

GSA General Assembly Meeting
Monday, October 28th, 2019
6:00PM, Watson Center (60 Sachem Street), Room A74

Meeting began 6pm

I. Approval of minutes
Minutes were approved.

II. Approval of agenda
Agenda was approved.

III. Attendance announcement
The Chair emphasized the importance of reps remaining throughout the entirety of each meeting.

IV. Conversation with Kim Goff-Crews, Secretary and Vice-President for Student Life
Secretary Goff-Crews gave brief responses to questions that had been submitted before the meeting.

Kim Goff-Crews: As you know, a selection process is underway for a new Provost. The current Provost has served for 7 years; a long term for this kind of post. President Salovey will pick the new Provost directly, and would like advice from graduate students and other stakeholders on qualities the new provost should have, as well as specific recommendations for candidates. A candidate will be selected internally.

In regards to the FAS Senate Report last semester, which identified concerns about recruiting and retaining excellent faculty, the size of the faculty body, and compensation, we continue to think about salaries that will attract and retain faculty. Over the last three years, we've made 30 new hires per year. The Office of Institutional Research conducted an analysis of salaries in relationship to peer institutions, and they have identified where adjustments are needed.

On UPass, there are two current issues: it seems that the state government currently requires all students in the university to participate, which means we can't provide it to graduate students alone. GSA and GPSS to do to work with other student groups on this. In terms of paying for the pass, the next provost will have to make this decision. Any provost will ask, "Where does UPass rank in relationship to other student priorities?" and GSA should be ready to answer. Would funding UPass rank above raising stipends, for example?

On the AAU climate and sexual misconduct survey: the 2019 results are out, and sobering. But there are some good news. There is an increase in awareness about the resources that are available to members of the Yale community, an increase in people's knowledge about bystander intervention, and reports of rape and harassment are lower than 2018. Yale is currently carrying out a deeper dive into the data; this is the first step in dealing with these results and it is ongoing. Some questions we will ask as we continue processing the data are: how do students' identities relate to their experiences? What are the barriers to using resources? What school-specific data do we have? Do we need new resources? Do we need to

design additional training for faculty and staff (we have already increased bystander intervention training)? Stephanie Spanger (stephanie.spangler@yale.edu) encourages students to reach out to her with suggestions for what she and the Title IX Office should be thinking about.

Regarding the Belonging at Yale initiative: we are looking to hire someone to oversee all of the offices that work on this issue across campus and to coordinate and strengthen their efforts (including the Office of Equal Opportunity Programs (which needs a new name and further resources) and Student Accessibility Services (formerly Resource Office on Disabilities)). We want graduate students to participate in the conversation of how we continue strengthening the Belonging initiative and also on selecting the new administrator who will oversee this. We hope to name someone by midway through the spring semester so that they can be working by the 2020-2021 school year.

On the 21CP consultation process: the State Attorney General has released its findings with respect to what happened the night Stephanie Washington was shot. Within Yale, Chase Rogers, former chief justice of the Connecticut Supreme Court, is leading an investigation. 21CP is looking more broadly at the operations and aims of the YPD going forward.

Maria del Mar Galindo (English; GSA Secretary): In relationship to the provost selection, it is important to select someone who identifies, can articulate, and promotes the value of graduate education, particularly in the context of dwindling job markets. How will the university respond to this, including financially? **Ethan Perets (Chemistry; GSA Parliamentarian):** How will this process begin? From where are candidates drawn? **Kim Goff-Crews:** The President will consider the goals that the university has over the next 5-10 years, and ask: what are the skills that are needed in the primary financial decision-maker? Some presidents look outside their institution; at Yale this is internal. Searches can be challenging as this can be a somewhat thankless job. Normally a faculty member with previous administrative experience will be chosen. **Devan Solanki (Chemical and Environmental Engineering):** What are the main goals over the next five years? **Kim Goff-Crews:** The President and the Board decide these. They will include academic priorities, which encompasses establishing new programs, building new facilities, and hiring more faculty (the last is a big focus). A large fundraising campaign is coming up: how do we raise money for the future, and for what? These goals must represent Yale's academic values--interdisciplinarity, access to education. **CJ Rice (History):** Once the President nominates a candidate, are they confirmed by the Yale Corporation? What is the role of the Corporation? **Kim Goff-Crews:** The Board is responsible for approving the vision of the President and Vice-President, as well as thinking through other major economic priorities. **CJ Rice:** Will a candidate's ideas for enacting change in the way that the university runs its finances be considered? **Kim Goff-Crews:** Probably not; the President will search for a basic skill set. He'll be hiring someone who has not done the job before, so the main considerations will be value systems, how the candidate works with people, what they can bring to the table as a member of the team. **Kristen Herdman (Medieval Studies):** In terms of value systems, it seems important to hire someone who can not just articulate general values such as "excellence in each division" or "the importance of equity and inclusion", but who has a demonstrated commitment to these things, and has a proven track record of delivering in this way. **Chris Londa (Classics):** The candidate should also be someone who prioritizes transparency, including budgetary transparency. This is a key way to keep tabs on issues like our progress on DEI, based on the distribution of financial resources. **Kim**

Goff-Crews: The current Provost has this commitment and set up [extensive resources](#) for consulting the budget. We hope this will be maintained. **Emily Stewart (Geology and Geophysics):** What does “faculty excellence” mean in practice? **Kim Goff-Crews:** Some of it is trying to get the best faculty in a particular field, as well as ensuring you support your own excellent faculty. We need to make sure we have ways of identifying faculty who are early on in their careers, that we have mechanisms such as spousal hires to draw the best candidate. More broadly we need to ensure faculty have access to resources, internally and externally. **Ryan Petersburg (Physics; GSA Vice-Chair):** For graduate students, excellent in mentoring is a huge issue. Not just the research a faculty member does, but how they help to foster student excellence and success. **Gadareth Higgs (MCDB):** This should include tracking and measuring how a faculty member’s advisees have gone on to do in their field. The new provost should have not only commitment to Yale but commitment to students, and demonstrated excellence in terms of helping their students position themselves. **Ethan Perets:** In terms of specific candidates to recommend, I would put forward Andrew Miranker. He has a demonstrated commitment to many of the issues being raised by the Assembly. He’s willing to think outside the box and is very familiar with many of the university’s internal mechanisms as well as with peer institutions. Director of Undergraduate Studies. **Megan Kelley (INP; GSA Service Chair):** In terms of faculty retention, it’s important to remember that part of retention is investing in the New Haven community. We need to be cognizant of New Haveners, and of what kinds of investments they’d like to see and need. Dean Darin Latimore at the Yale School of Medicine should be considered, and if he cannot serve due to his current position, he’s someone who has valuable input to offer on these and other issues. **Jacob Derechin (Sociology):** The FAS report also mentioned access to transit as a concern. Thinking about where and how faculty moves--and considering Yale-wide transit accessibility programs--would be helpful on this regard. **Kim Goff-Crews:** Yes; this can be particularly important for spouses, who may need to commute elsewhere to work. A better connection to New York would be idea. **Meaghan McGeary (Experimental Pathology; GSA T&S Chair):** A new Provost should ask the broad question: What does it mean to live in New Haven for different members of the Yale community? Resources like UPass would be invaluable for part of our community, but a new provost should consider more broadly where people live, what kinds of financial and other resources they have, where departments are located in relationship to popular neighborhoods. **Carson Bryant (Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry):** Any candidate should also have a history of reaching out to students to gather input. This can be hard as faculty acquire more responsibilities and lose time for interfacing with students, but this is crucial, so someone who has a record of doing this in the past should be considered. **Tyler Hayward (East Asian Studies):** In relation to the question of what our financial priorities are, I know many people in my department chose to come to Yale particularly of the stipend that is offered. This is central to student life.

Megan Kelley: On the issue of the 21CP report; can you make a commitment to recommending this is released publicly? **Kim Goff-Crews:** I already have. It may be impossible to release the full report for a number of reasons, but its summary and recommendations should be disseminated widely.

Maria del Mar Galindo: In terms of the initiative to hire a new person to work on Belonging at Yale, it’s important to remember that students already struggle to identify existing resources, and that existing offices could often use more resources to carry out their work. Hiring a new administrator is only one way

of addressing these issues. **Kim Goff-Crews:** We are aware of this, but our current resources are quite decentralized, so someone who can draw the strings together and oversee this will be a huge asset.

Jacob Derechin: On the AAU report, are the results accessible in a machine-readable format? **Kim Goff-Crews:** I will find out for you.

After the departure of Secretary Goff-Crews, the Chair opened up discussion among the Assembly.

Maria del Mar Galindo: It's important to balance having our guests present all their information with providing the opportunity to ask questions, so that they are not just downloading information. **Devan Solanki:** At the same time, we don't want to get stuck on a single question without moving on. **Meaghan McGeary:** On the UPass issue, it seems worthwhile to gather more information from GPSS and YCC so we can continue to make our case. **Nicolle Rosa Mercado (Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry):** Secretary-Goff Crews mentioned that in order for Yale to opt in to UPass, all students must have access to this, but I thought we had already discussed with the state the possibility of only having graduate students opt in? **Meaghan McGeary:** This is correct; we'll have to follow up on this as well. **Devan Solanki:** What will the cost of UPass be? **Meaghan McGeary:** \$500,000 for Yale to opt in; the cost per student pass is \$40. **Jacob Derechin:** Could we lobby the university to increase our stipend to make it possible for each student to buy a pass? **Meaghan McGeary:** We'd have to see, but going forward, we have to emphasize that this is an investment on Yale's part toward improving student life and improving student retention. Most of our peer institutions subsidize access to transport. This will help draw more students here, and will be an investment in the city and the state as well. **Ethan Perets:** Secretary Goff-Crews mentioned gathering more information from graduate students. GSA and GSPS issued a joint resolution stating we want UPass. This means the two graduate student representative bodies support this. We shouldn't get stuck in a conversation with the administration about gathering more information. This is all the information that is needed. **Nicolle Rosa Mercado:** She also mentioned undergraduates. What is the pushback from that constituency? **Lucy Armentano (Psychology; GSA Chair):** We've had conflicted reports on this, including that undergraduates are for and against this. We'll have to gather more information. **Alicia Strong (European and Russian Studies):** I have access to a UPass, subsidized by a university. Would graduate students here be interested in contributing if Yale subsidized the pass? **Meaghan McGeary:** Survey results from last year indicate students would be willing to pay an average of \$30. We'd be the first private university in CT to participate in this.

V. Updates from Committee Chairs

Megan Kelley: Service wants to re-advertise three events: the knitting-themed de-stress event with McDougal, the upcoming community garden clean-up, and the annual Toy Drive for families of the incarcerated. We need volunteers for all these, and reps to manage donation boxes for the drive. **Estella Barbosa de Souza (Physics; GSA APD Chair):** APD held its first meeting. If you haven't had the chance to sign up for a committee yet and want to serve on APD, get in touch with me. Tomorrow, we are meeting the student advisory committee of the OCS to present our plans for the year. Meaghan McGeary: T&S also had its first meeting last week. We are collecting project ideas; in the next two weeks, if you have something that you'd like to see T&S do beyond UPass please go to the GSA drive, [where there is a list of project ideas](#) in the Transit and Security folder.

VI. Ad-hoc CTF Committee Bill

The Parliamentarian provided background on bills and their procedures.

Jo Machesky (Chemical and Environmental Engineering; CTF Director): We are hoping to establish a committee with a couple representatives from each division to process departmental meeting data and new data gathered by the deans on departmental funding, make decisions after the 2019-2020 influx of applications, and ensure that students have clear instructions on how to apply for funding, so we can fund as many students as possible. **Burt Westermeier (History):** Are there insufficient funds? **Jo Machesky:** Our 2019-2020 Fund is \$120,000. As of right now, we've spent around \$50,000. This is partly because the fund was publicized more widely. We are trying to understand who needs funds from the CTF and who doesn't. Working with Dean Sleight's office, some departments have created their own fund for conference travel. We currently are double-checking with departments each time if there are other funds and encouraging them to release them if they are, so that it is not the students who end up pinched by this. **Ethan Perets:** Some objections were raised to the changes in the running of the CTF during Summer Steering, including by me. I'd be happy to discuss these further with anyone who shares them. **Lucy Armentano:** If we want to discuss this, reps should feel free to add it to the [GA agenda items suggestion document](#) on the Shared Drive. At this stage, the bill has been introduced, but we cannot discuss it. **Jo Machesky:** We have plans to provide more information on the CTF at upcoming meetings. **Kristen Herdman:** To clarify, we're just creating this committee to have a look at how the CTF is operating and how it will work going forward? **Jo Machesky:** I want to get perspectives from the different divisions on what's happening. **Megan Kelley:** Would committee members have to be GSA reps? **Jo Machesky:** I have no strong preference on this.

VII. Elections

- A. [Advisory Committee on Resources for Students and Employees with Disabilities](#) (two nominees)

Breanna Elliott (History) and **John Gonzalez (Biological and Biomedical Science)** were nominated by acclamation.

VIII. Dean's Emergency Fund discussion

The Chair provided brief background on ongoing discussions with the Deans.

CJ Rice: Part of the feedback from the Deans is that people are not applying to the Fund. But we've heard that some have and have been rejected and others report being dissuaded from applying by the application process. We are trying to understand how students are experiencing it. **Tyler Hayward:** I think a lot of students just don't know that it exists. **Andie Berry (English):** The Fund was partly set up to help with dental emergency expenses. I know some people who have had these who have not applied because the process is unclear with regards to timing. Can you get funds before the procedure? Do you pay out of pocket or are you reimbursed? These are normally surprise costs. **Julianne Rolf (Chemical and Environmental Engineering):** Do faculty know about the Fund? Can a letter go out to the DGS of each department? **Roxanne Morris (Microbiology):** Is there a reason why the fund is explicitly a one-time fund? Emergencies often don't work this way. **Meaghan McGeary:** We've recently found out

the undergraduates have a pretty robust emergency fund, covering expenses from textbooks to winter clothing. The college deans help to administer it. This might be a good model. **Trevor Williams (Economics)**: An emergency fund is a non-standard job benefit. We receive good stipends. What is the purpose of the fund? **Lucy Armentano**: It came as a response to the fact that we have substandard dental insurance compared to many of our peer institutions, and students were having to pay large out-of-pocket costs for procedures. **CJ Rice**: The assumption that our stipend is enough to cover emergency costs does not take into account different student needs or situations. This is a diversity, equity, and inclusion issue. What if you send money to your parents every month, or have dependents? We should not assume our stipend stretches in the same way for all situations. **Da'Von Boyd (Political Science)**: And to CJ's point, attempting to get a raise in stipends overall would require political capital that we don't have. But we can improve this fund. **Julianne Rolf**: Another question: would a grant from the Fund be taxable income? **Lucy Armentano**: We want to reinforce to the deans that there is a need for this fund. Currently people are applying at rates that the deans might not see as sufficient to sustain the fund. We need to provide them with more data and the kinds of things that are stopping people from applying, if any. **Breanna Elliott (History)**: To CJ's point about stipends not stretching for some, those who are most vulnerable may be holding back on applying to a one-time fund in fear that they will face a more serious emergency down the line. Maybe there could be stricter rules for subsequent payments, but the one-time rule is not very helpful. **Devan Solanki**: It could be made clear that this wouldn't handle something like recurring medical bills, while still making more than one application possible. **Ryan Petersburg**: My sense from our meetings with the Deans is that they are looking for cases they can fund. They are not trying to vet students away from this. But the way the language is set out on the website might be getting in the way of people applying. How many people who want to apply to this are looking at this and feeling prohibited? **Sydney Muchnik (Genetics)**: Something that we heard at the start of this initiative is that they didn't want to advertise this *too* widely, because they didn't want everyone applying. Now the sense is that not enough people are applying. This needs to be advertised widely, not buried in a longer email. If the intent is to help students it should be visible and public. **Lucy Armentano**: Our next meeting with the Deans on this will be on Thursday; please email if you have further comments.

IX. Department Meeting Report—Chemistry

Ryan Petersburg: We plan to keep track of commonalities in department meeting reports to have them be separate agenda items at upcoming meetings.

Ethan Perets: We held our meeting on October 25th. We did some pre-prep before the meeting (all of the GSA reps met with the faculty leadership: DGS, Chair, and our climate and diversity Chair). This is the start of a relationship between GSA and faculty leadership. We've successfully advocated for a graduate student lounge, which will open by the end of the semester. At the meeting we informed our constituents that we're working with faculty leadership to develop department-specific advising guidelines, thinking about using the model currently being developed in Neuroscience. Students wanted to know how to address grievances related to this, particularly in cases where DGS is involved/closely related to those who are involved. Another question was about post-tenure faculty review. how does this work? Does it happen? We spoke about a possible elimination of GRE requirements. There was some concern that elimination of one quantitative measurement might result in more a subject qualitative judgment. Particularly for international students—the GRE might allow them to put themselves on par with national

candidates. We advertised the diversity and climate town hall. Students wondered about means to give feedback about their advisor anonymously—our other rep Jake Spies pointed them to [Grad PI](#). We discussed a current faculty search that is underway and the fact that few or no students knew this was happening, and talked about how to have closer faculty-graduate student cooperation on major issues in the department.

Gadareth Higgs: How many students came to your meeting? **Ethan Perets:** About thirty out of 270. **Megan Kelley:** How did you find out about the faculty search? **Ethan Perets:** Informally--the grapevine. **Maria del Mar Galindo:** Do faculty candidates visit? **Ethan Perets:** For one day, which is packed. **Estella Barbosa de Souza:** Physics brings faculty candidates to have lunch or breakfast with students. **Syndi Barish (Genetics):** To the point about anonymous feedback about PIs, this is difficult for those who are alone or in small groups under a PI. **Ethan Perets:** Yes. This is on the agenda for our diversity committee. **Megan Kelley:** If you are facing issues with your PI or advisor and struggling to figure out what to do, Dean Michelle Nearon is a good person to approach. **Zach Michielli (Architecture):** Just to add some information on the topic of searches: sometimes there are confidentiality issues, including that sometimes candidates want to keep their participation in a search confidential.

X. DEI Initiative check-in

A. Working Time

The Secretary and Chair gave a short update on the campus-wide poster initiative in cooperation with OGSD. Posters should be placed somewhere prominent within the department, with an envelope to submit confidential responses somewhere identifiable. Reps should send out a communication about the poster and the GSAS-wide Diversity Town Hall on December 9th.

Reps will be invited to report back at the meeting on December 2nd on the conversations they are having within their departments. In the meantime, they are asked to provide information on their department's DEI-related efforts on the [Shared Drive spreadsheet](#).

XI. Miscellaneous

Lucy Armentano: We'll provide a digest from our Ivy+ participation as soon as we can; it was a productive meeting. Another thing that has come up in conversations with Assembly members recently is the issue of 6th-year funding in the Social Sciences and the Humanities. How is its availability communicated? Are people having any issues accessing this funding, or do they have any experiences they want to share? If there is interest we can have a discussion at an upcoming meeting.

Nicolle Rosa Mercado: I'd like to share some information from the Facilities and Healthcare Meeting this week, regarding how students from Puerto Rico have been facing issues scheduling appointments with Yale Health. There are seven cases that we've identified, dating back to 2009. Students have had medical issues that have not been tended to for weeks because Yale Health cannot access an "international" area code and dial numbers from Puerto Rico. I'm gathering information on experiences with this via a Google Form. The Administrative Staff can reach us, but the nurses' call center cannot. **Megan Kelley:** This might be worth bringing up with campus organization such as SACNAS. **Ethan Perets:** What does this

issue look like? **Nicolle Rosa Mercado**: When nurses attempt to make a call, the calls beeps as is disconnected. **Emily Davidson (Public Health)**: Usually nurses will send a follow-up message via MyChart; does this happen? **Nicolle Rosa Mercado**: They do. Sometimes it takes time for this email to come through. **Emily Stewart**: Mental Health Services won't use MyChart. **Tyler Hayward**: I've also had these issues when travelling out of the country, so this may be relevant to people doing fieldwork. It may also be relevant for international students.

Devan Solanki: I have a quick question--did Yale push for the GSA to use Slack as its communications platform? **Ryan Petersburg**: No, this decision was made completely internally. **Devan Solanki**: I was curious because Yale recently became a minority stakeholder in Slack.

Jeremy Gaison (Physics; GSA Treasurer): A reminder to please sign up for departmental meetings.

Meeting adjourned at 7.44pm.