

COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND RESEARCH POLICY**ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018**

At the start of the academic year, the Committee on External Relations and Research Policy decided to devote its major effort to devising a Resolution on Freedom of Expression on Campus. The Committee felt that this issue was highly relevant to its mandate to review and recommend policies for the University's external relations involving public affairs, especially given the recent media attention to contentious speakers on campuses, including our own. Freedom of expression also affects research.

In October 2017, the Committee heard from invited guest Greg Lukianoff, president of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE). Mr. Lukianoff, a lawyer, spoke about threats to free speech on college campuses, threats that he felt had been intensifying over the past several years. His position was that colleges could do more to promote dialogue between opposing factions rather than allow them to engage in protests and heckler's vetoes. He noted his organization's ratings of American colleges and universities' protections of campus free speech. (FIRE gives Columbia a speech code rating "Yellow," which it gives to colleges and universities "with at least one ambiguous policy that too easily encourages administrative abuse and arbitrary application.")

Over the next few months, the Committee debated various aspects of a proposal defending free expression on campus, especially for guest speakers, and proposing a series of town hall meetings on contemporary issues. This was spearheaded by Sen. Eli Noam (Ten., Business). The resolutions were intended to complement a resolution from the Faculty Affairs Committee regarding academic freedom in the classroom. The Committee ultimately decided to work jointly on a resolution with the Student Affairs Committee with Sen. James Piacentini (Stu., GSAPP), a member of both External Relations and Student Affairs, playing a key role as a mediator between the committees. This effort led to a final Resolution in Support of Freedom of Expression on Campus that the Senate unanimously passed (without abstentions) at the February 23, 2018, plenary. The resolution uses the First Amendment as a guideline for principles that govern University speech and also outlines the creation of town hall meetings in which students can discuss ideas and respond to speakers. After passage, the Committee had some questions regarding how this Resolution will be implemented.

The Committee received its annual update from Executive Vice President for Communications David Stone and his team about University communications, specifically its reception to the redesigned university website. The Committee was generally impressed by these efforts. (The Committee really appreciates its annual updates from David, who will be stepping down from this role at the end of September.) The Committee also received an update from Vice President for Government and Community Affairs Karen Jewett (who is also a member of the Committee). Accompanying Ms. Jewett at this meeting were Tricia Shimamura, Senior Project Coordinator, Government and Community Affairs; Flores Forbes, Associate Vice President, Strategic Policies and Programs; and Victoria Mason-Ailey, Associate Vice President, Planning and Community Affairs.

The guests discussed the Community Scholars, Project Art, Outreach to Disconnected Youth, and other community programs supported by the office. They also described the COSMOS wireless research platform, supported by the National Science Foundation, which is testing a next-generation wireless communication system in the community. Columbia representatives have attended community meetings to explain the project and allay some neighborhood suspicions.

In April, Rudi Odeh-Ramadan, Vice President for Research Administration, gave an update on research funding. Total research awards to Columbia in FY17 were \$1,080.6 million, a 1.9% increase over FY16. This was driven primarily by a 13% annual increase in NIH funding at CUMC. While the overall increase in funding is laudable in this highly competitive environment, it is barely keeping up with the core inflation rate. Ms. Odeh-Ramadan also noted that CUMC is testing a new financial application called MyGrant, which is easy to use and gives a snapshot of the funds for all of a principal investigator’s projects. It will soon be rolled out at Morningside as well. MyGrant apparently addresses a major deficiency of ARC system that many funded researchers have complained about.

At the end of the academic year, the Committee revisited the School of Professional Studies (SPS), including the new Columbia “campus” opening in San Francisco. Several members of the Committee joined members of the Budget Review and Education Committees on a subcommittee to further look into the expansion and academic oversight of SPS.

Howard J. Worman
 Chair, Committee on External Relations and Research Policy

External Relations and Research Policy Committee 2017-2018				
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Ten.	Mary Gamble		SPH	senator
Ten.	Eli M. Noam		BUS	senator
Ten.	Samuel Sia		SEAS	nonsen
Ten.	Howard Worman	Chair	P&S	senator
Nonten.	William Duggan		BUS	senator
Nonten.	Megan Mroczkowski	Vice Chair	P&S	senator
Stu.	Yu Cheng		GSAS/HUM	senator
Stu.	Julie Yoshimachi		NURS	senator
Stu.	James Piacentini	Vice Chair	GSAPP	senator
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Research Officers	Smaranda Muresan		Research Officers - Professional	senator
Admin.	Karen E. Jewett		Administration	nonsenator
Admin.	Naomi Schrag		Administration	nonsenator