



Chart *your course*

Yale ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

STRATEGIC PLAN 2026–2031



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Thank you to the alumni and staff who collaborated on the following working groups that brought the YAA's strategic plan to fruition.

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Service

Lifelong Learning

Chart
your course

Social
Connection

Professional
Development
and Mentoring

YAA COMPASS EVENTS

Flagship Four Points

The YAA will host a series of alumni gatherings each year, including internationally, to bring alumni together for a multi-day experience built around the four points in this plan. Local alumni will help showcase their city and provide an inclusive travel opportunity for others to attend.

The schedule will feature insider, behind-the-scenes access to organizations led by alumni — think historic sites, museums, sports venues, arts spaces, and can't-miss local attractions — plus service projects, social engagements, mentoring opportunities, and family-friendly gatherings.

Plan Ahead

The first events will take place in 2027 and will feature the following locations:

Puerto Rico
February 25–28, 2027

Washington, DC
October 14–17, 2027



LETTER FROM THE YALE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (YAA) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Fellow Alumni,

When I arrived at the YAA in May of 2024, a few things were immediately clear. First, I saw how hard the staff and volunteers worked to create opportunities for alumni to connect with each other and with Yale. Second, the pandemic had significantly changed the YAA's work, particularly in terms of volume and virtual engagement. And lastly, we hadn't yet captured enough information to determine whether these significant efforts were having an impact across the entire alumni body.

Our new strategic plan needed to be grounded in data and to prioritize focus areas where we could invest our time and resources to be excellent. We needed to provide talent and tools to partner with volunteers to engage in spaces where alumni want the YAA in their lives. We couldn't get there without listening deeply.

The past two years have been about collective listening, program assessment, and collaborative problem solving. We brought current and former volunteers together to inform our work. This plan was created by alumni for alumni. What we hope you take away is, "There is no wrong way to YAA — chart your own course." We are building our future around four (compass) points that you told us matter most to you: service, learning, professional development, and social connection. Some programs will look familiar but with renewed focus and clarity; others will go in new directions. Most importantly, each point of the compass will offer opportunities across the entire alumni lifecycle with varying levels of time required to engage.

As your life changes, our strategic plan will allow your engagement with Yale to change with it. The YAA will be here with you for all of it. We hope you join us on this journey!

Sincerely,

Alison E. Cole '99
Executive Director, Yale Alumni Association



BACKGROUND ON ALUMNI LISTENING

Over the past two years, the Yale Alumni Association has worked with volunteer partners to listen closely to alumni across our community. Alumni shared their perspectives and priorities through a questionnaire, virtual focus groups, an online feedback form, and in-person events. What we heard from you was applied by the strategic plan working groups to shape the path forward.

November/December 2024
YAA staff and members from the Board of Governors formed a committee

January 2025
YAA sent an all alumni questionnaire to 140,000 alumni; 10,000 responded

Four types of programming of greatest interest emerged from responses:

- Service
- Lifelong learning
- Social connection
- Professional development/mentoring

April/May 2025
Staff and alumni leaders trained to become focus group facilitators. YAA then invited questionnaire respondents to participate in focus groups.

May-Nov 2025
YAA conducted 38 focus groups with 308 alumni respondents.

November 2025
YAA launched an open feedback form on its website.

December – February 2026
Compiled questionnaire responses, focus group reports, and participation data from recent alumni events and programs.

February 2026
YAA convened six working groups whose members used evidence-based, design-thinking practices to review all data.

March-June 2026
Working groups completed strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats (SWOT) analysis and peer benchmarking; assessed current programs and gaps across the alumni lifecycle; and developed recommendations.



What is the Yale Alumni Association?



YALE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The YAA Board of Governors is comprised of a dedicated group of elected and appointed alumni who serve as trusted strategic partners to the association. They help guide alumni initiatives, celebrate exceptional volunteers, and support the university’s leadership pipeline.

Much of this work happens through committees and working groups. Going forward, these groups will be more closely aligned with the work of YAA staff, helping us collaborate to strengthen the impact of our programs.

The 2026-2027 board committees and working groups include:

- * Alumni Fellow Nominating
- * Governance & Leadership
- * Lifelong Learning
- * Professional Development & Mentoring
- * Service
- * Social Connection
- * Volunteer Development & Recognition
- * Yale Medal Nominating

The Yale Alumni Association (YAA) was established by the adoption of a Constitution by the Founding Board of the Association in 1972. Since then, the YAA has evolved and grown. Currently, more than 50 staff partner with volunteers to plan programs in: Alumni Experiences, Board and Volunteer Engagement, Lifelong Learning & Travel, Regional Clubs, Shared Interest Groups, Yale Alumni Magazine, and Yale College Classes.

Our mission is to strengthen the lifelong Yale connection for all alumni. Alumni volunteer leaders and staff unite to inspire and facilitate learning, friendships, professional development, and acts of service around the world. We create opportunities for all alumni to engage in ways that are personally meaningful, beneficial to their communities, and aligned with the University’s purpose.

We achieve this mission through our core values:

Collaboration
Establishing effective partnerships that create impact, drawing on the distinct contributions of volunteers, alumni, and staff

Transparency
Building stronger relationships through clear communication, direct feedback, and clarity in decision making

Excellence
Aspiring to be world-class in the work we undertake that advances the goals of the university and the YAA

Evolution
Cultivating staff, volunteers, and programming through ongoing training and mentoring, with a commitment to continuous assessment and growth

Trust
Leading with positive intention while recognizing each person’s expertise and holding each other accountable to the goals we pursue together

Inclusivity
Encouraging wide engagement among all alumni – across generations, geographies, backgrounds, and Yale affiliations

DID YOU KNOW?

Any alum who has completed at least one semester in a degree-granting program of Yale University, whether from Yale College, the Graduate School, or a professional school, is a member of the YAA. We also welcome postdoctoral fellows, international affiliates, and medical residents, among others, as members of the association. There is nothing to do to become a member other than engage with the robust alumni community in any way you choose.

The Four Strategic Points

Throughout the alumni listening process, feedback indicated that alumni want Yale to be part of their lives in four areas of interest: service, lifelong learning, social connection, and professional development and mentoring. These four points represent the strategic direction of this plan.

POINT 1 Service

Service has long been an integral part of the Yale experience. The YAA helps alumni take what they learned on campus and give back for the greater good. The YAA helps alumni do this by celebrating Day of Service through local or virtual service projects, supporting others in the Yale community through mentorship, or traveling in groups to make a difference in communities around the world.

WHAT WE HEARD

- * Include more **domestic** options for **Yale Alumni Service Corps** (YASC) trips
- * Incorporate **career and mentoring opportunities**, which many alumni value as service
- * Provide **training** for service opportunities
- * Improve and increase **communication** about service opportunities through other Yale organizations, such as the graduate and professional schools
- * Increase and diversify **virtual opportunities** for service
- * Offer **family-friendly** and **flexible** participation formats



WHAT'S NEXT

- * Invest in **technological infrastructure** to more easily find and better match alumni with service opportunities
- * Increase the **number of domestic Service Corps trips** to make them more inclusive and less expensive
- * Offer more **virtual and recurring opportunities** for service
- * Provide **updated volunteer tools, training, and community resources**
- * Strengthen **partnerships** with Yale-affiliated groups to connect potential volunteers with existing service opportunities
- * Recognize **mentoring, volunteering for Yale**, and other university service as service opportunities
- * Continue to **enhance and grow Yale Day of Service**
- * Curate **editorial content** in the Yale Alumni Magazine about alumni in service throughout the world.

DID YOU KNOW?



Yalies Donate
1,204 Books for Children



Yale Alumni Service Corps
Returns to Panama



Find Service Events



POINT 2 Lifelong Learning

Learning is critical to the Yale experience, and the YAA seeks to position its learning programs as alumni benefits that add value throughout their lives. Our long-term offerings currently include opportunities for alumni to learn online, on campus, in their local area, and through travel. Yale Alumni College (YACOL) is a program led by alumni for alumni that offers courses, outings, and events that reconnect graduates with the Yale experience. Yale Alumni Academy (YAAC), managed by YAA staff, brings Yale faculty and scholarship to alumni worldwide through online mini-seminar webinars, on-campus summer immersion courses, and faculty-led travel. Learning opportunities are also integrated into Regional Clubs (including the Redpath faculty speaker series), the YAA Assembly and Yale Alumni Fund Convocation, Yale College Reunions, and Shared Interest Group (SIG) activities.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR



Fall 2026
DeVane Lecture, The Purpose
of a College Education,
with Pericles Lewis, Dean of Yale College

Summer 2027
Multi-week, on-campus courses in the arts and
humanities in June-July.

WHAT WE HEARD

- * Include **shorter** learning opportunities alongside the existing Yale Alumni College (YACOL) and Yale Alumni Academy (YAAC) courses
- * Add **shorter, lower-cost trips** in addition to current, successful Alumni Academy travel programs
- * Provide more **opportunities to come to campus** for learning experiences
- * Improve **access to asynchronous learning** opportunities
- * Increase **learning opportunities tied to professional development**



WHAT'S NEXT

- * Pilot **short, lower-cost** domestic and international **travel opportunities** including **family-friendly** options
- * **Grow the existing Alumni Academy** on-campus summer immersion programming
- * Strengthen promotion of the **Redpath faculty speaker series** in regional clubs throughout the world
- * Improve awareness of **Yale College class auditing program**
- * Add a **webinar series** with 20–30 minute episodes
- * Assemble existing learning opportunities into tiers where **alumni can choose based on their own level of investment** (both time and cost)
- * Partner with the **DeVane Lecture series** to provide discussion sections for alumni
- * Identify existing **livestreamed and recorded events** that can be accessed by alumni; consider **investing** in recording and livestreaming additional events around campus.
- * Create a dedicated, easy-to-search **webpage within the YAA website** for all lifelong learning opportunities
- * Develop Yale Alumni Magazine **Ideas Week** to invite readers to campus for a symposium around a single subject



DID YOU KNOW?



In Hong Kong, Lunch for Two is Growing



Connection done right: Yale International Alliance Common Rooms



POINT 3

Social Connection

Friendship and social connection are a part of everything we do at YAA, whether we are providing opportunities to reconnect with old friends or to build new bonds around shared affiliations, interests, and experiences. One of the most valuable services the YAA can provide is creating space for Yalies to foster genuine, fortifying relationships throughout their lives.



WHAT WE HEARD

- * Facilitating **reconnections** with old friends through reunions and other programs is a YAA strength
- * Making lasting connections through school alumni groups that **transcend life stages** is particularly important to graduate and professional school alumni
- * Appreciation for opportunities to **create or expand local networks**, which are provided through regional clubs
- * Interest in ongoing, **small-group YAA programs**, such as book clubs and study groups
- * Need for social **support around major life transitions** — moving, changing careers, having children, caring for aging family members, retiring, etc., which can affect the amount of time people have to devote to their social lives
- * Help needed to overcome intimidation factor of **attending a Yale alumni event** when you don't know anyone else in the room

WHAT'S NEXT

- * Create more opportunities for **continued discussion during and after events**, both in person and virtually
- * Suggest and build in **mechanisms to make large events feel smaller** for alumni who may be attending alone or new to the group
- * Redesign the **class notes section of the Yale Alumni Magazine** to enhance opportunities for connection across Yale College classes and graduate and professional schools
- * Use technology tools to help alumni **find and connect to each other virtually**
- * Partner with volunteers to provide proof-of-concept programs that are **inclusive and welcoming**; of interest to alumni in **different life stages**; and intentional about cultivating connection among a **wide variety of personalities**
- * Pilot **travel programs** with the primary goal of social connection and provide alumni with an organized way to experience a destination together
- * Develop stronger **partnerships with graduate and professional alumni associations** to increase participation
- * Collaborate with **Yale Athletics** to host events when varsity teams travel outside of New Haven

POINT 4

Professional Development and Mentoring

The Yale alumni network is powerful and has an expansive global reach across just about any field. Enhancing your professional network after Yale is possible by providing or receiving mentorship, networking across industries or regions, and using Yale resources to build skills.



WHAT WE HEARD

- * Mentoring **relationships and experiences** inconsistent across Cross Campus users (YAA's career and mentoring platform)
- * Professional **development offerings** not cohesive and can be fragmented across groups
- * Desire for **mentoring and professional development** throughout life stages and on topics that are tangential to careers
- * Lack of **awareness** around professional development resources and opportunities to be mentored (especially for alumni later in their careers) or to be a mentor

WHAT'S NEXT

- * Prioritize **alumni-to-alumni** professional development throughout the entire career lifecycle

MENTORING:

- * Establish community and **partnership** expectations on Cross Campus, improve **onboarding**, and create more sophisticated **matching criteria**.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

- * Professional development curriculum around three categories:

Life transitions and milestones, such as going back to school at any age, career pivoting, becoming a working parent, caring for loved ones while working, and retirement

Universal skill-building, such as mindset management, public speaking, and financial literacy

Industry specific topics

- * Enhance partnership with Yale Office of Career Strategy to provide short-term, industry-based **career support**

Utilize Cross Campus **message boards** for post-event career discussions

- * Improve thematic offerings, branding, and promotional strategy to improve **awareness and quality** of these events

- * Prioritize **recruitment** of industry and skill building experts and develop ongoing **database** for future reference

- * Collect **alumni feedback** on topics that are important for discussion across industry, skills, and milestones to develop future programming

CHECK OUT



Cross Campus

YAA as a Content Convener and Amplifier

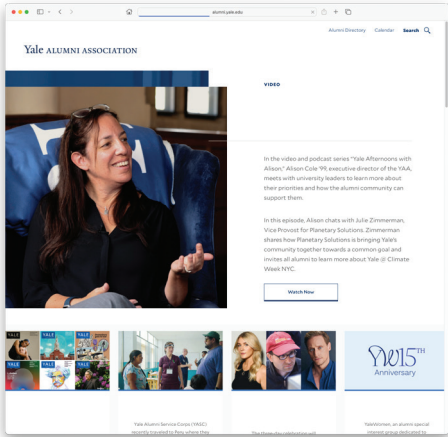
The YAA is often the first place alumni turn to for timely updates and resources. To help all alumni connect more easily with the broader Yale community, we are making thoughtful, strategic improvements to how we bring people together and share and elevate content.

WHAT WE HEARD

- * Need to **centralize information** that is currently coming from all directions
- * Simplify the YAA **website navigation**, which is cumbersome, and makes things difficult to find
- * Improve cadence of email **messages**, as alumni are experiencing email fatigue from Yale and the YAA
- * Provide a **digital presence** via mobile app or other means
- * Diversify our **communication channels**, since one size doesn't fit all

WHAT'S NEXT

- * Update and enhance **alumni.yale.edu** as an easy-to-navigate **hub for the alumni engagement** journey
- * Update and enhance **Yale Alumni Magazine website**
- * Build out a more robust **events calendar** that includes more campus programming that is open to alumni; ensure calendar makes it **simple to identify** all four strategic points
- * Roll out **email best practices** and processes internally and to volunteers to avoid email fatigue
- * Explore and standardize **non-email communications**, such as digital Badge ID card, text messaging, mobile app, and message boards on Cross Campus
- * Survey readers and commence re-design of **Yale Alumni Magazine**



Alumni Events

Events bring people together, help alumni grow their professional networks, and celebrate what makes the Yale community special. Because events can take many forms, and alumni have different expectations, the YAA will develop a system that distinguishes:

- * Events managed by the YAA
- * Events created in partnership with volunteers
- * Events organized independently by volunteers or other community members

Investing in Virtual Events

YAA's virtual programming took off in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to be a major part of the offerings to the alumni community. Data shows that alumni who engage online are more likely to connect in other ways, underscoring the importance of continuing to offer both virtual and in-person formats. This past year, we hosted more than 120 online-only events on a wide variety of topics, most of which were free and open to all alumni.

WHAT WE HEARD

- * Provide meaningful and important connections through **online opportunities** for the many alumni who cannot attend in person because they live far away, have busy schedules, have mobility limitations, or would need to find childcare
- * Create durable **communities that stay connected** long after the event has ended
- * Attending **webinars and online events** is not perceived as a technical challenge by alumni
- * Provide **online programs** that fall outside a one-hour webinar format
- * Online events are uniquely suited to **small group discussions**

WHAT'S NEXT

- * Explore **infrastructure** needed to host high-quality **hybrid events** that provide seamless participation
- * Record, caption, and transcribe as many events as possible to **ensure access** for those who are unable to attend live
- * Create new life for **recorded content** through short-form clips, and support programming around recorded events, such as discussion groups in **different time zones**
- * Pilot **additional formats for online programs**, with a focus on flexibility and interaction
- * Allow **alumni groups to upload their recorded digital content** to a library to maximize access to asynchronous content from around the world



CHECK OUT

YAA Website

Yale Alumni Magazine

YAA Social Media



CHECK OUT

Watch YAA Events On-Demand

Rose Alumni House

The YAA aspires for alumni to feel welcome in New Haven and that there is a place for them when they visit. The Great Hall of Rose Alumni House will undergo a refresh, providing alumni with a space to rest, work, and recharge when visiting campus.

WHAT'S NEXT

- * Open from 9 am–4 pm Tuesday–Thursday starting in Fall 2026, the Great Hall will offer water, coffee, and tea along with comfortable seating and workstations. **Alumni are encouraged to utilize the space** for quiet conversations, charging their devices, or getting some email done.
- * In addition, the communal spaces in Rose will be utilized more frequently for alumni on-campus classes and discussions. This strategic plan will also explore investment in livestreaming and recording to make them more accessible to alumni worldwide.

Information on how to book space and visit Rose Alumni House will be shared on the YAA website.



Stewarding and Recognizing Volunteers

Volunteer leaders are the engine of the YAA. The partnerships between staff and alumni allow our programs to reach 190,000+ alumni worldwide. It is critical that we develop a comprehensive program for recognizing this work, highlighting significant achievements, and thanking our outgoing volunteers.

WHAT'S NEXT

- * Introduce Executive Director quarterly **leadership discussion series**, tackling challenging topics for volunteers across all YAA-affiliated groups
- * **Enhance closing ceremony** at YAA Assembly & Yale Alumni Fund Convocation recognizing YAA Board of Governors Excellence Awards, Alumni Schools Committee Awards, YAA Public Service Awards, and YAA Executive Director's Compass Award.
- * Publish YAA **Annual Report** that recognizes volunteer long-service, outgoing volunteers, and significant achievements by volunteer groups
- * **Customize gifts** for outgoing leaders of YAA-recognized groups
- * Update **YAA webpage** for how to get involved
- * Improve digital **volunteer tools** provided by YAA to assist with group management

MEASURING AND ASSESSING SUCCESS

In the final year of the For Humanity campaign, the YAA announced – and achieved – engagement goals to measure impact, hold ourselves accountable, and highlight success in priority areas. Going forward, that success will be amplified by establishing goals to understand the impact of this strategic plan and to determine where to pivot or reallocate resources. The goals will be made public. Examples of those goals may include:

- * Increase participation in events overall or in specific areas
- * Achieve high satisfaction of event participants
- * Decrease in number of alumni who have not interacted with YAA in the last five years
- * Further support alumni volunteers
- * Calibrate staff workload to ensure the sustainability of the plan

CONTINUING LISTENING TO ALUMNI

Alumni listening is the foundation of this strategic plan. To keep that line of communication open, YAA will institute short surveys to ensure new and ongoing programs to meet the needs of the alumni community. Please continue to share your feedback!

ANNUAL REPORT

To promote greater transparency and accountability around the YAA's strategic priorities, an annual report will be published to highlight progress. The report will also recognize the volunteers whose contributions have helped the YAA reach its goals.

Chart your course

GENERAL STRATEGIC PLAN TIMELINE

- **September 2026**
Announce 5-year YAA strategic plan
- **September 2026 – September 2027**
Operationalize the plan through:
 - Designing** pilot programs; exploring and selecting technology platforms
 - Aligning** staff and financial resources
 - Phasing out** selected legacy programs
 - Publishing** first annual report in Summer 2027
- **September 2027 – September 2028**
Launch and evaluate new programs; continue to adjust
- **September 2028 – 2031**
Strategic plan fully operational

YAA



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Yale ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
alumni.yale.edu