

FAS-SEAS Senate Meeting

March 27, 2025

3:30 pm – 5:30 pm

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

Minutes

APPROVED

Attendance:

Mark Solomon, Chair; Marijeta Bozovic, Deputy Chair; Dinny Aletheiana, Neta Alexander, Andrea Aldrich, Michael Fischer, Beverly Gage, Alessandro Gomez, John Hall, Michael Loewenberg, Maria Piñango, Constance Sherak, Julia Titus, Rebecca Toseland, Meg Urry, Paul Van Tassel, Robert Wooster, Jing Yan, Mimi Yiengpruksawan

Senators Absent: Valerie Horsley, Gerald Jaynes, Mordechai Levy Eichel, Kathryn Slanski, Jason Stanley, Alison Sweeney

Guests: Yoram Alhassid, Tarren Andrews, Anjelica ?, Sean Barrett, Tim Barron, Alexia Belperron, Mariana Bertho, Julian Berro, Howard Bloch, Jeffrey Brock, Hal Brooks, Gary Brudvig, Yaminay Chaudhri, Nicholas Christakas, Sarah Demers, Ana De La O, Cynthia DeRoma, Annise Dobon, Kevin Ennis, Emily Erikson, Vanessa Ezenwa, Paul Forscher, Paul Franks, Eckart Frahm, Maria Gendron, Larry Gladney, Kaiama Glover, Kimberly Goff-Crews, Shiri Goren, Daniel Greco, Sheila Herrngton, Karsten Heeger, Sam Hodgkin, Jutta Joormann, Phone Josien, Ket2's phone, Shelly Kagan, Maria Kaliambou, Alicia Kaplan, Amy Kapczynski, Theodore Kim, Jennifer Klein, Elka KN, Michael Koelle, Yukiko Koga, Tom Kreiner, Gundula Kreuzer, Tian (Ester) Li, Maureen Long, Jane Lynch, Alex Manning, Alan Mikhail, Kathryn Miller-Jensen, Nadine Moeller, Anna Moldawa-Shetty, Fatima Naqvi, Gana Ndiaye, Andrew Neitzke, Cathy Nicholson, Jim Noonan, Mary O'Brien, Catalina Ospina, Charalampos Papamanthou, Julian Posada, Daniel Prober, Ayesha Ramachandran, Bill Rankin, Ana Ramos-Zaya, Malena Rice, Doug Rogers, Roy, Ozan Say, Kate Schilling, Julia Silvestri, Stephen Slade, A.L. Steiner, Dara Strolovitch, Zhaoxia Sun, Mary Louise Timmermans, Katie Trumpener, Jing Tsu, David Vasseur, Lisa Voigt, Daniel Walden, Steven Wilkinson, and several others.

FAS-SEAS Senate Chair **Mark Solomon** called the meeting of the FAS-SEAS Senate to order at 3:35 PM.

- He reported that the Senate's Executive Council (EC) met with the Deans. The request for an Ombuds Office received a cool reception and he said this issue remains ongoing.
- He noted that for an upcoming meeting with the Provost and Deans, topics will include recent Senate reports (Handbook Report, Ombuds Report, etc.); asking the Provost about the Harvard Ombuds Office as a model; and other topics of concern.
- He reported that the Senate EC met with the AAUP EC for a very successful first meeting. Topics addressed included areas of overlap and ways to collaborate, as well as concern over the lack of sufficient support for international scholars and students. **Meg Urry** made the argument that the full Senate should be aware of what the EC is saying if it speaks for

the entire Senate. **Mr. Solomon** agreed that this is appropriate, and that the full Senate would be contacted for feedback through email when necessary.

Mr. Solomon called for Senate Committees reports:

- **Paul Van Tassel** and **Rebecca Toseland** spoke for the Nominations Committee on the upcoming Senate election. To date, there are 27 nominations. Once nominations close, the committee will contact nominees to ask if they will run. There are 15 open positions. We need more nominations for Science, Social Sciences, and SEAS, and we can benefit from more ladder faculty nominations. The election is tentatively scheduled for April 21 to April 30.
- **Beverly Gage** reported on the recent faculty forum -*Standing and Strategizing Together* - that was held as an in-person event on March 3rd. It was extremely well attended by faculty from across the University and seemed to achieve its purpose - community building and sharing information from different parts of the University about faculty concerns, and finding points of common interest to reaffirm our shared mission and shared concerns. She noted that now we need to take what we learned and build by taking next steps to engage faculty from all parts of the University toward common goals.
- **Mr. Solomon** spoke on the Governance Committee's report --*The FAS Dean's Office and the Future of the FAS* -- that the Senate requested be edited further at February's Senate meeting, particularly the phrasing around graduate student support. He presented the relevant edits and the report was submitted for approval. *The FAS Dean's Office and the Future of the FAS Report* was unanimously approved.

Next **Mr. Solomon** introduced **Kimberly Goff-Crews**, Secretary and Vice President for University Life to discuss the urgent late addition to the Senate agenda - the controversial survey that was sent by **Lynn Cooley**, Dean of the Graduate School, requesting that chairs and DGSs provide information on any programs, requirements, activities, groups, content or policies supporting Diversity, Equity, Inclusion or Belonging in their units. The survey questions were composed by the Office of General Counsel and marked "privileged and confidential," and an "immediate response" was required, with a stated deadline of Friday, March 28.

After fielding numerous inquiries from concerned faculty, the FAS-SEAS Senate added this discussion of the survey request to today's meeting agenda and invited **Kimberly Goff-Crews**, Secretary and Vice President for University Life; **Steven Wilkinson**, Dean of the FAS; and **Larry Gladney**, Dean of Diversity and Faculty Development in the FAS and Divisional Dean of Science. **Ms. Goff-Crews** led the response to senator and faculty questions about the context, purpose, and intended use of the survey.

According to **Ms. Goff-Crews**, the survey had been explained and introduced to the Deans of all the schools prior to circulation, whereas, regrettably, there had been no similar explanation or context given to Chairs and DGSs. The Senate was assured that the survey was intended to gather information about university practices in advance of any external critique - to protect our community rather than to prompt anticipatory obedience or to chill efforts to promote diversity in advance of any legal requirement to do so. Members of the Senate and the Yale faculty pointed

out that, as sent out and received, the survey could prompt exactly the negative effects we were told we were trying to avoid. Discussion focused on how more collaborative approaches might empower the faculty and unite the Yale community while remaining in compliance with changing interpretations of laws and regulations.

Ms. Goff-Crews agreed that Chairs and DGSs needed an informational meeting prior to filling out the survey, both for reassurance and for explanation of the level of detail desired, as well as considerably more time to do so. (A meeting with Chairs is scheduled for April 8 and one with DGSs is planned.) Moreover, Ms. Goff-Crews confirmed that brief answers such as “My unit has followed best practices according to the policies the university administration communicated to us as of Fall 2024,” were perfectly appropriate and sufficient in response to survey questions.

The FAS-SEAS Senate will pay close attention to further developments and welcomes faculty input about this or any other newly urgent concerns at any time.

Mr. Solomon introduced a discussion of the future of the university’s *Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging* efforts and activities in the current climate. FAS Dean **Steven Wilkinson** talked about the new challenges appearing every day from the administration in Washington, and said that the University administration will be looking at each to determine the affects these challenges could have on us in this ever-changing climate. He noted that Yale is well aware and is working with its legal team and is collaborating with other universities on the challenges as they come. He added that he is proud of the way Yale has responded in comparison to some other institutions, and noted that fiscally, we have not overreacted. He agreed that we will need to speak about these challenges frequently as we collectively try and work our way through this very difficult period, not just for Yale, but for institutions across the country, and thanked **Kim Goff-Crews** and **Larry Gladney** for all that they are doing.

Mr. Solomon gave examples of universities fined large amounts of money for perfectly legal activities, and asked how we can defend against that. **Ms. Goff-Crews** said, “we don’t know yet, and that’s the truth. This is where we are right now.”

Cathy Nicholson said that what we need the University to say, in a full throated and open way, is that what's legal is legal and we will not accept the illegal redefinition of legal activity as impermissible. If something is legal according to the Constitution and US Law, we need this university to fight to defend our ability to keep doing it. **Ms. Goff-Crews** said we are working on it, and sometimes we are successful, and sometimes we’re not, but please know that we will continue to work actively to support this institution and higher education in the face of the challenges ahead.

Alice Kaplan stressed the chill that the survey had already produced to those who were asked to fill it out. **Michael Fischer** said that the email regarding the survey should have gone out to the entire community. He said we need transparency to strengthen our community so that we can all support each other. **Ms. Bozovic** suggested that if we are trying to show that we are all on the same side, the administration could reach out to faculty and ask for collaboration rather than issue commands as with the survey, without explanation. If the goal is to support and protect

faculty, then empower us by reaching out instead to chairs and DGSs to ask what we need. **Mr. Solomon** added that departments need to ask questions and get advice as things progress, instead of being told what not to do. **Mimi Yiengpruksawan** ended the conversation by saying she has been at Yale a long time and thinks many of us are asking our beloved institution, when push comes to shove, not to fold. **Dara Strolovitch** added that the undercurrent here is the institutional voice statement that has framed the entire year. She said she feels this is the context in which many of us received the email.

Mr. Solomon next introduced **Ozan Say**, Director of the Office of International Students and Scholars, to speak about the challenges and real dangers facing international students and faculty in the current climate. **Mr. Say** provided an overview of the travel ban, deportations, and the executive order on combating antisemitism. He also mentioned changes in registration requirements for children under 14, and the new need for individuals to actually carry their immigration documents on their person. He said his office has been working with General Counsel (OGC) on public safety and guidance for interacting with law enforcement, and have been providing resources to at-risk students. **Mr. Say** added that OISS has been meeting with students who have specific concerns and providing them with resources. He noted that while the registration requirement has been on the books for a long time, this was not something emphasized or worried about in the past. Now things have changed, and OISS is advising international scholars and students to carry their documents while they're in New Haven: a copy of their I-94 document that is the proof of registration, and a copy of their passport and visa and immigration documents. They also advise keeping copies in a safe place that someone else can access in the event that something happens. Moreover, outside New Haven, they're now advising foreign citizens to carry their original documents with them. **Mr. Say** noted that everyone is required to report their address change within 10 days, and again, now advises all students and scholars to follow these practices so they are not in violation in a way that can be used against them. He noted that his office is working with many situations to offer assistance and legal help. He also mentioned that they have been working to establish emergency funds for students who need financial assistance.

Mr. Say fielded questions from the group and assured them that his office will offer support and advice to people with visa questions, or to direct them to the proper resources for their specific situations. **Mr. Say** shared that he has been meeting one-on-one with students with specific concerns (that actual number is quite small), and that his office advises the general population to assess their risks and act accordingly. He noted that those who experience trouble at the border can call the office during regular business hours, or they can call Yale Security after hours, who will contact him directly. He also has a plan in place for students if they are detained and not able to make a call. **Mr. Say** advised faculty to direct students who have questions or concerns to OISS as they will always have the most updated information. **Mr. Say** announced that his office is holding a Town Hall Meeting on Tuesday on Zoom to which all are welcome, and information is available on the OISS website.

Mr. Solomon asked for approval to extend the meeting by 15 minutes, which was approved. The discussion continued as **Mr. Say** addressed how various challenges faced by international

students and faculty regarding visas might be handled, again with the understanding that the situation is changing and evolving.

Mr. Solomon adjourned the meeting at 5:45 PM.