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## **Coalition for a Diverse Harvard Candidate Questionnaire**

### ***1. How important should diversity be at Harvard? What strategies should the University pursue regarding this? (Please discuss specific programs and policies including Ethnic Studies and faculty hiring, tenure, and advancement, if you can)***

Diversity is essential to any institution of higher learning because it provides a depth of understanding that can never be acquired exclusively in a classroom, and it should be a fundamental consideration in our admissions processes, faculty hiring and retention, and academic opportunities available to students. Students should leave Harvard not only with a diploma, but with an understanding of how differing realities – race, ethnicity, culture, social economic status, religion, and sexual identity – impact the lives of individuals and our society at large.

Harvard is also uniquely charged with cultivating the world's future leaders – and good leaders know how to lead, follow, and collaborate with those unlike themselves. Such skills can only be acquired if the student body and faculty are diverse and inclusive. For these reasons, diversity should be defended, fostered, and reflected all throughout the University.

To defend and promote diversity on its campus and beyond, Harvard would do better to increase transparency and willingly provide more (anonymized) data that is disaggregated by race, ethnicity, first-generation status, and other relevant attributes that we must consider to understand how student outcomes vary in relation to these factors. With this information, Harvard can better determine how to provide adequate support to students who may need it, and as one of the best research institutions in the world, Harvard can lead the way in closing this gap in knowledge to the benefit of others. The practices we develop to address the issues that arise on our campus can be applied to other organizations and institutions.

Once students arrive on campus, Harvard should welcome them with the tools and resources needed to ensure a smooth transition, such as by:

- Hiring counselors (therapists, career counselors, and support staff more broadly), who are familiar with the varying challenges that each minority group faces and can offer support and advice to overcome them from a personal standpoint.
- Connecting students to recent alumni of similar backgrounds, purposefully creating cycles of role models, advisors, and friends that can assist students during their time at Harvard.
- Deliberately recruiting more diverse faculty members across all levels, schools, and tracks, so that women and minority groups are better represented in positions of leadership.

- [Establishing an Ethnic Studies department and an accompanying Ethnic Studies concentration at the College](#), so that students from traditionally marginalized communities can study their histories with the full academic rigor they deserve.
- Showcasing minority alumni who attend Harvard events, as well as including those alumni in developing programming, so that on-campus and off-campus (e.g. local Harvard Club) events are more appealing to minority students.

***2. How can Harvard encourage more diversity among its alumni leaders and activities? (If not discussed above.)***

It is absolutely critical for the diversity and inclusion work that is happening on campus to extend to the alumni community. We should take immediate steps, like recruiting diverse alumni to hold leadership positions and implementing more inclusive programming with input from a wide range of community members. But to create long-term, sustainable diversity in leadership, we need to build from the bottom up. This means consulting minority individuals currently active in alumni activities and working with them to design events that are appealing to a more diverse audience. This also means engaging with recent graduates and making them feel like important stakeholders in their alumni community. We can do this structurally by [creating recent alumni specific positions within alumni groups and on governing boards, such as the Board of Overseers](#).

***3. Please state your view on affirmative action and race conscious admissions.***

I staunchly support affirmative action and race conscious admissions.

Deliberate [discriminatory housing policies](#) enacted throughout America's history, such as the Housing Act of 1949, [the U.S. Federal Housing Administration \(FHA\) implementing pro-segregation policy through FDR's New Deal](#), and unconstitutional racial zoning resulted in systematic residential segregation. Coupled with the fact that our nation's public schools are funded predominantly through local property taxes, this segregation negatively impacts the quality of education available to children in low-income communities, who are disproportionately black and brown.

Thus, it would be unreasonable to expect students from disadvantaged backgrounds and schools lacking adequate resources to compete on equal footing with their more privileged counterparts. A fair and equitable admissions process must take into consideration the various factors that influence a student's academic performance, many of which are inextricably tied to race.

In addition, putting too much emphasis on standardized test scores overlooks the fact that performance on tests such as the SAT is heavily correlated with [parental education, race, class, and access to prep courses](#), further disadvantaging minority and low-income students, as well as the fact that [those scores are not particularly accurate predictors of a student's ability to succeed in college](#). If we aim to counteract racial injustice and to dismantle structural exclusion in higher education, we must defend comprehensive affirmative action policies that consider the impact that race can have on a student's educational outcomes.

Beyond these structural inequities, Harvard must contend with our nation's (and Harvard's own) history of inequality and injustice toward minorities. To sift through the extent of disadvantage onset by slavery, the genocide of indigenous peoples, the impacts of the Chinese Exclusion Act, proliferation of hate crimes against Latino people, and more would require a robust Ethnic Studies program at the University... which the University should have. But for now, to mitigate the repercussions of directly racist policies in our nation and in higher education, Harvard must remain firmly committed to a robust affirmative action policy.

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

Harvard's role is and should continue to be one of unquestionable leadership. The University must continue to defend race-conscious admissions, while also investing in research and sparking a shift in educational priorities, where students are not only taught what a just society is but also how to promote one.

If, as an institution, we hope to shape society in a more equitable and just manner, the principles of equity and inclusion must be modeled transparently in our governance. The University needs to incorporate the concerns and ideas of minority alumni into its strategic thinking and long-term planning because the knowledge and perspectives they bring to the table are critical to our success. If we are going to serve our community responsibly and adequately address the issues facing a 21st century University, we need more diverse leadership. Harvard should lead by example and show how invaluable minority group input is to University decisions. Building an equitable, inclusive, and just society is contingent on establishing inclusive governance practices, so we must ensure that all historically marginalized groups have their voices heard and acted upon.

***5. 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?***

I have found the most effective way to bring about diversity and inclusion in all areas of life is through personal relationships and thoughtful conversation. Many organizations that implement diversity policies mistakenly believe that the goal should be to simply treat everyone as if they are exactly the same in the name of equality. However, not acknowledging the ways in which race and ethnicity impact lived experiences does a disservice to efforts to bolster diversity and inclusion. The "inclusion" part of "diversity and inclusion" is essential – it's not enough to have diverse people in the room if their differences are not valued.

I experience this often because, as a black woman, I am often the person whose presence is considered proof of diversity. However, I believe firmly that acknowledging my differences is ultimately a better way to celebrate diversity and highlight its importance for those around me. Generating awareness around the value of diversity and inclusion among peers is a very powerful first step toward creating systemic change.

After graduating, I began to serve as a volunteer advisor on gender equity and youth education initiatives for Coaches Across Continents (CAC), a global non-profit that uses soccer as a tool for the advancement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. At CAC, we strive to advance progressive attitudes toward gender roles, develop leadership and problem-solving skills for young girls, and increase knowledge of girls' and women's rights and health choices.

In my role as a professional soccer player and female athlete, I consider promoting female empowerment extremely important and am committed to using my platform to do so. That's why I participate in volunteer service events like the [Girls Strong initiative](#) with the Portland Thorns, which focuses on providing young girls access to spaces where they can feel confident, valued, and inspired to pursue careers in sports, a field that has traditionally questioned their worth. I also serve on the National Women's Soccer League's collective-bargaining executive committee, where I am on the front lines of the fight for equal playing conditions for female athletes.