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Candidate for Harvard Board of Overseers
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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.)

Promoting and ensuring diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are central to the mission of higher education and the healthy future of our society. Harvard aspires to nurture students who will go out and lead us toward a more just and sustainable future. As we struggle to heal our increasingly fractured society and remedy hardships faced by marginalized communities, it is more important than ever that the Harvard community reflects the socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, gender, and cultural diversity of our country and that Harvard graduates come away with a fundamental understanding of our complex society and appreciation for the power of diversity.

Harvard can and should be a leader in weaving DEI into all aspects of university life, including:

- undergraduate and graduate admissions
- faculty hiring, tenure, and promotion
- undergraduate and graduate curricula
- campus life
- research/scholarship activities
- translation of research/scholarship to society

I would enthusiastically support Harvard in advancing its already innovative DEI efforts across these domains, including aligning core curricula to cultivate the diverse skills, open-mindedness, and knowledge that future leaders will need to *collectively* tackle our increasingly complex societal challenges. Recruiting and supporting diverse faculty as well as those who are pioneering effective approaches to equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the classroom, research, and outward service can positively impact campus culture.

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

I support a holistic admissions review process which considers the background of each applicant and seeks to build a diverse and inclusive community of students.

I believe that Harvard should aspire towards a student body that roughly represents the socioeconomic, racial, ethnic, gender, and cultural diversity of our country. In doing so, Harvard will continue to be an engine for social mobility and a breeding ground for future generations of leaders with the perspectives, relationships, and experiences needed to affect positive societal change.

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

Universities have never been more vital than today, as we struggle to heal our fractured communities, plan for a highly uncertain future, and harness increasingly powerful technology. We need to equip the college students of today with the knowledge, skills, and compassion they need for tomorrow. DEI lies at the heart of this challenge, in terms of providing broad access to a Harvard education and instilling these core values in the hearts of all students. I believe that Harvard has already begun to lead a radical integration of diversity, equity and inclusion into the fabric of college life, and I would gladly devote my time and expertise to advance this effort.

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 not a member of any of the signing organizations.

In my 18 years on the faculty of the University of Texas at Austin—one of the largest public flagship universities in the country, I have engaged in numerous efforts to promote DEI across campus, including:

- In my research lab, I have advised dozens of undergraduate and graduate students from underrepresented groups, who have gone on to very successful careers in science, technology, and public service.
- As a member of committees overseeing faculty recruitment, faculty promotion and tenure, and the UT faculty council, I have been an outspoken advocate for transparent and equitable evaluations that reward DEI-related activities.
- As the founding director of the [UT COVID-19 Modeling Consortium](#), I have focused our research on health disparities, including published studies on mitigating COVID-19 in the

[construction workforce](#) and [populations experiencing homelessness](#) and a public facing dashboard highlighting [socioeconomic disparities](#) in mortality and access to vaccines. I hired an equity specialist to provide direction and check for biases across our research and data analysis activities.

- I served on a National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) panel that developed actionable guidance recommendations for the Executive Office of the President of the United States on ensuring that renters can stay in their homes and housing aid reaches the communities that need it most. The panel report ([Rental Eviction and the COVID-19 Pandemic: Averting a Looming Crisis](#)) recommends actions to be taken both urgently and over the next three years aimed at addressing the immediate crisis as well as long-standing needs related to housing choice, affordability, and security across the United States.
- I have incorporated DEI issues into several of the undergraduate and graduate courses I have taught at UT, including lessons on implicit bias in two different Ph.D. professional development courses and a unit on health disparities in an undergraduate course in pandemic science.
- Finally, I have co-chaired two major strategic planning initiatives commissioned by UT's President through which we are taking bold steps to advance DEI across UT's teaching, research, and service missions.

Throughout my career as a pandemic scientist, I have had the opportunity to put my values and skills to public use. Working closely with public health agencies and policymakers, I design equitable and effective strategies for combating outbreaks. And, as a teacher, I aspire to nurture the next generation of scientists, citizens, and leaders. I believe that collaboration is the key to tackling our biggest societal challenges and am passionate about breaking down barriers between scholars, communities, and decision makers that stand in the way of societal advancement and global well-being.

As a member of the Harvard Board of Overseers, I would draw on these professional experiences and my commitment to ensuring our nation's universities equip the next generation to lead effectively and ethically.

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

Yes, I would enthusiastically meet with these groups while serving on the Harvard University Board of Overseers.