

# Yale OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

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April 2023



Dear 1stGenYale Alumni Conference Attendees,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to campus for your second conference, “Being the First, But Not the Last.” This year’s theme holds special resonance for me. Members of my family and I have experienced firsthand the power of education as a great equalizer. Like many immigrants, my grandparents were poor in means but rich in spirit. They encouraged my parents to take their schooling seriously. And a cost-free education would go on to place the ladder of opportunity within reach for my family. My wife Marta—a proud Yale graduate and first-generation alumna—is a testament as well to the transformative promise of education. She joins me in saluting your extraordinary work.

The social mobility we celebrate at this year’s program is central to Yale’s mission. Yale is now more diverse than ever in its history. Pell-eligible students in the entering class, for instance, have nearly doubled over the last decade, and we have enrolled approximately 400 more first-generation students per year to Yale College during this same period. Nearly one-fifth of the Class of 2026 is first-generation. And 88 percent of undergraduates earn their degrees free of debt.

Of course, the university is likewise committed to increasing access to our professional schools. For example, last academic year, the David Geffen School of Drama joined the School of Music in being tuition free for all present and future students. Yale Divinity School, meanwhile, meets the full tuition need of all students receiving financial aid. In February, Yale School of Medicine announced a \$25 million gift from The Starr Foundation toward medical student financial aid that has enabled the school to reduce expected student borrowing from \$15,000 to \$10,000 by replacing the loan with an additional \$5,000 in scholarship. Beginning in 2027, medical school students with demonstrated financial need can graduate with only \$40,000 of debt, compared to \$200,000 nationally. In that same month, Yale Law School expanded its Hurst Horizon Scholarship Program, significantly increasing the number of students (from 51 to 80-90 students per year) who will receive financial aid for the cost of tuition, health insurance, and fees.

Yale’s efforts to expand financial aid and invest significantly in talented students give us reason to be proud—although not complacent. As we ensure that worthy candidates are not discouraged from applying to Yale because of financial need, we must also make certain they feel a deep sense of belonging upon their arrival. Since its 2016 inception, 1stGenYale has been essential to this university priority.

During your years at Yale, you enriched our campus community immensely, both with the academic achievements you attained and the unique life experiences you brought. Now, as alumni, you continue to exemplify our highest ideals by supporting students who represent a range of cultural, ethnic, racial, gender, and socioeconomic backgrounds. 1stGenYale has my heartfelt appreciation for all it does to strengthen our beloved university.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter Salovey". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Peter Salovey  
President  
Chris Argyris Professor of Psychology