NEWS

"October sun shines down, golden leaves on the ground."
OCTOBER SUN MATT BERRY

Top administrator calls Yale 'AI-resilient,' stresses active discussion

BY SARA AGRAWAL
STAFF REPORTER

University Provost Scott Strobel praised Yale's resilience to the negative effects of artificial intelligence while acknowledging the need for continued conversations on the University's approach to the rapid development of AI.

Strobel, the chief academic and budgetary officer of the University, said in a Friday interview that he is not worried that AI would cause the value of a Yale degree to decrease. He contrasted Yale with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which in August released a report on the opportunities and risks presented by AI.

"I feel like we're a little bit more AI-resilient than maybe the social networks at other schools," Strobel said. "But that said, it's going to have an impact and has had an impact on what education and higher education looks like."

His office has begun leading conversations with deans of Yale's various schools over the nature of humanity in the age of AI, Strobel said, adding that the recommendations developed in 2024 by the Yale Task Force on Artificial Intelligence remain relevant today. Following the committee's report, Yale committed $150 million over five years to AI investments.

"AI has moved very quickly since then. It continues to move at a rapid pace," Strobel said. "Its capabilities have far exceeded in the past three years where they were three years ago. And so this is an ongoing and continuous conversation."

After the release of MIT's report, Yale's University Cabinet — which is composed of Yale's vice presidents, senior vice presidents, school deans and the University provost — met to discuss the MIT report's recommendations, Strobel said.

Reviewing MIT's report made him "very grateful to be at Yale," Strobel added.

"These technologies have driven major shifts in campus culture, including decreased attendance at office hours, reduced participation in online discussions, and, as we heard anecdotally, a drop in in-person study groups in dorms, libraries, and other study spaces," the MIT report reads.

He said that unlike at MIT, where AI has impacted a social culture that largely revolved around collaboration on problem sets, at Yale, "there's a lot of other social threads that tie our communities together."

In a survey of Yale graduating seniors last spring, 91 percent of 172 respondents said that they had used AI in their coursework. At the time, Aviv Melamud '26 told the News that AI had "basically killed office hours" in the computer science department.

The MIT report emphasized the need to consider the "structure, meaning and value of an MIT education in an era in which AI is one of several factors complicating the Institute's mission."

Like MIT's report, the Yale AI task force's 2024 report identified the importance of having access to AI tools in the University, Strobel said.

Yale's investments into artificial intelligence following the 2024 report's recommendations have included creating Clarity, a platform that provides secure access to models like GPT and Claude, and acquiring graphic processing units for computational research.

Strobel noted in a Tuesday email to the News that Yale used "AI-budgeted resources to help hire" new faculty in three schools.

The 2024 report also recommended offering seed grants for interdisciplinary research. In 2025, Yale awarded AI seed grants to 18 research teams, according to the Yale AI website.

Strobel said that seed grants offer initial support for "interesting intersections and collaborations" that are "the hardest kinds of conversations to get started" before researchers submit proposals for external grants.

Sarah Demers, the chair of the Physics Department, said in a phone interview that one of her graduate students was interested in researching AI safety. A seed grant from Yale allowed Demers to supplement the student's stipend as she searched for other sources of funding, she said.

"It's targeted flexibility because funding for AI research in general, that's an area that's really exploding. So it's targeted at the kinds of things where there are opportunities," Demers said.

Strobel said that Yale offers seed grants in areas other than AI, including planetary solutions. He added that there are "some conversations" about how these grants could be enacted in the context of the April report of the Committee on Trust in Higher Education.

One of the trust report's recommendations was that Yale "initiate a generous grant program available to students, faculty, staff, alumni, and members of the New Haven community who would like to experiment with ways to make Yale's educational resources more broadly available." The recommendation was not specific to AI grants.

Strobel's tenure as provost began in 2020.

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AMAY TEWARI
University Provost Scott Strobel, who is Yale's chief academic and budgetary officer, said an MIT report on AI's effects on the school made him "very grateful to be at Yale."

Drop in proportion of Native American first years spurs student concern

BY SASHA CABRAL AND DAVID LIU
STAFF REPORTERS

This year's decline in the percentage of incoming undergraduates identifying as Native American, from about 3 percent to 1 percent, has prompted student worry around the representation of indigenous communities on campus.

For the last five years, the College sustained an approximate 3 percent share of Native American students matriculating with each first-year class. The figure dropped to approximately 1 percent this year, which amounts to about 23 students given the class of 2030's size. A 3 percent proportion of students in the incoming class of 2029 would have equaled about 69 students.

"As with any identity at Yale, the fewer students who share that identity, the harder it is to cultivate community," Virginia Moore '28 wrote in an email on behalf of the Native and Indigenous Student Association at Yale, Indigenous Peoples of Oceania at Yale and Yale American Indian Science and Engineering Society.

"Especially for our Native students, who come from a number of diverse Indigenous communities, fewer students means it's less likely that another Native student comes from their community or region," Moore wrote. "This can be an isolating experience for our students."

Yale College Dean Pericles Lewis said the 2023 Supreme Court decision in Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard, which outlawed race-conscious college admissions processes, can complicate the interpretation of class racial data.

"It's always hard to know what accounts for these changes in particular since 2023 because of the Supreme Court ruling," Lewis said in an interview. "We don't ask students their race when they apply, and we don't even necessarily know the race of the student when they arrive."

While the ruling in Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard still allows students to write about their racial identity and heritage in essays, admissions officers will not otherwise know a Yale applicant's race during the admissions process.

"If a student identifies after they've been admitted, they identify as Native American or they want to talk to Native American Cultural Center, we invite them to the cultural center. We try to create a very welcoming environment for Native American students," Lewis said.

Matthew Makomenaw, the director of the Native American Cultural Center and an assistant dean of Yale College, wrote in a statement that the cultural center's goals will remain constant regardless of the number of Native American students on campus.

"The work of the Native American Cultural Center is to serve all students to include undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools. In addition, our programming is open to the entire Yale faculty and staff community," Makomenaw wrote. "The number of Native American students on campus does not change the work of building, sharing, and strengthening Indigenous thought, history and culture on campus."

Yale's Native American Cultural Center was founded in 1993.

Anayah Accilien contributed reporting.

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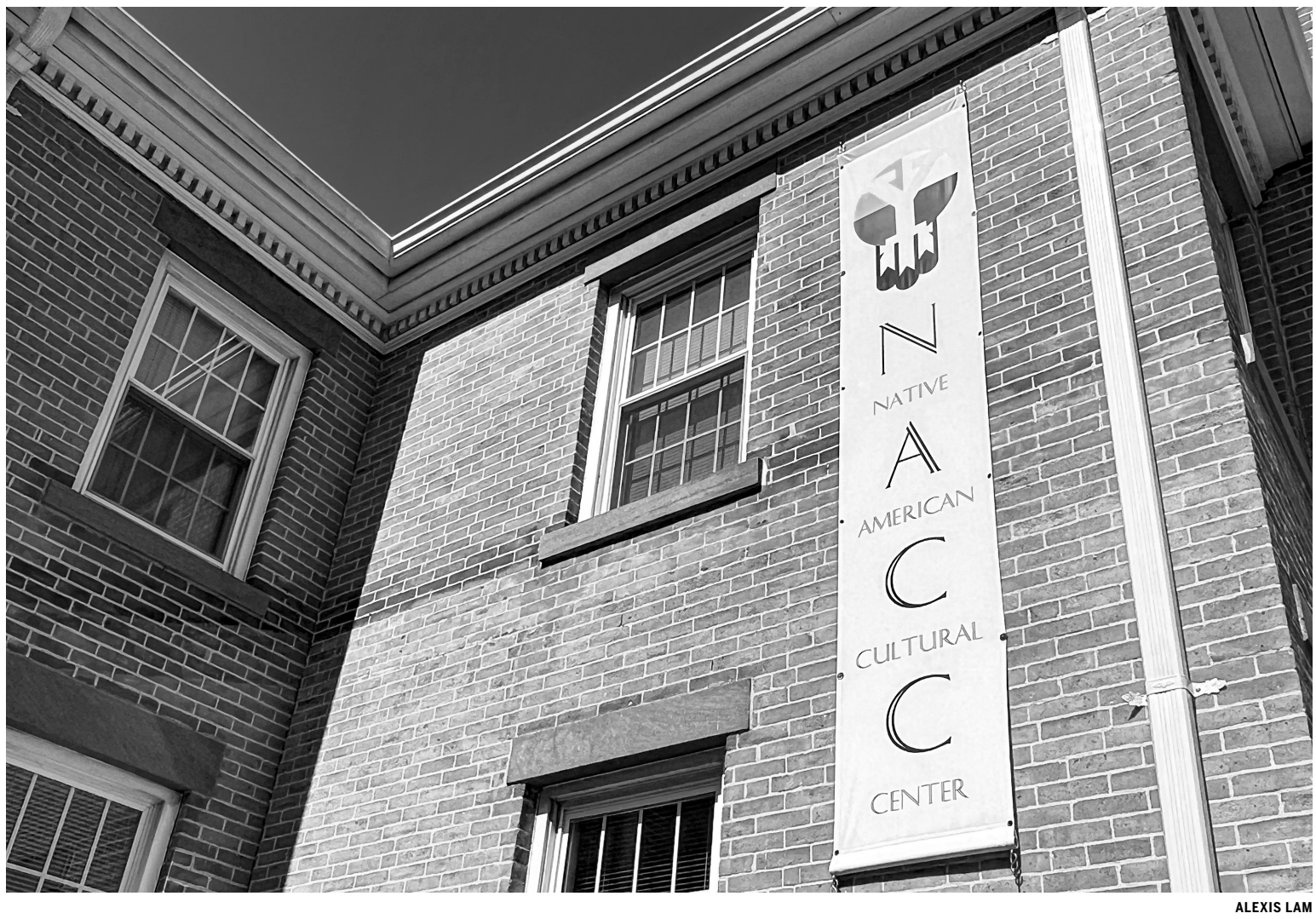

ALEXIS LAM
The percentage of matriculated first years who identify as Native American is approximately 1 percent this year, down from a consistent 3 percent for each of the last five years.