

HARVARD  
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



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**MEMORANDUM**

To: HAA Board of Directors  
From: Sarah Karmon  
Subject: Update on HAA Programs  
Date: October 25, 2024  
CC: HAA Committee Members

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Autumn has arrived in Cambridge, where leaves are falling and rowers are setting up for Head of the Charles this weekend. As you will see in this update, HAA staff and volunteers have been hard at work since we last convened in June.

September was a busy month! 3,000 alumni attended Welcome to Your City events in 47 cities in 28 countries. I'd like to extend a special thank you to the 47 Club and 15 SIG partners who hosted these events across the globe. This program is an important touch point for our recent graduates — and we could not do it without you.

To kick off a series of programs featuring Harvard leadership and faculty speakers, we hosted President Garber in conversation with alumni at events both virtual and in-person in Los Angeles and Seattle. He will travel to more cities in the new year. Provost John Manning will be featured in upcoming programs, in Texas in December and virtually in January. Information about future programs in this event series will be available soon.

On campus, the Harvard Black Alumni Society hosted the Harvard Black Alumni Global Changemakers Conference, which brought 1,000 alumni to campus for a two-day program. And the Harvard Jewish Alumni Alliance hosted a successful program on campus, in partnership with Harvard Hillel and Harvard Chabad.

[Harvard Moves](#) is back, returning for its fourth year on November 7-10. We are excited to share new resources for Clubs and SIGs planning local Harvard Moves Meetups, and a promotional toolkit to make the event easier to share with your networks. There is still time to join the fun, to encourage your alumni community to participate, and to [support students](#).

And, finally, planning for our spring events is already well underway! Harvard and Radcliffe College 2025 Reunion committees are convening regularly, Class Report submissions are coming in, and preparations are in the works for our fourth annual Harvard Alumni Day celebration — look for a save the date in your inbox soon.

Your partnership is vital to all of these efforts, and I remain grateful for all you do to support our alumni community. Wishing you safe travels back to Cambridge. I look forward to seeing you soon.

Best,  
Sarah

## **VOLUNTEER**

*Volunteers are the lifeblood of the HAA. The programs listed below happen thanks to the hard work of our volunteers, and the various HAA activities that focus on supporting and cultivating our volunteer network.*

- The **HAA Board of Directors** welcomes Moitri Chowdhury Savard AB '93 as the 2024-2025 HAA President. Under Moitri's leadership the Board will continue to build on the important work from last year — bringing volunteers together (in person and virtually) to share ideas and build leadership skills, with a focus on dialogue across differences, ultimately strengthening the alumni community. As Moitri shared in the [Gazette](#), *veritates*, the Latin plural for “truths,” reflects the important role of Harvard volunteer leaders and community members today. The ability to simultaneously hold multiple truths and come together, sometimes across differences in viewpoints, around our shared values, is vital to the alumni community.

This year, the HAA Board welcomed 47 new Directors, for a total of 139 Directors and Executive Committee members in all. The HAA Board of Directors is comprised of volunteers elected by the alumni body and those representing the graduate and professional schools, the College, and Clubs and Shared Interest Groups; they come from across the globe and span a broad age range, from students to post 50th reunion College alumni.

- **HAA Student-Alumni Engagement Committee (SAEC):** This group of Harvard College students (86 members this year, including 44 new members) partners with the HAA CAP team to promote, lead, review, and develop events, resources, and communications to facilitate the meaningful engagement of undergraduates with the alumni community. Their first meeting was on October 8.
- **HAA Recent Graduate Engagement Committee (RGEC):** This group of recent graduate Harvard College volunteer leaders now includes the Class Committee leadership up to nine years out, as well as the current and former 5th Reunion Chairs, to create a larger community of practice. Their first meeting was on October 7. In FY25, they will continue to design Real World for Recent Grad events.
- **2025 Class Committee:** The governance of the Harvard College Class of 2025 is now in place following a series of class elections, interviews, and appointments. The members will work with Harvard and with the larger alumni community this year to bolster connections among classmates – work that will continue into alumni life.
- **Reunion Program Committees:** The work of this year's Reunion Program Committees is under way, with most committees having hosted at least one full group meeting. The work this fall will focus on developing reunion schedules, creating budgets, and generating excitement among classmates. This year will be particularly significant given these classes were not able to return to campus for Reunions in 2020. In addition, Class Report chair volunteers, typically the class secretaries, launched production of the Red Books with their classes over the summer. So far, participation and story submissions are strong, and are expected to be substantive based on the events of the last five years.

- **Crimson Society Committee:** The Crimson Society Committee, now in its 5th year, is continuing its work to engage and create community for all College alumni who have celebrated their 50th Reunion. During this year's kickoff meeting on September 17, the Committee discussed the newly crafted mission and reviewed a list of possible speakers for the Crimson Society Celebration taking place June 5-6, 2025.
- The **Anti-Racism Network (ARN)** is committed to leading the Harvard community in recognizing, addressing, and eradicating social and institutional racial prejudice wherever it may exist. The group focuses on identifying and sharing best practices within our alumni communities, connecting volunteer leaders, and rapid response action planning. It is led by Paola Peacock SM '06, EDLD '14 and Yvonne Osirim AB '01, JD '07 in close partnership with HAA Board President Moitri Savard.
- The **HAA Awards Committee** meets throughout the year and is tasked with choosing three Harvard Medalists and six HAA Alumni Award winners each year.
  - The **Harvard Medal** is awarded to members of the Harvard community in recognition of extraordinary service to the University. On Harvard Alumni Day in June, the HAA honored [2024 Medalists](#) Scott A. Abell AB '72, Katherine N. Lapp, and M. Lee Pelton PhD '84.
  - The **HAA Alumni Award**, established in 1990, recognizes alumni for their outstanding service to Harvard University through leadership and engagement activities. The [2024 Alumni](#) Awardees who will be honored at the October HAA Board Meeting are Lewis "Lew" Auerbach AB '63, AM '64, Maria Carolina V. Dominguez AMP '12, Matthew G. Hegarty AB '82, Young Joon Kim JD '83, Maiya Williams Verrone AB '84, and John J. West Jr. MBA '95.

*The HAA encourages and welcomes nominations of candidates for the Harvard Medal and the HAA Award. Please share your nominations via this [online form](#).*

- Presented annually at the Alumni Leadership Conference (ALC), the [HAA Clubs and Shared Interest Groups \(SIG\) Awards](#) recognize the exceptional work of Clubs and SIGs and their volunteer leaders through two awards:
  - The **Outstanding Volunteer Leadership Award** recognizes Harvard Club and SIG volunteers who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to make an exceptional contribution to their Club or SIG. The 2023-2024 awardees are Bruce Hochstadt AB '81, from the Harvard Club of Chicago, and Kandeban Balendran PLDA '18, from the Harvard Club of Sri Lanka.
  - The **Outstanding Alumni Community Award** recognizes a Harvard Club or SIG for exceptional efforts resulting in outstanding, improved or innovated programs in areas including membership, succession planning, community service, outreach, schools and scholarship efforts, programming, or overall improvement. The 2023-2024 awardees are the Alumnae-i Network for Harvard Women and the Harvard Club of San Antonio.

*HAA Board members are encouraged to nominate outstanding Clubs and SIGs and their volunteers. Nominations for 2024-2025 are accepted through June 13, 2025 via this [online form](#).*

- The **HAA Committee to Nominate Overseers and Elected Directors** held their first meeting in September, beginning the process of selecting the candidate slates for the 2025 Harvard Board of Overseers and HAA Elected Directors. Throughout the fall, Committee members will review nominees with the goal of creating a group of candidates who bring important and complementary perspectives and experiences to both organizations. The Committee will review approximately 250 individuals for possible inclusion on the Overseers ballot and approximately 200 individuals for the Elected Directors ballot. Ultimately, the Committee is tasked with presenting eight candidates for five anticipated vacancies on the Board of Overseers, and nine candidates for six available positions as HAA Elected Director. The 2024-2025 HAA Nominating Committee members can be found on the [Harvard Elections website](#).

*The HAA encourages and welcomes nominations of candidates for Harvard Overseer and HAA Elected Director by the alumni body. [Please share your nominations via our online form](#).*

## **PARTICIPATE**

*Participating in alumni programming is critical to building engagement. Since the fall meeting, HAA staff have produced or supported a number of programs and initiatives, including:*

- **Shared Interest Group (SIG) Meetups** (June 1): Twenty-four SIGs hosted on-campus gatherings coinciding with College Reunions. The next SIG Meetups is scheduled for Friday, June 6, 2025. The move from the traditional Saturday date to Friday aligns the convenings with Harvard Alumni Day and College Reunions, and offers a fantastic opportunity for SIGs to connect with a larger audience as alumni and reunion attendees gather on campus for the various festivities.
- **Summer Community Service Fellowship** (various): This past spring, thirteen Clubs and SIGs distributed funds totaling \$114,750 to 22 very deserving Harvard College students, with awards ranging from \$4,000-\$8,000 per student. This funding assists fellows as they commit to a summer of nonprofit work, and supports graduates exploring a career in public interest.
- **Harvard Prize Book Program** (various): Harvard Clubs generously purchased 1,328 books from the COOP awarding them to high school students in their local area. Prize Books are presented annually to outstanding students in the next-to-graduating class who demonstrate excellence in scholarship and achievement in non-academic areas.
- **FYRE Office Speed Friending Fair** (August 26): The HAA College Alumni Programs (CAP) team and the Harvard College Fund (HCF) participated in a part of the FYRE (First-Year Retreat and Experience) pre-orientation program that the College organizes for first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented (FGLI/U) first-year students. At the office fair, students received resources on how to connect with the alumni community and attend events.
- **First-Year Convocation for the Class of 2028** (September 2): Organized by the Harvard College Dean of Students Office with support from the HAA CAP team, Convocation welcomed the College Class of 2028 to Harvard. The program featured remarks from Harvard leadership and

HAA Board President Moitri Savard. Alumni volunteers (members of the Schools & Scholarships Committee and the Happy Committee) welcomed the students into the larger Harvard community and gifted them with the Class of 2028 pins. On social media, the HAA collected and shared [welcome messages for the class](#) on the Instagram story and posted a [welcome message from Executive Director Sarah Karmon](#), a post-event [video reel highlighting high points of the program](#), and a [carousel photo post showcasing members of the new class](#).

- **College Student Leaders Forum** (September 8): Organized by the Harvard College Dean of Students Office, the Student Leaders Forum provides training for student organization leaders. The HAA CAP team shared a presentation and provided resources about ways for student organizations to engage with their alumni members with help from the HAA and the HCF.
- **[Welcome to Your City](#)**, an event designed to provide University-wide recent graduates (up to 10 years out) with an opportunity to connect with Clubs, SIGs, and fellow alumni in their local area, was held on Wednesday, September 11. Events were held in 47 cities (hosted by 47 Clubs with 15 SIG partners) and drew more than 3,000 registrants. This program continues to grow in participation and registration every year.
- **A Conversation with President Garber: Webinar** (September 12): An all-alumni webinar featured President Garber in conversation with Sylvia Mathews Burwell AB '87, current Overseer and former President of American University. The Zoom program had over 4,000 registrants, with 1,883 who attended through Zoom and approximately 300 additional viewers via the YouTube livestream.
- **A Conversation with President Garber: Los Angeles** (September 16): At the Beverly Hills Four Seasons, President Garber sat in conversation with Corporation Member Diana Nelson AB '84 before joining alumni attendees in a lively reception. The event was co-sponsored by the Harvard Club of Southern California, the Alumnae-i Network for Harvard Women, the Harvard Asian American Alumni Alliance, the Harvard Black Alumni Society, the Harvard Latino Alumni Alliance, and Harvardwood and drew over 400 registrants, with about 300 in attendance.
- **A Conversation with President Garber: Seattle** (September 19): President Garber sat in conversation with Overseer Sheryl WuDunn MBA '86 at the Seattle Four Seasons for a program co-sponsored by the Harvard Club of Seattle. The program drew over 200 registrants, with 158 in attendance.
- **[Harvard College Volunteer Assembly](#)** (September 20-21): Volunteers and alumni in Reunion came together for collaboration, learning, and connection. Participants heard from Harvard leadership and faculty, engaged with peers, gained insight into volunteer opportunities, shared volunteer strategies, and met new and experienced members of the HAA and the HCF.
- **Creative Careers Conference** (September 21): Organized by the HAA CAP team in partnership with the Office for the Arts, the Mignone Center for Career Success, and the HAA Student-Alumni Engagement Committee, this on-campus pilot event for undergraduate students and College alums interested in or working in the arts featured a luncheon, a keynote discussion featuring Kevin Lin AB '12 and Julia Riew AB '22, a panel with recent grad alum and student artists, and a reception.

- **Harvard Jewish Alumni Alliance** (September 22): in cooperation with Chabad at Harvard and Harvard Hillel, the HJAA hosted alumni, students, faculty, and friends in the broader community for a series of events on campus. The gathering was meant to commemorate the events of the last year and set a path forward for Harvard's Jewish community.
- **Harvard Black Alumni Weekend** (September 27-28): the HAA supported the Harvard Black Alumni Society (HBAS) in hosting the multi-day on-campus [2024 Harvard Black Alumni Weekend](#) (HBAW) event. This year's conference, themed Global Change Makers, marked the first HBAW in ten years. Alumni were eager to return to campus where they participated in over 20 events, listened to 60 speakers (including President Garber and Dr. Claudine Gay), and connected with 1,000 fellow Black alumni.
- **Eliot House Book Event** (September 29): The HAA CAP team partnered with Eliot House and the Faculty Deans to invite Eliot alums to the House for an event with students featuring Constantine Archimedes Valhouli, coauthor, with the late Nelson W. Aldrich Jr. AB '57, of the forthcoming biography of [John H. Finley Jr.](#), *The Master of Eliot House*.
- The **Speakers Bureau** 2024-2025 catalog launched in mid-September and the request form remained open until October 10. This year's catalog featured 34 outstanding faculty and administration members who are experts in a diverse range of topics including artificial intelligence, climate change, negotiation, and global supply chains. New to the program are a [collection of documents](#) and training sessions to help answer frequently asked questions, set program expectations, and share best practices for virtual and in-person events. HAA staff are currently working directly with faculty to fulfill as many speaker requests as possible.
- **College Leaders Webinar** (October 10): Over 500 College alumni joined a special opportunity to hear from Danoff Dean of Harvard College [Rakesh Khurana](#), Dean of Undergraduate Education [Amanda Claybaugh](#), and Dean of Students [Tom Dunne](#). Hosted by the HAA and the HCF, this virtual conversation was an opportunity for alumni to reconnect with campus, learn about new programs and initiatives, and discover the student experience today.
- **Harvard Moves** (November 7-10) returns for a fourth year this fall. With the goal of engaging the University-wide community around movement and support for undergraduate financial aid, this annual event encourages Harvard community members to get moving in whatever way they choose. Registrants are invited to take their participation a step further by making a voluntary gift to the HCF. New this year are additional resources for Clubs & SIGs planning local [Harvard Moves Meetups](#) including a [promotional toolkit](#) and marketing templates. [Check out the Harvard Moves dashboard](#) for real-time engagement data and see Who's Moving. As of early October, the event already had more than 1,000 registrants from over 60 countries. **HAA Board Members are encouraged to [sign up](#) and participate in this community-wide event!**
- **Harvard-Yale Recent Grad Tailgate** (November 23): The HAA CAP team is once again partnering with the HCF to organize a Recent Grad Tailgate for the Harvard College Classes of 2015-2024 before the 140th Playing of The Game. The event is free for attendees.

- **Reunion Leaders Roundtable Series** (various): Over the course of six meetings from September to June, this Series brings together Reunion co-chairs and class leaders to hear from the HAA about key developments and to share best practices/ideas/challenges with each other. Topics include building a reunion budget, communicating effectively, planning a memorial service, and more.
- **College Red Books Program:** All fourteen quinquennial Anniversary Reports are open for participation, with the final deadlines for the 25th and 50th books fast approaching. A strong shared sentiment appearing in a majority of reunion-year alumni stories so far is excitement to return to campus to see each other in person in the spring. For most of these alumni, it has been at least ten years since they have been back to campus.
- Harvard officially completed the last phase of Harvard’s **Email Forwarding roll-out** this past summer. The service was offered to the Class of 2024 just after Commencement; in mid-July, it was opened up to all remaining alumni without forwarding accounts. As a reminder, the upgraded service was offered to the Classes of 2021 – 2023 last summer, and all existing email forwarding users were migrated to the new platform earlier this year. As of early October 2024, nearly 9,000 recent graduates (2021-2024) have set up accounts, including more than 1,600 from the Class of 2024. More than 140,000 alumni have established active email forwarding.
- The **Harvard Alumni World MasterCard** (Harvard Alumni Card) has 9,814 cardholders as of October 2024. It is marketed on a quarterly cadence, and the HAA supports the Credit Union in their efforts to promote the rewards structure, which allows cardholders to earn double points for gas, groceries, dining, and gifts to Harvard.
- **Harvard Key Claims** have reached a total of 226,216 across the alumni community, with 32,930 new claims registered in 2024 so far. Alumni between 20-59 represent the highest volume of claims. The Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the College, and the Radcliffe Institute exhibit the highest number of Harvard Key claims in 2024 (in that order). More than 30,000 alumni have logged into the **Alumni Directory** so far this year.

#### Travels:

- **Scotland: Hiking the Islands of the Hebrides** (June 1-11): Led by Professor of History [Daniel Lord Smail](#), participants hiked throughout Scotland’s west coast from the Isle of Mull to the Isle of Skye and onto the western Hebrides.
- **Darwin's Galápagos: A Family Journey of Discovery on Coral I** (June 11-20): Professor of Human Evolutionary Biology and Department Chair [Joseph Henrich](#) accompanied alumni travelers and their families on a seven-night charter of the Galápagos islands.
- **Cruising the Adriatic: Dubrovnik to Venice on Emerald Sakara** (June 13-22): From Dubrovnik to Venice, passengers cruised the Adriatic Sea with Francis Goelet Professor of Medieval History [Michael McCormick](#).
- **Mongolia: Land of the Blue-Sky** (June 15-27): This adventure took participants to the land of Genghis Khan and Karakorum and the hospitable nomads of the Gobi Desert. [David R. Foster](#),

senior lecturer in Organismic and Evolutionary Biology and senior conservationist and former director of the Harvard Forest, was the study leader.

- **Japan Family Adventure: Tokyo, Kyoto & Hiroshima** (June 22-July 3): This family journey embraced Japan's frenetic cities, revered natural environment and enduring traditions; accompanied by the former executive director of the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs (WCFA), [Theodore J. Gilman](#).
- **Alaska Family Adventure** (July 29-August 6): Alumni travelers and their families spent eight days exploring magnificent Alaska through guided activities such as hiking, kayaking, and canoeing. [Fran Ulmer](#), former chair of the U.S. Arctic Research Commission and senior fellow at the Belfer Center at Harvard Kennedy School, shared her extensive knowledge of the region.
- **Alpine Splendor** (August 22-September 4): Led by C. Douglas Dillon Professor of the Civilization of France and Professor of Comparative Literature, Emerita, [Susan Rubin Suleiman](#), travelers admired the towering peaks of the Alps as they served as the stunning backdrop for this Swiss and Austrian exploration.
- **Cruising the Mediterranean: Athens to Rome on Emerald Sakara** (September 26-October 5): Led by [Robert Darnton](#), the Carl H. Pforzheimer University Professor, emeritus, and university librarian, emeritus, travelers saw the incomparable Parthenon, cruised through the Corinth Canal, and visited fascinating Pompeii.
- **Western Mediterranean Civilizations on Sea Cloud II** (September 13-22): On this voyage touching two continents, passengers cruised from Malta to Sicily, Tunisia, and Spain's Balearic Islands, visiting temples and cities left behind by waves of civilizations, from prehistoric peoples to the ancient Greeks, Carthaginians, and Romans. [Diana Sorensen](#), James F. Rothenberg Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures and former dean of Arts and Humanities, led the program.

## **COMMUNICATE**

*Through communication strategies, we reach the broadest range of alumni. Communications also play a critical role in marketing our programs and amplifying the impact of the events beyond the events themselves.*

### **Event and Program Campaigns**

- The **Harvard Alumni Day 2024** year-long marketing campaign leveraged email marketing, web promotions, advertisements, social media efforts, promotional videos, and press initiatives. The multifaceted strategy successfully garnered engagement and participation, while amplifying awareness and visibility of this relatively new tradition. In addition to registrant numbers, other key data points included:
  - 6,300+ day-of [livestream views](#)
  - 1.9 million sent emails reaching over 330,000 alumni, averaging a 56% open rate
  - 67,000+ visitors to the event website
  - 200,000+ digital ad views through *Harvard Magazine*
  - 21,000+ Instagram ad reach



- 8.7+ million GIF views
  - 114,000+ promotional video views
  - 68,000+ event coverage-related video views
- The **Harvard Alumni Day 2025** year-long marketing campaign is now underway, with an emphasis on both internal communications and external marketing efforts including a refreshed event website. The full campaign will launch in the new year. In the meantime, please [mark Friday, June 6, 2025 on your calendar](#). Be sure to also check out the [2025 Alumni Day digital toolkit](#), where you can download assets like logos and email banners to help promote the event.
  - **Harvard College and Radcliffe Reunions 2024** marketing efforts drove over 10,000 registrations. This was the culmination of a year-long marketing communications campaign that involved several individual strategies aimed at reaching and engaging as many alumni in Reunion as possible, including:
    - **Lost alumni campaign:** Focused on updating contact information for alumni in reunion and identifying populations with missing information (specifically email and mailing addresses). Through targeted email messages and mailed postcards, contact information for 73% of alumni in a 2024 reunion was updated or confirmed.
    - **Resubscribe campaign:** With a goal of reengaging reunion-year alumni who are unsubscribed from receiving reunion-based email messages, the resubscribe campaign resulted in 56% of the unsubscribed pool resubscribing to reunion emails. 44% of those resubscribed registered for their reunion, resulting in an additional 673 registrants across classes.
    - **CRO remittance campaign:** More than \$34,000 was raised in voluntary contributions (9% conversion rate) for the Class Report Office through strategically timed, automated messages to Red Book participants.
    - **Registration campaign:** Segmented invitations, social media ads and campaigns, unique sender profiles, Instagram Reels, and more garnered 10,183 registrations for 2024 Reunions and achieved an average 63% open rate and 9.5% click rate on email communications.
  - Marketing efforts are already underway for **Harvard College and Radcliffe Reunions 2025**. Informed by learnings and data from FY24, the FY25 campaign builds upon successful initiatives to strategically reach and engage as many alumni in reunion as possible, including:
    - **Lost alumni campaign:** An initial communication sent over the summer as part of a year-long effort focused on updating contact information for alumni in reunion had a 70% open rate and resulted in nearly 43% of 2025 reunion-year alumni clicking to confirm or update their contact information. Alumni for whom Harvard does not have an email address on file were encouraged to provide one as part of a mailed save the date postcard sent in September.
    - **Resubscribe campaign:** In July, resubscribe efforts for alumni in reunion who are unsubscribed from receiving reunion-based messages were launched. So far, 41% of people in this cohort have elected to resubscribe to updates about their Class Report and Reunion. A save the date message sent following resubscription had a 76% open rate, indicating strong interest in hearing about upcoming Reunion details.
    - **Reunions 2025 communications:** Starting with a save the date sent this past June, the year-long communications strategy aims to drive engagement, registration, and

participation in Reunion programs. June's save the date message had a 64% open rate and 11% click rate.

- **Virtual Reunion programs:** Marketing for virtual reunion programming that will be available to all alumni in Reunion classes, as well as members of the Crimson Society, is set to kick off soon. The first event in this series will feature Dean Hopi Hoekstra on December 4.
- Marketing for the **2024 Welcome to Your City** event launched in late August and saw an average open rate of 59% driving over 3,100 registrations. On social media, dozens of photos were submitted from 10 different locations, [WTYC event GIFs](#) all-time views reached 2,765,998 for seven GIFs, and a post-event photo carousel was posted on [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), and [Threads](#).
- **Marketing campaigns for September's President Garber events** began in early August and ran through late September and featured messages from HAA Executive Director Sarah Karmon and HAA Board President Moitri Savard. Emails saw an average open rate of 58% and drove more than 6,000 alumni to click, and more than 4,700 to register.
- **The Harvard-Yale social media campaign** is back building on the success of last year's campaign, which earned a [Grand Gold CASE award in 2024](#). This fall, the HAA will further engage the Harvard alumni community around the storied Harvard-Yale rivalry. Starting in October, the social media campaign will emphasize the global appeal of The Game by inviting alumni to share stories, participate in user-generated content, find and share [new H-Y GIFs](#), and join the recent grad tailgate.
- **Student Organization Communications:** The HAA CAP team helped various Harvard College student organizations send newsletter email updates to their alumni members, including Harvard Mock Trial, the Harvard-Radcliffe Dramatic Club, and Smart Woman Securities.
- Throughout the spring, the Clubs and SIGs team conducted its FY24 **Annual Report Survey** of 243 Harvard Clubs and SIGs. Participation exceeded expectations, with 90% of organizations providing input. Club and SIG leaders who attend the Alumni Leadership Conference (October 24-25) will receive a hard copy of the [Annual Report Book](#); a PDF version will be available in the [Officers Lounge](#).

## Communications

- **HAA Executive Director Sarah Karmon continues to send monthly emails to current HAA volunteers** featuring the latest University news, updates, and resources, and a roundup of current and upcoming events. Any additional information requiring volunteer attention is also shared through these communications. In FY24, these emails achieved an average open rate of 74.1% and an average click rate of 4.5%. The first message of the academic year, with a new format, saw a 67% open rate and a 7% click rate.
- **Harvard this Week:** this newsletter was shared on a bi-weekly schedule throughout the summer; returning to a weekly cadence in September, it maintained an average open rate of 57% in the first quarter. The HAA will continue amplify engagement by segmenting events for

key audiences including recent graduates, alumni in reunion, and members of the Crimson Society.

- **Harvard Alumni News (HAN):** was redesigned to offer a refreshing and more engaging experience. By delivering monthly newsletters and incorporating timely news alerts, the HAA aims to highlight Harvard's diverse impact through groundbreaking research, showcase the breadth and depth of Harvard campus content, and feature faculty, alumni, and student achievements. The plan includes incorporating re-engagement tactics and integrating sentiment tracking, offering direct options for alumni to share feedback. The first edition of the HAN with this new approach was sent less than a day before this report was published and already had an open rate of 60% and a click rate of 6% (about 12,000 clicks) and rising.
- **College Alumni News (CAN):** After a comprehensive redesign over the summer, the new format offers a variety of content blocks, allowing the HAA to produce more creative and engaging content that aligns with HAA and FAS FY25 content strategies including amplifying user-generated content, sharing impactful alumni stories, and featuring trending social media content. The first edition of the CAN went out in late September and saw an open rate of 67% and click rate of 8%—topping the averages for last year with this first edition.
- In the spring, the Engagement Marketing and Communications (EMC) team completed its 2024 **Grad Appeal** and **Matriculation Appeal** campaigns. Students received messaging promoting programs like Global Networking Night (GNN), tips on using the Alumni Directory, and additional resources to connect with local Harvard Clubs and Shared Interest Groups. The EMC team also partnered with students in the College's Crimson Creators group on video content for email and social media helping to highlight programs like GNN and HAA resources available to students, and welcoming Reunion classes back to campus. Both the Grad Appeal and Matriculation Appeal saw an average 74.1% open rate. Marketing for the FY25 campaigns will launch later this season.
- **Harvard Looks Forward (HLF)** continues to be a resource for alumni and volunteers, housing University updates and news to share with the alumni community. In addition to timely news, the [HLF webpage](#) also provides ways to share stories of Harvard community impact. This includes promoting civil discourse, showcasing groundbreaking research, and emphasizing Harvard's commitment to academic excellence. Since its launch, HLF has generated nearly 5,000 unique page views and more than 14,000 user interactions.
- The EMC team continues to send **Happy Birthday emails** to HAA volunteers, recent graduates, and other alumni who engage at high rates with HAA communications. The Class of 2024 is now receiving these emails as well. For FY24, the average month-to-month open rate was 74.32%, and the average month-to-month click rate was 6.17%. The months with the most birthdays were May (31 birthdays) and June (30 birthdays). So far in FY25 (from July 1, 2024, to October 1, 2024), 92 birthday emails have been sent. The average open rate from month to month is 68.85%, and the average click rate is 5.65%. Recipients are given a link to a discount at the Coop. Alumni who receive these messages frequently write to the HAA to express their gratitude and joy.

## Social Media

Across the HAA social media accounts, content highlighting the University, major events, and alumni – particularly photos of alumni and students vs. event promotional posts – continues to trend. Overall, campus photos and videos continue to lead as the most engaging content. Major highlights on social media during the spring and summer include Harvard Alumni Day, Reunions, Convocation, and Welcome to Your City. Upcoming fall events that will be featured across social channels for promotional, live, and post-event coverage include Harvard Moves and Harvard-Yale.

- The HAA's most engaged with platform is **Instagram** with over 105K followers. It reigns at the top of the Ivy League alumni social media; Columbia Alumni, the HAA's closest competitor, currently has 33,700 followers. The HAA saw extremely high levels of engagement with [Commencement post-event photos](#), a [reel highlighting Harvard Black Alumni Weekend](#), and [#HarvardInSummer campus photos](#). In June and July alone, Instagram stories saw more than 85,000 story views and more than 10,000 likes and shares.
- **LinkedIn** is steadily growing with over 11,500 followers and continues to see success in sharing content about alumni success stories, major university news, and event coverage. There has also been newfound success with videos proving to be some of the platform's most engaging content. The top performing content on LinkedIn includes [coverage of President Garber in LA and Seattle](#), [Class of 2028 move-in day](#), and [Class of 2028 Convocation](#).
- The HAA **Facebook** page maintains 28,000 followers. Recent top posts include [Class of 2028 move-in day photo coverage](#), photo uploads to the [Harvard Alumni Day 2024 Facebook album](#), and the [2024 Commencement photo wrap-up](#).
- The [HAA GIPHY Channel](#) has 476 Harvard Alumni GIFs and has reached over 283.6 million views. New custom GIFs have been uploaded for upcoming major campaigns like [Harvard Moves](#) and [Harvard-Yale](#).
- The HAA **Threads** account hit one year in July 2024 and currently has 33,500 followers. The ability to track other analytics on the platform is forthcoming. Content type includes Harvard research pieces, timely University news, photos and reels, and interactive content where followers can answer poll questions and respond to threads. As a reminder, Threads has replaced the HAA's presence on X (formerly Twitter).
- In the spring of 2024, the HAA began using a **social media listening tool** to track general sentiment and trending online conversations regarding Harvard alumni and other topics of interest. The HAA has and will continue to use these social listening efforts to refine our communication strategies and enhance alumni engagement. Each month (more often when there is additional news), the HAA creates a comprehensive social listening report that tracks conversations aligned with our key terms such as "Harvard Alumni" and "Harvard University." This report documents trending posts and general sentiment, providing valuable insights into alumni perspectives.

### Harvard Alumni Content and Storytelling Strategy

- For FY25, the HAA has implemented a comprehensive, cross-channel **HAA content strategy** focused on strategically sharing the breadth and depth of what is happening on campus as well

as Harvard's impact in the world. This audience-driven approach will ensure consistent messaging and continuous engagement, aiming to showcase Harvard's global impact and strengthen the connection between campus and Harvard's alumni community; it will encompass web, email, social media, and newsletter channels. Content will be reviewed regularly to ensure the HAA is sharing the breadth and depth of what is happening at Harvard. It will also be tracked using metrics to regularly explore what our alumni find most engaging.

## **HAA Data Initiative**

- The HAA continues to expand its work to become a more **data driven organization** through several different initiatives. First, the HAA and AAD as a whole are now **tracking more engagement behaviors** across AAD and the University than ever before. AAD had its first look at comprehensive University-wide engagement through the **CASE 2023 Insights on Alumni Engagement report** which was shared this fall. The HAA is undergoing an **initiative to develop new staff tools** to track alumni engagement behaviors comprehensively and to explore how alumni are engaging across different types of behavior categories (communications, event engagement, etc.). It is expected these new tools will be available to staff later this fall. Harvard will also participate in the CASE survey again for 2024 and plans to begin that work later this fall.

## **STAFFING UPDATES**

### **New Hires and Promotions**

- **Laura Foronda** joined the HAA in late May as alumni relations assistant for the EMC team, replacing Alise Pundure. Laura came to Harvard from Berkeley International School in Bangkok where she served as the School's marketing manager. She has hit the ground running supporting the EMC team's work across email, social media, and web channels, creating content and supporting nearly every HAA marketing campaign.
- In July, the HAA was thrilled to welcome **Maia Cataldo** to the team as the new alumni relations assistant specialist supporting Sarah Karmon and Katie Grissino. She has quickly become an invaluable member of the HAA Executive team. Maia joined the HAA from the Lyric Stage Company where, for the past few years, she served as box office manager. She received her BA from Brandeis University in English and Theater Arts, and is currently pursuing her MFA in Creative Writing from Emerson College.
- **Christine Potermin** joined the Clubs and SIGs team on July 8 as an alumni relations assistant. In her role, she provides essential program and administrative support. She earned her bachelor's degree in psychology and environmental policy at Northwestern University. Christine joins us most recently from Northwestern University where she was the program coordinator for their Office of External Programs, Internships & Career Services. Her experience working in higher-ed has enabled her to dive right in and add immediate value to the team!
- As of September 23, **Mariah Bensley** is the coordinator for the University-wide Alumni Engagement and Events team. In her new position, Mariah will lead the charge on numerous virtual and in-person programs for the alumni community, shepherding intellectual engagement opportunities for the HAA Board of Directors, reuniting college alumni, and others. Mariah

joined the HAA in April 2022 as a staff assistant supporting the U-wide team and has served as HAA group leader since January.

- This September, **Fabia Josselin** was promoted to assistant director, Engagement Marketing. Since joining the HAA in March 2020 as the EMC team's email coordinator and project manager, Fabia has developed new strategic approaches for dozens of HAA campaigns and programs, including reimagining the HAA's event newsletter into a weekly message that is engaging more alumni than ever before. With this promotion, Fabia will continue to bring her thoughtful strategies and positive energy to new marketing campaigns including the President Garber event series, lead full oversight the HAA's email marketing processes, and develop new collaborations with teams across AA&D.

### **Departures**

- **Chase Peters** departed the HAA on July 3 to pursue opportunities in graphic design. Chase joined the HAA in July 2023 as an alumni relations assistant on the Clubs and SIGs team. She supported the team's data and digital application efforts and contributed to several data, research, and Club and SIG website projects.

## APPENDIX 1: Current [Harvard Alumni Travel Trips](#)

- [Exploring the South Caucasus: Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia](#) (October 17-31): Former U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan and Lieutenant General of the U.S. Army [Karl Eikenberry](#) is leading travelers through stunning mountain backdrops talking with local people, hearing their songs and stories, and learning about their hopes for the future.
- [Catalan Interlude \(Round-Trip Barcelona\) on Sea Cloud II](#) (October 18-26): On this Balearic Sea adventure, travelers discover Girona's museums, galleries, and fine Romanesque and Gothic buildings. With [Diana Sorensen](#) continuing from the previous voyage, travelers will return to Barcelona to explore its kaleidoscope of remarkable architecture and modernist art work.
- [Legendary Türkiye](#) (October 22-November 5): Led by Associate of the Harvard Museum of the Ancient Near East [Joseph A. Greene](#), travelers begin in magnificent Istanbul, then journey along the Turquoise Coast through Antalya and Konya.
- [Journey Through Vietnam](#) (October 24-November 7): Study Leaders [Lizabeth Cohen](#), Howard Mumford Jones Professor of American Studies and [Herrick Chapman](#), professor of history and French studies at New York University, lead participants from Hanoi, with its French accents and colonial architecture, travelers will continue to Da Hang and Hoi An, to the Mekong Delta and Can Tho, to Saigon.

## **APPENDIX 2: Speakers Bureau Events since the May 24 Board Meeting**

- May 28: Harvard Club of Ottawa hosted [Michèle Lamont](#), professor of sociology and African and African American studies and Robert I. Goldman Professor of European Studies at Faculty of Arts and Sciences, to discuss “Seeing Others: How Recognition Works and How It Can Heal a Divided World.”
- June 4: Harvard Club in Maine hosted [Melani Cammett](#), Clarence Dillon Professor of International Affairs in the Department of Government and director, Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Faculty of Arts and Sciences, to discuss “Living Together After Violence: Insights from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Lebanon.”
- June 5: Harvard Club in Concord hosted [Dehlia Umunna](#) MPA '11, clinical professor of law and faculty deputy director, Harvard Criminal Justice Institute at Harvard Law School.
- June 13: Harvard Club of Cape Cod hosted [Stephen Ansolabehere](#), Frank G. Thompson Professor of Government at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, to discuss “Current Political Issues.”
- August 27: Harvard Club of Louisiana hosted [Timothy Patrick McCarthy](#), lecturer on education at Harvard Graduate School of Education, Harvard Kennedy School.
- September 18: Metro New York hosted [Michael Klarman](#), Charles Warren Professor of American Legal History at Harvard Law School, to discuss “Brown v. Board of Education: The Justices’ Internal Deliberations.”
- October 16: Harvard Club of Alabama and Southeast Cohort hosted [Michael Klarman](#) to discuss “Race in American History.”