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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.

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.

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My First Letter From The Editor: The Power of the Pen

Editor-in-Chief Layla Chaaraoui '26 on the influence of journalism and learning to listen.

I had a plan before arriving on campus. I had read the horror stories about joining too many clubs or getting caught up in the Harvard “bubble.” In my notes app, I kept a list of the organizations I was eager to join after hours of research—Expressions Dance Company, the Institute of Politics, and WHRB (Harvard Radio Broadcasting)—each of which I am still a part of today. Yet there was one organization I had never considered, let alone heard of, that has become the most pivotal part of my Harvard experience. Now approaching my senior year, I cannot help but be so beyond thankful for the *Harvard Independent*.

As a freshman, 12 Arrow St. was a fascinating place to me. I learned that every Monday, the *Independent* meets to plan articles for the upcoming issue. I let the surrounding discussions on the latest campus news fall to a low buzz in the back of my mind as my attention shifted to the space around me: headlines, designs, photographs, art pieces, and newspaper articles filled the room. Once white plaster, the walls were covered with the faces and covers that conveyed the powerful history of this publication.

When it was my turn to speak, I nervously read through the dozens of ideas I had prepared for my first official “Storyboard” meeting as an *Independent* comper. The pitch I landed on, a feature on student-created matchmaking sites called “Campus Cupid, Coded,” became my first article, edited by my friend and former *Independent* President Eliza Kimball '25.

What followed was an unexpected journey: two and a half years filled with investigative reporting about the doxxing truck on Harvard’s campus, on-the-ground video coverage of the University encampment, countless visits to art markets and local shows, shedding light on the complexities of Harvard’s mental health policies, interviews with incredible students, and coverage of the latest events “In The News.” That first Storyboard eventually led me to become Associate News Editor, then News Editor, Managing Editor, and now, Editor-in-Chief.

As I’ve held these positions throughout my time at the *Indy* and navigated my own Harvard journey, the past few years have been nothing short of tumultuous. From my first steps onto campus, I quickly realized that the “Harvard experience” was different from what I had expected it to be, and amid the incredible opportunities the University offers, there were difficult conversations that needed to be had.

During FUP (First-Year Urban Program), on-campus bulletin boards, across student messaging platforms, and in the *Independent* office, I learned from my peers the blemishes Harvard hides. Whether it was criticism of building names, the University’s historical ties to slavery, its role in global inequalities, or other systemic problems, I quickly learned that those around me had no hesitation in voicing their concerns about the institution we attended. I listened, did my research, and, over time, developed my own perspectives. The ability to openly recognize and critique the faults of the college we attend—and then work together to figure out how to address them—is what I believe to be one of the most powerful aspects of this University. It’s also one of the reasons I became so drawn to the *Indy*.

We belong to no one but ourselves. What initially was a mission statement I passively read while sitting in the *Indy* newsroom has become one of the most important statements of my journalistic career. The *Indy* refuses to let University norms or societal expectations confine our authorial freedom. We speak openly about what is right, what is wrong, and what needs attention—then we translate these conversations into our paper. The power of storytelling in journalism and the independence to do so within the *Indy* has only deepened my excitement to step into the role of Editor-in-Chief. I’m eager to build on the incredible work accomplished by my predecessor, Andrew Spielmann '25.

The need for a free press is more

urgent than ever. As journalists, we must seek out stories, listen to all perspectives, and report the facts. Journalism remains essential in holding institutions accountable, keeping the public informed, and sparking critical conversations that drive meaningful action. But as journalists continue to tell the story of the world around us, the responsibility for progress is then left up to you as readers, thinkers, and changemakers.

When you engage with our paper, I hope you find the same sense of discovery and purpose that I did when I first walked into 12 Arrow St. Although I hadn’t planned on joining the *Independent*, taking that leap has allowed me to pursue my passion for public service and advocacy in ways I never imagined. It’s a reminder that sometimes the most rewarding experiences come from stepping outside your plan and following your instincts.

As I begin my journey as Editor-in-Chief, I hope to instill the importance of taking risks, listening to the opinions of my fellow student body, and illuminating the stories of my peers that are often ignored among our staff and readers. As the *Independent* continues to evolve, tackle big stories, and hold a mirror to our institution, we hope you’ll join us and create the conversations that spark real change—not only on our campus but in the world beyond.

This is what makes the *Indy* and Harvard so unique: the freedom to question, to challenge, and to act. So, let’s keep pushing the boundaries, telling the stories that matter, and building a community that is always evolving and striving to be better. The journey isn’t over, and we’d love for you to be a part of it.

LAYLA CHAARAOUI '26 (LAYLACHAARAOU@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF THE HARVARD INDEPENDENT, AND SHE COULD NOT BE MORE EXCITED.

GRAPHIC BY SEATTLE HICKEY '25



Meet the Masthead

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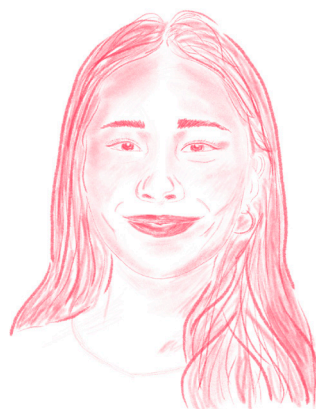
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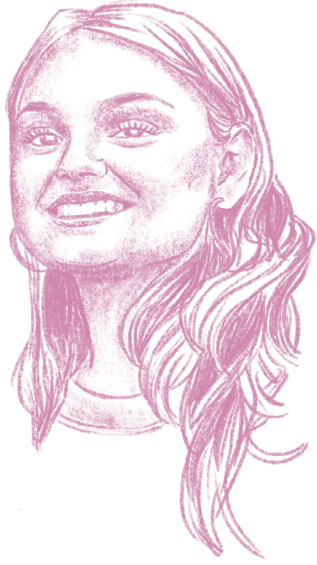


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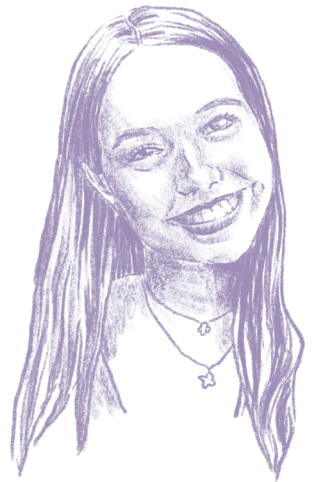
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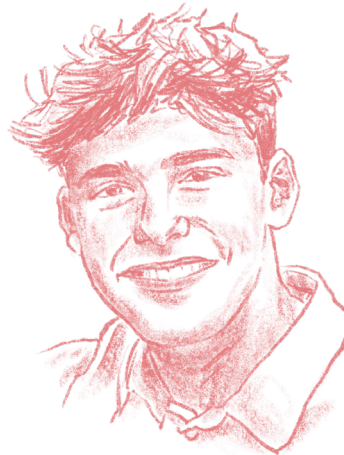
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Diversity on Trial

EXPERTS OFFER THEIR THOUGHTS ON THE SHARP DECLINE IN BLACK STUDENT ENROLLMENT IN HARVARD LAW SCHOOL'S JD CLASS OF 2027.

BY SARA KUMAR '27

Harvard Law School's mission statement offers a glimpse at the central tenets of the institution's academic experience: "The unique strength of our community is that it brings together, from around the world, so many exceptionally talented people of different backgrounds, lived experiences, interests, ambitions, approaches, methodologies, and perspectives."

However, after the number of Black enrollees in the 2024 incoming Harvard Law School (HLS) class hit a 60-year low following the Supreme Court's 2023 overturn of affirmative action, onlookers are questioning how HLS plans to uphold its commitment to unparalleled opportunity, equal access, and excellence in every dimension for all individuals.

According to data submitted to the American Bar Association, HLS's 2024 first-year law school students (JD1) Black student enrollment was only 19 students out of a total of 461 first years. This stat stands in stark contrast to the 2023 incoming class, which had 43 Black JD1's. The number of Hispanic students also decreased from 63 to 32. Meanwhile, the number of enrolled Asians in the incoming class rose from 103 to 132 students. In an institution that is known for educating some of America's most renowned Black lawyers, including former President Barack Obama, Civil Rights Movement leader Charles Hamilton Houston, and Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, many are concerned about the future of representation in the legal academic space and profession.

The *Harvard Independent* spoke with HLS Lester Kissel Professor of Law David B. Wilkins '77, University of Los Angeles California Jesse Dukeminier Professorship in Law holder Richard Sander '78, and Peter Arcidiacono, an expert witness in the two Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA) cases against Harvard and the University of North Carolina, to shed some light on the causes, implications, and future impacts of these numbers.

SFFA and the HLS Drop in Black Enrollment

American admissions practices across all institutions of higher education have used race-conscious affirmative action since the early 1960s. However, the focus on academic integration shifted with the elimination of racial preferences in admissions in the 2023 Supreme Court cases, SFFA v. Harvard and SFFA v. UNC.

In a landmark decision, SFFA v. Harvard and SFFA v. UNC struck down race-conscious affirmative action, declaring it unconstitutional. After four decades of universities using race-based preferences when admitting minority applicants, this decision naturally spurred controversy.

"I was very disappointed in the Supreme Court decision. I think that it ignored fifty years of evidence of the importance of diversity and inclusion in the legal profession," Wilkins confessed. "It's always been true that your background and experience has played into the admissions process. Always."

These thoughts were compounded by Wilkins' initial fear that the outcomes of the SFFA lawsuit would erase the progress made in representation in legal education and the profession as a whole over the past few decades. "Harvard is a far more interesting and exciting and excellent place than it has ever been because of its diversity," Wilkins expressed.

Arcidiacono offered a different perspective. "I think that universities have been very dishonest in how race is being used in their admissions practices. If we become more transparent, then we can get a lot of good things to come out of the ruling," he explained.

Sander presented a similar positive outlook on the Supreme Court's decision. "If the school is not using preferences, that, in essence, increases the value of their credential. Because it means, 'you got in the same way everybody else did. You're not like a special case. We don't need to think of you as a beneficiary of a double standard.'" To Sander, that makes admissions to elite institutions "more attractive."

To substantiate these preliminary

thoughts, Sander and his colleagues sought to investigate the impact of the SFFA rulings on law school admissions. After collecting and analyzing data across approximately 96,000 applicants applying to primarily elite law schools, their unpublished research offers quantitative insights into the impact of the Supreme Court decisions.

"In the 2021 and 2022 admissions cycles, law schools were using preferences very similar to those they had been using for decades," Sander explained. However, by 2023, his study showed that racial preferences generally declined across 80 of the top law schools.

This consistency drastically changed by 2024. Sander's findings demonstrated that, on average, there was a one-third decline in the amount of preferences given to African American students at elite law schools. Yet, there was a particularly striking decline at Harvard. According to Sander's data, there was no clear evidence that HLS was using racial preferences at all.

"Harvard had a target on it" due to their involvement in the Supreme Court lawsuits, Arcidiacono explained. According to Arcidiacono, they had to assume the most scrutiny and thus strictly complied with this overturn on affirmative action.

It is important to note that, at the undergraduate level, these rulings did not have a vast impact on minority enrollment, as seen from the Independent's prior investigation into the Harvard College Class of 2028. However, "affirmative action has always been bigger the higher up you go," Arcidiacono explained. "It doesn't surprise me that you see a bigger drop" when looking at the HLS JD1 class demographics.

"Harvard must have understood that if they didn't use preferences, they would have a pretty substantial drop. They may have been surprised it wasn't larger than it was," Sander stated. However, Wilkins felt that "the drop is greater than anyone expected," partly due to the lack of change in undergraduate admissions, and the decline was more significant at HLS than across peer institutions.

In response to these conflicting

question: “How does the school react to this?” This thought is especially relevant when considering how far the legal profession has come over the past few decades regarding diversity and racial representation.

The Legal Field, Race, and Law School Admissions

Throughout the early-to-mid twentieth century, the legal field was relatively homogenous in the context of race, religion, and gender. Wilkins explained, “Prior to the mid-1960s, anybody could be a lawyer, as long as you were a white, Anglo-Saxon, protestant man of means.”

Statistics from the era corroborate these statements. According to estimations cited by an article written by Professor John T. Baker of the Indiana University School of Law and Yale Law School graduate Jerome Davis, the number of Black lawyers in the United States before 1960 was approximately 1,500 out of the 300,000 lawyers in America. Representation in the justice sector was transformed in the late twentieth century.

In response to the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision and shifts in public perception of minority populations, the late 1960s opened the doors for under-represented populations. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission explains in a study on diversity in law firms that, in 1975, African Americans accounted for 2.3% of employed lawyers, and by 2002, 4.4%. By the twenty-first century, data from the American Bar Association’s 2020 Profile of the Legal Profession illustrates how the proportion of Black lawyers in America had dramatically increased, standing at 11.4% by 2010 and 14.1% by 2020.

In the context of HLS, the first Black law student was in the entering Class of 1962. However, diversity in enrollment classes grew in the coming years, and from 1965 to 2022, there were between 40-60 Black students in almost every entering class. Similar trends were seen across all the elite law institutions until the elimination of race-based preferences in admissions.

The Future of Admissions, Legal Education, and the Legal Profession

The influence of the Supreme Court’s overturn of affirmative action will vary across different institutions, especially at HLS. “You really have to distinguish between what happens at an individual school like Harvard and what happens in the system as a whole,” Sander noted. He also explained that non-elite institutions only saw a minimal drop in Black, Latino, and other minority student enrollment numbers. In contrast, the impact of the banning of

racial preferences in admissions at elite law schools depends on institutional compliance.

“What are my competitors going to do?” is the question that Arcidiacono believes elite law schools like Harvard, the University of Chicago, Stanford, and more will be asking. Arcidiacono predicts that institutions will shift their adherence to the elimination of race-based affirmative action in upcoming admission cycles depending on the extent to which their peers conform to the Supreme Court’s ruling.

Both Arcidiacono and Sander also suggest that compliance with the SFFA rulings, and thus changes in Black student enrollment for future law school admissions cycles, will change with our new executive branch.

“Under Biden, the only way you’re ever going to get compliance would be through more court cases. With the Trump administration, that may be different,” Arcidiacono stated. Sander concurs, explaining that Trump’s “justice department and education department might start suing schools that appear not to have reduced racial preferences. There may also be private litigation against law schools.”

With these questions regarding compliance in mind, Arcidiacono clarifies that academic institutions nationwide need to discover an optimal balance between using racial preferences in admissions while still ensuring their enrollment classes are intellectually and culturally compatible. “As you increase the preferences more and more, the benefits you may get from diversity become smaller and smaller, primarily because you’re ending up admitting students who don’t match as well with the characteristics with the other students,” he claimed.

Wilkins offered a different perspective on the direction of future law school admissions. In the context of HLS, according to Wilkins, the law school’s first-year classes consist of around 80 people. With this shift in racial representation, instead of having around seven or eight Black students in each lecture, there now may be one or two. Wilkins argued that this would put “tremendous pressure” on the few students who are there. “We know

that when people are in an extreme minority, whoever they are, it is much more difficult for them to realize their full potential and to contribute freely because there is a spotlight on them,” he explained.

Extrapolating this to the larger legal profession, Wilkins uses history to explain his concerns. “Harvard has educated more Black lawyers than any other law school in the United States with the exception of Howard Law School and perhaps another historically Black institution.” Therefore, to Wilkins, to have the number of Black students fall to the lowest level in any other entering class since 1965 “is not just a disaster for the Black students who are not enrolled, it’s a disaster for our profession.”

Wilkins claims that such richness in the law school student body “has played a huge role in bringing not just diversity...[but] bringing excellence, outstanding achievements at the highest levels in every aspect of our society.”



Ultimately, it is going to take a few admissions cycles to get more consistency. What it stabilizes at will be unclear, but, to Arcidiacono, the number of enrolled Black students at elite institutions “will certainly be less than what it was.”

“The path to a racially just and fair, race-neutral society is long and winding,” Sander added.

However, Wilkins makes it clear that diversity in race and all

other contexts is “a fundamental part of education” and, therefore, must be preserved.

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GRAPHIC BY RILEY CULLINAN '27

Trump Returns to Office

HARVARD STUDENTS REACT TO PRESIDENT TRUMP'S SECOND INAUGURATION.

BY JULES SANDERS '28

President Donald Trump was sworn in for his second term on Jan. 20 inside the Capitol Rotunda, making him the second person in American history to serve two nonconsecutive terms as chief executive.

Following a contentious and unprecedented election season, Trump narrowly won the national popular vote—the first Republican presidential candidate to do so since former Pres. George W. Bush in 2004—and carried all seven key battleground states. By decreasing margin of victory, they were Arizona, North Carolina, Nevada, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

“The golden age of America begins right now,” Trump said in his inaugural address. “From this day forward, our country will flourish and be respected again all over the world. We will be the envy of every nation, and we will not allow ourselves to be taken advantage of any longer.”

Attended by the four other living presidents, all nine members of the Supreme Court, nominees for the Trump cabinet, and other state and national officials, the inauguration ceremony was the first to be held indoors since former Pres. Ronald Reagan's in 1985. Trump emphasized campaign trail talking points, reaffirming his views on border security, education, and the economy. He also announced plans to issue a series of executive orders on his first day in office to “begin the complete restoration of America and the revolution of common sense.”

Soon after his inauguration, Trump pardoned over 1,500 rioters who took part in the Jan. 6 U.S. Capitol attack, attempted to restrict birthright citizenship, and placed a hold on the ban of the social media app TikTok—a prohibition that had come into effect on Jan. 19 as part of the Protecting Americans from Foreign

Adversary Controlled Applications Act. Trump has also signed executive orders targeting diversity, equity, and inclusion programs in the federal government, drawing condemnation from organizations like the ACLU and the NAACP.

Throughout his 2024 presidential campaign, Trump threatened to increase taxes on university endowments, and since taking office, he has targeted DEI programming in higher education. He has also indicated that his administration will seek to reduce federal funding for colleges and universities, potentially making it more difficult for students to acquire student loans.

This past fall, a series of *Harvard Crimson* editorial pieces highlighted a growing conservative movement among undergraduates and the rising visibility and outspokenness of this contingent. The 2021 revival of the Salient, a right-wing campus publication, as well as the rising conspicuity of the John Adams Society, a secretive, conservative-leaning debate organization, have marked this modest rightward shift since the 2020 election.

Michael Oved '25, president emeritus of the Harvard Republican Club, described the second Trump administration as a boon for the economy in contrast to the past four years.

“There is no doubt that President Trump's inauguration—and the actions he has taken in his first day in office—marks a positive shift from the failed administration of President Biden,” Oved said. “I look forward to the upcoming four years, which I am certain will be marked by a more prosperous, safe, and free America than we have seen in the past, grounded in de-regulation and spending cuts, as well as lower taxes and incentives for corporations to innovate and succeed in our ever-growing economy.”

Evan Doerr '28, recently selected co-chair of the Institute of Politics' Conservative Coalition, declined to comment on the inauguration. The *Independent* also attempted to contact Leo Koerner '26, chair of the John Adams Society and author of *The Crimson* op-ed “To the Editor: Harvard Conservatives Owe You Nothing,” but he did not respond to the request.

In contrast to Oved, newly elected Harvard College Democrats Co-Presidents Jack Tueting '27 and Mandy Zhang '27 voiced strong concern about the executive actions President Trump signed into effect during his first week in office.

“The attempt to end birthright citizenship undermines the Constitution, raising questions about his commitment to the rule of law. Pardoning individuals involved in the January 6 insurrection further erodes

democratic norms,” they said in a statement to the *Independent*. “Moreover, his rollback of executive orders aimed at lowering prescription drug costs shows a disregard for the needs of everyday Americans, prioritizing the interests of the wealthy and well-connected.”

“We anticipate widespread outrage and protest from the student body, given Harvard's historically active political environment and its diverse community of students directly affected by Trump's policies,” they added.

According to Tueting and Zhang, Harvard College Democrats plans to organize resistance against policies promulgated by the Trump administration that the group views as harmful.

“Our Annual Lobby Day at the Massachusetts State House in 2025 will likely focus on legislation that counters the federal government's most harmful policies,” they clarified. “We also aim to support Democratic candidates in local and state elections, including key races in Virginia and New Jersey, to build broader resistance. Additionally, our service efforts will focus on aiding communities that Trump's policies are likely to neglect, ensuring we use our resources to make a tangible impact.”

Virginia and New Jersey notably hold gubernatorial and some legislative elections in years succeeding the general election, and pundits often look to the results of these votes to predict trends for the midterm elections. For example, some viewed Republican Glenn Youngkin's upset victory over Democratic former Gov. Terry McAuliffe in the 2021 Virginia gubernatorial election as an indication that the 2022 midterms would favor the G.O.P.

Regardless of political affiliation, Harvard undergraduates and the world at large can agree that Trump's second term will have a drastic impact on nearly every sector of society, particularly education. Given Trump's long history of conflict with the University, the likelihood that the federal government again goes toe-to-toe with Harvard seems high.

Dominick Lombard '27 and Lily O'Donoghue-McDonald '26, co-chairs of the non-partisan Harvard Votes Challenge, declined to give a statement on the Trump inauguration.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF DENNY GULIA-JANOVSKI '26



The Enduring Attack on DEI

THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ISSUES AN EXECUTIVE ORDER COMMITTED TO ROLLING BACK DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION EFFORTS.

BY RANIA JONES '27

In his first week back in office, President Donald Trump signed a series of executive orders targeting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs across the executive branch and the broader United States. From anti-bias training to federal funding for minority farmers and homeowners, Trump's order effectively dismantles such programs from all aspects of the federal government and affiliated parties. This move by Trump comes after Monday's executive order accused former President Joe Biden of forcing "discrimination" programs into "virtually all aspects of the federal government" through DEI programs.

During his presidency, Biden mandated that all federal agencies develop DEI plans, issue annual progress reports, and provide data for a government-wide dashboard tracking demographic trends in hiring and promotions. His administration also established the Chief Diversity Officers Council to oversee the implementation of DEI plans—a council that Trump has now ordered to be disbanded.

Trump's sweeping executive order, issued just one day after his inauguration, requires that all executive agencies and federally funded educational institutions terminate any race- or gender-based diversity programs, mandates, policies, preferences, and activities that could violate federal civil rights laws.

"Influential institutions of American society, including the Federal Government," the document read, "... have adopted and actively use dangerous, demeaning, and immoral race- and sex-based preferences under the guise of so-called 'diversity, equity, and inclusion' (DEI) or 'diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility' (DEIA) that can violate the civil-rights laws of this Nation."

Trump's order asserts that DEI initiatives "not only violate the text and spirit of our longstanding Federal civil-rights laws, but also undermine our national unity." The order does not specify exactly which programs it targets but mandates a government-wide review

to ensure that contracts and grants comply with the Trump administration's anti-DEI stance.

Extending his reach beyond just government-funded subsidiaries, Trump instructed all federal agencies to each identify up to nine corporations, large non-profit groups, or institutions of higher education with endowments that exceed \$1 billion whose diversity policies violated civil rights laws. However, even without direct federal demand, companies like Walmart and Facebook have already reportedly scaled back or ended some of their diversity initiatives.

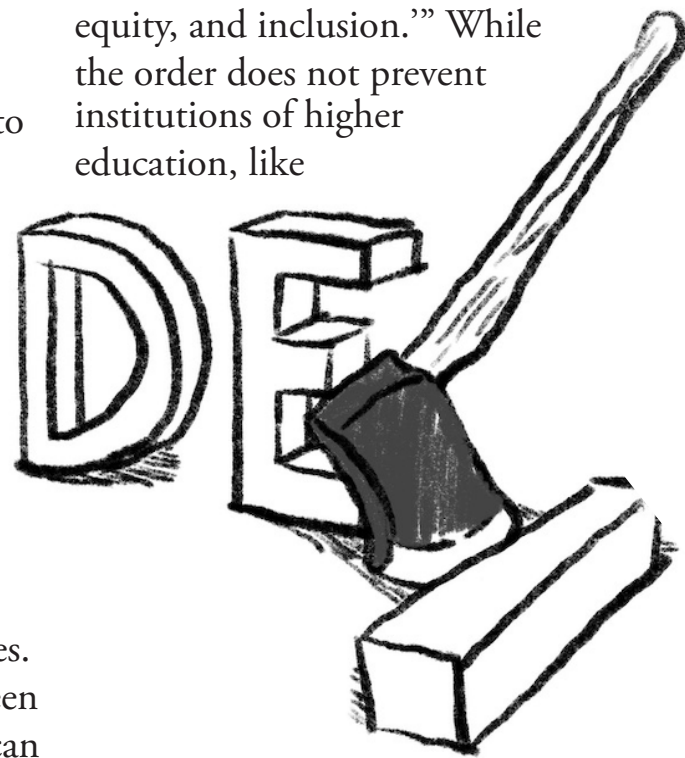
DEI laws and programs have been under attack for years by the Republican political agenda who contend that such measures and practices threaten merit-based hiring, promotion, and educational opportunities. In 2023, conservatives achieved a long-sought-after win when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against affirmative action programs in higher education, determining that race-based admissions practices are unconstitutional.

Late this past Tuesday, President Donald Trump issued an executive order challenging DEI practices and programming at colleges and universities in the United States. The order directed Pam Bondi, his nominee for attorney general, to consider federal litigation and regulatory action to ensure widespread compliance in the reduction and elimination of DEI programs at companies and universities. Trump also instructed Bondi, in addition to Linda McMahon, his nominee for Secretary of Education, to provide guidance within 120 days to all state and local educational agencies on complying with the 2023 Supreme Court ruling.

Throughout his campaign, Trump had reiterated his opposition to elite educational institutions, particularly Harvard, threatening to impose higher taxes on its endowment and cut federal funding.

In the order, Trump maintains this agenda: "Institutions of higher education have adopted and actively use

dangerous, demeaning, and immoral race-and sex-based preferences under the guise of so-called 'diversity, equity, and inclusion.'" While the order does not prevent institutions of higher education, like



Harvard, from discussing or teaching about diversity or issues related race and gender as a part of academic coursework, the immediate nature of this challenge to diversity initiatives on college campuses is indicative of the force and aggression to which Trump's administration seeks to dismantle.

However, given the University's \$53 billion endowment and vast diversity office, it's likely the school will be a target. Each of Harvard's schools has its own office dedicated to equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging.

At this point in time, no court has declared DEI efforts inherently illegal, and President Trump is not able to override decades of legal precedent. While many of Trump's changes may take months or even years to implement, his administration seeks to dismantle the decades of policies and laws committed to strengthening DEI practices around the country.

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GRAPHIC BY DAVID LI '25

Looking Beyond the Flames

INVESTIGATING THE LATENT ISSUES AND HEARTBREAKING TOLL ON HARVARD STUDENTS FROM THE LOS ANGELES WILDFIRES.

BY CAROLINE STOHRER '28

Three days before the fires, Los Angeles and the surrounding area were idyllic. The Daily Pilot, an Orange County newspaper, even featured an article about the wintry beauty of Laguna Beach on its front page. However, on Jan. 7, fierce winds and a region parched from drought combined to create one of the most devastating fires in California's history. Approximately two weeks later, thousands of buildings were destroyed, countless citizens displaced, and the death toll, now 28, continues to rise.

News coverage of the fires has been divided between the factual and political: local bureaucracy's prevention of better clearing of dry brush, resurfacing feuds between President Donald Trump and Governor Gavin Newsom, and the L.A. mayor's failure to delegate authority. After about a week of coverage, American media seemingly lost interest in the wildfires; even as the blaze continues to rage, entire neighborhoods have been destroyed, and the prospect of rain raises the concern of mudslides.

Noticing this downturn in coverage, especially regarding the underlying causes of the wildfires and the profound loss that communities have experienced, the *Independent* interviewed students close to the tragedy.

Underlying Causes

Before we can understand the level of devastation that wildfires have wrought on the L.A. area, it is important to review the systematic issues surrounding California's water management and drought. Firefighters were under-equipped and underfunded, facing unusually intense fires.

After a historic "megadrought" from 2020-2022, unprecedented levels of precipitation in 2022-2023 restored major state water supplies to above-average levels. Nonetheless, this turn of events did not resolve the serious issue of groundwater overdrafting that California faces. Overdrafting, or overdrawing, occurs when more water is pumped from aquifers than can be replenished. Year after year, the state's groundwater usage exceeds replenishment levels, diminishing an essential 40 percent of California's annual water source.

This overuse has caused record levels of sinking in central California and potential contamination of groundwater quality—over-drafting strains water usage, water transportation, and older pipe infrastructure. Solutions to sinking in central California, such as regional water recharges, are also tied to costly and time-consuming repairs of aqueducts and canals. California's 2024 Long-Term Drought Plan promises an Aqueduct Subsidence plan for sinking. Still, it may be necessary to extend this plan to ensure all major population centers are adequately

equipped for extensive fires.

The L.A. fires exacerbated these existing problems with California's water supply when it came time to combat the fires. A striking headline reported that fire hydrants ran dry while combating the flames. Local water supplies ran dry even though neighboring water supplies were in good condition because the water pressure in older pipes and aqueducts was too low to refill L.A.'s water, especially when faced with such a large fire.

In addition to a water shortage, firefighters faced a \$17 million budget cut. While L.A. officials have pointed out that fire department spending increased this fiscal year, Fire Chief Kristin Crowley disagreed in a Dec. 4 memo.

"These budgetary reductions have adversely affected the Department's ability to maintain core operations," wrote Chief Crowley. Regarding a \$7 million cut to Overtime Variable Staffing Hours, "v-hours," Crowley added, "the reduction in v-hours has severely limited the Department's capacity to prepare for, train for, and respond to large-scale emergencies, including wildfires, earthquakes, hazardous material incidents, and large public events." V-hours allow the LAFD to have a flexible work model where more firefighters are on the job when there is a greater demand. These cuts may have reduced the reach of LAFD firefighters and prolonged the spread of the fires.

Consequences of the Wildfires

While many factors contributed to the L.A. fires' destruction, the impact is undeniable.

Wanting to see how these underlying factors affected Harvard's student body, The *Independent* spoke with Ellie Chen '28, Amelie Lima '27, and Jocelyn Delgado '28 about their personal connections to the region.

When asked about the damage they or their families experienced in the wildfires, each student

offered devastating yet powerful anecdotes:

"My grandparents live in the Pacific Palisades and were affected by the fires. They lost their entire house. That house was not only the one they resided in, but also the childhood home of my dad. They have no belongings other than the ones they left with, and they lost hundreds of pictures, memories, and valuables." – Chen

"I grew up in the Palisades and lived there until I was 18. The majority of the town has completely burnt down; all the places I used to attend—right outside of the village—my home, my school, and church, friends' homes, schools, and churches, all burnt down. The loss is immeasurable, not just in terms of physical structures but also in the memories and experiences associated with these places." – Lima

"My uncle lost his whole entire house. He was finally able to go visit it again three days ago, and he took a video, and it's completely gone. The only thing still standing is the chimney[...]. [My cousin's] house was gone. Her high school was gone. The cemetery that my grandparents were buried in is completely burned. It honestly looks like such a ghost town." – Delgado

None of the interviewees found local officials' advice or government recommendations helpful during the wildfires. "For my grandparents, they have not been very effective...An officer from L.A. County was walking around their street and telling residents that they were safe from the fires and didn't need to evacuate. This information proved to be completely false, as an hour later, their entire street was engulfed in flames," Chen recalled.

Additionally, since the fires spread at unprecedented rates to unexpected regions, even recommendations that might have allowed Lima or Delgado's families to collect essential documents and supplies were fruitless. "Most people left all their belongings in their homes, which eventually burnt down—abandoned their cars, and only had the clothes on their backs left. The evacuation was chaotic, with people fleeing for their lives and not knowing if they would have a home to return to," Lima elaborated.

One of the wildfires' most devastating outcomes was the difficulty some families face in relocating or receiving adequate insurance compensation to cover their losses despite the high likelihood of future wildfires in the area.

"Pasadena's a big community for Hispanic and Black people. People living in these areas already are not the most wealthy, and there's already real estate vultures trying to make offers on land," Delgado said.

Chen's grandparents also would not be able to relocate: "They bought their house in the late sixties and have lived there since. They are now in their nineties and have lost everything. They cannot rebuild, and they can barely afford to move to a new place," Chen said.

Faced with the outsized risk of losing money and impending business failures from wildfires, insurance companies have been confronted with the need to change insurance policies and reinsurance modeling. "My uncle has already talked to the insurance, which is a bit of a battle because Allstate has stopped covering wildfires because it's too expensive for them," Delgado said.

Although it will be challenging to relocate, let alone rebuild, families with deep roots in the community are determined to forge on.

"My grandparents are adamant to stay in L.A. That's where they built their entire life after immigrating from Taiwan, and where they have all of their memories. Leaving L.A. to them is like admitting defeat after everything they have been through," Chen said.

CAROLINE STOHRER '28 (CAROLINESTOHRER@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) HAS FAMILY IN THE SAN FRANCISCO AREA AND HOPES THEY WON'T FACE A SIMILAR TRAGEDY IN THE FUTURE.

GRAPHIC BY RILEY CULLINAN '27



The 92 Report: Harvard Then & Now

WILL BACHMAN '92 IS ON A MISSION TO INTERVIEW EVERY MEMBER OF THE HARVARD AND RADCLIFFE CLASS OF 1992.

BY RANIA JONES '27

“So, tell me about your journey since graduating from Harvard.”

Each episode of Will Bachman '92's podcast, *The 92 Report*, kicks off the same way—but from there, Bachman lets his guests take the reins and lets the conversation flow organically.

The 92 Report, which first debuted in February 2022, follows Will Bachman as he speaks with his former classmates in the Harvard College and Radcliffe College Class of 1992. Since its pilot, where Bachman introduces himself and the podcast, he has hosted and produced over 100 episodes.

One evening in the fall of 2021 while biking home from Manhattan to Queens, Bachman was struck with the idea for this ambitious project. “I was just thinking, why, I wish that I had connected with more of my classmates, right?”

But Bachman's motivation went beyond wishing he had connected with more of his classmates. “My second thought was, other people might feel the same way, right? And then it just occurred to me, ‘Why don't I do a podcast and interview every member of the class who is willing?’”

His goal, in every episode, is to discover what Harvard students end up doing in life, and how the University impacted their trajectory.

From the Oval Office to local communities, Bachman is committed to recognizing the contributions of every member of the Class of '92: “I did not want to do something where I was interviewing just high profile, famous members of the class who were well known. Everyone, to some degree, is famous to the family, and as you know, capable.”

Around 1,600 members make up the Class of 1992, so at his rate of one episode per week, Bachman expects that this project will take close to 30 years to complete. Acknowledging the feat ahead of him, Bachman noted, “As I go along, people will be at different stages of life—by the back half of the class, most people will be retired. So it's a little bit of a moving biography.”

In the early days of *The 92 Report*, Bachman interviewed Angel Taveras '92, the 37th and first Hispanic mayor of Providence, R.I., in Episode 3. “I asked him: ‘What was the most challenging part of that job?’ I was a little bit surprised when he talked about snow removal, and those snow removal days were always very, very stressful. So that was fascinating to get insight there.”

In Episode 4, Bachman speaks with Rajani Larocca '92, a doctor and a Newbery Honor-winning author. In Episode 42, Bachman probed Father Roger J. Landry '92, the Columbia Catholic Chaplain, on what exactly Landry had meant when in passing he claimed that he “had gotten to know three popes personally.” In Episode 58, Ruth Hertzman-Miller '92 shared with Bachman how she pivoted midlife from being a practicing physician to pursuing her passion for music, dedicating herself to a career in composing. In Episode 60, in conversation with Shannon (Willey) Winakur '92, Bachman uncovered what life looks like for Winakur as both a cardiologist and an ice hockey player.

In his most recent episode, Episode 118, Bachman interviewed Jason Furman '92, American economist and professor of Economics 10a: “Principles of Microeconomics.” “[Jason] shared some fascinating behind-the-scenes stories about how policies were developed in the Oval Office, and that was fascinating.”

Although each episode boasts a diverse array of experiences, opportunities, and perspectives, Bachman noted there's a lot of luck involved. “The majority of the class have taken this nonlinear path, ending up doing something that they completely did not expect to do in college, and just the high prevalence of contingency is the word. Contingency of just being in the right place at the right time, or having opportunities presented to you.”

Personal side passions, Bachman pointed out, are also a consistent thread between interviews. “The other theme, I'd say, would be the importance in

people's lives of continuing to pursue side interests and hobbies, and in a lot of cases, it's things that were important to people in college.”

For Bachman, an unexpected gift from *The 92 Report* has been hearing about all the ways that the podcast has reconnected members of the class. “It's certainly been very rewarding to me to hear from members of the class that they heard an episode with a former friend of theirs—even a former roommate—they haven't spoken with in a while, and that then after that show, they went out and reached out to that person and reconnected.”

For his Class of 1992 listeners specifically, Bachman hopes that the weekly episodes serve as a way to reconnect with old friends or forge new connections with classmates they may have not known well.

For those of us who are still lucky enough to be Harvard undergraduates, Bachman offered up a tidbit of advice:

“Invest less in classwork and more in getting to know your classmates.” Acknowledging how college is a unique time, Bachman continued by emphasizing how “you need to make some investments over time to maintain those relationships. It can just be one touch per year—a phone call, an email, a handwritten note—to keep those relationships somewhat warm.”

The Harvard network is one of a kind, a web of connections that extends far beyond the hallowed brick halls of the Yard. Bachman's podcast serves as a testament to how these relationships, whether old friendships or newfound connections, require energy, care, and continuous cultivation to survive. The true value of this campus, though, resides in its enduring nature—this idea that no matter where life takes us, the ties forged here have a way of keeping us intertwined forever.

You can listen to *The 92 Report* on Spotify and Apple Podcasts.

RANIA JONES '27 (RJONES@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) MIGHT JUST HAVE TO MAKE THE 27 REPORT.
GRAPHIC BY RILEY CULLINAN '27

The Fragile Reality of “Ceasefire Now”

Momentary peace amidst the Israel-Hamas war.

BY MIA WILCOX '28

Jan. 19 marked the first day of a long-anticipated ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war that began over 15 months ago. The attack on Oct. 7, 2023 left 1,200 Israelis dead and over 240 captured by Hamas. Since then, more than 45,000 Palestinians have been killed as a result of Israel’s retaliation, along with hundreds more Israelis.

From the early days of the conflict, the urgency for a ceasefire became clear for both sides, with the foremost goals of the release of the Israeli hostages and efforts to aid the Palestinian population devastated by the war.

The ceasefire, brokered by Qatar, the United States, and Egypt, began Sunday morning with the release of three hostages: Romi Gonen, 24, Doron Steinbrecher, 31, and Emily Damari, 28. In return, Israel released 90 Palestinian prisoners. The ceasefire agreement outlines three distinct stages, each with specific goals.

The first stage involves a complete ceasefire along with the release of 33 Israeli hostages over the next six weeks, as well as the release of 1,700 Palestinian prisoners. This stage will also involve distributing humanitarian aid to Gaza and efforts to reestablish essential infrastructure such as hospitals and medical clinics. The second stage will consist of the release of the remaining hostages as well as the withdrawal of all Israeli troops from Gaza. The third and final stage consists of the return of the bodies of all deceased Israeli hostages and a formed plan for the reconstruction of Gaza.

If the ceasefire is upheld to the third and final stage, the reconstruction would be an enormous project, with the United Nations estimating the cost could reach up to \$50 billion. Even with that funding, which alone would be a feat to obtain, it could take hundreds of years to restore Gaza to its prior growth trend.

The ceasefire agreement was established in the final days of Biden’s presidency. During remarks given on Jan. 19, Pres. Biden took credit for the negotiation, suggesting it was in response to a plan he outlined in May 2024. While Biden reflected that the road to this deal has been long and arduous, he expressed hope for the region’s future. His words called for “a

credible path to a state of their own” for the Palestinian people and “the future normalization and integration of Israel with all of its Arab neighbors.”

The early days of the ceasefire saw many bittersweet returns. Thousands of Israelis gathered in Tel Aviv’s ‘Hostage Square,’ singing, dancing, and celebrating the release of Gonen, Steinbrecher, and Damari. The Israeli Defense Force shared footage of the three women being handed off to the Red Cross, as well as the reunion between them and their mothers. Meanwhile, the release of Palestinian detainees from Ofer Prison, located in the occupied West Bank, sparked celebrations in the streets. Many Palestinians also began to make their way back to their homes, 90% of which have been severely damaged or destroyed.

Upon returning to Harvard’s campus for the spring semester, it is hard to anticipate any prevailing sentiment among the student body and the University. The University has historically had many outspoken student groups representing both ends of the conflict.

“I am all for the hostage deal,” Alex Bernat ’25, Co-President of Harvard Chabad and outspoken advocate for Israel, stated in an interview with the Independent. While Bernat’s primary concern is the return of the Israeli hostages, he stressed “the utmost importance that this ends without Hamas in control of Gaza.” He argued that this action would maintain peace in the region and “better the lives of those living in the Gaza Strip as well, as they could have leaders more focused on development and economic opportunities.”

Following the ceasefire and the inauguration of President Donald Trump on Jan. 20, Harvard also adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism. This definition condemns blatant hatred against Jewish people as well as certain criticisms of the state of Israel, namely “the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity,”

as defined by IHRA. This includes “claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor” as well as “drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.” This definition was adopted as part of a settlement for two Title VI lawsuits claiming that the University was not doing enough to protect Jewish students from antisemitism.

The introduction of this definition has not been without controversy. Just days after its adoption, political scientist Jay Ufelder resigned as program director of Harvard Kennedy School’s Nonviolent Action Lab, citing concerns over free speech concerning his personal views on the conflict as reasons for his departure. The Harvard Undergraduate Palestine Solidarity Committee responded to this in an Instagram post that read, “Rather than listening to wide-supported demands to divest from companies directly complicit in genocide, the university is doubling down on its commitment to draconian measures against organizers. But that will never stop our solidarity with Palestine.”

In the wake of these recent developments, it is unclear what the coming weeks and months will hold both geopolitically and on campus. Will the ceasefire usher in a longer-lasting peace, or will it remain a temporary pause in the fighting? How will Harvard students respond upon returning to campus for the new semester? While these questions remain unanswered, the coming months are likely to offer greater clarity, revealing the broader implications of these events.



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GRAPHIC BY ANNELISE FISHER '26

FORUM

The War on Truth

How artificial intelligence fuels the machine of misinformation and propaganda.

BY GAURI SOOD '26

“Beta, did you hear the news? As of February 2025, working from home is going to be banned!” exclaimed my dadima, my paternal grandmother, visibly worried as she clutched the stairway. “How are people going to keep their jobs?”

I looked at my sister—she looked back at me—and we both nearly keeled over laughing. Clutching our stomachs and forcibly downturned our mouths, we responded, saying, “dadima, don’t worry. I’m sure this is some form of misinformation.”

This highly skewed announcement, coming from my dadima’s morning dose of news, was rooted in President Donald Trump’s barrage of executive orders. “Return to In-Person Work” was released on Jan. 20, 2025, and stated, “Heads of all departments and agencies in the executive branch of Government shall, as soon as practicable, take all necessary steps to terminate remote work arrangements and require employees to return to work in-person at their respective duty stations on a full-time basis...” The executive order refers to federal workers in the United States, not to all workers in the world.

Albeit a drastic change for federal workers across the nation, this order was not meant to impact the widespread issue of remote work across industries and organizational bodies. The executive order was quickly rebranded by a news outlet and implanted in the mind of my smart yet vulnerable grandmother, along with hundreds of thousands of other listeners. In turn, my grandmother’s interpretation of this repackaged narrative illustrated an evident display of misinformation.

Misinformation runs rampant in today’s world, where news is easily accessible, interpretable, and disseminated. Its existence, in some cases, comes merely from naïveté—my dadima was unquestionably not ill-intentioned, just innocently confused. Its concern, however, arises in two situations: either when spread with general malicious intent, or when incited to change a specific opinion.

As per a Johns Hopkins library guide, the difference between misinformation and propaganda may not be as large as you think. “Because of its historical use, many people associate propaganda with inflammatory speech or writing that has no basis in fact,” says the guide. “In reality, propaganda may easily be based in fact, but facts represented in such a way as to provoke a desired response.” Thus, we can understand propaganda as a sort of opinion-altering version of misinformation.

If you think back to high school history class, “propaganda,” may have had a certain meaning. Perhaps it’s the poster of Uncle Sam, pointing at you with “I want you for U.S. Army,” in bold lettering below his fierce face, or Rosie the Riveter, pumping her muscles, saying “We Can Do It!” Over the years, the word has remained, but it has progressed in its definition.

As stated by the American Historical Association (AHA), “propaganda is not new and modern... the battle for men’s minds is as old as human history.” The AHA even emphasizes the importance of some propaganda in modern-day democracy, particularly for “propaganda as promotion,” where a political candidate aiming to gain the favor of their voting bodies and constituencies “must engage in promotion as a legitimate and necessary part of a political contest.”

The waging of this opinion battle has progressed beyond appealing to voters, however, and into a modern-day war of misinformation. The culprit is in part the rise of artificial intelligence, with its ability to generate false stories, images, and even websites at the click of a finger. What began as an appeal to voter populations has become a war on truth.

NewsGuard, an organization dedicated to rating the transparency of news and information websites, has now tracked “1,150 AI-generated news and information sites operating with little to no human oversight, and is tracking false narratives produced by artificial intelligence tools,” (as of Jan. 13, 2025). Interestingly, NewsGuard reports that such AI-generated websites tend to have relatively “normal” names, which easily hides their bot-operative status. NewsGuard even found a network of over 150 Russian AI-generated websites, which they discovered hidden under the guise of “DC Weekly,” writing “egregiously misleading claims,” largely about the war in Ukraine.

The use of deepfakes is particularly harmful in inciting propaganda. A deepfake is “an image or recording that has been convincingly altered and manipulated,” and is intended “to misrepresent someone as doing or saying something that was not actually done or said,” as defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary. By putting fake information in people’s mouths, deepfakes can falsely display political support from prominent members of the public for or against a candidate, blurring the line of truth.

There were significant concerns about deepfakes and other AI-generated content drastically affecting the 2024 election. A deepfake of former President Joe Biden’s voice urged New Hampshire voters not to vote in the state’s primary, and to instead “save [their] vote for the November election.” This deepfake, distributed in Jan. of 2024, elicited fear for the coming election. Yet, as explained by NPR correspondent Shannon Bond, the damage that was expected did not ensue. Instead, AI was largely used to create politicized memes and videos intended to act as propaganda. In an interview with NPR, Zeve Sanderson, Executive Director of NYU’s Center for Social Media and Politics, noted

that the propaganda created through AI for the election this past year was “designed to push a narrative, and propaganda works.”

The concern is that AI-generated content is convincing. Researchers from Stanford University’s Institute for Human-Centered AI have found that AI-generated propaganda is even more cogent than human-created propaganda, indicating strong human susceptibility to AI-generated content. Additionally, as large language models and image generators improve in accuracy, alongside the rise in AI-generated propaganda, it will become increasingly difficult to discern the truth from the noise.

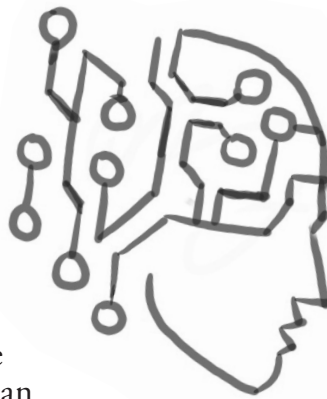
Bond and other researchers’ suggestion that elections may not be at stake, given the relatively small effect of deepfake-created propaganda and false information in 2024, is misleadingly comforting—deepfakes are not going anywhere. A recent opinion from the World Economic Forum details that, indeed, “deepfakes failed to turn the tide in any candidate’s favour,” but also that “their ineffectiveness does not mean that they are harmless.” Personal safety concerns and harassment are two very significant concerns that can affect anyone.

Mitigators are working hard to protect populations. Deepfake recognition technologies are in development, with several organizations releasing preliminary versions. OpenAI is one such group, having released a detection software that can identify 98.8% of images that are created by its most recent image generator (DALL-E 3). Though the government has no large-scale crackdowns or comprehensive AI regulation, largely due to free speech and innovation concerns, roughly 120 bills are in Congress circulation. Organizations such as NewsGuard are working tirelessly to capture AI-generated misinformation at its earliest iteration.

The most powerful tool, however, is the only thing we can continue to do—build awareness and foster education. This war against truth is not ending anytime soon; instead, it continues to evolve, from political propaganda to personal attacks. We must question the validity of the information we receive and attempt to fully understand it, just like my dadima did by vocalizing her confusion. In a time of constantly changing technologies with the possibility to enable limitless naïve assumptions, these are our strongest weapons.

GAURI SOOD '26 (GAURISOOD@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) LOVES LOOKING THROUGH THE AI-GENERATED CONTENT IN HER GRANDPARENTS' WHATSAPP GROUP CHATS.

GRAPHIC BY EMILY PALLAN '27



Dedans ou Dehors?: The Ins and Outs of Study Abroad

How I plan to make the most out of my four months in Paris.

BY FRANNY CONNORS '26

While riding in a taxi to the airport two weeks ago, I felt a mix of apprehension and a need for contemplation. I was simultaneously reflecting on an adventure-filled winter break and fall semester and forecasting my next semester in Paris. I jotted down a list of ins and outs in anticipation of this article, and I now return to them after completing a two-week orientation in France. As I gear up to start classes, here are the things I plan to carry and discard on this journey.

In: French

Two weeks ago, my number one fear of going abroad was French immersion. My program is entirely in French, and my host family can only speak to me in French. With just four semesters of Harvard French instruction under my belt, I had little confidence in my ability to take math, history, and art classes in French and communicate with my host family. Now, only two weeks later, I find myself already embracing the language, and it will be my “in” language for this semester (obviously, this column will be an exception).

Out: English

Since French immersion is the thing du jour this semester, English will have to take the backseat. All my classes will be in French, so I have little choice there, but the real challenge has been and will continue to be diving into the real francophone world. Despite the stereotypes that might suggest otherwise, I have gotten a very positive response rate when I speak French to shopkeepers and waiters, so hopefully by the end of the semester, I will stop getting English responses!

In: Espresso

Would I really be a study abroad student if I didn't sing the high praises of drinking European espresso? Far from a coffee snob, I cannot say that my palate is refined enough to notice a meaningful difference between the espresso at my local café and the one in my iced coffees from Pavement. I will say, however, that European coffee culture is far superior. This semester, sitting with friends and sipping on espresso for hours is definitely in. The light jolt of energy, the ambiance of a Parisian café, and good (French!) conversation make for a relaxing and entertaining afternoon. Ironically, this

caffeine break asks one to slow down instead of speed up.

Out: Iced Coffee

Since I've established that caffeine is for slowing down, ordering iced coffee to pick up before your mad dash to class is now out. Academically speaking, studying abroad offers an opportunity to take classes like art history or studio art, allowing for a break from the usual intense p-set workload. Late-night study sessions are no longer a necessity, so there's no urgent need to start the day with a nitro cold brew. Even if I did want iced coffee, it is overpriced and hard to find compared to the ubiquitous European espresso.

In: Trains

After a summer of commuting into Boston on the Red Line, I was shocked to see how efficient and packed the French Metro is. With such an expansive map of lines, you can truly get anywhere in Paris (and the rest of Europe, for that matter!) by train. The best part is that taking the trains in Paris is culturally very normalized. A late-night train on a Friday is just as full as an afternoon one, making me feel much safer than riding the T in Boston. With all that, trains are in this semester.

Out: Ubers

With such convenient, safe public transportation, taking an Uber feels almost sinful. I am proud to say I have been quite angelic thus far with zero Ubers taken. There will come a time when, for safety purposes, I will have to call an Uber. But for a dinner reservation that's only twenty minutes away by train or walking distance? Forget about it. Not only do Ubers drain your travel funds, but sitting in a car makes you miss out on getting a sneak peek into Parisian daily life (and fashion!) from people-watching on the train. I've gained a new appreciation for the old adage: life is not just about getting from point A to point B as fast as possible, but slowing down and enjoying yourself along the way.

In: Reading

Since I have established my love of trains and the large role they play in my daily life, I'd be remiss to leave out my favorite train activity besides people-watching: reading. Nothing makes a train ride go faster than a good book, but speaking from experience, it's important to not get so engrossed in your book that you miss your stop. Beyond the train, books are great company in cafés or parks, fitting seamlessly with the slowed-down lifestyle of studying abroad.

Out: Doomscrolling

There's no better way to ruin your sleep schedule or waste time on the train than by doomscrolling on Instagram Reels or TikTok. I have not completely made this an

“out” yet—it's hard to delete Instagram when I have to keep everyone back home updated with @frannytakesflight. To make social media feel more intentional, I downloaded the OneSec app, which makes you take a deep breath before opening Instagram. Now, I try my best to open up the New York Times Games app or send a text to a friend when I go on my phone instead. I would hate to leave one of the most beautiful cities in the world with the thought that I wasted my time there doomscrolling on my phone.

In: YOLO (You Only Live Once)

The most important element of having a stellar study abroad experience is your mindset. I plan to spend my time this semester trying new and exciting things that I could never do in Cambridge. Whether it be weekend trips to ride camels in Morocco or adventures across Paris like trying oysters from a street vendor, this is the semester I plan to live life to the fullest and adopt a “Yes, and...” attitude. After all, you only study abroad once, so the YOLO mindset is IN.

Out: FOMO (Fear of Missing Out)

In any conversation with a Harvard student about term-time study abroad, the topic of FOMO (fear of missing out) inevitably comes up. Cries of “you only have eight semesters here” are inescapable, and they reflect the underlying fear of many of my classmates: not optimizing one's time at Harvard. I understand the concerns about missing friends and social events, and I had to wrestle with the idea of studying abroad a lot before I came to terms with it. Yet, as an Applied Math and Economics concentrator, I can't help but bring up the concept of diminishing marginal returns: the novelty of your first semester abroad gives you much more benefit than your eighth semester at Harvard. When microeconomics is not comforting enough, I remind myself that Harvard will still be here when I come back in the fall. In the meantime I get to embark on an amazing, life-changing semester that will be filled with adventure, personal growth, and a lot of croissants.

The girl who wrote down that list of ins and outs just two weeks ago got a lot of things right about studying abroad. So far, my time in Paris has been marked by both a relaxed pace of life and daily doses of adventure. I'm excited to live in Paris for the next four months, and I look forward to sharing it with all of you in this column, *A Broad, Abroad vol. 2*.

FRANNY CONNORS '26
(MARYFRANCESCONNORS@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS STUDYING ABROAD WITH CUPA IN PARIS THIS SPRING, AND SHE CAN'T STOP TALKING ABOUT IT.

PHOTO COURTESY OF FRANNY CONNORS '26



MBTA: A Chapter of Renewal

Boston's public transit system is receiving its much-needed improvements.

BY KALVIN FRANK '28

Boston is a world-class city. Each year, the city receives around 23 million tourists, along with people moving from all over the world to Boston to get an education, advance their careers, and build their lives. Yet, for years, the city has struggled with a subpar transit system—the MBTA, or simply “the T.” Don't get me wrong: the MBTA maintains a sprawling subway system, with 157 stations across Boston Proper (not including the 137 commuter train stations and 1100 buses). On paper, the T is an excellent system, but in practice, it is burdened with slow zones, infrastructure issues, and dated trains.

When I first came to Boston from Michigan, I was amazed by the T subway system. My hometown's barely functioning public transit system consisted of eight bus lines running about ten trips per day. I was nowhere near a big city with a subway system, so living just above the expansive T system was an exciting adventure.

However, as I realized the issues with the T, its novelty wore off. The disillusionment started this past October while riding the Green Line to meet my grandparents in Boston's North End. What was supposed to be a 20-minute ride turned into a 40-minute ride, leaving me late for dinner and frustrated with the Green Line's snail pace. I wondered why such issues persisted in a system with over 700,000 daily users. Annoyed, I began to research the underlying issues, eventually finding the Track Improvement Program.

Launched in 2023, the Track Improvement Program aimed to eliminate the 191 speed restrictions across the subway system. The speed restrictions were causing delays across the system (including for me back in Oct.). I found out that many riders on the Green Line, for example,

often faced crawl-speed commutes, with travel times sometimes doubling during peak hours and where walking beats the pace of the T. So, with the support of Gov. Maura Healey, the MBTA set out to change this.

Even with this program, 36 percent of the Green Line still faced speed restrictions in September 2024. However, thanks to the hard work of construction crews and city leaders, the Track Improvement Program officially concluded on Dec. 23, 2024, with Governor Healey speaking and thanking T users and workers for their patience. Signage at the completion event boldly stated, “So long slow zones.” This event marked the first



time in 20 years that the T was slow zone-free, and there is hope that the T can remain this way.

The Track Improvement Program is just one of the many programs that Boston and Massachusetts have established to improve the MBTA. Another group of projects, under the Capital Investment Plan 2025-2029 (CIP) umbrella, is a \$16.7 billion investment in transport infrastructure. The Massachusetts Department of Transportation approved the CIP in July 2024 for the next five years of infrastructure improvements. Most of this will go towards improving the MBTA system as a whole. This investment includes multiple significant projects, such as redesigning the bus route system, purchasing 102 new green line trains, and expanding subway lines, among dozens of other projects listed on the MBTA website.

Beyond reducing commute times, current and future investments in the MBTA also address two other pressing issues: Boston's infamous traffic congestion and the city's sustainability goals. Boston ranks among the worst cities in the country for traffic, with CNBC listing it

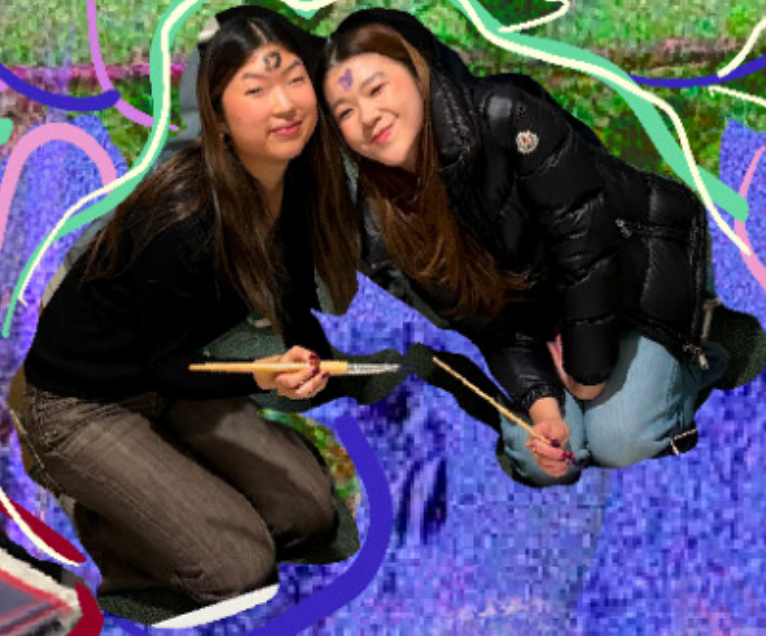
as the fourth worst in 2024. The best way to take cars off the streets is through public transportation investment. With more people using the MBTA, traffic on roadways will be eased. Boston is making this future a reality by investing in MBTA safety, efficiency, timeliness, and speed, all to make the system more appealing to users.

Due to Americans' car dependence, the transportation industry produces more carbon emissions than any other sector in the U.S. Initiatives like the CIP can help reduce Boston's emissions by decreasing the need for driving in and around the city while also supporting Boston's progressive lawmakers and their climate goals. As cities worldwide look to lower carbon emissions, they can look to Boston's efforts to modernize the MBTA and promote clean, safe public transit as a model for sustainable development.

With the elimination of slow zones and modernized trains among many other improvements, Boston's public transportation system is entering a bold, new chapter. While these improvements are promising, Boston and Massachusetts governments must ensure consistent funding and maintenance to prevent the recurrence of old issues. If the MBTA maintains its system, the future of Boston transportation looks bright. As a freshman without a car, I am thrilled to take advantage of the upgraded system that connects Harvard to the vibrant heart of Boston.

KALVIN FRANK '28 (KFRANK@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS EXCITED TO TAKE THE NEWLY-IMPROVED T INTO BOSTON.

GRAPHIC BY RILEY CULLINAN '27



C O M P

T H E I N D Y





THE HARVARD
Independent

ARTS

Spring 2025: What's on at the HRDC?

A preview of the Harvard-Radcliffe Dramatic Club's spring 2025 theater season.

BY KAYLA REIFEL '26

At the beginning of every semester, the Harvard-Radcliffe Dramatic Club (HRDC), Harvard's primary undergraduate theater organization, announces the productions that will take the stage across Harvard's theaters. This semester, the HRDC has announced an exciting mix of original student work and established productions that students can audition for, staff, or mark in their calendars as an entertaining break from classwork.

The HRDC productions for Spring 2025 are as follows:

The Loeb Proscenium

The Loeb Proscenium, the 550-person theater shared with the American Repertory Theater and the largest of the spaces available to the HRDC, will see two exciting large-scale productions this semester: the first a fresh take on *Jesus Christ Superstar*, the iconic 1971 musical, and the second *Eastbound 2025*, this semester's highly anticipated Asian American Dance Troupe (AADT) spring show.

Jesus Christ Superstar, directed by Hannah Alexis '27 and presented by Black Community and Student Theater (BlackC.A.S.T), is in residence at the Loeb Proscenium from March 24 to April 13. The musical, written by Tim Rice and composed by Andrew Lloyd Webber, debuted in 1971. The show is a rock opera that tracks the final week of Jesus's life as told from the perspective of Judas Iscariot. This production is significant as it is the first time in recent years that BlackC.A.S.T, the undergraduate theatre organization dedicated to promoting and creating theater-making opportunities for Black artists, has put a production on the Proscenium. Alexis plans to take a fresh approach to *Superstar*, reimagining it in the context of the social justice movements of the '60s and '70s to explore the savior-like pedestalization of activists.

The Asian American Dance Troupe (AADT) returns to the Proscenium this semester after an extremely successful, sold-out run of shows on Loeb's mainstage in spring 2024 and an equally successful production in Lowell Lecture Hall in fall 2024. AADT is composed of hundreds of dancers and a dedicated team of choreographers and board members who come together to put on a high-energy show that celebrates Asian culture through various forms of dance. This semester's AADT production, *Eastbound 2025*, will be in residence at the Loeb Proscenium from April 14 to April 27.

The Loeb Experimental Theater

A compelling mix of original student works and lesser-known plays and musicals are slated to take place in the Loeb Experimental Theater (the Loeb Ex), the HRDC's smaller black-box theater. First up is *Gruesome Playground Injuries*, a 2011 play by Rajiv Joseph that tracks an unconventional love story that begins when two people meet in their elementary school nurse's office. Directed by Texaco Teixeira-Ramos '26 and in residence from Feb. 17 to Feb. 23, the play will certainly pack a poignant, emotional punch.

Immediately after *Gruesome Playground Injuries* is *be cozy*, a play both written and directed by Zach Halberstam '25 with a residency from Feb. 24 to March 9. The play follows Emily, a struggling B-movie actress living with her troubled boyfriend and quirky brother, as she grapples with reality and control on a transformative film shoot in an exploration of entrapment, obsession, and the blurred lines between fiction and life. Halberstam is no stranger to the Ex, having previously co-directed *Constellations* in the spring of 2024, and it will be exciting to see him bring his original work to the space.

Following *be cozy* is *Songs For A New World*

from March 10 to March 30, directed and co-choreographed by Jessica Hung '25 alongside co-choreographer Abby Zachary '25. *Songs for A New World* is described as "neither musical play nor revue, it is closer to a theatrical song cycle, a very theatrical song cycle" and will feature four singers performing thematically connected yet temporally disparate songs alongside a company of contemporary dancers. The production is slightly more experimental than some others in the Ex this semester and is certain to be highly enthralling.

Next in the Ex is *mind's eye*, this semester's production by the Harvard-Radcliffe Modern Dance Company (HRMDC). HRMDC has a strong track record of putting visually stimulating and highly unique dance shows up in the Ex, and they are set to continue this with another strong production, which is in residence from March 31 to April 6.

Slated next in the Ex is *SKETCH!* (a sketch comedy show). *SKETCH!*, directed by Sophie Garrigus '25, will feature various comedic vignettes written by Talon Flodman '25, Kendall Brady '27, Kathleen Benson '26, Aidan Kohn-Murphy '26, Amann Mahajan '28, Clara Shapiro '27, and Mack Webb '25. In residence from April 7 to April 13, *SKETCH!* will go on at the perfect time to serve as a humorous break for laughing away the pain of impending exams.

Another dance show, *Cadence* by the Harvard Undergraduate Contemporary Collective (HCC), will follow *SKETCH!* in the Ex. HCC also has a history of putting up thematically complex and technically refined dance shows in the Ex, and this show is sure to continue that legacy by being a unique, not-to-be-missed dance event. *Cadence* will be in residence in the Ex from April 14 to April 20.

The final, highly-anticipated show of the season to be performed in the Ex is *The Old Man and the Old Moon*, in residence from April 21 to May 4. *The Old Man and the Old Moon* is a heart-warming "play with music" written by PigPen Theatre Co. that follows the Old Man in charge of filling the moon with light. The Old Man is thrust on a sea-faring adventure to find his wife after she is drawn away by a mysterious melody. Directed by Ria Cuellar-Koh '26, music directed by Kiese Nanor '26 and George Roggie '26, and choreographed by Adrienne Chan '25, the show will undoubtedly provide an uplifting end to the semester.

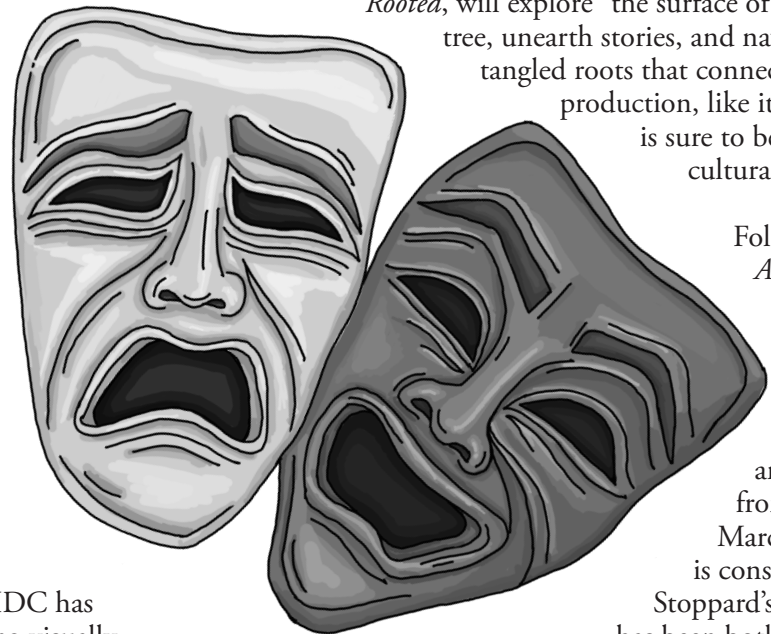
The Agassiz Theater

The third primary theater space occupied by the HRDC is the Agassiz Theater, and it too has an exciting lineup of shows in store this semester. The first, currently in residence with shows from Jan. 29 through Feb. 2, is Harvard College Opera's *Cendrillon*, a classic rendition of "Cinderella" set to music by Jules Massenet and a libretto by Henri Cain. *Cendrillon*, directed by Eliza Zangerl '26 is a fun, operatic take on a fairytale classic that could serve as a great way to unwind from the first week of classes.

Next in the Agassiz is *Ghungroo 2025: Rooted*, the latest installment of the annual favorite presented by the South Asian Student Association (SASA), the Harvard Undergraduate Nepali Student Association (HUNSA), the Pakistani Students Association (PSA), and the Bengali Association of Students at Harvard

College (BASHA). *Ghungroo* is the largest student-run production on campus, centering on South Asian and diaspora culture. It will feature a variety of dances, music, spoken word, skits, and more.

The organization announced that this year's theme, *Rooted*, will explore "the surface of our ancestral tree, unearth stories, and navigate the tangled roots that connect us all." The production, like its predecessors, is sure to be an unmissable cultural celebration.



Following this is *Arcadia*, a 1993 play by Tom Stoppard, to be directed by Ben Arthurs '27 and in residence from March 3 to March 30. The play is considered one of Stoppard's greatest and has been both canonized

and revered. *Arcadia* is a sophisticated comedy, exploring polemic themes of loss, order and disorder, certainty and uncertainty, and the passage of time. The play will likely be well-received by Harvard audiences, and will also be an exciting challenge to actors looking to work with nuanced, funny source material.

After *Arcadia* will be this year's First-Year Musical: *Starville*. The First-Year Musical, often referred to as the "froshical," is an annual musical completely written, produced, directed, and performed by Harvard first-years. The only requirement to be involved in the show is to be a first-year student. The First-Year Musical is a fun, wholly unique romp every year that provides first-year students with the opportunity to get involved in theater alongside their peers. With big shoes to fill after the Class of 2025's froshical *7 Sacrilege Street*, the Class of 2026's *Post Mortem*, and the Class of 2027's *The Kids are Alright*, this year's *Starville* is an eagerly anticipated production, promising fresh creativity, energy, and talent as the Class of 2028 takes the stage to showcase their original work in what has become a beloved Harvard tradition. *Starville* will be in residence in the Agassiz from March 31 to April 13.

The last production in the Agassiz is a beloved classic: *The Addams Family*. With lyrics and music by Andrew Lippa and based on a book by Marshall Brickman and Rick Elice, the musical opened on Broadway in 2010. This semester's production will be directed by Riley Jackson '27 and Mia Schenenga '27 and will be in residence from April 21 to May 4. With iconic, fun source material, this musical will be a great study break during finals and a delightful end to the HRDC's spring 2025 season.

Further information about these productions can be found on the HRDC's website.

**KAYLA REIFEL '26
(KAYLAREIFEL@COLLEGE.
HARVARD.EDU) IS ATTEMPTING
TO PLAN HER SEMESTER
AROUND SEEING EVERY SINGLE
ONE OF THESE SHOWS.**

**GRAPHIC BY MIRANDA CHAO
HWANG '28**

What We're Watching

A list of book, show, and movie recommendations from the *Harvard Independent* staff.

BY SARA KUMAR '27

The past month has been filled with long-awaited releases across the publishing and film industries. Like the majority of college students over winter recess, the staff of the *Harvard Independent* took full advantage of our Canvas-free lull by diving into such binge-worthy narratives. Now that the start of spring semester and the inevitable need for a good late-night unwind has arrived, we have compiled a roundup of some books, television shows, and movies that left a lasting impression on us.

Books

"Slouching Towards Bethlehem" by Joan Didion
The Civil Rights Movement. The Vietnam War. Beatlemania. Didion recognizes the chaos yet spirit of the 1960s through this introspective collection of essays. Easy to pick up and put down in short bursts, this novel is the epitome of a personal yet universal reflection on culture, identity, and human vulnerability. If you finish this text and are looking for another exploration of the sixties, we encourage you to check out Didion's "The White Album" next.

"Sex and Rage" by Eve Babitz
We covered the sixties, but what about the seventies? Set in Los Angeles, this coming-of-age novel contemplates the paradox of fame and self-discovery through protagonist Jacqueline's adolescence during this decade's hedonistic culture. Babitz's text is known for its witty and provocative analysis of identity, sexuality, and meaning in a society drawing in excess.

"The Submerged State" by Suzanne Mettler
In the wake of a new presidential administration, this book is incredibly timely. Through an analysis of three Obama reforms, Mettler discusses the formidable "submerged state" that, in her opinion, illuminates the difficulty in enacting policies and receiving positive public recognition for them. "The Submerged State" is ideal for anyone looking to learn more about the inner workings of federal social programs, and to a further extent, reclaim their voice in the American political sphere.

"Think Like a Monk" by Jay Shetty
Looking to overcome negativity, stop overthinking, how to leverage your fear, why kindness is imperative for success, and more? Shetty's reflection on his time as a monk explains how we can surmount our internal barriers to find a life brimming with potential and power. Abandon that Lexapro and melatonin and turn to this podcast host's distillation of wisdom instead.

"Intermezzo" by Sally Rooney
Stuck with a sibling you have nothing in common with? Rooney's two protagonists, Peter and Ivan, find themselves in a similar predicament, with one being a charismatic, successful lawyer and the other an awkward, competitive chess player. However, in this tale of grief and love, these two brothers learn the value of life and the significance they hold in each other's lives.

"Heads in Beds: A Reckless Memoir of Hotels, Hustles, and So-Called Hospitality" by Jacob Tomsy
If you think you know the hotel industry, wait until you read this uncensored memoir of this Cigarettes After Sex drummer's career in the hotel industry. Between scanning the mini bar for any missing overpriced snacks, to learning a

little more about his guests while cleaning their bathroom, Tomsy's seen it all, and now wants his readers to as well. By the end of this novel, you will be equipped to maximize an industry that is fueled by putting "heads in beds."

"On the Edge" by Nate Silver
At first glance, there is little overlap between a hedge fund manager, a cryptocurrency die-hard, a blue-chip art collector, and a poker player. However, Silver investigates the lives of these professionals to teach his audience about navigating the uncertainties of the twenty-first century. Whether or not you consider yourself someone with an appreciation for spontaneity, a thirst for high-stakes scenarios, or a competitive drive, after reading these 576 pages, you will have a better understanding of the individuals whose affinity for risk lets them dominate the modern world.

Television Shows

"The Sex Lives of College Girls"
Instead of Harvard, it's Essex College. Instead of blockmates, it's four randomly-assigned college roommates. Throughout three seasons, this drama authentically portrays the ups and downs of university life. Tackling issues like sexual identity, campus culture, and the complexities of friendships and romance, this show offers the perfect glimpse into the chaos of one's early twenties.

"Psych"
Whether you believe in psychics or not, this show's premise following a hyper-observant clairvoyant detective is the perfect blend of comedy, mystery, and life lessons. With an average Popcornmeter of 94%, we can't think of a reason not to procrastinate your next p-set with "Psych."

"One Hundred Years of Solitude"
Regardless of whether you read and loved Gabriel García Márquez's novel or not, this Netflix series is a masterful blend of magical realism and profound storytelling. Exploring the themes of love, power, family, and the cyclical nature of time and memory, "One Hundred Years of Solitude" invites its audience to reflect on human existence and the powers of our ancestors.

"Only Murders in the Building"
Here at the Independent, we love Selena Gomez, but we love this television series featuring the actress and singer even more. Following three true crime infatuated strangers, this show is a comedy murder mystery that takes viewers along for the ride as a body is discovered in their Upper West Side apartment building.

"Gossip Girl"
Shifting from the Upper West Side to the Upper East Side, this is a show we hope needs no introduction. If you haven't watched this classic, drop everything and head to Netflix now.

"Shogun"
Offering a different storyline than the majority of our television show recommendations, this historical fiction drama is set during Japan's Sengoku period in 1600. An English sailor shipwrecked on the coast of East-Asia during this time of warring states, John Blackthorne is thrown into a whirlwind of political rivalries between warlords, the Catholic Church, and the Empires of Spain and Portugal.

"Sopranos"
If you're a fan of "Mad Men," "Breaking Bad"

and its spinoff "Better Call Saul," or "Peaky Blinders," then "Sopranos" should be your next watch. This show follows Tony Soprano, an Italian-American New Jersey mob boss, as he works to balance his family life with his tumultuous professional career.

Movies

"Mona Lisa," directed by Neil Jordan
Yet another slightly controversial yet highly entertaining plot, this British crime drama offers a glimpse at the romantic life between an ex-convict and a high-end call girl in London during the 1980s.

"Smile," directed by Parker Finn
No, the title doesn't refer to elementary school picture day. The film follows Dr. Rose Cotter who experiences a troubling encounter with a patient. The fear and thrill that follows will leave you on the edge of your seat. If you love "The Conjuring," "The Shining," or "Come Play," this should be on your to-watch list.

"The Big Lebowski," directed by Joel Coen and Ethan Coen
Have you ever been mistaken for a millionaire? No? Well, Jeff 'The Dude' Lebowski has. After two criminals urinate on his rug and demand he pay a debt he knows nothing about, Lebowski hunts down his namesake and ends up accepting a one-time job with an enticing pay-off.

"The Darjeeling Unlimited," directed by Wes Anderson
Adding a bit of a somber tone to this list otherwise filled with action, thriller, and comedy movies, this film is about three brothers who travel via train across India to reconnect with one another and their culture following their father's death.

"Moonrise Kingdom," directed by Wes Anderson
It's 1965, and two young residents of an island off the coast of New England fall in love and choose to inhabit a unique community seemingly immune from the struggles of the rest of society. When a vicious storm nears the island they reside on, a search party sets out to find the young couple before it is too late. This film is a unique narrative about adolescent romance, sexuality, and mental health.

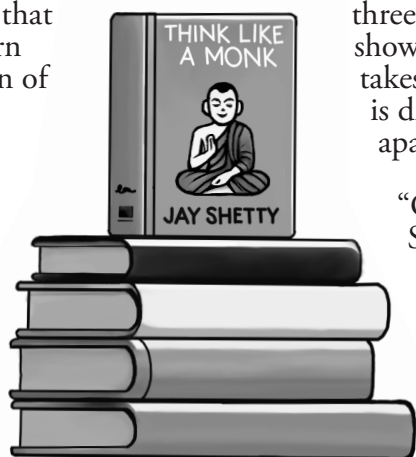
"Erin Brockovich," directed by Steven Soderbergh
Pre-law or not, this film should be on your watch list. A classic starring Julia Roberts, Erin Brockovich walks viewers through a legal case against the Pacific Gas and Electric Company after the very real Hinkley groundwater contamination incident that happened from 1952 to 1966.

"Country Strong," directed by Shana Feste
With a cast starring Tim McGraw, Leighton Meester, and Gwyneth Paltrow, who wouldn't want to watch this musical-romance flick? Don't let the poor Rotten Tomatoes reviews fool you. The Independent staff stands by this film inspired by the 2007 media frenzy and public meltdown of Britney Spears.

We hope you enjoy these recommendations as much as our staff did. If you happen to find yourself with some free time or are looking to put off the semester's first assignments, revisit this list—you won't be disappointed.

SARA KUMAR '27 (SJKUMAR@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS CURRENTLY WATCHING "SEX AND THE CITY" AND HOPES TO START READING MORE BOOKS.

GRAPHIC BY ALLYSON XU '28



“We Real Cool”

Reflections on the Black Arts Collective’s coming of age.

BY ALYSSA GAINES ’26

Founded by friends in 2021 out of freshman-year jam sessions, the Harvard Black Arts Collective is still coming of age. For the 2024 fall semester, Comp Directors Helena Hudlin ’27, Najya Gause ’26, Santi Kelly ’26, and I welcomed the largest comp class to date into our fold. Despite our recent establishment, this comp class did not know a Harvard without the BAC, and each week during comp we invited them to participate in the hardening of our self-definition.

As membership grew, external speculation around who we were and what we were doing intensified. Some assumed our space was necessarily exclusive by the sheer nature of our membership, likely accustomed to Harvard’s competitiveness and a Harvard “cool” that privileges some over others. For a moment we worried that, despite our open comp process, our mission had been overshadowed by this potentially intimidating perception. I thought back to when I initially joined BAC, drawn by the exact opposite reason. I joined the BAC



because it was a uniquely inclusive space.

I had been searching for Black arts spaces and attended the BAC block party, where I was immediately welcomed and impressed by the members I met and their bond. First as a member, then in the first Visionary Team class, then as a Comp Director, now as Co-Director, I believed in the uniqueness of what the Collective was doing, independent of what it had decided not to do. Now, I am more excited than ever to introduce our amazing space to the *Independent*. Like the *Independent*, we belong to no one but ourselves. We do not believe in exclusion. We do not tell anyone they cannot belong to us. But yes, to borrow from Gwendolyn Brooks, “We real cool.”

First, we are our foundation. We are Anya Sesay ’25, Jetta Strayhorn ’25, Toussaint Miller ’25, and Mariah Norman ’25, who came together in 2021 to form a space dedicated to the tradition of Black communal art-making beyond structures that felt disconnected from Black art history and tradition. Black art has been traditionally collective, interdisciplinary, collaborative, and aware of the political stakes of Blackness—regardless of what said art decided to do with that, if anything at all.

We are taking lessons from the Black Arts Movement, the Black Power Movement, the Harlem Renaissance, and more concentrated pockets of Black arts practice to weave our culture’s artistic tradition into our structure.

We are our inaugural mixer at the Hutchins Center in 2022 featuring U.S. Poet Laureate and Pulitzer Prize winner, Harvard professor Tracy K. Smith. We are “In the Shadow of Giants: A Commemorative Evening of Black Contemporary Art,” a partnership with the Chuck Stewart Estate to curate, display, celebrate, and unveil never-before-seen portraits of American icons a year from our founding. We presented a 2023 Vanguard Award to Tank and the Bangas as well as Samara Joy, and were humbled to host a panel including Nwaka Onwusa, the Chief Curator at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame; Jason Moran, jazz pianist and Artistic Director for Jazz at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; Chief Xian aTunde Adjuah, 6x Grammy-nominated trumpet player; and Chad Murdock, film director, writer, and editor.

We are young poets like Salome Agbaroji ’27 and myself, former Youth Poet Laureate of the United

States; acutely aware of the intersection of art and civic action and the legacy that makes such overlap possible. We are indebted to the work of spaces like the Dark Room Collective which brought together iconic Black poets in Boston to uplift each others’ work. We are not pre-professional in the traditional Harvard sense, but we focus on Black art, acting as an incubator for projects through resource-sharing, co-creation, and outreach. We aim to build meaningful relationships around artistic practices, with many of us not fitting the traditional artist mold. Our founders observed that many Harvard arts spaces were constrained by rigid categories, competition, and critique.

In 1992, Dark Room Collective poet Kevin Young ’92 told *The Crimson* that Harvard’s literary community had “shrunk back to the *Advocate*,” but he believed it would eventually

“burst open again.” Young’s success was attributed to his choice of unconventional writing channels, as he was not part of the *Advocate* or the Signet Society.

“If you just look at the *Advocate*, you would think the literary community is very small. The problem is that the *Advocate* also thinks it’s very small,” Young described. He was a member of *Padan Aram*, a defunct literary magazine, that he said failed for trying to emulate the *Advocate*. Because of Harvard’s “failure,” to bring together a “community of writers,” Young joined the Dark Room Collective.

Though much time has passed, the Black Arts Collective asks how much the structure of Harvard’s arts spaces has shifted since Young’s time, and how we can be that shift. We are a dedicated space, not just for writers or Black writers, but for Black art. We hope to be the “bursting open” that Young predicted even back then.

Part of what we are responding to is the fact that many Harvard arts spaces were not designed with Black culture and communal traditions in mind. This dominant orientation conceptualizes Black art merely as it can be squeezed into existing arts structures or as it can be relegated as essentially distinct. In Black artistic tradition, we are neither purely essentialist nor postblack. We carve space for Black invention across specific disciplines and we believe that Black art has its own convention, though it should not be essentialized to only that.

We are not only poets, painters, and performers. We are Kelly, multihyphenate model, Obama Foundation Voyager Scholarship Recipient, 2024 Fashion Director of Eleganza, and gallerist. We are Gabrielle Mitchell-Bonds ’27, writing for the Boston Art Review, receiving the Dean of Students’ Creativity Award while being a visual artist and dancing with Omo Naija x Wahala Boys Dance Troupe—a team also home to Agbaroji. We are Saira Rodriguez ’27, the PBHA’s Harvard Undergraduate Prison Education & Advocacy Coordinator and Eleganza performer. We are Leandra Bautista ’28, teen curator at the Institute of Contemporary Art Boston and Programs Assistant at the Harvard Art Museums.

We are the youngest child of Harvard’s Black Arts family that is alive and well across spaces like Black Community and Student Theater (BlackC.A.S.T) and Indigo Magazine. In our collective, members of traditional Harvard arts and affinity institutions

create together and support each other. Of course, we are Hannah Elena Alexis ’27, who performed in the Black Playwrights’ Festival, directed *The Penningtons*, wrote the script for her First Year Musical—as I music directed mine—and is gearing up to direct a mainstage Harvard production of *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

We are Isabel Wilson ’26, projected to be the first woman to perform a full college career of Hasty Pudding Theatricals in history, and therefore also the first Black woman. We are Jaia Wilensky ’27, of the Black Students Association (BSA) Board. We are Najya Gause ’26, the Music Executive of *The Crimson* Arts Board. We are Richardine Nbibba ’27, on the *Harvard Advocate*’s Poetry Board, Keely O’Gorman ’26, a member of BlackC.A.S.T who directed for the Black Playwrights’ Festival and performs with the Eritrean and East African Students Association (EESA), and we are Ottou Fouda ’26, president of Harvard Black Men’s Forum.

We are rebels with a cause, always grounding our creative and structural experiments in advocacy, inclusion, and action: like former Co-Director Marley Dias ’26, founder of #1000BlackGirlBooks, U.N. 2024 Young Activists Summit Laureate, and advocate for literary representation and against book banning. We are tastemakers like Gabby Anderson ’26, painter and pageant queen who has worked with the NFL, the NBA, and the Wal-Mart Corporation to showcase her art; and Cam Henry ’26, photographer, both of whom are also full-time varsity athletes.

We are all multihyphenates with so much overlap, and Black Arts Collective is our home base to convene, create, and combine our talents to make an impact. Last semester, we organized several exciting events, including our annual Paint the Block Party, a Graffiti Workshop with Victoria “Thirteenvic” Delvalle, a bleach-dye workshop at the Carpenter Center, and a collaborative art and archival installation with Cafe Gato Rojo.

We partnered with Black C.A.S.T, the Associate of Black Harvard Women ABHW, and TDM 173BF to bring actress Dominique Fishback to campus and hosted a workshop with Hutchins Center and HGSE Public Art. This semester, we’re hosting open studios, curating an exhibition at Bob Shane’s studio, bringing in guests like Moses Mitchell on Feb. 4, creating a Black History Month spread with Les Adore, developing a Women’s History Month zine, collaborating with Kuumba, hosting socials, participating in Arts First, and hopefully working with Boston museums.

Gwendolyn Brooks’s innovative poem “We Real Cool,” grabs the reader with a direct, colloquial address and invites the reader to be immersed in the complex world of the poem’s “We,” with no extra fluff; showing the reader around, and letting the inherent complexity speak for itself. Consider this an—albeit somewhat more explanatory—invitation into the world of our *we*.

For us, “We Real Cool” reflects the understanding that Harvard is just part of the puzzle. We break rules, act with urgency, honor the past, and clear paths for the future. The current moment is perfect for harnessing Harvard’s resources and talent to create something special for Black artists. We’re excited for what’s ahead. All our events are open, and in the fall, our comp will be too!

The Black Arts Collective runs an open comp every fall— for more, check out @theblackartscollective_ on Instagram for events and our newsletter

ALYSSA GAINES ’26 (AGAINES@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS ONE OF THE 2025 CO-DIRECTORS OF THE BLACK ARTS COLLECTIVE, ALONGSIDE RODRIGUEZ AND MITCHELL-BONDS.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BLACK ARTS COLLECTIVE.

Jules Sanders's 2025 Ins and Outs

The only 2025 in-and-out list you need to read.

BY JULES SANDERS '28

For the past month, countless people have come to me asking for my personal 2025 in-and-out list. As the CEO of Good Taste, I knew my peers would inevitably levee this responsibility—nay, burden—onto me. Never one to disappoint those counting on me, I've worked diligently to compile the comprehensive index below. Embrace each "in" and purge each "out" for the best possible results this year.

IN: Deconstructivist architecture

In my sophomore year AP Art History class, I gave a presentation on the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, designed by Frank Gehry. I poured so much effort into that presentation, and I want more credit for the single hour of work I spent working on that slideshow three years ago. I think that if more people understood and appreciated deconstructivism, I would finally get the recognition that I deserve for speaking for 15 minutes to the other 10 people in my class about an architectural style that Wikipedia completely excoriates as inconsistent, dystopian, and dead.

OUT: Decaf

On that note, nothing screams "inauthentic" more than decaffeinated coffee. The word 'caffeine' even sounds like the word 'coffee,' so the entire concept of decaf is, frankly, ridiculous. Most people's least favorite thing about coffee is the taste, and you're telling me that you want all of the taste for none of the buzz? Ridiculous. By the way, most commercially available decaf isn't even completely caffeine-free. Decaf is for frauds.

IN: Squash (the plant)

While all cucurbits are making a comeback, squash really seems to be coming into its own this year.

Butternut squash soup is a winter classic that isn't too difficult to make (even with a communal dorm kitchen setup). Don't forget that pumpkins and zucchini are also part of the squash family—I'm of the opinion that pumpkins should be a year-round porch decoration, and I've always felt so fancy calling zucchinis courgettes. Spaghetti squash is definitely still NOT in, though.

OUT: Squash (the sport)

Okay, I'm sorry, but squash is a ridiculous (love that word!) name for an actual sport that people play. Hold on, let me take a step back for a second. There are too many sports that are just tennis but not. I think we should consolidate some of them back into

tennis so I won't get confused when someone tells me what game their racket is for. Squash isn't even an Olympic sport yet. That means it's 116 years behind eventing, which according to Wikipedia, is like a horse triathlon. Also, every time someone tells me they play squash, I associate them with Jay from Modern Family. Would-be suitors—keep this in mind.

IN: Pithiness

The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'pithiness' as "fullness of meaning with brevity of expression," something I strive for every day of my life, except for the fact that I actually say a lot and the vast majority of it is meaningless. But if we don't have dreams, how can our dreams come true? Every breakfast since I've returned to campus, I've scraped each and every half grapefruit dry in the hopes that I'll ingest enough pith to get to the level to which I aspire. Was that good? Was that pithy enough? I'll get there.

OUT: Indifference

You know what exhausts me more than anything else? When people don't have opinions on things. Stop being so blasé! It's like you're not even trying to be an interesting person. What inevitably happens is that I have to fill in the empty space with all my opinions, and then I feel guilty for monopolizing the conversation, which is also very much OUT for 2025. Did you mistakenly have decaf this morning or something? I need you to match my energy and keep the dialogue going with some of your own takes.

IN: Having an air of mystery about you

This is the biggest "in" for 2025. Not everything about you has to be known (except for at least some of your opinions, as I elucidated in the previous "out"). Avoid responding to all your texts for six hours even if you have the time and energy to respond to them. Walk with purpose in the opposite direction from any building you actually have to walk toward to generate intrigue from onlookers. Check your phone, look like you were startled by something you read, and immediately run in the other direction. All of this will truly emanate the Italian concept of sprezzatura and get people talking about you. Vagueness plus calmness equals happiness.

OUT: Blood oaths

They're just never worth it.



JULES SANDERS '28

(JULESSANDERS@COLLEGE.

HARVARD.EDU) IS NOT TAKING ANY FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR THIS LIST.

GRAPHIC BY EL RICHARDS '26

From Rejection to Rapture

2HOLLIS ELECTRIFIES THE BOSTON CROWD IN A SOLD-OUT PARADISE ROCK CLUB SHOW.

BY JONAH KARAFIOL '26 AND ALEJANDRO SANCHEZ '26

Through a haze of flashing strobe lights and pounding bass, 2Hollis burst onto the stage at Paradise Rock Club on Jan. 24 to the deafening screams of a sold-out crowd. The 933-person venue, packed with teenagers and young adults in Opium-inspired all-black oversized outfits, teemed with excitement for the 20-year-old singer, rapper, and producer.

For the uninitiated, 2Hollis is a phenomenon on the rise—a genre-defying blend of pop, rap, and electronic chaos that earned him an opening act on Ken Carson's "The Chaos Tour." His aesthetic and collaborations with artists from Playboi Carti's Opium label have cemented his place in the emerging "rage rap" scene, a subgenre known for its wild energy and rabidly loyal fans. But his journey to headliner status hasn't been without its struggles.

"Rage rap fans are a notoriously tough crowd," 2Hollis admitted in a past interview with British magazine *The Face*, recalling his experience touring with Ken Carson. Booped off stage multiple times during that tour, he persevered. "I was just like: 'You know what? Fuck this. I'm going to keep pushing it, because they're going to get it.' And it worked." Fast forward to this night in Boston: the transformation was undeniable. The same chaotic mosh pit that

once rejected him now fully embraced him, with fans screaming every lyric as if their lives depended on it.

2Hollis's setlist spanned his growing discography, drawing from studio albums 2 and boy while featuring hit singles "jeans," "gold," and "trauma." Despite the aggressive, in-your-face style typical of the rage rap genre, each track blended seamlessly into the next.

The opening act from Nate Sib, a hyper-pop artist, was a refreshing surprise for many 2Hollis fans. Nate Sib was an addition to 2Hollis's 2025 North American Tour, which features sold-out venues from Toronto to Melbourne.

Experimenting to find his sound, Nate Sib bridges alternative pop with dubstep and other electronic genres, creating a melodic alternative to 2Hollis's unfettered energy. The Los Angeles-based artist was a new sight for many viewers, but by the end of the night, 2Hollis fans were sure to have Nate Sib songs queued on Spotify.

But the night's highlight was the debut of 2Hollis's new song, "All of the Lights." Sampling Kanye West's iconic track of the same name, the song is a high-octane reimagining that pays homage to its predecessor while injecting 2Hollis's distinctively chaotic twist. It's a bold move to sample such a legendary song, but 2Hollis made it his own. Disregarding his critics, 2Hollis's "All of the Lights" solidified his commitment to his unique musical style, letting his fans find him—and find him

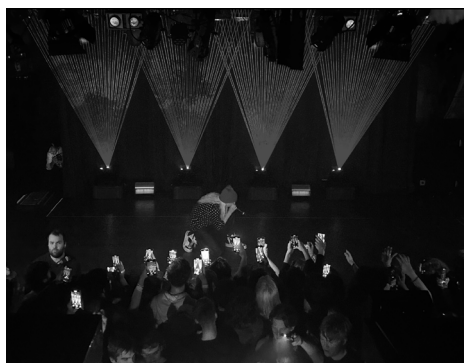
they did. Many in the crowd seemed to know the lyrics already, belting them out in unison as though the track had been out for months.

Despite the chaos of the night, 2Hollis's performance was anything but unpolished. His stage presence was magnetic, a mix of youthful defiance and polished showmanship. The production—a blend of fog, strobe lights, and thunderous bass—amplified the raw intensity of his music. In front of the brightly lit stage, the silhouettes of hundreds of avid fans moved in unison. The lights flashed across the crowd and illuminated ecstatic faces while the thundering bassline reverberated through the club. 2Hollis has not only found his footing but is carving out his place in the music world.

There is a kind of poetic irony in 2Hollis's journey. Once admonished by the same people he now captivates, his show at Paradise Rock Club was a testament to his resilience. At just 20 years old, he's turned skepticism into adoration, proving that he's here to stay. As the crowd poured out of the club into the cold Boston night, it was clear they had just witnessed the rise of a star who thrives in the chaos he creates.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEJANDRO SANCHEZ '26.



SPORTS

College Without Crossing the River

Why some Harvard varsity athletes quit their sport.

BY BREAGH BRIDGE '27

Playing Division I sports is an aspiration for many high school athletes, and a common narrative is using college to pursue sports rather than academics and bask in the glory of a full-ride scholarship. However, at Ivy League Schools, all registered in the NCAA Division I, athletes do not receive athletic scholarships. Harvard athletes choose to juggle academics and sports because they are unwilling to relinquish their love for either. Yet every

year, Harvard student-athletes quit their sport—often after just one year. Balancing academics and athletics often leaves no time for other extracurriculars, resume-building, or social activities, forcing athletes to sacrifice. “All the breaks are filled with skiing; spring break is filled with racing, Thanksgiving is filled with training, winter break is racing and training,” said Meredith Schwartz '27, a former member of Harvard Nordic Skiing. These opportunities are a unique part of undergraduate study, and they are difficult to ignore once you have explored them.

Schwartz first got a taste of the opportunities that she could have with more time when she got sick right before Thanksgiving and had to take a week off. “I had the best week of the school year so far when I was not skiing because I was just doing school and catching up on my real life,” said Schwartz. This sense that varsity athletics goals don’t align with ‘real life’ goals is a common reason athletes choose to step away. “I had so much fun not skiing, which is terrible because skiing is still one of my favorite things, but I realized I can’t do it anymore,” Schwartz shared.

Martha Merriam '22 was a fencer competing internationally for the U.S. National Team in high school. Merriam arrived on campus thinking she would pursue fencing all four years, but left Harvard Fencing after her first year on the team. In high school, she had struggled to explore other interests due to her rigorous training schedule: “I wasn’t able to do anything besides train and go to school. So, I wanted to try more of a normal life and try some extracurriculars,” said Merriam. Many Harvard athletes never play their sport competitively after graduating, so prioritizing vocational goals is essential while an undergraduate. “There’s so many other extracurricular opportunities like research and volunteering that I had never really been able to do my whole life,” said Merriam. “I knew that I wanted to step more into pre-med and science.” When varsity athletics are no longer fulfilling and playing professionally isn’t an option, quitting in college becomes a more attractive choice. This is a difficult choice for many undergraduates as they assess how much their passion for competing will last. However, leaving competitive sports in one’s rear view can reveal new interests and passions on the road ahead. Unrestricted by holiday training camps, Schwartz spent her summer in Shenzhen, China with the Harvard Association for U.S.-China Relations and worked for the Crimson EMS during the school year.

Limited time forces varsity athletes to discover and commit to new passions quickly. Annabelle Brooks '27, a former Harvard Nordic Ski Team member, is now a member of the Radcliffe Pitches a cappella group. “I couldn’t fully immerse myself in either skiing or a cappella last year,” said Brooks. “The longer I tried

to stay on top of school work while living in both the acappella world and ski world, the more I realized I had to choose one to excel in either.”

Academic rigor is rarely the reason that athletes quit, but prioritizing new experiences over athletic competition is at the center of this decision. “As my studies are concerned, I don’t think they were sacrificed for sport, but I do think finding time to devote sufficient attention to my studies was harder,” Brooks said.

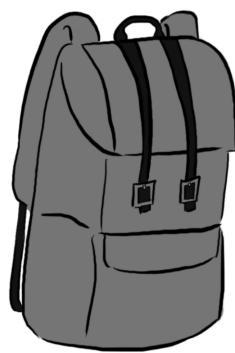
Leaving a team is not a question of the decision to juggle academics and athletics, but more so the fact that our hours on campus are limited. As Merriam put it, “There are only 24 hours in a day.”

Quitting a sport doesn’t mean athletes have lost their passion for it, but rather that their priorities have changed. Nevertheless, the athlete mindset is difficult to leave behind. “It’s super hard for me now because every time I start training [for a new sport], I spiral into thinking I need to become super fit to be able to race. Then I realized, ‘No, that’s not my goal now,’” Schwartz said. It is not necessarily the competitive drive and love for the sport that diminishes, but more the change in the training environment and team.

The absence of athletic scholarships is one less factor in the decision to quit, since athletes are already paying for school. This flexibility is also seen in the classroom, as there are no merit scholarships where students must keep grades over a certain threshold to maintain a scholarship. Ultimately, the beauty of a liberal arts education lies in its opportunities. As sad as it may be, quitting a varsity sport might be what opens new doors.

BREAGH BRIDGE '27 BREAGHBRIDGE@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU IS A VARSITY ATHLETE WHO DREAMS THE COLD BIKE RIDE OVER THE RIVER—BUT HAS NO PLANS TO QUIT HER SPORT.

GRAPHIC BY CLARA LAKE '27



Indy Sportsbook: Ins and Outs of Betting

Bets we are leaving behind in 2025 and ones we're eyeing for the coming year.

BY LUKE WAGNER '26

With the start of a new year, many of us are setting goals and making resolutions—so why not extend that mindset to sports betting? Whether you are a seasoned bettor or casual gambler, 2025 is the perfect time to refine your approach. It is time to embrace strategies that maximize value and leave behind the bad habits that drain your bank account. Below are some ins and outs of sports betting for the year ahead.

Let's start with one of the biggest 'ins' for 2025: Alternate spreads. These are the unsung heroes of sports betting, offering more control over risk and reward. Instead of sticking with the standard line, you can adjust bets based on confidence—either playing it safe or aiming for a larger payout. A larger spread boosts returns if a team dominates, while a smaller one lowers risk in a potential blowout. The key is finding value where others overlook it.

Sports where this strategy truly shines include football and soccer. In soccer, every goal counts—not just for the win, but for goal differential, which can humiliate teams. Just think of Manchester United's infamous 7-0 loss to Liverpool at Anfield in 2023. Unlike basketball, where dominant teams sometimes coast and substitute players like Xavier Tillman once the game is practically decided, soccer teams typically play hard until the final whistle, as goal differential can determine whether a team wins or loses the league. This means that alternate lines often come down to the wire, making them a thrilling and potentially rewarding choice for bettors who do their research.

Never underestimate the underdog. While favorites may win more frequently, the true value in betting lies in backing those overlooked challengers. Underdogs are often undervalued due to public perception, giving sharp bettors a chance to capitalize. Over the last five NFL seasons, underdogs are 694-581-28, with a win percentage of 54.4 percent and an ROI of nearly five percent. Favorites, on the other hand, in the 2022 NFL season had an ROI of -3 percent. Researching matchups and understanding why an underdog might overperform is key to success. Maybe the public is overestimating a favorite's recent form, or the underdog has matchup advantages that are overlooked; only time will tell.

Now, let's dive into in-game picks: halftime bets and half-specific

wagers can be some of the most thrilling bets out there. Betting on first-half or second-half outcomes is a great way to get an edge, as many teams or players overperform in different circumstances. Betting at halftime allows you to make live adjustments to your strategy based on what is happening in the game. A strong start by a team might fade, or a slow start might lead to a big comeback. Halftime plays are particularly rewarding if you are watching live and noticing trends. Think of them as your chance to correct course and capitalize on what you have learned.

Now that we've covered the 'ins' for the year ahead, it's time to turn our attention to what we should be kicking to the curb as we bid farewell to 2024. Let's be honest: chasing losses is one of the most common and costly pitfalls in sports betting. After a tough loss, it is tempting to place a bigger bet on the next game to try to bounce back. However, this emotional approach rarely ends well. It is smarter to pick a standard unit for your bets and stick to that unit in the face of losses. Chasing bets often leads to impulsive decisions and more losses. Instead, step back, analyze what went wrong, and focus on the next calculated play.

In that same vein, just because there are 12 games on the schedule does not mean you need to bet on all of them. Spreading yourself too thin dilutes your ability to make informed decisions. Focus on a few games you've researched thoroughly rather than trying to cover everything. Knowing a smaller number of sports or teams extremely well will give you an informed advantage over a midseason Tuesday night Raptors vs Jazz matchup. Betting fewer games with confidence beats betting every game with guesswork. Quality over quantity—always.

As much as people love drawing up a parlay, these bets provide some with the lowest expected value. Think of a 6-leg parlay of -110 bets, which are all roughly 50 percent of hitting. That means that the chance of the parlay hitting is roughly 1.5 percent. The payout on a bet like this would be approximately 4700 dollars for a 100-dollar bet, which might seem like a lot but has an estimated value of around -25 dollars. Parlays are flashy, but they are also a quick way to lose your bankroll. The odds of hitting a

massive 6-leg parlay are slim, even if each bet seems like a lock. The house edge compounds with every added leg, making these bets a poor long-term strategy. Keep parlays small and strategic, and avoid using them as your primary betting approach. A 2- or 3-leg parlay can still be exciting without the astronomical risk of a 10-leg dream ticket.

Parlaying a bunch of favorites that you consider "locks" is not a great strategy. Favorites are often overpriced due to public bias, making betting on them without considering context a rookie mistake.

Odds makers know how to set lines that attract money on favorites, even when the value is not there. For example, in the NFL playoffs, the Lions were massive favorites over the Commanders. 90 percent of the money line cash was on the Lions, and roughly 55 percent of the spread was on the Lions. Seeing this distribution, members of the Sportsbook flagged this and instantly bet on the Commanders, which turned very fruitful as both moneyline and spread hit. While underdogs hit less often than favorites, over time, their high returns can make up for their lack of frequency.

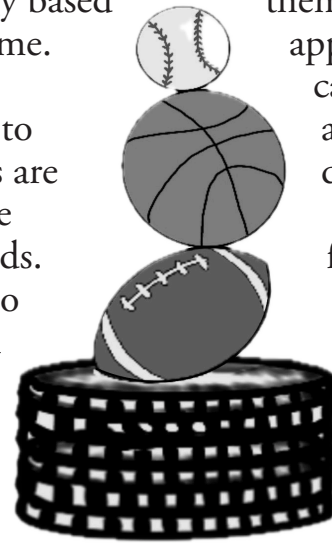
Sports betting is more than just placing wagers; it is about strategy, discipline, and finding joy in the process. While some members of the Indy Sportsbook might still hold on to certain habits—especially when it comes to parlays—we're focused on leveling up our game in 2025. Several of us have already started developing models for different sports teams, aiming to beat the house edge and sharpen our strategies.

Remember, the goal is not to bet on everything or to win every time. It is to make smarter, more informed decisions (with positive EV), while having fun along the way.

If you or someone you know has a gambling problem and wants help, call 1-800-GAMBLER.

LUKE WAGNER '26 (LUKEWAGNER@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) THINKS THAT DRAFTKINGS HAS THE BEST SPORTS BETTING APP USER INTERFACE.

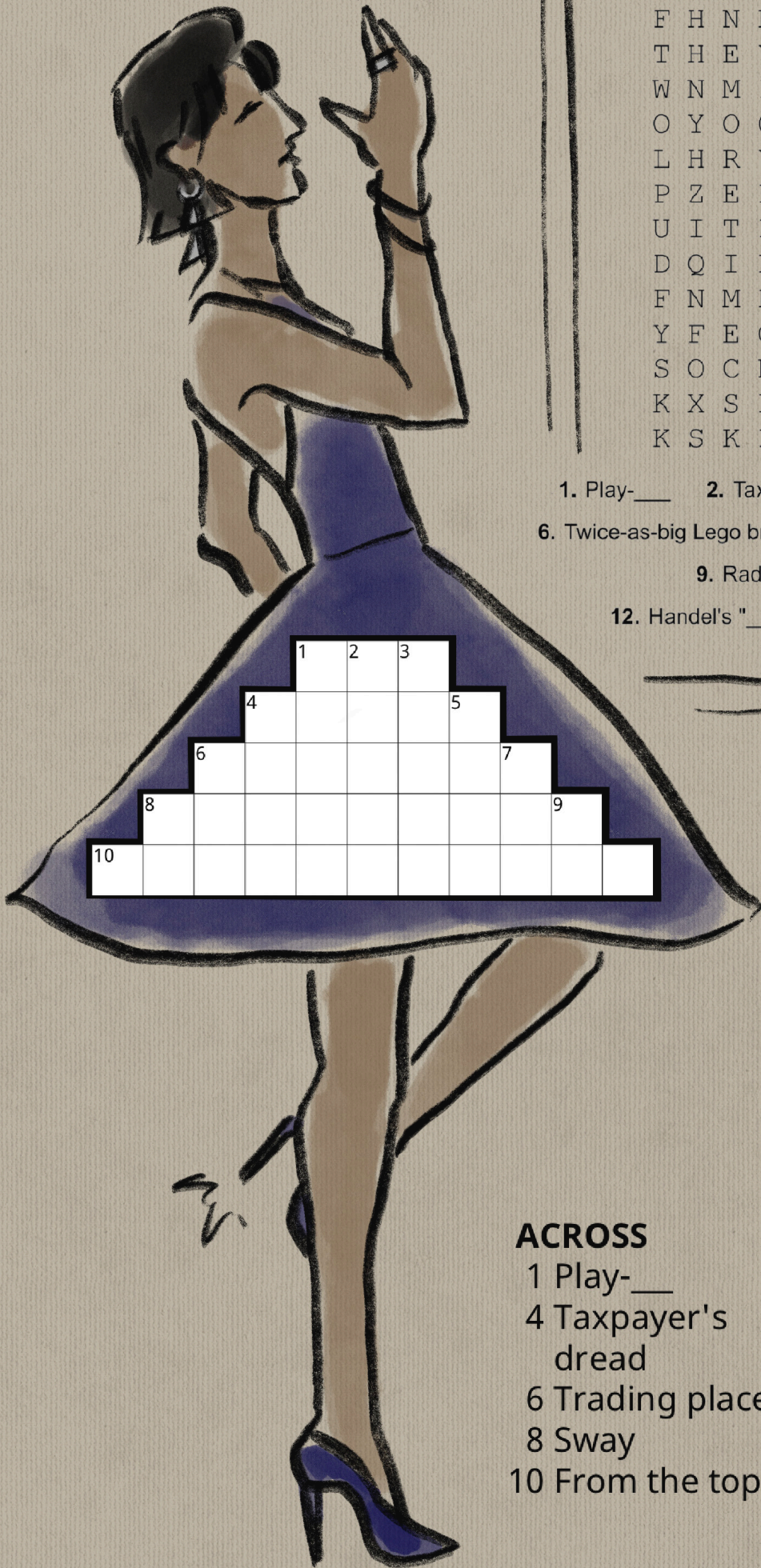
GRAPHIC BY SOPHIA RASCOFF '27



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INSIDE SCOOP

BY HAN NGUYEN '27
 GRAPHIC BY RILEY CULLINAN '27



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1. Play-___ 2. Taxpayer's dread 3. Trading places 4. Sway 5. From the top
 6. Twice-as-big Lego bricks designed for toddlers 7. Scent, in England 8. New worker
 9. Radio switch 10. Salon job 11. Hydrocarbon suffix
 12. Handel's "___, Galatea e Polifemo" 13. ___ and Out 14. Dash size

ACROSS

- 1 Play-___
 4 Taxpayer's dread
 6 Trading places
 8 Sway
 10 From the top

DOWN

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INSIDE SCOOP

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