

## **FAS-SEAS Senate Meeting**

May 8, 2025

3:30 pm – 5:30 pm

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

**Minutes**

**APPROVED**

### **Attendance - Senators:**

Mark Solomon, Chair; Marijeta Bozovic, Deputy Chair, Dinny Aletheiana, Michael Fischer, Beverly Gage, Alessandro Gomez, John Hall, , Michael Loewenberg, Maria Piñango, Constance Sherak, Kathryn Slanski, Alison Sweeney, Julia Titus, Rebecca Toseland, , Paul Van Tassel, Robert Wooster

### **New Senators:**

Casey Dunn, Cynthia DeRoma, Michael Farina, Alessandro Grammei, Amir Haji-Akbari, Sonam Kachru, Rourke O'Brien, David Post, Claire Roosien, Stephen Slade, Brett Smith (Claire Roosien not present)

### **Senators Absent:**

Andrea Aldrich, Neta Alexander Valerie Horsley, Gerald Jaynes, Mordechai Levy Eichel, , Jason Stanley, Meg Urry, Jing Yan, Mimi Yiengpruksawan

### **Guests:**

Tarren Andrews, Tim Barron, Alexia Belperron, Nicholas Christakis, Marion Gehlker, Shiri Goren, Kim Goff-Crews, Leslie Gross-Wyrtzen, Ronit Kaufman, Elka Kristo-Nagy, Roy Lederman, Greta LaFleur, Pauline Lin, Ximena Lopez Carrillo, Anna Moldawa-Shetty, Hiroyo Nishimua, Ana Ramos-Zayas, Dara Strolovitch, Madiha Tahir, Lourdes Sabe, Scott Strobel, Jim Tierney, Steven Wilkinson, Jonathan Wyrtzen.

### **Closed Session (Senators and newly elected Senators only): (start at 55)**

**3:30 PM – 4:15 PM**

FAS-SEAS Senate Chair **Mark Solomon** called the meeting to order at 3:35 PM. He welcomed newly-elected senators to the meeting and asked attendees to introduce themselves, and that all senators and newly-elected senators name their priorities for the Senate this year, and outgoing senators to give their input and ideas of what they want to see the Senate address in the future. He noted there are 12 returning senators out of 25, 11 incoming senators, and 2 unfilled seats. He explained that the Senate's Executive Council (EC) can fill unfilled seats for a one-year term.

**Mr. Solomon** asked **Paul Van Tassel** (who has served 6 years on the Senate, including one as Chair) to speak. **Mr. Van Tassel** noted that each returning and new senators will receive ballots to vote for the incoming chair and deputy chair positions, and the new members of the EC. Many new senators expressed excitement to learn about university governance and contribute their perspectives. Overall, there is a sense that the Senate needs to be proactive in shaping the future direction of the university during a time of change and challenges in higher education. Senators talked about their hopes for next term that include improved communication with the administration and collaboration with other faculty groups. They discussed priorities for the upcoming year, such as protecting academic freedom, addressing the use of AI in coursework,

supporting instructional faculty, improving accessibility, and responding to potential crises, and reflected on Senate accomplishments. They also discussed the challenges faced by international graduate students, the recent protest at Yale University, and the need for better policies and more fairly meted out policies around political engagement.

**Mr. Solomon** said he will review, and potentially propose changes to the Senate's By-laws regarding EC composition and eligibility requirements to ensure proper representation of pre-tenured faculty from each division in future elections, and address the lack of a social scientist representative as mandated by the By-laws.

**Mr. Solomon** shared a draft statement by the EC - "[Supporting Yale's International Graduate Students: A Statement with Recommendations by the FAS-SEAS Senate](#)" for review and vote to approve. He reviewed the statements and its recommendations, explaining the thought behind each one. He recommended adding a sentence "we encourage discussing these issues with the GSA" in order to address changes that may be forthcoming. **Michael Loewenberg** asked who the audience is for this statement. **Mr. Solomon** explained that this statement will be sent to faculty and departments and not to the administration, **Mr. Loewenberg** asked if it can also ask for emergency funding for international students, and **Mr. Solomon** said that the AAUP is drafting something along these lines and explained that this statement is for faculty and departments and not directed at the administration. **Ms. Bozovic** asked if we should add the sentence that **Alison Sweeney** suggested: "We also collectively, or we also encourage the Administration to take the most flexible and generous approach to support graduate students affected by visa and immigration issues." **Mr. Solomon** asked for a vote to approve this statement, and the statement "Supporting Yale's International Graduate Students: A Statement with Recommendations by the FAS-SEAS Senate" was unanimously approved. (Ended at 2:07)

#### **Open Session – 4:15 PM – 5:30 PM (2:19)**

Discussion of the University's response to the recent protest against Israeli minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and the *Current Time, Place and Manner Policies*.

**Mark Solomon** introduced a discussion on the recent protest against Israeli minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and Yale's current *Time, Place and Manner Policies* governing such a protest. **Greta LaFleur**, **Scott Strobel**, and **Kim Goff-Crews** joined the meeting for this discussion. **Ms. LaFleur** spoke about her observations at the protest at Yale against **Itamar Ben-Gvir**. At the protest on April 22<sup>nd</sup> at Yale, **Ms. LaFleur** observed a peaceful gathering with students reading statements in a quiet and orderly fashion, and at no point was ingress or egress blocked to any building by this group. However, she said, about 8 PM a group of student counter-protesters arrived and approached the protesters trying to get in the center of the rally. She said what she observed a man circling the people who were participating in the rally and then tried to push his way into the center of the rally. She directly witnessed him shoving, nudging, and otherwise putting his hands and body into non-consensual physical contact with rally participants despite clear directions from those participants saying "no." This counter-protester-agitator then put all videos that he took online and published the full names of the students that he believed to be involved. This to her is a form of doxing, and most importantly, the student, despite having a history of this kind of behavior, did not face disciplinary charges for that behavior; however the 4

students that were involved in the rally are facing disciplinary charges and 2 of them are seniors, so these charges could compromise their ability to graduate. She also noted that Yale also revoked the student club status of *Yalies for Palestine* despite the fact that they specifically denied being the organizers of that action. **Ms. LaFleur** feels that bringing disciplinary charges against students who participated in the rally espousing support of Palestine, but refusing to bring charges against the student on the video and who she personally witnessed making nonconsensual physical contact with protesters, seems like a clear form of viewpoint discrimination to her. She noted that intentional blocking of access, like ingress or egress, is one thing that seems to be a pretty clear public safety issue, however the public safety issues that are prompted by blocking ingress or egress are separate from the right to stand in a place and use public space, or space that Yale holds out for public use by students and community members. She feels that students at Yale should be able to use Yale's public spaces that are held out for the use of Yale community members on campus, including for rallies, and the reason that Yale students were protesting was the same reason that people all over the globe were protesting **Ben Gvir's** visit to the United States. **Ms. LaFleur** said that in her view universities should support the abilities of students to engage safely with the political questions of the moment. She also would like to see a dedicated free speech zone available at Yale, which is a common practice in the world outside of universities, where students can always protest or have rallies within reason and within hours allotted without applying for a permit and still be subject to time, place, and manner restrictions. She noted that the permit system right now seems unnecessarily discretionary and vulnerable to abuse. She also thinks we need dedicated space and rules for counter-protesters or agitators, and there should be both stated protections under Yale policy and also a required buffer zone that would eliminate the possibility that groups with clashing viewpoints would actually physically clash, and would protect the University from accusations of viewpoint discrimination at the very least. **Ms. Goff-Crews** noted that the groups observed that afternoon did request and have permission to be there, however the rally group did not follow procedures and we did not expect them to be there, and noted that our policies and protocols are not great, and will be reviewed as we do every year and look at where we can make positive changes. **Ms. Goff-Crews** explained that we are looking at what our peers are doing, and working on changes over the summer so we have them in place when new and current students return in the fall, and they will include a policy on doxing. **Mr. Strobel** commented that the high-level observation is that we are committed to having free expression on campus, and in order to do this we have established *Time, Place, and Manner Guidelines* for where and when you can express your point of view, and we have trouble when groups do not follow the guidelines. He said that the group who staged the rally on April 22<sup>nd</sup> did not follow rules to utilize that space, and many of the things done that evening were not consistent with the time rules. **Mr. Strobel** agreed that policies need to be adjusted and said we are committed to making those adjustments between now and when students return. Fundamentally, he said, the observation is that we are committed to having free speech on campus and having these voices heard, and noted that this issue is not about content but merely an issue with time, place, and manner. **Alessandro Gomez** commented that what he heard from **Ms. LaFleur** is contradictory from what has been described. **Mr. Strobel** responded that the challenge with that claim is that they were live broadcasting the event on Instagram under *Yalies for Palestine*; they were calling for people to come to the rally on the *Yalies for Palestine* Instagram page; they thanked people for coming to their rally; and the people that

were in charge are the people we recognize as the leaders of *Yalies for Palestine*. Therefore, he said, he doesn't know how it has been concluded that this had nothing to do with that organization. He noted that one of the challenges we have with this particular organization is that they will not identify a leader, which makes it difficult to communicate the conditions under which they can use this space. Someone asked who and why we were monitoring on Instagram? **Mr. Strobel** said he was not monitoring all Instagram pages of all student organizations. However, he can say what he saw on the *Yalies for Palestine* page, and it appeared that they were, at least partially, involved in that protest. He said we have had a number of cases in the past two weeks that involved *Yalies for Palestine* that we are dealing with, and this is the justification of actions taken for this particular event. Regarding the counter-protesters, he said he did not observe them physically touching anyone although they were very close to people, and did observe intimidating and harassing behavior. The problem is, he noted, that we don't have rules against filming someone, and this is something that we will explore over the summer. Someone said she doesn't understand that what she witnessed as intimidating and aggressive behavior by the counter-protesters against the protesters who were having a peaceful protest - denying these students their right to free speech, and actually threatening people and standing in front of them, filming them, and doxing them - is not punishable behavior. **Ms. Goff-Crews** responded that this is a policy that we need to put into place that we don't have now, so all we could do was ask them to step back, which doesn't always work. She said our goal for next year is to have this rule in place. **Rebecca Toseland** said she is encouraged to hear the plan is to include faculty in this policy-making process this summer, and hopes this continues moving forward and feels it's very important for the shared governance of our University that we have faculty involved in policymaking. **Nickolas Christakis** said he does not see justification in the administration's ruling against the *Yalies for Palestine* Instagram messages about the event taking place, and said it is no different from seeing this information reported in the *Yale Daily News* and other news outlets. Regarding the filming and doxing that took place that day, he feels that anyone who is protesting in public knows the implications of what will happen if they choose to participate in a protest. He also said he is against having free speech zones, and every time this has been done, it eventually is used by authorities to restrict the speech of disfavored groups and it will make us, in his judgment, look like a laughing-stock. He is worried about asking students to request permission in order to appear in our public places to protest because this is easily abusable, and feels that within a year or two, we will wind up being in a very inconsistent regime that may appear hypocritical. He said he does not think administrators have any business making decisions about what students can protest, whether it's strongly opposed to the visit of this Israeli minister or strongly in favor of his visit. **Ms. Goff-Crews** noted there was no concern about what these students were protesting, and that our concern was how they were doing it. **Mr. Strobel** noted that there were tents and it appeared that they might be staying all night which puts us in a very challenging space when it comes to what expression looks like on our campus. **Ms. Goff-Crews** said, regarding this particular event, she recommends that people who have complaints about it go to the "Office of Institutional Equity and Accessibility" and provide videos and whatever details they have to this office. She noted that videos would be most helpful so we can see what people have described. **Jonathan Wyrzten** noted that he is a free-speech facilitator who described what he experienced at a previous faculty rally, and then described what he viewed about this protest and the aftermath of disciplinary actions and press coverage, and

questioned what was written in the subsequent press releases, and asked who at Yale was responsible for writing them. **Mr. Strobel** said there were four facts that should not have been in the same document. **Mr. Wyrzten** asked if there is a way to issue a retraction or a correction? **Mr. Strobel** said the challenge is that the *Yale Daily News* convoluted what was said, and reported the reason something happened was because there was antisemitic activity on campus, and there was nothing about the actions against students and bringing students to excom or removing recognition of this student group that had anything to do with antisemitism. **Mr. Strobel** said we tried to get the *Yale Daily News* to retract the disturbing headline, and they refused, however they did get it right the next day even though the story that was initially written was problematic and not consistent with the facts. **Mr. Strobel** said that the actions of the students who are being taken to excom has nothing to do with antisemitic behavior, and the reason that we have deregistered *Yalies for Palestine* has nothing to do with antisemitic behavior. Someone commented that it is dangerous not to have a policy on doxing, and it causes serious consequences for our students. She also questioned the logic of reprimanding the protesters and not the counter-protesters, and felt both groups should have been held to the same standards. **Amir Haji-Akbari** commented that we need to understand the dangers of doxing in the context of what has been happening to our international students, and said the doxing is an invitation to **Marco Rubio** and people like him to basically kick people out of the country or detain them for months. He also said he has been receiving emails from an organization Shabtai that is not affiliated with Yale, and he asked if Yale has a policy about sharing our emails with these types of organizations. **Mr. Strobel** responded that Shabtai is not affiliated with Yale, and Yale does not share emails. **Tarren Andrews** commented, for the record, that she would be deeply concerned about us looking to Columbia as a model for policies, and that we don't have the same kind of police force as Columbia, and doesn't think Columbia should be the model for counter-protesting policies. She also asked what the evidence is that's being used to excom the 4 students that have been excomm - were people taking photos of them violating time, place, and manner restrictions? She said it seems that there are several people in this room who have identified behavior that, at the very least, says somewhere in the student code of conduct that you can't intimidate your fellow students, aggravate, agitate, and be aggressive towards them. She feels that there is enough evidence to excom both the protesters and counter-protesters. **Mr. Strobel** said he was at a meeting with Ivy plus Provosts, and asked what policies they have that would be helpful for us to implement after he described the situation. The answer he received was that they did not have a policy. Regarding the question about what evidence we have for the excomm cases, **Mr. Strobel** noted that this is not the forum to discuss these details as they are confidential and private.

**Mr. Solomon** said that he pledges that the current EC, and will also pledge for the new EC, to follow up on these issues and concerns over the summer with the administration. **Ms. Gage** noted that this is the final meeting that Senate Chair **Mark Solomon** will preside over, and thanked him for his chairmanship this year - this was followed by a resounding round of applause! **Mr. Solomon** then declared the final FAS-SEAS Senate meeting for 2024-25 adjourned.