

FEB. 22, 2024

HARVARD

VOL LV ISSUE 16

Independent

THE STUDENT WEEKLY SINCE 1969



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February 22, 2024

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In the News: Harvard Leadership Subpoenaed by House Committee

U.S. House committee subpoenas Harvard University over antisemitism investigation for the first time in history.

BY RANIA JONES '27

This past Friday, a congressional committee investigating campus antisemitism took the unprecedented action of issuing multiple subpoenas to Harvard University six weeks after hearings into antisemitism on campus triggered the resignation of former President Claudine Gay. The subpoenas set a deadline of 5 P.M. on March 4th for Harvard officials to produce the series of documents.

This move is part of the political effort to investigate elite universities for their response to pro-Palestine student demonstrations, especially following the Oct. 7th Hamas attacks in Israel, when a number of student bodies at Harvard and other universities appeared to condemn Israel without acknowledging the attack.

The committee said on Friday that it was subpoenaing Harvard for failing to produce priority documents related to the committee's ongoing antisemitism investigation. This marks the first time the education committee has ever subpoenaed a university since the panel was founded in March 1867.

The House Committee on Education and the Workforce said that the issued subpoenas are against three different Harvard officials:

Harvard's interim president, Alan Garber, Harvard Corporation Senior Fellow Penny Pritzker, and Harvard Management Co.

CEO N.P. "Narv"

Narvekar. The committee is asking for "all Harvard Corporation meeting minutes and

summaries, whether formal or informal, since Jan.

1, 2021," among a wide range of other material including board meeting minutes following the Oct. 7th Hamas attacks on Israel, all reports of antisemitic incidents on campus since January 2021, documents related to the results of the school's disciplinary process for antisemitism, and internal communication related to antisemitism among the institution's leaders.

In the last few days, the committee has reprimanded Harvard for withholding or heavily redacting documents.

Representative Virginia Foxx, the North Carolina Republican who chairs the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, told Harvard officials in letters accompanying the subpoenas that the university had "repeatedly failed" to satisfy lawmakers' request for documentation "within a reasonable timeframe" which is "obstructing" the committee's investigation.

Foxx also noted that she will "not tolerate delay and defiance of our investigation while Harvard's Jewish students continue to endure the firestorm of antisemitism that has engulfed its campus."

The subpoenas further inflate the House panel's efforts to investigate how elite universities handle and discipline anti-semitism.

On December 7th, 2023, House lawmakers announced a formal investigation into

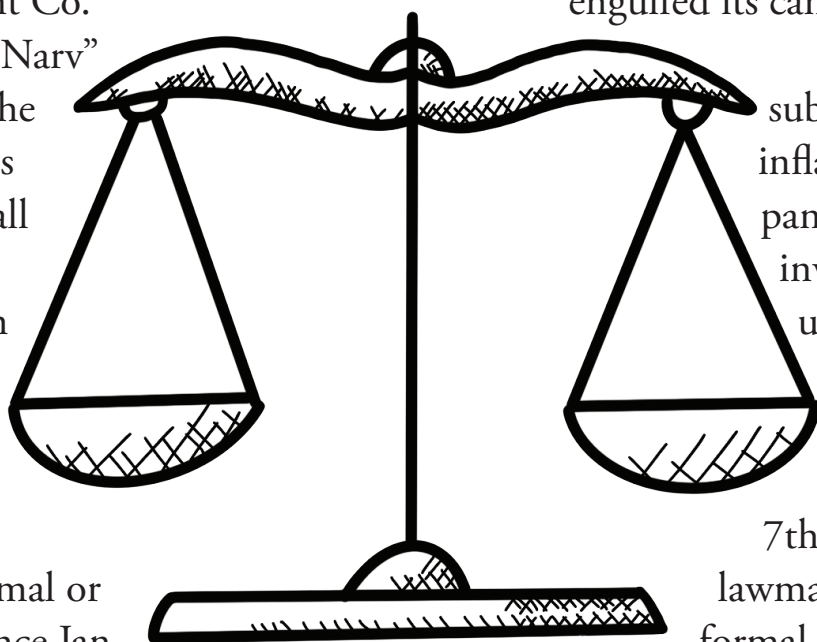
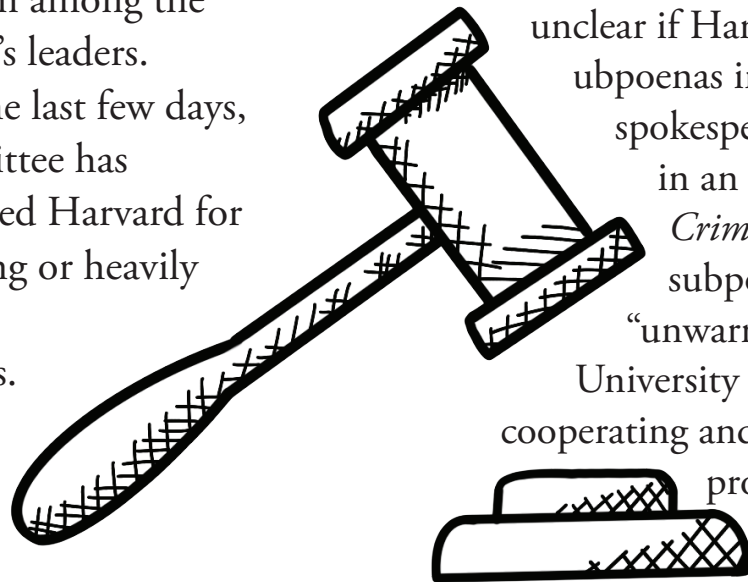
Harvard, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the University of Pennsylvania after the three institutions' leaders testified before Congress about campus antisemitism. Earlier this week, the committee expanded the antisemitism investigation to include Columbia University, however, as of now, the committee has only subpoenaed Harvard. At this point, it is unclear if Harvard will fight the subpoenas in court. Harvard spokesperson Jonathan Swain, in an interview with *Harvard Crimson*, shared that the subpoenas were "unwarranted" and that the University is committed to cooperating and would continue to provide additional materials.

The University has denied that it was withholding information and thus far has argued that it has complied with the committee and provided ample documents requested. Foxx, however, claims that out of the 2,516 pages Harvard has produced, more than 40% were publicly available. In a statement, Foxx pointed out that "quality—not quantity—is the Committee's concern."

Looking beyond legal jargon, it's important to question whether or not this is an investigation in good faith. This committee holds great power in the realm of education, and they are using that power to continue to undermine elite liberal universities like Harvard. As legislative inquiries into the internal behavior of higher education institutions take on yet another new form, the battle between politics and education persists, resists, and continues to exist.

RANIA JONES '27 (RJONES@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS THE ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR OF THE INDEPENDENT.

GRAPHICS BY EL RICHARDS '26



Home Sweet Home...Or Is It?

A look into the blocking process ahead of Housing Day.

BY AVA REM '27

Forget your spring break or reading period travel plans. There is a much more pressing decision that you and your friends must make in your group chats: blocking.

As is customary every year, Harvard first-years must sort themselves into “blocking groups” of up to eight people to participate in the housing lottery and get randomly assigned a House community that they will be part of for the remainder of their undergraduate experience. This year, first-years have until February 28th, 2024, to choose their blocking groups ahead of Housing Day on March 7th, 2024.

With the deadline approaching fast, most first-years have already begun having some difficult, brutally honest conversations about splitting their friend groups into blocking groups. An anonymous first-year, referred to by the pseudonym “Emily,” described the struggles of splitting a ten-person friend group into two five-person blocking groups. “As much as we all wanted to live together, the numbers didn’t work, so we had to force each other to be honest about which group of five we felt more compatible with,” she said.

Although living and personality compatibility were important factors to bring up in the blocking discussion, Emily went on to mention that being close friends with her blockmates was an important requirement for her. “It turned out that one person wanted to bring her other friends into whichever group of five she ended up in, and the rest of the group did not since they weren’t close friends with her other friends, so she ended up leaving the blocking group,” she explained.

Helen Blake '26 also blocked with people she was already friends with—including her first-year roommate. She noted that sometimes these stressful blocking conversations can be a good thing. “It means that you’re being honest or approaching the blocking group process from an angle in which

easy,” she mentioned.

Blake went on to say that, ultimately, forming your blocking group should not be the end-all, be-all of your life. “If forming your blocking group is so incredibly stressful, then maybe it’s worth it to take a step back, breathe, and think about what—and who—matters most.”

Blake’s advice is something that Emily says she has learned after finalizing her blocking group. “Although there were a few tears shed because people felt scared to say that they felt more compatible with one person over another, I feel like blocking made our friend group stronger and more willing to honestly communicate,” she admitted.

Another element to these already daunting blocking discussions is the fact that linking—which allowed two different blocking groups to be guaranteed housing in the same campus neighborhood—has been eliminated. This recent decision from the College is intended to make the lottery system “more fair and equitable,” said Harvard spokesperson Jonathan Palumbo, and respond to the increase in the undergraduate population of gap year students in the Class of 2025 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

An anonymous junior who was placed into overflow housing in response to the Class of 2025’s unprecedented large size shared her concerns about “los[ing] that sense of community” as a result of overflow and linking being discontinued. “Linking was great... If you couldn’t put eight people in your blocking group, you had at least eight more people in a different house and you could explore that house too,” she explained.

However, she urged first-year students to not be scared at the prospect of being placed in overflow housing or even deciding to eschew blocking groups and “float” as a blocking group of one. “I decided to float [and] it was great,” she said. “I think there’s a lot of anxiety surrounding floating and I think that it’s no big deal [because] you can just live with a random

person like you did freshman year...

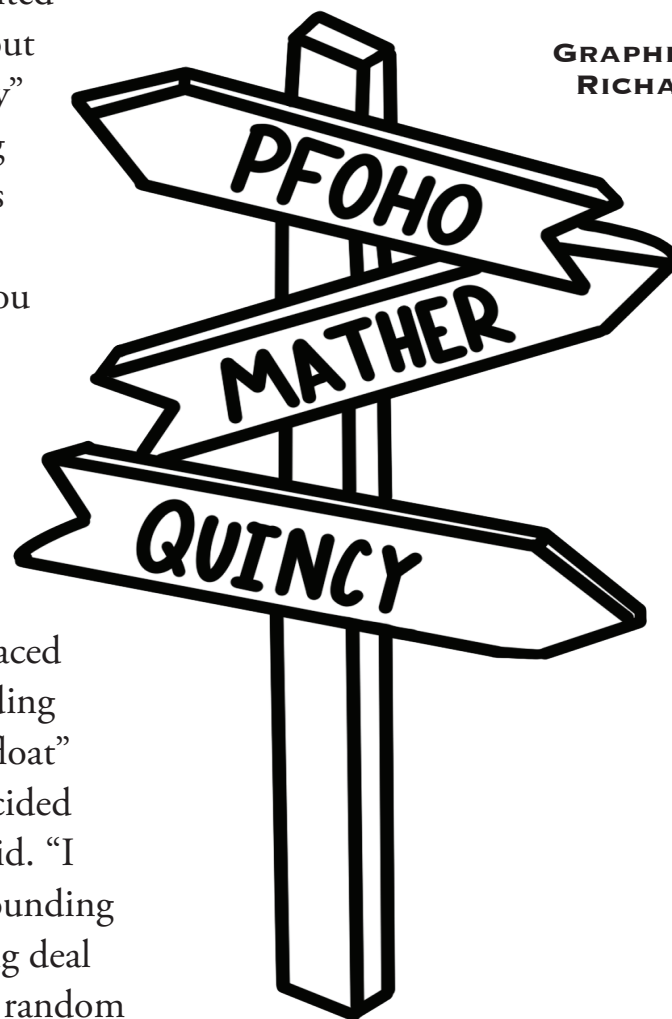
A lot of people are individual blocking groups and we meet a lot of good, really cool people [in the Houses].”

Above all, linking or no linking, overflow housing or regular housing, the College has made it a point to emphasize the fact that blocking should be an exciting time in your Harvard experience. Although these sometimes stressful conversations are important to have, you should not let them consume your every thought, especially since blocking groups do not necessarily determine your sophomore year roommates. In fact, as the College points out, blocking only ensures that you are in the same house as your blockmates, not that you must dorm with them.

Instead of letting possible blocking stress get to you, remember to focus on the positive aspects of finding a new, supportive community that will be by your side for the next three years and making memories with your friends—blockmates and non-blockmates—on Housing Day. As Blake said, “You will make new friends, you will find a different community, and you will be okay... The real ones will trek to the Quad for you.”

AVA REM '27 (AVAREM@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) HAD HER DIFFICULT BLOCKING CONVERSATION IN BERG TWO WEEKS AGO AND LIVED TO TELL THE TALE.

GRAPHIC BY EL RICHARDS '26



The Spotlight On Us

How a Harvard student's sense of community has been affected by persistent national media attention.

Let's set the scene. You're home for break and are sitting at the dinner table, ready to enjoy a nice, non-HUDS meal when your *second uncle thrice removed* throws a pointed question your way. "What do YOU think about Claudine Gay's resignation? Does Harvard HATE Jews? And what about affirmative action? What do YOU have to say about that?" Unless your entire community has been living under a rock, this probably isn't the first time you've been asked such a question.

Within days of the national press's deconstruction of Harvard's administration, I was receiving texts and phone calls from friends across the country, distant family members, and even people I would struggle to recognize as "acquaintances." The truth is, my answers to their questions had less to do with President Gay's alleged plagiarism or doxxing trucks on campus and more to do with how the consistent spotlight was slowly deteriorating my sense of community on campus.

I found myself constantly grappling with what it meant to be a Harvard student at such a volatile time. How could I explain the multitude of diverse perspectives on Harvard's campus to someone who's not living it? Do I really even understand the perspectives I'm charged with representing? How can I appropriately describe the big picture if I'm not in tune with the individual nuances? In my (short) time as a Harvard student, I have found that there is a lot to gain from attempting to answer an elusive question. So, in that spirit, I've tried to answer with what I know, starting from the big picture.

Harvard is portrayed as an academic pantheon and has unmatched global reputation. As a result, we are often put in the public eye and used as the premier example of higher education in the United States. It was an an unmatchable result, and higher education in the United States. Harvard that was sued for violation of the 14th Amendment, the case that eventually led the Supreme Court of the United States to rule against race-conscious admissions. And it is Harvard that, according to an article previously published by the Independent, "has become one of the most widely recognized epicenters of political tensions related to the [Israel-Palestine] conflict," despite our peers not being "unique in their concern for the situation." The CBS News website has a "Harvard University" tag, while a similar one for Yale is noticeably missing. As a community, we've received an unprecedented level of national media attention, and it has affected us deeply.

When I entered the college last fall as a wide-eyed freshman, I felt extraordinarily proud to represent Harvard and join the community. Now,

my feelings have become increasingly multifarious. On the one hand, I was so proud to have a Haitian woman as my president. I felt represented and knew that my Haitian grandmother would have been proud to see me succeed in a place that uplifts our people. I engaged in political debates and conversations with peers from vastly different backgrounds and went out of my way to learn about varying political and social ideologies. On my FOP trip, I even felt comfortable discussing my Christianity with a card-carrying member of The Satanic Temple.

By mid-October, however, I had a Jewish friend confide in me that they felt uncomfortable living with their pro-Palestine roommate and, on another occasion, was warned to not attend Shabbat for fear of being targeted by protesters. My cousin, in the process of applying to colleges, asked me whether I believed I had gotten into Harvard because of affirmative action. I could slowly see division creeping into relationships, and that worried me. I'd chosen Harvard specifically for its diversity of opinion and its allegedly close-knit community.

At first, I assumed that my experiences were unique to the time period and that students at other colleges must be experiencing similar reservations.

Yet, when I confided in my close friends at schools across the country like Yale, Brown, and Southern Methodist University, I was no, my experience was very specific to my school. Other students weren't experiencing "HARVARD HATES JEWS" flags across the sky or consistent *New York Times* emails flagging "Harvard" in the headlines. It was just at our school that divisions were becoming increasingly distorted by media attention from all sides of the political spectrum. Whether via heckling from X users or news desks misinterpreting student publications, I, along with others, became fearful that anything said or done on campus could become a target of national intrigue. That kind of environment does not lead to the strong community growth that Harvard prides itself on.

Racial distinctions become more prominent when we are worried that someone's alienating political belief is directly tied to their ethnicity. Constructive debate becomes ineffective when, regardless of what you say, the national media tells stories devoid of nuance. Students start joining clubs that they feel comfortable and safe in, surrounded by people that they know share similar beliefs. *There's no danger of being doxxed if you stay*

within small social circles, right? Peers judge others based on their background or that one time they retweeted a "problematic figure" rather than finding common ground to build deep and meaningful relationships on. Even while writing this article, I am tentative, worried that it might end up on X like many of my peers' work, quoted by politicians and "advocates" aiming to use the Harvard name to boost their likes.

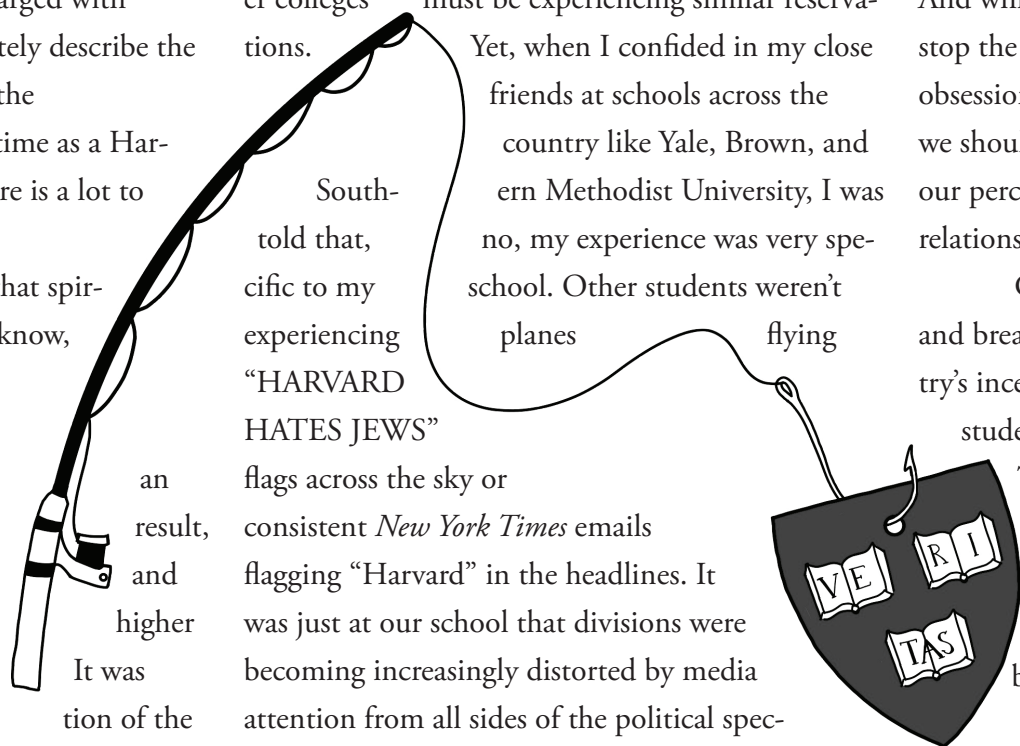
Yet, I don't recognize all of this to say that the polarization at Harvard has divided our community in an insurmountable way. In the end, we are all 18 to 20-something college students who are appalled by grape pizza and wish our Datamatches were more exciting. It's now, more than ever, important to recognize how national media attention can infiltrate our everyday lives in unexpected ways. Whether it's news channels showing up to film English 183TS (Taylor Swift and Her World) or Congress subpoenaing Harvard's Sidechat posts, the nation has its eyes trained on us. We can either let that become a source of tension in building community ties, or it can become a positive instigator for change.

Attending Harvard puts us in a unique position to have an extremely powerful platform. And while the first reality is that we can't really stop the national attention or alumni billionaires' obsession with our school, the second reality is that we shouldn't—no, we *can't*—let the media affect our perception of the world or the way we approach relationships here at Harvard.

Continue to step outside your comfort zone and break down political barriers. Since our country's inception, students have been agents of power and change. There's a reason Canaday Hall was built to be riot-proof. At the end of the day, despite whatever the newest clickbait article might say, we need to let that passion bring us together, not apart.

**MIA TAVARES '27
(MIATAVARES@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU)
HOPES THAT IF SHE GETS FAMOUS,
NO ONE WILL BUY A BILLBOARD (OR A
TRUCK) TO DISPLAY HER OLD TWITTER
LIKES FROM 8TH GRADE.**

GRAPHIC BY CLARA LAKE '27



Point: The SAT, A Sheep in Wolf's Clothing

The hidden advantages of standardized testing for economic diversity.

BY KATE KADYAN '26

In the wake of the overturning of affirmative action by the Supreme Court, all aspects of the college admissions process were placed under greater scrutiny. The Supreme Court's decision blocks colleges from consciously building a racially diverse class, and, as a result, it is more important than ever that Harvard examine its metrics for admission to build diversity in the areas it legally can—namely, economic diversity.

One of the most historically important (and controversial) aspects of the admissions process is standardized testing. As Dartmouth has become the first Ivy to reinstate SAT/ACT scores for admission, it is time for Harvard to likewise re-evaluate its test-optional policy, which currently extends until 2030.

The SAT and ACT have become a scapegoat for all manner of societal ills—most notably, for being discriminatory against Black, brown, and low-income students. However, this rhetoric is misguided—it blames a test which registers systemic gaps in education along economic and racial lines for the inequality itself. Students confront these standardized tests with over a decade of educational imbalance, and critics of these metrics claim that the differences in scores originate primarily from the test itself. In fact, taking variations into account according to the student's background and opportunity is far easier to do in standardized scores than for GPA or extracurriculars. As Raj Chetty, a Harvard economist at the forefront of standardized test research, put it, “disparities in SAT score are a symptom, not a cause, of inequality in the U.S.”

It is easy to see how the SAT and ACT became so villainized. For those of us who submitted SAT or ACT scores to college, the hours spent combing through practice exams are indelibly tattooed into our memories. With hundreds of nervous students packed into a gymnasium, No. 2 pencils and TI-84 calculators at the

ready, the tension
FORUM | 6 (and B.O.)

was palpable. These stressful tests transitioned from being an unhappy memory for students to seemingly becoming a symbol of the lack of diversity in race and economic backgrounds among elite colleges.

However, the opposite is true: although students from higher-income families can afford to hire test prep tutors, test scores can be manipulated far less by wealth than other admissions metrics. In fact, impressive extracurriculars, such as out-of-state debate tournaments, scientific research with a professor, and music lessons are much more dependent on attending prestigious high schools and having well-connected or wealthy parents. College essays, likewise, involve a weeks or even monthslong writing process in which the essays can be rewritten and polished by parents or professional college consultants. Standardized tests are—to some extent—more immune to the scramble of wealthy parents racing to perfect their child's Common App. At the end of the day, in the testing room, it's just students facing down Scantron sheets.

Without these tests, schools rely heavily on high school GPA as a metric for future academic success. However, research from Opportunity Insights shows that the SAT and ACT are more accurate indicators of success in college than GPA. Test scores are a stronger predictor of college grades, attending an elite graduate school, or working at a prestigious firm than high school grades. Moreover, regardless of whether students attended a disadvantaged or advantaged high school, the correlation between testing results and college grades remains unchanged.

Additionally, the emphasis on GPA might harm students from under-resourced high schools, as high GPAs from relatively unknown high schools are far harder for admissions officers to evaluate than a 4.0 from Exeter or Andover. With standardized tests, however, admissions officers can factor in the student's background by reading the score “in context,” considering factors such as the rate of college matriculation at the student's high school, the average SAT score in the local neighborhood, and the candidate's own first-generation or low-income status.

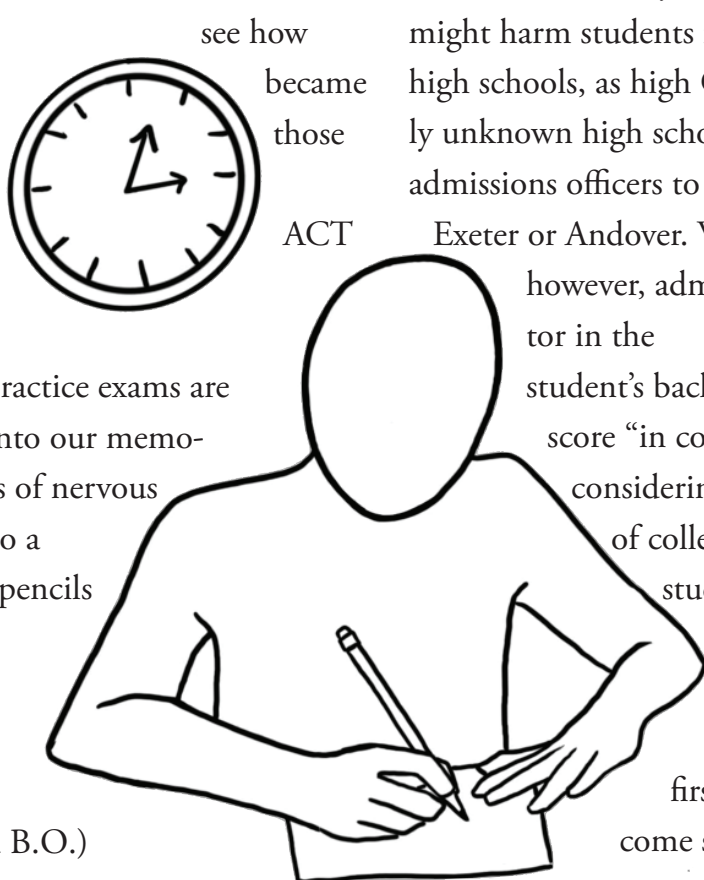
Keeping these tests merely optional is insufficient in identifying students from less advantaged backgrounds. A Dartmouth study found that many less-advantaged students withhold test scores for fear they are below the college mean, when these test scores may be beneficial in admissions when considered alongside the local norms of students' high schools and neighborhoods.

In an interview with the *Independent*, Richard Weissbourd, Senior Lecturer at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and director of the Making Caring Common Project, agreed that the war on standardized tests was misguided, and that “the data seems to be showing that the SAT finds the strengths of less advantaged students.” However, Weissbourd noted that though “reviving [the] SAT can capture some of those [less-advantaged] students,” Harvard should seek to revamp its *entire* admissions process to focus more on threshold tests and student writing samples. In his capacity as the director of the Making Caring Common Project, a national organization centered on changing college admissions, he recently met with the Common App to discuss the development of these new metrics. Weissbourd said, in light of the Supreme Court decision, this is a “critical juncture, a watershed moment, as we're going to see after this admissions cycle, whether colleges become significantly less diverse, and if they did, I think there will be a lot of momentum for creating fair and more equitable admissions practices.”

Hopefully, Harvard is spurred to re-imagine its admissions process, but the timeline for developing such metrics is slow and uncertain. In the meantime, Harvard is dismissing a valuable tool for identifying less-advantaged students. The current attitude of treating the SAT and ACT as socioeconomic or racial inequality incarnate is not only wrong, but it's detracting from the very goal critics of the SAT seek: college as a greater tool for social mobility.

KATE KADYAN '26 (KATEKADYAN@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) DOESN'T LOOK BACK FONDLY AT THE ACT BUT FEELS STRONGLY ABOUT THIS ISSUE NONETHELESS.

GRAPHIC BY RILEY CULLINAN '27



Counterpoint: Stay Optional, SAT

By continuing to not require standardized test scores, Harvard can stay inclusive to students of all backgrounds.

BY NATALIA SIWEK '27

In light of the recurring discussions about college admissions after the Supreme Court decision to ban Affirmative Action, there is a repeated query related to test-optional policies directed toward top universities. Many voices criticize the “holistic” college admissions call for re-introducing the mandatory testing policy, arguing that this is a fair and (as suggested by its name) standardized way of assessing candidates. However, demanding the SAT discourages students applying to schools like Harvard from underprivileged and underrepresented backgrounds that universities should be trying to attract.

The SAT can be inaccessible in plenty of ways. For some, taking the test is not physically possible, or at least extremely difficult. Annabelle Rayson '27 explained the boundaries some international students or students living in rural areas face when accessing testing sites. “In Southwestern Ontario, I would have had to drive 2-3 hours to a major city center to write the SATs. By having optional SATs, an Ivy League education becomes more accessible for rural and remote students,” she said. Those boundaries can be very hard to overcome, especially if a student cannot drive themselves to the test center, be driven by someone else, do not have a car, or cannot cover the costs of transportation and taking the test.

When a test-optional policy is in place, students who struggle with SAT accessibility have a more equitable opportunity to apply and get admitted to elite universities. Since implementing a test-optional policy, Harvard has already seen an increase in applications and admits from outside the US. In an interview with Harvard Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid William R. Fitzsimmons '67, the *Harvard Crimson* reported that when comparing early admission rounds between the Class of 2024 and 2028, there was an almost two-time increase in the number of international students accepted (from 9.6% to 17%). Without demanding SAT scores, Harvard can receive applications from a wider set of backgrounds and create a more diverse class.

Groups for whom taking the SAT is logistically or financially harder are also often the groups that have been historically

underrepresented in American colleges. These students often have the fewest examples of successful Harvard admits in their community and, as a result, can easily underestimate their chances for acceptance. In general, a study by Caroline Hoxby from Stanford University and Christopher Avery from Harvard Kennedy School shows that historically underrepresented students apply to selective colleges with much lesser frequency than their higher-income, similarly performing counterparts.

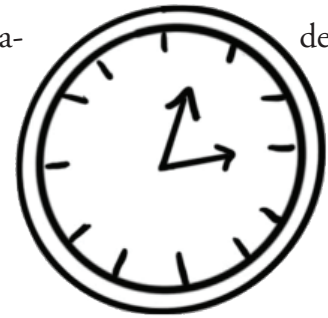
This effect is strengthened by the fact that low-income students cannot often access preparation materials, help from private tutors, or classes about test strategies. As opposed to their more affluent peers with dozens of sources of support, underprivileged students must rely upon themselves or limited free testing materials when approaching standardized testing.

This is reflected in the results. According to a 2015 study by Insider Higher Ed, there is a strong correlation between parents' income and their child's SAT scores. Currently, if students without such resources do not feel as if they can do well enough on their SAT, they can apply to Harvard without submitting a score. In a world with mandatory standardized testing, they may not even apply if their score is not on par with their well-resourced peers.

The SAT's superscore model complicates its ability to be equitable even further—the more times you can afford to take the test, the better chance of achieving a higher superscore. A person who can take the SAT 5 times can more easily achieve a higher score than a person taking the test once or twice. Even in the case when someone is eligible for a fee waiver given by the College Board, one cannot take more than two tests using that fee waiver. It means that the group of students that are acknowledged not to be able to afford the test are not even allowed to try as many times as they want to.

Some could argue that the SAT is a necessary tool to assess someone's readiness for college and academic success. However, there

are already plenty of ways for students to show that. High school transcripts, professional recommendations, and even the alumni interview all serve to show academic maturity and the ability to keep up with a college's workload. If students believe their academic abilities are better presented when including their standardized testing score results, they should be able to submit them. If not, the admissions office still has enough information to make an admissions decision.



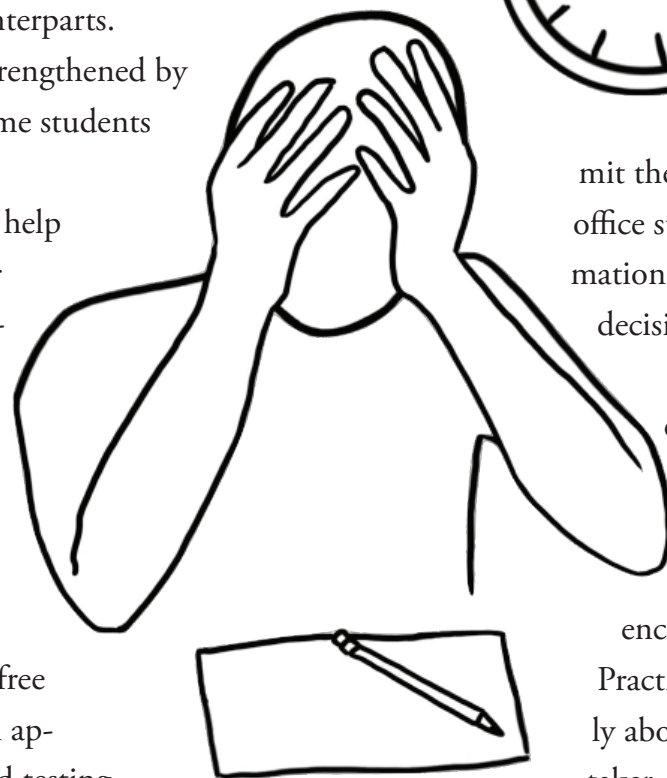
It should be asked whether spending copious time preparing for the SAT to score in the high 1500s is the activity we want to encourage in high schoolers. Practicing for the SAT is mostly about becoming a better test taker, not a

student in general. Learning the test strategies has little to do with knowledge that can be used in college or personal growth. From the perspective of building a diverse, interesting student body, Harvard should incentivize students to do activities that make them unique instead of studying methods to game the SAT.

In the post-Affirmative Action world, we should strive to find ways to make the Harvard Admission procedures more inclusive. The Supreme Court has already limited how admissions can take into account students' backgrounds. Harvard should strive to still attract and admit students from non-traditional backgrounds—requiring the SAT does the opposite.

NATALIA SIWEK '27 (NATALIASIWEK@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) TOOK HER SAT THREE WEEKS BEFORE THE APPLICATION DEADLINE BECAUSE SHE THOUGHT SHE WOULDN'T APPLY TO HARVARD.

GRAPHIC BY RILEY CULLINAN '27



Perusing Picasso

A new Exhibit at the Fogg Art Museum.

BY LUCIE STEFANONI '27

If you are interested in more of Picasso's prolific style, don't bother taking the T to the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA). Instead, just walk a block or so and up a few flights of stairs to the Harvard Art Museums' third floor, where you can find a new exhibit dedicated entirely to Picasso.

This exhibit on the third floor is in the Fogg Museum, one of the three art museums that comprise the Harvard Art Museums. The Fogg Museum is home to visual artworks of some of the most famous artists from the Middle Ages to contemporary times. Visiting the Fogg is an experience that contends with going to the MFA in Boston or the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. However, the museum's accessibility makes Harvard students take it for granted as it serves additional purposes as the location of a class, a place to do homework with a friend, or another café to buy a matcha from.

Despite the wide variety of works of art chosen by the curator, Suzanne Blier, to celebrate Picasso's versatility and evolving style, the exhibit's title, "Picasso: War, Combat, and Revolution," revolves around the iconic *Guernica*, a massive 11 ft. x 25 ft. canvas showing an elaborate gray, black, and white scene. Although *Guernica* may not be present in the exhibit, many valuable primary sources and photographs offer the average art connoisseur insight into both Picasso's artistic and political significance.

Guernica was commissioned by the Spanish Republican government for the 1937 Paris World Fair. To bring awareness to the ongoing conflict, the painting primarily presents the mythological motifs of a matador fighting a minotaur. This is a metaphorical demonstration of Picasso's anti-war sentiments. The title of the work directly references the aerial bombing of the Spanish town of Guernica earlier that year by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.

Professor Suzanne Blier gave historical context for its limited duration in the United States: "When *Guernica* came to this country during

World War II, he asked that it be traveled so that he could raise funding to support the anti-fascist movement in Spain. It went back to Spain after the government changed." During its time in the United States, the artwork found itself in New York City's Museum of Modern Art (the MoMA). It was briefly lent to the Fogg Museum on two separate occasions, in 1941 and 1942.

Blier, a historian for the History of Art and Architecture & African American Studies department, curated the new Picasso exhibit as she developed a new course for undergraduates. The emphasis on *Guernica* is related to a new course in the Art History department, World Fairs, a small seminar that "addresses questions of cultural display through the art and architecture of world fairs, mid-nineteenth century to present." When asked how the World Fairs expressed cultural display and if it was emphasized mainly through artistic advancements, Blier responded that "discussions focus on a key theme—economics, technological and science questions, gender, race, art and literature, etc. The students take up each of these subjects from the vantage of their own fairs." Students pave their own way in this course, and it is up to them to cultivate the artistic resources presented in the exhibit.

While Picasso may not be the focal point of this course, his artistic relevance in numerous World Fairs Blier cited, such as "1900 Paris and 1906 Marseille," and the "Trocadero where the African artworks were found and created in an earlier French fair" makes him very relevant to the course. "We visited the exhibit as a class, and go back to the exhibition in class discussion," Blier said. "We have discussed Picasso's artistic importance and the fact that his important political role is often under-explored. We also spent time in class talking about how Africans and other colonized people are addressed in the fairs, a key factor in the fairs that Picasso and the others attended."

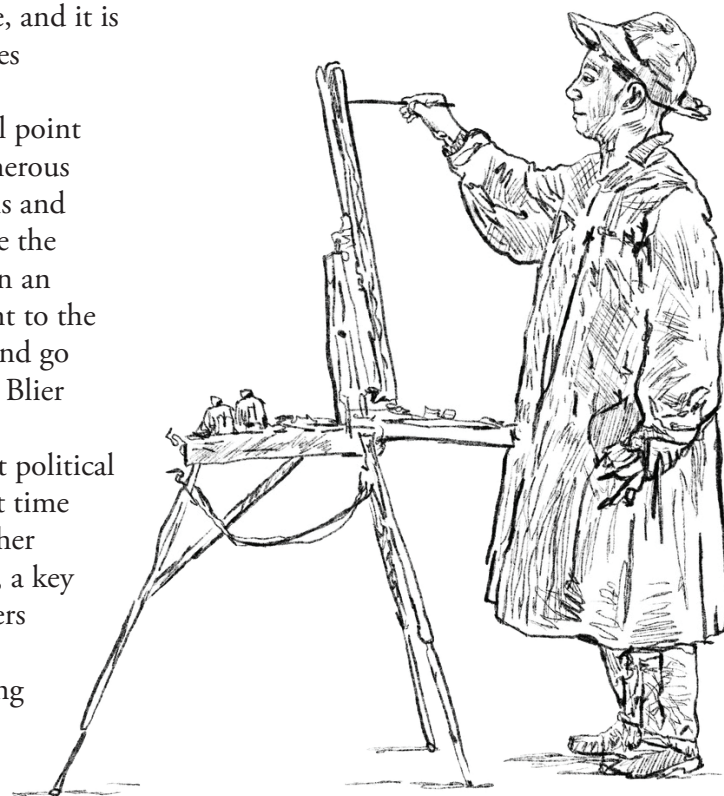
Blier did not shy away from praising

Picasso's impact despite the recent uncovering of his problematic persona. When asked about discussing Picasso as a controversial figure in class, Blier said, "All artists can be controversial, but some of Picasso's controversy is based on a misreading of his famous painting, *Les Femmes d'Alger*." This painting may not be part of the exhibit, but Blier recognizes Picasso is "addressing, in this painting specifically, issues around colonialism and evolution."

The aim of Blier's collection of Picasso artworks is not to alter people's impressions of Picasso as a person but rather to discuss "Picasso's artistic importance, and the fact that his important political role is often under-explored." Hopefully, students in the World Fairs course who visit the Fogg for class can foster an appreciation of his art from the privilege of learning from Suzanne Blier.

LUCIE STEFANONI '27 (LUCIESTEFANONI@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS AN ARTIST WHO DOES JOURNALISM ON THE SIDE.

GRAPHIC BY CHRISTIE BECKLEY '27



Let's Talk Sausage

A ranking of HUDS' sausage options.

BY ILANA FEDER '26

Grape pizza and blueberry glazed pork may not be up your alley.

Fortunately, Harvard University Dining Services (HUDS) hasn't tried to ruin one food with a creative twist: the fan-favorite breakfast sausage. Although not every dining hall on campus has hot breakfast, every student has gotten the opportunity to experience Harvard sausage in one way or another.

HUDS offers a few types of breakfast sausages, including chicken, pork links, pork patties, and some vegan options that don't look very edible. If you could only eat one type of HUDS sausage for the rest of your life, which sausage would you choose? I'm here to help you determine the answer to this life-altering question.

The pork sausage links are the worst option out of the real meat sausages. This is what you'd normally find on your plate at an IHOP or a free hotel breakfast. It's not that I have a vendetta against pork sausage links, but, in the Harvard dhalls, I choose to steer clear. The links are

connected with a weird outer layer that makes it seem as though you're eating a part of the sausage that's not meant to be ingested. As the sausages rest in a silver tub, they accumulate a lot of excess oil, making the links extra slippery rather than crispy. In the case of the pork sausage link, it's not so much an issue of flavor, but rather an issue of texture as the greasy outside is met with a mushy inside.

Moving up the ladder, we have the pork sausage patties. The thinness of the patty allows for the outer layer to be well-cooked, creating the perfect textured bite. As a firm believer in "shape makes it taste better," the patty form truly transforms the entire sausage experience. As a born and raised New Yorker, I can also make a credible judgment on the dining halls' so-called "bagels." A bite of these plastic bag bagels is not the way to start off your day, but a sausage patty in the middle is a game-changer. Add some questionable eggs, a slice of cheese, and some ketchup (or hot sauce if you're feeling spicy!), and suddenly you've got yourself a subpar sausage, egg, and cheese bagel sandwich!

Finally, the moment you have all been waiting for. The most elite sausage of them all, the sausage that takes the throne: chicken sausage. No drug can replicate the feeling of looking at the breakfast menu and seeing "chicken sausage" written in sunset orange. The chicken sausage comes packing a punch of flavor, and you can really see each individual seasoning in its cross-section. The thickness, reminiscent of more of a dinner sausage, causes a great crisp around the edges. You can take the sweet or savory path with this one, dipping the sausage in either maple syrup or ketchup. Personally, I think the chicken sausage-maple syrup combo is a great mix of sweet and salty. Just don't check your cholesterol levels after.

To conclude, I'd suggest going chicken sausage first, pork patty second, pork link third, and then just saying a prayer if you're vegan. Next time you find yourself at a HUDS hot breakfast, don't be afraid to get yourself all up in that sausage. You might discover a new-found passion for suspicious-looking meat!

ILANA FEDER '26 (ILANAFEDER@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WRITES ARTS FOR THE INDEPENDENT.

An Uneven Playing Field

Harvard's first female Athletic Director has chosen next season's football coach, and fans are not happy.

BY NATALIE FRANK '27 AND SOPHIA GHAFOURI '27

“This is what happens when you put a woman in charge of a historic football team,” wrote an X user in response to Harvard Athletic Director (AD) Erin McDermott’s announcement of the new Harvard football coach on February 12th. All eyes were on McDermott, the first-ever woman AD at Harvard, following the news of the beloved Tim Murphy’s retirement from head coach of the Crimson’s football team in January. She would have to make a difficult decision. *Should she hire someone already on the Harvard coaching staff? Or a head coach from another school?* The answer she chose shocked everyone: neither.

Instead, she tapped Andrew Aurich, who is leaving the Big 10 behind after working for six seasons as assistant coach at Rutgers University. Though it is his first time taking on the role of head coach, he has experience with nearly every level of football, including high school, NCAA Division I and III, and the NFL.

With what McDermott described at the Harvard Football Head Coach Announcement on February 15th as an “Ivy core and compass,” the Ivy League is nothing new to Aurich. Having played as an offensive lineman at Princeton and then returning to coach for eight seasons (2011, 2013-2019), Aurich is stepping back into familiar territory, this time with even more experience under his belt.

Despite the criticism McDermott has received, Aurich is confident in his abilities. “I have no trepidation,” he said at the press conference. “I love the challenge. I’m excited about the challenge.”

However, from angry tweets to threats from alumni to withdraw their donations, Harvard football fans have been quick to direct their dissatisfaction with the new hire towards McDermott, who was faced with the impossible task of meeting a wide range of demands for the next coach. Yet, McDermott was prepared to face the challenge.

McDermott be-

gan her career at Columbia, where she spent three years as Assistant Director of Compliance, after which she joined Princeton for thirteen years to eventually serve as Deputy Director of Athletics, already amassing a total of 16 years of experience in the Ivy League. McDermott served as the AD for the University of Chicago and led the school to its highest finish in school history in the Learfield rankings, thus completing a successful seven-year tenure.

After joining Harvard in 2020, McDermott’s leadership earned the athletic department its best effort in the Learfield Directors Cup standings since 1993 and their third-best performance in school history in the Division 1 rankings in her second year.

Despite her many other successes, including earning the NACDA Under Armour Athletic Director of the Year Award in 2019, fans continue to denounce McDermott’s capabilities as an AD—and, consequently, Aurich’s capabilities as a coach. Yet, current players hold a different sentiment and are looking forward to the season to come.

Owen Johnson '27, a first-year linebacker on the team, is excited to play under Coach Aurich. “He seems like a really good coach who’s really dedicated to his players,” he said. “So far, I have a really good feeling about him.” He also placed trust in Aurich’s abilities to lead the program. “I do believe he will be [good for the team’s success] because I believe he truly has the team’s best interest in mind,” he added. “He made it very clear that he’s going to work with us. He understands that we’re a good program and he’s going to try and elevate it to the next level.”

His brother Kyle Johnson '27, a first-year running back, feels similarly. “He’s going to be a great person to help move our program forward in the future,” he said. Both brothers agreed that, based on what they have seen, Aurich will have a positive impact on the team.

When asked about whether Aurich’s lack of experience as a head coach matters to the team’s future success, K. Johnson was confident that it would not. “Personally, I don’t think that matters,” he said.

“Meeting him, I think he’s gonna do a great job and...he has a lot of experience, so the fact that he hasn’t been a head coach, honestly, I don’t think that matters at all.”

With extensive background, support from his future players, and the will to win, Aurich is set up to bring Harvard’s football team success. Yet, some fans are still not convinced, raising the question: *Is their anger really a product of the man that*

was chosen, or is it instead a product of the woman who hired him? Time and time again, women who attempt to enter the realm of football are disproportionately criticized compared to their male counterparts.

Multiple Harvard football alumni, including general manager of the Cleveland Browns Andrew Berry '09, retired NFL quarterback Ryan Fitzpatrick '05, and Eion Hu '97 worked alongside McDermott in the search for a new coach. The three played a major role in the final decision, interviewing the four final candidates and providing their feedback to McDermott, yet received none of the backlash that McDermott has faced.

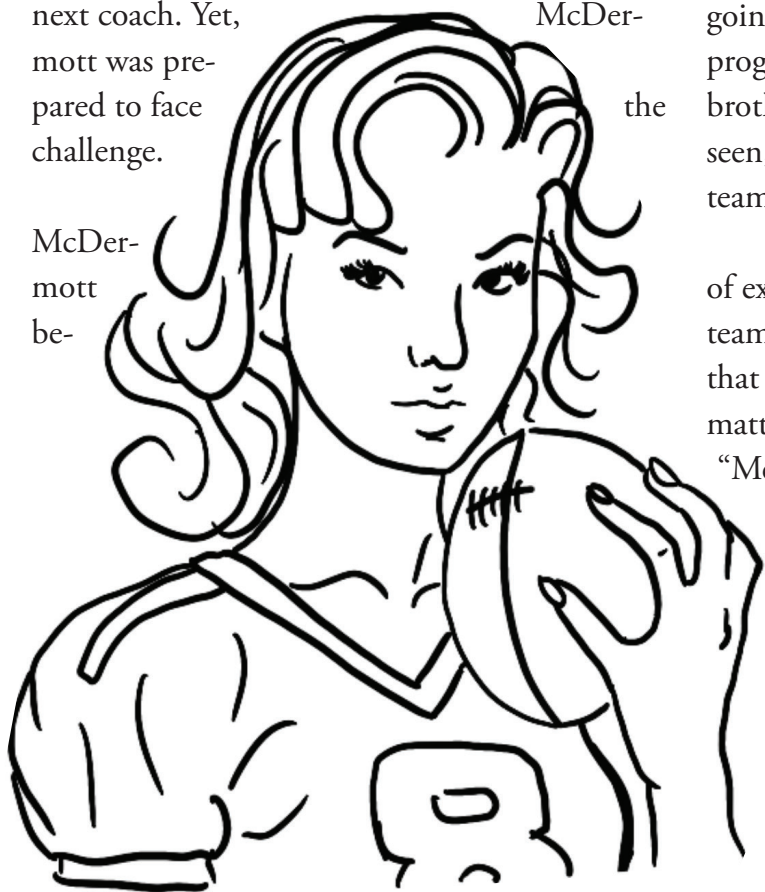
Discrimination against women in sports goes far beyond just football. In 2016, the Harvard Men’s Soccer team made national news for a team document that was leaked to the public. The “scouting report” from 2012 included graphic sexual descriptions of the women’s soccer team and lewdly ranked their freshmen recruits using objectifying terms.

When some of the women named in the report published an op-ed titled “Stronger Together” in the *Harvard Crimson*, they expressed how the comments hurt them. Sadly, however, they claimed to not be very surprised. The women explained they had “come to expect this kind of behavior from so many men,” but that “Harvard Women’s Soccer succeeds because despite any atmosphere of competition, [they] know how to be a team.”

The resentment expressed by men towards women, including Erin McDermott and the Harvard Women’s Soccer Team, illustrates a form of subtle misogyny throughout collegiate sports. The desire to exclude women from male-dominated sports like football ultimately implies that women can not contribute to sports what men do and will only spoil a cherished Sunday afternoon activity. In the face of challenges and criticism, Harvard Athletics must remember that experience and talent are what create an athlete, not gender.

NATALIE FRANK '27 (NFRANK@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) AND SOPHIA GHAFOURI '27 (SGHAFOURI@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) ARE ACCEPTING RECRUITING OFFERS FROM D1 FOOTBALL SCHOOLS.

GRAPHIC BY SEATTLE HICKEY '25



Sports Spotlight: Maia Ramsden

A profile on Harvard's national champion runner.

BY DECLAN BUCKLEY '24

Maia Ramsden '24 has had quite the year. After an outstanding first two seasons with the Crimson, she won the Women's 1500m at the 2023 NCAA Outdoor National Championships in June, becoming the first New Zealander to ever win the event. She followed up this historic win by reaching even greater heights in her senior year—she recently recorded the second-fastest women's collegiate mile time ever and is slated to make her debut for the Kiwis at the World Indoor Athletics Championships in March.

While she is now a fixture in the American college running world, Ramsden's career path—and life—has spanned multiple continents. She got her start in her hometown of Wellington, New Zealand at the age of five. “The most common cereal brand at home is called Weet-Bix, and they put on kids' triathlons that are a bit of an institution, so I used to do a bunch of those,” she said. Moves to the Solomon Islands and Fiji saw her focus switch to track before she ultimately ended up in Ethiopia for high school. “Running is central to that place,” she explained. “Moving there, I only became more involved in the sport, and my love for it as a fan and spectator grew too.”

Wanting to continue running and having family roots in the U.S. made coming to America for college a natural choice for Ramsden. However, her plans for a freshman season were completely upended when Harvard canceled all sports for the 2020-2021 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ramsden sees the silver lining when looking back on her transition. “I feel grateful for that time because I got to develop a strong relationship with my teammates and my coach, and figure out the running piece from a physical standpoint without having to worry about the competitive bit or school being a really big time commitment.”

This extra time to learn the ropes proved invaluable once things opened back up the next year. While most sports are centered around a single season, runners compete in all three, going from cross country in the fall to indoor and outdoor track in the winter and spring. This constant competition leaves little room for other parts of life, particularly as Ramsden prepares to submit her senior thesis, which focuses on the relationship between Pacific poets and

climate change migration. While

easier to focus on running at a different school, she does not necessarily wish for it. “It's a push and pull, but I don't think I'll ever regret this decision,” she said. “I've had a great experience here.”

Take one look at Ramsden's results and it is easy to see why she feels that way. Her accomplishments continue to grow, but her National Championship understandably stands above the rest.

“That was a pretty big, I would say life-changing moment,” she said. “As crazy as that is to say, it opened a lot of doors.” However, Ramsden's fondest memories of that week are not restricted to crossing the finish line first. She was quick to point to her team's ninth-place overall finish—its best since 1989. “It's a really huge deal, especially because we don't have scholarships, so we're not necessarily attracting the same sort of talent out of high school that other schools are, and we obviously have a different academic balance,” she said. “To have the team do that well as well was really special to be a part of.”

Performances like that one have brought Ramsden a lot of attention—including from Athletics New Zealand (ANZ), who selected her to compete in the 1500m against the world's best next month. She was also eligible to compete for the U.S. thanks to dual citizenship through her mother's family. However, there was never a question of which country Ramsden wanted to represent. “I'd never raced in the U.S. until coming to college, and even then, until last weekend, I had only ever raced at collegiate meets,” she said. “Whereas in New Zealand I'm part of this other club, I've represented my city before, and I've got this great community of running friends there.” She also highlighted ANZ's support for her as a citizen competing overseas as a deciding factor. “I'm sure if I had really wanted to [race for the U.S.], I had the choice...but socio emotionally I didn't think of it as a choice.”

In addition to further athletic opportunities, Ramsden's success gave her the chance to sign a Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) deal with On, an up-and-coming sportswear company. She emphasized her excitement about

working with an environmentally conscious company whose shoes she already loved. Her



thoughts on NIL as a whole are more complex. “The deals are happening almost ahead of regulation... Most institutions don't really know how to navigate that yet,” she said. She pointed to the inequality of income being offered to different sports as well as the dangers of offering brand deals to 18-year-olds still trying to find their way in life. On the other hand, she praised the initiative for allowing athletes to profit from their performance and preparing them for the world they might face as professionals.

This last point is especially important for Ramsden, who hopes to parlay an excellent college athletics career into a full-time one. “I'm going to take a break from school for a little and give the running thing a real shot while my body is at its prime,” she said. “I hope to be running for as long as my body and mind are happy with it.” Whenever she ultimately hangs up her spikes, she plans to return to academia to begin pursuing her Master's and PhD.

For now, however, Ramsden's focus remains on the races ahead of her. She will fly to Glasgow in two weeks to compete at Worlds, sandwiched between the Ivy League and National Indoor Championships. After that, the road to defend her national title begins.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF HARVARD
ATHLETICS

Indy Sportsbook: Is Gambling Bad?

An examination into the true desires of many young adult gamblers.

BY LUKE WAGNER '26 AND SANTI KELLY '26

In the realm of leisure and pastime, one practice stands out as steeped in contradiction:

gambling. Since the Supreme Court case in 2018 which struck down the federal ban on sports betting, the industry has grown to a \$15 billion-a-year industry. On one hand, gambling could merely be a benign form of entertainment, a source of exhilaration and social joy. On the other hand, it harbors the potential to spiral into a gripping addiction with far-reaching consequences. For students and young adults alike, gambling can spiral out of control fast.

In its most innocent form, gambling is a universal form of entertainment, a testament to humanity's fascination with chance and the potential to "win big." This allure is not merely about the prospect of financial gain but also the thrill of the unknown. Poker nights, sports betting pools, and even the casual lottery ticket embody this spirit of gambling as a leisure activity that offers a respite from the rigors of daily life and an opportunity for communal bonding.

The digital age has ushered in a new era of gambling, one where the thrill of the bet is never more than a click away. Improved technology has made gambling more accessible, discreet, and varied for groups that previously didn't have much access to it, including students. Online platforms and mobile apps now offer a plethora of gambling options, from virtual poker rooms to sports betting sites, all accessible from the comfort of one's dorm room. This convenience, however, comes with its own set of challenges. Ease of access can blur the boundaries between casual entertainment and compulsive behavior. Students can gamble anonymously, at any hour, without the social checks and balances that physical gambling spaces might

provide.

Students are not the only ones affected by the flashy colors and the large amounts of free play. A recent WSJ story profiled a 41-year-old mental health professional who got hooked on online gambling. After winning around \$500,000 online, she continued to gamble and soon lost all the money and more, ending up down \$100,000. While this may feel like an extreme case, it is often true that young adults get lucky to win a few hundred, just to find themselves down thousands when the clock strikes zero.

While gambling online is extremely popular, it is also common in dorm rooms. The camaraderie found in friendly wagers on

sporting events or the intellectual challenge posed by a game of blackjack can foster a sense of community and relaxation, albeit momentarily. Common rooms are often filled with students playing a light-hearted game of cards. When rival football teams play each other, many friends bet on the winner of the game for both bragging rights and money gains. For many, an important and exciting part of gambling is the camaraderie that is fostered and the community that can be formed around friendly bets.

Gambling can both strengthen bonds and create fond memories for all parties involved. However, especially for young adults responsible for their own decisions for the first time, excess gambling within social circles can place a heavy strain on finances and relationships. This kind of excessive practice can create or enforce socioeconomic power dynamics as some may be willing or able to gamble with more money or more frequently than others. Often, people who

are less financially stable can find themselves in tough situations more than people who have thousands at their disposal.

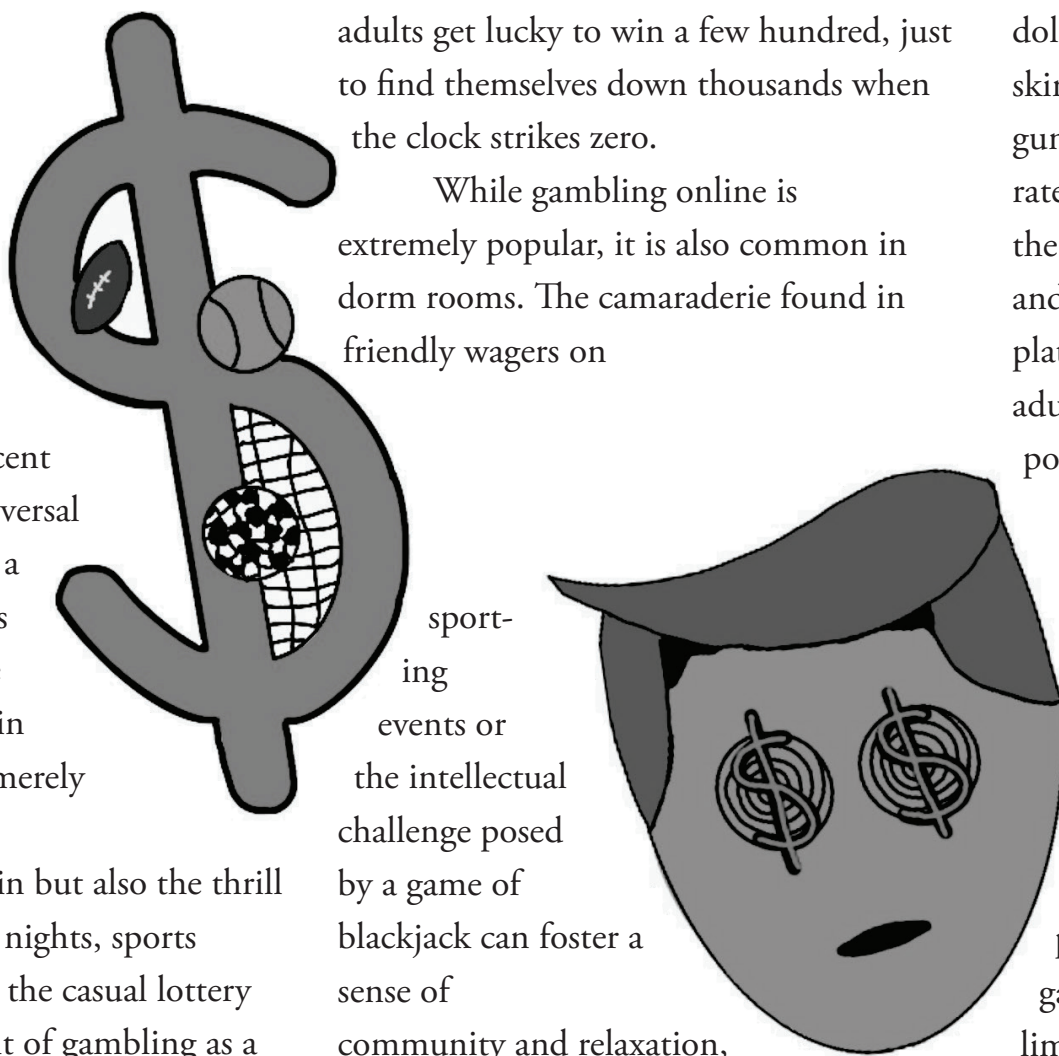
While not directly linked to how much money kids have, gambling's integration into society, social circles, and video games introduces gambling behaviors in a guise that might not be immediately recognized as such. In the popular video game Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CS:GO), people spin a wheel for one dollar, potentially getting a very rare gun skin worth hundreds online. However, those gun skins are acquired at an extremely rare rate. For a generation that has grown up in the digital age, the lines between gaming and gambling have become blurred. As these platforms become more ingrained in young adults' lives, understanding their allure and potential risks becomes crucial for fostering a healthy relationship with gambling among the youth.

The challenge, then, lies in navigating the fine line between gambling as a harmless form of entertainment and gambling as a harmful addiction. This requires a conscious effort to understand the psychological triggers associated with gambling, learn the importance of setting limits, and recognize the signs of problematic behavior.

However, beyond individual efforts, it's important for us to have conversations as a community about the various aspects of gambling, its impact, and the support available here at Harvard for those struggling with a gambling addiction. We have seen friends and peers alike go through gambling addictions on campus, and by working together, students can navigate the world of gambling, aiming for a future where its enjoyment is not overshadowed by the risks of addiction.

LUKE WAGNER '26 (LUKEWAGNER@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) AND SANTI KELLY '26 (SKELLY@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WRITE SPORTS FOR THE INDEPENDENT.

GRAPHIC BY SOPHIA RASCOFF '27



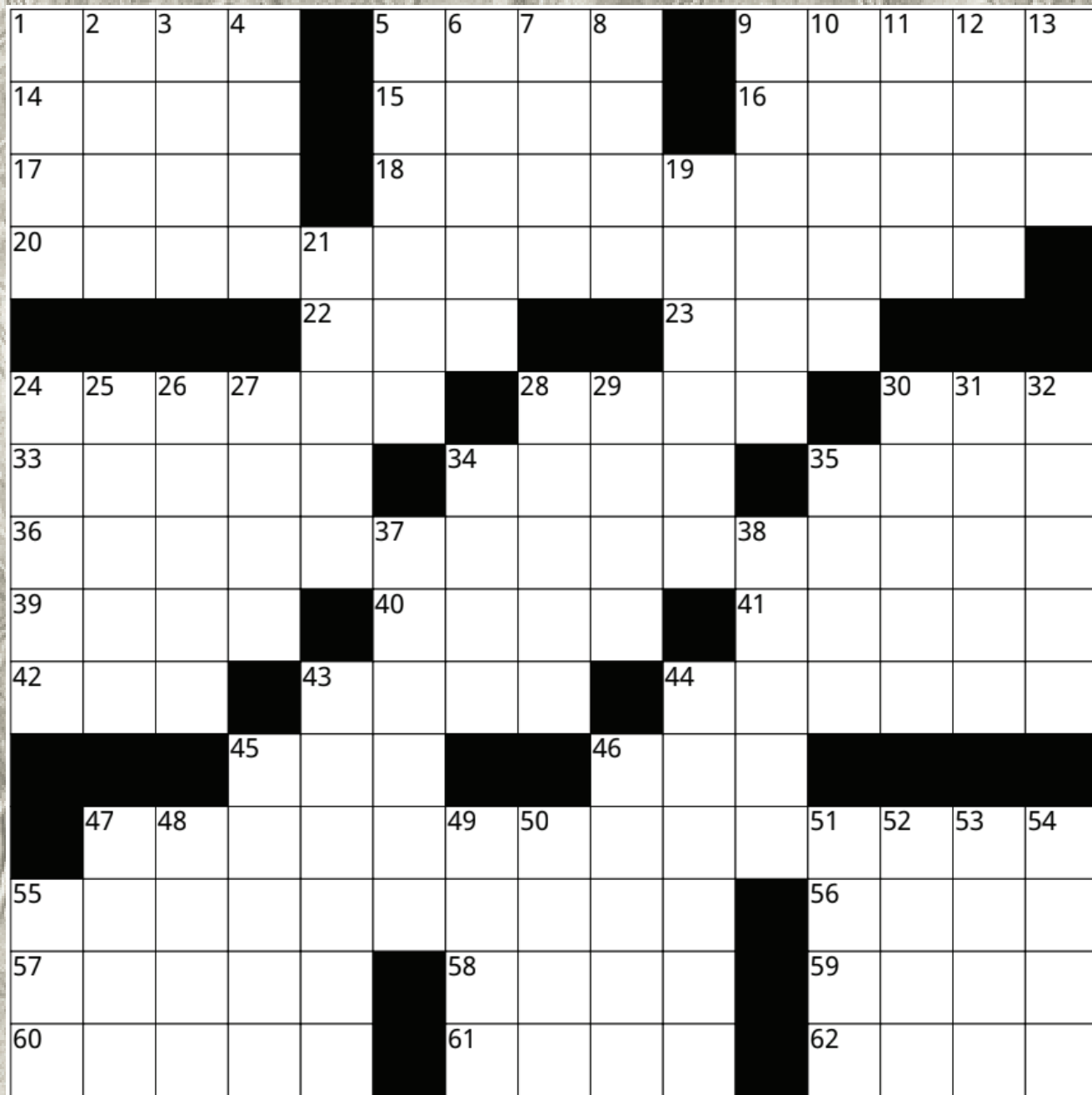
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DO NOT REFLECT THE VALUES OF THE *INDEPENDENT*.

Testing Testing

BY HAN NGUYEN '27



ACROSS

1 Pet-adoption ads, briefly
5 Latin I word
9 Flies like an eagle
14 Old man, in Mannheim
15 Unaccompanied segment
17 Paint layer
18 Gets older and slower
20 R. J. Reynolds product that once sponsored "The Dick Van Dyke Show"
22 Hi-___ graphics
23 50's political inits.
24 Sticks and ___
28 Explorer John et al.

30 Half a dozen
33 Well-to-do types
34 Broad valley
35 Auto racer Yarborough
36 What's measured in watts
39 Hockey venue
40 Wide shoe sizes
41 Dress style
42 Small batteries
43 Retired fliers
44 West ___ (Bahama Islands locale)
45 "Can't Help Lovin' ___ Man"
46 ___ Arbor, Mich.
47 Lively campaign face-offs
55 Title character about whom another says: "The man

seems hardly human"
56 Angers
57 Rollerblade
58 River to the Ubangi
59 Golfer's pocketful
60 Toledo cats
61 Historic Scott
62 Levelheaded

DOWN

1 Prepare for a trip
2 Gin flavoring
3 Work on ___ (sunbathe)
4 Paving block
5 Axis foes
6 Early synthesizers
7 Looped handle
8 Oracle
9 Outpourings

10 Brewery fixtures
12 Hwys
13 Maple syrup source
19 Sushi fish
21 Peak
24 He-Man's twin sister
25 Actress Shire
26 Pizzeria fixtures
27 Head turner
28 Track events
29 "What a shame!"
30 2005 horror sequel
31 Actress Graff
32 Spanish city that gave sherry its name
34 Food regimen
35 Chilly

37 Mix more thoroughly
38 Lustrous velvet
43 Indian wraps
44 "Absolutely!"
45 "Same here"
46 Confuse
47 Japanese deer
48 Jr.'s exam
49 Fall sound
50 Observer
51 Smithereens
52 Length times width
53 Adolescent
54 Latin 101 verb
55 Flavor enhancer

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