SEPTEMBER 19, 2024

### HARVARD VOL LVI ISSUE 4 INDEPENDENT

THE STUDENT WEEKLY SINCE 1969

6



### MASTHEAD

### **EXECUTIVE BOARD**

President: Eliza Kimball '25

Editor-in-Chief: Andrew Spielmann '25

Vice President: Katie Merriam '26 Design Editors: Annelise Fisher '26 & El Richards '26 Managing Editor: Layla Chaaraoui '26 Head of Business: Mir Zayid Alam '25 Head of Operations: Belle Behring '26 Comp Director: Ella Bikoff '27

### EDITORIAL BOARD

News Editor: Jonah Karafiol '26 Forum Editor: Abril Rodriguez Diaz '26 Arts Editor: Kayla Reifel '26 Sports Editor: Luke Wagner '26 Associate News Editor: Sara Kumar '27 Associate Forum Editors: Gauri Sood '26 & Rania Jones '27 Associate Arts Editor: Meena Behringer '27 Associate Sports Editor: Kate Oliver '26 Game Designer: Han Nguyen '27 Copy Editors: Lucas Cohen-d'Arbeloff '27, Sophie DePaul '27, Kaitlyn Hou '27 Podcast Director: Candace Gardner '25 Video Directors: Ryan Irving '27 & Mia Tavares '27 Photo Editor: Jordan Wasserberger '27

### **BUSINESS BOARD**

Programs Director: Frances Connors '26 Subscriptions Director: Lauren Zhang '27 Advertising Director: Tomas Arroyo '27 Special Projects Director: Michael Oved '25

### **OPERATIONS BOARD**

Social Media Director: Alma Russell '26 Publishing Director: Anna Moon '27 Outreach Director: Meagan Ma '27 Website Directors: Daniel Rosario '27 & Patrick Sliz '27 Community Chairs: Carly Gelles '27 & Keith Hannon '27

### ASSISTANT COMP DIRECTORS

Nina Berkman '27, Daphne Feigin '27, Anthony Goenaga '27, Natalie Mendez '26, Gabi Poniz '26

### **DESIGN STAFF**

Christie Beckley '27, Clara Corcoran '25, Riley Cullinan '27, Seattle Hickey '25, Jenny Jia '27, David Li '25, Dhati Oommen '26, Emily Pallan '27, Sophia Rascoff '27, Reeve Sykes '26

### **STAFF WRITERS**

Becca Ackerman '25, Adedoyin Adebayo '26, Chidimma Adinna '25, Lauren Barakett '27, Breagh Bridge '27, Kya Brooks '25, Andrew Christie '26, Taybah Crorie '25, Sophie Dauer '27, Hannah Davis '25, Ari Desai '27, Ilana Feder '26, Natalie Frank '27, Sophia Ghafouri '27, Jai Glazer '27, Denny Gulia-Janovski '26, Caroline Hao '25, Vincent Honrubia '27, Kate Kadyan '27, Santiago Kelly '26, Clara Lake '27, Sachi Laumas '26, Katy Lin '26, Gemma Maltby '27, Andrew Morrissey '26, Emeline Palfrey '27, Roberto Quesada '27, Ava Rem '27, Alejandro Sanchez '26, Lucie Stefanonie '27, Ellie Tunnell '27, Maddy Tunnell '26, Mishelle Wiewiora '27

### BUSINESS & OPERATIONS STAFF

Aanya Afridi '26, Josefina Biernacki '26, Kevin Blanco '26, Cate Buchan '27, Olivia Callander '26, Aliza Fergang '27, Ella Galova '27, Annabelle Gardner '27, Nia Goodloe-Pierre '27, Patricia Halliday '26, Jude Herwitz '25, Mimi Koenig '25, Julia Maciejak '26, Nicholas McQuilling '27, Matthew Moore '27, Lauren Murphy '25, Chinasa Ohajekwe '26, Christina Shi '27, Ava Stone '26

### CONTENTS

3. Meet the Class of 2028

by Sara Kumar '27

- 5. In Traveling Solo, I Discovered Myself by Roberto C. Quesada '27
- 6. Boys, Booze, and Bonding: An MIT Frat Experience

by Mia Tavares '27 and Mir Zayid Alam '25

8. Sunday in September by Jordan Wasserberger '27

10. Boys will be Boys, and Girls will be...Tidy? by Abril Rodriguez Diaz '26
11. Grounds for Discovery by Christina Shi '27 and Sophie DePaul '27
12. A Tribute to Hollywood's Greatest Voice by Jordan Wasserberger '27
13. The Unsung Heroes of Harvard Varsity Sports by Kate Oliver '26
14. Sports Spotlight: Bronte Brough by Rania Jones '27
15. Indy Sportsbook: 12 Teams, One Dream by Vincent Honrubia '27
16. Crossword: Changing Leaves by Han Nguyen '27

**ABOUT THE INDEPENDENT** 

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

For general or business inquiries, contact president@harvardindependent.com. Address Letters to the Editor, op-eds, or comments regarding content to editorinchief@ harvardindependent.com. To subscribe to bi-weekly mailed print issues, email subscriptions@harvardindependent.com.

### We belong to no one but ourselves.



### Meet the Class of 2028

Harvard releases a surprising Class of 2028 racial profile following the Supreme Court's 2023 strike down of affirmative action.

### BY SARA KUMAR '27

the Class of 2028 profile this past week to reveal remarkably similar numbers.

New demographic statistics for the Class of 2027 were reported in *The Harvard Gazette's* recent press release, which re-calculates based on percentages of only students who chose to disclose their race. The previously released statistics calculated student demographic percentages based on overall enrollment.

Using the newly reported numbers, Harvard's cumulative minority enrollment decreased from approximately 36.7% of the Class of 2027 to 31.5% of the Class of 2028. The Class of 2028 African American or Black student population fell from 18% to 14%. Furthermore, Native American enrollment decreased from 2.2% of the Class in 2027 to only 1% of the Class of 2028. Nonetheless, in comparison to projected enrollment numbers documented in the SFFA v. Harvard lawsuit, the change in class composition is less drastic than anticipated. Ransom explained the predicted shift in minority enrollment following an overturn of affirmative action is expressed in these findings.

"Under the status quo, [the current minority student population] would be about 13% Black and 13% Hispanic. And then, without any racial preferences but everything else the same about Harvard's process, [the minority student population following an affirmative action ban] would drop to about 4.6% black and 7% Hispanic," Ransom described. "The Asian numbers would rise from 22% to 29% ... The white numbers would also rise from 45 to 51%." Economists Dr. David Card and Dr. Peter Arcidiacono predicted similar outcomes if the SFFA ruling were to overturn affirmative action, according to projected enrollment

numbers displayed by *The Harvard Crimson* in 2022.

However, in contrast to the anticipated Hispanic or Latino enrollment, Harvard's Class of 2028 experienced an almost 2 percentage point increase in such students. Also straying from the anticipated numbers, according to the *Gazette* press release, "Thirty-seven percent of students [in the Class of 2028] identified as Asian American, representing no change from the year prior."

Looking at peer universities sheds further light on these statistics. Similar to Harvard, Yale's Class of 2028 was able to also maintain a diverse student body, with their African American numbers holding at 14% and Hispanic enrollment experiencing an increase from 18 to 19%. In fact, Yale received the most minority applicants ever during the 2024 application season, and its Class of 2028 had the largest share of Hispanic or Latino students in the University's history. However, unlike Harvard's profile, Yale's Asian American student population dropped from 30% of the Class of 2027 to 24% of the Class of 2028.

MIT starkly differentiated from Harvard and Yale, observing concerning falls in their minority populations. The percentage of African Americans in the Class of 2028 in comparison to the Class of 2027 dropped by 10 points. The share of Hispanic or Latino students fell by 5 percentage points, and MIT's Asian American enrollment increased by 7 percentage points. Amherst College observed similar shifts, with the proportion of African American students in the Class of 2028 falling to a mere 9%—a tremendous decline from the 19% enrolled in the Class of 2027.

Supreme Court ruling addressing race-conscious college admissions, Harvard College's Class of 2028 is of national interest. Since preserving diversity in American education is essential for high-quality instruction and the democratic strength of our nation, the College is at the forefront of this discussion.

n the wake of the June 2023

"Everyone wants to know, how is Harvard responding? Are they changing their admissions process? Are they changing their recruiting practices? Has their applicant pool changed?" explained Tyler Ransom in an interview with the *Independent*. Ransom is an Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Oklahoma and was a consultant for Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA) in their lawsuit against Harvard.

The Supreme Court's decision to overturn affirmative action came in response to accusations that both Harvard College and the University of North Carolina violated the Equal Protection Clause and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Plaintiffs SFFA argued that these schools intentionally discriminated against Asian American applicants on the premise of race. Ultimately, the Court decided that such practices were unconstitutional. This ruling came around two decades after California enacted Proposition 209 in 1996, which ended all state affirmative action policies in education, employment, and contracting. Considering the Class of 2028 is the first to join the College since the decision, many predicted its demographic composition to demonstrate significant changes, particularly in minority enrollment. However, the Admissions Office released

NEWS 3

These inconsistencies have prompted questions about how Harvard maintained such a diverse student population when other elite institutions and academic studies found or forecasted the opposite. And while it is difficult to understand such numbers without full transparency regarding legacy preferences, athletic recruitment procedures, racial data calculations, and other admissions criteria, there are a few suspected reasons behind such results.

First, Harvard's methods of calculation changed in the wake of the Supreme Court decision. When sharing the demographics for the Class of 2028, the College used a denominator that excluded international students and those who opted to not disclose their race. This decision inevitably shifts student enrollment percentages, making it harder to understand the current first-year profile in the context of information from prior years.

Ransom also articulated that, "Universities are probably going to change the weights that they put on different applicant attributes to arrive at the admissions decision." In the context of Harvard, the application for the Class of 2028 experienced a significant overhaul. Eliminating the supplemental, optional essay that let applicants write on any topic of their choosing, Harvard instead added five required short-answer questions focusing on topics ranging from life experiences and extracurriculars to attributes a prospective student would want their future roommate to know about them. Ransom suggested that these changes may have been made so the admissions committee could shift some of their decision-making to student essays and other more holistic factors rather than concrete metrics.

Additionally, when understanding the projected enrollment numbers, Ransom explained that a lot has changed since that data was released. The figure used in SFFA v. Harvard was calculated from 2019 Harvard student demographics yet the Harvard Class of 2027 observed significantly more African American and Hispanic or Latino students than 13% each. Furthermore, when analyzing schools like MIT, it is important to remember that allowing multi-ethnic students to check more than one box when self-reporting their racial identity also complicates how these numbers can be interpreted year-by-year. MIT's Class of 2027 reported demographics totaled 112%, whereas its Class of 2028 racial percentage breakdown 4 News only reached 101%. Harvard

has also been altering how multi-racial students document their ethnicities, further muddling the impact of the Supreme Court ruling.

According to Ransom, we cannot fully understand the gravity of the Supreme Court decision without the complete applicant data, which will likely be published by the Department of Education in a little over a year. "I actually don't put much stock in those numbers as being informative of anything. I think that we need to just wait until the official government numbers come out," Ransom expressed. "I view all of these releases as more of a public relations campaign than actual information."

"While the admissions offices at these places, they're trying to kind of play the middle between, 'We have some really strong feelings on the pro-racial preferences side from our alumni and from our faculty and other stakeholders,'" he explained. "'We also have a lot of people on the anti-racial preferences side that are really wanting to make sure that we're adhering to the ruling.' And so they're just basically trying to appease both sides."

Ultimately, American universities are stuck between a rock and a hard place as they attempt to maintain a variety of cultural backgrounds among their students while remaining racially neutral in the application process. Ransom suggests that increasing a school's "recruitment of applicants" is a possible solution. In a letter to the Harvard community following the release of the Class of 2028 data, Faculty of Arts and Sciences Dean Hopi Hoekstra explained how Harvard would be doing just that.

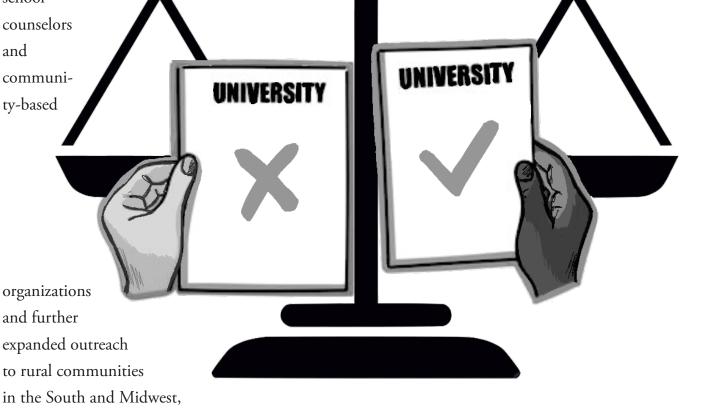
"Last fall, the Admissions team increased recruitment travel programs and outreach to school advancing our core goal of encouraging a diverse group of promising students, regardless of background, to consider Harvard," she wrote.

Harvard promotes the sentiment that "We all belong here." In the aftermath of these past few years of intense scrutiny surrounding the University's competitive admissions process and in advance of the inevitable future impact of the affirmative action ban, it is unclear how Harvard plans to uphold this motto. Yet William R. Fitzsimmons, dean of admissions and financial aid, assured the student body student body that the school will not stray from this commitment in a statement in the *Gazette*.

"Our community is strongest when we bring together students from different backgrounds, experiences, and beliefs," he said. "And our community excels when those with varied perspectives come together—inside and outside of the classroom—around a common challenge by seeing it through another's perspective."

However, the coming college application seasons will be telling as student enrollment numbers become increasingly transparent and previously notoriously secretive institutions are forced to bring their methods into the public eye. And, as Ransom explained, "It's not just about what's happening with what Harvard's allowed to do in the admissions process." As an elite institution, Harvard's actions will set the tone for the future of the cultural enrichment and quality of the American higher education system.

SARA KUMAR '27 (SJKUMAR@COLLEGE. HARVARD.EDU) WRITES NEWS FOR THE *INDEPENDENT*. GRAPHIC BY ANNELISE FISHER '26



# In Traveling Solo, I Discovered Myself

Traveling is often seen as something that must be done with others, but what if you did it alone? BY ROBERTO C. QUESADA '27

nstagram and travel magazines have sold us a picture-perfect image of what travel should be: lounging with your family in the Caribbean, hiking mountains with friends, or hanging out with your lover in Mykonos. But what if your friends never seem to have free time? And what if that dream lover is literally a dream? Thankfully, I found a solution: solo travel.

I went on my first international solo trip at 18 years old after my first semester at Harvard. From a young age, I had a fascination with Japan's advanced transportation system, one I had read about in books and seen in documentaries. While my friends were excited about the potential trip, our schedules never quite aligned. Knowing I might not have an opportunity again, I decided to take a leap and go alone.

Saying I was nervous would be an understatement. As my plane took off from Queens and started our 14 hour trip to Tokyo, worries filled my mind. How would I communicate if I didn't speak a word of Japanese? Could I handle Tokyo's transit network, daunting even for a New Yorker? Amidst the anxiety, I began to appreciate something better enjoyed alone and in quiet-the views. Thousands of feet below me, the beautiful snow-capped mountains and glaciers of Alaska unfolded, looking even more dramatic in the winter light.

Hours later, I stood in front of Tokyo

Yamanote train line. When in the planning stages, some of the benefits of solo travel are hard to appreciate. The first and biggest one is flexibility. As a solo traveler, I didn't have to compromise on anything. If I felt tired and wanted to stay in, I could do just that. If I wanted to see ten tourist attractions on a tightly packed schedule, nothing was stopping me. The flexibility of traveling alone allowed me to do everything I wanted, from riding trains in Tokyo to take in the views to exploring Japan's thrilling amusement parks.

Traveling alone also improved my communication skills. While being bilingual helped me smoothly explore places like Latin America, I had to find ways to get my ideas across in Asia. When I rode Eejanaika, one of the most intense roller coasters in both Japan and the world, I couldn't communicate with words. Instead, I looked into the eyes of the man sitting next to me. We burst out laughing as the spinning train cars started moving upwards. That was a human connection beyond language.

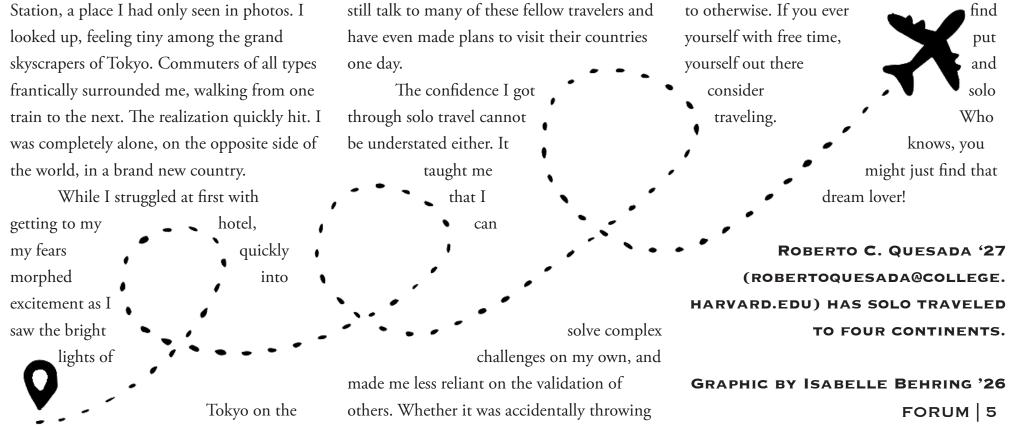
Beyond language barriers, I also got out of my comfort zone. When I wasn't focused on a close group of friends, I had no one to talk to but others. During my travels, I met both locals and other travelers from around the world. In China, I met a young man at the top of a skyscraper who told me about his time at university in the north of the country. I've made solo traveler friends on hikes through the mountains of Taiwan and on cable car rides. I

my high-speed rail ticket in the trash in Japan or nearly getting stranded in Macau in the middle of the night, solo traveling has taught me that I can persevere through difficult moments.

Coming back to the United States, solo travel exposed me to practices in other countries that could make life in the U.S. much better. For instance, I was very impressed by the transit systems in Europe and Asia, which were even more advanced than places like New York City. Rather than waiting on a schedule, the trains in Hong Kong and Tokyo came frequently and could take me anywhere in the city without the need to drive. High-speed rail systems like the one in Spain blew me away with their quick speeds and smooth riding.

In London, technologies like platform doors also made me feel safer while riding. Seeing these motivated me to advocate for better public transit in the United States. I would love to take a high-speed rail train from Boston to New York in one hour. Additionally, talking to locals in England and Spain about their healthcare and education systems made me wonder what the United States could look like with an affordable healthcare system. Seeing how other cities and countries handle their challenges provides inspiration for what the United States can improve upon.

While traveling with others has its advantages, solo traveling has given me the chance to see places I wouldn't have been able



## Boys, Booze, and Bonding: An MIT Frat Experience

A boy and a girl spend their Saturday night frat-hopping at MIT and learn why MIT might just be the perfect girls' night out.

### BY MIA TAVARES '27 AND MIR ZAYID ALAM '25

y the time we arrived at MIT, the frats were closing down. "Fratlantis," a juvenile play on the words "Frat" and "Atlantis," hosted by Phi Beta Epsilon (PBE) on Sept. 14, publicized a rather early start time of 10 p.m. In our attempt to be fashionably late, we completely missed the main function of the night. As our Uber rolled up to 400 Memorial Drive, we had to double-check that we had not signed up for a sorority philanthropy round. Cops arrived shortly after us at 11:35 p.m., and the predominantly female crowd was hastily herded off the frat house's front lawn. While a red-in-the-face PBE brother yelled at the gathering of future frat girlfriends to hurry up and order their Ubers, we struck up a conversation with a group of inebriated girls wearing jeans-anda-cute-top. The harsh blue lamplight washed over us all unflatteringly.

Much to our surprise, the girls weren't from MIT—out of the thirty-something girls we spoke with that night, only four were actually MIT students. The rest hailed from Northeastern, Boston University, Boston College, Wellesley, and a handful of other Boston schools. For most, MIT frats were their go-to choice on a Friday or Saturday night. Intrigued, we made it our mission for noticeable at the parties—allegedly due to both their short stature and demure personalities. One Northeastern freshman went so far as to claim that she has never spoken to an MIT guy outside of the brothers charged with guarding the doors. According to a Wentworth sophomore, "The only way to kiss an MIT guy, to be honest, [is for it] to be forgettable." Harsh? Yes. True? Neither of us would know. What we do know is that on our walk across the river from PBE to the other half of MIT frat row, we overheard a man ask his friends if "MIT men have game?" The reply came quickly, and vehemently. "No. Fuck no."

So if MIT boys are not a large presence at their parties, where are the men? The answer is that there aren't any. MIT frats are notorious for only letting in guys who present a valid MIT ID because outsiders are "known to cause problems." Zayid, for example, was not let into Sigma Chi despite the frat being at less than 50 percent capacity. A quick count of the attendees inside and the stream of party-goers leaving the houses suggested a staggering female-to-male ratio of around six to one. We barely saw, let alone spoke to, any guys other than the frat brothers. Despite our best efforts, they seemed unwilling to engage in jovial dialogue. The guys we did glimpse appeared to have no interest the night to find out why MIT frats in sticking around after they had been had been crowned the "most fun frats in told they would not be allowed into the and medium-sized Fireball handles Boston" by everyone we spoke to. parties. Another explanation for the glaring absence of testosterone is that Boys the boys were too busy bro-ing around According to our conversation with each other to make an appearance on the main house floors. Mia's swift jaunt inside the Sigma Chi function at the peak of midnight led her to a hidden "game room" filled with ten or so stoic frat brothers enjoying a game of water-pong and nursing lukewarm Coronas. A word of advice to anyone

searching for an MIT husband (or just a situationship)—you'll have a better chance looking in the library than on the Sigma Chi dance floor.

#### Booze

For all the media coverage that fraternities get for being Miller Lite meccas, we noticed very few drinks flowing anywhere. Our analysis of over 60 attendees at Sigma Chi revealed zero drinks in hands—phones aplenty, however. Yet, based on the fawn-like gaits employed by people filing in and out of the frats, they were quite drunk (unlike these two sober authors). As Mia can confirm, the sweat-soaked walls and stench of body odor mixed with the sounds of babbling girls and outdated pop hits were hard to stomach without the sensory dampening that alcohol so kindly provides.

A conversation with a few freshmen girls from Northeastern revealed that the culture of pregaming was prevalent given that frats served only beers and the principle of avoiding drinking at frats. Even said beers were discussed with middling enthusiasm. The girls aggressively shook their heads "no" when asked whether they would feel comfortable drinking anything served at a frat. While Zayid was relegated to the curb at Sigma Chi, he noticed some brothers confiscating numerous deceptive Poland Springs from handbags and promptly lobbing them into a brim-full bin by the front door. Perhaps these provide some context for the other accounts shared of 2 a.m. nights at the frats, throwing up, and then somehow getting home. Regardless of what drives this drinking pattern-convenience, preference, or risk mitigation—it is clear that people are not going to these frats to drink.

with four MIT sophomore girls, the best frats are those with the most attractive guys—Delta Tau Delta, Sigma Chi, and PBE. For context, there are 26 fraternities at MIT, five of which—per a brother of PBE—are "sporty." Yet, every other group of girls that we asked said that the frat brothers were barely

### 6 FORUM

### Bonding

So if the appeal isn't boys or booze, why are girls trekking from all around the city to show up before 10 p.m. on a Saturday for these frat

functions? The answer, we have found, is female friendship and community. MIT frats have perfected a recipe for bonding with your girlfriends and meeting new people in a female-dominated space.

First, given the six-to-one female-to-male ratio, allowing only MIT men inside, and the apparent invisibility of said MIT men, women at MIT frats are infrequently accosted by male attention (as opposed to Northeastern frats that we were told have aggressive and "douchey" men). An MIT sophomore explained that while female friendships can bloom at parties, there is also always the danger of being "side-eyed" by a girl who seems like she is there "to bag a man." At MIT, there are few men to bag. Second, as a go-to weekend night out for students at nearly every major Boston school, the MIT frats attract a crowd with multiple dimensions of diversity. In addition to mixing students from different schools, three Northeastern girls en route to Tufts found that MIT's parties were the most ethnically diverse. Our anecdotal evidence viewing the crowd confirmed their characterization. Finally, by the time these partygoers step into the dank frat houses, they are already quite drunk, and as such, more than ready to mingle. Mia can attest: during the four minutes she spent in a frat bathroom, she learned about one girl's ex-situationship, another girl's painful experience kissing a bearded man, and two other girl's insecurities about their hair and makeup. All of these factors lead to an environment that makes forming friendships easy. Two separate girls we talked to asserted that they had met some of their best friends at an MIT frat party—one being an MIT-

Boston College connection and the other being a Boston University-Northeastern connection. Neither of those friendships likely would have arisen in a place like a raunchy nightclub or a house party teeming with boys on the prowl.

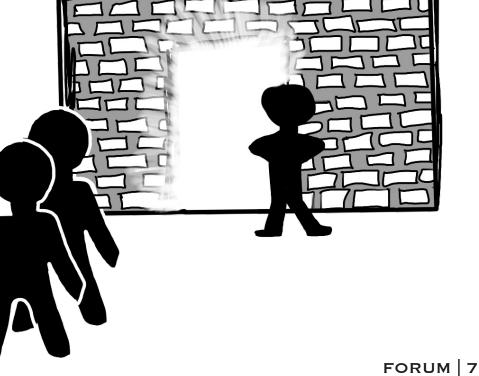
Harvard, however, was noticeably absent from everyone's friendly anecdotes. The girls we spoke to seemed shocked that we hailed from the other side of the Charles. Despite being familiar with the rumors that Harvard freshmen tend to spend their weekends at MIT, no such freshmen were spotted. When asked about encounters with Harvard students, it seemed that most of the partygoers had sparse, if any, interactions with our community. The girls we found who did know Harvard people could only name a few boys-a result of their MIT Alpha Chi Omega x Harvard Sigma Chi mixer earlier in the night. Indeed, it seems that Harvard girls are not taking advantage of the various networking opportunities that MIT frats can afford.

By the time we arrived back at Winthrop, we were satisfied with the success of our albeit short-lived night. While it had been debatably fun, it was indubitably enlightening. We learned about frathopping culture, how to spot a girl's girl, who not to kiss, and what happens when MIT boys call the cops on their own parties. Our biggest takeaway, however, was more Harvardoriented. MIT frats provide a unique

opportunity for Harvard girls to step outside of our potentially claustrophobic bubble and form relationships with students from other Boston schools. Maybe this untapped resource is the next big frontier for girls of all class years to explore. So, if you decide to venture outside the Harvard bubble into the world of MIT frat parties, we advise you to do so with an open mind and open arms. And maybe say hi to our newfound friends when you inevitably see them guarding the door to PBE.

MIA TAVARES '27 (MIATAVARES@COLLEGE. HARVARD.EDU) AND MIR ZAYID ALAM '25 (MIRZAYIDALAM@ COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WERE BOTH ACCEPTED INTO MIT AND CHOSE TO ATTEND HARVARD INSTEAD.

> GRAPHIC BY SOPHIA RASCOFF '27







### Boys will be Boys, and Girls will be... Tidu?

My messiness makes me feel like less of a woman. BY ABRIL RODRIGUEZ DIAZ '26

t was almost 9 in the morning when my roommate paused in front of my open bedroom door on her way to class. She was ready for the day: coffee in hand, hair done, and backpack squarely on her shoulders. She blinked bewilderedly, looking past me to examine my spotless, sparkling bedroom: freshly made bed, clean-swept floor, empty trash bin, and meticulously arranged desk.

"It's so clean," she said, surprised. The night prior, she had walked past my room and seen the floor of my 150-square-foot single covered in clothes, notebooks, toiletries, and more. Now, not even eight hours later, the old wood almost gleamed.

"Yeah," I managed. "Have a good day." As she walked out the door, I sank to the floor, put my head in my hands, and took a deep breath. It was time to face the day, and there was no time to take a nap before my first class. But at least my room was tidy again.

Struggling to stay tidy is challenging enough, but coupled with gendered expectations, it becomes ❹ P overwhelming. Since the A. Enlightenment, ideals of ليريد femininity have been deeply intertwined with tidiness. At O the time, the tidiness expectation was captured by the concept of women as "angels in the house," which valued women for Ð maintaining orderly homes, and by influential thinkers Œ like John Ruskin, who asserted that a woman's role was to "order, arrange, and decide." This expectation persisted into the 20th century, reinforced by advertising such as a 1963 Hoover ad urging husbands to gift their wives vacuums, claiming, "She cares about her home, so if you really care about her...wouldn't it be a good idea to consider a Hoover for Christmas?" From Tupperware commercials in the 1960s to modern Rubbermaid ads, these gendered expectations have persisted into the 21st century. Modern portrayals of messy women only exacerbate the idea. The "Messy Millennial Woman" or "Messy Modern Woman" trope, which exists in characters such as Phoebe Waller-Bridge's Fleabag, paints the messy woman as a trainwreck: fascinating yet 10 FORUM inherently flawed, falling

short of societal expectations of femininity.

As a woman who struggles significantly with keeping my space organized, this advertised ideal has been difficult to grapple with. To me, tidiness sometimes feels like an elusive requirement to be "woman enough." As women, how can we be content with who we are, when who we are does not match the constant barrage of others telling us what we should be? Studies confirm that women experience higher pressures to be tidy in comparison to men. For women with ADHD, these expectations are even more challenging. Studies on women with ADHD find that when we do not meet these often unreachable expectations, we suffer social consequences for violating gendered expectations.

One study on adult women with ADHD describes how we are socially encouraged to display "feminine" traits such as "organization,"

that

6

0

and

æ

"when

When gendered expectations feel like prerequisites for being considered "woman enough," yet remain unattainable, it is no surprise that women with ADHD suffer so severely with low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression. Being denied our femininity because we violate gendered expectations is deeply harmful; as human beings, we thrive when we can express ourselves authentically and feel that our identities are validated, not judged by arbitrary expectations.

Authentically, I am feminine. My clothes are rarely folded in my drawers, my desk is like a hidden object's game of scattered nail polish, pens, and post-its, and I once found my wallet in the freezer. My jewelry may be strewn all over my room, but I love matching my earrings, rings, and necklaces to my outfits every morning. I may be messy in the kitchen, but I take pride in cooking for the people I love. All of this is not to say that femininity cannot

be presented in other, ത less conventional forms. But کر www everyone's **₽** ₱ version Ø 9 of being authentic themselves is different, and for me, I express my femininity in a sacred practice M, that was passed down to me: by taking care of my loved ones through cooking. I am slowly learning to sever the connection between my messiness and my status as a woman. That does not mean I do not strive to be more organized in my daily life; I try hard to keep my space tidy and to find organization methods that work for me. Rather, it means that I try not to let my failure to be tidy define anything larger about my identity. I am just as much a capable woman when my room is spotlessly clean as when it is messy. Femininity does not have to be neat—femininity can be chaotic. **ABRIL RODRIGUEZ DIAZ '26** (ABRILRODRIGUEZDIAZ@COLLEGE. HARVARD.EDU) IS THE FORUM EDITOR OF THE INDEPENDENT.

[women] display behaviors consistent with ADHD symptoms...[such as] disorganization...they are at a higher risk for social judgment for violations of feminine norms." Another study further explains that women with ADHD are pressured to exhibit traditional "feminine" qualities, such as being "home-organizers." These societal pressures have real

consequences. Moreso than men with ADHD and women without the condition, women with ADHD tend to experience "deeply embedded feelings of lowered self-esteem and self-efficacy," and are significantly more likely to experience anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, and other comorbid disorders.

**GRAPHIC BY REEVE SYKES '26** 

### ARIS Grounds for Discovery

CAMBRIDGE'S UNDERRATED COFFEE SPOTS. BY SOPHIE DEPAUL '27 AND CHRISTINA SHI '27

es, you can get a cup of coffee in the d-hall and study in the library. But there's something about getting a deliciously overpriced coffee in a cozy cafe that makes spending hours staring at your computer screen far more enjoyable. In Harvard Square, you've probably visited Starbucks, Dunkin, and Blank Street. But this fall, break your routine and add some variety to your coffee shop circle. We visited five other cafes and evaluated their ambiance, coffee, and prices to come up with some of the best recommendations nearby.

#### **Bluestone Lane**

#### Better for brunch.

This "aussie-style" cafe offers plenty of both outdoor and indoor seating, perfect for those who enjoy an open and airy environment. It's also a comfortable place to sit and do work, with vaulted ceilings and air-conditioning. Still, the space has more of a restaurant feel, as you are seated by a hostess. While you can sit even if you're only getting a drink, Bluestone offers an all-day breakfast and lunch menu including waffles and sandwiches. The small iced vanilla latte, served in a cute glass cup, had a nice balance—not too milky or sweet, though a bit watery. This runs on the pricier side— \$6.40. One downside was the paper straw, which didn't hold up well.



#### Faro

#### The perfect place for a coffee chat.

In this boho-esque cafe, you'll often find people reading, talking, or putting up fliers for upcoming events in the community. One important thing to note: Faro is a no-laptop cafe. Though not really the right place to do work, this chatty atmosphere is the perfect setting for a coffee date. When you take a step down into the cafe, you're met with leafy green plants, mismatched wood furniture, and stacks of books and games. Soft music plays in the background and sunlight floods the low-ceilinged room. For \$5, the small iced chai latte was about 50 percent ice and a bit on the milkier side, but the chai flavor was strong and the plastic-alternative straw did not disappoint.

#### **Circus Cooperative Café**

#### Coffee with a heart.

Circus Cooperative Café, which opened just last year, is a spot for those seeking a quieter atmosphere with a cozy, "granola" feel not far from Mather House. Owned and managed cooperatively by its employees, the café prides itself on its non-hierarchical management system. With plenty of natural light and comfy couches, it's a great place to work (though laptops are not allowed on weekends). The café has seasonal specialty drinks, like the Donut Shop Latte and Lavender Latte. While their pastry selection is on the smaller side, they do offer a full lunch menu. Their small iced vanilla latte is \$5.50-a bit pricey for its size-but was pretty good with the right amount of sweetness and ice. For something lighter, the small iced tea goes for \$3.75. If you're looking for a way to support a local worker-owned business, Circus Cooperative Café is worth checking out.

fuel up with something nutritious. The interior is colorful and fun, and if you're looking for a more relaxed atmosphere, there's extra seating downstairs with cool lighting. Life Alive is also connected to Down Under School of Yoga that offers massages and meditation, adding to the "wellness" feel. The honey vanilla oat cold brew is very sweet, but comes in a cute cup. At \$5.50, the coffee is on the pricier side—and fair warning, it doesn't always sit well with the stomach. Still, the service is fast, and if you're into the wellness scene, it's worth checking out.

#### Cafe Gato Rojo

#### The place to save a buck.

Step down into the GSAS building for a step up from the dining hall. Cafe Gato Rojo's biggest selling point: they take board plus. Overall, the prices are on the cheaper side-at least for Cambridge. An iced vanilla latte with almond milk (one size only: 16oz) will cost you \$4.99. The coffee is pretty big and not too sweet, and any type of milk you get is the same price. The iced chai latte with oat milk is a little watery, but it has a good chai flavor that isn't too spicy and the oat milk taste isn't overpowering. Both drinks have a slightly bitter aftertaste, however. Though not particularly cozy, soft music plays and there is plentiful indoor and outdoor seating. Despite being noisy at times, it's a great place to do work except on the weekends, when it is closed. The cafe also offers baked goods, yogurt, and a wide assortment of hot teas (though as of now, only one iced tea option). Pick up a punch card and

### Life Alive

Coffee with a shot of wellness.

Conveniently located in Harvard Square, Life Alive offers that relaxed, post-yoga vibe that you didn't know you needed. It offers health-conscious food options like açaí bowls, juices, and wellness shots, making it a great spot for those looking to get your tenth coffee free!

The square may not have one perfect coffee shop, but there is a place for everything. So before you go to Pavement and settle into your usual spot, take a page out of our book and try someplace new.

SOPHIE DEPAUL '27 (SOPHIE\_DEPAUL@ COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) RECENTLY TRADED HER DAILY CUP OF COFFEE FOR FOUR CUPS OF CAFFEINATED TEA. CHRISTINA SHI '27 (CHRISTINASHI@ COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WILL BE TAKING A BREAK FROM ICED VANILLA LATTES.

**GRAPHIC BY ANNELISE FISHER '26** 

ARTS | 11

### A Tributre to Hollywood's Greatest Voice

James Earl Jones, iconic screen and stage actor and voice of Darth Vader, dies at 93. BY JORDAN WASSERBERGER '27

 Luke, I am your father." All of you reading that seminal line from *The Empire Strikes Back* likely did so in a low, metallic, baritone voice, perhaps the most recognizable in Hollywood
 history. James Earl Jones, the legendary actor who
 brought Darth Vader and countless other
 characters to life, passed away last week at the age of
 93, leaving behind a legacy that cements him as one
 of the most influential actors of all time.

Born in Mississippi in 1931 with a debilitating stutter, Jones was abandoned by his father as a child and raised by his grandparents in Michigan. According to Jones, "I was a stutterer. I couldn't talk. So my first year of school was my first mute year, and then those mute years continued until I got to high school." In high school, Jones turned to drama and poetry as ways to regain his voice and suppress his stutter, kindling a lifelong relationship with the arts which would eventually blossom into one of the most impactful entertainment careers in history. Before taking to the stage, he enrolled at the University of Michigan in 1949 as a pre-med major, training to be a combat field medic during the Korean War. When he returned from training, he decided to focus on his passion, graduating as a drama major in 1955. The poetic justice of a stuttering kid becoming the most iconic voice in film history should be lost on no one.

After graduating college in 1955, Jones moved to New York to study acting, supporting himself as a janitor and by taking small roles or stagehand jobs. Jones eventually became a prolific Shakespearean performer in the 1960s and became one of the best-known stage actors of the era. It was here, by luck, that he got his start in Hollywood. Looking to cast one of the co-stars in *Dr*.

Then, in 1976, Jones got a call from George Lucas, a director working on an underfunded pipe dream across Death Valley, Hertfordshire, and Tunisia. It was a project using clay models for spaceships, pulleys and strings for the Force, and a cast of mostly unknown actors to tell what would be one of the most impactful stories of all time. I am talking, of course, about Star Wars. The miraculous chronicle of how this cultural behemoth was made is an article unto itself, but we'll leave that for another day. For James Earl Jones, Star Wars wasn't an astonishing undertaking or leap of faith, as it was for so many others on that first film. For Jones, Star Wars was a quick phone call and a \$7,000 three-hour recording session in which he instantly became the greatest villain of all time.

It is astonishing that Jones was able to voice-act in three hours at a level never seen before or since, when in today's Hollywood, actors will take weeks or months to complete a voice acting role. My god, how many other performances are able to strike fear into the hearts of audiences just by the sound of their *breathing*? How many other performances are able to completely transcend genres and generations, to the point where I'd wager that anyone born in between 1950 and today, *Star Wars* fan or not, knows the name Darth Vader?

I can speak on Jones' incredible talent all day long, but his powerful humility deserves recognition as well. Where most people would bask in the glory of the success of *Star Wars*, Jones requested credit for Darth Vader be given to David Prowse, as "When it came to Darth Vader, I said, no, I'm just special effects." Jones would continue to refuse credit until 1983, when by then, according to him, "It became so identified that by the third Jones as the first Black man in history to be awarded EGOT status in 2011, a club of 21 that includes some of the most legendary figures from pop culture history, including Elton John, Audrey Hepburn, Mel Brooks, and Viola Davis. Jones' status as an EGOT winner is controversial given his Oscar was honorary, a ridiculous argument given he has a greater impact on the history of film then almost anyone else in the last century. 50 years later, his work is regarded as some of the greatest of all time, a dream career for anyone, let alone someone born with a stutter and practically mute for the first 14 years of his life. Simply put, James Earl Jones will *always* hold his EGOT.

In addition to his individual accolades, his bevy of work and trailblazing story have netted him several lifetime awards. In 1992, he received the National Medal of the Arts from President George H.W. Bush at the White House, followed by the Kennedy Center honors in 2002. In 2017, he was honored with a special Tony Award for lifetime achievement, as well as an honorary doctor of arts degree from Harvard. His acceptance speech was one line: "May the force be with you," and met with deafening applause.

For all of his career achievements, I think the most remarkable thing about James Earl Jones was his perseverance and unshakeable spirit. And so, I think it prudent to leave you with words from the legend himself: "If you expect someone else to guide you, you'll be lost." I hope we all can muster some semblance of Jones' courage in our daily lives, to become perhaps not a Dark Lord of the Sith or a proud lion, but the best version of ourselves.

JORDAN WASSERBERGER '27 (JWASSERBERGER@COLLEGE.HARVARD. EDU) HOPES THAT READERS WILL TAKE TWO HOURS OUT OF THEIR DAY TO GO WATCH (OR-REWATCH) STAR WARS AND THINK ABOUT HOW LUCKY WE ABE TO

THINK ADOUT HOM EOCKT ME AKE TO

*Strangelove*, director Stanley Kubrick happened to see Jones in a Shakespeare in the Park rendition of *The Merchant of Venice* and decided to bring him on the project.

Post-*Dr. Strangelove*, Jones enjoyed a relatively quiet film career, acting in a few smaller films, notably *The Comedians*, where he starred alongside future *Star Wars* co-star Alec Guiness (Obi-Wan Kenobi). It seems the invisible string theory was at play. Jones didn't *really* need Hollywood to be a star; in 1969, he became the first Black actor to win a Tony for Best Actor in a Play for his portrayal of Jack Jefferson in *The Great White* **12** | **ARTS** *Hope*. one, I thought, 'Okay, I'll let them put my name on it.'"

Over the next few decades, Jones would take on many more iconic roles. Whether it was Terence Mann in *Field of Dreams*, King Jaffe Joffer in *Coming to America*, or Mufasa in *The Lion King*, he was an unstoppable force in American pop culture. Jones went on to win two Emmys in 1991 for his portrayal of Junius Jackson in *Heat Wave* and Gabriel Bird in *Gabriel's Fire*, a Grammy in 1977 for spoken word poetry, and an honorary Oscar in 2011 for his lifetime of astonishing performance. That Oscar cemented





### The Unsung Heroes of Harvard Varsity Sports

How the athletic trainers keep student-athletes on the field. BY KATE OLIVER '26  $\!\!\!\!\!\!$ 

arvard is home to 42 varsity athletic programs, the most in the NCAA. These athletes perform both on and off the field, supported by the Harvard Varsity Club and other support systems throughout the University. Crimson athletes especially rely on a key group of 17

athletes especially rely on a key group of 17 individuals to make it through grueling practices and competitions: the athletic trainers. On top of keeping athletes healthy, the athletic training staff are some of the most dedicated fans on campus and are essential members of each of the teams that they work with. Harvard trainers go above and beyond their job description, working overtime to care for the whole person, not just the athlete.

While they receive little external recognition, athletic trainers are responsible for keeping players on the field; they treat any and all injuries for athletes both in and out of season, traveling for away weekends, and staffing practices to keep the team safe and healthy. Trainers are in constant contact with players and coaches to advocate for athletes and keep them on the field in the best condition possible. At Harvard, almost all of the trainers work with multiple sports teams, so they must balance treating in and out-of-season athletes to prevent and treat injuries.

To become an athletic trainer, one needs to complete a master's program at a CAATE-accredited program. Harvard does not

relationship carries the same importance as that of player and coach. Trainer Beth Boyington has been staffed on the field hockey team since she began working at Harvard nine years ago. In her time with Crimson Athletics, she has also worked with the wrestling, fencing, and softball teams. Before joining the Harvard staff, she worked with the football programs at the University of Texas, Austin, and the University of Oregon. Boyington stressed in her interview with the Independent that "gaining the trust... [of athletes] can be a difficult roadblock," but it is her job to develop this trust so she can prevent further injury.

In her previous position at Power 5 programs, Boyington was exposed to 5 treatment options -7 S HARVAR beyond and the scope of what is allowed by Harvard funding. She said, "I

think for as big of a program as Harvard is, they do as much as they can within the bounds that we are restricted to, to create the

resources and create a staff that knows how to work well within the resources that we have." All of the trainers at Harvard view their hands as their most important assets in properly treating student-athletes; any type of manual therapy cannot be completely replicated by the flash of new technology. With so many sports to cover, the trainers at Harvard are not confined to just their assigned teams. "We learn the body. We don't learn a sport," Boyington explained. Within their education, trainers are taught to treat injuries all over the body so they can fill in coverage holes while others are on away trips or sick. The strong group of 17 trainers works together just like every team they treat, relying on strong lines of communication and the cooperation of the athletes they are working with.

Furthermore, trainers at Harvard face additional time constraints from athletes' academic requirements; while teams set treatment schedules before practice, the staff spends their day preparing for the rush of students from 2 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. when student-athletes hurry to get some form of treatment before heading out to the field. As Boyington stated, "Two o'clock hits, and everything just gets really hectic. It's about getting people efficient treatment. If I get five minutes with someone, I need to make sure they're the most efficient five minutes I can give them."

Above all, the athletic trainers at Harvard are able to maintain a strong work-life balance while bringing elements from home into the training room. Boyington's dog Tucker is adored by the field hockey team and a frequently requested companion during weekend treatments. On weekends, when the

field hockey or softball team has away contests, Tucker is often watched by other members of the training staff. This goes to show that the bonds formed in Dillon Field House over the long tenure of many members of the staff extend beyond the workplace. Every athletic trainer is not only an important part of their respective sports teams, but a key piece in the well-oiled machine of Harvard sports medicine. They lean on each other, and together, they are able to provide the highest quality care that helps propel Harvard sports toward victory.

have this type of program, but the sports medicine department does offer transition-to-practice training for newly accredited clinicians to get live experience in a Division I setting. Clinical settings are a major part of proper training, as prospective trainers can develop the technical skills necessary to adequately treat athletes; these experiences offer live exposure to injuries and specialized treatment techniques.

A trainer's ability to adequately treat their teams comes from developing trust between the players and the professional. This KATE OLIVER '26 (KOLIVER@COL-LEGE.HARVARD.EDU) COULD NOT SURVIVE HER SPORT WITHOUT THE ATHLETIC TRAINERS.

**GRAPHIC BY GABI PONIZ '26** 

SPORTS 13

### Sports Spotlight: Bronte Brough

Turf wars: Bronte Brough's global field hockey journey. BY RANIA JONES '27

ronte-May Brough '26's primary education included all of the usual suspects: learning to read, write, multiply, push pass, sweep, oh, and aerial. Brough first started playing field hockey when she was seven years old.

Growing up, Brough learned how to play hockey on grass, but once she moved to prep school, she had the opportunity to play on astroturf. In England, Brough noted how "it's quite a small [field] hockey circle," and she attributes her closest friendships to this intimate environment.

In England, there are two distinct parts of field hockey. Brough explained how mostly "private boarding schools play field hockey, and they're notorious for being the only schools that do play." English schools compete in what Brough referred to as "school nationals," which are primarily just for private boarding schools with the exception of a few state schools. Outside of school athletics, there is additionally a club field hockey scene in England. For Brough, though, her "school actually set up a club that was affiliated with the school, and so it was basically the same school team as [her] club team."

Brough first played with England national squads when she was 15, but she explained that the process began much earlier. While other middle schoolers were awkwardly navigating the trials and tribulations of algebra and school dances, Brough, at about age 12 or 13, "started playing in the development



centers, from which you then get selected for the national team."

If selected from the development process to continue playing on the national squad, players are organized into an Under 16, Under 18, Under 21, and senior women's team. Brough explained that being on these teams is no small commitment. "We play games against other nations, like, obviously the home nations—Wales, Scotland—and then we'd play a lot against Ireland, Germany, the Netherlands."

At the U21 level, things get even more serious. Brough continued to explain how at the higher levels, players are able compete in the Junior World Cup and Junior Euros tournaments, which are bigger undertakings. In terms of time commitment, players who compete in these tournaments are attending training camps every other week as opposed to playing together only monthly. Impressively, Brough played in the Junior World Cup while she was technically still eligible for the U18 team.

When it came to the college recruitment process, Brough's decision wasn't exclusively defined by shin guards, sticks, and goggles. What drew her to America was "the fact that academics and athletics [are] respected, especially at Harvard, kind of equally. And for [her], academics is a huge part of [her] life."

At the end of her final year of high school, Brough competed with the England team at the Junior World Cup for the first time. She noted how because of COVID-19, her age

> group fluctuated, and as a result, her team was the youngest competing at the Junior World Cup. Nonetheless, Brough explained how her team, as the "underdogs" took it game by game, and in the end came out with a bronze

Playing hockey in America for two years now, Brough still plays for her European team which she did not always anticipate to be an option. "After the Junior World Cup, I told them that I was coming to America, and obviously I can't fly back and train every other weekend. And so I thought the door was closed on England hockey, but they changed their protocol kind of and said that if it's a summer tournament, then I could still be eligible to play it as long as I go and train the entire summer."

At a glance, this might not seem like a huge undertaking, but Brough walked us through how "going back is kind of weird, trying to adapt back to the style and the speed of play, and obviously, different players, different playing styles."

This past summer, Brough played in Barcelona in the Euros tournament where qualification for the next Junior World Cup was on the line. In the previous Euros, Brough shared how heartbreaking it was when her team came fourth, but accredited this loss to a shared determination amidst the team. "We had a relatively easy group, and we placed second in the group after losing to Germany two-nil, but we crashed out of the semi-finals playing the Dutch, which was obviously really hard, and it was honestly a bigger defeat than we'd have hoped for."

Even with these uniquely high-paced, high-caliber field hockey experiences, Brough's transition back to American field hockey has been seamless. In terms of the team's style, Brough noted that playing on the Harvard team resembles a style of hockey that "is halfway in between European and American field hockey because the international aspects of [their] team brings field hockey culture and tradition and playing styles from everywhere." Brough is still eligible to play for the next Junior World Cup, though her participation is dependent on the timing of the tournament.

14 SPORTS

medal. This was the best that England had ever done in this tournament. On a larger scale, Brough reflected that this win "kind of set up the expectation of [them] to win medals at major tournaments like that, and gave [them] a bit more confidence, and kind of put [them] on the map a little bit." When reflecting on what the Harvard team means to her, Brough shared: "American [field] hockey honestly made me fall back in love with hockey again. The team's amazing we all share the same love for field hockey—and I'm super, super excited about this season."

RANIA JONES '27 (RJONES@COLLEGE. HARVARD.EDU) WAS AWARDED THE NICKNAME OF FIGHT CLUB ON HER HIGH SCHOOL FIELD HOCKEY TEAM. PHOTO FROM BRONTE BROUGH '26

### Indy Sportsbook: 12 Teams, One Dream

PREDICTING THE 2024-2025 COLLEGE FOOTBALL SEASON. BY VINCENT HONRUBIA '27

• ext weekend marks the beginning of a new and exciting season for our Crimson football team as they face off against the Stetson Hatters. With 30 new recruits, an emerging FBS coach replacing the legendary Tim Murphy, and the number one kicker in the country, we believe it isn't too early to predict a 10-0 record and an Ivy League championship. Since the script for our perfect season has already been written, this week's Indy Sportsbook will instead turn to the more mainstream FBS level, analyzing what team has what it takes to become national champions in the new 12-team playoff format.

If you are unfamiliar with college football, NCAA Division 1 schools such as Harvard can be placed into one of two conferences: FCS (Football Championship Subdivision) or FBS (Football Bowl Subdivision). Harvard has been a member of the FCS since 1982, and due to academic requirements, scholarship opportunity, and the emerging NIL landscape, we don't see this changing anytime soon. Meanwhile, FBS is composed of the most elite 134 football teams in the country, all vying for the title of national champion.

Due to factors such as the NFL draft, transfer portal, and incoming freshman classes, it has never been more difficult to predict who will emerge victorious come the end of the season. That being said, we at the Indy Sportsbook can confidently say that Boston College, Northeastern, and UMass will not be among the 12 playoff teams competing in Atlanta this January. Don't be fooled by Boston College's current top 25 rank; we all know the true best football team in Massachusetts already aced their BC exam in high school. If you have ever watched any collegiate football, you will know the powerhouse that is the SEC. This is the conference in the Southeast region of the United States that has dominated every football category imaginable for the last several decades. From NFL potential to National Championship winners, the SEC is the true juggernaut of the NCAA, and we

don't see this status changing. This year, the clear frontrunner of the division is the number one ranked Georgia Bulldogs, with other SEC giants like Alabama, Tennessee, and Oklahoma all hoping to cause some upsets. That being said, with current odds of +300, Georgia is the safest pick you could possibly make to win the championship. Georgia has won 50 of their last 54 games over the past four seasons, winning back-to-back championships in 2021 and 2022. Head coach Kirby

NOX.

Smart will be looking to extend this record

with

returning senior QB Carson Beck destroying the number 22 ranked Clemson Tigers 34-3 in their week one matchup. You simply can't discuss the 2025 college football playoffs without mentioning the Dogs.

If any team can upset the SEC hierarchy, it may just be Coach Ryan Day's Ohio State. With heavy investment into the transfer portal this offseason, adding talents including quarterback Will Howard, safety Caleb Downs, and running back Quinshon Judkins, there is a reason Ohio State is only +325 to win their 9th national championship. It seems of the most exciting seasons of college football like this year will be make or break for Day, as in recent memory. Ohio State has failed to beat their rivals and reigning national champs, the University of Michigan, for Day's entire tenure. The Buckeyes need to take advantage of a struggling Michigan after the losses of coach Jim Harbaugh and key players to the NFL. That being said, if they do manage to emerge victorious, it could finally be Ryan Day's year to prove his many doubters, me included, wrong. Unfortunately in college football, it has become more and more rare for an underdog to compete at the playoff level. The

effect of NIL appears to be only furthering this disparity. However, if you're looking for an entertaining team that will definitely cause headaches, look no further than the Ole Miss Rebels. The Rebels have had an electric start to their season with Hiesman candidate quarterback Jaxson Dart throwing for 795 yards and 6 TDS without throwing an INT in two games. It's truly too early to tell with this team. Ole Miss's schedule has an absolutely brutal stretch coming up with games against South Carolina, LSU, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Georgia, which make +1500 odds look

far too conservative.

If Ole Miss's schedule is too daunting a task, look no further than the ACC for another team that could make some noise this year: the Miami Hurricanes. Quarterback Cam Ward currently leads the country in QBR (a rough system which measures overall quarterback performance) with 11 touchdowns and over 1,000 passing yards in only three games. The Miami offense is raising eyebrows with odds of +1600 after putting up unreal numbers. Miami is favored in every game for the rest of the 2024

season. With an easier ACC schedule, the number eight Hurricanes will likely make the 12 team playoffs, but will they be prepared to take on SEC and Big Ten opponents come January?

Make sure to come out this weekend and show some love for our Crimson team, with the rest of your Friday and Saturday reserved to watch what is shaping up to be one

**VINCENT HONRUBIA '27** (VINCENTHONRUBIA@COLLEGE. HARVARD.EDU) EXCLUDED THE NUMBER 2-RANKED UNIVERSITY OF **TEXAS IN THIS ARTICLE BECAUSE** HIS EX-GIRLFRIEND GOES THERE, SO HE HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO ACTIVELY PRAY ON THEIR DOWNFALL YEAR IN AND YEAR OUT.

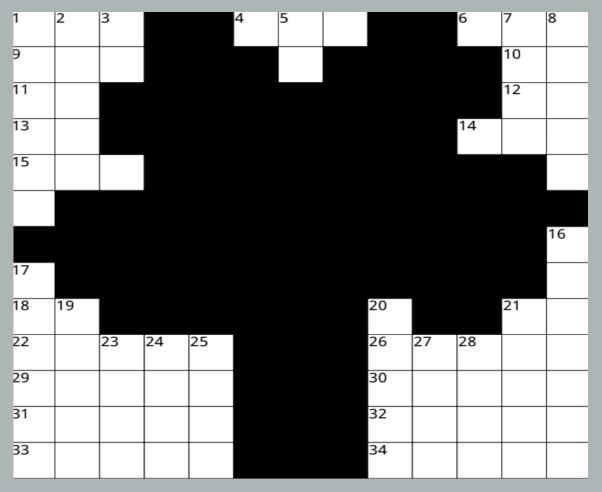
**GRAPHIC BY CLARA LAKE '27** 

SPORTS | 15

### **COVER ART BY EL RICHARDS '26** LAYOUT BY ANNELISE FISHER '26 AND EL RICHARDS '26

**OPINIONS OF FORUM PIECES BELONG ONLY TO THE WRITER AND DO NOT REFLECT THE VALUES OF THE INDEPENDENT.** 

### Changing Leaves BY HAN NGUYEN '27



### ACROSS

- 1 Sign of summer
- **4** <u>-</u>-12 Conference
- **6** Amazement
- **9** Acorn producer
- 10 Stephen King novel,
- 11 Have a go \_\_\_\_ (try)12 44th chemical symbol
- 13 \_\_\_ amo
- 14 Nourished
- 15 Letters in certain
- transitions
- **18** Informal greeting
- 21 Alien

### DOWN

- 1. Detest
- 2. Diner
- **3.** Approval
- 5. Electrical current unit
- 7. Hide a mike on
- 8. Practice piece
- 16. Sadden
- 17. Brisk
- 19. Not mainstream
- **20.** Like new dollar bills
- **21.** German thanks
- 23. "I May Destroy You"



22 Early Peruvians Pave over 29 Parkinson's treatment Actress Graff Rest atop 32 Fabric store section Shrill cries Ski equipment

creator Michaela **24.** Per **25.** Comic **27.** Singer from Din and Tonics **28.** Spill the beans

> THE HARVARD INDEPENDENT PUBLISHES **EVERY WEEK DURING THE ACADEMIC YEAR** BY THE HARVARD INDEPENDENT, INC., 12 **ARROW STREET CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138**

Eliza flimeall Artu Spielum