NEWS

"Golden slumbers fill your eyes.
Smiles await you when you rise."
THE BEATLES GOLDEN SLUMBERS

College term bill climbs to $94,100 as students object to funding cuts

BY ISOBEL MCCLURE AND SASHA CABRAL
STAFF REPORTERS

Undergraduate tuition and fees for the 2026-27 academic year will total $94,100 per student — marking a 3.92 percent increase from the current year's bill.

This increase is consistent with those in past years, which have remained within the range of 3.78 to 3.94 percent since the 2018-19 term bill. Next year's total bill is divided into $72,500 for tuition and $21,600 towards housing and food combined, compared to $69,900 and $20,650 in the 2025-26 term bill respectively.

"Students who are on financial aid will not see their bills increase. The financial aid is increased by the same amount as the tuition increase," Yale College Dean Pericles Lewis said in an interview this week, adding that it would "be a mistake" to interpret the tuition increase as hitting low and middle income students.

https://public.flourish.studio/visualisation/28454666/

"I want to make it clear that the tuition increase affects students who are not on financial aid," he said.

In a Tuesday email, Yale College Council President Andrew Boanoh '27 and Vice President Jalen Bradley '27 announced a motion which is set to ask students if they "support a student referendum condemning the Yale administration for raising tuition while reducing investment in undergraduate student life" and urging "an immediate pause on tuition increases and restoration of funding to core student programs." The motion, proposed by Alex Greene '26, was passed at the Yale College Council meeting last Sunday.

"It's very problematic to me that as that tuition is rising," Greene said, "student cuts are happening. In other words, students, their families are paying more for an experience that is less funded."

He described seeing the Yale undergraduate experience be "quietly eroded" over time. He cited recent examples including the end of College-sponsored summer storage funding for low-income students and the University's not renewing contracts for certain instructional faculty members.

An increase in the Yale undergraduate population by 100 students per year, which was announced last February and began with the class of 2029, seemed "problematic" to Greene given that administrators were "not investing a corresponding greater amount in student funding, but moving in the opposite direction."

Lewis said the term bill is "probably a little less than inflation in the costs of higher education" and that the Higher Education Price Index generally rises "a little faster than retail inflation." The 2025 higher education inflation rate was 3.6 percent, while the 2025 Consumer Price Index grew by 2.41 percent from February 2025 to February 2026.

The term bill "increases every year," and the amount of the increase "depends on a lot of things that are unpredictable," Lewis said. He said the College spends less when the economy improves, because "maybe some people who would have applied for financial aid won't apply or won't need it," and more when it weakens.

Other student leaders besides Greene similarly criticized the tuition increase amid cuts to student programming.

Sahra Wahedi '27, who currently serves as the Yale College Council's deputy director for financial policy, also noted the storage aid program's end and the replacement of the International Study Award and the Summer Experience Award for financial aid recipients with a single non-competitive grant.



ABBY ASSOUAD / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Yale College's 2026-27 total tuition and fees will mark a 3.92 percent bump, continuing a decade-long trend of similar increases. A proposed Yale College Council referendum would ask if students condemn the price amid cuts affecting student life.

"It's a little hypocritical of them to raise tuition while they continue to remove things the University is known for," she said, adding that given "Yale's $44 billion endowment," she would expect administrators to "work towards improving student life," rather than cutting programs that students "originally applied to Yale for."

An upcoming jump in the federal tax on wealthy universities' endowments, enacted last year and set to go into effect this summer, has led administrators to tighten budgets across the University.

Brian Moore '26, a former YCC presidential candidate who previously worked in the Yale Investments Office, said he supports the referendum, but would desire more specificity in what is meant by "core student programs."

"Without an immediate, actionable request, it can be difficult to get the administration to come to the negotiating table," he told the News. Moore also called for administrators to make a more concerted effort to incorporate student voices into discussions on Yale finances.

The Office of Undergraduate Financial Aid calculates financial aid using the new term bills, which means "increases in the term bill are matched by increases in need-based Yale scholarship," Mark Dunn '07, the office's senior associate director for outreach and recruitment, wrote to the News.

In January, Yale announced that undergraduates whose families have annual incomes and typical assets below $200,000 would have free tuition, and the entirety of the cost of attendance will be free for families with incomes below $100,000. The change applies to the incoming class of 2030 and future students.

Olivia Woo contributed reporting.

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In letter, Cory Booker urges Yale to make farmworkers' rights pledge

BY JERRY GAO
STAFF REPORTER

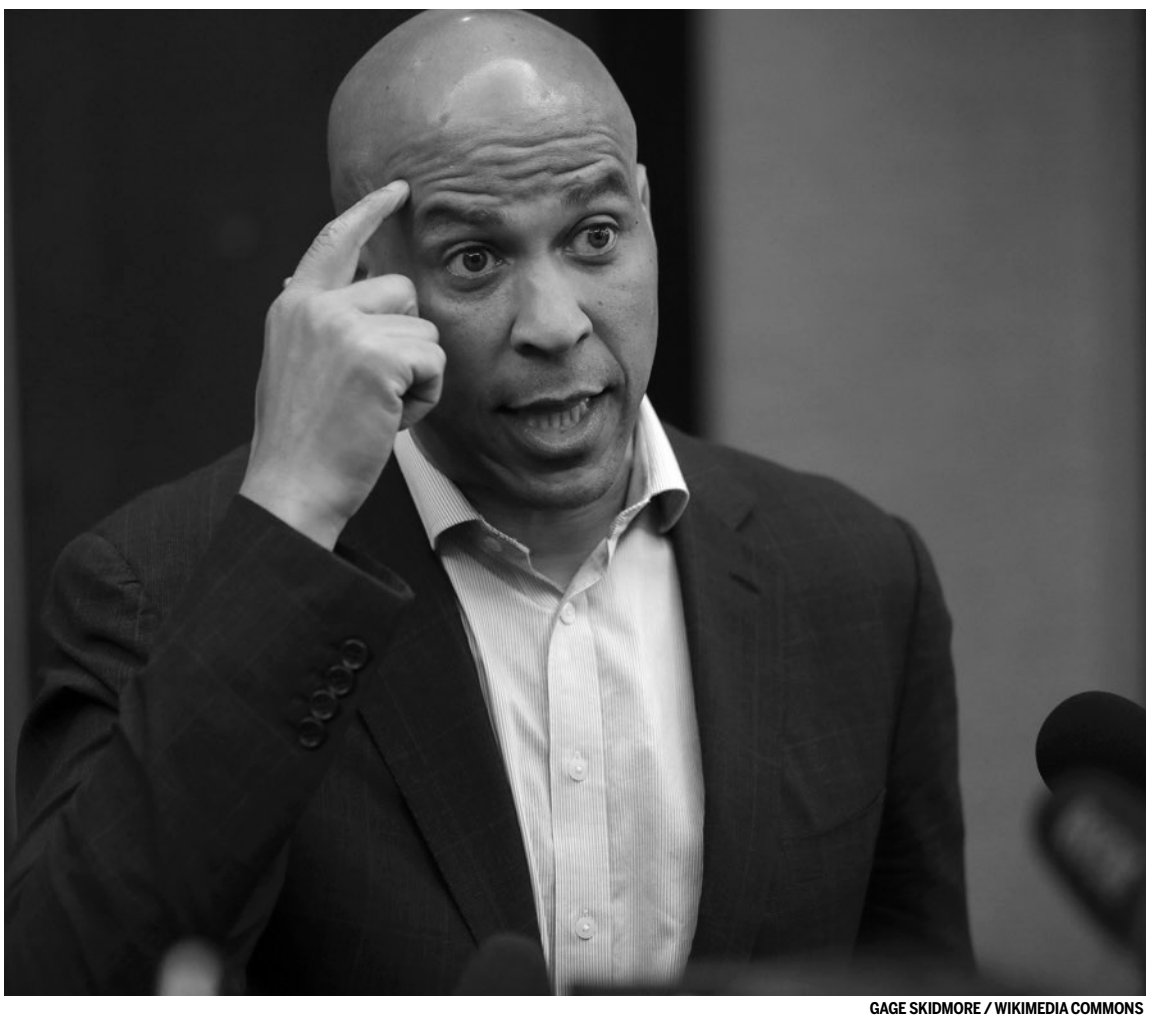
Sen. Cory Booker LAW '97 wrote a letter to Yale Hospitality last month, urging the University to join a farmworkers' rights initiative.

Booker's one-page letter, dated March 26, added to the Yale Student/Farmworker Alliance's campaign for Yale Hospitality to participate in the Fair Food Program. Student organizers have hosted screenings and petitions, and recently marched to Yale Hospitality's offices in an effort to pressure the University to join the program.

"As a proud alumnus of Yale Law School (Class of 1997) and a longtime advocate for a healthier and more equitable food system, I write to urge Yale Hospitality to join the Fair Food Program (FFP)," Booker wrote, later adding that "Yale has long been a leader in both scholarship and social responsibility."

Booker, a New Jersey Democrat who ran for president in the 2020 Democratic primary and is seen as a potential 2028 contender, is a member of the Senate's Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee. In the letter to Yale's assistant vice president for Hospitality, Jodi Smith Westwater, Booker referred to his personal experience with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, the group that created the Fair Food Program.

Student/Farmworker Alliance member John Robert Walker '28 shared Booker's letter with the News. Booker's office confirmed that the senator wrote the letter but did not respond to the News' emailed inquiry about what prompted him to do so.



GAGE SKIDMORE / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Sen. Cory Booker, a Yale Law School alumnus, wrote a letter last month to Yale Hospitality, throwing his weight behind a student campaign for the University to join the Fair Food Program.

Alexa Gotthardt, a Yale Hospitality spokesperson, wrote in a statement on April 7 that the University has "received the letter and a response is forthcoming," but did not respond to the News' questions about whether Yale Hospitality has reconsidered its position.

Gotthardt referred the News to a previous statement in which she wrote that Yale "is not currently positioned to become a formal signatory to the FFP, given its role further downstream in the supply chain," but that the University is "aligned with the program's goals."

The protest last March was organized by the Student/Farmworker Alliance. Walker, who has since announced his candidacy for Yale College Council president, wrote in an email to the News that the alliance had contacted Booker, who then agreed to write the letter.

"Despite Senator Booker's letter urging Yale to join the FFP, an official resolution from the Yale College Council, a petition signed by hundreds of students, and no clear reason for not joining the program, Yale Hospitality has refused to take any good-faith steps toward joining the FFP," Walker wrote. According to the alliance, its petition had 300 signatories by the end of March.

According to the Fair Food Program's website, buyers that participate in it — including companies such as McDonald's and Walmart — must agree to buy produce from farms that guarantee certain worker protections and abide by a code of conduct. Buyers also agree to pay a premium of one cent per pound picked, which goes to farmworker wages.

Yale Hospitality has said that it hopes to source more produce from program-affiliated suppliers. According to Gotthardt, more than 64 percent of Yale Hospitality's tomato purchases through suppliers are sourced from growers affiliated with the Fair Food Program, and the University hopes to increase its percentage of tomatoes from program-approved growers to 90 percent.

Booker's letter discussed his experience with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers.

"The FFP was created by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), who I had the pleasure of meeting while participating in the Food Inc. 2 documentary, which highlights the systemic abuses farmworkers face," Booker wrote. "I learned from the CIW about the extreme poverty, sexual harassment, and labor trafficking faced by many farmworkers, and the power of market-driven accountability to create real change."

Booker wrote that joining the program would set "an example for students, alumni and peer institutions about the power of ethical purchasing decisions and institutional leadership in ending longstanding abuses and transforming labor conditions for farmworkers for generations to come."

According to Walker, the group is in the process of contacting more alumni to support the group's campaign.

"We'll contact dozens more prominent alumni in the weeks ahead, and we expect many will follow Senator Booker's example and call on Hospitality to support the human rights of the farmworkers who grow our food by joining the FFP." Walker wrote.

Booker graduated from Yale Law School in 1997. The Law School's dining hall was independently operated prior to 2011 and stopped accepting undergraduate swipes in 2009. According to its website, Yale Hospitality now operates Café Law, which serves "coffee, sandwiches, salad, or soup for lunch, and plenty of snacks."

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