FROM THE FRONT

"Nature gets into our souls and opens doors to hidden parts of ourselves"
PAMELA HEYDA AMERICAN ARTIST

On campus, Blumenthal urges McInnis to defy Trump

PROTEST FROM PAGE 1

Trump's attacks on mail-in ballots and research.

At the protest, students carried a cardboard replica of "Lipstick (Ascending) on Caterpillar Tracks," a sculpture by Swedish sculptor Claes Oldenburg '50 that was installed on Beinecke Plaza in 1969 amid anti-war protests. The sculpture is currently displayed at the Yale University Art Gallery.

Students surrounded the replica Lipstick, and shouted slogans like "Hey hey, ho ho, Yale trustees have got to go," and "Get out, get down, we're anti-war in this town."

Miles Kirkpatrick '27, who attended the protest, said he attended after understanding the extent to which the Yale administration has been "derelicting" its duty to listen to its students over time. Kirkpatrick said he hopes the protest would eventually pressure the University against settling with the Trump administration.

"The University sits between the federal government and the students, and we can also apply pressure upwards as well," he said. "I think without student protests there really is no effective avenue for students to enact change in a manner that we need."

Susan DeSilver '79 said she came to protest because Yale's current negotiation is the "antithesis of what a university should stand for." She hopes that alumni could also pressure the University into accepting the protest's demands.

At the end of the press conference, Blumenthal assured the Yale administration that they have an ally in their community. Directing the comment towards Yale President Maurie McInnis, he said the gravity of the situation extends beyond Yale.

"If you want to retain the allegiance and support of your alumni, and I'm one of them, abandon appeasement," Blumenthal said. "The president of Yale is new to it as president, but she must know that what's happening here is bigger than Yale, and our alumni will stand behind Yale if it stands for academic freedom, if it stands up to Donald Trump, if it resists tyranny. That's what is at stake here."

Along with Blumenthal, DeLauro and Elicker, two law school professors spoke at the press conference before the protest. Law school professor Muneer Ahmad described the Justice Department's attack on the University as a "weaponization of Title VI" to exert control over Yale.

"Not only is the law on Yale's side, resisting settlement is the right thing to do," Ahmad said. "This is the time for our university to model the moral courage we seek to cultivate in our students."

The University's motto of "Lux et Veritas, light and truth" is only possible when students and faculty are confident that their "school community" upholds those values, Elicker also said.

Yale Law School professor Amy Kapczynski LAW '03 shared the concerns of Yale's chapter of the American Association of University Professors, which is dedicated to developing standards that preserve quality in higher education and academic freedom in America colleges and universities, according to its website.

In late May, Yale's AAUP chapter released a report that found a significant portion of the University's faculty currently perceives constraints on their ability to express their opinions or research potentially controversial topics.

"They have created a committee to articulate principles of academic freedom," said Kapczynski, referring to the University Provost Scott Strobel's formation in March of a faculty committee to produce a statement on academic freedom. "I thought we were past the point of statements, right? We don't just make statements, we need action."

DeLauro took further strikes at the Trump administration during the conference, saying that, in August, she and Blumenthal wrote to Yale President Maurie McInnis to not "capitulate" to Trump's demands.

While the University has an obligation to respond to the inquiries of the federal government, DeLauro said, it must protect its academic freedom — which she argued Columbia University and Northwestern University compromised in their settlements.

"The reality is that this administration is not trying to resolve a dispute with Yale University: They are building precedent and a template to use against other universities and attacking academic freedom," DeLauro said.

At the end of the protest, organizers urged students to use chalk and write their demands for the University. Students drew slogans such as "Say No to Fascism!," "Yale, Don't Concede!" and "Yale, Stop Bowing Down To Trump" on Beinecke Plaza.

Rosa DeLauro has represented Connecticut's 3rd district, which includes New Haven, since 1991.

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Sarah Rivas / Contributing Photographer



Kailyn Huynh / Contributing Photographer
On Friday afternoon, protesters marched to Beinecke Plaza, where they convened with Connecticut politicians

Lewis to attend senate on Sunday

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"I usually meet with them once a semester, so I haven't met with this group yet, but I'm looking forward to talking to them and hearing their concerns," Lewis said.

Before the final vote was conducted, several student group representatives expressed dissatisfaction with the dean's leadership.

Alexander Vakov '29, co-president of Yale's Questbridge chapter, discussed the impact of recent College policy changes — including a recently-reversed phaseout of summer storage funding and the halving of non-competitive summer grants available to students receiving financial aid — on first-generation, low-income students.

"As president of Questbridge, how am I supposed to explain to nearly 150 impressionable first-year students in my chapter, which is actually the largest class to date of Questbridge, that they should be thinking with extra care about what they want to spend their first summer doing so they don't end up without a source of funding for other opportunities in the future?" Vakov said.

Seth Baker '27, a first-year counselor for Saybrook College, alleged that Lewis lacked compassion regarding the College's decision to schedule first-year course registration before move-in. A petition written earlier this year protesting the change received a total of 121 counselor signatures out of the 132 total FroCos, according to Baker.

"All Head FroCos at the meeting said it was a bad idea. He continued anyway," Baker said, referencing a meeting between the FroCos and Lewis last spring. "Rather than taking into account FroCo perspectives, people who actually speak and listen to the first-year class, he marched on without hesitation."

After public comments on the statement criticizing Lewis were made, Parker moved the senate to debate on the proposed amendment to the document. The changes, he said, aimed to "recenter" the document so that it critiqued Lewis' actions towards vulnerable and low-income students instead of calling for his removal.

"There's the potential for this to feel like a voting dilemma, where voting 'yes' may feel like a sweeping generalization when there's a definite information gap about what we know," Parker said, referring to the workings of the College administration, "but voting 'no' might seem like a callous ignorance of the harms that have occurred."

Shem Haile '28, a Saybrook senator, said that he planned to vote against the amendment since it would take away "power" from the original statement.

"To just suddenly handicap ourselves and take away our own power and not really vote the way that we think and how we would vote if we were the ones in power — it's just that I don't see the appeal to that argument," Haile said.

Davenport senator Ethan Powell '27 supported the amendment, citing limited knowledge of Lewis' responsibilities in his hesitation to support the original statement.

"I think the changes make it more realistic given our position. I think it makes us seem more foolish if we suppose ourselves to have the ability to have enough information to make a full non-confidence vote in a leader, which I don't think we have," Powell said.

The amendment was rejected, with six senators in favor, 14 in favor and five abstaining, while the original statement passed with 20 votes in favor, three against and five abstaining.

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McInnis defended donor privacy

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names. The department's push to publish names follows the Trump administration's stricter regulation of foreign funding to universities. In February, the department released an online database publicizing sources of foreign funding by country, but not individual donors.

Thursday's temporary restraining order will expire on Oct. 29. The department has until Oct. 13 to oppose the AAU's motion for a preliminary injunction.

Department of Education spokesperson Ellen Keast said in a Monday statement to the News that the association of universities is "hellbent on avoiding public accountability after decades of insatiable greed and disregard for the national interest."

The Association of American Universities argued that releasing the names would violate the donors' free speech rights and that breaking donors' anonymity would violate the Administrative Procedure Act, which prohibits agencies from making "arbitrary and capricious" changes.

According to an Education Department database, Guernsey, a tiny English channel island with lenient corporate tax laws, is the top source of foreign funding for Yale. China provided the second most foreign funding for the University. Yale ranks eighth among American universities in foreign funding.

In a September interview, McInnis defended Yale's international cooperation when asked about a proposed bill that would tighten regulations on reporting foreign gifts.

"We don't really do classified research here. We do open science here," McInnis said. "We believe firmly in protecting sensitive and important information to keep it from bad actors."

She added that Yale and its faculty have partnerships across the world.

Keast, the Education Department spokesperson, said in her statement that American taxpayers have spent billions on higher education and expect universities to work in the national interest.

"At the same time, elite universities were cashing multi-million-dollar checks from malign foreign actors that fund centers and faculty who promote anti-Western ideologies and support partnerships that are designed to export sensitive technology to geopolitical adversaries," Keast said.

The Higher Education Act of 1965 requires universities to disclose foreign gifts or contracts above a threshold to the federal government. In 2020, the department began gathering the names of foreign donors but committed to safeguarding their privacy.

Yale has also lobbied against the DETERRENT Act, which would lower the reporting thresholds for foreign funding of higher education and compel faculty and staff to disclose foreign gifts over $480. In her Monday statement, Keast called on Congress to pass the DETERRENT Act to "avoid leaving this critical transparency issue in the hands of federal judges."

"There are particularities in this particular legislation that could make that kind of open science more difficult," McInnis said in September.

Harvard is under investigation by the Department of Justice for ties to China, while the University of Pennsylvania is facing an Education Department probe for allegedly inaccurate reporting of funding. Yale faced a similar Trump administration investigation in 2020 over the accuracy of reporting.

A day after the investigation was announced, the University admitted it did not accurately disclose foreign sources between 2014 and 2017 and updated their filings.

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Abby Assouad / Staff Photographer