



The Society of Columbia Graduates

April 13, 2018

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Dear Fellow Members of the Society of Columbia Graduates,

The Society's primary missions are, "... to promote and to enhance the tradition of Great Teaching at Columbia College and the Columbia School of Engineering and Applied Science; to encourage and maintain the bond between Columbia and her alumni and alumnae leaders; and to promote and to strengthen the bonds of collegiality among the members of the Society." Here's how we endeavored to do this in 2017-2018.

Last June witnessed the start of a new format for the Great Teacher Awards ceremony that featured much welcomed coordination and support from both the College and Engineering alumni associations. The event was held in the Faculty Room of Low Library and was beautifully appointed and catered courtesy of CCAA and CEAA. The event was further enhanced by heart-felt celebratory greetings from both Dean Valentini from the College and Dean Boyce from Engineering. The Great Teacher Awardees were Patricia Kitcher, the Roberta and William Campbell Professor of the Humanities, Carnoy Family Program Chair for Contemporary Civilization and Jay Sethuraman Vice Chair of the Department of Industrial Engineering and Operations Research.

Since the Awards luncheon the Society has hosted two extraordinary events. The first event featured Prof. Kathy McKeown, Director of the Data Science Institute at Columbia who delivered a fascinating discussion on developments at the Institute including a focused presentation on the uses of big data and computational linguistics in anticipating and preventing crime. The second event was a superb, thought provoking presentation on the history, current applications and future of artificial intelligence. Coming up on the evening of June 7th is a talk by Associate Dean Smey of the School of the Arts and a catered reception for our members in the Lenfest Center, prefaced by a short tour of the new facility.

For the second year the Society has been working closely with both Bernice Tsai and Star Sawyer from the Alumni Affairs offices of both the College and School of Engineering respectively to organize the Great Teacher Awards reception. As has historically been the case, the Society has been responsible for selecting awardees and presenting the awards, while senior faculty and administration from the respective schools have been responsible for nominating and supplying background information on at least two possible candidates per school. It was particularly gratifying for all to witness the challenging yet collegial discussion that occurred during the final selection process. I would like to personally thank all of our board members for their thoughtful participation. Last year's event was highly successful and we anticipate another successful event this year.

We are now looking forward to celebrating the Great Teacher Awards at a reception, to be held in the Faculty Room of Low Memorial Library on Dean's Day, Saturday the 2nd of June at 4pm. This year we once again anticipate the participation of both Dean James Valentini of the College and Dean Mary Boyce of the School of Engineering to bring us greetings from the Campus as the Society, for the 70th time, presents the Great Teacher Awards to two outstanding undergraduate teachers; one from the College and one from Engineering. This year's Awardees are Dustin R. Rubenstein, Associate Professor of Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Biology, and Andrew W. Smyth, Professor of Civil Engineering. Please join us at the Dean's Day Great Teacher Awards reception to honor these outstanding recipients!

We have much to be thankful for this year. I would be remiss not to make note of the exceptional quality of this year's fellowship meetings thanks to the efforts of Dan Lehrfeld and Michael Garrett, the continued contribution of David Evans for maintaining and updating our social media presence; an \$11,000 contribution to the Society from the Columbia Club Foundation brought about under the guidance of Bernd Brecher and the work of David Filosa who was a great partner in developing the proposal, the Great Teacher Awards Committee headed by Glenn Silbert for the exceptional work they did in providing the necessary information to permit the Board of the Society to do its job in selecting this year's Great Teachers and finally, the tireless efforts of Tom Magnani, without whom the Society would simply not function.

Andrew Weisman

President
Society of Columbia Graduates