



Administrative Staff Mobility Report by Maija Sura

Introduction

My visit to Columbia University was organized by Associate Vice Dean of HR, William Innes and HR Director of the College of Physicians and Surgeons Danielle Robbins. Danielle started in her position in December, prior to which she worked as the HR Director of the Department of Neurosurgery. She studied Healthcare and HR at Long Island University and first became an HR Director at the age of 30. William was previously in Danielle's position for four and half years, before moving to the University level HR organization and starting his position as the Associate Vice Dean and Chief HR Officer. Bill originally studied Architecture before changing his major to Psychology and moving onto a career in Human Resources.

The training I received was the most comprehensive onboarding that I have ever experience. I attended all the meetings that were related to HR issues with both Bill and Danielle. I attended a preliminary meeting for the Union negotiation and if there were on going Tenure processes or conflict arbitration with the unions I would have had the chance to be a part of those processes as well. The people I worked with were very open with disclosing everything related to their work – whether it was documents or anecdotes about issues they have had. The trip really left me in awe at how much time they spent with me and the constant care and looking after I received during my trip. It even went to the extent that the HR assistant was sent to my rental apartment on the Sunday night when I arrived at 10 p.m. to check if everything was ok and if I needed anything. All of this was managed despite the fact that June is the busiest month of the year for the University as the new fiscal year starts July 1st and all the temporary appointments are renewed yearly for the duration of the fiscal year. Hopefully we at Aalto can provide a similar experience to our future visitors and help them immerse themselves in to our organization as fully as I was immersed at Columbia.

Most of my time was spent at the Medical Center's College of Physicians and Surgeons HR Department, which is in the Washington Heights area of Manhattan (pictured on the right). The Medical Center consists of four schools:

- The College of Physicians and Surgeons
- The College of Dental Medicine
- The Mailman School of Public Health
- The School of Nursing

I spent my time with various members of the HR department (at department, school and university level) who work at different areas of HR. I also spent some time with Faculty Affairs which is the department responsible for Tenure Track recruitments and



International Affairs that is responsible for helping foreign staff and faculty with their relocation.

The Vice Dean of HR, Bill Innes, sat with me on multiple occasions to explain HR laws and regulations at Federal, State and Municipal level and to explain the healthcare and insurance systems in the States so I had an understanding of the bigger picture when I met with the more specialized HR professionals.

Some of the positions at Columbia University are automatically union positions. Those positions have set salaries and benefits that the employers have to abide by. The information below on benefits, termination, vacation days and other labor related issues are for the non-union employees unless otherwise stated.



The HR Organization at Columbia University

The HR Organization at Columbia University has four levels: the centralized University level that is responsible for Benefits, IT Systems and labor relations (union negotiations and cooperation), the Medical Center (or Morningside Campus) level that includes Client Managers that consult the administrative and HR employees within the departments and act as business partners to the Chairmen of the Departments, the School level HR that consists of each of the schools HR Directors and possible support staff and finally the HR and administrative teams and staff at the departments. The size of the departmental administrative teams depends on the size of the departments. Some only have one employee who also has other administrative responsibilities, other departments have 6 to 7 person HR teams. The centralized HR is a small, specialized unit. This same type of matrix organization is used in other administrative functions such as IT, Facility Services and Communication. The Chief Operating Officer supervises each of the administrative functions. The HR Directors of the Schools answer to the Vice Dean of Administration and the University level HR organization in addition to the Chief Operating Officer. The organization was formed in such a way that there is a small group of highly specialized HR employees at the university level and a large group of supportive HR staff at the schools.

I met with Client Manager Sony Jean-Michel to get a better picture of their area of responsibility. Most of the Client Managers have law degrees and their mission statement is: *We are committed to delivering the highest quality service and solutions, through strategic partnerships and collaborative practices, that focus on our valued client's business needs.* They have a strategic business partnership with the Chairmen of the Departments and their main responsibility is to make sure that the departments “don’t make bad HR decisions”. Sony told me that her job involves coming up with creative solutions to make sure that the departments are able to fulfill the requirements they have to fill in a way that is most suitable to them. They are available for questions and consultation and most of their time goes into coaching the Department Heads. Client Managers also participate in recruitment by doing a prescreening before the Departments start interviewing and organize training on HR issues for the departments. A lot of their work involves overseeing that the Departments are in compliance with HR processes and regulations.



It seems that a lot of the work time and effort of the HR Client Managers goes into mediating work place conflicts and aiding managers in terminating contracts and going through difficult performance related discussions.

Similarly to what I learned about the HR department of Rouen Business School during the Aalto International week, the operative HR staff at Columbia specializes in either faculty, non-union staff or union staff. A lot of the faculty related issues are not the responsibility of the HR department because there is a separate Department of Academic Affairs that handles tenure track recruitments and has administrative staff at each of the departments.

According to the Associate Vice Dean of Human Resources, Bill Innes, the HR at Columbia University does not make decisions, they give advice. The idea is to empower managers to take responsibility. He feels that this is the right, albeit more expensive, way of running an organization. The system is costly because there is HR staff at all levels who advise the managers in their decision making. When asked about the cons of this system he said that the only cons are that the managers don't always have the expertise to make HR decisions and when looking for money for new HR initiatives (such as the Skill Survey system, more of which below) it is difficult to find because the money related decisions are at the department level. A new manager that Bill recruited from Cornell (where decision making is more centralized) described it well, "At Columbia it is better to ask forgiveness for doing something rather than ask for permission to do something". The School gives the departments realms in which they can make their decisions, for example when looking at salaries, but expects them to make the decisions and take responsibility for them.



During one of our team meetings Danielle brought to Bill's attention a new HR Director that she had heard concerns about. The Director was promoted from within the organization, but did not have an HR background. Bill was of the opinion that if that is the person that the department chose, the HR organization has to support them in every way possible to make it work. This shows that the departments are really given authority to make their own decisions and the organization works to support those decisions, at least in the realm of human resources.

During my visit I met with Debra Keller who is the Administrative Manager of the Surgery Department. Debra has a Bachelor's Degree in

Business Administration and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Columbia and has been working with Columbia HR issues for ten years. She reiterated the decentralization of power at Columbia that Bill mentioned and says it is how things have always been run. The centralized HR reminds the departments of duties they have to perform and things they have to take care of, but the way they do them and the way their organization is structured is up to them. All of the departments have Administrative Directors, under which you will find staff dealing with HR, payroll and faculty affairs. Deb manages a payroll specialist, an HR administrator (for staff related issues) and an Administrative Coordinator who deals with faculty related HR issues. Some of the bigger departments have more staff and individuals that are responsible solely for academic appointments.

The full HR organizational chart can be found in the appendix.

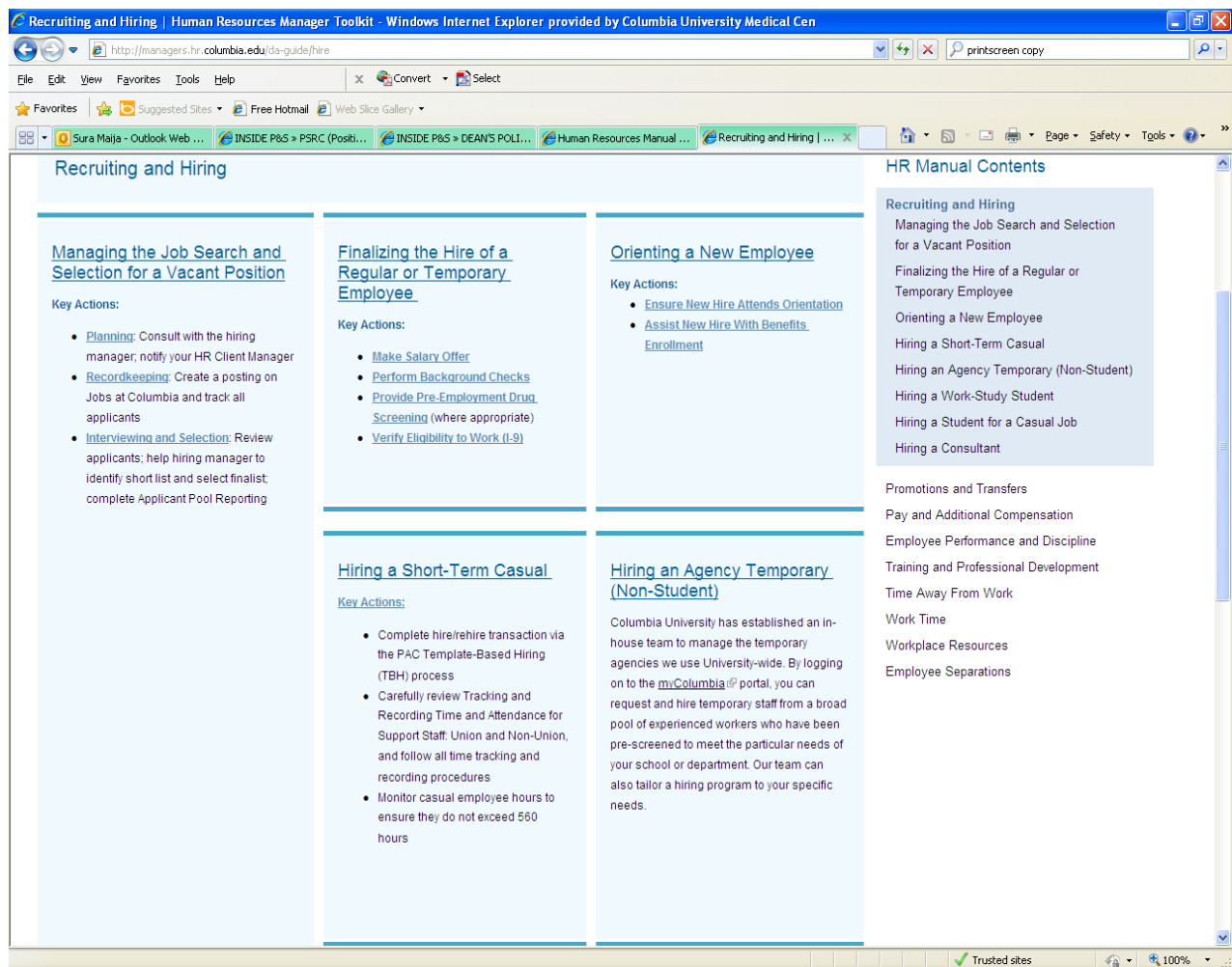
Co-operation within and outside of Columbia's HR: The schools prefer to benchmark the HR departments of other schools outside of Columbia that work in the same field, instead of the other schools at Columbia. They actively attend HR conferences in North America a couple of times a year and have mailing lists that reach the HR professionals in their field. There are also university level conferences, but usually if an HR employee of a school has a question about something it is more likely that they e-mail the HR employees of other universities in their field rather than their own centralized HR organization.

All HR staff of the Medical Center meet once a month. Teams meet once a week and the supervisors meet their own supervisors once a week for an update.

Recruitment: Columbia University always looks to promote internally to open positions. Usually vacant positions are opened for application, but occasionally they will promote someone in the department directly to that position.

The Columbia University intranet provides a comprehensive step by step check list for the manager when starting and going through a recruitment process (see picture below). This is a really clear way to make sure nothing is forgotten during the process.





I was surprised to hear that for an administrative position Columbia usually receives around 100 to 150 applications. This is roughly the same number that we at the Aalto University School of Business receive, but the quality of applications differs. The Columbia University online recruitment system weeds out unqualified applicants by asking questions related to the requirements of the position such as the level of education or years of relevant work experience. If they do not fill the requirements the system does not let them apply for the position. More questions can be added and for IT recruitments the HR Director will usually add questions related to specific IT programs that are used at the school. To save time and effort Columbia only contacts applicants who are invited to interviews. This is stated in the original job notice. The applicants are interviewed by an HR representative and the recruiting manager.

During my visit the recruitment process for the position of Executive Assistant to the Dean was finalized. The position is one of three assistants to the Dean all of whom have their own areas of expertise. They have a team manager who works as an assistant and manages the Dean's calendar and day to day things. One assistant does the Dean's power point presentations and is responsible for the Dean's communication. The hired assistant will help the Dean with research

for one of his three books. She was first tested out through the Columbia Staffing Agency that provides temporary staff internally (that can do a maximum of 560 hours during their contract). The Dean has a very direct way of communicating so HR wanted to make sure that she would be fine working with him. The hired assistant's yearly salary will be \$75 000. (Position description and the questions that were asked by the recruitment system are attached).

The administrative staff is all on permanent contracts. The family leaves are short so there is no need for replacements. Usually someone in the department takes on the necessary tasks of the person that is on leave. Temporary (casuals) employees are brought into for projects or short term part time work.



The School is currently in discussion with a service provider that sells a recruitment aid called Skill Survey. The system is used to get references automatically and will be a part of their online application process. The applicant fills out their information in the system, types in their references and a questionnaire is automatically sent out to the references. The references fill out a form that has 20 to 25 behavior related questions related to the position they have applied for and a comment box that they can freely write in. This saves up time from having to call and e-mail references and the work is actually done by the applicant who types in the names and contact information of their references. In addition, the person who is giving the references has an option to send out a reference request to his/her own references and to become a part of an applicant pool that the university will use for future recruitments. The program costs \$35 000 for 2600 applicants and gets cheaper with each additional applicant. A full year with the full program costs \$53 000. The program uses I.P. addresses to make sure that the references are not coming from the same computer. More information on the program can be found at: <http://www.skillsurvey.com/> Administrative Director, Debra Keller, told me that they currently have a problem with recruiting managers rushing the recruitment processes and not checking references, which leads into a quick turn over that is expensive for the department. She felt that the Skill Survey system would aid in ensuring quality in recruitments.

Instead of a contract like the one we use at Aalto, new employees sign an offer letter (see below) and their application that states the position number that they have applied for. HR does not get involved in the starting salaries or offers of the departments. They will only contact them if it looks like continuous raises are given to certain individuals.

Name

Address

Dear Maribel,

I am delighted to formally extend you this offer of employment and am excited that you will become a valued member of our team. As you know, we are committed to attracting and retaining the best and brightest in the workforce to support our mission of excellence in higher education and research. Accordingly, you are being offered the position of Executive Assistant in the Dean's Office, beginning on June 24, 2013. Your annual salary will be \$75,000 to be paid on a semi-monthly pay cycle at a rate of \$3125 per pay period.¹

In addition to your compensation, Columbia University offers a comprehensive benefits package. Summary details of these plans are contained in the *Benefits Highlights* booklet within the New Hire welcome packet enclosed with this letter. This guide contains an overview of benefits for Columbia University Officers, including, but not limited to, healthcare and dental insurance, adoption assistance, life and disability insurance and different types of paid time off. *Please note that you must make your elections for benefits online within 31 days from your date of hire in order to receive benefits for the remainder of the calendar year.* To read more about your benefits and enroll, go to: <http://hr.columbia.edu/benefits>.

In order to facilitate your transition to Columbia, we also ask that you attend a New Hire orientation session as early in your employment as possible. The orientation will provide valuable information about Columbia, the resources available to you as a Columbia employee and guidance on the many benefits available to you, including the deadlines for enrolling in our benefits programs. "Your department will register you for a date that coincides with your start date."

We also have a number of other resources available to us as Columbia University Officers. These resources include back-up care for children and adults, fitness facilities, libraries, and numerous training and educational offerings. Additionally through the Columbia University Arts Initiative, faculty & staff have access to low-cost and reduced-price tickets to some of New York's best cultural attractions. These and more are listed on our "Working at Columbia" guide at: <http://hr.columbia.edu/wac>.

Please understand that your offer of employment is contingent upon the satisfactory outcome of a personal background check which, depending upon your position and department, may include professional references, verification of previous employment and education, criminal background check, drug screening, a department of motor vehicles (DMV) check and/or a consumer credit check.

Maintaining a positive work environment, and promoting a workplace free from discrimination and harassment, supports the academic and research mission of the University by ensuring all members of our community can contribute to their fullest potential. As a result and as a condition of employment, you will be required to complete the "Doing the Right Thing" workplace harassment online training within the first thirty (30) days of employment. To access the training, go to: <http://hr.columbia.edu/learn-dev>.

¹ For more information on the University's payroll calendar, please refer to: <http://managers.hr.columbia.edu/tig/pay-calendar-overview>

Furthermore, in compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act, you must provide proof of eligibility to work in the United States, by using the I-9 form; instructions are available at <http://hr.columbia.edu/wac/workplace/i-9>. Note that within three business days of your start date, you must go in person to an I-9 Service Center, to complete the I-9 and present us with original documents, as listed in Section 1 of the I-9 online, which identify you and indicate you are eligible to work in the United States.²

Finally, as an at-will employee, please be advised that there is no guarantee of your continued employment nor is it for any definite term, regardless of any other oral or written statement by any Columbia University officer or representative. This at-will employment relationship will remain in full force and effect notwithstanding any changes in your position, title, compensation or other terms or conditions of your employment with the University, unless a written employment contract is entered into by an authorized human resources or legal representative of the University, or you become covered by a collective bargaining agreement which provides otherwise. If you understand these terms, and accept our offer of employment, please sign and return a copy of this letter.

Please contact me if you have any questions, require additional information or if there is anything we can do to help you get started in your new job at Columbia University.³ My direct phone number is 212-305-0022 and my email is dr2602@columbia.edu. I look forward to our partnership and to your contributions as a member of our team.

Sincerely,

Danielle Robbins
Director of Human Resources

I have read and understand the above referenced terms and conditions of employment and hereby accept Columbia University's offer of employment.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

cc: Personnel File
HR Client Manager

² Also please be aware that certain positions associated with designated federal contracts will also be subject to applicable e-Verify requirements.

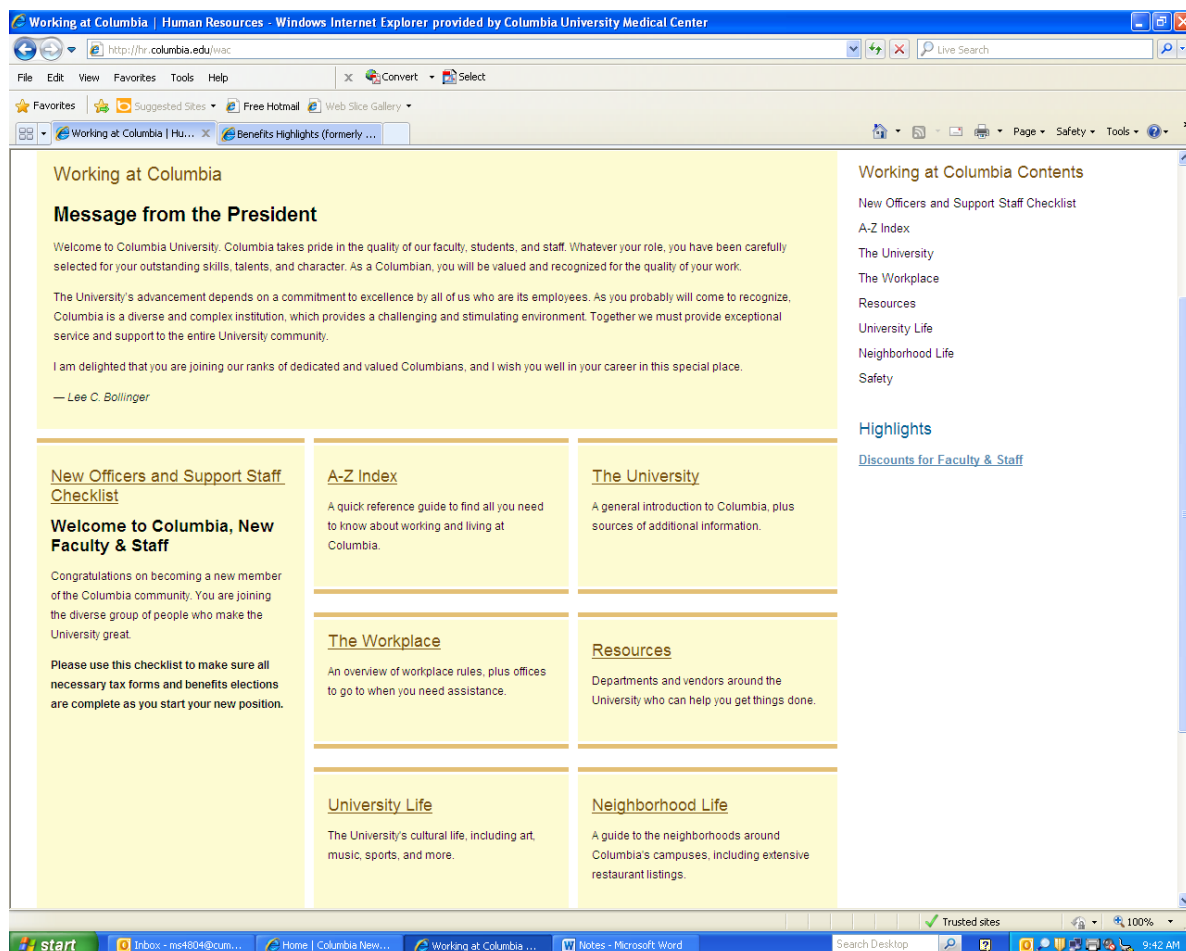
³ As a member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Council of Ivy Group Presidents (Ivy League), it is imperative that members of the Columbia University community, in all matters related to the intercollegiate athletics program, exhibit the highest professional standards and ethical behavior with regard to adherence to NCAA, Conference, University, and Department of Intercollegiate Athletics and Physical Education rules and regulations.

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When recruiting to certain positions drug tests are mandatory. These include union positions, summer employees and those positions where the employee is in contact with patients at the Medical Center. The flexibility of the school was shown when a Doctoral Student from London with a special skill set that a department needed for the summer tested positive for marijuana. The Department requested permission from HR to continue with the hiring process and got it as long as they agreed that the person would sit in a room on his computer and be watched closely by his supervisor (i.e. not be in contact with patients). This process of giving an exemption to someone who tested positive started a process of rethinking the drug test policy. The casual (temporary) employees are currently all tested because they are sometimes borrowed by departments that work with patients where employees need to be drug tested and because temporary contracts are an entry into Columbia and the employees sometimes end up signing permanent contracts to union positions that require drug tests, but post-employment drug testing is prohibited. The discussion went on in several different levels of HR during my visit, but there was no conclusion to the discussion as of the day I left.

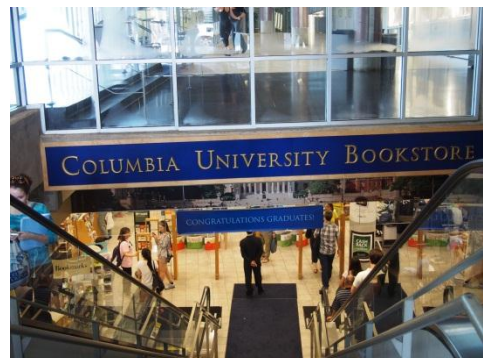
The Columbia University website provides a checklist for new employees and a welcoming message from the President of the University.



Salaries, Raises and Bonuses: Once a year in May-June (before the new fiscal year starts on July 1st) there is a merit review process in all departments. Usually 2 to 3% of the department's total salary sum is to be allocated for raises. The money can be allocated to a few high performing individuals or to all the employees of the department equally. The Dean of each school decides what the percentage that is to be allocated is each year. Departments that do well financially like to give raises to everyone, but departments that are struggling prefer to only give raises to a few well performing individuals. The instructions on the Columbia University intranet state that the Salary Review Committee decides on whether the raises are approved or not. I asked the HR Director who the Committee consists of. She laughed and told me it's really just her. In line with other decision making that I've seen at Columbia, the departments have the decision making power and the list only goes to Danielle so that she can check that there is nothing unusual on it. Normally she approves all raises. The Dean does not participate or take part in salary or title discussions, it is the responsibility of HR to make sure that they are in line and to approve them. The Vice Dean of Administration oversees the process.

Outside of the merit review process the departments can give raises by submitting their proposal by the 15th of each month for the new salary to be enforce by the 15th of the next month.

The Dean of the School decides on the yearly bonus and yearly raise for the Chairmen of the Departments. These are also done at the end of the fiscal year. When we were going through the bonus suggestions the Head of the Neurosurgery Department who the Dean had suggested a bonus and a yearly salary of \$928 000 (3% raise on his last year's salary) declined both the raise and the bonus. The Departmental HR administrator explained that the Chairman wants to lead by example and not let salaries get out of hand even though the Department of Neurosurgery is one of the most well off departments of the school.



Salaries at Columbia are paid bimonthly, on the 15th and the 30th of each month. The payroll employees work directly for the university and each of them has a school whose payroll they are responsible for. I asked whether the salaries are competitive when compared to the corporate world and was told that university salaries in the States usually are, but Columbia does not want to compete through salary levels because they do not need to. The prestige of the university allows them to recruit high level employees without having to pay as much as other universities. They do like to stay competitive, just not on the high end of the spectrum. They use flexible with job titles and use them for leverage when hiring. There is a job title library, but HR Director Danielle explained that she is flexible and is willing to accept the

suggestions made by the departments as long as they make sense with regards to the job description of the position.

Certain positions are union positions and have set salaries. The employer is not allowed to go over or under the set salary. I worked with Danielle on the merit review process during which we found that one of the union employees had been receiving a pay that was too high. I asked Danielle if there was a sanction for the department or the employer, but since the union and the department had not noticed she felt it was better just to forget that we saw it because the employee was switching positions anyway so her salary would be adjusted to the new position. This shows the flexibility and common sense approach that the administration of the University has towards their work.

In addition to the merit review, that happens once a year, there is a One Time Payment program for the administrative staff of the university. The payment can be used to reward individuals who have taken on new responsibilities, are covering temporarily for someone else or have performed exceptionally. The sum is 10 to 15% of the employee's salary. If the payment is paid for covering temporarily for another employee the sum is 10% for the same level position and 15% of the person's monthly salary for a higher level position. The extra sum is paid for each month the person covers another position. As with the salary review process, Danielle only checks that the sums have been calculated correctly and that there is nothing unusual in the explanations and approves them. After her approval the sums go to the Vice Dean of Administration for approval. If the employee has a temporary contract, Danielle's approval is sufficient. She trusts the Departments to decide who needs to be rewarded and to make sure they have the budget for the raise or payment.

The Chairmen of the departments are very well compensated for their position and the positions are coveted. The compensation depends on the size of the department, the bigger the



apartment (i.e. the more administrative work the position entails) the bigger the compensation. There is no bonus system for other professors and faculty members, but there is an additional compensation system that runs all year round. The Chairmen of the department set goals for the faculty and the administrative unit of each of the departments runs reports for them monthly or bimonthly to let them know the level they are at with regards to

their targets. The additional compensation is paid monthly. Each year each department sends a letter of compensation to the professors that lists their title, base salary, additional compensation and areas of responsibility.

When I met with Debra Keller at the Department of Surgery I asked her what her feeling was on the salary levels at Columbia. She said that salary is not the only competitive advantage Columbia has, they are also an Ivy League School and New York as a location is attractive, although expensive which has to be calculated into the offers. For professor level recruitments they are one of the top payers in the nation with at least 12 of their tenured faculty making more than a million dollars a year. The department follows salary levels and makes sure they increase them if they are not competitive in a certain field.

The salary levels for both campuses, for non-union employees, can be found below:

Morningside Campus Position Salary Schedule

For Officers of Administration and Support Staff (Non-Union)* — Effective July 1, 2012

Grade	Minimum
5	\$33,810
6	\$35,330
7	\$37,030
8	\$39,370
9	\$41,370
9a	\$43,030
<hr/>	
10	\$47,190
11	\$48,420
12	\$50,170
13	\$53,700
14	\$59,670
15	\$70,670
16	\$87,570

For Research and Technical Support Staff (Non-Union) — Effective July 1, 2012

Grade	Minimum
R1	\$30,490
R2	\$30,950
R3	\$32,120
R4	\$33,240
R5	\$34,710
R6	\$36,680
R7	\$38,810
R8	\$42,650
R9	\$45,570

Medical Center / Health Sciences Campus Position Salary Schedule

For Officers of Administration — Effective July 1, 2012

Grade	Minimum
103	\$47,185
104	\$50,220
105	\$56,259
106	\$71,043
107	\$98,379
108	\$120,023

Salary guidelines for officers of research can be found attached. Salary guidelines for union positions can be found in the attached Union Contract.

Benefits: The benefits department is mostly a centralized HR call center that serves the employees of the University. An employee is in the realm of benefits if they work over 20 hours

a week. New hires are told about their benefit packages in the New Hire orientation that lasts from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. There are several different health care and benefit packages that employers in the States provide and employees have to choose which one they will be participating in. The different packages are priced differently and employees may choose how much coverage they want and need. The prices also differ according to the income of the individual and the cost is subtracted automatically from the employee's pay prior to taxes. Employees may include their family (spouse, partner, children, step children) in the benefit plans that also cover perscriptions and dental care. Employees can open flexible spending accounts where they choose an amount per year that is subtracted pretax from their paycheck and put into a separate account that they can use to pay for healthcare related costs. The University significantly subsidizes the plans.

There are a lot of benefits that are culture specific to the States such as the possibility to apply for grants for the schooling of an employee's children (any age, pre-k to university level). The University has its own School for Children (pre-k to 8th grade) that each employee's children can apply to. The annual fee is \$40,000, but an employee's child gets a 50% discount and the school is very difficult to get into. Another Columbia related benefit is a program that has just been closed down for new applications where an employee's child can get a tuition waiver if they are admitted to Columbia. HR Director Danielle is planning for her 7 year old son to one day make a use of that benefit as she was able to join the program before it was closed. Currently certain levels of administrative staff and faculty can apply for a grant for their child's college tuition costs regardless of the college the child attends. The grant is 50% of the tuition fee.

Other benefits include a housing service that consults on renting and buying homes within commuting distance of Columbia, lactation rooms and supplies for mothers who need to pump milk during their work day, free shuttle services between campuses, free fitness opportunities on all campuses, health and dental care, discounts in a wide array of service providers (restaurants, banks, event planning etc.), help with wedding planning and the possibility to rent out St.Paul's Chapel (pictured on the right) for the ceremony.



Another service that the University provides for its employees is an outsourced Back Up Care service. The service is available for a maximum of 100 hours per fiscal year, for children or the elderly (family members including in-laws and older friends) that the employee has the responsibility of taking care of even if they reside in another state. The cost for the employee is \$2/per hour for a child and \$6/per hour for an adult.



Employees can apply for an adoption assistance of \$5 000 per child per employee. So if both of the adoptive parents are employees at Columbia University they can receive \$10 000 per child.

The Employee Assistance Program is a free benefit that is available to those employees who are part of the CU Medical Benefits program. It is a network of services that help the employees (and members of their

household) with everyday issues. Outsourced counselors are available for the employees 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The program also helps employees and their family to manage elder care and is designed to *“save time, energy and worry”*. Some examples of what the program helps with include: caregiving from a distance, stress, anxiety and depression, eating disorders, locating services and care for older adults, financial stress, coping with change, pet care, quitting smoking, addiction, weight loss, relationship problems, sleeping difficulties, coping with a serious illness, emotional issues, loss of a loved one, family relationships, dealing with work stress and many other issues.

The University also provides transit and parking reimbursement. Employees may elect to put up to 240 dollars a month (pre-tax) into an account that a third party administrator runs.

The employees can also choose to take out retirement plans for themselves. After 2 years of service the university also starts to pay its own part. For the faculty, the university starts to participate in their retirement fund immediately at the start of the employment.

With regards to tenure track recruitments, an additional benefit or compensation that the school likes to offer is moving costs. The offers that I saw for incoming recruits allocated \$80 000 for moving costs. The Internal Revenue Service has guidelines for the sum of moving costs that are tax deductible. The HR unit at Columbia advises departments to stay within these sums, but if they want to pay a larger sum to a recruit they are also responsible for the taxes for the amount that goes over the guidelines.

Work-Life Benefits brochure can be found attached.

Conflicts in the Work Place and Compliance: I asked the HR Director whether they have issues with employees not getting along or other internal conflicts between professors or within

departments. She said they do, but there is a very clear protocol that they follow to make sure the problems don't get out of hand. The progressive discipline process is used when a person is not performing in their job and when there is an individual who has demonstrated improper behavior in the workplace.

The steps of the process are as follows:

- First there is a mandatory counseling meeting where the issue is discussed and it is made clear to the employee what the problematic behavior is and that it should stop.
- If the behavior does not change a written warning is given.
- If the employee still continues to demonstrate unwanted behavior either a second warning is given or the contract is terminated.

With union member employees two warnings and a suspension have to be given before a contract can be terminated.

If there is a complaint on the behavior of a faculty member a meeting is set up that includes the Director of Faculty Affairs, the University level HR, the School's HR and the Public Safety Department. The Faculty member is usually mandated to attend the Employee Assistance Program that includes individual counseling or an anger management class for example. If the behavior does not change HR sends a letter of non-renewal to the department, so even if the professor is academically high performing and well respected their contract will not be renewed.



When I met with Client Manager Sony she told me about a recent issue of workplace mediation where an employee was sure that he was doing a good job and came to meet Sony to complain that their supervisor does not appreciate what they are doing. Sony explained to him that the supervisor gets to choose the measure of their success in a position and set up a meeting that she mediated to help the supervisor communicate what they expect from the employee.

Bringing up underlying problems or conflicts is demanded of each Columbia University employee. When a new employee first enters into their position at Columbia they are required to take an online class

called Doing the Right Thing, which emphasizes the duty to report. According to Sony, they have no problem putting a Tenured Professor who has served for 40 years into an anger management program if need be.

All employees are required to report unprofessional behavior to the HR Department or other avenues of reporting. From what I have seen whistleblowing is something that is actively done and supported at the School.

The employees of the University can report to the Ombuds Office, which is a neutral place for discussing workplace issues, interpersonal conflict, academic concerns, bureaucratic issues and other problems. They are governed by confidentiality and are not part of formal proceedings at the University. However, they are able to advise on how the employee should proceed and who they could contact. During my visit someone contacted the Ombuds office with regards to a recruitment process where a department had someone in mind for a position and they opened the position up for applications. After opening the position they noticed that the person does not fill the requirements listed in the posting, closed it and hired her.

The Ombuds office answers directly to the president and is not responsible to any administrative unit. They can help employees by:

- Listening
- Offering information about Columbia University policies and procedures
- Providing a place to discuss concerns and clarify issues
- Helping to identify and evaluate a range of options for resolving a problem
- Gathering information and offering referrals to other resources
- Offering coaching to help prepare for a difficult conversation
- Facilitating communication, indirectly or through shuttle diplomacy
- Working for collaborative agreements through mediation
- Tracking perceived issues and trends
- Making recommendations for institutional improvements

In addition to the Ombuds office which offers a non-official place to discuss and decide how to proceed the school has a confidential Compliance Hotline for reporting noncompliance. The text on the Compliance website states that:

Columbia University is committed to operating with integrity in full compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and policies. The University sets expectations of the highest standards of ethical conduct and is committed to upholding its reputation as one of the top academic and research institutions in the world.

Columbia University relies on you to speak up if you believe that you have observed unethical, illegal or suspicious behavior. When you speak up, you provide the information necessary to

*investigate and remedy a potentially damaging situation. **The University does not tolerate retaliation against individuals who report concerns in good faith.***

The hotline is a number that employees can contact if they have noticed noncompliance with federal, state or local laws or regulations, University policies, errors or irregularities in Columbia's financial accounting practices or policies (for ex. Management of grants). The caller can remain anonymous.

The office gives the following examples of issues that employees may want to discuss:

- "One of my co-workers may be improperly using University funds."
- "I feel threatened by actions in the workplace."
- "This transaction appears to be a violation of University policy and/or federal regulations."
- "My supervisor appears to have a conflict of interest."
- "One of my peers may have falsified research results."

Columbia's compliance office actively checks HR (as well as other units') processes.

Part time employees: Students and other casual (short term/temporary) employees sign a contract for 560 hours. They only get one contract so when the 560 hours is out there is no possibility of extension for any temporary position at Columbia. The IRS has limited the maximum working hours of a temporary employee to a 1000 hours, but the University uses 560 hours to make sure that they have some leeway if a department accidentally lets a casual work longer than they should. The school pays them low pay, but above minimum wage and they do not receive benefits.

Strategy & The 2020 Vision: The 2020 Vision is the strategy of the school that includes targets for each department and administrative unit. HR has created strategy score cards that the departments can use to measure how they succeed, but they do not require the departments to use them. According to Danielle, it's important that the departments meet their goals and succeed, not that they do it according to the way the administration has set up.

Work time: The work time of the administrative staff is from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m with one hour for lunch, so the working week is 35 hours. The working time of the faculty is also 35 hours a week. Some of the union position work times differ and can be anywhere from 30 to 37,5 hours a

week. Exceptions can be made and a non-union employee can apply for a 9, 10 or 11 month work time, flextime or the option to telecommute. Flextime contracts are signed for a year at a time and approved by the Department and HR.

When a position is opened up for applications it can be made into an 11 month position where the person only works for 11 months of the year and gets paid 11/12 of their yearly salary, but is paid 12 months of the year. The benefits of the position are the same as those of a full time employee. The decision depends on the needs of the Department.

Telecommuting can be initiated by the employee or the organization. The University policy on lists the next considerations as guidelines for when telecommuting can be contemplated and when it's not:

Can be contemplated when:

- The staff member has demonstrated sustained high performance, and when the manager believes the staff member can maintain the expected quantity and quality of work while telecommuting.
- The department can maintain quality of service for students, faculty and other members of the University community.
- Telecommuting is appropriate considering the nature of the job.

Requests should not be contemplated when:

- The job requires the staff member's physical presence or telecommuting would harm the school or department's efficiency.
- The staff member's current assignment requires frequent supervision, direction or input from others who are on-site.
- The staff member's performance evaluations do not indicate sustained high performance.
- The staff member's observed productivity levels are problematic.
- The staff member has received disciplinary action or has a demonstrated attendance problem.
- The staff member has less than six months of service in the administrative unit or school.

A recruiting department can use telecommuting as leverage when negotiating with a new employee and can in those cases apply to HR for a waiver on the six months of service rule.

Tenure Track: I was surprised to find that the HR departments (at the University and School level) have no involvement in the tenure track recruitment process. The process is overseen by the Vice Dean of Academic Affairs and is the responsibility of the Department of Academic Affairs (previously known as Academic Appointments). The departments have administrative staff that aid in the process on the department's end. I was able to meet with a representative of the Academic Affairs department, April Armstrong-Studivant, to ask questions about the Tenure Track process.



Officers of instruction can all have temporary contracts for a maximum of 8 years. If they are not tenured (or receive a permanent lecturer's position) during that period of time their contracts will not be renewed. Outside of tenured faculty, all appointments are for one year (the fiscal year). If there is a faculty member that is not performing or is coming to the end of his 8 year maximum HR sends them a letter of non-renewal in December so that they know well in advance that they will not have the opportunity to continue their career at Columbia.

The Tenure Track process is initiated by the department in question. According to April the number one thing that the departments have to look at is financial stability. Tenure Track is for life and the average retirement age is around 70, so the departments have to look at the research that the professor is doing to see if it is something that will be relevant and valuable long into the future. The Tenure Track leading up to the Tenured position is usually eight years long.

The Department's dossier on the applicant first goes to a school level Committee on Appointments and Promotions. The Chairman of the Department presents the dossier at the meeting and has to prove the enduring value of the applicant. The Committee includes Tenured professors from each of the departments of the school. If the Committee accepts the Department's proposal the dossier is sent to the Tenure Review Advisory Committee, which is a University level entity. Sometimes they will ask a witness (either someone who is a specialist in the field of research that the applicant represents or the Chairman of the Department) to come make a case and comment on the research the applicant is doing.

The number of external referees used in each recruitment process is around 20. The University does not pay them a fee for being a referee and all of the referees need to be from outside of Columbia. The department prepares a Comparison Scholar List of 5 people who work in the same field as the applicant and ask the referees to comment on how the chosen applicant compares to those 5 professors. All of the applicant communication during the process is the

responsibility of the Department Chair. The time period from when the department starts to prepare the dossier to finalization of the recruitment is usually anywhere from 1 to 1,5 years. April has found the referee letters to be the one part of the process that slows it down the most. Referees are given one month to answer, but sometimes they need to be reminded to return their answers on time. Columbia has not chosen to extend this time period because they found that if you give the referees more time, they will take it and turn it in at the last minute.

There is no Teaching Assessment Committee, instead the applicants have to provide references on their teaching skills and to list teaching experience and qualifications in their CV.

I went through the Tenure Track process with Debra Keller from the Department of Surgery to get a picture of the department administration's role in faculty recruitment processes. In tenure track (non-tenured) promotional processes the departmental recruitment committee includes all professors of the department, in bigger departments the committee only includes tenured professors. The professors meet in ad hoc committees to participate in promotional processes. There are 20 professors in Debra's department and usually 10 will participate. Each department can individually decide who their committee includes. The promotional process is initiated by the department head and the committee meets to look at the CV of the employee and decide whether, on the basis of the CV, the employee is in an appropriate place in their career to be up for promotion. The promotional process requires 8 to 12 referees and lasts usually anywhere from four to nine months. At least 5 of the referees have to be from outside of the department and 3 from outside of Columbia. A recent process took one month as all of the referees answered back quickly. The department usually recruits only in to assistant level even if they are recruiting a senior faculty member and then goes through the promotional process because it is quicker.

Debra used to give 3 months for the referees to answer questions, but now only gives 5 weeks and starts to follow up after 3 weeks. None of the referees have commented on the time period being too short and it has helped in speeding up the process. The documents have to include the names and positions of each of the referees that were asked for a letter, even those that



never return their letters. The Dean requires a minimum of 8 referee letters, but the department asks for 10. I asked Debra whether they have thought of extending the list to make sure that they get a certain number of answers back, but she felt that if they ask more people for referee letters there will also be more people declining so the percentage of answers won't necessarily increase. In the non-tenure promotional process they do not ask the referees to compare the candidate and they do not ask what level position the person would receive at the referee's university. After the letters come back, Debra

goes through them and highlights possible innuendos or questionable areas to make sure the professors in the committee go through at least those areas.

The tenure track recruitment process is the same at the department level, but requires some additional documents such as the applicant's research statement and the department's statement on how the applicant's research fits into their department and how the cost of the recruit will be covered for the next three years. As mentioned above, tenure track recruitments and promotions to tenured levels go to the school and university level committees whereas the non-tenured promotions and recruitments are departmental responsibilities. Last year the department had 19 promotions and most of their recruitments were to the level of assistant professor. New positions have to be opened up and advertised online and in a journal. The job post is usually open to all levels. They are open for a minimum of four weeks, but some positions have been open for up to 7 months, one even for 2 years. If the recruitment is to Assistant Professor level the Head of Department will run interviews, check references and choose the hire on their own.

Tenure Track promotional guidelines, recruitment guidelines, a list of members of the university level Tenure Track Committee, the Up or Out Policy, Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action guidelines and check lists for both tenured or non-tenured promotional processes can be found attached.

Leaves and Vacation: Sick leaves of three or more consecutive work days or right before or after a vacation require a doctor's note. The employer can also ask for a doctor's note in lieu of any sick leave if it is suspected that an employee is misusing their sick leave right. Many employer's in the States have a set maximum of 12 sick leave days that an employee can use in one year. After the 12 days is used up, the rest are unpaid. Columbia does not have a maximum number of sick leave days per year, but if they see that an employee is misusing their right for sick leaves they do invite them over for a discussion in the HR office. Doctors' notes can be given to HR, the Benefits Office or the Supervisor. According to Danielle, the employees that misuse their sick leave right usually send their doctors notes to the Benefits Office.

There is no minimum number of vacation days an employer has to provide in the States, but the non-union employees at the Medical Center campus get 23 vacation days and 2 personal days a year and the employees at the Morningside campus get 23 vacation days and 3 personal days. The difference in personal days is made up by the fact that the Medical Center employees get President's Day off, which the Morningside campus employees don't. All in all, there are 13 holidays during a year in addition to which the Friday after Thanksgiving and the day before Christmas are days off and if a holiday falls on a Saturday, the Friday before is off and if it falls

on a Sunday, the following Monday is a day off. The work day before a holiday is usually a shorter day with employees leaving early. An employee has the right to take days off due to religion, but the days are either unpaid or take up vacation days. The number of days off is the same for faculty and administration. If an employee does not use their vacation days by the end of the fiscal year they lose them. Employees are only compensated for unused vacation days if they resign or their contract ends for another reason. Usually they are required to use the days up during their resignation period.

The unions have a set number of vacation days that their employees are given, the employer cannot go above or below that number. The main union is the United Healthcare Workers Union and their contract mandates 10 days of vacation for a starting employee. The number of days increases as their time with the employer increases up to 22 after 15 years of employment.

Family leave can be taken when an employee gives birth to a child (whether or not they are keeping it or placing it up for adoption), a grandchild is born or a family member (spouse/child/parent/sibling or in-law) has serious health issues. When family leave is connected to the birth of a child the leave has to be taken within 12 months of the child being born. Paid maternal leave is 6 weeks long if the mother gave birth vaginally and 8 weeks if the child was born through a caesarean section. Other than the 6 to 8 week maternal leave, family leave is unpaid. The employee is eligible for family leave if they have been employed by



Columbia for the last 12 months prior to the leave and worked for at least 1250 hours during those 12 months. The 12 week leave does not cut off benefits for the time period. A 26 week family leave can be taken to care for a family member with serious health issues who is in the military service.

A 3 day bereavement leave is available when a spouse, parent, in-law, sibling, child or other member of the household dies.

Retirement: Administrative staff who have served for over 10 years and are over 55 years old can apply for a phased retirement where they can start working part time until they hit retirement age. The salary is adjusted accordingly, but they get to keep the benefits of a full time employee. This gives the departments time to hire and train a replacement or the possibility to restructure positions. The retirement age in the U.S. is 65, but employees can work to whatever age they choose.

Officers of instruction cannot be mandatorily retired. They can retire at 55 at the earliest and are asked to retire at the end of the school year so as not to disrupt teaching. Most choose to stay in their positions until the age of 70.

HR Learning and Development: is its own university level department that the departments and schools can buy services from and are charged per person per training for. Attendance on a course costs \$70 for a half day training and \$140 for a full day course. Some examples of the courses they provide are listed below:

- Managing Changes that Affect Your Work
- Having Challenging Conversations
- Emotional Intelligence
- Resolving Conflict
- Strategic Thinking
- Influencing Without Authority
- Time Management
- E-mail Etiquette
- Business Writing
- Communicating Effectively
- Impromptu Speaking – Communicating Clearly in Unexpected Situations
- Making Better Decisions

The HR Learning and Development organization also facilitates meetings and creates customized training courses for departments.

There is a one day orientation day for all new faculty and staff members and a second day for the administrative staff. Employees must attend within 30 days of starting their employment, but preferably on the day of arrival. Professors are on-boarded by the departments and the Department of Academic Affairs one by one as they arrive in addition to attending the orientation day. New Chairmen of Departments and Division Heads are on-boarded by the administrative director of their department. Debra Keller told me this was important not only for the employee, but also for her so that she could see what their capabilities are and what processes they need help with. All new employees have to take an online course called Doing the Right Thing.

International Mobility: There is no administrative staff mobility program at Columbia, but the administrative staff participates actively in various annual conferences in North America.



Issues related to the relocation of international employees at Columbia and their families moving with them are handled by the International Affairs unit that is not part of the HR organization. The same unit helps students with international mobility issues. The staff helps international employees and students with visa documentation for them and their families. They also send out announcements to personnel and students with updates on immigration-related issues. They organize immigration-, employment-, and tax-related workshops and help with social, cultural and other activities.

I met with Kathy McVeigh who has worked in International Affairs for over twenty years. There are two International Affairs offices at Columbia, one at the Washington Heights campus and the other on the Morningside Campus. There is also a one person team in the American Language program that handles their student visa applications. The Washington Heights team consists of two people and a part-time student employee who meet face to face with clients and are open for pop-ins or scheduled appointments. Their main focus is incoming scholars, especially post doc researchers. Kathy and her colleague prepare eligibility documents on the initiation of the departments before each employee comes to the U.S. and takes care of the paperwork when they get to the States. They only help with the start-up process, the rest is the responsibility of the departmental administrators. In 2012 they had 1076 new staff and faculty members that they helped with 323 dependents. All in all there were 3094 incoming international employees last year.

The international affairs office regularly attends conferences to network with people who work with the same issues at other Ivy League Schools. In some American universities International Affairs is under HR, but at Columbia it's a separate administrative unit.

Statistics on the international mobility and affairs of Columbia University can be found attached.

Employee Unions: Certain positions at the university are union positions so when a person is hired to one of those positions the benefits and their salary is already negotiated by the union and the employer cannot go over or under the agreement. I met with Director of Labor Relations Mary Ann Carlese who handles everything related to union co-operation. She is part of a seven person University level Labor Relations team.

Mary Ann originally studied Labor Relations, HR and Mediation at Cornell and went on to do a Law degree after working in several labor unions after graduation. She also studied labor relations at the University of Glasgow during her studies. Labor unions are especially strong in the North East of the United States and in California. The Southern states do not protect or support labor unions as strongly so there aren't as many issues that HR departments in those states have to deal with. Only about 13% of Columbia Employees are union employees, but in the public sector the percentage is around 30. Usually the union members get better pay than non-union members in the same level positions. The main union at the Columbia University Medical Center is the United Healthcare Workers union (their collective bargaining agreement can be found attached), but according to Mary there are 6 or 7 more unions at the Morningside Undergraduate campus and several other unions that have employees on both campuses such as the unions for the Transit/Security guards, maintenance employees, clerical workers and cafeteria workers.

Mary Ann works closely with the unions in many ways one of which is the grievance process. If a person or a group of people file a grievance on the employer to the union the union and the department the person/people works in sit down with the Department Head to try to come to an agreement. If they do not find consensus in this meeting they meet again with Mary and if no agreement is reached at this point the conflict goes to arbitration. There are usually 3 to 4 arbitration processes each year and one process costs \$10 000.

Termination of Employment: Columbia University is in constant reorganization, always looking to cut positions where they are not needed and add them where there is a lack of work force. Some of the smaller academic partners have merged their administrations to cut down on cost of labor and premises.

Termination of employment seems to be a more clear cut process than in Finland. If there is no need for a position anymore the position is terminated, as is the contract of the employee. Contracts can also be ended with the progressive discipline program and by notifying faculty members that have not performed or have shown unwanted behavior by sending them a Letter of Non-renewal six months before their one year contract ends.

The amount of severance that is paid when a contract is terminated depends on the number of years the person has worked at Columbia. Recently a position in HR administration was terminated and since the employee had worked for Columbia for a year and a half no severance was paid. The employer can decide on the length of the notice period and often consult the HR Client Managers to strategically decide whether a long or a short notice period should be chosen. If they see that the person will not create problems and will be motivated to work

effectively until the end of their contract they will give them more time to prepare for the termination. If there is a risk that the person will be a liability, they will give two weeks notice and ask the employee to leave right after notification. Severance is only mandated by law in cases of mass lay-offs, but the University prefers to pay them so they can get the laid off employee to sign a no claim release. With union positions the union decides the amount of the severance. A New York law prohibits discrimination against aged employees and all employees are protected after the age of 40. One of the departments recently had two underperforming long term employees whose contracts they wanted to end, but the legal department advised them against it due to the fact that both of them were over the age of 40, both were female and one was African American (possibility to sue the employer for discrimination). Instead, new positions were found for both of them

The notice period for resignation is 4 weeks for administration, 2 weeks for support staff and 3 months for faculty.

Meetings:

The onboarding I received at Columbia was extremely effective and I was able to attend all the meetings that the HR Director and the Vice Dean of HR attended. I cannot emphasize enough the importance this had on my ability to quickly understand the organization. This is definitely something we should look to replicate at Aalto. Clearly each team, whether they are part of a matrix or local teams, have set team meetings, whether weekly, biweekly or monthly, that they hold to. The University administration seems to be very development oriented and forward thinking and much of the meeting time is spent on new ideas that are immediately tested out or put in to affect. The added value of the meetings is clear as they have a set time when they brainstorm together and no idea or question is looked down upon. I've listed more information on some of the meetings I attended underneath.

Faculty Meeting: I attended the Dean's faculty meeting, which at Columbia was actually an afternoon soda (instead of our afternoon coffee). The decision making at the school seems to be quite consensus oriented with the Dean asking the faculty members to vote on the new job titles during the meeting. He also asked if any of the attendees had any worries and any brought up worries were discussed openly during the meeting.

Another topic of the meeting was the Medical Center PhD students for the school year 2013-2014. 12% of the PhD Program applicants were offered



admittance. 39% of them, 44 students, accepted. Out of the 44 starting students 52% were women and 32% foreign. The School is working towards recruiting more minorities by attending minority recruitment events. The PhD students will be paid for by money provided by the Dean's office, departmental money and outside training grants. Some of them will have employment contracts and others will be paid for by outside grants. The Dean emphasized that when recruiting PhD students it is important to present a united front as Columbia as a university has a stronger image than any department on its own can have.

In addition to faculty meetings, the Dean holds regular staff meetings for the administration.

Four School Meeting: I joined in on a monthly meeting with the HR Directors of the 4 schools of the Medical Center run by Bill, who is one of the supervisors of each of the HR Directors. The meeting consisted of going through updates from the university level, changes to laws in the State of New York and discussion on what each of the schools is doing. One of the issues discussed was the Relationship Policy. The University had not wanted to do a relationship policy, but two years ago ended up creating one regarding student-teacher relationships. Recently HR created one for supervisor-employee relationships and is now working on a version that explains the policy in the supervisor matrix system. The current policy is as follows.

Consensual Relationships Between Faculty and Students. *It is the policy of the University that no faculty member shall have a consensual romantic or sexual relationship with a student over whom he or she exercises academic or professional authority. It is also the University's policy that no faculty member shall exercise academic or professional authority over any student with whom he or she has or previously has had a consensual romantic or sexual relationship. This policy applies to all officers of instruction, research and the libraries, including student officers of instruction and research and graduate and undergraduate teaching assistants.*

Consensual Relationships Between Staff Members and Students. *No staff member at Columbia should participate in supervision, employment actions, evaluation, advising or mentoring any Columbia University student with whom that staff member has or has had a consensual romantic or sexual relationship, except in unusual circumstances, where explicit authorization has been obtained from the Vice President of Human Resources in consultation with Office of the General Counsel. In the event that a personal relationship of this kind does exist in a supervisory, advisory or mentoring context, the supervisor must disclose the relationship to the Vice President of Human Resources and initiate arrangements to address any issues of conflict of interest. A staff member who violates this*



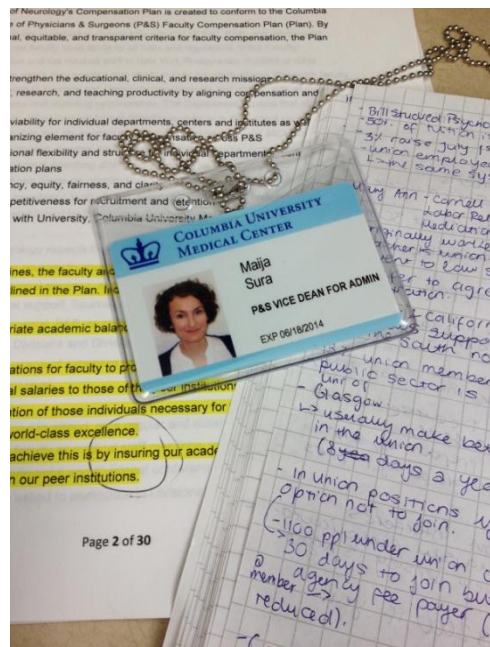
policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. The University will take all necessary steps to protect a student in such a relationship against academic, professional or financial hardship.

Consensual Relationships Between Staff Members. *Staff members at Columbia should not participate in hiring, supervision, employment actions, evaluation, decisions pertaining to promotion, or the direct setting of salary or wages, for someone employed at Columbia with whom that person has or has had a consensual romantic or sexual relationship except in unusual circumstances and with the explicit approval of the Vice President of Human Resources in consultation with the Office of the General Counsel. Employees should be aware that entering into such a relationship with a person who may direct or control his or her work creates the potential for risk to both parties. In the event that a personal relationship of this kind does exist in a supervisory context, the supervisor must disclose the relationship to the appropriate superior and initiate arrangements to address any issues of conflict of interest. A supervising staff member who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.*

Client Manager Team Meeting: The Client Manager Team Meeting I attended is a weekly meeting where the Client Managers meet to regroup about projects they are working on and communicate them to the Client Managers that work with other responsibilities and departments. We discussed the development of the Welcome to Columbia – day and developing the exit interview process. Columbia is looking into buying an exit interview service from an outside provider where they would call an ex-employee 30 days after they have left for a 10 to 15 minute interview that the employee can decide to keep confidential. The company compiles the exit interview information by department or if the employee does not ask the information to stay confidential provides the information directly to the department.

HR Brainstorming Session: The monthly Brainstorming session is headed by Bill Innes and includes an administrative representative of each of the departments, either a Director of HR and Faculty Affairs or Head Administrative Officer. There were some issues that Bill brought up in the Four School Meeting, his team meeting with the Client Managers and the HR Brainstorming Session and asked each of the groups for their opinion on policy changes. This way everyone knows what is going on and has the possibility to give input on the issues. Bill, as the Associate Vice Dean of HR, clearly does not go into meetings with the answer thought out. Instead he wants to consult all the people who will be dealing with the end result and lets them make the decision in consensus.

Support Staff Association – Union Negotiation Preliminary Meeting: I attended a meeting in which the employer’s representatives met to prepare for union negotiations that are coming up in September. The Unions are only for Columbia University and only for specific positions that are Union mandated. The biggest and most important thing that the School of Physicians and Surgeons wants to change in the contract is the possibility to do performance reviews for union members. Currently performance reviews cannot be done after the 3 month probation period



of union employees. Non-union employees have performance reviews once a year. The University level negotiators were not too optimistic about bringing forth this suggestion because it could create a big conflict and diminish the possibility of getting other suggestions passed such as getting everyone on electronic time keeping at the University.

Customer Manager’s Meeting with Supervisor and an Administrative Referral Meeting: Bill has weekly meetings with each of his Customer Managers to catch up on projects they are working on and consult them on their work. I joined in on these meetings and was surprised at how much of their work is related to mediating conflicts in the work place.

One of the issues that Customer Manager Nicole Scott-King was dealing with was a security guard who threatened her supervisor and herself with violence and has a long history of displaying worrying behavior and symptoms of mental illness. The issue came to the HR office’s attention through NYPD calling the employer after a church hotline employee called 911 with worries about the employee and told them about threats she had made on herself and the supervisor during a call. I got to attend all the preliminary meetings in preparation for meeting the employee, i.e. Nicole’s consultation with healthcare professionals and the person’s department head as well as the union representatives. Originally they thought about putting the person on unpaid leave until she brings in a psychiatrist’s note saying she is fit for duty. Due to the threats she made they ended up suspending her for violent behavior and telling her she is not allowed to approach the premises or her supervisor. Nicole asked the union representative to speak to the employee afterwards and make sure she checks in with a doctor.

I also sat in on Bill’s meeting with Client Manager Margaret Gibson. One of her projects is called Learning Academy, which is a school wide project to increase customer (patient) satisfaction. I was relieved to hear that similarly to our manager/supervisor trainings they struggle with the same issue – how to get managers to attend training sessions. So far attendance has been

around 50%. They take a list of attendance on each course and follow up with those who did not show up. They also contact the supervisors of the managers to make sure that they also pressure the managers to come to training sessions.

Bill and Margaret also discussed their initiative to market HR services internally and to improve their HR processes by explaining them and making them more transparent. They also plan to track process times from start to finish to see if they can speed them up. Their team will look into creating a quick tracking system that would not create too much work or slow down other processes.

Centralized HR Managers' Meeting

On the way to the managers meeting I asked Bill how actively the departments use the centralized HR services. According to him, if a department prefers to use outside consultants instead of Columbia's own HR Training and Development, since they have to pay for the internal services as well.

The main topic of the meeting was the new Manhattanville campus area. The centralized HR offices are already on this campus. The Department of Neurology (including three Nobel prize winners) will be moving into the new campus, as will other yet-to-be-decided departments. The campus will be finished in 2016 and Columbia is starting discussions on how HR services will be provided in the future, whether they will move people from the Washington Heights campus with the department or whether the HR officers will stay in their current offices and provide services from a separate campus. The new campus initiative requires the involvement of the union as it will include moving employees from campus to campus.

Another topic of the meeting was a new legislation on preventing domestic and dating violence. The legislation requires employers to train employees and students on how to report and notify suspicions on and off campus to the HR department. The legislation goes into force in March, 2014.

The development of the University website was also discussed. The idea is to make the intranet more interactive and think of it through how the client uses, not how HR thinks of it. An example of a more interactive intranet was to make the recruitment plan and instructions seem customized. The recruiting manager would click through and choose what sort of position they are recruiting for and the website would take the manager through the process step-by-step. The new website will be launched by April, 2014.

I found it interesting how many more men there are in the HR function in the States when compared to Finland. This was especially true in the HR Managers' Meeting.

Conclusion:

It is clear that Columbia is a respected employer and that the employees I met with were all proud to work there. Their job descriptions seemed challenging and rewarding and the four level HR organization did not seem excessive due to the amount of work they have. Employees have the chance to really develop and have great careers within Columbia either specializing in a certain area or working as a generalist. There is a lot of internal rotation from departments to schools to the centralized office and back, which ensures that people stay motivated and committed. Work days are long and hectic and employees rarely stop for lunch. Some even came in for meetings from vacation. There is constant development going on and meetings are used to bring out new ideas and brainstorm. The HR organization does not mandate from top down what each department or school should do. Instead they meet together to discuss and decide and value the activeness of team members. HR is clearly not considered a hindrance in this organization, but rather a much needed support organization that is very visible due to the fact that most of the organization is located at the school level, not in the centralized university level offices.

As a conclusion, I would say that it is definitely worthwhile to focus our international staff visits towards Ivy League Schools in the States and their counterparts in other countries. There is a lot we can learn from what other universities are doing, especially well-established and respected universities that hold their administration to high standards.

Pictures of Columbia University student housing below.



Appendices

1. Columbia University Facts 2012
2. HR Organizational Chart
3. Recruitment documents for the position of Assistant to the Dean (from the recruitment system)
4. Salary guidelines for Officers of Research
5. Work Life Brochure
6. Principles and Customs Governing University-Wide Tenure Reviews
7. Tenure Track Nomination Checklists
8. Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policies
 - Departmental Policy on the Recruitment of Women and Minority Faculty
9. Principles and Customs Governing the Procedures of Ad Hoc Committees and University-Wide Tenure Review
10. Up or Out Policy - Policies and Procedures for Determining the Statutory Limit on Full-Time Service of Nontenured Faculty
11. Statement of Ethical Conduct
12. International Students and Scholars Statistics 2012
13. Annual Performance Appraisal Form
14. Guidelines for Social Media – Note: An example of the wide array of policies that are available on the Columbia University intranet.
15. Faculty Handbook – Note: The Columbia University Faculty Handbook is only available online on the Columbia intranet. It is not available in PDF form so the attached copy is copied from the intranet and thus is not in its' original format.
16. Faculty Guidelines for the College of Physicians and Surgeons
17. Collective Bargaining Agreement

