

Moving Forward

Community Update | January 2025



Harvard & the Legacy
of Slavery Initiative



Moving Forward

Where we came from and where we are going



Tracey Hucks and Bernadette Holder attend the closing session of the Common Read Program at the Harvard Divinity School in April 2023. Photo by Osa Igiede/ Osa Igiede Photography.

Reckoning with Harvard University’s entanglement with slavery began more than 15 years ago, as Harvard faculty members asked important questions and raised critical issues, leading to a series of undergraduate research seminars taught by Laird Bell Professor of History Sven Beckert. Harvard’s 28th president, Drew Faust, advanced this research by establishing a committee on the University and slavery. This led to memorializing the labor of four enslaved people – Titus, Venus, Juba, and Bilhah – in 2016 at Wadsworth House in Harvard Yard, where they lived and worked for two Harvard presidents and their families. In 2019, Larry Bacow, Harvard’s 29th president, established the Presidential Initiative on Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery and appointed a committee representative of all of the University’s Schools.

Led by Dean Tomiko Brown-Nagin at the Harvard Radcliffe Institute, this committee was charged with diving deep into Harvard’s history of slavery. Their work culminated in the Report of the Presidential Committee on Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery, which was released in April 2022 and details the University’s historic ties to the enslavement of people of African descent and Native Americans in North America and the Caribbean.

Based on this knowledge, the University established the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative. This Initiative demonstrates the University’s steadfast commitment to the active pursuit of long-lasting repair: Harvard will tell the truth about our legacies of slavery and work to mend enduring harms through purposeful change grounded in our educational mission and the Report’s recommendations.

The recommendations from the Report call on us to be accountable, and partner with community members to repair harm. This community update shares highlights of our work from April 2022 to January 2025 with a focus on how partnerships are driving reparative action.



2022 Full Report
Read the 2022 full report
legacyofslavery.harvard.edu/report



Short Film
Watch the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery short film
youtu.be/EDIMi9Auyq0?si=dhFsT12qtNtUKbIE

Through the Report of the Presidential Committee on Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery, we acknowledged three things:

Harvard has direct ties to slavery:

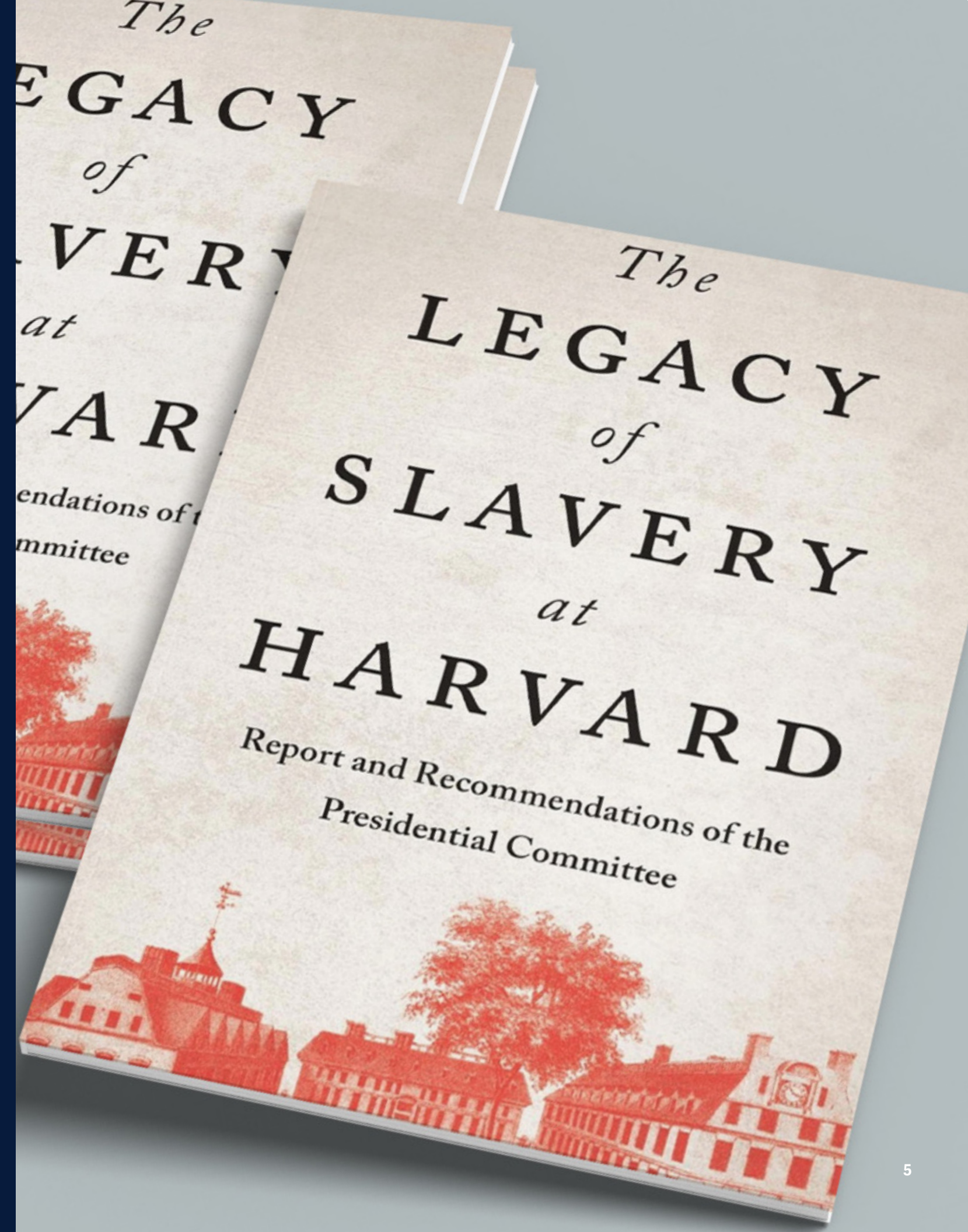
Harvard leaders, faculty, and staff enslaved at least 70 people during the 17th and 18th centuries.

Harvard has financial ties to slavery:

Five men who made their fortunes from slavery and slave-produced goods accounted for more than one-third of all private donations and financial pledges during the first half of the 19th century.

Harvard has intellectual ties to slavery:

In the 19th and 20th centuries, several Harvard faculty and leaders promoted now debunked theories of race science and eugenics, ideas that underpinned Jim Crow segregation and continue to support white supremacy.



“The Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative is taking critical actions to implement the commitment to reparative work. Listening, partnering, conducting research, and teaching are the foundation for enduring efforts.”

- Martha Minow, 300th Anniversary University Professor and member of the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative Advisory Council

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Harvard University President Alan M. Garber. Photo by Rose Lincoln/Harvard University.

Institutional Commitment:

Message from President Alan M. Garber

Dedicated to repair for the long haul

Through the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative, the University continues to grapple with its historical involvement in slavery, and our community continues to encourage the open exchange of ideas, to advance meaningful partnerships, and to learn from and collaborate with descendant communities.

Engaging in reparative work – and committing to significant and sustained effort – are important steps toward creating a just society. We embrace the opportunity to lead with ambition and humility with the hope that others will join us in these efforts.

Alan M. Garber, President, Harvard University

Forging Ahead:

Message from Vice Provost for Special Projects Sara Bleich

Daunting. Exciting. Urgent. Meaningful.

Those four words come to mind as I consider the work of healing and repair that we've embarked upon. This is an important time for our country. We see evidence of slavery's long shadow across the nation. Black people and Native Americans have less wealth, poorer health, less access to education, less freedom, and shorter life spans than their white peers.

After the Report of the Presidential Committee on Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery came out in 2022, people asked, "So what is Harvard going to do about it?" It is one thing to outline recommendations and another to develop a strategy and implement it. Having devoted my career to addressing public health inequities exacerbated by racism, I wake up every morning feeling the urgency of this work. But the reality is that the repair needed will not be fast or easy. It's going to take longer and involve more complexities than any of us would like.

I'm proud of what we've accomplished thus far and inspired by the potential to do more and reach further. We have begun connecting with local communities harmed by this legacy, building meaningful relationships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and co-creating solutions. In reflecting upon work done to date, three themes surfaced:

We must move ahead with thoughtful action

Change is difficult. We're going to make mistakes. Humility, a learning mindset, and an openness to change allow us to iterate and evolve programs.

Collaboration and partnerships are crucial

An African proverb states that: "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." To have lasting impact, we need to develop thoughtful collaborations so that we can go together with our partners.

Harvard is in this for the long haul

Meaningful impact requires time, resources, and leadership. The University supported three years of intensive research to develop the Report, tasked senior leadership with overseeing the effort, created the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative, and set aside a significant and enduring endowment to fund this work in perpetuity.

One reason I became involved in this work is that my parents always encouraged me to do my part to make the world better. Now that I have children of my own, I feel the drive to improve the world even more keenly. I see that Harvard is committed to the work of reckoning and repair, and I believe that, in concert with our partners, we can play a significant, positive, and far-reaching role in truth-telling and healing.

**Sara Bleich, Vice Provost for Special Projects,
Harvard University**





Guiding Principles

Our Values & Approach

Attendee of the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative's Inaugural 2024 Symposium claps at the Museum of African American History in Boston. Photo by Thunder Road Projects.

At the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative, we believe that if we enable collaborations, partnerships, and other strategic initiatives to address systemic inequities, we will meaningfully impact direct descendants (those whose ancestors were enslaved by Harvard leaders, faculty, and staff) and descendant communities (those who are directly or indirectly impacted by chattel slavery).

Through our work, we look forward to learning from and partnering with others to advance this Initiative in a way that honors those whose lives were impacted by slavery and its legacies. To make progress, we are listening actively to the community both at Harvard and in our surrounding communities — and not shying away from hard conversations.

The two most important things to know about the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative are that we are serious, and we are sincere. We strongly believe that how we do this work is as important as what we do.

As a result, we are anchored by these core values:

We continue to seek and speak the truth.

We are open, honest, and accountable.

We value partnership and action.

We embrace justice and equity.

We approach our work with a growth mindset.



Harvard & the Legacy
of Slavery Initiative



Tiana Woodard (far right) seated with attendees at the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative's Inaugural 2024 Symposium at the Richard A. and Susan F. Smith Campus Center. Photo by Thunder Road Projects.

Anchored by these beliefs and values, we will continue to advance the recommendations in the Report of the Presidential Committee on Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery by developing specific, thoughtful strategies that can move the needle.

While no amount of money can compensate for the damage caused by slavery, the implementation of this work is supported, in part, by a \$100 million endowment from Harvard University, which is dedicated to funding the implementation work, including projects with external partners.

As an institution that predates the nation, Harvard also takes the long view for our work and intends for our efforts to persist as long as the institution does; this is why Harvard provides additional funding (separate from the endowment) to support the Initiative's operating budget, and work that supports reparative efforts across the University and its Schools.



“Reparative work can take so many forms. For me, it’s this revolutionary mix of education, activism, entrepreneurship, and art.”

— RuQuan Brown, Former Student Ambassador

Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative



“The work of the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative is more urgent than ever as higher education reassesses its role in shaping the next generation of global leaders.”

— Tenzin Gund-Morrow, Former Student Ambassador

Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative



“It has been impressive to see [Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative’s] efforts to listen, connect with, and build relationships in the community to understand and grapple with the direct and indirect impacts of slavery on generations. These investments in building deep and authentic connections can help pave a path towards more just and equitable communities and begin to repair the inequities caused by slavery.”

— Geeta Pradhan

President, Cambridge Foundation



“My experiences with the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative have been outstanding. Their inclusive outreach, valuing HBCU stakeholders’ voices, and dedication to justice are inspiring. As an HBCU and Harvard graduate, I’m grateful for the opportunity to contribute to their impactful work and eagerly anticipate future collaborations. Their commitment to healing and repairing the past is commendable, and I fully support their efforts.”

— Evangeline Mitchell,

Attorney & Counselor at Law

Founder and CEO, HBCU Pre-Law, LLC

The Question We Keep Getting: **Why Now?**

As we have been communicating about the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative, many have asked: “Why are we focused on slavery since it officially ended more than 150 years ago?”

The legacies of slavery continue to impact every aspect of American life through systemic inequities, reflected by vast gaps that exist between different communities within society. Glaring gaps experienced by historically underserved communities illustrate this

disparity. For example, Black people have less wealth, fewer employment opportunities, poorer health, less education, less freedom, and shorter life spans. Harvard alone cannot solve these enormous societal issues, but we owe it to ourselves and future generations to do our part, recognizing that we are part of a much larger movement across the nation and around the world to advance repair. As Martin Luther King Jr. said, “The time is always right to do what is right.”

“The Harvard & The Legacy of Slavery Initiative is a new way for this venerable institution to engage, convene, and build bridges in a meaningful way with the Black legacy communities of Boston and Cambridge. The work here is to repair and to make sure that future Black generations right here locally have the networks and resources needed to succeed.”

— George (Chip) Greenidge Jr., Founder and Director, Greatest MINDS





Attendees join the inauguration of the Afro-Latin American Research Institute Second Continental Conference on Afro-Latin American Studies in the Tsai Auditorium at the Center for Government and International Studies South Building in December 2022. Photo by Stephanie Mitchell/ Harvard University.

The Power of Partnerships

Advancing educational opportunities for descendant communities

K-12 teacher training

Meira Levinson, and Danielle Allen, James Bryant Conant University Professor, Harvard University, secured funding to support professional education for K-12 teachers that focuses on how to teach students about slavery and its lasting impact on society. In Summer 2024, they hosted an in-person institute for educators across the country called “Past to Present: Teaching the History & Legacies of Enslavement.”

Through this work, we are intentionally leveraging Harvard’s key strengths as an institution of higher learning to advance educational opportunities for descendant communities through partnerships with our faculty at the Graduate School of Education and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

New curricular offerings

Meira Levinson, Juliana W. and William Foss Thompson Professor of Education and Society at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and her students developed a series of curricular offerings to accompany the 2022 report — such as normative case studies — that help support Harvard stakeholders (students, staff, faculty, alumni), local community members, and others who are interested in grappling with universities’ complex histories and legacies of enslavement.

Public Engagement with History

Evelyn Higginbotham, the Victor S. Thomas Professor of History and of African and African American Studies, and Jarvis Givens, Professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, are developing a course that explores the diverse ways in which the study and uses of history occur outside of academic settings. The course will focus on physical and digital sites and explore the evolution of public history, reclaiming the history of Black people and its diverse approaches and commitments. Once complete, the course will be delivered for free on the edX platform as part of the HarvardX portfolio.

The Power of Partnerships

Funding actionable efforts to address systemic inequities

In 2023, we launched our inaugural Reparative Partnership Grant Program, which supports innovative, achievable projects that address systemic inequities affecting descendant communities, with a strong focus on the Boston and Cambridge communities and regional Tribal communities. Two features of this grant program make it unique. One is that we require projects to take a collaborative approach and be co-led by community-focused nonprofits and a member of the Harvard community. The other is that a majority of the funds are awarded to the community partner. To spark collaborations and connections, we hosted a series of “Ideathons” within the local community that provided a space for interested grant applicants to brainstorm, learn from each other, and gain valuable insights.

After careful review by a committee composed of local and national leaders, the first round of grants was awarded in 2024 and focuses on several key areas: education, economic mobility, healthcare, criminal justice, and environmental justice. Seed Grants provide up to \$25,000 for one year, and Impact Grants provide up to \$350,000 for two years. For this round, a total of \$2.3 million has been awarded, with 90 percent of the funds allocated to community-focused nonprofits. The remainder will support Harvard faculty who are co-leading or participating in the funded projects.

Project Name	Community-Focused Partner & Harvard Partner	Grant Type
Inspire: Investing in Community-Led Scholarship in Community Health Centers	Institute for Health Equity Research, Evaluation and Policy, Inc. in partnership with Harvard Medical School	Healthcare Impact Grant
A Homeownership Estate Planning Project to Close the Racial Wealth Gap	The Initiative on Land, Housing & Property Rights at Boston College Law School and Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance in partnership with The Legal Services Center of Harvard Law School	Economic Mobility Impact Grant
PLA University: Workforce Development Program (For Boston and Cambridge Unemployed and Underemployed Individuals)	Phalen Academies in partnership with Harvard Graduate School of Education	
Our Voice, Our Stories, Our Legacy: Celebrating Black Cambridge Youth through the Arts	Community Art Center in partnership with Harvard Art Museums	
Center for Economic and Social Justice	Roxbury Community College in partnership with Harvard University	Education Impact Grant
A Community Engagement Initiative: Discovering Histories, Nurturing Future	Slave Legacy History Coalition in partnership with Harvard Chaplains	
Empowering Descendant Communities to Unlock Democracy	Healing Our Land, Inc. in partnership with Harvard College	Criminal Justice Impact Grant
Strengthening Support Networks among Native Students in the Greater Boston area	University of Massachusetts Foundation in partnership with Harvard Chan School of Public Health	
Roxbury History Project	Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry in partnership with Harvard Faculty of Arts & Sciences	
The Western Nubia Project Internship	Parents’ Management, Inc. in partnership with Harvard Griffin Graduate School of Arts & Sciences	Education Seed Grant
Tribal Archives Preservation and University Access	Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe Historic Preservation Department in partnership with Harvard Divinity School	
Repair and Prepare Symposium	Afrimerican Culture Initiative Inc. in partnership with Harold A. McDougall, Professor of Law, Howard University	
Once Upon a Time in Nubian Square	Live Like a Local Tours Boston in partnership with Harvard Chan School of Public Health	
Environmental Justice Workforce Development Initiative	Saving Our Daughters and Sons Life in partnership with Harvard Undergraduates Sustainability Lab	Economic Mobility & Environmental Justice Seed Grant



Harvard University Vice Provost for Special Projects Sara Bleich (second from the right) speaks with attendees of the My Brother's Keeper Shaping Our Future Event at My Brother's Keeper, Cambridge in December 2023. Photo by Tania Hernandez/Harvard University.

“In the nearly four years since George Floyd’s murder, it has become clear who took action for good PR and who took action with the goal of driving systemic change. Harvard — as one of our nation’s most prominent education institutions — has taken a step forward to demonstrate a sustained commitment to dismantling systemic racism and has an opportunity to demonstrate the dedication and urgency that mirrors the same urgency of philanthropic commitments we saw in 2020.”

— Makeeba McCreary, President,
New Commonwealth Racial Equity and Social Justice Fund

“The exploration of Harvard University’s ties to slavery and its impact on surrounding communities, especially those of African descent in Cambridge and Boston, sheds light on a critical aspect of American history and its lasting effects. Harvard’s acknowledgment of this legacy is significant in understanding slavery’s influence on higher education and societal structures. Efforts towards reparative action recognize the enduring disparities and aim to address systemic inequalities, fostering meaningful dialogue and reconciliation.”

— Ken Reeves, NAACP Cambridge President, Former Mayor of Cambridge

The Power of Partnerships

Strengthening our engagement with Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Another growing area of collaboration centers on Historically Black Colleges and Universities. While they have long played an outsized role in educating Black people whose talents have benefited the nation, HBCUs have often been excluded from the funding and advantages that other universities enjoy.

Understanding the role these important institutions play in our society, Harvard has sought to deepen its relationships with HBCUs. As it works to do so, team members from the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative and other units across the University have engaged alumni, faculty, and leadership from research-intensive HBCUs to better understand their needs and shared strengths in order to co-create, support, and inspire meaningful partnerships.

Expanding access to Black history collections

In March 2023, Harvard Library partnered with the HBCU Library Alliance and the AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library in Atlanta to launch the HBCU Digital Library Trust. The Trust seeks to sustain and deepen capacity for the digitization, discovery, and preservation of African American history collections held by HBCU libraries and archives and make them freely available to the public. The HBCU Library Alliance serves more than 300,000 students and 14,000 faculty at 105 schools.

Capacity building

In the summer of 2023, the Institute for Capacity Building at UNCF launched a partnership with Harvard University's Office of the Vice Provost for Advances in Learning and Axim Collaborative to support the development of HBCUv, a platform that will provide digital learning capabilities tailored to the needs and aspirations of HBCUs. The platform will be open to all HBCUs and enable institutions to share knowledge, resources, and best practices. The project focuses on the platform's course development and course management capabilities, which provide resources, training, and guidance to help faculty effectively shape learning experiences.

"HBCUv is an exciting opportunity for Harvard and HBCUs to build capacity by leveraging technology for enhancing teaching and learning. This partnership has already resulted in mutually beneficial insights on how to elevate student potential by integrating content and community."

— **Stephanie Ralston Khurana, CEO, Axim Collaborative and Bharat Anand, Vice Provost for Advances in Learning and Henry R. Byers Professor of Business Administration, Harvard Business School**

"In supporting and collaborating with the HBCU Library Alliance to increase capacity for all HBCU libraries and the existing HBCU Digital Collection, Harvard library has shown they are keenly aware that a full historical record cannot be documented without access to the invaluable archival collections found within Historically Black Colleges and Universities' libraries. Through this partnership, the HBCU Digital library Trust will expand global access to institutional, cultural and community memory."

— **Andrea Jackson Gavin, Program Director HBCU Digital library Trust, Harvard University**

THE HBCU LIBRARY ALLIANCE SERVES

300,000
STUDENTS

14,000
FACULTY

105
SCHOOLS



Atlanta University Center Woodruff Library staff, Kendall Barksdale, Senior Digitization Technician (left), and Christine Wiseman, Head of Digital Services (right), use a high-quality Phase One camera to digitize an HBCU yearbook in August 2024. Photo by Stillman Photography/Harvard University.



Members of the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative's inaugural cohort of Du Bois Scholars gather at Widener Library in July 2024: Kohl Crawford, Jaden Seay, and Ellison Richardson (back row). Oluwatomisin Salami, Ana Villavasso, Manuela Niamke, Esohe Edomwandagbon, and Anayla McClendon (front row). Photo by Sabrina Debrosse/Harvard College.

“Harvard’s commitment to establish partnerships with research-intensive HBCUs is one of the most significant developments in higher education in recent decades. The University’s doing so affirms clearly the importance of the teaching and research underway in these institutions.”

— Ruth Simmons, Senior Advisor to the President, Harvard University

Engagement with HBCU Students

An inaugural group of 20 undergraduate scholars from 12 research-intensive HBCUs came to Harvard in the summer of 2024 for the Du Bois Scholars Program, a fully funded, nine-week research internship. A partnership between the Harvard Summer Undergraduate Research Village and the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative, the Du Bois Scholars Program leverages the University’s educational and research resources to strengthen ties with HBCUs and provides learning and networking opportunities for participants.

“Since 1837, HBCUs have been pillars of empowerment and progress, fostering excellence and a legacy which fuels innovation and transforms society. Being a recipient of a venerable HBCU education, I am proud to work alongside insightful leaders who are shaping a brighter future for all scholars.”

— Shahara C. Jackson, Director of HBCU Strategic Initiatives, Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative, Harvard University

Engagement with HBCU Presidents

In September 2023, Harvard’s 30th president, Claudine Gay, hosted HBCU presidents and leadership from the UNCF, Thurgood Marshall College Fund, and Harvard University to share ideas and insights on developing enduring partnerships.

In the summer of 2024, Presidential Fellows from the Executive Leadership Institute at Clark Atlanta University, who are also HBCU presidents, attended the Harvard Seminar for New Presidents. This partnership between Harvard and the HBCU ELI, supported by the Harvard Graduate School of Education Professional Education team, seeks to create opportunities for aspiring leaders to thrive within the HBCU community and beyond.

“Our goal is to cultivate a robust ecosystem where professional development and leadership flourish, empowering individuals to reach their fullest potential. Through strategic partnerships, we can propel higher education forward, ensuring that the next generation of legacy leaders are equipped to thrive.”

— Phyllis Worthy Dawkins, Executive Director, Executive Leadership Institute at Clark Atlanta University

Engagement with HBCU Faculty

During the 2024–2025 academic year, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Dean’s Visiting Professorship Program welcomed a cohort of visiting professors from three HBCUs into the Harvard community. The program provides opportunities for Harvard to learn from leading HBCU scholars while simultaneously amplifying their research, and for the visiting professors to collaborate with Harvard colleagues.

“We are committed to meaningful, intentional collaboration with our colleagues at HBCUs, and are thrilled to welcome the inaugural cohort of FAS Dean’s Visiting Professors to campus.”

— Hopi Hoekstra, Edgerley Family Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the C. Y. Chan Professor of Arts and Sciences, and the Xiaomeng Tong and Yu Chen Professor of Life Sciences, Harvard University

The Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative also partnered with Harvard Business Publishing to offer the inaugural “Teaching with Cases” seminar for HBCU business faculty, hosted on the Harvard Business School campus this past summer. This seminar program trained an initial cohort of approximately 50 business faculty from participating HBCU schools on how best to engage with their students through the case method.

“We are excited to be working with the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative to bring this inaugural program to life. We are big believers in the power of the case method to engage students and shape critical reasoning skills. The HBCU program is a unique opportunity to develop the next generation of educators to carry the case method forth and make it their own.”

— Ellen Desmarais, Co-President, Harvard Business Publishing

Engagement with Professional Development for HBCU Staff

Harvard University Information Technology is exploring a pilot program that would offer IT Academy courses to several technology leaders and staff at HBCUs at no cost. One goal of the pilot is to learn whether participation in the IT Academy courses is a beneficial professional development opportunity for the HBCU community.



Members of the Harvard Divinity School Justice and Music Collective playing instruments at the closing session of HDS's Diversity Inclusion and Belonging Reorientation and Common Read program in April 2023. Pictured (from left to right) are: Atéha Bailly, Ebony West, Justin Janesko, and Chantel Sanchez. Photo by Osa Igiede/ Osa Igiede Photography.

The Power of Partnerships Action Across the University

We are gratified that units and Schools across the University have embraced the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative, unlocking enormous creativity and embodying our values as we continue to move the work forward. This is playing out through a wide variety of activities such as community discussions, new lectures or lecture series, new curricular offerings, and much more. Here are just a few examples of the many additional efforts underway across the University:

Harvard Divinity School

Harvard Divinity School chose the Report of the Presidential Committee on Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery as its 2022-2023 Common Read book and engaged in a year-long, HDS community-wide conversation, and also offered a public conversation series on Religion and the Legacies of Slavery. In 2024,

HDS launched “Harvard Divinity School & Legacies of Slavery & Resistance: A Site for Reckoning, Healing, & Repair through Love,” an exhibit in the HDS Library that highlights the School’s entanglements with slavery drawing from the 2022 report.

Harvard University Native American Program and Radcliffe Institute

The two-day Repair & Responsibility conference at Radcliffe Institute in November 2023 emerged in response to the 2022 report’s recommendation to “honor, engage, and support Native communities.” The Harvard University Native American Program and Radcliffe organized the conference to engage activists, scholars, Native leaders, and tribal historians. Dallas Goldtooth (Mdewakanton Dakota and Diñe) and Tara Houska (Couchiching First Nation) gave keynote addresses.

Harvard Law School

Harvard Law School is helping advance the understanding of the legacy of slavery through the creation of meaningful programs and initiatives. Examples include the Belinda Sutton Distinguished Lecture and Academic Symposium and a commemorative installation that will pay tribute to Belinda Sutton and other enslaved people whose labor generated the wealth that contributed to Isaac Royall, Jr.’s 1781 bequest to Harvard University. The donation funded Harvard’s first professorship in law, which was eventually transferred to, and helped contribute to the development of, the fledgling law school in 1817. As part of an effort to strengthen collaboration on future research and educational programming, the Law School is also providing \$500,000 in financial support to the Royall House and Slave Quarters Museum in Medford, Massachusetts.

The Office for Economic Inclusion & Diversity

The Office for Economic Inclusion & Diversity, an office within Harvard Financial Administration Strategic Procurement, supports the University’s commitment to creating an inclusive and equitable business

environment through the Construction Inclusion Plan. This plan establishes minimal standards for the inclusion of underrepresented business enterprises on projects that are \$5 million and over. OEID also developed the New Contractor Toolkit and the Construction Academy that guides contractors new to doing business with Harvard with the goal of increasing the pool of suppliers and trade partners from diverse and underrepresented groups.

Landscape of Slavery at Harvard Tour

In 2022, University Chaplains Dan Smith and Rita Powell created an in-person Landscape of Slavery at Harvard Tour, hosting more than 500 people to date. Participants learn about the local geography of African and Indigenous enslavement.

Faculty engagement

Multiple faculty across the University have incorporated portions of the 2022 report or the film into their courses, which is expanding student knowledge about this important work.



HBCU presidents and leadership gathering at the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research in September 2023. Photo by Harvard University.

Where We Are Headed

Looking Ahead

We entered into the next phase of this journey to uncover the truth about slavery, its lasting impact, and to identify the steps towards repair. In joining this important discussion, we approach it with both humility and enthusiasm, recognizing the weight of the task ahead and the need to collaborate and consult with others as we work together toward healing and change.

Guided by those who came before us at Harvard and beyond, we are inspired to embrace what civil rights leader John Lewis famously described as “good trouble.” With an unwavering commitment to truth (veritas) and justice, we are fueled by the belief that

change is not something we passively wait for — it is something we actively pursue. We must also recognize that this work takes time and cannot be rushed.

Over the next year, we will continue to engage people in and outside of the University and focus our efforts on three core initiatives to propel this critical work forward — memorialization and education, advancing HBCU partnerships, and supporting descendant communities. We will continuously look for opportunities to honor Tribal communities in our focus areas.



Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences Chief Campus Curator, Brenda Tindal moderates a panel discussion at Manifest | Thirteen Colonies Book Launch and Conversation event at the Harvard University Geological Lecture Hall in September 2024. Tindal is also the Senior Adviser on Academic Community Engagement and the co-chair of the Memorial Project Committee for the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative. Photo by Niles Singer/Harvard University.

Memorialization and education

In 2023, the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative launched the Memorial Project Committee to implement the recommendation in the 2022 report to honor enslaved people through memorialization, research, curricula, and knowledge dissemination. The committee has identified themes of grief, hope, remembrance, and reckoning to inform the design of a campus memorial that will recognize and honor the ongoing legacies of people enslaved at Harvard. The committee will actively seek community input throughout the coming months. As we honor enslaved people through memorialization, we will also continue efforts to educate about the history and legacies of slavery at Harvard through courses, film screenings, tours, and other outreach activities.

“Memorialization is a deliberate act of remembrance. In the context of honoring ancestors who were subjected to the traumas of slavery, memorialization is an exercise in generational grief work and constitutes a shared ritual and communal responsibility to never forget nor repeat the sins of the past as we pursue a more just future.”

— **Brenda Tindal, Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences Chief Campus Curator, Senior Adviser on Academic Community Engagement, Harvard University, and co-chair Memorial Project Committee, Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative**

Advancing HBCU partnerships

We will continue to build and deepen existing partnerships with research-intensive HBCUs and look forward to further strengthening these programs as well as starting new ones. These efforts aim to provide opportunities for students, faculty, and leadership at

HBCUs and Harvard to learn from one another, engage in scholarship and teaching, and advance the mission of higher education. Through these partnerships, the Harvard community has already learned much from HBCUs about excellent teaching and mentoring. We look forward to learning more and actively contributing to the partnerships.

Supporting descendant communities

Our work to support descendent communities will focus on two areas that have been launched and are early steps for long-term initiatives. The first is the Reparative Partnership Grant Program, which supports innovative and impactful work addressing systemic inequities affecting people harmed by slavery through two project types: impact (strategic, multi-year projects) and seed (proof of concept projects) with a focus on Boston and Cambridge and regional Tribal communities. The second is ongoing meticulous research to identify descendants — living and deceased — of those enslaved by University leaders, faculty, and staff.

“You can’t overstate how slavery erected what genealogists call a ‘brick wall’ that prohibits the understanding of family histories for African Americans. Enslaved men, women, and children were viewed as property, not people, and their material dollar value was often considered more worthy of recording in the paper trail than their names. My hope is that this work can, for some families, break down barriers and provide critical understanding about who their ancestors are and where they come from. This is important and exciting work that will have an impact on living descendants and the generations that follow them.”

— **Henry Louis Gates Jr., Director, The Hutchins Center for African and African American Studies, Alphonse Fletcher University Professor, Harvard University, member of the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Advisory Council**



Members of FOP, Harvard's First-Year Outdoor Program, gather in a circle to raise each other's spirits behind Harvard Hall in July 2023. Photo by Kris Snibbe/Harvard University.

Learn, Support, Amplify

Call to Action

We recognize that we are part of a much larger movement across the nation and around the world to understand the truth and advance repair. This work helps all of us and we must do it together — in partnership. Here is how you can get involved:

1. Spread the word about the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative by encouraging people to join the Landscape of Slavery at Harvard Tour. Engage with the Report by reading it or the two-pager that describes it and the implementation work or watch the 20-minute film that summarizes the Report .
2. Reach out to share your expertise, ideas, or resources to advance the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative. Much of our work to date has evolved from conversations with community members internal and external to the University.
3. Tell us your ideas on partnerships we might consider to advance this work. Reckoning and repair work will take a village to move forward and have the kind of impact that we want to see now and for generations to come.

The Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative is grateful for the guidance of the following individuals:

The Advisory Council:

Philip Deloria, Leverett Saltonstall Professor of History, Faculty of Arts and Sciences

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Stephen Gray, associate professor of urban design and director, Master of Architecture in Urban Design Program, Graduate School of Design

Eric Höweler, Memorial Committee Co-Chair. Director of the Master of Architecture I program and a professor of architecture, Harvard Graduate School of Design

Jerome Offord Jr., associate University librarian and chief diversity officer, Harvard Library

Karthik Pandian, associate professor of Art, Film, and Visual Studies, Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

Brenda Tindal, Memorial Committee Co-Chair. Faculty of Arts and Sciences chief campus curator and senior adviser on academic community engagement

Terry Tempest Williams, writer-in-residence, Harvard Divinity School

“With their report and subsequent implementation work, Harvard has taken an important step. I look forward to working alongside the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative as they and many other members of the Greater Boston community advance various reckoning and repair efforts.”

– Lee Pelton, President and CEO, The Boston Foundation, Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative Advisory Council member

Thank you to our partners both within and outside of the University. For more information about the Harvard & the Legacy of Slavery Initiative, scan the QR code:



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