

Coalition for a Diverse Harvard questionnaire responses

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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; faculty hiring, tenure, and advancement; and Harvard's pledge in its 1650 Charter to actively facilitate the education of American Indian youth, if you can.)

A focus on diversity and equity are essential to Harvard's continued success. Diversity ensures an inclusion of a wide spectrum of ideas and thoughts. It ensures that we represent our world in our student body, and it ensures that we have the best minds at the University to understand and address the most pressing issues of our times. Some strategies to address this issue include enhanced recruitment of students and faculty from diverse backgrounds and promoting learning from different perspectives including in coursework, research and campus life. Harvard can do more in existing programs including expanding the Native American program and Ethnic Studies.

We need a paradigm shift in the way we approach diversity and equity, prioritizing them in all programs and policies. The commitment to diversity should go beyond specific study areas and be embedded in the coursework and dialogue throughout the University. This ensures that it is present for students and faculty who actively seek out these opportunities as well as the broader campus communities.

In my work, I am often working to solve complex problems with high stakes (ex: COVID-19 pandemic, opioid epidemic, homelessness). I have found that engaging the community has been one of my most powerful guides in having impactful interventions. This is true community engagement with an openness to listen and learn. This should include indigenous youth, individuals who live in the communities surrounding the Harvard campuses and individuals dealing with the complex issues we are researching and studying. We reach true inclusion of diverse voices when we find ways to interact with community members to share in our programming and policy decisions.

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

I support affirmative action and race conscious admissions as part of a holistic process for admissions. In my professional life I have seen the tangible impact of having diverse voices at decision making tables. Our viewpoints and knowledge are impacted by our personal and professional experiences and contribute to robust conversations and new ideas. Having a community of students and faculty that reflect our diverse communities is critical.

As President Bacow recently stated in an email to the Harvard community, "Our admissions process, in which race is considered as one factor among many, makes us stronger. race matters in the United States. I long for the day when it does not, but we still have miles to go before our journey is complete."

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

Harvard must and can be a global leader in creating a more equitable, inclusive and just society. Harvard has a moral obligation and the right resources and platform to be a true leader in this space. During the pandemic, faculty and staff from Harvard worked to assist many efforts to improve the equitable response to COVID-19. The consequences of an inequitable society, where currently gaps are only widening, impacts us all. We will need the brightest minds to innovate, teach, and lead us to a new possibility, learning from the lessons of COVID-19 and embracing the impactful role of the University.

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? Are you a member of any of the signing organizations below?

My entire professional career has been focused on creating justice and fairness in health. This is possible by working with a diverse set of individuals, organizations, and communities. As an example, while running the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, I implemented a health equity approach that positioned equity at the center of all of our work. This included in our hiring process, trainings for staff, procurements and contracts and programmatic work. Through a data-driven approach, we chose communities to focus on including communities of color, individuals experiencing homelessness, individuals with a history of incarceration, and individuals with mental health or substance use disorders. During the opioid epidemic we began reporting data by race and ethnicity for the first time in the history Massachusetts DPH. We used this data to improve our programing and target areas of greatest need. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we engaged communities and equity advisors to help drive our work in testing and vaccine equity.

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

Yes, It would be my pleasure to meet with the groups listed and I am excited about the possible collaborations and transformative work that can occur.