



# ROTC and Military Service at Yale University

The Yale College Council Committee on ROTC  
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Inquiries: Please contact James Campbell at [james.campbell@yale.edu](mailto:james.campbell@yale.edu)

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# Introduction

## About this Survey Report

The Yale College Council Committee on ROTC commissioned this report in September 2010 as part of a larger effort to identify student perception of and interest in military service and Reserve Officers' Training Corps at Yale College. As of November 2010, neither the Yale College Council nor its Executive Board has held an official position for or against the return of ROTC to Yale's campus. This report is intended to be an informational tool for those on all sides of the ROTC debate, and was constructed without any preexisting ideological preference or policy agenda.

## Overview of Reserve Officers' Training Corps

Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) is a four-year program that prepares university students to become officers of the United States Armed Forces. Currently, three branches of the United States Military operate ROTC programs (Army, Navy<sup>1</sup>, and Air Force), which vary considerably in curriculum and organizational structure. ROTC students, who commission as officers immediately upon graduation, attend weekly military science classes, physical training, and leadership exercises as a supplement to their required academic coursework. Each of these ROTC programs offers tuition scholarships and other financial assistance to students who accept a multiyear service commitment within their respective branches<sup>2</sup>. Underclassmen who have not yet accepted an ROTC scholarship may participate in the program with no service obligation, but are expected to contract<sup>3</sup> before the start of their junior year. Overall, ROTC commissions approximately 40% of active duty officers in the Department of Defense.

## ROTC at Yale

Shortly after ROTC was created by the National Defense Act of 1916, Yale University became one of the first private universities in America to have an ROTC program. From the 1920s through the 1960s, Yale commissioned several thousand military officers through its Army and Naval ROTC programs, and a

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<sup>1</sup> It is possible to commission into the United States Marine Corps through Naval ROTC

<sup>2</sup> This process is known as "contracting." Service obligations vary among the different branches of service, and are generally between 3 and 5 years.

<sup>3</sup> See number 2

number into the Air Corps as part of a third ROTC unit that existed until the late 1950s. The true cause of ROTC's departure from Yale from 1970 to 1973 remains highly disputed and is not a focus of this report.<sup>4</sup> However, the Committee on ROTC would like to make it clear that Yale does not have nor has it ever had an explicit "ban" on the ROTC program. After a series of votes by the faculty and student body in 1969, the Yale Corporation voted to negotiate with the Department of Defense to establish an "extensively modified ROTC program without academic credit." After a period of negotiation regarding the various conditions they would have to meet in order to remain on campus, the Army and Navy announced in 1970 that they would be leaving Yale's campus. Since 1973, Yale has not had an on-campus ROTC program, though has commissioned a small number of officers through off-campus ROTC programs at various universities in southern Connecticut.

## **Military Service Options Currently Available to Yale Undergraduates<sup>5</sup>**

### **Off-Campus ROTC Programs**

Since the 1990s, The Yale President's Office has agreed to arrange and pay for transportation for students participating in ROTC programs at other universities in southern Connecticut. Below are the off-campus ROTC options available to Yale Undergraduates as of November 2010.

- Army ROTC—Yale students can currently participate in Army ROTC through the University of New Haven (UNH) in West Haven, CT, approximately 8 minutes from campus by car.<sup>6</sup> The UNH Army ROTC program, which has only existed since 2009, also includes students from Quinnipiac, Wesleyan, Post, SCSU, and one student from Yale. The program meets three times a week for physical training at 5:50am, once a week for an hour-long Military Science class, and every other Friday afternoon for a four-hour "leadership lab." Students are also expected to attend one 3-day field training exercise per semester, as well as the 28-day Leader Development and Assessment Course at Fort Lewis, WA during the summer before their senior year. Prior to 2009, Yale students participating in Army ROTC were asked to commute between 30 and 90 minutes to The University of Connecticut, Sacred Heart University, or The University of Bridgeport. Transportation is provided in the form of a Zipcar® account billed directly to Yale University.

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<sup>4</sup> See The Kingman Brewster Presidential Records, Sterling Memorial Library Archives

<sup>5</sup> Each of these has specific citizenship, age, medical, fitness, and other requirements as a condition of participation. Discussion of these options assumes fulfillment of these requirements.

<sup>6</sup> Army ROTC at the University of New Haven is a satellite program of the University of Connecticut

- Air Force ROTC— Yale currently has three students participating in the Air Force ROTC program at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, CT, approximately 90 minutes from campus by car. These students travel to the University of Connecticut on Thursday afternoons for Air Force Aerospace classes, physical training and “leadership labs,” returning to campus around 9:30pm. Yale students are generally exempted from part of the program’s group physical training component, though are expected to do physical training on their own several times a week. Occasionally, students are asked to commute to Storrs on days other than Thursday, but overall the program is considered accommodating to Yale students’ academic schedules. Participants are also expected to attend a 28-day Field Training program at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama during the summer before their senior year. Transportation to and from Storrs, CT on Thursdays is provided in the form of a shared rental car paid for by the Yale University President’s Office.
- Naval ROTC—The United States Navy does not currently operate any ROTC programs in southern Connecticut

### **Officer Candidate School<sup>7</sup>**

Upon graduation, a number of Yale students elect every year to attend Officer Candidate School (OCS), a 10 to 17 week program (depending on the branch) that trains college graduates to commission as military officers. The United States Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard all operate Officer Candidate Schools, though they vary extensively in length and intensity. A popular option among Yale Students interested in the military is the Marine Corps’ Platoon Leaders Class, an alternative to both NROTC and OCS in which students attend either two 6 week summer sessions or one 10 week summer session while they are still enrolled in college. Like ROTC graduates, these students receive their commissions upon graduation.

### **Enlistment**

Yale students who meet the branch-specific enlistment requirements may enlist in the United States Military at any time. The Yale College Council was unable to find any recent alumni who have pursued this option for active duty while or after attending Yale.

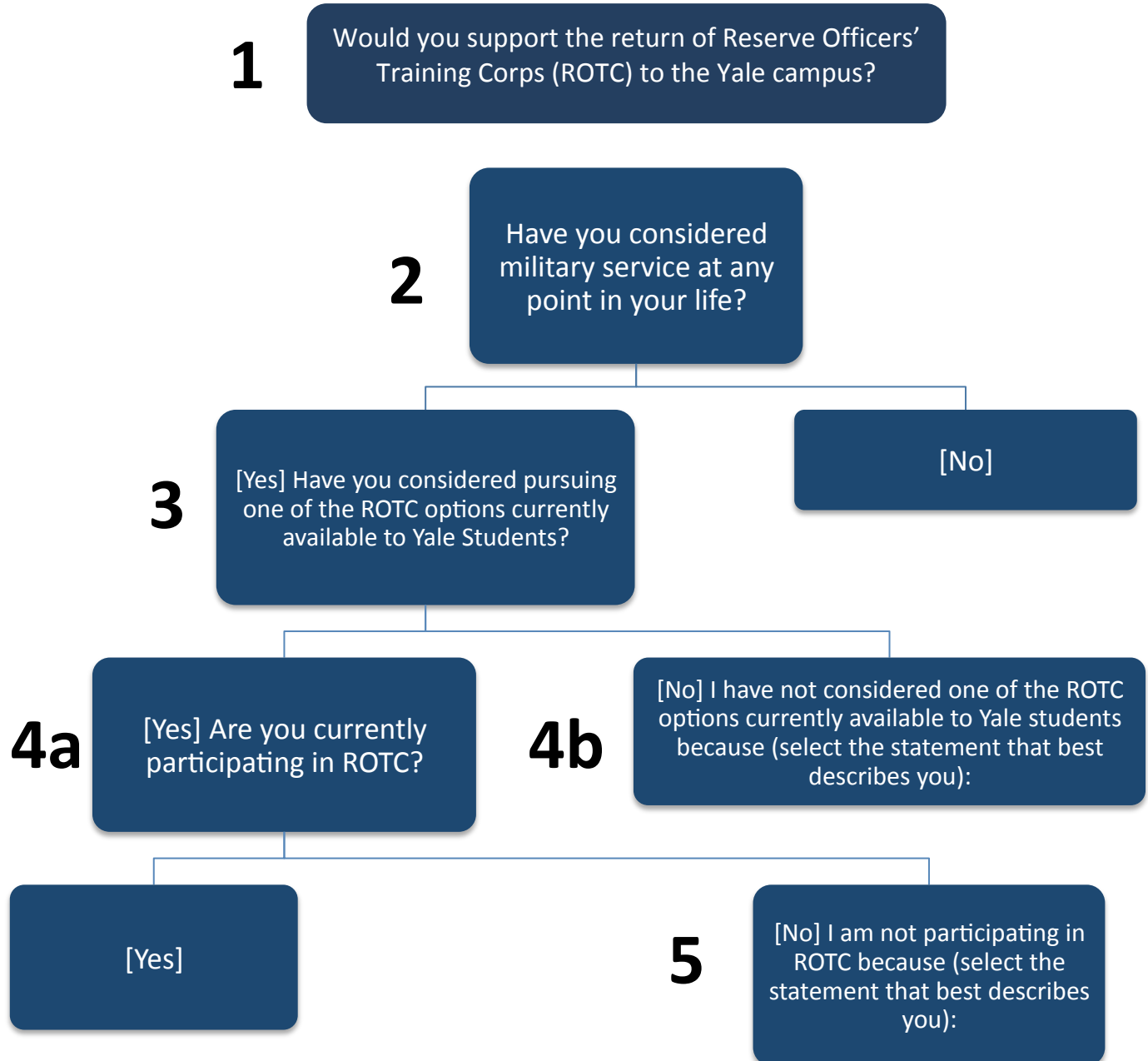
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<sup>7</sup>Called *Officer Training School* in the Air Force

## “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” and the Modern ROTC Debate

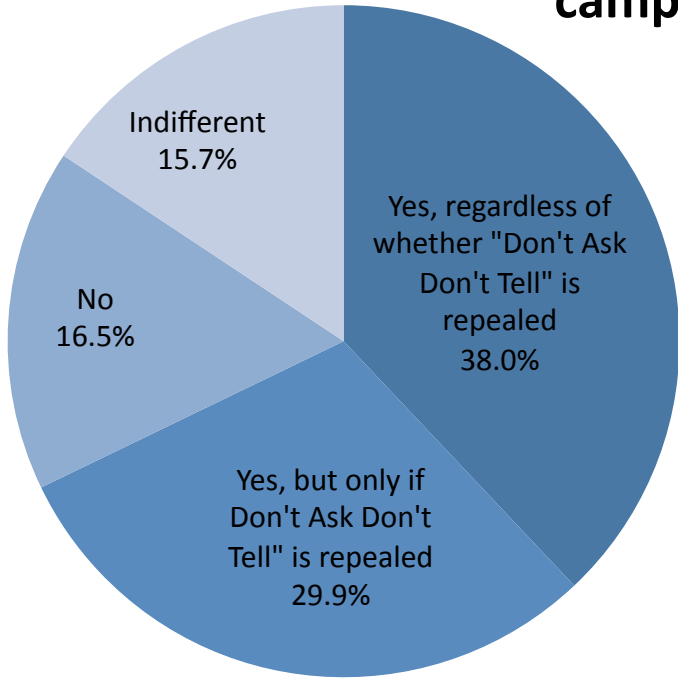
The topic of ROTC and military service has attracted a great amount of attention throughout the Yale community in recent months, primarily due to the controversial nature of the “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” (DADT) policy. Many on Yale’s campus find the law objectionable because it prohibits openly gay or bisexual men and women from serving in the Armed Forces. For this reason, many individuals and groups on campus have taken the stance that Yale cannot support the return of an ROTC program until DADT is abolished, while others believe that ROTC belongs at Yale despite the policy being in place. The Committee on ROTC believes that this debate is likely grow more contentious at Yale as long as Congress and Federal Courts continue to be unsuccessful in bringing an end to DADT.

### Survey Outline



1

# Would you support the return of Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) to the Yale campus?



- Yes, regardless of whether "Don't Ask Don't Tell" is repealed
- Yes, but only if Don't Ask Don't Tell" is repealed
- No
- Indifferent

Total Responses
1,346

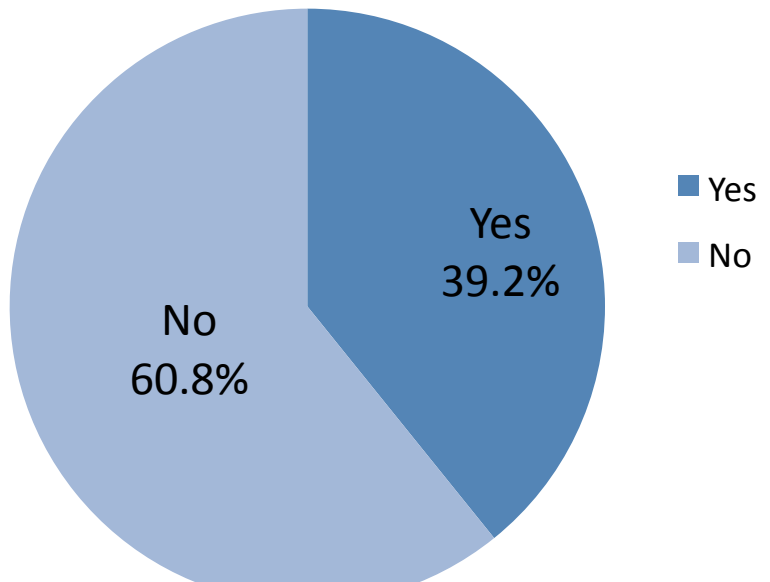
Value	Count	Percent %
Yes, regardless of whether "Don't Ask Don't Tell" is repealed	511	38%
Yes, but only if "Don't Ask Don't Tell" is repealed	402	29.9%
Indifferent	211	15.7%
No (*opportunity for write-in)	222	16.5%

2

# Have you considered military service at any point in your life?

Total Responses
1346

Value	Count	Percent %
Yes	527	39.2%
No	819	60.8%



### 3

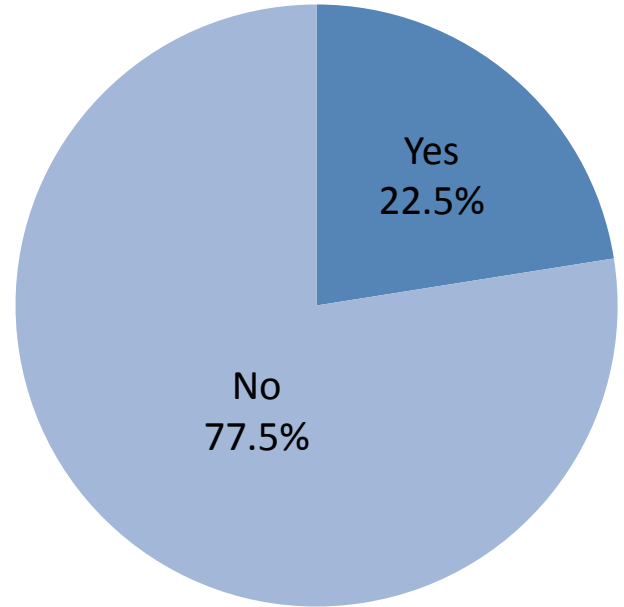
## Have you considered pursuing one of the ROTC options currently available to Yale students?\*

\*Conditions for this question:

- **Yes** to question 2 (*Have you considered military service at any point in your life?*)

Value	Count	Percent %
Yes	119	22.5%
No	410	77.5%

Total Responses
529



### 4a

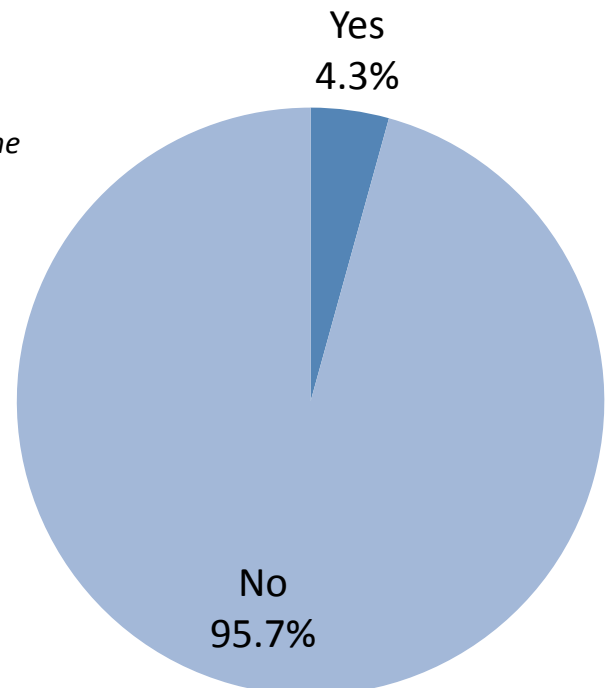
## Are you currently participating in ROTC?\*

\*Conditions for this question:

- **Yes** to question 2 (*Have you considered military service at any point in your life?*)
- **Yes** to question 3 (*Have you considered pursuing one of the ROTC options currently available to Yale students?*)

Value	Count	Percent %
Yes <sup>8</sup>	5	4.3%
No	112	95.7%

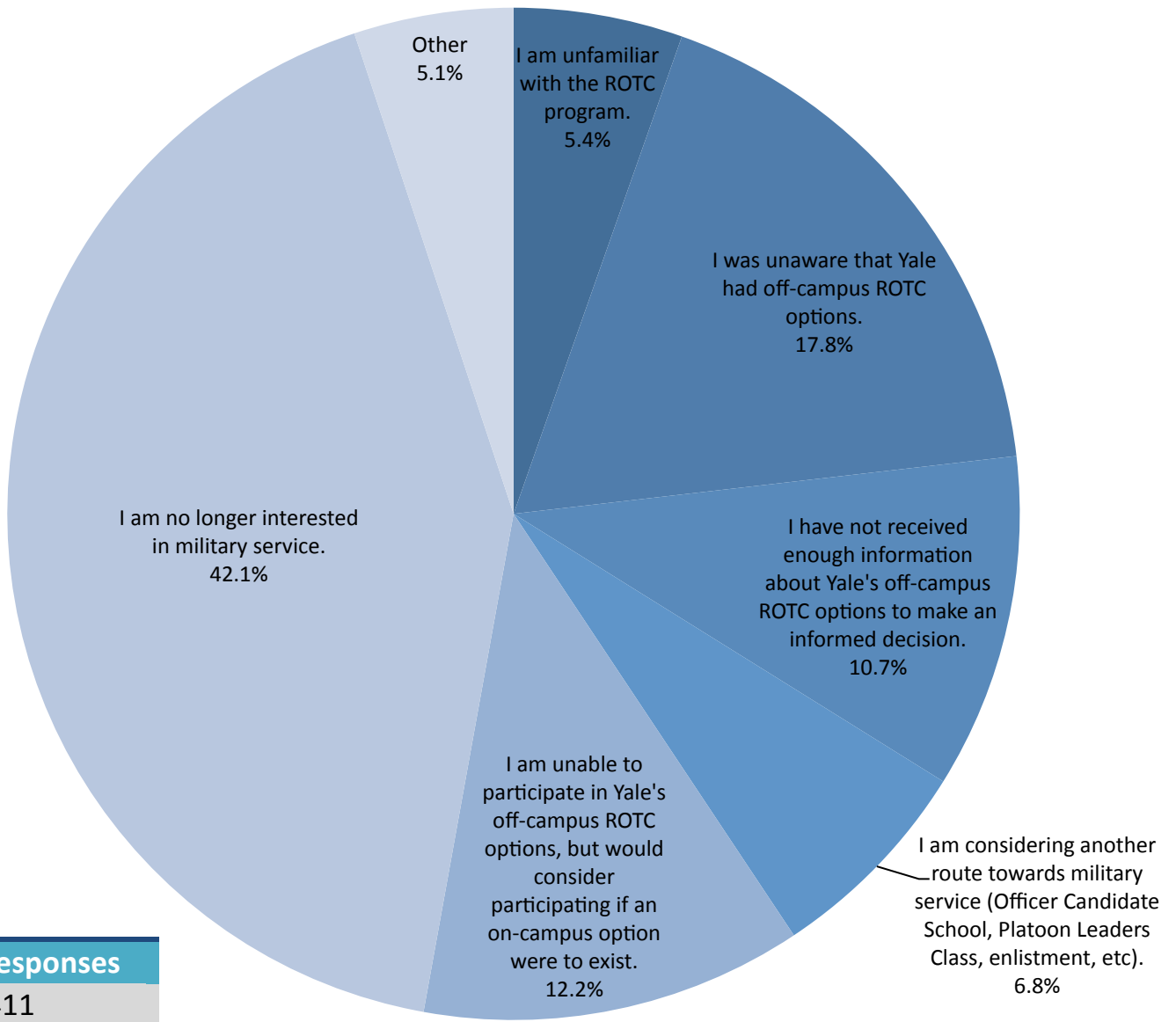
Total Responses
117



<sup>8</sup> Though five respondents answered "Yes," the ROTC committee knows of only 4 cadets on campus

4b

I have not considered one of the ROTC options currently available to Yale students because (select the statement that best describes you):\*



**Total Responses**  
411

Value	Count	Percent %
I am unfamiliar with the ROTC program.	22	5.4%
I was unaware that Yale had off-campus ROTC options.	73	17.8%

I have not received enough information about Yale's off-campus ROTC options to make an informed decision.	44	10.7%
I am considering another route towards military service (Officer Candidate School, Platoon Leaders Class, enlistment, etc).	28	6.8%
I am unable to participate in Yale's off-campus ROTC options, but would consider participating if an on-campus option were to exist.	50	12.2%
I am no longer interested in military service.	173	42.1%
Other (*opportunity for write-in)	21	5.1%

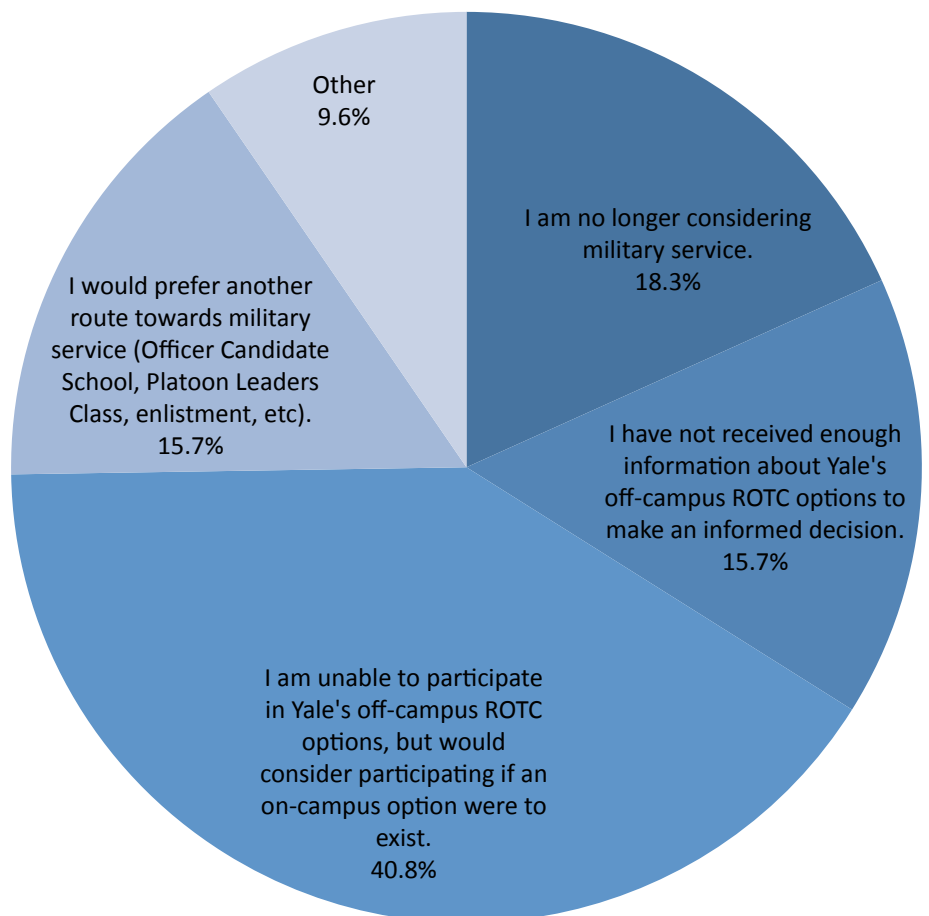
\*Conditions for this question:

- **Yes** to question 2 (*Have you considered military service at any point in your life?*)
- **No** to question 3 (*Have you considered pursuing one of the ROTC options currently available to Yale students?*)

## 5 I am not participating in ROTC because (select the statement that best describes you):\*

\*Conditions for this question:

- **Yes** to question 2 (*Have you considered military service at any point in your life?*)
- **Yes** to question 3 (*Have you considered pursuing one of the ROTC options currently available to Yale students?*)
- **No** to question 4a (*Are you currently participating in ROTC?*)



**Total Responses**

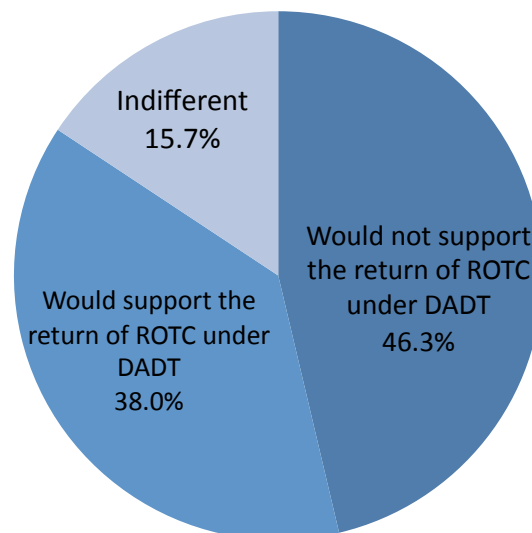
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Value	Count	Percent %
I am no longer interested in military service.	21	18.3%
I have not received enough information about Yale's off-campus ROTC options to make an informed decision.	18	15.7%
I am unable to participate in Yale's off-campus ROTC options, but would consider participating if an on-campus option were to exist.	47	40.9%
I would prefer another route towards military service (Officer Candidate School, Platoon Leaders Class, enlistment, etc).	18	15.7%
Other (*opportunity for write-in)	11	9.6%

## Summary

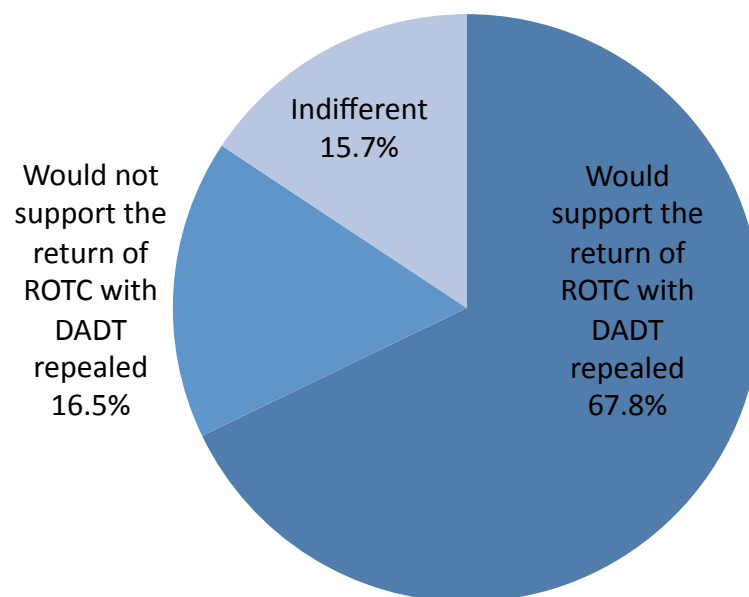
### Student Opinion

As anticipated, the results from **question 1**<sup>9</sup> of this survey suggest that student opinion regarding the return of ROTC to Yale was greatly divided with respect to “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell.” To demonstrate this divide, consider respondents who answered **Yes, but only if “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” is repealed** (29.9%) or **No** (16.5%) to be a single group of students that would not support the return of ROTC as long as DADT remains in place (see graph below).



<sup>9</sup> Question 1: *Would you support the return of Reserve Officers' Training Corps to the Yale campus?*

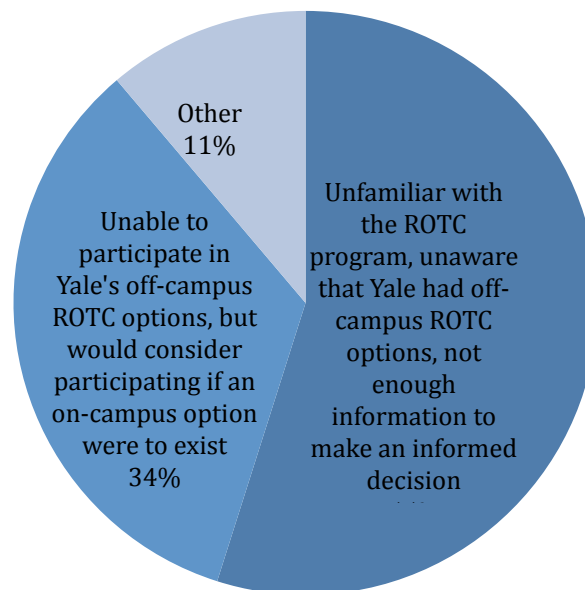
The inferential limitations of our survey design and absence of a clear majority opinion among respondents (seen above) prevent us from arriving at any major conclusions about overall student opinion under these conditions, except that it was extremely divided with respect to the “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” policy. With DADT reversed, a clear majority of respondents would support ROTC’s return, outnumbering those who would not support it by a ratio of more than 4:1 with 67.8% supporting and 16.5% not supporting. (see graph below)



While “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” was the primary objection among students who said they would not support ROTC’s return with DADT in place, the 222 **No** responses suggest the presence of others. Those who responded **No** to **question 1** were given the opportunity to write in the reason why they would not support ROTC’s return to Yale. Most of these respondents expressed moral opposition to the United States Military and/or the War on Terror, and for that reason would not support any kind of military presence on campus. Others expressed a belief that “military culture” would not fit well in the context of Yale’s undergraduate community. Although these are minority opinions, they are certainly worthy of consideration when examining Yale’s relationship with the military.

## Student Interest

To examine student interest in military service and ROTC, we took the 526 respondents who answered **Yes** to **Question 2**<sup>10</sup> (and who went on to answer question 4b or 5) and subtracted all of those who answered ***I am no longer considering military service*** to questions **4b**<sup>11</sup> and **5**<sup>12</sup>, leaving us with 332 (24.7%) respondents with a potential interest in one or more of the military service options outlined in the introduction. Subtracting the 46 who would prefer or are currently pursuing a non-ROTC route toward military service, we end up with **286** respondents with a potential interest in ROTC but who are not currently participating. Of these 286, 157 answered that they had not considered Yale’s off-campus ROTC options or had considered one but were not participating because they were either unfamiliar with the ROTC program, unaware that Yale had off-campus ROTC options, or had not received enough information about those options to make an informed decision<sup>13</sup>. 97 of the 286 answered that they were ***unable to participate in Yale’s off-campus ROTC options, but would consider participating if an on-campus option were to exist***, with the remaining 32 answering ***Other***. Those who answered ***Other*** wrote that they had not considered these options-or had considered them but were not participating-primarily because of continued uncertainty, Yale’s improved financial aid policies, medical/physical ineligibility, and/or ineligibility due to “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell.” Below is a graphic representation of this 286-response subsection.



<sup>10</sup> Question 2: *Have you considered military service at any point in your life?*

<sup>11</sup> Question 4b: *I have not considered one of the ROTC options currently available to Yale students because (select the statement that best describes you)*

<sup>12</sup> Question 5: *I am not participating in ROTC because (select the statement that best describes you)*

<sup>13</sup> See questions 4b and 5

## **Recommendation**

With 67.8% of respondents supporting ROTC's return and nearly 300 demonstrating a potential interest in the program, The Yale College Council strongly supports the return of ROTC to Yale's campus and recommends that the administration begin talks with the United States Department of Defense about the feasibility of establishing a unit on campus.

For information about the composition of this survey report or the efforts of the Yale College Council Committee on ROTC, please contact YCC Representatives James Campbell (PC'13) or Thomas Meyer (MC '13)