NEWS

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WARREN BUFFETT, AMERICAN INVESTOR

Yalies worried about grade inflation guidance expected this month

BY JOLYNDA WANG AND HAILEY YOUNG
STAFF REPORTERS

As a Yale committee prepares to offer recommendations on grade inflation in the coming weeks, students expressed worry about the potential for policies to harm student mental health and camaraderie.

In September, Yale College Dean Pericles Lewis told the News that the Committee on Teaching, Learning and Advising would release guidance on grading policy this month, though he said it was difficult to say when any changes might take effect. Harvard faculty this spring passed a proposal capping A grades at 20 percent beginning next fall, a policy that some undergraduates said might alter the way students approach learning. All nine students interviewed by the News expressed skepticism regarding Yale's efforts to combat grade inflation.

"I think that right now, Yale is very unique. It's special because it has an environment where students are encouraged to engage with each other, help each other through assignments and to rely on one another to learn," Elden Agee '30 said in an interview. "I think that with grade deflation or a grade cap, that community goes away. Instead of seeing each other as classmates, we would be seeing each other as competitors."

Agee added that he appreciates the current grading system, in which professors explain their grading policies, and that he believes it is not a "walk in the park" to get good grades.

Henry Cohen '29, a theater, dance and performance studies major, said it makes sense to him that most of the grades given out at Yale would be A's.

"I feel like we're in an environment where the vast majority of people just got all A's in high school," Cohen said. "I don't feel like there's really a need to deflate grades at all."

According to a faculty resolution that passed last month, 80.75 percent of grades awarded at Yale College in the 2024-25 school year were A's or A-'s, a figure slightly higher than the 78.97 percent of grades that were A-range during the 2022-23 school year, the last for which a breakdown of grading data is publicly available.

That resolution, passed by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and School of Engineering and Applied Science Faculty Senate, called on the College committee to minimize harm to student wellbeing while crafting guidance that keeps grades meaningful.

It also warned that changes to grading might inhibit collaboration between students and risk their intellectual exploration. A September press release from the senate said a full faculty vote on the committee's recommendations was expected in December.

Some students said they do not feel grade inflation has had much of an impact on their academic experiences.

Aishah Salman '29 said that her grades simply reflect her performance on exams.

"I feel like I'm taking the regular courses that people at other universities take. The content that they're teaching us isn't any different," Salman said in an interview. "It's not like you can inflate the numbers that I get on my test. The grade I get is the grade I get."

Keona Kibet '30 said she feels she has experienced grade deflation rather than grade inflation in her courses so far, and that she believes her grades accurately reflect the effort she puts into her coursework.

Some students expressed skepticism that a new policy would be able to create equitable grading practices across different academic departments.

Troy Kudrjavtsev '29, a Statistics and Data Science major, said it may be more difficult to implement a uniform grade cap in humanities courses than in STEM ones, since grading in the humanities is more subjective. He also said grade caps might unfairly penalize students.

Given the imminent recommendations from the committee on teaching, Veena Kailad '30 said she wondered if Yale could effectively address grade inflation on its own.

She described grade inflation as a "collective action problem," arguing that universities need to address the issue simultaneously for individual institutions' efforts to be effective.

Discussions about the meaning of and distribution of grades in Yale College was also a subject of interest for Yale's Committee on Trust in Higher Education. In April, the committee recommended that the University consider establishing a college-wide GPA standard, pointing specifically to a 3.0 mean GPA, to even out grading across departments.

The committee on teaching, learning and advising is composed of faculty members, Yale College administrators and the Yale College Council president and vice president.

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ETHAN SULLIVAN / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Undergraduates said they were skeptical about the recommendations on grading that are expected from a Yale College committee this month. Some were concerned that new policies would not be distributed fairly across disciplines and would stifle collaboration.

More Yalies chose spring study abroad, but most choose summer

BY KAI BWOR
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Next spring, 55 Yale undergraduates are planning to study abroad, double the number of students who chose to do so this semester.

Susan Evans, the senior associate director of Yale Study Abroad wrote in an email to the News that 24 Yale students are currently studying abroad, including 22 for the fall semester and two for the full academic year. The number of students planning to spend part of the school year overseas is slightly down from last year, when study abroad participation increased slightly but was still overwhelmingly dominated by summer experiences.

The 2025-26 cycle recorded 1,040 approved study abroad experiences, Evans wrote, which included 943 during the summer, 76 in the spring, 20 in the fall and one for a full academic year. The year before, students participated in 943 approved study abroad experiences for credit, including 862 during the summer and 81 during the school year, according to Yale Study Abroad's 2024-25 annual report.

During the 2024-25 academic year, students participated in 943 approved study abroad experiences for credit, including 862 summer experiences and 81 semester or year-long experiences, according to Yale Study Abroad's 2024-25 annual report.

Nancy Javkhlan '29, who studied abroad in Geneva, Switzerland, over the summer, said that the timing of study abroad programs was an important consideration for her.

"I think the opportunity cost of doing study abroad during the summer compared to doing it during a Yale semester is very different," she said.

Javakhlan explained that studying abroad during the academic year could mean missing time with friends and campus events such as the Spring Fling concert and Fall Fest, the annual autumnal Yale Hospitality event.

Evans also noted that while studying abroad offers opportunities to experience new cultures and pursue academic interests, students must consider both financial costs and the time they will spend away from campus.

Finances were an important consideration for Javkhlan. She said that Yale's International Study Award and support from her study abroad program made studying in Geneva financially manageable, despite her initial concerns about the cost of living.

Lillie Hickey '29, who studied abroad in León, Spain, this summer, similarly said Yale's financial assistance made her experience possible. However, she expressed concern about upcoming changes to Yale's summer funding system.

Yale College Dean Pericles Lewis announced last fall that beginning in 2027, the two non-competitive summer awards for students on financial aid — the International Study Award and Summer Experience Award — will be replaced by a single grant. The move resulted from budget-tightening in anticipation of a tax hike on Yale's endowment returns that took effect this July. Students expressed widespread concern about restrictions on opportunities for low-income students.

"I could see this disproportionately affecting FGLI students, like myself, who otherwise may not have the ability to fund summer experiences outside of this one-time grant," Hickey wrote to the News, expressing concern that students may have to choose between a study abroad and a professional or research experience as a result of the change.

Students on financial aid who study abroad during the school year, however, receive the same financial support they do at Yale when they enroll at a different school.

Evans wrote that Yale financial aid transfers to approved semester- and year-long study abroad programs. Students pay their host institution's tuition and fees instead of Yale's, and many programs cost the same as or less than a semester at Yale.

Students may also earn 4.5 transfer credits for a semester abroad, although whether courses count toward major or distributional requirements depends on departmental approval.

Yale undergraduates are eligible to study abroad during the second semester of sophomore year, either semester of junior year or the first semester of senior year.

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REETI MALHOTRA / MULTIMEDIA MANAGING EDITOR

Next semester, 55 Yale students plan to go abroad, according to a senior administrator. Students who previously participated in summer programs said financial considerations and campus commitments influenced their decisions to spend summer months abroad..