Brandon Woods is bringing his love of dance to his work in the residence halls.

How Brandon Woods builds community in the residence halls
By Fernanda Ferreira

Brandon Woods likes people. “I like being around people, I like talking to them,” the PhD candidate in biological and biomedical sciences says. Which is good because, as a resident advisor (RA) and wellness liaison in one of GSAS’s four residence halls, part of Woods’ job is making sure more than 150 residents are healthy and thriving at Harvard. “I’m here to promote holistic self-care among the residence halls and all of their members,” he shares.

The decision to become an RA was an easy one for Woods to make, especially since the community he found at Perkins Hall—where he has lived during his time at Harvard—has been there for him innumerable times. “Living in this environment, I feel connected to other students and that keeps my momentum going,” Woods says. “I interact with students that have experiences similar to my own; for example, I can easily walk out of my room and speak to a neighbor about grant writing or exams,” he explains. For Woods, this energy has facilitated his progress through graduate school and now, as an RA, he’s working to foster that same energy for other residents.

The Cleansing Power of Dance
Growing up in San Diego, Woods developed a deep appreciation for urban dance, particularly locking and hip-hop, which he refers to as his first love. More recently, he has been drawn to one of the lesser-known frontiers of urban dance: house dance.

“There’s a strong influence from African and Latin dances in house dance that I value,” Woods says. These influences are inherently connected to West African dances, which give house dance a spiritual aspect that speaks to him. “It means that dance isn’t merely about having a good time but is also equally about being aware and connected to the power of your spirit,” he explains. “After dancing, the music is still playing in my mind, the endorphins are there. It has a cleansing effect.”

Dean Launches Office Hours

In September, GSAS Dean Emma Dench launched a new program designed to increase connection with graduate students. Monthly office hours provide the opportunity for Emma to get to know GSAS students one-to-one and for students to raise a particular issue or to just stop by and say hello.

Sign up for a 15-minute appointment at gsas.harvard.edu-office-hours.
NOTES FROM THE DUDLEY UNDERGROUND

The New and Improved Richard A. and Susan F. Smith Campus Center

BY JACKIE YUN, ROOM B-2 IN DUDLEY HOUSE — COME VISIT!

This fall, the Richard A. and Susan F. Smith Campus Center (SCC) re-opened, new and improved. Here are some of the must-see features of the SCC and ways that graduate students can enjoy the space.

Outside of the building, the Moise Y. Safra Welcome Plaza contains plenty of café-style tables and chairs. You can hang or grab a drink from Pavement Coffeehouse, enjoy the fall weather, or even jump into a game of chess.

The SCC’s new glass entrance is designed to welcome visitors and community members to Harvard. Once inside, the lighting and vibrant red walls open into a busy and cheery space. In the Moise Y. Safra Welcome Pavilion, graduate students can inquire at the Harvard Information Center, grab tickets at the Harvard Box Office, check out the interactive event display screens, and enjoy people-watching through the glass doors and walls.

A few steps further into the building takes visitors into the Arcade. Eighteen-foot plant walls soar toward the ceiling, containing over 12,000 plants from 19 species. Many of the plants are indigenous to New England and will change color with the seasons. Branching out from the Arcade, students can find food vendors serving delicious sweet snacks (Swissbäkers, Blackbird Doughnuts) and meals, including Vietnamese, Greek, and vegan options (Bon Me, Oggî Gourmet, Saloniki Greek, and Whole Heart Provisions).

Along the ground floor entrance are plenty of tables and seating. Whether you are meeting with a study group or looking for a place to write, SCC includes a number of flexible and comfortable spaces to work. Certain spaces will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m., while others will be open to Harvard affiliates 24/7.

Harvard Commons is a large, 2-floor “living room” that features large and cozy red couches. Off the second floor is the Roof Garden. Surrounded by greenery, it is serene enough to make you think you left the city.

Students can also swipe into the Collaborative Commons for more options and views overlooking Massachusetts Avenue and Harvard Square. Collaborative Commons includes small meeting rooms equipped with audio visual equipment—great spaces to practice for a lab meeting or a dissertation defense.

If you need a study break, you can head to Riverview Commons on the 10th floor for a foosball or pool game or to take in the sprawling views of Cambridge and Boston, complete with beautiful foliage.

Whether popping in or staying a while, the newly renovated Smith Campus Center has much to offer the GSAS student body. Explore and enjoy!

SCC Events

Over the course of its inaugural year, SCC will host a variety of events. Visit the Common Spaces website at commonspaces.harvard.edu to learn about upcoming events!
classes he is organizing in the residence halls. “As the wellness liaison, I’m bringing in instructors who will not only teach dance but will also speak about how dance has been transformative and restorative to wellness in their own lives,” he explains. For Woods, dance fits perfectly within the realm of wellness, because its benefits are two-fold: spiritual, but also physiological. “Dance is something that supports mental, emotional, and physiological well-being,” he explains.

Beyond dance, Woods also wants to ensure his residents know about all the resources available to them on campus. “Sometimes new students don’t know that there is a Center for Wellness here at Harvard,” he says. He also plans on bringing in instructors to talk about the benefits of meditation. “My intent is to introduce a well-rounded set of resources that will appeal to the diverse residence hall community,” he says.

Dance, however, will be the foundation of Woods’ wellness initiatives as an RA. “I believe that dance, and the arts in general, are a creative outlet that can restore and create balance within graduate life,” he explains. By bringing house dance classes to Harvard, Woods will also be breaking new ground on campus. “Salsa, ballroom dancing, and hip-hop have always been popular,” Woods says. “But house has been the underground jewel of urban dance, so it’ll be nice to bring some light to it.”

Synaptic Remodeling

One of the advantages of being an RA, according to Woods, is that academics are still a priority. As Woods puts it, “Lab always comes first.”

Woods is based in the lab of Professor Davie Van Vactor, who studies synaptic plasticity, wherein synapses, the points of connection between neurons, strengthen or weaken. Woods explains that as you take in information through learning, this information is stored in neural circuits, which are sets of neurons that are connected to one another through synapses. This incoming information is specifically stored through the strengthening and weakening of these connections, and Woods’ main research interest is understanding how this plasticity is mediated at a genetic level. He is particularly looking at the role of microRNAs, small regulatory RNAs that control protein expression, in synaptic remodeling.

According to Woods, one of the interesting aspects of microRNAs is that they can perform their regulatory function outside of the cell’s nucleus. “This means they have access to the synaptic compartment, which holds the machinery for neural transmission and can regulate protein expression locally,” Woods explains. “We’re interested in how microRNAs contribute to synaptic remodeling, and at what steps in this process they are required.”

Woods did not expect to find himself working on what he describes as the nuts and bolts of neural cell biology when he arrived at Harvard. “I was more interested in translation,” he confesses. The big picture ideas of his research, such as how synaptic remodeling can go awry and cause disease, still motivate him but graduate school has given him an appreciation for basic research and an understanding of how successful translational research depends on a sound understanding of cell biology. “What I now appreciate is that you actually need basic principles to translate in order to do translational work,” Woods says.

Harvard offers opportunities for you to gain leadership experience. Become a resident advisor like Brandon Woods! Develop programming for your peers as a Dudley fellow or serve the undergraduate community as a resident tutor or freshman proctor.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- GSAS Resident Advisors: gsas.harvard.edu/student-life/housing/gsas-residence-halls
- Dudley Fellows: email: zawalich@fas.harvard.edu
- Resident Tutors: gsl.fas.harvard.edu/application
- Freshman Proctors: fdo.fas.harvard.edu/pages/apply-become-proctor

TAKE THE LEAD
**EVENTS AROUND CAMPUS**

**Lectures and Exhibits of Note**

**Radcliffe Institute**

**Next in Evolution**

Monday, November 5, 2018, 2:30 p.m., Knaefel Center, 10 Garden Street, Cambridge

The Next in Science Series provides an opportunity for early-career scientists to introduce their work to fellow scientists and non-specialists. This year’s program focuses on innovative research in the field of evolution. Speakers will discuss their research in human evolution, plant adaptation, and life in the oceans.

Register online at www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/event/2018-next-in-evolution-program

**Disability and Citizenship: Global and Local Perspectives**

Friday, November 9, 2018, 9:00 a.m., Knaefel Center, 10 Garden Street, Cambridge

This conference will explore ways in which contemporary notions of disability are linked to concepts of citizenship and belonging. Leaders in advocacy, education, medicine, and politics will consider how ideas of community at the local, national, and international levels affect the understanding of and policies related to disability—and how this has manifested itself, in particular, in higher education.

Register online at www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/event/2018-disability-and-citizenship-conference

**Harvard Art Museums**

**Between Art and Asset: Silver Vessels from Antiquity to Today**

Saturday, November 3, 2018, 10:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m., Harvard Art Museums, 32 Quincy Street, Cambridge

This symposium will bring together art historians, a conservator, a numismatist, and a silversmith to explore the enduring appeal of silver. Presented in conjunction with the Harvard Art Museums’ special exhibition Animal-Shaped Vessels from the Ancient World: Feasting with Gods, Heroes, and Kings.

Free admission but seating is limited.

**Corinne Wasmuht: The Speed of Painting**

Wednesday, November 7, 2018, 6:00 p.m.—7:30 p.m., Harvard Art Museums, 32 Quincy Street, Cambridge

German artist Corinne Wasmuht will discuss her early work as well as her recent paintings, which explore digital imagery and public space.

Free admission, but seating is limited.

**Music Events**

**Blodgett Quartet in Residence: Parker Quartet**

Friday, November 30, 2018, at 8:00 p.m. in John Knowles Paine Concert Hall

Shostakovich Two Pieces for String Quartet; Beethoven String Quartet in E Minor, op. 59, no. 2; Shostakovich Piano Quintet in G Minor, op. 57 (with Orion Weiss).

Free but tickets required, available beginning November 16 at the Harvard Box Office. Tickets may be picked up in person or obtained by phone at 617-495-2222 or online at www.boxoffice.harvard.edu (phone or online orders will be charged a small fee).
Don’t Miss!

OUR DUDLEY HOUSE PICKS OF THE MONTH. FOR MORE EVENTS, OUTINGS, AND GATHERINGS, GO TO DUDLEY.HARVARD.EDU/CALENDAR.

Dudley Beer Fest
Saturday, November 3, 2018, 7:00 p.m., Dudley House Main Dining Room. Dudley hosts the second annual Beer Fest, featuring Aeronaut Brewing, Bent Water Brewing, and Bantam Cider. We will have lively music, excellent snacks, non-alcoholic beverages, refreshing beer, and a really good time! The first 50 people to arrive will receive customized Dudley tasting glasses.

◆ Open to Dudley House members and two guests. Tickets cost $10 and can be purchased from the third floor of Dudley House or at the door. Please remember to bring a Harvard ID and a 21+ ID to the door.

Senior Common Room Dinner with Emma Dench:
21st-Century Leadership Lessons from Ancient Rome?
Monday, November 5, 2018, 5:30 p.m. reception, Graduate Student Lounge. 6:00 p.m. dinner, talk, and discussion, Dudley Common Room, Dudley House. How could ancient Rome possibly help us, with its mad emperors, tight hierarchies and snail-pace communications? GSAS Dean Emma Dench reflects on a year-long experiment teaching with Frances Frei at Harvard Business School in 2015–2016 and on how Rome helps her in her current “day job.”

◆ Free tickets available from the Dudley House third-floor office. Students based at the Longwood Medical Area may call to reserve tickets (617-495-2255). For more information, contact the Dudley intellectual/cultural fellows at dudley.intellectual@gmail.com.

Thanksgiving Fall Family Festival
Tuesday, November 13, 2018, 4:00 p.m., Dudley House Graduate Student Lounge. The Dudley Public Service team is hosting a Fall Family Festival with a Thanksgiving food drive and crafts day. Bring your kids to Dudley House for an evening of arts and crafts, including painted handprint turkeys, leaf designs, make-a-holiday greeting cards, Thanksgiving crowns, and more! There will be games, snacks, and movies. Please bring one nonperishable food item or small donation per family and enjoy endless Thanksgiving fun!◆ RSVP dudleypublicservice@gmail.com.

Volunteer with Prison Book Program
Thursday, November 15, 2018, 6:00 p.m. The Prison Book Program is committed to distributing educational literature to prisoners across the United States. Volunteer with Dudley Public Service as we respond to prisoners’ handwritten requests for books and sort, pack, and distribute books. We will receive an orientation to the organization before getting to work in the book warehouse!◆ RSVP to dudleypublicservice@gmail.com. We will take the Red Line or drive to the warehouse together.

Dudley House—Your Graduate Student Center since 1991
Lehman Hall, Harvard Yard + www.dudley.harvard.edu + 617-495-2255
Faculty Deans James M. Hogle and Doreen M. Hogle + House Administrator Susan Zawalich
Events from the Fellowships Office

By Cynthia Verba, Director of the Fellowships Office

The GSAS Fellowships Office is offering two events designed to help graduate students get started on their dissertation and learn how to publish their research.

Publishing Seminar: Books and Scholarly Journals
Thursday, November 8, 2018, 4:00 p.m.
Dudley House Common Room
Come hear speakers from the publishing world as well as students who have successfully published.

The Dissertation: Strategies from Beginning to End
Wednesday, November 28, 2018, 4:00 p.m.
Dudley House Common Room
For students in the humanities and social sciences who are preparing to write their dissertations. Speakers are recent PhDs and advanced students in their completion years.

CONTACT
If you have any questions about your fellowship applications, make an appointment to see Cynthia Verba, Director of the Fellowships Office.
Richard A. and Susan F. Smith Campus Center
1350 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 350
Phone: 617-495-1814
Email: cverba@fas.harvard.edu
gsas.harvard.edu/fellowships

The Bureau of Study Counsel (BSC) offers a collection of services designed to support you in your efforts to learn and grow and engage in the educational opportunities available to you at Harvard.
Visit the BSC at 5 Linden Street in Cambridge or online at bsc.harvard.edu.

Perfectionism: A Single-Edged Sword
Thursday, November 1, 2018
3:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m.
Explore perspectives and strategies for working effectively without feeling miserable. Register at bsc.harvard.edu.

Commitment and Overcommitment
Thursday, November 8, 2018
3:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m.
What drives us to overcommit? Consider where we devote our energy, time, and attention and how we make choices about what to prioritize in our lives. Register at bsc.harvard.edu.

Learning in a Context of Loss
Wednesday, November 14, 2018
3:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m.
For students who have experienced the death of someone who mattered to them. Explore how your learning is influenced by your experience of loss (and vice versa). Register at bsc.harvard.edu.

Drop-In Hours I
Brief conversation with a Bureau of Study Counsel academic counselor about practicalities and perspectives. Drop-in conversations operate on a same-day, first-come, first-served basis. Visit bsc.harvard.edu/appointments for a daily schedule.
The Office of Career Services (OCS) provides a wide range of services and resources tailored specifically to the needs of master’s and PhD students. Advisors work confidentially with GSAS students on a wide range of career-related issues, from broad self-assessment and decision-making to specific advice on resume, CV, and cover letter preparation for academic and nonacademic job searches. OCS also offers monthly events designed to help graduate students with their professional development. All events are open only to GSAS students and alumni.

**Preparing for Campus Visits**
Monday, November 5, 2018, 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., OCS, 54 Dunster Street, Cambridge
It’s not too early to prepare for the exciting possibility of being invited for a campus visit! Find out what to expect and how to prepare for your job talk, teaching demo, conversations with faculty and deans, and social gatherings. Please register at harvard-csm.symplicity.com/students.

**Pursuing the PhD: Myths and Realities**
Tuesday, November 6, 2018, 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., OCS, 54 Dunster Street, Cambridge
Are you a College or master’s student considering graduate school in the arts and sciences (i.e., PhD in the humanities, social sciences, or natural sciences)? Come hear from advanced graduate students who will share their tips and advice on applying for, and surviving and thriving in, graduate school. Please register at harvard-csm.symplicity.com/students.

**Cutting Edge Technology: Pathways into Robotics, Autonomous Transportation, AI, VR**
Tuesday, November 13, 2018, 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., OCS, 54 Dunster Street, Cambridge
The robots are coming! Be a part of the action—attend this panel discussion to learn about these fields and job and internship opportunities at the cutting edge of technology. Any FAS student with an interest in robotics, autonomous transportation, deep learning, and similar technology is invited to attend. Please register at harvard-csm.symplicity.com/students.

**Engineering Career Fair Collaborative**
Wednesday, November 14, 2018, 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., Sheraton Commander, 16 Garden Street, Cambridge
Join us for the Engineering Career Fair Collaborative! Career fairs and expos are a great way to meet representatives from different types of organizations, to learn about internship and full-time positions, and to discover exciting opportunities within the field. For more information about this event, including the list of participating organizations, please visit the Engineering Career Fair Collaborative website. Harvard ID required for entry. Please register at harvard-csm.symplicity.com/students.

**Career Jump-Start: For Biomedical Scientists**
Tuesday, November 13, 2018, 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., TMEC 332, 260 Longwood Avenue, Boston
What are your career plans post-Harvard? What are your options? How can you even get started? Jump-start your career and take on these big career questions with interactive career self-assessment exercises to better understand your skills, interests, and values in the context of an effective job search. Stay for an optional 30-minute open discussion (6:00 p.m.–6:30 p.m.) about specific careers of interest to PhDs in the humanities and social sciences. This workshop requires pre-work which will be sent to you once you have registered. This event is open only to Harvard GSAS students and alumni. Please register at harvard-csm.symplicity.com/students.

**Career Jump-Start: For Humanists & Social Scientists**
Thursday, November 15, 2018, 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., OCS, 54 Dunster Street, Cambridge
What are your career plans post-Harvard? What are your options? How can you even get started? Jump-start your career and take on these big career questions with interactive career self-assessment exercises to better understand your skills, interests, and values in the context of an effective job search. Stay for an optional 30-minute open discussion (6:00 p.m.–6:30 p.m.) about specific careers of interest to PhDs in the humanities and social sciences. This workshop requires pre-work which will be sent to you once you have registered. This event is open only to Harvard GSAS students and alumni. Please register at harvard-csm.symplicity.com/students.

**Contact**
The Office of Career Services (OCS) provides a wide range of services and resources tailored specifically to the needs of master’s and PhD students. Advisors work confidentially with GSAS students on a wide range of career-related issues, from broad self-assessment and decision-making to specific advice on resume, CV, and cover letter preparation for academic and nonacademic job searches. OCS also offers monthly events designed to help graduate students with their professional development. All events are open only to GSAS students and alumni.

**Preparing for Campus Visits**
Monday, November 5, 2018, 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., OCS, 54 Dunster Street, Cambridge
It’s not too early to prepare for the exciting possibility of being invited for a campus visit! Find out what to expect and how to prepare for your job talk, teaching demo, conversations with faculty and deans, and social gatherings. Please register at harvard-csm.symplicity.com/students.

**Pursuing the PhD: Myths and Realities**
Tuesday, November 6, 2018, 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., OCS, 54 Dunster Street, Cambridge
Are you a College or master’s student considering graduate school in the arts and sciences (i.e., PhD in the humanities, social sciences, or natural sciences)? Come hear from advanced graduate students who will share their tips and advice on applying for, and surviving and thriving in, graduate school. Please register at harvard-csm.symplicity.com/students.

**Cutting Edge Technology: Pathways into Robotics, Autonomous Transportation, AI, VR**
Tuesday, November 13, 2018, 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., OCS, 54 Dunster Street, Cambridge
The robots are coming! Be a part of the action—attend this panel discussion to learn about these fields and job and internship opportunities at the cutting edge of technology. Any FAS student with an interest in robotics, autonomous transportation, deep learning, and similar technology is invited to attend. Please register at harvard-csm.symplicity.com/students.

**Engineering Career Fair Collaborative**
Wednesday, November 14, 2018, 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., Sheraton Commander, 16 Garden Street, Cambridge
Join us for the Engineering Career Fair Collaborative! Career fairs and expos are a great way to meet representatives from different types of organizations, to learn about internship and full-time positions, and to discover exciting opportunities within the field. For more information about this event, including the list of participating organizations, please visit the Engineering Career Fair Collaborative website. Harvard ID required for entry. Please register at harvard-csm.symplicity.com/students.

**Career Jump-Start: For Biomedical Scientists**
Tuesday, November 13, 2018, 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., TMEC 332, 260 Longwood Avenue, Boston
What are your career plans post-Harvard? What are your options? How can you even get started? Jump-start your career and take on these big career questions with interactive career self-assessment exercises to better understand your skills, interests, and values in the context of an effective job search. Stay for an optional 30-minute open discussion (6:00 p.m.–6:30 p.m.) about specific careers of interest to PhDs in the humanities and social sciences. This workshop requires pre-work which will be sent to you once you have registered. This event is open only to Harvard GSAS students and alumni. Please register at harvard-csm.symplicity.com/students.

**Career Jump-Start: For Humanists & Social Scientists**
Thursday, November 15, 2018, 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., OCS, 54 Dunster Street, Cambridge
What are your career plans post-Harvard? What are your options? How can you even get started? Jump-start your career and take on these big career questions with interactive career self-assessment exercises to better understand your skills, interests, and values in the context of an effective job search. Stay for an optional 30-minute open discussion (6:00 p.m.–6:30 p.m.) about specific careers of interest to PhDs in the humanities and social sciences. This workshop requires pre-work which will be sent to you once you have registered. This event is open only to Harvard GSAS students and alumni. Please register at harvard-csm.symplicity.com/students.
Know Your Student Benefits
Learn more about the GSAS and Harvard benefits offered to students

Ride the T
GSAS students can purchase semester MBTA bus, link, and commuter rail passes (all zones) at a 50 percent discount. Applications open on November 1, 2018, for January to May (due by 11:59 p.m. on December 9) and February to May passes (due 11:59 p.m. on January 9, 2019). Visit gsas.harvard.edu/mbta for more information.

January@GSAS GSC Mini-Courses: By You, For You

January@GSAS takes place from January 14 through 25, 2019.
Each January, the GSAS Graduate Student Council sponsors a series of mini-courses on a broad variety of intriguing topics. These noncredit courses, taught by GSAS students for GSAS students, engage topics of discipline-spanning appeal; they’re stimulating and smart, but they’re designed for a diverse audience of non-specialists.

Take a mini-course—or propose and teach one of your own by applying at gsc.fas.harvard.edu/apply-teach by November 17, 2018.

Learn more at gsc.fas.harvard.edu/januarygsas