Senate Reaches Out CLS to Community  
by Elena Hassan ’09 and Jayme Bethel ’09

Last weekend, fourteen of CLS’s best, brightest and most robust, led valiantly by Student Senate Secretary Gabe Gershowitz ’09, marched over to Riverside Park where we participated in a day of “Columbia Community Outreach.” Once we were informed that there had been a change of plans and that we would not be handling compost but only mulch and woodchips, the smiles began to spread. Armed with shovels, rakes, pitchforks, buckets and wheelbarrows, we enthusiastically tackled both a monstrous pile of woodchips and the age-old question, “Are there non-wheeled barrows?” (Dictionary.com says yes—though they are carried by hands and not by horses as was surmised).

There is nothing like fresh air and manual labor, especially when one is a law student, and we even knew the perfect thing to do after a hard day's work. So we rewarded ourselves for our toil with beers, Domino’s, apples, and the hard-earned satisfaction that comes from knowing countless Riverside Park-goers can enjoy the hill we have beautified all summer long. Also, we got free hats!

The hale and hearty crew of CLS student volunteers at CCO find themselves in Riverside Park shoveling something different from what is typical of most law students.

Students and Alumni Protest Loan Assistance Denial to Grads  
by the Fair LRAP Coalition

Over 200 CLS alumni and students called on the school to reconsider its exclusion of recently graduated public interest lawyers from an enhanced loan forgiveness program. In a letter delivered to Dean Schizer on Wednesday, April 2, the Fair LRAP Coalition said that it is a mistake to continue offering current alumni a Loan Repayment Assistance Program (LRAP) that even the school determined to be woefully deficient.

Under Columbia's current LRAP, the school covers part of the cost of loan payments for a period of up to ten years after graduation for alumni engaged in human rights work, government service, and other non-profit legal work. However, the benefits of the program phase out rapidly once a participant's income exceeds...
Senate Business

The full Student Senate typically meets every other Monday at 9:10 PM in JGH 105. Meetings are generally open to the entire student body. The next and final meeting of the 2007-2008 Student Senate will take place next Monday, April 7, 2008.

Agenda for April 7, 2008, Senate Meeting

I. Roll Call

II. Amendments to by laws

III. Officer Reports
   a. President
   b. VP
   c. Treasurer
   d. Secretary
   e. Parliamentarian

IV. Committee Reports
   a. Graduation
   b. Housing
   c. IT
   d. University Senate
   e. Faculty Committees
      i. Admissions & Financial Aid
      ii. Advisory
      iii. Associates
      iv. Clerkships & Judicial Relations
      v. Comparative & International Law
      vi. Curriculum
      vii. Graduate
      viii. Information Technology
      ix. Journals
      x. Library
      xi. Public Interest Activities
      xii. Resources and Development
      xiii. Rules
      xiv. Student Services

V. Treasurer’s Report

VI. Announcements

VII. Adjourn
News & Notes

CSIL writes: You’ve seen the countdown. You’ve deleted our emails. But we found another way to get to you. So this Tuesday, April 8, please join CSIL at its biggest event of the year, the 34th Annual Friedmann Conference. Honoring Judge Antônio Augusto Cançado Trindade, former president of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, the conference will explore and contrast regional approaches to human rights law and its enforcement. At 2 p.m., Prof. Cleveland will moderate “Structure and Reform of the Inter American Court.” At 3:30pm, Prof. Bermann will moderate a panel on “The European Human Rights Regime.” At 5 p.m., the final panel, “Jurisprudence of the Inter-American Court,” will be moderated by Judge Trindade. All panels will be held in JGH 106. We will see you there!

BLSA writes: The CLS community is cordially invited to attend the 14th Annual Paul Robeson Conference. This year’s conference will be held on April 18 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in JGH 105, with a buffet luncheon held in Drapkin Lounge from 12:00 to 1:30 p.m. The 2008 topic commemorates the 40-year anniversary of the Fair Housing Act and examines the subprime crisis plaguing the economy, and how legal activism can play a role in helping those affected. Panel 1, examining the Fair Housing Act, will begin at 10 a.m.; Panel 2, on subprime, will begin at 1:30 p.m., and Panel 3, on the subject of legal activism, will begin at 3:15 p.m. A keynote luncheon address will be given by Jeh Johnson, CLS Class of ’82, on the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King and Paul Robeson.

If you have a news item that everyone should know about, please email senate@law.columbia.edu.

LRAP Protest (continued from p. 1)

$25,000 per year, a minimal level of assistance given the cost of living in New York City and other urban centers in which many alumni are employed.

On March 12, 2008, Columbia announced that it would double the income threshold from $25,000 to $50,000. The change will align LRAP more closely with entry level salaries for many public interest jobs, which are often in the $30,000-$50,000 range. However, to the surprise of many, the school announced that the change would apply only to alumni graduating in 2008 or later. The previous, $25,000 threshold will remain in place for current public interest alumni in the classes of 1996-2007 — all of the classes currently eligible for LRAP. As a result, individuals in those classes will be required to pay thousands of dollars more per year towards their student loans than similarly situated recent graduates.

"Many of us graduated from law school with over $180,000 in student loans, on top of considerable undergraduate debt," said Grainne O'Neill ’07, one of the signers of the Fair LRAP Coalition letter and a public defender in New Orleans. "The $25,000 a year threshold bears no relation to the reality of the cost of living."

"LRAP is such a modest portion of Columbia's budget," said Justin Mulaire '03, another of the letter's signers. "It's just so disappointing that the school would economize by maintaining concededly inadequate loan assistance for people who have actually demonstrated a commitment to public interest work. It's counter-intuitive, to say the least."

"The law school relies heavily on its public interest alumni to participate in programming and career placement activities for students — and it always cites LRAP as a reason all alumni should contribute to the school's annual giving campaign," said John Hirsch '02, a signatory from the Legal Aid Society of New York. "I have to think the school will work to equalize LRAP benefits quickly to keep this from being a point of contention as it celebrates its 150th anniversary this year."

Prior to the school's March 12 announcement, alumni and students had been pressing for improvements to LRAP for many years, as the basic benefits package had remained frozen since the late 1990s, with no adjustment for increases in the cost of living and the dramatic growth of student loan debt. Columbia's LRAP benefits have lagged behind those of a number of its peer schools, which had increased benefits substantially in recent years — all applying the improvements to current and future graduates alike.

For additional information on the Coalition for Fair LRAP's protest, visit www.columbialrap.org.
This Week at CLS  
April 7 – 13, 2008

Monday
- Student Senate/Career Services: “Success as a Summer Associate.” 12:15 - 1:30 PM; WJW L107.
- SJI/CPIL: Corporate Social Responsibility Panel. 6:00 - 8:00 PM; JG 103. Dinner.
- Student Senate: NCAA Final Game Watch Party. 9:00 PM, Lenfest Café. Light refreshments.

Tuesday
- Friedmann Conference: “Reform and Challenges Confronting Regional Human Rights Regimes.” 12:00 - 6:00 PM; JG 106.
- KCLMA: “Recent Developments in Fair Use.” 12:10 - 1:00 PM; JG 101. Pizza and soda.
- PILF: Election Information Meeting. 12:20 - 1:00 PM; JG 104. Pizza.
- MESO: Film Festival - Screening of City of God. 6:30 - 9:00 PM; JG TBA. Popcorn and soda.

Wednesday
- Journal Day. 12:00 - 4:00 PM; JG Lobby & 4:00 - 5:30 PM; JG 104.
- Human Rights Law Review Happy Hour. 6:00 - 8:00 PM; Radio Perfecto.
- DeVinimus: Rieslings Tasting. 8:00 - 10:00 PM; JG 106. RSVP to devinimus@gmail.com by Monday at noon.

Thursday
- LaLSA: Journal Student Panel. 12:15 - 1:00 PM; JG Annex. Lunch.
- HRLR, BLR, JLSP: Journal Early Application Info Session. 12:30 - 1:15 PM; JG 104. Food and drink.
- Student Services: Curricular Advising Panel Discussion. 1:15 - 2:45 PM; JG 106.
- 7th ANNUAL DEANS CUP. 6:00 - 9:00 PM.

Friday
- Student Services: Curricular Advising Panel Discussion. 10:00 - 11:30 AM; JG 104.
- Graduate Legal Studies/MESO: Farewell Friday Forum & LLM Awards Ceremony. 4:00 - 7:00 PM; JG Annex. Fully catered.

Saturday & Sunday
- Everybody’s working for the weekend.

Event information is taken from the Advisor, a Student Services e-publication. To have your event listed, follow the link below and submit the on-line form. These must be submitted by 10am on Thursday, the week BEFORE your event. http://www.law.columbia.edu/current_student/studentorgs_abc/studentorgevent/eventform.