

A. Acting According to Harvard's Values: A Call to Action

We each have the opportunity — and the responsibility — to create a greater sense of inclusion and belonging throughout our campus communities. Consider the various communities to which you belong — your department, your section, your School, your extracurricular organizations, your lab, or simply the people who live and work beside you. Each of us should think about the numerous roles we occupy within the broader Harvard context and their connection to other parts of the University. Identify the communities in which you have the power to create change and the communities where you can support efforts of those who are already engaged in creating a more inclusive Harvard. How can we each play a part in shaping our own experience and the experiences of those around us through our actions? How can we engage in the activities of our School or department and Harvard more broadly to further the goals, tools, and recommendations within this Task Force report?

In our outreach sessions, we asked what word came to mind when people heard “Harvard.” While many connected with pride to their own School, community, or unit, several expressed less connectedness with “Harvard” more broadly. Words shared included: elite, privilege, pretentious, old, and wealth. There was a hunger for improving upon our culture to grow into a more hospitable Harvard — a community of excellence that welcomes growth and challenge, with responsibility and humility. To create that cultural shift, there was

a realization that such change requires prioritizing this work in our busy lives and redefining how we achieve excellence. It requires us to reflect on the value we place on an inclusive community and culture. It requires us to realize that inclusivity and belonging are not exclusive of excellence but rather are its foundations.

By thinking and acting intentionally, we can enable each and every member of our community to be an integral and active part of it. To sustain this work, we have to ask questions constantly of ourselves and each other from a place of humility: What would you like Harvard to be? How do you envision a cultural change? How might you take action and ensure steps are carried forward in your realm of possibilities? Through this work together, we will realize our aspiration of inclusive excellence in our academic pursuits and professional development while building a strong Harvard community to serve society for generations to come.

Harvard University's five core values provide a framework to organize how each of us can act to create that inclusive and hospitable culture. We invite everyone to embrace these values. If we can achieve that, we will together strengthen the foundation of inclusion needed for the pursuit of excellence at Harvard. Many ideas about how to enact those values came out of conversations that the Task Force hosted. We provide some of them below.

1. Respect the rights, differences, and dignity of others

The University's first value is to respect the rights, differences, and dignity of others.

- We can live this value more deeply by engaging critically with colleagues through respectful dialogue and taking others seriously by being present and invested, assuming best intentions, and listening first to understand rather than to judge.
- To understand, respect, and bridge differences, we should be aware of how our culture and experiences shape our perspectives and, conversely, try to understand how others' backgrounds inform their views.
- Finally, each of us should model the behavior that is appropriate for the communities in which we want to live and work by trying to generate thoughtful solutions and creating space for others to speak and be heard.

2. Demonstrate honesty and integrity in all dealings

The University's second value, demonstrating honesty and integrity in all dealings, can increase inclusion and belonging by fostering trust and engagement that bridges differences.

- We can each build that trust by being forthright about our interests, intentions, and actions.
- We can each become more trustworthy by making the time, taking the initiative, and following through on our commitments.
- We can encourage the spread of trust in our communities by modeling an ethic of generosity, sharing, and collaboration.

3. Pursue excellence conscientiously in one's work

The University's third core value is to pursue excellence conscientiously. Inclusive excellence, a key idea of the Task Force's report, offers a guide to achieving greater excellence through inclusion.

- For example, we can each work to ensure there is representation across all constituents in our inquiries, meetings, and decision-making efforts.
- In creating inclusive and diverse teams, we can tap best practices, such as understanding implicit bias, building teams, and using teaching/learning tools for creating healthy norms across differences.
- The pursuit of excellence requires self-respect as well as respect from others; we can open up to others and stand up for ourselves when we need support.
- We can consider how inclusion and belonging concepts connect to the fields and professions in which we work and develop pathways for additional learning.
- We can be attentive to opportunities to integrate inclusion and belonging ideas into ongoing work, research, learning, and our living environment.

4. Be accountable for actions and conduct in the community

We can each enact the University's fourth value — being accountable for our actions and conduct — to increase inclusion and belonging in several ways.

- We can strive to understand that we are all teachers/learners and show compassion, as we all will make mistakes in growth.
- As student leaders, staff, and faculty and academic personnel, we can each develop skills of inclusive leadership, considering how hierarchies and power asymmetries affect decisions, actions, and communications.
- Each of us can reconsider our group's stated values, mission, purpose, and norms to consider what traditions or practices could be changed to better foster inclusive excellence.

5. Cultivate bonds and bridges that enable all to grow with and learn from one another

The Task Force recommends that the University adopt a fifth value: to cultivate the bonds and bridges that enable all to grow and learn from one another in the recognition that inclusion, belonging, and community are essentially relational ideas. We can cultivate these bonds and bridges in many ways.

- For example, we can practice acts of inclusion each day to foster a welcoming environment for all — we can say hello and welcome newcomers; we can learn and use people's names; we can share stories.
- We can proactively engage with groups who might have different views or interests.
- We can make time to actively participate in more events and initiatives across Harvard, beyond our School or business unit.
- We can seek opportunities to collaborate with people from a different School or business unit toward greater inclusive excellence.
- We can listen, care, and support — we can ask someone about his, her, or their personal story and share our own.

Beyond embracing Harvard's five values, there are many ways that everyone in the community can help spread the ideas of this Task Force and advance inclusion and belonging. Here are some suggestions that emerged:

- We can pick one book/article on the Task Force resource list to read and discuss each month to deepen our understanding of the Task Force report and framework.
- We can engage in town halls and feedback processes connected to the University's triennial assessments.
- We can consider how inclusion and belonging concepts connect to our field or profession and develop pathways to further learnings.
- We can learn about diversity and inclusion efforts underway and how they can support our own work, learning, and personal growth regardless of our background.