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One of the most unique aspects of a liberal arts education is that students can get exposed to vastly different skill sets. Art is one of the countless ways students at Yale can express themselves, and art courses prove to be a fundamental part of the Yale experience. However, students have raised several concerns regarding the numerous course and materials fees. Although demand for art courses have been increasing, there has not been enough enrollment spaces for a majority of students to have opportunities to take these courses. This has caused students to express concerns with the availability of art courses and hindrances against the art courses. Furthermore, the cost of enrolling in an art course and the material costs that are attached to each course seem to be a significant deterrent for Yale students today, as the percentage of the first-generation, Low-income (FGLI) student body continues to increase.

We hope that the data gathered in this report, the student input through the Focus Group, and the subsequent recommendations we propose will be useful for the Yale administration in brainstorming ideas about how to most efficiently approach and resolve this challenge, as well as open up opportunities for students at Yale to take art courses they please with less hindrance and barriers. As a leading university, Yale often sets the precedent for other universities. Thus, it’s critical that our art education is accessible to everyone, regardless of their income.
RESEARCH FINDINGS

In an effort to better understand the underlying problem of services and financial aid for art courses at Yale and its effects on the student body, we collected information from faculty members, administrators, and the student body through numerous interviews, focus groups, and the annual YCC fall survey. We have compiled this information into three key themes.

Community Engagement

A significant gap currently exists between administrative efforts to accommodate for low-income students who want to take art courses and the student body’s understanding of these resources. The art course fee still remains unchanged and a large deterrent for those contemplating taking an art course at Yale. In fact, according to the YCC Fall Survey, approximately 25% of students at Yale were not discouraged by the art fees; the remaining 3 out of 4 students expressed some sort of indication that the art course fees hindered them from taking an art course.

Figure 1: Results from the YCC survey when asked, “To what degree have expenses associated with arts courses discouraged you from taking art courses?”
This is particularly alarming, given that these art course fees can be upwards of $150 per term. For first generation, low-income (FGLI) students, any fees can become a significant barrier to enrolling in courses they otherwise would choose. During our focus group session, we even heard students claim that these art fees contribute to the myth that art is for the wealthy. Not only do course fees prevent students from enrolling in arts courses, but it also creates a social narrative that suggests those from minority backgrounds are being actively excluded from the art community.

Many students have voiced their concerns about the transparencies of the reasons for the art course fees. During our focus group and subsequent conversations with student activists, both art and non-art majors voiced their confusion on why the art course fees existed. Students indicate that the purpose of these fees are not made clear to students, but that instructors are apologetic about these fees and seem uncomfortable announcing and implementing them. Both art and non-art majors wish that administration could show students more transparency and a comprehensive breakdown of the allocation of the art course fees. This information has occasionally been made available to us upon request, but it is critical that the students enrolling in these courses have a cost breakdown presented upfront.

### Sustainability and Storage

On top of art course fees, materials also act as a huge deterrent for students, amounting upwards to $500 per semester. Students have tried to cut the cost by sharing materials, but instructors demand that each student buy all of the materials for themselves so that materials will not run low during the semester, and to minimize dependency on other students (for art supplies) when doing projects. Printing seems to be one of the main concerns for students, as they often have to print with special paper at the School of Art every week. For other art courses, there are huge rolls of paper, unused paint, and other perfectly new art materials that are left in excess after the end of the term with no place to store them for future use. This is concerning because most art courses do not have much overlap in the materials that are being used, which means that much of the art supplies that students purchase end up being wasted at the end of the course. The students attending our focus group were in agreement that students would be willing to donate materials

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**Figure 2: Percentages of results when asked “To what degree have expenses associated with arts courses discouraged you from taking art courses?”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Choice Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Completely Discouraged</td>
<td>9.87% 109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Discouraged</td>
<td>39.31% 434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Neutral</td>
<td>25.63% 283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Not really discouraged</td>
<td>14.58% 161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Not discouraged at all</td>
<td>10.60% 117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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they no longer need to a closet. This would allow for students to reduce both cost and waste production.

**Problems with Current Resources**

While the administration has taken steps to help reduce the cost of art materials and supplies, a large percentage of students are not aware that these resources exist. According to the YCC Fall Survey, an overwhelming 36% of students were not aware of any resources advertised by the School of Art. Any future resources should be advertised widely to students through channels such as social media, emails, and posters in departmental offices.

Currently, the viable options for students to receive aid for art supplies are the Safety Net, the Creative and Performing Arts fund (CPA), the residential college arts studios, and CCAM camera reservations.

**Safety Net:** SafetyNet is an emergency fund that FGLI students can use for unexpected expenses. In evaluating SafetyNet as a solution to the high cost of art courses and supplies, it is critical to first acknowledge that it isn’t even meant to address this problem. According to the website, SafetyNet is exclusively for the most ‘high-need’ students and is used for emergency situations or other necessary, often non-academic purchases. It is used for things like winter clothing, medical expenses, and housing during breaks - academic supplies and books are generally not funded. Additionally, students and faculty both report that SafetyNet can take a long time to give funding out. SafetyNet has limited resources, and many financial emergencies to deal with. As such, it’s unfair to expect SafetyNet to allot some of its funding towards academic fees that a department could reduce or eliminate. Though Safety Net is a valuable resource for certain financial emergencies, it is not the most effective way for students to receive financial aid on art materials.

**Creative and Performing Arts (CPA) grant:** The CPA supports on-campus art productions and exhibitions in residential colleges. The grant is given on an application basis, so not everyone with financial need would receive funding. Students felt that the CPA grant provides to be a barrier for most people because not everyone is comfortable with sharing their artwork, especially those who
are taking art courses for the first time. According to the students in the Focus Group, it makes students “feel like a charity case” and like they were “being forced to give back to Yale for being funded.” The CPA grant may be prohibitive to students who have high financial need but are uncomfortable displaying their work in exchange for assistance. Additionally, the CPA website states that using the CPA funds towards course fees is strictly prohibited, redirecting students to SafetyNet instead. As explained above, SafetyNet is not an adequate resource for art fees. Thus, it is unclear why numerous art students were instructed by faculty to use a CPA grant to pay for art courses. This is a clear example of how even the resource centers are improperly informed on the extent and nature of resources for art fees.

**Residential College Art Studios:** Several residential colleges have their own art studios, which can serve as a way to obtain arts materials and space to work but doesn’t tackle the course enrollment fees at all. Additionally, only students in that residential college can have access to the studio. There is also significant variation in the quality of each studio, but most students are in agreement that the studios tend to be in a state of disrepair. Supplies are not well-stocked or maintained, as there is usually nobody being paid to manage the studio. Currently, the only spaces where art can be built or painted are the Dramat Shop, the Timothy Dwight Art Room, the Silliman Art Studio, the Hopper Art Room, and the Berkeley Wood Shop. The Dramat shop is a woodworking shop that can be used as a paint area, but is prioritized for use by Dramat and pre-approval is needed by the Dramat and Undergraduate Production. Thus, additional exclusivity is created by the unequal availability of art-making spaces based on one’s residential college.

**CCAM camera reservations:** As can be seen in Figure 3, according to the YCC Fall Survey, very few people know of this resource. Students that decide to enroll in a photography class often buy their own cameras, as the CCAM is a new resource and likely has not been published widely enough. Even classes that require the same camera every year don’t provide cameras for students. It’s impractical better publicity for this resource and a concrete source of funding for those who wish to buy their own camera and are eligible for financial aid (like FGLI students) would remedy this issue.
RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the issues we have identified, we propose the following recommendations:

Steps to be taken at a Yale-wide level

1. **Address the financial burdens of taking arts courses immediately**
   a. As is apparent from our research, arts course fees, as well as the cost of materials (with amounts upwards of $500 per semester), is a huge deterrent for students when taking arts classes. Though many students have tried to cut costs by themselves—by sharing materials with other students, for example—arts courses can be demanding, as professors expect that each student buy all of their materials for themselves. Our suggestions are as follows:
      i. Create an arts supply closet in a space on campus, that is accessible to all students taking arts courses. Like the Career Closet in the Asian American Cultural Center—where anyone can rent formal suits free of charge for use in interviews—we suggest creating an arts sustainability closet, where students can rent art supplies for certain classes. The art supplies in this closet would include leftover materials donated by students, or supplies that are bought from funding received by external sources (such as alumni donations, grants, professors, etc.). On the topic of students providing the closet with leftover materials, Yale College Council can effectively publicize donation needs for unused art supplies.

2. **Support all Yale students by ensuring that all undergraduates have access to arts studios on campus**
   a. One of the most blatant problems with residential college art studios is the fact that there is a lack of accessibility for all Yale undergraduates. Most residential colleges—Berkeley, Davenport, Ezra Stiles, Grace Hopper, Jonathan Edwards, Silliman, Morse, Pauli Murray, Pierson, Saybrook, Timothy Dwight, and Trumbull, to be specific—have a gallery. However, only Timothy Dwight, Silliman, Hopper, and Berkeley have some sort of art studio. This is a serious issue considering the fact that most colleges have a space where art can be hung, yet, there are very few spaces available to produce that art. Even the Dramat Shop requires pre approval by the Dramat and Undergraduate Production and is prioritized for use by Dramat only. On this note, it is crucial that:
      i. We believe that increasing access to residential college arts studios, can help undergraduate students find more places to spend time producing art. A proposed mechanism is by ensuring that there are certain time slots during the day where anyone can swipe into residential college art studios, despite the college that individual resides in. By increasing accessibility to
residential art studios, undergraduates will be given a platform where they can produce art. However, it is an unfortunate reality that many colleges are uncomfortable with opening up access to their art studios for all Yale undergraduates.

3. Increase the number of scholarships available to students taking arts courses, so to reduce the financial barriers currently in place:
   a. In addition to art course fees—which can range from $75-$100 per course—the cost of materials also function as a major disincentive to students. Materials can cost upwards of $500 per semester; additionally, when taking certain courses that require materials such as a camera, a student would have to spend hundreds of dollars (approximately $500). Understandably so, students incur major financial burdens.
   b. Currently, the viable options for students to receive any sort of aid for art supplies are the Safety Net, the creative and performing arts fund (CPA), the residential college arts studios, and CCAM camera reservations. Although the administration has already taken thoughtful, valuable steps to address some of these issues, resources currently offered are insufficient to meet the needs of some students that wish to take art courses. Although it can be easy to quickly dismiss and attribute this statistic to the ignorance of Yale students, there seems to be an even broader problem with these resources.
      i. **Safety Net:** Students have commented that the Safety Net requires long amounts of time to fully process before giving any aid, and that computers have crashed during the processing of safety net. Given the standards for use set on the Safety Net website, it’s unlikely that requests for funding for art supplies would be granted: only 50% of requests are funded, and only “high-need” students’ requests for academic supplies help will be accommodated. According to the website, “Safety Net is not for things which you can plan for”; though Safety Net is a valuable resource for certain financial emergencies, it is not the most effective way for students to receive financial aid on art materials.
      ii. **Creative and Performing Arts (CPA) grant:** Students felt that the CPA grant provides to be a barrier for most people because not everyone is comfortable with sharing their artwork, especially those who are taking art courses for the first time. According to the students in the Focus Group, it makes students “feel like a charity case” and like they were “being forced to give back to Yale for being funded.” The CPA grant may be prohibitive to students who have high financial need but are uncomfortable displaying their work in exchange for assistance.
FINAL THOUGHTS

In providing the above recommendations, we hope to have laid out some easy and concrete steps to help move Yale’s art material sustainability forward and create new art spaces more accessible to students. Should there be any questions, concerns, or other thoughts, please do not hesitate to contact us at sam.woo@yale.edu, shaezmina.khan@yale.edu, or sarah.pitafi@yale.edu.