

UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL PROPOSAL FOR ACTION ON A PHYSICAL SPACE FOR BELONGING

Purpose

The purpose of this proposal for action is to address the following referendum question posed to the Harvard College Student Body in the Undergraduate Council's 2017 General Election: "Do you think that the Harvard College administration should promote diversity, belonging, and inclusion on campus through the establishment of a sufficient physical space for students devoted to these purposes". Out of the 2,074 students who cast their ballot, 1,402 students voted "Yes" on this question. (400 voted against and 272 abstained). This overwhelming majority mandates the Undergraduate Council to craft and present to the administration a proposed policy plan.

However, we recognize the complexity and specificity of diversity, belonging, and inclusion on Harvard's campus, as well as the historical significance of the need or desire for physical space. We also recognize that a community space requires community input, and as a small group of students, we cannot possibly have all of the answers. As such, this document is not intended to outline a specific formulation of a physical space dedicated to diversity, belonging, and inclusion. Rather, we here propose action items for the College administration to take to develop the necessary knowledge and awareness of the nuances and possibilities of the referendum's ends.

Outlined Proposal for Action

The proposed plan for action has three primary steps: a research process, an evaluative process, and a policy process. We believe each to be an important step in this larger action plan. The plan is as follows: First, one body will research the past and present facts of issues of diversity, belonging, and inclusion as they relate to physical spaces. Then, a second body will evaluate this research and recommend a certain response to the Harvard College Administration. Finally, a third body will craft a policy proposal in response to this recommendation.

1. Research:

- a. There are two main branches of information that we see as relevant to the eventual decision whether or not to pursue a specific policy related to a physical space for belonging and inclusion. The first is information (qualitative and quantitative) on the history of minority communities and intercommunal relations at Harvard. The second is information on models of multicultural centers at peer institutions.
- b. This information will be collected by a body made up of a) staff employed by the college b) College faculty members, and c) Harvard College students, all paid by the College administration.

- c. This research will begin in the Summer of 2018 and continue through the first semester of the 2018-2019 term.

2. Evaluation:

- a. After the above collection of data, a separate body will evaluate the research. They will then make a decision as to the best course of action: namely, is the creation of a physical space a step forward in addressing issues of diversity, inclusion, and belonging on Harvard's campus?
- b. This evaluative body will consist of a) College administrators, b) College Faculty, and c) Harvard College students, selected in part at the discretion of the administration and in part by a nomination process.
- c. This evaluation will be conducted in the beginning of the Spring of 2019, and will be constrained to a three-week period, at the conclusion of which a concrete decision is expected.

3. Creation of Task Force

- a. If the evaluative body concludes that the creation of a physical space is a step forward in addressing issues of diversity, inclusion, and belonging, a Task Force will be created to lay out a concrete plan for the development of such a space. This plan will include:
 - i. A time frame for creation and development
 - ii. A proposed long term financial plan
 - iii. Plan for staffing of the space
 - iv. Plans for uses and activation of the space in line with its intended purpose to create a space for diversity, belonging, and inclusion.
- b. The Task Force will consist of a) College administrators, b) College Faculty, c) Harvard College students, and d) Harvard College Alumni.
- c. The Task Force will have a proposal ready to present at the beginning of Spring 2020.

At the end of this process, the administration will have one month to make a decision whether or not to take on this proposal as official actionable College policy