Yale College Council
Council of Representatives Meeting
Sunday, December 7, 2014
Meeting Ten

Agenda Items

1. Financial Aid Task Force Update
2. Credit/D/Fail Policy
3. Shopping Period and Preregistration Reforms
4. Minors and Secondary Confirmations
5. Yale-NUS Integration

Attendance

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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).

Financial Aid Task Force
Presentation [Tyler, Nicholas, Collin, Chi, JT]:

• Labor Day on September 7
• Background
  • Applications to join the Task Force sent out in September.
  • Task Force chosen later that month.
  • Weekly meetings to discuss strategy/research related to financial aid.
  • Financial Aid Survey completed by 1,191 students.
  • Financial Aid Town Hall with Caesar Storlazzi in November.
  • Each member responsible for different parts of the final report; Tyler edited.
• Final Report Purview
  • Clarity of Financial Aid Policy
  • Six recommendations
  • Student Employment
  • Four recommendations
  • Student Income Contribution
  • Three short-term recommendations
  • Two long-term recommendations
• Clarity of Information
  • Frequent complaints about website.
  • 70% of those on financial aid said they did not have adequate resources to find outside scholarships.
  • 91% said financial aid was the most or very important to their college decision.
  • Confusion over federal tax payment.
• Clarity of Info Recommendation
  • More direct links to forms on the financial aid website.
  • Enhance OFA’s support for outside scholarships online and in person.
  • Announce all major policy changes in an email to entire student body.
  • Clearer warning of the late fee for payments and consideration of extenuating circumstances for those who cannot pay a bill on time.
• Clearer Financial Aid Award Letter
  • Provide more information early on about the federal tax payment expected of international students.
• Student Employment: Increasing Expectations
  • 2009-2010: SH ($2600) + SIC ($2450) = $5050
- 2014-2015: SH ($3350) + SIC ($3050) = $6400
- Student Employment Other Findings
  - Difficulty navigating the online job application system
  - Length of time spent searching for jobs
  - Lack of feedback from employers in application process
  - Difficulty balancing academic and extracurricular schedule with work
- Student Employment Recommendations
  - Accelerate the timeline for job applications in order to begin the process during August of summer vacation.
  - Assign low-income students an advisor to help secure summer, term-time jobs.
  - Freeze self-help portion
  - Raise campus minimum wage and lift $15/hr cap from 50/50 split program
- Student Income Contribution
  - Upperclassmen:
    - $3050 - Student Income Contribution
    - $3350 - “Self Help”
    - $6400 - Total
  - Freshmen
    - $1625 - Student Income Contribution
    - $2850 - “Self Help”
    - $4475 - Total
- Student Income Contribution Findings
  - Students and their families do not see the categories of costs in the same way the OFA does; rather, they simply want to know the “bottom line.”
  - Cost disparity between freshman and sophomore years (almost $2000) extremely problematic for many families.
  - For 55% of students, SIC has limited their summer opportunities.
  - 78% on financial aid think Yale should follow UChicago’s lead and guarantee low-income students a paid summer internship.
- SIC Short-Term Recommendations
  - Eliminate the distinction between the Student Income Contribution and Self-Help.
  - Change “Net Price Calculator” to make clear the increased expectation after freshman year.
  - Freeze/reduce the Student Effort portion of the financial aid award, which stands at $6400 for upperclassmen and $4475 for freshmen.
- SIC Long-Term Recommendations
  - Develop a program for those students at Yale with the most need (e.g. those with no expected parental contribution) that would guarantee paid summer positions.
  - Full elimination of the student effort portion of the financial aid award.

Discussion
- Tina: For summer paid salaries, where does that money go?
- Nick: That is a concern we thought about. We’re thinking of abolishing the “self-help” portion and consolidating everything into the “student contribution” that stays one number regardless of what you make during the year or over the summer.
• Grant: With the recommendation of pushing back dates of applying for jobs in the fall, how are we going to ensure freshmen have access to the info they need to apply in time?
• Tyler: That’s who we’re targeting with this. It would be something in the form of Yale ensuring freshmen get information well in advance so they know they can apply for jobs before coming to campus. The adviser program will help with this as well.
• Azan: We should include a portion in the Financial Aid letter that explains how to navigate ebill website.
• David L: For 2009, what was the number of hours students needed to work to fulfill the student income contribution compared to now?
• Nick: It was 62 fewer hours per year in 2009 compared to 2014.
• Tyler: That’s significant on a per weekly basis. Students are fired up about the fact that more and more of their time at school is dedicated to paying for school.
• Ben: Is the student income cost increasing at a fast rate relative to the overall tuition?
• Tyler: I believe so, based on the numbers we presented.
• Adam: Once you’ve received a certain amount of financial aid at other institutions, they guarantee that you will never receive less than that in subsequent years. That’s extremely important for family financial planning. Is there a possibility that we include that in our recommendations to the administration?
• Tyler: That’s not something we addressed in the report, but we’ll definitely consider it.
• Zach: Do you know the purpose between the 50/50 program?
• Tyler: Yes, it was meant to increase the student wages and number of student jobs. Over the summer, the administration changed this program to say that only Yale employers get this benefit, and they put a $15 cap on wages. Now, there is an incentive for employers to freeze wages because if they go above $15, they lose all funding from the Provost’s office.
• Collin: We were surprised that no one at Yale had heard about this program as well.
• Anna: I want to hear more about the “skin of the game” argument for SIC
• Tyler: This is the main topic of the Financial Aid town hall. Admin view is that student contribution makes students more responsible for their education. The reason why that is troublesome is that it only applies to low income students. They are the ones who bear the brunt of this burden for what they find to be a high income contribution. The reality has created a divide at Yale where students who don’t have to work can do more activities at Yale while low income students have to spend 12 hours a week working to pay for the tuition. We’re all invested in the education here and we don’t need to prove that to the university with employment.
• Anna: Do you know how many hours people are working on average?
• Tyler: Median is around 10. For people who are on financial aid, it’s significantly more.
• Michael: First thing is the idea of “skin in the game.” The first thing we’ll have push back on is that someone on full financial aid does not have any skin in the game. Maybe where we touch up the report is including data about how people on zero financial aid deal view their education. I also think the position presented in this paper might jolt the administration. I worry that this policy on student income contribution is too radical that it will delegitimize the other twelve less controversial topics presented in the report.
• Tyler: First point is true. People who are not on financial aid have jobs, but that is more of a choice than a requirement and is therefore less a burden on their academic
responsibilities. Second, I very much disagree. I think this is why we put this in the long term recommendations. We realize this isn’t something they’ll do next year, but we want to show the university that this is a value judgment that students very much disagree with. This is the most consistent response we had in the survey: eliminate the SIC. It’s our job as the YCC to show the admin what student opinions are. I don’t want it to dilute the short term goals we have in this report, which is why it’s in the long term section. I think it’s extremely important to include.

- Chi: We did discuss whether or not the long term recommendations are too controversial or not. That’s the rationale behind dividing recommendations on a short term and long term basis.

**Vote**

Clarity of Information: Unanimous consent  
Student Employment: Unanimous consent  
Student Income Contribution Short-Term: Unanimous consent  
Student Income Contribution Elimination: PASSED 15-5 (Dissent: Sam Kim, Alex Simon, Azan, Anna, Grant)

**Credit/D/Fail Presentation [Yaphet]:**

- **Current Policy**
  - Able to designate up to two classes Cr/D/Fail per semester and up to four classes total for your time at Yale.  
  - Able to designate a class Cr/D/Fail in the first two-weeks of classes.  
  - Able to revert classes back to grade on the 11th week of the semester.  

- **Issues with current system**
  - Only 30% of students at the start of the semester definitely knew they would keep their class Cr/D/Fail.  
  - Of the 70% who were not sure:  
    - 27.3% had more absences following the deadline for changing to a letter grade depending on the class.  
    - 56.2% did less work following the deadline changing to a letter grade depending on the class.  
  - 92% of students understand that the Cr/D/Fail policy is meant to encourage students to explore academically.  
    - Only 49% use it to explore new subject areas  
    - 57% said they use it to reduce stress  
  - Quotes in regards to how they use Cr/D/Fail  
    - “Just in case a class is too hard.”  
    - “I use at the beginning of the semester for classes I’m not sure I will do well in, but have always ended up converting to a letter grade.”

- **Proposed Policy Reforms**
  - Push the deadline to revert back from Cr/D/Fail to a letter grade until the day before reading period, which is the 15th week of the semester.
  - Student Reactions to Proposed Reform
• 76% said they would be more comfortable exploring subjects outside their major
• 69% said they put forth more effort into their Cr/D/F classes
• 72% said they would prefer this reform to the current system

• Alternative Policy Reforms
  • Changing Deadline
    • Students revert back to Cr/D/Fail after final grades are released
    • Students designate a certain grade at the start of the semester as the lowest grade that they want to show up on their transcript. Any grade below that would show up as simply Cr/D/Fail.
    • Students take some distribution requirements CR/D/Fail.
  • We chose to recommend the previous policy reform because of feasibility. In 2008 the YCC proposed moving the Cr/D/Fail deadline to after finals and it was rejected. Previous discussions with administrators indicate an unwillingness to consider CR/D/Fail distribution requirements. Pushing to the 15th week should be more easily accepted by the faculty.

Vote: PASSED 19-1 (Dissent: Phan)

Shopping Period reform
Presentation [Phan]:

• Context
  • Columbia, Cornell, and Princeton: in a majority of classes there is NO homework during the shopping period
  • Other Ivies: when there is homework there is informal forgiveness in place
  • Yale: Some courses have assignments during shopping period
  • Some department practices informal forgiveness (English)
• At Yale University
  • 41% of students attended classes with graded assignments during shopping week
  • 68% of students say these assignments were valuable to their learning
  • 78% of students say assignments only being due after shopping week would help them learn in their classes

• Our Proposal
  • Assignments fall into two categories:
    • (A) For **ongoing absorption** of material in class
      • such as homework for language classes, reading assignments for in-class discussions
    • (B) Graded work to check students progress and understanding
  • We recommend that a provision be added to the faculty handbook which strongly recommends that no type B assignments be due during shopping period. Such assignments could, however, still be assigned during shopping period and due afterwards.

Discussion:
• Anna: Does the difference in length of shopping period between schools impact grading policy?
Phan: The differences between length are negligible, and they aren’t long enough to impact grading. One extra class won’t change the course of an entire semester. Additionally, we’re not asking that professors don’t assign homework during shopping period. We’re asking that they don’t have assignments due during shopping period.

Tyler M: What would you do about curricula like DS that has a very concrete syllabus and can’t adjust?

Isaac: We aren’t requiring any professor to do something, this would just be a recommendation because most professors aren’t really aware of the ramifications of collecting graded homework during shopping period.

Ben: Is it possible to have graded projects be accepted past the due date (i.e. after shopping period) if that due date falls within shopping period? Like a leniency policy.

Phan: That’s definitely a consideration we’ll take into account.

Vote: Unanimous

Preregistration Process reform
Presentation [Phan]:

Context for CLASSES

- Missing the pre-registration of a course may result in failure to enroll in a course
- YCC Survey: 61% of students who have missed preregistration believe that missing preregistration deadline(s) has negatively affected their academic plans and schedules
- 66% of all students agree or strongly agree that uncertainty about when preregistration or section registration would open, close, or display results has caused them substantial inconvenience

Proposal:

- All classes that require special application processes and pre-registration should have pre-registration on the SAME day in the fall before classes start.
- There may be a few exceptions for advanced courses where students need more time to complete extensive applications.
- 75% of students prefers uniform preregistration and selection dates to the current system

The specific proposed date for a uniform pre-registration period is:

**Spring Term:**

- 2014:
  - Start selection window on Monday December 8 2015
  - End selection window on Thursday January 8 2015
  - Notification of placement on Friday January 9 2015
  - Spring term classes begin on Monday January 12 2015

- 2015:
  - Start selection window on Friday December 11 2015
  - End selection window on Monday January 11 2016
  - Notification of placement on Tuesday January 12 2016
  - Spring term classes begin on Wednesday January 13 2016

 Context for DISCUSSION SECTION

- Many courses across various departments have discussion sections held by TAs.
• Two types of discussion sections:
  • Non-mandatory
  • Mandatory discussion sections, which require students to sign up for discussion section officially via the Yale Online Course Selection website (OCS). Students must select their discussion sections before finalizing their schedule and getting their schedule signed and submitted by the end of shopping period.
• Registration for discussion session not uniform or synchronized.
• Differences in terms of time window, venue and method.
• Inconvenient for students and negatively affects their schedule planning
• Many students surveyed suggested having section selection open on the same day just different windows of time.
• Our Proposal
  • We propose that all classes that have compulsory discussion sections, have the registration for such discussion sections on the SAME day within the first 7 days of shopping period.
  • Fall Term:
    • 2014 - 2015:
      • Fall term classes begin on Wednesday, August 27 2014
      • Start selection window on Wednesday, September 3 2014
      • End selection window on Thursday, September 4 2014
      • Notification of placement on Friday, September 5 2014
    • 2015 - 2016:
      • Fall term classes begin on Wednesday September 2 2015
      • Start selection window on Wednesday, September 9 2014
      • End selection window on Thursday, September 10 2014
      • Notification of placement on Friday, September 11 2014
  • Spring Term: (the same model as past year applied to this as well)
    • 2014 - 2015:
      • Spring term classes begin on Monday January 12 2015
      • Start/End selection window on Monday, January 19 2015
      • Notification of placement on Tuesday, January 20 2015
    • 2015 - 2016:
      • Spring term classes begin on Monday January 19 2016
      • Start/End selection window on Monday, January 26 2015
      • Notification of placement on Tuesday, January 27 2015
• Discussion with Admin
  • Talked to various DUSs
  • Feedback: All welcome a uniform date, need to work out some logistics within departments. Biggest departments like Econ said they would have no problem.
  • Scheduled to talk with Registrar and the YCDO. Some preliminary discussion with representative of the YCDO has already occurred.
• Passed: Unanimous
Yale-NUS Integration
Presentation [David Liu]:
- Written exchange of ideas: swap campus publications
- Pen pal program
- Immersion and first-hand experiences
  - Send students to Yale-NUS and have these trips be subsidized by Yale admin
  - Select out of the people participating in the pen pal program

Discussion:
- Adam: There’s a program where NUS students can study abroad at Yale during junior year. We should look into reciprocating this more aggressively.

Vote: Unanimous consent

Minors
Presentation [Megan]
- Context
  - 2010 proposal to Committee on Majors, rejected
    - Reasons against: “insufficiently rigorous,” “accreditation inflation,” undercutting smaller programs, difficult to devise “appropriate template,” “unavailable resources”
    - Reasons in favor: organize non-major credits, increase enrollment in small departments, encourage study by non-majors, peer institution equivalents
  - Current options: double-major, no minors
    - Education Studies Scholars Program
      - 4 credits, plus field experience
    - Energy Studies Program
      - 6 credits, plus senior capstone project
  - Harvard: Secondary Concentrations
    - 48 majors, 47 “minors”
  - Princeton: Certificate Programs
    - 34 majors, 47 “certificates”
  - Arts, Language, Interdisciplinary
  - Cornell, Columbia, Dartmouth, UPenn, MIT, and Stanford all offer programs of secondary academic concentration in some form.
- Student Opinion
  - Strong preference for minors consistent across class year and academic discipline
  - More than 86% indicated they would definitely or probably pursue a minor.
  - In each discipline, Humanities, STEM, and Social Sciences, at least 88% responded in the same way.
  - Administration’s Concern: Minors might “discourage the free-ranging approach to a liberal education traditionally encouraged at Yale.”
  - Finding: Students are likely to use minors as a way to organize their non-major credits, thus gaining a deeper understanding in an area outside their major. In most cases, minors will encourage developing an interest for reasons other than practicality or job benefits, which falls exactly in line with a “liberal arts education.”
o Why do students double major? Opinion showed that far more students cited “strong interest in an area outside my major” (86%) and desire for “recognition of proficiency/significant coursework in an area” (63%), rather than “I believe having a double major will improve my job outlook” (42%)

- Minors
  o Allow any department or group of faculty (from the same or different departments) to propose creation of minor program
  o Consists of roughly 6 credits, but permit some department flexibility
  o Implement process for reviewing proposals in the Course of Study Committee or Committee on Majors
  o Explore options to encourage interdisciplinary minors
  o Further discussion:
    ▪ Imposing a limit, at least initially, on the size of the department that may put forth a proposal for a minor
    ▪ Permitting students to double major, or major and minor, or major and double minor, but neither double major and minor nor major and triple minor

Discussion:
- Anna: Can you separate languages? If you only take six classes in Spanish, you shouldn’t be able to minor with only one extra L5 class.
- Joe: That’s up to the discretion of the department, but usually what other schools do is say you need five or six classes in L5, not just five or six random classes.
- Maddie: This is a great time to submit this proposal because of the residential college expansion.

Vote: Unanimous