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Inside: The Commencement Issue

The Harvard Independent

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The Indy is on summer vacation!

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As Harvard College's weekly undergraduate newsmagazine, the Harvard Independent provides in-depth, critical coverage of issues and events of interest to the Harvard College community. The Independent has no political affiliation, instead offering diverse commentary on news, arts, sports, and student life.

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To Eat Sustainably

Results from student survey reflect desire for improvement in vegetarian and vegan options, suggesting that Harvard may be precluding itself from encouraging sustainable eating habits

By MARISSA GARCIA

It was the end of the season, and a Harvard athlete on the women's swim team was seeing a steep decline in her performance. She was not sure as to why. Suddenly she was unable to complete her practices—she would quickly collapse from the exertion. As a vegetarian for a year, she soon discovered that her ferritin levels were below 10. Ferritin is a protein assessed by doctors to determine patients' iron levels; animal-products are a standard source of iron, so it is often the quest of vegetarians and vegans to ensure they are nutritionally attaining enough iron through alternative sources, which can be consumed in salad greens and legumes. Normal ranges for iron levels can vary greatly, but for this athlete personally, her iron levels should have been at a minimum of 25, and, in order to be competitive, at a minimum of 50. Though she is no longer vegetarian to accommodate for this, she strives to go vegan after her time at Harvard to make up for her deepened environmental footprint from her less sustainable food intake in college.

Harvard University has recognized this increasingly prevalent sense of civic duty amongst its students to experiment and commit to sustainable diets and accordingly released a Sustainable and Healthful Food Standards Plan in April 2019, detailing a mission for meticulous selection of local food with lower carbon footprints, an emphasis on the nutritional well-being of the people they serve, and a reduction in food waste. This plan is intended to appertain to the many dining subsets comprising Harvard University, including the Restaurants Associates (serving Harvard Medical School, Harvard Law School, Harvard Business School, and the Harvard Graduate School of Design), Rebecca's Cafe (Harvard Graduate School of Education), Jules Catering (serving Harvard Divinity School), Clover Food Lab (serving the Science Center), and finally, the Harvard

University Dining Services (HUDS), which predominantly serves the undergraduate community.

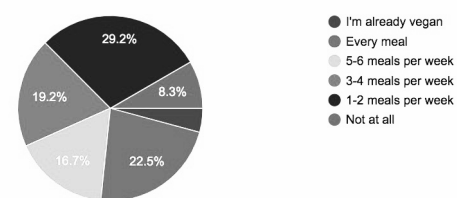
Though this Food Standards Plan was only recently initiated within the past month, HUDS has demonstrated in its history a trend of sustainable actions. A significant percentage of their budget is spent on locally produced goods, which originate from 250 local farms. In order to optimize the amount of food that is gathered locally, HUDS rotates its menu items based upon the produce currently in season within the New England region. Prioritizing purchases from farms in close proximity has not only bolstered the economies of local communities, reducing the externality of transactions and therein augmenting human capital, but has also decreased carbon emissions ascribed to food acquisition. In fact, the Green Restaurant Association has ranked Harvard's undergraduate dining halls as 2- and 3-star Certified Green Restaurants, with the single 2-star rating belonging to Adams House. These rankings are based upon the metrics of water efficiency, waste reduction and recycling, sustainable durable goods and building materials, sustainable food, energy, environmentally preferable disposables, chemical and pollution reduction, and transparency and education. Many of these accolades are upheld by a surveyed sample of Harvard undergraduates; out of 120 responses to a Dietary Lifestyles survey distributed by the Harvard Independent, 88.4% of respondents ranked their

satisfaction with HUDS' tackling of environmental food industry issues as a 3 or higher (on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest satisfaction). Respondents expressed appreciation that ranged from making alternative-meat options more prevalent ("I love Beyond burgers!! Has radically transformed my go-to grille order and I never got a hamburger again") to often ensuring that there is "good educational value" in their menu curation, such as through their Plant Protein initiative.

Although HUDS has made these operationally sustainable gestures, there has yet to be a public, formal measure evaluating the quality of its food for those strictly on plant-based diets and how the present offerings impact the undergraduates who consider these dishes as their main sustenance. Within the Green Restaurant Association's ranking for Certified Green Restaurants, the only metric under which this would have been appraised would have been "Sustainable Food." This overall classification is broken down into 51 categories, which each

If HUDS were to add a vegan entrée (and you don't currently identify as vegan), how often would you be willing to incorporate it into your diet?

120 responses

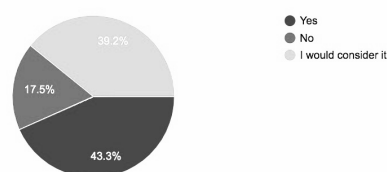


INDY NEWS

To Eat Sustainably, continued.

Would you be willing to engage with new dietary lifestyles if HUDS had more options for those lifestyles?

120 responses



have a point-value attached to them if the dining hall meets that criterion. Only three of these categories evaluate vegetarianism or vegan dining offerings, and they merely judge the presence of the entree: “At least one vegetarian entree,” “% of main dishes that are vegan,” and “% of main dishes that are vegetarian.”

Overall, in a broader comparison to other Ivy League undergraduate institutions, Harvard is not a leading institution in the quality of its vegetarian and vegan dining options. According to the report cards from PETA, Princeton, Brown, the University of Pennsylvania, and Dartmouth have A+ Ratings in accommodating for vegans. Yale has a Rating of A, whereas Cornell, Columbia, and Harvard all have B Ratings. Amongst these bottom three, Harvard has the lowest Student Satisfaction score, another metric used by Peta that gathers ratings and reviews from current undergraduates, at 56%, relative to Columbia’s 67% and Cornell’s 91%. When students were asked, “How do you feel about HUDS food in general?” on a scale of 1 to 5, vegetarians and vegans, on average, responded with a 3.14 ranking, indicating just above basal satisfaction.

By beginning the Plant Protein initiative in Fall 2018, HUDS introduced its first recent consistent offering at every meal that is based upon plant-protein. With heavy signage within dining halls, their educational efforts are evident, though one first-year student who identifies as pescatarian thought there could be even higher

communicative clarity regarding, “how much of the plant protein counts as a serving of protein.” Amongst surveyed Harvard undergraduates, mixed opinions persist regarding the Plant Protein initiative intended to deliberately appeal to those pursuing plant-based dietary lifestyles, despite 44% of respondents identifying as currently vegetarian/vegan. A student, who currently identifies as vegan, commented, “I think [the plant protein initiative] is absolutely great for environmental, nutritional, and ethical reasons. However, sometimes it seems like HUDS runs out of inspiration, I do not specifically consider rice with beans an especially high plant protein dish, for example.” This student was not inaccurate in their suppositions of the protein content in the rice and beans dish; in a nutritional analysis of two weeks worth of Plant Protein offerings, the “Black Beans and Rice” dish has only 2.2g of protein—amongst the smallest of quantities of protein in any standard 4oz serving of plant protein, comparatively. Amongst other nutrient-poor Plant Protein offerings are the “Cannelini Beans w/ Lemon & Spinach” dish, with only 2g of protein per 4oz serving, and the “Black Eye Pea & Cilantro” with only 2.4g of protein. All nutritional information was extracted from the HUDS website.

Recently introduced meat-alternatives on the HUDS menu demonstrate efforts being undertaken to accommodate vegetarian lifestyles. For example, HUDS has incorporated seitan, an alternative soy-protein source, into their Seitan Tostadas dish, packed with 20.9g of protein per taco, and the Seitan pepper Drizzle, packed with 20.7g of protein per 8 ounces. They have additionally innovated a meatball alternative made out of eggplant, and was even documented by one respondent to the survey as a favorite dish; however, it still does not qualify as vegan and only has 4.8g of protein per 4 oz serving. Vegetarian and vegan offerings are often unequal nutritionally, in terms of protein content. Certain vegetarian entrees have strikingly low quantities of protein per the recommended serving size. For example, the entree “White Bean Stew” has only 2.2g, “Stuffed Peppers w/ Beans &

Rice” only 2.3g, and the “Portobello Mushroom with Quinoa Stuffing” only 2.5g. On average, across 45 vegetarian meals, the average 5.5oz serving had only 10.11g of protein. In comparison to 25 meals containing meat, the average 5.4oz serving had 21.81g of protein. Though it varies per individual, the recommended protein intake tends to be 50g consumed daily.

Though these nutritional disparities may not seem significant—after all, those who choose to be vegetarian and vegan are fully understanding of the inevitable challenges that come with this choice of dietary lifestyle—college often marks a critical period of dietary transition. Students can elect to adopt any dietary lifestyles they so choose, now that they have freedom beyond the dietary lifestyle of their household. Of those surveyed, approximately 35.8% of respondents denoted college being the time in which they made the transition to their current dietary lifestyle. This data aligns with broader statistics calculated, such as a poll conducted through Dalhousie University’s professor Dr. Sylvain Charlebois. This revealed that Canadians under 35, in comparison to those older than 49, are three times more likely to identify as vegetarians or vegans.

Vegetarian and vegan lifestyles are a demographic increasing in prominence, particularly in the age group HUDS caters. Through a report published by VeganLife, Grubhub sees that students at Ivy League colleges are much more likely than students at other colleges to order vegetarian and vegan dinners. Yale is approximately 130% above the average in ordering meals corresponding to these dietary lifestyles, and Harvard trails right behind, with 86%. Ranking #4 is MIT at 53%, Ranking #6 is Boston University at 50%, and Ranking #9 is Brandeis University at 37%—the Greater Boston area seems to be a location with keen undergraduate interest in these dietary lifestyles. There is clear interest in the undergraduate student body to pursue these dietary lifestyles.

In fact, amongst students surveyed, in response to the question of “If HUDS were to add a vegan entree (and you don’t currently identify as vegan), how often would you be willing to incorporate it into your diet?”, only 8.3% students answered, “Not at all,” whereas 22.5% of respondents to this question expressed interest in incorporating the

vegan offerings into every meal. Considering how vegans only comprised 10.8% of respondents, this was a significant increase. There is palpable interest currently existing amongst students in pursuing these sustainable diets, but there is futility in the facilitation; students are less willing to act upon their desires to go vegan due to institutional constraints.

One would anticipate Harvard, as a globally-acclaimed institution, to engage more of its students in pursuing sustainable diets by providing higher quality alternatives, especially in consideration of the high-impact potential of its graduates, with 8% of 2018 graduates pursuing governmental professions according to the Office of Career Services. After all, undergraduates are expressing clear interest in experimenting with new dietary lifestyles within the HUDS dining halls. When asked, "Would be willing to engage with new dietary lifestyles if HUDS had more options for those lifestyles?", only 17.5% said "No." 43.3% of respondents to the survey said "Yes" and 39.2% said "I would consider it."

According to student surveys, the food in the dining hall, however, is failing in engaging this crowd which is willing and ready to take initiative. There are subtle lapses in the execution, such as the placement of food within the servery. One survey respondent, who identifies as vegan, wrote that "...[placement] does probably create more meat consumption overall because people tend to take stuff that's right in front of them in the line." Another respondent, who identifies as vegan, spoke to how the placement of food dishes in the servery directly impacts the lack of appeal in vegan options: "Meat items are placed in such a way that they seem to be the entree. If you don't eat meat, it feels like you're just taking multiple side dishes." Another respondent, who identifies as vegetarian, critiqued the efficacy of the Plant Protein initiative in encouraging sustainable diets, particularly in regards to its current placement in the servery not accurately highlighting the sustainable dishes: "...this campaign has yet to expand the visibility of vegetarian or vegan food options—many of which are already afterthoughts, and are frequently relegated to the back end of the serving line—

and has therefore not increased the accessibility of healthier or more sustainable dietary lifestyles in the Houses." This same student later wrote, "By improving the placement, appearance, and general quality of vegan and vegetarian food options, HUDS could empower students to learn about (and hopefully begin to habituate to) more sustainable choices with respect to their dietary lifestyles." To summarize, another respondent, currently identifying as vegetarian, concluded, "...the options don't make me want to become vegan."

In addition to the lack of appeal in pursuing vegetarian and vegan dietary lifestyles within the dining halls, some upperclassmen also face challenges of inaccessibility to adequate vegetarian vegan food, particularly at lunch time. The new class schedule, implemented in the 2018-2019 academic year, often inhibits many upperclassmen from returning to their dining halls to eat lunch, such as when they have back-to-back 12:00-1:15pm and 1:15-2:45pm class times. This resorts in them getting lunch at Fly-By if the line does not outlast their break between classes. The options, however, remain relatively similar every day, with pre-packaged sandwiches, soups, chili, and snacks, and considering how some students have to utilize this option multiple times a week, these options lack in quality and sufficient nutrients. One survey respondent, currently vegan, urged HUDS to "[make] lunch more vegan friendly. The only vegan bagged lunch options there are, are hummus & pretzel chips, and PB&J sandwich, both quite unhealthy..."

A reprieve from FlyBy for a vegetarian or vegan rushing between classes near the Science Center used to reside in Greenhouse Cafe, whereat students could buy lunch using their Board Plus, money that Harvard loads onto students' ID cards for the purpose of being spent in on-campus cafes for moments exactly like this. However, Greenhouse Cafe has since been replaced with Clover Food Lab. Clover prides itself upon the mission of offering sustainable food that not only accommodates vegan and vegetarian diets but in also drawing in people who may have never considered this type of cuisine before: CEO Ayr Muir wrote about their controversial introduction

of the Impossible Meatball Sandwich to the menu, "Clover's mission is to make meat lovers into vegetable loves...it's why 93% of our customers are not vegetarian." By having Clover in the Science Center, Harvard can almost use it as a token for engaging its university population in sustainable diets; in truth, this particular sandwich costs an upwards of \$15 with tax, a lofty price for an undergraduate to pay without the supplement of Board Plus. A respondent astutely observed, "Through its partnerships with businesses such as Clover and Whole Heart Provisions, Harvard likes to showcase the importance of healthy and environmentally conscious dietary lifestyles to the outside world. Why can't Harvard do the same for its students in its own dining halls?"

Though Harvard has ostensibly dedicated itself to noble sustainability goals in its food services, it has thus far focused on establishing metrics that can be generalized across all of its dining subsets, when special attention should be directed toward HUDS. A more effective metric should be developed to more adequately assess the quality of vegetarian and vegan options that extends beyond topical presence. Harvard carries a powerful role to engage its undergraduates to inspire their pursuit of more sustainable dietary lifestyles, whether it be through the tool of more nutritious and exciting dining offerings or of more accessible vegetarian and vegan options while not in the dining halls. The effects of this could be dramatically amplified within society in the years to come, in an age of climate change largely attributed to carbon emissions from the food industry, as alumni advocate for sustainable diets on the world stage.

Marissa Garcia '21 (marissagarcia@college.harvard.edu) considers dynamics between the food industry and climate change to be rampant and anticipates seeing how colleges across the US attain successes to both ends through their dining services. Their voices and experiences are also being given the adequate attention and care they deserve.

INDY FORUM

To Myself, Prior to and in Becoming a Ghost of Harvard's Past

By ARIANA AKBARI

The Harvard campus has shifted tectonically since I first matriculated in 2013. Incoming students will have no memory of the now-ancient relics that defined a significant portion of my own Harvard Square past - places like the Holyoke Center, Cafe Algiers, Wagamama, and Crema Cafe are all gone now. Many of the administrators and professors who influenced my own Harvard experience have met a similar fate. A great majority of my student peers have scattered across the globe and are well on their way to becoming everything from cogs in a capitalist machine to political leaders of society.

I have found that in the process of the disappearance of place and people, the memory attached to them becomes similarly dislodged. Instead of being anchored in terms of location, they're relegated to that diaphanous area of your brain that sometimes leave you questioning "Did

that even happen?" "Was that even there?" "Did they actually tell me that?"

One memory that, at this time, remains anchored to its Harvard location is etched in brick on the gate between the Science Center Plaza and the Phillips Brooks House courtyard. There, is a quote taken from a journal of Ralph Waldo Emerson, written on account of Harvard College's 200th anniversary celebrations (in 1836, if you don't want to do the math). I would read this inscription nearly every day of my freshman year as I walked from Annenberg to my freshman dorm, Mower Hall. It reads:

"Cambridge at any time is full of ghosts; but on that day the anointed eye saw the crowd of spirits that mingled with the procession in the vacant spaces, year by year, as the classes proceeded; and then the far longer train of ghosts that followed the company, of the men

that wore before us the college honors & the laurels of the state--the long winding train reach back into eternity."

Every day of my Harvard College career has brought me one step closer to joining Emerson's ghostly procession. It is now, on the precipice of my own graduation that I come face to face with the inescapable - my own impending ghostness. Like the disappeared storefronts, the faculty and staff from whom I no longer receive emails, and my College peers who now exist almost singularly as smiling faces on my Instagram feed, I too will soon be gone. I sometimes wonder if I'll also be left questioning, "Did I ever happen?"

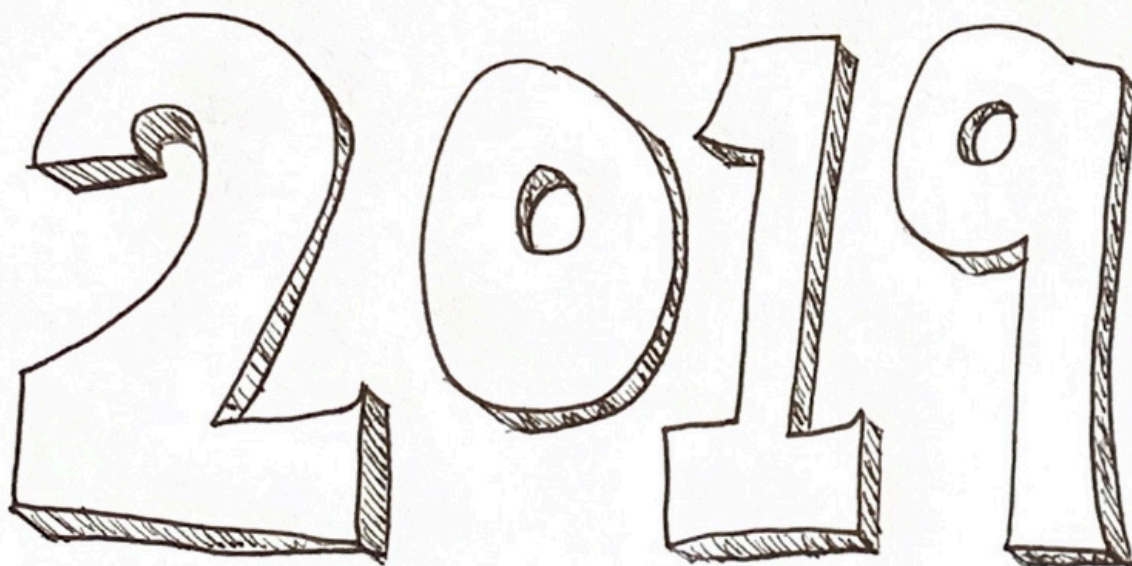
Regardless, as the days grow longer, the number of Gen Z-era students propelling themselves to class on scooters multiply, and the infamously spectacular Cambridge sunsets make their reappearance after their lengthy winter hibernation, I know that my time at Harvard is finally up. But before I leave, here are my last bits of wisdom to bestow - from me to me - and in the process, to you too.

To myself, prior to and in becoming a ghost of Harvard's past.

1) Don't seek inclusivity so much that you lose sight of celebrating your differences.

2) Gatsby at the Fly is SO overrated. Finesse an invite to Speekonos instead.

3) Write a thesis. Even if you don't know what to write



INDY FORUM

To Myself, continued.

about and you're afraid that you might actually be an idiot misplaced on a campus of geniuses. In the process you'll learn so much about life, yourself, and your professors.

4) Stay away from people with no discernable religious/moral/ethical compass to guide them.

5) Cross-register in at least one class at the graduate school of your choice. It will give you insight to a different type of learning as well as a community of visual role models by which you can orient your future.

6) Forget about FOMO and study abroad during the term. Also, major in the History of Art and Architecture. The professors there are just as crazy as you are and like to travel as much as you do.

7) Remain deeply critical of authoritarian regimes. Especially those wearing an administrative face who make sweeping decisions that affect the student body and teaching faculty without consulting them first.

8) The EPS lounge has Twinings teas and packets of Swiss Miss hot chocolate. They are left unguarded. You know what to do.

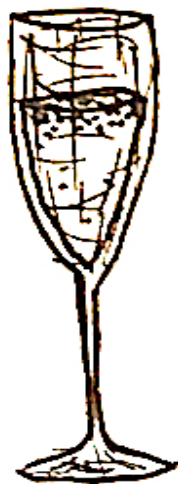
9) Breakfast in Annenberg is highly underrated. It's a 19th century secular Cathedral filled with deliciously hot food and a staff that is always happy to see you. Take advantage of its presence because you will never experience anything like it again.

10) Harvard career services is one of the worst on the planet. Do yourself a favor and just email the people and companies you're interested in working for if they're not a consulting firm or financial institution.

11) Invest. Financially, of course - because at this rate you're going to be graduating in debt. But more than that, invest in an organization that you can give back to after you graduate. Invest in your house and in making it feel like a home. Invest in volunteering and in doing something that helps someone other than yourself. Invest in the friendships you make, and the mentorships you stumble into.

Because in this physical world, everything eventually disappears. It is only the happiness that you derive from living your life and the cumulative effect of the impact you make by living it that hold solid and compound in greatness as we all move further into our respective futures.

Ariana Akbari (aakbari@college.harvard.edu) is graduating with a lot of wisdom under her belt.



INDY COMMENCEMENT

Daniel Um: Indy Senior Reflection

One Lap Complete, Many More to Go

By DANIEL UM

Harvard College is an odd place where exceptional students arrive from all over the world to 'sprint' for four years just to stay average. As an international student from Manila, Philippines attending a college comprised of 90% domestic students and 33% legacy, it was easy to feel as if everyone had Harvard figured out much better than I had. Navigating Harvard's exorbitant red-tape, the overwhelming number of opportunities and the seemingly uncaring administration made the whole experience simultaneously both exciting and frustrating. However, the key to my sanity was clinging onto the pockets of Harvard that were substantial, genuine, and cultivating.

Attending the activities fair, there were so many organizations that aligned with aspects of my personality and interests. However, amidst the entangled mess of club members, shouting over each other in the quad lawn and handing out flyers with dates and times for first comp meetings, I left feeling more confused than when I came. However, I attended a few of these comp meetings and quickly realized that some of these clubs were transactional while others were communities. The Indy

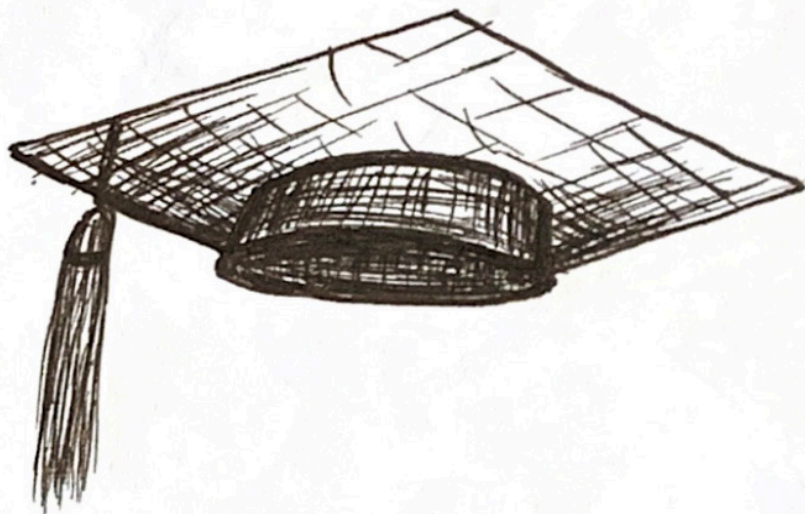
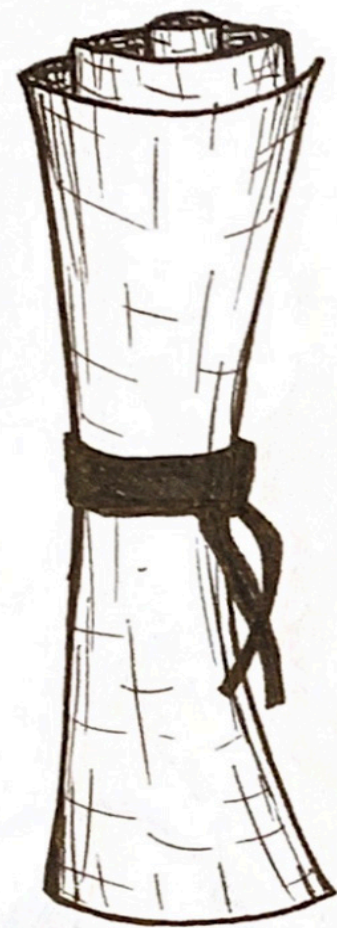
struck me as a group of people who authentically wanted to hear what you had to say and encouraged writers to hone their voice, rather than fit a mold. Indy filled a journalistic niche that allowed for more in-depth and lively pieces, while delivering on the key news stories at the forefront of campus consciousness.

After completing the comp as a writer, I was encouraged to transition to the business board because the nature of the work interested me and there was a gap that needed filling. I quickly learned about the different aspects of the 'business' side of journalism such as publishing, fundraising, and book-keeping. Furthermore, by taking on projects like the Indy Playbook and digitizing the Indy's accounting, I felt proud to make my modest impact in an organization with such great historical significance and illustrious alumni. I am and always grateful to the Indy for being a cornerstone in my college experience.

While I am definitely going to miss my time here at Harvard, I liken my experience here to that of a relay race ran by many different parts of myself. While one is exhausted, hav-

ing just completed a four year lap both thrilling and challenging, another is ready and has been waiting to start the next path anew. It is with great pleasure that I congratulate the class of 2019 here at the Indy and all over campus and look ahead to life beyond the houses of Harvard.

Daniel Um '19 (danielum@college.harvard.edu) looks ahead to life as a Harvard and Indy alum.



INDY FORUM

Everywhere and All the Time

Industrial and Environmental Changes Driven by
the Class of 2019

By ANA LUIZA NICOLAE

Past the Harvard Business School and Harvard Athletic Facilities, a quick stroll across the Charles River to Allston, MA leads the way to the Harvard Innovation Labs, comprising of the ArtLab, the LaunchLab X, and the Pagliuca Harvard Life Lab. These buildings are neighboring to the Science and Engineering Complex, which is currently under scheduled construction for the next few years. Easy to miss, however, is a nearby small brick building on Travis Street whose significance is often overlooked on first glance.

Contrary to its diminutive stature, the building is actually the home of Harvard's Facilities Maintenance Operations, tasked with the critical role of providing Harvard students with transportation and mail services in order to foster education-conducive environments. This facility also strives to minimize the students' impacts on the environment, most notably through recycling.

The left-hand entrance of the building opens to a looter's den, where there are piled and arranged objects ranging from furniture, to decorations, to books, easels, and clothes: the Harvard Recycling & Surplus Center. What are the origins of this eclectic mix of objects? Certainly, some parts of the University are periodically refurbished, leaving the charismatic wooden chairs many affiliates have worn well to be discarded somewhere. It may also be the case that malfunctioning drawers can lead to a desk being removed from the dorm room of an undergraduate and promptly replaced.

The vast swath of objects, in actuality, comes from outgoing seniors, shares Recycling and Waste Manager, Rob Gogan. After the whole ritual of circulating ads through email lists has started and... failed, a surplus of discarded belongings are still not always

passed onto Habitat for Humanity Harvard, instead being taken away by trucks. In light of this, Gogan ensures to find these belongings new homes. Every Thursday from 11am to 2pm, the facility is open to the public, where any person can come pick up and reuse the abandoned items for free. To accommodate for the large number of visitors taking advantage of this recycling program, this system operates on a first come first serve basis. This usually creates a swarm on Thursdays which carries away most of the items. Surprisingly, the belongings people throw out, leave behind, or utterly forget across the University sometimes find new lives some 1600 miles to the south. In particular, Rob Gogan mentions a whole cargo load of footwear that was donated to Haiti. Over the years, he has even developed quite a special bond with a few partners of the country, as encapsulated in part by the decorations in his office. Amidst a collection of diverse sculptures, Gogan sports a most special sculpture carved in Haiti and given to him in recognition of his kind support.

As the students of the Class of 2019 are prepared to make their mark on the world, one may wonder what they will leave behind. Alongside brilliant ideas and original projects, their passage might be quantified in paper cups and plastic wrappers. While discussing the most significant changes to his industry throughout the years, Gogan remarks, "now students want to eat everywhere, all the time." Cafes have been instituted in libraries and student centers across campus, and Gogan shares the noticeable increase in "snacking" instead of the traditional three sitting meals. At the same time, with the sudden surge in paper containers for food and drinks has come the staggering decrease of paper for class notes and person-

al usage. Another flagrant distinction in the industry is exemplified by an anecdote Gogan shares about a Harvard faculty member; the massive transition to digitized content in recent years has left the renowned Professor David Malan searching across campus for physical phonebooks for his characteristic stunt in the first class of the course CS50. He makes a point of tearing it apart while searching for a "Mike Smith" in order to demonstrate the tediousness and completeness of various approaches to problem-solving—a joke now potentially rendered obsolete by Gogan's observed industrial shift in the utilization of paper.

The Harvard's Facilities Maintenance Operations, an important part of the reallocation of belongings left behind by the Class of 2019, remain invisible, managing to elude the everyday preoccupations of a Harvard undergraduate or affiliate. There are of course many students, such as those in the Research Efficiency Program, dedicated to thoroughly raising awareness about overconsumption and therefore encourage recycling single-use items. However, the due diligence pursued by Rob Gogan and the Recycling and Surplus services operators ensures an extended shelf life to objects discarded by the Class of 2019 that are intended for long-term usage in interior living.

Ana Luiza Nicolae '22 (analuiza_nicolae@college.harvard.edu) writes Forum for the Indy.

INDY SPORTS

Harvard Heavyweight Crew, Just Another Day in the Life

The Indy Learns what it Takes to be a Top-3 Collegiate Crew Team Ahead of the Final Stages of the Rowing Season

By MIMI TARRANT

As an athlete at Harvard, the spare hours in the school day can be few and far between; taking into account time devoted to academic work (both inside and outside of the classroom) as well as team practise sessions, many athletes often find themselves simply pressed for unencumbered time. The impact of this is keenly felt with Harvard's Crew teams; often found to be the first teams awake in the dining halls for breakfast each morning, Crew has a notorious reputation for being one of the most demanding athletic departments at Harvard. Not only do they have some of the longest team practise sessions on campus each day, but they also train all-year round, a unique feature of the rowing season. While other sports have their hours cut in the off-season by their respective governing bodies such as the NCAA, Harvard Crew doesn't experience this dramatic decline in team hours. With the Head of the Charles in October providing the incentive for training even in the 'off' season, Crew is truly a year-round commitment.

Harvard supports four Crew teams in total, with men and women representing Harvard in both Heavyweight and Lightweight Crews. All four Crews are ranked in the top 20 nationally, the fruition of the strong tradition that Harvard holds within rowing. This element of tradition is even reflected in the training facilities for the Crews; Weld boathouse, where the women practise, has been a presence on the Charles since 1906. This is similar to Newell, the men's boathouse, which is located just across the river and was a gift to the program in 1900 from the

Harvard Club of New York. This charitable donation is one of many from alumni that the Crew programs constantly rely on; as well as providing the roof under which they train, the Crew teams receive generous donations towards other necessities (such as new boats) from their supportive and illustrative alumni network. It is this expansive network that has allowed Crew to be one of the most successful programs within Harvard Athletics for over a century.

While all teams hold national rankings, it is currently the men's Heavyweight Crew that sit highest in their relative ranking, coming in at 3rd in the nation. Throughout the season of dual-racing, the team remains undefeated, even when coming up against rivals such as Brown and Princeton. This follows a successful season the previous year, in which the team as a whole were ranked fourth in the country, while also posting respectable results at the Intercollegiate Rowing Association (IRA) National Championship (the first and second varsity boats placed fourth, and the third varsity earned a silver medal). The team will be looking to earn more medals this year as they travel to Lake Natoma in California for the 2019 IRA Championships on the 31st May, buoyed by their higher ranking and unblemished schedule so far.

While any rower will tell you that a National Championship is the pinnacle of collegiate rowing, the program does not end there for the Harvard men's Heavyweight Crews. After the IRAs the team will be heading to Connecticut, where they will contest the 154th Harvard-Yale Regatta. With the first contest of this kind being held in 1852, the tradition of a Harvard-Yale dual

race has held for every subsequent year, except for in years of major wars. Laden with historical importance, the regatta sees races for various boats in the Heavyweight Crew, with an overall winner being determined from the results of these individual races. History plays on Harvard's side here, with Harvard leading Yale for the total number of team wins, coming away from the regatta victorious 95 times compared to Yale's 57. Last year saw the previously top-ranked Yale beat Harvard in both the varsity and second boats, while Harvard's third boat saw victory. This year, with Yale will coming into the regatta confident from their team victory at Eastern Sprints (the closest rowing has to an Ivy League Championship Tournament), their likely success at the upcoming IRAs and their current ranking as number one in the country has perhaps rendered the Harvard team underdogs in the Harvard-Yale meet. However, a year of preparation, including countless hours spent on the water, in the weights room and on the ergs will no doubt push the Harvard Crews into making the 154th Harvard-Yale regatta a closely fought contest.

In anticipation of the IRAs and Harvard-Yale regattas, we caught up with Liam Corrigan '19, the senior captain of the Crew team, to learn a bit more about what the team's preparations have looked like in the run up to these races.

Indy: When are your typical 'on' and 'off' seasons?

Liam: For the rowing team we are always training and competing, but our official 'in season' period is roughly from early-April until mid-June. The rest of the school year we

INDY SPORTS

Harvard Heavyweight Crew, continued.

are still training and most people train to some extent over the summer.

Indy: How does training differ in these different seasons?

Liam: Honestly, I would say the training is largely similar in the off season versus the in season. We train roughly 20-25 hours a week both in season and off season. In the fall and spring most of the training is rowing a boat on the water, with 3-4 sessions spent weight training or rowing indoors on the ergs. During the winter all of the sessions are either on the erg or weight training as the river is mostly frozen. The only major difference between fall and spring is that in the spring racing season we have races every Saturday as opposed to practice.

Indy: How does training differ heading into big competitions such as Sprints and IRAs?

Liam: Generally heading into the big championship races we will taper for approximately a week, meaning that the intensity and the length of most of our sessions go down. So we will be rowing 12k instead of 18k or will be doing 1 hard piece per session as opposed to 4. That way when race day comes we're as physically fresh as possible as we don't have as much residual fatigue from hard training as we normally would.

Indy: How is the team feeling heading into the closing stages of the season?

Liam: At this point the team feels pretty good heading into IRAs and the Harvard Yale race. We got silver in the 1v, gold in the JV [the second varsity boat] and earned bronze medals in the 3V, 4V, and 5V. We were the only program to win medals in every boat, and it's the strongest team wide performance we've had in a number of years. Based on that we're hoping to win multiple medals at IRA, and win across the board in the Harvard-Yale race.

Indy: How have you found balancing rowing with other aspects of life at Harvard?

Liam: Balancing rowing with work, sleep, and social life definitely requires a fairly high level of discipline. There definitely isn't a lot of time in the average day of a rower to watch Netflix or take naps, but I think as long as you can stay focused in the academic and athletic areas that you care about, it really isn't too difficult to succeed in all of these aspects at once. That being said, there are definitely some stressful moments when a p-set that you've been working on is due at midnight,

and you still have to get up at 6am for practice, on top of everything else you have to do the following day.

Mimi Tarrant '21 (ameliatarrant@college.harvard.edu) wishes all the Harvard Crew teams good luck for their upcoming races, and looks forward to seeing how the teams get on.



Nick Plaut '20 Andrew Haimovici '21

the independent



One Last Look at the Yard

By ANDREW HAIMOVICI