NEWS

"October and trees are stripped bare, of all they wear"
OCTOBER U2

McInnis, Lewis agreed low turnout at event 'may not be bad'



ARIA LYNN-SKOV / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Before giving a Saturday update for parents on priorities for the University, Yale President Maurie McInnis and Yale College Dean Pericles Lewis discussed potential low turnout at the talk due to its start time and the News' presence at the event.

BY LEO NYBERG AND ARIA LYNN-SKOV
STAFF REPORTERS

University President Maurie McInnis and Yale College Dean Pericles Lewis suggested they wanted their shared Family Weekend event to be low-profile in a Saturday conversation caught on hot mic.

The conversation — captured by a Yale livestream — was a rare glimpse into a private exchange between the two administrators. Lewis remarked that lower attendance at the event, which McInnis said might be brought on by a 10 a.m. start time, might not be bad. Marsh Lecture Hall was nearly full for the talk, in which McInnis answered questions from Lewis and spoke about Yale's sexual misconduct policy, changes facing international students and federal relations.

"The 10 a.m. start may mean we get a smaller audience, which I'm fine by," McInnis said to Lewis before the event began, to which the dean responded, "May not be bad."

"Yeah, exactly. Yeah," McInnis responded.

In Sunday statements to the News, McInnis expressed regret about her remarks and Lewis apologized for any implication that he and McInnis did not care "a great deal" about students. University spokesperson Karen Peart wrote in a Monday statement to the News that McInnis and Lewis would not provide further comment.

The News reviewed a screen recording of the livestream, included in a press release from Democratize Yale — a coalition of Yale affiliates demanding, among other things, that Yale not settle with the Trump administration — on Sunday. The event recording does not appear on the Yale website, and a University spokesperson did not answer a question about its availability. Videos of McInnis' speeches at the 2024 and 2025 University updates are still viewable through archived webpages.

In their private conversation, McInnis and Lewis discussed topics ranging from student protesters to meetings with parents to Yale's trustees. They expressed frustration with student activists' conduct, and McInnis said a day in a prior year that included a Family Weekend update and trustee meetings was "painful," adding that trustees are "exhausting."

After discussing a student protester who approached McInnis on Friday and began recording, Lewis turned to discussing the News.

"And unfortunately even here, there's somebody, although it doesn't look like kids, but last year, there was somebody from the Yale Daily News who came in," he said.

Two reporters from the News were present at this year's event.

"Oh, I'm sure Yale Daily News will be here," McInnis said to Lewis. Lewis responded, "Yeah, they're here somewhere."

As she enters her third year as University president, some students, faculty and alumni have criticized McInnis for her silence and inaccessibility. Early in her presidency, she adopted guidelines that instructed Yale leadership to refrain from commenting publicly on topical issues. She has since refrained from commenting on public matters that do not directly impact the University.

In recent months, activists have escalated calls for Yale to stand up to the Trump administration as the University negotiates with the Department of Justice over an investigation into its admissions practices.

As the event ended, members of the Endowment Justice Collective — part of the Democratize Yale coalition calling on Yale not to settle with the Trump administration — held signs in the back of the lecture hall that said "FIGHT BACK DON'T SETTLE."

John Robert Walker '28, an organizer with the Endowment Justice Collective, described McInnis' speech as sanitized in a Saturday interview.

"The first half of this event was President McInnis reading off of a teleprompter and the second half of the event was her answering questions that were presubmitted and filtered," Walker said. "What parents experienced today of the University sanitizing their messaging to community stakeholders is what we've been experiencing for our entire time on campus."

Marsh Lecture Hall has a capacity of 483 people.

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Cleaning drone tested on Sterling wall as Yale experiments

BY KAI BWOR
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

A drone spotted spraying water on Sterling Memorial Library last week was part of a University-approved demonstration of new building-cleaning technology, according to administrators.

The drone was operated by a pressure washing company to demonstrate its equipment to University Facilities staff along Alexander Walk outside Sterling Memorial Library. Thomas Negrelli, a physical safety specialist at the University's Environmental Health & Safety office, confirmed that the demonstration had received prior approval and that he observed the flight in person.

"The purpose was to showcase emerging drone technology for building washing," Negrelli wrote in an email to the News. "While this approach has not been broadly adopted across campus, it is becoming increasingly common."

Austin Madson, a researcher at Yale's Center for Geospatial Solutions, wrote in an email to the News that drones could be used beyond cleaning building exteriors, including documenting the condition of campus buildings and creating detailed digital inventories of their materials.

The use of drones for building maintenance at Yale has "great potential," Madson wrote.

Madson also pointed to the potential safety advantages of using drones for maintenance work on taller buildings, although he stated that drone operations require careful planning and must comply with Federal Aviation Administration regulations.

"In particular, imagine having to hang off the side of Kline Tower to clean and/or inventory materials," Madson wrote. "Is it possible? Yes. Do humans do it? Yes. Is it safer to have the human on the ground? Yes!"

The demonstration comes as drones have become a familiar presence around campus, according to Duane Lovello, the University's head of public safety.

"Drones are now fairly common on campus, used for a variety of functions, including shooting film footage, building inspections, and the like," Lovello wrote in an email to the News.

Lovello also noted a separate drone operation at the University's offices at 25 Science Park last month when a large drone was used to wash exterior windows.

Unlike at the demonstration near Sterling Memorial Library, however, Environmental Health & Safety officials had not been informed of the activity at 25 Science Park, Negrelli wrote.

"Unfortunately, there are occasional drone operations near campus that have not gone through the required approval process, and we are actively working to address them," Negrelli wrote.

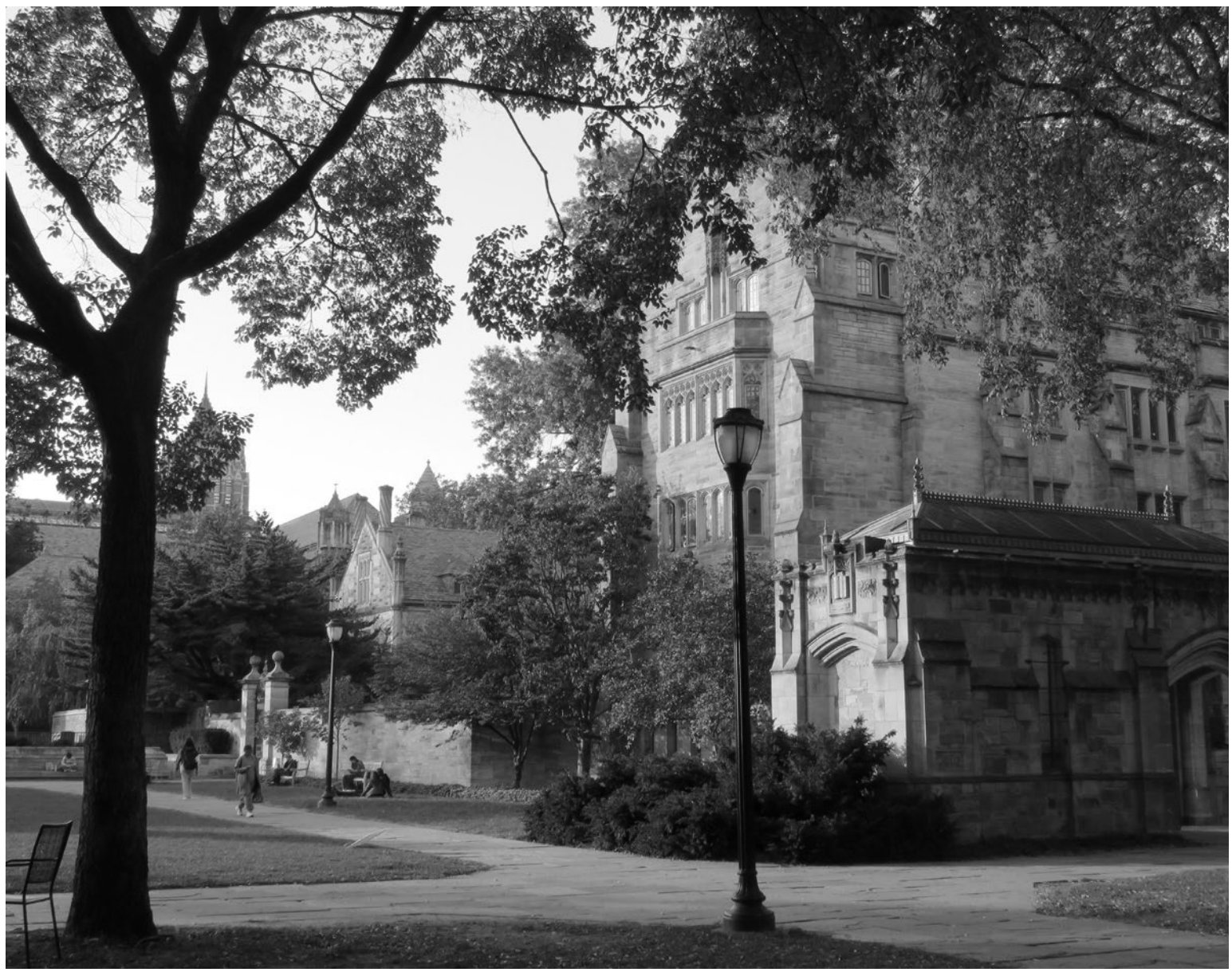
Negrelli wrote that officials have been attempting to identify window-washing companies that may be operating drones without submitting flight requests.

Negrelli referred the News to Yale's unmanned aircraft policy, which states that drone flights on University property or conducted in connection with University activities require prior approval from the Environmental Health & Safety office and the Office of Risk Management. Requests are reviewed, Negrelli wrote, according to the nature and purpose of the proposed flight.

University officials are also working to provide authorized drone operators with documentation confirming that their flights have received approval.

"For approved flights, we are also working to provide pilots with a Flight Approval Form that they can present upon request to confirm that the operation has been reviewed through the appropriate channels," Negrelli wrote, adding that members of the Yale community are welcome to ask drone pilots operating on University property about the purpose of their activities.

The recreational small drone fleet in the U.S. will reach 1.82 million by 2027, according to a Federal Aviation Administration report.



CLAIRE SALISBURY / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

A drone seen spraying water outside Sterling Memorial Library last week was part of a University-approved demonstration of building-cleaning technology, according to administrators affiliated with Yale Environmental Health & Safety.

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