

“The only thing better than singing is more singing”
ELLA FITZGERALD JAZZ SINGER

Students call for dining halls to serve only vegan desserts

BY JERRY GAO AND ANAYAH ACCILLEN
STAFF REPORTERS

The student group Plant Forward Yalies is petitioning the University to default to plant-based desserts instead of those containing dairy or eggs.

Cole Haynes '27, a member of Plant Forward Yalies and a co-president of Yale Effective Altruism, said that the petition to offer plant-based desserts is the next step Yale Hospitality can take toward meeting its sustainability goals, along with guaranteeing tofu in every dining hall's salad bars and providing more protein-rich, plant-based options.

"Emissions from our food system alone could preclude achieving the 1.5°C and 2°C climate change targets set by the Paris Agreement. At the same time, factory farming is linked to serious environmental damage and harm to both workers and animals," Haynes wrote to the News. "Serving more than 15,000 meals each day, Yale has both the influence and the responsibility to lead food sourcing that benefits humans, animals and the planet."

Haynes also claimed that Yale would save money by switching to plant-based desserts.

"According to a report published by UPGRADE Dining, an egg reduction in baked goods alone can save approximately \$34,000 per year at a university of Yale's size," he wrote.

The impending endorsement tax hike imposed by the One Big

Beautiful Bill Act has triggered budget constraints at the University. Last week, Yale College Dean Pericles Lewis told the News that the college's staff will shrink by roughly 7.5 percent.

In a statement, a Yale Hospitality spokesperson wrote to the News that students from Plant Forward Yalies had met with representatives of Yale Hospitality.

"Yale Hospitality was introduced to the group through Yale College Council and met with them to understand their requests. They asked for usage data on specific menu ingredients, which we have provided previously and will provide again," the spokesperson wrote.

The Yale Hospitality spokesperson did not address the News' request for what survey data said about Yalies' interest in the petition.

Adriana Petrizzo '29, another organizer with Plant Forward Yalies, said the petition would signal to other universities the feasibility of changes that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote healthier diets, and support a more compassionate food system.

"Many other universities across the country have already taken steps toward a more plant-forward dining experience, and we want to ensure that Yale positions itself as a leader in this change," Petrizzo said.

Several schools, including Cornell University and the

University of Michigan, have shifted towards using plant-based strategies in their food service operations, according to the nonprofit Better Food Foundation, which advocates to "flip food norms so plant-based food is the default, with animal products available by request only" on its website.

Yale Hospitality is no stranger to new dining advocacy campaigns. Last year, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers called on Yale Hospitality to join the Fair Food Program, telling the News that the organization had "really publicly launched" the push for universities to join the program at Yale.

Haynes referenced the 2015 Paris Agreement, where 195 countries committed to take action measures to curb climate change. The United States withdrew from the Paris Agreement in 2017, rejoined in 2021 and withdrew again in 2025.

On Thursday, the Trump administration revoked the federal government's ability to impose rules on greenhouse gases by rejecting an Environmental Protection Agency finding that greenhouse gases — such as methane and carbon dioxide — threaten human health.

Haynes said that the initiative is grateful for the support that they have already received, with their petitions for an oat-milk default at the Yale cafes and a plant-based default in baked goods receiving over 200



NELLIE KENNEY, STAFF ILLUSTRATOR

The student group Plant Forward Yalies is pushing Yale to make desserts without dairy and eggs, citing environmental and accessibility concerns.

signatures after a month.

Petrizzo added that a plant-based default in baked goods would promote a healthier and more inclusive dining experience because eggs and dairy are major allergens and are avoided in several religious, cultural and dietary traditions.

"Plant-based alternatives remove these barriers, making them a healthier and more inclusive option for a wider range of students. This is especially feasible for desserts, in which animal products don't contribute much to taste," Petrizzo said.

The Yale Hospitality spokesperson

wrote to the News that Hospitality "agreed to continue the conversation in the future to better understand their interests, consistent with our standard practice when engaging student groups and gathering feedback on dining preferences."

The United States produced 231 billion pounds of milk in 2025, according to the Department of Agriculture.

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Pentagon to review ties to Ivy graduate programs, Hegseth says

BY LEO NYBERG AND ANAYAH ACCILLEN
STAFF REPORTERS

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced this month that the Department of Defense will review all graduate programs for active-duty service members at Ivy League schools to determine whether the programs are "cost-effective."

Lt. Col. Timothy Riemann, an active-duty Marine and the Marine Corps fellow at the Jackson School, estimated that there are around 10 active-duty service members at Yale, not counting ROTC — Reserve Officers' Training Corps — instructors. The active-duty graduate students are dispersed across programs at Yale.

University spokesperson Karen Peart wrote in a statement that Yale did not receive any formal notice from the Defense Department or any military branch indicating that its programs are under evaluation or considered at risk. The Defense Department did not respond to the News' request for comment.

"In two weeks time, components of all of our departments — Army,

Navy and Air Force — will evaluate all existing graduate programs for active-duty servicemembers at all Ivy League universities and other civilian universities," Hegseth said in a Feb. 6 video posted to X.

A Defense Department memo listed Yale among 34 institutions at "moderate to high risk" of losing Pentagon funding for military tuition assistance, according to reporting by CNN. The News has not reviewed the memo and could not independently verify its contents.

Hegseth said in the video that, with some exceptions, the Ivy League "has pervasive institutional bias and a lack of viewpoint diversity."

"I think it's my privilege for me to be here," Riemann said.

"It is my sincere hope that the Department of War will continue to send military officers here to engage with, to be around, to learn from, and hopefully impart something in the next generation of leaders at Yale," he added, using the name for the department that President Donald Trump announced for the executive branch in an order last year

but that Congress has not reinstituted. Riemann wrote an open letter to Hegseth in the News' Opinion section, urging continued ties between the military and Yale.

According to Yale's Veteran and Military Affairs resources, financial aid for veteran and military-affiliated students may be provided through the Department of Veterans Affairs, the ROTC program and other scholarships.

In addition to active-duty students and fellows at Yale's graduate schools, Yale College has one active-duty student, as well as 130 students participating in ROTC programs in preparation for future service, according to Holly Hermes, Yale's liaison for veteran and military affairs.

"Yale has long been a leader in national security research and the education of future leaders in national security," Peart, the University spokesperson, wrote. "As part of that tradition, Yale is dedicated to supporting students throughout their military journeys."

Riemann told the News that he attends classes, meets with students

and conducts research as a Marine Corps fellow.

Riemann is researching artificial intelligence and its application to national security and plans to publish a report, he said. At Yale, Riemann has taken the grand strategy course as well as artificial intelligence and history courses.

Riemann said he gets coffee with Yale students and answers questions about how the Marines function, his experience being deployed and military strategy.

"There's a lot of goodness in having some connective tissue between the next generation of civil leaders and politicians, and someone who is currently on active duty," Riemann said.

Before coming to Yale, Reimann said his image of the University had been affected by social media, where he saw protestors screaming and disrupting classes. Reimann said he was pleasantly surprised by the quality of discourse at Yale.

"There's a collective feeling that I've gained from them, that they are serious, that they are compassionate and that they want the United States

to succeed, generally speaking," Riemann said.

In a Feb. 6 press release, Hegseth announced that the Defense Department would cut ties with Harvard — which include professional military education, fellowships and certificate programs — in the 2026-27 school year.

"Harvard is woke; The War Department is not," Hegseth wrote in the X post announcing the cuts. Hegseth described Harvard as one of "the red-hot centers of hate-America activism" in the attached video.

Harvard and the Trump administration have been at odds in the past year, with Trump freezing billions of dollars in federal funding to the university. Hegseth said Harvard "receives billions of our federal tax dollars."

Hegseth has degrees from Harvard and Princeton.

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In first year, civic thought center hosts small events on big questions

BY CORINNE COWAN
STAFF REPORTER

The Yale Center for Civic Thought has helped students and faculty tackle critical questions about politics and society since it was started last year, center leaders and participants told the News.

With guest seminars, reading groups and weekly discussions over coffee, the center aims to promote civil discourse and civic intellectual thought in new generations, according to its website.

Executive Director Stephanie Almeida Nevin, a humanities lecturer, said she defines civic thought as answering the question: "How can we just be more thoughtful about our shared civic life?"

"They do a very good job of trying to make people comfortable in expressing their beliefs," Elizabeth Swaine '27, an active attendee of center events, said in an interview.

Under the leadership of Almeida Nevin and professor Bryan Garsten, the center's faculty director, the center has built on Garsten's earlier efforts with the Civic Thought Initiative.

Yale administrators championed the center when it was first launched, with President Mau-

rie McInnis expressing hopes in a news release that the center would "cultivate habits of thought and support free expression, on campus and beyond, that are so essential for the future of higher education and our nation."

The founding of the center at Yale followed similar civic thought programs that have emerged at universities across the country, including Arizona State University around a decade ago. Some of these schools or initiatives have been explicit efforts by Republican legislators to expand viewpoint diversity in universities with a perceived liberal bias, the Chronicle of Higher Education reported in 2025.

Several individuals distanced Yale's center from the other universities, but acknowledged the current debates over the role of civic education in universities.

"We feel like that sort of thing should be part of what a university is," Garsten said, though he denied that the center had a goal of attracting all Yale students or advancing a single political perspective.

Students agreed with Garsten's characterization of the center's ideological neutrality.

"It's more about people bringing in their different perspectives, discuss-

ing it, rather than "This is a debate, this is the viewpoint you need to adopt in the end," Justin Greenman GRD '30 said.

Participants cited engaging with people of diverging political persuasions as one of the most intriguing aspects of the center.

For Nico Sahi SOM '26, Yale lacks other places to engage in discussion. As a liberal, he said he appreciates hearing other students' opinions.

In the room, Swaine said, "there are Trump supporters, and there are Marxists."

For this school year, the center is prioritizing three themes: constitutional democracy in the United States at its 250th anniversary, the role of universities in civic life and humanity in the age of artificial intelligence.

A unique mode for discussion

In the lamplit upper library of 77 Prospect Street, home to Yale's Institution for Social and Policy Studies, the Center for Civic Thought hosted Jenna Silber Storey last week. Storey, a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, is among the many figures in the worlds of academia, government and research who have discussed their ideas with students and faculty at the center.

The center's events called "guest

seminars" follow an unusual format to promote healthy discussion: After the guest converses with a faculty moderator for about 20 minutes, participants discuss the ideas without the guest's input for another 20. Then, the guest rejoins the conversation.

"I've heard from many of the visitors who we have had, that they've actually liked that," Kieran Mabey, a postdoctoral associate at the center, said in an interview.

At last week's seminar with Storey, participants — a mix of nine professors, graduate students and undergraduates — settled into a casual conversation over lunch.

"A messier, less disciplinarily confined set of conversations is important for creativity and new ideas," Garsten said.

At a seminar in November, Daniel Wasserman '19, a Trump administration official, discussed the relationship between the executive branch and higher education reform.

In addition to guest seminars, weekly coffeehouses and over 10 different reading groups provide opportunities for tackling tough questions.

Each of the reading groups prompts discussion by up to 15 students focused on one of the center's three

themes for the year.

"The idea is to give both students and faculty a lot of relative freedom in organizing them," Almeida Nevin said.

Caroline Pecore '27 leads a reading group called "Hannah Arendt on the Human Condition."

"It's a space to engage with books and ideas in a more personal, self-directed way where we choose what we want to read and take more ownership of the discussions," Pecore wrote in a text message to the News.

The center also hosts a summer program for New Haven high school students.

Students can become fellows of the center through a process of active involvement and leadership, culminating in writing a creative dialogue showcasing one of the three themes. Almeida Nevin stressed that being a fellow does not come through an application process but is "something you earn."

The Center for Civic Thought's website lists four members of an External Board of Advisers and nine members of a Yale Faculty Advisory Council.

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