FROM THE FRONT

"I think the apple's rotten right to the core"
APPLE CHARLI XCX

McInnis, Lewis were mic'd up for Family Weekend talk

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ratize Yale members started a video during their Friday interaction after standing in line for a selfie.

McInnis said she "didn't say anything," to which Lewis responded, "Of course." McInnis said that when the students took the camera down, she told them that she has "clearly articulated my principles" and that "we're not deviating."

A Sunday morning press release by Democratize Yale identified Siena Grouf '29 as the student who spoke with McInnis. In a Sunday phone interview, Grouf confirmed McInnis' account of their conversation. She and another student approached McInnis at the event, Grouf said, and asked "why Yale was entering negotiations with the Trump administration."

"I think it's extraordinarily disappointing to see McInnis speak that way about other trustees, about students," Grouf told the News. "There are no other opportunities for us to sort of engage with her and the rest of the trustees. So it shouldn't be the case that we have to approach her at events on Cross Campus, but unfortunately it is."

After McInnis' complaint about her Friday interaction with the "pissed off" student, Lewis responded: "Those are a little hard to avoid. We might see some in Commons on Monday."

During their conversation, Lewis and McInnis also discussed the 2024 Family Weekend, when the board of trustees met on the same weekend. She called that weekend "painful."

"Trustees are exhausting," McInnis said.

In her Sunday statement, McInnis said her words do "not reflect how I've spent the last two years meeting with students, faculty, staff, and alumni to hear their ideas, concerns, and aspirations for our university."

"Nor were my words reflective of my deep gratitude for our trustees, alumni volunteers who give so much of their time and energy to help strengthen this institution," McInnis said. "Going forward, I'll continue to meet with members of the Yale community and hear their wide range of perspectives. And I'm committed to continue working with my colleagues to steer the university we all love through this moment of unique uncertainty for higher education."

In a Sunday email to the News, Lewis also expressed regret about the conversation.

"President McInnis and I were having an informal, private conversation and didn't know we were being recorded," Lewis wrote. "She has been very committed to getting input from students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members. We both care a great deal about students and their perspectives, and I'm sorry that any remarks I made might have implied otherwise."

McInnis told Lewis that the students then asked why McInnis had not met with Democratize Yale and that she responded she had met with "many people on these topics." McInnis told Lewis she has met with Yale College Council President Alex William Chen '28 and Ward 1 Alder Elias Theodore '27, two student leaders who have collaborated with Democratize Yale.

Chen, with other undergraduate and graduate student leaders, met with McInnis in July to discuss Yale's negotiations with the Trump administration, before Democratize Yale — which hosted its first protest on Sept. 1 — formed as a coalition.

In a Sunday text message to the News, Theodore wrote that he met with McInnis and Associate Vice President for New Haven Partnerships and Development Alexandra Daum on Sept. 28, following a Board of Alders public hearing on a resolution calling on Yale not to settle with the Trump administration.

"I invited them to come to the hearing, but they opted to meet privately instead," Theodore wrote. "I attended this meeting in my capacity as Ward 1 Alder and a Yale student, not as a representative of Democratize Yale."

Joliana Yee, a Yale College assistant dean and the director of the Asian American Cultural Center, was also present for the beginning of the conversation and later introduced McInnis to the event's audience.



Aria Lynn-Skov / Contributing Photographer
Before a Saturday Family Weekend event with Yale College Dean Pericles Lewis, University President Maurie McInnis was heard saying that she was "ambushed" by a student organizer on Friday and that "trustees are exhausting." McInnis has since said she regrets those statements.



Aria Lynn-Skov / Contributing Photographer

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Deficit mainly due to school funding, Elicker says

DEFICIT FROM PAGE 1

lion in supplementary revenue from the state, Elicker also said.

New Haven's rainy-day fund has given the city "a buffer for rainy days like this one," Elicker said. As of May, the fund totaled around $56 million, according to a statement from the mayor. In that statement, Elicker, who has long emphasized the importance of fiscal caution, touted his administration's "more responsible approach to city budgeting."

The budget for the 2027 fiscal year, which the Board of Alders approved after a vote of 28 to 1, totals $744.3 million.

The city's financial burdens were lightened by a $22 million contribution from the state this spring and by a recent boost to Yale's voluntary contribution to New Haven, which is set to total around $30 million this year. The city has put that money toward its 2027 budget.

But Elicker said New Haven will face "significant headwinds" in the future. The city must spend its grant funding from the American Rescue Plan Act by the end of 2026. Elicker added that the city faces "additional borrowing costs" related to policing cases of the 1980s and 1990s.

In August, New Haven reached settlements totalling $30.5 million with two men who were wrongfully imprisoned after a 1999 shooting.

Earlier this week, the Board of Alders voted to take out $27 million in bonds to pay the portion of those settlements not covered by the city's insurance. The city is currently seeking a new trial for a jury's decision that would have it pay $38 million in another wrongful conviction case.

Elicker said the settlements themselves "didn't have an impact" on the city's debt in fiscal year 2026 but did lead to increased legal fees. New Haven is set to pay off the bonds at a rate of around $2.6 million a year for the next 20 years, although those payments will likely decrease over time, according to Ron Gizzi, the city's acting budget director.

Elicker stressed that the city has "come a long way," pointing to the contributions from both Yale and the state and recent quantum development. On Tuesday, QuantumCT, a joint initiative between the state of Connecticut, Yale and the University of Connecticut, opened a quantum technology hub in New Haven.

The city is working to address "inherited" challenges, like unfunded pension liabilities and past over-borrowing, Elicker said.

"We can't take our foot off the gas," Elicker said. "But we also can't bear all the burden of the past wrongdoing all at once."

The city has not seen a deficit since 2018, according to annual financial reports.

"The good news is that our fund balance is still in a really good place," Elicker said.

Elicker filed for re-election in April.



Jiyoo Nam / Contributing Photographer
Mayor Justin Elicker announced the deficit at a Thursday City Hall press conference. The budget was dragged down by city school funding but has been boosted by Yale's increased voluntary contributions to New Haven, among other factors.

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