YCC ELECTIONS

"Mama, don't take my Kodachrome away."
KODACHROME PAUL SIMON

Focus on administrator relations



Garrett Curtis / Photography Editor
The four student leaders running to be president of the Yale College Council have largely focused on criticizing how administrators have handled budget tightening in the wake of an upcoming endowment tax hike.

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referring to first-generation, low-income students.

This year, the YCC sponsored a petition to restore the two distinct summer awards. As of January, the petition had been signed by a quarter of undergraduates.

Over the weekend, Andrew Boanoh '27 and Jalen Bradley '27, the current YCC president and vice president, wrote to the student body to encourage them to sign an open letter decrying alleged financial threats to the Yale Sustainable Food Program. Yale College spokesperson Paul McKinley confirmed that the program was "undergoing changes to the size of its staff," though he did not specify whether the change was a result of budget cuts.

Wahedi said that her campaign focuses on "the fact that students should have to push hard to have their basic quality of life or their constitutional rights on campus." For Wahedi, "empowering Yale" means ensuring that the entire student body has the ability to translate Yale's budget into "better, everyday experiences" for student life.

Wahedi is not alone in that sentiment. Other candidates' platforms have also focused on the YCC's relationship with the Yale College dean's office.

Alex William Chen '28, the current speaker of the YCC Senate, said he was encouraged to run for YCC president when he met with Yale College Dean Pericles Lewis, who was "upset" and "visibly frustrated" in a meeting to discuss reduced summer grant opportunities.

Lewis did not respond to a Thursday request for comment on Chen's description. He also did not respond to a request for comment about candidates' criticisms of his office's budget tightening measures.

"I think it's worthwhile that student groups like the YCC try to find ways to help low-income students," Lewis said in an interview last week. "The part that I'd just like to make clear is that we're increasing financial aid for low-income students next year."

John Robert Walker '28, a student organizer with the Endowment Justice Collective running for president, said he wants to unite student workers and New Haven residents during upcoming union contract negotiations, calling for Yale to "negotiate contracts in good faith so that once an agreement is reached, everyone feels like their labor is valued in our educational community."

He also criticized administrators for making cuts to student resources "in an increasingly disrespectful manner" and said that the YCC has been "ineffective in countering these pressures from the administration."

"I have spent the last year learning how power functions at this institution, and these goals and strategies used to organize with the Endowment Justice Collective can translate into building student power for widely popular demands," Walker said in an interview.

Paul Park '27, another candidate, said that "written agreements with Yale College on what the student consultation actually means" is necessary for redefining the way Yale administrators consider the student body when making budget cuts. Park believes that students should be a part of the decision making process.

"These stipends that YCC is paying for is a good temporary bandage, but it shouldn't be necessary. It shouldn't be necessary for YCC to be paying out of their budget, out of their funding, to make up for the administration's cuts," Park said in an interview. "We're then losing more money that we could be spending for students. And a big sentiment that I've felt or that I've heard when I was walking around talking to people is that they felt they wanted more student life. They wanted more community building events."

Cemre Keles '28 and Remy Strichartz '29 dropped out of the presidential race before the debate between candidates, which was held on Sunday.

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Would YCC hopefuls meet with trustees?

BY ARIA LYNN-SKOV AND LEO NYBERG
STAFF REPORTERS

Yale College Council President Andrew Boanoh '27, along with around 25 other invited student leaders, had lunch with members of Yale's board of trustees in February.

The four presidential hopefuls vying for Boanoh's position had differing opinions on whether they would take such a meeting next year, but all candidates said they would try to bring student demands to the trustees' attention.

Trustees of the Yale Corporation, the University's main governing body, have faced student and alumni criticism for not engaging with students on issues like divestment from companies with ties to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Israel. At an Endowment Justice Collective rally last week, which encouraged divestment from companies with those ties, students held signs that read "Trustees you can't hide" and "Yale Corp, WYA?" — an abbreviation for "where you at."

"I would refuse to meet with the Board of Trustees until they're willing to engage with the entire student body in good faith," John Robert Walker '28, a presidential candidate and organizer with the Endowment Justice Collective, said in an interview at the rally. "I will not be a pawn that the Corporation uses to legitimize its relationship to the student body and to student leaders."

Ahead of the most recent Yale Corporation meeting held on Feb. 28, roughly 100 students walked to Sheffield-Sterling-Strathcona Hall, which houses University President Maurie McInnis' office, and delivered letters urging the Corporation to divest from companies tied to ICE. Organizers said they rallied students to send a total of 1,300 emails to the Yale Corporation ahead of passing out the physical letters. The number of emails sent through the online petition is now over 2,400.

In its last meeting of the year, the YCC Senate voted to adopt a public statement calling for the Corporation to divest from companies with connections to ICE. Previously, the Advisory Committee on Investor Responsibility, which makes recommendations to the Corporation, has rejected student pitches for divestment from weapons manufacturers, natural gas companies and Palantir — a data analysis company that has contracted with the Trump administration and the Department of Defense.

University spokesperson Tina Posterli previously confirmed to the News that the advisory committee did not recommend changes to Yale's investment policies in response to those requests. Posterli added, "It's important to note that just because a topic is reviewed by the ACIR, it does not mean the Endowment holds the investment."

Alex William Chen '28, another presidential candidate, also attended the divestment rally last week but said he would take a meeting with trustees if given the opportunity.

He said his primary goal in such a meeting would be to "elevate issues" the Corporation does not usually hear, like the divestment calls at the rally.

After the YCC presidential debate on Sunday, candidates Sahra Wahedi '27 and Paul Park '27 said they would also meet with trustees if invited.

"I would take up that opportunity," Wahedi said in an interview. "I think members of the YCC rarely have the opportunity to engage directly with the board of trustees, with members of higher administration. So I would definitely take that spot up."

She added that she might also invite leaders of groups like Yalies4Palestine and the Endowment Justice Collective, and she might send an email to students asking them to submit questions to potentially ask the trustees.

Boanoh told the News in March that in advance of his lunch with the trustees, students reached out to him about campus issues ranging from free laundry to divestment.

Park said he would be willing to take the meetings and that it was important for the YCC to "expand its borders" and talk to senior administrators and trustees "from the perspective of students."

"Change is not going to happen by itself unless we advocate for it," Park said.

Voting for YCC elections begins on Thursday at 9 a.m.

Anayah Accilien contributed reporting.

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What words appear most in YCC candidate statements?

BY ANAYAH ACCILIEN AND TYLER MATUKONIS
STAFF REPORTERS

In the race for positions in the Yale College Council, concerns over University budget cuts have emerged as a central theme across campaigns, shaping how candidates describe both the student government's role and its relationship with administrators.

A News analysis of candidate statements and campaign materials across races for president, vice president and events director shows repeated emphasis on financial language. The word "summer" appeared 21 times, while "funding," "financial," "president" and "administration" each appeared roughly 20 times. "Laundry," often used by candidates to reference student services and everyday costs, appeared 38 times.

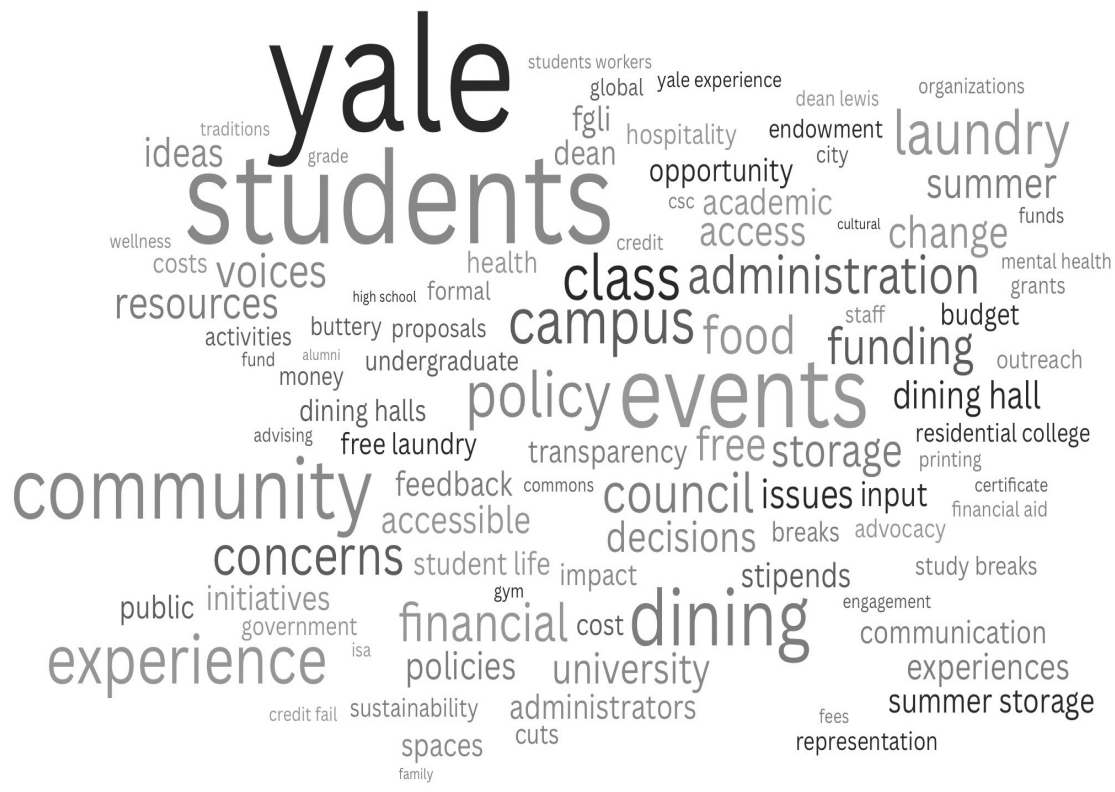
The word "storage" was mentioned 24 times and "summer storage" an additional 15. The YCC Senate recently passed a stipend program after Yale College Dean Pericles Lewis affirmed that summer storage support for first-generation, low-income students would be officially phased out this year. YCC leaders said they were "disappointed" to not have received prior warning. President Donald Trump's signing of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which includes a provision to increase the tax rate on the endowment incomes of the wealthiest universities' from 1.4 to 8 percent, caused University administrators to implement budget cuts across Yale's schools and divisions.

Candidates' complaints largely focused on the ways budget cuts have impacted Yale College, which this year combined the noncompetitive International Study Award and the Summer Experience Award into a single summer grant opportunity, reduced the staff of the Yale Sustainable Food Program from four to three and reduced the size of its administrative staff.

Candidates differed in their assessments about how to help students who are being affected by recent cuts, with some describing stipends as necessary short-term support and others arguing that they risk shifting responsibility for student support away from the University.

Alex William Chen '28, the current senate speaker, said in his campaign materials that he led a petition opposing the consolidation of summer funding programs, which drew more than 1,700 signatures. Throughout his campaign, he has highlighted his advocacy related to the summer grant changes and said he pressed administrators on financial decisions affecting students.

Sahra Wahedi '27, a current senator, has pointed to her experience meeting with administrators in her role as the deputy director of financial policy. She said students should receive earlier notice of administrative decisions and more consistent communication about any changes affecting funding and campus services.



Tyler Matukonis
Voting in Yale College Council elections begins on Thursday. A News analysis of the statements released by students running for council positions found that student resources were a campaign theme.

In John Robert Walker '28, a student organizer with the Endowment Justice Collective, criticized the YCC's ability to respond to administrative decisions and called for broader organizing that would include Yale workers and New Haven residents.

Paul Park '27 cited conversations with 243 students, 209 of whom said they were unfamiliar with the YCC or viewed it as ineffective. His campaign emphasized cost-of-living concerns, including student services and funding reductions, and called for clearer communication between the council and the student body.

Polls for YCC elections open at 9 a.m. on Thursday.

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