

New York, February 13, 2024

Dear President Berman,  
Dear Provost Botman:

The faculty council is currently facing a crisis in fulfilling its designated role of providing a voice for the faculty and representing YU faculty to the administration.

Multiple surveys conducted by the faculty council regarding the state of the faculty between 2020 and 2023 show a sustained dissatisfaction among YU faculty. Key contributors to this discontent include ongoing reductions in faculty benefits and very small infrequent raises, greatly outpaced by inflation, such that long term faculty earn much less than when initially hired. There are no incentives or merit pay in place to move forward the objectives of research and teaching. Additionally, our colleagues express concerns arising from the diminishing numbers of full-time research faculty.

The faculty council has attempted to communicate with the upper administration through meetings, resolutions, emails, and formal letters—all of which have been publicly posted on the YU website— but to no avail. Typically, we would either receive no response or would be granted a meeting which led to no meaningful changes. On one notable occasion, we received the explanation that budgetary constraints prevented better compensation for the faculty. Paradoxically, it was asserted (CFO, April 2023) that salary increases for the upper administration were deemed necessary to maintain quality and excellence in a competitive market like New York.

The council would like to see a meaningful response and an indication that its concerns shall be addressed. Right now, it seems that there is no plan to provide pay increases so that faculty can keep up with inflation or any merit pay. There seems to be no meaningful dialogue on issues that confront the university. We do not understand how any organization can thrive and succeed if talent cannot expect to be rewarded for success and the only prospect is of further pay cuts down the road. The steep decline in rankings and recognition of YU is particularly painful in this time of Jewish History. We have tried to communicate to the administration that faculty and management need to work together. However, as discussed above we need a positive response and support for working towards common goals. Otherwise, we face the prospect of significant resignations from the council, and, effectively, the disbanding of the council altogether.

In the name of the Faculty Council

S. Abraham Ravid and Gabriel Cwilich, Co-chairs