FROM THE FRONT

"I think I'm looking for the last step, right?"
ALEXANDER ZVEREV GERMAN TENNIS PLAYER

Legal expenses increased alongside lobbying spending

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the investigations, according to a July message from Yale President Maurie McInnis.

Yale hired McGuireWoods — the law firm that handled a federal inquiry into the University of Virginia — to manage its ongoing negotiations with the Trump administration.

On the website of Yale's Office of the General Counsel, which oversees legal matters affecting Yale, a frequently asked questions page says the general counsel may retain outside legal help on behalf of the University "to handle a matter requiring particular expertise, to manage a large litigation matter, or in the event of a conflict with another matter."

The disclosure for fiscal year ending in June 2025 does not detail how Yale spent the $26.2 million, except that it was used toward legal fees for non-employees. This means the figure does not include salaries and other expenses at the Office of the General Counsel.

University Spokesperson Karen Peart did not answer questions on the nature of Yale's legal spending.

Yale's lobbying spending has also skyrocketed during the second Trump administration.

After Trump's 2024 election victory, McInnis began a lobbying push to address declining trust in universities and oppose policies that could cut Yale's funding.

Many of Yale's peers have also hiked up lobbying and legal expenditures over the past year. While Yale has outpaced most of the Ivy League in lobbying spending since Trump returned to power, institutions that have faced more direct threats from the administration have vastly outspent Yale on outside legal counsel.

Harvard and Columbia — who faced frequent targeted pressure from Trump — spent $126 million and $93.6 million on outside counsel in the most recent fiscal year, respectively.

In that period, Harvard increased its legal spending by 58 percent, Princeton more than doubled its legal bills and Columbia increased legal expenditures by 46 percent — approximately the same rate as Yale.

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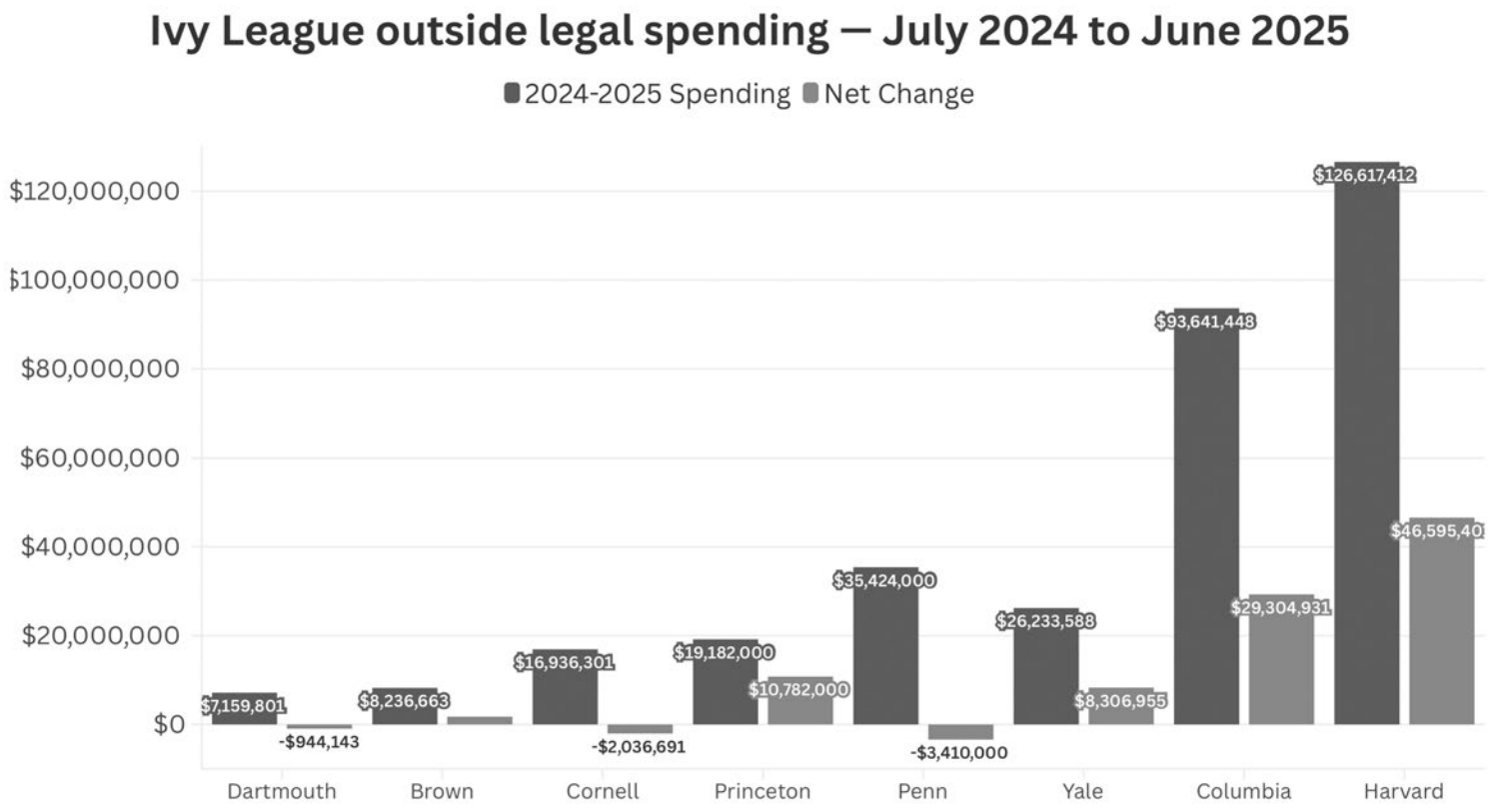
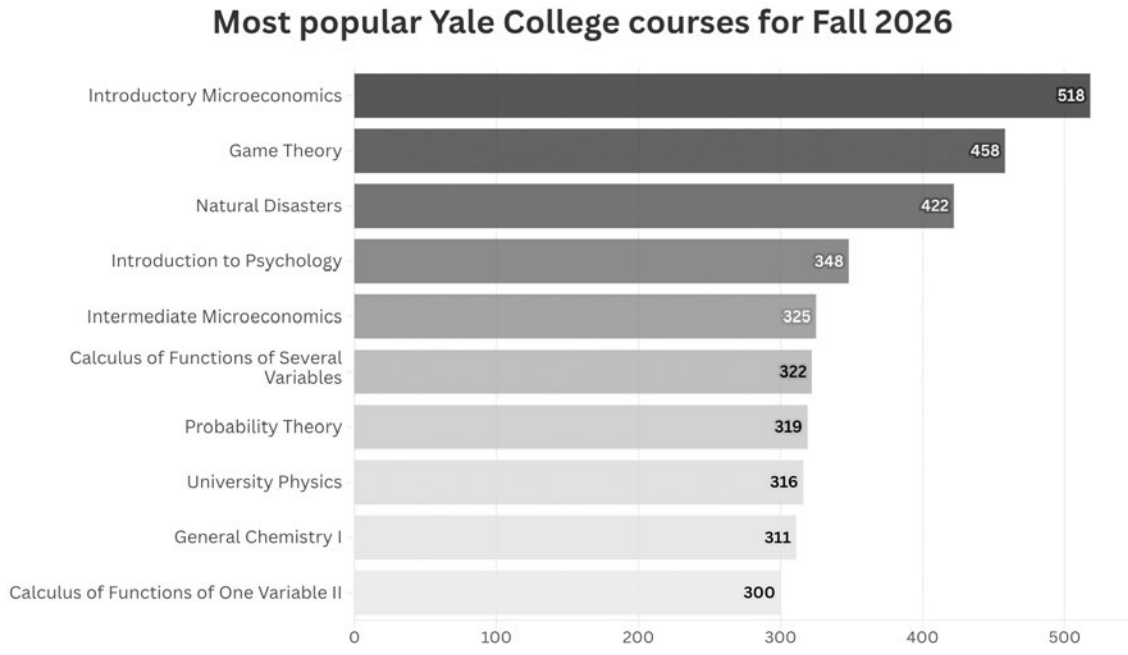


Adriana Petrizzo / Data Editor
The University spent over $26 million on outside legal bills from July 2024 to June 2025, a period marked by President Donald Trump's return to the White House and the initiation of investigations into Yale and other elite universities.

Economics still tops enrollment



Adriana Petrizzo / Data Editor
"Introductory Microeconomics" continues to hold the top spot of course enrollment this fall, while "Natural Disasters" picked up more than 100 students since it was last taught.

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an email to the News. "I'd love for every Yale student to know a little something about how the Earth system works, given its importance to many of the biggest problems that we are facing in today's world."

"Introductory Microeconomics" continued to hold the top spot among Yale's most-enrolled courses this semester.

"The course is a prerequisite for a lot of things, and it satisfies distributional requirements, so many students are there because it is a course they need to take," economics professor Cormac O'Dea, who teaches the course, wrote in an email to the News. "But I hope that they get more than a box ticked."

Teaching economic ideas to a large group of students, many of whom are new to the subject, sharpens his own thinking and serves as "good practice for writing papers and policy work," O'Dea added.

Last fall, "Game Theory" enrollment dropped to 375 students, resulting in a third-place ranking, but its enrollment has since risen back to make it the second most popular course this semester. Economics professor Benjamin Polak, who teaches the course, attributed the rebound in numbers to the discontinuation of the course's spring version this school year.

"The main thing I have learnt is it's a privilege to get to teach Yale students," Polak wrote in an email to the News. "They go on afterwards, perhaps even using some stuff from the class, and make the world a better place. It's a good feeling to be even a small part of that."

"Introduction to Psychology" replaced "Intermediate Microeconomics" for fourth place, with 348 enrolled. Former Yale President Peter Salovey returned to teaching the introductory psychology course this semester for the first time in 23 years, and after the first lecture, several students told the News that they were taking the course because of Salovey.

"My style is not overly formal, and I think even in a large class that encourages conversation about the material," Salovey wrote to the News regarding his teaching approach. "The students seem engaged and are asking interesting questions in class. For me personally, it's enjoyable and gratifying (and an honor) to be back in the classroom."

Kayla Bethea '28 wrote to the News that she enrolled in "Natural Disasters" to fulfill her science credit requirement and learn more about climate sciences.

Erica Yu '28, who is currently enrolled in "Natural Disasters" and is an earth and planetary science major, wrote that the course's broader appeal as a "gut " — a term popular among Yale students for an easy course, in this case for a science distributional requirement — has made it more difficult for students in the major to engage with the material in greater depth.

Chemistry professor Paul Cooper, who teaches "General Chemistry I," the ninth-most popular course this semester, noted that his course's large enrollment is likely not due to pure student interest.

"Realistically though, it's most likely because students are required to take the course as a degree requirement," he wrote in an email to the News. "But why do so many STEM majors require chemistry? Well of course it's because it's really important to know the fundamental nature of the world around us!"

Add/drop period lasts approximately two weeks every semester.

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Chatas probed for alleged financial fault

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tions that support the university's academic mission," according to Yale's website.

"We do not speculate about or discuss another institution's personnel matters," Yale spokesperson Karen Peart wrote in a Monday email to the News. "Mr. Chatas came to Yale, after a thorough search process, because of his demonstrated experience and commitment to strong financial stewardship and operational excellence."

Chatas did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Paul Corliss, a Michigan spokesperson, denied a request for comment, writing in an email to the News that "we do not comment on personnel matters such as this."

The investigation into Chatas' conduct was conducted privately, and Michigan released no findings from the investigation, according to The Detroit News.

During the Oct. 16 meeting of UMich's board of regents — the governing body of the university — UMich's President Domenico Grasso praised Chatas' work and congratulated the administrator on his upcoming position at Yale.

"Yale is fortunate to have him join their leadership team, and we will miss him in Ann Arbor," Grasso said at the meeting.

Before joining Michigan, Chatas worked as senior vice president for business and finance and chief financial officer at Ohio State University from 2010 to 2018, and as senior vice president and chief operating officer at Georgetown University from 2018 to 2021.

Before his career as a university administrator, Chatas was a finance executive in energy and finance firms including Citibank, according to Yale's webpage announcing Chatas' arrival.

Chatas arrived at Yale amid unprecedented budget cuts — including a number of staff layoffs — due to the passage of a tax hike on Yale's endowment returns that administrators estimated would cost the University $300 million annually. The tax, which was part of President Donald Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill Act, took effect in July 2026.

Chatas' salary is not disclosed in Yale's published tax filings — the most recent of which are from the 2025 fiscal year, which ended before Chatas joined Yale. In September 2025, Chatas' salary at UMich was increased to $886,954, according to The Detroit News.

The law firm Patterson Belknap dedicates a practice to representing tax-exempt entities, including universities, according to its website.

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Abby Assouad / Staff Photographer