

# UNIVERSITY LIFE

2024-2025

Annual Report





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As **University Life** marks its tenth year, this annual report reflects on a period of transition, renewal, and opportunity. Since its founding in 2015, University Life has grown into a University-wide hub dedicated to enhancing the student experience through programming, events, support, and connection.

The 2024–25 academic year was my first with University Life—a year of listening, learning, and helping plan for the future. Our teams navigated tremendous change with resilience and care, supporting students across schools and campuses while building stronger collaboration within the division. This intentional reflection has positioned University Life to move forward with clarity and purpose, grounded in our commitment to connection, integrity, respect, service, and growth.

As we enter our next decade, we are guided by a refreshed mission and vision centered on cultivating an inclusive community where every Columbia student can grow, connect, and thrive. These principles shape our work as we strengthen campus-wide support, deepen relationships, and continue to create spaces for students to belong and contribute meaningfully to the University.

This report highlights the collective impact of University Life’s departments, supporting teams, and student partners. Together, they embody our shared purpose

and demonstrate the many ways University Life continues to help students flourish at Columbia and beyond.

Thank you for your partnership and for your continued commitment to the success and wellbeing of Columbia students.

Be well,

**Melanie J. Bernitz**, MD, MPH

*Executive Vice President for University Life and Wellbeing*

*Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine (in the Center for Family and Community Medicine)*



# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE\*



\*Organizational structure as of the 2024-25 academic year



# STUDENT LIFE

The 2024–2025 academic year served as an important transitional period for the Student Life team. The team had the opportunity to reflect on successes — like increased participation and strong student satisfaction — while gathering insights to better support staff capacity, reimagine traditional programs for renewed student engagement, and reinforce sustainable operations.

This year demonstrated growth, experimentation, and reflection across Student Life programs. Through existing initiatives and a suite of engagement offerings, Student Life continued pursuing its mission to foster belonging, personal development, and connection across Columbia’s 17 schools.

## 15K

New and first-year students reached through pre-orientation tutorials

## 2.5K

Students attended Welcome Week activities

## 2K

Students reached through Resource Fairs

*“The whole vibe was sensational. Being from Miami, I’ve been homesick, and going to this event took me right back home for the hour I was there. ...Whoever organized this event: 10/10.”*

**-Café con Fotos attendee**

# STUDENT LIFE

Student Life programming and initiatives are described in greater detail in subsequent sections of this report and include:

- [The Community Citizenship Initiative \(CCI\)](#)
- [The Graduate Initiative for Inclusion and Engagement](#)
- [University Life Ambassadors](#)
- [University Life Events Council](#)
- [Welcome Home Columbia](#)

## Highlights from the 2024–2025 academic year include:

- Introduction of four large-scale events in collaboration with Office of the President, including: Café con Fotos: A Bad Bunny Brunch, Fun and Games on the Lawn, Painting with Strangers, and Retro Roller Rink
- An extensive overhaul of the Pre-Orientation tutorial, launching in July 2025
- Painting with Strangers received a 5/5 rating by 89% of attendees
- 91% of Café Con Fotos: A Bad Bunny Brunch participants said the event “strengthened their sense of belonging”

## Looking forward:

- Use a curriculum-based approach in program development
- Center the student voice and purposeful programming through data-informed decisions and thoughtful redesigns
- Further development of collaborations with campus partners from across the University



# RELIGIOUS LIFE



Religious Life has four full-time staff members and 20+ affiliated clergy members that work to meet the religious and spiritual needs of Columbia's diverse communities. This team supports all students, faculty, and staff, across all schools and on all campuses.

 COLUMBIA | RELIGIOUS LIFE

## 25+

Weekly programs held among Religious Life Advisers and the Office of Religious Life.

## 1,500+

Students engaged in weekly religious services across various faith traditions

# RELIGIOUS LIFE

## 2024-2025 Highlights

- Largest attendance at interfaith Baccalaureate Ceremony since the pandemic (700+)
- Launched a new staff engagement program, focusing on spiritual wellbeing and finding meaning at work

*"Earl [Hall] is a space rich with friendship, storytelling, and faith"*

– Ahmed Mahmud, SEAS'25



# COMMUNITY IMPACT



Community Impact (CI) strives to advance the public good by engaging Columbia University and Barnard College students, along with faculty, administrators, and community members, in high-quality service in partnership with community organizations that meet critical community needs, develop student leadership, connect service and learning, and foster an environment of mutual respect in the surrounding neighborhoods. Our goal is to design innovative programs that harness student talent and enthusiasm for changemaking, influencing their lifelong view of the importance of service in our society.

For almost 45 years, CI has served thousands of community members through more than 20 programs in the areas of Adult Education and Workforce Development, Emergency Services, Health Access, and Youth Achievement.

**30,000**

People were served through the Ford Hall Food Pantry in 2024

**850**

Columbia student volunteers and student workers served with Community Impact this academic year.

**774**

Community members participated in adult education programs focused on attaining their GED or acquiring English skills

# COMMUNITY IMPACT

## 2024-2025 Highlights

This year, Community Impact had 11 active youth achievement programs, six active health & emergency food programs, and five active adult education programs. Community Impact also:

- Added three new student groups
- Served over 800 young people through its youth achievement programs
- Launched a new speaker series, open to the entire campus community, called Impact (ED)
- Served 30,000 people in the food pantry and nearly 15,000 in the Community Lunch programs
- Provided support to recently arrived immigrants and refugees who now call New York home



# CSSI: THE CENTER FOR STUDENT SUCCESS AND INTERVENTION

The Center for Student Success & Intervention (CSSI) delivers a comprehensive, 360° model that integrates Student Conduct, Case Management & Student Support, and Operations/Training. CSSI partners across all Columbia schools to triage referrals, provide clear process guidance, and remove barriers to persistence through basic-needs supports and educational, developmentally focused interventions. Grounded in evidence-based practice and its core values of student success, integrity & accountability, and community & engagement, CSSI upholds community standards while advancing equitable student outcomes.

803

Total cases resolved by  
CSSI in 2024–2025

4.9K

Students reached through  
presentations, tabling  
events, workshops, and  
office hours

3.5K

Food Pantry  
disbursements

*"CSSI worked in lockstep with our office. Responsive, clear, and consistently student-centered throughout the process."*

– Columbia staff member





## Highlights from the 2024–2025 academic year include:

- Unified intake & triage streamlined reporting, improved timeliness, and clarified roles for students, faculty, and staff.
- Educational, developmentally focused outcomes (e.g., Conditional Disciplinary Probation) reinforced learning and accountability.
- Targeted trainings expanded on academic integrity/AI, shared adjudication practices, and partner-facing hearing preparation.
- Student Navigator program (with returning student leaders) increased visibility and match rates, enhancing student experience in conduct processes.
- Expanded basic needs support with more supportive measures, growth of the Food Pantry, and a new fresh produce pilot focused on dignity and low-barrier access.
- Relaunched Student Conduct Liaison Program to ensure school-specific coordination and policy consistency.

## Looking Forward:

- Standardize documentation and communications to further strengthen operational continuity, cross-coverage, and onboarding.
- Expand early intervention and basic ,needs programming (housing/financial preparedness, public benefits) and scale Return to Columbia re-entry.
- Broaden education for community standards: co-hearing officer training; collaborate with Residential Life, Public Safety, and CTL during high-risk periods.
- Implement the Student Group Accountability Review Board (SGARB) with clear procedures, training, and stakeholder feedback loops
- Enhance assessment and data tools to track outcomes, close equity gaps, and inform continuous improvement.
- Continuously pushing forward in campus-wide initiatives, strategies, and programming, while staying data-centered.

# ADMINISTRATION & OPERATIONS

## Teams and Data Points

The Administration & Operations team provides comprehensive operational, financial, event management, and communications support to University Life staff, students, and institutional partners.

Through intentional relationship-building, creative and collaborative problem-solving, and informed policy guidance, the team strengthens the division's capacity to serve the University community effectively. This support enables departments and individual staff members to focus their efforts on their core work of providing essential resources for the success and well-being of our students and community.

In addition to its operational functions, the Administration & Operations team cultivates a sense of shared purpose across University Life by coordinating team-building experiences, strategic planning retreats, and access to professional development opportunities.

### Facilities

The Facilities team ensures that University Life's physical spaces are welcoming, safe, and well-maintained. By coordinating repairs, managing vendor and campus partner relationships, and supporting day-to-day space needs, the team helps create environments where students and staff can learn, gather, and thrive.

### Events

The Events team ensures that campus spaces serve as welcoming and inclusive environments for student life, community gatherings, and institutional traditions. Responsible for the management and scheduling of Earl Hall and St. Paul's Chapel, the team plays a key role in supporting vibrant programming across the University.

In 2024–2025, the Events team managed:

- 4,108 total internal and external event inquiries
- 20 wedding ceremonies and rehearsals

### Communications

The Communications team amplifies University Life's mission by connecting students to the people, programs, and values that shape the Columbia experience. The team drives engagement in University Life events and initiatives. In 2024–2025, the team had significant outreach to the University community with over 35,000 students receiving weekly newsletters from University Life and more than 250,000 website views.

### Finance

The Finance team oversees the overall fiscal health of University Life. Through careful budget management, transaction processing, and compliance oversight,

# ADMINISTRATION & OPERATIONS

## Teams and Data Points

### Finance (cont.)

the team supports responsible stewardship of resources across the division.

#### In FY25, the team processed:

- **6164** total transactions in FY25
- **5420** administrative transactions
- **744** student group transactions

### Human Resources (HR)

The Human Resources team fosters a collaborative and supportive divisional culture. By planning gatherings, recognition initiatives, and shared conversations about our mission and values, HR encourages connection and belonging among staff.

#### Highlights included:

- A Winter Gathering focused on team-building and connection
- Participation in Denim Day with Sexual Violence Response to support survivors of sexual assault
- A Commencement Pizza Lunch honoring staff volunteers and graduates
- A Divisional Gathering to reimagine University Life's mission, vision, and values

### Operations

The Operations team ensures that systems, processes, and everyday logistics run smoothly across the division. Their work enables staff to focus on program delivery and student support, knowing that administrative foundations are strong and reliable.

### Special Projects

The Special Projects team leads cross-divisional initiatives that require strategic coordination, research, and collaboration to advance University Life priorities.

### LENS Survey

One of the year's signature initiatives was the **2024 Lived Experiences & Needs of Students (LENS) Survey**, conducted in partnership with Columbia Health and Student Health on Haven. The survey provided a comprehensive look at student well-being, campus experiences, and evolving needs. Institutional- and school-level findings were shared with University leadership and shared publicly via the LENS survey website.

**8,512 students** participated, representing a **24% response** rate across all Columbia schools, including JTS, UTS, and Teachers College.

# STUDENT AFFAIRS



Established in Spring 2025, the Student Affairs team provides vital support for student-led activities across the University. The team leads University-wide efforts related to student engagement, including oversight of Interschool Governing Board (IGB)-recognized groups, strategic initiatives, crisis management, freedom of expression, and student activism.

The Student Affairs unit works to strengthen student organization support, education, and policy awareness. In collaboration with the Rules Administrator and the Office of Rules Administration (ORA), the team provides administrative oversight. It also continues to expand resources and professional development opportunities for more than 900 student affairs staff who are members of Columbia's Student Affairs Network (SAN).

Student Affairs also partners closely with a wide range of campus partners and offices, including University and student leadership, the University Senate and Student Affairs Committee (SAC), Deans of Students, the University Title IX Coordinator, Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action (OIE), Columbia University Facilities & Operations; Columbia Dining; Columbia University Public Safety; Student Financial Services; Columbia University Information Technology (CUIT), Academic Affairs, Counseling and Psychological Services, Columbia Health, the Ombuds Office, as well as faculty, staff, and students across the University.



## 10

New IGB clubs  
established

## 20+

Student, staff, and faculty  
group partnerships across  
the University

# WELCOMING NEW/RETURNING STUDENTS & CONNECTING TO VALUES

## The First Year Experience

University Life reached over 15,000 first-year students before they began their Columbia experience through pre-orientation tutorials: Welcome to Columbia and Sexual Assault Prevention. These tutorials introduce students to University Life's values and highlight key resources and opportunities for engagement across the University.

This work continues through the Community Citizenship Initiative (CCI), a series of workshops, resources, events, and online learning opportunities that asks students to take an active role in creating an inclusive campus culture, as they deepen their understanding of Columbia's core values. The Initiative is required of all new students and has two components: sexual respect and inclusion & belonging. Returning students are always welcome to participate.

University Life engaged with over 2,000 students through participation in numerous resource and club fairs during Fall and Spring orientations across Columbia's campuses. The team also hosted the second annual University Life Resource Fair on Butler Plaza, providing students the opportunity to connect with University resources and IGB student groups. At school orientations, University Life also presented opportunities and resources available to students across the University.

## Welcome Week

In 2024-2025, Welcome Home Columbia was reintroduced as Welcome Week, a series of events held during the first two weeks of each semester, and supports new and returning students alike in creating a sense of belonging. This year, Welcome Week was attended by over 2,500 students from across the University, with an increase in participation from schools with low attendance in previous years. The series included a variety of events such as LowLapalooza: Silent Disco, Speed Friending, Passport to Columbia, Dinner with Strangers, and workshops in collaboration with University partners.



# STUDENT PARTNERSHIPS

## The Graduate Initiative for Inclusion and Engagement

The Graduate Initiative for Inclusion and Engagement demonstrates our commitment to supporting the success of all graduate and professional school students. This initiative was created with the specific needs of students from backgrounds who have historically faced barriers to higher education, ensuring they have the resources and opportunities needed to thrive. Through events such as Community Connections, Success Workshops, Graduate Hangouts, and reimagined Faculty Roundtables, the Initiative aims to support students as they transition to Columbia and connect with one another, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community. This year, the Initiative partnered with offices and departments across the University to host 17 events with more than 1,400 students participating.

*"Loved this event, it really made me feel like I have a community here at Columbia, and I felt an extreme sense of belonging after attending."*

**-Building a Welcoming Network event attendee**

## Campus Conversations

Campus Conversations is a dialogue-based program designed to bring students together across differences. Through these open conversations, undergraduate and graduate students have the opportunity to build meaningful connections with peers, develop deep critical listening skills, practice navigating challenging conversations, and explore issues of identity and community at Columbia.



# STUDENT PARTNERSHIPS



## Student Leadership Engagement Initiative (SLEI)

Launched in summer 2024, the Student Leadership Engagement Initiative (SLEI) brought together more than 70 student leaders from across all Columbia schools and campuses to learn from one another, exchange perspectives, and strengthen collaboration. Through seven fall sessions, a winter retreat, and ongoing spring programming, participants engaged with University leadership, developed leadership skills, and helped foster greater connection, inclusion, and shared purpose within the Columbia community.

## Campus Collaborative Fund

The Campus Collaborative Fund (CCF) provided grants of up to \$1,500 to support student-led projects and events that fostered dialogue, creativity, and connection across Columbia's diverse community. Through both local and collective awards, CCF funded initiatives ranging from interdisciplinary panels and multimedia projects to community-building events and cross-campus collaborations, amplifying student voices and strengthening Columbia's spirit of inquiry and inclusion.

*"When I'm walking by, I don't always stop and watch, but it's nice to see something going on."*

**-Zak Remy, CC'25, on Vibes on College Walk,  
a CCF-funded event**

# STUDENT PARTNERSHIPS

## Community Impact Student Executive Board

The Student Executive Board oversees Community Impact's budget allocation from Funding at Columbia University F@CU, along with volunteer recruitment, marketing, communications, and program evaluation. Meeting biweekly, the board provides leadership for more than 850 student volunteers. This year, the Resource Development Committee launched Impact(ED), a new capacity-building workshop series beginning with a panel on innovation in New York and California public schools. The Partnerships Committee also introduced a new application and onboarding process for student organizations, welcoming three new public health-focused groups to the Community Impact network.

## Food Pantry Student Executive Board

During the 2024–2025 academic year, the Food Pantry at Columbia benefited from the steady leadership of returning student board members, whose continuity strengthened operations, volunteer engagement, and outreach to students experiencing food insecurity. In spring, five new board members joined following the graduation of several long-serving leaders. A structured onboarding process ensured a smooth transition, preserving institutional knowledge while welcoming new ideas. Through these efforts, student leaders continue to advance the Food Pantry's mission as a reliable, student-centered resource that fosters compassion and care across the Columbia community.



# STUDENT PARTNERSHIPS

## Interschool Governing Board (IGB)

The Interschool Governing Board (IGB), established by the Student Affairs Committee of the University Senate, supports student organizations whose missions and membership span multiple Columbia schools. As part of the University's student government, the IGB recognizes and funds interdisciplinary groups not covered by other governing boards, including the Activities Board at Columbia and the Student Governing Board. In 2024-2025, the IGB continued to foster cross-school collaboration, oversee funding allocation, and set consistent policies that strengthen connection and engagement across Columbia's diverse academic communities.



## CSSI Student Navigators

Student Navigators are trained peer leaders from across Columbia who partner with CSSI to provide guidance and support throughout the student conduct process. The team included seven returning members who completed a two-day training on University policies, de-escalation, and referral procedures. During the 2024-2025 academic year, 159 students requested Navigator support, with nearly 60% successfully matched. These interactions demonstrate the program's growing visibility and the essential role Navigators play in making the conduct process more accessible, supportive, and student-centered.



# MORE UNIVERSITY LIFE PROGRAMS, SERVICES, AND RESOURCES

## Awakening Our Democracy

To encourage conversation about justice issues at the forefront of the University's and the nation's consciousness, this series of events fosters dialogue through discussions with thought leaders, advocates, journalists, and scholars. This year focused on the interactions between elections and artificial intelligence.

## Bias Response

As part of our efforts to create the most inclusive community possible, University Life works to address bias incidents within the Columbia community. It minimizes the potential for future occurrences by providing those involved with opportunities to engage in education, advocacy, and conversation.

## Presidential Advisory Committee on Sexual Assault (PACSA)

The Presidential Advisory Committee on Sexual Assault advises the University President on issues related to the prevention of and response to gender-based misconduct, including sexual assault. The Committee works to continually evaluate policies and procedures, solicit feedback from the Columbia community, and partner with experts across the University with the goal of eliminating sexual assault and other forms of gender-based misconduct from our community.

# MORE UNIVERSITY LIFE PROGRAMS, SERVICES, AND RESOURCES



## Student Affairs Network (SAN)

The Student Affairs Network brings together student-facing staff from across the University, providing ongoing support and professional development to a community of over 900 student-facing staff across Columbia's 17 schools, 23 central units, and its affiliate schools. The Network builds community among student affairs professionals and promotes equity, inclusion, and well-being in the workplace.

## University Delegates

Appointed by the President and/or the Rules Administrator, University Delegates play a vital role in sustaining Columbia's tradition of open inquiry and freedom of expression. Trained annually by University Life, Delegates promote open dialogue while helping to maintain a safe and respectful campus environment. This year, Delegates supported 460 events, including 108 protests and demonstrations.

## Deans of Students Meetings

University Life convenes regular Deans of Students (DoS) meetings to share key University updates, coordinate on policy implementation, and address operational questions that impact students. Bringing the DoS and student-facing staff from across the schools together ensures alignment, strengthens communication, and provides timely support on emerging issues. These meetings also serve as a core cross-campus forum for collaboration and problem-solving related to the student experience across the University.

# LOOKING FORWARD: OUR NEW MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

University Life enters the next 10 years with a refreshed [mission](#), [vision](#), and [values](#) developed through an iterative process involving all staff members within the division.



## Mission

University Life supports all Columbia students by cultivating an inclusive community. We build relationships across schools, strengthen campus-wide support, and help students grow, connect, and thrive.

## Vision

Every Columbia student experiences a deep sense of belonging and community, empowering them to have a meaningful impact at the University through their relationships, contributions, and engagement.



# LOOKING FORWARD: OUR NEW MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

In 2025–2026, [University Life](#) will work to bring our new mission and vision to life through increased partnership across the division and across the University as a whole. By reimagining the current slate of events,



## Values

### Connection

Our culture is built on meaningful relationships — with students, colleagues, and campus partners. We value collaboration, open communication, and the belief that students thrive when they feel engaged and supported.

### Integrity

We believe in honesty, consistency, and a strong sense of responsibility. In our daily work, we lead with principle, follow through on commitments, and hold ourselves accountable to the Columbia community.

### Respect

We foster a culture where all individuals are acknowledged and treated with dignity. We listen actively, engage thoughtfully across differing perspectives, and support open dialogue that strengthens our community.

### Service

We are energized by helping others, forming community partnerships, and supporting students as they turn their values into meaningful action.

### Learning & Growth

We affirm that learning is ongoing — for students and for ourselves. We embrace curiosity, reflection, and challenge as essential parts of our work.



THE COUNCIL  
PRESENTS  
LOW-LAPALOGZA: SILENT DISCO  
**COLLECT  
1 COOKIE**  
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