Dec. 2, 2016

Dear President Drew Gilpin Faust, Provost Alan M. Garber, Dean Michael D. Smith, Dean Xiao-Li Meng, Dean Rakesh Khurana, and Harvard University Faculty and Administration,

On November 15, 2016, just one week after the presidential election, President Faust wrote a letter that envisioned a Harvard “enriched, not embattled, by difference and diversity” and called us to exercise “our capacities and our values” to heal this nation. In response to her bold proposition, we, the Harvard Ethnic Studies Coalition, write appealing for critical ethnic studies at Harvard.

Over the past 44 years, Harvard students have submitted 11 proposals for ethnic studies. Today, neither a concentration nor a department for ethnic studies exists at Harvard, while our peer institutions have established research centers, departments, and programs in ethnic studies. We believe that this is a pivotal moment to fulfill intellectual needs that have gone unaddressed for too long. The president-elect’s political platform was built on xenophobic, sexist, and racist rhetoric and policy proposals, which, even within the first few days of the election, have inspired hate crimes against many marginalized groups in the United States. We believe this calls for urgent action on Harvard’s part to be ever more proactive in educating "the citizens and citizen-leaders for our society," as the mission of Harvard College states, who are grounded in values of equity and justice.

Students and faculty across schools and departments at Harvard have demonstrated their interest in and dedication to ethnic studies over the years. During the past year alone, we have organized teach-ins, town halls, and workshops on ethnic studies. Harvard students continue to pursue ethnic studies, even given the limited intellectual and material support from the University. We, then, find it incomprehensible that our institution continues to overlook our appeals and consequently fail to foster our intellectual growth.

Our proposal for structural change includes, but is not limited to, the following. Many of our concerns are also reflected in the recent petition to protect undocumented students at Harvard.

- Establish a Department of Ethnic Studies that offers: undergraduate concentrations and secondary fields in 1) Native American and Indigenous Studies, 2) Latinx Studies, 3) Asian American Studies, 4) Arab and Muslim American Studies, and 5) Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies; and Ph.D. degrees and graduate-level secondary fields in Ethnic Studies.
- Establish a center that would be a national and international hub for research in critical ethnic studies in comparative, national, transnational, and global frameworks, providing much-needed intellectual space for students, scholars, and faculty on campus.
- Recruit and retain Ethnic Studies faculty and faculty of color by dedicating tenured, tenure-track, and visiting professorships for Ethnic Studies and its allied disciplines such as Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, and African and African American Studies.

We believe that now is the time to act—for the University to be at the forefront of teaching, learning, and research in an academic field that seeks to examine some of the most fundamental and critical questions of our time. Indeed, the University must renew its dedication to developing leaders who can make a difference at home and globally.

Respectfully submitted,
Harvard Ethnic Studies Coalition, and the following signatories
Faculty
Laurence Tribe, The Carl M. Loeb University Professor
Robin Bernstein, Chair of the Committee on Degrees in Studies of Women, Gender and Sexuality, and Professor of African and African American Studies and of Women, Gender, and Sexuality
Joyce Chaplin, Chair of American Studies, and James Duncan Phillips Professor of Early American History
Shigehisa Kuriyama, Chair of the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, and Reischauer Institute Professor of Cultural History
Carol J. Oja, Chair of the Department of Music, and William Powell Mason Professor of Music
Kay Kaufman Shelemay, Chair of Committee on Ethnicity, Migration, and Rights, and G. Gordon Watts Professor of Music and African and African American Studies
Mariano Siskind, Chair of the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, and Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures and of Comparative Literature
Walter Johnson, Director of the Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History, and Winthrop Professor of History and Professor of African and African American Studies
Michele Lamont, Director of the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, and Robert I. Goldman Professor of European Studies and Professor of Sociology and of African and African American Studies
Jason Beckfield, Professor of Sociology
Glenda Carpio, Professor of English and of African and African American Studies
Jean Comaroff, Alfred North Whitehead Professor of African and African American Studies and of Anthropology
John Comaroff, Hugh K. Foster Professor of African and African American Studies and of Anthropology
Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, Professor of History and of African and African American Studies
Evelynn Hammonds, Barbara Gutmann Rosenkrantz Professor of the History of Science and of African and African American Studies
David L Howell, Professor of Japanese History
Mayra Rivera Rivera, Professor of Religion and Latina/o Studies (HDS)
Tommie Shelby, Caldwell Titcomb Professor of African and African American Studies and of Philosophy
Doris Sommer, Ira Jewell Williams, Jr. Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures and of African and African American Studies
John Stauffer, Professor of English and of African and African American Studies
Jonathan L. Walton, Pusey Minister in the Memorial Church, Plummer Professor of Christian Morals, and Professor of Religion and Society (HDS)
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Andrew Jewett, Associate Professor of History and of Social Studies
Ju Yon Kim, Associate Professor of English
Matthew Liebmann, John and Ruth Hazel Associate Professor of the Social Sciences
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Paul Chang, Assistant Professor of Sociology
Genevieve Clutario, Assistant Professor History and of History and Literature
Lorgia García Peña, Assistant Professor, Romance Languages and Literatures and of History and Literature
Brandon M. Terry ’05, Assistant Professor of African and African American Studies and of Social Studies
Lisa Wong ’79, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics (HMS)
Caroline Light, Director of Undergraduate Studies of and Lecturer on Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality
Tessa Lowinske Desmond, Administrative Director of and Lecturer on Committee on Ethnicity, Migration, and Rights
Nicole Newendorp, Ph.D. ’04, Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies of and Lecturer on Social Studies
Linda Schlossberg, Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies of and Lecturer on Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality
René Carrasco, Lecturer on History and Literature
Chris Clements, Post-Doctoral Fellow in the Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History
Daniel McKanan, Ralph Waldo Emerson Unitarian Universalist Association Senior Lecturer in Divinity
Terry Park, Lecturer on History and Literature
Everton Vargas da Costa, Visiting Lecturer on Romance Languages and Literatures

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Amy Parker, Department Administrator of WGS
Daniel Martin Gonzalez, Spanish Teaching Assistant
Panpan Gao, Preceptor in Chinese
Richie Leng, HUIT
Alyssa Green, HUHS
Meera Seshadri, HUHS
Student Organizations
Association of Black Harvard Women (ABHW)
Concilio Latino de Harvard
Harvard-Radcliffe Asian American Association (AAA)
Harvard-Radcliffe Asian American Women's Association (AAWA)
Harvard-Radcliffe Chinese Students Association (CSA)
Harvard Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association (APAMSA)
Harvard Black Law Students Association (HBLSA)
Harvard Black Students Association (BSA)
Harvard College Act On A Dream Club
Harvard College Iranian Association (HCIA)
Harvard College Democrats
Harvard GSAS Latinx Student Association
Harvard Islamic Society (HIS)
Harvard Latino Student Alliance (HLSA)
Harvard Native American Law Students Association (NALSA)
Harvard Philippine Forum (HPF)
Harvard South Asian Association (SAA)
Harvard South Asian Law Students Association (SALSA)
Harvard Taiwanese Cultural Society (TCS)
Harvard Vietnamese Association (HVA)
HGSE Pan Asian Coalition for Education (PACE)
Holoimua O Hawai‘i (Harvard-Radcliffe Hawai‘i Club)
La Alianza at Harvard Law School
Latinas Unidas de Harvard College (LU)
Native Americans at Harvard College (NAHC)
Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia Association (SIAMA)
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Joshua Zhang '14
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