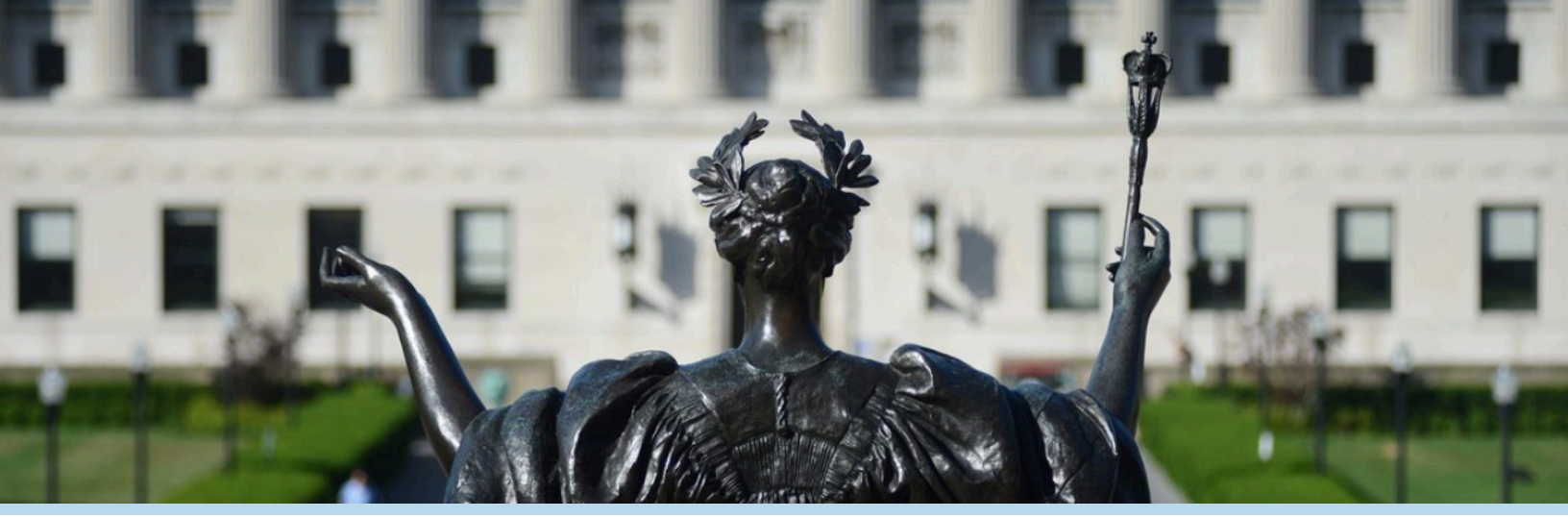


2026–2027 SESSION

University Senate Plenary

Friday, October 23, 2026

1:15 PM · VIA ZOOM

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SENATE

University Senate

Proposed: October 23, 2026

Adopted: October 23, 2026

University Senate

Friday, October 23, 2026 at 1:15 p.m., via Zoom

Registration required

After registering you will receive a confirmation email with meeting details.

PROPOSED AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Adoption of the minutes of October 2, 2026
3. President's report and questions
4. Chair's report and questions
5. Old business:
   a. Resolutions (Structure and Operations)
      i. Resolution to Amend the University Senate By-Laws to Establish Term Limits on Committee Chairs' Service
      ii. Resolution on Transition Provisions for the Amendment to Establish Term Limits on Committee Chairs' Service
      iii. Resolution to Refer the Resolution to Establish Term Limits on University Senate Service Back to the Structure and Operations Committee
      iv. [If not referred] Resolution to Amend the University Senate By-Laws to Establish Term Limits on University Senate Service
6. New business:
   a. Resolutions and statements:
      i. Resolution to Approve an Academic Program Leading to the Master of Science in Biogenic Buildings (GSAPP) (Education)
      ii. Statement on Protection of Student Status and Financial Affordability (Student Affairs)
   b. Committee reports and updates:
      i. Research Officers Committee Annual Report 2025-26
      ii. Commission on the Status of Women Annual Report 2025-26
      iii. Annual Officers' Benefits Update 2027
7. Adjourn

University Senate

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Minutes of the Meeting of October 2, 2026

87 of 104 University Senators were present.

The University Senate Plenary was called to order at 1:15pm. President Jennifer L. Mnookin welcomed everyone to the first Plenary of the 2026-2027 session and turned the floor to Senator Jeanine D'Armiento (Ten., P&S), Executive Committee Chair. Sen. D'Armiento reminded attendees that only Senators may vote via the raise hand icon in the reaction tab on Zoom and that recordings are not permitted in Plenary meetings.

Senators adopted the agenda.

Senators adopted the minutes of July 16, 2026.

President's Remarks

President Mnookin stated that she was now three months into her role and had continued a broad program of meetings and community engagement. She cited participation in undergraduate move-in day, convocation, and the New Student Orientation Programs (NSOP) events; Morningside Lights on September 19; the World Leaders Forum programming; a visit to the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory; and a reception for new faculty.

The President stated that it was a significant relief that the proposed revisions from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to the rules governing federal grants and other federal financial assistance had been temporarily halted, noting that Columbia had lobbied in partnership with other institutions. She stated that other federal actions continue to pose serious risks to the University's research enterprise and that legal action remains an important mechanism for halting some of them, at least temporarily.

The President addressed the recent news from Cornell and noted that October is Sexual Violence Awareness Month. She emphasized the importance of building and sustaining a culture of sexual respect at Columbia and across higher education, and she stated that it was important to regularly review Columbia's policies and resources, including its campus-based sexual violence response program. She noted that the Presidential Advisory Committee on Sexual Assault (PACSA), developed in partnership between the administration and the Senate and chaired by Melanie Bernitz, continues its work and may present at a future Plenary.

The President stated that Provost Angela Olinto's team has focused on supporting international students affected by changes to Curricular Practical Training (CPT), potential changes to Optional Practical Training (OPT), and the broader climate, with resources directed through the International Students and

Scholars Office (ISSO) and within each school. She said that this was a significant priority and spoke directly to international students to say that the University is glad they are here and wants them to feel a strong sense of belonging.

The President reported that the membership of the Task Force on Shared Governance had been announced, reflecting nominations from across the community and including several people with knowledge of the Senate, and that its work was underway. She stated that the membership of the Campus Access Advisory Committee, which will advise her and University leadership on the best ways to make campus more open, was being finalized and would include students, staff, faculty, alumni, parents, and, for the first time, local community members who are not Columbia affiliates, with initial invitations sent earlier in the week. She noted that access had been expanded in modest but important ways, including more guests permitted for all CUID holders and a new access services kiosk at the Broadway entrance. She further noted that about 1,200 neighbors have been given permanent, non-expiring QR codes.

The President announced that Mike Andreasen, formerly of UNC Chapel Hill, had joined the University as Executive Vice President for Alumni Affairs and Development, that the search for the head of CUIMC was about to officially launch, along with a search for the chief administrative and operating officer. She stated that she was developing priorities but was not yet ready to share them, and that she believed they should be rooted in existing strengths of the institution and priorities of community members. The President then took questions.

Sen. Katherine Brown (Stu., Undergraduate, SEAS) asked how the University planned to move forward with undergraduate expansion. She stated that engineering students had raised concerns about dining capacity and the increasing use of spaces outside the main campus for required courses, including Knox Hall, which creates transportation challenges, and religious buildings, including the Kraft Center. She noted that students in other schools had reported that there was an effort to move classes online due to assumed space constraints. She asked what concrete plan exists to ensure that infrastructure grows at the same pace as enrollment, including expanding dining capacity beyond Chef Mike's, increasing classroom capacity on the Morningside campus. She also asked what plans there were to address differing school-level responses to capacity constraints, whether the University would hold the size of the incoming class at its current level for the next admissions cycle, and what safeguards would prevent another year of enrollment growth or over-admission. The President responded that she appreciated the importance of the undergraduate experience and acknowledged the unexpectedly high yield rate. She noted that the University was on-track to meet the commitments announced last spring by Acting President Shipman regarding capacity increases, including additional tenure-track searches, additional academic advisors, expanded late-night and weekend dining hours and seating at Chef Mike's, and expanded Senior Dining seating and options at Faculty House. She stated that she had inherited a plan that went through several iterations, that her first priority is to make good on those commitments, and that meeting them should not be the end of the story.

Sen. Andrew Puthumana (Stu., CC) noted that the semiannual report under the federal resolution agreement had been released the previous day, and that items on admissions data (item 18) and

international student applicants (item 21), listed as in progress in April, were now marked as satisfied. He observed that the changes included a new admissions question asking applicants why they want to study in the United States and asked how answers to that question are used in evaluating applicants, if at all, and whether the monitor had commented on the change. The President responded that she was aware that applicants are asked this question but would need more information from Admissions on how it is used in a holistic review process, committing to follow up.

Sen. Madeleine Gordon (Stu., Graduate, SEAS) referenced the filing by the mayor's office stating that the city would sue if College Walk was not immediately opened to the public, and asked whether the University planned to comply, and, if not, how it planned to maintain good relations with the mayor's office. The President responded that the University is in active conversation with the City, including on this issue, and that the University must look carefully at how to move toward openness in a way that is safe and successful. She stated that she believes everyone can get there, and that a strong relationship with city officials can be maintained.

Sen. Gerard Ateshian (Ten., SEAS) asked about the Senate's role in approving new academic degree programs at the BA and BS levels. He stated that, under AAUP standards, a board or administration should reject a faculty decision on core academic matters only in exceptional circumstances and with clear, compelling written justification. He noted that in March 2026 the New York State Education Department approved a new BA in Global Affairs and Public Policy, yet there is no evidence that the program was reviewed and approved by the Senate, and that the Provost's Office website now states that new BA and BS programs do not require approval by the Senate Education Committee. He stated that this contradicts Section 24 of the University Charter and Statutes, updated in August 2026, which provides that the Senate, subject to the reserved power of the Trustees, shall prescribe, by concurrent action with the appropriate faculty or administrative board, the conditions upon which degrees, including BA degrees in Columbia College, Barnard College, and General Studies and BS degrees in Engineering, Nursing, and General Studies, shall be conferred. He asked whether the President would agree to work with the Provost's Office to remove the contradictory statement from its website.

The President responded that the question concerned internal processes that predate her arrival, but that her understanding was that new majors have generally not come to the Senate as a whole and have instead gone through a variety of subcommittees, which has been the practice for a considerable time and was followed in this case. She stated that she strongly believes in shared governance and that faculty governance over majors and programs of study is appropriate, and that the Senate's unusual array of voting constituencies also bears on how procedures for academic programs should be considered. She acknowledged that she was not fully informed about the procedures followed before her time and invited Provost Olinto to speak.

Provost Olinto stated that the University operates under contradictory texts and that, according to the history she had been given, the process for undergraduate programs is the purview of the Committee on Instruction (COI). Sen. Josef Sorett, Dean of Columbia College, stated that majors for the BA degree come through the Columbia College and General Studies Committee on Instruction, which he co-chairs with

Dean Lisa Rosen-Metsch and which includes 12 faculty members and four students. He stated that the proposal received significant attention over the past year, when questions about the Senate's jurisdiction arose in a way that had not occurred in more than a decade; that he and Dean Rosen-Metsch met and corresponded with the Senate Education Committee and the Student Affairs Committee, which he described as the first time in at least four or five years that such consultation had taken place for a major; and that he remained agnostic about the question of jurisdiction.

Sen. D'Armiento stated that, for clarity, the proposal was submitted to the New York State Education Department before it went through any internal committees, that the Senate does not review majors, and that the controversy arose because the proposal was perceived as a new program involving a professional school that required state approval. Provost Olinto stated, for the record, that the state application followed conditional approval from the COI, and Sen. D'Armiento responded that conditional approval is not approval. President Mnookin stated that the exchange showed why clarity about internal processes going forward is important, and Sen. D'Armiento agreed. Dean Rosen-Metsch added that this was not the first major involving a professional school, citing majors with the School of the Arts, the Climate School, and the School of Engineering, and that undergraduates had taken courses at the School of International and Public Affairs before the program was proposed. Sen. D'Armiento stated that those cases differed in structure, that the Senate expects clear processes to be followed in the future, and that she raised the point only to explain why Senators focused on this program.

Sen. Sean Eren (Stu., GSAPP) asked about the announcement on July 28, via podcast, of this fall's opening of the Columbia Tel Aviv Global Center, which he stated followed three years of protest and a faculty petition after the center was first announced in April 2023. He asked why the center was opened without an official announcement and despite community opposition, how it is being funded given recent financial difficulties, and how Palestinian students, staff, and faculty will be able to participate in its academic programming. The President responded that the center was announced and begun quite some time ago, paused in part because of circumstances in the broader world, and that the recent announcement simply un-paused it. She noted that all the University's global centers should offer a robust array of activities reflecting a variety of perspectives and noted that several centers are in places with political controversy.

Sen. Joseph Slaughter (Ten., A&S/HUM) stated that, according to the resolution monitor's report issued the previous day, the University had made its second payment under the agreement with the federal government. He cited the whistleblower complaint filed last month accusing the Department of Justice of not dealing fairly with universities such as Columbia, as well as the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights report released on September 28, which he encouraged all Senators to read. He stated that, while Columbia was not one of the schools sampled, the report describes parallels with those schools and suggests that federal procedures were not followed, and that Title VI was leveraged inappropriately. He asked whether there was any discussion at the level of the President, the Office of General Counsel, or the Trustees about revisiting the agreement. The President responded that she had read about the whistleblower's claims and understood the concerns, but that Columbia entered into a contractual agreement in which it did not admit wrongdoing and that later descriptions of events within the federal government likely do not affect its binding legal nature. She stated that the administration's departure

from agency protocol is a significant concern and that the federal elections in November may change this.

Sen. Simon Ogundare (Stu., P&S) stated that current students, including himself and other graduate students in his constituency, have had their IDs rejected at campus gates multiple times since the start of the semester. He stated that the problem appears more widespread than he originally thought and asked whether efforts are being made to address it. The President responded that there would certainly be an effort to address this, that she had already shared the matter with a member of her team to better understand how widespread the problem is.

Sen. Rebecca Xu (Stu., SSW) thanked the President for mentioning Cornell and noted that Columbia has also been mentioned in those conversations in reference to the Carry That Weight movement in 2015, in which she took part as an undergraduate. She asked how Columbia's sexual harassment policies have changed since then and what specific safeguards have been implemented to protect victims of sexual assault. The President responded that she understood that the University made a set of changes and enhancements to its internal resources and policies in the aftermath of that movement. She stated that Columbia now has the most comprehensive campus-based sexual violence response program in New York State and the only campus-based rape crisis center in the State certified by the Department of Health, and that reporting processes have been strengthened. She stated that the University should continue to ask what more it should do, and that she would welcome an update from Melanie Bernitz at a future Plenary and the creation of additional spaces for input beyond PACSA.

Sen. Liane Bdair (Stu., CC) reiterated Sen. Eren's point that the University had not addressed how it would ensure that Palestinian students and students of certain ethnicities can attend the Tel Aviv Global Center, stating that she and other Palestinian students would likely face legal obstacles to attending. She also asked about the fossil fuel report released over the summer, which concluded that divestment would conflict with academic freedom, stating that many students see this reasoning as an excuse to avoid divestment and that it contradicts student polling and the University's messaging on ethical investing and research. She asked for the administration's thoughts and how the University would respond to students who feel their concerns were set aside. The President responded to the first part of the question, stating that she would ask how the University can ensure that all students have access at the global center, noting that the University works in several countries with policies that limit entry for some people. Regarding the fossil fuel report, she stated that it was released shortly before she began. She stated that disclosure of research funding sources is important, but that a policy barring funding from sources risks infringing academic freedom and limiting whom members of the community may engage, and that universities should be wary of closing doors completely as a matter of policy. She stated that rules of this kind should be workable regardless of whether the people applying them share one's values, and that disclosure, rather than formal restrictions, is often the better path.

Sen. Victoria Frye (Ten., SSW) thanked the President and stated that she would be serving on PACSA. She identified herself as a rape crisis counselor and trainer of rape crisis counselors and invited student Senators to contact her about the issue. The President thanked Sen. Frye for her service on that

committee and thanked Senators for their questions. She then returned the floor to Sen. D'Armiento for her Chair's report and to preside over the remainder of old and new business.

Chair's Report and Questions

Sen. D'Armiento welcomed Senators and thanked them for volunteering their time. She stated that the 2025-2026 academic year had closed with many concerns and that the new year opened with additional challenges. She cited visa challenges for international students and scholars, including a move away from duration of status, changes to CPT, and the pausing of visa interviews. She thanked the Provost's Office and ISSO for their efforts to keep the community informed, as well as President Mnookin for her comments. She also noted changes in student loan practices, including lowered borrowing limits and a move toward private lenders, with potential interruptions in funding and higher borrowing costs for students. She stated that the Senate was working closely with the administration on this issue, and asked Senators who work with students to be mindful of the stresses they face. She further noted the Mayor's call for the campus to reopen, possible strike action by postdoctoral workers, and the University's semiannual report under the federal resolution agreement, asking Senators to read the report and to consider bringing comments to their committees.

Sen. D'Armiento stated that the Structure and Operations Committee, working with the Executive Committee, continues its work on term limits on total Senate service and that the latest proposal, in the form of a resolution, was in the Plenary binder for discussion only, with a vote anticipated at the next Plenary, where it would require a supermajority. She added that the binder also included a resolution on term limits for committee chair service, also for discussion only, which continues the Senate's work in recent years on the Executive Committee Chair term limits and creation of a term-limited Vice Chair position.

Sen. D'Armiento then turned to the Senate's efforts to support shared governance. She stated that following the announcement of the Task Force on Shared Governance on June 23 by President Shipman, and the announcement of its membership on August 26 by President Mnookin, the Executive Committee, after reviewing the membership and discussing the question of representation with several committees and constituencies, voted to approve a Senate self-study. The self-study will engage and be composed of the full scope of Senate constituencies, including tenure-track and off-track members, research officers, non-instructional officers, and students, and will examine how the Senate currently functions and what improvements can be made. She noted that the full proposal was included in the Plenary materials and asked Senators interested in serving on the committee, which she said would likely involve a significant amount of work, to email the Senate office or her, with the intention of announcing the membership at the next Plenary.

Later in the meeting, following the introduction of the term limits resolution, Sen. D'Armiento invited questions on her report. Sen. Nasser Odetallah (Stu., ARTS) stated that students are concerned by the language used over the past several months to describe student participation in shared governance, particularly in the Senate, as unusual compared with other universities, and that students continue to hear

in private conversations and from faculty about plans and concerns regarding the removal of students from the Senate. He asked what commitments would be made to ensure that students can continue to participate in the University Senate, noting that consultation with students has contributed to the success of many policies. Sen. D'Armiento responded that she has never heard Senators discuss removing students, that students are an integral part of the Senate as set out in its founding documents, and that this is why the self-study includes students. She stated that the Senate would fight strongly to support student participation and that policies that are controversial have often moved more smoothly because student Senators gave valuable input.

Sen. David Kessler (TTOT, P&S) asked whether the self-study as written provides no guaranteed representation from the Medical Center. Sen. D'Armiento responded that this was not a correct reading, and that as on all committees, there will be a balance between uptown and downtown representation.

Approval of Senate Committee Rosters for 2026-2027

Sen. D'Armiento presented the committee rosters for 2026-2027 included in the materials. She stated that they reflect the Structure and Operations Committee's new policy on committee preferences, which Senate staff implemented in accordance with guidelines set in spring 2026. The policy requires a balance of factors, including past committee service where continuity is important, representation from multiple schools, and particular expertise, and all Senators who submitted preferences received at least one of their first three choices. The rosters were adopted with no dissent.

Resolution to Amend the University Senate By-Laws to Establish Term Limits on Senate Service (Executive; Structure and Operations)

Sen. D'Armiento introduced two resolutions on term limits, one on Senate service and one on chair service, for discussion only, noting that the Senate service resolution requires a supermajority. She turned the floor to Sen. Henning Schulzrinne (Ten., SEAS) to introduce the Senate service resolution, which was included in the Plenary packet. Sen. Schulzrinne stated that on April 23, 2026, the Trustees sent a message to the University community regarding the release of a report on an earlier review of the Senate, which recommended that the Senate consider term limits. The Trustees stated an intention to work collaboratively with the Senate to develop a concrete implementation plan, considering service to date, in time for the August Board meeting, which did not occur. He stated that, to be effective for the 2027 election cycle, the change could be made through the By-Laws or by statute, and that the Trustees are open, after consultation with the Senate, to a statutory change. He stated that the Structure and Operations Committee considered a number of ways of implementing the request beginning before the summer and arrived at the wording in the packet, which seeks to balance operational simplicity, the preservation of institutional knowledge, and the opportunity for new voices to be heard in the Senate.

Sen. Raimondo Betti (Ten., SEAS) stated that he is one of a handful of Senators who have served beyond 12 years, as fewer than 10 percent of Senators have, and asked whether the idea had originated with the Trustees. Sen. D'Armiento responded that it was stated in the Report of the Senate Review Committee and on the website. Sen. Betti stated that the lack of term limits had not been a problem before, questioned

what experience the Trustees have in running an academic institution, noting that there is not a single academic among them, and questioned why 12 years should be considered sufficient. He stated that the small share of long-serving Senators keep institutional memory alive and can provide valuable context on issues previously discussed in the Senate when they return.

President Mnookin stated that she understood a previous comment to refer to remarks she had made earlier about the Senate's array of voting constituencies and clarified that those remarks were made in reference to the AAUP statement cited in Sen. Ateshian's question, which speaks to the role of faculty, and did not express an independent view of her own. Sen. D'Armiento stated that the Senate is extremely proud to include students, that other universities are now bringing students into their senates, and that in her twelve years in the Senate she has enjoyed working with students, who bring information from the ground that helps shape good policy.

Sen. Greg Freyer (TTOT, SPH) stated that this proposal appears to come from the Trustees and is a solution looking for a problem. He stated that students have told Senators how much they rely on long-serving Senators for history and guidance, that the small number of faculty who exceed the 12-year limit, such as Sen. Betti on the Faculty Affairs, Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee, are invaluable. He stated that term limits are unprecedented, noting that almost no democratic legislatures have them. He stated that he believed the Senate was acting to please the Trustees, who might otherwise impose something, and that this is not good practice.

Sen. Ogundare stated that there have been more democratic approaches to term limits, such as those for the Chair and Vice Chair, and hopefully soon for committee chairs, and that he had heard the rationale for general term limits was the concept of concentration of power. He stated that the Senate relies on volunteers and that it is difficult to balance the need for people willing to do hard work with the need for people willing to remain for long periods. He stated that students, whose terms and degree programs are short, receive mentorship from faculty, staff, and fellow students who share institutional knowledge, that the Student Affairs Committee's views were set out in a statement, and that the proposal appeared to be a solution looking for a problem that would, in the opinion of the students in SAC, prevent the Senate from executing its work efficiently.

Sen. Puthumana stated that, as a new Senator, he understood that the number of Senators who would be affected was fewer than 10 percent, or six Senators in a 111-member voting body, and that if concentration of power among six individuals is the Senate's biggest problem, the Senate should be examined more closely. He stated that those six Senators were instrumental in his onboarding over the past several months, and that the resolution exempts several administrators from term limits, which could create a coalition of power of those not term-limited.

Sen. John Santelli (Ten., SPH), Co-Chair of the External Relations and Research Policy Committee, stated that he understood the proposal to be a request from the Trustees that needs to be taken seriously and that Sen. Schulzrinne had laid out a serious proposal, but that he agreed strongly with Sen. Freyer that it is a

solution in search of a problem. He stated that the Senate does not need to approve it, that he had not heard a good rationale over the past year for how it would improve the work or the self-governance of the Senate.

Sen. D'Armiento stated that no amendments or concerns about specific language had been raised, that the document would remain unchanged until the next Plenary, and that Senators should send comments to the Structure and Operations Committee. She stated that the resolution would come to a vote at the next Plenary and would require a supermajority.

Resolution to Establish Term Limits on Chair Service (Executive; Structure and Operations)

Sen. D'Armiento introduced the resolution on term limits for committee chair service, stating that it originated within the Senate through conversations about turnover of leadership and addressing concentration of power, and that the document was in the packet. She stated that it was open for discussion and that it would come to a vote at the next Plenary together with the Senate service resolution.

Resolution to Amend the University Statutes to Rename the Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Environmental Biology (Education)

Sen. D'Armiento stated that the next resolution required supermajority approval. She turned the floor to Sen. Ulrich Hengst (Ten., P&S) to present the resolution on behalf of the Education Committee, noting that Professor Duncan Menge, Chair of the Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Environmental Biology, was present to answer questions.

Sen. Hengst stated that the Department was founded in 2001 and that its faculty now believe a removal of the phrase "environmental biology" is in order, for reasons including that environmental biology is not a clearly defined scientific discipline, that peer institutions do not use the term, which reduces the Department's visibility and proper placement in rankings, and that faculty must explain the unusual name in letters of recommendation. He stated that the change would not impact the Department's scientific, research, or academic scope; that the Department voted unanimously for it; that the Dean of Natural Sciences, Ruben Gonzalez, endorsed it in fall 2025; that Biological Sciences had no objection; and that the Education Committee, having received no objections after presenting the proposal in the prior Plenary, unanimously approved it. He noted that the resolution would amend the University Statutes in potentially two places and would then require approval by the Trustees.

Prof. Menge added that the name change was also suggested by the Department's most recent ARC report and that the current name is too long, making it harder for people to understand. Senators had no comments. Senators voted on the resolution, which passed with 80 votes in favor, and without dissent.

Student Affairs Committee Statement on Term Limits

Sen. D'Armiento turned the floor to the Student Affairs Committee leadership to present the Committee's statement on the term limits resolutions, asking that the presentation be brief given the earlier discussion. Sen. Ogundare, Co-Chair of the Committee, stated that students had several objections to the term limits policy, including the manner in which it was brought forward and its content. He stated that they were

concerned about the length of the cooling-off period, stating that a single year is sufficient to promote competition within a constituency, and that a longer period particularly harms students, who have the least time at the institution, by removing long-tenured and experienced Senators. He stated that the Committee also had questions about the differences between parallel approaches that were more democratic to establish term limits for the Chair and Vice Chair and for committee chairs. Finally, he stated that the major concern, echoed by several speakers earlier in the meeting, was the loss of institutional memory, diverse experience, and the mentorship from which students have benefited.

Sen. Adam Cannon (TTOT, SEAS) stated that he is personally in favor of term limits and meant no offense to the small minority of Senators who would be affected, but that an idea should be evaluated on its merits regardless of where it originates. He stated that he liked the students' suggestion of shortening the interval to one year, which he believed would not cost the Senate institutional memory since a Senator could return, that the resolution had been well drafted, and that he did not expect it to pass. He stated that his main question concerned the chair term limits resolution, which he believed addresses the Trustees' concerns more appropriately, and asked that the language include implementation detail, including exactly when the clock starts, to avoid the vagueness that arose with term limits for the Executive Committee Chair. Sen. D'Armiento responded that this was being addressed.

Sen. Slaughter stated that he largely agreed with Sen. Cannon and that institutional changes need to work today, tomorrow, and in ten years, rather than being based on the current condition of the Senate. He stated that the health of the institution should be separated from the individuals affected, and that while the resolution would currently affect only six Senators, the Senate's competitive elections are a result of events on campus in the last five years and were not the case ten or twenty years ago. He stated that when he first served in the Senate he was the only tenured faculty member in the humanities, with four empty seats around him, and that power was concentrated among a very small number of people, making it impossible for a new Senator to accomplish anything. Sen. D'Armiento responded that the concerns he described are being addressed through the term limits in the proposals before the Senate, including for chairs, and that younger members have told her there was no avenue to leadership when no term limits existed.

Sen. Odetallah encouraged all Senators to read the Student Affairs Committee's statement and raised a technical concern about the chair term limits resolution. He stated that the resolution provides that no person shall be elected chair or co-chair of a committee for more than three consecutive terms or partial terms, which the students understand to imply a maximum of six years, but that chairs of the Student Affairs Committee and of other bodies serve one-year terms, creating inconsistent standards. He stated that the Committee supports the underlying goal but would be unable to support the language as written. Sen. D'Armiento responded that commissions are not covered by the resolution, only committees, and suggested that he work with the Structure and Operations Committee on the language.

Sen. Hengst stated that the argument raised each time the proposal is discussed, that term limits would affect only a few Senators, in his view as a data-driven scientist, was irrelevant, and that the small number affected should make implementation easier. He stated that term limits are necessary for the continuous rejuvenation of the Senate. Sen. Babi Kruchin (TTOT, SPS) responded to Sen. Cannon's point, stating

that whether the Senate wants term limits is a separate issue from where the idea comes from. Sen. Santelli stated that he had reviewed the Trustees' report on the Senate, which presents arguments for and against term limits and recommends only that the Senate consider them, and that, regardless of the origin of the proposal, a clear rationale for the policy had not been established.

Sen. Puthumana asked whether term limits had been debated before, when concentration of power was seemingly a bigger issue. Sen. D'Armiento responded that only in 1996 did student Senators request term limits on other Senators and that the request did not pass.

Report on Dual Degree Linking the M.S. in Climate and the M.S. in Journalism (Education)

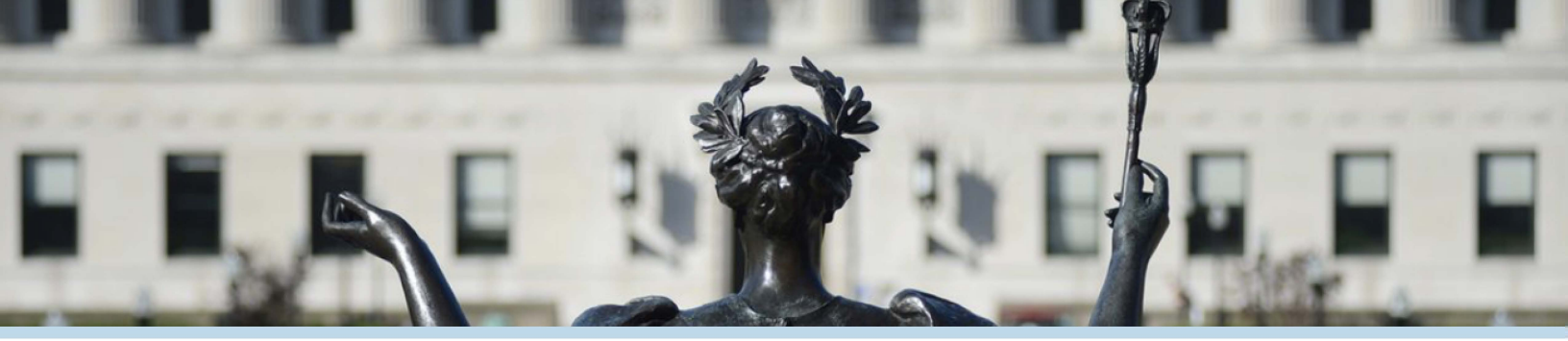
Sen. D'Armiento turned the floor to Sen. Hengst to present the Education Committee's report, for discussion and not for a vote. Sen. Hengst reported on a new dual degree linking the Master of Science in Climate with the Master of Science in Journalism, in which students will spend their first year at the Climate School and their second year at the Journalism School. He stated that the program totals 69 credits over two years, compared with 87 if the two degrees were taken separately, with 18 credits counting toward both degrees. He stated that there are no new faculty or courses apart from two small integrative seminars, and that the program is not expected to enlarge the student body, with enrollment projected at two students in the first year, rising to five at full capacity. He stated that because both degrees had previously been approved and there was no substantive change, the program requires only a report to the Plenary, and that the Education Committee voted to approve the proposal in April.

Sen. Ben Orlove (Ten., SIPA) welcomed the connection between the two schools and asked about the integrative seminars. Sen. Hengst responded that the Education Committee had requested integrative seminars in its previous review of dual degree programs involving the Climate School, and that they were incorporated proactively into this program to ensure that students do not receive two separate educations that do not connect. Sen. Freyer stated that dual degree programs should involve genuine communication between the two programs and asked whether students who complete a thesis would work across both programs. Sen. Hengst responded that the Education Committee recently established a rubric for reviewing such programs, which includes this consideration.

Sen. D'Armiento thanked Sen. Hengst and the Education Committee for their work and returned the floor to President Mnookin. The President thanked Senators for the discussions and for their service.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Senate staff



UNIVERSITY SENATE · 2026–2027 SESSION

Parliamentary Procedure Guide

QUORUM

Half of all sitting Senators (typically 90 to 111 senators). The online list of participants is the basis for determining a quorum. If you are not speaking, please try to be muted at most times.

SIGNING IN

Please rename yourself when you enter the meeting by putting "Sen." in front of your name. This helps everyone identify you as a Senator during the meeting.

VOTING

- Only Senators present may vote. "Present" means on the online list of participants during the vote.
- **How to vote:** Generally you vote by raising your virtual hand.
- **Confidential votes:** Occasionally Senators request a confidential ballot. If this happens, please make sure you have access to your CU email account so you can vote.
- **Default:** A motion passes if more Senators vote for than against it. (This always applies to amendments to motions even if the main motion requires a super-majority.)

EXCEPTIONS

- **Parliamentary exceptions:** 2/3 vote required for certain motions. The motion passes only if twice as many Senators vote for as vote against it. This includes:
  - Previous question (close debate and vote)
  - Suspend the rules (allow something normally not allowed)
  - Change the order of business
  - Limit or extend debate
- **University Senate exceptions:** Several kinds of actions require at least 3/5 of all Senators to vote in favor.

DEBATE

- Only Senators can speak, with limited exceptions (officers of schools or committee members presenting reports).
- You ask to speak by raising your virtual hand. You may speak only when the chair calls upon you. Remember to unmute yourself. Please lower your virtual hand and mute yourself when you are finished.
- **Germane:** Speak only about the merits of the motion on the floor.
- **Courteous:** Never speak ill of another Senator. Use of negative emojis has been disabled.
- **Brief:** No more than 10 minutes without permission of the Senate (2/3 vote).
- **Engaged:** No reading from lengthy documents without permission (2/3 vote).
- **Don't hog the floor:** Don't speak more than twice on same motion without permission (2/3 vote).

AMENDMENT RULES

- Must be germane to the main motion.
- Cannot just reverse the main motion.
- Can be amended only once (no amendments to amendments of amendments).
- Must be voted on before the main motion. (To postpone a vote on an amendment, you must postpone the vote on the main motion.)

SOME PRIVILEGED AND INCIDENTAL MOTIONS: ALMOST ALWAYS IN ORDER

- **Point of order:** To point out that the rules are not being followed. Chair rules on it immediately. Chair's decision may be appealed. Appeal is decided by majority vote—ties go to the chair.
- **Point of privilege (personal or general):** To point out an urgent condition preventing one or more Senators from fully participating. Chair rules on it immediately and acts.
- **Call for the order of the day:** If the Senate is not following its agenda. Chair rules immediately.
- **Adjourn:** To close the meeting.

SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS

- **Motion to refer:** The motion to refer is a subsidiary motion. It attaches to a main motion. If approved, it sends the main motion to a committee to consider. It is debatable and requires a majority vote even if the main motion requires 2/3 or 3/5.

University Senate

Proposed: October 23, 2026

Adopted: October 23, 2026

82-3-1: In favor-opposed-abstained

RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE UNIVERSITY SENATE BY-LAWS TO ESTABLISH TERM LIMITS ON COMMITTEE CHAIRS' SERVICE

Resolution Part 1

BE IT RESOLVED that the University Senate amend its By-Laws to establish limits on the service of chairs, as follows:

- **BY AMENDING SECTION 4.f. as follows:**

SEC. 4: COMMITTEES

f. Committee Chairs. Each committee, other than the Executive Committee, shall elect its chair from among its members. No person shall serve as chair of more than two standing committees, it being understood that serving as a co-chair constitutes serving as one chair. Each committee chair shall serve a term that ends at the first plenary meeting of the Senate in the second September after their election as chair, and until their successor is chosen. However, no person shall serve as a committee chair who is not a member of the committee.

No person shall be elected as a chair or co-chair of a committee for more than three consecutive terms or partial terms. A person who becomes ineligible to be elected as chair because of the number of consecutive terms that they have been elected shall not become eligible to be elected as chair or co-chair of the same committee until the second September 1 following the end of their term as chair or co-chair.

Resolution Part 2

- The Senate shall adopt transition rules for this amendment no later than December 31, 2026.

Proponent: Senate Structure and Operations Committee

University Senate

Proposed: October 23, 2026

Adopted: October 23, 2026

82-0-3: In favor-opposed-abstained

RESOLUTION ON TRANSITION PROVISIONS FOR THE AMENDMENT TO ESTABLISH TERM LIMITS ON COMMITTEE CHAIRS' SERVICE

WHEREAS The University Senate has adopted a *Resolution to Amend the University Senate By-Laws to Establish Term Limits on Committee Chairs' Service*; and

WHEREAS This resolution requires the University Senate to adopt transition provisions before December 31, 2026;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED That the transition provisions for the chairs' term limits amendment are the following:

1. This amendment shall take effect on September 1, 2027.
2. All time served as a chair or co-chair on or after September 1, 2021, shall be used in calculating all terms or partial terms of service as a chair or co-chair.

Proponent: Structure and Operations Committee

University Senate

Proposed: October 23, 2026 Adopted:

Adopted: October 23, 2026

76-1-2: In favor-opposed-abstained

RESOLUTION TO REFER THE RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH TERM LIMITS ON UNIVERSITY SENATE SERVICE BACK TO THE STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

WHEREAS there was extensive discussion and as yet no consensus reached at the October 2 plenary; and

WHEREAS the Structure and Operations Committee has respectfully requested that the Senate refer this resolution back to them;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate refers the "Resolution to Amend the University Senate By-Laws to Establish Term Limits on University Senate Service" back to the Structure and Operations Committee, from which it originated, for further study, including consideration of the effects of the “Resolution to Amend the University Senate By-Laws to Establish Term Limits on Committee Chairs’ Service,” and possible amendment.

Proponent: Structure and Operations Committee

University Senate

Proposed: October 23, 2026
Adopted: Referred back to Structure and Operations on October 23, 2026

RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE UNIVERSITY SENATE BY-LAWS TO ESTABLISH TERM LIMITS ON UNIVERSITY SENATE SERVICE

BE IT RESOLVED that the University Senate amend its By-Laws to establish term limits on University Senate service, as follows:

Resolution Part 1

- **BY ESTABLISHING SECTION. 1. p. General Term Limit**

SEC. 1: ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURE

p. General Term Limit: No person may start a term as a Senator more than six times within any 14-year period that ends on the same day as a Senate term ending date, except as provided below. The starting date for a Senate term means the date on which the records of the University Senate show the term starting. For the purpose of the term limit, terms served as a student Senator shall not be counted.

Vacancy Exception to Term Limits: Notwithstanding the term limits set forth above, a person who is otherwise ineligible to serve as a Senator by operation of that limitation may stand for election to the Senate as a representative of a constituency if, at the close of nominations, the number of eligible candidates for that constituency is fewer than the number of seats to be filled for that constituency and the constituency contains at least one person who is term-limited but otherwise eligible to serve. In that event, all such persons shall be notified and the nomination period shall be extended for no less than four and no more than seven days to receive additional nominations, including nominations of persons who are term-limited but otherwise eligible to serve.

Ex officio Senators: The Senators who serve by virtue of Section 20.a (except subsection 5) of the University Statutes do not serve terms in the sense of this section and so their service is not limited by this section. Nor does time served by virtue of these titles limit the number of terms they can serve as Senators in other capacities.

Resolution Part 2

- **BY AMENDING SECTION 3.h. as follows:**

SEC. 3: ELECTORAL CAUCUSES AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

h. In the spring of each odd-numbered year, the Senate shall nominate and elect the Chair of the Committee, and shall nominate and elect the Vice Chair of the Committee. Both officers shall take office on the following September 1. A candidate for Chair or Vice Chair must be a member of the Tenured Caucus at the time of their nomination. In addition, they must have served on the Senate at least two years in the immediately preceding four years.

   However, time in which a prospective candidate was ineligible to serve in the Senate because of term limits under Section 1.p. of these By-Laws shall not be counted against the four-year limit.

   Each nomination shall require a petition signed by at least six current members of the Senate, at least 3 of whom shall be members of the Tenured Caucus and at least 2 of whom shall not be members of the Tenured Caucus. The Elections Commission shall prescribe the format and timing of the nominations. The current members of the Senate shall elect the Chair and the Vice Chair by confidential electronic ballot as prescribed and supervised by the Elections Commission. A separate ballot shall be used for each position, and votes shall be tallied separately for each position. Each ballot shall include an option to abstain.

Resolution Part 3

- **The University Senate shall adopt transition rules for these amendments no later than December 31, 2026.**

Proponent: Senate Structure and Operations Committee

University Senate

Proposed: October 23, 2026

Adopted: October 23, 2026

77-0-1: In favor-opposed-abstained

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE AN ACADEMIC PROGRAM
LEADING TO THE MASTER OF SCIENCE IN BIOGENIC BUILDINGS
(Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation)

WHEREAS there is an urgent need to reduce buildings' contributions to carbon emissions and to train students who can become leaders in the sustainable transformation of the built environment; and

WHEREAS there is no comparable graduate program in the Northeast region, and industry partners, alumni, and professional organizations have expressed a growing need for practitioners trained in renewable material systems; and

WHEREAS the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation (GSAPP) has proposed this program to build on existing faculty expertise in biogenic materials and their relationship with architectural form and spatial organization; and

WHEREAS the program would require thirty weeks of full-time study and the completion of 33 credits, fifteen of which would be earned through a capstone Integrated Research Studio and Materials Lab; and

WHEREAS the program would expect to enroll 50 students per year when it reaches steady state, and it expects to require no new full-time faculty members and no creation of new courses beyond those already offered;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the University Senate approve the establishment of the Master of Science in Biogenic Buildings; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Education Committee shall review the program five years after its launch.

Proponent: Education Committee

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Proposal for New Degree, New Degree from Existing Track, New Certificate, or New Certification of Professional Achievement (CPA) Program

Please insert the requested information in the table below:

Degree:	Master of Science
Program Name:	Master of Science in Biogenic Buildings
If this program is currently a track in an existing program but has evolved as a stand-alone program, please indicate the program it's based on:	NA
Sponsoring School(s):	Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation
Proposed Start Date:	Fall 2027
Name and Email Address of the Primary Contact Person for this Proposal:	Danielle Smoller, ds89@columbia.edu
Date of Proposal Submission:	December 2025

Description of Proposed Program

Please complete the questions below and submit this document and the external reviewer list (if applicable) through the APAS system (https://apas.provost.columbia.edu/) to begin the review process. *Please note: Firefox is the recommended browser for APAS; functionality may be less optimal when using Internet Explorer or Chrome.*

1) Purpose

A) Describe in 1-2 paragraphs the purpose of the proposed program, its target audience, its content, and its format/pedagogical approaches.

The proposed Master of Science in Biogenic Buildings is designed to address the urgent need for sustainable buildings and climate-responsive architectural practices by focusing on the use of biomaterials in contemporary construction. The program aims to equip students with the scientific knowledge, technical skills, and design methodologies needed to innovate and scale up bio-materials, and therefore to become leaders in the sustainable transformation of the built environment. It is intended for architects, designers, material scientists, and environmentalists who are seeking to deepen their expertise in sustainable construction systems through a research-driven, design-integrated approach.

The curriculum combines applied research with studio-based learning, offering students hands-on experience through a materials laboratory and design studios. The materials laboratory serves as a site for experimentation and innovation in the fabrication and testing of biomaterials, while the design studios integrate these findings into architectural proposals and strategies for scaling up that respond to real-world ecological and social challenges. This pedagogical structure fosters interdisciplinary collaboration and emphasizes iterative design as a mode of applied research. It also incorporates an approach to systems thinking that is necessary to address the immense size and short timeframe required to have an impact on climate change. Graduates will emerge with theoretical foundations and practical skills that prepare them to advance sustainable construction in academia, industry, or policy.

B) How does the new program relate to ongoing programs? Will it replace any existing program(s)? Does the proposed program completely or partially duplicate (an) existing program(s) in any other unit of the University?

The proposed Master of Science in Biogenic Buildings is a brand-new program and does not replace any existing programs within the University. It represents a unique addition to the academic offerings, specifically tailored to the field of architecture and the built environment. While there are existing programs in materials science, biology, and climate science within the University, they do not overlap with the new program's focus on architectural design, construction, ecology, and rapidly scaling up. This program will be a pioneering initiative that fills a critical gap in sustainable design education.

2) Need

A) Why is the proposed program needed locally, statewide or nationally?

Buildings are the single largest contributor to the global carbon emissions that are driving climate change. The operational carbon of buildings—defined as all of the emissions for heating, cooling, lighting, and anything that is plugged into the wall—accounts for 29 percent of global emissions. But this number is actually decreasing, and there is consensus about the technologies, designs, and policies that will accelerate this reduction. Meanwhile, the embodied carbon of buildings—defined as all of the emissions involved in extracting, transporting, manufacturing, and assembling materials

into buildings—accounts for 11 percent of global emissions. This number is increasing, the topic is under-explored, and there is not yet agreement about the technologies, designs, and policies that will address this problem. In other words, the industry has a good plan for operational carbon, but it does not really have a plan yet for embodied carbon.

One of the best ways to reduce embodied carbon is to promote bio-materials, because they involve raw materials like plants that have removed carbon dioxide from the atmosphere through photosynthesis as they grew. Examples of these biomaterials include timber, bamboo, straw, hemp, and mycelium. While these materials are increasingly recognized as important by architecture professionals and urban policy-makers, they are still relatively new and untested, and there remains a significant gap in graduate education that integrates Biomaterials research, applied design, and strategies for scaling up. In this context, the proposed Master of Science in Biogenic Buildings addresses a growing local, national, and global demand for sustainable building practices. It uniquely positions graduates to lead in a rapidly evolving field where environmental performance is driving innovation and policy.

B) Have students at the University or elsewhere requested this program? How many?

Yes, there has been growing interest among students at the University and prospective applicants from other institutions in pursuing advanced studies that combine sustainability, material innovation, bio-design, and architecture. In recent years, faculty have received inquiries from students—particularly those in architecture and environmental design—seeking opportunities for deeper engagement with sustainable building technologies and material systems. While no formal petition has been submitted, anecdotal evidence from advising sessions, course feedback, and prospective student correspondence indicates strong and increasing demand for a program that fills this academic and professional gap.

C) If the program is professionally oriented, have persons in the profession requested establishment of the program? How have the employment needs of professionals in the field been taken into account when designing the program?

Yes, professionals in architecture, construction, and sustainability consulting have expressed strong interest in the development of a graduate program focused on Biogenic Buildings. Feedback from industry partners, alumni, and professional organizations indicates a growing need for practitioners trained in low-carbon, renewable material systems who can bridge the gap between material science and architectural application.

Architecture and construction firms—such as SOM, Henning Larsen, Arup, and Turner Construction—have established new sustainability commitments, divisions, and roles focused on using biomaterials to reduce embodied carbon. For example, SOM has created a new business called Independent Works that partners with and invests in startup companies. Many of these startups are based on sustainable bio-materials, including Prometheus Materials, developer of a new carbon-neutral concrete grown by algae. In addition, municipal, state, and federal governments—such as New York City, the state of California, and the national government of Denmark—have created ambitious embodied carbon goals that promote carbon-sequestering biomaterials and demand a new form of expertise in policy positions. For example, one recent GSAPP graduate who now works at the New York City Department of Buildings has indicated that he would like to hire graduates with the necessary expertise to help implement new embodied carbon legislation for the City. Furthermore, industry associations and organizations—such as the American Institute of Architects, the Royal Institute of British Architects, Architecture 2030, International Living Futures Institute (ILFI), and the

Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI)—have recently been advocating for the advancement of biomaterials in sustainable construction. Earlier this year, RMI published an industry report, called "Harnessing Carbon Removal Opportunities in Biomass Residue Building Products," which outlined the urgent need for new professionals to promote the rapid scale-up of bio-materials. Lindsay Baker, CEO of IFLI, announced at New York Climate Week 2025 that she used to think that biomaterials in construction were "fringe," but now she believes they are essential for the architecture industry to meet its climate goals, illustrating the importance of this topic and the need for associated expertise.

The program has been designed in consultation with these professionals and with GSAPP faculty leaders in sustainable and bio-based construction (David Benjamin, Lola Ben-Alon, Marc Tsurumaki, Lucia Allais, Mark Wigley, and Jorge Otero-Pailos, among others). It includes material prototyping, studio-based projects, and systems strategies to ensure graduates possess both technical and design expertise. This alignment with professional needs positions students for emerging roles in architecture firms, construction companies, industry associations, material startups, policy agencies, and academic research.

D) What other institutions in the New York metropolitan area and in the Northeast offer similar programs?

Currently, no other institution in the New York metropolitan area or the broader Northeast region offers a graduate-level degree program equivalent to the proposed Master of Science in Biogenic Buildings. While some universities offer individual courses or undergraduate programs that touch on biomaterials or sustainability, there is no existing master's program that integrates material science, architectural design, and scaling strategies for architectural bio-materials

Programs in biomaterials at universities such as SUNY ESF or Virginia Tech exist primarily within engineering or environmental science contexts, often focusing on materials for medical or industrial applications rather than the built environment. Similarly, while schools like the University of Pennsylvania, Yale, Parsons School of Design, and the University of Virginia conduct advanced research or offer courses on biomaterials in architecture, these efforts are not structured as dedicated master's degree programs. Therefore, the proposed program fills a unique and timely niche—bringing together bio-material innovation, architectural design, and scaling strategies in a format that does not currently exist within the University or elsewhere in the region.

3) Curriculum

A) Provide a brief summary of the program, in the form of a one-paragraph catalogue or website description.

The Master of Science in Biogenic Buildings is an intensive two-semester, 33-credit graduate program that explores the future of low-carbon, regenerative architecture through the development, application, and scaling of bio-materials. Designed for students and professionals in architecture and related disciplines, the program combines material research with applied design to address the environmental and technical challenges of contemporary construction. The fall semester (18 credits) establishes a foundational understanding through core seminars and lectures drawn from existing GSAPP architecture classes. The spring semester (15 credits) integrates research and design through a combined Studio-Lab format, consisting of a 9-credit advanced design studio and a 6-credit materials lab. Students engage in hands-on prototyping and testing to create innovative design proposals that advance sustainable building practices at scale.

B) Indicate the **minimum total number of credits** (or clock hours, as appropriate) required for completion of the program, as well as any other program requirements (e.g., final paper, field placement, capstone project). For Bachelor's programs, please indicate both the total number of credits required for graduation (e.g., 124 or 128), as well as the minimum number of credits within the major or concentration. Also note that the **minimum number of credits is 30 for Master's programs, 20-24 for Certificate programs, and 12 for Certification of Professional Achievement (CPA) programs.**

The Master of Science in Biogenic Buildings requires the successful completion of 33 graduate-level credits over the course of two semesters. The program culminates in a capstone Integrated Research Studio and Materials Lab, which accounts for 15 credits in the final semester (9 credits for the studio and 6 credits for the lab). This capstone experience is based in coursework, but also draws on student interaction with an extensive network of real-world architects, material innovators, and policy-makers in New York City and beyond. It serves as the primary applied research and design component of the degree, allowing students to synthesize material experimentation and architectural innovation into a comprehensive final project. The capstone studio and lab serve as the program's central research and design deliverable.

C) Please use the table below to list the required, elective, and selective coursework. "Selective" coursework consists of a list of courses from which a student must select a minimum number of credits (but need not take all courses on the list).

REQUIRED COURSES **Minimum number of required credits** **=** 21 pts (3 courses)	**School**	**Course Number (indicate if course is NEW)**	**Course Title & Instructor**	**Indicate whether course is fully, partially, or not at all online**	**# of Credits**
	AC	ARCHA4861 (Existing 75 % - add lab)	Footprint: Carbon + Design, David Benjamin	100% in-person	6 pts
	AC	ARCHA6913 (Existing 75 % -add lab)	ARCHA6913 Making with Earth + Lab, Lola Ben-Alon	100% in-person	6 pts
	AC	ARCHA4106 (Existing)	Studio, multiple instructors (Marc Tsurumaki, David Benjamin)	100% in-person	9 pts
SELECTIVE COURSES **Minimum number of selective credits** **= _____**	**School**	**Course Number (indicate if course is NEW)**	**Course Title & Instructor**	**Indicate whether course is fully, partially, or not at all online**	**# of Credits**
NA					
ELECTIVE COURSES **Minimum number of elective credits** **=** 12 pts (4 courses) Elective course offerings will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.	**School**	**Course Number (indicate if course is NEW)**	**Course Title & Instructor**	**Indicate whether course is fully, partially, or not at all online**	**# of Credits**

	AC	ARCHA4333 (Existing)	Transscalar Architecture : Construction Details as Cosmopolitical Enactments, Andrés Jaque	100% in-person	3 pts
	AC	ARCHA4849 (Existing)	Healthy Building Materials, Catherine Murphy	100% in-person	3 pts
	AC	ARCHA4874 (Existing)	Construction Ecologies in the Anthropocene, Tommy Schaperkotter	100% in-person	3 pts
	AC	ARCHA4875 (Existing)	Independent Tech Research, Lola Ben-Alon + Tech Faculty	100% in-person	3 pts
	AC	ARCHA6678 (Existing)	The Long History of Architecture Technologies, Lucia Allais	100% in-person	3 pts
	AC	ARCHA6714 (Existing)	Experimental Preservation, Jorge Otero-Pailos	100% in-person	3 pts
	AC	ARCHA6880 (Existing)	Towards a Trans-Species Architecture, Mark Wigley	100% in-person	3 pts
	AC	ARCHA6869 (Existing)	Nature and Infrastructure, Ateya Khorakiwala	100% in-person	3 pts
	AC	ARCHA6911 (Existing)	Metabolic Materials: Materials between the Animate and Inanimate, Michael Wang	100% in-person	3 pts
	AC	ARCHA6912 (Existing)	Emerging Optimism: Resources + the Fourth Industrial Revolution, Sean Gallagher	100% in-person	3 pts
	AC	ARCHA6913 (Existing)	Making with Earth, Lola Ben-Alon	100% in-person	3 pts
	AC	ARCHA6917 (Existing)	Seed Bombs: Technologies in Ecological Design, Emily Bauer	100% in-person	3 pts
	AC	ARCHA6951 (Existing)	Material Kitchens + Erroneous Imitations, Lola Ben Alon	100% in-person	3 pts
	AC	ARCHA6976 (Existing)	Material Diets and Thermal Performance, Olga Carcassi	100% in-person	3 pts

(Please add new rows above as needed.)

D) Provide a sample schedule showing the courses the students will take during each semester of the program. For elective or selective courses, simply enter “elective” or “selective.”

Semester 1 Fall			
Course Number & Title	**Credits**	**New?**	**Prerequisites**
ARCHA4861 Footprint: Carbon + Design (+Lab)	6 pts	Existing 75 % - add lab	NA
ARCHA6880 Towards a Trans-Species Architecture	3 pts	Existing	NA
ARCHA6678 The Long History of Architecture Technologies	3 pts	Existing	NA
ARCHA6917 Seed Bombs: Technologies in Ecological Design	3 pts	Existing	NA
ARCHA6950 Raw Materials Libraries + Cataloguing the irregular	3 pts	Existing	NA
TOTAL CREDITS FOR SEMESTER:	18		
Semester 2 Spring			
Course Number & Title	**Credits**	**New?**	**Prerequisites**

ARCHA4106 Studio (Scaling Up- Capstone Studio)	9 pts	Existing	ARCHA4861 Footprint: Carbon + Design (+Lab)
ARCHA6913 Making with Earth (+ Lab)	6 pts	Existing 75 % - add lab	
TOTAL CREDITS FOR SEMESTER:	15		
TOTAL CREDITS FOR PROGRAM:	33		

(Repeat or extend table as needed for additional semesters.)

E) Please provide the typical number of weeks in the Academic Year for this program, counting Fall and Spring semesters. Note that regulations define a "week" as any 7-day period in which ANY instructional activity occurs; this includes classes, discussion sections, labs, exam periods, and study periods. A single activity in a given week counts as a week of school. Virtually the only weeks not to be counted are orientation week and vacation weeks.
We expect the program to follow the regular Fall and Spring semesters (i.e., approximately 15 weeks per semester, 30 weeks per year).

F) Please also indicate the number of weeks IN TOTAL that it would take a typical full-time student to complete the program. For example, for a one-year MS program, which can typically be completed in Fall and Spring semesters, you would likely provide the same answer you gave immediately above (for weeks in the academic year). If a program requires 2 years of study, then you would multiply the number of weeks in the academic year by 2. If Summer terms are included, please include 6-10 weeks, as appropriate, for each Summer term.
A typical full-time student will take 2 semesters to complete the program (approximately 30 weeks).

G) Does the proposed program rely to a significant extent on courses that are offered by other parts of the University? If so, identify those courses and confirm that you have discussed course availability and capacity with the unit in which those courses are housed.
No, students can complete the MSBB degree with courses only from Columbia GSAPP.

H) For any new courses to be developed for this program, provide a draft syllabus and include information on when the courses have been or will be approved by the appropriate Committee(s) on Instruction.
All courses in the program exist and have been approved by Columbia GSAPP. Only a lab component will be added to 2 existing classes.

I) Indicate whether course credits earned in the proposed program can also be counted toward another degree or certificate.
Course credits earned in the proposed program cannot be counted toward another degree or certificate.

J) Please provide a proposed CIP code for the program. A full list of CIP codes can be found here. Please choose the CIP code that most closely aligns with the program. For CIP codes that are

defined as STEM, the University requires 75% or more of a program curriculum to be STEM-related, particularly as regards to required courses that all students need to take.
04. 0902 Architectural and Building Sciences / Technology
75% of the curriculum is related to STEM

4) Library Resources

Have you consulted with a library subject specialist about what library resources (e.g., books, databases, journals, streaming video or audio, data sets, etc.) or other support (research consultations, library instruction, etc.) you anticipate needing for this program? If yes, please list those resources expected.
We are not expecting any such needs for this program. We already have an existing technology infrastructure to support this program and the courses.

5) Faculty

A) Provide the name of the program director and the percent of time this individual will dedicate to leadership of the program.
David Benjamin will serve as the Program Director with a coordinator. They will dedicate approximately 10% of their time during the Summer 2026 terms to oversee curriculum development, instructor recruitment, and program delivery.

B) Indicate if the program will require the hiring of new faculty either at its inception or by the time it reaches steady state. If so, indicate the number of new faculty it will require, divided between full- and part-time, the subjects they will teach, and the year(s) of their initial appointment.
No new full-time faculty hires are required for the launch of this course. Instruction will be provided by existing fulltime and adjunct faculty affiliated with the March and MSAAD programs, guest practitioners from the NYC architecture community.

6) Students

A) Describe the requirements for admission to the program.
To be considered for admission to the program, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- Possession of a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution.
- Submission of a completed application form.
- Three letters of recommendation from academic or professional references.
- Official transcripts from all previously attended institutions.
- A personal statement outlining the applicant's goals, interests, and reasons for pursuing the program.
- Portfolio (optional)

B) Provide the anticipated enrollments of students in the program's first five years, and ultimate enrollment once it reaches steady state. Indicate the number of years it will take to grow the program to its full size.
Year 1: (Fall 2027) 20-30 students
Year 2: 30-40 students
Year 3: 40-50 students

Year 4 and beyond (Steady State): 50 students annually
Full enrollment is expected by Year 3.

C) If this is a dual-degree program, either between schools of the University or a joint program in collaboration with another institution, describe the support the students will receive from the participating schools or institutions and how the program will ensure that they have access to the courses and resources they will need to complete its requirements.
This is not a dual degree program.

D) Describe the types of jobs or careers for which the program will qualify its students.
A MS degree in Biogenic Buildings from GSAPP prepares students for a range of interdisciplinary careers at the intersection of architecture, sustainable design, and material science. Graduates will be qualified for roles such as:

1. Low-Carbon Materials Specialist
   - Working with architectural or engineering firms to research, specify, and implement biomaterials in construction projects (e.g., mycelium insulation, hempcrete, prefabricated straw panels).
2. Green Building Consultant
   - Advising developers or design teams on low-impact materials and construction strategies to meet LEED, BREEAM, or other sustainability certifications.
3. Architectural Designer with a Focus on Sustainable Materials
   - Applying biomaterials knowledge to design environmentally responsive buildings and detailing construction systems with renewable materials.
4. Materials Researcher or Developer
   - Innovating or improving bio-based construction products in research labs, startups, or R&D divisions of materials manufacturers.
5. Construction Project Manager (Sustainable Focus)
   - Managing projects with an emphasis on sustainable sourcing, life cycle analysis, and alternative building methods.
6. Policy Advisor or Environmental Analyst
   - Contributing to regulations, standards, or public policy related to sustainable building practices and the use of renewable resources.
7. Entrepreneur in Biomaterials for Construction
   - Launching startups focused on the design, manufacturing, or application of novel biomaterials in the building industry.
8. Academic or Educator
   - Teaching or conducting further research in universities or technical institutions focusing on the future of sustainable architecture and materials.
9. Staff Member for Industry Organization
   - Tracking and promoting Biogenic Building Construction at an organization such as the American Institute of Architects, Rocky Mountain Institute, the Global Green Building Council, or the United Nations.

This degree supports careers that align with global priorities like carbon reduction, circular economies, and regenerative design—positioning graduates to play a crucial role in the future of the built environment.

7) Online Delivery. If the proposed program will have an on-line component, answer the following questions.

A) Confirm whether the online and in-person programs will be identical with respect to content, admission criteria, student learning objectives, and assessment methods; and if not, indicate how they will differ.

The program will be offered 100% in person.

B) What percentage of the program will be offered online?

0 %

C) Please describe:

a. The on-line platform you will be using to teach this program;

NA

b. Student support resources that will be available to the on-line students;

NA

c. How you will authenticate the identity of the on-line students in the program.

NA

8) Evaluation

A) Describe how the quality of the program will be evaluated, including the frequency of the reviews and who will conduct them. Describe how student input will be obtained as part of the evaluation of the program.

The program will be evaluated by several mechanisms that are already in place at GSAPP including, but not limited to; course evaluations for all courses, regular monitoring of academic performance by the Office of Academic Affairs and meetings held each semester to ensure integration, annual student surveys collecting feedback on student experiences in the program, and alumni surveys conducted by the Office of Career Services, in order to assess perceptions of their curriculum as it relates to competency attainment and career preparation. Additionally, the directors will meet annually with the Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs to provide feedback specific to the program.

B) Include a learning outcomes and assessment plan for the proposed program, using the below template.

Program Learning Objectives (PLOs) for Students	Assessment of Learning Outcomes
Please list overall programmatic goals below.	Please indicate primary measures of student learning, which may include direct measures

	(e.g., coursework) and indirect measures (e.g., alumni outcomes).
PLO 1: Understand the Properties and Applications of Biomaterials • Gain foundational knowledge of natural and bio-based materials (e.g., wood, bamboo, mycelium, hempcrete, bio-polymers) including their mechanical, thermal, and environmental properties, as well as their performance in building systems.	Coursework + Lab- exams and pinups
PLO 2: Evaluate Environmental and Life Cycle Impacts of Building Materials • Learn to assess the ecological footprint of materials through life cycle assessment (LCA), carbon accounting, and circularity principles, with a focus on sustainability and regenerative design.	Coursework + Lab- exams and pinups
PLO 3: Integrate Biomaterials into Architectural Design and Construction • Develop the skills to design architectural projects that incorporate biomaterials effectively, considering structural performance, detailing, aesthetics, and building codes.	Coursework, Labs +Capstone Studio - pinups and reviews
PLO 4: Innovate and Experiment with Emerging Bio-Based Technologies • Engage in research, prototyping, and testing of innovative biomaterials through studio projects and lab work, encouraging hands-on experimentation and creative problem-solving.	Coursework, Labs + Capstone Studio- pinups and reviews
PLO 5: Collaborate Across Disciplines, Communities and Projects to Advance Sustainable Building Practices • Cultivate interdisciplinary collaboration skills with engineers, scientists, manufacturers, and policy-makers to implement biomaterials in real-world construction contexts.	Capstone Studio- pinups and reviews

(You may add more rows to the table above as needed.)

9) External Review for NEW Master's and Doctoral Programs.

Please provide the names of experts in the field of the program at institutions outside of New York State. Proposed reviewers should be specialists in the area of the program but should not have had an association with Columbia that would compromise the independence of their evaluations. NYSED considers that a conflict of interest exists if a proposed reviewer:

- has had an appointment at the University or is related to someone who has;
- was previously consulted about the development of the proposed program; or
- has a professional relationship with someone at the University such as collaborating on externally funded research and publications.

For new master's programs, the University must supply one external review; for doctoral programs, two external reviews are required. For this reason, please identify 3 potential reviewers for master's proposals, and 5 potential reviewers for doctoral proposals.

For each potential reviewer, include institutional affiliation, contact information and a link to the individual's website which lists his/her educational credential (including where his/her degrees were received) and employment history. If full information on degrees and employment cannot be viewed from the website, NYSED may require that we supply them with the individual's CV.

Please note that this requirement does not apply to new DUAL or JOINT degree programs, or to new BACHELOR's programs; we do not need to submit external reviews for these programs.

Resolution to Approve an Academic Program Leading to the Master of Science in Biogenic Buildings (GSAPP)

1. **Are the faculty whose courses make up the proposed program informed about the proposal?**

Yes. The full-time faculty members who teach the program's required core courses are aware of the proposal and develop the curriculum in collaboration with the senior leadership. The Adjunct faculty teaching electives have not yet been informed, as they are appointed annually and their teaching assignments may vary from year to year.

2. **The program is proposed as a Master of Science rather than a Master of Arts. What proportion of the faculty associated with the program brings scientific expertise?**

All three faculty members responsible for the required core courses, David Benjamin, Lola Ben-Alon, and Marc Tsurumaki, bring scientific and technical expertise to the program. Thus, among the faculty teaching the required core curriculum, the ratio is three out of three, or 100 percent.

The required core courses account for 21 of the program's 33 credits, or approximately 64 percent of the curriculum. The majority of the curriculum focuses on building construction systems and methods, building materials research and development, environmental performance, and related technical methods within the architectural tradition.

The Master of Science designation is also consistent with GSAPP's existing graduate degree structure. GSAPP offers seven Master of Science degrees and one Master of Architecture degree; the proposed degree is intended to align with this established framework and with the curriculum's substantial scientific and technological emphasis.

David Benjamin's work applies biology and computation to an expanded and actionable framework for environmental sustainability. By approaching buildings as dynamic systems rather than static objects, his research identifies design strategies that can serve as scalable levers for decarbonization.

Lola Ben-Alon directs the Natural Materials Lab and GSAPP's Building Technology curriculum. She specializes in socially and environmentally sustainable building materials, construction practices, and collaborations between engineering and architecture. Her research and teaching examine natural earth- and bio-based materials, craft, digital fabrication, life cycles, supply chains, and policy. She uses quantitative and qualitative methods to evaluate the embodied, thermal, and operational impacts of low-carbon building assemblies, including cob, rammed earth, and light-straw clay.

Marc Tsurumaki's work explores the architectural potential of plant- and earth-based materials. This research is reflected in his recent publication, *Manual of Biogenic House Sections*(2022). His work applies

a holistic approach to innovation in building construction, complementing material research with circular approaches to resource use, construction processes, and the long-term adaptability and recyclability of buildings.

3. **Do the courses that make up the proposed program meet the applicable contact-hour requirements?**

Yes. All courses included in the proposed program meet the applicable contact-hour requirements. Each course provides the equivalent of at least 50 minutes of supervised instruction per credit point. Studio and laboratory work is further expanded through workshops, tutorials and site visits, consistent with GSAPP's rich pedagogical palette.

Student Affairs Committee

Statement on Protection of Student Status and Financial Affordability

October 20, 2026

We, the Student Affairs Committee, would like to express our deep concern and disappointment with the senior administration regarding a series of changes that have resulted in precarity for many student populations.

We note here the following areas of concern that necessitate action from the President and other senior administrators:

1. **Changes to Duration of Status Visa Regulations:** In July 2026, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) shifted F and J visas to a "fixed time period of admission." While the rule itself is undergoing legal challenges, the result of these changes has been an intense and pervasive concern among international students at Columbia. There has been no formal, written message from the President in unequivocal support of international students nor a plan to support those potentially affected outside of referrals to the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO). A statement of this nature has true value to students and is not performative; in fact, the Student Affairs Committee believes a public commitment to international students is necessary now and a prerequisite for pushing for further protections at the federal level.

2. **Changes to Curricular Practical Training (CPT) and Optional Practical Training (OPT)**: In August 2026, the federal government indicated intensified scrutiny and stricter regulations for approval of CPT. Many international students have expressed deep concern to Student Affairs Committee Senators about their ability to complete their degrees as a result of these changes, and have noted the lack of sufficient guidance or messages of support from the administration. Further proposed changes to OPT were reported in October 2026, leaving many students worried that potentially high fees will be passed on to them.

3. **Changes to Graduate Student Federal Loans**: Changes to federal financial aid programs took effect on July 1, 2026, affecting domestic students taking out federal loans. In particular, the aggregate amount of federal loans for which graduate students are eligible has been greatly reduced. For more than a year, the Student Affairs Committee had requested that the senior administration establish a plan of action to support domestic graduate students before these changes took effect. In Spring 2026, then-Acting President Shipman assured students that a plan was in development for the 2026–27 school year. In August 2026, the Student Affairs Committee met with Columbia Finance to discuss the sole solution provided to graduate students by the university: recommendations to — in most cases — two for-profit external lenders with no assurance of low interest rates or continued eligibility in future academic terms. This raises concerns about Columbia's financial relationship with educational lenders in light of the projected

expansion in the graduate student private loan market. The Student Affairs Committee believes the university has an obligation to provide a variety of solutions, including emergency funds and flexible internal loan options, to ensure students are able to maintain continued access to graduate education.

4. **Changes to Financial Hold Policies and Enforcement**: In advance of the new academic year, students received notifications from Student Financial Services indicating that financial holds would, in addition to barring students from changing their registration, result in students being unenrolled from the semester in early September. This would undo any registration students had done prior to the financial hold and would essentially remove them from the university. To our knowledge, this is a significant departure from previous implementation of financial holds to the further detriment of students. No rationale was provided, and no announcement was shared with the larger student body.

5. **Changes to Waitlist Policy**: In late August 2026, the University Registrar notified instructors and schools of a change in policy through which students on financial hold and on waitlists for classes can no longer be registered from a waitlist, regardless of whether space opens in the class or whether the instructor wishes to admit the student. We understand that this policy change took effect without faculty consultation. This greatly affects students attempting to enroll in required and important courses while struggling to pay off holds before the semester starts. This change was not communicated to students despite immediately going into effect for the current Fall 2026 semester.

Taken together, these represent a significant change in the landscape of student access to education at Columbia and support given to students. Both international and domestic student populations face ever more precarious access to their ongoing Columbia education. The ability to enroll in courses and remain enrolled is now becoming increasingly dependent on financial resources, creating a two-tiered system while further punishing students on a financial hold.

The Student Affairs Committee continues to insist upon concrete and substantial plans for the support of all Columbia students.

Last Revised: October 20, 2026
For consideration at the October 23, 2026 University Senate Plenary

October 2026

UNIVERSITY SENATE RESEARCH OFFICERS COMMITTEE (ROC)
2025–2026 ACADEMIC YEAR ANNUAL REPORT

We briefly summarize below the principal matters the Research Officers Committee (ROC) addressed over the course of the 2025–2026 academic year.

Research Funding: Federal Uncertainty, Bridge Funding, and the OMB Proposed Rule. Unprecedented volatility in federal research funding has been an ongoing challenge for Research Officers (ROs). Members discussed the uncertain outlook for indirect cost recovery rates, challenged the absence of any further institutional stabilization or bridge-funding plan for ROs, and noted the particular vulnerability of international research officers. In parallel, over the summer, ROC collaborated with the Executive Committee and the External Relations and Research Policy Committee to call on the community to comment on the U.S. Office of Management and Budget's proposed Regulation for Federal Financial Assistance, which would elevate political considerations over peer review in funding decisions, broaden agencies' authority to terminate awards, and restrict certain conference-related costs. ROC held a joint session with the External Relations and Research Policy Committee to discuss the proposal and the University's guidance on submitting comments.

Research Professor Titles. A Research Professor track for Professional Research Officers (PROs) who are leading their own research program as Principal Investigators (PIs) on externally funded research grants remained under active discussion throughout the year. Key points in the proposal (still under development) include the ability for Research Professors to raise nine months of salary to obtain twelve months of benefits, and its existence as a parallel track alongside the existing Officers of Research titles. ROC members understand that meaningful progress on this title is urgent, given that a nine-month Research Professor appointment carrying twelve months of benefits would meaningfully reduce the precarity research officers currently face in an unstable funding environment. ROC presented a benchmarking review showing that a Research Professor title of some form is now used at nine of Columbia's Ivy and Ivy+ peers, compared to only two in 2009, when Columbia's own Lamont Research Professor title was created and limited to the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory.

Power-Based Bullying and Harassment. ROC worked with senior Administrators to ensure the development of power-based bullying and harassment policies and considered the specific issues facing research officers, including postdocs and graduate students, who are particularly reliant on mentorship and vulnerable to power-based bullying. ROs served on the Provostial Anti-Bullying Initiative and transmitted the committee’s suggestions regarding definitions of bullying and harassment as applied to research settings. Members simultaneously monitored the development of preventative measures to address bullying and harassment. Members worked with senior Administrators at CUIMC to develop mentorship training measures, as required in National Institutes of Health grant applications, monitoring the efforts to centralize training at P&S and the development of the BEAM (Building Excellence in Academic Mentorship) initiative, which provides training and certification for mentors. ROC will continue to meet with senior Administrators to monitor the development of anti-bullying policies and mentorship training programs.

Meetings with university administrators and others

- Joel Rosenblatt, Director, Network Computer Security, CUIT (18 Nov 2025).

- Prof. Eugenia Lean, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs; Prof. Jeannette Wing, Executive Vice President for Research (16 Dec 2025).
- Naomi Schrag, Vice President for Research Compliance, Training and Policy, and University Research Integrity Officer (20 Jan 2026).
- Daichi Shimbo, Senior Vice President for Faculty Affairs, CUIMC; Clara Lapiner, Assistant Vice President for Faculty, CUIMC (11 Feb 2026).
- Dr. Ericka Peterson, Executive Director, Office of Postdoctoral Affairs and Early Career Research; Rosa Chavarro, Associate Director, Postdoctoral Affairs/Early Career Research (24 Mar 2026).
- Prof. Eugenia Lean, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs; Prof. Jeannette Wing, Executive Vice President for Research (21 Apr 2026).
- Daichi Shimbo, Senior Vice President for Faculty Affairs, CUIMC; Clara Lapiner, Assistant Vice President for Faculty, CUIMC; Prof. Bernard Chang, Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine, CUIMC (23 Jun 2026).

Some issues for the coming year

- Continued advocacy for bridge and stabilization funding amid ongoing federal research-funding uncertainty
- Continued advancement of research professorships
- Implementation of anti-bullying and harassment training
- Continued review of the PI waiver process
- Reduced annual rate of increase in health care benefit premiums.
- Housing for postdoctoral researchers.
- Open access and the rising cost of journal publication and subscription fees, in coordination with the Libraries & Digital Resources Committee.

Respectfully,

University Senate Research Officers Committee 2025–2026

SEN. DANIEL WOLF SAVIN, Chair, *Senior Research Scientist*, Astrophysics Laboratory
SEN. BENJAMIN BOSTICK, *Lamont Research Professor*, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory
DHAN CARDINAL, *Senior Staff Assoc. II*, Center for Integrated Sciences and Engineering
CHRISTOPHER B. DAMOCI, *Senior Staff Assoc. II*, Herbert Irving Comprehensive Cancer Center
WILLIAM HUNNICUTT, *Senior Staff Associate II*, Civil Engineering and Engineering Mechanics
SEN. KARA LAMB, *Associate Research Scientist*, Earth and Environmental Engineering
NANCY LOIACONO, Vice Chair, *Research Scientist*, Environmental Health Sciences
VIKAS MALIK, *Associate Research Scientist*, Medical Center
SEN. ROHAN MUNOTH, *Staff Associate II,* Herbert Irving Comprehensive Cancer Center
SEN. GIOVANNI OLIVEROS, *Postdoctoral Research Scientist*, Pathology and Cell Biology
RADHA RAGHURAMAN, *Associate Research Scientist*, Neurology
SEN. MARCO TEDESCO, *Lamont Research Professor,* Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory
STEFAAN VAN LIEFFERINGE, *Associate Research Scholar,* Art History and Archaeology

Research Officers Committee (ROC) Annual Report 2025-2026

Daniel Wolf Savin, Chair
Nancy LoIacono, Vice Chair

October 23, 2025

UNIVERSITY SENATE

Overview

- University Senate
- Research Officers Committee (ROC)
- Activities in 2025-2026
- Plans for 2026-2027

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The University Senate

Policy body addressing issues affecting more than one school. Established by Trustees in 1969. Consists of

- Officers of Instruction: 63 senators
- Students: 25 senators
- Senior Administration: 9 senators
- Research Officers (ROs): 6 senators
- Officers of the Libraries: 2 senators
- Administrative Staff: 2 senators
- Alumni: 2 senators

Overview

- University Senate
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The Research Officers Committee (ROC)

Consists of all 6 RO senators plus 3 non-senator ROs, selected to achieve balance among RO ranks and across campuses.

Trustee-Approved Mandate

Considers all RO matters relating to terms and conditions of academic employment, including, but not limited to, promotion, leaves, retirement, academic freedom, academic advancement, benefits, housing, conduct and discipline, and other perquisites.

Research Officer Population (as of 10/2026)

Professional ROs (now 780, was 833 end of May 2025)

- Qualifications and contributions to fields are equivalent to parallel faculty rank, includes:
  - Lamont Research Professor of various ranks (32/7/16)
  - Senior Research Scientist/Scholar (46)
  - Research Scientist/Scholar (46)
  - Associate Research Scientist/Scholar (633)

Postdoctoral Research Scientists/Scholars (928, was 997)

Postdoctoral Research Fellows (153, was 183)

Staff Research Officers (520, was 582)

- Senior Staff Associate I, II, III (193)
- Staff Associate I, II, III (327)

Overview

- University Senate
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ROC Activities: 2026-2027

Research Funding: Uncertainty, Bridging, OMB

- RO population decreased by 9% from 05/2025 to 10/2026.
- ROC worked with Executive Committee, External Relations and Research Policy, and Senior Administrators.
- Advocated for additional stabilization or bridge funding to maintain research expertise.
- Advised ROs to provide individual comments on the proposed OMB policy changes.

ROC Activities: 2026-2027

Research Professor Titles for PRO PIs

- Principal Investigator (PI) Professional Research Officers (PROs) bring in ~10% of all external support to Columbia.
- Funding rate per capita comparable to Faculty.
- Titles already exist at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory.
- About 150 PRO PIs would be eligible.
- Some of the benefits for Columbia:
  - 100% benefits for 9 months salary adds flexibility.
  - Recruitment of more soft-money researchers.
  - Retention of those already at Columbia.

ROC Activities: 2026-2027

Frequent Meeting with Senior Administrators

- Senate is only forum that ROs have for interacting directly with Senior Administration.
- ROs do not have representation in faculty governance of departments or schools.
- ROC meets on a regular basis with Senior Administration across Columbia.
- Administration brings proposed policy changes and other issues to ROC for comments and suggested changes.
- These meetings are confidential to most fruitfully advance the work of ROC and the Administration.

Overview

- University Senate
- Research Officers Committee (ROC)
- Activities 2025-2026
- Plans for 2026-2027

ROC plans for 2026-2027

- Establish research professorships.
- Enhance operational efficiency at Columbia.
- Improve healthcare benefits and reduce annual rate of increase for health care premiums.
- Provide bridge funding for ROs.
- Enhance PRO/SRO severance policy.

UNIVERSITY SENATE	Annual Report of the Commission on the Status of Women	October 8, 2026

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) convened six times during the 2025–2026 academic year (October 2025–April 2026), meeting via Zoom. Throughout a year marked by institutional stress and uncertainty, the Commission sustained its focus on gender equity, institutional accountability and transparency, and the advancement and wellbeing of women across Columbia's campuses and constituencies.

1. Leadership and Structure

In November 2025, Dr. Monica Goldklang (P&S) and Dr. Susan Witte (SSW) were unanimously re-elected as co-chairs. The Commission welcomed new members throughout the year and reaffirmed its mission and Guidelines on Confidentiality at the start of the year. The Chairs also emphasized the importance of consistent attendance and engagement as interest in joining the Commission continues to grow.

2. Institutional Accountability and the Hadden Matter

The Commission continued to press for accountability and transparency in the aftermath of the Robert Hadden sexual abuse case, building on the University Senate's October 2023 resolution.

- In December 2025, the Commission reviewed the background of the 2023 resolution and discussed its response to a related letter, committing to continued support of those affected.
- With no report yet released, members expressed deep frustration at the persistent lack of transparency and the resulting erosion of trust, while commending students for their sustained advocacy.

- In Spring 2026, the Commission finalized and voted electronically on a letter regarding the Hadden matter, which was conveyed as a private letter to the President and Members of the Board of Trustees.
- The Hadden report was released on March 10, 2026. Following extended discussion of its shortcomings, the Commission co-sponsored the Resolution on Institutional Accountability and Governance Following the Hadden Report, which was brought jointly with the Commission on Diversity, the Faculty Affairs, Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee, the External Relations and Research Policy Committee, the Research Officers Committee, and the Student Affairs Committee, to the plenary floor where it was presented and adopted by the University Senate on May 8, 2026 (58-0-1).

Relatedly, in February 2026 the Commission discussed the Epstein files and Columbia, focusing not on judgment in the absence of full information, but on how the Commission's voice might be used effectively to address institutional transparency, accountability, and the damage to community trust.

3. Challenges Facing Women Faculty Seeking Tenure

The challenges facing women faculty seeking tenure remained a standing agenda item throughout the year. Members examined how the post-pandemic period, the hiring freeze, and pressures on international affiliates have compounded longstanding barriers to promotion and advancement. Guided discussions addressed symbolic inclusion, the distribution of invisible labor (emotional, DEI, and student-support burdens), and the institutional norms that impede women faculty and faculty of color from advancing and leading. Members identified concrete data needs, including brief summaries of the Commission's prior pipeline studies to inform Deans and Schools, data on diversity in leadership roles and recent hiring, and qualitative approaches to capture experiences across constituencies. Draft follow-up letters to deans requesting updates on actions taken since the release of the pipeline studies were prepared and reviewed.

4. Surveys and Data

The Commission discussed the **Columbia Employee Climate and Engagement Survey (CECES)**, open September 9–26, 2025, as well as the University Senate Faculty Quality of Life Survey, as sources to inform its past, current, and future work. CECES results were released during the last week of the Spring semester. The Commission will draw on these findings and on further data analyses as they become available, in setting priorities for the coming year.

5. Federal Funding and the Hiring Freeze

Members assessed the status of federal research funding, noting that while most of the funding had been restored, significant challenges remained for a number of schools, including the School of Public Health, and that the future funding outlook remained uncertain. The hiring freeze continued to pose a major challenge, and members emphasized the need for data on funding cuts and nonrenewals to understand the impact on women.

6. Collaboration, Governance, and Community Engagement

- In February 2026, the Commission voted to join the Commission on Diversity as co-proponent of its letter to Acting President Shipman.
- The Commission engaged with the Forums on University Governance held on the Morningside campus (March 26) and at CUIMC (March 31), submitting questions on behalf of the CSW concerning accountability, responsibility, transparency, reporting mechanisms, and structural change, and strongly encouraging member participation.
- Planning continued for listening sessions at both CUIMC and Morningside, in collaboration with CUIMC leadership, designed as informal, safe spaces for women across the University to share their experiences and concerns.

7. Priorities for 2026–2027

Members agreed to carry forward a focused agenda for the coming year, emphasizing:

- Gender equity in tenure, promotion, and advancement, informed by pipeline study follow-up and new data collection
- Institutional accountability and transparency, including follow through on the Resolution on Institutional Accountability and Governance Following the Hadden Report
- Launching the listening sessions and reviewing CECES results to guide the Commission's priorities

Commission on the Status of Women 2025-26 | Members[1] and Contributors

Ten.	Sen. Jeanine D'Armiento	P&S
Ten.	Sen. Chunhua Weng	P&S
Ten.	Susan Witte	SSW
TTOT	Monica P. Goldklang	P&S
TTOT	Paola Valenti	BUS
TTOT	Sen. Amy Zhou	BAR
Stu.	Alisha Deshmukh	GSAS/HUM
Stu.	Sen. Yvonne Hou	GSAS/NS
Stu.	Katherine Immergluck	P&S
Stu.	Caroline Klein	GSAS/HUM
Stu.	Sen. Mahlon Mathieson	NURS
Admin. Staff	Sen. Janie Weiss	Admin. Staff: CUIMC
Research Officers	Sen. Azzurra Cottarelli	Research Officers - Professional
Research Officers	Sen. Kara Lamb	Research Officers - Professional
Libraries	Candice Kail	Libraries
Admin. Staff	Sonia Gugga	Admin. Staff: Morningside-Lamont

[1] Including members who served part of the 2025-26 Academic Year

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
Human Resources

MY CUBenefits

2027 Open Enrollment

November 2–20, 2026

Sara Leupp
Executive Director, Benefits
Email: shl2169@columbia.edu



New and changing benefits

Progyny

Fertility, family building, menopause and midlife health

- Specialized forum: November 11, 12–1 p.m.

SupportLinc

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

- Specialized forum: November 4, 12–1 p.m.

Aetna

International Plan

- Dependent, in-network and out-of-network coverage

Wellthy

Concierge elder care services

- Dedicated support for every step of your care journey

Additional updates

Active Officers

- Opt-In for a printed Open Enrollment Brochure
- Benefits Bot
- Medical and Rx Plan Design Changes
- Medical contributions increase 6.5%. NY Metro average employer Plan increase is 9-11%
- Aetna DMO increase $0.60-$2/month; Aetna PPO $3-$8/month
- Optional vision decrease

Retirees

- Annual Officer Health Reimbursement University contribution increases 55% for 2027 to $3,250/retiree ($1,625/ covered spouse)
- Aetna replaces Anthem Support Staff Retiree Plan. Coverage includes vision exams and hearing aids

Benefits Expos, Health Screenings and OE Forums

In-Person Expos

Tuesday, Nov. 10 50 Haven Avenue (CUIMC)	8 a.m.–2 p.m.
Tuesday, Nov. 17 Lerner Hall (Morningside)	8 a.m.–2 p.m.
Wednesday, Nov. 18 Lenfest Center (Manhattanville)	9 a.m.–2 p.m.

Virtual OE Forums (Officers)

Tuesday, Oct. 27	12–1 p.m.
Thursday, Nov. 12	12–1 p.m.

Biometric health screenings

- Blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose
- Body composition, BMI, waist-to-hip ratio
- Fasting recommended, not required

All Campuses

Acupuncture and chair massages

Only at CUIMC

Financial wellbeing sessions

NEW

Morningside Campus: Nov. 17

Money 101: 10:30–11:00 a.m.
Protect What Matters Most: 1:00–1:30 p.m.

Manhattanville Campus: Nov. 18

Foundations for Your Financial Future: 10:30–11:00 a.m.
Keeping What You've Built: 1:00–1:30 p.m.

Register at **humanresources.columbia.edu/oe**

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
Human Resources

MY CUBenefits

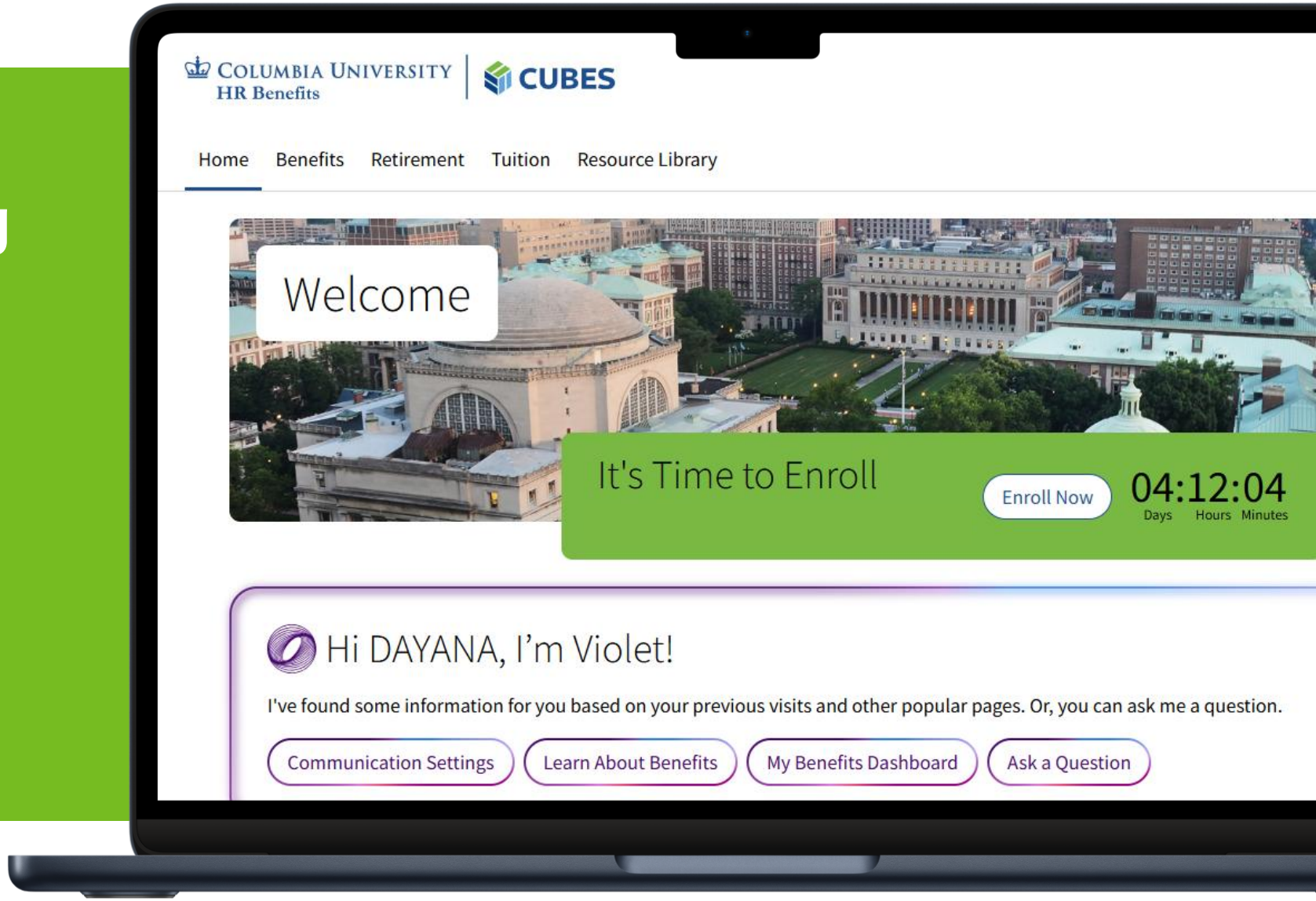
Take action during Open Enrollment

Enroll through CUBES:
November 2–20, 2026

humanresources.columbia.edu/oe

hrbenefits@columbia.edu

212-851-7000



Columbia University
Human Resources

MY CUBenefits