

Class/Action:

A Report on Socioeconomic Class as Experienced by Students at Yale Law School

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Executive Summary

The Class/Action report provides an analysis of student experience with social class throughout the Yale Law School community. In the fall of 2012, recognizing the unspoken salience of social class within our community, a group of Yale Law School students commissioned a survey, distributed over the YLS all-student email listserv, asking students to answer questions about the impact of social class on their experience at YLS. This report analyzes the 243 student responses to the survey and provides recommendations to further improve the YLS environment for students of all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Student respondents self-identified their own class backgrounds. 4% identified as “lower/working class,” 8% identified as “lower middle class,” 27% identified as “middle class,” 50% identified as “upper middle class,” and 11% identified as “upper class.”

Responses about student experience with social class at YLS have been grouped into four broad, though frequently overlapping categories: Awareness & Attitudes of Students, Awareness & Attitudes of Faculty & Staff, Networks & Connections, and Living Expenses & Costs. The Class/Action report analyzes student attitudes in each category and provides recommendations for improving the environment at YLS with respect to that category of social class experiences.

Awareness & Attitudes of Students

Analysis: Student perceptions of the class background of the average YLS student appear to be largely accurate. However, students identify challenges with awareness of social class within the YLS student body. While these challenges primarily concern sensitivity to students

from lower-income backgrounds, they also include stereotypes about wealthier students. Overall, a majority of students believe that class has affected their YLS experience.

Recommendations: The Class/Action report recommends that the identities and experiences of students be considered in the development of orientation programming. The report also recommends that the study body be surveyed on class issues every three to four years to keep an accurate picture of student experiences with class at YLS. Finally, the report recommends that student groups include discussions of class at YLS, including intersectionalities with other aspects of the student experience and legal profession.

Awareness & Attitudes: Faculty & Staff

Analysis: About half of students are ambivalent about professors' attitudes toward class, but significant minorities of students report either positive or negative experiences with professors in this context. One issue many students noted was that they feel professors assume that all students come from upper-middle class backgrounds.

Students reported that the administrative staff, particularly Jill Stone, is highly responsive to the needs of students from diverse class backgrounds. Students from working class or lower-middle class backgrounds reported dissatisfaction with University-wide financial aid policies, but students noted overall that YLS administrators are understanding of the experiences of people from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Recommendations: The Class/Action report recommends that professors think critically about social class in the classroom and consider student responses to this survey. Additionally, while the administration is doing a commendable job already, the Class/Action report

recommends that it entertain additional steps taking social class into consideration, including efforts related to admissions and anticipating the needs of students of diverse backgrounds.

Networks & Connections

Analysis: Many students expressed the belief that success at YLS and in the legal world depends in part on access to closed, informal networks of information. Class influences students' ability to access these networks through professors, professionals, and other students. Students noted that some classmates may be able to take advantage of family connections to individuals at YLS and in the legal world, and that classmates with family members in legal or professional jobs may be advantageously prepared for YLS culture, the legal profession, and legal academia in general. Students also noted that classmates who attended elite undergraduate institutions may be advantageously prepared for YLS culture.

Students noted that class background and disposable income affect students' ability to network with their classmates. Finally, students noted that both family and educational background affect their ability to form relationships with professors, including working relationships, and several students expressed that this concern extends to admission in "permission of instructor" courses.

Recommendations: The Class/Action report recommends that YLS attempt to open up information networks to students of all backgrounds, particularly with respect to relationships with professors. The report also recommends that YLS reduce the number of "permission of instructor" courses and clarify admissions procedures to these courses. More generally, the report recommends that YLS develop, enforce, and publicize uniform school policies. Finally, the

report recommends that student organizations continue to provide alternative information networks to students of all backgrounds.

Living Expenses & Costs

Analysis: Students noted that textbook costs and lack of early notice about required course materials poses concerns, and that even with financial aid, the cost of tuition and living expenses is a substantial burden on many students. Many students noted that the timing of loan disbursements in the fall and spring create issues for students on financial aid, both with respect to federal grants and loans and YLS's technology loan program. Many students noted that financial constraints have affected their job choices and prospects.

Recommendations: The Class/Action report recommends that the school direct professors to encourage use of the least expensive textbook option and to notify students of required course materials as early as possible. The report also recommends that the administration continue to increase student input and revise the student budget to help students accurately anticipate and pay for expenses. Recognizing that federal law prevents the University from making early financial aid disbursements, the report also recommends that the school continue to publicize, and explore options to end, the difficult transition periods between semesters. Finally, the report recommends that the school publicize available transportation funding for job interviews and increase the funding available, especially for students who have significant private sector interview expenses and 2Ls attending clerkship interviews.

I. Introduction & Methodology

The Class/Action project began in the spring of 2012 as Yale Law School students recognized the unspoken salience of social class within our community. While our anecdotal experiences revealed that socioeconomic status significantly influence many students' experiences at YLS, the issue is often avoided, pushed aside or forgotten. We also recognized the important interaction between social class in general and students' past, current and future work in law and policy.

As a result, we committed to perform a survey on social class and student experiences at YLS. We pursued three primary objectives:

- 1) Identifying student perspectives, attitudes and concerns regarding class issues at YLS;
- 2) Raising awareness of class issues among the YLS community; and
- 3) Developing recommendations for positive change.

The survey asked students to answer questions about their own background, perceptions of others' at YLS, and how students, faculty, and the administration understand and interact with students of different class backgrounds.¹ Our methodology built on past surveys performed on undergraduate campuses by students affiliated with the national students' organization United for Undergraduate Socio-Economic Diversity (U/FUSED).² We also considered the important contributions of Yale Law Women's April 2012 *Speak UP* study.

We opened the survey to YLS students from October 31, 2012 to November 8, 2012. We advertised through the YLS all-student email listserv, offering a randomly drawn \$15 Amazon gift certificate to encourage students to participate. We received a robust response: 243 students, or over a third of YLS's student body, completed the survey. Respondents offered a wealth of

¹ The full survey is located in this report's Appendix.

² More information on U/FUSED can be found at <http://ufused.org>. For full disclosure, Class/Action Co-Chair Chase Sackett currently serves as Director of Affiliate Development for U/FUSED and served as its founding Executive Director.

thoughtful contributions and perspectives, with many students writing at length about their experiences with class issues at YLS.

Four general areas of concern and opportunities for improvement emerged from the survey results, which this survey addresses:

- 1) Awareness and attitudes of students;
- 2) Awareness and attitudes of faculty and staff;
- 3) Networks and connections; and
- 4) Living expenses and costs.

Underlying each of these issues, many respondents identified a transcendental concern that affirmed our initial suspicions: socioeconomic class is insufficiently discussed at YLS, to the detriment of students from all class backgrounds. For each issue area, we identify key findings and offer recommendations for improvement.

We hope this report can foster that ongoing conversation while empowering students, faculty and staff to forge a more inclusive, cognizant community for people from all class backgrounds. We also recognize that class issues are not unique to YLS or law schools in general, and hope that our work will spark similar initiatives at other schools around the nation.

A Note on "Class"

Our survey did not provide a definition of "social class" for respondents to consider. However, in this report we have taken care to recognize that many considerations contribute to class distinctions. These considerations include finances, cultural competency, social connections, and educational capital, for example.

II. Survey Demographics

243 students completed the Class/Action survey, all but 10 of whom were J.D. students.

J.D. responses were evenly distributed across class years, ranging from 74 3L students to 80 2L students. Slightly more women (53.1%) than men (46.5%) responded to the survey.³ The survey allowed students to choose multiple responses for their race/ethnicity, which limits comparability to the institutionally reported YLS demographics. For example, it appears that responses for "White" (69.6%) were overrepresented compared to the institutional reporting (59.7%), as with survey responses for "Asian" (17.9%) versus reporting (13.6%).⁴

A slight majority, 50.2%, of respondents identified their class background growing up as upper middle class. Only 12.1% identified as lower/working class or lower middle class, while 10.9% identified as upper class and 26.8 as middle class.

Strikingly, nearly all students (91.7%) reported that at least one of their parents had a bachelor's degree or higher degree. In fact, 54.1% of respondents reported that at least one of their parents had attained a professional or doctoral degree. All students reported that at least one of their parents had received a high school degree. In comparison, as of 2012 only 33% of Americans aged 25- to 29-years-old have attained at least a bachelor's degree; 63% have completed some college but not graduated; and 90% have at least a high school degree.⁵

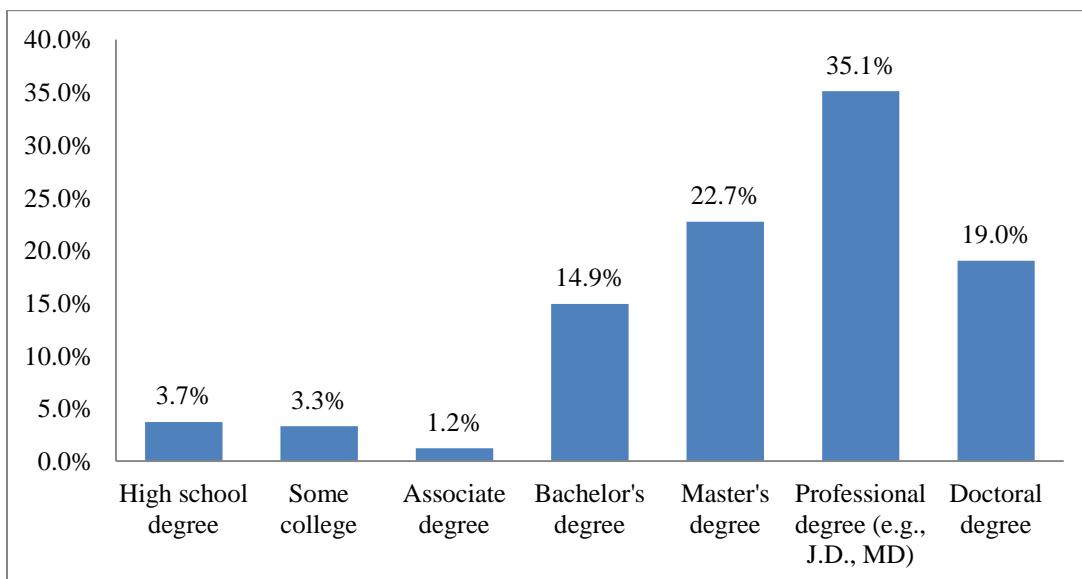
³ A single-digit number of students identified as "other." According to the American Bar Association's 2012 data sheet, these figures slightly over-represent the female (49.4%) student body population at YLS compared to the male population (50.6%). See

https://officialguide.lsac.org/RELEASE/SchoolsABAData/SchoolPage/SchoolPage_Info/ABA_LawSchoolData.aspx?sid=177.

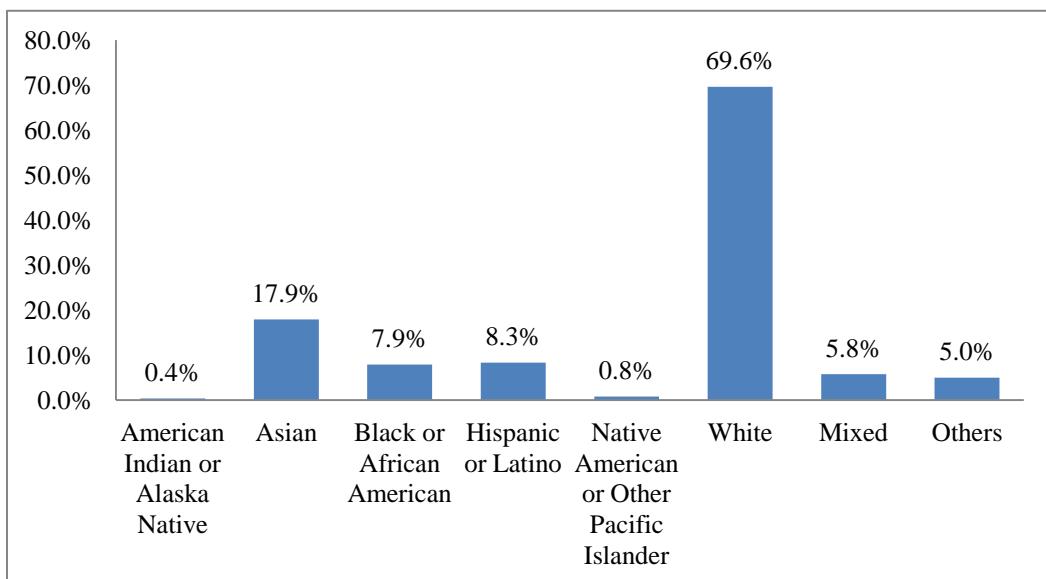
⁴ See *id.*

⁵ See Richard Fry & Kim Parker, "Record Shares of Young Adults Have Finished Both High School and College," Pew Research Center, Nov. 5, 2012, <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/11/05/record-shares-of-young-adults-have-finished-both-high-school-and-college/>.

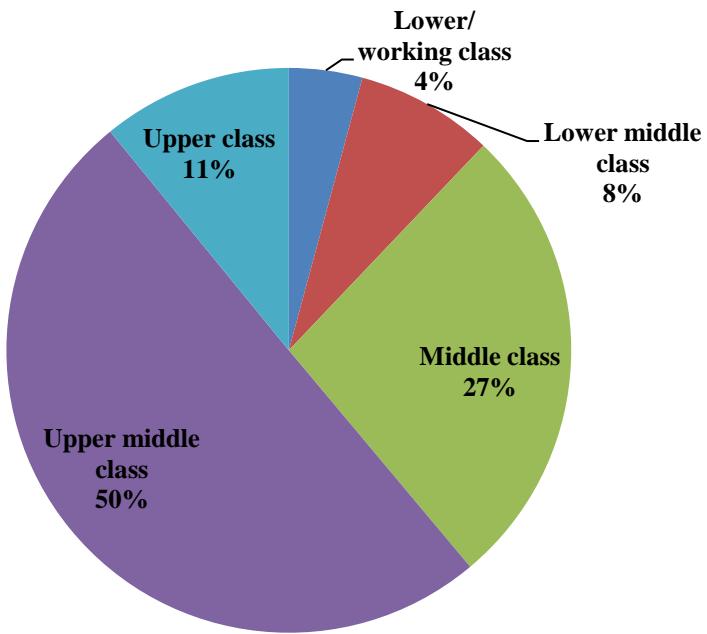
What is the highest level of education either of your parents attained?



Race/Ethnicity (Please choose all with which you identify)



I would identify my class background as...



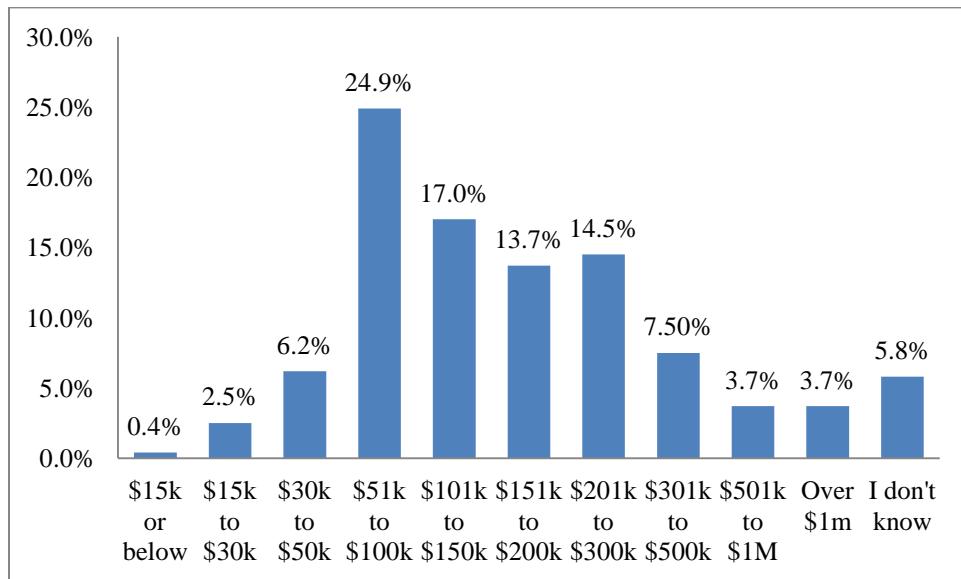
Students' estimations of their families' average household income during their pre-college years were fairly evenly dispersed across the available categories. A plurality of students (24.9%) selected "\$51 to \$ 100k." Less than 10% of students selected a response under \$50,000 per year. In contrast, 29.5% of students selected a response over \$200,000 per year. However, we should note that it is difficult to draw conclusions from this data. Factors such as students' likely lack of information about their families' household incomes during their childhood or differences in costs of living between geographic areas present significant confounding variables.

The information reported by students on the means by which they are paying for their YLS education supports the validity of our survey sample. According to the law school, 77% of the student body received some form of financial aid for the 2011-2012 academic year and more than 56% qualified for grants.⁶ These numbers generally accord with our sample: 77.3% of survey respondents reported taking out loans and 51.7% reported receiving YLS grants.

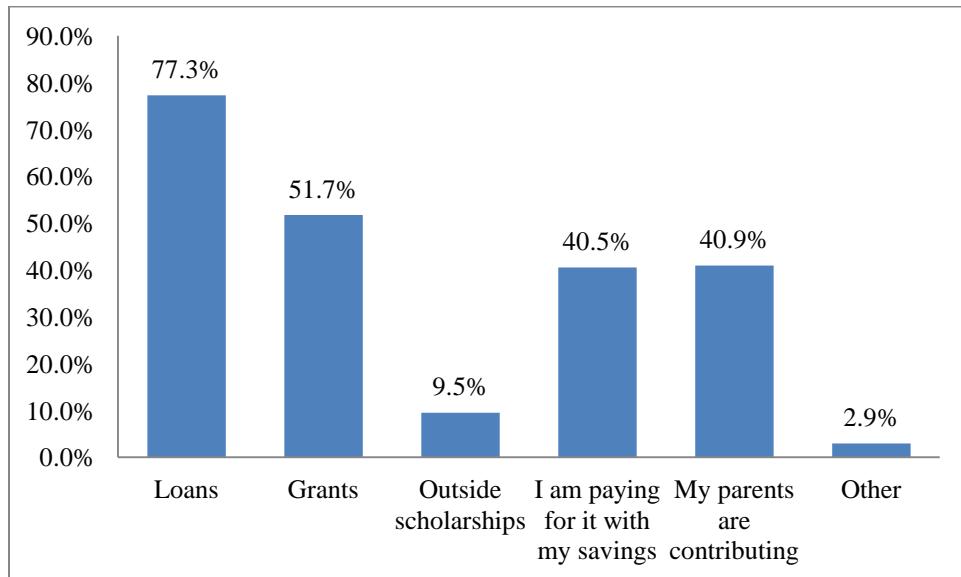
⁶ See "Admissions: Costs and Finances," Yale Law School, <http://www.law.yale.edu/admissions/admissions.htm>.

Additionally, cross-tabulated data reveals students' self-identifications of class closely correlated with both their parents' highest education level and their estimates of their family's average household income during their pre-college years. For example, over four-fifths of students who identified as upper class responded that at least one of their parents holds a professional degree or doctoral degree. By comparison, at least one parent with a professional or doctoral degree was reported by about three-fifths of students who identified as upper middle class; about half of students who identified as middle class; and only a tenth of students who identified as either lower/working class or lower middle class. The same sort of spread was visible with regard to estimates of household income.

Please estimate your family's average household income during your pre-college years. (Use your best estimate or select "I don't know.")⁷



How are you paying for your YLS education? (Please include funding for tuition as well as personal expenses.)



⁷ This version of the report has been corrected to include the \$151-200k category, which was omitted from the initial version.

III. Awareness & Attitudes - Students

Student Perceptions of the Class Background of the Average YLS Student Appear Largely Accurate

At least 70% of students from every class background identified the background of the average YLS student as upper middle class. If our survey accurately captured the YLS student body, it appears that students were largely accurate. As noted above, a majority of students surveyed identified their class background as upper middle class.

Students' self-identified class backgrounds appeared to influence their perspectives—though the same sample sizes in question were small. Students who identified as lower/working class, lower middle class, and upper class were more likely to view the average YLS student as upper class, in comparison with those students who identified as middle or upper middle class. Upper middle class students were also more likely than all other groups to identify the average YLS student as middle class.

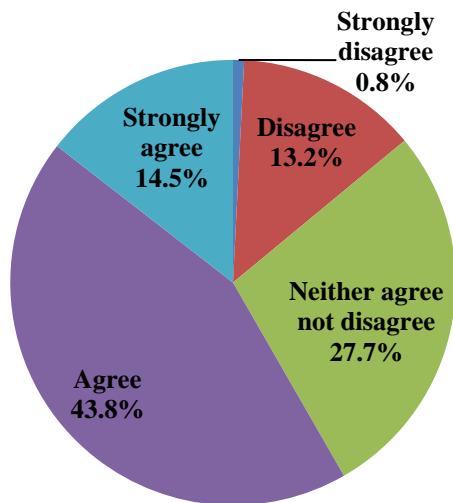
How would you identify the social class background of the average student at YLS?

I would describe my class background as...	Lower/working class	Lower middle class	Middle class	Upper middle class	Upper class	Total
Lower/working class	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	70.0%	30.0%	100.0%
Lower middle class	0.0%	0.0%	5.3%	73.7%	21.1%	100.0%
Middle class	0.0%	0.0%	9.5%	76.2%	14.3%	100.0%
Upper middle class	0.0%	0.0%	15.5%	74.1%	10.3%	100.0%
Upper class	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%	73.1%	23.1%	100.0%

A Majority of Students Believe Class has Affected Their YLS Experiences

A majority (58.5%) of students from every class background responded "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that the statement that class background and socioeconomic status have affected their YLS experience. Nearly all students who identified as lower/working class or lower middle class chose "Agree" or "Strongly Disagree." 28% of all students neither agreed nor disagreed. Only 12.5% of all students chose "Disagree," and only 2 students chose "Strongly Disagree."

Have your class background and socioeconomic status affected your YLS experience?



Have your class background and socioeconomic status affected your YLS experience? (Cross-tabs)

I would describe my class background as...	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Lower/working class	40.0%	50.0%	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Lower middle class	26.3%	47.4%	10.5%	15.8%	0.0%	100.0%
Middle class	6.3%	50.0%	31.3%	12.5%	0.0%	100.0%
Upper middle class	15.0%	39.2%	31.7%	12.5%	1.7%	100.0%
Upper class	15.4%	46.2%	26.9%	11.5%	0.0%	100.0%

In their qualitative responses, many students asserted that class affects everyone whether they recognize it or not. As one student wrote, "Class background impacts everyone's experience. It has shaped my understanding of what seems 'normal' and what seems 'extravagant' in a very privileged environment itself." Another wrote, "Socioeconomic status impacts everything."

Numerous students recognized their own comparatively privileged backgrounds. One wrote, "I'm guessing that it would have affected my experience more sharply if I came from a lower-class background." Another identified stigma against more affluent students, writing that while their parents are paying for their education out of pocket, "I don't tell anyone because I don't want them to judge me."

Other students reacted in shock to the privilege they see in the YLS community. One student wrote, "I was astonished by the entitlement that some students here have," but also commented that "[o]verall people are great and very nice."

A few students commented on race. One student wrote, "Being of African-American descent, however, has been a point of struggle here. This community can be hard to weather as a racial minority regardless of financial status."

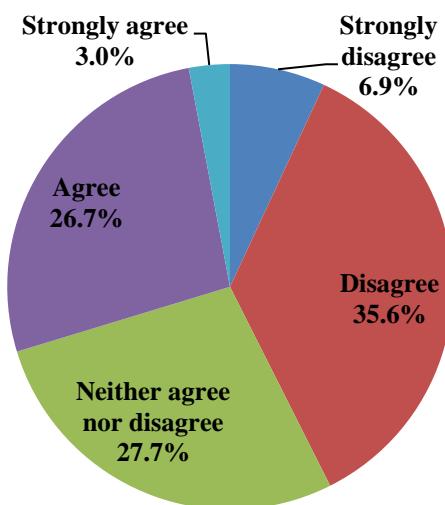
Several students commented that their class backgrounds have influenced their view of the law and career aims. A student responded, "I think it influences the way I read cases and the parties I identify with." One student commented, "It affects my views on the policy scholarship I pursue and also the way I see myself in relation to my classmates." On the other hand, another student commented that their upper-class background and parents' service work had made them "less cynical of going to a big firm because I view it as a false dichotomy that one has to choose between working to help underprivileged populations and pursuing a well-paying career path."

However, a handful of students rejected the notion that class plays a role in the YLS community. A student responded that class "hasn't [played a role] because law school is so expensive that tuition becomes sort of an equalizer." One student wrote, "I don't think socioeconomic background status affects an YLS students, except those who come from extremely privileged or famous families." Another wrote, "YLS is a super left-leaning, politically correct school. Nobody really care where you're from or how much money you have. It is literally a complete non-issue."

Students Identify Challenges with Awareness of Social Class in the YLS Student Body – These Challenges Primarily Concern Sensitivity to Lower-Income Students, but Also Include Stereotypes about Wealthier Students

Less than a third of YLS students "Agreed" or "Strongly Agreed" that YLS students are understanding of the experiences of people from all socioeconomic backgrounds. In contrast, 35.6% of students chose "Disagree" and 6.9% chose "Strongly Disagree." This reaction was visible across all backgrounds, as at least 30% every category of students chose "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree."

YLS students are understanding of the experiences of people from all socioeconomic backgrounds.



YLS students are understanding of the experiences of people from all socioeconomic backgrounds. (Cross-tabs)

I would describe my class background as...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Lower/working class	0.0%	20.0%	10.0%	40.0%	30.0%	100.0%
Lower middle class	0.0%	15.8%	36.8%	36.8%	10.5%	100.0%
Middle class	1.6%	25.0%	25.0%	45.3%	3.1%	100.0%
Upper middle class	3.3%	28.3%	29.2%	31.7%	7.5%	100.0%
Upper class	3.9%	34.6%	30.8%	30.8%	0.0%	100.0%
All Students	2.5%	26.8%	28.0%	36.0%	6.7%	100.0%

The qualitative responses reveal that many respondents felt that students are ignorant of issues of social class, while a significant minority identified more virulent animus. Numerous respondents also noted the difficulty of describing the YLS student body as a whole. As one student wrote, "I think it's impossible to generalize this. Every YLS student is different."

Many respondents felt that a substantial fraction of students attempt to be sensitive to the issue of class and are well-intentioned. As one wrote, "I think we're all empathetic people." However, respondents also noted that many students come from privileged backgrounds and lack personal experience with issues of class. One student wrote, "I think there is a great sympathy and empathy, but to understand it, one would need to have experienced it and had his or her life shaped by it." Another wrote, "I do think many YLS students (and I like to think of myself in this group) do try to understand experiences different from my own, but there is a limit to how much [we] truly can understand. And then of course, there are people who don't even try."

Student concerns about class attitudes focused on assumptions about class backgrounds and lack of self-awareness, which affected students from both privileged and less privileged backgrounds. One respondent commented, "People work under unexplored assumptions and

have biases against individuals from less privileged backgrounds." A student wrote, "There seems to be an assumption that everyone comes from the same place/same amount of money." A respondent commented, "Students are somewhat quick to judge other students based on their socioeconomic background." Another student identified biases against students from both less and more privileged backgrounds, writing, "I think the privileged kids are completely unaware of the experience of non-privileged kids (and are also unaware that they're unaware), but I think likewise, people coming from "lower" or just different socioeconomic backgrounds feel very negatively towards the privileged kids and don't take the time to understand them."⁸

Concerns about class awareness and student attitudes also considered insensitivity to differences in students' financial means. One student commented, "I find sometimes that folks don't understand that eating out all the time or other simple things like that just [don't] fit within my budget." A student wrote that "when explaining I did not have a smart phone because I could not afford one, a peer exclaimed their surprise and mentioned that just last year they had two."

Also, several respondents identified insensitivity towards class issues and socioeconomic diversity during in-class discussions. One respondent stated, ". . . [class] biases are frequently revealed in discussions involving the areas [of] criminal law and government entitlement programs." Another wrote, "It seems like students often make comments, whether in class, or when talking about summer jobs (and salaries), or when talking about the cost of an event that make it clear that they don't even understand the differences in economic situations of their fellow classmates in the room."

Several responses asserted that class is not discussed in comparison to other aspects of identity. One student wrote, "YLS students are incredibly focused on race and gender. Very little

⁸ Other research on class in higher education supports the finding that students at both ends of the socioeconomic spectrum experience negative effects of stereotyping. See Elizabeth Aries, *Race and Class Matters at an Elite College* 109-129 (2008) (studying undergraduate class interactions at Amherst College).

discussion of the huge class differences here." Others also commented on geography and rural/urban divides.

RECOMMENDATION: Consider Identities & Experiences as Part of Orientation Programming

Issues of access and privilege influence and inform the study and practice of law, whether in cases like *Gideon v. Wainwright*, YLS students' clinical work in our local community, or students' social experiences. As many students have commented, however, the issue of class is often suppressed or unrecognized by the YLS community. This absence of conversation diminishes the experiences of many students: both the recipients of ignorant slights and those who do not consider their own privilege and self-identity.

As a result, we recommend that the law school develop and implement orientation programming that challenges students to consider their own identities and experiences. This conversation should spur students to critically examine their own perspectives and nascent legal careers. We believe that class should play a role alongside other topics that significantly inform students' identities and perspectives, such as race, gender, sexual orientation, faith, prior education, and family lives.

Critically, this programming would not lecture students about how they *should* view law school or the legal profession. Instead, second- or third-year students—such as Dean's Advisors—would lead small group dialogues focused on sharing experiences and perspectives, not instilling dogma. Incoming students would also learn about issues to consider in the YLS community, such as those raised by this study or the YLW Speak Up study.

RECOMMENDATION: Survey the Student Body on Class Issues Every 3 to 4 Years

In order to ensure that class and socio-economic diversity remain salient in the minds of students and professors, it is our intention that this survey should spark an ongoing conversation about class at Yale, rather than being a one-time event. The survey and the events that follow

should be repeated every three to four years, to track changes in the level of diversity of the student body and to acknowledge improvements in the culture of the law school.

RECOMMENDATION: Student Group Events Should Include Discussion of Class at YLS, Including Intersectionalities

YLS does not currently have an affinity group concerned with issues of class among the study body. However, many events held by current student groups relate to issues of class and inequality in society at large. In addition, affinity student groups often hold events focused on career opportunities or barriers that certain groups encounter in law and the legal profession. We encourage these student groups to consider explicitly addressing intersectional class issues when they plan and frame these events. We also encourage them to create opportunities for students to share their own experiences with class during their education and in the broader community.

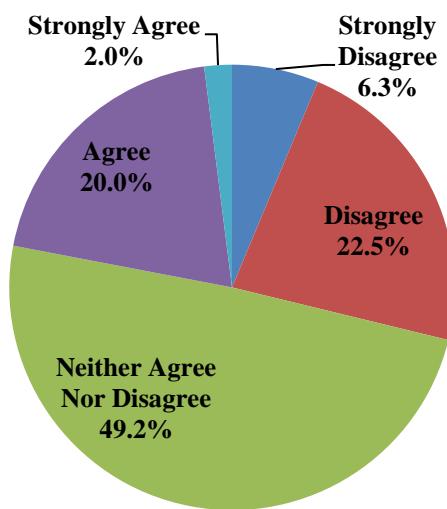
IV. Awareness & Attitudes – Faculty & Staff

About half of students are ambivalent about professors' attitudes towards class, but significant minorities feel positively or negatively about experiences with professors

Nearly a majority (49.2%) of respondents "Neither Agree Nor Disagree" that professors understand are understanding of the experiences of students of all socioeconomic backgrounds. Many students felt that they had insufficient contact with professors to say either way. One student wrote, "I suspect that faculty don't even think about it." Others acknowledged differences between professors. A representative response attested, "Depends on the professor. Some yes, some very no." Another wrote, "Except when they think \$250 textbooks are completely acceptable." A number of students speculated that the vast majority of professors themselves come from upper middle class backgrounds and "are disconnected from the experiences of more disadvantaged classes," even when they are well-meaning.

However, significant proportions of students chose firmer answers: 22.0% "Agree[d]" or "Strongly Agree[d]," while 28.0% chose "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree." Students who identified as upper class were significantly more likely to respond favorably, while the small sample size of lower/working class students were much more likely to choose "Strongly Disagree."

YLS faculty are understanding of the experiences of people from all socioeconomic backgrounds.



YLS faculty are understanding of the experiences of people from all socioeconomic backgrounds (Cross-tabs)

I would describe my class background as...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Lower/working class	0.0%	0.0%	44.4%	11.1%	44.4%	100.0%
Lower middle class	0.0%	10.5%	63.2%	21.1%	5.3%	100.0%
Middle class	3.1%	15.6%	53.1%	25.0%	3.1%	100.0%
Upper middle class	1.7%	21.7%	45.8%	25.0%	5.8%	100.0%
Upper class	3.9%	34.6%	46.2%	11.5%	3.9%	100.0%
All Students	2.1%	19.8%	49.2%	22.7%	6.3%	100.0%

Some students have had positive experiences with professors

As noted above, around a fifth of students attested to positive interactions with professors related to issues of class. Students identified Professors Grewal, Ayres, and Ellickson as particularly sensitive. Several pointed out positive interactions with unnamed professors—for instance, when a professor provides free course readings instead of requiring students to buy textbooks. One student felt that professors better understand class issues than the YLS student body in general.

Many students feel professors assume all students come from upper middle-class backgrounds

A significant number of students felt that professors assume all students come from comparatively privileged backgrounds. Many respondents indicated that professors' in-class comments on class or assumptions left students feeling intimidated or alienated. For example, one student commented that “[p]rofessors sometimes act like we're all rich” and another that professors “make tons of insensitive comments.”

Respondents also raised concerns that students who are not from elite backgrounds have difficulty interacting with faculty outside of class. Students wrote that faculty members were more likely to develop relationships with students who went to elite private colleges or had distinguished professional experiences before coming to law school. As a result, some students felt that working class or lower middle class students are disadvantaged because they have had fewer opportunities for such experiences. One respondent explained, “Yale law professors love success, not struggle. They favor the students who have had the freedom to build up impressive resumes of privilege-contingent accomplishments. … Being from the lower class and lower middle class is not just a matter of financial but also a matter of culture. Class is both resource and culture. …”

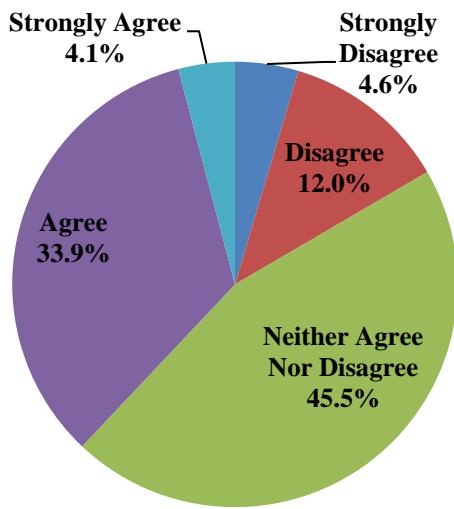
RECOMMENDATION: Professors should critically consider their approach to issues of social class and consider student responses to this survey.

First, we hope professors review this report and recognize the concerns students have raised. For one, professors should recognize that not all YLS students come from comparatively privileged upbringings. While about half of students identify as upper middle class, about two-fifths of the student body reported a working class, lower middle class or middle class background. We also hope that professors can build on the successes of their peers—a significant number of students believe that certain faculty members effectively address issues of social class.

Students perceive the administrative staff, particularly Jill Stone, as highly responsive to the needs of students from diverse class backgrounds. However, students from working class or lower middle class backgrounds reported dissatisfaction with financial aid policies.

In comparison to feedback regarding the YLS student body and faculty, respondents perceived administrators more favorably. Most students agreed that administrators were understanding of the experiences of students from all class backgrounds. Some students from working class backgrounds disagreed, but many of their comments were specifically related to University-wide policies affecting the financial aid process, and not to their personal interactions with administrators.

YLS administrators are understanding of the experiences of people from all socioeconomic backgrounds.



YLS administrators are understanding of the experiences of people from all socioeconomic backgrounds. (Cross-tabs)

I would describe my class background as...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Lower/working class	0.0%	20.0%	20.0%	30.0%	30.0%	100.0%
Lower middle class	0.0%	42.1%	31.6%	21.1%	5.3%	100.0%
Middle class	3.1%	29.7%	50.0%	12.5%	4.7%	100.0%
Upper middle class	3.3%	36.7%	47.5%	10.0%	2.5%	100.0%
Upper class	11.5%	30.8%	50.0%	3.9%	3.9%	100.0%
All Students	3.8%	33.9%	46.0%	11.7%	4.6%	100.0%

Many students surveyed indicated they were satisfied by administrative staff's professionalism and helpfulness, expressing that administrators seemed more "in tune" with the needs of students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Although students expressed some concern about the financial aid process, multiple respondents specifically mentioned that the staff and administrators were flexible and understanding about unexpected changes in students'

financial circumstances. Even a student who responded unfavorably to the survey suggested that, “Jill Stone has been working hard to make YLS a more accessible place for students of lower socio-economic status. I have really appreciated her efforts to educate, inform, and equip students since she's been here.” Other students echoed that sentiment, saying, “Jill Stone is amazing and very understanding, accommodating,” and that “things have been much better since Jill Stone took her position at the financial aid office.”

A few students noted unpleasant interactions with members of the administration

However, a handful of students mentioned having unpleasant interactions with deans and administrators because of their assumptions and negative comments about students and families from low socio-economic class backgrounds. One student mentioned, “One dean made a comment last semester suggesting that families with lower financial resources did not have adequate financial skills.” Another suggested that “there are certain implicit assumptions about the availability of capital that are at work in the minds of administrators. I also suspect that they either don't understand or, more likely, don't care about how socioeconomic background makes decisions regarding debt and employment particularly charged.”

RECOMMENDATION: Consider additional administrative steps taking social class into account, including efforts related to admissions.

Although the administration is doing a commendable job already, students have suggested some steps that administrators can take to make the law school experience less alienating for students from all backgrounds. These include improving socio-economic diversity in the student body, being proactive about anticipating the needs of students of diverse backgrounds instead of responding after problems arise, and making changes to the financial aid process (as discussed in greater detail at Section VI). One student remarked, “While it seems like the administration cares a great deal about its current students, I'm less sure about its efforts to diversify the student body. The school seems to operate on a ‘get the best we can, then deal with

their backgrounds once problems occur' approach, which doesn't foster the most welcoming environment for students of backgrounds outside the traditional law student majority." Another suggested that, "YLS administrators could lead some additional changes to ensure there's not a disparate impact of career decisions on students that correlates with our economic resources."

V. Networks & Connections

Success at YLS and in the legal world depends in part on access to closed, informal networks of information

In general, students noted that YLS and the legal world in general can be difficult to navigate without access to inside or informal information. YLS boasts a particularly significant amount of unofficial policies, such as the grading practices of individual professors. The crumbling status of the clerkship Plan also presents difficulties, for instance. These opaque policies or requirements particularly disadvantage students from less privileged backgrounds.

Some students may take advantage of family connections to individuals at YLS and in the legal world

A number of students expressed the belief that classmates whose parents are lawyers, judges, and academics – and classmates whose parents are educated and well-off, more generally – are at a distinct advantage at YLS for several reasons. First, these students may have direct "family connections" to professors, judges, and lawyers that can assist students in their professional development. One student listed "[n]ot having the family connections other students have" as a primary concern, for example. According to our survey data, at least 35% of students have one parent with a professional degree such as a J.D.

Students with family members in legal or professional jobs may be advantageously prepared for YLS culture, the legal profession, and legal academia in general

Students mentioned that their classmates who have family members in the legal profession may have learned about the culture of YLS and the legal profession at large. One

student wrote that YLS “is designed to benefit and does benefit students who know the rules of the game.... Whose older brother or dad is very plugged into the professions of legal service and legal academia, etc.” Another student wrote, “One of the things that shocked me is how many students had family (parents, siblings, etc) who also attended YLS, were judges, etc. It seemed like a coterie of people groomed for this experience, which I wasn't expecting.” Another wrote that “[t]hose without the benefit of family members who have gone through law school are at a massive disadvantage.”

More generally, students with parents from educated and/or privileged backgrounds may enter YLS already acquainted with the concepts, terms, institutions, and people discussed in class because they heard these terms discussed at the dinner table during childhood. One student wrote, “I can definitely tell whose parents come from more professional backgrounds, because people are much more well-versed in legal issues, etc., than I was coming into law school (and tha[n] I still am).” Another wrote, “I think a lot of the faculty assume that we have had a lot of exposure to legal information - legal words (Latin stuff), etc., because we have tons of lawyers in our family for example.”

Students who attended elite undergraduate institutions may be especially prepared for “YLS culture”

The advantages of professional connections, shared knowledge and experiences, and cultural/academic fluency are not unique to students who grew up in more privileged settings. A number of students also mentioned the role that prior educational experience plays in navigating YLS. Students observed that classmates who attended elite universities or who obtained advanced degrees before coming to YLS were particularly at an advantage.⁹

⁹ Of course, many of the nation’s elite undergraduate institutions struggle to achieve broad socioeconomic diversity, so “advantageous family background” and “advantageous educational background” are categories that frequently overlap.

Students reported that elite college backgrounds are advantageous for several reasons. As one student wrote, “Not having attended an Ivy League college (and not gaining all that comes with that- network, social skills, publishing, post- college jobs, etc) has made me feel very much at a disadvantage throughout my time here.”

Class background and disposable income affect student's ability to network with classmates

Not all of the networking at YLS involves building relationships with the right professors and elite lawyers or being college friends with in-the-know 3Ls. Simply socializing with fellow classmates at Bar Review, on the weekends, and over vacations can be a strain on the wallets of students without the disposable income for drink tabs and meal bills. A law school social culture structured around outings to bars and restaurants emphasizes socioeconomic divides between students, even outside of the classroom. One student pointed out that “It's really embarrassing to try to make friends with people who never have to really worry about money when I seriously cannot afford that beer at BAR on Thursday night.” This aspect of student life may not be appreciated by the financial aid office; one student wrote of being “[u]nable to participate in social activities predicated on having disposable income -- and even going out to drinks regularly can be difficult if you're just living on the expenses that Yale has calculated as part of their grant program.”

Students who attended prestigious schools have access to alumni networks

In addition to resume-boosting publication opportunities and prestigious post-college jobs, students mentioned that classmates who are alums of prestigious colleges have access to networks of other alums at YLS. These student networks are the channels through which much of YLS’s important, “unofficial” advice gets passed. As one student wrote, “There are students at this law school who still know each other from prep-school activities like national-level debate, a hobby that, not unlike many Ivy-league prerequisites, requires significant parental support and

involvement.” Another wrote, “Fewer connections => less insider knowledge because I didn’t go to the same prep schools, undergrad or fellowship programs as some other students.”

Another student described entering YLS without a network of acquaintances. “I had never met a soul from YLS--past or present--before walking into Sterling Law Building on the first day of orientation. It took me a full year to even partially understand the informal dynamics that govern YLS: which classes to take, which professors to build relationships with, what needs to be done to earn a clerkship, etc.” Another student gave an example: “Students with fewer connections to YLS might not understand, for example, that a certain professor is difficult, or may elect to take classes with visiting professors who turn out to be difficult graders.”

Because so many policies at YLS are unwritten and unofficial, students without connections to older students or recent alums may not have access to crucial information – if they even know that information exists in the first place. As one student put it bluntly, “You can’t function properly unless you have the connections of an elite private school.”

Family and educational background affect the ability to form relationships with professors, including working relationships

Many students wrote that family and educational background are particularly important when it comes to developing relationships with professors. Beyond students' in-class experiences, relationships with professors can provide students with mentorship as well as recommendations essential to securing clerkships or fellowships after graduation. Yet many students reported having more difficulty developing relationships with professors than classmates of other backgrounds.

As one student wrote, “YLS faculty are a wonderful but rarified group. I think that they often have trouble connecting with students on a level that is not academic. For many students who did not grow up in a family where there were deep conversations about news, politics, or

academics around the dinner table, this can be incredibly intimidat[ing], especially during 1L year.” Another echoed, “Admission to the elite world of legal thinking is the only thing some professors seem concerned with, although this world itself often assumes previous experiences and exposure.” One student wrote that YLS professors “favor the students who have had the freedom to build up impressive resumes of privilege-contingent accomplishments.” Another wrote that professors “would rather get to know a wealthy, well-connected student than a student who hasn’t checked all the same boxes in high school, college, and in the working world.”

A number of students noted feeling more comfortable working with the clinical faculty, who “ground the academy in the everyday world.” One student wrote that, “Even if they have been educated solely at institutions like Harvard and Yale, their work at least evinces an engagement with people of different socioeconomic backgrounds.”

Students expressed concerns regarding admission to permission of instructor courses

In turn, students expressed concern that systemic biases may bar students' entry into permission of instructor courts. One student wrote, “Permission of the instructor courses have always felt closed to me, largely because I didn't have the background or experience required to secure a place. I have always felt that I lacked this background in large part because I didn't attend an Ivy League college, and therefore didn't have all of the opportunities that came with that...”

Reviewing course listings for this year reveals that a substantial proportion of classes are listed as permission of instructor courses. Many of these courses ask for a transcript, resume and statement of interest, but provide no information on criteria for admission. The opaque nature of this process can disadvantage students without developed networks at YLS. Moreover, many of these courses are clinics or seminars, which provide students with key opportunities to write and build relationships with professors.

RECOMMENDATION: Open up information networks to students of all backgrounds, especially relationships with professors

To some extent, family or educational background will always matter. A student who is close family friends with a judge or who did undergraduate research for a professor may be at an advantage regardless of institutional efforts to provide equal opportunities. However, YLS should consider ways to ensure information is more widely dispersed to students. The "How-To" sessions are a helpful step, as well as the effort to publicize professors' office hours online.

Connections with professors pose the most critical issue. As the YLW *Speak Up* report advocated, professors should announce research or collaborative opportunities in class and publicly (wall emails, posted advertisements, on the YLS Inside page). According to anecdotal information, for example, many if not most small group professors choose their Coker Fellows before the public process is announced. Professors should recognize that these practices operate to the disadvantage of both women—as YLW has shown—and students from less privileged backgrounds.

RECOMMENDATION: Reduce number of permission of instructor courses and clarify admissions procedures.

Specifically, the administration and faculty should seek to reduce the number of permission of instructor courses and clarify admissions processes for these courses. The current opaque process can prevent students from less privileged or prestigious backgrounds from developing relationships with professors in small-group settings and pursuing particular areas of interest. For the permission of instructor courses that remain, professors should identify what they are seeking from students with regard to resumes and statements of interest.

RECOMMENDATION: Develop, enforce, and publicize uniform school policies

One suggestion for the school is to develop and enforce “official” policies and practices. Grading practices among professors, for example, are widely varied, and these practices may or may not be consistent with YLS’s official grading policy. Currently, students with acquaintances

who attend or have attended YLS may be able to find out about the grading policies of individual professors, while students without these connections have access only to the school's official policy.

Because official policies are of no use to students who don't know about them, the school should continue to make information easily available to students. 1L Orientation and the events held by the Career Development and Financial Aid Offices held throughout the year are good practices. To the extent that it can, 1L Orientation should include more information about how to navigate YLS's requirements and access its resources. For example, despite years of effort the law school still does not even have a map of the building. A student who cannot find a professor's office may be embarrassed to ask for help and then decide not to attend office hours.

RECOMMENDATION: Student organizations should continue to provide alternative information networks

Many student organizations and affinity groups are already taking steps to address the information gap felt by students without access to family or Ivy League information networks. For example, many interest and affinity groups run mentoring programs to connect 1Ls to upperclassmen who may be able to give them access to the informal information channels. Through the Dean's Advisor program during orientation and beyond, the Law School also attempts to connect 1Ls to upperclassmen and give them access to informal information channels.

In addition to compiling empirical data about class participation, Yale Law Women's *Speak Up* series offers recommendations to help students develop relationships with professors. YLW also maintains resources, including the Outline Bank, that help equalize access to information about courses and instructors.

On the clerkship front, a number of organizations have begun holding information sessions for 3Ls to share their experiences with the application process. Additionally, YLW publishes a guide to the clerkship process, improving access to information that is increasingly important as the process becomes de-formalized.

VI. Living Expenses & Costs

Textbook costs and lack of early notice pose concerns.

Several students also raised concerns about the cost of textbooks and the fact that faculty members give so little notice in advance about required course materials. One student commented, "[Professors have] the expectation that students have resources to throw down \$200 per book at a moment's notice. . . . [T]hey think \$250 textbooks are completely acceptable." Professors commonly do not list required textbooks until just before or after the semester begins. As a result, students cannot accurately budget for the semester in advance or purchase textbooks from less expensive sources than the campus bookstore.

The cost of tuition and living expenses is a substantial burden on many students

The YLS Class/Action survey noted that class background can affect students in many ways, both subtle and direct. For many students, one of the most salient issues they face at Yale is how to handle the \$54,575 in required tuition, fees, and insurance, while still having enough to buy books, pay for an apartment, and reserve funds to deal with emergencies.¹⁰

For many students of limited means, paying these bills is a daunting challenge. In some respects, the Law School does an admirable job in helping students cope. In other cases though, ranging from a failure to update the cost of living calculations for some reasonable expenses, including the skyrocketing costs of textbooks, students can be extremely constrained in their finances.

¹⁰ <http://www.law.yale.edu/admissions/costs.htm>

For example, Yale assumes an average living expense of \$17,000 per student per year. However, multiple students noted the significant price of living in New Haven and attending school at Yale. One student wrote, “As a PhD student I had approximately \$500 / month more to live on than what I live on here (I’m taking out the maximum in student loans)....and that graduate student stipend wasn’t exactly living the dream.” Some students noted that the student budgets issued by the financial aid office underestimate certain costs, including travel expenses. “The travel budget, at least for me, is only a couple hundred dollars for the entire year. I am from a Rocky Mountain state that does not have a major airport. For me to travel home for Thanksgiving and Christmas, I must exceed that travel budget many times over,” wrote one student.

The timing of loan disbursements creates issues for students on financial aid

Among students who raised financial aid or direct financial support issues within the survey, the most frequently mentioned difficulty facing students without external support concerned the timing of financial aid disbursement. Multiple students emphasized that while loan quantities may ultimately be sufficient for their needs, policies often presumed that they could rely upon outside funding - either loans or gifts from parents or other family - to provide for necessities until loans came through. As one student wrote, “My 1L year I had to borrow over \$1,000 from my grandparents...in order to make ends meet with these big beginning of the year expenses. I was lucky to have grandparents that are willing and able to loan me money, but many other people from lower-middle class backgrounds are likely not as lucky.”

Students whose families are not able to provide such interstitial support faced significant hardship as a result. In particular, respondents highlighted problems with financing the transition (back) to Yale at the start of each school year and an inability to afford January rent on their fall loan budgets. These difficulties were amplified for students who came to Yale from either a non-

profit or educational institution such that the students themselves (as well as their families) lacked savings to see them through the transition. Students who took SPIF funding for the summer reported difficulty in making that funding last through mid-September when school year loans were disbursed. Students attributed both hardships to an inability to access funds prior to the formal start of classes. Another student wrote, “The budget on which student loans are based seems to assume that students have outside sources of funding, particularly to bridge the gap between semesters. I have NO IDEA how I am going to pay for January rent. It would be so nice if there was some sort of bridge loan to cover this time. I had a similar problem in August, where I literally could not afford groceries during orientation.”

While students acknowledged that these policies were set not by the financial aid office but rather university-wide or federal loan policy, they also emphasized that rent, groceries, and moving/travel expenses are often required weeks or even months prior to disbursement. As one student wrote, “I think YLS Financial Aid does an excellent job of helping students work through difficult (and often unexpected) financial issues. However, in my personal experience, Jill and the office’s hands are tied in many instances due to unreasonable university-wide policies. My main contention is with the policy regarding distribution of financial aid (policy: no funds distributed until first day of classes). That policy is problematic because it leaves lower income students without resources to purchase books and prepare for their courses until the first day of class.”

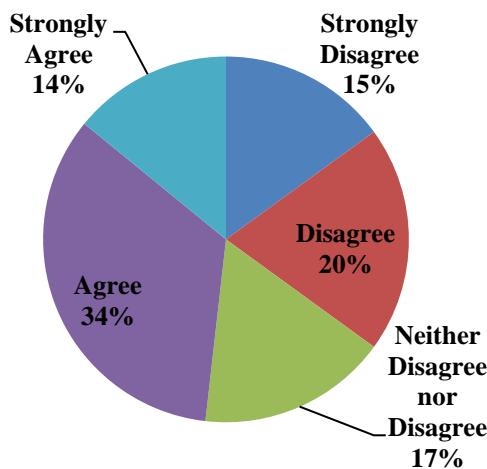
Survey respondents also raised similar issues with the technology loan program. While respondents appreciated the existence of the program, they expressed concern that because the reimbursement of the cost was split over two semesters, the program still required students without access to funding outside their student loan budget to carry a credit card balance for the

cost of the equipment, forgo, or push back timing on the purchase. "The computer policy...does not recognize the reality of needing money at the time of purchase," wrote one student.

Financial constraints also have affected the job choices and prospects of students

For many students, financial constraints have had negative effects on their ability to compete for or accept certain kinds of jobs. Nearly half of students "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" that financial needs have played a major role in their job search process. Cross-tabulations also show that students' class backgrounds strongly correlated with their responses. Unsurprisingly, the less privileged the student's class background, the more likely they were to respond that financial needs had played a major role in their job search process.

If applicable: Financial needs have played a major role in my job search process.



If applicable: Financial needs have played a major role in my job search process. (Cross-tabs)

I would describe my class background as...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Lower/working class	40.0%	40.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Lower middle class	20.0%	53.3%	6.7%	6.7%	13.3%	100.0%
Middle class	13.3%	36.7%	13.3%	23.3%	13.3%	100.0%
Upper middle class	10.9%	34.6%	23.6%	20.0%	10.9%	100.0%
Upper class	13.0%	13.0%	8.7%	21.7%	43.5%	100.0%
All Students	13.8%	34.4%	17.0%	20.2%	14.7%	100.0%

Both summer and post-graduate employment choices may be limited by a student's class background. For example, SPIF's limitation to public interest employment means that students without financial resources cannot elect to perform work that is open to their more affluent peers, such as a summer internship for a judge. Students also expressed concern that in past years, SPIF's lack of responsiveness to costs of living forced them to make difficult decisions about whether and how it is feasible for them to accept employment in locations with high costs of living. One student wrote that "SPIF money is granted based on the number of weeks worked, without any consideration of the cost of living in a given location. Students who wish to work in cities like NYC, San Fran, and DC either have to opt to go somewhere less expensive, or work a second job while doing public interest work, or scrimp on the necessities of life."

Finally, many respondents to the YLS Class Action Survey noted that their financial status limited their ability to travel to interviews for both summer employment and post-graduate clerkships. In particular, multiple students raised concerns about the effects of clerkship moving off-plan on less affluent students' ability to fly to interviews absent YLS internal support which is still linked to the Plan.

RECOMMENDATION: Establish a clear policy directive encouraging professors to use less expensive textbook options and disclose required materials in course listings

Professors could consider self-assembled readings or the use of older versions of textbooks likely to be available used either within or outside of Yale. Additionally, professors should be encouraged to list textbooks for courses as soon as they have selected their materials. For example, many professors likely know what textbook they will use for a course when the course listing is released. If possible, professors should include information on textbooks when the course is listed.

RECOMMENDATION: Continue to increase student input and revise the annual student budget

From this survey, it appears that the estimate of certain expenses could be improved with increased student input. For example, the line item for utilities can ask students to differentiate between fall and winter heating costs, to accurately account for the increase in cost during the winter months. The administration has reported that the most recent cost of living survey supports holding the annual maximum allotment at \$17,000 because average student costs are under that total.¹¹ However, our research supports a more nuanced view. The current cap particularly disadvantages students from lower-income backgrounds, as they attested in our survey. The administration should consider alternatives for students who cannot rely on their parents for assistance, including greater publicity for emergency loans.

RECOMMENDATION: Continue to publicize, and explore options to end, the difficult transition periods between semesters

If possible, create options to allow students funding to facilitate travel to New Haven and pay moving expenses at the start of 1L Orientation. Apartments typically require down payments, which students may struggle to afford before receiving financial aid. Include orientation (which now extends up to two weeks) in consideration of both the timing and quantity of loan disbursements for incoming 1Ls.

Additionally, assuming that it is impossible to disburse spring semester loans prior to January 1, the Financial Aid Office should continue to publicize this funding gap. In addition, as federal law prohibits the University from making an early disbursement, Yale should continue to think about solutions that might bridge that gap, including a potential short-term private sector emergency loan option.

¹¹ Jill Stone, *The Means to Live Within Your Means*, YaleLawBlog: FinAid, Jan. 28, 2013, <http://blogs.law.yale.edu/blogs/finaid/archive/2013/01/28/the-means-to-live-within-your-means.aspx>.

RECOMMENDATION: Publicize and increase funding options available for students travelling to job and clerkship interviews

For clerkship and non-Big Law job interviews, students are often asked to front (or simply absorb) the costs of travel. This can place certain jobs out of reach of students without cash on hand. The school should better publicize the options available to students to pay for public service job interviews and should consider short-term loans to students who may have significant private sector interview expenses. Additionally, funds for attending clerkship interviews are currently only available to 3Ls; with the collapse of the Plan, this should be broadened to include 2Ls as well.

X. Conclusion

This report identifies a number of challenges as well as opportunities for positive change on behalf of students, faculty and administrators. We are encouraged by the willingness of so many students to consider issues of class and to share their perspectives. We also take heart in the efforts that have already been made, such as the recent Summer Public Interest Fellowship increase to a \$6000 maximum and some professors' commitment to reducing their students' textbook expenses. We would also be remiss not to recognize the privilege we enjoy as Yale Law School students, regardless of our class identities or backgrounds. Finally, we are grateful to the law school for funding our work through the Zelia & Oscar Ruehausen/Debevoise & Plimpton Student Fund.

We also emphasize that this report should be considered a start to the conversation. As our team reviewed the survey results, we raised as many questions as we did findings or suggestions for change. For example, we are curious how professors and administrators perceive class and opportunity at YLS. A broader study involving interviews and long-term analysis like the YLW *Speak Up* project could provide an even richer portrait of social class at YLS.

While our report and survey only touched on the topic, we also urge the administration to consider its admissions approach. As our report reveals, the YLS student body is far less diverse in terms of social class than the nation as a whole. Challenges such as broad educational inequities and underrepresentation of talented lower-income students in highly selective undergraduate institutions certainly contribute to the lack of class diversity. Regardless, we encourage administrators to consider ways to increase socioeconomic diversity within the YLS student body or to compare it to other institutions. For example, while the percentage of students receiving federal Pell Grants is an imperfect measure of undergraduate socioeconomic diversity, it allows some comparability between institutions.

Most of all, we encourage members of the YLS community to critically consider the role of social class in their own paradigms and decision-making. While our class identities and backgrounds do not define us, they shape us all to some extent. We can only foster an inclusive and supportive community if we recognize our own assumptions, biases and preferences.

Appendix: Class/Action Survey

1. Current class year
 - a. 1L
 - b. 2L
 - c. 3L
 - d. LLM
 - e. Other _____
2. Gender
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Other
3. Race/Ethnicity (Please choose all with which you identify.)
 - a. American Indian or Alaska Native
 - b. Asian
 - c. Black or African American
 - d. Hispanic or Latino
 - e. Native American or Other Pacific Islander
 - f. White
 - g. Mixed
 - h. Other _____
4. I would describe my class background as...
 - a. Lower/working class
 - b. Lower middle class
 - c. Middle class
 - d. Upper middle class
 - e. Upper class
 - f. I don't know
5. What is the highest level of education either of your parents attained?
 - a. Elementary school
 - b. Middle school
 - c. Some high school
 - d. High school degree
 - e. Some college
 - f. Associate degree
 - g. Bachelor's degree
 - h. Master's degree
 - i. Professional degree (e.g., J.D., M.D.)
 - k. Doctoral degree
6. Please estimate your family's average household income during your pre-college years. (Use your best estimate or select "I don't know.")
 - a. \$15k or below
 - b. \$15k to \$30k
 - c. \$30k to \$50k
 - d. \$51k to \$100k
 - e. \$101k to \$150k
 - f. \$151k to \$200k

- g. \$201k to \$300k
- h. \$301k to \$500k
- i. \$501k to \$1M
- j. Over \$1M
- k. I don't know.

7. How would you classify the social class background of the average student at YLS?
- a. Lower/working class
 - b. Lower middle class
 - c. Middle class
 - d. Upper middle class
 - e. Upper class
 - f. I don't know
8. Have your class background and socioeconomic status affected your YLS experience?
- 1. Strongly agree
 - 2. Agree
 - 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 - 4. Disagree
 - 5. Strongly disagree
9. If so, please explain.
10. YLS students are understanding of the experiences of people from all socioeconomic backgrounds.
- 1. Strongly agree
 - 2. Agree
 - 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 - 4. Disagree
 - 5. Strongly disagree
11. Please explain.
12. YLS faculty are understanding of the experiences of people from all socioeconomic backgrounds.
- 1. Strongly agree
 - 2. Agree
 - 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 - 4. Disagree
 - 5. Strongly disagree
13. Please explain.
14. YLS administrators are understanding of the experiences of people from all socioeconomic backgrounds.
- 1. Strongly agree
 - 2. Agree
 - 3. Neither agree nor disagree
 - 4. Disagree
 - 5. Strongly disagree
15. Please explain.
16. How are you paying for your YLS education? (Please include funding for tuition as well as personal experiences.) [checkbox responses]
- a. Loans

- b. Grants
- c. Outside scholarships
- d. I am paying for it with my savings
- e. My parents are contributing
- f. Other _____

17. Are there ways that YLS students, faculty and the administration could be more supportive of students from all socioeconomic backgrounds and students' financial need? Are there specific programs or policies you would like to change? If so, please explain.

18. If applicable: Financial needs have played a major role in my job search process.

- 1. Strongly agree
- 2. Agree
- 3. Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 4. Disagree
- 5. Strongly disagree
- 6. N/A

19. Please explain.