FROM THE FRONT

"Face on lover with a fire in his heart /
a man undercover but you tore me apart"
LAST CHRISTMAS WHAM!

Faculty recommendations arrive after instructor layoffs



Ellie Park
The new report calls for greater compensation and institutional support for lecturers and lectors, who make up more than 40 percent of the faculty. It arrives after several instructional faculty were let go due to budget cuts last year.

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detailed plans for longer contracts, salaries adjusted for inflation and more supportive paid leave and professional development opportunities.

"Yale's commitment to excellence in teaching must include a renewed commitment to all of the people who provide it," Michael Farina, a senior Italian lector and the chair of the FAS-SEAS Senate, said in a Tuesday press release.

The report cites an April 2026 anonymous survey included in an interim report of instructional faculty, which found that 52 percent of respondents felt a sense of belonging at Yale and 43 percent reporting feeling respected by senior colleagues. Out of the respondents, 47 percent said their teaching responsibilities were fairly distributed, and 20 percent reported effective formal mentoring.

Additionally, respondents described feeling "disposable," "invisible" and like "second-class citizens," according to the survey. Faculty also reported concerns about exclusion from decision-making and inadequate compensation.

The report emphasizes that many concerns have been heightened from the past year. Budget reductions resulted in the non-reappointment of 20 instructional faculty, making up 9.1 percent of Faculty of Arts and Sciences lecturers, which has intensified anxiety over job security, according to the report.

In April, the News reported that at least three lecturers attributed their non-renewal of their contracts due budget cuts, and FAS Dean Steven Wilkinson told the News attributed those decisions to "difficult tradeoffs" due to Yale's "unprecedented budget challenges."

In July 2025, Congress passed an endowment tax hike that administrators estimated would cost the University around $300 million annually and went into effect this July. Other budget-saving measures included cuts to graduate school enrollment and staff reductions.

Instructional faculty also reported concerns about academic freedom, feeling that they experience increased vulnerability when teaching controversial subjects, according to the FAS-SEAS Senate report.

The report also calls for clearer procedures regarding promotion and increased inclusion of instructional faculty in department meetings, committees and University-wide decision making. They also recommend that Yale create a dedicated physical unit for instructional faculty within the FAS dean's office for "advice and information."

"Instructional faculty have repeatedly described what they need to build sustainable, fulfilling careers at our university: greater security, fair compensation, clear paths for advancement, and a meaningful voice in their departments," Cynthia DeRoma, a senior lector in the English Language Program and the chair of the Instructional Faculty Committee, said in the press release.

The recommendations follow the Committee on Trust in Higher Education's report, which suggested the University reaffirm teaching and research as central to its core mission. The Yale mission statement was later narrowed to reflect that ethos, removing references to diversity and "improving the world."

Yale President Maurie McInnis then said in a response in April that she had tasked Senior Vice President Geoff Chatas, in collaboration with faculty, to direct more of the budget "toward teaching, research, and scholarship."

Lectors are faculty trained in language instruction, as opposed to lecturers, per the faculty handbook. Prior to 2017, instructional faculty were previously referred to as "non-ladder faculty," but the University renamed the position following a push from the FAS-SEAS Senate due to perceived negative connotations.

The FAS welcomed seven new instructional faculty members for the 2026-27 academic year.

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Seminal Black play premiered in 1986

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"grateful" the play was returning to the Rep stage.

"It is a wonderful celebration of the strength of Black artists," Yionoulis said in a phone interview.

Previews for the play will begin on Oct. 2, with the show officially opening next Thursday.

Yionoulis also said the production represents something "the Rep does so beautifully: nurturing young writers."

Yionoulis said that at the time, Wilson was still an emerging playwright, and the production helped begin a relationship between Wilson and Richards that would become central to Wilson's career and to American theater.

"His career was really launched here," Yionoulis said.

"Ma Rainey's Black Bottom" is the second play in Wilson's "American Century Cycle," which is a series of 10 plays chronicling Black American life across each decade of the 20th century. The play examines the conditions and institutions under which Black artists create, said director Timothy Douglas DRA '86.

Douglas said the production marks both a return and a milestone.

"This is a real full circle for me," he said in a phone interview.

His connection to the play stretches back to its premiere, when he was a drama student.

"When Wilson came on the scene with this play while I was a drama student, there was really nothing like it in terms of a Black theatre and cast," Douglas said in a phone interview. "We suddenly had a voice in an American theater we didn't have before. As an actor, it was exciting to think about what it'd mean for my career."

With this production of "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom," Douglas will have directed all 10 plays in Wilson's cycle.

Maiesha McQueen, who plays Ma Rainey, emphasized that, although Wilson drew inspiration from the real-life blues singer Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, the play is not an account of her life. Rather, Wilson places the historical figure within a fictional moment, imagining her at a precarious point in her career, McQueen said.

"I think what August Wilson is trying to do is show the vulnerability of someone who had command in her artistic life," she said in a phone interview, adding that Ma Rainey is protective of the people she cares about as well as her artistry.

Jimmie "J.J." Jeter, who plays Levee, described a similar process of discovery. He's learned much from the hot-headed trumpet player, despite not feeling connected with the character at first, Jeter said.

"There is something beautiful that August is doing with this play by taking ordinary people and putting them in extraordinary places," he said.

"Ma Rainey's Black Bottom" will run until Oct. 24.

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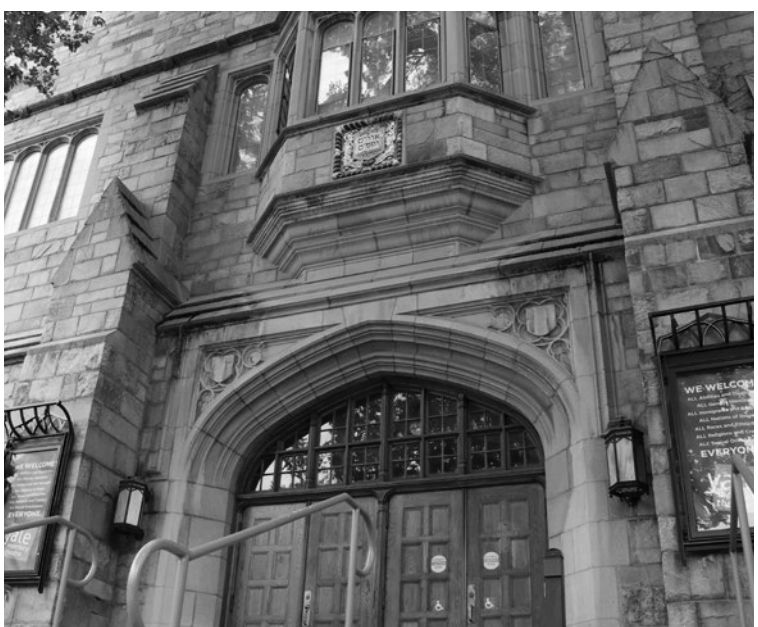

Christina Lee
More than four decades after "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom" had its world premiere at the Yale Repertory Theatre, the August Wilson play is returning on Friday to the stage where its theatrical life began.

Yale to play Merrimack Warriors



Liza Kaufman / Photography Editor
This weekend, Team 153 will host Merrimack for its home opener, just a week removed from dropping its first game of the year to Cornell. Quarterback Dante Reno '28 said he expects to return to the field for the game.

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told the News he expects to return to the field barring any new obstacles to his recovery.

Previewing Merrimack

The Bulldogs will face the Warriors, one of two independent FCS teams and whose squad has been susceptible to defensive breakdowns as of late. After dropping their first two games of the season, in which they allowed a combined 76 points, the Warriors picked up their first win of the year over the University of Maine (1–4, 1–1 CAA), winning 23-14. The following week, they lost 45-20 to No. 4 Tarleton State (4–0, 0–0 UAC) before bouncing back with a 17-10 win over the University of New Haven (1–4, 0–1 NEC).

Merrimack's offense started the season with a quarterback battle, as Cole Meehan and AJ Hairston Jr. split reps during the first couple of games of the season. Hairston Jr. eventually won the contest but since then has played more as a game manager rather than an offensive weapon.

Hairston Jr. has surpassed 150 yards passing just once this season, and has thrown four touchdowns and interceptions each. Part of the reason why the Warriors have such lackluster passing statistics is due to their focus on their rushing attack, as they have averaged 228 yards per game on the ground over the past three games. Matthias Latham has led the way rushing the ball, averaging 60 yards per game and five and a half yards per carry. Merrimack has also leaned on its second and third-stringers at times, who together average about four and a half yards per carry and have scored twice.

How do the 'Dogs bounce back?

Last week, despite having a less-experienced quarterback, the Bulldogs still managed to put up 25 points. Though the team has struggled to protect the quarterback and create holes for the running backs, the main focus will be on the defense this week.

The team this year is captained by two-time All-American and Team 153 Captain Abu Kamara '27, and many expected Yale's defense to be just as strong as years prior and keep its place as one of the top squads in the Ivy League.

However, in week one, the Bulldogs allowed 28 points to a weak Holy Cross team, and last weekend it gave up 38 points to the Big Red. Though it remains uncertain who will fill the quarterback position, it is vital that the Yale defense finds a way to respond and limit scoring opportunities for Merrimack this week.

Yale is set to kick off against Merrimack at noon on Saturday at the Yale Bowl. The game will be streamed on ESPN+.

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