NEWS

"It's a piece of cake until you get to the top. You find you can't stop playing the game the way you've always played."
RICHARD NIXON AMERICAN PRESIDENT

International students discuss romance at administrator-run event

BY OLIVIA CYRUS
STAFF REPORTER

A group of international students gathered on Wednesday to discuss navigating healthy romantic and sexual relationships at Yale.

The event, organized by the Office of International Students and Scholars, invited students to share their own experiences and outlooks. Attendees reflected on cultural miscommunications in romantic relationships.

"I think with dating culture, people feel like nobody else is experiencing the same thing that they are or having the same questions and being afraid to ask those questions," Molly Hampton, the office's associate director for engagement, assessment and operations, said. "So I'm hoping people feel like they're not as alone in this and that they have resources that they can go to, even if it's somebody that they met at the session."

The Office of International Students and Scholars co-hosted "Breakthrough the Bubble: Explore Dating Cultures Across the U.S." alongside the Sexual Harassment and Assault Response & Education, or SHARE, Center. The event offered attendees pizza and featured presentations, videos and small group discussions about how to navigate healthy romantic and sexual relationships as international students.

About 20 people attended. One attendee said that talking about romance and sex is more taboo in China than it is in the United States. Another, from Zimbabwe, stated that the freedom to date in their home country is similar to the United States.

Some participants brought up the frequency of "open relationships" in America and how rules and regulations such as "don't kiss on the first date" can complicate the dating scene at Yale.

Following an introduction from Hampton, Becca Geiger Wallen, a clinician and prevention specialist at SHARE, prompted attendees to split into discussion groups and consider how they discuss sex and dating in their culture and how American expectations of relationships are portrayed in the media.

"When we think about dating and making connections and relationships, we like to think of it as something with a very fixed, set structure," Wallen said. "But in reality, dating, romance and friendships — all of these things are influenced by our various cultures and the places in which we get our various values and beliefs."

Hampton noted that the event originated from the members of the community talking about challenges and their curiosity about how to navigate the dating scene at Yale.

Wallen proceeded to share a video with the group titled "Dating in Australia: Stories from International Students," where international students discussed queer dating, using social media such as Facebook and dating apps like Tinder and understanding social norms in Australia.

"You have to decide for you what those deal-breakers are and what we should expect from relationships when you should be looking for healthy relationships," Wallen said.

The final component of the talk entailed a discussion on consent. Wallen offered the New Haven pizza-themed acronym "SLICE" to guide the international students on how to navigate socialization and sexual boundaries. "SLICE," stands for specific, lack of force, threats or coercion, informed, continual process and enthusiastic.

Cindy Chen GRD '26, was enticed to attend the event after seeing it on Yale Connect. She found the talk "interesting, inspiring, and educational."

"We explored the concept of consent and dating and sex cultures from places around the world and how to deal with maybe difficult situations that regard intimacy," Chen said, admitting that she planned to use the lessons going forward when dating at Yale.

Hampton said she was "pleasantly surprised" by how vocal and vulnerable attendees were at the event.

In the fall of 2024, 11 percent of Yale College students were international.



OLIVIA CYRUS / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER
At "Breakthrough the Bubble: Explore Dating Cultures Across the U.S.," students compared notes on love, sex and consent.

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Introductory economics courses allow AI use for problem sets

BY JAEHA JANG
STAFF REPORTER

Since ChatGPT launched in November 2022, professors have adopted varying methods to address the use of artificial intelligence in the classroom.

Neither of the two introductory lectures in Yale's most popular major — Economics 1115, or "Introductory Microeconomics," and Economics 1116, or "Introductory Macroeconomics" — has a policy prohibiting AI use. Instead, the current professors of both courses told the News that they have shifted their classroom policies in accordance with advances in AI technology: They allow AI use in problem sets and grade them for completion rather than correctness.

"In ECON 1116, we explicitly embrace the use of AI," economics professor Michael Peters, who teaches "Introductory Macroeconomics," wrote in an email to the News. "I think using AI can be quite effective. Being able to discuss question with a chatbot and/or getting a starting point into a new literature and topic is useful."

Professors of both introductory courses told the News that recent developments in AI technology prompted them to change their problem set grading systems.

Considering the progress of AI technology, Peters wrote, AI can answer problem sets "mostly in a flawless way." If anything, grading for correctness would punish students who attempt to solve problem sets on their own, he added.

"We now grade for completion and I explicitly tell my students that it is all about trying the problem set by yourself," Peters wrote. "So far, this seems to be working ok, but this is the first time I am doing that and I will need to experiment more."

Economics professor Cormac O'Dea, who teaches "Introductory Microeconomics," also wrote that since he does not ban AI use in class, some students will "understandably use LLMs to check steps," referring to large language models that power chatbots like ChatGPT.

Grading based on completion, O'Dea wrote, allows him to use problem sets as "low-stakes practice" where students can struggle and learn. Seeking any assistance too quickly — whether from him, a teaching assistant or a large language model — can "short-circuit the slow work where real problem-solving skills form," he added.

"You won't have AI in the exam room, and if you lean on it too soon or too often, you'll be lost when it counts," this semester's "Introductory Microeconomics" syllabus notes.

The syllabus also advises students that AI will be part of their college and professional careers and that they should learn how to use AI to "complement your own skills, not replace them."

Both O'Dea and Peters emphasized that overreliance on AI can hinder learning.

"I think AI can be genuinely helpful for certain tasks, but it cannot replace learning how to reason with economics," O'Dea wrote in an email to the News.

Peters also wrote that he worries AI technology might generate disparities between students who use it to complement their learning and those who "take the easy route and learn less than they used to." It requires considerable effort from students to use AI technology in a productive manner, he added.

The "Introductory Macroeconomics" syllabus for this semester warns that AI chatbots can "hallucinate" and provide inaccurate answers, adding that the ability to judge a chatbot's answer is only acquired with expertise in both chatbot technology and the relevant class material. It also recommends that, when stuck on a problem, students ask AI for a hint instead of the answer.

O'Dea and Peters also emphasized the importance of flexibility when it comes to AI policy in economics courses.

Giovanni Maggi, the department's director of undergraduate studies, wrote in an email to the News that AI policies in economics courses are "left entirely to the instructors."

"My approach currently suits the course I am teaching, and it may not suit other courses," O'Dea wrote. "I am glad our department allows instructors to tailor policies to their courses."

Economics professor Ray Fair, who teaches "Applied Econometrics: Politics, Sports, Microeconomics," told the News that he gives students "an open ticket to use Chat as much as they want," referring to ChatGPT.

While ChatGPT can help students develop ideas for their projects, Fair added, it cannot do the exact empirical research and regression-based analysis that he looks for in their papers.

"Chat is now very good at answering problem sets, making up essays, and things of that sort," Fair said in a phone interview with the News. "That's not something that I need to worry about."

This fall, 528 students are enrolled in "Introductory Microeconomics" and 81 are enrolled in "Introductory Macroeconomics."

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Safety upgrades to East Rock intersection driven by residents' advocacy

BY ARIA LYNN-SKOV
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Safety upgrades to one crash-prone New Haven intersection are part of a city-wide strategy to improve transportation safety.

The Willow and Nicoll intersection in East Rock has seen 18 crashes since January 2022, according to the Connecticut Crash Data Repository — a figure that does not include a fatal collision near the intersection in 2023.

Locals' advocacy efforts, particularly a crash analysis studio session that detailed the causes of a November 2024 crash, were important for securing the safety upgrades. East Rock residents expressed appreciation for the safety updates, particularly due to the intersection's proximity to Wilbur Cross High School, the largest comprehensive high school in New Haven.

"This is part of our overall strategy across the city to improve safety for residents," New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker said in a phone interview.

Ward 9 Alder Caroline Tanbee Smith '14 SOM '25 announced the planned safety improvements to the intersection in a LinkedIn post two weeks ago. The post listed the various modifications, which include sidewalk bump-outs at each corner, flashing pedestrian lights and visible markings and signage.

In May, a Strong Towns article reported that over 28 crashes have happened at the intersection in the last five years. Strong Towns is a national nonprofit that prioritizes urban development through civic engagement, and the local chapter, Stronger Haven, formed in January.

Peter Clarke — who lives in East Rock — has been involved with Stronger Haven since it was founded, and was one of the East Rock residents who helped run the crash analysis.

"A lot of people feel unsafe driving and walking through there, and there's been a lot of crashes in the area, so we decided to go ahead and collect data at that intersection," Clarke explained.

The data he and another neighbor collected for the community-led study included drivers' speeds, road width and visibility.

"Based on that we could make design recommendations to say these are things that make this street design less safe, and here are some ways we could change it," Clarke explained. "Our idea is really about advocating for change by looking at the root cause of the problem in the design."

Clarke said he hopes that city planners can focus on identifying the root causes of crashes instead of solely looking for the cause of the crash in the drivers, which would allow for more intentional street design improvements.

"That would be a great approach to making some of our streets safer," he said.

New Haven City Engineer Giovanni Zinn '05 led a recent community meeting attended by around 30 people about the improvements to the intersection, according to Elicker.

"It was a good conversation," Elicker said. "People raised some other suggestions and ideas, and a lot of them, for various reasons, are not viable at this intersection, but I think having the engineer there to explain our thought process and the design was really helpful to give residents a comfort level that it will be a huge addition to the neighborhood."

Tanbee Smith and Ward 10 Alder Anna Festa also attended the meeting. The Willow and Nicoll intersection is on the border of Wards 9 and 10, so the improvements have been a priority for both alders.

"This has been a priority since the start of the term," Tanbee Smith said about improving the intersection. "I've been talking to neighbors on Nicoll Street and Willow who have been talking about this intersection and it being a real challenge and dangerous for the last 10-plus years."

She and Festa started a petition asking for a redesign that got 200 signatures from neighbors, according to Tanbee Smith.

"Whether you're a pedestrian or a cyclist or a car, it's a confusing and concerning intersection," she said.

Willow and Nicoll is just a few blocks away from Wilbur Cross High School.

"We prioritize areas that have sensitive populations, like around the school, around the senior home, or have a lot of pedestrian foot traffic," Elicker said. "I hope people understand that when you look citywide, there's an incredible need all around the city and that we're slowly working to address every location that we've identified as having a need."

Charlotte Herzog, a senior at Wilbur Cross High School who, like many students in East Rock, walks to school, described having to wait at the Willow and Nicoll intersection for five minutes every day while people speed through. She said people don't pay attention to the stop signs or the yield signs, and she was pleased to hear about the safety updates.

Describing the corner as "dangerous," she said she sees drivers speeding through the intersection frequently and recalled a crash that resulted in the death of a speeding driver two years ago.

"I'm glad that something's happening," she said, adding that it's good to see "that people suggesting things actually works."

The city aims to begin construction on the intersection in the spring, according to Elicker.



ARIA LYNN-SKOV / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER
The Willow and Nicoll intersection, known throughout East Rock for its hazards, will soon be modified for the sake of improved safety.

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