

University Senate

STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (SAC)
ANNUAL REPORT 2016 – 2017

SAC looks back on a highly productive year, including the following accomplishments.

- Advisory Committee on Socially Responsible Investing

SAC conducted robust deliberations in carrying out its regular responsibility to recommend candidates for the four student seats on the Advisory Committee on Socially Responsible Investing.

- Retreats

We planned and conducted a retreat at the start of each semester for new and returning senators.

- Interschool Governing Board (IGB)

We continued to collaborate with the IGB to their efforts to support student activities across the University, with an emphasis on bringing undergraduate and graduate students together.

- Quality of Life Report

Last fall SAC presented findings from its 2015 student quality-of-life survey to the Trustees.

Near the end of this academic year, SAC launched the 2017 quality-of-life survey; data collection will continue into next fall, with analysis to follow.

- Mental Health Initiatives

During the year Columbia was saddened by numerous deaths by suicide. SAC was at the forefront of conversations on this issue. It presented data on student suicides over the last two decades in a memorandum entitled “Mental Health: Suicide Prevention in our

Community.” SAC invited student councils across the University to submit addenda to this memorandum, which was then submitted to the central administration and the Trustees.

SAC recommended the creation of a steering committee to address campus mental health issues and services. In April President Bollinger announced the formation of such a committee under the leadership of Columbia College Dean James Valentini. The committee will rely on the expertise of the Jed Foundation, a respected non-profit focused on student mental health. SAC looks forward to hearing the Jed Foundation’s next year.

- Faculty Gatekeeper Training;

SAC raised awareness across the University of the importance of faculty gatekeeper training as an added protection for student mental health.

- Morningside Student Space Initiative

SAC provided a comprehensive proposal for the renovation of Lerner Hall, with an accompanying video. It stressed the need for more recreational space lounging and relaxing, as a benefit to student mental health.

SAC helped bring people from Undergraduate Student Life, Facilities and Operations, and Multicultural Affairs together to designate space for LGBT students and students of color in Lerner Hall.

SAC deliberations on space will continue next year.

- Community Building

--SAC worked to address concerns around Bacchanal and considered possibilities to expand that program.

In response to SAC requests:

--Campus lawns have been available for longer periods, and

--President Bollinger will use his house to host a student open house next year.

- Three Senate resolutions

SAC presented successful Senate resolutions to

- Endorse the sustainability principles of the University.
- Support undocumented students in the Deferred Action for Childhood (DACA) program, whose status became less secure after the start of the Trump administration.
- Make the Wednesday before Thanksgiving a holiday, starting in 2017 (in partnership with the Education Committee).

- Graduate student unionization

Last fall, before graduate student teaching and research assistants voted to decide whether to join a union, the Student Affairs Committee moderated three town halls (one at CUMC, two on Morningside) to discuss the issues involved. The meetings included panelists who spoke on both sides of the issue.

- Financial Insecurity Subcommittee

SAC set up a subcommittee on financial insecurity among students, after looking at data from the 2015 student quality-of-life survey. SAC strengthened relationships with groups of first-generation students on campus, as well as other organizations that deal with student financial insecurity. SAC held focus groups with students facing financial insecurity, to supplement the quantitative data of the 2017 quality-of-Life survey, which is still being collected.

- Subcommittee for Students with Disabilities (Ramond Curtis, chair)

SSD continued to bring voices to the table to make progress in the quality of life University-wide for students with disabilities across the University. They helped institute a once-per-semester event for disabilities awareness.

- Partnership with the Columbia Alumni Association

SAC worked with the Columbia Alumni Association and the Alumni Relations Committee to initiate the pilot program CU There! SAC also participated in Alumni Leaders Weekend.

SAC held a focus group on the new alumni database to help plan its roll-out for students. We've also been assisting with Volunteer Columbia, a new platform for students seeking opportunities to volunteer.

- Lion Credit Union

SAC has actively supported the development of the Lion Credit Union, a service to be made available to the entire Columbia community including students. SAC also helped It has helped bring more transparency and accountability to University deliberations about the proposed LCU.

- Next year

We offer best wishes and guidance to the incoming 2017-18 edition of SAC, whose leaders are co-chairs Josh Schenck (CC) and Sonia Nanda (Business) and vice-chair Izzet Kebudi (SEAS).

FOR THE COMMITTEE

Grace Kelley and Sean Ryan
Co-chairs

Daniella Urbina
Vice-chair

See our full roster on the next page

STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE: 2016-17

Kainen Bell		Social Work
Andrew Boyd		Arts
Ian Bradley-Perrin		Public Health
Ramond Curtis		General Studies
Sally Hull		Dental Medicine
Sarah Katz		Barnard
Izzet Kebudi		Engineering
Grace Kelley	Co- Chair	Nursing
Sonah Lee		Journalism
Daniel McConnell		P&S
Donald Mustard		Professional Studies
Sonya Nanda		Business
Aidan Quinn		GSAS/NS
James Rappaport		Columbia College
Cameron M. Robertson		Architecture
Sean Ryan	Co- Chair	Columbia College
Joshua Schenk		Columbia College
Daniella Urbina	Vice Chair	SIPA
Mark Logan Wright		Law
Bo Zhang		Business
Hanzhi Zhao		Engineering
Cassandra Ziegler		Teachers College
Cristy Vo		GSAS/SS
VACANT		GSAS/Hum.
Lee Sartain		UTS Observer