Daniel Schiavello  
CEAA Presidency Platform

When I was asked to accept the nomination of President of the Columbia Engineering Alumni Association (CEAA), I was, of course, honored but also indicated to the nomination committee representative that I may not be the best candidate since I tend not to be diplomatic and I do not shy away from controversy. Having said that, I accepted the nomination but suggested that I prepare a platform statement to be presented to CEAA membership.

There are over 20,000 Columbia Engineering Alumni. Thanks to the generosity of the late C.P. Davis, all Alumni are automatically members of CEAA upon graduation. Unfortunately most alumni have not even heard of the Association nor do they take advantage of the wonderful events and programs sponsored by CEAA. As President I would like to focus on improving name recognition of the association and promoting CEAA events and programs among students, young alumni and the entire Alumni community. This can only be accomplished by developing a communication plan that includes new ways to brand the CEAA name and to properly communicate news about CEAA and its sponsored activities. It will also require a stepped up membership recruitment program to increase awareness about CEAA.

CEAA is a fraternal association and thanks to an endowment bequest to the school by C.P. Davis and other generous Alumni, it remains an independent association. However, CEAA is the Alumni Association of the School of Engineering. Unfortunately, there seems to be many conflicting messages about the association’s relationship with the school and university. As President, I would like to take the necessary steps to improve our relation with the Engineering Dean’s office, the Columbia Alumni Association (CAA), the Columbia College Alumni Association (CCAA) and the University Development and Alumni Relations office (UDAR). To accomplish these goals, CEAA must improve interface between our sponsored activities and events and those sponsored by these other university offices and organizations. Of course, this means also providing fundraising support. Although CEAA is not and does not plan to become a fundraising organization, we must recognize our responsibility in supporting the Engineering School and University with this endeavor. In return, we should expect nothing less than having the Engineering School and University recognize us as the Engineering Alumni voice of Columbia University.

Ultimately, I envision CEAA as being the umbrella for all Engineering Alumni including young Alumni, Golden Lions and all alumni in between. Not only will this serve to fulfill our mission statement to foster and deepen the bonds of fellowship between the alumni, faculty and students of the Columbia University School of Engineering and Applied Science, it is essential for the future success of CEAA.
Rene Testa
CEAA Secretary Platform

In light of the platform statement of our nominee for president and his self-confessed propensity for controversy, I feel that my first obligation if elected to the post of Secretary will be to keep watch over that.

On a more serious note, I wish to support strongly the idea of gaining greater recognition of CEAA, an organization which I have always said deserves better visibility among students and alumni. As a long time member of the Columbia community, the erstwhile CESAA was virtually unknown to me until I became involved with the Board. Now as the reborn CEAA, it is time to make the Association a more vibrant and recognized part of the University and the School. Our nominee for President of CEAA will have my full support in his efforts to achieve that goal.

Rayman Bovell
CEAA Treasurer Candidacy

As an Officer of CEAA I will work with the other Officers and Board members to promote CEAA, engage our alumni, and create programming beneficial to our members. As Treasurer I will work with the various committees to ensure that allocated funds are spent. Too often committees don’t spend their allotted amounts on an annual basis which deprives our members of programming. Additionally, as an alumni organization, less than 20% of our annual operating budget is used to support “alumni” activities, that is, programs that benefit graduates of the school. While our organization aims to provide support for students, faculty and alumni alike we must remember that we are an “alumni” association.

Patrick Bronner
CEAA Vice-President – Faculty Relations Platform

As Vice-President – Faculty Relations, I would like to continue the emphasis to encourage the faculty to improve their relationship with students. CEAA will continue to underwrite two successful programs that exist to foster a bond with juniors entering the departments in their Fall Semester, and seniors and Graduate Students as they complete their studies at Columbia University.

The Faculty-Student Lunches offer the opportunity to students entering their respective departments in the Fall of Junior year to informally meet with professors outside the classroom, and share discussion of academic as well as personal interests. Students can meet the professors that they will have in future semesters in addition to those they have studied under during the fall semester of junior year. Fellow CEAA Board Members will be invited to attend to briefly introduce the juniors to CEAA as well.

The Faculty-Student dinners offer the opportunity to students completing study in their respective departments prior to graduation either as undergraduate and graduates with
recognition by the departments for their achievements as students and remind the
graduates that they will offer the world ahead them equally their personal development as
well as their academic development provided by the University. Fellow CEAA Board
Members will be invited to attend to briefly remind the graduates that they have attained
membership in CEAA, and what CEAA has to offer them in the years ahead.

Under the Faculty Relations domain is the sponsorship of the Distinguished Faculty
Teaching Award, given annually at Class Day to two professors based on direct feedback
of the student body. Beyond reviewing and recommending the selection of the Award
winner, the CEAA Board Committee for Faculty Relations is looking to create a forum
(lecture, demonstration, etc.) that professors, especially past Distinguished Faculty
Award recipients, can share with Alumni that can come back to campus to participate in.

Kelsey Nix
CEAA Vice-President – Alumni Relations Platform

I will continue to work with the our Executive Committee and our Board to facilitate
stronger and more productive bonds between CEAA and alumni, and between CEAA and
the School. Strengthening these bonds will require enhanced funding for alumni
programming and initiatives, increased visibility for CEAA, greater sensitivity to the
needs of the School, and refining CEAA's mission to better serve all alumni.

In addition to alumni events and a new regional alumni participation committee, Alumni
Affairs also includes the committees responsible for selecting the recipients of CEAA's
three most distinguished awards: (1) the Pupin Medal for Service to the Nation, (2) the
Samuel Johnson Medal for Distinguished Non-Engineering Achievement and (3) the
Egleston Medal for Distinguished Engineering Achievement. Through these awards,
CEAA perpetuates the memory, and advances the ideals, of those who have played an
important role in our School and the engineering profession.

Russel Baccaglini
CEAA Vice-President – Student Relations Platform

During the past year, the CEAA has made significant progress in increasing its visibility
and outreach to students and alumni. I would like to continue and hopefully accelerate
that progress, especially with students. Having served as VP-Student Relations before, I
have experience with the issues and efforts in the past. My goal would be to reactivate
and enhance successful programs and establish new efforts that link students and alumni.
One example would be to work with the Dean's office and the Engineering Student
Council to consider reactivating, in some form, the Kandel organization which was a
service oriented, student-run group sponsored by CEAA and represented CEAA on
campus. If students have positive experiences with alumni, especially through the efforts
of CEAA, they are much more likely to become active alumni.