

Arts &amp; Humanities

# Second ‘Careers, Life, and Yale’ event promotes connections in the arts

More than 100 students and 50 alumni gathered at the Yale School of Management on Feb. 20 for the second “Careers, Life, and Yale” program. Titled “Creative Careers in the Arts,” the event brought back alumni to connect with students and other alumni in creative professions.

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By **Román Castellanos-Monfil**



The second ever “Career, Life, and Yale” event featured a networking lunch with alumni in creative professions. (Photo by Román Castellanos-Monfil)

More than 100 students and 50 alumni gathered at the Yale School of Management on Feb. 20 for the second “Careers, Life, and Yale” program. Titled “Creative Careers in the Arts,” the event brought back alumni to connect with students and other alumni in creative professions.

Following the success of [last semester’s inaugural event](#), the organizers decided to focus on the arts because “it’s an area students don’t get a lot of assistance in,” according to Rahul Prasad ’87 Ph.D., a board officer for the Association of Yale Alumni (AYA) and co-founder of “Careers, Life, and Yale.” Nicholas Roman Lewis ’93, senior director for AYA shared interest groups and organizer of the event, agreed, adding that the arts “needed special energy put behind it.”

In his introductory remarks, Prasad emphasized the connection students shared with alumni as Yalies and urged students to “not be shy” in meeting alumni. In addition to a networking lunch, the event included morning panels with alumni in careers in conservation and curation, music, literary arts, fine and visual arts, performing arts, and

television. In the afternoon, students were able to attend “master classes” in a variety of professions taught by alumni.

New this year, the master classes were added since they are more relatable to the arts, Prasad said. Rather than having a broad class on interviewing skills that might not be translatable to different creative fields, the master classes allowed students to focus on a skill in their own area of interest and therefore are a better use of alumni resources, he added.

Lewis said he hoped that students understood the rarity of being able to meet alumni “in this format who could shape their future” and that they take advantage of the opportunity to foster connections. Citing the growth in interest from students from the previous event, Lise Pfeiffer Chapman ’81 M.B.A., chair of the AYA Board of Governors and co-founder of “Careers, Life, and Yale,” said she believes the program is spreading precisely because of its ability to connect students with alumni in a “meaningful capacity.”

“I think we’re hitting a nerve,” she explained. “The number-one comment we get back from students is, ‘I didn’t know alums cared that much about us.’ I love that line, absolutely love it. And you can see it here in the arts and in the networking ... everyone is cross-connecting.”

Christie Ramsaran ’17 said she decided to attend the event because she was interested in learning how to pursue a career in the arts. She added that listening to the experiences of alumni allowed her to begin formulating the questions she needed to ask herself about what she wanted and the path she could take to get there.

Alumni panelists frequently expressed a gratitude to Yale for their creative careers, adding that it was a big reason why they decided to come back to campus. Shana C. Waterman ’94, ’00 J.D., head of TV at One Race Television, said she “relished the opportunity to give back and to be inspired by the students who will shape the future.” For students who are interested in creative careers, Waterman emphasized the need to be “resilient.”

“The arts and entertainment industry is driven by passion, and sometimes other people don’t get your vision, until they do. But in the meantime, you have to believe in yourself; you have to do the work, day in and day out; and you have to keep a positive attitude,” she said.

Earlier in the day, [Waterman had interviewed Sarah E. Lewis '10 M.A., '15 Ph.D.](#) about Lewis's book, "The Rise: Creativity, the Gift of Failure, and the Search for Mastery." Throughout the interview, Lewis emphasized the role failure plays in the growth of an artist.

"Failure is an opportunity for growth," she said. "It's a gap between where you are and where you want to go." She also urged students to focus on the experience of creating and to be willing to sacrifice for their art.

Prasad said he hoped students used the opportunity to meet alumni so they wouldn't have to go through challenges by themselves.

"There's a great amount of strength that you draw out when you realize that there are other people who have done exactly what you are planning on doing before you, because it shows you there's a light at the end of the tunnel. Otherwise, it's a very lonely place," he explained.

He also noted that he thinks of "Careers, Life, and Yale" as a complement to the Office of Career Strategy and hopes to collaborate with the office in the future. While the theme of the next "Careers, Life, and Yale" event has yet to be decided, Chapman said she wants it to be focused on first-generation students.

For more information about future "Career, Life, and Yale" events, visit the [website](#).

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