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*D*ear *Harvard Independent* Readers,

As conversations surrounding the conflict in Israel and Palestine continue to escalate on campus, we must recognize our positions as both Harvard students and human beings, and the role we play in public discourse.

Over the past decade we have reported on students organizing with respect to Israel and Palestine. Our reporting work has shed light on student perspectives and experiences, and started important discussions around the conflict. Though we are proud of the journalism we have produced, we discourage the use of our reporting for malicious and harmful reasons.

At a time where personal religious and ethnic identities shape political dialogue on campus more than ever, we must remember the importance of open and respectful discourse. Personal threats, verbal abuse, and disparaging attitudes towards individuals with different belief systems only reinforces the cultural divides that separate us from one another.

We encourage you to check in on the safety and well-being of anyone you know who has personal ties to the conflict. Despite our intellectual, cultural, and ethical differences, we all share an identity as Harvard students, and have the responsibility to care for each other in these turbulent times.

As a matter of policy, the *Harvard Independent* does not take collective organizational positions or print staff editorials. In the coming weeks we plan to continue reporting on Israel, Palestine and Harvard student life. Opinions in all articles belong only to the writer and do not reflect the *Independent*.

Yours in the Indy,

Noah Tavares
President

Marbella Marlo
Editor-in-Chief

HARVARD CELEBRATES SIXTY-THREE YEARS OF NIGERIAN INDEPENDENCE

Harvard Nigerians on navigating their identities at the 14th Annual NSA Gala.

BY ADEDOYIN ADEBAYO '26 AND CHIDIMMA ADINNA '25

September 26th, 1960: Princess Alexandra of Kent, representing Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom, arrived in Lagos, Nigeria smiling from her car as she was greeted by the cheering of school-children. A few days later: on October 1st, the princess would preside over the official freedom charter where Nigeria was declared a sovereign state. Finally, after years of peaceful protests and strikes, Nigerians had won the right to govern themselves.

63 years later, Nigerians and members of the Nigerian diaspora gathered on Harvard's campus to celebrate Nigerian Independence Day. The Nigerian Students Association (NSA) Independence Day Gala is a yearly event that calls on members of Harvard and neighboring communities to take pride in Nigerian culture and identity. Students from other colleges and students of all ethnic and national descent were also welcome to join the fun.

Answering the question of what it means to have pride in and celebrate being Nigerian, especially for those born or raised outside of the country, can be difficult to fully articulate. The *Independent* spoke to different Nigerian students on campus to better understand how the NSA Gala has enabled students to embrace their cultural identity during their college years.

NSA Vice President Bolu Ilelaboye '25, states that being Nigerian on campus is like having a family away from home. "[I love] having such a strong community to fall back on. Since there's so many of us, we have such a huge support system and we can come together during events like Naija Chatta (a meeting series where NSA members discuss topics related to their lives as young Nigerians) to discuss issues. And because so many of us are Nigerian-American—first-generation Nigerians in America, we have so many shared experiences that are unique to our identity."

Adaolisa Mba '27, an auxiliary board member of NSA, reflected on how her cultural upbringing influences her behavior in college. "The part of Nigerian culture that resonates most with me is my role as a first daughter. I think I have a strong sense of responsibility and conscientiousness because of how much responsibility I was given at home. After years of being a second mom, it's become a habit to be on top of my responsibilities."

NSA's Development Chair, Dunmi Ojumu '25, has been an active member of the organization since her first year at Harvard. As a first-year, she worked to create a Gala that followed COVID-19 protocols. Now as a junior, she expressed her appreciation to be able to help welcome students from Harvard and different colleges to celebrate Nigeria's

independence. "[For the American diaspora], Nigerian independence really means reflecting on what it means to be a Nigerian living in the United States. I think a lot about 'What does it mean for me to connect with my culture, connect with my roots, and be committed to being Nigerian and actually building up the country and investing in [Nigerian] culture?' I also think about

students dressed from head to toe in traditional Nigerian attire, and Afrobeat songs blasting through the speakers.

High-profile keynote speakers and award winners were present such as Laolu Senbanjo, a Nigerian performance and visual artist who has previously worked with Beyoncé. Student performances ranged from a spoken word piece by Mike Torto '25 to a traditional Nigerian dance with a modern twist from Omo Naija x Wahala Boys, Harvard's premier African dance troupe. A portion of the proceeds from ticket sales will be donated to the Yinka Shonibare Foundation, which aims to help children and underserved communities in Nigeria.

Folukemi Olufidipe '25, the president of the NSA, was inspired to join the organization as a freshman to have a community that she lacked growing up. "[NSA has] given me so much... Being from Miami, I really had



the Nigerian government and the ways in which it [has] failed the country. Even though we are independent, what are the things that we've lost? What are the lessons we've learned from colonialism? And what are the ways it's impacted [us]?"

The many months of hard work spent planning NSA Gala are inspired by a want to "bring together Nigerians, Africans, Black individuals, and so many people who are interested in Nigerian culture," explained Ilelaboye. In the days leading up to the Gala, NSA held several events, including a speaker series that featured prominent individuals such as Nigerian journalist and activist Betty Abah and a pre-gala mixer with students from Yale, Brown, and Boston University. This year, Harvard NSA's 14th Annual Independence Day Gala attracted over 400 students from across the Ivy League and New England area.

The gala's theme, *Echos of the Past, Voice of the Future*, "[Aimed to incorporate] afro-futuristic themes by highlighting our rich past and cultural traditions in order to help shape the future," said Ilelaboye.

The Gala highlighted phenomenal student artists through an exhibition. Each of the pieces submitted tied to the theme of afro-futurism, a term used to describe the revision and projection of Black futures and celebration of Black culture, and the Gala's artwork emphasized the cohesion and intentionality of the event.

The Gala featured an abundance of Nigerian food such as jollof rice and meat pie,



no Nigerians near me except my parents and my immediate family. And honestly, [NSA] really [gives] me a home away from home I want to be able to give back to a community that's given me so much and kind of want to be the driving force that will keep it going for the soul."

Olufidipe predicts that future Galas will be characterized by "happiness and riches... [It is not just] about giving a space to the Nigerian community, but [a space for] teaching non-Nigerians about who we are, what Nigeria is, and what [it] stands for. I hope for more involvement, more cross cultural events, and just continuing to share the love."

ADEDOYIN ADEBAYO '26 (ADEBAYO@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS ALREADY BRAINSTORMING WHAT TO WEAR AT NEXT YEAR'S GALA. CHIDIMMA ADINNA '25 (CADINNA@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) HAS BEEN LISTENING TO AFROBEATS NON-STOP SINCE NSA GALA!

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE NSA; TAKEN BY (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) TAINA RICO '24 AND MASSIEL MORELL '25

HARVARD VETERANS & THEIR ENRICHMENT TO STUDENT LIFE

A historically-grounded look into the expanding student veteran community.

BY SOPHIE DAUER '27

The undergraduate veteran population plays a crucial role at Harvard, bringing rich backgrounds and unique experiences to our campus. The student vet population—composed of 76 individuals, according to an interview with the Harvard Undergraduate Veterans Organization (HUVO)—has both enhanced the school atmosphere and grown in size and visibility in recent years. The president of HUVO, Benjamin Allen '24, who served in the Navy for nearly five years before attending Harvard, described having witnessed “a shift in direction and acceptance [in the Harvard community] when it comes to vets” during his undergraduate experience.

Harvard has a long and complicated history regarding its relationship with and support for the United States military. After being commissioned as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army in 1775, George Washington housed his troops at the college. And during World War II, portions of Harvard's campus were converted into army and naval officer training grounds. Today, Harvard has more Medal of Honor Recipients than any other educational institution in the United States, excluding West Point and the Naval Academy. Thus, when the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) was founded in 1916, it soon came to Harvard in 1926.

However, in the face of anti-Vietnam War activism, Harvard decided to withhold academic credit from ROTC participants in 1969 before removing the program from campus a few years later. Harvard retained its ROTC ban through the 1970s and for the next forty years due to concerns over homophobia in the military. It was not until 2011, when Congress finally repealed the discriminatory Federal Policy “Don't Ask, Don't Tell,” that Harvard lifted its ROTC ban.

Twelve years later, Harvard's military community—including both vets and ROTC cadets—is rapidly growing as it recovers from the University's many years of exclusion. In 2017, the College declared its public partnership with Service to School, an organization that aids the transition from the military to university, as a means of attracting more veterans to Harvard. The consequences of the collaboration are quite visible: the total undergraduate veteran population was four in 2014, three in 2016, six in 2017, and eight in 2018. This number has steadily increased, with 24 students in 2020 and 51 students in 2021. Now, in 2023, there are 76 veterans. But the changes in veteran presence on campus extend far beyond simple numeric value.

Within his years here, Allen has wit-

nessed and nurtured transformations in the military campus culture. When Allen got to Harvard in 2020, he was vaguely aware of an existing veteran community but had no one to whom he could reach out. Confronted with the additional isolation of COVID-19 restrictions, Allen took matters into his own hands. “Everybody was already isolated, and I just wanted to find people who had a similar background to me,” he said. He took to social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook to connect the twelve veterans in the Class of 2024.

He was successful in his efforts, making lifelong friends and even a blocking group through the community. He also fostered lasting change—the veteran community is far more interconnected now. HUVO recently hosted an introductory meeting, aimed primarily at first-years, with a turnout of 22 veterans. Though HUVO has existed for much time, such a turnout would have never occurred in years past, according to Allen. “The years before I took over [HUVO], if they did an open town

“I THINK ADAPTATION IS SOMETHING THAT IS CRUCIAL FOR VETERANS, AND I THINK THAT IT'S POTENTIALLY A HARD SKILL TO FIND WHEN YOU'RE TRANSITIONING OUT OF THE MILITARY. HOWEVER, BEING IN COLLEGE, WHERE YOU HAVE SUCH A DIVERSE GROUP WHERE EVERYONE IS ALSO TRYING TO ADAPT, IT'S NOT HARD TO DO IF YOU REALIZE THAT EVERYONE'S IN THE SAME BOAT AS YOU,” -AUSTIN LAWRENCE '27.

hall, nobody would show up.”

Second-year veteran student Matthew Malkin '26, who served in the Marine Corps, expressed a similar sentiment. “We're a growing community, and my experience as a student veteran here is a lot different compared to the older student veteran classmates of mine who have been here for a little while,” he said. “There absolutely is a distinct community with the veterans here.” He feels grateful for the veteran community that he has found at Harvard. “I've had a pretty appreciative experience of open arms receiving me and having a group I can connect with, with somewhat shared experiences.”

On the other hand, Malkin sometimes finds it a bit difficult to relate to some traditional students, explaining that “you don't really have a lot of shared background experience.” Malkin finds it easier to connect with non-vet students whose parents served.

With reference to his transition from the military to Harvard, veteran Bernard Ervin '25 stated that “The metaphor of a roller coaster is probably the most accurate.”

“I think people here at Harvard are naturally curious, and so it's always fun just

talking to students and hearing their background,” said Ervin. However, at times, Ervin finds it difficult to be away from the Marines: “As a veteran, you still struggle with being away from an institution that gave you so much.” Ervin noted the irreplaceable bonds that he was able to form during his time at the Marines. “When you leave that family of the brotherhood and sisterhood of the military, where you're willing to die for the person to the left and right of you, and then you come here, you feel lost. And so, you try to connect with people, but it's just not the same.”

First-year student veteran Austin Lawrence '27 has tackled his transition to Harvard student life head-on. “Socially, I think that the best way to do it is to just kind of jump in and integrate yourself. Nowhere in life are people going to come up to you and say, hey, I want you all up in this social group. It takes the individual to actually want to be in a social group,” Lawrence said.

“I think adaptation is something that is crucial for veterans, and I think that it's potentially a hard skill to find when you're transitioning out of the military. However, being in college, where you have such a diverse group where everyone is also trying to adapt, it's not hard to do if you realize that everyone's in the same boat as you,” he added. Lawrence noted that college is a new experience for everyone. “Just because you're a veteran doesn't necessarily mean you're different from everybody. Everyone's on

the same playing field as far as what they're trying to do.”

To Allen, increased student vet visibility on Harvard's campus not only encourages other vets nationwide to apply to higher education, but also enriches college campuses as a whole. Allen finds it incredibly valuable for traditional students to study alongside individuals who served in the military, who could potentially be their section leader, math tutor, or CS50 TF. “Harvard has made a big push to have more veterans accepted year after year, and I think that's so awesome for traditional students to see,” Allen said.

Included in Harvard's mission is its commitment to bring together students “who come from different walks of life and have evolving identities.” The expanding student vet community, adding to the diverse reservoir of perspectives at the college, makes Harvard more enriching for all community members.

SOPHIE DAUER '27 (SOPHIEDAUER@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) BELIEVES THAT HARVARD'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY SHOULD EXTEND TO DIVERSITY OF EXPERIENCE.

CODE BLUE

One student's struggles with Harvard's mental health services and medical policies.

BY LAYLA CHAARAoui '26 AND JULIA TORREY '27

Note: To protect her privacy, the student referenced throughout the article wished to be anonymous. In the article, she is referred to by the pseudonym "Annie" or by her pronouns.

Trigger Warning: Mentions of suicide and eating disorders.

“Everyone in my life...including the [resident] Deans, were telling me ‘You need to go get help,’ but the barriers to doing so were so egregious that I was going to be locked out of school. I'm not gonna be able to come back. And what am I gonna do? How am I going to find a job? I can't do this.”

Annie, reaching a new low point in her health and well-being, made the decision to pursue medical leave from Harvard. However, she was faced with an ultimatum: if she wanted to take a medical leave of absence, she would have to complete treatment and a mandated six-month work requirement before she could return. Or, she could stay.

“I wanted to be at school. I loved school. School had always been so fun and exciting for me. I'm my most myself when I'm in a classroom... Harvard was the last thing I had. If I didn't have Harvard, I didn't have anything.”

The “Voluntary Leaves of Absence” section of the Harvard Student Handbook contains no record of the six-month, full-time work mandate that Harvard enforces if students pursue medical leave. Only after Annie began conversations with her Dean was she told that the leave policy required students to complete this work mandate.

Because Annie was at the midpoint of her Spring semester, completing treatment and working for six months would force her to miss the following Fall semester. “There's no way I'm going to take off the Fall semester,” Annie thought. “If I have to work through six months, I might as well push through the end of the semester...there were only six weeks left. *I can do six weeks.* I don't want to work. I don't want to have to petition the ad board to come back.”

Annie felt both discouraged by the work requirement that would be placed on her and completely unsure of its purpose. Moreover, there was nothing comforting about petitioning the Ad Board. Instead of a means of seeking help, petitioning felt like a daunting barrier—diplomatic and detached. “It was so impersonal...I was just navigating the system. No one was walking me through it. No one was helping me, telling me what [were] the pros and cons.” Instead, Annie chose to fight through the rest of the semester and avoid the intimidating and laborious process altogether.

So, Annie begged her parents and called her treatment facility, planning to remain at Harvard until her exams concluded. “[My parents] will forever blame themselves for this to this day [for allowing me to stay]. They said

it's the worst thing they've ever done.”

Annie's freshman fall took place in 2021, a time when the world was readjusting from the COVID-19 pandemic. This change, on top of Annie's struggle with an eating disorder, made attending Harvard a challenge. “It was my first time being back in school for a really long time...Because of COVID, I never really had the opportunity of slowly becoming independent. It all sort of happened at once.”

Harvard's campus represents not only a bubble, but a pressure cooker: a place where the best of the best students, athletes, musicians, and leaders converge and compete. The need to balance perfect academics with impressive extracurriculars and bustling social lives consumes many students and can be crippling. “Harvard is one of those places where if you're not doing something, you're doing something wrong. If you're relaxing... there's something else you should be doing,” Annie said.

Her eating disorder progressed rapidly as a means to cope with the stress of school and her self-imposed pressure. She began to withdraw socially, basing the entirety of her self-worth on how effectively she was spending her time. In an overwhelming and uncontrollable world, she “compensated by restricting.”

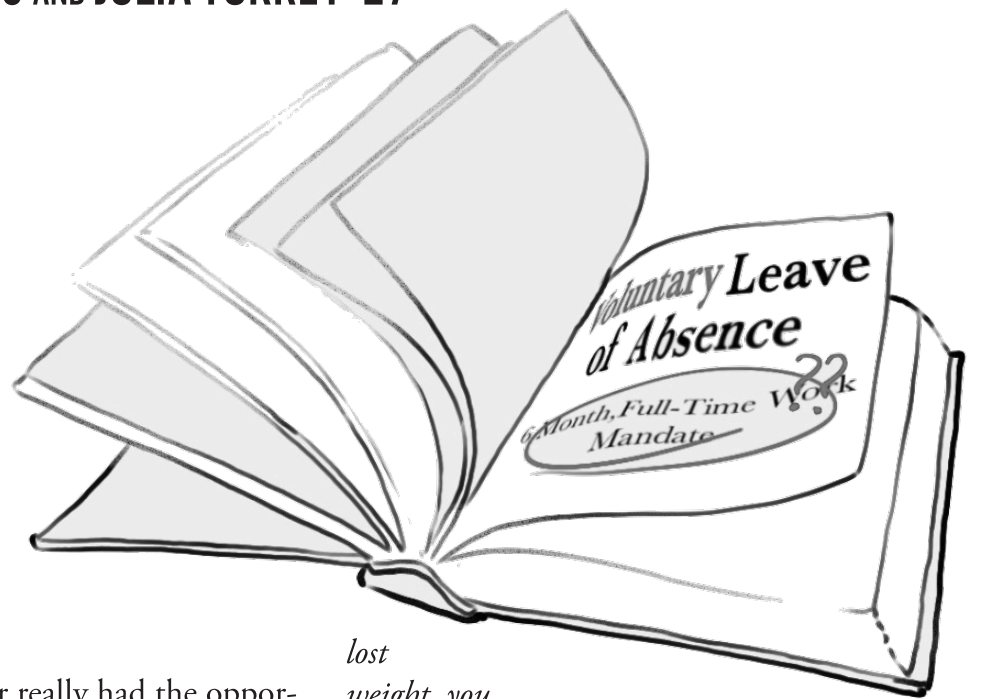
By Thanksgiving of her freshman year, Annie's eating disorder had progressed to a noticeable state.

“[My mom] was like, ‘*Alright, this is bad. You have to get this under control. You [have] to go to the doctor.*’” Annie said.

When Annie returned to Harvard after Thanksgiving break, she met with a doctor from Harvard University Health Services (HUHS)

who noted her rapid weight loss but did not ask or mention any concern about an eating disorder. “I'd lost 25 pounds in three months. The doctor [said], ‘*You really need to gain weight,*’ but...no one knew my medical history or my history of an eating disorder. No one asked.”

“It was really just ‘*You've*



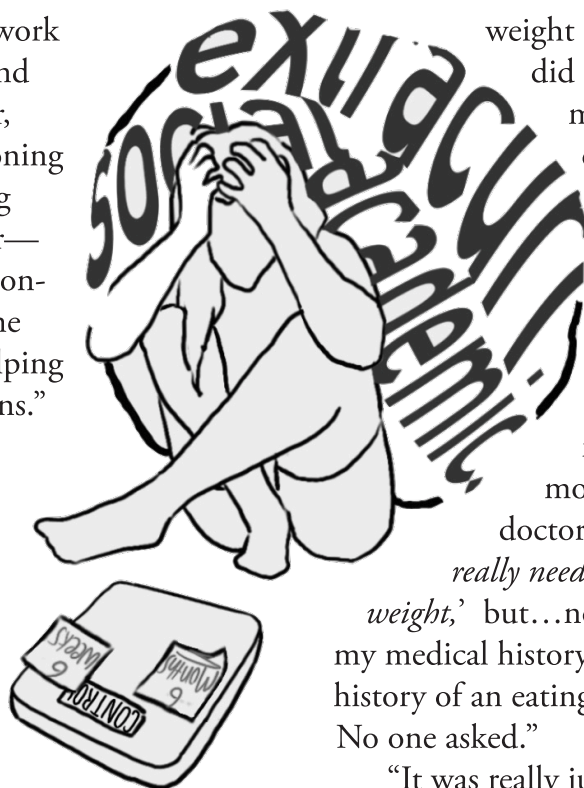
lost weight, you should try to eat a little bit more.’ I [told them], ‘*Sure, I can do that. That's not a problem.*’ But, I couldn't. I would try, and I just couldn't,” she explained. After her appointment, there was no follow-up from HUHS regarding her weight loss or state of being.

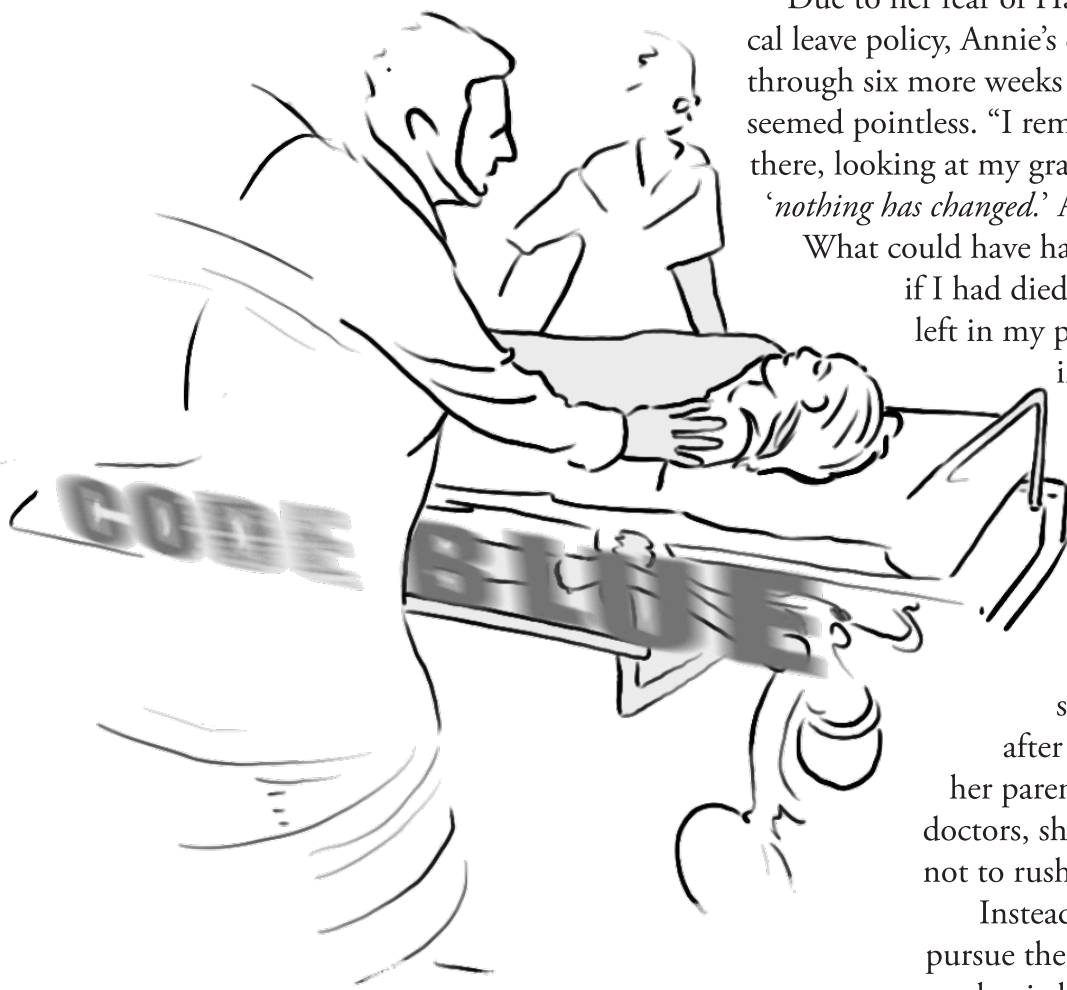
Annie, prompted by her parents, decided to seek out counseling. However, accessing support through CAMHS, Harvard's Counseling and Mental Health Service, was not on the table. “I knew CAMHS only did eight sessions... It felt like a big bureaucratic process. There's something about wanting to do it not involved with Harvard and wanting it to be an extended period of time.” Annie's concerns about CAMHS guided her to opt for a Cambridge-based therapist and former CAMHS employee.

Still, Annie remained connected to Harvard's services. Her therapist connected her with a nutritionist and scheduled weekly weigh-ins for her through a doctor at HUHS. Returning from Thanksgiving break and with a support system at school, Annie's parents felt more comfortable with her going back. Yet, Annie's weight loss continued to progress. Despite her obvious declining condition, no members of the HUHS team seriously intervened.

“The doctors saw that I was not doing well. The nutritionist must have known I was taking pictures of food I was not actually eating. The therapist knew I wasn't doing well.” By the spring, Annie's health was rapidly declining. “I had a conversation with someone and I couldn't even formulate a response...my brain was literally shutting down,” she explained.

Realizing that her mind's functions were declining represented a turning point for Annie. “I had those moments throughout the year, where my hair started falling out, I lost my period, I stopped wanting to see people, and I felt super fatigued. But this moment, when my brain wasn't working... My brain has always been the most important to me [and] the way I identified myself, almost to a fault.” She immediately enrolled in a treatment center and was ready to petition the Administrative Board to obtain permission to go on medical leave.





Due to her fear of Harvard's medical leave policy, Annie's decision to push through six more weeks for exams now seemed pointless. "I remember sitting there, looking at my grades, just [thinking], 'nothing has changed.' And, I almost died.

What could have happened? Imagine if I had died but that had been left in my place. That's nothing. That's a piece of paper. That's a print."

After a summer of treatment, Annie wanted to return to campus for her sophomore year, but after conversations with her parents, mentors, and doctors, she was convinced not to rush back to Harvard.

Instead, she began to pursue the prospect of taking academic leave to continue treatment and partake in two

prestigious fellowships. Yet, in stark contrast to her experience seeking medical leave, the attitudes of her Freshman-year Yard Dean and the larger Harvard community were much more encouraging.

After she explained her desire to take an academic leave to explore opportunities beyond Harvard, Annie learned that she would not be required to petition the Ad Board or work full-time. "It's very easy. It happens all the time, don't worry about it at all. We look forward to seeing you when you get back," the Dean told her. Instead of petitioning, she only needed to write two sentences on the academic opportunities she desired to pursue in her year off. "It was so different from my other experience. They seemed to really, really encourage it."

This disparity in treatment from the Harvard community between her decision to pursue academic and medical leave was obvious to Annie. While a medical leave of absence is often treated with shame and disapproval, her request for an academic break was encouraged, admired, and unquestioned. She recognized that the situations were different, considering her medical leave of absence was attempted mid-semester. However, the difference in accessibility and required terms was extreme. "You don't have to work if it's an academic leave. I don't have to [prove anything]. No one has any questions."

After taking the Fall semester off, Annie still felt pressure to return for the Spring semester, to jump back into her life at Harvard and the world she left behind. But, bravely, she chose to take the Spring semester off to continue treatment, pursue her academic interests, and *find herself*. "[People] said to me, 'What's the rush?' This was the first time I really had the choice, [and] everyone was very surprised when I ultimately said, 'I'm going to take this extra semester off.'"

Annie spent her first month off meditating, walking, and reading. She found a job within a diabetes organization

where her passion for medicine grew. Her next few months were spent working, traveling, spending time with friends, and practicing independence. "My life got so amazing. I was ecstatic with every day that passed ... I felt like I was like a kid again, growing up and experiencing everything for the first time, because I really felt like I was."

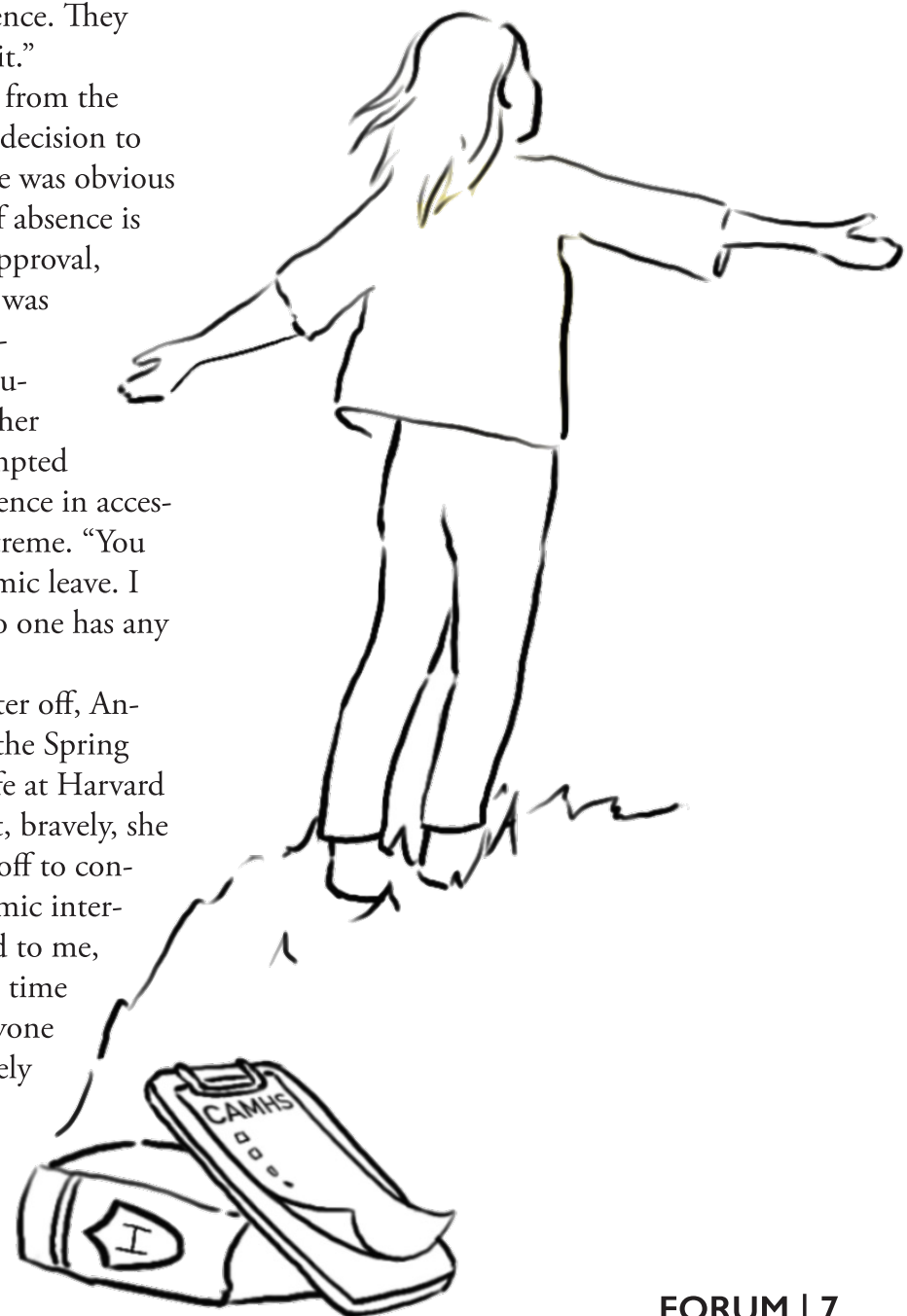
"The things that were so, so hard for me a year ago, I don't even think about anymore. It's just incredible when you look at everyone around you and realize how much—without even doing any extracurriculars, without even doing well in classes—how much is on all of our plates. Just living, just existing here at Harvard is the biggest task of all, and requires so much of us and so much energy."

After her leave, Annie came back with a newfound appreciation for not only Harvard but also for her life. "I never took for granted that I was at Harvard, but I took for granted that I was getting an education. I never take that for granted here [now]. Just every little freedom that I have and I just want to soak all of it up."

Annie recognized that her healing began when she was not under the stipulations of Harvard's medical leave requirements. Perhaps she could have started this process earlier if she was not confronted with work mandates and barriers. "It ended up being obviously the best thing that ever happened to me. *Upsets are setups*, which I often like to say. But I needed that year, and it has forever changed my trajectory."

LAYLA CHAARAOU '26 (LAYLACHAARAOU@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) AND JULIA TORREY '27 (JULIATORREY@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WRITE NEWS FOR THE INDEPENDENT.

GRAPHICS BY OLIVIA PARK '27



However, instead of being warmly greeted by an accommodating and accessible process, Annie was faced with the hidden work mandate and the unfavorable truth behind the situation. "My nutritionist and my therapist both really wanted me to take this time off ... The reality of it was not what I wanted. It was like, 'This is the way it is, you're in a bureaucracy.'" This ultimately contributed to her decision to stay at Harvard.

In those last six weeks, Annie's health was in the worst state it had ever been. "I caught the norovirus [and] ended up in an emergency room. They said, 'This is really bad, you should be in treatment for an eating disorder.' [I said], 'Yeah, I know, I'm going in two weeks. I'm just finishing finals.'" Upon turning in her final essay, her mom arrived at campus and drove her to treatment.

"I had my first meal at treatment ... With Anorexia, if you haven't eaten food in a long time, your body completely freaks out." Her blood sugar dropped to an extreme low. She had a seizure. Her heart rate was in the low 30s. "[The staff] at the treatment center [was] like forget anorexia, forget eating disorder treatment, you need to go to the ICU. So, they forced me to leave treatment, and I went to Children's National Hospital in DC."

"My brain was not functioning ... This was the night I almost died. I vaguely remember [them] calling the *code blue*. I didn't know that I was gonna live, and I very easily could have died. It was like I didn't exist."

Annie had a team of 12 doctors and remained in the hospital for a month. "Do I refuse food and decide to die?" she asked herself. "I just didn't think I could get any better. This is the closest to death I'll ever be. [I almost] just died. Getting back is too far. There's nothing left."

While in the hospital, Annie received her report card from the Spring semester. "I like to say that I sacrificed my life for my grades because I ended up getting a 4.0 that semester... This epitomized the lengths I was willing to go to. There was a 4.0 on a piece of paper, and I almost died because of it. In what world is that okay? There's nothing that justifies that."

FRESH ICE: HARVARD HOCKEY'S REVAMP AHEAD OF THE 2023-2024 SEASON

As Harvard's rivals stock up on NHL draft picks, Coach Donato reshapes team around young, fast talent.

BY JORDAN WASSERBERGER '27

"Harvard College: The NHL Factory." Not exactly the first thing that comes to mind when you hear "Harvard," but a moniker well-earned nevertheless. The Crimson has produced some of the NHL's greatest current and past talent. True superstars like Norris Trophy-winning New York Rangers defenseman Adam Fox, two-time Stanley Cup Champion Alex Killorn, and Ted Donato, the Crimson coach since 2004, who played almost 800 games in the NHL with almost 400 points to his record.

Last year, the Men's Varsity Hockey Team were a dynamic force, finishing 10th in the NCAA and first among the Ivy League with a 24-8-2 record. Perhaps more importantly, they rostered the most draft picks in all of college hockey by a mile. When the Beanpot rolled around last season, the Crimson had 15 players going to the NHL, many of whom began their professional careers this fall. But this year, the ice looks different.

Nearly every team, Crimson included, lost several extraordinarily gifted players during the offseason. It is true that every year a crop of players leave, but this time there were especially notable losses. It is one thing to lose some stars, but another for the Crimson to lose a third of its drafted players in the same year that Boston College has more than doubled the drafted players on their roster. The Eagles also made NCAA history as one of two schools ever to have three players drafted in the first round.

BC is not Harvard's only neighbor



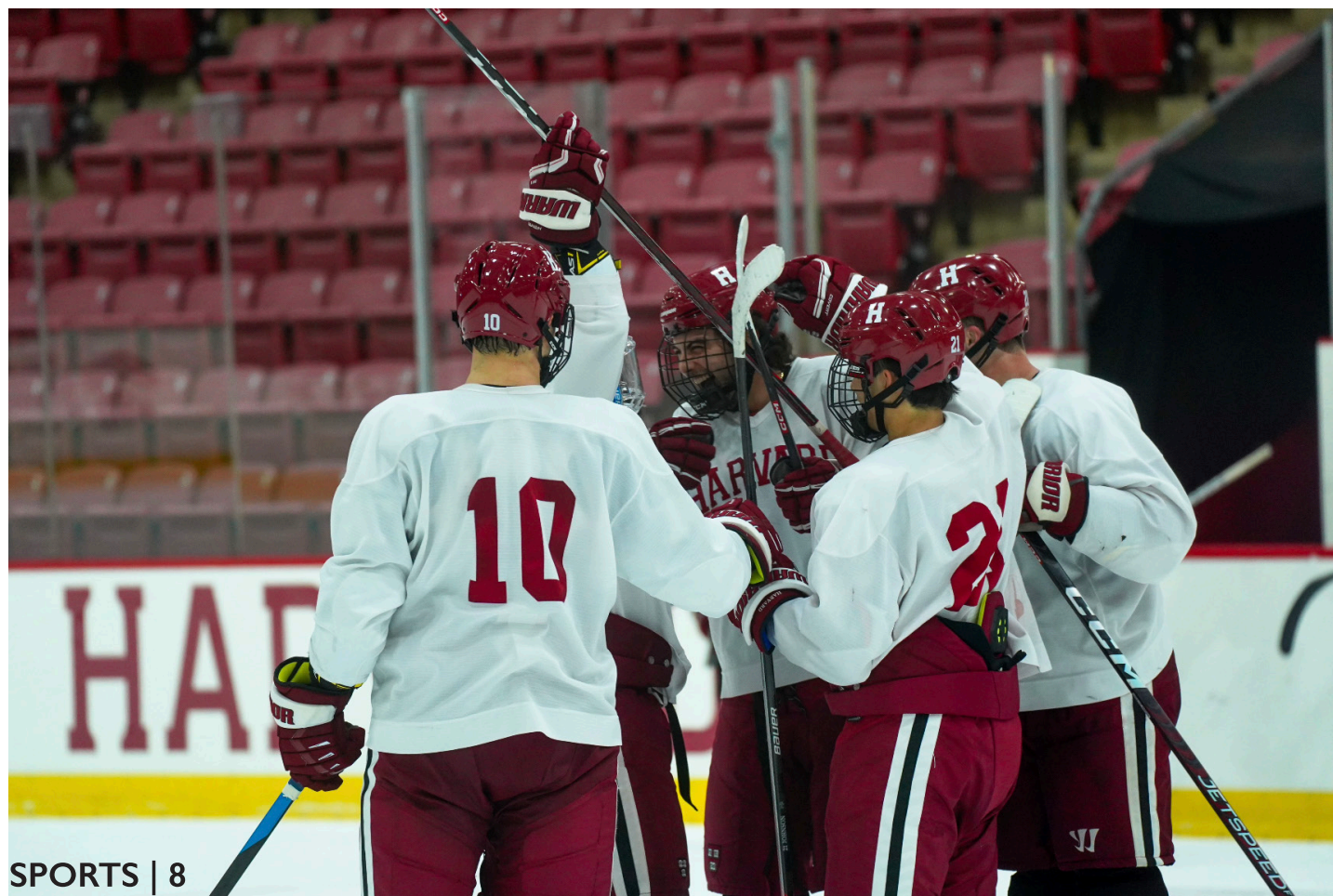
to sign future superstars. Recently, Newburyport, MA native Cole Eiserman agreed to play for Boston University along with Macklin Celebrini, putting the top two projected 2024-2025 NHL draft picks on the same roster for the upcoming season. Our main rivals are loading up on high-level draft picks to the point where the Crimson will be playing against close-to-full NHL rosters multiple times this season. So, how do we stack up?

It is important to remember that the reigning NCAA champions, Quinnipiac, won their school's first championship last year with only four drafted players on their roster (now increased to five). As anyone who watched the Rangers' soul-crushing

performance in the playoffs last year knows, a strong core will beat loosely connected talent nine times out of ten. The Crimson are fortunate enough to be ironclad in the former, with wicked talent to boot (even if it is somewhat lighter than last year).

For Coach Ted Donato, that combination is essential. "Last season, there were a lot of great things, but the ending was tough to swallow," he said in an interview with the *Independent*. Losing key drafted talent has made things "a little more challenging," and he acknowledged that offense in particular could be a weakness for the 2023-2024 Crimson. They lack a proven crop of goal-scorers, something other schools have in spades. That said, he sees their new, young talent as an exciting opportunity. "[They] bring a certain energy, and that's something we're excited about," Donato said.

That new talent seems to be taking Donato's system in stride. Defenseman Matthew Morden '27 comes to Harvard after representing Canada at the 2022 World Juniors alongside Connor Bedard, the most-hyped NHL player in almost a decade. Referring to his next four years, Morden said "I'm excited and looking to learn, looking to develop, looking to become the best version of myself on and off the ice." Pair a fast, rearing group of young players with a tried-and-true defensive core and star goaltender Derek Mullahy '24, and there is reason to be excited for the coming year.





pushed his players to the limit. The athletes met this challenge only with maximum intensity and effort. Donato's offseason focus on maintaining strong defense, goaltending, and bolstering offense has created a powerful team with a strong ability to keep the pressure on as much as possible.

That ferocity was matched step for step by the defense. The offense was only allowed sparing shots on goal, and of those, only two got past the netminder. Their neutral game looked just as strong. The team seems to be channeling the New Jersey Devils' strategy of "if they cannot catch you, they cannot stop you," moving up the ice blazingly fast with quick, short passes to minimize turnovers and create shooting lanes. Conditioning, the epicenter of the legendary Herb Brooks' game, looks like a big part of Donato's system as well.

There were *maybe* two moments the entire practice where the team stopped moving, and only for a few minutes each time. Other than that, it was an all-out war.

The final, yet undeniable strength of the Harvard Men's Hockey Team is their heart. The roster is brimming with love for each other, palpable in every post-goal celebration, every friendly chirp from the bench, and the endless support pouring onto the ice at all times. When talking with Karpa, Miller, Mullahy, and Morden, that heart shone through. Above all else, everyone is solely committed to bringing as much team success as possible. "The goal is to play well and keep the boys winning," Mullahy said.

The sport of hockey is changing. The NHL has seen a shift towards younger, faster players, with an emphasis on moving the puck to generate as many scoring chances as possible. That focus is mirrored at the collegiate level, with schools across the league going out of their way to find superstar guys who fit the bill. The 2023-2024 Crimson, on paper, do not have such *technical* superstars, but as a unit, they are as lethal as any team in the NCAA. This is

a tight-knit group dedicated to bringing home as many wins as possible and deeply committed to proving that Harvard is still a crown jewel of the collegiate hockey world.

Donato's excitement was strongly echoed by his players. Captain Zakary Karpa '25 believes the Crimson are primed to "surprise some teams" this year, and hopefully win their first Beanpot since he joined the team. Forward Joe Miller '26, who had a breakout season last year with 28 points in 33 games, says that the end of the 2022-2023 season, in which the Crimson got blown out 8-1 by Ohio State, fueled the fire for this year. "Anyone who was on the team last year knows it stung all summer, and we're not gonna let it happen again," Miller stated. "We're going to continue to be gritty and competitive as a team, and take it one game at a time."

When asked about the new draft pick hierarchy in the NCAA and ECAC, Miller was unequivocal. "You can't focus on that. If we play our game and run our system, it shouldn't matter who's in the other locker room," he said. Miller stated he was eagerly anticipating the new competition, and the whole team is making sure they are "dialed in" for every game.

And "dialed in" they are. At one practice I attended in early October, the Crimson looked fast, deadly, and ready to take on anything. For hours, Coach Donato posed every hypothetical game scenario and



JORDAN WASSERBERGER '27
(JWASSERBERGER@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU), WHOSE MENTAL HEALTH WILL BE ENTIRELY DETERMINED BY HOW THE RANGERS DO THIS YEAR, WRITES SPORTS FOR *THE INDEPENDENT*.

IMAGES TAKEN BY JORDAN WASSERBERGER '27



AN OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT CLAUDINE GAY

Originally published online on Tuesday, October 10th.

BY WILLIAM GOLDSMITH '24

Dear President Claudine Gay,

I write to you today with a heavy but hopeful heart. My heart is heavy as a result of the tragedies that have unfolded, and are continuing to unfold, in southern Israel and Gaza. My heart is also heavy because of the hateful rhetoric employed by some of my fellow Harvard students in the wake of the recent terror attacks. It is painful for me to reckon with the fact that individuals have sent fellow students memes advocating for the destruction of the Jewish state within the Harvard community. And yet I am still hopeful, President Gay. I am hopeful that Harvard students and Harvard administrators can come together to take a stand in support of diversity and the need to daringly engage with issues afflicting our global community.

I watched with enormous pride during your inauguration speech as you spoke about the potential that Harvard holds to serve as a beacon of justice in the world. I was particularly struck by your emphasis on the need to engage with those with whom we disagree. As you discerningly observed, “when we embrace diversity—of backgrounds, lived experiences, and perspectives—as an institutional imperative, ... [i]t’s because we believe in the value of dynamic engagement and the learning that happens when ideas and opinions collide.”

The “institutional imperative” of diversity at this institution hangs in the balance. It hangs in the balance not as a result of noxious efforts aiming to mute diverse viewpoints—efforts appearing

at institutions of higher learning across this country—but as a result of silence and indifference. A palpable feeling of embarrassment has gripped our campus, President Gay. I worry that such embarrassment may morph into cynicism and apathy: forces that douse the diverse intellectual engagement that we should be protecting here at Harvard. Harvard students, professors, and administrators of varying ethnic, religious, and political backgrounds sense an air of indifference from their Administration regarding terrorism and its recent eruption in southern Israel.

Now, to be clear, I acknowledge and appreciate the more forceful statement condemning terror that you released today, President Gay. But I’m still hurt by the Administration’s response to the recent outbreak of violence. And I’m even more pained by the discourse of palpable antagonism toward Israel that has been inculcating the Harvard student body. I’m also left wondering, though: Why did it take a public outcry to make you feel compelled to denounce terrorism? Why was your message not circulated to the Harvard community via email like your prior one? And why are you the lone signatory on today’s statement? Does the absence of other signatories suggest that they do not “condemn the terrorist atrocities perpetrated by Hamas” like you do?

The Harvard community deserves answers. If the United States, Europe, and Israel can characterize an organization as terroristic, why can’t Harvard’s Administration do the same with a unified and loud voice?

Issues surrounding the Isra-

el-Palestine conflict are nuanced and seemingly intractable. I came to Harvard because of what Harvard used to represent to me: a place where students tackle apparently intractable issues with empathy, boldness, and hope. There is nothing bold or empathetic about displaying indifference towards the issue of terrorism and the student groups that refuse to condemn it.

Perhaps I was overly idealistic in my perception of Harvard. Perhaps we are not the source of goodness and justice that we claim to be. As I am sure you are aware, while speaking to Harvard’s Phi Beta Kappa Society Chapter in 1837, Ralph Waldo Emerson delivered what many have called our nation’s “intellectual declaration of independence,” an address in which he argued that “character is higher than intellect.” Today I am left wondering whether “character”—the willingness to call out those who perpetrate senseless violence—is still crucial to Harvard’s mission.

President Gay, the weight of the Administration’s indifference is enveloping the intellectual and moral fabric of our community. How can one feel empowered to take on the world’s issues when their institution’s Administration fails to vehemently condemn a terrorist organization?

Sincerely,

William Goldsmith

*Opinions of Forum pieces belong only to the writer and do not reflect the values of the *Independent*.

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THE LOST GENERATION

A Letter to the (Original) Class of 2024.

BY MARBELLA MARLO '24

In his Magnum Opus *The Sun Also Rises*, Ernest Hemingway describes the disillusioning, misguided, and ultimately self-fulfilling story of young adults in postwar France and Spain. He narrates their exorbitant lives filled with drinking, surface-level relationships, and the unsatiated pursuit of wealth. Residue from World War I—in both the gross disregard for human life for an arguably political outcome as well as the precedent-driven “return to normalcy” policy coined by President Warren G. Harding—alienated young Americans.

Hemingway, in citing Gertrude Stein, calls these individuals the “Lost Generation,” or those who were grossly awakened by real-world atrocities and subsequently found little interest in traditional enterprises. The label referred to young adults who felt that the conservative values instilled in them from the generations above them held no meaning in a postwar society. The “Lost Generation” had no one to hold their hand in a world broken by a global catastrophe.

We are this decade's lost generation.

During the height and immediate wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, countless discussions surfaced of the privileges and experiences we lost, as well as the potential implications a two-year void would have. In addition to coping with lost loved ones from COVID-19, the transition to at-home quarantine and virtual graduations, proms, and modified beginning years of college, all challenged us to cautiously preserve tradition in a world that set arbitrary thresholds to distinguish the healthy from the sick.

Nearly two years later and the once-ubiquitous pandemic conversations have seemingly evaporated. Everyday life, travel, and work have all returned back to normal, as if the nearly two year chasm from 2020-2022 had never happened. While I never do a double take when I see someone wearing a face mask or discussing a new vaccine, I find myself rarely interacting with the aftermath of the

pandemic in my everyday life.

Yet as the sun begins to set on my Harvard college experience, and I witness and help mentor the younger generations of students on campus, the fruits of the pandemic begin to return and form an unavoidable pit in my stomach. The time we lost to COVID caused more than just a temporary adjustment to zoom classes and a normalization of quarantine.

The 2020-2021 school year lasted for three, in-person months in Cambridge. Only first-year students were initially invited to campus, and international students were unable to join. In that time, 18 and 19 year olds were introduced to the Harvard community and their college careers in isolated 10' by 10' dorm rooms, sitting in front of laptops for 12-14 hours each day attending virtual classes and meetings, and awarded with pre-prepared and cold dinners to be microwaved each night. Daring to see other students in-person was academic suicide: several students I knew of were kicked off campus, placed on probation, or threatened with expulsion for attending off-line social events.

In November of that year, we were expected to leave campus until the 2021 fall semester. In Harvard's eyes, three months of virtual (or otherwise illicit in-person) acclimation was sufficient in both providing first-years the introduction to their Harvard experience and preparing them for the next three years. When we became sophomores during the 2021-2022 school year, the previous pandemic-induced power vacuum of free-time became clogged by endless opportunities, expectations, and people to meet. We were treated as upper-classmen—expected to determine our concentrations, career paths, and extracurricular goals with nothing more than three months of pathetic Harvard exposure under our belt.

This awkward phase of experiencing everything—Harvard classrooms, buildings, weather, sports, and even people's faces—for the first

time, yet still being treated as students who had been there for years, was exacerbated by welcoming hundreds of additional students, who were originally Class of 2023, into our family of '24. Not only was our high school senior year—a traditionally celebratory and reflective year of completing our adolescent journey—robbed from us, but we were also left to learn how to leave our nests and become Harvard students with no physical instruction, guidance, or mentorship. And now we were being evaluated against students years older than us, who had both.

In no way is this letter a plea for sympathy or a self-declaration of victimhood, and I must add that I recognize my privilege to have had the ability to learn and stay healthy in a state of such calamity. Rather, it is a recognition of the prowess that the pandemic gave to the original Class of 2024.

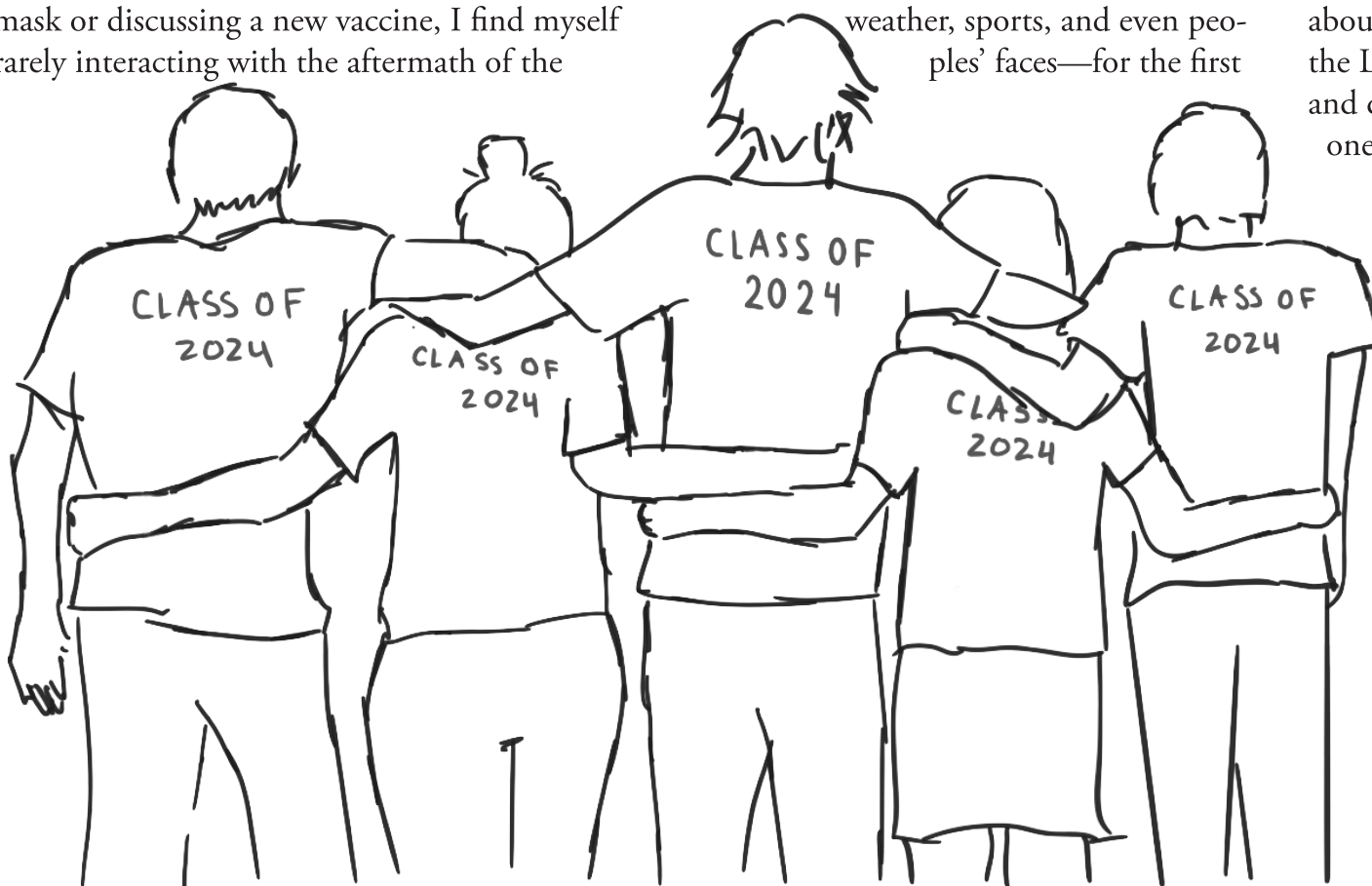
The 2020-2021 school year, for those students who came to Harvard for the first time, or logged in virtually as first-years miles away, has instilled the skills of fortitude and perspective that few people can comprehend. Though not sparked by a world war or celebrated with copious amounts of alcohol, COVID-19 has turned the (original) Class of 2024 into a Lost Generation—given minimal resources for a (now) hypercompetitive environment. Previous values of structure, seniority, or precedence no longer interest us; that's what happens when you take arguably two of the most formative years of a young adult's life, and turn them into an unstandardized, virtual, do-it-yourself experience.

The Lost Generation of the Class of 2024 is one that cherishes immediate and physical relationships, not those fueled by external incentives. The Lost Generation turns long-term goals into present day tasks, as they know that nothing in this world is an entitled right. Though the Lost Generation does not follow the rules, for they know all too well about the value of personal and mental health, the Lost Generation cares about each other, and does whatever they see necessary to help one another out.

They respect authority, but are not codependent on the traditional support systems that have been instilled for generations. They appreciate solitude, simplicity, and the beauty of a world off-line. The Lost Generation of the Class of 2024's college experience compares to no other year, but it will prepare us for the professional world with more grit and perspective than any other.

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GRAPHIC BY GABI PONIZ '27
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SHELVES AND SELVES

Exploring Harvard students' library choices as outlets for self-expression.

BY HAN NGUYEN '27 AND LUCAS COHEN-D'ARBELOFF '27

Your midterm is in 24 hours and you haven't studied. Panic swells as the weight of unread chapters, unwatched lectures, and unreviewed notes begins to sink in. Having put off your preparation for weeks, you now exemplify the procrastination and present bias described to you in Ec10. David Laibson was right. Worse, the once comforting hum of your dorm room suddenly feels stifling, every distraction amplified by your panicked brain. It's time to lock in, but where?

Many Harvard students regularly seek scholarly refuge in one of Harvard's 28 libraries on campus. The array of options can sometimes feel overwhelming, but not to fear—your favorite bright-eyed first-years are here, ready to help you optimize your caffeine-fueled cramming journey.

Lamont:

Lamont Library sits atop a hill that represents its status to academic try-hards: a beacon of peace and silence with the late-night company of fellow overachievers. Academic weapons populate the reading room and upper floors 24 hours a day (except for Friday and Saturday nights, when the library closes early; this can sometimes present issues when you feel like being lame and studious on the weekends). When students are ejected from other libraries as they close for the evening, the "Lamonsters" come out to play, settling in and taking over the library's uncozy wooden desks and tables for the night. But even among non-regulars, sometimes it's just a Lamont kind of night, and that's okay.

Widener:

Arguably the most iconic and beautiful library on campus, Harry Elkins Widener Memorial Library houses an impressive 3.5 million books, neatly shelved across its vast 57 miles of shelf space. This architectural gem offers a wide-variety of inspiring study spaces: literally just the Loker Reading Room. The air is so thick with intellect here that it's

almost suffocating. Students go to the reading room to be hissed at when they cough, glared at when they sneeze, and scrutinized on Sidechat when they drop a pencil.

Yet, the students who grace the library—normally with oversized glasses and purposely tousled hair—do not come just to study. They arrive to make sure everyone knows they're spending their hours in this fortress of knowledge. If that sounds like you, Widener might just become your scholarly sanctuary.

Cabot:

Barring the occasional mysterious sophomore, Cabot Science Library is a magnet for excited first-years ready to make friends. Open 24 hours during the week, the library has a variety of innovative, comfy spaces such as collaborative study rooms, chat booths, and media studios. Indeed, Cabot Science Library becomes a home-away-from-home for enthusiastic first-year students, who typically invade the library throughout all hours of the day. It's a hub for people who pretend to work on p-sets, but are actually just there to socialize. 10am? There is a frosh in there talking at maximum volume while friends nod emphatically, sipping on lattes from Clover. 10pm? Frosh fill the library with Lucky Charms from Brain Break as they race to complete assignments with deadlines just a few hours away.

Law School:

If you study at the Law School Library, you are Elle Woods. And you will get Professor Callahan's internship and successfully defend Brooke Windham and break barriers and win at life. This may be the spot for you if your goal is to see no one you know and absorb some legal knowledge through osmosis.

Working in one of the library's Collaboration Zones, you might find yourself a witness to hushed debates on corporate takeovers and constitutional dilemmas. If you find watching law students converse fluently in the esoteric language of torts and statutes is not conducive to getting work done, the quiet areas of the library may be more your vibe. That way, you can live out your corporate

law fantasy without having to deal with the stress and pressure of actual legal discussion.

Others:

Not visiting any of the libraries we've mentioned so far? That can only mean you frequent lesser-known libraries like Houghton, Fung, or Loeb. Perhaps the allure of Houghton's extensive performing arts archives, Fung's post-WWII Soviet photographs, or Loeb's hidden treasure trove of composers' manuscripts draw you in. But let's be honest, it's not merely the fascinating collections that captivate you, it's the fact that absolutely no one else on campus even knows these libraries exist. You must not be like the other girls. You are niche and different and entirely unique. Your peculiar choice of reading nook sets you apart from the mundane masses. Your preference for the obscure libraries isn't just about the books; it's about wearing your individuality like a badge of honor, because standing out in a crowd makes you feel better about yourself.

Your choice of library isn't just about where you study; it's a form of self-expression, a silent proclamation of who you are. Whether you're a mainstream Lamonster or a Houghton hermit speaks volumes (pun intended) about the kind of student persona you've carved out for yourself. Choose wisely, Harvard students. Happy midterms.

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GRAPHIC BY NATALIE MENDEZ '26



HOW TO STUDY FOR MIDTERMS

The complete guide for guaranteed success.

BY SARA KUMAR '27

Wake up West Cambridge-siders. It's that time of year again. Lamont's air is thick with the scent of coffee and desperation, Cabot social hour is no longer an option, and Kettle Cooked Pop Corners are nowhere to be found in the Science Center vending machines. That's right. It's midterm season, and I, a (very experienced) first-year, have a few tips that will guarantee you ace your first exam.

1. Study intoxicated

It is no surprise that many Harvard students are inherently academic masochists. They love the adrenaline they get from the art of procrastination and their inevitable rising cholesterol levels as they proudly carry El Jefe's and pillows into the Lamont basement conference rooms at 3am, ready to learn about the hippocampus for their anatomy exam in 5 hours.

But have you ever tried a post-Harvard Brown tailgate Expos 20 paper grind? Or a 9am EC 10 debate the morning after Thirsty Thursday? A Starbucks Pumpkin Spice Latte

mixed with the perfect levels of hangxiety is a sure way to convince everyone that AI should be permitted to grow unregulated. Even better, stroll into the debate in your Friday-night toga party outfit, leaving everyone in awe of how a fitted sheet makes your argument that much stronger.

2. Pull a Cabot all-nighter

I've said this before, and I'll say it again, Clover adopting a 24-hour operating schedule Monday through Thursday would be more lucrative than directing tourists to the COOP. Midterm season profits alone could fund the *drastic* shift from Cinnamon Toasters to authentic Cinnamon Toast Crunch in the dining halls if we all embraced the "always open" library mantra.

If you thought paying fourteen dollars for ten strawberries at the Science Center Plaza Farmers Market was a new low, witnessing the Cabot security guard night-to-morning shift change can be one of the more humbling moments of your academic career. However, the possibilities are endless in a 2am delirium. Stat 210 midterm? Easy. What is the probability that the audience will pick Felipe's when deciding between Joe's, Jefe's, CVS Chipwich, and Felipe's for a little midnight grub? Struggling with your Death and Immortality freshman seminar? Get that extra credit and learn the entire material of course after a week of no sleep! Bonus points if your heart gives out during the midterm itself.

3. Leave Smith Collaborative Commons social hour and lock-in (for Football Sunday)

If you really think about it, what's more important? A Phil 7 midterm where both the TAs and the students know what a colossal waste of time the lectures have been, or keeping up-to-date with the latest Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce drama? And just so you seem like a true NFL fan, "Long Story Short" the 49ers beat the Dallas Cowboys in a landslide and somehow the Detroit Lions still have a positive record.

Those Nicomachean Ethics have been around since 340BC, and they are not going anywhere if you decide to leave the Smith Center and roll up to a Canaday athlete's dorm for the classic American experience of Bud Light and a miniature flat screen. And who knows? Thinking about the pixels that dance through the jumbotron or the varying decibel count of every quarter buzzer may just help you with that CS 50 exam.

So when lamentations about the Math 1a and 1b exams circulating freshman dorms start to slow, and the Farnsworth Reading Room at Lamont is no longer as busy as Harvard Yard at 11:45 am, I hope you are sitting on Canvas, looking at your grades, knowing you did damn well.

XoXo.

SARA KUMAR '27 (SJKUMAR@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WRITES SATIRE FOR THE HARVARD INDEPENDENT.

MY BOYFRIEND THINKS IT'S IRRATIONAL TO BELIEVE IN GOD

Agony Aunt: Navigating religious differences in a Harvard romance.

BY TAYBAH CRORIE '25

Dear Taybah,

I have been dating my boyfriend seriously for a few months now. However, I consider myself to be a religious and spiritual person, whereas he is completely non-religious. I thought that as long as my partner had a strong moral framework from which he lived his life, then I would be content. Basically, everyone tries to be a good person. But recently, he said he found belief in God 'irrational' and at odds with the rest of my personality (I study integrative biology). It feels like he is rejecting a big part of who I am, which hurts.

— An upperclassman woman in Leverett House

Dear Leverett Woman, Thank you so much for writing in and sharing your concerns so openly. It's clear that you are navigating some significant differences in belief systems, which can be challenging in a relationship. I would advise you to independently clarify your personal values before listening to each other's perspectives through open, honest conversations about your differing beliefs. It is worth considering if these differences are something you can navigate or if they might be a fundamental challenge to the relationship.

I shared your concerns with Swami Tyagananda, Harvard's Hindu Chaplain. Tyagananda advised that even if you dismissed your boyfriend's words as a "misguided opinion," it "still would hurt to think that [you are] being told that what is sacred to [you] is irrational." He also posed that the "implication would mean that [you are] an irrational person." I can understand how this might feel like a rejection of a significant part of who you are. It's important to recognize and validate your feelings.

Part of this recognition may also entail understanding what you want in a relationship. Before talking to him, it might be helpful to map out more clearly for yourself what you're seeking in a partner morally, spiritually, and religiously. It's clear to me you have done some introspection as to which value systems are important to you. You state that a "strong moral framework" in your partner is desirable. What does this mean practically, and does your current partner share these values? How does your scientific background marry with your

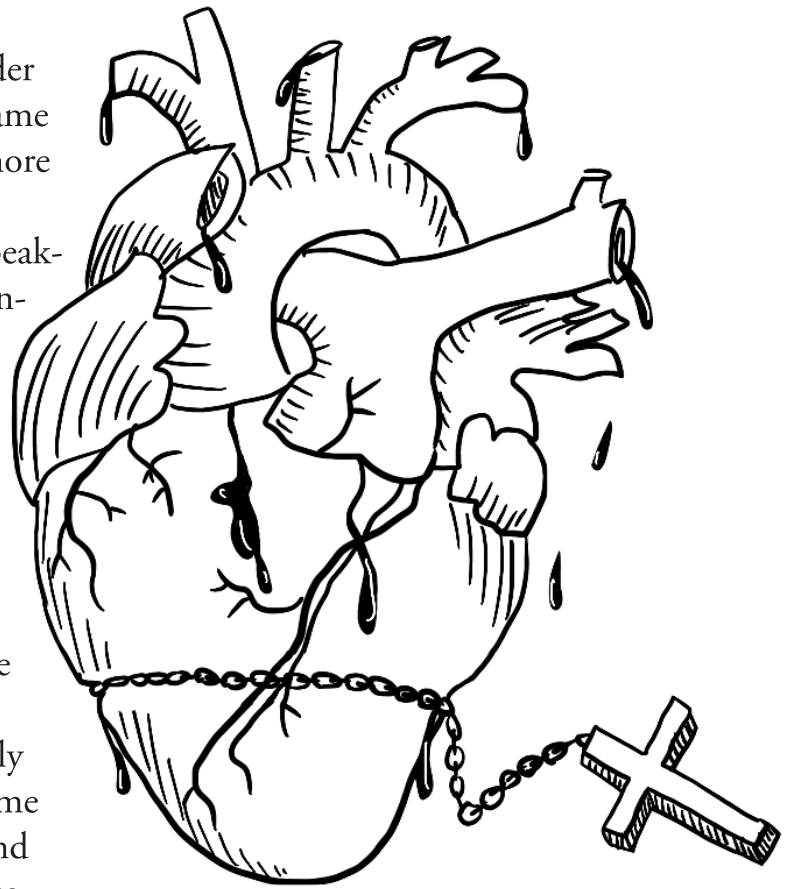
religious beliefs? Additionally, consider if your requirements would be the same if the relationship were to become more casual.

Eventually, I would suggest speaking to your boyfriend about your concerns. Tyagananda agreed, suggesting, "It will be helpful for [you] to have an honest conversation with [your] partner about this, especially if [you are] thinking in terms of a long-term relationship."

I recognize that taking this step to be vulnerable about your core values might feel difficult. However, consider that you have dated seriously for several months. This suggests to me that you have a strong connection and respect for one another, which creates grounds for a solid foundation for these conversations. Given the duration of your relationship, it's a natural time to engage in deeper discussions about your beliefs and values. Especially as your lives become more intertwined, enhancing your understanding of one another can help you determine if you are in a compatible relationship.

In navigating this situation, open and honest communication is absolutely essential. Expressing your feelings to your boyfriend in a non-confrontational manner can make both sides feel heard and dissolve the remaining tension. Use "I" statements to avoid sounding accusatory. For example, say, "I felt hurt when you called my belief 'irrational' because religion is an integral part of who I am." See how this focuses on discussing feelings, words, actions, beliefs, and values rather than making judgments about each other's character or intelligence.

It seems like he's been honest about his views, even if it may have been difficult to hear. Hear his thoughts on why theism is 'irrational.' The Pew Research Centre found 51% of American scientists believe in a deity, and many Nobel prize winners including D.H.R Barton, Christian Anfinsen, Arno Penzias and Abdus Salam, have openly discussed their belief in a God in Margenau and Varghese's book, 'Cosmos, Bios, Theos', (1997). It seems that for many researchers, adhering to scientific reasoning and religious traditions are not mutually exclusive. That you highlight your concentration in Integrative Biology suggests science and religion are both important parts of you, and exploring this together could be of interest.



Finding consensus may take work. The key is to first find out if he thinks less of you or your intellect because of your beliefs and then go from there. Spirituality or belief may not be something you can ever connect with him on, and you need to think about whether you are okay with that. Maybe a belief in God is non-negotiable. Is growing spiritually together a priority, or is it more of an individual pursuit for you? We often turn to our partners first for guidance and help with decision-making, which means their values can shape your own. But we can never expect our partners to adopt or assimilate to our beliefs. To do so would be to disrespect each other's autonomy. Still, it may be possible to find some middle ground by reflecting on shared ideals.

I hope your conversations will be a source of intimacy and support. Tyagananda concluded, "These things can get complicated over time." It is better to resolve this problem before it festers into resentment. If your beliefs and values stay incompatible, or in the case of irreconcilable differences, consider an amicable separation for your well-being. Seeking advice from a professional or Harvard's religious chaplains could offer more impartial guidance.

All the best,

Taybah

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GRAPHIC BY DAVID LI '25

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WHAT EUROPEAN FOOTBALL CAN LEARN FROM AMERICAN SPORTS

By following the American sports model, European football can regain the competitive edge it once had.

BY AHMAD KANAFANI '26

Passionate fandom aside, European football has a lot to learn from American Sports. Famous British pundit Gary Neville is not a fan of U.S. investment into English football. “US investment into English football is a clear and present danger to the pyramid and fabric of the game,” he said. The irony is that as a pundit, Gary Neville owes his very career in TV to the “Americanization” of English football; without the influence of America’s example, the English football industry would not be structured around massive TV deals, and Gary Neville would not have a job.

In contrast, New Chelsea co-owner Todd Boehly has suggested that the Premier League could learn from America, and I *completely agree*. Suggestions like Boehly’s are the very reason this sport has developed over the last three decades with arguably ample room for further growth. According to Boehly, lessons from U.S. sports can turn around English Football, which is currently heavily undervalued.

England boasts about having one of the greatest domestic league systems in the world, at the apex of which is the Premier League, which some consider the most competitive in the world. But has the Premier League lost its competitiveness and edge? The answer is a resounding *yes*.

Europe, especially England, has embraced the commercialism of U.S. Sports, only without their egalitarianism. The United States is now a paradise of relative sporting equality, with competitive teams from around the country: 12 different Super Bowl winners and 11 different World Series winners in the last 15 years. European Football, on the other hand, does not quite have that competitive edge to its game.

Over the past six years, Manchester City have won five Premier League championships, including three consecutive titles between 2020 and 2023. In the German Football League—the Bundesliga—Bayern Munich, has won the Championship *eleven times in a row!* This has

never and would never happen in the NFL. No American team has ever won the Superbowl three times in a row, let alone eleven. The only NFL team to ever go back-to-back were the 2003-04 Patriots.

Now, the question is, *why?* Why are American sports leagues more competitive, with talent more evenly distributed, than European football?

One of the reasons boils down to the hard salary cap, which the NFL introduced in 1993 and European football has yet to endorse. A salary cap would level the playing field amongst European clubs and end the monopoly on trophies that just a handful of them possess. If Manchester City had a limited wage bill, they would not be able to pay the massive salaries they currently give their star players. Ultimately, the reason English Football has lost its competitiveness is not because it is easy to reach the top, but because it is impossible to create numerous powerful dynasties that have the financial abilities to stay at the top.

With an NFL-esque salary cap, on the other hand, it would be impossible to maintain a dynasty in European football. The logic is simple: If clubs are limited by their wage bills, then it is unlikely they will be able to complete the same number of multi-million-pound transfers we are witnessing now.

Imagine an NFL world without a salary cap. What would stop Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones from jumping at the top free agents every year and building a monopoly-like dynasty?

A mechanism tied to the salary is the NFL’s “fair” revenue sharing, or a reward and punishment system. The salary floor prevents NFL owners from pocketing revenue-sharing money, meaning that if a team loses, the ownership does not turn a profit. This has not

been the case with Manchester United, for example, whose owners have made billions even though the team has been underperforming for

years. Through revenue sharing, any team can beat any other team, and most teams have

a shot to make it to the playoffs if they make the right offseason moves.

One additional valuable difference in the U.S. versus Europe is the holistic system of “machine and man” to keep the games fair. With the recent implementation of advanced technology such as new camera and video tracking in the NFL, NBA, and MLB, referees can make more precise calls and leave no room for speculation. To secure transparency and fairness, every NFL team is allowed two challenges per game should they believe the referee made a wrong call. If they are successful on the first two, they get awarded a third. However, they get charged a timeout for every failed challenge.

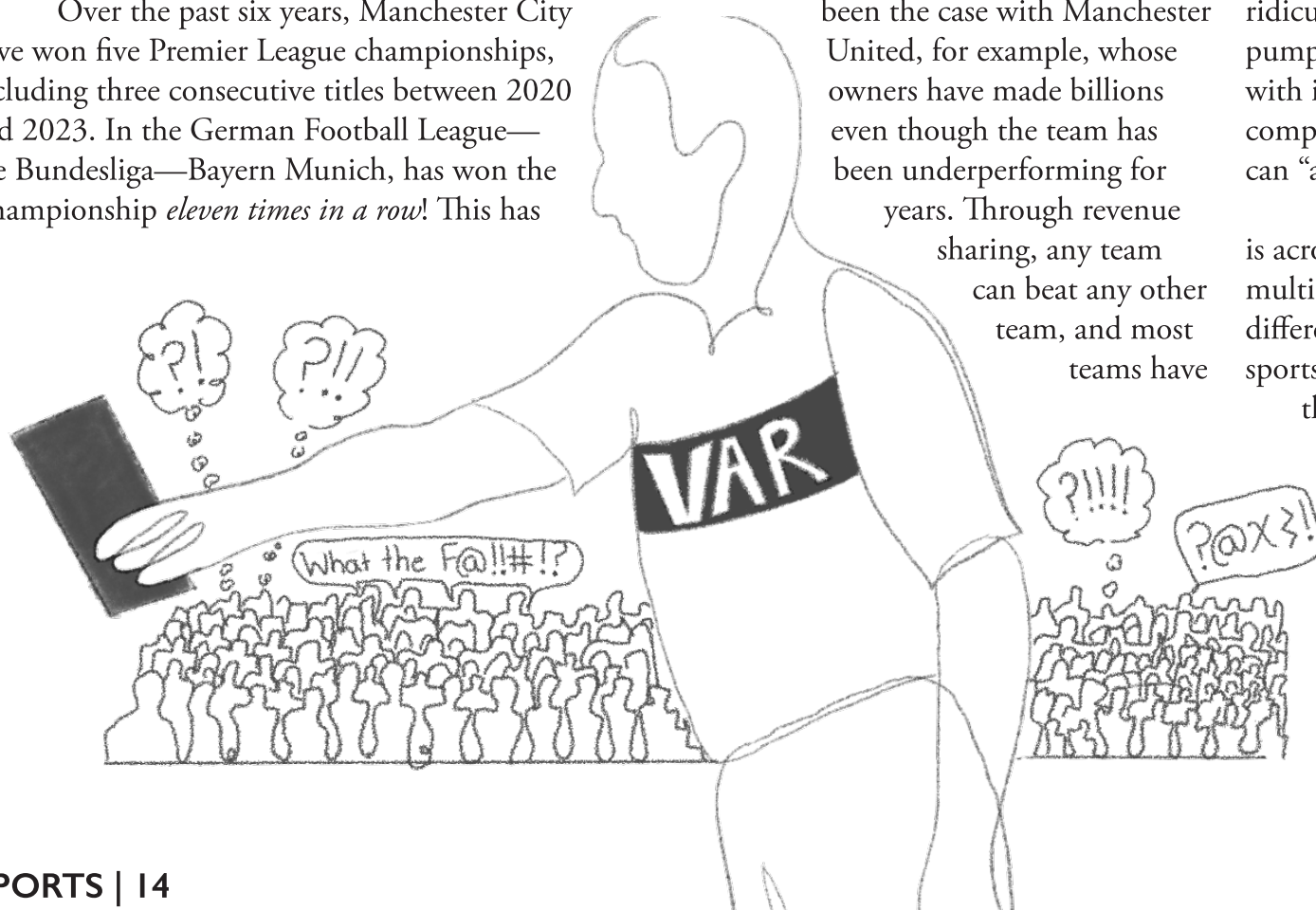
In Europe, however, the way technology has been implemented is inadequate and unfair. The Video Assistant Referring system, commonly known as VAR, has been under major scrutiny since its introduction in 2017, with grave errors repeatedly made. Only last week, the VAR called Liverpool Player Luis Diaz’s decisive goal against Tottenham offside. Liverpool ended up losing the game, only for the Professional Game Match Officials Board to later release a statement that the goal was wrongly ruled out for offside. That would not happen in the U.S., and especially the NFL.

With the U.S. system in place, a significant number of errors would be avoided. Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp would have undoubtedly challenged that game-losing call. This change would lead to fewer mistakes made by European referees, minimize the toxicity and abuse referees often face in English football, and silence the managers—like Klopp in his post-match press conference—who are quick to blame the referees for his team’s shortcomings.

In Europe today, the football industry results are well known: exorbitant salary bills, ridiculous transfer fees, billionaire owners pumping money into the club, bad refereeing with ill-supported referees, and leagues lacking competitiveness since only two or three teams can “afford” a chance to win.

One place to look for urgent solutions is across the Atlantic. Despite the complex multi-tiered European football system and the different labor laws across the continent, the sports must implement mechanisms to level the playing field while also protecting the genuine international aspect of football and its uniquely passionate fandom. As we’ve seen over the past few years with far too many failed initiatives, there is always room for trial and error.

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INDY SPORTSBOOK: THANK GOD IT'S FALL

Forget sweaters and pumpkins, this is what the season's all about.

BY DECLAN BUCKLEY '24 AND ANDREW CHRISTIE '26

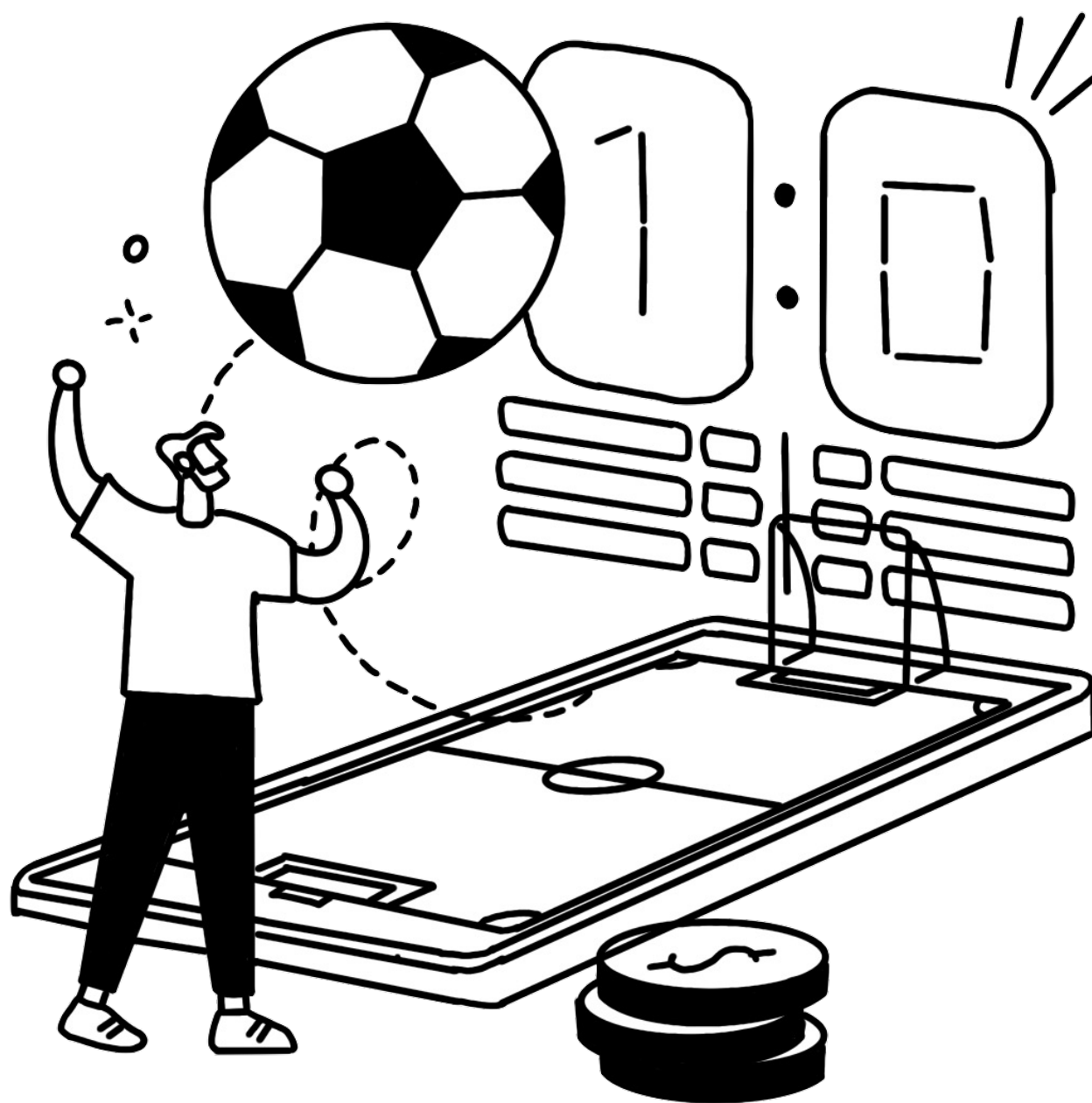
The fall is an absolutely fantastic time to be a sports bettor. Seemingly every major sport is either underway or about to begin, and we at *Indy Sportsbook* have been surely reaping the benefits. After a mediocre rookie year, the start of our sophomore season proves promising. While it will be some time before any of our NFL futures bear fruit, the 49ers look like a juggernaut and the Falcons are in the thick of the divisional race. Other highlights include a spot-on WNBA finals matchup and a guaranteed Toronto Argonauts win. Even some of our misses have silver linings: while we were not so bold to think Man City would lose to Wolves, we did warn you not to trust them too much.

Unfortunately, the whirlwind nature of the fall season means there is no time to rest on our laurels. The leaves will continue to turn, and we must ride our streak of luck until it dies with them. Thankfully, things only become more exciting from here. The MLB playoffs have just begun, and both the NHL and NBA seasons are on the horizon. Here is what we think will happen for all three of them, along with a look at the NFL MVP race.

For Boston sports fans who have been lamenting yet another disappointing Patriots season (we know we earn no sympathy), the NBA season comes as a welcome respite. Bolstered by their offseason trades for Kristaps Porzingis and Jrue Holiday, the Celtics open the season as co-favorites with the Bucks to win it all. Call it a homer pick, but taking Boston at +380 is too good to pass up. Worthy contenders from the West are the defending champion Nuggets (+550) and the Lakers (+1300) in what could be LeBron's final shot at a fifth ring. Take a Celtics vs. Lakers finals matchup at +1300 if you feel like dreaming.

In terms of regular season honors, we like Luka Doncic (+550) for MVP. The Slovenian guard has been knocking on the door of this award for several years and could finally win it this season if the Mavericks make a playoff run. Another one to watch is Mikal Bridges (+1000) for Most Improved Player. After a midseason trade to the Nets last year, Bridges averaged 26 points per game in 27 outings with his new team. If he can couple these offensive strides with his outstanding defense over a full season, the MIP trophy should be his.

Many have complained that the NHL preseason ran too long. These critics have since gone quiet because the NHL is back, with the opening round of games just finishing. Even though the regular season just began, it is never too early to start



thinking about the end-of-season accolades. While the Bruins did lose several important players from their record-breaking team last year, they still have an impressive roster. Here at *Indy Sportsbook* we still find great value in their odds to win the Stanley Cup at +1700. Additionally, don't overlook the Edmonton Oilers at +1100. Led by the reigning "Most Outstanding Player in the NHL" Connor McDavid, the Oilers will look to capitalize on their star power and make a run deep into the playoffs.

While the NHL is just getting underway, the NFL is already 5 weeks into the season, with many teams and players not faring exactly as predicted before the season. For someone who received the most bets to be MVP before the opening kickoff, Justin Fields is not living up to expectations. His team opened with three straight losses, two of which had the football world wondering whether the Bears should trade him. Now, the MVP attention has shifted to Josh Allen (+350) and Tua Tagovailoa (+500). These two quarterbacks have both started the season off strong, each racking up multiple MVP caliber performances. If you were to pick, we would advise taking Josh Allen (+350). The AFC East isn't turning out to be quite as difficult as predicted, and he looks to have eliminated his high turnover rate. With these conditions in his favor, it seems he will continue playing well and he

remains a forerunner in the MVP race.

In our second-ever column, we made bold claims about never making any baseball picks. However, the excitement that the MLB playoffs bring is worth breaking that promise (besides, it would not be the first time we made a false prediction). While every Wild Card series resulted in a sweep, the Divisional Round is shaping up to have some battles. The Rangers have already punched their ticket to the ALCS and you should expect the Diamondbacks (-550), Astros (-385), and Phillies (+124) to join them. Considering we are picking Philadelphia to unseat one of the best-hitting teams of all time, you better believe we have them at +600 to win the whole thing too.

By the time our next column is published, you may find us walking back our posts. Bettors are a suspicious type, and we have certainly opened ourselves up to bad karma. For now, however, we are on a roll. For both our sake and yours, we are hoping it will last a little longer.

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