

MAY 2019 FAS Senate Voter's Guide



Sybil Alexandrov
Senior Lector II
Department of Spanish and Portuguese
HUMANITIES

It has been an honor to serve on the FAS Senate for nearly two years. I have taught Spanish language at Yale for twenty-two years and have been actively involved in pedagogic and other academic initiatives across languages. I have a clear sense of issues pertaining to instructional faculty, who play an essential and insufficiently recognized role in the education of Yale undergraduates. The FAS Senate has been instrumental in articulating and communicating these to the administration and some progress has been made. However, the conditions of our employment and our status in the FAS do not sufficiently reflect the contribution we make to the faculty's collective educational mission. If reelected, I will focus on issues that seriously impact our students and on realistic ways to improve such matters as salary and parenting leave for instructional faculty, as well as topics of concern to the faculty more broadly.



Emily Erikson
Associate Professor, Sociology (with Tenure)
SOCIAL SCIENCES

After completing two years of service on the FAS senate, I am honored to be nominated for another term. If re-elected, my priority in the coming two years would be to focus on the service burden at the university. I gain a great deal from the service that I perform for the university. I believe it is central to fostering the engaged and informed community vital to the operations of the university and the pursuit of intellectual excellence more generally. However, I am interested in assessing ways through which service might be made more efficient, productive, and fulfilling for the faculty.



Joe Fischel

Associate Professor, Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies (untenured)
HUMANITIES

I am delighted to be nominated to the FAS Senate, and I am so grateful for the Senate's work on our behalf. My close colleagues serve as senators, and I hope to advocate as they do for our faculty and for a better Yale.

In the seven years I have worked at Yale as a ladder faculty member, I have contributed significant service to my program, Women's, Gender, & Sexuality Studies, in capacities as DUS, DGS, and chair of several curricular and award committees. I appreciate now the opportunity to be more outward-looking, to collaborate on improving our university across departments and divisions, for staff, students and faculty.

In particular, I am interested in developing procedures to ensure accountability regarding administrative commitments to departments and programs; strategizing enforcement powers for the FAS Senate's policy recommendations; and improving faculty diversity and university accessibility for persons with disabilities. Also, as a professor whose course materials are regularly provocative and uncomfortable, I want to help make sure our faculty standards of conduct respect our pedagogic obligations and intellectual aspirations while guaranteeing equal educational opportunities for all students.



John Geanakoplos

James Tobin Professor of Economics
SOCIAL SCIENCES

The University functions best when crucial decisions are made by the Administration in partnership with the Faculty. I have served on four faculty-wide committees that issued reports that influenced University policy. I chaired the 1988 CESOF committee (on the economic status of the faculty) that recommended maternity leave, which was adopted by the university in the Provost's response to our report. Two years later I again

chaired CESOF when we recommended free meals for the faculty in the colleges, which was adopted by the University in the Provost's response to the report. In 1991, after President Benno Schmidt announced that he was shrinking the faculty by 15% in order to cut costs, I served on the Faculty Review Committee (chaired by Tom Carew) that was created by the faculty to assess the actions of the President. I delivered the first half of the report, in which we said that the President had got the economics all wrong and the university was far from broke. The conclusions and recommendations of the report were accepted by the new President, who took office three months later.

For the last two years I co-chaired the FAS Senate Faculty Advancement Committee that wrote the Faculty Excellence Report. As with the other reports, this involved input from a broad range of faculty from outside the committee and a collaborative effort among many faculty on the committee who each devoted dozens of hours to try to make Yale better. The report has surely influenced the administration; hopefully the university will fully embrace its 12 recommendations, including the elimination of the Faculty Compensation Deficit.

If elected I would like to continue Senate initiatives to figure out why the administrative burden on faculty seems so much greater than it was 20 years ago, and to examine undergraduate admissions. Yale faculty are justly proud of our excellent students, and in our survey expressed a desire to better understand the admissions process, prophetically, it turned out. Now, when Yale is involved in a national college admissions scandal, is an appropriate moment to consider whether the College's admission criteria are ideally formulated to foster Yale's leadership goals.



Alessandro Gomez

Professor, Department of Mechanical Engineering and Materials Science

Yale University

SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

I have been on the Yale faculty since 1989 and currently serve as Professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering and Materials Science (MEMS). Over the years I have become increasingly worried about governance at Yale: too much power is in the hands of few, which should be of concern to all members of a progressive institution, no matter how well intentioned those few administrators are. There is an apparent lack of transparency in the decision-making process, based on asymmetry of information between faculty and administration and, possibly, a deliberate divide-and-conquer strategy. Individually, it would be very difficult for a faculty member to tackle these issues but collectively we can through the Faculty Senate. If elected, I would hope to work on these issues and others brought up by the faculty, with the goal of ensuring a greater

participation of the faculty at early stages in the process leading to critical decisions. I will be a forceful advocate of the needs and priorities of the faculty for the general betterment of Yale.



Valerie Horsley

Associate Professor of Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology and Dermatology (with Tenure)
SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

I am honored to be nominated for the FAS Senate. I am an Associate Professor with Tenure in the Department of Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology. Over the last 10 years, I have been active in working to bring community to Yale through bringing more childcare, speaking for women in STEM, and a host of other service activities. I would like Yale to be an inclusive community that fosters excellence in our students and faculty, regardless of their status, gender, race, or background. It would be my honor to serve on the FAS Senate to find solutions for issues that impact FAS faculty and developing ways to connect to our broader community in New Haven and throughout Connecticut. If elected, I would do my best to enthusiastically advocate for issues that are important to you, as my colleagues.



Jennifer Klein

Professor of History
HUMANITIES

As more of our social institutions get bent toward the imperatives of corporate modes of thinking and “management,” the FAS faculty has an essential role to play in defending universities as social communities, places of democratic culture and practice and creative problem solving, and institutions of intersecting labors.

In the past two years that I have served on the FAS Senate, I have also found that the Senate has consistently sought to foreground support for stellar teaching and rigorous, innovative research.

I am a history professor who has come up through the ranks at Yale. I have served as DUS of History, Director of our Senior Essay Program, chair of the department's Advisory Committee on Racial Diversity and Gender Equity, and member of the department's Graduate Committee and the Executive Committee.

As an elected senator, I have served on the Senate's Committee on Instructional Teaching and Libraries, the Budget Committee, and Committee on Faculty Diversity. With a more informal committee on the Humanities, I have been participating in regular meetings with the Dean of the Humanities, addressing issues of research support; greater recognition of service work and mentoring by instructional and ladder faculty; pay and other inequities encumbering instructional and untenured faculty; and the future of the Humanities at Yale. We are working to get the administration to recognize that attracting and maintaining the best scholars requires stepping up to levels of research support and salary offered by peer institutions and restoring money to our libraries, departmental research and speaker funds, conference travel, and graduate programs.

A key priority of mine has been the university libraries. Given this year's imbroglio over the Bass Library, it is more important than ever that the FAS push for faculty inclusion in planning processes and decisions that so integrally connect to our teaching and research. I remain committed to communicating that our libraries should be understood as more than just a compendium of on-line resources. We must maintain our book collections and not fall further behind in essential fields. Special collections should be kept intact and provided with sufficient curatorial staff; managerial decisions about these should be more transparent to faculty.

Members of the FASS have put tremendous time and effort into producing vital reports and public statements on major issues that faculty long should have been consulted on. I'm committed to seeing the university administration follow through on the Senate's incisive reports on the conditions of non-ladder faculty, child care and parenting, and faculty excellence. With the new capital campaign, I believe the Senate can act as a forum for debating the capital campaign's objectives and seeking to ensure that definitive plans for racial and gender diversity and equity (in hiring, promotion, curriculum, and research) are woven into such university priorities. Transparency and inclusive process connect all of these matters.



Hélène Landemore

Associate Professor of Political Science (with Tenure)
SOCIAL SCIENCES

I'm a tenured Associate Professor of Political Science. In the last year I have become more aware of the work done by the Senate on behalf of the Yale community of teachers, researchers, and students and I have been impressed by the influence that this seemingly purely advisory body can wield. The last FAS Senate report also opened my eyes to a number of governance issues at the University level, which made me want to run for

election. If elected I would fight for introducing greater transparency and accountability in university governance. This starts in my view by creating more solidarity between departments and better knowledge of each other's issues. Because it's easier to generate solidarity when the size of the pie increases, I would fight for Yale to close the 15% "salary gap" revealed by the 2018 FAS Senate report. Generally, I think Yale should re-focus its resources and energies on its core asset, namely we the faculty – whether tenured or untenured, ladder or not. Finally, I would seek to make Yale deliver on its commitment to inclusion and diversity and generally push for creating a more welcoming environment for all.



Rajit Manohar

John C. Malone Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science
SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

I joined Yale in 2017, and was elected to the FAS senate a few months after I arrived. My hope is that the FAS senate will facilitate an atmosphere of cooperation between the faculty and administration, while always representing the views of the faculty. This is especially important as Yale embarks on its science initiative. Prior to joining Yale, I was on the Cornell faculty for eighteen years where I served as the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies for Engineering, and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the Applied Sciences campus in NYC.



Tim Newhouse

Associate Professor of Chemistry (Untenured)
SCIENCE

I am an untenured Associate Professor of Chemistry and member of the Interdepartmental Neuroscience Program. If elected to the FAS Senate, I would be a strong and vocal advocate for policies and programs to support faculty research and teaching. I will strive to engage faculty across disciplines and ranks in conversations about what we need from university structures. I will argue for increased resources dedicated to faculty recruitment and retention, which may take the form of increased faculty size, direct compensation, fringe benefits, spousal hiring practices, family leave policies, and research budgets. More broadly, I hope that the FAS Senate can help shift the conversation at Yale away from the goal of catching up to our peer institutions: Yale should be a place that leads, rather than follows, other universities.



William Nordhaus

Sterling Professor of Economics and Professor of Forestry & Environmental Studies, FAS Senate Executive Council Member
SOCIAL SCIENCES

I am running for another term to continue working on issues that I believe most important to the FAS and its faculty. First, the budget and organizational structure of the FAS are new and need to be examined carefully to ensure they are serving our teaching and research mission. The President will soon appoint a committee to evaluate the structure, and the Senate should consult with the committee. Second, the Senate has not yet secured its role in the Yale ecosystem as a partner in the shared governance of the institution, and this should be a high priority in the next few years. Third, issues such as the lagging compensation of faculty and stagnant size of the FAS faculty have been clearly shown in Senate reports, and the Senate should continue to remind the administration of the central importance of fixing these problems for the excellence of the FAS."



Paul North

Professor of Germanic Languages and Literature
HUMANITIES

“Freedom is the consciousness of necessity” is a quote from Marx you can find all over the internet. One of the biggest gifts the FAS Senate has given to faculty up to this point has been a growing consciousness of our real constraints – on access to money, on hiring inclusively, on equality of participation for instructional faculty, among many other things. If we can’t see the constraints, we can’t respond. Having been a faculty member at Yale for 10 years, I see the real difference the Senate is making and I believe strongly in its consciousness-raising activities. If elected, I would hope to continue to bring out facts that can help faculty do their teaching and research in the freest possible way. I am particularly interested in the budget and how financial decisions are made across the university. If elected I would do my best to represent the interests of all faculty of every rank and status.



Paul Van Tassell

Professor of Chemical & Environmental Engineering & Biomedical Engineering
SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

I am very excited about the possibility to serve in the FAS Senate, a key element of University governance. I find three issues to be of particular interest. One is the balance every institution must strike between academic strength that is broad / fundamental on one hand, and targeted / focused on the other. While I recognize the wisdom in investing in strengths, and the principle that development may at times demand focus, I strongly believe the long term academic strength of the University depends heavily on investments in core areas / disciplines, and hope to work with my Senate colleagues to ensure that Yale strikes an optimal balance here. A second issue concerns the graduate student experience at Yale. While already strong, I believe through reform of the student funding model (to be less reliant on external grants) and enhanced focus on extracurricular

opportunities (e.g. on-campus housing, support for internships / conferences), the graduate student experience at Yale could approach the virtually unparalleled experience already offered to our undergraduates. Finally, a third issue concerns the relationship between Yale and the City of New Haven. In many ways, the City is flourishing, as evidenced by surges in demand for housing, entertainment, and retail. Still, parts of New Haven face significant challenges. From my perspective as both City resident and Yale faculty member, I hope to explore / advance new ways in which the University may contribute to, and benefit from, New Haven.



Kirk Wetters

Professor, German
HUMANITIES

Since coming to Yale in 2004, I have served my department and the university in ways that make the FAS Senate a logical next step. Following several years as DUS during my first decade at Yale, I am currently completing my first three-year term as chair of the German Department. This work for my department has given me familiarity with the administrative realm and an overview of the issues and concerns of humanities departments. Since 2013-2014 I have been Chair of the Language Study Committee (LSC), which has given me deep experience and sympathy with the concerns of instructional faculty. In all of these positions, I have learned that making (or preventing) changes at Yale is often a difficult process, which takes patience, complicated coordination and communication – and often multiple attempts. Also, for more than a decade I have been a regular member of the Committee on Honors and Academic Standing (CHAS), which helped me to understand Yale's academic policies in relation to students and faculty outside of my own division and discipline. On the basis of these experiences, I bring to the FAS Senate a deep and sometimes frustrating understanding of “the art of the possible” at Yale (if that reference is not too German). I recognize that the university – all universities – are in a defensive posture these days, and this informs my approach, my frustration, and my desire to contribute to the FAS Senate in any way I can. I don't have a specific agenda, platform or constituency, but I think that the faculty's voice should be more prominent at Yale and for this reason I would be honored to think together with colleagues on the FAS Senate about the most pressing concerns of our community and what we can do to make the university a better place for all of us.