

FAS-SEAS Senate Meeting
February 19, 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, Beverly Gage, Alessandro Giammei, Amir Haji-Akbari, Sonam Kachru, Michael Loewenberg, Rourke O’Brien, David Post, Claire Roosien, Stephen Slade, Kathryn Slanski, Brett Smith, Mark Solomon, Meg Urry, Robert Wooster, Jing Yan

Absent:

Casey Dunn, Alison Sweeney

Guests:

Jeffrey Brock, Lynn Cooley, Pericles Lewis, and other guests

Closed session: (3:30 PM – 4 PM)

FAS-SEAS Faculty Senate Chair **Marijeta Bozovic** opened the closed portion of the FAS-SEAS Senate meeting at 3:30 PM. **Cynthia DeRoma** and **Kathryn Slanski** reported on the *Instructional Faculty Town Hall Listening Session* that took place on February 29, 2026. **Ms. Slanski** noted that there were approximate 30 instructional faculty and the five members of the FAS-SEAS Senate Instructional Faculty Committee in attendance. She noted that two main topics emerged:

-The new class meeting time matrix that will adversely affect language faculty teaching 5 days a week that will be disadvantaging to a significant number of women faculty. It was noted that the new matrix was made with no faculty input and has been forced on us adding to other stresses and uncertainty at the university. We are concerned that ladder faculty will allocate the prime teaching times for themselves and instructional faculty will be left with times being very early or very late.

-Concern over protections for academic freedom especially for contingent faculty who are the most vulnerable now. Many teach controversial subject matter, and we need assurances from the university that our freedom to teach in the best way we see fit, will be protected and not used against us at our next review.

Closed session recap:

The meeting focused on addressing concerns and challenges within the instructional faculty, particularly regarding the new class meeting time matrix and academic freedom protections. *The Instructional Faculty Town Hall Listening Session* highlighted issues on the impact of the new time matrix on language faculty, especially those with childcare responsibilities, and the

need for clearer academic freedom definitions in the faculty handbook.

The Senate discussed a draft open letter to the provost regarding academic freedom, which was approved unanimously, and considered the implications of budget cuts on graduate and undergraduate education.

Next Steps:

- Senate Committee on Instructional Faculty to finalize and vote on the report with recommendations from the *Instructional Faculty Town Hall Listening Session*, including monitoring impacts of the new class time matrix, establishing a standing committee to monitor impacts on instructional faculty, reviewing promotional pathways, and tracking annual progress on off-the-ladder recommendations.
- Senate Committee on Instructional Faculty to investigate how other Yale professional schools (e.g., Forestry, School of Medicine, Medical School) structure research support and recognition for contingent faculty and incorporate findings into recommendations.
- Senate and relevant faculty to monitor the impact of the new course time matrix on instructional faculty, especially those with childcare responsibilities, and consider adjustments based on feedback and data over the next year.
- Senate Committee on Instructional Faculty to hold semi-annual or annual Town Hall listening sessions for instructional faculty going forward.
- Senate Committee on Instructional Faculty work toward broader participation among instructional faculty in future climate surveys and track progress toward 50% response rate.
- Senate Committee on Instructional Faculty to track and report annually on progress regarding recommendations for instructional faculty from 2023.
- Senate Committee on Instructional Faculty to consider proposing or establishing a faculty-led committee or process for handling academic freedom complaints, as suggested in discussion.
- Senate Executive Committee (EC) to send the approved open letter to the provost.
- EC to discuss and determine further advocacy and publicizing actions related to the open letter on academic freedom.

Summary of closed session:

Faculty Concerns Over Class Scheduling

The town hall listening session for instructional faculty on February 29th addressed two main issues: the new class meeting time matrix and protections for academic freedom. The new time matrix, which will disadvantage language faculty and disproportionately affect women, was implemented without faculty input. Concerns were also raised about academic freedom for contingent faculty, increased class sizes, lack of research support, and the need for regular non-competitive leave. The committee plans to develop recommendations based on the session's feedback and will meet again tomorrow at 8:30 AM.

Faculty Climate Survey Results Review

The meeting focused on the results of the *Faculty Climate Survey*, which showed declining indicators for instructional faculty compared to ladder faculty, particularly in areas of belonging and professional respect. The discussion highlighted that only 19% of instructional faculty felt comfortable responding to the survey, compared to 50% of ladder faculty. Recommendations were proposed, including adding a statement of academic freedom to the *Faculty Handbook*, reconsidering the class time matrix, reviewing promotional requirements for instructional faculty, and tracking progress on previous recommendations. The group planned to finalize a report with action items and track progress in six months.

Challenges in Contingent Faculty Research

The group discussed challenges faced by contingent faculty in conducting research and the impact of research on promotions. They explored how other academic units, such as the School of Forestry and the Medical School structure research opportunities for contingent faculty. The discussion highlighted concerns about the lack of support and recognition for research conducted by contingent faculty, particularly in teaching-related areas. The participants agreed to gather more data on research freedoms, what counts as research in promotions, and the approval rates for professional development leaves. They also discussed the need to better understand the processes and narratives surrounding the denial of professional development opportunities.

Course Scheduling and Academic Freedom

Regarding course scheduling, faculty expressed concerns about the lack of consultation in the redistribution of course schedules, with questions on why changes were implemented now. The group discussed the need for a report analyzing the impact of these changes and potential adjustments. Regarding academic freedom, the provost's recent address was reviewed, with participants expressing disappointment that no concrete changes were made to the *Faculty Handbook* despite promises of ongoing discussions with other universities and faculty input. The Senate Executive Committee drafted a response to continue negotiations with the administration while maintaining pressure for clearer academic freedom protections.

Academic Freedom Definition and Protections

The meeting focused on discussing academic freedom and its definition, with **Robert Post** presenting a four-point definition that included freedom to teach, research, engage in intramural and external activities. The group discussed concerns about potential legal challenges to academic freedom and the need for clear protections in the *Faculty Handbook*. It was pointed out that there is a contradiction between the provost's claim that the *Faculty Handbook* sufficiently protects academic freedom and the university's previous argument in court that it did not. The discussion also highlighted the need for faculty to take responsibility in advancing academic freedom, with references to Harvard's *Faculty Handbook* as a comparison.

Academic Freedom Protections at Yale

The Senate discussed academic freedom protections and reviewed a draft open letter to

Provost Scott Strobel. The letter, drafted by the Executive Committee with input from **Mark Solomon**, requests clear language in the *Faculty Handbook* stating Yale's support for academic freedom, along with definitions and examples of protected activities. The group debated whether to send the letter directly or continue private negotiations, with **Taryn Andrews** emphasizing the need for substantive faculty governance alongside academic freedom protections.

Academic Freedom Senate Resolution

The Senate discussed an open letter addressing academic freedom concerns, with a unanimous vote in favor of sending it to the provost. The letter will be publicly released and posted on the Senate website, with the Executive Committee planning further advocacy and a follow-up meeting with the provost. The discussion highlighted fears about government influence on research funding and the university's role in supporting academic freedom, with some senators expressing frustration about the administration's apparent backtracking after a previous report.

Open Session: (4 PM – 5:30 PM)

FAS-SEAS Senate Chair **Marijeta Bozovic** called the open session of the FAS-SEAS Senate meeting to order at 4 PM, with the agenda including budget cuts affecting Yale College and GSAS. Yale College **Dean Pericles Lewis** and Graduate School **Dean Lynn Cooley** shared insights on budget decisions, emphasizing the protection of academic mission and the challenges of balancing endowment-dependent programs with tuition revenue. The meeting also touched on the potential long-term effects of AI on teaching methods and the importance of public understanding of higher education's value.

Next steps:

- **Marijeta Bozovic/Lynn Cooley** (or relevant administrators) to work with Biological and Biomedical Sciences Executive Committee and Biological and Biomedical Science_faculty to develop and implement a new policy to address MCDB course over-enrollment and add/drop issues.
- **Marijeta Bozovic/Lynn Cooley** (or relevant administrators) to continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the new add/drop policy and its impact on course enrollment and section management and adjust as needed.
- Senate Executive Council to consider including a requirement in future *Faculty Handbook* revisions that faculty be involved in drafting handbook language related to academic freedom and other key issues.
- **Marijeta Bozovic/Lynn Cooley** (or relevant administrators) to monitor and, if necessary, adjust the preceptor model and instructional faculty hiring in response to ongoing teaching needs and feedback, particularly in high-enrollment areas.

Summary

Yale Teaching Challenges and Budget Adjustments

The meeting focused on addressing challenges related to teaching fellow shortages and budget constraints at Yale University. Yale College **Dean Lewis** and Graduate School **Dean Cooley** discussed strategies to manage teaching needs, including the use of preceptors and adjustments to course scheduling. They emphasized that graduate student admissions are not based on teaching needs but rather research and job market considerations. The discussion also covered financial aid adjustments, with **Dean Cooley** explaining that while the overall dollar pool remains, the growth has been curtailed, and changes to summer funding were made to align with peer institutions. Concerns were raised about the long-term trajectory of PhD training programs, particularly in the humanities and social sciences, and the impact of AI on undergraduate education. The conversation ended with a discussion on the university's financial models and the importance of maintaining the institution's core mission during times of financial adjustment.