FROM THE FRONT

"The best kind of parent you can be is to lead by example."
DREW BARRYMORE AMERICAN ACTRESS

Yale donor aiding Trump-Harvard talks, Times reports

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to comment on Schwarzman's behalf.

Unlike Harvard and all but one other Ivy League institution, Yale has been spared from targeted federal funding cuts.

Harvard sued the Trump administration in April in response to Trump's extensive list of demands for the university to regain access to federal funding. The Trump administration has attempted to freeze billions of dollars in federal research funding to Harvard and launched a series of investigations into the university, citing antisemitism on campus and other issues.

In June, Yale and 23 other universities jointly filed a brief in support of Harvard's case against the government.

On Sept. 3, a federal judge ruled in Harvard's favor, ordering the administration to unfreeze the related funding. The Trump administration has vowed to appeal the ruling, and later initiated a process that would cut off Harvard's future federal funding.

Trump said Tuesday that the White House was closing in on a $500 million deal with Harvard in which the university would agree to use the money to fund trade schools.

"We're in the process of getting very close. Linda's finishing up the final details, and they'd be paying about $500 million," Trump told a group of reporters on Tuesday, referring to Secretary of Education Linda McMahon.

The Times reported that Schwarzman aided in the negotiations by speaking with Trump over the weekend and on Tuesday.

Since beginning his second term, the Trump administration has attacked various aspects of universities, including increasing endowment taxation, investigating more than 50 universities for civil rights violations and freezing federal funding.

In April, Trump's task force on antisemitism wrote in a statement that it was "cautiously encouraged" by Yale's response to a burst of pro-Palestinian protests — which included referring some protesters to the Executive Committee, or ExComm, and revoking the club status of Yalies4Palestine.

Yale has significantly increased its lobbying efforts in Washington during the second Trump administration. It spent $320,000 in the second quarter of 2025, nearly double its spending in the second quarter of 2024.

Schwarzman's connection with Trump has long been a subject of discussion at Yale. Schwarzman chaired Trump's Strategic and Policy Forum, a business council, at the beginning of Trump's first term in 2017. Schwarzman endorsed Trump in 2020 and 2024.

In 2015, Schwarzman donated $150 million to Yale, an amount that made it the second largest donation in the University's history after a $250 million donation in 2013 by Charles Johnson '54 to fund the construction of two new residential colleges.

The donation and subsequent renaming of Commons and Memorial Hall in 2015 were controversial among students and alumni, with some applauding the upcoming improvements while others criticizing Blackstone's alleged exploitation of the real estate foreclosures.

Jim Sleeper '69, once a political science lecturer at Yale, was in the same class in Davenport College as Schwarzman. Sleeper told the News that he felt the renaming of Commons in Schwarzman's name signaled the donor's style of "self-exculpating philanthropy."

"While I have no proof that he persuaded Trump to hold off on Yale, one can imagine the scenario," Sleeper said in a phone interview Wednesday. "He would have told Trump, 'Go light on Yale because I have a stake there, and you respect me.' It's the art of the deal."

The Schwarzman Center opened in 2021, with a renovated Commons dining hall, the Bow Wow, a theater and a dance studio in The Underground, and a satellite location for the Good Life Center.

Schwarzman, who attended Yale College, is also an alumnus of Harvard Business School, where he earned an MBA in 1972.

He is a prominent donor to several universities. In 2013, he donated $100 million to Beijing's Tsinghua University to establish Schwarzman Scholars, a scholarship program, and the construction of Schwarzman College on campus.

Since his $150 million gift to Yale, Schwarzman has made a $350 million gift to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 2018 to establish the MIT Stephen A. Schwarzman College of Computing, as well as a £150 million gift to the University of Oxford in 2019 to establish the Schwarzman Centre for the Humanities.

Schwarzman donated $5 million to Harvard Business School in 2018.

Contact
JERRY GAO at
jerry.gao@yale.edu and



Calls between Trump and Schwarzman, a prominent Yale donor, helped advance negotiations between Harvard and the Trump administration, according to a report published Tuesday. **/ YuLin Zhen, Photography Editor**

Private student testimonials part of McInnis' push in D.C.

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would be subjected to a 21 percent rate, an increase from the flat rate of 1.4 percent. The legislation signed into law on July 4 raised Yale's endowment investment income tax to 8 percent.

Danelski provided a statement on the same day that he was emailed by Saybrook Head of College Thomas Near and Dean Adam Haliburton. He told the News he was thanked for his contribution and was excited to support the University.

"I haven't heard anything else," Danelski said in an interview on July 10. "I'm also kind of confused as to the whole situation, because I never got any closure after the fact." He suggested that administrators may have been trying to "keep things a little bit quieter."

He confirmed in a text on Thursday that he has not received any further information regarding the comments that he provided and whether the statement was conducive to lobbying efforts.

McInnis said in an interview on Sept. 19 that she visited Washington monthly over the course of the spring semester, for approximately two days at a time. She told the News she has tried to meet with lawmakers on committees that deal with issues pertinent to higher education and confirmed that students were asked by administrators to provide statements to be shared with lawmakers.



As executive orders threaten Yale, McInnis explained how she works behind the scenes to defend the Yale's funding and programs. / **Ellie Park, Multimedia Managing Editor**

"You really want to help lawmakers see the ways in which universities, even though they might be 2000 miles away, are actually making a difference for residents in that state as well," McInnis said.

She said she was unaware how particular students were chosen to be contacted.

"Maybe it made a difference that all of us were there talking with lawmakers," McInnis said, "that they realized that a 21 percent reduction, or a 21 percent tax — maybe they understood that that would have put a lot of things at risk, and therefore maybe that's why they ended up at 8 percent. Who knows?"

The same day Danelski was contacted, Missouri resident Yogev Angelovici '27 received a message signed by his own residential college head and dean. Their email explained that McInnis planned to highlight student perspectives with "one or more" Missouri representatives in Washington early the following week.

The emails to Danelski and Angelovici, both reviewed by the News, contained parallel phrasing, including identical statements regarding McInnis' focus on financial aid and advocating against an "exorbitant" tax on endowment returns. They each mentioned that if the student received financial aid, the information would be "good to note" in their message.

During her conversations with lawmakers, McInnis said, she would convey information including the number of students from their district and the amount of financial aid that they may be receiving.

The day that the earlier version of the bill passed in the House, McInnis urged Yale community members in a University-wide email to contact their senators and advocate against the 21 percent rate. She noted her own work, as well as that of other university presidents, in promoting to elected officials the universities' contributions to society.

"What is at stake is Yale's ability to offer financial aid," McInnis' wrote on May 22, noting that the University provides $564 million in financial aid for "students across all schools" through Yale's endowment.

In June, Yale students — with financial support and coaching from the University — spoke at a Capitol Hill press conference against Trump's tax bill. Student speakers bolstered arguments that the tax could endanger Yale's ability to offer financial aid through personal anecdotes.

Dean of Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid Jeremiah Quinlan recently told the News that current financial aid packages for undergraduates have not been impacted by the elevated endowment tax.

The email came during the second quarter of 2025, within which the University would spend $320,000 on its federal lobbying efforts, then exceeding $500,000 in spending since Jan. 1.

Haliburton, Saybrook's dean and a signatory of the email to Danelski, wrote in an email to the News that he has experience supporting Yale's lobbying efforts in the past.

"Lawmakers' authority and scope to issue laws is broad and deep," Haliburton wrote in an email to the News. "The goal of the conscientious lobbyist is simple: to try to ensure that, with respect to how lawmakers' actions will affect people, institutions and society, their knowledge is as broad and deep as their authority—that is what I learned in that job."

Near, Saybrook's head of college, did not respond to requests for comment about his role in the lobbying effort.

Jacob, Yale's longtime lobbyist, wrote in a statement to the News on Sept. 24 that the University was "exploring new ways of describing the positive impact that Yale has across the country and the world as well as in our home city and state."

He said personal narratives "go well beyond" messaging reliant on statistics alone.

"We hope to do more to document the ways in which faculty and students are engaged in communities across the country and globe through their research. Developing these stories will remain a priority for the coming year," he wrote.

The endowment tax hike, which has already prompted budgetary changes at Yale, is scheduled to go into effect on July 1.

Contact
ISOBEL MCCLURE at
isobel.mcclure@yale.edu
and **ASHER BOISKIN** at
asher.boiskin@yale.edu