

## Short Answers to the questions from Coalition for a Diverse Harvard (from Judy Norsigian) Feb 2023

1. How important should diversity, equity and inclusion be at Harvard, and what strategies should the University pursue to address these? If you can, please discuss specific programs and policies (e.g., Ethnic Studies; faculty hiring, tenure and advancement; Harvard's pledge in its 1650 Charter to actively facilitate the education of American Indian youth; Harvard's legacy of slavery; environmental justice).

DEI efforts are of course important. I am not yet sure of all the strategies I would recommend, but one would be an immediate and meaningful "reparations payment" by Harvard University to HBCUs – something that would begin redress for Harvard's having benefited so greatly from the earlier practice of slavery.

Another would be to collaborate more extensively with community-based advocacy groups committed to environmental justice and evidence-based policy changes (groups like Ceres, Mothers Out Front, HEET, Grassroots International, Indigenous Environment Network, the Sunrise Movement, [350.org](https://www.350.org/), and the Union of Concerned Scientists).

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

I believe that affirmative action and race-conscious admissions improve the learning environment and possibilities for everyone. And I agree with many of the comments in this Harvard Gazette article from last year: <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2022/01/higher-ed-civil-rights-leaders-decry-high-court-decision-to-hear-admissions-case/>. Current attacks on affirmative action and race-based admissions require new strategies to preserve and expand the kind of justice we seek, and this is where I have a lot more to learn. Creating clearer narratives to offset the misinformation about these and related issues will be key, and Harvard could play a bigger role in educating the general public.

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

I believe that Harvard should partner more with existing organizations already working in this space and should promote more "scholar/activist" conversations for the public to attend. Right now, I see this happening in other universities more than at Harvard, and I would like that to change. Scholarly presentations and conferences that omit this kind of "intersectional" exchange won't achieve the kind of equitable, just, and inclusive society that so many of us now seek. (And academic rigor does not have to be sacrificed while creating such collaborations.)

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?

My personal involvements with Our Bodies Ourselves, the National Women's Health Network, Community Works, and other nonprofit organizations over the past 4-5 decades have frequently addressed these issues. I have also been part of the HR70 reunion planning committees, where I have worked on creating greater diversity in our panels, topics addressed, etc. Currently, I am working with a group of 1970 classmates on a letter to the HAA that will be asking Harvard to make reparations payments (given how much the institution benefited financially from and practice of slavery over many years).

5. If elected, would you be willing to meet occasionally with the leaders and/or memberships of the groups below during your tenure? Absolutely yes. And I don't believe that I am a member of any of the groups you list below. I might have responded to an inquiry from Coalition for a Diverse Harvard, but I haven't been active in any way thus far.