

From: [President Peter Salovey](#)
To: [Faculty and Staff](#)
Subject: Fall Update on Academic Strategy
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Dear Colleagues,

I would like to start the new academic year by sharing with you the substantial progress we have made on our most exciting work going forward—the academic priorities that will guide Yale for the next decade. I am more grateful than ever for your dedication and commitment to Yale’s mission.

As you will recall, Yale is investing in the four main disciplinary areas—science, social science, the arts, and humanities. As part of these investments, we are also advancing faculty excellence and reiterating our commitment to the preeminence of our educational programs. We are building on Yale’s signature strengths and bolstering areas where we must be strong.

The boldest investment we are making is in science, engineering, and innovation. We cannot be a great university in the 21st century without great science, broadly speaking. We broke ground last year on the new Yale Science Building—a centerpiece of our strategy. Thanks to thoughtful planning by a faculty committee chaired by [Anna Pyle](#), the building will include substantial teaching and research space, as well as a pavilion and café to encourage interaction and collaboration across the biological and physical sciences. This impressive facility, scheduled for completion in 2020, will become a new focal point for the north side of campus. It will bring together faculty and students from across the FAS through the co-location of a number of departments, and from across the campus through the shared use of core facilities, such as the cryo-electron microscope and the Quantitative Biology Institute.

Last spring, we opened the renovated Wright Laboratory, where fundamental interactions in nuclear and particle physics and astrophysics are investigated. And, yesterday, [Kyle Vanderlick](#) and I formally dedicated the new Greenberg Teaching Concourse of the School of Engineering & Applied Science.

This fall also marks the official launch of the Tsai Center for Innovative Thinking at Yale (Tsai CITY), our new innovation hub. Tsai CITY, to be built behind the Center for Engineering Innovation and Design, is where students and faculty members will work together to develop innovative solutions to real-world problems.

This academic year also brings new scientific leadership to the university. In October, we will welcome [Peter Schiffer](#), our inaugural vice provost for research, who will also be joining the Yale faculty as professor of applied physics. The University Science Strategy Committee, chaired by [Scott Strobel](#), is identifying areas where Yale can lead in science and engineering. The committee brings together distinguished faculty from Yale’s School of Medicine, School of Public Health, School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, School of Engineering & Applied Science, and Faculty of Arts and Sciences, who are consulting with colleagues from across the university. The committee will deliver its report this year.

Our investments in social science will emphasize the importance of using empirical approaches to address society’s greatest challenges and to inform public policy. The transformation of the [Department of Statistics and Data Science](#) brings a focus to this area of

intellectual innovation. Guided by [Alan Gerber](#), other initiatives will allow faculty members and students from many Yale schools and departments to investigate data-driven solutions to policy questions from perspectives across the social sciences.

A faculty committee exploring the future focus and scope of the Jackson Institute, chaired by [Judy Chevalier](#), will deliver its report this year. This year also marks the start of our partnership with former secretary of state [John Kerry '66](#). Housed in the Jackson Institute for Global Affairs, the Kerry Initiative brings together graduate, professional, and undergraduate students, as well as faculty members, from the School of Management, School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, Law School, and Divinity School to address pressing global challenges.

Yale boasts some of the greatest professional arts schools—architecture, art, drama, and music—in the world. The arts inspire us and ignite our own creativity, allowing us to do better work in any field. In recent years, Yale has made significant strategic investments in the arts. The Yale University Art Gallery underwent major renovation and expansion, and a three-phase renovation plan has been completed for the Yale Center for British Art. The YUAG and YCBA have augmented Yale's standing as a preeminent institution of the arts. The new Adams Center for Musical Arts, a fantastic space that encompasses the beautifully renovated Hendrie Hall and additional facilities, is a marvelous resource for all members of the Yale community. Our strategy for the arts is to use these new facilities and others to increase connections between these schools and the rest of the university. We will hire faculty members who can contribute teaching to both a school in the arts and to another school, department, or program. This year we will also continue to work toward building a new facility for drama at Yale.

Likewise, in the humanities, Yale will bring together scholars working in different fields. The humanities have always been fundamental to a liberal education; they help us learn what is meaningful, what matters, and who we are as individuals and as communities and societies. By investing further in the humanities, we will ensure that Yale remains a leader in humanities scholarship and education well into the future. The renovation and reimagining of 320 York Street as a new home for nearly two-thirds of the FAS humanities departments and programs and for the Whitney Humanities Center will support this goal by bringing together faculty and students from a wide range of fields. We have completed the design development phase of the project and have initiated programming based on the work of a faculty committee chaired by [Amy Hungerford](#).

Yale's renowned faculty is the bedrock of the university. Yale faculty members continue to be leaders in their areas of expertise, publishing field-shaping books and articles, creating masterful artistic works, providing innovative clinical care, and creating an unsurpassed intellectual environment within the university. In the past year, Yale faculty members produced 240 inventions, filed over 400 patent applications, and received five elections to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and seven elections to the National Academy of Sciences, Medicine, or Engineering. As befits the research university most committed to teaching and learning, this excellence in scholarship is accompanied by an unwavering dedication to education. We will continue to support and enhance the quality and diversity of our faculty across campus, setting our sights high when recruiting new faculty members at all levels, and nurturing faculty members who are already here so they can do their best work.

I am working closely, as well, with the new dean of Yale College, [Marvin Chun](#), to elevate further and strengthen undergraduate education on our campus. Yale College received the

highest number of applications ever for the Class of 2021 and had one of the lowest admittance rates, even with the availability of additional space in the first-year cohort due to the opening of two new colleges. We also saw one of the highest yields (percentage of admitted students who matriculate) in years. We are working to ensure that Yale's tremendous and unique resources—our residential college system, world-class faculty, generous financial aid, and committed advising system—are calibrated to enhance Yale College's educational mission.

Our academic strategies across the university will be aided by the work of [Pericles Lewis](#), who has returned to New Haven this fall to serve as vice president for global strategy and deputy provost for international affairs. Pericles will engage with faculty, staff, and students and provide them support and strategic guidance to ensure that the broader global initiatives of the university are carried out in service to our mission and academic priorities.

Our academic strategy, built around careful, long-range investments, requires resources to support an outstanding faculty and extraordinary staff. I am pleased to report that university finances and operations continue to be strong. With the help of many individuals and teams, particularly in our development and alumni affairs offices, we completed a successful fundraising year in June. Yale's fundraising achievement was \$633.5 million in gifts and new pledges and \$600.3 million in cash, the highest in Yale's history. The Yale Alumni Fund raised \$38.2 million, surpassing the previous year. Although a final figure is not yet available, we are confident that the endowment return for the year that ended on June 30 exceeded the assumptions in our budget model. (Spending from the endowment is determined by a rule that smooths endowment returns over time.) The most recent results will be helpful to everyone—and we are thankful to David Swensen and his excellent team. We must continue to be prudent in our spending and in our forecasts about future endowment results. When the 2016-2017 financial report becomes available, I encourage you to read it for more details.

The work each of us does here at Yale—as a scholar, researcher, educator, or staff member—is meaningful and vital. We all advance Yale's mission, “improving the world today and for future generations through outstanding research and scholarship, education, preservation, and practice.” I hope you will join me in looking ahead to this new academic year with optimism and excitement.

Sincerely,

Peter Salovey
President and Chris Argyris Professor of Psychology

