THREE PROVOSTS: The University trustees have approved a recommendation by President-elect Sovern that Columbia's academic activities be headed by three provosts rather than one.

As the role of the provost has evolved over the past decade, Sovern noted, the provost has increasingly become involved in every major issue facing the University. After 15 months as provost himself, he has concluded that the office's activities at the highest levels encompass more responsibilities than one person should handle, he said. The provost, in addition to overseeing all academic activities, is responsible for the libraries, computing, registration, Senate duties and ceremonial obligations as well as, to a large extent, Barnard relations, budget, government relations, fund raising, financial management and a wide range of other matters. Consolidated research management, he suggested, probably ought to be added to those duties.

As of July 1, when the new president takes office, these activities will be distributed among three provosts of equal rank: one will be responsible primarily for the arts and sciences, another for the health sciences and a third for the remaining professional schools. After the three have been chosen, a comprehensive table of organization indicating lines of reporting authority will be issued.

"Three provosts, wisely chosen and deeply committed to the University, will do the job surpassingly well," said Sovern. "Not only will they bring more time and energy to the tasks than a single person, but they can also be selected to bring complementary skills and capacities to the office's many functions." One hoped-for dividend from the plan is a closer relationship between the Morningside and Washington Heights campuses, he said. The new approach may also bring a swifter conclusion to the work of the Provost's Search Committee, he added.

"We are a large and complicated institution," Sovern stated, "operating more by consensus than by command, in a swiftly changing, sometimes harsh, environment. We have very little margin for error and no time to waste if we are to strengthen our position as one of the world's leading universities. I need outstanding help, and lots of it, and this proposal is designed to see that I have it."

FIND THE TITANIC! That is the challenge given scientists led by geophysicist William Ryan in a contract signed by the University April 15 with Texas oilman Jack Grimm—68 years to the day after the "unsinkable" liner went down off Newfoundland.

"The Titanic search agreement offers Lamont-Doherty scientists an opportunity to participate in the design and fabrication of advanced underwater equipment that will substantially benefit our own research programs," Ryan said. The new equipment will later be donated to Columbia, filling an important technology gap and allowing marine scientists to better understand the shape, nature and origin of the ocean floor, he said. The six-week expedition, planned for July and August, will allow hands-on training for students.

More than 1,500 people died when the Titanic sank approximately 300 miles southeast of Cape Race, Newfoundland, in water 13,000-feet deep. The wreck lies somewhere in an area the size of Rhode Island on a large, thick apron of sediment called the continental rise. Marine scientists from many institutions are actively studying the area as part of the High Energy Benthic Boundary Layer Experiment (HEBBLE) research effort. The boundary layer is caused by turbulence
stirred up when cold and dense ocean-bottom currents sweep swiftly southward from the Labrador Sea, sometimes creating persistent mud clouds called "abyssal storms."

"In searching for the Titanic," Ryan said, "much can be learned about these deep abyssal currents and the ocean-bottom features that they create, including giant dunes and erosional furrows. Using sound waves, we can generate acoustic images that effectively 'see' through the cloudy water, much the way radar 'sees' through clouds in the atmosphere. Other surveillance equipment that we will develop and use for the first time in deep-sea exploration will better chart the thickness and extent of the benthic boundary layer. Development of these and other exploration techniques has obvious advantages for both scientific and strategic applications, and provides an exciting adventure of interest to many people worldwide."

CENTENNIAL CHAIRS: In honor of the GSAS 100th anniversary, the trustees April 7 established the Centennial professorship of physics and the Centennial professorship of chemistry. Malvin Ruderman was named to the physics chair and Koji Nakanishi to that in chemistry.

The trustees also named incumbents for four existing chairs:

- Howard McP. Davis to the Moore Collegiate professorship of art history.
- Sacvan Bercovitch (English) to the Old Dominion Foundation professorship in the humanities.
- Oscar Schachter to the Hamilton Fish professorship of international law and diplomacy.
- Philip Felig to the Samuel Bard professorship in medicine.

The appointments, except for Felig's, which will begin June 1, are effective July 1.

"A RESOUNDING SUCCESS" is the way personnel vice president Robert Early described the effort to keep Columbia going during the transit strike. While other New York schools either closed or reduced operations, Columbia student and staff attendance was 95 percent of normal during those 11 days. At a cost of about $75,000, private buses and vans operated 12 hours a day for Columbia passengers to and from points in Manhattan and the Bronx, a central assistance office helped organize car pools, and special parking areas, including part of South Field, were opened. The success was in the planning, said Early, who gave special credit to personnel relations director Ross Rimicci, security director Gilbert Miller and assistant vice president at Health Sciences John Fiorillo. Spectator called it "an impressive demonstration of foresight and conscience."

BRIEFLY NOTED: Maintenance work on the central steam and chilled water plant will require a shutdown of these systems Saturday, May 3, between 7 A.M. and 7 P.M. Departments whose operations cannot be disrupted should call Gene Richter at Ext. 4337 as early as possible to discuss special arrangements.

- Architecture alumni will gather in Wood Auditorium Saturday, April 26, for a day-long symposium, "Legacies of a Radical Era: Architecture at Columbia, 1968-80." Talks and discussions will examine the impact of an era of intense political and social action on Columbia's Architecture graduates and on the profession. Participants will include two faculty members who have taught since the late '60s—Max Bond and Romaldo Giurgola—and alumni of the 1968-70 and 1978-80 periods. A $10 fee ($15 for non-alumni) will include a buffet lunch. For information, call Arlene Jacobs, Ext. 3473.

- As part of its 25th-anniversary observance, Columbia Composers will present a concert, "New Music at Columbia," Thursday, May 1, at 8 in McMillin Theatre. The program will feature works by five graduate students: Robin Berger, Mark Birnbaum, Eric Chasalow, Louise Mygatt and Steve Roens. Admission is free.

- Max Bond, who has taught at Architecture since 1968, will become chairman of the architecture division at the
school July 1. Early this month, Bond was appointed by Mayor Koch to the City Planning Commission.

- Stanford sociologist Nancy Tuma will conduct a workshop on event-history analysis at the Center for the Social Sciences May 29–31 and June 2–4. Persons attending will be presumed to be familiar with linear regression analysis and fundamental statistics. Two hours of lectures each day will be followed by informal discussions. Tuition is $200. For information, call Jonathan Cole, Ext. 3093.

- Perhaps the largest crowd ever to jam Low rotunda—more than a thousand students and scholars—heard Jorge Luis Borges, the famed Argentinian poet, discuss his works April 4. He answered questions about his life and writings for nearly two hours in the late afternoon. The event was sponsored by Columbia: A Magazine of Poetry and Prose, published twice a year in association with the writing division of the School of the Arts and GS.

- “The Medical Care Facility: Microcosm of Environmental Health Problems” is the topic at this year’s School of Public Health alumni conference May 16. A panel of experts on environmental problems related to health care delivery will discuss aspects of the subject in the all-day conference. The fee—$25 for alumni, $12 for students and $35 for others—including lunch. For information, call Health Sciences, Ext. 3803.

- Frances Perkins, who received her M.A. from Columbia in 1910 and whose principal collection of papers is housed in the Columbia Libraries, was memorialized April 10, the 100th anniversary of her birth, when President Carter dedicated the Labor Department building in Washington in her honor. Secretary of Labor from 1933 to 1945, she was the nation’s first woman cabinet officer. A 15-cent stamp bearing her profile was issued the same day.

■ RENOVATION and expansion of the East Asian library, the most heavily used collection of its kind in the country, has been buttressed by a $1-million gift from the Starr Foundation. The library will be named for the late Cornelius Vander Starr, an American businessman who spent many years in the Far East.

T.C. Hsu, president of the foundation, said that its gift is “an appropriate extension” of Mr. Starr’s lifelong relationship with East Asian countries and his interest in education. Starr, who died in 1968 at 76, was founder of the worldwide American International Group Inc., a multi-million-dollar insurance group of 100 companies and agencies with offices in 130 countries.

Expansion and renovation of the library, already under way, will relieve overcrowded conditions in its Kent Hall quarters and provide improved study and service facilities.

■ PROSPECTING FORESTS from the air by measuring subtle spectral differences in light reflected from tree tops is enabling geophysicists William Collins and Sheng-Huei Chang to detect valuable mineral deposits. From laboratory studies with biochemist Alberto Mancinelli, they have learned that minerals in soil beneath the trees retard chlorophyll production, causing subtle changes in the light reflected by the trees’ leaves. They have developed an instrument that, when carried in a small aircraft over forest canopies, can pinpoint minerals by detecting the telltale spectral changes.

“The prospects for further development of this new mineral exploration technique look very hopeful,” Collins reported April 16. “We have shown that the method can detect deposits containing nickel, copper and zinc. Other important minerals occur in combination with these ores, and the technique promises to open vast forested areas of the world for exploration of untapped hidden resources.”

The ability of ore metals to affect plant growth has been known since ancient times, but scientists had been unable to put that knowledge to use in prospecting. The problem, now solved, was to identify certain physical properties of the affected plants and to filter out interferences caused by differences in the densities of forest canopies, in sun angle, in ground slope and in the light-reflecting properties of various plant species, so that the subtle spectral signals that indicate buried minerals could be detected. Collins likened the challenge, under airborne survey conditions,
to detecting a faint A-sharp sound over the roar of a subway train.

The instrument designed for the task by Collins and Chang is a 500-channel geophysical/spectroradiometer many times more sensitive than the unaided human eye or conventional remote-sensing instruments, including the LANDSAT satellite. Data collected from the instrument are stored in digital form on magnetic tape aboard the aircraft and later analyzed using a computer that filters out most of the interference, allowing sensitive detection of the mineral-related signals.

■ WINNERS of two prestigious Columbia awards were announced in recent weeks.

- Pulitzer Prize recipients for 1980 were announced April 14 by President McGill. The Boston Globe won three of the 12 prizes in journalism, a record held till this year by The New York Times, which had three winners in 1978. Norman Mailer's The Executioner's Song won him his second Pulitzer in fiction and Lanford Wilson's Talley's Folly, now on Broadway, took the drama award.

- The 1980 National Magazine Awards winners were announced April 9. They are: Antaeus, for fiction; GEO, design; IEEE Spectrum, specialized journalism; Mother Jones, reporting; Natural History, essays and criticism; Saturday Review, service to the individual; Scientific American, single-topic issue, and Texas Monthly, public service. The awards, administered by Columbia, were announced by Osborn Elliott, dean of Journalism, and Geraldine Rhoads, vice president and editor in chief of Woman's Day and former head of the American Society of Magazine Editors, which established the prizes in 1965 under a grant from the Magazine Publishers Association.

■ URBAN JEWS: “Jews, Cities and Modernist Culture” is the theme of a conference April 27 and 28 sponsored by the Center for Israel and Jewish Studies and the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.

Some 40 participants representing history, philosophy, sociology, literature, music and law will explore questions relating to Jews as an urban group, both in New York and in European cities. Paula Hyman, assistant professor of history, a director of the conference, said the theme emerged from discussions at last year’s conference on “Culture and Community Among New York Jews.” Conference co-director is Deborah Dash Moore of YIVO and Vassar College.

Sessions from 10 A.M. until 10 P.M. will be held in Ferris Booth. All are open to the public without charge.

Columbia participants include professors Sigmund Diamond, Sidney Morgenbesser, Istvan Deak, Herbert Gans and Michael Wood. Among others taking part are Irving Howe, CUNY, Aryeh Neier, New York Institute for the Humanities, Robert Alter, University of California at Berkeley, and Morris Dickstein, Queens College and CUNY.