On Campus

In Brief: Fall 2015

Fall 2015

Diversity initiative gets $33M

The University recently announced that it is investing thirty-three million dollars in an ongoing effort to enhance the diversity of its faculty. The funds, which are in addition to a thirty-million-dollar investment made in 2012, are being used to recruit underrepresented minority and female scholars and to provide grants to junior faculty who contribute to the University's diversity goals. The initiative also now supports the recruitment of faculty who study LGBTQ issues.

"We have learned from experience that the work of building a diverse university environment does not occur quickly or simply; it requires sustained attention from all of us," said President Lee C. Bollinger in announcing the initiative's expansion earlier this year.

"Our long-term goal has been, and remains, to achieve the critical mass of faculty needed to establish Columbia as a national leader and world center of the greatest scholarship and teaching that can only arise out of a diverse academic community."

Barnard College to accept transgender women

This summer, Barnard College joined the growing number of women's colleges that have adopted a formal transgender-admissions policy, announcing that it now officially welcomes students who "consistently live and identify as women, regardless of the gender assigned to them at birth."

The college's trustees approved the new policy in June, following a year of discussions among faculty, staff, students, alumnae, and parents. Debora L. Spar, the college's president, said the community decided it was important to be inclusive of transgender people at a time when they are fighting for public and institutional

acceptance.

“When I first started hearing from trans students ... I couldn’t help but sympathize,” Spar told the *New York Times* on June 4. “I think once you understand the human dimension of this, you want to do the right thing.”



Barnard president Debora L. Spar (center) at a meeting last fall. Photo: Kiera Wood / Columbia Daily Spectator.

National Academy of Sciences elects three Columbia profs

This year, three Columbia professors were elected to the National Academy of Sciences, which is one of the highest honors a scientist can receive. They are cell biologist Riccardo Dalla-Favera, who studies the genetics of cancer; anthropologist Ralph L. Holloway, who examines the structure of ape brains and fossils in order to understand human evolution; and geneticist Rodney Rothstein, who pioneered recombinant engineering techniques widely used in research.

Five new fellows

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences recently inducted five Columbia professors: philosopher of science David Albert ’76CC; legal scholars Jane Ginsburg and Philip Hamburger; composer, musicologist, and installation artist George E. Lewis; and literary scholar Edward Mendelson.



Guide to school abbreviations

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