

The Task Force on the Relationship of the Arts & Sciences and the College Summary of Recommendations April 8, 2022

Overview

Columbia University stands at an inflection point. As we exit a multi-year pandemic, successfully conclude the Columbia Commitment, celebrate the recognition of Columbia College as one of the world's premier undergraduate experiences, and continue to reimagine our place in the global context, we cannot just settle for our current, exceptional success. We must explore how Columbia can further raise its level of excellence and move into a new era of growth and understanding.

The relationship of the Arts and Sciences and Columbia College has profound effects on the governance, culture, and fiscal realities of the Arts and Sciences, the College, and, indeed, the entire University. While there are ambiguities in this relationship, it is essential to reflect upon the many accomplishments of this academic community and leverage all that has made us successful thus far.

Columbia College and the School of Engineering and Applied Science currently attract 60,000 undergraduate applicants a year with an acceptance rate of 3.73% (per Class of 2026 data). Our undergraduates come to Columbia for the Core Curriculum, to experience New York City, and to be part of the Ivy League. They also come because the student experience is among the best in the world. Columbia stands on the cutting edge of scholarship and achieves a level of academic excellence found only at the top research universities in the US and abroad. Students recognize the unique benefit of studying with world-renowned faculty, dedicated scholars and researchers, and prominent alumni leaders—in the very best city in the world—in a shared pursuit of knowledge and the application of it to solve some of the world's most pressing challenges.

Columbia College is our crown jewel and is central to the mission of the University. Our celebrated Faculty of Arts and Sciences is essential to our institutional excellence. Departmental successes, over the years, have been innumerable, and all of them enhance the whole. These successes depend upon the full support of the University; as such, the entire enterprise must be viewed through a lens of collaboration.

Our outstanding faculty, the heart of a research institution, create knowledge through their world-class research, which fuels our undergraduate education. In turn, our undergraduate students inspire faculty to further innovations in research and pedagogy. Our students graduate to become recognized leaders in their fields and return to Columbia as respected alumni, mentors, and academics. While the relationship of the traditional individual school-based faculties that comprise today's umbrella of Arts and Sciences has been studied and adjusted many times over the last century, there is always an opportunity for improvement. Indeed, an essential theme of President Bollinger's tenure at Columbia has been collaboration, integrating formerly siloed departments and initiatives across the University. To explore new methods of working together,

President Bollinger formed the Task Force on the Relationship of the Arts and Sciences and the College in September 2021 (henceforth “the Task Force”).

The Task Force received presentations with respect to how the current relationship and structure were established and listened to testimony offering various perspectives from the administration on how the structure presently functions, including the current structure’s strengths and weaknesses.

Assessments and recommendations previously conducted by internal committees and task forces, which were, since the creation of the Vice President for Arts and Sciences role in 1982 and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences in 1991, charged with similar evaluation, were made available to the Task Force. The Task Force has been asked to offer recommendations to the appropriate institutional governance bodies, including the University Trustees and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, for consideration.

The multi-constituency Task Force, composed of twelve Arts and Sciences faculty, two alumni leaders, two University Trustees, and five University administrators, has undertaken an examination of the connection between Columbia College and the Arts and Sciences, proposing new ways to collaborate while honoring our many strengths.

Summary of Recommendations

The work of the Task Force was, by design, a collaborative process that confirmed a shared commitment to the fundamental mission of the University and led to the recommendations outlined below concerning **Curricular Excellence** and **Enhanced Collaboration** between the Dean of Columbia College and the Dean of Arts and Sciences¹.

The recommendations outlined in the Curricular Excellence section emphasize collaboration between faculty and the College. For example, an expanded Committee on Instruction with a faculty chair reporting directly to the Dean of Arts and Sciences and the Dean of Columbia College, and where the deans would serve as voting members, aims to engage faculty more directly and to encourage partnership across schools. An integrated system, with a caring eye for the whole, will create a richer experience for everyone involved: students, faculty, alumni, and administration.

The intent of all of the recommendations, including those in the Curricular Excellence section and those in the Enhanced Collaboration section, is to encourage further discussion between Arts and Sciences and the College, to bring the faculty and the alumni closer together and facilitate opportunities for them to work together, to let everyone committed to the success of the institution see the whole in a clearer manner, and to ensure unmatched excellence in terms of the student experience.

¹ Note title change recommended on page 6

Curricular Excellence

The Arts and Sciences faculty members on the Task Force met regularly as a subcommittee (henceforth “the Faculty Subcommittee”) to explore new methods of collaboration between the College and the Arts and Sciences with the hope of enhancing faculty engagement with our teaching mission and faculty governance. The entire Curricular Excellence section reflects a collective statement by this subcommittee.

The Faculty Subcommittee collectively supports the recommendations outlined elsewhere in this document in regard to improved collaboration between the College and Arts and Sciences in development efforts and in the activities of the Columbia College Board of Visitors, feeling that these changes will enhance the financial well-being of all parts of the Arts and Sciences and encourage collaborative leadership. The Faculty Subcommittee also unanimously agrees on the need to expand faculty knowledge, involvement in, and direction of the curriculum, to strengthen cross-school structures so as to allow for better coordination within Arts and Sciences, and to integrate those into the governance structures of Arts and Sciences. We also agree on the need for a functioning Arts and Sciences Executive Committee and for clarifying the processes by which Deans are appointed and re-appointed within Arts and Sciences. Towards those ends, and understanding that these proposals will require further faculty review and consultation with administrators and other stakeholders, the Faculty Subcommittee proposes the following:

Proposal to expand the work of the COI across the Arts and Sciences

The Faculty Subcommittee spent much time discussing how we, as faculty, might best reconcile our strong commitment to Columbia College and to its distinctive Core Curriculum with the many instructional responsibilities borne by the Arts and Sciences faculty as a whole. We agree this task should be addressed directly and not left to be resolved through competition among various institutional parts. We agree that we need a better and more collaborative governance structure for the curriculum, one that provides for routine collaboration among all the principal deans and the faculty and that brings curricular matters routinely before the full Faculty of the Arts and Sciences. We therefore propose that the Columbia College/General Studies Committee on Instruction (CC/GS COI) be restructured along the lines laid out below and charged with coordination and oversight of all undergraduate and graduate curricular matters in the Arts and Sciences.

The reason to restructure and expand the existing CC/GS COI to incorporate a graduate element and to take on the work of coordination is that instruction in the Arts and Sciences is highly integrated. There is one Faculty, responsible for all parts of the curriculum from Core classes for first-year undergraduates to seminars for advanced doctoral students; much of our teaching also brings together students across departments, programs, years, levels, and schools. Columbia College and the Arts and Sciences will best thrive if our structures, while preserving and renewing College-only programs, reflect and manage that integration. An expanded COI would foster information-sharing, transparency, and collaboration among the leadership of those schools. It would also strengthen the engagement of the faculty in all aspects of undergraduate and graduate education and support the goal of broad faculty stewardship of the core academic

mission of Columbia College, General Studies, and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS). The Faculty Subcommittee thinks these goals can be best achieved by building on governance structures that work well rather than by creating new ones.

The expanded COI is thus envisaged as a means to extend the work of, and not to replace, the current COI. The expanded COI is envisaged, as now, as a governance committee and not simply as an advisory committee. It would take over all work within the remit of the current Educational Policy and Planning Committee (EPPC), rendering that body unnecessary. It would continue to do the curricular work of the current CC/GS COI as well as the curricular work of the GSAS Executive Committee (GSAS EC) for Arts and Sciences courses and programs.

Just how to draw the lines between various bodies will require further thought; we understand, for instance, that the GSAS EC will continue to deal with many matters (such as, for example, dissertation committees and progress, student well-being, and so on) and that the CC/GS Deans may wish to establish a body to deal with school-specific matters (such as, for example, student advising, well-being, progress through programs, and study abroad). We understand, too, that the expanded COI may, at its discretion, delegate any issues to those ECs that it felt were best dealt with by those bodies. As now, the COI would work in collaboration with Barnard, SEAS, the School of the Arts, and the School of Professional Studies (SPS) insofar as that School currently coordinates Columbia Summer Sessions. The committee would be staffed and minutes kept. The Faculty Subcommittee feels it is critical that the COI apprise the full Faculty on its work regularly at Faculty meetings and report in writing at least once yearly, and that the Deans do so as well for any school-specific work; such communication is essential if faculty are to be fully engaged with our teaching mission. The work of the departmental Directors of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) and Directors of Graduate Studies (DGS) would continue to be coordinated through CC/GS and GSAS.

The COI's remit would be to ensure the proper functioning and coordination of all elements of the curriculum, including general education, existing majors and degree programs, and graduate offerings within Arts and Sciences. It would propose changes to such programs as needed and coordinate teaching across department and school lines. Some items would be brought to it by the academic deans of GS, CC, and GSAS who would also support the routine work of the committee; agenda items could also be proposed by departments, faculty, and students, or arise from the DUS and DGS meetings, or might simply emerge organically as the COI does its routine work. To manage its workload, and in line with current practice, the COI might delegate some work, such as the routine approval of new courses, to the academic deans or create subcommittees to deal with other business not requiring full COI input. Decisions made by the COI on routine matters would not require further approval. Any large scale or significant changes to curricular structures would be brought to the Faculty for discussion and ratification. Should proposals require additional financial or human resources, the Dean of Arts and Sciences, working with the Policy and Planning Committee (PPC), would indicate how such resources would be provided, and the tradeoffs necessary to achieve them, when bringing the proposals to the Faculty.

The COI might also establish ad hoc task forces to take on major issues that, because of their scale or complexity, could not be properly considered along with the regular work required of the

COI. These might include proposals for significant curricular innovations or changes to existing programs. The Executive Committee, taking advice from the PPC, might initiate a request for such large-scale undertakings, as could other faculty or faculty groups such as the Chairs. Reports and recommendations from such task forces would go back to the COI for consideration before going to the Faculty for discussion. As indicated above, major curricular changes would require a Faculty vote. The Dean of Arts and Sciences, working with the EC, would be responsible for implementation.

The Faculty Subcommittee recommends that the Committee on Instruction be chaired by a faculty member with considerable institutional experience, jointly appointed by the Dean of Columbia College and the Dean of Arts and Sciences. This faculty person will work in close collaboration with the Deans of Columbia College and of the Arts and Sciences to set the agenda for the COI. This model of collaborative leadership chimes with collaborative leadership structures outlined at other points in this report. It recognizes the special and long-standing role of the College Dean in sustaining the excellence of all undergraduate programs of study. It likewise recognizes the responsibility of the Dean of Arts and Sciences for managing the financial and faculty resources on which the whole of the Arts and Sciences depends. At the same time, it acknowledges that curricular matters are properly the responsibility of the Faculty and provides for a more robust link between curricular bodies and the structures of faculty governance.

The Faculty Subcommittee recommends that the COI be composed, as now, of twelve faculty members (including the Chair) jointly appointed by the Dean of Arts and Sciences and the Dean of Columbia College, taking advice from the PPC, and taking care to represent all three divisions of the Arts and Sciences. Faculty members would serve staggered three-year terms. One COI faculty representative should be a member of the PPC, to ensure communication; likewise, at least one member of the COI should serve on the GSAS EC and any comparable undergraduate body. The Deans of Columbia College, General Studies, Arts and Sciences, and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, plus an appropriate representative each from SEAS and Barnard, and the twelve faculty, would be voting members. The Academic Deans of CC, GS, GSAS, and Arts and Sciences would serve ex-officio, and a representative from SPS and the School of the Arts would attend ex-officio when the agenda appears to them to warrant it. We anticipate incorporating student representatives from the College, GS, and GSAS in some but not all parts of the Committee's work. The COI would operate, so far as possible, through consensus, but when a vote is necessary, a three-quarters majority of voting members would be required in order for a measure to pass. Since service on the COI will be time-consuming, the Faculty Subcommittee recommends that additional compensation be established for such service.

The current College Committees that deal with specific parts of the curriculum (Committee on the Core, Committee on Science Instruction, Committee on the Global Core) would remain in place, with authority over these programs, but their membership and chairs would be appointed for fixed terms with the aim of expanding faculty ownership of and participation in these programs. They would also report their work to the COI each semester, with information then going forward to the full Faculty. Should the COI feel there are problems with decisions taken by these curricular committees, the COI would consult with them to find a good solution, and, in

cases of conflict, would pass the issue to the EC and PPC, perhaps for resolution through an ad hoc task force, as described above.

Governance in the Arts and Sciences

The success of this structure depends on the existence of a functioning and collaborative Executive Committee. However that committee is structured, it should include the principal deans and meet regularly, chaired by the Dean of Arts and Sciences. The Faculty Subcommittee also agrees on the need for more transparency about the terms and process of decanal appointments. The Faculty Subcommittee proposes that when new appointments are made to the position of Dean of Arts and Sciences, Dean of CC, Dean of GS, or Dean of GSAS, the length of the appointment be announced as well. If, at the end of the announced term, the holder of one of these positions is being considered for reappointment, the President should consult with the PPC and Department Chairs before making a final decision. Reappointments should be announced as new appointments are.

Enhanced Collaboration

Universities are necessarily complicated institutions. Deans with structurally different constituencies may find it difficult to coordinate in productive ways, especially in the absence of defined channels for collaboration. The fall of 2022 presents an opportunity to introduce an environment of joint responsibility to the incoming Class of 2026 and to our entire undergraduate community. A new Dean of Columbia College will soon be appointed. This person will be poised to foster a collaborative relationship with the Dean of Arts and Sciences who, to date, has not been optimally visible to the students and the alumni community. The Task Force recommends that there be a clear institutional expectation that these two leaders work together for the benefit of students and faculty. Below are recommendations that create the possibility for new methods of collaboration that we hope would also encourage substantial alumni engagement with faculty while offering alumni a broader view of the University and would also model the benefits of collaboration.

Dean of Arts and Sciences

The Task Force recommends renaming the position currently known as the Executive Vice President and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. The majority of the Task Force believes the title should be Dean of Arts and Sciences. This shift recognizes the important academic responsibilities of this position rather than emphasizing the accompanying administrative aspects of the role.

Board of Visitors and Alumni Engagement

Interaction with College alumni leadership and broader segments of the alumni population should be the joint responsibility of the Dean of Columbia College and the Dean of Arts and Sciences. This would create many benefits, including significantly enhanced development opportunities over time. This shared responsibility has been discussed and endorsed by numerous stakeholders over the years but has not been realized. The Task Force recommends that this now

be institutionalized and made a cultural reality. Historically, generations of the College alumni identify strongly with the Dean of Columbia College as the person who symbolizes and represents the extraordinary education they received. The Task Force does not seek to lessen that identification, but rather broaden it to include the Dean of Arts and Sciences in the alumni experience, which will only enhance and augment those sentiments.

The Task Force recommends that the Dean of Arts and Sciences be invited to present regular reports on the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at College Board of Visitors meetings. The Task Force believes the Dean of Arts and Sciences should be offered the opportunity, as is true for the Dean of the College, to provide input to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Visitors on the development of meeting agendas and priorities. Both Deans would have access to the alumni leaders for their counsel and support, and would, together, increase the impact of alumni leaders throughout the College and the Arts and Sciences. Further, both Deans should be encouraged to meet with smaller groups of alumni or individual alumni, and regularly should travel together and individually on regional swings to which groups of alumni are invited to attend. The Task Force encourages the alumni leadership to make the Dean of Arts and Sciences an ex-officio member as is true for the Dean of the College.

Similar recommendations, encouragement, and opportunities apply to the Board of Directors of the Columbia College Alumni Association. Both the Dean of Columbia College and Dean of Arts and Sciences would be jointly responsible for coordinated outreach and engagement.

The Task Force recommends that all other separate school-loyalty based boards of visitors and alumni associations of the schools comprising the Arts and Sciences, such as General Studies, be guided by the strategic visioning described above with respect to the College.

Development and Principal Gifts

Columbia College has become an incredible fundraising engine as evidenced by the *Core to Commencement Campaign* within the *Columbia Commitment*. That prowess should be celebrated. Alumni are dedicated, ardent, and believe in the mission of the College. It is essential that this passion be integrated into the over-arching goals and vision of the Arts and Sciences as they fuel and sustain our undergraduate education. We want to offer our donors the chance to see what is being taught, what knowledge is being explored, and what is happening academically and intellectually. That opportunity stems from a meaningful connection between Arts and Sciences and the College.

The Task Force urges a comprehensive development vision that would consider the whole, leveraging the success of the College and its fundraising excellence to support an expanded range of priorities without negatively impacting—in fact, while significantly enhancing—College excellence. The Task Force believes that a coordinated approach would untap potential for both the College and the Arts and Sciences. It therefore recommends that the offices of development coordinate efforts through a combined team that would work together with the Dean of Arts and Sciences and the Dean of Columbia College. Specifically, it recommends that the existing offices of development within the Arts and Sciences and Columbia College be reorganized to serve both the College and the Arts and Sciences as a whole. This reconstituted

development team would continue to work with the University's central Office of Alumni and Development, as the school-specific offices do now.

Budget

The Task Force recognizes that budgets are a central element in any operation. Budgets can both create incentives for collaboration and create opportunities to align priorities. Many relevant models were examined including incentive-based models that specifically encourage and promote teaching undergraduates. In the end, the Task Force decided that the Dean of Arts and Sciences and the Dean of Columbia College, as they start their work in a spirit of collaboration, should examine budgetary challenges and form a working group to be led by the Provost in concert with the Central Finance team. This group should, over the next year, offer proposals for reorganizing the current budget systems that would not negatively impact the future of the Core Curriculum. This group should also consult members of this Task Force who specifically explored budgetary models to help with this process. It should also consult with the PPC to ensure that broader budgetary considerations are taken into account.

Student Experience and Wellness

All of the aforementioned areas offer possibilities for enhancing the overall student experience and, as such, this specific area (which was not within the charge of the Task Force) can be viewed as an outcome of the other areas. Columbia's commitment to undergraduate education is unwavering and ensuring that undergraduate students have an advocate is paramount to this process.

The Task Force recommends that the Dean of Columbia College, while a steadfast advocate for students in the classroom, curricular issues, and avenues of study, would also remain the leader of the larger undergraduate student experience, overseeing admissions and financial aid, student affairs, residential life, advising, student leadership opportunities, and other co-curricular support. This would include both the continuous enhancement of the Core Curriculum and of majors and upper-division opportunities. The Task Force recommends that the Dean of Columbia College collaborate with departments and the entire Faculty of Arts and Sciences to address student needs and promote an excellent and unparalleled undergraduate education. Student well-being, in the largest sense, is the primary goal of the collaboration the Task Force wishes to promote.

Honors and Ceremonies

The Task Force recommends that the Dean of Arts and Sciences and the Dean of Columbia College share leadership of and joint responsibility for ceremonial activities and academic honors. The Dean of Arts and Sciences and the Dean of Columbia College should co-host and make remarks at large student events such as Convocation, Senior Day, and Class Day. Significant College awards such as the Alexander Hamilton Medal and the John Jay Awards would continue to be selected by committee with input from both the Dean of Columbia College and the Dean of Arts and Sciences. Both the Dean of Columbia College and the Dean of Arts and Sciences would be invited to make remarks at these dinner ceremonies, at the direction of the

President of the College's alumni association. The participation of both deans in these events, at which students so often create lifelong memories, will solidify the connections between the two deans for students and for alumni, thereby reinforcing a culture of collaboration.

Conclusion

The Task Force recommends that an assessment be conducted within the next 3 years by a new task force or working group with sufficient overlap with this Task Force, and then periodic assessments be conducted every 3 to 5 years to ensure that any implemented measures are successful. These assessments should include a variety of perspectives and build from the strong foundation of collaboration and transparency that framed the discussions of this Task Force. The Task Force also recommends that the University Board of Trustees form a subcommittee of the Academic Affairs Committee to follow the progress of this proposal and provide support and guidance as needed.

The Task Force is grateful to have had the opportunity to establish a set of recommendations that support new methods of collaboration in pursuit of greater excellence. The Task Force is also deeply appreciative of the College and Arts and Sciences communities for their support throughout this process and for reviewing these recommendations with an open mind and shared sense of responsibility.