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The Disorientation Guide was produced by a group of student activists committed to supporting a culture of dissent and politicization on Columbia's campus. All involved groups are listed below with contact information. We chose not to name individuals for the sake of solidarity but want to acknowledge the valuable contributions of individuals not in these groups as well. If you have felt that this guide was useful, inspiring, challenging to you, or whatever else we invite you to come talk to us! Many people were involved in the project in various capacities and while we hope to keep the publication free of individual credit, those who were involved can be most easily contacted through the student groups mentioned in the publication. We look forward to hearing your thoughts!

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Hi there, welcome, and thank you for opening up The Disorientation Guide!

This pamphlet exists to provide you (a new Barnumbia student) with an alternative perspective and understanding of what Columbia is, what Columbia does, and what it means to be a student located at the heart of global capital. This is a guide for everyone, but it is one that we hope will speak to anyone who has some understanding or experience of racism, sexism, or classism and is curious about the ways in which you as a student are both a subject of and a participant in the kinds of oppression perpetuated by institutions of power like the one you will be attending these four years.

We like to think of the guide as a series of brief introductions to a broad range of issues that students have recognized as unacceptable and believe should be changed. Many of the writers in this guide are organizers and activists who spend much of their time on this campus fighting the oppressions that this institution represents. We are, for the most part, members of campus political groups including Students for Justice in Palestine, Barnard-Columbia International Socialist Organization, Students Against Mass Incarceration, Barnard Columbia Divest for Climate Justice, Columbia Prison Divest, Coalition Against Gentrification, LUCHA, and more. Here we share with you our views of the institution and the world around us, as well as tactics for fighting it.

So where do you fit in more concretely? As a new student, you may be feeling excited for a transition into a new phase of your life. Maybe you’re right on track to go get that job as an investment banker, consultant, tech entrepreneur, doctor or whatever other position has been described for you as “success” or maybe you’ve already decided that’s not what success looks like and you’re floating around trying to figure out how to change the world instead. Regardless of where you are right now and where you think your life is headed, college will be a time when you will be constantly pushed to reshape your world view and redefine what the purpose of your life will be. Success may even become a term meaningless to you, representing an ideology’s demands that you conform to and validate it with as much effort as you can humanly put into it.

Being a dissenting student is a compromising position. While you are here protesting for humane treatment of workers on campus, you are still benefitting from Columbia’s abusive employment of that labor. Moreover, you may find yourself saying that the very system that pays those workers, a system that allows for incredibly wealthy institutions like Columbia to exist (read: CAPITALISM), is in itself abusive. For many of us, however, this dissonance is a place from which to exercise our privilege to undo the systems that we object to, including the ones responsible for our privilege. It is better that we struggle for what is good, at the risk of being called hypocrites, than by supporting the far deeper hypocrisies that institutions like Columbia engage in everyday.
In any case here you are one of the “lucky few” who gets to attend a university that has sexual assault policies that protect perpetrators of violence, that expands into Harlem in order to displace residents who have lived there for generations, that invests its funds into private prisons and global defense firms, and that is at its deepest core based on a history of white male power. Although the student populations have changed, that mentality more often than not has remained the same, and you will see elitism and attempts to perpetuate the power of the ruling class everywhere you look. Many of your student peers, whether privately or publicly, will be folks who long for money and power and see their college experience as a brand name on the pathway to individual victory. And it’s suffice to say that the opportunity to even attend Columbia in the first place is one that typically demands a large amount of privilege; see the percentages of private school students and full-tuition payers for some shocking evidence of it. Columbia exists for the perpetuation of the ruling class; make no mistake. Much of this is very depressing, but there are ways to make it easier even as you may become frustrated by the materialism (that is, not the historical kind) of your peers’ thinking.

Programs like The Disorientation Guide and all of the groups and individuals that contributed to this guide believe in building community that challenges what this institution stands for and the alienation that it forces on us. For some of us, these communities will be host to the most meaningful experiences we will have had in our four years here. Friends and comrades standing together we support each other in our quest to find freedom and closeness in an estranging and unfree world.

We invite you to peruse this guide and get in contact with the groups mentioned. We hope it will challenge your beliefs, force you to question what brought you here, and perhaps give you a place in which to belong. Although the Guide is anonymous, it was written by individuals and communities who are extremely excited to meet you and welcome you. We look forward to working with you.

Solidarity,
The Disorientation Guide*

*While each author in the guide may not agree with the words of every other author, we all stand behind the guide as whole.
The Core Curriculum is an educational model begun by Columbia in 1919. A distinct set of requirements and experiences for all undergraduates at CC, the core cultivates a "...critical and creative intellectual capacity that students employ long after college, in the pursuit and the fulfillment of meaningful lives." (Columbia's website) While the curriculum's concentration on western thought makes one apt for dinner parties and intellectual foreplay, it has been both enjoyed and critiqued by students since it's birth. Here are a handful of student's thoughts on the core.

My experience leaving the core is not that it need not be a project of indoctrination but rather an exploration of where modernity comes from. It's tempting to say "old white men's words are meaningless" but any concerted understanding of power requires an inquiry into its origins. Marx's method emphasizes this at its core, and he spent years and years researching the very literature and thought he sought to overcome through revolutionary class struggle. Take the core as a similar project, ask where capitalism and identity-oppression come from. I'll show you a lot about how we ended up in the world we are today.

The core has us racing fast through thousands of pages of white men musing about their idyllic lovers and eating habits and brothelists. Not that I wasn't happy to be reading "the classics" or whatever colonialisit term they're using now, but for any non-white and/or non-cis-male person it took a toll to be repeatedly discussing romanticized depictions of "barbarians" and frail female characters. It isn't that we shouldn't read books by authors that we disagree with, but by no means. But the lack of diversity of experience in the canon was miserable, and often made me feel isolated in discussion, especially when it came to matters of class.

So my advice to the next generation of Lit-Hum readers is this: speak up. Speak up in class when someone says something that hurts.

To study the core without addressing this issue is to normalize a system that benefits few and oppresses many. Since the canon is already defined, if retroactively attempt to insert others into it is to try to mend the ideas of oppressed groups to those of the oppressors, thus reinforcing the oppressive hierarchy we are trying to destroy. Therefore any attempt to preserve the canon while opening it up to excluded groups is hypocritical because the canon always has and always will be defined by the groups in power.

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Except for frosci, I'm a big fan. It gets me to read books I wouldn't get around to reading otherwise.

Ladies and Gentlemen, for your Eurocentric viewing pleasure, I give you the Core Curriculum!!!
So you’re kinda holding a zine in your hands, but maybe you don’t really know what a zine is. That’s a-okay. We’re here from the Barnard Zine Club to help.

What is a zine?
A zine is a self-published magazine, meaning its creation and publication are completely controlled by the person or people making it.

What goes into a zine?
Anything you want! A zine can have poetry, essays, photography, drawings, cartoons, or pretty much anything else you can imagine. Here at the Zine Club we’ve made ones with themes called “Growing Up”, “Maps”, and “The Middle School Dance” so you have plenty of freedom!

How do people use zines?
Zines aren’t usually created with the intent of making a profit. Zines are associated with counterculture movements like punk in the 1970’s and riot grrrls in the 1990’s. They can be a form of creation or rebellion or a way to get the word out about something you care about. You can trade zines with other zinesters or just hand ’em out!

Zines, NYC, Barnard/Columbia, and YOU!
Interested in zine-ing your <3 out? You’re in a great place for it. Barnard has a Zine Library on the first floor of Lehman and an awesome zine librarian named Jenna Freedman.
The Zine Club at Barnard compiles submissions based around one theme each semester and puts out a Zine, so come to meetings and contribute! (We have Creos)
New York hosts multiple Zine Fests throughout the year, like the Feminist Zine Fest (which was at the ‘Nard last year!), the Brooklyn Zine Fest, etc. so keep an eye out and an ear open.
NYU has a collection of riot grrrl zines in their library, so borrow an NYU friend’s ID and go check it out!

Putting the Internet to Good Use:
Barnard Zine Club
Website: zines.barnard.edu
E-Mail: zines@barnard.edu
Twitter/Instagram: @barnardzineclub

Brooklyn Zine Fest
Website: brooklynzinefest.com
Twitter: @bklynzinefest

Feminist Zine Fest
Website: feministzinefestnyc.wordpress.com
COLUMBIA:

1754
Columbia University is founded as King’s College by a royal charter of British King George II.

1889
Barnard is founded by Columbia University President Frederick Augustus Porter Barnard, after the Board of Trustees rejected Barnard’s proposition to make Columbia coed. Barnard students could not attend Columbia’s classes until 1900.

1894
Barnard’s second graduating class.

1909
Kang Tung Pih, daughter of Chinese political reformist Kang Youwei, graduates from Barnard as one of the first transfers and the first woman of color.

1898
Faculty of Political Science admits women to classes, with permission of instructor; authorizes the awarding of PhDs to women, despite Dean Burgess’s opposition.

1919
In reaction to World War I, Columbia starts the Core Curriculum, a set of class standards that has been adopted with “Contemporary Civ.” intended to “cultivate a critical and creative intellectual capacity that students employ long after college, in the pursuit and the fulfillment of meaningful lives.”
**a brief (colonialist) history**

1928

Zora Neale Hurston, the first known black student at Barnard, graduates. Hurston worked in the Anthropology Department with Franz Boas, collecting black folklore and oral history.

1983

Columbia accepts (cis)women.

1968

In light of the assassination of MLK and student frustration over Vietnam, student protests erupt over the school’s active involvement with the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA), a weapons research think-tank affiliated with the U.S. Department of Defense and plans to build gym facilities in Harlem. Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the Student Afro-American Society (SAS) united, resulting in Columbia scrapping the Gym plans and divesting from the IDA. 712 students were arrested; The University was put on pause as students taught “Liberation Classes” on the lawn; The Grateful Dead gave a free concert.

2008

After seven students go on a ten day hunger strike (2007), the program previously known as the Major Cultures seminar is adopted into the Core Curriculum and transformed into what we now know as the Global CORE.

2002

Columbia announces its plan to expand into West Harlem.
UP AGAINST THE WALL, MOTHERFUCKER!
the columbia student strike of 1968

In 1968, just like today, Columbia was heavily involved in weapons research for the Department of Defense. In 1968, just like today, Columbia practiced racist development policies in the Harlem community. In 1968, two student groups led an uprising that changed the history of America. Today, it doesn’t take a weatherman to know which way the wind blows...

For years, social disillusionment and institutional disenchantment had simmered on campus and off; the war in Vietnam began to bring popular hostility towards all forms of authority to a boil. Civil rights activists were beginning to move towards Black Power. Relations between the University and the Harlem community were strained to the point of breaking over the construction of a private University gymnasium on public land in Morningside Park; this tension was exacerbated by the assassination of King and the ensuing riots in Harlem.

On April 23, 1968, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the Student Afro-American Society (SAS) united for the first time to occupy the gym construction site. The University called in the 26th Precinct of the NYPD to forcibly remove them, so students marched back to Hamilton and occupied it, taking Dean Coleman as a hostage. The SAS members were far more serious and better trained than the SDS members, so the next morning they evicted all of the white students from Hamilton; SDS marched over to Low Library and took over President Kirk’s offices.

Over the next week, students and supporters also occupied Avery, Fayerweather and Mathematics. The strikers were supported by hundreds of students who rallied in front of the occupied buildings, running supplies and press releases back and forth; they were opposed by a handful of athletes and alumni who called themselves the “Majority Coalition.” Finally, in the early morning hours of April 30, President Kirk instructed the NYPD to invade the occupied buildings and remove the students by force. The police rioted:712 were arrested and 148 were injured in the police violence; 372 complaints of police brutality were filed. Most of those arrested and injured were not in the occupied buildings, but were just students on South Lawn who had come to watch. Some students evacuated from the buildings were made to walk by a line of police officers while being beaten by each one; others were dragged head-first down marble stairs.
On May 6, Kirk unsuccessfully attempted to reopen the University as most students and many faculty members boycotted their classes. An alternative “Liberation School” was established on South Lawn, with classes about the Cuban Revolution and the history of Native Americans taught in a truly collaborative method. Students put on guerilla theater pieces; the Grateful Dead played a free concert. The strike lasted until Friday, May 17, when community activists, with the help of student strike leaders, seized a Columbia-owned low-income apartment building slated for demolition. Within hours, police cleared the building and arrested 117 people, including 56 students. On May 21, nearly 300 students protesting disciplinary action against strike leaders again occupied Hamilton Hall; the administration again called in the NYPD and they rioted again. Forty-seven student bystanders were arrested, and 68 people were reported injured, including 17 police.

The last action that spring came on June 4, graduation day. Several hundred graduating seniors walked out of the ceremonies and held a counter-commencement on Low Plaza. With this peaceful symbolic gesture, the tumultuous spring semester of 1968 came to a close. Over the course of the never-to-be-forgotten six weeks, 1,100 were arrested at Columbia. Hundreds of arrested students went home for the summer facing suspension or expulsion, not knowing if they would be allowed to return. Others took their experiences to Chicago, for the Democratic Convention of 1968. Some formed the Weathermen, a guerilla organization committed to ending American imperialism by force. The legacy of 1968 on campus is the formation of the University Senate, a more democratic governing body – and of a campus security department that is committed to using espionage to stifle student protest movements before they erupt and that maintains still closer ties to the 26th Precinct of the NYPD. They said it could never happen at Columbia, but it happened at Columbia. They say it could never happen again at Columbia…

**COME WATCH ACTUAL FOOTAGE OF THE 1968 STRIKE, EAT FREE FOOD, AND LEARN ABOUT CONTEMPORARY CAMPUS ACTIVISM. SEE BACK COVER FOR DETAILS.**
SMILES AND LIES:
TIPS FOR DEALING WITH YOUR ADMINISTRATION

WARNING
If you are interested in panel discussions, co-sponsorship, and plates of cold vegetarian sandwiches- all integral elements of postmodern academia, the following advice may not be for you.

1. Administrators are not your friends… ever…

If you are engaging in any activity that threatens their bottom line (labor organizing), scares their donor base (anti- racist/ anti-imperialist struggle), or in any way affects their prestigious progressive image (anti- rape, environmental, radical queer movements), their job classifications make them STRUCTURALLY OPPOSED to your mission.
- The communications office’s job is to lie about and demean your work.
- The SGB officers are there to check your emails and facebook posts to preempt subversive activities.
- The deans, even the smiling ones, are there to make a show of support and track the up and coming organizers.
- The Office of Judicial Affairs is there to put you in a glass box, scream at you till you cry, then thank you for reconsidering your motivations as they hand you a tissue.

2. Play their game… up to a point.

Unfortunately many well-meaning liberal students don't want to believe point #1. And they think you're being unfair if you don't start things off with calm negotiation. Campus activism is theater and this is the opening act. So you go in like infants, asking, "Umm hi Mr. Prezbo, would it be ok if the workers don't have to sweat in 97 degree kitchens well they cook? :)") When they inevitable smile, pat you on the head, and congratulate you for your concern (while doing nothing), its time to start organizing.

3. Beware of any path they give you.

The 2013-2014 divestment and anti-rape campaigns have proven that university commissions set up to "look into"/ make recommendations for progress are b.s. distractions. If you go down their path, you will stress for months making presentations to puppet boards, who really don't give a fuck about your cause. By the time the President sends an official email with his meaningless reforms at the end of the year, you realize you wasted a year, when you could have built the kind of power that would have scared them sufficiently in the first place.

4. This is a conflict, not a misunderstanding.

If you organize with the assumption that they simply don't understand why you are angry, you will remain angry and languish with your disenchanted circle of friends in some godforsaken basement. Administrators, as much as we may despise them, are smart people. They understand exactly what we need and work actively to oppose us. Dealing with them effectively when it comes times for official negotiation sessions necessitates student power beforehand. Senators, student councilors are frivolous, their only power comes from an agitated student body.
Are you tired of the two party political system in which the interests of both Republicans and Democrats seem intertwined, if not nearly identical? Are you wondering why Obama has deported more people than any president in US history, escalated the war in Afghanistan, and still allows indefinite detention and torture to happen in Guantánamo Bay? Are you sick of the Democratic Party’s rhetoric surrounding issues such as race, class, and income inequality without any actual action? Well, so are we. Luckily, there is an alternative to this inherently oppressive system, and building this alternative has a presence on Columbia’s campus. Many groups of people are committed to building a Left that participates in the struggles for justice and liberation today, and ultimately, for a future socialist society.

Why is it that in the U.S., the top 1% controls more than a third of the nation’s wealth? The system we currently live under—capitalism—is fundamentally based on the rule of a tiny minority who profit from the labor of the vast majority of the population. Capitalism is responsible for countless wars, endless poverty, and mass exploitation and oppression for the sake of profit. As a capitalist institution, Columbia is not exempt. It is not simply an intellectual island in which independent inquiry is encouraged. Columbia’s administration benefits from maintaining capitalism, and the inevitably racist, sexist, classist, and homophobic conditions that arise from it. Columbia is likewise a place where students are molded into the next generation of bosses, politicians, and CEOs - who have a stake in maintaining the status quo. Columbia’s primary function as a capitalist institution is far more corporate than educational -- not only does it exist to train the 1% to rule, but it also reproduces intellectual workers and research for profit at the expense of students, workers, neighboring residents, and the global community at large.

Columbia’s actions have made this evident throughout the course of its history. As you can see throughout this guide, at this moment Columbia’s administration is displacing hundreds of Harlem residents for the sake of its expansion into Manhattanville, supporting the oppression of Palestinians both through its investments and by suppressing anti-Israel speech on campus, investing in racist and unjust imprisonment of countless people of color, and trying to maintain its reputation rather than guaranteeing rights and resources for survivors of sexual violence (just to name a few examples). Additionally, tuition at Columbia is $46,846 (not including any associated fees such as housing, food, or other expenses), while the median household income in the U.S. is around $50,000. Columbia’s President, Lee Bollinger, on the other hand, earns an annual income of $1.93 million.

While Bollinger gets paid an exorbitant salary, it is actually the workers on this campus—from custodians to professors, support staff to TAs, most of whom are woefully underpaid—that allow Columbia to function. As students, we also occupy a unique space within the corporate institution that Columbia is, and that position gives us the power to make a real change, especially when we can collaborate with workers on campus and people in the communities around Columbia.

All the issues mentioned above are embedded within contexts outside of the University, but we can still make a disproportionate impact by acting against the profit-driven motives of the administration. We’re the ones the university is meant to accommodate, we’re the ones who uphold their reputation, and we’re the ones who often pay (either through tuition and/or donations as alumni). As stakeholders in a capitalist institution, we don’t only have the power, but the responsibility to fight against oppressive policy. As you can see in Columbia’s own history of student activism, student movements can often lead to change on a larger scale—just think of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement against apartheid South Africa, which has inspired a new generation of students to push their administration to withdraw all investments in the Israeli occupation of Palestine, fossil fuel corporations, and the private prison industry.

We, as socialists, see that these issues of oppression are all interrelated because they all have the same root in the foundations of the capitalist system. The fight against sexual violence is related to the fight against transphobia, which is related to the fight against prisons, which is related to the fight against racism, and so on and so forth. Moreover, this fight is global, and there are revolutionary socialists fighting for justice all over the world, from Egypt to Australia, Greece to the United States. Because the fight against oppression and exploitation spans so many issues and regions across the world, we must develop political principles and experience that we carry outside of the gates of Columbia and well past our graduation. We enter campus with a choice: Are we here simply to get a degree from an elite school, or are we going to actually challenge the inequality and oppression that Columbia perpetuates? We don’t look proudly at the institution of Columbia University—instead we see our school as part of a problem that we’re committed to ending.
LABOR STRUGGLES are happening HERE on campus

* Working Conditions
* Salaries/Benefits
* Healthcare
* More

What can we do?

1. SHOP VISITS
   How are contract negotiations coming along?
   Find out what's up!

2. DISCUSS/PLAN/SHARE IDEAS

3. ACTION!
   SUPPORT WORKER RIGHTS
   We can help put PRESSURE
SEPTEMBER 2012
The Barnard Clerical Workers of UAW Local 2110 were in the midst of tense contract negotiations; when maternity leave and health care was put to the chopping block, the workers turned to students to pressure the administration. Student Support Barnard Workers was formed, which became the bones for Student-Worker Solidarity. A fair contract was negotiated after student solidarity actions.

DECEMBER 2012
The newly chartered Student-Worker Solidarity began their next campaign when workers from Indus Valley, a neighborhood filed a lawsuit against their employers for tip theft and abuse. SWS staged weekly solidarity at the restaurant during the fall 2012 semester. The lawsuit was settled favorably for the

ACADEMIC YEAR 2013-2014
SWS staged actions resulting in safer working conditions for the workers at John Jay dining hall on Columbia’s campus. SWS also staged events to increase student awareness of labor issues on and around campus, such as a walking tour of Manhattanville.

SPRING 2013
SWS organized alongside the Unite Here! workers at Faculty House to fight for a fair contract. The main issues on the table were stolen tips, job classification, health care cuts, “part time workers” working full-time hours, and arbitrary stipend reductions. SWS and the Faculty House workers organized actions that drew more than 200 people and gained national coverage. After worker strikes and intense student pressure, in May of 2013 an adequate contract was

Get involved in Student Worker Solidarity!
Like us on Facebook, join our listerv by emailing studentworkersolidarity@gmail.com or visit us on our website at www.studentworkersolidarity.wordpress.com
"IT'S THE STUDENT SCAB!

Danger Signals

Don't be a fool. Stay away.

answers to all your questions

Never!
Liberate yourself from the Concrete Jungle
Come explore the NY Wilderness with Barnard Outdoor Adventure Team.
Join for our first-year hike on Sept. 20th - 21st
facebook.com/barnardBOAT ~ Barnard.boat@gmail.com
Climate change is one of the defining issues of our generation. The first reference of climate change in the White House was in 1969, when a Nixon Administration official warned that rising sea levels from global warming would mean “Goodbye New York. Goodbye Washington, for that matter.” Climate change will transform life on Earth as we know it, and the brunt of it will be felt disproportionately felt by the marginalized communities that contributed least to it. Forty years have gone by and heat-trapping greenhouse gases have risen unabated. Much of this inertia is due to the clout of the fossil fuel industry; “Big Carbon” has derailed meaningful attempts to tackle climate change through its highly sophisticated climate science disinformation campaign, political lobbying, campaign contributions, and even the slandering of climate scientists. The fossil fuel industry also possesses five times the amount of carbon in fossil fuel reserves that can be burned before irrevocably disrupting the ecological conditions that sustain life on our planet.

The fossil fuel divestment movement emerged in response to this inertia. It recognizes the imperative of not letting global warming exceed 2°C above pre-industrial levels, beyond which will result in runaway climate change. Divestment is the opposite of investment, entailing selling assets or the stocks of certain corporations. Columbia University’s investments in the fossil fuel industry, whose activities do not reflect the realities of a warming planet, are hypocritical and are contrary to the fiduciary duty of Columbia’s trustees to hold the endowment in trust for future generations, who will disproportionately suffer the brunt of climate change. Barnard Columbia Divest (BCD) emerged in 2012 after students heeded the call of Bill McKibben, who went on a “Do the Math” tour around the United States to call for grassroots action to address climate change. The movement now encompasses 500 universities in the United States, and has spread to campaigns targeting churches, municipal and state pension funds, nonprofits, and foundations globally. While BCD initially emerged to achieve divestment, we recognized that our campaign was just one part of the broader narrative and struggle for climate justice, and changed our name to Barnard Columbia Divest for Climate Justice to reflect this.

Divestment will revoke the social license of fossil fuel firms to continue their extractive activities, and consequently loosen their political grip in Washington. An Oxford study confirms that such was the case with divestment campaigns addressing Big Tobacco, Darfur, and South Africa Apartheid. With regards to South Africa Apartheid, Desmond Tutu, one of the foremost social justice figures of our time, recently endorsed fossil fuel
divestment, recognizing that it was instrumental in changing the political conversation and inciting action against the racist apartheid regime. We need to hold Columbia University accountable to the values it ostensibly holds, and the research that it actively funds, including climate science. In doing so, we will also empower ourselves and other campaigns addressing the injustices of climate change.

Last fall, BCD passed the first-ever student ballot initiative for Columbia College calling for fossil fuel divestment, with 73.7% of participating students voting in favor. Our engagement with Columbia’s Advisory Committee on Socially Responsible Investing (ACSRRI), which rejected our divestment proposal due to the fact that we did not meet certain criteria, also woke us up to the challenges of working with a system that esteems the status quo. However, we will continue to put pressure on Columbia University and hold it accountable. As of this writing, over 120 colleges and universities, municipalities and cities, foundations and nonprofits, and pension funds have pledged to divest in some form or have divested already. Institutional investors with significant assets under management have also stated they will announce their intent to divest in Ban Ki-Moon’s climate summit this September. This movement is not going away anytime soon, and it offers students the opportunity to address what is absolutely the greatest intergenerational and global injustice of our day. Time is running out before we reach the tipping point that results in catastrophic and irreversible climate change. Join BCD and fight for the future of the planet today!

Please like our Facebook page, follow us on Twitter, contact barnardcolumbiaadvest@gmail.com and join us at our weekly meetings for more information about how you can get involved!
Seventeen Principles of Environmental Justice

Delegates to the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit held on October 24-27, 1991, in Washington DC, drafted and adopted 17 principles of Environmental Justice. Since then, The Principles have served as a defining document for the growing grassroots movement for environmental justice.

PREAMBLE

WE, THE PEOPLE OF COLOR, gathered together at this multinational People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, to begin to build a national and international movement of all peoples of color to fight the destruction and taking of our lands and communities, do hereby re-establish our spiritual interdependence to the sacredness of our Mother Earth; to respect and celebrate each of our cultures, languages and beliefs about the natural world and our roles in healing ourselves; to ensure environmental justice; to promote economic alternatives which would contribute to the development of environmentally safe livelihoods; and, to secure our political, economic and cultural liberation that has been denied for over 500 years of colonization and oppression, resulting in the poisoning of our communities and land and the genocide of our peoples, do affirm and adopt these Principles of Environmental Justice:

*Environmental Justice* affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction.

*Environmental Justice* demands that public policy be based on mutual respect and justice for all peoples, free from any form of discrimination or bias.

*Environmental Justice* mandates the right to ethical, balanced and responsible uses of land and renewable resources in the interest of a sustainable planet for humans and other living things.

*Environmental Justice* calls for universal protection from nuclear testing, extraction, production and disposal of toxic/hazardous wastes and poisons and nuclear testing that threaten the fundamental right to clean air, land, water, and food.

*Environmental Justice* affirms the fundamental right to political, economic, cultural and environmental self-determination of all peoples.

*Environmental Justice* demands the cessation of the production of all toxins, hazardous wastes, and radioactive materials, and that all past and current producers be held strictly accountable to the people for detoxification and the containment at the point of production.
Environmental Justice demands the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making, including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation.

Environmental Justice affirms the right of all workers to a safe and healthy work environment without being forced to choose between an unsafe livelihood and unemployment. It also affirms the right of those who work at home to be free from environmental hazards.

Environmental Justice protects the right of victims of environmental injustice to receive full compensation and reparations for damages as well as quality health care.


Environmental Justice must recognize a special legal and natural relationship of Native Peoples to the U.S. government through treaties, agreements, compacts, and covenants affirming sovereignty and self-determination.

Environmental Justice affirms the need for urban and rural ecological policies to clean up and rebuild our cities and rural areas in balance with nature, honoring the cultural integrity of all our communities, and provided fair access for all to the full range of resources.

Environmental Justice calls for the strict enforcement of principles of informed consent, and a halt to the testing of experimental reproductive and medical procedures and vaccinations on people of color.

Environmental Justice opposes the destructive operations of multi-national corporations.

Environmental Justice opposes military occupation, repression and exploitation of lands, peoples and cultures, and other life forms.

Environmental Justice calls for the education of present and future generations which emphasizes social and environmental issues, based on our experience and an appreciation of our diverse cultural perspectives.

Environmental Justice requires that we, as individuals, make personal and consumer choices to consume as little of Mother Earth's resources and to produce as little waste as possible; and make the conscious decision to challenge and reprioritize our lifestyles to ensure the health of the natural world for present and future generations.
And they depend on current and former students to keep profits high and maintain business as usual. Behind images of a diverse campus, and promises of an “elite” education lies a brand – the Columbia name – that the university pushes to talented and wealthy students across the globe. In return, the university expects that one day (or days after graduation, to be more specific) its moneyed and powerful alumni will make generous donations back to the university. While some percentage of these donations goes directly toward funding the university’s daily operations, Columbia’s $8.137 billion dollar bestowal – otherwise known as its endowment – exists primarily to grow. In an effort to nourish its endowment in perpetuity, Columbia goes to extraordinary lengths that are often at the detriment of many of the communities that its students hail from. Counter to its professed promises of social responsibility, Columbia’s investment history reveals that it is within their coffers, below the secret tunnels and past the façade of a multicultural utopia, where the institution’s true intentions rest.

While alumni donations represent the largest contributions to Columbia’s endowment (up from $5.191 billion in 2005, and dwarfing the average endowment of $529.9 million at universities across the nation) student tuition and other funds make their way into the mix. As a result, university endowments – and the ways that they are spent – have an underemphasized relationship to current and former students. But in order to guarantee that this sum total grows, the money must first be analyzed by magicians known as financial advisors who organize the dough into investment funds, and go to Wall Street to alchemically transform their money into more money. Call it what you want – money for money’s sake, das kapital, C.R.E.A.M., there is no difference. At King’s College, profit is king. It is this approach – this conviction toward spending Columbia’s plundered riches through avenues that are guaranteed to produce maximum returns – that has led Columbia to invest in weapons funding the Vietnam War (1968). It is this conviction that led Columbia to invest in the brutal regime known as Apartheid South Africa (1985). It is this conviction that led Columbia to invest in the very fossil fuels that have been the source of American imperialism throughout the 20th century. It is this conviction that currently justifies the settler colonial occupation of Palestine. And it is this conviction that is currently a contributing factor to the destruction and death that is known as the prison industrial complex.

As of June 30th, 2013, Columbia owned 230,432 shares worth a market value of just under $8 million in Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), or the world’s largest private prison corporation. Serving both an agenda of corporate greed and white supremacy, business for CCA means keeping prison beds full, and advocating for the policing of people of color, international, LGBTQ and working class communities. Columbia also owned 665,700 shares worth a market value of over $2 million in G4S, a security corporation that provides technology for checkpoints in Israeli occupied Palestine. If Columbia were truly committed to the “fundamental dignity and worth of all [its] members” (as it expressed it was through its Equal Opportunity Affirmative Action Statement), its investment in both CCA and G4S illuminates an irreconcilably conflicting interest in creating a future with more and more people - from communities that we identify with - in prison.

To keep Columbia running, the institution has decided to invest in the prison industrial complex and all of the violence it harbors. Thus for Columbia, contrary to their mission statements and new student propaganda, destroying communities in order to maximize returns simply constitutes business as usual.
PEOPLE + PRISONS + PROFIT
where do we fit in?

THE ERA OF MASS INCARCERATION
-The United States claims only 5% of the world’s population, but 25% of the world’s prison population. This makes us the world’s largest jailer.

-7 million, or one in 31 adults, are under some form of correctional control, counting prison, jail, parole and probation populations.

-Private prison companies lobby federal and state governments for laws that contribute to the disproportionate incarceration of many Columbia students’ communities, including those of LGBTQ, international, working class communities and communities of color.

WHAT IS A PRIVATE PRISON?
Private prisons are detention facilities run by a third party entity contracted by government agencies. Private prison companies get most of their money from government contracts. Because they are businesses, private prison companies try to cut costs and maximize profit often at the expense of the health and safety of prisoners. In addition, it is in the financial interest (the only interest) of these companies to support and fight for laws that will put more and more people behind bars.

big name corporations to know
CORRECTIONS CORPORATION OF AMERICAN (CCA)

Founded in 1983, was the first and is now the largest private prison company in the United States. As of 2010, CCA operated 67 facilities in 20 states with a total capacity of almost 100,000 beds. CCA has had a heavy hand in lobbying for the harsh sentencing legislation that has passed over the course of the past few decades and increased the prison population so dramatically.

In CCA facilities, there have been cases of Medicaid fraud, failure to provide healthcare for sick prisoners, falsified staffing records to collect wages from the state of Idaho, tax evasion as well as rampant cases of prisoner mistreatment and abuse.

G4S

Is the world’s largest multinational security company, operating in around 125 countries. G4S trains security personnel, manufactures prison technology (monitoring devices, alarms, surveillance equipment, etc.), provides internal support for police forces, and operates prisons all over the world. G4S was initially a part of the Wackenhut Corporation, which in 2002 split, resulting in G4S and the GEO Group. The GEO Group is now the second largest...
On June 5th, Columbia students received an email from Vice President for Public Safety James F. McShane, informing us of the arrest and indictment of 100 “suspected gang members” in West Harlem in “one of the largest gang arrests in New York City history”. McShane argued that these mass arrests, which involved years of surveillance and militarized police tactics including helicopter patrolling, are parts of the process to “make our city and community safer”. Further, McShane stated that “Following these arrests, we are actively supporting an enhanced police presence in West Harlem and increasing our public safety personnel and patrols in and around Columbia buildings in Manhattanville. We will continue to do everything possible to keep making our campus community even safer.” On behalf of Coalition Against Gentrification (CAGe) and Columbia Prison Divest (CPD), we want to express our deep disagreement with the forms in which McShane, and by extension, Columbia, are responding to the raid and the idea of “safety” that they are promoting.

Firstly, we object to the tone in which McShane wrote to the Columbia community regarding what is fundamentally a tragic and violent series of events in the housing units closest to Columbia University. The violence that has taken place in the past years in Manhattanville and Grant Houses has taken a deep toll on a community which Columbia University, despite being only a few blocks away, does not know or understand, making it highly inappropriate for Columbia to judge what safety for these communities means. Not only this but it is clear that the university is not actually concerned with the safety of community members, as McShane goes on to emphasize his commitment to “keep making our campus community even safer.”

Even more disturbing is the idea that this arrest makes Columbia students “safer”, for two reasons: Firstly, it creates an idea that the main source of insecurity at Columbia comes from the “outside”, an outside depicted in racialized terms that reinforce the projection of danger on poor communities of color. In fact, the majority of acts of victimization of Columbia students come from within Columbia’s gates, as evidenced by the statistics around sexual violence, and the violence that the administration itself enacts by failing to take this violence seriously. Secondly, it creates a zero-sum idea of community, in which Columbia students are safe at the expense of the community around us. We believe that the application of militarized and systemic violence on the West Harlem community does not make Columbia students safer, and that the rhetoric that says it does instrumentalizes the concept of “our campus community’s safety” and underlying racist fear to justify violence imposed on others.
Underlying this mutually exclusive rhetoric around Columbia students’ safety is the very logic behind gentrification, to which we profoundly object. This logic is based on the premise that the well-being of a neighborhood is incompatible with the people who originally live there, particularly poor people of color. For that reason, the “cleaning-up” of a neighborhood, in which “safety” is a central component, consists of criminalizing the original inhabitants and dispossessing them of their housing, jobs and rights.

Hence, the people of West Harlem are being dispossessed over and over. Under Columbia’s expansion, the University began to buy up apartment buildings in the area, displacing the first wave of residents before the speculative frenzy to follow. Since 2004, real wages have fallen, domestic rents have risen, and ground rents for local businesses have grown dramatically in expectation of a new influx of more expensive stores. As thousands are being displaced, and stores are succumbing to rents that appropriate up to 95% of monthly revenues, many more local youths find themselves out of work (unemployment amongst people of color below 30 in Manhattanville is hovering around 70%). This has culminated in an extremely difficult situation for young people. For the last decade leaders in West Harlem from Grant Houses, Manhattanville Houses, Coalition to Preserve Community, and The Mirabal Sisters have advocated for policy reforms to improve these conditions.

Rather than address the structural problems that it has a part in creating, Columbia’s response has been to support the increased police militarization of the area, delineated in McShane’s letter, a police presence that has proven to be racist and to deepen the inequalities of race and class in the neighborhood and city.

As students, we object to the use of a dishonest representation of “our safety” as a tool to perpetuate violence on West Harlem residents. We do not feel safer when our university is inflicting violence on the community around us. Instead, we call on Columbia to cease justifying its violence and expansion with our safety. If Columbia is serious about decreasing violence then it must stop supporting and contributing to increased policing, cease its own violent practice of expansion and attend in meaningful ways to the real causes of violence within the Columbia community. We demand that Columbia fulfill the promises it has made in its community plan and organize its relationship to the West Harlem community around principles of support for the community’s health, independence, and well-being instead of favoring actions that increase violence and poverty.

-Coalition Against Gentrification and Columbia Prison Divest

from a June 2014 post on TALK Mag.
for further reading on the raid and Columbia’s expansion:
http://jjie.org/harlem-residents-we-asked-city-for-help-we-got-a-raid-instead/107031/
http://www.columbia.edu/cu/cssn/expansion/
MANHATTANVILLE RISES

The Coalition Against Gentrification (CAGE) was formed by students who wanted to look at the way Columbia University in the City of New York interacts with its neighbors. Columbia has a long history of being disruptive, deceptive, and generally isolating towards the Harlem community.

Walking through the iron gates that separate the campus from the city you feel as though you’ve escaped. The noise of traffic is blocked by the barricading buildings, and one finds space from the crowds in the wide college walk and the expansive Low Plaza. It is as though the city has been silenced. For many of us students it is this silence that caps off the return from a late excursion into the city. It is as though you have entered a bubble which is your home and school for four years. This is the Columbia bubble.

For many years this was the extent of the Columbia bubble. Leaving the gates meant going out into the community of New York City. In one direction, Harlem; in the other, a place now known as Morningside Heights, the area that Columbia has staked out for itself after decades of pressure on the surrounding community. It meant you were entering a space which was not comprised of students, and it meant conforming to the standards and rules of an established community. What was a ‘safe’ environment built upon conventions of academia and whiteness was immediately surrounded by one where self-awareness and rules for safety were on the minds of students. Many of these rules, however, were products of a variety of social issues that were found in the city during much of the 20th century. By some peoples’ accounts, the area and city were not safe. In this context the students were outsider to their immediate area. Today, we see that fear projected onto the areas to our immediate north, a place many students hesitate to visit and upon which all of the collective fears of the poor and pigmented are projected. We hear jokes, “you’ll get shot or stabbed,” even as some of our peers grew up in those areas.

Returning to history, we can see the reasons for why the institution felt it necessary to create an area that produced an environment more “suitable” for the nation’s elite. Columbia, a privileged, prestigious institution, confronted by a contrasting 1960’s cityscape faced with many social issues, decided to make an impression and really make itself known to its neighbors. Columbia did not choose to attempt to use its resources to assist residents and aid in the social issues like good neighbors. Instead, land and real-estate grabbing commenced and soon Columbia became the second largest land-owner in the entire city. These issues of course were never the sole responsibility of Columbia. As in any city, however, these issues implicate a combination of local governments, police and other public servants, and private institutions. Nevertheless, Columbia has consistently found support from these other institutions stemming from deep connections within our school. Thus the standard was set for future relations between the university and the city, and the “MoHi” we know today, full of overpriced Mexican restaurants and artisanal grocery stores carrying craft beers, was born.

In 1968 it was clear to the students, faculty, and community members who protested Columbia’s building of a private gym in the public Morningside Park that Columbia’s strategy for expansion was one of segregation. This continues to be clear today as Columbia builds its new “Manhattanville Campus,” what amounts to a ruthless expansion northward into West Harlem (what some, including Columbia, refer to as “Manhattanville.”), a predominantly Black and Hispanic neighborhood. In the past decade Columbia has employed and been complicit in the use of eminent domain, rent increases, and police raids to displace residents of the area and cheapen the costs to Columbia’s pocket by raising the social costs. The Columbia bubble has expanded now to the point that businesses in the community cater almost exclusively to the budding young
professionals and the children of wealthy magnates who attend our school. We see the replication of a phenomenon that characterizes the school’s current immediate area, and we see the history of those actions as deeply tied to the ones the University is engaged in today. If eviction and exclusion worked 50 years ago, the University sees no reason why it should not continue to do so today. In other words, the institution’s logic is one that places little to no value on the people and their community. An example? On June 4th, the largest “gang raid” in New York City history happened in Grant and Manhattanville Houses, located in the immediate vicinity of Columbia’s new campus. The youth had no formal ties to any gangs and were engaged in no established criminal pursuits. The NYPD used extensive social media surveillance in order to build its case and invade the buildings with force.

What we see is that issue of gentrification is primarily one of power: police, landlords, real-estate companies, and wealthy investors work together to push people out of their homes. Within Harlem and Washington Heights, however, there has consistently been resistance against abuses of power from these positions. For example, an organization called the Mirabal Sisters has been particularly involved in promoting tenants’ rights by taking abusive landlords to court, and fighting the rent increases which have plagued the city in recent years. The members of CAGe look to provide support to organizations like the Mirabal Sisters, using our position as students within an institution that is constantly trying to take over more of their community. We seek to hold the school accountable for their apparently nominal promises to the Manhattanville community made in the Community Benefits Agreement. We seek furthermore to voice the demands of members of the community directly to President Bollinger, the administration, and the board of trustees. Likewise, throughout all this it is important to uncover Columbia’s connections which allow them to continue these abuses of power. Lastly we are here to learn and spread awareness about the troublesome history of the institution that we are a part of.

Over the past year, we have conducted tours of the expansion area as well as talked to and connected with residents, faculty members, and community groups who live and work in Manhattanville. We have also conducted extensive research into the history and current state of Columbia’s relationship with Harlem in order to better understand what we are fighting for. We organized a conference and speaker series bringing many community groups and individuals together in the spring. Our members consist of people from all different groups and backgrounds and we form the Coalition Against Gentrification.
RED TAPE WON'T COVER UP RAPE

Flashback to the disorientation guide of 2002 and an entry entitled “Red Tape Won’t Cover Up Rape.” Activists fighting sexual violence at Columbia had just experienced a few years of relative success with the administration: in 1995 Columbia passed its first sexual misconduct policy (which that guide called “the most progressive policy in the nation”) after 14 years of intense pressure from activists, and in 1999 students banded together to form SAFER (Students Active for Ending Rape) in response to still inadequate administrative actions. The tone of the piece was aggressive and optimistic. They’d been fighting a long time and they felt good about what they’d done. Furthermore, they were hopeful that the next generation could “guard the progress made while working for improvements.”

Now fast-forward to the fall of 2013. Columbia had effectively stifled survivors and activists for the decade following this activism and not much had changed. A Barnard student journalist spent months investigating various cases of sexual assault at Columbia for an article in the Blue and White magazine. Her piece was published right before winter break, exposing the horrors of Columbia’s process for adjudicating sexual assault, including a story of a woman who was assaulted by her consent educator during NSOP. The piece re-ignited the fire of student activists and the Coalition Against Sexual Violence was formed. It brought together numerous individual students and representatives from many student groups who wanted to make meaningful changes to the campus culture and administrative approach to handling sexual violence.

The Coalition worked to draft a new and better policy and worked with administrators in an attempt to have to student voices heard. After a short time some Coalition members formed another student group: No Red Tape. It formed as an anonymous student collective that had come to realize Columbia’s was not on their side. They used direct action to build student power in the hopes of radically shifting Columbia’s warped priorities so that student well-being moved to the top. All it took was some word-of-mouth, and people from all corners of campus came out angry about this issue and ready for action.

Working together both groups have successfully brought enormous attention to the issue. Numerous campus media pieces were written in response to actions organized by No Red Tape, including attempts to engage with prospective students on the issue and publicly released letters to the university President with demands for change. Then, in April, 25 brave students filed Title IX, Clery and Americans with Disabilities complaints with the federal government for Columbia’s egregious mishandling of sexual assault and non-compliance with federal law. Then everything blew up. National media was all over it. Columbia was one of the first schools to file a federal complaint. By spring 55 schools were under official federal investigation across the country. Then it was 67. And counting. However, as of the writing of this piece in late August, 2014, Columbia is still not under investigation.

These investigations have the potential to hold schools accountable for unacceptable behavior that was previously ignored. In addition, the government has recently issued new legislation, such as the Campus SAVE Act, and is possibly in the process of revising Title IX so that schools have a larger incentive to stay in compliance. In mid-August, 2014, Columbia issued a new policy on sexual violence. Many of the changes respond to mandates from the federal government. Frustratingly, and contrary to what they told us for months, student activists and concerned community members were excluded from the formal revision process. However, the administration did take into account a few of the changes we have been suggesting for months.

The anger building is palpable at Columbia and nationally. Though activists have felt frustrated time and time again with the lack of administrative response, we firmly believe that if students come together on this campus and across the country we have the power to force them to change their policies. We as students must set a positive precedent for how people treat each other and create a culture free of violence of all forms.
FIVE THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT consent

1. SEXUAL VIOLENCE IS NOT ABOUT INDIVIDUAL “BAD” MEN AND RAPE CULTURE IS REAL

Studies show over and over again that the overwhelming majority of sexual assaults are not committed by strangers, but by people survivors already know, including acquaintances, friends, and intimate partners. The “stranger rape myth” feeds into dominant ideas of what constitutes “safety”—who is considered an “incorrigible criminal” and who is considered a “confused young man”—which perpetuate racist and classist stereotypes as well as victim-blaming. It is important to emphasize that the causes of rape and sexual assault go beyond the actions of individual men. They are rooted in a system that has, for hundreds of years, been maintained in part by the material inequality between men and women, and by the furthering of sexist ideas that divide men and women. While women’s oppression and gender play a role, perhaps a decisive role, in structuring and organizing sexual violence, they are not the sole explanation for it. There are different factors and oppressions that influence one another in specific ways, depending on specific contexts and particular social conditions—for example, there is no way to fit into the same rubric the rape of slave women and newly freed black women, and the sexual assault that takes place on college campuses.

2. RAPE ISN'T ABOUT SEX, IT'S ABOUT POWER

Rape does not happen because of desire or lust. It is inherently an act of violence. It is used as a tool used against those with systematically oppressed identities. People of color and incarcerated people are many times more likely to experience assault than other groups.

3. OUR CURRENT "CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM" IS NOT THE ANSWER

While we do not condemn any survivor who chooses to go to the police and wholeheartedly believe that it is the right of every survivor to decide for themselves what is the best route to take after experiencing sexual violence, it is important to recognize that the current criminal justice system is an oppressive one. The Prison Industrial Complex feeds into a cycle of violence that offers little rehabilitation for the perpetrator, or closure for many victims. Instead, it embeds the anti-sexual violence movement in a framework focused on criminalization and persecution that coincides in crucial ways with the racist and deliberate buildup of mass incarceration, as well as the individualization of problems that in fact stem from structural inequality.

4. NEITHER IS OUR UNIVERSITY’S ADJUDICATION PROCESS

The university system is insensitive to the needs of survivors. Beyond that, it is hugely biased to maintaining its reputation and the loyalty of wealthy families.

5. CONSENT ISN'T SEXY, IT’S MANDATORY

Sex without consent isn’t sex, it’s rape. Consent must be a wilfully given, sober, continuous, enthusiastic, revokable, YES.

brought to you by No Red Tape Columbia
noredtapecu@gmail.com
To graduate from Columbia College you need to pass a swim test.

Or take a beginner's swim class.

75 yards in Uris pool. It's open for a couple hours Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays. And some other days during the year too.

Dean Valentini even wrote a whole speech about the importance of the swim test on his blog last year. It was titled "Time to take the plunge". He called the test a "tradition" and "graduation requirement".

Why doesn't Columbia's administration uphold consent-verbal, enthusiastic, continuous, non-coerced, consent- as a Columbia requirement?

My assaulter graduated, my friends' rapist graduated.

I guess not being a rapist isn't a graduation requirement-unlike knowing how to swim.
Knowing how to breast stroke for three laps isn’t going to keep me from drowning when I see my rapist on campus. Or their name on a class roster. Arm shoots forward over water. Body relax... Or when you run into them in an elevator.

Swimmer gulps air through mouth and body rolls from side to side with alternate strokes of arms. Columbia, where rapists walk away with diplomas but you can’t graduate unless you’ve passed a swim test.

Wednesday you’ll find the Rape Crisis Center closed, but Uris pool open.

POPULAR SWIMMING STROKES

BACKSTROKE

Motions are like those of the crawl, but are done on the back. At least my rapist knows how to swim laps?

Arms are thrown over head and drawn back one after the other.
WOMANHOOD AND WOMEN'S COLLEGES
the trans* reality at Barnard

As of now, Barnard only admits applicants whose applications indicate them as female—as Dean Hinkson is quoted as saying, “Barnard is a women’s college and only receives and reviews applications from applicants who select ‘female.’”—which does not necessarily mean that the student identifies as a woman. There are current students who identify as (cis) women and students with a whole spectrum of trans identities (trans male, genderqueer, genderfluid, and more!). Barnard is already a school whose population is not solely made up of women, and yet it continues to actively exclude trans women. Barnard has no written policy regarding its admission of trans women, so it seems that the only way for a trans woman to be able to apply is for them to have “all their paperwork in order” (i.e. to have all application materials state that the applicant is female)—which is an unreasonable burden for applicants. Changing legal gender documentation is an expensive process everywhere, requires surgery in most states, and is not allowed in other states. Asking a student applying to college to navigate all this presupposes a level of parental support and environmental safety that often just isn’t there. Additionally, this excludes non-binary DMAB (designated male at birth) trans people, those who do not wish to transition medically, and those who cannot medically transition for medical reasons. As a college that was founded in order to provide education to women who were denied it on the basis of their gender, the unconditional acceptance of trans women fits perfectly with Barnard’s mission to provide resources to those who have been systematically denied access.

Barnard was founded as a women’s college. However, throughout its history, its definition of ‘woman’ has expanded to include more than just the kind of women who constituted its first graduates. That is to say, originally, “women’s college” really meant “white, rich women’s college”. Thankfully, this definition has expanded over time to admit women of color and women from other class backgrounds. Admittance doesn’t mean perfection, though—Barnard (and Columbia as well) can still do a lot of work on bringing in more women of color and creating better systems of support for students of color, especially queer and trans students of color. These efforts and resources should expand as our student populations do.

We believe the time has come to extend admission further: As a historically women’s college, Barnard should admit trans women. In general, attitudes reflecting transphobia and cissexism are rampant in campus discourse, academic scholarship, and student life on campus. Due to the lack of education about trans issues, students are not provided with a multifaceted understanding of gender. Binary structures of gender are constantly reinforced in everyday language, reproducing transphobic attitudes and behaviors. Seemingly meaningless practices such as the use of language when referring to
Barnard students as “Barnard women” or “girls” has the harmful effect of erasure upon non-binary and trans identities (i.e. men go to Barnard too). And although this is a reflection of societal attitudes founded in ciscentric thought, Barnard’s lack of attention to these issues works to further marginalize already-oppressed gender identities.

To stand by its commitments to diversity and to student well-being, Barnard must be more active in combating transphobia in its policies, in its classrooms and on campus. The creation of gender-inclusive bathrooms on campus, which came from collaborations between students, faculty, and administrators, is a step in the right direction for Barnard. Students and administrators must continue to work towards progressive policies that are beneficial to trans and non-binary people in our community. We are speaking up and we need to be heard.

Trans women are women, and to imply otherwise in any way perpetuates transmisogyny, the intersection of transphobia and misogyny that discriminates against trans women on interpersonal and institutional levels. We agree with Dean Spade, who proposed at the recent SGA Town Hall on gender at Barnard, that the college should be a space for all gender-oppressed people, not just those who were assigned female at birth. It’s important for Barnard to be a space that is open to trans women, who in various areas of life face barriers to accessing resources for women. Barnard, a college that prides itself in giving women the tools they need to succeed in life after graduation, should also allow trans women to access these tools for success. Trans women face disproportionate violence on the basis of their gender identities and expressions, and so the supportive space that Barnard could provide for them is important and would foster the sort of community that has helped so many women.

Mills College, a women’s college in the San Francisco Bay Area, has taken strides toward the inclusion of transgender students—they published a report on how to make the campus more trans-inclusive in its admissions processes, as well as in various aspects of daily campus life. Two years prior to that, an anonymous trans student published an opinion piece with similar goals to ours, discussing the necessity of opening the college’s doors to all trans people but especially trans women. At Simmons College, another women’s college, trans women are also admitted—one woman, Alex, published her acceptance letter online. Smith has had less success, but students there are working tirelessly toward the inclusion of trans women.

We are not writing this op-ed with the intention of attacking or demonizing Barnard. As Barnard and Columbia students, we have a great deal of love for Barnard College, and it is because of this love that we want to push Barnard to be more inclusive. We believe that Barnard can be better and want all gender-oppressed people who desire to call this school home to be able to do so. Barnard’s gender-related admission policies are no more of a problem than they are at any other women’s college that does not admit trans women. The other schools of Columbia are no better or worse than Barnard regarding trans students. If anything, Barnard has the potential to be a safer space, which is why it is vital for Barnard to be accessible for not only all women but also all gender-oppressed people. The inclusion of trans women at Barnard will certainly not solve all problems of transphobia on either side of the street, but it is an important and necessary step in the right direction.

-GendeRevolution and Proud Colors
WHAT IS CORPORATE FEMINISM?

WHY IS IT TOXIC AND EXPLOITATIVE?

Corporate feminism is a popular and palatable form of feminism on this campus. A form of feminism that relies on a narrow definition of woman and a narrow definition of success. It reifies a gender binary fundamentally relies on exploitation of some for progress of others. It is tightly interwoven with other systems of oppression such as racism, ableism, cissexism, classism, capitalism, colonizing and heavily influenced by patriarchy. A model excludes people of color, people with the unacknowledged gender non-conforming and women. It seeks to make invisible these systems of oppression that sustain social inequalities. It shifts the conversation to an individual level, vs. structural. To be corporate feminist is to participate in multiple systems of oppression at once.
Bell Hooks
"Dig Deep, Beyond Lean in"
"Feminism is for Everybody"

Sylvia Rivera Law Project
Incite!

International Working Women's Coalition
(mis)EDUCATION REFORM

The so-called education reform movement has been gaining rapid traction around the country in recent months. Just this summer, California decided to restructure teacher tenure laws, New Orleans completed its transition to an all-charter school district, and New York passed laws that made finding space for charter schools the responsibility of the public school system.

The education reform movement is based on a lack of faith in traditional public schools and teachers and ignores structural issues like poverty that many schools and students face. Its advocates argue that teachers' unions, in protecting their members, are preventing students from receiving quality educations. They promote more standardization, and the use of standardized tests as a measure of success, so that teacher and student performance can more easily be evaluated. Charter schools, first conceived as laboratories for innovative teaching methods that could be implemented in public schools, have become a key component of ed reformers' long-term prescription for the education system.

Charter schools are free for students, but are privately managed: their boards and investors profit from the school, and the public school system, while providing some of the funding for charter schools, has no authority in deciding how they educate and operate. Charter schools, almost without exception, do not hire unionized teachers.

Harlem, the neighborhood surrounding Barnard and Columbia, has seen a rapid expansion of charter schools in recent years. School space is particularly at issue in New York City, and finding space for new charters has often meant sharing buildings among multiple schools—a practice known as co-location.

Charter/public co-locations are often contentious, as they make the greater availability of resources made possible by private funding visible to students at each school. Following his election last winter, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio,
several co-locations approved under the previous administration—including a particularly controversial co-location that would have moved a third charter school into a Harlem building that already houses four schools, two public and two charter. This decision, along with other co-location cancellations and funding cuts, prompted the state government to include legislation in this year’s state budget that mandates that the public school system either provide or find space for new charter schools. Governor Andrew Cuomo came out as a major supporter of charter-friendly legislation during the debate, a position possibly explained by his connections to charter school investors who contribute to his campaigns. This school year, the charter originally planned for co-location in Harlem, Harlem Success Academy IV, will open in an old Catholic school building.

Ed reform has also found its niche on campus, where Teach for America recruits seniors each year to join its corps, with TFA consistently ranking as the number one employer for recently graduated Columbia students. TFA teachers attend a five-week training, and then begin working in schools the program has identified as “struggling.” Like charter schools that justify the disruptions they cause with reports of their students’ alleged success on standardized tests, the TFA model assumes that communities will welcome the arrival of outsiders educated at elite universities. In reality, bringing in TFA recruits looks more like replacement of fully trained teachers with poorly paid college recruits, most of whom are no longer working as teachers after three years. In fact, TFA teachers have not been proven to improve the quality of education in their classrooms. On the contrary, teacher experience has been consistently proven to improve students’ future prospects. TFA provides a cheap replacement for unionized teachers, representing the business-like approach of the ed reform movement—an approach that minimizes costs at the expense of students. Like charters, TFA represents a band aid solution that ignores the root issue. Systemic poverty that is actually causing schools to struggle.
the perks of a hostile environment

Being a Palestine solidarity group in New York is a challenge that never fails to pay off. In the spring of last year, we hung a banner at the entrance of Barnard, calling for justice in Palestine along with a map of historical Palestine having first obtained approval through all of the official Barnard banner hanger channels. Within hours of the banner's hanging, Zionist groups and individuals complained to the Barnard administration that they found the banner offensive; some individuals less aware what irony is called it violent. In response, the Barnard administration, in an unprecedented move, removed the banner flying in the face of the traditions of free speech and fair process that SJP was entitled to. The move was cheered on by Zionist and right-wing groups. What is the challenge we were referring to? Having to deal with the administration, attacks from Zionists and other right-wing groups, and the all-too-frequent hate speech by some of them. How does this challenge pay off? The fact that you've probably heard of it.

But let's put aside the sometimes stressful and often amusing challenge of these confrontations with the administration and Zionist campus groups, and the thrill of the small victories that ensue. The more interesting challenge is the realization that we are in a settler colony too; we are hypocrites if we speak about home demolition in Palestine and turn a blind eye on the expulsion of residents a few blocks away by the university that we attend. We cannot oppose military occupation in Palestine and not oppose the militarization of our campus through ROTC and of our neighborhood through militarized police presence targeting, displacing, and incarcerating communities of color. We cannot oppose Israeli apartheid but make amends with the New Jim Crow. We cannot oppose the colonization of historical Palestine while forgetting that the very land we live on is a land stolen from the Native Americans. In addressing these challenges while advocating for justice in Palestine, we have been able to form a solid alliance with various campus groups that stand against these various forms of injustices. The outcome was a variety of thought provoking events that address how these causes intersect.
This was also a learning process. There were many deeper connections to discover underneath the surface similarities. For example the same companies that help run the US prison system (companies like G4S, or what is more broadly known as the "prison-industrial complex") play a parallel role running Israeli prisons and checkpoints. Similarly, the same companies providing the security systems for the apartheid wall between Israel and the West Bank are also helping build the segregation wall at the US-Mexico borders; Elbit Systems, an Israeli company that manufactures surveillance systems is a case in point. These connections have been and should continue to be a basis for common boycott and divestment campaigns against such companies. In fact, the similarities between the US police violence against communities of color and that of the Israeli violence against the Palestinians run deep down to the fact that both sides exchange information, tactics, and technology and that Israel has made an industry of selling "counterinsurgency expertise" to the United States. Some lessons were less empirical but still as important, like how sexual violence and state violence can be intertwined and lend each other support, something we see very clearly in incidents of sexual torture or wartime sexual violence (recently an Israeli scholar advocated the rape of Palestinian women as the final deterrent against Palestinian militants, a suggestion that is hardly original and that has been part of the US genocidal war against the Native American population).

We consider it a challenge and also a privilege, to learn about all these causes and work with all these comrades. Somewhat specific to New York City is the privilege to work with a number of amazing Jewish activists and groups, most notably Jewish Voice for Peace with whom we are working on a campaign calling on CU employee pension fund provider TIAA CREF to divest from a number of companies that are involved in the occupation. We are still working on this campaign, and are excited for a new set of activists to join us this fall. We are also excited that a CU chapter of Jewish Voice for Peace is opening this year and can't wait to work together.

The challenges we face and the relations we build also teach us that "activism" and "organizing" are not just about sterile lectures, solid fact sheets, or intense dramatic debates. Yes we do all that and we do them well, but when they become too intense, come dance with our dabke brigade, come attend one of our theatrical performances or outdoor exhibitions, or just ignore the Zionists yelling racial slurs at our stand and instead engage us in a conversation that is either meaningful or fun.
engineering
history
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rich tradition
perpetuate the same
finding
today's
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BS
U.S. NEWS HAS RECENTLY RANKED COLUMBIA AS NUMBER ONE.

We are pleased to receive this important recognition.

Columbia is a pioneer in distance education, enabling students to study from anywhere. Our horizons will be broadened and diversified in ways that we are only beginning to imagine.

We are also enhancing our in-house learning management system, preparing our students for the #MOOC era.

Pursue your degrees in multiple locations.
Do what is best for you; never feel rushed or forced to make any decision that makes you **uncomfortable**. Find a space that you feel comfortable in, even if you are not always an active participant. - KK

You’re not alone in your loneliness - GR

To all my QPOC first-years: Find/Build your community with **your people**. Don’t waste time. And don’t listen to that “self-segregation” shit. - DB

Don’t be upset that you’re upset.
You just need find people that you can vibe with, and find your community. And if you can’t find a community, make one. - GR

[Find] safer spaces to vent frustrations, offer support, and reflect. Place(s) to talk shit and sympathize. People who listen. People to learn from. People to be fabulous with. **People to be weak with, and come out stronger for it.** - KP

QPOC youngins.... a big congrats for getting into this university/college (seriously, this shit is cut-throat, so congrats again), but if you **ever feel discouraged, sad or angry**, know that this place **was not built FOR people like us**, it was **build ON and AGAINST us** - a pretentious edifice which perpetuates the capitalist ideas of racism, homophobia, classism, ableism, sexism, etc. Use the skills you learn here against the oppression of the hegemony. - ZB

Proud colors to me means **family** when family is something that is no longer accessible, it means a supportive group of people to help you realize who you are while being **critical of that self**, proud colors has been one of the main reasons why ive been able to stay sane on this campus its been an emotional pillar in my life that i am so grateful to have found / built a part of myself on. - CFA

Discomfort is an agent of growth, and in many cases it is discomfort that allows one to confront one’s innermost fears head on. - AG

Don’t be afraid to fail spectacularly. Go in the direction of the dreams that you fear you are not capable of achieving. Find friends and love them even if you don’t want to be romantic with them.... Seek support if you are struggling; there is no shame in saying that sometimes your mind feels as though it is a black box because many of us have been there too. Love your body: what it is capable and incapable of. - KL

I wish you the serenity to accept and love the people who will truly have your back. The courage to let go of those who will not. And the wisdom to know the difference...don’t waste time trying to prove your humanity (or those of your loved ones, that’s important!!!) to white/cis/straight ppl. - DLQ

We hold each other accountable for our words and actions, and that accountability serves as a way of maintaining safe(r) spaces as well as being a learning moment, or rather an unlearning moment in the context of oppressive behavior - XJ

Give it all you got, and
The university doesn’t always provide or allow space, voice, access or respect for marginal students (students of color, working students, disabled students, queer students, trans* students, etc), so if you give any shits about the liberation of oppressed peoples, here are a few ways you can be your own portable safe space...

Be mindful not to use oppressive language (“hey guys” “that’s gay” “this is crazy” “we were blind to it” “illegal immigrants” “that’s ghetto” “that’s lame”).

Take time to affirm yourself, your friends, your floormates, suitemates, Barnumbia workers, etc. We should all feel loved.

When in a group, make sure everyone is involved in the decision-making process. Exclusion is a tool for capitalism, not for building solidarity.

Make sure to check-in with yourself (am I feeling okay, am I taking care of myself?) and with others (send them a message, ask to get coffee, to study together).

Be cognizant of power dynamics in the classroom, while hanging out, while standing in line at Liz’s… Knowing what’s up is one of the first radical moves we can make.

Be conscious that privilege (whiteness, maleness, attending Barnumbia, cisbodies, straightness, ablebodies, ableminds, etc) is often oppressive and affects group (and societal) dynamics.

There is a difference between allyship and solidarity. Allies might show up, but those in solidarity do the work.

Sometimes tense moments can (and should) turn into learning moments. It is vital that we ourselves, the communities, are aware of how our information is spread and understood.

Do not be afraid of discomfort. It’s important to be critical of the things we think are true.

Self-sustainability is important. Healing is a big part of a liberatory practice.

stay open // good vibez // do all things with love
[don’t throw shade, throw glitter]

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DISORIENTATION PROGRAMS

like what you read? don't like what you read? curious about it?
come talk to real live humans about it at one of these many amazing events!

Talking Consent

Monday, August 25, 8:00pm, Potluck Basement, 606 W 114th St

Now that you're coming to Columbia, you've probably noticed lots of news coverage about how badly they're dealing with sexual assault. We're here to attack this issue at the root and try and change the culture of consent at Columbia and beyond. Come join current students who care and your new fellow classmates to dig in to issues of consent and learn tools to talk about this with other humans.

Stand with Survivors

Monday, September 1, 2:00pm, Low Steps

Show your support for survivors of sexual and domestic violence at Columbia. Come gather on the steps of Low Plaza and stand with survivors and allies who aren't willing to put up with the school's mishandling of sexual violence any longer. There will be speaking and performance space beginning at 5pm.

History of Student Activism Around Sexual Assault (on Columbia's Campus)

Queer and Trans Consent 101

Friday, September 5, 5:30-7:30pm, Q House, 546 W 114th St

Consent, respect and accountability are important components of healthy communities. Join us to learn and discuss how these things interact with queer and trans identities, ways we as individuals can practice consent and accountability and deal with violence in our communities (including bystander intervention and how to navigate Columbia's systems of response), and ways we can center consent and accountability as queer and trans people.

Facilitated by Columbia Queer Alliance, Proud Colors, Gender Revolution, Everyone Allied Against Homophobia, Q House, No Red Tape, and the Coalition Against Sexual Violence. Anonymous questions before and during the event can be submitted here: http://tinyurl.com/qtconsent. Contact caitlin0lowell@gmail.com with questions or concerns.

Columbia Revolt Screening

Join the disorientation guide team for a screening of Columbia Revolt, a student-made chronicle of the protests of 1968. See actual protest footage and hear interviews with students. Stay tuned for information on the date and time.

Student Worker Solidarity - Campus Left Party

Friday, September 5, 10pm, Potluck House, 606 114th St

Union-Made Beer Drinking!

Surviving Columbia 101 Workshop

Thursday, August 28, SGO and Thursday, September 4, IRC

These facilitations will focus on the current and past issues that have faced Columbia as an institution and on ways that we can all, as students and as people, engage with Columbia's historical legacy in a way that is conducive to self-care and community building.

Why You Should Join the Socialists and Change the World

Thursday, September 11, 8:30 PM, Hamilton Hall, room TBA

Capitalism is killing the planet. We face escalating ecological crises, unending wars and occupations from Iraq and Afghanistan to the U.S.-backed Israeli assaults on Palestine, racism in the form of mass incarceration and out-of-control anti-immigrant bigotry, and rising levels of misogyny and homophobia. Come join the International Socialist Organization for a discussion of how we can build a movement to get rid of capitalism and what you can do to help.

for more information and updates on times and locations search "The Disorientation Program" event on facebook