

## SEAS to start P/D/F pilot program

BY BEN SHENG

*Columbia Daily Spectator*

The School of Engineering and Applied Science's Committee on Instruction approved a proposal on Wednesday to allow SEAS students to pass/fail up to six credits of their non-technical electives.

Currently, SEAS does not offer credit for any classes taken pass/fail. Under the new pilot program, SEAS students will be able to receive credit for any pass/fail class that a Columbia College student can take pass/D/fail, although they will not be able to pass/fail classes required for a minor. All SEAS students need to complete nine to 11 credits' worth of non-technical electives to graduate.

The new policy will be implemented next semester as a two-year pilot. If, at the end of the second year, the COI decides two years of data is not conclusive enough to vote on, the program will last another year.

The SEAS pass/fail policy differs from CC's pass/D/fail policy in a few ways, including the exclusion of D grades. Additionally, only 3000-level classes or higher will be eligible for pass/fail, and SEAS students will not be allowed to uncover their grades afterward.

Spearheaded this year by Engineering Student Council Vice President for Policy Bora Kim, SEAS '13, and class of 2014

SEE PASS/FAIL, page 6



OLACHI OLERU / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

NOT EXACTLY A PHOTO FINISH | The It's Always Sunny at Columbia party, running uncontested, won the CCSC e-board race.

## ABC overhaul to change club representation

BY LILLIAN CHEN  
AND GINA LEE

*Spectator Senior Staff Writers*

Clubs represented by the Activities Board at Columbia voted unanimously Tuesday night to approve reforms to the board's constitution—a major overhaul of how dozens of groups are represented in student government.

The board, which oversees cultural, performing arts, pre-professional, academic, publication, and special interest groups, has been

working on a series of structural changes throughout the semester.

The biggest changes include a transition to a direct democracy, a discretionary budget for representatives, and an improved relationship with Barnard Student Government Association and the newly introduced Governing Board at Barnard.

Under the new direct democracy system, each category of group—dance groups, for example—will vote directly for its own representative on the board.

Previously, every student group voted for all representatives, and each category of group would be assigned one after elections.

“We expect that through the direct democracy reform, the people that are elected will probably be from the communities that they're representing,” incoming ABC president Tony Lee, CC '15, said. “They'll probably be more knowledgeable and more driven ... We're looking forward to their contributions.”

The 13 categories that will be

represented are dance, musical, performance, engineering, publication, pre-professional, East Asian, South Asian, European and Middle Eastern, academic, media, special interest, and black and Latino groups.

Will Hughes, CC '13 and president of the Columbia University Performing Arts League, said he thinks the changes are “a great step for ABC.” “Historically, members of the theater community haven't

SEE ABC, page 2

## Bus-only lanes on 125th to speed up M60 service

BY CHRISTIAN ZHANG

*Spectator Senior Staff Writer*

As the city moves forward with plans to speed up M60 buses on 125th Street, commuters are pleased by the prospect of faster service, but some locals say more community engagement is needed.

The Metropolitan Transit Authority and the city Department of Transportation will convert the M60 route, which runs from the Upper West Side along 125th Street to LaGuardia Airport, to Select Bus Service this fall, with construction set to occur over the summer.

First announced in October, the SBS reforms, which the MTA has unveiled over the last few months, include bus-only lanes along 125th Street, new left turn and parking regulations, and new rules for boarding and fare payment.

When the overhaul is complete, two traffic lanes on 125th Street will be converted into bus-only lanes, to be used by the M60, M100, M101, and Bx15 bus lines. The M60 will have fewer stops and off-board fare payment, which will allow passengers to use all the doors on a bus to board and exit. Bus stops will be extended to accommodate larger buses and more buses at the same time, and the buses themselves will be able to communicate with upcoming traffic lights, telling them to turn green before the bus arrives.

The DOT estimates the changes, which are a form of bus rapid transit, would increase service speed by 15 percent while reducing emissions by 25 percent as buses spend less time idling.

“The customers actually perceive a bigger time savings than the actual time savings,” DOT representative Ted Wright said at a Community Board 10 meeting

last month.

“In Staten Island there was a big speed up—about 20 minutes faster—and people were coming off the bus saying they saved half an hour. They are used to it being slow.”

Notoriously pokey M60 buses currently average 2.7 miles per hour during rush hour, compared with a citywide average of 7.7 mph.

“Even by New York standards, it's really slow,” DOT Assistant Commissioner Tom Maguire said Tuesday at an open house about the project.

The open houses, which have been fairly well attended, are part of the two agencies' effort to involve locals in the planning for SBS, which also includes community walk-throughs of the route.

But there have been mixed reactions to the level of engagement officials have pursued.

Community Boards 9, 10, and 11, which represent the entirety of Harlem, sent a letter to the MTA and DOT expressing concern for the lack of community engagement, CB10 chair Henrietta Lyle said.

CB9 member Vicky Gholson said that while her board was “somewhat in favor” of SBS, the plans “have to be given a closer scrutiny” because of recent reductions in bus service. Gholson said she and other CB9 members would also like to see the SBS reforms extended to the Broadway segment of the route, from 106th Street to 125th Street.

H. Jacob Carlson, an advocacy coordinator for local

SEE M60, page 2



## Harlem nonprofit will use \$42,500 grant to aid tenants

BY CHRIS MEYER

*Spectator Senior Staff Writer*

Elsia Vasquez can't get a moment's peace.

Three times a week, Vasquez—the founder and executive director of tenant advocacy organization PA'LANTE Harlem—meets with dozens of tenants from across Northern Manhattan, discussing problems ranging from rodent infestations to reductions in rent-stabilized apartments.

This “intake process,” a routine for the office's volunteers, is just one of the operational costs that a \$42,500 grant

from the West Harlem Local Development Corporation will help fund. PA'LANTE, which Vasquez established in 2006, was one of just four local housing organizations to receive money in the corporation's recent grant cycle, in which it doled out a total of \$2 million of Columbia's money to 83 neighborhood organizations.

PA'LANTE, which stands for People Against Landlord Abuse and Tenant Exploitation, works to protect tenants in both rent-stabilized and cooperative apartment buildings. During intake hours, tenants from around the neighborhood bring paperwork

about their rent payments and lease information to the organization's volunteers. PA'LANTE then helps them deal with city and state agencies, organize into tenants associations, and push landlords to make necessary changes.

Vasquez said her organization often deals with rampant abuse in rent payments, pointing to one case in which the tenant was owed roughly \$100,000 in rent credit to compensate for years of overcharging by the landlord. And as PA'LANTE has grown, so has Vasquez's confidence in the organization's work.

“When landlords see this,

they need to hire an attorney because we're so good at it,” Vasquez said, referring to a list of complaints, such as rat and bedbug infestation, that tenants in one West Harlem building were planning to submit to their landlord. “But in reality, just skip the attorney, and fix it. Get a crew, get a licensed crew, and get it done.”

In order to respond to complaints about local landlords, Vasquez said PA'LANTE often encourages individual tenants to form larger organizations within their buildings, which could prevent further issues from emerging.

“PA'LANTE says, ‘I will help you, but you have to help your neighbor,’” Vasquez said. “And if you don't help your neighbor, I'm not going to help you again.”

Although PA'LANTE deals mostly with landlord-tenant conflicts in rent-stabilized apartments, Vasquez said she was seeing more cases concerning cooperative apartments, which are formerly city-owned apartment buildings sold to a group of tenants rather than to a private landlord.

Rosa Williams, 85, came to PA'LANTE two years ago to help organize the tenants in her cooperative apartment after the president of the building's board was accused of embezzling roughly \$50,000 in funds. She now works part-time as a volunteer with the organization.

“For me, it meant bread in my children's mouth, so I was very disgusted about it,” she said, referring to the problems in her building. “Someone told us about PA'LANTE and we went to a meeting, and they really did help us tremendously. I've been able to see them put a roof over

SEE PA'LANTE, page 6

### THE EYE

#### Spring is in the Airwaves

Music (read: Bacchanal) on your mind? Columbia radio fosters community and creativity for undergraduates. Read about WBAR, WKCR, and the evolution of college radio in this week's magazine.



### OPINION, PAGE 4

#### Education trending

Rega Jha discusses social media in the classroom.

#### Identity redefined

Not your average “man of color.”

### A&E, BACK PAGE

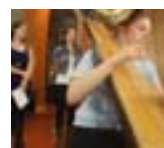
#### CC alumna breaks into the music industry

Tara Priya, CC '09, is making a name for herself as a singer-songwriter. Recently signed with a manager, she will release her second album this year.

### MULTIMEDIA, ONLINE

#### Light in the Piazza

Rebekah Lowin, CC '14, and Geoffrey Hahn, CC '15, discuss their roles in CMTS's newest performance.



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# Locals divided over MTA, DOT outreach

M60 from front page

environmental advocacy group WE ACT and a weekly M60 commuter, said “there’s a difference” between the quality of the community engagement and the amount of engagement.

“I think they’re trying really hard, but I know there are some concerns that feel unanswered,” he said, adding that he was concerned about the elimination of alternate-side parking.

But Maguire defended the agencies’ efforts.

“We’ve done more public outreach for this project than for any other SBS project we’ve done,” he said. “We’re still open to revisions.”

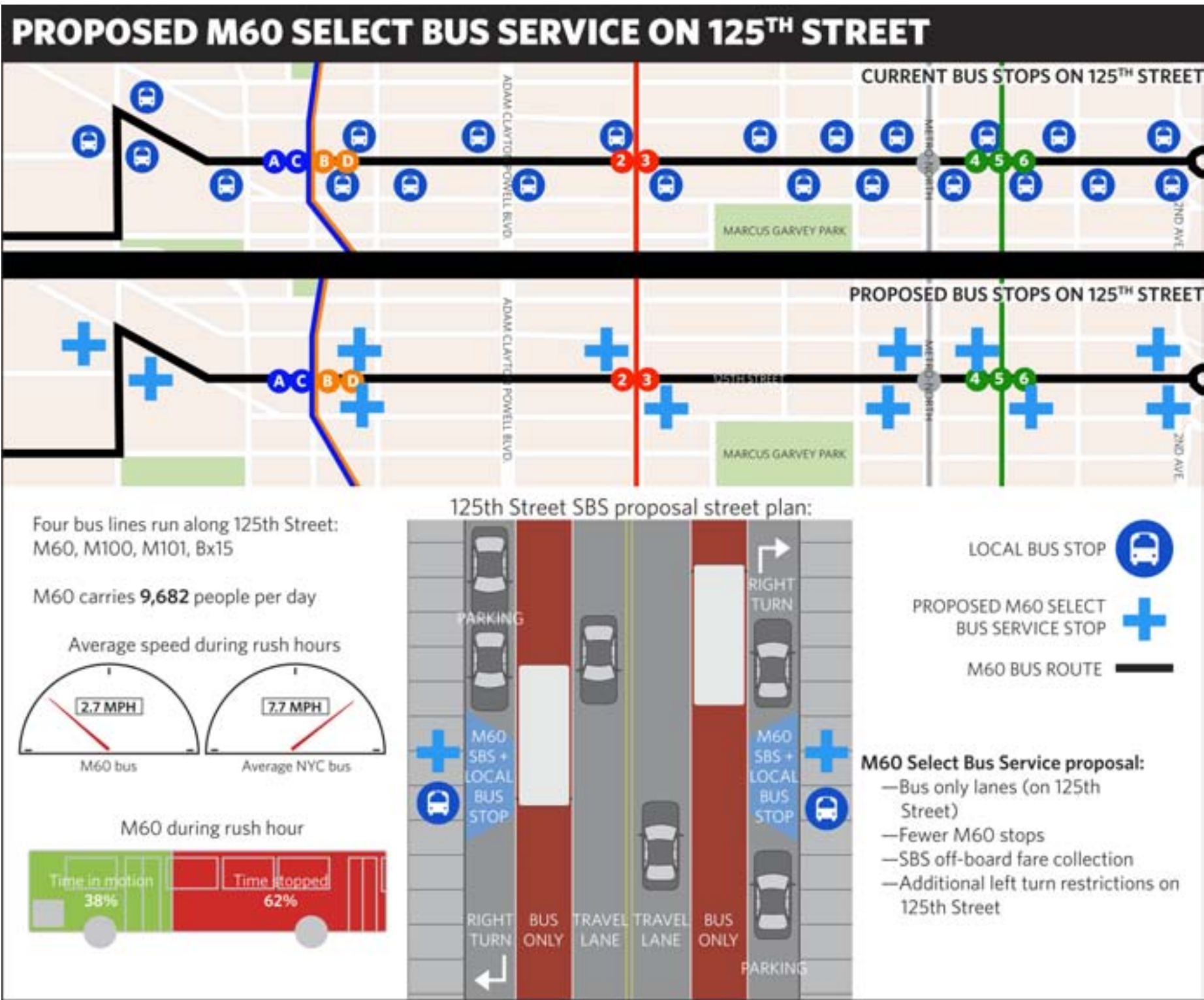
Some commuters agree. Carlton Walton, said he supports the proposal and thinks the agencies are doing a well at outreach.

“I do like the idea of having these open houses,” he said.

CB10 member Deborah Gillard said the proposal “has its pros and cons.” She said that there were other things that could be done to reduce truck and regular traffic.

“We don’t have the whole picture yet,” she said. “We are still working out bits and pieces because this is such a big area—from Broadway, all the way across the bridge to Queens—so it is a lot of area to address.”

*Avantika Kumar and Sophie Gamez contributed reporting.*  
*christian.zhang@columbiaspectator.com*



# Activities board moves to direct democracy system

ABC from front page

really been on ABC, so I think it’s a step in the right direction,” Hughes said.

Each representative will be given a \$300 discretionary budget every semester “to further empower this position of the ABC representative and make it a really attractive position for students to run for,” outgoing ABC president Saketh Kalathur, CC ’13, said. Kalathur said that giving representatives a “real source of money” for which they are responsible will incentivize student groups to stay in communication with their representatives and further build community.

“It’ll strengthen our board and strengthen your abilities to get your voices heard,” he said.

He added that the board hopes that representatives elected through the new system will be knowledgeable about groups in their respective categories and will have ideas that other board members wouldn’t think of.

Another major change in ABC’s constitution is that SGA will now fund ABC during Funding at Columbia University, the process by which the four undergraduate student councils fund the governing boards.

This means that all ABC groups, whether they are dually recognized or not, will be able to book space at Barnard—a new benefit for about 115 of the approximately 160 groups ABC represents.

“Given how tight space is on Columbia’s campus, especially in Lerner, this will be extremely good for our groups and extremely good for Barnard, because it’ll spread student life at Barnard,” Kalathur said.

Additionally, all ABC positions will now be open to Barnard students. For groups like CUPAL

and other theater groups, which have large Barnard membership, the amendment allowing more Barnard leadership within ABC “totally makes sense,” Hughes said.

Groups that are currently dually recognized under ABC and SGA will be grandfathered into the new system, Kalathur said.

“We didn’t want all these positive changes to be derailed by sort of a custody fight about who gets to keep which groups,” he said, adding that he thinks dual recognition will be phased out eventually.

Other changes include the creation of ABC funding awards, which will encourage groups to do more programming. Previously, new groups were disadvantaged with regards to funding because they tend to start out with low allocations, Lee said.

“One award I especially like is Rookie of the Year,” Lee said, referring to a proposed award for the best new event of the year.

Additionally, new group recognition, which was suspended this semester, is being shortened from an ongoing process to one that takes place over one or two big interview weekends.

ABC also plans to continue examining resource issues by being “more stringent with standards, finding ways to make resources, and finding more efficient ways to use resources that are available,” Lee said. The board will also continue to derecognize inactive groups.

Despite the changes the board has made this year, Kalathur said its work is not over. “The real work will actually be in implementing all these changes,” Kalathur said. “It’s actually a cultural change that can only happen with next year’s e-board. I’m very confident in them.”

*news@columbiaspectator.com*



**EASY AS A-B-C** | Incoming ABC President Tony Lee, CC ’15, discusses reforms at the board’s town hall Tuesday evening.

# Winners to focus on helping students access resources

ELECTION from front page

he said. “David really presented some fresh ideas and he had a lot of support behind him.”

Odyssey said that his experience on the council helped to distinguish him from Froomkin, who has never served on CCSC before.

“I think David’s message about the democratic culture is important, and a lot of the criticism is validated when people haven’t really done anything with their position on campus,” he said. “Even with a position on the inside this year, I’ve taken advantage of the resources available to me and I’ve helped undergraduate students. I hope to continue to serve students on the senate.”

Froomkin said that he called Odyssey last night to congratulate him, and that he hopes to work with him in the future.

“I told him that I think he’d do a fantastic job as senator,” he said. “I think Jared has done a great job in his tenure on CCSC and that rightfully helped him in this race.”

Even though he won’t be serving in the senate, Froomkin said that he will continue to address what he considers to be a “democratic deficit” on Columbia’s campus.

“I do think we need to continue the conversation about Columbia’s democratic deficit,” he said. “I will continue my work to address those issues as an outsider. I think it’s clear that a lot of students feel disenfranchised by the system, and that’s evident by the low voter turnout.”

In the ESC elections, 32.7 percent of the student body voted, while in the CCSC elections, turnout was 28.7 percent.

For CCSC, the executive board will be rounded out by Bob Sun, CC ’14 and vice president-elect of policy, Peter Bailinson, CC ’16 and vice president-elect of communications, Noah Swartz, CC ’16 and vice president-elect of finance, and Briana Saddler, CC ’14 and vice president-elect of campus life.

Chen said that even though her party ran unopposed, she still wanted to campaign for votes and ask students for their ideas.

“We spent the past week dorm-storming, going to Ferris, asking students what they think,” she said. “We heard all these new ideas ... We were taking this very seriously.”

The It’s Always Sunny in Columbia party has four main goals, Chen said—increasing transparency, accessing resources and technology, advocating for Columbia College, and improving the campus experience. Part of improving access, Bailinson, a Spectator development associate said, is just letting students know

what resources are available to them.

“I want to focus on making connections between the resources that already exist on campus and students,” he said. “One of the great things about Columbia is that a lot of these things already exist. I want to make it easier for students to connect with those resources.”

Bailinson, who made national headlines earlier this semester when he became the face of Columbia’s Nutella frenzy, said that he’s looking forward to working on important issues.

“I’m not sure if I’m ever going to live down the Nutella,” he said. “What people have been telling me is that when employers search my name forever, they’re going to see it ... I’m excited to get my name out there on issues that are more important, but I took it as something funny.”

On the ESC executive board, Bhatt will be joined by Tanya Shah, SEAS ’14 and vice president-elect of policy, Brian Wu, SEAS ’15 and vice president-elect of finance, Rushal Rege, SEAS ’14 and vice president-elect of student life, and Jillian Ross, SEAS ’16 and vice president-elect of communications (defeating Matthew Sheridan, SEAS ’16, who ran independently for the communications post).

Bhatt said that even though his party ran unopposed, he wanted to reach out to as many people as possible and show that his party was accountable during the campaign.

The party’s platform consisted of three pillars, he said—representing SEAS students, making the council more efficient, and representing engineering student groups.

Bhatt said he chose his fellow party members based on his desire for a diverse executive board, with people from different class years and levels of experience with the council—a mix of seasoned and fresh perspectives, he said.

“When we came together, we often discussed what our ideal Columbia would be,” he said.

During Sunday night’s debate, Chen announced that a task force was being formed to explore the possibility of merging CCSC and ESC. Bhatt said he found the idea of a merger exciting, even though there are still many issues the task force would have to consider before it could happen.

“It’s an exciting time. A lot of changes are happening,” he said. “There are some big tasks that we’re hoping to explore and we’ll see what works best.”

Some of the most contested races were for CCSC at-large

representative positions.

Loxley Bennett, CC ’15 and current class of 2015 president, and Chris Godshall, CC ’15, won the election for student services representatives against Nada Zaher, CC ’16.

Mary Joseph, CC ’15, won the election for pre-professional representative against Hamza Khan, CC ’14.

Nora Habboosh, CC ’14, won the election for academic affairs representative against Benjamin Spener, CC ’14, Rachel Bercovitz, CC ’15, and Qiyyun Tan, CC ’16 and a Spectator staff writer and associate photo editor.

Daniel Liss, CC ’16 and a Spectator Opinion deputy, won the election for alumni affairs representative against Daniel Cohen, CC ’15, and Pilar Guerra, CC ’16.

CCSC’s current class of 2014 council, the Kiwi Krew party, ran unopposed and won, led by president Conan Cassidy, CC ’14. He is joined by Joanna Kelly as vice president, and Sarita Patankar, Ben Xue, and Zach Vargas-Sullivan, all CC ’14, as class representatives. Xue will be the only new member of the 2014 council, replacing Arvin Ahmadi, CC ’14 and a Spectator Opinion blogger.

Michael Li will serve as president of the class of 2015, with Uchechi Iteogu as vice president and Liam Bland, Kareem Carryl, and Jackson Tse, all CC ’15, as representatives.

The Corps party, led by Ramis Wadood, CC ’16, won the election for the class of 2016 council. Grayson Warrick, CC ’16, will be the class of 2016’s vice president. Benjamin Kornick, Anne Scotti, and Richin Kabra, all CC ’16, were elected as class representatives.

The LegaSEAS party ran unopposed and won the election for class of 2014 council. Daniel O’Leary will be class president with Caroline Taylor as vice president. Andrew Gonzalez and Linda Sun were elected as class representatives. All are SEAS ’14.

O’Leary, who said that he’s already pre-calendared seven events for the fall semester, noted that the top priority of the class of 2014 council is events for the senior class.

“There are just a ton of events that make senior year amazing,” he said. “We want to make sure that we execute these events very well.”

O’Leary also said that his main focus in ESC will be to streamline processes for student groups and give them the flexibility that can be lost amid bureaucratic inefficiencies.

Seila Misheni, SEAS ’14, ran independently for class president and lost.

Joshua Boggs, leading the Blue Union party, will be the class of 2015 president, with Shensi Ding as vice president. Maria Balsinde and Gilbert Feig were elected as class representatives. All are SEAS ’15.

The ClasSEAS party, led by Michelle Lee, SEAS ’16, as president, won in the class of 2016 elections. Caroline Park, SEAS ’16, will be the class’ vice president, with Abdulrahman Sam Skhosaim and Chloe Blanchard, SEAS ’16, as class representatives.

Aside from ESC’s professional development and alumni affairs representative position, all of the at-large positions had uncontested races.

Janiel Li, SEAS ’15, won the election for professional development and alumni affairs representative against Aditya Naganath, SEAS ’15. Robert Ying, SEAS ’16, was elected academic affairs representative, and Jerry Sun, SEAS ’15, was elected student services representative.

Li, who is the current Student Governing Association liaison for ESC, said he had to campaign much more aggressively this time around because his race was contested, unlike last year.

“I put a lot more effort in flying and creating Facebook pages, and getting the word out to have people vote,” he said. “I also wanted to make sure that I structured my platform very specifically.”

Li said that he is more focused on the alumni affairs part of his title than the professional development part, and that he wants to expand programs that allow students to connect with alumni for career guidance.

“It’s all about what experience the alumni had, and how they can show a realistic view of the opportunities students have out of college,” he said. Whatever “direction students should go, whether it’d be industry or research, they can have input from alumni.”

ESC also held elections for liaison positions to the other undergraduate councils. Vishnu Kalugotla, SEAS ’14, was elected as the Columbia College Student Council liaison. Manali Yavatkar, SEAS ’15, was elected as the General Studies Student Council liaison. Jason Kang, SEAS ’16, will be the new Student Government Association liaison.

ESC’s new director of technology will be Vanshil Shah, SEAS ’15. Malini Nambiar, SEAS ’15, was elected sustainability liaison.

*Abby Abrams contributed reporting.*  
*tracey.wang@columbiaspectator.com*



# Strong mental fortitude a tennis necessity

Imagine you're on the brink of falling off a cliff, hanging on by the thinnest of threads. You can even look down and see the bottom, but somehow you manage to pick yourself up and recover your balance despite everything nearly coming to an end. The peril of the former moment and the relief of the latter are all too familiar to tennis players, as every single match contains countless ups and downs.

Tennis is one of the most interesting sports to watch, not only for its pace, intensity, and theatrics, but also its unpredictability. Momentum swings like crazy throughout a match, as a single deuce point can go on for what seems like forever, and players can come so perilously close to losing a match yet storm back to take championship point.

This may be thrilling for spectators like myself as we root for our favorite players in the comfort of our pajamas with a bowl of ketchup chips, but for the player, the fickle nature of tennis can wreak havoc on the nerves. The demanding physical conditions are compounded by immense nervousness and unpredictability at each and every point.

Some of the best matches I've seen are those where a player seemingly comes from the edge of death—down two sets, at match point, and at the point of exhaustion—to somehow muster up some magical strength and take the match. That moment of exhilarating victory as they clinch match point is that much sweeter because it seemed so impossible a few sets ago.

## Many think that self-belief will come once they win, but it may be the other way around.

What is it that allows some players to persevere just a bit longer than their peers, not to panic even when all seems lost, and to cultivate that mental steeliness required to finish out an often grueling tennis match?

Many tennis players think that self-belief will come once they win matches, but it may actually be the other way around. Roger Federer said that his career finally reached its peak once he learned not to panic in situations when he was down or under pressure but rather to just “keep playing and see what happened.” Even when it appeared he was going to lose for sure, he allowed his self-belief to guide him through the mental rough waters and keep him calm. In a way, he created his own self-belief before he began winning a lot of matches, and that in itself allowed his career to skyrocket.

As a member of Columbia's women's tennis team, which now sits atop the Ivy League, sophomore Amy Li also stresses the importance of self-belief in a sport like tennis.

“Believing in yourself is where it all starts,” she told me. “Tennis is very much a technical sport in that you need a basic foundation to play, but, given two players with the same physical abilities, the one with the stronger mental game wins. The fact that tennis is an individual sport makes belief all the more necessary because you have to cope with all the pressures of competition by yourself.”

In a high-stress individual sport, it can often feel like there are multiple battles occurring within a player's mind all at the same time, and things such as self-doubt can lead to mental obstacles and decide the outcome of a match.

“Having to deal with doubt is like having another opponent that you have to compete against in addition to the actual opponent across the net,” Li said. “Doubt just makes tennis more difficult than it needs to be.”

Instead of worrying about an endless array of “what-ifs,” Li directs her mind to focus on things within her power. “I focus on my game plan against my opponent to keep doubt out of my head. I also focus on little things such as breathing or how much time I take in between points because these are factors that I can control.”

Another top-ranked player who exemplifies how self-belief is not only a result of success but also a requirement for it is Serena Williams. As Li puts it, “You can tell from the way she behaves both on and off the court that she truly believes in herself, that she is number one. That's why she's been so dominant in the sport for more



MINNIA FENG

### Mind Games



KIERA WOOD / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**NICKED BASE** | Senior second baseman Nick Crucet is second on the team 11 stolen bases this season for Columbia in 15 attempts. He is batting .256.

## Light Blue's 5-game win streak buoyed by aggressive base-running

BY MYLES SIMMONS  
*Spectator Senior Staff Writer*

Bringing a five-game winning streak into this weekend's Ivy contests, Light Blue baseball has had plenty going right for it over the past week.

Columbia (14-15, 6-2 Ivy) solved its brief starting pitching woes with four solid performances against Yale and Brown, and carried the momentum into the mid-week contest against St. John's. During the streak, starters have given up just six earned runs, and eight runs total. That consistency has been one of the keys to keeping the Lions competitive in each game. Any time there has been a deficit, it has not been too much for the Light Blue to overcome.

On Saturday, for instance, junior lefty David Speer allowed just one run on five hits in the seven-inning contest, leaving the door open for

sophomore Joey Falcone to hit a game-tying, pinch-hit home run in the top of the final frame. Senior Eric Williams then gave the Lions the 2-1 lead later in the inning with a RBI double.

Though effective pitching and timely hitting are always important for winning in baseball, Columbia's streak has also been propelled by the team's strong base-running.

Over the last five games, the Lions have stolen 10 bases, getting caught just three times. They stole five on Tuesday afternoon alone in the 5-3 victory over St. John's.

“I think base-running today was good,” Light Blue head coach Brett Boretti said after the game. “I think guys are getting more confident there. The more we get on base, the more we have a chance of doing it.”

So far this season, the Lions have swiped 40 bases on 50 attempts. Among Ivy League teams, only Penn and Cornell—both of the Lou Gehrig division—have more stolen bases,

although Columbia leads the Ancient Eight in steals during conference play with 11.

Sophomore center fielder Jordan Serena has been the biggest thief, taking 15 in 16 attempts, including two on Tuesday. Senior second baseman Nick Crucet is right behind him, succeeding in 11 of 15 attempts.

“We took some gambles in some situations, and it paid off,” Boretti said. “Just continuing to put pressure on them.”

Still, when a team runs as much as the Lions, some of the wagers don't go their way. In the bottom of the second in Tuesday's contest, Crucet got picked off from attempting to steal second on the lefty pitcher's first movement, which ended the inning. This came after junior shortstop Aaron Silbar got caught trying to steal third earlier in the frame.

“We tried to steal third, double steal at one point,” Boretti said. “We had it, but we over-slid the bag in that situation.”

But being aggressive on the base-paths doesn't just mean stealing bases. Boretti said the team also used some hit-and-run on Tuesday to get things going offensively.

“The guys are handling the bats and being able to do that in those situations, which is good,” Boretti said. “I think we're continuing to get better.”

The Lions will need to use their base-running prowess against a strong Cornell squad over the upcoming weekend. The Big Red has allowed 26 steals on 39 attempts so far this season, but will come into Inwood sporting a pitching staff with a league-leading 1.87 ERA in conference play.

With those numbers, each and every run Columbia can get across the plate could go a long way. Once men get on base, look for the Lions to be aggressive in getting them over and getting them in.

myles.simmons  
@columbiaspectator.com

## Archers have strong showing against world-class competition

BY KELLY RELLER  
*Columbia Daily Spectator*

The Columbia archery team faced off against the world's best in shooting this past weekend at the Arizona Cup, coming away with several strong individual performances.

After a first-round bye, sophomore Sarah Bernstein represented the Light Blue in the recurve division with a narrow 6-5 loss to nationally ranked Holly Stover. Sophomore Grace Kim, a Spectator design associate, soundly conquered the first round with a 6-0 win, but fell 6-0 in the second round to Olympian shooter Miranda Leek.

In compound, freshman Julie Hoffman gave a strong performance in the first round with a 126-123 win. Sophomore Mary Quien conquered her first round with a score of 129-101. Quien continued to battle hard in the second round against the eventual silver medalist of the compound division, Gabriela Trevino, but fell 140-130.

“These young women are very competitive ... I'd say they are mostly satisfied.”

—Derek Davis  
Head coach

Columbia head coach Derek Davis knew the Arizona Cup would be especially challenging, but the steep competition did not hinder the team's effort.

“These young women are very



ALYSON GOULDEN / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**DESERT STORM** | The Light Blue archery squad did well against top competition from around the world in Phoenix.

competitive,” Davis said. “They know they are up against athletes who train full time and don't have an academic workload. So in perspective, looking at the amount of quality outdoor practice we get before the event and the level of competition we face at the event, I'd say they are mostly

satisfied.”

Only two competitions remain on the team's schedule, but the importance of each performance increases as the season narrows in May.

“Things really heat up on a collegiate level now. Our next two events are what lead us into Nationals,” said

Davis. “As always, the goal is to win.”

The next competition will be the U.S. Collegiate Archery East Region Intercollegiate Archery Championship during the weekend of April 19 at Pennsylvania College of Technology in Williamsport.

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# What it means to be a man of color

BY BURHAN SANDHU

In her column “Going home from the unexamined life” (March 27), Rega Jha expressed “a larger sadness about the slight insincerity and reluctance with which [she] call[s her native India] home now.” As an immi- grant who recalls nothing of his own homeland, I find this issue of understanding how to be “sincere” exceed- ingly complicated. Maintaining allegiance to my fam- ily’s culture in the face of assimilating to the culture in which I was raised is a tension that has motivated my question of identity for quite some time. I’ve lived in Brooklyn ever since I came to America, and I’ve met kids every day who were caught in the same clash of cultures and identities. We, the culturally multipartite, are collectively dubbed “people of color.” But what does that really mean?

## The idea that antagonism toward white America should be the immediate mental association with the identifier “person of color” made me think.

While I was discussing this question recently with a good friend, he expressed frustration at the notion that being a person of color entailed a decidedly antagonistic attitude toward the white majority. Being white himself, he expressed a sense of helplessness when hearing or reading about people identifying as “people of color,” feeling that the color of his skin forced this burden of generations’ worth of responsibility on his shoulders, even though he himself was not culpable. The con- versation started from a piece online I had found and shared on Facebook titled, “What’s Wrong With the Term ‘Person of Color.’” In this piece, the author sum- mated his thesis by saying that “as long as the vocabu- laries of our struggle derive from the homogenizing actions of white supremacy, we will be that much fur- ther from racial liberation.” The idea that antagonism toward white America should be the immediate mental association with the identifier “person of color” made

me think, “Well, is that really what I mean when I say I am a man of color?”

The answer, in brief, is no. I do not identify as a man of color because I am looking for people to know I am overtly hostile to a white majority that established its dominance early in this nation’s history. I do not iden- tify myself as a man of color because I am from Pakistan, or because I am South Asian. I do not identify myself as a man of color because I am looking for favors from a society that thinks erasing centuries of biases can be reduced to using virtual quotas for admissions at institutions of higher education. “Man of color” does not describe me. It defines me.

The distinction rests in how I approach the term. As I see it, if you identify as a person of color, you are a person of color. For me, it is not so much a designa- tion placed on somebody as it is an identifier one ac- tively takes. More often than not, people who assume this identity use it in context as agents working against systems of oppression. What that means in day-to-day action varies based on how aggressive one’s pursuit of action is, but I do believe that it is a general character- istic shared by those who identify as people of color.

I do not very much resemble a man from Brazil. I speak Urdu; he speaks Portuguese. I play cricket; he plays football. I’m Muslim; he’s Catholic. But the real- ity is, when we come here as immigrants, we are each as underrepresented as the other in different aspects of social, political, and professional life—as a conse- quence of how this country has developed and which groups of people have come to dominate the upper strata of society. The hope is that we can help each other correct this underrepresentation; this partnership is what is meant by solidarity. It’s supposed to be about self-empowerment more than it’s supposed to be about white antagonism. Our differences, distinct as they are, remain in the background because we have a common goal. It is this goal that is at the core of the reaction I seek when I publicly identify as a man of color.

For this reason, I can get behind a group on campus like the Men of Color Alliance, which accepts anyone who self-identifies as a man of color. As one of the board members explained it to a reporter for Bwog, “if that means as a Caucasian male that your background and life experiences have lent themselves to being a man of color, then you are welcome here.” Now there is an identity I have no qualms about assuming. This under- standing is inclusive rather than exclusive, constructive rather than destructive. And if we are to attempt to real- ize any meaningful change in the underlying biases of our society, this understanding is the only way forward.

*The author is a Columbia College first-year. He is a Spectator associate design editor.*

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

As a Barnard alumna who still uses the Barnard pool, I have several concerns about the consequences of its closure at the end of this semester.

The closing of the Barnard pool will greatly decrease the number of women who graduate with knowledge of how to swim. Swimming is an important, lifelong skill, and the Barnard pool encourages both Barnard and Columbia students who are not strong swimmers—or do not know how to swim at all, but have the personal motivation to learn—a chance to splash around without the pressure of swimming laps. The pool at Dodge Fitness Center is not for beginner swimmers. It is for swimmers who competed on their high school swim teams and whose strokes hit the water like the beat of a metronome.

## The physical fitness options for Barnard students are being limited.

Furthermore, as the “Freshman 15” continues to rise (I am told 20-30 pounds is a more accurate estimate now), how can the school close a facility that promotes physical fitness and health? Now that the physical education re- quirement will be reduced to one semester, the physical fitness options for Barnard students are being limited. Its two-semester physical equipment requirement once kept the Barnard curriculum unique. I wonder what First Lady Michelle Obama—with her “Let’s Move” campaign—would think of all of this. Would it deter Sasha and Malia from applying?

Is this to become a trend on the Barnard campus? Will each facility that the administration finds too costly and burdensome to maintain be shut down? What is next? Le Frak Gymnasium? Wolman Library? If the administration does not fight to maintain and keep each and every campus facility open, then Barnard will become more dependent on Columbia resources and will continue to fade into history as one of the former great independent colleges for women.

I am glad I attended and graduated from Barnard when I did. I will always be grateful for the education Barnard gave me, and I will always remember how it encouraged me to be more physically active. I am sorry that future Barnard students will not have the same opportunity.

*Chi-Young Park  
BC ’05*

## #Classroom

In a lecture earlier this week, our professor asked all 70-some- thing of us a simple question. “Do you intend to use new or social media during this class?”

Only two brave hands went up. Admittedly, although I fully in- tended to tweet the hours away, mine did not.

After a few minutes of con- versation, he clarified that our honesty would not be punished. I raised my hand and so did several others. In doing so, we declared, with tinges of both guilt and pride, that yes, we might tweet or Facebook or send emails during this class, and no, we had no intention of trying to stay off the social web for 75 consecutive minutes. The motley crew of 20-or-so of us were then asked to relocate to one cor- ner of the classroom.

The purpose of this exercise was to demonstrate the sociological and psychological effects of group- formation, and it worked. But then, very quickly, ad- ditional judgments began to be made.

Our professor accused us of wanting to “check out” during the class and of not wishing to engage fully. Slowly, my peers also began to pass similar judgments. “They’re clearly incapable of paying attention for an hour and 20 minutes,” one girl said. “It seems as though they care less about the subject matter than the rest of us do,” another voice chimed in. “They’ve made the conscious decision to basically not be in this room.”

OK. Of course, as a self-proclaimed social media “ad- dict,” I take issue with these allegations—first and foremost on a personal, emotional level. So I’ll put my bias on the table and I’ll say it: I was offended.



REGA JHA

### Rega-rding Columbia

But, more importantly, I take issue with the state- ments that were made because I think they are based on dangerously outdated assumptions. Most urgently, I disagree with the assumption that being active on new media necessarily implies “checking out” from one’s physical environment. Sure, that is one poten- tial outcome, but the other option—one that I believe professors should capitalize on—is the potential for social media and new media to enhance and comple- ment our engagement with classroom goings-on.

## I hope professors will embrace his recommendation to recognize the social web as an educational tool.

Just as taking notes by hand commit them to my memory forever, so should tweeting a fact I learn in class. Just as study groups once acted as venues for inter-student discussion and support, so should Facebook groups. Just as the classroom has gradually evolved, over years of debate and resistance, to in- corporate newly introduced technologies which now seem commonplace (projectors, laptops, iPads), so it should evolve to accommodate social media, an in- arguable component of the average college student’s everyday life.

When I reached out to Sree Sreenivasan (Columbia’s Chief Digital Officer, a professor of social and new media at the J-School, and himself an avid user of most major social networks) for comment, he laid down the general rule that “social media is only as useful a tool as professors encourage it to be.”

“I would encourage professors who want to try it out to experiment with it,” he said, “but at the same time, if they’re uncomfortable—if they feel students

are disengaged—then they have the right to stop stu- dents from doing it.”

Professor Sreenivasan is right. There are cer- tain classes in which even the most creative profes- sor wouldn’t find a use for an Instagram filter or a hashtag (here’s lookin’ at you, Calc III), but, when- ever possible, I hope professors will embrace his recommendation to recognize the social web as an educational tool whose potential simply hasn’t been tapped into yet. A classroom at Temple University serves as a perfect example of such an experiment.

“At this school,” Prof. Sreenivasan continued, “the discussion of technology in the classroom has been going on for years—more than a decade—and we’ve had to talk about things like laptops in the classroom. ... We, as a society, change and adjust our use of tech- nology and where we see it and where we’re used to it.”

In the spirit of coupling evolution with discussion, I encourage all four of Columbia’s undergraduate schools to follow the Graduate School of Journalism’s lead and establish a set of guidelines for the use of social media in classrooms. The J-School’s social me- dia guidelines account for several gray areas created by the meeting of academia with social media (e.g., classroom confidentiality). At the same time, they give professors free reign to determine the extent to which they would like social media utilized in their specific classrooms.

As Associate Professor of Music Jordan Shapiro said in Forbes recently, “Colleges shouldn’t be jittery about students who are Twitterly.” Rather than establishing knee-jerk bans and reactionary judgments, they should deeply consider the educational potential of the social web and, with open minds and careful consideration, establish classroom cultures tailored to optimize learn- ing in the 21st century, for 21st century students.

*Rega Jha is a Columbia College senior majoring in creative writing. Rega-rding Columbia runs alternate Thursdays.*

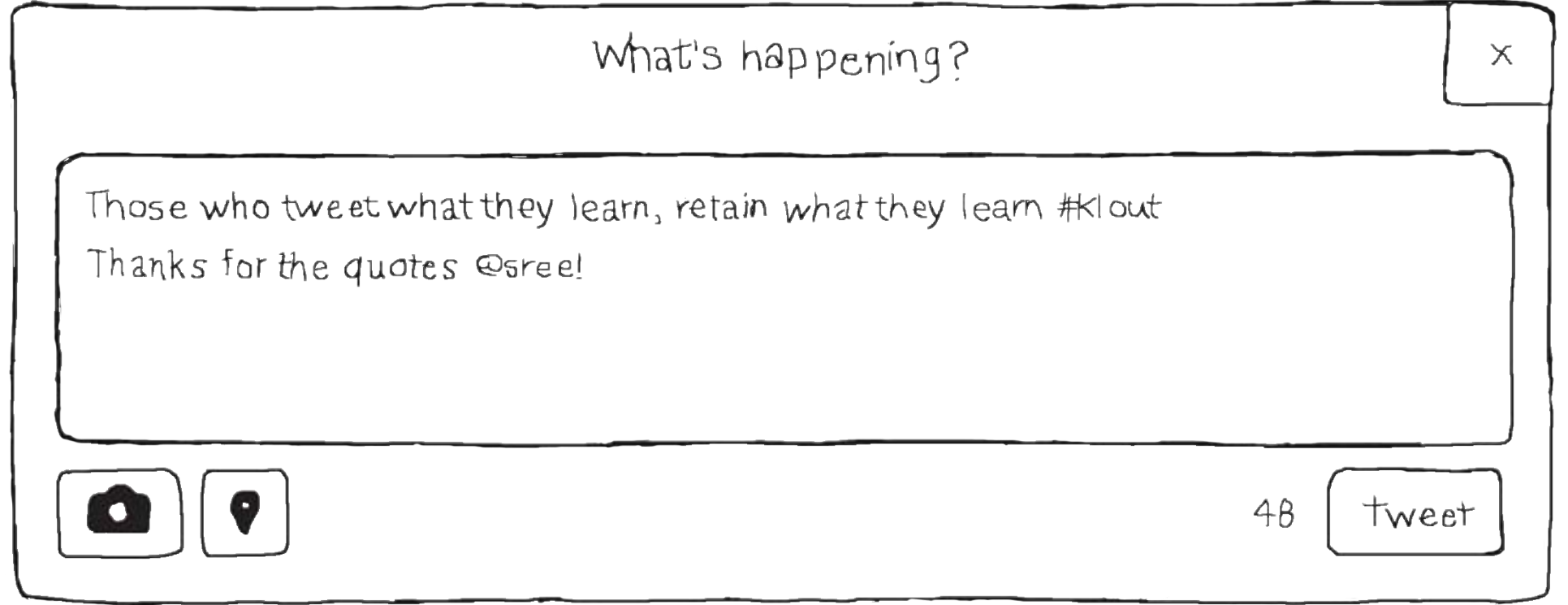


ILLUSTRATION BY GRACE BICKERS

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# Believing in oneself is most important for learning how to win in tennis

**FENG, from page 3**

than 10 years, which is an incredible feat given the intense nature of the sport.”

From top-ranked players like Williams to high school varsity teams like that of junior Xiaotong Li, whose team had a remarkable undefeated streak of five years, belief is essential to success in tennis at any level.

“You can’t win a game that you’ve already given up on,” Xiaotong Li said. “Hold onto the match as long as you can, treat every game and every set

like that of a new match.”

Doubt and worry can’t alleviate the unpredictability of a situation and can only hinder performance, so the best solution is to focus on what can be controlled and play to win at every point of the game. In the wise words of legendary divas Mariah Carey and Whitney Houston, “You will when you believe.”

*Minnia Feng is a Columbia College junior majoring in psychology. Mind Games runs biweekly. sports@columbiaspectator.com*



MICHAEL DISCENZA / SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**DEVILISH DARLING** | Brooke Darling’s stellar pitching is key for the Lions.

# Lions to face St. Peter’s after successful Ivy weekend

**BY PHIL GODZIN**  
*Spectator Staff Writer*

After a 3-1 road weekend at Brown and Yale that bumped the softball team back to .500, the Lions (15-15, 4-4 Ivy) will try to keep the wins coming on Thursday against a Saint Peter’s club that has just five wins in 34 games.

The Light Blue has beaten St. Peter’s in 12 consecutive meetings dating back to 2003. The two teams have already met once this season during the Rebel Spring Games in Kissimmee, Fla. over spring break—a contest that Columbia won, 6-0. Sophomore Brooke Darling pitched a complete game shutout, while freshman Nicole Borchard went 3-3 with a stolen base.

Borchard has stayed hot ever since, leading the team with a .367 batting average and 23 RBIs. Her excellent

**COLUMBIA VS. ST. PETER’S**  
Columbia Softball Stadium, 3 p.m.

offensive start to her collegiate career was recognized this week when she was named Ivy League Softball Rookie of the Week. In six games, Borchard hit .450 with six RBIs, including a 4-4, four-RBI performance against Brown.

The Peacocks’ main offensive threats are Lee Harrison and Francesca D’Amato, who have a combined nine home runs and 25 RBIs on the season. Both are hitting above .320, but are the only hitters above .300 on the team. The team’s subpar offense has led to an opponent ERA of just 2.40, which does not lead to much success given the Peacocks’ own team ERA of 8.30.

After facing St. Peter’s, the Lions will host Cornell (14-16, 4-4 Ivy) in four straight games over the weekend.

*sports@columbiaspectator.com*

# PA’LANTE works to organize W. Harlem tenants

**PA’LANTE, from front page**

the heads of children and senior citizens like myself.”

The organization has also increased its work with undocumented immigrants, many of whom cannot find help at legal aid nonprofits without citizenship papers.

Gasper Rivera, a tenant leader at an apartment building on 134th Street, said PA’LANTE had “been there every step of the way” with his group, especially with respect to undocumented immigrants.

“Some of the tenants come from outside the country, so they don’t

know their rights or how the system works,” he said.

Spectator reported in January that PA’LANTE had hoped the grant would be enough to keep a lawyer on retainer full-time, a change that Vasquez estimated could cost roughly \$300,000.

But with the WHLDC opting to fund over 80 organizations, PA’LANTE and other organizations had to settle for smaller amounts. Still, Vasquez says she is pleased that she doesn’t have to worry about the operational expenses of her growing nonprofit.

“We’re happy and we’re thankful because that is the most we have

ever received in a grant so far,” said Vasquez, whose organization helped an estimated 611 families in 2012, almost double the number served in 2011. “Everything has a cost, and we’re very happy that we got this money.”

Although the grant is helping fund the organization’s day-to-day operations, Vasquez said she also hopes to benefit from the Affordable Housing Fund outlined in Columbia’s Community Benefits Agreement, which will contribute roughly \$20 million to affordable housing initiatives around the Manhattanville expansion.

*chris.meyer@columbiaspectator.com*

# Advocates surprised by approval of pass/fail

**PASS/FAIL, from front page**

Vice President Tanya Shah, SEAS ’14, the proposal was set in motion in the spring of 2012 by then-Vice President for Policy Logan Donovan, SEAS ’13.

Shah and Donovan both admitted that they actually expected the proposal to be rejected. Shah said that before the proposal was voted on, she’d already started thinking about bringing another proposal in the fall.

“I was actually already planning how we could incorporate [incoming SEAS dean] Mary Boyce into our plans for next year to get this through,” she said, laughing.

“I had no impression it was going through,” Donovan said. “So I was sitting in class, and I got the text from Bora, saying, like, ‘It passed!’ and I was like, ‘What?!’”

The proposal’s supporters hope the pass/fail option will allow engineers to venture into exploring subjects they might otherwise have avoided to preserve their GPAs.

“This will provide a confidence boost for those students who really wanted to take that hard poli sci

course,” Kim said. “Now they can.”

ESC President Tim Qin, SEAS ’13, encouraged SEAS students to take advantage of the leeway the pilot program offers by trying out challenging subjects.

“Look, now’s your chance,” he said. “Show that you’re interested in the hard classes.”

The proposal brought to the COI represented over a year of work and almost two semesters of cooperation between ESC and SEAS Vice Dean Soulaymane Kachani, who is the chair of the COI for SEAS.

Kachani advised the writers of the proposal to frame the pass/fail proposal as a matter of expanding students’ educational opportunities as opposed to one of improving grades, which had been a focus last spring. Many of the stipulations in the proposal, such as the 3000-level rule, were added to deter use of the pass/fail option as a way to inflate grades.

“I think there were enough protections and enough thought into structuring this in a way that seems that it’s really not compromising on the rigor of the curriculum,” Kachani said.

The vice dean and the dean’s office conducted research into whether the lack of a pass/fail option was really causing students to shy away from more difficult non-technical classes. After sifting through two years’ worth of course registration data, Kachani’s research concluded that students were indeed not taking as many challenging non-technical elective courses as the school wanted them to.

Kachani’s findings, combined with the results of a SEAS-wide survey Kim conducted on the subject of pass/fail, formed much of the empirical basis for COI supporting the proposal.

For Shah, the legacy of the successful pass/fail proposal will be more than curricular or academic.

“I think it’ll show students that if there’s something that students are really passionate about, and want to push for, and push for it, the faculty will eventually listen,” Shah said.

Kachani said significant policy changes like the pass/fail proposal rarely make it into the University’s curriculum, and he noted that the ESC proposal was the culmination of a perennially sustained demand from the student body.

“We have to start with the premise that curriculum has to be stable, and it is stable for very good reasons,” he said. “However, when, over a number of years, a certain voice or a certain plea or a certain policy issue comes back again and again and again—not because the graduating class passes on the agenda to the other classes, but more because, independently, students think and care a lot about a certain issue—then we have to listen.”

Donovan took great joy in seeing her year-long personal cause finally vindicated.

“The reason that I’ve always wanted this is because I want people to use those credits to take things that are meaningful to them and interesting, because that’s the point of being in college, and that’s what I hope will come through,” she said.

The passage of the SEAS pass/fail policy comes just three days after Columbia College Student Council passed a resolution that would mandate first-years take all first-semester, non-Core classes as pass/D/fail. That more ambitious proposal faces a longer approval process, however, and would go into effect in the fall of 2014 at the earliest.

*news@columbiaspectator.com*



COURTESY OF BORA KIM

**GOOD GRADES** | “This will provide a confidence boost for those students who really wanted to take that hard poli sci course,” ESC VP Bora Kim, SEAS ’13, said.

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# ‘The Magic Circle’ doesn’t deliver despite its promise

BY RACHEL DUNPHY  
*Spectator Senior Staff Writer*

When I first heard the premise of “The Magic Circle,” a new novel by Professor Jenny Davidson of Columbia’s department of English and comparative literature, I couldn’t have been more excited. Three Columbia post-grads invent live action role-playing games based on the secret history of Morningside monuments? Yes, please. There are very few things I like more than hokey noir mysteries, especially when they’re partially inspired by “The Bacchae” and therefore guarantee copious amounts of drunkenness in almost every scene.

The novel follows room-mates Lucy, an MFA poetry student, and Ruth, a game theorist, as they design a series of immersive games around Grant’s Tomb, St. John the Divine, and the asylum that used to stand on campus. Joining them on their various adventures is Anna, the dangerous and intriguing sociologist who lives down the hall.

Through a succession of events that shift from unobtrusively boring to utterly insane at an abrupt and alarming rate, the women plan, practice, and play out a series of increasingly ridiculous, destructive, and implausible games.

While all of this was essentially what I expected, I still spent the first 100 pages trying hard to like the book earnestly, and then ironically, but failed on both counts. I spent the rest of the novel wishing it would improve.

In the end, the book was adequate. The story is reasonably engaging, with an accurate depiction of university life, and the characters are likable enough, but it fails to instill the wonder that its characters experience in the ordinary events it describes. Instead, Davidson traps the reader in a reality so absolute that it loses an element of believability. The prose is meticulous, straightforward, and

overly academic. The book is about freedom and control, but its writing features no such control.

Her descriptions are unadorned and thorough in a way that provides a lot of practical information, but almost nothing thematic. I could explain the layout of a 19th century board game given to Ruth’s mother as a Christmas present, and I could map out the route Lucy took from her apartment on 122nd Street between Broadway and Amsterdam to yoga class in the morning, then to her office, then to Morningside Park, then to Max Soha and back home, but the significance of these details is not illuminated well.

The overload of detail reached a point where I wondered if Davidson believed that her readers would get so immersed in her novel that they would be transported to the physical space of the story and feared that when they arrive they would be lost if she didn’t specify where and how far Ruth went running (Riverside Park until the playground at 96th Street, then turning around and running back to 122nd Street on Riverside Drive) before she went to meet her boyfriend for dinner at seven at Max Soha.

“The Magic Circle” is so regular and exact in its habit of describing the location of every event in the plot that it alienates anyone unfamiliar with the neighborhood and irritates those of us who know it well. And the map references are just the most obvious example of a plethora of unnecessary information that altogether makes the novel at least 40 pages longer than it needs to be.

Unfortunately, there is a certain degree of excitement that is notably absent through the novel, and this ultimately results in an attempt at epic drama so overly constructed that it failed to make me feel anything at all.

*rachel.dunphy@columbiaspectator.com*



ELIZABETH HEYMAN FOR SPECTATOR

**MORNINGSIDE MAGIC** | English professor Jenny Davidson recently penned a novel about three Columbia post-grads.



**FOR CLUCK’S SAKE** | Toast Chicken offers a variety of chicken dishes. The restaurant’s chickens are raised naturally, free-roaming, and antibiotic free. Unfortunately, the menu’s staple does not deliver as much as its appetizers, drinks, and condiments.

## Toast Chicken: Not entirely roasted to perfection

BY YVONNE HSIAO  
*Spectator Staff Writer*

Having just written an opinion column criticizing American eating habits, I ventured into Toast Chicken on Monday night, seeking redemption for my prejudice against this country’s cuisine. Stepping into a dimly lit bar with circular lanterns splashing soft light on exposed brick, burgundy, and teal walls, my friend and I immediately liked the cozy atmosphere at the eatery, on Amsterdam Avenue between 122nd and 123rd streets.

This attention to decorative detail and presentation continued when we were served the sampler appetizer, the Pupu Platter. With a deviled egg, two pieces of chicken toast, two avocado fries, two pairs of chicken wings, and three dips (blue cheese, tartar with chunks of pickle, and sesame-soy), this platter teased my taste buds pleasantly with its variety of flavors. The center consisted of a smooth, creamy yolk that was enhanced by just the right amount of mayonnaise, with floating notes of blue cheese.

This all sounds rich, but it didn’t taste that way—the

scallions provided some brighter notes at the finish to clean up the foundation, and the paprika offered a good flavor kick as well. The avocado fries were fried, breaded avocado wedges. The pickles in the tartar sauce were a foil for the full-flavored foundation, its saltiness bringing out the fragrance of the avocado.

The wings were spicy—fried, then slathered in a sriracha sauce. Every bite had the great texture combination of tough meat and crunchy skin softened by sauce and delivered flavor bombs as well, especially in combination with the blue cheese.

But we were unsatisfied with the poorly executed standard, American fare that we ordered for main courses. I had a quarter white rotisserie chicken that arrived tough, crumbly, and charred to a black and peeling state. The texture of the meat testified to its lack of tenderizers, but this free-range, natural, and antibiotic-free chicken just wasn’t good.

While \$6 was decent for a chunk of meat, its taste and appearance paled in comparison to the restaurant’s ambience and appetizer. The only redeeming quality to this dish

was the herb pesto. With fresh lemon zest contributing to a slightly more curdled texture and many herbs besides fresh basil layering bright and bitter notes on top of each other, these flavors grounded themselves in extra virgin olive oil and offered a liquid component to the dryness.

**Toast Chicken is probably a better place to come for drinks—growlers and milkshakes—than for a proper meal. It seems to make a bit more sense to treat the restaurant as a bar.**

My friend ordered Texas Tenders with honey Dijon dressing—while the chicken strips were crunchy, juicy, and stringy, I’d get the same results from a standard halal

cart. The sauce was an abomination: The aromatic notes of honey sickened a mustard base that didn’t even have mustard seeds, which would have provided some form of acidity to balance out the sauce and provided some textural excitement.

The sides were \$2.50 each, cold from neglect, and not worth the price. The roasted beets, although chilled and nicely soft, were slathered in vegetable oil that pooled at the bottom of the dish. The mashed potatoes did not have a smooth, thick, buttery feel, and were paired with thin-but-goey chicken gravy in a crater. The red rice wasn’t the long grain type, but rather general white rice covered with tomato sauce and tossed with small pieces of wilted carrot.

Toast Chicken is probably a better place to come for drinks—growlers and milkshakes—than for a proper meal. It seems to make a bit more sense to treat the restaurant as a bar, bumping down its chicken entrées to second tier and treating them as condiments to appetizing snack platters and good company.

*Toast Chicken is located at 1268 Amsterdam Avenue. arts@columbiaspectator.com*

## Undergraduate musicians display wealth of talent

**CHAMBER** from page 7

with great camaraderie in an exuberant presentation from Dvořák’s “American” quartet. With beaming smiles and supportive glances to their colleagues, these players shared their personal joy with the audience.

The second portion of the concert featured three equally accomplished, though musically

diverse, presentations. Flautist Rachel Susser, BC ’14, accompanied by pianist Amalia Rinehart, CC ’14, began this half with a nicely shaped reading of the first movement of a Prokofiev flute sonata.

Then, the largest ensemble of the evening—made up of David Halpern, CC ’13, on bass, Ethan Perets, CC ’14, on guitar, Noelle Martinez, CC ’13, on cello, Bryan Terrazas, CC ’13, on clarinet,

Claire Duvallet, CC ’13, on vibraphone, and Carolyn Ruvkun, CC ’13, on piano—conjured a hypnotic soundscape with a reading of “The Last Spell” from Somei Satoh’s “Shu.”

The final group, comprised of Joy Pai, CC ’16, on violin, Michael Chang-Frieden, CC ’16, on cello, and Alison Chang, CC ’16, at the piano, offered movements from the Dvořák trio mentioned earlier in another

inspired performance.

Wednesday’s concert was a perfect reminder of the immense pool of talent within the Columbia community.

The next time any of these musicians performs, make an effort to be in attendance, for these presentations are a real treat. The performance certainly lived up to its grand and iconic setting.

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# Columbia Chamber Players hit Carnegie Hall for concert

BY CHRIS BROWNER  
*Spectator Staff Writer*

There are few sights more engaging than the rapport between chamber musicians, and this could not have been more evident at Wednesday night's presentation by the Columbia Chamber Players in Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall. The collection of musicians, undergraduate students from all four schools, offered a varied program of pieces from a spectrum of musical periods. Each small ensemble of extraordinarily talented musicians delivered finely crafted performances, and as a whole, the evening was a delightful display of the players' overwhelming passion for collaborative music making.

Wednesday's concert was a perfect reminder of the immense pool of talent within the Columbia community, for these presentations are a real treat.

Pianist Qi Xu, CC '16, flautist Caroline Sonnett, and harpist Eleanor Tier Kirk opened the concert with a lush selection from Mozart's "Flute and Harp Concerto" and were followed by three spirited movements of a Dvorák trio by Madeleine Tucker on cello, Tiedan Yao on piano, and Shannon Lee on violin. Afterward, the audience was treated to an impassioned duet from Nathan Chan, CC '15, a co-founder of the cello ensemble String Theory, and pianist Kimberly Hou, CC '16. This performance from a Rachmaninoff cello sonata was certainly a highlight, as Chan's heartfelt virtuosity was nicely paired with Hou's beautiful playing. The first half of the program closed with another standout moment as another ensemble—featuring violinists Amir Safavi, CC '14, and Yujin Ariza, violist Alexander Aries, and cellist Lukas Matern—combined superb musicianship

SEE CHAMBER, page 7



COURTESY OF TARA PRIYA & CLEAR ENTERTAINMENT MUSIC

SOUL SISTER | Tara Priya graduated from Columbia with a degree in economics in two years and is expecting the release of her second album.

# Tara Priya, CC '09, makes waves with retro soul

BY JENNY PAYNE  
*Spectator Senior Staff Writer*

Soul singer-songwriter Tara Priya, CC '09, knows a thing or two about hard work. After spending her college years performing around New York City, graduating from Columbia two years early, and building her own musical career with little structure or guidance along the way, Priya has begun to reap the rewards of her lifelong dedication to music. Recorded and written in Los Angeles, Priya's self-titled first full-length album debuted at number two on iTunes Japan, with the album's single, "Run Like Hell," lasting 17 weeks on the Japan Hot 100. In March, Priya filmed her third music video, which has garnered over 300,000 views on YouTube, and she is expecting to release her second album this year. Critics have compared her retro soul sound to Amy Winehouse's, though she names Duffy, Aretha Franklin, and The Temptations among her influences.

But her success has not come easy. "I'm glad that I had no idea how hard it was going to be," she said. "But the thing is, with most things that are very difficult, every time you don't give up, you win, because so many people drop out and give up." Priya takes pride in being able to attribute much of her success to her own efforts. The times when she did not have friends in Los Angeles, connections in the music industry, or support from her family were formative, she said, allowing her to focus her energy on her career. "If you're comfortable, there's not a lot to drive you, but when you're uncomfortable, you have a fire under your ass and are more motivated to be successful," Priya said. "The things that make it difficult, like not having friends, are actually blessings because I've seen many artists who get distracted by those things." Despite her strong focus on her career, Priya doesn't regret her choice to attend Columbia instead of launching directly into the industry. As part of Columbia's Jazz Ensemble, Priya had the

opportunity to perform in venues around the city and gain experience that would be invaluable in her solo ventures, she said. "If I hadn't had performance opportunities and training while I was at Columbia, I could have very easily not had any music in my life beyond what I played for myself," Priya said. Her time in college was accelerated, with Priya carefully planning her economics degree to fit in two years, but she still values her academic pursuits. "I think that just being an intelligent, well-read person will serve you no matter what career path you take," she said. "The arts need people with brains, too." Having recently signed with a manager in Los Angeles, Priya is looking forward to the release of her next album. "It's really exciting and feels like things are finally coming together, and there's a little less struggle," Priya said. "It's an awesome time to be on this journey, as opposed to the beginning."

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