

Appendix A.

Task Force Charge

From Diversity to Belonging

A community that draws on the widest possible pool of talent, one that fully embraces individuals from varied backgrounds, cultures, races, identities, life experiences, perspectives, beliefs, and values, is a more just community. It is also an environment in which learning, creativity, and discovery can flourish. Harvard aspires to be such a place. Diversity, inclusion, and belonging are not incidental concerns; they are fundamental to Harvard’s mission and identity. As noted in a report unanimously adopted by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences in February 2016, true diversity 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.” (Quoting from *The President’s Report: 1993–95*)

For nearly 400 years, Harvard has steadily — though often painfully slowly — opened its doors, as it has welcomed groups previously excluded from its faculty, staff, and student body. But, as recent events both here and elsewhere have reminded us, much work remains to be done if we are to fulfill our ideals and if we are to succeed

in educating leaders and scholars who can effectively contribute to a complex and too often fractured world. It is essential that we bring together a diverse community. To realize the community’s full promise, and to foster the personal and intellectual transformation at the heart of our mission, we must also work affirmatively and collectively to advance a culture of belonging. This requires an openness to change, as well as a willingness to learn from and embrace difference in the spirit that defines a vibrant and respectful academic community.

Over the past several months, Harvard’s Schools have undertaken a range of inquiries and initiatives designed to make this a more open and inclusive campus, an effort made more urgent by the searing experiences of marginalization and discrimination described in the broader society and by members of our community. Since so many critical decisions and policies — on issues from academic priorities and recruitments to student services — are determined at the School level, this focus has already produced important outcomes. But the promise of Harvard University, its inspiring culture of excellence and its most salient opportunities, rests beyond any individual School — in foundational institutional values and in what we contribute to and learn from one another, with each of us and all our endeavors enlarged and expanded by what we share.

To help fulfill that promise, I am convening a University-wide task force on diversity and belonging. I will ask the group, to be made up of faculty, staff, and students from across the University, to focus on four specific areas, and ultimately to recommend programs or initiatives based in an assessment of how we can make progress toward our goal of a community in which everyone may participate as a full member and everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

The task force should consider the following issues, gathering and generating qualitative and quantitative data to help inform its work:

1. *Demographic Realities*

What are the current realities across the University? Where are we doing better; where worse? How do we increase the diversity of faculty, staff, and students? How do we enhance the attractiveness of the campus to faculty, students, and staff who would increase its diversity? What initiatives, incentives, processes, and resources would bring positive change?

2. *The Fabric of the Institution & the Lived Experience of Belonging*

Across and within its 12 Schools, Harvard offers its students, faculty, and staff many different experiential path-

ways but also elements of a common culture. What are the defining characteristics of Harvard's common culture? That is, what is the lived experience of diversity, inclusion, empowerment, and belonging among students, staff, and faculty? How can we transform that culture to achieve not just inclusion but full belonging and empowerment for all members of our community? What are the social, academic, or other structural barriers that may inhibit full membership and participation? Can we identify the critical junctures where opportunities to leverage diversity as a positive benefit for all go untapped? How do we effectively teach and create a dynamic learning environment in an increasingly diverse community? How do we help the entire community understand that the work ahead is a collective opportunity and responsibility?

3. *Academic Resources & Contributions*

Harvard is dedicated to discovery and learning as means of advancing knowledge and changing the world. What intellectual resources do we currently devote across the University to understanding and advancing issues of diversity, inclusion, and social and organizational transformation? How do these issues fit within our teaching and research agendas and in our curricula?

What more can and should we do to create and disseminate knowledge that can advance our common goals?

4. *Harvard's Organizational Structures*

Harvard has a plethora of diversity officers, programs, and initiatives. How can we ensure that these efforts work together well and are known to the community? How do we best measure and improve their effectiveness? Have we defined their roles appropriately? How does our approach compare to established best practices?

Ultimately, the work of the task force is about promise and opportunity: making sure that Harvard continues to attract the most talented people from all walks of life and creates an environment where we can be our best selves. This work will never be complete, nor does it belong to the task force alone, but the University will benefit from the sustained focus of a dedicated group that will help us continue to make progress on the path from diversity to belonging.

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