NEWS

"Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity. And I'm not sure about the universe."
ALBERT EINSTEIN

Course registration will now open to first years before they move in

BY OLIVIA WOO
STAFF REPORTER

Next academic year, course registration for incoming first years will begin on Aug. 17, six days before the first-year move-in date listed on the Yale College website.

The new timeline gives first-year students two weeks to register for fall courses before they begin, marking a departure from the traditional hourslong registration window that opens to first years during their first week on campus. The change has been met with concerns from current head first-year counselors, three of whom wrote a petition last month arguing that the new timeline will decrease equal access to registration resources and limit the ability of future FroCos to advise first years.

"Students need a little ramp-up time to plan what their courses are going to be," Yale College Dean Pericles Lewis said in an interview earlier this month. He added that the traditional hourslong registration block created "too much stress" among first-year students.

"We need to make sure there are sections and classrooms available for them to take those courses, and we want them to not be making this decision in two or three hours on the day after they arrive on campus when they're all wiped out from move-in," Lewis said.

Fall term registration for current first years occurred from noon to 3 p.m. on Aug. 20, 2025, three days after they moved in on Aug. 17. The change to the registration timeline was announced to current head FroCos and dean's office liaisons at a Jan. 30 meeting, according to the petition protesting the decision. The change has not been officially announced to incoming FroCos or any other members of the student body.

The petition protesting the change, which was written shortly after the January meeting, was circulated to Yale College administrators in the form of a letter and was also sent to current FroCos, 107 of whom signed on, in addition to the authors. The authors described in detail issues they foresaw around "accessibility," "logistics," "social/cultural concerns" and "pre-arrival advising infrastructure."

"Classes will still fill up at the same rate as before the change," the petition reads. "Rather than eliminating the stress, the change simply shifts the stress from the first week of their Yale experience (when FroCos are present) to before they ever step foot on campus (when FroCos are not present). The lack of FroCo presence is a particularly important point since in-person advising is one of the main mitigators of stress during the registration period and add/drop period."

An email to the petition's authors from Dean of Academic Affairs George Levesque, which was obtained by the News, acknowledged that the FroCos' concerns "need to be taken seriously" but stated that "there are significant downsides" to the current first-year registration timeline.

"It was decided that the advantages of a revised timeline outweigh the disadvantages. Our focus now is on making the transition to the revised timeline as smooth as possible," Levesque wrote in his email to the authors.

Juan Borrego '26, a Silliman co-head FroCo and one of the petition's authors, expressed disappointment with the lack of FroCo involvement in administrative decision-making in a statement to the News on Thursday, March 5.

"Beyond the decision itself, which to our knowledge is now finalized, the process by which the decision was made left enough ambiguity around the extent to and means by which student and FroCo input was considered that, unfortunately, many have come away feeling that it wasn't valued at all," Grace Gibson-Snyder '26, another of the petition's authors, wrote in a statement.

In devising a new schedule for first years, Lewis said that administrators have "followed a lot of the advice" in the petition sent by the head FroCos — which Lewis received as a letter — though he said he could not provide further detail as to which recommendations have been employed.

"There are talks happening to have FroCos be formally involved in helping adjust Spring training in light of these new changes," Borrego wrote.

According to the petition, the head FroCos first learned of the potential change to first-year registration timelines in a Dec. 5 meeting. That day, Levesque joined a monthly meeting between head FroCos and dean's office liaisons to float the suggestion of "moving the first day of Fall term course registration to some time before first-year move-in."

Borrego said that after the meeting, during which all 14 representatives from the residential colleges expressed unanimous opposition to the change, "there was absolutely no communication from the administration about the potential changes before the final decision."

After the Jan. 30 meeting in which Associate Dean of Residential Life Ferentz Lafargue announced that the timeline had been adjusted, "there were lots of conversations among the FroCos in regards to our disagreement with the changes," according to Borrego. Borrego added that he engaged in "one-on-one communication" with Lafargue to inform his writing the petition.

Borrego collaborated with Celene Bennett '26, Timothy Dwight head FroCo, and Gibson-Snyder, who serves alongside Borrego as co-head FroCo in Silliman, to draft the document. It was sent to the other head FroCos and dean's office liaisons on Feb. 12 to be further distributed, Borrego said.

"Feedback from other FroCos about the petition was very positive, with 110 out of the 132 FroCos signing on in support of the position expressed in it," Borrego wrote.

In the five-page petition, Borrego, Gibson-Snyder and Bennett laid out seven distinct arguments in favor of the change and outlined their concerns with each one. They ended the document with a proposed solution: to restore first-year registration dates to the status quo and extend the first-year registration period through the end of the current add/drop period.

In the petition, the trio wrote that the timeline adjustment would not eliminate the "high-pressure 3-hour registration scramble" of the current model because lengthening "the registration window does not reduce the pressure of registering for classes."

Instead of reducing inequities among first-year students by ceasing to favor those who register for classes the fastest, the petition continues, the new model might also disrupt the existing "level playing field" created by on-campus registration. "Differences in time zones, internet access, or home environments," it states, mean that the new timeline might increase inequities in access to registration.


TIM TAI / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Yale College will move the start of first-year course registration to nearly a week before first-year students arrive on campus, a move that current and incoming first-year counselors have criticized as inequitable.

Existing inequities may also have outsized effects on incoming first-year students, the petition suggests, because "students with stronger pre-college networks, family experience with higher education, or informal advising channels" will "be better positioned to manage the process" in the absence of in-person FroCo support. The idiosyncrasies inherent to the Yale College academic system, including distributional requirements and first-year seminars, mean that those with access to more resources "would hold a quiet but consequential advantage," the petition reads.

Seth Baker '27, who will soon serve as a Saybrook FroCo, comes from a "very rural background" in Tennessee. Baker said in an interview with the News that he arrived at Yale with such little exposure to the college academic system that he had not yet learned what credits were. He said his FroCo was a vital resource in helping him choose his classes.

"It can be very disadvantageous to rural and FGLI students, especially, to move the advising to be over the summer," Baker said. Without an in-person connection, he continued, it "feels much more intimidating to reach out" to FroCos.

"I do think it kind of puts students who don't have connections coming into Yale at a disadvantage," Baker said of the new registration timeline.

Lewis said that the College is allocating more resources to the advising system, including mandatory sessions with former FroCos over the summer for incoming first years. Another change will designate students' residential college deans as their primary academic advisors upon enrollment. College advisors will remain resources for incoming students but will specialize in more "personal advising."

"College advisors are not in a position to give advice on particular courses. So that will now come from your college dean most of all and, to some extent, from the FroCos who are trained by the deans because we want to make sure that the advice students get on which courses to take is consistent," Lewis said. "The dean will give you the academic advice and the approval of your course schedule."

Lewis said that this advising system is being developed over the next two summers and is expected to be fully implemented by August 2027. "We're sort of piloting in August of 2026," he added.

In addition to live resources, Lewis said, incoming first years can learn about course registration from weekly summer emails that have been updated to include more academic information, as well from Yale 101, which according to the Yale College website is "a series of short, interlinked videos designed to introduce you to a Yale education." Incoming students will complete this training alongside the "Perspectives" training offered for the first time last summer.

This year, 358 members of the class of 2027 applied to be FroCos.

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Yale to offer Catalan language courses next academic year

BY JAEHA JANG
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This coming fall, Yalies will have the chance to take Catalan language courses.

The Department of Spanish and Portuguese will offer "Elementary Catalan I" in fall 2026 and "Elementary Catalan II" in spring 2027, according to senior lector Lourdes Sabé, the program's coordinator, who will also be teaching the courses. Professors told the News that offering Catalan, which is spoken in eastern Spain, Andorra and parts of France and Italy, will allow students to better understand the region's culture and history.

"I truly believe that offering Catalan shows that we recognize the linguistic diversity of the Iberian Peninsula," Aurélie Vialette, the director of undergraduate studies for Spanish, wrote in an email to the News. "Catalonia has a rich culture, and we hope to create interest in our students not only for the language but also for the history, literature, cinema, music, architecture, and in general Catalonia's incredible cultural contribution to the world."



ABBY ASSOUAD / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Professors said the new program will help students better understand the cultural history of the Catalan-speaking region, which includes Barcelona and parts of France and Italy.

Alongside Spanish, Catalan is the official language of three autonomous regions in Spain: Catalonia, the Balearic Islands and Valencia.

Sabé wrote in an email to the News that whether a student is interested in the arts, literature, history, politics, cultural studies, Romance language or other fields, the new Catalan program will provide them "an opportunity to grasp a culture in its entirety."

Sabé added that although Catalan courses have been offered on occasion at Yale, there has been no official program despite student interest. After identifying student interest and receiving departmental support, Sabé wrote, she wrote a proposal that was then approved by the Language Study Committee and the Teaching Resource Advisory Committee.

Adam Stein, a program manager for Yale's Directed Independent Language Study program, wrote in an email to the News that there has been "consistent interest" in Catalan through the program in recent years.

In addition to the Catalan-speaking region's cultural importance, Sabé wrote, "its recent history as the most entrepreneurial region in Spain and a focal point of European economic activity" also means that offering Catalan has "practical value" for Yale and its students.

"Having Catalan offered in our department will open students' horizon for sure," Vialette wrote. "Each time a new language is taught at Yale it is an open door to new knowledge for the students."

History professor Paul Freedman, whose research interests include the history of Catalonia, wrote in an email to the News that the popularity of Barcelona, which is located in Catalonia, and the architecture of Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí, as well as the region's prominent cuisine and long history of literature, "make the language important within a European context, if under-appreciated."

"As someone who has devoted much of his research to Catalan history this means a lot because of the prominence of Catalan culture and the need to know some Catalan in order to understand it," Freedman wrote.

Sabé added that Yale's Catalan courses will also be offered to students at Cornell through the Shared Course Initiative, which, according to Yale's website, allows students at Columbia, Cornell and Yale to share classes in "less commonly taught languages" through videoconferencing.

Yale's offering of Catalan through the initiative is "important to maintain Yale's commitment to diversity and inclusion" and "will strengthen the ties between Yale and the other SCI universities, which share the goal that teaching vulnerable linguistic communities helps promote linguistic diversity and understanding of global perspectives," Sabé wrote.

Pol Berger Romeu '26 wrote in an email to the News that he was "really excited" to hear about the new program. His mother's family is from Catalonia, and he grew up speaking Catalan, he wrote.

"I strongly believe that Catalan culture is incredibly rich and actually quite different from the general Spanish culture that most students know," Romeu wrote. "I love the idea of there being an opportunity for the student body to learn more about a part of the world that is so important to me."

Myroslav Bur '28 wrote in an email to the News that he is "truly excited that Catalan will be offered at Yale." He wrote that it is important to consider the history of "small European nations," including Catalonia.

"As a Ukrainian, whose culture and language have long been under pressure from Russia, I deeply believe in the importance of linguistic sovereignty for each nation," he added.

Bur also wrote that it's important for students to support the preservation of cultures and languages while traveling.

"For example, as an American tourist, you could choose to speak basic Catalan instead of Spanish when interacting with people on the streets of Barcelona," he wrote. "CTLN 1100 would be very helpful for that!"

Last fall, the University started offering its first Filipino language courses after years of student advocacy.

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