

FAS Senate

AN ELECTED BODY OF THE FACULTY OF ARTS AND
SCIENCES
YALE UNIVERSITY

FAS Senate Meeting

Thursday, March 7, 2019 – ESC 110, 21 Sachem Street

APPROVED

In attendance

Senators: William Nordhaus, Chair, Jill Campbell, Deputy Chair, Sybil Alexandrov, Arielle Baskin-Sommers, Howard Bloch, Marijeta Bozovic, Alexandre Debs, Emily Erikson, John Geanakoplos, Shiri Goren, Matthew Jacobson, Brad Inwood, Ruth Koizim, Maureen Long, Ruzica Piskac, Charles Schmuttenmaer, Mark Solomon

FASS Program Coordinator Rose Rita Riccitelli

Absent: Senators – Jennifer Klein, , Rajit Manohar, Nikhil Padmanabhan, Theresa Schenker, Ian Shapiro

Guests: Richard Bribiescas, Gisella Caccone, Michael Fischer, Tamar Gendler, Joel Rosenbaum. Non-faculty: Steve Murphy, Matthew Regan

Agenda and Senate actions in bold

FAS Senate meeting

1. Welcome from Bill Nordhaus, Senate Chair

The meeting of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Senate (FASS) was called to order at 4:02 PM by Chair William Nordhaus.

Mr. Nordhaus explained that because Yale is in session for only two weeks in March, the meeting had been scheduled at the same time as the Yale College Faculty meeting, and he apologized for the conflict. Mr. Nordhaus noted that the main focus for today's FASS meeting is a presentation by Provost Ben Polak.

Reflecting on the progress made by the FASS, the Chair identified its most important achievement of 2018-19 as the release of the Faculty Excellence Report, the culmination of a major effort of the FASS over more than two years. While this report includes a number of observations and recommendations, its central recommendations are that the top leadership of the University put renewed emphasis on the University's core mission – particularly Yale College and the Graduate School – and that it recognize a robust and high quality faculty as the essential component of a great university. The Faculty Excellence Report demonstrates that the FAS faculty has been neglected in recent years, both in declining faculty compensation relative to our competitors (Yale salaries were at a premium of 11% in the 1970's compared to peer institutions and fell to a gap of 13% by 2018, figures roughly corroborated by the 2018

CESOF report) and in the stagnation of the size of the faculty, in stark contrast with other major universities. He compared Yale faculty size to three major universities for which we have data: in the last seven year period, our FAS faculty has declined 10%, and the FAS faculty is now 20% smaller than those of Harvard, Princeton, and Stanford. The FASS has posed the question of why this has happened to University leadership but has not received a response.

Another important finding of the Faculty Excellent Report, Mr. Nordhaus added, is faculty frustration with the growing service burden and increased red tape in administering University affairs.

Mr. Nordhaus then turned to the future of the FAS budget. At present, he said, FAS has the most limited budget authority of any school at Yale. Last year, he noted, the FASS recommended that the President appoint a committee to look into moving to a system of greater budget authority for the FAS, one similar to that of the professional schools. The President agreed to appoint a committee this spring (2019), with the FASS making recommendations on the membership of the committee. Mr. Nordhaus noted the complexity of the way the endowment is treated in our system of accounting; he has asked the Provost to explain that system in his presentation today.

Mr. Nordhaus also pointed to the lack of response from the administration to major FASS reports and requests. He cited the Parenting Report, delivered in 2016, as a notable example. While some of the recommendations of that report were eventually implemented, some were not, including the provision of parental leave for instructional faculty; and the administration provided no response about its reasons. A lack of consultation with the Senate on major initiatives affecting the FAS also remains an issue, from the non-renaming of Calhoun to the Schwarzman Center, the Jackson School of Global Affairs, the major directions of a new capital campaign, and initiatives announced for “faculty excellence.” In some cases the FASS was informed after decisions were made on important initiatives. Mr. Nordhaus observed that one of the reasons for forming the FASS was for the President and administration to use it as a sounding board for major initiatives.

Using an ecological metaphor to consider causes for these patterns, Mr. Nordhaus described the FASS as a new organism in a long-standing ecosystem adapted to particular resources, requirements, and constraints, and he speculated that the FASS has not yet established its own niche among existing powerful entities that resist its emergence. He feels the FASS will gain ground in the long run but noted the difficulties facing it thus far. Looking back at the ups and downs of the FASS over its first four years, Mr. Nordhaus described his membership in the Senate as a very rewarding and heartening experience: much has been accomplished, and Senators who have served can take great pride in these accomplishments. However, he affirmed, much remains to be done if we are going to make the FASS an important part of the administrative ecosystem.

Mr. Nordhaus invited comments from Senators, and asked for their guidance about whether he should write a letter to faculty based on these remarks. John Geanakoplos inquired about the anticipated advantages of having the FAS in control of the FAS budget. Mr. Nordhaus replied that the main problem with the existing budget is not being able to trade off between different entities with the FAS.

2. Approval of minutes, FASS meeting, February 14, 2019

Jill Campbell, Deputy Chair of the FASS, presented the minutes from the FASS February 14, 2019 meeting and asked for corrections and comments. Mr. Geanakoplos asked that he be mentioned in the minutes as one of the people who spoke against having closed meetings. A discussion ensued both about

the level of specificity or summary in FASS minutes and about the proposal to hold parts of regular FASS sessions under a “closed” format. Mr. Nordhaus recommended deferring discussion of both issues to a future meeting, when they can be considered and debated more systematically. He asked for a motion to accept the minutes subject to the proviso of a resolution of the request made by Mr. Geanakoplos. Brad Inwood made a motion to accept the minutes and a vote was taken.

The minutes for the February 14, 2019, FASS meeting were unanimously approved.

3. Committee Reports

Mark Solomon reported on the Governance Committee’s efforts to achieve more transparency in the Faculty Handbook. This is an ongoing discussion and so far, there has been no resistance. Mr. Solomon said that about ten years of faculty handbooks will be made available electronically. He added that it would be good to have older handbooks also put on line; if anyone has copies of printed handbooks, it would be good to share them for possible scanning. Going forward, previous handbooks are being put online, with notations of changes made.

Mr. Solomon also reported that he and Alex Debs had a meeting with Harold Rose from the Office of General Counsel about searches of faculty computer records – mostly computers but also phones. He explained that there are two occasions for such searches: cases of suspected wrong-doing by faculty members, and (more commonly) cases of litigation against the University, when a faculty member’s records might include something relevant to the case. When this occurs, any email that is on the Yale server is preserved, whereas deleted emails are ordinarily removed from the server after six months. In cases of litigation holds, emails are preserved until the litigation ends. In addition, for those employing Crash Plan, back-ups are also preserved until litigation ends. Mr. Solomon reported that faculty are not informed of searches. Asked about the frequency of such searches, Mr. Rose stated that in general, there are just a handful conducted per year. Mr. Solomon said that the committee would like to interview people who have been through the process to find out their experience when their records are being searched. Senators inquired about the conditions of notification of faculty whose emails are subjected to searches and whether the University is obligated to notify faculty of searches; Mr. Solomon said the Committee would seek confirmation of their understanding about non-notification of faculty. He added that he asked Mr. Rose if there have been any National Security Letters received from the FBI recently. While Mr. Rose is not at liberty to share this information, he did imply that it is not a recent occurrence. Finally, Mr. Solomon addressed the protections in place for servers such as Canvas and G-Mail: when Yale negotiates contracts with servers, the key concern of the University is the protection of student records and the contracts are structured with this concern in mind.

Mr. Geanakoplos reported that the Faculty Advancement Committee plans to meet following Spring Break and to begin to address two issues: 1) the increasing demands on faculty time; and 2) the Yale College admissions process and criteria. Noting the involvement of faculty in important changes to admissions policies in the past, including the end of the “Jewish quota,” he suggested that it is time for another period of faculty engagement with admissions policies and practices. He asked Senators who are interested in investigation of either burdens on faculty time or admissions to please contact him.

There was no report from the Budget Committee.

Reporting on behalf of the Nominations Committee, Mr. Schmuttenmaer noted that the nominations window closes on March 8, 2019. He reported on the open seats in each category (three open seats for the “at large” positions, with the incumbents running; two open seats in the Humanities, with one required to be filled by an untenured faculty and no incumbents running; three open seats in the Social Sciences, with two incumbents running; and three open seats in the Sciences, with one incumbent running). The goal, he said, is to have twice as many candidates as there are slots; there are eleven openings so he feels that we should have twenty-five candidates. He asked that any Senator who has not submitted nominations to do so by tomorrow, March 8th.

Mr. Nordhaus reported on the Elections Committee and introduced Matthew Regan, Communications Manager of the Cowles Foundation for Research in Economics, who will take over the administration of FASS elections this year.

Arielle Baskin-Sommers reported on behalf of the Peer Advisory Committee. The committee is finalizing a flyer publicizing the functions of the Committee to be posted in department offices; it has also set up a Google email address so that people can contact the committee without using the Yale server.

The major project of the Peer Advisory Committee this year has been an investigation into the desirability of creating a position for a university ombudsperson at Yale. Ms. Baskin-Sommers reported that she and Ms. Campbell have been conducting interviews with administrators and others at the University about the potential functions and benefits of an ombudsperson. The position, she said, would be situated outside of the Dean’s office and would be confidential, neutral, and impartial; the person serving in this office would not be on any committees or judge or interact with faculty in any way that might create potential conflicts in their role. She noted that an ombudsperson would not usually provide any solutions. Rather, they would support faculty or students by helping people work through the issues themselves; they would also potentially serve as a facilitator between a faculty member or student and other parties.

Ms. Baskin-Sommers reported that the ombudsperson at the Medical School sees about fifteen to twenty students and faculty per month, including some from FAS even though FAS is not part of her official purview. The Medical School ombudsperson suggested that having an independent ombudsperson would help build relationships between the administration and students and faculty and also promote transparency about issues that recur. Ms. Baskin-Sommers noted that members of the administration interviewed felt that we already have this infrastructure; they suggested that the roles of certain deans, including Jack Dovidio, Larry Gladney, and Debra Fischer, include the functions of an ombudsperson, though this may not be adequately known, so a first step would be to improve communication about their roles. She noted that the administration was not aware that the FASS has a Peer Advisory Committee. Administrators expressed the view that it would be too difficult for one person to effectively navigate Yale’s system with multiple deans overseeing different areas. Ms. Baskin-Sommers said that once interviews are completed, the Peer Advisory Committee will write their report and present it to the FASS with recommendations. Mr. Nordhaus thanked Ms. Baskin-Sommers and would like the committee’s report ready for a discussion at the FASS April meeting. Mr. Solomon noted the issues surrounding conflict of interest in having administrators serve as ombudspersons. He also pointed out that the people cited as serving ombudsperson-like functions are in positions that entail mandatory reporting, which an ombudsperson would not be subject to.

Shiri Goren reported on a meeting of members of the Instructional Faculty Committee with the Dean of Yale College, where they learned that teaching prizes will now include instructional faculty, which is excellent news. She said there will be more information to come at future FASS meetings.

4. Bass Library renovation planning process; and new business

Mr. Nordhaus noted, while there is ongoing discussion of the Bass Library renovation planning process, there is nothing to report today as Jennifer Klein, Chair of the Instructional Committee's sub-committee on the Library, is away.

Mr. Nordhaus also reported that he has had some communications about the Provost's email [of February 22, 2019] about faculty abuse of staff. He will not, however, comment on it today. He did note that one interesting issue revealed by discussion of the Provost's email is that many staff-members are not aware of the *Faculty Standards of Conduct and Procedures* and so do not know of the procedures for reporting, for example, verbal abuse by faculty. He suggested that one thing we can do is to make sure that staff members are aware of the *Standards and Procedures*, especially as they pertain to them.

Mr. Nordhaus asked for any new business – there was none.

5. Planning for Faculty Forum, March 27, 2019

Mr. Nordhaus described planning for the *Faculty Forum*, including an email letter to faculty and a tentative plan for the structure of the session. He reported that responses to his message have not been overwhelming; he plans to send another message tonight. Mr. Schmuttenmaer and Ms. Campbell urged outreach to non-Senators to encourage their participation.

6. Presentation from the Provost, Ben Polak, Department of Economics

Mr. Nordhaus introduced Provost Ben Polak to address the FASS and guests. He explained that the Provost's presentation will be followed by remarks by Senator Geanakoplos. The floor will then be opened for Senators to ask questions and offer remarks and for the Provost to respond.

The Provost greeted the group. He introduced an extended metaphor to explain fund accounting and the relation of the endowment to the budget, likening revenues, expenses, and University funds to rivers flowing in and out of a lake, with the endowment figured as a snow-pack whose melt provides a significant additional stream.

The Provost's first slide showed the budget for this fiscal year with columns representing revenues flowing into major units of the University – the Medical School, Professional Schools, Arts Schools, FAS, Institutes and Collections, Campus Services, Administrative Units, and University Unrestricted – totaling about \$4 billion this year. He noted that the endowment provides almost 1/3 of the revenues flowing in and is the major source of revenue for the University. His next slide showed the disbursement of funds among units. The Provost noted that the Medical School, although it has the largest proportion of the budget (approximately 46%), uses the smallest portion of endowment revenue (9%) and does not rely heavily on endowment funds because of its other revenue sources. The endowment supports the Arts and Professional

Schools at 15%, the Art Gallery and libraries at 18%, with the FAS at 35%. The rest, he noted is unrestricted – not meant for a particular school or project. Mr. Nordhaus asked how much of the endowment that goes to the FAS is restricted to FAS and how much is directed to FAS. The Provost responded that this is difficult to answer because one would have to review every endowment to determine if it is specifically intended for what it is supporting. He noted that looking at the figures, they understate the revenues of the Arts and Sciences and make them look smaller than they really are.

Mr. Polak then turned to out-flows: expenses and fund transfers. He observed that the total expenses for the University are almost the same as the total revenue, as is intended for a non-profit organization. He displayed a slide showing which schools are most endowment-dependent and which units do not depend heavily on endowment funds. He noted that within fund transfers to the Arts Schools, the Drama School takes the biggest portion. Turning to the changing size of the endowment itself, he said that over an 18-year period, the endowment grew from \$17.5 billion to \$29.5 billion – an increase of about 2/3, adjusted for inflation. The bad news, Mr. Polak commented, is that it will not sustain this growth. Over a 20-year period, he reported, the return on the endowment averaged about 11%; over a 10-year period, 7.5%.

The Provost then described the principles guiding Yale's approach to spending: 1) intergenerational neutrality, drawing on the endowment each year only what we believe will be replaced by long-term growth (5.25% plus 3% inflation); 2) Tobin's Spending Rule [which sets the annual distribution each year through a formula with 80% set by a stability term – the prior year's spending adjusted for inflation – and 20% by a "market" term, based on the long-term sustainable rate of distribution, 5.25%, times the market value of the endowment]. He noted that we feel constrained because, as a non-profit, we are always spending what we have.

Since 2009, the Provost added, our expenses have risen: we are spending more than we did then because Yale has grown and expenses have gone up. He cited some areas of steep growth in expenses in the FAS over the last 10-15 years: financial aid, support of graduate students, construction of buildings, and repairing of the old residential colleges. He noted that one thing that Yale did not spend heavily on in this period is building up our Science facilities. Explaining the special constraints on Yale's budget that other universities do not have, the Provost spoke of several exceptional budgetary demands: 1) Yale's arts schools; 2) its collections (on which Yale spends vastly more, he said, than any university but Harvard); 3) residential life for students (on which, he said, nobody spends as much); 4) expensive architecture; 5) financial aid. Although Provost Polak had more to share, he stopped at this point to listen to faculty commenter John Geanakoplos and then to answer questions.

Senator Geanakoplos's remarks focused on faculty excellence in scholarship and teaching as a top priority for Yale spending and on the decline of Yale's standing in these areas (for the full text of his remarks, see Appendix 1). As one external reflection of Yale's slipping position, he cited the *U.S. News & World Report's* ranking of colleges, which now places Yale in a four-way tie for third through six. He observed that the world of higher education has become more competitive, and this is precisely why it is disappointing that we have reduced the relative resources that we devote to our faculty, especially as Yale's endowment consistently outperforms those of its rivals. He noted the steep decline in Yale faculty salaries relative to peer institutions, documented in both the FASS Faculty Excellence Report and CESOF reports. He also pointed to Yale's small and decreasing FAS faculty size, declining from 688 in 2010 to 652 this year, while faculty numbers at peer institutions have grown enormously, leaving Yale 15% to 20% smaller

than our major competitors. He also noted the reduction in staff support for faculty, citing his own experience. According to the Senate's survey results, he said, 73% of Yale faculty think that their administrative duties have increased since they came to Yale, while just 2% think that they have gone down.

Senator Geanakoplos posed the following questions to the Provost: 1) What are we going to do to reverse these trends in status and resources? 2) What is the timetable for bringing our salaries up to our peers? 3) Why has our faculty shrunk over the last seven years? 4) Why do we set an *aspirational* target faculty of 703 that is 11% below the current *average* of Harvard, Princeton, and Stanford? 5) Why can't the President devote the resources to what he says is his highest priority, especially given the large budget surpluses of the last two years and high returns (12.3%) on the endowment? 6) Why do we always hear about new centers, new initiatives, and new buildings, and why does faculty excellence have to wait for all of these things? He said that faculty excellence should be the core priority of the administration's attention and come from core funds. Referring to Dean Jack Dovidio's injunction to faculty at the meeting about the CESOF report – that they must remember that Yale's spending is a matter of priorities – Mr. Geanakoplos concluded by asking: what are Yale's priorities, and are faculty its priority or not?

Mr. Nordhaus invited comments and questions from other Senators.

Brad Inwood inquired about whether operating reserves might be allowed to reside in units, and about whether these decentralized funds could serve some of the smoothing function the Provost had alluded to as necessary for budgetary planning, as well as allowing units some flexibility in setting their own priorities.

Ms. Goren asked the Provost to describe the University's vision and strategy regarding instructional faculty. She noted the consistent focus on ladder faculty in recent discussions and the lack of attention to instructional faculty -- a large and growing population that shoulders a lot of the responsibility of teaching, research, and service.

Ms. Campbell spoke on behalf of faculty colleagues who have expressed anger and frustration about the picture they see in the CESOF and Faculty Excellence reports, which confirmed their own experience. These faculty are looking to the leaders of the University to produce results. She observed that, although many colleagues are not familiar with the details of the budget that the Provost has presented, they feel clear that the faculty should be a top priority. She commented that it is hard to hear about Yale's unequalled investment in collections and expensive architecture while feeling that the faculty who are performing the core mission of the University have not merited the devotion of resources that we have trusted our leaders to be providing.

Mr. Nordhaus said it is important to understand how we got where we are in terms of priorities and our spending patterns. It is difficult, he commented, to answer the questions about the faculty not growing – that we are not keeping up is clear. He feels the role of the provost is to take the long view and to focus on the long-term direction of the University and the capital operating budget. When he hears about expensive architecture, West Campus, an expensive art school, expensive art galleries, very rapid growth in scholarships and discounted tuition, it appears to him very difficult for top leaders to keep a focus on the core mission.

Provost Polak responded that his top priorities as Provost have always been scholarship and teaching, and that he has aimed throughout his time to shift resources back to the academic core. The heart of the core is research and teaching - and at the core of these are faculty, and great students as well. In response to Mr. Nordhaus's and Ms. Campbell's remarks, he said that it is the job of the provost to steer the resources insofar as he or she can, towards the core mission, and we have shifted resources towards the academic core. He explained that FAS is part of the academic core but not the whole academic core, and that the whole academic core lies in all of the schools. He said he believes in the importance of financial aid to the core mission; he has increased the resources in financial aid because of this belief. He agreed that there are areas where Yale has slipped and areas where its standing is in danger. He affirmed that we have to have faculty excellence at our core. He said his priorities are: 1) faculty excellence; 2) facilities and space, especially in the Sciences but also in Drama; 3) maintaining Yale's commitment to financial aid. He concluded by saying that he agrees with much of the FASS Faculty Excellence Report, including most of the numbers presented in it.

Mr. Nordhaus thanked the Provost for his presentation and adjourned the meeting at 6:08 PM.

Appendix 1. Response to Provost's presentation: John Geanakoplos, Department of Economics

Ben, you painted a breathtaking landscape of the endowment glacier feeding and flowing through Yale's many rivers. I was almost brought to tears when you conjured the abyss of poverty we risk every year in case the glacier stops growing so fast.

I will respond today by talking entirely about what should be the biggest river in your landscape: excellence in research and teaching. I know your heart is in the right place. Your career as Cambridge Apostle, Harvard Junior Fellow, the last junior economist to turn down Harvard for Yale, and DeVane teaching medalist exemplified excellence in teaching and research. But something has gone wrong.

When I was a Yale undergraduate in the mid-1970s we all thought we were at the number one college in the world. Our President had been on the cover of Time Magazine, our campus was better known to the public via Doonesbury than any other, and we led the way on co-education. Most importantly, and not coincidentally, we could count at least half a dozen departments, in which most of the College majored, as unambiguously number one.

Yale is a magical institution, with an enchanting campus. I am still in love with Yale. But we are slipping. Our faculty knows it. Out of almost 500 faculty who responded to the survey conducted by the Senate, just 1.8% said their department was the clear leader in its field. The world knows it too. Our College ranking in US News and World Report has dropped all the way into a tie for third through sixth. Our ratings in scholarly research have fallen further.

Of course the world has become more competitive. That is precisely why it is so disappointing that we have reduced the relative resources we devote to our faculty. It is also puzzling, since the Yale endowment has steadily outperformed its rivals.

You have seen the graph of AAUP salaries where we go from 11% above our rivals in 1970, to even with them in 1980, where we stay for 25 years, as if somebody were paying attention to those very numbers. Then in the last 10 years we drop to 13% behind. (With access to confidential data over a shorter period of time, CESOF confirmed the trend and concluded the magnitude might be 2/3 as big.)

You saw the numbers for ladder faculty size. We dropped from 688 in 2010-11 to 652 in 2017-18, which by the way is lower than the year before, and barely higher than where we were in 1984-85. By contrast our peers have been steadily growing, and are now almost 20% bigger than we are.

When I started at Yale I had a quarter-time secretary plus another who typed every one of my manuscripts and lecture notes. Now 18 of us share an assistant. I hire my own assistant out of my own pocket. 73% of the Yale faculty we surveyed think their administrative duties have increased since they came to Yale. Just 2% thought they had gone down.

What are we going to do differently to reverse the trend in status and resources?

What is the timetable for bringing Yale salaries up to our peers?

Why has our faculty been shrinking over the last 7 years?

Why do we set an *aspirational* target faculty size of 703 that is 11% below the *current* average of Harvard, Princeton, and Stanford?

Why can't the President devote the resources to what he says is his highest priority? Common sense cries out that there is surely \$40 million more to spend on the faculty out of a budget of \$3.8 billion. The budget surplus was \$91 million this year, and \$115 million the year before. Why not use that? The return on the endowment last year was 12.3%, 4% above what was provisioned in budget planning the year before. That return surplus from one year alone (of over \$1 billion) could more than fund the faculty compensation gap in perpetuity.

Why do we always hear about new centers and new initiatives and new buildings? We can't be out of space. We have fewer faculty and more buildings than 7 years ago. Why does faculty excellence have to wait for new buildings, or for initiatives like the Jackson Center that depend on the whims of donors? If excellence is a core priority, it should come out of core funds, and be the focus of the administration's attention.

Speaking on behalf of the administration, in response to the CESOF report, Jack Davidio said he was surprised and glad to learn about what we called the faculty compensation deficit. The administration would do something he said. But we had to remember that it was a matter of priorities. Well, what are the priorities?