

Student Affairs Committee 2017-2018

The 2017-2018 Student Affairs Committee (SAC) of the University Senate, led by Co-Chairs Joshua Schenk (CC'19) and Sonya Nanda (BUS'18) and Vice Chair Izzet Kebudi (SEAS'19), is excited to report on a productive and successful school year. We are proud of our work on behalf of our constituents and progress made in creating real and lasting change that will benefit students across all schools for years to come. Among the most exciting developments this year:

Lerner Hall Renovations

SAC was pleased to announce the grand opening of the Food Bank at Columbia in newly rededicated space in Lerner Hall, as well as oversee the relocation of the computer lab in Lerner and the creation of new student reservable and lounge space. This major update, the continuation of a SAC project from the previous academic year, will benefit Columbia students for many years.

Quality of Life Survey and Report

The Committee relaunched the survey in the fall semester and collected a record number of responses from students across all schools and demographic groups. In the spring semester, the data was analyzed and compiled into the 2018 Student Quality of Life Survey Report, which was presented to the full Senate at the March plenary. Findings showed that students were overall more satisfied with their Columbia experience overall, though still unhappy with fitness services, space on campus, and some aspects of mental health.

Subcommittee on Students with Disabilities

For the second consecutive school year, SAC operated the Subcommittee on Students with Disabilities, led by Senator Ramond Curtis ('18GS). Since the creation of the subcommittee, students with disabilities have reported higher rates of satisfaction with their Columbia experience. After thorough investigation, the subcommittee recommended the creation of dedicated testing space for students with disabilities as well as an online portal through which accommodation requests can be processed.

Dodge Fitness Center and Mental Health Investigation

A team of senators and staffers investigated the connection between the condition of Dodge Fitness Center and the mental health condition of students on campus. After meeting with administrators in the Department of Physical Education, the team developed a list of recommendations for the improvement of Dodge Fitness Center.

CUthere! Expansion

A joint project between SAC and the Columbia Alumni Association, Cuthere! is a new program which allows Columbia students and alumni from all schools the opportunity to interact with each other during the summer, all over the world. This year, the program completed its successful inaugural run and the infrastructure to ensure its future success, including a new website, was built.

Academic Freedom Resolution

SAC, in conjunction with the Faculty Affairs Committee, presented to and passed through the full Senate a resolution reaffirming the principles that govern academic freedom on campus. This important document continues Columbia's legacy as a place where ideas can be freely exchanged with respect and compassion for all viewpoints and sides of every issue.

Resolution in Support of Freedom of Expression on Campus

SAC, in conjunction with the External Relations Committee, presented to and passed through the full Senate a resolution in support of freedom of expression on campus. This important document reaffirmed Columbia's commitment to remaining a venue for free and open dialogue.

Faculty-Student Relationship Policy Update

In partnership with the Faculty Affairs Committee and the Commission on the Status of Women, SAC presented to and passed through the full Senate an amendment to the Faculty-Student Relationship Policy placing a complete ban on relationships between faculty and undergraduate students. This important update preserves the academic integrity of the University and allows undergraduates to focus fully on their coursework without the risk of romantic overtures from their instructors.

2018-2019

SAC is pleased to announce that in the coming academic year the committee will be co-chaired by Senators Kira Dennis of Barnard and Art Benoit of the Business School, with Senator Indira Martinez of the School of Social Work as Vice Chair. The new committee leadership will continue with projects born of the 2018 Quality of Life Survey Report, help guide conversations surrounding the ongoing issue of graduate student unionization, and pursue exciting and necessary new projects of their own. We wish the new chairs well and are glad to be leaving SAC in such good hands.

It has been our true honor to serve our constituents and the entire Columbia community in our capacity as SAC chairs this year. We would like to thank our esteemed colleagues, the Senate staff, and our own SAC student staffers for their assistance and support in helping our committee reach its goals. We are proud of our accomplishments this year and confident as ever in the future of SAC and the Columbia University community.

Joshua Schenk (CC'19)
Co-Chair, SAC 2017-2018

Sonya Nanda (BUS'18)
Co-Chair, SAC 2017-18

Izzet Kebudi (SEAS'19)
Vice Chair, SAC 2017-18

Student Affairs Committee Membership

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