

University Senate

CUIMC Administrative and Support Staff Election to the University Senate 2026

Candidates' Statements

(Candidates Listed in Alphabetical Order)

There are 9 candidates in this election to one open seat in the University Senate:

1. **Nadia Amokrane** | Senior Clinical Research Manager, Department of Neurology
2. **Sarah Borden** | Clinical Research Coordinator, Department of Medicine Endocrinology
3. **Jessica Glaser** | Clinical Coordinator I/RN, Department of Radiology
4. **Lucia P. Li** | Assistant Director of Academic Programs, Department of Biostatistics
5. **Jeanine Ozoa** | Administrative Aide, Outpatient Transplant Center, Department of Surgery
6. **Michelle Rivera-Lopez** | Departmental Administrator, Department of Sociomedical Sciences
7. **Deidre Sherman** | Clinical Coordinator II/RN, Department of Radiology
8. **Raquel Y. Sotelo** | Manager of Grants & Finance, CCCEH Director of Operations, Department of Environmental Health Sciences
9. **Janie Weiss** | IT Manager, Irving Comprehensive Cancer Center



Nadia Amokrane
Senior Clinical Research Manager
Department of Neurology

My name is Nadia Amokrane, and I am a Clinical Research Manager in the Department of Neurology. In my seven years at CUIMC, I have worked across departments, collaborating with colleagues at every level to advance complex, mission-driven work.

I am running for University Senate because our administrative and support staff deserve an engaged, thoughtful voice in University-wide decisions, one that listens first and advocates always.

The issues driving my candidacy are ones I hear from colleagues regularly: rising healthcare costs that quietly erode our compensation, slow access to tuition and retirement benefits that should be easier to reach, and limited pathways for staff advancement and recognition.

I am also committed to strengthening cross-departmental communication at CUIMC. We work alongside one another every day, yet our challenges too often remain siloed. A more connected, community-centered culture makes us all more effective, and makes this a place people want to stay.

I would be honored to represent you on the University Senate and to work alongside colleagues from across Columbia in service of the people who keep this institution running.



Sarah Borden

Clinical Research Coordinator I
Department of Medicine Endocrinology

When I started working at CUMC as a research assistant in 2000, I never imagined the future would include a pandemic and threats to academic medical research from an American autocracy. In the meantime, I participated in and saw firsthand the benefits of public health and medical research, and took advantage of our tuition benefit to get my MPH at Mailman.

I've always been proud to advocate with CUMC for NIH funding and Stand Up for Science marches in DC and NYC. When the federal administration began to hold research funding hostage, CU began to collaborate with their demands, and still fired hundreds of our coworkers, I felt ashamed to be in an institution that refused to stand up for what's right.

As we see threats from the federal administration grow, we are increasingly affected at CUMC. The University Senate can address a variety of these attacks:

- Suggest alternative responses to funding challenges.
- Organize ICE response training for the healthcare setting.
- Demand timely release of reports, surveys, & information; demand appropriate consequences for CU affiliates involved in unethical & illegal activities, such as the Hadden & Epstein cases.
- Advocate for humane adjudication for student protestors, support protestors' first amendment rights.



Jessica Glaser
Clinical Coordinator I/RN
Department of Radiology

Some of the most important gaps in patient care are the ones you only see when you're directly at the bedside. That perspective is what's driving me to run for the University Senate. I'm a nurse of over 15 years and a mother of three, and I want to advocate for safer, more patient-centered care, especially for women.

I've worked my way up the nursing ladder but have always stayed close to patient care, which has allowed me to maintain that direct connection with patients. I've worked as an LPN, an RN with my associate's degree, and now with my BSN across multiple institutions. I currently work in outpatient radiology, where patients are often in vulnerable situations.

From what I've seen, policies and procedures are often changed after something goes wrong. My goal is to help shift that approach toward prevention. While roles like chaperones are in place, there are still gaps that need more attention and consistency so they do not go unnoticed.

Working both clinically and alongside administration, I understand how difficult it can be to push for change when leadership is focused on larger system goals. But these frontline concerns matter because they directly impact patient safety.



Lucia P. Li

Assistant Director of Academic Programs
Department of Biostatistics

I want to participate in the University Senate to share ideas and initiatives that can improve the experience of our students, faculty members, and staff. I think it is crucial to embrace our multicultural student population and practitioners who are steering and bringing innovation to our different professional fields. I believe that Columbia University is an amazing community that can develop and grow into a successful and thriving organization that embraces both differences and similarities. We should continue to enhance our policies, regulations, and programs to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our students. The University Senate has the responsibility to revolutionize and bring changes that will create a more inclusive culture. As a Senate member, I would strive to implement new ideas to advance our goals, practices, and policies, so we can continue fostering an environment of collaboration and fairness for our current students, newly admitted students, and future generations.



Jeanine Ozoa

Administrative Aide, Outpatient Transplant Center
Department of Surgery

I am writing to express my interest in serving on the Columbia University Senate as an employee representative. I bring nine years of experience working within our institution, currently serving as an Administrative Aide C6 in the Outpatient Transplant Clinic. In this role, I have gained a strong appreciation for teamwork, compassion, and the importance of delivering high-quality care to our patients and supporting our colleagues.

As a member of the Patient Safety Champions program, I am committed to fostering a culture of safety, accountability, and continuous improvement. This experience has strengthened my ability to identify challenges and advocate for thoughtful, practical solutions that benefit both staff and those we serve. In addition, I have returned to school to pursue my bachelor's degree in health services administration, reflecting my commitment to professional growth and a deeper understanding of healthcare systems.

I am dedicated to ensuring that staff voices are heard, respected, and included in decision-making processes. I would be honored to contribute to a more transparent, collaborative, and inclusive university environment.

Thank you for your consideration.



Deidre Sherman
Clinical Coordinator II/RN
Department of Radiology

I am interested in becoming a member of the University Senate because I believe deeply in shared governance and the power of collective voice. The collaboration of students, faculty, and staff is instrumental to accomplishing widespread efficacy. As both a lifelong student and employee, I bring a perspective grounded in lived experience. I pursued my Masters Degree in Nursing Leadership due to my passion for advocacy and ethical leadership. Leadership isn't about authority—it is about responsibility to others. We are responsible for the mother struggling to find child care, the student struggling to balance studies and work, and the professors who have lives outside of the classroom. As someone who is neurodivergent, I understand that not all needs fit within traditional structures. I have lacked representation during my own struggles, highlighting the need for equity and accessibility in both school and the workplace. Listening is a core responsibility of leadership, as is effectuating positive change. I aim to be the advocate I once needed: someone who listens, cares, and works to ensure every member of the community is seen, respected, and supported. In a world where so often we seem divided, I value togetherness as our greatest strength.



Michelle Rivera-Lopez

Departmental Administrator

Department of Sociomedical Sciences, Mailman School of Public Health

I am honored to submit my candidacy for the University Senate. During my tenure at Columbia, I have gained a rare, dual perspective by serving in both **Central Administration (Treasury Office)** and at the school level within **CUIMC**. This experience allows me to understand the complexities of high-level university policy while remaining deeply connected to the day-to-day operational realities of our faculty, staff, and students.

My advocacy is rooted in a commitment to transparency, efficiency, and equity. My current and past leadership roles include:

- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** I am an active member of the School's D&I initiatives. I was also nominated to serve on the inaugural **Accountability Committee for FORWARD**, Mailman's anti-racism and inclusion initiative, ensuring that our institutional goals result in measurable change.
- **Administrative Excellence:** I am currently serving on the **Administrative Efficiency Initiative**, where we are developing recommendations to streamline school-wide processes to make Columbia agile and a supportive workplace.

As your Senator, I will utilize my "inside-out" knowledge of Columbia's infrastructure to be a pragmatic and dedicated voice for my constituents; committed to fostering a university environment that is efficient as it is socially just.



Raquel Y. Sotelo

Manager of Grants & Finance, CCCEH Director of Operations,
Department of Environmental Health Sciences

As the Director of Operations and Finance and Grants Manager for The Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health within the Department of Environmental Health Sciences, I have spent years working in research administration, financial management, and operational leadership. This breadth of experience has given me an intimate understanding of the challenges our administrative and support staff face daily from navigating complex grant requirements and tight budgets to managing competing institutional priorities, all while striving to deliver excellence in service to our departments and the broader CUIMC community.

I am running because I believe that effective shared governance depends on having representatives who truly understand the weight of the work our staff carries out. I am not just familiar with these realities. I live them. I am ready to bring that grounded, informed perspective to the Senate table and to serve as a strong, reliable advocate for the needs and voices of our colleagues across CUIMC.

My commitment is simple: to listen, to represent, and to act with integrity on behalf of every administrative and support staff member who deserves a seat at the table.



Janie Weiss
IT Manager
Irving Comprehensive Cancer Center

I have served as IT Manager of the Comprehensive Cancer Center for over 30 years, supporting faculty and staff in advancing the research enterprise.

In the Senate, I am committed to continuing my work recognizing the contributions of administrative staff and ensuring their voices are heard. I successfully secured representation for Officers of Administration on the Benefits Subcommittee, ensuring their perspectives are included in discussions that directly impact staff.

I am working to increase the number of senators representing Officers of Administration and Support Staff and am collaborating closely with a Senate Committee Chair to understand how representation was successfully expanded for other constituencies.

Currently, I am working with the Structure and Operations Committee to clarify electioneering guidelines in the election code, ensuring that they are consistent and transparent.

I continue to push for restoring tuition benefits to a competitive level and for policies that better support staff across the University. With your support, I look forward to pursuing this work, along with my core efforts on anti-bullying and women's issues.