Mailman Study: Less Confidence on Terror

A new study by The National Center for Disaster Preparedness (NCDP) at Columbia’s Mailman School of Public Health and the Center for Health Affairs (CHA) is calling for new measures to address the decline in public confidence and readiness preparedness efforts. Three years after the terror attacks of September 11, confidence in the federal government’s ability to protect American has fallen to a cross-level — dropping to 20 percent from 62 percent in 2003 — according to a new study from the NCDP at Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health and CHA.

The two groups commissioned a survey in July 2004 from the Marist Institute for Public Opinion as a follow-up to their 2003 study to identify trends and public attitudes related to September 11 and the war on terrorism.

Irwin Redlener, director of NCDP and president of CHA, has proposed specific recommendations for improving overall preparedness and coordination. For more information, visit www.beautifoures.columbia.edu.

From the University Senate
2004-05 Agenda to Include ROTC and Columbia School

By Thomas Malincon

I n 1976 after the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) was barred from Columbia, the University Senate assented to what may have seemed like an idle prerogative at the time—responsibility for any future decision about whether to bring ROTC back. But this year nearly three decades later, a newly formed task force will take up a proposal to do just that and report its findings to the Senate.

The panel includes six students, five faculty members and one alumnus. Its co-chairs are Nathan Wallace, a co-chair of the student caucus, and James Applegate, professor of astronomy. Of the main dilemmas for the task force will be the conflict between Columbia’s antidiscrimination policies and military policies excluding gays or lesbians.

The School at Columbia University, which opened its doors last September to a roughly equal number of Columbia faculty, and students and children from the surrounding community in grades K – 4, has drawn the attention of more than one Senate committee, as well as the outside press. The External Relations Committee’s annual report last April predicted that the School’s current deficit of $9 million is likely to grow, noting discussions with Provost Bricklin about this issue as well as the School’s admissions criteria. The report acknowledged the provost’s request to keep underlying issues confidential for the time being, but anticipated an open discussion.

A Senate task force went to work last winter on a long-awaited review of the University’s current policy in regard to sexual misconduct, which the Senate adopted in February 2000. Part of the panel’s job was to assess an abiding crisis of the implementation of the current policy that Misimbu Byrd, director of the Office of Sexual Misconduct, Prevention, and Education, had delivered to the Senate last September, almost two years before her resignation. In April, a few months into its deliberations, the task force learned that Vice President for Student Services Lois Hogarty had already decided to reorganize Columbia’s sexual assault services under a single department with a single director.

In an interview at the Senate at the end of the year, task force chair Patricia Grieve said the group “lamented” that what was already informally said of such a decision, given the concerns we have heard over the last three months, some of which do not fit the report’s solution. Some members approve of this move, others believe it adversely limits the committee in terms of future recommendations, for reasons that are best left to further discussion by the task force and a final report.

Last year yet another Senate task force—on campus planning—created in April 2003, held numerous meetings with senior administrators and delivered three reports to the Senate, with one open hearing. The group expressed guarded approval for the model of a proposed Manhattanville development that Columbia presented to local communities; but the task force, co-chaired by Sen. Peter Maxwell (Ten.) and Sen. Sharyn O’Halloran (Ten., SIPA), focused mainly on academic planning, issues in its annual report, requesting the findings of the offices of the provost and the vice president for arts and sciences on recent surveys of academic needs. The report expresses a significant interest in planning efforts for the School of the Arts, the first Columbia-designed building in the presence in Manhattanville.

The Senate will hold its first plenary meeting at 11 a.m. on Sept. 24. Most Senate documents, past and present, are available on the web, at www.columbia.edu/senate.

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