

# Questionnaire for HAA Elected Director Candidates

Santiago Creuheras

February 25, 2020

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*1. How important should diversity be at Harvard? What strategies should the University pursue regarding this? (Please discuss specific programs and policies, including Ethnic Studies and faculty hiring, tenure, and advancement, if you can.)*

Inclusion should be the standard at Harvard. In order to achieve the highest level of inclusion Harvard must implement a remarkable and exemplary diversity practice across the whole administration.

Diversity in terms of age, beliefs, dress, ethnicity, gender, geography, identity, intellectual capacity, sexual orientation, physical ability, politics, religion, socioeconomics and values should be one of the pillars at Harvard. As other pillars (such as sustainability), diversity must be addressed and considered as a crucial element in all decision-making processes at Harvard including academic and professional programs, accountability, admissions, events, governance, human resources, teaching, and transparency among others. Harvard's tenure and advancement policies and procedures should be more accountable and transparent.

Harvard is a university and its vision must remain universal. Without a universal and inclusive vision, it will be difficult to increase diversity within its community. Harvard has existed for many centuries. World dignitaries, eminences, experts, professionals have contributed to this community building for years. It is essential that Harvard jumps to the next step. Harvard must have a strong and world class **ethnic studies department, center or institute** honoring and recognizing its past. A body that conglomerates experts, professionals and students who study and research ethnicity in depth. A community within Harvard that focuses on this

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important area and sheds light across different boundaries. Present and future generations of students should explore ethnicity and diversity considering the relevance that Harvard has succeeded and built new paths of knowledge thanks to its universality. Issues of diversity such as race, gender, and identity will be at the center of international discussion and Harvard, as lighthouse of the universal knowledge, must lead by example.

But there will not be a path to a diverse and inclusive future without considering sustainability. Studies across the world have suggested that diversity and inclusion, and a sustainable future are deeply intertwined. Our university is moving forward in becoming a more sustainable place. Harvard must have a similar **entity that embeds and researches sustainability across the whole university**. It is vital we build sustainability bridges among our schools. The Office for Sustainability is doing a great job. However, it needs to move on to the next level and set the world standard.

Ethnic studies must be at the center of Harvard's decision-making arena, diversity should be one pillar for Harvard's successful progress. The more diverse groups across America and the World access to a more prosperous life, the more important is sustainability. Thus, as I mentioned above, sustainability should be another one.

## ***2. How can Harvard encourage more diversity among its alumni leaders and activities? (If not discussed above.)***

Harvard can encourage more diversity among its alumni leaders and activities promoting inclusion. Alumni leaders must represent not only the schools with the greatest number of students and alumni. In a value creation environment, all voices are necessary to be heard. Alumni can contribute to strengthen our community in

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different ways considering an inclusive vision. Boards, events, initiatives, funding, and projects should consider diversity in order to reach out all our community members. Harvard does not tolerate any sort of discriminatory discourse. All alumni should respect other alumni and treat them equally with fairness. Alumni leaders must eliminate discrimination among the alumni from different schools. In a few words, alumni leaders and activities should embed the sense of **“One Diverse and Sustainable Harvard”**.

Within the HAA Board of Directors, if elected, I suggest the following:

- Creation of a “Young Diverse Sub-committee” in order to explore new initiatives that promote inclusion within Harvard alumni
- Harvard-wide Alumni Speaker’s Series Webinars and On-Campus sharing their diverse and inclusion experiences
- HAA and Harvard College Freshman Diversity Orientation Workshop, among others.

### ***3. Please state your views on affirmative action and race-conscious admissions.***

I respectfully support affirmative action and race-conscious admissions. These policies were enacted after years of fight for fairness and are at the cornerstone of the civil rights movement of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The intellectual discussions on addressing the issue of fair access to education still echoes in our times. As I mentioned, Harvard should remain universal and inclusive. Admissions is one of the most difficult processes at the different schools at Harvard, but one that guarantees the excellence of the university. It is essential every school encourages diversity and race-consciousness within its admission’s policy. Harvard’s intellectual richness will continue only if Harvard commits to diversity across all

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schools. Jurisprudence in the United States of America in these matters demands universities to be aware of race-consciousness as part of their multidimensional admission policy and processes.

#### *4. What do you think Harvard's role should be in creating a more equitable, inclusive and just society?*

Harvard should be exemplary and set the world standard in creating a more equitable, inclusive and just society. Harvard's mission should clearly include diversity and sustainability within its statement:

**"To educate the citizens and citizen-leaders for a diverse and sustainable society"**

To achieve that, Harvard should create two bodies, departments, centers or institutes with a transdisciplinary perspective focusing on ethnic studies and sustainability. These two initiatives with the support of all Harvard schools could set the standard and let Harvard University to become the role model in innovating on how to create a more equitable, inclusive and just society. I have no doubt exploring these initiatives within the Harvard Alumni Association Board of Directors will be an endeavor to explore among HAA leaders and the University.

#### *5. What steps have you taken to bring diversity and inclusion to Harvard, to your workplace, and/or to an organization that you have been involved with?*

I have had the honor to participate in many initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion at Harvard as well as a member of other organizations and at my different workplaces. I would like to share some of them: as a graduate student at Harvard, I served as an advisor to Harvard Organization for Latin America and shared my experiences at Adams House. I also joined and participated in many capacities within the Harvard University Mexican Association of Students (HUMAS). With the

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support of the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies (DRCLAS) and Professor John Coatsworth, I founded the DRCLAS Summer Internship Program offering Harvard students the opportunity to experience internships and research in Latin America. This program also offered fellowships for exploring ethnic studies in Latin America. Currently, this program has evolved and offers internship opportunities during all terms. As I have always been committed to diversity, when Harvard offered the course: Gender and History of Latin America with Professor Jane Mangan for the first time, I was the only male student during the course. I also served as a host for G1 students at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences showing them around and supporting them to settle at Harvard and in Cambridge. For Commencement, I organized the First Latin American Commencement Dinner, supporting Harvard graduates and their families to add a Latin American touch celebration to the Harvard tradition.

As an alumnus, I have served for many years as a Harvard College Admissions Interviewer always concerned about diversity and inclusion. While serving in different capacities within the Harvard Club of Mexico, I organized events promoting diversity and inclusion considering speakers that appealed to alumni from Harvard schools and hosted the HAA Latin American Regional Leaders Meeting in my hometown Puebla, Mexico. At my workplace, I have participated in the Ethics and Behavior Committee, I have designed and implemented policies that have allowed for the poorest to have access to electricity as well as energy efficiency schemes, financial inclusion opportunities and labor training workshops. Moreover, I am involved in increasing access to and improve the quality of the delivery of public services, developing initiatives to promote equitable access to labor markets and entrepreneurship with identity of indigenous peoples, Afro-descendants and other diverse populations; and promoting participatory

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governance structures that recognize the territorial and cultural heritage of indigenous peoples and expand socioeconomic opportunities in an equitable manner, among others.

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