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HARVARD KENNETH C. GRIFFIN GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCES

A Partner for Women at Midlife

At Midi Health, Ava Mainieri works to transform menopause care.



to note



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Join Harvard Griffin GSAS on the road!

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AS WE WELCOME A NEW GROUP OF SCHOLARS

to campus this academic year, I am proud of the important work Harvard Griffin GSAS does to engage the most promising students whose academic work is characterized by the same curiosity and innovation as that of the alumni who came before them.

Harvard Griffin GSAS remains committed to supporting students and encouraging them to reach their potential both as intellectual leaders and as individuals; our mission remains clear. The creativity, resilience, and dedication our scholars bring to their work and research have sustained Harvard Griffin GSAS for more than 150 years and will continue to have an enormous positive impact on the world.

A vivid example of this impact is embodied by the four remarkable Harvard Griffin GSAS alumni we honored this past May with our Centennial Medal: Frank Bidart, AM '67, English and American literature and language; Anjana Rao, PhD '78, biophysics; Cristián Samper, PhD '92, organismic and evolutionary biology; and Londa Schiebinger, PhD '84, history. You'll learn more about them in this issue of *Colloquy*, alongside stories about alumni efforts to transform menopause care, research public regard for certain immigrant traits, and lead courageously.

As always, thank you for your support of Harvard Griffin GSAS.

—EMMA DENCH
DEAN

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SUMMER/
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Some recent graduates of the Harvard Kenneth C. Griffin Graduate School of Arts and Sciences speak about their work, its impact, and their experiences at the School.

• • • Read the full profiles and find many more at gsas.harvard.edu/news/topic/voices

STOPPING CERVICAL CANCER BEFORE IT STARTS

Our vaccine includes fragments of the proteins that the human papillomavirus uses to replicate early on. By teaching the T cells to identify these viral fragments, we can stop the progression to cancer before it starts. . . . When we tested this in mouse models, the results were incredible. In a cervical cancer model, the circular RNA vaccines had a massive, robust ability to completely eradicate tumors. We also showed they were highly effective at preventing tumor growth in the first place.

ALTON GAYTON, PHD '26
Virology

gsas.harvard.edu/news/stopping-cervical-cancer-it-starts



FINDING IRELAND'S "INVISIBLE PEOPLE"

I found evidence of Iron Age activity on some [medieval archaeological] sites [in Ireland], suggesting they were being used much earlier than the textbooks allowed. The sites saw continued use in the eleventh and twelfth centuries as well, and even through the seventeenth century. . . . One of the major realizations of my work is that the way we categorize the past—sorting things into neat baskets like “the Iron Age” or “the Middle Ages”—tells us more about ourselves in the present than it does about the people who lived back then.

ANDREW BAIR, PHD '26
Anthropology

gsas.harvard.edu/news/looking-irelands-invisible-people



ECONOMICS FOR GOOD

At the Chicago Fed, I . . . looked at the causal effects of the “redlining” maps from the 1930s. These maps were drawn by the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation, a now-defunct government agency, to measure loan repayment likelihoods, but race was a primary factor in the scores. . . . I realized that while economists’ focus is on proving “causality,” there is a “so what” factor that sometimes gets lost. I wanted to be the kind of researcher who used the tools of economics to answer the questions I truly cared about, even if they weren’t part of the “standard” training.

AVINASH MOORTHY, PHD '26
Public Policy

gsas.harvard.edu/news/studying-how-black-media-shaped-great-migration



HOW MUSIC MOVES THE BRAIN

When the brain is integrating sound, reward, and attention all at once, [cortical neurons stimulated by vasoactive intestinal peptide release] may be doing far more than we gave them credit for. This challenges how we think about inhibitory neurons in the sensory cortex. Their peptidergic side has been largely overlooked here, even though peptide transmission has been studied elsewhere in the brain for a long time. What’s exciting now is that new tools let us monitor peptide release in living animals in real time—something that simply wasn’t possible before.

CHRISTINE JUNHUI LIU, PHD '25
Speech and Hearing Bioscience and Technology

gsas.harvard.edu/news/how-music-moves-brain



Alumni Scientists Detect Atmosphere on Distant “Earth-Like” Planet



Wordsworth, Cherubim, and Charbonneau

A group of Harvard scientists led by new alumnus **Collin Cherubim**, PhD '26, and including FAS professors **David Charbonneau**, PhD '01, and **Robyn Wordsworth**, has discovered an atmosphere on an Earth-like planet in the temperate “habitable zone” of a distant star system – an intriguing hint of another world that might be capable of hosting life. In a study published in *Science*, the team

details the helium-dominated atmosphere of the planet LHS 1140 b, located about 48 light-years from Earth. “People are generally interested in the big questions,” said Cherubim. “Are we alone? Is there life beyond the Earth or beyond our solar system? To that end, this study reveals the first atmosphere discovered on a rocky planet in the habitable zone of a star outside our solar system.”

● ● ● Learn more on the new FAS Current website: current.fas.harvard.edu/stories/harvard-scientists-detect-atmosphere-distant-earth-planet.

ALUM, 101, GIFTS UNIQUE ARTWORK TO STUDENT CENTER

Family and friends of the inventor and entrepreneur **David Bakalar**, AM '48, joined Harvard administrators and staff on June 23, 2026, to celebrate the donation of three large-scale, semi-abstract paintings from the Harvard Griffin GSAS alumnus's *Brain Series*. The mixed-media and acrylic works—two 80-by-40-inch paintings and one 80-by-60-inch painting—evoke the synapses of the brain while drawing inspiration from $E = mc^2$, Albert Einstein's

landmark mass-energy equivalence formula. On display in the lobby of Zimmer Hall (formerly the Science Center) through the end of 2026, the works will eventually move to their permanent home, the Harvard Griffin GSAS Student Center in Lehman Hall. “It’s a wonderful experience to get older and be exposed to these positive things in the arts and sciences,” Bakalar said, “and I think it’s never-ending.”



Bakalar

● ● ● Read about the paintings and about Bakalar's background at current.fas.harvard.edu/stories/age-101-alum-gifts-big-geometric-colorful-artwork-fas.

FROM THE COLLOQUY PODCAST

“For much of American history, the idea that the Supreme Court would have the ability to take a federal law and say, ‘We don’t want to enforce it,’ would have been seen as tyrannical.”

— HARVARD LAW SCHOOL PROFESSOR NIKOLAS BOWIE on the *Colloquy* podcast: gsas.harvard.edu/news/colloquy-podcast-has-supreme-court-become-too-powerful



Harvard Griffin GSAS Team Wins Innovation Challenge



Refine co-founder Yann Calvó López accepts his grand prize at the Harvard President's Innovation Challenge Award Ceremony at Klarman Hall.

A team from Harvard Griffin GSAS was one of the five \$75,000 grand prize winners of the 2026 President's Innovation Challenge, Harvard University's flagship venture competition for students as well as select alumni and affiliates. Refine Technologies, led by Yann Calvó López, SM '26, and developed jointly with the Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, won for creating an AI system for research papers that provides reviewer-grade feedback in minutes instead of months. Winners were celebrated at a May 6 ceremony in Klarman Hall and received a share of more than \$500,000 in non-dilutive funding from the Bertarelli Foundation.

● ● ● Find out more about the competition and its winners: news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2026/05/moved-to-act/

● ● ● Stay up to date with the latest news and research from the Harvard PhD community. Subscribe to the *Research Matters* newsletter at gsas.harvard.edu/news.

DISSERTATION IN THREE MINUTES



Contestants at the Three Minute Thesis Competition

An enthusiastic crowd filled Sever Hall 113 on March 5, 2026, as 10 of Harvard Griffin GSAS's top student researchers took on the challenge of presenting years of complex research in

a flash as part of Harvard Griffin GSAS's second annual Three Minute Thesis Competition (3MT). Part of a national competition, the speakers gave fascinating talks about their research in three minutes, ranging in scale and scope from the microscopic to the universal, with the aid of only one static slide. Biological sciences in public health student Abigail Frey took first prize for "Uncovering the Unknown," which described her work identifying drug-resistant tuberculosis. Second prize went to materials science student Sofia Edgar for "Just Right," which presented her effort to design better batteries for a renewable future. Masoud Ariankhoo (Near Eastern languages and civilizations) received the third-place award for his talk "How the Devil Defines Us," which explored the often conflicting versions of Satan presented in medieval literature.

● ● ● Watch the presentations on the Harvard Griffin GSAS YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLPeHaldzhCORuOFRfOjSbh-hNwcn-Gely.

FURMAN NAMED DIRECTOR OF CENTER FOR BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT



Furman

FAS economist **Jason Furman**, PhD '04, has been named director of Harvard Kennedy School's Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business and Government (M-RCBG) by Dean Jeremy Weinstein, PhD '03. Furman will serve alongside Co-director John Haigh, who has co-led the center since 2011. Under Furman and Haigh's

leadership, M-RCBG will work to help the world better understand and tackle the most pressing challenges by conducting rigorous research, teaching and mentoring students, hosting practitioners and policymakers as fellows, and convening timely conversations between leading experts. "We are thrilled to have Jason bring extraordinary vision, insights, and experience to this role," said Weinstein. "Together, he and John will lead the center into an exciting new chapter."

● ● ● Read the full announcement: www.hks.harvard.edu/announcements/hks-announces-jason-furman-director-mossavar-rahmani-center-business-and-government.



RADICAL PATERNITY

NOW A POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME, **THOMAS BLAKESLEE**'S RESEARCH TRACES NARRATIVES OF THE BLACK FATHER AND FAMILY BACK TO STEREOTYPES THAT EMERGED ALONGSIDE EMANCIPATION AFTER THE CIVIL WAR. BUILDING ON DECADES OF SCHOLARSHIP THAT CHRONICLED THE RESILIENCE OF THE BLACK FAMILY, BLAKESLEE, PHD '25, ILLUSTRATES HOW FATHERHOOD GAVE RISE TO "RADICAL PATERNITY"—ACTS OF RESISTANCE AND NEW VERSIONS OF MASCULINITY IN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY THAT EMPHASIZED CARE AND SERVICE WHILE REJECTING DOMINATION AND VIOLENCE.

You had a nontraditional path to Harvard, a big part of which was fatherhood. Can you describe it?

I grew up in the Philadelphia area, part of a large extended family. I have two sisters and a brother. None of us went the academic route. Like my father before me, I was a blue-collar worker with an intellectual interest in books, documentaries, and good music. At one point, I thought I was going to take the creative professional route because I did visual art and music production. As it turned out, I did nearly every sort of menial labor that was available to a young man: warehouse work, construction, masonry, security guard, delivery guy—all of those things.

I married my wife in my early 20s. We had two kids. We moved to California in 2008. I drove trucks up and down the West Coast. My wife started taking classes at community college, and I helped with her homework. That encouraged me to go back to school too. She transferred from community college to UC Davis, and I went to UC Berkeley. We took night classes, worked, and raised our children.

“The idea of the lack of Black patriarchy . . . was part of the excuse for why Black men should not have political power, gain the franchise, or have the vote.”

— THOMAS BLAKESLEE

Since my wife and I took that path in life, I got my PhD and she received her master's degree. She's now a psychologist and behavioral therapist. One of our adult children has a bachelor's degree. Another is now in a PhD program. So, I think the decision that we made over 10 years ago has panned out in many good ways.

You study the social history of Black fatherhood in the United States from the mid-19th to the early 20th century. How were African American fathers portrayed during that time?

The idea of the lack of Black patriarchy goes back to the moment of emancipation, and maybe even a little before that. It was part of the excuse for why Black men should not have political power, gain the franchise, or have the vote: because they were not the heads of households, they were not leaders, and they needed the strong governing hand of a white slave master to function in society. The argument was that once you removed that, there would be nothing but chaos among men and women.

This is also the birth of many stereotypes. For women, there was the Sapphire caricature, the mammy, and Jezebel. On the male side, there were Sambo, the City Dandy, and other characters that showed a supposed lack of mature masculinity and an inability to be a leader of a family, a provider, or a protector.

What was the reality?

The Princeton University historian Tera Hunter's work on Black marriage

shows how committed Black families were to adhering to the social norms of the time: becoming legitimate, as they saw it, as married couples and starting nuclear families in the period immediately following slavery. You can trace that through Black populations moving during the Great Migration into northern cities and the Midwest.

Still, the criticism of Black families as dysfunctional continued until the 1960s with the Moynihan Report, which came out in 1965. Moynihan, who was a sociologist and at that time a government researcher, produced a study called *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*. The consensus at that time, even among the Black scholars he cited, was that a lack of Black patriarchy was at the root of much social dysfunction, poverty, and unrest among Black populations, especially in the urban North.

After that, scholars really started to respond. The late Herbert Gutman, a historian at the City University of New York, showed that the trajectory Moynihan presented—the idea that Black families did not like to orient themselves in the nuclear sense—was false. As far back as they could find, the nuclear family was actually the norm among Black families.

One of your contributions to the field is the concept of “radical paternity.” What is it?

It describes the ways in which African American men resisted racist ideologies by embracing fatherhood as a site of dignity, responsibility, and political commitment. So much of what I have uncovered, especially among Black in-

CURRICULUM VITAE

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tellectuals, is that many of these fathers were trying to resist mainstream ideas of patriarchy. They did uphold the service and care aspects of it, but they rejected the domination and violence aspects. I look at certain studies, especially among Black intellectuals who fought against and debated eugenicists. In one study I came across, a pro-eugenics scholar interviewed interracial couples and found that the Black husbands of white wives were reported by their wives to be more caring than the white husbands they had before. This was in the 1920s. It was still rare at the time, but these women reported that their husbands were more caring toward their children, more gentle toward their wives and family members, and more caring and gentle toward the vulnerable members of their households than what they had experienced in white society. 🍷

A Revolution in Women's Midlife Health



men's Care



At Midi Health, Ava Mainieri helps transform the way menopause is understood and treated.

By Paul Massari

FOCUSED ON RESULTS: At Midi Health, Mainieri leads a group that develops scores of evidence-based protocols to standardize best practices in menopause care and tracks adherence. The organization's goal is for clinicians to follow the protocols at a rate of over 90 percent—including when making complex decisions.



An estimated 75 million US women suffer from symptoms related to menopause—from hot flashes and mood changes to sleep disturbances, joint pain, weight gain, and much more.

Despite menopause's dramatic impact on well-being, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) allocates to it only a fraction of the already meager 9 percent of its research budget targeting women's health. Moreover, many women have little access to qualified health care professionals who can help them manage the profound impacts of menopause: rural counties in the US average fewer than 2 obstetrician-gynecologists per 1,000 residents. Many of those doctors—perhaps as many as 80 percent—report feeling unprepared to manage menopause effectively.

Ava Mainieri, PhD '20, wants to transform this aspect of women's health care. As vice president of clinical operations at the fast-growing startup Midi Health, Mainieri is part of the effort to expand access to doctors who understand the challenges of midlife. In doing so, she hopes not only to bridge the gap in knowledge faced by women and their providers but also, ultimately, to help set a new standard of care for those in menopause.

PERIMENOPAUSE AND ITS DISCONTENTS

The first thing to understand about menopause is that the symptoms most often associated with the term actually occur during *perimenopause*. “In the zeitgeist, we say menopause, but technically it’s perimenopause, menopause, and then postmenopause,” Mainieri says.

Menopause, Mainieri explains, is the moment when menses have ceased for at least 12 months. In perimenopause, lower and lower levels of the hormones estrogen and progesterone are produced. Menstrual cycles become irregular, the drop in estrogen wreaks havoc with the body’s internal thermometer, and mood changes become more extreme as the brain tries to squeeze hormones from ovaries that have them in increasingly short supply. The process can begin as early as the late 30s, can last anywhere from one year to a decade, and affects the entire physiology.

“Why are the symptoms of perimenopause so widespread rather than being localized to your reproductive system? Because you have estrogen receptors in all parts of your body, from “your skin to your bones to your ovaries,” Mainieri explains. “And the impact on quality of life is huge. We joke about hot flashes, for instance, but it really feels like you’re burning alive.”

A MODEL THAT MEETS THE NEEDS OF MIDLIFE

Mainieri says traditional health care is structured around incentives that often work against women in midlife. The fee-for-service model keeps visit times short. Perimenopause symptoms, which most clinicians are sparsely trained to treat, are often dismissed or patients are referred



When you think of it through an evolutionary lens, menopause is kind of like pregnancy: a withdrawal of a system that was doing a lot of work behind the scenes.”

—AVA MAINIERI

to a specialist, which presents additional challenges to access. Built around telehealth meetings accessible in all 50 states, Midi’s model seeks to eliminate barriers to access. “Patients can meet with their doctor online whether they’re in a car or at a cafe,” Mainieri says.

Virtual visits and prescriptions are covered by major insurance carriers like Blue Cross, Aetna, Cigna, and United-Healthcare (but not yet Medicare and Medicaid). “All you really have to do is book a visit, pay your copay, and then you can be with us as long as you want. We specialize in midlife care, but we see patients age 18 and older. We can take care of that whole breadth of adult life.”

The organization’s more than 550 clinicians complete 80 hours of rigorous, menopause-specific training. For mammograms, ultrasounds, or other diagnostics, Midi boasts an extensive list of vetted referral partners. “We make sure we’re sending you to someone whom we like and trust, and you’re not going to be dismissed when you go there,” Mainieri says.

Finally—and perhaps most of all—Midi emphasizes the relationship building that is foundational to the delivery of high-quality care. “You’re going to talk to a clinician who’s been specifically trained in perimenopause and menopause care. Most of all, you’re going to see the same clinician over and over again, so she understands who you are as a person and can help guide you to the best treatment or intervention for your specific symptoms. And then thinking 10 years down the line, she can help you age gracefully and healthfully.”

At Midi, Mainieri focuses on results. Are patients getting better? Are clinicians delivering good care? And how do leaders know? “I lead a group that’s developed around 50 protocols because menopause as a field has been unstandardized, and our clinicians have been using evidence-based frameworks.”

Once the protocols are built, Mainieri supervises the effort to track adherence to them. The organization’s goal is for clinicians to follow protocol at a rate of more than 90 percent, including complex clinical decisions.

“If you have a uterus, you have to be on estrogen and progesterone both to prevent endometrial or uterine cancer,” she explains. “That is a safety concern. So, we want to make sure that every single one of our patients who need to be on a progesterone medication is actually taking it, rather than unopposed estrogen. It’s the protocol development, the patient outcomes, measuring quality, making sure that we’re delivering good, safe care, and then, again, swooping in and fixing when we’re not.”

Dr. Kathleen Jordan, Midi’s chief medical officer, says Mainieri’s PhD work and ability to think critically help the leadership team translate the science into practical solutions. “Ava never stops learning and with that knowledge helps us iterate and deliver care that truly reflects best practices and always improving

with new and emerging science and care tools,” Jordan says. “She is multitasked, but her acumen is particularly outstanding when looking and developing new care approaches, informed by new and emerging science. She leads many of our discussions here, working collaboratively with our clinical leaders.

Midi’s chief clinical officer, Dr. Mindy Goldman, says Mainieri helps ensure every aspect of care is grounded in science, overseeing the development of clinical protocols, and monitoring outcomes to ensure high standards. “By partnering across our clinical, operations, and product teams, Ava helps translate research into practice, evaluate the quality and consistency of the care we deliver, and identify new opportunities to better support our patients,” she says. “Her scientific curiosity, collaborative approach, and commitment to excellence have helped shape the high-quality care that defines Midi.”

LEVERAGING AI FOR WOMEN’S HEALTH

Firms in the health care sector, as elsewhere, have great hopes about artificial intelligence’s (AI) ability to lower costs, while improving the productivity of providers and the quality of the care they deliver. Unlike generative AI platforms like ChatGPT, for instance, the clinically focused Open Evidence platform restricts its data retrieval to medical literature: major journals like the *New England Journal of Medicine*, *JAMA* and the JAMA Network of specialty journals, and the Wiley Online Library; clinical guidelines from organizations such as the National Comprehensive Cancer Network, and review bodies like Cochrane Systematic Reviews, as well as a raft of medical society partners. But Mainieri notes that, here too, gender matters.

“

Ava’s attention to the subtleties of evolutionary tradeoffs will be useful in this important work.”

—DAVID HAIG, GEORGE PUTNAM
PROFESSOR OF ORGANISMIC AND
EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY

“The biggest challenge is that most AI tools in health care are still built on data that reflects decades of underresearch in female physiology,” she says. “Those gaps are encoded into the AI. The output is only as good as the clinical knowledge underneath it.”

To address those gaps, Midi brought AI in-house, developing models trained on the most recent menopause research. “We’re really in an unusual position, because we have something like 200,000 plus patients in this specific demographic,” says Mainieri, “which means that the sample we’re working with is far more representative than what most health AI is trained on. We have board-certified MDs who help craft protocols geared specifically to that population.”

Moreover, AI supports Midi clinicians in real time during a patient visit. “If a patient asks an esoteric question, the clinician can say, ‘Hold on one second. Let me look that up for you right now.’ And it gives her an answer that comes from our own protocols. It provides decision support when the clinician actually needs it, not when the appointment is over.”

ANCIENT SYSTEMS, MODERN MEDICINE

Mainieri’s path to Midi followed from her PhD work at Harvard Griffin GSAS. As a student in organismic and evolutionary biology, her research examined how the same genes express themselves differently depending on parent of origin. She also investigated how deeply rooted, ancient hormone systems can be disrupted by environmental factors.

“For example, the estrogen signaling system is ancient,” Mainieri explains. “It does things far beyond production. It’s involved in inflammation regulation, bone metabolism, neural function, and cardiovascular protection. When you think of it through an evolutionary lens, menopause is kind of like pregnancy: a withdrawal of a system that was doing a lot of work behind the scenes.”

Mainieri’s PhD advisor, George Putnam Professor of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology David Haig, says her work on the ancient functions of oxytocin was particularly notable. “Oxytocin is popularly known as a ‘love’ or ‘trust’ hormone, but has ancient functions in uterine contraction during labor and milk let-down, and effects on appetite,” he says. “Ava related the evolution of these disparate functions from ancient forms of parental care—including not eating your hard-won offspring!”

Mainieri’s framing of the menopausal process in terms of pregnancy is more than just semantics; it enables clinicians to think about what symptoms to look for and what downstream effects to anticipate with treatment. The estrogen example also highlights the importance of hormone therapy across multiple organ systems: bones, brain, and heart.

“The training I got at Harvard Griffin GSAS in this type of systems thinking is really what good menopause care requires,” she says. “It’s not just one intervention, and then you’re going to be

fine. It's 'How do we work and tinker this together?' It's why I like menopausal care so much."

Mainieri's passion for women's health is also personal. "I've had moments of watching the health care system fail to take me seriously," she says. "That's why I jumped immediately from my PhD into working in women's health. When I saw that Midi was treating menopausal women as a clinical area that deserved rigorous evidence-informed care, rather than a life event to be endured, it really clicked. And then the next question, of course, is 'How do we fix this? What do we do?'"

GROWTH MENTALITY

Midi's model, and its focus on women's health, has resonated both with patients and investors. Last winter, the company raised \$100 million from firms like Foresite Capital, Advance Venture Partners, and Google Ventures. The funds brought Midi's valuation to over \$1 billion.

"Midi has grown many multiples year after year—and continues to grow," says Jordan. "We started with serving a few patients per day at our inception in 2021 and are now serving tens of thousands of women each week in 2026. We have delivered care to hundreds of thousands of women already and anticipate—and are building—a care system that is able to serve even more."

Mainieri says the reason for the company's success is simple: pent-up demand.

"The growth here, and in menopausal health care more broadly, reflects a genuine market failure that's finally being addressed," she says. "Two million US women enter menopause each year. Many are told that the health care system doesn't have much to offer them: 'There's nothing we can do. It's not that bad. Just turn up the air conditioner if you're having a hot flash.' When you show up with

actual clinical expertise, and a care model that acknowledges these symptoms are real and can be treated, you don't have a marketing problem. The demand is already there."

In the years to come, Mainieri looks forward to helping Midi set the standard for menopause and, more broadly, women's health. Harvard's Haig says this goal is consistent with concerns and interests apparent in his former advisee's research.

"Menopause is a distinctive aspect of human life history that poses an evolutionary puzzle: What explains the cessation of ovulation in healthy women with many years of life expectancy?" he observes. "Ava's attention to the subtleties of evolutionary trade-offs will be useful in this important work."

When she describes what future success would look like, Mainieri's words are those of a PhD researcher merged with a clinician, complemented by a commitment to access for patients up and down the economic ladder.

"Setting the standard means more published outcomes data, and a deeper evidence base built from our own patient population," she says. "It's also a care model that women can actually access, including those for whom out-of-pocket telehealth is currently a barrier. That's why we hope eventually to be able to accept Medicaid and Medicare."

At the core of Mainieri's work—and Midi's—is the ethic of listening to women whose suffering has been dismissed, discounted, and disregarded.

"The thing for us is that we believe you," she says. "We believe our patients. We want to send you to doctors who also believe their patients. When I'm telling you I'm feeling really hot, you believe that I'm experiencing a hot flash. The science that I care about is integrated with a population that I also care about, and that's been underserved. That combination is why, hopefully, I'll be in this field for many more years to come." 🍷





COMBINING DATA FROM A HUNDRED STUDIES, A NEW HARVARD-LED PAPER EXAMINES WHICH NEW





COMERS ARE VIEWED MOST FAVORABLY IN HOST COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD. By Sydney Sauer



**What
Makes a
"Worthy"
Immigrant?**



Imagine you are an immigration official. You can admit only one of the following two people into the country: a man with an elementary school education who is fleeing violence, or a woman with a graduate degree who is seeking employment. Which one would you choose?

FELLOW TRAVELER: Aviña's curiosity about immigration and public opinion stems from his own experience immigrating from Mexico to Canada as a child and coming to the United States for graduate school.





To measure public opinion about immigration, political scientists have asked variations of this question to hundreds of thousands of people all over the world. A new study in *Science Advances*, led by Harvard Griffin GSAS PhD student Marco Aviña, combines data from a hundred of these studies for a large-scale examination of who makes a “worthy” immigrant in the public eye.

Across 36 countries, the paper reports that host citizens generally prefer immigrants with attributes associated with economic contribution, such as those possessing advanced degrees or strong language skills. It also warns of profound political polarization—while conservatives place great weight on cultural similarity, liberals largely do not.

Motivated by Experience

Aviña’s curiosity about immigration and public opinion stems from his own experience immigrating from Mexico to Canada as a child and coming to the United States for graduate school.

“My family was seeking asylum in Canada, so I had the experience of being a little uncertain about the future when we first arrived,” he says. Even once his family secured permanent status, cultural challenges remained. “I had to learn a

new language (French). I had to incorporate into the culture here in Quebec. Then again, going into a PhD in the United States, I had to go through the same thing, doing it all in my third language.”

Throughout this journey, Aviña has witnessed many changes to immigration policy. Some have affected him firsthand, including, most recently, President Donald Trump’s efforts to revoke international student visas at Harvard. As an undergraduate, he decided to turn these observations into research questions.

“I started my undergrad in 2017, right after Trump was elected president. Immigration was definitely salient back then,” he says. “I wanted to understand why it was so contentious—why people are either very favorable or very opposed to immigration, when we know that immigration has very positive aspects.”

Putting the Pieces Together

As a PhD student, Aviña looked at studies called “conjoint experiments,” which randomly assign attributes like gender, education, and country of origin to two hypothetical immigrants. Survey respondents then decide which immigrant they would prefer to admit into their country. When repeated enough times, robust patterns emerge in which types of people

are more likely to be accepted.

“What’s great about conjoint experiments is that you have multiple attributes, and the analysis holds all other attributes constant when estimating each effect. For instance, the effect of gender is calculated net of every other attribute,” Aviña explains. “This creates really good conditions to have clean estimates, so you can be sure that this gender effect takes into account other attributes that were included in the experiment.”

Rather than compare hundreds of separate—and sometimes contradictory—sets of findings, Aviña and his team of five other Harvard colleagues (one now based at Brigham Young University) asked an ambitious question: What if we combined them all?

“Every study is a little bit different—a different context, a different population, different attributes,” Aviña says. “But across all these slightly different studies, there’s also quite a bit of overlap. This creates a great opportunity for assessing generalizability.”

The research team systematically searched the political science literature for immigration-focused conjoint experiments from 2012 to 2024 and contacted authors to obtain replication data and materials where needed. Since the project predates the widespread adoption of

“I wanted to understand why immigration was so contentious—why people are either very favorable or very opposed to immigration, when we know that immigration has very positive aspects.”

— MARCO AVIÑA



artificial intelligence tools, this manual data collection effort took three years. In total, their combined dataset included over 1.4 million immigrant profiles that had been assessed by 142,817 survey respondents in 36 countries.

The Global Immigration Consensus

Even with such a broad geographic scope and time range, Aviña and his team uncovered remarkable consistency in which immigrants tended to be viewed favorably.

“The most important characteristics are what we call ‘sociotropic attributes’—things like education, employment status, occupational skill level, and language ability that signal the contributions that an immigrant will make to the host society,” he says. “These had by far the clearest, largest effects.”

The immigrant’s level of attachment to the host society, such as having friends or family members already living in the country, was another important factor. People also tended to prefer immigrants who were fleeing violence rather than seeking economic opportunity.

“Whether they are in North America, Western Europe, or Eastern Europe, there seems to be a consensus in what people prioritize from potential immigrants,” Aviña says, emphasizing that the scarcity of data from the Global South makes it hard to generalize beyond the Global North.

While these findings were stable across countries, they did vary across time. “Sociotropic attributes tend to matter more over time,” Aviña notes. “For employment status, occupational skill level, and language ability, recent studies find larger effects than the older studies.”

Narratives of Worthiness

Sociotropic attributes took precedence over race, ethnicity, and cultural characteristics in Aviña’s analysis, but this does not mean that citizens’ evaluations

were racially neutral. According to Judit Kende, an assistant professor of social psychology at Tilburg University who published a [commentary](#) on Aviña’s study, attributes like educational credentials or legal status carry racialized connotations in many cultures.

“For example, one of the most penalized attributes is irregular entry into the country or undocumented status. While these attributes could be interpreted as simply a question of legal status, [this] is

strongly tied to race and ethnicity,” Kende says. “Thus, while it could appear that citizens do not evaluate immigrants by their race, ethnicity, or culture, a more careful unpacking of immigrant characteristics reveals racialized evaluations.”

Similarly, Aviña acknowledges that political narratives about immigration—which are often racialized—may also shape public ideas about potential new entrants’ worthiness.

“Increasingly, you have politicians

Which Traits Do Host Societies Prefer?

Aviña’s meta-analysis revealed that migrants with “sociotropic attributes” such as education, employment status, occupational skill level, and language ability were viewed more favorably by the countries they sought to join.





“With fertility dropping across many countries and geopolitical instability and war creating more forced migrants, we need to develop ways to match potential immigrants with countries that need all kinds of people.”

— HARVARD SOCIOLOGY PROFESSOR MARY WATERS

emphasizing that immigrants maybe don't contribute their fair share, or that immigrants might be a burden," he says. The cultural impact of such messaging could be one explanation for the growing importance of sociotropic attributes. "This rhetoric, it reaches people. We see here one indication that people might be swayed by this sort of discourse."

In fact, political beliefs emerged as a key driver of immigration preferences. While the researchers found no variation across standard demographic variables like age, gender, and even one's own immigration status, preferences differed sharply in several cases between anti-immigrant or conservative people and their pro-immigrant or liberal counterparts.

"Conservative people . . . prioritize cultural similarity and nationality effects. Shared culture, political norms, development status, whether the country is European, Afro-descended, or Muslim—these cultural characteristics associated with nationality matter quite a bit," Aviña says. "For pro-immigration respondents, cultural similarity has little influence; in some analyses, the pattern even points in the opposite direction."

These findings held up regardless of whether the researchers measured political beliefs using the labels "liberal" and "conservative" or simply asked people if they were generally for or against immigration. Aviña was surprised to see such consistent, strong disagreement.

"The consensus in the literature was that there was widespread agreement

among the public on immigration. So going in, I wasn't expecting to see these differences based on political predispositions," he explains. "But now that we've established this finding, it makes complete sense—if you're anti-immigrant, then you're not going to care about the same [attributes of] potential immigrants as if you're pro-immigrant."

"We didn't expect this—it's a new finding for this literature," he says.

A Leap Forward

Aviña's simple, polished findings conceal just how difficult it was to collect and analyze this data. After creating the extensive list of studies and obtaining permission to use each dataset, his team faced challenging measurement decisions.

"Some studies might include four age categories, others might include two, and it's the same idea for other attributes," he says. "We had to sit down with all these studies and find a way to code them that's comparable across studies. This standardization work was a huge undertaking."

But after three years of hard work, Aviña hopes this study will help scholars make a leap forward in a field where progress has been slow and incremental for over a decade.

"We provide very definitive answers about what matters, what doesn't, and even answers that we didn't know about previously, like this heterogeneity across people based on their predispositions toward immigration," he says. "With this

paper, I hope the literature can move forward in a more substantial way."

The paper also has much to contribute beyond political science. Across campus in Harvard's sociology department, Professor Mary Waters, herself an immigration expert, sees applications for this work in other academic disciplines—and even outside of academia.

"With fertility dropping across many countries and geopolitical instability and war creating more forced migrants, we need to develop ways to match potential immigrants with countries that need all kinds of people," she says. "Understanding what drives attitudes toward immigration is an important question across the social sciences, and this paper makes an important contribution to this endeavor."

As public opinion about immigration continues to shift, influencing the direction of policies across the world, Aviña's work has much to offer. "If journalists or politicians want to understand what people prioritize in immigration, they can look to this paper for a really strong set of answers," he says.

Aviña hopes his paper and future studies like it will provide a template for glean- ing new discoveries from existing data, even beyond the field of immigration.

"Taking everything that we know about these issues, sitting with the findings, and trying to assess what this collection of studies teaches us that we hadn't figured out yet. That was the idea for this paper," he says. "And we found pretty surprising results." 🍷

2026 HONOREES

Beyond Boundaries

THE 2026 CENTENNIAL MEDALISTS ARE KNOWN FOR BREAKING
NEW GROUND AND BRIDGING DISCIPLINES.

BY KELLY HAHN | ILLUSTRATIONS BY MATT COOK



EVERY YEAR, THE HARVARD KENNETH C. GRIFFIN GRADUATE School of Arts and Sciences celebrates some of its most distinguished alumni with the Centennial Medal. This year's honorees—a Pulitzer Prize-winning poet; a biologist adept at solving mysteries of how genes and cells function; the director of leading institutions for conservation, biology, and natural history; and a historian who partners with scientists to improve research through innovative perspectives on gender—are all renowned for pushing past traditional limits and working across disciplines to advance knowl-

edge and human endeavor. “The 2026 Centennial Medalists are superlative in every respect,” says Dean Emma Dench. “Through their work, they exemplify the power of thinking beyond boundaries to expand what’s possible.” “These Centennial Medalists are among the foremost figures in their fields, with above-and-beyond achievements,” observes David Staines, PhD ’73, chair of the Graduate School Alumni Association Council’s Medals Committee. “That is what this program is about: shining a light on extraordinary individuals whose work means so much to so many.”

• • • Nominate a candidate for the Centennial Medal, Harvard Griffin GSAS's highest honor, by visiting gsas.harvard.edu/alumni/recognize/centennial-medal

Frank Bidart, AM '67, English and American Literature and Language



RANK BIDART, who won the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award for *Half-Light: Collected Poems, 1965–2016*, is known for raw, powerful poetry—works that not only speak to his deepest personal experiences, including growing up gay in the 1940s and '50s in

Bakersfield, California, but that also channel the voices of a wide-ranging, often envelope-pushing cast of characters.

Bidart studied poetry at the University of California, Riverside, and met Robert Lowell as a graduate student at Harvard; he would go on to advise Lowell on his last four books of poetry and to edit Lowell's *Collected Poems*. "Much before I met him, I had known his work extremely well—I had admired it, and learned from it, in the way that I admired and learned from Eliot and Pound," Bidart said in a 1983 interview. "The fact that later I could be useful, both as a reader of his poems and a friend, to someone I so much revered, was a profound event in my life."

The author of 11 poetry collections, Bidart made a striking debut in 1973 with *Golden State*, which opens with a poem in the voice of a serial killer—where Bidart explored, as he put it in 2015, the Yeatsian idea of the "anti-self," "in which someone like you but unlike you in profound ways is embodied, and you can see yourself and discover yourself in the difference." Bidart quickly gained renown as a master of the dramatic monologue, with celebrated works from the perspectives of tortured historical figures—Ellen West, a pseudonymous patient of the Swiss psychiatrist Ludwig Binswanger who suffered from anorexia; the ballet dancer Vaslav Nijinsky—reflecting Bidart's abiding fascination with character and narrative.

"I was very much formed by Shakespeare as a kind of model of the artist," Bidart said in 2021. "He was not an Egyptian, and he was not a Danish prince, or any of these things, literally. And he could inhabit the minds, sensibilities, perspectives, and worlds of these characters." Bidart added, "An artist is not someone who simply transcribes his or her

experience. An artist is someone with a sympathetic imagination—sympathetic meaning identifying with ways of being that are not literally one's own."

One of Bidart's most ambitious projects is "The Hours of the Night," an ongoing series of poems inspired by the ancient Egyptian *Book of Gates*, which traces the passage of the sun through 12 underworld territories. These poems bring Bidart's vast knowledge of history and culture to bear in exploring some of the most harrowing aspects of human existence: desire, grief, war, death. The latest installment, "The Fifth Hour of the Night," appeared in Bidart's most recent collection, *Against Silence*, in 2021.

"Each poem in the series is an hour we must pass through before the sun can rise again," Bidart said in 2005. "I don't know what will make moral and intellectual clarity and coherence rise again: I could never write 12 'hours.'" He added, "I like the idea that I'm involved in a project that can't be completed: the project corresponds to how things are."

The poet Dan Chiasson, PhD '02, first met Bidart as a graduate student; the two subsequently became readers of each other's work, and both taught for many years at Wellesley College, where Chiasson is a professor of English. "I've always looked forward to the latest Bidart book as a kind of clarification of life: what Matthew Arnold says poetry should be," Chiasson says. "You're just waiting for that deep insight, that powerful sense of beauty, and the dignity that he brings to people in love, people in grief."

Often, Bidart's work grapples with opposing forces in tension—exploring, for example, the connection between hate and love, as in Bidart's interpretations of the Roman poet Catullus's two-line lyric "Odi et Amo." The third interpretation, completed in 2008, reads: "What I hate I love. Ask



the crucified hand that holds / the nail that now is driven into itself, why.”

“The minute, as a graduate student, I read ‘Odi et Amo,’ I felt that it was the quintessential thing I had ever read: that in two lines, Catullus crystallized this utterly fundamental thing, that we love and hate at the same time, that we love and hate the same thing at the same time,” Bidart said in 2021. “And in a way, I’ve spent my life trying to excavate that.”

“YOU’RE JUST WAITING FOR THAT DEEP INSIGHT, THAT POWERFUL SENSE OF BEAUTY, AND THE DIGNITY THAT HE BRINGS TO PEOPLE IN LOVE, PEOPLE IN GRIEF.”

*—Dan Chiasson, PhD ’02, Colleague, Poet,
and Professor of English, Wellesley College*

Anjana Rao, PhD '78, Biophysics



NJANA RAO has found answers to some of the most challenging and consequential puzzles in human cell biology—often working out the solutions by making unexpected connections and developing

new approaches needed to solve them.

Rao spent 30 years on the Harvard Medical School faculty before joining the La Jolla Institute for Immunology. She established the Institute's Division of Signaling and Gene Expression in 2010 and is also an adjunct professor at the University of California, San Diego, and an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the National Academy of Sciences.

Born in Washington, DC, Rao grew up in India and earned bachelor's and master's degrees at Osmania University before coming to Harvard for her PhD. As a graduate student, she chose to complete substantial coursework in nonrequired fields, which helped lay the foundation for the depth and breadth of research that she would go on to do throughout her career.

"I took or audited courses in neurobiology and immunology, and I sat in on many of the preclinical physiology modules for medical students, which taught me about physiology and pathology in many of the organ systems in the human body," Rao recalls. "It was the heyday of molecular biology and recombinant DNA, and I learned—partly by taking classes taught by the many famous molecular biologists who were then at Harvard—about nucleic acids, plasmids, early sequencing technologies, gene expression mechanisms, gene regulatory regions, and tumor viruses. These were all pertinent to my future research."

A key turning point for Rao came when she chose to complete postdoctoral work in immunology rather than neurobiology, with a focus on T cells, a type of white blood cell critical to the immune system. "I realized that T cells were a remarkable model system for studying signaling—from T cell receptors,

for instance—to gene expression," she explains.

Rao's initial goal was simply to determine how genes are expressed in T cells. Together with Patrick Hogan, a long-term collaborator whom she met when they were both graduate students at Harvard, she began by investigating an important pathway of gene expression that begins when calcium enters T cells. "We became interested in a postulated—but unidentified—transcription factor that was the target of a remarkably effective immunosuppressive drug that had revolutionized transplant medicine," Rao says. They showed that this transcription factor, known as NFAT, was in fact a complex of two unrelated transcription factors: a major revelation.

For Rao, this was the first in what would become a series of momentous collaborative discoveries, including her identification of the elusive CRAC calcium channel, which allows calcium to enter T cells and prompts NFAT to move to the nucleus; groundbreaking work on DNA methylation, an epigenetic process that modulates gene expression; and her discovery of a small family of proteins known as TET proteins that reverse this process. "This led me to investigate the repressed region of the genome known as heterochromatin, which is still poorly studied, despite the growing realization that it plays a role in aging, cancers, and neurodevelopmental disorders," Rao says. "There are many more problems to solve in this field!"

For years, Fred Alt, Charles A. Janeway Professor of Pediatrics and Genetics at Harvard Medical School, led a lab neighboring Rao's at what was then known as the Center for Blood Research/Immune Disease Institute, now the Program in Cellular and Molecular Medicine at Boston Children's Hospital. "There are several whole fields that Anjana opened up, and she has then worked out a lot of the details,"



**“SHE’S ABLE TO POINT
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DEVELOP WAYS TO
STUDY THEM AND MAKE
SEMINAL ADVANCES.”**

*—Fred Alt, Charles A. Janeway
Professor of Pediatrics and
Genetics, Harvard Medical
School*

Alt says. “She’s able to point herself at really important scientific questions and then develop ways to study them and make seminal advances.”

Reflecting on what motivates her work, Rao cites the opportunity to solve longstanding problems. “Discovery research—discovering new pathways and mechanisms no one knew before—is always fascinating and rewarding,” she says. “Every field comes with one or more ‘holy grail’ questions: things people

have wondered about, often for decades, that have finally come within reach of experimental analysis. I was lucky to find and work on three of them—NFAT, the CRAC channel, and TET proteins—and I am still working on the third. And I could not have tackled any of them without the many insightful collaborators and lab members who provided new reagents, new technologies, and sustained intellectual support.”

Cristián Samper, PhD '92, Organismic and Evolutionary Biology



RISTIÁN SAMPER has helped lay the foundations for international climate policy and has stood at the helm of some of the world's leading organizations in conservation and biology. But he remains a scientist at heart.

"A scientist is a kid who never really grows up," Samper says. "We're always asking questions."

Born in Costa Rica and raised in Colombia, Samper first came to Harvard in 1985 as a visiting undergraduate from the Universidad de los Andes; he returned two years later as a PhD student in tropical biology. "I went from reading books by Harvard scientists—people like Stephen Jay Gould and E.O. Wilson—to taking classes with them," Samper says. Just as formative were the connections he made with his fellow graduate students. "Many of us were interested in environmental issues," he recounts. "It wasn't just the science: it was what we could do with the science."

Soon after he finished his PhD, Samper helped create Colombia's Ministry of the Environment and became founding director of his country's Alexander von Humboldt Biodiversity Institute. He also became a leader in environmental policy on a global scale: he chaired the science advisory body of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and launched the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, a landmark study that involved more than 1,300 scientists.

Even though he never planned to leave Colombia, he soon had an opportunity too good to pass up: the chance to lead the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama, which Samper describes as "the best place for tropical biology in the world." Just two years later, he was named director of the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC—which he led for a decade, including a year as acting secretary of the Smithsonian Institution as a whole—before becoming president and

CEO of the Wildlife Conservation Society, which not only runs four zoos and an aquarium in New York but also manages field research and conservation programs in more than 60 countries: work that brought Samper around the world, from the Congo Basin to Myanmar.

Today, Samper is managing director and leader for nature solutions at the Bezos Earth Fund, founded in 2020 with the largest-ever philanthropic commitment to fight climate change and protect nature. "Everything we do is about three key goals," Samper explains. "We have to protect what we have, we have to transform the way we live, and we have to restore and heal the planet. And we're investing \$10 billion in that idea."

Samper also served as a member of the Harvard Board of Overseers from 2009 to 2015. "Being an overseer completed my Harvard education," he says. "It was an incredible opportunity to see the whole University." Samper chaired the overseers' committee on science and engineering with then-provost Alan Garber, now president of Harvard. They found, among other things, that when you look at the 14 different biology departments across Schools, Harvard has the largest biology faculty of any university in the world.

"Cristián is an exemplary University citizen," Garber says. "He deserves a great deal of credit for his role in spurring the University-wide review of the life sciences, an ambitious undertaking that led to consequential advances in one of Harvard's most prominent areas of research and teaching. He is endlessly curious, tenacious, unfailingly diplomatic, and a powerful advocate for the environment and for institutions that contribute to knowledge and its dissemination worldwide."

For Samper, Harvard's landscape offers students



an invaluable opportunity to learn about different fields. “Today, the world needs people that can work across disciplines,” Samper explains. “You need to have depth in your area of expertise, but you also have to be able to speak with experts from many other backgrounds and disciplines, because the magnitude and the types of problems we have to deal with require systems thinking. That’s what the world needs right now.”

“CRISTIÁN IS AN EXEMPLARY UNIVERSITY CITIZEN. HE DESERVES A GREAT DEAL OF CREDIT FOR HIS ROLE IN SPURRING THE UNIVERSITY-WIDE REVIEW OF THE LIFE SCIENCES.”

—Alan Garber, President, Harvard University

Londa Schiebinger, PhD '84, History



S THE WORLD'S LEADING AUTHORITY on sex and gender in the history of science, Londa Schiebinger not only pioneered the study of women in science in the 18th century but also created an international

platform that helps scientists use insights and methodologies from the humanities to innovate and improve the practice of scientific discovery today.

Schiebinger, the John L. Hinds Professor of History of Science at Stanford University and director of the ambitious and highly influential Gendered Innovations in Science, Health, & Medicine, Engineering, and Environment project, is producing trailblazing scholarship on the past as well as toolkits for more rigorous scientific practice in the present.

Schiebinger grew up in Lincoln, Nebraska, where she trained as a classical pianist and studied English at the University of Nebraska. She first came to Harvard as a staff member, serving as a typist for the economist John Kenneth Galbraith. "I'm a terrible typist," she confesses. But seeing the opportunities, she quickly enrolled at Harvard to pursue graduate work in intellectual history. "I became interested in gender," Schiebinger recalls, "but Harvard had no one teaching women's history, and gender history had not yet been developed."

A series of lectures at MIT in 1981 on women in science led her to realize that historians had failed to account for women in the history of science. "Historians studied participation in science from many important vantage points—religious affiliation, class, age, vocation—but ignored entirely questions of gender," she says.

Schiebinger's dissertation took up these neglected questions and gave rise to two books that would prove foundational to the field: *The Mind Has No Sex? Women in the Origins of Modern Science*, in 1989, and *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science*, in 1993. Through a series of revelatory case studies, these books distill key in-

sights into the history of the Scientific Revolution—including, for example, why the Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus decided to use the highly gendered term "Mammalia" in his taxonomy and the cultural struggles embedded in that nomenclature. Schiebinger has also been a leader in examining the circulation of knowledge—and barriers to knowledge—in science, including in her prize-winning 2004 book *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World*.

Schiebinger joined the Stanford faculty in 2004 to direct the Clayman Institute for Gender Research. "My job was to promote work on gender in science across the university, including in engineering, medicine, and computer science," she says. "The big question for me became: Can methodological insights from the humanities contribute to discovery in science and technology?"

Gendered Innovations made this ambition a reality. Through a longstanding series of collaborative workshops, the project has brought scientists and humanists together to create pathways for incorporating sex, gender, and intersectional analysis into the design of science and engineering efforts. The Gendered Innovations website supports the work of 2.5 million unique users in 185 countries, and Schiebinger has brought the project's insights to the United Nations, the European Commission, and the National Science Foundation—improving policy decisions, research outcomes, and countless lives in the process. This work also has strong footholds in Asia, where institutes for gendered innovations were founded in the Republic of Korea in 2016 and Japan in 2022.

"It was an 'If you build it, they will come' scenario," says Sarah Richardson, Harvard's Aramont Professor of the History of Science & Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality, who completed her PhD



“[SCHIEBINGER’S WORK] HAS PRODUCED AN ENORMOUS NUMBER OF NEW CASES THAT ARE TEACHABLE, TRANSLATABLE, AND TRAVEL ACROSS DIFFERENT DISCIPLINES.”

—Sarah Richardson, Aramont
Professor of the History of Science &
Studies of Women, Gender, and
Sexuality, Harvard University

with Schiebinger at Stanford. “Londa believed in it, and she was right. It has produced not only an enormous number of new cases that are teachable, translatable, and travel across different disciplines, but also relationships among people who otherwise would have never met each other or read each other’s work.”

For Schiebinger, the concept of translation is key. “Languages are entire universes,” she explains. “In academia, each discipline is a language, a way of thinking, a way of knowing—and if you speak plainly, without jargon, you can translate and communicate to other disciplines. That’s what

Gendered Innovations is about: making a shared language, and bringing our way of analyzing society and science into how researchers actually do science.”

Schiebinger encourages today’s students to take inspiration from this approach, no matter their field. “I really think it’s important that people look beyond their disciplines,” she says. “Grasp the larger view, the long-term view. What world would you like to see, and what’s the next step you can take to create that world for yourself and for others?” And she emphasizes the core learning of Gendered Innovations: if you see a problem, find a solution. 🍷



INTELLECTUAL LEADERSHIP IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) appointed **Silvana Tenreyro**, PhD '02, economics, economic counsellor and director of the research department. The position makes Tenreyro the IMF's chief economist, leader of the organization's research efforts, and one of the world's leading voices on policy.

The James E. Meade Professor of Economics at the London School of Economics, Tenreyro's research has been widely published in leading journals and recognized with international honors.

"Silvana is a globally respected economist who combines outstanding academic achievements with extensive policymaking experience and a close engagement with leading international institutions," said IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva in a press release on the Fund's website. "At a time of profound transformation and heightened uncertainty in the global economy, Silvana's mix of intellectual leadership and policy experience will help ensure that the Fund's analytical work and multilateral surveillance and policy advice will remain at the cutting edge in support of our membership."

... Read the full text of the IMF's press release: www.imf.org/en/news/articles/2026/07/07/pr26241-imf-md-kristalina-georgieva-names-silvana-tenreyro-economic-counsellor-and-head-of-res-dept.



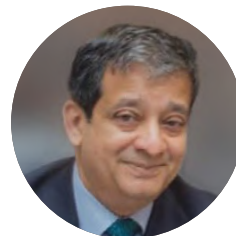
Oratomic, a quantum computing startup led by **Dolev Bluvstein**, PhD '25, physics, raised \$300 million in Series A funding to build what it calls the first utility-scale, fault-tolerant quantum computer. The funds will support the company's efforts to scale from its current laboratory demonstrations of 6,000 trapped atoms to a fully integrated system of 10,000 to 20,000 qubits with operational error correction.



Lauren E. Brandt, PhD '09, history of American civilization, was appointed inaugural secretary of Harvard College, a new senior role within the leadership team of Dean David Deming, PhD '10. The office will be responsible for the operations of the Administrative Board and Honor Council and serve as the primary custodian of policies and procedures related to student discipline and academic exceptions.



The Neuroimmunology of Pain, a project led by Harvard Medical School's **Isaac Chiu**, PhD '09, immunology, received a \$2 million grant from the Warren Alpert Foundation, supporting the effort to explore how the nervous and immune systems work together to generate – and potentially quiet – chronic pain, which affects tens of millions of people in the United States.



Riyad Insanally, PhD '90, romance languages and literatures, was elected commissioner of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights by the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States (OAS). From 2016 to 2021, Insanally served as Guyana's eighth ambassador to the United States of America and fourth permanent representative to the OAS, as well as ambassador-designate, nonresident, to Mexico.



Jeffrey R. Long, PhD '95, chemistry, has been named Harvard's inaugural Thomas C. Foley Professor of Energy and the Environment and director of the Harvard Materials Initiative, a new effort to address challenging problems in energy science. The initiative will connect faculty from different departments and Schools, creating an interdisciplinary environment that can foster transformative research.



Gregory Nagy, PhD '66, classics, was part of the 2026 cohort of "Great Immigrants, Great Americans" honored by the Andrew Carnegie Foundation, which marked Independence Day in the US by recognizing a group of naturalized citizens whose contributions have strengthened the nation.



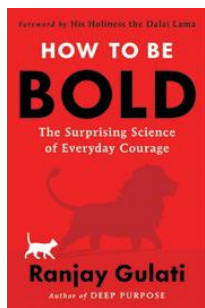
Vijay Sankaran, PhD '09, genetics, was one of five scientists awarded the 2026 Warren Alpert Foundation Prize for their work leading to curative genetic therapies for two major blood disorders: sickle cell disease and beta-thalassemia. The \$500,000 prize recognizes individuals whose breakthroughs in biomedicine have led to the understanding, prevention, cure, or treatment of human disease.



Ruth Simmons, PhD '73, romance languages and literatures, established the Nora B. Wilson Endowment and Health Clinic at Texas Southern University. The new endowment will support the university's Breast Cancer Screening and Prevention Center, which provides prevention and early detection resources to women in nine counties throughout Southeast Texas.

AUTHOR INTERVIEW

BEING BRAVE



Ranjay Gulati, PhD '93, an expert on leadership strategy and organizational growth, has thought a lot about courage. It is not fearlessness, the Harvard Business School professor writes in his new book, How to Be Bold, but the ability to make sense of situations in helpful ways and also see ourselves as strong, capable people who can control our destinies. Most of all, he says that courage is a learned behavior. With evidence-based tools—and with practice—leaders of all kinds can put themselves on the path to developing a courageous mindset.

How do you define boldness? Is it the same as courage?

[The South African leader] Nelson Mandela said courage is not the absence of fear; it is resourcing yourself in the face of fear, usually toward a noble cause. That is how I define courage and boldness in my book.

What's the difference between courage and recklessness?

The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle reflected on this question in the fourth century BCE. He distinguished cowardice from recklessness and put courage in the middle. It's where there is deliberate, thoughtful action. In the case of one of my former MBA students, Frances Haugen, who became a whistleblower at Facebook and essentially blew up her career as a high-tech executive with a Harvard MBA, she spent a year deliberating over whether she was going to do this. It was not something she did off the cuff.

In some cases, you have the luxury of time, but in others, you do not. In 2009, for instance, Captain Chesley Sullenberger was piloting a US Airways flight from New York's LaGuardia Airport to Charlotte when a bird strike disabled his engines. He had seconds to decide whether he was going to turn the plane back

and try to get to LaGuardia, go straight to Teterboro Airport in New Jersey, or land in the Hudson River. He did the math in his head. He took the third option. All 155 passengers survived.

You have a formula for becoming more courageous: the Nine Cs. What are some of them?

The first C, "calm," talks about dialing down the fear. For the longest time, humankind has prayed to a higher power, and it works. Also, it turns out checklists are calming devices that focus you on the task at hand. The first thing Captain Sullenberger did when he had to land the plane in the Hudson was make a checklist. Another thing people use is ritual. Adele, the famous singer, is terrified of public singing. What does she do? She has a ritual. She looks at Céline Dion's picture before she sings. Céline Dion is her hero, and it calms her down.



C IS FOR COURAGE:
Gulati's Nine Cs—including calm, confidence, and conviction—offer an evidence-based path to boldness.

Another “C” is confidence. This comes from research done by a Stanford professor named Albert Bandura. He recruited students who were terrified of snakes and said, “I am going to make you look at pictures and slowly expose you to snakes. Over time, however, you will get comfortable with the snake, and maybe you will hold one.” Many students dropped out during the course of the study, but the ones who stuck around later said not only that they could hold a snake, but also that it had given them a general confidence about their lives. If they could deal with the snake, they could deal with anything.

One more “C” is conviction. Most of us hold on to some beliefs that are sacred to us, meaning that if they are violated, we will do anything, even at our own physical or emotional cost. For example, the Russian dissident Alexei Navalny was poisoned. He was evacuated to Germany and had a miraculous recovery. He had a wife and two kids. What did he do? He turned

around, got on a plane, and went back to Russia, knowing they would arrest him and ship him to Siberia, which is exactly what they did. He knew that he might die, but he said, “I do not have a choice.” That feeling of being morally compelled is conviction.

Finally, you write in the book that, if there was ever a time to enhance our ability to control or manage fear and show more everyday courage, this is it. Why is boldness so important now?

The point of origin of courage is fear. The point of origin of fear is uncertainty. If ever there was a time of uncertainty, it's right now. It's not easy, but as a professor of business, I see many illustrations of turnaround and transformation. In 2009, for instance, Boston Scientific bought Guidant for a record sum of \$28 billion, though Boston Scientific itself was worth only \$27 billion. It turned out to be a complete

disaster. They had FDA recalls, quality issues, and regulatory issues. The collective market cap dropped from around \$56 billion or \$60 billion to \$8 billion.

The company offered the job to a new CEO, Mike Mahoney, who hired a consulting firm to advise him on how bad the situation was and whether he should take the job. The consultants came back and told him it was really bad, and that he should not take the job. He took it and turned a failing company with an \$8 billion market cap, going down fast, into a \$150 billion market cap company. In medical devices, Boston Scientific is now considered a juggernaut.

How do you do that? You see instances where a leader steps up. Mahoney faced down impossible odds. So did Anne Mulcahy, who became CEO of Xerox many decades ago, and turned it around when it was an almost bankrupt company. I think the world needs leaders like that. 🍷

RECENTLY PUBLISHED



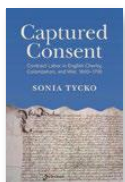
Jane Casey, PhD '91
Fine Arts
*Taklung Painting:
A Study in Chronology*
Serindia, 2026



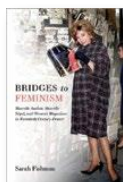
Jonathan Daly, PhD '92
History
*The Man Who Knew Russia:
Richard Pipes, Humanist
and Cold Warrior*
Stanford University Press, 2026



Donald L. Horowitz, PhD '68
Government
*The Promise and Perils of
Devolution: Federalism, Regional
Autonomy, and Ethnic Conflict*
Oxford University Press, 2025



Sonia Tycko, PhD '19
History
*Captured Consent: Contract Labor
in English Charity, Colonization,
and War, 1600–1700*
Cambridge University Press, 2026



Sarah Fishman, PhD '87
History
Bridges to Feminism
Oxford University Press, 2026



Gordon Legge, PhD '76
Experimental Psychology
*Low Vision—What It's
Like to Live with
Vision Loss*
Oxford University Press, 2025



Join Harvard Griffin GSAS on the Road!

Engage with fellow alumni this academic year at events featuring Dean Emma Dench in cities around the world:

Hong Kong: November 10, 2026

Shanghai: November 12, 2026

São Paulo: December 15, 2026

Seoul: January 19, 2027

London: March 9, 2027

Paris: March 11, 2027, with Nobel Prize-winning economist Philippe Aghion, PhD '87, economics
And more to come!

Connect with other Harvard Griffin GSAS alumni for personal and professional networking during the following conferences:

TechCrunch Disrupt and SEMICON West Networking event, San Francisco, CA
Harvard Griffin GSAS event: Tuesday, October 13, 2026

JP Morgan HealthCare Conference Networking event, San Francisco, CA
Harvard Griffin GSAS event: Monday, January 11, 2027

... [Contact the GSAA](#) or [visit the alumni events calendar](#) to learn more about events in your local area or online.

SAVE THE DATES!

Virtual event: How Election Reform Can Help Depolarize US Politics, featuring Nobel Prize-winning economist Eric Maskin, PhD '76

October 8, 2026

TechCrunch Disrupt and SEMICON West Networking event in San Francisco, CA
October 13, 2026

Dean Emma Dench in Hong Kong
November 10, 2026

Dean Emma Dench in Shanghai
November 12, 2026

Dean Emma Dench in São Paulo
December 15, 2026

JP Morgan HealthCare Conference Networking event in San Francisco, CA
January 11, 2027

Dean Emma Dench in Seoul
January 19, 2027

Dean Emma Dench in London
March 9, 2027

Dean Emma Dench and Professor Philippe Aghion, PhD '87, in Paris
March 11, 2027

Alumni Day, Cambridge
April 10, 2027

Centennial Medals Ceremony, Cambridge and livestreamed
May 26, 2027

Harvard Griffin GSAS Alumni Breakfast and All-Harvard Alumni Day
June 4, 2027

Alumni support powers the groundbreaking research that students like Sophia conduct every day at Harvard.



WHAT GENEROSITY MAKES POSSIBLE

Growing up, I never pictured myself as a researcher. It wasn't until I had the chance to work in a lab as an undergraduate that something clicked for me. Hands-on work felt like solving small puzzles that add up to what we see every day.

I chose Harvard for the chance to access incredible resources and to learn from scientists I admire—including Professor Michael Baym, whose microbiology lab I now work in. Our lab is the only one in the world that uses our technique. It was developed by a postdoctoral researcher who saw that bigger questions could be answered with this tool.

That's one of my favorite parts of the academic system. We're constantly passing on knowledge and lifting up the next generation. I am so grateful to the many mentors who took the time to show me what is possible.

—SOPHIA, PHD CANDIDATE IN SYSTEMS, SYNTHETIC, AND QUANTITATIVE BIOLOGY

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RESEARCH EXAMINES WHICH
NEWCOMERS ARE VIEWED
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