

Yale Daily News

NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT · FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2024 · VOL. CXLVI, NO. 19 · yaledailynews.com · @yaledailynews



Yale reinstates standardized testing requirement

BY MOLLY REINMANN
STAFF REPORTER

After four years with a test-optional policy — which allowed students to decide whether or not to submit standardized test scores as part of their Yale College applications — the College will resume requiring test scores for the next application cycle. But now, in addition to SAT and ACT scores, Yale will allow students to submit Advanced Placement, or AP, and International Baccalaureate, or IB, scores to fulfill the standardized testing requirement. According to a Thursday message from the admissions office to high school counselors, applicants will be able to select one or more type of test from a list of four options — SAT, ACT, AP and IB — and those who select AP or IB will be required to include results from all subject exams that they have taken. “Our experience with both test-optional and test-required policies has persuaded us of three things,”

the University wrote in a statement posted on the admissions office website. “First, when used thoughtfully as part of a whole-person review process, tests can help increase rather than decrease diversity in our class. Second, a narrow focus on only the ACT and SAT can discourage promising students from considering colleges like Yale. Finally, inviting students to apply without any test scores can, inadvertently, disadvantage students from low-income, first-generation, and rural backgrounds.”

The University is the second Ivy League school to announce its long-term testing policy, after Dartmouth decided to resume a test-required policy earlier this month. Unlike Yale, however, Dartmouth will not accept AP and IB scores to fulfill the testing requirement.

In the statement, the admissions office said that the four years of test-optional applications afforded

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A ‘new type of Russian politician’: Alexey Navalny’s rise from Yale World Fellow to Kremlin watchdog



Navalny and former Yale president Richard Levin. / Harold Shapiro, Senior Photographer

BY BEN RAAB
STAFF REPORTER

In August 2010, 34-year-old Alexey Navalny arrived in the United States for only the second time in his life. Unlike his past visit — a brief business trip to Chicago — this trip would be a lengthier stay. For the next five months, Yale University’s Betts House would be home for Navalny and his family as he joined the Yale World Fellows Program.

Thirteen years later — last Friday, Feb. 16 — Navalny, a Russian opposition leader and anti-corruption activist, died in a Russian prison. He was 47 years old.

Born in Moscow, Navalny studied law and finance and worked for Russia’s Yabloko political party from 2001 to 2007. He began making his name as a grassroots activist in 2008, using an online blog to publicize corruption in state-owned Russian corporations.

But it was at Yale, in 2010, that Navalny — who’d soon become a household name for his fierce opposition to Kremlin leadership — honed his skills as an activist.

“Alexey, at the time, was struggling to identify the mechanism through which he could affect social change in Russia,” Michael Cappello, the then-director of the World Fellows program told the News. “He

wasn’t getting as much traction as he felt the problem deserved.”

At Yale, Navalny hoped to learn how to mobilize Russians when he returned home. He spent much of his free time at Yale meeting with economists, psychologists and historians to study how successful social movements had evolved.

After returning to Russia in 2011, Navalny dedicated himself to exposing corruption in the Kremlin, despite being arrested repeatedly and facing state-sponsored political attacks, which often weaponized his Yale education to depict him as a U.S.-sympathizer.

A poisoning attack executed by Russian operatives in 2020 left Navalny in a coma for over two weeks in a hospital in Germany. Five months later, he returned to Russia and was arrested upon landing, leading protesters across the country to rally in support.

“Of course there was a part of me that wished he never went back to Russia, but it also would have been hard to imagine otherwise,” May Akl, a member of the 2010 world fellow’s class, said. “The Alexey I knew would have done exactly the same as what he did.”

While serving his prison sentence, Russian authorities reported on Feb. 16 that he had lost consciousness and died after taking a

walk at the prison. President Joe Biden said there can be “no doubt” that Putin is to blame for his death.

Director of the World Fellows program Emma Sky posted a statement following Navalny’s death, and a memorial to Navalny was placed inside the entrance to Horchow Hall at the Jackson School.

“The World Fellows community weeps, and we are angry: no one should die for imagining a better future,” Sky wrote to the News. “World Fellows — and all Yalies — can walk a little taller knowing that such a hero walked among us. His courage, his moral clarity, his dignity, his defiant sense of humor, they can only inspire us.”

Arrival at Yale

In August 2010, Navalny, with his wife and two children, moved into Betts House, a historic mansion on New Haven’s Prospect Hill that is owned by the University. He would soon share the house with three other fellows — Lumumba Di-Aping, Ricardo Teran and Marvin Rees — but had arrived six weeks before the program’s official start date to practice his English.

Rees, then a BBC radio talk show host and now the mayor of Bristol, England, noted that Navalny was the

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University apologizes for ties to slavery



Yale has announced a set of actions, some of which were first announced in the previous two years, to acknowledge the school’s ties to the institution of slavery. / Tim Tai, Senior Photographer

BY BENJAMIN HERNANDEZ
STAFF REPORTER

On Friday, University President Peter Salovey and Joshua Bekenstein ’80, senior trustee of the Yale Corporation, issued a formal apology and a set of actions in response to Yale’s ties to slavery.

The announcement came alongside the release of a book titled “Yale and Slavery: A History,” which is the culmination of the findings made by the Yale and Slavery Working Group. The group, composed of faculty, students, researchers and New Haven residents and led by David Blight, a professor of history and African American studies, was formed in 2020 under Salovey’s direction.

The book was released in its entirety online along with key findings which are explored on the project’s site.

Yale is not alone in revisiting its past ties to slavery. In April 2022, Harvard committed \$100 million to redress its ties to slavery concurrent with the release of the university’s own report on the matter.

In their announcement, Salovey and Bekenstein not only framed the project as a recognition of the University’s role in and association with the institution of slavery, but it also formally apologized for the ways that Yale’s leaders participated in slavery, adding that the findings from the group have “propelled” the University toward actions to address the continued effects of enslavement today.

Steven Rome ’20 conducted research for the project as his first post-graduate job, after having Blight as his senior thesis advisor.

Rome emphasized that the findings are just the start of a larger inquiry into the historical influence of institutions like Yale.

“This history has always been there and often, right in front of our eyes and to be able to be a small part of the work to bring that to life, I think was long overdue,” Rome said. “This is obviously meant to be just the beginning and we should be continuing to think deeply about the impact of choices that institutions are making and the way we respond with that history very present in our minds.”

Blight’s research

According to the email announcement, the group’s research uncovered the role that enslaved individuals played in constructing Yale’s buildings or in the lives of “prominent leaders who made gifts to Yale.”

The announcement continues by stating that although no evidence was found that Yale University owned enslaved people, many of Yale’s Puritan founders and early leaders did own slaves — who were mostly Black but also of Indigenous descent.

“We started with the effective liquidation of Native peoples in Connecticut ... but also that encounter between the English Puritans and Native peoples,” Blight told the News. “And then in the midst of that, some ministers met down the road and decided to create this little Collegiate school.”

The book also details a failed proposal to construct what would have been America’s first Black college — in New Haven. The effort, which the research found to be a joint effort

SEE SLAVERY PAGE 4

Yale New Haven Hospital closes daycare

BY ASUKA KODA
STAFF REPORTER

Adding to previous uncertainty regarding changes due to the new partnership between the Yale New Haven Hospital Day Care Center and Bright Horizons, YNHH leadership announced the closure of one of two YNHH daycare centers. Parents report that they are now struggling to confirm their current spot at the daycare center.

The daycare center currently operates out of two locations, each located around 10 minutes away from the other by car. Both provide childcare services to employees of the Yale New Haven Hospital, though the daycare located at 110 Davenport St. is larger and operates with greater child enrollment.

On Feb. 13, however, families enrolled at the Yale New Haven Hospital Day Care Center received an email announcing that the Davenport Street location would be closing permanently on June 28, 2024.

At a Feb. 15 town hall meeting for parents, YNHH administrators informed parents that the remaining YNHH daycare center,

on 501 George St., would not have the capacity to include all children currently enrolled at the Davenport Street facility.

“We recognize that there will not be a spot for everyone,” said Melissa Turner, senior vice president and chief human resources officer at YNHH, during the town hall.

YNHH did not immediately respond to the News’s request for comment on Sunday afternoon.

The closure is occurring amid record losses for the hospital system during the COVID-19 pandemic: for the fiscal year 2023, the Yale New Haven Health system budgeted for a \$250 million deficit.

As a cost-saving measure, administrators plan to outsource daycare operations to Bright Horizons, a national organization that provides childcare services, YNHH leaders announced to parents in January. The shift has sparked concern among parents about prospective tuition hikes at the YNHH daycare, which previously cost far less than local comparable daycare facilities due to YNHH subsidies.

The prospective partnership with Bright Horizons has also prompted



One of two current YNHH Daycare Center locations is permanently closing. / Adam McPhail, Contributing Photographer

alarm about daycare educators’ futures at the center. During a staff meeting with daycare educators, Turner and other YNHH administrators announced that current daycare employees would have to be rehired for their current positions.

At the town hall, administrators at the YNHH Daycare Center and Bright Horizons attempted to address some of the parents’ con-

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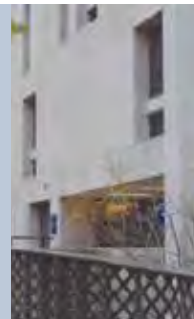
CROSS CAMPUS

THIS DAY IN YALE HISTORY, 2005. Connecticut state legislators are considering banning people from using cell phones while driving. A recent poll shows that 85 percent of Connecticut voters talk on their phones while operating a vehicle.

INSIDE THE NEWS

Data shows gender disparities persist in several areas of study at Yale.

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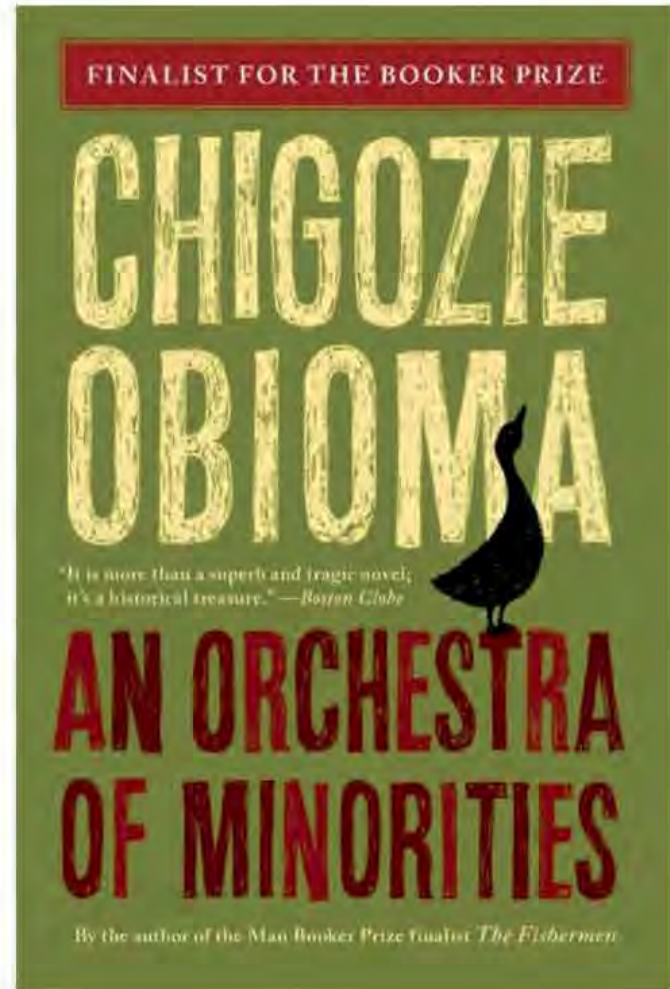
WHIFFS AND WHIMS The two all-senior a cappella groups announced their new taps this week.

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CEASEFIRE Hundreds gathered at the Hamden Town Hall for a four-hour public hearing on a proposed Gaza ceasefire resolution.

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Jonathan Edwards Head of College Tea



Chigozie Obioma Author of “An Orchestra of Minorities”

“Chigozie Obioma is that rare thing: an original. His world is a mix of the real and the folkloric, and his writing sounds like no one else’s.”
– Wall Street Journal

Spanning continents, traversing the earth and cosmic spaces, and told by a narrator who has lived for hundreds of years, the novel is a contemporary twist of Homer’s Odyssey. Written in the mythic style of the Igbo literary tradition, Chigozie Obioma weaves a heart-wrenching epic about destiny and determination.

*Chigozie Obioma was born in Akure, Nigeria. His two novels, *The Fishermen* (2015) and *An Orchestra of Minorities* (2019) were shortlisted for The Booker Prize and have been translated into 30 languages. He has an LA Times book prize, the prestigious Internationalerpris, FT/Oppenheimer prize for fiction, an NAACP Image award and has been nominated for two dozen prizes for fiction. He was a judge of the Booker prize in 2021. He is a Distinguished writer in Residence at Wesleyan University, CT, the James E. Ryan Associate Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and the program director of the Oxbelly Writers retreat. His third novel, *The Road to the Country*, will be published in 2024.*

**February 29
JE Head of College House
4:00 pm Tea
4:30pm Conversation**

OPINION

From exaggeration to fabrication

What is the line between embellishment and fraud? The former we tacitly acknowledge as necessary for our professional lives. The latter is a permanent black mark to your reputation. How do we delineate between the two? Formal definitions are not helpful here. Instead, it is like the difference between porn and speech — you know it when you see it. And I see it everywhere.

The most infamous fraudster this past year is the now-expelled Congressman George Santos, whose schemes ranged from the spectacular — inventing an entire employment history out of whole cloth — to the pathetic, as when he allegedly misappropriated campaign funds for the explicit content site OnlyFans. But this is not just limited to politics. We know that politicians play up, omit, and lie about their backgrounds. More and more the bar of conduct has fallen so low that there are few scandals that will elicit a strong reaction anymore. All the fun drama — secret mistresses, bribery, insider trading — are mostly shrugged off, a casualty of our ever growing cynicism. Now even fraud is in danger of being desensitized.

But fraud is not just limited to politicians, and the worst cases are beyond the political arena. Why are there so many cases of deception over the past few years? The simple answer is there is no one to follow local issues anymore. Non-national media is on its knees — half of the counties in the United States do not have a single paper — and it is grasping towards anything that will move it in the direction of profitability. The beat writer that used to cover high school athletics? That job disappeared a decade ago.

The more important loss is that few believe that what goes on in their communities are consistently covered — and even if they do, no one will read it. If the main barrier to local news were people refusing to pay high fees, then there would be a straightforward solution. But even when people are given free coverage, they still refuse to take it. This depressing reality was confirmed in a UPenn experiment where over 2,000 were offered free subscriptions to local newspapers, but less than 2 percent chose to do so.

Social media makes a poor imitation of the consistent work that local reporters do, and cannot make up for the relationships that provide needed context for their articles. If larger newspapers rely on local news for their own pieces, then how can regional coverage persist if local newsrooms collapse? News does not exist in a vacuum, and like in academia it depends on the prior work of others. This absence continues to create the perfect ground for fraud to grow.

How else was Bishop Sycamore, a phantom high school with no faculty or campus, able to swim by for years able to pass by undetected? It was not until they were so badly

beaten in a ESPN-televized game with IMG academy, an elite athletics school with a national profile, that major news organizations finally ended the obscurity of the fraudulent school. This entire scandal could not have occurred without the absence of local journalists.

In the last few months, academia has suffered the most due to allegations of fraud. Plagiarism, the fraud of appropriation, is the reason Claudine Gay ultimately had to resign from her presidency of Harvard. The Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, also under Harvard, is facing dozens of allegations of data fraud. Incredibly, a professor who studies dishonesty is under administrative leave for allegedly fabricating data. Beyond Cambridge, Stanford's previous president Marc Tessier-Lavigne, also had to leave after his lab manipulated data that underpinned his research. Accusations of plagiarism have now become a cudgel to hold over opponents. Dissertations that no one reads are now peered through to see if there are any misattributions. Will this lead to a constructive change? No, but it will just yield even more damaged reputations.

The fact is a vast majority of academics, athletes and politicians will go through their professional lives without resorting to lies and misattributions. Unfortunately, most will not be recognized for their contributions. In the rare cases where these professionals are in the spotlight, fraud crowds out and undermines the reputation of these fields. It should not be a surprise that this period of increasing fraud runs parallel to record lows in the trust that Americans have in institutions — whether in our government, places of worship, or in academia. If this race to the bottom in collective cynicism continues at its current pace, we will be left with an environment that cannot discern the value of expertise anymore.

A worrying future is not one of constant anger from the public, but rather apathy. That many will resign themselves to categorizing most information as tainted, and incapable — or unwilling — to bother rummaging through to see what is true.

There are no easy solutions to this trend, but there are a few steps we can take. First, transparency must be centered as a bedrock for public trust. That does not simply mean the information is available buried underneath forms and links, but ease of access. We must decide if coverage of our own communities matter — or if we will just outsource it to the arbitrary algorithms of social media. Life does not just exist at the national level and, without change, the void of information at the regional level will continue to spill even more egregious cases of misconduct that even Geroge Santos would blush at.

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Do we want virtual reality? Really?

If you could predetermine your experiences while floating in a tank with your brain plugged into electrodes, would you? I know I wouldn't, even if that meant living a life strictly made of satisfactions and success. I'd rather not enter the Matrix anytime soon, thanks. It sounds creepy, disconnected from reality and just plain wrong. I'm not alone in thinking this: people generally tend to hold unfavorable reactions to "the Experience Machine" thought experiment, which philosopher Robert Nozick famously discussed in 1974.

In his book "Anarchy, State, and Utopia," Nozick predicts negative responses to the hypothetical scenario of the Experience Machine. He develops his argument by considering what matters to us beyond having good feelings. We want our experiences to be real, not restricted to a "man-made reality." We want to perform certain activities. We want not just to feel, but to do. Why? Because we wish to become people of a sort: potentially successful, intelligent, well-rounded and ethical. Nozick concludes that "plugging into the machine is a kind of suicide." It indeed feels unattractive to live a life completely dictated by an external influence, in which we lose all of our agency and connection to the real world.

But what are virtual reality, or VR, technologies if not a toned-

down version of an Experience Machine? VR headsets promise to morph users' environments into completely distinct scenarios, blending the digital world with reality to create an immersive experience. With a VR headset on, I could skydive from the safety of my common room and travel to faraway countries without taking a flight. But no matter how vivid and convincing these moments may seem, I don't think they will ever be enough.

I would expect people to react to VR in the same way they reacted to the Experience Machine thought experiment. Instead, people have been flocking to buy a headset of their own. VR users increased to 171 million in 2022, and the VR market is predicted to reach ten times its 2021 size this year. But the question remains: if we want to live the "here and now" in its truthful and imperfect form, why are so many of us diving head-first into the online world?

I think the answer is that we tend to behave in accordance with the majority. I'm possibly more critical of VR because none of my friends own a headset, and I see this technology as a cutting-edge development embraced by the distant mist of the unknown. But like VR, social media arguably follows similar premises to Nozick's thought experiment. We are constantly immersed in the lives of others,

curated to reveal mostly happy, sunny, glimmering vignettes. I am an active user of social media, probably because everyone I know also is. In our current world, being online appears to be a condition for keeping one's interpersonal connections. Social media has become the primary way of staying informed about other people and keeping in touch.

We all wish to have real lives. Ideally, our experiences should be determined by our concrete actions and should bear significant consequences for those around us. Yet when the fake and virtual permeate everyone's day to day, disconnecting feels impossible. Maybe we react negatively to the Experience Machine because we imagine ourselves isolated in a tank, while others are going to class, sitting in Cross Campus, or jogging in the street. That happens to be my first impression of VR as well.

But if everyone was plugged into an Experience Machine, would any of us have the courage to unplug?

LAURA WAGNER is a sophomore in Benjamin Franklin College. Her fortnightly column, "Metamorphosis," promotes insights about adapting to technological innovation and future change, based on personal experiences at Yale and beyond. Contact her at laura.wagner@yale.edu.

STAFF COLUMNIST

AVI FEINSOD

A divided Yale Law School confronts the Israel-Gaza war

On Feb. 5, two events were held within hours of each other at Yale Law School; each reflecting a radically different understanding of reality. The first event, sponsored by Yale Law Students for Justice in Palestine — or YLSJP — was titled "Defense for Children International—Palestine v. Biden." It featured lawyers and plaintiffs who sued President Biden and others in his administration to hold them "accountable for [their] role in the Israeli army's genocide in Gaza." The second event, sponsored by the deputy dean of the Law School and organized by Law Students for Israel — or LSI, an organization of which I am a member — was titled "A Conversation with an IDF Soldier: An Insider's Perspective on the Israel-Hamas War."

The events were markedly different from the start. The event advertised by YLSJP went smoothly. Despite the event's content, charging the United States with assisting the "crime of crimes," many students were excited to join and participate. In the days leading up to the event, a range of student groups showed support for the event by co-sponsoring. These groups included the Middle Eastern and North African Law Students Association, the Women of Color Collective, the Yale Society of International Law and the Black Law Students Association. At the event, the room was filled with around 100 students.

Promoting LSI's event was much harder. Over 15 students hung up signs on the law school's walls reading "No IDF on Campus," even though nearly all the Israeli students in the law school served in the IDF. Some signs included slogans such as "Genocide is not self-defense" or "War Criminals Aren't Welcome." A letter circulated among students and YLSJP's social media page challenged the administration for allowing the event. While I was not responsible for coordinating this event, I — as a board member of LSI — became painfully aware of the internal difficulties and stress caused by all the surrounding circumstances at the school.

The campaign to shut down the event did not stop there. Before the event, many students protested the event. They shamed people for supporting genocide and eating sushi while people starved in Gaza. Many of these protesters participated in

the YLSJP event just a few hours earlier where lunch was served. The LSI event had multiple security and administrators present, and an announcement about school policy against disrupting events was read to ensure order. Despite the YLSJP's claims of Palestinian speech being suppressed on campus, all these features were noticeably absent from the YLSJP event.

The events also displayed stark differences in grappling with the difficult realities of war. The YLSJP event, which focused on charging the United States with assisting Israel in committing genocide, spent almost no time explaining how their analysis of the facts gathered on the ground led to that conclusion. The speakers did not discuss the complexities of urban warfare, International Humanitarian Law, or how Hamas cynically embeds itself into civilian structures. Hamas was not mentioned at all until one Israeli student questioned whether Israel's stated goal of eliminating an entrenched terror group holding civilians hostage is relevant to the genocide analysis. The speakers' responses were dismissive and elicited snapping from much of the crowd, as if this were a game where their team scored some points by putting down an opponent.

At the LSI event, the protesting students displayed no interest in hearing what the speaker — an IDF reservist — had to say. At the beginning of the event, a small group of students placed signs on their laptops and propped them up in an attempt to dismiss the speaker before they heard anything he had to say. A few minutes into his presentation, these students disruptively left in unison. They apparently had nothing to learn from someone who had been in Gaza just weeks ago. Why listen when you already stand on the right side of history? Fortunately, many other students stayed to ask questions — a substantial portion of which criticized the IDF's campaign in Gaza and its human cost — in the spirit of open inquiry and dialogue.

The IDF soldier, unlike the students, knew firsthand the tragedy and complexity of war and death. This was not merely something he read in a textbook or a political position. He lived and witnessed the horrors of war and death, and said that

"every civilian casualty is terrible and unacceptable." He left his family on Oct. 7 to protect his country from the worst massacre of Jews since the Holocaust — carnage he witnessed with his own eyes. He warned students, even those that might downplay or deny what Hamas did, against watching the films documenting those atrocities for risk of permanent scarring. He spoke about the responsibility each soldier has because taking a life is a matter of utmost seriousness. He repeated that IDF's difficult goal is to destroy Hamas, who vow to wipe out Israel and the Jews, and liberate Gazans from Hamas's tyrannical reign. All this was "for the sake that one day, [Israelis] will be living in peace with our Palestinian neighbors." In response to students who challenged the morality of Israel's actions, he acknowledged that the cost of dead innocents is always too high and that war is deadly and destructive, but underscored that it was Hamas who forced this terrible reality upon the people of Israel and Gaza.

There is always much to learn from other perspectives. At the YLSJP event, it was important to hear about the great pain and suffering Gazan people are enduring and to be aware of the terrible cost this war is having. The horrible number of civilian deaths, the instability and chaos for those in Gaza, and the feelings of pain, anger, and despair it has engendered are all essential for any discussion about the war. To ignore any of the weighty issues in this matter belittles the importance of the topic and leaves us poorer in our understanding. However, the slogans and facile analyses offered by the speakers present at the YLSJP event, and their denigration of serious questions asked in good faith, do not get us further in trying to understand these fraught and sensitive issues. Instead, they continue to sow divisiveness and discord.

If we pursue questions with empathy and seriously listen to each other, we can move in the right direction. At the very least, we must understand the reasons we hold fundamentally opposing views and inquire whether any common ground may be found.

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FROM THE FRONT

"I will not have my life narrowed down. I will not bow down to somebody else's whim or to someone else's ignorance."

BELL HOOKS AMERICAN AUTHOR

University apologies for slavery ties, announces set of new initiatives

SLAVERY FROM PAGE 1

between prominent Yale community members and New Haven leaders and citizens, was quashed after then-New Haven Mayor and Yale graduate Dennis Kimberly, class of 1812, held a meeting that was "whites-only" at which 700 people voted in opposition of the plan.

Blight said that although the initial plan for the book was to cover this history into the 1930s, "the book got too long."

Yet, concluding the book in 1915 with the unveiling of the Civil War memorial — located between the Schwarzman Center and Woolsey Hall — was a "perfect ending," he said. This is so, he added, because the memorial, which honors the lives of soldiers on both sides of the Civil War without mentioning slavery, showcases the apathetic view Yale took toward slavery in the early twentieth century.

"This is a case where the archives were not silent; there was so much material, we couldn't even begin to use it all," Blight said. "We decided to end the book with 1915 and the unveiling of that war memorial ... because it wasn't the end of racial issues at Yale by any means, but it was the end of concern over slavery directly, or a lack of concern about it."

To further showcase the findings of the YSWG, the University opened a free exhibition in the New Haven Museum highlighting key findings included in the book. Yale is also providing copies of the book to New Haven public libraries and high schools and updating campus tours to address key findings. A new app will offer self-guided tours with 19 points of interest to help visitors explore the University's ties to slavery.

On-campus changes

Per the announcement, Yale will continue working to ensure that its physical campus reflects "a more complete view of the university's history," consistent with the research findings.

"The most important consequences of the revelation of this history is our desire to play a role in lifting our entire community," Salovey said.

The University's Committee for Art Representing Enslavement, launched in June, will work with campus and New Haven community members to commission works

of art that address Yale's ties to and the legacy of slavery.

Among CARE's tasks will also be to make recommendations for new art in Connecticut Hall — Yale and New Haven's oldest extant building which will be renovated to become the new home of the Yale Chaplaincy — to better reflect the building's history with slavery. Among the research findings is that free and enslaved Black men devoted over 27 percent of the hours to the construction of Connecticut Hall, despite constituting only 3 percent of the local population.

Additionally, a physical display was recently installed near the Civil War Memorial located in the Schwarzman Center between Commons and Woolsey Hall to inform visitors of the memorial's history.

"No one uttered a word of what the Civil War had been fought about, with the exception of a discussion of states' rights," Blight wrote on Feb. 16 of the memorial's 1915 dedication in *The Atlantic*. "Instead, the ultimate memorial, in its content and form, served as an institutional Yankee apology for Reconstruction ... Perhaps the Yale men needed to convince themselves that if they could make history itself calm and unifying on walls, on floors, and in marble, they could do the same with their university and their country."

In September, the University honored the late Rev. James W.C. Pennington, the first Black student known to study at what is now the Yale Divinity School, and Rev. Alexander Crummell, who also attended the Yale Theological Seminary, with honorary master's degrees. The posthumous degree conferral followed years of student and alumni advocacy, since at least 2014.

Educational programs, economic growth in New Haven

The announcement lists seven responses aimed at expanding educational access and opportunities for teaching and research and two for promoting inclusive economic growth in New Haven. Not all of the actions are new, such as increased support for New Haven Promise, K-12 outreach through Yale's Pathways to Science program and the formation of the Pennington Fellowship, both referenced in Salovey's announcement.

In January 2022, the University increased its financial contribution by one million dollars annually

to the New Haven Promise, a college scholarship program that helps New Haven public school students pay for college. In December 2022, Salovey announced the Pennington Fellowship, a four-year, \$20,000 scholarship for approximately ten to twelve New Haven public high school seniors attending some of the nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities — including Hampton University, Morehouse College and Spelman College.

"We've not been holding back so while the research has been done, we have announced certain responses to what we were learning as we went," Salovey said. "I had thought it would be wrong to simply delay things that would be good for Yale and for the New Haven community simply because the book wasn't finished yet."

Among Yale's other planned actions are those to address the shortage of teachers in New Haven through a residency fellowship program in collaboration with New Haven Public Schools, New Haven Promise and Southern Connecticut State University that will fully fund a master's in teaching degree for about 100 aspiring teachers. In exchange, the teachers must commit to working in the New Haven public school system for at least three years.

Two weeks before the 2023-2024 academic year began for New Haven public schools, the school district found it had 84 classroom teachers positions still open.

"Ultimately, we hope in over the next five years to put 100 new teachers in the New Haven public schools and that number is not an accident," Salovey told the News.

Per the announcement, Yale also plans to launch a four-year teacher's institute in the summer of 2025 that will help K-12 teachers throughout New England to meet state mandates for incorporating Black and Indigenous history into their curricula.

The announcement also references other educational programs including the Access to Law School program which guides local New Haven students from underrepresented groups in law through the law school application process.

Moreover, the announcement details a "recently signed ten-year letter of intent" for the Dixwell Plaza space, which is a collaboration between Yale and the Connecticut Community and Com-

munity Revitalization Program, a local program that seeks to offer opportunities for New Haven's underserved residents.

"What Yale is going to do is we have offered to be a major tenant in the Dixwell Plaza," Salovey said. "And so the letter that's being referred to will ultimately be a lease, and we will lease space there providing a flow of revenue to ConCORP as they look for other tenants ... and an example I hope to others that might inspire them to join us in setting up shop in Dixwell Plaza."

Who was involved?

Salovey said that he approached Blight for the project because he thought him to be the "perfect historian" for conducting Yale's own history with slavery. Blight said that he initially intended for these findings to be finalized in a report. However, upon accepting the project, Blight told Salovey that he would release the findings in a narrative history, not a report — something, Blight told the News in September, that students, alumni and the general public would actually read.

"It is essentially the instincts of historians: we like chronology, we like details, we like evidence," Blight said. "Historical material imposes its own order on you as the writer, and so does the research."

The book is principally authored by Blight but was also authored by Michael Morand, director of community engagement at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, and Hope McGrath, lead researcher of the Yale and Slavery Research Group.

Blight told the News that student researchers were "crucial" to the research for the book "from the very beginning." He added that while the student and professional researchers were paid by the President's Office, the faculty involved were not.

"Some of our first student researchers only worked for a couple of months because they do what students do: they graduate, they leave, they get jobs, but some of them stayed on the project for quite a while," he said.

Charles Warner, a New Havener, is a member of the Yale and Slavery Working Group and serves on the Board of Directors of the Amistad Committee which honors and preserves African and American history in Connecticut. Warner said that he first became involved with

Blight's research after the professors approached the Amistad group and invited them to join his project.

Warner emphasized the need, throughout the project, to understand slavery as a human issue, adding that the project was of particular meaning to him because he had the opportunity to share information the Black community of New Haven has "held dear and treasured" for so long and highlight "unsung heroes."

"It's important when you're discussing an issue, like the institution of slavery that we always remember that while there's so much academic work around it, that this is a story of living, breathing people," Warner said.

What comes next?

Kimberly Goff-Crews, vice president and secretary for university life, told the News that she will chair a new committee that will host conversations with student leaders and New Haven residents. She said it will inform next steps for engaging with the Yale and Slavery Research Project's findings.

"There are a lot of ways in which people are going to be able to engage with material," Goff-Crews said.

Salovey will be stepping down from his role this June. The search for his successor publicly launched when he announced he would be stepping down in August.

However, he said that he anticipates his successor will pick up where he leaves off on this work.

"A big theme in the search for my successor is continuing the course we're on and that includes the slavery research project," Salovey told the News. "The idea is a next president who can provide a vision for 10 to 15 years from now that builds on what we've been trying to do over the last decade, and I fully expect that will include both our commitment to a diverse campus in all the meanings of that term, as well as in continuing to educate and lead around the legacy of slavery."

For the University's 300th anniversary in 2001, a group of graduate students issued an independent report on Yale's connections to slavery, which Salovey acknowledged in his address at an event announcing the book on Yale and slavery.

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College will require applicants to submit SAT, ACT, AP or IB scores

TESTING FROM PAGE 1

it the ability to re-evaluate the role that test scores play in its deliberation process. New research by organizations like Opportunity Insights about the predictive ability of standardized test scores helped inform the admissions office's decision, the website says.

Among Opportunity Insights' findings are that students with higher SAT and ACT scores are more likely to have higher college GPAs than their lower-scoring counterparts, and that high school GPAs alone are poor predictors of college success.

The office maintained that, despite accepting more types of scores, it does not prefer one score type over another, and students who submit more scores will not be advantaged.

Yale urged applicants against taking more tests to increase the number of scores that they include in their application. A narrow focus on testing is "not a wise college preparation strategy," according to the Thursday release.

Going forward, the Yale-specific questions on all accepted application forums — the Common Application, the Coalition Application and the QuestBridge application — will contain a space for students to report scores that they would like considered with their Yale applications.

In a different optional question, students will have space to explain any of the circumstances surrounding their testing experience.

The role of tests in admissions

Under Yale's holistic review framework, standardized test scores can help contextualize other parts of an application, like high school GPA, according to the admissions office.

"No exam can demonstrate every student's college readiness or perfectly predict future performance," Thursday's statement reads. "Tests

can highlight an applicant's areas of academic strength, reinforce high school grades, fill in gaps in a transcript stemming from extenuating circumstances, and — most importantly — identify students whose performance stands out in their high school context."

When admissions officers evaluate applications that do not include test scores — as they have often had to do in the past four test-optional cycles — they are forced to put more weight on other parts of the application. But, according to the release, this process frequently disadvantaged less wealthy applicants.

In a survey conducted earlier this month, the News found that students who receive financial aid were less likely to have submitted scores with their Yale applications than their wealthier counterparts.

Since going test-optional, Yale has seen a disproportionate increase in applications from students who would be the first in their family to attend college and students from neighborhoods with below-median household incomes. Applications to the class of 2028 saw applications from first-generation students and low-income students increase 13 percent and 19 percent more than the overall applicant pool, respectively.

In conversations with the News, low-income students who omitted scores said that they did so out of worry that a score below Yale's median would take away from other parts of their application, or immediately disqualify them from consideration.

But Bruce Sacerdote, a researcher at Opportunity Insights, previously told the News that lower-income students submit test scores "at too low a rate," according to his research.

"We hypothesize that this stems from applicants not having full knowledge of how test scores are used in context," Sacerdote wrote

to the News. "Scores are used as only one input and are viewed in the context of the applicant's background, neighborhood and high school. As a result, applicants may not realize that their score is an impressive one that could help their admission chances."

The new comments from the admissions office are in line with Sacerdote's research, affirming that a score below Yale's median can actually be useful in identifying applicants who stand out within their high school or personal environment.

Students from well-resourced high schools often have access to easy "substitutes" for standardized test scores, such as many advanced courses, comments from teachers with whom they have close relationships and hoards of impressive enrichment activities, per the statement.

Students from lower-resourced high schools, on the other hand, may have less access to advanced courses that showcase their academic ability, and more generic comments from teachers who deal with larger class sizes, the release says.

"With no test scores to supplement these components, applications from students attending [lower-resourced] schools may leave admissions officers with scant evidence of their readiness for Yale," the release says. "When students attending these high schools include a score with their application — even a score below Yale's median range — they give the committee greater confidence that they are likely to achieve academic success in college."

Access barriers and goals moving forward

In addition to increased applications from first-generation and low-income students, since going test-optional in 2020, applica-

In addition to SAT and ACT scores, students will be able to submit Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate scores to fulfill Yale College's new "test-flexible" policy. / **Ellie Park, Photography Editor**

tions from international students increased by 130 percent, twice the rate of growth of domestic applicants, according to data from the admissions office.

Numerous international students spoke with the News about the barriers to access they faced when trying to take the SAT and ACT in their home countries. Many students said they had to travel long distances, often to other countries, to take the tests, a process that students felt favored wealthier applicants.

In a recent episode of the podcast "Inside the Yale Admissions Office" titled "How We Got Here," hosts Mark Dunn '07, senior associate director for outreach and recruitment at the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, and Hannah Mendlowitz '12, associate director of admissions, said that it is "pretty easy" to understand why international applications increased when Yale adopted a test-optional policy.

"Registering for and taking the SAT or ACT abroad is much more challenging than it is in the US," Mendlowitz said in the episode. "And understandably, many international students haven't invested the same amount of time in preparing for or learning about those tests. So removing that barrier meant that a lot more

international students could apply. And they did."

As the admissions landscape has changed in the four years since most colleges went test-optional, Quinlan said he hopes adding AP and IB to the list of accepted scores will not disadvantage students who "have not had the ACT or SAT as part of their planning for college."

Looking toward the future, Quinlan said that, while he is confident in the new test-flexible model, it is not set in stone.

"We are in a dynamic moment for standardized testing," Quinlan told Yale News. "There are efforts to design and roll out new tests, and there is more energy for developing alternatives to the SAT or ACT than ever before. Although our research on the predictive power of the four tests we will accept next cycle is compelling, I like that our policy is flexible by design and can easily accommodate future additions to the list of required scores."

Yale first announced a test-optional policy in June 2020.

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"Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

JAMES BALDWIN AMERICAN WRITER

Yale's effect on Navalny's political career in Russia

NAVALNY FROM PAGE 1

first fellow he met. In their first interaction, Navalny noticed that Rees did not have a car and offered to drive him to the grocery store. Even as Navalny was still learning English, his sense of humor resonated with Rees.

"We joked that he talked like the Terminator when he spoke in English," Rees said.

As the cohort began, Navalny became serious about his purpose at Yale.

Navalny was one of 15 fellows that year, selected out of a pool of over 1,500 applications. World Fellows, while undergoing career-specific training, auditing Yale classes and participating in weekly program seminars, are also typically expected to engage with students and professors by hosting talks and participating in panels across Yale's campus.

"We look for people for whom the experience could change the trajectory of their career," Cappello said. "In that sense, Alexey was exactly what our recruitment process tried to capture. His achievement was notable, but his greatest accomplishments were still yet to come."

Navalny began as a relatively quiet member of the cohort.

"He had a serenity about him that you knew he was very passionate about what he was doing," Cappello said.

As a fellow, Navalny remained an activist, too. At the time, he sought to uncover corruption from the inside. He bought small numbers of shares of major Russian oil companies, banks and ministries, which allowed him to attend company shareholder meetings and obtain access to company documents, later posting his findings on his blog and Twitter page.

While at Yale, in November 2010, Navalny published a 300-page document on his website, Navalny.ru, revealing that Transneft, a state-controlled Russian oil pipeline monopoly, had embezzled four billion dollars during the construction of a new pipeline. The report was viewed by millions of people, and three weeks later, he learned that the Minister of the Interior had placed him under investigation.

"It was the effect of an exploding bomb when I revealed this report," Navalny told the News in 2011. "Officials cannot deny my data because it's not my report; it's a report by Transneft."

Navalny's devotion to this cause, particularly his constant internet presence — at a time when social media was only just gaining mainstream attention — quickly impressed the other fellows.

"He was a totally new type of Russian politician, or any politician

for that matter," Sergey Lagodinsky, a 2010 fellow who now serves as a member of the European Parliament said. "This is a guy who pioneered a new era of digital politics, who could bring his dedication and charisma to the internet for the whole world to see."

Lagodinsky, who had been born and raised in Russia before leaving in 1993, said that Navalny changed his perception of the typical Russian politician, who he perceived to be "dull, grey, old and totally non-dynamic."

The then-34 year old Navalny, he said, was bound to become a disruptive force in Russian politics.

"Russian politics in 2010 was Yavlinsky, a liberal who could inspire nobody," Lagodinsky said, referring to Yabloko party founder and leader Grigory Yavlinsky. "Alexey was totally inspiring, and he came in with a very ambitious agenda."

Navalny's American influence

As invested as he was in affairs back home, Navalny continued to audit classes and meet with professors daily, with a particular interest in studying American social movements. When he spoke on campus, he was a "magnet for people," Rees said.

While at Yale, Navalny's priorities as an activist began to shift, moving from shareholder rights to a broader focus on Russian corruption, and, in particular, using social media to spread his message to the general Russian population.

"He was always looking for that mobilizing factor," Cappello said. "As he progressed through the program, it became further entrenched in his mind that corruption, and exposing it to the Russian people, was just that."

At the same time, Navalny's activism became informed by his environment at Yale.

In this way, Navalny was "a sponge of ideas."

"He was fascinated by, and constantly sucked in all these American-style leadership ideas," Rees said. "He was really looking to store it and bring it with him back home."

In particular, Navalny was captivated by the capacity for grassroots movements to influence the American political system, a concept he hoped to bring back to Russia. In a 2011 interview with the *New Yorker*, three months after leaving Yale, Navalny referred to the Tea Party as an example of a political movement he learned about during his time at Yale.

"It's an incredible thing: some old ladies got together and are now hammering at Obama from all sides," Navalny said in the interview.

Navalny's Russian background and limited exposure to the Western world enhanced this curiosity with Yale and the landscape of Ameri-

can foreign policy and higher education, according to Ted Wittenstein, an associate fellow at the time and the current Executive Director of International Security Studies at Yale.

Navalny's nationalist efforts

At times, Navalny's sharp views could clash with those of the other fellows. A Russian nationalist, he took part in the annual "Russian march" during early years of his life, a demonstration that united various Russian ultranationalist groups, including neo-Nazis. In August 2008, he supported Russia in its war against Georgia, and called for Georgians to be expelled from Russia. Videos on his YouTube channel from 2008 reveal him advocating for gun-rights and comparing migrants in Moscow to tooth cavities.

For these reasons, Yevhenii Monastyrskiy '23 GRD a Ukrainian-born Harvard graduate student in Eastern European History, sees Navalny's legacy as more complicated than just anti-Putin activism.

"We do have to recognize that for Russians who oppose Putin, Navalny was hope," Monastyrskiy said. "For Ukrainians, for Georgians, for central Asians, he was an imperialist and a nationalist," referencing comments Navalny once made suggesting Crimea should be kept in Russian hands and on Georgian migrants.

Later in life, Navalny retracted his stance on Ukraine, declaring that Crimea should be returned to Ukraine.

He also distanced himself from the Russian marches and toned down nationalist rhetoric. During his time at Yale, multiple fellows recalled having "civil disagreements" with Navalny.

"One of the first questions he wanted to have with me was about migration," Rees, who is of Jamaican-British ancestry, said. "I remember having discussions on our back porch where he would ask me, 'how do you build a society when you have migration?'"

Rees maintained that Navalny seemed "genuinely intrigued" to hear his perspective, and held very friendly relationships with Di-Aping and Teran, who were of Southern Sudanese and Nicaraguan descent.

Lagodinsky, who at the time was the lead spokesperson for the Jewish community of Berlin, recalled similar disagreements with Navalny over religious diversity, but referred to them as "always friendly and civilized."

Still, despite toning down his nationalist rhetoric, Navalny grew increasingly emboldened in his desire to expose Russian corruption.

"He would repeat the same things over and over again, like about how he was going to expose Putin's corrup-

tion," Wittenstein said. "It wasn't like we didn't believe him, but it almost sounded like he was a broken record."

During discussions with visiting global politicians, Navalny consistently asked the same question, according to Akl. He wanted to know their reasons for continuing to support the corrupt Russian government.

His intense distaste for Russian leadership was clear to other fellows. During one evening in the computer room of Betts House, he called Rees over and showed him footage of a journalist being beaten motionless by two government officials on the street.

Post Yale, Navalny faces numerous arrests, remembered as a 'champion'

Just under a year since the end of the program, in December 2011, Navalny made global headlines for leading protests against alleged fraud in that year's parliamentary elections. These demonstrations were some of the largest against the Kremlin since Putin's ascent to the presidency in 1999.

During the protest, Navalny was publicly arrested and sentenced to a 15-day prison sentence. Soon after, he founded the Anti-Corruption Foundation, which grew into the nation's leading anti-corruption body.

In 2011 and 2013, he returned to campus for World Fellows reunions — trips that would later become difficult as state forces monitored his activity intensely and sought to minimize his public persona.

His political impact deepened when he ran for mayor of Moscow in 2013. His grassroots campaign — not unlike those he studied at Yale — secured 27 percent of the vote, an unprecedented achievement for an opposition candidate in the Putiner era.

Russian state media often called out his Yale background, referring to him as "the Yale World Fellow" during his run for mayor. Genady Zyuganov, leader of the Russian Communist party, called for Navalny to be jailed for his connections to the 'Imperial West' and referred to him as a "direct offspring of their union."

Since 2011, Navalny was jailed on more than ten separate occasions and spent hundreds of days in custody.

According to Rees, the fellows followed his career closely, and in "particular moments of threat" to Navalny wrote to the Russian embassies to "let them know the world was watching."

Navalny, too, kept track of the other fellows. One day, during Rees' run for mayor of Bristol in 2016, Rees's campaign manager informed him that "we have a tweet from a guy with millions of followers," referring to Navalny.

"That's the kind of guy he was," Rees said. "He tweeted to show

me support and then later sent an email congratulating me."

By 2017, Navalny had emerged as the principal challenger to Putin's presidency but was barred from the election by a court ruling based on fraud charges.

In 2018, he made his last documented visit to Yale's campus, where he met with Cappello for lunch at Mory's. The visit was kept quiet for security reasons, and he had to book multiple flights and hotel rooms to fend off harassment from Russian security services.

His immediate imprisonment following his decision to return to Russia in 2020 after the poisoning attack has left some observers questioning why he ever returned.

However, none of the four fellows whom the News interviewed said that they were surprised by Navalny's decision.

Wittenstein, who frequently attended Yale football games with Navalny while at Yale and spent hours explaining to him the sport's rules and strategy, recalled Navalny using a football metaphor to explain his reasoning.

"He said he didn't want to play 'armchair quarterback,' harkening back to his time as a world fellow," Wittenstein said. "He didn't think he could be a leader in opposition to the Putin regime if he himself wasn't willing to be there, and potentially pay the ultimate price."

At the World Fellows' 20th reunion in 2023, a seat reserved for Alexey was kept empty in the front row.

Since his death on Friday, several world fellows have expressed tributes to Navalny online and on a webpage set up by the Jackson School of Global Affairs.

Former Yale president Richard Levin, who founded the program in 2002, referred to Navalny as "a symbol of what we aspired to be."

"Alexey was a perfect fit: one cannot imagine a more courageous and determined champion of democracy and human decency," Levin wrote. "He cherished his time at Yale, and he believed he was fortunate to have had the opportunity to come here. But it was we who were fortunate; it was a privilege to have helped him along his path."

Several fellows added that Alexey would not have been able to make the impact he did without his wife, Yulia, who Akl described as "equally charismatic and brave."

Navalny is survived by his wife and two children.

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Harold Shapiro, Senior Photographer

NEWS

"Hey, I'ma keep running 'cause a winner don't quit on themselves."
 "FREEDOM" BY BEYONCÉ AMERICAN SINGER-SONGWRITER AND BUSINESSWOMAN

Faculty group calls on Yale to make teaching 'distinct from activism'



ELLIE PARK / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

The new initiative urges the University to adopt six new measures, which include more thorough protections on free speech, a commitment to institutional neutrality and new guidelines regarding donor influence.

BY BEN RAAB & BENJAMIN HERNANDEZ
 STAFF REPORTERS

Over 100 faculty members now have their signatures displayed on a website for a new faculty group, Faculty for Yale, which "insist[s] on the primacy of teaching, learning and research as distinct from advocacy and activism."

Among other measures, the group calls for "a thorough reassessment of administrative encroachment" and the promotion of diverse viewpoints. The group also calls for a more thorough description of free expression guidelines in the Faculty Handbook; Yale's current guidelines are based on its 1974 Woodward Report. The group also wants Yale to implement a set of

guidelines regarding donor influence, which were first put forth by the Gift Policy Review Committee in 2022.

On its site, Faculty for Yale outlines issues that it claims stem from Yale's "retreat from the university's basic mission."

"Faculty for Yale is a spontaneously coalescing group of (so far) over 100 faculty from throughout the university who wish to support our university in re-dedicating itself to its historic and magnificent mission to preserve, produce, and transmit knowledge," professor of social and natural science Nicholas Christakis wrote to the News. "We believe that any loss of focus on this deep, fundamental, and important mission may contribute to a range of

challenges being faced in universities like ours nowadays."

Faculty for Yale also urges the University to adopt the University of Chicago's Kalven Committee report that urges institutional neutrality.

However, in an interview with the News in November, Salovey said that although more college presidents might be considering the principle of institutional neutrality "because they realize how fraught it has become to speak out" on the issues of the day, he does not yet hold that view. He added, though, that "it's a worthy view to consider."

"I still think that we are going to want to speak out as leaders in higher education on issues of the day, but the decision about when to

and when not to is not an easy one," Salovey said. "I tend to use a criteria of how directly our campus is affected by whatever the incident in the world is but that's still not a perfect criteria ... there are atrocities all over the world, and I've probably not spoken out on more of them than I have spoken on."

Christakis, speaking on behalf of the group, told the News that "we hope to meet" with Salovey.

Howard Forman, a professor at the School of Management, said that he signed the letter in part to emphasize Yale's "promises for advancing and disseminating knowledge" amid the presidential search process. Forman also called himself a "big fan" of Salovey.

"He has served us extremely well, facing numerous internal and external upheavals and facing up to Yale's own troubling history," Forman said. "This letter does not sit in judgment of him or his predecessors. It speaks to our future and how we all can be better."

Although the group was formed in December, a column published last month in the Wall Street Journal discussed emails from Christakis and law professor Kate Stith — sent to their faculty colleagues — in which they expressed views now available on Faculty for Yale's site.

Other signatories include the Trumbull and Grace Hopper heads of college — biomedical engineering professor Fahmeed Hyder and sociology professor Julia Adams, respectively. Hyder did not respond to the News' request for comment.

Adams wrote to the News that academic freedom, which she described as "the bedrock of the advancement of knowledge through teaching and learning," needs support at Yale and other colleges and universities.

"The concerns articulated in the FfY formation statement pertain to universities — and not their members! — as activists," Adams wrote. "I consider myself something of an activist on behalf of academic freedom, scholarship, and the mission of the university. But there will also come times, as the Kalven Report notes, in which colleges and universities confront threats to their very mission, and must seek to defend their fundamental values. That is happening worldwide."

Similar efforts at other universities have emerged in recent months, including Harvard's Council on Academic Freedom, Princeton's Princeton Principles for a Campus Culture of Free Inquiry and the University of Pennsylvania's pennforward.com.

All such efforts formally began within the last year.

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Faculty letter to Yale's future president urges social justice mission

BY BEN RAAB
 STAFF REPORTER

Around 150 Yale faculty have signed a letter addressed to the future president of Yale University.

The letter, which has been active since Feb. 14, has been signed by faculty at Yale College, Yale Law School and the School of Medicine, among others. It offers six aspirations for the upcoming tenure of Yale's future president, who is yet to be identified.

"We hope that as the next president you will support the continued engagement of our faculty and students in initiatives that affect the world around us," it reads. "And that you strongly and unequivocally reaffirm the value that Yale sees in the efforts we all put towards environmental, social and civil justice."

The letter supports, among other priorities, the protection of students' rights to protest and engage in civil disobedience, diversity and inclusion initiatives and collaboration with community colleges and other universities to expand access to higher education.

The letter comes on the heels of another initiative, "Faculty for Yale," which calls on Yale to "insist on the primacy of teaching, learning, and research as distinct from advocacy and activism" and argues that Yale is struggling to meet its "most important responsibilities as an academic institution in a clear and consistent way."

By contrast, the faculty letter seems to come from an opposing ideological standpoint, urging the University to embrace its role as an advocate for causes in social justice and higher education.

While professor Greta LaFleur, who signed the letter, said that it was not intended as a direct response to Faculty for Yale, the letter refers to the group in its opening statement. It claims that American universities must be defended against attacks from "members of their own faculty, who argue that



ELLIE PARK / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

The letter — signed by more than 100 faculty members at Yale College, Yale Law School and the Yale School of Medicine, among others — offers six aspirations for Yale's future president's tenure.

universities have lost their way," in addition to donors and politicians.

Daniel HoSang, who is a professor of ethnicity, race and migration and of American studies as well as a co-author of the letter, said that it was written in order to "affirm the wide range of extraordinary work happening at our institution that integrates outstanding research, teaching and practice with a robust commitment to the public good."

One of the letter's main points urges the future president to continue being a "positive force on the world," highlighting instances in which Yale

faculty have faculty have" translated their academic findings into practice," such as Yale's prison education initiatives or the work of Yale Schools of Public Health and Medicine faculties on COVID-19.

Amy Kapczynski, a law professor and one of the letter's authors emphasized Yale's relation to national higher education as one of the "broader themes of the letter."

"There's really a need to pay attention to the broader loss of faith in higher education and attacks on higher education across the country," Kapczynski

said. "We don't just see this as a Yale question, but a need for leadership in higher education more broadly."

According to Kapczynski, higher education is under attack partly because "we are a place where people think freely and do important research that sometimes challenges conventional orthodoxies."

The letter cites educational gag orders that aim to restrict the teaching of certain subjects and censor teachers in both K-12 and higher education, as well as attempts to undermine DEI programs and eliminate certain majors, such as sociology.

Naftali Kaminski, a professor at the School of Medicine who helped author the letter, said that he feels the University is at a critical juncture in its history and can thrive by continuing to affirm the outlined priorities. He highlighted examples of Yale's engagement with the world over the last ten years, such as global healthcare leadership, commitment to clean energy and climate change mitigation and student activism.

As of Monday evening, the letter has 148 signatories.

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NEWS

"Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare."

AUDRE LORDE AMERICAN WRITER AND PROFESSOR

Warming centers reach capacity as temperatures drop

BY MAIA NEHME AND
NATASHA KHAZZAM
STAFF REPORTERS

The city's three winter warming centers — Upon this Rock, Varick Memorial and the 180 Center — have hit full capacity nearly every night since beginning their seasonal operations on Dec. 1. These constraints became increasingly prevalent after Tuesday's winter storm, which led the warming centers to surpass capacity limits in an effort to accommodate guests.

Warming centers typically provide unhoused people with food and a place to spend the night during winter months, operating from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. Tuesday's extreme conditions prompted the city's warming centers to adopt severe cold-weather protocols, during which they operated 24 hours a day instead of the usual 12. Tuesday's weather also led several warming centers to accommodate people beyond capacity. This called into question the centers' ability to accommodate everybody looking for shelter — a concern which prompted expansion and reform efforts that have been ongoing throughout the winter.

Warming centers respond to decreased temperatures

According to Program Manager Shellina Poure, Varick Memorial increased its capacity from 39 to 42 people in response to the severe cold weather. Upon this Rock underwent a similar response, opening its doors to over 60 people in response to the extreme conditions on Tuesday.

Poure noted that although the warming centers always house more people in response to severe cold weather, there is often simply not enough space to accommodate everybody who stops by. However, the warming centers' need to expand beyond capacity is not limited to extreme weather conditions.

Delana Lawrence, the assistant director at Upon this Rock, explained that the center changed its location to 130 Orchard St. in order to accommodate more people than in previous winters, as its former Grand Avenue



NATASHA KHAZZAM/CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Due to a winter storm last week, the city's warming centers underwent emergency protocols.

location only accommodated 30 people. When the new location opened on Dec. 1, it was equipped to accommodate 47 people, but that number has since expanded to 60 in response to increased demand.

"Cold or warm, we still hit our capacity every night," Lawrence said.

She added that the warming center plays an important role in addressing needs beyond just relief from cold weather. In addition to distributing hot meals every night, it serves as a "safe environment" that provides people with a peaceful night's rest.

Poure explained how the need to continuously stay open remains a reality, especially in response to an increase in the number of people looking to the warming centers for food and shelter.

"We've definitely been seeing new people ... people move on, they get housed or they go into shelter ... they leave the warming center," she said. "But then you see another wave of new people come through [the warming centers]."

Ongoing efforts seek to address capacity constraints

Several of the city's centers have engaged in private efforts to expand services. Poure stated that Varick has recently collaborated with nonprofits Bridges of Hope and fREsh-STARTs to provide dinner at the center each night.

Teddy Natter, the supervisor at the 180 Center, explained that the Center is undergoing a second phase of

expansion funded by private donations, rather than by the city. The construction entails 17 permanent beds, showers, laundry services and a commercial kitchen.

Natter explained that this addition will serve as "somewhere for people that aren't looking to just crash — they're looking to actually utilize the stepping stones to get employed and get housing, and get out of the situation that they're in."

According to Natter, this construction project is roughly three-fourths of the way done, and will likely be finished at some point this year.

Community members highlight potential improvements for warming centers

Prior to Tuesday's snowstorm, homelessness activist Roosevelt Watkins — who is homeless — raised several complaints regarding the city's warming centers with The Unhoused Activists' Community Team, or U-ACT, a New Haven homelessness advocacy group that was established in June 2022.

Watkins' advocacy led U-ACT to file six demands with the city of New Haven, which involve extending warming center hours to 10 a.m. each day, providing guests with "comfortable places" to sleep, guaranteeing all guests a warm dinner, informing guests on how to file grievances if a center fails to follow the city's policies, permitting transgender guests to use the restroom that corresponds

with their gender identity and adding at least 50 spots at warming centers for the winter of 2024-25.

The first demand stems from Watkins' main complaint: After the warming centers close at 7 a.m., people typically seek shelter in the city's public libraries, which do not open until 10 a.m. — leaving many people without shelter for a three-hour period.

According to Bromage, U-ACT's second demand addresses a city policy that prohibits warming centers from providing guests with cots. Instead, the centers provide guests with chairs, blankets or yoga mats to sleep on.

"If our goal is to not have people freeze to death, that's not a sufficient way to acknowledge the humanity of someone," Bromage said. "We need to aim for a much higher standard of dignity and acknowledgement of people's human rights."

Watkins pointed out that this city policy is meant to maximize warming centers' capacities — adding cots to centers would limit the amount of guests they could accept.

According to Bromage, these sleeping conditions are especially harmful for elderly unhoused people, who make up an increasing percentage of the national unhoused population. Recent studies show that about 50 percent of unhoused single adults are over the age of 50.

Watkins, however, disagreed: "I would rather be uncomfortable than [have people] out in the cold," he said.

Bromage explained that some of the city's warming centers pay for warm meals out of pocket or receive food through donations, rather than from city funding. This inspired U-ACT's third demand to provide all of the center's guests with a warm dinner.

U-ACT's fifth demand was prompted by Upon this Rock lacking accommodations for transgender guests who hope to use bathrooms that correspond with their gender identity, according to Bromage.

"It's both a lack of acknowledgment of the legal requirements to

make bathrooms available and lack of training for warming center staff," Bromage wrote to the News.

Bromage and Watkins emphasized that this issue largely affects transgender women, since cisgender female guests who have experienced male violence often feel uncomfortable sharing the bathroom with transgender women. They mentioned potential solutions, such as implementing gender neutral bathrooms and improving training for Upon this Rock's staff members.

Brother Barry, one of the deacons at Upon this Rock Ministries who did not provide his last name, denied U-ACT's allegations.

"We don't do that. We treat everybody equally," he said. "We cater to all people."

The other two shelters have not experienced this issue: Watkins said that Varick's staff has accommodated transgender guests, while Bromage added that 180 Center has single-occupancy bathrooms.

U-ACT shared its demands at a Feb. 9 City Hall meeting, which was also attended by representatives of the city's warming centers and the United Way of Connecticut, another nonprofit organization.

The warming centers were most receptive to the first demand, especially since 180 Center already provides religious programming during the day, according to Bromage. However, like Watkins, the centers' representatives noted that their limited capacity makes it difficult to address the second demand.

Bromage told the News that U-ACT plans to continue advocating for its demands to be met.

"It will certainly be a lot of pushing on getting funding... to get more people [in the centers], but in a way where they're laying down [and] they're not putting their health at risk every night," he said.

Varick Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church is located at 242 Dixwell Ave.

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Gender disparities persist in several areas of study at Yale, data show

BY HUDSON WARM
STAFF REPORTER

A notable gender disparity is apparent in two of Yale College's four primary academic areas, namely in disciplines that fall under the Arts & Humanities category and those that fall under Physical Sciences & Engineering.

Data released by Yale's Office of Institutional Research from the 2022-23 academic year has revealed a notable gender disparity in certain academic areas — particularly in arts and humanities and in physical sciences and engineering.

According to data released by Yale's Office of Institutional Research — which presents figures through a gender binary — there are 664 junior and senior male majors within the Physical Sciences & Engineering realm, compared to 351 women. Meanwhile, the number of female Arts & Humanities majors far outnumbered male ones, with 701.5 women and 420 men. The decimal point accounts for interdisciplinary majors that fall in more than one of the four dominant divisions — for example, the Archeological Studies major being classified under both Arts & Humanities and Social Sciences.

Although the percentage of women in Physical Sciences & Engineering has increased between the 2000-01 academic year and now — from 26.3 percent to 34.5 percent — for the last 10 years, this percentage has fluctuated between 33.6 percent and 38.8 percent without a clear upward trajectory.

On the national level, numbers are worse. The American Society for Engineering Education, for example, reported that women were awarded only 24.1 percent of the total number of bachelor's degrees in engineering in 2022.

Though Yale has seen more success in gender diversity than the national average, the University is falling short compared to peer institutions. At Princeton, 40.6 percent of the bachelor of science in engineering degrees

that the school distributed in 2023 were to women. At MIT, 48 percent of undergraduates studying engineering were women. The same year at Yale, only 34.5 percent of junior and senior physical sciences and engineering majors were women.

Vincent Wilczynski, deputy dean of the School of Engineering & Applied Science, told the News that engineering faculty maintain a close relationship with admissions officers while admissions decisions are being made.

"Admissions clearly, clearly, clearly has its eye on this topic," he said regarding gender diversity.

Internally, too, Wilczynski said diversity and inclusion remain central priorities at the engineering school. He cited several professional organizations — including the Society of Women Engineers, the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers and the National Society of Black Engineers — which he said help create safe environments for engineering students who are part of underrepresented minorities.

Wilczynski said that the engineering school has many support systems in place, aimed at combating the "national and international problem" of gender inequity in STEM.

Though some engineering departments — such as biomedical and chemical engineering — have more female students — most departments in the engineering school are male-dominated.

For the electrical engineering and computer science combined major, for example, the class of 2025 has 10 men but only one woman in the major.

Rajit Manohar, the director of undergraduate studies for the electrical engineering component of the electrical engineering and computer science major, told the News that he thinks his area of study has an "image problem." He said he thinks this dissuades students of all genders from studying the discipline as he thinks that many students do not have an accurate understanding of what engineering is.

"I had a really interesting conversation with some folks at the art school and I said, you know, we are much more similar to you than you think," Manohar told the News. "Because engineering is about creativity. You're designing something new?"

Along with engineering, physics is also a disproportionately male major at Yale, with 46 declared junior and senior men and 13 women in the 2022-23 academic year.

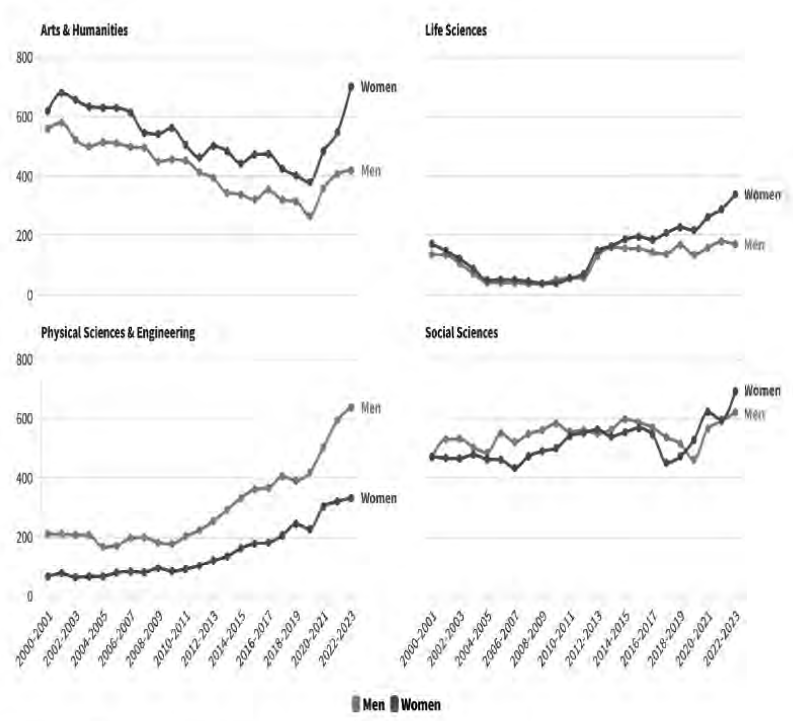
Sarah Demers, the director of undergraduate studies in physics, said that within the already male-dominated physics major, there are four introductory sequences, and the department has noticed many fewer women in the most advanced sequence.

"Physics is a subject that's traditionally seen as very challenging. It has that stereotype and that in some ways works against us in terms of people feeling like they don't belong if things start to get really hard," Demers told the News. "If people aren't open and communicating and they don't realize, 'oh, wait a second, this actually is pretty tough for everybody,' they might assume that they're the only one who's confused."

Demers penned an op-ed about gender bias in science in 2013. She wrote about a 2012 study that revealed that when science faculty members were shown identical applications for a lab manager position from men and women, they were more likely to see men as more competent and deserving of a higher salary.

The gender inequality in physics majors is echoed in an uneven faculty gender distribution, Demers said. Still, Demers added that she is hopeful about improvements that have been made in recent years.

"I believe the numbers are seven women out of 37 tenure track faculty members," Demers said. "Which is actually very good in the national context. If you go back 20 years ago, there was a period when there were one or two."



Source: Yale's Office of Institutional Research

PAM OGBEBOR AND ANIKA ARORA SETH

The share of women studying physical sciences and engineering disciplines at Yale lags behind peer institutions.

Demers told the News that her department is focusing not only on gender but also on other types of diversity, specifically citing race and ethnicity.

She said that diversity is important for reasons deeper than optics — that different perspectives and backgrounds can improve a work environment as well as the ideas and findings that come out of that space.

"It also is a benefit to the science," she said. "I mean, we're just not going to be doing as much physics or as good physics if we're restricting unnaturally who participates, right?"

These issues are central to "Being Human in STEM," a science course led by professors Rona Ramos GRD '10 and Benjamin Machta.

The course addresses topics of diversity and representation in STEM disciplines, seeking to study solutions to these stagnancies.

The bulk of the class focuses on

discussions of readings, including peer-reviewed papers on subjects such as stereotype threat — a phenomenon that finds that people tend to fall back on vocalized stereotypes of themselves in performing intellectual tasks.

"It's great that I get to hear the youth's perspective on this," Machta said. "It's quite a fun course."

As a final assignment, students aim to create and implement a project that will improve STEM culture at Yale.

Machta noted that the gender inequity problem is complex, and one without obvious reasoning.

"It's a problem of culture, really," Machta told the News. "And culture is slow to change."

Yale College first welcomed women in 1969.

Pam Ogbebor contributed reporting.

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FROM THE FRONT

"I can be changed by what happens to me. But I refuse to be reduced by it."

MAYA ANGELOU AMERICAN WRITER

Davenport Street daycare shuts down, leaves parents concerned

DAYCARE FROM PAGE 1

cerns about the consolidation of the daycare centers and the new YNHH-Bright Horizons partnership.

Turner reassured parents that YNHH's partnership does not indicate that the hospital is "selling our daycare and daycare services."

She also clarified that all teaching staff in good standing would be offered employment at the George Street daycare center. There would be no application and interview, she added — "simply a background check."

However, Turner announced that there would be limited capacity at the consolidated daycare location, meaning that not every family could be promised a spot.

Parents will be required to complete a "Needs Assessment Survey," which daycare administrators will use to determine which families will receive spots at the consolidated center. The survey will also be used to determine new hours of operation and tuition rates.

"No surprise to all of you, we had a pretty substantial subsidy in place up to this point," said Jodie Boldrighini, the vice president of human resources at YNHH. "We first need to understand the needs assessment and understand the volume of children and teachers at the center and do a market assessment of where rates are."

The News was able to acquire the survey from parents. Other than family information and demographics, the survey includes two questions. The first asks whether the children currently enrolled at the center are interested in staying, have plans to leave or would be graduating in the fall. The form then asks for "hours needed" from families. It does not include any questions or information about tuition rates.

The closure and re-assessment process has generated new frustration among parents at the center. Deborah Greig, an educator in New Haven who has two

children at the daycare, believes that the daycare consolidation process has broken old promises of a guaranteed spot until they reach the age for kindergarten.

She chose the YNHH Daycare Center in part because it is one of the few facilities that allows children to stay until they are 5 years old without switching locations, she said.

"It is something we intentionally looked for, we want them to feel comfortable at a place," said Greig.

Because her child is at a specific age threshold that some childcare systems do not support, the YNHH Daycare Center may be Greig's only option, she added.

"I was talking to some daycare places and they said 'He's 2 years and 7 months old in August, and he needs to be 2.8,'" Greig said. "So we just can't have a spot for him in our Pre-K because he doesn't make the cut off."

Meanwhile, public preschools are not an option for Greig's family because the cutoff is even higher, at 3 years of age. In addition,

most public preschools end at 3 p.m. and do not provide after-school care until she finishes her workday.

Another daycare parent, a YNHH medical staff administrator who requested anonymity from the News over concerns of employer retribution, described concerns over the consolidation's impact on her daughter's sense of emotional stability.

After moving to New Haven two years ago with her daughter, the employee tried other daycare locations where her daughter experienced "a lot of behavioral and emotional difficulties adjusting."

However, her child had a smooth transition to the Davenport location of the daycare, she said. The center was also conveniently located for her.

"I don't have to worry about finding a place that opens before I go to work," the employee said. "I don't have to worry about getting to work on time. The commute is just very seamless."

Her biggest fear is that her daughter will not be able to transition into a new environment.

"I am worried that she would relieve the emotional changes or behavior changes just due to the changes of people, routine, or how this other center may run their operations," she added.

The parents also expressed skepticism about the continued affordability of the daycare center.

One of the other parents of a child at the YNHH daycare center is an employee at a Bright Horizons center in Connecticut, she said.

However, because he couldn't afford Bright Horizons tuition, he opted to send his daughter to the cheaper YNHH center instead.

The current closest Bright Horizons daycare center is located at Yale West Campus at 230 West Campus Dr. in Orange.

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Yale New Haven Hospital announces new president



Katherine Heilpern takes the reins of the hospital amid YNHH's hospital acquisitions and parent discontent over daycare downsizing. / Marisa Peryer

BY ERIN HU
STAFF REPORTER

Amid its attempts to acquire three Prospect medical hospitals and recent backlash following its decision to shut down one of its daycare facilities, the Yale New Haven Health system announced last week that Katherine Heilpern would be the new president of Yale New Haven Hospital.

Heilpern is the former chief operating officer of the Weill Cornell Division at New York-Presbyterian Hospital and worked for 12 years as chair of the department of emergency medicine at Emory University School of Medicine. She will assume the position at Yale New Haven Hospital, the system's flagship facility, on March 11. On Tuesday, the YNHH system announced that it will promote Pamela Sutton-Wallace SPH '97, who previously served as interim president of YNHH, to president of the entire system.

"I've had leadership positions that have served on both sides of the academic healthcare coin," Heilpern said. "Having practiced emergency medicine for about 28 years, [this]

gives me the opportunity to really understand life at the frontline, and the care that's being delivered by the providers and how it feels on the side of patients and families."

Prior to Wallace's interim appointment in 2023, Keith Churchwell was president of the hospital. Before Churchwell, Richard D'Aquila served as both the president of the hospital and for the entire YNHH system for nearly 15 years.

For Arjun Venkatesh, chair of emergency medicine at the hospital, Heilpern's appointment represents an important transition in YNHH's leadership. Heilpern will be one of the few women running a hospital of YNHH's size — the hospital is one of the largest in the United States.

"There are not many women who lead hospitals among that top 10 or 20 list," Venkatesh said, referring to specifically large hospitals.

Heilpern will assume the role amid many ongoing developments at YNHH. Last week, the News reported on parents' disapproval of YNHH's plans to close one of its daycare locations in order to cut costs.

Last fall, the YNHH system signed a preliminary agreement to acquire

three hospitals from Prospect Medical Holdings — Manchester Memorial, Rockville General and Waterbury Health, which has prompted concerns about the system's expansion, as the Connecticut healthcare giant's expanding reach could decrease competition and increase patient costs. Amid such concerns, the deal has stalled.

Heilpern said that she is unaware of the charged response to the daycare closures and regards the acquisitions as beyond her role as YNHH president.

Nevertheless, many YNHH officers expressed optimism about Heilpern and her new position. According to Venkatesh, many medical workers believe Heilpern's history as an emergency physician will bring an important perspective.

Venkatesh noted that many hospital presidents do not have a clinical background. However, he said that physician presidents could offer a more well-rounded perspective when determining how to best serve patients.

"I believe that physician-literate leaders can bring their clinical experience and lens of

taking care of patients to [the] business leadership and organizational leadership skills you need to be ... president of the hospital," Venkatesh said.

Alan Friedman, the chief medical officer at YNHH, works closely alongside Ena Williams, the chief nursing officer at YNHH, and the president to improve patient care. For Friedman, the new YNHH president's background could enhance patients' experiences.

"Having a president who is so clinically attuned to the day-to-day operations in the critical need to provide high quality, safe care to each and every patient in the most equitable ways, is what we seek to do," Friedman said.

Venkatesh also specifically highlighted that Heilpern's perspective as a physician could help the hospital solve overcrowded hospitals. Her experience in emergency medicine may also help her tackle the wide range of issues in the healthcare system.

"If you look anywhere in the news today, you'll see hospitals crumbling," Venkatesh said. "Having a president who has experi-

ence, with the full lens of hospitals and how they operate, and experience working in those kinds of capacity issues is good for both the hospital and the community."

In an interview with the News, Heilpern said that her goal is to deliver more accessible and convenient care to patients, especially to develop an efficient care continuum — from a pre-hospital setting, to the hospital and back home again.

Heilpern also described her goal to deliver quality care through, "the force multiplier," a collaboration between the School of Medicine, the School of Public Health and the School of Nursing.

"There aren't too many places in the country, for that matter, in the world, that can pull together the talent that exists in the system, and in the schools," Heilpern said.

Yale New Haven Hospital employs over 5000 medical personnel and almost 15,000 staff members.

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ARTS

"If there's a book that you want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it."
MAYA ANGELOU AMERICAN NOVELIST

Whiffenpoofs and Whim 'n Rhythm tap 2025 classes



COURTESY OF WHIFFENPOOFS AND WHIM 'N RHYTHM

The two all-senior a cappella groups announced their new taps this week.

BY CODY SKINNER
STAFF REPORTER

Hundreds flocked to Instagram earlier this week to extend their congratulations to the freshly announced tap classes of the Whiffenpoofs and Whim 'n Rhythm. The two senior a cappella groups made their tap announcements this past Monday and Tuesday, respectively.

New members come from a variety of singing backgrounds, and many have been involved in non-senior a cappella and music groups, including The Alley Cats, The Baker's Dozen, Cadence of Yale, Yale Glee Club, Magevet, Marquand Chapel Choir, Mixed Company, The New Blue, Yale Repertory Chorus, Something Extra and the student band Sel-dom Street, which is signed to 1701 Records. The Whiffs announced 14 new taps and Whim announced 11.

The members of the Whiffenpoofs class of 2025, who will be required to take gap years to tour and record an album, are Pilar Bylinsky '25, Yara Chami '25, John Colbert '25, Joey Cumpian '25, Krishna Davis '25, Sophie Dvorak '25, Caroline Fai '25, Jason Han '25, Charlie Karner '25, Rory Latham '25, Adam McPhail '25 — a Science & Technology editor at the News — and Noah Stein '25. Josh Bock '25 was tapped as the business manager and Logan Foy '25 is the

incoming musical director. They will now all join the class of 2026.

"This was a [one-time] audition, which eliminated the long game of waiting to hear back," Dvorak wrote to the News about the Whiffs' audition process. "We had to prepare an excerpt from a quartet as well as a solo in the Whiffenpoof rep, as well as an individual solo. Once in the audition, there were some ear training exercises and we were taught an additional quartet in real time."

In 2018, both the Whiffs and Whim started tapping members of all genders. Whiffs was originally all-male, and Whim originally all-female.

Bylinsky expressed her desire for increased participation of women and non-binary individuals in the Whiffenpoofs, commenting that "[the] Whiffs just recently shifted from being all-male, so [she's] excited about being in the early cohort of women joining the group."

"The Whiffs exist in this sort of threshold space, upheld by a long commitment to tradition while also incorporating new/modern genres of music and styles of performance," Dvorak said. "My hope is that, as the Whiffs become more diverse, the organization and alumni not only accommodate that diversity, but embrace it."

The reveal of the Whiffenpoofs' new class followed the release of the class of 2023's album — "Magical Thinking" — which was released to

all streaming services on Feb. 9, 2024.

The album "goes a few layers deep," according to 2023 Whiffs class member Adrien Rolet '24. The name has a triple-meaning, referring to the album's musical theme, a Joan Didion book and a 2023 Whiffs inside joke — a "company secret, sorry!" Rolet said.

Rolet revealed that it has been an unofficial tradition that each Whiffs album title is a reference to a story or joke from that year.

The Whim 'n Rhythm 2025 tap class includes Karen Ayoub '25, Marie Bong '25, Hajin Kim '25, Michelle Luh '25, Julia Mangual '25, Meridian Monthy '25, Bella Osgood '25, Ivana Ramirez '25 and Raina Sparks '25. Violet Barnum '25 was tapped as the group's musical director and Sarah Shapiro '25 will become Whim business manager.

Whim 'n Rhythm members tour during the winter and spring of their senior year, as well as in the summer following their commencement, allowing members to continue their education while also being part of the group.

"Whim has fluctuated in size and structure a bit more than the Whiffs since its founding," said current Whim member Adia Keene '24. The group began with seven singers in 1981, but that number has fluctuated between 11 and 14 members. The new Whim class's 11 members, all women and non-binary identifying students

this year, are fewer than the 13 members of the previous year's cohort.

Unlike the audition processes for underclass a cappella groups, which often take an entire month, the Whim process only lasted one day in February, following a short social event earlier in the month for interested students to get to know current members better.

"We prepared a section from one of Whim's arrangements in our vocal part of choice, sang vocal warm-ups, completed an ear training exercise and performed a snippet of a solo song of our choice," said Shapiro.

At the end of auditions, new taps spoke about being asked questions — such as, "Why do you want to be in Whim?" and "How do you handle conflict?" — emphasizing the importance of group chemistry in the selection process.

When asked what attracted her to Whim, Barnum spoke about her interest in the pitch, or musical director, position. She had been involved with a number of singing groups before but had never had the chance to musically-direct one. After hearing Isabella Zou '23 — a past Whim 'n Rhythm member — speak positively about her experience pitching Whim, Barnum found herself wanting to try her own hand at the position.

Whim is an SSAA choir, meaning that it consists of two distinct

soprano and two alto sections, as opposed to the Whiffenpoofs — a TTBB choir comprising two tenor and two bass sections.

Since 2018, both the Whiffs and Whim have welcomed members of all genders. However, in 2022, the Yale Singing Group Council implemented a uniform policy requiring that all a cappella groups consider rushees of all genders, regardless of the often-gendered vocal range labels.

New taps of both The Whiffenpoofs and Whim 'n Rhythm expressed their excitement about connecting with their tap classes, several stating satisfaction that both senior a cappella groups are able to bring together students from all different musical backgrounds.

Ramirez highlighted looking forward to the yearly Library Jam event where the new Whiffs and Whim taps perform their first group performances together in Sterling Memorial Library.

The date for this event, as well as the official calendars for the 2025 Whiffs and Whim tours, have yet to be released.

The Whiffenpoofs and Whim 'n Rhythm — along with the Society of Orpheus and Bacchus — are the only three groups that have weekly engagements at Mory's Temple Bar.

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JESSAI FLORES '23

Puzzle by Ariana Borut

ACROSS

- Taylor Swift's ___ Tour
- Blast of wind
- ___ 500
- Monthly expense
- Midshipmen's sch.
- Sleep soundly?
- ___-Seltzer
- Not far
- Diminutive suffixes
- *Shakers on restaurant tables
- Fencing swords
- Mythical creature in the Starbucks logo
- *Firehouse canine
- Hush-hush org.
- English Channel port town
- Compete in the America's Cup
- Pie ___ mode
- Alpaca relative
- The Spanans of the N.C.A.A.
- Fruit filled pastry
- More than sufficient
- Hummel's center
- *"Star Wars" soldier
- Can's eldest son
- Sunset direction
- Cookie that originated in New York... or what 19-, 25- and 45-Across all are
- San Andreas ___
- Mine, in Marseille
- "Bring ___"
- (fighting words)
- ___ski
- Time to give up?
- Performs like Kendrick Lamar or Travis Scott
- Nimble for one's age
- Grandson of Adam and Eve
- Online market craft site

DOWN

- Use the pink end of a pencil
- Pass again on the track
- Commonly sprained joint
- Declared
- Film of "Project Runway"
- Pre-owned
- Rice Krispies sound
- Zero, as a scale
- Summer office workers
- The Hunchback of ___
- Beats by ___ (headphones brand)
- Magi & Ball response
- Vintage photo tint
- 20 Star!
- Triquetrum-shaped Greek letter
- Boisterous
- Chuckle in textspeak
- Grimacing leath Texas landmark to "remember"
- Musical speed
- Elmer's product
- D.C. MLB team
- List of candidates
- Leslie Odom Jr.'s role in "Hamilton"
- Swiss peak
- *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood transport
- Cry of pain
- Exams for future docs
- Active ingredient in marijuana, for short
- Bring back on staff
- Occupy, as a table
- Sporty car roofs
- Wee
- Chewy leafy green
- Prayer ending
- Taboo
- Short bursts in Morse code
- Followers of ms. musically
- Smartphone download

Check back next week for the solutions.

NEWS

"To me, we are the most beautiful creatures in the whole world. Black people. And I mean that in every sense." NINA SIMONE

AMERICAN SINGER, SONGWRITER, CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST

Hamden Town Council hears testimony on ceasefire resolution

BY ARIELA LOPEZ AND YURII STASIUK
STAFF REPORTERS

HAMDEN – Hundreds gathered at the Hamden Town Hall on Tuesday evening for a four-hour public hearing on a proposed Gaza ceasefire resolution.

The resolution, drafted by councilmember and Connecticut Democratic Socialists of America member Abdul Osmanu, calls for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, affirms the town's commitment to combating anti-Palestinian and anti-Arab racism, antisemitism and Islamophobia and asks for the town to make sure that its investments and bonds do not support war, directly or indirectly.

At the meeting, nearly 100 residents of Hamden and surrounding towns testified to support or oppose the resolution in person and on the council's Zoom broadcast. At 12:21 a.m. on Wednesday, Council President Dominique Baez '12 called for a recess, and the Council left without voting.

"Have no clue when the vote will happen but there will in all likelihood be some sort of conversation, maybe within the purview of council or outside of it before the vote and I'm hoping for that to be as public and transparent as possible," Osmanu wrote to the News after the hearing.

Pro-Palestine activists across the U.S. have moved to pressure local governments to call for a ceasefire in Gaza following Israel's military retaliation to Hamas's surprise attack on Oct. 7. Already, around 70 cities have passed similar resolutions. In November, a similar resolution was introduced to New Haven's Board of Alders but has not yet been moved to committee.

On Tuesday, hundreds filled all the seats on the ground level and half of the seats on the balcony of the chamber to join a public hearing on the resolution. Many wore keffiyehs or kippahs and held up Palestinian and Israeli flags. Signs supporting or opposing the resolution flanked the room's walls, chairs and balcony.

Pro-resolution supporters were led by Connecticut Democratic Socialists of America — or CT DSA — and Jewish Voices for Peace, both of which were involved in organizing a protest before the meeting and called on residents to testify. Throughout most of the meeting, two CT DSA members stood behind Osmanu with the organization's flag. Many attendees wore shirts saying "Jews for ceasefire."

The supporters emphasized the war's casualties — Israel has killed over 29,000 people in Gaza so far — with several showing pictures to the Council or sharing their own families' stories. They encouraged the councilmembers to send a message to federal and state officials by passing a resolution in support of saving lives.

"I urge you to do the right thing," Tom Fortuna, who testified in sup-

port of the resolution, said. "Half of you can vote for it because you believe in it, and half of you can vote for it because you don't think it's going to do anything anyway?"

Organizations including the Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven and Yale Forum for Jewish Faculty and Friends called those who opposed the resolution to testify and shared an online petition against it, which has been signed by more than 800 people as of Wednesday evening. Many opponents of the resolution wore blue ribbons on Tuesday, and carried signs saying "Nothing about us without us" and "Don't divide Hamden."

Anti-resolution activists called out the fact that the resolution does not once mention Hamas. Several also took issue with the resolution's invocation of the memory of the Holocaust.

The resolution asks that the town "takes seriously the entreaty of 'Never Again,' and that the historical memory of the Holocaust means fighting ethnic cleansing and apartheid everywhere."

Many of the speakers opposing the resolution mentioned their personal generational ties to the Holocaust. Endre Sarkany, a New Haven resident who survived the Holocaust, testified early in the meeting.

"This is totally misrepresenting what the Holocaust was all about," Sarkany said. "Never again just happened again," he said, referring to the Oct. 7 attacks, in which Hamas killed 1,200 people in Israel and took around 250 people as hostages.

Many who spoke in opposition

to the resolution also said that foreign policy issues are not the jurisdiction of local councils, whose members were elected not to be voices in international affairs but to "govern Hamden," as one member of the public said.

Not all who testified in the chamber were Hamden residents. Some said they worked in Hamden or had lived there in the past, and others came from New Haven and other neighboring cities for the hearing.

A roughly equal number of people spoke for and against the proposed resolution. After most testimonies, some in the crowd loudly cheered and clapped. Occasionally, both pro- and anti-resolution groups booed the opposing side.

The meeting's public input section closed at 12:22 a.m. By that time, most members of the public had left the chamber.

After Baez called a recess, Osmanu addressed the room to clarify "misconceptions" about his process of drafting the resolution. He said that constituents had called him for months about the issue and that he had listened to them and workshopped the resolution with several "folks from the community."

Osmanu wrote to the News that he hopes Tuesday's hearings will further meaningful dialogue between members of the community.

The meeting was held at 2372 Whitney Ave.

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YURII STASIUK, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Residents in support of the resolution urged the council to stand up for global human rights, while opponents condemned the "divisive" resolution's invocation of the Holocaust. No vote was held on the resolution.

Frank Redente's path from gang member to alder and activist

BY YURII STASIUK
STAFF REPORTER

In his teenage years, Frank Redente started dealing drugs with a gang in Fair Haven. Looking back, he says he could not imagine that one day he would become a politician.

But after a "turnaround" in his life, his career in New Haven Public Schools, and community activism, Redente became the only challenger to oust an incumbent alder in New Haven in the 2023 election.

Redente said he is led by childhood traumas and strives to help those who go through hard times like he once did. In his work as an alder, he said he hopes to address gun violence and drug use in New Haven, support its youth and bring infrastructure investments into Fair Haven, the heavily Latine neighborhood he believes was overlooked for a long time.

"I never thought I'd be a politician. An alder? Me? Never," Redente said. "I feel like I switched universes. I like to fight for the marginalized groups."

A Fair Haven upbringing

Redente is the son of Frank Redente, Sr., who ran Farnam Neighborhood House, a local club and gymnasium that was popular among Fair Haven youth.

Redente Jr. did not like staying in Farnam House. There, he was "Frank's kid," which he said put extra social pressure on him. He knew he was queer from an early age and living in a household where it was not safe to come out, he said he gravitated to the streets "to prove what a man [he] was."

"Right around eighth grade, going into high school, I got involved with dealing drugs and gangs," Redente said. "I wasn't necessarily part of the solution around here, [but] very much a part of a problem."

He said that as a kid he was also bullied. His trauma, he said, led him to bad choices. His trauma, however, also guided his later work.

Jimmy Flynn, a childhood friend, told the News that he knew Redente was going through personal problems but never knew much in detail. In 1992, Flynn was incarcerated but kept in touch with Redente. He was surprised when he learned Redente was getting into "a little trouble."

Redente said that when he was around 18 years old, many of his friends were in prison. Redente got lucky, he said, and was not charged with serious crimes. Redente then got a part-time job at Fair Haven School, where he would spend the next 30 years of his life, starting as

a security guard and becoming an outreach worker for the entire Fair Haven district.

Thirty years in New Haven Public Schools

"I never thought in a million years I would work at a school with kids," Redente said. "But right away, when I started working in the school, people noticed that I was good at what I was doing as far as building relationships with the students."

Redente said he believes that as a result of his childhood trauma, he tries his best to understand students who misbehave and help them out.

Redente was transferred to Edgewood Magnet School, where after two years as a security guard, he was promoted to a truant officer. In this role, he reached out to students with continued absences to bring them to school, connect them with mental health services and provide any other support needed.

"He turned his life around. [It's] a lot of people's aspiration, but this guy is actually doing it," Flynn said.

Redente then moved back to Fair Haven School and became a youth development coordinator. In this position, he supports families and students in need. Oftentimes, he said, this means getting outside of school walls, "on the streets."

In public schools, he said he deals with children who suffer from trauma like he did. Many students, he said, are impacted by the violence in the community and come from poor families. Kids rely on him, Redente said, and that is what keeps him motivated to do his work.

A year ago, Redente also became an official street outreach worker in Fair Haven, working with children at risk in all Fair Haven schools.

Outside of school, Redente also worked with kids coaching basketball, which he said he sees as a tool to keep children "off the streets."

Over the years of work with children in New Haven, he lost many of them. On his arm, Redente has over 50 names tattooed — all teenagers and youth he knew who died prematurely, some because of cancer or asthma, but most because of gun violence. This week, he added a couple of fresh names on his shoulder.

"I've had to console too many mothers and grandmothers who have lost their kids," Redente said.

On the campaign trail

In New Haven, incumbents rarely lose elections. Redente is the first candidate to unseat an incumbent alder since 2015, and those challeng-

ers were supported by Yale's politically powerful UNITE HERE unions.

In this year's Ward 15 election, incumbent Ernie Santiago, who had been an alderman for 12 years, ran for reelection with endorsements from Mayor Justin Elicker, Rep. Rosa DeLauro and the influential Local 34 - UNITE HERE union.

Redente recalled that he first thought of running when his neighbor built an illegal car business in his backyard, which constantly emitted noise. After talking with many officials, he said, he was able to get the city to file a cease-and-desist order. Getting "the wheels of justice moving in this city" motivated him, but nowhere in this process did his then-alder Santiago respond to these issues, according to Redente.

"My neighborhood was deteriorating," Redente said. "Nobody else was stepping up year after year. This guy was just handed the alder position because nobody ran against him."

Santiago did not respond to a request for comment. In an interview with New Haven Independent last summer, after he failed to secure the endorsement of the Democratic Town Committee, Santiago said that "communications broke down between [him] and [his] constituents." He attributed it to his busy schedule serving on multiple city boards and alder committees.

Another Fair Haven Alder, Sarah Miller '03, told the News that Ward 15, which borders her own Ward 14, had not had an active representation for years, and a lot of people had been complaining to her about Santiago's unresponsiveness.

When she learned that Redente, whom she knew was a person ready to work, she publicly supported him and helped him with his campaign.

Both Miller and Flynn said that everyone in the neighborhood knew Redente. Miller recalled that when she was canvassing for his campaign and got turned away at one door, she showed Redente's campaign handout with his picture, and it changed the attitude of that resident.

Part of his local fame is because of his father's work, Redente said. Another part is his active outreach work in the community and work with children in Fair Haven public schools, according to Miller.

Flynn, who got out of prison through a community service program last May and now works with New Haven Rising, told the News that Redente supported him throughout the whole process of reentry. Flynn,



YURII STASIUK, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Redente, a 30-year employee in New Haven Public Schools, became the first challenger to oust an incumbent alder since 2015 last fall.

seeing how Redente helped him and others in the community, decided to support his campaign.

"He believes in his community, he's invested in his community," Flynn said. According to him, Redente started taking calls and requests from the community even before he got elected.

Redente gathered a group of Fair Haven residents with whom he said he knocked on over a thousand doors in his neighborhood, another explanation for electoral success. According to Redente, he was proud to increase the voter turnout in a neighborhood that usually votes the least in New Haven.

Last year, on Sept. 12, Redente won 64 percent of the ward's votes in the Democratic primary, becoming the party's nominee. During the general election, he ran unopposed and was inaugurated into the position along with 29 colleagues in January.

Two months in an aldermanic chamber

Although Redente defeated an opponent whom many of his current colleagues had endorsed, he said that they warmly welcomed him, and he had "great" conversations with the Mayor and other alders.

"Politics is really new to him, and what I've appreciated is that he asked a lot of questions, and he's really trying to learn the ropes," Miller said.

In a new seat, Redente cooperates closely with Miller and another newcomer from Fair Haven, Alder Caroline Tanbee Smith '14. The three are now building up a community management team to address Fair Haven's issues.

Redente sits on the Community

Development, Education and Youth & Youth Services committees and said he was excited to recently vote on approving the creation of 150 affordable housing units during his first committee meeting in early February.

While in office, he also wants to address gun violence and drug use, he said. Redente said that he first wants to facilitate the agreement on "a fair" police union contract. Over-policing is not good, he said, but he wants to see "well-trained, culturally competent police officers with secure jobs, which don't make them stressed out." Addressing shortages in the force will help police officers build stronger relationships with communities, he believes.

"I'm a former gang member," Redente said. "I've never in a million years thought I would advocate for the police."

Another priority for him is bringing infrastructure investments to Fair Haven, starting with fixing sidewalks, many of which have not been renewed in decades. "Broken windows," underdeveloped infrastructure in his neighborhood, bring crime and violence, he said, and he wants to fix it.

So far, he has also recruited Manuel Camacho, a student at Southern Connecticut State University, to serve as a co-chair for Ward 15 and join Redente's team.

"He told everyone and was very honest about it: 'I don't like politics. The reason I am doing this is because I care about people,'" Camacho said of Redente. "That's the type of people we should elect."

The next alder elections will be held in 2025.

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NEWS

"All literature is protest."
RICHARD WRIGHT, AMERICAN AUTHOR

PROFILE: Ellen Cupo's fight for New Haveners, from Yale to City Hall

ETHAN WOLIN
STAFF REPORTER

At 6:01 p.m. three Tuesdays ago, after checking in with the colleagues beside her, Ellen Cupo gavelled in the first 2024 meeting of the Board of Alders Legislation Committee. There were just a handful of onlookers, mostly local officials — a far cry from the night before, when pro-Palestine protesters disrupted a mayoral address. In the quiet after the storm, city business plodded on.

That was only the beginning of Cupo's week. Wednesday brought another aldermanic committee meeting and Thursday a Zoom conference about the replacement of a Christopher Columbus statue that once stood in her neighborhood. On Friday, Cupo took her two young children to her in-laws so she and her husband could get up on Saturday to canvass for Democratic Town Committee members.

"A lot of my friends who don't live in New Haven, who don't do the work with me — the constant refrain is, 'Ellen, why are you doing more? Like, do less,'" she told the News. Her answer? "I'm doing what I want to do."

For Cupo, representing the 4,300-odd residents of Ward 8 in New Haven's version of a city council is a side gig, even if it feels at times like a full-time job. During the day, she works at Yale as the assistant to the chair of the Program in Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, supporting Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Studies as well.

But perhaps her deepest passion — where her day job, her political advocacy and her family history converge — is Local 34-UNITE HERE, the union of Yale's clerical and technical workers, for which she serves as a volunteer organizer and an executive board member. Although Cupo speaks of separating her life's strands into different "silos," a common posture unites them.

"She has an incredible sense of justice, gets really mad when things don't seem just," Ian Dunn, Cupo's husband and the communications director for Local 34, said. "She gets incredibly passionate when the contract is violated or when workers aren't getting a fair deal."

Injustice may anger Cupo, and bureaucracy may busy her, but she is almost always cheerful, freely doling out kind words. The ten people interviewed for this article — family, constituents, Yale colleagues and local politicians — also repeatedly mentioned her attention to detail, her warmth toward other people and her jam-packed schedule. "She's a force of nature," Maureen Gardner, the WGSS registrar, said.

Cupo has spent all but four of her 35 years in New Haven and now finds herself at the nexus of the city's relationship with Yale, its biggest employer. Sworn in last month for her third term as an alder, she embodies the dominance of Yale's unions in city politics, which some New Haveners have criticized as privileging Yale issues, and what happens when activists take over the government.

Charlotte Eliscu, a onetime coworker at a communications firm whom Cupo likened to an

older sister, said Cupo draws inspiration from a desire to keep the city hospitable for future generations of locals.

"New Haven is really lucky to have Ellen. And I think that Ellen is also really lucky to live in New Haven," Eliscu said. "She wants to make it better, and she wants to make sure that her children can have the same experience."

Raising kids, representing neighbors

On Nov. 5, 2019, Ellen Cupo gave birth to her first child, Hunter, while coasting to victory in her uncontested alder election.

The idea of running for the Board of Alders had come from Aaron Greenberg GRD '19, who had stepped down from the Ward 8 seat earlier that year and whose replacement was not seeking a full term. So Cupo spent the summer politicking in the city as her pregnancy progressed, pitching a platform of housing affordability, jobs and what she called "developments built in the character of our neighborhood."

"I felt like I could do anything," she said. "I felt strong. I felt brave."

But just over two months after her inauguration, COVID-19 sent Board meetings to Zoom, leaving Cupo to legislate virtually with 29 other alders she barely knew.

Then, in June 2020, amid a nationwide movement for racial justice, the city took down the Christopher Columbus statue that stood in Wooster Square Park, at the center of Cupo's historically Italian neighborhood, provoking protests. A special committee that Cupo sits on approved a new statue depicting an Italian immigrant family, which is set to be unveiled in June, she said.

Her paternal great-grandparents were among the Italian immigrants to New Haven, but Cupo only moved to Wooster Square in 2015. After she and Dunn got engaged in 2018, the two moved into the two-bedroom second floor of a house less than a block from Frank Pepe Pizzeria, with a backyard where the children can play. The couple pays \$1,400 a month in rent, Cupo said, to a landlord with whom they are friends.

"He could easily charge market rate for our house, and we wouldn't be able to live there anymore," Dunn said. "It's a question of, is this a city for us?"

Ward 8 extends beyond Wooster Square to parts of the Mill River district, Fair Haven and the Annex, and so does its alder's advocacy. In 2022, pregnant with her daughter Ada, Cupo helped rally resistance to a proposed strip club near Jocelyn Square.

Owing largely to time off after Ada's birth, Cupo's attendance rate at full Board of Alders meetings dipped below 60 percent across 2022. She missed six consecutive full Board meetings last winter, absences which she told the New Haven Independent were a result of sickness in her family.

"We missed her when she was on maternity leave, and we're really glad she's back," Sarah Greenblatt, the president of the Historic Wooster Square Association, told the News.

After two uncontested elections, Cupo faced her first challenge last year, from



ETHAN WOLIN / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Ellen Cupo serves on the Board of Alders, works at Yale, organizes for her union and is raising two young children. It all amounts to a campaign for the future of her hometown.

Andrea DiLieto Zola, a Democrat-turned-Republican and local business owner. Cupo said she took the race seriously, although, in an overwhelmingly Democratic city, it posed little threat.

Cupo trounced Zola, 410 votes to 72 — but not before a contentious debate in which Cupo criticized Zola's Republican affiliation and Zola hit back at Cupo's union allegiance. When the two candidates were asked to compliment each other, Zola drew gasps for focusing on Cupo's absences during maternity leave.

"Being a woman who's working as a mom, no matter what political party you're representing, isn't an easy job at the end of the day, and we're constantly working," Zola reiterated in a recent interview with the News.

Joining the family union

Before she was a mother, Ellen Cupo was a child of Local 34.

Her mother, a medical research assistant, and her father, who worked in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, met while organizing the union in the early 1980s. By 1988, when Cupo's mother was helping negotiate Local 34's second contract, she was pregnant with Ellen.

"Growing up, I knew what it took to win the union, and the difference it made for working-class folks in the city," Cupo said.

The family lived in Fair Haven. As she attended both Wilbur Cross High School and the Educational Center for the Arts, Cupo said she noticed that most of her friends' parents did not own their homes as hers did.

One time in high school, Cupo and a friend were sitting on Cross Campus when a Yale security officer kicked them out. "I knew I didn't belong on Yale's campus," Cupo said.

In the years after graduating from New York University with a degree in communications and a load of student debt that brought

her back to live at home, Cupo applied to 12 jobs at Yale but did not get interviews, she said. That changed in 2015, thanks to the job placement program New Haven Works recently launched by the Board of Alders.

Almost as soon as she landed her first Yale job, Cupo joined efforts to push the University to hire more New Haveners. She was arrested at a protest blocking traffic outside Yale-New Haven Hospital. Two years later, she got to know Dunn as they spent time on Beinecke Plaza with graduate students, including Greenberg, who were on a hunger strike for union recognition.

Cupo's first labor fight as an organizer came in 2018, when she supported a Divinity School employee who had been mistreated by an overbearing boss, according to Cupo. She recalled a meeting in which a group of colleagues, including ones preferred by the supervisor, joined the aggrieved union member, sitting across a table from higher-ups.

"That was the fight through which I learned how to organize," Cupo said. "That was also the point that I was like, okay, I'm doing something important and I'm doing something good for people."

Nowadays, Cupo works tucked away in the cozy WGSS third-floor hallway in William L. Harkness Hall, next to the lawn from which she once was removed. As assistant to department chair Roderick Ferguson, she handles a variety of administrative tasks, from awards and fellowships to faculty searches. During work hours, Cupo said, she ignores calls and emails about city business and typically limits union organizing to lunchtime and her two 15-minute breaks.

"You can have a department, or an administrative staff, that just wants to push paper, but they're not really into the intellectual mission of the department," Ferguson said. But not Cupo. Ferguson said that she shares an interest in "promoting equality, promoting social justice, diversity."

In late November, Cupo was one of three administrative employees to sign an open letter defending students who had been targeted by a so-called doxxing truck amid campus tensions about the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza. One of the truck's targets, a graduate student who works with Cupo and who asked to remain anonymous due to fear of further targeting, told the News that Cupo's signature touched them.

Fighting for change in the long run

Cupo got off work at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 6. There was no time to get home for a shower and a bite to eat, so she stopped at Burger King before heading to City Hall to preside over the Legislation Committee for the first time this year.

The committee's work spans a variety of policy areas, but this meeting had only one item: a measure to exempt certain city officials from the requirement to live inside New Haven. Cupo, who has chaired the committee since September 2022, called on each speaker as the

six alders reviewed the proposed text and questioned mayoral appointees.

"Regardless of what's going on, she's always upbeat, she's always prepared," Ward 27 Alder Richard Furlow, a committee member, said in an interview. "I think that's what makes her so easy to work with."

But formal protocols are not second nature to Cupo. Several times during the meeting, Furlow, the Board's majority leader, whispered to her some procedural reminder. Because of her job, Cupo said, she attends fewer ribbon cuttings and press conferences than the stereotypical local politician. She prefers meeting constituents at regular "office hours" at a neighborhood coffee shop.

On Monday, Feb. 5, Cupo and some colleagues had the official duty of escorting Mayor Justin Elicker into the Aldermanic Chambers for his State of the City speech. When pro-Palestine protestors halted Elicker's speech by shouting for a Gaza ceasefire resolution, Cupo said she watched with mixed feelings: sadness and fear, sympathy for the activists' cause yet qualms about their relentlessness.

When it comes to demanding action from those in power, Cupo said, "I have more often been on the other side." She said she returned home that night moved by the protesters' anguish. Yet she has not decided where she stands on the resolution, given her constituents' varying views.

"I focus my efforts in New Haven specifically, right, because this is where I can make change," she said.

As a means of making local change, the New Haven Board of Alders moves slowly, but also just as fast as some members' busy lives can sustain. Cupo described reading reams of official documents in the evenings, and fielding daily questions and complaints from constituents about everything from speeding cars on Chapel Street to indecent images posted outside a strip club.

Alders tend not to propose policy initiatives of their own but rather vote on proposals that come before them, sometimes after making amendments. The vast majority of votes are unanimous. Cupo said she has no aspirations for higher office but plans to keep running for her alder seat as long as she can fight for New Haveners' housing and jobs and for Yale to give the city more money.

In other words, she sees the long run. When Cupo meets a new member of Local 34, among her first questions is, "What do you want to win in our next contract?" she said. "Everything that we have — paid time off, overtime, all of our benefits — are only because there have been people over the last 40 years who have fought like hell to get them and then to keep them."

Cupo would know. Her parents, now retired, receive pensions on par with the salaries they earned while working. When Cupo and Dunn need help, they look after Hunter and Ada.

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COURTESY OF ELLEN CUPO

Cupo protests in 2016 during negotiations for a Local 34 contract.

SPORTS

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"In the moment I didn't realize I had the game winning goal because I was so focused on what we accomplished as a team. After realizing it though, it feels good, but it was a total team effort on both ends,"

SKY CARRASQUILLO '25, YALE WOMEN'S LACROSSE MIDFIELDER

W LACROSSE: Yale secures last-second victory in home opener against Stanford

BY COLETTE STAADECKER
STAFF REPORTER

In their season opener at Reese Stadium, the Yale women's lacrosse team (1-0, 0-0 Ivy) secured a thrilling 13-12 victory over Stanford University (1-2, 0-0 ACC) this past Saturday.

Right from the start, the matchup between the Bulldogs and the Cardinals promised to be a tight game.

The two teams traded goals throughout the first half, with the score tied on seven occasions before Stanford took an 8-7 lead into halftime.

The game saw contributions from various players, including goals from Jenna Collignon '25, Taylor Everson '25, Taylor Lane '25 and Sky Carrasquillo '25, showcasing Yale's diverse offensive strengths. Everson, returning from a lacrosse-related kidney injury, rejoined the team for her first game since Feb. 25, 2023.

"The personal highlight of my weekend was stepping out again in my Yale jersey for the first time in almost a year," Taylor Everson '25 wrote to the News. "It felt so good to be back on the

field with my teammates and competing in a real game again."

Facing a three-point deficit with just over 14 minutes remaining, Yale rallied and out-scored Stanford 4-0 in the final stretch.

Yale's defense played a crucial role in the outcome of the game, causing turnovers that limited Stanford's scoring opportunities. Katie Claire '27, Molly McGuckin '25 and Bella Saviano '26 were key in stifling the Cardinal's offense, keeping the Bulldogs in contention until the end.

Despite trailing six times, the Bulldogs displayed remarkable resilience, with Carrasquillo clinching the win with a game-winning goal just 3:53 before the final whistle.

"In the moment I didn't realize I had the game winning goal because I was so focused on what we accomplished as a team," Carrasquillo wrote to the News. "After realizing it though, it feels good, but it was a total team effort on both ends!"

Carrasquillo, Collignon and Chloe Conaghan '24 each secured hat tricks in the Saturday game, while Everson,



YALE ATHLETICS

The women's lacrosse team secured an exhilarating victory against Stanford, a thrilling start their 2024 season.

Lane, Katie Claire '27 and Fallon Vaughn '25 had one each.

Last time Yale and Stanford faced off was Apr. 1, 2017 at Reese Stadium, in which the Bulldogs beat the Cardinals 15-12.

The Bulldogs brought back the same excitement to Reese Stadium seven years later with their last-second win this past weekend.

Looking ahead, the Bulldogs

will travel to Philadelphia to take on Temple University at noon on Saturday.

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M BASKETBALL: After Princeton speedbump, Yale must hit the accelerator vs Cornell

BY BEN RAAB
STAFF REPORTER

Yale's high-gear Ivy League campaign hit a speedbump with Saturday's loss to Princeton, snapping a ten-game winning streak and falling one win short of a new school record.

With the number one seed back up for grabs this Friday against Cornell (19-4, 8-1 Ivy), the Bulldogs (17-7, 8-1 Ivy) must hit the accelerator once more.

"We still have an opportunity to win a championship, we still have an opportunity to get the number one seed," head coach James Jones told the News after the loss. "We were gonna have to win the rest of our games anyways, so let's go out and do that now!"

With five games remaining in conference play, Yale and Cornell sit atop the Ivy League standings at 8-1 each, while Princeton (19-4, 7-2 Ivy) is one game back. If the Elis defeat the Big Red on Friday, they'll have total control over first place and be in prime position to land the first seed at the four-team Ivy tournament in March.

The number one seed is especially desirable in this season's Ivy League landscape, where three teams — Yale, Cornell and Princeton — rank far above the remaining five. As the first seed, the Bulldogs would likely face either Harvard (13-9, 4-5 Ivy) or Columbia (13-9, 4-5 Ivy) in the tournament's first round, where they would be heavy favorites.

The matchup between the two and three seeds would be Cornell vs Princeton, which would be a far more contested affair.

Yale, Cornell and Princeton have all only lost to each other so far this season, and are a combined 19-0 against the other five teams.

The Bulldogs beat Cornell on a last-second basket two weeks ago at home, in a game they trailed for over thirty minutes of play. In order to avoid a similarly close game in Ithaca on Friday, they'll have to do a better job of adapting to the Big Red's rapid pace of play.

Cornell's offense is the fifth fastest in the country, playing at a rate of just 14.9 seconds per possession. They also score at a high volume on shots inside two-point range. The team's 2-point percentage of 63.6 percent ranks first in the country.

There's no simple way to stop the Big Red, who compromise intensity on defense for speed on offense and whose play often resembles a track meet more than a basketball game. Forcing Cornell to play at Yale's pace in their home gym will be easier said than done.

What should be easy are the fundamentals. Reducing turnovers should be a key for Yale on Friday, who, despite having the lowest turnover percentage in the conference, coughed the ball up 13 times against Cornell on Feb. 10. In last year's regular season loss to the Big Red, Yale

turned the ball over 16 times.

The Bulldogs must keep their composure against the Cornell press on Friday night. The steady presence of forward Matt Knowling '24, who's missed the last two games due to injury, would be a big addition.

Sharpshooting duo August Mahoney '24 and John Poulakidas '25 will also need to take on a larger role in Friday night's matchup. The two struggled to find quality looks from behind the arc in the two teams' last matchup, with Yale shooting 3-14 from three-point range.

In last year's Ivy Tournament, against Cornell, though, Poulakidas's 25-point effort, on 6-7 from beyond the arc, was a key factor in Yale's victory. A more efficient night from three-point range will be key to the Elis' ability to match the Cornell offense.

Yale will also rely heavily on star forward Danny Wolf '26 to have a comeback game. The 7-footer struggled mightily against Princeton last week, going scoreless on 0-8 shooting from the field.

The Bulldogs ability to limit turnovers, find space on the perimeter, and get Wolf going offensively will go a long way toward making the six-hour journey to Ithaca a success.

Friday night's game will tip off at 7:00 p.m. in Cornell's Newman Arena.

Contact **BEN RAAB** at ben.raab@yale.edu.



YALE ATHLETICS

If the Bulldogs defeat the Big Red, they'll be in prime position to land first seed at the March four-team Ivy tournament.

M LACROSSE: Elis defeat Villanova in season opener

BY SPENCER KING
SPORTS EDITOR

The 10th-ranked Yale men's lacrosse team (1-0, 0-0 Ivy) defeated the Villanova Wildcats (0-2, 0-0 Big East) by a score of 13-11 on Saturday to begin their 2024 season.

After finishing last season with a 9-6 record and falling to Georgetown in the NCAA Tournament, the Bulldogs come into the new season with high hopes. That is not to say that meeting those hopes will be easy, as the Ivy League is shaping up to be one of the most competitive conferences in the nation this season, with three teams currently ranked in the top 15.

The starting lineup for the Bulldogs as they took the field for their first game of the season was not one many would have expected. Star attackmen and last year's two leading goalscorers Chris Lyons '25 and Leo Johnson '25 were both out with injuries, leaving questions about where the Elis would find offense.

The answer it turned out to be, was the same answer it has been for the Bulldogs for the past two seasons: leading man Matt Brandau '24.

Brandau, who along with Lyons, was named to the Tewaaron Award Watch List for the best player in college lacrosse, opened his season with two goals and four assists to push the Bulldogs past the Wildcats.

However, late in the game with the score tied at 11, the hero proved to be one of the players filling in for Lyons and Johnson.

Carson Kuhl '25, who is listed on the roster as a midfielder but played attack all day for the Bulldogs, scored the final two goals of the game to secure an opening-day win for Yale. The two late-game goals joined his first-quarter tally to give Kuhl the hattrick on a day the Bulldogs needed to find offense.

Kuhl was joined on attack by David Anderson '27, who introduced himself to the Yale fans with a hattrick of his own in his first collegiate start.

The defense also played well for the Bulldogs, limiting the Villanova offense to only 22 shots on goal, 11 of which were saved by goalie Jared Paquette '25.

Leading the defense was Patrick Pisano '26, who in his first collegiate start wreaked havoc on the Villanova offense all afternoon. Pisano forced four turnovers and scooped up five ground balls, earning him the title of Ivy League Defensive Player of the Week.

Despite the win, the Bulldogs will have a big second week of the season ahead, with matchups against two Top-20 teams in the nation.

On Wednesday the Bulldogs will travel to Albany to take on No. 20 Colgate before then heading to Pennsylvania to play No. 13 Penn State.

Contact **SPENCER KING** at spencer.king@yale.edu.



YALE ATHLETICS

The Yale men's lacrosse team opened their 2024 season with a win over Villanova.

STAT OF THE WEEK

13

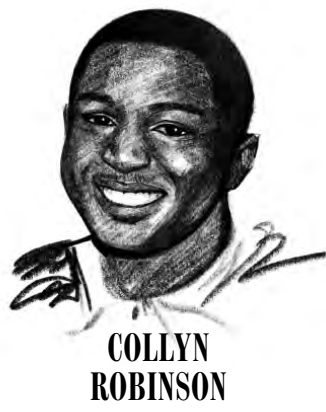
NUMBER OF POINTS, A SCHOOL RECORD, FOR YALE MEN'S LACROSSE ATTACKMAN MATT BRANDAU '24 IN THE BULLDOGS WIN OVER COLGATE, TALLYING SIX GOALS AND SEVEN ASSISTS.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Welcome to the News' special issue commemorating Black History Month!

// MICHELLE FOLEY



COLLYN ROBINSON

When I took on the role of leading the spissue, I knew I did not want to have a theme. We too often find ourselves attempting to bound Blackness to terms. Beautiful, resilient, talented. We are all those things, so why just pick one for an issue that occurs once a year?

Instead of presenting some grandiose discussion on how the News needs to do better with recruiting Black writers and including our voices in the conversation, what it means for a newsroom to actually be diverse and

inclusive, or even the intricacies of being a Black student at Yale, I will let the contributors' works speak on their own.

In this year's spissue, read about a student's experiences with racial profiling during two consecutive Yale-Harvard weekends. Enjoy a poem about a student's heritage. Browse through photo essays that examine Blackness and comment on professionalism's roots in anti-Blackness. Read about a student's experience discovering Black Yale — and much more.

Thank you to the contributors and everyone at the News that made this issue possible. I would also like to extend a special thank you to Michael Ndubisi, who is the reason I was able to spearhead an issue of this magnitude, and Solomon Adams, who encouraged me to take the risk of leading the special issue.

This spissue is for us. No strings attached. Take it in, consume it, appreciate it.

While growing up, my mom would always say, "I can show you

better than I can tell you." So here it is: the Black History Month special issue.

We welcome and appreciate any feedback about the spissue. Feel free to contact us at editor@yaledailynews.com, or email me directly at the email address below.

With love,
COLLYN ROBINSON is the editor for the Black History Month Spissue and serves as the Multimedia Managing Editor for the News.

I.N.W. (It's No Wonder)

I come from a long lineage of displaced people,
So, it's no wonder I feel lost.
It's no wonder that I have found joy in discovery,
A rediscovery,
Reclaiming really, of a heritage
That has been muddled by inaccuracies and silence.

No acknowledgment — propaganda.
My family — living, though paradoxically,
Was convinced it did not exist.
Lost in misinformation, I'm grabbing for a flashlight...

Constantly, fighting back.
It's encoded, in my genes.
I know this because behavior, its genetic,

On edge, anxious, effed up...
It's no wonder.
Chains. Waves. Tears. And whips.
Memories with voices that forcibly shout Move!
Deconstruct me, and you'll see.
Here, there, and perhaps even there...
I'll never know,
My mind occupied.
By a demanding other — without negotiation,
I am here. But I am aware.

MAYA FOSTER is third-year Doctoral Candidate in Biomedical Engineering.

Bearing witness: the harrowing reality of Black maternal healthcare

In 2002, my mom sat in a hospital bed in excruciating pain while giving birth to me. After receiving an epidural, she still felt everything. This was her second birth. She knew her body and what the numbness of an epidural was supposed to feel like. She couldn't understand what was different this time around, so she asked her doctor for help. They explained that they left her with a "hot spot" which would still allow her to feel pain in certain places. She explained this wasn't what she asked for and would prefer the injection be increased to numb the pain completely. She waited and waited for the anesthesiologist, but they never came. She sat there in pain until I was born.

When my cousin gave birth just a year ago, she also had a difficult time. Throughout the course of her pregnancy, her doctor told her the baby wasn't progressing as much as they expected him to, especially with how far along she was in her pregnancy. A few weeks before her due date, they encouraged inducing her labor. She wanted to give the baby some more time to see if he'd be able to grow on his own, but at 39 weeks she decided to go through with being induced. While this may have been the doctor's professional opinion, complications arose following her induction. Two days later, the baby still wasn't here. Her doctor attempted to use a Foley Bulb to help her cervix dilate, but she described it as being an extremely uncomfortable process.

When this didn't work and the baby's heart rate began to drop each time she contracted, she was rushed into an emergency cesarean section.

Unfortunately, their stories are not a unique experience for many Black women. My mother and sister happen to be among the "luckier" mothers who got to walk out of the hospital with their babies; some Black mothers never leave the hospital, Black women far too often have to beg for doctors to do their job, and when doctors fail to follow through, it can have life-threatening consequences.

This phenomenon is part of a larger systemic issue that has deep historical roots. For example, dating back to the 19th century, notorious figures in healthcare like J. Marion Sims performed nonconsensual and experimental procedures on Black women to make advancements in the study of gynecology. Enslaved women like "Anarcha," "Betsey" and "Lucy," the only three of his subjects he named in his scientific journals, were forced to undergo medical operations, restrained to the operating table and given no anesthesia because it was a commonly held belief that Black women didn't feel pain in the same way white women did.

Centuries later, Black women are still being dismissed by medical professionals because of racially biased myths and are facing life-threatening consequences because of it. Even affluent Black women aren't immune to the effects of medical racism.

23-time Grand Slam champion Serena Williams recalled how doctors and nurses were quick to dismiss her concerns following the birth of her daughter as she described her shortness of breath and history of blood clots. She knew that it might've been a sign of something more serious and insisted she needed a CT scan and heparin, and when doctors gave in after she persisted, they found that she did, in fact, have blood clots in her lungs that required life-saving surgery before they traveled to her heart.

It shouldn't take Black women to get to a point where they feel like they're dying, or actually die, for medical professionals to do their job. These women have entrusted their doctors with saving them and instead have to take charge of their own health and save themselves. The legacy of our medical system is marred by its racist roots, and it's about time they confront and rectify it for the health of all Black women who've been victims of it.

I'm writing this piece not because this story hasn't already been told or because these experiences are unique to my mother, cousin or countless other Black women whose stories haven't been told — but I'm going to keep telling this story anywhere I can until someone starts to listen to us.

JA'JUAN REFUGE is a first-year in Silvanus College. Contact her at ja'juan.refuge@yale.edu.



// MILAN ACOSTA

Chris Rabb '92 hosts genealogy workshop

BY COLLYN ROBINSON
MULTIMEDIA MANAGING EDITOR

Pennsylvania State Representative Chris Rabb '92 hosted a Black History Month keynote discussion and genealogy workshop last Thursday at The House.

Rabb spoke about his experience as a student at Yale, how he became a genealogist for his family and his direct genealogical ties to the University. He also focused on why he believes it is important for community members to trace their own genealogy, or as he referred to it, "reclaiming our stories."

Hunter Robbins '27 moderated the event. Robbins said that he was initially nervous to learn about people he had never met and people his father never knew about because of his family's limited information about their ancestry. He noted that it was basic information he felt everyone should know.

"Sadly, my dad doesn't know very essential and basic information about our ancestors; their names, where they're from, and very basic things, I feel like we all should just really know," Robbins told the News. "Understanding that I have the ability to learn about my ancestors, even though systems such as slavery made that very difficult and continue to make it very difficult. It's still possible for

me, and being able to help others do that was really meaningful."

Rabb began the event with a keynote presentation about his Yale experience titled "Yale & Me."

As a student, Rabb studied African American Studies and was a columnist for the Yale Daily News, where he wrote about race, politics and culture. He resided in Calhoun College, now known as Grace Hopper College, as a student, and explained how the time he spent there correlates to his relationship with history and genealogy.

Rabb called attention to the markers of slavery that existed and still exist on campus, such as a glass-pane window in his residential college while he was a student. Members of the class of 1992 held a protest during the Calhoun College graduation, which Rabb was a part of, where he read a manifesto — called the 1992 Calhoun Manifesto on the College History section of Grace Hopper College's website — aloud to the audience. He noted that he was shocked by the affirmation he received from the crowd, even earning a standing ovation.


Three years later, Rabb discovered that his ties to Yale were closer to home. He learned that he has direct ancestral ties to Philip Livingston — a member of the class of 1737, a slave trader and the endower of the first professorship at Yale College. Livingston has an

archway dedicated to him in the Branford courtyard.

Rabb explained that his grandmother was the woman who inspired him to explore their family history and that she paid him to do so to ensure he would complete the task. Rabb, with the use of archives, connected with family members to find more family members to the point where he even found information on his "father's, father's, father" and subsequently found their tie to the Livingston family.

"I just started writing in the names to trace my ancestry, incorporating all the information I could find to create a pedigree chart," Rabb said. "I looked for birth or death dates, where they lived, where they moved."

Read more online:



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Yale Daily News

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ISSUES PRINTED BY
Valley Publishing Co. Derby, CT

ONLINE ARCHIVES
OurSchoolNewspaper.com/Yale

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OPINION

NDUBISI & WARD: Black Yale in Focus

As part of this year's Black History Month special issue, the News wants to working to highlight Black voices across our campus community. We spoke with five Black Yale students, who hail from vari-

ous areas across the United States, about their experiences navigating Yale as Black students and maintaining their sense of authenticity. There was consensus on some issues and disagreement on oth-

ers, but as you'll read below, the conversation largely offered a real glimpse into the rich tapestry of perspectives within Yale's Black community through the voices of students' lived experiences.

While the transcript has been edited for clarity and length, an audio recording of the session is available if you'd like to listen to the full unedited conversation. We hope you enjoy, reflect and learn as

much as we did — and we encourage you to continue such conversations throughout the year, not just during Black History Month.

— Michael Ndubisi, Opinion Editor

Sebastian, Moderator: Describe yourself in three words.



Kyle Shepherd '25
(Caribbean American, New York)
Resourceful, chaotic and artistic.



David Adebogun '26
(Nigerian American, Maryland)
Empathetic, thoughtful and witty.



Joseph Nash '26
(African American, Texas)
Personable, persistent and accountable.



Celene Bennett '26
(Half Black and half Filipino, Georgia)
Dedicated, excitable and engaging.

No photo submitted.

Milan Acosta '26
(Half Black and half Latina, New York)
Loving, responsible and passionate.

How do you think someone you know would describe you if I asked them?

Milan: Serious when necessary, but a comedian otherwise.

David: Somewhat unconventional and funny.

Celene: Selfless and does too much.

Joe: Doesn't take himself too seriously but still a person who values having meaningful conversations and building close relationships.

Kyle: Creative and romantic—not in the relationship sense, but in thought.

How do you think you are perceived by people on campus?

Milan: Unknown.

Kyle: I like to think fashionable, ballsy and one of a kind.

Celene: Warm, approachable and friends with everyone—for better or for worse.

David: Down to earth and maybe a little confused by me sometimes.

Joe: Intimidating at first glance, as a bigger football player on campus, but maybe once interacting, they would see I'm really personable and try to get along with everyone the best way I can.

David, just to follow up on your response, you said people were "confused" by you. What did you mean?

David: Yeah well, just because I think my first week on here campus, a lot of people thought I was an athlete. And then they got to know me, and well, I'm not but some people were confused by that.

Celine, I also wanted to follow up on yours. You said people think you're "Warm, approachable and friends with everyone?"

Celene: Honestly, yeah. I don't think I present myself as intimidating in any way. But I do think that maybe people assume that I'm a little bit one dimensional because of that. I feel like some people think I'm just like, "a la-da-da", "happy go lucky girl" and there's not much more than that.

But that isn't true?

Celene: Oh, definitely not.

Joe, you said people might find you intimidating because you're an athlete. Do you think that's the only reason why someone might find you intimidating? Are there other reasons?

Joe: Maybe not just because I'm an athlete. Maybe because I'm a larger Black man on a predominantly white campus. I think from that standpoint, it can be intimidating to interact with a person like that, especially if that hasn't been the environment you're used to in high school or wherever else.

What do the words visibility and authenticity bring to mind?

Milan: I'd say the AfAm House. I went to their monthly res-group meeting a few weeks ago and it was just really nice to be around a lot of people that were Black and looked like me. I hadn't been to the house in a while at an event like that, so it was really important for me.

Celene: To me, it means being able to be consistent in who you are, regardless of who you're hanging around. Whether you're hanging out with a bunch of white people, or you're hanging out with a strong Black community, I think visibility and authenticity to me is just having that comfort of being proud regardless of the audience.

Kyle: Those bring to mind how I love dressing up and being visible in my authentic self through what I wear. And I love that. So I make an extra effort to be seen in myself through that lens.

David: When I think about visibility and authenticity, I think it just means being true to yourself not feeling pressure to conform to any standard. I don't think you need to exclusively have Black friends or exclusively be part of some community because of your identity. I think you should just do you, and I think that that's kind of the core meaning of those terms.

Joe: When I think of visibility and authenticity, I'll go back to the strong sense of identity. I think that's a really core foundation for navigating any environment because the environment you're in may change. But if you have a strong set of virtues and values that you know you're not willing to compromise, then the environment will have that much less weight on you.

Kyle, what aspects of yourself do you try to portray in the way that you dress?

Kyle: Intention and open-mindedness. I am Caribbean American, and while there isn't specific traditional dress from there, I pull what feels true to me off the shelves. Even if it's a sweater with the American flag or snowflakes or something like that, I don't feel like that can't also be mine.

Joe, are there any environments that make it difficult to maintain your sense of authenticity?

Joe: At this point, as a sophomore, I'd say not so much. But when I was younger, being in a predominantly white environment really tested my identity, and I definitely felt pressure in some ways to conform to the environment. But as I matured and developed a stronger sense of self, the desire to conform to my environment or whoever I was around diminished.

What one word comes to mind when I say Black Yale?

Kyle: Yalie.

David: Interesting.

Celene: Inspiring.

Milan: Real.

Joe: Persistent.

Elaborate.

Celene: I think every single Black person that I've met on this campus inspires me because I think Black people are beautiful and I already feel that connection and pride just looking at someone else who made it the same place as me in a different way. But I also think non-Black people on this campus often look at Black people on this campus as incredible, and rightfully so. But I think it's very often that I'll have a non-Black friend tell me like, "Oh my gosh, you know, this person?" "They're great!" or "They're amazing!" And nine times out of ten, they're Black. I think they're inspiring to everyone.

How often are you reminded of your Blackness on campus, if at all?

Joe: Honestly, just going through the hectic day-to-day, my Blackness isn't really something that I reflect on a lot. But I will say, whenever I walk past the Beinecke Library and I see DuBois and Langston Hughes, knowing that some of their work and history is here. It's definitely inspiring to me. And it definitely causes me to reflect on my Blackness and how far I've come. It motivates me.

Milan: I would say, fairly frequently, because I'm in a Black sorority. So I think it's really nice to get together with my line sisters and just the other lines in our chapter in a room full of powerful Black women is a really a nice experience. We meet pretty often, so I have a lot of time to reflect on that.

David: I think just like sometimes in my classes, or in seminars or discussion sections, I'll notice that I'm the only Black student in the class, or one of a few. But I definitely don't get too in my head about it. As a sophomore, I've gotten to be a part of some more diverse classes and I think I've gotten used to how the school works now.

Has the awareness of being the only Black person in a class had any effect on you and your time at Yale?

David: A little bit, but I don't think much really.

Milan: To add on to David's point, in classes, especially seminars, when you make eye contact with the only other Black person in the class and you just know immediately that's your connection right there.

How many of you think that if you weren't black, you would be perceived differently?

Yes: Celene, Joe, David and Milan

No: Kyle

Kyle, you're the odd one out. Why not?

Kyle: Yeah, I just think the perception of me has little to do with my Blackness. This may evidence my detachment from a certain reality, but I would like to think that assumptions made about me aren't held based on my race and that people don't treat me better or worse because of it.

Celene: I think if I weren't Black, I'd be perceived differently anywhere. Like it's not specific to Yale. I just think being Black in the United States automatically comes with a certain level of perception that reveals itself in different ways depending on where you are.

Milan: I was just thinking about, I guess how the Black community would perceive me if I weren't as much a part of the Afam community as I am, right now. So I didn't have like specifics, I was just thinking, like, that would be a big part missing for me.

Joe: I would agree that if I wasn't Black, my perception in any environment would change, but I think that's why I value having a strong self perception so much. That can never change, but the outside perceptions will often change depending on where you are.

David: I just think it's like a visibility thing, whether you can blend in easily or not. So I think it would change by virtue of that.

Are there moments when you feel pressured to hide or downplay certain aspects of your identity? To avoid discomfort or judgment and spaces on campus?

David: When I first came on campus, I was in my head about that a lot. But if I had to be honest, I think during my time spent on this campus, I've been able to be pretty open about anything and have uncomfortable conversations. I feel like most people aren't engaging in topics like that anyways, whether it's their coursework or just their day-to-day conversations. So I think I definitely feel comfortable, and I don't feel like I have to downplay any aspect of my personality or individual self.

Kyle: Semi-self-inflicted is the fact that I'm in a conservative Yale Political Union party, and more than having to downplay my Blackness, I do feel like I have to downplay my queerness.

Did you come in knowing that you'd have to downplay your queerness or were there certain moments where you felt this is something that I have to do right now?

Kyle: Again, this was kind of self inflicted and I expected it. And that's not something you should do to yourself... but I don't have any regrets. It's definitely been psychologically stressful, and your mental well being should be a priority, but I feel great that I'm able to exist in the conservative political party space—queerness, blackness and all.

Celene: I think not so much anymore. But when I first came here, I was definitely intimidated and felt the pressure to downplay in some ways when people outside my tax bracket would talk about certain things. I felt a little bit like maybe I shouldn't say anything, or hope that they don't ask me about a common experience they share when talking about their summer homes or fancy career opportunities or experiences I didn't grow up with and people around me didn't grow up with. But I don't think I ever felt shame, it was more like wanting to stop myself from entering the conversation because I couldn't relate.

And now it's more like I can contribute however I want and oftentimes it's enlightening for other people to hear what else there is.

Kyle: To follow up to that, I feel very okay when people are mentioning their ski trips and vacation homes. I'm like, what? And I want to do that because they need to know how privileged they are.

Joe: My answer would be no. I felt I was very much prepared in high school to be here. As a junior, I was one of two Black kids in my class at a private, conservative school. So I felt I was comfortable navigating a predominantly white environment, so I haven't really felt the pressure to assimilate to the culture here.

Milan: My experience is my experience, and I only have what I know to speak on. But sometimes I don't want to be seen as that person who always talks about race or makes everything "a Black thing" or something. I used to be more cautious of that, but now I've kind of learned that doesn't matter.

Did you ever get the sense that people in your class were getting tired of hearing you talk about how things relate back to Black issues? Did anyone ever say that to you explicitly or was it just felt?

Milan: Honestly, it wasn't always like a disinterested thing. A lot of times, people just couldn't relate, and they'd be like, "Wow, that's crazy that people actually go through these experiences." So a lot of times, I've had the token stories and it's not really a thing of like, "This is so boring," but like, "This is crazy." "She has a different life." And it's not like I'm trying to be unique or different, I'm just speaking on what I know.

Okay, so how do you define authenticity for yourself? In predominantly white spaces, and what does it mean to live authentically to you?

Joe: I think for me, it's not allowing anyone to kind of put me in a box and define me based on the exterior.

Celene: I'd say doing things for your own happiness without considering what others would want from you.

Kyle: Heavy on those two answers.

Okay, I know we're running low on time, so feel free to answer either of the following questions: what actions or behaviors from others help you feel seen, heard and understood for who you truly are in a PWI? Or how can people from many backgrounds work to create an environment where everyone feels like they can express themselves without fear of judgment or discomfort? Two similar questions, but I think that they stab at different things.

Kyle: On behavior, don't always hang out with the same type of people. Maybe I have my own biased perceptions, but I see very uniform groups sometimes. And I feel like I could never even try to approach them.

Uniform it terms of?

Kyle: Racially. When I see that, it makes me think that I cannot approach them or shouldn't. I feel like that they don't want to talk to me or wouldn't want to talk to me or be friends with me.

Joe: If I were to answer the first one, as far as actions and behaviors that helped me feel seen and understood, that happens through an open and honest conversation, whether it's a personal conversation or a conversation in a group where a person really tries to understand me, understand the experiences I've had and what I've been through in my journey. And I think open dialogue where people don't feel judged if they say the wrong thing. It's very hard that when you grow up a certain way, programmed to think a certain way, see things a certain way, people may want to change their views, but it can be hard if they don't feel like the environment is conducive to that. So I think having an environment where people aren't pressured to say the right thing, but to learn and not be judged for saying the wrong thing. I think it takes saying the wrong thing and messing up and that discomfort to grow.

Milan: I think it's kind of similar to what Celene mentioned earlier, events like the Black Harvard-Yale event, or things like Steppin' Out and Dzana and Sabro performing. The energy from the audience makes me feel really seen even though I'm not part of those groups. It's just like such a great community, and it makes me want to try harder to be a part of these groups. But, yeah, I just love them so much.

Celene: Would say on feeling seen and understood, just ask me to elaborate. Regardless of who I'm talking to, whether I say "Oh, I came from class," or "Oh, I had a meeting," when you ask me, "What was it for?" or "How did it go?" helps you get to know me better. Demonstrating that interest is what makes me feel seen and understood by people within my community and without because if you don't ask to elaborate, that usually means there's an assumption of what you already know or think you know about me and my interests.

Thank you all for coming and talking with me today.

SEBASTIAN WARD is a sophomore in Timothy Dwight College. Contact him at sebastian.ward@yale.edu.

NEWS

PROFILE: Byron Brooks starts as Assistant Director of the House

MADELEINE KEENAN
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

The Afro-American Cultural Center at Yale officially welcomed new Assistant Director Byron Brooks on Monday, Feb. 5 — just in time for the Af-Am House's Black History Month programming. Brooks is taking on the role after it was vacant for over a year. The role is an important one, with Brooks responsible for overseeing daily operations and supporting students.

"Service plays a big role within my life, within my walk," Bryon told the News.

Brooks added that he is guided by the Zulu proverb Ubuntu, which translates to "I am because we are."

Brooks, an educator and activist, hails from Detroit, Michigan. He was raised by his great-grandparents and attributes much of who he is today to the family that raised him. He holds a bachelor's degree from Ferris State University and a master of arts in Diversity and Social Justice in Higher Education from the University of Michigan. Before coming to Yale he worked as a Community Engagement Coordinator, Anti-Racist Program Facilitator & Instructor at the University of Michigan and as Assistant Director of Residential Life at the College of Wooster.

As an educator, he worked to create anti-racist and social justice education and curriculum across the state of Michigan and at the University of Michigan, creating leadership development and student engagement curricula. He has experience as a teacher and professor and is also a licensed minister. Faith has played an important role in his life, Brooks said.

Brooks is also the founder of a nonprofit organization called From the Hood For the Hood, which is dedicated to fighting homelessness and promoting community engagement throughout Michigan and the country. Brooks himself was unhoused for part of his college career and started the nonprofit as a way to support those going through similar experiences.

Because of his extensive nonprofit work, Brooks was asked to

lead the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service for the Biden Administration and received the Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award from President Joe Biden.

At Yale, Brooks said he is excited to "pour into both the current and next generation of change-makers." He added that he is a firm believer that young people can be the change they seek in the world, something that he emphasized at the "Meet the AD Lunch" hosted on Feb. 17. He spoke about wanting to empower students to be their best selves, saying "often-times people want to wait for the next Dr. King, the next Malcolm" but that people can be the change that they want to see. Brooks said he believes that everyone has the power to "dismantle systems of inequity and replace them with equity, love, and justice" by being their best selves.

Brooks was drawn to Yale for several reasons, primarily because of the students. He said he saw "the opportunity to pour into" the students and our energy. He also wanted to step outside of his comfort zone and be "poured into" as well, both career-wise and personally. He shared that the Af-Am House's "Reclaiming Our Expressions" Black Arts Showcase in particular warmed his heart because he was able to see students being "unapologetically themselves." Brooks shared his own talents and creativity with the Af-Am House Community at the Showcase, where he performed a spoken-word poem and a selection of music on the piano.

Brooks said that he also loves how the Afro-American Cultural Center is centered specifically on the Black and African Diasporas and has been enjoying his first weeks settling in. Since the Af-Am House is a cultural center for Black people rather than a multicultural center, it helps him feel like he's "walking more within his purpose," he said.

He shared that the Af-Am House already feels like a home away from home for him and a safe haven for him to be "unapologetically me."

Brooks has an open-door policy, inviting students to come



COLLYN ROBINSON / MULTIMEDIA MANAGING EDITOR

introduce themselves to him whenever he is in the office. He said that he is open to hearing any and all new ideas that students have and hopes to amplify student voices across campus.

Alejandro Rojas '26 said that he loves "how available and visible Byron has already been in our community" and that he cannot wait to get to know Brooks more.

Brooks is also excited about ideas of his own, including a

book club that he hopes to start titled Radical Reflections — a space where students would come together to read and discuss literature from the African Diaspora.

For Stephanie Owusu '24, Brooks "lives up to that excitement with the energy he brings."

"[I noticed] an excitement about him coming to campus," Owusu said.

Owusu said she especially appreciated how Brooks intro-

duced himself through his art at the Black History Month Showcase. She said she hopes that he will continue to "bring populations that we might not see as much at the House" and that he has already brought positive energy.

The Afro-American Cultural Center is located at 211 Park St.

Contact **MADELEINE KEENAN** at madeleine.keenan@yale.edu.

Black History Month arts showcase takes Schwarzman

BY MODUPE KARIMI
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Students, faculty, administrators and more gathered for the "Reclaiming Our Expressions! Black History Month Performing Arts Showcase" that took place in the Underground at the Schwarzman Center on Saturday night.

This event was part of the Afro-American Cultural Center's Black History Month programming. Participating student organizations included Yale Gospel Choir, the Nu Gamma Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc., Sabrosura, Desta, Rhythmic Blue, Steppin' Out and Dzana, displaying a wide variety of student talents.

"The show was meaningful because it gave the opportunity for Black students to come together and share their different talents," said Jordan Mincy '26. "Whether it was singing, dancing, or spoken word, it was nice to see what the many groups on campus have been working on."

Attendees like Mincy loved the lineup of performances, particularly the Yale Gospel Choir, because "the harmonies were incredible and the piano accompaniment was great," and he found the showcase impactful.

At the event, there were spoken-word, collaborative dance performances between student groups like Steppin' Out and Dzana and traditional Ethiopian and Eritrean dances performed by Desta.

Even the new assistant director of the Af-Am House, Byron Brooks, took part in the show. The audience was able to enjoy his musical stylings and spoken word.

"It was exhilarating, thrilling, and rewarding to have the honor of participating in the show," Brooks said. "In essence, it gave me an opportunity to share a big

part of who I am with the students. On top of that, I witnessed our extremely talented students express themselves through the arts unapologetically."

Students like Caleb Prempeh '26, who participated in the show as a part of Dzana, Steppin' Out and Rhythmic Blue, found it "empowering" to showcase his culture to a larger audience.

"Performing in the show was empowering, as it allowed my teammates and me to embrace Black culture and provided us with the opportunity to reach a broader audience," Prempeh said.

While student groups were dancing to the song "My Power" by Beyonce and recreating the associated popular dance trend, there were students behind the scenes, ensuring the showcase went off without a hitch.

Favour Akingbemi '26, a student on the student leadership team at the Af-Am House, helped organize the showcase. Akingbemi spent a lot of time working with the House leaders and the participating student organizations, wanting to make sure that student leaders felt supported at all steps in the process needed to prepare for the showcase.

"As a leader of a performance group myself, I understand the importance of feeling supported in the space that is Yale, especially when working with a new group of people," Akingbemi said. "The showcase was really important to me because it's not every day that we get to fully claim a space like Schwarzman as Black people on campus. It felt empowering to be able to express ourselves and to be the center of attention in a place where we can often feel ignored."

The Schwarzman Center is located at 168 Grove St.

Contact **MODUPE KARIMI** at modupe.karimi@yale.edu.



COURTESY OF THE AF-AM HOUSE

The 'Reclaiming Our Expressions! Black History Month Performing Arts Showcase' was held at the Schwarzman Center last Saturday.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH SPISSUE

Huck Farvard, Yuck Fale

// BY SOLOMON ADAMS

I still recall the exact outfit I was wearing on Nov. 16, 2023: University Blue Jordan 4s, khaki cargo pants, an Atlanta Braves graphic tee and a black UNIQLO puffer jacket. There wasn't anything special about this particular combination of clothing; all I can remember is the deep-rooted feeling of discomfort I had as I trekked in the direction of Payne Whitney Gymnasium (PWG) to pick up my tickets for The Game. With the massive influx of Yale alumni and their families, students from other universities and Yale policemen/security guards, I couldn't help but feel totally out of place on my own campus.

After securing my ticket, I headed to my next stop, a senior mixer, with hopes that familiar faces — and a bit of alcohol — would ward off my worries. But even after several drinks and a few rounds of beer pong, I continued to feel unsettled. Trying with all my might, no amount of dancing or drunken chatter proved effective in distracting me from my troubled thoughts, so I decided to leave the mixer early to charge up for the remaining nights of partying and celebration to come. While lying in bed, I convinced myself to brush off my irrational thoughts as a one-off mystery to be dealt with after Yale-Harvard and went to sleep. The next day, classes proceeded as normal, and before I knew it, night had fallen upon me once again. As I got ready for the numerous festivities of Yale-Harvard eve, I opted for a more “appropriate” outfit: a plain white UNIQLO tee, navy UNIQLO relaxed ankle pants and black loafers. And surely enough, my outfit eased my worried mind. As the events of the weekend continued to unfold, the distorting lens that was once disrupting the thoughts of my mind began to wear off. Amid running into friends on the street, hopping between mixers, attending a comedy show and jamming to live music, my anxiety was quickly replaced with the feelings of joy that I so strongly desired to feel the night before. The familiar creative and social sphere of college reminded me of the positive parts of this campus that I most frequently correlated with the idea of Yale in my mind. Reminiscing on this very fruitful Friday night, I waltzed back to my dorm, excited for The Game the next morning. I set my alarm, did my nightly routine and closed my eyes in order to grab as much shuteye as possible — Beep! Beep! Beep!

Waking up at 7:47 am in an abrupt panic, I scrambled to get ready as I was already running late to my first social event before The Game. Luckily, my outfit had been in my mind all week. It was a safe and familiar choice that I had worn in some variation each year before: gray Nike sweatpants, a navy blue Crew Doggo hoodie, black Ugg boots and the UNIQLO puffer again. I grabbed my phone and darted out the door to another senior mixer where all of my friends were. After taking several shots and drinking a rancid combination of Fireball and coffee, I had just enough stimulation to actively engage in typical darty activities.

While dancing, I couldn't help but notice that everyone at said mixer was wearing jeans. Though it was a trivial detail that I would never have noticed in years beforehand, the thought was almost enough to reignite the forgotten anxieties of my mind. However, these thoughts were swiftly overtaken after realizing that I left my ticket in my dorm room. Having to walk back to my room, I once again perceived the odd stares of students around campus as I progressed towards Silliman. But without focusing too much on these glances, I continued on.

Charting up the four flights of steps to my room, I grabbed the ticket off of my desk and dashed out. Halfway down the stairs, the rather recent picture of dancing within a sea of blue jeans entered my mind, so I ran back up and changed into jeans. I then went to High Street where I ran into a friend, who very conveniently was calling an Uber to the Yale Bowl. We carpooled there, and the rest of the day was a blissful blur. I was cold for a bit. I felt slightly dehydrated. Yale won! I stormed the field. My friends and I piled onto buses back to campus; nutrient-deprived, I met up with another friend at the Berkeley College dining hall for dinner. We napped. I witnessed yet another Yale victory from the women's volleyball team and, exhausted, returned to my bed to knock out. On that day, the bubble of Yale lived up to its namesake and created a force field, impenetrable to the outside plagues of the world.

Still a bit hungry from the eventful day, I placed a DoorDash order and reflected on the highlights of my Yale-Harvard experience. Completely detached from the emotions I felt at the beginning of the weekend, it became apparent to me at this moment that my original fears and anxieties were nothing more than irrational manifestations of something unconnected to this specific weekend. But maybe, I had spoken — or thought — too soon.

After an hour or so, I went downstairs to pick up the food from my Dasher. As I walked across the street to meet the man delivering my food, I couldn't help but notice an odd interaction. I saw two college-aged Black women shivering in what seemed to be party clothes standing outside of the gates of Timothy Dwight College, or TD. It appeared that these two girls were engaging in conversation with a security guard stationed within the gates. I could not tell how long these girls had been standing outside, so I naively assumed their situation would work itself out. At first, I grabbed my food and was prepared to return to my room. Whatever those girls were dealing with was none of my concern. Still, I could not shake this gut feeling that something was off.

I walked to the gate and attempted to swipe myself into TD. As I walked in, the security guard then repositioned himself in front of the entrance and stated, “Only he can come in since he has a Yale ID.” I then turned around towards the girls and was met with vivid facial expressions of desperation and embarrassment. In that instant, I was instantaneously transported backwards by a year and one day.

I still recall the exact outfit I was wearing on Nov. 18, 2022: University Blue Jordan 4s, khaki cargo pants, an Atlanta Braves graphic tee and a black UNIQLO puffer jacket. I was returning from an MIT frat party to Harvard's campus, where I was staying with a friend. Because I did not have swipe access, the friend I was staying with suggested that I try to have another Harvard student swipe me up because she thought it would be quicker than her coming down to get me.

Knowing that Harvard and Yale paired different “sister” residential colleges together for hosting purposes, I thought nothing of this request and was sure that someone would be kind enough to let me in. After making it past the initial door, I then lingered in the lobby hoping to get a student to grant me swipe access to the elevator. Shortly after, a group of white and non-Black girls entered the lobby. Waiting for them to get within proximity of the elevator, I kindly asked, “Hey, sorry to bother you. I am a student from Yale, staying with my friend. Would you be willing to swipe me up to the fifth floor?”

With blank stares and confused faces, the girls agreed, and as I walked towards the elevator, expecting them to follow me, they instead turned around and exited the building. Unsure of what just happened, I attempted to call the friend who was hosting me. But unfortunately during that brief encounter, my phone died, and so I was trapped downstairs until the next student arrived. Waiting around, I then tried calling the elevator again by pressing the button. The doors to the elevator then opened, and to my surprise, I was met with the faces of the very same group of girls who had just ditched me. Unbeknownst to me, there was a basement entrance by which these girls entered the residential college in an attempt to circumvent interacting with/helping me. I hopped onto the elevator, and requested to be swiped up again.

But this time, I was met with a more direct response. The elevator door closed, and what seemed to be the ringleader of the group — let's call them the racist regime — asked, “What college do you live in at Yale?”

“Silliman,” I complied.

“And who are you staying with?” she followed up.

I answered with my friend's name.

“What floor does she live on?” she quickly asked in response. I provided her with the desired information, but still none of it was enough.

I followed up by once again asking her to grant me swipe access, and she stated in response, “We're gonna need to see your Yale ID first.”

That was my final straw.

Without being so explicit in the less elo-

quent — but necessary — ways I communicated it, I proceeded to call each and every one of the girls out for their bigotry. I explained that they should be ashamed of themselves, and to top everything off, I pulled out my ID and showed them the proof they so aggressively requested. The elevator fell silent, and one of the members of the racist regime tried to explain themselves, but I abruptly cut them off before they could get a word out.

They swiped me up. The elevator rose to my floor, and I exited enraged.

Fast forward to the night of The Game 2023, and this same tense feeling of anger had returned. As I looked into these faces of the young girls in front of me, it was clear what I needed to do. I asked the girls if they needed help, and in unison, they nodded their heads saying yes. In response, I guided them towards the other gate of Timothy Dwight on Grove Street while they caught me up to speed on their interactions with the security guard. The girls said they had been out there for roughly thirty minutes before I arrived, and the security guard, like the racist regime, refused to offer any support or assistance. Instead, the guard continued actively posing as a barrier to ensure the girls' safety. Unfortunately, the girls' host was not answering his phone, and the security guard asked the girls for their host's name, entryway and explanation for being outside TD. But just like the regime at Har-

vard's racist regime, well, racist. While running purely on the hormones associated with fight or flight, all I knew was what I felt. But now, I think I can formally answer this question: from start to end, the visiting Black girls and I were seen as threats first, (sub)human second. Part of me wants to justify the security guard and the racist regime's actions as a consideration of broader security concerns. Maybe they really were concerned for their safety or the safety of other students. But, any attempt to rationalize this explanation is short-lived. See, in both incidents, the girls and I should have also been included in that group of students whom the security guard and the racist regime were so “concerned” about. As students ourselves, our safety was at risk, but the preconceived notions and stereotypes that were ascribed to us superseded any potential humanity simultaneously afforded to us such that the security of only a subset of demographics were consciously validated. Instead of being empathized with, the visiting girls and I were barred entry into our homes for the night in order to ensure the protection of other students.

How am I being racist? In the midst of both incidents, I was unable to organize, let alone verbalize, a well-formed explanation of what made the Yale security guard and Har-

vard's racist regime, well, racist. While running purely on the hormones associated with fight or flight, all I knew was what I felt. But now, I think I can formally answer this question: from start to end, the visiting Black girls and I were seen as threats first, (sub)human second. Part of me wants to justify the security guard and the racist regime's actions as a consideration of broader security concerns. Maybe they really were concerned for their safety or the safety of other students. But, any attempt to rationalize this explanation is short-lived. See, in both incidents, the girls and I should have also been included in that group of students whom the security guard and the racist regime were so “concerned” about. As students ourselves, our safety was at risk, but the preconceived notions and stereotypes that were ascribed to us superseded any potential humanity simultaneously afforded to us such that the security of only a subset of demographics were consciously validated. Instead of being empathized with, the visiting girls and I were barred entry into our homes for the night in order to ensure the protection of other students.

How am I being racist? If I were to be asked this question again, my only response to the security guard would be a question of my own: what about these girls made them unworthy of the same level of care, consideration and safety that was actively being enforced and afforded to all other students during that incident, and more broadly speaking, that weekend?

// MICHELLE FOLEY



vard, the guard took no action to put the provided information to use.

While the girls continued to update me, I FaceTimed my friend who was luckily still awake and a FroCo in TD, and after filling her in, she offered to come down to help. By the time the girls and I had reached the courtyard, in classic Western showdown style all parties involved were now looking at each other in a triangular formation. It was me and the visiting girls, my FroCo friend and the security guard.

As the security guard approached us, he asked, “So, you're just gonna try to go around me, huh?”

I replied, “Yes, because you're being racist!”

Almost encroaching well within the security guard's personal space, my friend quickly intervened and pushed me away from the guard. My friend then attempted to take the visiting girls to their entryway, but the security guard tried to once again physically block all of them. Walking around him, they made it to their entryway, and my friend and I waited for his departure in the stairwell one entryway over. After a few minutes, he finally left, and I let out a sigh of relief. All the pent up worries that I held were very much rational, and in just two minutes, my entire Yale-Harvard experience was ruined. All of the positive memories of this so-called “celebratory” weekend were stained by the dormant emotions from previous traumatic instances that were re-realized through forced exposure “therapy.”

The rest of that night proceeded pretty mundanely. I ate my food, then went to bed shortly after. But the implications and thoughts of that night have lasted long after. To this day, I have developed severe anxiety while around any of Yale's police, whether it

vard's racist regime, well, racist. While running purely on the hormones associated with fight or flight, all I knew was what I felt. But now, I think I can formally answer this question: from start to end, the visiting Black girls and I were seen as threats first, (sub)human second. Part of me wants to justify the security guard and the racist regime's actions as a consideration of broader security concerns. Maybe they really were concerned for their safety or the safety of other students. But, any attempt to rationalize this explanation is short-lived. See, in both incidents, the girls and I should have also been included in that group of students whom the security guard and the racist regime were so “concerned” about. As students ourselves, our safety was at risk, but the preconceived notions and stereotypes that were ascribed to us superseded any potential humanity simultaneously afforded to us such that the security of only a subset of demographics were consciously validated. Instead of being empathized with, the visiting girls and I were barred entry into our homes for the night in order to ensure the protection of other students.

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Contact SOLOMON ADAMS at solomon.adams@yale.edu.

SPISSUE

Being a Black engineer at Yale

Being a black engineer at Yale is... an experience. Here a few stories centering the voices of the Black engineers at Yale.

“When I committed to Yale as an applied mathematics major, I knew my classes weren’t going to look like my sister’s at Howard. On a conceptual level, I understood that I was agreeing to go to a school with a 6 percent Black population in a major that was historically known for its lack of diversity. But it doesn’t really start to kick in until you’re the only Black girl in three of your classes. In my classes, I always feel a need to go out of my way to answer the professor’s questions or talk to my classmates because I would rather be known by my name than as ‘the Black girl in the class.’

I’m not going to waste my time making the obvious argument that we all know. There’s a diversity problem in the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences at Yale. I don’t need to reiterate how diversity increases inclusivity, creativity and innovation in a team. It’s obvious that Yale needs to hire more Black and female engineering professors and support Black engineering students in their studies. Instead of spending this article explaining to you that diversity is bad, the rest of this article will be dedicated to the lived experiences of actual Black Yalies in Engineering. Hopefully reading their experiences might open you to a perspective you hadn’t considered before.”

- *Deja Dunlap '26, Applied Mathematics*

“Being one of the only Black people in STEM spaces is not something that I’m not accustomed to. It definitely isn’t something that I prefer. Throughout my journey as a computer science student, I’ve found myself in situations where I’ve felt unsupported, and it didn’t help that there was no one around who looked like me. I’ve also felt as though I’ve had to prove myself to my non-Black counterparts, which has been nothing but exhausting and draining. For this reason, (and I cannot emphasize this enough) I believe that diversity within these spaces is so important, whether that translates to a more diverse pool of Black students in Engineering or even a more diverse faculty. Diversity in these spaces is a reminder that we are worthy, capable and exceptional at what we do.”

- *Bayan Mohamed '26, Computer Science and Psychology*

“Being a Black computer science major at Yale is walking into a classroom and being unsurprised to see that no one looks like you. It’s not wanting to go to your professor’s office hours because you aren’t sure if they’ll remember your name. It’s isolating and oftentimes it makes me wonder if any of this is worth the time and effort and stress that I put on myself to perform.”

- *Madison Williams '26, Computer Science*

“Yale engineering is isolating as a black woman. Although I’ve only been here for a short time I have seen patterns of a lack of representation in my introductory major courses. As a first-year student, I feel like the majority of the support that I’m receiving to continue pursuing an engineering degree is coming from the NSBE community. While I enjoy our workshops and bonding activities that we participate in as an organization, I wish I felt the same feelings of empowerment and validity throughout the Yale engineering community.”

- *Aminata Kamara '27, Mechanical Engineering*

“To an extent, being a black computer science major at Yale can feel isolating, partly due to the nature of the major itself – as it at times requires a lot of solitary self-investment – and partly because, aside from NSBE, there aren’t any black CS/engineering communities at Yale. The silver lining is that I naturally find myself overturning that equilibrium by balancing my academic and pre-professional interests with intentional engagement within black spaces and communities. I’m very appreciative of all the people I’ve gotten to meet and to know, and I’m finding value in bringing my passion and technical ability to every space I enter.”

- *Muyi Aghedo '25, Computer Science*

“Not only is there a lack of Black representation among students, but there’s also a lack of Black professors teaching engineering courses. In October, the National Society of Black Engineers held a speaker panel of Black faculty in engineering. There were only four faculty members to choose from. Sometimes this lack of representation makes it difficult for me to see myself in the engineering industry or academia.”

- *Kayla Samo '25, Biomedical Engineering*

Being Black at Yale is already an ordeal in itself, but to be Black AND an engineer is something else entirely. As a first year, it is disheartening to see a lack of representation in my introductory engineering classes. I, with the exception of NSBE, feel isolated in the field I dream of doing for the rest of my life. Without NSBE, prejudiced gazes and side-splitting side eyes would patiently whittle me down until I lose the passion for doing the things I love.

- *Bronson Hooper '27, Mechanical Engineering*

“I didn’t anticipate Yale to be the epitome of diversity, but as a computer science major, the reality is more disheartening than I imagined. I’m tired of being one of the few Black faces I see in class, and as I delve deeper into the major, the lack of students who look like me becomes more apparent. While I don’t expect Yale to solve its diversity problem overnight, I do expect the university to take meaningful steps to promote underrepresented students in the department.”

- *Kemi Omoniyi '26, Computer Science*

“Being a Black STEM student is an opportunity for self-growth and a test of one’s tenacity, if nothing else. There’s an underlying sense of isolation in all you do, whether it be a stark lack of representation in faculty members or imposter syndrome internalized through the academic accomplishments of your non-Black peers. Even as a freshman, I’ve realized that the only way to protect myself from this seclusion is through the fostering of a sense of community with other Black STEM students. Organizations like NSBE, Black friend groups and other means of seeking community are how Black STEM students resist the inequities our very identity sparks and learn to take up space in rooms not built for us.”

- *Seline Mesfin '27, Biomedical Engineering*

THROUGH THE LENS

“PROFESSIONAL”

For this project, I wanted to examine our ideas of professionalism and their origins in anti-Blackness. We are often told what is “proper” in academic and professional settings, and those beliefs seep into our minds, becoming internalized prejudices. My own mother wouldn’t allow me to loc my hair up in high school, as she feared it would have a negative effect during my college interviews. As a young Black person, having access to a place like Yale University is a rare opportunity. By having Black student models pose in Yale’s hallowed spaces with bonnets, durags, jewelry and whatever made them feel most comfortable, I sought to subvert racist notions of professionalism and remind us that we can exist in academia without censoring ourselves.

Students names:

Joaquin Estevez '24

Kala Keaton and Kennedy Anderson '25

Ikenna Ugbaja '25

Shomari Smith '25

Best,

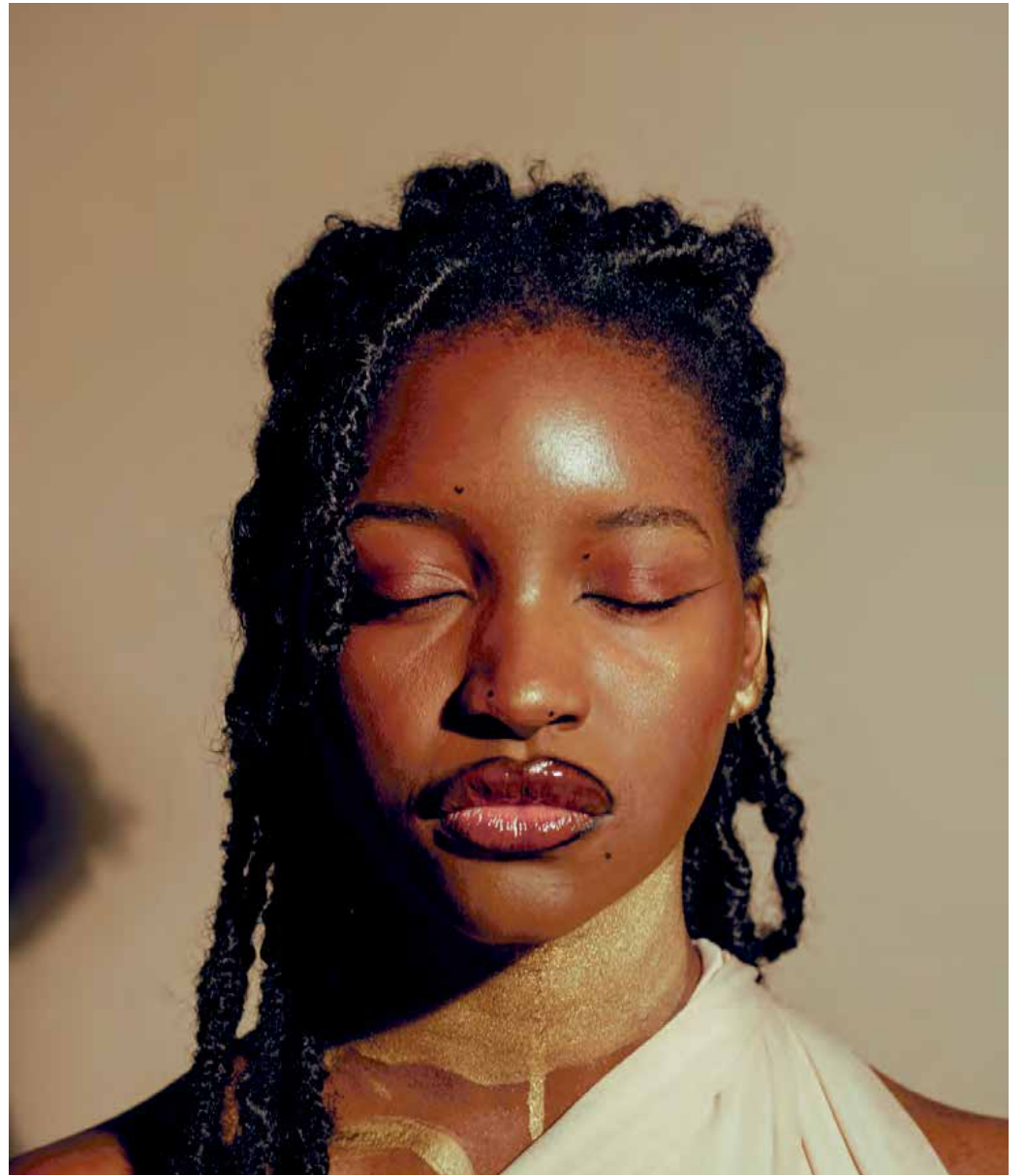
Maxx Shearod



Photos by Maxx Shearod



PHOTO ESSAY



Photos by Elishevlyne Eliason

