

FAS Senate

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

FAS Senate Meeting

Thursday November 15, 2018, CT Hall, Rm. 201

Approved, December 11, 2018

In attendance:

Senators: William Nordhaus, Chair, Jill Campbell, Deputy Chair, Arielle Baskin-Sommers, Howard Bloch, Alexandre Debs, Emily Erikson, John Geanakoplos, Shiri Goren, Matthew Jacobson, Ruth Koizim, Rajit Manohar, Nikhil Padmanabhan, Ruzica Piskac, Maureen Long, Charles Schmuttenmaer, Ian Shapiro

FASS Program Coordinator: Rose Rita Riccitelli

Absent: Senators: Sybil Alexandrov, Marijeta Bozovic, Maria Doerfler, Jennifer Klein, Theresa Schenker, Mark Solomon

Guests: Rene Almeling, Marvin Chun, Stan Eisenstat, Michael Fischer, Tamar Gendler, Margaret Homans, John MacKay, Millicent Marcus, Charles Musser, Anders Winroth. Non-faculty: John Mangan

Agenda and Senate actions in bold

1. Welcome from William Nordhaus, Senate Chair

The meeting of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Senate (FASS) was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by the Chair, William Nordhaus, who welcomed Senators and guests and gave an update on upcoming Senate meetings. Plans for meetings in spring 2019 include discussion of the university science initiative with the FAS Dean of Science Jeff Brock on January 17, and a conversation with Provost Ben Polak tentatively scheduled for the meeting of March 7.

2. Approval of minutes, FASS meeting, October 25, 2018

FASS Deputy Chair Jill Campbell presented the minutes from the October 25, 2018 FASS meeting for review and corrections. There were no comments or proposed changes. A motion to approve the minutes by Ruth Koizim was made and seconded by Charles Schmuttenmaer.

The minutes as submitted were unanimously approved.

3. Committee reports

Mr. Nordhaus called on chairs of committees to offer brief updates on their committee's activities.

Mr. Schmuttenmaer reported for the Nominations Committee. He noted that, although Senate by-laws specify that non-Senators from each division serve on this committee, participation by non-Senators has been minimal. The committee will circulate proposed changes to the by-laws about the constitution of the Nominations Committee at the December 11, 2018 FASS meeting.

Ms. Campbell reported for the Peer Advisory Committee, saying that they are currently researching the work of ombudspersons at universities as a possible model to recommend to the FAS Dean's Office.

Shiri Goren reported on the Yale College Library and Instructional Faculty Committee. As a follow-up to the 2016 FASS Report on Yale College Expansion, the committee plans to create a survey to be taken at the end of this academic year – a half-way mark of the four-year expansion. The committee will also pursue two issues relating to instructional and research faculty this year: (1) the desirability of additional prizes to recognize instructional faculty excellence; 2) the need for Yale to address the growing gap in salaries of instructional faculty in comparison to those at peer institutions. A sub-committee on library issues, headed by Jennifer Klein, recently met with Susan Gibbons, University Librarian.

4. Presentation and discussion with Marvin Chun, Dean of Yale College

Mr. Nordhaus introduced the Dean of Yale College Marvin Chun. Dean Chun began by declaring his two central commitments as Dean: to watch over the curriculum, admissions, and quality of instruction at Yale College, guarding Yale's mission as the research institution most dedicated to the teaching and learning of undergraduates; and to ensure that Yale College students are receiving the most outstanding residential college and extracurricular experience possible.

Dean Chun noted the current low size of the FAS faculty, particularly given the expansion of Yale College, and invited input from FAS faculty on the subject. He observed that the shopping period system is detrimental to populating our courses in the most effective way and reported that he has charged the Committee on Advising, Placement, and Enrollment to examine the question of what we can do to reduce the inefficiencies of shopping period. Their recommendations have been shared with DUSs.

Dean Chun briefly addressed several other topics: the advantages of the new decanal structure for the Dean of Yale College's work; the creation of "The Domestic Summer Award," which supports students on financial aid for one summer internship at any non-profit institution, now including positions at Yale; changes to the Credit/D/Fail policy, which have resulted in students taking more courses for letter grades; and his charge to the Course of Study Committee to examine whether our curriculum is serving the full range of an increasingly diverse student body. He also noted that he is in charge of Yale's reaccreditation and is already preparing a draft, which he plans to make available for comment by next spring.

Dean Chun noted two other current initiatives for Yale College: a renewed discussion of the possibility of providing options for a minor in departments or programs that choose to offer one; and active discussion among faculty, college heads, and students about free speech and how to foster students' ability to engage in difficult conversations with people of differing views, outside as well as inside classrooms. He then invited questions and comments from the Senate.

Howard Bloch inquired about what would be lost with the elimination of the shopping period, and Dean Chun spoke of the advantages of maintaining some flexibility in the choice of courses. John Geanakoplos asked about whether Yale allows drinking of alcoholic beverages by students in the colleges; noted an

effective essay assignment at Harvard College for promoting discussion of the idea of free speech; and inquired about whether the Admissions Office sets deliberate targets for the constitution of the incoming class by such groups as first-generation students (Dean Chun said that ensuring that Yale is accessible to first-generation and low-income students is one of several priorities) and whether faculty input was solicited for such choices (Dean Chun was not sure). Charles Schmuttenmaer and Shiri Goren asked for further details of the proposal to expand preregistration for courses.

Other questions and comments addressed the poor condition of many classrooms, particularly with A.V. equipment; the preparation of students for high-tech and computer science jobs; and support for students facing difficulties transitioning to college setting, including an inability to purchase course books. Dean Chun described the launch of a Safety Net web site to help students financially by granting them \$2,000 to help defray necessary expenses. Ruth Koizim asked about the confidentiality of requests as well as about support for students struggling with language courses. Mr. Nordhaus asked for the dean to describe the parameters on minors. Mr. Nordhaus thanked Dean Chen for sharing his visions for the FAS.

[Agenda item 3, cont. Committee reports]

Mr. Nordhaus asked Committee chairs who were present to offer an update on their respective committees.

Ian Shapiro reported that the Budget Committee has not met this term. Faculty colleagues have raised questions about the changes in retirement investments; he has spoken with the Provost and others about details of the changes taking place.

Alex Debs said there is nothing to report from the Committee on Governance and Institutional Policy.

Matthew Jacobson reported that the Diversity Committee has met with the outgoing Dean of Diversity, Kathryn Lofton. Its plans for the year include an informal review of the FRC (Faculty Resource Committee) through interviews with deans, administrators, and chairs of selected departments and programs; a meeting with Larry Gladney, the new Dean of Diversity and Faculty Development; and discussion with deans and chairs about units' varying successes and failures in achieving diversity.

5. Faculty commenter: Millicent Marcus, Professor of Italian and Film & Media Studies, on undergraduate minors

Ms. Marcus presented arguments in support of the institution of an option for minors in interested departments and programs, noting that the question was last reviewed and brought to a Yale College Faculty meeting for a vote in 2010. She believes that this option would enable undergraduates to give further shape and definition to their academic experience at Yale and enrich students' profiles as they move on to the next phase of their education or enter an ever more competitive market place. The term "minor," she observed, states more clearly a student's academic achievements to potential employers or members of admissions committees than less-familiar terms. (Her full statement is attached.)

6. Discussion of the revised *Research and Scholarly Excellence* report, and possible vote

Mr. Nordhaus introduced the topic of the revised Research and Scholarly Excellence Report and proposed procedures for discussion and votes on the report, in keeping with Robert's Rules of Order. He noted that the Executive Council of the FASS has recommended that the distribution of the report be limited to FAS Faculty. He also noted that he had received a request to have a paper ballot for votes on the report, as provided by Senate by-laws. The Deputy Chair collected names of Senators interested in four-minute speaking slots, to begin with the Co-Chairs of the Faculty Advancement Committee, followed by members of the Committee and then other Senators.

Ms. Erikson described the committee's review of all suggestions submitted on the draft and reported the committee's unanimous view that this is the best version of the report to be presented to the FAS Faculty. She noted that there were issues that the report could not encompass and that the report is not the end of the work of the committee, nor the end of the work of the FASS. Mr. Geanakoplos recounted the stages in the report's development, beginning with careful review of a 23-page survey completed by 360 ladder faculty and 149 non-ladder faculty and culminating in an extended comment period with responses from Senators, the President, Provost, FAS Dean, and Dean of Social Sciences. He highlighted the report's key points: current risks to the excellence of the FAS faculty; lagging salaries and size of the faculty relative to peer institutions; an increasing burden of university service, especially for women faculty; a decrease in administrative support for faculty; and an unwieldy hiring process that impedes faculty recruitment.

Mr. Bloch, Mr. Schmuttenmaer, Mr. Shapiro, and Mr. Jacobson spoke in support of the report's adoption, emphasizing, respectively, the lack of response to previous efforts to call administrators' attention to urgent FAS needs; the reinforcement of the report's claims by the findings of the 2018 CESOF report; the large gap between the report's recommendation of structural adjustments to the FAS budget and the scale of the recently announced Presidential Faculty Excellence Initiative; and the significant strengthening of the report in revision. Mr. Shapiro also proposed delaying the release of the report until the committee has met with the President and Provost to see if there is a way for them to increase their commitment to the FAS.

Dean Gendler expressed reservations about the report's representation of the state of the FAS and seconded Mr. Shapiro's recommendation to delay the distribution of the report.

Ms. Koizim urged timely release of the report, given faculty expectation of response to their participation in the FAS survey, and Ms. Campbell spoke of the faculty's shared responsibility for stewardship of the university's resources and historic strengths. Adding his support for release of the report, Mr. Debs noted a proposal for a Town Hall Meeting to allow faculty to raise their concerns. Further discussion on the timing of release followed, with comments from Mr. Shapiro, Mr. Schmuttenmaer, and Mr. Geneakoplos.

A motion was made and seconded to postpone the vote on adopting the report and to return it to the committee for further revision.

The motion to postpone was defeated in paper ballot by a vote of 10 nays, 6 yeas.

A motion was made and seconded to adopt the report as submitted by the committee, with the question of how to distribute the report to be considered if the report is adopted.

The motion to adopt the report was passed in paper ballot by a vote of 14 yeas, 1 nay, and 1 abstention.

Mr. Nordhaus noted three options for distribution of the report: 1) to make it available on the FASS web site for anyone to view; 2) to make it available only to FAS Faculty; 3) not to make it available to anyone. Another option was proposed -- to make it available to faculty who request a copy. Mr. Nordhaus asked for a vote on two options: A) to distribute to all FAS Faculty (in a secure manner); B) to provide the report on request of individual faculty members.

By a show of hands, distribution to FAS faculty in a secure manner was approved in a vote of 15 to 1.

Mr. Nordhaus adjourned the meeting at 6 PM.

Appendix: Faculty Commenter Millicent Marcus's remarks on undergraduate minors

I was thrilled to learn that the subject of the Minor is being brought up for consideration by the Dean and the Committee on Majors. This is especially timely given the YCC survey showing that over 80% of respondents would welcome this option. And I'm very grateful to be able to speak in favor of it before the Senate.

In 2010 I was part of an insurgency that brought a proposal for an optional Minor, to be offered at the discretion of individual departments and programs before the Yale College faculty. The measure was strongly opposed by the then-dean and the Committee on Majors, 6 of whose 8 members hailed from the largest departments in the College, arguing that it would be an administrative nightmare, and overlooking the academic reasons behind its strong support among students and faculty.

One such reason is the pressure for students to major in a field with practical (lucrative) career possibilities, whereas they might fall in love with a subject with less obvious "real world" application (such as Italian, or Film, to cite a few random examples). As it stands now, the only option for developing a second field of expertise is the double major with all of the difficulties of scheduling, and the drains on time and energy, not to mention the stress of writing two senior theses. If one of Yale's cherished goals is to allow students to explore broadly across the entire college curriculum the double major poses a formidable constraint on the range of courses they can sample.

Among the beauties of the Minor is that with the benefit of careful structuring and advising it would confer logic and coherence to a cluster of courses the students would take within a given field.

A recent curricular trend which would benefit from the Minor is the growing number of multi-disciplinary programs, such as the proposed one in Animal Behavior to be offered across EEB, Anthropology, Psychology and Linguistics. I'd like to quote from the e-mail I received back in 2010, "We feel that this is a coherent area of sub-specialization, not really suitable as a major, but ideal as a minor."

In general, I strongly believe that the Minor option would enable all undergraduates to give further shape and definition to their academic experience at Yale. In life after Yale, the addition of this credential will enrich students' profiles as they move on to the next phase of their education or enter an ever more competitive marketplace. Though our peer institutions may use such alternative labels as "secondary field" (Harvard) or "certificate" (Princeton), I believe that the term "Minor" has wider recognition and would more clearly "speak to" both our own students' desire for this option, and to potential employers or members of admissions committees familiar with this terminology.