

## Global Advisory Council Evening Speaking Program—Thursday, October 26, 2023

### Welcome remarks from President Claudine Gay

President Claudine Gay welcomed the Council members to the annual meeting. At this first convening under her leadership, President Gay expressed her gratitude for the wisdom of President *Emerita* Drew Gilpin Faust and Council Chair David Rubenstein, who established this group 11 years ago. President Gay acknowledged the moment of challenge and grief in the world and on campus, emphasizing Harvard's responsibility as a learning community to be a force for good in the world and the profound role that Council members play as partners in this endeavor.

### Fireside chat–style conversation on prosperity and happiness, as well as barriers to achieving them, led by Council Chair David Rubenstein and featuring:

**Vikram Patel**, *Chair of the Department of Global Health and Social Medicine, Paul Farmer Professor, Harvard Medical School; Professor of Global Health and Population, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health*

**Stefanie Stantcheva**, *Nathaniel Ropes Professor of Political Economy, Faculty of Arts and Sciences*

**Robert Waldinger AB '73, MD '78**, *Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School; Director of the Harvard Study of Adult Development, Director of the Center for Psychodynamic Therapy and Research, Massachusetts General Hospital*

Council Chair David Rubenstein introduced the fireside chat–style conversation, which focused on the topics of mental health, happiness, and fulfillment, as well as barriers to global prosperity.

Professor Robert Waldinger shared his work on the Harvard Study of Adult Development—the longest study of adult life, which for more than 80 years has followed 724 families selected from Harvard graduates and residents of inner-city Boston. Professor Waldinger noted that individuals who are warmly connected to others in their youth remain healthier throughout their lives—emphasizing the connection between positive relationships and health outcomes. The study further found that despite their differences in circumstances, the group of Harvard graduates was no happier on average than the group of inner-city residents. Waldinger also shared a concept from a course on happiness that he teaches with Professor Arthur Brooks—through psychological research, happiness can be distilled into two types: hedonic well-being, or current happiness and enjoyment, and eudemonic well-being, or the feeling of fulfillment and living a worthwhile life. People desire both types of happiness, but the importance of each varies between individuals and across lifetimes.

Professor Vikram Patel emphasized that adversities faced in early childhood are the single most powerful determinant of poor mental and physical health across life. He shared that the best investment a society can make is in the early years of a child's life—improvements in health, education, and well-being are highly impactful during this time when a child's brain is growing and forming at a rapid rate, and damage from adversity faced during this time may not become visible until much later in life. To illustrate this, Professor Patel shared a study that showed that a Brazilian federal cash grant program to families with young children made marked impacts 10 years later, including a large reduction in the rate of suicide. Longer-term studies of such programs can show many positive outcomes not visible in the first year.

Patel also iterated that happiness is a dynamic emotion distinct from mental health and depression, which are issues faced worldwide.

Professor Stefanie Stantcheva shared findings from her Social Economics Lab, which seeks to understand how people think about the economy through data from surveys and experiments. She identified that a great hurdle to happiness is a zero-sum mindset—the belief that there is a finite amount of prosperity in the world, and so if some individuals are doing well others must be less prosperous. The economic conditions under which individuals enter adulthood largely affect this mindset, with those who experience economic scarcity or low mobility more likely to have zero-sum thinking. Professor Stantcheva also shared about public reactions to climate policy. While many more people are concerned about climate than they were even a few years ago, the public reacts negatively to climate policy they view as inequitable. Stantcheva noted that in addition to equity, individuals care largely about the effectiveness of climate policies and their impact on individual interests, which can be challenging to understand and demonstrate.

## Global Advisory Council Annual Meeting—Friday, October 27, 2023

**Welcome remarks from David F. Holland**, *Interim Dean of Harvard Divinity School, John A. Bartlett Professor of New England Church History*

Dean David Holland welcomed members to the Harvard Divinity School and to the School's newly renovated Swartz Hall. Dean Holland's remarks centered on the Divinity School's role in cultivating ethical leadership and providing a theologically informed perspective on major world challenges. He also emphasized the School's contributions towards confronting the climate crisis, from pastoral work informed by the realities of ecological destruction to the significance of religion in inspiring change and building public understanding of climate realities.

### **Introductory remarks from Mr. Jean Salata**

Jean Salata delivered remarks highlighting the importance of maintaining a focus on the long-term work of confronting climate change amidst other urgent challenges. This undertaking is the mission of the recently formed Salata Institute on Climate and Sustainability, which seeks to use Harvard's resources and multidisciplinary community to catalyze change and deliver a worldwide call to climate action. Salata spoke to the work the Institute has undertaken to empower students and faculty to drive real-world solutions. He concluded by expressing his enduring optimism for the future, fueled by the collaboration and dedication he has witnessed through the Salata Institute.

### **Keynote panel on climate change, examining policy and climate adaptation efforts underway in key regions worldwide, featuring:**

Moderator: **James H. Stock**, *Vice Provost for Climate and Sustainability, Director of the Salata Institute for Climate and Sustainability, Harvard University; Harold Hitchings Burbank Professor of Political Economy, Faculty of Arts and Sciences; Professor of Public Policy, Harvard Kennedy School*

**Emmanuel K. Akyeampong**, *Ellen Gurney Professor of History and of African and African American Studies, Faculty of Arts and Sciences*

**Anita Berrizbeitia MLA '87**, *Professor of Landscape Architecture, Harvard Graduate School of Design*

**Caroline Buckee**, *Associate Director of the Center for Communicable Disease Dynamics, Professor of Epidemiology, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health*

**Kari C. Nadeau MD '92, PhD '95**, *Chair of the Department of Environmental Health, John Rock Professor of Climate and Population Studies, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health*

Vice Provost Jim Stock introduced the four keynote panelists and provided a brief overview of his ongoing work as director of the Salata Institute. Vice Provost Stock noted that two of the panelists—Professors Caroline Buckee and Emmanuel Akyeampong—serve as principal investigators for Salata Institute Interdisciplinary Research Clusters, cross-School initiatives aimed at bridging disciplines to investigate and confront pressing climate issues. Stock emphasized that the work of the Salata Institute, founded in 2022, has just begun.

Professor Kari Nadeau highlighted the importance of facing forward towards climate solutions, drawing from her own work on the human health impacts of climate change. There are no boundaries for how climate affects our health, and certain communities are urgently and inequitably exposed to climate impacts such as air pollution, extreme heat, and severe weather. Professor Nadeau noted that community-based work focused on practical solutions is desperately needed, and Harvard can serve as a home for this research. She added that Harvard faculty, fellows, and students will participate in the United Nations' upcoming COP28 climate meetings, including groundbreaking discussions on health systems impacts.

Professor Caroline Buckee proposed that the largest challenge in climate and health discussions is linking fragmented data across scales of measurement—bringing immense global models to a human and community level to inform policy and disaster decision-making. Professor Buckee is the codirector of CrisisReady, a program based at Harvard and DirectRelief that seeks to create a shared database of climate and health data—typically produced at different scales by separate segments of academia. Buckee demonstrated this obstacle through her work leading the Salata Institute's Climate Adaptation in South Asia Research Cluster, which found significant disparities between weather station climate data and lived temperatures in South Asian communities. She concluded by thanking the Salata Institute for providing funding for applied solutions-driven research.

Professor Anita Berrizbeitia emphasized and illustrated landscape architecture's role in climate adaptation by introducing members to her ongoing work in Thailand. Professor Berrizbeitia noted that landscape architecture was established to address the environmental and social challenges of the industrial city, and now seeks to prompt discussion on alternative futures that are sustainable and just. Berrizbeitia is currently working with students to transform a flood-threatened informal settlement in Bangkok, proposing solutions in which impoverished residents who are disproportionately impacted by climate threats and rising housing demand can avoid forceful relocation. Her vision for transformation reveals that this coexistence is possible with a rewritten city, in which residents across socioeconomic levels share climate impacts and the benefits of an adaptive landscape.

Professor Emmanuel Akyeampong provided members with an overview of his ongoing work leading the Salata Institute's Climate Adaptation in the Gulf of Guinea Research Cluster, which focuses on sea level rise, coastal erosion, and urban flooding in West Africa. The multidisciplinary research group recently spent a month visiting fishing communities in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria. Professor Akyeampong shared his takeaways: climate science is embedded in politics, with some receiving protection at the cost of others; population pressure spurs irresponsible coastal development and other land use that harms traditional communities; and regional governments cannot be the sole funders for climate adaptation, and instead rely on external funding.

### **TED-style talks that showcase a range of globally relevant topics—and how Harvard is poised to lead**

**Alejandro de la Fuente**, *Director of the Afro-Latin American Research Institute at the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research, Robert Woods Bliss Professor of Latin American History and Economics, Professor of African and African American Studies and of History, Faculty of Arts and Sciences*

Professor Alejandro de la Fuente spoke to the importance and impact of Afro-Latin American Studies, a multidisciplinary field that seeks to confront the modern and historical minimization of Latin America's population of African descent. While 95 percent of the 11 million Africans who arrived in the Americas during the colonial slave trade inhabited Latin America and the Caribbean, representing 75 percent of all colonial-era migrants to those regions, modern curricula and power structures disregard the significance of this population. Drawing from his experience as the director of Harvard's Afro-Latin American Research Institute, Professor de la Fuente highlighted the Institute's work to engage scholars, policymakers, and activists to develop a field centered on the experiences and contributions of Africans and their descendants in Latin America.

**Gabrielle Oliveira**, *Jorge Paulo Lemann Associate Professor of Education and of Brazil Studies, Harvard Graduate School of Education*

Emphasizing the significance of education as a stabilizing and beneficial force for immigrant and refugee children worldwide, Professor Gabrielle Oliveira underscored the importance of policies and curricula that engage with diverse student bodies to improve the overall educational experience. She highlighted her work with Venezuelan migrant children in Brazil, which has led to dialogues with local officials and educators on the necessity of providing learning environments that acknowledge and adapt to multicultural student populations. Professor Oliveira urged educators and those who value education to consider multiculturalism as an asset rather than an impediment—noting that teacher expectations drive educational outcomes and that adults are the predominant source of discrimination in classroom settings.

**Pippa Norris**, *Paul F. McGuire Lecturer in Comparative Politics, Harvard Kennedy School*

Professor Pippa Norris provided members with an overview of her forthcoming book, which argues that the risks of democratic backsliding under authoritarian populism are significantly increased by the duration such leaders spend in office. This thesis shifts sole responsibility from authoritarian leaders to the cultural conditions that enable their rise and political salience. Professor Norris identifies that while there is widespread and broadly acknowledged evidence of challenges to democracy in cases around the world, scholars and policymakers continue to dispute the causes behind the trend. Professor Norris's

book, which is based on her Kennedy School course on democratic backsliding, maintains that the societal, electoral, and cultural undercurrents of rising political polarization are the true drivers of democratic decline.

**Flavio du Pin Calmon**, *Assistant Professor of Electrical Engineering, Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences*

Professor Flavio Calmon presented on the current revolution in artificial intelligence, detailing his research group's work on building trustworthy AI algorithms. AI technology has progressed at lightning speed, which Professor Calmon attributes to an explosion in available data, cheap and plentiful computing power, and open-source collaboration. He argues that true mass deployment of AI models into fields such as health care and education is only possible if algorithms can be made reliable, fair, and can be trained to ensure respect for personal privacy and copyright law. Calmon's research group pursues these principles from an information theory perspective, working to understand how learning systems process and understand information. He emphasized that ensuring trustworthiness does not stall progress—rather, it provides an essential foundation to make AI useful at scale.

**Debora Spar PhD '90**, *Senior Associate Dean for Business and Global Society, Jaime and Josefina Chua Tiampo Professor of Business Administration, Harvard Business School*

Professor Debora Spar provided an overview of her teaching and research on the roles of business and capitalism in both causing and addressing urgent societal challenges. Her course, "Capitalism and the State," identifies that capitalism is frequently blamed for societal ills and seeks to explore this debate from the system's theoretical frameworks. Professor Spar noted how her work in the newly formed Institute for the Study of Business in Global Society starts with a more positive framework—asking how businesses can play a constructive role in tackling major societal challenges. She argues that there is no way to confront challenges such as climate change without participation from the business community, identifying a need to teach businesses and their leaders how to play a social role alongside maximizing profits.

**Mark Wu AB '95**, *Director of the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, Faculty of Arts and Sciences; Co-Director, Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society, Harvard University; Henry L. Stimson Professor of Law, Harvard Law School*

Continuing a conversation he began with the GAC in 2018 about U.S.-China trade disputes, Professor Mark Wu expanded more broadly to the address challenges of global trade governance. He proposed that structural issues rather than specific leadership decisions are responsible for economic strife and uncertainty. Much of the world believes global trade regulations have not fulfilled development promises, fraught with judicial loopholes and absent observed procedural norms. Professor Wu proposes that the only viable future is a world where trade rules are shaped around security—particularly centering regulation of technology and other key sectors. If we are moving towards this world, Wu stresses the importance of multidisciplinary teaching to equip a new generation of leaders to work creatively and guide a new era of global trade.