Within and beyond classrooms, in residence halls, and in all corners of Columbia University, members of our community are engaged in dialogue with one another.

Through dialogue, students, faculty, parents, alumni, and administrators show respect for differences and take steps to collaborate and achieve common goals. In our own way, we each contribute unique opinions, cultural perspectives, and beliefs to this dialogue. Together, we foster appreciation of ideas at school, at home, within our communities, and beyond.

Dialogue is a natural extension of the learning that occurs in the classroom, and all members of our community share in the benefits of these rich, inquisitive conversations.
Message from the Dean

Dear Parents and Families,

It is our pleasure to bring to you this Spring 2008 issue of Family Connection, the newsletter for parents and families of undergraduate students at Columbia College and The Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science.

This issue examines the subject of “dialogue,” and its presence on our campus and in our community. Last semester brought many occasions for members of the Columbia community to come together to express different points of view and move beyond our differences. We have taken this opportunity to highlight a number of the programs and initiatives that helped to foster these conversations.

We believe dialogue is a tool that enriches everyone’s experience at Columbia, and we are excited to share these different perspectives. On page 3 of this issue are remarks from current students and faculty, addressing dialogue on Columbia’s campus. Also included are articles about recent initiatives to increase community on campus, which include programs such as the Under1Roof program and the “Day Out Against Hate,” a New York City-wide initiative to which Columbia students contributed on campus.

We also have included information regarding graduation for the parents and families of graduating seniors. We invite you to visit our online graduation resource for the most up-to-date information: www.studentaffairs.columbia.edu/events/gradzone.

In November, we reached out to parents of first-year students and requested feedback on our family programs. We would like to extend our appreciation for your responses and take this opportunity to share some of the results of this survey with you on page 11. Your input will inform future parent and family programming, and we are excited to incorporate your suggestions into our offerings.

Also in this issue, you will read about recent and upcoming programs that allow you, the parent, to be involved in our extended community. We rely in part on you to help us provide a fulfilling and engaging experience for new Columbia parents. A number of incoming student programs are in the works, and we are seeking parent volunteers to help make these programs particularly useful for parents of new students. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Eleanor Daugherty, Associate Dean of Student Affairs, by calling 212-854-2446 or e-mailing fpse@columbia.edu. It is our goal to ensure that every parent’s experience as a member of Columbia’s extended community is enjoyable, and we appreciate your continued feedback and support.

We hope you find this issue of Family Connection interesting and enlightening. As always, we send best wishes to you and your family.

Chris Colombo
Dean of Student Affairs
Columbia College and The Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science
What Is Dialogue?

Dialogue plays an important role in everyone’s life, every day. Interactions at work, school, home, and within the greater community highlight opportunities to engage in dialogue. We asked students and faculty members to address the issue of dialogue on Columbia’s campus, and we think the responses below show that Columbians are learning from one another in ways you might not have imagined.

Eash Cumarasamy, SEAS ‘08
President, SEAS Class of 2008
Dialogue is something that exists on many different levels at Columbia. There is dialogue about campus, local, national, and world happenings. There is dialogue among suitmates, floormates, and friends about everything from politics to physics. In the hallways and the classrooms and the lounges, these dialogues take place but never end, because it is in this constant debate that we define our beliefs and become more fully aware of our convictions.

Without a campus full of intellectuals so willing to engage me in dialogue, if only to prove me wrong, I would not be the person I am today.

Michelle Diamond, CC ’08
President, CC Student Body
Over the past year, I have been involved in some of the most interesting conversations I have ever been a part of during my four years at Columbia. After a series of high-profile events on campus—from Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to Jeffrey Sachs and John Legend—students are discussing how Columbia and its students should engage with important contemporary issues such as foreign relations and world poverty. We’re also discussing what it means to be part of Columbia College. This semester, Columbia College Student Council has launched a campaign we’re calling “I Am Light Blue,” which highlights the important contributions made by students, faculty, and alumni. Whatever it is they are discussing, students are very excited and very proud to be a part of Columbia!

Patrick Foley, CC ’10
Men’s Basketball
It is common for us to dialogue with our peers throughout the day—about the Giants game, the test we just took, or even about a date we had the night before. However, what I find unique about the dialogue on Columbia’s campus is the dialogue that goes on between students and their so-called superiors—i.e., professors, TAs, coaches. In other situations and contexts, I have encountered barriers between students and professors and students and coaches that prevent open and honest dialogue. In many places, coaches and professors carry an “air of superiority” about them that prevents open dialogue. In the situations I have encountered here on Columbia’s campus, both academically and athletically, my “superiors” have been nothing but approachable. The result has been open and thus productive dialogue as well as a real sense of community. When students and “superiors” can dialogue as peers, the unfettered exchange of knowledge and ideas inevitably leads to real learning and progress, essential to success in the classroom or on the court.

Andrew Smyth
Associate Professor of Civil Engineering and Engineering Mechanics
Faculty-in-Residence, Hartley-Wallach Living Learning Center
To me, dialogue with students is one of the most rewarding aspects of being on the faculty at Columbia. Serving also as faculty-in-residence for Hartley and Wallach Halls only increases the opportunities for me to engage and form connections with students while bridging the gap that sometimes understandably exists between faculty and students. As faculty-in-residence, I host regular dinner/speaker events in our apartment. Through these events, and the outstanding speakers we have managed to attract from the University and more importantly from beyond, fascinating discussions have been sparked. I spend a lot of time as both a regular faculty adviser in my department and faculty-in-residence, chatting with students about their courses, their goals in life, and how to make the most of the opportunities Columbia has to offer. I am impressed by the students’ drive and their desire to pile on activities and courses. I usually try to remind them to stay busy, but not get so overworked that they miss the depth in their studies and the opportunities to build lasting friendships.

Michelle Diamond, CC ’08
President, CC Student Body
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Under1Roof: Building Community Through Dialogue and Exchange

One of Columbia’s most valuable educational resources is found in the active exchange of ideas and experiences among the students themselves. In its second year, Under1Roof provides all first-year students the opportunity to begin this exchange through engaging in small group dialogues with their peers during the New Student Orientation Program (NSOP) about the role every student plays in creating a truly diverse and inclusive campus community.

All students—no matter how they identify—bring to campus different voices, knowledge bases, ideologies, and beliefs. These, oftentimes, are impacted and informed by their various social identities (e.g., race, religion/spirituality, socioeconomic class, gender identity, ethnicity, sexual orientation). Acknowledging these differences is not about separating people, but about understanding the rich experiences that shape the lenses through which they see the world, the people around them, and their life at the University. The process also helps explore and understand the social realities and dynamics that exist and that have prevented real connections between communities socially and historically. Through encouraging this understanding, the hope is to develop more substantive connections across identities, nurture better and more informed allies, and create shared principles of what “community” means to them.

Coordinated through the Office of Multicultural Affairs, Under1Roof underscores the importance of building community by creating spaces for students to explore their identities with one another. It was crafted in such a way as to move conversation from familiar comfort zones to more difficult, substantive dialogue while maintaining a safe environment. As one student commented on his evaluation, “I expected this event to be mostly lip-service, but it was actually the most intelligent and conscious exploration of identity and privilege I’ve been in in a long time.”

During NSOP, students are randomly assigned to small group discussions, each led by two trained administrators and/or student facilitators. Drawing from the rich diversity that already exists on campus and in New York City, students are challenged to move beyond just passively appreciating various experiences to actively engage with one other and to take this sharing of cultures and ideas as a personal and community building opportunity. This interpersonal exchange across identities is the cornerstone of building a tightly knit community.

As students are told, the program “is a process, not an event.” Under1Roof is the beginning of an important dialogue that will continue throughout students’ time at Columbia and beyond. Additionally, the dialogue is not just about learning from one another. It is also about how our deeper understanding of who is in our community allows us to see our individual and collective social responsibility and accountability to one another by observing how different actions and behaviors affect those around us. While working through difficult scenarios that are common at universities and colleges across the country, students examine ways these situations could impact them and how coalitions can be built with other students to address relevant issues.

By sharing individual stories and hearing those of their peers, the goal is to create an inclusive community at Columbia University founded upon intergroup understanding, support, and action. Community building is achieved through continual engagement and education while giving every student ownership of the dialogue and a stake in the outcome.

In addition to community building, skill building is emphasized. Through the discussion and exercises, students
• develop basic dialogistic skills to utilize in future programs, interactions, and challenging conversations;
• increase understanding regarding issues of diversity globally, in our country, and on campus;
• prepare for the academic and social adjustment to living and learning in a diverse campus environment;
• develop some rapport with a “core group” of students with whom they can further develop relationships, as well as continue to engage with in diversity-related educational activities while at the University;
• create a pedagogical foundation for diversity education rooted in sustained dialogue, critical awareness of social issues, and bridging differences.

While Under1Roof and related follow-up programs will further develop with the changing needs and concerns of their students every year, the heart of these programs will always be dialogue in our campus community. As one participant wrote, “Personally, I was impacted greatly by the realization that discussion and action is so crucial to maintaining healthy diversity.”

—Melinda A. Aquino
Senior Assistant Dean of Multicultural Affairs
Overlapping Dialogue: Inquiry House Thrives on Different Voices and Perspectives

Sarah Martin has lived in the General Ulysses S. Grant Houses, a New York City Housing Authority complex on 125th Street, for more than 35 years. Over those years—and as president of the General Grant Residents Association—she’s had the chance to talk with thousands of West Harlem residents. But she’s had little opportunity to engage in a real dialogue with the Columbia community, especially students, even though the General Grant Houses are only a few blocks from the Morningside Heights campus.

But now Martin speaks with Columbia students routinely, often several times a week. Students attend her association’s board meetings on the last Thursday of each month. Students are working with her to develop a management plan and communications strategy, including a Web site, for the association. Students also are helping her design a new youth program to encourage younger Grant Houses residents to become active members of the association.

The students working with Martin are residents of Inquiry House, Columbia’s newest student special interest community. The Office of Residential Programs (part of the Division of Student Affairs) runs several special interest communities—groups of sophomores, juniors, and seniors with common interests who live together to explore a topic or theme. Through tailored programming, this living arrangement creates opportunities for students to interact with each other and connect with faculty, administrators, alumni, and community leaders. Currently, special interest communities range from the Pan African House to Urban Economic Perspectives.

The theme of Inquiry House is civic engagement. By choosing to live in Inquiry House, students commit themselves to working on projects that engage them in dialogue with the community outside of Columbia’s gates. The goal is twofold: to help students develop new skills and knowledge through activity outside the classroom and to improve the quality of life of local residents.

“An important thing that Inquiry House students are learning is how to apply their specific interests to a larger group project,” says Ellen Godena, an associate director in the Office of Residential Programs who works with the Inquiry House students. This year, all Inquiry House students are working on projects relating to the Grant Houses, home to some of the poorest residents in Manhattan. During the fall, the students conducted basic research, learning about conditions in city housing complexes and understanding the populations they serve. This semester, in addition to developing new programs with Martin, students take turns working in the General Grant Residents Association office each week.

“One big problem is that people at Columbia and people in the local community don’t talk,” says SEAS Associate Dean Jack McGourty, who serves as faculty advisor to Inquiry House. “Through these community projects, students, faculty, staff, and local residents not only talk but work together to achieve common goals. We’re furthering our students’ educations, while at the same time providing real services to the local community.”

The program also encourages students to interact with each other in new ways. Inquiry House’s 16 residents represent Columbia College and SEAS. Because Inquiry House draws students from both schools, students bring different skill sets, different scholarly and personal interests, and different perspectives. McGourty sees this as a major advantage because it forces students to think outside their normal frames of reference.

“Inquiry House students have to work as a team,” says Godena. “They also learn to negotiate with each other and hold each other accountable to make sure that the projects are completed.”

For a complete list of special interest communities, please visit www.studentaffairs.columbia.edu/resprograms/special_interest.

—Timothy P. Cross
Director of Undergraduate Programs and Grants
SEAS
Day Out Against Hate

On November 29, 2007, Columbia University students participated in New York City’s Day Out Against Hate. What began as a conversation among a few students quickly expanded to include support and participation from schools throughout Columbia’s campus. The resulting effort was a display that offered support and expression to those students and organizations which experienced issues of bias or hate, including anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, racism, and homophobia.

On these pages, several students describe their involvement in creating awareness and dialogue in our community.

As signs of intolerance appeared on our campus, there were feelings of intimidation, disappointment, and loneliness. One feels powerless, unable to prevent the anonymous criminal placement of symbols of hate on campus. Students and communities within Columbia were targeted and isolated from the greater Columbia community based on their creed, race, or sexual orientation. It was these difficult incidents and their aftermath that inspired us to reach out to fellow student leaders and activists and get involved in the Day Out Against Hate.

It is very difficult to stop hateful acts from occurring; however, one can utilize the incidents to promote awareness and solidarity rather than fear and futility. The idea behind the Day Out Against Hate was twofold. First, to educate and promote awareness about different kinds of hate and, second, to provide a means through which the Columbia community could express solidarity. We wanted the community to engage in conversation about the symbols of hate and express the deeper emotions conjured up in everyone’s minds. With these goals and ideas, I contacted student leaders from the Black Student Organization, Muslim Student Association, Columbia Queer Alliance, and Hillel. I received tremendous support from many student leaders, and thus began the long and rewarding effort to put together the Day Out Against Hate.

The project quickly transformed into a Columbia-wide initiative involving students and administrators from many of Columbia’s schools. The Day Out Against Hate panels served as an architectural display that allowed students to contribute to the art while learning from it. The Day Out Against Hate also included both verbal and silent expressions of solidarity through a Spoken Word portion and an evening candlelight vigil for the entire community.

Josh Rosner
CC ’08
President, Hillel

The goal of the Spoken Word section of the Day Out Against Hate was to harness the healing power of words, particularly through the elegant medium of poetry, to promote the spirit of our community. We decided to incorporate the written word into the visual exhibit, as a metaphoric integration of paradigms of expression that brings together written and impromptu verbal expression from everyone and anyone interested in the Columbia community. To advance our goals, we created live, safe pressure valves, through candid dialogue, for a random mosaic of students, professors, and administrators alike to share their thoughts and emotions in response to the recent events on campus.

This was a pivotal moment in my college career, in which I felt our campus embodied the inspiring idealism and honest hope portrayed in Raphael’s School of Athens fresco, after which Low Plaza was modeled. We are a muscle amid difficult growth, and thus its fibers may seem torn and tested at times. I am optimistic that although we dealt directly with painful issues with strangers on this day, the shared vulnerability and genuine support rendered us potential and influential agents of the dynamic repair process.

Shirin Soufian
Barnard ’08
Co-President, Sephardic Club at Hillel
SGA Representative for Diversity, ’06–’07

Josh Rosner
CC ’08
President, Hillel
The construction and design of the panels were meant to be symbolic of the shared vision and experiences of the groups. There were six panels, and each was designed as a template where experiences could be freely expressed.

One single white panel was left blank, and students were encouraged to express their own experiences on it while it stood on Low Plaza. This panel evolved throughout the day as students began a conversation and used the panel as a forum to express their ideas.

Each of the other five panels was painted black and represented a particular group targeted by recent acts of intolerance. Each panel was adorned with messages in black, white, and gray paint. We limited the colors to black and white to show similarities among the groups, connect their experiences, and show the history of the experience of hate for that group. A mirror in the center of each panel reflected different views of campus and students as they walked by, yielding powerful imagery.

Each of the individual panels was constructed so that it was able to stand on its own; however, without the support of the others, a light wind would knock a lone panel over. This construction was symbolic of the support needed to strengthen one another against hate.

An opening in the panels served as a door to the interior of the structure. The experience of walking inside the “room against hate” was intense. The noise was muffled and the experience was very isolating. When I walked into the room, darkness and silence overcame me with brief and bright flashes of color toward a solution. On the inside, the white panels were the only places where people were able to paint and express themselves. The groups were given bright colors to express their solution or direction to their experiences of hate.

Overall, the panels reflected, figuratively and literally, the experiences of the students as individuals and as targeted groups. The structure brought awareness and represented the Muslim Student Association’s spirit and ideals of tolerance, intellect, respect, and integrity. Once the crescent was in place, it became easy for us to add the rest. We wanted to associate our community-building work with the other groups. We added pictures from our interfaith events with Hillel and the Hindu Student Organization, and from our large congregational dinners during Ramadan. We placed the Islamophobic graffiti off to the side of the panel in a thickly bordered box, disconnected from the rest of the positive images on the panel. Thus, the panel communicated the message that Muslim, Jewish, Asian-American, African-American, Latino-American, and homosexual communities are able to work together to set aside differences and unite in the common cause of abolishing hate.

Adil Ahmed
CC ’09
President, Muslim Student Association

How do you mobilize a community, disillusioned by multiple incidents of hate crimes, bias incidents, and campus controversies, to design six 64-square-foot panels about hate in two days?

To generate awareness for the project, we first questioned not what we could do, but rather how we could do it. By working under the motto of “for the students, by the students,” members of the Day Out Against Hate committee set out to encourage their peers that this was something that could finally belong to us. By sitting in on countless student group meetings and making back-to-back phone calls and presentations, we were able to stir up a good portion of the campus to not only contribute to but also partake in discussions about what these panels could achieve. Furthermore, we were inspired by seeing how so many people did want to work together; for them it had just been a matter of finding the best way.

We simply brought this up as one of the ways. They listened.

What would the panels do? They would ask. It’s just a symbol, some would say. But then what are the nooses, graffiti, and other representations of hate that have so deeply affected us here? Should we not respond with our own? Should we not have our own collective voice that cries out, “Not on our campus”?

Calvin Sun
CC ’08
Vice President, CC Class of 2008
President, Asian American Alliance
Profile: Initiative for Policy Dialogue Based at Columbia University

The Initiative for Policy Dialogue (IPD) is a collaborative, nonprofit organization whose mission is to help developing countries explore economic policy alternatives. IPD brings together specialists from all corners of the world and capitalizes on their diverse backgrounds and perspectives, making it possible to suggest innovative solutions to critical, widespread concerns. By approaching each issue optimistically and ultimately leaving final policy decisions to countries’ individual political processes, IPD provides significant aid to countries in need, without imposing ideas or forcing action.

IPD’s location on campus at Columbia University affords students unique internship and work-study opportunities as well as access to cutting-edge research and information on alternative theories and ideas in the field. When appropriate, Columbia students can take advantage of IPD’s huge network of researchers, policy makers, institutes, and programs to pursue their own research or career aspirations.

IPD was founded by Nobel laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz in 2000 to combat the “one size fits all” approach to economic policy in developing countries. While his project started modestly, IPD has quickly become a world-wide collaborative effort among more than 250 individual contributors and institutions of higher learning. Today, IPD thrives under the leadership of Stiglitz and Jose Antonio Ocampo, both of whom are professors at Columbia and share a long list of professional accomplishments in the field of economics.

The initiative’s success relies on assembling a diverse membership, where a broad range of viewpoints are represented. IPD has made remarkable achievements, and credits much of this to its wide-reaching network. Ariel Schwartz, a program manager for IPD, states that “IPD is not an academic department or research institute. Rather, IPD is a network of people—economists, noneconomists, political scientists, and policy makers—who share the same goals. There are lessons to be learned from both developed and developing countries, and we recognize how important a multidisciplinary approach is to answering tough economic policy questions.”

IPD utilizes four main activities and programs to attain its specific goals:

**IPD Task Forces** are a global effort aimed at improving the value of dialogue on crucial economic topics within developing countries. They build the foundation for decision-making by describing and analyzing alternatives, approaching long-standing problems from fresh perspectives, and identifying areas that need further research. By presenting their findings objectively, Task Forces ensure that countries are empowered through knowledge and are informed enough on issues and options to partake in constructive dialogue and reach consensus. One output of IPD’s Task Forces are Task Force Reports, which investigate and analyze the underlying differences between positions. By framing disparities in this manner, Task Forces aim to bring about effective, respectful dialogue that goes beyond traditional arguments and encourages people with dissimilar viewpoints to listen to one another and explore alternative possibilities.

**IPD’s Journalism Program** aims to educate journalists in developing countries and to provide them with the tools and training they need to effectively report on topical economic issues. Schwartz says, “Journalism is a means for the general public in any given country to understand policy issues, and a well-educated public can engage in informed dialogue.” Through the program, journalists are connected with experts in relevant fields in order to improve their understanding of these areas and yield accurate and informed coverage. The Journalism Program’s web site offers a substantial amount of background information, compiled by reporters who have written for a diverse array of media outlets and in countries around the world. Additional information on this program is available at [www.journalismtraining.net](http://www.journalismtraining.net).

**Country Dialogues** are a means by which IPD promotes informed discussion between countries and their citizens. By including perspectives that were, historically, excluded from this type of exchange, these forums enable a significantly broader policy dialogue to take place. At the request of a country, and when a real need is evident, IPD invites incumbents, opposition groups, nongovernmental organizations, and other stakeholders to share in the exchange of ideas. On the goals of these dialogues Schwartz says, “IPD does not seek specific policy changes; it looks to promote a more inclusive dialogue.” The hope for result of these dialogues is mutual respect for the opinions and perspectives of others. Alternative solutions to common concerns are often a by-product of the forums, and these dialogues form the basis for future discussion and decision-making.

**IPD’s Research Program** is, in part, steered by the findings of Task Forces and Country Dialogues. As part of its research efforts, IPD produces a steady supply of relevant publications, including the IPD Book Series. The new series of books features volumes that outline alternative points of view toward economic policy in developing countries. Additionally, members of IPD frequently contribute their work to publications internationally.

IPD is successful because it brings together individual contributors and institutes around the world, all of which have a shared concern for the economic issues developing countries face. This common focus enables members to see beyond differences and engage in serious dialogue—tackling some of the most challenging issues the world faces today.

To read more about IPD, please visit [www.policydialogue.org](http://www.policydialogue.org).

---Cristina Stevenson
Director of Events and Communications
Office of the Dean of Student Affairs
Advice for Fostering Dialogue at Home

As a parent, it is hard to watch your child head off into the great unknown, and for most parents, college is the beginning of “letting go.” But when your child no longer sits across from you at the dinner table every evening or sleeps just down the hall every night, how can you be sure that you are maintaining a sufficient level of communication? Of the many mixed emotions parents experience when a child leaves for college, one of the most difficult to conquer is this fear of losing touch.

As a parent and a professional who works with college students every day, I understand this mix of emotions very well.

Starting the Conversation
The best way to stay involved (and welcome) in your student’s life is to foster dialogue, either long-distance or during your student’s visits home. Dialogue is not always easy for parents or their children. Adolescents are often unwilling to talk about some issues that may concern them (such as alcohol, drugs, and relationships) because of the possibility that these issues may provoke “conflict” between children and parents (Vangelisti, 1992, p. 383).

When communication is strained, how can a parent know not only what a son or daughter is doing, but how they are doing? After all, it is not always the best solution to reach out to a college professor or dean, and attempts to get answers this way may be seen as too meddling or intrusive. So, how do parents find appropriate avenues for communicating with college-age sons and daughters?

If questions about grades, homework, keeping up with assignments, and due dates yield distant responses—“Fine,” “Okay,” “Not too bad,” or “You don’t get it, do you?”—rest assured that among parents of college students, you are not alone.

My advice? Try asking questions about roommates, the latest campus news headlines, or even a more casual inquiry about how your child is enjoying classes. These nontimidating conversation starters may be the way to a more interactive dialogue with your child. I encourage my children, now adults, to talk about their lives and their interests. We chat about politics and family, and only occasionally do I ask how things are going academically. As hard as it is, I try to wait for them to initiate those conversations.

Building Mutual Trust and Respect
While some parents may have access to their child’s academic or other records, when we intrude in our children’s lives in this way we imply that there is a lack of trust and respect, a guaranteed way to discourage dialogue. Through our actions we must show our sons and daughters that they have our confidence, thereby encouraging them to open up and share with us. By doing this, we strengthen a foundation that will support lifelong communication and mutual respect.

Students come to college bearing the weight of their own expectations, but often even more significant is the stress of others’ expectations, including parents. This may be especially the case if a child is the first in the family to go to college. As difficult as it is for parents to accept that their son’s college curriculum is his to shape, or that their daughter’s choices are hers to make, this is exactly what must happen. And when I don’t allow my child to make his or her own choices, I find that communication is hampered.

Encouraging Independence
As parents who want “only the best” for their children, this is perhaps the hardest lesson to learn. You have, after all, invested eighteen or so years of your love, dedication, and hard work to reach this point, and now you must let go. It is extremely difficult to stand by while your child makes what you perceive as a poor decision. However, when we allow our children to own their college experience and make independent choices, we promote dialogue and foster the growth of well-educated and responsible citizens of the world.

Even as our children begin this transition into their adult lives, they remain connected to home and family. Those first visits home are often awkward and fraught with tension. Our children think that they are in the residence halls and relatively without constraints about their comings and goings, and we think that we are back in the high school days where family dinners and curfews were the norm. Establishing a common ground through dialogue, rather than through imposition of old rules, will open up the way for conversation. Keep “sacred” your child’s room (don’t be in a hurry to install that home gym or office you have wanted) until your son lets you know that he is okay with it, or your daughter shows that she is ready to move forward. Plan family activities for later in the vacation, thereby allowing your son or daughter to have that important time to catch up with friends and share college stories. Let adult children know through actions and dialogue that home will always be a welcoming place. They will understand that they are still part of the family and are also respected as young adults.

As a parent myself, have I followed all of these rules to a “T”? Absolutely not! And how do I know that these are ways to promote dialogue and conversation? Because of my unique perspective as a parent of two college-age children, and as a member of the Center for Student Advising staff, where I regularly have these conversations with your sons and daughters, encouraging them to open up and share dialogue with you, their parents!

—Leora Browman, P ’09, ’11
Advising Dean
Center for Student Advising
Especially for Parents of Graduating Seniors

Save the Dates!
Graduation dates have been set, and we look forward to welcoming you to campus in May. Please take a moment to read about the various ceremonies that will celebrate this special time in your student’s life.

Baccalaureate Service
Sunday, May 18, 2008, St. Paul’s Chapel
This remarkable event features a procession that includes undergraduate degree candidates from Columbia College, The Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science, School of General Studies, and Barnard College. School deans, the University chaplain, and faculty and administrators also participate. Some of the highlights of the service include hymns and musical selections performed by student musicians and choirs. There will also be readings, reflections, and speeches by students, including a Senior Reflection and a Family Tribute.

Class Day
Monday, May 19, 2008, South Lawns
The Class Day exercises are ceremonies specifically for Columbia College and The Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science to celebrate the accomplishments of the Class of 2008. It is at Class Day that students hear their names read aloud as they walk across the stage, have their photograph taken, and receive a class pin. The programs also include remarks by a featured speaker, the school’s dean, and several students, as well as an awards ceremony. No tickets are required for guests, and seating is unlimited. A reception for students, faculty, and families is hosted by the dean on Hamilton Lawn immediately following each ceremony.

For more information on the Class Day ceremonies, please visit the GradZone Web site at www.studentaffairs.columbia.edu/events/gradzone. Or contact GradZone: e-mail: gradzone@columbia.edu; telephone: 212-854-2446.

Commencement
Wednesday, May 21, 2008, Morningside Campus
The Columbia University Commencement is unique in that all degrees are conferred by the President of the University during the ceremony. No candidate officially graduates until the Commencement ceremony is completed. The ceremony is an unforgettable grand-scale celebration that appropriately marks the academic achievements of the University community. While all graduates and degree candidates of the fall 2007, winter 2008, spring 2008, and summer 2008 terms from all schools and colleges affiliated with Columbia University are warmly encouraged to attend, individual student recognition is not part of this ceremony, and students do not need to attend this ceremony to receive their degree.

Immediately following Commencement, in Alfred Lerner Hall, a Family Appreciation Reception for Columbia College and Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science graduates and their families will be hosted by the Office of Parent and Family Programs and the Dean of Student Affairs Office.

For more information on the Baccalaureate Service or Commencement, please visit the Commencement Web site at www.columbia.edu/cu/ceremonies/commencement.
The Office of Parent and Family Programs within the Division of Student Affairs recognizes the important role parents and families play in shaping the Columbia community.

An important type of dialogue within Columbia’s community is that which occurs between Columbia and the families of our students. Throughout the year, several events are designed to acquaint families with the resources available to them and their students for the duration of their Columbia education and beyond.

Two such programs for first-year parents are Family Orientation and Family Weekend, which occur in August and October, respectively.

Family Orientation in August provided families the opportunity to meet and speak to various campus officials who help provide the atmosphere that makes Columbia a home away from home. Through panels and workshops, parents held dialogue with each other and campus representatives about their concerns and hopes for their students as they enter the Columbia family.

Families were provided an additional opportunity to visit during Family Weekend in October, after students had become acclimated to the Columbia environment. Family members experienced various Core Curriculum courses for both Columbia College and The Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science, which are a major source of dialogue among students throughout their tenures at Columbia. Parents and families also attended the Homecoming football game and a barbecue, were led on tours of campus, and enjoyed a special boat cruise around the island of Manhattan.

According to our survey of first-year parents, 44% of respondents use text messaging as a way to communicate with their child.

Columbia University Develops Text Message Notification System

Like many other colleges around the country, Columbia has taken steps to improve communication with students by using new technology. The Office of Public Safety, in collaboration with the Division of Student Affairs, has reached out to students and encouraged them to enroll in a text messaging service, which will allow the University to communicate with them immediately in the event of an urgent situation. Text messaging is useful because of the convenience and prevalence of cell phones, and it will complement the use of e-mail, web postings, phone calls, and in-person communication for delivering important information. At press time, approximately 47% of CC and 49% of SEAS students had enrolled. While we are pleased that so many students have taken these efforts seriously, we are hoping to reach even more students and request that you encourage your son or daughter to enroll in this service if he or she has not done so already. Columbia University is committed to the safety of all students, and is pleased to be able to offer the Text Message Notification System as a method for quick, widespread communication. We thank you in advance for working with us to ensure the safety of our students.

Family Orientation

88% of our first-year parent survey respondents feel connected to Columbia. We encourage all parents to visit the Office of Parent and Family Programs online at www.studentaffairs.columbia.edu/parents for even more information.

Your favorite Family Weekend activity?
Spending time with your child! Your responses are already shaping our 2008 Family Weekend programs, and we plan to include more opportunities for parents to reunite with their students.
University Calendar

Monday, May 5
Last Day of Classes

Tuesday, May 6–Thursday, May 8
Study Days

Friday, May 9–Friday, May 16
Final Examinations

Monday, May 19
CC Class Day
SEAS Class Day

Wednesday, May 21
University Commencement

For the complete calendar, please visit www.columbia.edu/cu/registrar

Helpful Web Sites

Office of Parent and Family Programs
www.studentaffairs.columbia.edu/parents
E-mail: fpse@columbia.edu

Division of Student Affairs
www.studentaffairs.columbia.edu

Columbia College Parents
www.college.columbia.edu

Engineering Parents
www.engineering.columbia.edu

Family Connection is a joint effort of the Office of Parent and Family Programs and the Office of Events and Communications within the Division of Student Affairs.

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www.studentaffairs.columbia.edu/parents