FROM THE FRONT

"When the one you care for just takes it all, washing you down like a waterfall"
CARRY YOU HOME ZARA LARSSON

Chun, nearing contract's end, slammed for leadership

CHUN FROM PAGE 1

Chun did not respond to the News' request for responses to a detailed list of questions about her leadership as athletic director and the criticisms leveled against her.

University spokesperson Karen Peart declined to comment on an individual personnel matter.

A Colgate coterie

On July 1, 2018, Chun started her new job as Yale's Thomas A. Beckett director of athletics, a position endowed by Yale alumni to honor her predecessor, who had been Yale's athletic director for 24 years. Chun is the first woman to hold the position.

Five people who worked in the department at the time told the News that Chun's leadership quickly eroded the camaraderie among Yale Athletics staff.

She forced out a number of longtime employees, according to six administrators, staff and coaches who worked there at the time. One former staff member who said he left as a result of his peers' departures described a moment of "rapid turnover," and a former head coach said firings by Chun created a "chill" in the department.

Some coaches told the News that the high turnover was reasonable, and many who criticized the pace of turnover also agreed that it was Chun's prerogative to hire and fire whomever she wanted. Kylie Stannard, Yale's head men's soccer coach, wrote in an email to the News that "whenever there is a new leader of a team or organization, there is always going to be some turnover in the early years."

After axing many longtime Yale Athletics staff members, Chun hired a number of employees from Colgate University, where she had been the athletic director before taking the Yale job.

Two of Chun's current top deputies, Ann-Marie Guglieri and Mary Berdo, both worked under her at Colgate. Guglieri started at Yale with Chun in July 2018, and Berdo soon joined the next year. In Yale Athletics' top administrative unit, the director's office, four of six people — including Chun — formerly worked at Colgate. In addition, the News identified nine other Yale Athletics hires since 2018 who formerly worked at Colgate.

"It seems weird: You do a national search for a very competitive athletic program and you come back with 10 people from Colgate," said Matthew Dean, a former head of membership services at the Yale Golf Course whose father, a longtime administrator, left the department in 2020 after butting heads with Chun. "That doesn't make sense to me."

Laz Fernandez, a high school athletic director and former assistant women's basketball coach under Chun at Colgate, told the News that he thought Chun's bringing her own staff was normal in athletics.

"It's like comparing it to a head basketball coach being hired from one school to another and bringing their associate head coach," Fernandez said.

'Their way or the highway'

Wayne Dean was one of Yale Athletics' most senior administrators, serving as a deputy director of the department when Chun arrived in 2018. He was also a close friend of Allain, according to his son, Matthew Dean.

In 2018, when Wayne Dean heard the news that Chun would be Yale's next athletic director, he called the head coach of Colgate's men's hockey team at the time, Don Vaughan, according to Matthew Dean. He said his father was advised by Vaughan not to get on Chun's "wrong side." The News could not reach Vaughan for comment.

Wayne Dean ended up on the wrong side, according to six former employees. Matthew Dean said his father felt he had to leave the place where he had worked for 34 years because of Chun's mistreatment of him. Wayne Dean retired in July 2020 and died suddenly that November.

Allain wrote in a text message to the News that "Wayne Dean would have been a tremendous asset to the new administration."

"He was extremely competent, hard working, selfless and the ultimate team player," Allain wrote. "Yet they demeaned him, treated him as if he were a problem and made him so miserable that he finally left a job he loved."

Five former employees said that Chun and her top administrators have demanded a culture of loyalty, allowing little room for pushback or dialogue. These employees said that the culture created an in-group of loyal employees, which alienated others. Chun's hirings since 2018 have replaced dissenters with employees who will follow her top-down leadership style, according to six former coaches and staff.

"It was basically their way or the highway," Matthew Dean said, referring to Chun's top brass. Chun "would hire the people who were closest to her that have already proven their loyalty to her."

In a 2018 interview with the #3Pillars Academy, released by the America East Conference, Guglieri — who worked under Chun at Colgate at the time — described how she treats her boss. "Always, always be on their side, I think this cannot be overstated enough," Guglieri said.

"If you wanna be viewed on the inner circle, or be a member of the inner circle, you can't think like an outsider, and you can't be perceived as if you are an outsider from people that are making the decisions," she added. "Be really, really cognizant of always being on the side of your one-up."

Henry Harutunian, a 93-year-old former Yale head fencing coach, said in an interview at his home in the New Haven suburbs that he had told Chun in 2018, during his 49th year as coach, that he wished to stay for a 50th season and then retire.

In March 2019, to his surprise, he was told by the Yale Athletics administrator assigned to his team that he would be let go a year before hitting that milestone, Harutunian recalled. He said he was not given a reason for his firing, and Yale fencing alumni at the time told the News that it came as a shock. The administrator, who has since left Yale Athletics, did not reply to requests for comment.

Three current Yale head coaches came to Chun's defense when presented with their colleagues' allegations about the culture she oversaw.

Brian Hamm, who became Yale's head baseball coach in 2022, denied that there was a division between coaches who fell in line and those who did not.

"We are all on the same team - Team Yale. I don't view this as an 'in-group/out-group' dynamic," he wrote in an email to the News this month, adding that, in an organization like Yale Athletics, "it is not possible to keep everyone happy all the time."

Erin Appleman, who became Yale's head volleyball coach in 2003, agreed with Hamm's view.

"There's a lot of support from staff and administrators across all our programs, and we're all working toward the same goal," Appleman wrote in response to a question about the alleged division in the department. "After more than 20 years here, I've always felt the department is supportive and inclusive."

When Chun took the Yale job, she wrote in an article for AthleticDirectorU: "I do not expect the Yale community to simply embrace me because of my title. I will have to earn and re-earn their trust and commitment every single day through my actions."

Very visible — on social media

In his letter to McInnis, Allain wrote that Chun's "singular talent is self promotion."

Six former employees said Allain was right. Often the first place they would point is her social media presence. Chun maintains an active Instagram account, frequently posting photos of herself at Yale events. Three employees recalled Chun telling staff and coaches to follow her and like her Instagram posts.



Yale Athletics
Former members of the athletic department told the News that Vicky Chun forced out longtime employees and insulated herself from staff while fixating on her online presence.

"I felt like we were being led by, like, an 18-year-old girl," one former head coach said.

Three former staff members and one coach complained that Chun always wanted to get in photo ops, something they said Beckett, her predecessor, would shy away from.

Chun's social media received serious criticism within the department for one specific post, the former head coach said. On January 16, 2022, Yale's men's hockey team played against Colgate at Ingalls Rink. Chun posted a photo of herself with the hashtag "#GOGATE," apparently rooting against Yale while not at the home rink. Chun graduated from Colgate in 1991, and worked there until she was hired by Yale. Four former coaches and staff members said it was inappropriate that Chun seemed to be rooting against the program she led.

In a June 2025 interview with AthleticDirectorU, Chun was asked about how she balances a public social media presence and her private life.

"I really try to be transparent," Chun said. "It is a fine line. And I have gotten in trouble a couple of times of maybe being too transparent."

While Chun was focused on social media, nine former employees said, she remained largely out of sight to much of her staff. A former senior administrator said that "access to Vicky was very limited" and that he struggled to get meetings with her.

Seven employees said that Guglieri ran the bulk of the department's day-to-day operations and controlled access to Chun.

"You rarely saw her, you never really got to meet her, you had a mandatory semi-annual meeting and everything had to be vetted. They always said 'Vicky doesn't like surprises,'' a former head coach said.

In a 2022 interview with the One Question Leadership Podcast about her role in Yale Athletics, Guglieri described how she managed access to Chun.

"You have to be cognizant that someone in her position is talking to a thousand different people a day, and you never want her to be caught flat-footed, that they're telling her something that she's hearing for the first time," Guglieri said. "I'm a big believer in 'never let your boss open a sealed envelope.'"

Three coaches disputed their colleagues' opinions on Chun's involvement and social media presence.

Hamm wrote that Chun's style is reflective of broader changes in Division I athletics, where the responsibilities of the athletic director "now mirror those of a CEO."

In response to a question about Chun's presence around Yale Athletics, Stannard, the soccer coach, wrote that "Vicky has so many responsibilities and that is why her staff is so crucial for supporting her."

Former Yale President Peter Salovey in 2021 extended Chun's contract for five additional years.

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Men's hockey's all-time top scorer named its top coach

BY LIZA KAUFMAN
STAFF REPORTER

Yale Athletics announced Monday afternoon that Jeff Hamilton '01 will be the next head coach of the Yale men's hockey team.

An Englewood, Ohio native, Hamilton is no stranger to Yale or Ingalls Rink, having sported the Yale jersey from 1996 to 2001.

Hamilton was a former captain and made history during his time at The Whale, going down as the all-time leading scorer and totaling 174 points, including 80 goals and 94 assists, in his 127 games as a Bulldog.

Hamilton's wife, Jane, was a forward on the Yale women's hockey team from 1999 to 2001 and was named the most valuable player of the 2000-2001 season.

"I am thrilled that Jeff will be returning to the Whale to lead our storied men's ice hockey program. His deep understanding of Yale, combined with his experience and leadership, makes him the ideal person to guide us forward," athletics director Vicky Chun is quoted as saying in a Yale Athletics news release.

Hamilton's homecoming comes after longtime coach Keith Allain '80 announced his retirement in August after 19 years at the helm of the men's hockey team.

Following an impressive career at Yale, Hamilton played one season overseas for the Finnish team Kärpät and then returned to the United States to play for the American Hockey League's Bridgeport Sound Tigers and the New York Islanders. He then joined the Hartford Wolf Pack for the 2004-2005 season. He played eight games for the Russian Ak Bars Kazan before turning to the Sound Tigers.

Hamilton then had a stint in the National Hockey League. In 2006, Hamilton made his debut with the Chicago Blackhawks. After one season in the Windy City, in which he tallied 18 goals and 21 assists, Hamilton signed with the Carolina Hurricanes in July 2007. A year later, he returned to Chicago and the AHL as a member of the Chicago Wolves, before going up north to join the Toronto Maple Leafs' roster.

His career then took him to Switzerland to play for HC Lugano from 2009 to 2010 and concluded in Finland, the same nation where his professional career began after his time in New Haven.

After wrapping up his career overseas, Hamilton returned to Connecticut and committed himself to coaching and developing the next generation of hockey players through the Connecticut Junior Rangers program, of which he is a co-owner.

Although Hamilton has not coached at the collegiate level, his work with the Junior Rangers has produced more than 100 players who have gone on to compete at the collegiate and professional levels.

He also works with athletes and their families through his company, 203 Sports Group, to navigate the recruiting process.

Hamilton is excited to return to the rink he and his wife called home.

"Building on the foundation laid by my greatest mentor, Coach Tim Taylor, and on the extraordinary success of the past decades, we will pursue excellence with the highest expectations," Hamilton is quoted as saying in the news release. "My staff and I are committed to elevating the student-athlete experience to the highest standard of recruiting, developing, and championing the very best in college hockey, while providing opportunities that are uniquely Yale."

Players said Hamilton made a strong first impression in his meeting with the team on Monday afternoon.

"We're really excited and thankful to have Coach Hamilton leading the program," sophomore forward Ronan O'Donnell '28 wrote in a text message to the News. "What stands out right away is his competitive drive, it's clear why he's had such a successful career in the sport."

O'Donnell added that Hamilton's emphasis on team culture stood out.

"He brings a high standard and a development-focused mindset that I'm looking forward to buying into," O'Donnell wrote. "His emphasis on culture and family really came through in his opening remarks to the team, which is something we value greatly within the program. I'm excited for this new era of Yale men's ice hockey with Coach Hamilton at the helm."

Yale finished the 2025-2026 season 8–22–1.

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Yale Athletics
Following a national search process, Jeff Hamilton '01 was named the next head coach of the men's hockey team in a meeting with the team on Monday afternoon..