

Response from Miki Uchida Tsusaka AB '84 magna cum laude, MBA '88. Currently senior partner and managing director, Boston Consulting Group (Tokyo, Japan). Harvard Overseer candidate.

1. How important should diversity be at Harvard? What strategies should the University pursue regarding this? (Please discuss specific programs and policies, including Ethnic Studies and faculty hiring, tenure, and advancement, if you can.)

I passionately believe that diversity must be at the foundation of any organization that wants to remain innovative and resilient. Diversity *and* inclusion are both mission-critical for Harvard as a world-class, leading university.

I applaud the efforts of the University to date but appreciate that the job is far from done. For example, I remember as an HBS student, women hovered around the 25% mark of my class, and that was the ratio for many, many years. Today, almost half of students—and one-quarter of faculty—are women, but I trust the administration is continuing to aim for an even higher degree of diversity in search of the best talent pool globally available.

The definition of diversity has, over the years, become more diverse itself, and appropriately so. I have been part of a team at my firm, Boston Consulting Group, that has conducted research proving without a doubt the economic upside and value creation that diversity brings to society—and that multiple dimensions of diversity create even better outcomes. For example, in the article [“Fixing the Flawed Approach to Diversity,”](#) we call out that 98% of companies have established a gender diversity program, but only about one-quarter of employees in diverse groups feel that they have personally benefited from these programs. Our research identifies back-to-basics and proven measures that can advance diversity, as well as hidden gems identified by women, people of color, and LGBTQ employees. Such measures can be relevant for Harvard to leverage, as well.

Leading organizations are clear in their goals—and Harvard should be no exception, continuing to be an advocate for excellence in its student body, faculty, and administration. I expect the University to have concrete diversity goals, fund programs to ensure we are attracting the best, invest in an inclusive environment that allows diversity to thrive, and graduate global citizens that embrace these beliefs.

I believe Ethnic Studies is a timely addition to the curriculum and support hiring faculty that can drive the program. I was a double concentration in Government and East Asian Studies as an undergrad. As a Japanese-American now, I am grateful that I had the opportunity to study my ethnic grounding as part of my education. I see the formalization of Ethnic Studies as an important extension of such disciplines that bring a multicultural and multinational point of view to Harvard.

2. How can Harvard encourage more diversity among its alumni leaders and activities? (If not discussed above.)

The Harvard alumni community is an important extension of the University. All of us are ambassadors and advocates, but it also up to us to be critics and guardians for the University when it isn't quite growing up as it should. What I've described above as my hopes for Harvard equally extend to how the alumni of Harvard should lead from the front, reflecting increasing dimensions of diversity and contributing to the broader communities we serve.

I am particularly keen to bring my global experience to Harvard. I am fortunate to work across a wide range of countries around the world (half in Asia, half in the rest of world, on average today), and I hope to add my international experience and perspective to the Overseer group, especially as we face increasingly global opportunities and challenges.

3. Please state your views on affirmative action and race-conscious admissions

I have always been and remain today a fully committed believer in the benefits of affirmative action and race-conscious admissions. Harvard remains blessed with an incredible admissions pool, including many candidates who meet the “quality of academic excellence” bar. I've heard many alumni comment that they believed they were *the* admissions “mistake” for being invited to join such an impressive group of peers, and I have felt the same way. I was the first-ever from my small high school in New York to be accepted to Harvard on a financial scholarship (and one of just three Japanese nationals then), and it was a truly daunting beginning for me as a freshman. I did not have perfect SAT scores, but I know now that I really did belong in my class and will be forever grateful for this opportunity and privilege to share and contribute my unique background with the student body.

4. What do you think Harvard's role should be in creating a more equitable, inclusive and just society?

Harvard as a University has incredible global reach and responsibility. I believe it has a unique calling to contribute to society to ensure an equitable and inclusive world such as:

-provide the educational grounding in its coursework and forums on why it's important and instill a sense of responsibility while students remain at Harvard. My favorite memories of my education involve moments when the amazing faculty, guests, and students showcased their passionate leadership, including changing the world (literally) at the United Nations in a government class in International Organizations and learning about how nonprofit leaders successfully and professionally run entities whose exclusive purpose is to serve those in need.

- encourage 'giving back' to society by having an active role during and post-graduation. Each of us has a responsibility to ensure that the world makes progress. We all live in a time-pressed world, but committing to important causes and mentoring the next generation to achieve their full potential should be an important calling for Harvard alumni.

5. What steps have you taken to bring diversity and inclusion to Harvard, to your workplace, and/or to an organization that you have been involved with?

Since my Harvard undergraduate and graduate degrees, I have been an active alumna during my professional career in New York (20 years) and Tokyo (14 years). I'm most proud of the next generation of alumni I have connected with and mentored in local club activities and networks. I am also proud of my on-campus recruiting leadership roles and initiatives at Harvard for Boston Consulting Group. A huge number of our hires are incredible graduates of Harvard, and I have spoken on campus regularly to ensure a diverse slate of the best have been recruited and hired by our firm.

Diversity is one of BCG's core founding values. Passionate, open-minded people of all backgrounds, genders, gender identities, sexual orientations, ethnicities, expertise, and experience are fundamental to our success as they enable us to solve the hardest of problems and challenge established ways of thinking. Pride@BCG (our LGBTQ platform) and Women@ BCG are two such global platforms and priority investments that ensure we remain at the forefront on diversity and inclusion.

Pride@BCG is a 20-year-old network within our firm, consisting of global mentoring programs, ally training, and committees to educate and inform our employees more broadly and invest in the conversation with the broader community through our research. We are proud of the fact that we have earned a perfect 100% rating for 12 years running from the Human Rights Campaign on its Corporate Equality Index, and I have been a mentor to many in this community.

I have also personally led Women@BCG in Asia for many years and am proud of our global progress. This includes the firm winning external accolades, such as being named one of the "100 Best Companies" by *Working Mother* magazine 13 years in a row, making concrete progress in our numbers at all layers, offering many innovative flex time/training/coaching programs, and—for me personally—being an elected member of our Executive Committee for two terms (over six years), where one-third of the group are now women. That said, I remain committed to moving even faster and further.

I have written extensively and speak frequently on the general topic of diversity, including the article "[5 Ways for Business Leaders to Win in the 2020s](#)," which highlights how women, ethnic minorities, and LGBTQ must be leveraged for success and is part of an annual series for the World Economic Forum in Davos. Another such example is "[How Diverse Leadership Teams Boost Innovation](#)," an article I co-authored that demonstrates how diversity in gender, national origin, academic backgrounds, and age contribute to innovation.

I have been engaged in multiple international organizations and forums to make sure my voice is heard and push forward the diversity and inclusion agenda. My Overseer memo mentions my participation at the World Economic Forum in Davos and the World Assembly for Women in Tokyo (as founding member, sponsored by the Japanese Prime Minister). Additionally, I have been a part of and addressed groups at the W20 and Y20 Summit in Japan (coinciding with the G20 last year), the Global Summit for Women (Tokyo, this year in Bangkok), Most Powerful Women's International Summit in Hong Kong, the Japan Federation of Business Executives, J-WIN (Japan Women's Innovation Network), and more, as well as discussions with the media including the *Financial Times*, *Forbes*, *Fortune*, *Business Insider*, and *Thrive Global*.