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HARVARD

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# INDEPENDENT

THE STUDENT WEEKLY SINCE 1969





# MASTHEAD

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## 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.

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**We belong to no one but ourselves.**

## THE SUSTAINERS

*The Sustainers are a group of Independent alumni committed to supporting our mission by funding one month of office rent each year for at least five years.*

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# NEWS

## Campus Chaos

Dangers on campus raise safety concerns among students.

BY PIPPA LEE '28 AND MIA WILCOX '28

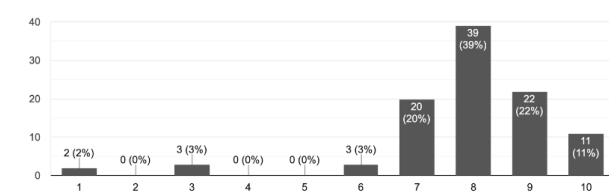
Tuesday afternoon, students of the College received an email from Lauren Brandt, Associate Dean of Students, regarding increased safety measures on campus. This email came in the wake of a series of events that have jeopardized the safety of many students since their arrival on campus. After reading this email, we are left wondering how safe the Yard really is.

From property theft to dorm break-ins to violent encounters in public, the safety and security of Harvard Yard and the broader Harvard Square for students has come increasingly under scrutiny. While college can be intimidating and stressful, concerns about safety can make the transition for Harvard Yard's first-year residents even more challenging.

Since late August, Harvard Yard has been swarming with students rushing to classes, hosting meetings, or arriving on campus for the first time—but they aren't alone. Millions of tourists coupled with unhoused individuals native to the Greater Boston area pass through the Yard alongside these students every year. Harvard students have varying opinions on these dynamics. While some enjoy the bustling environment that includes a mix of students and visitors, others feel that the crowded Yard can become invasive and raise safety concerns. *How can we strike a balance?*

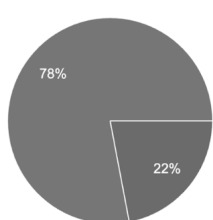
To gain a better understanding of the sentiments surrounding safety at Harvard, the *Independent* randomly polled 100 first-year students in Cabot Library. When asked how safe they felt at Harvard on a scale of 1 to 10, 39% of the surveyed students reported an 8. Yet while these students generally feel safe on campus, the prevalence of theft and instances of violence leave a sense of unease.

How safe do you feel at Harvard?  
100 responses



We also asked, "Have you experienced or witnessed any unsafe events on campus (theft, confrontation etc.?)" Nine people reported that they had witnessed scooter theft. Athletes on campus noted that their scooters were stolen just outside of Annenberg Hall and Cabot Library despite having locks on them.

Have you witnessed any unsafe events on campus (theft, confrontation etc.)?  
100 responses



Some students reported more alarming encounters.

"I watched a girl in my class get asked multiple times to go to an alley with a creepy old man so he could take pictures with her," Ben Fitzpane '28 recalled. "It was the second day of school at Joe's Pizza. When she told me what was happening, I got in between them and told him she wasn't interested. He kept talking to her until she forcefully told him no."

Ahmed Eldeeb '28 explained his unnerving encounters with tourists and non-Harvard-affiliated individuals on campus. "It was the first week here, and we're coming from orientation, there's just a random homeless lady. She comes by Holworthy, like, where I'm at. She's coughing like crazy, and she's screaming at all the freshmen. She's like, 'let me in. I have COVID, I need to use the bathroom right now,'" Eldeeb recounted. "And then she got really mad, and then she started chasing us with a ruler. And then we called the Securitas. They escorted her, but it took a bit."

Eldeeb's experience within his first week at the College sheds light on the prevalence of outsiders near the freshman dorms and the shortcomings of security at Harvard. His unsafe experiences did not end there.

"My friends and I were studying at Cabot Library in the Science Center, and we were studying in a study room, and then there was a random guy who came into our study room, and he was just talking to us about our personal life and dating experience," he explained. "It was really weird, and so we asked him, 'Who are you? Like, are you an undergraduate student?'"

At first, Eldeeb explained that the man said, "Yeah. I go, here, I'm 26 years old, and I'm majoring in physics. I go to grad school for physics." And then we asked him again. We're like, "Wait, so you go here, right?" He said, "Yeah, I'm a CS major."

"We're like, 'Hold up. You're not a CS major because you said you were a physics major in the beginning.' And then that's when there was a red flag. We got really uncomfortable. We get outside, and then my friend Nejman calls Securitas. He [Securitas officer] comes downstairs and escorts the guy. But the unfortunate thing is, I still see him on campus."

At a school where so many students spend their nights studying in the library, this story raises many concerns. The walk home from Lamont and Cabot in the early hours of the morning is already a difficult trek for students delirious from

work without the added safety concerns. As more students report non-Harvard affiliates gaining access to Harvard buildings and student spaces, the urgency to address these issues becomes even more critical.

Eve Weiner '28 described a similar experience regarding an altercation she witnessed between a CVS employee and an unhoused person.

"I walk into CVS at 7 a.m., and it's fully empty, except the workers, and then all of a sudden, this [woman] walks in and just basically grabs a bunch of stuff, and then walks out. And the people are like, 'Hi, you can't leave with that,'" Weiner explained. "It escalates very quickly, and she starts throwing things... She takes a case of energy drinks and she smashes it to the ground. Glass shatters everywhere. And the drinks are like fizzy drinks. So these are exploding everywhere and rolling all over the ground, and she starts picking up those drinks and chucking them across the way. And it hits the keychain holder, and those all crash to the ground," Weiner recalled.

It is alarming that many students feel unsafe in shared spaces such as the library, near their dorms, or the local CVS. All students deserve to feel secure in their college environment, yet many continue to experience anxiety about their safety. Harvard administration must recognize these concerns and address student needs.

While these concerns about safety on campus are legitimate, it's important to remember that Harvard Square and Cambridge are home to more than just Harvard students. Perhaps, we should consider re-evaluating our perceptions of tourism and the broader Cambridge community. The well-being and upkeep of our community depends on all of its members.

**MIA WILCOX '28 (MWILCOX@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) AND PIPPA LEE '28 (PIPPALEE@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) ARE COMPING THE INDEPENDENT.**

GRAPHIC BY MIRANDA CHAO HWANG '28



# Unhoused in Harvard Square

Hearing the stories of people experiencing homelessness in Harvard Square.

BY CAROLINE STOHRER '28

The corner of Massachusetts Avenue and JFK Street is a popular spot for toiletries from CVS, matchas from Blank Street, and trips into Boston via the Red Line. However, it's also a place for around twenty unhoused individuals to rest or to ask passersby for spare change. While most students and Cambridge residents ignore them, this week, the *Harvard Independent* spoke to a few individuals in Harvard Square to hear their stories and bring nuance to our understanding of the homeless.

Antonio, an elderly amputee, sits outside of CVS or the Smith Campus Center on most days. He came from Cape Verde, an island country off of West Africa, ten years ago. Though a passerby may assume he has no housing, Antonio currently rents an apartment in Jamaica Plain, an hour-long train ride from Cambridge.

"I used to work. I used to work a mechanic job, and I used to deliver, drive," Antonio explained. Ever since he needed his legs amputated due to diabetes about a year ago, Antonio has struggled financially.

Outside of the Coop sit Dylan and Ziggy. "We're not homeless, but more or less travelers," Ziggy remarked. Ziggy is awaiting his court hearing for distribution charges, and Dylan is trying to save enough money to repair his guitar and go to Salem. "I just came from California," Dylan added. "We just met."

At the moment, the two of them sleep on the streets or in abandoned buildings. "There's squats everywhere. They're all over—like storefronts anywhere that say 'for lease.' They can't really complain about you being there," Ziggy said. In the last year since the police cracked down on the Massachusetts Avenue and Melnea Cass Boulevard encampment, people experiencing homelessness have spread out across Boston and past

its city limits, never staying in one spot for fear of police violence or arrest.

"You got to worry about cops for sure," Dylan said. Ziggy agreed, introducing me to his dog, Deity, who he said had been his protector and motivation for getting up every morning. "I've been stopped by the cops before—they've made me lie down on top of him," Ziggy said. Dylan followed up with, "They'll shoot a dog, yeah. They're a little trigger-happy."

## Financial Stability and Family

In August 2024, *Boston Indicators* released a report on homelessness in the Greater Boston area. Their findings showed that residential overcrowding in Boston has increased 50% since 2006, accompanying rising rental and home value rates over the past few years. This housing shortage, compounded by the high cost of living in Boston, has left many families without a stable housing situation. Homelessness rose by 27% between 2022 and 2023 alone.

Antonio sells editions from *Spare Change Newspapers*, a biweekly newspaper published through the work of the Homeless Empowerment Project in Cambridge, to make money. "I sell my papers every day when I go [to Harvard Square]," Antonio said, "They sell me a newspaper for 50 cents, I sell them for two dollars." *Spare Change Newspapers* publishes local news and serves as a financial opportunity for unhoused individuals to earn profits while learning about pertinent resources

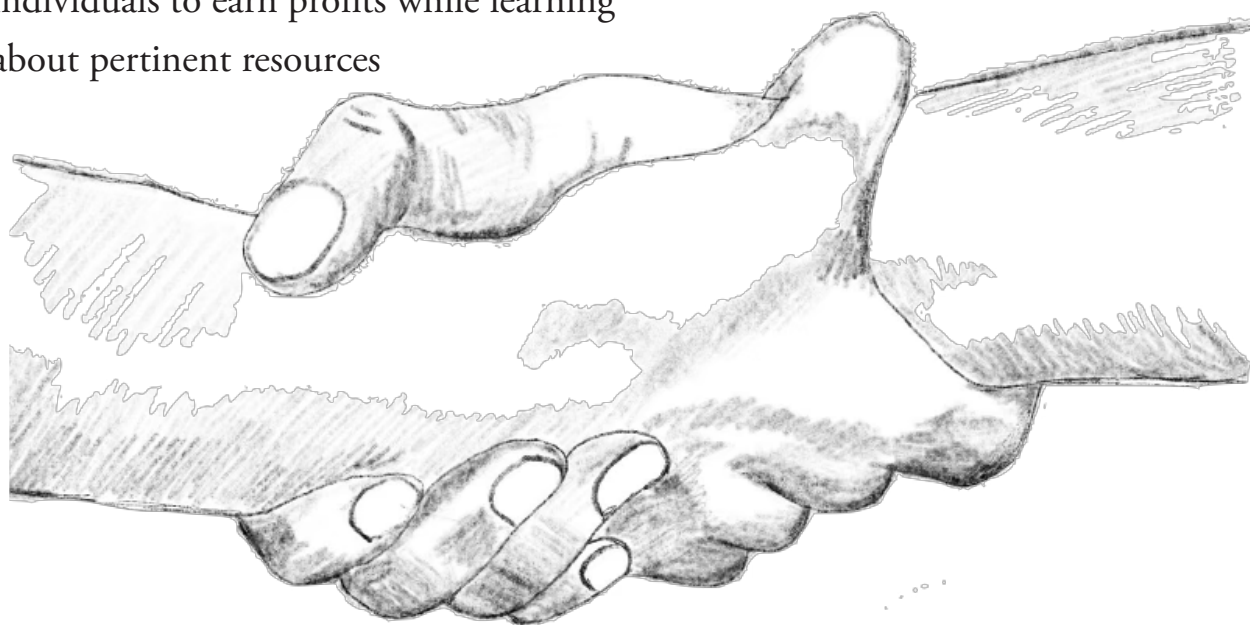
through their "Helping Hands" and "Situations Wanted" sections.

Antonio has a daughter who lives in Boston. "She went to UMass, she made me very proud. Now she's married, she's got her husband, and she's got two daughters raised. She supports me with food money; I don't ask her for too much. She's got a house to pay [for]." He displayed a picture of his two granddaughters on his phone, a look of pride on his face as he described his daughter's success.

Ziggy's main goal at the moment is to pay for his court fees while he's mandated to be in the area. "I'm currently kidnapped by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts until November 19, but after that, I'm headed off to the red rocks of California or Colorado," Ziggy said, "I have family in Allston and Boston, which helps, but I do siding and framing. I do carpentry work here and there, but that's just for now."

"Boston's pretty tough to make money in," Dylan said when asked about sources of income to compensate for the rising cost of living. "I have barely ever spent time in Boston. I travel the whole country. I play guitar for tips."

GRAPHIC BY  
CHRISTIE BECKLEY '27



## Relationship with Social Services

The *Independent's* interviewees had conflicting views about shelters and social services available to the public. Health services were a major draw for each of the three. Antonio recounted his positive experience with social workers in the South End: “They give me medication, they check my foot, they check my blood pressure, they check my sugar, they check everything. They help me with everything.”

Ziggy was assigned a caseworker to help him access similar healthcare services until his court appointment in November. “I had my wisdom teeth come in, and they lined me up for appointments at Tufts Medical Center. There are eye appointments, too, that I’m able to go to,” Ziggy said. “I was able to apply for housing too, my wisdom teeth got extracted—I have two more up top for next week.”

Dylan, however, had a different view on social services. According to Dylan, the label “homeless” is applied to a diverse group of people, with unhoused individuals falling on a spectrum of self-sufficiency and stability. He expressed frustration with shelters and the support system, saying, “I don’t mess with them,” Dylan explained. “I walk into some shelter and we’re standing in line with a bunch of drug addicts—like the kind of people who really did fall on hard times and are just extremely misfortunate to have actual mental illness.”

Dylan recalled thinking, “What am I doing here? I can be resourceful. I can travel. I know how to get around. I like to leave the services for the people who really need it.”

Dylan was also skeptical about the benefits that outreach could provide. “If I were to get help from a shelter or a business, it would leave behind a homeless paper trail. It can mess with your traveling,” Dylan said.

Both Dylan and Ziggy concurred on this point, with Ziggy adding, “You can get stuck in a loop, and the help is not really much help anyways.”

## Homeless Outreach at Harvard

In Cambridge, public outreach for the unhoused is manifold in social services offered, some right outside of Harvard Yard. A critical demographic facing homelessness is youth around or under the age of 18, whom *Boston Indicators* reported accounting for a third of Greater Boston’s unhoused population. The *Independent* spoke with Necati Ünsal ’26, the administrative director of Y2Y Harvard Square, a student-staffed program that serves this vulnerable population.

“We are the nation’s first student-led shelter for youth homeless. Our overnight shelter serves up to 27 young adults each night—there are 22 long-term beds that guests can lottery for, and that bed lasts for 30 days. There are also five emergency beds.”

Ünsal described Y2Y’s role in both helping guests reach financial stability and in working with local services to provide better care. “We have case management services that will connect guests with resources regarding employment, getting an ID, applying for other things, generally finding ways to support them outside of our shelter services or working in tandem to transition them out of the shelters.”

While Y2Y has a strong network with PBHA and other Y2Y locations, Ünsal hopes to expand Y2Y’s reach to work with public services this year.

“Ongoing goals for this year are building relationships with Cambridge Police Department, Cambridge Fire Department, and the new Continuum of Care team,” Ünsal said. “We can provide coordinated incident response [and] are on the same page when stuff

happens in an effort to not only make sure [a response] happens efficiently, but also to ensure the safety of guests and shelter staff.” Continuum of Care is a group of local nonprofits and individuals that coordinate housing and outreach programs for people experiencing housing insecurity.

Y2Y was founded by a former staff member of Harvard Square Homeless Shelter (HSHS), a homeless shelter similar to Y2Y but directed at the general adult population, that provides “guests with resources and services that will help them successfully transition into housing,” as their website states. HSHS is open from November to April, and their services range from daily meals and case management to street outreach and collaboration with local services.

Antonio, Ziggy, and Dylan seemed interested in these services, but it was unclear if they would actually seek them out here in Cambridge. “I know there’s a Continuum of Care,” Ziggy said, “I want to see if there’s some basic services here, like showers, day-to-day stuff.”

The experiences shared by Antonio, Ziggy, and Dylan highlight the diverse range of circumstances and challenges facing unhoused in Boston. Social services and homeless outreach continue, nevertheless, to expand their efforts and help our local community. Students who are interested in volunteering for homeless outreach can contact Y2Y at [volunteer@y2y.harvard.square.org](mailto:volunteer@y2y.harvard.square.org) or HSHS at [hshs.volunteer@gmail.com](mailto:hshs.volunteer@gmail.com).

**CAROLINE STOHRER ’28 (CAROLINESTOHRER@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS COMMITTED TO LEARNING MORE ABOUT PUBLIC POLICY REGARDING HOMELESS OUTREACH AND THE HOUSING CRISIS.**



# When Roommates Collide

Harvard freshmen enter the arena—facing the tensions of dorm life.

BY WESSAL BAKRY '28

Tensions are escalating, boundaries are blurring, and tempers are flaring as students clash over shared bedrooms, colonized common rooms, and personal space. These housing disputes continue to shake up dorm life and test the limits of cohabitation.

Living arrangements for the Class of 2028 vary widely across campus, with each first-year dorm offering unique amenities and room configurations. Considering the variability of everything from hallway singles to four-bedroom suites, students are given the opportunity to voice their preferences and priorities before the school year officially starts, by taking a mandatory housing form. First-year students are asked to rank their cleanliness and sociability, as well as list the attributes of their ideal roommate. Despite best efforts to be thorough, many students still find themselves with either incompatible roommates or undesirable living configurations—the truly unlucky are navigating both.

When there are clear disconnects between roommates' living habits, housing disputes inevitably unfold. One first-year student, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, recounted their experience with this struggle in an interview with the *Independent*.

"I think, overall, Harvard did a really bad job of pairing [my roommate and I] together because we actually showed each other what we had submitted in our roommate form when we were applying for roommates, and they were completely different," they said. "I had assumed that I was going to be put with someone with a similar sleep schedule. Otherwise, I would have requested a single. Other than that, there were things socially, where I had wanted a very social dorm, where I could bring people over and use the common room as a shared space, but she had kind of wanted our suite to just be for our use."

They also attributed the tension to the forced proximity in their double—a sentiment many students can relate to. In fact, most Harvard students find that the bunk-bed life is not for them.

"The dorm that we were placed in, it's the size of a single where they just stack a bunk bed in it. I think that putting anyone in a room that small, for people living in such close quarters, if you get up at different times of day, if you go to bed at different times of day, if you

just have very different schedules to begin with, it's gonna be an issue," they remarked.

However, there is no ideal solution for students faced with this issue. In most Harvard first-year dorms, in order to debunk the beds, the entire suite must agree on relinquishing the common room and using it as an additional bedroom. The decision of whether to preserve a bunked double or give up the common room is often quite difficult, especially when suitemates have contrasting living preferences. Different sleep schedules, opinions on hosting others in the room, and more all contribute to the complexity of such a choice.

When prompted to reflect on the driving force of her roommate tensions, the freshman concluded it was a fundamental disconnect in enthusiasm for the space. "We were really treating the suite like a home, whereas she was kind of using it as a hotel," they shared.

Despite initial disagreements, the freshman, along with their other roommate, contest that there is no longer any bad blood: "I really like her. The only problem was we couldn't live together, but we are friends now, so everything is good."

Another freshman who lives in a different dorm and also chose to remain anonymous, experienced a similar housing conflict. "My roommates already took and claimed a bed without me there. It was just hard to compromise on a good solution for all of us," they said. After the suitemates could not agree on who would get which room, as well as a fair orientation of the beds, they asked their proctor to get involved before one student eventually chose to move out.

"The proctor did try and have us talk without the parents, which actually was helpful. And then, basically how I moved was I talked to the dean," they detailed. "At first, I tried asking them if they wanted to do some rotation thing where we rotate rooms halfway through, but they didn't want to do that, since they didn't want to take down all of their stuff. I was like, 'Oh, we could also maybe move some beds to the common room,' but they didn't want to do that either," they said. "And this was pretty early on, so I just figured, honestly, at this point, it might just be easier to move because it was already just kind of tense, and they're all super nice. I still talk to them, but I kind of figured it'd just be better to start new."

In most cases like these, proctors and resident deans facilitate the settlement process. In an interview with the *Independent*, one proctor described the benefit of reaching out for help.

"When there's a lot of disagreement and bad faith, it helps to have a neutral third person. Someone who both of the students can trust and has both of their interests in mind," they said. In thinking about how to prevent these situations in the first place, they emphasized the importance of having a thorough roommate agreement.

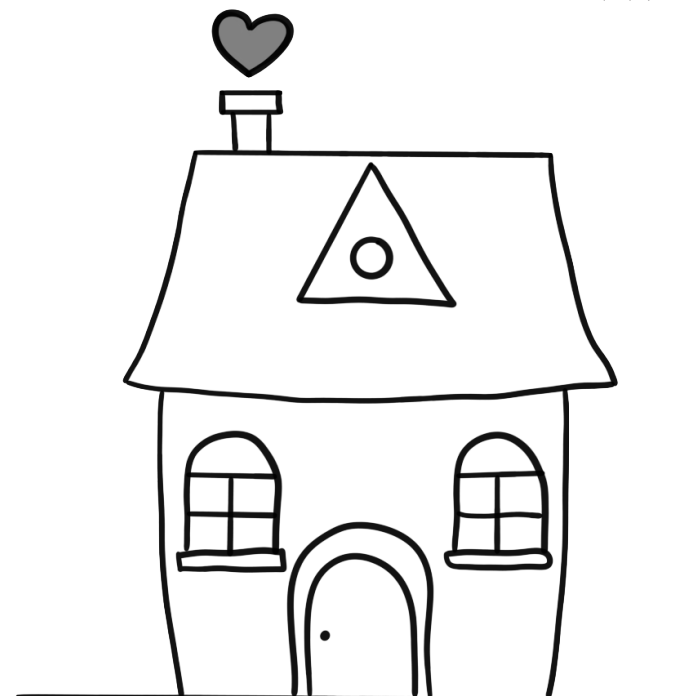
"The more that you spend as a roommate group discussing the roommate agreements, the more likely it is that you have looked at all the nitty-gritty. One of the issues that I would recommend for students to really look at is room rotation at the end of the term or in the middle of the semester because that potentially causes a lot of problems," said the proctor.

Confronted with the realities of dorm life, students are adapting by learning how to coexist with others and make the best of their living situations. One of the aforementioned freshmen noted that although they have had a difficult time acclimating themselves to college living, they have grown a lot as a person.

"At the end of the day, you've gotta roll with the punches. Things are going to be hard, everybody has different opinions, so it won't always be easy to agree. I had a tough time for a bit, but learning to communicate and find middle ground is, I feel like, what college is all about."

**WESSAL BAKRY '28  
(WESSALBAKRY@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS COMPING THE INDEPENDENT.**

**GRAPHIC BY GABI PONIZ '26**



# Laughter, Gasps, and Scoffs...

Inside the thoughts of Democrats at Harvard as they watch Senator Vance and

Governor Walz battle on the debate stage.

BY KALVIN FRANK '28

In the first night of October, I joined the Harvard Democrats at the Harvard Kennedy School for their watch party of the 2024 Vice Presidential Debate. As the table gathered, the room filled with excitement for the candidate they affectionately called “Coach Walz.” Around twenty-five people lined the room, loud chatter filling the space as they waited for the debate to begin.

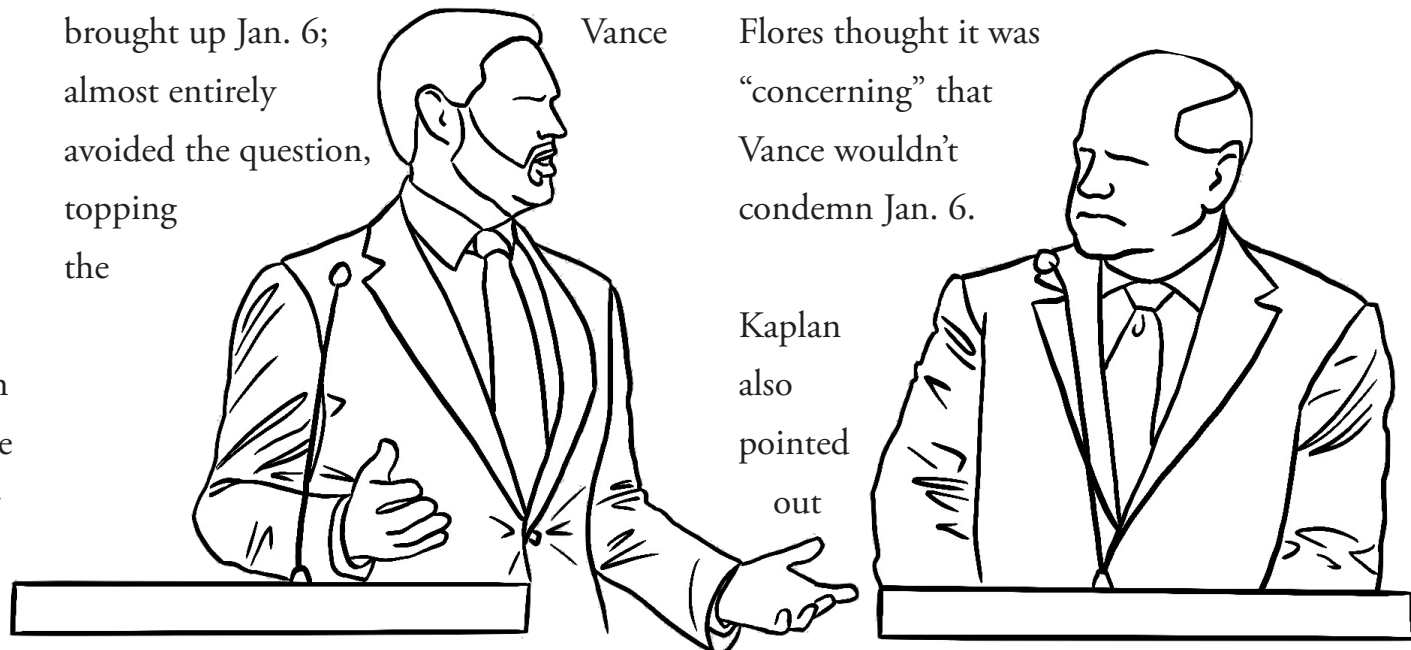
“Good evening. I’m Norah O’Donnell, and thank you for joining us...” The debate began, and the room fell silent. The stillness persisted for the first 20 minutes due to Governor Tim Walz’s slow start to the debate, with only slight interruptions from a few individual scoffs and eye rolls. The atmosphere shifted when Senator JD Vance was asked about his campaign and began describing “the largest mass deportation plan in American history.” Boos reverberated in response, and the silence disappeared for the rest of the evening.

Everyone frequently erupted in laughter in response to Walz’s comments. One notable occurrence was in response to Walz’s quip, “But look, we all want to solve this. Most of us want to solve this...” in reference to the “bipartisan immigration bill” that Senate Republicans blocked in May. A moment of shock and laughter ensued when Vance became frustrated and began fact-checking Walz’s statements.

The crowd had now grown to about 45 people and continued to scoff when Vance made a bold statement and laughed or nodded in approval as Walz spoke. A surprising turn of opinion was the genuine approval the room had for Vance’s stance on abortion, but many Harvard Democrats in the room expressed that his moderate stance in the debate didn’t reflect the policies he and the Trump administration have endorsed.

The energy shifted as the moderators

brought up Jan. 6; almost entirely avoided the question, topping the



Vance

Flores thought it was “concerning” that Vance wouldn’t condemn Jan. 6.

Kaplan also pointed out

conversation by denying Trump’s 2020 presidential loss. The Democrats were bewildered and looked around in shock. These reactions to Vance were much harsher than to Walz’s mishaps, in which he stumbled over the fact that he said he was in Hong Kong during the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. Walz was not, and the room fell silent as Walz had to admit his mistake.

As the debate ended with the closing statements, the room offered a standing ovation to Walz’s final remark: “I humbly ask for your vote on November 5th for Kamala Harris.”

A freshman who spoke anonymously attended the debate watch party to gauge the rapid reactions of the night. “My immediate reaction is that, obviously, it didn’t go as well as I had hoped it would in my wildest dream, but I feel all right about it.” When asked if she thought there was a winner in the debate, she declared, “Walz was a lot more direct in what he was talking about and getting at the issues that people care about.”

Harvard College Democrats co-presidents Victor Flores ’25 and Tova Kaplan ’26 agreed that the debate had some great and insightful conversations. “We actually had two folks on the debate stage willing to talk about policies,” Flores said.

Yet Flores and Kaplan noted significant flaws in JD Vance’s arguments.

that Vance used “demonizing, marginalizing language against immigrants and other populations.” Kaplan argued that Vance gave “a more moderate face to the rhetoric” but still elevated extreme views. “He was fully supporting the Trump agenda [and] Project 2025 ideas, and that does worry me.”

Both co-presidents expressed excitement for the club’s programming for the upcoming election. Kaplan plugged their forthcoming trip to New Hampshire and the upcoming weekend’s canvassing events. Their Instagram page, @harvardcollegedems, will continue to be populated with updates throughout the course of the semester.

The Harvard College Democrats debate watch party was an engaging community-building event for Harvard Democrats. With the conclusion of the final debate of the 2024 election season (for now), Harvard students on both sides of the aisle will begin gearing up for the highly anticipated election day.

**KALVIN FRANK '28 (KFRANK@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) HAD A MUCH EASIER TIME REPORTING THAN HIS COUNTERPART AT THE GOP WATCH PARTY.**

**GRAPHIC BY RILEY CULLINAN '27**











# FORUM

## What Harvard Could Learn from Yale

Reflections on a weekend spent in New Haven.

BY LUKE WAGNER '26

*Is Yale better than Harvard?* (The last two football games would say so.) This past weekend, I visited one of my friends at Yale to compete in a club squash round-robin on Saturday. However, I also got to experience New Haven, talk to students, take a walk around campus, and go out at night. Before my trip down to New Haven, everything I had experienced about Yale centered around the 36 hours of mayhem last year in late November when Harvard's football team, and many other students and community members, traveled to Yale for The Game.

The first thing I think Harvard could learn from Yale centers around freshman integration into the College. My freshman year was by far my least favorite at Harvard, largely because it felt completely disconnected from everyone and everything else. As a freshman at Harvard, if you do not join a plethora of clubs and spend all your waking hours reaching out to people, it is very hard to meet anyone outside of your grade. Students can meet each other in their building, or at Annenberg, but the focus is placed on how much you reach out to others. I think Yale facilitates a much smoother transition for their freshmen. At Yale, freshmen get placed into their "residential colleges"—equivalent to Harvard's Houses. This allows students to meet a much larger group of people, exposes them to many more facets of the school, and helps them build a lasting community right as they step on campus. The benefits of this system cannot be overstated. Everyone I spoke to felt that their residential college played a significant role in helping them adjust.

Within their residential college, students are assigned a "big sibling," or a student from the grade above who

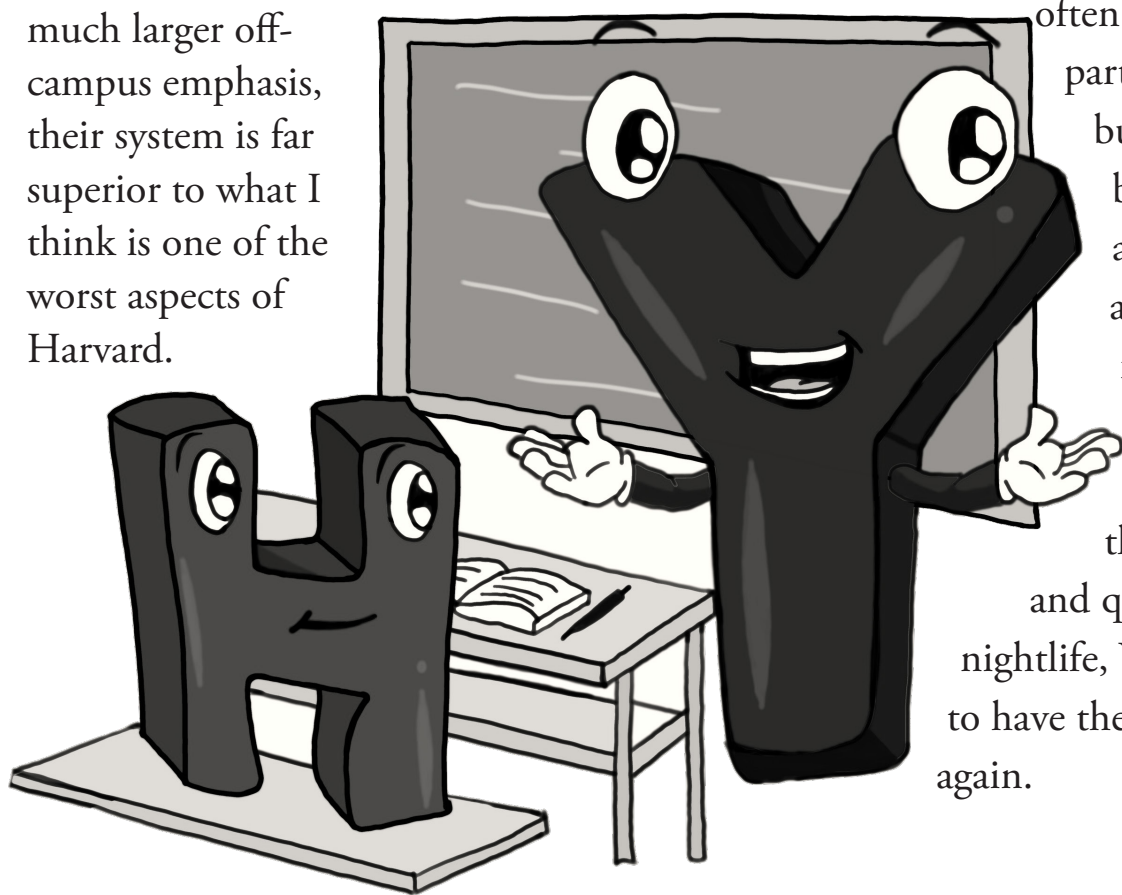
connects with them and helps them transition into college life, especially in the first few weeks. In my friend's residential college, it is customary for freshmen to have dinner with their big siblings on "family night" each week on Sundays, where students can only eat in their own residential college, building a stronger community. In addition, they have tight-knit communities within their dorms, similar to entryways, along with groups of other freshman students that form a kind of "cohort" in their residential college. Yale seems to place a lot more effort into ensuring that students hit the ground running.

These residential colleges appear to be incredibly invested in their students. When I was visiting, my friend's residential college, Trumbull, had rented out the entirety of the local Barcelona Wine Bar supplied with food and a completely open bar (to students over 21). They had a DJ and an open dance floor that was actually populated. The House events at Harvard do not even come close. While Yale's campus functions a lot differently than Harvard's and has a much larger off-campus emphasis, their system is far superior to what I think is one of the worst aspects of Harvard.

At Harvard, I often find that students within each House have no connections to one another, and the House does not invest in the students or student events. My house, Cabot, has yet to host an event anywhere outside of the dining hall, the Quad Lawn, or the faculty dean's living room. Many people I know have zero interest in their housing community and know one or two blocking groups outside of their own. At Yale, the residential college is well-connected, even with many students living off campus.

Additionally, the off-campus emphasis creates many more social opportunities for students. Many residential colleges consist of members who are all in social clubs that have parties and social events very regularly. On Friday, I went to a friend's birthday party in a large courtyard, before hopping between club socials and frat parties. It is common for random social groups or teams to host parties on any given weekend. People

often throw parties in their buildings or backyards, and there is a fairly active frat scene. When it comes to the variety and quality of nightlife, Yale seemed to have the edge once again.



GRAPHIC BY  
ALMA RUSSELL '26



When I went out, I didn't have many chances to talk to students, as it was often loud and I was not focused on writing this article at the time. However, in conversations outside of parties, I could tell that the student body felt different than Harvard's. The range of majors that I encountered was much broader and more interesting. A Harvard Open Data Project analysis that looked at Harvard students from 2012-2021 found that around 30-40 percent of students concentrate in economics, with second place being computer science at 22.5 percent. In contrast, in 2023, Yale's top two most popular majors were also economics and computer science; however, their distribution is only 11 percent and 6 percent respectively. No two majors dominate at Yale: instead, there's a much larger distribution of majors across all disciplines. Because of this, the students seem to "value" majors across all fields a lot more. And unlike Harvard, I didn't find myself repeatedly meeting students who were all studying economics.

In terms of racial and ethnic diversity, Harvard and Yale are similar. Harvard's ethnic diversity from 2023 is 33.2 percent white, 14.4 percent Asian, 6.3 percent Black or African American, and 9.2 percent Hispanic or Latino contrasted to Yale's from 2023 which is 35.6 percent white, 16.8 percent Asian, 6.9 percent Black or African American, and 11.5 percent Hispanic or Latino. That weekend, I met people from a vast range of ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds throughout my different endeavors. However, the biggest change was the difference in intellectual diversity. As a social studies concentrator, and someone very interested in the humanities and arts, people seemed to be curious and respectful of my intellectual endeavors.

Often, I do not feel this way at Harvard. When I started college,

my interests in science and math continued into my classes. During my first semester, I took exclusively STEM classes, in addition to Expos 10. During that time, I found that many of my peers interested in STEM had a superiority complex about studying STEM, often connoting how much more difficult their concentration was than others, and largely invalidating pursuits in the humanities or arts. Now, as a social studies concentrator, I feel those same judgments and viewpoints projected onto me by nearly everyone I interact with. I have a very small sample size to work with, it's clear that people at Yale felt more interested and less dismissive.

With this increased intellectual diversity at Yale, I was interested to hear what people were doing after college. In my experience, Harvard has a very strong emphasis on finance, consulting, and computer programming, leaving other job fields behind. Harvard does not do a good job of exposing people to options and opportunities outside of finance and consulting. For instance, I only learned about the Mahindra Humanities Center earlier this week. Harvard's issue isn't a lack of resources, but rather a lack of open dialogue about what student's options are after college.

While not everyone was happy with the job boards and services at Yale, students noted that finance and consulting were consistently the most common job outcomes. However, students felt that while they could go into many different fields, they ultimately chose finance or consulting because of the salaries. I'm not sure if it's a product of the culture of opportunities, but finance and consulting dominate to a stronger extent at Harvard. A *Harvard Crimson* survey found that in the 2024 Harvard graduating class (of the 955 respondents), 50 percent of students go into finance,

consulting, and tech post-grad. Whereas at Yale, in their 2024 graduating class, only 39 percent of students go into finance, consulting, and programming or software engineering. As a result, it feels like there are more people interested in a wider variety of professions at Yale.

In looking at the schools as institutions, in terms of what Yale does better than Harvard, I could dive into the fact that Yale has not mismanaged their endowment for the better part of two decades, or how they do not seem to have presidential controversy every other year. But that is not what I chose to highlight. *Does Harvard do an amazing job as an institution looking out to the rest of the world?* No. *Does Yale do a better job in that regard?* Probably not. However, I don't really care much about commenting on the school as an institution, because I am extremely far removed from the board of overseers and largely uninterested in it.

And I know this article may come off as brash, negative, or make you think I am a hater. That's not the point. I wanted to examine several aspects of student life and housing, areas in which Yale blows Harvard out of the water, and reflect on whether we as students or the institution could be doing a better job. Far too often people get their feelings hurt when people are critical. That is not the intention. But rather, through difficult conversations and thoughts about what we can be doing better, everyone can live a happier Harvard experience.

**LUKE WAGNER '26  
(LUKEWAGNER@COLLEGE.  
HARVARD.EDU) HAS A MUCH  
GREATER APPRECIATION FOR  
YALE AFTER HIS VISIT AND  
WONDERS WHAT HIS LIFE  
WOULD HAVE LOOKED LIKE IF  
HE HAD GONE TO YALE.**

# Migration, Unification, and the Art Nation

A review of Harvard Art Museums' *Made in Germany?* exhibition.

BY MADDY TUNNELL '26

Lynette Roth, curator at Harvard's Busch Reisinger Museum which specializes in art from Germany and Northern Europe, would describe her new exhibition *Made in Germany?* as "pushing back against this idea that the Busch Reisinger is just a museum for German art, but actually looking into its complicated history and taking that as a cue to think about identity—institutional identity, individual identity, national identity." Roth's co-curator Peter Murphy, Stefan Engelhorn Curatorial Fellow in the Busch-Reisinger Museum added that the exhibit presents "a challenge to or to the expectations of what people think German art after 1980 is which we do have an art collection."

"It was an opportunity for us to really build further and show the diverse artists and practices that were being have existed in post-war German art beyond just large scale paintings," Murphy explained in an interview with the *Independent*.

Roth, Murphy, and Bridget Hinz, the show's third curator, aspired to bring together post-war German art to display voices not as prominently heard in this category's greater conceptualization. Women, East German, and migrant artists have historically been left out of many conversations about German art, but in the



exhibition, their presence aids in redefining the German art bracket. Throughout my tour with Roth and Murphy, we discussed the importance of asking questions regarding our own definitions and assumptions about what it means to be made

in Germany, as well as how we can use art as a lens to broaden our understanding of current social phenomena both in America and abroad.

Upon entering, look to the wall



opposing the white title letters to view a timeline outlining the major immigration movements and political change in Germany since the end of World War II. The exhibition, though designed prior to Germany's state elections, comes at a crucial time as the Alternative for Germany (AfD) has just won the most parliamentary seats in Thüringen this past September. The AfD is a far-right nationalist party, and with their momentum over the last six years, Roth and Murphy described the need for conversations concerning migration, nationalism, and the rise of the far right in Germany—that we are viewers that can relate to our own experiences with the current political climate in America during our election year.

With the context from the timeline, the opening piece by Sung Tieu ties the historical context into the artist's messaging of the show, as her work grapples with migration. Tieu was born in Vietnam in 1987 but came to Germany as a child. In her work "Multiboy," she created what Roth described as a "deconstructed readymade" comprising an old yellow food processor in a prison-like metal box. The work is in conversation with the Vietnamese labor migrants in what was formerly East Germany, a program that started in the 1980s. The Multiboy food processor was one of the products produced by labor migrants, presenting an interesting correlation; just as labor migrants quickly and efficiently produce goods, the food processor embodies the concept of work being done for you. Both represent

productivity done behind the scenes for the sake of others.

Tieu accompanies the sculpture with three print references of work agreements between companies and Vietnamese labor migrants, displaying the complex language used to disguise the overt power dynamics as a mutually beneficial relationship. "A lot of it is also about the bureaucratic languages and systems that...literally move people," said Roth, with Murphy pointing out the "slang-filled obtuse language" that is often used to manipulate the intentions of worker contracts.

Rounding the wall, emotions wheeled when I came face to face with an expansive work by Katharina Sieverding, first shown in 1992, titled "Deutschland wird deutscher XLI/92." The work stands at around an impressive 10 ft by 14 ft. Hung on a temporary steel grated wall, the dark metal print reads its namesake through removed color in an image of Sieverding's veiled face surrounded by knives. The term translates to "Germany becomes more German," taken from a newspaper article about the prominence of Germans questioning Germany's place in the European Union post-unification.

Roth described Sieverding's acknowledgment of a movement towards a more isolationist Germany as well as an increase in violence post-unification. She explained that the term also points out that "the fascist past is not all that distant," and that at the time, the controversial choice caused outcry and contradicted a specific view of what it meant to be "more German." Town Hall meetings were held alongside press conferences—with this piece, in Roth's words, Sieverding asked: "What can art do?"

In response to Sieverding's question, Roth asked her own. "I thought, 'That's the question I hope we're also asking, right?' Art is participating in our contemporary discussions, right? Or if it's not, it should be," she said. Roth believes we should all be "really thinking, thinking through...the challenges that we face as a society by also looking to artists."

PHOTOS BY JENNY JIA '27



Some of the other works that stood out to me were a monumental post-unification film by Hito Steyerl, authentic photographs of East German neighborhoods by Gundula Schulze Eldowy, an expansive photobook by Ulrich Wüst, and an illuminating projector slide series by Candida Höfer emphasizing the invisibility of Turkish immigrants in West Germany in 1979.

Alas, it was upon entering a room flipped on its side, with chairs on the wall and bookshelves on the floor that I truly lost my breath. This installation, set in a rectangular gallery space, comprises a fully dressed living room of furniture from East Germany. The artist Henrike Naumann, born in 1984, just five years before the wall fell, wanted to highlight how the world flipped on its head for East Germans after unification. The title, “Ostelgie,” combines *ost*, which means east, and *nostalgie*, to create “nostalgia for the east.”

The furnishings are pieces bought by East Germans from West Germany, with references to the Flintstones

represented by bones laid in the carpet, a fur-covered couch, and a dinosaur-styled landline. The reference highlights how East Germany was somewhat living in the past compared to the West, so at the time of unification, the East was starting from behind. Regarding the furniture, Murphy explained that upon the fall of the wall, East Germans finally “had access to this open, free market where they could collect all these goods and exciting furniture that they thought were super futuristic, when in fact they were already out of fashion.”

Naumann visually portrays the disorientation of the Eastern citizens who were invited late to the game, with Murphy adding that during lectures and presentations on the work, the artist “beautifully describes...the ways in which, one day, she was living in a socialist system, and then literally overnight, that system toppled over,”—literally turning her by 90 degrees. Murphy went on to ask: “What is it like to now navigate this kind of unknown terrain of the new capitalist sovereign

nation of Germany?”

Overall, I truly believe *everyone* should visit the Harvard Art Museum and explore the Made in Germany? exhibition. Additional information and talks with the artists shared on YouTube and Instagram allow everyone to have an in-depth understanding of the works on display. The show is vitally important, as we can use the context to think about the current political state of America and our opportunities in the upcoming election.

The question mark in the title imparts a final message from the curators. “We’re sort of putting it out there, and we’re saying these are actually just topics we need to all be engaged with, and that artists are kind of helping us think through in, we think, often very surprising ways, very different ways,” Roth said. So, as you explore the show, consider your own questions, and help the curators and artists start the conversations.

**MADDY TUNNELL '26**  
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# SPORTS

## Sports Spotlight: Ben Abercrombie

A Harvard journey of recovery, football, and lots of Jefe's.

BY LAYLA CHAARAOU '26

“I like the competitiveness, and I've always been more fiery,” Ben Abercrombie '25 reflected when discussing his love for football. “I grew up in Hoover, Alabama. Here in Alabama, you basically live and breathe football.”

Abercrombie got recruited by Harvard his junior year of high school, he recalled in an interview with the *Independent*. Though schools like Yale and Dartmouth also reached out, it was Harvard's coaches and players that swayed Abercrombie toward playing for the Crimson.

Once arriving at Harvard, Abercrombie chose to concentrate in Economics, citing his passion for finance and his plans to work in the industry after graduation. During fall camp for football of his first-year, Abercrombie worked his way up in the “depth chart,” a chart used to determine the placements of players on a sports team. By the Crimson's first game of the 2017-2018 season at the University of Rhode Island (URI), Abercrombie was the second-string defensive back.

“The guy starting in front of me tore his hamstring. I ended up getting right in there,” he said. Abercrombie was not supposed to play on the day of the accident.

Abercrombie watched as URI's quarterback broke the ball toward a wide receiver running down the sidelines and went to separate the ball from the player. While trying to hit his shoulder into the opponent's chest, Abercrombie broke his neck, landing on the ground unable to move.

“It was a freak thing. That moment changed my whole life,” he remarked.

The following events went in “slow motion,” as Abercrombie described. “I lost feeling of everything. I remember talking to the trainer, and then a few seconds later I couldn't talk anymore... I couldn't breathe, and I ended up passing out and waking up in the hospital a few days later.” Abercrombie would have to relearn life in a wheelchair.

Today, Abercrombie remains paralyzed from the neck down and does not have any functional movement. He cannot breathe on his own and has to wear a diaphragmatic pacer to help build the functionality of his diaphragm back up. Yet, Abercrombie's long journey of recovery has shown signs of progress. Every day, Abercrombie takes part in rehab exercises to regain mobility such as stimulating riding a bike, standing upright, and walking on a treadmill. He goes to Journey Forward, a facility in Canton, Massachusetts, where people who sustain injuries similar to Abercrombie can work out with trained professionals. He can twitch his thumbs and notes movement in his diaphragm. “The rehab stuff has been such a long road,” Abercrombie stated.

Abercrombie made a promise to himself to finish college. Though he could have stayed back in Alabama and finished college



there, for him, it only made sense to return to Cambridge. “I wanted to come back up here and get my Harvard degree because it's Harvard. It's only a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.” Abercrombie came back to campus two years later in 2019, continuing to pursue his passion for finance on the Economics track and is set to graduate this spring.

Abercrombie is taking a corporate finance course, a German history course, and Old English. Both Abercrombie and Sherri Abercrombie, his mother who attends his classes with him, recommended the German history course, HIST 1265: Germany 1848-1949 with Professor Alison Frank Johnson. “She's really good, and she makes it real interesting,” Sherri exclaimed.

HIST 1265 is Abercrombie's earliest course, beginning at 10:30 a.m. To prepare, Abercrombie wakes up at 7 a.m. to get ready, and then his parents “load him up and drive him close to his class,” Sherri explained. Abercrombie's parents attend his classes and live with him full-time, helping him navigate life at the College from a modified suite in Winthrop House. “I have to be really strategic about breaking up my classes and finding times to do homework. I guess everything takes me a little bit longer,” he explained.

Abercrombie and his parents praised the Harvard administration and community for their support throughout the process. “I thank all the faculty and staff—Harvard administration—for taking care of us,” Abercrombie said. “They are great. Responding and always checking up on me and making sure I have everything I need.”

Sherri echoed this, explaining how the accessibility office has been helpful in meeting Abercrombie's needs, such as his need for a scribe when doing calculus and mathematics. “Having to do that can get a little bit annoying because I can't write it down myself.” But Abercrombie can type out essays, test questions, and even use Excel on his own—using his eyes.

Tobii Eye Gaze allows him to control his

computer by looking at the commands he needs. “It has a left click button, a right click, a scroll up and down, and I can pull up a keyboard and start typing. That's how I take all my tests and write papers,” he explained. “He's gotten faster,” his mother added. Abercrombie uses the eye gaze for Excel and coding in his econometrics classes. “Coding is not fun. [In my] corporate finance class, there's a lot of Excel.” Nonetheless, Abercrombie comments, “I don't mind Excel—it's pretty useful.”

Abercrombie takes advantage of not having Monday classes to complete his homework. On the weekends, he spends time watching football and baseball, oftentimes rooting for his former teammates from high school and college. “On Saturday, if you came by here, it'd be a game on [the TV], another TV on that tray, an iPad, and another tablet. It could be four games going on at once,” Sherri stated. Abercrombie participates weekly in an article for AL.com where he offers his picks for the week's games, his dad Marty Abercrombie explained. He also attends every Harvard Crimson home football game and frequently talks to the coaches and players.

Abercrombie and his family expressed excitement toward the multiple community events that take place for him each year. The 7th annual Ben Abercrombie Day at El Jefe's will take place on Dec. 10, where all proceeds from the day go to the Ben Abercrombie Fund, designed to assist the Abercrombies and anyone else who suffers a catastrophic injury at Harvard. “It helps my family a lot,” he said, but noted that this year could be the last one as he is graduating. The Harvard Varsity Club additionally hosts an annual “3.2 for Ben” for the fund—a 3.2-mile virtual walk or run that can be completed during November. The 3.2 is in honor of Abercrombie's football jersey for the Crimson, number 32.

After graduation, his plans to go into financial management remain the same from when he first came to Harvard in 2017. His room—which he has not had to leave since moving into Winthrop—is decked out in sports memorabilia: half Harvard, half Alabama, and a gifted 32 jersey from this year's Crimson team. Abercrombie has enjoyed his time back in Harvard Square—though he often misses the warm weather of Hoover (“Nothing is better than home”)—dining out at Mr. Bartley's Burger Cottage, Cava, and of course, Jefe's. He was adamant about how Winthrop House and the community support have been great to him. And the dining hall food? “It will do.”

**LAYLA CHAARAOU '26  
(LAYLACHAARAOU@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) CAN BARELY USE EXCEL, BUT DOES SHARE ABERCROMBIE'S LOVE FOR SPICY BEEF NACHOS AT EL JEFE'S.**

**PHOTO COURTESY OF SHERRI AND BEN ABERCROMBIE**



# Indy Sportsbook: The End of the Eras Tour

How will Taylor Swift end this part of her legacy?

BY KATE OLIVER '26

Cultural icon Taylor Swift has made international headlines since releasing her first album, *Taylor Swift*, in 2006. Her Eras Tour is the highest-grossing concert series of all time, earning over \$1 billion in 2023 alone. The Eras Tour brings “Swifties” through all of her different music-making eras, from Fearless to the recently released *Tortured Poets Department*. Over the course of 152 shows and counting, Swift has captivated fans of all ages, produced a movie, and announced the upcoming release of three albums. With the tour finally coming to a close in December, we at the Indy Sportsbook thought it was time to place final bets on how she will end this chapter of her legacy.

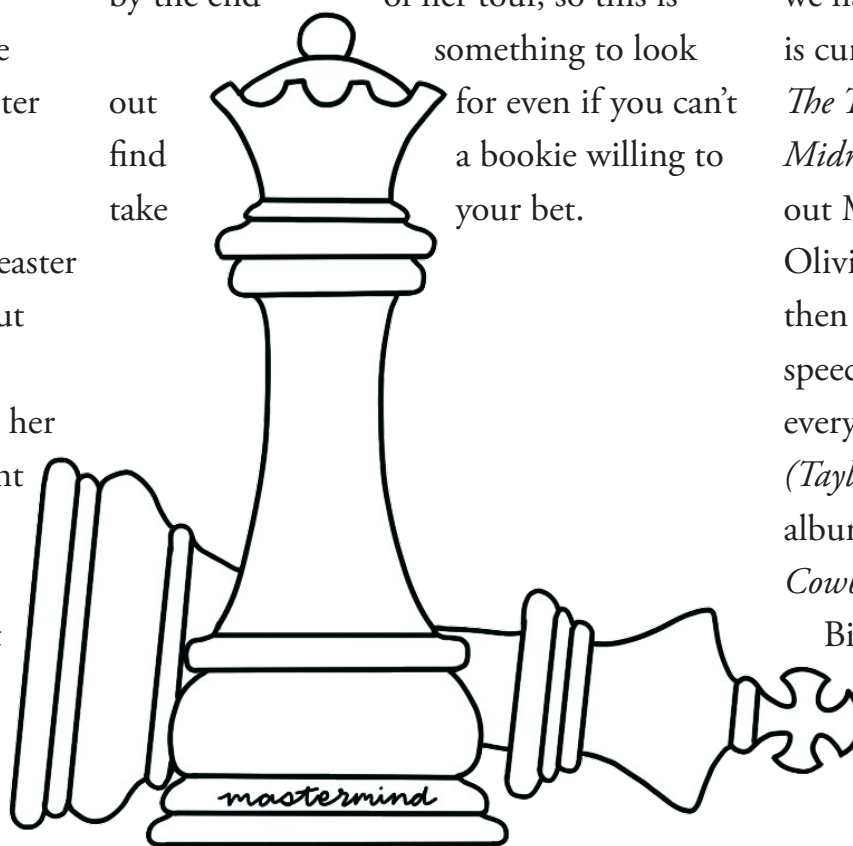
**Reputation TV:** Swift is the queen of “easter eggs” and has commented publicly about her decisions to place them throughout social media posts and music videos for her followers to uncover. Her announcement of *1989 (Taylor’s Version)* during the Los Angeles leg of her tour was foreshadowed continuously throughout the concert; she debuted five new outfits all in the album’s signature color blue before announcing the re-record on 8/9/2023. Given the level of intricacy that goes into these easter eggs, Swifties have applied immense levels of focus in decoding the clues for *Reputation (Taylor’s Version)*.

Favorites for the release of this album are highest for January 2025 or later. However, we feel that the time frame for the first two weeks of December should not be overlooked; while the odds are smaller at +210, Swift will wrap up the Eras Tour in Vancouver on 12/9. It is safe to say that announcing the release of *Reputation (Taylor’s Version)* would provide the perfect conclusion to a record-breaking tour. Be on the lookout for more black-and-white Instagram posts by the artist, as well as any snake memorabilia for these odds to shoot up.

**Debut TV:** While her first album was released in 2006, Swift has yet to re-record

this set of songs with her new label for unknown reasons. Her debut album, Taylor Swift, is the only one that does not have a song featured in the permanent setlist of the Eras Tours. As a result, there has been little speculation of when she will be releasing the re-recorded version of her first album. Despite the lack of attention *Taylor Swift (Taylor’s Version)* has received, we believe Swift has the potential to surprise all of her fans when it comes to this album. We believe that Swift will announce the re-recordings of both *Reputation (Taylor’s Version)* and *Taylor Swift (Taylor’s Version)* by the end of her tour, so this is

something to look out for even if you can’t find a bookie willing to take your bet.



**Travis Kelce:** Swift’s relationship with Kelce initially began thanks to the Eras Tour. While he didn’t exchange friendship bracelets with the artist, Kelce still found a way to get her number, and the two began seeing each other shortly after. Swift spent the end of the 2023 season balancing her international tour dates with the Chiefs playoff run that ultimately resulted in them winning the 2024 Super Bowl. Kelce has also become an even more public fan, making his debut on stage on the first night of her dates at Wembley Stadium; his appearance for “I Can Do It With A Broken Heart” stunned fans and prompted a renewed media focus on their relationship.

While bettors had originally looked at the odds of Kelce proposing after clinching a Super Bowl win, we believe that a proposal is unlikely until after the slotted December end date of the tour. Current odds stand

at +200 for an engagement announcement before June 2025. Now, if you have followed Swift’s previous relationships, these odds would seem relatively low given her breakup with Joe Alwyn after six years. However, her relationship with Kelce appears to be flourishing per media coverage, as the two are regularly seen supporting each other publicly. Based on what we have seen so far, it seems extremely likely that the two will live out their love story.

**Album of the Year:** Rounding out the parlay for this edition of the Sportsbook, we have Grammy Album of the Year; Swift is currently leading the odds at +125 for *The Tortured Poets Department*. Her album *Midnights* won Best Album in 2024, beating out Miley Cyrus’ *Endless Summer Vacation*, Olivia Rodrigo’s *Guts*, and SZA’s *SOS*. Swift then announced TTPD in her acceptance speech after winning, surprising Swifties everywhere who were expecting *Reputation (Taylor’s Version)*. This year, Swift’s newest album is slated to compete with Beyoncé’s *Cowboy Carter*, Charlie XCX’s *BRAT*, and Billie Eilish’s *Hit Me Hard and Soft*. This win is almost a shoo-in, so you are losing money by not placing your bets accordingly.

While everyone may not be a self-proclaimed Swiftie, it is impossible to ignore the impact she has had on industries beyond her multiple-genre music. From stimulating economic growth to encouraging her followers to register to vote, she has a profound ability to affect everything around her; her tour has added \$5.6 billion to the U.S. economy alone. Furthermore, the Eras Tour has brought together Swifties from all over the world, and its conclusion will mark the end of a tour that has changed the standards of live performances forever. No matter how she chooses to end this chapter of her story, Taylor Swift has ensured she will never be forgotten.

**KATE OLIVER '26 (KOLIVER@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) HAD TICKETS TO THE ERAS TOUR IN VIENNA BEFORE IT GOT CANCELED.**

**GRAPHIC BY REEVE SYKES '26**

