**GSA General Assembly Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday March 1, 2017**

**HGS 119, 6:30 PM**

Meeting started at 6:

1. Approval of Minutes

Minutes are approved.

1. Approval of Agenda

Agenda is approved; Item VI concerning resolution S17-002 is struck.

1. Discussion with Deputy Provost Stephanie Spangler and Secretary and Vice President Kim Goff-Crews

Stephanie Spangler: I was here a couple weeks ago: thank you for your feedback on bystander intervention. I have a couple of GSA reps on the advisory board; please also channel your suggestions there. There are a couple of points of confusion in the community that I would like to address. Title IX is one of the civil rights acts, which prohibits education from discriminating based on gender (1972). Gender discrimination in education institutions was before then not included in legislation (a woman graduate student at the University of Maryland could not get interviews because she apparently came off too strong). The act’s wording is “sex discrimination,” so I am not sure how the current administration will apply this. Title IX applies more broadly than sexual misconduct (including sex-based harassment). There had been turmoil about sexual misconduct here at Yale and how the university dealt with it. Starting especially in 2010, more policies have been put in place. Yale has also been under investigation (360 institutions are). The measures/policies aim to respond better to reports of sexual misconduct and mitigate sexual misconduct. Yale has a definition of affirmative consent. We have received over 704 complaints, a big jump from the preceding five years, and about 80-90 went through the formal process. We have the UWC, which holds formal hearings for reports of sexual misconduct from the entire university. Police and criminal complaint are another option. Title IX coordinators first and foremost want to make sure that students who complain are comfortable and have the support they need (to continue with studies/get leaves/get extensions/get assigned to a different class, etc.).

Stephanie Spangler: Although we have 704 complaints, we have disproportionately smaller complaints from the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. There have been more complaints since the AAU survey, but they are still disproportionately lower, even though the AAU survey has shown an astounding degree in which comments on appearance, sexuality, etc. have affected graduate students’ work and studies. So the prevalence is high, but the report rate is lower. One thing we want to know is why we do not hear from graduate students as much. This is also why we have done the bystander intervention workshops. Toomas Laarits: is the survey showing high prevalence (50%) a Yale survey? Stephanie Spangler: it’s an AAU Survey (presidential association of top research universities). The statistics are posted online too. For women it’s 64%, and for men, it’s 39% - so these are disturbing numbers. So we are working quite aggressively both with students and faculty. Another factor that arose in the survey is how reporting would affect their careers/professional trajectories, if privacy is breached. I would like to make clear: if you/your friend is concerned with harassment/assault, and you come to a Title IX coordinator/police, they will not say anything to others (unless there is a huge threat to safety). Of course, a lot of harassment is best addressed by our prevention workshops (bystander, building awareness, etc.).

Kate Philips: you mentioned working aggressively with faculty. Can you say more about that? Stephanie Spangler: after the AAU survey, we met with all the deans of graduate and professional schools, who then had the data to engage with their faculty. There are various manners of engagement (focus surveys to get more information, etc.). In the Arts and Sciences, Dean Gendler required that all chairs to be trained. It has been patchy: not every department has been touched by this, so it has not been completely consistent (some DGS, e.g., have decided to work with students rather than faculty). MB&B did a ten-hour, intensive training workshop. We want to highlight departments like this that went to the next step for training. There are as many actions as departments. What would you hope that we do? Kate Philips: it seems that, in my department, when someone mentions something frustrating, the response is mostly that people do things differently (e.g., they have been here for many years and do things differently). There is also a conversation not just about misconduct itself but also about general attitudes/relationships – this has been helpful. Stephanie Spangler: part of the reason we did the bystander intervention is to see what other things departments want.

Consuelo Amat-Matus: in political science, we had a meeting where people want to bring bystander intervention training into the department. Is there any pattern by individual departments? Stephanie Spangler: I also want that information, but breaking down the data by departments results in very small data sample. Consuelo Amat-Matus: would a GSA survey be helpful? Stephanie Spangler: SOM just had the follow-up survey. Surveys generally take a lot of time; there is someone in the Office of Institutional Research making sure that the survey produces information that we want (instead of a repeat of AAU survey). For departments, you might also want to focus on qualitative surveys. If your department wants a bystander intervention training, please tell us. Katie Oltman: you said that non-union employees can come to UWC, so does this mean that unionized departments cannot come to the university anymore for sexual misconduct? Stephanie Spangler: everyone can come to the Title IX office. The reason that UWC deals with non-union employees is that there is already an additional disciplinary procedure for unionized workers. We are also always open to revising the procedures – a big debate now is whether such procedures are fair.

Michael Giannetto: 1) For conferences, what do students do when they experience sexual harassment at conferences? 2) What if graduate students feel that their DGS is not doing anything? That is our perception in engineering. Stephanie Spangler: we want to work with you to encourage departments to work on this! As for conferences/other contexts, FES actually circulated information about boundary issues, and drama also has a protocol. We are working with certain departments on guidelines for conferences. If you have an issue (e.g., general climate issue), you should go where you feel the most comfortable (our office, a trusted faculty member who should know how to access resources, etc.). I have noticed lower response from engineering. Chris Geissler: two suggestions: 1) you could add a bystander conference scenario in the workshop; 2) graduate students sometimes do not know about Title IX resources when they serve in teaching/mentoring capacities. There is no mandatory training for this besides during orientation. Laura Brown: this is mandatory now for new TFs.

Emilio Salazar: So you mentioned that one big concern of GSAS students is that their anonymity would not be preserved. What solutions have you been working on for this? Stephanie Spangler: first, the issue is how we reassure that their privacy will not be breached. I feel good about this issue, because we tell people that we will not talk about their situation without their consent. We can do a number of things to address the fear of retaliation. If it is possible to switch advisors, we can work with that. Depending on who the advisor is, we can also talk to him/her. Sometimes we train a whole department, if there is a problem with a group of faculty members or if it is too risky for the student to talk to the specific advisor. What I have not been able to solve is when the student gets out of Yale, and when the student’s whole career trajectory depends on this. We have worked on prevention for this issue, but would definitely be open for more ideas.

Sarah Zager: it might be helpful to have a person within the department (e.g., a graduate student) who develops a relationship with the Title IX coordinator and to whom graduate students can go to when they encounter problems. Stephanie Spangler: that is a great idea; we do have student advisors who are very helpful. Undergraduates have CCEs (this might not be the exact model, but we can build on that). Sarah Zager: I think a graduate student serving in this role would be helpful. Stephanie Spangler: astronomy has also talked about the idea of having peer advisors. Katie Oltman: I am looking at the report: one of the reasons people do not report is shame/embarrassment. What have you done for this issue? Stephanie Spangler: one thing is to work on getting people comfortable speaking out about these things, and our bystander intervention training works on this. Katie Oltman: this is similar to the stigma associated with mental healthcare, because people think that there is something wrong with *them*. Stephanie Spangler: this certainly comes up in many sexual assault/non-consented cases. The more all of us speak up, the better this will be. Nick Vincent: is there a plan to replace Carl Hashimoto? Stephanie Spangler: Carl is the deputy Title IX coordinator. Pamela Schirmeister and Allegra diBonaventura will serve together in the role. One question our graduate/professional advisory board had is: what happens when the government changes everything? Title IX is not going away, so the concern is more with guidelines. Our office is fully committed to these issues, and we have an obligation to protect the rights of students of all genders (including students who do not fit into the gender binaries). So while we are watching what the government is doing, the university is fully committed to protecting these rights.

1. Departmental meeting reports
   1. Political Science

Melis Laebens: we had a good meeting. About housing: there is little interest in dorms, but there is interest in on-campus housing if conditions can be relaxed (e.g., pets). There is no interest in Common Grounds. Some people feel affected by the sixth-year funding scheme. For mental health, there is some complaint. There is also concern with dental plan and how some TFs do not know resources (maybe wrap this into bystander intervention?). For the project-based approach, people want to know what the projects are from GSA website. People like the shuttle system. We also talked about childcare: there is a suggestion to engage students studying childcare/ early childcare development/ etc. who can get credit for doing childcare work.

* 1. Pharmacology

Courtney: 26 students in department and about 5 attended. We have students on West Campus, and they want student-specific spaces there (perhaps a McDougal fellow). There was a change in shuttle service/schedule to west campus that was not announced to students. For MHC, there can still be long wait-times, and people want it more clearly announced that MHC at Yale Health is a short-term not long-term care plan. Our department expanded so there is need for more student facilities/resources. Nick Vincent: I followed up with the McDougal Center about the west campus fellow suggestion. They are willing to hear ideas about how to do this in the future (they need to move in the summer), but have decided not to pursue this right now (also because fellows are not divided up by the regions they serve).

1. Election- Faculty Mentor Awards Committee
   1. One representative from each division
   2. Meeting date and time: Monday, March 27, 1:30-2:30 PM, Warner House 107
   3. Description: Representatives on this committee will read submitted nominations for the Faculty Mentor Awards Committee and then, as a member of the committee, will select the winners who will be honored at 2017 Commencement.

Paul Lemler: do you receive nominations before? Nick Vincent: yes. Connor Williams: if your mentor is nominated, is there a conflict of interest? Wendy Xiao: yes. Nick Vincent: we can operate under the assumption that everyone is eligible, but wait for the list of nominations to be released.

Nominations:

Humanities: Laura Brown

Social Sciences: Chris Geissler

Sciences: Nathan Nguyen

Laura Brown, Chris Geissler, and Nathan Nguyen are elected to the Faculty Mentor Awards Committee.

1. Call for CTF Readers

Kevin Regan: we need one more reader from the humanities and one more from the social sciences. This is not limited to GSA reps. Please email me! Connor Williams: I can do this. Nick Vincent: I will send out an email with 5-6 items people can get involved with, and I will include this.

1. Concerns from the floor

Katie Oltman: I am also a member of GPSS, which is still looking for cooks for the Chili event. I can lend you my crockpot! I am also working on a project collecting data (a survey to the entire graduate school) on cost of housing. Toomas Laarits: thank you also for responding to our stipend survey! Connor Williams: the McDougal fellows are hosting a panel for people considering having kids in graduate school. GSA rep: for the survey, you could consider doing this on an academic year rather than calendar year basis? Nick Vincent: Kim Goff-Crews did not get a chance to speak tonight but she will be back. We also have another meeting next Wednesday because of spring break.

1. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:53PM.