

To (Administrator),

The Columbia College Student Council believes that the University, in keeping with its commitment to provide students with “the depth of understanding and intellectual flexibility they need to respond to the challenges we all will face in the years to come,” has a responsibility to offer resources that give students the opportunity to be more informed about events shaping the world.¹ As an invaluable source of current news and insightful commentary, we believe that free and convenient access to the nation’s leading newspapers is critical to the development of a student body with a heightened awareness for the world in which we live.² In recent years, many of our Ivy counterparts including Yale, Cornell, and Dartmouth have adopted complimentary newspaper readership programs.

Last spring Columbia took the first step in launching the USA Today Collegiate Readership Pilot Program. For four weeks Columbia University students received free access to weekday editions of *USA Today*, *The New York Times* and the *Financial Times* at five convenient campus locations. Overall, more than 4,177 students participated in the program of which 43% took a newspaper each day.

In conjunction with the program, two surveys were conducted before and after the pilot to measure changes in student readership habits. As survey results indicate, more than 50% of the students involved in the program had increased readership habits. Results went on to attribute this increase to the convenience of on-campus pickup locations and the wide selection of available dailies. Students were literally reading the newspaper every day!

In short, student response to the pilot program has been overwhelmingly positive. Having been editorialized in *The Spectator* numerous times, the program has also won the full support of the University’s main student-run newspaper.

However, with the termination of the pilot program we must now explore new ways to continue providing students with this service. That is why we are asking for your help to ensure that daily access to free newspapers becomes a permanent feature of undergraduate life. University funding of any size would enable us to maintain this invaluable service.

We hope this package offers a complete overview of the components of a daily newspaper readership program. In addition, survey results and student responses have been attached. Thank you for your time and support.

Sincerely,
The Columbia College Student Council

¹ About Columbia: Mission Statement. <http://www.columbia.edu/about_columbia/mission.html>.

² Overview of the Collegiate Readership Program. <<http://www.usatoday.com/educate/readers/over.htm>>.