Yale College Council
Council of Representatives Meeting
Sunday, February 22, 2014
Meeting Sixteen

Agenda Items

1. Project Proposal: Yale Unplugged
2. Project Proposal: Readmissions Peer Liaisons

Attendance

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<td>BK</td>
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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).

Yale Unplugged

- Presentation [ETHAN YOUNG]
  - Overview
    - Create an environment that allows interested Yale students and faculty to discontinue use of smartphones, laptop computers, social media, and other technologies without being penalized or “missing a beat.”
    - A participant’s motivations for “unplugging” may be based on environmental or philosophical concerns; however, the primary concern the Yale College Council hopes to acknowledge is that of mental health.
  - Technology and Mental Health
    - The average attention span of an adult in 2013 is 8 seconds (1 second less than a goldfish)\(^1\)
    - “What the Net seems to be doing is chipping away my capacity for concentration and contemplation. Whether I’m online or not, my mind now expects to take in information the way the Net distributes it: in a swiftly moving stream of particles.”\(^2\)
  - Mental Health at Yale University
    - Recent tragedies have led to reevaluations
    - Personal experience, and often echoed by others: feeling inundated by demands on our time and being expected to be accessible 24/7 can become a significant factor in creating undue anxiety
  - Action
    - Create a day-long event called Unplug Yale
    - Establish agreements on the students’ behalf with campus organizations and departments in advance so that a participant is not penalized
    - Publicize the event with flyers
    - Establish a physical “headquarters” of sorts that encourages participation and facilitates creative outlets for participants to maximize the time they abstain from technology usage
  - Tentative schedule moving forward
    - Feb. 21-30: Contact a variety of student organizations asking for their support; encourage active support via an announcement to panlists
    - Mar. 5: Finalize event summary; email job assignments to council members
    - Mar. 22: Run event flyers and web advertisements upon arrival back on campus from Spring Recess
- Mar. 29: Event date
  - Headquarters logistics
    - Preferred:
      - Cross-Campus: Setup would include portable tables, a lemonade stand, and loudspeakers playing music. Bass Cafe: Setup would include coffee, hot chocolate, and tea
  - Rainy Day:
    - Bass Cafe: Setup would include coffee, hot chocolate, and tea
- East Rock Trip: A team of one or two YCC Representatives could lead a trip to East Rock Park with participants who would like to enjoy the great outdoors without the hindrance of their devices.
- Frisbee: Pickup games of frisbee could be played on Cross Campus near the Event Headquarters.
- Lawn Chairs: To encourage person-to-person interaction without electronic device hindrance, several pairs of lawn chairs could be setup on Cross Campus where friends could sit and chat.

- Discussion
  - Grant: Is the headquarters a mandatory spot to leave you phone?
    - Ethan: Nope, it’s just a central location with activities. It’s difficult to have a single phone drop of location or one single place with activities, so we’re leaving it up to students if they have better alternatives for themselves.
  - Anna: Have you heard of the program that UNICEF would run where they would donate money to clean water initiatives for every 10 minutes you didn’t pick up your phone?
    - Ethan: Yes, but that initiative was unfortunately discontinued.
  - Andy: Have you thought about weaving this into sustainability initiatives?
    - Ethan: Yes, but we’ll definitely need to make sure we keep the event focused and don’t dilute it with too many side projects and initiatives.
  - Zach: Who would coordinate the East Rock trips?
    - Ethan: For the most part, we’d use the Yale shuttle, but we can also have people connected (or not connected) to YCC lead running groups or hiking groups up as well.
  - Maddie: You’ve talked about partnering with Yale groups. We should definitely look into partnering with Yale Outdoors because that seems right up their alley. Also, for games on campus, we can reach out to groups that run activities that we want to see as part of the event (Frisbee team running Frisbee games, etc.)
  - Sam: What specific responsibilities would you have for each council person?
    - Ethan: It really wouldn’t be a big responsibility for any individual rep. The expectation though would be for each Council member participating in the event and sign up for shifts at the “headquarters” for a few hours that day.
  - Ben: Would you be using YCC events committee resources? Obviously this is a YCC event, so it could fall under that jurisdiction.
  - Ethan: The budget so far is pretty meager, so I don’t expect it to be a big expense. At this point though, we’re seeing if it will be logistically feasible.
    - Jaime: We’d be willing to help.

- Vote: PASSED by unanimous consent.
Readmissions Peer Liaisons

• Presentation [MICHAEL HERBERT]
  o Withdrawal policy
    ▪ Currently, there are no infrastructures in place for withdrawn students
    ▪ Withdrawn students are removed from the community
    ▪ Residential college deans can be a point of contact, but it can be difficult for students to touch base
  o Potential solution
    ▪ Would connect each withdrawn student with a student who has gone through the readmissions process
    ▪ Could serve as a point of contact throughout the withdrawal
    ▪ 90% of people who apply for readmission are readmitted
    ▪ Everyone who I have talked to who has been readmitted said they would be interested in participating in this program

• Discussion
  o Grant: Do we have enough potential PLs to do one on one mentoring?
  o Michael: The numbers suggest that there are enough, but if a PL has to double up or triple up, that can work too.
  o Ashley: Would you match people up based on interests?
  o Michael: I think that’d be a great idea.
  o Zach: Would PLs be compensated?
  o Michael: If administrators want to pay them, I wouldn’t be opposed to it. But that’s not currently in the proposal or necessarily in the mission of the program, but we can look into that further.
  o Josh: Would you change the program for someone who is trying to be readmitted a second time?
  o Michael: I didn’t create this program with those people specifically in mind, but we’ll look into it.
  o Thomas: What is the idea for quality control for these PLs? We really don’t want these people dropping off the map, and it’s harder to keep tabs on volunteers. So what guidelines and methods of accountability would you incorporate?
  o Michael: If someone is incompetent, they can be removed from the program, but as far as the PLs are concerns, a lot of what is driving them will be the goodness of their hearts. They know what a vulnerable position the withdrawn students are in, so they’d be definitely willing to put in the time.
  o Maddie: To what extent to we see this fitting into the Mental Health Fellows? I know they’re different programs, but they’re related in the sense that students and reaching out to other students to facilitate conversations about mental wellbeing, communication, etc.
  o Michael: Once you’re withdrawn, you’re removed to some extent from the college system, and the mental health fellows are inherently serving the colleges. The PL would not be necessarily tied to individual colleges, and I don’t see a point in basing this in the college system.

• Vote: PASSED by unanimous consent