

FAS-SEAS Senate Meeting
Thursday, March 30, 2023
3:30 PM – 5:30 PM
HQ276 and Via Zoom

Minutes
APPROVED 4/30/23

Senators Present: Paul Van Tassel, Chair

Sybil Alexandrov, Jill Campbell, Michael Fischer, Gerald Jaynes, Greta LaFleur, Maria Piñango, Maria Kaliambou, Larry Samuelson, Kathryn Slanski Mark Solomon, Dara Strolovitch, Julia Titus, Rebecca Toseland, Jing Yan

Staff: Rose Rita Riccitelli

Absent:

Elisa Celis (on leave), Oswaldo Chinchilla, Alessandro Gomez, Valerie Horsley, Hélène Landemore, Paul A. North, Ruzica Piskac, Jason Stanley, Meg Urry, Mimi Yiengpruksawan (on leave)

Guests (open session):

Jeff Brock, Alexia Belperron, Marion Gehlker, Miki Havlickova, Paul Hoffman, Al Klevatorick, Elka Kristo-Nagy, Pericles Lewis, Michael Loewenberg, Lieselotte Sippel, Camille Thomasson, Karen von Kunes

Open Session 4:00 PM – 5:45 PM:

Chair of the FAS-SEAS Senate **Paul Van Tassel** began the open session of the FAS-SEAS Senate meeting at 4 PM. He introduced **Pericles Lewis**, Dean of Yale College and Douglas Tracy Smith Professor of Comparative Literature and Professor of English, to talk about student diversity and mental health issues within Yale College. **Mr. Lewis** noted that **Paul Hoffman**, Director of Mental Health and Counseling at Yale Health, is joining him in this discussion. He noted that **Dr. Hoffman** has helped us rethink our service to our students and has committed a considerable resources on policy matters to better serve students who are facing various kinds of challenges in regard to their mental health. **Mr. Lewis** shared the vision of Yale College:

Yale College offers a liberal education that aims to:

- Educate talented students of diverse backgrounds to lead and serve in a complex and changing society.
- Provide a supportive residential community of learning in which social experience and the free exchange of ideas underpin the pursuit of knowledge.
- Cultivate both the broad intellectual, moral, civic, and creative capacities and the more specialized skills that will allow students to thrive beyond the college gates.

- Draw on the distinctive strengths and traditions of Yale University as a globally recognized leader across the arts, humanities, social sciences, sciences, engineering, and the professions.
- We seek to educate students who are broad-minded and autonomous, capable of making judgments and taking responsibility for their decisions. We believe that a liberal education should encourage students to become curious, engaged citizens. It should also prepare them well for their professional lives and further educational opportunities and help them develop as active learners who thrive in complex environments.

Mr. Lewis noted that our students today are more diverse than they have ever been ,and the Yale College Class of 2026 are represented as follows:

- 49% speak a language other than English at home, or as a first language.
- There are 56 countries represented.
- 20% are Pell Grant recipients.
- 53% receive a Yale need-based financial aid award.
- 51 US states and territories are represented.
- 18% are first generation students.
- 49%:51% - male:female
- 53% identify as students of color (US Cit. & Perm. Res.)

He said that some of the things he focus on during the next 5 years as Dean are:

- Maintaining diversity in a changing legal landscape
- Supporting success to students transitioning to college (mostly - first generation and low-income students).
- Poorvu Center, DUS's, and Advising resources.
- Promoting student social, emotional, and mental health.
- Policy changes and clarifications (Yale Mental Health and Counseling; Yale College Community Care (YC3)).

Mr. Lewis noted that Harvard is currently being sued -Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. vs President and Fellows of Harvard College. He noted that the University of North Carolina is also being sued -Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. vs University of North Carolina, Et Al, and among others Yale is also being sued by Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. He noted that the Yale suit is on hold and Yale is preparing for alternative ways to try and achieve diversity in various ways, particularly socioeconomic and geographic diversity. He noted that if the court strikes down affirmative action, it will be a challenge to maintain the racial diversity that we've seen in the last decade especially. **Mr. Lewis** said that supporting successful transitions to college for students is related to the question of first generation and low-income students, however not only low-income students, and we find that we need to help students to succeed even if they come from a different school system, if they are veterans, are a community college transfer, or are students from non-traditional situations, and are from a diversity of backgrounds and learning styles. **Mr. Lewis** spoke about policy changes and clarifications of the Mental Health and Counseling, and the College Community Care or YC3 programs that promote student social, emotional, and mental health assistance, and provide formal counseling and confidentiality as

needed to help with the issue of wait-lists at Yale Mental Health. It is easy access that reduces the barriers to getting help as needed.

Mr. Lewis opened the floor for questions. **Mr. Van Tassel** noted that the University has done an admirable job of mobilizing resources to support students from increasingly diverse backgrounds to get off to a good start academically, and in supporting the mental health of students in need. He asked **Dean Lewis** to talk about these and other challenges that he is facing in addition to these two areas. **Mr. Lewis** said that he is learning as he goes along, and he feels that communication is a key on how we approach whatever challenges come up. He would like to help students navigate through all of the high expectations that are put on Yale students, and to find a healthy balance. He noted that for our increasing diverse student body, there are many cultural resources that we already have that help students from diverse backgrounds settle in at Yale. He said on the learning side, he is a little more worried because we have a curriculum that has built up over the years that tends to assume you come to Yale and have done all of the AP's, and now some of our students come to Yale from places where AP's were not an option, and so they have not taken that material and are not prepared to take courses that already assume that the student has a knowledge that they don't have. What we've done to help with this is asked our DUS's to analyze what the different pathways are into their major so we don't assume that we're only preparing a major for the elite, when half of our students don't fit that mold. **Rebecca Toseland** thanked **Mr. Lewis** and **Mr. Hoffman** for the work that they are doing, and noted that she sees a difference since she was here as an undergraduate. She asked **Mr. Lewis** to explain the changes in the withdrawal process, and to highlight any other changes that are or will be made. **Mr. Lewis** noted that during COVID, Yale made changes to extend the deadline for Credit/D/Fail, and to take away grades in various other areas. He said while they may have been beneficial in some ways, not having too much structure can increase anxiety, and so we need to think of ways to have structure and have appropriate accommodations around structure. **Mr. Lewis** noted that we need to look at the academic policies, which he noted are elaborate and detailed and hard to read. He said he would like to simplify the process and give the residential college deans more ability to make decisions so that people are not feeling like they are dealing with a bureaucracy, noting that this is a complaint he hears from students. Regarding courses, he noted that there used to be a requirement that you need to take two courses while you are away on a withdrawal at some other university so you can prove that you can manage the rigors of a Yale education, and a requirement that you be productively occupied. He noted that if a student is in true crisis, we want them to be getting therapy while they are away. There is now a way that a student can take a two-course load per semester while in crisis, and we are considering the possibility of doing it for a full year, so in the case of a leave, you can extend your undergraduate time up to 5 years. He explained that now, a student no longer "withdraws" from Yale but takes a "medical leave of absence." When you "withdraw" you are no longer a student, and when you are on a "leave of absence" you are still a student and therefore still have all of the benefits afforded a student, including being able to participate in extracurricular activities. **Jing Yan** asked when preparing a course, how do we make it challenging for the students who are essentially prepared for a challenging course, and also balance it for students who come without this type of preparation? **Mr. Yan** also noted that this type of situation could have a negative impact on course evaluations, and asked how the administration deals with this if it happens. **Mr. Lewis** noted that in these cases, larger departments that offer multiple courses in the same area can do

this more easily than a small department that only offers one or two same courses. He is looking at offering more financial aid during the summer so that students who need to take courses to bring them up to speed with what is being offered to them in their major, can do so easier than before. He also would like to see more “bridge” programs offered in the summer to help bring students up to speed when they begin their fall semester. Regarding the matter of course evaluations, **Mr. Lewis** does not feel that there is a negative effect if a professor is evaluated as being “tough,” and does not think it would affect a tenure situation negatively. However, he thinks that we still need to keep working on the way that course evaluations are conducted and counted on, including how students use them to choose whose class they will take. **Sybil Alexandrov** asked about resources for faculty to learn how to deal with first generation students. **Mr. Lewis** will find out what the Poorvu Center has to offer. **Mr. Van Tassel** asked if the legal landscape changes, how would we be able to bring in students from diverse backgrounds – what would we have to do in order to keep up what we have been doing? **Mr. Lewis** responded that Yale and other peer institutions have been admitting diverse students for a long time and know how to do this effectively, and that new laws or lack thereof, will not stop us from continuing our traditions. **Maria Piñango** asked about what problems may arise with continuing with these programs. **Mr. Lewis** highlighted all of the special programs that help students who come to Yale and need special resources. He noted that these programs are effective for the students who are able to participate, but do not serve all of the students who may benefit from them. **Mr. Lewis** also noted that they are run by a small group of dedicated people who put in many hours and sometimes volunteer their free time. **Jill Campbell** noted that she teaches English 115, an introductory writing-intensive course, and that in the last few years, she belatedly discovered that more than half of the students had never written an essay at home and had only done timed writing. She wonders if this information is somehow gathered when students are admitted and if so, is there a way information can be communicated to instructors in different fields beforehand so that we know what to expect, or not to expect, of our students. **Mr. Lewis** said that he thinks the communication idea is excellent. He noted that our colleague **Marta Figlerowicz** led a study last summer on the writing experience our undergraduates have had with very illuminating results, and she is doing it again this summer and we hope it will help us inform placement and design of our introductory writing courses. He said that in the sciences, we’ve long had placement tests that help when you have students from very diverse preparation. **Mr. Lewis** talked about having these tools that would be more like a survey of a student’s background than a “test.” **Mr. Lewis** had to leave for another engagement and **Mr. Van Tassel** introduced **Paul Hoffman**, the Chief of Mental Health and Counseling (MHC) at Yale Health Plan, to talk about the mental health challenges in today’s climate. **Mr. Hoffman** is a psychologist and began his career at Yale as a therapist, then associate director of MHC, then as the interim and is now the director. He gave an overview of MHC.

MHC Overview:

- No Cost
- Confidential
- Individual Psychotherapy
- Group Psychotherapy
- Psychiatry

- Embedded Counseling
- Emergency Coverage
- Referrals
- Outreach and Programming
- Consultation

Individual Therapy:

- Therapy provided mostly by psychologists, but also have LCSWs and psychiatrists who provide therapy.
- Range of approaches including CBT, Psychodynamic, DBT, ACT, Solution-focused, EMDR, etc.
- Languages: English, Farsi, Mandarin, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Ukrainian

MHC runs several groups each semester that can be done in conjunction with other treatments. Each group has 2 therapists and there are 6-10 student group members.

Psychiatry:

- Medication consultations and ongoing management
- 13 MDs (2 more next year)
- 5 Psychiatry Residents
- 1 Psychiatric APRN (soon)

Embedded Counselors:

- Yale College (YC3)
- Medical School
- Law School
- School of the Environment
- School of Management
- SOM (Soon)
- Divinity (Soon)
- School of Music (Soon)
- Athletics (Soon)

The way that the embedded counselors work: Student Self Scheduled Appointments; Short-term treatment; Outreach and Programming; Group Therapy; and Appointments within one week.

Emergency Coverage:

- 2 MHC Clinicians available in-person from 8:30 AM – 5 PM
- After-hours coverage provided through ProtoCall, backed up by MHC
- Staffed by licensed mental health clinicians
- MHC follows up the next day

How is Yale Mental Health and Counseling different? (from every other college counseling center in the country):

Typical Counseling Center	MHC
Short-Term treatment	Short and long-term treatment
Referrals	Full Psychiatry
Outside Insurance	Many students with Yale Insurance
Possible fees and co-pays	No cost for treatment
Limited scope of treatment	Larger scope of service
Lower utilization (12% average)	High utilization (34%)

MHC Staffing:

- 19 psychologists
- 6 LCSW's
- 3 Psychiatrists
- 10 Embedded Counselors (4 psychologists & 6 Social Workers)
- 5 Psychiatry Residents
- 5 Postdoctoral Psychologists
- 58 Total Clinicians

Mr. Van Tassel asked if this number is what we need. **Mr. Hoffman** said that we certainly need more – we need more psychologists and more LCSW's and has been working on figuring out how many staff we need. In the past, we based staffing on the number of students enrolled. We are now looking at the utilization rate and how it compares to the number of clinicians, and so we are better than others in this area, but still need more staff. **Ms. Toseland** asked if **Mr. Hoffman** has the budget to fully staff the number needed. **Mr. Hoffman** explained that it takes a while to hire staff. He said that he has the budget to hire for a year, and it takes him the entire year to hire a certain number of staff and noted that we need a “significant amount” more staff and so it will take some time to reach the number needed. **Ms. Toseland** asked if he had access to the entire budget needed to reach an ideal number of staff. **Mr. Hoffman** said he asks for the amount that he needs to hire as many people as possible that he can hire in a year, and this is the way he does it. He needs to get approval for the positions and it takes him a year to do the hiring. **Ms. Piñango**, asked if there was some sort of a long-term plan, like a 10-year plan for hiring. **Mr. Hoffman** said he is currently working with a 3-year plan, and explained that the hiring process takes a long time and he is hiring as many people as he can each year until the ideal staffing is complete. **Mr. Van Tassel** asked if there are challenges in retaining all of these mental health professionals due to the nature of the positions? **Mr. Hoffman** noted that generally this is a field that normally has a large turnover rate, however he said Yale has worked on this issue so that currently, there is not a significant turnover rate. He noted that we have had progress in decreasing wait-time for the most part and most of the year wait time is a week for initial appointment. **Mr. Hoffman** spoke about the college mental health crisis, with rising rates of

utilization and increasing rates of anxiety, depression, eating disorders, suicidal ideation. He also shared data from a national survey program “Healthy Minds Data” that’s been used since 2007, and where respondents, who are a normative college population, are given set of questions to come up with the data on a national level. There are about 40,000 respondents and he shared data from 2007 and 2020:

- Anxiety: 2007-17%; 2020-31%
- Depression: 2007-22%; 2020-37%
- Eating disorders: 2013-5%; 2020-11%
- Marijuana use: 2007-14%; 2020-21%
- Binge Drinking: 2007-43%; 2020-33%
- Flourishing: 2012-57%; 2020-30%
- Personal Stigma: 2007-12%; 2020-7%
- Knowledge of Services: 2007-59%; 2020-74%
- Therapy: 2007-13%; 2020-29%
- Medications: 2007-12%; 2020-23%

Mr. Van Tassel asked if professionals have a sense of why these trends are taking place. **Mr. Hoffman** said there are lots of thoughts on this and that there are a lot of trends that negatively impact mental health, such as economic anxiety, climate anxiety, media in general and social media in particular, increase in competition among students, and sometimes things that are supposed to make life easier and have the opposite effect. He said there are many things that happen that have a negative impact on people’s mental health. **Ms. Piñango**, asked if there is a way that you track through the people who are advising students, who the students are that could benefit from getting help from MHC? **Mr. Hoffman** noted that it is difficult to track this in a general sense, however he said that advisors in residential colleges are better able to sense this need if it exists and direct the student to MHC. **Mr. Hoffman** compared the utilization numbers from 2010 to 2022 and noted that between 2015 and 2022, the numbers almost doubled, from 2596 in 2015 to 4943 in 2022, and noted events that were taking place during that period, from the election in 2016 to the recent pandemic, and that even though the numbers went down during the pandemic, it certainly contributed to the anxiety rates. He talked about post-pandemic problems:

- Increased social anxiety (and social skill deficits)
- Substance Abuse
- Eating disorders
- ADHD
- Significant academic skill deficits (and resulting academic anxiety)
- Increasing academic disparities.

What has MHC done (2020 – now)

- Increased clinicians: 34 in 2020; 58 now; 68 projected for fall 2023
- Increased diversity
- Co-created embedded counseling programs (along with schools)
- Telehealth
- Added Care Coordination

- Created Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) position
- Migrated to Electronic Health Records (HER)
- Decreased wait times
- Increased number of visits per student
- Invested in training program
- Opened two additional locations

On the Horizon:

- Continued disruptions to the academic environment (especially in high schools)
- Academic skill deficits
- Potential for increased disparities based on racial and economic factors
- Enrollment cliff (in 4 years)
- Gender divide in college applications
- Increased investment in mental health resources
- Pressure to keep students with significant mental health issues enrolled and supported
- Need for learning environments to adapt

Next steps for MHC:

- Continue to add therapists (decreased wait time; increased intensity and efficacy of treatment; decreased outsourcing to community providers)
- Greater outreach efforts along with increased student participation
- Greater development of treatment options or programs for students with high mental health needs
- Solve space issues

Mr. Van Tassel thanked **Mr. Hoffman** and **Mr. Lewis** for sharing their updates on Yale students and Yale Mental Health and Counseling with the Senate. He adjourned the FAS-SEAS Senate meeting at 5:45 PM.