YDS Students and Their Passions

Yale Divinity School attracts students with a wide variety of backgrounds and interests. Most are recent college graduates, but a sizeable number are second-career students; many aim to enter the ordained or lay ministries, while others are interested in the life of the academy, the world of nonprofits, or the arts and communications; a majority are associated with mainline Protestantism; many are Roman Catholic, some are Jewish, some are evangelical, and others have no formal affiliation. A growing number of persons of diverse ethnicities and racial identities populate the student body; and the LGBTQ community is an integral part of campus life. Mirroring this is a diverse array of activities through which YDS students pursue their passions, creating a palpable energy that permeates the campus on many levels. Activities include those that are linked to the Community Life Committee or Yale Divinity Student Government (see Student Groups and Activities, below) and also those pursued in less formal ways. A few recent examples of student endeavors, past and present: creation of a hi-tech video production company that uses 3-D laser scanning and 360-degree photography to create virtual tours of ancient churches; a student-run community garden on campus, focused on organic and sustainable growing methods that encourage a theological appreciation for creation; travel abroad to participate in globally significant religious dialogues, such as an International Women’s Day panel at the Vatican on the topic of women’s leadership in Catholicism; small church gatherings in apartments or other informal settings as venues for creative, egalitarian, and progressive worship with communion at the center; DivOut, a fellowship dedicated to the full and equal participation in faith communities and society of persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities; writing about faith, such as poetry enabled under a Ruth Lilly Fellowship, awarded to five young poets nationwide each year; a student-driven podcast series featuring interviews with faculty on questions about the future of faith.