



**Columbia Alumni Association
Task Force on Belonging**

Report and Recommendations

June 4, 2021

**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE CAA TASK FORCE ON BELONGING**

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INTRODUCTION

The Columbia Alumni Association (CAA)'s mission is to cultivate a uniquely Columbia environment in which diverse, impactful opportunities inspire students and alumni to engage, exchange, and experience the lifelong benefits of our University community.

Since its inception in 2005, the CAA has focused on being an environment where all alumni, students, and members of the broader Columbia community feel welcome, and where all engagement opportunities (e.g., events and programs, volunteer roles and entities, and communications/outreach) reflect and celebrate both everyone individually and the community as a whole. As the Columbia alumni community continues to grow and approaches 390,000 members, this continues to be a core tenet of the organization. At its January 2020 retreat, the Board made “belonging” the most significant priority for CAA leadership and resolved to create the CAA Task Force on Belonging (Task Force).

The Task Force's work was scheduled to begin in March 2020. However, external forces in our community and world delayed the initiative while also amplifying its importance. The COVID-19 pandemic forced the CAA, as well as the rest of the world, to stop in its tracks and reimagine every aspect of the organization in the name of health and safety. It was in this time that virtual programming went from a novel idea that was executed periodically, to the principal way that individuals could interact with each other and their alma mater. While launching and offering virtual programming was challenging, it did create opportunities to engage individuals who would or could not actively engage with the CAA in the past. The overwhelming feelings of isolation and lack of camaraderie shared by many, alongside the increase in home-bound leisure time, made it more crucial than ever for alumni to feel connected to Columbia and each other and for the CAA to offer easily accessible programs.

The spring of 2020 was marked by frequent acts of racism and violence which garnered extensive public attention. While hatred was felt by members of many historically marginalized groups, it was a particularly tumultuous time for the Black and Asian and Pacific Islander communities. The Asian and Pacific Islander community was targeted in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic while the Black community had to grapple with the deaths of many individuals, including Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, and Breonna Taylor, who died at the hands of police. With so many members of the alumni community feeling so much pain—set against a backdrop of racism, xenophobia, and isolation—it was more important than ever that all Columbians felt safe, heard and represented.

After several benchmarking discussions with peer institutions and internal reviews of current processes, the Task Force began in earnest in the summer of 2020.

Following the execution of two sets of focus groups, individual conversations and a survey process including nearly 90,000 alumni, the Task Force assembled the following five overarching recommendations:

- Enhance engagement and feelings of belonging through segmented programmatic offerings.
- Ensure strategic planning and cross-collaboration across programmatic and volunteer efforts, especially amongst segmented groups and clubs, to build a stronger sense of unity with volunteers and alumni overall.
- Increase awareness of existing programmatic and volunteer opportunities as well as brand recognition of the benefits of engagement with the University and CAA.

- Continue to gather and utilize data to understand why alumni do and do not participate in CAA engagement opportunities.
- Continually assess the effectiveness of initiatives to ensure broad community inclusion and representation in all events and programs, communications and volunteer opportunities.

While the Task Force is very proud of the work that has led to the aforementioned recommendations, the group intends to remain in formation for an additional year to continue its work and ensure the initial adoption of these recommendations.

TASK FORCE PREPARATION AND COMPOSITION

Prior to convening the Task Force and in order to attain benchmarks for the Task Force’s work, the CAA administrative team undertook an analysis of best practices across several peer institutions. (APPENDIX A) In addition to reviewing the work of peer institutions (APPENDIX B), the CAA administrators met with Columbia partners from the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Office of University Life to better understand the resources that are available on campus that could be utilized to complete the work of the Task Force.

Once constituted, the Task Force created a roadmap to guide its fact-finding and discussions for the academic year (APPENDIX C). The composition of the 23-member Task Force included three Trustees, several CAA Board members, a representation of Global Clubs/Shared Interest Groups (SIGs) leadership, School-based leaders, and student and administrative representatives. (APPENDIX D) While broad in its composition, the scope of work was focused exclusively on CAA efforts and engagement opportunities. It is, however, understood that many of the recommendations in this report may also have relevance to our School-based partners.

The Task Force was empowered to assess all CAA initiatives and to formulate recommendations that could be utilized by the CAA Board and its Strategic Planning Committee to create a stronger and more focused commitment to building an organization welcoming to all by formulating intentional and actionable strategies.

The stated purpose of the Task Force is to “ensure that the Columbia Alumni Association and all of its related entities are accurately representative of, are welcoming to, foster a sense of belonging for, amplify the voices of and create a space for all members of the Columbia alumni community”. This purpose was set with the intention of empowering the task force to consider all alumni experiences yet focus its analysis and recommendations exclusively on the work of the CAA, rather than additional areas of the University or any individual School.

METHODOLOGY AND CONTENT

The Task Force met six times throughout the course of the 2020-2021 academic year. Between meetings, the administrative team met to debrief on the content of the previous meeting, and smaller groups of Task Force members were convened for more individualized feedback and perspectives. The meetings served as an opportunity for members to share their own experiences and those of alumni with whom they’ve interacted, provide feedback on topics/findings presented, and continue to define what belonging means to alumni. During the second semester of the 2020-2021 academic year, the content of the meetings shifted to an analysis of the research findings, and the formulation of recommendations for their report.

It is crucial to note that throughout this process “engagement” refers to attending events, volunteering time, giving philanthropically, participating in surveys, and all the additional ways alumni remain connected with the University through either the School from which they graduated, other Schools at Columbia, or the CAA.

The primary research components consisted of a survey tool and several iterations of focus groups. Additionally, an audit of current CAA communications and critique of CAA programs and volunteer structure were undertaken (APPENDIX E).

An alumni survey was developed in collaboration with the Office of Alumni and Development (OAD)'s marketing research team (APPENDIX F). It was sent to a 70,000 person representative cross-sectioned random sample of the alumni population. Prior to the survey's distribution, focus groups composed of alumni who engaged with the University between July 2019 and October 2020 were conducted to determine and confirm key areas to be addressed (APPENDIX G, H). Following the initial distribution of the survey, it was sent to a second pool of 18,650 alumni. A subsection of these alumni had been included in the original pool, but distribution channels for this second group included the listservs of the identity-based SIGs (such as Black Alumni Council and Columbia Pride), to elicit a broader diversity of responses that was more representative of the Columbia alumni population as a whole. Leaders of identity-based SIGs were also given the opportunity to share feedback on their experiences with the CAA (APPENDIX I, J). Finally, an additional set of focus groups gave survey respondents an opportunity to share feedback on the survey findings. This feedback was considered by the OAD marketing research team in the crafting of their initial recommendations which were presented to the Task Force (APPENDIX K).

Between both the first and second (APPENDIX L) and the fourth and fifth Task Force meetings (APPENDIX M), members were invited to participate in small group discussions to further analyze and expand upon data and the themes presented to the full group. The takeaways from these sessions assisted in the formulation of the initial Task Force recommendations. In order to ensure that the recommendations were not only based on the feedback of individuals inclined to respond to a survey or participate in a focus group, members and SIG leaders were invited to solicit additional feedback from their personal and volunteer-led Columbia contacts in the form of small group or one-on-one meetings. This feedback was then synthesized and included in the data for this report.

RESEARCH AND FINDINGS

The research yielded feedback from 2,188 alumni, representing all 18 schools and units of the University, through the survey and focus groups. Additionally, 15 alumni participated in small groups or one-on-one conversations facilitated by Task Force members and SIG leaders.

We noted that 80% of all survey respondents reported a general feeling of connectedness with Columbia and 17% of those respondents feel very connected. Additionally, there were varying levels of connectedness reported throughout the focus group conversations. Alumni of differing ethnicities and ages recorded similar connectedness to questions about the CAA and Columbia in the survey. However, there were notable differences based on age regarding more specific statements about belonging. Respondents connected in a variety of ways, ranging from volunteering and attending events, to staying in contact with Columbia classmates and friends. A common theme throughout the research process was that the alumni experience and feelings of belonging are often directly influenced by the student experience.

Conversations with Task Force members, SIG leaders and select survey respondents who participated in focus groups revealed that segmented groups are a pivotal connection for many alumni to both the CAA and the University. That said, respondents from the SIG communities had, relative to the original sample, a stronger connection to the CAA. When asked about information sources in the past two years which promoted feelings of belonging with Columbia, the SIGs sample was 5-10 points lower than the original sample survey respondents on two channels: Columbia email and websites. They were on par with the original sample for their school magazine and *Columbia Magazine*.

The Task Force looks forward to exploring this finding further to understand the reason for this difference. Additionally, while many alumni were very grateful for the opportunities provided by the SIGs to connect with their own community, there was a stated desire for engagement opportunities for all alumni of color, as well as alumni from other historically underrepresented communities.

In the survey, we included a series of statements about being accepted as a Columbia alum, regardless of race and ethnicity and/or socio-economic status. The survey data showed disparities for this question, with 58% of the original sample feeling everyone is accepted regardless of race/ethnicity, versus 22% for Black Alumni Council (BAC) members, 39% for Latino Alumni Association of Columbia University (LAACU) members, and 48% for Asian Columbia Alumni Association (ACAA) members represented in the SIG sample. In terms of economic or social class, 45% of the original survey respondents strongly agree that this has been their experience as a Columbia alum, versus 23% for BAC, 29% for LAACU, and 39% for ACAA SIG respondents.

The role of events as a significant source of belonging was not surprising, especially given the prevalence of virtual programs taking the place of in-person gatherings during the COVID-19 pandemic. While alumni were able to give feedback about both virtual and in-person events, the Task Force recognizes that it is challenging to know whether the entirety of respondents' feedback was on virtual or in-person programming, or a combination of both, but the implicit need to continue virtual programs is clear. Survey respondents and focus group participants residing outside of the Tri-State area found virtual programs provided an essential opportunity for engagement as they are unable to attend in-person CAA programs. Even alumni in New York City advocated for continued virtual programming;

"I would appreciate more opportunities where alumnae can do online webinars that involve directly talking to or collaborating with other alumnae." - Hispanic female, 35-44, NYC

77% of survey respondents cited events as increasing their sense of belonging with the greater alumni community. However, it is worth noting that 36% of survey respondents indicated feeling out of place at a Columbia event. Some respondents cited examples such as School-based silos, perceived cliques, experiences of imposter syndrome, and the lack of a personal greeting upon arrival as possible barriers to feeling included and welcomed.

Respondents shared a variety of reasons for not being more engaged with Columbia, including, (*in order of comment frequency*): lack of time, geographic location, lack of awareness of others who may be attending programs, not being aware of what the opportunities are, timing of events, diversity of thought, and diversity of attendees. SIG leaders also shared that while both they and their communities have had generally positive experiences at larger CAA events, some felt these broader programs were not always presented in a format that resonated with and/or featured topics that were relevant to their communities. Alumni would also like to be invited to events that are more closely aligned with their interests and that explore issues from multiple perspectives.

"No community feeling at Columbia in general. It is not about ethnicity, it is about interests. I go to Journalism events and feel welcome." - Black female, 45-54, NYC

"Offer both sides of polarizing issues with equally qualified programming so that we can hear thoughtful perspectives - 360 degrees - around an issue." - White male, 45-54, St. Louis, MO

Similarly to events (83% of respondents cited the CAA events as welcoming), survey participants shared that CAA communications both helped to facilitate connectedness and feelings of belonging but could also create a barrier to inclusion and engagement if they were focused on a particular age demographic. Many respondents noted that, while they appreciate the communications they receive, they often find it difficult to distinguish

whether messages are coming from the CAA or another University entity. Additionally, alumni were especially engaged with messages that were intellectual and targeted based on interest. While 83% of the total respondents said email helps them feel they belong to Columbia, younger alumni feel that social media also promotes strong feelings of belonging. There were 86% of respondents that cited *Columbia Magazine* as promoting positive feelings of belonging to the University. This was the highest (most positive) ranking for any communication vehicle.

Comments about current CAA communications offered several important insights including a desire for more stories about “everyday” alumni and less emphasis on “superstars.”

“I feel that many of the people featured in the Columbia Magazine are the superheroes and best and brightest. While I enjoy reading about them, it reminds me that I am made to feel ordinary and not one of those superheroes. I imagine many of us alumni are living our lives, doing our best, have good jobs that we are proud of but we don't invent things or write award-winning books. Maybe some of what is offered through the Alumni association could be to highlight alumni who are proud of their situation but are middle- class, everyday people...There is an elitism that was there when I attended Columbia and frankly, in those days, that elitism was the reason to attend. But now it is suffocating.” - Asian female, 45-54, Long Island, NY

They also shared that the way events and opportunities are communicated can have an impact.

“I frequently question whether I am welcome at Columbia events even though I am absolutely devoted to Columbia. Something about the way it is marketed always feels like it is a closed club and I am intruding.” - White female, 45-54, Bronx, NY

Respondents also reported that appropriate representation illustrating ethnicity, race, family makeup, ability, and age diversity is crucial to ensuring alumni connect with messaging.

Beyond the insights gleaned on the impact events and communications have had on feelings of belonging, volunteerism was also analyzed. Task Force members and SIG leaders shared that the opportunity to volunteer, especially for SIGs, Global Clubs, and CAA Board committees had a positive impact on their feelings of belonging. Additionally, SIG leaders in particular, shared that lead volunteers of their groups were significantly connected to the CAA and its major initiatives such as task forces, signature events and programs including Columbia Alumni Leaders Weekend (CALW)/Columbia Alumni Leaders Experience (CALE) , CU there!, Columbia Connects, and University-wide initiatives such as Giving Day. SIG leaders also shared that their own initiatives, such as spotlighting their members in communications, personal outreach, listening sessions, and the ability to make informed decisions based on constituent feedback, increase feelings of belonging. Survey respondents shared that participating in efforts through Global Clubs and SIGs as well as ‘done in a day’ volunteer opportunities helped to increase their feelings of belonging and sense of community. Additionally, respondents noted a desire for opportunities to work with the CAA to co-create experiences for fellow alumni.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force has assembled five overarching recommendations based on the aforementioned findings. In order to fulfill these recommendations, the Task Force is putting forth both tasks that will have a finite completion (and will consistently be reviewed and maintained) as well as longer term considerations which will require cultural changes within the CAA. There are also considerations to be assessed and led specifically by the CAA Board and its Strategic Planning Committee. Collaboration between University Alumni Relations staff, CAA Board members and alumni leaders will be paramount to the execution of these recommendations.

1. Enhance engagement and feelings of belonging through segmented programmatic offerings.

a. Create a programmatic plan to engage alumni from segments of the community that are often disengaged, including mid-career alumni, recent alumni, retired alumni and alumni with young families. Additionally, execute one or two CAA-wide events annually that highlight the intersectionality in addition to the diversity of heritages and cultures represented throughout the Columbia alumni community.

b. Encourage alumni to form connections with each other at large-scale programs. This can be done at in-person programs by instituting ice breakers, volunteer greeters, and facilitators for peer-to-peer introductions. Connections of this manner can be created through virtual programs by encouraging all event organizers to employ moderated breakout rooms and/or follow up discussions.

The Task Force recommends the CAA Board consider the following:

c. Engender feelings of connectedness with and visibility of the CAA Board by ensuring that the majority of programs executed by the CAA, regardless of size and lead organizers, have a CAA board presence.

d. Encourage School-based diversity at all programs by working with School-based alumni directors and alumni leaders to develop roles for School-based liaisons to populate the leadership teams of SIGs/Global Clubs/Arts Access.

2. Ensure strategic planning and cross-collaboration across programmatic and volunteer efforts, especially among segmented groups and clubs, to build a stronger sense of unity with volunteers and alumni overall.

a. Develop an overall set of goals and objectives including enhanced regular collaboration of SIGs through a committee-based effort.

b. Identify themes for one to three All-SIG, volunteer-driven, signature events annually.

c. Empower the Recent Alumni and Student Relations Committee (RASR) to collaborate with leaders of the Student Leadership Advisory Council (SLAC) and the Student Affairs Committee of the University Senate (SAC) to create an engagement plan that ensures students are aware of CAA opportunities for engagement and for RASR and SLAC to support and participate in student initiatives, where appropriate.

d. Encourage segmented groups to identify a lead volunteer to focus on collaborations that build unity across all organizations and CAA-led efforts.

e. Strengthen lines of communications with Tri-State alumni and University partners to engage local alumni with the University through on-campus events as well as both volunteer and staff driven-programs of the CAA.

The Task Force recommends the CAA Board consider the following:

f. Leverage relationships Board members have with University-wide and School-based partners to increase awareness of CAA SIG and Global Club programmatic and volunteer opportunities

3. Increase awareness of existing programmatic and volunteer opportunities as well as brand recognition of the benefits of being engaged with the University and CAA.

- a. Charge leaders from the SIGs, Global Clubs, Alumnae Leadership Group, and Student Leadership Advisory Council, as well as leaders from Schools and units across the University, with creating a CAA events and engagement communication plan. This plan will be used to ensure members of each of the aforementioned groups are consistently aware of and promoting programs for each other and the CAA, volunteer opportunities, and virtual programs and event archives. Similarly, the CAA will continue broadly promoting the work of these groups.
- b. Create an alumni spotlight in the CAA's monthly newsletter. This storytelling vehicle will showcase the diversity of the CAA volunteer community, ways alumni can become engaged and reasons why alumni choose to engage and stay involved.
- c. Since many alumni are unaware of the variety of topic-based or niche programs offered by the CAA and School-based partners, develop and implement a marketing/brand recognition plan to better inform the overall alumni audience about how to participate in such programs, both online and in-person.
- d. Social media platforms are consistently evolving and changing. Assess the CAA's social media strategy to determine new or different opportunities to engage alumni. This will be ongoing.

4. Continue to gather and utilize data to understand why alumni do and do not participate in CAA engagement opportunities.

- a. Anecdotal data has been crucial to the work of the Task Force. Continue to understand alumni feelings of belonging through pop-up surveys and Alumni Voices, to use to understand how these feelings change over time.
- b. Analyze current and past engagement trends to enable the CAA to do more targeted outreach to individuals that have been intermittently engaged.
- c. Administer a Survey on Belonging on a biennial basis that will allow us to assess whether or not general feelings of belonging are increasing throughout the alumni community. Share findings and actions taken to give alumni the opportunity to understand the impact of sharing their feedback.
- d. Create an opportunity for students to approve their data being transferred from student records to the alumni database.
- e. Establish a baseline metric that will enable the tracking of alumni participation across segmented programs.

The Task Force recommends the CAA Board consider the following:

- f. Encourage increased data collection and analysis by working with School-based alumni directors and both School-based and CAA alumni leaders to ensure comprehensive documentation of alumni engagement information.

5. Continually assess the effectiveness of initiatives to ensure broad community inclusion and representation in all events and programs, communications, and volunteer opportunities.

a. At the onset of the Task Force’s work, a review of all CAA communications, programs and practices (volunteer recruitment, etc.) was conducted. Formalize this process and execute it on an annual basis.

The Task Force recommends the CAA Board consider the following:

b. Empower all volunteers and staff to enhance the inclusivity of the CAA. This is imperative and will require training. The Columbia Alumni Leaders Experience can be utilized to raise awareness of the issues identified in this report and provide training in the methods that can be used to promote feelings of belonging.

c. The development of a CAA community standard for inclusive engagement will define the expectations of all volunteers and staff as it relates to ensuring that all alumni feel that the CAA is a community in which they belong. This standard will be created based on the input and support of the Task Force as well as the CAA’s partners.

METRICS FOR SUCCESS

While analysis of the self-reported survey and focus group perspectives has largely shaped the Task Force’s recommendations, quantitative figures, in addition to qualitative data, will be utilized in determining their success. In alignment with the CAA 2023 five-year plan’s metrics for success, additional measures will be considered in the creation of CAA 2027, the next five-year plan which will commence in July 2022. These metrics should include but not be limited to:

1. Improved overall feelings of belonging as determined by subsequent surveys
2. Number of individuals who participate, participate for the first time, or move to engaged alum status through their participation in the following initiatives:
 - 2a. attending in-person and virtual CAA programs
 - 2b. attending SIG individual and collaborative events
 - 2c. participating in pop-up surveys/Alumni Voices
 - 2d. volunteering through belonging-focused positions
3. Number of students engaging with the CAA and its segmented efforts
4. Students engaged with the CAA who continue engaging as alumni
5. Number of individuals participating in CAA’s segmented efforts

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The Task Force is confident that the implementation of the recommendations in this report will result in a stronger sense of belonging across our community. However, there is still much work to be done, and the Task Force, with the addition of new members to further represent the diversity of the alumni body, recommends it remain in formation through the 2021-2022 academic year.

The next phase of work will focus on the creation of subcommittees to carry out the recommendations set forth in this report. Additionally, the Task Force will ensure that its work, as well as the findings from the preliminary

survey, are shared with University and CAA leadership and the overall alumni community through the CAA newsletter and other alumni communications.

The Task Force recognizes the impact that virtual programming has had on the engagement of alumni throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Online programs will continue to be valuable in the future—particularly for engaging new alumni, especially those outside of the geographic areas where in-person programs will be held. Virtual programs have also helped to engage those alumni whose accessibility to in-person programming is limited based on numerous other factors. The Task Force recommends that the CAA board consider the importance of continuing virtual and hybrid programming to maintain the engagement of these individuals.

Finally, the Task Force is eager to see belonging as a consistent theme throughout the entirety of the upcoming CAA five-year strategic plan. We believe this will create a stronger commitment to goals of belonging and inclusivity than if these matters were condensed into a single goal.

The Task Force is proud to have been part of this process and looks forward to continuing to work to ensure that all alumni feel safe, welcome and integral to the CAA.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Feedback

As the Columbia Alumni Association works to launch our Task Force on Belonging we appreciate any insight you may be able to share regarding work your institutions have done to address the diversity, inclusivity, and equity of your organizations.

Name

Your answer

Institution

Your answer

What initiatives and/or task forces have your organization launched to access and address questions of diversity, equity, and inclusion?

Your answer

How did you engage alumni and volunteers in this process?

Your answer

What data analysis and/or surveys were completed as part of this process?

Your answer

What was the outcome of this work?

Your answer

Is this anything you wish you had done differently throughout this process?

Your answer

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APPENDIX B- Peer Institutions Survey Responses

	A	B	C	D	E
	What initiatives and/or task forces have your organization launched to access and address questions of diversity, equity, and inclusion?	How did you engage alumni and volunteers in this process?	What data analysis and/or surveys were completed as part of this process?	What was the outcome of this work?	Is this anything you wish you had done differently throughout this process?
1	Currently have a university committee that meets monthly on this topic. Name is University Committee on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. This committee has been around since 2006 and is made up of representatives from around campus. All of our school/colleges have representatives, as well as athletics, alumni, student life, career services, admission, etc. Over the years we have had community volunteers on the committee, but not consistently. They have an annual award (Champion of Diversity and Inclusion...name is probably going to change to include Equity) that they present, and they work on general programming for campus, but of course this programming has ramped up in the past 2 months.	We have engaged our Black Alumni Club, Pride Alumni Club and Latinx in programming conversations. In addition, we have hosted four virtual alumni events all dealing with the conversation of DEI. Our first one was in April 2020, prior to the protests. The second part of our April event just happened to be schedule 2 weeks into the protests. Topics: Cultural Humility During Covid-19; part 1 (April), Racial Injustice: Continuing the Conversation; part 2 (June), LGBTQ+ Legal Rights in the Post-Kennedy Era (June), and Fostering Belonging in the Workplace (July). All of these programs were led by alumni and/or current faculty. We are continuing to work with alumni to figure out next steps.	None.... we should have in hindsight!!	A great connection with our alumni speakers who we may not have had other engagement opportunities with. Timely topics, that have engaged alumni that have not participated in the past with our office.	Surveyed our alumni after each event!
2	The Alumni Task Force on DEI was formed in 2015 and delivered a report to the board chair, who then delivered it to the president. We convened the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 DEI working groups, held a conference, organized events of interest to alumni from diverse backgrounds and events that showed the value of diversity (a workshop with the Medici group, for example).		There were 2 surveys of our top alumni leaders -- a little more than 1,000, I recall. This cohort is described in the 2017 report of the Alumni Task Force on DEI, which is on the website previously cited.	Identified young alumni and alumni from diverse backgrounds as potential alumni leaders, developed a communications toolkit and a DEI-specific toolkit, developed programs that focus on self-reflection and sharing stories, organized programs.	I would have liked to have: (i) worked closely with University president to respond to the 2017 report of the Alumni Task Force on DEI, (ii) communicated more often with alumni about the Alumni Association's DEI work and amplified the university's DEI work, especially to alumni interested in DEI work. The best advice I received about advancing DEI was to start first with the alumni association staff, before working with the Alumni Association board. I wished I had started earlier with the staff. With regard to working to advance DEI with the Alumni Association board, I should have involved board members in planning the session on working across differences. The content was good but the trainer was not well-received, in part because board members had not been involved in the planning. I also learned that if you organize committees, you will get reports and recommendations but no action. You need to make sure that the committee's charge includes execution.
3	The university has formed a Diversity Council with representatives from each School, the College of Arts and Sciences, and several other units; the chancellor appointed a Commission on History, Race, and a Way Forward; the university's new strategic plan has 8 strategic initiatives and purpose, the #1 is "Build our Community Together."	Our association has had a very successful Black Alumni Reunion for the past 40 years - our largest affinity reunion. BAR meets over several days with a wide range of programs (e.g. awards, scholarships, mentoring, social, homecoming football game, etc.). BAR also created a society which takes advantage of the General Alumni Association's self-governance to raise funds scholarships for Black students	Our association staff responded to an association staff created a questionnaire to assess how we think we're doing in exactly the spaces you are examining. We also have compiled data on under represented minority alumni among all university alumni.	Outcomes to be determined over time. Our success has assured diverse representation on the association's board and among association award recipients.	The university is xxxx years old and there is much that could/should have been differently over those years.
4	Diversity and Inclusion is one of our core values. We have a full time Associate Director for Diversity and Inclusion. Her work focuses on Diversity and Inclusion and international programming for students and alumni. This position has been in place since 1994. We also dedicated an entire issue of our members only magazine to diversity and inclusion last fall.	We have a Multicultural Alumni Council that meets several times a year to assist with our programmatic efforts and serves as an advisory council.	Not applicable as this position has been in existence since 1994.	N/A	N/A
5	We have had a long-standing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice staff committee and a Diversity Committee of our Board of Directors. Most of our focus has been on "diversity," though now we're beginning to explore more about the true meaning of and how to be "inclusive."	Our Board regularly discusses this as part of their meetings and are considering work they can do together to learn more about social justice. Already 12 or our 23 elected Board members are minority. I've been meeting with leaders of our minority (Black, Latinx, Asian Pacific Islander, International and LGBTQ) alumni groups to get their input on future planning and programming.	Nothing yet		
6	The Alumni Association Board of Governors has a permanent sub-committee called the Multicultural Activities Committee that focuses on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion strategy for alumni communities. Over the years this committee has worked with staff members on developing and implementing programs and initiatives that promote collaborations between Affinity groups and regional club communities. This year the Multicultural Activities Committee has developed a survey for Historically Underrepresented Group alumni community members. This survey will provide the insight needed to develop a long term DE&I strategy for the Alumni Association. We also have an Alumni Class Leaders Board that has developed DE&I guidelines for our class communities. This past year our department established a DE&I taskforce to address how we incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion in our business practices for our internal (staff) and external (alumni) communities.	The Alumni Association Board of Governors Multicultural Affairs committee and the Alumni Class Leaders Board are comprised of alumni volunteers.	We are working on a survey that will go out to Historically Underrepresented Group alumni which will go out this fall	We have incentivized cross-community collaboration on Diversity themed events and initiatives that engage alumni of all backgrounds by providing a financial subsidy. This initiative has resulted in our Affinity Groups and Regional Club communities collaborating on a number of events over the years focused on social justice issues and race relations in the U.S.	I only started at 10 months ago. I will say that upon my arrival I wish there had been an Alumni Relations survey done in the past of the Historically Underrepresented Group alumni. We had surveyed these communities in the past but these surveys were done in conjunction with our last campaign effort and focused on philanthropy and Affinity Group affiliation (not all Historically Underrepresented Group alumni have a strong affiliation with their affinity/shared interest groups).
7	The university has a President's Council on Diversity and Inclusion, which includes an alumni cluster. We also have a divisional committee who works in alignment. The Alumni Board has begun their own journey of self-education with a series of conversations about systemic racism and our role as a board.	See above.	The university utilized some original data collections as well as climate surveys to inform their work.	Plan for Inclusive Excellence, which can be found on our website.	There is consensus that we may have prioritized differently with regards to certain areas.
8	Our Advancement group has its own Diversity Committee, which is a volunteer group that helps to advise senior staff and produces professional development events throughout the year: speakers, a book club, an internal newsletter.	Not at all. It's entirely an internal group. We've been debating what we should do externally for some time, but to no conclusions so far.	None.	We've set aside our monthly Advancement staff meeting for August to do a two-hour workshop with staff on DEI. It's next week.	I wish we'd jumped earlier to do the simple stuff: issue a simple statement in support of BLM and/or create a statement that staff members could voluntarily sign on to. I liked that staffers created a social media graphic that staff members could choose to post on their personal feeds, saying that they worked at the Alumni Association and were supportive of Black Lives.
9					

	A	B	C	D	E
	We have a staff of 4 and a Board Committee	Through a committee formed by the Board - has representation from network leaders, students, staff, faculty	surveys, data collected over the past 4 years	Multiple types of programs in multiple venues and heavy utilization of technology	
10	Beginning three years ago with the rehire of our Director of Diverse Alumni Engagement, we undertook a series of focus groups with alumni in metro areas with the highest concentration of diverse (African-American, Latinx, Native American, Asian American) alumni. For us that was Milwaukee, Chicago, Atlanta, Washington, DC. Also three years ago, I started a work group as part of my alumni advisory council to address issues of diversity and diverse alumni engagement. Just recently, the governing board of our parent organization launched a work group for Diversity and Inclusion. In more of a personal development journey, I and my leadership team are reading and discussing White Fragility by Robin DiAngelo.	For the focus groups, we asked a series of questions to gather qualitative feedback from them about their student experience, alumni experience, disappointments in the institution and alumni association and hopes / areas of passion for future engagement. 6 Council members participate each year in the Diverse Alumni Engagement work group and provide insights and direction to the program strategies for that area of our organizations' engagement work. The Board Work Group includes approximately 10 board members who are in two subgroups: Internal goals (recruitment, retention, policies, etc.) and External goals (engagement, philanthropy, values, messaging). Groups have been tasked to have a plan ready by August 30.	To date, only qualitative. I believe that as we undergo staff training we will be taking an inventory.	The focus group responses informed a three-year strategic engagement plan for diverse alumni. We have seen engagement and affinity scores among Black and Latinx alumni increase since new strategies have been put in place (monthly e-newsletter highlighting accomplishments of diverse students, alumni and fac/staff; engagement opportunities specifically for diverse alumni communities; intentional opportunities to network with and mentor current students; collaboration with campus programs on joint programs; increasing diversity of alumni advisory council). The outcomes of the Council work group have been participating in networking events with students, participating in engagement activities in their local areas, advising on engagement strategy, and advising me and my team on how to improve in these areas. The outcomes of the Board work group are yet to be determined but deliverables include an organizational road map for diversity and inclusion, with goals and milestones to which we will be held accountable; additional training for staff; and a values statement/community principles for volunteers and donors.	I wish we would have started the organizational conversations much earlier. I would find value in a quantitative survey or instrument to guide our work as well.
11	We have just launched an internal DEI task force at the Foundation. A survey is also being conducted so that the DEI task force has a benchmark for building their programs/initiatives.	We have selected a few key volunteers to participate in the survey and feedback groups	Historical data in our data base, and creating a survey	in process	We should have begun this sooner
12	We previously had an internal Equity team focused on talent management within the Foundation. We also previously had an Inclusion and Diversity Committee for the alumni board. We have since launched a Foundation/Association-wide task force that will focus on engaging alumni of color and will be very intentional with their work through established metrics.	The alumni board tasked volunteers to populate the Inclusion and Diversity Committee. Our equity committee has a Foundation Board committee that they are working with. Both alumni committees will be involved in the staff-led task force.	We previously conducted a survey through Simpson Scarborough of all alumni, but findings around race/ethnicity were inconclusive.	The work is ongoing, but the early work that we did over the past 5 years has created a culture that is supportive of this work.	I would have been more closely involved with the Board committee to provide greater direction and support.
13	Affinity Groups/Programs	Steering Committees	Unknown	Current Affinity Community consisting of 8 Affinity Groups/Programs based on identity, industry and interest	I'm newer to the team so that's a bit difficult to answer as this time.
14	In 2016 we (development and alumni relations) launched a Roadmap for Diversity & Inclusion, which built upon the University's Roadmap. We acknowledged these roadmaps and included diversity, equity and inclusion priorities, goals, and recommendations in the University-Wide Alumni Engagement Strategic Plan which was just launched March 2020. In addition, we have created a task force within the operating board of the Alumni Association to look at the strategic plan and ensure that the Alumni Association is aligned with it. This process is going on now with a report from the task force due at the Annual Meeting in October.	Alumni were involved in development of the University-wide Alumni Engagement Strategic Plan, and actively involved in the Alumni Association Task Force	We had a GG&A review of all alumni programs across the university in 2017, and followed it with a Gallup Survey in 2018	The outcomes were the university-wide strategic plan, as well as the redefinition of the purpose and goal of our affinity program (more of a tweaking than a complete overhaul).	Not at this point.
15	After months of consultation over the 2019-2020 academic year with 100s of members of the community, our first Strategic EDI Plan (2020-2025) was endorsed in April 2020 by the Senate and Board of Governors (i.e., Trustees). This Plan will ensure that EDI considerations are accounted for in all core University activities, and sets out a range of objectives and measures that we will undertake over the next five years. These measures will seek to enhance the diversity and representativeness of our University community while ensuring equitable opportunities and sense of inclusion and belonging for all. Implications for University Advancement are embedded in several aspects of the Plan, namely in funding opportunities, as well as mentorship for underrepresented populations. The Alumni Association disseminated a Statement on Diversity and Inclusion in June 2020 that supported the University's statement on injustice and racism, and outlined the actions the alumni association has or intends to undertake relative to recruitment for governance roles, support of the University's EDI Plan and a financial commitment towards anti-racism initiatives undertaken by student groups and/or branch (regional) associations.	The process was established as a result of the work put into place by the Board on the Association's strategic plan, one pillar of which is EDI. With the assistance and support of the CAO (my role), a subcommittee of the Board undertook research into EDI plans and/or policies at other like-institutions, as well as a scan of EDI policies and processes. Action items and timelines were presented to the Board for approval. The Board is in its first year of carrying out its current strategic plan. (The other pillars are support of current campaign and outreach to alumni leaders from regional and constituent alumni groups.	See above - research was conducted to gather policies and processes from us and other institutions.	See above - strategic plan pillar related to EDI and later, the statement issued in June. In terms of mentorship opportunities, we are deepening our outreach to alumni from underrepresented groups and investigating new platforms to help with data collection and matching. Underrepresented groups include, but are not restricted to: women, racialized and ethnic persons, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, persons of diverse sexual orientations or gender identities and/or persons with significant care responsibilities.	We are fortunate to have an excellent Equity Office, as well as a vibrant alumni community to turn to for insight and collaboration - we're in the early stages of carrying out plans and creating change - too early to look back, just yet!
16	Joint planning group from our diversity leadership society and the Black Alumni Society	Using existing diversity groups boards and organizations to create structure and dialogue	Segmented and ongoing survey around issue of racism, policing, etc	Ongoing themed programming in partnership with faculty and other content experts for both all alumni and more targeted diverse alumni audiences	
17	University-wide task force on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and anti-black racism is launching this fall	Not yet, but they will be. Consultations with the Alumni Association, and divisionally based associations will take place	not known yet	In progress	Don't know yet!
18	The initial task force report was done by the Board of Trustees in 1988 which led to the establishment of the Office of Minority Alumni Program in 1990 which has been in existence since (changing names to Diversity Alumni Programs in 2011). Many initiatives have followed including the expansion of the identity based alumni associations, and staff led programs, outreach, and engagement.	All of the volunteer organizations are alumni led. The chair of is always a sitting trustee.	Ongoing data analysis of demographics/representation, alumni census, focus groups, etc. all over the past few decades.	See above - ongoing.	A more inclusive charge from the beginning as the initial efforts were mostly centered around BIPOC alumni and did not take a holistic approach to diversity.
19					

	A	B	C	D	E
	We have launched a "Forum for Equity" -- a speaker series engaging with issues of systemic racism and other issues of equity across URMs. It may be that we will jointly run a few events aimed at encouraging dialogue in industries that have somewhat notorious reputations for racism and misogyny. We are supporting our affinity groups and Clubs as they develop and offer programming. We are encouraging our leadership volunteers to use their voices effectively on this topic when they sit on our governance committees like the Corporation and its committees.	Email marketing, engaging with senior volunteer leaders in these communities on speaker ideas, connecting with our Institute Community and Equity Officer to ensure alignment. Our most recent past president of the alumni association is African-American and a champion for the effort.	We are tracking metrics on the speaker series and will report out. We are watching and engaging with culture shifting efforts underway at the Corporation level.	Visible commitment by the central Alumni Association to this important dialogue. Stronger community connections as Clubs and affinity groups work together to offer and market programming on these important topics. Otherwise it is too early to say, in my opinion.	so far, no -- but I am sure we have a long path ahead and much to learn.
20	Developing a resource hub for alumni; plan to do implicit bias training; Alumni Council addressing this in their committee structure.		None yet; planning on it.	in progress	
21	We have focused for three years in our board on DIB. After the Floyd murder we created a working group on antiracism. In addition we have a staff group focused on DIB in the office.	ALumni led the efforts. They are supported by staff. I personally am involved with the antiracism working group.	We did initial analysis trying to understand the demographics of our volunteer ranks.	The data analysis informed the agendas of the initiatives. The initiatives themselves resulted in training and awareness building for volunteers. Antiracism Working Group is creating volunteer learning opportunities in program development, difficult conversation and personal narrative to drive belonging and action.	Not yet.
22					

Institutions Represented in Survey: American University, Brown University, Cornell University, Dartmouth, Harvard, Kansas State University, Johns Hopkins University, McGill University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, The University of North Carolina General Alumni Association, University of California - Los Angeles, University of Chicago, University of Connecticut, University of Michigan, University of Oregon Alumni Association, University of the Pacific, University of Pennsylvania, University of Toronto, University of Wisconsin, Yale University

Proposal for the Columbia Alumni Association's Task Force on Belonging - As of 9.1.2020

Task Force Purpose

The purpose of the CAA's Task Force on Belonging ('Task Force') is to ensure that the Columbia Alumni Association and all of its related entities are accurately representative of, are welcoming to, foster a sense of belonging for, amplify the voices of and create a space for all members of the Columbia alumni community

Task Force Composition

The Task Force shall be composed of members of the CAA Board, CAA club/SIG leaders, student leaders and alumni. The task force shall be supported by the Associate Director, Shared Interest Groups.

Proposed Responsibilities

Prep Work - Summer 2020

- Draft a census of the CAA board to ensure the leadership is representative of the alumni population.
- Gather feedback regarding similar task forces at peer institutions via phone calls and survey.
- Work internally to gather samples of CAA marketing and communications pieces, descriptions of CAA programs and engagement opportunities, and roles and responsibilities for the CAA board, clubs and groups.
- Consult with partners from the Office of Multicultural Affairs and University Life at the University.
- Invite potential task force members to participate.

Meeting #1- September 23, 2020

- Review purpose and scope of work of the task force.
- Share overview of programs, volunteer engagement, and marketing streams.
- Review what works well and what should be improved (from the task force's perspective).
- Brainstorm questions and goals of an all-alumni survey.

In between meetings

- Draft survey to be sent to all alumni.
- Schedule one on one or small group meetings with task force members to learn their own experiences and perceptions of belonging at Columbia.

Meeting #2 - November 4, 2020

- Review survey and communications plan for rollout through *Alumni Voices* and other channels.
- Recap and follow up on items from meeting #1.

In between meetings

- Release survey and compile results.

Meeting #3 - January 14, 2021

- Review survey findings.
- Determine main themes to convene focus groups around.

In between meetings

- Invitations to focus groups sent.

Meeting #4- February 23, 2021

- Training for focus groups facilitation.

- Review focus groups composition.

In between meetings

- Hold focus groups

Meeting #5- April 8, 2021

- Review themes that emerge from focus groups.
- Outline themes, items to be included in an action plan.

In between meetings

- Draft action plan with recommendations in line with the goals of CAA 2023 Strategic Plan, especially segmentation and personalization.

Meeting #6- May 20, 2021

- Finalize action plan to be presented to the CAA Board by the end of the academic year.

Long Term Considerations

- Ensure awareness of identity-based activities and groups both within the CAA and share with the School-based alumni relations programs.
- Help facilitate the creation of opportunities for leaders rolling off of the boards of SIGs or School-based identity alumni groups.
- Create connections between CAA SIGs and School-based identity groups.
- Consider the creation of programming specifically designed to highlight the diversity of the CAA.
- Provide an alumni perspective in campus-wide discussions around diversity and inclusion.
- Help facilitate connections between SIGs and student identity-based groups as a means of transitioning students to alumni as referenced in the CAA 2023 Strategic Plan.

Appendix D - Task Force Membership

Members

Rolando Acosta '79CC, '82LAW
Prisca Bae '00CC
A'Lelia Bundles '76JRN
Kenneth Catandella (Staff)
Elisa Charters '01SIPA
Carlos Cuevas '05CC, '12MPH, '12SIPA
Genna Farley Fleming (Staff)
Keith Goggin '91JRN
Ted Gregory '74CC
Alicia Guevara '95CC, '14BUS
Wanda Holland Greene '89CC, '91TC
Sitara Herur '19GS
Marvellous Iheukwumere '14CC
Riley Jones '17CC
Elizabeth Kipp Giusti '12CC
Gibson Knott (Staff)
Peter Liang '08BUS
Katherine Liu '21SEAS
Donna MacPhee '89CC (Staff)
Nick Mannino (Staff)
Tania Martin-Mercado '16SPS
Alece Oxendine '11SOA
Will Plews-Ogan '22GSAS, '23LAW
Zoe Rumashu '20JRN
Kiara Reed '11GS, '16BUS, '16SIPA
Brandon Shi '22CC
Laura Thornton '20SIPA
Jena Tumbleson '19SIPA (Staff)
Ying Yen '95CC

Schools/Units Represented

Columbia Business School
Columbia College
Columbia Law School
Columbia School of the Arts
Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Graduate School of Journalism
Mailman School of Public Health
School of General Studies
School of International and Public Affairs
School of Professional Studies
Teacher's College

Shared Interest Groups Represented

Asian Columbia Alumni Association (ACAA)
Black Alumni Council (BAC)
Columbia Pride
Latino Alumni Association of Columbia University (LAACU)

Membership Breakdown

Columbia University Trustees - 3
CAA Board Members - 7
Recent Graduates/Students - 5
School Volunteers - 4
SIG/Global Club Leaders - 5
Staff - 6



Opportunities for Engagement

CAA Task Force on Belonging Meeting #1

Programmatic Offerings

- CAA Signature Programs
 - Columbia at Home
 - Columbia Connects (volunteer-led component)
 - CAA at Sundance
 - CAA at Tribeca Film Festival
 - CAA at Art Basel
 - Stem Day
- CAA Volunteer-Led Initiatives
 - Columbia Alumni Leaders Experience/Weekend
 - She Opened the Door

Programmatic Offerings

- CAA Arts Access
- CAA Partnership Programs (School-based Events and Meetings with School-based Alumni Associations)
- Columbia Alumni Center
 - Events and Reception Space
 - Informal Internal and External Meetings
 - Work/Meeting Space for Alumni
 - Services
 - Lounge, Library, Courtesy Office, Refreshments
 - Assistance Exploring Alumni Benefits

Student-Alumni Programming

- The Columbia Way - Graduating Student Program
- SLAC Initiatives
- CU there!
- Free Lunch Fridays and Study Breaks
- Student-sponsored Events
- Alumni Club and SIG hosted Experiences for Students (holiday meals, send-offs, welcome events)

Regional Clubs and SIGs

- Global Programs
 - Domestic Clubs
 - International Clubs
 - All-Ivy Programs (in conjunction with Ivy regional/SIGs)
- Shared Interest Groups
 - Identity-Based
 - Industry-Based
 - Interest-Based

Active Regional Clubs - 89 Domestic and International Clubs

- Argentina
- Atlanta
- Austria
- Beijing
- Belgium
- Boston
- Brazil, Porto Alegre Chapter
- Brazil, Rio de Janeiro Chapter
- Brazil, Sao Paulo Chapter
- Brooklyn – (FY18)
- Central Texas, Austin
- Chicago
- Chile, Santiago
- Cleveland
- Club
- Colombia
- Colombo, Sri Lanka
- Colorado
- Cyprus
- Denmark
- Egypt
- Ethiopia
- Fairfield County
- France
- Lima
- London
- Luxembourg
- Mexico
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Morocco
- Moscow
- Nairobi
- Nashville
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- New Orleans
- Nigeria
- North Texas, Dallas
- Northern California
 - San Francisco
 - Sacramento
- Pakistan
- Philadelphia
- Phoenix
- Pittsburgh
- Poland
- Portland
- Qatar
- Qingdao, China
- Germany
 - Berlin,
 - Dusseldorf/Cologne
 - Frankfurt
 - Munich
- Greece
- Guangzhou
- Hangzhou
- Hawaii
- Hong Kong Limited
- Hungary
- India
 - Bangalore
 - Delhi
 - Calcutta
 - Mumbai
 - Chennai
 - Hyderabad
- Indonesia
- Israel
- Italy, Rome
- Japan
- Kazakhstan
- Korea
- Kuwait – (FY19)
- Lebanon
- Rhode Island
- Rochester
- San Antonio
- San Diego
- Sarasota
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
 - Basel
 - Geneva
- Zurich
- Taipei
- Thailand
- The Carolinas, Charlotte
- The Netherlands
- The Pacific Northwest, Seattle
- The Philippines – (FY18)
- Tunisia
- Turkey
- U.A.E. – (FY19)
- Vietnam
 - Ha Noi
 - Ho Chi Minh
- Washington, D.C.

Shared Interest Groups (SIGs): 14 Groups

- Asian Columbia Alumni Association
- Black Alumni Council
- CAA First-Generation/Low-Income Alumni Network
- CAA Wine Industry Network
- Columbia Alumni Singers
- Columbia Arab Alumni Association
- Columbia Fiction Foundry
- Columbia Pride
- Columbia University Band Alumni Association
- Columbia University Muslim Alumni Association
- Columbia Venture Community
- Columbia University Women's Business Society Alumnae
- Latino Alumni Association of Columbia University
- Real Estate Network of Columbia Alumni Association

Student Groups That Collaborate With SIGs:

- **Columbia Arab Alumni Association**
 - ✓ Turath
 - ✓ Arab/Middle Eastern Family Tree of the Columbia Mentoring Initiative
- **Asian Columbia Alumni Association (ACAA)**
 - ✓ ACAA Student Council
 - ✓ Columbia University Chinese Students Association (CUCSSA)
 - ✓ SIPA Empowering Asia Women EMPA
 - ✓ Undergrad groups through OMA
 - ✓ Columbia University Lion Dance
- **Black Alumni Council (BAC)**
 - ✓ Black Students Organization
 - ✓ National Society of Black Engineers
 - ✓ African Students Association
 - ✓ CU Black Pre-Professional Society
 - ✓ African Development Group
 - ✓ Black Business Students Association
 - ✓ Black Student Nurses
 - ✓ SIPA Students of Color
 - ✓ Teachers College Black Student Network
 - ✓ Black and Latino Student Organization (BALSO) at P&S
 - ✓ Charles PreMedical Society
 - ✓ Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity
 - ✓ Delta Sigma Theta Sorority
 - ✓ Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority
 - ✓ National Association of Black Journalists
 - ✓ Black Law Students Association
- **CAA First-Generation/Low-Income Alumni Network (CFLAN)**
 - ✓ First-Generation Low-Income Partnership (FLIP)
- **CAA Wine Industry Network (WIN)**
 - ✓ CBS Wine Society
- **Columbia University Band Alumni Association**
 - ✓ Columbia Marching Band
- **Columbia Venture Community (CVC)**
 - ✓ Columbia Organization of Rising Entrepreneurs (CORE)
 - ✓ Columbia Venture Partners
- **Columbia Veterans**
 - ✓ Columbia MilVets
- **Columbia Women's Business Society Alumnae (CWBSA)**
 - ✓ Columbia Women's Business Society
- **Latino Alumni Association of Columbia University (LAACU)**
 - ✓ Undergrad groups through OMA
 - ✓ LASA (SIPA Latinx Student Group)
 - ✓ Columbia Business School Hispanic Business Association
- **PRIDE**
 - ✓ Undergrad groups through OMA
 - ✓ Cluster Q (Columbia Business School)
 - ✓ GS Alliance
 - ✓ SPS
 - ✓ Teacher's College
 - ✓ QSAPP
- **Real Estate Network of the Columbia Alumni Association (RENCAA)**
 - ✓ GSAPP MSRED Program

CAA Volunteer Opportunities

- Board - 45 members
- Committees
 - Alumnae Leadership Group
 - Alumni Trustee Nominating Committee
 - Arts Access
 - Associations & Clubs
 - Honors & Prizes
 - Nominating Committee
 - Programs Committee
 - Student Leadership Advisory Council (SLAC)
 - Strategic Planning Committee
- Alumni Relations Committee (University Senate)
- CAA Global Clubs and Shared Interest Groups

CAA Volunteer Opportunities

- **Columbia Alumni Voices** - a feedback panel of alumni from all decades, ages, degrees and parts of the world, sharing their opinions on a regular basis to help shape a range of Columbia offerings
- **She Opened the Door Initiative** - began with a conference in 2018; aims to enlighten, educate, elevate and to empower Columbia Women across the University

VolunteerColumbia

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[HELP](#)

[CALENDAR](#)

Our Community

Recent Opportunities

2020 Campbell Awards



Meet the winners...



Is Ongoing

**GSAS Alumni Association:
Ambassadorship Committee**
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences



Is Ongoing

Hosting Virtual Events
School of Professional Studies



Is Ongoing

**Student Preparatory Workshops
(e.g., Resume Reviews, Interview
Prep, etc.)**
School of Professional Studies

[View More Opportunities](#)

27 Volunteer Hub Partners FY17-FY20

ACAA: Asian Columbia Alumni Association	Formula SAE-Knickerbocker Motorsports - <i>Student Agency</i>
Barnard College	Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Sciences
CAA Arts Access	Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation
College of Dental Medicine	Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Columbia Alumni Association	Just Societies Volunteer Initiative
Columbia Business School	Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory
Columbia College	Mailman School of Public Health
Columbia College Alumni Association	School of General Studies
Columbia Giving Day	School of International and Public Affairs
Columbia Journalism School	School of Nursing
Columbia Law School	School of Professional Studies
Columbia School of Social Work	School of the Arts
Community Impact Formula - <i>Student Agency</i>	Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons
Crowdfunding Impact Giving	

Marketing Streams

- Email






Columbia Connects is underway! Don't miss out.


Join in this annual tradition that brings alumni together for fellowship and networking and welcomes new graduates to the community.

Take part in a variety of in-person and online events to develop connections, learn about volunteer opportunities, and celebrate everything it means to be a member of our network.









Donna, join 3,200+ other alumni!

Hi Donna,

You hear from us many times throughout the year. Now is your opportunity to make your voice heard!

If you're not yet familiar, Alumni Voices is an online panel for Columbia University graduates to weigh in via brief, five-minute surveys on dozens of initiatives that impact alumni. Participants have shared their opinions on benefits and discounts, the Online Alumni Community, Columbia Magazine content, how they prefer to receive communications from the University, and more.

Marketing Streams

- Social Media
 - Instagram
 - @columbiaalumni
 - LinkedIn
 - Columbia Alumni Association Network
 - Facebook
 - @ColumbiaAlumniAssoc
 - Twitter
 - @ColumbiaAlumniA
- Program Distribution Channels
 - YouTube
 - Online Alumni Community
 - Brazen Networking

Engagement Survey Jan 2021

Columbia is conducting this survey to learn more about ways we can better serve our alumni community and understand how included and welcomed you feel when attending Columbia events and receiving Columbia communications. The questions in this survey will touch upon a wide range of topics and we look forward to receiving your candid responses. The survey will take about 10 minutes of your time. We appreciate your participation.

Your responses are confidential and will only be reported in the aggregate. If you are interrupted or lose your connection while taking the survey, you may continue where you left off by clicking on the link in the email you received.

We look forward to learning more about you. Thank you!

How connected do you feel to Columbia?

- Very connected (1)
 - Somewhat connected (2)
 - Not connected (3)
 - Not at all connected (4)
-

Display This Question:

If How connected do you feel to Columbia? = Not connected

Or How connected do you feel to Columbia? = Not at all connected

Why do you feel that way?

How connected do you feel to the following?

	Very connected (1)	Somewhat connected (2)	Not connected (3)	Not at all connected (4)	Not Applicable (5)
Columbia University (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your School (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your Department / Area of Study (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your Peers/Classmates (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faculty (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Athletics (including coaches) (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Columbia Alumni Association (CAA) (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your School's Alumni Association (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your Regional Club(s) (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your Shared Interest Group(s) (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I feel more connected with my peers and classmates through:








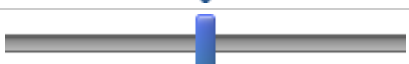


	Strongly Agree (1)	Somewhat Agree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Strongly Disagree (4)
Official Columbia events (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Informal gatherings not set up by Columbia (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

On a scale of 0 to 10, how much does each of these activities make you feel a part of the Columbia community?

For each activity listed, use the slider to choose the number that best shows how you feel, where **0 = Doesn't make me feel like part of the Columbia community at all** and **10 = Makes me feel like part of the Columbia community a great deal**. If you do not participate in the activity, select the "Not Applicable" box.

Not Applicable

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Attending an event ()	
Making a gift ()	
Reading Columbia communications ()	
Interviewing prospective students ()	
Volunteering with Columbia ()	
Mentoring/connecting with a student ()	
Mentoring/connecting with alumni ()	
Being a fundraising volunteer ()	
Attending a Columbia Athletics competition ()	
Reading about Columbia's work/impact in the news ()	

Which of the following Columbia Alumni Association-sponsored programs have you attended in the past two years? (Please select all that apply):

- Regional club event(s) (1)
 - Shared Interest Group event(s) (2)
 - In-person event(s), such as She Opened the Door, Columbia Connects, etc. (3)
 - Networking event(s), either in-person or online (4)
 - Online/Virtual event(s), such as Columbia at Home, webinars, etc. (5)
 - Columbia Alumni Leaders Weekend (in-person) (6)
 - Columbia Alumni Leaders Experience (online/virtual) (7)
 - None of the above (8)
 - Other: (9) _____
-

Which of the following Columbia programs sponsored by a School, Center, Institute, or Athletics have you attended in the past two years? (Please select all that apply):

- In-person event (1)
- Online event (2)
- Reunion (3)
- Homecoming (4)
- Columbia Athletics event or game (5)
- None of the above (6)
- Other: (7) _____

Display This Question:

*If Which of the following Columbia programs sponsored by a School, Center, Institute, or Athletics h...
!= None of the above*

In the past two years, how welcome and included did you feel when you attended the following?

	Very welcomed (1)	Somewhat welcomed (2)	Not welcomed (3)	Not at all welcomed (4)
Columbia events in-person (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Columbia events online (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Display This Question:

*If In the past two years, how welcome and included did you feel when you attended the following? =
Columbia events in-person [Not welcomed]*

*Or In the past two years, how welcome and included did you feel when you attended the following? =
Columbia events in-person [Not at all welcomed]*

What made you feel this way at in-person events?

Display This Question:

*If In the past two years, how welcome and included did you feel when you attended the following? =
Columbia events online [Not welcomed]*

*Or In the past two years, how welcome and included did you feel when you attended the following? =
Columbia events online [Not at all welcomed]*

What made you feel this way at online events?

Please choose how you feel about each of the following statements:	Strongly agree (1)	Somewhat agree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Strongly disagree (4)	Not Applicable (5)
After a Columbia event, I feel that I belong and am connected to the greater alumni community (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have often felt out-of-place at a Columbia event (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Columbia online/virtual events offered since March 2020 have made me feel more connected to the greater alumni community (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Columbia is intentionally engaging all alumni based on a respect for our differences (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel uncomfortable sharing my thoughts and opinions with other Columbians (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel I can be my authentic self when I participate in Columbia activities (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The tone of communications from the CAA feels inclusive and welcoming (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Attending CAA events enhances my personal and/or professional network (8)

I feel CAA programs are welcoming and friendly (9)

I view the CAA as a University-wide organization that helps to break down silos (10)

In the past two years, did these information outlets or interactions promote feelings of inclusion and belonging with Columbia?

	Promotes Inclusion & Belonging (1)	Does Not Promote Inclusion & Belonging (2)	Not Used in the Past Two Years (3)
<i>Columbia Magazine</i> (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School Magazine (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<i>The Columbia Daily Spectator</i> (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
National newspapers and magazines (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Columbia University websites (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Blogs (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facebook (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instagram (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Twitter (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LinkedIn (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Email from Columbia (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Events (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Talking with alumni or current students (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Talking with professors or staff (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other: (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your experience as a Columbia alumna/us.

	Strongly agree (1)	Somewhat agree (2)	Somewhat disagree (6)	Strongly disagree (7)
I feel everyone is accepted regardless of political beliefs (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel everyone is accepted regardless of religious beliefs (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel everyone is accepted regardless of economic or social class (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel everyone is accepted regardless of race and ethnicity (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel everyone is accepted regardless of sexual orientation (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel everyone is accepted regardless of gender identity (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please select from the list of possible barriers below those that might limit you from being more involved with Columbia. (Select all that apply)

- Timing of the offerings (1)
- My own lack of time (2)
- More interested in working with other organizations (3)
- I don't know what the opportunities are (4)
- Topics of the offerings don't appeal to me (5)
- Lack of diversity of thought/viewpoint (6)
- Lack of diversity of event attendees (7)
- Don't feel part of the community (8)
- Geographic location (9)
- Cost of participating in the event(s) (10)
- Family obligations (11)
- Didn't know anyone else attending the event(s) (12)
- Afraid I will be put on a list to be asked for money (13)
- Getting to campus (travel, parking, etc.) (14)
- Other: (15) _____
- I haven't felt any barriers (16)

Display This Question:

If Please select from the list of possible barriers below those that might limit you from being more... = More interested in working with other organizations

Please select which other organizational areas you are currently connected to through volunteering or donating. (Select all that apply)

- Social justice (1)
- Climate/Environment (2)
- Religious (3)
- Health/Medicine (4)
- Higher educational institutions besides Columbia (5)
- Arts & Culture (6)
- Animal rights (7)
- K-12 schools (8)
- Poverty mitigation organizations (9)
- None of the above (10)
- Other: (11) _____

Do you have other comments about ways the CAA can best foster a sense of belonging and inclusion for all alumni **through its programming?**

Do you have other comments about ways the CAA can best foster a sense of belonging and inclusion for all alumni **through its communications?**

Just a few more questions for demographic purposes only.

What is your gender identity?

- Female (1)
 - Male (2)
 - Agender (3)
 - Gender non-binary or genderqueer (4)
 - Gender fluid (5)
 - Prefer to self-describe (Please specify) (6)
-
- Prefer not to say (7)

Display This Question:

If What is your gender identity? = Female

Or What is your gender identity? = Male

Or What is your gender identity? = Agender

Or What is your gender identity? = Gender non-binary or genderqueer

Or What is your gender identity? = Gender fluid

Or What is your gender identity? = Prefer to self-describe (Please specify)

Or What is your gender identity? = Prefer not to say

Do you identify as transgender?

- Yes (1)
 - No (2)
 - Prefer not to say (3)
-

What is your racial identity? (Please select all that apply)

- American Indian, Alaska Native, Aboriginal, Native or Indigenous (1)
 - Asian (2)
 - Black or African American (3)
 - Hispanic or Latinx (4)
 - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (5)
 - White or Caucasian (6)
 - Prefer not to say (7)
 - Other: (8) _____
-

Is your primary residence in the United States?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

What is your age range?

- Under 18 (1)
- 18-24 (2)
- 25-34 (3)
- 35-44 (4)
- 45-54 (5)
- 55-64 (6)
- 65+ (7)

Do you have any children?

Yes (5)

No (6)

Display This Question:

If Do you have any children? = Yes

How many children do you have in each of the following categories? (Please select all categories which apply)

	0 Children (7)	1 Child (3)	2 Children (4)	3+ Children (5)
Under age 5 (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5-12 (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13-18 (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Over 18 (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

As we noted at the start of the survey, your responses are confidential and will only be reported in the aggregate. So that we can continue to improve upon things that are important to you, would you be willing to have your individual responses identified back to you?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Thank you very much for your time and participation.

APPENDIX G- Focus Group Invitation

From: Donna MacPhee

Subject: You are invited to participate in a Columbia Alumni Association Focus Group

Dear <Insert First Name>,

I hope you and your family are doing well in these unsettled times. As part of our on-going efforts to provide a positive and inclusive alumni experience, I would like to invite you to **join a select group of Columbia alumni to share your thoughts in a moderated group discussion**. We hope to explore the aspects of your Columbia experience which were most important to you, and learn how we can sustain and strengthen your relationship with the Columbia Alumni Association and the University going forward.

This informal and confidential discussion aims to ensure that alumni voices are heard and that our programs and services for alumni going forward speak to your interests.

The session will be accessible via telephone or Zoom video conference on Thursday, October 15, from 1:00–2:15 p.m. Eastern Time. Details on how to access the focus group will be provided in your confirmation email.

Please RSVP to Elizabeth Vera at ev2@columbia.edu by Tuesday, October 13 and please mention the topic, date, and time of the session you are responding for since we are managing several programs simultaneously. **Space is limited. We can only accommodate 12 people, so please RSVP today.**

We greatly appreciate your time and look forward to your contributions to the dialogue. Alumni and friends who have participated in past focus groups always enjoy the lively discussion and meeting each other!

Sincerely,

Donna H. MacPhee '89CC, P: '17CC
Vice President for Alumni Relations
President, Columbia Alumni Association
Office of Alumni and Development

APPENDIX H- Focus Group Feedback Presentation

Alumni Focus Group Observations

Conducted October 19 and 22, 2020 - 20 Participants

Top of mind one word or short phrase observations when I said the prompt:

Columbia:

Columbia Lions, Prestigious, Expensive, City of New York, Sports, Intelligence, Knowledge, College Walk, Manhattan, Connection, Global, Core, Opportunity, Connection, Intensity, Excellence

Columbia Schools:

Costly, Critical Thinking, Humanities, Many Things to Improve, History of the School, Career, Community, Common Core, Brand Extension, Career Advancement, Intellectual, Oddball, Low Library, Intellectual Growth, Writing, Sisterhood

Columbia Alumni Association:

Infancy, Something I'm New to, Connection, Novel, Friendship, Potential to Grow, Still Finding Itself, Diversity of Events, Family, Leadership Weekend, Stranger, Engagement, Collaboration, Leadership Weekend, Mysterious, Opaque, Diversity of Events, Giveaways at Homecoming, Responsive, Open Door to Broader Community

Key Quotes about Belonging/Inclusion:

*"Felt very siloed on campus. I didn't know of any events happening outside of things I was exposed to at the College. In the virtual world I am getting access to topics across campus. I've gone to more non-College than College events. **I wish I had done more of this as a student.**"*
- '20CC

"Been to events in Dusseldorf and Nairobi. Last event in Dusseldorf was a mismatch. Everyone from different schools, not much in common. Got to meet new people. Did wine and cheese tasting in Nairobi. Was more like a mosaic." - '12PH

*"The messaging is great. Everything is professional. **However we all transpose any experience we had at our schools onto the engagement requests.** For some it is about igniting nostalgia for others transforming perception. Diversity and inclusion are paramount and I think the language from Columbia is inclusive. It is about the individual experience." - '15GS*

"Belonging is about your mindset. Columbia is a place I belong. I stayed in the United States and as an international student do not feel welcomed because of the current administration. Need help to feel involved. Recent international graduates are struggling." - '18SPS

"I used to work at the UN. I have joined and belonged to Columbia groups across nations and around the world. There is inconsistency between the groups. DC does a great job making you feel welcome. Been to many events where I felt awkward, there was no leadership to welcome you, and it was mostly a drinking event. I made a friend from the Law School though. Shocked

that we met each other, because the scene feels very cliquy. Beijing was great. France was not.” - '01PH

“I live in Cambridge. I went to an event in Boston and felt I didn't fit in at all. Everyone was young, drinking. Never went back. I go primarily to GSAS events. As a graduate student people are attached to their departments. Hard to expand from department to school to university-wide. Leadership weekend events have always felt comfortable. Depends a lot on your own perspective. I loved Columbia so I show up with an open and positive mindset.” - '87GSAS, '92GSAS

“I do a lot of work with MIT and I forget that I went to Columbia. Columbia makes it harder to connect. What makes a university have a robust network is alumni who are able to help you connect. I don't know where the systemic disconnect happens.” - '01PH

“Many events I go to are SIPA events. I'm in touch with that community. Occasionally I branch out. I identify myself with my school more than Columbia at-large.” - '19SIPA

“I have a cousin who got Masters in Arts at Columbia. He had mixed feelings about his educational experience and would not engage as an alum socially. He had a racial issue and felt he wasn't heard. You have to give margin and create your own experience. I had a completely different experience. I think it is an individual experience.” - '17TC, '19SPS

“I have heard from other alumni, classmates. It was a formative time. I always feel embraced and welcomed. I do get feedback from other alumni. Some people hold back from attending programming due to feelings they have left over from time as students. From not having felt part of the community as a student, they hold back from attending and becoming involved as alumni.” - '11BC, '19BUS

“Based on the last in person event. Went with a friend. We felt fine. People were welcoming. I didn't feel like “I went to a different school, I can't talk to them.” - '17TC, '19SPS

Shared Interest Group Insight Form

Please fill out this form to share a bit about your group with the CAA Task Force on Belonging

Group Name

Your answer

What do you think is your group's greatest strength?

Your answer

What do you believe to be your group's greatest challenge?

Your answer

How do you make members feel like they belong?

Your answer

What about your group makes you the most proud?

Your answer

How much has your group interacted with the CAA?

[Request edit access](#)

Your answer

Have members of your group attended CAA events?

Your answer

What has been your/your group's experience at CAA events?

Your answer

How do you think your group can benefit from the CAA Task Force on Belonging?

Your answer

Submit

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

This form was created inside of LionMail. [Report Abuse](#)



SIGs Leaders Survey Results

Presented to the CAA
Task Force on Belonging
February 23, 2021

CONFIDENTIAL

Objectives of the Research



Understand how our identity-based SIG leaders feel about CAA efforts to promote and foster diversity.



Learn how the CAA and its Task Force on Belonging can better support these groups' efforts.

Who Participated

- Arab Alumni Association of Columbia University
- Asian Columbia Alumni Association (ACAA)
- Black Alumni Council (BAC)
- Columbia PRIDE (LGBTQIA+)
- Columbia University Muslim Alumni Association
- Latino Alumni Association of Columbia University (LAACU)

What do you think is your group's greatest strength?

Community: Size of alumni, geographic representation, cultural diversity, generational diversity, all schools both undergrad and grad, 25 years of history, across industries.

Our **collective buy-in** without much effort. The national climate on racial issues has certainly made our existence more relevant and prominent in the Columbia community.

Dedicated Leadership.

Our youth -- because we are so new, more people want to be involved and engage with us by sharing their ideas.

Innovation.

How do you make members feel like they belong?

"**Community spotlights**" - members submit people from the community to be highlighted on social media for their accomplishments.

Regular communications and events with varied approaches, candid about our positioning, **empowering volunteers to do things**, inclusive to all.

Collect **data, incorporate constituent feedback** and make decisions that are aligned with this approach.

Personal welcome, active follow up, **responsiveness**.

Mix of **social and content-driven events** to speak to varied interests. Make an effort to make **individual connections** at every event.

Make members feel they belong by **listening first**. Take stock of the various cultural identities, traditions, and frameworks of members.

What do you believe to be your group's greatest challenge?

University recognition, catered diverse interests from many subgroups, **not strong brand recognition, lack broad-based communication, outreach to young people and students.**

Convincing others in the Columbia ecosystem - student affairs, professors, CAA, Trustees - that **developing a model that focuses on Black students and alumni yields success for non-Black students and alumni in areas beyond racial equity.** Have a flexible and inclusive approach from the start.

Vision.

Recruiting new members and membership retention. Making ourselves known to the alumni community--**publicity and outreach.** Help from the individual schools in promoting our events when appropriate. Getting people to feel compelled to be involved.

Openness in developing strategic solutions and partnerships from all Schools and levels of the University, equally. We found when we bring on **support towards a common goal** all members of our constituency benefit.

What about your group makes you the most proud?

Adaptability - switched to the online platform rapidly and partner well with other departments at the University.

Everyone's **appetite for solving for issues** that are long outstanding within the Columbia experience.

Dedication of leadership and alumni.

Raise the most dollars amongst SIGs and Clubs on Giving Day; we did that for the community, we get things done, listen to different groups: CAA, student groups, etc.; forward looking, **loyalty to Columbia**.

How much has your group interacted with the CAA?

Our co-founders have engaged **significantly** with the CAA as well as other CAA events to bring back more information to the board on how we can develop long-lasting tangible impact.

We have **a lot** of interaction with our SIG staff liaison.

All the time.

Members served on the CAA board, its task forces and School Boards; Columbia Connects, CALE and CALW participation; **directly involved in every single major CAA initiative.**

Have members of your group attended CAA events?

Most of our board and general members have participated in CU there! and other CAA events. **We help CAA publicize these event on our social media platforms.**

Yes, many of our members have attended CAA events.

Yes and participated in speaking.

What has been your/your group's experience at CAA events?

Generally positive but large CAA all-inclusive **events are not always the best format for our community.**

Our **group should be more involved** in CAA events.

Excellent opportunity to **share experiences.**

Our experience has been mostly positive. I think **finding interesting ways to get alumni interested in CAA events is a challenge, but that has more to do with their experience feeling included as a student.**

Overall a good experience. Some events are less relevant for our population than others but mostly enjoyable.

How do you think your group can benefit from the CAA Task Force on Belonging?

We can benefit from hearing how other people experience the CAA and **getting candid thoughts from people like A'Lelia, Wanda, Rolando and Donna about what their goals are for the CAA.**

Share best practices and involve us in strategic level decisions.

Help us reach more alumni to feel they have a place in the alumni community and can benefit from it. Make our own group **more diverse and welcoming** to everyone.

Through more thoughtful conversation that **allows us to better consider the identities within our own identity** (race, religion, sexuality, etc.) we can more effectively support our community. This task force will help us to identify better ways of doing that and in turn set up a stronger foundation for the community as a whole.

Not certain. It **depends on the composition of the task force, its stated goals, and approach to solution development and execution.** This point may warrant a longer conversation.

Questions and Comments?

Engagement and Belonging at Columbia

Executive summary of results and recommendations

Presented to the
CAA Task Force on Belonging
February 23, 2021

CONFIDENTIAL

Objectives of the Research



Understand alumni connections to Columbia



Learn if alumni feel welcomed when attending Columbia events and receiving Columbia communications



Discover alumni perceptions about the CAA in terms of belonging and inclusion



Uncover barriers to engagement with Columbia

Respondent Summary

1,706 survey respondents
January 2021

462 SIGs survey respondents
February 2021

32 focus group participants
February 2021

Our Two Samples

- **Similarities:**

- Connections to Columbia - About 80% Very/Somewhat Connected
- Age - 30% Under 45, 70% Over 45
- Geography – About 85% U.S./15% International

- **Differences:**

- Gender: More females (47%) in SIGs sample vs. 40% in random
- Children: 63% in random sample, 57% in SIGs
- Ethnicity:

Ethnicity/Race	Random	SIGs
White	64%	13%
Asian	14%	30%
Hispanic	6%	36%
Black	4%	21%
Other	12%	10%

What can the CAA do to foster more inclusion and belonging in programming?

Many alumni would want to do more. **Make it easy** for people to do so and commit to just certain programming during the year so it's not overwhelming.

Asian female, 35-44, New Haven, CT

Offer both sides of polarizing issues with equally qualified programming so that we can hear thoughtful perspectives - 360 degrees - around an issue.

Male, 45-54, St. Louis, MO

The CAA should continue its positive direction in DEI/belonging.

Columbia as an institution needs to completely pivot in its internal and external efforts, deliberately putting DEI/belonging as one of its most important objectives via budgeting, marketing, recruiting, awareness and connectivity in actionable allyship.

Hispanic female, 45-54, NYC

Zoom events or other online events have been good, but they don't make me feel a part of the community. If there **were long-term projects or programs** I could commit to, that would be very helpful. It seems like these things exist, I just have never heard of them, so **maybe more visible communication.**

Female, 18-24, Anchorage, AK

Acknowledge the class of 2020. No one has made mention of our lack of graduation since May.

Female, 18-24 Sacramento, CA

What can the CAA do to foster more inclusion and belonging in programming?

No community feeling at Columbia in general. **It is not about ethnicity, it is about interests.** I go to Journalism events and feel welcome.

Black female, 45-54, NYC

More opportunities for "training," esp. to group leaders: How can I be more empathic or inclusive/compassionate and understanding in my work, family, relationships, etc.

White female, 45-54, Athens, Greece

Spend a moment to discuss affinity groups as represented at events. **Talk about who is there at the event.**

Black female, 25-34, Boston, MA

I frequently question whether I am welcome at Columbia events even though I am absolutely devoted to Columbia. Something about the way it is marketed **always feels like it is a closed club and I am intruding.**

White female, 45-54, Bronx, NY

There doesn't seem to be an effort to **engage alumni working in fields relevant to programs.**

I've lived in Toronto for almost 20 years and **I also just learned that there is a Columbia Club here.**

White female, 45-54, Toronto, Canada

The Columbia constituency is an independent, confident, smart group of people who are reluctant to have Columbia come to them. **Appreciate our intellectual independence.**

White male, 65+, Sarasota, FL

What can the CAA do to foster more inclusion and belonging in communications?

In Columbia emails, there is a lot that seems skewed toward people in business/highly corporate careers. **We need more about the Arts.**
Black female, 25-34, Chicago, IL

Many of the people featured in the *Columbia Magazine* are the superheroes and best and brightest. Maybe the Alumni Association could **highlight alumni who are proud of their situation, but are middle class, everyday people.** There is an elitism that was there when I attended Columbia and frankly that was the reason to attend, but now it is suffocating.

Asian female, 45-54, Long Island, NY

Periodic individual school updates; medical, law, SSW, architecture, business, etc. Try one at a time in the magazine to keep us aware.

Male, 55-64, Chicago, IL

I would appreciate more opportunities where alumnae can do **online webinars that involve directly talking to or collaborating with other alumnae.**

Hispanic female, 35-44, NYC, NY

Very disappointed in Columbia. I'll feel good working with an amazing staff person. The person leaves, it's over. **Staff doesn't respond to my inquiries.**

White female, 45-54, Los Angeles, CA

Top Takeaways

- 80% of alumni feel connected to Columbia, with 63% indicating they feel “somewhat” connected
- Alumni want Columbia to know their interests, provide intellectual content, and curate accordingly
- Online events are much appreciated, especially by those outside of the Tri-state area
- Columbia peers remain a big factor in their lives - a source of connection back to the school
- SIG members show a higher connection to the CAA, but are less likely to feel a sense of belonging

Top Takeaways

Email is the best vehicle, but still inbox clutter; perceived lack of presence in other digital channels

Columbia Magazine is top vehicle for information. Highest visibility and inclusion promotion rates of all Columbia channels

Alumni are aware of school silos. Most want a “One Columbia” inclusive approach where they help co-create experiences

Overload of solicitations, especially perceived by young alumni, places a premium on being wealthy or working in certain fields

Survey responses for connection and belonging similar across ethnicities – more disparities by age

Barriers to Inclusion and Engagement

Lack of time

Geography, but online events are helping

Feeling that the University's viewpoints are one-sided

Lack of awareness about Columbia alumni benefits and opportunities

Life stage demands (children, elderly parents)

Feeling left out due to age

School silos and perceived cliques - issues when attending events alone

Difficulty breaking into new communities after a move

Timing of offerings (desire for on-demand programming)

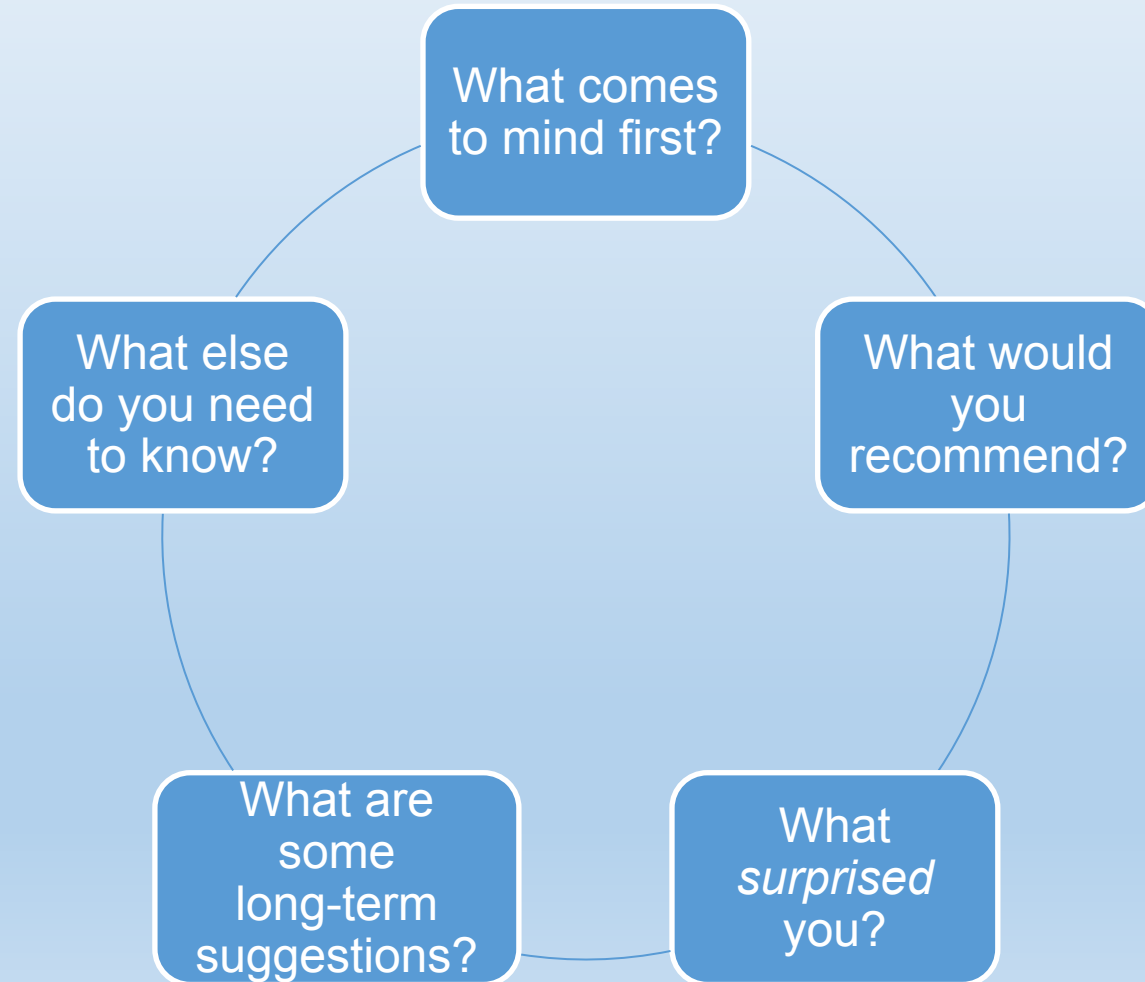
Recommendations

- Host **“Columbia Alumni 101” events online** – how to get involved, programming, polls, swag, make it fun!
- **Distribute monthly “move” report to regional clubs** - personal welcome for alumni new to their region
- Give alumni **intellectual content AND a breakout room**
- Send **targeted emails when possible about what CAA offers**
- **Target events by decade** so attendees feel a commonality
- International think tank group(s) to **showcase thought leaders**

Recommendations

- **Co-create** experiences with alumni
- Offer more **done-in-a-day volunteering** in person and online
- Have a **question of the month** in the CAA Newsletter
- **Feature “non-star” alumni** to show possible pathways
- Identify alumni with interests to create **more lists of possible speakers**
- **Expand peer-to-peer outreach** in communications
- Be mindful of those attending in-person events **solo** for welcoming

Thought-starter Questions



Question One: Demographics

How do we create a Columbia environment that provides a feeling of equal stature for all and all experiences are available to them?

1. **Alumni of Color**
2. **Geography**
3. **Gender**
4. **Socioeconomics**

Question Two: Programming

How can we leverage what we already know about our alumni (and learn more) to create a more dynamic, inclusive relationship?

1. **Interests**
2. **Co-Creation of Opportunities (Alumni/Volunteer/Staff)**
3. **Life Stage Needs**

Question Three: Communications

How can we improve the awareness and penetration of our communications?

1. Email
2. Social Media
3. Newsletters
4. Messaging and Tone (Imagery, Content, Offerings)

Next Steps?



Small Group Meeting Takeaways

CAA Task Force on Belonging

Meeting #2

General

- Sense of belonging correlated to School identity, not only individual identity
- Need more opportunities for alumni from ALL underrepresented communities to come together as a larger group (SIGs coalition)
- Students/alumni need to see themselves in communications, lead volunteer roles and at programs
- CAA seen as a vehicle for breaking down silos

Volunteerism

- Important for lead volunteers to document the history of student/alumni organizations for ongoing success
- Alumni want to make a day-to-day difference for students (meals, space for programs, etc.)
- Diversity within identity-based groups is crucial

Communications

- Alumni want to see ‘everyday’ people featured, not just ‘superstars’
- Including all forms of diversity and considering positioning and placement of subjects in images is crucial
- Based on target demographic, component elements in a given communication can be perceived very differently (e.g. names in subject line, campus photos, punctuation)

Programming

- Communication/follow up in between programs helps to foster belonging
- Attending programs if you do not expect to see anyone with a shared identity requires emotional labor pre/during/post event

CAA TASK FORCE ON BELONGING
SMALL GROUP MEETING NOTES

Meetings held week of March 15

General Questions/Thoughts

Suggestions

- Current students need to be engaged
 - Classes of 2020 and 2021 will continue to need targeted outreach
- A lot of work is done to engage recent graduates, emphasis needs to be placed on alumni in other stages (such as retirees, alumni with families, and mid-career alumni)
- The best way to engage the unengaged is through individual outreach
 - People want to have their voices heard, will share their feedback if there is a stated goal
- Very few alumni only 'check one box', it needs to be easy for alumni to check many boxes
- In the 'COVID era' it is important to balance the information/programs that are COVID-based as well as those that are not

Questions

- What is the SIGs' role in making statements about current events?
 - Alumni of Color groups need to work together
 - Programs
 - Condemning violence
- Significant that only 17% of alumni felt very connected
 - How/what are alumni connected to?
 - What was survey respondents' last point of engagement?
 - What does 'somewhat' connected mean?

Comments

- Survey results were affirming
- Some alumni are simply not joiners
- Some alumni may engage with organizations outside of Columbia because they don't feel as heard within Columbia spaces or don't feel as connected to the University after they graduate

Events

Suggestions

- Events could be held by decade to guarantee that alumni will have at least the shared experience of having been at Columbia at the same time
- Alumni can suffer from imposter syndrome and feel like they're intruding at programs if they're not represented as events
 - Small group gatherings prior to events can help solve this
- It is imperative to personally welcome alumni to events, especially if they are attending alone
- CAA/SIG leaders need to attend each other's events.

Questions

- What will be the investment in technology/staff resources to continue virtual programming?

Comments

- Important to acknowledge that SIG/Club events are CAA events but the question is how to ensure that folks that participate in segmented events feel comfortable at CAA-wide events
- Homecoming, specifically, is impactful because the SIGs have a presence.
- Attention needs to be paid to those that are **not** attending programs.
- Alumni may not attend events alone if they are not confident they will know other attendees
 - Folks are most likely to attend events if personally invited by an organizer/friend that is attending
- Young alumni want career advancement/mentoring based programs from folks who are relatable/graduates of similar years
- A desire for DEI-based events
 - Both events that are focused on DEI issues as well as events that highlight diverse alumni

Communications

Suggestions

- Social media should be used to elicit feedback from young alumni
 - Feedback can be incentivized
- Targeted communications should differ based on the age of recipients
- Interesting initiatives/news should not only be shared with alumni from the school that are spearheading the work
- Alumni want to hear about 'everyday' alumni
- Ambassadors can be used to post Columbia news on various social media outlets
- Grassroots social media efforts can be followed to get 'real' stories
 - An example is Columbia Confessions

Comments

- Many alumni do not distinguish the sender of emails, just see Columbia

Questions

- Why do alumni not read emails/want to be reached?

Volunteering

Suggestions

- A lot of opportunities are created for new volunteers, not long standing volunteers
 - Increase specialized training for experienced/senior volunteers
 - Social/networking opportunities can be created for alumni leaders (perhaps inviting club/SIG leaders to Alumni Association presidents' get-togethers)

Comments

- It is challenging to get really involved as a young alumnus

Next Steps

Suggestions

- Actionable items must be established. Need some small wins
- Task Force report and subsequent updates should be shared widely.
 - Survey respondents should be made aware of findings
- SIG leaders need to work together to create intersectional opportunities
- Initiatives need to be taken to ease silos between schools/Columbia campuses
- Focus on belonging/DEI needs to continue
 - DEI-focused staff
 - Need to train alumni in multicultural affairs, safe spaces, how to make people feel welcome

Questions

- Can Task Force members be connected with survey respondents?