

## Questionnaire for Dr. John B. King, Jr.

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

Diversity, equity, and inclusion ought to be central to how Harvard's institutional leaders understand the University's mission. Those values should permeate every aspect of the University, including:

- Admitting diverse classes to each school and program with respect to race, socioeconomic background, sex, and LGBTQ status (which requires intentionality about recruitment, admissions, student supports, and retention)
- Hiring and granting tenure to diverse faculty members and administrators with respect to race, socioeconomic background, sex, and LGBTQ status (including faculty and administrators who were the first in their families to graduate from college)
- Ensuring curricula address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion (from ethnic studies departments within the Faculty of Arts and Sciences to addressing implicit bias and cultural competence in the training of doctors at the Medical School)
- Creating campus climates at each of the schools and within every program where diversity, equity, and inclusion are defining features (including a broad range of extracurricular activities; opportunities for shared experiences across lines of race, class, and culture; vigilant enforcement of civil rights protections [including protections against harassment on the basis of race, religion, sex, LGBTQ status, etc.]; etc.)

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

In addition to the activities above in #1:

- Providing University support for the activities of organizations like the Harvard Black Alumni Society, the Harvard Latino Alumni Alliance, etc.
- Recruiting diverse alumni to participate in alumni activities (from alumni interviews to club leadership to reunion leadership), alumni association leadership, visiting committees, the Board of Overseers, the Harvard Corporation etc.

### **3. Please state your views on affirmative action and race-conscious admissions.**

It is imperative for the long-term health of the University and American democracy that Harvard continues to defend affirmative action and race-conscious admissions. At the organization I now lead, the Education Trust, we are outspoken advocates for affirmative action and dispelling the deeply problematic myths propagated by opponents of affirmative action: <https://edtrust.org/the-equity-line/debunking-5-myths-affirmative-action/>. In fact, given the chronic underrepresentation of students of color and low-income students at selective admissions colleges – including Harvard – I believe trustees, presidents, and administrators have a moral responsibility to radically increase their efforts to diversify their student bodies.

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

Beyond the critical diversity, equity, and inclusion activities described in #1 above, Harvard can play an important role in creating a more equitable, inclusive, and just society by:

- Preparing students to be informed and engaged citizens, including investing in meaningful service learning (like the Phillips Brooks House Association), ensuring that students have opportunities to learn and work in diverse communities (e.g., teacher residencies, medical residencies, and law clinics where students serve in high-needs communities, work with undocumented families, etc.), ensuring students have access to opportunities to register to vote and to learn about candidates and issues, and providing study abroad opportunities (with particular attention to providing adequate financial support for students from low-income families)
- Modeling equitable and inclusive practices as an employer, property owner in Boston and Cambridge, and leader in the higher education community (for example, Harvard should be a strong voice for substantially increasing Pell grants in Congressional discussions about reauthorizing the Higher Education Act)
- Using Harvard's unique international platform to challenge injustice (e.g., defending DACA and calling on Congress to advance comprehensive immigration reform that protects Dreamers, challenging attacks on the civil rights of the LGBTQ community, investing in Boston and Cambridge [including youth development activities to create a stronger pipeline of future Harvard undergraduate and graduate students from high needs communities within both cities], etc.)

**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?**

As an African-American and Puerto Rican man whose life was quite literally saved by New York City public school teachers, advancing education equity has always been my core mission. As a Harvard undergraduate, I was deeply involved in PBHA programs serving students in Boston and was PBHA President. In my work at PBHA, I sought to diversify the organization's student leadership and professional staff. After my time at Harvard, I taught in Puerto Rico and then returned to Boston to teach high school social studies and serve as a middle school principal in the same Mission Hill neighborhood where I had participated in PBHA programming. In my school-based work, preparing students of color to enter, succeed in, and graduate from college was a central goal. I built a diverse staff at my school and created leadership opportunities for several teachers of color who went on to become principals. My commitment to building diverse teams and creating pathways for diverse leaders continued in my subsequent role leading a network of schools in New York.

Later, as the first African-American and Puerto Rican to serve as New York State Education Commissioner, I recruited a diverse senior team, and made diversity, equity, and inclusion priorities for the agency and for the initiatives we launched, ranging from a [redesign of the state's approach to English learners to emphasize bilingualism](#) to establishing a [new grant program to promote school integration](#).

When I joined the Obama Administration to take on the duties of Deputy Secretary at the U.S. Department of Education, I took responsibility for coordinating cross-agency work on President Obama's My Brother's Keeper initiative, focused on removing obstacles to the success of boys and young men of color (including addressing racial disparities in the use of exclusionary discipline in schools, facilitating community-level collective impact work focused on supporting boys and young men of color, etc.).

During my tenure as U.S. Secretary of Education, diversity (with respect to race, socioeconomic background, sex, and LGBTQ status) was a priority in building our senior team, a majority of our political appointees were people of color, and we pursued a range of initiatives focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion, including [robust civil rights enforcement](#), an [initiative to create a movement to diversify the teaching profession](#), and numerous programs aimed at expanding opportunity for low-income students and students of color in P-12 and higher education.

At the Education Trust, we are an education civil rights organization wherein diversity (with respect to race, socioeconomic background, sex, and LGBTQ status) and inclusion are core values. We advance those values in our daily work, including research identifying opportunity gaps and bright spots for students of color and low-income students in [P-12](#) and [higher education](#) and mobilizing coalitions of civil rights, business, immigrants' rights, disability rights, parents, and educators to address those opportunity gaps at the federal and state level (e.g., <https://number1forsome.org/>). A majority of our senior team is made up of people of color and we have just completed a year-long diversity, equity, and inclusion externally facilitated workshop series to ensure we are living our outwardly facing mission internally.