NEWS

"The game is on again"
THE WINNER TAKES IT ALL ABBA

Students, faculty fly to Turkey for global climate change conference

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COURTESY OF DANIEL ESTY

At the largest annual international summit on climate change, students and faculty are speaking and reporting on international relations, environmental policy and humanitarian rights. The conference in Antalya, Turkey, ends on Friday.

Yale students and faculty are attending the 31st annual United Nations Conference of the Parties, or COP31, to discuss global climate change.

The conference is taking place in Antalya, Turkey, from Nov. 9 to Nov. 20. The group from Yale is joining other delegates from around the world for events on climate finance, clean energy transitions and international cooperation on environmental issues.

"Making progress on climate change takes rigorous science and the ability to bring together people with competing interests," Yale School of the Environment Dean Indy Burke said. "At COP31, our students engage with country delegations, civil society groups and researchers from around the world to help forge collaborative approaches. They'll carry that experience into environmental leadership roles in their own communities and countries."

Among those attending is Lizeth Ortega Luna ENV '28, a student in the environmental management program. She is reporting for the media service Yale Climate Connections with a focus on Indigenous groups' representation and participation at COP31.

"Scientists see the economic profit of electrification, but oftentimes, we forget that there are some Indigenous communities that choose not to take part in this," Ortega Luna said in a phone interview. "They don't have a way to share their conditions, so they're forced to enter these 100-plus-year agreements that they never had a chance to review and agree to with full consent."

Ortega Luna also questioned the conference's increasingly commercial atmosphere, describing disparities between elaborate national pavilions and smaller spaces available to less-resourced participants.

Other Yalies are focusing on the financial mechanisms needed to help vulnerable countries respond to climate change.

Sarahi Muro Puente ENV '28, another student in the environmental management program, is attending COP31 to learn from and participate in discussions about financial policies.

"It's a lot about how we are going to fund the adaptation needed in certain areas of the world, especially in the developing countries that historically have emitted less but are the ones that are suffering the most from climate change," Muro Puente said in a video interview.

Some professors highlighted the tension between international cooperation and the slow pace of consensus-building.

Daniel Esty LAW '86, a professor of environmental law and policy, spoke at various events at the conference that covered topics from strengthening international climate governance to incorporating environmental commitments in global trade rules.

"Because some people are not taking their commitments seriously, others say, 'If those guys aren't going to follow the commitments to reduce emissions, then we're not going to follow them,'" Esty said in a phone interview. "Once one party starts to defect from the commitments, pretty quickly everybody breaks away, and we don't have a successful response."

Esty emphasized the importance of international trade mechanisms, which he said would impose economic consequences on countries that disregard the agreements.

A. Scott Denning, a visiting professor at the Yale School of the Environment, said COP31 provides a space for countries to come together and find a middle ground for climate negotiations to commence.

"Progress on electrification is likely to be almost entirely driven by developing and middle-income countries, which are worried about the infrastructure costs of electrification," Denning said in a phone interview. "Success looks like negotiating a way around those differences and coming to an agreement that nearly 200 countries can sign up to."

More than 90,000 people registered to attend COP31.

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Yale New Haven Health taps CEO who doubled revenue at UChicago

BY HAMZA MODAN
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The Yale New Haven Health System named Thomas Jackiewicz, the president of the University of Chicago Health System, as its next CEO.

Jackiewicz will take over Feb. 1, 2027, according to a Monday YNHH press release. Chris O'Connor, who had been CEO since 2022 and with the system for 14 years, abruptly left his role in June, and Pamela Sutton-Wallace SPH '97 has served as acting CEO since then.

"Tom is a seasoned and innovative leader with a proven ability to help academic health systems grow, strengthen performance and expand access to exceptional care," Jack Callahan, the chair of the system's board of trustees, said in the press release.

Jackiewicz has led three academic health systems including the University of California San Diego Health System, Keck Medicine of USC and, since 2020, the University of Chicago Health System. The University of Chicago Health System's operating profit increased by more than sixfold while its operating revenue more than doubled during Jackiewicz's six-year tenure at the system, according to the press release.

Howard Forman, a professor of radiology and biomedical imaging and a YNHH clinician, said he expects Jackiewicz to be warmly received and to quickly address the health system's many upcoming challenges. That work includes "working closely with the clinical staff at all levels to ensure their wellbeing at a time when burnout among so many healthcare workers is at or near a high," he said.

Forman also recognized the work O'Connor achieved during his time at YNHH, including leading the hospital through "the extraordinary challenges of COVID."

Forman said that he has liked Jackiewicz's experience working across three different systems while achieving high and seemingly sustainable growth." He also recognized Jackiewicz's connection to the Connecticut region.

"He was born and raised in Bridgeport, Connecticut, so this is a bit of a homecoming for him and while that may not be essential, gives him a great connection to our region," Forman said.

What Jackiewicz is walking into is Connecticut's largest health system, which reported $7.58 billion in operating revenue in September 2025. While the performance has outpaced the average health system in the state, its finances have lagged behind its biggest competitor, Hartford HealthCare, which reported an operating profit of $201.4 million. Earlier this year, YNHH reported operating losses of around $196.8 million.

Across Jackiewicz's six years at the University of Chicago, the medical center climbed from 34th to eighth for access to care in a ranking by Vizient, a health care analytics company. Modern Healthcare named Jackiewicz one of the 100 Most Influential People in Healthcare in 2025.

Harlan Krumholz '80, a cardiologist and the director of the Yale New Haven Hospital Center for Outcomes Research and Evaluation, said he has "heard great things about Tom" and is looking forward to what he will do at YNHH. Krumholz added that the position Jackiewicz will enter is a job that starts with managing money but extends to steering its vision.

"The next CEO will need to steward the system's finances carefully while also giving the community a compelling sense of what is possible in this next era of medicine," Krumholz said.

Krumholz said he is a strong believer in YNHH's positioning at the forefront of innovation and capacity to improve the health of the communities it serves. However, he said, that positioning depends on a leader's ability to shape priorities.

"The institution's success depends on the contributions of everyone in the community, whether they are part of Yale or Yale New Haven Health," he said. "A leader can make a real difference by bringing people together around shared values and a shared mission."

The YNHH employs more than 38,000 employees and medical staff.



XIMENA SOLORZANO / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

Thomas Jackiewicz more than doubled the University of Chicago Health System's operating revenue during his tenure there. At Yale New Haven Health System, he will replace Chris O'Connor, who abruptly left the position five months ago.

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