

“Summer’s lease hath all too short a date.”
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, SONNET 18

Directed Studies waitlist highest in known records

BY JAEHA JANG
STAFF REPORTER

More than 110 first-year students were waitlisted for the Directed Studies program this fall, according to Katja Lindskog, the program’s director of undergraduate studies. The waitlist for the 120-person year-long Great Books program is the largest in the past decade. This jump follows an upward trend in interest since around the 2019-2020 academic year, Lindskog wrote to the News.

“There may be something about this moment that draws students to the program,” Daniel Schillinger, who teaches history and political thought for the program, wrote to the News. “When the world is so unsettled, when opinions are shifting, fundamental questions come to the fore; old books appear in a new light.”

The program is generally appealing because of its tight-knit community and “electric” seminars, Schillinger added.

Directed Studies, known to students as DS, is an intensive two-semester program for Yale College first years that offers a survey of Western canon. Founded in 1947 to preserve the liberal arts tradition, the application-based program offers a set of three courses on literature, philosophy, and historical and political thought.

In an Aug. 12 email obtained by the News, Lindskog reached out to the first 25 students on the waitlist, writing that they had a “decent (but NOT guaranteed!) chance” of joining the program. She further encouraged students to keep some time blocks open for the program’s mandatory lectures and recommended courses adjacent to the curriculum.

Separate emails were sent to students on the waitlist who were between 25th and 50th, as well as those who were 50th and beyond, advising students to keep an eye out for other classes, according to students who received the emails.

Premmie Mepremwattana ’29, a waitlisted student, grasped this year’s uniquely high interest in Directed Studies after talking to some upperclassmen about the program, she said in an interview. Upperclassmen told her, “you can get off the waitlist if you really wanted to,” but Mepremwattana said she didn’t think that was the case this year, having heard of the more than 100-person-long waitlist.

Mepremwattana was disappointed when she received an email from the program informing her that she was between 25th and 50th on the waitlist, she said.

“Who knows? I could be 50th,” she said. “I feel like the odds were really low.”

Mepremwattana added that the program “did a really good job” communicating with waitlisted students. The program provided contacts of formerly waitlisted students and offered invitations to its book fair and information sessions, she said.

Neslo Atilla ’29, who got off the waitlist, said she felt exhilarated upon hearing the news. It was the morning after she returned from her First-Year Outdoor Orientation trip when she received an email from the program.

“I just kinda stood there for a moment,” she said. “Like, after all that waiting, is this real? I was really happy.”

Atilla added that getting on the waitlist itself was an accomplishment for her. When she received an email informing her that she was one of the top 25 students on the waitlist, Atilla said she was “excited” that the program was letting her know she had a strong opportunity to take part in its studies.

“At the same time, it felt a bit like being in limbo because I just registered for an alternative slate of classes that I would have taken if I didn’t get into DS,” she said. “But imagine receiving that email that you’re number 100 on the waitlist and being stuck in limbo for real.”

Atilla said she thinks the extent of the waitlist is “a little excessive,” especially when it’s clear that many students will never get off the waitlist.

Bryce Falkoff ’29 said he started considering a schedule outside of the program when he received an email informing him that he was below the 50th place on the waitlist.

He expected to get off the waitlist because of what he’d read online about Directed Studies admissions, but he said he quickly realized that wouldn’t be the case.

Eugenie Kim ’29, who was third on the waitlist as of Wednesday night, said while she thinks the program is “so, so, so fascinating,” she finds the uncertainty of the waitlist frustrating. Coming to Yale itself and exploring extracurricular activities has already been a “big wave of uncertainty,” she said, and the Directed Studies waitlist has added an extra layer.

While Lindskog emailed her this week to be cautiously optimistic about her chances, Kim said, she looks forward to moving on from the waitlist -- whether she ultimately gets into the program or not.

Levin Li ’29 said that he got off the waitlist on Aug. 25 but ultimately decided against taking the program. The curriculum was not compatible with the requirements for his prospective major, global affairs, he said, and he wanted to tackle his language requirement as well.

He said he felt he could still attain a liberal arts education outside of the program, citing Yale College’s distributional requirements.

“I hope someone else is enjoying their DS spot right now,” he said.

Last year, 82 students were waitlisted for Directed Studies.

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RANA ROOSEVELT / CONTRIBUTING ILLUSTRATOR



Student groups expand Narcan training and distribution

BY ASHER BOISKIN
STAFF REPORTER

The Yale College Council and Yale Emergency Medical Services have scaled up opioid overdose response training and the distribution of emergency overdose medication, aiming to make overdose response a more common skill among students.

This semester, for the first time, YCC and YEMS trained nearly all first-year counselors, or FroCos, on how to use Narcan kits, which can be used to quickly reverse an opioid overdose. The YCC also partnered with fraternities, sororities and other student groups to provide training and Narcan, hoping to give more students practical tools to respond to emergencies.

“Even though it was one of the shorter sessions of all our FroCo training, I feel like I actually learned the most from their presentation,” Gia Cook ’26, a FroCo in Davenport College, wrote to the News about the opioid overdose training. “Even with such a serious topic, they made everything feel very approachable and like something we could really use if needed.”

In the past year and a half, more than 250 students have completed the training. This year’s expansion follows years of advocacy.

In 2023, Narcan, a common fast-acting opioid overdose med-

ication, was available at one New Haven pharmacy, and YCC members purchased single doses to distribute. Narcan typically costs \$40 to \$60 per dose, which can be a barrier for many students.

Last September, the YCC approved a \$4,577 proposal — co-sponsored by then-Ezra Stiles senator Surabhi Kumar ’26 and then-YCC president Mimi Papanthanasopoulos ’26 — to fund Narcan kits for FroCos and cover stipends for training participants.

FroCos, who guide first-year students through their academic and social transitions to Yale, are often the first people contacted when first years experience emergencies, which is why FroCos were a focus of the early training stages.

Ava Ospina ’26, the YEMS chief, described naloxone as a “miracle drug,” citing its ability to reverse opioid overdoses without any adverse effects.

“This isn’t about encouraging drug use,” Ospina said. “It’s a public health measure with real, tangible outcomes in saving lives.”

The YCC’s push for increased naloxone programming includes training for student organizations that host large events, such as fraternities and sororities, and aims to address overdose risks in New Haven more broadly.



ELLIE PARK / SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

The YCC and student emergency medical services are promoting training programs to improve overdose preparedness on campus.

According to a December 2024 Connecticut Department of Public Health report, the state projected about 1,118 drug overdose deaths for 2024, a 16.4 percent decrease from 2023’s 1,338 deaths, with figures still in review.

“We don’t want to wait until something goes wrong before being prepared,” Kumar said.

The YCC has pushed for Yale to fund the program in future years to ensure sustainability and to further integrate nalox-

one into emergency preparedness protocols.

Naloxone can be delivered via prepackaged nasal spray or injection.

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