

December 13th, 2024 University Senate Plenary Overview

On December 13th, 2024, the University Senate held its fourth plenary for the 2024-2025 academic year. As a reminder, all Plenary material can be accessed through [this link](#) for the University community.

Senator Jeanine D'Armiento, Chair of the Executive Committee, welcomed all Senators and guests to the fourth plenary of the year. Sen. D'Armiento turned over the meeting to Interim University President Katrina Armstrong.

Updates from Interim University President Armstrong

Interim President Armstrong began her remarks by thanking the Columbia community during these difficult times and emphasized the strength in diversity in dialogue at the University. She stated that her administration has begun discussing with the [Columbia American Association of University Professors \(AAUP\)](#) as well as the newly formed Campus Access Advisory Committee. President Armstrong added that her administration has been looking at all aspects of the student experience, particularly highlighting the importance of connections between students and faculty. President Armstrong then took questions.

President Armstrong took questions from Senators. A question was raised about the Campus Access Advisory Committee and the future plan for this committee. President Armstrong stated that Committee was just beginning its work and could potentially become a part of the [Inclusive Public Safety Advisory Committee \(IPSAC\)](#). Questions were raised about what protections and plans were in place to support international students, faculty, and staff on visas with the incoming federal administration and whether NYPD would be allowed on campus. President Armstrong responded that her administration has created working groups with experts to monitor and create plans on how the University would respond to certain scenarios. A concern was raised about the perception of a planned erosion of tenure spots for faculty and how that will affect the student experience. Another concern was raised about the lack of reflection and dialogue about the events of last year and how the University can move forward rather than the recent emphasis on discipline and rules. Finally, a question was raised about how aligned the Board of Trustees are with the plans and discussions occurring with the administration and the University Senate. President Armstrong and Sen. D'Armiento reiterated that the Board of Trustees has stated that they are committed to the shared governance model the University currently has.

Chair's Report

Sen. D'Armiento began her report by stating that the Senate would not be discussing the [three amendments listed on the agenda](#) due to their not being enough Senators present to hold the vote. Sen. D'Armiento gave a brief update on the status of the [Resolution to Address Institutional Failings Relating to the Case of R. Hadden](#) adopted on October 27th, 2023. Sen. D'Armiento stated that the Senate is working with the administration to understand the current status set out in the

[University's Response to Robert Hadden](#) from November 13th, 2023 and that she expects an update in the spring. Sen. D'Armiento added that the University Senate will be finishing their [report](#) reflecting on the events from last year and will have opportunities to discuss with the community in the spring.

Statement About Community (Student Affairs)

Senator Maria Martinez, Co-Chair of the Student Affairs Committee, read a [Statement About Community](#), with support from fellow Co-Chair and Senator Jaxon Williams-Bellamy and Vice Chair and Senator Bruce Goumain. The statement was passed by the [Student Affairs Committee](#) and addressed the recent targeting and doxing of a student Senator from the November 22nd Plenary that resulted in sexist, racist, and discriminatory harassment online against this member. Following this statement, Senator Helen Han Wei Luo read her own [statement](#) describing her experience being doxed and her requests for change from the administration.

Many questions and comments were raised by Senators. Most comments commended Sen. Luo and the other students for their bravery in speaking out about this harassment and not being silenced. Senators shared other statements and experiences of other students, staff, and faculty being doxed and the culture of fear that has spread throughout campus as a response. Specific questions were raised about Senate procedures in order to avoid future doxing, the administrations lack of action to protect community members, the effect doxing has had on the academic community, and the desire for better community norms to combat doxing from fellow Columbia affiliates.

Petition Under Section 1.m. of the University Senate By-Laws

Sen. D'Armiento next discussed the [petition](#) that had been received under Section 1.m. of the Senate By-Laws. Sen. D'Armiento stated that the Executive Committee must validate the petition before it can be referred to the relevant Senate Committee.

Update from Rules Administrator Gregory Wawro

Sen. D'Armiento next introduced Professor of Political Science Gregory Wawro who serves as the University Rules Administrator. Rules Administrator Wawro emphasized the three standards the Rules Administrator needed to adhere to: fairness, transparency, and efficiency. Rules Administrator Wawro stated that he has been attempting to achieve short-term and long-term goals. First, the University is trying to achieve resolution from cases from last year. Second, the University is trying to process current protests and demonstrations this semester. For longer-term goals, Rules Administrator Wawro hopes to rebuild trust with the [Rules of University Conduct](#). He added that the volume of protests and demonstrations since last year has resulted in rethinking about how to change Rules Administration. As part of these changes, Rules Administrator Wawro announced the creation of the Office of Rules Administration that will have full-time staff, new training for Delegates, and enhanced communication in the future. He

also discussed the importance of meeting with elected University representatives to shape the new Office. Rules Administrator Wawro then took questions.

A question was raised about protection for Delegates from harassment and doxing, given incidents from last year. Rules Administrator Wawro responded that he is engaging with community members and Delegates to work on this issue and will have new trainings for Delegates, as well as enhancing partnerships with Public Safety. Another question was raised about the distinction between protests that occur on-campus vs. off-campus and how student groups can be held responsible for off-campus protests. Rules Administrator Wawro responded that events that are held off-campus and not University-sponsored events would fall under the jurisdiction of the NYPS, not the University, and that student groups are not under the jurisdiction of the Rules of University Conduct, only individuals. A final question was raised about how to improve upon protecting students from discrimination along race, ethnicity, gender, and class identities. Rules Administrator Wawro responded that Title VI and IX violations are not under the Rules of University Conduct but handled instead by the [Office of Institutional Equity](#), which the Office of Rules Administration meets weekly with to clarify where each case should be handled.