NEWS

"There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it."
EDITH WHARTON

Ahead of trustees' meeting, students write letters urging divestment

BY LEO NYBERG AND ARIA LYNN-SKOV
STAFF REPORTERS

Around 100 students gathered on Thursday outside of Sheffield-Sterling-Strathcona Hall, where University President Maurie McInnis' office is located, to drop off letters demanding that Yale divest from companies connected with Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

What started as a small gathering in the Schwarzman Center rotunda at 12:40 p.m. turned into a 100-person demonstration as the students moved to stand outside the entrance to McInnis' office building. The protest came ahead of a Saturday meeting of the Yale Corporation, the University's main governing body, which makes decisions about how Yale's endowment is invested.

A small group of protesters rang the intercom system at the door, and after a brief pause Pilar Montalvo, Yale's assistant vice president for University life, stepped out, collected the letters and walked back into the building.

The event started with around 20 students who, wearing pins and holding signs calling for divestment, gathered in the rotunda. As more demonstrators trickled in, organizers told students to line up in a semi-circle around the rotunda to keep the space open.

Isabel Matos '28, a student organizer with the Endowment Justice Collective then addressed the crowd, which had at that point grown to about 50 people.

"Yale invests our 44 billion dollar endowment into these exact companies powering ICE's terror and gets richer while New Haven, a sanctuary city, is systematically defunded by Yale's tax-exempt status," Matos said in her speech, referencing companies including Palantir, Anduril, Flock Safety and Target Hospitality. In the group's press release for the event, they detailed the alleged ties between Yale and those companies. The News could not confirm whether Yale has any financial ties to those companies.

"The university has received the letters," University spokesperson Karen Peart wrote in an email to the News on Thursday.

Matos condemned ICE's presence in New Haven and also mentioned a student who was arrested by ICE on Thursday morning on Columbia's campus. The student was released by Thursday evening, according to reporting in the Columbia Daily Spectator.

"If you see the trustees on campus, tell them our demands have always been the same: Disclose and divest from companies profiting from violence and reinvest in New Haven," Matos said in her speech, referring to the Yale Corporation members. "And if they keep refusing to hear us, we will have no choice but to get louder."

The crowd launched into a series of chants including "Yale funds ICE, New Haven pays the price."

The chants drew some spectators who left their lunches at Commons to see what the noise was about.

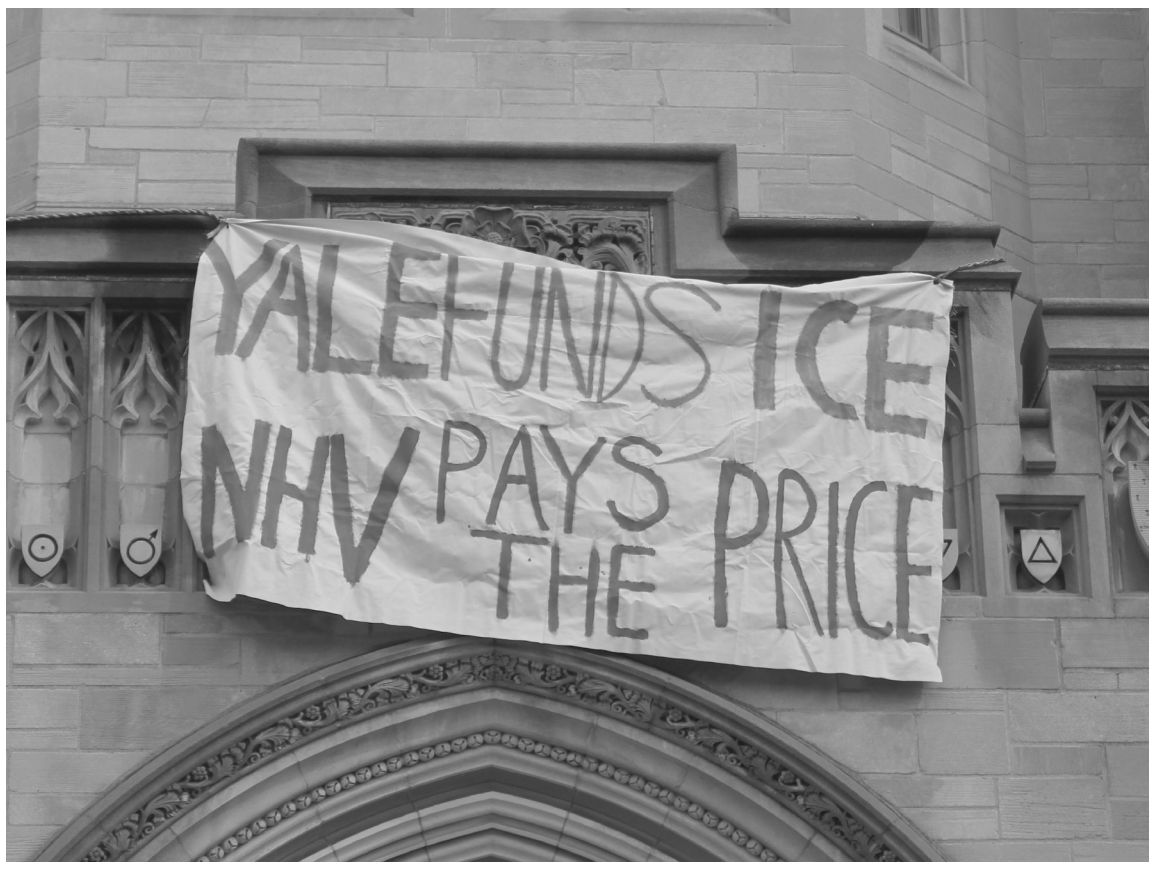
Students held cardboard signs with slogans like "Divest from Palantir," "Abolish ICE Free Palestine" and a cardboard-cutout sign with the letters "FUCK ICE."

At 12:55 p.m., the crowd, which had swelled to about 100, crossed the intersection of Grove and Prospect Streets to line up outside McInnis' office in an attempt to hand deliver the letters.

When the locked door to the administrative offices in the building opened, students cheered. Montalvo stepped out and a few organizers greeted her. Montalvo took the letters and thanked the organizers. After Montalvo left, organizers began addressing the crowd.

While organizers told the News that they had wanted to hand the letters directly to McInnis, they emphasized the importance of delivering the correspondence — a combination of physical letters and emails from the online petition. The organizers thanked the crowd and encouraged them to keep coming to events.

On Thursday afternoon, organizers said a total of around 1,300 emails demanding divestment had been sent to the Yale Corporation, of which McInnis is a member. According to event organizer Diego Loustaunau '27, "several hundred" physical letters were delivered in person. By Thursday evening, over 1,600 letters had been sent via the online petition, according to the Endowment Justice Collective's letter campaign website.



COURTESY OF LYNNA THAI
A group of about 100 students gathered outside of the building that houses University President Maurie McInnis' office to deliver letters calling for Yale to divest from companies connected to Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The group also passed out flyers with information on Palantir's ties to ICE. Palantir, a data analysis technology firm that has contracts with the Trump administration, is one of the companies from which students have repeatedly asked the Corporation to divest. Palantir is a data analysis technology firm that has contracts with the Trump administration.

On the back of the flyers were pictures of McInnis and the 14 current trustees listed on the University's website. The flyers instructed students to "remind them to divest from ICE technologies" if they saw them on campus this weekend.

As the crowd dispersed around 1:05 p.m., students placed their cardboard signs outside of Sheffield-Sterling-Strathcona. By 2:20 p.m., the signs were gone.

The Endowment Justice Collective has repeatedly attempted to sway Yale's investment decisions. In November 2025, the group presented a pitch to the Advisory Committee on Investor Responsibility, which makes recommendations to the Yale Corporation's committee on investments.

In January, the advisory committee rejected students' pitches for divestment from British oil company BP and gas companies Ring Energy and LNG, as well as their pitch for divestment from Palantir.

"The Advisory Committee on Investor Responsibility (ACIR) considered this topic as part its review process and did not recommend any changes to investment eligibility policies, based on Yale's criteria," Peart wrote in an email to the News Thursday evening, adding that just because a topic is reviewed does not mean the endowment holds the investment.

"The university encourages all groups with concerns to follow the ACIR process," Peart wrote.

The trustees are scheduled to meet on Saturday, according to a Yale website. The Corporation's meetings are closed to the public. Jaime Teevan '98, a Yale trustee and chief scientist at Microsoft, spoke at a dean's speaker series on Thursday three hours after the demonstrations.

Before McInnis became University president, she served as a successor trustee on the Yale Corporation.

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For second straight year, 358 students applied to be FroCos

BY OLIVIA WOO AND ISOBEL McCLURE
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Kamile Makselyte '27 was grocery shopping at home in New Jersey when decisions for Yale College's first-year counselor program were released last Friday. Without saying anything, she high-fived her mom, she recalled in an interview.

Makselyte was one of 132 rising seniors — out of 358 applicants — selected to be a FroCo.

She said her close relationship with her own FroCo and her experiences as a first-generation college student without older siblings motivated her to apply for the position.

"I would have been so lost had it not been for my FroCo, and I know for a fact that there are more kids like me," Makselyte said in a Thursday interview.

This year's application cycle was identical to last year's, each drawing 358 applicants for the 132 available positions, according to Associate Dean of Residential College Life Ferentz Lafargue. The 358 applicants mark an increase in total applicants from 2023 and 2024, when 183 and 242 students applied each year, respectively.

The overall number of counselors increased to the current 132 last spring, the News reported in January 2025, a change that enabled smaller average FroCo group sizes. According to Lafargue, each residential college has either 10 or 8 counselors, and most FroCo groups have between 11 and 13 first years.

The FroCo application process remained consistent with the 2025 cycle, according to Lafargue. He noted that the College was "making some adjustments to FroCo training." What was once a two-to-three day "Spring Training" will this year be a single evening titled "Spring Orientation," he said.

Lafargue noted that the shift towards a single evening of spring programming was caused by conflicts due to athletics and study abroad programs.

"The other change that we are making is exploring ways to increase opportunities for teams to experience training sessions in smaller groups in hopes of facilitating more fervent exchanges with presenters and more brainstorming/problem solving among team members," Lafargue wrote to the News.

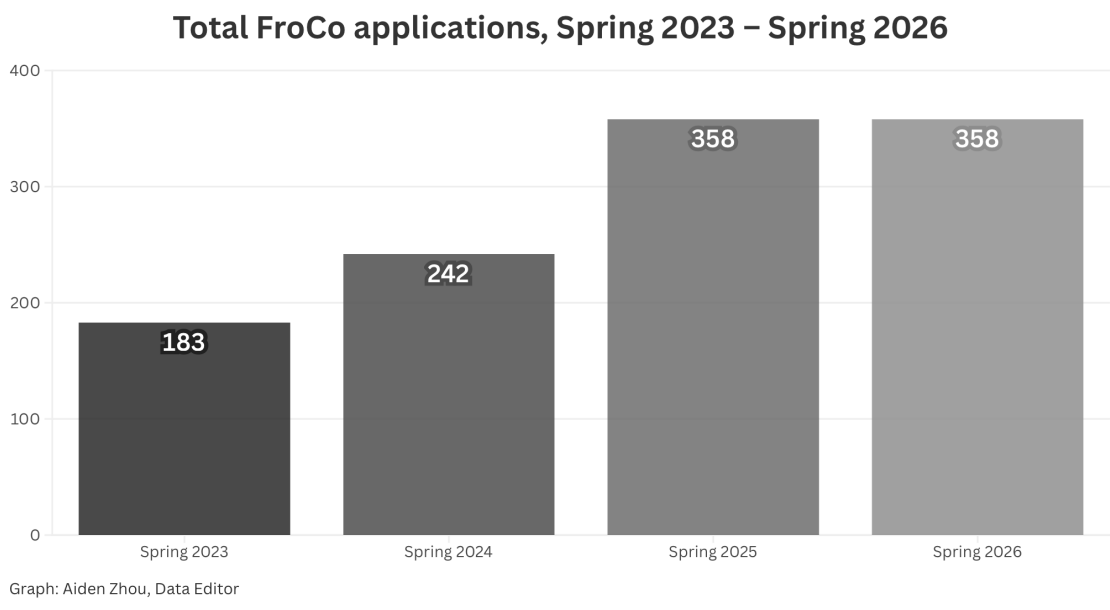
Gloria Kunnapilly '27 — who will work alongside Makselyte as a future Branford FroCo — said that she had been thinking about applying to the role since her first year at Yale.

"I absolutely loved my FroCo and the entire Branford FroCo team," she said in a Thursday interview. "I worked their commencement my first year, and I think seeing them graduate and reflecting on the positive impact they had on my freshman year really made me want to take on that mentorship role."

That experience wasn't universal among future Branford FroCos, however. Suitemates Erin Hu '27 and Te Maia Wiki '27 both said during a Wednesday interview that their interests in the role only became serious during their junior years.

Hu said that in the fall, she "realized that what I want my senior year to look like is an experience that's very grounded and rooted in the community here at Yale. And I think that FroCo is such a great way for you to do that."

Lafargue wrote that colleges that "house their students all four-years" continued to receive more applicants, pointing to Benjamin Franklin, Pauli Murray, Silliman and Timothy Dwight. According to Lafargue, this year, Benjamin Franklin received the most applicants at 34.



Graph: Aiden Zhou, Data Editor

GRAPH BY AIDEN ZHOU
Of the 358 rising seniors who applied to be first-year counselors, 132 were selected for the position.

Most residential colleges had openings for 10 FroCos this year. Trumbull, Grace Hopper, Jonathan Edwards and Berkeley, however, each accepted 8 to the role.

Victoria Mnatsakanyan '27, a future Timothy Dwight FroCo, will move from her off-campus apartment back to her residential college in the fall.

"I was excited to be connected to my residential college community again," Mnatsakanyan said in a Thursday phone interview. "I still go back there every Sunday night for family dinner and meetings with the college council, but I do miss that collegiate feel that you don't really get off campus."

Most Benjamin Franklin FroCos currently live in the "Founder's Suite," a suite in Franklin with two floors and seven singles, according to Taylor Burke '27, who will be a FroCo next year. That housing designation was new this academic year, and current FroCos have "seemed to really enjoy it so far," Burke said.

The rotation of Old Campus housing assignments that took effect this academic year moved Branford first years from Vanderbilt Hall to Lawrance Hall. Wiki said that she was "sort of sad" about not getting to live where she did her first year but added that she has grown to appreciate the prospect of living in Lawrance.

Hu added that current Branford FroCos have told her that the prevalence of singles in Lawrance has led to "less roommate-to-roommate conflict," which is "something very new in Branford."

Compensation for the FroCo position will match the cost of housing and meals for the 2026-27 academic year, equivalent to $21,600. Hu said that the FroCo compensation helps signal to her that "the University values this job" — and more specifically, she said, that "the University values you."

The FroCo program at Yale was founded in 1938.

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