George Rupp’s Presidency Marked by Substantial Progress for Entire University

During the presidency of George Rupp, Columbia made significant strides on every front. The University recruited top senior and junior scholars to further enhance its renowned faculty, launched cutting-edge education and research programs, increased its applications and selectivity, expanded both the University’s international dimensions and its links to New York City, improved student and faculty services, and revitalized its historic McKin, Mead, and White campus on Morningside Heights.

Undergraduate Education
Columbia College has become one of the most selective undergraduate institutions in the Ivy League and across the United States, accepting less than 12 percent of the 14,136 students who applied last year. Applications for admission to the Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science reached an all-time high, and the number of students applying to the School of General Studies has increased by 40 percent. Columbia College has set records for applications for eight consecutive years.

Graduate and Professional Education
There have been wide-ranging advances in Columbia’s Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS), which now serves more than 3,200 graduate students enrolled in 85 graduate programs. Since 1993, the number of master’s degrees programs has expanded, and the number of financial aid for students has increased. There have been significant programmatic advances in the professional schools as well. The College of Physicians and Surgeons introduced a medical informatics degree, and opened a major diabetes center and a new comprehensive center for cancer research and treatment. The Columbia Business School moved beyond a Wall Street focus to train entrepreneurs for both nearby Harlem and around the world. The School of Law established the Center for Law and Culture and opened a new high-tech electronic library. The School of the Arts’ film program has become widely recognized.

Faculty Quality
During the last six years, five Columbia faculty members have won Nobel Prizes: William Vickrey (Economics, 1980), Robert Mundell (Economics, 1999), Eric Kandel (Medicine, 2000) and Joseph Stiglitz (Economics, 2002). Overall, 63 individuals who have taught or studied at Columbia have won the Nobel Prize since it was first awarded in 1901, including 18 current or former faculty members who have won the prize for work done while at Columbia.

The DNA sequencing of Kaposi’s sarcoma, devising a luminous marker to study DNA in living cells, finding that estrogen can reduce Alzheimer’s risk in women, discovering that the Earth’s core is spinning faster than the planet itself, uncovering steps in human evolution linked directly to changes in climate, and participating in the development of MPEG-2, a data compression technology used in new computers, digital television and other devices.

Columbia has made major improvements in student services, including expanding the counseling center, creating a lower-cost tuition loan program, revitalizing the job placement service, and building a new student center (Alfred Lerner Hall) and a new residence hall.

Fund-raising
The Campaign for Columbia, the university’s record-setting ($2.8 billion, 10-year capital campaign, concluded on Dec. 31, 2002. This fund-raising effort helped to establish more than 200 named professorships, create new academic programs and multidisciplinary centers, and expand Columbia’s endowment to $4 billion.

Construction and Renovation
During the 1990s, the university implemented consecutive capital spending plans amounting to more than $1.5 billion over 10 years. Twenty-five buildings were either constructed or renovated. Projects included the new $28 million Audubon Research Building and a second $66 million research facility, the David Turpin Bion Park; the new $85 million Alfred Lerner Hall Student The Earth’s core is spinning faster than the planet itself, uncovering steps in human evolution linked directly to changes in climate, and participating in the development of MPEG-2, a data compression technology used in new computers, digital television and other devices.

Columbia helped develop the proposal for the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone (UMEZ), provided ongoing technical support to the UMEZ, and opened the first biophysical research and development park in New York City.

In an effort to strengthen the economic linkages between Columbia and surrounding neighborhoods, the university has embarked on a number of initiative to increase hiring, purchasing, and spending in the local area. It offers forgiving” loans to employees as an incentive for home-buying within the Empowerment Zone. The University also administers academic, professional, and service programs that assist thousands of Upper Manhattan residents, school children, and businesses.

International Programs
A number of new academic programs were created with institutions abroad. These include the Law School’s faculty exchange program with Tokyo University and its four-year dual-degree program with the University of Paris; the first American undergraduate program with the Free University of Berlin; and the Center for Environmental Research and Conservation’s programs with universities in Brazil, Indonesia and Belize. For Columbia College students, more than 150 study abroad opportunities are available in more than 50 countries, including China, Vietnam, Spain, Japan, Cameroon, Chile and the Czech Republic. The University offers internships in 40 languages and houses four dozen institutes and centers that study regions of the world, and other cultures. It has one of the largest populations of international students of any academic institution in the country and one of every four faculty was educated abroad.

History and Statistics
Columbia College was founded as King’s College in 1745 by royal charter of King George II of England. The institution was renamed Columbia College in 1784 and was officially designated as a university in 1896. Today, Columbia University, one of eight Ivy League universities, is comprised of 15 school and colleges: the School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, the School of the Arts, the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, the Business School, Columbia College, Continuing Education and Special Programs, the School of Dental and Oral Surgery, The Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science, the School of General Studies, the School of International and Public Affairs, the Graduate School of Journalism, the School of Law, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the School of Nursing, the Mailman School of Public Health, and the School of Social Work.

Libraries
Columbia’s libraries are among the nation’s ten largest academic library systems. The collections here. The collections comprise 7.3 million printed volumes, 5.4 million microform units, 28 million manuscripts and 500,000 rare books.