

# OFFICE OF THE VICE PROVOST FOR FACULTY ADVANCEMENT

YEAR IN REVIEW | 2024-25



## Our Mission and Our Vision

The [Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Advancement \(OVPPFA\)](#) is committed to supporting scholars as they navigate the evolving challenges of academic life and strive for professional success. In alignment with its enduring commitment to inclusive excellence, the OVPPFA collaborates with University partners to cultivate a dynamic and supportive environment that fosters faculty development and community building. Our efforts are guided by the conviction that faculty flourish best within a climate that values community, encourages collaboration, and promotes academic innovation.

Our vision is for Columbia University to serve as a global destination for leading scholars—a community where excellence is embedded in institutional culture, and where faculty are empowered to pursue their teaching and research with confidence and purpose.



## Supporting Scholars Across the Career Span

### Strengthening Pathways to the Professoriate

Building on our commitment to develop students from their earliest stages of engagement with Columbia, the [Inclusive Faculty Pathways](#) initiative expanded its efforts to support students exploring academic careers through the [Columbia University Pathways Program \(CUPP\)](#). During the summer of 2024, more than 700 high school, undergraduate, and graduate students participated in four CUPP events: a summer cookout, a LinkedIn-focused professional development workshop, a research symposium featuring 100 student poster presentations, and a networking cruise, co-sponsored by the

Office of Alumni and Development. Students also attended an admissions fair, where representatives from 17 admissions offices across Columbia's undergraduate, graduate, and medical center programs



provided personalized guidance and insights into the University's wide range of academic offerings. In addition,



as part of the half-day symposium, CUPP students attended concurrent workshops on best practices for applying to college or graduate admissions from Columbia's admissions counselors and took professional pictures for their LinkedIn profiles.

Throughout the academic semesters, we continued to foster community among the 500+ fellows and alumni of the [Provost Doctoral Fellowship](#), [Bridge to the Ph.D. Program In STEM](#), and the [Provost's Postdoctoral Research Scientist and Scholar Program](#) through writing accountability groups, welcome and alumni panels, mentoring opportunities, networking events, and professional development sessions. These campus-wide fellowships bring together students from Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS), Columbia Business School, Columbia Journalism School, School of Social

## 2024-25 Programs and Events

### July

CUPP Cookout  
CUPP Symposium and Mini Admissions Fair  
HB/CU Connections: A Columbia-HBCU Students and Alumni Networking Cruise

### September

New Faculty Meet and Greet  
Listening Skills and Empathy for Effective Classrooms  
Provost Leadership Fellowship Session  
Managing Disruptive Behaviors in the Classroom  
Provost Doctoral Fellows Welcome Panel and Reception  
Healing and Restorative Practices in the Classroom  
Designing, Implementing, and Refining Evaluation Rubrics

### October

Provost Leadership Fellowship Session  
Denice Frohman Poetry Reading  
Inkwell Writing Retreat  
Awakening Our Democracy: AI in the Ballot Box

### November

Provost Leadership Fellows Session  
FAN Ivy+ Provost Leadership Fellows Luncheon  
NADOHE Restorative Communities of Practice Convening  
Speaking with Presence Workshop  
Symposium on Listening for Educators

### December

Inclusive Faculty Pathways Winter Social  
Provost Leadership Fellowship Session

### January

Provost Leadership Fellowship Lightning Talks  
Engagement Officers Network Brown Bag Luncheon

### February

Demystifying the Tenure Process  
Navigating Columbia's Research Resources  
Provost Leadership Fellowship Session

### March

Work/Life New Faculty Reception  
Dennis Mitchell Legacy Celebration

### April

Provost Leadership Fellows Session  
AAADS Faculty and Administrators Dinner

### April

Parenting on the Tenure Track  
Leadership in Uncertain Times: Challenges and Opportunities for Faculty Leaders

### May

Family-friendly Junior Faculty Outdoor Social  
FAN Ivy+ Mellon Leadership Fellows Retreat  
Beyond The PhD: Career Panel and Spring Social

### June

Rubin First Look Watch Party and Panel Discussion  
LinkedIn for Students: Building Your Columbia Network

Work, Columbia Engineering, School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA), Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation (GSAPP), the Mailman School of Public Health, and Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons (VP&S).

During the 2024-2025 academic year, our office's Small Grants Program played an impactful role in advancing the research of Doctoral Fellows, supporting activities such as fieldwork, survey implementation, and the purchase of research equipment. Project reports submitted by grant recipients illustrate the valuable role the research grants played in advancing scholarly work over the past year—below are selected excerpts highlighting their impact.



THE EXCAVATION TEAM (BRANDON AGOSTO IN THE CENTER) EXCAVATING PORTIONS OF A RESIDENTIAL PALACE WALL

“The 2024 research grant generously awarded by the Vice Provost for Faculty Advancement office has provided the means to begin prospectus field research and finalize a dissertation topic that I presented to my committee in October. It provided the means to conduct archaeological research at the archaeological site of Monte Albán for one month. This grant is undoubtedly what directly led to discovering my dissertation topic and has shaped my research. Thanks to this summer research experience, I've been able to document a corpus of mural paintings, ceramic vessels, residential architecture, and acquire undigitized archaeological reports that will allow me to synthesize the pressing questions regarding intercultural contact between the Gulf Coast of Mexico, Central Mexico, and the Maya region.

**Brandon Agosto**

Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, fourth-year student in Art History and Archaeology



BRANDON AGOSTO (LEFT) AND HIS TEAM OF ARCHAEOLOGISTS PREPARING TO REPAIR SOME OF THE CERAMIC FRAGMENTS IN THE LABORATORY

“My PhD thesis is centered around two groundbreaking, proprietary X-ray surveys of the Galactic Center – by the XMM-Newton and Chandra observatories – which allow me to conduct the most comprehensive study of the Galactic Center X-ray sources to ever be completed. I travelled to INAF Astronomical Observatory in Merate (Italy) in October 2024, where I had the opportunity to work very productively with my longtime collaborator, Gabriele Ponti. Dr. Ponti and his team obtained these surveys and generously shared the data with me, in addition to providing invaluable guidance throughout the process of analyzing the data. I am very grateful to the Provost's Small Grants Program for allowing me this opportunity.

**Shifra Mandel**

Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, fifth-year student in Astronomy



GALACTIC CENTER PANORAMA IN X-RAY AND RADIO (CREDIT X-RAY: NASA/CXC/UMASS/Q.D. WANG; RADIO: NRF/SARAO/MEERKAT)



“Funds from the Provost's Small Grants program were used to fund the substrate materials for this multi-phase, proof-of-concept project. These funds were sufficient to acquire the materials needed. Currently, we have acquired 6 sapphire wafers, three that are custom etched and jree that we intend to etch using a diamond-tipped CNC mill. Notable offset and light refraction through the 4mm sapphire wafer led to acquisition of thinner (1 mm) sapphire wafers as the window (top/seal) for the microfluidic cell. Accomplishments to date for the project funded by Provost Grant include progress in Phase I and Phase II of the project.

**Olivia Terry**

Columbia Engineering, second-year student in Earth and Environmental Engineering

“The Provost's Small Grant played a crucial role in enabling this project to move forward, allowing me to recruit 1,000 of the 2,141 total respondents, each at \$2. We are currently in the process of preparing a draft manuscript and intend to submit this paper soon to a top social science journal. I proposed to study how social influence shapes conspiracy belief through a survey experiment in which respondents engaged in political conversations with a naturalistic, GPT-powered AI chatbot I was developing with Dr. Yamil Velez. The findings not only advance our understanding of strategies for combating misinformation, but also offer some of the first clear empirical evidence for long-standing hypotheses about a normative mechanism within the social transmission of conspiracy beliefs.

**Patrick Liu**

Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, third-year student in Political Science



ROBERT LOUIS BRANDON EDWARDS, WITH THE GREYHOUND BUS HE PURCHASED IN 2024 FOR HIS PROJECT, "THE GREAT MIGRATION."

“In part with the funding from the Small grants program, I purchased a 1947 Greyhound bus to restore in order to tell the story of The Great Migration and Black mobility during the twentieth century. I have partnered with Playhouse Square in Cleveland who purchased a 1948 Greyhound bus station. They have asked me to help them rehabilitate the station into something new in its next phase. They have also allowed me to bring my bus to Cleveland and work on it at the station where it has drawn lots of attention from pedestrians, Greyhound passengers and people driving past the station. The bus is already doing what I intended for it to do without having restored it yet. It is already creating discourse around Black mobility and forcing people to think about how they got to Cleveland. I have launched The Great Migration Project website and I am currently wrapping up the documentation phase where I have 3D scanned and documented the exterior and interior of the bus. The deconstruction of the interior will begin in March. The bus will continue to be on exhibit during its restoration and after at the station during its next phase. I am also developing a new methodology of preservation by restoring and preserving a moving historical object using similar techniques as we would a historic building.

**Robert Louis Brandon Edwards**

Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, third-year PhD Student in Historic Preservation



## Developing Academic Careers

OVPFA continued to champion the development of writing and research skills for the next generation of scholars. Graduate students and postdoctoral scholars took part in a Writing Accountability Group (IFP WAG), where they had dedicated time and space to work on their individual writing projects while providing peer support and accountability to one another. In addition, scholars from across the University had the opportunity to participate in the InkWell Campus Writing Retreat: Ready, Set, Flow, a full-day, in-person workshop held on October 25. Sponsored by the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Advancement, the Office of Academic Diversity and Inclusion at GSAS, and Teachers College, the retreat was open to a broad campus audience beyond the IFP program. Led by Michelle Boyd, PhD, founder of InkWell Academic Writing Retreats, the session equipped participants with evidence-based strategies to overcome writing anxiety, prioritize tasks, and build a sustainable, productive writing practice. This immersive experience complemented ongoing writing support efforts by helping scholars reengage with their academic work in a more focused and fulfilling way.



## Faculty Professional Development and Trainings

In support of inclusive teaching, faculty success, and a thriving academic community, we offered a robust series of [professional development workshops and trainings](#) throughout the year, including individualized guidance and opportunities to connect with colleagues across disciplines. Our office strives to ensure faculty feel supported and empowered. These sessions were designed to equip scholars at all career stages with practical tools for navigating the complexities of academic life, fostering inclusive classrooms, and advancing their careers at Columbia.

As part of our tenure and career advancement offerings, *Demystifying the Tenure Process* provided early career faculty with guidance from the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs on tenure expectations, timelines, and strategies for success. In the area of research support, *Navigating Columbia's Research Resources* introduced faculty to the University's research infrastructure, with a focus on key offices, support services, and institutional tools to help advance their scholarship.



We also partnered with the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences as members of the [Equity in Graduate Education \(EGE\) Consortium](#), a national initiative uniting change-ready institutions committed to advancing equity in graduate education. The Consortium offers evidence-based professional development and a learning community that provides faculty and administrators with tools and resources to create and sustain institutional change. In the fall, we hosted a faculty development session on *Designing, Implementing, and Refining Evaluation Rubrics*, focused on promoting fair and transparent assessment practices.

These offerings reflect our ongoing commitment to faculty development, equity, and a supportive learning environment that provides faculty with the training needed to advance their academic careers.

## Recognizing Emerging Leaders

OVPFA's faculty grant programs play a vital role in advancing academic excellence and equity across the University. Launched in 2012, the [Junior Faculty Grants program supports outstanding early-career scholars whose research, teaching, and mentoring advance the University's inclusion and belonging goals](#). We were pleased to announce the Fall 2024 awardees:

**EMANUEL ADMASSU**  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE,  
PLANNING AND PRESERVATION  
*Black Measure: Architecture After Property*

#ColumbiaFacultyGrants COLUMBIA | Faculty Advancement

**JAMES MCIVER**  
Department of Physics  
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES  
*The Physics Scholars Program*

#ColumbiaFacultyGrants COLUMBIA | Faculty Advancement

**ASHER WILLIAMS**  
Department of Chemical Engineering  
FU FOUNDATION SCHOOL OF  
ENGINEERING AND APPLIED SCIENCE  
*Engineering Dendritic Cell-Targeting Nanobodies for Enhanced Vaccine Development Against Enteric Viruses*

#ColumbiaFacultyGrants COLUMBIA | Faculty Advancement



2023-2025 Provost Leadership Fellows

## Cultivating Leadership

*The Provost Leadership Fellows program deeply enriched my understanding of higher education and leadership. It's been especially rewarding to learn from fellow campus leaders and apply those insights to better serve our students and the broader community.*

### Qin Gao

Professor of Social Work and Provost Leadership Fellow, 2023-2025

Our office remains deeply committed to supporting faculty leadership at every stage. Through targeted programming and meaningful recognition, we continue to invest in developing and celebrating faculty whose leadership strengthens the University and contributes to its long-term success.

The [Provost Leadership Fellows](#) program continued to thrive as a cornerstone of this work by promoting career advancement and leadership development amongst mid-career and senior faculty. Established in 2013, the fellowship has provided professional development sessions offering critical insight into key University initiatives and academic processes in public affairs and communications, budgeting and development, strategic planning and effective leadership amidst uncertainty, and more. This year, the sixth cohort of fellows completed their two-year term, marking another milestone in cultivating academic leadership.

## Recognizing Outstanding Contributions to Mentorship and Service

We also honor faculty who go above and beyond in mentorship and service. Our [Faculty Mentoring](#) and [Faculty Service](#) Awards recognize full-time faculty whose extraordinary voluntary mentoring and service has contributed significantly to the University's inclusion and belonging efforts. This year's awardees were selected from a remarkably impressive pool of nominations. We are pleased to recognize two distinguished faculty members:

### Faculty Service Award Recipient

Jacquelyn Y. Taylor, PhD, PNP-BC, RN, FAHA, FAAN  
Helen F. Pettit Professor of Nursing and Professor of Medical Sciences (in Medicine), Columbia School of Nursing

### Faculty Mentoring Award Recipient

Kathleen McKeown  
Henry and Gertrude Rothschild Professor of Computer Science, Columbia Engineering

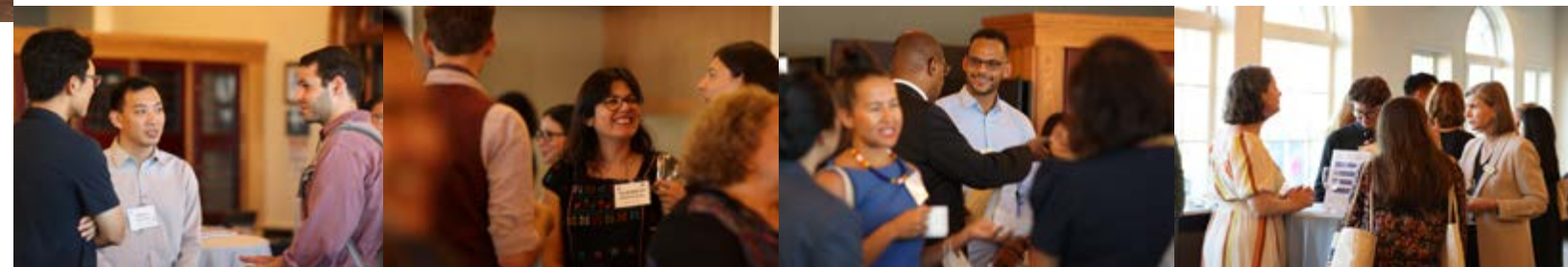


Left: Sam Sia; Middle: Kathleen McKeown; Right: Jacquelyn Taylor

We are grateful to our faculty review committees and to Sam Sia, Review Committee Chair and Vice Provost for Fourth Purpose and Strategic Impact, for their thoughtful review and selection of this year's faculty awardees. Together, these initiatives reflect our commitment to developing and celebrating faculty leaders who foster inclusive excellence and shape the future of the University.



Left: Kathleen McKeown; Middle: Claire Shipman; Right: Jacquelyn Taylor  
(Photo credit: Eileen Barroso)



## Creating Community

### Welcoming Faculty

We continued to welcome and orient faculty as they navigated the evolving challenges of academic life and strive for professional success. Working with our partners in the Center for Teaching and Learning, we hosted our online [New Faculty Orientation](#) introducing faculty to a broad spectrum of University resources and offices dedicated to supporting their teaching, scholarship, and overall well-being.

In September, we celebrated and welcomed new faculty at the annual Meet and Greet reception at Faculty House, where new faculty connected with peers, administrators, and staff. Columbia Clefhangers Acapella offered a musical welcome, and Interim President Katrina Armstrong and Provost Angela Olinto spoke to the exciting opportunities that lie ahead for Columbia's newest scholars.



### Communications as Community: Faculty Communications and Engagement

Our office continued to strengthen its communications efforts. Through the [Faculty Snapshots](#) series, we offered a more personal look at faculty members beyond their academic roles by highlighting their stories, research, and contributions. These features underscore our commitment to fostering a more inclusive academic environment.

In addition to our biannual all-faculty newsletters, we shared timely updates on grant opportunities and faculty achievements through [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), and [Slack](#). Our digital engagement increased by over 135%, reflecting a growing interest in the work and voices of Columbia's faculty. We look forward to building on this momentum in the year ahead.

## Art and Activism

In October, we marked Latinx Heritage Month with a stirring reading by [Denise Frohman](#), an acclaimed poet and performer. Celebrated for her deep exploration of identity, cultural preservation, and social justice, Frohman, a former Woman of the World Slam Champion (2013), captivated the audience at Casa Hispanica with her poignant poetry, including an excerpt from her one-woman show, *Esto No Tiene Nombre*, which highlights the oral histories of Latina lesbian elders. The event culminated with a conversation between Frohman and Dr. Frances Negrón-Muntaner, Julian Clarence Levi Professor in the Humanities, where they delved into the intersections of art, gender, activism, and Latinx identity. This event was co-sponsored by the Greater Caribbean Studies Program, Hispanic Institute, Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race, Writing Program at the School of the Arts, and the Institute of Latin American Studies.



## Rubin Observatory First Look Release Celebration

In June, we cosponsored a celebration to mark the release of the first images from the Vera C. Rubin Observatory. Located in Chile and named for the astronomer who provided the first compelling evidence of dark matter, this groundbreaking telescope is poised to redefine the future of astronomical research. The observatory features the largest digital camera ever built. The event drew more than 100 faculty, students, and astronomy enthusiasts, and was supported by Schmidt Sciences. Speakers from Columbia, the City University of New York, and Rutgers University shared research plans using data from the forthcoming Legacy Survey of Space and Time (LSST). Featuring a faculty panel, a live streamed press conference, and a reception, the event highlighted Columbia's leadership in frontier science and its ongoing commitment to cross-institutional collaboration.



## Supporting Faculty Families

In partnership with the Office of Work/Life (OWL), OVPFA supports the success of faculty parents through targeted programming, practical guidance, and opportunities to build community. In April, we hosted a panel on parenting on the tenure track, where faculty members shared reflections on navigating academic careers while raising families. They discussed challenges related to timing, support systems, and career decision-making, and emphasized the importance of setting boundaries, knowing University policies, and seeking support beyond the department.

In May, in collaboration with OWL and A&S Junior Faculty Advisory Board, we hosted a family-friendly Junior Faculty Outdoor Social at Ellington in the Park. With Provost Angela Olinto in attendance, the event was a resounding success—offering junior faculty a relaxed space to connect over food, games, and conversation. Designed in response to faculty interest in more opportunities to engage with fellow faculty families, the gathering fostered meaningful connections among faculty, their partners, and children—recognizing the importance of community both on and beyond campus.



## Supporting Work-Life Integration

The [Office of Work/Life \(OWL\)](#) is committed to supporting the well-being of Columbia's community in their pursuit of meaningful and productive academic, personal, and work lives. Our work positively impacts Columbia's faculty and staff by focusing on: child care and schooling, housing and relocation, faculty spouse/partner dual career search, well-being, adult/elder care, and breastfeeding support.

OWL expertise is a key tool in the recruitment and retention of an outstanding faculty. Our team of work/life experts addresses the unique needs of individuals while supporting policies and programs that recognize the demands faced by the community as a whole. Decades of experience have demonstrated that addressing the range of challenges associated with relocation can directly affect Columbia's ability to attract and successfully retain outstanding faculty.

OWL professionals serve as trusted advisors to the Columbia community by providing consultations on a range of matters that are fundamental to affiliates' full and effective participation in the University, while viewing them holistically across their life cycles.

During the 2024-2025 academic year, OWL experts provided over 600 consultations, including approximately 300 with faculty. Highlights include:

- A prospective CUIMC faculty member with a prospective Officer of Administration spouse needed to find the right NYC elder care living situation for an aging parent in order to make a big move. Two OWL team members worked with the couple to connect with real estate brokers to view potential new homes and suggested assisted living communities to visit with the elder. The family found good options, accepted both positions and made the move.
- A tenure-track faculty member and his wife arrived in winter 2025. Expecting in summer 2025 and with no family living close by, SCCSS supported their transition, both professionally and personally, by connecting them with relevant parenting resources, support networks, and services available through Columbia and the broader NYC community. They scheduled two personalized consultations, received a list of child care options for fall

2026, and will stay connected with OWL through the coming year. They also attended a number of OWL events including the annual New Faculty Reception, annual Baby Shower, and Breastfeeding workshop.

OWL led programs, workshops, and events focused on building community and sharing information relevant to the needs of Columbia's people. More than 1,700 Columbia affiliates registered for one or more OWL workshops this year. OWL also led over 40 departmental presentations and orientations and shared information by participating in various Columbia events.

OWL further supports opportunities for community through events that focus on the varied interests and concerns relevant to faculty. Over the past year these have included:

- The annual New Faculty Reception where tenured and tenure-track faculty from across the University, along with their spouse/partners, have the opportunity to connect with each other and with key members of the Office of the Provost.
- The annual Baby Shower for New and Expectant Parents which allows Columbia parents to meet one another at this special time in their lives and to learn about the programs, services, and benefits available to them.
- Four guided Walking Tours of various neighborhoods, including two exclusively for faculty and expertly led by GSAAP Professor Andrew Dolkart.
- Monthly discussion groups that provide support, community, and resources for those with differing caregiving responsibilities—one for parents of children ages 2-5 and one for those caring for elders.

Additional 2024-2025 Work/Life highlights include:

- Received a Mental Health Initiative grant from the President's Office to host a monthly art meet-up series to build community among Provost Office colleagues beginning spring 2025.
- Co-hosted with NYU the College and University Work-Life-Family Association's (CUWFA) annual three-day conference, examining both the origins and future of the work/life profession and sharing best-practices across member institutions.



- Secured agreement for a new Affiliated Early Learning Center, Imagine Morningside Heights, to be located at 560 Riverside Drive, serving Columbia and community families in the Manhattanville neighborhood.
- Provided guidance for Tompkins Hall Nursery teachers and administration during the center’s leadership transition, including active involvement in the recruitment and hiring of a new director.
- Established three new lactation spaces to support nursing

- parents returning to campus, implemented an improved scheduling system, and updated the University’s lactation policy to comply with the PUMP Act.
- Served on the planning committee for the very successful CUIMC Mental Health and Heart Health Fairs.
- Continued to support [Emeritus Professors in Columbia \(EPIC\)](#) as they expanded their programming, increased their membership, and reached out to newly-retired faculty and senior administrators.

## Advancing Inclusion and Belonging Initiatives at Columbia and Across the Academy



### Provost’s Advisory Council for Faculty Advancement

A pillar of this work is the [Provost’s Advisory Council for Faculty Advancement](#), which continues to guide University efforts in creating a more inclusive academic environment. In 2024, we welcomed two new members: Rebecca Kobrin, Russell and Bettina Knapp Associate Professor of American Jewish History and co-director of the Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies, and Jacquelyn Taylor, Helen F. Pettit Professor of Nursing and Professor of Medical Sciences (in Medicine) and founding executive director of the Center for Research on People of Color (CRPC). Their addition further strengthened the Council’s ability to support and advise the Provost on critical issues affecting faculty life and institutional climate.

We deepened our commitment to advancing inclusion and belonging through a range of strategic initiatives and national collaborations.

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|--|--|
| <b>Ana Abraído Lanza</b><br>Social Work  | <b>Karl Jacoby</b><br>Arts and Sciences      |
| <b>Walter Bockting</b><br>Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons and Nursing | <b>Gita Johar</b><br>Business                |
| <b>Nabila El-Bassel</b><br>Social Work   | <b>Olatunde Johnson</b><br>Law               |
| <b>Ruben L. Gonzalez Jr.</b><br>Arts and Sciences                                | <b>Kathryn Johnston</b><br>Arts and Sciences |
| <b>Farah Jasmine Griffin</b><br>Arts and Sciences                                | <b>Kellie Jones</b><br>Arts and Sciences     |

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Rebecca Kobrin</b><br>Arts and Sciences  | <b>Anne L. Taylor</b><br>Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons |
| <b>Helen H. Lu</b><br>Engineering   | <b>Jacquelyn Y. Taylor</b><br>Nursing                               |
| <b>Maria Victoria Murillo</b><br>Arts and Sciences and International and Public Affairs | <b>Gina Wingood</b><br>Public Health                                |
| <b>Samuel K. Roberts</b><br>Arts and Sciences   |   |

### Campus Climate Collaborative

Last year, the Office of the Provost established a campus climate working group convened by the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Advancement. Comprising leaders from schools and administrative units across Columbia, the group regularly met to address shared challenges, exchange best practices, and develop strategies to foster a more inclusive and respectful campus environment. In fall 2024, the Office of the President launched the [Campus Climate Collaborative](#) and introduced the Campus Collaborative Fund, an initiative inviting proposals that

advance the University’s educational mission through efforts that support free expression, open inquiry, and community well-being. Members of the working group played a key role in reviewing proposals and recommending those with the potential for broader adaptation.

A second round for student-led proposals was administered by the Office of University Life. Leaders in the Office of the Provost, including the Provost and the Vice Provost for Faculty Ad-



vancement, participated in [Listening Tables](#), a Trust Collaboratory initiative designed to foster mutual understanding across ideological divides through intentional, facilitated dialogue. These efforts reflect Columbia’s commitment to building a campus culture rooted in trust, empathy, and belonging.

### Dialogue Across Difference

As part of Columbia’s ongoing commitment to fostering freedom of expression within a culture of civility and empathy, last year OVPFA launched the [Dialogue Across Difference](#) initiative. In Fall 2024, we organized 3 additional professional development workshops:

- “Listening Skills and Empathy for Effective Classrooms” led by Martin Epstein, designed to develop better active listening skills, the workshop explored different levels and types of listening, with a particular emphasis on how empathy naturally arises from good listening practices.
- “Managing Disruptive Behaviors in the Classroom” led by Jenny Besch, designed to explore specific strategies and tactics to de-escalate behaviors that may disrupt learning in the classroom, aimed to teach faculty techniques for effectively managing classroom interactions among students and between students and faculty during discussions on sensitive or “hot” topics, helping to create a more inclusive environment for all students.
- “Healing and Restorative Practices in the Classroom” led by Dianne Williams, built on faculty’s existing skills to support the use of Restorative Justice approaches in the classroom as a way to build community and repair relationships while encouraging reflection, communication, and healing.

We also supported two faculty projects that strengthened our campus community by equipping students, faculty, and staff with the tools and spaces to navigate complex societal issues with respect and openness: *The Listening Tables Core Student Fellowship Program* (Gil Eyal, Larry Jackson, Amy Werman) and *Modeling Dialogue Across Differences Using Standardized Simulation Patient Scenarios* (Natalya Pasklinsky and Mary Hickey)

### Societal Impact

The [Societal Impact Seed Grant](#) supported innovative faculty-led projects that leverage scholarly research to create broader societal impact. Aligned with the University’s Fourth Purpose, the grant encouraged interdisciplinary research, partnerships with local communities as integral participants, and collaboration with government agencies, nonprofits, industry, and other sectors. The goal was to help faculty extend the reach of their research beyond campus and build a strong foundation for future funding opportunities.

This year, two projects culminated their project cycles: *Columbia Morningside Park Pond Project* (Marco Giometto, Adrian Brugger, Joaquim Goes, William Hunnicutt, and Alexandra Novak) and *Indigenous and Locally Led Knowledge Co-Production to Understand Environmental Change* (Pamela Smith, Paige West, Ajit Subramaniam, Michael Petriello).



“With support from the Societal Impact Grant, our team hosted a multi-day convening at Columbia that brought together Columbia researchers, Indigenous leaders, and community and government representatives to develop ethical, collaborative approaches to climate research. The result is “Good Practices in the Co-Production of Knowledge,” a practical framework grounded in relationship-building, power-sharing, and community leadership.”

**Paige West**  
Professor of Anthropology

## Climate of Inclusiveness

We continued to strengthen connections across Columbia by co-sponsoring a range of events that fostered interdisciplinary dialogue, built community, and discussed urgent societal issues. In October, we supported [Awakening Our Democracy: AI in the Ballot Box](#), hosted by the Office of University Life, a timely panel exploring the intersection of artificial intelligence, misinformation, and electoral integrity. We also co-sponsored the Administrators & Faculty Dinner and Spirit of 1968 Sankofa Prize hosted by the Department of African American and African Diaspora Studies, and the 2025 Columbia University Asian Faculty Association Gala Dinner, both of which celebrated faculty leadership and community. Additionally, we supported public programming on Greater Caribbean Studies, including four scholarly roundtables and a series of co-hosted events with the Department of Latin American and Iberian Cultures.



**Awakening Our Democracy: AI in the Ballot Box**

In October, a panel discussion addressed the intersection of artificial intelligence (AI) and democracy in the context of the 2024 presidential election.

Featuring experts like Eugene Wu, Alma Steingart, Brian Smith, and Yamil R. Velez, the event emphasized the critical need for AI literacy across all academic disciplines, including humanities and arts. The panel highlighted the risks of misinformation through technologies like deepfakes, which can reinforce biases and mislead voters. However, they also pointed out the potential of AI to enhance democratic engagement if appropriate guardrails are established. The discussion underscored the vital role of educational institutions in preparing students to navigate an AI-driven landscape as they approach the electoral process. The event called for interdisciplinary collaboration to empower informed voting and protect democratic integrity.



Left: Josef Sorett; Right: Dennis Mitchell (Photo credit: DiVito)

## NADOHE Restorative Communities of Practice

In November, we served as a satellite campus for the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education's hybrid [Restorative Communities of Practice](#) convening. The event, which included over 200 participants from 21 host institutions, provided senior diversity leaders in higher education with a platform to reflect on and strategize responses to the current challenges in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. The convening, held in Columbia's Armen Avanesians Data Science Institute Conference Room, served as a space for

leaders to build a community of practice, drawing on diverse perspectives to enhance the future of higher education. Participants included leaders from institutions across the country, as well as members from the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation (TRHT) Campus Centers. The event provided a valuable opportunity for leaders to come together, reflect on their shared challenges, and develop actionable strategies that will continue to shape the future of higher education.

## FAN Ivy+ Provost Leadership Fellowship



We continued participating in the Ivy+ [Faculty Advancement Network \(FAN\)](#), a consortium of 13 Ivy+ institutions committed to advancing inclusive excellence in the professoriate. This year's faculty fellows included: Marcus Folch, Associate Professor of Classics, Arts and Sciences; Christine Hendon, Associate Professor of Electrical Engineering, Columbia Engineering; and Vice Dean of Diversity and Strategic Partnerships, Climate School; V. Fay McNeill, Professor of Chemical Engineering and Earth and Environmental Sciences and Department Vice Chair; Kerstin Perez, Lavine Family Associate Professor of the Natural Sciences, Arts and Sciences; and Dan Steingart, Stanley-Thompson Professor of Chemical Metallurgy; Professor of Chemical Engineering; and Chair of the Department of Earth and Environmental Engineering, Columbia Engineering. They participated in the year-long Institute on Inquiry, Equity, and Leadership in the Academic Department, a program designed to support equity-minded leadership among department chairs and academic leaders. The fellowship launched



with a convening at Princeton University, where thought leaders—including former university presidents and scholars in leadership and inclusion—offered insights on equity, academic freedom, and institutional change. Fellows engaged in cross-institutional dialogue, virtual workshops, and a capstone event at Duke University, exploring how faculty can lead transformation in their departments and disciplines.

Columbia also hosted this year's Ivy+ FAN Mellon Leadership Fellows Retreat Convening where the Mellon Fellows celebrated the final phase of their fellowship. FAN received a \$1.5m grant from the Mellon Foundation to launch this program which aims to increase the representation of humanities faculty members occupying the highest administrative offices in the academy. FAN members selected a cohort of tenured faculty for a comprehensive program of skill development in academic leadership and governance over a period of two years.

## National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

Columbia continues to serve as a member of the [National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education](#), a national initiative aimed at addressing and preventing sexual harassment across academic institutions. Columbia's participation in this important collaborative enables new partnerships and coordinated efforts to advance institutional change and foster safer, more equitable academic environments. Together with other institutional members, we are working to generate targeted, evidence-based action.

These efforts reflect our sustained commitment to cultivating an environment where all members of our academic community can thrive—a commitment that was nationally recognized with the 2024 Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award by INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine.



## Celebrating the Legacy of Dr. Dennis Mitchell and His Transition to Dean of the College of Dental Medicine

This year marked a significant transition for Columbia University and OVPFA, as we honored the enduring legacy of Dr. [Dennis A. Mitchell](#), DDS, MPH, who was appointed Dean of the College of Dental Medicine in Spring 2025.

In celebration of Dr. Mitchell's transition, we held a celebration reception honoring his commitment to equity, mentorship, and academic excellence.



For over a decade, Dr. Mitchell expanded and diversified Columbia's faculty. Beginning in 2014 as Senior Associate Provost for Faculty Diversity and Inclusion and later serving as Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Advancement and Senior Advisor to the President for Inclusion and Belonging, Dr. Mitchell brought his guiding vision and resolve to the University's mission of inclusive excellence. During his tenure, he oversaw initiatives that spanned recruitment, retention, and advancement of faculty.



Among his many contributions, Dr. Mitchell led the development of transformative programs such as Inclusive Faculty Pathways, the launch of The Columbia University LGBTQ+ Guide, and the implementation of university-wide mentoring, leadership development, and faculty support initiatives.

Dr. Mitchell's leadership has always been deeply informed by his identity as a scholar and public health advocate. A professor of Dental Medicine at Columbia University Irving Medical Center since 1991, he has long been a champion of equity in clinical research and access to care—particularly for Black and Latinx communities in Harlem and Upper Manhattan. His research on HIV/AIDS, oral health disparities, and preterm birth outcomes has earned national recognition, including the American Academy of Periodontology's Clinical Research Award. Most recently, in March, he was honored with the 2025 ADEAGies Foundation Award for Eminence in Achievement, recognizing his exceptional contributions to dental education and public health.



Dr. Mitchell embodies a career defined by service. His ability to create and build pathways—from patients to policy, and from students to the professoriate—has left a lasting mark on Columbia and higher education more broadly. His legacy will continue to guide our work for years to come and will continue to shape the next generation of health leaders.



## Looking Ahead

Looking ahead to the 2025–2026 academic year, we remain committed to supporting early career scholars by expanding mentorship opportunities, enhancing professional development programming, and investing in structures that help faculty thrive from their first steps at Columbia through every stage of their careers. [Our team](#) is here to support you—whether you're navigating the early stages of your appointment, seeking community, or pursuing new opportunities for growth. We look forward to building on this momentum together.

## By the Numbers



**470+**

Provost Doctoral Fellows



**135%**

increase in digital engagement



**1700+**

registered for Work/Life programs

**\$600k+**

awarded for Faculty Service and Faculty Mentoring Recognition

**250+**

Junior and Mid-Career Faculty Grants, and Faculty Seed Grants awarded University-wide

