NEWS

"Seems it never rains in Southern California"
IT NEVER RAINS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ALBERT HAMMOND

School of Medicine, Law School students share Trump concerns

BY GILLIAN PEIHE FENG AND IRENE KIM
STAFF REPORTERS

When nearly 200 Yale School of Medicine students last week signed a letter to administrators urging the University against a settlement with the Trump administration, they were not the first group of Yale graduate students to write a letter of that nature this year.

Affiliates of Yale Law School — which, like the School of Medicine, has faced a Department of Justice investigation into its admissions practices — had written an open letter two months ago that opposed a settlement with the federal government.

Earlier this month, Yale President Maurie McInnis told the News that the University's negotiations with the Justice Department only concern the School of Medicine and not the Law School or Yale College, which is also facing an investigation. The Justice Department has only released a letter of findings for its investigation into the School of Medicine.

But in interviews with the News, students from the Law School and the School of Medicine alike expressed strong opposition towards the prospect of Yale settling with the Justice Department. While medical students in particular were concerned about what they called administrators' lack of communication, transparency and openness to student input, some Law School students said they feel more detached from the negotiations because their school is not involved.

Yale spokesperson Karen Peart did not respond to the News' request for comment.

School of Medicine students slam accusations

Students at Yale School of Medicine expressed disbelief in the Department of Justice's allegation that the medical school practices race-based discrimination in its admissions process. They further called for greater transparency and communication from Yale administration during its negotiation with the Justice Department.

In May, the Justice Department released a letter accusing Yale School of Medicine of continuing to "intentionally discriminate against applicants based on their race," which violates the 2023 Supreme Court ruling that ended race-based affirmative action. The letter claimed that the admissions process put Black and Hispanic applicants at an unfair advantage, while discriminating against White and Asian applicants.

"When the letter of findings came out, I think my initial response, and I think the response of a lot of our peers, was disbelief," Manu Sundaresan MED '33 said in a Zoom interview with the News. He further called the findings "disingenuous."

Kyle Gavulic MED '29 GRD '29 said that the Justice Department's findings are not fully supported by the evidence it presents in the letter.

"When you dig into the actual report that the DOJ has produced on its findings, it's very clear that there's a large misunderstanding or chosen misunderstanding of how holistic missions and medical school admissions work across the country," Gavulic said in a Zoom interview with the News. "The statistical claims and evidence that they present, are extremely elementary, and a lot of the claims that they make cannot actually be drawn from the quote evidence that they claim to present."

In its letter of findings, the Justice Department presented admissions data from the School of Medicine that showed discrepancies in GPAs and standardized medical exam scores by race among admitted applicants in the 2023, 2024 and 2025 admissions cycles.

Michelle Mantilla MED '33, who identifies as a Latino student from a first-generation, low-income background, said that the Justice Department's investigations and findings have added to the pressure that many medical school students from underrepresented backgrounds are already under.

The medical students further expressed disappointment in Yale's handling of its negotiations with the Justice Department, demanding greater transparency, better communication and an openness to input from medical school students.

"Despite being the only ones that have had findings that are against our school, it doesn't feel like she's really getting student input from the School of Medicine," Samiksha Chopra MED '29 said in an interview to the News, referring to McInnis.

Chopra pointed out that while McInnis has met with representatives from Yale College and the Yale Graduate School of Arts and Sciences to discuss the Justice Department investigations, no medical school student has so far been included in these talks. That meeting happened in July.

"It's really the School of Medicine that these allegations are targeting, but if that's the case, why not talk to School of Medicine students?" Chopra said. "I feel like there's a lot more they could be doing to kind of address these things, particularly at the student level. But right now, it really, really feels like they're prioritizing their own reputation and their relationship with the current administration, and not prioritizing the students who actually make the school."

For Gavulic, Yale's lack of transparency on what exact information of medical school students has been shared with the Justice Department is particularly concerning, especially with regard to the fact that Yale has provided "applicant-level admissions data" to the Justice Department, as stated in the department's letter of findings.

"It's unclear to us with this environment of lack of transparency what information of ours has been shared with the government," Gavulic said.

Law School students opposed, but somewhat detached

Saavni Desai LAW '27 said that she had been following the initial probe into the medical school and was surprised that the Law School was targeted next.

"It was a little bit surprising that Yale was being targeted for these kinds of investigations, especially after we'd been excluded from prior rounds of settlement negotiations," she said in a phone interview. "The Yale Law School one did feel a little bit close to home, so that was jarring."

Because the news came in July, classes were out of session. Grady Short LAW '28, who serves as a co-president of Yale Law Democrats, said in a phone interview that this meant "there was not a day when everyone was at the Law School and talking about it as a fresh thing."

Still, law students, professors and alumni gathered in resistance when news suggesting that the University was open to negotiating with the Trump administration broke. Students circulated a July petition by Stand Up For Yale, an alumni advocacy group, around the Law School, encouraging their peers to join the some 5,000 signatories who called any settlement with the Department of Justice a "slap in the face to current students and generations of alumni."


CHRISTINA LEE
Students from both schools have in recent months signed letters demanding that Yale not settle with the federal government, which has probed both schools.

Faculty members, including Yale Law Dean Cristina Rodríguez '95 LAW '00, quietly met to organize lobbying efforts against any negotiations — and even explored whether the Law School could be excluded from a potential deal with the federal government.

The same week, Yale Law Democrats came together to author an open letter to McInnis, Rodríguez and the Board of Trustees, which urged the University "not to enter into a settlement with the federal government concerning admission."

The letter, signed by nearly 200 students and 27 student organizations, claimed that "if the university signs an agreement its own law school would advise against, it will teach us more vividly that fair process, even rule of law itself, must ultimately yield to power." The Law School admits around 200 students every year.

Echoing sentiments seen across other faculty, student and alumni efforts, the letter concluded: "Yale's reputation was not built by accommodation to political power and it will not be preserved that way."

McInnis' most recent announcement about the Law School's exclusion from investigations has not changed the picture for most law students. Many think that any settlement with any part of the university — like the School of Medicine — could still affect their lives.

"I don't see the law school as operating in a silo that is disconnected from the rest of the university," Anna Brent-Levenstein LAW '28 said in a phone interview. "Until there is an announcement that there will be no settlement that affects any of the schools, law students are still concerned about any settlement the university could make."

Desai said that this sentiment is felt across the student body.

"There's strong opposition among most of the law students to the Trump administration's targeting of institutions of higher education, including Yale and its various schools," she said.

Still, neither the announcement of investigation updates nor lingering negotiations between the School of Medicine and the Justice Department seem to much affect day-to-day life over at Wall Street.

"Since there haven't been major developments beyond what the president of the university has said about it," Short said, life hasn't changed much at the Law School.

Students said that professors rarely mention the negotiations in class, and that the topic comes up only casually in conversation.

Though the announcement of the investigations surprised Desai, she said she and her peers have become used to their education being part of a national political spectacle.

"Maybe we're a little bit desensitized to these kinds of things affecting us, our job opportunities and our law school," she said.

Combined, Yale Law School and the School of Medicine enroll approximately 1,200 students.

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New Haven attempts but fails to break food costume world record

BY CYRUS TURNER
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Just one year after attendees of the 10th New Haven Apizza Feast beat the Guinness World Record for "Largest Pizza Party," more than 700 attendees of the event's 11th iteration attempted another record-breaking feat. They did not succeed.

Organizers of last Friday's pizza event hoped to beat the record for the largest gathering of people dressed as food. The title is currently held by a community organization in Kusatsu, Japan, which in 2017 had 888 people dress as wasabi mustard greens.

New Haven pizza costume-wearers came about 100 people short of that record.

The nor'easter storm forecasted for the weekend impacted participant turnout, event organizer Colin Caplan wrote in an email after the gathering.

"Over 1200 tickets were purchased but only 778 participated," Caplan, who founded Taste of New Haven — which operates food tours of the city — wrote. "Had 111 more people showed up and entered the attempt we would have broken the record. Instead we got the most beautiful rainbow and sunset!"

A double rainbow graced the sky to cap off the world record attempt, which was part of the broader annual A-1 Toyota Apizza Feast and New Haven Grand Prix Cycling Race event. Attendees could purchase from more than 70 vendors on and around the New Haven Green as they listened to live music performed by Carlos Santiago y Su Momento Musical.


CYRUS TURNER, CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER
Participants in the 11th annual New Haven Apizza Feast tried to beat the record for the largest gathering of people dressed as food but were thwarted by a forecasted nor'easter.

Caplan said the world record attempt was inspired by the success of last year's gathering.

"It was so rewarding to see that come together that I ended up wanting to do something else with Guinness World Records," he said.

Guinness World Records adjudicator Natalia Ramirez, who oversaw the event, reassured the pizza-wearing attendees from a stage on the Green.

"You have to beat a minimum established in Japan," Ramirez said. "Unfortunately, we didn't beat that number today, but it doesn't mean that you didn't make history. You are almost 700 souls dressed as pizza."

The annual event raises money for the Connecticut Cycling Advancement Program, Caplan said. This year, he added, a percentage of the proceeds will go to the Boys and Girls Club of Greater New Haven.

"This whole event is to support small businesses, community organizers and leaders and our youth," Caplan said to the crowd. "It's all about the youth."

Ramirez said there are established guidelines for each record attempt.

"We have to validate the accountability process from the beginning of the participants' registrations," she said. "We have some stewards inside of the record attempt area, that was the witnesses who see if the participants have the costume. We have a closed and secure record attempt area with only two entrances, without an exit."

Participants lined up outside of a fenced area on the New Haven Green between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m., where they were counted in groups of 100, according to the Taste of New Haven website. Once inside the enclosed area, participants were required to remain there until counting had finished.

Caplan said he designed the costumes to look like a slice of Frank Pepe's pizza and ordered 5,000 of them from an online merchandise supplier.

Attendees of the event could purchase the pizza slice costume, which sold for around $25, online or in person. Taste of New Haven also set aside 250 free costumes for Yale students, Caplan said.

Heather Owens, a former postal worker from Rhode Island, said the costumes were one appeal of the event.

"We love pizza, so we decided to come down and be a pizza," Owens said.

Winston Choo '30, who did not purchase a costume, said his decision to attend the Apizza Feast was spontaneous.

"I was sitting in my room and then I heard a bunch of noise outside," Choo, who lives in Bingham Hall, said. "I looked out the window, there were a bunch of people in pizza costumes, so I came down because I was hungry."

Catering manager for Frank Pepe Pizzeria Napoletana Cedric Gibbs said events like the Apizza Feast offer a way to become connected with the New Haven community.

"You have people that actually educate us on pizza," Gibbs said. "I'm 60. We have people that come in in their eighties and nineties that have been eating Pepe's since they were a baby."

Frank Pepe Pizzeria Napoletana is an integral part of New Haven's apizza tradition, Gibbs explained.

"We are the originators of the apizza," he said. "1965, Frank Pepe's started and now it's blown into what you see here."

Emma Baldeh '30, who is from Nebraska, said she attended the event to familiarize herself with the city.

"It's a really great opportunity to go out and see New Haven, be a part of the community and celebrate great pizza and New England culture," she said.

Owens said inclement weather should not dissuade event organizers from future world record attempts.

"It would be great if there wasn't a big storm coming, or people would come. I think it'd probably be better next year," she said.

Caplan did not say whether Taste of New Haven would attempt another record next year.

"There's no specific plans in the works, but we'll keep our ears open for ideas!" he wrote.

Winds reached speeds of around 17 miles per hour at the start of the event.

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