



FIVE YEARS OF INNOVATION

2021–2022

ANNUAL REPORT

**tsai center for
innovative
thinking**

Yale

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A Note from our Executive Director

During the 2021–2022 academic year, Tsai CITY welcomed students into our sparkling, light-filled new building. Returning to in-person programming after a long hiatus was truly a cause for celebration, with staff and students alike reconnecting with enthusiasm and energy. Contributing to the buzz of activity in the building during the fall semester was Joe Tsai (YC '86, JD '90) himself, who spent time at Tsai CITY as a visiting senior innovation fellow. Joe delivered several talks on sports and the world of digital innovation, interviewed recent graduates of Tsai CITY's programs in our Pathways in Innovation series, and met with faculty, staff, and students active in the university innovation and entrepreneurship community.

This year also marked the launch of Tsai CITY's Pathways model designed to help guide student innovators toward their unique, potential areas of interest. After substantial time last year consulting with our Student Advisory Board, staff and students together mapped five pathways with an aim to help students understand the diversity of options available to them as they embark on their innovation journeys. These five, non-mutually exclusive pathways are: Entrepreneur, Intrapreneur, Creative, Civic Innovator, and Explorer. This framework has now been integrated into our programs and initiatives, website, and office hours. It has become both an essential organizing framework as well as a tool to spark in-depth conversations.

As Tsai CITY entered its fifth year of activity since its launch in 2017, we were awarded Outstanding Emerging Entrepreneurship Center by the Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centers (GCEC), a remarkable accomplishment and important recognition for Tsai CITY. Tsai CITY has continued to be a leader in principles of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging among university innovation centers. Our commitment to Tsai CITY's mission—to inspire students from diverse backgrounds and disciplines to seek innovative ways to solve real-world problems—underlies everything we do and integrates into our decisions at every level. A practical example of this leadership is our recent collaboration with VentureWell on a publication and subsequent community conversations for their Advancing Equity series, Transforming Programs Through an Equity Lens.

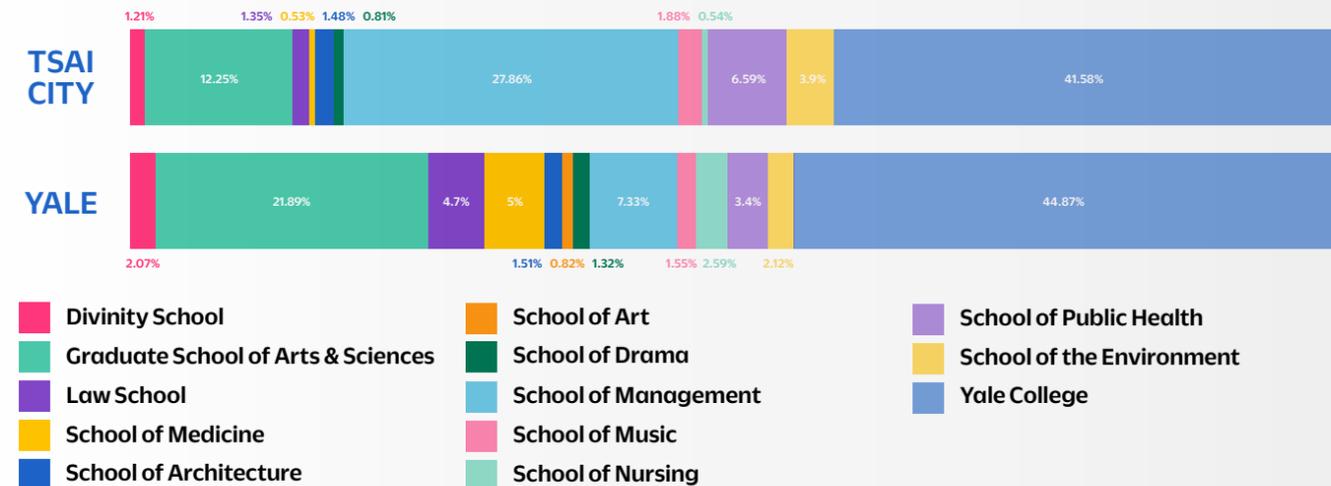
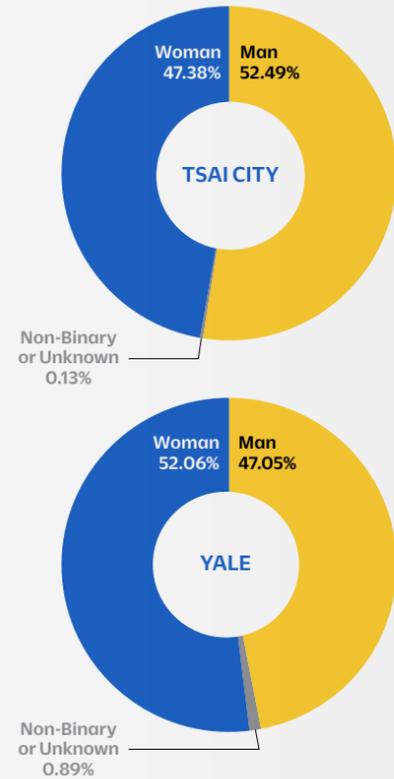
While these representative accomplishments of the past year are significant, it is important to recognize that they are built upon the solid foundation and sturdy scaffolding of student curiosity and commitment, staff creativity and passion, and Yale University's momentum in strengthening the innovation and entrepreneurship community. With the recent launch of Yale Ventures and a university-wide vision of a more unified and fully integrated set of resources and goals, Yale is at a point of incredible creativity and growth. Tsai CITY plays an important role in that vision and we look forward to the years to come.

Sincerely,
Clare Leinweber
Executive Director

Community Overview

Tsai CITY's Student Body

	TSAI CITY	YALE
White	23.01%	38.75%
International	31.63%	21.11%
Asian	23.15%	16.24%
Hispanic or Latino of Any Race	9.96%	10.62%
Black or African American	6.46%	6.53%
Two or more races	4.71%	4.92%
Unkown	1.08%	1.45%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0%	0.25%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0%	0.12%



Over the past five years we've served approximately 1,100 students each year through programming, mentorship, funding, and student employment. We've taken critical steps to operationalize equity and accessibility across our offerings to allow for a greater representation of diverse backgrounds and disciplines. We've worked to create opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration, community building, and belonging in ways that support a shared belief that true innovation requires diversity.



Student Advisory Board

Tsai CITY's Student Advisory Board (SAB), composed of students from across Yale's campus, plays a key role in shaping our work. Collectively representing a diversity of Yale experiences, these students offer insight and feedback on Tsai CITY programs, policies, and priorities.

15
MEMBERS

5
SCHOOLS REPRESENTED

ENGAGING STUDENT LEADERS

To foster a greater community across Yale's entrepreneurial ecosystem, this year we engaged Yale College's entrepreneurship & innovation related student groups in a monthly convening. Student leaders from these organizations came together to think about ways to collaborate and cross promote events and offerings—and to ideate ways Tsai CITY can more directly support their work.

TIMELINE FACT

In September 2018, Tsai CITY Norms were established in collaboration with the Student Advisory Board to provide a guide to help us all create spaces of inclusive innovation in our daily activities. These norms reflect our core commitments to interdisciplinary collaboration, inclusivity across all dimensions of diversity, providing skills & practices of effective action, risk-taking, and resilience. These norms lay the foundation for all conversations and interactions at Tsai CITY and have been iterated on throughout the years.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? **Aspecta.ai**

Amidst COVID-19, the rapid development of open-source culture has allowed for web talent data to experience exponential growth, meaning that the traditional method of discovering, understanding, and hiring talents solely based on resumes fails to satisfy the needs of the new age.

aspecta.

MISSION

PRODUCT

ABOUT

Future paradigm of work and professional lives powered by AI-driven web and on-chain data insights.

01

alpha
out now

RECRUITING
SAAS

EXPLORE ALPHA

The next generation talent engine: AI powered assessment, screening, and sourcing for Web 3.0 employers and beyond.



Zongjian (Jack) He (GRD '22)
Founder

Aspecta.ai (formerly iTalent.ai) is a Yale student startup and Tsai CITY supported venture hoping to change that. Led by Zongjian (Jack) He (GRD '22), Aspecta.ai gathered a team of top AI scientists to build the next generation talent engine to empower the recruiting of the “cloud” era. Since its founding, Aspecta.ai has raised approximately \$2 million with investments from top-tier global venture capital funds like ZhenFund.

This summer, Aspecta.ai joined Tsai CITY's latest Summer Fellowship cohort with plans to launch the Aspecta.ai job market in the fall and a workspace created to host inclusive events and offer recruiting and collaboration opportunities.

Community Events

Community events provide low-stakes entry points to Tsai CITY and spark connections among innovators of all kinds. Take a look at a few events we hosted this year.

2,337
ATTENDEES FOR COMMUNITY EVENTS
AND WORKSHOPS

94
COMMUNITY EVENTS AND
WORKSHOPS

9.5
NPS SCORE AVERAGE

Art Exhibitions

This year, we engaged with university students to contribute immersive art to occupy Tsai CITY's studio space. These artists, Diego Ellis Soto (GRD '22) and Lucas Yasunaga (ART '22), also coordinated accompanying live performances.

Innovator Teams

These small group meetups—designed to provide support, inspiration, and accountability to like-minded innovators—convened weekly throughout the fall and spring semesters.

On Memory, Memorial Mapping

The On Memory project report underscores the city's infrastructural history and how it led to COVID-19's disproportionate effects on Black and Brown communities. The On Memory team, birthed from last year's Hub & Spoke intensive, hosted two community events that served to report on the research and create transformational space that merged healing, community, and the arts.

Orientations

These one-hour events, offered regularly throughout the academic year, invite students from across Yale to learn about Tsai CITY resources and connect with fellow innovators.

Pathways in Innovation

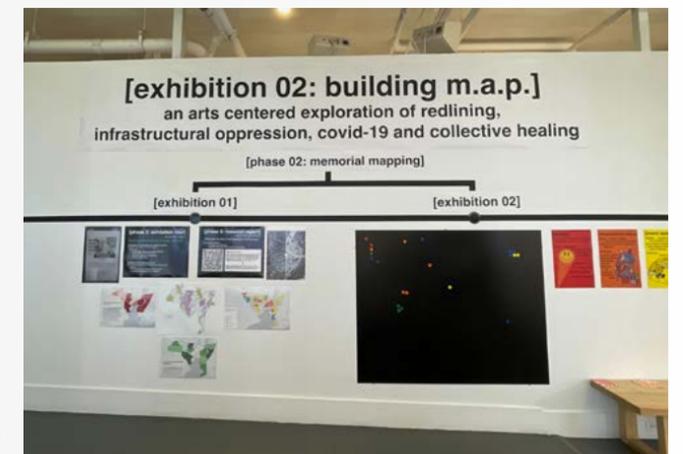
Hundreds of audience members joined as Joe Tsai (YC '86, JD '90) interviewed program alumni across the various pathways. Each discussion offered insight on entrepreneurship, creating value, pivoting, and more.

Pitch Slams

Students pitched concepts of all kinds, including their most early-stage, unfeasible, or just plain weird ideas, to a supportive audience of peers.

WE@Yale Women Innovators Series

In this popular series, female innovators—from founders Mahima (Chawla Cocoon), Crystal Etienne (Ruby Love), and Rebecca Minkoff (Rebecca Minkoff and Female Founder Collective) to leaders in venture capital, activism, and other fields—shared lessons learned from their own journeys.



Workshops

Tsai CITY holds a range of open workshops with expert practitioners, entrepreneurs, and Yale staff and faculty, helping students develop innovative mindsets and essential practical skills.



TIMELINE FACT

Thanks to a generous donation from benefactor and namesake, Joe Tsai (YC '86, JD '90), Tsai CITY was founded on July 1, 2017 and held its first series of open workshops during the fall 2017 semester.

Innovator's Toolkit Series

This series brings experts from a wide range of industries to provide attendees with core innovation skills and tangible takeaways. All Innovator's Toolkit workshops are free and open to the public. This year's topics included venture funding, civic innovation, branding, and more.

Sports and the World of Digital Innovation

As Joe Tsai (YC '86, JD '90) joined the team as senior innovation fellow, he led the charge on hosting his own special set of workshops. Through three in-person talks, Joe Tsai explored how the evolving transformation of the digital landscape continues to provide growth opportunities for the sports industry.

 **CLICK TO WATCH**
Sports and the World of Digital Innovation recap

Intensives

Intensives offer hands-on learning experiences on specific themes and topics. This year, we refined our offerings—piloting several new programs & improving on existing ones—allowing diverse cohorts to explore topics from product development to climate innovation in multi-session programs.

6
INTENSIVES

167
PARTICIPANTS

Climate Solutions Generator

This collaboration with the Center for Business and the Environment at Yale (CBEY) allowed students from across campus to explore key challenges and opportunities for innovation in climate change.

Global Innovators Intensive

This program, piloted in fall 2021, included talks from guest speakers, movie screenings, panel discussions, and workshops to showcase global innovation, and discuss how to manage and lead global teams. The last module included an ideation session where students put their newly learned skills to practice to solve complex global problems.

Hub & Spoke

In this intensive students built upon the work of the first cohort by completing a community-centered data mapping project that underscores the city's infrastructural history and its correlation to COVID-19's disproportionate effects on Black and Brown communities. The report was presented to the community in two public exhibitions.

Innovation from the Inside: Accelerators and Incubators

This intensive, focused on intrapreneurship, connected students to global leaders from incubator programs like Techstars, Y-Combinator, Mass Challenge, and more, to learn the mindsets and frameworks used by innovative thinkers and practitioners who develop new ventures through accelerators and incubators.

Product Development Intensive

This intensive—a partnership with L'Oréal, Yale's Center for Engineering Innovation and Design (CEID), the Greenberg Engineering Teaching Concourse, and Tsai CITY—gave students an insiders look at innovation and developing consumer goods within large organizations.

Scientific Commercialization Intensive

This spring 2021 program facilitated collaboration between students and faculty innovators to explore early commercialization opportunities for research discoveries.

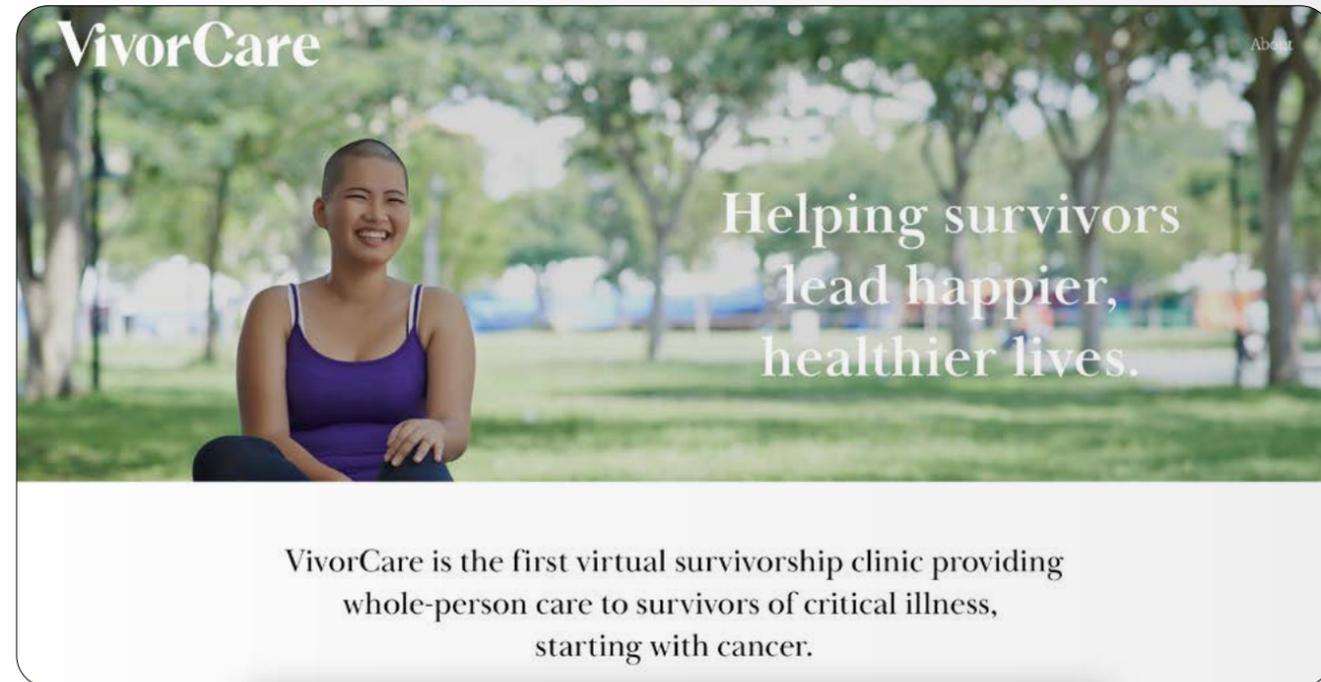


⊕ INNOVATION

Identifying a need for programming that empowered innovators eager to create change globally, the Global Innovator's Intensive launched in fall 2021. The program convened 30 students across eight schools at Yale for six weeks and culminated in a shared optimism that this is just the beginning of exploring global innovation at Yale.

Launch Pad

The Tsai CITY Launch Pad is designed to take early-stage founders to the next level with their ventures through asynchronous and synchronous programming.



VivorCare

Helping survivors lead happier, healthier lives.

VivorCare is the first virtual survivorship clinic providing whole-person care to survivors of critical illness, starting with cancer.

51
TEAMS SUPPORTED

ACCforall

Melissa Lu (SOM '22)
ACCforall's vision is to be an international B2C fine jewelry and accessories membership e-commerce platform.

Adaptive House

Janelle Schmidt (ARC '22)
Adaptive House plans to rebuild the structure of a home into both a new type of spatial configuration and structural system.

Arch Assets

Kevin Wang (SOM '23)
Arch Assets is a fintech venture that aims to democratize access to alternative investments for everyday people.

Birthyear Family Consulting

Yushi Zhang (SPH '23)
Birthyear Family Consulting provides consulting services for families around the birth years.

BrideMeetsGuide

Aleck Solorzano (SOM '23), Josh Gluckman (YC '24)
BrideMeetsGuide is a website that helps couples pick the right venues and vendors for their wedding.

Carry

Ali Brocato (YC '23)
Carry is an on-demand, mobile marketplace that matches users with a network of nearby carriers, allowing consumers to find instantaneous help for transporting, retrieving, or sending goods.

Uplypht

David Mandelbaum (SPH '23)
Uplypht is a technology platform that applies comprehensive personalized psychology-based and social interventions to drive sustainable physical activity behavior change and positive mental and physical health outcomes.

CoffeChats

Diego Vega (SOM '23)
CoffeChats is a platform to democratize knowledge—domain experts get paid for sharing their time and knowledge.

DesMuse

Camilla Tassi (DRA '22), Maura Tuffy (MUS '22), John Horzen (DRA '24)
DesMuse is the first space dedicated to the intersection of theatrical design and classical concerted music.

Dimension

Srikar Godilla (YC '24)
Dimension helps engineers design things by using augmented reality and provides easy-to-use CAD functionality at a fraction of the cost.

HITLAB Women's Health Tech Initiative 2.0

Nicole Anderson (SPH '23)
HITLAB Women's Health Tech Initiative 2.0 plans to expand the mission and vision of the existing HITLAB Women's Health Tech Initiative, addressing unmet health needs of women globally and increasing gender equity in technology and venture capital.

Horace Forests

Brady Rowe (SPH '22)
Horace Forests is a real estate investing company that buys tax-delinquent land to sell under market value to underserved communities and individuals.

Hue

Nathan Mai (YC '25)
Hue is an app that lets you review, catalog, and share music reviews online, similar to Goodreads and Letterboxd, but for music.

Hyacinth Fitness

Savannah Bailey (SOM '23), Nick Kripowicz
Hyacinth Fitness introduces barbell strength training to those curious about its benefits in a safe, supportive, inclusive atmosphere helping members form exercise habits to build a healthier, happier life.

Kelp It On

Debie Blair (SOM '23), Wei-Ru Li (SOM '23)
Kelp It On wants to bring kelp into the western diet by designing kelp-based snacks and other food formats and introducing it to an under-developed market.

Lua

Elaine Lac (YSE '22), Veenu King (YSE '22)
Lua is a U.S.-based B2B supplier of lotus silk to luxury wear manufacturers and brands, and working to scale the production of this sustainable fabric through automation, industrial symbiosis, and supplier centralization.

Mea-Lynn Wong

Mea-Lynn Wong (SOM '23)
Mea-Lynn Wong's vision is to create an application that will serve as a platform to validate future purchases, starting with fashion pieces.

Nia.Health

Julian Love (SOM '23)
Nia.Health is a website that provides people with herbal remedy information and products for their ailments or just for generally improving their health and wellbeing.

Nombox

Ethan Treiman (YC '22), Francis Kigawa (YC '22)
Nombox empowers its users to create, share, and stream multimedia walkthroughs of their favorite recipes.

Palete

Archit Bagaria (SOM '23)
Palete is a plant-based meat analog company. Their first product is a chicken replacement made of all-natural ingredients.

Parrot

Harry Jain (YC '23)
Parrot is a social media app and website for storing, sharing, and discovering quotes.

PreMind Health (FKA Nebula Care)

Jae Zhong (SPH '23), Robert (Xiangru) Tang (GRD '22)
PreMind Health provides a smart, preemptive and multilingual mental health platform that improves the efficiency of care for large organizations.

RDonCall (Registered Dietitian on Call)

Zhuoya Yang (SPH '23)
RDonCall is initiating a telenutrition platform for people suffering from chronic diseases to connect with and receive personalized guidance from registered dietitian.

Read to Lead

Abraham Keita (YC '24), Dylan Baldwin (YC '25)
Read to Lead aims to transform education in Africa, with a focus on Liberia by raising books, computers, and educational resources that will provide quality education for Liberian children.

Sectus

Seun Omonije (YC '22)
Sectus builds the infrastructure for scalable computation and communication of data generated at the network edge.

SHEN

Clara Lee (YC '24)
SHEN is dedicated to making Chinese medicine more accessible by delivering benefits through a high-potency, easily consumable gummy.

Sillable

Aaron Daniel (YC '23), Em Tchorz (YC '23), Burton Lyng-Olsen (YC '25)
Sillable is building a mobile application that allows retail consumers to search for products sold in local stores.

Swift Spot

Kelvin Yip (YC '24), Philippe Haffner (SOM '22), August Money, Harish Vemuri
Swift Spot is a digital marketplace for those looking to buy and sell parking spaces for live events.

Toomb

Julian Fueyo Gonzalez (MUS '23)
Toomb is a social-media app designed to connect users in 'hyper-social environments'.

VivorCare

Hill Moss (SOM, SPH '22)
VivorCare's mission is to equip survivors of severe and critical illness with the tools they need to lead happier, healthier lives.

Reflected above are the fall '21 participants.



CLICK TO READ
Full list of 21–22
Launch Pad teams

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? Midnight Oil Collective

“At every point in our development, Midnight Oil Collective has been supported by resources and networks through Tsai CITY. We very much recognize that our work would not have been possible without Margaret, Matt, Victor, Justin, and Clare, all who worked tirelessly with us as we took our first steps. Thank you, Tsai CITY for burning the midnight oil with us all along the way.”

— Frances Pollock (MUS '25)



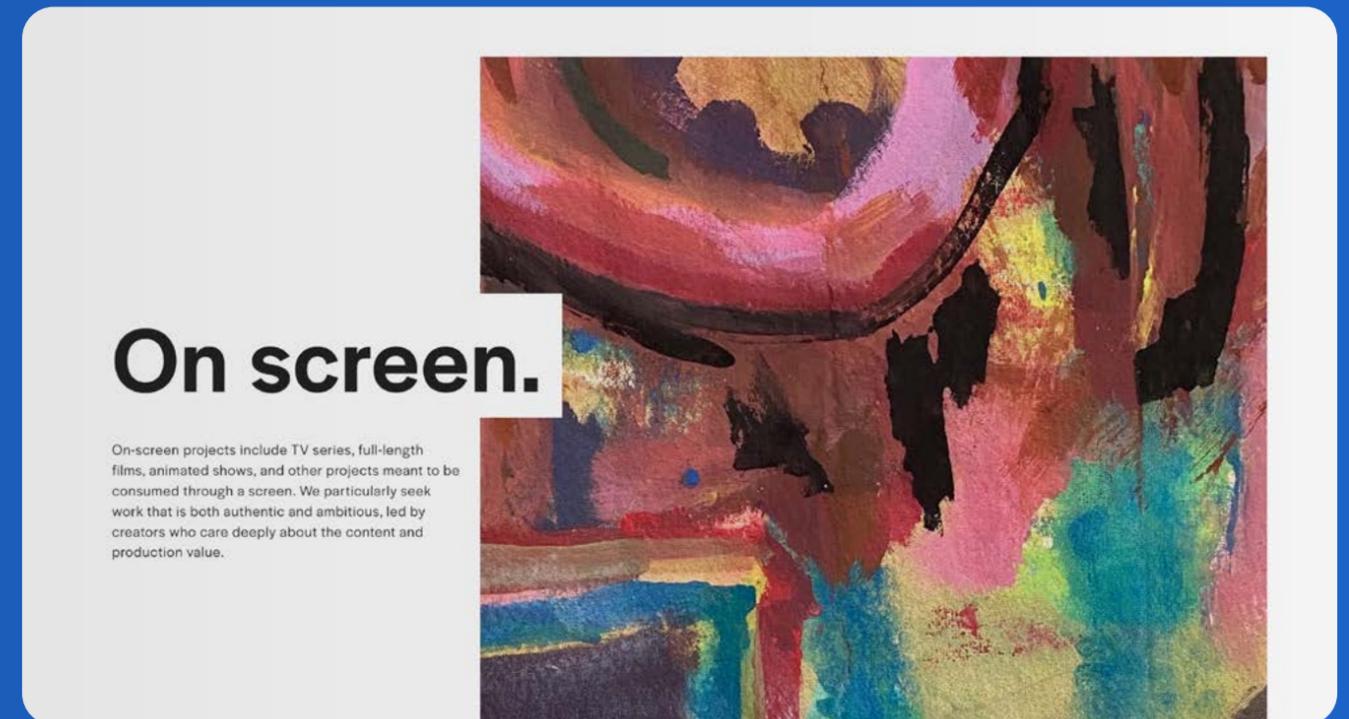
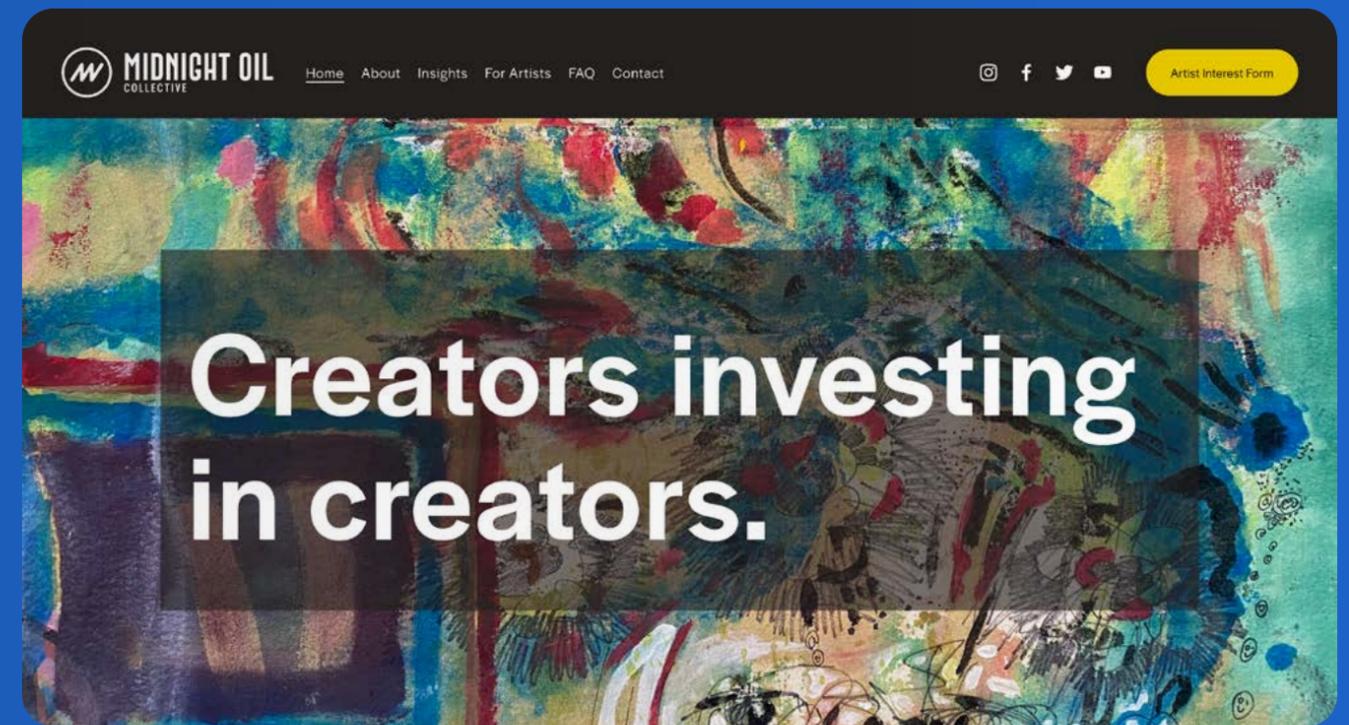
Frances Pollock (MUS '25)
Co-founder



Edwin Joseph (MUS '20)
Co-founder



Danilo Gambini (DRA '20)
Co-founder



The Midnight Oil Collective is a group of creators investing in creators. It was founded by Yale artists—Frances Pollock (MUS '25), Edwin Joseph (MUS '20), and Danilo Gambini (DRA '20)—who during the pandemic reflected upon equity in the arts and their struggle to procure funding. Hoping to change the system, Midnight Oil Collective (MOC) operates through a cyclical investment cycle.

MOC began its journey at Tsai CITY in the Fall 2020 Accelerator program, later participating in the Summer Fellowship and eventually winning the new Manolo Sanchez prize at StartUp Yale in 2022. This year, they've raised \$500k in seed funding, launched their own incubator and accelerator program, and will be investing in nine inaugural portfolio companies in the fall.

Accelerator

Tsai CITY's Accelerator, which runs every fall and spring semester, guides students and teams with innovative ideas through the process of building effective organizations, projects, and ventures through workshops, mentorship, and funding. The Accelerator provides an enriching learning opportunity for students with innovative ideas.

24
TEAMS

\$48K
AWARDED



Aspecta.ai

Zongjian He (GRD '22), Leo Song
Aspecta.ai provides a revolutionary candidate assessment solution; powered by AI, Aspecta.ai quantitatively evaluate candidates' qualifications in thousands of skill aspects with big data from 40+ sources.

Catalace

Dana Joseph (SPH '22), Newlyn Joseph (YC '19)
Catalace is a medical technology that combines artificial intelligence and precision medicine to improve cancer diagnostics.

Cimu

Kaci Xie (YC '24)
Cimu is a marketplace that rescues unwanted clothes from landfills by refashioning them through stylish, planet-saving alterations.

Dalmatian

Alex Holm (SOM '24)
Dalmatian helps young adults fight acne with trendy, fashionable, and fun graphic pimple patches that are designed to be displayed.

Edwell

Nicola Fleischer (SOM '22)
Edwell is a technology-enabled wellness platform to connect, empower, and support educators.

Environmental Justice Index LLC

Pari Kasotia (YSE '22), Jessica Scott
Environmental Justice Index provides insights on a company's environmental justice performance.

Hirect

Steven Zipei Zhu (GRD '22)
Hirect is an online recruiting platform where recruiters and candidates can directly chat with each other.

Meego Inc

Jamil Liu (SOM '22)
Meego is an e-bike company that wants to build a modern aftersales service system to integrate existing resources in the industry.

Perkify

Matteo Carrabba (YC '24)
Perkify provides the infrastructure for businesses and institutions to offer subscription services as a benefit to their employees or members.

PlanMemorial.com

Xiaoteng Huang (SOM '22), Kate Busatto (DIV '23)
PlanMemorial.com is a website/mobile application that helps people to plan, organize, and execute memorial services of their loved ones who pass away.

The New Muses Project

Joe Lerangis (MUS '25), Gloria Yin (MUS '22), Rhianna Cockrell
The New Muses Project incentivizes musicians to perform, support, and research music by composers from historically marginalized backgrounds through a website that matches users' interests with tailored suggestions, a series of recording and performance projects to amplify underrepresented voices, and a transcription project to bring archival material to the forefront of classical music.

The Palestinian Soap Store

Chris Hebdon (GRD '22), Dina Omar (GRD '22)
The Palestinian Soap Store seeks to be the first store in the USA to sell all of the historic brands of traditional soaps from Nablus.

Tutoring for Tomorrow

Preston Smith (YC '23), Louis Moon (YC '22)
Tutoring for Tomorrow is a nonprofit that provides students with academic assistance in order to support local communities.

Reflected above are the fall '21 participants.



CLICK TO READ
Full list of 21-22 Accelerator teams



**A NEW VISION
FOR
SUPPORTING
STUDENT
VENTURES**

As we welcomed our inaugural Associate Director of Student Programming, Sade Owoye, we saw changes to popular venture development programs Launch Pad and Accelerator. This year, in-person workshops called 'discovery sessions' were introduced to the Launch Pad's asynchronous format. These live sessions provided students with an experiential learning opportunity that was complementary to the asynchronous learning modules. For the Accelerator, students attended networking sessions that provided them with the chance to build relationships within the Yale ecosystem.

In addition, students were introduced to Circle, an all-in-one community platform that helped Accelerator and Launch Pad participants interact with each other and access program content. Each of these improvements aligned with a common goal for this year: build community, collaboration, and engagement amongst program participants. As we approach a new academic year, there will continue to be improvements and iterations to these popular offerings; among them include rolling admission to the Launch Pad program.

Summer Fellowship

The Tsai CITY Summer Fellowship is a full-time accelerator designed for companies, nonprofits, and initiatives that have demonstrated traction and have developed sustainable models for their ventures. The fellowship provides a \$15,000 grant for each team, along with a diverse array of workshops, mentoring resources, pitch opportunities, and more.

12 TEAMS
\$180K AWARDED



A RETURN TO NORMALCY

As the Summer Fellowship returned to an in-person experience, we worked to ensure a critical component of the program was re-introduced: the summer fellowship retreat. This year's retreat took place at the Interlaken Inn in Lakeville, Connecticut and featured two days of community building, farm-to-table meals, and adventurous canoeing and kayaking experiences in Lake Wonoscopomuc. "The retreat built a strong sense of community and deepened the connection between the teams and our staff," shared Jaclyn Dadio, Tsai CITY's Associate Director of Operations and Events.

Aspecta.ai

Zongjian He (GRD '22), Xue (Steve) Liu
Aspecta.ai develops next-generation talent assessment technology to empower future recruiting.

Catalace

Dana Joseph (SPH '22), Newlyn Joseph (YC '19), Adrian Joseph
Catalace is a medical technology that combines artificial intelligence and precision medicine to improve cancer diagnostics.

CountyShops

Greg Gatto (YC '22)
CountyShops aims to create local marketplaces by county. This allows shoppers to browse and buy products from local businesses, all on one site.

Cimu

Kaci Xie (YC '24)
Cimu is a Gen-Z alterations company that rescues unwanted clothes from landfills by refashioning them through planet-saving clothing alterations.

Dalmatian

Alex Holm (SOM '22)
Dalmatian helps young adults fight acne with trendy, fashionable, and fun graphic pimple patches that are designed to be displayed.

Nebula Care

Jae Zhong (SPH '23)
Nebula Care is driven by the mission to advance health equity through culturally appropriate care.

MangoLeather

Jinali Mody (YSE '23)
MangoLeather focuses on manufacturing plant leather from mango peel and core waste (ensuring comparable quality to animal hide) and selling B2B to fashion houses, car manufacturers and others as we move towards more environmentally friendly, cruelty-free substitutes.

Meego Inc

Mimi Chen (SOM '22)
Meego is operating an ebike company including design, manufacturing, and sales.

Mindful Kala

Shruti Parthasarathy (YC '24)
Mindful Kala aims to empower teens through easily-accessible intercultural education, support, and mind-body movement to be happier, healthier, and more resilient beings.

New Muses Project

Gloria Yin (MUS '22)
New Muses Project incentivizes classical musicians to research, perform, and support music by composers from historically marginalized backgrounds through an innovative and accessible website.

Phigital

Lacie Thorne (SOM '23)
Phigital is a proprietary API plugin that extends a brand's existing e-commerce platform into a resale marketplace.

Ruffle

Archit Bagaria (SOM '23)
Ruffle's objective is to disrupt the unsustainable meat industry by driving affordable and innovative meat substitutes.



Mentoring

Mentoring is a key resource for our students. We offer mentoring through two primary tracks: office hours—which invite any student to chat with our core team about new ideas, feedback, or whatever’s on their mind—and more structured connections between project teams and our robust mentor network.

Mentoring is an essential offering at Tsai CITY and has grown tremendously over the past five years. In 2017, Tsai CITY’s mentor network included 80 mentors who supported students in our Accelerator and Summer Fellowship programs. As we complete our fifth year, we have more than 540 mentors who offer opportunities (or ‘entry points’) to support students participating in a variety of programs—including the Launch Pad, mentor breakfasts, Startup Yale, and rolling mentorship—and with various needs including marketing, legal, fundraising operations and more.

803

OFFICE HOURS SESSIONS

545

MENTORS IN NETWORK

208

MENTORS ENGAGED



“Every student innovator at Yale deserves a mentor.”

— Victor Padilla-Taylor, Director of Networks

Funding

\$371,450

TOTAL AWARDED

We help students realize ideas through several funding streams, from small grants for early-stage concepts to major entrepreneurship awards.

Student Ecosystem Fund

\$3,125 awarded

The Student Ecosystem fund offers funding to students doing work that supports and advances Yale’s entrepreneurship & innovation ecosystem. Including funding for events, clubs, or any other creative initiative that helps students at Yale be part of innovation, students are eligible for up to \$500 in matching funds.

Student Milestone Fund

\$55,690 awarded

The Student Milestone Fund is an opportunity for current Yale students to apply for up to \$2,000 to take their business, project, or intervention to the next level. This fund is designed for students who have a prototype or operational proof of concept and are invested in the long-term success of their endeavor.

Student Exploration Fund

\$16,635 awarded

The Student Exploration Fund, which offers grants of up to \$500 on a rolling basis, supports students looking to advance an early-stage idea or project.

Startup Yale Prizes

\$68,000 awarded

Tsai CITY sponsored three prizes (the Miller Prize, the Yale Innovators’ Prize, and the newly added Manolo Sanchez Prize), including associated audience choice awards.

Venture Development Funding

\$228,000 awarded

Participants in our Accelerator and Summer Fellowship cohorts received grants as part of these programs.

TIMELINE FACT

Tsai CITY awarded the most funding in its five-year history during the 2020–2021 academic year, totaling \$466,731. During the pandemic, Tsai CITY repurposed resources that would have been used primarily for in-person programming to create more grants for student innovators pursuing projects of their own.



NEW FUND FOR ECOSYSTEM BUILDERS

This year, Tsai CITY introduced the Student Ecosystem Fund to Yale students. This fund encourages students to help build Yale’s innovation ecosystem. This includes planning events, starting clubs, or any other creative initiative that helps students contribute to innovation and entrepreneurship. Students received up to \$500 in matching funds and gained access to a community of other innovators, entrepreneurs, and ecosystem builders.

Among this year’s recipients was SYNC—an initiative led by four International Yale students from South Korea, England, Hong Kong, and Singapore—who were displaced and working across time zones during the COVID lockdown. Their experience led them to explore the idea of instantaneity, seamlessness and interconnectivity. They proposed an exhibition that asks artists and students to re-imagine how we as innovators can be in “sync” and meet with others while maintaining privacy and balance in our lives.

Startup Yale

7
PRIZES

\$138K+
TOTAL PRIZE FUNDING AWARDED

Startup Yale 2022 brought together hundreds of attendees in a series of conversations and pitch-offs, through virtual viewing and in-person watch parties. The event kicked off with virtual tours of physical landscapes and infrastructures launched by Yale startups. Later, students pitched for Yale's biggest entrepreneurship awards—including a new prize for student-led startups helping the financially underserved.



New Haven Civic Innovation Prize
The New Haven Civic Innovation Prize awards up to \$10,000 to the best student- or community-led venture or project focused on benefiting New Haven.

Prize winners: Healing by Growing (\$8,000), Inspire Centre for Infinite Learning (\$2,000)
Camila Guiza-Chavez, Ivette Ruiz, Yuka Matsubara; Dominiq Oti (ARC '22)

The judges decided to split the prize between two teams, Healing by Growing Farms is an urban farm addressing food insecurity by and for disabled people and trauma survivors centering BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and other marginalized groups to reconnect to themselves and their communities by reconnecting to the land.

Inspire Centre for Infinite Learning aims to renovate its interior with the clear intent to transform the use of an existing interior space into a training centre for the Newhallville community. The space will have resources to support training such as: computers, study desks and flexible study areas for quiet reading and gathering.

Rita Wilson Prize Fund in Support of Innovation and Entrepreneurship
The Rita Wilson Prize Fund in Support of Innovation and Entrepreneurship is a \$10,000 cash prize awarded by InnovateHealth Yale to the best student-led venture focused on creating a technological solution to address a health disparity in the United States.

Prize winner: Adiona
Joshua Kim (YC '23), Katherine Sylvester (YC '23)

Using novel analytics that predict onset of key dementia symptoms from consumer-grade, wearable sensors, Adiona uses a mobile app to alleviate the 24/7 worry that comes with caregiving, providing caregivers peace of mind and tools to provide better care,

while providing clinicians/researchers valuable information about disease presentation/progression.

Thorne Prize for Social Innovation in Public Health or Education
The Thorne Prize for Social Innovation in Health or Education is a \$25,000 cash prize awarded to the best student-led venture focused on social innovation in health or education for underserved communities in the United States or low-resource countries.

Prize winner: The Educator Wellness Project
Nicola Fleischer (SOM '22)

The Educator Wellness Project supports wellbeing and retention in the teaching profession. It provides individualized wellness coaching, small group healing circles, and social-emotional learning resources to meet the mental health and wellness needs of teachers.

Miller Prize
The Miller Prize awards a \$25,000 cash prize to a student-led venture working on innovative tech or tech-enabled solutions that has a definable go-to-market strategy.

Prize winner: Panluminate Inc
Ons M'Saad (GRD '22), Joerg Bewersdorf, Tom Friedlander

Panluminate Inc is a proprietary pan-Expansion Microscopy that will revolutionize biological research by enabling the average scientist to acquire high-end 3D images of their samples at a fraction of the time, cost, and difficulty of current state-of-the-art methods.

Sustainable Venture Prize
The Sustainable Venture Prize, managed by the Yale Center for Business and the Environment, awards \$25,000 to a promising student business venture that advances environmental sustainability.

Prize winner: Aatma Leather
Jinali Mody (YSE '23), Vidit Bhandarkar (GRD '24)

Aatma Leather manufactures mango leather from mango peel and core waste while ensuring comparable quality to animal hide and selling B2B to fashion houses for products like belts, shoes, bags and car manufacturers for seats in efforts to move towards more environmentally friendly, cruelty-free substitutes for clothing.

Manolo Sanchez Prize
The Manolo Sanchez Prize awards \$25,000 to a for-profit or non-profit student-led startup with the potential to help improve the financial health of the financially underserved.

Prize winner: Midnight Oil Collective
Edwin Joseph MUS '20, Frances Pollock (MUS '20), Sola Fadiran (DRA '22), Emily Roller

Midnight Oil Collective is a venture studio that invests in creative-economy based businesses and assets validated through our incubator and accelerator.

Yale Innovators Prize
The Yale Innovators Prize is a \$15,000 cash prize awarded to the for-profit or non-profit startup that has the potential to produce the greatest impact (financially, socially, or otherwise). The Yale Innovators' Prize is open to any project, campaign, solution, venture, or non-profit led by a current Yale student(s).

Prize winner: Frailty Myths
Georgia Faye Hirsty (SOM '22), Erinn Carter

Frailty Myths is a different kind of diversity, equity, and inclusion consultancy that uses the power of practice, community leadership, and experiential learning to transform workplace culture and advance justice.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT IN UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

The new Manolo Sanchez Prize was introduced at this year's Startup Yale. The donor-funded prize awards \$25,000 to a for-profit or non-profit startup with the potential to help support financial health in underserved communities.

In its inaugural year, the prize was awarded to the Midnight Oil Collective (Edwin Joseph MUS '20, Frances Pollock MUS '25, Sola Fadiran DRA '22, Emily Roller YC '07). The Midnight Oil Collective combines the tools of venture capital with those of cooperative economics to create a new business model that truly centers creators. As the first Manolo Sanchez Prize winners, the Midnight Oil Collective will continue to educate and support creatives through funding and accelerator opportunities.

Five Years of Innovation



Where it Began

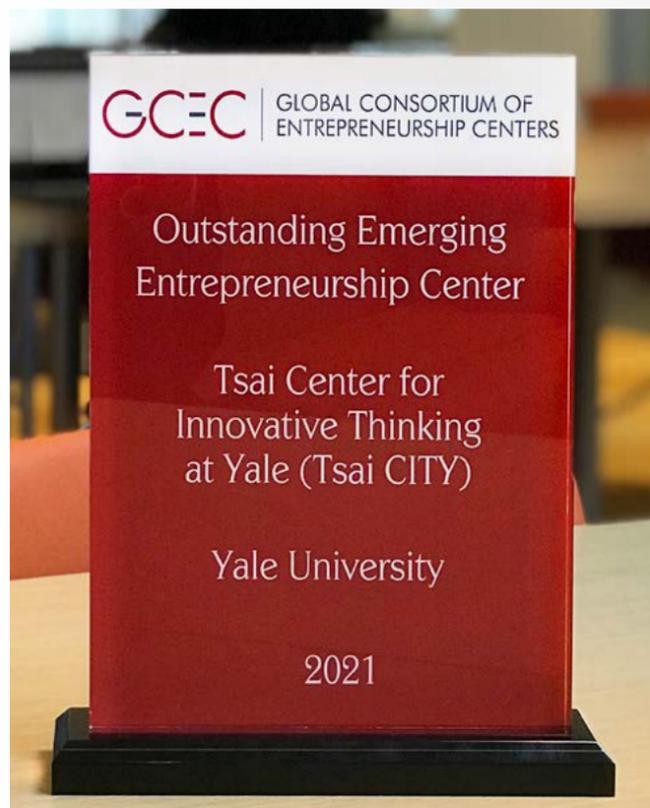
In 2017, with a generous donation from the Joe and Clara Tsai Foundation, Tsai CITY began its journey as Yale University's student hub for creativity and innovation. Over the next five years, the center would flourish into a space where students from all backgrounds and disciplines could come together and access programs, funding, and mentorship. From our first mentor session in 2017 to completing 1,000 events a year later, every year has been one of learning, growing, and continuously working to build a new kind of innovation center, rooted in inclusivity.

Striving for a New Kind of Innovation Center

Building a new kind of innovation center has been possible through a mix of strong partnerships, diverse leadership and a constant growth mindset. Collaborations with partners like the Center for Business and the Environment (CBEY), the Center for Collaborative Media and Arts (CCAM), and the L'Oréal Groupe—among many others—have allowed us to offer an array of programs that meet the needs of students across the full spectrum of innovation.

The Past Year

In Fall 2021, Tsai CITY welcomed students to its new building in the heart of Becton Plaza. While the pandemic expanded what innovation rooted in inclusivity and access looks like—allowing us to find creative ways to produce digital content that can be accessed on-demand, offering hybrid options for programming, and various online community building opportunities—we also spent time identifying ways to cultivate a robust in-person community in our new space. The past year has been one of many victories. Not only were we able to reopen our doors, but we received the GCEC award for Outstanding Emerging Entrepreneurship Center and ranked in the top 10 university innovation centers for our work in DEI&A (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility) by VentureWell (2020). Tsai CITY also welcomed Joe Tsai (YC '86, JD '90) back to campus as a visiting senior innovation fellow. As we continue to grow and learn, we're committed to recognizing the work our program alumni, partners, staff, and mentors have done to make Tsai CITY a national model for student entrepreneurship and innovation.



A Bold Vision Ahead



Prioritizing Impact

Moving forward with innovation in mind is a vision not just at Tsai CITY but across Yale's ecosystem. To further this vision, Josh Geballe (YC '97, MBA '02)—Yale's inaugural senior associate provost for entrepreneurship and innovation—hopes to nurture an already robust innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem at Yale and in Greater New Haven through the launch of Yale Ventures. Yale Ventures will serve as a resource to help drive economic growth and create opportunity in our communities for students, faculty, staff and residents of New Haven. As we look ahead to this work, as members of Yale Ventures, it is important for us to continue to develop diverse and inclusive, interdisciplinary collaborations that expand beyond the walls of our campus and into the broader community.



Up and Coming

For the first time in two years, we've launched our in-person Summer Fellowship and are preparing for more in-person programming, networking and mentoring opportunities in the fall. Moving forward, our Launch Pad program will have rolling enrollment—reducing the barrier for entry—we will be hard at work building stronger connections with student groups doing innovation and entrepreneurship work across campus—both at the undergraduate and graduate level. We're exploring ways to make our new space more lively and engaging with furniture experiments and community building activities. And, we're preparing to commemorate Tsai CITY's fifth year with a birthday celebration.



As we ease back into in-person events, we're hoping that the center remains at the forefront of student ideation and innovation. We truly cannot wait to witness and support all the creativity that lies ahead.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW? **Firoz Academy**

Wazhma Sadat (YC '14, JD '19) is the first Afghan woman to graduate from Yale College and Yale Law School. After college, Sadat co-founded Firoz Academy, an online academy with the mission to provide educational and virtual employment opportunities for underserved communities in Afghanistan.



Wazhma Sadat (YC '14, JD '19)
Founder

Firoz Academy was one of the first ventures to participate in Tsai CITY's Summer Fellowship in 2018. Over the course of the 8-week boot camp, 15 teams worked to move from early stages to launch with the help of intensive workshops, mentorships, and pitch opportunities.

Firoz Academy, received \$15,000 to test, develop, and scale its existing business model. Firoz Academy continues to provide world-class instruction in math, english, and technology to help students in Afghanistan prosper in the global services economy.



tsai center for
innovative
thinking

Yale