

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.)

I'll never forget May 2007, when as a freshman at the College, I was playing capture-the-flag in the Quad on a Saturday afternoon, as part of the annual Harvard Black Men's Forum and the Association of Black Harvard Women Challenge. We were having a great time and were very confused when the Harvard University Police Department sent officers to inquire whether we had a permit to be on the field (we did). Apparently a number of emails were sent over the Cabot House email list questioning our use of the public law and whether we were even Harvard students (even though we were all wearing Harvard gear). This generated a lot of hurt and controversy. As an executive in BMF, we launched a campaign in response to dispel racial stereotypes that we called "I am Harvard." 7 years later, as a JD/MBA graduate student at the Law School and the Business School, and a Resident Tutor in Adams House, I re-lived the 2007 experience as black students on campus organized the viral "I, Too, Am Harvard" campaign.

I am proud that half of the deans of Harvard's schools are immigrants, that we have had a woman President, and that in response to Trump's ban, our University made a decision to appoint a Muslim chaplain and to increase support for Harvard Law School's Immigration and Refugee Clinic. However, there is much more to be done. As a student leader and later as a Resident Tutor in Adams House, I heard from many of my advisees and fellow students about the challenges of being under-represented at Harvard, whether you're Muslim, African-American, Latino, LGBTQ or First Generation among others. As a black man, international student, financial aid recipient with a Muslim mother and a Catholic father, I appreciate in very personal terms, the power and promise of a diverse world view.

We have come a long way since 1636 when no student on campus looked like me, or even 1970 when Helen Gilbert became the first woman member of the Board of Overseers. We have made tremendous and commendable progress in diversifying our student body and expanding access. As an interviewer for Harvard College, I am always proud to tell prospective students that their financial needs will not exclude them from admission. But if we are honest with ourselves, we know we still have a lot more work to do. We still need to improve on diversity among our faculty and staff (especially among tenured faculty), our leadership and even our governing bodies. And I mean diversity in the broadest sense—not just with respect to race or gender or sexual orientation, but also geographic, socio-economic and background. The pursuit of *Veritas* requires that.

I have some ideas that I'd love to see the University pursue:

- Increasing diversity of our faculty: in my experience at the College, the Law School, and the Business School (and I imagine the same can be said of many other schools at the University), I believe this is probably the area where Harvard has the greatest room for improvement in terms of diversity
- Increasing diversity of our *tenured* faculty

- Increasing diversity of staff especially in traditionally non-diverse sectors e.g. Harvard Management Company
- Incorporation of DEI in capital allocation decisions both in procurement and in selecting managers for our endowment
- Increasing socio-economic diversity: even with its generous financial aid program, Harvard can still be a difficult transition for low-income students. I believe we need to expand the “start-up” grants program and to increase resources for First Generation advising, not just at the College, but throughout the University
- Increased resources towards diversity training
- Incorporation of DEI in our curriculum including creation of new departments such as Ethnic Studies

But it’s not about my ideas because I don’t hold the monopoly on ideas. I believe it’s about my ability and willingness to listen to your ideas, to solicit your input, to gather your perspectives and to represent your views and to vigorously pursue them with the University.

I believe Harvard as an institution needs to do a much better job of engaging with special interest groups and associations that represent diverse members to actively promote its activities, solicit input and recruit leaders.

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

In an *amicus curiae* following the University of Texas affirmative action case, our University joined 13 other colleges in supporting the practice of race-conscious admissions policies “to continue to allow educational institutions to structure admissions programs that take account of race and ethnicity as single factors within a highly individualized, holistic review process.” President Faust endorsed “the vital interest of universities in bringing together students from many different backgrounds and points of view. Such diversity enriches the learning experience for all our students, as they live and learn in a community whose collectively variety of experiences, interests and perspectives open minds, expands horizons and better prepares students to live and serve in a pluralistic world.” I am proud of, and continue to support, Harvard’s strong defense of affirmative action and race-conscious admissions not as controlling factors, but as single factors within a holistic review process. We still need to do a better job of socio-economic diversity, even within our under-represented communities.

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

I believe Harvard, by virtue of its place in society, as *the* premier institution of higher learning, has a moral responsibility to lead by example and I commit to doing everything in my power to hold the University accountable in the pursuit of this ideal. I wasn’t afraid to speak truth to power to the University in 2007 on behalf of Harvard workers and I won’t be afraid today and in the future of standing up to the University’s leadership to advocate for progressive change.



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?

*I am a current member and a former board executive of the Harvard Black Alumni Society (HBAS).*

When I was five years old growing up in Ghana, I stumbled upon a document in my father's library with "Harvard University" on it. I asked him, "what is university?" He told me "That's where you go to get smart." I followed up: "and what's Harvard?" "Ohhh" he replied "that's where you go to get REALLY smart." Based on the cartoons I watched on Plato, I imagined Harvard as this place in Greece with pillars and people wearing togas sitting around "getting smart." In what my high school counselor would later call benevolent naivete, I decided I must go to this place to get really smart. So, at age five, I wrote a letter to the "Headmaster" of Harvard expressing this desire. Six or so months later, Neil Rudenstine wrote back. In his letter, I learned 3 things: 1) Harvard is not in Greece, but in some place called Cambridge, MA; 2) His title is President and not Headmaster; and 3) age 5 is too young for Harvard. It was a very kind letter and he encouraged me to keep in touch. (I would later meet him in person for the first time

in February 2020 at the 50th anniversary of Harvard's Department of African and African American Studies). This started my Harvard love story.

In a story I have shared in the past, a European ambassador in Ghana told me I was "foolish" for daring to dream of going to Harvard ("it's impossible to get in, not even my daughter will bother" he told me). He meant well and offered to help me get into good schools in Europe. Fast forward and I had the great opportunity and blessing to attend The Peddie School on a full scholarship. I applied to Harvard College under the Early Action Program in 2005. I'll never forget December 14th, 2005. At 10:16pm GMT, I received my offer of admission and a full scholarship from Harvard. I cried all night. After 14 years, the dream of a young and "foolish" African boy became reality. I later pursued graduate studies at Harvard Business School and Harvard Law School as a Soros Fellow. Harvard completely changed my life. It inspired me to believe in my dreams and to pursue the socio-economic transformation of Africa, my continent that I love so deeply and dearly.

Filled with immense gratitude for the countless gifts Harvard gave me, I have always felt a moral obligation to give back and to pay it forward. Harvard is a major priority in my personal philanthropy, and I have supported financial aid, research on Africa, mental health, and other important causes at the University. I have volunteered with Alumni Affairs and Development, helping to raise funds for financial aid. I served as Chair of my reunions at the College, the Business School, and the Law School. I co-founded the Harvard Club of Ghana and helped launch the Harvard Book Prize and the INSPIRE program in-country. I fought to establish and now chair Harvard College Interviews in Ghana. I volunteer on several boards at Harvard including the Harvard Center for African Studies Leadership Council, the Harvard Business School Fund Council, the Harvard Medical School Dean's Advisory Council on Global Health, and the Joint Committee on Alumni Affairs and Development. In addition, from 2017-2020, I was humbled to have been elected by the alumni and to serve as an Elected Director of the Harvard Alumni Association.

When I was contacted by Harvard about my nomination for the Board of Overseers, I was surprised. I remain humbled, honored, and deeply moved by the nominating committee's consideration of my candidacy. At the same time, I am beyond excited for the opportunity to give back to my beloved alma mater in this capacity. Harvard has always been a global institution which reflects our international community: 24% of Harvard students are international from over 180 countries and over 69,000 Harvard alumni live abroad. Yet this rich global diversity isn't reflected on the Board of Overseers, which presently has only 3 members outside the United States. If elected, I will be the only African representative on the 30-member board and I can't wait to represent our international alumni on this board. Serving Harvard remains one

of the greatest privileges of my lifetime and it would be a deep honor to help contribute towards building a greater, stronger, and more inclusive University.

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

Absolutely!