NEWS

"There is a light that never goes out."
THE QUEEN IS DEAD THE SMITHS

Increased dining offerings and staggered menus spark joy for students

BY ANAYAH ACCILIEN AND HAILEY YOUNG
STAFF REPORTERS



MARTIN PERALTA / HEAD PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

Yale College's 2026-27 total tuition and fees will mark a 3.92 percent bump, continuing a decade-long trend of similar increases. A proposed Yale College Council referendum would ask if students condemn the price amid cuts affecting student life.

After Yale Hospitality introduced rotating menu cycles to college dining halls and poke bowls to Commons, undergraduates noted improvements in food quality during their first weeks back on campus.

The changes, announced in August, organized Yale's 14 residential college dining halls into three clusters with staggered menu rotations. Additionally, Yale brought two new food stations to Commons, which now also operates on rotating menu cycles.

"I've got to say the quality of the food in the first week so far is better than the peak of last year," Karolis Chandler '29 said after trying orange chicken and a pasta dish served at Commons.

Kayla Ruano-Lumpris '28 said she appreciated the wider range of options in Commons and anticipates that the dining hall will appeal to more students, including those with personal and religious dietary restrictions.

"They're adding more different cultural cuisines, like the Nori station, which is Japanese influenced, and Sazón, which is Latin American influenced," Ruano-Lumpris said.

In the dining halls, too, students have been pleasantly surprised.

Mitchell Ichinkhorloo '29 said he had "nothing bad to say" so far about the dining hall. He said that he experiences "great joy" from the new four-week rotating menu cycle and that it allows him to satisfy any cravings he has all throughout the week.

Ichinkhorloo said he especially appreciated the expanded breakfast offerings at Davenport, including new toasters, waffle machines and batter dispensers, and a "life-changing" smoked salmon cream cheese.

"I would like to gatekeep it, but I have to mention it. It is amazing," Ichinkhorloo said.

Chandler also highlighted the variety of protein options available at each meal.

"It's very helpful to be able to decide whether I want chicken or pork or beef," Chandler said. "We didn't have that privilege last year and it kind of felt like we were eating the same thing week after week."

In a statement to the News, Assistant Vice President of Yale Hospitality Jodi Smith Westwater wrote that this academic year's menu changes were based on collaboration with the Yale College Council and heads of colleges, along with student feedback.

"This year's changes were designed to respond directly to that feedback — expanding the variety of options available to students and improving speed and ease of service during peak lunch periods," she wrote.

Westwater added that the Yale Hospitality team and YCC representatives meet every three weeks to review student feedback in order to "collaborate on future dining initiatives."

"While it is still early in the academic year, the anecdotal feedback received from students and YCC thus far has been positive, particularly around the increased variety across dining halls and enhanced food quality," she wrote.

Though the changes have exceeded many students' expectations, both Chandler and Ichinkhorloo expressed skepticism that Yale Hospitality offerings will remain satisfactory all yearlong.

"It's a little bit suspicious how good the dining halls have been. I think something's gonna crack pretty soon. But I'm very grateful so far," Chandler said.

Commons can seat 750 people.

Contact **ANAYAH ACCILIEN** *at anayah.accilien@yale.edu and Contact* **HAILEY YOUNG** *at hailey.young@yale.edu.*

Special election shapes up in Edgewood as longtime alder resigns

BY NELLIE KENNEY
STAFF REPORTER

New Haven's third special alder election of the year is shaping up after Ward 24 Alder Evette Hamilton announced she will step down at the end of the month.

Randall Furlow, co-chair of the ward's Democratic committee, told the News he plans to run for the seat, representing part of the city's Edgewood neighborhood. No other candidates have signaled a bid yet, but Furlow and the chairs of New Haven's Democratic and Republican town committees suggested the possibility of a contested election.

In an August letter to Mayor Justin Elicker announcing her resignation, Hamilton wrote that she "deeply appreciated the opportunity for personal growth, invaluable experience gained, and the chance to contribute to the city's success" during her time as an alder.

In 2011, Hamilton, then a member of Yale's clerical and technical workers' union, was first elected to the seat alongside more than a dozen successful union-backed challengers. Currently, she is serving as the chair of the Aldermanic Affairs Committee.

Hamilton's resignation arrives as another special alder election enters its final stretch.

Former Ward 9 Alder Caroline Tanbee Smith '14 SOM '25 stepped down at the end of August, spurring a Sept. 15 election that is set to test the viability of democratic socialism in the ward.

In February, Ward 7 Alder Christine Kim '99 won her seat in a special election following the resignation of Eli Sabin '22 LAW '26 in January.

Furlow said in a Wednesday phone interview that he decided to run for the seat after considering Hamilton's example. As a co-chair, Furlow worked with Hamilton on addressing "crises" in the ward and "motivating people to get involved," he said to the News.

Residents he has spoken to have pointed to road safety, crime and the cost of living as major concerns, Furlow said. He also emphasized the diversity of Ward 24.

"We have a multiplicity of age demographics that are represented in our ward," Furlow said. "We have some people that have been there for a very, very long time as well as some people that are just moving into the ward."

The ward is a "microcosm for the city" and represents a range of "socioeconomic needs," Democratic Town Committee Chair Vincent Mauro Jr. also said in a phone interview.

Per Connecticut's general statutes, there are no primaries in municipal special elections. Rather, members of the ward committee for each party select their party's official nominee, and other candidates may also petition to be on the ballot.

The nomination process will be the same for Furlow, a ward committee chair, as it would be for any other candidate, Mauro said.

"We can't punish people for being a co-chair," he said.

Furlow said that in his capacity as Democratic ward co-chair, he has heard "rumblings" about other people who are interested in the role, but that no one else has expressed official interest.

Republican Town Committee Chair John Carlson said in a phone interview that he hopes to back a Republican candidate in the ward. Because Ward 24 has no Republican co-chairs, identifying potential candidates will likely fall to him, he said.

That process will involve reaching out to Republicans in the ward, and possibly to independent and unaffiliated residents as well to "see if anyone's interested, anyone would make a good candidate," Carlson said.

Ward 24 has a history of "long, stable leadership," Mauro said, and is not "prone to easy turnover."

Former Alder Elizabeth McCormack represented the ward from 1987 to 2009. Marcus Paca served for one term before Hamilton's election.

Hamilton could not be reached for an interview about the special election.

Six alders currently double as Democratic Town Committee ward co-chairs.



Martin Peralta / Head Photography Editor
In what is set to be New Haven's third special election this year, Randall Furlow, a co-chair of the ward's Democratic committee, is mounting a bid to replace Ward 24 Alder Evette Hamilton, who is resigning after 15 years in her seat.

Contact **NELLIE KENNEY** *at nellie.kenney@yale.edu.*