Yale College Council

Council of Representatives Meeting
Saturday, January 18, 2014; 4:45 PM
Spring Meeting One

Action Items

• Promote YCC’s party, Elevate Your Resolutions, to friends!  
  All, 1/19

• All representatives and associates should stay tuned for new project assignments, which will occur over Trello (see end of notes for further details).  
  All, TBA

• Promote the Avram Grant panel – Wednesday, January 22nd in the Law School Auditorium (note the venue change) at 8 pm  
  All, 1/22

• Review the first card on the Trello board and vote, read grant guidelines, and contact Andrew Grass if you don’t have access to Trello.  
  All, 1/25

Attendance

Excused Absence
  1. Kathy Khalvati (JE ’17)

Unexcused Absence
  1. Jamie Halberstam (SM ’16)
  2. Grant Fergusson (BR ’16)

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 Begins 4:45 pm
• Announcements
  – Elevate Your Resolutions – Eli Rivkin
    • Thanks to Walden Davis (SY ’16) for the last minute graphic!
  – Avram Grant – Danny Avraham
    • Event will be held Wednesday, January 22nd in the Law School Auditorium
• Initially the event was free for YCC since I got Slifka and Mory’s to sponsor.
• Over 700 students signed up for event, so we will no longer hold at Sudler hall. Moving to law school auditorium. Change in venue will cost YCC. We’ll allocate from community fund.
• Tickets no longer required
• [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OXAazbBFdU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OXAazbBFdU)
• Dinner at Mory’s will have a vetting process since 210 people signed up for the dinner.

- **Constitution – Danny Avraham**
  - Almost done!
  - 3 council members expressed support for joint ticket online
  - 5 people sent in public feedback
    - 1 was a YCC rep
  - 2 concerns: joint-ticket and requirement to be on YCC or subsidiary body to have an appointed position
  - **Debate on Requirement to be on YCC or subsidiary body to have an appointed position**
    • Allison – Think it is a good idea to get rid of those requirements
    • Leah – You need certain understanding and skills and especially knowing YCC to have these positions. Lots of ways to get involved, so the requirement is not that restrictive.
    • Leigh – What is the deadline to become an associate member in the spring?
      • Danny – Requirement to be an associate or affiliated member is only for appointed members
    • David – Requirement promotes continuity on board and on YCC
      - *Additional argument raised: could create nepotism if anyone would run.*
      - *Continue with the requirement – no one asked for a vote to change*

- **Discussion on UOC and Funding – Ben Ackerman**
  - Student orgs apply
  - Preliminary decisions reached in UOC
    • Yes, No, Partial funding
  - Council Members go to Trello UOC board
    • **Review the first card on the Trello board and then vote**
    • **Read Grant Guidelines**
    • **If you don’t have access to Trello, you should contact Andrew Grass**
    • Review starred card for the grant decisions
    • ADM is a restriction on the type of funding they can receive
      • Click files available here to see all the applications on Yale Box
      • You can view their application to see what the committee decided
If you think UOC should have funded them, then put on the checklist the application number and tag your name

**Ben will send an email every Tuesday or Wednesday**

- Kevin/David – are there factors we should consider to look at decisions?
  - Ben – what are organizations you hear about on campus and which ones do you think deserve the money
  - David – is deservedness determined by number of people in the organization?
  - Ben – good to give money to start-up organizations or sustaining organizations that are unique (unique, effectiveness, start-up)
  - David – how much the money will make a difference to the organization?
- Leah – we are representatives for people so if they want to complain then it is fine to investigate
  - Bechir – don’t curry favor to representatives. Process needs work.
    - Ben – UOC has tremendous power.
    - Kyle – I’d call them out. You will need to get it by all the elected representatives, so unlikely to have abuse.
  - Joe V – Need to have clear guidelines.
    - Ben – they are there.
- Matt – if Council doesn’t like it what would be the process to revise it?
  - Ben – If flagged, rep would have the opportunity to explain why, and then Ben would defend UOC.

**Minors Proposal – Grant Bronsdon**

- **Current Situation Part 1**
  - As it stands right now, Yale College students can either major or double-major in academic disciplines. “Minors,” or courses of study that require fewer classes than a major, are not offered at Yale, despite being available at many schools across the nation. Accordingly, Yale students and faculty members have explored adding minors in the past.
  - The Yale Climate and Energy Institute (YCEI) has an "Energy Studies" program that is similar to a minor and sets an interesting precedent.
  - A 2010 report from the Committee on Majors looked into the subject and ultimately declined to endorse minors, though they encouraged the Committee on Yale College Education (CYCE) to consider “minors or certificate programs” in their review of Yale curriculum.

- The report lists the following reasons for and against minors.
  - Reasons Against:
    - Concerns grouped around credential seeking and against liberal arts mission
“Minors might not provide students with sufficiently intellectually rigorous exposure to a discipline to deserve special recognition by Yale College;

Minors might encourage the seeking of credentials or “merit badges” at the expense of choosing courses for their intrinsic interest and value;

By emphasizing credentials, minors might discourage the free-ranging approach to a liberal education traditionally encouraged at Yale; they may encourage “accreditation inflation” and a rush for all or most students to take minors;

There is a danger that introducing minors would in fact undercut some small programs by encouraging their majors to switch to minors; they might also undercut interdisciplinary majors;

Minors will of necessity include a large proportion of required courses, which may not be as intellectually stimulating as electives chosen more freely;

Some of the concerns raised by proponents of minors (especially the scatter-shot nature of students’ choice of electives) might be better addressed by an improved advising system, and the Committee on Teaching, Learning, and Advising is currently studying the advising system;

Students who wish to pursue the equivalent of a minor are free to do so, and the absence of the word minor from their transcript does not cause much harm; the existence of formal minors might cause students to take extra courses simply for the sake of official credentials;

There already exists a wide range of requirements for majors in Yale College; it would be difficult to devise an appropriate template for minors. Some minor proposals received by the Committee required as many credits as existing majors.

Yale’s existing system of over 75 majors already offers more curricular options than many peer institutions; our double majors offer many of the features supported by proponents of minors. At Princeton, it is not possible to double major. At Harvard “joint concentrations” are restricted to intellectually contiguous fields and require a fully joint senior project.

Introducing minors will require additional administrative time and effort for which, as the Provost’s office has stated, additional resources are not available at this time.”

– Reasons For:

• Some people want more formalized curriculum without a double major
• “Minors might encourage students to organize their non-major, non-distributional requirement courses;
• Minors might help some departments with small numbers of majors to increase their enrollments;
• Minors might counteract the trend towards pre-professionalism in choice of courses; conversely, minors might legitimately help students to present credentials in the job market while still allowing them to pursue disinterested study of the liberal arts and sciences;
• In the national languages in particular, a minor might recognize a high level of fluency and some command of literature, and thus would encourage advanced study by non-majors; a similar argument may apply in the sciences;
• Minors could offer a more flexible alternative to double-majors;
• Harvard has recently introduced secondary concentrations, and they seem from anecdotal evidence to be very popular among students; approximately a third of Harvard’s current seniors are pursuing minors. The typical minor at Harvard requires the equivalent of 5 course credits at Yale. Princeton has a set of certificate programs, also very popular, that more closely resemble interdisciplinary minors; by far the most popular of these certificates is in finance. These certificates are offered only in fields that do not offer majors.
• There may be some areas of study that are only suitable as minors and not as majors.”

– Peer institutions:
• Ivy League, MIT, Stanford
• Of these nine schools:
  • Eight offer some level of minors (Brown)
  • On average, 5-8 courses each
  • Harvard added “secondary fields” in 2007
    • They don’t have double majors though
    • Departments are allowed whether to have secondary fields or not

• Full Details:
• Harvard: They do have minors called “secondary fields.” 4-6 half year courses that generally don’t overlap with distributional requirements/concentrations. Implemented in 2007 after near-unanimous faculty vote
• Princeton: They do have minors called “certificate programs.” Certain number of courses & senior thesis are required. Can be interdisciplinary (history major w/ Middle Ages cert.) or fulfilling an interest (physics major w/ music cert.)
• **Columbia:** They do have minors called minors for engineering, “concentrations” for other departments. 6-7 courses required.

• **Cornell:** They do have minors. 70 different options. Monitored by individual academic departments. Roughly 5 classes = minor.

• **Dartmouth:** They do have minors. According to their website, about 30% of students have a major and a minor. Looks like roughly half the classes of a typical major.

• **Penn:** They do have minors. Available in schools across Penn, from Arts & Sciences to Nursing (and more!). Generally requires 6-8 courses, or half of what the major requires.

• **Stanford:** They do have minors. Separate programs for minors, double majors, and secondary majors. No limitations for minors except no double-counting major/minor requirements

• **MIT:** They do have minors. Not all departments offer minors (or majors, for that matter).

• **Brown:** They do not have minors. According to a friend I have at Brown: “I think the University just views it as pure resume-building, which the New Curriculum theoretically discourages”.

– **Student Opinion Part 1**

9. If minors were offered at Yale, would you pursue or would you have pursued a minor? Assume that a minor requires 6 credits.

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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,450</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
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– Additionally, a YCC survey cited in the January 2010 report said that over 85% of students were “interested in pursuing a minor,” and though that report partially dismissed the 2010 YCC report due to self-selection bias, the numbers indicate a significant groundswell of support.

– **Student Opinion Part 2**

11. How many additional credits in your minor discipline would you need to take compared to what you are already planning to take? Assume that a minor requires 6 credits.

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<th>%</th>
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<td>323</td>
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<td>1-3</td>
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<td>55%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,390</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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– This debunks, at least partially, the prevailing notion that minors would encourage students to take a large number of classes that they were not planning on taking. At the same time, it also does
show that students would organize their non-major, non-distributional requirement courses, thus furthering their depth of study into an academic discipline by on average 2 more courses.

- Of those who self-reported a double-major, 75.6% (248/328) indicated they would consider minoring in one of the subjects they had been double majoring in.
  - This suggests that students are often taking the extra courses within a subject for the accreditation
  - Allowing minors could promote students’ ability to pursue a “free-ranging approach to a liberal education traditionally encouraged at Yale”

- **Student Opinion Part 3**
  - Some students and administrators are concerned with the additional administrative demands that minors could impose on departments.
    - In the opt-in system proposed, each department could evaluate the risk themselves, using YCC survey data to project student interest.
    - We will use the computer science department as an example. Using survey data to extrapolate to the student body at large, there would be 48 students per graduating class minoring in CS. Some of these students would be students who had formerly intended to double major in CS. On average, a student interested in minoring in CS would need to take an additional 3.41 courses in the CS department than he or she had planned on taking. On balance, on a yearly basis the CS department could expect an additional burden of 133 “seats” or “places” in total across all CS courses per year. “Seats” is a measurement of (number of students)*(number of classes each would take within the minor).
  - Other departments where there was large interest in a minor include economics, history, political science, psychology, music, and languages.

- **Recommendation**
  - 1. We recommend allowing all academic departments the option of creating their own “minor” course of study that can be officially recognized on students’ transcripts.
  - 2. Recognizing the administrative and teaching burden that this puts on departments, we recommend creating a task force consisting of administrators, faculty members, and students to further study the issue and make a recommendation to the faculty.
  - Actions the task force could take:
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- Reaching out to departments (and their DUS) to determine interest level in minors, as well as providing these departments with information on projected student demand for a minor in their discipline based on YCC survey data.
- Conduct a survey of staff/faculty members.
- Determine administrative burden & whether extra funds would be needed to ensure a seamless implementation

- Discussion
  - Matt R – what percentage have double majors?
  - Saif – Around 10-15%
  - Saif – does a department have the authority to decide whether people can minor in other departments?
    - Kyle – no.
  - Ben – if Committee on Majors already decided no, why do we need a new task force?
    - Kyle – we have a new provost.
    - Grant/David – better survey data this time.
  - Allison – I’m ideologically opposed for the same reasons as the administration. Certificate proposals also exist.
  - Kevin – Can we institute rule that there is just 1 minor?
    - Grant – yes.
  - Ben – against because committee may not happen.
  - Danny – Minors will eventually happen because Yale will be the only school without. We should push for this sooner than later.

- Vote on all recommendations (19-1-0)

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<th>Last Name</th>
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<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Abstain</th>
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<td>Halberstam</td>
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<td>Saifullah</td>
<td>Khan</td>
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• Term Paper Deadline Proposal – Vicky Chou

- **Current Situation - Context**
  - The 2012-2013 academic calendar was affected by the first calendar changes in thirty years. Changes included:
    - Adding a 3-day October Recess in October
    - Shortening reading period and exam period by 2 days each
    - Increasing winter break by 2-5 days (depending on the year).
    - However, there was no change made to the term paper deadline, which is officially the last day of reading period.
    - The term paper deadline was originally put in place to ease student stress by separating paper deadlines and final exams. Many students now have several term papers due at the same time but not as much time as they had in previous semesters to work on these papers.
    - The term paper deadline affects almost all students during their time at Yale: of the 304 seniors who took the recent YCC academics survey, 98% had turned at least one paper in during reading or exam period.

- **Current Situation – Harm to Students**

- **1. Punishing Students Who Write Papers**
  - The current system imposes an arbitrary deadline that does not equitably allocate study days to students in different disciplines.
  - Some students write papers during reading week, take final exam(s) the day or two after finishing their papers, and then are done with days to spare.
  - Other students only have final papers. In the Spring of 2013 23.8% of students (206/863) had more papers than exams due during reading and exam period.
  - “4-5 final papers due at the end of the semester, but no exams and having to hand all of them in at the end of reading period significantly harms my ability to do well in all of them”
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• “The shortened reading week is AWFUL for humanities kids. It basically gives us no time to write papers. It’s very unfair and prevents us from delivering our best work possible given time constraints.”

2. Uneven Policy Enforcement
• Many Professors do not adhere to the end of reading period paper deadline, which is unfair to students whose professors do enforce the deadline.
• 43% of students (522/1209) who have taken a class in which a paper was due during reading or exam period have had a professor accept their final paper after reading period without penalty.

Peer Institutions
• Research was conducted in two manners: searching through the registrar or provost websites or contacting the undergraduate councils of peer institutions.
• For the purposes of our report, Dartmouth is not included in our report because Dartmouth is not on a semester system.
• Effective range – the possible range within which term papers can be due

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<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Effective Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Princeton</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Pennsylvania</td>
<td>0-10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cornell</td>
<td>7 to 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>6 to 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harvard</td>
<td>1 to 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Columbia</td>
<td>4 to 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yale</td>
<td>5</td>
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Student Opinion
• Q: Yale’s current policy is that final papers are due on the last day of reading period. When would you prefer that final papers be due?
• A plurality (45.2%) preferred the last day of exam period
• A majority (58.1%) prefer that papers be due later than they are
• Few students (12.9%) prefer during exam period as a top choice

Answer
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The last day of reading period | 578 (41.9%)  
During exam period | 178 (12.9%)  
The last day of exam period | 624 (45.2%)  
Total | 1380

- **Recommendation:**
  - Argue that the administration should implement one of the following mutually exclusive policy changes, listed below in order of preference:
    - Change the term paper deadline from the last day of reading period to the last day of exam period.
    - Remove the term paper deadline regulation entirely, and instead recommend in the faculty handbook that professors set the last day of exam period as a paper deadline.

- **Discussion**
  - Saif – started because of fall break introduction, so if the calendar is resolved will it still be recommended?
    - Vicky – yes.
  - David – only 1 student out of 1500 commented to have papers due before exams.
  - Kevin – problematic if professors let you turn it in after the break?
    - Danny – could be problematic due to grade deadlines
  - Maddie – how do you enforce the deadline?
    - David – concern about enforcement is valid if we want the deadline to be the last one
    - Danny – professors can put their papers due earlier
  - Andrew/Danny – there will be a deadline, as it stands the deadline makes it harder for Deans to give a Dean’s Excuse
  - Layla – will this affect the professors’ calendar? What if people don’t turn in papers?
    - Danny/Ben – professor doesn’t need to force the student turn in papers if the student doesn’t want to (will just fail them).
  - Yonghyun – is equality a concern?
• Danny – professors don’t care about breaking the rules.
  • Danny – do we need to prove that there is a shift in number of papers and exams?
    • David – we have that information
      – Vote on all recommendations (20-0-0)

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<td>Andi</td>
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<td>JR</td>
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• **Representatives attendance**
  – Danny – what do you all think we should do about this? Regulations presented during orientation were that more than 3 unexcused absence is grounds for removal from position since you are not here to represent.
    • Azan – instead of kicking them out is it making them an associate?
    • Danny – yes would automatically make them an associate
    • Joe E – I think we should follow the constitution, since we need to have value in the constitution.
• Bechir – if we don’t follow the constitution, then we should amend it to lose voting power
• Joe V – if there’s no associate, what would happen? who would take their place?
  • Kyle – could be special election
• Projects for the semester
  – Danny – new board on Trello for all projects we have in mind, and then you will join the project of your choice.
  • Once you join the item you can work together with several partners this time around
  • All will be explained in an email
• Meeting Done: 6:07 pm