

## Student Org Spotlight: Campus Y



The pastel pink building in Polk Place directly below South Building is always plastered with social justice posters. This building houses the Campus Y, a vital hub for action, service, and social issue advocacy on campus.

The Campus Y's official mission is to engage students, the UNC campus, and communities in the pursuit of social justice. There are 31 committees that make up the Campus Y, all of which have different social justice focuses. "Anything from environmentalism, criminal justice, homelessness, everything is sort of packed into this one building," said Raymond Tu, the Campus Y's Director of Communications and a sophomore from Ontario, Canada. In addition to the Campus Y's action and service mission, their social justice presence on campus is strong, especially in anti-racist movements.

At the beginning of the semester, and all through last year, anti-Silent Sam posters were featured both inside and outside the Campus Y. This inclination to take on social justice issues is quite different from the time of the group's founding. The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and Young Women's Christian Organization (YWCA) established presences in Chapel Hill in 1860 and 1935, respectively. In 1963, the two organizations merged, subsequently dropping their religious and gendered affiliations while maintaining their strong commitments to service.

The Campus Y, as we know it, was born from this merger and would go on to effectively serve as "a hub for student leadership and social activism and as the leading organization for student action, addressing issues of integration, free speech, gender equality, workers' rights, world hunger, apartheid, and armed conflict," according to their website.

Innovation has always been strong in the Campus Y, often in ways that most people are unaware of. "We're always spinning these things out, making these things that UNC is always like 'wait, this is really cool,'" said Tu. Campus Y programs are then often implemented more broadly by the University. For example, Carolina Kickoff was once the only form of new student orientation that UNC had, and once UNC's administration saw how it was succeeding they decided to enact it on a larger scale. Carolina Public Scholars, also a creation of the Campus Y, was an inspiration for the creation of the APPLES Service-Learning Program.

The Meantime Coffee Co. is housed inside of the Campus Y and is a non-profit, student-run

coffee shop. All profits from Meantime go toward student scholarships and grants.

When asked why students should join the Campus Y, Tu's answer was immediate. "I think that students should join the Campus Y if they want to get involved with service or if they want to get involved with advocacy," he said. "Anyone can join the Y, because so long as you have a passion, you can find it represented there."

The Campus Y invites new members to apply all year long. Their application can be accessed at <https://campusy.unc.edu/connect/join-the-y/>.

### **Campus Y Snapshot**

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Website: <https://campusy.unc.edu>

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Note: Student Org Spotlights are a recurring series on the Carolina Union website that showcase UNC student organizations. If you would like your student organization to be considered for the Spotlight series, please email [design@unc.edu](mailto:design@unc.edu) with the subject line "Student Org Spotlight Request".

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