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USGSO committee.

Thank you, President Faust.

I would like to begin by thanking everyone who gave feedback to the committee via email, the wiki, the drop-in sessions and during our visits to various FAS committees. This feedback from faculty, as well as from students and alumni, was tremendously valuable in shaping the final report. On behalf of the Committee, thank you.

I have c. 7 minutes to introduce our report and so I'll shall focus on **3 main points**.

The **first** is to explain why our report spent so much time discussing the "ISOs", which are the recognized "independent student organizations." These ISOs include affinity groups, music groups, political groups, special-interest groups and so on. Our report contains a recommendation to review the ISO regulations to ensure they are consistent and transparent because that is how trust in a system is built.

The College has over 400 ISOs. All 400 of them come under the same College regulations, including: they must be non-discriminatory, have open membership, and local autonomy in their governance.

If an ISO fails to meet these requirements or other College regulations, it can have its charter revoked and lose all of its privileges.

Meanwhile, there are no such measures for the "USGSOs," which are the final clubs, fraternities and sororities.

This means Harvard has one student body, but students who belong to ISOs are required to follow College regulations on non-discrimination, open membership and local governance, while the USGSOs contravene all—or most—of these regulations, yet there are no repercussions for doing so.

Our committee thinks it's important to do something about this inconsistency.

This brings me to my **second** point, which is the Committee's views on the USGSOs. First, I should explain why our report presents 3 Options, rather than a single recommendation on the USGSOs. Our *Preliminary Report*, published in July,

presented one recommendation. But it also included a section called “Other points of view.” While we were trying to draw attention to the range of views on our committee, that message seems to have gotten lost. So our final report simply emphasizes the different “points of view” in the form of 3 options—and I should add that the majority of our committee supported this approach for our report.

So, what are the 3 Options?

Option 1 is designed to phase out the USGSOs by 2022. As such, Harvard would become a school without final clubs, sororities and fraternities by 2022. However, the report also points out that there has always been on the books the possibility for a USGSO to apply to become a recognized ISO. To be eligible, the USGSO would have to—amongst other things—follow College regulations regarding non-discrimination, open membership, and local governance—just like all the other 400 independent student organizations.

Option 2 is the May 2016 policy. I won’t go into detail because I imagine everyone is familiar with it. But in brief, this policy incentivizes the USGSOs to go co-ed by reserving certain privileges for students who uphold Harvard’s standards for gender inclusivity—privileges such as being a captain of a team, holding leadership positions in an ISO, and getting endorsements from the Dean for certain fellowships.

Option 3 is a collection of ideas that we received from faculty and members of the committee who were opposed to Options 1 and 2. These include various interventions to address illegal activity within the USGSO spaces, such as underage drinking and violations of noise ordinances, to developing sustained campaigns to change social behavior. My colleague Professor Jason Mitchell has written a minority report that gives more detail on Option 3.

What all 3 Options have in common is a recognition that there is a need for change. Our committee was aiming to find the right policy to serve as a catalyst to change the culture around the USGSOs. As I am sure you all know, changing a culture—especially of institutions—is one of the hardest things to do. But it seems we have momentum on our side, which brings me to **my final point**: the view of the students.

We met with members of the Committee on Student Life, and in fact our Committee deliberately delayed the intended deadline of our final report in order to meet with them and consider their feedback.

The Committee on Student Life told us that their feeling on the ground is that, at this point, most students want reform and are eager for an intervention in order to create a social scene at Harvard that is rooted in principles of inclusion and non-discrimination.

As students themselves have told us, while the students of the USGSOs do indeed meet “off campus”, the power dynamics created by their discriminatory behaviors directly impacts the way students interact with each other in the classroom and in sections. In other words, this *is* a campus issue.

As I have already said, changing a culture is one of the hardest things to do. This fall, we welcomed the most diverse class in Harvard College’s history.

As each class becomes increasingly diverse, it is untenable to have USGSOs scripting campus social life, especially as their discriminatory practices are in contravention of Harvard’s mission and are at direct cross-purposes with our obligation to foster a College environment where, regardless of one’s intrinsic identity, students can flourish academically, socially, and personally.

Our students are watching us. They are looking to us to find the right catalyst to bring about reform. We can’t let them down. So, I end with this question: our students are eager for reform—are we?