

## NEWS

*"You'll be my rise and shine soon as them stars align."*

NASA ARIANA GRANDE

# Crew Dog founders reflect on company's rise from rowing roots

BY OLIVIA CYRUS  
STAFF REPORTER

An image of a white bulldog holding a crew oar, and a desire to become the fastest-growing collegiate brand, catalyzed the founding of the clothing brand Crew Dog.

The clothing line was conceived in April 2023, when London native Constantine Polychronopoulos '25 was in his second season as a member of the Yale lightweight crew team. At the time of its founding, co-owner Polychronopoulos dubbed the creations neither a business nor a brand.

"It was literally a side project for the team around the race season in the spring, where we were going to do a group order for merch and a bunch of the guys, especially, wanted something different," Polychronopoulos said.

"Different," in this case, meant prioritizing understated fashion rather than loud "Yale Crew Team" or traditional emboldened logos, Polychronopoulos said.

The high-quality merchandise involves putting premium large scale embroidery on otherwise blank garments. He hoped to provide members of the team identifiable athletic

clothing that could also be worn in travel, professional or leisurely settings.

Nearly every member of the team purchased the clothing, Polychronopoulos said. News of the "side project" quickly spread, with requests for similar merchandise from the varsity swim and baseball teams and other student organizations.

The Shopify contact form he used to sell the clothing soon gave way to a full-fledged website, and that was when Polychronopoulos decided to call the brand Crew Dog.

Co-owner Coby Wagonfeld '26 began his involvement with the company and Polychro-

nopoulos, whom he refers to as Tino, shortly after it put up its storefront in August 2023.

"A mutual friend introduced me to Tino and at that time, Tino really realized that there's a proper concept here and that the success at Yale could work at a bunch of other schools," Wagonfeld said. "From our first lunch, we were like, 'Oh, this would be a super fun project to work on.'"

Wagonfeld, currently a student, said that balancing his undergraduate workload with the thriving company is "not the easiest at times." However, he said his main priority is the business. Schoolwork sometimes takes a bit of back seat until midterm season, and then he has to "lock back into school," he explained.

Wagonfeld, though, intends to work on the company full time after graduation, joining the recently graduated Polychronopoulos.

"College apparel is so concentrated between a few huge companies that have kind of forgotten about the consumer, whether that's students or alumni, and focused more on profit," Wagonfeld said. We feel like there's a way to do both and make really cool stuff. When people think, 'I want to buy something for my college,' we want them to think of Crew Dog."

In February, the company received its first retail placement and pursued buying consortia such as Barnes & Noble. In just a few months, Crew Dog grew to more than 40 bookstores and larger retailers, according to Wagonfeld.

Eight to nine months after the company's inception, many of the order forms were handled by Polychronopoulos, who would spend his weekends dallying with the form and confirming orders.

By the end of 2024, the company sold approximately 12,000

units of clothing. This year, Wagonfeld estimates that it will sell closer to 37,000 through three revenue streams: direct to consumer, group orders and from bookstores. Currently, embroidered tees sell for about \$45 on the company's website; crewnecks go for nearly \$100.

The pair, along with their 12 full-time staff members, sell hand-drawn images of everything from well-dressed Boston University terriers to dapper University of Washington huskies.

"Consumer apparel is hard," Wagonfeld said. "At every touch point, there's potential human error. You're producing a physical project, and especially in the collegiate space, there are a lot of regulations around what you make. So it's not a very easy space, but it's even more rewarding because of that."

The duo will have their first official merchandise drop on Saturday, with their Yale-Harvard game collection — a contrast with their other clothing, which showcases one school.

The collection will remain available for two weeks and is inspired by Harvard and Yale archival magazines, Polychronopoulos said.

"There's so much meaning you can pack into a shirt, you have memories around it, where you bought it, when you wore it, who you were with," Polychronopoulos said. "We're trying to put all of that heritage into a broad collection that really speaks to every kind of fan and potential consumer and give people unique, meaningful apparel that isn't offered for the Game."

The first Yale-Harvard football game was in 1875.

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ALEX HONG / CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER

Founded by two Yale students as a "side project," Crew Dog now sells merchandise designed for dozens of universities.

# Administrators turn to dogs for stress relief and student bonds

BY OLIVIA CYRUS AND HAILEY YOUNG  
STAFF REPORTER AND CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

Morse Head of College Catherine Panter-Brick got her mini shepherd Rio in 2019 after a sustained campaign from students asking her to get a pet. Noting that other heads of college had dogs, the anthropology professor said that she received relentless emails from students for nearly a year asking her the same question: When are you getting your dog?

She eventually yielded.

Panter-Brick's fun-loving fido isn't alone — several other administrators credited their dogs with bringing stress relief and liveliness to campus. While Handsome Dan receives his flowers as Yale's mascot, other administrator-owned pups have made appearances at college teas, commencement and fall festivities.

Administrators across campus said that aside from providing companionship, their dogs help ease student stress and foster a sense of belonging and community with students. The presence of these fluffy companions, they said, has helped brighten admin-

istrative spaces and form connections with students.

"You and I can go through the day performing really well, but this animal just makes you feel wonderful because he's so happy to see you," Panter-Brick said, adding that she was inspired to adopt the dog because some students missed their own pets.

Having made appearances at intramural soccer games, family receptions and teas, Rio has become a college staple, Panter-Brick said, with students attracted like a magnet to "his beauty and steadiness."

The dog takes its name from the Rio Grande, where Panter-Brick was doing field work along the border between the United States and Mexico at the time of his adoption. She said having Rio "chills everybody out" and makes the college experience feel more like a home.

For other administrators, dogs have become an extension of their work and how they build community with students outside of the office.

Dogs Winston Aloysius Farley and Maxine Shaw are "the light" of Matthew Farley's heart. As an assistant director of the Yale LGBTQ Center, Farley attributes the pair to

relieving the "stress and tension" he encounters on campus.

Farley, who previously worked with K-12 students, often brought Winston with him for work. He said he hopes his pooches can bring joy to Yale, where students can take them for walks.

"I want to make sure that anywhere Winston and Maxine are, they're able to touch at least one person or change one person's day, because once that person's day is changed, that affects their whole day and environment," Farley said. "And that's what they are here for."

In residential colleges, deans and heads of college use dogs to create spaces of belonging.

Fubá, the dog belonging to Berkeley College Dean Bárbara Cruvinel Santiago '17, is a "3-year old goofball," doubling as the "Berkeley Dean of Pawffairs," Cruvinel Santiago wrote in an email to the News.

The pup is an English cream golden retriever Cruvinel Santiago got three years ago while studying at Columbia University. She raised Fubá in a shared apartment in Manhattan and often took him around Columbia's campus and on the subway.

At Yale now, Fubá has become a



XIMENASOLORZANO / HEAD PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

Meet some of the dogs that bring canine company to campus.

close companion to students walking into Cruvinel Santiago's office and experiencing stress or sadness.

"It's almost a daily occurrence that someone comes into the office looking for him and not anyone else," she wrote. "These students just want a moment of peace and some cuddles to feel better during a particularly stressful day; it also gives them an excuse to come to the office and open up if something is wrong."

Cruvinel Santiago also admitted that Fubá has given her a lens into student life that she may not

have had otherwise. She's noticed students often stopping her on her walks with Fubá to confide in the pair details about their lives.

Handsome Dan was first dubbed Yale's mascot in the early 1890s, making Yale the first American college with a living animal as a mascot, according to a University article.

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# Tim Snyder advocates for Ukraine at Jackson School lecture

BY JOLYNDA WANG  
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Timothy Snyder, a prominent European history scholar who taught at Yale for more than 20 years, gave a lecture Monday on European rearmament with Andrew Peek, who previously directed European and Russian affairs at the National Security Council.

In the spring, Snyder and two other prominent professors — who have all been vocal critics of President Donald Trump — left Yale to teach at the University of Toronto. Jason Stanley, a philosophy professor, said in March that he left because of the "political climate," while Snyder and Marci Shore, Snyder's wife, attributed their depart-

ures largely to family matters. Snyder wrote in a News opinion article that he was "not fleeing anything" because of Trump and instead left Yale for "matters that are of no public interest."

Snyder still retains connections to Yale. He is currently a visiting professor at the Jackson School of Global Affairs and the faculty advisor to the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, he wrote in April.

At the lecture, Snyder and Peek shared opposing viewpoints on several topics, including the adoption of modern warfare, NATO's role in European security, the Ukraine war and United States-Europe relations.

"The Americans have a traditional complaint, which is that we spend all the money and we do all the

work," Snyder said. "But right now, the Ukrainians are doing all the work. They're fighting the actual war."

Peek praised Trump for being an "excellent diplomat" and creating "concrete policy objectives," considering the uncertainty in Europe. Peek said that the president's policy of lowering oil prices has put pressure on Russia and allowed the United States to "position itself" as a "mediator role" in the Ukraine war.

Snyder asserted that "the world champion is not the United States" but instead is Ukraine, which Snyder said has "been spending far more on defense than anybody." He said the purpose of defense spending is to deter and combat war.

This lecture was part of the Blue

Center for Global Strategic Assessment's series, which features government or industry practitioners and Yale professors co-lecturing on statecraft. The practitioners share their policy experience, while the professors contribute their research-based insight to the discussions.

Snyder, in an interview after the lecture, expressed his appreciation for the format of the lecture, which allowed each side to present their perspectives, followed by questions from the other lecturer.

Lily Enghith '17 SOM '24, a former student of Snyder's, described Snyder as "one of the most important intellectuals in his appeals" in an interview before the lecture.

Ethan Chiu '26 JGA '27 said he wanted to take Snyder's "Hitler, Stalin, and Us" class but was unable to before Snyder left Yale.

"I'm grateful that he is still here and able to share his opinions," Chiu said about Snyder's lecture.

During his time at Yale, Snyder helped found the Jackson School.

Nico Kasparetz, a visiting doctoral student, said that a factor for many who applied to the Jackson School was the opportunity to interact with Snyder.

"I know two students who applied, hoping to be supervised by or talk to Snyder, so it's really good that he keeps coming back here," he said.

The Jackson School launched the Blue Center for Global Strategic Assessment in August 2024.

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