



COLUMBIAESC

ENGINEERING STUDENT COUNCIL

In Engineering Student Council, 29 January 2017
Authored and Introduced in ESC by Sidney Perkins

A Resolution on the Community Dissonance between Student Leaders and Administrators, which Contributes to a Culture of Stress on Columbia's Campus

WHEREAS Columbia struggles with one of the worst stress cultures among our peer institutions;¹

WHEREAS President Bollinger has gone on public record saying that Columbia has inadequate and subpar community engagement;²

ACKNOWLEDGING that students are incredibly engaged and desire opportunities to help build community, but are continuously ignored by administrators, their ideas denied by Columbia's administrative bureaucracy;

WHEREAS A series of tragedies has recently struck Columbia and has accentuated the need for a war on stress culture on campus and the institution of long-term initiatives for increased student wellness as well as short term projects to be followed through in the next few months;³

ACKNOWLEDGING that the suggestions in this resolution, though necessary, may not fully suffice for the curbing of stress culture on campus and that our process will be a continued effort;

WHEREAS the Engineering Student Council has received pushback on many initiatives in the past semester aimed at reducing student stresses including but not limited to:

1. Guaranteeing broader lawn hours
2. Putting Legos in Carleton Commons and creating an environment to destress there
3. Putting a printer in Carleton Commons
4. Ensuring that Fire Alarms will not be tested during final exams
5. Creating an open-source advising platform to interface students with other students, departmental advisors, CCE, and CSA advisors
6. Curtailing smoking policy non-compliance in areas affecting the wellbeing of students with asthma and predispositions to lung cancer

¹<http://features.columbiaspectator.com/news/2016/04/14/are-columbia-students-the-most-stressed-in-the-ivy-league/>

²<http://columbiaspectator.com/news/2016/10/11/bollinger-discusses-stress-culture-lack-community-undergraduate-fireside-chat>

³ <http://thetab.com/us/columbia/2017/01/24/columbia-university-death-4054/amp>

7. Ensuring that course evaluations will remain open through final exams
8. Getting more mechanical, chemical, and biomedical engineering firms on campus through the career center
9. Requesting extensions for students affected negatively by the results of the US Presidential Election

ACKNOWLEDGING that although many members of the administration vocalized in the years 2014 - 2016 their distaste for ESC and CCSC resolutions and much prefer open communication to affect change on Columbia's campus, a resolution has been deemed necessary given the extent to which such open communication has failed;

ACKNOWLEDGING that many of the aforementioned initiatives have received pushback without a thorough explanation of why they have been rejected;

ACKNOWLEDGING that some of the pushback (including smoking policy enforcement) has been in direct conflict with Columbia University-wide policy and with New York City Law;

ACKNOWLEDGING that some of the pushback (including fire alarm testing) constituted direct violations of previously established working understandings between the undergraduate student councils and administrators in the years 2014 - 2016.

ACKNOWLEDGING that there is a lack of student-facing administrators who seem able and willing to help student representatives accomplish their goals;

ACKNOWLEDGING that administrators have a responsibility for the wellness of all members of the community, including students;

And **ACKNOWLEDGING** that administrators have a responsibility to listen and openly communicate with the student body, and especially elected representatives of that student body;

And **WHEREAS** the Engineering Student Council has had a limited influence on the actions and behaviours of the administration but nevertheless has a duty to set an example for other councils, for student groups, and for administrators;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that, though we fully expect the future support of administrators toward the stemming of student stresses, the Engineering Student Council will be proactive about addressing student stress by allocating \$100 from the Diversity & Inclusion Fund for the planning of a wellness day, where resources will be available for students to destress and broad, qualitative student feedback will be solicited on substantive changes that the administration can make to reduce student stress, anxiety, anomie, and depression;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Engineering Student Council calls upon administrators to respect the proposals and suggestions of all students, including elected representatives of the student body. This must occur with transparency in the decision-making process, not blithe rejection. Specifically, the Engineering Student Council requires that all rejected proposals be accompanied by a formal response by the administration. Should members of the administration fail to provide such a statement of rejection, the Engineering Student Council will publish our own on our website. Written statements will be composed by the Engineering Student Council for the above enumerated rejected proposals;

Finally, **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Engineering Student Council will produce a series of suggestions to the Student Affairs Committee of the University Senate with the hopes that their institution has more political capital than our own and more access to administrators with the capacity to create change for the wellness of our community.