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INDEPENDENT

The student weekly
since 1969



the
COMMENCEMENT
issue

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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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Harvard, Trump, and SEVP Certification: The University Responds

Harvard publicly answers following the Trump administration's ban on foreign student enrollment.

by LAYLA CHAARAOUİ '26 AND SARA KUMAR '27

In the 24 hours since the Trump administration announced that Harvard would no longer be able to host international enrollees for the 2025-2026 academic year, University affiliates have stood their ground. “We condemn this unlawful and unwarranted action,” University President Alan Garber '76 wrote in a University-wide message on the morning of May 23. “It imperils the futures of thousands of students and scholars across Harvard and serves as a warning to countless others at colleges and universities throughout the country who have come to America to pursue their education and fulfill their dreams.”

The most recently updated list of schools certified for the Student and Exchange Visitor Program is over 200 pages and includes all eight Ivy League institutions.

The Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem's letter claimed that the SEVP certificate revocation means that current Harvard enrollees with F-1 visas or J-1 nonimmigrants must transfer to other institutions for the 2025-2026 academic year, and the University cannot host any incoming individuals under those classifications. Harvard has 72 hours to respond with newly requested information to reverse this amendment.

Since the 2006-2007 academic year, around 20% of Harvard University's total enrollment has been international. Hailing from over 140 countries, the 2024-2025 academic year saw the largest percentage of nonimmigrant individuals, reaching 27.2% or 6,793 undergraduate and graduate students. The Graduate School of Design, in particular, strongly benefits from its foreign population, with 53% of its enrollees for the 2022-2023 academic year being non-U.S. citizens. During this same year, 12% of Harvard College's student body was foreign.

“For those international students and scholars affected by yesterday's action, know that you are vital members of our community. You are our classmates and friends, our colleagues and mentors, our partners in the work of this great institution,” Garber continued.

Student leadership followed suit. “In light of the recent revocation of Harvard's SEVP status by the Department of Homeland Security, the Harvard Undergraduate Association stands in complete solidarity with members of our international community and strongly condemns the explicit targeting of Harvard's international population,” announced the Harvard Undergraduate Association, Harvard's student government, in a statement released May 23.

“With many of the core members of our undergraduate community being on student visas, we understand the way students from all across the globe enrich the spaces we share. We are

working closely with the administration to ensure that our peers are supported in the best manner possible in these testing times.”

Campus groups similarly responded.

The Institute of Politics is Harvard's largest undergraduate organization, with 18 programs, six coalitions, and a membership of over 1,200 students. Although the IOP is nonpartisan, its Student Advisory Committee asserted that “interference with students' education is not a partisan issue. Using the lives of students as political leverage is a deeply inhumane act.”

“For 58 years, current and future leaders from around the world have gathered at the Institute of Politics to learn from their differences, share their values, and maximize their impact,” the SAC continued.

“The IOP is home to hundreds of international students. They are integral to realizing our nonpartisan mission of inspiring ethical and effective public service around the world...our student leadership team strongly rebukes this targeted, unproductive, and deeply unjust measure.”

The Harvard College Democrats' 197th executive board called the administration's revocation of Harvard's credentials to enroll international students “textbook authoritarianism,” adding that “Harvard must continue to hold the line.”

“This university has been the epicenter of the right's war on education for some time, but today's escalation goes far beyond what we've seen so far. This is Trump punitively targeting international students simply because Harvard refused to fully cooperate with an unconstitutional attempt to curtail academic freedom,” they added.

“Democracy dies when dissenting voices cannot speak freely. Harvard held the line when it needed to, and now faces retribution.”

The Harvard Republican Club has not yet responded to yesterday's developments. However, on April 14, the student organization's board spoke on the proposed funding cuts. “The Harvard Republican Club believes that this University can be Great. We are hopeful that a resolution can be reached and that Harvard will return to the American principles that formed the great men of this nation.”

The College's cultural organizations condemned the Trump administration's decision.

“Harvard's South Asian Association strongly condemns the US Department of Homeland Security's recent decision,” an Instagram post from SAA on May 22 read. “If this decision by the current federal administration is actualized, Harvard will lose some of its greatest minds and kindest souls, and SAA will irrevocably lose its community.”

Harvard's Black Men's Forum had

commentary akin to SAA's. “International students at Harvard form an irreplaceable part of the school community and Harvard's BMF,” an Instagram post from the student organization on May 22 declared. “As Harvard's administration navigates the consequences of this prejudiced decision, Harvard's BMF's [sic] reiterates our unwavering support for our international community.”

These statements come weeks after the University withdrew funding for Class of 2025 affinity group graduation celebrations.

As the events of this certification removal continue to unfold, Harvard's student, faculty, and administrative population will likely continue to adjust and respond to the Trump administration.

“To all international students: you belong at Harvard, and we will stand for you,” the SAA post concluded.

“Thanks to you, we know more and understand more, and our country and our world are more enlightened and more resilient. We will support you as we do our utmost to ensure that Harvard remains open to the world,” Garber commented.

Harvard has filed a complaint against this SEVP certification removal and followed up with a temporary restraining order. TRO approval was granted on May 23.

There is a community gathering at the Queens Head Pub from 5-6 p.m. on May 23 for all available University affiliates. The Harvard International Office has released resources related to the Trump administration's actions against the international student body.

LAYLA CHAARAOUİ '26 (LAYLACHAARAOUİ@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) AND SARA KUMAR '27 (SJKUMAR@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WRITE NEWS FOR THE HARVARD INDEPENDENT.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HARVARD INDEPENDENT



Reckoning and Renewal: Harvard's Spring 2025 in Review

Reviewing the major events and shifts that marked Harvard's Spring 2025 semester.

BY NASHLA TURCIOS '28

Over the past few months, Harvard University has faced significant social, political, and legal turmoil, largely due to targeted challenges from the Trump administration against the school and its policies. The 2025 spring semester brought student movements and potent lawsuits against the federal government—all of which left the campus at the center of national attention. The University's past and forthcoming decisions are continuing to receive increased scrutiny.

This spring, Harvard welcomed the newly admitted class of 2029. Unlike recent years, this admissions cycle marked the return of required standardized testing—a shift from the test-optional policy adopted from 2020 to 2024. The University also announced it would not release detailed admissions data regarding the number of applicants, class acceptance rate, and demographic breakdowns until the fall. This new choice comes two years after the *SFFA v. Harvard* ruling overturned affirmative action.

On May 13, the University named the successor to Dean Rakesh Khurana, who announced on Aug. 29 that he would be stepping down from the role after a decade. David Deming, Isabelle and Scott Black Professor of Political Economy at the Kennedy Schools and Faculty Dean of Kirkland House, will officially claim the title of Danoff Dean of Harvard College on July 1.

In addition to administrative leadership changes, Harvard announced a major expansion of its financial aid programs. On March 17, President Alan Garber '76 revealed that, beginning in the 2025-2026 academic year, Harvard College would be free for students from families earning \$100,000 or less annually and tuition-free for those with household incomes up to \$200,000. Families earning over \$200,000 are still expected to cover a large share of costs, including housing, food, and other expenses.

On April 11, the U.S. Department of Education sent Harvard a letter outlining a series of requests for the institution to maintain its "financial relationship with the federal government." The letter called for significant changes to admissions and diversity policies, including reducing the influence of students and non-tenured faculty in University governance, adopting merit-based hiring and admissions practices, and immediately dismantling all diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

Following this, Garber issued a university-wide email affirming Harvard's refusal to comply with the federal government's mandates. "The University will not surrender its independence or relinquish its constitutional rights," Garber wrote. Since then, the federal government has frozen \$2.65 billion in grants to the University. Harvard filed a lawsuit to counter this move, asking a federal judge in Massachusetts to overturn the freeze and to restore any suspended or revoked federal funding.

Funding cuts have affected research in fields ranging from breast cancer and fertility to climate and antibiotic resistance. In response, President Garber pledged \$250 million in institutional funds to sustain disrupted projects, while faculty and departments across the University brace for long-term financial strain.

Harvard's stance has been echoed by members of the broader campus community. A series of student and faculty demonstrations has echoed the University's tone in responding to the federal funding freeze and later executive orders, risking the academic status of international affiliates. On April 16, the Trump administration threatened to revoke Harvard's certification to enroll international students unless the University provided detailed disciplinary records for student visa holders, prompting some faculty members, joined by students and staff, to organize a protest in Harvard Yard. On April 29, a second protest was held, this time led by the newly formed group Students for Freedom, calling on the University to resist federal demands to disclose information about international students. Despite these efforts, Harvard complied with a request from the Department of Homeland Security on April 30, releasing the requested data.

On May 22, the Trump administration revoked Harvard's certification to enroll international students, placing the legal status of more than 6,800 international enrollees at risk. Citing insufficient compliance with a federal request for student records, Homeland Security suspended Harvard's participation in the Student Exchange Visitor Program. The move prompted rapid legal pushback, with a federal judge in California issuing an emergency ruling to temporarily block the decision and protect students from immediate deportation.

In addition to political episodes, the year offered moments of celebration, reflection, and inspiration. On Feb. 3, Harvard welcomed Bill Gates for a conversation with Arthur Brooks, where the tech pioneer discussed his memoir "Source Code," his upbringing, and his time at the College.

The Institute of Politics' JFK Jr. Forum hosted a strong lineup of speakers, including Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, journalist Anderson Cooper, former White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre, and former United States Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas. Former President Joe Biden made a brief visit as well, in a private meeting with IOP staff and members.

Actor and singer Cynthia Erivo was honored as Hasty Pudding Theatricals' Woman

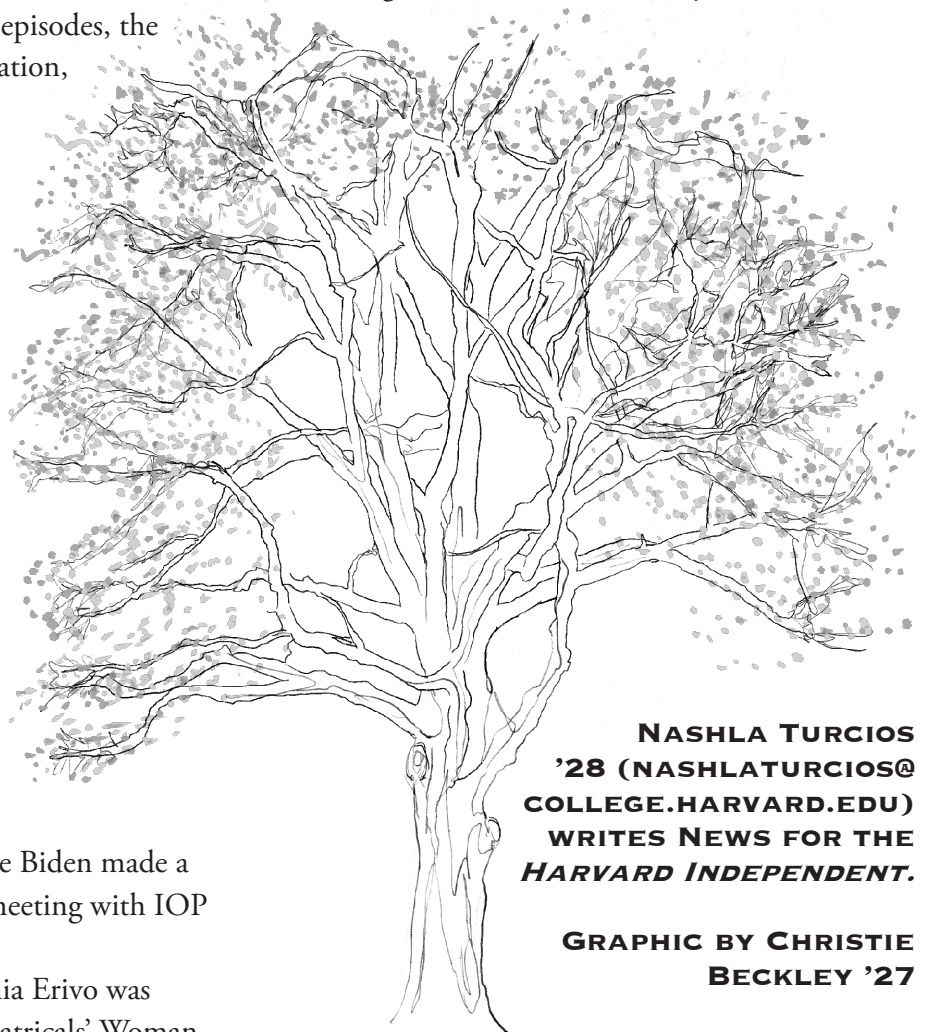
of the Year on Feb. 6, parading through Harvard Square before delivering a rousing rendition of "Defying Gravity" at the University's Farkas Hall. Actor Jon Hamm received HPT's 2025 Man of the Year award on Jan. 31.

Harvard also recognized outstanding student leadership this year through its annual awards for exceptional contributions to campus life. The Harvard-Radcliffe Asian American Association received the Inclusive Recruitment Award, and Harvard Undergraduate Women in Entrepreneurship was named Student Organization of the Year. Imani Fonfield '25 was honored with the Senior Veritas Award, and Sirazam Murina '26 with the Spirit of Harvard College Award. The Women's Leadership Award was presented to Claire Yuan '25, Namirah Quadir '25, and Daniela Andrade '25. These were some among the many students and groups celebrated for their impact on the Harvard community.

Abdullah Shahid '27 and Caleb N. Thompson '27 were elected as the new Harvard Undergraduate Association co-presidents on April 3. The pair campaigned on a platform of transparency and student advocacy, promising to take clear stances on issues directly affecting undergraduates. They have pledged to gather more representative student input and push back when student interests diverge from administrative decisions. Their term lasts until May 2026.

With the 2024-2025 academic year concluding, Harvard stands at a crossroads—grappling with external challenges, internal transitions, and a student body increasingly engaged in shaping its future.

Commencement for the Class of 2025 will take place on May 29. The University's lawsuit against the Trump administration is scheduled for a hearing in Massachusetts on July 21.



**NASHLA TURCIOS
'28 (NASHLATURCIOS@
COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU)
WRITES NEWS FOR THE
HARVARD INDEPENDENT.**

**GRAPHIC BY CHRISTIE
BECKLEY '27**

Funding Cuts Leave Harvard University Endowment in Jeopardy

Fiscal instability spurred by the Trump administration places one of the world's largest institutional trusts at risk.

BY SARA KUMAR '27

As of May 15, the Trump administration has frozen about \$2.7 billion in federal grants from Harvard University. While the University's robust endowment should help cushion further cuts, the challenges of digging into such funds leave the institution on unstable fiscal footing.

At \$53.2 billion, Harvard has the largest endowment across global higher education institutions. Stewardship from the Harvard Management Company, 388 years of University support, and 14,600 individual funds have guided the trust in serving as the backbone of the institution's academic and philanthropic goals.

Fiscal year 2024 brought significant growth. Return on the endowment was 9.6%, increasing the fund's value by \$2.5 billion from FY 2023. In addition to this income generation, FY 2024 also brought \$368 million in gifts. Over the past decade, cumulative donations have ranged from \$338 million to \$646 million. The FY 2024 market value of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences specifically is approximately \$21.5 billion.

Such expansive finances fuel annual University responsibilities. \$2.4 billion, or over a third of Harvard's total operating revenue, was distributed from the endowment as of FY 2024. In the same fiscal year, the endowment granted \$749 million in financial aid in scholarships, including \$250 million for undergraduates—a 6% increase compared to FY 2023.

"Harvard's financial capital acts as both a catalyst to accelerate learning and discovery today, and as a stabilizing force to ensure that future generations of scholars have the same opportunities," wrote Vice President for Finance Ritu Kalra and University Treasurer Timothy Barakett '87 in Harvard's 2024 financial report. "In such a rapidly evolving landscape, safeguarding the University's financial resilience is vital."

However, this fund is not unlimited. Endowment spending is fickle, determined by the need to fund the institution's overhead costs and the obligation to longitudinally preserve the fund's value. Tilting the scales too far in the operating budget's favor imperils the worth of yearly charitable donations and the larger fund. Yet leaving too much for later use is likewise not pragmatic. Each year, the University thus must strike a delicate balance between endowment spending and sustaining to uphold their mission of intergenerational equity.

"It's not a checking or a savings account—it's a long term investment for the future," a joint Instagram post by Harvard affiliates, Princeton, and the University of Pennsylvania read on the purpose of such higher education funds.



"Endowments do not sit idle. Each year, only a portion of an endowment is paid to fund the university's work, supporting annual operating expenses like research and financial aid," the carousel continued.

The University, therefore, relies on other sources to fund around two-thirds of its operating expenses, among which federal grants remain a critical subsidiary. Yet since arriving in office, Trump has placed American higher education institutions on notice over alleged on-campus antisemitism, illegal diversity practices, or noncompliance with federal mandates. Harvard in particular has been a target of these executive actions—the presidential administration first jeopardized the institution's federal funding on March 31 and most recently has terminated approximately \$89 million in grant money from the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Science and Advanced Research Projects Agency. On May 2, Trump posted on Truth Social that he is planning on revoking Harvard's tax-exempt status, exacerbating an already unstable financial situation.

U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon compounded this series of resource cuts on May 5 in a letter to Harvard President Alan M. Garber '76. "Harvard University has made a mockery of this country's higher education system," she wrote. According to McMahon, the University has consistently violated its legal obligations. "Harvard should no longer seek GRANTS from the federal government, since none will be provided," she added.

Garber responded to McMahon on May 15. "We share common ground on a number of critical issues," he wrote. Garber proceeded to outline the government's claims made about campus antisemitism, the presence of illegal international students, and unconstitutional hiring practices. "Our agenda touches on all aspects of university life with a view to making Harvard a better place for our entire community," he wrote.

His conclusion suggested the potential overturn of the grant freeze and a desire to amend the currently fragmented relationship between Harvard and the Trump administration. "We hope that the partnership between higher education and the federal government will be vibrant and successful for generations to come."

Though the University saw a surge in donations surrounding the administration's April funding freeze—nearly \$1.14 million was collected between April 14-16—much larger funding cuts mean such contributions do not offset total losses. However, greater dips in the endowment to counter federal pressures may not be possible.

Endowment spending has remained fairly consistent over the past few years. FY 2023 saw less spending than FY 2024, but accounted for a similar 37% of total operating revenue. FY 2022 reported \$2.1 billion in endowment distributions or 36% of total operating revenue. In FY 2021, the University observed a similar \$2.0 billion distribution or around 38% of the total operating revenue. For Harvard

to offset the past few months of executive funding withdrawals with endowment money, they would have to almost double what they have taken in the past from the trust.

However, little of Harvard's endowment is available for unrestricted use. According to the University's FY 2024 Financial Report, 80% of the trust is restricted to specific Schools, programs, or activities. Hedge funds, private equity, and real estate leave other portions of the money illiquid.

Moreover, if these restrictions can be circumvented, the Harvard Corporation still must agree to increase the annual payout rate of Harvard's endowment from what has been held at around 5-5.5% of its market value. The Corporation has authorized deeper dives into the endowment's corpus before—in 2020, they approved an increase of 2.5% to the distribution rate. Drastic changes have not been made since 2020, though, and a recent announcement from University leadership confirms that they will not yet accommodate another steep shift. "We cannot absorb the entire cost of the suspended or canceled federal funds," Garber and Provost John F. Manning '82 wrote in a statement to Harvard affiliates on May 14.

But steps have been taken to tighten University financing in the wake of presidential pressure.

On March 10, Harvard announced a temporary hiring freeze to preserve financial flexibility that will extend through the summer. Late April brought a University decision to pause all merit-based faculty pay raises. Garber declared he will be taking a voluntary 25% pay cut on May 14, which will take effect on July 1. Past Harvard presidents have made upwards of \$1 million annually, meaning such a reduction could result in a six-figure salary decline. More than 80% of University faculty members have also agreed to dedicate 10% of their pay to supporting the University's legal resistance to the Trump administration.

In their recent message, Garber and Manning disclosed that the University will dedicate a preliminary \$250 million to bolster research affected by the Trump administration's funding withdrawals.

The University's lawsuit against departments of the federal government regarding funding freezes will be heard in the Massachusetts federal court system on July 21—an expedited date that Harvard administration hopes will mitigate the more permanent impacts of resource cuts.

"While there will undoubtedly be difficult decisions and sacrifices ahead, we know that, together, we will chart a path forward to sustain and advance Harvard's vital research mission," Garber and Manning concluded.

SARA KUMAR '27 (SJKUMAR@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS THE NEWS EDITOR OF THE HARVARD INDEPENDENT.

GRAPHIC BY AMELIE LIMA '27

FORUM

Looking Back, Leading Forward

Editor-in-Chief Layla Chaaraoui '26 reflects on new beginnings.

BY LAYLA CHAARAOUI '26

“Where do you think you’ll go to school next?” my youngest sister asked me as we pulled out of our driveway. As the oldest of three, I was the first to leave home and begin college. As I turned out of the neighborhood I loved, my pulse accelerated just thinking of how different everything was about to become. I was sketching the blueprint for myself. *What if I got things wrong?*

Choosing Harvard—a school six hours from home—felt like reaching for something big, maybe even impossible. I hoped the campus would be full of ideas, energy, and people who cared deeply about the world. I imagined late-night conversations, opportunities I’d never dreamed of, and the chance to grow into someone braver. I knew I had to take the leap, not just for myself, but so my sisters might feel a little less afraid when it’s their turn.

As I unpacked my life into Wigglesworth Hall and hugged my family goodbye, the excitement of move-in day was blurred with fear. I glanced at the Yard from my new window. Students with boxes and backpacks huddled with their parents merged with upperclassmen leading check-in groups during pre-orientation. My tense expression softened into a slight smile—this would become my community for the next four years. *Harvard*. I didn’t know exactly what I would find, but I hoped I’d figure out how to make my way.

At first, I tried to navigate college alone—convinced that to lead by example, I had to chart a path solo. It was the mindset I had carried for years as the oldest sibling: stay strong, stay composed, figure it out so others wouldn’t have to. I’ve always tried to be a steady source of support for my younger sisters, even if I lacked confidence in my ability to do so successfully. In my eyes, independence demanded self-reliance, even if it came with uncertainty.

But after a few weeks on campus, that instinct began to crack. I found myself asking questions—about classes, clubs, how to make it all work—and turning to those who had already walked this path. I was surprised to realize I didn’t *have* to do it all alone. Older students were more than happy to take me under their wing and offer guidance, reassurance, and the kind of peace of mind that only comes from trusting someone who had already done it all. I sought Government concentration advice from my FUP leader, June Park ’24; eagerly awaited article feedback from former *Independent* Editor-in-Chief Marbella Marlo ’24; and found a home in Harvard’s hip-hop community thanks to Daylan Davis ’25, Liliana Price ’25, and May Jung ’25. For the first time, I felt the presence of something I’d never known before: *my* version of an older sibling.

Through both academics and

extracurriculars, I grew close to students in the years above me—people who pushed me to think more deeply and live more intentionally. Whether we were debating philosophy and science after “GOV 1090: Biotech Ethics” or blocking choreography backstage during Expressions Dance Company’s semesterly show, these older students shaped how I approach ideas, collaborate with others, and imagine the future.

With today’s Commencement, it is the Class of 2026’s turn to become the mentors—the steady presence for younger students that older classes once were for us. Once more, I find myself stepping into the role of the older sibling but now with the insight that comes with the maturity and support I’ve received from my peers.

I’ve watched my senior friends lead the organizations I’m now at the helm of, navigate the classes I’m just beginning to take, and pass responsibility onto the next generation. Like me, they weren’t the very first to hold these roles—each of them benefited from the guidance of those who came before. Being the oldest carries unspoken responsibility—a quiet promise to lead by example.

Embracing that role isn’t always easy. It means carrying the weight of expectations, balancing your own growth with the needs of others, and being idolized as the person everyone looks up to—even when you’re still figuring things out yourself. Leadership, much like caregiving, comes with moments of uncertainty and self-doubt.

But in hindsight, I know that being “the oldest” helped shape who I am today. It taught me responsibility, empathy, and a quiet resilience I’ve come to rely on—especially when facing the unknown. A moment that stands out: last semester in Professor Michael Sandel’s “Gen Ed 1200: Justice,” he asked the 900-person lecture hall how many of us were older siblings. When most students raised their hands, the room burst into laughter—we hadn’t realized how many of us shared the same eldest-child role, shaped by ambition and responsibility. But what I’ve come to understand since arriving at Harvard is that even the “oldest” can learn from others. True leadership isn’t about having all the answers—leaning on your peers builds trust and creates spaces for your community to grow with you.

When I think about the legacy I want to have on Harvard’s campus, I can’t help but

reflect on the incredible leaders who came before me and the examples they set. I hope to carry forward their spirit and make a positive difference as I step into my final year.

To the seniors I’ve had the privilege to learn from and grow alongside across Harvard’s campus—I am grateful. Your leadership, insight, and generosity have left a lasting impression on my educational journey and extracurricular experiences. I feel extremely lucky to have met you, to have called you a friend, and to have shared moments that shaped my time here. Know that I’ll always be cheering you on, and I’ll never forget the impact you’ve had on my life—for the better.

Eliza, Andrew, Zayid, Michael, Jude, Seattle, Hannah, Aidan, Kya, Taybah, David, and Mimi—thank you for the creativity, passion, and commitment you’ve brought to the *Independent*. Your diverse and meaningful contributions—from detailed designs to engaging articles to bold entrepreneurial ventures—have shaped the *Independent* into what it is today. You embody the spirit of this paper and our mission to champion expression, elevate storytelling, and uphold integrity.

And to the Class of 2025, congratulations. You’ve shaped this campus by improving student life, leading clubs, launching initiatives, and bringing creativity and passion to everything from the arts to advocacy. Your resilience and leadership have set a powerful example for those who follow.

Saying goodbye is never easy—especially when it means stepping into a new chapter. Yet,

I’ve learned that there is a unique feeling in being the one who leads, supports, and lights the way for those who come after.

I take the lessons from both of my worlds with me—the two places I call home—harmonizing the strength I gained before college with the guidance I

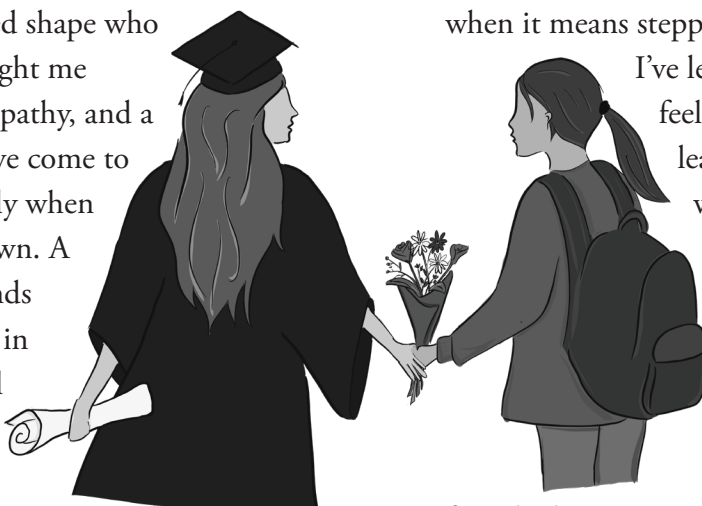
found when I arrived.

So while I say farewell to those who inspired me and prepare for what lies ahead, I carry with me the pride and purpose that comes with being the oldest.

It’s a joy, truly, to hold that place—and to keep moving forward.

**LAYLA CHAARAOUI '26
(LAYLACHAARAOUI@COLLEGE.
HARVARD.EDU) IS EXCITED FOR
THE YEAR TO COME.**

GRAPHIC BY CLARA LAKE '27



The Promise of an American Education

I'm an international student: the American ideal of freedom is under attack.

BY FRIDA LÓPEZ '27

Mexico—my homeland—is one of the deadliest countries in the world for journalists outside of active war zones. There, speaking up against those in power means gambling your life. Fear of the State is woven into the fabric of daily life. That is the country I come from. Nonetheless, it is a country I love, the land of my childhood, and where all my family still resides.

Leaving for college two years ago was not easy. My departure felt like a betrayal of the place that shaped me. But I knew that pursuing a career in journalism would endanger me if I stayed. I needed to learn and grow my skills elsewhere before returning and successfully fighting with the pen. So, I applied to college in the United States, seeking a place where truth-telling was a right, not a provocation. A place where freedom of speech wasn't a fleeting aspiration, but a reality. That was the promise of an American education.

I won't pretend I wasn't skeptical. In my experience, freedom of expression has always been more of a privilege than a guarantee. Still, I had faith that this country would become the space I craved to safely speak my mind and chase my aspirations.

For a time, it did. For a time, I believed the promise might hold.

Then came November 5, 2024—the U.S. presidential election day. Donald Trump was elected to a second term, and soon after, his administration began to deny various forms of freedom of speech—targeting dissent, restricting media, and amplifying disinformation. Day by day, the very reasons for which I came to this country began to feel increasingly uncertain.

On April 14, Harvard rejected a set of federal demands that threatened the University's integrity; within hours, the administration froze more

than \$2.2 billion in research funding. Two days later, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem ordered Harvard to hand over the immigration files of every international student within ten business days, warning that any shortfall would be treated as the University's "voluntary withdrawal" from the F-1 visa program. Harvard complied and was punished anyway.

And on May 22, with the suspension of Harvard's Student Exchange Visitor Program certification, international students saw the emptiness of this promise of freedom. The illusion of America's commitment to free expression cracked. The Trump administration made clear that it sees international students not as scholars, but as leverage—pawns in his political warfare. We are being sidelined and silenced. America's warnings have become akin to my homeland's: speak out, and risk losing everything.

Now, as an international student at Harvard, I find myself in a state of uncertainty. If I leave the country, I don't know if I'll be allowed to return. I am unsure if I'll be detained the next time I try to cross the border. Will I be able to see my family in Mexico this summer, the next school year? Will ICE show up at my dorm tomorrow? In this suspended state, I confront, face to face, the steep price of standing up to a government intent on silencing criticism.

This is the price of speaking out in a country that once promised to protect that very act. But I will not be silent.

I do not bear this uncertainty alone. The more than ten thousand international students and scholars

who share Harvard's classrooms are reckoning with these tensions.

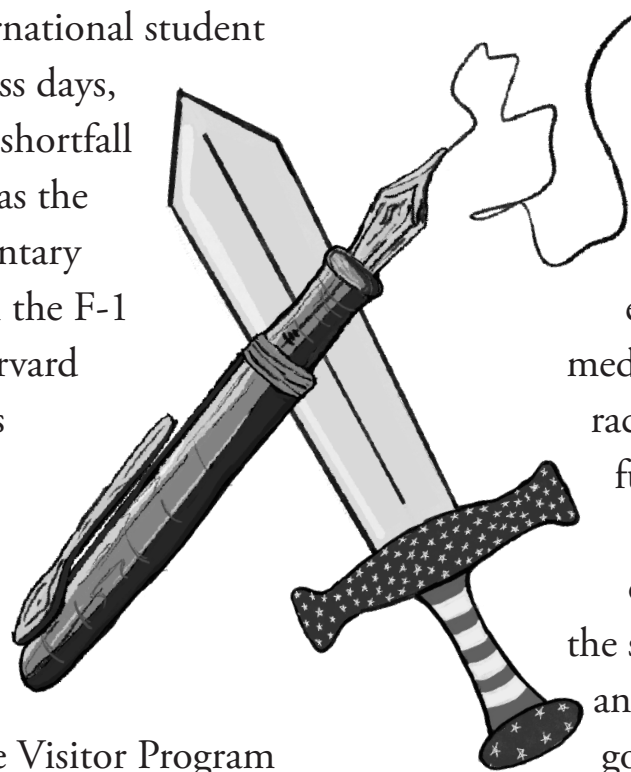
How can Trump forget that the contributions of my international peers to our University and to the American nation are immeasurable? We seed new patents in engineering labs, fill medical research teams racing toward treatments, fund start-ups that hire locally, and put our scholarship to the service of innovation and truth. But our value goes beyond this; the diversity of perspectives that we bring to the classroom expands the University's vision. To threaten our place here is to threaten one of the things that makes American universities unique.

We do not bear this fight alone. All across the University—from professors, students, and organizations—we have received support during these difficult times.

I know what it means to speak at a cost. I am intimately aware of that danger. As someone who has left a country to flee such a risk, I refuse now to trade that voice for a counterfeit safety.

I came here to chase freedom—I will not surrender it at another nation's gate.

I call everyone to do the same. Americans, it is time to defend the ideal freedom that your nation claims to be built upon. Harvard is fighting, and we must too. Standing up to injustice comes with a cost, but not doing it comes with an even greater one.



FRIDA LÓPEZ '27 (FRIDALOPEZBRAVO@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) WANTS TO PROTECT HER RIGHT TO DISSENT.

GRAPHIC BY CHRISTIE BECKLEY '27

Farewell, Fare Well

A letter to the class I left behind, as they leave me behind.

BY KAYLA REIFEL '26

My dearly departed,

When I think of words, I think of their parts. This is a goodbye letter, so it should be just that. A good bye. A cheerful ciao. A splendid so long. But this goodbye is far from just good—in fact, it is causing me quite a bit of emotional turmoil. And the word “turmoil,” true to its meaning, lacks a clear etymology. Unlike most English words, we cannot split turmoil down into identifiable parts. Its origin eludes us. I’d argue there is only one emotional turmoil that rivals that of graduating from college—that of *not* graduating from college.

I began college with you, Class of 2025. Remember? We arrived on campus young and bright-eyed, with masks strapped tight to our faces in the fall of 2021. Still very much in the heyday of the pandemic, Harvard looked different back then. Masks were required in class. When we forgot to complete our weekly COVID-19 testing, we received increasingly threatening emails about being referred to some all-knowing, fear-inspiring body of power called the Community Council. Lamont Cafe and Barker Cafe were urban legends. Weekdays were big introductory lecture classes. Weekends were “wtm tonight?” texts (to no avail, save the occasional dorm party). Everything was easy. I finished my freshman year more in love

with you, Class of 2025, and with Harvard than I thought possible.

Then, Class of 2025, we had a breakup. We didn’t go completely no contact, but we should have, because I was still in love with you. I set off on a gap year, and you braved your sophomore year. Like a jealous ex, I obsessed over you. All year, I checked Snap Maps like clockwork, watching your bitmojis scurry from class to class. I deleted social media. I redownloaded it. I deleted it. I redownloaded it. Repeat. I worked. I worked. I worked. I traveled. I missed you.

And then, I came back. When I returned to Harvard after my gap year, you and I were estranged, Class of 2025. Your sophomore year had done a tragic thing—it made you solemn and fragmented. As fresh juniors, everyone stood divided into blocking groups, houses, and final clubs. Your fluidity was a shell of its former self. But of course, I still loved you. I wanted you back, even though I knew things wouldn’t ever be the same.

Since I’ve come back, I have straddled two worlds—you, and the Class of 2026, my new graduating class. Now, my left foot stands firmly entrenched in the mud of ’26. But my right is stuck with you, ’25. Now, as you leave, I feel my entire right leg being ripped away. All I can do is say goodbye—to both you and my leg. But, of course, like any

true goodbye letter, this is also a love letter. So, Class of 2025, let us reminisce on our beginnings.

I think it was love at first sight. Or rather, love at first GroupMe. My first connection with you was within days of receiving my acceptance letter, when I joined the Harvard Class of 2025 GroupMe. The chat was filled with glee back then—banter, memes, and a palpable excitement that can only come from just having been accepted into Harvard. Even before meeting each other in person, we were electric.

Our relationship only grew more intense when everyone arrived on campus. Starved for social interaction, we coalesced in a horde in the corner of Harvard Yard some nights, and by the river other nights. One or two real compatriots handed out White Claws from their backpacks. An abundance of Instagram and Snapchat connections were made. Brunch plans. “Where are you from?” Water bottles of liquor were tragically confiscated at the gates to the first-year fling. Tasty basty. Tasty basty. Had to say it twice to pay tribute to the cultural phenomenon that it was. A passing moment in which someone said to me that four years would fly by, and everyone would just leave. The day after hearing that, a mid-therapy crash-out, during which my therapist told me the end was so far away. But I knew it was not. I was right.

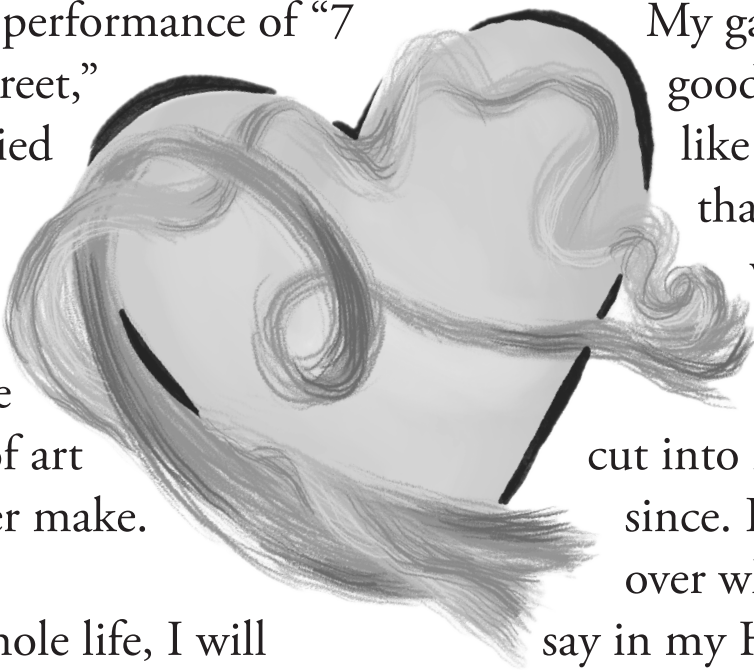
My first real unit within you, Class of 2025, maybe the first part of you I really fell for, were my freshman year roommates. The smell of Hunter’s spicy ramen noodles taking over the tiny, beloved shoebox of Weld 38. Yirenni mothering us, cooking and cleaning and scolding and loving. Karla’s deep, infectious laugh and her electric guitar. My first-year roommates became family so quickly and with such ease, I thought things would be that easy forever. I was wrong.

Then, I fell head over heels. I know you remember it too. It was perhaps the most intense and beautiful part of our affair—our first-year musical, “7 Sacrilege Street.” Not to get all theater-kid-remiscing-about-a-show on you, but this one really was special. As “producer,” a title I still don’t fully understand, I was afforded the opportunity to make a piece of art with you, from you, and of you, Class of 2025. That show taught me the beauty of obsession—obsession with art, with people. At the end of the final performance of “7 Sacrilege Street,” I cried. I cried because I thought perhaps that was the best piece of art I would ever make. I was right.

My whole life, I will be searching for that feeling again. And I know I will never find it—both because it was tied to youth and because it was tied to you, Class of 2025. You are something that is both

temporary and forever. That musical was something both temporary and forever.

And of course, together you and I entered this very space we now converse in—the *Independent* herself. I comped the *Independent* during my freshman spring alongside our Editor-in-Chief emeritus, Andrew Spielmann ’25. I’d been intent on comping since the *Independent*’s president emeritus, Eliza Kimball ’25, made a very convincing argument for the publication over a beautiful Thanksgiving dinner in late November of 2021. When Spielmann and I joined, the publication had just under 50 members. It now has just under 150. I am hard-pressed to rank the best decisions I have made so far in college, but comping the *Independent* certainly sits high on the list. This newspaper has given my words space from then up until now, as I pen this very piece. And here they’ll rest—perhaps temporarily, perhaps forever. Such is art, and such is life.



My gap year did great good for me, but like any old thing that heals, there were side effects. Papercut-sized reminders have cut into my skin ever since. I have agonized over what class year to say in my Harvard intro. I have moped alone in my room, pitying myself, as all my friends attended a strictly seniors-only party. I have sat in total silence while my senior roommates discussed what white dresses

they were buying for graduation. These woes may seem trivial in the grand scheme of things, but it does take a certain type of strength to have one foot in and one foot out of a community. The off-cycle student has toned muscles in this department, ready to perform heavy lifting during moments that expose them as atypical. Today, I will sit on the side and tell rows of graduates when to walk instead of walking alongside them. I will not wear a white dress, but I will wear a smile. For you.

I write this final letter to you perhaps in a whisper, perhaps in a scream. Keep me. Remember me. Let me stay. Think of me as part of you. I like the number 26, but I love the number 25. When you are 18 and starting college, you are Play-Doh. And Class of 2025—I am stuck under your nails. Or at least—you are stuck under mine.

To you, Class of 2025, my social class, my first community at Harvard, my first love, I’ve missed you since I left you in 2022, and I’ll miss you when you leave me at the end of today. Farewell, and remember, when you think of words, think of their parts. Farewell—it is not a goodbye, it is a command. Go out into the world. And fare well.

Hopelessly,
Kayla

**KAYLA REIFEL ’26
(KAYLAREIFEL@COLLEGE.
HARVARD.EDU) STILL
SOMETIMES ACCIDENTALLY
TYPES KAYLA REIFEL ’25 WHEN
SHE’S WRITING THESE BYLINES.**

What Winthrop Means

Winthrop House, past and future.

BY AIDAN FITZSIMONS '25

A fantastically large bird, nameless and blue, pops out of the bushes and flies across the water. Luckily, I live in Winthrop House, so I could walk right out of my own courtyard to this perfect bench by the river moments before, barefoot if I wished.

Winthrop is clearly protagonist-coded, a prominent House in the pantheon of Harvard—though all Houses are powerful, uniquely compelling characters, and essential to our shared strength. (*A small black bird with orange shoulder-flames lands on the bush in front of me, cheeping its original voice, differently and equally beautiful to the big bird before.*) But what is Winthrop's role? What does Winthrop represent? And—especially given current discourse about the weight of history, and the clouded, chiaroscuro significance of Winthrop's name—what might Winthrop *mean*?

I've been in Winthrop longer than just about anyone, besides Goretti, who swipes us into the dining hall. On Housing Day 2017, in JFK's old place in Weld, my friends and I jumped for joy to follow further in his footsteps when Winthrop stormed our dorm. We would be the first class to enter the newly-renovated Winthrop—it was by far the most desired House that year, and still, as always, remains in the top four. The Millennials who stormed our dorm had lived in the 'Winn,' but we, who they called Gen Z, would be the first to define the new Winthrop still wrapped in construction paper.

Three different faculty deans have come and gone from new Winthrop during these last eight years, after the Ron Sullivan controversy in 2019 led to a fascinating coup d'etat by the Winthrop tutors. Though I began my five-year leave of absence in Spring 2019, I kept visiting my friends in Winthrop—until March 2020, when we were all kicked off campus with a few days to pack. That was a wild time; as the world went crazy, all the rules of Harvard disappeared, and everyone tried to fit senior spring into a few days. On the last night before the end of the world, someone set up a pong table right in the center of Winthrop d-hall.

My sister came to Harvard with the Class of 2025, and in 2022, she too was blessed with Winthrop. So I visited often

when I was in town, hitchhiking into the d-hall, saying hi to Goretti. These visits to share food with friends and family kept me tethered to this place, reminded me that this is my *home*, one of the best homes I've ever known. And now, here I am, home again, finishing my senior year with my sister and all the wonderful friends I've made with this generation of Harvard students and Winthropians. *This* is why I care about what Winthrop means.

Besides the obvious—lions, the red and black, the general Gryffindor vibe, the fact that we win the intramural Straus Cup more often than anyone and just did it again—I believe three core themes define Winthrop.

The first is, of course, the river. Everyone wants a River House, but Winthrop is *the* River House. It stretches across the choicest green of the riverfront, the main grass we all cover in picnic blankets and sundresses when the spring sun comes out. Harvardians of all stripes walk through our open courtyard to reach the river, from green path to green freedom. This is essential to our sense of living in a healthy, walkable neighborhood with access to nature—our sense of Harvard as a tasteful old estate, a humane and beautiful garden.

The Charles River is the best place at Harvard. It's the one part of campus that reminds us we're still in nature, still a part of the land, still flowing in the great river of evolution that widens beyond our merely human world. We go there to feel moments of peace, to smoke, to walk, to reset from the craziness of campus life. The Lowell courtyard is lovely, but I'd rather choose immediate river access. As someone who's spent four years living in nature out of my converted school bus, I needed the river this year more than ever to feel at home in the natural world of Massachusetts.

To truly embrace this strength, though, Winthrop must make the main courtyard gate swipe-access, so that Winthropians and other students can more easily get to the river and back at night. The current lack of swipe provides no safety benefit besides security theater, and it forces hundreds of students to walk an ugly concrete path far out of their way just to get to the river. This unnecessarily locked gate betrays the essence of Winthrop nightly.

In Standish Courtyard last night, two baby bunnies ran by my bench and scurried through the space below the gates. There is more life around Winthrop than any other House, because we open to the widest reach of the river.

Secondly, Winthrop is the most dialectical house, due to its unique founding; when President Lowell designed the House system in the 1930s, he combined the existing Gore and Standish halls into one new house, a binary star system composed of two buildings with different personalities. Gore is larger, more utilitarian, and more communal with its dining hall, gym, and essential community amenities—it was once considered one of Harvard's most beautiful bits of architecture. Standish, the building I love most, has its own vibe—more academic, alternative, homely, with the Standish Library, the arts room, and the long basement common space.

Both are essential, but the 'center' of Winthrop is neither. The other core Houses that Lowell built have a tighter sense of center, whereas Winthrop's center is the open courtyard between its two buildings—an area of unbounded betweenness that holds space for conversation as we cross. (*Two older women, up the path, are looking at a bird. When they walk by my bench, they're talking about it. "The black bird with the orange flames on its shoulders!" I say. "Yes!" they say, excited. "And yellow underneath when they open their wings!" I hadn't noticed that. We get to talking.*) Like any dialectic, this creates a whole gestalt that is larger than and other than the sum of its parts. Over time—innumerable collisions—the river widens.

Diversity accelerates dialectics. Essential to what Winthrop means is that it was the first House really open to Catholics and Jews; this meant a lot in the first half of the twentieth century, at a Harvard dominated by old WASPs and defined by spheres of exclusion. Franklin D. Roosevelt '03 lived in the luxurious Gold Coast dorms, back before Adams House existed. John F. Kennedy '40 is the College's only U.S. President to come of age in the House system. A damned Irish Catholic like me, he was not the 'right sort' for Eliot or Lowell—but he and his brothers belonged in the open gates of Winthrop.

Once you notice the theme of dialectics at Winthrop, you start seeing it everywhere. A conversation emerges between the two gates to the main courtyard. Between American literature on the inside wall of the library and British literature on the outside wall. Between civilization and nature across the road. Between the two faculty deans, Steve and Kiran, both active presences in House life. Between my sister in Gore and myself in Standish. Between Massachusetts Bay Colony, represented by John Winthrop, and Plymouth Colony, represented by Miles Standish—the modern state of Massachusetts is a sort of symbiogenesis. Boston imperially absorbed Plymouth like an endosymbiotic mitochondria: Wampanoag land, where I grew up, joined together with Massachusetts land, where I go to school.

Of course, this reminds us of the dialectic most salient to current discourse about what Winthrop means: the dialectic between the past and the present. For, as has been discussed at length in the *Independent, Crimson*, and Winthrop’s website, the first John Winthrop was responsible not only for founding Boston but for the enslavement of Native Americans, while the second John Winthrop was not only America’s first astronomer, but also a keeper of African slaves. Some student groups have made an effort to ‘dename’ Winthrop House as a way of symbolically rejecting these historic crimes, and this effort is understandable.

However, I assume denaming is unlikely to happen; after all, the same Harvard committee reviewing the denaming request chose to keep the name of the Sackler Building, named after a family personally responsible for hundreds of thousands of ruined lives and deaths by opioid addiction—perpetrators of much more recent crimes in a more immediately shared moral context. Furthermore, the Sackler Building wasn’t ever anybody’s *home*, but to thousands of Winthrop alumni, the word Winthrop means home more than anything else. It connects us to shared memories and one another. If the name stays, then the conversation we need to have is about meaning. Can we change and choose what we want words to mean? Can we face the past while remaining free to become new again in the present?

I believe we can, and this brings us to the third defining theme of Winthrop: the blank slate. For much of Winthrop is, quite literally, a blank canvas: after its relatively recent renovation, new Winthrop often feels like a hotel with empty halls and long white walls. In these blank spaces,

there is freedom and opportunity. Already, the deans are putting beautiful art up to fill the space, including art co-created by multiple Winthropians. I hope to see more dialectical art fill the blank space as years go by (especially collaborative poetry, which I enjoyed hosting in the Winthrop JCR). To be a blank slate means that the community here gets to shape Winthrop’s future together, in dialogue with one another.

W.E.B. Du

Bois ’88 inherited the last name of a white slaveholder in the Bahamas who fathered Du Bois’s grandfather with one of his slaves. Yet, unlike Malcolm X, Du Bois kept his name, made it his own, made it new, made it emancipatory. Instead of capitulating to the weight of history, Du Bois decided to enter into courageous, productive dialogue with it. This is fitting for a man who knew what it was to see on both sides of ‘double-consciousness,’ who wrote that “[o]ne ever feels his two-ness.” He acknowledged the power of history while also recognizing the right of the present to change, to dawn again and again, a new world in the innocence of becoming.

When we interact with the past, it always takes place on the turf of the present, a turf that’s already drifted—a little space opens up, a crack of blankness across the surface of any story. Interaction itself generates novelty, freedom; the present emerges as the river flows, made of the past yet more than the past, fresh in the white foam at the very edge of history. *A new day in May; an osprey dives into the river, catches a fish in the froth, and flies away.*

The river, the dialectic, the blank space—Winthrop is an open gate symbolizing all three, symbolizing what it means to grow and yet stay the same, to be a container that must overflow itself. Forgive the metaphysics—there’s a girl in Winthrop who really likes Hegel.

To make healthy use of Winthrop’s past and widen the river of consciousness, there should be a statue dedicated to W.E.B. Du Bois in the Gore Courtyard and a statue for John Sassamon in the

Standish Courtyard. John Sassamon was a Massachusetts native who learned English at Harvard in the 1650s; as Professor Jill Lepore wrote in “The Name of War,” he worked with the original John Eliot to print works translating between English and

Algonquian, fulfilling one of Harvard’s original aspirations. Sassamon was a key figure in the cross-cultural communication that tragically collapsed when his murder on Wampanoag land precipitated the King Philip’s War, tearing New England apart in what was essentially the

first war along ‘racial’ lines

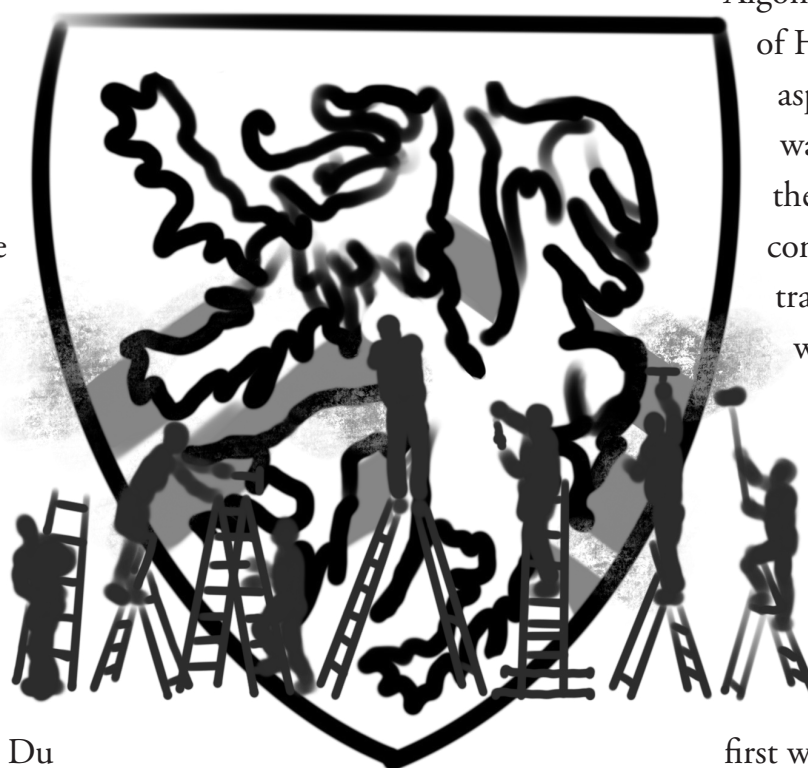
in its history. Yet his story, and the hope of communication across difference, are still worth celebrating despite all our tragic failures. We can choose dialogue with this past, too.

To celebrate Du Bois and Sassamon in a house called Winthrop is not a contradiction, but a conversation. Denaming Winthrop would weaken, not increase, our ability to have a productive conversation with history. The true use of discourse comes not from obscuring it, but from bringing it into contrast. On his way to found Boston, John Winthrop famously said “We must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us.” And, as it says in the original Bible verse, “A city on a hill cannot be hidden.”

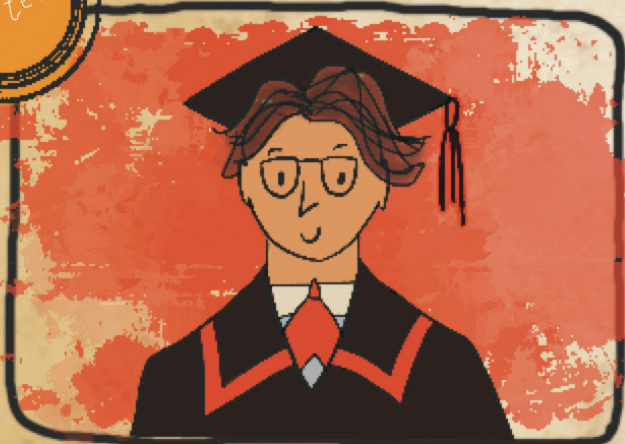
I will miss Winthrop. I’ve been writing this piece for weeks; I’m now in dialogue with my past self. Today, on the same bench, I saw a great blue heron, rare but alive around here. I wonder if it’s the same fantastic bird I saw last time, the one I didn’t have a name for; or, perhaps, it’s different. A chip bag floats slowly towards the shore; I pick up a stick, reach out, and snag the soggy garbage. This has happened before, exactly here, at another time, with another chip bag. I walk someone else’s trash to the can and toss it, on behalf of the river. I leave my home better than I found it.

AIDAN FITZSIMONS ’25 (AIDAN_FITZSIMONS@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) KNOWS A SECRET ABOUT STANDISH HALL THAT HE’LL ONLY SHARE WITH THOSE WHO ARE WORTHY.

GRAPHIC BY ANGIE LI ’28



the INDY



Mir Zayid Alami



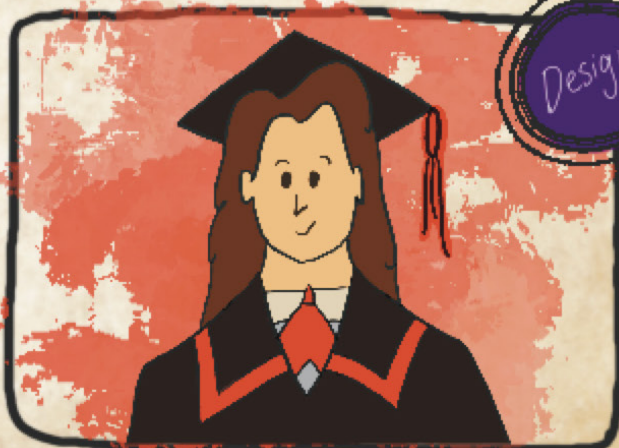
Kya Brooks



Tayla



Jude Herwitz



Seattle Hickey



Eliza



Michael Oved



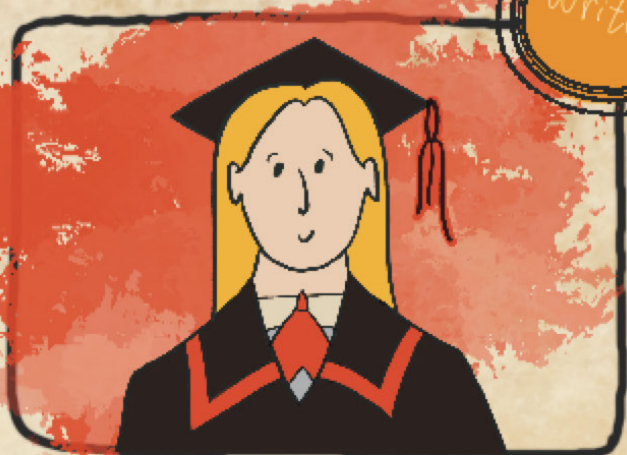
Andrew Spielmann

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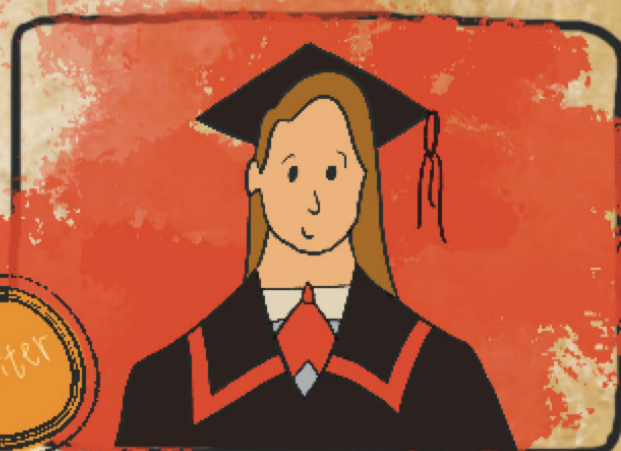
YEAR BOOK



Chris Croje



Hannah Darrif



Michael Fitzsimmons



Kimball



Mimi Koerlig



David Li

AD CLASS OF 2025

This Shared Life

Finding what Harvard can really give us.

BY ANDREW MORRISSEY '26

With my junior year behind me, the end of college suddenly feels right around the corner. It seems like just yesterday I was grabbing meals with strangers in Annenberg, writing Expos 20 essays, and making my frequent treks to and from Pennypacker 27. I always knew my time at Harvard would fly by—everyone told me it would—but I always thought that maybe, if I kept a close enough eye on the clock, I could slow it down. I remember finishing freshman fall and thinking, “Wow, that’s 1/8th of the way done,” hoping that keeping a tally might help me hold on to time a little longer. But time well spent inevitably slips away.

So, rather than wasting energy on a futile fight against Father Time, we should focus instead on making the most of the moments we have here. I want to offer my thoughts on a question that’s always on my mind: how can we make the most of our time at Harvard? Of course, there’s no single answer—everyone’s life and goals differ. But if we aim to maximize our overall satisfaction, we can start to build a framework for making decisions about how to spend our time here.

One common strategy is to pursue whatever makes us happiest in the moment. While this idea sounds appealing, it offers little real guidance—and doesn’t necessarily lead to a satisfying life. For example, I could scroll on Instagram Reels for the rest of my life and feel content in the moment—only to experience deep regret during a final moment of reflection. True satisfaction comes not just from present choices, but from how those choices hold up over time.

A better method, then, is to minimize regret. Make decisions that your future self will be thankful for. While it is difficult to predict your future feelings, you can identify the past decisions that evoke a sense of regret and then make the opposite decision in the future. One

primary source of regret for me is missed opportunities. For example, I wish I had continued my soccer career through high school. I quit in 9th grade and didn’t realize my mistake until my junior year, when I rejoined the team (this time from the bench). I remember being unwilling to wake up early in the summer for practice. But I don’t remember the extra sleep, and I missed my last opportunity to play a key role in a team sport for my school. So, what opportunities does college offer that we might not have again? In other words, what makes this time—and this place—so special? If we can figure that out, we’ll be better able to take advantage of those things before they disappear.

Maybe it’s the location. Cambridge is a beautiful, vibrant, storied city. So yes, we should row on the Charles, run the river path, lounge in the Yard, grab drinks on Felipe’s rooftop—and on Wednesdays, bring some friends and ride the Grendel’s to Charlie’s Trivia Night pipeline. These are all great things to do; however, they ultimately are not what make Harvard memorable. The river and the activities in our Square will still be here when we return.

If not the place, then perhaps it’s the academics. Harvard is renowned for its diverse courses and broad liberal arts education. To take advantage of this opportunity, then, we should step outside of our comfort zones, explore classes in unfamiliar fields, and commit time to study and reflection. Learning, however, is a lifelong pursuit. Textbooks can be bought, lectures found online, YouTube is free, and the local library is open Monday through Saturday.

Maybe, then, it’s the freedom college gives us. Freshman year is a crash course in independence: suddenly, your choices are entirely your own. The training wheels are off—no one tells you when to sleep, when to study, or how to spend your time. So stay up late, make dumb decisions, and have fun. But freedom isn’t unique to college—in fact,

our independence will only grow as we take more responsibility after graduation.

So if it’s not the place, not the academics, and not the independence—what is it?

You probably saw this coming, but it’s the people: the proximity, the community, and the shared values. One of the things that makes Harvard truly special is the housing system. While I may grumble about paying for HUDS, I think that it’s incredible that for four years, we get to live within walking distance of nearly everyone we know. That kind of proximity is rare—and it won’t last forever.

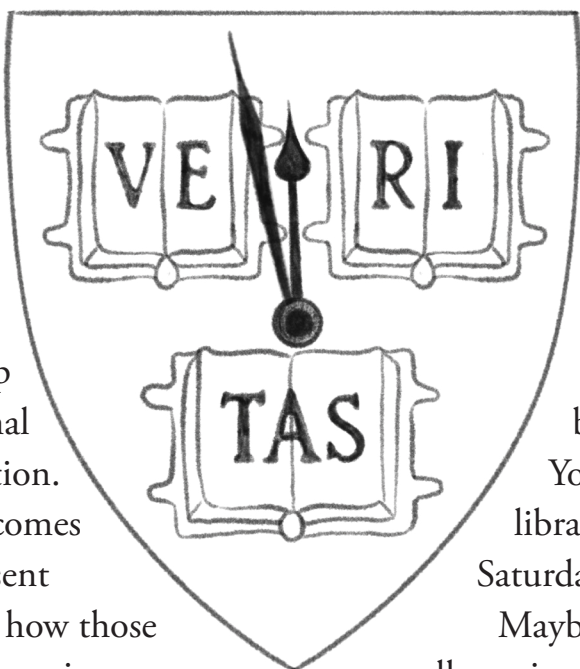
Of course, access to people isn’t enough on its own. What makes this proximity meaningful is that the people who are close to us are part of a shared journey. We all worked hard to get here. We all made the same decision to spend four years of our lives at this place, yet everyone has such a unique story and perspective. We’re all working toward graduation—and trying to figure out what comes next. Yes, we’re a diverse student body. But we’re also a community, united by curiosity, ambition, and the desire to make the most of our time.

So say hello. Smile and wave at someone on your way to class. Spend time getting to know people, and cherish time with your friends. Go to office hours and talk with your professors. Learn the names of your house’s dining hall staff. Have those philosophical, argumentative, and vulnerable conversations, and be open to learning from those around you. Go out of your way to make memories with the people you love, who are living this shared life with you—for only four very short years.

Congratulations to the seniors on your graduation. Hopefully I’ll be where you are in just one year—but I can’t say I envy you right now. I’ll be holding onto my final year as tightly as I can, and I can’t wait to spend it with this amazing community.

ANDREW MORRISSEY '26
(AJMORRISSEY@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS READY FOR THE BEACH.

GRAPHIC BY NESHAMA RYMAN '28



Bon Voyage, Class of 2025!

A study abroad student's guide to senior trips.

BY FRANCES CONNORS '26

One of the saddest parts of studying abroad during junior spring is saying goodbye to all the graduating seniors in December instead of May. I found it hard to properly bid adieu to all the wonderful people who shaped my first three years at Harvard—especially those at the Indy. So, to make up for it, I have a parting gift for the Class of '25: a senior trip European travel guide.

As someone who has spent nearly every weekend of the past four months hopscotching across Europe, I feel qualified to advise on where you should go for one last hurrah with your blocking group. Below is a list of ten vacation spots (plus a bonus!) and who they're best suited for. There's something for everyone—from food and beer lovers to adventure seekers and history buffs.

For the Purists: Nice and The South of France

A classic senior trip doesn't require much: a beach, warm weather, and some light adventure. The South of France delivers all three in abundance. Over Easter Break, my friends and I stayed in Nice for five days, the perfect home base for traversing the coast. Each morning, we took a train or Uber no more than 30 minutes to a new village, explored its Old Town before lunch, and spent the afternoon lounging on the beach. Long hikes, cliff jumping, and morning runs made beach naps well-earned. As you plan your itinerary, Billionaire's Bay in Antibes and the charming medieval village of Èze are two must-visit spots, but Monaco is skippable. Pro tip: take the bus or Uber to Èze, as the train drops you off with an hour-long hike to the village. If you prefer a livelier scene, fear not—by June, the beach clubs in St. Tropez and Cannes will be open for business, ready for champagne toasts to your new diploma.

For Foodies: Lisbon, Portugal

Rainy weather may have limited my sightseeing in Lisbon, but every bite of a *pastel de nata* made it feel like the sun was still shining. These flaky, creamy custard pastries are reason enough to fall in love with the city. I was fortunate enough to visit this city with my good friend, Beli-extraordinaire and former Lisbon resident Anil Cacodcar '26, who introduced me to the amazing food scene. Palácio Chiado and Pastéis de Belém need to make it on your Lisbon itinerary. Instead of a post-graduation dinner at Boston's Legal Seafood—have the best seafood of your life in this tiled city. Plus, you can sneak in some beach trips to swim with the fish, not just eat them.

For Art Lovers and Study Abroad Regretters: Madrid, Spain

If wandering galleries and losing hours in museums is your idea of a good time, then Madrid is the spot for you. The Justicia neighborhood and El Prado Museum were my favorite spots to soak up some good art, and when I needed a break, El Retiro Park was the perfect place for reading and people-watching. A bonus: eating tapas and drinking *Tinto de Verano* (the locals' alternative to sangria) at 10 p.m. every day for a week will be enough for you to lament America's big portions and early dinner times like a real study abroad student!

For Golfers: Fife, Scotland

While tourists crowd the John Harvard statue back in Cambridge, the University of St. Andrews in Fife, Scotland, hosts a different kind of invasion: golf lovers. Home to the world's first golf course, it attracts enthusiasts from around the globe hoping to play its hallowed greens and grab a pint at the Dunvegan (affectionately known as the "Dunnie") afterwards. Unfortunately, you're too late for May Dip, a university-wide event I attended where students jumped into the North Sea at 5 a.m. on May 1. But if you and your friends prefer sand traps to sandy beaches, why not head to Scotland for your senior trip?

For Beer Lovers: Dublin, Ireland

I'll start this recommendation with a caveat: I visited Dublin for St. Patrick's Day, so most of my impressions are painted in green and Guinness. Still, visiting pubs seems to be a top activity in this Irish city even outside of St. Paddy's. With the Guinness Storehouse in town, you'll immerse yourself in the history and brewing process of Guinness and have every chance to "split the G"—a skillful chug that ends the foam in the center of the pint glass logo. If you choose this trip, explore the beautiful Irish countryside or the Cliffs of Moher for a scenic detour from the city. Pro tip: leave space in your suitcase to pick up a beautiful Aran sweater or some Guinness merch.

For History Buffs: Kraków, Poland

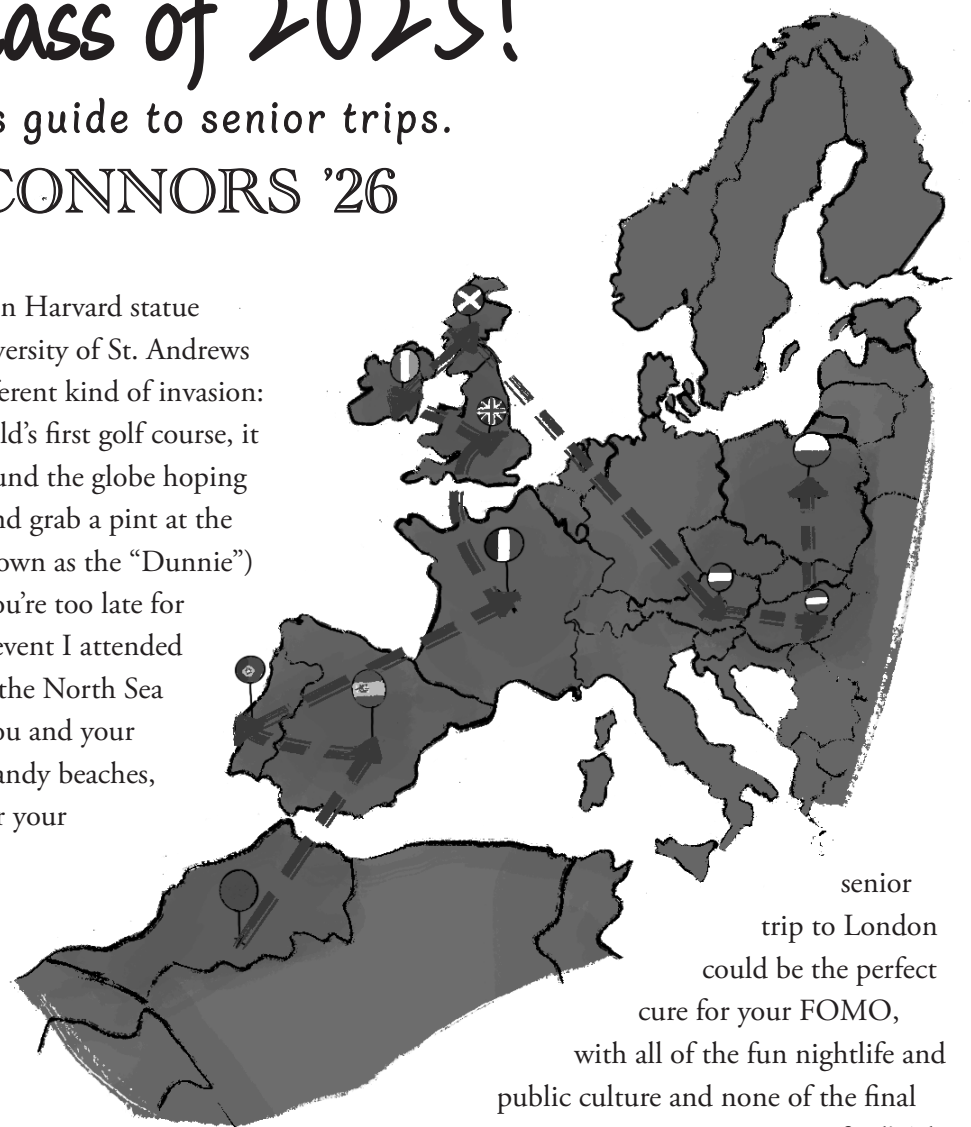
In a recent column, I told the story of how my view of history was forever changed after visiting Kraków. Whether you're a History concentrator or a CS student with a high school WWII fascination, this city will delight you with its rich history in the Old Town, Royal Castle, and every building. It's also a short train ride away from other historic cities like Vienna and Prague, and close to the beautiful Tatra Mountains.

For History Buffs Who Also Like to Party: Budapest, Hungary

Like Kraków, Budapest is steeped in history—its architecture, churches, and monuments tell countless stories. It's the perfect spot to rid yourself of any guilt for not paying enough attention in your "History, Society, and Individuals" Gen Ed. When you inevitably get hungry, be sure to try Kürtöskalács, Hungarian chimney cake, and Langos, a savory fried dough topped with sour cream and cheese. What sets Budapest apart for senior trips is its nightlife. In theory, you could stay out dancing until it's time to watch the sunrise over Fisherman's Bastion—Kraków is a true win-win for the inner scholar and socialite.

For LSE FOMO Crowd: London, England

A contributing factor to my decision to study abroad was seeing how much fun my classmates had at the London School of Economics summer program. If you, too, regret missing out on a UK summer, a



senior trip to London could be the perfect cure for your FOMO, with all of the fun nightlife and public culture and none of the final papers or exams. Be sure to visit Oxford's The Hall at Christ Church, so you can try to relive the magic of breaking bread with strangers in Annenberg freshman year. The two halls have remarkably similar architecture.

For December Graduates: Zell Am See, Austria

If you were ever looking for a reason to take a gap semester and graduate off-cycle, let this senior trip idea be it. Instead of sweating and burning under the Mediterranean sun, you could take in the breathtaking views of the Austrian Alps and cozy up with a hot chocolate next to a fire after a long day of skiing in Zell Am See. If you've spent the last four years skiing near Boston, the powder of the Alps might bring a tear to your eyes, and your legs will appreciate a break from the ice of East Coast skiing. Finally, if European après-ski is good enough for my 21st birthday, it will surely suffice for your post-grad celebrations.

(Bonus) For Adventure Seekers: Marrakech, Morocco

Technically, I never visited Morocco—a stomach bug knocked me out at the Naples Airport on my layover—but I did book a three-day camel tour in the desert and swiped through countless Instagram posts of study abroad students who made it to a new continent, so I can recommend it with confidence. You can enjoy the thrills of dune surfing and the aromas of spice bazaars that initially attracted me. I can't offer any advice, but my friends who went loved it, so if you make the trek, send me a camel selfie!

No matter where you go post-graduation—whether it's a new continent or your childhood home—enjoy some well-deserved rest after four years of hard work. Congratulations, Class of '25!

FRANCES CONNORS '26
(MARYFRANCESCONNORS@COLLEGE.
HARVARD.EDU) HAS ALREADY
STARTED PLANNING HER GRADUATION
BACKPACKING TRIP.

GRAPHIC BY MADISON KRUG '27

A Letter To Our Senior Selves

A checklist we hope to recall with nostalgia in three years.

BY PAIGE CORNELIUS '28 AND TILLY BUTTERWORTH '28

Dear Senior Paige and Tilly,

Although some days seemed to drag on forever, it feels just like yesterday that we were banging on the door of our freshman dorms, not realizing we had to pick up our keys from Yard Ops. All of a sudden, we were returning those same keys, rooms empty once more.

While the year was filled with many successes, it also made us realize that Harvard offers so much that we have yet to embrace. This checklist could really go on forever, but we chose to delve into what we believed to be the nine critical themes of making the most out of our unique undergraduate experience. In three years, we hope to look back on our years at the College with pride in knowing we put ourselves out there and strived to make ourselves better. And while college looks different for everyone, maybe these goals might inspire you, too.

Reflecting on Freshman Year

Looking back on our first year at Harvard already feels oddly nostalgic. Arriving on campus was like stepping into a new world—one filled with driven, curious, and passionate people who reminded us of why we came here in the first place. Freshman year had many enjoyable moments, but also moments of uncertainty and challenge. At times, the novelty wore off and college life became extremely intense and competitive. Impostor syndrome crept in and we were forced to confront the daunting feeling of three more years of late nights studying, being away from home, and working till exhaustion. It seemed like an impossible feat.

But when we're seniors, we hope we'll remember these trials fondly—all of our embarrassing stories and rocky mistakes that only a freshman

makes at Harvard (trust us, there are plenty). It wouldn't be our first year without them. Freshman year isn't about perfection—it's about meeting new people, acclimating to college life, and understanding all the unique aspects Harvard has to offer. As our sophomore year looms, we hope to take on some important challenges that we hope our senior selves will master and bask in.

Making Even More Friendships

While we should be most thankful for Harvard's world-renowned education and plethora of networking opportunities, instead, we are most grateful to this school for giving us friendships that will last well beyond our time in Cambridge. We hit the friend lottery.

But as much as we love them, we don't want comfort to turn into complacency. When we read this article senior year, our hope is that we did not succumb to the temptation of safety for the next three years, but instead challenged ourselves to form new connections. Undoubtedly, it is important to cherish the people in your life. And while we look forward to growing alongside the people we experienced freshman year with, learning from our diverse cohort of peers on campus is more valuable than a lecture ever will be.

So when we are 22 (ew, *weird*), we still plan on having wine nights with our core five friends and inviting them over for Thanksgiving. But we also want to get coffee with the girls in our sections who have great style or exchange more than just *Sorry* with the boys in Berg we accidentally bump into. We hope we don't put ourselves in a box. Harvard's full of the most extraordinary people we haven't met yet, and we want to keep building relationships with them.

Embracing House Life

While freshman year means waking up in Harvard Yard—or, if you're *extra* lucky, Pennypacker Hall—becoming a sophomore brings something new: House life. By senior year, we hope we've fully immersed ourselves in the Quad and taken advantage of all the resources and opportunities that come from its community. The separation between freshmen and upperclassmen at Harvard is more divisive than many realize, and House life will help us to integrate, introducing us to more people from different years and areas of Harvard.

It's already becoming a place of real comfort—just the mere idea of living in the same place for the next three years feels secure. We have the chance to set foundations and grow into a house. Though our initial reaction to the big, red, floppy fish stumbling into our room at 8:50 a.m. on Housing Day wasn't one full of joy and relief, Quad life will hopefully bring us excitement, community, and fulfillment.

Opening Up About Homesickness

This Harvard freshman class is the most diverse in history, which is a privilege. However, this comes with challenges, as so many of us flew from home to a new state, country, or even continent to continue our education, with no turning back.

Cambridge offers a plethora of cozy restaurants, shops, parks—everything that a neighborhood needs to feel like home. But waking up next to a stranger and getting lost on the way to class are merely more reminders that you've been uprooted from your home to the gates of Harvard Yard. There is a beauty to a fresh start, but also a desire for a home-cooked meal or a motherly hug that lingers throughout freshman year.

It is important that, in these times, we talk about these feelings. We relate to our peers in the emotional challenges that come with being far from home. We FaceTime the people that we miss and send texts of gratitude. There is no cure for homesickness, but it becomes more manageable when it is not handled in solitude.

Living Out College Traditions

Some of the first things you hear about, even before you start your first year at Harvard, are the College’s wonderful traditions. Whilst some must not be mentioned, we have found ourselves at the end of our first year having not completed as many as we initially planned. We want to make sure that by the time our senior year comes around, we will be nostalgically reflecting on our cold plunges in the river or our special visits to see John Harvard. In that moment, we can wholeheartedly say we are true Harvard students. Who knows, maybe we will have created some of our own.

Trying *All* the Food

It might sound trivial, but food is a college experience. Especially when your dinners mostly consist of french fries, Golden Grahams mixed with Frosted Flakes, and a twist of froyo. We were overwhelmed walking into Berg at first, mostly because we didn’t know how to build a real meal. Unfortunately, this fear never really went away.

Some of our friends walk out with bowls that look like they’re from Cava. Forget portraits, still-lifes, or abstracts, HUDS bowl-making is an *art*. And it is one we pray our senior selves have mastered.

Choosing Passion Over Pressure

This section may feel a bit direct, but let’s be honest—it applies to more than our senior selves. Anyways, here we go.

If you’re reading this in 2026, 2027, or 2028, and prepping for a private equity internship in NYC, *close*

the tab. Have ChatGPT craft an email to the hiring manager to give your spot to someone else. You hate numbers and all things business, and you spent all of the first semester kicking yourself for not understanding anything Jason Furman said in Econ 10A.

And while wearing trendy pantsuits and outperforming the men who believe corporate America is not meant for women does sound appealing, working into the morning, methodically, does not. You are not weak for wanting your passions to become a profession. For wanting to change the criminal justice system or help those with mental disorders, or for valuing being a mother over any job at all. Lead with your heart, because you have the brain to make any of your interests worthwhile.

Going Out (Even After 10:30 p.m.)

At Harvard, it’s easy to feel 30 at 20—everyone’s hustling, everyone’s booked, and everyone’s *burnt out*. But we hope we will not have let that mindset steal our youth. It feels like we accomplish more in a day than others do in a week. And while this is nothing to complain about, a night of studying isn’t always worth missing a Hong Kong karaoke night. On our 21st birthdays, we do not want the novelty of “going out” to have disappeared because we’re convinced that we are above the social scene.

As we get older, we, contrarily, want to get more youthful, fun, and free. When we are seniors on campus, we plan on acting the most foolish. There is a freedom in undergraduate life that is not as apparent in the “real world.” So for the next three years, we’ll never be the first ones to leave a mixer, to suggest going to Joe’s instead of Ubering into Boston, or to suggest staying in at all. If we are home before midnight on a Saturday night in the spring, we hope

it’s because we were dragged out by our concerned friends.

Finding Ourselves

Before college, we thought we had a pretty good idea of who we were. Our goals were simple: complete four years here, get a Harvard degree, have some fun along the way, and boom! We’d be out in the world, headstrong and decisive about who we were. Harvard was just *supposed* to add the polish.

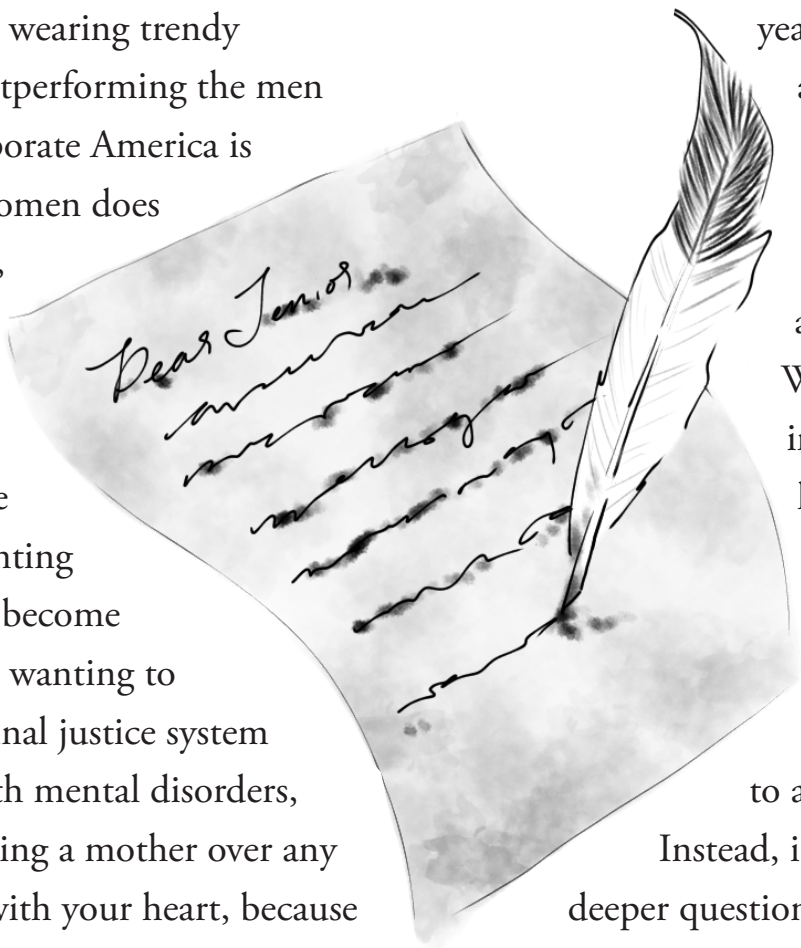
Instead, it’s made us ask deeper questions.

We’ve realized that growing up isn’t just about becoming more accomplished—it’s about becoming more us. We want our senior selves to graduate feeling truly confident and happy in the people we are, no matter what that means. We want to fight off the nightmare that is “Imposter Syndrome” once and for all. At the end of the day, no one will pay attention to the awkward or embarrassing things we do on a daily basis, because how we treated others—and how we treated ourselves—will have mattered the most.

Love,
Freshmen Paige and Tilly

**PAIGE CORNELIUS ’28
(PAIGECORNELIUS@COLLEGE.
HARVARD.EDU) AND
TILLY BUTTERWORTH ’28
(MBUTTERWORTH@COLLEGE.
HARVARD.EDU) WILL
HOPEFULLY HAVE STAYED
TRUE TO THESE GOALS BY
THE TIME THEY ARE SENIORS.**

**GRAPHIC BY EMMA
CRAGO ’28**



Thoughts from New Quincy: Into the Unknown

Why not knowing might be the most grounded way to move through the world.

BY LUKE WAGNER '26

The road curves out ahead of us, the trees pulling long shadows across the asphalt. I'm driving—my dad in the passenger seat, one arm out the window, tapping his fingers on the door in rhythm with the song on the radio. The Stones are playing low, something from "Sticky Fingers" I only ever seem to hear when I'm with him. The air coming in smells like salt and cut grass.

We're heading to Rhode Island, winding through the backroads we've driven a hundred times before—at least, he has. The sun is starting to set, casting an orange glow across the trees and windshield. We haven't said much for a few minutes.

Then, casually, he nods toward the windshield and says, "Take a left on Mitchells Ln."

I pause for a second. "Where's that?"

He shoots me a look, somewhere between amused and confused. "Are you serious? It's the road right by the golf course—you've driven down it a million times."

I just shrug. "I don't know... I always just use Maps."

He lets out a short laugh. "You really don't know the roads around here, do you?" He shakes his head, not mad, just baffled. "We didn't have GPS when I was your age. You just figured it out."

I don't really have a response, so I just keep driving.

He's right. Without my phone pulling up step-by-step directions, I probably couldn't get from one side of town to the other. My dad doesn't have that problem—he just knows the way. It's instinctive. The roads live in his memory like a second language. I, on the other hand, rely on tech to think for me. The landscape doesn't feel familiar. It feels outsourced. It exists not as a place, but as a set of coordinates I retrieve on command—a blue arrow on a screen.

Watching my dad navigate without hesitation made me realize how often I treat other parts of my life like unfamiliar roads—just waiting for the next alert to tell me what to do. It's not just directions I outsource. I rely on being "in the know" the same way: as a kind of emotional GPS. Staying updated—on news, trends, group chats—feels like a way to avoid getting lost. Most of the time, it isn't even real curiosity. It's about not falling behind. About proving I haven't missed anything.

It's weird how much modern life makes not knowing feel like a personal failure. Everyone's constantly trying to prove they're in the loop—throwing out half-baked takes, name-dropping headlines, pretending they've read things they've only scrolled past. This so-called "awareness" is performative, and the performance isn't just about fitting in—it's about convincing yourself that you know more than you do. And the scary part is, most of us believe our own performance. The confidence is real. The knowledge often isn't.

That's what catches me off guard about the way my dad moves through the world. He doesn't

worry about keeping up or falling behind—he reads widely, thinks carefully, but doesn't perform.

He doesn't chase the next thing just to prove he's already there. When he pointed out that I didn't really know the roads around our home, he wasn't just referring to directions. Instead, his comment made me realize how much I rely on technology to fill in the gaps. I'm used to outsourcing the details of everyday life because there's *always* an app to do it for me.

But I don't think this anxiety about not knowing is just a personal thing. It feels generational. It's like we've been trained to think that knowledge equates to value.

Falling behind doesn't just mean being out of touch;

it feels like missing a step in a dance everyone else already knows. At Harvard, it's practically a reflex.

You walk into a dining hall conversation, and everyone's already talking about the latest news or some debate blowing up on social media. If you're not in the loop, you feel like a small failure.

Still, being in the loop doesn't always mean understanding—it often just means knowing how to sound like you do. At Harvard, people get good at bluffing, speaking in polished sentences that circle around a point they haven't really thought through. The performance becomes the knowledge.

I check my phone more than I'd like to admit. Five, six hours a day, sometimes seven. I'm not reading news because I'm curious—I'm skimming headlines so I won't be caught off guard when someone brings them up. I refresh X between classes like I'm checking the scoreboard of a game I forgot I was playing in.

In his 1975 book "Discipline and Punish," French theorist Michel Foucault argues that modern power doesn't just punish—it trains you to punish yourself. You don't need a guard if you've already built the tower in your head. That's what makes self-surveillance so insidious: it doesn't just regulate what we do—it alters how we see ourselves. The irony is, most people don't even feel behind. They feel ahead. We're not just afraid of ignorance—we've lost the ability to recognize it in ourselves.

No one's actually watching me scroll on my phone before section. No one's giving me a grade for having the right take. But still, I self-correct. I monitor what I know and what I don't, and I manage the version of myself that other people might see. It's like life has become a kind of soft surveillance—just enough to keep you always catching up.

It's exhausting—not because we're hungry to learn, but because we're desperate not to fall behind. Half the time, we're not thinking—we're scanning, adjusting, posing. We second-guess what we know and overstate what we don't, all to hold onto the illusion that we're always in control. That

we get it. That we're already caught up.

But the irony is that the best learning often comes from admitting how much you still don't know, not pretending to have it all figured out.

The people I learn the most from aren't the ones who speak in polished arguments, but the ones who say, "I don't know," and mean it—the ones who ask the awkward questions and speak up even when they're unsure.

Vulnerability isn't a weakness—it's clarity. It's the thing that makes actual thinking possible. It's in those moments of uncertainty that you actually start to understand something deeper, whether that be in the classroom or passing conversations with friends.

That's why not knowing can feel oddly freeing, if you let it be. It means letting go of the instinct of performative understanding, to instantly process every event, every opinion, every update. It's stepping outside the cycle of needing to appear certain—and accepting that uncertainty is part of being human.

Still, there's a difference between not knowing and refusing to know. Curiosity begins with humility, with admitting the gap. But ignorance—the dangerous kind—pretends the gap isn't there. The real problem isn't that we don't know everything. It's when we convince ourselves we already do. That's the trap: not uncertainty, but certainty without reflection.

I think about that drive again, how my dad didn't need a map, didn't hesitate, didn't second-guess the next turn. He just knew where he was. Not because he memorized every street, but because he paid attention over time.

Meanwhile, I'm so used to being told where to go—by apps, by group chats, by whatever's trending—that I rarely stop to ask or acknowledge where I actually am. Maybe letting go of the need to always know would leave space for something else. Not certainty and direction, but attention and presence.

My dad doesn't stress about whether he's on the most efficient path—he just keeps going, humming along to the radio, reaching forward now and then to turn the dial up when a favorite comes on. Maybe that's the mindset I need to lean into: not perfect knowledge, but a little more faith that I'll figure it out as I go. Not knowing doesn't have to feel like failing. It can be a way of paying attention, of seeing the world as it is instead of always racing to stay ahead of it.

LUKE WAGNER '26 (LUKEWAGNER@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) IS THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE HARVARD INDEPENDENT.

GRAPHIC BY JOYE WINGARD '28

Abreast on Abroad: My Final Love Letter

Sadie Kargman's final plea for Harvard students to study abroad as she reflects on her fabulous semester in Paris.

BY SADIE KARGMAN '26

Bonjour Friends,

Actually, hello. While I arrived at Charles de Gaulle as a girl in an "I Heart NY" tee, I leave as a woman in a beret.

To my dismay, my return to the United States of America has arrived. Shameless plug for the Harvard Office of International Education (your girl is **officially** an ambassador), but studying abroad is seriously one of the best things I've ever done.

As my friends know, I am very confident. At times, *too* confident. However, nothing is more humbling than moving to a foreign country by yourself. Yes, I am very lucky to have some family in Paris (shoutout famille!), but nonetheless, it was terrifying learning and adapting to a new culture when you have no choice but to make it your new norm. Want to do anything from the hours of 12-4 p.m.? Forget about it. As a New Yorker, I wanted "let's go" versus "*laissez-faire*."

The first day of my program's orientation honestly felt like kindergarten. Who was I going to sit with? Did we have any mutuals on Insta? How tired did I look from my flight? 'Twas comical, actually. Thank god for Keeley O'Gorman '26, who was also in my program, also a Harvard Pfoho Baddie, and was right there with me. After making some friends (yay!), I then had to combat my social anxiety of engaging with French people daily. Imagine telling someone you're from the U.S. in this economic and political climate. Imagine you exist in the same DECADE as "Emily in Paris." Doomed. From. The. Start—just kidding!

From my experience, if you're self-assured, *respectful*, and lean into speaking French, nine times out of ten, you're met with a smile and (best case scenario) "tu parles bien français pour une américaine!" I'll never get sick of that one. Instead of cosplaying a French girl, or worse, defaulting to English, it is SO much better to be a confident American who culturally adapts. Once I realized this behavioral hack, my entire travel perspective and

persona shifted; I'm not fooling anyone with my accent, so the next best thing is trying to bring a good "rep" back to "Les États-Unis."

Being an American in Paris these last five months *has* been very challenging, don't get me wrong. There are things you miss and crave from home (bagels...also my family). There are cultural references you'll never get abroad ("football" culture—people get into full street riots). And God knows you'll often stick out like a sore thumb (If you're in a group of English speakers, forget it). But it's these little cultural differences that make studying abroad so much more special and worthwhile. Also, frankly, going abroad is a major life accomplishment.

Many ask: What's the point? Was it worth it? What about the seniors I'll never get to say bye to or see again?

I will begin with the last one. Firstly, imminent congratulations to the Class of 2025. Please, all go to Harvard grad schools as I'm in perpetual denial that you're leaving. However, re: missing your last semester, you're not dying... I'll see my best friends again. Also, I live in New York, for God's sake. I understand some of you will

never forgive me for venturing abroad this semester, but isn't it so much better to always remind me I missed your senior spring? I thought so. *HUG*

Back to the program: junior spring is really the best time to go abroad. Yes, you could go in the fall, but a) the semester itself is super short, and b) imagine moving into campus during the bleak, dead of winter. Horrific. Choosing to go abroad this spring allowed me to think more holistically about my college experience, both academically and socially. I knew exactly what requirements I had to check off and, more importantly, who my friends were before I left campus. Sure, I had FOMO at times. Of COURSE I did. But I also had the assurance of a fantastic senior year with an incredible group of friends waiting for me on the other side.

The point of going abroad? I could say it was to travel. I could say it was to

immerse myself in the French language and culture (raging Francophile over here). But really, I went abroad for *me*—I grew so much as a person because I had the space to learn new things about myself. Cheesy as fuck, I know.

Never in my life, especially with my Type A ass, will I get to move abroad alone and have the freedom to figure myself out. I had *no* responsibilities (cough, school) and *no* problems (cough, I was robbed). Free will is alive and well, people! I could do whatever I wanted. I could go anywhere I pleased. Or, fuck it, I could have eaten €1.50 baguettes every goddamn day for every meal. Joy to the world!

To recap my *Abreast on Abroad* series, I visited over twenty different towns, cities, countries and regions (Final chronological list: Paris, Fontainebleau, Lyon, Edinburgh, St. Andrew's, Dijon, Amsterdam, Chantilly, Copenhagen, Oslo, Madrid, London, Lisbon, Malta, Rome, Munich, Berlin, Warsaw, Lublin, Krakow, Majorca, and Avignon). Let me remind you, I was robbed. I survived a "ScareBnB." Ironically, luck *stayed* on my side (Harry Styles paid for my cab). But most importantly, I made lifelong best friends.

I will miss and think about being abroad probably once a day for the rest of my life. Is this just a love letter to the OIE? Yeah, it is.

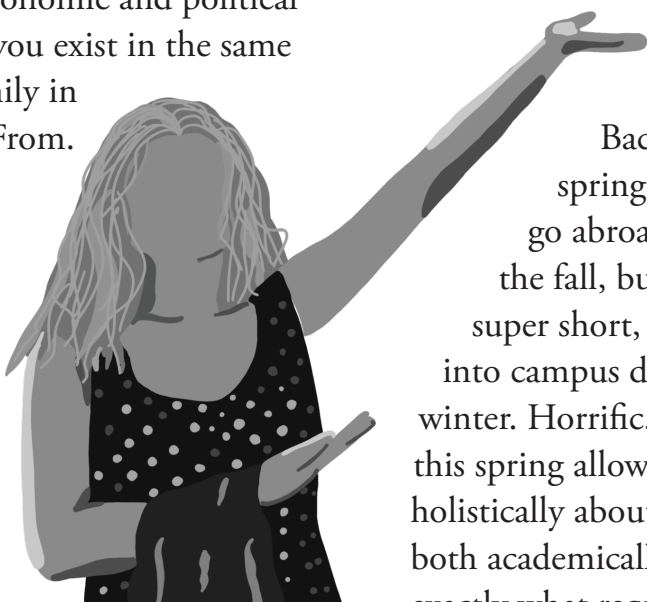
It's fitting that my last letter to you all is in the Commencement Issue, as I graduate from a normal person to someone who won't shut up about their time abroad. This past semester has changed me as a human being, thinker, and even patriot—eek. So, if you took anything from this wild word-vomit series, please consider either traveling or studying abroad, and make sure to keep your friends abreast of the ride.

Thank you all for reading, and keep those eyes peeled for my new column in the *Harvard Independent* (whatever it may be) next fall!

Kisses!
Sadie

**SADIE KARGMAN '26
(SADIEKARGMAN@COLLEGE.
HARVARD.EDU) HAS CONCLUDED
HER REIGN AS YOUR FAVORITE
SHITSTAIN IN PARIS.**

GRAPHIC BY EL RICHARDS '26



ARTS

your Harvard semester in 25 Squares

A Bingo card to summarize your not-so-niche experiences.

By: Sophie Dauer '27 and Kayla Le '28



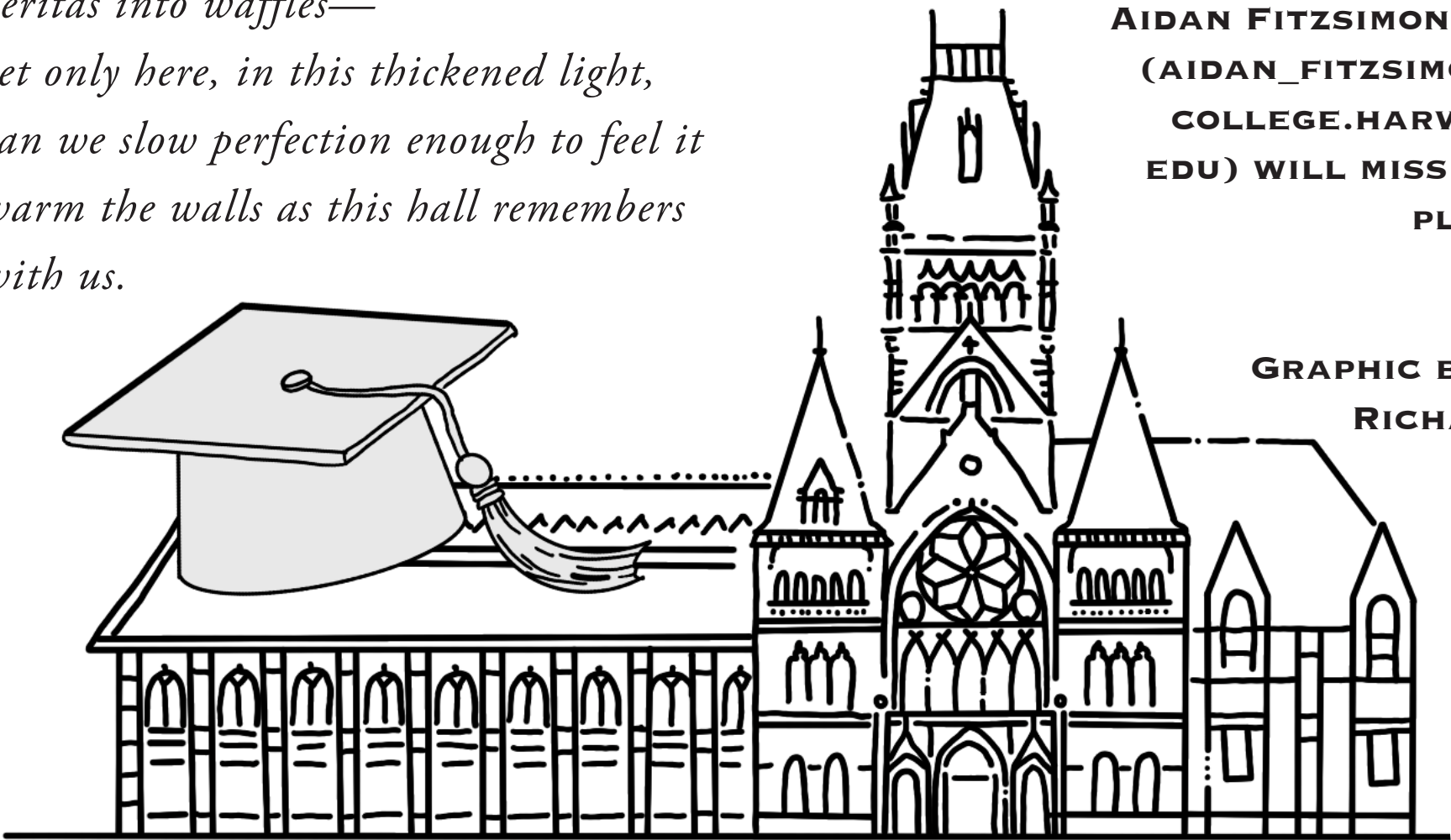
Memorial Hall

BY AIDAN FITZSIMONS '25

*Memory filters the moment like light
through stained glass—
shapes and colors the stretch of the soul,
limits the unlimited sun, refracts
mere truth into beauty, converts
veritas into waffles—
yet only here, in this thickened light,
can we slow perfection enough to feel it
warm the walls as this hall remembers
with us.*

AIDAN FITZSIMONS '25
(AIDAN_FITZSIMONS@
COLLEGE.HARVARD.
EDU) WILL MISS THIS
PLACE.

GRAPHIC BY EL
RICHARDS
'26



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SPORTS

Spring Sports Round-Up

How did Harvard fare across its sports teams this spring?

BY KALVIN FRANK '28

While sports fans regard fall as the coveted football season, as the NFL and NCAA run parallel, spring is the time for some of America's most popular sports: baseball, softball, and lacrosse. This year, Harvard has seen success in many of its teams, from the most recognized to the least mainstream sports. With some teams finishing in April and more going into late May, here are the teams' results to date.

Baseball:

The baseball team had a rough start to the season with a 16-game losing streak, which they eventually broke with a win against Holy Cross. They ended the season 14-28 after beating No. 1-ranked Yale and losing to No. 2-ranked Columbia in the Ivy League Tournament championship game.

Softball:

The softball team had a remarkable season. Ending with a 26-13 record, the team succeeded both in-conference (15-6) and out-of-conference (11-7) games. By the end of the period, they were ranked second in the Ivy League. Despite these successes, Crimson softball suffered two tough defeats in the Ivy tournament, against Columbia and then Princeton, ending their season.

Golf:

The golf teams start their season in September and compete until the Ivy League championship in April. The men's and women's teams' year-long season saw ups and downs at their various invitationals. As they moved into the Ivy League championships, the women's team finished second with a first-place individual finish from Vanessa Zhang '28. The men's team placed third with a second-place individual finish from Ieuan Jones '28. After individually qualifying for regionals at the Ivy tournament, Zhang was a few shots at the NCAA regional finals away from making it to the NCAA championship tournament.

Lacrosse:

The No. 26 women's and No. 11 men's lacrosse teams had solid seasons, ending with 9-6 and 10-5 records, respectively. Despite a decent in-conference season, the women's team barely missed qualifying for the Ivy Tournament, ending the year with a regular-season 18-4 win over Columbia. After qualifying for the Ivy League Tournament, the men's team suffered an 8-11 loss to No. 3 Princeton. Going into the NCAA tournament, the men's team had their season ended by No. 6 Syracuse. After taking a dominant lead of 8-2 in the first 2 quarters, Syracuse battled back to 12-12, which set the match into overtime, concluding in a 12-13 nail-biting win for Syracuse. Despite the upsetting end to the season, Sam King '25

was recently announced as one of the five finalists for the top award in lacrosse, the Tewaaron presented by the Tewaaron Foundation. The official awardee will be announced on May 29.

Rowing:

Harvard's four rowing teams have all had successful seasons. The No. 12 Radcliffe women's open weight team garnered a clean sweep at the Big 10 tournament across all events. However, they struggled at the Ivy League tournament, with the first eight-man team getting sixth, the second and third eight-man teams getting fourth, and the two four-man teams getting fourth. Despite this, they garnered a bid to the NCAA Championship. Radcliffe lights has earned podium finishes for almost all of their spring events. Most recently at the Eastern Sprints, the lightweights took a second-place finish in the eight and four-man A races, third in four-man B, and a sixth-place finish in the double.

The No. 1 Harvard men's heavies have dominated their season with their 1V, 2V, and 3V, earning first at almost all spring events, and 4V getting podium at all of their events. The crews are top contenders in the upcoming events. The lightweight men's rowing team has earned 1st place finishes all spring for their 1V and 2V teams, along with top-three finishes for their 3V squad at all events. All teams will go on to their respective national championships, with the women's open weight at the NCAA's and the rest attending Intercollegiate Rowing Association events.

Women's Rugby 7's:

After a championship win for their fall complete 15-man season, the team had a consistent 7-man season. The team placed third and second at the Crimson and Emperor 7's, respectively. They then finished second to Dartmouth in the Ivy League championship. Finally, the team ended with a 5th place finish at the CRAA National 7's tournament. They will return in the fall to defend their reigning national title for the 15's.

Sailing:

The Harvard women's and co-ed sailing teams have had a tumultuous season with what hopefully will be a strong finish. The sailing crew took home a first-place win at the ICSA Open Team Race National Championships, along with a women's team race third-place finish. The teams will now look forward to their ICSA semifinals and finals, competing from May 22 to 29.

Tennis:

The men's and women's tennis teams both maintained winning seasons. The No. 21 men's team went 20-7 and 5-2 (conference), and the women's team went 15-9 but undefeated in the Ivy League. Both advanced to the NCAA tournaments, where the women's team suffered a first-round loss to No. 17 UCLA. The men's team secured a 4-0 win over No. 37 Washington before losing 0-4 to No. 10 Arizona.

Track and Field:

The men's and women's teams concluded the indoor season in March with the women's team securing an 11th-place finish at the NCAA championships. After indoor, track and field moves outside with invitationals starting just a week after indoor championships. After competing in 14 outdoor invitationals, with second-place finishes at the Ivy League championships, Harvard T&F will go on to compete at the NCAA East Region First Round, May 28 to 31. Following this meet, they will hopefully continue to the NCAA outdoor championships from June 11 to 14.

Men's Volleyball:

The No. 31 men's volleyball team has maintained a turbulent season. They had a 9-15 overall record, and as one of Harvard's only teams not within an Ivy League conference, they had a 5-7 record in the Eastern Intercollegiate Volleyball Association. Going into the conference tournament, the team's season came to an end with a 0-3 loss to No. 22 Penn State.

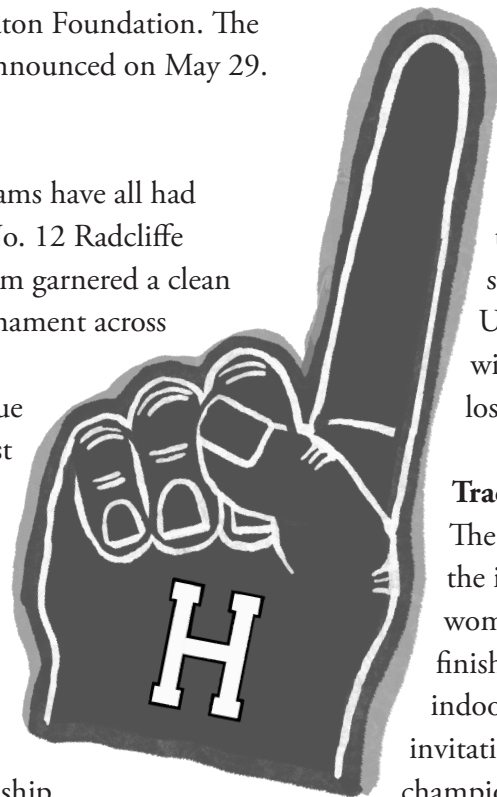
Women's Water Polo:

The No. 10 women's water polo team's season culminated with a 26-7 record. The team added major wins against No. 15 UC Santa Barbara, No. 13 Princeton, No. 11 UC San Diego, and No. 14 University of Michigan to its resume. After the regular season, the team took home its first-ever Collegiate Water Polo Association Championship with two overtime wins against the University of Michigan and the University of Princeton. The team lost to No. 4 USC at the NCAA tournament.

Harvard athletics had a massive year across the board, and spring season athletics certainly did not disappoint. Follow the Harvard athletics page as team results pour in from the upcoming competitions.

**KALVIN FRANK '28 (KFRANK@COLLEGE.HARVARD.EDU) SAYS
ROLL CRIMSON.**

**GRAPHIC BY CHRISTIE
BECKLEY '27**



Sports Spotlight: Radcliffe Lightweight Rowing

A look at lightweight rowing before their final challenge of the season: the IRA National Championship.

BY OLIVIA LUNSETH '28

As most students pack up for summer break, many Harvard athletes remain on campus, training for the final stretch of their season. The Radcliffe Lightweights, Harvard's women's lightweight rowing team, are preparing for the Intercollegiate Rowing Association National Championship Regatta on May 31 to June 1 at Mercer Lake in West Windsor, NJ.

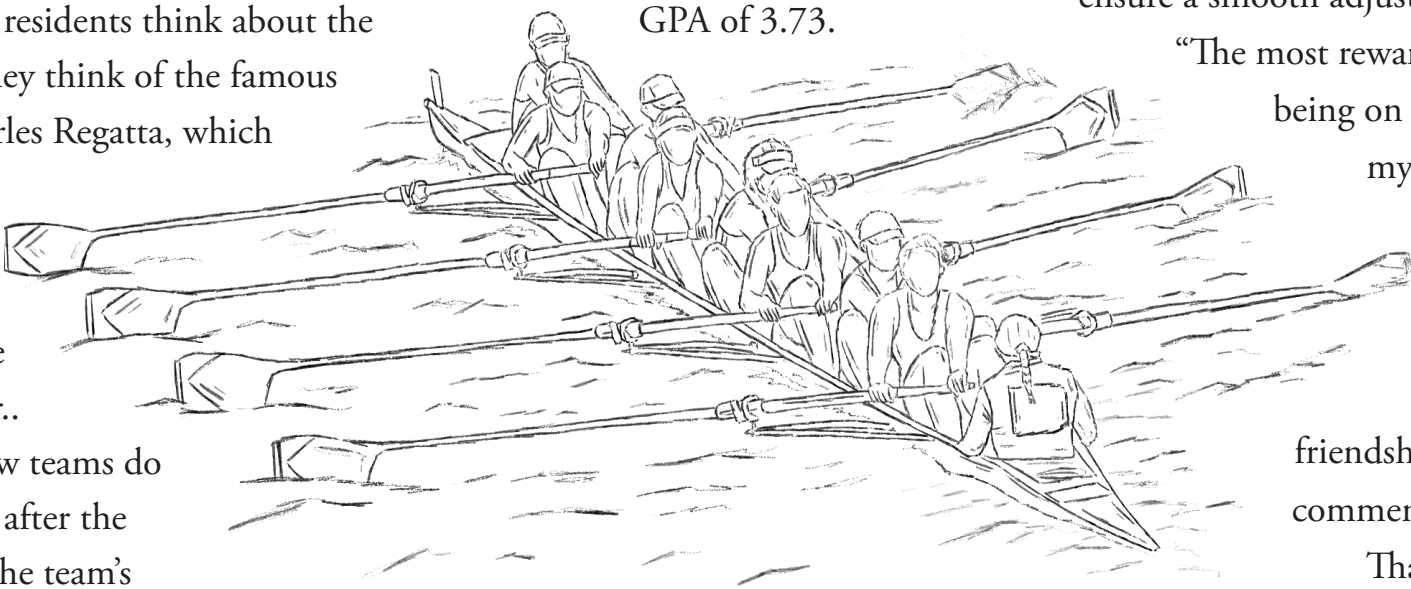
Rowing is a sport few fully understand. While many notice the boats cutting across the water and some are familiar with the different events, few realize the discipline it takes to sustain twice-daily practices nearly all year long—particularly for lightweight athletes. When most Cambridge residents think about the rowing season, they think of the famous Head of the Charles Regatta, which draws Harvard students, local fans, and viewers across the world in October.. The Crimson crew teams do not stop training after the fall, however, as the team's competitive season extends through the end of May.

Because of the weight cap, lightweight rowing allows people with a naturally smaller frame to compete in rowing at the collegiate level. "As a female lightweight rower, we weigh in prior to racing at under 130 lbs and race 2,000 meters during our spring season," shared Britt Wotovich '28. Female athletes must safely meet their weight requirement while maintaining peak physical condition, in order to display speed, synchronization, and efficiency on the water.

The Radcliffe Lightweights compete in a range of boat categories. "We race three main boat categories: a coxed eight, coxed four, and the double scull," Wotovich explained. "Coxed" means that the boat has a coxswain in the stern—the person who steers and coordinates the

rowers throughout the race. If you've ever gone for an early morning walk or run along the Charles, you might've heard a coxswain yelling out commands to their boat. Eight and four refers to the number of rowers in the boat and each rower has one oar. A double skull has two rowers and no coxswain in the boat, with each one having two oars.

The team trains five to six days a week, often twice a day, balancing on-the-water practices, strength training, and endurance work—all while managing the academic demands of Harvard. Maintaining this balance is no small feat, but the Radcliffe Lights were able to maintain an impressive fall GPA of 3.73.



Harvard's women's crew teams are one of the only varsity programs that still officially compete only under the name "Radcliffe." As the oldest women's rowing program in the Ivy League, the name was retained to honor the determination, success, and legacy of the original Radcliffe College crews. Although lightweight rowing falls outside NCAA governance due to its weight-class requirements, the team proudly competes under the Radcliffe name, alongside the openweight rowing team, which does compete under the NCAA.

At the 50th annual Eastern Sprints, the team brought home two silver medals and a bronze: second place in the varsity eight and four A, third in the four B, and sixth in the double. These were strong finishes for the team as their final regatta

before the national championship.

The time between Eastern Sprints in early May and their upcoming regatta has been a valuable training block for the team. "Being one of the last teams on campus has been an opportunity to bond with fellow spring athletes and focus on athletics without academic pressures," Wotovich shared.

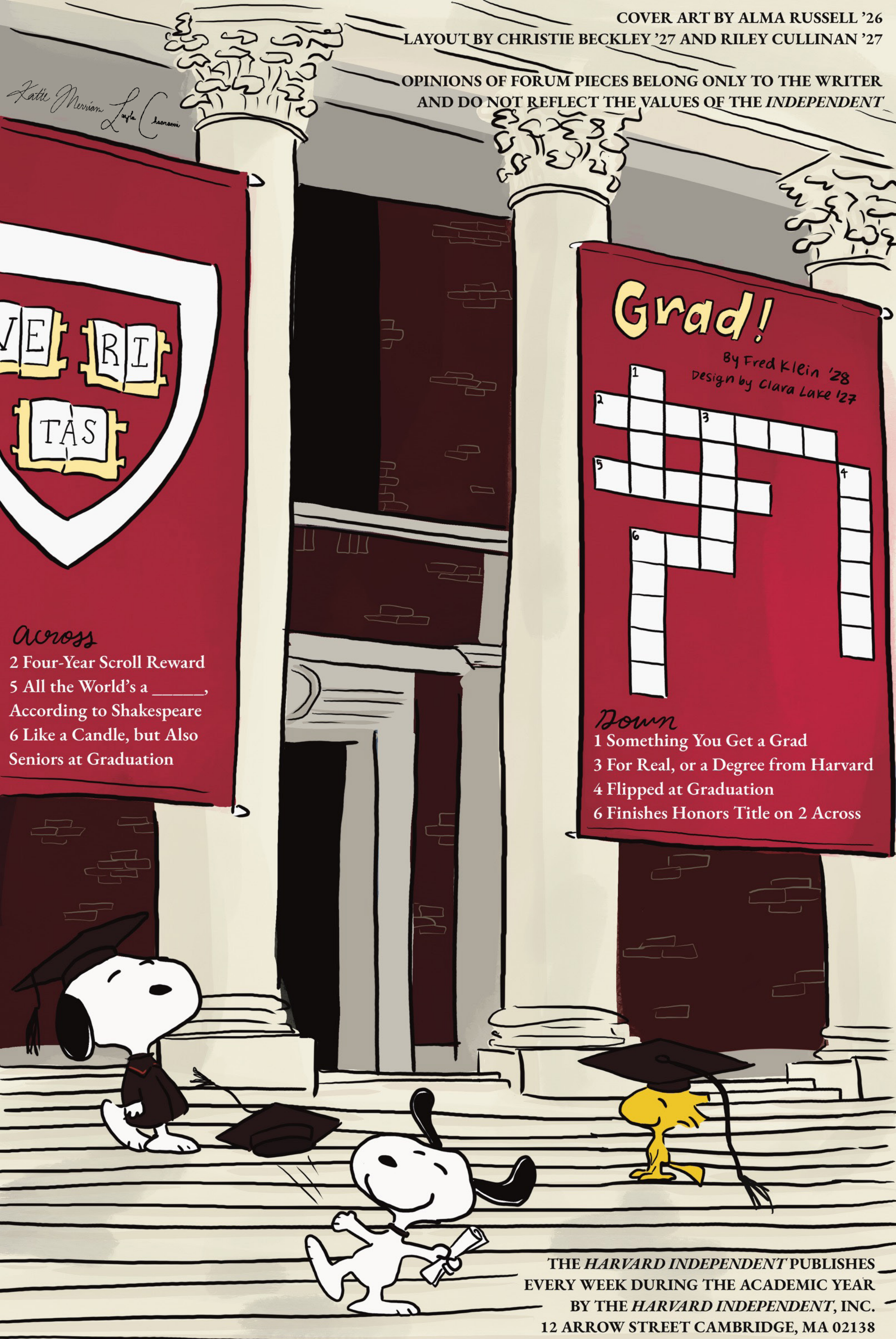
The Radcliffe Lightweights are navigating a period of transition under their new head coach, Stacey Apfelbaum. While adapting to new leadership presents its challenges, the team has handled this change by leaning on one another and drawing strength from their captains to ensure a smooth adjustment.

"The most rewarding part of being on RVL is 100% my teammates. My teammates are so inspiring, and I have made such incredible friendships with this sport," commented Wotovich.

That sense of connection fuels the team both on and off the water. Balancing the demands of Harvard academics with the intensity of training for a national competition is no easy task, but last spring, the Radcliffe lights proved it could be done with a third-place finish at the IRA National Championships Regatta. Now, with IRA Nationals just a week away and the stress of finals over, the Radcliffe lights are once again in a strong position to compete at the highest level of collegiate lightweight rowing.

**OLIVIA LUNSETH '28
(OLIVIALUNSETH@COLLEGE.
HARVARD.EDU) WRITES SPORTS
FOR THE INDEPENDENT.**

**GRAPHIC BY MIRANDA CHAO
HWANG '28**



*Katie Merriam
Clara Lake
Alma Russell*

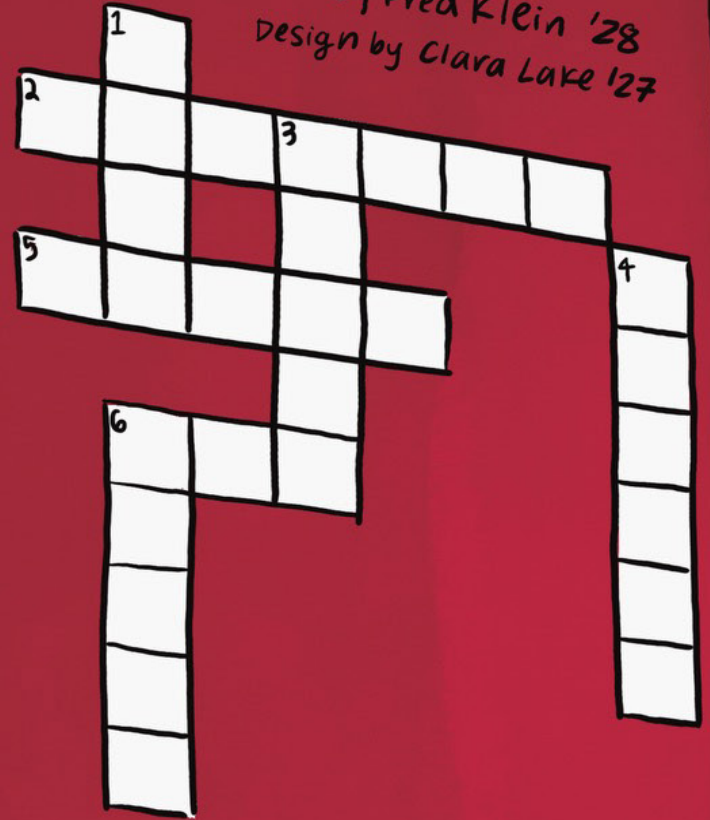
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Across

- 2 Four-Year Scroll Reward
5 All the World's a _____,
According to Shakespeare
6 Like a Candle, but Also
Seniors at Graduation

Grad!

By Fred Klein '28
Design by Clara Lake '27



Down

- 1 Something You Get a Grad
3 For Real, or a Degree from Harvard
4 Flipped at Graduation
6 Finishes Honors Title on 2 Across