FROM THE FRONT

"Your decisions reveal your priorities."
JEFF VAN GUNDY

Alums' suit against Corporation rejected by top court

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over 700 alumni from over 40 classes donated funds to the legal effort. The News reported in 2021 that Bond Hill's announcement sparked outrage among alumni.

"Yale needs more, not fewer, alumni support supporting it, in what I'll describe as a difficult time for higher education," Glascoff said in an interview last Thursday, specifically pointing to an impending tax hike on Yale's endowment, which has caused budget tightening across the University.

Glascoff said that, despite the court ruling, he still disagrees with the nomination process.

"I think the more candidates you have and the more opinions you have and the more views you have, the better off the process is," he told the News. "Since I cannot win on the law, I'm trying to win on the policy. I believe it to be a bad policy, and I'm trying to get people's attention to agree with me."

Glascoff said he retained a lobbyist in Washington. Ashe said that he would "join with him" in talking to "people who know members of Congress, know the executive branch and can talk about it, can be persuasive in getting them to try to influence Yale too."

"I think the continuance of the policy as articulated in 2021 will get Yale in trouble, just as the issues at Columbia and Harvard have gotten them into deep trouble, issues of antisemitism and related topics" Glascoff said. He said that he was glad that, unlike Columbia and Harvard, Yale had not been subjected to President Donald Trump's targeted funding cuts, but that "if it wants to stay out of the crosshairs, I think the Corporation should very definitely revisit its policy on alumni trustee nominations and elections."

Bond Hill's rationale for eliminating the petitioning process, as stated in her 2021 message to alumni, was that the route to nomination had scarcely been used until recently, when it was being "embraced by issues-based candidacies, with intense campaigning by petitioners who are materially supported by organizations that seek to advance specific platforms."

Bond Hill wrote at the time that nominees should be elected "without any agenda other than to bring independent judgment to the varied and complex issues facing the university."

When asked about this rationale, Glascoff said: "For the board to function as best it can, I think that it should be objective in being aware of all of the issues of the day and all the policies that need to be considered. And if it is not aware of them, it could not become aware of them if all issue-based candidates were eliminated."

Through the petitioning route, Ashe qualified to be on the ballot in the 2021 election of alumni fellows. A day after that election, which Ashe lost, Bond Hill announced the changes to the nomination process.

The Corporation's next meeting is scheduled to take place on April 25.

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Ximena Solorzano / Head Photography Editor
After Yale stopped allowing alumni to petition to be candidates in trustee elections, two alumni filed a lawsuit challenging the change in 2022. The suit was unsuccessfully argued in multiple courts before the state's supreme court declined to hear it last month.

YCC adopts call for Yale to divest from ICE partners

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has contracts with ICE and the Department of Defense.

"The Advisory Committee on Investor Responsibility considered this topic as part its review process and did not recommend any changes to investment eligibility policies, based on Yale's criteria," University spokesperson Tina Posterli previously wrote in an email to the News. "It's important to note that just because a topic is reviewed by the ACIR, it does not mean the Endowment holds the investment," she added at the time.

Alex William Chen '28, the speaker of the senate, said he "strongly supports" the statement the YCC passed on Sunday, and Saybrook Senator Brendan Kaminski '28 voiced his thanks to the Endowment Justice Collective for organizing teach-ins about divestment.

"I think it just goes to show how many students and how many of our constituents are very passionate about this issue and want to be able to take a greater stance on it," Kaminski said.

Over the years, the YCC has called for changes to Yale's investment policies multiple times. In 2006, the advisory committee cited YCC advocacy in its decision to recommend divestment from oil companies operating in Sudan due to genocide against people in the Darfur region. In 2020, the YCC joined the Endowment Justice Collective in its calls for the University to divest from fossil fuels. In the fall, the senate passed a statement condemning Yale's 2023 donation to Friends of the Israel Defense Forces.

The Endowment Justice Collective has been calling throughout this year for Yale to divest from companies connected to ICE. In late February, around 100 students gathered outside of McInnis' office building to deliver letters that were addressed to trustees and called for divestment ahead of their board meeting.

On the day of that protest, the number of letters that had been sent through an online petition was around 1,600. Now, the count stands at over 2,200, according to a public webpage that shows how many people have sent digital letters calling for divestment.

Of the advisory committee's eight members, two are student representatives — one graduate and one undergraduate — according to a University webpage.

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Garrett Curtis, Photography Editor

Student leaders back academic freedom demands

FREEDOM FROM PAGE 1

Engineering and Applied Sciences Senate and Yale's chapter of the American Association of University Professors outlined five proposed revisions to the Faculty Handbook under the banner of academic freedom.

The undergraduate and graduate student leaders' joint resolution, which endorses those proposals, was approved by the GPSS on Thursday with one opposing vote and by the YCC Senate unanimously on Sunday, during the council's last meeting of the semester.

In February, the AAUP launched a campaign pushing for these stronger protections, which include commitments that Yale will consult faculty before making further revisions to the Faculty Handbook or terminating any school or department. More than 100 faculty members attended a launch meeting, where they sent postcards to University President Maurie McInnis about the need for stronger protections.

The same week, the FAS-SEAS Senate wrote an open letter to Provost Scott Strobel to "strongly request" clearer protections by the end of this semester.

Last month, Strobel announced the formation of a new committee of nine professors tasked with developing a "clear, forward-looking statement" on academic freedom.

In response, the AAUP released a statement that contained mixed faculty responses, from a welcoming of "the administration's recognition that academic freedom is the lifeblood of the university" to a call for "action, not statements."

The students' joint resolution echoes the faculty groups' demand for action, noting that while the committee is a "welcome step," it "stops short of providing concrete, enforceable, and sustainable protections."

GPSS President Sam Haddad LAW '26 said in a phone interview that the GPSS learned about the faculty groups' advocacy through connections with faculty in the groups, as well as posters promoted by the AAUP.

American studies professor Daniel HoSang, the president of Yale's AAUP chapter, wrote in an email to the News that the student resolution "reflects the views of a broad cross-section" of Yale's undergraduate and graduate student bodies in support of faculty's demands, including "the right to teach without fear of censorship or reprisal."

To an inquiry last month about faculty demands for strong academic freedom protections and the criticism that a statement by the provost's committee would not be enough, University spokesperson Tina Posterli wrote in an email to the News that the "Faculty Handbook states clearly that 'academic freedom and the spirit of free inquiry are fundamental to Yale's mission,' and it includes both explicit protections and established procedures for review and redress."

"Yale views academic freedom as a central element of our purpose and mission, and it is committed to protecting the academic freedom of faculty members," Posterli wrote.

Zoe Murray SPH '26, the GPSS advocacy chair, wrote in an email to the News that the united front between faculty and students demonstrated that academic freedom is important for the intellectual life of the "entire Yale community."

"I believe it is essential that university administration understand how a lack of academic freedom impacts students, as future researchers, educators, and professionals whose training depends on the quality and integrity of the academic environment that faculty are able to provide," she wrote.

Chen said that student interests are "inextricable" from faculty's freedom to teach and speak as they wish.

"If they are in some way feeling that they have to curtail what they can teach, what they can speak about in the classroom, then that is stripping Yalies, undergrads and graduate, professional students alike, of the full breadth of an education that they otherwise would have received," Chen said. "Our education is only as good as the freedom that our teachers and faculty have to teach."

The joint resolution also refers to the lawsuit Lee v. Yale, a 2021 case in which Yale argued that the Woodward Report and Faculty Handbook's references to academic freedom were not contractually binding while defending the termination of a School of Medicine faculty member's contract.

"Yale has, for too long, relied on the Woodward Report and the Faculty Handbook's vague protections, which it has even argued are not at all legally binding," Murray wrote, adding that Yale must take "concrete, enforceable steps" to uphold academic freedom.

Posterli, the Yale spokesperson, wrote to the News that Lee had "a voluntary, unpaid appointment with a term limit, and therefore was not considered a Yale employee—a position the court agreed with."

The Graduate & Professional Student Senate has 66 senators, according to its website.

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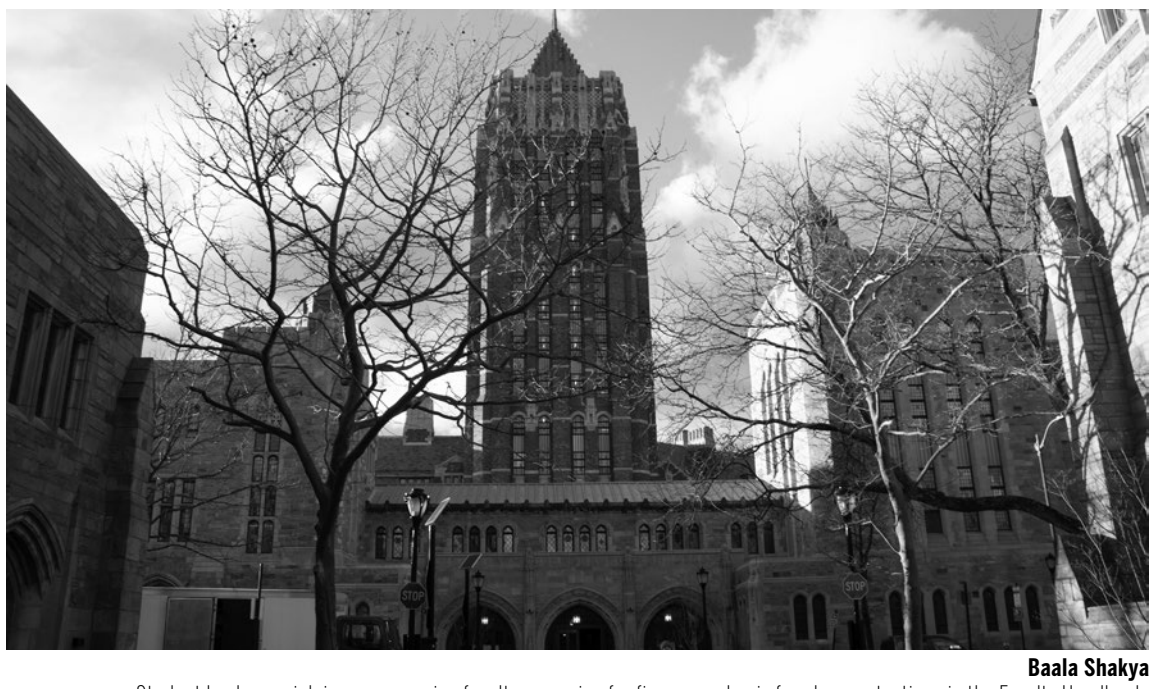

Baala Shakya
Student leaders weigh in on an ongoing faculty campaign for firmer academic freedom protections in the Faculty Handbook.