

Present: Drs. Abrams, Blackwell, Bourdeaux, Chang, Da Silva, Dienstag, DePace, Ferran, Galaburda, Howley, Khoshbin, Kroshinsky, Lee, Lovejoy, Mullen, Poussaint, Richardson, Rosen, Solomon, Stone, Taqueti, Vleugels, Weinstock.

Guests: Drs. Bates, Hundert, Pursley and Westlund

Staff: Mss. Chandrashekar, Cowles, Hecht, Neill, Nolen, Ryan, Williams; Dr. Lensch; Messrs. Benson, McKenzie, Mecklai, Song, Virji, Winkie

Interim Dean for Academic and Faculty Affairs, Jules Dienstag, chaired the meeting as Dean Daley and Vice Chair Rexrode were unavailable.

Interim Dean Dienstag called the meeting to order at approximately 4:01pm. He asked for and received acceptance of the minutes for the December 4, 2019 meeting, as presented.

He called upon Dr. Caren Solomon, Faculty Council Climate Change Committee chair, to lead a discussion on the committee's work to date.

Dr. Solomon discussed climate change, health and HMS. There are three subcommittee working groups within the Climate Change Committee: education and research, decarbonization and sustainability, "leadership/finance". She discussed the major health risks associated with climate change, including societal breakdown (violence, mental health effects). She drew attention to an interactive perspective she and a colleague [published](#) over the summer discussing the climate crisis and how it is not only affecting diseases but also health care delivery.

She reviewed the intergovernmental panel on climate change 2018 report and discussed the reasons for divestment. She noted that the fossil fuel industry has not acted in good faith in that they have been aware of expected effects on climate decades ago but nonetheless promoted scientific doubt and influenced policy. Dr. Solomon further shared that a number of institutions have committed to divestment including medical organizations across the globe as well as colleges/universities. The University of California system recently divested stating "We believe hanging on to fossil fuel assets is a financial risk. That's why we will have made our \$13.4 billion endowment "fossil free" as of the end of this month, and why our \$70 billion pension will soon be that way as well."- Jagdeep Singh Bachher and Richard Sherman, LA Times, Sept. 17, 2019.

Next, Dr. Solomon discussed Harvard's divestment campaign. It includes:

- Students (Divest Harvard)
- Alumni
- Harvard Forward (coalition of alumni, students and faculty who want Harvard to become a climate leader, including in responsible investment practices (divestment))
- Faculty of Arts and Sciences
 - Discussed divestment at 3 faculty meetings in the fall
 - Vote on divestment planned in February

Climate Change Subcommittee members reached out to members of Faculty Council to receive feedback on their efforts. Dr. Solomon reviewed a resolution that the subcommittee hopes the Dean will adopt on behalf of HMS.

(1) The Faculty Council calls on Harvard Medical School to declare the climate crisis a health emergency requiring urgent action;

and become a signatory to the Medical Consortium's "Call to Action"

2) The Faculty Council calls on the Harvard Corporation to divest Harvard's endowment from the fossil fuel industry, by eliminating all direct investments and commingled assets in companies that generate the majority of their profits from the exploration for, production of, transportation of, or sale of fossil fuels; including but not limited to the 200 publicly-traded companies with the largest coal, oil, and gas reserves as listed in the Carbon Underground 200; and urges Dean Daley to adopt this resolution on behalf of Harvard Medical School.

The Council then discussed.

Dr. Weinstock proposed that the Council do a vote of confidence in terms of pursuing climate change as a medical school.

Dr. Bourdeaux then made motion for vote of confidence that this resolution is on the right track.

Favor 22

Opposed 0

Abstentions 0

Next, Interim Dean Dienstag introduced Dean Hundert to lead the Financial Aid discussion.

Dean Hundert shared that financial aid is getting increased national attention as schools adopt tuition and debt free policies. He asked the panel to introduce themselves.

Sarah Carey, associate director of financial aid, has worked in the HMS Office of financial aid for 14 years. She strongly favors a strong need based aid program with the goal of eventually going debt free. Ms. Carey emphasized that the REACH program should be expanded. She also noted that having tuition and mandatory fees covered for full need students this past year was huge progress. She would like to expand those efforts going forward and help students who have some need. In particular, she cited the expansion of the middle income initiative and debt relief at graduation in the form of loan forgiveness as two potential programs.

Dr. DeWayne Pursley, HMS Financial Aid Committee Chair, has chaired the Committee for last four years. He noted that HMS is somewhat unique in that most med schools do not have a financial aid committee nor is it mandated by regulatory folks. This committee has served important purpose for several decades in that it is almost equally divided between faculty and students and provides a forum for the discussion of policies which may be impacted by financial aid. Dr. Pursley shared that the students provide a very important voice in that their experiences inform the deliberations of the committee.

The seven students in attendance (Jalen Benson, Zack McKenzie, Andrew Song, Azan Virji, Pooja Chandrashekar, LaShyra Nolen, Mitchell Winkie) shared their own personal financial aid stories and

reasons they matriculated at HMS. Several noted that without the REACH program, they would not have been able to come to HMS. Students also shared that students from low income backgrounds often have hidden debt and some have to take on their parents' debt, information that cannot share that on applications. Through loan forgiveness, the middle income initiative and the REACH program, many of their classmates were able to come to HMS.

Dean Hundert discussed the REACH program. He shared that about five years ago, HMS saw a decrease in yield of acceptance of disadvantaged students who were offered admission. Other schools were providing full scholarships including tuition, stipend, and travel supplements. Dean Hundert noted that it is very difficult for someone from disadvantaged background to turn that down and borrow in excess of \$100k to attend HMS. Dean Hundert and students met with a potential donor. The next day she wired the medical school a million dollars for financial aid. The money was used to pilot a new program to directly address this issue. The REACH scholarship program provides a scholarship rather than a loan so that the total financial aid package looks the same but students graduate with less debt. It became a fundraising priority and each year the program has grown. This year's REACH scholarship provides \$17,500 per year. Dean Hundert noted that HMS would benefit from an additional 10-15 REACH scholarships funded each year.

A faculty council member stated this doesn't sound right – need to aspire to do more than what we're doing now. Students should not be missing meals. He noted that there must be ways we can do this as alumni and faculty. The faculty were particularly interested in fundraising for REACH perhaps as department challenges. Faculty also discussed solicitation of faculty for financial aid support.

The final presentation was from the Student Council, represented by members of the Class of 2023: LaShyra Nolen, Mitchell Winkie, Pooja Chandrashekar, Jalen Benson, Azan Virji. The students shared the Student Council's mission, the general organization of Student Council, goals for the academic year, and future initiatives. Ms. Nolen discussed the "Our Harvard" Portrait Initiative, where they wish to celebrate all individuals on campus, including blue collar workers. They are looking to team up with others to move this forward and have portraits created to display around HMS. Ms. Chandrashekar is working on a community service website, to provide incoming students and current students the community service options that are available within student groups, affiliated institutions and local organizations.

When asked what the Faculty Council could do for Student Council, besides helping fund financial aid, partnering with their initiatives would be great.

After some discussion, interim Dean Dienstag adjourned the meeting at 5:32pm.