



# Elicker reports State of the City



Alders and New Haveners gathered in City Hall Monday Evening / **Nathaniel Rosenberg, Contributing Photographer**

The mayor talked economy, affordable housing and education

BY YASH ROY, YURII STASIUK AND NATHANIEL ROSENBERG  
STAFF REPORTERS

Amidst a burgeoning housing crisis and lower-than-expected test scores in New Haven schools, Mayor Justin Elicker sees brightness on the horizon for the Elm City. Alders and New Haveners gathered in City Hall Monday evening as Elicker delivered his fourth annual State of the City address. Elicker presented an optimistic outlook of the city’s future, telling the crowd that the city is on track to meet the challenges of 2023. Top of his list for the new year: better solutions to the city’s housing crisis, improving attendance and test scores in New Haven Public Schools and continuing economic growth and fiscal stability in New Haven.

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# Faculty call for higher salaries

Report reveals higher comp. at peer insitutions

BY WILLIAM PORAYOUW  
STAFF REPORTER

During a meeting of the Faculty FAS-SEAS Senate last December, professor of economics Costas Arkolakis spoke about professor salary discrepancies between Yale and its peer institutions. Arkolakis, who was introduced by senate chair Paul Van Tassel, spoke on behalf of the Committee on the Economic Status of the Faculty. According to the committee’s report, Arkolakis found that salaries for faculty at the

SEE SALARY PAGE 5

# New details emerge about Phelps Gate assault

Female student hospitalized after assault by seven juveniles

BY MIA CORTÉS CASTRO  
STAFF REPORTER

On Friday, Jan. 20, a female undergraduate student was assaulted by seven juveniles outside of Phelps Gate, across the street from the New Haven Green. The community was first alerted about the assault four days later, when Yale Police Department Chief Anthony Campbell sent out a Public Safety Advisory email. Immediately afterwards, a screenshot of the email was posted on the anonymous chat app Fizz, to which the victim responded, thanking the Yale community for their support. The student who reported the assault told the News that she was on her way into Old Campus when a group of six to seven teenagers blocked her path. The perpetrators then both verbally

and physically assaulted her, hitting her several times and smashing her head to the ground. Campbell told the News that YPD responded to the incident at 10:41 p.m. “There was a guy on a bike in a blue hoodie who stopped me and asked for a hug,” the student, who has been granted anonymity to protect her privacy, told the News. “It was a very weird request and I assumed it was one of the high-schoolers on campus for the [Yale International Relations Association] event just acting obnoxious so I politely said no and continued walking.” 20 seconds later, she said, she felt one of the teenagers hit her in the back of her head. She turned around and was approached by another boy who witnessed the attack. Though the female student does not know whether he was affiliated with the perpetrators, she said he offered to help her. The boy then called the group of perpetrators back in order to confront them. The boy pointed out a girl in a white jacket who was walking away, saying she had been the one to hit the female student. The student then approached the girl to ask if she had hit her.

SEE ASSAULT PAGE 4



The student said she was frustrated by YPD’s system of alerting the community. / **Tim Tai, Photography Editor**

# Peer-led FGLI office hours launch



At the forefront of the program is a drive to up inter-student connections / **Yale Daily News**

BY BRIAN ZHANG  
STAFF REPORTER

A new office hours program for first-generation, low-income students will station student ambassadors throughout various residential colleges. At the forefront of the program is a drive to up inter-student connections and build stronger intra-residential college communities. Spearheaded by the FGLI Community Initiative at Yale — an administration-led effort that seeks to empower socioeconomic diversity within the student body — the program is slated to open on Feb. 7 and assume a biweekly schedule for the remainder of the spring semester. This year’s ambassadors are Drake Prince ’24, Natalie Sangngam ’23, Huda Siddiqui ’25, Sayda Martinez-Alvarado ’23, Reece Maccaux ’24 and Linh Pham ’24. Information on their stations and schedules is available online, and each station will have light snacks and laptop stickers for visitors. “As FGLI students, we are often the leaders for our siblings and others in the community,” Prince said. “We are used to being the one that others come to for help, but now you need to be the person who ... knows how to seek help. Yale has a lot of

SEE OFFICE HOURS PAGE 4

# Students vote 'Yes' on Yale corp. reforms

BY EVAN GORELICK AND JANALIE COBB  
STAFF REPORTERS

A Yale College Council referendum, which opened Jan. 30, saw students vote overwhelmingly in favor of more democratic trustee elections. Over 2,000 students — almost 90 percent of referendum participants — voted in the affirmative to the referendum’s two yes-or-no questions: “Should the board of trustees for Yale Corporation consist of democratically elected trustees?” and “Should students, professors, and staff be eligible to vote for candidates for the board of trustees for Yale Corporation?” Approximately 30 percent of Yale’s undergraduate population voted in the online referendum. The Yale College Council sent a letter to the Board of Trustees on Feb. 6 with the results of the referendum and several policy recommendations aimed at “achiev-

SEE REFERENDUM PAGE 4

## CROSS CAMPUS

THIS DAY IN YALE HISTORY, 1933. Yale Divinity School announces they will end sex discrimination in admissions. They will begin accepting women in the program for the following year. Unfortunately, the admission will be limited to 10 women.

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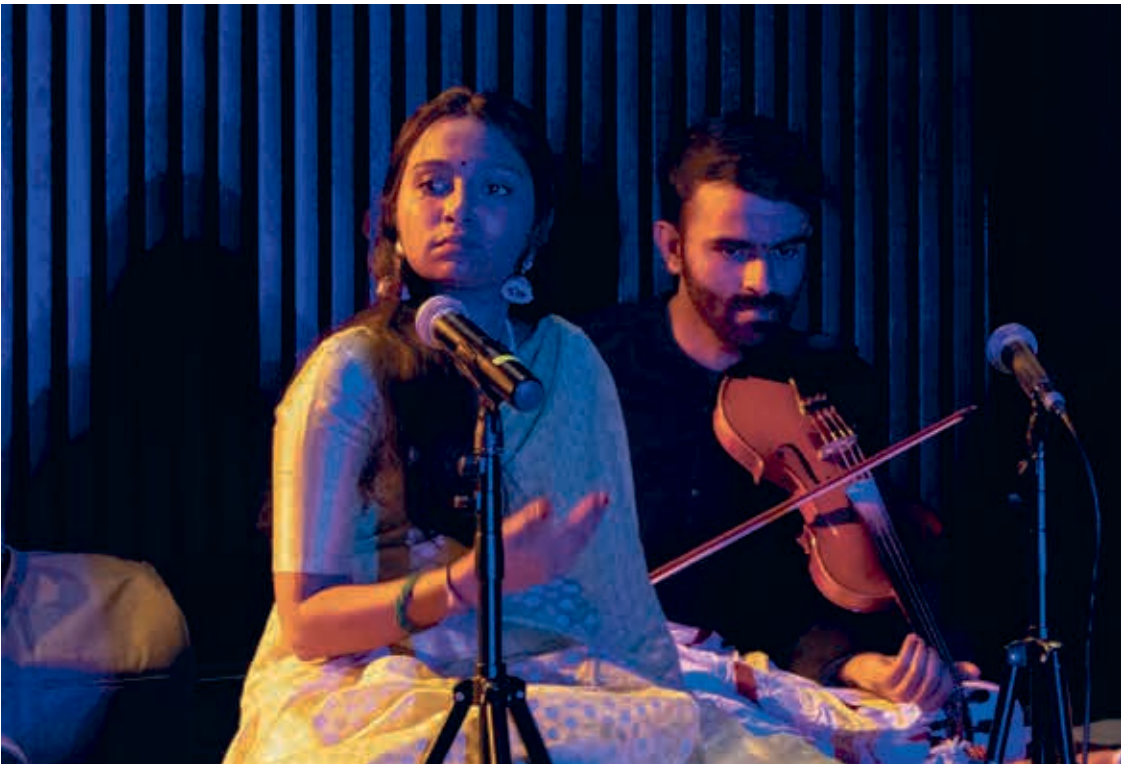
# THROUGH THE LENS



Hundreds of years ago, Lord Krishna danced his way into the hearts of Gopis and villagers. On Sunday, Yale Kalaa invoked his spirit through the performance of Krishna’s Leelas with Brown’s Abhinaya.

Words by Yash Roy

Photos by Kris Aziabor





# OPINION

GUEST COLUMNIST  
MITCHELL TYLER

## The niche and what it preaches

It's difficult not to be captivated by Yale's campus, and it's just as easy to grow numb to it. The fact that we operate within a grand, Hogwarts-esque gothic wonderland falls to the wayside when we have readings to do, or papers to turn in, or people to meet. Busy periods cause us to be lulled into that ignorance. It's easy to take for granted the realities around us. I've noticed the details of campus more recently, and it's been fun. Perhaps it has to do with the fact that the trees don't hide as much of the stonework. Maybe I'm more bored.

Among the things I've noticed are empty niches.

They're little alcoves in the sides of buildings and above doorways. Sterling has them, so does HQ. Every college in the center of campus — Branford, Saybrook, Trumbull, Berkeley and Grace Hopper — have them. WLH, too. Yale's campus design finds its roots in Christian architecture, and Yale itself was founded as a school for ministers. Yale has different, less directly Christian emphases today, but it's impossible to escape the imagery: Sterling is laid out in cruciform, as is Payne Whitney. Saybrook's Wrexham Tower is a copy of the tower on St. Giles' Church in Wales, where Elihu Yale is buried. Art all around campus is directly influenced by ecclesiastical iconography — and the ones here deify education rather than Christianity. Religious influence is woven into the brick and mortar of Yale's campus, only with knowledge taking the place of Christian figures.

Yale's temple-complex of knowledge is similar in many ways to the grand churches of Europe, although you won't find many empty niches in the walls in Gothic cathedrals. In a church, there's almost always some stone statue taking up that space: a Mary, a saint, Jesus.

That is the purpose of the niche: to showcase some venerable symbol. And the ones at Yale are empty, with very few exceptions. I don't think this is an accident. But why? I have a few suggestions.

David Foster Wallace said in his oft-quoted commencement address, "This is Water": "There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship." I happen to agree with him. If you don't, that's fine. Bear with me for a moment. If we allow Wallace and the Abrahamic religions to back us into that corner, those empty niches and pedestals are suddenly full of meaning: it's our job as the

viewer to put something where there's nothing. Our job as students becomes to generate some object of desire and to venerate it because we're hardwired to. Like the Athenians in St. Paul's missionary journey, these pedestals are invisibly inscribed, "to an unknown god," and it's our work to create deities — or at least define what they are. Good grades? Connections? Sports? A religious deity? Whatever we put in the niche governs the way we operate during our time in college and far beyond that.

If you'd rather reject the notion that we all must worship and that there are no non-worshippers, that's alright. You can ignore the previous paragraph if you want to.

It doesn't change the fact of the empty niches and the questions they ask. Outside of the questions about one's belief and worship, perhaps they have something to say about Yale as an institution. Maybe they suggest that Yale stands for nothing in particular. That the virtues, principles or saints that could be venerated are constantly shifting, and that carving one out of stone would be a waste because another idol would soon take its place as popular opinions shift. It wouldn't be marketable for Yale to claim any objects of veneration outside of its generic "light and truth" — so it hasn't claimed any, and it probably won't.

More optimistically, maybe it's a little bit of both: Yale is a place that ostensibly creates an environment in which a person can accomplish whatever it is they value most, a university in which one spends four years chipping away at their respective stone blocks — in the end coming up with a final product that matches the niche-figure they envisioned all along. It's a place where empty niches are not only challenges but opportunities.

Then again, maybe the empty niches mean nothing at all. Maybe I'm committing a classic error here: creating meaning out of a text where there is none, projecting my inward thoughts onto something else instead of expressing them unprompted. Then again, perhaps they were left empty to generate discussions like these. If that were the case, it worked. I think a lot of us could shake hands over the fact that there are less exciting, less intricate, and less thought-provoking places to take walks than Yale's campus.

**MITCHELL TYLER** is a junior in Grace Hopper College. He can be reached at mitchell.tyler@yale.edu.

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# Wild West

I always come off the Grammys doing a lot of Googling. I like to spend the morning after the awards looking up winners I've never heard of, and then, in a very consumerist fashion, deciding if they should have received the award or not. It's a fun and low stakes way to discover new music — except when it's not. I went to bed on Sunday night without knowing who had won the Big Four: the music industry's pet name for the awards for Album of the Year, Song of the Year, Record of the Year and New Artist of the Year. That's fine — I knew how those would go. I placed my bets and went to bed.

I woke up Monday morning to the news that Beyoncé, after a legendary 23 years in the music industry, has finally broken the record for the highest number of Grammys awards in the award ceremony's history. This made sense, as she has been the favorite to win in every category she is nominated in, ever since her very first nomination in 2001 for "Say my Name" with Destiny's Child. What didn't make sense, however, was that she did not win the Big Four award she was favored to win: Album of the Year. The recording academy, it seems, felt that the award was better suited for Harry Styles, who won for his album "Harry's House."

This isn't the first time Beyoncé has been snubbed for the Album of the Year award. She famously lost to Adele in 2017, whose acceptance speech acknowledged the fact that it really should have been Beyoncé up on that stage. This year, actually, was the fourth time that she has been nominated for album of the year and lost. And this year, it made the least sense. It's widely agreed that "Renaissance" was a career defining album, and the best of 2022. It broke streaming records, was every major publication's album of the year, and, to be quite honest, has been a cultural reset in the world of music. Beyoncé has always had an incredible influence on the music industry — this was the year when it would officially be confirmed. Losing to Harry, therefore, felt kind of weird, especially in a category with several other cultural resets: Bad Bunny, ABBA — who made a legendary comeback, Kendrick Lamar and Adele, again.

This isn't an indictment of Harry Styles' album. I famously served time in the One Direction fandom, and respect his hard work to create a successful solo career post-boy band. His album was also very good, and definitely deserved the nomi-

nation. His speech after receiving the Grammy, however, explains my point perfectly: "Things like this don't happen to people like me." The ambiguity of the statement — which people are still trying to decode on Twitter — doesn't cancel the fact that it's made in poor taste. Harry Styles is a young, white man — a demographic that the recording academy has been historically kind to — who, for the umpteenth time, has taken an award that was more deserved by someone else. The recording academy is famous for these kinds of decisions, so much so that some publications keep a running list. From this perspective, it feels almost sinister to award Beyoncé all the Grammys surrounding her album, but to snub her for the award that she has proven, over and over, that she deserves. Is the bar just higher for Black women? Even if that Black woman is Beyoncé?

... Anyways, no one on the planet has as many Grammys as Beyoncé. And it's going to stay like that for a very long time.

**AWUORONGURU** is a junior in Berkeley college, majoring in English and French. Her column, "Wild West," runs once a month. Contact her at awuor.onguru@yale.edu.

GUEST COLUMNISTS  
NOOR KAREEM & CRAIG BIRCKHEAD-MORTON

## The Palestinian exception to free speech

Although Yale claims to be a bastion of free speech that provides a forum for addressing all political and cultural issues, the one exception to this is the issue of Palestinian liberation.

The discourse around Palestine at Yale is surrounded by fear and restraint. Discussion is often prefaced with the familiar acknowledgment of how complicated the topic is, immediately obscuring the power relations between a Western-backed occupying power and a population subjected to life under occupation. Ensuing conversations are, at best, composed of vague statements about the need for "peace" and "dialogue" on "both sides." Tired and simplified narratives take the place of coherent conversations about the reality of life in Palestine, deliberately absolving the West, particularly the United States, from any responsibility in funding and supporting the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.

Despite the numerous human rights violations and continued expansion of illegal settlements, criticizing the settler colonial regime occupying Palestine is the exception to the cherished American value of freedom of speech. Unequivocally supporting Palestinian liberation is a choice that can put one's professional life at risk.

Some of the most prominent intimidation campaigns against those supporting Palestine take place on campuses like Yale. In 2006, Juan Cole, a noted Middle East expert, was denied tenure at Yale because of his anti-Zionist pieces on his blog "Informed Comment." In 2014, Reverend Bruce Shipman was forced to resign from his position as chaplain of the Episcopal Church at Yale because of his condemnation of the war on Gaza. And this phenomenon extends beyond Yale's campus. Last month, Kenneth Roth, former executive director of Human Rights Watch, had his fellowship to the Harvard Kennedy School vetoed over his criticism of Israel. Harvard later reversed its decision following pressure from students and alumni, including the organizers of the Harvard Palestine Solidarity Committee. However, professors are not the only ones vulnerable on campuses. For students, especially students of color, discussing Palestine invites accusations of hate speech and antisemitism, as well as fear of doxxing and intimidation. Pro-Palestine activism can land students on blacklists backed by pro-Zionist organizations.

Many incorrectly frame Zionism — the political project seeking to establish Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people — as synonymous with Jewish identity. This conflation of the Jewish people with the Zionist state makes any criticism of the occupation immediately deemed "antisemitic." In reality, Zionism is an ideology and a political movement that, in the words of its founders, necessitates the erasure of Palestinians and the violent seizure of their land in the pursuit of creating a modern nation-state.

If we have learned one thing from the last couple of years, it is that silence kills. The lack of discussion on the systemic nature of Israeli war crimes has given total impunity to a state that murders civilians, massacres refugees and bombs a city already under siege. Since the assassination of American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh by Israeli forces in May 2022, the Biden administration has failed to hold Israel accountable. The number of murders is showing no signs of slowing down so far, as 2022 was the deadliest year for Palestinians since the Second Palestinian Intifada. And as of Feb. 6, 2023, 36 Palestinians have already been killed.

Yalies4Palestine, or Y4P, was created in response to this silence. In the spring of 2021, Israel was simultaneously forcing Palestinian families in East Jerusalem out of their houses and bombing residential buildings in Gaza, killing and injuring innocent people. Because Yale did not have any spaces where students — especially Palestinians — could discuss and process this violence, we initiated conversations that drew students' attention to these human rights abuses. Yalies4Palestine has created increasingly popular spaces to discuss, think and dream of ways to break the institutional gag on criticism of Israel. As a result, the Yale student body has become more aware, if not more critical, of the Israeli occupation and the crimes committed against the people of Palestine.

But having conversations about Palestine is only the first step. The next necessary step is to ask Yale as an academic institution and as a corporation, to end its complicity in the colonization of Palestine and to hold Israel accountable.

We can act, and we can act locally. The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions, or BDS, movement effectively challenges the complicity of states, corpora-

tions and other entities in supporting Israeli settler colonialism. Inspired by the South African anti-apartheid movement, BDS is devoted to ending international support for Israel's oppression of Palestinians through boycotts, community mobilization and grassroots campaigns. In 1986, Yale students proved the efficacy of such campaigns when they protested the Yale Corporation's investments in South African apartheid, eventually forcing the University to comply with the demands to divest in the 1990s. Yale failed to take a stand against South African apartheid until its students forced it to do so. Today, we must do the same.

In December 2022, Yalies4Palestine launched the first-ever BDS campaign at Yale. Prior to this, Yale was the only university in the Ivy League not involved in the BDS movement, largely due to this campus's pro-Zionist climate. This is despite public institutional condemnations of human rights violations in Iran and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. We must overcome this culture of hypocrisy and call on Yale to take a stand against the Israeli occupation. We echo the sentiment expressed in a recent article about the attempted censorship of Kenneth Roth: "Universities are sites that must always privilege truth, along with the free inquiry through which it is discovered. Where this is lacking, universities veer away from enlightenment and in time they enter darkness." As students at one of the most elite academic institutions in the world, we have an obligation to illuminate truth and honor light over darkness. Join us in fulfilling this obligation by signing and sharing our petition demanding that Yale cancel its contract with G4S — a security company involved in some of the world's worst human rights abuses, including those in Israel — and by taking the initiative to learn more about the BDS movement.

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# FROM THE FRONT

*“If you wish to make an apple pie from scratch, you must first invent the universe.”* CARL SAGAN AMERICAN ASTRONOMER

## New details emerge about student assault at Phelps Gate

### ASSAULT FROM PAGE 1

According to the student, the girl said she had because she “just felt like it.”

The student asked what school the juveniles were from but did not receive a direct response. She then said she told the group they were “going to amount to nothing” before walking off.

“I didn’t want to escalate it further, and especially not physically,” the student told the News.

According to the student, the group then turned to punch her in the face and shove her head into the pavement. The student said she was disoriented, and that her head and knee were badly hurt.

“People in the group then continued to kick and hit me and I didn’t want to retaliate because they were minors and I didn’t want it to look like I was the aggressor,” she said. “When it hurt too much, I grabbed onto one of their legs and scared them away.”

During the assault, the student recalled seeing a YPD police car parked on College Street. However, she said there were no officers in the car or visibly around the area that she could call over for help.

She called her friends for help, who then called YPD. Officers arrived on the scene and brought

the student to the Yale New Haven Hospital. She was discharged at 4:30 a.m. the following morning.

In the wake of the incident, the student received support from YPD officers and the department’s Sensitive Crimes Coordinator, Sergeant Kristina Reech. The student told the News that both her Dean and Head of College have been supportive and understanding of her situation, as well as the Title IX and Student Accessibility Services offices.

Of the seven perpetrators, YPD arrested and charged two, who were identified by the student. Both juveniles are being charged with criminal trespassing in the third degree, breach of the peace in the second degree, assault in the second degree, conspiracy to commit assault in the second degree and interfering with a police officer.

“Both parties were issued a juvenile summons and were released to their parents who were with them,” Campbell said.

The other juveniles involved have not been identified or charged by YPD.

“They claimed the two people they arrested were the two involved in physically attack-

ing me but honestly the rest were equally culpable and dangerous,” the student told the News.

The student said she was also frustrated by YPD’s system of alerting the community about crime. Instead of sending out a “Timely Warning” alert right after the assault occurred, Campbell released a “Public Safety Advisory” email about the assault four days afterward.

Campbell explained that “messages from the chief” are based upon federal requirements from the Clery Act which requires college police forces to issue a “Timely Warning” to the campus community when certain crimes occur within a particular geographic area. Those crimes must represent a serious or continuing threat to the campus.

“We review each crime that is reported to us and we use our best judgment to decide, on a case-by-case basis, whether to issue a Timely Warning,” Campbell told the News. “Given that the two juveniles who committed the crime and engaged in the violence against the student were apprehended in close proximity to the scene of the offense, a public safety advisory was the best resource in this instance.”



In response to the attack, Campbell responded that the New Haven Police Department and YPD have been deploying “more resources” in the area. / **Tim Tai, Photography Editor**

In response to the attack, Campbell responded that the New Haven Police Department and YPD have been deploying “more resources” in the area.

New Haven Police Department Assistant Chief David Zannelli told the News last week that

the department had not been informed of the assault.

The two juveniles arrested for the assault have court dates scheduled for early February.

Contact **MIA CORTÉS CASTRO** at [mia.cortescastro@yale.edu](mailto:mia.cortescastro@yale.edu).

## FGLI Community Initiative launches student ambassadors

### OFFICE HOURS FROM PAGE 1

resources, and the problem is oftentimes ... [knowing] how to access them.”

Knowing firsthand the challenges of travel and family emergencies as a low-income student, he looks forward to using his own experiences to help others and publicize the University’s Safety Net program, which grants short-term funding for unexpected hardship related directly to one’s Yale education.

In a conversation with the News, transfer student Kayla Wong ’25, who hopes to stop by office hours, also pointed to the fact that eligibility for University resources does not necessarily equate to accessibility. Compiling a list of student resources that are not well known or discussed, such as the winter clothing grant and calculator loan, would particularly benefit first-year students who are still completing their transition to college, she said.

For Prince, however, the greatest challenge that follows a FGLI student is navigating social relationships on a campus where students’ different financial abilities are often compared against each other in both direct and subtle ways.

The office hours initiative tackles this problem by introducing a human element to mentorship — not only can students ask for concrete help on their respective financial situations, but they can also gain a friend.

The need for networking and building stronger cultures is also on Jorge Anaya ’19’s mind. Anaya currently serves as a Woodbridge Fellow for the Yale College Dean’s Office & Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning, and has worked alongside ambassadors to launch the new program. He wanted to provide another avenue for communication aside from residential college deans, first-year counselors and peer liaisons.

“As FGLI students, we’re missing a lot of the social capital that is needed for working in careers that don’t have straightforward paths,” said Mariah Najera ’25. “I also think general affirmations can be useful in this setting. ... Just having a space to acknowledge that our experiences at Yale and in the world are valued and can be nuanced is really important.”

The struggle of finding adequate career support hits close to home for pre-med student Sidiqui, the ambassador for students in Morse and Ezra Stiles

Colleges. She expressed gratitude for the support she received from programs, groups and friends on campus. She looks forward to returning the favor by connecting future visitors to her station to support systems that can help them thrive.

But among Najera’s worries is that at Yale, there is a “tipping” of ideas, work and emotional labor onto student mentors when it comes to University support for FGLI students. She is curious as to how the Dean’s Office will partner with the ambassadors to engineer creative solutions and adapt to student needs.

Joanna Ruiz ’25, who typically goes to her head of college at Jonathan Edwards and fellow FGLI peers for advice, said she is happy to see a heightened focus on human resources. However, she urged University-led efforts supporting the FGLI community to be less afraid of being “political,” suggesting that ambassadors should also serve as advocates who empower students to take action and make change at Yale regarding financial aid and admissions policies.

“I think being political is essential to our being and our existence here at Yale,” Ruiz said. She wants to see “guidance on more tangible ways we can take

action and let our presence be known, whether that is by connecting us with other FGLI orgs and clubs on campus or by giving us more tips on how to go about starting a movement ... [like] who to email, how to organize, [or] where to get funding.”

Office hours will allegedly also be an opportunity for students to suggest improvements, accommodations and project ideas. In a Feb. 6 newsletter from the Community Initiative, staff members wrote that a defining part of their jobs is to learn about the “current” struggles confronting FGLI students, emphasizing that the FGLI identity is nuanced, continuous and intersectional.

In recent years, the Community Initiative has been actively working with both on-campus and alumni-affiliated organizations — namely 1stGenYale and the Yale First-Gen and/or Low-Income Advocacy Movement — to effect cultural change on the way that the University understands and approaches FGLI student concerns.

Barb Protacio ’81, the Vice President of 1stGenYale, takes pride in hearing about and contributing to the University’s evolving commitment to creating a culture of visibility for underprivileged and underrepresented students on campus.

“Students have come to us expressing a need for regular, normalized, and easy access to a physical, welcoming space where they can go for answers to their questions, share experiences, and connect with others who are the first in their families to navigate college,” she wrote in an email to the News. “If [office hours] will provide for a welcoming space in addition to friendly and understanding upperclassman student Ambassadors at times that are considerate of extracurricular schedules of FGLI, like work-study job hours, this sounds like it would be a positive approach.”

Drawing attention to the simultaneous universality and individuality of the FGLI experience, Protacio hopes that every ambassador will tailor Yale’s opportunities and services to the unique situation of every student, and then go back to the governing bodies and have “unmet needs collated” and addressed systematically for the benefit of Yale’s entire low-income community.

The FGLI Community Initiative Office is located on 55 Whitney Avenue, Suite 240.

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## Students vote overwhelmingly in support of democratizing trustee elections

### REFERENDUM FROM PAGE 1

ing democratization.” These recommendations do not directly address the trustee election process. Rather, they are intended to “open the door” to the possibility of achieving democratic trustee elections in the future, according to the letter.

“The connection between Board members and members of the Yale community has dissolved,” the YCC letter reads. “Democratization is something that may take a long time — longer than our time spent here as undergraduates. As members of the Yale College Council, we believe we must restore the link between the Board and the students, faculty and staff at Yale.”

The Yale Corporation, also known as the Board of Trustees, consists of the University President, 10 “successor trustees” appointed by the current Board and six “alumni trustees” elected by University alumni from the broader community. The governor and lieutenant governor of Connecticut retain positions on the Board.

The Corporation holds significant power at Yale, ruling on issues ranging from budget oversight to administrative

appointments and long-term University priorities.

In May 2021, the University took unilateral action to jettison the long-standing alumni fellows petition process, which allowed Yale alumni to petition for candidacy in the annual trustee election. Now, only candidates nominated specifically by the University may appear on the ballot.

Many students and alumni have renounced the decision over the past two years. In addition to alumni petitions and student government resolutions condemning the change and imploring the University to reinstate its former election process, Victor Ashe ’67 and Donald Glascoff ’67 sued Yale for the change, arguing that the new policy violates Yale’s legal obligations to its alumni.

“One of the reasons students and alumni feel unhappy is because they feel unheard,” Ashe said. “They have no seat at the table, and the University has demonstrated little interest in listening to them.”

Ashe said that he was not surprised by the overwhelming student support for a more democratic trustee election process.

He said that if the University were to conduct a similar referendum for alumni, he would expect the alumni — like students — to vote overwhelmingly for democratization.

Ashe argued that this is why the Corporation scrapped the petition process unilaterally rather than with an alumni vote.

“There’s a huge divide between what the administration thinks and what students and alumni think,” Ashe told the News. “Alumni are treated as useful for donations, but otherwise as a nuisance.”

When contacted for comment, University spokesperson Karen Peart referred the News to President Peter Salovey’s letter in response to the YCC. The letter acknowledged receipt of the YCC’s letter and encouraged the YCC to “continue conversations about matters of interest to students” with the Corporation’s student liaisons.

“The board of trustees always welcomes input from students, faculty, alumni, and staff,” Salovey wrote in the letter. “The board of trustees is not designed as a representative body for the current Yale community; they are fiduciaries and therefore must

act in the university’s best interests, today and for Yale’s future.”

Salovey also noted that trustees engage in “varied, ongoing formal and informal meetings and discussions” with members of the Yale community, including students.

Naina Agrawal-Hardin ’25, an organizer for the Yale Endowment Justice Coalition — which campaigned to increase referendum turnout last week — said that she was not surprised to learn that students supported democratization.

“The Board’s recent elimination of the alumni petition process and continued inaction on fossil fuel divestment (despite students’ strong support for the cause) have made it clear that the Corporation is not listening to the Yale community, and their current structure leaves us powerless to do anything about it,” Agrawal-Hardin told the News. “I’m eager to see how they respond to student proposals for more accountability in light of the referendum results.”

In its letter to the Corporation, the YCC outlined four main policy proposals: to make Corporation meeting minutes and agendas publicly accessible; to allow students to appear before committees of the Board and to

streamline ways to connect students with trustee members; to establish a committee exploring ways to improve the structure of the Yale Corporation; to hold an annual public meeting to discuss the Board’s goals and solicit community feedback.

YCC Senator Kyle Hovannesian ’25 said that whether the Corporation actually institutes the changes depends on whether members really value student opinion. He said that, after speaking with “over a hundred” students last week, he encountered some who voted no simply because they felt nothing would come of it.

“The results will show the Yale Corporation that there needs to be some sort of change, and they would benefit greatly from accepting the YCC recommendations,” Hovannesian told the News. “Students would have a more vested interest in the state of our University and would get more involved.”

The Corporation will next meet on Feb. 11, 2023.

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FROM THE FRONT

“So the pie isn’t perfect? Cut it into wedges. Stay in control, and never panic.” MARTHA STEWART AMERICAN BUSINESSWOMAN

# Elicker leads with optimism in State of City Speech

ADDRESS FROM PAGE 1

“We still have a lot more work to do and a long way to go,” Elicker said during his address. “We commit ourselves to an end goal of inclusive growth, a city where no one is left behind, a city where there is hope for all, and a city where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.”

For Elicker, 2023 is the first time he could report a “bright” future for New Haven. His 2020 address warned residents the city was on the brink of financial collapse without a significant cut to the city’s budget. 2021’s address was delivered at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic and 2022’s was cautiously optimistic as the city still confronted public health and budgetary concerns.

From \$66 million budget deficit in 2020 to \$17 million budget surplus in 2023

Elicker began his speech by reminding New Haveners of the dire financial straits the city was in when he took office in 2019. At the time, the city risked financial collapse due to what he called “structural financial issues” including mismanagement, increased pension and debt costs and an increase in employee salaries.

“Together we charted a different path from a financial collapse,” Elicker told attendees.

New Haven’s financial situation has improved since New Haven’s State Senator and Senate Pro Tempore Martin Looney helped double the state’s contribution to the city through payment-in-lieu-of-taxes funds from \$41 million to \$91 million.

After extensive advocacy that Elicker credited to the UNITE-HERE unions, Yale agreed to pay an additional \$10 million in the form of their voluntary contribution. This contribution, as well as an increase in city revenues due to economic growth has led to the city’s current \$16 million budget surplus.

“All of these factors have left us well positioned for the new fiscal year with our budget proposal coming on March 1,” Elicker said.

“Building back better:” A beacon of economic growth in Connecticut

In the last year, 58 storefront businesses opened their doors in New Haven. However, Elicker acknowledged that much work had to be done with one in four New Haveners living in poverty.

“We’re leading Connecticut’s recovery from the pandemic and we have a layman’s recipe for success,” Elicker said. “We’re honest and straightforward about the problems we face and we take challenges head on. We have a long way to go, but we’re going to build an inclusive economy.”

Elicker touted a slew of recent projects, including the opening of the Elm City Bioscience Center on Church Street and the groundbreaking of a \$838 million Neuroscience Center facility at Yale New Haven Health’s St. Raphael campus.

Elicker also highlighted the city’s plans to “Build Back Better” using the phrasing of the Federal infrastructure bill passed by the



Elicker is the 51st elected Mayor of New Haven / Yash Roy, Contributing Reporter

Biden administration to improve physical and green infrastructure across the nation.

With the recent creation of a climate office, plans to improve pedestrian and bike access in New Haven, as well as roughly \$200 million in pandemic and infrastructure-bill related funding from the federal government to strengthen the city’s flood response, New Haven is on the path of “green, sustainable” infrastructure growth that moves away from a car-centric model according to Elicker.

“Across the city, from new roundabouts to raised crosswalks near schools, every day we’re working to make it safer, easier and more accessible to get around,” Elicker said. “We’re currently focusing on eight of our busiest thoroughfares, and we continue to be strong advocates on the state level for an extension of the state’s free bus service.”

Elicker talks decreasing crime, recent homicides

The mayor began his discussion of public safety by highlighting the promotion of New Haven Police Chief Karl Jacobson last July with a promise to prioritize what Elicker described as “community-based policing.” Elicker also touted decreases from both 2020 and 2021 in violent and property crimes.

At the same time, Elicker mourned the gun violence that has claimed five lives so far in 2023, including that of Dontae Myers. Myers’s mother, LaQuvia Jones, was a guest of Elicker’s at the speech and received a round of applause when her presence was noted by the mayor.

“Now, these are statistics, but we know they’re not just statistics. They represent real people, family, friends, neighbors,” Elicker said. “In the words of LaQuvia Jones..when you pull the trigger, you don’t pull it on a

target. You’re pulling on in the community. You pull it on anyone who loves that person.”

Elicker reviewed several solutions to reduce crime and violence in New Haven. In addition to current policing strategy, he highlighted the investments the alders had made in more surveillance cameras and Shotspotter technology, despite some of those investments drawing the ire of activists.

He also praised the city’s new non-violent first responders program, Elm City COMPASS, which he said has responded to more than 250 emergency calls since its launch in early November.

Several members of the COMPASS team were also at the speech as guests of Elicker. They expressed appreciation for being mentioned and their excitement about their ongoing work.

“It’s always cool to get accolades, get your flowers while you’re still here,” said Jennifer Vargas, one of the COMPASS team members.

## Righting the ship for NHPS

With roughly 40 percent of students chronically absent, record-low test scores and the retirement of current NHPS superintendent Iline Tracey looming, Elicker and the city hope that a slew of policy changes will allow NHPS to course-correct.

“Average student performance, like many of our peer cities across the state and country, was alarmingly low,” Elicker said.

The Mayor cited the city having only 24 percent of third to eighth graders meet or exceed state proficiency standards. That 24 percent compares to 49 percent statewide. In math, Elicker continued, only 11.5 percent of third to eighth graders met or exceeded state proficiency standards compared to 40 percent statewide.

Elicker pointed to the pandemic as a major contributor in the drop of

scores, also claiming that most students were not meeting proficiency standards before the pandemic.

He also expressed optimism about the recent ratification of a teacher’s contract that will increase pay by 15 percent over three years, also highlighting the Board of Alder’s approval of \$2.5 million of funding for after-school programs.

“These efforts are paying off since June of 2022,” Elicker said. “Until now, we’ve seen a decline in chronic absenteeism by 20 percentage points, and when it comes to literacy and math NHPS is piloting a new early literacy curriculum that embraces the science of reading, and is aligned with the requirement of the state’s right to read legislation.”

While Elicker claimed credit for these proposals, Fair Haven Alder Sarah Miller wrote to the News that NHPS has “had to be pushed hard by outside forces.”

“The new teachers’ contract and shift to science of reading are positive moves — but in both instances, the district had to be pushed hard by outside forces,” Miller wrote to the News. “Meanwhile, New Haven has gone from leading the state’s urban districts on most indicators to trailing them. We need to be honest about how perilous things still are, and how much business-as-usual hurts our kids and school communities, in order to have a real shot at reversing this trend.”

## Grappling with the affordable housing crisis

During the address, Elicker stressed his commitment to making New Haven an inclusive city. He said that the city needs to add a variety of housing options by providing access to more affordable housing units and improving the affordability of existing housing stock.

According to Elicker, New Haven has issued the most hous-

ing permits at all affordability levels in the state — 2,225 since 2020. The city has renovated over 500 affordable housing units in the last two years, with over 1600 more in the pipeline.

“Significant projects are underway in nearly every neighborhood in the city,” Elicker said. “Projects have been green-lighted — shelves are in the ground, and cranes are in the sky.”

Elicker also mentioned the city’s inclusionary zoning ordinance which the Board of Alders passed in January of 2022. The legislation ensures that affordable housing units are incorporated into every major development.

“We will continue to be one of the strongest advocates at the state capitol for legislation promoting, and if necessary, requiring the creation of regional affordable housing,” Elicker concluded the housing efforts. “It is the right thing to do for New Haven, and it is the right thing to do for our state.”

In addition, Elicker noted, the city is also working to protect the tenants by ensuring safety standards through inspections and fighting for transparency in the rent market.

New Haven also became the state’s first municipality to recognize tenants’ right to organize against unfair rent increases and ensure better living conditions. Representatives from the Blake Street Tenants Union — the first officially recognized in New Haven — could not attend the address but received a round of applause from the audience.

Elicker is the 51st elected Mayor of New Haven.

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# Faculty pressure administrators for higher salaries

SALARY FROM PAGE 1

University were noticeably low for those in the humanities and social sciences, but that they had generally been improving. Those in the sciences and engineering, on the other hand, received around 10 percent less compensation than comparable faculty at other such schools as of 2018.

The committee’s report, caught the attention of faculty, and the Senate has since been in communication with University administration on how to move forward. The News spoke to four professors, all of whom confirmed the conclusions shared at the December meeting.

“I join my [Senate and non-Senate] colleagues in calling for the University to compensate faculty at the level of our leading peers,” Van Tassel wrote in an email to the News.

Arkolakis told the News that data on faculty compensation generally comes from two data sets. The first is attached to the

American Association of University Professors, and consists of public level data that anyone can view. However, this data cannot be further split up by subdivisions, and is therefore lacking when it comes to more complex analysis.

The second, Arkolakis said, is that which is provided by the Association of American Universities Data Exchange. It is broken down by subdivision, which facilitates a more accurate picture of individual salaries, and contains data from Yale’s major peer institutions. But the data is not easily accessible, according to Arkolakis. Administrators who can access the information might not be willing to share it, especially with the public, due to legal stipulations arising from “monopoly concerns” over salary match pressures.

Arkolakis’ committee received access to the data they needed from these files through the administration, although such information was given late and with extraction errors that had to be corrected.

The data, however, was limited from 2009 to 2018. When faculty at the meeting asked where the data for the following years was, Arkolakis said he asked the administration for the data, but that he did not receive it. In reflection, Arkolakis suggested to the News that had the committee “push[ed] a little more,” they might have received the data — but that would delay the report, already behind schedule due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

But the control over data has been frustrating to some faculty. Alessandro Gomez, a professor of mechanical engineering in the School of Engineering and Applied Science, told the News that he thinks the University could do more to share the data, especially within the Senate.

“The University has all this information and of course, I understand also the reluctance to share them,” Gomez said. “But there are ways to reveal this information without betraying any secrets.”

Gomez took it on himself to make his own inquiry into

the “delicate” issue of salaries within the mechanical engineering department. Relying on the help of his Yale colleagues, he collected their salary average and compared it to those of public universities such as the University of California, Berkeley and the University of Michigan.

What was found, according to Gomez, was that Yale was doing “significantly worse” than most of these public universities.

“On top of that, we know that private universities usually pay better than public ones,” Gomez said. “And so the conclusion is that we are, at least in mechanical engineering, definitely doing significantly worse than our peers.”

Michael Fischer, a professor of computer science and FAS-SEAS senator, told the News that he thought the Gomez report was “pretty convincing” — and raised questions about how a lack of transparent data might affect the faculty culture.

Fischer explained to the News that it “damages the morale of

the faculty” if they think the only way they can be paid fairly by the administration is to solicit other job options.

“In terms of maintaining an outstanding faculty, you actually want to be transparent enough to let people know they are being well-paid,” Fischer said. “And you want to be sure that that’s actually true so people are not tempted to seek outside offers.”

Van Tassel confirmed that the Senate has been in communication with the administration regarding the report, but told the News that there have been “no definitive responses as of yet.”

Neither acting FAS dean Kathryn Lofton nor former FAS dean Tamar Gendler responded to requests for comment.

The next FAS-SEAS Senate meeting is on Feb. 16.end of vibes from there.”

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*“Of emotions, of love, of breakup, of love and hate and death and dying, mama, apple pie, and the whole thing. It covers a lot of territory, country music does.”* JOHNNY CASH AMERICAN SINGER-SONGWRITER

# “Room to grow”: African studies program at a crossroads



YALE DAILY NEWS

Five years after faculty criticized its lack of institutional support, African Studies has strengthened in size — but some say that more attention to the program is needed.

WILLIAM PORAYOUW AND MOLLY REINMANN  
STAFF REPORTERS

Five years after the African Studies program criticized University administration over a lack of faculty recruitment and retention, some faculty members say progress has been made to increase its academic support. According to former Director of Undergraduate Studies Daniel Magaziner, the University deserves credit for several “really good hires” that have been achieved since the “emergency situation” in 2018 — particularly in the humanities. The program’s growth, he said, represents significant expansion in areas such as English and history. But Magaziner says that the growth is somewhat limited, in part owing to the “pretty obvious

need” in the social sciences, such as anthropology, political science and economics. “[The question] is whether or not the University wants to rest on its laurels, having done this exciting expansion, or wants to consolidate what this expansion makes possible,” Magaziner said. “Which is the probability of Yale becoming one of the centers, if not the center, for African Studies in the northeast, if not the country?” Magaziner felt positive about the administration’s progress in expanding African Studies at Yale through hires, especially in the humanities sector. For example, the University has doubled its capacity in hires who specialize in the history of Africa, which is “pretty remarkable.” But he said that subjects traditionally at the heart of African Stud-

ies, such as political science and economics, have been neglected at Yale over the last decade. Although the existing faculty in these areas who specialize in Africa are talented, Magaziner said, there are not enough to compensate for the value of studying the African continent. “So there’s real areas of really clear need in the social sciences, and then areas that would need to be augmented in the humanities,” Magaziner said. Steven Wilkinson, who serves as the vice provost for global strategy, told the News that new leadership appointments create a fresh opportunity to bring more of Africa to Yale and Yale to Africa. He referenced Lauren Falcao Bergquist, who was hired last year with a joint appointment in the Jackson School of Global Affairs and Department of Economics, as well as Cajetan Ihekta, who this month took over as the first African-born chair of the Council on African Studies. “Hiring faculty who work on Africa is a continuing priority,” Wilkinson wrote in an email to the News. Magaziner recalled the state of African Studies program over a decade ago, and how over time many of its faculty had left Yale. The administration has rebuilt the pool of humanities faculty talent, he said, but has not been able to replicate that success in the social sciences. While students can engage in African Studies at Yale, there seems to be something missing. What stands out, Magaziner told the News, is a lack of “comprehensive faculty.” “We haven’t created a program where so many interested in Africa can approach it from all the various disciplinary angles and perspectives that are necessary for a comprehensive understanding,” Magaziner said. But Magaziner explained that hiring discretion is not up to the African Studies program, since it lacks departmental status. It is up to the academic departments to make these decisions on hiring, Magaziner told the News. According to him, these depart-

ments “haven’t prioritized hiring in African Studies.” “We continue to search for experts in comparative politics,” Gregory Huber, chair of the Department of Political Science, wrote in an email to the News. “Some of whom will focus on sub-Saharan Africa, and some of whom we hope will focus on north Africa.” Huber told the News that while many offers have been made to experts in African politics over the last few years, no new faculty have been hired. But he maintained that there are still faculty in the department who specialize in the African continent. He pointed to professors Kate Baldwin and Elisabeth Wood and senior lecturer David Simon. As Yale’s efforts to expand its international outreach and promote a diverse education have increased in recent years, Magaziner said that eyes across campus are watching. “We have increasing numbers of African Students and students of African descent on campus who are really invested in building on African Studies and strengthening it as a really important part of the University’s overall mission,” Magaziner said. Kennedy Odiboh ’25, a double major in African Studies and Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and the president of the Nigerian Students Association, told the News that all of his African Studies courses thus far have started out with a basic introduction to the African continent. This, he said, speaks to the fact that Yale does not offer many opportunities for students to formally explore Africa. While he thinks the language department within the African Studies program is relatively well established, Odiboh also said that hopes to see more African languages offered in the future. According to the Yale University Bulletin, Yale currently offers courses in five out of Africa’s nearly 2,000 languages: Swahili, Yoruba, Twi, Wolof and Zulu. “A lot of my friends want to learn their family’s languages, but those simply aren’t offered,” Odiboh said. “If I had the ability to,

I’d push for the expansion of languages taught within the African Studies department. There are tons of people out there who have the ability to teach these languages at the university level, but they just aren’t here at Yale.” Both Odiboh and African Studies Major Fatoumata Soumare ’24 told the News that while they have had a relatively positive experience with the program thus far, they want to see Yale invest more resources into the department in the future. “Funding is definitely a no brainer,” Soumare wrote. “For a continent that is continually growing and changing economically, politically, and socially, there needs to be more funding set aside for students to explore those topics.” She added that while she was supportive of the administration’s effort so far, there is still “room to grow.” Soumare said she also wants to see more efforts by the administrative body to hire faculty with African heritage to teach subjects in the department, which she believes lack faculty diversity. Soumare also said she hopes more trips to the continent are offered, specifically to less visited areas. In addition to South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria, Soumare hopes to see travel opportunities to places like Cote d’Ivoire, Senegal, Seychelles and Cape Verde. “African Studies needs just as much funding as every other continental department,” Odiboh said. “It’s an entire continent with a global diaspora that we’re talking about. I don’t think there’s a shortage of scholars asking questions about the African continent, but rather a shortage of funding to get these scholars to Yale.” The African continent is home to approximately one third of the world’s languages.

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# “Embrace your obstacles” says Yale’s resident Ninja Warrior

BY MIRANDA WOLLEN  
STAFF REPORTER

Everyone at Yale has a backstory. Not everyone at Yale’s backstory involves four U.S. patents-in-progress and years of training to try out one of the world’s hardest obstacles courses on live television. David Fleming’s does. After spending his high school years learning to propel his body between far-flung rungs and strengthening his grip to climb from millimeter-long ledges, 18-year-old Fleming finally got the call he’d been dreaming of since childhood on Jan. 25. He was going to be competing on American Ninja Warrior, a television show in which trained athletes compete on obstacle courses in order to be crowned the year’s ultimate Ninja Warrior. “I always had the dream of being on the show ... and joining these incredible athletes as they try to conquer the world’s hardest obstacles,” Fleming told the News. “Like most kids, I watched American Ninja Warrior starting when I was eight years old, and it had always been a point of fascination for me.” Growing up in Florida, Fleming was an energized and enthusiastic mini-ninja from before the time he could walk — much less sprint up the Warped Wall. Kelly Fleming, David’s mother, noted that her youngest son had always been a dreamer. “As a four-year-old, he wanted only two things for Christmas — a grappling hook, and a jetpack,” Fleming said. “He was always very bright, determined and insightful so I had a feeling that his path would be rather extraordinary.” Upon encountering serious health issues in elementary and middle school, however, David was unsure whether competing on the show would ever be feasible for him. He worked through the issues — and came up with the concept for a migraine relief

device whose various prototypes have been awarded four patents in the process. “I plan to have [it] on the market this year,” Fleming explained of the device, which uses acupressure and gravity to relieve head pain. Acupressure has long been used in Eastern medicine, he noted, but techniques like his have yet to be explored as much in the West outside of the chiropractic field. Fleming first created the device at 13-years-old in an effort to re-assimilate himself into a normal academic and social life after his health struggles, but he waited until adulthood to seek patenting: he feared he would fail to present as an effective salesman when he was not yet a legal adult. “To see that he now has four patents and is getting very close to making his solution available to others who suffer is truly remarkable,” added his mother. “I couldn’t be more proud of him or more grateful to be his mom and be a part of his incredible journey.” In high school, a recreational ninja gym opened ten minutes from Fleming’s house in Boca Raton. Fleming and his brother immediately fell in love with the “sport of ninja,” though they took a while to get the hang of it. “My brother transitioned to ultimate frisbee,” Fleming explained, “but I continued with ninja ... over sophomore summer I really fell in love with it and started training three to four times a week.” Fleming’s coaches noted his improvement and encouraged him to start competing in rec leagues, as he was not old enough yet to go on the show. After a last-place finish at his first rec league competition, David began to compete more frequently. Mrs. Fleming explained that he eventually moved up to the National Ninja League, where he experienced great success. Upon getting into Yale, he immediately sought out the nearest ninja gym — the Hamden Ninja Academy — and worked toward



COURTESY OF DAVID FLEMING

David Fleming ’26, a Morse College first year, is slated to compete on American Ninja Warrior this coming spring.

sending in his audition materials to the show, which had recently lowered its age limit from 19 to 15. “I decided I should wait and see if I could get into a top school [before applying to American Ninja Warrior] which I could proudly represent if I ended up getting on the show,” Fleming stated. When offered his spot on the show last month, David learned he would have only a few months to prepare before his taped appearance sometime in late March or early April. The show will premiere in a backlot of Universal Studios in June; now that COVID-19 restrictions have lessened, Fleming is excited to bring any guests who want to watch him. “We are all right behind him, encouraging him to practice, helping with t-shirt logo design and whatever else comes his way,” his mother wrote to the News. “Our extended family will be there for the taping to cheer him on and if he is fortunate, his taping date will coincide with spring break and several of his friends from Yale will be able to attend as well!”

Contestants take this prep time seriously; Fleming noted that since the show films between midnight and 5 a.m. PST, a friend and fellow competitor of his is attempting to adopt a nocturnal schedule to maximize his energy on the show. “It’s been great being able to train alongside him,” two-time competitor Jay Lewis, the nocturnal friend in question, said of Fleming. “The only thing you can fully control is how much fun you have, so I hope David really takes the whole experience in.” Lewis took the semester off from Syracuse, where he is a freshman, to compete; Fleming described him as “one of the top ninjas in the world” and noted that it was an honor to train alongside him. Many ninja warriors have mottos; Fleming is no exception. His American Ninja Warrior maxim? “Embrace your obstacles.” “I’ve always been interested in the parallels between Ninja Warrior and life, and a lot of people don’t realize this but until you see the set on the day you’re competing you have no idea what the obstacles

will be, and they could be anything,” Fleming elaborated. Fleming got his inspiration from an ancient Chinese proverb: “Obstacles do not block the path. They are the path.” He has always been fascinated by “Greek philosophy quotes,” he noted, and has thereby found himself drawn to ancient philosophy. He carries the motto into a larger life mindset, and added that he draws parallels between the obstacles he faces in Ninja Warrior and those he has faced in his life thus far. Aside from American Ninja Warrior and pending patents, Fleming looks forward to the obstacles that lay in his path as he continues at Yale: his economics courseload, juggling young ninjedom and extracurriculars like the Yale Entrepreneurial Society and the Yale Undergraduate Aerospace Association, and, he hopes, rushing fraternities in the fall — he had initially planned to do so this spring, but ninja took precedent.

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“Whatever is funny is subversive, every joke is ultimately a custard pie... a dirty joke is a sort of mental rebellion.” GEORGE ORWELL ENGLISH NOVELIST

# Of Mice and Men: Branford College students report rodent infestation

TRISTAN HERNANDEZ  
STAFF REPORTER

On the first day back from winter break, Nathalie Lemon '25's suitemate saw a mouse in their dorm.

When Branford College facilities showed up the next morning to investigate, they were unable to find the mouse and set traps throughout the suite. But the mouse sightings did not end that morning. After the facilities workers had left, Lemon started unpacking from break, and the mouse ran across her bedroom floor. She screamed, grabbed her bag and headed out for class for the day.

“Oh my god, what a way to get back,” Lemon said.

The News spoke with eight students who reported mice sightings across Branford College, in the dining hall and in the basement, which connects to Saybrook College.

The mice appeared in Elena Unger '25's suite in November, and the first sighting took place in her bedroom. Unger is also a staff reporter for the News. She called facilities, who put down mice traps, but they have not caught a mouse in the intervening two months.

“I am a drama queen when it comes to all animals, particularly rodents,” Unger said. “They’re like these little demonic brown creatures that scurry and you can hear them scratching in the wall, like the mice are having a little party. It’s kind of figuratively cute, like Ratatouille, but then when you see them come out of the holes in the wall, it’s much less cute.”

According to Unger, later mice sightings occurred not only in her bedroom, but also in her common room and in the suite across the hall. The worst day for Unger came when she reached into her snack bin to grab Cheez-Its, and her finger brushed a mouse’s tail.

Cosima Deetman '25 saw a mouse in the Branford buttery during finals week, and the day she got back from break, she saw a mouse in her common room.

“Two of my suitemates say they have heard scuttling and squeaking at night,” Deetman wrote to the News. “We live on the third floor, and we don’t have much food around, so it was pretty surprising. They don’t really bother me, and they haven’t caused any problems in the suite. But some of my suitemates were pretty distressed when I told them about my sightings.”

Branford College Council president Hilary Griggs '24 said that while she has not seen a mouse in Branford herself, she has heard about sightings from a few of her constituents.

“We have a big group chat in Branford of about 200 people in different classes, and there have been a few exchanges within the group chat,” Griggs said. “A week or two ago someone said, ‘What do we do if we saw a mouse?’ And the response was ‘Give it a name and accept your new friend.’”

The amount of mice within a building does not have to reach a certain threshold to qualify as an infestation. Signs of a mouse infestation can include droppings, smudges on the floor, scratching noises in the wall or finding a dead or live mouse during the day, the latter of which can indicate a more serious infestation.

From Griggs’ past experience with Branford administration and facilities, she believes that if mice are a widespread issue within the college, it will be resolved.

“In my practical experience, a lot of colleges will get mice occasionally,” Griggs said. “So based on my perspective, it hasn’t been a recurrent enough issue that I have seen it as a huge problem. But if this is a widespread infestation, that’s obviously an issue.”

In Saybrook College, which Branford shares a basement with, Max Werner '25 and his suitemates saw a mouse at the start of December. “More annoyed than anything else,” Werner said he blocked off a hole he discovered in his suite in hopes of compelling the mouse to “go find some other place to live.”



SOPHIE SONNENFELD/CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Several Branford students have reported mouse sightings in the college since winter recess.

Neither Branford nor Saybrook facilities representatives responded to requests for comment. Lemon and Unger said that Branford facilities have been helpful with the mice in their suites, responding within 24 hours once a mouse sighting is reported.

“I called facilities and they were amazing,” Unger said. “But it’s definitely an old building with holes in the baseboards, so espe-

cially in the winter, they come out to play. It’s terrible.”

Lemon said that before this semester, she had not seen a mouse in Branford during her two years living in the college. For Lemon, the only way she will know the mouse in her suite is finally gone is when they see it in a trap or “when the smell starts.”

“We still haven’t found it,” Lemon said. “We heard scurry-

ing and squeaking, but we have not been able to track it. We’re all living in fear in this community. Maybe I’m rustling through my bags or in my storage one day and I squish it. It wouldn’t even be squishy at that point – rigor mortis.”

Branford College is located at 74 High St.

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# Streamlined on-campus housing process to take effect for fall 2023

BY KAITLYN POHLY  
STAFF REPORTER

In an effort to provide on-campus housing to as many students as possible, the Yale College Dean’s Office recently announced a set of changes to the housing draw process.

Yale’s housing draw, which used to take place on a different timeline for each of the 14 residential colleges, will now be overseen by the Yale College Housing Office on a single calendar. The new streamlined housing process will take place entirely online, as opposed to the in-person lottery systems or hybrid systems that individual colleges have used in the past. Students will now be able to assess which rooms are available, view their layouts and select rooms all through the Yale Housing website.

“The move to a single, unified calendar will make it easier for you to get information and stay on track, regardless of your college affiliation,” Dean of Student Affairs Melanie Boyd wrote to students in a Feb. 3 mass email.

The updated system is designed to alleviate many issues that arise with annexation housing. In the past, when demand to live in-college has been too high, some students who elected to live on-campus in their residential college have then been moved to another college or overflow housing halls, such as McClellan Hall on Old Campus.

Dean of Yale College Pericles Lewis told the News that in the past, the annexation of certain students to other dorms has been a source of chaos. Members of each residential college’s administration – for example, the dean, administrative assistant or office manager – have had to be in constant communication with one another to arrange potential annexations.

“It’ll be a little more efficient to be able to identify where remain-



ROBBIE SHORT/SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

The Yale College Dean’s Office has announced a set of changes to the housing process in an effort to standardize the housing draw across all 14 residential colleges.

ing units are,” Lewis said. “There will [now] be one place where it’s all located. We’re still trying to match people to their traditional annex location, but we hopefully can fill up any vacancies.”

Beyond annexation and organizational streamlining, the new housing system also involves a unilateral housing draw timeline that will apply to all students choosing to live on campus for the 2023-24 school year.

From now until Feb. 27, all undergraduate students must submit their intent to live either on-campus or off-campus. As in previous years, all sophomores are required to live on-campus unless they are married or over 21 years of age. Juniors and seniors

are not required to live on-campus. They are also not guaranteed on-campus housing.

Following a declaration of intent to live on campus, students within each residential college must then form “rooming groups” with those they intend to live with. For rising sophomores and seniors, this process takes place from March 8 to March 28. Rising juniors and post-seniors, colloquially known as “super seniors,” have from March 8 to April 13 to form their groups.

In regard to rooming groups, Addie Lowenstein '26 told the News that she wished there was more clear communication regarding expectations.

“I’m pretty uninformed about the rooming situation for next

year,” Lowenstein said. “I don’t know how many people I’m supposed to find to be living with, and I haven’t gotten any information about this. There’s lots of speculation: ‘oh all sophomore suites need six people, or oh some sophomore suites need eight,’ but I really don’t know. I would definitely feel better if there was more clear information being given out about rooming groups.”

Following the submission of rooming groups, students will either be told that their cohort size has been approved, or be sent back a new number to either add or subtract suitemates. The approval of rooming groups, according to both Lewis and early

communications sent to students, is done by lottery.

Following lottery results, students will be able to select suites of their designated size within their residential college. The room selection process will take place from April 10 to 12 for sophomores and seniors, and April 20 and 21 for juniors and post-seniors.

All of these room selections will be centrally managed “in this database by the new housing office rather than the [residential college] teams having to do fourteen different versions,” Lewis told the News.

The Yale College Dean’s Office is located at 1 Prospect St.

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# SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

## Study highlights racial bias in school disciplinary practices

BY ABEL GELETA  
STAFF REPORTER

Jayanti Owens — an assistant professor of organizational behavior at the Yale School of Management — recently published research that finds that a student's race and school culture play a factor in how teachers respond to misbehavior.

The study, titled “Double Jeopardy: Teacher Biases, Racialized Organizations, and the Production of Racial/Ethnic Disparities in School Discipline” focused on identifying the source of the racial disparities in school punishment with an innovative approach. Although racial disparities in disciplinary actions in the education system have been documented, the fundamental causes of why students are treated differently have not been adequately examined. Owens’ approach showed teachers videos of teens from different racial and ethnic backgrounds misbehaving through behaviors such as slamming a door and texting during a test.

The research included 1,339 teachers in 295 U.S. schools, taking into account the schools’ racial/ethnic and socioeconomic composition. The experiment sought to determine how factors such as teacher bias and school climate drove discrepancies in student discipline. The research focused on teenage boys, since Owens found that boys are disciplined more frequently than girls, particularly in high school.

“We find that black boys face a double jeopardy in that they are both perceived as being more blameworthy for the exact same behavior as their white and Latino counterparts, and also that they’re more likely as our Latino students to attend schools where teachers perceive students from all racial,

ethnic backgrounds as being more blameworthy than do their counterparts in predominantly white schools,” Owens said. “There’s this sort of double disadvantage that is faced by black students in particular.”

Through this method of showing video vignettes of students engaging in the same behavior, Owens concluded when Black actors behaved the same as white actors, teachers were more likely to refer them to the principal’s office — demonstrating the pivotal role of the teacher’s decision-making on the impact that this has on a particular student.

These findings suggest the various causes for higher referral rates of minority students, which can lead to unfavorable outcomes for the student, such as detentions, suspensions and expulsions. The dynamic between the student and the teacher is vital in understanding how and why there are disproportionate outcomes in student punishment.

“People jump to the conclusion that just because there are disparities, that there is, in fact, racial bias in disciplinary decisions,” Owens said in highlighting the importance of this study. “In order to be able to claim that there’s racial bias at play, one needs to understand that you have students from different racial, ethnic backgrounds engaging in the exact same behavior.”

Another point that the research demonstrates is that the school environment is an important factor in determining how likely a student is to be disciplined for their behavior. Teachers’ reactions to misbehavior varied from school district to school district — teachers were more likely to place blame for misbehavior on all students, regardless of race or ethnic-

ity, when there were a disproportionate number of students from under-represented groups in their schools.

Owens emphasized the importance of reconsidering current discriminatory practices in the administration of school discipline punishments. Although teachers play an important role in disciplinary processes, blaming teachers for being biased towards students should not be the case in resolving issues related to school discipline, he said. Instead, he advocated for adopting a holistic approach to work towards mitigating the ramifications of racial biased disciplinary practices.

“I think that we need to take a systems-based approach to thinking about how we can reduce these racially biased sort of incidents within classrooms by thinking about the structure of schools overall,” Owens said. “Other districts have actually tried to reform discipline processes altogether through the use of things like restorative justice practices, that are aimed at trying to mediate conflict when it arises between students and teachers or between students themselves.”

Mira Debs, Executive Director of the Education Studies Program, spoke about the importance of this research’s findings and how disparities in school punishment outcomes can have long-term consequences for students. In all cases, the relationship between a student and a teacher should strive for conflict resolution and ensure that the teacher is empowering the student, Debs said. Nonetheless, students in school environments where disciplinary processes disproportionately impact them may experience the negative consequences of these measures.

“When a student is frequently being disciplined it can negatively impact their sense of self as a learner,”

Debs said. “It can also make them feel like they’re going to act in opposition to school because there’s no point in continuing to try. This often gets talked about as being part of the school to prison pipeline. So students who start getting referred into the disciplinary system continue to be progressively referred more and more and that can lead directly into students going into the juvenile justice system.”

Richard W. Lemons, executive director for the Connecticut Center for School Change and lecturer in education studies, and Leslie Torres-Rodriguez, superintendent of Hartford Public Schools, or HPS, are co-teaching a course this semester titled “Educational Design: The Form and Function of Schooling and Learning.”

“I think we’re still struggling with exactly how to do this, how to deal with this because I think [these kinds of studies] reveal that it’s inside people’s judgment call these thousands of moments a day where an adult is making a decision, is drawing inferences reaching a conclusion about something that involves a child and what are the negative consequences on the child’s — it’s a really complicated issue,” Lemons said.

Lemons spends most of his time running a nonprofit that collaborates with school districts to help them achieve instructional improvement and addressing issues of equity. There are always opportunities and ways to improve public education through research and supporting the next generation of educational leaders, emphasized Lemons. His time as a visiting professor through the Yale Education Studies program has been rewarding as he aspires to teach his courses with the central vein of equity.

“The course that I’m teaching this spring along with my colleague who happens to be the superintendent of Hartford Public Schools, similarly has a main vein. An explicit tenant running through the entire course, is around equity,” Lemons said. “So we’re asking questions all the time about what are the needs of the end user, students and parents? How do we know what the problem is that we’re trying to solve? And how do we prototype ideas? How do we develop creative ways of solving them and then test those ideas?”

Torres-Rodriguez leads HPS, one of the largest urban school districts in Connecticut, and aims to ensure that her school district can provide the best education to all students. Like most issues within education, school discipline is complex and requires Torres-Rodriguez to foster a school culture that meets the needs of students, staff and families.

“HPS utilizes a Restorative Practices approach to disciplinary practices in all schools,” Torres-Rodriguez wrote to the News. “HPS believes that students need to learn specific skills in order to positively resolve an issue or appropriately respond to a peer or staff member. The reason for the targeted learning and practice is not only to model, but so students build their toolbox of responses.”

Although the challenge surrounding school punishment and discipline requires numerous individuals and stakeholders collaborating, Torres-Rodriguez said, “Building positive relationships with our HPS students is at the core of our work, and should be in any organization that serves young people.”

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## Physicians listen to patients’ experiences in workshop

BY KAYLA YUP  
STAFF REPORTER

Eleven physician-writers reflected on the limits of medicine and the art of honoring patients through writing at the 19th annual Yale Internal Medicine Residency Writers’ Workshop.

The two-day intensive writing workshop returned fully in-person in November, with lively group discussions and writing exercises. Anna Reisman ’86, professor at the School of Medicine and director of the Program for Humanities in Medicine, and Lisa Sanders MED ’97, associate professor of medicine, co-directed the workshop.

Many pieces featured experiences that were traumatizing to the residents or that bore witness to a patient’s traumatic event, Reisman noted. To Sanders, this year’s pieces all address some kind of “moral injury,” capturing moments when the limits of medicine were reached.

“It’s like if you’ve ever seen a dog on a chain, run, run, run, and then they get to the end of the chain and they stop,” Sanders said. “Often that’s something that happens in medicine, as you’re going as far and as fast as you can, and then you reach the end of what we can do — either emotionally or physically for a patient. It’s a terrible shock so many times.”

The annual reading on Feb. 2, when residents share their pieces aloud, is Sanders’ favorite day of the year. These pieces are also collected in a booklet called “Capsules” to be distributed to the medical community. Four of the participating residents — Victoria Lewis, Anna Delamerced, Katherine Feder and Preetha Hebbar — organized the theme of the booklet and reading.

“We all found ourselves together stuck with the image of water, and particularly the idea of the ocean shore and the way that the shore can be a sight of reflection, of remembrance, of grief, longing and joy,” Lewis said at the event. “The order of the pieces you’ll hear today were intentional and intended to mimic the flow of a wave, starting with a crash and then pulling us back into the ocean’s eternal ebb and flow.”

The reading, and booklet, launched with the story of a car crash, then flowed through various water metaphors expressed in the pieces. It ended with a resident’s reflection on visiting a seafood restaurant recommended by a patient who had passed.

Nathan Maris, a pediatric resident, took the stage first with his short story of a car crash. In

the piece, his words take two paths: first the literary style of a third person narrative, then the dry, technical jargon of a medical record. Maris said he hoped to articulate the “inherent gap” between the patient’s experience of illness and the physicians’ perception of that experience.

“The human mind is not meant to process catastrophe with such haste,” Maris wrote. “A vodka-sodden SUV clips her rear fender ... Her world is a tangle of pavement and sagebrush and steel and snow and bone and blood.”

The structure of Maris’ story is circular, beginning with the patient’s plans to take her GRE and start an MBA, and ending with the patient’s final day of inpatient rehabilitation. After injury and recovery, she leaves with GRE prep books loaded onto an iPad and eventually an acceptance packet in the mail.

“Aside from treating patients directly, one of the most important parts of being a resident is bearing witness to our patients’ experiences and affirming their innate human dignity in spite of their suffering,” Maris told the News. “Every physician does this in different ways, but writing just happens to be one method that I employ.”

Natasha Freeman, an internal medicine resident, studied comparative literature in college and narrative medicine in graduate school. She was grateful to find medical colleagues who were interested in the humanistic side of medicine.

Freeman called it “a testament to the workshop’s popularity” that she only got into it during her third and final year of residency. Her story was about a patient care experience her mind kept revisiting.

“I took care of this man with advanced cancer and schizophrenia who was forsaken by the system and everyone in it,” Freeman told the News. “He lost his ability to advocate for himself in words that made sense, and therefore his needs were not attended to — the system did not allow for it.”

In her piece, Freeman details how the patient has not been outside for nearly 300 days. Scribbling zig-zags on colored construction paper, the patient asserts to her that he is writing medical research. He tells Freeman that he does not have metastatic cancer, that his own research cured cancer. When she tries to bring him to reality, the patient tells her that he wants to leave, that he has not been allowed to eat or drink in five years — currently hooked up to tubes — and

all he wants is orange juice and a breakfast sandwich.

The ethics committee had recommended months ago to stop the chemotherapy, needles, restraints and prohibition on eating — all the treatment that extends his life while deteriorating his quality of life — but the patient’s conservator refuses to authorize the change in treatment plan. Without a court order to override the conservator, the patient is stuck.

“[The patient] knew exactly what he wanted, it was obvious if you read between the lines of his psychosis and saw his emotions,” Freeman said. “Knowing how he felt and being forced to contradict those feelings by the system was somewhat of a traumatic experience, and that compelled me, despite my exhausting schedule, to write about it.”

To Freeman, creative writing can and should be used as a tool for advocacy — to give a voice to herself, peers and patients. Delamerced, a pediatric resident, also writes to advocate for patients, and has published op-ed pieces in the past that shed light on health topics in the community.

Delamerced’s piece was a short memoir in which she found resilience reflecting on her mother’s strength. Her mother had immigrated from the Philippines to Connecticut as a teenager, and had also endured the trials of medical residency.

“I will tell her about my time in New Haven. The tearful nights, the 24 hour shifts, the unexpected heartaches,” Delamerced writes. “Hugs from children leaving the hospital. Sunrises and sunsets ... If I should have a daughter, I wonder what she will think when she hears these stories.”

Delamerced reflected on the feelings of inadequacy and otherness that her mother must have felt but endured with grace.

Laila Knio, a psychiatry resident, valued sharing lived experiences with her fellow writers. It would be hard to feel true to herself, she said, if she disconnected from her creative side. There were periods of her medical education where Knio recounted losing herself to the learning of medicine — they were “the darkest.”

According to Reisman, people often write their narratives from a detached perspective at first. The workshop encourages them to reflect on what it felt like to be in the room where an experience happened — how all of the senses

felt, how the body reacted to a particular emotion.

“We talked about the normal [writing] workshop stuff like opening in medias res and plot and what we wondered about,” Knio wrote to the News. “But we also talked about how to honor our patients in our writing, about what disclosure looks like as physicians, about how to tell the truth without doing harm. It felt like a rare and precious space.”

Hebbar delivered the reading’s final piece. To her, she said, writing can be a form of processing and escapism, whether exploring challenging emotions or patient cases. An internal medicine second year resident in the primary care pro-

gram, Hebbar writes. “Then, as we had long promised, we crossed the street to Stowe’s and ate the best fish in the world.”

Reflecting on the workshop, Hebbar said she enjoyed seeing how people’s brains work outside the hospital. When people who previously had just been “somebody [she] worked with” unveiled their writing and stories, she formed a deeper appreciation for who they were as people.

Ann Soliman, chief resident in internal medicine, returned to the workshop as a facilitator after taking part in the 17th annual workshop. The workshop being her first taste of narrative medicine,



COURTESY OF ANNA REISMAN

Physicians continued the legacy of narrative medicine at the 19th writers’ workshop.

gram, Hebbar’s piece came from her first year of residency.

“Mr. R,” Hebbar’s patient, was an overnight admission. His prostate cancer had spread to his skull, “wreaking neurologic havoc,” Hebbar wrote. He could no longer walk. To her, Mr. R looked too young to be in his 50s and this sick.

“I stared at his shaved head and imagined cancer burrowing into bone underneath,” Hebbar wrote. “It felt improbable that something so catastrophic could hide under the smooth contours of his skin.”

Mr. R and his wife were thrilled to hear that Hebbar was new to Connecticut. One summer afternoon, staring out at the ocean, Mr. R marveled about the best fried fish in the area, insisting that Hebbar check out Stowe’s Seafood in West Haven.

Though Hebbar moved to a new rotation and was no longer his physician, she kept tabs on him. One day, when checking on his chart, Hebbar discovered that Mr. R had died. Nearly a year later, Hebbar and her fellow intern drove in 85 degree heat to West Haven Beach.

“There was a physical intensity to the moment which allowed for reflection upon the life we had lost and the doctors we were becom-

Soliman welcomed the chance to step back, reflect on what affected her and enjoy “a fundamental human thing.”

Soliman noted the workshop’s value for doctors at the residency stage. Resident physicians embark on a new role, entering people’s lives in a way not previously welcomed or expected before.

“I think a lot of people really resonate with experiences at that time because it’s very much a transformation in responsibility,” Soliman said. “It’s the first time they are directly caring for a patient who died or pronouncing a patient who died.”

Each year, a doctor-writer is invited to speak at the School of Medicine’s “Writing and Medicine” Grand Rounds, which takes place the same day as the annual resident reading. Physician and writer Anna DeForest, an alumna of the workshop, delivered the talk “Language for an Infinite Distance: Art as Work in Medicine” as this year’s visiting speaker.

The Yale Department of Internal Medicine established the Writers’ Workshop in 2003.

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# SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

## PROFILE:

### Megan Ranney, the next dean of YSPH



COURTESY OF STEPHANIE EWENS

Following her appointment as dean of the Yale School of Public Health, Ranney discussed her background in public health and her goals for the YSPH community.

BY JESSICA KASAMOTO AND GIRI VISWANATHAN  
STAFF REPORTERS

Megan Ranney has been involved in public health before she knew what “public health” was. As a high schooler, she led efforts to prevent substance use disorders and improve access to food for low income and elderly populations.

Now, as the incoming dean of the Yale School of Public Health, Ranney looks to draw on experiences that have taken her across the globe, blending pursuits in public health, emergency medicine and firearm violence reduction to advance health outcomes. She will begin her term at YSPH on July 1.

“We have the opportunity to set a model for schools of public health across the country, and hopefully, across the globe, around how to think differently about who’s part of the work of public health and the study of public health,” Ranney told the News. “I want us to be the best at research and to have the best students, but the thing that I care most about is that we actually change health outcomes for communities. And to me, that’s the ultimate metric of my deanship.”

Ranney arrives at Yale from Brown University, where she serves as the deputy dean of the Brown University School of Public Health and a professor of behavioral and social sciences and health services.

Long before that, Ranney began her career at Harvard, where as an undergraduate she examined the link between social determinants and healthcare as a history of science major. Internalizing the maxim that “all medicine is political,” Ranney grew to understand how deeply healthcare is intertwined with social structures — a philosophy that led her to enlist as a Peace Corps volunteer in West Africa combating the HIV/AIDS epidemic following graduation.

“I did a lot of work while I was there around gender based violence as a form to prevent the spread of HIV,” Ranney said. “But then at the end of the day, when people did catch the virus, they didn’t want to get diagnosed. They wouldn’t say its name ... couldn’t get treated. It was basically a death sentence.”

The experience led Ranney towards a passion for understanding the “underlying structural factors” that determine access to healthcare. On her return to the U.S., Ranney attended medical school at Columbia University and completed her residency in emergency medicine at Brown.

By the time she was in medical school, Ranney admitted, she wanted to get a degree in public

health but was reluctant to pay for it herself. That dilemma, she explained, drives a commitment to financial accessibility as a public health administrator.

Her decision to pursue clinical practice in emergency medicine, however, soon proved impactful. Ranney explained that she was drawn to the specialty due to its role as the “safety net of our health care system.”

“We were on the front lines,” Ranney said. “It’s really the place where you see public health problems before the rest of society [and] the rest of our country sees [them].”

She recalled observing the increase in opioid overdoses and opioid use disorder prior to the rest of the country, adding that she and her team are also first hand witnesses to domestic violence and to the challenges unhouse people face.

Having obtained her master’s of public health and completed an injury prevention research fellowship at Brown, Ranney still regularly spends time in the emergency room as a clinician, a practice she hopes to continue at Yale on top of her deanship.

Emergency medicine keeps Ranney’s “feet firmly on the reality of healthcare” and “all the ways in which ... society does not promote health.” According to Ranney, the specialty allows her to monitor and detect crises in public health before they reach the rest of society.

Ranney also sees the emergency room as a locus for equity; according to her, the ER is the only place in the U.S. healthcare system that is open to everyone, regardless of ability to pay.

“We serve as the bellwether for the problems in the U.S. healthcare system,” Ranney said. “When you look at overcrowding, staffing issues, burnout, [and] issues with payment reform, [emergency medicine is] a harbinger of all of those as well. There are a few places in the healthcare system that see it firsthand as those of us that work in emergency medicine.”

Today, Ranney is widely recognized as an expert on gun violence as a public health crisis. Ranney has served as a co-founder and senior strategic advisor for the American Foundation for Firearm Injury Reduction in Medicine at the Aspen Institute. Locally, she serves on the board of directors for the Non-Violence Institute in Providence, Rhode Island.

The roots of her interest in preventing firearm violence, Ranney explained, are her experiences in emergency medicine. When Ranney entered the field in the mid-2000’s, the federal government

had defunded the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and National Institutes of Health’s firearm injury prevention research, and few researchers had thought of addressing gun violence as a public health emergency.

According to Ranney, treating victims of gun violence in the emergency room gave her “repeated lived experience” that compelled her research.

“I think there’s a very visceral knowledge of the effects of a bullet on a human body, on the human psyche and on the family and community around them,” Ranney said. “It changes a human, forever, even if they survive that bullet wound.”

Applying the same scientific methodology used to address heart disease or COVID-19, Ranney explained, is essential to reducing harm from firearms. She prides herself on bringing a degree of “scientific rigor” and methodological tools from across her career to the study of firearm harm reduction.

For Maame-Owusua Boateng SPH ’23, Ranney’s hybrid role as a doctor and a public health practitioner provides a model for students interested in combining public health and clinical medicine. Ranney’s combination of the fields creates a “holistic view” on how to address community healthcare and “create trust in communities that have reasons to distrust.”

Similarly, for Lauren Chin SPH ’23, Ranney’s work on addressing gun violence strikes a personal note, giving her optimism about the incoming dean.

“As someone who calls Monterey Park and East Los Angeles home and has witnessed gun violence in New Haven, this public health issue is too familiar to me,” Chin wrote to the News. “But Dr. Ranney understands the nuances between mental illness and gun violence and how to build solutions to gun injury such as community partnerships, something Yale needs to support more of in New Haven.”

Brown School of Public Health’s interim dean Ronald Aubert described Ranney as an “integral part of the Brown community” during her time in Providence. Ranney has been a “tireless advocate” for patients, students and colleagues while impacting “real-world issues facing patients.”

Aubert specifically recalled a moment where Ranney attended a Women in Public Health luncheon organized by Brown’s graduate student council. According to Aubert, her role within the community serves as an inspiration for women in the field.

“The impact that she has ... brings a lot of warmth and a lot

of encouragement to the women who are envisioning themselves as leaders in public health,” Aubert said. “And that’s a beautiful thing.”

As she arrives at Yale, Ranney has already had a similar impact on YSPH students.

“[Ranney] is one of the reasons I decided to pursue public health when I was exploring such a career field,” Chin wrote to the News. “I was torn between pursuing medicine (EM specifically at the time) or public health, but Dr. Ranney has demonstrated that it is possible to successfully combine work in both fields while simultaneously caring for colleagues.”

Although Ranney accepted the YSPH deanship less than a week before it was officially announced, she hopes to arrive at Yale with two major goals: to get to know YSPH, Yale and the New Haven community, and to successfully transition YSPH to an independent model.

Ranney expects that it will take her at least a few months to get her bearings at YSPH. She hopes to spend her first few months understanding YSPH’s culture, budgeting and administration before collaborating with the YSM and YSPH leadership to set up a transition structure that is “nimble” and “fiscally responsible.”

Her colleagues at YSPH already look forward to her leadership.

“It’ll be very refreshing to have [Ranney] come here and help us advance what is already, what I like to say, a school of public health that punches way above its weight at this time,” said Howard Forman, professor of radiology and director of the YSPH Health Care Management program. “Hopefully, we can start beefing up, getting bigger, building, getting a building and continuing the evolution that we’ve had over the last decades.”

To do so, Ranney hopes to pursue three “big verticals.” First, she explained, she hopes to foster a sense of inclusivity within the school, to create a “space where all voices are heard” and where “diverse communities are equal partners in the work.”

While Ranney recognizes that tensions exist between Yale and the New Haven community, she aims to approach those conversations with respect and willingness to listen. In addition, Ranney emphasized the importance of “creating a system that walks the walk,” where institutions establish trust by proving themselves to communities.

“One of my most deeply held, most consistent driving beliefs ... is that nothing that we do matters unless it is done with community members as partners,” Ranney said. “Not doing partic-

ipatory research, which is deeply important, but true bidirectional partnerships where we have longitudinal trusted relationships with communities.”

Secondly, Ranney intends to cultivate an emphasis on innovation and entrepreneurship within the sphere of public health. By collaborating with for-profit, nonprofit and government sectors — and by relying on her experience starting two successful nonprofits — Ranney aspires to “empower” faculty and foster a spirit of innovation.

Ranney’s third “vertical” emphasizes communication. She hopes to ensure that students and faculty are provided with the “tools and training” to serve as a clear resource for “accurate, timely and trusted communication.” In addition, she hopes to build up Yale’s existing research on gun violence prevention, collaborating with YSM and YSL researchers who are exploring the topic and developing research in the discipline.

“We’re at a moment of transformation,” Ranney said. “I think that this is a time where we have the opportunity across the nation and the globe in public health to be leaders in how we think about how we train people in public health, how we study public health and most of all, how we put public health into practice.”

For Melinda Irwin, chair of the search committee for the new YSPH dean, Ranney’s ability as a communicator and firearm injury reduction expert, as well as her excitement about collaborations across the University, distinguished her from over 100 other applicants. As Irwin and Ranney both indicated, Ranney was also a faculty member at the Brown School of Public Health during its separation from the Warren Alpert School of Medicine.

Ranney’s emphasis on underrepresented communities — from her desire to work clinical shifts in the ER to research on population health— demonstrated compassion for her patients and set her apart, according to Irwin.

“I’m really looking forward to getting to know the New Haven community, the Connecticut community and then potentially getting our students and faculty to have those deep, respectful relationships,” Ranney told the News. “Because that’s at the core of public health — it’s about the public ... It’s about creating a space where community partners are deeply heard.”

YSPH was founded in 1915.

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SPORTS

*"I thank you guys so much for allowing me to be a part of something I've always dreamed about," "I thank you guys so much for allowing me to be a part of something I've always dreamed about,"* **LEBRON JAMES** ALL-TIME NBA SCORER

Men's basketball one game from first place



YALE ATHLETICS

With these early wins, the Bulldogs are likely to exceed expectations and pick up some conference wins later this season.

M BASKETBALL FROM PAGE

Despite leading by 19 with 16:25 remaining, the Blue and White slowly watched their lead crumble throughout the second half, and the pressure was on as Harvard’s Justice Ajogbor cut the deficit to just five with 2:25 remaining. But Yale remained composed in front of the Crimson crowd in the sold out Lavietes Pavilion, holding on thanks to clutch free throw shooting by guard Bez Mbeng ’25 and forward Isaiah Kelly ’23. Harvard did not score in the final two minutes. In addition to securing a key victory, the Bulldogs can also celebrate delivering what may have been the deathblow for their rivals’ playoff chances, as Harvard now teeters in seventh place and appears on the verge of missing Ivy Madness for the second year in a row. Against Dartmouth the following day, the Elis looked eager

to avenge their loss to the Big Green earlier in the season, playing with defensive intensity and holding their opponent to a paltry 22-point first half. Forward Danny Wolf ’26 and Poulakidas hit back-to-back threes in the final minute of the first half to give Yale an 11-point lead as they headed into the locker room. In the second half, the Elis stood firm, connecting on a couple of threes to widen the lead late in the game. Knowling led the scoring again with 14 points while Mbeng added 12. The Blue and White also kept Dartmouth big man Dame Adelekun — who scored 41 against Columbia a week prior — to just 13 points. “Our defense led the way tonight,” said Jones. “We were able to put some stops together to end the first half, which gave us momentum coming out of halftime. Outside of a five-minute stretch offensively in the first half, we played perfectly.”

Over the past three games, the Bulldogs have enjoyed a comfortable 17.3 point average margin of victory, thanks in large part to their stellar defensive effort. For the first time since the start of conference play, Yale once again leads the Ivy League in KenPom’s adjusted defensive efficiency rating. “We have gotten back to playing strong team defense and being connected which I think has helped us get back on track,” Knowling said. “We are feeling confident, and as long as we are doing what it takes to be successful, we can play with anybody.” Next up for the Bulldogs is another chance for vengeance against the lowly Lions of Columbia (6-18, 1-8), who pulled off an upset win in their conference season-opener but have failed to come up with a win since then. Contact **BEN RAAB** at [ben.raab@yale.edu](mailto:ben.raab@yale.edu).

Empire State dominance for Women's Hockey

W HOCKEY FROM PAGE 14

Hartje ’24 pacing the team as she has for much of the year. Hartje extended her point streak to 11 games with a goal and an assist to help the team past RPI. Hartje has followed her impressive sophomore campaign up with a stellar junior year, ranking 15th in the country in points per game and ninth in assists per game at 0.96. While Hartje came into the season as a player to watch, she has been quick to point out the large roles her younger teammates have played in the team’s stellar season. “There is always a lot of pressure in transitioning from youth hockey to collegiate, and making such a state-

ment will only help them gain experience and confidence,” Hartje said to the News earlier in the season. “I would just say to keep playing their games and working hard. If they do that, further success is inevitable since they are so talented and skilled.” First-year players Ray and Carina DiAntonia ’26 both rank in the top five on the Yale team in points this season, while Hartje herself leads the team with 33 points. The Bulldogs will return to New York next weekend for their final two away games of the regular season against Colgate and Cornell.

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The Bulldogs will return to New York next weekend for their final two away games of the regular season against Colgate and Cornell..

Elis finish with second highest team score

GYMNASTICS FROM PAGE 14

prevention, pancreatic cancer, spinal cord injuries, breast cancer and sexual assault, respectively. In the meet itself, Gigi Sabatini ’26, and Walker posted Yale's highest scores on vault, 9.725, tying for fifth place. Aviad was less than 0.1 behind her teammates in this high-powered event. “Now that we have a few meets under our belts, we are trying to clean our routines up and start focusing on the details,” Sabatini said. Sabatini competed this past weekend in support of mental health awareness because members of her family have struggled with their mental health, and it is a prevalent issue overall in college athletics. Sarah Wilson ’24 and Sherry Wang ’24 took third and fourth, respectively, on the uneven bars. The team score on the uneven bars was the team’s second-best of the day, just behind the floor team score of 48.700. On the spring floor, up-and-coming first-year student Megan Brueck ’26 flipped, tumbled and leaped her way to a second-place finish with a 9.775.



YALE ATHLETICS

This is the team's yearly chance to honor Barbara Tonry's life as a coach, gymnast and contributor to Yale Gymnastics.

On the aggregate, the team was just slightly under a point below their season-best team score of 194.250 that they earned against the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Head coach Andrew Leis told the News agrees with Sabatini’s point of focusing on the details to improve the scores overall. “The consistency is improving daily in practice and competition, so getting every tenth back by sticking dismounts and doing error-free gymnastics is our focus going forward,” Leis said. Leis said he enjoys competing against bigger state schools such as UNC and Temple, no matter the team. “Every time we step out onto the floor, we want to win, and that is what motivates us on a daily basis,” he continued. The Bulldogs will host their sentimental Tonry Invitational this coming Sunday at 1:00 pm in the Lee Amphitheater. This is the team's yearly chance to honor Barbara Tonry's life as a coach, gymnast and contributor to Yale Gymnastics. The late head coach died in July 2021.

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W Tennis continues winning streak



YALE ATHLETICS

The women will continue regular season play on Feb. 17. The men will resume their regular season play on Mar. 3.

W TENNIS FROM PAGE 14

captain Theo Dean ’24 said. “As a team, the doubles point was a highlight on both days.” The Blue and White beat the Broncos out for the doubles point, marking wins at lines one and two. Renaud Lefevre ’24 and Vignesh Gogineni ’26 defeated Fynn Lohse and Arjun Honnappa 7-5 while Theo Dean and Aidan Reilly ’25 beat Brogan Pierce and Benjamin George 6-2. In singles, Dean, Michael Sun ’23, Shervin Dehmoubed ’24 and Walker Oberg ’25 clinched wins of (6-4, 6-3), (6-1, 7-5), (6-4, 5-7, 1-0 (10-7)) and (6-1, 6-3), respectively. “We had good competitive engagement from everyone, even guys not playing,” Oberg said. “We have room to improve on execution in singles.” The Blue and White broke their four-match winning streak against the Badgers on Saturday. The Bull-

dogs’ winning streak included wins against Binghamton University (0-8, 0-0 America East), Fairfield University (0-3, 0-0 Metro Atlantic), Temple University (2-2, 0-0 American) and Western Michigan University. “I think we succeeded in competing very hard throughout the majority of our lineup each day, and we fought hard to hang in the Wisconsin match when they had gotten ahead of us,” head coach Chris Drake wrote to the News. “We can improve our ability to sustain our focus and level against good teams. We were a bit up and down, but we will get there with more experience at this level.” The Elis earned the doubles point after Lefevre and Gogineni defeated Gabriel Huber and Michael Minasyan 6-3, and Sun and Dehmoubed beat Robin Parts and Sebastian Vile 7-5. Dean clinched

the only singles point for the team, routing Jared Pratt (6-4, 6-3). “There’s still improvement as we had lapses in focus that led to critical losses,” Gogineni said. “I’m going to mainly focus on my serve during practice as I felt that was a big liability for me this weekend.” The women will return to competition next weekend in Hanover, New Hampshire at the ECAC Championship. The men will compete in the Championship at Dartmouth College the following weekend. The women will continue regular season play at the University of South Carolina (1-2, 0-0 SEC) on Feb. 17. The men will resume their regular season play against New Jersey Institute of Technology (4-0, 0-0 American East) on Friday, Mar. 3. Contact **GRAYSON LAMBERT** at [grayson.lambert@yale.edu](mailto:grayson.lambert@yale.edu).



# First Connecticut school for LGBTQ+ students set to open in New Haven



COURTESY OF PATRICIA NICOLARI

Longtime teacher Patricia Nicolari is planning on opening PROUD Academy, a safe school space for LGBTQ+ students and allies.

YASH ROY  
STAFF REPORTER

After facing discrimination and derogatory comments about her sexuality over her three decades of teaching, Patricia Nicolari is realizing a dream she has had for 14 years: opening a school that caters specifically to the needs of LGBTQ+ students.

With plans to enroll roughly 150 7th to 10th graders in the upcoming 2023-2024 school year, the New Haven-based PROUD Academy is designed to provide a safe haven from bullying and discrimination for LGBTQ+ youth. According to a 2021 study by the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network, more than 80 percent of LGBTQ+ students between the ages of 13 and 21 report feeling unsafe at their schools.

"Coming out changed everything, and I realized what a difference it makes to not pretend to be anybody anymore," Nicolari told the News. "I started going across the country putting on workshops for teachers to create safe spaces for students.

Eventually, I thought I need to do this for students so that they don't waste as much time as I did, so this school is a place that empowers them to be authentic and be who they are."

While the private school is specifically geared towards the needs of LGBTQ+ students, it is also open to cisgender and heterosexual students who wish to attend the academy. PROUD has garnered national and international press and activist attention after its launch announcement at Southern Connecticut State University last week. PROUD would be the fifth school of its kind in the nation.

PROUD's tuition is currently estimated to be roughly between \$30,000-40,000 per year with a need-based financial aid policy based on the federal aid system. However, in the long term, Nicolari hopes to make the school free to all of those who want to attend.

The school is still working to raise the funds necessary to open in September. Barbara Duncan, the academy's board director, told the News that keeping the school open for its first

three years will require roughly \$5 million dollars. PROUD currently does not receive any federal or state funding, but school leadership is in the process of asking for donations to enable the school to meet the financial needs of all students.

"We've just really been connecting to the community," Duncan told the News. "It's just amazing that this initiative is a grassroots effort. And it's just starting to percolate to reality."

PROUD is currently negotiating to buy the old Riverside Academy on Ella T. Grasso Blvd. in the Hill neighborhood. Nicolari told the News that the site suits the needs of PROUD perfectly, with a large indoor space as well as an outdoor space that borders the West River.

Moreover, Nicolari added that choosing New Haven as PROUD's location was deliberate since the academy will be located near both Yale and Southern Connecticut State University. PROUD is actively working with the gender and emotional learning centers at Yale to augment their current curriculum plans,

and PROUD students will be able to dual-enroll for college classes at SCSU.

"Patty who had a vision for this school and has been putting in the work and recruiting so many like minded partners — like the folks here at Southern — to make it a reality," state treasurer Erick Russell, who is the first openly gay Black person to serve in statewide office in the U.S., wrote to the News. "Being yourself sounds so easy but can be so difficult for LGBTQ+ kids. That's why the PROUD Academy is so important, and the work it's doing is so impactful. Every kid deserves to feel accepted, safe and totally themselves."

## A safe haven for transgender and nonbinary students

The largest group of students who have expressed interest in PROUD Academy so far are transgender and nonbinary students.

Fairfield resident Tiffanie Wong submitted an application for her nonbinary child, Maddie, who is currently in seventh grade. Wong told the News that her child has lived through bullying and harassment at their middle school because of their gender identity.

"It's gotten to a point where they're no longer comfortable in school, and we've been having a lot of issues trying to get them to go to school because of how traumatic it has been," Wong said. "They were really excited to hear about PROUD because it's a place where they feel like they wouldn't be different, which is a huge thing because no one wants to be different in middle school."

Wong is one of roughly 50 parents who have reached out already for their students to be enrolled, including two out-of-state families who have said they will relocate to Connecticut so that their child feels more safe.

Within the last year, school officials and state legislators across the nation have worked to limit discussion around and end recognition of transgender and nonbinary students. Connecticut Republicans introduced a bill on Jan. 20 calling on school officials to only rec-

ognize students by their biological sex. Roughly 100 pieces of legislation similar to this Connecticut bill have been introduced in the last year across the nation, according to the American Civil Liberties Union.

"The anti-trans sentiment that we have seen across the country might explain the national attention and outreach from families across the country we have received since announcing last week," Nicolari told the News.

Staff will be trained to better understand transgender and nonbinary students so that they can provide them with the support necessary. Nicolari told the News that she has already received dozens of applications from teachers who hope to create a more nurturing environment for LGBTQ+ students.

To better support transgender and nonbinary students, PROUD will also have a gender-affirming closet where transgender and nonbinary students can change into clothes that suit how they identify.

Nicolari said that PROUD will also emphasize social-emotional learning with daily surveys and mental health check-ins with students so that teachers and staff can identify issues quickly and help students address them.

When PROUD opens, it will join the national LGBTQ+ ally network of schools. All five schools in the network have similar founding missions. New York City's Harvey Milk School, founded in 1985, was the first school created with a focus on LGBTQ+ students, with three others following in Alabama, Wisconsin and Ohio.

"I was the first Black lawyer at a big law firm in Connecticut," PROUD member John Rose told the News. "It's been so heartening to see how hard Patty is working to protect and lift up LGBTQ+ and Trans kids and help them fight against discrimination. PROUD is going to thrive when it opens."

The Riverside Academy is located at 560 Ella T Grasso Blvd.

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# Volunteers canvass for rent caps in Fair Haven

BY MAGGIE GRETHER  
STAFF REPORTER

Canvassers braved the cold snap last Sunday to knock on doors in New Haven's Fair Haven neighborhood, generating support for a state-wide cap on annual rent increases.

The proposed law, Senate Bill 138, would limit state-wide rent increases at 2.5 percent each year. The bill would also crack down on no-fault evictions, restricting landlords' power to evict tenants without valid reasons.

"Right now, landlords can evict anybody for any reason — five days later you're out of a house," Alex Speiser, an organizer with Connecticut Tenants Union, said. "We're fed up with it. ...We're trying to push politicians to do something as soon as possible."

The Cap the Rent campaign kicked off in January, timed to align with the start of Connecticut's new legislative session. Sunday's canvassing in New Haven was part of a greater statewide effort, with volunteers with the Cap the Rent movement knocking on doors in Bridgeport, Manchester and East Hartford.

Cap the Rent is part of a larger housing rights movement that has swept across the state since the pandemic. The Connecticut Tenants Union has been active for about a year, helping to form multiple tenants unions around the state.

Thomas Gilbertie, a volunteer, said that he was motivated to join the Cap the Rent Campaign as he prepares to become a first-time renter after he graduates college.

"I've been looking at rent prices, and they're ridiculous and unrealistic for someone like me," Gilbertie said.

Speiser drew attention to skyrocketing rental rates across the state. In the past year, rents increased around 12 percent across Connecticut, and in New Haven specifically, rents spiked around 19 percent. Cur-



YASH ROY/CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

As part of the recently-launched Cap the Rent campaign, canvassers looked to generate support for a proposed rent cap ahead of the bill's public hearing in Hartford.

rently, 52 percent of Connecticut renters are cost burdened, Speiser said, meaning over half of families spend more than 30 percent of their income on rent and utilities.

James O'Donnell, an organizer with the city's first officially recognized tenants union, explained that advocates decided to push for a 2.5 percent rent cap to reflect the average annual rental increase in Connecticut between 2000 and 2020, which was 2.1 percent.

O'Donnell also pointed out the bill would carve out possible exceptions for small landlords on a local level. The exemption process, O'Donnell said, would involve work-

ing individually with landlords and might function similarly to how fair rent commissions work with tenants to process complaints about unfair rent hikes.

On Sunday, canvassers had three main goals: getting tenants to sign a petition for rent caps, helping people call their elected officials to express support for the Cap the Rent bill and encouraging tenants to volunteer to give public testimony at an upcoming public hearing. So far, the legislation has been referred to the Connecticut General Assembly's Joint Committee on Housing.

Ben Smith, an organizer with the Connecticut Tenants Union, said

he was particularly motivated to canvass after thinking about people who were unhoused during the extremely cold temperatures over the weekend. He was also compelled by stories he had heard of people living in apartments without properly-functioning heat.

Canvassers specifically focused on blocks with high concentrations of properties owned by large, corporate real estate agencies such as Mandy Management and Ocean Management. Over the past five years, Mandy Management affiliates have spent over \$150 million acquiring 1,530 New Haven rental housing units.

Speiser said that especially while organizing for tenant-related issues, he has encountered people fearing retaliation from landlords.

"Housing is so fundamental to people's lives and security, that they put up with a lot that they shouldn't have to because they're nervous about having even crummy living situations taken away from them," said Speiser.

Senate Bill 138 was proposed by New Haven State Sen. Gary Winfield and State Rep. Robyn Porter, among others.

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“My loquat tree sprouted, and I like making loquat pie. They’re really hard to peel and everything, and it took me forever, but they make the best pies. They’re amazing.” KRISTEN STEWART AMERICAN ACTRESS

# Lamont unveils \$50 billion budget

BY YASH ROY  
STAFF REPORTER

With more than \$6 billion tucked away in Connecticut’s rainy day fund, Gov. Ned Lamont called at the biennial budget address for the state’s largest tax cuts since the creation of the state income tax in 1991.

Speaking within the House chamber of the Connecticut General Assembly on Wednesday, Lamont laid out a \$50 billion dollar budget that will lower the tax rates for families making less than \$150,000 while also increasing the state’s contribution to school districts by \$135 million.

While Lamont announced spending increases, progressive legislators and activists argue that the state is not spending enough to deal with affordability and education crises across the state.

“My primary goal for the next two years is driving growth,” Lamont said in his speech. “We continue to move from rescue to recovery, lifelines to ladders to opportunity. None of this would be possible if not for our collective hard work over the last four years which is the foundation of our next chapter of growth and opportunity for all.

The budget allocates \$25 billion for spending for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, which is a 3.5 percent increase in spending from the current fiscal year. The budget allocates \$25.5 billion for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, which is an additional 1.8 percent in spending.

The budget will now be debated and amended by the state’s appropriation committees to be passed by June.

While Lamont touted the budget as a means of fighting income inequality and improving residents’ economic situation, Recovery for All CT, a coalition of unions, organizers and faith groups in the state, argue that decisions to maintain budgetary controls without increasing funding to programs or increasing taxes on the rich make the budget ineffective.

“Instead, this proposed budget does not live up to the promise of equity that Section 92 demands—threatening to continue the decades of bad policy choices that have made Connecticut ground zero for the most extreme racial, economic, and gender inequities in the country,” Recovery for All CT Executive Director Puya Gerami GRD ’23 told the News.

### 1.1 million tax filers to receive tax relief under tax reduction

Lamont announced on Wednesday that his budget proposal includes a lowering of the 3 percent income tax on the first \$10,000 of income to a 2 percent rate while income under \$50,000 would see a cut from the current 5 percent to 4.5 percent.

This cut is projected to save taxpayers \$440 million annually according to the Governor’s office.

Of the state’s 1.7 million tax filers, roughly 1.1 million will receive up to \$300 in tax relief with this plan.

On top of the general tax cut, Lamont also included a Earned Income Tax Income expansion that has been pushed for years by progressive legislators, including State Rep. Anne Hughes. The new increases in the EITC would raise the tax-credit rate from the current 30.5 percent to 40 percent.

“The EITC is one of the best anti-poverty tools we can use because it encourages work, boosts working families, and uplifts generations to come,” Lamont said on Wednesday. “It’s about time that we increase it.”

Under the proposed expansion, families earning less than \$50,000 a year will pay no state income tax while families earning \$60,000 will receive a 20 percent tax cut. If a family has an income lower than \$150,000, the EITC will provide them a 6.5 percent tax cut worth roughly \$500.

The rate increase is projected to provide an additional \$44.6 million state tax credits to roughly 210,000 qualifying low income households.

While Hughes believes that these measures are important steps forward, she added that the state should also pursue the state’s “highest tax evaders” who she said avoid paying taxes and cost the state almost \$125 million per year.

“We’re totally enthusiastic about the Earned Income Tax Credit but it’s not enough,” Hughes told the News. “We’re going to be pushing for the child-tax credit and also for raising revenues on capital gains and top income tax earners but Lamont has clearly said he’s not going to do that.”

While progressives in the state have called for these tax increases, Eric Gjede, vice president of public policy for the Connecticut Business Industry Association, told the News that such increases would be “absolute job and business killers” that would make doing business more difficult in a state where “doing business is already difficult.”

Lamont’s budget plan does include the reimplementing of pass-through-entity taxes for small businesses to avoid state tax deduction limitations imposed by the 2017 federal tax cuts.

Similar to the SALT tax deductions for property taxes that was capped at \$10,000, small businesses were also not allowed to deduct more than \$10,000 from their federal taxes for state income taxes that they passed.

Additionally, Lamont is calling on the state legislature to enact a 25 percent tax credit for large corporations to open childcare centers on site.

“This budget proposal for one of the richest states in the richest nation in the world does not require our wealthiest corporations and earners to contribute what they own



COURTESY OF BRIAN M. O’CONNOR, HOUSE DEMOCRATIC OFFICE

Activists across the state are questioning why the state must save billions amidst educational and housing crises.

to fund the future of our communities even while working families still contribute a much greater share of their income for the programs and services we all rely on,” Gerami told the News.

### Education Cost Sharing funding to increase by \$135 million

With school districts across the state struggling with lower-than-expected test scores, chronic absenteeism and teacher retention issues, Lamont plans on spending an additional \$135 million on education over the next two years.

The budget will also add an additional \$10 million in grants to assist municipalities and districts with addressing staff shortages. This includes apprentice programs and strengthening earning-while-you-work programs for teachers.

To combat absenteeism, the budget includes \$7 million for the LEAP program where counselors knock on doors to help increase student attendance.

“The state of many of our schools are abysmal and this doesn’t even come close to giving the full funding they need to thrive,” Hughes told the News. “I’m very concerned about the stress being placed on municipalities. \$135 million is modest ... we should accelerate the formula right now and fully fund PILOT, but we can’t do that with the budgetary control we need flexibility.”

The state legislature will vote tomorrow to extend free lunch for all students through the end of the current school year to incentivize attendance.

### Lamont presses cities and municipalities to address housing

During his budget address, Lamont called on city and local governments to create actionable plans on developing multi-unit and affordable housing in the state.

“I will also urge mayors and first selectmen to develop and act on a plan of their own where they will allow more housing in their com-

munity through friendlier zoning and expedited approvals,” Lamont said. “Towns may submit their plans to facilitate housing on their terms. Doing nothing is not an acceptable strategy.”

Lamont also touted the expansion of the time-to-own program by \$50 million each year. Under this program, residents who can gather half of a down payment will receive a forgivable loan for the other half.

Gerami pointed to a spike in rents across the state with rents increasing by 20 percent per year for the last two years on average. Across the state, more than 50 percent of Connecticut residents spend more than 30 percent of their income on rent. According to Hughes, the state needs to invest in building more affordable housing units with the current surplus funding.

Gerami told the News that the Recovery for all CT coalition which includes the AFL-CIO, AFT, and New Haven Rising has thrown its support behind Senate Bill 138 which would limit state-wide rent increases to 2.5 percent per year.

### Lamont solidifies budgetary controls through 2032

Prior to 2017, Connecticut faced high volatility in its expenditures since a large portion of the state’s tax base comes from Connecticut residents who work in stock-related industries. Thus, when there are economic downturns, Connecticut’s tax revenue shrinks at a rate higher than most other states.

The 2017 budget strengthened the rainy day reserves and the fund currently sits at \$3.2 billion which could fully fund the state government and services for roughly 70 days.

On Tuesday, Lamont announced that he and both the senior Republican and Democratic legislative leaders had agreed to a continuation of the same budgetary control through 2032.

“This agreement locks us in too far into the future,” State Representative Anne Hughes told the News. “We don’t know what the landscape will

look like and we need more flexibility to fund services now ... we are facing a critical workforce crisis, a care workforce crisis. I don’t think we can count on the federal government saving us from that, and we need to spend the money now.”

The agreement limits the values of state bonds that can be issued to finance municipal projects to \$1.9 billion per year. It also restricts legislators from increasing spending by more than \$3.2 billion during any quarter.

The 15 percent cap on general funds saving that currently exists will also be raised to 18 percent.

“I think it’s a balance and we’re trying to address their concerns,” Scanlon told the News. “We’re not going to make the mistakes of the past by continuing just to say, Oh, look, we have a huge surplus. Let’s spend it on all these problems. They’re well intentioned but that was what got us into a fiscal crisis and therefore resulted in us spending even less money on some of those services because we had to make very difficult cuts during the Malloy years to scale back those programs.”

### Where does the budget go next?

State appropriators will now debate the budget for the next three months adding legislative text and hammering out details from the top-line vision laid out by the governor.

“We are encouraged by the values put forth by the governor in this budget and look forward to working with him over the coming months,” Senator, President Pro Tempore and New Haven legislator Martin Looney told the News. “The General Assembly’s Appropriations and Finance committees will now begin their process of crafting the legislature’s budget proposal determining the best ways to support Connecticut’s working and middle class families.”

The state legislature sits in Hartford from January to June in odd years where the budget is debated.

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# Transportation committee hears speeding camera bill

BY YASH WADWEKAR  
STAFF REPORTER

Propelled by a drastic increase in traffic-related deaths and discourse surrounding increased traffic regulation, the Connecticut state legislature recently began hearing testimony on a bill that would install statewide automated speeding cameras.

Last Monday, the Connecticut General Assembly’s transportation committee held its first public hearing on HB 5971. At the hearing, 80 people shared testimony, with some of those in support of the bill detailing personal accounts of near-fatal accidents.

In 2022 alone, 385 Connecticut residents died in traffic accidents, a 22 percent increase from the 302 fatalities the year before. Addressing traffic accidents has become a matter of personal significance for many committee members as last month, State Rep. Quentin Williams was killed in a wrong-way driver collision.

“Traffic violence is personal to me because I have almost been hit several times due to cars not obeying traffic laws on my way to work,” Aishwarya Pillai MED ’23 wrote, testifying in support of the legislation.

Pillai added that she has had to personally treat victims of accidents at several high-risk intersections around New Haven.

One of these cases, Pillai wrote, involved a law student who was hit at the intersection of York Street and South Frontage Road. The student was struck after visiting his sister at the hospital and died while receiving treatment.

During the hearing, Pillai explained that drivers around the South Frontage Road and York Street intersection, as well as many others in the city, regularly speed and run red lights because of limited penalties for doing so. The bill’s proposed speeding camera installments would ostensibly fix this problem by automatically flashing photos of drivers’ license plates and fining drivers after traffic violations.

“I pretty much walk everywhere I go and witness so many drivers dangerously speeding and running red lights across the city,” Abigail Roth, a member of Yale’s Traffic Safety Committee, told the News. “With so many people being injured and killed by traffic violence, it feels really important to push for change.”

Roth, who testified in support of the bill, said she has been pushing for greater traffic safety legislation in Connecticut—including automated enforcement—for a decade.

New Haven considered a red light camera proposal in 2009 after the deaths of a Yale medical student and a young girl the

year before. Two years ago, the state legislature proposed another piece of legislation aimed at tackling traffic safety. The legislation, called the 2021 Transportation Safety Act, outlined the creation of a “Vision Zero Council”—a statewide policy research council—to combat traffic-related fatalities. But neither bill implemented automated traffic monitoring. If passed, HB 5971 would be the first of its kind to do so.

Concerns about automated traffic regulation largely revolve around discrimination and privacy infringement. During the hearing, Carol Platt Liebau, president of the Connecticut-based Yankee Institute, testified in opposition, arguing the bill would breach individual privacy rights.

“The people of Connecticut have the right to be secure in their property and to go about their business without being watched,” Liebau said.

Proponents, meanwhile, maintained that Connecticut’s automated traffic monitoring would follow similar models in other states, only taking photos of license plates.

“I think people don’t understand that the camera just takes a picture of the license plate,” Andrew Giering LAW ’11, who testified at the hearing, told the News. “It doesn’t take pictures of people’s faces; it won’t be used to

record crimes. It’s a public safety measure and as long as safeguards are in place, I don’t know how valid these privacy concerns are.”

Lior Trestman, who is a member of The Safe Streets Coalition, a New Haven organization advocating for increased road regulation, testified at the hearing arguing that most privacy concerns regarding the bill are excessive. Trestman postulated that the bill’s opposition instead stems from an inclination to speed on roads along suburb-to-city commutes.

“These concerns primarily bubble from people who are not representing cities,” Trestman told the News. “In my mind, they come across as not wanting the people who live in suburbs and traveling into the cities to get tickets and be held accountable for the speed at which they’re driving and the damage they’re causing.”

Opponents including Liebau also contended that the cameras could disproportionately impact racial minorities. Liebau pointed to Chicago’s automated traffic monitoring system, which ticketed Black and Latino areas at twice the rate of their white counterparts.

But Trestman argued that the bill’s preventative measures addressed these claims too.

“One thing that’s built into the law as it’s written is that the ven-

dor isn’t allowed to make money based on how many tickets they issue or how many fines they collect so they aren’t incentivized to issue more tickets,” he said. “They don’t get to choose where the cameras go either. Every location can be suggested by the city and then approved by both the local traffic authority and the State Traffic Administration.”

Trestman also suggested issuing ticket fines proportional to drivers’ incomes, as well as installing camera warning signs before the camera itself. He said he believed such measures could alleviate the economic burdens of ticket fines while also promoting safer roads for everyone. Additionally, Trestman noted that the automated ticketing systems replacing some police officer enforcement might save time for New Haven’s police department.

If implemented, speeding cameras would be installed first in school zones and pedestrian safety zones. Then, cameras would be installed in high-crash zones as identified by the Department of Transportation’s crash map.

Of the 80 people testifying in the Committee’s public hearing, 73 testified in support of the legislation.

Contact **YASH WADWEKAR** at  
yash.wadwekar@yale.edu .



BULLETIN BOARD

“Have you cooked an apple pie? You don’t know what you did wrong? Do this: Take two or three apples. Put them on a table. Study them.” PAUL PRUDHOMME AMERICAN CELEBRITY CHEF

Mini 4

ACROSS

1 Fad, trend

6 Famed Swiss watchmaker

7 Cognizant of

8 FSU rival mascot

9 Egg-holder

DOWN

1 Rugged rock face

2 Platinum mountain-ash?

3 Winged ant, ex.

4 Opposite of heroes

5 Expend energy or effort

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YALE UNIVERSITY

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES DEPARTMENT

THE HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.

ANNUAL LECTURE

“BIASED: UNCOVERING THE HIDDEN PREJUDICE THAT SHAPES WHAT WE SEE, THINK, AND DO”

JENNIFER EBERHARDT

MORRIS M. DOYLE CENTENNIAL PROFESSOR OF PUBLIC POLICY, PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY, FACULTY DIRECTOR, STANFORD SPARQ, STANFORD UNIVERSITY

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2023, 4:00PM

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FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mini 3

ACROSS

1 Wile E. Coyote's supplier

5 "mmph" for instance

7 Largest blood vessel

8 Pilloried over the coals?

9 Actress Sedgwick

DOWN

1 Famous .io game

2 How frogs snuff it

3 Of the future and brackish water

4 Prerequisite to an exit

6 Voilà!

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CHASE COGGINS MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP 2023

The Chase Coggins Memorial Fund is named for Chase Frederick Coggins '79 Timothy Dwight College. The Scholarship is to assist undergraduates in

1) wilderness exploration with philosophical, artistic or scientific intent, and

2) traveling to rural areas or developing countries to study.

Examples of past recipient project areas include: “Hiking Japan’s Shin-etsu Trail an 80-kilometer trail that runs along the ridge of the Sekida Mountains in Japan” “travel to Lebanon to document and study the crisis of high concentrations of chemical and bacterial contamination and its effect on vulnerable populations with the country,” “Lithium isotopes as a silicate weathering proxy in the Kapuas River, Indonesia, the key to understanding global climate feedbacks.

There is no application form, but proposals are expected to contain a brief summary of academic background, a statement of objectives, an itinerary and a budget.

Recommendations are welcome, and the selection committee may request an interview with the applicant.

You can visit the website at [www.chasecogginsfund.org](https://www.chasecogginsfund.org)

Proposals can be emailed to [miserendi@saintanthonyhallsigma.org](mailto:miserendi@saintanthonyhallsigma.org)

The deadline is March 1, 2023.

CATHERINE KWON is a sophomore in Benjamin Franklin College.

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SPORTS

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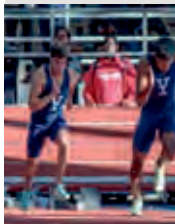
WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

**BULLDOGS FILL BIG GREEN**  
Carson Swank '23 will lead the Yale baseball team as its new captain this year, as the program prepares to welcome a talented first-year class and new members of its coaching staff.



MEN'S ICE HOCKEY

**YALE WINS TWICE ON ICE**  
The Yale men's ice hockey team shut-out Clarkson and St. Lawrence in back-to-back 4-0 victories at home with goalie Luke Pearson '25 making a combined 52 saves throughout the weekend.



"I've been throwing big in practice for a while now so I knew I was due for a big meet," Chris Ward '24 said.

**TRACK AND FIELD**  
CHRIS WARD '24

No. 2 Bulldogs remain dominant



MUSCOSPSPORTSPHOTOS.COM

The Yale women's hockey team continued its impressive season with wins over Union and RPI this weekend.

BY SPENCER KING  
STAFF REPORTER

The Yale women's hockey team (23-1-1, 16-1-1 ECAC) continued their road game perfection this season with two more wins at Union College (11-18-1, 4-13-1 ECAC) and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (9-20-1, 4-13-1 ECAC).

The No. 2 ranked Bulldogs took care of business on their weekend road trip to New York that saw them face off against two of the bottom three teams in the ECAC. The Bulldogs themselves currently sit atop the ECAC, holding a 5 point lead over rivals Colgate (24-4-2, 14-3-1 ECAC) who are in second place with 44.5 points in the season.

"We want to set ourselves up to have a successful post season which means winning the ECAC and maintaining home ice advantage for the entirety of the playoffs and potentially the first round

of the NCAA tournament," forward Claire Dalton '23 said.

The weekend started out hot for the Elis as they visited Schenectady, New York to play Union and scored less than three minutes into the game when Charlotte Welch '23 buried her first of many for the night.

The Bulldogs took off from there, continuing to fill the Union net all night. Once the dust settled on the night, Yale emerged with a dominant 10-1 win, holding a 46-15 advantage in shots.

The disparity in shots for each team shows the completeness of this Bulldogs team, with head coach Matt Bolding getting his team to play a full 200-foot game from net to net.

"Everyone on the team plays equally hard on both sides of the puck which (in my opinion) has been our main advantage this year — we care the same about a goal as we do a good d-zone play," Welch told the

News. "As fatigue grows with school, hopefully we can keep up, our strength coach has been great about getting us in good enough shape to last through the end."

For Welch, the goals kept coming on Friday as she finished the game with her second career hat trick. However, Welch wasn't alone in putting hats on the ice for the Bulldogs, as teammate Jordan Ray '26 also posted a hat trick.

The two hat tricks paced the Bulldogs double-digit goal performance in Yale's highest scoring game since the 2014-15 season.

Despite a tighter score of 4-2, the Saturday night visit to Troy, New York against RPI was a similarly dominant Yale performance, with the Bulldogs holding a 45-19 advantage in shots.

The win pused the Bulldogs win streak to 15 games, with Elle

SEE **W HOCKEY** PAGE 10

Men's Basketball make it five straight

BY BEN RAAB  
STAFF REPORTER

Heading into the home stretch of the Ivy League season, the Yale men's basketball team is riding a five-game win streak.

Yale (16-6, 6-3 Ivy) hit the road last weekend, playing at Harvard University (12-11, 3-6 Ivy) and Dartmouth College (8-15, 4-5 Ivy). The Bulldogs seemed unfazed by the hostile environments, winning 68-57 and 72-53 respectively.

From the opening tipoff in Cambridge, it was clear that the Bulldogs' momentum had not stopped since last week's second-half domination of Princeton. Forward Matt Knowing '24 made a layup on the opening possession and it was all Elis from that point on. The Bulldogs padded their early lead with a 17-5 run to close out the first half with a 42-25 lead. While the

offense slowed down in the second half, the Yale defense held strong and kept the Crimson offense at bay to secure a comfortable win.

"It was a great team win," head coach James Jones said. "It is always difficult to win a league road game, but our guys stayed together and put in a tremendous effort defensively for 40 minutes."

Knowing led all scorers with 18 points to go along with seven rebounds. Guard John Poulakidas '25, coming off of a strong performance against Princeton, added 13 points.

"I'm feeling more confident and in a better rhythm out there," said Knowing, who recorded his highest scoring total since Nov. 22 against Vermont and has been dealing with a bicep injury for the past two months.

SEE **M BASKETBALL** PAGE 10



YALE ATHLETICS

Men's basketball team won at Harvard and Dartmouth this weekend to stretch their winning streak to five games in a row and draw within one game of first place.

Gymnasts post second-highest team score



YALE ATHLETICS

The Yale gymnastics team lost by just over a point against the Temple Owls at home this Sunday. Nusandit aut alita voluptam apero ipsuscim endam et officio taeris in nis

BY PALOMA VIGIL  
STAFF REPORTER

Although Yale Gymnastics lost against Temple at John J. Lee Amphitheater on Sunday, the team finished with the second-highest team score of their season — 193.600 points.

The meet on Sunday held extra weight as it was also their "My Cause, My Ribbon" meet, in which each gymnast competed in support of a unique cause. Gymnasts raised awareness for a wide variety of issues, among them sexual assault, neuroblastoma and liver cancer.

"Everyone chose a cause that they feel passionate about, either from personal experience or hardships or the experience of family or friends that they want to bring light to," said Oren Aviad '25. "Mine was spinal cord injury awareness, specifically tied to one of my teammates, Melanie Coleman, who

passed away a few years ago due to a spinal cord injury as a result of a gymnastics accident."

Coleman was a 20-year-old gymnast at Southern Connecticut State University who died in November 2018 after suffering a spinal cord injury when she slipped from the uneven bars.

The team tries to have themes or causes for which they wish to compete at many of their home meets. However, according to Aviad, "we [the team] wanted to make it more personal and give everyone the opportunity to highlight the cause they feel passionate about."

The team did just as that as seniors Aimee Titche '23, Alexa Berezowitz '23, Caitlin Henry '23, Cassie Clement '23, Raegan Walker '23 and Riley Meeks '23 raised awareness for mental health, suicide

SEE **GYMNASTICS** PAGE 10

Women's Tennis routs Midwestern teams

BY GRAYSON LAMBERT  
STAFF REPORTER

This weekend, the Yale women's tennis team welcomed Rutgers University (4-1, 0-0 Big Ten) and Indiana University (4-2, 0-0 Big Ten) to Cullman-Heyman Tennis Center. The men traveled to Madison, Wisconsin, where they battled Western Michigan University (3-3, 0-0 Mid American) and the University of Wisconsin-Madison (5-1, 0-0 Big Ten).

The women's team eked out a 4-3 victory over Rutgers on Friday, continuing their winning streak against the Scarlet Knights.

"We all did a really good job of having a lot of high energy and cheering each other on constantly and loudly," Ann Wright Guerry '26 said.

All three doubles teams were victorious. Vivian Cheng '23 and Chelsea Kung '23 posted a 6-2 vic-

tory over Tara Chilton and Mai Nguyen. Rhea Shrivastava '23 and Jamie Kim '25 defeated Minchae Kim and Jackeline Lopez 6-2. And Guerry and Sophia Zaslow '26 beat Amira Badawi and Daira Cardenas 6-2.

Kung, Guerry and Zaslow also posted singles victories against the Scarlet Knights, winning (6-1, 6-4), (6-1, 6-1) and (6-3, 6-3), respectively.

On Saturday, the women took on Indiana, taking revenge after losing their last matchup against the Hoosiers. This time the Elis posted an impressive 4-1 win.

"This weekend was an overall team effort, and we had a solid weekend against two very strong teams," head coach Rachel Kahan said. "We did a great job especially against Indiana coming out with energy and making adjustments when we needed to."

Shrivastava and Guerry defeated Hoosiers Mila Mejic and Lauren Lemonds 7-5, but the Hoosiers ultimately gained the doubles point. However, Kung, Guerry, Cheng and Zaslow won singles points for the Blue and White, with scores of (6-2, 6-4), (6-3, 6-4), (6-4, 6-1) and (6-4, 6-2), respectively.

"My highlight this week was winning my Indiana singles match because Indiana is a competitive team and this was a solid win," Zaslow said.

The men's team traveled to Wisconsin this weekend, where they took on Western Michigan and Wisconsin. The Bulldogs posted a 5-2 victory over Western Michigan on Friday to kick off their weekend.

"Renaud played fantastic doubles with a new partner (Vignesh) which was a great mental effort,"

SEE **W TENNIS** PAGE 10



YALE ATHLETICS

Ami Gianchandani '23 participated in the U.S. Women's Amateur Championship this summer.



WEEKEND

// BY ELIZA JOSEPHSON



CONFESSIONS of a DS  
DRAMAQUEEN

You know those things that you can't stop complaining about, but it's because, deep down, you love them? That's my relationship with Directed Studies. You might say, Eliza! How can you even write an article for the YDN about an experience only 100 first years can relate to? And to that I say, whether you know it or not, everyone is affected in some way.

The reason that your friend who always lent you an extra tote bag got a bona fide backpack? DS. That one suitemate who can't tag along to WOADS? DS again. And why did your date make you a charcuterie board with barley crackers and goat cheese, and who are these Epicureans he's talking about? I think you know the answer. We might not have the enigmatic presence of secret societies or the revelrous reputation of Greek Life, but you have to admit there is a uniquely mystifying allure surrounding the program.

Come on, even if this is a little niche for most tastes, I know you're a little curious. And if you're a current or former DS-er, I know you'll automatically do a close reading of this article anyway.

So I've compiled a list of some commonly asked questions interspersed with some hard, unshakeable facts. Also, here's my informal disclaimer: I'll stress that while this is all based on personal experience, I am not trying to target anyone. Most of the jabs I make could just as easily be directed back at me! And even though I might live in a glass house, I sure as hell am going to throw stones. It's more entertaining that way.

So enjoy my one-woman, Q&A, dramatic retelling of life in DS as I write the things that people are too afraid to say, but must be said anyway.

Cont. on page B2



WEEKEND *PARTY*

*Cont. from page B1*

**What even is Directed Studies?**

DS is basically the equivalent of a Pre-Med track for humanities kids who are in WAY over their heads. We take intensive literature, philosophy, and history classes in an attempt to grasp the Western Canon. Translation: We read. We write. We discuss. Repeat steps one through three on a loop. In a typical week, we read sizable portions of three books, sit through three lectures, raise our hands one too many times in our discussion sections, and end it off with one 5-page paper due on Friday. Supposedly, college is the best four years of your life. And I'm spending it in my residential college library, basically in the fetal position, splitting the evening hours between frantically beginning to type up an outline for an essay due in 24 hours, and annotating whatever two immense texts I'm two days behind on readings for. Go figure.

Fact #1: We drown in books. It's crazy. The vibes are dark-academia aesthetic. Or at least that's what we tell ourselves as we ignore the stray sheets of lecture paper haphazardly peeking out of our cluttered notebooks and the stacks of cracked spines accumulating in the dark recesses of common room corners. Shout out to all of the DS roommates and suitemates: you're the real heroes for letting us store used paper-backs all over the place when our desk drawers are full.

**What kind of person actively chooses to be in DS?**

Think of the kind of person who would be slightly more excited than normal to visit the Beinecke, crossing their fingers that the Gutenberg Bible is out

for observation. Or the former Percy Jackson and Song of Achilles kids whose obsession with Greek mythology takes them even further than being a Classics major. Or the self-impressed, private school educated "devil's advocate" kid, from your history class who knows way too much about Alexander the Great. The program has a lot of characters that are larger than life, the worst of whom we've endearingly dubbed "section assholes."

**So the stereotypes are true?**

Well, yes and no. Depends on what stereotypes you mean. I know some DS people who boldly break the mold as student athletes and future Chemistry and Physics majors. As someone who's only been to Payne Whitney twice and who hasn't taken a science class since my junior year of high school, I really don't know how they do it. But for every single anomaly, there are 20 overzealous future EP&E majors to make up for it. And you should see what everyone gets up to in the GroupMe. Since removing myself on Day 2 of the fall semester to avoid getting distracted by the fact that it is somehow active 25/7, I've only heard the wildest legends about the Thrasymachus "might makes right" memes. Honestly, someone should put me back on.

But for real, what does this aforementioned "mold" of a DS student look like? I envision it like the Cartesian wax thought experiment in The Meditations: transmutable. We come from various different backgrounds, but we all can still identify with one another over our nerdy interests, brought together by something intellectual and intangible.

\*BOO! She's making pretentious allusions to French philosophers!\*

Okay, maybe I'm the problem. But hey! If it weren't for DS, I might not have gotten around to reading Descartes. So that's something.

Fact #2: You won't get through a philosophy lecture without hearing at least one of the holy trinity of terms that still confuse me: metaphysics, ontology, and epistemology. Well, I know now what they mean. I've read the definitions and used the words when it seemed right to. But nobody really knows anything though, right? I'm with Socrates on this one. I know nothing.

Fact #3: Roughly 20 kids dropped out of DS after their first semester. Selfishly, I miss a lot of them, but I know they have their reasons. One friend of mine said she suddenly had all this extra time she didn't know what to do with? I didn't get to hear the rest because I had to rush to my study date with 200 pages of Milton's Paradise Lost in a Bass cubicle. Shame.

**So if you're so busy, what do DS kids do on the weekend?**

Thought we didn't have any free time? Well, not really, it's pretty scarce. But there is a light at the end of the 3-week torment tunnel! Let me introduce you to the novel invention of a no-paper week. If you thought WOADS has had weird vibes recently, or that the BDs get crazy crowded on Thursdays, wait until the rare week when we don't have an essay due on Friday. Yale's weekday nightlife gets engulfed by an avalanche of overworked DS kids attempting to unwind (key word, attempting).

However, by far the most iconic tradition passed on through the generations of Directed Studies is the Toga Party. One daring first-year offers to host the best suite party thrown A.D. (after death), or at

least of the century. Attendees must brave the embarrassment of walking across Old Campus in their cleanest white sheets twisted into a classic Roman toga. Not for the faint of heart, especially on a Friday night when everyone else looks good, and, well, modern. That's all I can say about the matter— I've been sworn to secrecy. What goes down at these parties is strictly off-the-record activity, and I need to keep my journalistic integrity intact to make sure my invite to the next Toga Party doesn't get lost in the mail.

**Do people date within DS?**

Interesting question, very juicy! The answer is yes, that has happened. But personally, unless you're super confident your relationship will last, I do not recommend it. In most cases, I love the fact that I'm with all of the same friends for three quarters of my lectures. But in this particular case? I couldn't bear to see an ex that often and actively have to avoid running into them every day. My advice? Treat DS like a work environment, and don't mingle with your coworkers.

I do have one exception to this rule, though. For all of my romance novel lovers — and yes, the DS people have trashy guilty pleasures too — if presented with an academic-rivals-to-lovers scenario, I might play along. Getting my claims challenged on a sound basis and still winning the argument? Palpable tension brewing as we make eye contact across the room while discussing Troubadour love poetry? Walking to Atticus to continue our discussion outside of the classroom? I wouldn't be opposed. Like, if this romanticized and unrealistic scenario occurred in my life? I wouldn't complain.

**So, was it worth it? Did the ends justify the means?**

Well, Machiavelli, you tell me. I guess people do look at me with extra pity in their eyes when they remember I've sold my soul to Directed Studies. And I understand why, it's a stressful program that covers lots of material in a super condensed period. I mean, thanks to DS, my color-coded Google calendar has a separate "social" label. I literally have to schedule in my leisure time or else I won't have any.

But I urge you not to feel bad for me. I chose this life! Universities like Columbia and UChicago have core curriculums that cover a lot of the same material, but what's special about DS is that we all opted in. We came into this reciting Petrarch in our spare time. This is our version of a varsity sport, our equivalent to mastery on a musical instrument. And that's what makes it special.

During reading week, the private rooms in the Humanities Quadrangle are ablaze with classical music and laughter that is so loud it is almost socially inappropriate. It's kind of all a blur now, but I remember sharing Shake Shack fries as we went around in a circle, rapid firing one-by-one each philosopher's stance on God in syllabus order. I think everyone that was present would look back on that time fondly. Some may say it's sweet, others may say it's trauma bonding. Like Sappho's fragments, I'll leave it up to personal interpretation.

My best Yale memories are undeniably marked by DS. It's not a program for everyone, but it's definitely the program for me (no matter how much I complain about it on a daily basis).

Contact **ELIZA JOSEPHSON** at [eliza.josephson@yale.edu](mailto:eliza.josephson@yale.edu).

# DOUBLE MAJORING: SEDUCTIVE YET DESTRUCTIVE

// BY ORAH MASSIHESRAELIAN

I tend to be a person of few strong opinions, but when it comes to questions pertaining to "doubles", I lean more towards assertiveness. Dingle? Yes, duh. Double date? The more the merrier! Double bonded carbons? You bet I'll be keen on that.

Double major? Absolutely not. I used to question, with subtle undertones of frustration, why Yale didn't have a "minor" option like most other colleges. I felt like my academic interests existed beyond the realms of what could be represented by and explored in one single major. While double majoring seemed like it could be too big of a commitment, a single major just didn't seem like it would be enough. I explored the list of undergraduate certificates one could pursue in addition to their major, what some refer to as Yale's version of a minor, but unfortunately, none of the plentiful options spoke to what I was after. That's a joke. There are all of like five obscure certificate options.

A bit later in the game, I feel like I better understand why there's no minor program — one major is already more than enough. As a sophomore, the approaching deadline for declaring a major looms over me mercilessly. I've therefore done quite a bit of thinking on the concept of majoring, and of course, the topic of double majors tends to arise. I've realized that in order to properly contemplate taking on a second major, it's necessary to first understand both the actual and perceived implications of a major and how these relate to undergraduate education.

A major's plain purpose is to emphasize a specific topic of interest, yet it is often inflated to mean much more. Sure, sometimes specific major requirements can help guide you in exploring a certain

topic and push you to challenge yourself. Still, those same requirements can also feel like an extra strain or stressor that does not necessarily align with your actual desires and goals in pursuing a major. I am yet to meet an aspiring environmentalist who is psyched about gaining skills from PHYS 170. Finally, what hopefully goes unsaid is that a major should not be something pursued for the sole sake of having a certain title on your diploma.

There's virtually no reason to actually select a specific major, other than that the education system and powers beyond require it. If you're interested in history, take history classes. The same is true for any other subject — and in an ideal world, this is all that you would need to do. This format would accentuate the utopian vision of liberal arts education to pursue knowledge simply for the sake of the knowledge itself. In other words, learning in its purest form — a sublime experience of increasing understanding that inspires connection and ultimately contentment (especially with oneself).

Instead, this idealistic style of education is often quashed by pressures to label oneself, and even worse, pressures to choose a certain label to appear a certain way. Do you absolutely need to major in Econ so that a finance company will hire you? Maybe, I wouldn't really know. But ultimately, across subjects and careers, we tend to give this arbitrary title a lot more significance than it deserves — another loose screw in the disjointed system of elite education. Of course, I'm not arguing that we should discard the whole system or that "nothing actually matters anyway," because, whether fortunately or unfortunately, it often does. In other words, we can't really change

the system, but we can control how we approach it and how we allow it to affect us individually.

When choosing a major, deciphering an area that you want to hone in on is a lovely way to arrive at actually selecting that subject in the drop-down menu of majors. But, for the rest of us who struggle with this sort of determination, an alternative type of advice comes into play. The message goes as follows: figure out the types of classes you are most interested in taking and choose the major that encompasses the greatest number of those classes. But, while the collegiate gods have ruled that we must label ourselves by sophomore summer, they say no such thing about double majoring.

Sometimes, I'll hear people justifying taking on a second major as "why not?" But I ask you this — why yes? Why choose to be further limited in your academic endeavors so that you can tag on a lousy few extra words the next time you introduce yourself? If you're interested in taking classes in a different subject, take them without the extra hassle of having a major instruct you on which ones to take, potentially even defeating the whole purpose of pursuing something additional because it excites you. Oh and, here's the kicker, in most cases, you'd be required to take on an additional senior thesis/project/research project too.

Titles do not and should not represent who you are. You really can be interested in a multitude of areas without including them all in a concise tagline. Contrary to what seems widely accepted belief, your major is not actually the SparkNotes version of your identity. These titles are more like icebreakers to segway you into genuine discourse, so to the extent that you're able, let them be just that!

As you go about your days this spring semester, whether it's your last or you

have three solid "bright college years" ahead of you, I'd encourage you to consider a few things.

First, your opinion on other "double" topics. Really, I'd be so curious to hear your thoughts. Double bubble? Let me know.

Second, if you are thinking about double majoring, see if you can get to the root of that desire. Earlier this year, I found myself deliberating the possibility of double majoring. Part of this desire stemmed from indecisive feelings — I like all of it! In the end, though, I concluded that I would be much better off majoring in one area and taking a bunch of classes in a second, or more, and forfeiting the strenuous additional responsibilities that come with officially declared majors. (As opposed to a secretly declared major — sort of like a child keeping a secret from their parent, where we are the scheming child and the registrar is the disgruntled parent).

Lastly, turn inwards. Give yourself space to feel, and then listen. Don't succumb to the often exaggerated endorsements of elite education. From the moment I stepped foot into the Yale bubble, I was fed with plenty of formulas for how to reach various end-goals. Part of undoing the conditioned pressures of double majoring is undoing misconceptions of a fixed and absolute education format. The point is, sometimes what we actually want (including paths we might choose to take) differs from what we're told to want. Most often, the greatest reward comes from pursuing inwardly inspired passions and plans despite deviations from preconceived notions of fulfillment. So listen in, and you might just find your next best move.

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## WKND Recommends

Giving pineapple on pizza a chance.



WEEKEND

PHONES



My phone is in black and white — “grayscale,” as it’s officially known. I set the color filter of my screen this way almost nine months ago, and at this point, I don’t even notice it anymore. I only think about it when someone else mentions it, which is surprisingly often. Giving my phone to someone so they can put their number in — “Whoa, what is this?” Responding to a text with an onlooking neighbor — “Your phone’s black and white?” Sometimes these comments are positive, sometimes they’re not. I once had a drunk boy tell me through laughter that it’s not the 1930s anymore — I’ll let you decide which side of the scale that comment landed on.

The most common question I get, and the one I unfortunately have the most difficulty responding to, is “why?” It’s a good question; I would probably ask the same thing. But the answer isn’t always easy to explain. Let’s just say, it started with professor Laurie Santos.

In the spring of 2022, I took “Psychology and the Good Life” with professor Santos. While there were many things I took away from that course, the one that most affected my day-to-day life was learning that one way to work on your relationship with your phone is to make it more boring looking — to turn it grayscale. This definitely wasn’t pitched as a fix-all method to make you feel compelled to never look at your phone again, but it was such an easy change that I figured, why not try it? So, I tried it.

I’m an English major, and there’s something discussed in the literature world called conflict. This is essentially when a character encounters an obstacle keeping them from achieving their goal. There are a handful of general conflict types that people have recognized, such as character versus character, character versus self, character versus society and character versus technology. It’s

that last one that I couldn’t shake from my head as I stared for the first time at my newly black and white phone screen.

When I was learning about literary conflicts in my middle school English class, character versus technology was presented with the examples of Mary Shelley’s “Frankenstein” and Ray Bradbury’s “The Veldt.” Essentially, character versus technology was science fiction. It was the day we lost control over our own ingenuity, a fear of that which we are capable of creating.

In the practically minute-by-minute news cycle we live in, cell phone addiction feels like an old topic. Of course phones are addictive, that’s pretty much the point of most of the popular apps — to keep you engaged. I, along with many of my friends, watched The Social Network in horror. But aside from that first week where we all swore we were never using social media again, I don’t think any of

us really made any significant changes with our phone or social media usage; I certainly didn’t.

Now, I know this piece might have seemed like it was gearing up to tell you that changing my phone to black and white was the answer, that turning a 21st-century technology the same color as the first TVs made it nothing worth checking impulsively throughout the day. Wouldn’t that be easy, if the answer to all our modern woes about cell phone addiction could be cured with a simple change of display?

Unfortunately, I can’t say from my personal experience that this is the answer. I’ve noticed no change in my phone usage, if screen time is any indicator. And although I wouldn’t say I was ever honestly concerned that my phone usage was anything abnormally unhealthy, there were definitely still times I found myself reaching for the device when there were more productive things I could have been doing.

Maybe we’ve opened a Pandora’s box with smartphones. Maybe we’ve bitten into the Apple of the Tree of Knowledge. Regardless of the dramatic description used, it’s clear that for many of us, phones have become their own point of conflict. Even if it’s less noticeable than a semi-murderous man-made creature or child turning against their parents.

Now, don’t get me wrong, none of this is to discredit the ways that smartphones make our lives better, because believe me, that’s not my intention. I just thought it was interesting that when I did eventually try to turn my phone display back to its default, it only took me about 30 seconds until I switched it back to grayscale again. The sudden change had hurt my eyes. I’d never realized before just how blinding all of the colors had been.

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WKND

Horoscopes

// BY HANNAH KURCZESKI



// JESSAI FLORES

**Aquarius**  
Shut your laptop and put away that pset. It's time to party! Take some time to treat yourself this week. It's your season, after all — you deserve it.

**Pisces**  
Stop letting other people meddle in your love life, Pisces. You may be a water sign, but now's not the time to “go with the flow.” Take charge, and let your crush know how you feel just in time for V-Day.

**Aries**  
Stop reading this and cry. Yes, seriously. Grab some Kleenex and crank up the Mitski. Bottling up your emotions doesn't do you any good — it's time to confront them.

**Taurus**  
Text them right now. You know exactly who I'm talking about.

**Gemini**  
Be careful who you talk shit to, Gemini. You've had a lot to say recently, and people are finding out all the things you say about them. Did someone say karma?

**Cancer**  
You might not want to admit it but yes, you do have a crush on them. No, they do not feel the same way. Do yourself a favor and move on.

**Leo**  
It's okay to shut up sometimes. Contrary to popular belief, not everyone wants to hear your opinion! And if you don't have anything nice to say, it really is better to not say anything at all.

**Virgo**  
Stop taking yourself so seriously. Go watch some Disney movies, and eat some dino nuggets. It's way past time to take your inner child on a playdate.

**Libra**  
Breathe. Sleep. Feed yourself. You've been super busy, Libra, and you're absolutely killing it in everything you do. Just don't forget to take care of yourself, okay?

**Scorpio**  
Clean your room. It's an absolute pigsty. You and your suitemates all know it. You're never too busy for basic hygiene.

**Sagittarius**  
You've been turning heads, Sag. You might not realize it, but you've got what some might call “W Rizz.” Who knows? The next love of your life could be right in front of your eyes ... if only you weren't so oblivious.

**Capricorn**  
I'm not going to tell you to drop that class that you hate, because we both know you wouldn't listen to me. Just remember: it's never too early to Credit/D/Fail!

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WKND Recommends

Deleting Instagram.





# It’s Brutal Out Here

// BY JESSAI FLORES

There is the joke among Northerners that Southern kids, like me, cannot handle the cold. Some of this is true. My first year, I did not have snow shoes because I thought it was ridiculous to have to spend money on something I could only wear once or twice — and then I fell down the stairs. The snow I had crushed with the bottom of my Oxford shoes had melted and refrozen so that the steps inside of Welch Hall became the world’s worst toboggan chute. Bruised tailbones aside, you would be surprised at how prepared Southerners are for the bitter Connecticut winters. So, when the recent mass of arctic air settled upon New Haven, I was not only prepared because of my now three winters in the North, but because Southerners, Texans in particular, are made of a special type of brass.

Picture this: It is early February and the temperatures drop below zero. It is so cold that the air is like thorns on exposed flesh. The wind is so strong that it rattles the skeletons of frozen trees, warps window panes as if they were made of plastic and sears the corners of your ears. This was what New Haven was like earlier this month during the arctic blast, but it is also weather that is now — thanks to climate change — not too uncommon in Texas. Growing up in the Dallas area, January or February brings a blast of frosty weather that ices over the roads, downs power lines and locks down the city all together. In fact, the weather gets so violently cold that our senators take extended vacations to Cancun where it is warmer and people there do not know them well enough to despise them the way Texans do — with gritted teeth and fake hospitality. Sweet tea anyone? That aside, these repeated experiences with cold snaps work wonders for one’s tolerance and preparedness for Northern winters.

I now get used to the cold very fast. For example, once I wore a thin cardigan around campus when the weather was just ten degrees. Do I recommend it? No. It was not very fun, but I — like any Texan — am daring and do things my own way. I willed myself to get used to the cold because I

simply could not walk around and let Northerners know that their winters are too harsh for me. They are, but I will not let it show on my pale, wind-whipped face. I even walked all the way to Walgreens for soap while I wore an ill-fitting coat and a mustard yellow sweater. Was I cold? Absolutely. My ears hurt. It was nine degrees. But did I look good? Of course. I looked swell.

Still, the best thing to do when the weather gets dangerously cold is to stay home. Do not do what I did and make the trip to Mecha Noodle Bar. Their spicy beef ramen is fantastic, but probably not worth risking the loss of one of your ears or fingers to frostbite. Okay, maybe it was worth it. Hot and spicy broth and noodles on a cold day warms you up so fast. I walked all the way home with fire — ramen, it was the ramen — in my belly. Still, stay home.

When Texas freezes over, everyone stays home. We watch television, play video games, and call friends over the telephone. You can do the same in New Haven. In fact, that is what I did during the cold snap whenever I was not risking my life to go get noodles or soap.

New Haven winters are brutal, but once you survive enough of them they become less like incidents of mortal peril and more like obstacles. Your first New Haven winter, after a life spent in the South, is like fighting a dragon. Your third New Haven winter is more like coming across a closed sidewalk. It is annoying, but it will not kill you. At least I hope it doesn’t.

Winter is coming to an end. I can already feel the sun getting just a tad bit warmer. The worst is over, save for if one of those big, late-March snowstorms rolls around. Speaking of which, where was the snow this winter? Definitely not here. Perhaps that is what made this winter feel so much like home, but like any Southern or Texan winter, it is best not to underestimate how quickly the winds can change. Judging from how warm the weather is starting to become, let us hope the winds change for the better.

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# An Immortal Lie: the Unending Deceit of Punxsutawney

// BY LIZZIE CONKLIN

I believe in Pennsylvania.  
I believe in the keystone state.  
I believe in freedom, rolling hills, “Brotherly Love,” the Reading Terminal Market and saying “wooder” instead of “water.” Pennsylvania bred the United States of America and nurtured it with cheese steaks and Hershey’s bars. I took my first breath in Pennsylvania, lost my first tooth in Pennsylvania and was lightly bullied by schoolchildren in Pennsylvania. The state raised me.  
I don’t believe in Punxsutawney Phil.  
For 136 years, he has successfully swindled American citizens with promises of spring’s birth, budding trees and sunshine. Every year, we willingly believe. On February 2nd, he emerges from his lair. Like a politician, he disseminates a false hope we’re all too familiar with for personal interest and power. He is the State.  
If he sees his shadow, residents of Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania face six more grueling weeks of winter. If he does not, he promises an early spring. He, our fickle master, abuses the godlike power we give him with no consequence, despite his 46 percent accuracy rate.  
First of all, I don’t get this. How do we determine whether or not he sees his shadow? Does Punxsutawney Phil report his findings? Even when it’s overcast, we all have a shadow. What makes him look? What makes him ignore? Does he know his power?  
Thought to have begun in 1887, Groundhog Day was born from “Candlemas,” a Pennsylvania Dutch holiday that announces a seasonal turning point, like the summer and winter solstice. In the absence of science, they pur-

sued reason in the Groundhog. On this day, they ask the groundhog to escape his earthen home, check for his meteorological shadow, and celebrate if he saw it. Punxsutawney sought relief from the long, barren winter. They found it in a rat. Despite their reverence for the rodent, residents KILLED him and feasted on GROUNDHOG MEAT after the ceremony. This is a cause I can get behind.  
Seeing that the tradition has lasted more than a century, Punxsutawney Phil has surely met his maker, but the Punxsutawney Groundhog Club insists otherwise. Every few years, he consumes an “elixir of life” which, with repeated doses, grants Punxsutawney Phil immortality. As we great thinkers know, eternal life comes with more drawbacks than advan-



// ARIANE DE GENNARO

tages. He has no reason to love life. He cherishes not the time he has on earth; he lives in a monotonous drone, uninterrupted by the tick of mother nature’s clock. He feels no guilt. He feels no fear. He feels nothing, only the manipulative power he wields over humankind when February dawns.  
Nonetheless, he has a wife. He might even have a son. Phyliss, his devoted spouse, is not treated with the “Elixir of Life,” no doubt a symptom of ceaseless sexism in the United States of America. Groundhogs generally live for six years, so Phil has grieved his wife about 2 2

times, making him either immune to sadness or a sick sadist who thrives on her death. He essentially has a harem. Down with Patriarchy Phil.  
In reality, Punxsutawney Phil has no concept of his own significance, which, for some, is a beacon of hope. Maybe some greater being watches me, too and waits for me to indicate some turning point in a meta-season or time. Maybe they want me to see my shadow when I go outside. Maybe winter ends when I floss. If so, these mystical beings are in for a long winter. I won’t change for them.  
All facets of this story conflict. If they ate Punxsutawney Phil in the early years of the tradition, how is he 136 years old? How does he know to come out on February 2nd? Why must he give Pennsylvania a bad rep?  
Pennsylvania is more than Punxsutawney Phil. Metropolitan corners sandwich farmlands, Amish country, coal mines, mountains and running creeks. It’s rural. There are groundhogs everywhere. One even lived in my backyard. Considering the fact that he literally burrowed himself under a rock, I don’t think he had sufficient meteorological expertise to tell the weather, but I never really asked. I hope he’s okay.  
Please, I beg, do not let Punxsutawney Phil characterize Pennsylvania. When you think of my home state, think instead of the Poconos, Questlove and Gitty, not that tyrannous rat.

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## WKND Hot Take:

“Slay” should fade out of the lexicon.