

GSA General Assembly Meeting

Wednesday, November 13th, 2013

Meeting convened at 7:11pm.

1. Approval of the Minutes 2 min
 - a. Approved.

2. Approval of the Agenda
 - a. Request to move the resolution up so Lauren Tilton can speak in support of it before having to leave to meet with her advisor.

3. Resolution F13_006: Creating an ad-hoc Committee to Review Graduate Student Life
10 min
(Kyle Skinner)
 - a. Introducing the resolution
 - i. Italian rep, steering committee.
 - ii. Spiritual fellow
 - iii. Does work for Secretary's office talking about the relationship between the Grad School and undergrad community in its residential colleges.
 - iv. Been thinking about how the graduate community fits into the Yale community, and how our needs are different from professional students, undergraduate students, and also the graduate students who have come before us.
 - v. Really think that it's time for us to have a conversation about whether the services offered are meeting our needs today. Infrastructure created to have a community that encourages us to be good graduate students, envisioned over 15 years ago. Are the needs still being met?
 - vi. Talking with McDougal/GSL (Lisa, Jen Mendelson), associate dean (Sleight), and people in the Secretary's Office, Dean Pollard and Steering Committee – all these people excited about having a conversation with the stakeholders to evaluate what our needs are.
 - vii. Time for us to show some initiative and tell them what the needs are.
 - viii. I hope that you all will consider this and show your support.
 - b. Brian
 - i. Just to be very clear, this resolution would create an ad-hoc committee, representatives could volunteer for it. The dissolution date of April 23 is the date of our last meeting for the academic year.
 - ii. Similar to the mental health ad-hoc, and the bike plan report also came out of similar
 - c. Discussion from the floor and discussion.
 - i. Consuelo: What would this committee do that's different?
 1. Student life is encapsulated in part of other committees, but there are parts of the university that have the title of being in charge of student life, and those individual and collective entities don't have the same

conversations with this group (GSA) that more specific entities do. E.g. we talked to Mental Health and Counseling, but we haven't done a big picture thing. Looking at people whose job titles and descriptions involve student life. Getting us together is a first step, along with all of those offices at the University.

- ii. Justine: Are you able to offer some of the rubrics for evaluation?
 - 1. Role of graduate student groups (i.e. groups that include graduate students or are composed entirely of graduate student groups); how do they get registered?
 - 2. How does community get built? What kind of resources do they need and what resources should be prioritizing?
- iii. Faustin: You talked about the administrators whose titles involve student life; do you plan on meeting with them?
 - 1. The intention fo the committee is first-off gathering information from students about perceived needs
- iv. Paul: Any administrators on the committee?
 - 1. No, the report would suggest a framework for those employees to have a sustained conversation about the issues.
- v. Motion passes: 74% in favor, 9% disapprove, 17% abstain.

4. Deep Dive: Transit and Security (Sachi Inukai)

- a. Looking to improve shuttle routes and pedestrian safety, talking about the two-way streets encompasses many of these other issues.
- b. Conversion to two-way streets in New Haven
 - i. Went into a presentation
 - ii. Goals for GSA involvement
 - 1. Conversion is still in the proposal stage; if we are in favor of this, we can help push for the two-way conversion. We can also give our input on the plan. No funding for the plan yet; many years in the future. Contact with Jim Travers (Director of Traffic and Parking for New Haven).
 - iii. Claimed benefits
 - 1. 2-way streets are less frustrating, safer; make easier loops.
 - 2. Simplify bus routes
 - 3. Expand bike network – sharrows; Church Street bike spine
 - 4. Improve pedestrian safety – slower speeds.
 - iv. Proposed affected streets
 - 1. Dwight
 - 2. Howe
 - 3. Park
 - 4. York
 - 5. Crown
 - 6. George
 - 7. College
 - 8. Church

- 9. Grove
- 10. Hillhouse Avenue
 - a. Elm and Chapel are not included because their reach extends outside of downtown; would be part of a later phase of the conversion project.
- v. Separate project involving the traffic signaling in the main downtown areas. Has gotten federal funding to improve this, so this project is further along (i.e. they have a budget), but there are still changes that can be made.
 - 1. Brian: Can the scope of this be improved? E.g. what about College Street?
 - a. Will believes the issue is money. Combination of most-used routes and routes that need the most improvement. Tracked cards that went through each intersection to arrive at this.
- vi. Proposal of a two-way loop around Church-York to allow traffic to come in and out more easily.
- vii. This will definitely affect grad students and bikers.
- viii. Bicycle facilities were a consideration in the proposal.
 - 1. Have they considered just changing how one-ways work, i.e. improving the alternation of one-ways?
 - a. Sachi: I assume they've considered it but the general conclusion was to convert everything to two-way because of the other benefits involving two-ways (safety, economic development).
 - b. Cars drive more slowly on the two-ways; speed and biker fatalities are highly correlated.
 - 2. Saad: I've been reading about this and it's an issue of big debate in the urban planning literature, especially regarding banning left turns.
 - a. Sachi: planning on hosting a big meeting with GPSS to discuss these concerns.
 - 3. Concern about biking
 - a. Will: this is one of our big concerns with the proposed plan since only one street has a bike lane.
 - 4. Elm lane already has a bike lane. Want to add a bike lane to Church Street, and add sharrows to other streets instead of an independent bike lane.
 - a. Faustin: anecdotally, I commute on my bike from Goff Street, the speed of drivers went down.
 - i. Evan Rodriguez: There is evidence that sharrows reduce speed.
 - b. Bill: they went and measured each street when considering what lanes, parking, sharrows, etc. would be proposed.
 - 5. Grove Street – problems
 - a. Planning on putting in a green space down the median; no bike lane or even a sharrow.
- ix. Bike plan

- x. Key corridors: York, College/Prospect; these weren't addressed by the proposal. There are advantages for Church (especially for East Rock).
 - 1. Brian: did city officials mention their response to the Bike Plan?
 - a. Sachi: we talked to the consulting firm that the city hired, they were very vague about saying they may have seen it.
 - xi. Bike racks
 - 1. Not many on Church Street; the activity I largely on York and Chapel; supports our earlier argument. We need something that connects the Farmington Trail Canal.
 - xii. Pedestrian safety
 - 1. Proposing reducing the speed limit.
 - 2. Compared to Blue Light survey, we don't think where the lower speed limits are being proposed for are where Yale students actually walk.
 - xiii. GSA/GPSS co-hosted event
 - 1. Date TBD (late January)
 - a. Moved back to have time to prepare and publicize
 - 2. Open to all; will need help from the representatives to help spread the word about the event.
 - xiv. Questions
 - 1. When will this actually start?
 - a. Jim Travers says no timeline at all. Don't even have the data of the next meeting to discuss this, they don't have funding...
 - 2. Bike rack update?
 - a. Evan: Something that we really need to work on and encourage.
 - i. Brian: we've had a lot of luck on campus via Janet Lindler's office and the Yale Shuttle folks. Off-campus is spottier.
 - 3. Kristin Graves: Are they going to just repartition lanes, or will they chip away sidewalks?
 - a. Sachi: don't believe they are able to modify sidewalks, and they promised not to take away parking; parking may be moved but there would be no net loss.
 - 4. Debayan: Transparency in the process used to generate all this? e.g. bike accidents per year, the numbers of people going through these places. Is there an actual report?
 - a. Ankit: They sent out a case study of ideas and some statistics, we might be able to get that sent out to the general body.
 - c. Highlights from GSAS survey
 - d. Recommendations to Environmental Health and Safety (EHS)
5. Reports
- a. Genetics (Monica Bowen and Helen Rankin)
 - i. Postponed due to illness.
 - b. Anthropology (Shayna Liberman and Heidi Lam)

- i. 3 Sub-disciplines:
 - 1. Cultural
 - 2. Biological
 - 3. Linguistics
 - ii. Three sub-disciplines, the survey wasn't useful for us because it didn't separate by the sub-divisions; would like that information if possible.
 - iii. APD
 - 1. People curious about transparency in teaching assignments, and more explanation of the TF levels. Suspicion that the professors don't know or understand about the difference and don't push for higher pay levels.
 - iv. Transit and Security
 - 1. Concern with red-light cameras.
 - 2. More bike racks.
 - a. Across from new School of Management, maybe that will help.
 - 3. Availability of Yale Shuttle.
 - v. General
 - 1. Emergency training for, e.g. shooter on campus. Lot of the tips weren't very intuitive so learning that would be good.
 - 2. Concern about the wait times for mental health. Went in in August, had intake, then nothing since.
 - 3. Dental and Eye Med – problems there. [?]
 - vi. Facilities
 - 1. HGS remodel and in favor of 24/7 study space.
 - vii. Housing committee
 - 1. Wanted to add that it's important to get more information to the incoming students.
 - viii. People really want institutionalized tax help.
 - ix. Colton: aren't teachers "allowed" to have favorites and request people from the pool ahead of time?
 - 1. Yes, but the transparency isn't really there.
 - x. Debayan: Lots of people are concerned on if they're being paid the same, etc., but this is all on the TF website with requirements for how many students you need to be teaching and the number of hours. You can cite this website and email your registrar and be bumped up a level; I was.
- c. German (Andrew Kirwin)
- i. Really concerned about the German Library and study space? Concerns about losing the space when HGS is renovated. Andrew asked if people were interested in a 24-hour space and people were for that, on the condition that they wouldn't have to sacrifice the space they currently have. Don't want it being used as an excuse to take away space that already exists.
 - ii. Interested in joining a consortium of other universities (e.g. Columbia, NY system)
 - 1. Lauren Young: Yale has the Exchange Scholar Program with Columbia, MIT, Michigan, Harvard, Stanford, Berkeley, Cornell, possibly others,

and under that program you can enroll in a class with another institution; it's just not talked about very often.

- iii.
- d. Steering Committee (Brian Dunican)
 - i. DGS / GSAS survey meetings
 1. About 20% of people have had department meetings.
 2. Kristin – French: No specific data about their department.
 3. Brian: Departments with <10 respondents should have received narrative information by now.
 4. Dean Pollard has requested everyone to report back to him by December 1. If you haven't heard yet, please email your DGS.
 - ii. Went to Ivy Plus; longer report at the next meeting.
 - iii. Steve Reilly (GPSS President) and Brian met with the student life deans to discuss the GradStation proposal that we approved at our first meeting; they thought it was a cool idea and a lot of them wanted to participate in it. Kim Goff-Crews' office was interested in taking over the management of it.
 - iv. Steve, Brian, and YCC President met with President Salovey, This meeting doesn't substitute for our individual meeting. He's seen and read the mental health report; discussed wait times, additional staff, communication to the community, preventive care.
 1. Asked about gym and library hours. Pilot proposal for gym hours was passed in December 4 of last year, currently being priced out, he basically agreed it should happen but needs to see the prices.
 2. Concept of student center – positive but building a new building is unlikely.
 3. Thanked him for the Grad/Prof housing committee
 4. GradStation
 5. Online education – confusion, fear, excitement. Where is Yale going? Salovey replied that he has a lot of ideas, is now aware that there is this confusion and plans on communicating in either his Woodbridge Notes or a similar forum about some clarifying information.
 - a. Harvard just got a donation to build a student center but it's \$125 million.
- e. Academics and Professional Development (Caitlin Verboon)
 - i. Had a meeting last week. Working on online education and getting environmental data collection. Working in tandem
 - ii. Working on teaching review, which we will present on further in two weeks.
- f. Facilities and Healthcare (Michelle Kriner)
 - i. Met last week, digested feedback from you guys.
 - ii. Tax advice: planning on having at least one advice per semester to answer questions. Looking also on general information about taxes, e.g. reminding students that they need to file taxes, perhaps with links to the IRS and/or Yale Tax site.

- iii. Housing: Grad/Prof Housing Committee is meeting regularly and is addressing many of the issues we're concerned about. Have talked to Grad Housing Office about improving information on the website; apartments downtown and building more apartment-style Yale housing; landlord responsibility, perhaps a "Yale seal of approval."
- iv. Mental health: Paul and Angharad have been organizing meetings with various stakeholders. Thinking about collaborating for an awareness campaign and integrating mental health issues into teacher training.
 - 1. Shayna: What about a black-list?
 - a. Brian: the University is starting to collect stories from students for a major meeting with landowners. There is a link on our own website and in the GPSS weekly announcements where you can submit this feedback anonymously.

6. Concerns from the floor and announcements

2 min

- a. Joori: it is your responsibility as a rep to hold a department meeting; we get lots of feedback
 - i. Must have it by spring break
 - ii. After you have your meeting, please make sure to fill out the Qualtrics survey so we can collect the data and use this for future projects.
 - iii. When you submit the funding documents, submit them all at once so it goes smoothly for the administrator handling it.
- b. Brian:
 - i. There will be a poll in three weeks about whether we will have a meeting on December 18. If we do have a meeting, there will be eggnog.
- c. Faustin: Ask-a-Lawyer
 - i. 14 people, 3 attorneys, very busy for the whole 2 hours. Attorneys had a great time and want to come back. 12 of 14 people found out about it either through the GPSS email or MacDougal life notes; apparently people read these emails; no one said they came because they saw a flyer, so I'll give you all more flyers next time.

7. Adjournment at 8:15pm