Yale College Council

Council of Representatives Meeting

Saturday, April 19, 2014; 4:00 PM

Final Meeting

Minutes

Please note that the minutes reflect the conversation held during the Council of Representatives meeting, but may not contain every comment and are not intended to reflect exact quotations. Comments in italics are notes to give context to the minutes. The layout of the minutes is the Presentation of the Issue, Presentation of the Discussion, and Recording of the Vote. Unless otherwise noted, the Presentation of the Issue is done by the person whose name is next to the heading for that issue. Comments by representatives or other attendees are preceded by their name (e.g. Jane – comment).

• Meeting Start: 4:00 pm
• Expectations for Spring Fling – Eli/Connor
  o 48 people signed up for Spring Fling
  o Do not be drunk at your shift!
• End of Year Project Updates – Appropriate Director
  o Student Life – Maia
    • American Political System Intro for International Students – Khalid
    • Student Center Initiative – Khalid and Michael L.
    • Medical Amnesty- Kevin Kory and Steve Goulas
      • Amnesty at the state level and at Yale
    • Building a More Sustainable Yale – Kristoffer and Grant F.
      • Talked to sustainability office
      • Launch a campaign at the start of next year
    • Past projects
      • Summer storage
        o April 29 is the last day to register
        o Need to carry your boxes to Lot 51 which is near TD
      • Athletic Attendance Track
        o Working on a new system in which people can swipe into events
        o Update next year
    • Mixed Gender Housing
      o Why not this year?
      o Feasibility Issues
        • Logistically hard to guarantee having same number of doubles and singles according to the administration
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- Dean Mary Miller will recommend to successor that he/she approves this for 2015-2016 academic year
  - If not, case-by-case basis
- Danny – Broad understanding that it will happen in some way
- Kyle – Admin wants to write it into undergraduate regulations

- Fossil Fuel Divestment
  - Meeting with VP Goff-Crews and Fossil Free Yale
  - Proposal from Fossil Free Yale already in hands of the Advisory Committee on Investor Responsibility
  - Proposal
    - Want the investment office to give ultimatum to companies to reach standards or then will divest
- Kevin – Heard administration is thinking about generic furniture for common rooms
- University Services – Sara

- Ongoing Projects
  - Mental Health:
    - Still responding to the issues raised in the report written last year
    - Working with the MHC and its new leadership
    - Already received excellent responses from administrators
  - Yale Dining
    - A new meal plan
    - Clearing up some meal swipe misconceptions
    - Better labeling of ingredients for allergy folks

- Completed Projects
  - Campus Wheelchair Accessibility
  - Bike Share
    - JR still in touch with Holly Parker who is in charge of the program
  - Financial Literacy
  - Financial Aid Website
    - YSS financial aid: just fill out an extra form!
  - Printing Stipends
  - Freshman Summer Alcohol Education feedback
  - Adjusting the “Personal Expenses” portion of tuition
  - Streamlining the ROD Note-Taking system

- Academics – David
  - Past Projects
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- Preregistration
  - Reached preliminary agreement on how to standardize preregistration
- Minors
  - Considered by Dean Miller and hopeful that the Dean will look favorably on it
- Student Ambassador Program
  - Final verdict on May 1
- Term Paper Deadlines
  - Final verdict on May 1
- 50% Exam Cap
  - Final verdict on May 1
- UCS/Symplicity Reform
  - Meeting with director of UCS on recommendations to the Symplicity system
- Calendar Reform
  - Got 1 day more
  - Midterm Feedback for New Professors - JR Reed and Yaphet Getachew

  ▪ **Context:** first-time professors often do not receive any feedback until after their first semester teaching has ended. Mid-semester evaluations can provide first-time professors with the opportunity to solicit feedback and make direct, tangible changes and improvements immediately. Peer institutions, including Harvard, have implemented this type of system and mandate that new professors facilitate a midterm evaluation.

- Student and Faculty Support
  - **Students at Yale**, especially those majoring in STEM fields, have agreed that this process would be beneficial.
  - **Rolena Adorno**, the DUS of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, said that this could “help the instructor get valuable feedback so that he/she can reflect upon his/her teaching and make adjustments in pedagogy before the end of the term.”
  - Public Health Professor **Richard Skolnik** similarly favors mid-semester evaluations and offers them to students in his courses.

- Implementation
  - Different disciplines face distinct pedagogical challenges, so no one feedback form will fit all types of classes at Yale. The YCC believes that midterm evaluations can be more effective if tailored to individual classes, and has therefore drafted only a basic framework to work from for review by the Teaching, Learning, and Advising committee.
With regards to enforcement, under Harvard’s system students serve as the check to ensure that first-time professors offer this evaluation process.

**Recommendation**

- YCC recommends:
  - The administration mandate that first-time professors solicit feedback from their students before midterm and encourage more experienced faculty members to do the same.

**Discussion**

- Kevin – Would it be beneficial to do the feedback after the midterm?
  - Yaphet – We could do after the exam based on each class.
- Bechir – Could this be an extension of the current online evaluation?
  - JR – We don’t want to put pressure on professors that admin is reviewing them, rather an informal system where students are reviewing.
  - Bechir – It doesn’t need to go to the administration, just could do it online and have it go to the professor.
  - David – Implementation in paper or online could be at teacher’s discretion.
- Joe E – What do you mean by first-time? Is it someone teaching first semester or new course?
  - Yaphet – First course taught at Yale. Should we expand it more?
  - David – We didn’t expand further because professors can be reluctant to make changes.
- Maddie B – Who is holding professors accountable to the students?
  - Yaphet – Spanish department doesn’t think DUS should read the recommendations.
- Leah – Would this be mandatory?
  - Yaphet – No.
- Kevin – Could we extend it to first time TAs?
  - Yaphet – Good idea.
- Bechir – Really think it is important for professor to do it the first time they are teaching a class.
  - Yaphet – We could recommend both.
  - Ewurama – Some professors teach a version of their old class.
• Joe V – Can we do every professor?
  o Yaphet – Do people want us to take this hard stance?
  o Sounds of disapproval.
• Michael M – Biggest benefit is for the students. No evaluations for you to base it off of, so midterm evaluation is a good way to share your thoughts and not be quite the guinea pig.
  - Vote to change recommendation to have reviews it for all instructors. Passed with unanimous consent.

Midterm Feedback - All new courses get midterm reviews

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  - Class Reviews for Students Who Drop with a “W” – Vicky Chou
  - Allow students who receive a “W” the option of writing a class review visible in YBB.
As review policy currently stands, students who chose to withdraw from a course are not offered the option of submitting an anonymous course review at the end of the term. These students likely have feedback that would be useful to students and teachers alike. Classes with high attrition rates thus have a positive bias in YBB reviews, providing students who are shopping with an unrealistic expectation of the course and not allowing for professors to improve upon the course.

Discussion
- Kevin – Will it be noted that those kids withdrew on the evaluation?
  - David – I would favor it being specified.
  - Grant – Just change the colors to show they had withdrawn.
  - Danny – Should explicitly say withdrawn.
  - Ahron – It makes it less anonymous if they were the only one who withdrew.
    - Vicky – Not a requirement to report you withdrew.
    - Bechir – Currently if there are not enough reviews they don’t show them to protect anonymity.

- Grant F – How are we showing this to the students?
  - Vicky – These are not mandatory.

- Yonghyun – Could it be optional and still see grades?
  - Vicky – Yes, should be. Also if you have withdrawn, you don’t need to see grade.

  Recommendation: Allow students who receive a “W” the option of writing a class review visible in YBB.

  Passed with unanimous consent.

- TA Grading and Quality Variance - Grant Bronsdon and Joe Vinson
  - YCC recommends that
    1. The administration require professors teaching courses with teaching assistants to implement a rotation system for TA grading: either one TA grades all the submissions for a particular assignment or each TA grades one particular question for all the submissions. (“Assignment” here refers to problem sets, exams, papers, or any other academic project.) Where this is not feasible, the administration should require professors to (1) provide TAs with clear guidelines for how assignments should be marked and (2) “(2) use individual assignments as benchmarks for grading
or provide model answers that meet the standards of each respective grade."

2. The administration recommend to all professors that they share grading rubrics or exemplar materials for assignments with students so that they may have a clear understanding of how they will be assessed.

- Discussion
  - Azan – Are there still classes that don’t have this implemented?
    - Joe V – Yes, we have been reaching out to professors and TAs to see who does it. Many classes do this, but not every class does it.
  - Joe E – Could you add the midterm evaluations to this proposal.
    - David – Previous proposal changed to instructors.
  - Grant F – Second recommendation could be a bit restrictive for classes that are subjective in grading.
  - Kevin – Can’t really make objective criteria for essays.
  - Yonghyun – Could you divide this between introductory lectures and senior seminars?
    - David – In future discussions, we could parse it along those lines in negotiations.
    - Grant B – I think it is fine as it is right now.

- Passed by unanimous consent.

- Saturday Exams Conflict – Ahron Singer
  - Context: Students in the past have encountered issues with Saturday exams conflicting with religious observances. Normally this is resolved on an ad hoc basis between student and professor. Other students have been forced to take their exam the following semester.
  - Current Policy
    - Only the residential college dean may authorize postponement of a final examination. The residential college dean may give such permission... because of the observance of religious holy days.
    - 1. Yale’s policy does not guarantee students protection from the conflict.
    - 2. Some students have been forced to take a makeup exam in the fall for a spring term class, which disrupts their summer, as well as weakening their memory of lecture material, creating unnecessary stress and hardship.
  - Princeton’s Policy
    - The registrar, acting for the Committee on Examinations and Standing, may authorize a student to take an examination up to 24 hours before or after the scheduled examination time. Appropriate reasons for granting such requests are religious
days. Examinations will normally be rescheduled during the 24 hours after the scheduled examination time; examinations will be rescheduled during the 24-hour period before the regularly scheduled time only in the most unusual and compelling circumstances. In no such cases will a faculty member be required to administer the examination more than twice. This provision does not preclude additional administrations of an examination by the registrar or other responsible individuals designated by the registrar.

- **Recommendation**
  - 1. Yale incorporate into its code a policy assuring students of their right to a makeup exam, even if this exam were to take place the following semester.
  - 2. Yale create a policy similar to Princeton’s where an alternative exam would be administered within 24 hours of the original exam time. This could be accommodated by administering the exam either during (1) a currently designated “alternative exam” time slot on Sunday mornings, or (2) on Saturday evenings after Shabbat ends. Under the second scenario, students could be supervised between the originally-scheduled exam and same-day make-up exam.

- **Discussion**
  - Bechir – What is the policy for athletes?
    - Yaphet – My roommate got to take exam two days after track meet.
    - Ahron – Seniors also get to take it the same semester.
  - Kevin – Why are doing 24 time frame and not just this semester?
    - Ahron – Princeton already has the policy and an administrative fear could be the integrity of the exam.
    - Danny – Also want to prevent gaming of the system.
  - Ahron – Should have a letter from the chaplain saying you are observant to prevent gaming.
  - Bechir – Could we make the recommendation more broad and not just Saturday?
    - David – We can probably adjust.
  - Azan – Could we do this for students with medical reasons as well?
    - Ahron – Administration worried about opening floodgates with students faking.
    - David – Could be too much this time.

- **Passed with unanimous consent.**

- **Computer Science Department Funding** - K. Fong ‘13, R. Khan’15, B. Smith ‘14, A. Upadhyay ‘14, H. Yu ‘14
  - “Electives within the department are all experiencing higher enrollment.”
As interest in, and awareness of, computer science continues to grow at Yale, it is anticipated that enrollment in these courses will continue to rise.

We propose that the Provost’s office allocate funds for additional tenure-track faculty in computer science. It has been noted that there is a hiring freeze and a cap on the number of total faculty, but the extraordinary situation described previously warrants an exception. The department is currently conducting a faculty search for one junior professor, but approval for a second faculty member will result in up to four new courses. This will substantially alleviate the pressures of overenrolled classes. In addition, new faculty will allow the department to take on additional graduate students who will contribute to the Teaching Assistant base for department courses and ease the load on current TA’s.”

**Recommendation: Increase department funding to facilitate a greater number of faculty and graduate students**

**Discussion**

- Ewurama – I am concerned about giving preferential treatment to a department to get extra funding.
  - David – I think that is a legitimate concern.
- Michael L – Why don’t we advocate ending the freeze? How do we ensure that the money will go to getting professors for courses that students want.
  - David – Those were other areas that the group recommended.
  - Grant F – I don’t think we need to.
  - Matt R – Definitely student interest in practical classes.
- Anna Lu – Philosophy in department is you learn how to learn practical stuff.
- Maddie – Do we actually want to do anything? Should the group itself just submit their recommendations?
- Yonghyun – We should probably do our own research as well.
- Ahron – Funding is a zero-sum game.
- Kevin – I’m fine voting on this now.
- Grant B – Hiring freeze because of the deficit.
  - Andrew – All Yale departments have to cut a certain percentage.
- Ewurama – I’m philosophically against choosing favorite departments.
- Bechir – I recommend we lift the hiring freeze.
- Joe E – The Council shouldn't take a stance on this.
- Yonghyun – This was brought to us by an outside group of students and it is our role as a student government to take stance on it.
- Michael M – Recommending giving funding isn’t choosing favorites, its meeting student demand. But we need more numbers to justify funding.

- **Communications Update** – Andrew Grass
  - Both students and administration have seen YCC Communications as being more professional this year.
  - List of successful communications projects
    - Danny – The old website cost $8000.
    - Andrew – I made the current one for less than $75.
    - *Cheering.*
  - Kevin – Can we make Production and Design team stay on?
    - Andrew – We have both presidential candidates in the room. If either of you fire our Production and Design team, I’ll write an angry Op-Ed.
    - *Applause and cheering.*
  - Discussion of projects that need to be continued next year
  - Andrew – This is likely my last presentation to YCC, so thank you for a special year.
  - *Standing ovation.*

- **Events Update** – Eli Rivkin
  - Shout-out to our events committee
  - Tremendous amount of events this year
  - Bigger council and bigger events committee
  - Important to have Deputy Events Director
  - If SAF is improved you will have more events.
  - *Ovation.*
  - Ewurama – Eli makes events committee so much fun.

- **Summary of finances** – Leigh
  - Campus Events Fund- $32,000
  - Administrative Fund- $2,700
  - Spring Fling Fund- $194,301.06
  - Community Fund- $23,000
Spring Fling
- Info unavailable as of now
- Reallocation of money from campus wide party to fund ($7,000)
- Allocation from Community Fund ($8,000)

Community Fund
- Total Used- $14,232.20/ $23,000
- Rock Climbing Wall- $5,000 not used
- Reallocation to Spring Fling- $8,000
- Class Councils
- FCC: Before Freshmen Olympics charges- $1,099.86/$2,000
Soco: $553.01/$3,000
JCC: $2979.33/$3,000

Final Budget
- Sponsorships- $6,032
- End totals will be based on Spring Fling expenditures
- So far, all have remained in the budget

Business Team should be more utilized
- Thank you Leigh for adding organization.

Elections Guidelines Rewording – Kyle and Grant B
- Current wording (edited for clarity)
  - Article VI, Section Two: Council Elections Commission
    - The Council Elections Commission (CEC) shall determine specific election rules, monitor campaigns, and facilitate voting for the YCC. The CEC shall be established no later than two weeks prior to the beginning of the campaign period.
  - Article VI, Section Four: Election Guidelines
    - By submitting the documents defined in Article 6.3, a candidate shall agree to adhere to the regulations set forth in the Election Guidelines (see Appendix 2). A subsequent violation of the Election Guidelines shall result in the candidate’s disqualification from the election.

Election Guidelines
- Unacceptable Publicity:
  - No campaigning publicity, verbal or otherwise, may occur in any of the computer clusters across campus.
Neither a candidate nor a member of the candidate’s campaign team may inappropriately harass or detain a student, either for purposes of campaigning or to get them to vote directly.

No notice of candidacy may be written with chalk.

Recommendation

- Alter wording in Article VI, section 4:
- By submitting the documents defined in Article 6.3, a candidate shall agree to adhere to the regulations set forth in the Election Guidelines (see Appendix 2). A subsequent violation of the Election Guidelines shall result in the candidate’s disqualification from the election. **Any violations of the Election Guidelines will be dealt with by the Council Elections Commission (CEC).**
- Any publicity that is deemed fraudulent, or deemed primarily to intimidate or derogate another candidate, is not permitted.
- Candidates are not allowed to enter suites and bedrooms while residents are not present.
- No faculty of staff may be included in campaign videos or posters.

Recommendation changes (for election guidelines)

- Unacceptable Publicity:
- **For these guidelines, publicity is defined as “the activity or business of getting people to give attention to someone or something.”**
- No campaigning publicity, verbal or otherwise, may occur in any of the computer clusters across campus.
- Neither a candidate nor a member of the candidate’s campaign team may inappropriately harass or detain a student, either for purposes of campaigning or to get them to vote directly.
- No notice of candidacy may be written with chalk.
- Any publicity that is deemed fraudulent, or deemed primarily to intimidate or derogate another candidate, is not permitted. **Slander or intimidation will be penalized by removal from the ballot.**
- Candidates are not allowed to enter suites and bedrooms while residents are not present.
- No faculty of staff may be included in campaign videos or posters.

Discussion

- Grant B – Approved by the Council next year.
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• Kevin – Removal from the ballot seems extreme. Handled by the CEC instead of automatic removal.
• Grant F – How would CEC determine that it would have occurred?
• Khalid – Specific to computer clusters?
  o Kyle – we could include libraries
  o Andrew – I think in the past it was because people voted in the computer clusters.

• **Constitutional amendments and recommendations for review** – Danny
  o Current Wording
    ▪ **Section Eight: Task Forces**
      ▪ At the discretion of the Executive Board or via majority vote from the Council, a task force may be established to work on specific project. This task force shall be comprised of YCC members and special project contributors as follows:
        ▪ A current YCC member (representative or Executive Board member) shall lead the task force.
        ▪ Special project contributors shall be selected through an application process managed by the head of the task force. Special project contributors shall be volunteers from the student body at large.
        ▪ A task force shall complete its project and report its findings according to the guidelines set forth in Article 2.7.
  o Constitutional Amendment
    ▪ **Section Eight: Task Forces**
      ▪ At the discretion of the Executive Board or via majority vote from the Council, a task force may be established to work on a specific project. This task force shall be comprised of YCC members and special project contributors as follows:
        ▪ A current YCC member (representative or Executive Board member) **shall serve as an official liaison between task force members and the YCC.**
        ▪ The head of the task force shall be either a current YCC member (representative or Executive Board member) or a volunteer from the student body at large.
        ▪ Special project contributors shall be selected through an application process managed by the head of the task force. Special project contributors shall be volunteers from the student body at large.
        ▪ A task force shall complete its project and report its findings according to the guidelines set forth in Article 2.7.

### Constitutional Amendment

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- Student Organizations – Ben Ackerman
  - Glad we have been discussing tough decisions
  - Funding guidelines have been important
  - Organizational Management System
  - Applause.

- YCC Bulldog Days
  - We will crash FCC s'mores event since they already have funding and logistics done.

- Closing remarks
  - Kyle’s remarks
  - Danny’s remarks

- Meeting End