

## **Report of the Committee to Study the Importance of Student Body Diversity**

The mission of Harvard College is to educate the citizenry and citizen leaders for our society. We take this mission very seriously and firmly believe it is accomplished through the transformative power of a liberal arts and sciences education.

That transformation begins in the classroom with exposure to new ideas, new ways of understanding and new ways of knowing. It is further fostered through a diverse residential environment where our students live with peers who are studying different subjects, who come from different walks of life, and have different identities. This exposure to difference not only deepens a student's intellectual transformation, but also creates the conditions for a social transformation as students begin to question who they are and how they relate to others. From their experiences in the classroom and in their residences, we hope students will experience personal transformation as they begin to fashion the patterns for the rest of their lives; to reflect on what they will do with their lives; to develop their values and interests; and to begin to understand how they can best use their talents to serve the world.

It is with these sentiments that the Dean of Harvard College opens nearly every meeting he chairs. Echoing the fundamental principles upon which Harvard College was founded more than 350 years ago, these words highlight the importance of development and transformation, of growth and change, and of an educational experience in which challenge and confrontation are essential counterparts to collaboration and cooperation. They also reflect the central role that student body diversity plays in the achievement of our mission: the education of our students through exposure to novel ideas; to people whose backgrounds, points of view and life experiences are profoundly different from their own; to innovative pedagogy; and to diverse educators – at the front of our classrooms and in the seats, at lectures, in dining halls, in residences, and in the thousands of other structured and informal interactions that make up a Harvard education.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Through this Committee's work, we have sought to examine and restate the benefits that the College derives – as an institution, and for its students and faculty – from student body diversity of all kinds, including racial diversity.

The question before us is one the Supreme Court has asked public institutions of higher education to answer in connection with the consideration of an applicant's race in the admissions processes as one factor among many in an individualized review. In fact, we recognize that this question and these issues deserve exploration and articulation as the underlying fabric of the College's mission, derived from the basis of the liberal arts education to which Harvard has been committed since its founding.

We emphatically embrace and reaffirm the University's long-held and oft-expressed view that student body diversity – including racial diversity – is essential to our pedagogical objectives and institutional mission. Our diverse student population enhances the education of our students of all races and backgrounds and prepares them to assume leadership roles in the increasingly

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pluralistic society into which they will graduate. In our view, racial diversity is particularly fundamental to the effective education of Harvard College students. Moreover, it advances our responsibility as a leading national college to ensure, in the words of Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, that "the path to leadership [is] visibly open to talented and qualified individuals of every race and ethnicity."<sup>1</sup>

In the course of our work, we reached out to a wide range of people throughout the College and the University more broadly. Those consulted include the Dean of Admissions, the Dean of Freshmen, the Dean of Student Life, the Educational Policy Committee, the Residential House Masters, the Standing Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid, and the Faculty Council. We also spoke with student-life professionals working directly in the fields of equity, diversity, and inclusion, both in the College administration and in the residential Houses. We sought and received input from teaching faculty, athletic coaches, advisors of extra-curricular activities, and, of course, students and alumni. Our work also benefited from discussions with colleagues at other institutions of higher education and was informed by leading voices throughout Harvard's history.

By contrast, in two sections of this report (at pp. 13 and 21), we include references to specific Harvard alumni because we believe that their experiences or public statements are particularly on point. We explicitly note that, as indicated in the citations contained in the footnotes, the committee is relying entirely on public sources for this information, and has not spoken with these individuals. We are not intending to suggest that they have in any way reviewed this report or endorsed any of its contents.

This Report begins with a brief synopsis of how Harvard has valued and fostered student body diversity as a central part of its mission. Against this backdrop, the Report then examines the ways in which diversity in the student body helps catalyze the intellectual, social, and personal transformations that are central to Harvard's liberal arts and sciences education. We then consider the distinctive role that institutions of higher education like Harvard College hold in American society and the particular responsibilities that accompany that role.

## **I. DIVERSITY AND THE MISSION OF HARVARD COLLEGE**

In 1996, Harvard's President, Neil Rudenstine, submitted his President's Report to the Board of Overseers, captioned "Diversity and Learning".<sup>2</sup> President Rudenstine, in an in-depth analysis which we endorse and attach as Appendix A to this Report, sought to "remind [us] that student diversity has, for more than a century, been valued for its capacity to contribute powerfully to the process of learning and to the creation of an effective educational environment."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 539 U.S. 306, 332 (2003).

<sup>2</sup> As explained in a sidebar to the Harvard Magazine excerpt of President Rudenstine's Report: "Up until the last two or three years, we've been able to count on a fair level of understanding as to why diversity was important and good," says Harvard president Neil L. Rudenstine. "That's been more directly challenged of late." Hence his decision to devote his most recent report to the Board of Overseers to 'Diversity and Learning.' 'People have been declaring themselves on the issue,' Rudenstine points out. 'If you don't say what you think about it now, you're really not doing your educational duty.'"

<sup>3</sup> Rudenstine, Neil, *The President's Report: 1993-1995* (Harvard Univ., 1995), 2.

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In this section, we highlight only some of Harvard's history; we have not attempted to set out the full history which both is beyond the scope of our work and has been set forth much more comprehensively by others. We recognize that Harvard's history recounts neither a single nor a simple story about diversity and inclusion. It is a complex narrative made up of the actions, understandings, and beliefs of individuals – some products of their time, some ahead of their time, and some perhaps behind their time. We recognize that our aspirations always have run ahead of our reality. But we also believe that a fair reading of Harvard's history reveals a process across time in which the College has developed a recognition and appreciation of the excellence that comes only from including and embracing multiple sources of talent.

As President Rudenstine recognized in his Report, and as has become only clearer in the twenty years hence, diversity at Harvard is “not an end in itself, or a pleasant but dispensable accessory.” Rather, “[i]t is the substance from which much human learning, understanding, and wisdom derive. It offers one of the most powerful ways of creating the intellectual energy and robustness that lead to greater knowledge, as well as the tolerance and mutual respect that are so essential to the maintenance of our civic society.”<sup>4</sup> The exposure to innovative ideas and novel ways of thinking that is at the heart of Harvard's liberal arts and sciences education is deepened immeasurably by close contact with people whose lives and experiences animate those ideas. It is not enough, Harvard has long recognized, to read about or be taught the opinions of others on a given subject. As John Stuart Mill observed centuries ago:

That is not the way to do justice to the arguments, or bring them into real contact with [one's] own mind. [One] must be able to hear them from persons who actually believe them; who defend them in earnest, and do their very utmost for them. He must know them in their most plausible and persuasive form; he must feel the whole force of the difficulty which the true view of the subject has to encounter and dispose of . . . .”<sup>5</sup>

The first Charter of the President and Fellows of Harvard College, authorized by Governor Thomas Dudley in 1650, identifies as the animating purpose of the institution “the education of the English and Indian youth of this country.”<sup>6</sup> In these words from Harvard's foundational moments, we find the seed that has flourished as Harvard has expanded its efforts to become more inclusive of all forms of diversity.

Through the first several centuries of Harvard College's history, student body diversity was limited by such factors as geography, access to secondary education, and prevailing attitudes. Comparatively few young men finished high school, and even fewer of those sought to pursue post-secondary education. Of that limited set, only a small portion lived close enough to Harvard, or had the means to travel, to attend. A large pool of strongly qualified applicants from which the College could select the student body did not exist for much of Harvard College's early history.

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<sup>4</sup> Rudenstine, 53.

<sup>5</sup> Rudenstine 4, quoting *On Liberty* (1859), pt. II.

<sup>6</sup> <http://library.harvard.edu/university-archives/using-the-collections/online-resources/charter-of-1650>.

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Harvard's transformation from a regional college into a national university (a necessary step toward the education we offer today) began in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Observing a nation rent by regional differences in the years leading up to the Civil War, University President C.C. Felton argued in his annual report to the Board of Overseers for the academic year 1859-60 that to bring together students "from different and distant States must tend powerfully to remove prejudices, by bringing them into friendly relations . . . . Such influences are especially needed in the present disastrous condition of public affairs."<sup>7</sup>

Over the next forty years, Harvard's leaders continued to highlight the importance of diversity and to broaden its student body. Harvard President Charles William Eliot understood that diversity was, in the words of Rudenstine, "capable of shaping lifelong attitudes and habits," and "indispensable to the healthy functioning of a democratic society."<sup>8</sup> Under Eliot's presidency, Harvard developed an elective system of coursework expanding the variety and diversity of Harvard's curriculum as well as its student body. As Rudenstine expanded on these principles:

The goal was to create a more open and even disputatious university community where the zeal and zest of argument and debate would be audible and tangible. In addition, the gains in terms of tolerance, mutual understanding, and camaraderie would be profound and long-lasting. The 'collision of views' at a university is 'wholesome and profitable,' Eliot wrote. 'It promotes thought on great themes, converts passion into resolution, cultivates forbearance and mutual respect, and teaches . . . candor, moral courage, and independence of thought . . . .'<sup>9</sup>

These principles have carried forward to this day as Harvard has continued to widen its gates through greater outreach to, and broadening acceptance of, greater diversity and difference. As Harvard's current President, Drew Gilpin Faust, noted at the beginning of this academic year:

[F]or many if not most of those arriving at Harvard for the first time, this is the most varied community in which they have ever lived—perhaps ever will live. People of different races, religions, ethnicities, nationalities, political views, gender identities, sexual orientations. We celebrate these differences as an integral part of everyone's education—whether for a first year student in the College or an aspiring MD or MBA or LLM—or for a member of the faculty or staff, who themselves are always learners too.<sup>10</sup>

We have long defined the concept of "ability" broadly, and we seek out a variety of intelligences, including motivation, intellectual interests, and the capacity to make use of available opportunities. As President Rudenstine observed, "any definition of qualifications or merit that does not give considerable weight to a wide range of human qualities and capacities will not serve the goal of fairness to individual candidates (quite apart from groups) in admissions. Nor will it serve the fundamental purposes of education. The more narrow and numerical the definition of qualifications, the more likely we are to pass over (or discount) applicants – of

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<sup>7</sup> Rudenstine, 5, quoting Report of the President to the Board of Overseers 1859-60, 6.

<sup>8</sup> Rudenstine, 51.

<sup>9</sup> Rudenstine, 11, quoting "The Aims of the Higher Education," in *Educational Reform*, 237.

<sup>10</sup> Drew Faust, 2015 Remarks at Morning Prayers (Sept. 2, 2015), available at <http://www.harvard.edu/president/speech/2015/2015-remarks-morning-prayers>.

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many different kinds – who possess exceptional talents, attributes, and evidence of promise that are not well measured by standardized tests.”<sup>11</sup>

From the moment our students enter our gates, Harvard College is committed to encouraging them to become more intellectually inquisitive, more creative, more understanding, more tolerant, and thus more accomplished individuals in an increasingly interconnected world. 150 years ago, Harvard’s President recognized that “if he could bring together – in a single institution – young people from different backgrounds who would be educated in association with one another, and who would eventually become leaders in different parts of the nation, then that process could make a difference to the creation of unity throughout the country as a whole.”<sup>12</sup> Today, these notions are magnified a hundredfold: our students become leaders in not only different parts of the nation, but in different corners of the world, and our process can, and we believe does, help create understanding and respect beyond the borders of our campus and our nation.

Our students arrive at Harvard with their identities partially formed, shaped by racial, ethnic, social, economic, geographic, and other cultural factors, a sense of self both internally realized and externally recognized. Four years later, our students are welcomed by the President of the University to embrace an additional identity, that of membership in “the community of educated men and women”. A critical aspect of our transformational goal is to encourage this second and complementary identity, one inclusive of but not bounded by race or ethnicity, one that is sensitive to and understanding of the rich and diverse range of others’ identities, one that opens empathic windows to imagining how other identities might feel. This we aspire to do by creating contexts where students interact with “other”, with those having different realized and recognized identities, and by providing academic, residential, and extra-curricular opportunities for these interactions.

If the only contact students had with others’ lived experiences was on the page or on the screen, it would be far too easy to take short cuts in the exercise of empathy, to keep a safe distance from the ideas, and the people, that might make one uncomfortable. By putting those people and those ideas on the other side of the seminar table – and in one’s own dormitory rooms and dining halls – we ensure that our students truly engage with other people’s experiences and points of view, that they truly develop their powers of empathy. As President Conant explained, “[t]olerance, honesty, intellectual integrity, courage, [and] friendliness are virtues not to be learned out of a printed volume but from the book of experience.”<sup>13</sup>

The role played by racial diversity in particular in the development of this capacity for empathy cannot be overstated. Even a cursory review of the newspapers for the last year makes clear that race remains a central element of American society, and of the identity of every American.

Needless to say, we aspire to the day when negative life experiences attributable to differences in racial and ethnic heritage are far less common. But as current events across the nation continue to demonstrate, that day has not yet arrived, and we would fail in a foundational aspect of our

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<sup>11</sup> Rudenstine, 50.

<sup>12</sup> Rudenstine, 6.

<sup>13</sup> Rudenstine, 26, quoting Report of the President to the Board of Overseers, 1950-51, 15.

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mission if we disregarded that fact as we prepare our students for such a complex and heterogeneous society.

### Harvard's Statements in Court Proceedings

Given Harvard's long history of careful thought on the subject of student body diversity, it is no surprise that when the issue arose in the courts in the 1978 case of *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, Harvard took an active role in that public conversation by joining with several other universities to file a brief as *amici curiae*, or friends of the court. As Harvard and the other amici explained, "[a] primary value of the liberal education should be exposure to new and provocative points of view, at a time in the student's life when he or she has recently left home and is eager for new intellectual experiences."<sup>14</sup>

Twenty-five years later, we reiterated this view to the Supreme Court as it revisited, and reaffirmed, its analysis in the case of *Grutter v. Bollinger*: "Diversity helps students confront perspectives other than their own and thus to think more rigorously and imaginatively; it helps students learn to relate better to people from different backgrounds; it helps students become better citizens. The educational benefits of student diversity include the discovery that there is a broad range of viewpoint and experience within any given minority community – as well as learning that certain imagined differences at times turn out to be only skin deep."<sup>15</sup>

In *Fisher v. University of Texas (Fisher I)*, we explained to the Supreme Court our deeply held conviction that "[d]iversity encourages students to question their own assumptions, to test received truths, and to appreciate the spectacular complexity of the modern world. This larger understanding prepares [our] graduates to be active engaged citizens wrestling with the pressing challenges of the day, to pursue innovation in every field of discovery, and to expand humanity's learning and accomplishment."<sup>16</sup> These principles have undergirded our university since its inception and continue to do so today.

And most recently, in the Supreme Court's second hearing of the *Fisher* case (*Fisher II*), we again emphasized the profound educational benefits that emerge from a diverse student body. We also explained the important post-graduation benefits that flow from our students' exposure to people of different backgrounds, races, and life experiences: "The world and the nation into which Harvard's students graduate demand that those students be open and exposed to a broad array of perspectives. Whatever their field of endeavor, Harvard's graduates will have to contend with a society that is increasingly complex and influenced by developments that may originate far from their homes. To fulfill their civic and other responsibilities, Harvard's graduates cannot be blind either to the challenges facing our increasingly pluralistic country or to the unresolved racial divisions that stubbornly persist despite decades of substantial efforts to resolve them."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Brief for Columbia Univ. et al. as *amici curiae*, p. 12, *Regents of the Univ. of California v. Bakke*, 438 U.S. 265 (1978).

<sup>15</sup> Brief for Harvard Univ. et al. as *amici curiae*, pp. 8-9, *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 539 U.S. 306 (2003).

<sup>16</sup> Brief for Brown Univ. et al. as *amici curiae*, p. 2, *Fisher v. Univ. of Texas*, 133 S. Ct. 2411 (2013).

<sup>17</sup> Brief for Harvard Univ. as *amicus curiae*, p. 9, *Fisher v. Univ. of Texas*, No. 14-981 (Nov. 2, 2015).

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## II. THE PATH TO INTELLECTUAL TRANSFORMATION

### A. Students' Classroom Experiences Underscore the Benefits of a Diverse Student Body

#### 1. The General Education Curriculum

Harvard's undergraduate curriculum is deliberately shaped to encourage exposure to "new ideas, new ways of understanding, and new ways of knowing." Our students choose among many possible concentrations that will lead them along distinct courses of study. We insist, however, that all Harvard College graduates complete courses in the various subject areas that constitute our General Education program. These subjects form the basis of a liberal education and prepare students to connect their educations to life outside of college. "Generally educated students need to have grappled with the very personal question of the duties and obligations, as well as the privileges, rights, and responsibilities, of civic and ethical agency in a dynamically changing world."<sup>18</sup> As the Report of the Task Force on General Education that recommended this course of study in 2007 observed:

A liberal education is useful. This does not mean that its purpose is to train students for their professions or to give them a guide to life after college. Nor does it mean instilling confidence in students by flattering the presumption that the world they are familiar with is the only one that matters. On the contrary, the aim of a liberal education is to unsettle presumptions, to defamiliarize the familiar, to reveal what is going on beneath and behind appearances, to disorient young people and to help them to find ways to re-orient themselves. A liberal education aims to accomplish these things by questioning assumptions, by inducing self-reflection, by teaching students to think critically and analytically, by exposing them to the sense of alienation produced by encounters with radically different historical moments and cultural formations and with phenomena that exceed their, and even our own, capacity fully to understand. Liberal education is vital because professional schools do not teach these things, employers do not teach them, and even most academic graduate programs do not teach them. Those institutions deliberalize students: they train them to think as professionals. A preparation in the liberal arts and sciences is crucial to the ability to think and act critically and reflectively outside the channels of a career or profession. The historical, theoretical, and relational perspectives that a liberal education provides can be a source of enlightenment and empowerment that will serve students well for the rest of their lives.<sup>19</sup>

One of the primary criteria for the introduction of new courses to Gen Ed is that they be pedagogically innovative in ways that encourage students to proactively engage their subjects, their classmates, and their instructors. The premium placed on robust engagement reinforces opportunities for students to draw on the benefits of a diverse student body.

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<sup>18</sup> Statement of Sean D. Kelly, Martignetti Professor of Philosophy, at meeting of Faculty of Arts and Sciences May 5, 2015.

<sup>19</sup> Faculty of Arts and Sciences Task Force on General Education, *Report of the Task Force on General Education*, February 2007.

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## 2. The Broader Curriculum

Harvard's commitment to unsettling its students' presumptions, about the world and about each other, is borne out outside of the Gen Ed curriculum as well. Harvard Professor Richard J. Light, the Carl H. Pforzheimer Professor of Teaching and Learning at the Graduate School of Education, conducted a substantial study of the ways that students can optimize their college experience. His findings, based on in-depth interviews with thousands of Harvard students, underscore the point that racial diversity can be a powerful force in students' education.

One graduating senior told the following story in an interview with Professor Light about his Harvard College experience:

In my case, the learning from diversity came . . . when I became very upset about how a fellow black student approached discussions in our sociology class.

I was stunned when one of my black classmates became visibly angry and accused the professor of not realizing how much it hurt him to hear information [about out-of-wedlock birthrates among African Americans] presented in class. Thank goodness he did it politely and not accusingly. But he was obviously upset. And his upset got me very upset, but in the opposite direction.

This was the whole reason I had signed up to take this course. I need to grapple with unpleasant realities. . . . But my fellow black student really made it awkward—both for the professor and for me. I actually wanted to hear more details about those demographics. Not because I am happy about them, but because I absolutely need to understand them as well as I can. Illusions are definitely no help.

Well, frankly, I didn't know quite what to do. [Fortunately,] there was a third African-American student in the class [who] had the courage to speak right up, and to thank the professor for sharing this awkward but real data. This guy basically said what I was thinking, except I didn't have the courage to verbalize it out loud.

The student who had complained to the professor seemed surprised that a fellow black student would criticize him. But this other student was so diplomatic that I think he somehow succeeded in getting the complainer to take a deep breath and to pause and reconsider his views. It took some courage for that black student to criticize another black student who clearly was upset. And in the context of a mostly white class.<sup>20</sup>

We note, as the student relating the story observed, that the educational benefits of this exchange were profound and varied. All three students involved, and everyone in the class, learned valuable lessons about recognizing and managing the differences in reactions among African-American students on a topic of sensitivity to them all. These experiences also highlight and help to resolve a false paradox: on the one hand, Harvard College recognizes that race plays an irreplaceable role in our conception of a diverse student body; on the other, we reject any

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<sup>20</sup> Light, Richard. *Making the Most of College*, (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press 2001), 149-151.



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implication that we essentialize race, or believe that all students of a particular race share the same views, experiences, or other characteristics.

The story related above illustrates how both of these concepts co-exist. The different responses of the three African-American students to the statistics cited by their professor confirm, if such confirmation were needed, that race does not dictate opinions or viewpoints on any given issue. At the same time, though, the conversation that took place among them likely could not have occurred as candidly as it did had any or all of them been white. While their reactions to the statistics on out-of-wedlock birth rates among African-Americans were different, they shared a relationship to the issue that non-African-American students simply did not have. Because of the role race continues to play in American society, they all knew that those statistics could be seen to reflect on their communities, simply by virtue of the color of their skin.

### B. The Creation of Knowledge Through Research Is Enriched by Diversity in the Student Body

As was recognized in Harvard's brief in *Bakke*, an education process enriched by diversity is not only of great importance to students: "It broadens the perspectives of teachers and thus tends to expand the reach of the curriculum and the range of scholarly interests of the faculty."<sup>21</sup> The diversity on our campus has expanded our knowledge in the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences.

The strong curricular emphasis on the humanities is one of the ways in which Harvard College challenges its student body to maximize the potential of its own diversity. Indeed, the very rationale for emphasizing the humanities in a liberal arts education closely resembles the merits of racial and other forms of diversity in a university community. We study the art, literature, music, and philosophy of other cultures and historical eras because these modes of expression allow unique access often to radically different forms of human experience. This is why students are asked to read seventeenth-century Chinese novels, Greek epics, and the poetry of Emily Dickinson. Encountering these cultural expressions enables us to imagine positions other than our own, to understand what is universal across time and space, and to feel a sense of connection or empathy with communities otherwise seemingly remote or obscure.

Racial and other forms of diversity in the student body provide a similar matrix of otherness in which to embed any individual student, thereby encouraging students to examine ways of processing the world dissimilar to their own. But this matrix becomes further activated through classroom discussions of specific cultural expressions of human experience, whether they be the colonial-era American literature, 19<sup>th</sup>-century Native American art, or free jazz of the 1960s. It is through such sustained conversations that one learns to negotiate pluralism. Harvard's commitment to maximizing the distinctive profiles of its students is thus powerfully manifested in its plethora of humanities courses and faculty.

Further, the research conducted by the faculty is enriched by the diversity of the student body in multiple ways. Entirely new fields of study have developed as a result of the changing nature of America's college and universities. Women's Studies, Latin-American Studies, and Labor

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<sup>21</sup> Brief for Columbia Univ. et al. as *amici curiae*, at 9.

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Studies are only three examples of fields that came to be perceived as valuable areas of study only as and because the campuses themselves experienced the greater presence and influence of women, Hispanics, and the working class. Introducing larger groups of women and minorities into the academy opened these theretofore unexplored histories, new areas of research, and burgeoning fields to inquiry in ways that simply did not occur when the campuses were more demographically monolithic.

Even areas of study that had been active for centuries – Classics and Philosophy, to name just two – have been reshaped by the inclusion in the scholarly debate of voices coming from different backgrounds. In Classics, the inclusion of new perspectives on gender and sexuality, race, ethnicity, and social class has transformed the research and teaching agenda both in the United States and internationally. Interest in the experience and outlook of women, minorities, and slaves has significantly changed the way in which written sources are interpreted, has encouraged deeper investigation of a much broader range of artifacts, and has spurred on the development of new methodologies. The traditional geographical boundaries of the ancient societies studied have also been challenged, with heightened interest in the borderlands of the Greek and Roman world, long-distance trade relationships, and other contemporary civilizations. In conferences, publications, and teaching, Classics professors are thus increasingly considering sub-Saharan Africa, South and Central Asia, and China as well as the more traditional regions of the Mediterranean, northern Europe, and the Near and Middle East. Over the last fifteen years, the new subfield of reception studies has grown and emphasizes the diversity of modern translation and adaptation of classical works within world literature.

Research in the social sciences also has benefited strongly by student body diversity. In exploring social and cultural phenomena, the range of hypotheses that is considered is bounded only by the imaginations, and the lived experiences that inform them, of the people engaged in the study. The entire enterprise is enriched by the inclusion of people with different backgrounds, experiences, and hypotheses to broaden the scope of the investigation and avoid the shared blind spots that may result from a homogeneous research community. As Justice Frankfurter recognized, “It is the business of a university to provide that atmosphere which is most conducive to speculation, experiment, and creation.”<sup>22</sup>

The benefits of student body diversity may be less immediately obvious in the studies of natural and physical sciences, but here, too, student body diversity has expanded the spheres of consideration and study in several ways. First, within the classroom: One long-time, natural-sciences faculty member who also has significant academic advising responsibilities within her department informed us that her experience has persuaded her that “race profoundly affects the dynamic in the classroom, and diversity increases the breadth of discussion and even course curriculum in ways that I never anticipated.” For instance, questions from minority students about race and stress led her to modify her syllabus with additional articles and related instruction that “facilitated animated and informed discussion in lecture and sections, with students linking personal experiences to what they were learning in class.”

Further, as with other fields of study, an increasingly diverse community of students, researchers, and physicians has also broadened the range of diseases receiving significant research attention.

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<sup>22</sup> *Sweezy v. New Hampshire*, 354 U.S. 234, 263 (1957).

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The Harvard Global Health Institute, to take just one example, is driven to a great degree by the international and cross-cultural character of the university and its students. That initiative “seeks to confront the global health challenges that arise from or are made more complex by the increasing interconnectedness of people throughout the world. Taking an interdisciplinary approach, the institute seeks to provide the intellectual space to tackle the world’s most intractable health challenges and to inspire and invest in the next generation of global health leaders.”<sup>23</sup>

In health and medicine, qualities of empathy, self-awareness, and sensitivity to “otherness” are critically important. Our physicians must interact constructively and sympathetically with patients of all ages, ethnicities, socio-economic status, and experiences. Their preparation begins as undergraduates with what may be our students’ first experience with “otherness,” the beginning of the essential process in becoming engaged and active participants in their professions and communities. At Harvard Medical School, all students are invited to work with the Inter-Society Multicultural Fellows committee, bearing out that school’s belief that “the best possible medical community is one in which the maximum heterogeneity is found [and] that the best research and medical care occurs in a context where differences are highly valued.” The Dean for Medical Education emphasizes this point to all new students from the day they arrive, observing that talking to people different from oneself with both candor and sensitivity is among the great challenges in the practice of medicine. He encourages them to take advantage of the diversity among their own classmates by learning about each other and building the skills to have those difficult conversations with their future patients – and he notes that those students who have spent their undergraduate careers in diverse academic communities are better prepared for that challenge.

Former President Rudenstine noted that “if we want a society in which our physicians, teachers, architects, public servants, and other professionals possess a developed sense of vocation and calling; if we want them to be able to gain some genuine understanding of the variety of human beings with whom they will work, and whom they will serve; if we want them to think imaginatively and to act effectively in relation to the needs and values of their communities, then we shall have to take diversity into account . . . .”<sup>24</sup> Although he was speaking of our graduate schools, his words resonate equally for Harvard College.

### **III. PERSONAL AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS**

#### **A. Residences and Extracurricular Activities**

The education of our students is not restricted to the classroom. Our students learn in powerful ways from each other and more so because of the rich variety of their backgrounds, interests, and lived experiences. We believe, moreover, that we can enhance the benefit that they draw from the diversity in their classes and peer groups through thoughtful attention to the structures and institutions that shape the ways in which they spend their time at Harvard. From the shared common room to the dining hall, from the playing field to the stage, our students devote immeasurable energy and their exceptional talents to their extra-curricular pursuits. These

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<sup>23</sup> <http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2014/08/goldie-takes-new-post/>

<sup>24</sup> Rudenstine, 42.

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experiences are central to the personal transformation that is at the core of our liberal arts education and integral to our commitment to ensuring excellence in our academic environment. Immersion in a community marked by so many kinds of difference teaches our students how to engage across those differences.

Allowing our students to interact, grow, and learn from each other begins from the moment members of an incoming class accept their offers of admission. Harvard College is a residential experience. Over 97% of our students live on campus for all four years. This is not happenstance. We want our students to engage with each other not only in their classes but where they eat, play, dance, sing, act, debate, write, throw, catch, relax, and, of course, study. We seek to achieve this goal through very deliberate choices in the way in the College is structured.

As a recent Harvard graduate observed:

Harvard, by virtue of the people I was surrounded by, forced me to sit and listen to those from other worlds to mine, and over a few terms my original assumptions of who and what I was, and what I could be, in this world, were altered and freed from the barriers of ignorance. I'm writing this from a summer job in China. Never before Harvard could I challenge myself to rise up into the globalised world and strike out.

And, more importantly, the labels people in my community put on others from elsewhere in the world - I now know these are not true. I've met people that were labelled as different and bad; and they are utterly fantastic people and some of my most trusted companions going forward into this diverse and beautifully mixed-up world.

### 1. Freshman Rooming

When our students first arrive on campus, they live in dormitories that are organized in "entryways." Students share common space and a common residential advisor, and rooming groups are assigned with the goal that every entryway should represent a microcosm of the entering class. Entering students complete a lengthy rooming questionnaire so that their assignments may take account of their stated preferences as well as their temperaments, study habits, extracurricular interests, hometowns, intended courses of study, and innumerable other factors. The College uses that information to ensure that all first-year students feel comfortable and at home in their entryways at the same time that preconceptions are challenged and stretched. We do this in an effort to ensure that our students may fully benefit from our deliberate institutional choice to foster a diverse living and learning community.

There is no formula that can be applied to this task. Rather, the Freshman Dean's Office devotes long, painstaking hours to match students with those who, in some cases, will become best friends for the next half century or more. Since there are so many dimensions along which the freshman class as a whole is diverse, there is no way for every unique quality to be represented in every room. Instead, the goal may be to pair a musician with an athlete, a science-prize winner with a classicist, a student whose family has lived for generations in the same homogeneous town with a child of immigrants.

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One of the people with whom we spoke observed that in 2002, the Freshman Dean's Office paired a white Jewish freshman coming from Westchester County, New York, in a double room in Strauss Hall with a first-generation son of Haitian immigrants.<sup>25</sup> Speaking of the friendship ten years later, the black student observed that their friendship "was based on us being a couple of 17-year old kids who happened to be thrown into a room together."<sup>26</sup> The student from Westchester was Mark Zuckerberg. His freshman year roommate, Samyr Laine, set the triple jump record at Harvard and, after graduation, represented Haiti in the Olympics.<sup>27</sup> "What," mused the person with whom we spoke, "must those freshman year conversations have been like."

### 2. The Harvard House System

Perhaps even more than the freshman dorms, the residential House system is central to Harvard's approach to student life. The vast majority of Harvard upperclassmen live in residences called Houses, and even those who move off-campus remain affiliated with a House through Commencement and beyond.

The House system was created in the 1930s when the accelerating growth in the numbers of public-school students and others of modest means at the College had the side effect of creating an increasingly stratified environment, with the wealthy elites living, eating, and socializing almost entirely with each other while the less well-off students constituted a separate lower class on campus. Harvard attacked that stratification by implementing among the most significant and enduring structural changes in the history of the College. Dissatisfied with the de facto segregation, the University went further than it previously had "in providing facilities that could sustain the more democratic ideals which had gradually been established at the University," by instituting the residential House system. The Houses have the effect of bringing students of divergent backgrounds together, with the goal that "each House should be as nearly as possible a cross-section of the College."<sup>28</sup>

This objective of the House system was reaffirmed and amplified in the 1990s, when the Committee on the Structure of Harvard College recommended that the assignment of students to Houses be made at random, rather than according to the students' and House Masters' choice. The recommendation was based on the Committee's perception that "students [were] being, as one person put it, 'educationally deprived' because they have contact only with a somewhat homogeneous group of their peers." That homogeneity reflected a degree of self-sorting by students into Houses that were, individually, dominated by particular groups or communities of

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<sup>25</sup> "Dr. Zuckerberg Talks About His Son Mark's Upbringing,"

[http://www.salon.com/2011/02/04/mark\\_zuckerberg\\_dad\\_interview/](http://www.salon.com/2011/02/04/mark_zuckerberg_dad_interview/); <http://glamlifeblog.com/samyr-laine-olympian-philanthropist/#.VkESiLerS70>

<sup>26</sup> "Zuckerberg Freshman Roommate Goes From Harvard to Haiti Olympics,"

(<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2012-07-11/zuckerberg-freshman-roommate-goes-from-harvard-to-haiti-olympian>)

<sup>27</sup> "Mark Zuckerberg's Freshman Roommate Will be in the Olympics (<http://www.businessinsider.com/mark-zuckerbergs-freshman-roommate-will-be-in-the-olympics-2012-7>). As noted above, neither Mr. Zuckerberg nor Mr. Laine has reviewed or endorsed this report.

<sup>28</sup> Rudenstine, 24.

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interest, such that over time, student choice had resulted in “a housing system that does not reflect the richness and complexity of the student body,” the Committee observed.<sup>29</sup> Since 1996, selection to the Houses has been randomized. Following that randomization, the percent of surveyed seniors who believe that house staff “foster exchanges among diverse groups” more than doubled. In addition, those House Masters who initially were skeptical about the change found that after randomization, students were happier and that morale in the Houses improved.

Over the years there have been periodic efforts to create dedicated spaces on campus for particular racial or ethnic groups – a “black house” or “Asian center.” The College has resisted those efforts, believing that the existence of such spaces would undermine the function of the residential Houses. Living in the Houses, as President Rudenstine noted, “was rightly seen as much more than a mere adjunct to education. It became part of the fabric of daily life, and one of the primary ways that students learned from one another.”<sup>30</sup>

### 3. Extra-Curricular Activities

The residences are one of the primary ways by which the inherent benefits of diversity are maximized outside of the classroom, but they are by no means the only way. The variety of student organizations on campus, and their openness to members from all different backgrounds, is essential to this teaching process. One recent graduate tells of how his experience at a large, urban high school with a strong institutional commitment to diversity was still limited in ways he did not understand at the time. Although the school was diverse, it did not afford him with opportunities to interact with a diverse group of students. As a result, he found himself and his classmates in the student government advocating on behalf of socioeconomically less privileged and under-represented minority peers without having the benefit of their direct input.

On arriving at Harvard, this student joined the Kuumba singers, a student group whose membership and leadership are predominantly African-American. He found that these students focused on different issues, and in different ways, than he and his white classmates in high school would ever have imagined. This experience deepened his understanding of those particular issues, but more importantly, he observed that there is no substitute for lived experience to inform a person’s point of view, or for direct contact with people to understand their perspectives.

A recent alumna was struck by the difference between her college experience and that of her older siblings. One sister found that at her school, there was a single Asian-American student organization; Harvard, the alumna noted, has more than thirty student groups focused on Asian culture and heritage. She found this breadth of offerings invaluable in illustrating the diversity that exists within each broad ethnic category. It also gives students an opportunity to focus much more deeply on their heritage than would be possible absent structures that bring together communities of people with shared experiences.

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<sup>29</sup> Committee on the Structure of Harvard College, *Report on the Structure of Harvard College* (Harvard Univ. 1994), 38.

<sup>30</sup> Rudenstine, 24.

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These are just two of many examples. Harvard College makes it possible for its students to engage in an array of extracurricular activities that not only deepen their learning and develop their capacities; they also provide students with both structured and informal opportunities to interact with other members of the community and, through that, to work closely with students from different races, backgrounds, life experiences, and aspirations.

### **4. Athletics**

Harvard's athletic program provides another example of the ways in which we bring together our diverse communities and of the symbiotic benefits of diversity to the College and its students. Several coaches with whom we spoke explained to us that, through athletics, our students learn to work together with those from vastly different backgrounds and life experiences toward a common goal – or shot or touchdown. These teams are often the first time that our students are interacting with someone who is poor or rich or gay or lesbian or African-American or Latino or whose parents did not attend college or whose ancestors came over on the Mayflower. Whether it is five players on a court, eleven on a field, one running for a team in a race, the coaches explained that our students must not set aside their differences, but instead must seek out those differences, learn from them, and expand their views of each other and the game. Athletes, we were told, who think narrowly about their peers think narrowly about their sport. But those athletes who are willing to embrace new perspectives and ideas from their teammates can generate creative solutions in a meet or a game, expand their own abilities, improve the team's performance, and excel as athletes and as scholars.

In all of these extracurricular activities, the benefits brought about by exposure to difference extend beyond the stage or field; they shape and inform the students' entire experience at Harvard. And, as an integral part of the transformation that occurs through a residential undergraduate experience, this exposure is part of what students carry with them outside our gates and throughout their entire lives.

### **B. Additional Resources at Harvard**

In its efforts to operationalize the transformation that we expect of our students, Harvard offers additional resources to students to maximize the benefits that flow from student body diversity. Community Conversations is a program for incoming freshmen whereby freshmen are assigned literature to read and discuss. The objective is to provide an opportunity for incoming students to consider their own identities, learn about their peers' diverse identities and perspectives, and engage in frank and open conversations with each other. This year, for example, the students discussed "My Beloved World," by Justice Sotomayor.

The Office of Student Life has a department dedicated to diversity and inclusion. In addition, Harvard College students are served by the Harvard Foundation for Diversity and Inclusion. Its staff meets regularly with tutors in each house, and serves to mediate disputes and resolve issues having to do with differences in background, whether they are based on race, religion, gender, sexuality, or geography. The Foundation also encourages collaboration among student groups, by awarding grants whose amounts increase if the recipients co-sponsor events with other student groups. All these structures exist because while a diverse student body creates

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opportunities for growth and learning that cannot be achieved in its absence, Harvard also believes it is important to encourage students to take the best possible advantage of these opportunities.

### C. Diversity on Multiple Dimensions

The diversity we seek at Harvard is diversity on a wide range of dimensions, including racial diversity but not limited to it. From early in Harvard's history, for example, the College sought to expand its student body beyond the wealthy. President Eliot wanted a university "of broad democratic resort." Harvard's students should be children of the "rich and poor," the "educated and uneducated."<sup>31</sup>

Reflecting on his time at Harvard, W.E.B. Dubois wrote:

Men sought to make Harvard an expression of the United States, and to do this by means of leaders unshackled in thought and custom who were beating back bars of ignorance and particularism and prejudice. There were William James and Josiah Royce; Nathaniel Shaler and Charles Eliot Norton; George Santayana; Albert Bushnell Hart, and President Eliot himself. There were at least a dozen men – rebels against convention, unorthodox in religion, poor in money – who for a moment held in their hands the culture of the United States, typified it, expressed it, and pushed it a vast step forward.<sup>32</sup>

President Conant, himself an undergraduate scholarship student, created Harvard's first significant financial aid initiative in the 1930s. Today, more than half of Harvard's families receive scholarship aid from Harvard, and families with incomes below \$65,000 are not expected to pay anything toward the cost of a Harvard College education. Harvard's Admissions Office conducts significant outreach to low income students, writing to high-performing, low-income high school students and traveling around the country to speak with low-income students and their parents to encourage them to consider applying to Harvard College.

The College's efforts to enhance the socioeconomic diversity of its student body have been markedly successful. As Harvard explained in its amicus brief in *Fisher II*,

Under Harvard's admissions policies, a candidate's financial need will never adversely affect his or her chances of admission. In fact, Harvard pays the total cost of attendance for students from families with annual incomes below \$65,000, with no expected contribution from the student's family. More than half of Harvard students receive grant aid, and for those students, the average family pays less than \$12,000 to attend; they also are not required to take out any loans. In these and other ways, Harvard strives to ensure that it receives applications from a wide range of applicants and that all admitted students, regardless of financial means, are able to attend.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Rudenstine, 10.

<sup>32</sup> Rudenstine, 21, quoting "The Field and Function of the Private Negro College" (1933) in *The Education of Black People*, ed. Herbert Aptheker (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1973), 89.

<sup>33</sup> Brief for Harvard Univ. as *amicus curiae*, at 20.



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More important than the details are the students and their impact on Harvard's educational mission. As is true for other demographic characteristics such as race, the life experiences of low-income students have been shaped by their circumstances. They add healthy pluralism to the campus and, as part of the alchemy that results from a diverse student body, benefit from and contribute to an enriched educational experience for everyone.

### **D. International Education**

In discussing diversity, we must also note the global diversity at Harvard both in our undergraduate population and in the increased international experiences of our students in recent years. The University's Office of International Education runs more than 250 study abroad programs, through which undergraduates have the opportunity to study archaeology in Peru or neuroscience in Japan with leading world specialists. Such opportunities are enhanced by President Faust's Innovation Fund for International Experiences, which "provides seed funding to faculty members at any Harvard school to support the development of creative and significant academic experiences abroad for Harvard College students."<sup>34</sup>

This commitment to internationalism is also reinforced through the General Education program, where categories such as "Societies of the World," "Culture and Belief," and "Aesthetic and Interpretive Understanding" have encouraged the ongoing development of scores of new courses focusing on the study of foreign cultures and societies. The significant presence of international students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels in these courses and others, as well as a highly international faculty, ensure that Harvard students will be challenged and engaged by perspectives reflecting a diverse sample of the world's communities and ethnicities. All of this encourages Harvard students to consider their place in their community not only at Harvard or in Cambridge or even the United States, but in the world.

## **IV. SURVEY DATA**

As part of our efforts to provide students with a transformative educational experience, we also seek to ensure that those efforts are working. We, therefore, regularly monitor, evaluate, and adjust them. Sometimes we make significant alterations, such as reworking the House selection system discussed above. At other times, the alterations are more subtle. One way in which we monitor our efforts is through frequent surveys of our students. Nearly every survey includes questions about student experiences with ethnic or racial diversity. The questions assess the frequency and type of interactions, assessment of tolerance levels, ability to relate to those who are different from the responder, and whether, how, and where Harvard encourages exchanges between students of different backgrounds.

The results from these surveys of students at the College confirm that the benefits resulting from our diverse student body are both real and profound. 94% of our students believe that Harvard promotes respect for those from all races and cultures either "Quite a bit" or "A great deal," and the sentiment is shared across racial groups. Our students also readily inform us that learning to live in a diverse population is important to them: when asked to rate the importance of "the

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<sup>34</sup> President's Innovation Fund for International Experiences, at <http://oue.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k18059&pageid=icb.page542267>.

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ability to relate well to people of different races, nations, and religions,” 84% of our students identified this as either “Essential” or “Very Important.”

Our prospective students also understand the value of a diverse student body. Most of the students admitted to Harvard College have the option to pursue their studies elsewhere if they choose, but the College’s yield rate is historically among the highest in the nation. And while surveys reveal that the majority of all students admitted to Harvard associate the school with diversity and open-mindedness, those associations are especially strong among those who ultimately choose to pursue their undergraduate studies at Harvard. These results make clear that our students share Harvard’s commitment to fostering a diverse community, and that they recognize and appreciate the efforts that Harvard takes to fulfill that commitment.

The survey data also show that once students arrive, Harvard College successfully engages students with those who are dissimilar. 72% of our freshmen report that their extracurricular activities helped them learn to work with others who are different from them, and more than half of our students report that the Houses foster exchanges between students of different backgrounds.

Large majorities of Harvard undergraduates report having conversations with students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds “very frequently”; and these proportions significantly exceed (by more than ten percentage points) those reported by students at the thirty-one colleges in the Consortium on Financing Higher Education (COFHE). These conversations, and the other exchanges fostered by the Houses and other institutions at the College, are an important medium through which the benefits of a diverse student body are shared.

Perhaps most importantly, Harvard College seniors reported that their ability to relate to people who differ from themselves strengthened while they were at Harvard. Approximately two-thirds of graduating seniors report that their ability to relate well to people of different races, nations, and religions was “stronger” or “much stronger” than when they matriculated at Harvard, and the results are consistent across racial and ethnic groups. Moreover, nearly 70% of our students at some point in their Harvard undergraduate career seriously questioned or rethought their beliefs about a race or ethnic group different from their own.

The surveys that we conduct give students the opportunity to provide written responses in addition to the multiple-choice questions described above. These responses further confirm the significant impact that diversity has on the experiences of our students. Students often report that the experience that had the “most significant impact” on their college careers was exposure to a racially diverse group of peers. One student described it as “learning and living with people from all walks of life racially, ethnically, socioeconomically, (etc.)” Another wrote that “racial, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity helped globalize my world-view.”

Our students express these views outside of surveys as well. In a recent article in *The Crimson*, a graduating senior wrote, “I remember a time when I used to thumb through college pamphlets and the word ‘diversity’ meant little to me. Thanks to Harvard, that is no longer the case. What I realize now, and what I failed to realize back then, is that the more people you meet who are different from you, the more aware you become . . . . Harvard forced me to befriend people with

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whom I had little in common, to have difficult conversations about race, politics, and religion, and ultimately to challenge my beliefs, thereby strengthening them in the process.”<sup>35</sup>

*The Crimson* editorial board underscored the importance of student body diversity in an editorial supporting Harvard’s admissions process published this month.

Affirmative action is not just an abstract policy issue. As Harvard students, we know firsthand the benefits of diversity. We know that we don’t have all the answers or all the experiences or all the perspectives the world has to offer at the ripe age of 18. We learn not only from professors, but also from each other. We learn from [the] international student sitting next to us in section or the entryway-mate from the other side of the country. And yes, we learn by engaging in frank and honest discussions about race with people who know what it is like to have a skin color different from ours. Harvard should be a transformational place, and if this lawsuit succeeds, it will fail to achieve one fundamental part of that mission.<sup>36</sup>

Alumni also report seeing the way those benefits have shaped their lives over the decades that follow their graduation from the College. One alumnus with whom we spoke had never spent significant time before he arrived at Harvard with anyone whose experience differed from his own background, growing up white in the suburbs. He discussed his first-year entryway with classmates ranging from a young woman from a tiny town in rural Arkansas to one whose father was a foreign head of state. By the time he graduated, he had a multi-racial and multi-ethnic group of friends and had encountered first-hand the experience of being a racial minority, by traveling throughout China. He still recalls watching the announcement of the verdict in the OJ Simpson trial and being astonished by the different reactions among his friends of different races: the African-American students were cheering, while the white students sat in stunned silence. That event revealed to him the ways in which people’s experiences – many of which are shaped by their racial histories – can affect their perceptions, causing them to draw completely different, yet all valid, conclusions from the same set of facts. It was an education, he notes, that could not come from books, but could arise only come from direct experience with a diverse community.

### V. POST-GRADUATION

We expect of our students and hope for them a life of engagement – with their families, their communities, and their fellow citizens of the world. In whatever ways in which they pursue their future, we want them to carry forward a willingness to learn from and connect with those around them. And we understand that those encounters in this increasingly complex and interconnected world may, with the click of a mouse, reach halfway around the globe. We want our students to recognize the equal dignity of all those they meet once they leave our gates, and it is through their experiences with others and “other” at Harvard that we hope and expect that they will work to create a truly integrated society.

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<sup>35</sup> “An Ode to Harvard,” Aria N. Bendix, *The Crimson* (Apr. 28, 2015), available at <http://www.thecrimson.com/column/catch-22/article/2015/4/28/ode-to-four-years/>.

<sup>36</sup> “Don’t Go Back on Diversity,” *The Crimson* (Nov. 3, 2015), available at <http://www.thecrimson.com/article/2015/11/3/staff-affirmative-action-diversity/>.

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There can be no doubt that the world into which our students will graduate is a pluralistic one. We must prepare our graduates to succeed – as citizens, parents, civic leaders, lawyers, doctors, academics, and the many other roles they will play – as they graduate into this world. We also recognize that in many cases, our graduates will assume leadership positions, not only here in the United States, but across the globe. Men and women who attended Harvard College are founding and running global companies in technology, retail, finance, and healthcare, among others. Graduates of Harvard College signed the Declaration of Independence and have served in a broad spectrum of roles in the government ever since. They educate, govern, and entertain us.

Our responsibilities as we educate the leaders of tomorrow cannot be denied. Harvard does “represent the training ground for a large number of the world’s leaders,” and “in order to cultivate a set of leaders with legitimacy in the eyes of the citizenry, it is necessary that the path to leadership be visibly open to talented and qualified individuals of every race and ethnicity.”<sup>37</sup> We must demonstrate to the world that individuals of all races, ethnicities, all backgrounds may thrive, succeed, and lead.

Our graduates not only are themselves diverse, but also carry with them the importance of developing the diversity of the organizations they lead. Harvard College alumnus and Microsoft’s former CEO Steve Ballmer has noted that Microsoft’s commitment to diversity is “critical” to him, observing that “diversity and inclusion are not just words on paper for us; they are core values and business imperatives.”<sup>38</sup> Lloyd Blankfein, another Harvard College alumnus, stated as CEO of Goldman Sachs that, “[d]iversity is essential to our mission as a firm: It lets us develop better ideas, respond to the needs of our clients, and ensure that our people can work at their maximum potential.”<sup>39</sup> Harvard College alumna Sheryl Sandberg has noted that, “[t]o reflect the diversity of the 1.4 billion people using [Facebook’s] products, we need to have people with different backgrounds, races, genders, and points of view working at Facebook.”<sup>40</sup> Our graduates demonstrate that the path to leadership is visible and manifest the strong belief that diversity is essential to the organizations they lead.

We also recognize the great disservice that we would do for our students if we were not preparing them for the careers and graduate schools they seek to pursue after graduation. As businesses, for example, have made clear, “the need for diversity in higher education is compelling,” and “the nation’s future depends upon leaders trained through wide exposure to the ideas and mores of a diverse student body.”<sup>41</sup> Writing in an amicus brief to the Supreme Court,

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<sup>37</sup> *Grutter*, 539 U.S. at 332.

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.microsoft.com/about/en/xm/importedcontent/about/diversity/en/us/exec.aspx>.

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.goldmansachs.com/who-we-are/diversity-and-inclusion/>.

<sup>40</sup> <http://newsroom.fb.com/news/2015/07/managing-unconscious-bias/>. As noted above, we are relying entirely on the published media reports regarding these quotations. None of Mr. Ballmer, Mr. Blankfein, or Ms. Sandberg has reviewed or endorsed this report.

<sup>41</sup> *Grutter* Amicus Brief of 3M et al., at 8. The amicus brief was filed by 3M; Abbott Laboratories; American Airlines, Inc.; Ashland, Inc.; Bank One Corporation; The Boeing Company; The Coca-Cola Company; The Dow Chemical Company; E. I. Du Pont De Nemours and Company; Eastman Kodak Company; Eli Lilly & Company; Ernst & Young LLP; Exelon Corporation; Fannie Mae; General Dynamics Corporation; General Mills, Inc.; Intel Corporation; Johnson & Johnson; Kellogg Company; KPMG International on behalf of its United States Member

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this collection of Fortune 500 companies from a wide swath of industries recognized that, “the individuals who run and staff [our] businesses must be able to understand, learn from, collaborate with, and design products and services for clientele and associates from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural background,” and those “individuals who have been educated in a diverse setting are more likely to succeed.”<sup>42</sup> Without the opportunity to engage with other students in a diverse undergraduate environment, our students likely would be constrained in their pursuit of excellence, and we would be remiss in failing to provide them with the skills they need to flourish after graduation.

### **VI. EXPERIENCES IN HIGHER EDUCATION MORE BROADLY**

Our views about the educational benefits of diversity are borne from our experiences and expertise as educators, as well as the testimony of other members of the Harvard community with whom we have consulted (both in connection with our work on this committee and in the course of the myriad interactions we have in our daily lives on campus). We have no doubt that student body diversity creates a fertile environment for the intellectual, social, and personal transformations that are central to the educational mission of Harvard College.

It is worth noting that our views are shared across higher education. They are reflected in the admissions practices, statements by leaders, and amicus briefs of our peer institutions. Just as we do at Harvard, our peers see in the curricular and extracurricular experiences of their students the manifold benefits of a racially diverse student body. The collective judgment of our nation’s leading universities amplifies and underscores the perspective Harvard has developed from educating students over its 379-year history.

### **CONCLUSION**

As President Faust has explained, the students who have made the choice to come to Harvard College have elected to be “part of a class, a laboratory, a seminar, an entryway, a section, a chorus, an ensemble, a cast, a team.”<sup>43</sup> Our students undertake a “bold and brave commitment,” she declared, “to revisit [their] assumptions, to see the world through others’ eyes, to expand [their] understanding, to find common spaces we can share even as we explore and celebrate our differences.”<sup>44</sup> We are, as President Faust recognized, a symphony, enriched by the diversity of all of the instruments, sounding in the remarkable heterogeneity of our society, embracing different choruses of race, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomics, and geography.

We recognize, as did President Faust in her remarks, that unlike a well-performed symphony, the notes we play will not always be perfect. Fully maximizing the benefits of diversity at Harvard

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Firm, KPMG LLP; Lucent Technologies; Microsoft Corporation; Mitsubishi Motor Sales of America, Inc.; Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company and Nationwide Financial Services, Inc.; Pfizer Inc.; PPG Industries, Inc.; The Procter & Gamble Company; Sara Lee Corporation; Steelcase, Inc.; Texaco, Inc.; TRW, Inc.; and United Airlines, Inc.

<sup>42</sup> *Id.* 9-10.

<sup>43</sup> President Drew Faust 2014 Remarks at Morning Prayer, available at <http://www.harvard.edu/president/speech/2014/2014-remarks-at-morning-prayers>.

<sup>44</sup> *Id.*

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College is an aspiration. We have work to do to improve the opportunities we offer our students to engage with others in an exploration and challenge of their ideas and beliefs. Our students may not always take full advantage of the opportunities we do offer. And we also recognize that the very goal we seek – exposing our students to people who are different from themselves – has within it the possibility of misunderstanding and conflict. As we have recognized in the past and reiterate here, we should not and we need not “romanticize the idea of diversity in order to reach a sensible and realistic assessment of its positive value.”<sup>45</sup> Diversity – expressed through the “clash of freely expressed opinions” – will inevitably create moments of heat, but “[t]here is always hope when people are forced to listen to both sides.”<sup>46</sup>

We emphatically embrace and reaffirm the University’s long-held view that student body diversity – including racial diversity – is essential to our pedagogical objectives and institutional mission. It enhances the education of all of our students, it prepares them to assume leadership roles in the increasingly pluralistic society into which they will graduate, and it is fundamental to the effective education of the men and women of Harvard College.

### FACULTY COMMITTEE

Rakesh Khurana (CHAIR), *Dean of Harvard College; Marvin Bower Professor of Leadership Development, Harvard Business School; Co-Master, Cabot House*

Mahzarin R. Banaji, *Richard Clarke Cabot Professor of Social Ethics*

Emma Dench, *McLean Professor of Ancient and Modern History and of the Classics*

Yukio Lippit, *Harris K. Weston Associate Professor of the Humanities*

David R. Pilbeam, *Henry Ford II Professor of Human Evolution*

Jonathan L. Walton, *Plummer Professor of Christian Morals; Pusey Minister, Memorial Church*

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<sup>45</sup> Rudenstine, 54.

<sup>46</sup> *Id.* 54, 55, quoting *On Liberty*, pt. II.