

Questionnaire about Diversity

Responses submitted by
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"Diversity is at the core of who I am and how I behave or work."

"As an Elected Director, Diversity & Inclusion will be part of my program and actions on the HAA Board."

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 denotes plurality and respect for human differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical values system, geographic location of origin, and political beliefs. It is therefore an essential element of any organisation - also of an academic organisation like Harvard University.

In my view, diversity shall be regarded not just as a strategy or action point, but as an overarching principle and a major guideline for the overall operation of Harvard, including its governance, academic programs, admissions procedure, and any other process or activity. Diversity metrics shall also guide all processes of the University, the Corporation, Board of Overseers or the Alumni Association. Finally, to progress further, I believe that diversity shall be measured against specific goals and KPIs and any areas of improvement shall be addressed.

To embrace diversity fully at Harvard, we should ensure that:

- The admission process of new students to College and Graduate Schools shall allow for diverse and inclusive classes;
- The selection, employment and retention of Faculty and Staff shall mirror the diversity of our society;
- The selection process shall provide for a diverse and inclusive leadership and governance bodies;
- Speakers or panels at conferences and seminars at the University shall be diverse and inclusive of different views and perspectives;
- Diversity shall also play a fundamental role in the design and development of academic programs to mirror the diversity in the student and faculty corps.

This shall lead to the offering of programs like Ethnic Studies, as well as a wide range of courses to address the diversity of our society and students. Such a variety of courses and programs will undoubtedly contribute to promoting a sense of diversity, inclusion, and belonging, both in the classroom and in the University community.

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

Further to the points mentioned above, Harvard can encourage more diversity by nominating a diverse group of alumni to its committees and governing bodies, such as the HAA Board of Directors. By nominating me (woman, Basque minority, Harvard Law School graduate), the HAA has in fact applied diversity criteria.

I believe that our success as HAA Board of Directors will depend on our ability to represent the diversity of our alumni, and future alumni, and be inclusive of their views and concerns. We shall attract and retain a diverse group of alumni, and foster a work environment with alumni of all programs and Schools, backgrounds and experiences. We can only reach our full potential by bringing to our discussions the diversity of our alumni in terms of Schools and education, but also gender, race, ethnicity, religion, geographic origin, gender identity or expression, age, sexual orientation, or disability.

In our activities at the HAA, we shall also embrace diversity and inclusion behaviour as follows:

- Treating all with whom we interact with respect and fairness;
- Encouraging and allowing alumni with different backgrounds, personalities, points of view, skills and approaches to collaborate in an environment of mutual support;
- Promoting equal opportunities to all alumni;
- Understanding better the needs of our diverse student base and the alumni communities in which we live and work; and
- Continuously monitoring the effectiveness of our diversity values and take proactive measures to advance them.

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

I am generally in favour of affirmative action as a catalyst of change.

This includes race-conscious admissions, but this should not be the only criterion. As indicated earlier, diversity should be understood in broad terms to capture all the differences in human nature. Admissions should reflect this to ensure a rich, inclusive and comprehensive educational experience to the benefit of all students and for the sake of our future leaders.

As Jennifer Holmes, Assistant Counsel at LDF has stated, "race-conscious admissions are vital to advancing racial equity and inclusion in higher education, and the Supreme Court has repeatedly affirmed that universities have the right to consider race as one aspect of a multidimensional admissions process." I could not agree more.

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

The mission of Harvard is, and shall continue to be, "to educate the citizens and citizen-leaders for our society." This can only be achieved through a strong commitment to a diverse educational program and living experience. Diversity and inclusion will therefore play a fundamental role.

Harvard shall continue to offer all students the unparalleled diverse educational journey that is intellectually, socially, and personally transformative.

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?

Personally, I am a big believer in the positive impact that diversity can have on organisations. Diversity is at the core of who I am and how I behave or work. It has therefore been part of my work as a lawyer, but also when serving as the President of the Harvard Club of Belgium or on the HAA Board as an Appointed Director for Europe.

I am part of a high-performing global law firm with people from very different backgrounds, all with different perspectives and life experiences. We believe in the power of diversity and are committed to make it real.

Each office has a "Diversity Champion", who is responsible for the implementation of our diversity values at local level. I was nominated the "Brussels' Diversity Champion" soon after joining the firm. Now, as office managing partner, I am using my position to instil diversity as an overarching principle of our operations and activities and promote more diversity and inclusion in our office.

My objective is to make our office an open place where everybody can speak up and expect to be treated with dignity and respect, in line with our inclusive culture. This is a shared responsibility and we take very seriously any behaviour that demeans the dignity and respect of others, such as bullying, harassment and discrimination.

We have developed a global policy and each region or office will establish its own goals and expectations, including how to report any inappropriate behaviour. These policies apply to everyone, including third parties and clients.

Here are some examples of what this has led me to do in our office (together with my team):

- We have developed a fully-fledged Diversity & Inclusion Policy at office level and set out a Diversity & Inclusion Committee. We have our annual plan (with goals and KPIs) in accordance with the firm-wide plan and design and implement the appropriate strategies and actions.

- We have an almost gender-parity team of lawyers and business services, which is quite unique in the legal industry and certainly in Brussels.
- New incorporations are always assessed from a diversity angle as well. A diverse pool of candidates is sought throughout each phase of the recruitment process. Our HR officers will participate in diversity job fairs (e.g., with a focus on LGBT or people with a disability) to attract diverse talented people.
- Our teams are also diverse in terms of nationalities and geographic origins (with over 18 nationalities and 17 languages), as well as ethnicities and race, sexual orientations, age, political beliefs, etc.
- We regularly organise events to enhance our diversity values and promote inclusion. By way of example, we have monthly or bi-monthly events to discuss women leadership and empowerment, celebrate LGBT+ rights or discuss LGBT+ inclusion, understand the challenges of immigration and the contribution of refugees, etc.
- We set up diverse teams to openly discuss office matters (e.g., "Citizenship Committee", "Better Brussels' Committee").
- We have a formal procedure for handling and resolving complaints of unfair treatment (i.e., bullying, sexual harassment, etc.), discrimination and inappropriate behaviour and language.
- Internal conferences such as induction sessions, retreats, local annual meetings must include a diversity session. Attendance at external events, seminars etc. and internal working groups will also be diversity balanced. Internal documents must include a diversity statement, subject to local laws.
- We also make a point of working for clients that care about diversity. We set up diverse teams to pitch for new projects or work on a particular matter. We incorporate diversity and inclusion statements in our engagement letters and live our diversity values in the way we work. We also work with clients on diversity initiatives to support our mutual objectives.
- Major suppliers are requested to provide us with their diversity policies and management on diversity balance.
- We work on numerous cases related to diversity on a pro bono basis.
- Finally, we monitor and measure our diversity and gender statistics against our objectives and plans. We will identify areas for improvement and work on them.

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