

COLUMBIA SPECTATOR ARCHIVE

Columbia Daily Spectator, Volume CXIX, Number 78, 28 August 1995 – Welcome to Columbia Class of 1999 arrives for Orientation [ARTICLE]

Welcome to Columbia Class of 1999 arrives for Orientation

By THE SPECTATOR STAFF

Riding the wave of New York City's increasing allure and Columbia's growing popularity with high school students nationwide, Columbia College, the School of Engineering and Applied Science (SEAS), and Barnard College each boast one of the most highly qualified incoming classes—and in many regards the most unique—in their histories.

In an interview this summer, Long Island opera singer Hayley Kabilinsky, CC '99, said a campus visit sealed her choice of schools.

"As soon as I set foot on the campus, I knew it was the place for me," Kabilinsky said. "I loved the architecture and the way the students were bustling around campus. Everyone was so New York."

University President George Rupp cited the University administration's increased focus on undergraduate education and the school's location as the main factors responsible for the increase in applicants like Kabilinsky.

"New York is also more visible to more people. In the '70s, it hurt when New York was thought to be on the brink of collapse," Rupp said.

With an acceptance rate of 23 percent and a yield of 45 percent of students who decided to attend, Columbia's Class of 1999 has many unique students.

Scot Watnik, CC '99, a Bronx High School of Science honor student and a two-time winner of the city-wide Mayor's Cup in tennis, was heavily recruited by other Ivy League schools, but said he chose Columbia for its top-notch men's tennis program and coach Bid Goswami.

"Goswami was interested in my well-being, not just in what I could do for the team. He didn't talk about whether I could beat this or that person like other coaches did," Watnik said, adding that academics are his top priority.

One of the reasons that Eric Pflanzer, CC '99, chose Columbia was the Core Curriculum. Pflanzer, an AIDS advocate from Fort Lauderdale, said he had a "gut feeling" Columbia was the right school.

Pflanzer, who was president of his high school's chapter of Youth Against AIDS, said New York attracted him as a place to escape from "movies, chicken sandwiches, and bottomless sodas," as well as other perils of suburbia.

"The city is amazing. The cultural, social, and employment opportunities are great," Pflanzer said. "I feel like I'd be rotting in a town like Hanover."

But Columbia College is not the only school to have a record number of applicants.

Of the 1,351 SEAS applicants, 49 percent were admitted, with a yield of 44 percent—a yield second only to that of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, according to then-Columbia College Dean of Admissions Drusilla Blackman in a June interview.

Combined average SAT scores rose 25 points at Columbia College and five points at SEAS.

At Barnard, the number of applicants rose 8.8 percent from 1994, with a 41.9 percent acceptance rate and a 42 percent yield.

Test scores of the incoming Barnard class also rose from previous years, with SAT scores averaging 1280.

Dean of Barnard College Dorothy Denburg also attributed the rise in applicants to New York City, once seen by some to deter students from applying to the school.

“Barnard combines all the aspects of undergraduate life: being in a very academically challenging community, [and being in] New York City,” Denburg said.