

Coalition for a Diverse Harvard

HAA Elected Director Questionnaire

*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.)*

Diversity, inclusion, and belonging should be tremendously important to Harvard University.

In the private sector, diversity, inclusion, and belonging are now foundational components of our day-to-day. Organizations continue to seize the moral imperative of greater representation, inclusivity, and belonging. And those organizations are increasingly being rewarded with financial outperformance.

Harvard University would also benefit from a heightened focus on diversity, inclusion, and belonging. The August 2020 arrival of Sherri Charleston as Harvard's Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer is an encouraging development. Reporting into President Bacow, Ms. Charleston appears well-positioned to work across the University to both implement and expand upon the Presidential Task Force on Inclusion and Belonging's recommendations.

I do not currently have a deep understanding of the pedagogical and recruitment constraints that would impact the hiring and promotion of faculty, the launch of new departments, and the start of new degree granting programs. If elected, I commit to becoming better informed about how the President, Provost, and Dean of each Faculty can promote academic and faculty diversity at Harvard.

I do believe that there is a direct role for Harvard's more than 300,000 alumni to play in promoting diversity. Harvard endeavors to interview every applicant for Harvard College. This task is made more challenging by the increasing number of applicants. The Schools and Scholarship Committees of global Harvard clubs work closely with the Admissions Office on this vital effort. These dedicated alumni volunteers are a key component of the admissions process. Their service directly promotes more diversity at Harvard. Alumni can also influence the University's deployment of its financial resources in service of greater diversity. The continued expansion of financial aid is another proof point of alumni working with Harvard to secure greater diversity on campus.

If elected, I will work to increase the awareness and adoption of Alumni service opportunities that promote diversity.

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

I believe that race should be one factor among many in Harvard's admissions process.

I support Harvard's efforts to ensure a diverse and representative student body. Diversity, in all its forms, is a through line that unites all my Harvard experiences. The range of perspectives that I was exposed to greatly enriched my time at Harvard. I believe that the diversity of Harvard's campus was a flywheel (forgive the

business cliché) that benefitted my Harvard experience – diversity, inclusion, and belonging encouraged more members to be their authentic selves; authenticity unlocked more points of view; intellectual diversity encouraged greater engagement within the community; engagement drove the entire community forward and pushed its members to value and promote more inclusivity.

My personal experience gives me added conviction in the importance of race-conscious admissions. I'm a Black man. My race contributes to my lived experience. My lived experience creates my identity and informs my point of view. I cannot see how you can assess my potential contribution to a school without considering the many factors, including race, that comprise my lived experience.

*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 a leader in creating a more equitable, inclusive, and just society. Thought leadership alone is insufficient. Harvard can and should take direct action that helps build a better world.

Fortunately, driving impactful, positive change is already a feature of many mission statements at Schools across Harvard. Below is a selection:

College: "to educate the citizens and citizen-leaders for our society."

GSAS: "To identify and attract the most promising students to form a dynamic and diverse community, and to shape them into visionary scholars, innovative educators, and creative leaders"

GSE: "to prepare leaders in education and to generate knowledge to improve student opportunity, achievement, and success."

HBS: "We educate leaders who make a difference in the world."

HKS: "to improve public policy and leadership so people can live in societies that are more safe, free, just, and sustainably prosperous."

HMS: "To nurture a diverse, inclusive community dedicated to alleviating suffering and improving health and well-being for all through excellence in teaching and learning, discovery and scholarship, and service and leadership."

SEAS: "Through education and research, we address global challenges and serve society."

These mission statements illustrate that Harvard already believes that it can and should play an active role in creating a more equitable, inclusive, and just society. To that end, alumni leaders must push the University to deploy the right tools with the required urgency to meet the challenge.

There's a rich history of student-led Harvard groups demanding that the University confront issues of global equity, e.g. South Africa / apartheid in the late 1980s and early 1990s. We are seeing this today with climate change. It is encouraging to read about the meeting between Fossil Fuel Divest Harvard and the Harvard Corporation in December 2020.

If elected, I look forward to engaging with student and alumni leaders advocating for change.

Below please find an overview of my current thinking on the specific issues you referenced:

Fossil Fuels: I support Harvard's decarbonization pledge. The University should explain how the timeline can be meaningfully pulled forward from 2050. Investment decisions are one of the University's financial tools. Harvard's Endowment also supports research and innovation that will play a vital role in combatting climate change and mitigating its impact. Harvard should increasingly highlight the ongoing work of its faculty, students, and affiliates to tackle climate change. In success, additional visibility into that work will secure additional funding that can pull forward its impact.

Private Prisons: I do not believe that private prisons are a feature of a more equitable, inclusive, and just society. The Harvard Management Company should not invest in private prisons.

Harvard University Police Department (HUPD): Harvard has an opportunity to reform HUPD to ensure that its public safety mission is equitably implemented and fully reflects the University's diverse stakeholders. Recommendations from 21CP Solutions released in December 2020 appear to be a good starting point. My understanding is that Harvard is working to extend and implement them. I look forward to learning more about the University's concrete policy changes and, if elected, directly advocating for equitable policing by HUPD.

*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?*

I have benefitted from mentorship throughout my life. This has unlocked access to opportunities and provided the insight and support to succeed in them. In my volunteer service, I look to "pay it forward" by working with organizations that create educational and professional opportunities for underrepresented groups. Professionally, my contributions to promoting diversity, inclusion, and belonging have primarily taken the form of mentoring and recruiting. This is an important opportunity as people of color are underrepresented in entertainment and investment banking.

With more seniority, I have been able to directly contribute to even more impactful diversity, inclusion, and belonging efforts. In the television business, promoting representation in front of and behind the camera is a major priority. However, it is often met with modest action. In December 2020, my employer, MTV Entertainment Group launched a new, \$250 million studio initiative to seed the creation of new BIPOC and women-owned and operated production companies. This initiative will push a new generation of talented content creators into ownership. I led the business planning that sized our financial commitment to this studio effort. It was very rewarding to think big and to play a part in such an impactful diversity initiative. It was also a great lesson in implementing sustainable change.

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

Yes. If elected, I welcome continued engagement with the student and alumni leaders of the organizations that comprise the Coalition for a Diverse Harvard.