

Coalition for a Diverse Harvard Questions + Responses by Kimberly Dowdell

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

Focusing on diversity as well as equity, inclusion and belonging are all part of the equation for Harvard's sustained success into the future. Instead of just counting the people (diversity), we must actively work to ensure that all of the people count (inclusion). Harvard can accomplish this by actively recruiting in communities of color, connecting admitted low-income students with scholarship and grant resources to reduce debt load upon graduation, and fostering a network of support that makes space for all Harvard students to build community on campus. Harvard faculty and staff should also be afforded the opportunity to find community as they desire to better support students. In order to foster a strong sense of belonging across campus, Harvard must respond to the university's shortcomings as articulated by stakeholders. One way to gather input is to organize focus groups or surveys. However the input is gathered, the action taken by Harvard in response will be critically important. As an Overseer, I will support efforts that are brought to the forefront by feedback provided by diverse stakeholders.

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

Race-conscious admissions will continue to be vital to curating diverse classes. I am in support of evaluating the racial make-up of each program and class at Harvard. Harvard's admissions committees are to look at what perspectives are potentially missing and balance groups accordingly. These perspectives include, but are not limited to race.

3. What do you think Harvard's role should be in creating a more equitable, inclusive, and just society? For example, please share any thoughts on divestment from fossil fuels and the prison industry and on the role of the Harvard University Police Department, issues of concern to current students.

Harvard should be leading the conversation around how an institution can actively create a more just society by building equity and inclusion into our operations while also pushing the envelope on environmental stewardship. Climate change and racism are real problems that Harvard must confront head on through strategic policy design and thorough implementation.

4. 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?

At Harvard, I was in the inaugural class of Shelia C. Johnson Leadership Fellows, which was established in an effort to address disparities in communities of color. I have subsequently helped recruit and mentor a diverse array of students at the Harvard Kennedy School, where I currently serve as Co-Chair of the Alumni Council for the Center for Public Leadership. I recently completed a two-year term as the national president of the National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA), where I led efforts to diversify the profession of architecture. I am currently serving as a Co-Chair of the Diversity Advisory Council (DAC) at global design firm, HOK, leading efforts to foster belonging in our 23 offices on multiple continents. I am frequently called upon to consult on issues of diversity, equity and inclusion in the real estate industry.

5. If elected, would you be willing to meet occasionally with the leaders and/or memberships of the groups below during your tenure?

Absolutely.