President Ahmadinejad Arrives

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad will be one of the four heads of state who will be speaking on Monday, September 24, as part of the fifth annual Columbia University World Leaders Forum. He will be speaking from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. in Roone Arledge Auditorium, with at least one simulcast venue planned for those who could not get a ticket (simulcast locations unavailable at press time). 600 tickets for Arledge Auditorium were made available to Columbia students, but all were quickly claimed. Half the time will be reserved for Q&A, and the un-ticketed may submit questions ahead of time to worldleaders@columbia.edu with the subject line, “Question for the President of Iran.”

President Ahmadinejad’s visit has been sparking some controversy here at the law school. Many students are upset with the fact that the University is giving a platform to a man who, among other controversial actions, has made remarks in the past perceived as virulently anti-Semitic, such as calling the Holocaust a “myth” and saying that Israel “should be wiped off the map.” Students from throughout the University, calling themselves the “Columbia Coalition,” are organizing a rally on Low Plaza for Monday to give every student a chance to express his views on the whole situation. More information on the rally is available by contacting columbiacoalition@gmail.com.

The purpose of the World Leaders Forum, according to University President Lee Bollinger, is to “help realize Columbia University’s commitment to serving as a center for the discussion of the large economic, political, social, and cultural questions of our times that cut across traditional academic and national boundaries.” This University-wide initiative consists of “a year-long series of events where governmental and civic leaders, renowned intellectuals, and cultural icons from many nations join with Columbia faculty and students to discuss a wide range of global issues”.

The controversy has spread far beyond the campus at this point. Satellite vans from major news outlets have been on-campus gauging student reaction. New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn has called on Columbia to rescind the invitation, saying that “the idea of Ahmadinejad as an honored guest anywhere in our city is offensive to all New Yorkers.”

Official Senate Announcements

The Senate held an emergency meeting to address the Ahmadinejad matter on Thurs, 9/20. Minutes on p. 2.

The Senate standing committees have been finalized. The committees are: Student Issues & Academic Affairs; Student Life & Social Activities; Budget; Community Action; Recognition; Graduation; Housing & Facilities; and Computers, IT, & Library. Committee rosters will be available online by October 1st at http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lawschool/senate.

Approval of budget allocations to student groups will be voted on at the next Senate meeting this Tues, 9/25, in JGH 105. The meeting starts at 9:00 p.m. Senate meetings, including this one, are generally open to all members of the student body.

The Senate held an open forum this past Thursday at 12:30 p.m. in JGH 102 for students to ask questions or express concerns about the ’07 Grad Ball debt. No members of the general student body attended.

Lawyer Joke of the Week

Q: What’s the problem with lawyer jokes?
A: Lawyers don’t think they’re funny, and no one else thinks they’re jokes.

News & Notes

ID Card Needed to Access Campus on Monday. Access will be limited at various hours on 9/24 to Columbia affiliates with a valid University ID only. All faculty, staff and students must show their IDs to enter the campus.

Stanford Invite to CLS Public Interest Student Leaders. “Shaking the Foundations” is an annual student-organized conference that brings together over 250 law students, practitioners, and academics from around the country who share a commitment to using the law for positive social change. The theme of this year's conference, “Outside the Courtroom,” emphasizes everything from attorneys pursuing non-traditional career paths to communities who disproportionately lack access to the justice system. Travel scholarships are available. Visit http://shaking.stanford.edu for conference registration and details.

That '70s School. Anonymous sources have revealed to The CLS Black Letter that the renovation of the JGH lobby will be completed this week with the installation of lava lamps and a disco ball.

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

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**Your 2007-2008 Student Senate**

Please contact us with questions or concerns! We are working hard to represent you.

E-mail us at senate@law.columbia.edu, and visit us at http://www.columbia.edu/cu/law/senate/.

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**Executive Board**

Tope Yusuf, President  
Dan Y. Shin, Vice President  
Max Miller, Treasurer  
Gabriel Gershowitz, Secretary  
Kathrin Schwebinger, Parliamentarian

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**Senate Business**

The Senate held an emergency meeting on Thursday, September 20, 2007. Here are the minutes:

1. **Call to Order** at 7:05 pm.

2. **Tope’s Informational speech.** We are here because of email we received earlier today and also other student senators mentioned they heard from students requesting the senate do something about the upcoming speech by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the President of Iran. Some are wondering why the senate even has a role in this. Background: last year Jim Gilchrist of the Minutemen was invited to campus by student group. He was only able to speak for a short period of time before there was chaos. Students requested that senate take a stance. We had an open forum, members of the student body spoke and expressed their concerns about freedom of speech being taken too far. Senate did not issue a statement. Last year Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was invited and many people think the invitation was rescinded because of his views. This year a professor approached interim dean of SIPA about hosting the speaker. Dean approached president who said it would be okay only if it was for an academic purpose. The speaker agreed to use 50% of the time to speak and 50% to respond to questions by the audience read by interim dean. Met with student leaders across the campus and President Bollinger today. Bollinger explained that he doesn’t like to step in when students invite speakers because it has a chilling effect on students. Last year Mahmoud Ahmadinejad did not come to campus because of extremely short notice that the president received from SIPA and the security and academic concerns surrounding the event. The event will be simulcast and we will try to broadcast in the law school.

3. **Floor open to senators for 10 minute discussion.** Yael: we think that there should be freedom of ideas when its in an academic setting. Can we see if we agree on this and send out a statement to that effect? Devora: I don’t agree, but I don’t think we are in a position to send out a statement on behalf of the student body. Mikhaile: I think we are here to represent people, I had an inbox full of emails. Devora: maybe we should send out an email. Craig: email saying we recognize different viewpoints. Vote on sending positional statement fails. Floor open to more discussion of any alternative suggestions. Jason: were not going to take a position so maybe informational email send out. Sinrin: we already took a vote. Arjun: check with Schizer to make sure he’s not sending the same email. Kirstin: what’s wrong with one from him and us. Student body should know we talked about this. Jen: tell students we don’t have to speak on very political issue. Devora: sponsor event on freedom of speech. Variety of law school profs. Devora will plan.

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**Adjourn** at 7:40 pm.

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**Agenda**

I. **Call to Order.**  
II. **Roll Call.**  
III. **Officer Reports.**  
IV. **Committee Reports.**  
V. **Student Group Recognition.**  
VI. **Budget Allocations.**  
VII. **Announcements and Other Business.**  
VIII. **Adjourn.**
Get to Know Your CLS

Spotlight on Ellen Chapnick

Ellen Chapnick is Dean for Social Justice Initiatives.

Q. How long have you been at CLS? Do you live in the neighborhood?
A. I came to CLS to found the Center for Public Interest Law in January 1993 and became the Dean of Social Justice Initiatives in July 2003. I live in Riverdale, which is in the Bronx, but can be thought of as the upper upper westside. It is a great place that allows me to live in a house with a yard, and be close to the Law School and all that NYC has to offer.

Q. What brought you to Columbia?
A. I saw an ad in the National Law Journal on the shuttle from New York to D.C. By the time the plane landed I had decided that after a 20 year career as a public interest litigator, it was more important and rewarding to help develop the next generation of lawyers for social justice than to work on more cases. It was the right decision. Among other things, being around Columbia law students allows me to remain optimistic about the future.

Q. About what do students generally come to speak with you?
A. A wide variety of students, both J.D.s and LL.M.s, as well as graduates come to speak about issues ranging from their course selections to pro bono projects to their careers to social justice topics in the U.S. and Latin America. Some students want to discuss the National State Attorneys General Program, which is under SJI's auspices. I have heard that I am known for having a very useful "rollidex" for networking purposes. Students in my Externship on Pro Bono Practice and Design meet with me regularly about their concept papers for postgraduate pro bono projects. The best way to get on my calendar is to contact Jane Cooper at jcoope2@law.columbia.edu or 212-851-1929.

Q. What has been your favorite job, aside from your current one?
A. My first job after law school - I was an assistant general counsel at the United Mine Workers of America. I loved being part of a team that included, among others, organizers, health & safety experts, researchers, journalists and bankers, as well as lawyers, who all were using their expertise to help the coal miners rebuild their union and obtain decent working conditions. I had a lot of responsibility and autonomy but excellent, experienced lawyers were always available for advice. Working in Appalachia and other coal field areas, taught me about lives and parts of the U.S. that I never would have seen otherwise. It also was an opportunity to show the miners (all men in those days) that women were not limited to being wives, mothers, nuns and school teachers.

Q. What is your favorite restaurant in the area?
A. I like Max Soha Cafe for breakfast meetings, especially on days that I can sit outside.

Q. Name something most people don't know about you?
A. Gardening is a huge pleasure - lots of planning and work, but something new happens almost every day. It also keeps me humble about how much control I can have over anything.

Q. What's one thing every CLS student should do before they graduate?
A. Find something in the law that they are passionate about and build at least part of their lives around it.
This Week at CLS
September 24 - 30, 2007

Monday
- Koleinu: Lunch Lecture, “Opposites Attract: Legal Redundancy in the Succot and Yom Kippur Holidays,” Rabbi Shmuel Hain, Yeshiva University. 12:10 - 1:00 PM; JG 546.
- NLG/CRLS/ACS: Brennan Center Opportunities Presentation. 12:15 - 1:10 PM; JG 105.
- CPIIL Presents: Legal Outreach Debate Program Info Session. 12:20 - 1:00 PM; WJW 103.

Tuesday

Wednesday
- Public Interest Brown Bag: Chadbourne & Parke, The Door Legal Services Center fellowship. 12:20 - 1:00 PM; WJW L104.
- Community Oversight of the Police Project Training. 6:00 - 8:00 PM; JG 107.
- Battered Immigrant Women’s Project Information Session. 6:30 - 8:00 PM; JG 107.
- “After Innocence” Screening and Q&A with Writer/Producer Marc Simon. 7-9 PM; JG 101.
- SIPA: “Every American Insured,” Mike Leavitt, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services. 12:00 - 2:00 PM, 1501 International Affairs Building.

Thursday
- CRLS: Immigration Detention Pro Bono Project Training. 7:00 - 8:30 PM; JG 105. RSVP requested.

Friday & Saturday & Sunday
- All quiet on the weekend front.

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