



General Session Minutes

March 27, 2023 | HM 150 | 7:00pm

OPEN:

7:00 PM - Open (PARLIAMENTARIAN)

Approval of Minutes from last session [3.6.2023](#)

Motion to approve, motion seconded

Approval of Agenda for today's session [3.27.2023](#)

Motion to approve, motion seconded

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Legislation First Reading

- a. First Reading [President and Vice President Term of Office](#) Himaja Boinapalli (5 Minutes)

- b. Q and A (10 Minutes)

- i. **President Bakhoya:** Please raise your hand if you have a question, and we will answer questions in the order they are received.
- ii. **Senator Boinapalli:** Any question, please do ask.
- iii. **President Bakhoya:** Have you spoken to any presidents or Vice Presidents about the experience of being president for one year or two years?
- iv. **Senator Boinapalli:** Not yet. Because the time is short, and we are beginning our elections soon, I wanted to bring this up now so that we at least have a fair chance for all the master's students to be able to run for president if they wish to. But that is a very good point, and I will definitely do that.
- v. **Senator Pant:** How are you going to measure responsiveness or accountability on the part of leadership
- vi. **Senator Boinapalli:** We are electing them every year, we can see what their work has been in the Senate, and what their goals are. Every year we get to see different work, every year we get to be accountable and make them accountable.
- vii. **Senator Pant:** That speaks to diversity in leadership, not accountability.

- viii. **Senator Boinapalli:** That's the argument I spoke for incentivizing different students.
- ix. **Senator Pant:** How are you going to measure the accountability you're talking about?
- x. **Senator Boinapalli:** Through elections, that's one way of keeping accountability. We also have end of semester reports, transitions, student feedback. I think it's also fresh blood and fresh perspective. I think even as long as you're being elected by the students, that means that they believe in you, they have read your agenda. Probably by the end of the year we can add more structures to keep them accountable. If a PhD student wants to run again, they can run again the second year.
- xi. **President Bakhoya:** You have to be able to serve two years, if you are an EdM student are you able to serve?
- xii. **Senator Boinapalli:** I guess so, yes. Whoever has two years in their education, whether it's Master's or PhD, can serve. Do you mean I re-word that?
- xiii. **President Bakyoha:** It's not only doctoral students who can serve.
- xiv. **Senator Boinapalli:** I said majority of master's students. Those who are EdM and have more than two years can serve. That's a good point.
- xv. **Senator Lin:** Have you reviewed the current workload of current President and Vice President? Is it possible to have a one year term and still be effective?
- xvi. **Senator Boinapalli:** I believe yes. Change is slow, but change can happen, even in one year. We all bring change in one year as Senators.
- xvii. **Senator Lin:** I guess it goes back to Senator Pant's question, what if someone gets elected and isn't effective? How do you ensure that Student Senate will still run efficiently when it's such a short term? Because I think in the fall semester we only have 6 meetings and in the spring we have a couple more... or less. But it's not that many meetings.
- xviii. **Senator Boinapalli:** I think with Master's students, they're graduating into the job market, if they have the time to invest in this, I believe that if Master's students are standing for the President that means that they're serious about doing this work. And, is there an accountability system for the president right now? Even as they're serving two years.
- xix. Is there a term limit on how many times a President can run?

- xx. **Senator Boinapalli:** I think future legislation can look at how those terms are distributed.
- xxi. **Senator McKenzie:** Are there any best practices from other universities? Have you looked in terms of whether or not other universities have a similar student government structure, such as the one you're proposing?
- xxii. **Senator Boinapalli:** No, I haven't looked at other universities. I was concerned and made this legislation because the matter was president.
- xxiii. **University Senator Lee:** Have you looked into the Columbia university Senate? Because it's a little similar to what you are suggesting.
- xxiv. **Senator Boinapalli:** Yes, I think the Columbia university senate also has a one year presidential term, so I did look at that.
- xxv. **President Bakhoya:** How much time do you think would be sufficient for a master's student to have to represent the student body when you have meetings with the board of trustees, etc. You have an outward facing role, so how much time do you think is sufficient for a master's student to be here so that they are effective in that leadership?
- xxvi. **Senator Boinapalli:** I believe that one year is enough time for that. I am a serving senator, and I believe that if I were to run for President I would have enough knowledge, but I also come with a lot of leadership experience from my past. I believe whoever is coming does come with leadership experience, and whoever is standing for the President role is serious about why they are running, and comes with the skills to be the President. And if they're not, Senate is competent to see whether they will be eligible and whether they will have skills to be President.
- xxvii. **Vice President Jones:** Is there a reason that this legislation didn't come up earlier in the year?
- xxviii. **Senator Boinapalli:** I think not everyone has gone through the constitution in detail.
- xxix. **Senator Spitzmueller:** What weight does past leadership experience have on running for President?
- xxx. **Senator Boinapalli:** I think it definitely would have weight, and the one year term that you serve as senator would also have weight. Because past experience can make us ready and help us to adapt to this environment. And every

environment is different, but we can bring knowledge from different institutions.

- xxxi. **Senator Chow:** Do you think anything needs to be done for this to be sustainable?
- xxxii. **Senator Boinapalli:** I think there should be structures in place to pass on information between presidents to future generations, for it to be sustainable.
- xxxiii. **Senator Lin:** Do you think this is of good quality because you feel rushed and you're submitting this bill now? And is
- xxxiv. **Senator Boinapalli:** Prior planning is not always necessary, I think it's a sign of great leadership that we are speaking on needing to represent Master's students, and needing to support master's students. The time that it has come is rightly so because we are having elections now, and it is more fortunate
- xxxv. **Senator Lin:** Yes, but I think the timeline for elections was provided ahead of time. So
- xxxvi. **Senator Boinapalli:** I think the timeline also came up, I also thought the elections would be in April.
- xxxvii. **Senator Pant:** Are you going to add a clause about the fact that elections are the next general session? So, then by that law, only doctoral students can run.
- xxxviii. **Senator Boinapalli:** If the bill is passed next session, it would come immediately into effect. So, whoever wishes to run for president starts preparing their application, and at the beginning of the next session we vote, the master's candidate can also stand for the election. Scenario 2: If the senate is in agreement, we will probably vote in this session and we could pass the bill so that officially we could give master's students a chance to prepare and run for the following session. So I would ask the Senate what they think about voting this session.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Legislation Second Reading
 - a. First reading [A RESOLUTION Restructuring of Teachers College Ombuds Office](#)
Michael McKenzie
 - i. **Senator McKenzie:** Ombuds allows students to seek mediation for different causes. We'd like to see the program reach the level of effectiveness of that of Columbia's program. We'd like to ensure there's no conflict of interest. We had a great meeting with Dr. Peverly.
 - ii. **University Senator Lee:** Peverly told us that there's no plan in place for when he leaves. He gave us a lot of details about how he came to be in the role, why

the Ombuds was structured in this way. He is certified as an IOA charter, but there's been inconsistency with that in past ombuds. He's very open to a collaborative partnership with Columbia Ombuds. Very in support of our proposal, especially marketing campaigns. He does a lot of presentations for admin, faculty, staff, but not students.

- iii. **Senator Nicholas:** He's only the fourth Ombuds in the history of TC, and it's very vague. It's important that we recognize that there should be formal infrastructure for what happens when he retires. It seems shrouded in mystery. Especially for Dr. Peverly's part could be helped by providing additional resources on his website. Process seems very secret and dated.

b. Discussion (10 Minutes)

- i. **President Bakhoya:** I will bring this into discussion and talk about action steps for when he retires and is no longer in the role.
- ii. **Senator McKenzie:** Dr. Peverly is very open, knowledgeable. We want to present our conversations in a way that is respectful, and be mindful of that in the conversation, but there is some work to do and we have an opportunity to make some systemic changes that allow for long term success of this program.
- iii. **University Senator Lee:** He didn't think contracting externally was a good idea because you need institutional knowledge and relationship building. He said his job is very hard and it's hard to be the only person who keeps confidentiality, so this would actually be giving support to him in his role as an Ombuds.

c. Committee Discussion (10 Minutes)

d. Vote

i. Committee Recommendations

1. Academic Affairs: Aye
2. Experience: Aye
3. DEI: Aye
4. University Policy and Rules: Aye

ii. Senators

1. **Parliamentarian Heidelberg:** With 20 yeses, this legislation passes
2. **President Bakhoya:** I will add it to my roster for our meeting with President Bailey.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPDATES

Committee Updates

- Academic Affairs Jialu Yin
 - Next steps: Support the E-Board with academic advising experiences survey results.

- We were able to review the results of the advising survey, and integrate it with the results that Vice President Jones had from last semester. Senator Liu will also be setting up meetings regarding more accessibility for fieldwork opportunities for students with mandatory fieldwork as part of their program.
- Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Neha Pant
- Student Experience Emma Ehrenzeller
 - Greenspace — Collaborating with STF & SWDAG
 - Safety — Connecting IR and PSO
 - Registration — Aiming to collaborate with Registrars on an instructional email sequence
- University Policy & Rules Vikas Tatad
 - After the acceptance of caste as a protected category, the Columbia journalism school has drafted the legislation and they are coming up with that legislation, and other schools like CIPA are working with the other university people, they are also looking into this legislation.
- Social Chair updates Mana Uppili Yuchen Liu
 - Social Event: Beat the Bomb
 - March 31st at 7:30pm

Executive Board Announcements and Updates

- President Marion Bakhoya
 - n/a
- Vice President: Amelia Jones
 - Election Timeline
 - Eboard
 - Application form is open, it will close on April 3rd by 11:59pm
 - We will host elections
 - Must be chosen by a plurality of Senators.
 - Need to submit a letter of intent and a resume.
 - Can run for President, VP, Parliamentarian, Treasurer, Comms Officer
 - University Senator
 - Elected by the student body
 - Wednesday an announcement of the elections will go out to the entire student body, will be able to self-nominate. Will be open until April 5th

- Candidates will be able to campaign for a week, campaign closes on April 12 and voting begins. April 13, voting closes, April 14, certify the results and send to the Columbia University senate.
 - Need to submit a statement of purpose.
 - **Senator Spitzmueller:** In anticipation of what happens at our next senate meeting, how will that affect master's students who run?
 - **Parliamentarian Heidelberg:** Bills are effective immediately, like the one that was talked about today. It would still be active for senators who may consider running as master's students.
 - **Senator Nicholas:** Are senators allowed to submit a video as a complement to their statement of purpose?
 - **VP Jones:** No, just statement of purpose and resume.
- Parliamentarian: Krystina Heidelberg
 - Great Job Today with Legislation
 - Please reach out to Himaja regarding and comments, questions or concerns about the presidential term legislation. This is very important to the efficiency of the legislative process.
 - Virtual Attendance Policy
 - Questions about Parliamentarian duties and role please reach out!
 - Comments or concerns regarding the constitution, legislation or future legislation please reach out.
- Treasurer: Iman Niazi
 - Social Media
 - Application was sent out
 - Graduation dinner
 - Only for graduating members
 - Fill out form: <https://forms.gle/zKUeWY5A3wd7BDNc8>
- University Senator: Tina Lee
 - A new project to address early career inequity and unpaid internship gaps across Columbia University. This is to support BIPOC, low-income, and international students who typically do not have access to generational privilege/resources, which create equity barriers in fields like psychology and social work. We are currently conducting research across Columbia schools, programs, requirements of practicums/internships, and equity gaps in funding policies (Social Work, TC, Climate School, Law School, Mailman). We hope to raise awareness on this issue and lay a solid foundation for next year's senators to take this project further.

- Example of University of Michigan's *Pay 4 Placement Resolution* campaign:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1R-VA4jzSKfpT5SzGKSiVPHAD1R4l267C7m84eQgPTRk/edit>

Other Announcements

- **Senator Boinapalli:** Motion for a breakout session to decide if we can vote today
- **President Bakhoya:** We'll have a 5 minute breakout session, to discuss whether we will have a second reading and vote today.
- **President Bakhoya:** We are voting on the motion to do a second reading of the legislation.
 - **Parliamentarian Heidelberg:** The nays have it, the motion does not pass, there will not be a second reading tonight.

CLOSE

8:30 PM - Adjournment (PARLIAMENTARIAN)