

Dear Graduate Students,

We hope you have all had a wonderful fall semester! From the ratification of a graduate worker union contract, to beginning the search for Yale's new university president, this has been an important semester of advocacy for graduate students at Yale. This was also a challenging semester for the broader Yale community. In the wake of the war in the Middle East and the heightening of tensions across universities around the country, we in the graduate student assembly believe more than ever in the importance of strengthening our community. As the winter break begins, we would like to highlight some pieces of our advocacy work from the past semester. If you would like to save this email and come back to it, a copy of this email is available at [LINK: <https://gsa.yale.edu/letters-gsas>] We would also like to thank our department representatives and wish all graduating students the best in your future endeavors!

Advocacy in the GSA is led by committees made up of departmental representatives, elected from every department in the Yale Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Each of the GSA committees works to improve a different aspect of graduate student life, and highlights from each committee's year of advocacy can be read below. Additional information about each GSA committee can be found on our website [LINK: <https://gsa.yale.edu>].

Academics and Professional Development

Chaired by Andrew Takeda (andrew.takeda@yale.edu)

The Academics and Professional Development Committee is focusing on student engagement with professional development resources. Professional development is vital to the modern PhD experience, and this semester, the Academics and Professional Development Committee has begun surveying the current landscape of professional development programming held at the department/program level. They will compile these results into a collection of internal professional development resources, and use them to help other offices at Yale identify effective professional development techniques and resources.

Conference Travel Fund

Chaired by Shannon Rainsford (shannon.rainsford@yale.edu)

The Conference Travel Fellowship Committee continues to raise awareness of the Conference Travel Fund, review applications, distribute awards, analyze the current and future need for funding, and advocate for improvements to funds. To accomplish these, the committee has hosted a Fall Information Session to help students apply, distributed 119 awards totaling almost \$100,000, and analyzed current data to project this year's spending. The conference travel fund committee has also attended meetings with the Deans of the Graduate School in order to advocate for more funding for conference travel.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee has focused this past semester on understanding DEI statistics at Yale on a departmental level. Committee members have also begun communications with related groups on campus, especially for accessibility issues.

Members of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee also led a student response to the Doxxing truck campaign in November. In response, the GSA has compiled answers to questions and concerns affected graduate students might have, and checked them with the relevant Yale offices [in this document](#).

Facilities and Health Care

Chaired by Victoria Rai (victoria.raiyale.edu)

The Facilities and Healthcare Committee is working to increase access to resources for our community with particular focuses on graduate student parents and child care, health costs when away from New Haven or Yale, and housing that is safe and affordable. Here are some highlights from this committee's advocacy this semester:

- Graduate student parent town hall: We are planning to host a graduate student parent town hall in partnership with the McDougal Center. Please complete [this 7 question form](#) if you are interested.
- Navigating Well-Being Resources (Yale Health): This [well-being resource document](#) contains descriptions and contact information for 13 organizations at Yale that are accessible to graduate and professional students.
- Out-of-Area Health Coverage (Yale Health): The [Approved Academic Travel Rider](#) helps meet the medical needs of qualified students who travel within the United States but outside the Yale Health service area.
- Rate your Landlord (Off Campus Living): Sharing information about your experience with your landlord is valuable to students looking for housing, so please rate your landlord through the [Off Campus Living Landlord Rating System](#).

We are excited to continue our advocacy efforts with our many partnerships that have only been strengthened in the last year.

International Students

Chaired by Nicola Angeli (nicola.angeli@yale.edu)

The International Students Ad-Hoc Committee serves a vital role in advocating for the rights and needs of international graduate students at Yale. This semester they have created an extensive **survey for International, DACA, Undocumented, Asylum-Seeking, and Refugee students** after consulting with the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS). **This anonymous survey can be filled out here (12-14 min) [LINK: https://yalesurvey.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cHCYNMkEqpwgglw]. Your participation is extremely important—your responses will help us understand how best to support international students during their time at Yale.**

In addition to the survey, the International Students Committee has continued to identify and advocate for additional support from the Graduate School for students at risk. The committee is also working on making communication between the OISS, students, faculty, and departments more efficient. As a step in this direction, they have compiled a series of suggestions for improving the readability and accessibility of OISS' website (**would you like to add your own suggestion? Please take the survey above and let us know!**). Also, the committee has established a partnership with the Facilities and Healthcare Committee to tackle the issue of healthcare literacy.

Public Relations

Chaired by Dani Katenkamp (seth.katenkamp@yale.edu)

The Public Relations Committee has worked diligently this semester to keep the GSA website updated with the current roster of GSA representatives [LINK: <https://gsa.yale.edu/about/department-representatives-2023-24>] as well as with the texts of the resolutions passed this semester [LINK: <https://gsa.yale.edu/news/resolutions>]. There has also been an effective effort to increase GSA outreach and disseminate important news and information through departmental representatives to their constituents during GSA general assembly meetings.

Service

Chaired by Jane Lee (jane.h.lee@yale.edu)

The Service Committee is the GSA's community outreach arm and seeks to provide useful resources and events to the broader graduate student committee. This semester, the Service Committee has extended the initial pilot food pantry from last semester through the summer and plan to continue through the 2023-2024 school year. The pantry stocks pantry staples and is located in the McDougal Center (135 Prospect Street). The pantry now also stocks feminine hygiene products. Next semester, look out for service committee events including Ask-A-Lawyer, Personal Finance for Graduate Students (February 2024), and Tax Facts (March 2024).

Transit and Security

Chaired by Riley Wadehra (riley.wadehra@yale.edu)

This semester, the Transit and Security Committee has continued initiatives to improve Yale shuttle service and transit safety on campus and throughout New Haven. Members of the Transit and Security Committee advocate for graduate student transport needs and attend meetings of the Yale Traffic Safety Committee, which aims to keep motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists safe while navigating the streets of New Haven. The Transit and Security Committee has also begun compiling transit tips flyers, which will be distributed starting next semester.

Unionization

Chaired by Benjamin Sanders (benjamin.sanders@yale.edu)

The Unionization Committee was formed to provide access to information relevant to the vote to unionize last year, contract negotiations, and ratification of our first contract. As many of you know, Local 33 held elections on 12/15 & 12/16 and **graduate students approved the ratification of the first contract with a vote of 1705 to 10 (99.4%)**. Congratulations to everyone involved in the negotiations and those who voted to make this happen. I highly encourage that you still take time to read [the in-depth summary](#) or [the full text](#) of the new contract as provided by Local 33.

Do you expect to hold a bargaining unit position next semester (teachers & project/research assistants in GSAS; teachers in the professional schools)? You can sign your **union**

membership and dues deduction card. No dues will be deducted until raises go into effect, and you are in a bargaining unit position.

Not going to be in the bargaining unit yet? You can still **sign a membership card** to become a member and actively participate in internal union elections, meetings, etc...

Not getting emails from Local 33? Sign up for their newsletter at [their website](#) or email 33@yaleunions.org

Wishing you a fantastic winter break,

The GSA