06 billion, a significant increase over \$941.1 million in FY 2015. The main reason for this increase was that five large grants were funded in total that year rather than over the usual five-year period.

Despite Columbia's apparent success in research funding, the committee is deeply concerned about future significant cuts. The committee has been worried that certain schools place inordinate pressure on faculty members to bring in extramural research funding, including more and more facilities and administration fees for overhead. Since the committee's meeting with members of the Office of Community and Government Affairs, the Trump administration's budget for next year has proposed an 18% cut for NIH with the possibility that a large portion of this may come from reduced support for facilities and administrative support. Deep cuts to support research on climate and the environment are also proposed. Committee members have frequently discussed how large cuts to federal research funding could affect faculty morale, recruitment and tenure. They also had the opportunity this year to discuss these issues with Chris Brown, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs.

Even modest decreases in government research funding would have profound implications for Columbia's external reputation and research policy. There is a consensus among the committee members that the University should be proactive regarding possible significant federal research funding cuts. Among issues that need to be addressed is how to reduce spending on administration and facilities should there be a significant reduction in government support for them. Given the potential magnitude of the impact of proposed federal research funding reductions to the entire University, the committee feels that a "business as usual" approach of leaving matters up to individual schools and departments may not be adequate. A University-level effort should be undertaken to explore mechanisms to respond to potentially huge reductions in research funding so that harm to scholarship and education is kept to a minimum.

Sen. Howard J. Worman (Tenured, P&S)

Chair, Committee on External Relations and Research Policy

University Senate

April 28, 2017

**STATEMENT FROM THE EXTERNAL RELATIONS
AND RESEARCH POLICY COMMITTEE CONCERNING
THE SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES**

The mandate of the Senate External Relations and Research Policy Committee includes a concern for the University's external reputation as a high-quality academic institution.

Over this past academic year, we looked into a possible problem in this domain at the School of Professional Studies (SPS).

In other schools of the University, faculty with research backgrounds in a discipline propose, design and oversee the teaching of new graduate degrees, including the engagement of teaching faculty, in order to maintain academic quality.

SPS lacks this deep, primary academic oversight, and it is not the role of the Senate Education Committee to provide it, for SPS or for any other school.

SPS has greatly expanded the number of graduate degrees it grants and plans to continue to do so. This creates a potential problem: the proliferation of graduate degrees without adequate academic oversight can threaten Columbia's external brand and reputation.

Our Committee met with David Madigan, Executive Vice President for Arts and Sciences, and Jason Wingard, Dean of SPS. In that discussion, we learned of no plans to alter the SPS strategy with regard to academic oversight and quality. Our committee also heard from some students from SPS, who alerted the committee to several significant concerns of some master's degree students.

Our Committee thus wishes to alert the Senate as a whole to these questions of SPS academic oversight and its effect on the University's external reputation. We further urge the Senate to take up this matter in some manner over the next academic year.

External Relations and Research Policy Committee 2016-2017

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| Ten. | David R. Bickers | P&S | senator |
| Ten. | Jeanine D'Armiento | P&S | senator |
| Ten. | Ernest Morrell | TC | senator |
| Ten. | Mary Mundinger | NURS | senator |
| Ten. | Eli M. Noam | BUS | senator |
| Ten. | Samuel Sia | SEAS | nonsenator |
| Ten. | Howard Worman, Chair | P&S | senator |
| Nonten. | William Duggan | BUS | senator |
| Nonten. | Francesco Lotti | P&S | nonsenator |
| Stu. | Evan Garnick | CC | nonsenator |
| Stu. | Aidan Quinn | GSAS/NS | senator |
| Stu. | Cassandra Ziegler | TC | senator |
| Libraries | William Vanti | Libraries | nonsenator |
| Research Officers | Smaranda Muresan | Research Officers - Professional | senator |
| Research Officers | Sylwia Trzaska | Research Officers - Professional | senator |
| Admin. | Karen E. Jewett | Adm | nonsenator |
| Admin. | Naomi Schrag | Adm | nonsenator |
| Alum. | Gerald Sherwin | Alum. | nonsenator |