

GSA General Assembly Meeting
Monday, December 2nd, 2019
6:00PM, Watson Center (60 Sachem Street), Room A74

Meeting began 6.01

I. Approval of minutes
Minutes were approved.

II. Approval of agenda
Agenda was approved

III. Updates from Committee Chairs

Meaghan McGeary (Experimental Pathology, GSA Transit and Security Chair): YCC is piloting a ride-sharing service that will be open to graduate students; this was advertised on the GSA Instagram. **Megan Kelley (Neuroscience, Service Committee Chair):** The Service Committee met with the Office of Sustainability today, to talk about possibilities for collaboration. We will keep you updated.

IV. Facilities and Healthcare Committee Chair Election

Lucy Armentano (Psychology, GSA Chair) gave a brief overview of the Facilities and Healthcare position and election. **Megan Kelley** and **Meaghan McGeary** gave brief overviews of the work of a committee chair.

Nicolle Rosa Mercado (Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry) was elected as Facilities and Healthcare Chair by unanimous consent.

V. DEI Initiative Wrap-up

Maria del Mar Galindo (English, GSA Secretary) and **Lucy Armentano** gave a brief overview of the semester's work and next steps.

Representatives collated information from responses to the initiative submitted in hard copy, submitted new electronic responses in advance of the Town Hall, and worked in groups to identify 1-3 priorities for the Town Hall, and 1-3 priorities for next semester. The reports of this discussion will be shared with Dean Michelle Nearon and Dean Lynn Cooley.

VI. Department meeting reports

A. Statistics and Data Science/Statistics/Applied Mathematics

Dylan O'Connell (Statistics and Data Science): All three departments and the Statistics Masters program held a joint meeting. Diversity was a primary topic, particularly around hiring and student involvement in those processes, which are opaque. The main complaints received from students were socially oriented: departments have recently lost shared spaces and students want more opportunities to build community. The question of whether it might be possible to swipe into undergraduate colleges

during lunch hours (particularly at Silliman, Franklin, and Murray, closer to Science Hill) was discussed. The current system of graduate students tailgating undergraduates isn't safe; perhaps access could be given 12-2.

B. East Asian Studies

Tyler Hayward (East Asian Studies): Students reported satisfaction with the way transit services are running. On the question of UPass, students were comfortable making a contribution as long as the cost per year doesn't go above \$40. On the Dean's Emergency Fund, there is concern that Masters students—many of whom pay tuition—can't apply to this. On healthcare, students mentioned the long wait time for ophthalmology appointments. In terms of DEI, we spoke about the multidisciplinary nature of our department, and how to ensure there is diverse representation of students as well as research topics. 4 out of 17 people attended.

C. Public Health

Shannon Whittaker (Public Health): Students' broad first concern was the lack of synchronicity between departments when it comes to requirements; qualifying exams differ for each, for example. It would be good to have a uniform system throughout the school. In terms of student participation in faculty selection or committees, Social and Behavioral Science is the only department in the school of Public Health that allows students to participate in faculty meetings. The issue of teaching and TFing also came up. The maximum number of hours students can TF at the moment is 30; students who need extra income would like to be able to TF beyond that. What's more, many students TF for Masters classes, but want the chance to TF undergraduates. On mental health services, people are still waiting for appointments, sometimes 3-5 months to be seen by a provider. Providers in the mental health department are also discontinuing care if they move on from Yale. The School may be in the process of hiring a mental health counselor for their students, but a single counselor won't be able to meet full need. There was a lot of concern about the phrasing of the question of the diversity initiative—some students mentioned that they did not feel they could address it. **Megan Kelley:** Did students share an alternative phrasing they'd like to have seen? **Shannon Whittaker:** A lot of work at the SPH is geared toward social justice; "diversity" and "inclusion" can be seen as buzzwords without much meaning. We have our own committee at the school, and they are going to meet to discuss what kinds of meaningful questions might be asked. **Devan Solanki (Chemical and Environmental Engineering):** Could you report back on the counselor once the school makes the hire? My undergraduate institution had one per school; it would be great to know how this works out. **Shannon Whittaker:** I know that our DGS is requesting money for this; I don't know what the outcome will be. **Ryan Petersburg (Physics, GSA Vice-Chair):** Did your reps share anything regarding how they feel about being professional students and PhD students, and about how the GSA can support them? **Shannon Whittaker:** Students are connecting more to GSA and to GSAS as time passes; there's more integration happening.

D. English

Andie Berry (English): Twenty out of the roughly 40 students in residence attended; our enrollment is about 60 overall. Students were enthusiastic about U-Pass. We had a brief report from our first-year cohort, and their feedback was echoed by students in early years; they'd like more contact with the DGS, better outlined requirements, and more ways to create departmental community. This led to a

conversation about revising our graduate handbook, which is currently put together by our student committee; we'd like to see a faculty-produced set of guidelines. A big issue that comes up every year is teaching. Our main PTAI assignment, ENGL 114, has a very teaching load, and is paid at the same rate that other assignments. Students would like access to information about alternative teaching opportunities, including summer teaching opportunities. There was a lengthy discussion about faculty diversity and retention. The meeting included one of the faculty conveners for the DEI committee in the department in the later half. Students raised that the issue is not only about external hiring; the English Department is currently lacking people in critical sub-fields. Given that senior faculty hires take between 2-4 years to happen, we should think about inviting people who are already affiliated with other departments in the university to be affiliated with English. There have been hires in adjacent departments in the last few years that would be great additions to the English faculty, but they have either not been invited to be affiliated or have refused affiliation. **Gadareth Higgs (MCDB)**: How did you have such a good attendance rate? **Andie Berry (English)**: We have a big Town Hall in the spring with faculty; we pitch this as a graduate student-only opportunity to have an internal conversation, and as preparation for that meeting. **Maria del Mar Galindo**: We also use our internal student representation body to encourage participation.

E. Economics

Trevor Williams (Economics): 30 students attended a departmental meeting about three weeks ago. There was a lot of discussion about transportation: UPass, the YCC ride-share initiative, or having Yale organize transportation at cost, in the way that peer institutions such as Cornell do. There were complaints about the transportation apps; the design of the night-ride shuttle system is fundamentally flawed, and it can take a very large amount of time to be picked up before being driven all over. People are also concerned as the department is moving buildings. We'd love to hear feedback from people who have navigated moving buildings: how can we stay updated/informed on what is happening? Another topic was the CTL-run Teaching Day. For Social Scientists, a lot of the instruction is geared toward humanities teaching courses, and many felt we should have been in the Science teaching day, as it more closely mirrors what we teach. We also had one or two students express extreme dissatisfaction with exam grading requirements; some TFs are being asked to have a 48-hour turnaround, which can be extremely challenging and has an effect on mental and physical health. There was some discussion about difficulties navigating the payroll deduction system for university housing payments. Students often have to put down deposits before they have received a stipend. **Dylan O'Connell**: Our department has a similar sense that we should be in the Science Teaching Day. **Chris Londa (Classics)**: Where are you moving? **Trevor Williams**: From 38-40 Hillhouse; we're moving onto College Street as new facilities are built. **Devan Solanki**: Should the move be relatively painless, given that Economics doesn't have to move equipment? **Trevor Williams**: Maybe; but people just want to know what's going on. **Kristen Herdmann (Medieval Studies)**: Do you not know anything about your timeline? **Ahyan Panjwani (Economics)**: I know from local news coverage that we have a permit from City Hall to put up our new building, but the current house that is in that space has to be moved elsewhere on Trumbull. City Hall has asked Yale to move the building the weekend after commencement.

Julianne Rolf (Chemical and Environmental Engineering): On the question of payroll deductions and stipends—I know GSAS moved up the payment to September 1st from the 15th. Is that the earliest it can

happen? **Nicolle Rosa Mercado**: Other schools move up their first stipend further or pay a moving bonus fairly early on in the summer. **Julianne Rolf**: If it's classified as a "bonus," would it not be taxed differently? **Trevor Williams**: Setting up a new bonus system may take an investment. Whereas using the existing stipend system to simply pay one stipend date earlier wouldn't cost anything other than the payment itself. **Ryan Petersburg**: Yale could also think about frontloading the September stipend to give people more flexibility. **Maria del Mar Galindo**: This is an issue not only of *when* people need the money, but the fact that they may need *more* money. This is an equity and inclusion issue; some people have good financial support from other sources to move, but many don't. **Lucy Armentano**: We should ask the university where we are on the possibility of moving the stipend to August 15th, which is a question we've raised before. **Nicolle Rosa Mercado**: There's precedent at other Ivy Leagues for this. **Jacob Derechin (Sociology)**: The individual who had to grade in 48 hours—can we have more information on this? **Ahyan Panjwani**: Last semester I was a TF for a large, class (200+) and I was asked to have a very fast turnaround, too. **Jacob Derechin**: Is this specific professors, and can we flag this? **Ahyan Panjwani**: We've heard it from quite a few people. **Lucy Armentano**: We'll bring this up with our APD Chair so she can look into it.

VII. CTF Ad-Hoc Committee

Lucy Armentano gave a brief update on the CTF Committee. The Assembly discussed representation ratios from each division.

Julianne Rolf: Can we add more people at a later date? **Lucy Armentano**: This could be possible. **Ryan Petersburg**: The point of the committee is simply to data-gather and to make recommendations; they are not making decisions, so it's not as if divisional representation will influence voting. **Maria del Mar Galindo**: Data-gathering itself can require a kind of divisional expertise. If data is not legible to someone because they don't understand how a department outside their division functions (a humanist not fully understanding a PI model, for example), this matters. We need to make sure that quorum can't be met without representation from all divisions.

The Assembly agreed that it would attempt to elect as even a number of representatives per division as possible.

Humanities

Chris Londa (Classics) was elected by unanimous consent.

Thiti Owlarn (German) was elected by unanimous consent.

Social Sciences

Marisha Evans (Linguistics) was elected by unanimous consent.

Dan Bromberg (Public Health) was elected by unanimous consent.

Sciences

Syndi Barish (Genetics) was elected by unanimous consent.

Jacob Spies (Chemistry) was elected by unanimous consent.

Devan Solanki (Chem and Env Engineering) was elected by unanimous consent.

VIII. 21CP Resolution

Megan Kelley and **Meaghan McGeary** introduced a resolution regarding the report compiled by 21CP:

Whereas the Graduate Student Assembly advocates on behalf of graduate students on issues relating to safety and security at Yale and in New Haven.

Whereas the Yale Police Department (YPD) is committed to “protect[ing] and serv[ing] the campus”¹, and to “being fully transparent with the University community”¹ and to “maintaining the highest level of trust and honesty with those [they] serve”¹

Whereas several events, including but not limited to the involvement of a YPD officer in the shooting of Stephanie Washington, have impacted the ability of graduate students to trust YPD officers to serve them fairly and without bias.

Therefore be it resolved by the Graduate Student Assembly, that YPD should release to the public, with minimal redactions, the report compiled by 21CP Solutions.

Be it further resolved that 21CP Solutions should include in their final report a recommendation to make the report public, with minimal redactions.

Julianne Rolf: I have concerns about “minimal redactions.” Full disclosure could impact officer safety.

Megan Kelley: Our understanding is that the report won’t include any personal information. **Julianne**

Rolf: What about other information impacting officer safety, such as patrolling times? **Devan Solanki:**

Did the University already say they won’t release this? **Meaghan McGeary:** Secretary Goff-Crews said

sections would be made available. **Julianne Rolf:** Officer safety is important whether we agree with what

the YPD is doing or not. **Amber Howell (Neuroscience):** By offering “redactions,” we give them cover

to remove sensitive information. **John Gonzalez (Biological and Biomedical Sciences):** Can we stress to

them that there is very high interest in this report, and that we’d like to see the full report with redactions,

as well? **Amber Howell:** This may result in us receiving not very much at all. **Julianne Rolf:** I am not

comfortable with language that doesn’t show we understand that officer safety is an issue. We should

signal that we understand where they are coming from. **Devan Solanki:** Weren’t the consultants hired to

assess overall standards and operations? **Lucy Armentano:** That’s correct. **Megan Kelley:** It is not our

understanding that this will include any substantive information about individual officers. **Julianne Rolf:**

Even the hours and locations that YPD is on duty constitutes sensitive information.

A motion to table this agenda item for an upcoming meeting was approved.

IX. Resources Spotlight: Yale Shuttle Twitter

¹ “Yale Police Department.” *It’s Your Yale: Yale Police Department*, your.yale.edu/community/public-safety/yale-police-department.

Meaghan McGeary: The Yale Shuttle Twitter now gives up-to-date information on shuttle services. We advocated for this; please follow the account. **Jacob Spies:** It would be good for them to add a profile picture to increase student confidence that the account is legitimate. **Maria del Mar Galindo:** And eventually, it would be great if these updates and other shuttle information could be on a single platform.

X. Miscellaneous

Lucy Armentano: Please share any Doctoral Survey information that was shared with your department with the GSA at large; we are trying to establish a full database. You can email it to (ryan.petersburg@yale.edu). Two events to advertise: the Diversity Town Hall will take place on December 9th at 3pm, and a Graduate Students of Color Brunch will take place this Sunday from 12pm to 2pm. Finally, any inputs for our meeting with the Trustee of the Yale Board can be added to the file on the Google Drive.

Megan Kelley: This Wednesday, we will have our Knitting De-Stress event, and on Thursday, the GSA-GPSS Fundraiser to culminate the Toy Drive for New Haven children.

Jeremy Gaison: Please sign up for your departmental meeting if you haven't done so.

Meeting adjourned 7.47pm.