Introduction
The main goal of the Sophomore Seminar Project is to increase accessibility to seminars for the class of 2021 and all future classes of sophomores. Seminars offer a unique opportunity for students to explore new academic areas, make meaningful connections with professors, have in-depth conversations about the topic at hand, and discover what they want to do with their lives. Given that students must declare a major before the start of their junior year, it is essential that sophomores receive the previously mentioned benefits, potentially more so than any other year.

Background
Every shopping period, sophomores across Yale are faced with the same issues surrounding seminars: either being denied access outright due to limited space or enduring a limbo period of not knowing whether they will get in or not. Despite the regular occurrence of this problem, very little tangible work has been done to accomplish this goal. Several departments claim that there are not enough resources to offer additional sophomore-only seminars, but every year spots are left unfilled in seminars across disciplines.

Data Analysis
In the 2018 YCC fall survey, which received over 3200 responses, 80% of respondents said they supported increasing sophomores’ access to seminars. 553 students stated that seminars have helped them decide on a major, and 1,522 reported having made connections with professors because of seminars, yet more than 66% of upper level students reported being rejected from at least 1-2 of these classes during their sophomore year due to over-enrollment. While demonstrating some of the clear benefits seminars can provide students, the above survey responses also reveal a lack of opportunity for sophomores to take the seminar courses they wish to.

Recommendations
1. Provide increased resources from the YCDO (in the form of increased faculty and funding) to departments and professors that offer courses designated “sophomore only” or “sophomores-preferred”
2. Require publication of the number of open spaces in seminars during reading week so students can find classes they are interested in

Progress
- Met with DUSes of a number of departments including History, History of Art, and Sociology
- Met with Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs Risa Sodi to gain her support for the project and insight into how preference selection is conducted
- Met with individual professors such as NELC Chairman Shawkat Toorawa
• Created a comprehensive proposal sheet that petitions the department in question to offer sophomore seminars and expresses the reasons for the project
• Met weekly with the YCC Academics team and our project lead Sophie Gottfried to discuss updates and next steps

Challenges
• Departmental concerns over a lack of resources to offer additional courses
• Professors failing to see a need for sophomore seminars
• Concerns that sophomores would acquire seminar access at the expense of students in other years

Next Steps
• Continue meeting with DUSes of departments such as English and EVST to pitch the project to them from January to March
• Meet with Dean Chun to obtain administrative support by early April
• Have new sophomore seminars slated for Fall 2019 before Reading Week

Conclusion
Through the results collected in the YCC fall survey, it appears that there is significant student interest in a sophomore seminar program, but major issues need to be resolved with the program's implementation and practicality (in terms of creating new classes with finite resources). While there is much interest and support for the project among some faculty, many express concerns that their hands are tied due to lack of resources in their respective departments.

In order to accomplish this YCC policy project, the YCC must obtain administrative commitment to offer more resources to departments which offer sophomore seminars. Alternatively, the YCC can coordinate with professors directly to persuade them to designate their courses as sophomore seminars or sophomores-preferred.