

Strategic Planning for Yale College 2023–2028

February 2025



Overview

*An update on challenges,
opportunities, and achievements*

“This plan presents a blueprint for how to address the questions facing the college... to provide the best possible liberal education for the world today.”

—Dean Pericles Lewis, *Strategic Planning for Yale College*, December 2023

The strategic plan for Yale College, developed in the 2022-2023 academic year, is informed by four pillars of emphasis designed to ensure the university’s continued leadership in undergraduate education: attracting a diverse and excellent student body, fostering curricular innovation, strengthening our community of learning, and communicating internally and externally about the college’s mission.

These priorities — *Educational Opportunity, Curricular Innovation, A Community of Learning, and Shared Mission* — have guided us through a time of intense challenges including a new regulatory landscape for college admissions and student demonstrations in response to global conflict. It has also been a period of achievement and growth, from the flourishing of the Office of Educational Opportunity to the 1,554 talented and diverse members of the Class of 2028 to the pedagogical innovations of Yale’s faculty across the arts, humanities, social sciences, and sciences and engineering.

Highlights

- *Access*
- *Excellence*
- *Imagination*
- *Opportunity*
- *Understanding*

Access: The college will expand its student population from 6,200 to 6,600 students by raising the targeted class size from 1,550 to 1,650.

Excellence: New data science connector courses and faculty innovations in teaching with AI are promoting core 21st-century literacies across the curriculum.

Imagination: An award-winning new “Designing Your Career” tool developed at Yale enables students to rethink the possibilities for their paths beyond college.

Opportunity: The Office of Educational Opportunity is coordinating a robust range of services tailored to first-generation and low-income students.

Understanding: Programs including the Dean’s Dialogues series are strengthening a culture of dialogue and civil discourse on our campus.

Educational Opportunity

Leading in Admissions and Financial Aid

- Enrolled an excellent, accomplished, and diverse first-year class.
- Updated the admissions reading process and expanded training to meet the new legal requirements for whole person review.
- Expanded outreach channels to prospective students, built staff and programs, and invested in long-term pipeline development.
- Announced plans to expand the college's student population from 6,200 to 6,600 (an increase of 6.5 percent) following work by a dean's task force that provided guidance on the resources and considerations necessary to do so.
- Spent \$257 million on undergraduate financial aid to meet the full demonstrated need for all students without loans; the average Yale scholarship in academic year 2024-25 is almost \$68,000, which exceeds the cost of tuition.
- Established a new model for financial aid in which each applicant is assigned a dedicated financial aid counselor, simplifying the experience for families and creating better access to appointments for students and families.



From top: The Class of 2028 celebrates the start of its bright college years at Opening Assembly; Bulldog Days asked students to share why they chose Yale (left); a rainy move-in day did not dampen students' spirits (right).

Educational Opportunity

Supporting Students' Transition to College

- Enhanced the First-Year Scholars at Yale program to offer a more flexible menu of ways to explore campus activities and resources.
- With the new orientation format now in its third year, added new residential college welcome events to build community, encourage open conversation, and strengthen relationships.
- Collaborated with Yale Library on a new academic resources fair to introduce students to the personal librarians, Poorvu Center, Office of Educational Opportunity, and other sources of support.

Advising, Mentorship, and Opportunity Programs

- Expanded online [summer peer advising](#) to include all incoming students in 2024, following a successful pilot in summer 2023.
- Launched a series of [advising videos](#) by members of the faculty.
- Through the [Office of Educational Opportunity](#), served nearly 900 students in workshops and events, nearly 400 in 1:1 consultations, and more than 550 through mentorship programs, with areas of focus including disability and neurodiversity, first-generation/low-income student success, and educational community coordination.



From top: Students in the First-Year Scholars at Yale program study objects from Yale's collections; the new academic resources fair drew hundreds of members of the Class of 2028 to the nave of Sterling Memorial Library.

Educational Opportunity

Fostering Academic Growth and Exploration

- Developed use of Yale Summer Session as a laboratory for innovative pedagogy, including through new courses in [American Sign Language](#) that enabled students to practice signing beyond the boundaries of the classroom.
- Increased efficiency in payment practices for fellowships and the International Summer Award, including setting up all first-year students in the required systems to facilitate smoother processing of summer and post-graduate funds.

Building Students' Pathways Beyond Yale

- Expanded Office of Career Strategy collaborations with faculty, joint efforts with Yale centers and student organizations, and programs at Poorvu including partnering with the Undergraduate Writing Center to create student guidance on the use of AI in the job search, fellowships process, and graduate school applications.
- Increased [fellowships](#) outreach through cross-campus collaborations and partnerships, varied delivery, and peer-to-peer support, yielding an unprecedented increase in applications for Marshall, Rhodes (U.S. and international), and Fulbright.



Yale's 2024 Fulbright award recipients are studying, researching, and teaching in locations including Mongolia, Portugal, Turkey, and Armenia.

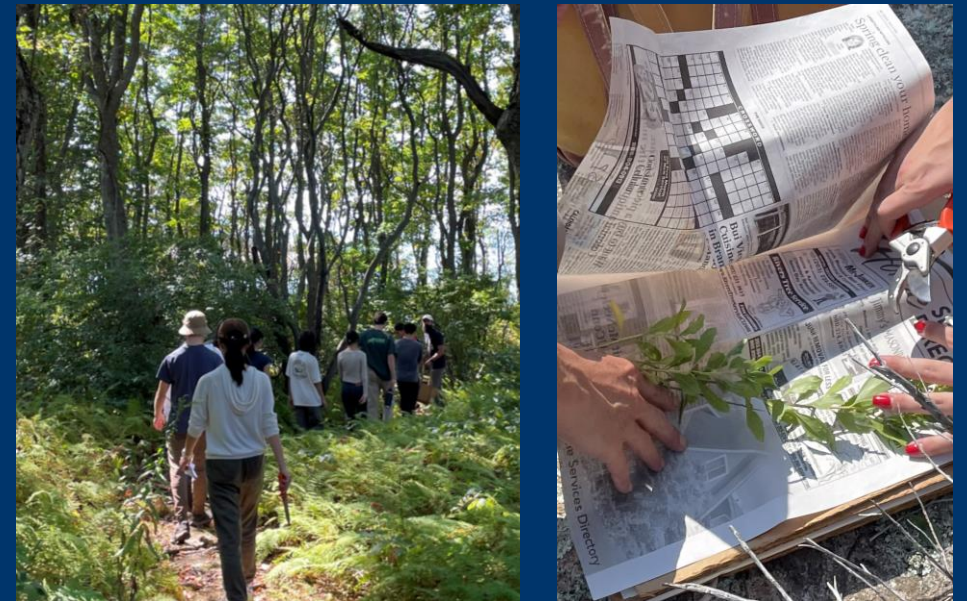
Curricular Innovation

Identifying Opportunities for Innovation

- Explored new vehicles to incorporate hands-on, experiential learning, including the [Impact!](#) initiative, sponsored by Yale Planetary Solutions, in which teams of students, faculty, and staff will pursue projects to mitigate planetary challenges.
- Partnered with the Poorvu Center to encourage faculty experimentation in teaching with and about artificial intelligence, with early innovations spanning the disciplines including art history, language study, neuroscience, political science, statistics and data science, and beyond.

Promoting a Culture of Exploration

- Augmented the Residential College Seminars program to include Yale College Seminars, with courses on medicine and the humanities, ceramic ritual and performance, and the art of watercolor.
- Established new certificate programs including [data science](#), [ethnography](#), [food studies](#), and [human rights](#) as a part of broader efforts to develop new programs that respond to the shifting landscape of students' interests.

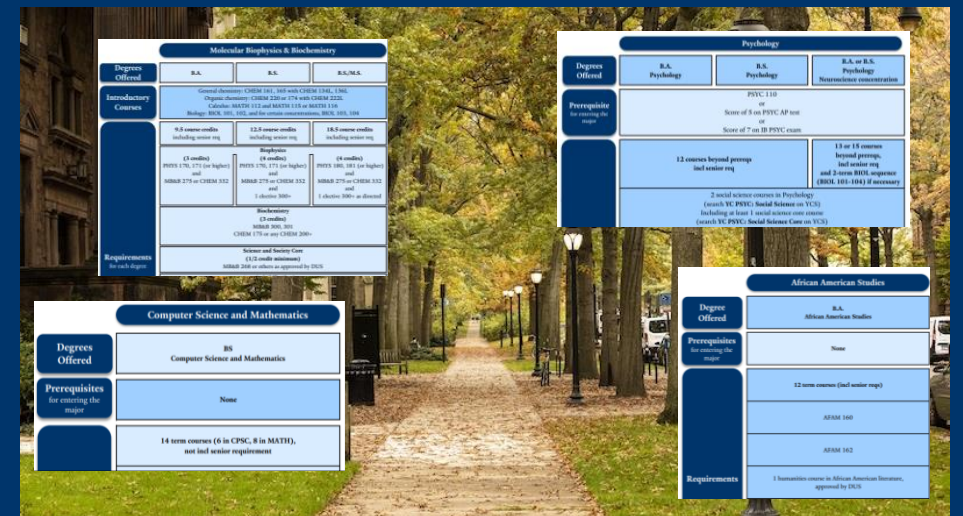


Students attend a talk organized by the Yale Sustainable Food Program, home of the new Food, Agriculture, and Climate Change Certificate (top) and participate in a field trip hosted by the Yale Peabody Museum to learn about botanical surveys and plant specimen collection practices (bottom).

Curricular Innovation

Supporting Outstanding Major Programs

- Led by the Committee on Majors, reviewed the six undergraduate engineering majors, laying the groundwork for Yale to respond to the changing landscape of incoming students and their preparation for intended majors in the engineering disciplines.
- Provided guidance developed by the Committee on Teaching, Learning, and Advising to help departments revise their websites so that undergraduate major pathways and career possibilities are described with consistency and transparency.
- Reviewed (as a special project of the Committee on Majors) the major departments' and programs' perspectives on and engagements with artificial intelligence across the disciplines, and reported those findings to the Yale Task Force on Artificial Intelligence. Areas of anticipated growth and opportunity include classroom gamification, materials tailored to students' individualized learning, AI “tutoring,” and interactive textbook functionality.



From top: students in a classroom at the Center for Engineering Innovation and Design; major roadmaps, posted on department websites and in the Yale College Programs of Study, model pathways to success across the disciplines.

Curricular Innovation

Enhancing Yale's Disciplinary Excellence

- Converted the college's faculty-led musical ensembles to be designated as curricular activities, carrying enrollment credit and appearing on students' transcripts.
- Developed new writing-intensive seminars designed by advanced graduate students – such as “Writing Creative Ethnographies: Exploring Movement, Poetics, and Collaboration” – with a close focus on the craft and discourse of writing in a specific discipline.
- Launched a new suite of data science “connector” courses to promote data literacy, preparing students to assess and interpret information across multiple dimensions.
- Approved a new undergraduate certificate in quantum science and engineering, contributing to university-wide STEM initiatives.
- Provided seed funds to spark the development of innovative cross-divisional courses such as “The Physics of Film.”

Partnering with the Graduate and Professional Schools

- Offered innovative courses among and across disciplines at the Center for Collaborative Arts and Media, including “The Mechanical Eye” (with the School of Architecture) and others.



Dean Lewis with members of the Yale Symphony Orchestra (top); the *The Machine as Medium* symposium at the Center for Collaborative Arts and Media, fall 2023 (bottom).

A Community of Learning

Enhancing Our Residential Communities

- Introduced new position descriptions and recruitment processes for the heads and deans of residential colleges. Eight heads of college and 10 deans have been appointed since July 1, 2022.
- Convened task forces within the Council of Heads of College to give focused attention to topics including undergraduate housing and the roles of fellows, college advisers, and graduate affiliates.
- Made two key changes to housing policy: ensured residential college housing priority for juniors, to ease stressful housing draw, and added more single-gender bathrooms while preserving gender-neutral bathrooms as the primary option.

Fostering Social Experience and the Free Exchange of Ideas

- Launched the Dean's Dialogues series and [Purposes of College Education](#) podcast to promote the values of liberal education, expose undergraduates to a greater range of views, and emphasize thoughtful listening and the exploration of ideas.
- Working with student leaders, piloted "[Perspectives](#)," an online interactive program designed to improve participants' ability to engage in productive conversations across lines of disagreement.



From top: Dean Pericles Lewis (left) and President Maurie McInnis (center, right) with heads of the residential colleges; a Dean's Dialogue featuring Professors Jacob S. Hacker and Christina Rodriguez on immigration, healthcare, and the Supreme Court.

A Community of Learning

Advancing Campus Life

- Expanded work in restorative practices, with focus on the Executive Committee, [YC3](#), and the Office of Gender and Campus Culture; engaged with university director of restorative practices to cross-train professional staff and help design a plan for incorporating student staff; and added conflict resolution to First-Year Counselor training and new student orientation.
- Launched a registration and advising process for major events planned by undergraduate organizations, ensuring timely and consistent direction of groups planning events to the resources and departments that help ensure safety and policy compliance.

Fostering Identity, Engagement, and Enrichment

- Established a dedicated space for the [Middle Eastern & North African Cultural Community](#), with a grand opening in October, as part of the college's support for emergent student communities.
- Reconstituted the Communication and Consent Educators (CCE) Cultural Centers Team and Queer Project Team, created a CCE Student Organizations Project Team, and supported CCEs in building connections and collaborations with campus resources.



Students attend the fall 2024 Bulldog Bash (top) and Extracurricular Bazaar (bottom).

A Community of Learning

Promoting Students' Well-Being

- Built students' capacity to make effective use of college and university services by developing a new series of communications to incoming students and their families, with reimagined messages that provide weekly guidance on topics ranging from course selection to free expression to personal well-being to athletics. This effort has received very positive feedback and enabled students to shift their attention to social adjustment during the early weeks following their arrival on campus.
- Revised time away policies, including the creation of a medical leave of absence (formerly a medical withdrawal) that gives more flexibility with health insurance, campus jobs, class registration, and other elements of student life; streamlined reinstatement processes; expanded accommodations and support upon return.
- Implemented a three-tier public health model to coordinate efforts to reduce harms related to undergraduate substance use: community-wide education and prevention via the Alcohol and Other Drugs Harm Reduction Initiative (AODHRI); individual support from YC3; and acute treatment through Yale Health.



From top: An installment in the new series of communications to incoming students; participants in a Yale Athletics pep rally.

Shared Mission

Strengthening Our Shared Purpose

- Launched orientation program for new staff and Yale College Ambassador program of volunteers for large events; both initiatives contribute to wider efforts to bring staff together and increase “collisional frequency” across branches of the college.
- Revised cadence and content of all-staff meetings to enhance ease of participation and accessibility through the introduction of shorter virtual meetings interleaved with longer in-person meetings, as well as to highlight and raise awareness of colleagues’ achievements.
- Initiated program of community-building events including an all-staff coffee hour to begin the new academic year, as well as opportunities to gather at athletics, arts, and other events.
- Expanded mechanisms of collaboration across the residential colleges: Dean Lewis hosts monthly lunches for the heads to meet with university leaders and to share ideas and information; “Dean School” for new college deans now includes a graduate fellow to support continuity through future hiring transitions; and a new “Residential College Events Guide” supports best practices for planning programs and activities throughout the 14 colleges.



Members of the Yale College staff gather to attend athletic events, participate in campus ceremonies, collaborate on shared projects, and connect socially.

Shared Mission

Fostering Partnership and Collaboration

- Working with the Office of Development and Yale Procurement, launched the online [Designing Your Career](#) tool for Yale and the broader higher education community; the platform has garnered national attention and a 2024 Linda K. Lorimer Award honoring the team of colleagues who created it.
- Enabled by newly created director of operations role, expanded collaboration of operational activities across the college, including in the residential colleges and in the college branches of student affairs and student engagement.
- Partnered with the Yale College Council to improve meal coverage for low-income students who stay on campus during the breaks: the daily meal voucher was increased from \$30 to \$40, and breakfast items are now available for pickup in each college.
- With the Office of Development, launched YaleSOAR (Student Orgs Annual Raise), which guides undergraduate organizations through the process of building their own crowdfunding campaigns and connecting with alumni, families, friends, and peers during an annual giving week.



From top: Colleagues in the college, the Office of Development, and Yale Procurement received a Linda K. Lorimer Award for their collaborative work on the Designing Your Career tool; Dean Lewis meets with members of the Yale College Council.

Shared Mission

Communicating Thoughtfully and Effectively

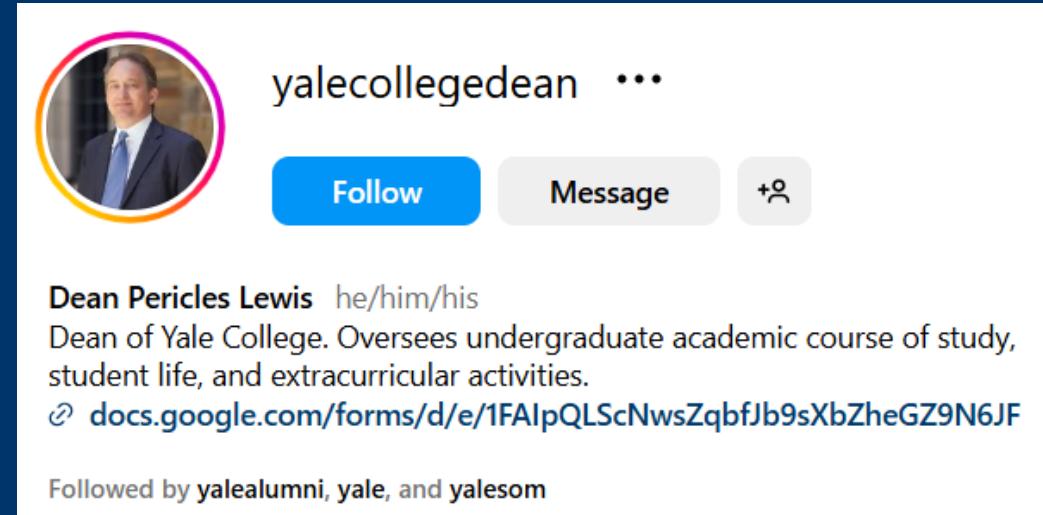
- Developed and refined channels of communication to internal and external constituencies, including a new college SharePoint site to house staff communications, digital resources, and calendars; the [Yale College Voices](#) podcast; a [dean's Instagram account](#); and expanded coordination of the residential colleges' newsletters.
- Deployed Yale College representatives to serve on a working group that will carry out the recommendations of the [Committee on Institutional Voice](#) and offer guidance to schools and units.

Modeling Excellent Use of Financial Resources

- Collaborated across the college to improve [SafetyNet](#) response times, consistency in the consideration and funding of requests, and processing of assistance outside of term time.

Measuring and Assessing Our Outcomes

- Launched a data dashboard to support the use of new metrics and assessment tools by the college's senior management team.
- Convened an ad hoc consultative group of faculty and staff to study data on areas of student success and struggles, and to identify and advise on possible interventions.



Communications initiatives include the dean's Instagram account (top), with nearly 5,000 followers, and the Yale College Voices podcast (bottom).



“This strategic plan – and the *opportunity*, *innovation*, *community*, and *mission* that are its four cornerstones – is meant to guide the college’s concrete actions over the next five years, and to serve as a roadmap for further action and an invitation for continued faculty and staff involvement. Our work today positions Yale to shape the conversation about liberal education for tomorrow and beyond.”

