* Matt Peragona – Secretary-Treasurer for GESO
* Passes around an article.
	+ Why do we want a union?
		- For me, it’s because we work here, we work at universities across the country, our work is changing.
		- 2009, the figures had nearly flipped: 1/3 tenure-track, 2/3 non-tenure-track, just 19% of the 2/3 were full-time
		- Many have looked to unions as a way of increasing their voice and their change.
		- First graduate student union was formed at Wisconsin-Madison in ’69. Reads full list of schools with unions.
		- What we’re trying to do is not new.
		- I joined the union when I came to Yale because I wasn’t sure if there was room for me at the academy, and I’m still not sure about that. I’ve wanted to be an academic for a very long time, love the open intellectual environment of the university. Worried about employment prospects even though I’ve done everything right. Want a union to ensure
	+ Matt:
		- 3rd year PhD – chemical engineering
		- Worked in industry for 3 years
		- Career aspirations lie in returning to industry.
		- Became a member of GESO in the fall. Joined because I feel there are substantial changes that could come about, as well as having a large group of organized grad students asking for particular changes.
		- Particular issues for me:
			* Child care
				+ Wonderful that Yale provides time off for parents who have just had children, but the issue of providing care after 4 months still remains.
				+ Yale-subsidized care is $20,000 per year, outside the realm of possibility for many graduate students.
				+ Issue about returning to work faster.
			* Work requirements for graduate students properly defined. In the sciences, some departments don’t even have the degree requirements spelled out. Also want better advisor problem resolutions.
			* Access to mental health report. Highly accessed, cap on number of visits, long wait times.
			* Visa access – international students.
			* Improved facilities. Yale manages the buildings that we’re in (water, power, heating), beyond the scope of individual PI’s to change, so we would need direct discussions with the administration.
* Questions from the Floor
	+ Saad: What’s your policy recommendation? Surplus of PhD students compared to jobs.
		- Aaron: At this point we are a petition for a union, we don’t have any particular demands. That said, from my own perspective, it seems ironic that there’s such a problem with the job market given that there has never been more money flowing through the universities. Less money investing in hiring and more invested in other parts of the universities. Some of these decisions are about the market, others have been issues in which we (faculty) have had little say.
	+ Lauren: You mentioned voicing on having the committees; GSA is on the same committees, provostial committees, Corporation, Brian meets with KGC, we meet with the Provost, etc. We’ve had a lot of success working on these topics and with these people. Could you speak to how the union would be different from what this body already does?
		- Aaron: If there a way for students to discuss these issues in a that’s binding on the university as opposed to advisory like the GSA is, I would be all for it. Power to leverage and negotiate with the university.
	+ Faustin: 1) You read a long list of universities that – how many private universities are on that list? Aaron: just one. Faustin: why is that? Is there sometign different about public versus private universities?
		- Aaron: Weeds of labor law. There’s a board established under the Wagner Act in the New Deal, the Labor Relations Board, which determines judicial labor law in the US. In the 90’s, this board determined that graduate students are in fact eligible to solicit for a union, at public universities, because they are employees of the university by default.
			* This ruling was overturned in the Bush years, 2003. Reason why NYU lost its contract in 2005.
			* There’s some notion that the NLRB, once it’s up and running again, might rule differently. NYU agreed to a voluntary process to have a union, after a vote by the students.
	+ Colton: All the schools you’ve mentioned have their own funding system, less stipends [?], state-mandated requirements. One thing that could happen is if you demand all these things, private universities can cut budgets elsewhere. Rising tide situation… [really hard question to transcribe/interpret.] Public you have opportunity of saying
		- Aaron: the workers at Yale, who are not us and are not our advisors, have unions – the folks who clean the classrooms, our registrars, our administrative assistants, etc. They structurally face a similar situation, the Corporation can decide what to do with the budget. There’s a good example of what the unions here have done.
* Lesley Park: there’s a large body of professional researchers who have a choice
	+ Aaron: yes, that’s true.
* Steve Reilly: legality of the union issue. Apprenticeship role. Hard sciences weren’t allowed to join the union at NYU, which is about 2/3 of the students here at Yale. A union that can only represent part of the students, how would that fit in?
	+ Aaron: I don’t believe that’s quite the case for all hard scientists at NYU, but that information is available.
		- Steve: I just checked the NYTimes article about it. It includes biological sciences and hard sciences.
	+ Aaron: I can’t speak to that, it’s not been the case at other universities.
* <>: Do you have a plan in place for how to implement
	+ Aaron: We are a few steps away from the types of contracts that other organizations have, that’s not where my head is.
* <>: Negotation role rather than advisory. Why are you here tonight?
	+ Aaron: Well, we were invited. There are many GESO members here; having talked to Brian and many other folks, it’s clear that the issues you talk about are exactly the ones we are concerned.
	+ <>: So you are hoping for a synergistic relationship with the GSA?
		- Yeah.
* NYU’s agreement just now circumvented the national labor laws; what is the way forward for Yale? Do you hope to go through the federal government?
	+ Matt: Focused on building our member base, and work towards voluntary recognition by building
* Second question: earlier this week or last week, student-athletes at Northwestern filed to unionize; does GESO have any interest on non-stduent labor, such as athletes or adjuncts,
	+ Aaron: Saw the case, think its’ really cool, we don’t really have a formal position. NCAA students deserve a seat at the table, especially since many don’t go on to professional sports. Right now looking at having many conversations.
* <guy from last meeting>: Can you explain how you become a member of GESO, and how you hold office or become more involved in GESO?
	+ Matt: GESO has its own set of bylaws. We have conversation with people we are familiar with, have a discussion with what they are interested in and what we’re interested in, explain GESO’s history and where we’re going. Ask them to sign a membership card, if they do, then they’re a member.
	+ If members are interested in becoming more active or organizing, they can talk to us, if they bcome really passionate about GESO, they can ask to become a coordinator, and then the coordinating body votes on whether they become a coordinator (coordinating body is basically the governing body)
	+ <guy>: How do I become the secretary-treasurer of GESO?
		- General body meetings once a semester. Voted on officer positons in the fall.
* Caitlin Verboon: Disclaimer, I am a member of GESO, don’t meant to sound antagonistic. If you don’t have a plan for what your goals are after you get GESO to recognize, why should more people join?
	+ Aaron: This is a good question. I would hesitate to talk about specific goals. All contracts that labor management
		- Wages, benefits, grievance procedures. They all have to minimally have that. What that looks like will depend on the workplace. The contracts from NYU and Berkeley that I’m passing around, or more relevantly the Local 34 contract here in New Haven (secretarial), they vary by department.
		- Example, in my department, we were very concerned by a position that used to exist that faculty were given teaching relief to focus on career development. Peer departments like Stanford and Princeton have, they place better than we do, and we could use the help.
	+ Matt: this is why we try to have coordinators from every department, so we can get to a good
* Paul: how would you handle interdepartmental programs or places like BBS?
* Kyle: when you negotiate a contract, responding to various needs of departments, makes sense to me, sounds like a good thing, we want lots of the same things other people need. Do you take any view of what the university as a whole is able to offer? My concern is creating a kind of antagonistic relationship; 34 and 35 and graduate students together could be enough to walk-out, end up crippling the University, in the way that the pilots’ unions crippled that industry. Long view of things?
	+ Aaron: we’re many steps away from that, not my desire to have that kind of power. Last 8-9 years of negotiations between Local 34 and 35 and Yale is a good example of a collaborative relationship that has made the university better. Traditionally there has been an antgaonistic relationship between the unions and the administration, that has been transformed, everyone has won, even though this hasn’t been acknowledged by the administration, one of Rick Levin’s great legacies.
	+ Matt: ultimately we’re graduating from Yale, we’ll be associated with our professors even after we leave, it’s not in our best interest to leave it in a worse position than when we came.
* Steve: Wages. Our legal status as students – part of the legal argument for letting us be union members is our student status. We are line-item exempt because we are students for tax purposes. Medicaid and Medicare, if we had a new contract. If we union, we would be self-admitting we are employees, putting a 15% . So we would be wanting Yale to increase our wages by 15% and then some to retain at parity. I completely agree with your issues but there are some structural problems. Can you speak to how this works at other universities?
	+ Aaron: Not that intimiately familiar with other universities contracts and how they solve that issue. I have never known of a contract that ends up with terms that are worse than not having a contract. I’m sure it will involve lawyers, be messy, we are far from that, I’ll look into it.
* Counseulo(?): worried about the trend of hiring more academics.
	+ Aaron: one example that comes to mind is that Rutgers has a joint faculty-grad student union, the university agreed to create 100 new tenure-track lines over the next 4 years, I think this is an example of what
* Holly: question about the umbrella term of benefits. I’ve heard from several reps that one of the specific benefits GESO is interested in is interested in is improving the medical coverage, esp. for families. Is that correct? Yes. OK, how are you planning on that, esp. since Yale has one of the best coverage plans in the nation, have been given a family care credit. would cost them $12,000 per year
	+ Matt: These are getting into contract specifics, which we’re not at the negotiationg table.
* Brian: I have a question about negotiations. My understanding is that contracts have a periodic renewal, and they’re re-engotiatied. Do you worry that you grind progress to a halt and everything relies on re-negotiaton every half-decade? In contrast to the more dynamic process that the GSA currently has. Example of the gym process. Is this a concern, how can it be ameliorated?
	+ Aaron: not to get into specifics more than I’m willing to commit to, one of the reason why the relationships among other locals is so good, there is an instrument called best practices, which is a method for groups to call a meeting with a department head (e.g. dean) and discuss things that aren’t covered in the contracts.
* Katherine Hindley: You mentioned better visa conditions, can you mention what those might be?
	+ Matt: There’s some parts of this that are obviously at the national level, others that are Yale-specific.
	+ Aaron: GO to our local representatives, encourage them to change the status quo, so international students after they finish can stay in the US, instead of the current very complicated system that makes international students’ status quite precarious once they graduate. Union can be a powerful vehicle for political change. For example attended a meeting last year about this.
* Brian: doesn’t this go both ways? We would be obligated to ally ourselves with other organizations? e.g. going on a strike. Speaking for myself, I would have cell lines that would die.
	+ Aaron: the goal is that it’s a democratic body, positions would have to go thorugh all members.
* Jamie: collective bargaining between students and an administration. GESO or a previous incarnation of GESO had a strike in 2003 or 2004 Can you speak to how that worked out?
	+ Matt: That strike was not successful. At the time when that strike occurred, relationships between existing unions (34, 35) and the other unions was not very positive. Following that event, the unions spent a lot of time and energy improving things with Levin, who later called it one of his legacies when it left. SO I don’t think
* Katie: You keep comparing us to the local union, but wouldn’t a student union be fundamentally different than a worker’s union, due to the word student? Can you reasonably say we can use their practices when I can’t realistically skip going to class, and I’m a PhD student because I love what I do, I’d be doing this even if they weren’t paying me for it?
	+ Aaron: I feel like I do work. I am a student, I do work and I read books. Writing is work, reading is work. I write for a professor, coordinate conferences, organize websites. I will teach next year – that’s work. We run conferences, we run classes. That’s work.
	+ Katie: at what point does that dovetail with part of your education?
		- Aaron: zooming out into the way we started the conversation, the way our work is treated and is changing at universities around the world, whether we are students or workers, specifically, it feels like we are workers, and whether we love it doesn’t change that it’s work. The workers on campus, whether cleaning classrooms or registering for classes, also love what it is they do.
* Faustin: if we do get a union here, who runs that, and who is in charge? I think NYU grouped up with the Auto Workers,which is unappealing. Do we parterner up with 34/35, do we partner up with aerospace and medical workers? Who is being paid to oversee our interests? How can I trust that tey are overseeing my interests?
	+ Aaron: it’s funny and weird that the Auto workers ended up with NYU, transitioned from manufacturing to . The locals 34 and 35 have been here on campus for a long time, they look and act like us, they work in our labs and do work in our departments. Who runs it is a part of what we will decide.
	+ Faustin: but don’t the dues go to a central organization, and then the union decides what to do with it?
		- Aaron: any contract or any action would have to go through the. We arepart of a federation of unions, we are not a union now, were we to become a union now.
* Colton: we already have GPSS and GSA, which are distinct bodies serving different purposes, what if you throw in GESO as well? You’re right that we don’t have binding power but they do tend to listen to us, what if you bring in this third party? DO you see it being similar to what GSA/GPSS do, or its unique niche?
	+ Aaron: there are lots of mechanisms to negotiations with the administration, GSA and GPSS being one, there’s no suc thing as too many ways to communicate. Imagining a happy symphony of voices heading in that direction.
* Elizabeth: What is your plan for this semester?
	+ Matt: We are in the process of building out in a way we haven’t before, trying to build out and reach out to neglected departments, e.g. sciences and engineering.
* Brian: best way of people to get in touch with you?
	+ aaron.greenberg@yale.edu
	+ matthew.paragano@yale.edu
	+ Brian gives them GSA mugs.
* 8pm.
* Approval of the Minutes
	+ Approved.
* Approval of the Agenda
	+ Tabling the resolution
	+ Aprpoved.
* Strategic Plan (Joori)
	+ Looking for information, please fill out a short survey (5 questions). Should take <5 minutes. Birttany will send it out, Qualtrics format, please fill it out and we would appreciate it. Work on the strategic plan continues. Great way to send us ideas without much commitment.
* Steering Report
	+ Monthyl reminder to KGC about the gym plan did something, we have pricing for the three gym proposals and others that the thought were useful, going to the Provost.
		- Also inquired as to what changes to library hours we would like to start the same process.
	+ Obtaining the whole batch of compiled department survey data in narrative form, for our strategic plan and for our committees.
	+ The GradStation – university is shopping professionally-operated software, may not occur until next year, seems like a when and not an if now, so that’s a win.
	+ We do place people on external committees, run out of Pres. Or Provost office, they run things by vote, and our members vote, their standing is just as strong as the member of any faculty, so that’s a sort of being a binding situation, and we get to help format the votes and meetings from the very start.
	+ Grad Exec Committee, Investor Responsibility, Library, Minority, <get the list from Brian>
* T&S Report – Sachi
	+ Wednesdays on the off-week, 7pm, MacDougal Center
	+ New ppointtee to the University-Wide Safety Committee, Bill Ruff
	+ Working on white paper for the Yale Shuttle
	+ Laboratory funding situation [?]
* APD – Will Gray
	+ Finalized the teaching proposal [?]
	+ May be changing meeting time, will forward that out.
* FHC – Michlele
	+ Let constituents know about the tax advice session tomorrow, in this room, 7pm and 8pm
	+ Wendy Xiao has organized a housing fair for New Haven to connect students to landlords. Thursday, Feb 13, 5-7pm, Harkness Ballroom (Medical School)
		- Please let your constituents know, especially first years.
	+ Wendy: I sent everyone the memo from Pike, which is the list of things they’ve agreed to do and change, it would be helpful to check with your constituents and see if this has actually happened.
	+ Mental health: planning on an awareness campaign to combat the negative culture. Bathroom flyers, factoids and contact information.
	+ Meeting tonight after this meeting in the common room.
* Publicity – Justine
	+ Everything continues to progress, we’ve developed a form for flyer requests but that’s not quite ready yet.
* Bryce Maxey – Spanish and Portuguese
	+ Better routes to and from Union Station, specifically
		- Would like more security in Wooster Square in East Rock, especially since there’s lots of students there.
			* Wendy: Could use more lights, lightposts with lights out.
	+ Healthcare
		- Like that they don’t have to pay
		- Would like better dental and contact lens coverage.
		- People aren’t happy with the basic care of dental, 1 cleaning per semester.
	+ Dining
		- Lecturers get a free lunch every week, why can’t graduate students?
	+ Departmental space
		- None for students who aren’t in their teaching years, for those in their teaching years (3rd, 4th) it’s a very small office.
* MCDB – Sachi and Joori
	+ This info Is not just from the department meeting we had, but also from the department meeting that our DGS had
	+ APD
		- Supporting mentoring: academic and professional development support, want to see more information brought to the department. Suggestino to incorporate this into the mandatory class we have to talk. Students not content with the quality of current mentoring, esp. regarding non-acdaemic careers. Some PIs are supportive and others are not, wish this could be improved/normalized.
		- Required DGS was a waste of time, should not be quired
		- Stress about balancing time in lab w/ other career-building activities, some people have to ask for permission to attend McDougal and other events
	+ TS
		- Bike racks for KBT
		- Yale Shuttle
			* Blue Line takes forever to get downtown, what if we had a bus line with a fixed route, more control over how long it would take.
		- Gym
			* Current classes start at 5,5:30 which is early
			* HGS: want a kitchen accessible to non-HGS students, better check-out
* American Studies
	+ TS
		- Linking with CT Transit, help w/ Westville and union station
	+ FHC
		- Excited that mental health is being addressed
		- Excitied about fillings, <X> would be a great addition
		- Excited for housing review site, want that to be a success and have people add to it
		- Excited about GSA working to make housing better through conversations with Pike, etc.
		- We need more housing
	+ APD
		- Teaching review
		- Excited about 6th year funding, most 6th years who ask for teaching do get it, only ~5 per year, so it’s not as bad as people make it out to be, but people panic because of misinformation.
		- Excited about faculty helping with careers. Ask that GSA talk to the grad school about course relief or other incentive to give to faculty to take that position.
		- Very impressed with everything the GSA does.
* Italian (Kyle Skinner)
	+ Main theme was transparency.
	+ Our teachers are concerned with our workload, which is a common theme for when we teach languages, most people teach language all four semesters, which is an hour every day, and another hour-long [thing] every week.
	+ After you teach your languages for two years, people go to the job market and then get asked questions about pedagogy they can’t answer, we don’t have any training. CLS [Classics?] classes available but felt like they weren’t useful. Don’t have a permanent language coordinator right now, no communication from our department about that right now.
	+ Got a written agreement and principle from our department head to fix some of these issues, requesting with the PRovosot office for someone to teach a pedagogy workshop, which will count as one of our required classes. We along with French, Spanish, POrtugese, German, have 16 credits required…1 of those will be allowed to be an audit, and the pedagogy class will count.
	+ Don’t like not having coffee (blue Dog) not open after 5pm, don’t like that it’s “student-run” but decisions are made by administrators
	+ T&S – Wall Street is really dangerous, Winchester needs more lightning, want more bike racks
	+ Dental: driving 45 minutes to Farmington for the UConn Dental School.
	+ Developing peer counseling, similar to Walden. Student your age talks you through what your problems are.
* Concerns from Floor and Announcements
	+ Tomorrow is tax advice, and investor responsibility meeting
	+ CTF: Brian needs 6 volunteers for the February reading cycle, which ends this Friday at midnight. Take about 5 hours in total.
		- What sort of criteria are you looking for?
			* Biggest one is for people who the conferences will help the most, often means later-years, presenting research or approaching job market.
	+ Lesley: How will the GSA be involved in the selection of the new dean?
		- Number one item on the steering meeting.
* Adjourns at 8:31pm.
* Bennett Thompson was here. Michelle Kriner was also here.