

## FAS-SEAS Senate Meeting

December 17, 2024

3:30 pm – 5:30 pm

Dow Hall, room 100 (370 Temple Street) and on Zoom

**APPROVED**

### **Attendance:**

Mark Solomon, Chair; Marijeta Bozovic, Deputy Chair; Dinny Aletheiani, Michael Fischer, Beverly Gage, Alessandro Gomez, John Hall, Valerie Horsley, Michael Loewenberg, Maria Piñango, Constance Sherak, Meg Urry, Paul Van Tassel, Jing Yan, Mimi Yiengpruksawan

**Senators Absent:** Andrea Aldrich, Gerald Jaynes, Mordechai Levy Eichel, Jason Stanley, Alison Sweeney, Julia Titus, Rebecca Toseland, Robert Wooster

**Guests:** Jeffrey Brock, Nicholas Christakis, Kevin Ennis, Tamar Gendler, Larry Gladney, Daniel Greco, Timothy Newhouse, Claire Rosin, Julia Silvestro, Stephen Slade

**Mark Solomon**, Chair of the FAS-SEAS Senate, called the closed portion of the FAS-SEAS Senate meeting to order at 3:35 PM. **Mr. Solomon** noted that **Andrea Aldrich** volunteered to serve on the multi-bodied Family Leave Committee representing the Senate, and the committee plans to have a report in the spring to vote on.

**Mr. Solomon** called for Senate committee updates.

**John Hall** chair of the Student Affairs Committee said the committee met twice and focused on preparing questions for the Admissions presentation, and decided, as much as possible, for committee members to volunteer to participate on the Admissions Committee and report back on their experiences. He noted the committee plans to facilitate a workshop with mental health people in the spring for senators and faculty, and one focus will be on the training they give to deans who work closely with students on mental health issues. This information, he said, will make us more aware of resources and the various things they are looking at when interacting with students. He said the committee is also looking at graduate student issues and will look into how departments are handling issues related to graduate students. He talked about creating a survey for departments and DGS's. **Mr. Solomon** asked what the survey would include. **Michael Loewenberg** said it would ask how each department is doing relating to graduate student admissions, how happy they are with that process, and if they have ideas for improving the process. He said we want to learn what is working and not working. He noted that there is very little information for applicants on what people are looking for in a particular area, and the survey can give us an idea of how each department handles graduate admissions and if there are things they can share that would improve the process overall. The committee plans to send the survey in the spring. **Mr. Hall** asked senators if they had further projects in mind for this committee. **Mimi Yiengpruksawan** noted that she has been puzzled by graduate student admissions for years and has been trying to get statistics on who is applying. She noted it appears that this process is not organized as the undergraduate admissions process is. She said she is truly curious about graduate admissions and not just in her department. She sees how it varies year-to-year by the dynamic of the committee, and sometimes feels it's not entirely fair or

transparent. She would like to find out more about the overall process from various departments. **Jing Yan** noted that each department does the process differently and in his department the DGS oversees the process, there are different tracks, and he said the process is transparent. He noted that each department has its own needs so he feels it is okay for the process to be decentralized, however it would be beneficial for departments to learn what others are doing to possibly adopt the things that are working in other areas that they may not be aware of. **Ms. Yiengpruksawan** said she would like to know who's applying and how we can track who's getting in, and the pattern of this process. **Paul Van Tassel** reported on the Science and Engineering Committee noting the committee is focusing on graduate student funding and the rising costs involved. He also noted that we're a few years into the *Yale Science Strategic Plan* and that many departments have formed their own committees and the Senate's committee would like to get a sense of how those plans are being implemented. He noted that the committee has met with **Larry Gladney**, Dean of Science, and **Jeffrey Brock**, Dean of SEAS, and talked about the graduate student funding problem, however there is no answer yet. He said on the Strategic Plan implementation, they welcome us to probe at the chair level to see how well we're doing there. **Mr. Van Tassel** said that the committee is considering issuing a report to send a message to the administration on how important the issue of graduate student funding is and give some ideas for moving forward with examples of what is being done elsewhere. He noted that on the issue of graduate student funding, both deans have been working with the Development Office, and maybe the committee can either lobby or help direct those efforts. **Maria Piñango** spoke for the Peer Advisory and Ombuds Committee noting that the committee is focusing on the history of an ombuds office at Yale. She said they realize that some of the administration has been against creating an ombuds office here, and having a new administration gives us the opportunity to reopen the discussion. She noted the committee is looking at some of the concerns that have been given, and they will submit a report to the Senate sometime in March. She said that to prepare the report, we are looking at what other institutions do and specifically Harvard that has had an Ombuds Office with three full-time staff. The committee has been in touch with **Melissa Broderick** from that Harvard office and we plan to invite her to speak with the committee. She said **Ms. Broderick** was initially invited to speak at the Senate's January 16<sup>th</sup> meeting, however **Ms. Piñango** feels it would be more beneficial for her to meet with our committee instead so we can ask more in-depth questions to obtain pertinent information to use in our committee's report. **Mr. Van Tassel** spoke for elections portion of the Outreach and Elections Committee and said that the Senate has 23 sitting senators and will have 14 open slots for the upcoming election due to a big turnover with more than half the seats up for election. He said the committee plans to have social events to encourage people to run and mentioned that there is a Google sign-up sheet for senators to use to add names of people they know who may be interested in the Senate. **Mr. Solomon** suggested that senators send these names directly to the Senate's Deputy Chair **Marijeta Bozovic** and she will add names to the document. Regarding the Instructional Faculty Committee, **Constance Sherak** said that the committee is talking about course load issues, and especially among instructional language faculty. **Mr. Solomon** asked if the load is different from one department to another. **Ms. Sherak** said yes, it has to do with vagaries of what language departments mainly do about course chairing, different responsibilities, and DUS'ing, and also our population within a language department. So it is a bit of a bracket as opposed to all instructional faculty and something that the committee is discussing, and we'll come up with

something more public about that and it's being particular to the language faculty and how they're defining workflow, course chairing and how much this counts in the workload. **Beverly Gage** talked for the Governance Committee and said they are working on two issues: one is finishing work on the Faculty Handbook, and two is completing a draft document on the *FAS Dean's Report*. She said the committee will meet in January to complete the draft. **Ms. Gage** asked if there was a formal "welcome" sent to the new FAS Dean **Steven Wilkinson** from the Senate. **Mr. Solomon** said that he wrote **Mr. Wilkinson** a brief email to welcome him as the FAS Dean, however it was not formal. He said he also invited him to this Senate meeting, which he was not able to attend, and there are plans for the EC to meet with **Mr. Wilkinson** sometime in January aside from the usual EC and Deans meetings, and he also plans to attend a future Senate meeting when he is available. **Ms. Gage** noted that **Mr. Wilkinson** chaired the committee that recommended the formation of the FAS Senate. **Ms. Bozovic** spoke for the Faculty Advancement Committee noting there is nothing to report at this time. **Meg Urry** spoke for the Diversity Committee and said they have discussed last year's letter to **Provost Scott Strobel** on trying to change the policy for graduate student/faculty relations. **Mr. Strobel's** reply was that he was supportive, however a policy would have to be implemented university-wide and he was waiting for the new Title 9 regulations came down from the White House. She said that this has happened, but due to the results of the recent election it seems like he will not move forward. It was suggested that the committee talk with individual departments, however at our recent meeting, some members of the committee suggested that this should be preceded by more discussion in a broader forum. **Ms. Urry** said the impetus for the suggested policy is to protect students, all students, so they are able to have an educational environment that doesn't involve intrigue with faculty. However, there are concerns how this might be implemented and how it might affect LGBTQ faculty disproportionately. She said this was something last year's committee took into account. However, she noted, it is coming up again as an issue. **Mr. Solomon** asked what the suggestion is to going forward. **Ms. Urry** said she would like to have an open discussion with the full Senate on this issue, and include experts on sexual harassment in academia. **Ms. Bozovic** noted that her recommendation would be to consult with faculty in WGSS whose research is dedicated to questions of sexual justice. She noted two important things have changed since the committee's discussions took place last year – one is at that time, while there was some disagreement among the committee about the details of the language of the report, the intended audience of the report was the administration. We should think again before pushing as potential policy something without further feedback from faculty who work on gender and sexuality, law, not to mention General Counsel. The second change from one year ago is the dramatic change in national political climate and media attacks on higher education. She said she feels both of these need to be part of the discussion and that she believes we should hear from the chair of WGSS and experts like **Joseph Fischel**, who has published on sexual justice, before proceeding. **Ms. Urry** noted that the initial report was indeed approved by the Senate – not just discussed in the committee, and the language was carefully thought through. Then, she said, it was sent to the Provost but not widely circulated, and once the Provost said he would not go forward with this, the committee did not take a next step. **Mr. Solomon** noted that it is clear that we need further discussion before taking the next step. **Ms. Yiengpruksawan** and **Ms. Piñango** both want to hear what people's specific objections are so we can address them one-by-one before we can move forward. **Ms. Urry** said it is important that we get feedback from the

people who are harmed by faculty-student relationships. She noted most have never experienced this type of problem but we do know that this does happen and has been reported in the YDN, and to hear of instances where people have adversely been affected by this behavior would be most beneficial. **Mr. Solomon** said he is aware that the Title 9 office is reporting these instances continuously and he will see if he can obtain information. **Valerie Horsley** said she is concerned that something that has been passed by the Senate is now being re-visited and it makes it sound like it wasn't properly vetted. She said there may be additional things that we want to bring forward, but if it has been passed by the Senate, it is a document that is to be publicly consumed. **Mr. Solomon** said this is not about revoking our previous report but it is how to proceed moving forward. **Ms. Bozovic** said that what she means is that what is written for public dissemination, department to department, as suggested policy is different than a document intended primarily as a communication of concerns to the administration. She said that she spoke with (former senators) **Greta LaFleur** and **Dara Strolovitch** who had had a similar idea that more steps would be taken before doing something else actively with last year's report.

**Mr. Solomon** concluded the closed session and invited guests to join the open portion of the meeting. He introduced the discussion of a proposed letter to the Provost reaffirming the Senate's spring 2024 [Passing the Harasser Report](#), and also seeking to prevent implementation of criminal background checks for new faculty. He noted that in the spring the Senate approved this report that recommends Yale implement something akin to what UC Davis started where they ask senior faculty finalists for jobs to give permission to Yale to check with prior employers on findings of sexual or academic misconduct. He said a second part of it would be that all faculty applicants would, just like graduate student applicants, check a box saying I have or have not been found responsible for any prior offences, and then a possible explanation, and the report specifically said that we do not want criminal background checks. We now understand that Provost **Scott Strobel** is considering criminal background checks in addition to our recommendations. **Mr. Solomon** feels that criminal background checks are likely be implemented, and he drafted the letter to the provost. **Nicholas Christakis** commented that it would be fairer to applicants to require a background check where there has been an adjudication by a court of law than to simply accept the findings of some prior university about such matters. He asked, "how can we say Yale won't hire someone that UC Davis has found guilty of harassment?" And, what if for example, the Court of law has not found them guilty but UC Davis has? He said he doesn't understand how that's going to be handled. **Mr. Solomon** said that we had a full discussion of this last year, and if someone having a misconduct finding in their history doesn't preclude their hiring, it just requires more investigation. He noted that UC Davis began this policy about 10 years ago and found no cases where there was academic or sexual misconduct among their senior candidate finalists, and so to some extent it's the perception that really matters that this is a healthy and safe place to be. **Mr. Van Tassel** added that if we find misconduct, we look into it and there's an investigation into the facts of the situation. **Mr. Christakis** asked if we want Yale to be in the business of checking on the sexual behaviors of people who are not yet our own faculty. He noted what if another university went to court and the candidate said the University found that they had done something wrong but the court of law said they didn't. He also noted that Yale had a case of a student that had that exact situation. He said in a way we've set ourselves up to besmirch this person and is Yale going to get into this

mess and try to sort it out? He asked if this is what we're proposing. **Mr. Solomon** noted that the Senate has already made the recommendation, so we are here now to discuss criminal background checks. **Mr. Solomon** read the draft letter he proposes be sent to the Provost. **Jing Yang** asked for clarification of who at Yale is currently subject to background checks. **Mr. Solomon** and **Mr. Van Tassel** said that presently, all staff and post docs are subject to background checks, and faculty and students are not, and it's not clear if grad students are. **Mr. Solomon** noted that it has been reported that staff are upset that faculty are not held to the same standards as they are and this is the main argument we have heard about criminal background checks for faculty. **Mr. Yang** said he finds it strange that staff and postdocs are subject to background checks and students, faculty, and graduate students are not. **Mr. Solomon** noted that graduate student applications have a box to check to say that they have been found responsible for violation of academic, and another box for an explanation, and the proposal would add that kind of attestation for faculty hires. **Michael Fischer** said that when he read the preamble to the draft letter, he thought you were writing to support background checks, and then in the conclusion you say you are not. He said he was not compelled by the reasoning in the letter. **Mr. Solomon** pointed to the line where it says, "we write now to reemphasize that we strongly recommend that the University not perform criminal background checks for new faculty." He said he thinks there would always be a strong contingent of faculty opposed to criminal background checks, and at this time he feels the opposition is even stronger. **Mr. Van Tassel** asked that if we decide to require background checks for faculty, would we be the only university among our peers to do so? **Mr. Solomon** said he is not sure, however it is probably done at public universities. **Ms. Bozovic** said she believes it is not all of the public universities and is not many other Ivy's, but that we will research and provide a list of those who do. **Mr. Solomon** said if there's general support, we would actually vote on something in January, and before then he and **Ms. Bozovic**, who have been attending the once monthly get-together of heads of about 15 senates, will ask them to comment on their institution's policy. **Ms. Bozovic** noted that UC and SUNY systems have some such policy, and Texas public universities do, but their policies vary dramatically; but plenty of institutions, especially peer institutions do not. **Ms. Bozovic** said that speaking to colleagues who represent faculty senates from different parts of the nation has been chilling. She said our colleagues from other schools convey a strong sense of universities under attack, faculty heavily critiqued by media, and institutions of higher learning cast as sites of brainwashing. Meanwhile we see an uptick in doxxing oriented at faculty and students in retaliation for political opinions and organizing protests. She said that there is great fear at this encroachment on faculty freedoms and attacks on intellectual freedom. She said that the idea of inviting additional surveillance into faculty at hire disproportionately affects communities of color and especially black men who for example may have been targeted and accused of selling marijuana, since legalized, when 18 – again it is more vulnerable communities that are disproportionately affected by criminal background checks and will hence be even less likely to apply or see themselves as potentially part of a Yale community. She said political protest and consequent arrest is a regular occurrence for some political activist graduate students. **Mr. Solomon** added that while the university will say that that criminal background check information will not be misused, we cannot know that will be the case especially going forward. **Mr. Yan** asked that as with harassment if the candidate chooses to explain a prior record, the university will still decide, and will it be the same with evidence that comes out of a criminal

background check? **Mr. Solomon** said it's unclear that with a criminal background check that a candidate would have a chance to explain. **Mr. Yan** said he would not support criminal background checks if candidates were not given a chance to explain. **Mr. Solomon** said the purpose for writing this letter is, at a minimum, to ask the administration not to move forward with this until we have further discussion that would include the right to a rebuttal. **Ms. Yiengpruksawan** said she is always skeptical about institutions who say, "it is going to remain confidential." She said that the whole concept is really disturbing to her. **Ms. Bozovic** noted that a few years ago this seemed inconceivable at Yale; indeed we had conversations with higher administration who said criminal background checks will never happen at Yale. So what has changed? How is it that something we were reassured mere months ago would never happen at Yale, presumably because it is antithetical to the principles of autonomy and independent judgement that Yale stands for, is suddenly about to be a foregone conclusion? She said that if we speak now before it is announced, we have a chance to have an impact. **Ms. Horsley** said she doesn't see this as being such a big deal, especially when we don't know the full information on how it's being used. She said we should be trying to find out more information on what the process is and what it will be used for. She noted that someone in the chat said that Princeton and Columbia already have background checks so it doesn't seem like it's so out of the ordinary and she's not sure she supports this letter from the Senate without further information and discussions. **Ms. Urry** said that she thinks the rationale for exempting professors doesn't make sense to her because if we require it for staff, then why don't we require it for professors. If we want to argue that it shouldn't be required for any Yale hires, she could support that. She also said that she is 100% sure that just because something shows up on a criminal background check, it doesn't disqualify you from a job. **Kevin Ennis** asked if there are similar processes in the professional schools regarding background checks or is this just in FAS and SEAS that the university is proposing? **Mr. Solomon** said he believes that this proposal is university-wide and it is possible that the professional schools already have background checks, however he does not know. **Ms. Yiengpruksawan** asked about political activists that are here from other countries, what happens to them? She said she knows lots of people from Eurasia who are political activists-- what happens to them? **Mr. Van Tassel** noted that even if it starts off very well meaning, it's a slippery slope that can lead to something else. **Ms. Piñango** noted that for postdoctoral and postgraduate fellows who are required to have background checks: if you have never lived or worked in the US, you need to successfully complete a Federal background check to obtain a work visa, and this government background check is sufficient to meet Yale's requirements. It was asked if they do this for Yale's World Fellows. **Ms. Piñango** said this is for postdoctoral and postgraduate fellows and associates who are required to have background checks, and World Fellows need a work visa so they would be included. She noted that a background check is required for all candidates who are either US citizens, from US Government agencies who are currently in the US on a non-immigrant visa and have a US Social security number. **Ms. Bozovic** noted that even if nothing changes practically right now in response to such a policy change, it has symbolic importance. If Yale changes its policy and institutes criminal background checks for faculty, this will be national news and signals a shift in a certain direction. She says we have to remember that the things we do and the decisions we make have effects elsewhere. Moreover, we're the Faculty Senate -- we're supposed to be representing the interests of the faculty so why would we advocate for greater surveillance, more checks, more

dissuasion for faculty of color or potential colleagues of color to apply? **Ms. Gage** said she doesn't understand what problem is being solved by this – have we seen an epidemic of faculty with secret criminal history joining and getting tenure? She feels it would be useful to hear from the administration what problem they think they're solving and why we are making this policy. She noted that on these kinds of civil liberties related issues, talking in the abstract can be less useful than saying - look, here's a scenario of a person who was engaged in this form of protest and did this, and our concern is that a person in that situation would be subject to X. She feels that some of what happens in these kinds of debates is that people are imagining different things, and putting examples into the letter might clarify things. **Mr. Solomon** said it is his sense that we are divided on this issue, however he still wants to submit a finalized letter at the January Senate meeting for consideration as a statement of the Senate and asked for suggestions for changing the letter. **Mr. Van Tassel** noted that there are two things still unresolved –the pass the harasser policy and adding background checks for faculty, and it would be good to understand who is for what, and go from there. **Ms. Bozovic** said that **Ms. Gage's** suggestion to include an illustrative example or two is an excellent one. **Mr. Gomez** commented that **Ms. Bozovic's** arguments against background checks were very convincing, however we have heard of cases where our colleagues were responsible for hideous crimes. **Mr. Solomon** said he knows of two cases and neither had offences before coming here. He noted that the pass the harasser is for senior hires only, and the background checks would be for all hires. **Ms. Bozovic** suggested that a letter from the Senate should clarify that the Senate does not condone criminal background checks as somehow an extension of the Senate's initiative on passing the harasser. **Mr. Solomon** said that we will have time in January to discuss the issues, and right now he is asking for constructive advice on how to compose the letter. **Ms. Horsley** noted that the Senate's EC meets with the FAS and SEAS Deans every two weeks and with the Provost every quarter, and she asked if these issues have been raised, and what is the process of communicating with the administration? **Mr. Solomon** said the EC has not met with the Provost this term so we can ask to meet with him early in the term. He said he is worried about the timing and that a decision would come down really soon and he would like to get a letter out quickly. **Ms. Yiengpruksawan** asked if this matter has not been up for discussion until now, do you know if there is some data that we are not aware of that has prompted this conversation? **Mr. Van Tassel** stressed the fairness issue about background checks being required for staff and not for faculty as the likely cause of this issue coming up now, and **Ms. Yiengpruksawan** said that she understands that part of the issue but wonders if there has been anything that we are unaware of that has prompted this decision to include faculty. **Mr. Gomez** suggested that we bring in someone from the Law School to enter the conversation and provide insight on the issue of criminal background checks for faculty. **Ms. Bozovic** said again she would like to advocate to include faculty from Humanities and who work on social justice as having something important to contribute to the conversation. **Mr. Solomon** said he would like to present the letter for vote at the January meeting to slow any action that the Provost might take before we have a chance to discuss it with him. **Ms. Urry** commented that rather than a letter that gives the opinion of the Senate, what about saying we've heard this is maybe happening and are concerned about it, we have had a Senate discussion about it and we would like to hear more about it. **Mr. Solomon** asked if anyone would object to him sending a message that we heard this is in the works, some senators have concerns, and could we have a discussion with you before a decision is made? It was decided that **Mr. Solomon** will work on

something along the lines of what was just suggested, and he will figure out what route to take to get it to the Provost.

**Mr. Solomon** presented the last item on the agenda - a discussion of a proposed response to the Institutional Voice Report/policy. **Ms. Bozovic** summarized that there are subtle but important differences between the Yale statement on institutional voice and some of those made by our peer institutions. We feel the report has been misread or misinterpreted by some, and that the details are worth discussing and bringing to the surface. This led us to compose a one-page memo statement of the FAS-SEAS Senate. She read aloud the statement [*edit*. Voted on and included in full on the Senate website].

**Mr. Fischer** said that he spent some time writing down his reactions and he asked to read them: I have three reactions on reading this draft statement. I don't understand what it is supposed to accomplish at this time. President McInnis convened the Committee on Institutional Voice on September 10, 2024, with a request to provide its recommendations this semester. The Committee held several listening sessions throughout the month. This body devoted an hour of its meeting on October 10 to a discussion of institutional voice/neutrality with **Robert Post**. **President McInnis** accepted the report on October 30. The Senate had ample time to supply collective input to the Committee before that date but failed to do so. Any action by the Senate at this time can be easily misinterpreted. Is it a criticism of **President McInnis** for setting a short timetable for the Committee on Institutional Voice to complete its work? Is it a criticism of the Committee for not meeting specially with the Senate? Is it a criticism of the president for accepting the report without first asking approval from the Senate? Asking for Senate ratification of this statement at this time seems intended to silence those who may still believe that *institutional* neutrality is the best way to support "unfettered freedom, the right to think the unthinkable, discuss the unmentionable, and challenge the unchallengeable" that the proposed statement purports to support. Is that the example we want to set for how to treat those who hold minority opinions?

**Ms. Bozovic** responded that the intention is neither to critique the timeline nor the committee, but to speak in response to oversimplifications of the report or policy that we have been hearing about from faculty colleagues and students concerned with that all might fall under the policy change. She said the term institutional neutrality has been tossed around quite a bit on campus, but we have indeed not adopted a position of institutional neutrality. Nevertheless, she noted, we have already heard of the term neutrality used to curb the activities of a student center. **Ms. Bozovic** noted the goal of this statement is to amplify and remind our community members of the actual message of the committee report point, to stress the important differences between what Yale has done and what some peer institutions have done.

**Mr. Solomon** said his regret is that we didn't speak up as a Senate before the report came out, as the Senate should comment on important university policies, and this is one. **Ms. Bozovic** noted the Senate procedures of writing a report, vetting it with the EC, taking it to the Senate for discussion, and then approving a report--we did not have sufficient time to go through the procedures and act quickly. Now, she said, we are trying to make our voices heard and have an

impact even after the fact. She responded to **Mr. Fischer's** question of majority opinion and minority voice, and said this is something that pertains to almost any statement that the Senate is going to make going forward and there are going to be some Senators who disagree with any statement that the Senate wants to make. She noted that if we decide to say that the Senate cannot make a statement without unanimity because it is silencing minority voices, she fears we have painted ourselves into a corner of irrelevance. **Mr. Solomon** said he doesn't think it's an attack on people who have a different view. He suggested that add in revision some lines that address what **Mr. Fischer** asked – “what is the point of this and what does it add?” He would add for further discussion that we don't know how the policy be implemented and it's important to stay alert to that to that. He noted that the importance of allowing School of Public Health room to make statements and we certainly don't want individual voices to be silenced. **Mr. Gomez** said he has no issues with putting together this sort of clarification, even though anybody who has read that report should have been able to come to the same conclusions if they care about this issue of neutrality, or actually, to use Robert Post's words, restraint, which is also what they use. He said however that the real issue is the university mission statement which is far to general. **Mr. Solomon** said we want to bring a polished statement for a vote in January, and asked if there is general support (mostly if not completely) for the idea of issuing something on institutional voice. **Ms. Gage** said she supports this initiative, and as a humanities scholar she feels this is a model of textual interpretation: scholars, lawyers, and others can write one thing down and then people spend a long time talking about how to interpret it and what it really means. She noted that what we're doing is going on record with our interpretation of what the report meant in a context where the shorthand has become “Yale has adopted institutional neutrality” which is not the case. **Mr. Solomon** asked for suggestions of things that should or not be included. **Ms. Horsley** said she supports this document as is and feels that what the committee said they were asking for and how it was interpreted were two different things and it's important to weigh in. A **guest** to the Senate noted that there was no statement from the university – there was institutional silence -- about Washington, not even for example a congratulations to President-elect Trump. He said it seems to be particularly quiet, especially if we the faculty are dealing with it all in our classrooms and helping students navigate and make sense of current events. **Mr. Solomon** said he worries that even restraint of not commenting on things that are such core matters misses how it affects our community. **Ms. Yiengpruksawan** noted that whatever we may feel about the matter of neutrality, we keep hearing about the lobbying in Washington, and so on, so she tends to think of the ways in which the university itself can become voiceless in this country, neutrality may leads to that potential quietness. **Mr. Gomez** commented that we may be facing one of the most vindictive administrations that's going to take office on January 20<sup>th</sup>, and the last thing you want to do is to be the lightning rod, so he welcomes the restraint in that particular case, in part from a pragmatic viewpoint can we survive the next four years. **Ms. Yiengpruksawan** agreed, however commented if there's no voice, there's no resistance.

**Mr. Solomon** asked if there were any suggestions for the write-up. With none, **Mr. Solomon** adjourned the meeting at 5:30 PM.