

University Senate

**Proposed: March 7,
2003**

Adopted:

MINUTES OF JANUARY 31, 2003

President Lee Bollinger, the chairman, called the Senate to order shortly after 1:15 pm in the Davis Auditorium in the Schapiro Engineering Building. There were 51 senators present during the meeting.

Minutes and agenda: The minutes of December 13, 2002, and the agenda were adopted as proposed.

President's report: In a memo to the Arts and Sciences faculty at the start of the term, the president announced a search for a new vice president for Arts and Sciences. A nine-member committee, chaired by David Freedberg of Art History, is now meeting.

The president said he had been talking informally to people on campus and elsewhere about the search for a new provost. He appreciated the willingness of Provost Cole and Vice President Cohen to serve out the year.

The president hoped to settle on one or more top candidates for provost within two months, and then consult with campus groups, including the Senate Executive Committee. He expected the work of the Arts and Sciences search committee to be nearing completion at that point, so that the new provost can participate in the final selection of the new vice president.

The president said he expected to make announcements in the next few weeks on other projects his administration has been working on through the fall.

The president commented on the affirmative action cases now before the Supreme Court. He

acknowledged Columbia's longstanding commitment to ethnic diversity. He said oral arguments will be on April 1 in the two cases involving admissions policies at the University of Michigan—one having to do with the undergraduate division, the other with the law school. As president at Michigan, he had been actively involved in defending the admissions policies. In the lower courts the two cases had been considered separately: one district judge had found the undergraduate admissions policy constitutional; another found the law school policy unconstitutional. On appeal the lower court ruling on the law school was overturned, but no decision was made on the undergraduate case. The Supreme Court has consolidated the two cases. A decision is expected late in June.

Until President Bush's statement a couple of weeks earlier opposing the affirmative action policies now being challenged before the Supreme Court, President Bollinger was accustomed in his own public statements to offer a list of widely accepted myths about affirmative action. But he was gratified to note that public discussion since President Bush's announcement has done an impressive job of analyzing these myths.

President Bollinger said the first of these--that race is no longer a problem in American life--no longer requires rebuttal.

Another myth, that ethnic diversity is somehow added at the end of an otherwise straightforward consideration of academic credentials in admissions decisions, has also been exposed. The real process is that an applicant pool based mainly on academic credentials is then scrutinized with a wide variety of factors in mind, including legacy affiliations with the institution, geographic and socioeconomic diversity, and personal experiences, as well as racial and ethnic diversity.

Still another myth about affirmative action, the president said, is that diversity is an unessential add-on to education. The basic response to this view is that one of the core challenges of higher education is to teach the difficult skill of imagining how other people experience the world.

Another myth is that the self-segregation that occurs on campuses shows that there is no real commitment to ethnic diversity. President Bollinger pointed out that the majority of freshmen arrive on college campuses from all-white or all-black environments, and a certain amount of self-isolation--another sign of the continuing difficulty of the race issue in this country—is to be expected. This is not a reason to abandon the quest for racial diversity, the president said.

The president repeated his sense of satisfaction that these myths—so prevalent only a few years ago—are now subject to informed debate in the press and on talk shows. A great deal is at stake for both public and private universities, he said, as well as for the American military academies, which consider race in trying to build an integrated officer corps. The president said the present Supreme Court case may represent a turning point on racial issues: Which way is the nation turning?

Sen. Michael Castleman (Stu., SEAS) said student groups have been discussing the role of legacy in Columbia admissions, noting that it has the opposite effect from affirmative action, tending to perpetuate the ethnically homogeneous character of the University from previous generations. He asked what role Columbia assigns to legacy, and what that role should be.

The president said a significant portion of each entering class at Columbia benefits from the legacy factor, a situation he viewed favorably. American universities, much more than European universities, try to build a sense of community partly by maintaining links with alumni. Money is not the only benefit of this arrangement; others include the web of connections in the alumni community that helps to provide students, research opportunities, and valuable ways of thinking about the world. The president concluded that the legacy arrangement is a reasonable part of these important linkages, and should be retained along with the other considerations the University values in admissions.

The president also noted a transformation over the past 30 years in the ethnic composition of student bodies—and alumni populations—at Columbia and other universities. This change is one of the products of the thinking of the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision. But there remains a lag in the transition in the alumni population, which will continue to produce distortions until the change has been more comprehensive.

Jeffrey Sult, a student observer from Teachers College, said he thought the president's point about the integration of the military was an argument for bringing ROTC back to Columbia. The president did not see ROTC as an issue for him to present, but said that if it matters to a significant segment of the community, it should be discussed.

Sen. William Harris (Ten., A&S/SS) asked how grave a threat a negative Supreme Court decision would pose to affirmative action policies. Would it be possible to maintain the policies anyway?

The president said this question addressed another important myth, which was revealed in advice he had received since 1997 about the case now before the Supreme Court: it's not worth pursuing this defense of affirmative action in the courts, and it will always be possible to find ways to pursue racial diversity regardless of what the courts decide.

One of the benefits of recent public discussion, the president said, is that it has exposed the defects of some of the common alternative paths to ethnic diversity that have been recently proposed. Among these are policies assuring admission for students in the top percentiles in each high school to the state university system. The Florida and California policies assure admission only to some part of the state system, so flagship schools like Berkeley and UCLA get little benefit from the policy. The Texas system sacrifices selectivity in admissions, even in its flagship school, and accepts the top 10 percent of every high school class, providing tutoring and financial aid as part of a major effort to achieve diversity in the face of a negative court ruling.

The president listed several problems with this approach: it does nothing for graduate education; ironically, it only works in promoting diversity if the state high school system is segregated; it gives up all control over the admissions process. This is a serious loss (contrary to the common misconception that there is no selectivity in state university systems), and over time open admissions will undermine the great public universities. Certainly private universities will never adopt such an approach to admissions. Most seriously, approaches of this kind are illogical: if the Supreme Court decides that it is

unconstitutional to consider race in public decisions, especially in admissions, then any policy whose avowed goal is racial diversity, including the 10 percent Texas solution, will be subject to constitutional challenge.

The president identified two other solutions he considered unsatisfactory. Seeking racial diversity by using poverty as a criterion for admitting students won't work since poor students are more likely than not to be white. Seeking to admit more non-white students without acknowledging that the goal is racial diversity—in effect circumventing a possible negative constitutional ruling from the Supreme Court—would amount to a travesty of the public trust that is essential to the standing of universities in society, with a tragic outcome. Plaintiffs could follow up such a ruling with lawsuits and require university administrators to account for their admissions decisions under oath.

Sen. Joan Ferrante (Ten., A&S/Hum) expressed support for the president's efforts.

Senate roster changes: The Senate approved a list of roster changes that Executive Committee chairman Paul Duby read aloud.

Executive Committee chairman's report: Sen. Duby said the main decisions at the Executive Committee meeting on January 24 were to add the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) degree proposal to the Senate agenda and leave the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DrNP) degree off the agenda. He conveyed this decision in a memo in the Senate packet, a letter to Nursing Dean Mary Munding, in conversations with Nursing senators.

Sen. Duby acknowledged the work that had gone into the DrNP proposal and the disappointment expressed by Nursing senators. He said that a careful review of the two proposals had convinced the Education Committee to approve the DPT program now for Senate action. A national accrediting group has established the DPT degree to replace current master's programs in physical therapy, and indicated that master's degrees will become obsolete. It is a matter of some urgency for Columbia's physical therapy program to offer the DPT by next year to remain competitive with other programs that are already offering the new degree.

In response to a Senate request, the Health Sciences Vice President has drafted guidelines for clinical doctorates, which are now being revised. The Education Committee will consider a later draft at its next meeting, which may be helpful in evaluating the DrNP.

Sen. Mary Byrne (NT, Nursing) asked for clarification of the process for moving the DrNP onto the Senate agenda. Who will make that decision, since the Education Committee approved the program for Senate consideration last October? Will the Executive Committee decide? How will the Nursing School be informed of steps needed to get the DrNP ready for Senate action? Finally, what will be the time line for consideration of the DrNP, which was first presented to Education in January 2002?

Sen. Duby said the first step is the Education Committee's review of the standards for clinical doctorates.

At the committee's meeting on January 22, Vice President Fischbach indicated that he wants the Senate to review and approve the standards. After that, Education will measure the DrNP against them. The committee may then ask the Nursing School to make changes in the program. The schedule is hard to predict, he said.

Education chair Letty Moss-Salentijn added that Dr. Fischbach has urged her committee not to rush its review of the standards, but to discuss them with him and the committee at Health Sciences that is drafting them until it is comfortable moving forward.

-- Procedures for submitting the Senate column to the *University Record*: Sen. Duby referred to new editorial guidelines for the Senate *Record* column that were distributed in the Senate packet. They had been drafted by Provost Cole and Sens. Roosevelt Montas (Stu., GSAS/Hum) and Sharyn O'Halloran (Ten. A&S/SS), and approved by the Executive Committee. Sen. Duby said the new procedure was in effect for the latest *Record* column, published a few days before. In a pleasant conversation, Sen. Duby and *Record* editor Jason Hollander had agreed on a few minor changes. He said that if the procedure had been in effect last fall, there would have been no problems with the previous three *Record* columns. He hoped this issue could now be left behind.

--Interactions with Trustees: The Executive Committee subcommittee considering nominees for Senate-consulted Trustee had met once, but was still open to suggestions.

Caucus reports: There were none.

Old business:

--Revised resolution to establish the Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT): Sen. Moss-Salentijn said that the resolution was added to the Senate agenda for discussion on November 22, removed from the agenda in December, and was now back for action in slightly revised form. The change is a provision for a review of the program after the Senate has adopted standards for clinical doctorates. She said the DPT is before the Senate now because of the sense of urgency that Sen. Duby had explained earlier.

Sen. Moss-Salentijn reviewed the Education Committee's reasons for approving the DPT proposal. The degree, an expanded version of a two-year master's program, requires three years (eight terms). It was developed in response to the mandate of a national accrediting

committee, which has established the new doctorate to replace the master's degree.

Sen. Suzanne Bakken (Ten., Nursing) said she would abstain in the vote on the DPT, not out of opposition to the DPT, but to call attention to the difference between the procedures followed for the DTP and the DrNP: the DPT is before the Senate for a vote without having to meet the standards that are being applied to the DrNP.

By show of hands, the Senate voted to approve the DPT program, with four abstentions and one opposed.

New business:

--Resolution to establish the M.S. in Computer Engineering: Sen Moss-Salentijn moved the resolution for Education. Without discussion, the Senate voted unanimously to approve the program.

The president adjourned the meeting at about 1:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Mathewson, Senate staff