

**FAS-SEAS Senate Meeting**  
**January 15, 2026**  
**Closed Meeting - Senators Only**  
**3:30 PM – 4:00 PM**  
**Open Meeting – 4 PM. – 5:30 PM**  
**203 Luce Hall, 34 Hillhouse Avenue**  
**APPROVED**

**Present:**

Chair Marijeta Bozovic and Deputy Chair Maria Piñango, Dinny Aletheiani, Cynthia DeRoma, Michael Farina, Michael Fischer, Amir Haji-Akbari, Sonam Kachru, Michael Loewenberg, Rourke O'Brien, David Post, Stephen Slade, Kathryn Slanski, Brett Smith, Mark Solomon, Meg Urry, Robert Wooster, Jing Yan

**Absent:**

Casey Dunn, Beverly Gage, Alessandro Giammei, Claire Roosien, Alison Sweeney

**Guests:**

Jeffrey Brock, Jill Campbell, Karsten Heeger, Elka Kristo-Nagy, Mark Mooseker, Arun Natarajan, Lordes Sabé, Constance Sherak, Julia Silvestri, Eliyahu Stern, Camille Thomasson, Rebecca Toseland, Steven Wilkinson

**Closed session:**

FAS-SEAS Faculty Senate Chair **Marijeta Bozovic** opened the closed portion of the FAS-SEAS Senate meeting at 3:30 PM and called for committee updates:

-Governance Committee: **Mark Solomon** said there were no updates for the Governance Committee. He noted that the University will be searching for a new Dean of Science because **Larry Gladney** is stepping down from that role at the end of the academic year. He proposed that the Science and Engineering Committee work on a list of people to nominate to serve on the search committee. **Ms. Bozovic** agreed and asked senators to think about who they would nominate. **David Post** noted that **FAS Dean Steven Wilkinson** is already in the process of creating that committee and we must move quickly. **Ms. Bozovic** asked senators to email her or Senate Deputy Chair **Maria Piñango** with suggestions.

-Faculty Advancement Committee: **Rouke O'Brien** said the committee will begin interviewing people who recently have gone through the FASTAP process to ask for feedback on their experiences, and what their relationship has been with the university since. He asked for volunteers to help with the interviews, noting the goal is to complete the process before spring break.

-Budget Committee: **Mr. Post** said he was pleased with the amount of time and honesty the Senate received from **FAS Dean Wilkinson** and **SEAS Dean Jeffrey Brock** who spoke about budget concerns at the Senate's December meeting. He said that The Budget Committee plans to meet with the deans in the coming months to discuss more transparency and to ask them to articulate their philosophy for budgetary cuts, how they think about cuts, and how they will

communicate with the community on this sensitive topic. **Ms. Bozovic** noted there are also questions about what happens to GSAS and how graduate and undergraduate students will be affected by the budget cuts in ways that we haven't heard satisfactorily addressed. **Ms. Bozovic** plans to invite Yale College **Dean Pericles Lewis** and Graduate School **Dean Lynn Cooley** to a Senate meeting to address these concerns. **Michael Loewenberg** noted that his department has an excess of teaching assistants and perhaps other areas that are being adversely affected can use them to fill their needs. There was discussion about the difficulty of someone teaching in a different discipline than theirs, and the different requirements for teaching in each discipline. It was noted that while this could help, there is no easy fix.

-Student Affairs Committee: **Mr. Loewenberg** noted that it has been difficult to get anyone to speak with the committee about how we recruit graduate students. He plans to meet with **Michelle Nearon** and noted that having fewer graduate students makes it more important on how we select them. He also said the committee plans to address AI and how it is affecting our teaching. **Michael Farina** noted that he is already using AI and ChatGPT in teaching and offered to advise the Student Affairs Committee on his experiences and share his expertise. **Ms. Bozovic** noted there are problems with non-native speaking graduate students who use AI for grammar and spell checking, and when using it consistently, it seems to hinder them in developing rhetorical skills that will show up when they have in person interviews rather than submitting their work in writing. **Mr. Loewenberg** noted that in science, we are concerned with how people solve problems. He asked **Mr. Farina** how to deal with students who use AI in their homework assignments - "do we ban them from using it?" **Mr. Farina** said we should look at what the provost feels is the university's goal for AI, and what knowledge students should have of AI and LLMs when they graduate. Also, he said, to determine if it is appropriate to incorporate that into our teaching as we shape our students and help form them as they go through the university. He posed the question of "what are the clear goals for our students on what they should know and be able to do with AI upon graduation?" He said it just hasn't trickled down to the classroom yet. **Mr. Farina** noted that we need to have clarity on what AI tools students are using and what they are using it for. He noted that in some cases students could be at a disadvantage if they don't use AI. **Michael Fischer** said we have observed Computer Science (CS) that students, particularly in beginning courses, rely on AI when doing their homework and when they get to the intermediate level courses, they have not learned the basics that we expect them to know. He said CS faculty have observed that our students are less well prepared in our intermediate courses than they were a few years ago, and from the pedagogical point of view, AI is a negative. He also noted that it seems okay for students to use it when writing a project description and writing results, but it's not appropriate to use to help produce results. **Mark Solomon** commented that there is a balance between learning fundamentals – whether it's research, writing, or coding, and getting a high level of knowledge in these areas to then being able to use AI as a benefit, and so we need to train students not to use it in the first case, and being able to use it in the second case.

**Ms. Bozovic** presented FAS-SEAS Senate minutes from the October 7, 2025, and November 20, 2025, and asked for comments, edits, and approval. A vote was taken and the minutes from the

October 7, 2025, and November 20, 2025 FAS-SEAS Senate meetings were approved. **Ms. Bozovic** adjourned the closed portion of the FAS-SEAS Senate meeting at 4:00 PM.

### **Open Session:**

FAS-SEAS Senate Chair **Marijeta Bozovic** began the open portion of the FAS-SEAS Senate meeting at 4 PM. **Ms. Bozovic** reminded everyone of the upcoming Senate meeting dates: February 19<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup>, April 16<sup>th</sup>, and May 5<sup>th</sup>, and asked senators to think about what we hope to accomplish this semester. She noted topics of graduate and undergraduate student sizes and pedagogy, budgeting concerns, what has happened to DEI on campus, and what was learned at the instructional faculty town hall event. **Ms. Bozovic** talked about having discussions on a possible university-wide Senate and said that a representative from the Medical School's Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) will join us for this discussion. She said the FAS-SEAS Senate and the FAC in the Medical School are the two largest such bodies at Yale, and while very different, they are the largest faculty groups that serve in an advisory capacity among other things, and we will learn what they do at the Medical School, what their governance structure is, and we will share our goals.

**Ms. Bozovic** introduced the first agenda item that is concerned with what we do in cases of complaints about faculty, what are the limits of faculty rights, how these cases might be connected to our previous conversations about AI and plagiarism, and the larger problem of grade inflation. She noted great concern and a running theme this first week of the semester is talking about grade inflation. **Ms. Bozovic** posed a recent problem: an instructional faculty member had a case of seemingly evident plagiarism, and other faculty in the program looked at the situation and confirmed they thought it was likely. She said the student, who had been struggling academically, reported the faculty member for bias in rather vague terms, and while there was not sufficient cause for an investigation, the faculty member's chair was notified that there was a student complaint against the faculty member. **Ms. Bozovic** said the question is – is this common practice for OIEA and Title IX, that even if there isn't an investigation, that the chair will be notified of a complaint or whether there will be an investigation. On one hand, she noted, there should be tracking if someone has received many complaints, however the worry from faculty is what happens in the case of spurious accusations or potentially retaliatory ones over grades, or accusations of plagiarism that can cause negative consequences for innocent faculty. She noted that this raises much larger questions about what faculty incentives are, or rather, disincentives are, for grading fairly or for reporting plagiarism. **Ms. Bozovic** noted that the public is looking at Ivy League institutions and blaming us for grade inflation. And, she said, our chairs are looking at us and blaming us for grade inflation, and there is pressure on one hand to have these evaluations be fair and meaningful, and how these pressures are felt differently by instructional faculty, and by tenure-track and ladder faculty who might fear student complaints at this time, especially if they're anonymous and the faculty member doesn't find out about them and they go to the chair. She said there are many potential things to think about. **Ms. Bozovic** opened the floor to discuss what the line is between protecting students and taking them seriously, while also maintaining academic integrity, especially in a moment where everybody is very nervous. **Michael Fischer** said that he has just discovered that the chair gets to see student evaluations before the faculty member does and he finds this

strange and concerning that the chair gets to see the comments first. He feels this puts the chair in the pocket of the administration instead of being the chair of the department's faculty. **Ms. Bozovic** questions who should keep track of complaints, and if there a pattern of complaints against one faculty member – is there someone keeping track, and who is that someone? She asked if it should be Title IX or the chair, and **Mr. Fischer** raises a good point that if it's colleagues that you work with daily, these complaints, especially if they are unfounded, can affect your relationships with your colleagues. **Mr. Fischer** noted that upper administration will ask chairs about policies and how departments feel about certain policies. He sees this as a concern that puts another barrier of communication of what's going on in departments and what information the administration is getting, and he feels that anything that interferes with communication between the faculty and the administration is a negative. **Eliyahu Stern** noted that as a chair, this office reached out to him multiple times about a complaint about a faculty member. He said he has asked this office on many occasions "why are you coming to me?" The answer, he quoted, was "there was harm done to the student." When he asked what harm was being done, the reply was "the student received a lower grade than what they believed they deserved." He then asked that if a student complains of receiving a grade lower than they felt they deserved, your office must investigate this. The answer was yes because a harm was being done to the student. **Mr. Stern** noted that if this is a case for an investigation, what would be the incentive to give a student anything but an A, if in fact, a student can make a complaint on their grade, and this office will investigate this situation (as harmful to the student). **Mr. Stern** asked if others have encountered similar situations and said he is extremely concerned about these types of situations. **Ms. Bozovic** said there are three topics here and all slightly different: grade inflation because people are nervous about giving lower grades and risking complaints that will turn into an investigations; vulnerability of faculty, especially instructional faculty, because some faculty can afford to get negative evaluations than others; what we do with sensitive information, where it lives, and who has access to it. And as chairs working closely with their faculty, should we know every rumor, are notes kept on rumors, and are they passed along from chair to chair without context. She said she wants to know more about this process, how it is done, whether it is uniform, what are the best practices, what do other institutions do, and how people are encountering it. **Mark Solomon** said he feels that if there is no investigation, or no finding, a rumor should not be started, so if the OIEA cannot determine something, they should not be sharing information with chairs. **Ms. Bozovic** said she would also include Title IX in how they share or not share information. She said she would like to know what people have experienced, what they've seen, and are these isolated incidents or something that is a pattern. **Amir Haji-Akbari** noted that these types of situations can affect how faculty are assessed with promotion and salary increases. He said that his teaching is rigorous and tougher, and he grades accordingly, and because he gives lower grades when a student cannot do basic things that are expected, he has experienced lower course evaluations. He feels that this is a philosophical discussion that needs to be had on a university level and feels that grade inflation jeopardizes a student's ability to perform and operate under real life conditions. **Kathryn Slanski** said she thinks grade inflation is demoralizing for both students and faculty, and allows us to grow this feeling of "why bother?" She said that it removes incentives for faculty to read essays if they know they will give an A- anyway and removes the student's incentive to write a good essay when they

know they will receive no lower than an A- grade. She wants to see Yale take the lead in addressing grade inflation that is evident here and at our peer institutions. **Robert Wooster** said if we are going to address this issue, it should be from top-down university support. He said we as individuals are disincentivized to be the one to start if we don't have support from the university, and he would like to see the university communicate clearly to the students what grades mean. He tells his students that GPA matters less than they think, however they don't believe it and he said he doesn't know where students are getting this idea. **Mark Solomon** noted some examples on reading transcripts and what grades mean and don't mean. He said the problem of grade inflation needs to be that the whole world gets on board or it won't work. And he noted that there will be a transition period that will be difficult. **Mr. Farina** said instructional faculty are more vulnerable because of their short contracts that make them under review more often. He suggested that their grading be done by others, so they won't bear the burden of students blaming them for unfair grading. He noted that there is a huge problem with "rumors" of unfounded misconduct by faculty towards students and said this is damaging to one's reputation even if nothing comes of it. He said something should be done to stop the reporting of unfounded complaints or investigations where there are no findings. **Jill Campbell** noted that Harvard issued an informative report on grade inflation that confirms the demoralizing effects for both faculty and students that **Ms. Slanski** described. **Ms. Bozovic** noted that this is something the Committee on Trust in Higher Education is thinking about and will likely make a recommendation on – instructional faculty need to be protected; grade inflation has to be tackled top down, and this isn't something that individual faculty should try to solve on their own; the question of protection for faculty if there is student retaliation for low grades, or being cited for plagiarism. **Meg Urry** said she is not in favor of grade inflation and pointed out problems with a top-down imposition for grade distribution. She said many are moving away from high-stakes tests and moving to having very clear expectations and rubrics, and when students do what you ask of them, and learn what you ask them to learn, you have to give them credit and you cannot focus on minute differences between one student and another. She spoke about grading on a curve and explained how this does not work well in most situations. She spoke about a grading practice of giving out so many A's, so many B's, etc. which she and **Ms. Bozovic** do not think works. **Rourke O'Brien** said that he is working with graduate admissions now and noted that the University of Toronto, on their transcripts, provides the average grade for each course that creates a basis for what the grade means. He also said he was in college 20 years ago when there was also a crisis about grade inflation and noted that Princeton put in strict measures to try to reduce grade inflation, which worked to bring down the average GPA a little. In time, they found that their students were not getting into Harvard Law School and pulled back entirely on the measures. He noted that students have their own measures of grading courses and sorting out how grading relates to the courses, and this is shared amongst each other which results in poor course enrollments for instructors whose grading is low or even normal. **Mr. O'Brien** feels this is a difficult problem to solve. **David Post** said this points to the insufficiency of the course evaluation system, especially when we're having a discussion on grades, and noted that peer evaluations are one way other institutions have circumvented some of these problems. He said that this is a method that was used in Singapore that worked well for all faculty ranks and helped them be rigorous graders and able to tackle challenging topics. **Michael Loewenberg** said he finds this

problem discouraging, and he likes the idea of having a narrative evaluation and would be willing to be part of this initiative. He said he sees colleagues looking at graduate school applications and if the GPA is too low, they don't look further. He feels that too much weight is put on GPA's and would like to see consideration for narrative evaluations as part of the process. Others spoke and noted difficulty in the time it would require reading narrative evaluations but also noted it would give a better view of the student being considered. **Ms. Bozovic** said this might be a situation where we need a university-wide committee to take a systemic look into the problem of grade inflation without passing the buck back to individual faculty. **Dinny Aletheiani** said she wants to know how faculty are being evaluated, how the process is being assessed, and how it influences the review process. She has spoken with students and hears how important it is to have higher grades when applying for internships and jobs. She noted high grades seem to be very important for students. She feels there needs to be clarity on what grades reflect and how we as faculty can have a common understanding so we can grade appropriately. **Michael Fischer** said this discussion brings out that grades are proxy for two different things: 1) did the student learn the training content that was given – the information we wanted to convey? If they did, they should receive a good grade; 2) how much initiative do they have and how are they able to go deeply into a topic? He said these are things that graduate admissions committees or a potential employer might want to know about a student. He said grade inflation implies that all our students are good, and therefore we can't differentiate from ones who perform at an exceptional level, and which are more average. And, he said, it leads to this misinterpretation that education is just learning a lot of facts. **Ms. Bozovic** noted a message from **Mr. Stern** that said this may be a role that the ombudsperson could take when grade complaints come in against faculty.

Ms. Bozovic called on **Ms. Aletheiani** and **Mr. Post** to give an update on the ombuds search. **Mr. Post** said we had an exceptionally strong candidate pool, and applications were pre-screened by HR to make sure the applicants met our standards. He said the committee then interviewed 12 candidates, and of the 12, we are in the process of inviting 3 or 4 for an on-campus interview with those who we feel are the best qualified for the position. **Mr. Post** said the committee has also spoken with many stakeholders, including the FAS-SEAS Senate, the GPSS and GSA, the Faculty Advisory Council at the Medical School, HR, groups in the Vice President for Student Affairs office, SHARE, Title IX office, and the Chaplain's office. He said the committee's goal is to include these folks in meetings with finalists when they are on campus. He noted that this is an advisory committee who will present **President Mauri McInnis** with the finalists and she will have the final decision on the hire and that the ombuds person will report directly to her, and that the goal is to make the hire this summer. He also clarified that an ombuds person does not represent anyone on campus, is an independent neutral party, and does not represent anyone on campus in formal processes.

**Ms. Bozovic** introduced **Joe El-Khoury** from the Medical School to represent the Medical School's Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC). She noted that this conversation is an opportunity for the Senate to think about governance structures, how they work, and what are the similarities and differences between the FAC and the FAS-SEAS Senate.

**Mr. El-Khoury** said he has been Vice Chair of the FAC for the last two years and begins his third year in March. He noted the following about FAC:

- FAC provides a forum for representatives to bring new ideas and concerns from a broad range of faculty perspectives to the dean's office.
- FAC representatives attend regularly scheduled meetings with the administration during the academic year and are responsible for engaging with members of their departments to learn about concerns and issues and relay information to the FAC.
- FAC has one to two representatives from each department serving a three-year term and represent 700-plus faculty.
- FAC meets once a month as a group. They also meet with the dean once a month to share concerns that are brought to FAC's attention from department representatives.
- FAC also actively meets with associate deans and other individuals in the dean's office who come and present us with their issues, whether it's clinical affairs or research related to School of Medicine.
- Associate deans and others in the dean's office also inform FAC of ongoing activities in each department, we get to learn about what's happening, and we can ask them questions and bring things back to our constituents.

**Mr. El-Khoury** said FAC is meant to be a bi-directional interface between the dean's office and the rest of the faculty, and it brings issues forward and communicates back what's happening in the dean's office. Because one concern from the dean is communication, FAC serves faculty in keeping them up to date about what's happening in the School of Medicine. We use emails and town halls, and send summaries of ongoing major activities, policies, and guidelines. He said they also conduct surveys to get a better sense of what's happening with our faculty, and if there's anything we can learn and bringing that forward to the dean. He said that we also address issues with advancement for people on the promotions due to multiple tracks people can be on, with concerns about one track vs. the other. He noted that FAC meets 12 times a year as a group, 12 times a year with the dean, and has an executive committee that meets separately to decide on topics, who invites people to speak at meetings, and meets with other committees in the School of Medicine on determining ways we can collaborate with other committees and groups. He also said if there are any mutual opportunities for FAC to work with the FAS-SEAS Senate, he is happy to do that. **Ms. Bozovic** asked about the formation of FAC and how it sees itself as interconnected with the administration and to what extent do you see FAC as potentially critiquing or pushing back against the administration? She also asked if he thinks there is interest in having a university-wide senate that would bring together representatives from dramatically different schools, and what we can do in the interim to increase communication and collaboration between the two existing bodies? **Mr. El-Khoury** said he feels the greater the collaboration is to advance all our interests as faculty at Yale, with the goal of making this a better home for all of us, would make us stronger as representing all the schools especially on common issues in bringing them forward, and future collaboration will benefit us all. He pointed to the issue of an ombuds person noting he was happy to see the approval come through even though the FAC was not actively involved, and that the position with benefit both sides of campus. **Jing Yan** asked if all medical school faculty are allowed to

join FAC, and is it more like a conversation among the faculty or is it a two-way communication with administration? **Mr. El-Khoury** said membership to FAC is restricted to faculty who are not in leadership positions, and that chairs and associate deans cannot attend FAC meetings unless invited for a specific purpose. This is to preserve the communication in a way that's open and no one feels that there would be repercussions for speaking out. He said there is a committee that reviews and evaluates and approves member to be admitted. He clarified that FAC meetings are only attended by FAC members - 30 and up to 60 if all attend, and not faculty. **Mr. El-Khoury** noted that when heated issues arise, we try to work towards the same goal with the dean and try to find common ground, and if we cannot, we usually settle on a compromise of a clear policy to standardize the situation. He noted that the Dean is very responsive, very direct and clear, and her priority is to make sure that communication is also bi-directional so that we are effective. **Mr. Solomon** noted that the FAS-SEAS Senate often becomes an oppositional body to the administration and asked **Mr. El-Khoury** if he feels there would be an advantage to the FAC becoming more oppositional, and would a university-wide senate work for the Medical School? **Mr. El-Khoury** noted that so far, we have not had an issue that has raised the concern of the dean, however if an issue comes up that we think is fair and we do not make progress on a resolve, then he feels it would be proper to take an oppositional stance. **Ms. Bozovic** described in detail how the FAS-SEAS Senate operates to tackle issues relevant to faculty, and the various ways in which the senate works, and noted that some issues affect not only this side of campus, but also faculty in the Medical School. She said if there was a university-wide senate, we would benefit by working together on issues that we are all facing in today's environment that affect everyone. **Mr. Fischer** asked about the 40-60 members of the FAC and if there is a hierarchy in the group, or does the whole group meet with the dean 12 times a year? **Mr. El-Khoury** explained: all 60 members attend each meeting including the 12 meetings with the dean; all meetings are hybrid on Zoom; once a year there is an in-person meeting for all 60 members and the dean; there are committees that members can volunteer to serve on, and one executive committee that consists of the previous chair, the vice chair, and consultants the chair appoints to help with various initiatives; the EC defines the topics for discussions for faculty; there is an advancement committee, a clinical committee, and a benefits committee, each with 3-5 members who work on several matters. **Ms. Bozovic** thanked **Mr. El-Khoury** for his time and information on the FAC and said she plans to attend a FAC meeting and hopes the FAC and FAS-SEAS Senate can work on establishing a relationship with each other this spring.

**Ms. Bozovic** talked about the instructional faculty's planned town hall meeting where there will be an opportunity for faculty to voice concerns and talk about what we can do to address these concerns. **Cynthia DeRoma** said the event is advertised as a *Town Hall Listening Session* where we will listen to concerns and we can see what others are concerned about and create solidarity. She noted that faculty are concerned about being affected by the government's new tax regulations and what impact it will have on them and the university. **Kathryn Slanski** said she has reached out to the AAUP who have been hearing from faculty about concerns about their positions due to the budget cuts being made. **Ms. Bozovic** asked if there were any opportunities instructional faculty have to meet, gather, and talk to each other across divisions - opportunities and affordances to meet and discuss outside of the Senate and/or the AAUP?

She noted that this event could afford the opportunity to organize ongoing events for instructional faculty to get together on a regular basis to gather and voice concerns, listen to each other, and meet each other and see what is shared and what is not shared. **Rebecca Toseland** asked if there are plans to create a summary of what comes out of the town hall? **Ms. Bozovic** said one way we can make an impact would be to speak directly to those in the room, and another would be to create a document, not necessarily a full report, that would be a summary of what was discussed at the town hall listening session that could be shared with the administration, could be filed on line, and could be used as a basis for creating an ongoing event. She reflected on the presentation by **Mr. El-Khoury** that speaks to outreach and communication among faculty from other areas of campus to share ideas and concerns. **Ms. DeRoma** noted that she received a message from the School of Engineering (SEAS) saying that they have scheduled a meeting at the same time the town hall is taking place, and they asked if we could reschedule. She said unfortunately it is too late to reschedule our event. **Ms. Bozovic** clarified that this town hall event is for instructional faculty only.

**Ms. Bozovic** reviewed upcoming meeting topics and asked if there were any suggestions from the floor for other topics to be considered. She adjourned the meeting at 5:30 PM.