Innovative Symposium

China's Economic Conference Draws Hundred

By Stephanie Berger

More than 100 staff and collaborators involved in programs developed by the International Center for AIDS Care and Treatment Programs (ICAP) at Columbia University recently met in Mozambique.

Mallin School Delivers HIV Care and Treatment

Columbia faculty, staff, students and supporters gather in Mozambique.

John Williamson, senior fellow, Institute for International Economics; Hu Angang, senior fellow at the Institute for International Economics; Jeffrey Sachs, the Director of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, examined a range of issues, from the environmental costs of economic development to the problems and progress of legal reform.

China’s economic growth has been at the center of the most significant stories of world economic development in the last 25 years, said Columbia President Lee C. Bollinger in his opening remarks. “In many ways, China’s success in moving toward greater competitiveness and prosperity has increased some of the economic and social challenges the country has been facing,” he said.

Conversely, all the panelists expressed concern about growing economic inequality and the possibility that the country’s poor could easily slide further below the poverty line. Disagreement arose over the issue of China’spegged currency, with Srigitz supporting current government policies. Srigitz, noting that what has “happened” in China in the last 25 years “has been quite impressive,” praised the government’s macroeconomic agenda for broad stability, and said that avoiding an overvalued exchange rate has contributed to the country’s success.

Bhagwati delivered the keynote address at the conference, focusing on China’s rise in the world economy. Our hope was that by bringing together leading authorities on sustainable development, energy conservation, water management and public health and putting them in the same room as experts on legal reform, policy, business and capital markets, we could create a new kind of conversation about China, its development trajectory and its domestic and international impact,” said Madeline Zehf, former director of WEAI and professor of Modern Chinese History.

One of the oldest Chinese studies programs in the country and noted for the depth and breadth of its China-related programs in the arts and sciences, as well as in the response of its professional schools to the growing importance of China in the world. The conference was made possible by an extraordinary collaboration across the University, with sessions sponsored by the WEAI, the Graduate School of Public Health, and the School of International and Public Affairs and the Business School.

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Panelists in the first session, Srigitz, professor of Economics at the University for the World, Nicholas Lardy, senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, Hu Angang, professor at Tsinghua University and Carl Bildt, adjunct professor of Economics at the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, (WEAI), debated whether the Chinese model would be a helpful model or cautionary tale. All agreed that moves toward greater competition and openness were two of the most critical factors in the country’s recent economic achievements.

At the meeting, President Lee C. Bollinger, and some faculty senators expressed reservations about the impact of the senate’s new procedures on the new provost appointment.

The research officers’ bid for membership on four committees—Strategic Planning and Executive Review, Alumni Relations and Rules—had been made by sending a researcher to their committees and convinced enough faculty colleagues to deplore the last two resolutions of the 59 affirmative votes needed for a three-fifths majority of all 98 incumbent senators, with 10 of 16 senators present voting on education and fifteen not voting on Executive.

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By Thomas Matteson

The student Senate voted today to approve the University-wide procedure for appealing student classroom grievances that would include students on an advisory review panel.

In other business, the legislature, the senate, and the executive discussed the university’s role in reviewing and enhancing national HIV care programs.

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More than 25,000 individuals in six African countries and Thailand now have access to lifelong treatments. With a unique focus on the needs of HIV-infected mothers, ICAP’s programs are tackling one of the singular features of the global HIV epidemic: the disproportionate impact on women. And the initiative’s efforts toward treating families rather than individuals has the potential to substantially impact not only the programs, but also the larger public health environment.

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