

Office of University Life 2016 - 2017 Year in Review

University as Community

The Office of University Life works with all schools at Columbia - bringing together students, faculty and staff on issues, initiatives and ideas so that all in our University community can thrive. Here's a look at our 2016-2017 academic year.



Summer and New Student Orientations 2016

Love and Light for Orlando

In the wake of a mass shooting at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, the Office of University Life organized a university-wide gathering and vigil on Low Plaza. Victims' names were read, counselors were on site to provide support, and as the sun set, the front of Low Library was lit in rainbow colors to show support for the LGBTQ+ community.

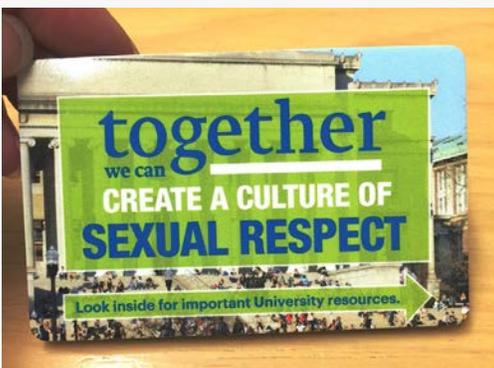
"When so many now feel vulnerable it is ever more important that we come together as a University community... to pursue knowledge and learning at the highest level with a shared interest in achieving understanding across our differences, valuing justice and peace in the world."

- Suzanne Goldberg, Executive Vice President for University Life

June 14, 2016

"Welcome to Columbia" Pre-arrival Tutorials

University Life provided every student new to Columbia with an introduction to University community values, resources, and policies, including focus on sexual respect and gender-based misconduct prevention, and mental health and wellness.



Sexual Respect Website Redesign

This widely admired site is the University's go-to place for help, prevention, and information about Columbia's gender-based misconduct policy and resources. All incoming students also receive new pocket-sized resource and consent 101 cards.

Nearly 30,000 students have visited sexualrespect.columbia.edu since its redesign.

University Life App

A mobile guide to all things Columbia, including emergency resources, student discounts, events and more, gives students an easy way to navigate campus life.

Office of University Life 2016 - 2017 Year in Review

Fall Semester 2016

2016 Sexual Respect & Community Citizenship Initiative

This University-wide initiative engages all new students in a campus climate that reinforces sexual respect and rejects sexual harassment, sexual assault and other forms of gender-based misconduct. More than 10,000 students participated through workshops, online activities and independent projects.

In a survey of 3,000 students who took the Sexual Respect and Community Citizenship Initiative, 88% expressed feeling satisfied or extremely satisfied with the overall program.



Lenape Plaque Dedication

On Oct. 10, 2016 - Indigenous Peoples' Day - the University unveiled a plaque in honor of the Lenape People who lived in the area where Columbia campuses stand today. The ceremony began with traditional Native American singing and prayer, and included comments from President Bollinger, EVP Goldberg and student leaders of the Native American Council.

Yoga Tuesdays

University Life offered yoga at dusk on the lawns in front of Butler Library, inside Low Library and in Dodge Gym, creating more opportunities for students from around the university to be together.



StorySpace @ Columbia: IDENTITY and BELONGING

Students from across Columbia shared powerful stories about overcoming fear, parental expectations, physical abuse and learning disabilities - and of finding themselves at Columbia - in intimate evenings (both fall and spring) for storytellers, listeners and supporters.

Presidential Election

November 2016 marked for many students the first U.S. presidential election in which they voted. The Office of University Life created several spaces for conversation, learning and reflection for students, faculty and staff across Columbia.

*Oct. 5 - Awakening Our Democracy: One Nation Under Politics
Nov. 9 - Community Reflection and Conversation
Nov. 11 - Campus Conversation with Faculty
Nov. 16 - Awakening Our Democracy: Feminism, Media and the State of the Union
Nov. 29 - Forum on Free Speech in our Community*

Office of University Life

2016 - 2017 Year in Review

Spring Semester 2017

U.S. Presidential Inauguration and Discussion with Deans

University Life provided live coverage of the presidential inauguration and address followed by discussion with deans of Journalism; Law; Architecture, Planning and Preservation; and of the Faculties of Health Sciences and Medicine.

Forum on Immigration

Within days of President Trump's first immigration executive order, University Life convened a campus conversation featuring legal scholars, Global Centers leadership and the director of the International Students and Scholars Office to speak about legal and political issues as well as important resources for Columbia community members affected by the travel ban.



Film Screening of "13TH"

University Life's Community Citizenship film series featured the Oscar-nominated documentary "13TH," about mass incarceration in the U.S., slavery and racism, and a post-screening, all-star panel of Columbia faculty commentators.

"I loved the screening of '13TH' and felt it was applicable and timely after the election. It was great to hear the various speakers, as well, who were all experts in their fields."

- Madeleine M., Columbia College '17

Gender-Neutral Restrooms / Affirming Non-Discrimination at Columbia

Shortly after the U.S. Department of Education withdrew legal protections for transgender students, University Life worked with Columbia University Facilities and Operations to post signs on every University restroom reiterating Columbia's own policy -- that all on our campus should use whichever restroom is most consistent with their gender identity.

"Go @Columbia! So happy to see universities standing up for equality!"

- Twitter



Mental Health and Wellness

In mid-April, University Life debuted "Wellness Days @ Columbia" with student groups and partner offices across the University, inviting students to come together to raise awareness of mental health, support each other, relax and unwind. Sixteen student organizations received University Life grants to host their own events during a week that also featured a "sold-out" talk on managing anxiety, online tutorials on how to help a friend, and all-afternoon study breaks on the Morningside and Medical Center campuses.

Based on students' enthusiastic response, we anticipate offering more Wellness Days in the next academic year as part of an ongoing focus on mental health, wellness and community citizenship.

Office of University Life 2016 - 2017 Year in Review

Ongoing

AWAKENING OUR DEMOCRACY

In addition to tackling election issues, this popular University Life lunchtime conversation series on justice, disparities and other pressing issues of our time highlighted global populism, immigration and national security, and mental health access.

"I like that the University was engaged with the world in real time and made efforts to involve the student body."

- David J., School of General Studies '17



DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and Undocumented Students Working Group

Associate Vice President for Student Life Ixchel Rosal works with students, faculty and staff from across the University to identify and develop initiatives to support DACA and undocumented students. Columbia now offers pro bono legal assistance and personalized counseling for DACA and undocumented students as well as community education.

Race, Ethnicity and Inclusion Task Force

Approximately 100 students from both Morningside and CUMC, along with staff and faculty, have contributed their ideas and participated in Task Force working groups to develop plans for creating more inclusive classrooms, raising awareness of inclusion and belonging on campus, and facilitating conversations about race, ethnicity and inclusion.

Gender-Based Misconduct Prevention Task Force

In its second year, this Task Force continues to work on building a University climate free from gender-based misconduct, including sexual violence. Central to this is Columbia's Sexual Respect and Community Citizenship Initiative; the Task Force focuses on evaluation, peer leadership, and multi-year engagement.

Community Messages

University Life provides students across Columbia's 16 schools with information and timely response to important issues through university-wide email, the University Life blog and social media, columns and interviews in the Columbia Spectator, and in-school channels.

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