Getting an acceptance letter from Harvard University brings with it a rush of joy, excitement, and sometimes more than a little bit of anxiety. For Freddy Valencia, a PhD student in chemical biology, the rigors of Harvard’s academics weren’t as intimidating as the sense that he might not fit in.

“In deciding to come to Harvard, I had this feeling that I would have to fit the ‘Harvard mold,’” he says. Valencia was concerned that as a Latino—and a first-generation college student—he wouldn’t be able to connect with faculty and fellow students.

Alyssa Hernandez, a PhD student in the Department of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology, had the same fears, until she found, via GSAS student groups, peers at Harvard who offered her a chance to talk about her own experiences as an LGBT woman of color in the sciences. “You need someplace to go talk to people about what you’re experiencing, and you need a safe place to do that,” she says.

Valencia and Hernandez are the inaugural diversity and inclusion fellows in the GSAS Office of Diversity and Minority Affairs. These yearlong, paid positions are designed to improve communication between students and administrators at GSAS.

An Unvarnished View
Dean for Academic Programs and Diversity Sheila Thomas says that this role is crucial in helping administrators provide better support to students. While the Office of Diversity and Minority Affairs meets with student groups to hear their concerns about academic and student life, Thomas hopes Hernandez and Valencia will provide unvarnished views of the student experience.

“If I go out to students as an administrator and say ‘tell me your thoughts,’ I’m not going to hear the same

Emboldening Student Voices
Alyssa Hernandez and Freddy Valencia Named First Diversity and Inclusion Fellows By Anna Fisher-Pinkert

continued on page 3...
the University’s response would later
the early 1900s. This controversy and
activity in Perkins Hall that occurred in
$150 to $210 for the academic year.
$60 to $120 and double rooms from
applicants: single rooms ranging from
fives (a sport similar to handball)
amenities: an exercise room and a court
meetings. A
a residence hall for graduate students,
in the vestibules of Conant and Perkins
payphones at Harvard would be installed
vard Crimson
chusetts. Conant Hall also originally
philanthropist from Worcester, Massa
was funded by Edwin Conant, Harvard
architects as Perkins Hall, the building
year later, forming a “gateway” to Har
Harvard College undergraduates.
Just across the street from Perkins
Hall, Conant Hall was constructed a
year later, forming a “gateway” to Har
vard’s North Yard. Designed by the same
architects as Perkins Hall, the building
was funded by Edwin Conant, Harvard
College class of 1829, a prominent
philanthropist from Worcester, Massa-
chusetts. Conant Hall also originally
housed undergraduate students.
At the turn of the century, the Har-
vard Crimson announced that the first
payphones at Harvard would be installed
in the vestibules of Conant and Perkins
Halls by the New England Telephone and
Telegraph Company. While the phones
are long gone, Current Perkins residents
must wonder about the purpose of the
wooden box that remains near the
entrance.
In 1906, Conant was converted into
a residence hall for graduate students,
which included a small kitchen and
a common room designed to accom-
modate graduate student organization
meetings. A Harvard Crimson article
from December 20, 1905, describes the
amenities: an exercise room and a court
for fives (a sport similar to handball)
in the basement; steam heat; electric
lights. Room rates were set to entice
applicants: single rooms ranging from
$60 to $120 and double rooms from
$150 to $210 for the academic year.
In 1920, a disciplinary tribunal was
announced, “Harvard decides to ‘Build Modern.’”
First known as “Dormitory G,” Child Hall was con-
structed on the Jarvis Yard, the location of the first Amer-
ican football game, which took place in 1874. Later, the
building was called William James Hall after the famous
psychologist, then renamed for Francis J. Child, the Boyl-
ston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory at Harvard, when the new William James Hall opened on Kirkland Street in 1965.
Also built in 1950, Richards Hall, origi-
inally “Dormitory F,” was named after Theodore Richards, the Eving Professor of Chemistry at Harvard, who earned an
AB from Harvard College in 1886 and a
PhD in 1888 before winning the Nobel
Prize in Chemistry in 1914. Together,
Child and Richards Halls housed 184
men from the Graduate School of Arts
and Sciences and the schools of design,
education, and public administration.
On the lawn behind Richards Hall
sprouts a 27-foot-tall steel sculpture by
artist Richard Lippold named “World
Tree.” From the trunk of the sculpture
grows the main branches representing
the four compass directions. A Harvard
Crimson article from 1951 states that
the sculptor wants viewers to “enjoy it!”
The artist also recommends polishing
it at the vernal equinox with a specific
cleaner and hopes that the sculpture will
“not resent being inhabited by one or
more contemplative beings.”
Today, the GSAS residence halls
are home to over 400 graduate students
from GSAS, the Graduate School of
Design, the Harvard Graduate School
of Education, and the Harvard Kennedy
School. In addition, there are 16 resident
advisors who provide support and orga-
nize events and programs for the com-
munity. These buildings, like so many
others at Harvard, share past architec-
tural styles and hold rich histories while
also providing the settings for current
work, fun, and innovation.
things that a student will hear,” says Thomas. “The fellows provide an additional perspective.”

Hernandez and Valencia’s first order of business will be to listen to students and learn what is most important to them. They come into their roles with an awareness that every minority, female, or LGBTQ student’s experience is unique.

“We may not represent every background here at Harvard, but one of the things that we can do is show that we are here to listen,” says Hernandez.

Valencia does see common threads that connect students of color. He says that many students feel like imposters when they first come to Harvard, but it’s a topic that is rarely discussed out in the open.

“Studies show that first-generation college students, students of color, and underrepresented students generally face higher anxiety and depression when pursuing higher education,” says Valencia. “I was fortunate enough to find affinity groups, specifically the W. E. B. Du Bois Graduate Society, in which I was able to discuss the issues I was facing.”

**Student Leaders**

Thomas says that Valencia and Hernandez were selected as fellows because they have distinguished themselves as leaders in the graduate student community.

Hernandez is a graduate mentor for the Harvard College Women’s Center Women in STEM program, a member of Harvard Graduate Women in Science and Engineering, and a participant in the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS). Valencia is co-president of Minority Biomedical Scientists at Harvard, a SACNAS participant, and a member of the W. E. B. Du Bois Graduate Society.

Student groups will play a large role in Hernandez and Valencia’s first few months on the job. Together, the fellows hope to strengthen student affinity groups at GSAS. “Student groups were so helpful in my first couple of years here, I just want to make what they do known to the graduate population,” says Hernandez.

The pair plan to meet with student group leaders across GSAS and work on ways to connect groups with common interests and with resources at Harvard. Future projects include investigating how different programs of study talk about diversity in their departments and participating in conversations around standardized testing in graduate admissions. In everything Hernandez and Valencia do, they’re bringing student voices to the table.

Thomas also sees the diversity and inclusion fellowships as an opportunity for graduate students to develop leadership skills that will be beneficial in their careers inside or outside of academia. Because she plays a dual role as a member of the faculty and an administrator, Thomas hopes that the fellowships will help students gain a stronger sense of how they can use their skills as leaders and critical thinkers to have an impact on Harvard.

“Each group has a role to play in making Harvard a better and more inclusive place,” says Thomas. “Faculty have a role to play. Administrators have a role to play. Students have a role to play. We have to include all voices in the conversation.”

For Valencia, it all comes back to creating a sense of belonging at Harvard—one that isn’t based on fitting into a “Harvard mold.”

“By increasing the number of students from underserved and underrepresented backgrounds,” says Valencia, “we embolden and increase the diversity of thoughts and ideas that are at Harvard.”

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**Harvard Horizons Symposium**

Don’t miss the Harvard Horizons Symposium on Wednesday, April 11, 2018, at 4:30 p.m. in Sanders Theatre.

**Virtual Workshops**

**COUNSELING AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES LAUNCHES NEW MENTAL HEALTH BENEFIT**

Counseling and Mental Health Services has partnered with iHope, a telemental health company, to provide workshops during spring 2018 that address a number of issues.

- Mending Your Mood
- Sleeping Soundly
- Calming the Worried Mind
- Organizational Skills for ADHD
- Overcoming Perfectionism

Space is limited so sign up today! Visit huhs.harvard.edu/services/counseling-and-mental-health for more information and to register.
Unseen Connections: A Natural History of Cell Phones
Wednesday, April 18, 2018, 6:00 p.m., Geological Lecture Hall, 24 Oxford Street, Cambridge
Joshua A. Bell, Curator of Globalization, Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution

Cell phones are among people’s most prized possessions. They play an important role in daily life, facilitating everything from communication with others to the recording of social experiences and emotions. Despite the importance and ubiquity of cell phones, few people know how these devices are made or what happens to them after they are discarded. Using an anthropological lens, Joshua Bell will discuss the international network of relationships that underpins the production, repair, and disposal of cell phones and the emerging social implications of this network at both global and local levels.


From Site to Sight: Anthropology, Photography, and the Power of Imagery
Tuesday, April 24, 2018, 6:00 p.m., Geological Lecture Hall, 24 Oxford Street, Cambridge
Melissa Banta, Projects Curator, Weissman Preservation Center, Harvard Library Museum Associate, Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology, Harvard University

In 1986, the Peabody Museum mounted “From Site to Sight,” a groundbreaking traveling exhibition on the historic and contemporary uses of photography in anthropology. Using visual materials from the museum’s photographic archives and research by Harvard anthropologists, the recently reissued exhibition catalog investigates how anthropologists have employed the camera as a recording and analytic tool, as well as the broader implications of the uses—and misuses—of visual imagery within the human sciences. Melissa Banta, coauthor of the publication, will discuss the history and diversity of the Peabody’s photographic archive and developments in the history of photography since the publication of From Site to Sight.


Music Events

Dean’s Noontime Concert: Parker Quartet
Thursday, April 5, 2018, at 12:15 p.m., Faculty Room, University Hall
Concert will conclude by 1:00 p.m. Free and open to the public.

Blodgett Chamber Music Series: Parker Quartet
Friday, April 6, 2018, at 8:00 p.m., John Knowles Paine Concert Hall
Mendelssohn Quartet Op. 44, No. 2; Austin Weber Cisco Beach in Winter (Blodgett Composition Winner); Beethoven Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 130 with the Grosse Fuge
Free parking at Broadway Garage.
Don’t Miss!
OUR DUDLEY HOUSE PICKS OF THE MONTH. FOR MORE EVENTS, OUTINGS, AND GATHERINGS, GO TO DUDLEY.HARVARD.EDU/CALENDAR.

Senior Common Room Dinner
Monday, April 2, 2018, 5:30 p.m. reception in the Dudley House Graduate Student Lounge, 6:00 p.m. dinner and talk in the Common Room. Visualizing the Pyramids: The Giza Project and 3D Approaches to Archaeology with Professor Peter Der Manuelian. Professor Der Manuelian will discuss archaeological activity at the Pyramids of Giza, the Giza Project and its website (giza.fas.harvard.edu), and the visualization of ancient sites in computer renderings and virtual reality.
◆ Open to Dudley House members. Free tickets available from the Dudley House third-floor office.
Longwood-based students can reserve their tickets by calling 617-495-2255.

Blood Drive with Mount Auburn Hospital
Thursday, April 5, 2018, 9:00 a.m.–2:30 p.m., Dudley House Graduate Student Lounge. Donate love by giving blood! Sign up to donate blood and help save lives at Mount Auburn Hospital.
We have 15 slots for donations and will provide plenty of juice and snacks to reward your generosity!
◆ E-mail dudleypublicservice@gmail.com to sign up or call Charlene Shapiro (blood donor recruiter) at 617-499-5735 for more information regarding eligibility.

William Shakespeare’s Birthday
Friday, April 20, 2018, 6:00 p.m., Dudley Common Room. In Shakespeare Uncovered: Hamlet, David Tennant talks with other actors who have played Hamlet, scholars, and fans to discuss the importance of Shakespeare and this play in particular. Followed by Hamlet with David Tennant, Patrick Stewart, and a fabulous ensemble cast from England’s Royal Shakespeare Company in a stunning modern production.
◆ Presented by Dudley House Classic Films.

Film Showing: La Haine
Thursday, April 26, 2018, 7:00 p.m., Dudley Common Room. Arguably the most incendiary, provocative, and prescient film to emerge from France in the 1990s, Mathieu Kassovitz’s La Haine (French for Hate) follows three young men trapped in the Parisian economic, ethnic, and social underclass in the aftermath of a violent riot and police shooting. In French with English subtitles. Refreshments provided.
◆ For more information, contact dudleyhouse.literary@gmail.com.

Dudley House End-of-Year Boat Bash!
Saturday, April 28, 2018, boarding starts at 6:15 p.m., boat departs at 7:00 p.m.
Celebrate the end of term with the annual Boat Bash! Dance the night away as we cruise across Boston Harbor toward a spectacular sunset.
◆ Location and ticket information will be announced on the Dudley House website. Dudley House members, students at Harvard’s graduate and professional schools, and their guests are welcome. Proper 21+ ID required to board the boat. Cash required for food and drinks.

Dudley Jazz Band Concert
Saturday, April 28, 2018, 8:00 p.m., Dudley House. The Dudley jazz bands will play a mix of classic and contemporary repertoire. Free refreshments will be served. ID required for alcohol.

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
From time to time, when students request a letter of recommendation from a faculty advisor, they are asked to provide a draft of the potential letter. Typically, students cringe at this assignment: How can they sing their own praises, how can they avoid overstepping the bounds of good taste while providing the necessary positive input for a strong letter of recommendation? We would argue that this dilemma is always present, even when the assignment of a draft has not been made, and that it is perfectly good form and even a kindness to help provide the letter writer with sufficient concrete documentation to write a good letter.

Two key issues should be addressed in such a letter: one, the importance of the proposed project, and two, the student’s qualifications to implement that project. Ideally, you will have communicated already with faculty members in your field about your project and the necessary preparation to implement it, but if not, best to get started as quickly as possible. You will probably get some excellent advice once you engage with faculty.

When the time comes for actually applying, be sure to give your letter writers as much advance notice as possible, at least two weeks prior to deadline, if possible. When making your request for a letter, set up an appointment or take advantage of office hours to be sure that you and the writer are giving the application the serious attention it deserves; do not rely on a casual encounter in the hallway to make your request. Faculty are delighted when their students get funded, so they are likely to be forthcoming in providing the requisite support. It’s a good idea to provide the letter writer with a CV and perhaps a fairly clean draft of your proposal as a reminder, as well as a description of the fellowship and its priorities; be sure to provide instructions for how and when to submit the recommendation.

To put all this another way: Try to take an active stance in the application process; do not just sit around hoping your advisors will come through. Do whatever you can to make it come out all right. YES, YOU CAN!

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 E-mail: cverba@fas.harvard.edu gsas.harvard.edu/fellowships
Building Connections and Community for International Students
Host Student Program 2018

Dudley House announces the start of the 30th annual Host Student Program to welcome incoming international students. Host students are continuing GSAS students who provide friendship and informal advice to incoming international GSAS students as they make the transition to life in the United States and to graduate studies at Harvard. For the many current GSAS students who may have benefited from this program, becoming a host is a chance to give something back. This month, currently enrolled GSAS students will receive a program invitation via e-mail. Registration is conducted online, and students are matched as closely as possible according to their preferences. Host students contact their “match” over the summer, and everyone meets at the Host Student Dinner on Monday, August 27, 2018. This is a celebratory start to the academic year and a wonderful opportunity to learn about the resources of Dudley House and GSAS as a whole.

If you would like to be a part of this wonderful program, please visit gsas.harvard.edu/student-life/hs-host-student-program to apply. For more information, e-mail Susan Zawalich, Dudley House administrator, at zawalich@fas.harvard.edu.
Get Out
EXPLORATIONS AND ADVENTURES ON AND OFF CAMPUS

We Create! Celebrating Women in the Arts
Friday, April 6, 2018, and Saturday, April 7, 2018, Hibernian Hall, 184 Dudley Street, Boston
Join an unparalleled feast of music, dance, film, circus arts, and media arts at the fifth annual We Create! festival and celebrate the work of self-identified women and gender non-conforming artists from New England and New York.

Learn more at danzaorganica.org/we-create-festival

IMPORTANT DEADLINES

Last day to apply for the May 2018 degree: April 6, 2018
Order your tickets: April 1–20, 2018
Regalia orders (PhD candidates): April 20, 2018
Regalia orders (Master’s candidates): April 4, 2018
Pick up your tickets: May 18, 21–24, 2018

EVENTS

The Day Before
Wednesday, May 23, 2018
4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Dudley House Faculty Deans’ Reception, Main Dining Room, Dudley House

On the Day
Thursday, May 24, 2018
6:30 a.m. GSAS Breakfast with the Deans, Lawns at Richards Hall, 33–35 Oxford Street, for all degree candidates and their guests.
7:15 a.m. GSAS Procession begins from 35 Oxford Street to Sever Quadrangle.
9:45 a.m. Morning Exercises begin in Harvard Yard.
11:30 a.m. The GSAS Diploma Awarding Ceremony in Sanders Theatre begins immediately following the Morning Exercises.
Noon Champagne reception and luncheon begins on the Lawns at Richards Hall, 33–35 Oxford Street and continues until approximately 3:00 p.m. for all degree recipients and their guests.
2:15 p.m. Afternoon Exercises begin in Harvard Yard.

More information at gsas.harvard.edu/commencement