

Harvey Mudd College 2022

Healthy Excellence or Ideological Grooming?

Healthy Excellence. Ideological Grooming.

The dogma underpinning these two phrases is at the heart of the current nationwide battle pitting parents against school boards, Americans against Americans. At issue is control and politicization of education, with embedding Critical Race Theory into curricula and culture at the core of the argument.

The term *ideological grooming* was used by a self-described lifelong liberal, a mother of four, to passionately and publicly oppose her city's public school system implementing Critical Race Theory indoctrination, eliminating merit-based admissions, scrapping objective tests, and dismantling gifted and talented programs.

Healthy excellence is the meme of the Harvey Mudd College plan for further changing the institution, including ***continued discrimination in student admissions and faculty hiring, expansion of anti-racist/Critical Race Theory programming,*** elimination of some SAT tests for applicants, additional ***reductions in content and rigor in the Core curriculum,*** and ***institutionalizing racial and social justice into the scientific and technical curriculum.***

Yet *healthy excellence* (as seen by HMC) and *ideological grooming* share a common ideology and agenda. Is *healthy excellence* a Trojan Horse for *ideological grooming*? What may have begun as an effort to admit more underrepresented students has seemingly turned into an ***expectation, perhaps demand, for ideological homogeneity and activism from both students and faculty.***

There are strong parental objections to *ideological grooming* in public schools, yet there appears little challenge to *healthy excellence* at Harvey Mudd. ***Viewpoint diversity has been driven off*** campus; views that fall outside a small range of acceptable socio-political thought are said to be either vilified or ignored, shutting down what should be an important part of academic discourse. Some faculty have said the campus is not a happy or healthy place. Some faculty and staff have felt bullied, and some alumni have been cancelled. Still, the Board of Trustees supports the administration, believing as well that there's more work to be done.

The College's theme for reaffirmation of its accreditation is *Healthy Excellence: Putting Success in Perspective*. Why does success need perspective?

Regardless, Harvey Mudd recently submitted a "*Thematic Pathway to Reaffirmation of Accreditation Institutional Report*" to demonstrate its commitment to WSCUC standards. Unlike the College's anonymous and vague 2006 "Breaking the Mudd Bubble" roadmap for transformation, this report describes in detail the significant changes to the institution that lie ahead. Much of the report addresses fusing the Division of Student Affairs with the Academic Departments through a ***"co-curricular" program that would connect equity and social justice to scientific and technical education "in a deep and meaningful way"***.

Following are excerpts from this report that show - ***in the College's own words*** - how Harvey Mudd intends to change even more in the years ahead.

If you believe Harvey Mudd College is healthier, academically stronger, and more competitive than it was 15 years ago, then this report will be reaffirming.

If you believe the Harvey Mudd College of its first 50 years is gone, the report will be confirming.

(As a quick aside, the College has made much of the phrase “with a clear understanding of the impact of their work on society”, and it makes much every Spring of the many computer science grads going to Silicon Valley and social media companies, including Facebook/Meta. Recent whistleblowers have alleged that some Facebook/Meta policies and practices may actually be harming society. Regardless of the merits of these assertions, they suggest an interesting question: with HMC barring viewpoint diversity from campus, as well as ingraining social justice and racist politics into all academic departments, will its future graduates still be able to responsibly understand the impact of their work on society?)

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**Harvey Mudd College
Healthy Excellence: Putting Success in Perspective
WSCUC Thematic Pathway to Reaffirmation
of Accreditation Institutional Report
August 2021**

Our vision for HMC ... significant changes to the institution

- more recently the college has established an identity and a growing reputation as a place that makes STEM accessible and attractive, and as a result we have diversified our student body
- connecting HMC to the world have ***focused on addressing climate change***
 - HMC has ***significant obligations and opportunities to mitigate climate change*** on its campus
 - faculty endorsement of an expanded footprint for climate studies
 - pursue options such as adding faculty with expertise in climate studies
- ***priorities that speak broadly to the intersection of science and social justice***
- our desire to diversify the scientific workforce ... make the world a fairer and more just place for everyone
- uniquely positioned to address ... the problem that ... the culture of science has historically excluded certain identities (and continues to do so)
- teaching students to ***apply critical thinking and scientific methods to the field of science ... particularly in service of issues of equity, inclusion, and justice***
- advocating for the cohesive, coherent, and ***collaborative integration of social justice*** into our pursuit ... of academic excellence

- seeking to address the challenging problems at the interface of STEM and society ... climate change, diversity/equity/inclusion, status of women in STEM, infectious diseases, racial biases built into technologies
- continued **commitment to gender and ethnic diversity**
- the **(racial and ethnic) composition of faculty and staff** ... undergone real change since 2011 ... (but) **our work here is not complete**
- established a diversity strategic planning committee to develop HMC's strategic plan for diversity, equity, and inclusion for the next five years
- articulating **how the divisions of student and academic affairs might collaborate on DEI** ... to examine how we continually improve instruction at HMC with equity and inclusivity in mind
- design and **implement change strategies through an equity-minded lens** ... train staff on Racial Equity Scorecard (RES) process ... to take actionable steps towards a campus culture with equity at its core ... RES is personal, **political work**
- we remain focused on **making progress on racial justice and curating anti-racist resources**
- appointed **associate dean for institutional diversity and associate dean of faculty as co-chairs for a newly-formed Justice, Education, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee** ... to facilitate communication between departments and constituents in regard to JEDI initiatives
- The **Physics Department** ... will look at their practices, develop strategic plans to support the success of current and/or prospective African-American undergraduate students, investigate their culture, and **commit to racial equity for African-American students in physics and astronomy.**
- the **Engineering Department** is using the framework of a prototyping mindset (Prototyping Your Future Self [PYFS]) to change the culture within the department ... to help **move from a fear-driven approach to a test-and-learn approach to building an inclusive community.** The department ... is considering partnering with BTS Spark ... to develop a simulation aimed at increasing empathy for a wide array of student backgrounds.

Student Workload and The Core

- **a new Core Curriculum ... will provide a substantial departure from the existing Core** ... four courses per term for the first three semesters, rather than our current model of five ... affording a particularly powerful target for workload concerns
- **new Core includes a sophomore-level impact course** ... as a way to address the need for students ... to engage deeply with questions about the social, **political**, and ethical considerations of their work

- ***HSA remains a critical component of our Core*** ... providing the ability to traverse the social, ***political***, and economic factors that impact ... their scientific work
- in thinking critically about consequential problems and complex issues ... students will be able to analyze or construct arguments considering underlying assumptions and potential counter arguments ***where appropriate***

Co-Curricula Program and the Division of Student Affairs

- co-curricula offerings are instrumental in supporting students in their pursuit of healthy excellence
- an ***increasing number of students confront difficulties related to mental health, time management, and feelings of belonging***
- promoted the link between the DSA and our academic values as a means to better support the student experience
- ***co-curricular activities were seen not as an add-on, but as an integral part of an HMC education***
- co-curricular activities are not yet clearly and consistently aligned under a holistic umbrella that allows students to ***make the connections between their scientific and technical education and their experiences in the co-curriculum***
- academic and co-curricular support at HMC are deeply interconnected, and the boundaries are not always clear ... making faculty more aware of the work being done in the DSA and fostering partnerships with faculty have been prioritized
- The ***Division of Student Affairs serves as co-educators*** in support of the mission of Harvey Mudd College ... fostering an inclusive community
- the OIRE and DSA created a reporting template that closely mirrors the template used in academic assessment reports
- ***HMC students can engage in identity development and examine the impacts of power and privilege on self and society***
- ***HMC students come to campus ... with an expectation for diversity in our community that we are not fully meeting***
- also vital to HMC to create a more inclusive campus climate through increased programming ... created and ***implemented a foundational anti-racism module for all incoming students as well as an anti-racism program series ... how to address systemic racism on campus, building solidarity across communities, and the impact of xenophobia in our communities*** ... showed a significant commitment on behalf of the institution to ***create a positive campus climate to become more anti-racist as a community***

- **faculty and staff from various departments** across campus ... participate(d) in ... intergroup dialogue and **social justice training** ... complex and thoughtful dialogue on social identity in society.

(for additional context, see: https://www.hmc.edu/institutional-research/wp-content/uploads/sites/42/2021/08/Harvey-Mudd-College-Institutional-Report_WebVersion.pdf)

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