

Dear President Salovey, Chief Higgins, Vice President Lindner, Vice President Goff-Crews, Provost Strobel, and senior members of the Yale Administration,

April 16, 2019. Stephanie Washington and Paul Witherspoon— two unarmed, Black youth— were sitting in their car, singing love songs to one another. Their romantic moment was shattered when Hamden Police Officer Devon Eaton and Yale Police Officer Terrance Pollock fired 16 shots into their car. Since then, community members and students alike have flooded the streets, police commission meetings, and municipal hearings asking for answers: how many more Black people must be harmed for you to make a change? So far the Yale Administration has gestured the public to weak reforms, and responded to community organizers with silence. The Black Students for Disarmament at Yale have had no open communication with the administration to date, and this is unacceptable.

Such instances of police brutality are not cases of “bad apples,” but rather products of a poisonous tree that is rooted in racism. Much like the slave patrols and ‘indian constables’ that were the precursors to modern police, [we cannot deny the racialised history of policing at Yale](#). Black and Brown lives are being brutalized by the police at an alarming rate, as data shows that [police violence is endemic to departments nationwide](#). [There is no room for slow, incremental reforms](#). Continuing to maintain a police department, despite its inherent racism, is an act of complicity. Until we uproot these deep systems of oppression, Black and Brown people will continue to live in fear of becoming the next hashtag. That is why we as the Black Students for Disarmament at Yale present and defend the following demands:

1. Immediately disarm the Yale Police Department;
2. Implement a robust Differential Response System devoid of police officers by the end of the 2020–21 Academic School Year;
3. Begin defunding the Yale Police Department immediately so that it can be dismantled by 2023;
4. Reinvest these funds to support New Haven organizations that protect, serve and uplift Black and Brown communities.

The case for college police forces is incredibly thin. Despite attempts to overstate their importance, the Yale Police Department is idle at best and, at worst, an extended arm of the carceral state. If Yale is genuine about promoting public safety, the YPD should be abolished and the funds should be reallocated to social services that truly keep communities safe.

Our attached report, titled *A Pathway to Abolition*, provides a framework for implementing these demands, and demonstrates that they are realizable. The attached petition with over 8,000 signatures demonstrates that our demands have a large and diverse body of support, from students to faculty to alum to concerned third parties. Everyone sees the problem—it is time for the Yale administration to do their job and resolve the issue. We as the Black Students for Disarmament at Yale are willing to partner with local community activists to have open conversations with the Yale administration on how we can accomplish these demands. We expect a response by no later than **September 30**.

There is hope for a better future. We must put the work in to achieve it.

In solidarity,
Black Students for Disarmament at Yale