NEWS

"By the pricking of my thumbs, / Something wicked this way comes."
MACBETH WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Yale College Council announces free Canva Pro for undergraduates

BY EMILY AKBAR
STAFF REPORTER

Yale College Council leaders on Tuesday announced a one-year agreement to provide undergraduates free access to Canva Pro.

The agreement, shared in an email to undergraduates from YCC President Alex William Chen '28 and Vice President Michelle Jimenez '28, comes over a year after Yale discontinued free Adobe Creative Cloud access for students in August 2025. In response, the YCC approved stipends to help students purchase individual software licenses. With Canva Pro, a graphic design platform, students can access additional templates and editing tools.

"Graphic design tools enhance students' coursework, drive collaboration between student groups, and help our campus communicate and publicize opportunities," Chen wrote in a text message to the News.

The Council secured $980,000 worth of Canva Pro accounts for a price tag of just $23,000, Chen and Jimenez wrote in the email to students. The cost was covered by endowment returns from a longstanding donation to the Council, with no money drawn from the Student Activities Fee, they added.

YCC Speaker and Chief Financial Officer Kyler Parker '29 said the deal resulted from an initiative by Canva to cater to student governments across the country with "discounts."

"The impression that I've gotten is that Canva is kind of doing a push right now to sell these large subscription packages to student governments around the country," Parker said. "And we're kind of one of the pioneering cases that they're basically testing out this model with, and as part of the attempt to entice student government associations to sign on to this."

Chen said that he and Jimenez had conversations with University administrators to negotiate a source of funding for the move. But he said administrators did not want to cover the cost due to other existing small scope deals with editing platforms like Adobe Creative Cloud, leading the YCC to rely on the endowment returns.

Michael Canudas '28, the YCC Senate's technology chair, said he coordinated with Yale Information Technology Services to execute the update, helping bridge technology administrators and Canva to ensure proper implementation.

Students can sign in to the platform with their Yale credentials and join the "Yale College Students – Canva Pro" team. Existing designs will remain in personal accounts, while designs created through the Yale team will remain private unless shared.

The current Canva deal is set to expire in one year, according to the YCC announcement. After the end of the deal, students will lose access to Canva Pro, but their accounts and designs will remain accessible, Canudas said. Future plans for similar initiatives are not yet in place.

"Personally, I would like to extend this indefinitely and put the framework in place to extend this indefinitely, but ultimately it's gonna be up to the next YCC administration," Parker said.

The YCC previously expanded Yale College students' Google Drive storage to 20 gigabytes.

Contact
EMILY AKBAR *at*
emily.akbar@yale.edu.



GARRETT CURTIS / PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

In a Tuesday email to students, Yale College Council leaders announced a yearlong deal guaranteeing undergraduates access to Canva Pro. The deal, which was discounted from $980,000 to $23,000, was paid for by endowment returns on a donation to the YCC.

Top administrator talks AI, endowment and chicken tenders



SARA AGRAWAL / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Geoff Chatas, who has served as senior vice president for operations since last fall, discussed his approach to his role at a Wednesday talk that spanned from the University's AI strategy to the importance of chicken tenders as a part of the Yale experience.



BY SARA AGRAWAL
STAFF REPORTER

Geoff Chatas, the University's chief operating officer and senior vice president for operations, discussed his first year at Yale and upcoming priorities at a Silliman College tea on Wednesday evening.

In the Wednesday talk that was attended by around 15 students, Chatas emphasized his priorities — which included preserving the Yale experience and deploying AI in human resources and facilities — and answered questions about the University endowment. On Tuesday, Chatas and other administrators announced that the endowment saw a 26.3 percent return last fiscal year, reaching $54.5 billion.

Chatas said that coming to Yale, it was "a pleasant surprise" that "we actually do invest a lot in the institution, both teaching and research. And sometimes I know it doesn't feel like it, but we do."

As senior vice president for operations, Chatas "oversees finance, human resources, facilities, hospitality, public safety, information technology, and other administrative functions that support the university's academic mission," according to Yale's website.

Chatas assumed his role at Yale in November 2025, after working as the executive vice president and chief financial officer at the University of Michigan since 2021.

MLive, a Michigan digital news network, reported last month that the University of Michigan investigated Chatas following allegations of financial mismanagement. The Detroit News also reported that the school paid a New York law firm nearly $1.3 million to conduct the investigation. Both reports cited open records requests.

Yale spokesperson Karen Peart wrote in an email to the News then that the University does "not speculate about or discuss another institution's personnel matters" and selected Chatas because of "his demonstrated experience and commitment to strong financial stewardship and operational excellence."

Arielle Baskin-Sommers, the head of Silliman College, asked Chatas to explain the importance of a multi-billion dollar endowment. Chatas explained that the increased growth on the endowment will roll out over the course of five years. He also noted that 75 percent of the endowment is restricted.

"A lot of that growth will go to where the donor intended it to go, and then the rest of it is a discussion with the community about what's important," he said.

Chatas also addressed the budget cuts caused by the increased tax on Yale's net endowment income from 1.4 percent to 8 percent. He said that, despite the tax, "we are still going to have an increase" in funds from the endowment's growth.

When Baskin-Sommers asked Chatas what change he might want in the University, Chatas emphasized his commitment to improving the student experience. He also stressed the importance of the residential college system to the Yale experience amid a trend of students moving off campus.

"I think about the fact that so many of our undergrads move out of colleges, and what can we do about that," Chatas said.

Chatas also said that the role of AI is another major focus for him.

"We are just about to post for somebody to report to me directly, both focused on AI and operational strategy," he said.

In an interview after the tea, Chatas said that the person hired for this position would help find ways to implement AI in human resources and facilities.

"I'm all about trying to simplify things and de-bureaucratizing, but it's not to replace people," he said. "That is not our goal. We are a people business and we will continue to invest in people."

During his first year at Yale, Chatas said, he spent much of his time "just listening and learning" and trying to understand Yale's culture. As an example, Chatas, who oversees Yale Hospitality, cited the hand-breaded chicken tenders served every other Thursday in dining halls.

"You could buy them frozen and save money, but then that takes away from what's so important to you all," Chatas said. "I think you can look across the institution and you say, well, we may not be as efficient as we could be. But it all adds up to this incredible experience, so we should be thoughtful about how we make changes."

When one undergraduate asked how often Chatas meets with students, he said, "Not enough, probably. I need to do even more, so I would welcome ideas and suggestions."

In January, Chatas stopped by the Berkeley College dining hall to make pizza with Yale Hospitality staff.

Contact
SARA AGRAWAL *at*
sara.agrawal@yale.edu.