

Harvard Board of Overseers Election
Coalition for a Diverse Harvard Questionnaire Responses
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1. *How important should diversity, equity, and inclusion be at Harvard, and what strategies should the University pursue to address these? How would you work to advance Ethnic Studies at Harvard, including the establishment of a concentration and department? In addition, please discuss other specific programs and policies, especially the 1650 Charter's pledge to facilitate education of American Indian youth.*

I am a first-generation Harvard graduate and am grateful for the opportunity I had to study, interact with, and be a part of this diverse and vibrant academic community. When I arrived at Harvard College in 1995, I was struck by the many viewpoints, perspectives, and lived experiences of my classmates—even for someone who graduated from a large public high school in Southern California and had interacted with people from a range of backgrounds.

Harvard should lead the way in creating an environment that welcomes students from all backgrounds and walks of life. This includes a continued commitment to ensuring a diverse student body that reflects a broad range of lived experiences.

So, too, should Harvard students be able to pursue academic work that reflects these many backgrounds and a desire to learn more about them. As an undergraduate, I benefited from taking courses which furthered my understanding of the varied experiences and histories of classmates and Americans from different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. But I was disappointed in the limited opportunities that I had during my time on campus to learn more specifically about historical and other elements of the Asian American experience.

The University can support ethnic studies by ensuring an ample offering of courses to give students opportunities to learn about their own communities and those of their classmates and those around them; encouraging existing faculty or recruiting faculty or instructors who can offer relevant instruction; and seeking opportunities to include ethnic studies as part of other concentrations, such as is currently available within the History and Literature concentration.

Finally, Harvard should continue efforts to ensure it meets the overarching goals of the 1650 Charter, which set out a broad commitment to further the education of a diverse group of students, including Native Americans.

2. *Given the Supreme Court's ruling against race-conscious admissions, what measures should the University adopt to promote student-body diversity along multiple dimensions, including racial diversity? Do you support this [University policy concerning affirmative action](#)?*

Harvard's admissions process should continue to aim to form a student body that reflects diversity along multiple dimensions. The U.S. Supreme Court's 2023 decision regarding affirmative action creates an opportunity to ensure that the University has an admissions policy that supports this

goal but also fully complies with the law. Harvard's admissions process should evaluate applicants in a truly holistic fashion; select for academic and extracurricular excellence; uphold the value of a diverse student body; and give applicants the opportunity to fully tell their own life stories, including (if relevant and as permitted by law) how race has impacted an applicant's lived experience. I support the University's stated and reaffirmed policy of hiring and promotion of faculty and staff in a nondiscriminatory fashion and without regard to race, ethnicity, or any other protected classification.

3. *Do you support the elimination of admissions preferences for recruited athletes, children of donors, and children of alumni (legacy)? Please address all three categories.*

Academic excellence is at the core of Harvard's identity as an institution and the admissions process for students should ensure that this excellence continues to be upheld. The University should, in an ongoing fashion, review all elements of its admissions policies and processes. This includes an examination of the impacts of preferences granted to recruited athletes, children of donors, and children of alumni. Any such examination must include consideration of how these policies impact admissions prospects and processes for those who do not benefit from these preferences, and whether any existing preferences diminish or interfere with Harvard's ability to maintain the highest standards of academic excellence.

4. *In light of last year's turmoil—from the doxxing of students to the resignation of President Gay—how do you think Harvard can ensure key institutional values such as: academic independence from political and financial strong-arming; free expression on campus (including the right to protest); and safety for all?*

Academic independence, freedom of expression, and safety for students and other members of the Harvard community are important values that the University should uphold. None of these values is completely unconstrained, however, and striking an appropriate balance between them is a constant challenge for Harvard—but one that it must embrace in the coming years. Indeed, other institutions in higher education and beyond look to Harvard as an example of how they can and should react to difficult societal moments. There have been times over the last few years when quite simply, Harvard has failed at this task.

I believe that to resolve some of these tensions, the University must foster civil dialogue that allows students to express differences of opinion and viewpoint in respectful, orderly, and sincere ways. So, too, must Harvard seek to encourage the expression of a true diversity of viewpoints on any issue where there is disagreement. True viewpoint diversity is key to the University's success in promoting a vibrant and productive dialogue on any given issue.

It is not, however, the University's responsibility to pick sides or express points of view on the content of what its community members express—particularly when it comes to issues where there are strongly held differences of opinion. I stand by Harvard's decision in May 2024 to refrain from making statements on issues not "relevant to the core function of the university." Notwithstanding this posture, Harvard should make clear its commitment to the basic values discussed above and

ensure it provides appropriate forums for the safe and civil exchange of diverse points of view.

5. *What concrete steps have you taken to bring diversity and inclusion to Harvard, to your workplace, and/or to other organizations? Are you a member of any of the signing groups below?*

Throughout my academic and professional career, I have believed in and taken steps to advance the idea that a diverse and inclusive environment—whether in the classroom or the workplace—is important to the success of individuals within those settings, as well as to the institutions I have been a part of, more broadly.

While at Harvard Law School, I co-chaired the Asian Pacific American Law Students (APALSA) annual conference and brought a diversity of voices and viewpoints to our event, while also opening attendance to the event to students at other schools and members of the Harvard community more broadly.

When I started work in the policy and political fields several decades ago, there weren't too many Asian Americans who chose to walk the same path. It was an experience that was lonely at times, always challenging, but both personally and professionally rewarding. I committed to ensuring that I would do my part to help make the pathway easier for others. I am proud to have mentored, guided, and advised in the professional journeys of many others of Asian descent, as well as people who did not come from families with a heritage in that line of work. To see these individuals go on to great success has been a real joy. I see this work—to help the next generation of Americans contribute to our civic and public institutions—as both a responsibility and a great honor.

Furthermore, I continue to sponsor, promote and participate in the work of relevant employee resource groups (ERGs), such as the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) ERG at the Brunswick Group. I believe these groups can play an important role in ensuring that the workplace is a supportive and welcoming place that also brings connection between colleagues with shared backgrounds and heritages.

Finally, since some of the earliest days of its existence, I have kept up with the activities of the Harvard Asian American Alumni Alliance (H4A). I've also been invited to participate in H4A events in past years and believe the work it is doing—in part, bringing a greater sense of community and belonging to alumni of AAPI descent—is important. I also affirm the important role that all the signing organizations play in bringing connection to their own communities of Harvard alumni.

6. *What role do you think Harvard can and should play in defending democracy and the rule of law in the US and around the world?*

As the University observed in a 2021 statement: “The future of our Republic depends on our willingness to defend the values that brought it into being.” Harvard plays an important role in ensuring the continued success of America's democracy by promoting, protecting and defending

the values that underpin it. Core to this success is a respect for and belief in the rule of law. Harvard should do what it can, in both word and deed, to defend the primacy of this value here in America and abroad.

Part of what has traditionally made America a beacon of democracy around the world is the ability to facilitate civil conversations between sharply differing points of view. We have, unfortunately, seen a significant erosion of this in our country to the detriment of the strength of our democracy. Harvard has been no stranger to this troubling trend but can help to restore this important element of our democracy by providing a venue for these difficult conversations and bringing stakeholders from diverse points of view together to engage in the civil discourse that is so sorely lacking today.

Harvard should also be a place where students can choose to learn about the events and experiences that have shaped our democracy, for better or worse. It is important that students have access to courses and opportunities outside the classroom to learn about the history of American democracy, which equip them to formulate their own opinions about how best to continue to defend the rule of law and our nation's civic institutions.

Finally, Harvard should continue to be a place that trains, encourages, and sends out the next generation of civic and public leaders. This means giving students who wish to pursue these careers the proper support and counsel they need to walk pathways that may be different from that of their classmates who are headed for opportunities in the private sector. These investments are core to ensuring that Harvard continues to play a leading role in bolstering American democracy for generations to come.