

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

Diversity is central to Harvard's success. The College's mission focuses on educating the citizens and citizen-leaders for our society. This mission cannot be fulfilled without recognizing, celebrating and increasing the diversity of its students, faculty and curriculum.

University-wide, Harvard is preparing students to become leaders in their professions, communities and nations. Leadership is rooted in empathy and understanding. Cultivating diversity in all forms – from its people to its pedagogy – will ensure Harvard develops leaders who both reflect the diversity of the communities from which they come and develop the empathetic approach that comes only from understanding others' perspectives.

Valuing diversity also means understanding before taking action, and I know I have much to learn from others before presuming to know the specific programs and policies that will best foster and increase diversity at Harvard. However, I strongly believe the University should pursue an overarching strategy of creating a culture and climate in which all students, faculty, staff and alumni feel represented, valued and empowered to share their perspective.

I look to my own relatively recent experience at Harvard's Graduate School of Education for examples of how this might be accomplished. Diversity is woven into the fabric of the school. My classmates came from a wide range of backgrounds and life experiences and the faculty and curriculum consistently focused on the impact, both good and bad, of education on the lives of historically marginalized populations. The school gives voice to diversity through events like the Askwith Forum, a series of public lectures (the most recent of which is on a new vision for higher education in indigenous communities) and the Alumni of Color conference. Scaling strong programs like these will ensure that diversity is not an afterthought, but is at the forefront of the University's strategic planning.

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

Again, Harvard can encourage more diversity by building a student body and faculty from diverse backgrounds and creating a culture in which everyone feels safe and valued in sharing their lived experiences. In addition, as a member of the Board of Overseers, I believe it is incumbent upon my colleagues and me to ask questions to ensure the university is making real progress in its efforts to encourage more diversity among its alumni leaders and activities.

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

Affirmative action and race-conscious admissions policies, including Harvard's approach, are fair, appropriate and beneficial. The consideration of race as one of multiple factors in admissions supports diversity and complements other admissions criteria.

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

Creating more equitable, inclusive and just societies requires a comprehensive approach

grounded in effective legal, government, health, business, and education systems. Harvard alumni around the world are shaping these systems at the local, state, national and international levels. Accordingly, it's critical the university develops leaders and scholars that are both diverse in background and cognizant of the role they play in improving the quality of life for citizens around the world.

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?

As a student at Harvard, I supported diversity and inclusion by listening more than I spoke. I recognized that how I identified often put me in the majority population, which made it critical that I truly listened to those who came from experiences much different than my own in order to help foster an inclusive culture.

I've also taken this same approach in my one-year appointment to the Board of Overseers. I have intentionally sought out diverse points of view, attended the Harvard Asian American Alumni Alliance meeting, and asked the deans of the schools we have reviewed how they have worked to ensure all members of their community feel safe and valued.

Equity, which has diversity at its core, has been a central focus of my work at the Iowa Department of Education. I have consistently championed efforts that value and support diversity and inclusion in education in Iowa, from creating a system of accountability and support designed to help schools address opportunity and achievement gaps for students of color to launching an equity audit of barriers that prevent all students from excelling. In 2016, under my leadership as director, the Iowa Department of Education received an award from the Connect Foundation, a nonprofit organization that launched Iowa's Juneteenth Observance and the Iowa African American Hall of Fame, for our work to motivate schools and foster significant progress in closing gaps in student achievement. I also strive to make the Department a great place to work for individuals from all backgrounds.

I will carry this same approach with me when I begin my service in May at Drake University as Dean of the School of Education. A significant component that attracted me to this role is the university's and school's commitment to diversity and inclusion. These principles have been foundational in every professional role I've held throughout my career.