

**President Drew Faust's Campaign Address  
Sanders Theatre, September 21, 2013**

Just one month ago, nearly 300 men and women, from the Class of 1961 to the Class of 2017, from across the country and around the world, descended on Harvard, took to the Charles, and rowed.

They rowed to honor the late and legendary Harry Parker, Harvard crew coach for more than half a century. They rowed because each of them knew vividly and personally what Harry Parker meant when he said, "I think of myself first as a teacher."

But they came for another reason, too. They came because Harvard draws you back. Harvard is a place, an experience, you never really get over. It's as if our university years are larger, magnified, out of proportion to any other time in life, a time when we can let our minds range and roam, when we can find our passions and follow them, test ourselves and stretch ourselves.

What you learned on the river, in the Houses, in the classrooms in Sever or Andover or Langdell, in the carrels of Widener or Gutman, in the laboratories on Oxford Street or off Longwood Avenue, on the stage here in Sanders or at the Loeb—these experiences made you different people. We know how education has transformed each of us, and we know it can change the world. That is why our lives, and our sense of ourselves, continue to flow through Harvard, and Harvard through us.

I see the power of that connection when alumni gather by the hundreds to greet me in Seoul, London, Rio, or Mumbai.

I see it on the faces of newly arriving students full of equal parts elation, anxiety, and wonder.

And I see it in the work of our faculty, inspired to know why, to know how, to know more. To challenge, debunk, question, and redefine in ways that have propelled discovery and shaped human history in five different centuries.

Harvard has left an indelible mark. It has given this country eight

presidents—from its second to its 44th—and has educated and shaped leaders in countries around the world. It has nurtured novelists and scientific pioneers, jurists and composers, architects and actors, business leaders and spiritual leaders, physicians and public servants, scholars and teachers in fields too numerous to mention. All around us we see examples of how Harvard helps build our society and better our world—supporting students to find fullest expression for their talents, supporting research that may enable new treatments for diabetes or new ways to create sustainable cities or new understandings of the meaning of justice. It is up to us to make sure that we continue to build, to lead, to advance in a world almost unimaginably different from the one our founders inhabited nearly four centuries ago.

It is that task—that imperative to make Harvard even better—that brings us together this weekend. It seems to me fitting that we will gather tonight in the Stadium, taking the field in search of a somewhat different sort of win from the one the Crimson seized there from Yale just 10 months ago—a victory, I wish to note, that we have claimed each November for the past six years.

For us, for this campaign, the real triumph will lie in our ability to rival the efforts and the commitment of those who have bequeathed this extraordinary institution to us, and to strengthen it for those who will follow.

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A campaign calls on us to ask what we stand for. What institutional commitments will we make to define who we are and who we will be decades and centuries from now? This afternoon I want to share with you my ambitions—ambitions for how Harvard will be enhanced and enabled by this campaign, for how our work together will make it different and launch it into “the age that is waiting before.”

Despite those gentle words from “Fair Harvard,” that age does not wait patiently and passively before us. It challenges us to meet the demands of change—change of sometimes dizzying variety and scope, change that comes at us with increasing speed and unpredictability. It confronts us with the opportunity and the necessity to seize the future in ways that will fulfill this remarkable University’s enduring promise to our students and the world. Seizing that impatient future is the goal of this campaign.

*The future we face together is one in which knowledge will be the most important currency.* Harvard must be at the forefront of creating knowledge, of integrating knowledge across fields, and of deploying knowledge in service to the world.

We find ourselves in the midst of an explosion of scientific possibility. Genomics, imaging, nanotechnology, big data, computation, and other powerful new tools enable us to understand more, and to do more with that understanding, than ever before in human history. Paradoxically, in this very moment of possibility, we also confront fundamental challenges and cutbacks to the resources that make this work possible. We need to sustain and extend the work of discovery. And we must do so in the areas of basic research that will yield building blocks for the future, as well as in fields with more immediate potential to contribute to human health and social and environmental welfare.

*The future we face together will also change the very shape of knowledge.* Faculty and students are asking questions that require them not just to dive deep but to reach across, questions whose complexity demands the forging of new connections and the crossing of traditional boundaries. An issue like digital privacy calls upon law and policy, even philosophy, as well as technology. The challenges in bioengineering—using a 3-D printer to fabricate a kidney—unite the life and physical sciences, but draw importantly on design fields as well. The effort to understand and alleviate ethnic and sectarian conflict requires not just insights from political science and policy, but from fields such as history, anthropology, literature, psychology, and religion. Harvard must nurture such confluences to create an intellectual landscape where increasingly important cross-disciplinary and cross-School work can flourish. The universe of ideas is changing. We must support our faculty as they take the lead in reconfiguring the map of knowledge.

*The impatient future we face together summons us to reimagine how we teach and learn.* Harvard can and should lead a revolution in pedagogy. Advances in our understanding of the mind and of human behavior open new windows on how we learn. Advances in technology open new possibilities for how we teach. Insight into the power of not just thinking, but doing—of what is often called “active learning”—is changing how we envision our educational programs. How can we best use time in the classroom? What can we do as well—or even better—online? What can

we learn in the field, close to home or continents away, at the nexus of theory and practice? How can we connect to people and intellectual resources beyond our classroom to enhance what happens within it? In the first years of the Harvard Initiative for Learning and Teaching, and of edX and HarvardX, faculty and students have been passionately engaged, eager to shape these transformations. Through our campaign, Harvard seeks to set a standard for innovation in teaching and learning.

*The future we face together will bring us closer than ever to people, ideas, and cultures around the globe.* Harvard must bring the world to our campus and our students and faculty to the world. Harvard students and faculty must understand their lives and work within a global context, one enriched by the content of the curriculum, by a cosmopolitan campus, and by the opportunities available for significant international study, research, and engagement. Our campaign must strengthen the bonds between Harvard and the wider world.

*The future we face together calls for a campus that embodies and enables our ambitions for learning and discovery.* In Cambridge, in Longwood and in Allston, what we can be depends fundamentally on the spaces we create, renew, and inhabit. We must shape our campus for the next century with spaces that encourage collaboration, spaces that spur experimentation, that foster connections between Harvard's boundlessly imaginative people and infinitely varied parts. New global and technological realities have challenged universities to examine the logic of physical campuses, to be far more intentional about how we design and use space. We at Harvard have no doubts about the special power of residential education, of what happens through the intensity and serendipity of our shared presence in Cambridge and Boston. That is why we are renewing our undergraduate Houses, where the educational power of being together has its most vivid and indelible expression. That is why we seek to bring our community together across its Schools and complex geography into common spaces like the new Plaza at the Science Center, or the envisioned campus center, steps from the Yard, where people can meet and talk, study and perform, and learn from one another in ways no less compelling than what happens in class.

This campaign will provide the momentum as well for further developing our Allston property as an integral part of Harvard. It will allow our School of Engineering and Applied Sciences—Harvard's newest School—room to

grow in a state-of-the-art facility on Western Avenue. It will enhance collaborations across disciplines and Schools and encourage connections among the University, the community, and new partners in industry and research. No institution of higher education has a more exciting opportunity for innovative growth, in an intellectual and entrepreneurial environment as dynamic as we have in Boston and Cambridge. By the time we close this campaign, hundreds of thousands of square feet of new campus space will be taking shape across the Charles. And we can imagine Harvard, by its 400th anniversary, less as a campus of separate precincts and more as a unified campus with a river running through its center.

*The future we face together, the future we shape, will depend perhaps most of all on who we are and who we will be. Attracting and supporting the most promising students and faculty are crucial to all we aspire to do. When we think of what Harvard has meant to the world, we inevitably find ourselves focusing on people: the extraordinary individuals who define our identity and embody our aims.*

We must be a magnet for talent. Lady Ann (Radcliffe) Mowlson knew this in 1643 when she endowed Harvard's first scholarship. President Conant knew this nearly 300 years later when, in the shadow of the Great Depression, he created the Harvard National Scholarships program, drawing promising students from across the economic spectrum. We are proud to have nearly doubled our financial aid investment in the College since 2007. Six in ten of our undergraduates receive scholarship support; those who do pay an average of \$12,000 to attend Harvard College. This commitment makes Harvard more open and accessible, better able to draw a new generation of leaders from the widest pool of talent. It also creates a more vibrant educational environment for all our students. But we do this not just because it makes Harvard better; we do it because it is right. We must sustain our efforts in the College, and we must build support for financial aid across our Schools—especially Schools whose graduates look forward to careers in public service and who should not face a choice between repaying educational debt and pursuing their dreams.

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Creating new knowledge, reimagining teaching and learning, engaging globally, reinventing the spaces where we learn and live, attracting and inspiring the best students and faculty: These are essential to our enduring

strength. But the future requires something more.

Each moment in history, to those who live in it, may seem distinctive, pivotal. To us, at this moment, there can be no doubt that we live in a pivotal and transformative time for the future of knowledge and universities. For nearly four centuries, Harvard has recognized that colleges and universities are special institutions, with an irreplaceable role in society. Almost a millennium since their invention, they continue to challenge us to look beyond the here and now. They bring to bear the critical eye; they incite the imagination; they encourage the skepticism, the rigor, the intellectual adventure and unbounded curiosity that yield our deepest understandings. When I was privileged to be installed six years ago as Harvard's president, I reflected on what has always seemed to me the essence of a university: that among society's institutions, it is uniquely accountable to the past and to the future. A university must make an impact on the world we inhabit today. But its responsibilities extend much further. Universities must help define aspirations and possibilities for the long term. Even as they engage the present, they must help us transcend the immediate and the instrumental to explore where human civilization has been and where it hopes to go.

We undertake this campaign in a time when public discourse about higher education focuses narrowly on outcomes measured in products and dollars, numbers and jobs. Make no mistake: These are important, and universities are crucial to those outcomes. But to see universities through so restricted a lens is to fail to recognize their most distinctive strength; it puts at risk their most vital and enduring contributions to society—their singular power in the search for meaning, values, and creativity, in the constant and ever-changing pursuit of truth. This campaign must help us support the structures and modes of academic inquiry, especially but certainly not only the arts and humanities, which devote themselves to pursuing these questions. At the heart of all our research and teaching is the necessity for interpretation and for judgment, for making meaning and making sense out of the world around us. Technology has rendered this effort ever-more challenging, as we are bombarded with information that we seek to transform into knowledge and wisdom. Technology offers magnificent tools, but how shall we use them? How do we know what is true? What is good? What is just? How do we nurture the imagination that kindles innovation and change? How do we understand ourselves, our values, our common humanity in a world that in one sense seems flat, yet at the same time is shaped and often shaken by its contrasts and differences?

These are vital questions that universities have long asked and continue to ask. The Harvard Campaign must affirm—it must *insist on*—their importance. It must shine a light on why universities matter—and why the higher purposes of higher education must continue to claim a central place in our national life and its educational agenda.

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And what does it look like when it all works? When extraordinarily talented people come together on a campus with others who share a passion for experimenting, inventing, and interpreting? People who are curious, driven, ready to challenge and be challenged, who are given the time and space and headroom to take risks, to ask uncomfortable questions, to wonder why ... and why not?

Think about it:

At Harvard, Bill Gates began to lay the foundation for the personal computer revolution, and Mark Zuckerberg honed the algorithms that spurred the rise of social media.

At Harvard, poets like Longfellow, T.S. Eliot, e.e. cummings, Robert Lowell, Elizabeth Bishop, Adrienne Rich, and Seamus Heaney all cultivated their craft.

Fairbank and Reischauer pioneered our study of China and Japan.

Edward Purcell and colleagues discovered nuclear magnetic resonance—the foundation for modern-day imaging.

At Harvard, Henry Adams received his famous “Education,” and John Rawls conceived his “Theory of Justice.”

Drinker and Shaw invented the iron lung; and Warren demonstrated the use of ether as anesthesia.

At Harvard, Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin explained the composition of the sun.

At Harvard, Jack Lemmon, Stockard Channing, and John Lithgow graced the stage; Leonard Bernstein got his start as a conductor; and Yo-Yo Ma played here in Sanders for 75 cents a ticket.

At Harvard, W. E. B. Du Bois explored ideas that would change our understanding of race in America.

Thoreau took his first courses in philosophy, and Emerson delivered the oration hailed as America's "intellectual Declaration of Independence."

At Radcliffe, Helen Keller wrote the story of her life, and Gertrude Stein probed the nature of consciousness with her professor William James.

At Harvard, Ralph Bunche and Ban Ki-Moon, Mary Robinson and Gro Harlem Brundtland, prepared for their careers on the international stage.

At Harvard, George Washington quartered the troops that would win American independence, and George Marshall, on the steps of Memorial Church, announced the historic plan that would bear his name.

Now, at Harvard ... it is our turn. Our turn to invent, to question, to push forward.

Our turn to support the young scientist so fixated on her experiment, so determined to see where it leads, that she is astonished to look up through her goggles and realize it's 3 a.m.

Our turn to nurture the young writer whose words sparkle with invention and the young entrepreneur whose ideas bristle with promise.

Our turn to welcome the thinkers and doers ready to add their ideas and energy, their hopes and dreams.

Our turn to create the spaces where future chapters of Harvard history will take place.

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We will gather again tonight, on the other side of the Charles. When you cross the river, think for a moment about one of those scores of people who returned to Harvard just a month ago. Think of what she said about her teacher and mentor Harry Parker, in words that reach beyond her experience and capture something essential about Harvard. "He made people prove themselves to themselves," she remembered. "It's like he said, 'This is what you could be. Do you want to be that?'"

Tonight, as we cross the river, we can pause to ask that question of ourselves, and of Harvard. "This is what you could be. Do you want to be that?" It is what we ask of our students, and what our campaign asks of us all. What is it that Harvard could be? What will we do to make it so?

We take up this challenge together. We can do no less. To confront a limit and transcend it, to glimpse truth and peer beyond to the next question, to overtake the impossible, to seize an impatient future: that is what Harvard does—what it must do. That is what we must do as we embrace the sacred trust that is this extraordinary university.

Tonight, when we gather in the Stadium, surrounded by its majestic arches, as we reflect on the university that knits us together as one, we will be asked what each of us most hopes for Harvard. I leave you, for now, with my hope:

May Harvard be as wise as it is smart,  
as restless as it is proud,  
as bold as it is thoughtful,  
as new as it is old,  
as good as it is great.