FROM THE FRONT

"You're like a dream come true."
WHEN WE WERE YOUNG ADELE

Directed Studies cohort could grow by 25%, dean says

DS FROM PAGE 1

them that it would be easy to get off the waitlist, but that was not the case this year.

Katja Lindskog, the program's director of undergraduate studies, clarified in an email that the proposed expansion is "very much just an idea that has been suggested to us."

"We would love for more students to participate if possible," she wrote, "but we also want to make sure in that case that we get the resources we need to preserve part of what makes DS special, which are the small section sizes and making sure we have enough qualified and passionate faculty teaching to ensure all students can feel as supported, challenged, and inspired as possible."

Lindskog added that the recent increase in interest in the program is "great news for the humanities in higher education."

Ruth Yeazell GRD '69 '71, who teaches Directed Studies literature and enrolled as a student in the program in 2020, praised the expansion plan.

"I think the increased interest in DS is exciting, and I'm delighted that the College is responding by adding more sections," she wrote in an email to the News.

Yeazell added that it's important to preserve the 15-student cap for sections and that she doesn't expect each student's experience to change significantly from adding two sections worth of students, "as long as we can all fit into the HQ lecture hall."

The program's weekly lectures are held for the entire cohort in the Humanities Quadrangle's room L02, which accommodates 187 people, according to a University webpage.

While Paul Freedman, who teaches historical and political thought for the program, wrote in an email to the News that lectures are "already crowded," he added that he doesn't think expanding the program would "undermine the overall experience."

Daniel Schillinger, who teaches historical and political thought for the program, called the proposed expansion a "great idea" — as long as seminar sizes remain small.

"If the students are eager and deserving, why not allow them to join?" he wrote in an email to the News. "The more humanities nerds, the merrier."

Schillinger also wrote that students' and faculty's enthusiasm "fuels" the program, adding that what makes Directed Studies unique from Great Books programs at peer institutions, such as Columbia University's core curriculum, is its voluntary nature.

Lewis echoed this remark, noting that a required undergraduate core curriculum can limit students' abilities to explore course offerings.

"For Chicago and Columbia, it's a big part of their identity, and I always hear from alumni of Columbia and Chicago about what a great experience they had," Lewis said. "I think having optional cores like DS works better at a large university with a very diverse set of student interests."



If hiring capacity permits, program spots would increase for the class of 2030, Yale College Dean Pericles Lewis said in an interview. / **Zoe Berg**

Anthony Dominguez '28, a Directed Studies alum and current peer tutor for the program, said that he thinks it is important to make the curriculum more accessible.

"A big problem of this notion of studying the Western canon and being at an institution like Yale is just the inherent tinge of elitism, so if there's any way to accommodate, to democratize, then we should absolutely be doing that," Dominguez said in an interview.

Dominguez said that opening up the course to additional students is "in line" with making the curriculum more accessible.

Eugenie Kim '29, who did not get off the program's waitlist earlier this year, called the proposed expansion "exciting," although she noted that she is "extremely happy" with her current courses.

"As someone who really wanted to do DS, I think it's great that more people are able to delve into the literature and enjoy the awesome academic experience," she wrote in a text message to the News.

The Directed Studies program began in 1947.

Contact **JAEHA JANG** *at jaeha.jang@yale.edu and* **OLIVIA WOO** *at olivia.woo@yale.edu.*

Republican mayor candidate wants to shake up City Hall

OROSCO FROM PAGE 1

For a while, though, Orosco planned to fight his way to Wall Street. He went to Pace University and eventually moved to New Haven to work at the Shelton-based Barnum Financial Group and pursue a dual degree at Albertus Magnus College.

But Orosco could not resist the allure of mixed martial arts, or MMA. In 2009, he moved to San Diego — MMA's "mecca" — to pursue a career in the sport. He fought professionally until 2015, when he moved to Los Angeles to establish SMASH MMA, a league and events production company. In 2019, he moved back to New Haven's Morris Cove neighborhood, where his wife had grown up.

Two years later, Anthony Acri, a businessman who is running for Ward 18 alder this year, asked Orosco to run for that seat.

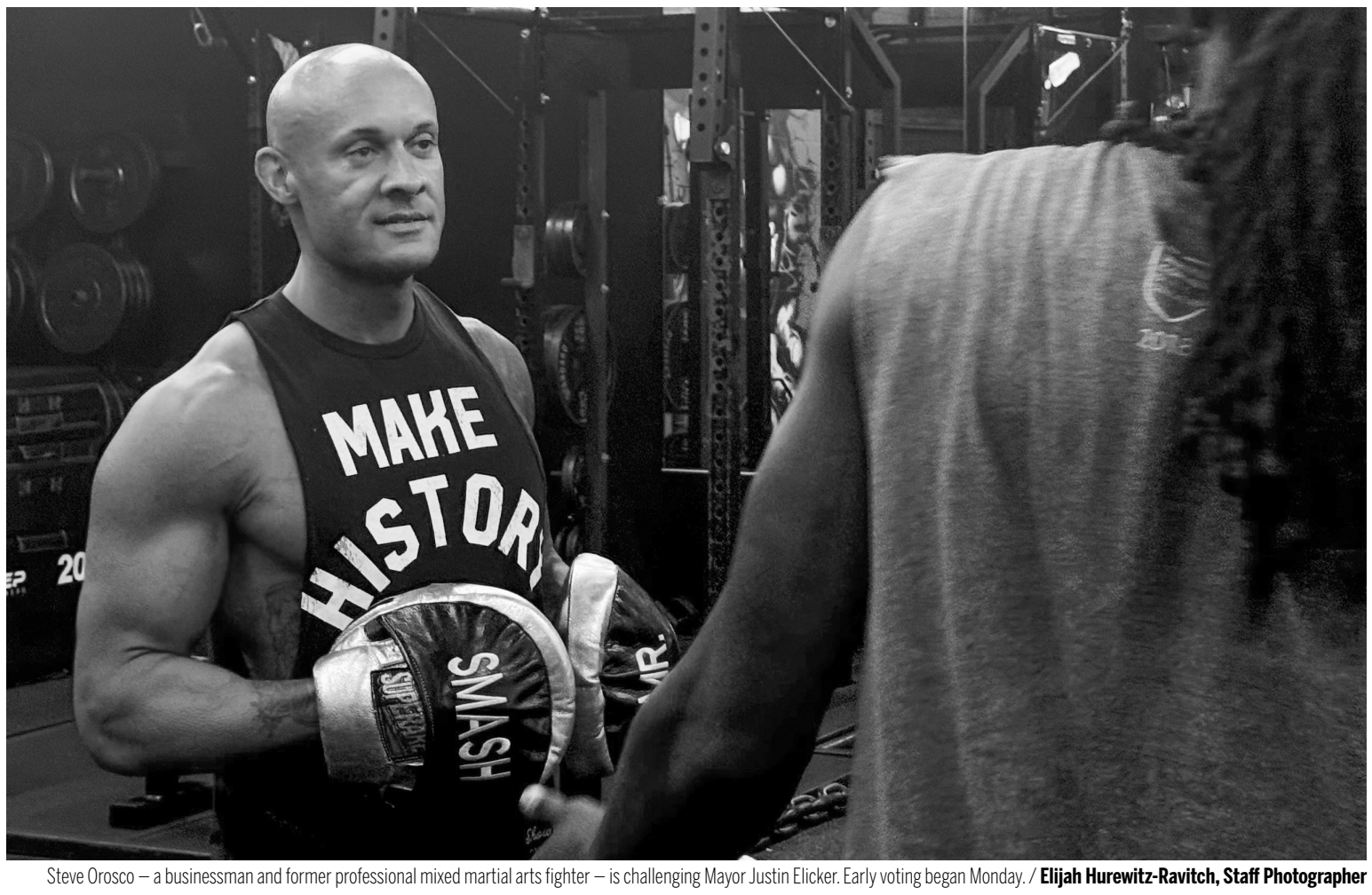
He won just under 40 percent of the vote in the 2021 general election.

In 2022, Orosco decided to challenge then-15-term incumbent Martin Looney for state senator. In that race, and again when he ran last year, Orosco lost by about 55 percentage points.

"You're not a loser until you quit," Orosco said. "At some point, you're not gonna be able to deny me."

Orosco is upset, he said, by Democrats' longstanding dominance in New Haven.

"You can't vote Democrat in New Haven anymore, just like you can't vote Republican in these places that are in the Deep South," he said. "When one party reigns for too long, anywhere on the planet, they always fail, always, because they don't have to earn your vote anymore."



Steve Orosco — a businessman and former professional mixed martial arts fighter — is challenging Mayor Justin Elicker. Early voting began Monday. / **Elijah Hurewitz-Ravitch, Staff Photographer**

The biggest hurdle running as a Republican in New Haven — where there are more than 10 registered Democrats for every registered Republican, according to data from the city's Registrar of Voters office — is finding enough volunteers, Orosco said.

At present, Orosco said that he has four people on his campaign staff. As of Sept. 30, his campaign has raised $21,150. Orosco said that money came mostly from donors outside of New Haven.

With early voting already underway, the race is now entering its final stages.

In interviews with the News and at a mayoral debate late last month, Elicker has voiced his disapproval of Orosco's social media rhetoric and for what Elicker sees as a lack of sincere engagement in New Haven. And Elicker has defended his record on education, affordable housing and public safety.

For now, Orosco is most focused on mobilizing voters. Tom Goldenberg, the Republican who challenged Elicker in 2023, won 2,322 votes to the mayor's 10,064. But there are 4,149 registered Republicans in New Haven — and 6,626 residents who voted for Donald Trump in 2024.

In the 2021 and 2023 mayoral elections, 12,980 and 13,058 total votes were cast, respectively.

"If you look at that number, somewhere around the 6,500 mark seems to be a magic number," Connecticut Republican Party Chairman Ben Proto said in a telephone interview.

He said he discussed that target with Orosco over the summer.

"In the past, there's been a lot of voter apathy," John Carlson, the chair of New Haven's Republican Town Committee, said in a telephone interview. "Steve is getting people in his campaign to notice what's going on, and now they're more cognizant of the issues. And I think there's a lot more interest in his mayoral campaign than there's been in the past."

If he loses next month, Orosco said he plans to run for mayor again in 2027. But he is confident that "no one's gonna have moved the needle as much as I have in this election."

"For the first time in a long time, I've seen so many Democrats that are actually nervous," said Oliver Augustin, vice chair of New Haven's Republican Town Committee.

Augustin clarified in a telephone interview that he was not referring to anyone in particular but "more of a general vibe." He added that he has noticed that some Newhallville and Westville residents who normally "would tune out of local politics are taking notice of Steve."

Orosco traces his "conservative nature" back to the values instilled in him by his father's parents — "marriage, church, education."

"Before the Civil Rights Movement, Black America was at its peak," Orosco said. "That's when everyone went to church on Sunday. Two-parent home was everything. Mother stayed home, fathers went to work. We wanted education so bad, we risked our lives to go to white schools. We spent all our money within our own community."

Orosco said he once identified as a conservative Democrat and voted for Hillary Clinton in 2016, but he registered as a Republican in 2020.

To be sure, Orosco — who is also running on the Independent Party line — is not a traditional member of the GOP. He said he dislikes the two-party system, is "pro-choice" in regards to abortion and believes in "what a lot of progressives say with 'tax the rich.'"

The mayoral hopeful wants to be a change agent — to "disrupt the system" — and likened himself to younger Republicans such as the Ohio gubernatorial candidate and former presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy.

As he runs for mayor, Orosco said he has two core priorities: "fully funding the police, and then fully funding education."

But, he added, "you can't fund all that stuff unless you audit the city, uncover money."

He aims to bring a business-minded approach to what he sees as a bloated municipal government.

"We waste money here," he said. "We're so central office-heavy and bloated, it's almost ridiculous."

He pointed to New Haven having spent over $43,000 on fans a week and a half before the end of the past school year to alleviate high temperatures in buildings without working air conditioning.

A spokesperson for New Haven Public Schools did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Orosco is also determined not to raise taxes — which he said requires building up the local economy. For Orosco, that means development. To begin with, he wants Long Wharf built out.

"I see water taxis going up and down the coast and through Mill River District," he said. "I see our New Haven Beach, beautiful, having a boardwalk, having restaurants so people can actually use it and create revenue for our city. I see the airport continuing to grow."

Projects like these will create jobs and generate revenue, Orosco said, adding that he would give tax breaks to firms that hired New Haveners below the poverty line.

Orosco wants New Haven to be a place that drivers passing on I-91 and I-95 want to visit.

"We're more than just pizza," he added.

Although campaigning keeps him busy, Orosco still makes time to train kids to fight at the Milford gym he co-owns.

"There's nothing like training a kid and pushing them and watching them succeed and win," he said.

He wants to do the same for New Haven.

Despite his three campaigns, Orosco has few ties with the dominant forces in New Haven's politics. He said that he has not yet spoken with any Yale administrator and that he does not have a relationship with any of its politically powerful unions.

"It's clearly a tough row to hoe, no doubt about it," Proto said. "It's a heavily Democrat city. But you know, we've seen stranger things happen."

Orosco, for his part, may not want to stop at City Hall.

"I want to be the mayor of New Haven until New Haven is fixed and really moving slow, then maybe I'd be governor," Orosco said.

The Elm City's last Republican mayor left office in 1953.

Contact **ELIJAH HUREWITZ-RAVITCH** *at elijah.hurewitz-ravitch@yale.edu.*