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HARVARD

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# INDEPENDENT

THE STUDENT WEEKLY SINCE 1969

# COUNTER CULTURE



LET THEM EAT CAKE

LET THEM EAT CAKE



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## About the *Independent*

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

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# Higher Education's Fiscal Crisis

A list circulated by the Trump administration places 10 American higher education institutions—including Harvard—in financial jeopardy.

BY SARA KUMAR '27



53.2 billion. \$22.3 billion. \$14.8 billion. These are the respective endowments for fiscal year 2024 of Harvard University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Columbia University. Collectively, the eight Ivy League schools' endowments exceed \$185 billion. While these robust provisions are paramount in supporting student financial aid, faculty salaries, research, and other university programs, federal funding is also important in upholding the missions of these institutions. However, abrupt cuts in government aid to Penn and Columbia in the past few weeks have raised concerns about the financial stability of these schools and peer institutions, including Harvard.

In anticipation of the challenges following the nation's shift to a new presidential administration, Harvard President Alan M. Garber '76 issued "Emergent Regulations and Legislation" on Jan. 28—a statement to University affiliates just a few days after the inauguration. "In these challenging times, our efforts will be guided by our values and commitments: supporting academic excellence and the pursuit of knowledge; championing open inquiry, constructive dialogue, and academic freedom," he wrote.

Other university leaders and students across the nation echoed Garber's sentiments. "Now more than ever, we must rely on our values of diversity, inclusion, respect, and collaboration... By acting together, we will be able to marshal our collective resources to overcome this global threat," said Yale University Deputy Dean and Chief Diversity Officer Dr. Darin Latimore.

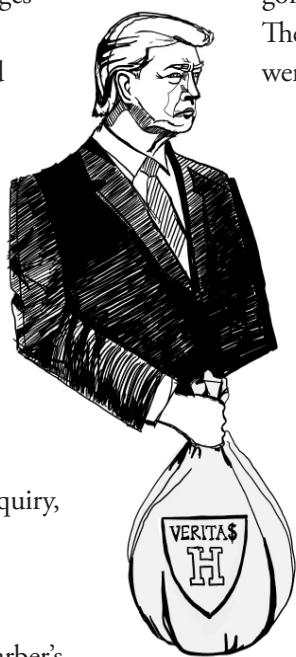
Regardless of these affirmations, President Donald Trump's administration focused early on addressing what it viewed as an overly DEI-tolerant higher education system. His administration called attention to ongoing incidents of antisemitism on college campuses and pledged to reform how universities handle these issues.

## Federal Funding Withdrawals

On Feb. 26, the Trump administration released a list of 10 U.S. colleges and universities placed under scrutiny for "incidents of antisemitism." This came about a month after Trump signed an executive order aimed at combating nationwide antisemitism. Last year, Harvard was the site of a pro-Palestinian encampment, which was named alongside other public and private institutions, including George Washington University; the University of California, Los Angeles; the University of California, Berkeley; and the University of Minnesota.

Faculty members at these schools reassured both the government and the public of their unwavering commitment to balancing inclusivity with freedom of speech. However, the Trump administration remained unconvinced and escalated its actions.

Columbia University, already in the spring 2024 tabloids due to protests relating to the Israel-Hamas war, drew further attention this year. On March 7, the Trump administration withdrew \$400 million in federal funding "due to the school's continued inaction in the face of persistent harassment of Jewish students."



According to the Columbia Daily Spectator, the University relied on \$1.3 billion in federal funding for FY 2024. With about one-third of this sum now withdrawn, Columbia's financial stability is at risk. In response, Secretary of Education Linda McMahon addressed concerns on X, reassuring students of Columbia and other similarly impacted institutions that open communication with Katrina Armstrong, interim president of Columbia, was ongoing.

The Trump administration extrapolated this decision as part of a broader push for compliance across the American higher education system. "Universities must comply with all federal antidiscrimination laws if they are going to receive federal funding," the executive order read. The announcement emphasized that these cancellations were just the first round, with additional cuts expected.

Penn became the latest target of these funding cancellations after a broader executive investigation into over 50 institutions launched on March 14 found infringements in Title IV policies. This followed a preliminary review of Penn's transgender athlete regulations in February. On March 19, the Trump administration paused \$175 million in federal funding due to the University's "policies forcing women to compete with men in sports," according to a tweet from the White House's Rapid Response account. The tweet—which included a video segment from "Fox News"—further confirmed that, according to a senior Trump administration official, these funding freezes were "just a taste of what could be coming down the pipe for Penn."

Though not yet subjected to monetary withdrawals, similar to McMahon's comments, the University of California system outlined its next steps in addressing the financial uncertainties caused by federal scrutiny. This came after the inclusion of both UCLA and UC Berkeley on the Feb. 26 list. As public institutions, UCLA and UC Berkeley would face significant challenges if withdrawals of federal funding were to go through.

"The University of California is unwavering in its commitment to combating antisemitism," a UC spokesperson said in a statement to the *Independent*. "We look forward to meeting with the task force members and sharing the many steps the University of California system has taken to foster an environment free of harassment and discrimination."

Given its placement on the Trump administration's initial shortlist, Harvard is similarly increasingly vigilant, especially considering the school's dependence on federal funds. In FY 2024, Harvard received \$686 million in federal funding, which accounted for an estimated 68% of the University's total sponsored revenue for the year.

Due to the nature of the situation, a Harvard spokesperson could not comment on Harvard's plans if government aid were to be curtailed.

## The Weight of These Dollars

The financial retribution of the Trump administration's actions on higher education threatens to disrupt the entire system's functionality and growth.

In a December interview with the Harvard Crimson, Garber emphasized the University's reliance on government funding. "We could not carry out our mission the way we do now without substantial federal research support, nor could we provide the benefits to

the nation that we do now without that support," he explained.

A financial overview of FY 2024 provided by Harvard Vice President for Finance Ritu Kalra voiced similar concerns. "Federal funding plays a pivotal role in these endeavors, supporting groundbreaking scientific discoveries that fuel innovation and economic growth in our local community and around the world," the document read.

Penn corroborated these statements in a statement released to affiliates on March 10. "Changes to federal research funding could significantly reduce our operating budget," Provost John L. Jackson Jr. and Senior Executive Vice President Craig R. Carnaroli declared.

"The scope and pace of the possible disruptions we face may make them more severe than those of previous challenges, such as the 2008 financial crisis or the COVID pandemic," they continued.

As Jackson and Carnaroli indicated, it remains unclear whether federal task forces will conduct further campus visits with additional fiscal actions. Nonetheless, precautionary measures are underway at universities across the nation.

In the same statement, Penn explained that they are currently undergoing a review of all capital expenditures, freezing the majority of staff hiring, halting faculty mid-year salary adjustments, evaluating hiring practices, imposing a five-percent cut on "noncompensation expenses," and working to maximize the efficiency of all operational funds.

Other universities are taking similar steps. On March 10, Harvard announced they would "implement a temporary pause on staff and faculty hiring across the University."

"We need to prepare for a wide range of financial circumstances, and strategic adjustments will take time to identify and implement," Harvard's report continued.

This wave of financial distress has underscored the extent of private universities' reliance on federal funding, an issue that had not been fully understood until this recent saga.

However, public universities are also affected. On March 21, the UC system likewise declared a hiring freeze in addition to other "cost-saving measures." Yet, regardless of these drastic policy changes, the majority of these universities have reaffirmed their commitment to academic freedom and excellence regardless of these executive orders.

"With careful financial management, however, Penn is well-positioned to navigate them," Jackson and Carnaroli stated.

Harvard leaders—including Garber, Provost John F. Manning '82, Executive Vice President Meredith Weenick '90, and Kalra—echoed these thoughts in a joint statement.

"Though current uncertainties touch every corner of the University and of higher education, we are confident that we will be able to address the present challenges together as we continue to pursue academic excellence in service to the nation and the world," they stated.

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GRAPHIC BY LUCIE STEFANONI '27

# Stand With Her: A Call to Action at Harvard's Institute of Politics

Spotlighting the epidemic of gender-based violence and femicides on International Women's Day.

BY NASHLA TURCIOS '28

The Institute of Politics celebrated International Women's Day with a conversation centered on the #StandWithHer movement, a global initiative inspired by the Academy Award-winning film "To Kill a Tiger." Held on March 11, the event spotlighted stories of resilience, gender justice, and the role of solidarity in addressing gender-based violence.

The panel brought together voices from various fields: Canadian filmmaker Nisha Pahuja, whose documentary explores change in the face of injustice; Amita Vyas, a public health professor at George Washington University specializing in global gender equity; and Ziauddin Yousafzai, co-founder of the Malala Fund and an advocate for girls' education. Moderated by Harvard Medical School professor Atul Gawande and four-time Canadian Screen Award-winning actor and Harvard undergraduate Saara Chaudry '26, the conversation underscored a pressing question: what does it take to challenge perpetuating cultural norms that enable violence against women?

"To Kill a Tiger" follows the story of a low-income man in rural India who defies societal norms to seek justice for his teenage daughter, Kiran, after she is brutally assaulted—a narrative that emphasizes the challenges of confronting gender-based violence in deeply patriarchal cultures.

Though released in 2022, this film has become increasingly topical. Gender discrimination has been a highly debated issue in recent months, with certain women's rights initiatives now facing opposition from President Donald Trump's administration. From a rural village to a global conversation, "To Kill a Tiger" seeks to challenge cultural norms around gender-based violence and accountability.

The panelists, drawing from their work amplifying women's rights, discussed the unique role masculinity plays in feminist activism. Rather than solely blaming current gender-based discrimination on male prejudice, their discourse highlighted how men can be a driver against violence toward women worldwide. For instance, Yousafzai, father of Nobel Laureate Malala Yousafzai, described how his transformation began internally.

"The first person I came across was myself... the old Ziauddin who was [raised in a] patriarchy. And to defeat that old Ziauddin...once you change yourself, then [you change] the family, and that change spreads all around," he shared.

The film captures this seemingly revolutionary perspective. For Pahuja, the essence of "To Kill a Tiger" lies in its commentary on men's influence in driving progress.

"I still think this film is about masculinity. What happened to her—a teenage daughter who was brutally raped and who 'To Kill a Tiger' is based on—was done by men," she explained. "And the antidote came from her father, an extraordinary man who had the

courage to go against his culture and rewrite cultural norms to become this amazing ally and supporter."

Yousafzai approached the role of masculinity in the women's rights movement from a personal lens. After his daughter was fiercely targeted and shot by a Taliban gunman in retaliation for advocating for girls' rights to education in Pakistan, Yousafzai assisted her in founding the Malala Fund. Yousafzai has since become personally committed to the fight for women's rights, and he emphasizes in his work the importance of a male perspective in feminist activism, both due to its rarity and its challenge to stereotypical male roles.

"One thing that men and boys can do is to revisit their masculinity—redefine for themselves their manhood. I'm a man, that's fine. But what kind of man am I? That's very important," he said.

Female figures also play a vital role in breaking down stereotypical domestic structures in "To Kill a Tiger," according to Yousafzai. "We should not ignore the role of Kiran's mom," he said. "She is amazing. We should not be patriarchal here. The power of a mother, the way she stands behind her husband and daughter, is incredibly powerful."

Yousafzai noted the parallels between the film and his daughter's own experience, praising its portrayal of household dynamics.

"The most important thing that I see in this family is their values," he said. "They are a poor family, like my family, but they are very rich in values. They have this freedom of expression in the family, they talk to one another." Much like the father in the film, he, too, had to defy societal expectations to support his daughter's right to education.

This focus on family values and personal connection extended into the panel's broader discussion on activism, with Vyas addressing the challenges faced by on-the-ground work addressing violence and gender equity. She stressed her frustration with the short-term impact of traditional public health projects, which may improve conditions immediately but fail to transform long-standing gender norms.

"I had spent about more than a decade of my time working in the area of sexual and reproductive health and women's health across the globe, and I had sort of constantly been frustrated that, so many of our interventions on the ground, they had some impact, but generally that impact was short-term impact," Vyas said. "If we cannot really address the underlying causes of why women and girls are not healthy, none of this amazing work that happens on the ground is going to flourish."

These shortcomings motivated her involvement in the film industry, particularly her role in the documentary "Girl Rising." "We have now taken the film and created a curriculum," Vyas said. "We are now in 17 countries where young people, particularly adolescent boys and girls, are going to school and are engaged in this curriculum." Chaudry then turned the conversation's

focus to how filmmakers can preserve their authorial integrity when shedding light on injustice through films and media.

"I think my approach as a filmmaker is very much aligned with empathy," Vyas explained. "I tend to go into situations without any judgment, with really sort of a desire to try to understand the other perspective, because I think creating empathy is very important."

Yet, to Chaudry, the impact of such storytelling is contingent on the allocation of resources necessary for these projects to be carried out. Massive cuts to foreign aid have undermined many efforts—particularly those focused on addressing gender disparities both abroad and domestically. The panelists agreed that the current political climate has affected modern women's rights activism.

"We refuse to change the language, we refuse to not talk about gender-based violence," Nisha said. "We have lost some partners as a result because they can't align with us because it would impact their funding."

"We should not be self-censoring ourselves," Amita added. "Nobody has asked us to censor ourselves just yet, so we should not be proactively self-censoring. We need to keep telling those stories because stories change people's brain chemistry."

The urgency of the panelists' messages was reinforced by sobering statistics. Despite the sensitive nature of discussions surrounding gender-based violence, Gawande acknowledged the human impact behind these conversations and emphasized the importance of having them. In 2023, approximately 51,000 women and girls globally were killed by their intimate partners or other family members. In recent years, climate, health, and humanitarian crises have intensified violence against women and girls.

"Having this conversation can seem really hard. But we are talking about the violent rape of a child, the attempted murder of a child, for seeking basic rights like education or simply going to a wedding and feeling safe," Gawande said.

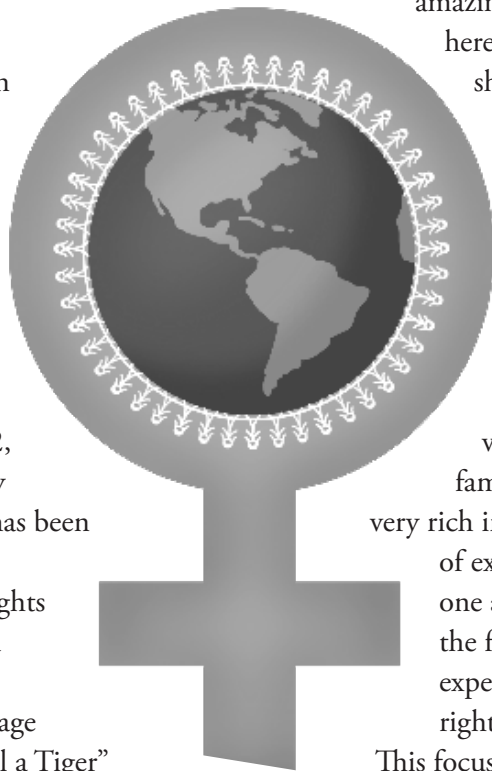
The group finally turned their attention to a pressing question: how can we ensure a future where all communities, particularly South Asians, can feel protected?

"There are some incredible South Asian leaders, like Atul Gawande, who were in the previous administration, who will come back in future administrations. What we can do now is continue to support South Asian leaders at local levels as well as state and federal levels who align with our values," Vyas said.

Gawande stressed the importance of connecting with vulnerable communities and building bridges. While political polarization may seem like an obstacle to the progress of marginalized communities, there are always ways to overcome it. "There is no monopoly on empathy in either party and there is plenty of toxicity in either party."

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**GRAPHIC BY NESHAMA RYMAN '28**



# A Controversial Future Looking at Harvard's Complicated Past

A profile on one of Harvard's most scrutinized programs and where it is headed.

BY BEN KAUFMAN '28

More focus than ever is being cast on Harvard's diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives as universities across the country, such as Columbia and Johns Hopkins, face crackdowns due to external government pressure. So, when Harvard itself laid off all 12 internal members of the Harvard Slavery Remembrance Program this past January, many were surprised and outspoken with disapproval.

The HSRP was established as an acknowledgment of the University's ties to racial oppression by working to discover direct descendants of those enslaved by Harvard-affiliated individuals. Yet University faculty and administrators now feel differently about the initiative's purpose and instead focused on the recent transition of descendant research efforts to the Boston-based genealogical nonprofit American Ancestors this past January. Further projects within the initiative focus on empowering descendants of slaves and reaching out to historically Black colleges and universities may offer a chance for Harvard to reclaim its troubled past with slavery, though in the face of an era of uncertainty around diversity efforts, these may also be short-lived.

In January, Harvard officially began its partnership with the American Ancestors. The move was simultaneous with a disbanding of the HSRP, which included abrupt layoffs of all 12 of its staff members. Certain former employees, such as former HSRP director Richard Cellini, suspect that the cuts may result from his supervisors' request "not to find too many descendants." By the time of the Reparation Program's downsizing, HSRP had found 1,400 direct relatives of slaves owned by individuals affiliated with Harvard.

"I have told officials at the highest level of the University that they only have two options: fire me, or let the HSRP do this work properly," Cellini told the Harvard Crimson. Spokespeople from the Vice Provost for Special Projects did not give a direct reason for the cuts, referring to Harvard's policies on employment.

Nearly three years have passed since Harvard launched its Legacy of Slavery Initiative, a program that includes a \$100 million commitment to addressing the University's historical ties to slavery, especially through the HSRP. The Initiative was announced in 2022 following a report by the Presidential Committee, which detailed the University's financial and intellectual entanglements with slavery from the 17th through the 19th centuries. The fund supports a range of efforts, including genealogical research, partnerships with historically Black colleges and universities, community engagement, and educational initiatives aimed at fostering public understanding and memorialization.

The origins of the Legacy of Slavery Initiative, as well as HSRP, trace back to former Harvard President Lawrence Bacow's introduction

of the Initiative in 2022, where he framed it as a challenge yet also a call to action. "The work of further redressing its persistent effects will require our sustained and ambitious efforts for years to come," he said. "While Harvard does not bear exclusive responsibility for these injustices, and while many members of our community have worked hard to counteract them, Harvard benefited from and in some ways perpetuated practices that were profoundly immoral."

Three years later, administrators close to the Initiative echoed their commitment to its mission. "In just over two years, we have taken significant steps to advance the mission of the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative," Sara Bleich, Harvard's Vice Provost for Special Projects, said in a press statement detailing the collaboration with American Ancestors.

At the time of the partnership's announcement, American Ancestors also emphasized a commitment to rigorous documentation and descendant outreach at the core of the Initiative, despite public outcry at the turnover. "We are committed to advancing this critical research to help Harvard establish meaningful connections and engagement with living descendants," American

Ancestors president Ryan J. Woods said in a press release from the Initiative. The collaboration marks the next step in a history between the organization and Harvard, including the popular PBS show "Finding Your Roots" hosted by Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. Harvard administrators believe the partnership reflects a broadening scope of the Initiative, backed by the genealogical robustness of American Ancestors.

"We look forward to the expertise and skill with which American Ancestors will continue to build on the foundation we laid in 2022," wrote University President Alan Garber '76 in press statement announcing the American Ancestors partnership.

The same statement outlined how working with American Ancestors would by extension support 10 Million Names, a project working to uncover the names of roughly ten million men, women, and children of African descent enslaved in America's earliest periods, and brings the reach of the partnership to the broader issue outside just Harvard.

Though the partnership with American Ancestors may expedite the process of finding descendants, previous HSRP affiliates have recounted successes before employees were terminated. In a January profile published by Harvard Magazine, historian Vincent Brown described working with the initiative's internal team as actively and successfully uncovering histories—identifying nearly 1,000 enslaved individuals and more than 1,400 direct descendants.

"We had a real sense about how research collaboration on Antigua might develop," said Brown. When HSRP cut down on staff a week later, Brown resigned from the Initiative's Memorial Project Committee, criticizing the Initiative and calling Harvard's firing of Cellini "vindictive and wasteful."

The Initiative's announcement of working with American Ancestors also stressed their foci

outside of HSRP, and future plans include an expansion toward fostering partnerships with historically Black colleges and universities, bringing professors and visiting faculty from HBCUs to Harvard's campus over the past academic year as well as planning for bringing further cohorts of HBCU students on campus for summer research. Part of this has been done through the DuBois Scholars program, which connects certain HBCU students with Harvard faculty for a summer of research.

Additionally, Harvard's Reparative Partnership Grant Program has awarded \$2.3 million in grants to focus on "descendant communities" in an effort to pay back societal inequities, especially in the local Boston and Cambridge area. The program supports projects known by names such as "Empowering Descendant Communities to Unlock Democracy" and "Our Voice, Our Stories, Our Legacy: Celebrating Black Cambridge Youth through the Arts" which address various aspects of the lives of these communities.

Yet as the Legacy of Slavery Initiative adapts and continues, the investigation into Harvard's role in slavery may face further obstacles given the recent rise in crackdowns on diversity, equity, and inclusion programs nationwide, in addition to the precarious past of the offices governing the Initiative. Columbia University recently conceded to the Trump administration's demands that they revamp the Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies Department and institute a mask ban campus-wide, fearing the government's threats of pulling \$400 million in funding from the University. This follows from accusations of antisemitism in the wake of protests on campus regarding the Israel-Hamas War and Columbia's lackluster handling of the protests.

With 44 other universities under investigation for "race-exclusionary programs" across the nation, public funding for the University is in an uncertain time. If Harvard is cornered into a similar position as Columbia, conditions for continued funding may be placed on ending or changing highly scrutinized DEI programs like the Legacy of Slavery Initiatives.

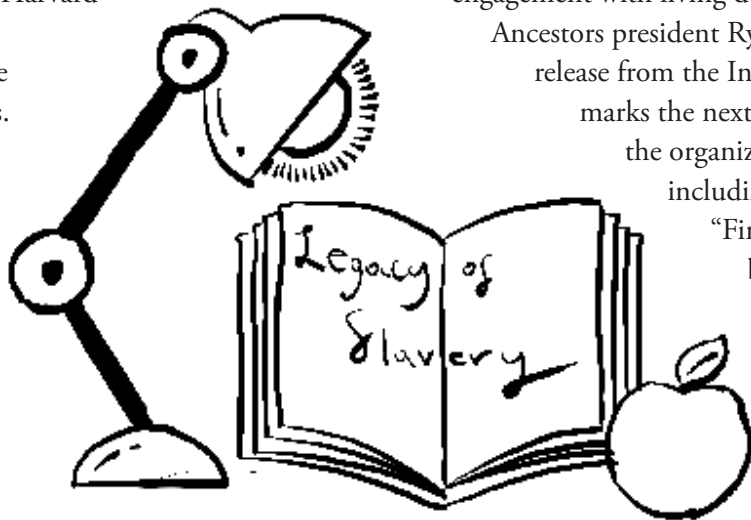
"Most universities—including Harvard—have responded to these attacks with strategies of self-preservation," wrote Harvard Government professors Ryan D. Enos and Steven Levitsky in an op-ed to the Crimson. "They are lying low, avoiding public debate (and sometimes cooperating with the administration) in the hope of mitigating the coming assault."

However, until it is shut down, representatives of the Initiative show no signs of slowing their projects. These include carrying out seven recommendations from the President Committee that aim to use the Initiative's mission in a context expanding to supporting Native communities and honoring slaves through extended research and instituting educational programming.

"Our commitment to truth means that we must embrace it even when it makes us uncomfortable or causes us pain," stated President Bacow when the Initiative was first founded. As Harvard enters these next stages of the Initiative's future, Bacow's words echo to the present.

**BEN KAUFMAN '28 (BENKAUFMAN@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WRITES NEWS FOR THE INDEPENDENT.**

**GRAPHIC BY EMILY PALLAN '27 NEWS | 5**



# Exploring the Role of TFs at Harvard

Does Harvard value the role of Teaching Fellows in student education, and is their instruction consistent across campus?

BY TILLY BUTTERWORTH '28

Harvard has long prided itself on its ability to foster intellectual curiosity and excellence among its students. However, this ambitious educational undertaking inevitably requires an extensive faculty. Among this robust staff are teaching fellows. Both professors and undergraduates appreciate the instrumental role that these instructors—known by students as TFs—play in educating the student body, but their consistent work can often be overlooked or misunderstood.

Looking to understand student and instructor perspectives on this critical position and gather specific thoughts on the topic, the *Harvard Independent* sat down with undergraduates and TFs to hear their thoughts on the benefits and drawbacks of this position.

Throughout their undergraduate careers, the majority of Harvard College students will take classes with TFs, typically via discussion sections or labs. Since Harvard offers classes with up to 800 students such as Gen-Ed 1200: “Justice” and Econ 10A: “Principle of Economics (Microeconomics),” the role a TF plays is critical in connecting undergraduates with not only leading course professionals but also their peers.

In discussion sections of typically 10 to 15 students, TFs act as a bridge between the respective section’s large lecture and individual understanding. They lead discourse and offer undergraduates the chance to voice their questions and reach conclusions from the wider class setting. “I have found the TFs to be extremely helpful in most questions regarding the topics of the class/courseworks. They are perfect for these types of questions because they are typically still students themselves so they remember what it is like to be an undergrad,” wrote Sofia Castore '25.

The appreciation for the younger demographics of these fellows, many of whom are graduate students, stems from their personal experience at Harvard allowing them to offer both their academic wisdom and institutional empathy to undergraduates.

“The younger age of the average TF compared to the professor feels better for me to relearn material from a younger and more adapted perspective,” Silas Nwaishienyi '28 said.

Harvard also employs undergraduate TFs which allow students not only to learn from their peers as classmates but also as instructors. Undergraduates can become TFs through the

Fellows program or by registering in a program at the Harvard Kennedy School.

“I really wish more courses had undergrad TFs,” undergraduate Econ 10A TF Jack Kelly '26 said. “I think there is something really positive about having former students help teach a course since they know what it’s like to be a student in the course. I believe this is a helpful perspective to hear whether you need some help on a problem set or want some study advice for an upcoming exam,” he added.

The role of undergraduate TFs has had positive impacts on student experience, as students appreciate the empathy and excitement generated in their teaching. “Age and enthusiasm really add to the experience that I have had with TFs,” said Marie Schaefer '26.

Beyond demographics, a central part of the undergraduate academic experience at the College is the interactions they have with the faculty in their classes. “Positives [of TFs] are their availability, approachability, and enthusiasm about the topic,” Castore continued. “I have also found that typically TFs will have slightly different niche topics of study than the professor, so this is great in exposing students to different options and fields.”

“Though a majority of my TFs were brand-new to teaching, all of them were good at demonstrating confidence and familiarity with the material they taught,” Nwaishienyi added. “This always made me feel adequately prepared.”

However, undergraduates at the College have also suggested that certain TFs may lack the experience necessary to reaffirm a student’s confidence in the material they are learning. “I’d

say only a few of my TFs have made me confident to problem-solve alone, without other aids,” said Nwaishienyi, who is interested in studying a STEM-focused concentration. In

his opinion, more time and guidance for TFs at the College may help eliminate this issue and thus bolster the quality of education.

Moreover, considering the complexities of this position, does such a high-achieving college like Harvard fully recognize the intricacies of this work and the necessary support needed for the role?

Personal reflections from TFs illustrate the extensive rewards yet also the responsibility inherent to this position. “My favorite thing about being a TF at Harvard is witnessing the intellectual growth of my students. Harvard students are fiercely smart and, when dedicated, are entirely capable of, within a short period of time, leading complex discussions

on a wide range of topics,” said Andrew Deloucas, a PhD candidate in Assyriology and a TF for Gen-Ed 1001: “Stories From The End Of The World.” “There’s often a ‘light switch’ moment midway through the semester... It’s at that point being a TF becomes an enriching experience and I begin to learn alongside my students.”

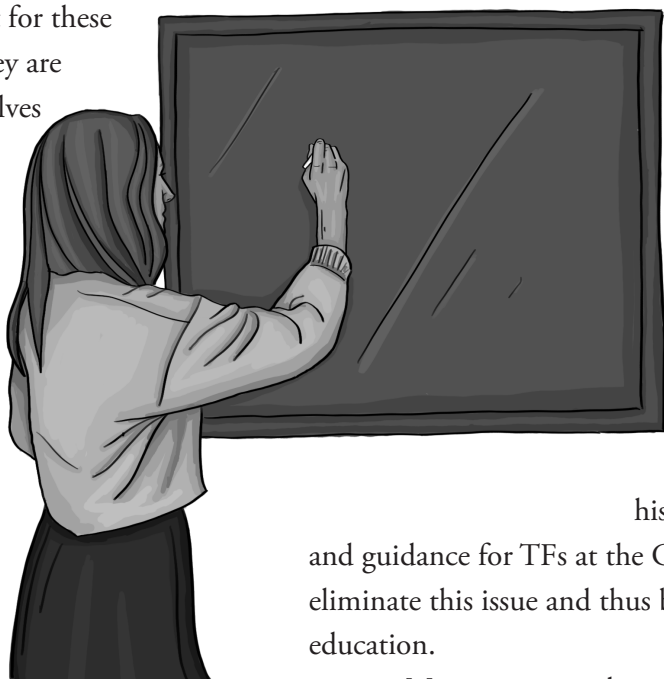
Despite the positives of the job, Deloucas also recalled the difficulty and costs of being a TF alongside other commitments. “The training comes at a cost, often to the detriment of Ph.D. programs,” he said.

The expectations levied upon graduate students of upholding TF obligations, whilst taking classes and working on their dissertations, could present itself as both taxing and time-consuming. In his opinion, this disrupts the teaching experience for both students and TFs themselves. “This is a systemic challenge that requires defining the institutional role of a Ph.D. student, and that sometimes feels like a politically charged task, in addition to being an economic one,” Deloucas continued.

Though Harvard College voices its commitment to its staff and students, TFs often find the school is nonetheless struggling to fully support TFs in this area, contradicting the academic professionalism Harvard claims to uphold. “TFs are not part of a larger discussion regarding Harvard’s expectations for its undergraduate students,” Deloucas said. This lack of acknowledgment reflects an existing failure to fully listen to the thoughts of the TF body, despite their influential role in undergraduate education. Offering more openness and understanding to TFs could help eliminate the unsupportive environment TFs at the College sometimes experience.

Ultimately, recognition of the requirement for increased support for TFs is clear throughout both TF and student perspectives; TFs are still pursuing educational goals while teaching at Harvard.

“The other TFs I get to teach alongside are phenomenal and incredibly dedicated,” said Kelly. This exciting opportunity should be accompanied by more support to eliminate hurdles such as cost and work-life balance. Whether this be through mentoring clinics or support networks for TFs, further guidance and empathy could be largely beneficial from both the student and TF perspective. “Getting the right training program for instructors is critical for developing a longstanding, supportive relationship between student and institution,” Deloucas said.



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GRAPHIC BY MIRANDA CHAO HWANG '28

# FORUM

## Thoughts From New Quincy: The Death of Counterculture

How institutions and the internet are suffocating dissent.

BY LUKE WAGNER '26

Every few weeks, the *Independent* hears a quieter kind of silence: a writer backs out. “I started drafting something, but I’m not sure I want my name on it anymore.”

I feel a pang of sadness with each of these withholdings. These hesitations do not always stem from controversial exposés or radical manifestos—often, they’re thoughtful essays or personal reflections. Yet, in the unforgiving permanence of the digital age, even mild rebellion feels risky. When did speaking one’s mind become something to hide or later erase?

The heart of this problem isn’t confined to Harvard or even universities—it signals a deeper, troubling shift in American society. Today, speech itself is increasingly monitored. The boundaries of acceptable expression have narrowed, shaped by shifting power structures, heightened scrutiny, and a culture of rapid online judgment. These pressures—both social and institutional—make it daunting to speak openly, let alone rebelliously.

Historically, counterculture thrived not despite discomfort but because of it. It emerged precisely where friction with the status quo was sharpest. The cultural upheavals of the 1960s—the anti-war movement, the Civil Rights Movement, the sexual revolution—were all deeply disruptive yet profoundly transformative not only for marginalized communities but also for free speech.

The *Independent* itself was born from that spirit, founded as a counternarrative to mainstream coverage of the Vietnam War. These movements didn’t shy away from controversy or imperfection; they embraced risk, uncertainty, and the inevitability of backlash.

The rise of digital communication and the rapid spread of information have radically changed the stakes. Every opinion, misstep, and protest is permanently archived, ready to be weaponized against dissenters. This has created an environment where even mild deviation from mainstream sentiments can carry severe personal and professional consequences. Social media platforms, originally celebrated for democratizing speech, have paradoxically facilitated unprecedented levels of judgment, backlash, hatred, and public shaming.

Within this digital landscape, one of the most visible and consequential byproducts has been the rise of cancel culture. Today, individuals frequently face intense public condemnation, social ostracism, or professional ruin due to statements or actions perceived as offensive or problematic. This rapid and often unforgiving digital judgment discourages genuine dialogue, making people increasingly fearful of expressing their true thoughts or exploring controversial ideas openly, often because of their digital footprint.

For example, in 2021, the Associated Press fired a young journalist, Emily Wilder, due to negative press from conservative groups over videos that she had retweeted of demonstrators chanting “Free, Free Palestine” while an AP employee. At the time, Wilder was based in Phoenix as a news associate for the Western U.S., but the AP cited a violation of its social media policy, which bars employees from expressing opinions on political issues to preserve the organization’s perceived objectivity.

While Wilder broke protocol, there was no evidence of bias in her reporting, and she was dismissed just weeks into the job. Her firing reflected not just internal policy enforcement but the external political pressure increasingly shaping institutional decisions. Cancel culture, by its very nature, inhibits countercultural thought, reinforcing conformity rather than challenging it.

The effects of this shift extend beyond personal anxiety; they influence political activism and dissent more broadly. Mahmoud Khalil, a Columbia University graduate student involved in pro-Palestinian activism, recently faced detention by Immigration and Customs Enforcement because he “led activities aligned to Hamas, a designated terrorist organization,” according to a spokesperson for the Department of Homeland Security, Tricia McLaughlin.

No matter your opinion of Khalil’s politics, the incident highlights a frightening truth: speaking your mind, especially on controversial issues, now involves risks that go well beyond criticism or backlash. It can genuinely change someone’s life for the worse. Cases like this create troubling precedents, making people wary of expressing dissent and forcing many into silence simply out of fear.

This environment profoundly reshapes how counterculture can exist—or struggle to survive—in contemporary society. Individuals and communities who once might have challenged social norms now find themselves hesitant, calculating potential fallout before even uttering a word. Today, activism often feels less about real-world action or disruption and more about people’s polished online personas, catchy but hollow slogans, and carefully curated public images.

Indeed, many institutions once considered bastions of free speech—Ivy League universities and media outlets—are becoming increasingly restrictive. At Harvard, in October 2024, a group of faculty members held a silent “study-in” protest

at Widener Library, reading works on dissent and academic freedom while displaying signs. Despite the quiet nature of the demonstration, the University suspended the faculty members’ library privileges, citing disruption to the academic environment.

This reaction, minor as it might seem, points to a deeper institutional unease with free expression. Speech codes and the looming threat of punishment only add to an already oppressive climate on campus—everyone feels like they are walking on eggshells. Universities and workplaces are becoming battlegrounds over free expression, with

high-profile controversies making one thing clear: stepping

out of line now carries real consequences.

If counterculture is going to mean anything today, it has to fight a battle on two fronts: the external pressure to stay in line and the internal fear of what might happen if you don’t. Until more of us are willing to speak out against the increasing grip of power from social structures, the emails will keep coming—each one quietly erasing something once said with honesty.

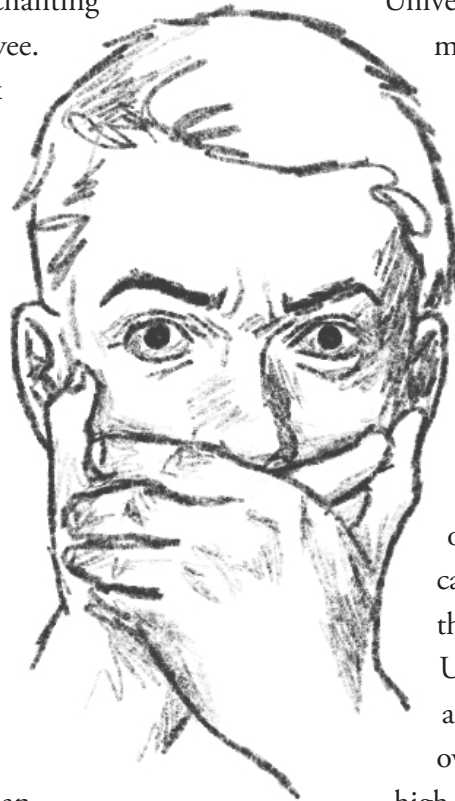
Maybe it starts by facing the reality we’re in. Maybe it starts by refusing to concede. That’s the only way we get back to something real.

As a member of the *Independent*, a publication founded explicitly to challenge prevailing narratives during the Vietnam War, I often find myself wrestling with these tensions. I feel a responsibility to uphold our tradition of countercultural thought, even as external pressures increasingly discourage us from publishing anything remotely controversial.

Counterculture isn’t merely about resisting external authority; it’s about overcoming our own internalized fears of consequence. The *Independent* began as an act of defiance in a turbulent era; now, it’s our turn to ensure that that spirit doesn’t quietly fade into silence.

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**GRAPHIC BY RILEY CULLINAN '27**



# I'm NEON Green

A letter from an avid Android user.

BY RAINA WANG '28

**A**s an Android user, I stick out like a neon green bubble in a sea of blue. If you're in a group chat with me, then yes—I'm the one making them green (oops!). Don't poke fun at me, though; this is a monumental confession.

Back in middle school, when we first discovered the joys of texting group chats, I dreaded the inevitable question: "Why's it green?" Of course, I thought it was because of me, so I was too embarrassed to mention it. After many years, though, I've finally come to peace with my decision to use an Android. Because, as I've realized, the green bubble isn't *my* fault—it's Apple's.

Look around. Everyone has an iPhone. And if they don't, it's assumed they do—just look at how people instinctively say, "Let's do the tappy thing!" when exchanging contact info. Yet, iPhones aren't the most popular phone worldwide.

According to StatCounter, in 2024, Androids (including Samsung, Pixel, Nokia, and Xiaomi) held 72% of the global market, while iPhones held barely 28%. But in the U.S., the numbers flip—iPhones dominate 58% of the market, and Androids lag at 42%. The gap is even wider among teens—almost 90% of Gen Z own iPhones.

So, you might wonder, *what's your deal then? Why an Android?* Well, the first phone I owned in 6th grade was my dad's old phone, so I didn't really get a choice: a Samsung Galaxy S7. And when it came time for a new phone, I didn't see a reason to change; I liked swiping up from the home screen to access my apps, all my photos were synced to Google already, I enjoyed being able to change my device's default font, and I relied on Always On Display—kind of like the phone version of screen savers—to keep track of time.

At the end of the day, Android phones are just another option in the market and should be treated as such. They have their perks—different camera specifications, different user interfaces, and different home screen setups, to name a few—and Android phones are known for being more customizable.

So, you might ask, *what accounts for this monopoly-esque phenomenon in teens across the U.S.?* And I would answer: Apple's clever marketing techniques.

Here's a classic: the infamous green bubble. While not *explicitly* designed with blatant malicious intent, it was designed to be exclusive. Because iMessage runs under a "proprietary closed system," only Apple devices can use it. Naturally, this exclusivity formed an *in-group*, and Androids aren't part of this *in-group*, so Apple-Android texts used to default back to the primitive SMS (now, Apple has finally integrated RCS into iOS 18).

That's why, according to Justin Santamaria, a former Apple engineer, the green color was "necessary," since it indicates when iMessage features, such as reactions or replies, wouldn't work.

But let's be honest: the ugly

slime-colored neon green was a *choice*. And so, this so-called "harmless" green bubble alienation took on a life of its own.

Green bubbles became the hallmark of an Android user. An outsider. Worse, they became associated with being "poor" or "a loser." It's the same social pressure that made everyone want a fidget spinner or Adidas Superstars in middle school, and you just weren't as *cool* if you didn't have them. But what does that leave us with?

## Social Conformity

Why are people telling me to change my phone based on someone else's perceived "better brand?" This is precisely why iPhones are so popular among the teenage population. Between the ages of 10 and 15, vulnerable minds are trying to figure out who they are and how to fit in with society. Even psychology proves that during adolescence, developing brains entering the world independent of their parents and looking to find social belonging are easily influenced by peer pressure. And Apple knowingly takes advantage of this to intentionally manipulate the market and drive iPhone sales.

## The "Haves" vs. the "Have Nots"

It's not just about the color—it's about whether or not you own an iPhone. This iPhone elitism leads to social ostracization, no matter how subtle it is, from exclusion from group chats to calls of "green texts don't get texts back," implying that people only date iPhone users. Apple has turned a messaging app into a status symbol, and iPhones into a perceived measure of superiority.

So, you might say, *this is all just a bug, a little misunderstanding, that's all. Apple could quickly remedy this and make the world just that little bit better.* And you'd be absolutely correct!

In fact, back in the early 2010s, Apple executives considered releasing iMessage to Android. However, one of Apple's top executives, Phil Schiller, fought against this, claiming it would "hurt us more than help us." Translation? Keeping iMessage exclusive results in more interest in the iPhone, and therefore more sales.

Apple has no real incentive to change. They *purposefully* created and are currently trying to maintain this exclusive "walled garden" ecosystem to create a monopoly in the teenage mobile phone market. Apple chooses to make texting between iPhones and Androids difficult because its number one priority is profit.

They only started adopting industry-wide standards, like RCS in iOS 18, after mounting pressure from competitors and the Department of Justice's anti-monopoly lawsuit. Even the iPhone 15's switch to USB-C only happened because of an EU law.

So, you might think, *if none of us have the*

*power to change trillion-dollar companies, what does this matter to us? How are we to make a difference?* Well, look at Europe!

Would it surprise you that this is *only* a problem in the U.S.? And *only* among our generation? In the U.S., most people have unlimited text and talk built into their phone plan, facilitating a culture of texting. But this isn't true for most of the world, where phone plans

typically charge by message. So to

avoid hefty phone bills, European users default to alternative messaging apps such as WhatsApp, for example, and Asian users to WeChat or KakaoTalk, rendering them ignorant of the *bubblism* that plagues us here.

Looking at the rest of the world, from France to China to South Africa, it's obvious iMessaging is not a necessity in our lives—there are other

ways to communicate. So instead of supporting Apple's dirty marketing techniques, switch apps. Use WhatsApp instead. Or Facebook Messenger, Instagram, Telegram, or WeChat. (We already know Signal has Pete Hegseth's vote). Regardless, there are so many alternatives. It only takes two seconds to click download.

Granted, it would take a mass movement of teenagers. But if WhatsApp became everyone's default, there would no longer be an issue of blurry images sent by MMS, creating a new group chat to add people, or not being able to name group chats. The DOJ is already fighting Apple's monopolistic practices with an antitrust lawsuit; this is how *we* can contribute to that movement.

While it may be true that some people find the green bubble atrocious, I've made peace with it. Sure, when I was in middle school, part of me always feared being left out; but, since then, I've met so many wonderful friends who don't care about the color of our texts or prefer to use WhatsApp anyway, reaffirming my belief that the phone I use does not matter. That said... a tiny wave of annoyance still rolls over me whenever someone tells me, "You should just get an iPhone already."

**RAINA WANG '28 (RAINAWANG@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) THINKS EVERYONE SHOULD SWITCH TO WHATSAPP.**

**GRAPHIC BY REEVE SYKES '26**





# A Love Letter to The Humanities

To innovate our future, we must first understand who we are.

BY MEENA BEHRINGER '27

In practically every finance internship interview, I'm asked some variation of the same question—*why Art History?*

I've come to understand art history as the history of culture: how we creatively express ourselves, respond to the world around us, and protest. Art is constantly in conversation with itself; artists revisiting and reinventing themes, variations, and subject matter. There's a reason art has persisted across cultures and centuries, why we find joy in music, books, theater, and painting, and why we inherently seek aesthetics. Art, I answer, is a universal form of communication. Art is part of humanity.

But make no mistake—I am a STEM person through and through. I am concentrating in Applied Math at Harvard, with Art History as a secondary. Math and physics were my favorite subjects throughout high school, and I would much rather do a problem set than draft an outline for a paper. I could go on for hours about how much I love solving problems and the beauty of numbers. Still, I inherited my secondary-love for the humanities from my parents; growing up, my mom dragged my brothers and me to art museums while my dad filled family dinners with conversations on world wars, government policies, and literature. Hard copies of Supreme Court opinions and *The Atlantic* articles even frequent the kitchen counter.

Naturally, in my increasingly math-heavy course schedule, I've become more removed from such discussions. I now sit in relatively larger lecture classes, scribbling down derivations and equations. The felt absence of sitting around a small table, analyzing a novel or historical text, has only made me appreciate the humanities more—what it teaches and inspires.

The STEM-versus-humanities debate is by no means a new one. STEM is strongly considered a more practical discipline, offering stable and lucrative job prospects as well as being more rigorous and time-intensive. STEM courses demand challenging problem sets, long lab hours, and exams designed to be unfinishable that require a conceptual understanding of abstract material. A recent *Harvard Crimson* article published the difference in hours spent weekly on coursework by concentration, reigniting this debate; computer science, math, and statistics courses require, on average, over nine hours of work, whereas English and government require around five.

With that, many often cast aside studying the humanities as not only easier but also significantly less valuable for career opportunities. Starting STEM-degree salaries have historically been higher and more stable than humanities ones, providing higher return on investments for a college education; it's a running pop culture joke that English majors are "useless." In that respect, there is an undeniable privilege in being able to study any discipline without financial concerns.

But dismissing the humanities as worthless is vastly flawed—the humanities are invaluable to further the human condition. Debating the time difference between problem sets and readings, or even time spent in class—the comparison in rigor—fails to understand the difference and even purpose between the two disciplines. The value of an education lies not in time lost but in knowledge gained. The humanities explore what it means to be human and how we interact with others in larger society, teaching skills few STEM classes can, and inspiring what needs to be innovated.

While STEM teaches problem-solving and analytical thought, the humanities teach effective communication, creativity, and how to construct original arguments. They teach us how to critically examine ideas, articulate opinions, and build upon others' perspectives. Conversations exploring justice or philosophical questions where we can learn from one another, particularly on a college campus, reveals where it is that we need to innovate, rewrite policy, or research more. And, studying the humanities teaches perhaps the most important skill—writing.

David Solomon, CEO of Goldman Sachs, has noted writing as an invaluable skill that has become quite rare. "How you communicate with other people, how you interact with other people, how you express yourself will have a huge impact on your success," said Solomon in a 2019 speech. It is mastering communication that inspires and influences people to improve and ultimately spark change—a skill the humanities, not STEM, instills.

Even so, at a liberal arts institution like Harvard, concentrations are intentionally not pre-professional. Our education equips us instead with the tools to learn how to think. The humanities have pushed me to think in vastly different but similarly complex ways than STEM. I've found it more

difficult to come up with an idea on the spot in class than to prepare for a problem I know I will see some variation of on an exam. The way we measure "rigor" shouldn't be solely based on hours spent on work. I struggle with the ambiguity of open-ended questions without a single answer, like in a math problem. Perfection never exists in the humanities the way it can in STEM.

With the rise of generative AI, we have even greater need for the humanities. ChatGPT's generic output has highlighted that technology cannot substitute human creativity, a reminder of how the humanities encapsulate the human condition. The release of ChatGPT initially seemed like a threat to the humanities much more than STEM. It could write essays in seconds, summarize dense texts, and analyze historical plots. My high-school English teachers were the first to discuss generative AI's implications, justifying the value of human writing, and opting for in-class essays to avoid cheating, but similar conversations from science teachers

were absent. It was briefly then that STEM felt invincible—a testament to its supposed superiority, the very field that built artificial intelligence in the first place.

Yet, AI and its uses have evolved. ChatGPT can write high-level code, solve Stat 110 problem sets, and generate supply and demand graphs more accurately than it can compare art history pieces or write an excellent novel. Of course, over the past few years, ChatGPT has undeniably become better at high-level writing and summarizing. But we are quick to recognize ChatGPT writing because it is formulaic and unnatural; it cannot write a short story or powerful poem the way humans can, nor can it produce brand-new music or physical art. It fails to originate thought and it fails to imagine, pulling from a database of all of human ideas rather than creating its own. There's the difference again—there is right and wrong in a math problem, but there is a scale of greatness and beauty in writing.

In our increasingly technological age and volatile political climate, the humanities are more essential than ever; humanities are why we have lessons from the past on how to build the future. Understanding past historical situations is crucial to understanding threats to democracy and how to react, and informed perspectives on our world better inform our decisions, especially on a national scale. Moreover, effective communication inspires political and social change, which we learn from mastering the complexities of language and human emotions. Art, for one, has served as an important tool for protest, evoking emotion and provocation.

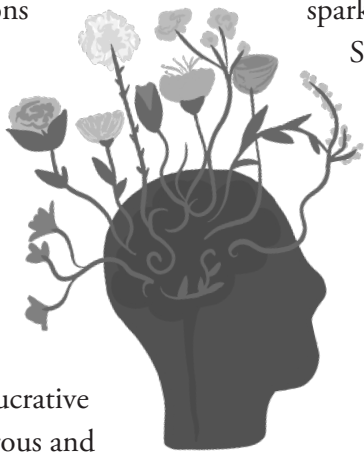
We are trained with critical thinking skills to produce and lead change in our society. Leadership—the ability to influence people—requires an in-depth understanding of what motivates people. It is through language and words that leaders inspire change and through a well grounded knowledge of laws and history that change is properly effected. The humanities gives us this toolbox.

I often think about what my senior-year high school English teacher told us on our first day of class—fiction can teach empathy. Through literature, not problem-solving classes, we learn how to understand one another. We see different perspectives and experiences, allowing us to grow and relate. We must ask the questions that humanities force us to think through and challenge our notions. As much as we need to understand the physical world around us, we must also understand humans—each other, and ourselves.

Our world is built on both science and the humanities. To truly innovate our world—of both man and nature—we must devote ourselves to engaging with humans and their creative expressions.

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GRAPHIC BY ANNELISE FISHER '26



# When Will the Ivory Tower Speak Again?

Why university silence is a moral betrayal to students who are being surveilled, silenced, and punished.

BY COURTNEY HINES '28



On the morning of March 8, federal agents entered a Columbia University-owned apartment and detained Mahmoud Khalil, a Palestinian graduate student, campus activist, and lawful U.S. resident. Officials cited unspecified national security concerns, stripping his green card and transferring him to an ICE facility in Louisiana, without trial. No formal charges were announced.

The detention of a legal U.S. resident for practicing free, political activism—without trial—should be unthinkable, especially at Columbia, a pivotal campus known for its student activism. And yet, it happened. More unsettling still is the lack of response from many of the nation's most powerful academic institutions.

That silence is not incidental—it's calculated. Days after Khalil's detention, President Donald Trump stated that he was “*the first arrest of many to come.*” The Trump administration then announced it would withhold \$400 million in federal funding from Columbia, accusing the University of “inaction in the face of persistent harassment of Jewish students.” In reality, Columbia has taken significant steps to address concerns raised by Jewish students, including extensive campus security, establishing new task forces on antisemitism, and even suspending or disciplining pro-Palestinian student groups.

Still, the Trump administration's message was undeniable: detentions like Khalil's will happen again, and universities that challenge this agenda will face financial consequences. This is pressure with intent, a test to see whether institutions that once prided themselves on moral leadership will fold in the modern political landscape.

Already, Columbia has fallen to governmental pressure. Last Wednesday, the University signaled in exchange for the restoration of its \$400 million in funding, it would comply with the Trump administration's demands by working to implement new definitions and policies for antisemitism on campus. This is only the beginning of the executive's persecution of students and intimidation of Ivy League institutions, which begs the question: Which institution will be next on Trump's list, and will they succumb as well?

Universities' fear of federal coercion is, to an extent, understandable. But history shows that institutions have faced similar pressures before—and resisted. Academics take bold moral stances in moments of national crisis, standing with students against unjust wars, apartheid, and censorship. Students used to lead the way, and their colleges followed.

At Princeton University, students organized hunger strikes and sit-ins, demanding divestment from apartheid South Africa, ultimately leading to the University's decision to begin divesting in 1987. Under similar pressure, Brown University also began partial divestment after a 1992 hunger strike led by students. These moments reflected an underlying truth: elite universities are not only educational institutions, but also ethical actors.

During the Vietnam War, Harvard University became a focal point for anti-war activism. In April 1969, approximately 500 student activists occupied

University Hall to protest the presence of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps on campus. This led to significant institutional changes, most notably the formal codification of the University-Wide Statement on Rights and Responsibilities in 1970. The document defended students' rights as much as orderly conduct, underscoring the power of student activism in shaping university policies. It is from this event that the Harvard Independent emerged as a way to provide broader context during moments of student-led activism. These decisions in the face of threats are instances our institutions look back on with pride. We are now at risk of defacing this history.

University responses to anti-war movements today are now characterized by a retreat into neutrality or overt suppression. In a healthier form, this neutrality could have led to the maintenance of free speech, where multiple perspectives are free to clash and communicate, bringing more scholarly complexity to campus. In May 2024, President Alan Garber '76 set a new precedent for Harvard's current rules in an official statement, valuing campus disruption over students' right to protest.

This change led to 13 pro-Palestine protesters involved in the Harvard Yard encampment being barred from graduating, with 20 others placed on probation by the Administrative Board. More recently, Harvard University temporarily suspended library privileges for faculty members who participated in a “study-in” protest advocating for Palestinian rights, just weeks after students faced similar suspensions. The pattern is clear: instead of protecting free speech, institutions are policing specific forms of protest.

The disparity in treatment is striking. While pro-Israel alumni and affiliates successfully mobilized to influence University policies, pro-Palestinian groups faced suspensions and disciplinary actions. This inconsistency not only undermines the principle of free speech but also contradicts the University's commitment to impartiality and open dialogue. These decisions came soon after President Garber met with the head of the Anti-Defamation League, Jonathan Greenblatt. The ADL is known for its history of pro-Israel lobbying, with Greenblatt's most recent campaign conflating anti-Zionism with antisemitism. Here, there is an obvious role that external donors like alumni or special interest groups play in the University's administrative decision-making.

Current institutions are succumbing to financial and political coercion. The choice to remain neutral or passive in these circumstances is effectively a choice to side with an oppressive administration, abandoning the University's role as a defender of free thought and expression.

For over a year now, we've witnessed the consequences of capitulation. In January 2024, Harvard President Claudine Gay resigned under immense pressure from Congress and donors following her testimony before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. Her departure, though officially attributed to plagiarism allegations, came

amid a broader political effort to discipline universities over their perceived failures to combat antisemitism—a charge that, in practice, has often been leveled at pro-Palestinian speech and organizing.

These public associations hold power over the Harvard Corporation's decision-making; with the resignation of several Ivy League presidents, the goal of each institution became damage control. The timing and intensity of her resignation marked a turning point: not only was a university president forced out under political scrutiny, but the University itself failed to meaningfully defend her or the institution's right to remain independent of partisan influence.

This wasn't always the posture universities took. During the McCarthy era, Harvard President James B. Conant '16 was questioned by Congress about Harvard's approach to faculty with alleged communist affiliations and argued that ideological beliefs alone should not be grounds for dismissal. Yale, similarly, refused to sign loyalty oaths, despite significant external pressures to do so.

Universities once understood that their legitimacy as centers of thought depended on protecting dissent, not policing it. Today, under similar pressures, where there was once defiance, there is now complacency. The Ivy League of today chooses silence in the face of federal constraints not because they lack historical precedent for resistance, but because they fear reputational and financial risk more than they value their own principles. But what is reputation without integrity? When institutions abandon their students under pressure, they don't just forfeit moral authority—they weaken the very foundation of academic freedom they claim to protect.

The failure to support students advocating for their rights does not just diminish Harvard's moral standing—as a leader amongst universities nationwide, it sets a precedent for the erosion of free speech on college campuses everywhere and emboldens future government overstep. Universities stand at a crossroads: they can yield to political coercion or reclaim their role as defenders of intellectual freedom and spaces for critical thought and societal progress. Their responses to external pressures will either fortify or weaken the principles of free expression, not just within their institutions, but throughout the nation.

Harvard needs to remember its legacy of moral conviction. Administrators must honor past leaders who, in the face of significant risks, set precedents by choosing to uphold the principles of free expression and choose their students above all else. This moment in time calls for courage and conviction. Now, Harvard has an opportunity to demonstrate that the values of academic freedom, open dialogue, and social responsibility are not merely rhetorical but are actively practiced and defended.



**COURTNEY HINES '28**  
**(COURTNEYHINES@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WANTS TO BE PROUD OF HER COLLEGE AGAIN.**

**GRAPHIC BY KERRIE ZHU '28**

# Making English Official: A Blow to America's Diversity

The downsides to adopting English as the U.S.'s official language.

BY TYLER DANG '28

“This order designates English as the official language of the United States.” —Exec. Order No. 14224.

With President Donald Trump's reelection, many anticipated sweeping changes to American life. From economic policies to foreign relations, the United States was poised for a dramatic transformation—whether for better or worse. In early March, the administration made a bold move, designating English as the official federal language.

Previously, the U.S. was among the short list of nations with no official language, alongside the United Kingdom, Mexico, Australia, and Eritrea. While the Trump administration justified its decision by claiming that English has always been the majority-spoken language, this move undermines the very essence of the American Dream.

## The American Dream

Like any other nation, the United States has its own mythos and rich history. From its beginnings with the Pilgrims to its efforts in foreign lands, the U.S. has imagined itself as a land of opportunity and a protector of the marginalized. The “American Dream” clearly represents this ideal—the idea that anyone, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or even language, could prosper provided they work hard. This long-held belief contributed to the rapid immigration America experienced.

While this ideal may not be as universally agreed upon today, its impact has contributed to a sense that America is a country of immigrants. The Immigration and Nationality Act allows for 675,000 permanent visas to be granted, and with 14.3 % of the population being foreign-born, the United States continues to offer those from other nations the ideals of achieving a successful life.

Trump's Executive Order No. 14224 erodes a key component of opportunity in the United States. While its impact is still to be determined, the order sends a message for any incoming immigrants: English is necessary for success, and without it, you won't achieve the American Dream. Is understanding English essential for communication in everyday life? Yes—it is by far the most prevalent language in the U.S., with 78.3% of Americans speaking only English at home. However, establishing English as the official language imparts the impression that other languages are second-class and restricts those who have access to the American Dream.

While English has long been the de facto language in the U.S., the change to de jure runs counter to the idea of freedom and celebration of individuality. The Establishment Clause in the First Amendment prevents the government from establishing an official religion, protecting private practice. Just as the lack of a state religion ensures that anyone from a minority religion is not forced to conform to another faith, the absence of an official language encourages linguistic inclusivity. By making English the official language, the

government risks sending a message that other languages and cultures are of lesser importance, further marginalizing those whose first language is not English.

Though this may seem like a minor change with little immediate legal effect, the order raises important questions: what comes next? Will the current administration stop at officially adopting English, or will other limitations follow?

## Minority Recognition

Executive Order No. 14224 is not the first occurrence concerning making English the official language. In 1780, John Adams proposed making English the official language of the United States, but the Continental Congress rejected it as “undemocratic and a threat to individual

liberty.” While language is a form of communication, it's also a vital link to one's heritage, community, and identity. As the United States becomes ever more diverse, it is crucial that every group feels valued and included, regardless of the language they speak.

Compare this to our neighbor Canada, where two official languages—English and French—are recognized. According to the country's Official Languages Act of 1969, the designation of multiple official languages ensures equality of status and protects linguistic minorities. In the U.S., with over 350 languages

spoken nationwide, the need for similar inclusivity is even greater. The new executive order does not prohibit or restrict the use of the languages, but by prioritizing English, it subtly diminishes the significance of minority languages.

A few languages emphasized over the hundred others runs counter to the hope for an inclusive America.

Naturally, the order has some benefits for certain sectors. For example, previously, healthcare providers receiving federal funding must provide language access accommodations for patients with limited English proficiency. However, this requirement has been eliminated by Trump's order. Now, healthcare providers will not have to pay for translators. Instead, patients are expected to know enough English to, say, communicate with their doctor. However, these expectations are unrealistic in certain parts of the country and can pose significant risks to informed consent and the delivery of effective patient care.

Homogeneous communities where people speak languages other than English have existed in the United States since the 1800s. Many of these communities are comprised of working residents who never needed to learn English. These individuals have built lives in environments where communication in their native tongue suffices. Yet, this executive order makes no provisions to ensure that people learn English, but instead reduces the

protections for those who don't speak it fluently.

The administration defends the order by claiming it “celebrates the long tradition of multilingual American citizens who have learned English.” Perhaps that is true for U.S. citizens, but for those attempting to gain citizenship, the change makes the process even more difficult. Previously, applicants with specific age and residency qualifications could take their citizenship test and interview in their native language. This order threatens that option for those already navigating a complicated immigration process.

It should also be noted that the Trump administration shut down the Spanish-language White House website page and its X account under the handle “LaCasaBlanca.” Trump previously removed the page in his first term. In a country where 13.8% of the population speaks solely Spanish in their household, these decisions give the impression that only one language, English, will be tolerated.

## The Order's Narrative

“The English language has been a cornerstone of American culture for over 250 years,” — then Sen. JD Vance stated in 2023.

In reality, this order will have little tangible effect. English was already the dominant language in America. Of those who spoke a language other than English at home, about 70% still spoke English “very well.” Establishing English as the official language is unlikely to encourage more immigrants to learn it, especially when 54% of immigrants are already proficient in English. Put simply, most jobs already require some understanding of the language. Not to mention that more than 30 states already had laws designating English as an official language.

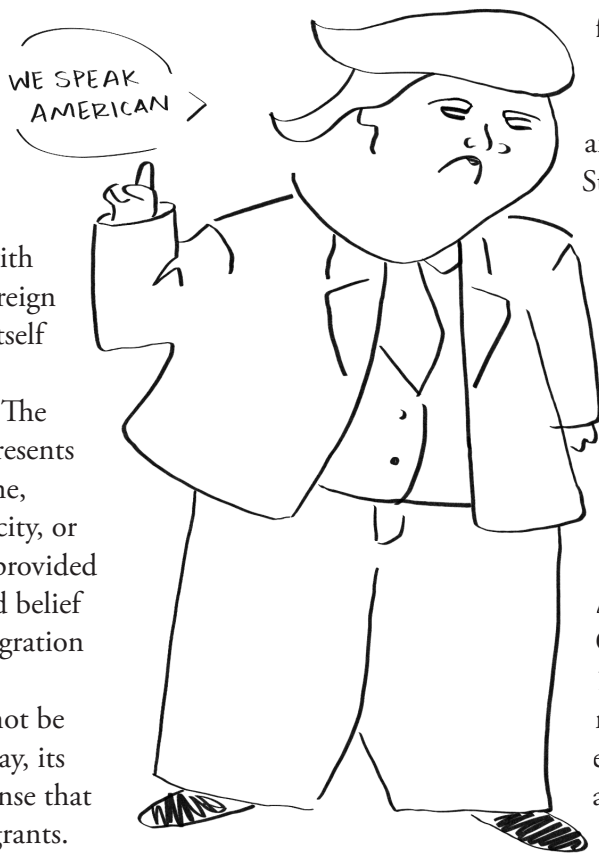
Both sides of my family immigrated from Asia. My father was born on an American military base in Guam after his parents fled Vietnam, and my mother immigrated from China when she was nine years old. Despite Presidents Ford and Reagan never making such an order, my family still learned English. Perhaps they knew it because there were few Asian communities in Tennessee and Alabama where they could rely on their native language. Or perhaps it was because they felt that understanding English was necessary to achieving success.

With this order, the administration sends a clear message: English is the norm, and if you don't learn it, you risk falling behind. The problem arises because the U.S. government, which was founded on unalienable rights such as liberty, is embracing that message. While residents are free to use any language they prefer, protections for those who are not proficient in English are threatened.

In fairness, the order has reasonable goals. Its policy aims to “make the United States a shared home and empower new citizens to achieve the American dream.” Indeed, the country seems to be increasingly polarized, and an official language hopes to invoke unity throughout the nation. But is the almost dismissal of other languages truly going to unite the nation, or will it only deepen political divisions

TYLER DANG '28 (TYLERDANG@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) TOOK LATIN IN HIGH SCHOOL

GRAPHIC BY REEVE SYKES '26



# China Bowls

Some love waits for you to come back to it.

BY COURTNEY HINES '28

**C** In the left side of my mother's kitchen, a cabinet is filled with mismatched china bowls. At family dinners, we all eat from different portion sizes, but through second helpings, we somehow eat the same amount of rice and chicken. Usually, I use a white china bowl, its rim lined with a blue pattern, and drink from a Hello Kitty mug I've had since I was eight.

At the back of the cabinet, behind the stacks of assorted china, lie eight identical dinner plates, each adorned with a pastel-colored fruit design. They're hidden by the rest of the dishes because they're only meant for "special occasions" (when we have guests over). There's never been an urge to use the matching plates; my family finds comfort in using our more personalized dishes.

In pieces, my mom told me how this paralleled her own childhood. When she immigrated to America, her family didn't have the means to purchase fine china from the stores. Instead, my grandmother's friends from the mainland lent them excess kitchenware—single bowls that were unused from their fanciest sets of porcelain. As their circumstances improved, they never bought a matching set. Even if they could have, why would they have bothered? There was always something more important than luxury table appliances.

Whenever my mom informed me of my grandmother's next visit to our apartment, I was scared. My grandmother's nostrils flared at me as she spoke, her Cantonese accent harsh and strident. Her features were tarnished from Vietnam's ashes, her smile permanently diminished into an expression of fury and fear. The girl that her body once contained slipped into

the seams around her eyes, never to be revealed unless I were to smooth out her skin with my hands—but I was too afraid to ever try this. I avoided her at family gatherings, eating dinner at opposite sides of the table from her. My mom scolded me for it, reminding me it was my grandmother who brought the family to America, who protected us for decades. The least I could do, she said, was set my bowl beside hers.

I positioned myself to be estranged from my grandmother for most of my life. Offhandedly, I convinced myself that strained ties could coexist with love, that the distance I put between us wasn't our fault, wasn't my fault. She lost her husband when I was two—an age too young for me to have any recollection of the man, and memories too painful for my mother to recount in an anecdote. Since then, my grandmother lived with different relatives in Vietnam and the States. I understood her to be a restless woman, independent of her own accord. Well into her eighties, she would take the bus to Chinatown alone each morning despite her children's wishes that she stay home.

This, I told myself, was the way she wished to live; surrounded by a language different than mine, with people far away from me. She wished to speak like she was at home, and we were too different for me to ever feel like home to her, or her to me.

Cantonese became a hidden language in our household, heard in the background of the dinner table when my mom spoke to her family members

on the phone. And so, whenever I saw her, my grandmother spoke to me in incomplete phrases, piecing together the English terms she'd heard from her children as they grew up. In turn, I knowingly responded to her in words she couldn't understand. Maybe it was easier that way, terminating the pain of trying. Each conversation ended with suppressed facial expressions of frustration, though this frustration seemed to differ between my grandmother and me.

At twelve, I saw my grandmother at a family reunion in my youngest auntie's home. It was the first time we had seen each other in years. My grandmother was distant, not because of her lack of kisses and touches to my arms when I saw her again, but from my own uncertain affections. The family went out for dim sum, where I requested we order pork *cheong fun*, a noodle roll that was my favorite at the time. This was a word my grandmother understood. She tapped my shoulder and asked me if I liked it. I looked down at the floor when I told her I did.

The next morning, I poured a bowl of Apple Jacks with milk, taking advantage of the sugary cereals my aunt had that my household didn't. This breakfast was even more exciting because nobody else was awake yet, leaving me to enjoy my meal in secret. I ate, standing at the kitchen counter, when my grandmother entered from the front door, carrying bags of takeout containers.

A grin spread across her face as she walked forward and grabbed one of the containers from the bottom of the plastic bag. Holding it steady, she set



the rest of the bags down and reached for an azure china bowl from my aunt's cupboard. She placed the bowl in front of me and opened the takeout container. It was filled with *cheong fun*.

"Thank you, but I already ate." I pointed to the china bowl, where all that was left was green and orange-dyed milk. She looked at it, then me, with confusion, and still began to lift the *cheong fun* from the container into the bowl.

I shook my head. "I'm not hungry." My grandmother understood my rejection, more than I did, and set the food back in its original box. She began to cry. I wanted to say some other words she would know, words that I meant. But I couldn't think of the right combination. I just stared at the tile while she cried. I should've said I was sorry.

Two years ago, I visited my youngest auntie alone in San Francisco. My grandmother had lived fifteen minutes away from her for over twenty years, alone in a smushed house on an upturned hill since my grandfather passed away. Right before my trip, my grandmother left her house in the city to see my eldest auntie up north. All of her belongings remained, so I lived in the house for the week I was there.

I spent most of the trip with my auntie's family, rarely lingering in the dilapidated house by myself for very long. One night, before leaving me alone for a few hours, my auntie took me to the store and bought a bag of groceries so I "would not starve." She handed me rice noodles, garlic, and chicken. I told her I couldn't cook, to which she responded, "Learn."

I spent most of the trip with my auntie's family, rarely lingering in the dilapidated house by myself for very long. One night, before leaving me alone for a few hours, my auntie took me to the store and bought a bag of groceries so I "would not starve." She handed me rice noodles, garlic, and chicken. I told her I couldn't cook, to which she responded,

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Later in the night, I decided to try—not out of hunger, but curiosity. My grandmother's kitchen contained the seasonings and pots I needed. I counted fifteen spatulas, two toasters, and three air fryers—two still sealed in boxes, stacked inside the kitchen stove. I overcooked the garlic noodles, but they were, at best, edible. All I needed was a bowl and chopsticks. I searched the cabinets, pushing past overcrowded shelves cluttered with unfamiliar cooking utensils that I will never know the names of. But one shelf was nearly empty, containing a single china bowl, flamed red and enveloped with black Mandarin characters I couldn't read. I picked up the clean dish, revealing a matching second bowl behind it.

The bowl was a ways above my head, making the dust that covered it look like fading color from my perspective below. As I picked it up, the white grime slicked its surface, and it slipped from my fingers, shattering into large chunks of crimson on the floor.

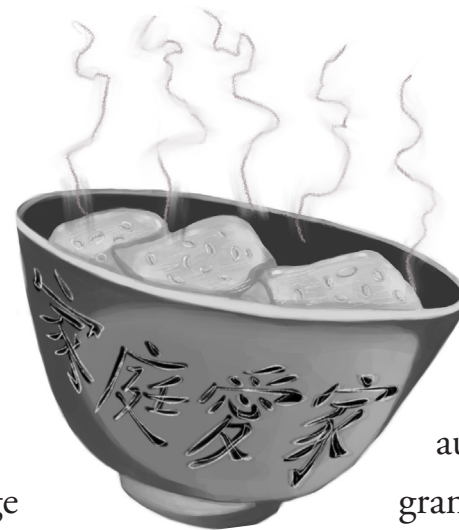
For a moment, I didn't understand why the bowl went untouched long enough to collect dust. But then I remembered, it was here in this house where both my grandfather and grandmother lived together. It was here that he left her.

Until the china bowl had crumbled, I'd only thought of my grandfather's legacy twice. When I was ten, I snooped through my mother's drawers and found a photo of him and me playing on his hospital bed. At fourteen, our extended family visited his grave, bringing *sui mai* and *cheong fun* (his favorite foods) and fake money to burn as offerings to him. My grandmother led the ceremony. I wondered if my grandmother bought his *cheong fun* from the same shop where she had gotten mine. Would she still put it in this shattered bowl? I wondered if my grandfather was watching and remembering me, though I couldn't

remember him, hating me for not taking care of his wife in his absence.

Once, my grandmother's kitchen cupboards had been filled with mismatched bowls. Now, it had come down to just one. One bowl, one old woman, one home.

My knees hit the floor and I gripped the scarlet glass in my hands. While my fingers were left unscathed, I winced from shards of glass that pushed into my legs as I collapsed. My limbs began to bleed in shame; shame for breaking my grandfather's bowl, for never setting my grandmother's bowl next to mine at the dining table. I gathered the crimson chunks into a pile and looked



at my hands. Red dust had collected under my fingernails. I didn't wash it away until the next morning.

That winter, I visited my eldest auntie, whom my grandmother had officially moved in with.

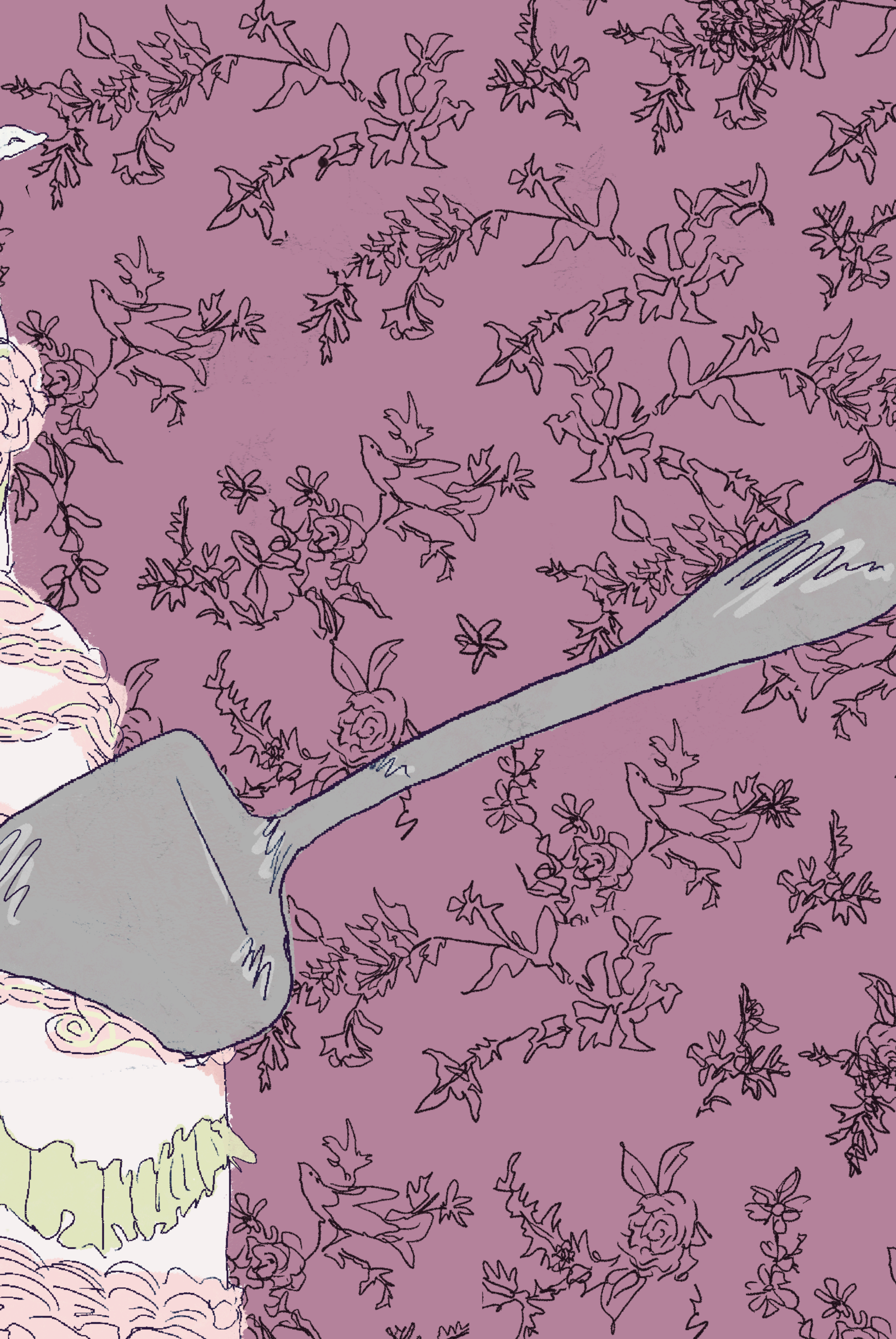
Her kitchen was different from my mother's, with matching white china from Ikea still bearing their price stickers. When we ate dim sum at her house, we set up plates around her kitchen counter (the dining table, my auntie said, was just for display) and drank out of never-before-used glasses.

For the first time, I put my plain Ikea bowl next to my grandmother's and ate beside her. We exchanged a few words, lost in translation, but I looked up to see her eyes smile at me regardless.

**COURTNEY HINES '28  
(COURTNEYHINES@COLLEGE.  
HARVARD.EDU) IS PIECING  
TOGETHER A BROKEN  
PORCELAIN BOWL AS BEST AS  
SHE CAN.**

**GRAPHIC BY KAYLA LE '28**





# Dispatch from New Jersey

Perspectives on counterculture from the upper masthead of the *Nassau Weekly*, Princeton University's weekly alternative magazine.

BY ELLIE DIAMOND, FRANKIE SOLINSKY DURYEYEA, ALEX NORBROOK, AND SASHA ROTKO

The *Nass* was founded in 1979 as an outlet for alternative, creative, and journalistic pieces. Below are a series of short essays by members of the magazine's upper masthead that meditate on counterculture and the role of alternative publications on college campuses.

When thinking about the role of counterculture, there are a series of preliminary definitional questions: What is the culture under consideration? What does it mean to be against that culture? Who is responsible for countering it? When we—readers and writers of alternative magazines as well as current college students at elite universities more broadly—think of the recent history of countercultural movements, we may trace a heritage that goes back to at least the 1960s and 1970s: think the Stonewall riots, or protests against the Vietnam War and for racial liberation. At that time, young people, especially college students, were the agents; traditional frameworks of identity, family, race, sexuality, and art constituted the culture; the mainstream was challenged through political acts of questioning, resistance, revolution, and experimentation.

In many ways, members of today's alternative spaces on college campuses represent the successes of this previous generation. In the aggregate, we are more likely to accept more diverse gender identities and sexualities than any generation before us; we are more critical of unjust hierarchies that cut along racial, economic, and gendered lines. Advancing from countercultural foundations that have become mainstream, young people have carved out new frontiers in the fight for transgender rights, climate justice, and a free Palestine.

In response to these frontiers, conservative movements and institutions are attempting to recast the definitions of counterculture. They seek to change the parameters of what it means to be alternative, casting people on the right as principal agents and attacking the foundations of the "traditional" alternative movement rooted in previous generations of struggle. The ideology of this "counter" is reactionary, advocating a return to older forms of hierarchy. We can look to the "manosphere" that enshrines a cult of masculinity to suppress gender equality or to pundits demonizing efforts to promote racial justice as "wokeism" as examples of this trend. The contested realignment of dominant counterculture prompts a second series of questions. What becomes of the counterculturalist who identifies with the tradition I have touched on above? How does their responsibility change when they must now defend the (imperfect) progress of previous generations while also fighting for a more expansive set of issues? Is it possible to defend this progress without losing one's identity as a counterculturalist?

I lack the space here to offer definitive answers. However, I raise them because I believe they will be important to grapple with in the coming years for anyone drawn to the "tradition" of counterculture, especially as the half-generation below us—13- to 17-year old Gen Z-ers—becomes more swayed by the conservative cultural movement that seems

to be gaining strength today. Data shows that this group of 13-to-17-year-olds is less liberal than us. They are more trusting of religious institutions than us. Demonstrating the connection between culture and politics, they are less politically engaged than us and less supportive of the Democratic Party. It is too early to draw definitive conclusions from these facts. However, they caution that expecting the next generation to fully embrace the cultural progressivism fostered in alternative spaces like the ones we inhabit on college campuses may be overly optimistic. It is our responsibility as readers and creators of these alternative spaces to contest the central definitional questions of counterculture and find compelling answers to provide for the sub-generation that is soon to take our place.

- Alex Norbrook

To be alternative, to be the counterculture, to be an independent magazine on a university campus is to occupy a space that can be combative. To exist for the sole purpose of acting against the norm or mainstream might be interpreted as antagonistic, unrelenting, or juvenile. To produce a magazine consisting of whatever the daily newspaper is *not* writing might seem like a goal with the wrong motivations. These are all fair judgments. However, these judgments misunderstand the intentions of the counterculture.

The mainstream cannot exist without the counterculture, just as the primary cannot exist without the alternative—without contrast, there is no conversation. We observe from a different vantage point and with a different intention: perhaps not to inform, but to inquire. Not to portray, but to question, to investigate. Magazines like the *Nassau Weekly* and the *Harvard Independent* serve a different, distinct purpose. They are not simply reactionary; they are responsive.

- Sasha Rotko

One is the loneliest number. Most everyone on the *Nass* thinks they are One—a singular, unique perspective cutting through the hivemind that dominates this campus. Some Ones are more justified in that belief than others, but at a certain point, even the mere belief in Oneness morphs into being One. I certainly came to campus as a freshman with a boldly defined sense of Oneness. I joined the *Nass* early on, hoping that there I would find other Ones. My inkling feeling was correct: there, Oneness abounded.

One is a strange number. When Ones fill up a room or magazine, the inclination is not to add. Rather, Ones coexist. If the *Nass* has a perspective at all, it is that it is an amalgamation of radically different ones. No two pages in the *Nass* will look the same, just like the faces that fill Bloomberg Hall 044 (well...maybe not *all* the faces). However similar the faces may look, the minds inside them have taken shape in distinct ways. We take on a multitude of forms. Some Ones have a serif, others a slight squiggle in their shaft; some are One squared, others need erasing (we can answer for those).

One *can be* a lonely number. The intrinsic interiority of being One makes its façade unassuming. It can

sometimes appear as a vector, an L, or something else entirely. But Oneness comes with a finely tuned radar. There is a perpetual knowledge that other Ones walk among you. They may even be convening in the *Nass* room Mondays and Thursdays at 5:00 p.m. Once a One knows who they are, they'll be able to spot others in an instant.

- Ellie Diamond

In a 1941 pamphlet, George Orwell wrote, "Probably the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing-fields of Eton, but the opening battles of all subsequent wars have been lost there." He recognized that schools, the birthplaces of dominant culture, can also be the institutions that restrict forward thinking and change. Any of *us*—as if I can speak for any "*us*"—who hesitate before naming our university affiliation to others, do so understanding that we exist in establishments that uphold "culture" in its most outdated sense. To stay here, hoping that we will learn enough to then go out and make a significant change—significant enough to offset our complicity in staying here—is uncomfortable.

Magazines and independent publications necessarily work at a slower pace. The time from submission to editing to publication requires that stories imagine every catastrophe has already occurred, that individual narratives can exist outside of their immediate temporal context. Catastrophes *have* occurred, and they continue to. The act of conscious and alternative publication becomes a constraint that forces us to step back from information vomit and attempt to approach serious issues outside of the institutionally imposed flow of time.

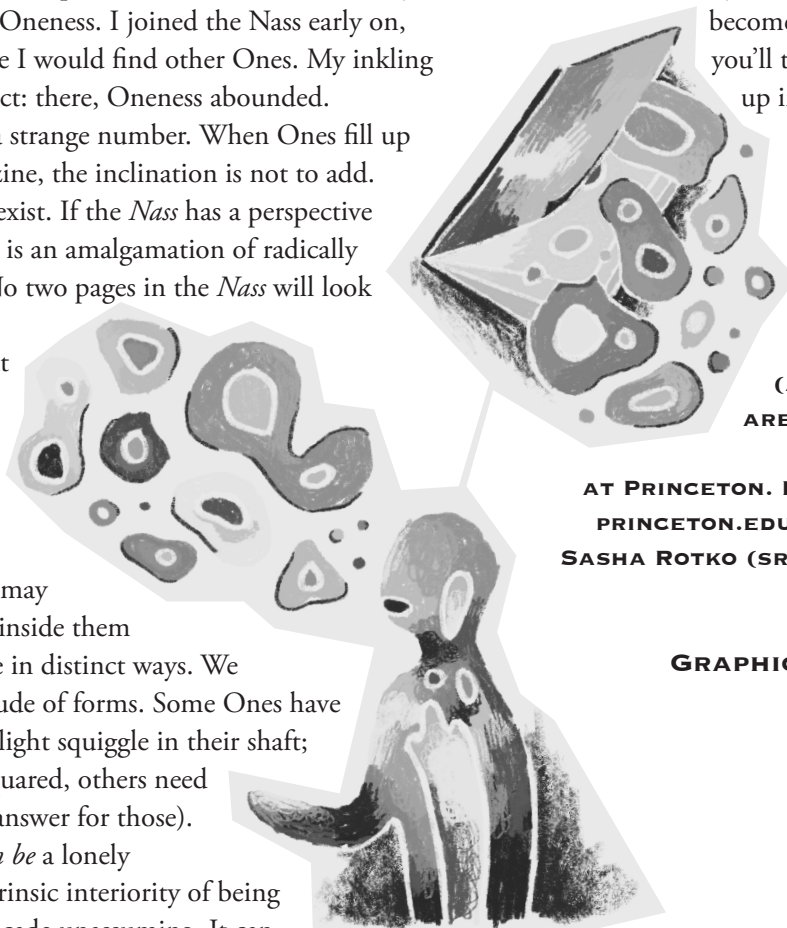
The *Nassau Weekly* was born on the playing fields of Princeton. As such, we must keep up an actively oppositional stance (rather than assuming inaction is sufficient) if we want to resist the historical attitudes that our campus upholds. We don't pretend to counteract our University's culture entirely, nor do we presume that you all do.

But we do try to assert some mutual discomfort, a shared understanding that catastrophes occur on every scale and deserve recognition. We intend to expand and distort before culture ever reaches us. We intend to always be a little "off," and once we've become too normal, we hope that you'll take us out back and cut us up into something new.

- Frankie Solinsky Duryea

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**GRAPHICS BY EDEN REINFURT**





# A Broad, Abroad: Between Constants and Cafés

My reflection on the balance of novelty with familiarity in experiences abroad.

BY FRANCES CONNORS '26

**O**n Housing Day my sophomore year, as I walked into Eliot Dining Hall for an enhanced dinner, I was greeted with the smells of lobster ravioli and fresh apple crisp and the excited energy of new and old Eliotites mingling for the first time. Little did I know that this space in my new House would become one of the places I miss the most while abroad two years later. Three semesters of early breakfasts, late-night conversations, and countless meals in between transformed a mere dining hall into a second home. The hours I've spent in the space have allowed me to form meaningful friendships and become part of an amazing community. I have never walked through without waving hello to at least one person. I know Eliot Dining Hall, and in it, I am known.

What I long for isn't just the dining hall itself, but the feeling of belonging that came with it—familiarity that's hard to come by. The irony, of course, is that familiarity is both the most comforting thing to have and the hardest thing to acquire, especially while abroad. It isn't something you buy; it's something you invest in, with time as your only currency. As I consider how to spend my months in Paris, I've discovered an internal tension between my competing desire for familiarity and novelty. How do I balance time between seeking the comfort of familiarity with the adventure and time-slowness properties of novelty?

It is only through repetition that we can become familiar with a place. Comfort isn't something you can buy. A café won't accept an upfront payment of €50 to make you a regular. Instead, that money must be divided into twenty-five €2 espressos. It takes a few visits for a barista to know your name and order or for another regular to nod at you.

If the key to familiarity is repetition, then the key to repetition is consistency. For better or worse, prolonged consistency has never been a hallmark of my schedule. Back on campus, weeks oscillate between heavy and light workloads, and a plethora of different experiences disrupt any chance of monotony. Even last summer, when I worked a 9-5—a stereotypically “routine” lifestyle—I still felt that the adventures I sprinkled in each week sufficiently shook things up.

Coming to Paris, I thought that my schedule would be more consistent than at Harvard while still including moments for new adventures. With fewer class hours and

less homework, I imagined myself settling into a steady routine, embedding myself into small city subcultures, and easily becoming a regular at the nearest corner café. In some ways, this has been true. But in hindsight, my time here has been anything but routine. The past two months have been the most novelty-filled (read: inconsistent) of my life. Each week brings a new café, a new corner of Paris, or even a new country. With so many new experiences, I feel like I've lived here for much longer than merely ten weeks.

This brings me back to my question: how do I balance the search for familiarity with my love of novelty? Take my choice of cafés, for example. Although my love for espresso may be infinite, the amount of time I have to spend sitting in cafés, unfortunately, is not. After switching host families to be closer to class a few weeks into my stay, I discovered a delightful café just a ten-minute walk from my new home. With its perfectly creamy macchiato and spacious, sun-filled interior, the Dancing Goat quickly became my new favorite café in the city. Determined to become a regular, I've made a conscious effort over the past few weeks to visit weekly and spend some time drawing, journaling, or just pondering in their computer-free space. I recognize at least one other regular and the baristas—though I'm not sure they recognize me yet. Familiarity is close.

But the Dancing Goat isn't on my daily commute. Each visit requires a conscious effort, a small act of resistance against my pull of regularity. Often when I decide to go, I wonder: should I try somewhere new in my neighborhood instead? Would the novelty of a different café outweigh the growing comfort of my usual spot? Do café visits have diminishing marginal returns? Certainly not when you consider the benefits of commitment—becoming a regular, building relationships, and finding familiarity. Commitment yields dividends far greater than the fleeting high of newness.

And still, a voice in my head urges me to explore more, to maximize originality. If time is limited, I should try to see as much of Paris as I can before returning to places I already know. In these moments of doubt, it's clear that novelty is something I value. From a strictly utilitarian perspective, this makes sense. Studies show that novelty changes our perception of time, boosts neuroplasticity,

and enhances overall life satisfaction. Who wouldn't want all those benefits? But perhaps I've been thinking about this all wrong, which raises a new question: can familiarity still feel new?

The answer is yes—if you let it. Faithful readers know I joined a run club when I first arrived in Paris, and I'm pleased to report that it's become a regular part of my week. Thankfully, this familiarity hasn't come at the cost of novelty. Each week, we run a new

route and meet new members.

Many rituals, like a run club, can be modified to include new experiences. A weekly lunch can move to a different spot, a daily coffee order can

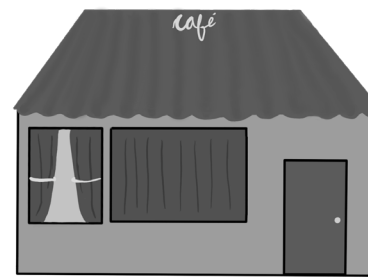
be switched once a week, and a morning commute can take the scenic route now and then.

Yet even when familiarity exists without freshness, it still deserves to be valued for its own sake. As much as I love the thrill of each week here looking different, I've come to cherish the parts of my life that look the same week after week—like my art class and daily dinners with my host family. Not every experience needs to be the best or the newest to add value and bring joy. Sometimes, the real reward comes from commitment. I'm certainly happier having spent so much time in the Eliot Dining Hall instead of hopping from one dining hall to the next in search of something different.

At the end of this reflection, I still don't have a perfect mix for balancing novelty and familiarity. They both have their place and can coexist. In Paris, as in life, we all have to decide how to spend time in a way that aligns with our values. At different times, the ideal balance can shift, so we must be in tune with ourselves to know how to adjust. As I look forward to the next two months in Paris, I plan to index more towards familiarity. I want to establish stronger links to the city and the people that I've met here. I'll still find time for novelty (my Paris Bucket List will make sure of that), but I'll be mindful not to chase it at the expense of the beauty of being known.

**FRANCES CONNORS '26 (MARYFRANCESCONNORS@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS EXCITED TO BECOME A TRUE REGULAR IN A PARISIAN CAFÉ.**

**GRAPHIC BY SOPHIA RASCOFF '27**



# Beyond the Headlines: The Real Costs of Slashing USAID Funding

How slashing foreign aid endangers the world's most vulnerable populations.

BY NASHLA TURCIOS '28

On Jan. 20, President Donald Trump announced that his administration would cut over 90% of the U.S. Agency for International Development's foreign aid contracts and reduce overall U.S. assistance worldwide by \$60 billion. Since then, headlines have captured the widespread shock among international development agencies, as many critical programs face funding cuts, directly impacting those who rely on them for essential needs.

While critics of the agency have dismissed USAID as corrupt and ineffective, their arguments overlook the crucial role USAID's funding has played in supporting local development initiatives, particularly those focused on delivering healthcare and economic relief to impoverished communities abroad. By slashing funding, thousands of lives will be lost, democratic institutions abroad will be undermined, and the challenges these programs aim to combat will worsen, likely leading to increased migration to the U.S.

During this spring break, my visit to Honduras made the USAID's impact feel strikingly real. Witnessing firsthand how it supports communities already grappling with economic hardship—compounded by the instability of civil unrest—was truly eye-opening.

When I entered a rural hospital just a few miles away from San Pedro Sula, the country's industrial capital, shortly after it had been directly affected by the program's funding cuts, I was struck by the stark image of pregnant women sitting on the floor, sweating as they waited for care. Walking down a corridor lined with patients whose faces bore the weight of desperation, I couldn't help but fear how much severe conditions might worsen under the burden of these new financial constraints.

In a conversation with the hospital's managing director, Mayra Flores, she revealed that several operations had been canceled the previous week due to a lack of surgical supplies and basic equipment. With the recent funding cuts, she feared this would become a routine crisis. She also emphasized the program's vital role in providing HIV services to low-income individuals, many of whom had already been turned away in the past week after the clinic announced its newly limited resources.

For decades, Honduras has suffered from weak governmental structures and rampant

corruption, with much of the funding intended for infrastructure and healthcare failing to reach its intended destination. As a result, many local hospitals depend on foreign aid to sustain their daily operations.

The human impact of these cuts became painfully clear when I sat next to a patient who was leaving the hospital after being denied her usual HIV treatment after the program was temporarily paused. Carrying a baby in one arm and medical paperwork in the other, her gaze filled with intense worry. She told me how the program had been a lifeline for her after contracting HIV when she was assaulted while leaving her night shift job on her way home to her daughter.

She then reflected on the challenges of living in a gang-controlled area, where sexual violence against women is widespread, and seeking justice through the legal system is largely futile. As a result, many women depend on non-governmental organizations conducting on-the-ground work to support victims of domestic violence.

"This was never my choice," she said, her voice strained. "But having help from the hospital gave me the certainty that I could remain healthy to ensure my daughter is well."

USAID's impact extends beyond healthcare, supporting organizations dedicated to combating government corruption—one of the primary drivers of immigration to the United States from Central America in recent years.

In a conversation with an employee at the Consejo Nacional Anticorrupción (National Anti-Corruption Council), who requested to remain anonymous, it was revealed that the organization would play a critical role in ensuring fair presidential elections later this year. However, with the announcement of new funding cuts, accomplishing this mission will become even more difficult.

"Our work is to protect the little democracy we have left. I'm not sure this country can withstand another fraudulent election," he said. "Without foreign aid, it's difficult to sustain the programs that keep our organization functioning."

The Trump administration has heavily criticized the surge of immigration from

various Latin American regions, as well as the rise in political asylum applications. However, when the very organizations working on the ground to address the root causes driving mass migration to the United States are facing severe cuts, it's hard to see how this will effectively reduce immigration. If the Trump administration aims to reduce immigration, it should focus on investing in organizations that tackle the root causes of migration, rather than undermining their efforts by cutting their funding. The characterization of U.S. foreign aid as wasteful is unsettling. It reduces investment in key human rights—healthcare, safety, and good governance—to something seen as a burden.

Concerns about USAID's effectiveness often center on allegations of misused funds, with critics arguing that its results do not justify high financial investment. Nevertheless, much of the funding has supported non-governmental and non-partisan organizations that deliver crucial support to vulnerable populations.

The decision to cut funding for life-changing programs worldwide, coming from Washington, may go unnoticed by U.S. residents who believe foreign aid is wasteful. But it will not go unnoticed by the mother whose health is now permanently at risk, by her daughter, who, if targeted by organized crime groups, will lose access to critical legal aid programs for low-income communities, or by the young boy, like so many others, who will be forced to flee his home with an empty stomach as economic insecurity deepens in his country.

The question we must ask ourselves is not just whether the world can afford to turn its back on those in need, but what must be done to ensure it doesn't. Rather than slashing funding, the U.S. government should reconsider its approach to foreign aid—prioritizing reforms that enhance transparency and effectiveness rather than eliminating programs that serve as lifelines.

**NASHLA TURCIOS '28**  
([NASHLATURCIOS@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU](mailto:NASHLATURCIOS@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU)) WRITES FORUM FOR THE *HARVARD INDEPENDENT*.

GRAPHIC BY MADISON KRUG '27



# Abreast on Abroad: Letter Three

How Sadie Kargman is cosplaying as Kim Kardashian with Parisian Robbery Rendez-vous.

BY SADIE KARGMAN '26

**H**ey chicas,  
Happy Spring to those who celebrate, and happy *it's-still-fifty-degrees* to those already wearing jorts.

In this week's letter, I tell a rather sad tale—with an optimistic, dare I say even happy, ending.

When I first came to Paris, I aspired to be a little more Jane Birkin and a little less Emily-in-Paris. While packing, I imagined myself picking up French slang or perhaps even a cigarette addiction (just kidding, Mom!). But as they say, you can't tell God your plans... and so, I've compromised somewhere in the middle: Kim Kardashian cosplay.

My mom's side of the family is French. No, it's not my first language. No, we didn't speak it at home. No, I don't introduce myself as French, nor do I have the French flag in my bio (#shade). But since living in Paris, my French has improved exponentially—I can confidently speak, navigate, and hold my own with the language.

Still, when I think of fluency—the kind people flex on LinkedIn or resumes—I define it as the ability to converse about complex or difficult topics with ease. This is all to say, I will never call myself fluent. But if that's your definition of fluency, I should be pretty close.

A ripe month and eleven days into my Parisian adventure, I received a strange text from one of my roommates, Bianca. My other roommate, Remi, and I were away for the weekend; however, Bianca wondered if we had gone into her room and messed it up. 'You're crazy!' we told her. Full gaslight in hindsight—our bad, Bianca.

That following Sunday, Remi returned from her weekend getaway and found her room in disarray as well. After a quick glance around and a run to my room, the reality set in: someone had broken in.

We'd been *robbed*.

See the Kim K connection now?

Suitcases were strewn across the beds, cosmetics had been spilled everywhere, and clothes were all over the floor. As someone with a strict *no street clothes on the bed* rule, this was nothing short of horrific.

My roommates, *bless their hearts*, immediately FaceTimed me to confirm that my valuables, too, had all been stolen.

Where was I, you might ask? Oslo.

That poor city did *not* deserve the angsty review I gave her.

While my roommates called the police, I called my parents, feeling utterly stranded and helpless in the Nordic sea—*great for the plot, terrible for my sanity*. In the meantime, a full hazmat and forensics team descended upon the apartment, only to take a single, inconclusive fingerprint from a miscellaneous glass. These criminals were *good*.

Good *taste*, that is. Despite the absolute MESS left in the robber's wake, they took only very very specific items, even leaving behind my lipgloss and wallet. King knows what a pain it is to get a new credit card.

After kissing the tarmac at Charles de Gaulle Airport, I found myself at the police station giving my victim statement. As if Remy the Rat, himself, was under my hat, my French was *Chef's kiss* that day. I described the layout of the apartment, the lace design of my stolen cuff bracelet, and how they weirdly left the lip oil—in my head, I definitely had the effortless French *je ne sais quoi* down.

That is, until the officer asked if anyone suspicious had been in or around my apartment in the weeks prior.

And suddenly, it clicked.

Exactly a week before the break-in, I had been asleep around 2 p.m.—*we listen and we don't judge*—when a man entered my apartment. And then my *bedroom*. He claimed to be maintenance from our rental company. I yelped, shot out of bed, and forcefully asked him to leave, which he did—swiftly and, dare I say, respectfully.

Even though I had not asked for maintenance, I *wrongfully* assumed one of my roommates did, as we had previously had issues with a shower. In addition, *this strange man had his own key*.

Shockingly, *after* I had been robbed, I realized this man in my apartment *exactly* a week prior was no coincidence #SherlockHolmes #EmmaRoberts'sNancyDrew. After conveying this information to the officer, we then contacted the agency, who confirmed there was no scheduled maintenance supposed to be done that day.

Sweet.

Not only did the thief steal all my belongings, but they also had a key to my apartment—*charming*, to say the least.

Despite all this unsettling news, no one was home at the time of the robbery, and my roommates and I are all safe.

On a serious note, we are very, truly, #blessed. The stuff that was stolen is just *stuff*. It's been easy to keep perspective, especially in light of the devastation happening elsewhere—entire homes reduced to ashes in California wildfires, wars raging across the world. Ultimately, all material things are replaceable and locks are changeable.

Yes, I cried a little for some of the more sentimental items I lost—I'm human and #JustAGirl, after all—but ultimately, I know I am *so* lucky considering what happened and *how*.

Kim K, for instance, didn't get the luxury of walking away unscathed. She was blindfolded and tied up in her five-star hotel room. It's one thing to take that ice-skating-rink-sized diamond, but I can't even fathom the emotional trauma she endured.

So, was this a learning lesson? Absolutely. Am I now at peace with it? *Absolutely not*. I'm still pissed about my borderline-ugly childhood charm bracelet!

But in the end, that's not even what truly matters.

What does matter is that I'm safe, feeling more prepared for the unexpected, and, as a bonus, now fluent in robbery and criminal lingo in French. Plus, this robbed-in-Paris-unscathed #ForThePlot moment will definitely be in my biopic.

I hope you all *reveled* in my misfortune and enjoyed this week's letter of *Abreast on Abroad*. Look out for my next piece: *Travel Diary Dump*.

Bisous,  
Sadie

**SADIE KARGMAN '26 (SADIEKARGMAN@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS CURRENTLY STARRING AS YOUR FAVORITE SHITSTAIN IN PARIS.**

GRAPHIC BY EL RICHARDS '26



# Semicolons

Breaking the silence on a universal taboo.

BY ANONYMOUS

**Editors' note: this narrative contains graphic depictions of suicide and self-harm that could be triggering for some individuals. If you are having thoughts of suicide, or are concerned that someone you know may be, please reach out to the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline by calling or texting 988, or text HOME to 741741 for support. Additional resources are available here. Reader discretion is advised.**

3 5,876 feet. The deepest known part of the ocean. And a trench I had been drowning in for months, as the tides of my subconscious steadily pulled me under until my metaphorical asphyxiation was inching toward an attainable reality. It was getting harder and harder to breathe.

I felt my thoughts trying to escape, attempting to materialize into words that could cry for help in my anger and fear that I would lose to the desires born in the profundities of my muddled mind one night on my common room couch.

Instead, I was reminded I was alone. Alone in my hopelessness. Alone in the fight between my life and death's seemingly sweet freedom.

I'm no stranger to this dilemma, this heavily stigmatized pursuit of liberation from constant everyday suffering. College didn't leave me toeing this crag, wondering how close I could get to the edge before the sediment beneath me gave out, crumbling down the ravine, taking my body with it. Rather, I was abandoned on these rocks years ago.

Thirteen. I sat criss-crossed on the rough-textured carpet of my bedroom, staring at my flushed face in the mirror just four feet away. *There's nothing here for me. No one is here for me.*

I thought about letting death slowly suffocate me, a dark vignette subsuming my vision. Would my blood vessels constrict or my skin shrivel until I was nothing more than a shred of a soul abandoned?

Before I could answer, the front door lock turned. The

sounds of high heels, loafers, and rustling pea coats echoed down the hallway and slipped under the crack of my door. No time now. I brushed the tears away, spun into my desk chair, and resumed my calculus homework.

"How was your evening?" my mother asked dryly as she walked into my room seconds later, the scent of Barberesco lingering on her breath.

"Oh, just worked. The usual," I responded with a smile, swallowing the lump in my throat. *Thank god for their perfect child.*

She nodded in satisfaction and walked out, leaving behind a trail of Byredo Mojave Ghost. My eyes lingered on the spot where I had just been sitting. I turned back to my homework. *I never would have actually done it.*

I'd never actually do it.

Fourteen. I lay on the limestone of the foyer, tears slipping from my eyes and down my ears as my father's voice shattered my being.

"You're just like your mother." Words that cut deeper than anyone outside our home could fathom, their implications understood all too well. The ripples of my self-deprecation turned to crashing waves, pulling my frail body into the rough coral below, scraping my already weakened skin. How could he insinuate I was like the very person I had vowed never to become?

"Stop. Please. Please stop," I begged between sobs. *If I'm just like her, then I deserve nothing.*

"Just like her," he scoffed. His indifference to his hurting child only deepened my apathy for my own life. His footsteps receded as he left me in a puddle of despair and headed upstairs.

I recalled the keen paring blade, the serrated bread cutter, the honed edge of the nakiri. I lay on the floor for hours, my thoughts oscillating.

By 3 a.m., the house was quiet. The steady stream of cars outside the dining room window, whose headlights had illuminated my limp arms and legs as

they passed, had dissipated. The once cool floor was now warm from my body heat. Suddenly, the world felt peaceful. I was numb, but *it's all going to be fine.*

I'd never actually do it.

Sixteen. 5,303 miles weren't enough to escape these feelings.

Isolated with my toxic family in the Mediterranean, caught between bruschetta and osso buco, the waves of impulses were stronger than ever. *Nothing I do is good enough. I'm no one special. No one wants me.* I wondered whether the weight of the ocean or a bathtub was best to swallow me whole. *Would my parents regret their years of loathing if their morning coffee was accompanied by my lifeless body? Or would I just float, unnoticed?*

After dinner, I went on a walk alone: across the property, back to our villa, and a few circles around the pool. But even as I stood there, gazing at the enticing embrace of vermiculite and Portland cement, a part of me recoiled, a whisper of doubt remained. *Not today. Not like this.*

I'd never actually do it.

Eighteen. The thoughts left for a few months—from January to August, before starting college, I had hoped that everything would get better. But after heavy familial expectations of excellence left me still feeling unworthy, the darkness returned.

The week before Thanksgiving. Olivia Rodrigo's "enough for you" on loop, the lyrics lacerating my chest. I walked from the Yard to the Charles, each step heavier than the last, thinking I could jump, and it would all be over. Let the mud of the riverbed swell up and absorb me like a sponge does water.

I only made it to the crosswalk before Memorial Drive—the corner of Dunster and Leverett House. I couldn't step further. I was afraid of what I was capable of. *You're a coward if you jump. You're a coward if, after all this time, you don't.*

The walk back to the Yard was harsh in its silence. My AirPods sat loose in my left jacket pocket as I swung the keyring of the empty case around my finger. The hum of car engines, the ringing of graduate student bicycle bells as they crossed the Charles, and the faint conversations of passersby tethered me to earth rather than life after.

I spent the rest of the night making small talk and laughing with my roommate—a whirlwind of BerryLine mochi, abandoned essay drafts, and the latest campus gossip—a surface-level charade to conceal my internal tumult, the tsunami of individual pain and darkness.

“Goodnight,” we both said.

I’d never actually do it.

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Three months later. I was ready to truly let myself finally sink into the soft sand of death’s welcoming waters, eagerly awaiting my arrival.

I planned the perfect day—the perfect last 12 hours.

Avocado toast with an over-easy egg and raspberry balsamic vinaigrette to start my morning. Lunch with my childhood best friend, followed by bundt cakes and French pastry making. Finally, an evening of lemon drop tea and “The Polar Express,” each ready to offer one last glimpse of life’s warmth as edibles dissolved into my bloodstream. A comforting 90 minutes.

But I ended up falling asleep just as the locomotive sped down Glacier Gulch.

When I woke, it was 4 a.m. The screen that had been playing the movie hours earlier was now black. *It’s too late now. I’m too tired.*

I made my way from the living room to my parents’ bed and spent the rest of the night nestled between them. Even though they rarely gave me the comfort I needed, in this moment of ultimate weakness, I reverted to my childlike dependency. I was scared to be alone with myself—with my thoughts.

Because I really would have done it. I really was going to do it, and that was more terrifying than life itself.

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Twenty. I’m doing better now. But sometimes, I still ask myself: if everything could be over in a second, would I do it?

Some mornings, as my hand reaches for the prescribed Lexapro on my skincare turnstile, my thoughts flicker. I could skip my 20mg, let the medicine slowly trickle out of my system, and allow my emotions to consume me completely. Will the sound of the ocean that echoes in the back of my head eventually flood my brain until I hear nothing but emptiness?

;

Twenty. I still refuse to divulge the true trauma of my past to those in my life. I’m afraid

of what they might think of me or do after learning of my history. *Who wants someone like that in*

*their life?* And I know it’s unfair to burden someone with such a mess, especially one still being cleaned.

Still, I’ve reached out a few times to the people I trust most, though only with seemingly shallower worries: an inclination to drop out of college, an inability—yet lingering desire—to forgive the people who gave me life, or feelings of profound loneliness. I’m often met with disbelief—some variation of the same overarching responses: “But everything seems perfect,” “How does this happen every few months?” or “You’ll be fine.”

But what they, and most, don’t understand is that this pain often endures in silence, buried within those you least expect. The stigma surrounding these conversations leaves so many feeling alone in their fight, afraid to admit to thoughts of self-harm.

Over the past five years, I have lost two friends to suicide and watched my roommates mourn loved ones who were similarly bested by their battles with mental health. Every time I read a campus announcement with hollow condolences or see an Instagram post filled with perfect memories, I can’t help but wonder—if these conversations weren’t so taboo, would we still have some of those lives with us today?

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Ultimately, while I believe there is strength in navigating this journey quietly, in solitude—strength in wanting to learn

and live through it internally—there is also considerable power in admitting the need for help. Sometimes, acknowledging internal agony is the first step toward remembering that life still has something to offer, even when it seems like it doesn’t. More importantly, it’s the silence

surrounding this epidemic that leaves so many floundering in the seas of despair until the weight on their chest becomes too heavy,

submerging their fragile souls.

This narrative is my way of loosening the constraints of societal conventions

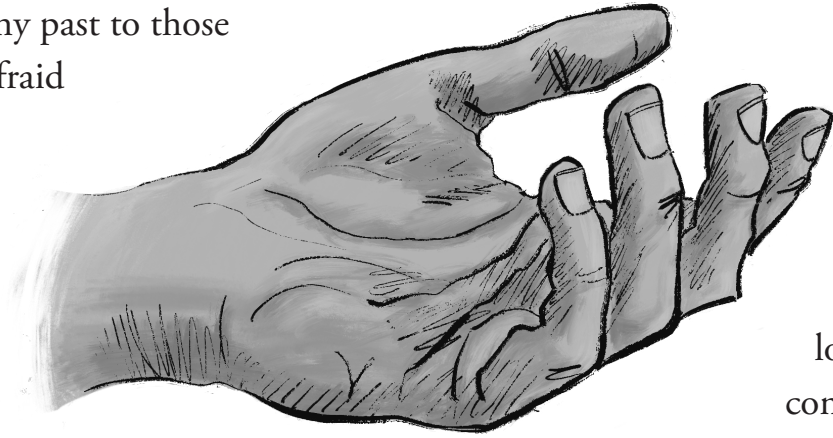
for the sake of others. Not that my struggles should be taken as a form of assurance, but rather as a gesture of solidarity—a reason to keep pushing forward. The semicolon symbolizes resilience, a reminder that anyone can overcome.

As I reflect—both in this piece and in my daily fight against the now-dormant demons that once crucified my mental health—I remind myself of how far I’ve come, how long I’ve resisted those impulses because of a faint pull to survive. I remind myself that there is more beyond my home, more beyond this campus, more that I have yet to discover. And while I exist in anticipation, it is the smallest moments—dinners with friends, time spent composing my thoughts alone, even the excitement of new clothes—that guide me to another day. The big things, the littlest things—they all matter.

Holding on isn’t about never having those urges again—it’s about believing there is always more waiting to be lived and letting such conceptions fuel the desire to persist.

**WRITTEN ANONYMOUSLY FOR  
THE INDEPENDENT.**

**GRAPHIC BY MADISON KRUG '27**



# Harvard's Very Own Battle of the Bands

Student performers brawl it out for their chance to perform at Yardfest 2025.

BY SIDNEY REGELBRUGGE '28

Though Harvard is known for its academic excellence, students have proven their talents span across disciplines. For one, there are many skilled student musical groups on campus, and each spring, they come to the stage at Harvard's annual Battle for Yardfest. Yardfest is a concert hosted by Harvard's College Events Board where student performers showcase their talents before the celebrity artist takes the stage. This year, 2000s pop sensation Natasha Bedingfield, known for her hits like "Unwritten" and "Pocketful of Sunshine," will headline Yardfest. In preparation for Yardfest, CEB hosts the "Battle for Yardfest," which determines who the student openers will be at the show. Students piled into Sanders Theatre on Feb. 29 for the event, eager to hear student performers audition for their place at Yardfest. With a total of ten acts, only three groups could emerge on top.

The energy in the room was electric as 162 attendees crowded around to hear their peers perform. The mixture of music genres was nothing short of eclectic. Groups would vie to be crowned victorious in one of three categories: the CEB Art and Entertainment's Vote, the Judges' Vote, or the Audience's Vote. The winners were revealed just days after the concert: "Yard Bops" was chosen as the CEB's Art and Entertainment Vote; "STRYK9" received the Judge's Vote; and "Big Tuesday" earned the Audience Vote.

These groups were no strangers to the Battle for Yardfest stage. All three bands had previously competed in the competition, but had yet to earn bids to the show. Their undeniable perseverance and musical talent shone through their performances, laying the foundation for their eventual triumph.

Each group brought a distinct vibe and feel to the stage, performing a myriad of songs

from different genres and time periods. "Yard Bops" performed a mash-up of Paramore's "Ain't It Fun" and "Superstition" by Stevie Wonder. "I don't think I could pick a favorite artist, but I could list some of the musicians that inspire the music we make in the Yard Bops: Stevie Wonder, Earth, Wind, and Fire, Gloria Gaynor, Cory Wong, Lawrence, and Couch," explained Yard Bops member Matthew Chen '26 in an interview with the Harvard Independent.

The recipients of the Audience Vote, "Big Tuesday," performed two songs: "Animal" by Neon Trees and "Read My Mind" by the Killers. Milo Taylor '25 from "Big Tuesday" opened up to the Independent about his nerves during the concert.

"It's always a bit nerve-racking going on stage in front of a large crowd. Just trusting our preparation and staying positive helps," Taylor said. "Also being on stage with the other four guys makes everything so much easier." Camaraderie and practice are crucial aspects for these groups to maintain their composure and confidence when performing on stage. Even under the pressure of live performance, their tight-knit bond and preparation was evident, allowing both the bands and the audience members to have fun with the night.

The final group, "STRYK9," performed two more obscure songs, "Cumdumpster" by Jack Off Jill and "Yes It's Fucking Political" by Skunk Anansie. In between the two songs, the group also engaged in a "No Trump Chant," an homage which originated from the band

Green Day.

Sierra Stocker '25 from "STRYK9" expressed confidence as she prepared to take the stage with her group, a crucial quality for embracing the creative risks in their performance. "I don't really get stage fright. We felt pretty comfortable since it was only a six-minute set, and we'd rehearsed those songs many times before. Sometimes there are a bit of nerves just because we all have high expectations for ourselves, but hanging out backstage with bandmates helps

turn that energy into excitement," she said.

So, what can students expect from Yardfest this year? "Music that will make you want to dance," Chen promised. "Expect a high-energy performance!" And what about

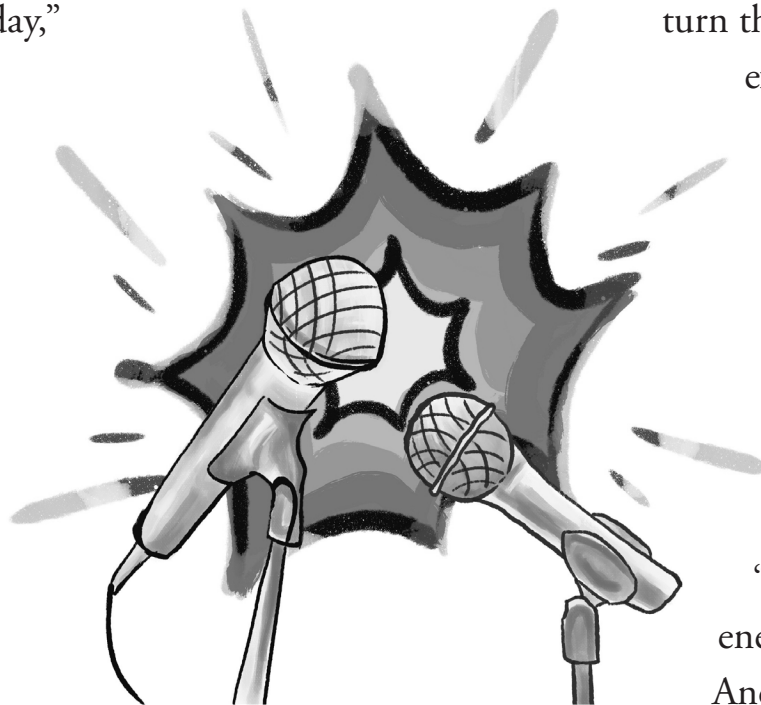
the possibility of cool costumes? "You'll have to come watch to find out!" Taylor said.

Stocker from "STRYK9" promised the group outfits "will disappoint [their] parents." "Alan Garber may want to wear earplugs once we get onstage," she added.

With assurances like these, one can only imagine the energy that these three bands will bring to Yardfest this spring. As Harvard College makes its way to Tercentenary Theatre on April 6, there is no doubt that the performances of "Yard Bops," "Big Tuesday," and "STRYK9" will cause students to dance the night away.

**SIDNEY REGELBRUGGE '28  
(SIDNEYREGELBRUGGE@COLLEGE.  
HARVARD.EDU) IS ALREADY  
PREPARING HER YARDFEST  
OUTFIT.**

**GRAPHIC BY ANNA SHAO '28**



# “I've Never Seen Skin Aging Reversed This Quickly”

- *Leading Dermatologist Shares New Breakthrough*

By Sarah Lindström - March 20th 2025, Boston

Dermatologists worldwide were astonished last month when a previously obscure skincare solution, known as Frøya Organics, dramatically reversed visible signs of aging within days. Participants in recent studies reported promising results—wrinkles vanished, dark circles disappeared, and deep-set lines known as "crow's feet" and "11s" seemed to erase overnight.

"Initially, even experts were skeptical," confessed Dr. Sanober Doctor, MD, a double US Board Certified Dermatologist and renowned anti-aging expert. "But the outcomes defied all expectations. Aging markers typically resistant to treatment—wrinkles, dark circles, even persistent crow's feet—were notably diminished, often after just one application." One participant reported seeing five years of visible aging reversed in only five days.

In fact, multiple subjects observed dramatic improvements within hours, describing their skin as "refreshed," "brighter," and "remarkably youthful."

## **Dramatic Results in Less Than 24 Hours**

The treatment's extraordinary potency is derived from a unique combination of Arctic herbs and beeswax—ingredients now scientifically validated to rapidly repair damaged skin barriers and rejuvenate at the cellular level. While most skincare products promise gradual results, 92% of study participants reported significant visible improvements within the first night.

Even seasoned dermatologists noted immediate transformations: "We saw dramatic results overnight," Dr. Sanober Doctor confirmed. Even more astonishing was that aging markers on several subjects showed reversal equivalent to "five years younger skin in just five days."

## **Confirmed by Thousands Worldwide**

Developed after years of research, the innovative Frøya Organics formula has captivated over 100,000 users globally, each reporting dramatic skin transformations. "My skin looked younger, firmer, almost overnight. Friends kept asking me what procedure I'd done," said Alice Brennan, an early Frøya user.

They have mainly been sold in Europe and the US so far. Being from Norway they source their raw materials there and ship these arctic ingredients into the US where they are mixed in Philadelphia before they are sent to US customers.

Recently, due to popular demand, they have opened for sale in Australia and are expected to become available also for Asian customers in 2025.



# Technically Speaking

A new exhibit at the Harvard Art Museums highlights Edvard Munch's works and innovative techniques.

BY MIA TAVARES '27 AND AUGUST HACHMEISTER

**C**On a brisk Friday afternoon, after exiting Harvard Yard, we had the opportunity to see the Harvard Art Museums' new exhibit, "Edvard Munch: Technically Speaking," on its opening day. The experience felt like more than a casual weekend stroll through a gallery; it was a journey through a man's fractured and perhaps disturbed psyche, stretched out in brushstrokes and anguish.

Walking into the exhibit, we stepped into Munch's mind. Though absent in body, Munch was present in spirit. We engaged with the more than 70 mixed-media print and painted works from his lifelong artistic engagement with the uncanny. Curated in large part thanks to a gift from the collection of Philip A. and Lynn G. Straus, the works were hung alongside the original woodcuts and carved print blocks Munch used to reproduce his prints. It was apparent quickly that his most famous piece, "The Scream," an iconic portrayal of pure, unfiltered panic, was not the only work by Munch that deserves attention.

A particularly eye-catching piece was the haunting silhouette of "Two Human Beings (The Lonely Ones)." The work, placed at the very center of one of the rooms, drew a crowd of onlookers, all craning their necks to catch a glimpse of isolation made manifest. Around them hung variations of lithographs, woodblocks, and sketches of the same image born and reborn, each ghostly scene crafted by Munch's fevered hand—no two prints were created exactly the same. The mood was palpable: silent, eerie, and magnetic, drawing in the souls who came to gaze into the abyss of Munch's inner workings. With each piece, we stared into an adjacent reality.

Before the exhibit opened, however, the pieces underwent a restoration process that combined traditional conservation practices like varnish removal with more investigative technical examinations to uncover the methods behind Munch's exceptional

production. In an interview with the *Harvard Independent*, Kate Smith, Senior Conservator of Paintings and Head of Paintings Lab, Ellen Davis, Associate Paintings Conservator, and Abby Schleicher, Assistant Paper Conservator, spoke about their experience working with the extensive collection.



Many of the gifted works combine print and paint—Munch showed no restraint in blending various artistic techniques and working across mediums. For the conservators, this meant frequent communication between the print and paint teams and considerable technical analysis. This analysis involved procedures ranging from microscopic investigation to fiber identification to parse out Munch's creative process.

The technical exams answered open questions not just about Munch's techniques but also about the materials he used. According to Schleicher, thanks to scientific examination, they found that Munch "is using very contemporary materials...like very new pigments that are being developed during his lifetime, and papers that are being developed during his lifetime. So it's like he's very experimental, and I think that speaks to him as an artist."

For Davis, the restoration process led to an entirely new viewing experience for Munch's painting "Winter in Kragerø."

"It's a painting that's always on view at the museums and everyone knew so well, or thought they knew so well, but after cleaning it just before the opening of the show, [we found that] it's just almost a completely different painting than what we had gotten to know so well before," she said. "The purples and the blues and the greens are just almost psychedelic, compared to the gray, snowy day that we were so familiar with."

When we first viewed "Winter in Kragerø," we were taken aback by the vibrance of the colors and how it completely changed our interpretation of

the frosty scene. The pale white snow that blankets the picture looked practically eternal. The colors felt ghostly, with pale blues and whites composing a threshold of liminal space; yet everything in Munch's created world was lucid.

The rest of the exhibit proved just as enlightening. Presenting multiple distinct iterations of various pieces, the exhibit called the meaning of "finality" into question—Munch was more an experimentalist than a perfectionist. Ten tangibly different versions of "Two Human Beings (The Lonely Ones)" were displayed next to the single fundamental wooden print block that birthed them. We gazed upon the depressed form of eleven duplicate figures, all "Melancholy." Regardless of Munch's iterative process, each piece stood as a complete work in its own right. There were no perfect "final" versions.

"Edvard Munch: Technically Speaking" is more than just a groundbreaking exhibition—it is a posthumous exploration and celebration of man's mad brilliance, a window into the mind of a long-gone artist. The exhibit sheds light upon the process behind the paintings—Munch's psyche laid bare for all to see as he experimented with complex print techniques.

Adding this exhibit to the HAM's extensive history of high-quality exhibits has been an exciting new development for Smith. "We're a Munch place now, which is cool...it's an identity piece now for us," she said. Expanding their Munch collection has allowed the HAM to provide insight into his iterative prints for many more people.

"I'm really so happy for us that we have that to offer people now," said Smith.

The exhibit will remain on display March 7–July 27, in the Special Exhibitions Gallery on Level 3 of the Harvard Art Museums.

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AND AUGUST HACHMEISTER  
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**GRAPHIC BY NESHAMA RYMAN '28**



# Ode To The Residents of the Charles River

This is dedicated to the ducks.

BY SIDNEY REGELBRUGGE '28

I walk along the river, wondering how the great poets claimed to love and how I might write this unordinary love letter. The idea of mimicking Shakespeare seems futile and unprepared. My mind momentarily errs as if to stop my aimless wandering, meeting me with a moment of clarity. Suddenly, I no longer remember where I am. The breeze is chilling, ever-moving, and dragging me to the cement. As my torso presses against the cold wall of the bridge, my face peers over. The water, unclear and unable to provide me with a reflection of my face, instead shows me a path not chosen.

The Charles River is akin to an old flame that has since died out—with potential clarity and safety, yet covered by murky dirt lining the top. Beneath me, two ducks floated peacefully on the river. Their bodies occasionally knock against one another. The facade I present, calm and unbothered, mimics the ducks floating—ever-changing and consistently following a path that might not be my own. The creatures follow the stream, never fully knowing where the current will lead them. Are the ducks fated together? It all seems so still, so foolish, to spend hours grasping for perfection, tired eyes pouring over texts, the words jumbling together.

Is this journey what I am meant for? Is this all we can have? Have we strayed so far from our humanity, that we forget to smile at the person across from

us, their path momentarily intersecting with mine, as our feet shuffled to the end of the crosswalk; one going and one leaving?

The ducks in the river know nothing of p-sets and internship applications; nothing of grad school worries and foolish insecurities. They simply float, letting the river take them, the current uncontrollable but pleasant. Have they mastered mindfulness? Have we lost ours? My heart thumps as I begin to question moments of joy and childhood.



Is it possible we have forgotten how to laugh with ease and read for pleasure? How to love because it feels good and not because it is right? To hold another's hand in my own, and not wonder if he is the one. To simply love without the expectation of forever. How to chase after what we want and not what others tell us? Have we lost our dreaming souls? My mind asks me, as it swims with nonsensical sentences, to describe the ducks beneath me, creating foolish statements strung together with too many adjectives.

In this moment of reflection, my eyes close, and I face the clouded

waters, feeling the breeze tangle and whip my hair. My eyes see nothing, concealed by my tired lids. My mouth has closed, its senseless words ceasing. I can smell nothing but the end of the cold of winter and the start of spring, and I hear nothing but the ducks beneath me, quietly floating. For the first time in a while, I feel my lungs expanding. My chest rises as if matching the rhythm of the creatures below me. How can I begin to express this feeling of peace? I no longer worry about things

beyond my control as I breathe the winter air. Now, my reflection is complete. My quiet mind, a blank slate upon which to write this offering of love.

How I love you, Charles, for your murky surface which reminds me that perfection is not needed, and no matter how stagnant

I stand, there is still motion within me. How I love you, Charles, for the life you carry easily upon your back, coasting families of ducklings to and fro. How I love you, Charles, for reminding me that the world continues around me, and I best make use of my time and start to move with it. Both masses flowed with the conviction of understanding that it just might all be okay.

**SIDNEY REGELBRUGGE '28 (SIDNEYREGELBRUGGE@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) CAN BE FOUND WATCHING THE DUCKS AND WRITING POETIC NONSENSE.**

**GRAPHIC BY AMELIE LIMA '27**

# From Studio to Showcase

The Office for the Arts is hosting its first-ever student artwork gallery this weekend.

BY LAYLA CHAARAOUI '26

From March 28 to March 30, about 20 Harvard students will display more than 50 original artworks, including photography, watercolors, acrylics, ceramics, basket weaving, and other mediums, at Harvard's Office for the Arts Student Art Gallery. This pop-up exhibition in the main OFA offices will showcase artwork from both undergraduate and graduate students, celebrating the incredible talent across Harvard's campus.

The gallery will feature student art made individually or through a variety of on-campus programs, including the OFA Ceramics Studio and creations from the Department of Art, Film, and Visual Studies. It also features art created through the OFA Visual Arts in the Houses initiative, which has brought over 40 workshops this year to student residences, including pottery studios, in the Houses. "Harvard's Houses offer unique artmaking experiences that support expression and connection among undergraduates," the OFA website explains.

Co-chairs of the gallery project, Katherrin Billordo '26 and Eli Johnson-Visio '26, said that

the exhibit came to life through dedicated efforts to champion spaces that promote art. "We have been advocating for spaces to display our art, and I'm glad the OFA is acting on this through the OFA Student Ambassadors Program," Johnson-Visio said in an interview with the *Harvard Independent*.

Johnson-Visio, also one of the tri-chairs of the OFA Ambassadors Program, explained that the cohort identified a need for space on campus to promote student art. He teamed up with Billordo to lead the organization of the exhibit. "I was fortunate to support Katherrin as she launched the Harvard x Yale exhibit with funding from the OFA last semester, and this time, the OFA was able to make us paid student workers to lead this initiative. We hope that more students will get involved as a result of this."

The weekend will begin with an opening reception welcoming the artists and featuring special remarks from Brenda Tindal, Chief Campus Curator, from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on March 28. This reception will also feature live music and refreshments and is free and open to the public. The gallery will be open during Friday's opening

ceremony and from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. on March 29 and March 30.

The OFA was founded in 1973 based on the recommendation of the James S. Ackerman Committee on the arts to create a permanent space for art support and extracurriculars on Harvard's campus. Since then, the Office has supported dance programming, theater productions, student arts organizations, student coursework, public workshops, and art creation.

"We are committed to amplifying our students' creativity," said Angelica Durrell, OFA Director of Programs. "Arts is a priority for us at the OFA, and we are proud to be turning our very own headquarters into an art gallery for this weekend."

This exhibit further strengthens the OFA's legacy of uplifting art and creative spaces for Harvard students. The gallery not only showcases the incredible talent of Harvard's student body but also highlights the essential role organizations like the OFA play in supporting student artmaking.

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GRAPHIC BY CLARA LAKE '27



## SPORTS

### How Mad is March, Really?

A closer look at the NCAA Division I basketball tournament.

BY JONAH KARAFIOL '26

Every March, millions of Americans dive into brackets, search for Cinderella stories, and brace for the chaos of the NCAA Division I basketball tournament. Affectionately known as "March Madness," buzzer-beaters, bracket-busters, and No. 15 seeds knocking off Blue Bloods are the heart and soul of the spectacle.

But, let's take a timeout.

Is March really that mad? Or is its fabled mania no more than a myth? To find out, the *Independent* turned to the numbers, running head-to-head comparisons between college basketball's big dance, the NFL playoffs, and the NBA postseason to compare how seeding predicts outcomes in each tournament.

We started by scraping playoff results from 2005–2024 from Sports Reference, building regression models to test how much a team's seed predicts whether they win. The logic is simple: if March Madness is truly unpredictable, then seeding shouldn't matter much. If the NBA and NFL are more orderly, then seeding should be a stronger predictor of success. Here's what we found.

In the NCAA Tournament, seeding matters—a lot. According to our weighted regression of seed win percentage and seed number, each step down the seed ladder (e.g., from a 1-seed to a 2-seed) reduces a team's chance of winning by 4.3 percentage points. That's a huge effect—larger than in the NFL and NBA. And this isn't just statistical noise: the p-value for this effect was a microscopic  $4.765e-09$ , meaning there's essentially zero chance this pattern is due to randomness.

March Madness may feel wild, but on the whole, it's a tournament where David won't be taking down Goliath.



Contrast this with the NFL, where seeding does almost nothing to predict who wins. Our regression shows that a drop of one seed only decreases a team's odds by 0.37 percentage points—a negligible effect with a p-value of 0.8665. The catchphrase "Any Given Sunday" thus rings true: the NFL postseason is full of upsets, with wild card teams frequently making deep runs and Super Bowls often decided by razor-thin margins.

The NBA strikes a balance between these two extremes. Here, each seed drop lowered win probability by 5.6 percentage points, a figure both larger than the NCAA's coefficient and statistically significant ( $p = 0.02$ ). But this makes sense: the NBA's best-of-seven format gives more room for talent to rise to the top. There are fewer upsets when teams have to win four times to advance.

Contrast that with the volatility of March Madness, where one hot shooting night or off-game can change everything. As Fairleigh Dickinson head coach Tobin Anderson famously said after his No. 16-seed squad stunned top-seeded Purdue in 2023: "If we played them 100 times, they'd probably beat us 99 times... But tonight's the one we had to be unique, we had to be unorthodox. We had to make

it tough on them, just be different." If that matchup had been a seven-game series, the Boilermakers would almost certainly have won in five.

To account for the series format, we also examined how seeding affects win percentage in the playoffs. For every seed a favorite fell, their in-series win percentage dropped by 4.5 percentage points ( $p = 0.0007$ )—nearly identical to the 4.3 percentage point drop we found in the NCAA Tournament.

But perhaps we're thinking about madness all wrong—what if we look at the sports betting market instead? Here, March comes out on top. More money is wagered during March than in any other month outside the NFL regular season, including during the NFL and NBA playoffs. In other words, the "madness" might not come from the outcomes—it comes from the obsession, the belief that anything can happen, the way entire workplaces grind to a halt on a Thursday afternoon to stream a 13-seed knocking off a powerhouse.

So, while the Big Dance is chaotic in spirit, it is orderly in structure. Yes, brackets get busted and underdogs rise, but with 63 games played during the tournament, this is inevitable. Top seeds still perform like top seeds, which means winning most of the time—just not all the time. As Fairleigh Dickinson reminded us last year, you only need to win once.

And that once is madness enough.

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GRAPHIC BY AMELIE LIMA '27

# Indy Sportsbook: March Madness Part II

Our picks for who will still be dancing come next week.

BY KATE OLIVER '26

While some chose to spend their last precious days of spring break lying on a beach or battling the Sunday scaries, others were glued to their computer with a multi-view of the NCAA Division I Basketball Tournament, also known as “March Madness.” Thus far, all of our Sportbook picks are still dancing, yet our underdogs have sadly bit the dust. Moving into the Sweet Sixteen, we have a tight competition for which teams will play in men’s and women’s, respectively.

## MEN’S PICKS

For this edition, we are picking our choices for the Final Four. With a record-breaking seven SEC teams left in the tournament, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that we see an all-SEC championship. This year’s Sweet Sixteen has one Cinderella story remaining, with the lowest-ranked team being 10-seeded Arkansas. Despite the more predictable Sweet Sixteen in relation to past years, we expect no reason for all four remaining 1-seeds to prevail in the Final Four.

### South: Auburn University Tigers (+550)

While Ole Miss stunned most bettors with their upset win over Iowa State, we still believe Auburn will emerge from the South to secure their spot in the Final Four. Despite trailing Crieghton at halftime, the Tigers’ defense emerged from the locker room with a renewed vigor that led them to victory. Freshman Tahaad Pettiford had one of his best games yet, scoring over half his points in the second half; he and Chad Baker-Mazara combined for 40 of Auburn’s 82 points. Despite their record, Auburn remains behind all other remaining one-seeds for odds; time will tell if taking a chance on the Tigers will be the best payout of the tournament.

### East: Duke University Blue Devils (+225)

There’s no denying it: Duke has been the dominant force in this year’s tournament. They are the betting favorite, trailing for all of 101 seconds across their first two games. After defeating Baylor by more than a 20-point margin, we have no doubt they will breeze past Arizona. Junior Tyrese Proctor has been on fire this March, scoring a career-high 25 points in the win over Baylor. This was a massive turnaround after going 0 for 10 on 3-pointers at the start of the ACC tournament. Proctor’s performance and consistent play from Cooper Flagg could just be the combination that secures Duke their first NCAA Championship since 2015.

### Midwest: University of Houston Cougars (+500)

Coming off an exciting win over Gonzaga, the Cougars are poised to emerge from the Midwest Region, the only remaining part of the bracket where the one through four seeds are still alive. In their

win, Houston simultaneously ended Gonzaga’s nine-season Sweet 16 streak and became the new record holder with 10 straight appearances. LJ Cryer is on another tear, matching his career-high points during the game. If he can keep his momentum going, Cryer could be the spark to power Houston to San Antonio. Paired with the best-scoring defense in the country, the Cougars cannot be overlooked as a lethal two-way team.

### West: Texas Tech University Red Raiders (+2000)

The Red Raiders have by far the most challenging path to the Final Four, but it is by no means an unrealistic scenario. As the 3-seed, they must first get through the only remaining double-digit seed in the Arkansas Razorbacks. Arkansas upset St. John’s this past weekend, but we believe the Red Raiders will come up short in their Cinderella story. Moving into the Elite Eight, their defense will have to stand tall against the likes of Florida or Maryland. Tech has a hard road ahead of them, but if these odds were to hit, it would be one of the best bets of this tournament.

## WOMEN’S PICKS

Despite Harvard exiting the tournament following a heartbreaking loss to Michigan State, there are still plenty of other teams for Crimson fans to throw their support behind. If fans learned anything from last season, it is that the women’s March Madness bracket can be even more exciting than the men’s: drawing more viewers during last year’s final by more than four million, it could not be clearer that everyone should be watching women’s sports.

### Spokane 1: UCLA Bruins (+650)

The Bruins have thus far enjoyed comfortable margins over their first two opponents, but this is unlikely to be the case moving into the Sweet Sixteen. While their first half against Richmond raised some eyebrows, the Bruins shut down any doubters with a dominant second-half performance. Senior Lauren Betts had a record game, becoming the first Bruin in program history to record a 30-10 in the NCAA tournament. Looking ahead, UCLA will roll past Ole Miss and face the winner of the highly contested match between LSU and NC State. We expect UCLA to emerge victorious and reach the Final Four for the first time in program history.

### Birmingham 1: USC Gamecocks (+225)

The defending National Champions, the Gamecocks, have again found their way into the Sweet Sixteen. Coming off a perfect season in 2023-2024, they are currently 32-3 and are adequately prepared to face

either Duke or UNC after rolling past Maryland. However, they must avoid a disastrous first-half performance like they did against Indiana. The Gamecocks picked it up in the second half and continue to be every oddsmaker’s favorite, but going 10 for 29 is not a recipe for success this weekend. It will be up to the players to keep this from happening again to punch their Final Four ticket.

### Spokane 3: UConn Huskies (+250)

There is no denying the dominance of the UConn Huskies under the leadership of Geno Auriemma. For all their storied history, they have failed in recent years to reach the pinnacle of becoming National Champions. From Paige Bueckers’s play thus far, it is clear this is a chip on her shoulder; Bueckers tied her career high of 34 points in the win over South Dakota State. The team is hungry for more, and we believe they will power past Oklahoma. While it is likely they will face the USC Trojans, Juju Watkins’s injury on Monday night begs the question of who UConn will have to defeat in their path to a title this year.



### Birmingham 3: TCU Horned Frogs (+3000)

While our previous Sportsbook originally had the Horned Frogs down as a wildcard, their performance thus far has been exceptional. For the first time in program history, they are still dancing into the Sweet Sixteen. TCU already beat Notre Dame in November 2024 but will face an uphill battle against the Texas Longhorns in the case that the two meet in the Elite Eight. If their starters can put up an offensive performance similar to that against Louisville, we believe that they have the potential to keep breaking records all the way to the Final Four.

Regardless of which bracket you are following, tune in this weekend for what is guaranteed to be some of the best collegiate basketball this season. Will records be broken, or will each Final Four be a battle of the 1-seeds? You truly never know what will happen, and that is the magic of March Madness.

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

**KATE OLIVER '26 (KOLIVER@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) DOES NOT PERSONALLY PLACE SPORTS BETS PER NCAA REGULATIONS.**

**GRAPHIC BY ANGIE LI '28**

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

# CROSSWORDS, NOT COPS

By Han Nguyen '27  
Design by Clara Lake '27



## ACROSS

1. Kind of rock
4. Japanese volcano
5. Rational
7. Colorize
8. Shifts with price levels, briefly
9. Tach stats
13. A foot wide?
14. Composer Bartok
15. Instance, in France
18. Single-\_\_ tourney
19. FBI employees
21. Moon goddess
23. Quarrel
24. Extension \_\_
25. Wind dir.
26. " \_\_ Miz"

## DOWN

1. Histories
2. Old plane handle
3. Italian granny
6. Bug eyed monsters
9. Insurgency troops
10. Curl, as paint on a wall
11. Sweet-sounding Greek name
12. Flat ocean floor
15. Countermand
16. Early birthday milestone
17. Gawks
20. Transmittable initials?

*Latie Morrison*  
*Clara Lake*