

Dear Coalition for a Diverse Harvard:

I believe in the critical importance of diversity at Harvard, and the value diversity brings to all members of the university and society at large. I support affirmative action and race-conscious admissions because these have been essential to increasing diversity in Harvard's student body and faculty.

In my own professional practice, I have dedicated my life to creating works of public art that invite diverse audiences into communal art experiences in the public realm. My work has frequently sought to focus public attention on issues of race, diversity and inclusion. My permanent sculpture "[Where We Met](#)" for Greensboro, North Carolina brings people from diverse communities together in a new central park underneath a tapestry which traces the historical railroad tracks that once divided them. This month I announced the title of my newest commission under construction in Florida on a public beach site in the process of transforming a painful history of segregation as the city builds its new inclusive waterfront park which explicitly welcomes all. My title, "[Bending Arc](#)", references the speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King and Transcendentalist pastor Theodore Parker, who centuries apart spoke about the fact that the arc of moral history is bending toward justice.

Overall, I believe that Harvard has a moral duty to play a part in helping history bend toward justice and inclusion, and Harvard's active embrace of diversity within the university is critical to achieving that mission. While I do not yet feel sufficiently knowledgeable to respond to some of the specific policy items mentioned in your questionnaire, I do feel confident in addressing specifically how I might contribute my distinct professional expertise as the first visual artist on the Board of Overseers. I believe public space symbolically communicates an institution's values, and public space design and public art can foster a local culture which communicates inclusion and connects each of us to one another across boundaries. As Harvard is now embarking on its most ambitious campus expansion in centuries, this is a time to insure that those qualities are embedded and expressed across all its campuses.

Sincerely,  
Janet Echelman, visual artist



["Where We Met"](#) Greensboro, NC, 2016

**STUDIO JANET ECHELMAN**

[TED Talk \*Taking Imagination Seriously\*](#)

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