NEWS

"Make you banana pancakes, pretend like it's the weekend now."
BANANA PANCAKES JACK JOHNSON

Some YCC senators unsatisfied after questioning Lewis on budget cuts

BY EMILY AKBAR AND ANAYAH ACCILIEN
STAFF REPORTERS

After Yale College Dean Pericles Lewis participated in an off-the-record Yale College Council Senate meeting on Sunday, senators expressed varying degrees of satisfaction with the dean's leadership.

Lewis attended the meeting alongside Associate Dean of Student Affairs Hannah Peck, one week after the body passed a statement of no confidence in Lewis' leadership that urged Yale not to reappoint him to a second term. The document criticized, among other Yale College policy decisions, changes to summer funding that combined the two non-competitive summer awards for low-income students — the International Study Award and the Summer Experience Award — into one grant. The change was made in anticipation of an increased tax on Yale's endowment.

Branford Senator Maneet Mehta '29 said he came into Sunday's meeting hoping Lewis would justify budget cuts made in response to the tax hike. Mehta said that while Lewis did justify the cuts, he did not leave with a "clear understanding" of the University's choices around budget allocations.

"There was a large push towards explaining that a lot of the cuts were made in an effort to maintain or even increase financial aid opportunities for FGLI students in some way," Mehta said, referencing first-generation, low-income students.

"But to me, it seemed like if a large part of that is coming out of things like tuition increases or just reallocating or redistributing funding from the ISA or SEA to things like the 200k tuition cap, et cetera, it's not really so much of an expansion and so much of it is like a superficial redistribution," he said, referring to the International Study Award and Summer Experience Award.

Dean of Undergraduate Admissions Jeremiah Quinlan '03 told the News in January that the grants were combined to allow increased income thresholds for financial aid guarantees. The University announced that month that tuition would be covered for families earning under $200,000 for the class of 2030 and beyond.

YCC Senate Speaker Kyler Parker '29 said he was "optimistic" after the meeting, and that Lewis said the College has entered into a "cautious growth phase."

"We are no longer making these cuts. That was very important," Parker said. "I don't think that's something that has been discussed in the YCC, that we are going to a growth phase. 'Cautious growth phase' is the impression that we got. That's very promising because it means that we as YCC have the opportunity to push new initiatives."

Last month, Lewis told the News that Yale College's budget is "now in balance" after the College saved $3 million in its operating budget last year.

"I think it's very important that this meeting happen because the deans are often not as accessible as we'd like them to, and this is the most direct student facing contact that we do once a semester," Parker said.

Jaden Franklin '29, a senator representing Benjamin Franklin College, said she attended the event hoping to understand Yale's financial priorities. She said the University has expanded its student body while students experience "a reduction in student quality of life."

Beginning with the class of 2029, Yale College admitted 100 more students to each incoming class, aiming to bring the total undergraduate student body to 6,600 students.

Franklin questioned why Yale was not making greater use of its endowment to protect students from financial pressures, including the endowment tax.

"We have the endowment. It's supposed to be a tool that we use to ensure the continuation of quality education at Yale," she said.

Franklin described Lewis as a "good speaker," but she said the event left important questions unanswered, particularly about the administration's plans for financial recovery.

"What are they actually planning to do to make sure that there actually are no cuts?" Franklin said.

Franklin said that cutting resources for students who are already under-resourced undermines the administration's credibility. The summer storage aid phaseout, which was recently reversed after YCC advocacy, affected low-income students.

The YCC senators met with Lewis and Peck at Sheffield-Sterling-Strathcona Hall.

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COLETTE YERRID / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER
Senators at the Yale College Council meeting on Sunday, which was attended by Yale College Dean Pericles Lewis, said they were frustrated by a lack of communication from administrators amid cuts that they say adversely affect student experience.

New Haven chefs launch seasonal dishes inspired by fall flavors

BY ELSPETH YEH AND CRISTINA ORTIZ
STAFF REPORTER AND CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

As temperatures dropped in New Haven, so have new menu items at the city's popular eateries.

Hoping to capitalize on the autumnal buzz, some restaurateurs are debuting dishes exclusive to the season, inspired by classic flavors and New England harvest-time produce.

"I just try to think of things that are gonna highlight the season and highlight flavors that people are anticipating," John Brennan, the chef-owner of Elm City Social and Olives and Oil, said in a phone interview. "Obviously, pumpkin spice season has become its own kind of genre in and of itself, but I think a lot of those flavors that people associate with pumpkin spice season really lend well to other varietals that come out during the time."

For Brennan, fall means squash. He said the restaurants' purveyor sources fresh squash and apples from southern Massachusetts and Connecticut for their seasonal dishes.

Butternut squash features heavily in Brennan's early fall menu items. At Elm City Social, a butternut squash grilled cheese with maple aioli and freshly sliced apples has been "super popular" with guests, he said. At Olives and Oil, Brennan's team is serving up butternut squash alfredo with freshly-made linguine and a roasted butternut squash pizza, topped with balsamic onion jam and hot honey.

Brennan said he loves to highlight fresh, seasonal produce in his cooking, adding that even in a time when most fruits and vegetables are available year-round, there's nothing better — or more flavorful — than enjoying them in their prime.

At Harvest Wine Bar & Restaurant, squash is also taking center stage. The restaurant introduced its house-made butternut squash ravioli this week, prepared with organic eggs and farm-fresh produce.

"We introduced the squash ravioli last week, and it's the bestseller we have," one of the restaurant's chefs and owners, Kleber Nube, said.

Harvest is also serving duck with butternut squash, blueberry sauce and poached pear. On the drinks side, the restaurant is experimenting with seasonal cocktails, including apple cider and spiced pumpkin martinis.

Nube said that the bartenders are "doing a trial, and we're tasting different flavors to see what's best for the fall season."

For some eateries, the timeline for coming out with fall specials starts early. Now that chains like Starbucks have begun releasing fall menu items in August, other businesses are pressured to follow their lead, Brennan said.

Mariam Tabrez of Sixer Coffee, a mobile coffee cart based in New Haven, said in a phone interview that she started researching trends almost two months ago. The cart's seasonal specials include a pumpkin spice latte and apple crisp latte.

Tabrez said that the apple crisp lattes have outsold other menu items, which she attributes to the quality produce coming out of the many local apple orchards in Connecticut.

"You can technically offer anything at any time, but it's just not going to taste the same," Tabrez said. "It's not going to taste right because the fruit or the flavor is not in season."

Tabrez also said fall specials capitalize on the "sense of urgency" consumers feel when it comes to menu items available for a limited time.

At Pistachio Cafe, fall flavors have a Middle Eastern twist. The cafe is offering pistachio cardamom croissants and a new pumpkin spice pistachio cold brew.

Pistachio Cafe is offering midweek study discounts for students and a seasonal combo deal pairing specialty fall drinks with fresh pastries.

At Ashley's Ice Cream, fall flavors also bring a boost in sales. Store manager Mike Kochis said in a phone interview that its pumpkin ice creams are "hot sellers."

The pumpkin ice cream base at Ashley's is made from the same ingredients one would find in pumpkin pie. Its popular varieties feature gingersnap cookies or Oreos as mix-ins. According to Kochis, the fall flavors are always fresh — since Ashley's sells out so frequently, its staff is always making new batches.

Ashley's has also recently begun offering a monthly sundae special. For the month of October, its menu features a pumpkin ice cream sundae, topped with cheesecake, whipped cream and graham cracker crumbs. Kochis said because Ashley's rents from Yale University Properties, the Yale media team has been helping advertise the promotional sundaes.

For non-pumpkin lovers, Ashley's also scoops up seasonal flavors such as apple crumble, maple walnut and bourbon brown sugar.

While the pumpkin flavors are popular in the fall, Kochis said that "after January, we can't even give it away." He added that Ashley's will stop making its pumpkin ice cream after December.

Elm City Social and Olives and Oil will rotate their seasonal menus mid-November, according to Brennan.

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