

FAS Senate
AN ELECTED BODY OF THE FACULTY OF ARTS AND
SCIENCES
YALE UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Arts and Sciences Senate
Statement of Concern
May 28, 2021

RE: The Petition Process for Alumni Fellows

As a body representing faculty and many Yale alumni, the FAS Senate expresses its deep concern about the peremptory decision by the Yale Corporation, nullifying the right of Yale alumni to nominate Alumni Fellows by petition. No sooner had the class of 2021 left the campus than they and other alumni received an email from the Yale Corporation stating, "the petition process to become a candidate in the Alumni Fellow election no longer serves the best interests of the university, and ... this path to candidacy [is removed], effective immediately."

This is an egregious misstep by the Yale Corporation. Our concerns are threefold. First, this decision silences the voice of dissenting alumni by disallowing the possibility of their joining the governing board of the University. Second, this step is particularly lamentable in an age when minds are increasingly closed to opposing views, and it directly contradicts the advice of President Salovey, who extolled "the robust and free exchange of ideas, as essential to the mission of a great university as it is to the health of our democracy." Third, such a decision, involving a fundamental change to Yale's constitution, should be made after vigorous and open discussion among the larger community of alumni, faculty, and students, not within the closed ranks of the Corporation.

This antidemocratic and secretive policy change speaks ill of a board charged with overseeing an institution devoted to enlightenment. The Senate of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences urges that the Corporation revoke this decision at the earliest

possible occasion and open a discussion of the role of faculty, alumni, and students in the shared governance of this great research university.