NEWS

"Gratitude is the closest thing to beauty manifested in an emotion."
MINDY KALING AMERICAN ACTRESS

New York politician argues for sanctuary cities at YPU debate

BY SASHA CABRAL
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Attendees filed into the 53 Wall St. auditorium on Tuesday for the Yale Political Union's penultimate debate of the semester, in which New York City Comptroller Brad Lander spoke in favor of the resolution "Save the Sanctuary City," which passed 95-16.

The YPU hosted Lander, who finished third in the June Democratic primary for New York City mayor. Now soon to be out of a job, the comptroller is considering running for Congress, according to reporting by the New York Times.

Lander is voluntarily facing trial for his arrest at 26 Federal Plaza after reportedly linking arms with a person Immigrations and Customs Enforcement officers were attempting to apprehend.

"At the state and local level, we don't set border policy. We don't decide who can become a citizen or legal permanent resident. We don't set protective status. We don't do any of those things. That is, in fact, the prerogative of the federal government. But once people are in our jurisdictions, they are our residents," Lander said at the union debate, speaking in defense of the legality of sanctuary cities.

At the debate, students sparred about the moral and legal reasons to support or oppose the resolution. Most of the student speeches condemned the way ICE has treated immigrants under the Trump administration.

"No matter one's personal policy position on immigration, I think the manner of immigration enforcement has been pretty horrific, pretty sickening," Avi Rao '27, the chairman of the Independent Party, said in his speech opposing the resolution.

Rao, who described himself as "strongly in favor of immigration," posited that the support of immigration and rejection of ICE does not have to equate to automatic support for sanctuary cities.

"Sanctuary city policies do work until the federal government wants immigration enforcement to be uniform. At that point, the same policies that are meant to protect immigrants actually create more violence and fear," Rao continued.

Elizabeth Shvarts '27 posed a rhetorical question to the audience, asking if "mass deportation is the economically savvy option," while also positioning morality at the forefront of their speech. They elaborated on how legality and morality have historically been at odds, particularly citing Nazi officers' "just following orders" defense.

"This is not just a moral question. This is a blatant violation of existing federal law," Shvarts, who spoke in favor of the resolution, said. "And in terms of a time to break the law, a time to break the law is when people's human rights and dignity are being violated. Even if it means being arrested, not cooperating with ICE is the thing to do. You should break the law in that instance."


SASHA CABRAL / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER
New York City Comptroller Brad Lander argued for the resolution, "Save the Sanctuary City."

Lander recognized the divide between students regarding sanctuary cities while also acknowledging the general consensus in opinion on ICE's recent actions.

"One thing I'm delighted to see is how broad the revulsion at ICE's policies broadly are," Lander said. "Regardless of how you feel about sanctuary cities tonight, I feel hopeful that the set of people here have a good sense of right from wrong, what's lawful from what's lawless."

While there was a general denouncement of ICE's activities, not all audience members were in agreement. In an interview, Garrett Warner '27 expressed his dissatisfaction at the resolution's passage. Warner, who is from North Carolina, expressed support for Trump's actions in Charlotte, N.C.

"What's happening in Charlotte needed to happen, right? American citizens have been suffering for a long time, and our laws have not been enforced in this country for my entire lifetime," he said. "This is the first time in my 21 years of life that American immigration laws have been enforced, and I think that's a wonderful thing, and it's very sad to see almost the entirety of the political union disagree with that."

Warner also recounted his discontent at what he characterized as a lack of representation for people with his viewpoint on the stage.

Brad Lander previously represented a Brooklyn neighborhood on the New York City Council.

Contact **SASHA CABRAL** *at sasha.cabral@yale.edu.*

YCC passes proposal urging creation of Ukrainian Studies certificate

BY ASHER BOISKIN
STAFF REPORTER

Yale College students may be one step closer to the chance to pursue a Ukrainian studies certificate, following a unanimous Sunday vote by the Yale College Council Senate in favor of a proposal outlining a five-course program centered on Ukrainian language and culture.

The certificate as proposed would offer a structured academic pathway for students interested in Ukraine but unable to take on the requirements of the Russian, Eastern European and Eurasian studies major, or REES, which currently demands 11 to 12 courses as well as language prerequisites. Supporters say the new program would also address concerns that Yale's Slavic offerings concentrate heavily on Russia.

Nataliia Shuliakova '28, the president of the Ukraine House at Yale, wrote in testimony that the certificate would fill a gap for students who "must currently search for knowledge about Ukraine across multiple departments with no cohesive academic structure."

Shuliakova added that faculty who want to include Ukraine more substantially in their teaching "lack an institutional framework to do so."

Unlike the REES major, which requires some Russian or eastern European language proficiency, the certificate would ask students to complete three courses in Ukrainian language, two courses on Ukrainian culture and short reflections on two cultural events. The structure follows existing models such as the Persian Studies certificate.

Saybrook Senator Brendan Kaminski '28, who sponsored the proposal, told the senate that the idea emerged from both his experience with the REES major and feedback from students who wanted academic recognition for their work in Ukrainian language and culture.

"I'm someone who was interested in the major and then dropped it because I could not physically do it," Kaminski said at the meeting. Kaminski said the certificate would allow students in demanding majors to pursue regional study without taking on "pretty hefty" requirements.

Kaminski also framed the certificate as part of a broader shift within Slavic departments nationwide "following Russia's full scale invasion of Ukraine," noting that many programs aim to "decolonize a lot of the academic material that has been published" and reduce the dominance of Russia-centered coursework.

Kaminski pointed to current REES offerings, most of which he argues focus on Russia, and said a Ukrainian studies certificate would "facilitate these conversations on decentering, a dominant Russian narrative."

The proposal includes testimony from students, faculty and members of the Ukraine House at Yale who argued that Ukrainian language and culture deserve a dedicated academic home.

Ella King '28, a student in "Cinematic Ukraine: Culture, Identity, and Memory," described the certificate as a way to integrate coursework that currently exists "only in fragments across departments," writing that such a program "would affirm Yale's commitment to de-centering Russia-centric narratives."

In a statement to the News, YCC Speaker Alex Chen '28 offered his support for the proposal.

"The push for a Ukrainian Studies certificate only furthers the renowned hallmarks of what a Yale education should be for: the development of skills necessary for addressing humanity's global issues, including in this case, studying and engaging with the complex geopolitical challenges and cultural landscape of Ukraine's sovereignty and identity," Chen wrote.

Faculty support for the legislation includes professor Claire Roosien, the director of undergraduate studies in Slavic Languages and Literatures and professor Olha Tytarenko, a Ukrainian language instructor.

In July, the Russian government designated Yale an "undesirable organization."

Contact **ASHER BOISKIN** *at asher.boiskin@yale.edu.*

At Buckley conference, critiques of universities echoed Trump

BY LEO NYBERG AND YOUSSEF MAZOUZ
CONTRIBUTING REPORTERS

The 15th annual Buckley Institute conference last Friday brought to New Haven a range of conservative speakers and panelists, some of whom criticized Yale and other universities for alleged hostility to conservatives.

The Buckley Institute was founded in 2011 to promote free speech and serve as a platform for conservative thought at Yale, according to its mission statement. The conference featured panels on the nature of conservatism; a conversation with friends of William F. Buckley Jr. '50, the namesake for the Buckley Institute; and a debate about whether President Donald Trump's agenda is conservative. It was capped by a speech from Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis '01.

While the speakers steered clear of explicit calls for Trump to change or continue his attacks on higher education, many panelists and speakers voiced support for Trump's efforts to influence elite universities.

Lauren Noble '11, the founder and executive director of the Buckley Institute, wrote in an email to the News that Buckley's mission had not changed under the current Trump administration, but that record attendance at this year's conference was "a testament to the energy and enthusiasm around supporting free speech at Yale and across the country."

In the debate on whether Trump's agenda is conservative, Scott Jennings, a CNN contributor and former aide to President George W. Bush '68, said he agrees with Trump's calls to deport international students who protested against Israel's war in Gaza.


LEO NYBERG / CONTRIBUTING REPORTER
For its 15th annual conference, the Buckley Institute invited a range of conservative speakers who were critical of perceived liberal bias in higher education.

"If you're a guest in this country and we allow you to be here, it would be better if you didn't engage in perpetual activity that was designed to bring about the downfall of this country and the downfall of western civilization," Jennings said, earning a spirited round of applause from the audience.

Jennings' sparring partner, Noah Rothman, a writer for the National Review, agreed.

"You have individuals who are not citizens of the country who are here on temporary status who jeopardize that status by engaging in ideological activities that represent a threat, as defined by the secretary of state," Rothman said.

Conference speaker Eliana Johnson '06, a former Fox News producer and editor-in-chief of the Washington Free Beacon, said that she does not believe universities can diversify ideologically through the leadership of university presidents and trustees.

"I don't think the change is going to come from the trustees and the presidents. Because the presidents, as we've seen, are basically pulled into their faculty. And the faculty revolts if the president takes a line they don't like," she said. "And in many cases, the boards of trustees, they're weak, and they agree with where the president wants to be and where the faculty members are. I've spoken to these people. They are not aligned in the direction of change and pressing for ideological diversity."

Instead, Johnson praised the Trump administration's efforts to pressure universities to change ideologically.

"What Trump did to change the equation was he started pulling taxpayer dollars from these schools," Johnson said. "And I can tell you that we were talking about this before Trump was elected, that somebody's just got to pull the taxpayer money."

Unlike most of its Ivy League peers, Yale has not received direct threats to its federal funding attached to demands from the Trump administration.

When asked at a Family Weekend parent forum last month why Yale has been spared, University President Maurie McInnis said there was "no obvious answer" but suggested that the Buckley Institute's presence at Yale might be a reason.

Beverly Gage '94, a history professor and co-chair of the Committee on Trust in Higher Education, attended the Buckley conference. Gage said she was there in her capacity as co-chair of the committee and for her upcoming biography of Ronald Reagan.

While she said she disagreed with Jennings and Rothman on some points about the role of the university, she thinks the critiques are worth listening to.

"I do think it's important to know that these narratives are out there," Gage said. "And part of what we're investigating as a committee is trying to understand, really, the full range of views and critiques."

The Buckley Institute's board of directors wrote a letter to McInnis in June, asking her to place Noble, the institute's founder and director, on the Committee on Trust in Higher Education. Noble was not placed on the committee. Gage previously told the News the committee is only composed of faculty members.

In his keynote speech, DeSantis said Yale's free speech environment has gotten worse since he graduated.

Johnson criticized what she called Yale's relative lack of conservative thought, but said she was appreciative of her Yale education, citing the Directed Studies program as a highlight of her undergraduate experience.

Brian Allen GRD '93 '97 '98, an art critic for the National Review, said that the field of art history has been infiltrated by "woke exhibitions" and victim mentality in a panel on whether conservatives can reclaim culture.

Allen cited Barack Obama's 2008 presidential victory as a turning point for the museum industry, stating that "everybody became political" and adding that political activism through art was "reinforced big time in 2020."

Allen went on to critique the "infestation of critical race theory" in art history, attacking the inclusion of themes of colonialism and oppression in the Yale Center for British Art's new Hew Locke exhibit.

The annual Buckley Institute conference was held at the Omni New Haven Hotel, located at 155 Temple St.

Contact **LEO NYBERG** *at leo.nyberg@yale.edu and* **YOUSSEF MAZOUZ** *at youssef.mazouz@yale.edu.*