

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY SENATE
STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Redesigning Columbia University's Diploma As presented to the Executive Committee of the University Senate on April 23, 2004

Executive Summary

Under the leadership of Matan Ariel, the Student Affairs Committee directed Columbia's first University-wide electronic polling of students. Specifically, the question was whether or not there should be a new design of the standard University diplomas. The results are as follows:

Number of votes counted:	6,045
Percentage of population:	30.8%
In favor of a new design:	5,450
Percentage of total voted:	90%
In favor of "Old English" design:	3824
Percentage of favoring new design:	70%
In favor of Alma Mata etching:	4705
Percentage of favoring new design:	86%
In favor of separate doctoral design:	3548
Percentage of favoring new design:	65%

In summary, the majority of those who voted are in favor of using the "Old English" design with the Alma Mata etching. In addition, the students are in favor of creating a separate design for doctoral degrees from that of the Bachelor and Master designs.

Diploma Leadership

- Matan Ariel, director of the redesigning initiative and respondent to the diploma@columbia.edu inquiries.
- Jennifer Schnidman, diploma webmaster
- In addition, the members of the Diploma Task Force included: Alida Bouris, Jennifer Caplan, Eduard Ghanem, Sean Kelly, and Nathan Walker

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Table 1. Number of Votes by School and by Enrollment Percentage

	Votes	Percentage	Contr. Enrol	Total Enrol.
Dental & Oral Surgery	181	65.6%	276	414
Engineering (undergrad)	595	58.0%	1,025	1,360
SIPA	280	40.3%	694	1,214
Business	437	37.9%	1,153	1,933
Journalism	96	37.5%	256	256
Teachers College	1,256	37.5%	3,350	4,950
General Studies	433	36.6%	1,183	1,422
Continuing Education	39	36.1%	108	1,334
Nursing (undergrad + grad)	123	35.7%	345	519
Public Health	184	34.3%	537	738
Columbia College	872	27.8%	3,139	4,170
Barnard	488	27.2%	1,797	2,297
Engineering (grad)	178	22.1%	807	1,048
Social Work	116	20.9%	556	936
GSAS (NS, HUM, SS)	643	18.5%	3,473	3,988
Arts	88	14.7%	597	762
Architecture	36	10.4%	346	582
Total	6,045		19,642	27,923
Percent of student body who voted:	30.8%			

Notes (1) The Enrollment is based on Fall 2003 statistics: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/opir/2004EnrIHC.htm>. (2) Controlled enrollment was calculated by subtracting the exact number of students that will graduate from each school this May or June. Please note, that we could not guarantee that some of these students may have voted even though their diplomas will not be changed. With that said, the controlled enrollment represent a minor margin of error. (3) The GSAS “controlled enrollment” figure is inaccurate because the PhD students are not coded for graduation until they defend and deposit, which goes until mid May. (4) Law and Medicine were not polled because they have separate diplomas. Only Dual Degree Union Students were polled because the M.Div. is not conferred by the Columbia Trustees, but the M.A. and Ph.D.s are Columbia degrees. (5) An “eligible student” is defined as a student who will graduate after January of 2005. (6) Table 1 only includes students that voted for one of the designs; the 111 students that left the design question unanswered are included in table 2. Consequently, the actual number of voting students was 6,156 or 31.3% of eligible students who voted.

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Table 2. Number of Votes by Question

	Current	Old English	Roman	No design ¹	Etching ² Yes	Etching No	Doc Yes ³	Doc No
Total								
Architecture	8	18	10	2	21	14	15	19
Barnard	49	314	125	4	383	103	296	181
Business	57	233	147	3	340	96	165	259
CC	160	509	203	5	645	239	565	303
Continuing Ed	6	26	7	1	34	4	16	22
Dental and Oral Surgery	6	146	29	3	162	10	162	17
GS	38	285	110	1	340	89	268	154
GSAS	72	342	229	6	472	176	468	182
Journalism	15	50	31	0	73	23	35	55
Nursing	8	82	33	2	104	18	53	66
Public Health	10	113	61	0	150	37	77	105
School of the Arts	5	52	31	1	62	26	34	51
SEAS (grad)	18	124	36	2	154	27	92	87
SEAS (undergrad)	45	391	159	3	507	95	412	177
SIPA	20	159	101	1	210	68	96	169
Social Work	5	84	27	0	97	17	47	65
Teachers College	73	896	287	6	951	298	747	496
Sub Total	595	<u>3,824</u>	1626	40	<u>4,705</u>	1340	<u>3,548</u>	2408
Total Identified Votes		<u>6,045</u>						

¹ Some students did not vote for a design, but did vote for the other questions in the poll.

² The Etching is of the Alma Mater statue.

³ The doctoral question was “Should the doctoral diplomas be a separate design from the Undergraduate and Master diplomas?”