

“The visionary starts with a clean sheet of paper and reimagines the world.”
MALCOLM GLADWELL, AMERICAN WRITER

Meal plan changes set to make Commons visits less common for many

BY JERRY GAO
STAFF REPORTER

In recent memory, students have been able to use their meal swipes for lunch at Yale’s food court-style dining hall, Commons, and the grab-and-go convenience store, the Bow Wow.

But this year, students will have limited opportunities for lunch at those locations — some less than others.

Students on each of Yale’s three meal plans will now have dining points, which are valued at roughly \$1 each, to use at the school’s retail dining locations, including Commons and the Bow Wow. They will no longer be able to purchase lunch with meal swipes at these locations.

A Commons meal will cost 11 points, according to a Yale Hospitality spokesperson, which is discounted compared to the \$16 rate that someone would pay for a Commons meal in cash.

For 11 points, students on Full, Flex and Connect could get at most 27, 54 and 34 Commons meals per semester, respectively, if they spend their points only there. For a student on the Full plan, that would mean roughly two meals on average at Commons per week.

Undergraduate students living on campus must choose between the Full and Flex meal plans. First-year students are required

to be on the Full plan. Undergraduates living off campus can opt for Full or Flex plans, the less expensive Connect plan or no meal plan at all.

The Full plan provides unlimited access to the 14 residential college dining halls along with 300 points. Flex offers 14 meal swipes per week at residential colleges and 600 points. The Connect plan provides five meal swipes per week along with 375 points.

In previous years, students on the Full plan had only meal swipes and no dining points, while those on the Flex plan had 14 weekly swipes and 300 points. Students previously could transfer meal swipes to Commons and the Bow Wow for lunch, and points were typically used at non-transferable retail locations, such as the on-campus cafe, the Elm.

One new feature of the Full plan allows for unlimited visits to dining halls during the same meal period at residential dining halls.

However, students with the Full plan will be limited to one entrance per meal period at the Slifka Center for Jewish Life’s kosher dining hall.

Commons will begin its regular lunch service on Sept. 2 and is open Monday through Thursday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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TIM TAI

Instead of a lunch swipe, a Commons meal will cost 11 dining points.

YCC Senate to meet behind glass as new speaker stresses transparency

BY ASHER BOISKIN
STAFF REPORTER

This summer, Alex Chen ’28 took the helm of the Yale College Council Senate, becoming the first sophomore in recent memory to become its speaker.

The speaker’s role, outlined in the YCC Constitution, makes Chen the presiding officer of the 28-member Senate. The speaker designs agendas, moderates meetings and conveys Senate concerns to the Executive Board. Chen told the News he is focused on reforms to earn the trust of the student body.

“Leadership in student government doesn’t have to be merely a figurehead or a talking piece or a resume climber,” Chen said in an interview. “I want my speakership to be the boldest, most involved tenure in YCC history.”

His first proposed change, which Chen calls “auto-matching,” would ensure that senators who pass legislation meet directly with the Yale administrators responsible for the policy area in question. That process would prevent passed bills from stalling due to unresponsive or indifferent administrators, he said.

“I will spend the time to match senators with the relevant administrator to at least have a conversation,” Chen said.

He also said he planned to introduce a formal rules package to structure Senate debate. In the past, Chen said, discussions often faltered without ground rules.

Chen’s third reform would make use of the constitutional provision allowing the speaker to invite administrators to attend Senate meetings. He said administrators should attend more regularly to hear student concerns and answer questions directly.

“The only way for Yale administrators to understand how we think, how the student body thinks, is if they’re coming to field questions from us, to engage in dialogue,” Chen said.

Chen sees the three reforms as ways to improve the YCC’s reputation. In past years, students have criticized the YCC for focusing on formals and cookie-fueled study breaks instead of tackling issues like mental health, dining accessibility and water filtration. Some have also admitted to not understand-

ing what the council actually does.

Born in Philadelphia to Chinese immigrants, Chen traces his political interests to his family’s history. His parents’ escape from communism for the United States instilled in him a commitment to “give back to a nation that has welcomed my family,” he said.

“And that begins in my campus community,” he added.

Last fall, Chen served as a Morse College delegate, a position students can earn after attending two Senate meetings and receiving confirmation from the Senate. He chose not to run for the First-Year Class Council, seeking a “more policy-oriented” forum rather than one focused on “event planning,” he said. In the spring, he secured a Senate seat, representing more than four hundred Morse students.

Over the summer, Chen worked with the Democratic staff of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security.

Chen said he wants his term as YCC Senate speaker to be defined by trustworthiness, reform and honesty. He said he planned to work closely with YCC President Andrew Boanoh ’27 and Vice President Jalen Bradley ’27 to ensure students see their representatives as effective.

“I hope I can prove that I tried my best to be a good public servant, to engage, to fulfill the promises that I made, not only to my 27 member senators, but to the six and a half thousand undergrads,” Chen said.

As the first official act of his speakership, Chen has relocated Senate meetings from Rosenfeld Hall to the Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning in Sterling Memorial Library — a more central location, he said.

The Senate will meet there in a glass-walled room, a move that Chen said symbolizes transparency and will encourage students walking by to observe YCC proceedings.

“Everyone will be walking through and seeing us,” Chen said. “That’s very important. And I encourage everyone to come stop by.”

The YCC Senate will convene Sunday for its first meeting of the semester.

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BAALA SHAKYA / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

Alex Chen ’28, a sophomore recently elected as the Yale College Council Senate speaker, said he plans to implement reforms to increase senators’ transparency and their interactions with administrators.

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