FROM THE FRONT

"Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin."
MOTHER TERESA ALBANIAN-INDIAN CATHOLIC NUN

Room, resource capacity stretched by rapid growth

NURSING FROM PAGE 1

the School of Nursing's dean, celebrated enrollment growth as a reflection of student belief in the school's vision. But students currently enrolled in the master's in nursing degree program — by far the largest program at the school, encompassing 486 of 558 total nursing students last academic year — said that the school has strained to keep pace with its own growth.

In an April 7 announcement, Emami called the School of Nursing's enrollment increase from the 2023-24 to the 2025-26 academic year — in which the number of master's students rose by 44.1 percent — "a powerful testament to the confidence that students place in YSN as a leader in nursing education and leadership development."

Conversations with current students reveal a complicated picture of how enrollment growth has affected the classroom experience.

"You do just feel like a number," Alana Plumb NUR '28, a student in the family nurse practitioner track, the largest nursing specialty, said this spring. "I don't think they often know your name."

Plumb estimated that her class of first-year students — who complete a year of intensive coursework to become nurses before entering the two-year MSN program — consisted of 112 people. The master's program also enrolls registered nurses who are seeking an advanced degree.

Growth in MSN degree program enrollment was the driving factor behind the school's 50.8 percent enrollment increase between the 2022-23 and 2025-26 school years. The sharpest jump came in the 2023-24 school year, when the school added nearly 100 students.

The MSN program's growth can be directly linked to Yale's rise in a recent U.S. News & World Report national ranking of master's programs in nursing.

The degree program rose this year from No. 30 to No. 14 in the ranking, which Emami said deserved celebration in the April message. The U.S. News & World Report weighs the number of master's students enrolled at a nursing school, along with the number of master's degrees the school awards, as 9 percent of its ranking methodology.

But nine nursing students said that clinical opportunities and course quality have lagged behind a rapid expansion of the student body.

"YSN recognizes that growth creates pressure," the school said in an April statement to the News, adding that it has taken steps to align faculty, staff and clinical preceptor capacity to accommodate a larger student body.

Spaces under strain

The School of Nursing occupies a unique space in American nursing education. It was the first to train nurses through university education rather than hospital apprenticeship, and its graduate entry pre-specialty in nursing program, or GEPN, remains one of the field's most compressed routes into advanced practice.

Recent student enrollment growth has coincided with shortages not only in classroom space but also in school supplies. Plumb said that professors have stopped supplying scratch paper for exams, citing budget constraints and requiring students to bring their own materials.

Academic buildings open at 7:30 a.m. By 8 a.m., Lara Keskin NUR '27 said, the study rooms are all taken "because there's so many students now."

In the school's simulation labs, where students practice clinical skills on high-fidelity medical mannequins, supplies are increasingly reused rather than replaced — and often, items like IVs don't come prepared for use, Plumb said.

"If I need to learn how to start an IV from a bag, it needs to have fluid in it," she said. "I need to know how to actually clear the line and get the air out."

Starting an IV on an empty bag means students may only be able to practice insertion mechanics, not the downstream steps of priming the line and removing air bubbles. Without fluid-filled IV bags, students have fewer opportunities to practice the procedure in full before encountering it in a clinical setting.

Keskin, who also serves as a teaching assistant for the simulation lab — a central part of YSN's training model and a key draw for prospective students, offering early hands-on clinical experience — said classmates have described more limited access to the center as the first-year cohort expands.

In a statement to the News, the school said its Simulation Center has achieved national accreditation and that these efforts "support both the capacity and quality of student training by expanding access to a wide variety of well-supervised clinical learning environments."

Inside the classroom

Several students interviewed by the News, including Walker, said they were frustrated by institutional pressures tied to enrollment growth — reflected, they said, in larger classes, disorganized teaching and an accelerated pace of coursework.

Keskin questioned the motivations behind the school's enrollment expansion and expressed concern that further growth would inhibit future students' ability to receive the "maximum education that they can get."

The strain on the School of Nursing's educational infrastructure is most visible in core courses that members of each cohort take together, regardless of specialty: pathophysiology, health assessment and pharmacology. These courses are designed to give the entire student body a shared clinical foundation before students diverge into their specialty tracks during their master's years.

Last year's first-year cohort, which had doubled in size from the year before, still attended mandatory lectures in a single classroom. Unlike undergraduate lecture courses, where large class sizes are the norm, the School of Nursing has traditionally emphasized small cohorts. Several students, including Plumb, said the current scale makes it difficult to engage or to be known.

Complaints about Care of Adult Patient, a required first-year class, have circulated through the school long enough that students said they entered already having been warned about the course. Students across program years gave similar accounts of abrasive commentary from faculty during the class' first assessment.

"'Don't cry in here. If you want to cry, go to the bathroom and cry,'" Belinda Kuo NUR '28, a second-year MSN student, recounted a professor saying in an interview with the News this spring.

The school did not respond to questions about specific classroom incidents, citing policy against commenting on faculty performance.

Unfulfilled promises

Along with the accelerated three-year direct-entry structure it offers, the Yale School of Nursing is one of the few nursing schools that arranges clinical placements on students' behalf. For some, that promise has not been fully realized.

Clinical placements are shifts in care settings where preceptors — licensed clinicians who agree to supervise a nursing student — provide hands-on training. Students complete up to 1,000 clinical hours to graduate and qualify for a nursing license that allows them to independently diagnose illnesses, prescribe medications and create treatment plans.

But clinical placements are dependent on a preceptor pool that has not kept pace with nursing enrollment growth. A nationwide shortage of willing preceptors has strained clinical education across nursing programs, and the nursing workforce remains stretched following the pandemic, with fewer experienced clinicians feeling able to take on students. At Yale, the placement system is further strained by the growth in the number of students it must find preceptors for.

Yale New Haven Hospital, one of the largest academic medical centers in New England, is frequently cited by the nursing school as a central site for clinical training. Liz Daskalakis NUR '26, a second-year master's student, said she discovered after enrolling that the hospital does not routinely take YSN students, and that placements instead send students across Connecticut — and sometimes outside of the state.

"I never realized that you weren't always at that hospital," Daskalakis said. "That's one of the draws to the school."

Some students said they commute more than four hours a day to reach their assigned clinical sites. Kuo said her labor and delivery rotation was assigned to a hospital in Danbury, roughly an hour away. Students in larger specialty cohorts have been warned they may be placed out of state next semester.

"Our professor said, 'I'm going to draw out of a hat and you guys just have to go,'" Keskin recalled, "'because we have no other placements to put you guys in.'"

Asked about strain on clinical placements, YSN said it has worked to keep pace with enrollment. "When student numbers increase, YSN takes steps to align faculty, staff and clinical preceptor capacity and to expand access to clinical placements through formal agreements and partnerships," the school wrote in its statement. "Program growth is necessary for YSN's sustainability and is central to addressing the nationwide nursing shortage that endangers lives."

But because clinical hours are mandatory, the location and quality of an assignment can have outsized consequences for nursing students.

Amid rising frustration, students endure

Students consistently pointed to the community they build with one another as one of the program's most enduring strengths. The intensity of a three-year program, they said, produces close relationships that persist across cohorts.

Dang Lam NUR '26, like many graduating second-year MSNs, expects the "the Yale name — the Ivy League name" to carry weight when he returns home to California.

"But it's nothing crazy," he said. "I think it's just a little boost."

Students across cohorts, including Walker and Daskalakis, said they approach the program with growing pragmatism. Given the pace and structure of the curriculum, several said their focus has shifted away from trying to change the system and toward simply completing it.

In response to these student criticisms, the school cited its 2025 graduating student survey, which it said showed "strong outcomes in overall satisfaction, preparation for employment, and likelihood to recommend YSN" to prospective students. It also identified "opportunities for continued improvement in communication, coordination, and consistency."

"A lot of us are very disappointed. For how much we're paying in tuition and the Yale name, I would expect things to be a lot more organized," said Kuo. "A lot of us don't even like telling people we're at Yale, not because we're embarrassed, but because we're just so disappointed."

Yale School of Nursing was founded in 1923.

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Dining menus run on cycles

BY ANAYAH ACCILIEN
STAFF REPORTER

"Shifting upper-level move-in closer to the start of classes distributes the work more evenly," Boyd wrote. "It also reduces the cost of reopening each year, at. 2.

Yale's flagship residential communities find themselves this year in communities of their own — distinguished not by mascots and traditions, but by varying menu cycles.

In order to triple the food options available to students, the 14 residential college dining halls have been organized into three different clusters — called "dining communities" — that each operate on different weeks of a four-week menu schedule. Additionally, Commons will now feature sushi, poke bowls and Latin-inspired cuisine, functioning for the first time on a rotating menu cycle.

"Students were definitely craving more of a diversity in the options that were available to them, each and every day throughout the dining ecosystem," Brendan Kaminski '28, Yale College Council chief of staff and last year's deputy dining policy director, said in a phone interview with the News.

A Yale Hospitality spokesperson wrote that through close collaboration with the YCC and Heads of Colleges, as well as the solicitation of student feedback, administrators were able to expand salad bar protein choices, including plant-based options like beans, lentils and tofu.

"While expanded protein choices are one component, the broader priority is variety, balance, and customization," a Yale Hospitality spokesperson wrote in an email to the News.

The changes to Commons menus and the creation of the three dining communities were announced to students in two Aug. 20 emails — one from Yale Hospitality and one from YCC President Alex William Chen '28 and YCC Vice President Michelle Jimenez '28.

Both emails included a graphic depicting the breakdown of the three residential college groups, accompanied by thick color-coded lines mapping the paths between the dining communities' member residential colleges.

According to the Yale Hospitality website, one dining community consists of Pauli Murray, Benjamin Franklin, Silliman and Timothy Dwight colleges; another comprises Ezra Stiles, Morse, Trumbull, Berkeley and Grace Hopper colleges and the third is made up of Davenport, Saybrook, Pierson, Branford and Jonathan Edwards colleges.

The website notes that grilled cheese and chicken tender lunches will continue to rotate on Thursdays in every residential college dining hall.

Greek yogurt, a popular breakfast offering, is also returning to the residential college dining halls this year, according to the Yale Hospitality email.

"I'd also often hear students from a variety of backgrounds asking for more protein options in the dining hall, especially as last year's dining options included significantly less Greek yogurt," Thy Luong '28, who served as a YCC dining director alongside Kaminski last year, wrote in a text message to the News.

Luong said that the change gives more options to students with dietary restrictions, increasing accessibility and "making students happier about the autonomy they have over their dining choices at Yale."

Yale Hospitality has previously made unpopular changes to dining at Yale. Students expressed discontent over the reduction in hot food offerings at certain dining halls with the introduction of "Greens, Grains, & Grill" menus in spring 2025, along with a switch from ceramic to bamboo plates.

Last fall, clementines replaced chocolate chip cookies among Commons offerings — a move that was rolled back and replaced with a rotating clementines-and-cookies system in response to student feedback.

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