On Campus

ROTC and Columbia, Together Again

Winter 2013-14



Naval ROTC midshipmen from across the New York City region came to Columbia on September 30 for an event celebrating the return of NROTC here. Kathyrn Susko, a freshman from Fordham University, got some help adjusting her shoulder insignia before the ceremony. Photo: Eileen Barroso

The Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) celebrated its return to Columbia this past fall, with dozens of white-clad midshipmen from universities throughout the region gathering at the Italian Academy for a ceremony with veterans, faculty, students, and alumni on September 30.

It had been two years since the University announced that it would resume its “full and formal recognition” of NROTC, following a more than forty-year absence that

was initiated by student protests in 1969 and prolonged in recent decades by campus opposition to the US military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. The NROTC set up an office on campus in 2012, and since then a handful of Columbia students have traveled to the ROTC's regional consortium unit at SUNY Maritime College in the Bronx for physical training and courses two mornings per week.

Assistant secretary of the navy Juan M. Garcia III spoke passionately about the NROTC's role in national defense, saying that the military requires "access to the most talented, innovative, and motivated minds the country has to offer."

Said University president Lee C. Bollinger: "I think this is more than simply the return of Naval ROTC to Columbia: this is really a historic moment in which the breach for all of its different reasons is repaired, is healed. That's the way it should be. I want to recognize all of the students here for their participation at Columbia. We value you for many, many reasons, but one of them is that we think the diversity of perspectives and opinions that you bring to the institution is highly significant. I see it myself in the classes that I teach."



Guide to school abbreviations

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