



Hiya Hits the High Note: Cardiff Student Wins Offers from Yale

Hiya Ray (18), a student at Cardiff Sixth Form College is celebrating a phenomenal academic year, receiving top A Level results alongside offers from the University of Cambridge, Yale, UCLA and The University of Chicago.

Hiya, who lives in St Mellons, achieved four A*s in Maths, Further Maths, Physics, and Economics and has already secured a place to study Applied Maths and Economics at Yale. She also earned full marks on the SATs, cementing her status as one of the UK's most outstanding all-round students.

Hiya's Extended Project Qualification focused on microfinance and its ability to empower women in developing countries — a passion sparked by her work experience at a microfinance bank in Kolkata, India, where her family is originally from. Her research examined the ethics of group lending and interest rates, concluding that success hinges on the moral practices of lenders.

"Microfinance has the power to transform lives but only when used responsibly," Hiya said. "It's where my love of economics meets my interest in social change."

Hiya is also a talented musician, holding a diploma in violin and performs with the National Youth Orchestra. She has played at the Royal Albert Hall, Barbican, Bridgewater Hall and Snape Maltings and also served as Principal Second Violin for NYO Wales — an ensemble open to musicians up to 23 years old.

Through NYO's outreach programme, she volunteers bringing classical music into primary schools and hospitals, making orchestral performance accessible to new audiences. "Music has been life-changing for me," she said. "It brings people together and gives me the balance I need. I've fallen in love with both music and making change."

As well as excelling academically and musically Hiya is an international chess player for Wales, a half-marathon fundraiser for Tŷ Hafan and an award-winning debater who has reached the finals at Oxford, Cambridge and Imperial. She's President of her school's Economics Society, won the Cambridge University Financial Society Essay Prize, and was awarded the Professor Layard Economics Prize by LSE.

Hiya has also completed prestigious internships at JP Morgan and HSBC and was part of the winning team in a finance innovation challenge designing the "Bank of the Future" where her team's concept focused on microfinance. She has represented her school in the F1 Schools Competition coming second in the World Finals, won the prestigious ISA Lexton Prize and was crowned winner of the Ethnic Minority Welsh Women's Young Achiever Award 2025 from EMWWAA (Ethnic Minority Welsh Women Achievement Association).

Currently serving as Deputy Head of College and President of the Debate Club, Hiya plays an active role in shaping school life and mentoring younger students. She also co-leads debate outreach projects, teaching students from across South Wales how to find their voice.

“I love learning, but I also love giving back and whether it’s through debate, music, law or economics, I want to keep making a difference,” she said. “I’d be bored if I wasn’t doing something that challenged me!”

With friends heading to both Yale and Cambridge, Hiya is now deciding between her offers and whatever path she chooses, she’s certain to continue her mission of combining rigorous thinking with creative compassion.

ENDS

Issued on behalf of Cardiff Sixth Form College. For further information please contact Henrietta Lightwood on henriettaclaire.lightwood@ccoex.com or by mobile 07788 289937.