

FAS-SEAS Senate Meeting
Tuesday October 7, 2025
3:30 PM – 3:45 PM – Senators Only; 3:45 PM – 5:30 PM Open Meeting
100 Dow Hall, 370 Temple Street and on Zoom

Minutes
Approved

Present:

Chair Marijeta Bozovic and Deputy Chair Maria Piñango, Dinny Aletheiani, Cynthia DeRoma, Casey Dunn, 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:

Alison Sweeney

Guests:

Neta Alexander, Tarren Andrews, Timothy Barron, Jeffrey Brock, Nicholas Christakis, Annise Dobson, Fatima El-Tayeb, Kevin Ennis, Paul Forscher, Marion Gehlker, Michael Grome, Annie Harper, Maria Kaliambou, Danya Keene, Jennifer Klein, Roy Lederman, Juan Lora, Ivan Losev, Elka Nagy, Kathy Nicholson, Hiroyo Nishimura, Julian Posada, Sam Reskin, Dara Strolovitch, Rebecca Toseland, Jane Tylus, Paul Van Tassel, Steven Wilkinson

SENATOR'S ONLY Portion:

Marijeta Bozovic, Chair of the FAS-SEAS Faculty Senate, opened the senators only portion of the meeting at 3:35 PM. **Ms. Bozovic** noted that all 2025/6 FAS-SEAS Senate Committees are formed and are meeting, however a formal announcement has not happened due to the question of whether to rename the Diversity Committee or change it to something less controversial. She said the appointed committee co-chairs expressed concern that people are easily Google-able-searchable as a chair or director of anything pertaining to DEI initiatives, and might be targeted, and this would put non-ladder or tenure-track faculty at risk. She explained the pros and cons of renaming the committee, and said it could remain the same or be changed to something such as the Campus Climate Committee or the Campus Community Committee. She noted the Senate's Executive Council (EC) discussed the issue and decided it should be discussed by the entire Senate. In the interim, she is the committee's chair, and noted we can keep its name with her as chair, and once the committee meets, it can discuss and decide what to do about the naming issue. **Ms. Bozovic** said she reached out to **Caroline Hendel** in the Office of General Council (OGC) for advice, and asked for thoughts from the full Senate on the subject. She also mentioned the disappearance of the term "DEI" at Yale, and the committee's charge to investigate how and why this has been done. **Claire Roosien** commented that if we change the name of the committee, someone who has an issue relating to DEI would not know that the Senate has a committee with these interests. It was noted that each committee has a description that serves as information of what the committee's charge is. **Ms. Bozovic** said that keeping diversity in that description might also be a concern for committee members. **Mark Solomon**

noted that there is much information on the Senate's website that could cause problems with the present government and asked if we should consider making the Senate's website available only within Yale and not visible to the world. There were comments from Senators that led to the decision that the Diversity Committee name will remain the same with **Ms. Bozovic** as chair, and when the committee meets, it will discuss issues concerning its name and membership. It is noted that **Kathryn Slanski**, who has served on and chaired this committee in the past, has offered to serve on this committee. **Ms. Bozovic** asked senators to contact her if they have any further thoughts, and to let her know if they would like to serve on this committee.

3:45 PM – Open meeting of the FAS-SEAS Senate:

FAS-SEAS Senate Chair **Marijeta Bozovic** began the open portion of the FAS-SEAS Senate meeting. **Ms. Bozovic** introduced a discussion on the Report from the FAS-SEAS *Governance Committee: Recommendation that the Faculty Handbook Include Robust Statements in Support of Academic Freedom* (printed and on-line copies were available for review). **Mark Solomon** spoke and noted that last year the Governance Committee addressed issues on how changes were being made to the *Faculty Handbook*. This year's committee report addresses adding something about academic protections for academic freedom. He noted the *Woodward Report*, that has been used as part of the *Faculty Handbook*, protects freedom of expression and what and how we teach, what we choose to research, who we choose to organize with in programs, and all things that are not literally speech. He noted that there is no protection for academic freedom in the *Faculty Handbook* and said we need a statement more so now because of broader national concerns where faculty have been fired for teaching things that ought to be protected here, and noted that many universities have these statements and it's time for Yale to have one too. The committee used Yale's Chapter of the AAUP report and cover letter as a guide, and **David Post** revised the language that is in the Governance Committee's report to go along with the views that the Senate has on how to address this issue, and to offer statements that other peer institutions have already adopted. **Mr. Solomon** noted that the report was not unanimously approved by the committee – of 5 members, three approved, one abstained, and one voted against. **Michael Fischer** spoke as the one who did not approve the report stating that it was not fully written by all committee members, and its members did not, in his opinion, have adequate time for reviewing and discussing the report. **Ms. Bozovic** commented that the Senate works in a timely fashion, and this report addresses a pressing issue, and while there may be a small number of dissents regarding this report, it will serve to alert the administration to act on the issue of putting a statement into the *Faulty Handbook* on academic freedom. **Alessandro Gomez** spoke on behalf of FAS-SEAS faculty and as a member of the AAUP and noted that making changes to the *Faculty Handbook* takes 2 years, and currently faculty have no protection for academic freedom, which needs immediate attention. He also noted that the AAUP has members from the Law School who can use their expertise on the legal aspects of this issue and make sound recommendations from a legal standpoint. **Nicholas Christakis** commented on a case where Yale went to a federal appellate court and used the *Faculty Handbook* as a contractual set of rules governing faculty behavior in the case of **Dr. Bandy Lee** who criticized **Donald Trump** as being mentally unstable. **Dr. Lee's** contract was not renewed for what was said "other reasons," but **Mr. Christakis** noted that this is an example where Yale did not protect faculty academic freedom and said there are other cases with the same results. **Mr. Gomez** said there is also the

issue of faculty governance, and that presently the *Faculty Handbook* is written by, and changes made by the administration without consulting faculty or listening to their input. **Ms. Bozovic** suggested ways to address this report – one to take a vote to approve this report as is as a report from the Governance Committee, and following up with requesting a meeting between the Senate’s EC and the AAUP with perhaps the FAS and SEAS Deans and the Provost to further discuss the report. Another action would be to give the report back to the Governance Committee for revisions, and reshare a new report with the Senate planning an emergency Senate meeting on Zoom in 2 weeks to discuss changes and move forward, hopefully before the November Senate meeting as timing is important because our colleagues from the AAUP have been waiting. There was a discussion on what exactly this report is highlighting of the three main issues: academic freedom, shared governance, and freedom of speech, pointing that the main point in this report is to have a clear statement of freedom of speech in the *Faculty Handbook*. **Ms. Bozovic** presented the Governance Committee’s Faculty Handbook Include Robust Statements in Support of Academic Freedom report and asked for a vote of Senator’s. A count was taken with 16 votes to approve the report, one vote of no, and no abstentions. *The Governance Committee: Recommendation that the Faculty Handbook Include Robust Statements in Support of Academic Freedom* report was approved.

Ms. Bozovic introduced **Beverly Gage** and **Julia Adams**, co-chairs of the Presidential Committee on Trust in Higher Education, whose charge is to draw on the knowledge and experience of experts, citizens, and scholars, including members of the Yale faculty, to better understand public perception, and envision ways to strengthen trust in higher education. The committee will engage the Yale community, as well as outside critics. It will invite external experts with varied viewpoints and backgrounds to provide perspective and to weigh how best to address the erosion of trust in higher education and explore possibilities for enhancing the open exchange of ideas on campus, in the classroom and beyond. **Ms. Adams** said it is helpful having current and former senators on this committee, especially when discussing shared governance and academic freedom. She invited faculty to send the committee questions they have, and give their views on what matters to them and the people they work with. **Ms. Gage** noted that the committee has a very broad charge with many interlocking of issues. She said the committee met over the summer working to identify what major issues arise again and again, both on and off campus, looking at the big picture, and acknowledge and address the declining trust in higher education, particularly in the last 10 to 15 years. She said this is a multi-faceted set of problems and questions, and the committee will attempt to figure out the ones that matter most at Yale and also speak to broader issues like the cost of higher education and the concentrations of wealth and the expense of higher education. There are questions about admissions – transparency and who gets admitted. She said another big issue centers around questions of speech, intellectual diversity, academic freedom, curriculum, and the things we do as scholars and intellectuals, and who has the right to say in what all of this might be. We understand part of our work is to simply describe what some of these issues are, why people feel so passionately about them, and to make sure that people on the campus understand all of this. She said our understanding as the committee is that these are all real and serious problems, that the question of trust is one that has great importance for an institution like Yale whose existence and reputation and future depends, in part, on a certain kind of public legitimacy. She noted the committee has been spending a lot of time thinking about the mission of the University, its core values, and the ways

in which those values can shape a way for us to think about a path forward noting that our big challenge is to come up with a set of solutions to some of these issues, or a way to move forward, and to envision a future for our institution. If we do not do this, particularly in a moment like this, other people will do it for us. One question is about internal trust versus external trust and the problem of public legitimacy, declining polls, and we came to understand as we did this research, that some of those are quite related to a set of questions about trust within an institution and within higher education. More broadly, trust between faculty and students, trust between faculty and administrations, trust between alumni and the universities. She said the committee would like a report that addresses how much we are talking about Yale specifically, and the very, very specific sliver of higher education - the elite, highly selective, private research university with a gigantic endowment, and how much the issues that we're encountering at a place like Yale are more broadly shared within the very diverse and complicated world of American higher education. We have a set of questions about how much of this problem is one of trust, or declining trust, and a result of poor communication, misunderstanding, deliberate campaigns of distortion, and how much is a set of issues that are quite real and are things that we might want to contend with directly. It's not just that we're misunderstood, though that might be part of it as well. **Ms. Gage** said the committee is interested in self-critique and understands that our work is to describe what some of these issues are and why people feel so passionately about them. She reminded the group that the committee is interested in receiving their questions and viewpoints. **Ms. Adams** said speech and decision-making powers, including some of the biggest tensions between faculty and administration over the past two decades and plus, are the two most pressing issues. She said the committee is listening to faculty and engaging in meetings such as this, meets weekly with internal experts, and will host several events this fall and winter with formal and informal leadership groups and outside speakers who have a wide range of perspectives to offer. These events will not be for debate, and will be for one-on-one conversations and then questions and discussions with the audience. Our first speaker is **Danielle Allen** from Harvard whose public focus is on democracy, civic education, and knowledge. The second is **Carlos Carvalho**, president of the new University of Austin, and the third is **Musa al-Gharbi**, Assistant Professor of communications and journalism at Stony Brook and well-known for his book *We Have Never Been Woke, the Cultural Contradictions of a New Elite*. Also, she noted other speakers - **Corey Robin**, an American political theorist, journalist, professor of political science at Brooklyn College who writes on modern conservatism and the role of fear in political life; **Janice Story**, a Senior Fellow at American Enterprise Institute and co-director of the AEI's Center for the Future of the American University. **Ms. Adams** said the series is also linked to President **Mauri McInnes'** presidential lecture on November 11th that features **Jonathan Haidt** who will address students, not for debate but for one-on-one conversation, with questions and discussion with the audience. **Ms. Gage** noted that the committee has already been talking to a wide variety of individuals and groups on and off campus, and this visit to the Senate is part of our outreach to both organized and less organized bodies. She said the committee will produce a report, and will foster ongoing conversations to add to the committee's report. She said we also have a postdoctoral fellow who will be teaching a course on the history of the legitimacy of universities and who wrote his history dissertation on the moral legitimacy of universities and challenges to them in enlightened France. **Ms. Gage** and **Ms. Adams** opened the floor for questions. **Rebecca Toseland** said she is excited about the list of

speakers and asked if there will be others invited who are outside of the academy. **Ms. Adams** said there are a number of invitations to people outside the academy, and so far none have confirmed noting there is less eagerness for people to come speak here than previously, however she believes we will be successful eventually. **Ms. Gage** agreed, and said there are private conversations going on, however we agreed not to invite people who are in office or running for office because we are not sure if those public conversations would be as productive as private conversations. **Kathy Nicholson** said she is concerned about the relationship between trust and truth, which is complicated in this sense because trust is both a question of reliability and validity and a problem of perception. And we obviously have to reckon with both of those because we live in a world where perception matters. She said she appreciates the committee's sense that we can't simply be in a defensive mode and have to be in a mode of critique. However, she thinks we have to, above all, insist on things being true. She said as a committee, she feels we have to say we are up against many challenging forces and one is misinformation, mediated misinformation, and we can name that, but the demand cannot be that we engage ceaselessly with every possible source of misinformation. Not everyone is acting in good faith, and said she could not do her work as a scholar if she was constantly being asked to address every misinformation that comes up. She also is concerned about proportionality and how to decide what to address and what not to. **Sonam Kachru** said he is eager to read the committee's report. His own thinking is about trust and who to trust; is there a sense of international parallels; in the university, what is being lost sight of, or what trusts are diminishing – is it science or research, sociocultural advancement – professional advancement? **Rourke O'Brien** said when people think of higher education at large and also at Yale, they are trying to assess what good it is doing in the world. And, what are graduates doing with their credentials and sets of skills. He noted that his office hours are filled with students who want to do good in the world and feel that they are being set up for consulting and finance, and he spends his time trying to help them find their paths forward and to use their tremendous talents to do something else. He feels that the university should be responsible for how we send students out into the world for other things than consulting, finance, law, or management. **Ms. Gage** noted that this an area that the committee is addressing and has already begun looking into. **Michael Grome** said he has been at Yale since 2013, as a graduate student, a postdoc, and has experienced a lot of this, and he feels what needs to be explicitly addressed is that we are working on institutional trust in a highly polarized political environment and that we do have research fields that are innately normative, innately countercultural, and a lot of the praxis that arises from it is going to be political. He said we should know that Yale is quite hegemonic in a lot of that kind of political praxis, when we as academics go out and speak, people take note, and if you take that component, the idea of addressing institutional trust without addressing that directly, it's almost futile. He said another part of this is the way we conduct ourselves when speaking, and many lost trust in Yale after COVID and the coverage of a public health panel from Yale that said that racism was a bigger public health problem than COVID so go out and protest, which was a direct contradiction of all the guidance we had given previously to go into to lock down due to COVID. With no further question, **Ms. Bozovic** said that the Senate will invite **Ms. Gage** and **Ms. Adams** to return to a Senate meeting in early spring to report on the committee's progress.

Ms. Bozovic introduced **Ozan Say**, Director of the Yale Office of International Scholars, to provide an update on graduate student visas; H-1B petitions; and other pressing questions. **Mr.**

Say said there is good news regarding student visas, and despite challenges, he said 98% of students who enrolled at Yale were able to get their visas and have arrived. However, he noted that our colleagues at the University of New Haven have witnessed a 60% decline, and so many of our colleagues are reporting similar declines – 30-40% and he remarked that the elite name Yale is still helping with this issue. **Mr. Say** said there are other major issues – a proposed rule to eliminate duration of status – something that we have taken for granted for the last 30 years that allows students and scholars to enter the US without a certain date where they need to leave. He said the proposal is now to allow a maximum of 4 years which would not give students, especially PhD students, the time necessary to complete their degrees. He said that many institutions, including Yale, submitted public comments that were due September 29th, and he is happy to say there were close to 22,000 comments in the end that were submitted, and they were basically opposed the entire proposal. **Mr. Say** noted that if this proposal goes through, each student and scholar, when their status expires and they want to extend, would need to apply for an extension with a cost of \$500 (and to quicken the process an additional \$2,000), and depending on the duration of their stay, one might have to apply for an extension multiple times with each application taking up to 12 months for approval. He outlined many other restrictions that this proposal would put on students. He noted they are eager to push this proposal through however they do need to respond to all the submitted public comments, and we could see this finalized by early fall 2026. He said we will update everyone on this proposal as we receive more information. **Mr. Say** said the next issue is the H-1B proclamation with the 100K fee, and said the proclamation language was very broad and alarming, and it was quickly walked back by the agency with a clarification the day after the proclamation, and there are a lot of uncertainties that still remain. He said that the initial proclamation seemed to apply to everyone without distinction, however the clarification said that this only applies to people who are outside the US, and for new applications submitted after September 21st, the effective date of the proclamation. He noted the many unanswered questions regarding this proclamation including what happens when individuals decide to travel and go outside the US – do fees apply? Also, he noted, many of the immigration experts think this does not intend to include universities and research institutions, however they did not make that distinction and there is more information to clarify on who will be affected by this proclamation. **Mr. Say** answered questions from faculty and explained how new proposals and proclamations could impact students and faculty at Yale, and talked about what his office is doing to keep people who may be affected up-to-date on what these new rules could mean to them.

Ms. Bozovic thanked everyone and especially **Mr. Say** for the work that his office is doing, and adjourned the FAS-SEAS Senate meeting at 5:30 PM.