



# We Are Called

## The Campaign for Yale Divinity School

### Inclusion and Belonging Community Impact Fund

Yale Divinity School students are eager to meet humanity's challenges head-on. Whether working toward racial justice, improved mental health outcomes, or housing solutions for all, the next generation of leaders embraces the daunting future. YDS is eager to equip them as they rise to meet challenges.

To this end, we foster inclusivity and diversity through our academic, social, and spiritual practices. We encourage conversation across lines of difference, sensitivity to the uniqueness of each person's background, and attentiveness to our words in speech, writing, prayer, and praise.

Since beginning its work in 2020, Yale Divinity School—first through the Anti-Racism Task Force, now through the Committee on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging—has worked steadily to cultivate a more inclusive learning environment. And Yale University has recognized YDS for its steps to advance the experience of intersectionality among historically excluded groups.

Significant progress was made in 2023 alone: Both new faculty hires, Bo kyung Blenda Im and Adrián Emmanuel Hernández-Acosta, are from underrepresented groups; leadership of Black Church Studies became a half-time position, with plans to build endowment for program; and the Center for Public Theology & Public Policy was launched. Of course, there remains much more to be done.



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The Inclusion and Belonging Community Impact Fund has great potential for collaboration and synergy with other Inclusive Excellence Program Funds as part of our We Are Called campaign for YDS. These include Black Church Studies, Prison Ministry, Social Justice Internships, and the Proctor Conference Travel Fund. More detail can be found on standalone fact sheets available from the Office of Development.

We are fortunate that Lynn Sullivan-Harmon, Associate Dean for DEIB, leads us in much of this work. In her role, aided by Assistant Director Rahel Mekonnen, she strives to build an equitable community at YDS. To improve the quality of life for our students, Lynn works closely with Vicki Flippin, Associate Dean for Student Affairs, and is very involved with the wider Yale community. She heads YDS efforts to explore new directions for growth.

The following is just a sample of additional programming that is planned to support YDS students. Endowing these and other programs will signal our deep commitment to creating an environment where everyone belongs.

### **Restorative Justice Practices and Wellness**

YDS aims to use restorative practices as (1) a way of being in community with one another and (2) to mitigate the discord that often limits opportunities for growth and transformation. An extension of the work of the YDS Restorative Justice Working Committee, this initiative will fund external trainers for student leaders and other stakeholders, support participation in related conferences, and ensure the sustainability of the program and its tenets over time.

### **Student Organization Community Events**

YDS wishes to create an endowment that would allow student organizations to apply for funding for events related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. These would include community-building offerings for our international students, including outreach to incoming students, events during orientation, and gatherings for fellowship during the school year. There are more than 20 student-affinity groups, Yale Black Seminararians being the largest.

### **Mental Health Counseling**

YDS seeks to support a programming budget for the new mental health counselor embedded at YDS, Elizabeth Burns. Funds would be used for the counselor to offer meals and materials for workshops and student gatherings to enhance the wellness practices and mental health literacy of YDS students.

### **New Student Orientation**

YDS plans to create orientation videos on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging, as well as Restorative Justice. These will allow our new classes to start each year with important shared information prior to coming to campus.

### **Heritage Months and Identity Recognitions**

YDS plans to launch a new program led by divinity students working in the Office of DEIB to facilitate programming around federally recognized heritage months, such as Black History Month.

With a gift of \$500,000, you may create and name an endowed fund that provides resources to develop and implement a variety of programs to equip academic leaders, administrative leaders, and diversity professionals to create inclusive classrooms, offices, and department spaces.

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At YDS, endowments for key programs and initiatives provide sustainable and enduring support, supplying the necessary funds for leadership, teaching, and research activities year after year. We value the worth and dignity of every member of the Divinity School community, and we build an environment where inclusivity and diversity are central and consistently affirmed. **With your help, we know we can realize our ambitions and callings for**

### **To Learn More**

*For Humanity* is Yale's most ambitious fundraising campaign yet, guided by a mission to improve the world for future generations.

For more information about how you can support the Black Church Studies Program at Yale Divinity School, please contact:

#### **Rod A. Lowe**

*Senior Associate Director of Major Gifts*  
(203) 432-8127  
rodwin.lowe@yale.edu



