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HARVARD

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INDEPENDENT

The student weekly since 1969

WELT TO OWN



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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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HOLA: A Home Away from Home

A look inside the Harvard Organization for Latin America.

BY JOCELYNE DELGADO '28

Harvard College is home to a wide range of unique student organizations. However, the Harvard Organization for Latin America stands out due to its vibrant combination of culture, connection, and celebration. While many of Harvard's students primarily hear about consulting or networking organizations, HOLA's rich Latin American community makes its presence just as critical for its members. To them, HOLA is not just another acronym amidst HUCG, CBE, WIB, or HFAC—it's a family and, for many students, *un hogar*.

HOLA is a vibrant organization that brings Latin American culture, politics, and community to life. Moreover, it is a support network that allows students of similar Latin American backgrounds to gather together to embrace their roots and uplift each other. To better understand the organization's inner workings, the *Independent* sat down with Outreach Chair Alejandra Conrado '27.

"I feel [the mission] is to create a space where HOLA and American students feel welcomed," she said. "Especially...for those who come from international backgrounds, adjusting to Harvard can be very difficult, and so we want to create a space that is a home far away from home for a lot of students."

While HOLA is centered around Latin American heritage, the organization welcomes all identities. "Really, anyone is welcome to HOLA, if you're generally interested in speaking more Spanish, or engaging with Latin American culture, food, and music," Conrado explained. "It's a space that welcomes everyone, and we hope to spread our culture and create a community full of people that are interesting and celebrate with us."

However, Conrado also noted that HOLA's current membership is mostly international—the transition

from a Latin American region to a new environment in New England can be overwhelming, prompting many of these students to seek familiar environments. HOLA helps students bridge the gap between academia and identity.

Conrado shared this as the reason she joined the organization in the first place.

"I really wanted a space where I could connect with my Latin American heritage and where I could meet other Latin American students here...[and speak] Spanish with them and share parts of my culture," she explained.

Whether it be through a formal with an explosion of reggaeton, bachata, and salsa, or a workshop that serves as a recruitment and information session to help Latinx students with their career trajectories, HOLA prides itself on its versatility.

Conrado shared that one of her favorite events HOLA hosted was an interactive workshop that aims to help accented, non-native English speakers improve their confidence in job interviews. "If you speak predominantly Spanish, maybe doing interviews with an accent can be really hard or stressful," she said. "So we try to alleviate some of that pressure and create a network where people can feel comfortable making steps towards their career."

Despite the positives shared from student members of HOLA, cultural organizations as a whole are at risk under the current presidential administration. The U.S. Department of Education has given schools and universities a new ultimatum: cut DEI programs or lose federal funding.

Despite being a private university, Harvard is not immune to these threats—the University received \$676 million in federal research funding in the last year.

"I feel like...Trump's agenda [is] generally anti-immigration and anti-Latino, and we all are a little worried," Conrado explained. "But honestly, we treat HOLA as a safe space more than anything, and we're always open to talk about if anyone is feeling insecure and if anyone's scared about their future in the University."

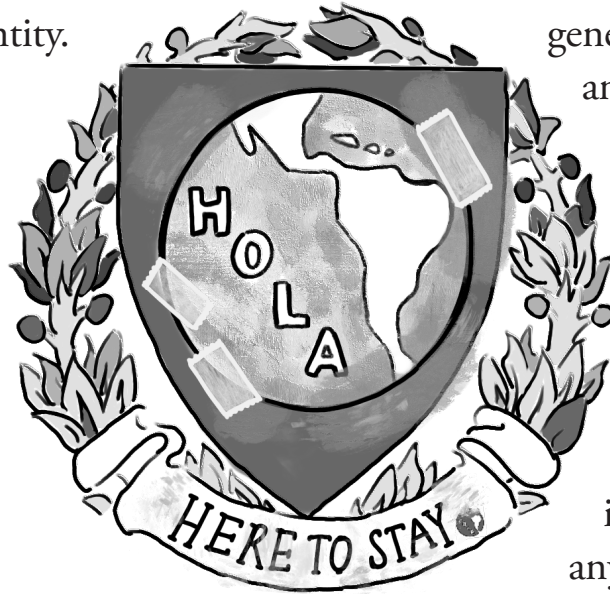
"It's a hard time for a lot of people, and they should feel free to come to any board member...to speak about their struggles and concerns. I think we have fostered a community space that is pretty close to one another, and we have developed that honesty and confidence in each other to really say what we are feeling," Conrado said.

Despite current political pressure, HOLA remains a secure and supportive haven for Latinx students on Harvard's campus. The organization prioritizes open dialogue, mutual trust, and respect in order to create a united community that ensures students never feel isolated or alone in the face of challenges. Conrado emphasizes HOLA's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

"We're trying our best by providing a safe space for people," she said.

**JOCELYNE DELGADO '28
(JIDELGADO@COLLEGE.
HARVARD.EDU) IS READY FOR
THE NEXT HOLA FORMAL.**

GRAPHIC BY ANGIE LI '28



“From the Briefing Room”

Karine Jean-Pierre takes the JFK Jr. Forum stage at Harvard’s Institute of Politics.

BY LAYLA CHAARAOUI '26

In her first public event since leaving Washington this past January, former White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre took the John F. Kennedy Jr. Forum stage on Feb. 26 to discuss the Biden administration, journalism, and democracy. ABC News national political reporter and Spring 2025 IOP Resident Fellow Brittany Shepherd joined Jean-Pierre, as well as Harvard College undergraduate Anoushka Chander '25.

Jean-Pierre previously served as the regional political director for the White House Office of Political Affairs during former President Barack Obama’s first term and was National Deputy Battleground States Director during his 2012 re-election campaign. Her decision to return to the White House—first as a senior advisor, then as principal deputy secretary, and finally as press secretary—was motivated by a belief in the mission and platform of the incoming Biden administration. “It was really important if I was going to come back into the White House, that I believed in what we were trying to do,” she said. “As president, he has to make incredibly difficult decisions.”

As the first Black and openly queer woman to hold this position, Jean-Pierre began her talk by highlighting

the importance of the prior presidential administration. “I would not have made that history or be at the White House in that role if it wasn’t for Joe Biden, who believed in me, who believed I was the best person to help him communicate with the American people,” she said.

“As the White House press secretary...I’m not a policymaker: I am the person who tries to share the message that the president believes is the

“We’ve got to continue to fight for democracy. That includes the freedom of the press.”

- Karine Jean-Pierre

right thing to do on behalf of the American people.”

Though dedicated to advancing diversity in American governance, Jean-Pierre acknowledged the pressure that came with her trailblazing role.

“I represent many communities, so you don’t want to disappoint those communities,” she explained. “I don’t want to disappoint the president... It is very much a lot of pressure, and you just have to learn how to maneuver and manage through that and still show up; not just for everyone else, but for yourself.”

“When you are the first, you don’t want to be the last,” Jean-Pierre continued, echoing advice from former

Vice President Kamala Harris’s mother, Shyamala Gopalan Harris. “You have to overperform, you have to outperform, you have to be better than everybody before you.”

To stay focused, Jean-Pierre avoided reading online comments (calling herself her own harshest critic) and chose to keep the details of her personal life out of the public eye. In a Jan 21. “Vanity Fair” op-ed,

she wrote: “I have kept details about my private life under lock and key. Society doesn’t allow women of color to be vulnerable at work.”

She shared with the Forum audience why she wanted the article to be published the day after she left the White House: “For two and a half years in the job, I couldn’t defend myself,” she said. “I couldn’t talk about what I was going through. Because I couldn’t—it wasn’t about me. If I’m the story, there is a problem.” In her op-ed, she shared the emotional toll of her mother’s cancer and coping with it in secret. “I felt that if I shared that, it would be seen as an excuse.” This testimony highlights the “cooker pressure” job Jean-Pierre held. “Some people have said ‘It’s the hardest job in the White House,’” Jean-Pierre reflected.

“Would you say that?” Shepherd asked. “I’m like, ‘Yes, it is, thank you,’” Jean-Pierre replied.

She also explained the process of disconnecting from the news after leaving the White House. After spending years following the media and dedicating hours each day to preparing for press briefs, Jean-Pierre has not watched the news since President Donald Trump’s inauguration. “I have deprogrammed myself so that I can be a civilian again. I used to wake up at 4:30 in the morning. That was my schedule every day for four years,” she explained.

“I thought that when I stepped away from the lectern and the podium, that I would have this adrenaline—like I would need to feed my need to do something—and I have not missed it at all.”

However, regardless of her relation to the news, Jean-Pierre addressed the growing threat to a free press. President Donald Trump’s administration recently announced plans to determine which reporters and organizations would be granted access to the president, effectively taking control of the White House press pool. Jean-Pierre contrasted this new system against her management of the executive branch’s press. “We took questions not just from the mainstream media: we took questions from nontraditional media, right-leaning media. We took questions from them, and we didn’t shy away from that, because it was important to do that,” she explained. “When you take that away, when you

do not do that, where is the democracy? Where is the healthy back-and-forth? Where is the accountability?”

“We understood how important it was to have the freedom of the press, even when we didn’t agree with them,” she continued. “It didn’t matter, right? Even when it was contentious in that room, that’s not what it’s about. It’s about making sure that we are exercising something that is really part of who we are as a country. We are also leading the world.”

“We’ve got to continue to fight for democracy. That includes the freedom of the press.”

During the audience Q&A, Jean-Pierre fielded questions about Biden’s final months in office, the messaging strategies of Democrats in the recent presidential election, and the intersection of identity and politics. In one exchange, when asked about the three weeks between the first presidential debate and Biden’s decision to drop out of the race, Jean-Pierre expressed frustration with the response from Democrats toward the former president. “I’ve never seen a party do that in the way that they did, and it was hurtful and sad to see that happening—a firing squad around a person who I believe was a true patriot.”

“Instead of coming together to really be unified in trying to

figure out: ‘How do we save our democracy?’ ‘How do we fight back?’ That is what I was seeing. That’s what we decided to do for three weeks,” she said. “It was truly, truly unfortunate. And I think it hurt us more than I think folks realized to have done that.”

Jean-Pierre’s visit to the John F. Kennedy Jr. Forum stage allowed an untold perspective of what happens behind the scenes of White House communications, and the difficulties, challenges, and pressures that meet the person who is the face of them. “[The press secretary] office is the connector between the Oval Office and the press briefing room, supposedly equal distance. I connect the president to the press and vice versa,” she explained.

“How amazing that was, and not to forget what I was being able to experience and be a part of, and I got to do this press briefing. Even if it was hard and difficult, I got to be at that lectern, standing there, taking questions, exercising in what is incredibly important, which is democracy, which was being televised across the globe for the most powerful political person in the world.”

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**PHOTO COURTESY OF
LAYLA CHAARAOUI
'26**



Putting a Cap on Time Caps

A look at the movement to end limits on non-tenured Harvard staff contracts.

BY BEN KAUFMAN '28

A university as expansive as Harvard requires thousands of teaching staff to preserve its academic reputation of integrity and curiosity. Though they are known by various names—professors, senior lecturers, preceptors, and College fellows—each faculty member's mission is to educate. Tenured professors like Jason Furman '92 and Michael Sandel enjoy unlimited lengths of stay at Harvard, and have the opportunity to teach thousands of students across decades in courses about their intellectual passions. In contrast, most non-tenured teaching (NTT) faculty have a set length of time they are allowed to instruct at the University, called a time cap.

NTT faculty have expressed grievances in response to this policy, condemning the forced uprooting of their lives once their contracts expire. University faculty and students are taking action against these limitations—a class walkout on March 4 was a recent community-wide response spearheaded by the Student Labor Action Movement and Harvard Academic Workers-United Auto Workers.

At Harvard, time caps range anywhere from two to eight years, depending on the respective faculty position—two years for College Fellows, three years for lecturers, and eight years for preceptors.

NTT faculty have long spoken out against this policy. A recent report by the Time Caps Working Group found that 92% of time-capped faculty experienced trouble with career planning, and 89% reported adverse effects on mental health from the stress caused by a lack of job security. Anonymous statements in the report from survey respondents described the professional and personal threat of looming time caps as “a ticking time bomb in my career, my financial planning, and my family life.” Another survey response stated that due to their lack of research output, “there is no career path for [us] at Harvard.”

Despite the controversy surrounding time caps, there have also been favorable policy developments in the eyes of the opposition. Both SLAM and HAW-UAW have been persistent in fighting for workers' rights since negotiations on time caps with the University began in September 2024. Four weeks ago, after considerable negotiating between the University and HAW-UAW, Harvard tentatively accepted a proposal to eliminate preceptor time caps via a process of tiered promotions. Yet this motion will only go through if union members accept new rules about the ending of their contracts. Union members would have to

accept the distinction of the cessation of NTT employment at the end of their predetermined hiring period or immediate termination before the preset employment expiration date due to a specific reason.

However, even if this decision eliminates time caps for preceptors, HAW-UAW still remains committed to abolishing time caps for other NTT faculty, notably non-senior lecturers who “time out” after three years. Students feel similarly: two weeks ago, SLAM began a petition with over 1,400 total signatures among Harvard students and staff that was delivered to University President Alan Garber '76, demanding an end to term limits for NTT faculty.

“Solidarity is not shared,” said Prince Williams '25, an active SLAM member since his freshman year. “Solidarity is something that's exercised on the realization that we have a shared struggle. We're gonna have shared interests, and I think in the process of organizing with HAW, that remains clear.”

Disappointed by the lack of action following the petition, activists led a walkout—a joint effort from SLAM and HAW—and demanded justice for still-unprotected lecturers and other NTTs. A large gathering of students joined protesters from HAW to voice their concerns near the provost and president's offices.

Such an event at Harvard is not unprecedented: last May, hundreds of students walked out of their commencement ceremony in protest of Harvard barring 13 seniors from graduating due to their involvement in protests against Harvard's investment in Israeli military companies.

“I feel like with this walkout, I think it's a test,” said Williams, who helped coordinate the student section at the walkout and took photos and videos of the event for SLAM's Instagram. “It's a test to see if we're doing our jobs in terms of raising campus consciousness around the union fight,” he continued.

Along with SLAM activists, University faculty ranging from department chairs to time-capped professors spoke at the event. “The only team-teaching I have done since getting tenure is with a lecturer,” said Germanic Languages and Literatures

Department Chair Alison Frank Johnson. “[A lecturer and I] created together an amazing class that allowed me to do something I was afraid to do on my own. She had expertise I didn't have, and she said to me, ‘We can do this together.’ And we created a class, and I loved it. Now, she's gone. She isn't gone because she didn't advise senior theses and didn't do independent studies with students who wanted

them and she didn't talk at events and didn't ask good questions and didn't make me a better teacher. She's gone because she ran out of time.”

“I had eight faculties write to the dean, begging them to keep me. Everybody wants to keep me in the school. The students want me. The faculty wants me,” added School of Engineering and Applied Science preceptor Salma Abu Ayyash, under pressure of a time cap that

will end her contract with Harvard in June. “The administration just plays this game of bureaucracy, of ‘these are the rules.’ They're literally shooting themselves in the foot.”

Some, however, remain skeptical about what this walkout will accomplish. A first-year student anonymously commented on their concerns regarding such activism. “I'm also not quite sure how impactful protests are here, so I'm curious to see if action will take place,” they said. “There have been so many protests [and] we haven't seen much change. So it would be curious [and] interesting to see what the administration does.”

Despite concerns over what impacts the walkout will have, those speaking at the protest remain positive. “For all of us here, I can say we're all doing great jobs. Otherwise, we wouldn't be here. They would have found cause to fire us a long time ago,” Ayyash continued.

Whether Harvard's administration removes time caps for other NTT faculty remains to be seen, with further bargaining sessions scheduled for March 6. Yet, HAW and SLAM will likely continue to put pressure on the University until time caps are eliminated.

BEN KAUFMAN '28
(benkaufman@college.harvard.edu) WRITES NEWS FOR THE *INDEPENDENT*.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LUKE WAGNER '26



Is the Grass Greener at Other Schools?

Students voice concerns over uniquely Harvard inconveniences.

BY NATALIE COOPER '28

Do Harvard students melt down over the minuscule? Or are their complaints of campus crises completely justified? Whether it's sprinting across campus to make Annenberg Hall's slim 4 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. dinner hours, battling the printers in Lamont Library, or making the outdoor trek in 20-degree weather to another building to do laundry, minor inconveniences on this campus have a way of adding up. Midway through their second semester, freshmen have begun to weigh the pros and cons of attending Harvard over other institutions. In interviews with the *Independent*, three students shared their perspectives on their campus struggles in contrast to life at other universities.

Katrina Yip '28 explained how the culture of overreaction is something unique to Harvard undergraduates.

"A lot of people need to chill," she said. "Especially first semester freshman year—people start comping a million clubs, and when they don't get in, it's the end of the world. Like, you have three

more years." She noted that, while students at other schools certainly deal with stress, the tendency of Harvard students to equate club rejections with personal failure seems particularly intense. "I have friends at other schools, and they're just not as pressed about these things," she added.

Yip opined that the constant pursuit of *more*—more clubs, more prestige, more LinkedIn-worthy accomplishments—gets in the way of perspective, especially among freshmen. "It seems like they're always chasing something. It's always more professional clubs, and then next year we'll be recruiting. It's like never ending," she said. "I do think they should take a pause, realize how they got here in the first place, and be okay with that for now."

Jith Nambiar '28 experienced his own brush with Harvard's signature brand of unnecessary stress. "I forgot my lab safety glasses one day and asked the [Teaching Fellow] if I could run back to my dorm and

grab them," he recalled. "She said, 'No. If you leave, I'll deny you entry to class.'" The consequence? "Three points deducted from my final lab report. That's three points out of 35!"

A part from campus culture, Kalea Severino '28 expressed concern with Harvard's physical layout. "All of my classes are in different parts of campus," she said, leading to a daily routine of frantic power walking and a growing list of missed meals. "I only have 15 minutes in between them, and sometimes I can't eat at Berg," she added. "I'm a little hangry, actually." Since Annenberg is the only dining hall available to first-years during lunch that is also central to the Yard, it serves as the only option for many. While many American universities also boast sprawling campuses,

Yale Dining, for instance, has more geographically distributed options.

With a dining hall in each of the

freshmen's Residential Colleges, students are never more than a few minutes away from a meal.

But among our interviewees, nothing compared to the frustration with short dining hall hours. "It's

horrible," Severino said. "Sometimes I won't eat lunch until 4 p.m., so why do I have to eat again so soon? Then it's 10 o'clock, and I have nothing to eat. I have to buy DoorDash food, and if I don't have money, I can't do that."

Nambiar echoed her frustration. "One time I played tennis and missed dinner, and I had to find some sad alternative instead of my beautiful Annenberg dining hall. It ruined my night," he said.

Yip, meanwhile, has resigned herself to late-night food expenses. "I pretty much eat at 8 or 8:30, so I usually end up eating out at night, which is not great for my bank account." In addition to their more broadly distributed dining locations, Yale also has hours that better align with the habits of these freshmen. For instance, the majority of their dining halls do not close until 8 p.m.

According to these students, printing

is another Harvard-specific nightmare. Crimson Print can be complicated—requiring students to download software and pay for each page individually. "I had a problem with the printer one time and ended up having to have my friend print it out for me because it was just too complex to figure out," Severino said.

Also unable to figure out how to print, Nambiar reached out for assistance. "One of the workers at Lamont just printed it for me," he said. "It was a lifesaver."

Even something as simple as walking can be an unexpected challenge for Harvard students as a result of the seemingly never-ending construction projects in Harvard Square. "They blocked off the sidewalk, so I have to go around. It adds, like, two minutes to my commute," Severino said.

Nambiar mentioned the annoyance of construction around the traffic circle outside CVS. "We all go there just to function here in Cambridge. It really grinds my gears," he added.

Ultimately, these concerns shape a critical question among these students. "Sometimes I wonder, well, what would my life be like if I went to this school?" Severino reflected. For example, other universities, such as Yale, may offer longer dining hall hours or a greater variety of dining options, areas where these students believe Harvard could improve its own campus amenities.

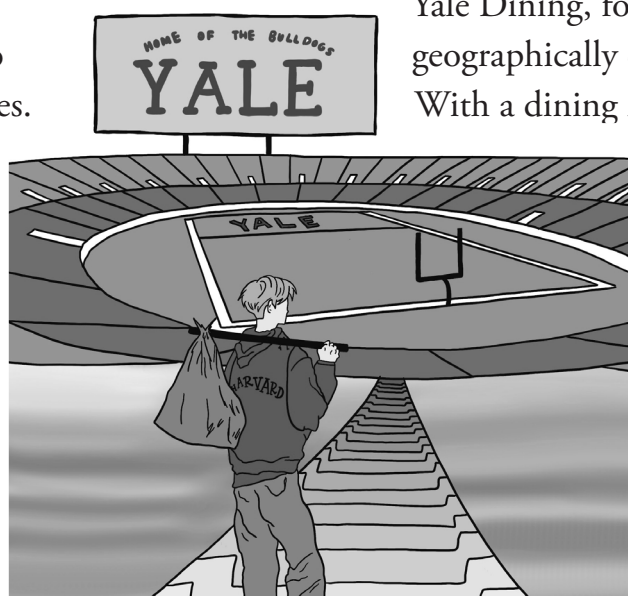
Yip shared a similar sentiment, especially about her early experiences at Harvard. "In my first semester, I definitely thought, 'Oh, the social scene at Harvard sucks. Yale would be more fun, and the food is so much better at Yale too,'" she said. "I don't think those instances have built up to me completely regretting choosing Harvard—because it is Harvard after all."

Still, Severino acknowledged the tendency to dwell on these minor meltdowns. "Overall...we tend to complain a bit," Severino admitted. Yet, she wants to remind her peers, "We're pretty privileged."

NATALIE COOPER '28 (NATALIE.COOPER@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS RUNNING TO EAT AT ANNENBERG HALL BEFORE IT CLOSES.

GRAPHIC BY KERRIE ZHU '28

NEWS | 7



FORUM

Abreast on Abroad: Letter One

Why Sadie Kargman became your favorite self-proclaimed “Shitstain in Paris.”

BY SADIE KARGMAN '26

To whom it may concern in the Harvard *vicinitas*, Greetings from the beautiful city of Paris, also known as my home for the rest of the spring semester. How's Cambridge? Don't answer that.

In this new column, “Abreast on Abroad,” I want to write a love letter from across the pond, detailing my wild life while living in the “City of Love.”

In a recent *Independent* article written by Heidi Heffinger '26 and Mia Wilcox '28, my perfect little sister, Ivy Kargman '28, attested to some normal feelings of anxiety regarding study abroad, such as potential “FOMO” and simply living far away. I mean, who in their right mind would trade a HUDS bagel for a €1.50 scorching-hot, rippable, and dippable baguette? Psychos. That's the answer.

All jokes aside, deciding to study abroad was hard. The faculty in Harvard's tiny-but-perfect Romance Languages and Literature department are family to me. I love my extracurriculars (shoutout to the *Advocate* and Chabad), and I have the BEST friends (if we've talked since I've been abroad, I love you).

However, since the lack of travel with the pandemic, there was so much I craved to do and see, and I wasn't sure when—or if—I'd get the chance. Like many Harvard students, I am extremely Type-A and have a set vision for what I want my life to look like. Last summer, however, I traveled to Paris with my best friend, and the city has been singing a siren-song to me ever since.

Back when I had TikTok—I'm now a hypocritical Reels gal—I would scroll through idyllic European videos for hours just to put off the fifteen minute trek from the Quad to the river. Between the endless, on-campus opportunities and Harvard's lukewarm attitude toward studying abroad, the idea of taking the leap felt more like a pipe-dream than potential reality. One of my best friends even reflected, “I thought this was going to be one of those things that one of our friends says they're going to do, but never really do it.” #ThanksForTheFaith

Another major hesitation about studying abroad is the buildup to the decision. It's one thing to skip a night at Grendel's to churn

out a 250-word “*Why I want to go to Paris*” essay, but it's another thing to actually get on that plane. I mean, you only get eight semesters at *the greatest place on earth*, you know?

That said, for all its flaws, Harvard has been an incredible college experience so far, and I am SO excited to get right back to Cambridge come fall.

BUT.

I have never felt more challenged—or received a better education—than simply *existing* in Paris these past two months.

I spend every moment of every day studying a language I love. All my professors are native speakers whose English is *horrific*—my personal favorite example being an unfortunate mispronunciation of “apri-CUNT” instead of “apricot.” My classrooms are adorned with mahogany and frescoes, perfect for daydreaming, *and* I have access to the most fascinating courses. My new friends and I are taking everything from “The Science of Fashion” to “European Economics: A Focus on Bitcoin.” When you step outside the Harvard bubble, mentally, physically, emotionally, and *academically*, you will find there is a world of opportunities.

Before this semester, I had never considered taking a film class. Now, I'm in two: “World History Through Cinema” and “French Cinema of the 21st Century.” We spend class time watching films and then analyzing everything from the color of an actor's shoe to the sex position chosen by the director—which is, of course, *very French*.

While Harvard is “the best of the best,” I would argue it is the best at what it *offers*, which is ultimately limited.

Between core requirements and jumping through concentration-hoops, a student realistically only has a couple courses that they can take “for pleasure.” In addition, many faculty members have reflected that most of their out-of-the-box course proposals are denied (hello to my current “History of Prostitution” course).

These two points mixed with the fact that venturing into deep Cambridge doesn't push me out of my comfort zone (not you, Hi-Rise Bakery) demonstrate why taking my funky classes abroad—for credit I might add—has been the best academic decision I have ever made.

As countless study-abroad articles have echoed before me, travel in Europe is *insanely* accessible, which is already a type of education on its own. Countries I never dreamed of visiting (and others I've always longed to see) are just a short, spontaneous ride away—you read that right, I firmly believe we should go anywhere once. In just two months, I've traveled nationally to Lyon, Dijon, and Chantilly, and internationally to Edinburgh, Fife, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Madrid, and most recently Oslo. My grandmother keeps asking how I function every day.

Admittedly, some of these trips were chosen simply to say I have visited **cough** Oslo, but others were well thought-out and planned in just 20 minutes, given the easy train system. Yes, students in the U.S. travel home or visit friends at other schools, but when have you ever heard someone say: “*I really want to check out Rhode Island this weekend?*” If I am going to be trapped with this Eager-Beaver-Planner brain, for better or worse, I might as well have the opportunity to explore and pretend to be spontaneous. Plus, traveling is a huge passion of mine—not to check off boxes, but to connect with people and learn about new cultures through my own experiences. *Should I just become an influencer at this point?*

So, if you would like to read about “what dreams are made of” as I live out my Lizzie McGuire-abroad-fantasies, look out for my next article, “ScareBnBs” coming soon!

Xo, Sadie

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

GRAPHIC BY EL RICHARDS '26



Thoughts from New Quincy: Popping the Bubble

Why stepping off campus might be the best lesson Harvard has to offer.

BY LUKE WAGNER '26

Ask any student rushing from their dorm to a morning lecture, clutching a cup of Blank Street coffee, about their day ahead, and you'll hear a whirlwind of commitments: guest speakers, club meetings, and networking events. At Harvard, everything—friends, food, a library shelf with your name on it—feels just a few steps away. The proximity of resources and a swirl of like-minded peers creates a sense of intense community and convenience that's hard to resist.

But walk just a few yards out of the Yard gates, and you might catch yourself pausing, realizing this campus world is both a blessing and a curse. Harvard Square can start to feel like you're standing on the edge of a waterfall, inches from a meltdown. Your schedule starts to become rigidly segmented into morning, noon, and night by classes, problem sets, and d-hall runs. When was the last time you stepped outside that routine—beyond Widener, Lamont, or the Science Center? The demands of academic life can make it tempting to stay in a loop of class-library-dorm, but that pattern can cost you experiences that defy any syllabus.

Breaking that loop, however, isn't as hard as it seems. Boston and the surrounding neighborhoods have a pull that, once you give in, feels magnetic. Craving Turkish flavors? Venture deeper into Allston to Sofra, a cozy bakery and café where the scent of spiced pastries and coffee greets you at the door. Looking for a cozy vibe with pop-up restaurants and delicious desserts? Swing on over to Davis Square and around the corner to Bow Market. Chinese food calling your name? Take the Red Line down to Chinatown at dinnertime, where rows of dumpling shops and hot pot spots beckon you to sample

flavors that no dining hall could replicate.

Even within Cambridge, venturing beyond Harvard Square can feel like stumbling into a whole new world. A quick walk or bike ride takes you to Mamagoo's, my go-to spot for massive sandwiches that instantly make you forget about HUDS. Craving a quick but classic meal? Armando's Pizza serves up some amazing, quick slices that can be accompanied with a cold soda. And if you need a real escape—from both food and finals—Fresh Pond is just around the bend, perfect for a jog or a leisurely walk around the water.

It's easy to stay perfectly insulated, hopping between classes, club meetings, and study sessions, scarcely aware of the people and places outside the gates. Nothing says you *have* to engage with the broader Cambridge or Boston community: unlike some universities that require service hours or off-campus projects, Harvard lets you sail through four years without ever setting foot beyond the Yard—no penalty, no questions asked.

But that kind of isolation, while straightforward, also means missing out on the realities just blocks away: neighbors tackling everything from school funding issues to cultural celebrations you won't find in a course catalog. Sure, you can graduate as a "Harvard student," but when you choose to venture past the river or the Quad, you start to see yourself as part of a bigger ecosystem—one where knowledge isn't confined to lecture halls and civic responsibility isn't just a buzzword. That choice isn't forced on you; it's an invitation to be more than a visitor in someone else's hometown.



Escaping Harvard's pressure-cooker is an emotional necessity. It's one thing to read about a "work-life balance" in an email from CAMHS; it's another to let the surrounding area provide a genuine outlet from the stress that builds up in Harvard Square. Devoid of wandering tourists and power-walking classmates, a quiet stroll through the cobblestone streets of Beacon Hill might offer the mental reset you didn't even know you needed.

Ultimately, Harvard's gates were never built to seal you off from the world, even when it feels like that's their main purpose. They're meant to be crossed as often as you like, reminding you that some of the most memorable parts of a Harvard education can take place well beyond campus. In the messy, vivid, lived-in streets and neighborhoods that lie outside, you'll find stories and experiences that stick with you long after you've forgotten what you got on that Stats final. (Let's be honest—you did not do well.)

Not everything has to be a group effort, a calendar invite, or an "experience" curated for social media. Often, the most meaningful moments come from embracing solitude and allowing ourselves the space to simply unwind.

So the next time you're scurrying from the Science Center to the Yard, juggling a to-do list longer than the Charles, pause. Let yourself wander past the usual radius—take a T ride somewhere new, or spontaneously join a friend exploring Central Square. You might return to campus not just refreshed, but moved in a way no class could manage. The city is already alive and moving—whether or not you choose to step into it. The real question is: *When will you?*

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GRAPHIC BY ANNA SHAO '28

The Social Cost

Navigating the costs of social life for first-years at Harvard.

BY PIPPA LEE '28

I'll never forget the day I got into Harvard. I was standing by my gate in the middle of Newark International Airport with my parents. It was around 7 p.m., and my flight to Orlando was taking off in 50 minutes. As the hum of flight announcements and the sound of rolling suitcases filled the air, I hesitantly refreshed my applicant portal. Time froze for a split second, then, all of a sudden, before I could read any words on my phone, confetti exploded across my screen. A rush of emotions hit me: shock, excitement, and pure joy.

As the initial shock settled into reality, my excitement took over. *It was actually happening. I was going to Harvard.* In the months leading up to my first semester, I envisioned everything I would do upon my arrival: walking around the Yard, meeting my brilliant classmates, taking the classes I'd always dreamed of, and exploring Cambridge. I could picture it all and couldn't wait to dive in. But there was one thing I couldn't quite picture: my social life.

What would weekends look like? Would it feel like the quintessential college experience? How different would my experience be compared to those of my friends at state schools?

When August eventually rolled around, like many other first-years, I came to college exhilarated. I had been counting down the days and was determined to make the most of my Harvard experience. During the first week, I had my first rite of passage: a Harvard dorm party. It was sweaty and packed, but I was happy regardless. I was meeting so many new people, and everyone genuinely wanted to connect with each other. *That's what the first few weeks are really about, I*

thought. *If this is how it's going to be, I'll be happy.*

However, it wasn't long before I realized that, when it came to weekend plans, Harvard first-years often resorted to leaving campus. *Nothing is happening on campus tonight, I would hear repeatedly. Let's go to MIT. Let's go to this party in Boston. We should have a fun group dinner in the North End.*

And just like that, it became clear to me—at Harvard, social life often comes with a price tag.

One first-year student, who requested anonymity, summed up this experience: “The going-out scene is heavily reliant on being in the city of Boston,” she said.

“I would say that's definitely because there's not much going on at Harvard's campus,” she continued. “I mean, we have two bars, but that still costs money... There's not a lot of spaces that we can congregate and go out or party. And, there's not a lot of events going on.”

It's a common sentiment among first-years: while there are occasional events on campus, they're often infrequent or exclusive, leaving many students looking elsewhere for social opportunities. With limited on-campus spaces designed for nightlife, “going out” frequently means leaving Harvard's gates.

In my first few months of school, I had a similar realization: compared to huge universities in college towns, socializing takes on a different form at Harvard. Since there are no officially recognized on-campus fraternities or social clubs, there isn't the same structured social scene that my friends at the University of Michigan have. Aside from the occasional parties hosted by Harvard College Events Board or student organizations, there

are rarely open parties for everyone to attend. And when some student organizations do throw parties and events, most of the time, one must be a member of the club or know someone in one to attend.

As a result of this social culture, first-year students at Harvard are often left with a choice: stay on campus for a chill night, or go off-campus in search of a more traditional party scene. But the cost of “going out” is significant. I spoke with another first-year student—let's call her *Soda Girl*—who broke down the price of one of her recent nights out.

“Last weekend, I had a bit of a splurge,” she confessed. “I went to dinner, which cost me \$35. I then went on a bus service that would take me to a venue, which cost me \$20, then I had to buy a ticket to get into the venue, which was \$30.”

At this point, the night had already cost \$85—and the spending wasn't over.

“Then once I was at the place, I purchased a ‘soda’ which cost me \$20.” She continued explaining her commute home: “I had to get back home in an Uber, which did end up costing me \$35.” Her total for one night? A whopping \$140.

This experience is all too common. Soda Girl went out with six other girls that night, and they likely spent similar amounts. For many students, Uber and Lyft are the only viable transportation options after a night out—as riding the T late at night or in the early morning hours can feel unsafe. While not every night out reaches triple digits, even a more modest evening—grabbing dinner and Ubering to and from a party—can still cost \$50 or more. Multiply that by a few weekends a month, and socializing

becomes a luxury not all students can afford.

That being said, not all socializing at Harvard requires spending money or going off-campus. Many students, particularly those in extracurriculars, navigate the social scene by participating in group-specific events.

“I’m on the soccer team, so usually we’ll have mixers, but if we don’t have a mixer, then I’ll probably just stay in my dorm, and maybe study, maybe get some sleep early,” another first-year student, who requested anonymity, commented. “It’s kind of a good time to recover and catch up on sleep for the week, since the actual weekdays are so packed,” he added.

When asked if not “going out” was fulfilling for him, he affirmed that it was. “I don’t really like going to clubs and stuff.”

“It depends on what I’m doing,” he continued. “But on an average weekend, I’d probably say [I spend] \$30 to \$40 just on food.”

There are plenty of ways to have fun on campus without spending money; however, while these options exist, they don’t always fill the gap left by the absence of a more structured, inclusive social scene.

Such spending—like Soda Girl’s night out— isn’t feasible for many students at Harvard. For students who can’t regularly afford to Uber into Boston or split expensive dinners, the alternative often means staying behind. It’s not that there aren’t

ways to have fun on campus, but if many of your friends are Ubering to the MIT frats for the night, repeatedly saying “no” can feel isolating.

The same first-year student who described the lack of on-campus social spaces echoed this perspective. “There were times where I felt like I didn’t want to go out because some of my friends were going to a club, and I didn’t want to buy the ticket for a club, or pay a \$40 cover. Like, that wasn’t in my evening activity,” she said.

It’s no secret that Harvard is an expensive school to attend. This year, the cost of attendance before financial aid was \$82,866, which covers tuition, books, and on-campus room and board. While Harvard’s financial aid is generous, it doesn’t account for the hidden costs of college life.

Feeling left out doesn’t just ruin a weekend—it has real emotional and psychological consequences. In a time when Americans are more likely than ever to spend time alone, college students are no exception. A survey of around 1,100 U.S. college students found that nearly 64.7% reported feeling lonely. A 2020 report from the Harvard Task Force on Managing Student Mental Health revealed that 62% of first-year students scored in the high range on the UCLA loneliness scale, indicating that feelings of social isolation are not the exception but the norm.

The report also highlighted the correlation between financial hardship and stress among Harvard students: “Students across the board struggled to afford the high cost of living in the Boston area.” This is where the hidden costs of socializing become significant. When participating in nightlife requires spending upwards of \$50 per weekend, students without disposable income are forced to make

tough choices: stretch their budget and go out, or save money and risk feeling left behind. Repeatedly choosing the latter can create a cycle of exclusion—where those who can’t afford to participate in the “going out” social scene find themselves with fewer opportunities to bond with their peers.

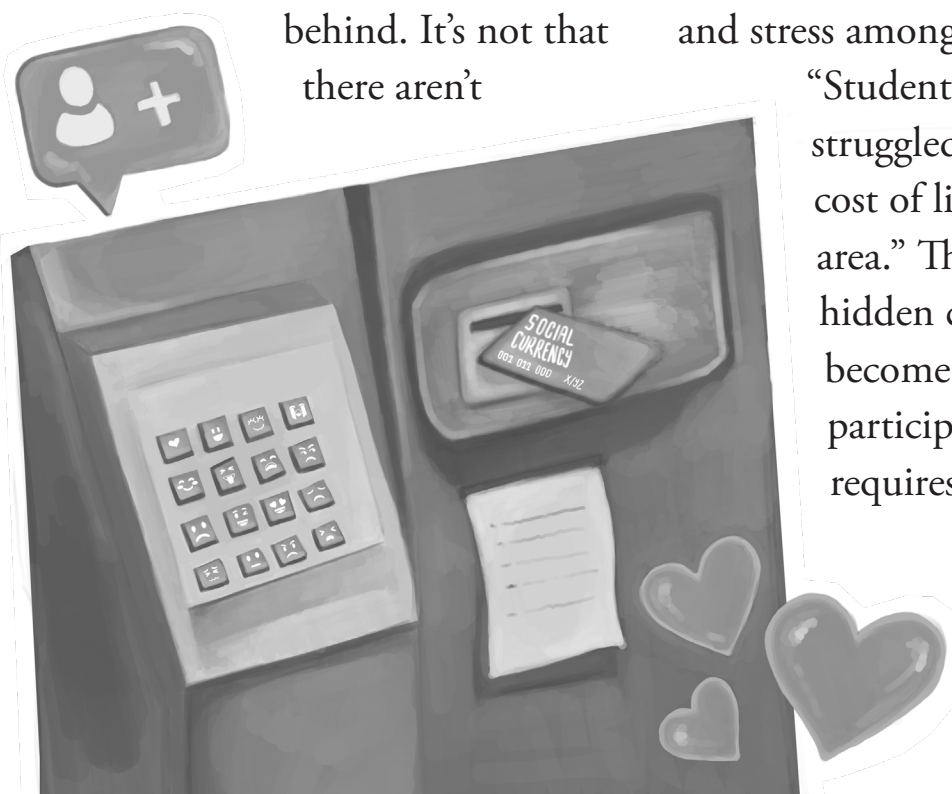
Now, more than halfway through freshman year, I have a better understanding of the social scene here. I’ve had my fair share of nights out—some that felt worth every penny and others that made me wonder if I should have just stayed in. I’ve also had nights where I chose to stay back, perfectly happy to unwind in my dorm or have a more relaxed evening with friends. At Harvard, I’ve learned a fun night is what you make of it, and it doesn’t necessitate going somewhere.

However, it is important to note that for some students, opting out of a pricey night in Boston is a choice they can make. For others, financial constraints make it less of a decision and more of a limitation.

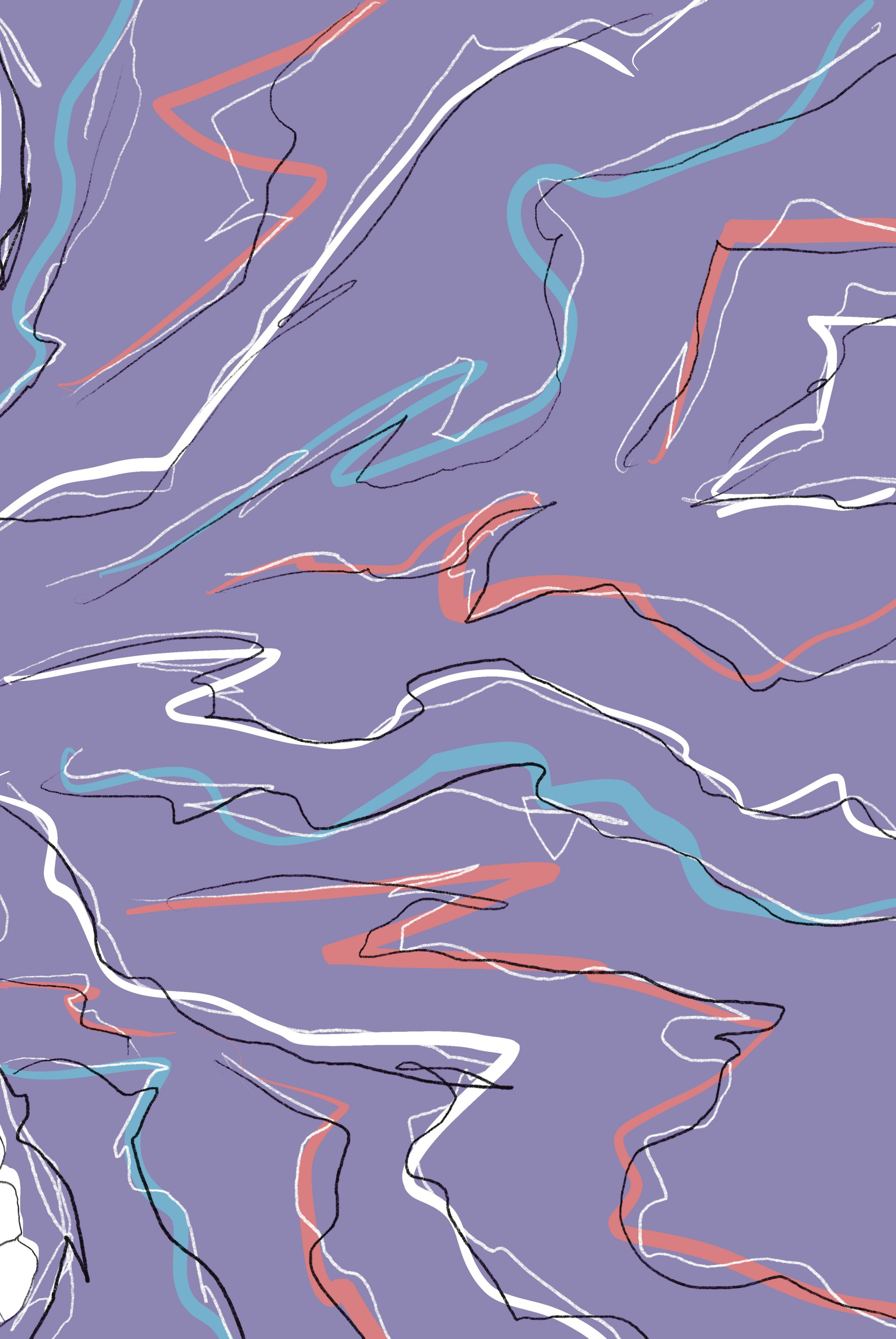
Harvard prides itself on bringing together students from diverse backgrounds and promoting inclusion, but true inclusivity goes beyond official College resources—it means ensuring that everyone can fully participate in all aspects of college life. If Harvard is genuinely committed to inclusion for all students, perhaps it should rethink and reimagine its policy on social structures on campus. If the cost of socializing continues to rise without change, the question remains: How can Harvard foster a campus culture where every student—regardless of financial background—can find meaningful ways to connect and belong?

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GRAPHIC BY KAYLA LE ’28







Inconstant Senses

Recounting memories of the hospital at 14.

BY ANONYMOUS

Trigger warning: mentions of suicide.

We remember hospitals to be quieter than they truly are. Their hallways form “private rooms:” large spaces partitioned by sheets of blue instead of walls, so that while a patient might not see anything around them, they hear everything. Footsteps reverberate off the tiled floor while noise grows and fades as nurses walk past. Monitors beep discordantly—some too slow, others dangerously quick. Doctors share brisk words of comfort with their patients and speak in foreign tongues with their peers. No sound is inherently good because we rarely go to the hospital for good things.

Each clattering remains distinct but is soon forgotten. The psyche, in its self-preserving way, discards memories and sensations, making us forget the noises that once scared us most.

I’ve visited family members before in their little curtain rooms. When I was 11, treatment centers always startled me with their constant commotion, yet my relatives lying in critical care beds never seemed to notice the rapid clamor around them. My nine-year-old sister, in the hours before surgery to remove a tumor on her back, needed just a little time to detach from her circumstance. She would focus on her hands, tracing their lines. As I sat on the edge of her frigid, cerulean bed, asking insignificant questions and telling bad jokes, she wouldn’t respond. Her eyes never even met mine. Instead, they remained on her palms as she touched finger to

finger, scrutinizing parts of herself that she never regarded as worth her attention before.

Around five minutes before tunic uniforms rolled my sister into the surgery room, a nurse pulled back our curtain, enabling sight of a passerby. A newborn rolled past us in a clear, wheeled box. One wheel seemed to be loose, for the box shook profusely as it squeaked across the floor. The newborn’s ventilator covered her mouth. She laid motionless as a monitor with a straight line emitted a monotonous beeeeeep. I didn’t know what that meant, so I turned to my sister, smiling, in hopes of a reaction. “Look at the baby!”

Years later, I asked her if she remembered that baby. She didn’t. I can’t recall if she ever even looked up to see it. Was this a memory she threw away or never had? Should I have thrown it away?

At fourteen, I found myself in my first curtain room for emergency treatment. My school had forced me into a psychological evaluation after classmates had stolen my journal and began spreading rumors about its contents. They began with truths—retellings of my familial pains, iterations of my worst memories. But middle school is when kids learn to feed their cravings for inclusion, gluttonous on external validation. Truths are blended with fiction, so everyone was a part of my story; everyone had a moment of recognition. I suppose I wanted that too, but that chance was lost to malicious translations. While worse narratives travelled, the only one my school cared about was my accused

suicidality.

I spent nine hours in the emergency room, six of them alone. Four psychiatrists visited me individually, each asking things of me that I can’t remember. I recall hearing very little, just a distant hum of whisperings. When I tried to engage in conversations with the doctors, I became distracted by my mind’s voice, which oscillated from shame to frustration to shame again. I choked on stifled words like they were phlegmy coughs that I never wanted to be heard. My voice felt dirty, futile. I blamed it and my journal for my circumstances.

In those hours alone, I could find no words at all, only static. Maybe it came from the TV that I couldn’t figure out how to turn off completely. It seemed to distort time, or at least fuse time together, making each hour in isolation indiscernible from the next.

Sight became my only working sense in that curtain room. My family couldn’t visit, so I soon attempted to gain familiarity with each doctor and nurse I met. This practice proved useless; they would inevitably end their shifts and replace themselves with a new white coat two hours later. Their features on any other day would’ve seemed indistinct, but within those nine hours, I memorized the different curvatures of each human nose more than ever before. I was desperate for humanity, just a trace of it—the hospital didn’t feel human at all.

My toes peeked out from a new but already destroyed blanket, which my hands ripped apart little by little in anxious bursts.

It was aquamarine, sterile, and when I held it in my fists after tearing it to pieces, I felt that I'd ruined it, dirtied it. I felt dirty. My nails, jagged and untrimmed, pressed into my palms, forming tiny crescents in them. Each finger was too weak, only capable of breaking skin in one little spot that I then began to pick at.

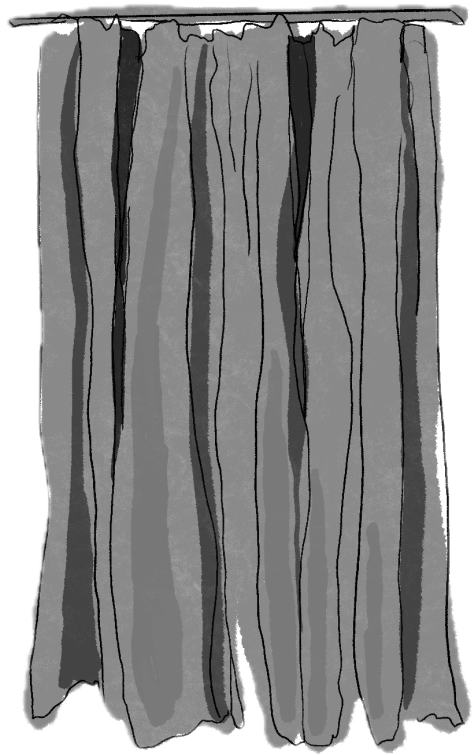
My eyes diverted to an opening blue curtain in front of me as I watched three nurses enter my sheet-covered room, one with a notebook and two telling me something that I didn't pay attention to. One empty-handed nurse exchanged a glance with the other before stepping forward and holding my arms together. Her touch was firm as she turned my wrists upward.

She pushed me against the critical care bed as the other woman walked forward. Fingers tickled the flesh of my back, and I felt the string of my hospital gown unravel. Instinctually, I pulled my arms into myself in an attempt to break them free of the nurse's grip, and tried to roll over like a pill bug stuck on its back.

This is the version I tell myself—how I cultivate memories and protect my mind, replacing truth with distortion. But honesty is ruthless. It scolds me, strips me bare: I didn't fight. I didn't resist at all. I instead lay there motionless, a living corpse, as bare hands pulled back my gown and lifted my hair, checking my thighs, my stomach, between my toes, for something that was never there.

My head lay on top of the tattered blanket, forcing me to

face the nurse with the clipboard. She spoke to the others, jotting something down. I searched her face for anything, no, everything, fixing my gaze on her frowning lower lip, and then to her nose which curved upward and widened at its tip. Maybe if I could see every part of her, she would look at me too, and recognize my mortal pieces, the way my septum deviated to the left.



Maybe she would see a girl, a girl who was sad, but wanted to live through that pain and eventually be happy. Maybe she would see a girl begging to feel like a person again.

But she disengaged from the telling parts of me, instead focusing on the color fading from my complexion to avoid

the collecting dew in my eyes. Her features blurred beyond recognition as water drowned my scleras, incapable of being wiped away as long as my hands lay held down in front of me. The static in my head turned into nothing, and now I perceived nothing as a sound.

This same nurse returned with her clipboard a few hours later, but by then, I couldn't look at her any more than I could hear her. Her lips moved, shaping words I didn't catch. I only learned I was discharged when she turned to my father instead. She told my father what the psychiatrists had decided: depressed, not suicidal. They found no cuts on my body, no words in my journal that suggested self-harm, no movements during the nine hours alone in a curtained room that indicated anything besides the will to persist. I wonder if the nurses said goodbye. I wonder if silence always protected me, or if in

moments like these, it made things worse.

I left the hospital at 11 p.m. that evening, marking the ninth hour spent in that little curtain room, and shook violently at the screams of an ambulance's siren just beyond the exit doors. Cars around me swished as they passed by, and plastic bags scraped against parking lot concrete. A baby—who I later found out had been in the curtained room beside me that day—nuzzled his chin into his father's arms as the two walked out of the hospital and passed me by. He began to cry, his muffled sobs pushing towards me from the wind. Surely he cried in the hospital hallway, but I had no recollection of hearing that sound before. I'd forgotten the world outside of myself. Finally, I understood my sister, her own lapses in memory, and decided I would choose to remember; remember the baby, remember the nurses, remember the sound of nothing.

When I walked forward past the emergency room, there was no relief in my diagnosis, no resentment for the nurses' unempathetic touches, but a quiet resignation. For nine hours I hid in a cerulean bed, desperate to disappear into silence, but silence never protected me. It only made it easier to look past my expressions, to replace my voice with a clipboard, and my body with a case file. I let silence steal moments from me, let it erase the sounds I wasn't ready to hold on to. I still search for echoes of all I've lost, each sensation, and hope one day to recover everything.

**ANONYMOUS IS GRATEFUL
SHE CAN BE VULNERABLE
THROUGH THE INDEPENDENT.**

**GRAPHIC BY CHRISTIE
BECKLEY '27**

Surviving a “Harvard Meltdown”

Harvard’s institutionalized stress culture is taboo: it’s time for a change.

BY TILLY BUTTERWORTH '28

About 10 weeks into my first semester at Harvard, I sat down with a friend for a catch-up, and we both ended up breaking down over our Harvard journeys so far. Although it was difficult to express how burnt out we were feeling, I was unexpectedly reassured when I realized I wasn’t alone in experiencing this. However, I also felt a deep sense of frustration that it had taken me this long to confront the stress and imposter syndrome I had been ignoring.

Accepting the reality that our college journeys are not always steady and consistent can be hard for Harvard students, especially since we tend to set our personal standards high and strive for perfection. This means that for many of us, it feels like a ‘Harvard Meltdown’ is inevitable.

At Harvard, stress is almost a daily guarantee—whether it’s a looming p-set deadline, an extra long practice, or a terrible dining hall meal. With most of us pushing ourselves to the limit, it’s no surprise that stress is both normalized and accepted across college campuses, including at Harvard. According to the American Institute of Stress, 45% of college students across the United States report they experience “more than average stress.” Attending one of the top academic institutions in the world is never easy, especially with the unspoken pressure to seize every opportunity and make the most of our time here.

A ‘Harvard Meltdown’ can be characterized by many different feelings and actions: one that resonated with me most was getting my first midterm back in the fall semester. My stomach dropped at the “Grade Posted” notification on Canvas. Was this grade going to be a reassuring stamp of approval that I belonged here, that I was good enough? Or, was it going to confirm every fear and insecurity I had about attending Harvard? After finally opening the notification, the sense of comfort and pride I was hoping for did not follow. Instead, I questioned all my life decisions leading up to this moment and considered dropping out. This may sound like an overreaction, and looking back on how I felt, it certainly was.

However, my breakdown isn’t an uncommon experience, as it reflects a broader theme among students. With all the pressure we put ourselves under, stress, overexertion, and grades

easily become defeating and toxic. The feelings of isolation and underachievement when we don’t get the academic and extracurricular results we want are only exacerbated by the reluctance of our peers to share when they have these intrusive thoughts.

Facing significant obstacles at Harvard is an unavoidable part of the college experience. Burnout, anxiety, imposter syndrome—these feelings affect every student, even if few people openly show it. Considering how hardworking and committed the student body is, I was taken aback when I realized that no one talks about these struggles. And I’m not talking about a fleeting remark about a rough day; I mean deep, meaningful conversations about the real, often overwhelming impact Harvard has on its students. This silence is the root cause of the stress epidemic in our community.

No Harvard student is ‘ordinary.’ As we walk through our beautiful Cambridge campus every day, everyone we pass has a mind racing with thoughts—ambitions, results, interactions, and the occasional daydream. But these thoughts can become overwhelming and demanding at times. Especially with such a robust student body, stress at Harvard sprouts from so many avenues of life: academic performance, athletic commitments, club comps, friendships, and—beyond campus—the turbulence of the world we live in.

Speculation about the future, and what it holds for all of us individually, is intimidating and hard to escape. The American Psychological Association expresses how “headline anxiety” and “headline stress disorder” are severe prompts of stress due to media speculation and overload. When combined with our daily worries and responsibilities, it’s no wonder so many of us find ourselves on the brink of a meltdown.

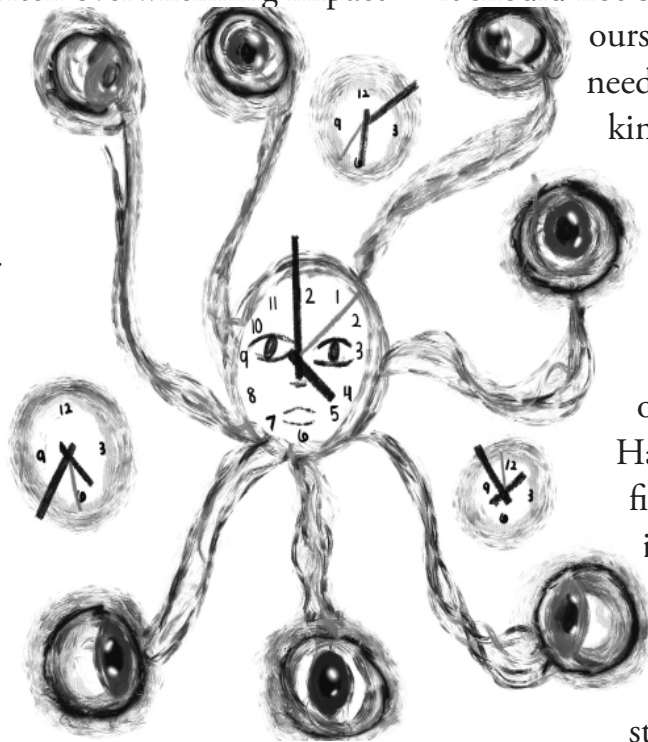
Striving for success at Harvard can be rewarding, but also intoxicating.

Subconsciously, we fall into the trap of comparing ourselves to others and examining what others are achieving or aspiring for. This begins a vicious cycle of waking up in the mornings constantly wondering if we can compete to be here. Imposter syndrome rates across America are as high as 82% in undergraduate and graduate students, according to Florida Atlantic University. The prominence of these feelings of isolation and self-doubt make it clear that the culture of stress at Harvard needs to be addressed, and understanding our worth and individual journeys is a way of achieving this.

While having a ‘Harvard Meltdown’ is sometimes helpful in forcing us to realize when we should give ourselves grace, it should not be the boundary we push ourselves to. A wake-up call is needed to help remind us to be kind to ourselves and reduce the extremes we work to. This comes with beginning to accept that making mistakes, or dare I say *failing*, at Harvard is not only normal, but human. Yes, Harvard may be a competitive, fierce machine at times, but it is also a community—a place full of people with hearts and emotions. Changing the culture of stress here starts with us. It’s in our hands to shift the stress culture at Harvard to one of balance, support, and fulfillment.

At Harvard, bad days are inevitable, but the overwhelming levels of stress induced by our busy lives shouldn’t be treated as a badge of honor or an unavoidable norm. We are all in control of our own journeys and what we get out of our college experience. So, the next time you feel anxious, tired, or upset, pause and ask yourself: *What do I truly need right now?* Maybe it’s an early night, a reassuring chat with a friend, or a trip to Berryline. The effort to beat stress at Harvard can begin whenever we want it to—like right now—by prioritizing balance and openly reassuring each other that our decisions are the right ones.

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ARTS

Bassett & Vance Join the Sphinx

The Hasty Pudding revives their Golden Sphinx Award and honors Angela Bassett and Courtney B. Vance.

BY LAYLA CHAARAOU I '26 AND RANIA JONES '27

For the first time since 2019, the Hasty Pudding Institute hosted their 8th Annual Golden Sphinx Award Ceremony on March 2. The Order of the Golden Sphinx, named for the Pudding's traditional symbol, "recognizes individuals in the entertainment industry for their extraordinary contributions to the performing arts" and is the Institute's highest honor. This year, the prestigious award honored a dynamic, powerhouse, married couple: actors Angela Bassett and Courtney B. Vance '82. Their careers, both as individuals and as a duo, have left an enduring mark on film, television, and theater.

Defined by its avant-garde spirit, nationally-recognized legacy, and Broadway-level professionalism, there is no theater experience quite like the Pudding. As the third oldest theatrical organization in the world, The Hasty Pudding has a storied legacy of honoring figures who have made profound contributions to the arts, and Bassett and Vance are no exception.

Bassett, an honorary Oscar recipient and Golden Globe and Emmy award-winning actress, is renowned for her ground-breaking performances in films such as "Malcolm X," "Waiting To Exhale," "How Stella Got Her Groove Back," "Black Panther," and "What's Love Got To Do With It," for which she received an Academy Award nomination. Vance, who boasts a career similarly filled with 2 Primetime Emmy awards and critically acclaimed roles, is known for his performances in "The Hunt for Red October," "Lovecraft Country," "The Adventures of Huck Finn," and "The People vs. OJ Simpson: American Crime Story."

Together, the duo, who met at Yale School of Drama, have not only established their individual careers, but have demonstrated the beautiful capacity that resides within the power of collaboration. Together, they own a production company—"Bassett Vance Productions"—where they have worked behind the scenes on numerous television and feature productions.

The celebration was held at the historic Farkas Hall for the first time in the award's history, allowing undergraduates across the College and Harvard community members to attend. The evening was filled with warmth, banter, and an undeniable sense of admiration for the pair. Notable guests at the ceremony included former Harvard president Claudine Gay, current Harvard president Alan Garber, *Black-ish* actress and Harvard graduate Yara Shahidi

'22, and an array of family members, friends, guests, and fans of Bassett and Vance, including Bassett's first ever talent agent.

Previous recipients of the Golden Sphinx Award include Marc Anthony, Derek McLane, Paris Barclay, Daryl Roth, Clive David, David Heyman, and Michael Lynton. The evening began in true Pudding fashion with an extravagant song-and-dance number led by Alex Lim '26 and Emma Rogers '25, alongside other current members of the Hasty Pudding Theatricals cast and the Harvard Krokodilos.

Following this, Andrew Farkas '82, Graduate Chairman of the Hasty Pudding Institute and a dear friend of Bassett and Vance's, introduced the iconic pair, joking that it was the "first time that Hollywood royalty skipped the Oscars for the Hasty Pudding Theatricals." Farkas continued to joke that the two would also be the first couple to receive a "SEGOT:" Sphinx, Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony.

The ceremony kicked off with a highlight reel showcasing Bassett's and Vance's most iconic roles and moments from their careers, which was met with a standing ovation from the crowd. Following the montage, Farkas led an engaging question and answer session with the couple, where they reflected on their journeys, craft, and the impact of family on their success.

Vance, ever the storyteller, shared a memorable anecdote, taking us back to his early theater days. He recalled how, when cast in the play "Fences," he didn't know the difference between upstage and downstage: "Don't be ashamed of the fact that you don't know everything," he advised. He urged the audience not to quit or give up until you find the thing that brings you joy.

In a particularly sweet moment, Vance shared his admiration for Bassett and her work. "She's my inspiration," he said.

Bassett, known for her unwavering grace and talent, reflected on the importance of perseverance in the face of adversity. She spoke of difficulties of representation for artists, offering a powerful message to young performers: "Don't waste your time with cynicism. Hold onto your wonder." The humor

and warmth emanating from the two as they cracked jokes and reflected on the serendipity of their careers was contagious.

Alongside the award, the HPI presented them with a \$50,000 grant for their charity of choice. They chose to direct the award to Heartfelt Education through the Arts, a Los-Angeles based organization that aims to provide arts education opportunities for underserved communities. Farkas highlighted that the Pudding's philanthropic mission is to further the advancement of arts education worldwide, with the Institute having awarded countless



grants to individuals and organizations since its founding.

The main event of the evening was when the couple's two children, Bronwyn Golden Vance '28 and Slater Josiah Vance, bestowed them with the physical Golden Sphinx Award. Bassett and Vance, visibly moved, acknowledged their children as the true "manifestation" of their success and legacy.

As the ceremony came to a close, Farkas expressed his gratitude to the Pudding board and everyone who contributed to make the evening a success. The ceremony concluded with a moving homage performance, led by cast member Gabrielle Greene '27. Alongside the Theatricals cast and Kroks, she delivered an original rendition of Tina Turner's "Proud Mary," with lyric changes that alluded to Bassett's and Vance's careers. With outrageous costumes, fierce dance breaks, and astounding vocal riffs, it was a truly fitting tribute to two individuals whose careers have been defined by their constant evolution, inspiration, and boundary-pushing work.

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LOVE THE SONG "PROUD MARY."**

**PHOTO COURTESY OF LAYLA
CHAARAOU I '26**

Underground at the Ag

Our love letter to Ghungroo: Rooted.

BY SARA KUMAR '27 AND SACHI LAUMAS '26

Painted lehengas and Parle-G cookie boxes adorn wooden set panels of the Agassiz—affectionately dubbed the “Ag.” Bollywood vocals mixed with piano, guitar, and percussion echo through the theater. Spots, PAR cans, and Fresnels illuminate the stage. 12 dancers in classical Indian attire stand in four lines. The first dance of Ghungroo 2025 is about to begin.

Honoring a diaspora that has existed for over 2,500 years, Ghungroo combines assorted acts of dance, music, drama, and art entirely choreographed, written, created, and performed by undergraduates to pay an annual homage to South Asian culture. Since its inception in 1988, Ghungroo has grown to become Harvard’s largest student-run production.

Each year, the show centers around a core idea that guides the cast through weeks of consistent rehearsals, set painting shifts, and collaboration. Ghungroo 2025 embraced the theme of “Rooted,” alluding to the common ancestors and lands that connect the show’s manifold of dialects, styles, and cultures. “We seek to uncover our roots—to learn the languages, savor the flavors, and understand and reconcile with the history that forms the backbone of our heritage. We seek a home that spans both worlds,” Ghungroo wrote when announcing this motif.

The cast came together for four shows from Feb. 20 to Feb. 23 on the Agassiz stage to present their months of dedication framed within this concept.

However, while the Thursday through Sunday run is exciting in its entirety, there is one particular show that remains long-awaited by performers, crew, and audience members. Widely known as the “Ghungroo alumni show,” Saturday night reminds the team that this organization fosters



PHOTO COURTESY OF REZA SHAMJI '25

a community across generations as Harvard College graduates return to reminisce and celebrate the new team’s production. And apart from these students, parents and grandparents are always in attendance, proudly watching their children embrace the rhythms and tongues of their origins and honor the cross-cultural path they paved.

As Ghungroo continued to write, the show is “an homage to the courage with which those before us planted their dreams, pushing roots through rocky earth, anchoring a strong foundation for future generations.”

After realizing neither of us were well-versed enough on the sitar for a musical act or sufficiently experienced with lights and sound for the tech team, we chose to join Ghungroo 2025’s Underground dance.

Often described as “Desi-hip-hop,” the dance style blends traditional Desi music styles with global street movement to create a unique art form. Though often perceived as mere techno beats paired with smooth yet punctuated movement, the Underground dance goes beyond the steps as it embodies South Asian culture. Each year, Ghungroo’s Underground dance leverages the soundtrack and choreography to reflect the style’s fusion.

Merging KR\$NA, Mukesh, and Shankar Jaikishan’s “Joota Japni” with Tyler the Creator’s “Sticky,” our dance welcomed the genre’s background through a melding of American and Indian sounds. We moved in

Bhangra steps before sliding into body rolls. And after approximately three minutes, the lights dimmed, and our team cheered as we ran backstage.

Apart from the rewarding experience of performing our final product, watching our dance progress from the studio to the stage was equally as memorable. Throughout

February, we consistently made our way to the Harvard Dance

Center to practice the carefully choreographed moves of Saara Chaudry '26, Ananya Choudhary '27, and Gauri Sood '26. We spent weeks practicing and perfecting our performance of South Asian diasporic culture while building a community within our dance.

And as a result of our Desi upbringing, this dance resonated with each of us.

Sachi: Participating in the Underground dance was a unique way to connect with my South Asian roots while also actively acknowledging how the culture morphs and changes due to the ever-evolving traditions. The fusion of hip-hop and Indian dance steps allowed me to explore the flexibility of the South Asian space and how art forms such as dance can encompass the complex cultural experience of diaspora and displacement.

When I was five years old, my parents enrolled me in a form of Indian classical dance, Kathak. Despite their best efforts, I lacked much interest in dedicating any number of hours per week to exploring my culture through music and dance. I was much more interested in learning to ice skate. Reflecting on my brief experience with Kathak, I realize that at five years old (and in the years after), I did not fully appreciate how I could connect to my identity through the arts. Though I loved lounging on the couch to watch “Rab Ne Bana di Jodi” for the fiftieth time, I could not see myself up on a stage participating.

Joining Ghungroo allowed me to immerse myself in my heritage in a whole new way, one that allowed me to be up on stage alongside my Bollywood favorites.

Sara: Despite my Punjabi and Gujarati roots, I have rarely immersed myself in South Asian cultural spaces. Raised in immigrant households, both my parents were taught to suppress their ethnic heritage to properly assimilate into American life. After hearing how the alien clothing, thick accents, and coarse hair had estranged our Desi peers, their parents believed that white-washing would maximize long-term success. My dad's first name of "Madhur" became "Alan," kurtas shortened to Gymboree t-shirts, and English replaced both my parents' Hindi.

Such values translated into my upbringing. This doesn't mean my family hasn't always appreciated the delicate beading on the lehengas we wore on Diwali or the Nastaliq script remaining on old Indian snack boxes that now held Club Crackers in our pantry. However, after 19 years of being raised as an "American," by the time I realized I wanted to fully reconnect with my South Asian heritage, I felt too estranged from the space to engage with the culturally rich community.

But after arriving at Harvard and seeing the power of the diaspora on campus, I knew I wanted to get involved. Joining the Ghungroo Underground dance this year was an incredible experience. I built relationships across a community I never thought I would have the opportunity to truly discover and was reminded that it is never too late to immerse yourself in your heritage.

Our passion for this organization was shared by many. "Ghungroo allows me to have a space that I can call home away from home. It's a beautiful experience where everyone from the South Asian community comes together to celebrate the identity that binds them together," an anonymous member expressed.

We are both looking forward to continuing Ghungroo in the coming years. The friendships we fostered while taking the shuttle to the Quad,

the laughs we tried to stifle as our crisp dance formations slowly disintegrated, and our outbursts of cheers on-and-off stage after every three-minute performance will forever last.

However, we are also excited to continue working on and with a production that extends beyond South Asian expression to become a form of activism.

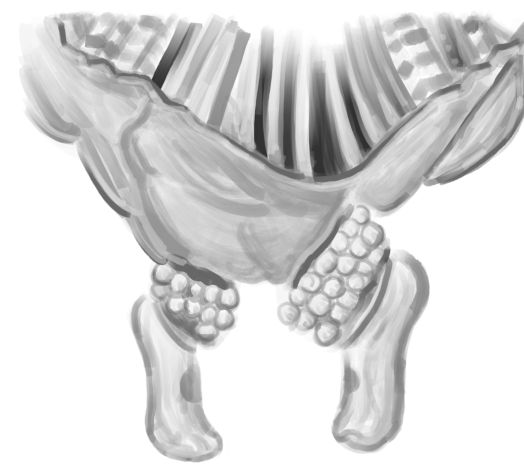
As a genre, Underground is a cultural phenomenon.

Experimental Bollywood artist and Underground pioneer Nitin Sawhney commented on the power of this music in a 2019 interview with *The Guardian*. "The whole idea of the movement was that cultural change could occur and that Asians would feel they have relevance and identity within the wider culture—that's what was exciting. Not this idea that we were underground, but that we were part of music," he explained.

The concept of being a "part" of something was particularly emblematic of the genre. Gaining traction in the UK after the nation's Indian immigrant boom, the *Guardian* explains how "the music these first-generation British Asians made was full of internal tension." Working to fight for their place in this new, slowly diversifying country, the "tension" inherent in the movement slowly loosened to open the door for Indian dancers to express themselves within the freeform space between traditional styles and Western influences.

Our costume is a great example of the message of counterculture imbued in Underground. The majority of Ghungroo dances donned traditional Indian ghagra cholis, sarees, or dupattas. However, we wore taupe t-shirts hanging off our shoulders and black cargo pants that dragged across the floor. Although at times we undeniably envied the flow of our friends' vibrant purple and orange Bollywood skirts, we reminded ourselves that the clothing was symbolic of something greater: representation and the refusal to blindly conform.

Additionally, the Tibetan Uyghur dance reminded us of the power of Ghungroo as the dancers waved the flags of Tibet and East



Turkestan on the stage, calling for the liberation of their people from the People's Republic of China. The choreographers—Tenzin Yiga '27 and Kawsar Yasin '26—and performers leveraged their art as a form of action and empowerment, reminding the audience that their homelands are currently at risk of cultural erasure while using their three minutes on stage to keep their heritage alive.

"We chose to choreograph a Tibetan/Uyghur dance at Ghungroo to not only share our cultures with the Harvard community and gain visibility, but to illustrate the vibrancy and resilience of our diasporas," Yiga and Yasin explained. "It shows how our liberation is intertwined as Tibetans and Uyghurs have engaged in the struggle for freedom together in recent decades. As we remember our roots and pay homage to our histories that transcend borders, we also hold the radical hope of a free Tibet and East Turkistan."

Ghungroo is so much more than a four-night production; it extends beyond dances, skits, and spoken-word performances as a form of solidarity.

As we finished reading the explanation behind the theme, we connected with the words as they embodied the passion we feel for Ghungroo, the community we found within the space, and the ideas it represents.

"[Ghungroo] is a narrative of longing and discovery that follows the physical and metaphorical quest to connect with our heritage. With each step on our route, together we will dig beneath the surface of our ancestral tree, unearth stories, and navigate the tangled roots that connect us all."

SARA KUMAR '27 (SJKUMAR@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) AND SACHI LAUMAS '26 (SLAUMAS@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) ARE STILL SINGING THE UNDERGROUND MIX.

GRAPHIC BY ANGIE LI '28

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Kate Hamill's "Odyssey" Makes Waves

A review and panel discussion of the adaptation of the Greek epic at the A.R.T.

BY JULES SANDERS '28 AND NASHLA TURCIOS '28

Oules: I have a troubling confession to make: I cannot help but spoil things for myself. Every time I see a Broadway play or start a new television show, I look up the entire plot beforehand so I know what to expect. Something about reading the Wikipedia summary of a particularly shocking moment—say, Tony Vlachos's blindsided Sarah Lacina in "Survivor: Cagayan," Nick Arnstein's arrest in "Funny Girl," or Greg Serrano leaving West Covina to go to business school in "Crazy Ex-Girlfriend"—establishes a mental image that I'm excited to see surpassed by the director's own.

When I received an email from the Classics Department offering a free ticket to Kate Hamill's "The Odyssey," running through March 16 at the American Repertory Theater, I felt like I knew what I was going into. Not only had I read the epic the prior semester and written a paper about the symbolism of speech, but I had also seen a stage production drawn from the same source material two years prior. In the basement of St. Jean's Church during my junior year of high school, I saw the York Theatre Company's musical-comedy "Penelope, or How the Odyssey Was Really Written."

Now today, while sitting in seat G-7 at Hamill's production, my mind darted from the Canaday Hall dorm room where I read Homer's words to the street outside St. Jean's where I discussed "Penelope" with my father, to the meeting room in the Science Center where I would later write an essay on "Penelope," the final chapter of James Joyce's "Ulysses," to the theater where at that moment I sat to Odysseus's home island of Ithaca. *Lots* going on.

Hamill's interpretation begins in Ithaca, where Telemachus (Carlo Albán) worries that one of Penelope's

suitors will woo his mother and usurp his rightful place on the throne of the island of Ithaca as his father, Odysseus (Wayne T. Carr), takes years to return from the Trojan War. Making use of shadow puppetry (all too reminiscent of Plato's allegory of the cave), Penelope explains to her son why Odysseus had to leave for Troy—to save Telemachus, whom King of Mycenae Agamemnon had placed in front of Odysseus's plow. (I promise this is important for later.)

Act I sees us dart between a veiled Penelope's increasingly weaker rebukes of the suitors' advances and Odysseus and his crew's escape from Polyphemus's giant projected yellow eye. Act II is spent with Circe (playwright Kate Hamill), who offers Odysseus a "Scott Pilgrim"-esque choice between forgetting the trauma of the Trojan War by staying with her forever or learning to live with his past on the open seas. He chooses the latter, while one suitor, Amphinomus (Keshav Moodliar) successfully seduces Penelope. In Act III, the sirens kill Odysseus's men, then Odysseus explains how he ordered the death of the infant son of Hector, and eventually Odysseus and Telemachus slaughter all of Penelope's suitors except Amphinomus, whom Penelope begs her husband not to kill.

This all sounds pretty heavy, and at times it was. Act III was noticeably darker in tone, perhaps even bordering on maudlin. Odysseus's description of his crimes at war to the peace-loving princess Nausicaa, who welcomes him in after he washes up alone on her island, was gripping at first but grew tiring after the first few minutes. At that point, we know he's about to return to Ithaca, so why keep us waiting any longer? I appreciated the levity of the first two acts, particularly the performance of Alejandra Escalante, Nike Imoru, and Hamill herself, who together played a trio of multifaceted female characters—at

times sheep, the Fates, and Penelope's servants.

One moment in particular made me chuckle: when Telemachus improperly barges into Penelope's private quarters and she accosts him for scandalizing her ladies-in-waiting, one of them utters a flirtatious "Heyyy" before recoiling in awkward embarrassment. In Hamill's reinterpretation of "The Odyssey" as a beleaguered man's attempt to cope with the trauma of war, moments of levity offered a welcome counterpoint to the omnipresent threat of death.

The first few minutes make it seem like you're in for a mythical drama; our first foray into Ithaca features almost exclusively expository premonitions and explanations. It is not until Odysseus's introduction that the comedy sets in. As he and his suitors anger their female hosts by stealing all of their supplies, the first expletives are launched across the stage. Hamill deftly plays with our expectations of what a stage production of the "Odyssey" should look like.

The York Theatre Company's "Penelope" of my high school days asked us to wonder if the adventures of Odysseus on the open seas were merely falsified letters written by Penelope herself to buy time with the suitors. Hamill's play similarly requests a suspension of unwavering belief in the Homeric text as we watch and enjoy—there's no mention of the nymph Calypso, the carnivorous Laestrygonians, or the precarious Scylla and Charybdis. Circe tells Odysseus that stories about him, including that he and his sailors have dined with an enigmatic group of flower-consuming beings (ostensibly, the Lotus-Eaters), are already circulating through the Aegean. And whereas Homer recounts how Odysseus and his crew outsmart the sirens, Hamill feeds the four remaining sailors to the musical monsters. What

preference of alternative retellings over faithful adaptation? Could it be inherent in our understanding of the universal experience of the Odyssean journey to apply it to our own trials?

This dissonance between the source material and this rendition wasn't a major shortcoming of the show as a whole, but at times it stuck out where it didn't need to. For example, the choice to name one of the sailors "Antinous," famously the first suitor Odysseus kills at the end of the Homeric text, was but one example of needless divergence.

On the whole, Hamill kept me on the edge of my seat as I was told a story I've read, watched, and heard countless times.

Penelope's adultery is a surprising but fascinating addition that reflects the sheer quantity of craft Hamill put into this production: we, the audience, can tell that something is off about the way Penelope is flirting back with Amphinomus at the end of Act I, but surely, we think, the play won't depart that much from the source material—but then it does. Yet this choice gave me false hope for a more transgressive ending. While we're left with Odysseus and Penelope staring at one another with uncertainty, surrounded by the corpses of the suitors, something felt lacking from the final scene. The suitors were so ridiculous and whimsical throughout the play that I was kind of rooting against Odysseus at the end.

Perhaps that's what Hamill was aiming for with all the focus placed on Odysseus's trauma from the war. We can see what he's gone through, and we can see why he's suffering, but we aren't on his side. Nausicaa recoils in horror upon hearing his stories of war, and the Greek chorus chants of "Stop! Don't! Please!" in recollection of Odysseus's murder of Astyanax with swelling volume and desperation

as the play persists despite their pleas. Hamill sets up an eerie parallel between the murder of Hector's son and the survival of Telemachus, one that (I told you!) links the beginning and end of the production expertly.

Hamill's performance as Circe unequivocally steals the show—her voice, creepy without bordering on cartoonish, unsettles the audience as much as it does Odysseus. The way she sits ethereally upon the baskets of fruit and meat center-stage evokes a strong sense of discomfort that I'm not completely sure how to explain.

The performances of Carr, Imoru, and Moodliar, as well as Benjamin Bonenfant as a sailor and a suitor, also stood out from the cast. The sole weak link among them was Nichols, whose Penelope did not quite match her castmate Moodliar's dynamic Amphinomus. I at times felt akin to Telemachus at the onset of the epic: desperate to leave Ithaca for whatever Odysseus was doing.

Nashla: As someone who struggled with the rigid interpretation of "The Odyssey" imposed by traditional AP literature classes, listening to *Myth and Modernity: A Conversation about The Odyssey* at the Loeb Drama Center this past Monday was particularly moving. My attention was drawn to Carr, Classics Department scholars David Elmer, Emily Greenwood, Naomi Weiss, and Museum of Fine Arts curator Phoebe Segal, as they discussed how interpretations of Homer's poem have evolved across time. Notably, they emphasized that the storytelling tradition of the wanderer who must find a way home is not confined to Greek mythology.

When asked whether they welcomed modern adaptations of "The Odyssey," Greenwood responded, "I want different versions of The Odyssey that rhyme with my own experience as a modern subject of the 21st century." She then highlighted African American interpretations of

Homer's work, drawing connections to Frederick Douglass's 1845 narrative—asserting that "there is not a better Odyssey than the adventures of fugitive slaves"—Jacob Lawrence's "Great Migration" series, and Toni Morrison's novel "Home." The parallels between "The Odyssey's" theme of wandering and the history of race in America were striking.

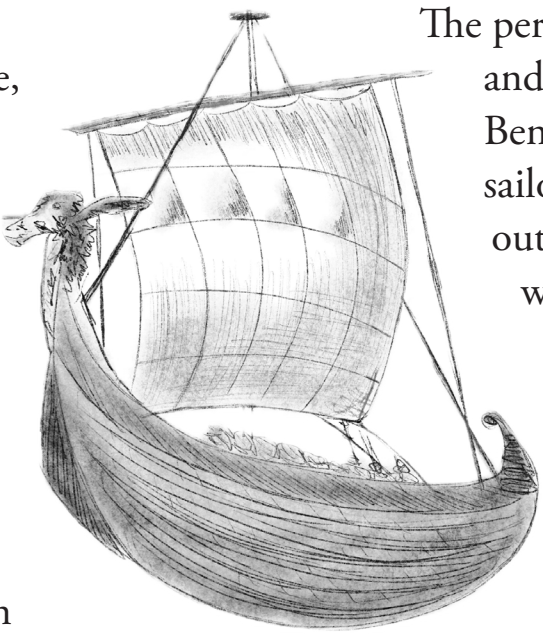
In this sense, Hamill's adaptation achieves something remarkable: it shifts the focus to characters whose lived experiences have traditionally been marginalized. The panelists noted that the play spotlights the women left behind and the children who grow up without knowing their families. Drawing connections to contemporary struggles, Segal observed, "I noticed they all don't know who is dead and who is alive. I think that's relevant to what is happening today—coming home from war and not knowing who is still alive."

The discussion also touched on the play's portrayal of trauma, particularly the PTSD Odysseus suffers from. Carr reflected on the responsibility of embodying such a character: "As an actor, we are trained to hold up the mirror to life. A lot of the inspiration came from the people we talked to. My dad is a vet, so I talked to him about it. I don't know anyone who has been in war who does not have PTSD. It is an honor to portray them," he said.

The panel illuminated how Hamill's "Odyssey" breathes raw emotion into Homer's poem—the ache of suffering, the yearning for home, and the quiet, unbreakable strength that carries one forward. Hamill doesn't just retell "The Odyssey"—she makes it pulse with the agony and hope that defines the human experience.

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THINKS EVERYONE SHOULD
VISIT THE AMERICAN
REPERTORY THEATER.**

GRAPHIC BY KELLY TUNG '27



SPORTS

Indy Sportsbook: Podium Picks

Pre-season testing takeaways and our predictions for the 2025 Formula 1 Season.

BY WHITNEY FORD '28

Formula 1 is back and better than ever after a solid week of pre-season testing in Bahrain. Coming off of a drama-filled 2024 season with grid changes, championship battles, and seven different Grand Prix winners, the 2025 season is bound to bring even more excitement. Ending his 12-year tenure with Mercedes, seven-time World Champion Lewis Hamilton will debut in this upcoming season with Ferrari, demoting Carlos Sainz Jr. to Williams. Additionally, Liam Lawson will be stepping up to occupy Red Bull's coveted second seat, and six rookie drivers will be joining the grid for their first full-time seasons. With the Australian Grand Prix kicking off the season next weekend, here are some fictional lines to prepare you for racing's return.

Constructors' Championship Winner: McLaren +130

F1 is no stranger to rivalries between teams. The 2021 season witnessed one of the most fierce and controversial team rivalries in motorsport history when Red Bull and Mercedes went head-to-head for the Drivers' and Constructors' Championships. Red Bull emerged on top, though the validity of their win remains a topic of passionate debate. Red Bull carried that momentum forward through two uncontested Constructors' victories in 2022 and 2023, with margins of 205 points and 451 points, respectively. Last season saw a disruption in Red Bull's dominance, with McLaren and Ferrari entering the last race of the season only 21 points apart. Despite a strong performance from Ferrari that earned them second and third place on the podium, Lando Norris's win secured the Constructors' title for

McLaren. During the last three days of pre-season testing, McLaren emerged as clear pack leaders, holding on tight to their World Champion distinction. However, with Ferrari, Red Bull, and Mercedes all putting in some strong times, this year's title fight will be a close one.

Hamilton vs. Leclerc: Charles Leclerc +400

Since the announcement in February 2024, Lewis Hamilton's unexpected move to Ferrari that ended his residency at Mercedes has been one of the most anticipated aspects of the coming season. Heading into his nineteenth season in F1, Hamilton is revered as one of the greatest drivers of all time and positioned to butt heads with Charles Leclerc, Ferrari's long-time poster child. Leclerc has occupied the position of lead driver for Ferrari since 2019. However, it does not seem likely that Hamilton will readily accept a demotion to second driver after serving as Mercedes' lead driver for over a decade. The question is: Who will emerge on top in the standings? Despite Hamilton's long history of dominance in the sport, Leclerc has been performing at his peak ability, while Hamilton's performances have declined in the last few years.

Australian Grand Prix Winner: Oscar Piastri +650

As the season opener, the Australian Grand Prix is bound to deliver a thrilling start. With most senior drivers competing closely during testing, the unprecedented number of rookies on the grid is set to spice things up. Bolstered by McLaren's strong performance and title of reigning world champion, our pick for the winner of the 2025 Australian Grand Prix is the Melbourne native Oscar Piastri. In just his second year in F1,

Piastri achieved his maiden Grand Prix victory in Hungary, closely followed by another win at the Azerbaijan Grand Prix. Considering his consistent performance throughout the

2024 season that landed him fourth place in the standings, Piastri will use his home track advantage to achieve his first Australian Grand Prix win next weekend.

Most Crash Damage: Kimi Antonelli +700

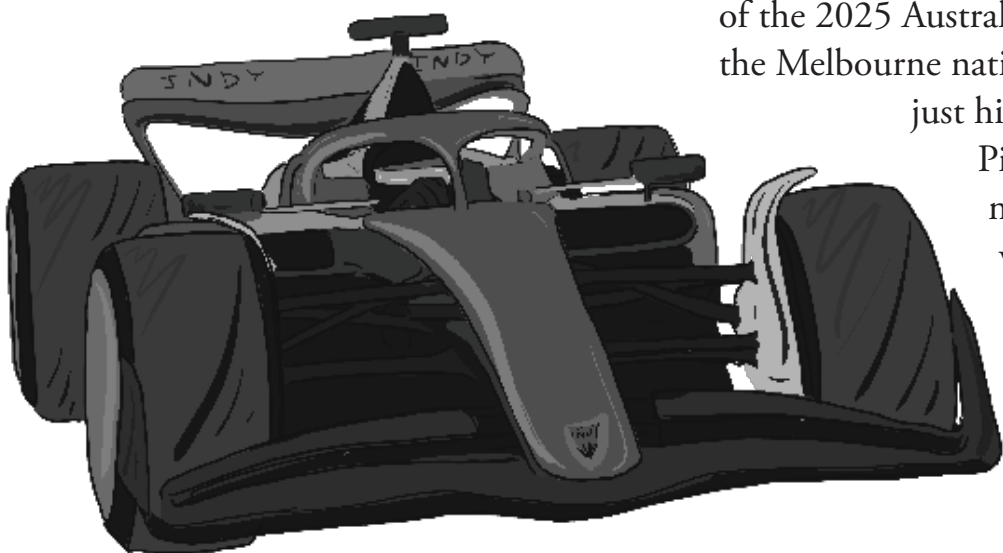
The jury is out for which driver will incur the highest repair costs in the 2025 season as Sergio Perez and Logan Sargeant, the previous crash damage connoisseurs, retire. Perez amassed \$4.83 million in damages last year, while Sargeant incurred \$4.33 million throughout the 2023 season. Though any of the rookies could be a sound choice for the most crash damage in the 2025 season, we have selected Mercedes driver Kimi Antonelli as our first pick. Having been promoted directly from Formula 2 to occupy Lewis Hamilton's spot at Mercedes, Antonelli has never raced in an F1 Grand Prix and will have a large adjustment to make as he adapts to racing at the highest level. Not to mention, he will become the third youngest driver to start an F1 Grand Prix at just 18 years old.

Drivers' Championship Winner: Max Verstappen +350

With the 2025 F1 season shaping up to be one of the most unpredictable in recent years, there is no clear favorite for the winner of the Drivers' Championship. Last season saw an exciting resurgence in both McLaren and Ferrari's performance, but Max Verstappen could not be denied his fourth consecutive title. Though McLaren's Lando Norris and Ferrari's Charles Leclerc are bound to put up a strong fight, our money remains on Verstappen to be victorious. Verstappen's ability to extract the very most out of his car, along with Red Bull's dependable performance, gives him a strong edge against the rest of the grid in his fight to retain his title as reigning world champion.

WHITNEY FORD '28 (WFORD@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) HOPES THAT THIS WILL BE THE YEAR SHE CAN WATCH A GRAND PRIX IN PERSON.

GRAPHIC BY CLARA LAKE '27



The Art of a Mental Health Walk

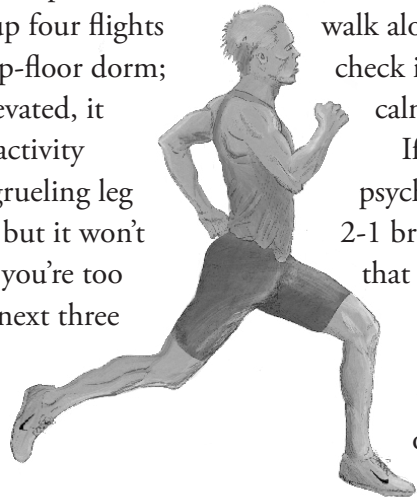
How consistent exercise can help prevent a crash-out.

BY KATE OLIVER '26

At Harvard, we toss around the term “crash-out” as casually as if it’s just another everyday occurrence—like leaving your laundry in the machine for a minute too long and coming down to find it discarded on the floor in a plastic bag. Students are relentlessly torn between academic, social, and physical demands, pushing themselves to the brink of burnout long before they even face the unyielding pressures of post-graduate life. In the struggle to meet every demand, physical activity is often the first casualty, sacrificed in favor of getting more than just four hours of sleep each night. However, committing to some form of exercise can be the key to overcoming the crushing weight of Harvard life.

There is no shortage of research to confirm that exercise of any form is critical for your physical health. The United States Department of Health recommends that adults aim to get anywhere from 75 to 150 minutes of physical activity a week. This can include anything from a planned run on a MAC treadmill to walking up four flights of stairs to reach your Eliot top-floor dorm; as long as your heart rate is elevated, it counts. The key is finding an activity that promotes consistency: a grueling leg day may boost physical gains, but it won’t support your mental health if you’re too sore to leave your bed for the next three days.

Surprisingly, one of the most convenient and effective ways to stay



active and improve your mental health is walking. Walking is low-impact, easily accessible, and necessary for daily life on Harvard’s sprawling campus. A comprehensive review by *JAMA Psychiatry* found that walking outside can decrease stress and anxiety, contribute to a more optimistic attitude, and lower your risk of depression by almost 25%. Something so simple, with so many benefits, is the perfect way to avoid the “crash-out.” In the long run, stepping outside for even five minutes to loop around Lamont will serve you much better than chugging another Red Bull at 2 a.m.

Now, there is always the option to run instead of walk, but experts advise against this if your primary focus is to reset mentally. While running causes an increase in heart rate, the concern becomes focusing on the activity itself rather than taking the time to process internal thoughts and feelings. Running to the point of your calves cramping is not doing your mental health any favors; on the other hand, a calming walk along the Charles River gives you time to check in, assess, and process your emotions in a calm environment.

If you want to take it one step further, psychologists suggest implementing the 5-4-3-2-1 breathing method while walking, a process that is often recommended to combat anxiety attacks. This method starts by identifying five tangible things that you can see on your walk, such as flowers, trees, or a pair of geese in the river. Next, shift your focus to four objects you can touch, which

can range from the grass underneath your feet to the hem of your sweatshirt. After that, single out three noises from the environment (ideally ones that do not set off your fight-or-flight response, like an ambulance siren would).

You then pinpoint two smells around you; preferably these are pleasant aromas, but anything will work. Finally, identify one remnant of taste left over from your midnight Jefe’s burrito or the dining hall coffee you had to wake yourself up this morning. The combination of this routine calms your parasympathetic nervous system, lowering your heart rate and easing mental strain.

Should your mental health walk not provide the support you need to prevent a “crash-out,” Harvard provides many resources, including the CAMHS Cares Hotline and access to therapy through the TimelyCare app. Regardless of how you choose to care for your mental health, the most crucial thing is to prioritize it with the same importance as your physical health. As the weather warms up and seasonal depression begins to end, get outside, soak up vitamins from the sunlight, and use your silly little mental health walk to feel better.

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ACROSS

1. stage fright, opposite of this issue
2. controversial power source
3. "I'm gonna _____" (stressed)
4. made of Datty, formerly
5. hissy fit

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