OPINION

GUEST COLUMNISTS

GABRIELA EWART & JOHN WINTERS

The University and hypocrisy

The Opening Days events for first-year students looked different this year. All members of the class of 2030 were required to attend "The University and Democracy" panel featuring professor Beverly Gage '94 and Yale College Dean Pericles Lewis. Focusing on Gage's new book and general thoughts for the academic year rather than University democracy and its traditions, the panel was preceded by the largest student-led demonstration in two-and-a-half years: Democratize Yale.

The Opening Days panel insulated its speakers from the audience by dodging submitted questions and presenting democracy not as an open practice but as an act somehow scandalous enough to require thorough and strict oversight by Yale's senior administrators.

Democratize Yale, on the other hand, brought democratic concerns directly to the forefront, calling on Yale to adopt a democratic trustee structure, terminate negotiations with the Trump administration, defend merit-based admissions for Black and brown students, protect academic freedom and support free expression. Students, staff, faculty and alumni were clear and unequivocal while Yale pursues settlement negotiations in complete opacity.

The contrast between the events was disconcerting. Attending Democratize Yale's teach-in exemplified standards for discussions on Yale's campus: speak publicly, hear community voices and respond insightfully. "The University and Democracy" failed to meet those standards. The facilitators restricted the agenda, ignored student questions and kept the answers they did give vague. What do these practices say about our future at Yale? Will the University listen to us when its policies harm us? Will Yale's administration meet the popular solutions Democratize Yale has proposed?

Yale is not blind to the widespread and ongoing criticism facing higher education. The Committee on Trust in Higher Education — co-chaired by Gage — issued a report earlier this year addressing a range of issues, from grade inflation to rising tuition. The report itself prompted a series of critiques: some accused it of relying on far-right talking points over empirical evidence, while others noted the irony of addressing elite academia's insularity by convening a committee drawn from that same elite circle. Nonetheless, the report succeeded in bringing these critical issues into the public discourse, both on campus and beyond.

Democratize Yale was launched against the backdrop of this institutional soul-searching. It responded to growing uncertainty over Yale's apparent cooperation with the Trump administration's efforts to dismantle diversity in higher education — a cornerstone of civic and intellectual progress in our nation's history. A central challenge identified by the Trust Committee — diminishing confidence in the University's ability to maintain its democratic ideals — found an answer in the hundreds of students, staff, faculty and alumni who gathered on Cross Campus with a bold, invigorating vision for our University. Protesters actively practiced democracy on the University's public square, refusing to accept undemocratic policies that require pre-registered demonstrations. In doing so, they exposed Yale's core contradictions.

The report on trust encouraged Yale to adhere to the Woodward Report, the University's foundational free speech standard since 1975, when navigating campus expression. Following the release of the Trust Committee's findings in April, President Maurie McInnis stated that she accepted "without reservation the committee's recommendations to protect free speech and support academic freedom." Yet during the Democratize Yale protest, representatives from the Yale Office of Public Affairs and Communications — or OPAC — directed journalists from outlets like The Chronicle of Higher Education and National Public Radio affiliate CT Public Radio to move to a public sidewalk 250 feet away, ostensibly "to protect the privacy of students and faculty." However, organizers had explicitly invited these reporters, and several protest participants walked to the sidewalk specifically to give interviews.

OPAC's decision to restrict press access contradicts the Woodward Report's explicit directive on press freedom: "A group inviting a speaker may close the meeting to the press. It may also invite the press. In either case, the administration should cooperate." Democratize Yale revealed a key truth: policy statements, committee reports and public assurances remain empty commitments when administrators prioritize institutional control over foundational values. It seems that when students and workers unite with public support, the guidelines become merely a suggestion to Yale's senior administrators.

Yale has the right as a private university to deny reporters, or any private citizen for that matter, access to campus — even to a de facto public space like Cross Campus. But should it be within its practice? Should the University, at an inflection point in the history of its role in civil society, turn away and hide from the public it claims to serve?

The administration's actions leading up to and during Democratize Yale underscore a clear priority: maintaining strict oversight of student life and controlling external perception. In suppressing campus expression and disregarding its own free speech standards, the University demonstrates a persistent pattern of institutional hypocrisy.

Yale does not have to operate like this, and Democratize Yale shows there is a better way. A University we can trust — that lives up to its values — is worth fighting for.

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STAFF COLUMNIST

TOM DAWBER

American jobs can be for American students

Early this September, following guidance from the Trump administration, Brown, Princeton and Harvard restricted Curricular Practical Training (CPT), a temporary work authorization that allows international students to gain work experience in their fields. On September 9, the News reported that Yale is examining its own policies.

The new federal guidance is a stricter interpretation of an existing regulation. CPT has always been limited to "a required internship or practicum" that "is an integral part of the established curriculum." Until now, some schools, including Harvard and Princeton, have interpreted that narrow permission more broadly, approving CPT for internships that are not required for graduation.

The Trump administration's decision to enforce the CPT regulations as written is a welcome change that will benefit American students.

Donald Trump is terrible for this country, and in no way am I excusing the damage he has already done and continues to do. But we should resist the temptation to dismiss out of hand everything his administration does. Just because an edict comes from the desk of the 47th president, that most imperfect of messengers, doesn't mean it's evil, un-American or even necessarily wrong.

This new regulatory interpretation is a restriction on the opportunities of international students. But that restriction serves to protect the opportunities of American students. Limiting international students only to internships that are required to complete their programs increases the chances for American students to earn competitive positions.

As an unnamed international graduate student says in the News, "it is really difficult to find a job in the U.S. after graduation as an international student, and it is really important to get an internship during the summer to find a job after you graduate."

It is really difficult for anyone to find a job in the U.S. after graduation, international or not. Yale's Office of Career Strategy data from the class of 2025 says that six months after graduation 4.6 percent of Yale College graduates were still seeking postgraduate employment, 3.2 percent reported working freelance and 2.8 percent reported that they work part-time. 57.2 percent of Yale College graduates are working full-time six months after graduation, which sounds great.

However, one crucial flaw of OCS's data is that it doesn't differentiate between full-time work in a graduate's intended field and any full-time job they may have accepted just to pay the bills. This choice renders that 57.2 percent figure almost uselessly opaque, and makes it impossible to determine the real underemployment rate of Yale graduates.

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Yale's numbers, incomplete though they may be, are much more encouraging than the national rates reported by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York this August. Their data shows a 5.6 percent unemployment rate among recent college graduates aged 22-27 and a staggering 42 percent underemployment rate for that cohort, as of June 2026.

Let that sink in: nearly half of recent American college graduates are "working in jobs that typically do not require a college degree."

As hard as it already is to find a job after graduation, the data suggests it's only going to get harder. The Center for American Progress argues that the United States needs to add 97,000 jobs per month "just to maintain the employment-to-population ratio." But the Bureau of Labor Statistics's 10-year projections fall short of this number, anticipating the creation of around 49,000 jobs per month.

Internships make college graduates more competitive job candidates. Internships are vital for getting one's foot in the door at a target company or gaining transferable skills. And there are a finite number of those internships available. What's wrong with preserving those limited opportunities for American students whenever possible?

The job market is a zero sum game: either candidate A gets the job or candidate B does. Internships give candidates an edge. An internship that goes to an international student necessarily is an internship that isn't going to an American student. The federal government has the right and the responsibility to ensure that its own people are taken care of before opening these limited opportunities up to international workers.

We already engage in this sort of job market protectionism. Companies can only hire foreign employees through an H-1B visa if the job description meets certain criteria. The job must be complex and require skills or training that may not be easily found in the American workforce. Employers in certain fields must attest that hiring an H-1B visa holder "will not adversely affect other similarly employed workers." H-1B visas are not for entry level jobs. Protecting internships — the most entry level of entry level jobs — by enforcing CPT regulations as they are written follows the same logic as this restriction on H-1B visa hiring.

America isn't the land of limitless opportunity that it once was. The frontier is closed, the cities are full, the suburbs are unaffordable and there aren't enough places in the 21st century job market for those of us who are already here. International students are welcome to study in the United States if private colleges want to continue admitting them. But American jobs should go to Americans first.

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GUEST COLUMNIST

I found God at the Burning of Benedict Arnold

One of the quirks of going to high school in Nevada was the annual, week-long period where my classes were taught by substitute teachers. My actual teachers weren't sick, and, as far as I know, they weren't staging a union walkout. Instead, they were headed to Burning Man.

Those who've attended the festival, which draws some 80,000 participants to the Black Rock Desert, describe watching a 100-foot wooden statue go up in flames as a religious experience. I'd never understood the appeal of "burning the man" — that is, until I attended the "Burning of Benedict Arnold" last weekend.

My Saturday journey to New London, Conn. was something of a religious pilgrimage in its own right. The annual event coincided with the second night of Rosh Hashanah. Yet the allure of parading Arnold through New London outweighed my sense of religious obligation. Plus, I managed to find a friend to drag along.

Arnold's caustic relationship with New London began in 1781. That year, after defecting to the British, the Connecticut-native commanded a raid that left some 90 Americans dead and the town smoldering. New Londoners soon after began giving Arnold's effigy the historical comeuppance he deserved — a tradition revived by a local theater troupe in 2013.

Our procession began at dusk. Arnold's two-faced effigy rode atop a handcart, which was followed by an actor on stilts dressed as the devil in a redcoat. A colonial fife and drums corp regaled us with classics like "Yankee Doodle Dandy" and the anachronistic, though always welcome, "Battle Hymn of the Republic."

Among Arnold's most enthusiastic hecklers were a group of 20-somethings, decked out in knee breaches and frock coats, who seemed to have indulged in their fair share of ale at a local tavern. Needless to say, it was a different crowd to what I had encountered at Rosh Hashanah services only a few hours earlier.

I wasn't entirely sure that this is what the rabbis had in mind for one of Judaism's holiest days. Yet I was reminded that Rosh Hashanah is followed by the Fast of Gedaliah, when Jews lament the assassination of the final governor of Judah. New Londoners, like Jews, know how to hold a grudge.

Once we arrived at the waterfront, Governor Ned Lamont SOM '80 reminded us that the cry "Remember New London!" roused patriots to battle at Yorktown. Arnold, doused in lighter fluid, didn't last long. The fire department eventually moved in to extinguish the blaze.

I finally understood at that moment what my teachers had been chasing all those years in the Black Rock Desert: there is something oddly cathartic about watching a wooden man go up in flames with a group of strangers. For a few minutes, we had a common villain and a common purpose. I felt a peculiar kinship with my fellow man while yelling "burn the traitor!"

We had gathered as a congregation and recited our own liturgy. It was our job, not God's, to deliver Arnold his fate.

I'm not the first to notice the religious undertones. Benjamin Franklin chided Arnold as America's Iscariot. Franklin went as far as to write to the Marquis de Lafayette that "Judas sold only one Man, Arnold three Millions."

The pages of the News tell a more complicated story. Arnold has been scorned as a villain and praised as a hero. New Haven's annual Powder House Day commemorates when Arnold, then a patriot, demanded the keys to the city's gunpowder after the Battle of Lexington and Concord.

One 1971 letter-to-the-editor even argued that Arnold has been "maligned and unfairly judged" in the annals of history. "Should anyone oppose my views, I challenge him to an open debate at a time and location convenient to both of us," the author continued.

Well challenge accepted, Dr. Lindner, albeit 55 years too late.

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