

As an addendum to our letter, we wanted to also offer a brief evaluation of the nuts and bolts of our first retreat, as a way to help prepare for our future gatherings.

Planning

The decision-making process felt a bit unclear this time around, which makes sense as a first round! We may want to have more clarity on what is determined by the YWI members, the facilitator, and the Council. We also may want to rotate having a logistics point-person from the YWI for each gathering, and also a Council logistics point-person (perhaps based on where they live) for each gathering.

Transportation Arrangements

Self-booking of flights seemed to work well. We may want to have a clearer arrival/specific start time earlier in the process so that flights can be booked accordingly. The location of the retreat center relatively near to the airport was also convenient for a short stay. Having April nearby to help with transportation was also really great, and may be something to consider for future gatherings (meeting near a Council member's home).

Retreat Center/Accommodations

We really loved this retreat center and felt very comfortable and welcomed. There was ample outdoor space, a comfortable common area for our meetings, and individual bedrooms for each person.

Food

Making food for ourselves worked out well, as people got to choose what they wanted for each meal. We did have way too much food, though! We probably needed more snack food and less meal food. Healthy snacks (fruit, nuts, etc) were very popular and actually ran out! Tea was also very popular, so we should make sure to have plenty of teas on hand for next time. Other things that ran out were salad, eggs, yogurt, almond milk, avocados, La Croix (seltzer) and grilled tofu. Cookies and ice cream were greatly appreciated, as well! If we go the route of 'self-catering' again, we may want to make a collaborative grocery list rather than have a Council member generate the list. For future gatherings, if we meet at a place that offers meals, we should make sure that there are diverse offerings of food, and probably purchase our own snacks for in-between meals.

Facilitator

Suzanne was an excellent, clear, and warm facilitator. She kept us focused on the bigger themes that we needed to dive into and offered some really helpful frameworks for us to work with. The structure of our time was simple and very effective.

Communication with Council

It may make sense for one member of Council to be the designated point-person for each retreat or for our group process as a whole. This seemed like it might have been Pam, but that was not clear.