

WEEKEND

WHIMSY

Laila Davson '26 thrives on community. Ever since her preteen babysitting gigs, the newly-minted Stiles FroCo has sought out mentorship opportunities that connect her with people who want to learn. One of the first things to strike me about Laila was her dedication to her Education Studies certificate — a path she chose in her junior year, but a passion she had long cultivated. Having spent years wrangling her younger cousins in what she now considers preparation for more recent New Haven mentorship programs, Laila immerses herself in learning processes.

“I think we think about childhood and adolescence as a very temporary time. And society tends to not think of children’s experiences as legitimate, because they’re younger and haven’t developed fully,” she told me in a cozy corner in Book Trader. “But these experiences matter, and more people should be focused on learning how we can better the systems that teach kids.”

Laila encourages her first years to revel in being themselves as opposed to feeling shame. “We all come from different back-grounds, with different experiences and expectations all come in with that same level of pressure which can cause us to act in ways that aren’t authentic to who we are.” Referring to what she considers the inevitable let downs of not connecting with certain clubs, opportunities, or fields of study, Laila finds comfort in the belief that “the learning process is the value of Yale.”

Laila’s love of community was evident in her answers to my silliest questions. When asked how she would allocate a Stiles endowment donation after becoming the world’s first ethical billionaire, Laila enthusiastically answered, “build a rollerskating rink!”

Growing up in North Virginia, one of the cornerstones of her community was the hometown rollerskating rink. A popular afterschool activity and birthday party location, the roller rink was a place where people of all ages came together and enjoyed each other’s company.



STILES

When I messaged the Trumbull FroCo Instagram, I anticipated a response along the lines of “here’s a FroCo who would love to be interviewed!” as I had gotten from other FroCo teams. Instead, I was offered an interview with not one, but a trio of FroCos.

“We have the dynamic trio Nabiha Khan ’26, Eliana Peyton ’26 and Cory Fan ’26! all three of us or nothing!”

The FroCos brought that same enthusiastic energy straight into the interview, rocking cowboy hats and sunglasses the whole way through. Within minutes they were cracking jokes and bursting into laughter at insider references that had, surprisingly, been formed in just a few weeks of friendship. The Trumbull Trio, as I like to call them, only officially met through FroCo training — but you’d never guess it from the way they bantered like lifelong friends.

Trumbullians are “electric, audacious and loyal.” When I asked the trio what they wanted to accomplish as FroCos, they all recognized the importance of authenticity when stepping into the mentor role, wanting to teach their frosh things they wished they had known in their first year. Eliana encouraged frosh to stay true to themselves, saying, “Social status and hierarchies were things I learned to tune out and not to care about. Care less about what people think!” Cory added, “FOMO is definitely a thing, especially with the chaos of club registration. But do things that you’re actually interested in, that’s something I wish I did earlier.” Nabiha rounded the advice out, adding “Be okay with the ups and downs that you’ll face in first year, you’ll be able to figure it out! It’s all preparing you to be a better person.”

As a parting message, the Trumbull Trio leaves you with their “Why FroCo” haiku: Leader of the herd / With great care, we motivate / Make good trouble, moo-rah



TRUMBULL

Sitting with Britney Gramajo Barrios ’26 in the JE FroCo suite, it’s easy to see how much she loves her college. For Britney, JE’s nature of constant evolution can be seen in the college’s unique approach to traditions. “Maybe people think that, because JE is the oldest residential college, we’re very traditionalist. But I think the way that JE embraces tradition is really cool because it can change. We keep traditions, but we also start new ones.”

When it comes to traditions, none exemplifies this JE spirit more than the Tulip Princess. Recently revived, this pageant-like tradition is like no other: any JE Senior that “embodies the characteristics of a tulip, like poise, resilience, beauty and kindness” can be nominated and crowned the Tulip Princess. The most recent Tulip Princesses have highlighted the diversity of the JE community, highlighting how JE constantly reinvents itself while staying rooted in community.

This upcoming year, Britney is excited to see her frosh grow. “I want them to be confident in their ability to ask for help, to make decisions and also to make mistakes. That things will move on and be okay. They can blossom like a tulip! Maybe be the next tulip princess, who knows?”

Mentoring in the first-generation, low-income student community opened the door for her to become a FroCo, a role that allows her to pay it forward. “My first FGLI mentor was bone of the first people at Yale who showed me how helpful people are.”



JONATHAN EDWARDS

For Gia Cook ’26, there truly is no place like gnome. When asked what residential college tradition she was most excited to share with her first years, Gia named a Davenport Gnomecoming, first-year assassins and John Davenport Day. When I excitedly shared that I attended Gnomecoming last year, Gia cheered, “Gnomecoming is worldwide!” For Gia, Davenport’s community events are a representation of the college’s unique and welcoming environment. Even though she feels that the college is “a little bit of a hidden gem,” the community has become central to her Yale experience.

Gia fondly recounts how, as frosh, she and her friends would practice their auditions for Yale’s step dance team, Steppin’ Out, in the Davenport courtyard. Despite Steppin’ Out being Gia’s first exposure to performance, it became the first Yale community Gia felt grounded in. “It definitely brought me out of my comfort zone,” she confided in me. “I was super nervous for auditions, but that’s where I met some of my closest friends in first year.” While going through her first-year memories, including both the fun achievements and the hard lessons — “The first year carnival event, getting rejected from a club” — Gia encourages frosh to not be afraid of rejection.

“There’s no predetermined path that you have to take. Because everyone’s coming from different backgrounds, success looks different for everyone. So take the classes you want, explore, meet the people you want to meet. Step out of your comfort zone.”



DAVENPORT

SAYBROOK

Participating in organizations from the Cuban-American Undergraduate Student Association to St. Anthony Hall and the News’ Illustration Desk, Maria Arozamena ’26 has always dove head first into her Yale experience.

As she told me in the shaded Saybrook courtyard, her residential college is where those circles intersect — especially in Saybrook’s Latina affinity group, Saytinas. “Those spaces remind me of home, it’s a place where you can be yourself. Things that are unspoken are understood, especially cultural things.”

Maria’s playful side came through when I asked her what lessons she’d take away from “The Hunger Games” to give to her frosh. “Make strong allies, but have stronger boundaries,” she said. “You’ll be meeting so many people, making a lot of friends, and it’s easy to unintentionally pour so much of ourselves into others when oftentimes what we need is to take a step back and let things grow!”

Beyond the games, her advice is just as practical, encouraging first years to not be afraid to ask for help. “Never struggle alone. There are so many resources on this campus that are there to help you to figure your way out.”



PROFILE

THE FROCO FILES

WKND profiled ten FroCos from eight of the residential colleges. From their journeys to FroCo-ship to sharing advice that remarkably applies to both the Hunger Games and what can be lovingly thought of as the Hunger Games of the college experience — first year — the seniors tell all.

So without further ado, welcome Class of 2029! I can’t wait to spend the next three years lordling a one year age difference over you all.

//BY KATE SOO HYUN KIM

A proud Hopplite through and through, Fardouza Farah ’25 describes Grace Hopper College as “charming, funny and chill.” Her Hopper pride shines especially when discussing her favorite college tradition, the Hogwarts dinner, when the dining hall is transformed with decorations and costumes for a night of magic. But for Fardouza, the dining hall is more than just the backdrop for special events — it’s the heart of Hopper. “The Hopper Dining Hall staff are so amazing in so many aspects because they make the dining hall a place of community. It is so much more than food that they do for us.”

Fardouza emphasizes the importance of frosh resisting labels and embracing the communities that feel the most natural to them.

Drawing on her own memories of first year, she said “It’s easy to think of things on a black-and-white spectrum and preemptively limit yourself by saying, ‘If I’m a part of X community, I can’t be a part of Y community.’ But if I’d put myself in a box where I felt like I had to pick between, for example, the Muslim community and CCE community, I would have missed out on a very transformative experience.”

For Fardouza, that experience was shaped in large part by her three years as a CCE mentor, a role that became central to her time at Yale and underscored her commitment to fostering care and connection on campus.

At the end of the interview, Fardouza’s face lit up at the mention of her fellow Hopper FroCos, assuring me that “the Hopper FroCo team is amazing. Even the most mundane things feel really fun with the team, they make the experience of being a FroCo.”



GRACE HOPPER

Berkeley college may be split by Cross Campus, but after talking to Abigail Lopez ’26 I feel certain that it is bonded in every other way. As early as move in, Abi was “astonished by the fact that people were so willing to help. I think from there, I was like, ‘I would love to be this person for someone else.’” Now, as a FroCo and Berkeley’s senior chief aide for the Head of College office, her senior year is a full circle moment.

Abi’s first three years at Yale as a Berkeley aide allowed her to connect with every corner of Berkeley’s community. “If I were to describe Berkeley in three words, they would be: Passionate, home and authentic. From the administration, the dining hall staff and the custodial staff, everyone in Berkeley is so amazing. Together, we all make Berkeley Berkeley!”

Abi encourages her frosh to embrace asking for help. “Never struggle alone. There are so many resources on this campus that are there to help you to figure your way out.”



BERKELEY

When I asked Sofia Jacobson ’26 what three words she would use to describe Pauli Murray, she easily replied, “passionate, caring, community.” After sitting down with her in the Murray courtyard, soaking in the sun and bonding over our shared love for our resco — go Lemurs! — I can see that Sofia’s enthusiasm whole-heartedly embodies the Paul-emur spirit.

Experience on the Pauli Murray College Council and as the previous manager of the Murray butterfly has colored Sofia’s Yale experience and compelled her to give back to Murray in her last year. “We’re definitely a tight-knit community, everyone takes care of each other.” Sofia has ingrained in her frosh that Murray’s distance doesn’t mean missing out — you can still throw yourself into clubs, organizations and everything else you love. Murray’s your neighborhood, not your whole life. Sofia attributes her connections with people all over campus to her participation in Club Soccer, a community that has been just as big of a part of her Yale experience as Murray has.

When asked where Murray would fall on the chaotic and lawful alignment scale, Sofia quickly placed Pauli Murray at “Chaotic Good.” “I feel like we’re pretty fun — we’re Murrayheads! We’re always down to have a good time, even if it means being a little chaotic.” This mischievous nature is reflected in the many exciting activities that have been planned for the Murray frosh, one of which being — drum roll please — the Lemur Induction. At the time of the interview, Lemur Induction had not taken place yet, but the insider knowledge I was given? Lemur costumes. Eerie rituals. A proper induction ceremony into Murray. Chaotic indeed — get excited first-years!



PAULI MURRAY