

Buyback nets 114 guns at Harlem churches

BY CASEY TOLAN
Columbia Daily Spectator

As statistics show gun violence increasing in the city, a buyback program last Saturday collected 144 handguns in Harlem.

The NYPD and the Manhattan District Attorney sponsored the buyback, which allowed residents to exchange operable handguns for a \$200 bank card and operable rifles and shotguns for a \$20 bank card, no questions asked. It was held at two local churches—one only a few blocks away from Grant Houses, where 18-year-old Tayshana Murphy was gunned down last month.

“There was a steady stream of people that came in,” said Bishop Carlton Brown, senior pastor at Bethel Gospel Assembly on 120th Street between 5th and Madison avenues, one of the participating churches. “Young people, old people, black people, white people brought in their guns and seemed happy to do it.”

Adrian Carmona, president of the NYPD’s 26th Precinct Community Council, said that the buyback “has made the area safer.” Saturday’s event netted more guns than previous buybacks, he said.

“We are very concerned with the level of crime,” Brown said, but added that he was “positive that we can change things.”

According to a statement from Manhattan DA Cyrus Vance, 249 people have been

SEE GUN BUYBACK, page 2



ADRIENNE HEZGHIA FOR SPECTATOR

BLUEPRINTS | Ilana Breitman, BC ’13, writes suggestions during an SGA town hall on the Diana Center’s space usage on Wednesday.

Diana Center needs more useful spaces, students say

BY JESSICA STALLONE
Spectator Staff Writer

Barnard is looking for ideas about how to squeeze the most out of its limited space—especially when it comes to the Diana Center.

At a town hall meeting on Wednesday, students

and Student Government Association members told Barnard officials that the student center needs more seating and clearer differences between lounge spaces and study spaces for it to become a more comfortable place for students.

Jessica Nuñez, associate dean for student life, and Greg

Brown, Barnard’s chief operating officer, spoke with students about problems they encounter in the Diana and tried to brainstorm solutions.

“The Diana Center was designed, as any urban building is, to be a lot of different things. But I know students are thinking about how they hang out in

the space and how they use the space,” Brown said. “I’m not going to redesign the building, but I need to know what you need.”

Students focused on the Diana’s second-floor dining area and its lack of seating during peak hours.

SEE DIANA CENTER, page 2

Valentini keeping door open as dean

Transparency efforts still leave questions

BY LILLIAN CHEN
Columbia Daily Spectator

For Columbia College students, the jury is still out on Interim Dean James Valentini’s efforts at transparency.

Valentini hosted the first in a series of at least three student chats on Wednesday, and he’ll hold office hours that anyone can sign up for next week—one of a number of attempts to spark conversation with students. Those efforts, including a video message and an appearance at a Spectator-sponsored town hall, have been widely praised, though others say that Valentini has a ways to go.

Valentini was appointed last month to replace philosophy professor Michele Moody-Adams, who resigned as dean in August, citing as-yet unknown structural changes to the University that would academically and financially harm Columbia College. Valentini has since pledged increased transparency, and several students who attended his chat Wednesday indicated he was succeeding, describing him as “candid” and “frank.”

“He was really open and straightforward about

SEE VALENTINI, page 6

GS town hall sees old problems, new ideas

BY MADINA TOURE
Spectator Senior Staff Writer

Perennial issues for General Studies students—finding housing, getting financial aid, and fitting into the undergraduate community—were given a fresh look on Wednesday night.

At the General Studies Student Council’s first town hall of the school year, held in the GS student lounge in Lewisohn Hall, Dean Peter Awn and other GS deans fielded questions from about 20 students, putting the focus on some new solutions to long-term problems.

Students asked about the difficulty of securing housing through the University, and how GS students could be centralized to live together on specific blocks. One student used the example of someone who was offered housing—but only well into the semester, after already signing a lease somewhere else.

“The reason that this problem emerges, and it really is a frustrating one, is that frequently we get an allocation for the incoming class but that allocation’s a floating number,” Awn said. “It doesn’t go down as we get closer to the beginning of the semester—it frequently goes up a little or a lot—so we scramble to [accommodate] incoming students and/or continuing students.”

Dean for Enrollment Management Curtis Rodgers said that GS has been working with local landlords and realtors to develop solutions through the open market. He said that GS has negotiated apartment leases that are now administered through University Housing.

Awn said that administrators are always looking at examples outside of Columbia, citing students at Teachers College and

the Union Theological Seminary.

“We’re not just sitting around and waiting for Columbia to solve our problems,” he said, though the deans still encouraged students to consider other housing options.

Students also brought up the differences in how GS students experience the Core. Currently, Contemporary Civilization and Literature Humanities are voluntary for GS students, with two sections for each class composed exclusively of GS students.

“It is absolutely presumed that we will make Contemporary Civilization and Lit Hum a requirement for GS students,” Awn said. The main issue was the cost, he said, calling it a “wildly expensive program.”

“We’re not just sitting around and waiting for Columbia to solve our problems.”

—Peter Awn, GS dean

Awn also acknowledged that finding professors to teach the number of core classes already in existence is a struggle.

“The issue isn’t approving it as a requirement, but coming up with the funds in the Arts and Sciences to be able to fund a sufficient number of preceptors to teach the additional sections of CC and Lit Hum,” he said.

Awn also discussed the benefits of GS’ financial aid model—a hybrid model, instituted in 2008, that considers both need and merit—in comparison to the full need-based model

used by Columbia College and the School of Engineering and Applied Science.

“All full-need models are based on scrutinizing and excruciating details on your parents, not you,” he said. “You play one small part.”

Citing the example of a student whose parents are rich but has not spoken with them for four years, Awn said that the hybrid model at GS takes into account the different factors that influence an individual’s ability to pay tuition.

“The model we are trying to develop is a combination of merit, which we think is very important, and need awareness to the extent possible only dealing with you as an individual,” he said.

“We are doing really well, but does it keep with the need? The answer is, only marginally,” he added.

The question of the role of GS students in the undergraduate community came up as well. Nick Hesselgrave, first-year class president, speaking only for himself, said that GS students feel slightly alienated from the undergraduate community.

Hesselgrave proposed the idea that they focus their efforts on integrating GS students with older students—at graduate schools, for example.

Awn suggested joining clubs but acknowledged the social challenges that GS students face.

“There has been a real effort, symbolically, to have this integration with the other college students but the social events don’t resonate,” Awn said. “To me, it’s just an age and experience issue, it’s not a conscious effort to marginalize.”

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DAVID BRANN FOR SPECTATOR

ONLINE ALLIES | Lea Robinson, OMA assistant director, is overseeing the new program.

OMA launches ‘Queer Peers’ online chat

BY ABBY ABRAMS
Columbia Daily Spectator

The Office of Multicultural Affairs is now available to chat.

A pilot program called Queer Peers and Allies now allows students to anonymously connect with peer advisers, similar to Nightline—but instead of calling a phone number, students talk via a secure online chat, adding another layer of privacy.

“Campus is really great about taking care of the macro issues that address the queer community, but we’re here to take care of the personal issues,” said one peer adviser, who asked not to be named because of the anonymous nature of the program.

The new program is coordinated by the Office of

Multicultural Affairs and Columbia’s Counseling and Psychological Services, and currently has 10 student advisers staffing the online chat three nights each week. Lea Robinson, assistant director of LGBT programming and advising in OMA, said she hopes to attract more users by doubling the number of advisers next semester and adjusting the chat hours.

“It is only going to become more of a resource, especially around times with high stress levels like midterms ... We want to make sure we’re creating spaces students can feel safe in and where students can get the support that they need,” she said.

The anonymity of the program is one of its key aspects. While the online chat does

require students to submit their UNI in case a dangerous situation arises, neither the students seeking help nor the queer peers know each other’s names.

“It’s trying to create some sort of programming that maybe speaks more to confidentiality, to more private spaces,” Robinson said. “Students may feel more comfortable getting online and chatting with someone about things going on as opposed to stepping in to a meeting or coming to a program.”

One of the peer advisers said that she would have taken advantage of the service had it existed previously.

“A lot of times people think since so many people are out

A&E, PAGE 3

EC suite a set-design shop for ‘Sweeney’

The Crown and Scepter Theater Company will mount “Sweeney Todd” at Symphony Space next week—but first, they’ve got to finish constructing the set on EC’s 8th floor.



SPORTS, PAGE 8

Wicks’ late game goals earn her the spotlight

Senior forward/midfielder Liz Wicks, who calls Hungerford, UK, home, boasts a wealth of soccer experience that has helped her excel on both sides of the Atlantic.

OPINION, PAGE 4

Value judgement

Esfandiyar Batmanghelidj reconsiders our approach to liberalism.

Maintaining diversity

Jessica Geiger discusses the importance of diversity in admissions.

EVENTS

Financial Crisis vs. Humanity Crisis

A discussion by professors Robert Thurman and Marcellus Andrews on finding a holistic approach to the economy.

Roone Arledge Auditorium, 5-6 p.m.

WEATHER

Today



55°/39°

Tomorrow



50°/42°

ON THE DIANA

Students and administrators critiqued the building’s current use on Wednesday night.



ADRIENNE HEZGHIA FOR SPECTATOR

DINING

“There’s definitely not enough seating anywhere in the Diana, especially during that twelve-to-two lunchtime period.”

—Emily Shartrand, BC ’12



FILE PHOTO

THE DIANA CAFE

“I was studying there one weekend as a tour guide came through and described it as the mecca of student life, but it was completely empty.”

—Maya Zinkow,
BC ’14, SGA representative for
community programming



DAVID BRANN FOR SPECTATOR

SPACE

“The Diana Center was designed, as any urban building is, to be a lot of different things.”

—Greg Brown,
Barnard College’s chief operating officer



DAVID BRANN FOR SPECTATOR

Students propose Diana changes

DIANA CENTER
from front page

“There’s definitely not enough seating anywhere in the Diana, especially during that twelve-to-two lunchtime period. It gets to the point where you’re taking the elevator and getting off at every floor, trying to find a seat,” Emily Shartrand, BC ’12 and a former Spectator design deputy, said.

Students who attended the meeting were also concerned about the lack of distinction between the center’s use as both a quiet study space and a lounge area.

“There was a TV put in Liz’s Place. We had been hearing for years that students wanted a TV lounge. However, one of the things we struggle with is that students turn off the TV so that it can be a quiet place to study,” Nuñez said. “It’s supposed to be a lively loud place to hang out, socialize and relax.”

This semester, Barnard’s dining services department revamped the food selection in the second-floor dining center and transitioned from Java City to Starbucks coffee at Liz’s Place. At the meeting, Director of Operations for Dining Services Goldi Juer announced another change to come next week—adding breakfast hours.

“Oatmeal, fresh fruit, and hot sandwiches will be served from 10:30 to 11:30 in the mornings,” Juer said.

Gila Schwarzschild, BC ’13 and SGA vice president of student activities, and Maya Zinkow, BC ’14 and representative for community programming, both suggested that Liz’s Place be open on the weekends as a way to foster a sense of community.

“I was studying there one weekend as a tour guide came through and described it as the mecca of student life, but it was completely empty,” Zinkow said.

The discussion was limited by low attendance—only four students showed up to participate in the discussion, which was dominated by SGA members. Rachel Ferrari, BC ’13 and vice president of student government, emphasized that other students could contact SGA directly to get involved.

Despite the poor showing from the student body, Brown said, “What we were looking for was feedback, and I think we got it.”

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NYPD sponsors buyback as gun violence increases

GUN BUYBACK
from front page

indicted for possessing loaded guns this year, 52 of whom were 18 or younger when they were arrested.

The buyback program, which started in 2008, includes an event roughly once a year in the Harlem area, Carmona said. Throughout the city, more than 7,000 guns have been recovered through the program.

But several studies have shown that buyback programs aren’t necessarily effective. A 2002 study in the journal Injury Prevention determined that handguns recovered from buybacks are “not the types most commonly linked to firearm homicides and suicides” and the “limited resources for firearm injury prevention may be better spent in other ways.”

Carmona said he didn’t buy it. “Come up here and work around a little,” he said. “This is not academic. 144 guns are not out there and will not hurt anyone.”

Brown said that some of those who turned in guns were “young people in the projects, where we have much of the problems with guns and violence.”

For pastors at the two churches—Bethel Gospel and St. Joseph of the Holy Family Roman Catholic Church, on 125th

Street between Amsterdam and Morningside avenues—the buyback was part of a larger effort to help Harlem.

“Even if you get one off the street, I think that’s good,” Father Ransford Clarke of St. Joseph said.

“We need to stand up and say, ‘take it someplace else,’” Brown said. “Most importantly, we have to accept it’s a crisis that’s not going away. It’s not somebody else’s problem. We’ve got to take action, clean up this place.”

The night before the buyback, Bethel Gospel held a candlelight vigil to remember victims and survivors of gun violence.

“We should not feel that just because we do a gun buyback here and there, we can all rest,” Brown said. “No. You have to accompany this action with other actions.”

Bethel, which is housed in a former junior high school building, has taken action by hosting programs for youth that Brown said included “writing résumés, continuing education, entrepreneurial classes with other groups.”

St. Joseph has similar programs in its basement, including one that helps young people get paid internships.

“Kids who aren’t going to school can have our space,” Clarke said. “We want to give them an avenue.”

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SWEENEY IN EC | Crown and Scepter’s Joseph Rozenshtein and Mitchell Feinberg, center and right, use East Campus as rehearsal space. Todd’s barber chair, right, temporarily resides in Feinberg’s suite.



MARIA CASTEX / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

For Crown and Scepter ‘Sweeney Todd,’ all East Campus’ a stage

BY CHRISTINE JORDAN
Spectator Senior Staff Writer

Forget red Solo cups and dirty laundry—the East Campus suite of Mitchell Feinberg, SEAS ’13, is cluttered with 25-foot painted London cityscapes, modular wooden stage platforms, and a 200-pound barber chair from the 1890s.

**THEATER
FEATURE**

As Crown and Scepter Theater Company, Feinberg and Joseph Rozenshtein, CC ’12/SIPA ’13, are staging this fall’s off-campus production of “Sweeney Todd.” With zero up-front outside funding and a venue 20 blocks south of its campus base, Crown and Scepter has resorted to some unusual tactics to realize its production—including turning a dorm room into the show’s veritable art closet.

“I like it now that I have the barber chair in my room,” Feinberg, the show’s musical director, said of EC 803’s idiosyncratic new decorations. “I can relax [in it]—give myself a shave.”

Feinberg and Rozenshtein’s Crown and Scepter is a “vehicle created for the sole purpose of putting on this show,” as Rozenshtein,

the show’s director, said. Though the two have worked together on various campus shows, they are actually childhood friends, a fact evidenced in their tendency to get lost in facetious, excitable rapport.

“I think it would be safe to say that it’s very difficult to work with us individually,” Rozenshtein said. “But Mitchell and I work extraordinarily well together as a duo ... We’re the only ones who can tolerate each other the way we do.”

While moving set pieces between Feinberg’s bedroom, EC’s courtyard, and Ancel Plaza for their regular set build session in the weeks leading up to the show, the team behind “Sweeney” spoke to Spectator about the makeshift and often quixotic path their passion project has traveled.

In its most literal sense, that road has led to professional performing arts venue Symphony Space at 95th Street and Broadway. The theater will host the show’s four total performances at 5:30 and 9 p.m. on Oct. 31 and Nov. 4.

Originally, the team compiled a proposal to stage “Sweeney” on campus but didn’t find a campus theater group to back the vision. “When we sat back and we thought about whether we

wanted to scratch the project or go on to other projects, we realized that our team was very passionate,” Rozenshtein said. “And so we decided that we would do it anyway.”

“I like it now that I have the barber chair in my room. I can relax [in it]—give myself a shave.”

—Mitchell Feinberg, SEAS ’13

That, of course, has been easier said than done. By then, on-campus performance spaces were fully booked. “And that’s perfectly understandable ... We’re just another group who wants space and they just don’t have enough room,” Rozenshtein said.

As Feinberg explained, the average Columbia play is afforded a more structured approach

to producing by their on-campus venue. “I’ve worked on shows in Roone. They have the space for a week or for five days, and you can keep day-to-day things in there—keep your costumes in a room, your stuff on the ramp,” he said.

EC offered the convenience, amenities, and abundant open spaces (and cramped ones, in the case of Feinberg’s bedroom) they needed. They quickly saw it as a natural home for the show’s hit-and-run set construction and rehearsals.

According to “Sweeney” assistant producer and props manager Cristina Ramos, CC ’12, having a highly visible presence in Columbia’s busiest dorm has been an unexpected blessing. “It’s really great publicity, because people come over and are like, ‘What are you doing?,’” she said with a laugh. “People kept texting me, ‘Wow, the [barber] chair looks great! I can’t wait to see the show,’” producer Gabriel Kerr, CC ’12, added.

Allison Cohen, BC ’14, the show’s set designer, has had an entirely separate slate of challenges while painting the show’s 25-foot backdrop on the ground of Ancel Plaza. “Periodically I had to climb up to the second floor [of EC] and

SEE TODD, page 7

‘Guban’ burns away misconceptions of Somali culture in Ph.D candidate’s new novel

BY SHAYNA ORENS
Columbia Daily Spectator

In Somali, “guban” means “burnt.” In Columbia Ph.D. candidate and teaching fellow Abdi Latif Ega’s new novel, “Guban,” the word takes on multiple connotations. Literally, the word refers to the volcanic region of northwestern Somalia, where the mountains appear physically burnt. But “guban” also resonates metaphorically throughout the work. Through his portrayal of Somalia between the 1960s and 1991, prior to its collapse, Ega explores what “guban” means for the people who have to “take the fire” of power imbalance, post-colonial modernization, Westernization, and proxy warfare.

**BOOK
REVIEW**

“The book goes beyond the nomenclature of pirates, warlords, terrorists.”

—Abdi Latif Ega, author of “Guban”

“Guban” is a book that should be read—not just for its stunning imagery and language—but also for what it says about the human condition. Though Lit Hum professors often discourage students from taking the macro route in examining a text, “Guban” is a complicated, probing work that must be examined as such. The novel establishes context for Somalia that readers might be familiar with, all the while challenging that very image.

“The book goes beyond the nomenclature of pirates, warlords, terrorists,” Ega said.

Ega remarked that he wanted to write about Somalia’s collapse in 1991 but could not do so without first establishing context. He felt that the issue was too complex to approach without providing

readers with some background of its history.

“I had to create a space where people understand,” he said.

He seeks to offer an alternate narrative to the way Somalia is portrayed by the media. “Guban” engages its audience, forcing readers to see Twosmo, whose journey the novel traces, as unequivocally human.

“The work should engage people and speak for itself,” Ega said.

At times the work’s exposé can be uncomfortable—but not in a bad way. Ega makes transparent a culture his readers are likely unfamiliar with. Yet woven into the cultural differences—which include a society premised on clan hierarchy and a currency system based on the exchange of camels—are subdued portraits of similarities in the human experience, such as a child’s fascination with nature or a woman’s devotion to prayer. And these moments, in which readers can see themselves, happen in sync with the corruption of a nation and Twosmo’s flight out of a broken Somalia. Readers are challenged to ask themselves, “What if that were me?”

Ega accomplishes this humanization in a way that is both subtle and beautiful. The following excerpt is just one example of the stunning imagery that permeates the novel:

“It was evening in the capital and the colors of the women’s silk painted the scene around Beheyeah like a Cezanne. The multicolored pastels of the long translucent dears, and the beautiful head silks the women used to cover their hair—light blue, off-tan, turquoise, jade, meandering blue—all accentuated the tall and handsome chocolate brown of the Somal women as they walked the capital in groups.”

Ega, who is originally from Somalia, inserts his own memories into his text. The juxtaposition of alluring imagery with a deeply conflicted land creates images of a Somalia remarkably different from what the typical American might infer from watching the news.

“Guban” is the first novel in what Ega hopes will be part of a trilogy portraying Somalia from the medieval times to the present day. The book will be released in late fall.



DOUGLAS KESSEL FOR SPECTATOR

SLOW BURN | “Guban” author Abdi Latif Ega, above, paints a vibrant portrait of Somalia and its rich culture and history that is often ignored in mass media portrayals of the east African nation.



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Liberalism and the storm

At Columbia, “liberal” carries many meanings. It can refer to the type of education we receive, one that seeks to expand general knowledge and experience. It can refer to the ideological undercurrent of that education, a mentality that is accepting of new behaviors or opinions and willing to discard traditional values. And it also describes the political project of the University as an institution that is favorable to or respectful of individual rights. These definitions encompass a great deal of what it means to be a Columbia student. Our experiences in the classroom and in the wider community are derivative of a cultural commitment to a multi-faceted liberalism. But in recent controversies, different well-intentioned actors have misapplied liberal ideals, overstating the role of rights in their advocacies and potentially diminishing the utility of our education.

Given that we pursue a liberal education in a liberal democracy, our personal beliefs are accommodated with incredible consistency. It is a singular luxury to live in a country where there is presumed harmony between the interests of the individual and the interests of the state. It follows that at Columbia, the interests and beliefs of the student body are principal to the interests and beliefs of the University. We have seen this fact borne out in several recent controversies. Last year, in the deliberations over the reinstatement of ROTC, the Columbia community considered whether or not the presence of ROTC on campus would be consistent with the various liberal aims of the school. In September, there was an outcry over plans for members of Columbia International Relations Council and Association students to attend a dinner with the President of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. And just this month, a Barnard student has raised allegations of discrimination, saying she was “steered” away from taking a course with a professor whose views might offend her.

The interests and beliefs of the student body are principal to the interests and beliefs of the University.

In each of these episodes, rights advocates voiced overlapping concerns. For example, in a statement on the ROTC debate, members of Columbia faculty claimed that “in uniform, individuals are representatives of the military before all else, and their presence constitutes a symbolic militarization of campus.” This representation was believed to be antithetical to the aims of Columbia in so far as it would require us to bid farewell to unhindered thought. Echoing these sentiments, the Sept. 18 Spectator staff editorial on CIRCA’s plan to attend the Ahmadinejad dinner described the central conflict of such controversies as one between “freedom of speech and association, and a respect for human rights.” But as much as freedom of speech is a subset of the larger category of human rights, the real issue at hand is how the University’s commitment to promoting “rights” should be handled when rights come into conflict, or when violations seem justifiable.

In an Oct. 6 editorial, professors Awi Federgruen and Judith Jacobson explored the Barnard “steering” controversy and rightly suggested that “students should not go to college if they are seeking only to be intellectually ‘comfortable.’ Professors have a responsibility to challenge students’ beliefs.” The authors qualify their statement by noting that the challenge must be “evidence-based and not personally demeaning.” But further arguing that the incidence of steering both “deprives [some students] of the opportunity for an educational experience that is available to all other students” and also “protects the professor from exposure” reveals a flawed logic. Because of a fixation with protecting liberal rights absolutely, Federgruen and Jacobson fail to see that at the point at which steering allegedly occurred, the student still had the ability to take the class. And by Federgruen and Jacobson’s own account, she ought to have taken it, either to be challenged or to expose the professor (assuming he met the arbitrary threshold for “harassment”). In this way, the issue of steering is an example of liberalism as a distraction.

Aeschylus once wrote, “I’m not afraid of storms, for I’m learning to sail my ship.” His words perfectly capture the reality that a complete education requires a passage through intellectually difficult and inherently discomforting experiences. The “real world” is toxic to the idealist-liberalist. For our education to be practical, we need to thoughtfully and purposefully engage with intellectually threatening people and groups, because these are the people we will have to confront now and forever in the pursuit of positive change. If we do not engage, we risk becoming effete in the worst of ways—not in the way the word superficially describes the “liberal elite,” but in the very real way that renders us ineffective social actors without the credibility to lead. To be truly wise is to confront the soldier, the mercurial dictator, and the biased professor and engage them with an intellectual purpose. Metaphorically speaking, avoiding the storm today leaves us ill prepared for the necessity of enduring the storm tomorrow.

Esfandiyar Batmanghelidj is a Columbia College sophomore. He is a member of the rugby team. Institution Rules runs alternate Thursdays.

Correction

The author of “Put the president in his place,” from the Oct. 26 edition, was Refik Hodzic, not Amra Dumisic. Hodzic is the director of communications at the International Center for Transnational Justice.

Spectator is committed to fair and accurate reporting. If you know of an error please inform us at info@columbiaspectator.com.

For general comments or questions about the newspaper, please write to the editor in chief and managing editor at editor@columbiaspectator.com.



ESFANDYAR
BATMAN-
GHELIDJ

Institution Rules



JESSICA
GEIGER

State of the student

To quote Columbia’s student affairs website, “diversity is one of the things that make Columbia vibrant, dynamic and exciting.” I think most Columbia students would agree with this statement, and I know I certainly do. The experiences I’ve had with people of different ethnicities, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds at Columbia have been some of the most valuable experiences I’ve had during college.

From hearing a Contemporary Civilizations classmate relate his experiences in the South Korean army to Plato’s “Republic,” to listening to my suitemate tell story after story about her experiences in one of Minnesota’s lower-income high schools, I can safely say my experiences inside and outside of the classroom have been enriched, varied, and altered thanks to the extensive diversity of Columbia’s student body.

At many universities and colleges today, some sort of affirmative action policy in the college admissions process fosters such diversity. This is especially true of state schools. The Supreme Court case Grutter v. Bollinger (yes, our Bollinger!), which dealt with the University of Michigan’s law school admissions policy, established that United States Constitution “does not prohibit the Law School’s narrowly tailored use of race in admissions decisions to further a compelling interest in obtaining the educational benefits that flow from a diverse student body.” To summarize, this means state schools can use race as a plus factor in admissions in order to create diversity.

But this policy may be changing. Adam Liptak of the New York Times reported on Oct. 15 that the plaintiff in Fisher v. University of Texas Austin, Abigail Fisher, a Caucasian student and Texas resident, applied to and was rejected from the University of Texas. She proceeded to sue UT Austin in Federal District Court in Austin and lost, but a month ago her lawyers filed a petition seeking a Supreme Court review, and it is likely that the justices will agree to hear her case. Fisher’s lawsuit could very well mean the end of affirmative action—at least as we know it today. This risk to affirmative action exists for two reasons. First, the Grutter case was decided in 2003, and since then the Supreme Court has become more conservative and

likely to rule against affirmative action as it now stands. Second, the legal principle that is under siege via the Fisher lawsuit is whether “diversity” is of such a compelling state interest that it can override any concerns of “race” that are intertwined with diversity. Chief Justice John Roberts’ Supreme Court may very well rule that diversity isn’t sufficiently important, and that would be regrettable. Sorting through the tea leaves, we learn that Roberts sees little to no constitutional protection for diversity. In a different case in 2007, Roberts wrote, “Racial balancing is not transformed from ‘patently unconstitutional’ to a compelling state interest simply by relabeling it ‘racial diversity.’”

But Fisher’s suit could also mean the beginning of a new era of affirmative action. Thus far in college admissions, addressing racial diversity, racial advantage, and racial injustice directly through affirmative action has created backlash on both sides of this policy debate. There is a possibility that the policy could morph to use financial means as a factor in college admissions instead of skin color. This would provide diversity, socioeconomically and experientially, without the backlash against both “color-awareness” and “color-blindness.”

Although affirmative action currently exists constitutionally for public universities and colleges today but not for private schools like Columbia, we have a stake in this debate. Whatever precedent American public colleges set will most likely eventually be followed or considered by private schools. While Columbia students may not right now have a direct link to Abigail Fisher’s Supreme Court case, we do have an indirect bond to its outcome.

We need to remember how much we get out of diversity at our college—in the classroom, on Low Steps, in our dorm lounges, and through daily random occurrences. We need to decide if we want to continue to foster such a multifaceted environment directly or leave it up to chance.

In my opinion, we need to remember how diverse experiences and diverse people enrich our college reality and continue some form of affirmative action. The question then becomes, should this be done through financial or racial means, color-aware or color-blind?

Jessica Geiger is a Columbia College sophomore. She is an associate copy editor for Spectator. State of the Student runs alternate Thursdays.



CECILIA REYES

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

Yesterday’s lecture by the genocide denier and president of the smaller of the two political entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Milorad Dodik, was a slap in the face to the victims of genocide. It is astonishing that Columbia would allow him the platform to spread his lies and propaganda regarding the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, despite protests by victims of genocide and organizations like the Congress of North American Bosniaks, Bosniak American Advisory Council for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosnian American Genocide Institute and Education Center, and Institute for the Research of Genocide, Canada. It is maybe even more disturbing that he was accompanied by Darko Trifunovic, a well known genocide denier and leading Islamophobe in Europe, under the guise of academia. It seems that your honorable publication forgot to do the homework on this person and painted a rosy picture of his willingness to talk to the protesters.

Trifunovic is one of the main genocide deniers who, in a report published in 2002, accused the wives and mothers of Srebrenica of filing falsified reports about missing relatives and alleged that “less than 100 Muslim soldiers” had been executed at Srebrenica. Trifunovic also tries to portray himself as a “terrorism” expert and has on numerous occasions tried to promote the Serb nationalist agenda and justification of their aggression towards Bosnia by painting many Bosnian Muslims as members of the so-called “white al Qaeda.” It is a disturbing trend that he and another

controversial “scholar,” Srdja Trifkovic, have tried to promote as part of the global anti-Muslim agenda. It should be noted that Srdja Trifkovic was denied entry into Canada earlier this year when he was scheduled to give a lecture at the University of British Columbia due to his role as a genocide denier and a spokesperson for Radovan Karadzic, the butcher of Bosnia. Karadzic is being tried at The Hague for war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity, among other charges.

It was disappointing to hear that many Bosniak Americans were denied entry to the lecture being held by Dodik even though they received confirmation of their registration. It is difficult to believe that discrimination did not take place given that so many of the protesters were denied access to confront the Republika Srpska president.

Lastly, I would like to draw attention to the perceived pro-Serbian bias that was apparent in the organization of this event and the high likelihood of conflict of interest, given that Columbia received significant Serbian funds in the establishment of the “Njegos endowment.” Dodik’s lecture at Columbia can therefore be seen as a favor to Serbian nationalists for their generous financial contribution.

Respectfully,

*Hamdija Custovic
Spokesperson for the Congress of North American Bosniaks
Oct. 27, 2011*



KATE SCARBROUGH / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

DEAN DISCUSSION | Interim Dean James Valentini will hold open office hours next week.

Moody-Adams questions remain as dean reaches out

VALENTINI
from front page

everything, which was refreshing to see,” Denise Yu, CC ’12, said. She added that a student brought in a proposal for a policy change, and Valentini was “extraordinarily receptive.”

Chris Canales, CC ’14, agreed, saying that Valentini did a good job calming students’ fears around the future of the college.

“I think Dean Moody-Adams’s decision to resign kind of brought those issues up,” he said. “A lot of CC students were concerned that Dean Valentini was going to be a puppet of the upper-level administration of the University. And I think it’s safe to say that he showed today that he’s going to stand up for the college, for what he feels the college should be.”

Other attendees, though, were less satisfied. Cindy Gao, CC ’12, said Valentini still has a lot to learn.

“Pretty much all the services or issues that I brought up he didn’t know anything about,” Gao said. “He didn’t know what the OMA [Office of Multicultural Affairs] stood for ... I think he got irritated at me for asking hard questions.”

Valentini will hold at least two more chats next month, with students who are selected to attend through a lottery.

Similarly, Moody-Adams hosted teas with students picked by lottery several times a semester. But any students will be able to show up for the office hours that Valentini will hold next Wednesday from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., as long as they RSVP in advance.

Most students said they were impressed by that new initiative. Anchit Nayar, CC ’12, said Valentini has shown a real effort to communicate with the student body.

“I personally think he’s reaching out more than Michele Moody-Adams did,” Nayar said.

Patricia Rojas, CC ’11 and now a postbac student, said that the chats are “nothing out of the

ordinary,” but called the office hours a “wonderful opportunity.”

“He’s actually giving an opportunity for students to come in and talk to him ... so people can’t say it’s not there. They can’t complain,” Rojas said.

But while most students appreciate Valentini’s effort, others are less impressed, and several students said they are still worried by lingering questions about Moody-Adams’ resignation.

Valentini has assured students that there are no harmful changes coming to the College, but hasn’t explained why Moody-Adams left. Elisa Quiroz, CC ’13, said that the lack of an explanation from the administration is still troubling.

“That was the vaguest answer I’ve ever heard,” she said. “There’s obviously something deeper going on ... and they don’t really talk about it.”

“I want to know specifically what controls he [Valentini] has,” Jake Shaner, CC ’14, said, referring to Moody-Adams’ implication in her resignation letter that the authority of the dean of the college was being diminished.

Other students said the administration has not done a good job of telling students about Valentini’s attempts to reach out to them. Quite a few said they knew nothing about the chats and office hours.

“The fact that I didn’t know about them says he’s not changing much,” Samantha Moreno, CC ’13, said. Of his communication with students, “I don’t think it’s any worse or any better,” she added.

Even students who praised Valentini’s outreach said it’s too early to tell if the transparency will last.

“It hasn’t been long enough to accurately say ... whether he’s lived up to his promises of transparency,” Steele Sternberg, CC ’13, said. “I think it’s going to be a year at least to see whether anything’s actually happening. And I think that’s fair.”

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Anonymous advising program for ‘queer peers’ launches

QUEER PEERS
from front page

and fine, it’s not a big deal, but it still is a big deal for a good deal of people,” she said.

While Queer Peers and Allies is new this semester, it has been in the works for several years.

“This program was created ... to support students wherever they are in their own identity.”

—Lea Robinson,
assistant director of LGBT programming and advising

The process began with Robinson’s predecessor, Kerry Poynter, who worked to formulate the program’s mission and obtain funding from the David Bohnett Foundation before leaving in 2008. In spring 2010, OMA developed its relationship with CPS, and began recruiting and training “queer peers” last year.


“This program was created initially in trying to find a way to support students wherever they are in their own identity,” Robinson said.

Now that the program is up and running, Robinson says she is excited to continue improving.

“We know that the need is there. We’re just continually working to figure out what the program will look like and how to get there,” she said.

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FILE PHOTO
ROAD RULES | The Columbia women’s soccer team leads the Ivies in conference wins on the road.

Lions show their mettle away from home

SOCCKER from back page
when away from home. First-place Harvard has earned a conference victory and a tie on the road, and Penn, Yale, and Brown each have one league win apiece when traveling. After Columbia’s 4-1 loss to Princeton the Saturday before

last, it looked like the Lions were out of the title race. However, persistence and tenacity helped propel the Lions to redemption at Dartmouth and right back into contention. “It’s the fifth or sixth year in the row where we’ve gone into the last two weeks of the season with a chance of the title. The

gals know that these games are incredibly intense, you have to be ready for each one, and that makes a really fun and exciting environment to play into.” The Light Blue will play its two remaining games of 2011 at home. First up is Yale, which currently shares third place with the Lions.

Constant defeat is wearing on the Lions

JONES from back page
opponent to prepare for and another game on the line. So, I understand why they’re defeated. It’s difficult to work as hard as they do and still come up empty-handed, but that doesn’t make it okay to give up. To put it simply: This is football. Man up. This is why I was so

disappointed on Saturday. In that one action, I saw a player giving up and giving in. I can respect the guys who are out there busting their butts each week, but it seems like not all of them are anymore, which is just unacceptable. I think it’s fair to say that no one is expecting this team to finish the season on a high note, and it’s statistically

impossible for them to finish with a winning record overall, but at the very least I think it’s reasonable to hope that in the coming games we see the Lions with a little fire in their eyes instead of resignation. *Victoria Jones is a Barnard College senior majoring in French. sports@columbiaspectator.com*

‘Sweeney’ thinks outside the (black) box

TODD from page 3
look down at it to make sure it looked right from far away,” she says. And when that floor is right outside a residential area? “Actually, one time, someone spit out their window and it landed on the backdrop, which was kind of disgusting,” Cohen said. Designing professional-grade sets necessitated flexible thinking. “The theater doesn’t have wing space, so we either have the option to break it down and carry it into the back ... or we leave it on stage the whole time,” Feinberg said. They designed every piece to break down, both to

facilitate scene changes during the night of the performance and to comfortably fit the set into Feinberg’s room. As a result, nearly every “Sweeney Todd” set piece is equipped with detachable hinges, collapsible walls, and, in some cases, wheels. Although they have grant applications pending to help them earn back money spent on things like set construction, Rozenshtein and Feinberg fronted all costs for the show. The largest sum was, naturally, the fee for Symphony Space, which was provided to them at a discount. “It’s pretty comparable to a one-week, two- or three-show tech cost at

Lerner,” Feinberg said, explaining that they avoid Lerner’s hourly tech charges with the all-inclusive rate. Still, they are admittedly more cash-conscious than recognized student groups, as they have neither a University allocation nor previous revenues to help them. They hope to make it up on a combination of ticket profits, advertisements, donations, and other fundraising efforts. “If the show indicates to us that we can be sustainable—that is to say, we make a profit—we will perpetuate ourselves as an institution,” Rozenshtein said. “But our first goal is to put on the show.”

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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Fall 2011

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Monday • October 31
12:00 pm - 6:00 pm
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12:00 pm - 4:30 pm
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CU’s frustration becoming visible to fans

In this past Saturday’s game against Dartmouth, I think I saw the most disappointing thing I’ve seen from the Lions thus far this season—and that’s saying a lot for this 0-6 team.



VICTORIA JONES

Batting a Thousand

It wasn’t the terribly performing offense. It wasn’t the 37-0 shutout. It wasn’t even anything you could see by looking at a stats sheet (though that can be depressing to look at too). What I saw on Saturday was an unenthusiastic player—a player who looked like he had given up, like things were just happening to him and the team, and there was nothing he could do about it.

This is the worst thing I have ever seen on the field all season, and I’ve watched every minute of Light Blue play thus far.

What I saw was a guy get up after a play and look visibly discouraged and defeated. He shook his arms in an “Aww, man!” style. I don’t know how to show you this with words really, so you’ll have to take my observation on faith unless you happened to see it too.

It didn’t look like an angry “I can’t believe I missed that tackle” gesture. And I think we can all agree that it probably wasn’t a misidentified celebration motion. As a beat writer, I feel like I could accurately recognize a celebration gesture, and given the course of the game, that’s really unlikely anyway.

Now, I can’t begin to try and tell you who this exasperated player is. I was more focused oh his body language than his number, and as much as I love the look of those away uniforms—so fly—they make it difficult to see numbers even if you’re explicitly looking for them.

All I know is Columbia’s defense was on the field, and it was during the third quarter when the Lions were down 30-0. So, you can understand the frustration, but that’s still no excuse for showing it.

While I don’t remember when I expressed my first disheartened comment of the game, I can tell you that after this point, I lost a little faith in the Lions, because I had just witnessed them losing a little bit of faith in themselves.

As much as they’ve tried, the Light Blue just can’t make it work this season.

The more I think about it, the more I realize that this must be a constant struggle for the team this season. Right now they’re 0-6. They’ve lost some close games to some quality teams, and they’ve endured some embarrassing losses to less-than-impressive teams. Every single aspect of play has suffered from poor performance at least once this season.

On top of this, the Lions are currently without starting quarterback Sean Brackett. Now, Brackett isn’t god, and he’s the least Brackett-esque that I’ve ever seen him, but nevertheless suffering a loss like that is always tough mentally.

And I think, to a certain extent, the Lions are suffering mentally. It’s not just because of their record either. It’s because of how they got there. The team came in with such high expectations and they’ve fallen short on basically every level.

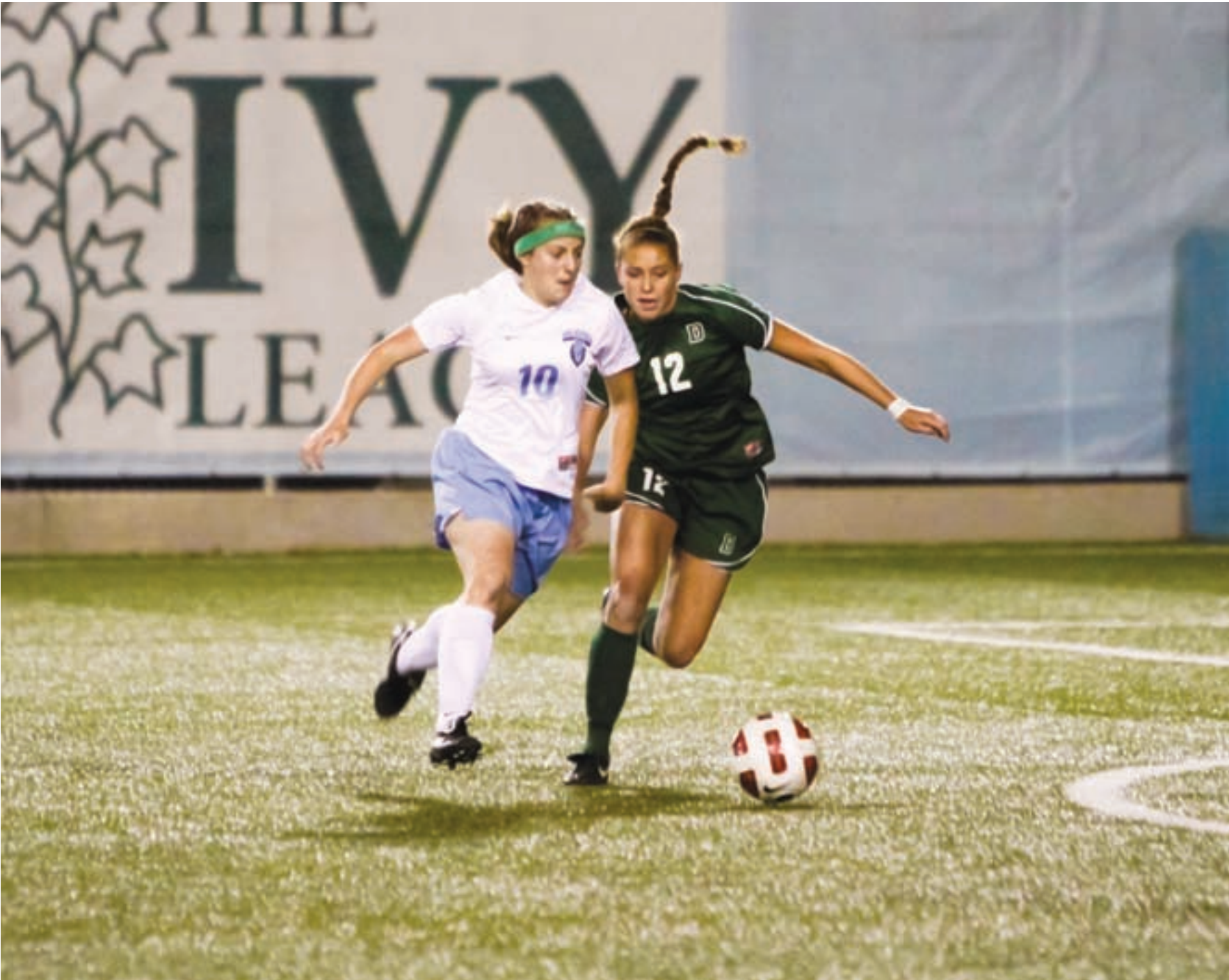
As much as they’ve tried, the Light Blue just can’t make it work this season. And the most frustrating part about it is that there’s no clear-cut explanation for it: they have the facilities, they have the skill, they have the experience.

This could have been the best Columbia football team in years. I firmly believe that.

At this point though, it just seems like everything is crumbling around Norries Wilson and the Lions. They had big expectations for this season, but those have since been shattered.

I think that what they need is to be able to take a step back and start from scratch, but you can’t exactly do that in the middle of the season when there’s constantly another

SEE JONES, page 7



FILE PHOTO

FABU-LIZ | Senior forward/midfielder Liz Wicks scored a pair of goals in the game’s final eight minutes to lead the Lions to victory over Dartmouth last Saturday.

Years of high-level experience gives Wicks an edge

BY MELISSA CHEUNG
Columbia Daily Spectator

As the game entered the 83rd minute last Saturday, things looked bleak for the Lions. Dartmouth was up 1-0 and it seemed like the women’s soccer team was headed for its fifth straight loss. But then, senior Liz Wicks managed to sneak the ball past Big Green goalkeeper Tatiana Saunders, tying the score at one. The Light Blue was back in the game.

As the minutes ticked down, overtime seemed imminent, but Wicks struck again with just 17 seconds left in regulation to give Columbia its first victory since Oct. 1.

The win in last Saturday’s game helped move Columbia into a third place tie with Yale, which it will face next weekend. Both teams have nine points, just behind Penn’s 12 points and first-place Harvard’s 13.

Wicks’ composure in such a high-pressure situation may be the result of her years of experience—she has been playing soccer since the age of six.

A native of Hungerford, UK, Wicks played for England’s Southampton U-14 and U-16 teams early on. At 15, she played for Arsenal Academy’s U-16 team and later went on to make appearances for the Arsenal first team before coming to the United States.

When it came to choosing a college to attend, Wicks’ decision was understandably driven by soccer.

“I decided it was a good idea to come to America, because here you can play soccer at a college, whereas in England you play for a university and there are more time clashes. I’d have to choose between one or the other, which I didn’t want to do,” Wicks said.

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

“My Arsenal coach knew the soccer coach here. I visited on a recruiting trip, and I committed the next day,” she added.

Lions head coach Kevin McCarthy knew from the very beginning that Wicks would be a good fit and a valuable asset to the team.

“You try to maximize your changes of scoring. It’s just key to stay calm.”

—Liz Wicks, women’s soccer forward

“It was an easy decision to recruit her,” McCarthy said. “Liz comes from a background, soccer-wise, that is much different. She has incredible soccer IQ, and she plays with great joy. Combine that with her ability and it makes quite a unique player. We’re very grateful to have her.”

Among Wicks’s greatest contributions to McCarthy’s team has been her cool demeanor under pressure.

“When time ticks down, obviously you gamble a bit more, and push more players forward,” Wicks said. “But I tend not to look at the clock and try to treat every minute the same. Players should look at the first minute of play the same as they do the last.”

It is her innate ability to deal with pressure, along with her years of experience, that have allowed her to develop a positive

mentality in the final minutes of the game.

“You try to maximize your chances of scoring. It’s just key to stay calm,” Wicks said.

Although Wicks says that Saturday was not the best game she’s ever had for the Lions, it’s safe to say she had plenty of fun.

“For the first goal, after we won the throw-in, it ran through my mind that it was now or never. As for the second goal, there was 45 seconds left, and I thought to myself, wouldn’t it be funny if we scored now?” Wicks said.

The Lions did score, giving them an exciting victory over an Ivy League rival.

“Chelsea threw the ball into the box, and I headed it into the near post. Then I

laughed,” Wicks said. “The celebration? It was pretty epic. It was an exciting time.”

As the soccer season comes to a close, Wicks’ goals seem to have reenergized the senior going into the last two games of her college career.

“My first goal is to win out the season. Secondly, I want to do something epic, like score a 40 yard goal, an over-head scissor kick goal, or taking on the entire defense of the other team and scoring,” Wicks said.



FILE PHOTO / GRAPHIC BY CASEY TOLAN AND ANN CHOU

Year	Games	Goals	Assists	Points
2008	9	4	1	9
2009	17	0	1	1
2010	17	1	3	5
2011	11	2	0	4

Women’s soccer shows its experience in road victories in Ivy play

BY MOLLY TOW
Spectator Staff Writer

Most teams prefer to play at home, and the Lions are no exception. Teams can play more aggressively and confidently when they know the field. However, what separates a few competitors from the rest is the ability to win the important games in territory that is not so familiar. This ability has allowed the Lions to stay in the race for the Ivy League title.

The Columbia women’s soccer team (6-9, 3-2 Ivy) has seen two road victories this year. Both have come against Ivy teams. The first win was at Cornell, where the Lions beat the Big Red 3-1 to begin their Ivy season. The second came last Saturday, as the Light Blue shut out the Big Green 2-0

in Hanover, N.H., on their home turf. That translates to a .667 winning percentage in the conference when the Light Blue travel to another field.

“There’s clearly a high level of intensity in every Ivy League match,” head coach Kevin McCarthy said. “The players get very up for the Ivy matches and they’re always the first game of the weekend too.”

The Lions, who have averaged just .8 goals a game this season, scored three goals at Cornell and two at Dartmouth. Considering the Light Blue has scored 12 goals in its 15 games, five goals between two games stand out.

The Cornell and Dartmouth fields differ significantly from the Columbia Soccer Stadium. The Big Red and Big Green play on grass, whereas the

Lions spend most of their time playing on turf. This doesn’t seem to have a negative effect on Columbia’s game. McCarthy thinks it is actually quite the opposite.

“They both play on grass, and that’s not the surface of our home pitch but they’re both good fields,” McCarthy said of Cornell and Dartmouth. “I know the girls look forward to playing on nice grass fields when they can.”

McCarthy also attributes Columbia’s success to the guidance of the team’s more seasoned players.

“It helps to have a good senior contingent,” McCarthy said. “All of our seniors are women of really good character, they’ve been to these Ivy League fields before, and they help the younger players know what to expect. Even though our senior class has been

with injuries, they’ve been really good teammates and leaders. They know the games in the Ivy League are always going to be a battle and it’s going to come down to a lot of small details, so they’re very good at getting our team prepared.”

Traveling can be a pain, but spending hours on a bus together can help a team work on its chemistry and prepare mentally for what lies ahead.

“They’re both long trips, so we have a chance to bond together on those road trips and that helps sometimes,” McCarthy said of the treks to the two Ivies.

The Lions may not lead the league in total victories this year, but they boast the most conference success

SEE SOCCER, page 7