

“Give thanks for a little, and you will find a lot.”
HAUSA PROVERB

State Dept. partnership at Yale may be suspended, Guardian reports

BY JERRY GAO
STAFF REPORTER

An internal State Department memo recommended the suspension of Yale and 37 other universities from the Diplomacy Lab — a State Department initiative that partners with education institutions to research topics proposed by the Department — for “DEI hiring practices,” according to a Wednesday article in The Guardian.

According to The Guardian’s report, a spreadsheet accompanying the memo categorized 75 universities on their hiring policies, ranging from “clear DEI hiring policy” to “merit-based hiring with no evidence of DEI,” an acronym that typically refers to diversity, equity and inclusion. According to The Guardian, the memo further states that

“letters notifying institutions of discontinued participation will be sent pending approval.”

University spokesperson Karen Peart wrote in an email to the News that Yale has “not received such a notice” and “complies with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.”

The memo’s recommendations could be the latest in numerous efforts by the Trump administration against diversity, equity, and inclusion, or DEI, measures. On Jan. 20, Trump signed an executive order that described government DEI measures as “illegal and immoral discrimination programs.”

At least one course at Yale, “Artificial Intelligence, Anti-Human Trafficking and the Ukrainian Refugee Crisis,” was run in partnership with the Diplomacy Lab last spring. A description of the course posted on Yale Jackson School of Global

Affairs’ website noted that the seminar was “taught in collaboration with the United States Department of State’s Diplomacy Lab and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.”

Casey King ’GRD 10 — the lecturer for the course — did not immediately respond to the News’ request for comment regarding the nature of the State Department’s involvement.

According to The Guardian, Harvard, Stanford, Johns Hopkins, Duke and the University of Southern California are also “marked for suspension,” alongside Yale. Columbia, MIT, the University of Michigan, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Virginia and the University of Texas at Austin were among the universities recommended to stay.

The State Department did not immediately respond to

the News’ and The Guardian’s requests for comment.

“The State Department is reviewing all programs to ensure that they are in line with the President’s agenda,” a spokesperson wrote to The Daily Pennsylvanian about the memo obtained by The Guardian.

According to an archived version of the State Department’s website, the Diplomacy Lab was launched in 2013 and partners with academic institutions to “conduct research around various Department-identified topics in priority policy areas.”

“Academic partners recruit faculty members to assemble and guide student teams to undertake State Department-proposed Diplomacy Lab projects. Over a semester, faculty guide students in developing a final work product and presentation according to goals

developed in collaboration with the Department of State,” a 2024 document on the State Department’s website states.

In February, the Department of Education instructed universities in a “Dear Colleague” letter to end all race-conscious programs and launched an investigation alleging that several universities’ violated Title IX by allowing transgender athletes to compete in sports. In March, the department launched an investigation into Yale’s partnership with an organization that aims to bolster diversity amongst business school faculty.

The State Department was the first administrative arm of the executive branch to be established.

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‘That’s me, I won’: Rhodes Scholar picks reflect on Yale journeys

BY RISHI GURUDEVAN AND SULLIVAN HO
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After 10 hours of interviews, Aruna Balasubramanian ’26 said she could barely process what was happening when the Rhodes Trust announced her as a winner of the prestigious Rhodes scholarship.

“They said my name, and I was like, ‘That’s me, I won,’ and that was crazy,” Balasubramanian said in an interview.

“I went to the hotel room where my mom was staying, and we went out to dinner, and I called my family,” Balasubramanian said. “Both my parents cried for joy, of course, and it’s been really a crazy experience.”

On Saturday, three Yale seniors were named Rhodes Scholars. Balasubramanian, August Rios ’26 and Noah Tirschwell ’26 were among 32 American students selected for the scholarship, which funds graduate study at the University of Oxford.

Each of the three students were formally nominated by Yale, and they were selected from a pool of 965 candidates who were also endorsed by their universities on the basis of their “academic excellence,” “moral force of character” and “energy to use one’s talents to the full,” among other criteria, according to the Rhodes Trust website.

Balasubramanian views art as a policy tool

Balasubramanian, who is from Bala Cynwyd, Pa., plans to study global and area studies at Oxford. She is focusing her work on “how art can be used as a policy tool, especially for small towns and

small communities.” She plans to pursue field work in France, Japan and Wales, she said.

Balasubramanian said her senior thesis is focused on studying a Japanese village that used art galleries to revitalize its economy. During her time at Yale, she’s been broadly interested in “what art can do for people’s lives, in terms of fostering social cohesion, giving a sense of identity, being an economic force and a political force.”

“In hindsight, my interests have been the same all along, but I didn’t really know how to articulate them,” Balasubramanian said. “I applied to Yale for, interestingly, East Asian Studies and Sociology. Obviously, not art. But I picked Yale because Yale had the art museums, it had the Yale Art School.”

Discussing trips abroad with the Yale Center for British Art and the Light Fellowship, she reflected, “I think the best parts of my experience at Yale have been how many times I’ve been able to travel the world on Yale’s dime with Yale students.”

Rios fights for housing

Rios was on a FaceTime call with his mother when he heard the announcement.

“She was with my dad and my older sister,” he said in an interview “My parents were in the Walmart parking lot, I believe.”

For the rest of the day, Rios described having a “complete brain mush and in the best way possible.” He called and emailed many of the people who had supported him along the way, including his recommenders

and extended family. “I have five siblings, so all of them got their own call, and they were wonderful and adorable,” he said.

Rios, a senior in Timothy Dwight College, is from Bluffton, S.C. Majoring in sociology, he intends to pursue two one-year masters degrees from Oxford, the first in comparative social policy and the second in evidence-based social intervention and policy evaluation.

Rios said that after studying international housing policy abroad, he wants to return home and take “what’s working elsewhere, perhaps, and readapt and reconfigure the U.S. model.”

Rios explained that his increased awareness of long waits for food, vaccines and housing during the COVID-19 pandemic revealed to him that “despite us being the wealthiest democracy on Earth, our we do a lot of things wrong.” Initially entering Yale on a pre-medical track, he pivoted to the urban sociology track of the sociology major after taking professor Rourke O’Brien’s course entitled “Inequality, Economic Mobility & Public Policy” during his first-year spring.

Rios has engaged with housing advocacy in a multitude of settings at Yale and in New Haven. He was an audit tester at the Connecticut Fair Housing Center, identifying instances in which “corporate landlords or other entities are discriminating on the basis of a protected class.” In August 2024, Rios was appointed to the New Haven Affordable Housing Commission by Mayor Justin Elicker.

Tirschwell thanks Yale community



Aruna Balasubramanian ’26, August Rios ’26 and Noah Tirschwell ’26 were announced as recipients of the Rhodes scholarship on Saturday.

“I called my parents immediately,” Noah Tirschwell ’26 wrote in an email. “Then, I went to Shake Shack and bought myself a celebratory shake. I was missing the Saybrook Formal at Shake Shack later that night, so it felt like a fitting way to mark the occasion.”

Tirschwell was filled with “extraordinary gratitude” about winning the scholarship, and was grateful for the “more people than I can count” that supported him during his time at Yale, “in ways large and small.”

Tirschwell told the News he plans to pursue a one-year masters in intellectual history, followed by a one-year masters in Jewish studies, “but that might change.” While at Oxford, he intends to write a research paper based off of archival research he conducted in Paris over the summer.

Over the last four years, Tirschwell has been involved in various capacities while on campus. He tutored “Calculus of Functions of Several Variables” and helped students as a Writing Center partner and Directed Studies tutor. He also “served in various Jewish leadership and advisory capacities in the Slifka Center, including as Hillel Student board co-president from 2024–25,” he wrote.

Tirschwell is also a first-year orientation trip leader, guiding backpacking trips for incoming first years.

Among the Ivy League, Yale tied with Harvard for the most American Rhodes Scholars this year with three students selected.

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Students pitch divestment to advisory committee at annual meeting

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The Yale Endowment Justice Collective, an undergraduate group that advocates against “unethical investment practices,” delivered three presentations to Yale’s Advisory Committee on Investor Responsibility at its annual open meeting on Zoom last Thursday.

In recent years, the committee has considered various student proposals about divestments. Last year, the committee recommended divestment from assault weapons manufacturers but declined to make a recommendation about investments in military weapons manufacturers, despite ongoing student protests calling for divestment. The committee is still considering a proposal from last year on divesting from BP, a British oil company.

“We’re here today with dozens of other students to show that we are not fooled by channels designed to fail us: we will continue to hold Yale Corp accountable,” Isabel Matos ’28, an organizer with the Endowment Justice Collective, wrote in the

group’s Thursday press release.

The advisory committee is comprised of two faculty members, two students, two staff members and two alumni, according to its website. The committee makes recommendations to the Corporation Committee on Investor Responsibility, a committee of trustees that makes recommendations to the Yale Corporation. Any recommendations made by the Corporation’s investor responsibility committee then must be “must be adopted by the full Board to become effective.”

The advisory committee holds an open meeting to hear student proposals every year.

Attendees had to register in advance of attending the meeting. Julianne Minuto, an event planner with Yale Conferences and Events, wrote in an email to the News that “while this meeting is open to the Yale Community,” it was closed to press.

The Endowment Justice Collective shared a press release Thursday about the group’s proposals to the committee but did not respond to the News’ request for the specific materials they presented.

The group’s first presentation

advocated for divestment from software company Palantir Technologies, according to the press release. The Endowment Justice Collective and the Yale Undergraduate Prison Project previously pitched divestment from Palantir last year. According to the Thursday press release, the original proposal was rejected by the advisory committee.

This year’s presentation focused on how Palantir’s technology in the last year has aided “targeted missile strikes on journalists in Gaza, mass-scale deportation efforts in collaboration with ICE” and repressed “free speech on college campuses across the country,” according to the Endowment Justice Collective’s press release. The presentation specifically mentioned that Palantir’s “Gotham” and “Foundry” operating systems have enabled surveillance of Americans by Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Gazans by the Israel Ministry of Defense.

In April, Palantir denied its involvement in surveillance operations, but reaffirmed its

“support of and solidarity with Israel.”

The next presentation advocated against Yale’s investments in the liquefied natural gas industry, according to the press release, which said that the harm caused to the environment by liquefied natural gas is greater than that by other fossil fuels. The press release said that Yale had “an investment in Ring Energy Inc.” and “significant investments in Energy Transfer and EQT Corporation,” citing a link to Yale’s Form 13-F, a type of SEC filing that collects “information required of institutional investment managers.”

The final presentation argued a renewed case for divestment from Yale’s holdings in military weapons manufacturers, according to the press release.

“Yale has previously divested from assault weapons retailers, in an effort to address mass shootings,” the press release states. “Nonetheless, they invest in weapons manufacturers who sell to states that violate both

international law and the core of Yale’s mission.”

“The ACIR affirmed a commitment to ‘the process’—which as we’ve seen with our previous presentation on divestment from BP, can take years,” he wrote in a text message to the News, referring to the British oil company. “Dozens of students and workers showed up in support of our demands because we cannot wait.”

Kenneth Gillingham, the senior associate dean of academic affairs and the chair of the advisory committee, wrote in an email to the News that the committee takes varying amounts of time to come to a decision.

“The ACIR takes as long as is needed to discuss any proposal that comes in from the Yale community, student or otherwise,” he wrote. “Sometimes this doesn’t take long at all. Other times it can take longer.”

The Advisory Committee on Investor Responsibility was established during the 1972–73 academic year, according to its website.

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