Dear Squirrels,

Welcome to Branford College, the most beautiful of Yale’s residential colleges! We are very excited to have you as a member of our community.

As Head and Dean of Branford College, we live in the college with our families (including our pets!) and are here to welcome you, answer questions, and direct you to resources as you settle in at Yale. Branford will be a source of special friendship and learning, a place of discovery and growth, a support in times of challenge, and an anchoring community for you on campus. We very much look forward to getting to know you as an individual.

[Branford College](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Branford_College) was founded in 1933 by partitioning the [Memorial Quadrangle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memorial_Quadrangle) – where seniors lived before implementation of the residential college system – into two residential colleges, Branford and neighboring Saybrook. Our college is named for the township of Branford, CT (where Yale was briefly located) and is recognized for its collegiate Gothic architecture. The iconic Harkness Tower, which houses a 54-bell carillon – from which student carillonneurs play all kinds of music, from holiday carols to Disney themes; you’ll soon become familiar with the tower’s bells – and the intricate wrought-iron shapes of Memorial Gate are some of Yale’s best-known architectural features. Our impressive and beautiful main courtyard, Branford Court, is the envy of the other colleges. Branford also has three smaller courtyards, named for literary societies that donated their libraries to the University: Linonia, Calliope, and Brothers in Unity. They each have a unique personality and serve as places to gather, relax on our college hammocks, and meet new friends. The Branford College coat of arms features ten books to represent the ten ministers who pooled their books and resources to establish the Collegiate School, which would officially become Yale College. Our college mascot is the Squirrel, due in part to the large number of squirrels who traditionally take up residence in our courtyards.

Branford College is a vibrant community, with many peers and mentors who look forward to welcoming you as you settle into your life at Yale and in New Haven. First year students will be assigned a [first-year counselor](https://branford.yalecollege.yale.edu/whos-who/first-year-counselors), a senior who will be living with you in Lawrance Hall on Old Campus (where first-year students from ten of the fourteen residential colleges live in their first year at Yale), will be able to guide you on matters both academic and personal. You will soon be hearing from your FroCo (as they are known colloquially), and they will be a resource throughout the year. Shortly before classes begin, you will also meet your college adviser, a Branford fellow – a member of the faculty or staff fellowship that helps to sustain our college’s intellectual life – who takes special interest in advising and mentoring first-year students. Working together with the Directors of Undergraduate Study at each Yale department, who provide advising within our many majors, and with the FroCos, your college adviser will play an important role as you navigate your first year. And last but certainly not least, the Branford College Council (BCC) is at the heart of student life in the college. You will be hearing from our BCC co-presidents, Alyssa Chang and Birikti Kahsai, soon.

You will also be supported throughout your time at Yale by [Dean Galindo](https://branford.yalecollege.yale.edu/whos-who/dean-galindo), who serves as your chief academic adviser. Alongside the team of people above, Dean G. helps to ensure that you are meeting academic milestones while thriving at Yale. She is also a source of support on personal and social matters and serves as a conduit to a rich network of resources on campus, from our [Academic Strategies](https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/academic-strategies-program) mentors to our [Yale College Community Care](https://yalecollege.yale.edu/getting-help/yale-college-community-care) specialists to your personal librarian to our [Study Abroad](https://studyabroad.yale.edu/) advisers – to name just a few! Dean G. and her senior administrative assistant, Jen DellaCamera, look forward to seeing you in the office. Dean G. lives alongside you in the college with her husband Marcus Alaimo, an instructor in the Directed Studies program, and their dogs Merkel, Frijolina (lovingly nicknamed, Leena-Beana) and Alyosha (aka Chilaquil). Jen’s friendly goldendoodle [Ollie](https://www.instagram.com/olliewaffles22/) rounds out the Dean’s Office team!

As Head of College, [Professor De La Cruz](https://branford.yalecollege.yale.edu/whos-who/head-branford-college) serves as the Yale faculty presence in the residential college. He leads the college, serving as its chief executive officer, and works closely with Dean Galindo and a [marvelous team of staff](https://branford.yalecollege.yale.edu./whos-who/staff) and students, including our [college aides](https://branford.yalecollege.yale.edu./whos-who/branford-aides), to foster the social and intellectual life of our community. His senior administrative assistant, Joan Dempsey, and Branford’s Assistant Director of Operations, Rachel Lyke, are here to support you as we continue to build the vibrant community that Branford is known for. Students also consult with Head DLC about their plans and needs (and you’ll hear from him every Sunday about upcoming events; look out for his “Song of the Week” recommendations!) and together you will design programs and celebrations that make our college unique and that support Branfordians as they navigate Yale individually and collectively. Head DLC’s wife Leslie, his sons Ezra and Lucien, and their two dogs, Cuca and Yoli, look forward to welcoming you and getting to know you.

**Eli Whitney and Transfer Students**

While Eli Whitney students do not live in the residential colleges, Branford is nonetheless a central aspect of your undergraduate student life at Yale.  We hope that you will take part in college activities as much as you are able!  You will be assigned an Eli Whitney peer mentor, a returning Eli Whitney student who will provide guidance on both academic matters and your transition to Yale. You’ll learn the name of your peer mentor later this summer, in an email sent to your Yale e-mail address from the president of the Eli Whitney Student Society, a registered student organization.

Branford College transfer students who live on campus will be assigned a room assignment, along with the names and Yale e-mail addresses of everyone in your assigned suite. Transfer students who are over 21 or who are married may live off campus.  Whether you live on or off campus, we hope that you will take part in college activities as much as you are able!   You will be assigned a transfer peer adviser (TPA), a returning transfer student who will guide on both academic matters and personal ones, including what to pack and what to expect in your opening days at Yale. You’ll learn the name of your TPA later this summer, in an email sent to your Yale e-mail address from the co-heads of the TPA team.

**All Branfordians (aka “Squirrels”)**

Once you arrive at Branford you will quickly become familiar with all the different things your peers – and this year, you! – do to make Branford a fun, safe, and welcoming space. You might spend an evening at our pottery studio, join friends on our basketball court or sprung dance floor, spend a few hours battling on our college pinball machine, enjoy delicious refreshments made by our Service Assistant, Tara Landino, at our weekly Tea Room, or even attend a “Science Dinner” at Mory’s with residential fellows James Rothman and Joy Hirsch. Professor Rothman was awarded the 2013 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, and Professor Hirsch is the Elizabeth Mears and House Jameson Professor of Psychiatry and Professor of Comparative Medicine and Neuroscience at the Yale School of Medicine (she’s also a champion ballroom dancer!). Branford has three “resident fellows” who contribute meaningfully to the life of the college: Professors Hirsch and Rothman, and the wonderful Steve Blum – a proud Branford grad and Senior Director of Strategic Initiatives for the Association of Yale Alumni. Our resident fellows, along with a large number of non-resident [Branford Fellows](https://branford.yalecollege.yale.edu/whos-who/branford-fellows), are available to meet with our students virtually or in person and provide guidance on academic and career-related topics.

We know that you, new members of the Yale and Branford communities, are asking what starting your time here will look like and what the shape of your community will be, and that you are beginning to make plans for all you will do at Yale and in New Haven. We know you will make important contributions to Branford and to Yale, and we look forward to getting to know you over the time that you are here. This letter serves as an invitation and a pledge: we are committed to you, we are excited to learn more about who you are, and we will work hard to make Yale a home for you, In the meantime, we invite you to visit [our website](http://branford.yalecollege.yale.edu/) to learn more about the college, staff, faculty, students and facilities.

Enjoy the rest of the summer, and we look forward to meeting you soon – nos vemos pronto!

  

Enrique M. De La Cruz Maria del Mar Galindo

Head, Branford College Dean, Branford College

William R. Kenan Jr. Professor Lecturer, English and Humanities

Molecular Biophysics & Biochemistry