

AGENDA

University Senate

Friday, March 30, 2001

Schapiro Engineering Auditorium, 1:15 p.m.

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Adoption of the minutes of February 23, 2001
3. Report of the President
4. Report of the Executive Committee chairman

--Reports from Senate representatives at March Trustee meetings

5. Old business

--Resolution to Amend Statutory Provisions for the Apportionment of University Senate Seats

--Resolution to Establish a Committee on Online Learning and Digital Media Initiatives

6. New business:

--Report from External Relations:

--Update on living wage

--Discussion of the proposed K-8 Columbia School

University Senate

Proposed: April 27, 2001

Adopted:

MEETING OF MARCH 30, 2001

President George Rupp, the chairman, called the Senate to order at 1:20 pm in Schapiro Engineering Auditorium. Forty-nine of 85 senators attended the meeting.

Minutes and agenda: The minutes and agenda were adopted as proposed.

Report of the President:

At their March meeting the Trustees approved two major capital projects for the Pharmacy site, east of Amsterdam between 121st and 122nd streets. One will provide housing for law students, particularly international students in the L.L.M. program. The other is a new home for the School of Social Work, a project widely agreed to be a major step forward for the school.

The Trustees named three new University Professors: Jagdish Bhagwati and Robert Mundell of Economics and Wayne Hendrickson of Biochemistry and Molecular Biophysics.

At its first working meeting, the Committee on Socially Responsible Investing began what may turn out to be laborious deliberations: it took three hours to arrive at recommendations for the Trustees on the first two of the 80 shareholder resolutions it has decided to consider this year.

A major lobbying effort in Albany has sought maximum benefits for Columbia from a range of investments New York State will be making in science and technology.

One meeting stood out from the President's trip to Washington on March 29: Secretary of State Colin Powell and New York Congressman Jose Serrano, both from the South Bronx, seemed to agree on an innovative program that would join Hostos Community College and Columbia's Schools of General Studies and International and Public Affairs in a plan to train Latino students—to be called Serrano Scholars—for the U.S. Foreign Service.

Report of the Executive Committee chairman:

Sen. Paul Duby (Ten., SEAS) reported on the March 3 Trustees' meeting, which he had attended as an observer with Sen. Rohit Aggarwala (Stu., GSAS/SS). The main topic was President Rupp's announcement that he would resign at the end of the 2001-02 academic year. There were tributes to his accomplishments, and two Trustees emeritus, Jerry Speyer and Lionel Pincus, announced that they would establish a professorship in President Rupp's name. To conduct the search for a new president, the Trustees also chose Henry King, who as chairman of the board had conducted the last presidential search in 1992-93: a recognition not only of Mr. King's dedication to Columbia, Sen. Duby said, but also of the success of the last search.

The other main item on the Trustees' agenda was a report from the Development Office.

Sen. Duby invited senators who had attended Trustee committee meetings to report: Senate Education Committee chairman Letty Moss-Salentijn (Ten., SDOS) said the Trustees' Committee on Educational Policy and the State of the University had been devoted to the implications of possible unionization of graduate students.

On March 23 the Executive Committee had discussed the resolution to amend Statutory guidelines on the apportionment of Senate seats, which requires the support of three-fifths of all incumbent senators. Sen. Duby asked for a count of senators in the room: 48 of 85 were present; passage of the amendments would require 51 senators.

The President suggested that the parliamentarian might confirm that if no one raises the question of quorum it doesn't have to be addressed. Howard Jacobson, the parliamentarian, said the specific requirement of a three-fifths majority for changing Statutes pertaining to the Senate, which was meant to protect the Senate, rules out the possibility of overlooking the question of quorum.

The other main agenda item, the resolution to create a committee on online learning, was withdrawn after discussion at the previous Senate meeting. This month the resolution and its rationale are revised, with a new sponsor, the Executive Committee.

Election of a new tenured member of the Executive Committee: Sen. Duby announced that Sen. Luciano Rebay (Ten., A&S) had resigned from the Executive Committee for personal reasons.

The tenured faculty caucus, at a meeting earlier that day, had nominated a pro tem replacement. Sen. Richard Bulliet (Ten., A&S), chairman of the tenured caucus, announced the nomination of Sen. Eugene Litwak (Ten., A&S). Without dissent, the Senate then elected Sen. Litwak to fill the vacant tenured Executive Committee seat for the rest of the present Senate session.

Old business:

Resolution to Amend Statutory Provisions for the Apportionment of University Senate Seats: Sen. Joan Ferrante (Ten, A&S), chairman of Structure and Operations, saw few administration senators in the room, and said she would be irritated to learn that the Senate could not pass Statutory amendments on apportionment to accommodate new faculties created by the administration because too few administrators were present.

Sen. Ferrante thanked the senators who had come. She called attention to errors in the counts of tenured professors in two schools in the reapportionment report. The errors do not affect the Statutory amendments the committee was asking the Senate to support, Sen. Ferrante said, but might mean reassignment of one or two seats.

In response to the President's request for another count, the staff counted 49 senators present, two short of three-fifths of all incumbent senators.

Mr. Jacobson, speaking now not as parliamentarian but as a nonsenator member of Structure and Operations, said the committee unanimously supported the Statutory amendments on faculty seats, but there was some disagreement about the amendment to increase the total number of student seats. Mr. Jacobson said he and at least one other member thought such an increase would set a poor precedent, to be invoked in years to come by any constituency calling attention to shifts in the organization or population of the University. Even though some constituencies don't always send senators, he said, the Senate would be large enough if all senators were present. He added that the basic proportions among constituencies were set years ago, reflecting the constitutional thinking of the institution's founding fathers.

Mr. Jacobson noted that a small refinement of the amendments on faculty apportionment had been distributed at the door. It was meant to clarify a possible ambiguity.

Sen. Ferrante said the proposed increase in student seats did not set a new precedent. She added that the student population has grown a lot, particularly in certain schools, since the founding of the Senate. She said a majority of the committee preferred increasing the student delegation by one to taking away a second seat from a populous school, like Law, and giving it to a small newly recognized school, like Nursing.

Sen. Aggarwala, chairman of the student caucus, said students agree that it would be ridiculous to take away the Law School's second seat. He added that reconsidering the structure of the Senate from time to time is a precedent worth setting, and is appropriate in view of the restructuring implied by the recent creation of new faculties.

Sen. Ferrante accepted Sen. Aggarwala's point as a request to her committee to reconsider the structure of the Senate, a request she said the committee can take up next year.

Sen. Stephanie Neuman (Research Staff) asked what the original guidelines were for the apportionment of Senate seats. Mr. Jacobson said he could not provide an authoritative account of the thinking of the Senate's founding fathers in the aftermath of the upheavals of 1968. He said it might be possible to discuss these issues with some of the founders, like Michael Sovern and Frank Grad. His objection to basing an argument for increasing the Senate representation for any particular constituency on its population growth since 1969 was that almost every Senate constituency has grown since 1969. He said opening up the question of resetting Senate representation for all constituencies would be difficult.

The President said that without an accurate account of the original rationale for the composition of the Senate, an impressionistic reconstruction would only be distracting.

Sen. Ferrante asked for a straw vote on Senate sentiment on the proposed Statutory amendments. By voice vote, the Senate favored the amendments without dissent.

Resolution to Establish a Committee on Online Learning and Digital Media Initiatives: Sen. Duby moved the revised resolution, which was sponsored by the Executive Committee. He said the only change in the resolution presented to the Senate in February is the replacement of one faculty member on the proposed ad hoc committee by a researcher. This change represented a compromise on the question of whether faculty members should make up an absolute majority of the committee.

Sen. Duby said it is important to get the new committee started before the summer, because important issues of policy and implementation require immediate attention. He said he thought Columbia may be behind other schools in this effort, and it is important to have strong faculty participation in getting courses online. He noted a March 9 conference on campus that displayed examples of innovative course presentations by the Center for New Media Teaching and Learning. He said the Executive Committee should determine the membership of the new committee before the April Senate meeting.

Sen. Sharyn O'Halloran (Ten., A&S) briefly reviewed the new committee's revised rationale, which she helped to write, and welcomed the input and cooperation of the administration in the committee's work.

By voice vote, the Senate then passed the resolution without dissent.

New business:

Report from External Relations:

An update on a living wage: Chairman Eugene Litwak (Ten., A&S) said the committee expected a year ago to be producing a formula for computing a living wage, but has not done so. It sent two representatives to a living wage symposium in Wisconsin in November 1999 and two representatives to a meeting of the Collegiate Living Wage Association in February 2001. It also met several times in the spring of 2000 with a Columbia economist who has worked on defining a living wage for El Salvador. The committee has concluded that it cannot recommend a living wage formula at this point, but remains hopeful that one can be developed in the near future.

For the time being, Sen. Litwak said, External Relations has decided not to recommend joining the CLWA, which is still in its formative stages, but to maintain the committee's present focus on evaluating the anti-sweatshop efforts of the Fair Labor Association and the Worker Rights Consortium. In March 2000 the Senate had adopted the committee's recommendation to maintain ties with both organizations. In the future, the committee might reconsider its decision on the CLWA.

Sen. Litwak referred to an e-mail from Ginger Gentile, a participant in External Relations deliberations and a member of Columbia Students Against Sweatshops, expressing the support of CSAS for the committee's present position on the CLWA.

The proposed K-8 Columbia School: Sen. Litwak said External Relations has had misgivings about the private school Columbia proposes to found in a building to be built on the east side of Broadway below 110th Street. The committee understands the urgency of the need to recruit and retain faculty, and supports the creation of a private school in the short run. But a number of members believe strongly in public education, and worry that in the long run the school may divide Columbia from the surrounding community. The committee wants to make sure that the University is making efforts to support public education in the long run. It has had good exchanges with administrators on these issues. Sen. Litwak mentioned a letter Sen. Emily Lloyd had written to Community Board 7, which he said called for a comprehensive partnership between the proposed Columbia school and a local public school. He said his research has shown that successful schools in low-income areas have relied on innovative principals who know how to manipulate the system and who have substantial funds from outside sources. Sen. Litwak called for long-term partnerships that could foster magnet schools, with substantial support from Columbia, that would attract faculty families.

Sen. Litwak said the committee is also concerned about the budgetary implications of the proposed private school—how will it be funded over time? The committee has not heard more than general assurances from the administration on this point.

Sen. James Applegate (Ten., A&S) said much of the criticism of the proposed school seemed to him insane. He knew of no Columbia faculty members who send their children to public schools in the immediate neighborhood. Instead, they move to the suburbs, or send their children to private schools or a few public schools some distance away, like PS 87 on 78th Street. Far from further dividing Columbia from the community, he said the proposed school would bring Columbia children back into the neighborhood. He said he himself is a product of Detroit public schools and would like nothing more than to see better public schools. But that outcome is unlikely in the next five years, and Columbia can only bring finite resources to bear on the problem. He called the school an extremely important, positive step, and expressed bafflement at the opposition.

Sen. O'Halloran, a member of External Relations, said it is the committee's job to understand and articulate community concerns. While the committee agreed that there is no short-term alternative to the proposed private school, she said, there remain opportunities to build bridges through active partnerships with local public schools.

Sen. Litwak said the sight of a building in the neighborhood identified as Columbia's private school is an affront to some members of the community.

Sen. Janet Metcalfe (Ten., A&S) noted that there are opportunities for community participation in the Columbia schools, including an extensive scholarship program for community families. Sen. Litwak acknowledged these efforts.

At Sen. Litwak's request, Sen. Emily Lloyd summarized community objections to the private school. She said one group is philosophically committed to public schools, believing that a private school would siphon off resources and active families—including a few Columbia families. Some feel that a new building devoted partly to a private school is a symbolic repudiation of public education. There is also a wishful belief that Columbia could somehow exhort families to use local public schools. She said Jonathan Cole and Gardner Dunnan have replied that parents make their own decisions about educating their children, and Columbia should be supporting them, not lecturing them.

The President adjourned the meeting shortly after 2 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Mathewson, Senate staff