



OLACHI OLERU / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

MAKE SOME NOISE | Protesters with the Student-Worker Solidarity group demonstrate in front of Faculty House on Wednesday.

Latest Faculty House negotiations end in standstill again

BY AVANTIKA KUMAR, CHRISTIAN ZHANG, AND CECILIA REYES
Spectator Senior Staff Writers

Another round of contract negotiations between administrators and Faculty House employees ended in a standstill Wednesday—but unlike previous negotiating sessions, student activists were allowed to observe.

The negotiations were the latest in a series of meetings over the past 10 months, which so far have proved unfruitful. Employees say they have had little to no wage increases for more than eight years, are withheld a 22 percent gratuity, and receive only meager stipends as part of their grievances.

In a protest in advance of the negotiating session Wednesday,

about 20 members of the Student-Worker Solidarity group, which has advocated for better benefits for campus workers, marched and waved posters outside of Faculty House. Chanting “Sheila Garvey, rich and rude!” and “Sheila Garvey, pay your workers!” referring to the administrator in charge of labor relations, demonstrators lined up to cheer on workers entering negotiations.

George Joseph, CC ’16 and a SWS member, said that “a lot of them came and hugged and thanked us—kissed us.”

According to Joseph and Jane Brennan, CC ’14, Garvey tried to use the back door of SIPA to enter Faculty House upon seeing the protesters.

For the first time, student activists were allowed in the

negotiating room during the talks. Earlier this month, SWS delivered a petition to Jeff Scott,

“This is not a bodega. This is Columbia University.”

—Osmond Cousins,
Faculty House chef

executive vice president for Student and Administrative services, requesting to be allowed into Wednesday’s meeting after two students were forbidden from

sitting in on the December negotiations—but received no response. Members ended up chasing Scott when they brought the petition to his office.

After discussing in private the presence of third parties at Wednesday’s meeting, administrators asked a Spectator reporter but not the SWS students to leave.

“We can’t have disinterested outside observers,” Garvey said. “We’ve never done it. It’s not appropriate ... We can’t have Spectator ... these are private discussions.”

After about 20 minutes, when administrators left the room, members of SWS said that the administrators had not negotiated in good faith. Garvey “came in ... and

SEE SWS, page 2

CUIT upgrades Internet in Butler

Library speeds up bandwidth, improves access in stacks

BY ABBY ABRAMS
Spectator Senior Staff Writer

The stacks in Butler Library are known for many things, but until now, wireless Internet has not been one of them.

Over winter break, Columbia University Information Technology updated the wireless Internet service in Butler as part of a University-wide system upgrade that started last year—an update that included the tomblake stacks.

When the service alert signs went up in Butler the week before classes, students already on campus took notice. Although portions of the stacks have previously had wireless access, many students still consider the Internet-free zone a less distracting place to study than traditional study spaces such as the reading rooms or Butler Lounge, where a half hour of procrastination is only a few clicks away.

“I always go into the stacks when I don’t want any distractions, because I’ll end up on Facebook and blogs,” Hannah Cohen, CC ’15, said.

The network upgrade, which took place last week, strengthened Internet connection throughout the building and extended the wireless range by placing new

routers in existing wireless access points, according to Robert Cartolano, director of the Libraries Information Technology Office.

“The upgraded wireless network will provide students with access to our library’s extensive collection of millions of ebooks, journal articles, databases and many other electronic resources, along with access to University and other Internet services,” Cartolano said in an email.

Jessica Kalay, director of strategic communications, added that the new technology “may slightly increase the amount of area covered” by each router and is up to eight times faster than the previous system.

Most of the wireless coverage for the stacks comes from technology housed outside the actual stack area, according to CUIT. CUIT did not specify which areas of the stacks received improved wireless access, but the upgrade affected primarily those sections closest to the new wireless infrastructure.

To some, this announcement came as an exciting development, which will allow students to more easily look up call numbers and do research while in the stacks.

SEE CUIT, page 2



LUKE HENDERSON / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

ONLINE IN THE STACKS | The upgrade will mean quicker internet in most of Butler and expanded access in the stacks.

BC students must show insurance

BY EMMA GOSS
Spectator Senior Staff Writer

A new policy requires Barnard students to present documentation of insurance when seeking services at Barnard’s Primary Care Health Service.

Mary Joan Murphy, Barnard’s executive director of student health and wellness programs, notified students and parents of the change via email during winter break, reminding students to have up-to-date insurance cards when they return to campus.

“If no insurance information is provided, you will not be able to be seen by a provider, regardless if you had been seen earlier this year without one,” Murphy wrote in the email.

Barnard mandates that all students be covered by some form of health insurance, and prior to this academic year, students were required to purchase Barnard’s Aetna student health insurance.

As of this year, Barnard now allows students to have personal health insurance plans.

“Because of Obamacare, you can be on your parent or guardian’s insurance until you turn 26. Students now have a choice,”

SEE INSURANCE, page 2

New Nairobi Global Center is first in Africa

BY JOSEPHINE MCGOWAN
Spectator Staff Writer

The Nairobi Global Center, the first in Africa, is providing a hub for academic and research opportunities for the Columbia community across the continent.

The center, which officially opened last week, has programs in place to give students and faculty on-the-ground experience and opportunities to further their research and make a difference in the local community.

In conjunction with Princeton’s Mpala Research Centre in central Kenya, the Nairobi center sponsors the Tropical Biology and Sustainability Program for undergraduate students, which allows 10 Columbia juniors to study ecological communities and sustainable development in Kenya alongside students from Princeton and a Kenyan university.

The center, which has been operating since January 2012, will also provide opportunities for professors. Belay Begashaw, the center’s director, is working to bring faculty from various Columbia schools to enhance research opportunities there.

“We have been trying to build more programs and attract more departments and centers in Columbia’s main campus to open projects, and also bring Columbia’s people, place them

here, and start working accordingly to where their interests are,” Begashaw said.

The center was officially launched at an event that University President Lee Bollinger, faculty members, and Kenyan government leaders attended on Jan. 14.

Five schools at Columbia have already begun work in Kenya with support from the center—including the School of Engineering and Applied Science, which is working to develop information technology-based programs on water and solar energy, and the Mailman School of Public Health, which is researching nutrition in East Africa.

The center also works closely with the Kenyan government to design programs that benefit the country.

“We have to base our information, programs, advice, and all of these things on their priorities and to help to accomplish their visions,” Begashaw said. “We are very careful not to take the driving seat from them.”

Safwan Masri, vice president for global centers, said that the Nairobi hub—Columbia’s eighth—fits into the University’s larger plan for a connected network of global centers.

“Each center is unique in that it is meant to grow organically

SEE NAIROBI, page 2

NEWS BRIEF

Absolute Bagels reopens after health violation scare

BY CHRIS MEYER
Spectator Senior Staff Writer

Absolute Bagels is back. Almost a week after the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene temporarily shuttered the popular Broadway bagel joint for sanitation violations, Absolute, between 107th and 108th streets, reopened and began serving customers once again on Wednesday.

In a routine health inspection last Thursday, the popular bagel joint racked up a whopping 73 violation points after city officials discovered live roaches, flies, and “live mice or evidence of mice.” The score was more than double the 28 points

required for a C grade.

The sign in the store’s window reads “Grade Pending,” the same as before it was closed.

A regular stream of customers filed in and out of the restaurant throughout Wednesday afternoon. Customers were routinely treated to a frigid gust of wind as new patrons entered through the slightly ajar door at the front of the shop, leading many to keep their winter coats on while they ate.

Some customers, many of them students, said they initially had reservations after hearing the store had temporarily closed down, but added that the quality of the shop’s bagels eventually brought them back.

“It’s the kind of place where you hope the violation isn’t that serious,” said Samir Choksy, Business ’13. “I like the bagels so much that it would be a hard habit to kick.”

Others said they hadn’t been aware of the violations.

Nakisa Nassersharif, a graduate student in SEAS who moved to New York about one week ago, said her friends had encouraged her to go to the shop before the temporary shutdown, and that she was not aware of why it had been closed down.

“My friend came here today, so that kind of helped me make up my mind,” she said.

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DOUGLAS KESSEL / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

SAFE AGAIN? | Absolute Bagels reopened a week after being closed in a health inspection.

A&E, PAGE 3

CC alum helps bring musical to the stage

Laura Pietropinto, CC ’00, led students in a workshop to put on “College: The Musical,” which will be performed this Saturday in the Lerner Black Box.



OPINION, PAGE 4

Past in present

James Yoon on Columbia’s hesitation to embrace a changing future.

What’s not to fix?

Lanbo Zhang on the need for real solutions.

SPORTS, BACK PAGE

Inconsistency mars Light Blue’s play

Columbia women’s basketball has had a difficult time reacting to the adjustments made by opposing teams at halftime, leading to declining plays and losses in competitive games.

EVENTS

Basketball Mania

Student performances and a DJ will mark the first home basketball games of the spring semester.

Levien Gym, 9-10 p.m.

WEATHER

Today



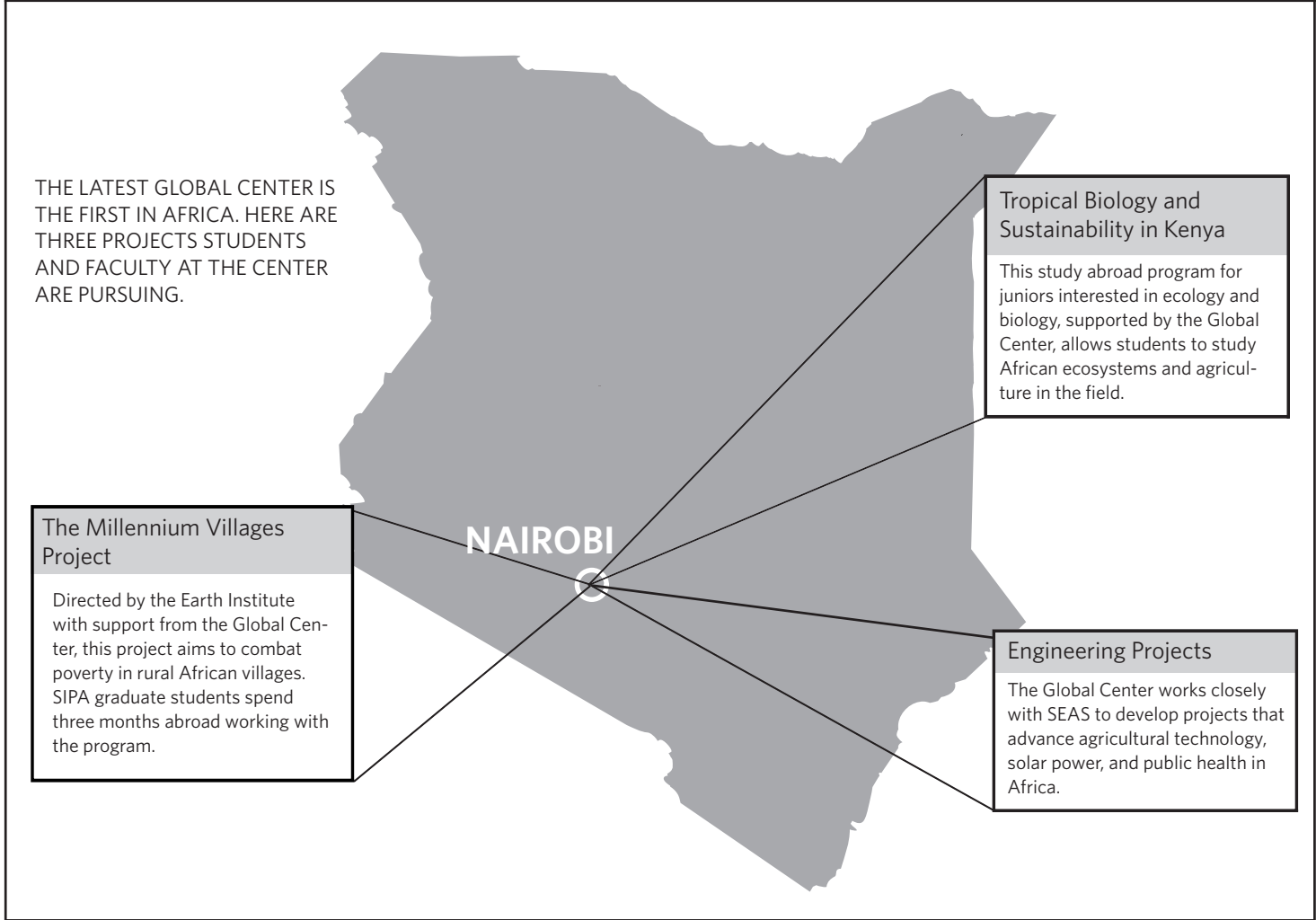
24°/12°

Tomorrow



27°/20°

COLUMBIA IN AFRICA



Global Center aims to serve students across Africa

NAIROBI from front page

and capture opportunities that the region it is in provides,” Masri said. “It also provides a good foundation for faculty and student interests.”

Students who arrive at the center will have a one-day orientation where they will learn about the center’s initiatives and research and spend time at local field sites, including the Millennium Villages Project, a program run by Columbia’s Earth Institute to help African communities combat poverty.

“The centers really are there to further our faculty and students’ understanding of the world,” Masri said. “The amount of learning by virtue of interacting with other students and the education that

you get from being immersed in that country and region is invaluable.”

Undergraduate students interviewed Wednesday said they think the program will provide knowledge that cannot be gained in a Columbia classroom.

“I’m interested in biology and it would be an exotic experience,” Nisha Iyer, BC ’16 and a prospective biology major, said.

“I think that the program, from what I’ve heard, seems like it’s going to be a great opportunity for Columbia students in terms of research in Kenya,” Eric Kutscher, CC ’13, said.

Kutscher, who studied abroad in Kenya during his junior year, called Kenya the

perfect place to study ecology because “the wildlife and environment is so amazing.”

Still, he said he had a few doubts about the program and was interested in hearing about firsthand experiences from students currently abroad.

“I’m sure the program will expand and there is potential in terms of what research is done, but it could be a bit neocolonial,” Kutscher said.

Thirty students in the Master of Public Administration in Development Practice program at the School of International and Public Affairs will spend three-month placements at the center, working with the Millennium Villages Project in surrounding countries—a program that has drawn praise

from SIPA students.

“It’s good to be able to study sustainable development in the field,” Guy Bloembergen, SIPA ’13 and a MPA student, said. “Coming to a place like SIPA, it should be required.”

“I think that it could offer great opportunities for on-the-ground experience, as students can engage in projects and implement the theory they have learned,” Sacha Manov, SIPA ’13, said.

Manov, who is working toward her master’s degree in international affairs, added, “It’s a great test pilot program that will be especially beneficial in gaining skills and being able to apply the skills that you learned within other contexts.”

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Barnard health services requires insurance proof

INSURANCE from front page

Murphy said. “Beforehand, we would bill all of our services and labs that we did to Aetna because everyone had Aetna, but now that’s not the case. To bill for labs now, we need that insurance information.”

Many students, such as Lissa Soares, BC ’15, said that they already carry their insurance cards with them in their wallets, so the new policy doesn’t inconvenience them at all.

However, this policy will inconvenience some students who don’t have their insurance cards on hand for this week’s flu shot fair.

“I’m not getting a flu shot yet because I left my insurance card at home,” Sophia Braha, BC ’13, said.

Spring transfer students and visiting students, all of whom are insured by Aetna, have not received their insurance cards in their Barnard mailboxes yet, but Murphy said that an exception will be made to the new policy so that such students

may receive flu shots this week without presenting their insurance cards.

Murphy said that the new policy has a second objective as well—to educate students on health insurance responsibility. “As young women coming to Barnard, our responsibility is to educate you as a whole person. Understanding your health insurance is really important in terms of educating you as an adult,” she said.

Murphy added that PCHS introduced Point and Click, a new electronic medical records system that is more organized and efficient than the former Practice Partner records system. Murphy said that PCHS is still exploring Point and Click’s “full potential.” Students will also be able to schedule appointments online through a system called Open Communicator, which will allow them to send medical documents like immunization records electronically, she said.

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DAVID BRANN / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

INSURANCE CHANGE-UP | Barnard Students must now bring insurance documentation when visiting Barnard health services.

Adinistrators allow student activists into contract negotiating room

SWS from front page

refused to negotiate,” Joseph said. “It was really disrespectful,” he said. “We just wanted to make the process fair.”

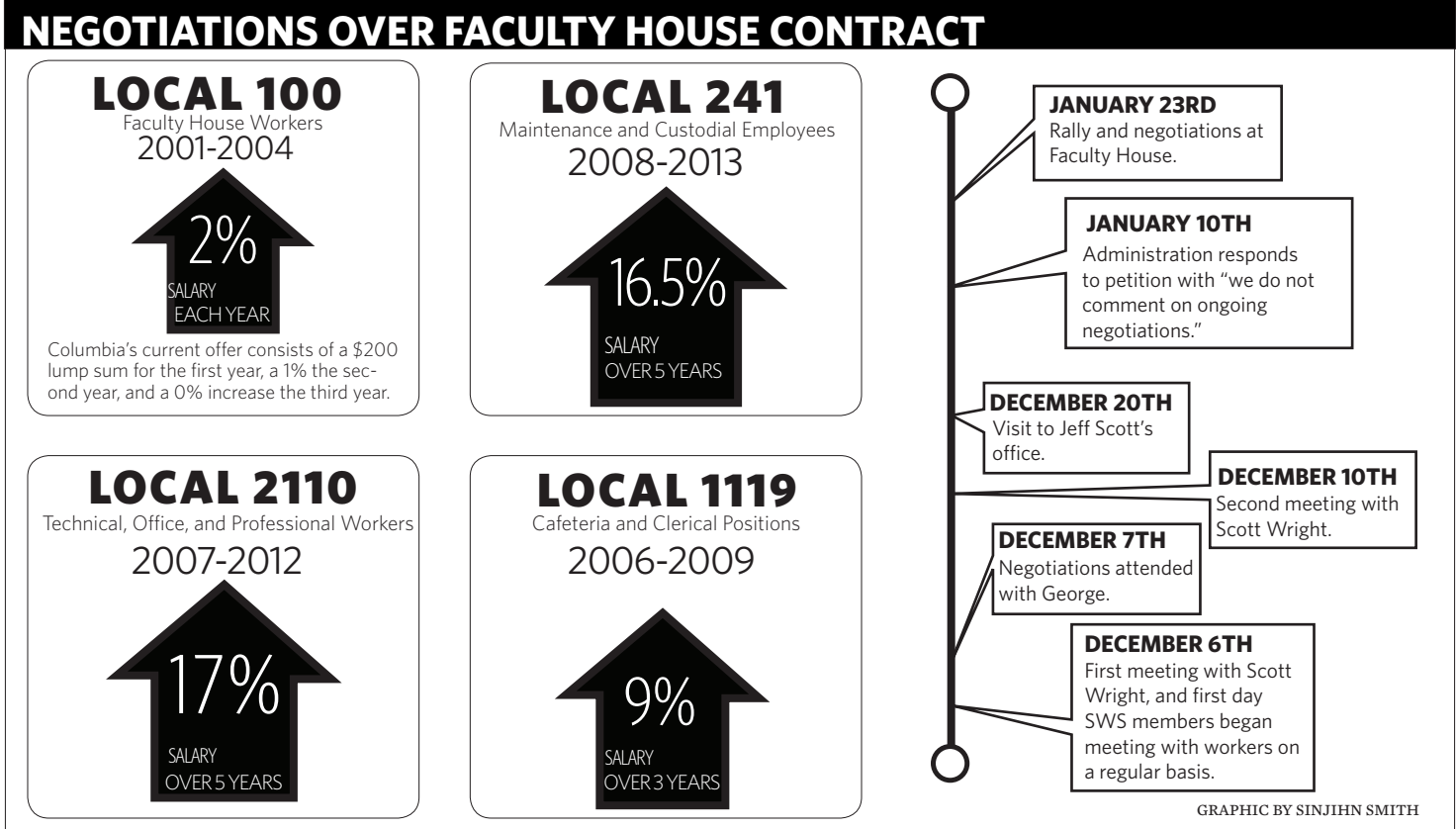
The protest was only one event in a week of action SWS has planned, which includes “teach-ins” with employees educating students about their working conditions.

Faculty House workers said they were thankful for student involvement in their cause.

“No students, no meeting,” said Osmond Cousins, a sous-chef for Faculty House for more than 18 years, before negotiations began. “We’re not taking no crap ... This is not a bodega. This is Columbia University.”

“They’re scared of us,” said Lindsey Dayton, GSAS. “We’ve got people running out of their own offices.”

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Stacks no longer Internet-free

CUIT from front page

Serena Dasani, CC ’13, said she does not usually study in the stacks, but called the upgrade welcome news.

Others, however, felt less enthusiastic about the changes.

“When I go to the stacks I don’t want any interruptions,” Yohana Beyene, CC ’13, said. Having wireless everywhere “makes Columbia too perfect, in a sense.”

Ben Eckersley, CC ’13, agreed that he has enjoyed having limited wireless access in the stacks, but felt the upgrade wasn’t a major issue. Not having any wireless access “is a good self-regulation tool,” he said. “But I find ways to procrastinate anyway, so it’s fine.”

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College Fashionista flips cancer the bird with bracelets

BY ABBY MITCHELL
Spectator Senior Staff Writer

Popular student website College Fashionista and jewelry designer Jennifer Fisher have one big thing to say on their latest collaboration: Fuck Cancer.

The duo has teamed up with the Fuck Cancer foundation, founded by Yael Cohen, to create a limited-edition cuff which will be available through Feb. 28.

This venture directly targets the readership of College Fashionista, which is written by and for college students.

“Fuck Cancer is all about supporting people in Generation Y, which is really what we do at College Fashionista,” Amy Levin, founder and creative director of the website, said.

“When Amy came to me with this idea to collab [sic] it was a no-brainer,” Fisher said. “I have been waiting for a pair like Yael and Amy to give a voice to a younger audience about the fight and awareness of this disease.”

The bracelet itself is made of brass with raised, Gothic letters reading “Fuck Cancer.”

Many of Fisher’s jewelry pieces feature Gothic lettering, using phrases to evoke important moments or emotions in a person’s life, but this project truly hits home for the designer. Thirteen years ago she underwent chemotherapy for desmoids tumors in her chest.

“Being able to put ‘Fuck Cancer’ on the bracelet was ... a badass way to represent something that’s really important with edge and a bit more style,” she said. “It was simple, it was clean, and straight to the point.”

Why the crude language? Fuck Cancer, as an organization, justifies its use of profanity simply: because it’s what everyone is thinking. Their home page reads, “Using these two words together gives cancer the visceral response it deserves ... If there’s ever a time to use ‘fuck,’ it’s now.”

Both Levin and Fisher think the bracelet design will create an equally powerful reaction from buyers.

“It’s a constant reminder that every time you look down at it, whether you’ve had cancer yourself or if you know someone who has, that the fight is out there,” Levin said.

Though a relatively thin cuff at only a quarter-inch wide, Fisher said she is confident that the message is evocative enough to grab attention.

“It’s a conversation piece,” she said. “People look at it and it’s instantly starting a dialogue.”

The price is a bit lofty for some students at \$225, with 20 percent of the proceeds going to Fuck Cancer. Additionally, Fisher maintains that it’s a question of quality—and with this kind of cause, she wanted to create something that would last.

“I want people to feel like they can wear it every day,” she said. “Maybe their mother has one of our more high-end pieces, with diamonds in white or yellow gold ... but this bracelet is very simple to reach a younger audience and bring a different face to awareness.”

Awareness is ultimately what this entire collaboration is about. Fuck Cancer, as an organization, doesn’t conduct research of its own. Rather, its goal is getting young people involved in the movement of early detection. Their website teases, “We teach them about social media, how to use their Blackberries, and how to balance their diets. So why don’t we teach them something that can actually save their lives?”

For Cohen, the greater benefit of the collaboration is that College Fashionista’s “extensive reach to college students across the country helps us to further connect with our target Gen Y audience in a new and unique way.”

Levin explained that through this project, the website’s approximately 700 contributors—who hail from universities across the country, including Columbia—have been receiving an education of their own by supporting the cause through their own social media and from the site’s upper management.

“They’re the arms and legs of the project,” Levin said.

To buy the Fuck Cancer cuff, head to Jennifer Fisher’s online store. Ninety percent of cancers are curable in stage one. To learn more about risk factors and simple self exams you can do to stay aware, check out Fuck Cancer’s website.

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MIKE DISCENZA / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

MUSIC AND LYRICS | Laura Pietropinto, CC ’00 (bottom left), directs and produces a workshop to be performed Jan. 26 in the Lerner Black Box.

Musical workshop brings ‘COLLEGE’ to stage

BY RACHEL DUNPHY
Spectator Senior Staff Writer

Dance numbers in the library and dramatic dialogues between classes aren’t just for the Disney Channel anymore.

Laura Pietropinto, CC ’00, directs and produces a reading of an updated version of “COLLEGE: The Musical,” created in 2006 by Drew Fornarola and Scott Elmgreen, in the Lerner Black Box this Saturday. The show follows the story of a college freshman named Nathan (Sean Walsh, CC ’14) who is taken under the wing of a hard-partying senior, Jay (Alessio Mineo, CC ’14), and finally realizes that the lifestyle is unhealthy and unsatisfying.

Pietropinto, who teaches theater at Marymount School, returned to Columbia in November to gather a group of talented Barnard and Columbia students to assist in writing, producing, and acting.

She originally conceived the project as a way to get input on the rewrite from real college students while also providing pre-professional experience in the arts that, she says, is often not available until after graduation.

“A big aspect of it [this experience] was realizing that it is possible to have a professional career in the arts and theater,” said assistant producer Adrian Alea, CC ’15. He and the other student assistants said the program has given them a chance to work with theater professionals, learn how a professional rehearsal is run, and learn how to take an active role in developing an original theatrical

piece.

Beyond providing pre-professional experience for students, the workshop was “also an opportunity for the writers to get input from college students,” Pietropinto said. The students and professionals said that this goal was one of the features of the workshop that made it special, according to Pietropinto.

“The amount of work the writers have done over just one week is incredible.”

—Laura Pietropinto, CC ’00

Director/producer

The creative team, which includes Pietropinto, Elmgreen, Fornarola, and producer Jillian Robbins, said it expects student input to be useful in updating the musical and adapting it to represent a more universal and more relatable college experience for today’s students.

Some of the most valuable contributions

students made were in creating more well-developed characters, according to Elmgreen. “They’ve had a lot of insight into what the characters are thinking and what they’re feeling,” Elmgreen said.

As the cast ran through parts of the show during a marathon session on Wednesday, Pietropinto frequently interrupted to ask the actors how they thought their characters were feeling and when they thought the audience should begin to see some of the deeper conflicts and anxieties that shaped their decisions. Elmgreen said that after each day’s rehearsal, he and Fornarola rewrite portions of the script based in part on student suggestions.

“We’ve found that most of it rings true, and the parts that don’t, we’ve addressed,” Pietropinto said. The team knew at the beginning that it wouldn’t have a finished piece by the end of the two-week workshop, but they weren’t worried, since “the amount of work the writers have done over just one week is incredible.”

Pietropinto said she was amazed by “the level of intelligence and insight and articulate opinion we’ve received from these students,” and said she would be excited to create similar collaborative programs in the future.

“COLLEGE: The Musical” will be performed this Saturday, Jan. 26 at 8 p.m. in the Lerner Black Box. Admission is free. RSVP at ccmusicalworkshop@gmail.com.

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Double Exposure film journal grows readership in first year; fifth issue due out soon

BY DAVID SALAZAR
Spectator Senior Staff Writer

It’s a tired joke that not much comes out of NSOP besides a few horror stories and a couple of vicious hangovers. For David Beal and Max Nelson, both CC ’15, NSOP was where the idea for their now year-old film journal, Double Exposure, was born.

“Max and I met at the glow stick party during NSOP, and I noticed he was wearing a shirt from ‘Hausu,’” a 1977 Japanese horror movie, Beal said. “And I said, ‘Hey, I know that movie,’ and he said, ‘Hey, yeah, want to start a film journal?’”

In the year since its first issue and three semesters since its inception, Double Exposure has established a notable presence on campus. In October, the journal held a comedy event with Jester at Alpha Delta Phi featuring sketch comedy group Chowdah, live stand-up, and film clips. In December, Double Exposure also co-sponsored Hoot Magazine’s launch party in the Diana Center.

So far four issues have been published exclusively on Double Exposure’s website, which also features a recently redesigned blog that posts shorter film analyses between issues. This semester, Double Exposure’s fifth issue will also be its first to be published in print.

Following the approval of its constitution, the journal will receive funding from the

University as a recognized publication. Looking back on how Double Exposure started and seeing what it has become, the editors in chief said they have been thrilled to see a film community of sorts burgeon around the journal.

“One of the things that was really rewarding for us at the beginning—and now as well—is that we felt that when we got on campus, there were a lot of people who were really passionate about film ... and yet didn’t really have a single outlet to come together and share their passion,” Nelson said. “Now it’s as much a community as it is a film journal.”

Both Beal and Nelson chalk up the journal’s sense of community to them having writers and staff largely by chance, which results in a collection of people who share an interest in film, and who may not have met otherwise.

“The initial gathering together of people was pretty haphazard,” Nelson said. “We recruited from the film department, from the list of potential film majors—we built up a small staff.”

“From that point on, it was pretty much just building it brick by brick, seeking out who was interested in movies,” Beal said. “We sort of wanted to hear what other kids talked about when they talked about movies.”

Nelson and Beal said that their goal is to create a new space for young cinemphiles—an alternative to “what you’re normally getting

at the IMDb news desk and even in some glitzier PR pieces,” according to Beal. But they don’t see Double Exposure as an alternative to many of the “fantastic film journals that are currently on the market—both online and in print,” Nelson said. Meanwhile, they are still forming their tastes.

“We’re still forming the way we see the world, and we hope that maybe the movies have a part to play in the way we write and the way we think about art, culture, and maybe life in general,” Nelson said.

For the most part, this has paid off—regular contributors write for each issue, going through several drafts with the editors and making sure their work is of the best quality. And the pieces that run in Double Exposure, much like its roots, are completely organic.

“I don’t want it to seem like it’s us reigning in all these submissions, tinkering with them and playing around with them, then putting out this final product,” Nelson said.

The ideas for most issues have come from subway rides back to campus or conversations they’ve had about movies they’ve seen. “It has kind of become an ongoing dialogue, and I think that’s what distinguishes us from other journals,” Nelson said.

Most importantly, Beal said, “It’s a blast.” “It’s really fun to just be immersed in a conversation about the movies,” Beal said. In essence, this conversation shows itself in each issue and each blog post put up on the



COURTESY OF MAX NELSON

HAPPY BIRTHDAY | Double Exposure has created a community around film.

journal’s website. Now moving into print, Double Exposure hopes to bring this discussion to more people than ever before.

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Real and imaginary

In my experience, there are two types of problems at Columbia: real problems and imaginary problems. In light of the Columbia College Student Council's new initiative, "What To Fix," I want to make a point of distinguishing between the two.

I have no desire to enter into a debate about the existential states of our problems and what properly constitutes existence. I will humbly leave those debates to other people. I merely wish to distinguish problems with real or physical solutions from those which can be remedied by changing our opinions and dispositions toward them.

Absolute Bagels' closure at the hands of the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene was a real problem. If I had wanted a warm whole wheat everything bagel from my favorite bagel joint earlier in the week, I would have had no alternative. I would have gone to Nussbaum and Wu and settled for an inferior bagel.

Likewise, when I check the weather app on my iPhone and see a minus sign in front of the temperature, I can't just walk out on the street in a t-shirt and boxers and not feel cold. My most practical solution is not to then begin some Gandhiesque experiment where I test my mental will against the wind chill, but to make sure my coat is filled with down and wrap a scarf around my neck.

Yet more often than not in the so-called "campus dialogue"—which, in my opinion, is a misleading and useless term thoughtlessly bandied about by student government types, Spectator columnists, and other self-appointed "campus leaders" in a self-aggrandizing attempt to seem more important than they are—real and imaginary problems tend to be confused. As an institution, we focus too much on trying to find physical solutions to imaginary problems and



LANBO ZHANG

Second Impressions

consequently forget about the real problems.

A good example of this—and it is merely one example of many—is the discussion of community. For as long as anybody involved in the "campus dialogue" can remember, Columbia has lacked community. As such, Columbia's institutional bodies dedicate substantial resources trying to build it. Housing orders Resident Advisers to make door tags and send email after email about fostering "Special Interest Communities." CCSC, through what seems like a series of offshore holdings and numbered accounts, funds t-shirts for Random Acts of Kindness Week using the infamous student life fee. Student Affairs even has a rather Orwellian-sounding

Not having a community isn't a good thing or a bad thing, it just happens to be the case.

arm called "Community Development," under whose penumbra resides more Orwellian-sounding arms such as the "Office of Civic Action and Engagement" and the "Office of Student Development and Activities."

I'm sure that much of the work done by the departments and offices I have just named is much appreciated by many students. Likewise, I am sure that much of the work is mostly ignored by many other students. In any case, despite their existence, "campus dialogue" people still complain about not having enough community at Columbia.

If community were such a dire problem at Columbia, students would have two solutions. The first is a real solution: Transfer to Dartmouth or Duke or somewhere where they have a "vibrant and thriving community." The second is to knock this ridiculous idea of community off its pedestal and

Renovating traditions

Right around final exam week in December, one of the elevators in John Jay broke down with impeccable timing.

A month later, the elevator still remains broken. Housing explained to the Office of Residential Programs that the delay was caused by the need to make a special order for the malfunctioning parts. The make of the elevator is so old that no one in the country produces these parts for sale on a regular basis. By the end of the first week of classes, Housing has promised, John Jay should have two functioning elevators again.

John Jay Hall, like many other buildings on campus, was built in 1927 under the direction of the firm McKim, Mead and White. Throughout its history, the building saw very few major renovations for the sake of preserving its Beaux Arts architecture. Eighty-six years later, John Jay's original façade still stands, welcoming 445 first-year students every fall.

Columbia's entire campus, not just John Jay, carries a timeless appearance, and perhaps it will continue to do so for many years to come. In fact, when the Northwest Corner Building opened in 2011, President Bollinger predicted that NoCo would be the final addition to the Morningside Heights campus. Since then, all subsequent major construction has been restricted to the Manhattanville campus, which will predominately house graduate schools. As of now, the administration has no plans to overhaul any part of the undergraduate physical experience on the Morningside campus.

I think all of us will be proud that our children, if admitted, will live in the same dormitories that we've come to love despite the many overdue facilities issues. Sit on the same wooden desks in Pupin. Walk the same flights of stairs to the seventh floor of Hamilton. Read the same Lattimore translation of the Iliad. People, especially at a historic institution like Columbia, regard tradition with great sentimental value. It is Columbians' sacred duty to protect this legacy, which they believe is the best of the old. Students and alumni would guard the building with pitchforks if the University planned to demolish the building for a brand new one. "García Lorca's spirit still rests in room 1231," former John Jay residents might shout back.

How do we know our traditions are sacred, inviolable standards of integrity and excellence? How can we be sure that there are no other alternative paths toward excellence? Is it possible that our shared legacy is merely a burden, a cause of inertia to progress? As one example, the Core has been the cause of heated discussion ever since it was

accept the practical reality that Columbia, due to its particular set of circumstances—as determined by its location, makeup of graduate and undergraduate schools, physical space, and whatnot—will never have the community that is constantly being called for.

Not having a community isn't a good thing or a bad thing, it just happens to be the case. When it becomes a problem, it is only because people perceive it as such. At that point, it is a problem that no administrative body can fix with a physical solution. Such problems are individual in nature and can only be solved by changing how we perceive them.

Instead of spending so much energy tending to the complaints raised in the "campus dialogue," the administrative bodies of the University should look for ways to deal with Columbia's many real problems. Take the issue of space, for example. The School of Engineering and Applied Science, still looking for a permanent dean, persistently lacks laboratory space. Similarly, student groups seem to be constantly short on practice space, meeting space, or performance space. When exams roll around, all of us will inevitably sacrifice firstborns for Butler study space.

Having identified space as a major issue long ago, President Bollinger used eminent domain to get some for us in Manhattanville. While the campus expansion created headaches of its own, it proves my point: Institutions are better at dealing with real problems and individuals are better at dealing with imaginary ones.

Ultimately, I don't particularly care about either the issue of community or space—they simply illustrate the need to distinguish the real from the imaginary. Conflating the two does nothing to help anyone. We will all save ourselves a lot of grief if we stop.

Lanbo Zhang is a Columbia College junior majoring in economics and history. He is a former Spectator editorial page editor. Second Impressions runs alternate Thursdays.



JAMES YOON
Yoon-iversity

established in 1919. In the past several years, students have repeatedly written Spectator columns and op-eds about the Core. Some have asked for a more robust science requirement, while others have asked that works of American writers be included in Literature Humanities. However, perhaps for diplomatic reasons, no one has recently suggested that the Core should be overhauled. At least at Columbia, the general consensus appears to be that there is only one right way to obtain a liberal arts education.

The focus of this piece is not about the Core, or even the John Jay elevators. What I am trying to say is that in our school, we favor piecemeal changes over fundamental shifts. We are comfortable with excising a book from the syllabus but never an entire course, like Frontiers of Science, from the curriculum. We renovate dormitories constantly or acquire apartments, but rarely discuss building one from scratch on our current campus.

However, it is undeniable that the world changes outside our Morningside campus. It is possible that one day our small renovations will not keep up with New York City's building code regulations. While I feel very lucky to have learned here, I also recognize that perhaps a liberal arts education will not satisfy the needs of the distant future. Having only looked into stopgaps instead of tangible solutions, we might face an overwhelming number of overdue overhauls.

We walk reluctantly with our eyes fixated on our inherited history, while others are running forcefully without ever looking back. Our hesitation at retiring the old may stem from America's short history. We fear risking our identity entirely when we sacrifice any part of our past, even if it's holding us down.

Last semester, I wrote about breaking down the walls of academic departments. I argued that in order to resolve the world's increasingly complicated problems, we need cooperation among academics, laypeople, and others with contrasting backgrounds. I believe that there is no room for unilateralism in our future. No singular tradition and convention will hold tyrannical power over all other paths toward personal, institutional, national, or worldwide fulfillment. But after meeting some die-hard future Ph.D.s and reuniting with my older relatives over winter break, I wonder if there are certain traditions that are sacred. Traditions that are not mere conventions but actual truths without which we would be lost. It is my hope that we will one day discern the difference between truth and convention in preparation for an innovative future that still preserves wisdom painfully won from the past.

James Yoon is a Columbia College senior majoring in environmental science. Yooniversity runs alternate Thursdays.



ILLUSTRATION BY IONE WANG

Parity, not talent, key in Ivy League

It's pretty easy rooting for a team at its peak, capable of making a deep run into the playoffs year after year and always having a reasonable shot at a championship. So I say "lucky you" to all those Manchester United, Barcelona, New York Yankees, and Los Angeles Lakers fans out there. For the rest of us, we can only dream of the day when our favorite teams can start churning out championship runs in their sleep.

Parity in the Ivy League, on the other hand, makes the athletic programs so much more interesting to follow. With no athletic scholarships offered, a team can go from being a bottom dweller in the standings to championship contention in just a few seasons.

But boiling down sports to a contest of one winner and a bunch of runners-up doesn't do justice to the story lines behind the scenes. Not to say that championships aren't important, but in my experience as a sports fan, I've found that there's often a more compelling story behind a team's rise to prominence than the end product of championship-caliber teams.

Success is often driven by a group of athletes and coaches who bought into a vision of eventual success long before it seemed within grasp. Just take a look at the accomplishments of the volleyball team this past fall. It had its highest finish ever as a program, finishing tied for second with Princeton. Though Yale ran away with its second straight championship, Columbia went from a winless Ivy season back in 2008 to a sixth place finish, then third, and now second.

To reach that point, star athletes like senior Megan Gaughn had to look at that 2008 Light Blue program and decide that she could make a difference. And after the foundation was built, a culture needed to be developed, where the whole team bought into the mindset of being winners and making the necessary sacrifices to accomplish its goals.

And so back to the idea of parity, the Ivy League is unique because every year is a new chance for coaches to find a core group of talent to build their teams around. Unlike with scholarship programs and professional leagues, there are no extra incentives for the better players to pick programs that are more established, with promises of bigger scholarships or bigger salaries and bonuses. While the Ivy League may attract less elite athletes for the bigger sports where the chance to go professional could mean multi-million dollar contracts, many of the smaller sport elite athletes bring their trade to the Ancient Eight, where they can make a significant, and sometimes even immediate, impact on a program.

Like with every team playing in a competitive league, many of the teams will have certain windows of opportunities where they have the best shot of capturing a championship. But that period of title contention is so much easier to create when the playing field is more level and the barriers to becoming competitive are at a minimum.

Now, my motivation for being a fan of Columbia athletics is to follow those building-block stories, where an upset of a stronger team or a significant improvement of a team over the course of the season isn't just a one-time fluke, but an indication that the Lions are that much closer to capturing a set of championship rings.

So my challenge is to find those Light Blue teams that are on the cusp of becoming something great, going from zero to hero, and digging into their past to look for some stories and ideas that guided them to their current paths towards success.

This winter, I'll be keeping an eye on Light Blue teams such as men's squash. While its meteoric rise is well-documented after being named the nation's most improved squad for two consecutive seasons, it's the team's ability to attract top talent such as sophomore Ramit Tandon, ranked second in the nation, that is intriguing. And while any talk of potential championship titles would be premature, I'm certain that more will be coming to Columbia in the near future.

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ERIC WONG

Under the Radar



DAVID BRANN / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

PLAYING WITHOUT A FULL DECK | Junior guard Tyler Simpson's consistent productivity is going to be critical for the Lions as Ivy play continues.

Inconsistent play a significant concern for Light Blue

BY CAROLINE BOWMAN
Spectator Senior Staff Writer

In recent games, the women's basketball team (2-13, 0-1 Ivy) has put up some big numbers in the first half to stay within striking distance of opponents, but struggled to maintain this offensive production after intermission.

The Lions began their conference

season on Saturday with an apparently one-sided 68-54 loss to Cornell. But Columbia held a six-point lead with seven minutes left in the first half, and at intermission the Light Blue was dead even with the Big Red, 37-37. The Lions shot 15-34 (44 percent) from the field and sunk five of 10 from behind the arc before the break. The Light Blue even kept pace on the boards with the Big Red, posting 17 rebounds to Cornell's 21.



KIERA WOOD / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

TALE OF TWO HALVES | Finding a way to replicate first half success has been a recurring issue for women's basketball.

But these numbers fell drastically after halftime, as Columbia shot just 7-25 (28 percent) from the field, failed to tally a single three-pointer in six attempts, and missed seven shots in the paint over the course of the second half.

Senior guard Brittany Simmons said that she felt a change in her team's energy between the first and second half.

"I really think that we stunned Cornell the first half. Their energy was not on them and we were up," she said. "But I think that second half they came out with a little bit more fire than we did. That was because they were executing their offenses. They were hitting some threes. I feel like we can't get down on ourselves when they make their way."

This trend of decreasing offensive production in the second half began prior to the Light Blue's matchup against Cornell. In a closely contested 49-47 loss against Lafayette on Jan. 9, the Lions shot 11-34 (32 percent) and buried four three-pointers in 14 attempts in the first half. But in the second, the Lions shot just 6-29 (20 percent) from the field and went 1-4 from behind the arc.

Considering Columbia's strong first-half performance against the Big Red in Saturday's matchup, the question is how the Lions plan to address their problems in the second half and

sustain their first-half firepower over the entirety of a game.

"The other teams have made defensive adjustments at halftime, and we haven't done a good enough job of countering their defensive adjustments and looking for other ways to score," Nixon said.

If the Light Blue hopes to break the pattern and maintain its first-half energy through the final buzzer, Nixon said that offensive flexibility is a must.

"I think it comes back to us and doing a better job of executing our offense," he said. "We need to make sure that we continue to take high percentage shots and also continue to hit the offensive glass to give ourselves more than one scoring opportunity on each trip down the floor."

The Lions showed earlier in the season that these goals are attainable. In their final game before winter break against St. Francis, they managed to stave off a run by the Terriers late in the second half to maintain a narrow lead and eventually capture the 49-45 victory.

As Columbia looks toward Ivy League powerhouses like Princeton and Harvard in upcoming conference rivalry games, the team needs to prove that it is capable of not only getting off to a good start, but also maintaining offensive production until the final buzzer.

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Early leaders emerge in Ancient Eight for women's basketball

BY MYLES SIMMONS
Spectator Senior Staff Writer

Women's basketball has seen its share of blowouts around the league in early Ivy League play. Perennial powerhouses Princeton and Harvard blew the doors off their first Ancient Eight opponents, and with Cornell handily defeating Columbia, Yale and Brown provided the only close contest to open the 14-game conference season over the past two weekends.

Brown (7-8, 1-0 Ivy) went into the locker room at halftime down by five,

BROWN	68
YALE	67

but outscored Yale (5-10, 0-1 Ivy) 45-39 after the break to get the victory.

Brown opened up the half with a 16-4 run to open up a 39-34 lead, and stayed in front until Yale's Amanda Tyson nailed a jump shot with five seconds left to tie the game at 67. But with just a second left on the clock, Brown's Sheila Dixon got fouled and made one of her two free throws to seal the victory. Dixon's teammate, Lauren Clarke, finished with 20 points, five assists, and a steal to earn co-Ivy Player of the Week.

With a 17-2 lead in the game's first eight minutes, Princeton (10-5, 1-0 Ivy)

PRINCETON	77
PENN	47

never looked back and easily handled Penn (7-6, 0-1 Ivy). The contest was effectively over at halftime, with the Tigers in front 35-16.

Penn struggled with shooting the entire game, managing a meager 27.3 percent from the floor. Of course, Princeton's strong defense was instrumental, as the Tigers are first in the league in shooting defense—allowing opponents to shoot just 35 percent on the season. After going 14-0 in Ivy play last season, Princeton certainly looks poised to capture another Ancient Eight title.

HARVARD	88
DARTMOUTH	66

Harvard (10-5, 1-0 Ivy) may have been picked to finish second in the league in the preseason media poll, but sure looked like a team on a mission scoring a season-high 88 points en route to victory over Dartmouth (2-13, 0-1 Ivy).

The Big Green has struggled all season to find a rhythm, and this problem continued against the Crimson, as Dartmouth shot just 39.6 percent from the field. Harvard, on the other hand, lit up the scoreboard shooting 46.3 percent, and emptied its bench by using 14 total players during the game. Harvard's Christine Clark had a game-high 22 points to go along with seven rebounds, two assists, and two steals in the win.

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