On March 30, two University Senate committees reached the finish line of marathon deliberations to redefine academic titles and career paths at the Medical Center and to set boundaries for consensual romantic or sexual relations between students and their academic supervisors. In neither case did the Senate have a full picture of the measure it was approving.

The Senate also began discussion of student proposals to publish course evaluations within the University and to enable senators to communicate directly with the people who elected them by email. While the previous policy on consensual relations merely advised faculty to avoid them, the new one actually prohibits such relations if a faculty member has any of nine specific academic relationships with students. These include teaching them in a class or independently, mentoring or advising them, and grading or otherwise evaluating or recommending them. The policy also requires faculty who are already sexually involved with a student to cut all nine of these academic ties.

English professor Jenny Davidson, co-chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, presented the policy, which was co-sponsored by Student Affairs and Faculty Affairs. The main drafter, Associate Provost for Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Susan Rieger, had begun work on the new policy in 2006 and had run a gamut of consultations with groups inside the Senate and out. But Sen. Ronald Mazzon (T’n., Law) announced on the floor that some Law School colleagues had reservations about the language. Without discussing the criticisms, the Senate followed President Lee Bollinger’s suggestion and put the issue to a vote on the Senate floor on April 11 and may follow up with a town hall meeting on course evaluations on April 11 and may vote on the Student Affairs resolution at its last plenary meeting on April 27.

Structure and Operations chair Ron Monar (Stu., Law) presented a draft resolution to allow senators to communicate with their constituents by email or on the Web. The resolution will be presented to the Senate at its next plenary meeting on April 17.

For the UMC’s academic titles, Sen. Alice Prince (Ten, P&S) approached the lectern to report for the Senate that the Medical School’s eight-year faculty review (SEAS graduate student) argued that several of Columbia’s peer institutions, as well as its own Law, Business, and International Affairs schools, already have open evaluations, with procedures for flagging inappropriate comments, and have not reported major abuses.

Several faculty members objected to the proposals. Sen. Graziella Chichilnisky (Ten, A&S/Social Sciences) said student evaluations should identify themselves to make the process fairer. Otherwise they will be tempted to write anonymous “junk” on the Internet. Sens. Bette Gordon (NT, Arts) and Marilyn Irving (Ten, A&S/Social Sciences) said that publishing course evaluations will undermine the valuable contributions that confidential evaluations make for teacher performance, and that student evaluations are also subject to serious ethnic and gender bias. The Senate has scheduled an additional town hall meeting on course evaluations on April 11 and may vote on the Student Affairs resolution at its last plenary meeting on April 27.

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It was the former first lady whom he got to know while profiling her for *The New York Times* Magazine, who taught him that free trade sometimes needs to be balanced against social considerations—especially a concern for the Clinton administration that he covered. "It was a magical interlude for me and a lesson I have always tried to remember," he says.

Gardner’s teaching career was interrupted only by a series of government appointments that she made to training missions: ambassadorships to Italy (1977 to 1981) and Spain (1995 to 1997). But it was during these years that he was taking classes at Georgetown University, deriving unique joy from his role as student advocate and counselor. Each year he would sort through 80 applications for the 20 available places in his Legal Aspects seminar, struggling to winnow the field.

"Not long ago, he recently recalled, he faced a particularly impressive group. That year “was the best group ever, and I told the students, ‘I’m glad I’m teaching the class, because I think I could have been committed to it in competition with you.’"

Columbia Record, April 26, 2012

Anne Gefell

COLUMBIA PEOPLE

Who she is:
Academic Department Administrator, Music

Years at Columbia: 16

What she does: Anne Gefell manages the Department of Music’s office and its staff of four in Prentis Hall. On any given day, she handles payroll, talks with prospective students and their parents, troubleshoots technology issues in the classrooms, investigates leaks and other building problems, and interviews candidates for staff and work-study positions in the department. As the academic year winds down, Gefell is already busy preparing next year’s budgets, pre-registration and courses, and monitoring the faculty hiring processes.

Gefell is also a part of the seven-member steering committee of academic department administrators at Arts & Sciences at the University. And she manages the Alice M. Dixon Fund, a grant program that supports performances and recordings of works by American composers, and sits on the advisory board of the department’s journal, Current Musicology. Founded in 1965, it is the oldest musicology journal run by American institutions.

Best part of the job: Gefell grew up around music, and the arts. Her mother was a singer and music teacher who also played the violin, and Gefell sang, played the harp and piano, and attended a high school program called "the art," a wonderful opportunity to support dedicated students of music, and it’s broadened my appreciation of the arts," she said.

Road to Columbia: Gefell, 56, grew up in Rochester, N.Y. and received a B.A. honors degree in social behavior at Queens University in Ontario in 1978. She worked in social services and then environmental research along the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River, where her parents owned a cottage. In 1979, Gefell co-founded the River, an organization that protects the Upper St. Lawrence River, and served on its board for 11 years. After moving to New York City in 1985, she reinvented herself as an administrative assistant at law firms and investment banks. In 1995, she joined Columbia’s Center for Oral History and two years later became the musicology department’s graduate student coordinator. Since then, she has been the department’s academic administrator.

Most memorable moment: In September 2001, Gefell was asked to participate in Professor Ian Bent’s Sonic Glossary project—an online resource that explains music through voice, photos, graphics and song. Gefell was to read a part in Arnold Schoenberg’s Pierrot Lunaire: The Moholy-Nagy in the Computer Music Center’s recording studio in Prentis Hall. Days after the terrorist attacks, the show went on. Gefell initially felt “disrespectful for doing something fun,” she confessed. “But it turned out to be cathartic. We needed to continue on, and this was an opportunity to create art and support one another.”

In her spare time: Gefell, who has taken graduate courses in American Studies and lives in Morningside Heights, sings soprano in two community choirs and helps coordinate the Red Harlem Readers, a literary group that performs every Sunday at Indian Café on Broadway and 108th Street.

Her family still owns that cottage on the St. Lawrence River, which the avid swimmer visits frequently with her five siblings and their spouses and 14 nieces and nephews. In the 1980s, she rowed 150 miles down the river to draw awareness to its damaged ecosystem. In a related project, she created an oral history project and photo essay—River Recollections: Portraits of Life Along the St. Lawrence River in the 20th Century—that was exhibited at MoMA PS1. It was later published by Cornell University.

—By Meghan Berry

Columbia Record, April 26, 2012

A woman in a white suit and glasses, Anne Gefell, talks outside a building.