#### Kelsey Trey Leonard (Shinnecock Nation) AB '10

MSc '11, University of Oxford; JD '15, Duquesne University; PhD '19, McMaster University

Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

# 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.)

Diversity at Harvard is inherent to the University's mission as detailed in its charter which calls for the education of diverse youth (at the time English and Indigenous students). The University Charter underscores the importance that diversity should always have at Harvard – an institution where peoples from all over the world may come together to learn and grow.

University Strategies:

- Affordability Harvard should revise its low-income family threshold for tuition coverage from \$65,000 to \$85,000. Additional policies and measures should be put in place to lower the cost of attendance and student debt.
- Recruitment Recruiting practices that provide prospective students with free visiting programs to campus are needed and programmatic models exist at other Ivy League institutions. Additional partnerships are needed with HBCUs, TCUs, and HSIs to enhance the University's recruitment of highly qualified diverse students.
- Wellbeing Harvard must develop better policies and programs for Mental Health services for all students but especially students from underrepresented communities such as students of color and LGBTQIA-2S students who are disproportionately impacted and often face disparate academic advising and administrative review by the university.
- Faculty Hiring The University should make strategic commitments for diverse hires and for a robust Ethnic Studies Department through special faculty hiring clusters in key disciplines and from underrepresented faculty communities.
- Inclusive Campus Provide more resources for interfaculty initiatives and research centers on race and ethnicity. Furthermore, provide more opportunities for campus cultural exchange through public art, town halls, signage, etc. Additionally, Harvard should remove harmful holidays from the university calendar such as Columbus Day and recognize Indigenous People's Day.

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

I believe it is important for the HAA to be guided by the University's charter recognizing that Harvard exists today because of the unique shared history of the University and Indigenous Peoples. As alumni we have a responsibility to ensure a welcoming and inclusive environment for all through our engagement activities and cultivation of volunteer leaders. We need more opportunities for mentoring alumni of diverse backgrounds and for pipeline programs that allow for the cultivation of diverse alumni leaders who are fully supported to take on leadership roles. We also have a wealth of leadership experience and knowledge among our Shared Interest Groups and should work to develop more alumni activities that support their excellent work and promote cross collaboration with other alumni boards. We also need to evaluate our alumni outreach pathways and explore untapped technologies for enhancing our reach. A centralized alumni app would help to promote greater inclusivity and connection of alumni.

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

I support affirmative action and race-conscious admissions. Harvard University's existence is deeply indebted to communities of color and the economically disenfranchised. Ensuring a diverse and inclusive Harvard through affirmative action and race-conscious admissions is recognition of those debts and the commitment outlined in the University's Charter.

### The Charter of the President and Fellows of Harvard College under the seal of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay and bearing the date May 31st A.D.1650

**"Whereas** through the good hand of God many well devoted persons have been and daily are moved and stirred up to give and bestow sundry gifts legacies lands and revenues for the advancement of all good literature arts and sciences in Harvard College in Cambridge in the County of Middlesex and to the maintenance of the President and Fellows and for all accommodations of buildings and all other necessary provisions that may conduce to <u>the education of the English and Indian youth of this country in knowledge</u>..."

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

Harvard should be a global leader in equity, inclusion, and diversity to help promote a more just society. Just societies are built on communities of leaders who are worldly, cultured, well-rounded and exposed to diversity of thought and backgrounds. Without stronger commitments and action towards improving diversity and inclusion at Harvard the institution will struggle to cultivate global leaders that can build a legacy of equity and reconciliation for a more just future.

## 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 an undergraduate I was a former president and member of Native Americans at Harvard College and served as an intern for the Harvard Foundation on Intercultural and Race Relations. As an alumna I am the former president and current board member of the Native American Alumni of Harvard University Shared Interest Group (SIG). My current research focuses on Indigenous Water Justice and identifying climate change impacts for Indigenous Peoples' water security. My whole existence as a researcher and scientist is guided by principles of diversity and inclusion that I have learned throughout my life as an Indigenous woman from the Shinnecock Nation. I champion an approach to institutional change that is not simply a finite set of actions, but a perspective that this work is a life's journey that must include foundational transformations in our moral understandings of the world and what our society values. *Tabutne*.