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A Report to the Yale Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Yale Summer Session: A Retrospective, 2000-2009

Program Overview and Mission

The Office of Yale Summer Session and Special Programs is responsible for several different kinds of academic programs, both during the summer months and the fall and spring academic terms. These can neatly be divided between summer and academic year terms, but they can also be categorized perhaps more meaningfully as programs that bear Yale College credit and those that do not. The credit-bearing programs include Summer Session, the Peking University – Yale University Joint Undergraduate Program in Beijing, the Eli Whitney Students program (a non-residential program of flexible study for the Bachelors Degree, mostly for older learners), the Nondegree Students program (essentially a visiting students program), and finally the Yale-New Haven and Area High School program (a program that makes it possible for the brightest of New Haven’s high school juniors and seniors to take Yale courses during the academic year). All of these programs either make courses for credit available to currently enrolled Yale College students, or they make it possible for non-Yale students to take Yale courses for credit. The non-credit bearing programs included in this organization are the English Language Institute and the auditing program. They also serve a valuable function in providing educational opportunities to students who are not enrolled in Yale College.

The variety of these programs requires an office and staff that is well-versed in all aspects of Yale College education, that is headed by a dean, and that can address the needs of many different kinds of students. Although all of these programs provide a valuable contribution to a wide range of educational endeavors, this report will focus on credit-bearing summer activities only, that is, on the Yale Summer Session (YSS). It is the Summer Session that is at the heart of the organization’s mission: to provide credit-bearing courses to Yale College students during the summer months. While YSS is also able to make these courses available to a group of non-Yale students, thus creating a diverse and lively summer learning community, the central and foundational task remains to provide Yale College students with a summer learning experience that is exciting, creative, and lives up to the high standards of the academic year. This report will furthermore focus its retrospective on the last ten years, 2000-2009 – a convenient block of time that has been characterized by growth, the addition of study abroad programs, and the inclusion of other innovative academic initiatives. It is hoped that the faculty will gain some new insights into Summer Session from this report, as well as an appreciation of its contributions to Yale College’s academic mission.

A Program History

A brief history, 1975-1999. Yale Summer Session can now look back on more than thirty years as Yale College’s summer school. First organized in 1975 as the Yale College Summer Term, the summer school was originally organized around three distinct centers,
each with an emphasis on a particular area of knowledge: humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. As described in the 1975 informational brochure, these centers allowed faculty to sponsor programs “organized around a theme, a problem, a time period, a geographic area, or a method.” Students could “examine a topic from the varying points of view of different disciplines.” This interdisciplinary approach for majors and non-majors alike resulted in groupings of courses under programs such as “Colonial America,” “Origins of the Modern World,” and “Film.” Each of the centers was based in a residential college, and students, although not restricted to just one area of study, were encouraged to take most of their summer courses in one particular center.

Major changes to this organization were made in 1980, when the Summer Term became Yale Summer Programs (YSP). One of the main changes at that time was the incorporation of the Summer Language Institute into YSP. The Summer Language Institute had been founded in 1948 and could look back on its own history of providing Yale and non-Yale students alike a chance to engage in intensive foreign language learning during the summer. This focus remained unchanged under YSP, and summer languages have continued to flourish to this day, with offerings in languages continually changing to reflect our own country’s engagement with the non-English speaking world. Other changes made in 1980 included the reorganization of the centers into sessions of varying length, while decoupling them from the residential colleges. Humanities and social sciences combined with SLI into a single 8-week session. The natural sciences offered a 10-week program, and a separate English Language and Orientation Program for International Students was offered over the course of four or seven weeks.

Along with a new name for 1982, Yale Summer and Special Programs, a five-week semester was instituted in 1983, “particularly recommended for college freshmen and qualified pre-college students,” as that year’s catalog indicates. And it is in this basic configuration, with minor changes, that YSP operated for the next 20 years.

A brief history, 2000-2009. The following provides a quick snapshot of some of the more significant developments in Summer Session over the past decade:

2000. YSP offered two consecutive 5-week sessions, 5A and 5B, which allowed more flexibility in scheduling one-credit courses given limited classroom space. These are now designated Session A and Session B.

2001. YSP engaged a professional marketing firm (Cason-Nightingale, both Yale alums, in Manhattan) to increase advertising and the profile of the program. Increased enrollments can in part be ascribed to this effective marketing effort.

2002. Six courses offered abroad, the first of a concerted and organized effort to build a study abroad program. YSS now offers over 30 courses abroad. Start of Filmmaking and Acting courses, both intensive workshops in the “boot camp” mode.
2003. Launch of the Summer Film Studies Institute. Program directed by Charles Musser, integrating Film Studies course work with additional events, such as film screenings and panels by filmmakers. CYCE encouraged YSS to increase number of courses taught abroad.

2004. Seoul National University sent 20 students to YSS, the first of our summer partnership universities. Residential colleges used by YSS in the summer received remuneration of $10,000 each for full use.  

2005. The program changed its name to Yale Summer Session (YSS). It was felt that this name more accurately reflects the program’s core academic mission. It also brings the name more in line with the norm nationwide. Introduction of online applications. Special Programs (formerly special students, as well as auditing and high school students) are integrated into the YSS office.

2006. Third residential college added to the summer housing for YSS. 25% increase in revenue for the year, continuing a growth pattern since 2003.

2007. Launch of new website, with application and course catalog linked to Banner and Online Course Information (OCI) systems. Slight decline in enrollments, the first in 6 years. YSS becomes a part of the Center for International Experience, directed by Associate Dean Jane Edwards.

2008. Launch of Global Summer Program, an initiative of the International Alliance of Research Universities (IARU). Enrollments again increased, 20% increase in revenue.

2009. Long-standing Drama program expands with the addition of an advanced workshop titled “An Introduction to Playing Shakespeare.” The Summer Language Institute is discontinued with the departure of its long-serving director, Maria Kosinski. Most language courses are now offered abroad.

**YSS Facts and Numbers at a Glance**

Students. (A more detailed breakdown of student enrollments and types can be found at Appendix A.)

1. In 2009, 1403 students attended YSS. In 2000, this number was 795.

2. The number of students enrolling in YSS courses has increased over the past ten years by 50%. The greatest gains have been seen among Yale College students, who now make up 60% of the entire Summer Session student body, and many of whom choose to study abroad.
3. 529 members of the Class of 2009, or about 40%, attended one or more summer courses and earned graduation credit during their four years at Yale.

4. Students come from over 30 different US states and 30 different countries, with the greatest number of international students coming from China.

5. Over 50% of Yale College students receive a tuition stipend while attending summer courses in New Haven. These stipends do not cover all costs, but typically can cover up to half tuition for two courses. The funding for these scholarships comes from YSS.

6. A significant number of Yale graduate and professional students (about 80) take courses during the summer, primarily in the foreign language “reading knowledge” courses in preparation for foreign language reading exams. These students are financially supported by tuition scholarships from the Graduate School and Summer Session.

7. A relatively small number of high school students (rising seniors) are on campus to take summer courses. They make up about 12% of the summer student body. These are outstanding students, at the top of their classes in high school. About a third go on to apply to Yale.

8. Yale College regulations apply to all YSS students, both on-campus and abroad. A Summer Session Executive Committee, consisting of regular Yale faculty and deans, can meet adhoc to adjudicate infractions of the Undergraduate Regulations by regular Yale students and non-Yale students.

Faculty.

1. In 2008, 74 Yale ladder and non-ladder faculty taught one or more summer courses. This represents 50% of all summer instructors. This is up somewhat from 42% in 2000.

2. Last summer, 25% of all courses were taught by Yale graduate students, including foreign language courses normally taught by these same students. This is down from 33% in 2000. The remaining 25% of summer instructors includes various categories of non-Yale faculty, such as just-graduated Yale Ph.D.s and ladder faculty from other institutions.

3. Ladder faculty, both Yale and non-Yale, are paid 1/9th of their annual salary for a one-credit summer course, up to but not to exceed $15,000. Non-ladder faculty are paid a base summer salary slightly over $7,000 per course. These pay scales are well within the “industry” standard and are competitive when compared to our peer institutions.

4. Faculty who teach abroad are paid for expenses incurred through travel and living abroad, to include airfare and living expenses. Faculty who also serve as course coordinators are furthermore paid a stipend beyond regular salary to recognize their increased extracurricular responsibilities to the course and the students.
Courses. (Appendix B contains a list of all courses taught in Summer Session from 2000-2009.)

1. A typical summer sees over 160 different courses and labs taught, representing over 40 different departments and disciplines. 66% of all courses taught were in Humanities and Arts and Social Sciences.

2. All YSS courses are approved by their cognizant academic department before inclusion in the summer course catalog. All new courses are also approved by the Course of Study Committee for credit in Yale College. The approval process is much the same as for courses offered during the academic year. Proposals are made by faculty online, DUSs approve (or disapprove) the proposals, and the approved courses are forwarded to Course of Study for final approval, and then faculty vote.

3. In 2009, 330 Yale College students were enrolled in 30 YSS courses taught in 14 different countries around the world. This is a number of students eight times greater than in 2002, when YSS started offering a number of summer courses abroad in earnest.

4. Tuition charged for summer credit is pegged to Academic Year tuition, currently at a rate of .65 to 1. One credit in 2009 cost $2650 in tuition.

A Comparison of Summer and Academic Year

While Summer Session is like Yale College in many ways, there are certain areas that are obviously different. There are also some perhaps not so obvious ways in which the summer differs from the regular year. The summer is a time of intense focus, a time that allows students to delve into subject areas in ways not possible during the academic year, with its many other activities and distractions. This intensity is, of course, reflected in the shortened duration of courses, with a regular semester squeezed into five weeks. This requires a compensatory lengthening of class times, with most classes meeting two or three times a week for two or three hours at a time, and may also require a significant adjustment for both faculty and students.

Probably the biggest difference is the system of pre-registration and enrollment. Summer students apply for admission prior to the start of classes. This can happen anywhere between five months to two weeks before the opening day of a session. All students are judged on their academic merit and preparation for a particular course of summer study. Yale College students are deemed to be qualified by the nature of their full-time enrollment, but they, too, must meet course prerequisites, and they, too, must apply for admission and pre-select their course of study.

Registration usually takes place the day before the start of a session, usually on Sunday. This provides students with a final opportunity to discuss their course selection with their summer academic advisor, the dean of Summer Session. Once the courses have been chosen, they should not be changed. This provides advantage of having a fairly clear
picture of enrollments about two weeks before the start of classes, and the class list is fairly well set before the first day.

There is no shopping period during the summer. The time is simply too short, since missing even one day of class can be equivalent to missing an entire week during the year. Students can drop courses the first week of the session, but adding a course requires instructor permission. If the instructor feels that a student has missed too much work and would be academically disadvantaged and unable to catch up, he or she may decline a student’s request to add the course during the first week. No classes may be added after the first week.

Absences during the summer are not tolerated. Students normally take only two courses at any one time during the summer; this is considered a full load. Exceptions can be made, but usually only with the approval of the student’s regular college dean.

There is no final examination period. Finals are usually given on the last day of class, but unfortunately this takes away an entire class period. Unfortunately for the students, this also does not allow for a reading period or any other time to prepare specifically for final exams. This is also why we do not take the 4th of July as a holiday. In many summers this is a day of final exams, and losing this day would move the exam to an earlier day in the last week, effectively cutting the time of the class by an entire week.

**Study Abroad and International Initiatives**

Yale Summer Session has made significant contributions since Yale University launched its internationalization initiative in 2001. It has long been clear that Yale students want to take advantage of the summer months to study abroad, and YSS began a concerted effort in 2002 to make it possible for students to study abroad with the same Yale faculty that teaches them during the year. This began with courses in music, marine biology, and Kiswahili, and soon led to an expansion of other foreign language and non-language courses alike. What was at first a small-scale experiment to see if Yale students would want to take Yale courses abroad in the summer is now a full-scale program within a program, with over 350 students (Yale and non-Yale) going to over a dozen countries world-wide last summer alone.

One guiding principle throughout this development has been the balance between language and non-language courses, with about half of all courses offered abroad taught in English on subjects ranging from Economics, Astronomy, Public Health, Film Studies, to Humanities and Art. Now, as a part of the Center for International Experience, YSS can integrate its programs into an ever-growing number of study abroad options, from internships to research to academic courses for credit.

Building on the long-standing practice of the Summer Language Institute, where two semesters of language were taught over an 8 week period, YSS introduced the “at home and abroad” model, with the first intermediate semester (now L3) taught in New Haven, and then the entire course traveling abroad to complete the second semester (or L4)
course in an immersion environment, complete with family homestays and numerous excursions. This model, supported by courses in Russian, Italian, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and German is unique to YSS and offers advantages over many other study abroad programs. Students and their instructors can bond in a familiar environment before traveling abroad, students are highly motivated to learn as much as possible before going abroad, since they know that they will soon have to use those skills exclusively abroad, and the communications skills of most students are appreciably enhanced with this real-world experience. Finally, students realize that they are experiencing a particular city or site within the context of a real Yale course, and that they have Yale faculty and their expertise to guide them in their discoveries.

Making all this possible has been the incredibly generous financial assistance offered to Yale College students in the summer through the International Summer Award. The ISA is made available to students receiving Yale financial aid and helps to offset the high cost of study abroad, which can average $8000 or $9000. With over 60% of all YSS students that study abroad receiving an ISA, Yale College has guaranteed that every student will have the chance at an international experience regardless of income. Study abroad cannot be reserved for students of high-income families. To experience a part of the world in some academic engagement is important for every student at Yale.

The experience of an increasingly international Yale has also been brought to life in New Haven during the summer. Through a number of partnerships with leading universities around the world, especially in China, YSS has been able to open up the summer experience of Yale to a greater number of international students. Partner universities include:

1. Peking University, or Beida
2. Fudan University, Shanghai
3. Tsinghua University, Beijing
4. National University of Singapore
5. Tecnológico de Monterrey
6. University of Tokyo
7. Waseda University, Tokyo
8. Seoul National University, South Korea

Given the difficulty associated with hosting true exchange students during the year, Yale College can make a similar experience available to international students during the summer. These students live in a residential college, they eat in the dining halls, they have a summer master and counselors, they have a social life in the buttery and elsewhere, and they come to know New Haven in all its summer splendor. These students return to their home institutions at the end of the summer and can look back on a wonderfully enriching experience of summer study and community. They are truly ambassadors for Yale and its approach to undergraduate education. These relationships between Yale Summer Session and other universities have gone beyond just the student body. YSS has begun to host guest faculty from our partner universities, a concept of
faculty “exchange” that may yet lead to increased opportunities for collaboration among
the world’s best scholars.

Finally, Summer Session has embarked on an experiment in joint summer education
called the Global Summer Program (GSP). This initiative was undertaken in partnership
with the International Alliance of Research Universities (IARU), a group of ten of the
best research universities around the world (Cambridge, Oxford, Copenhagen, ETH
Zürich, Australian National, Tokyo, Peking U., National University of Singapore, UC
Berkeley and Yale). The GSP is designed to offer summer courses at each member
university and to make these courses available to students from all member universities.
This provides students with an opportunity to go abroad during the summer and study at a
university of the highest caliber with students from that university and other, similarly
highly motivated students. It is a kind of premiere summer program, and Yale faculty
who have taught in the program have described the students as some of the best they have
taught in any course at Yale.

Financial Information

Support to Yale College. Summer Session plays a significant role in supporting the
budget of Yale College. YSS is by design a for-profit organization, i.e. tuition and other
income is supposed to exceed overall operating expenses. YSS gets no budgetary support
from Yale in any way. All of its budget is supported by income generated by YSS. All
profit is therefore true profit to Yale and can be used by other units in support of their
own operating budgets. In 2009, YSS generated a net profit of close to $1.5 million.
Given an overall gross income of about $7 million, this represents a 20% profit margin.
Gross revenue has increased over threefold in the ten summers since 2000.

Support to other schools and departments. In addition to its support of Yale College, YSS
also shares profits or directly pays other units, to include the School of Art, School of
Drama, Center for Language Study, Payne Whitney Gym, the Digital Media Center for
the Arts, Media Services, and the summer residential colleges. The Biology and
Chemistry departments also receive payments for services and supplies related to courses
taught in those departments. The total amount of these payments exceeds $280,000.

Support to Yale faculty and students. Summer faculty were paid over $2 million in
salaries in 2009. This represents a very significant level of indirect support to Yale, in
that 75% of summer instructors are Yale affiliates. Yale College students receive tuition
support totaling around $500,000. Again, this is a significant indirect contribution to Yale
students who are on financial aid.

Community

Residential colleges. Summer Session is modeled on the Yale College residential system.
While most Yale College students during the summer live off campus, almost all non-
Yale students attending live on campus, i.e. in a residential college. YSS has for the past
several years occupied three residential colleges at its peak enrollment in July. These
three colleges are managed by a Summer Master, who for the past ten years and even earlier has been a residential college dean during the year. Along with assistant masters and Yale student counselors, a team is in place that can recreate a summer residential program based on Yale College values. As we know, colleges are more than just dormitories, and even during the short stays in the summer, YSS is able to create a sense of community among its students that mixes social and academic spaces and makes extracurricular activities a valuable time for students to learn from each other. We feel confident that students who attend Summer Session and live on campus go away with a real sense of what it’s like to attend Yale College, that is to say, a sense of how special the colleges really are to Yale. They are, as during the year, at the heart of the undergraduate experience.

New Haven. Summer Session also values its ties to New Haven and the local community. YSS involvement in the International Festival of Arts and Ideas goes back to 2007. The Summer Film Studies Institute, directed by Professor Charles Musser, has been a leading force in integrating film screenings and panels with directors and filmmakers into the festival. All events sponsored by YSS are open to the public, and the talk given by Spike Lee a few years ago, for example, was so popular that people had to be turned away. A further tie to the New Haven community is represented by the Shafer Family Summer Scholarship. This endowed program gives about 7 New Haven public high school students the opportunity to attend Summer Session courses and live on campus for free. These students are among the highest achievers in the New Haven public school system, and some of these Shafer Scholars have gone on to acceptance at Yale. This endowed scholarship is a wonderful gift to New Haven and to Yale, one that has been giving to students and their families for over 20 years now.

A Glimpse into the Future

Yale Summer Session is poised to engage with the future in a creative and innovative way. Organizationally we are now fit, and the notion of growth has become the norm during the summer. Here are a few ways in which Summer Session might continue to forge exciting new ways to make the most of the summer at Yale.

• The English Language Institute, which offers English as a Second Language courses during the summer to international students, is going to take a look at capturing a greater market share by offering additional programs in popular subjects like law, business, engineering, and medical English.

• Our program with partner universities could be expanded to include outstanding students from places and institutions not yet highly represented during the summer, such as Latin America and Africa.

• Partnerships with international high schools could lead to increased ties, especially in areas identified by Admissions as important for Yale’s future. Funding is often a problem when attempting to bring young people to New Haven
in the summer, as scholarship money is not currently available for non-Yale students (except for the Shafer scholarship for New Haven high school students).

• The summer could become an important part of a mentoring and achievement program for entering Yale freshman who have been identified as disadvantaged in some aspect of preparation. A kind of summer bridge program, combining summer study and credit, tutoring, mentorship, and social acclimatization would be a valuable addition to the advising and support networks already in place for this population. The money for such a program would need to be provided by Yale, since it would support students during the summer who cannot pay tuition or living expenses.

• As the requirements for pre-med study change, YSS will change its offerings to adjust. Pre-med study is a major part of summer academics at Yale, and we want to be sure that we remain relevant to that student population.

• The study abroad program will continue to engage with Yale faculty in order to offer unique study opportunities to students in all parts of the world, especially Africa and the Middle East.

• Summer Session will continue to promote summer teaching by Yale faculty, working with the Provost and others to reduce disincentives and to mainstream summer teaching as much as possible.

All of these represent just some of the ideas that could come to fruition in the next decade. We at Summer Session are excited about stretching in new directions, staying relevant to Yale students and institutions, and creating a program of summer academics worthy of the Yale name.