

anyone on campus who supported Trump, if the patently liberal student body had crawled into a corner following the election, unable to face a country in which millions of people leaned differently than they imagined.

What I can say is this: I haven't had a substantive conversation with a fellow undergraduate who vocally identifies as a Trump supporter. I presume there are some out there who voted Trump and are just being quiet about it, but it strikes me that there was genuinely almost zero support for his campaign on campus. Even the Harvard Republican Club refused to endorse Trump, the first time they hadn't backed the GOP candidate in their history. Still, it doesn't seem that the political consensus here is the result of an addled, overly sensitive generation.

The formulation of the popular coddled-campus critique is questionable. Not only are some of its claims debatable—as if there were a way to confidently divide the parts of the thought process that are emotional from what is properly intellectual—but its characterization of campuses doesn't seem to align with our reality. We don't feel the pressure of some gag order that prevents us from talking about ideas that challenge our psyches. In fact, we talk about Trump ad nauseam. The Clintonite consensus and shock of the electoral result weren't a product of an echo chamber wherein no alternative viewpoints are discussed. Critics like to assert that new academia has caused us to retreat inward from opposing views, but, if anything, I think our academic tools encourage *more* bipartisan understanding. By learning to see the influence exerted by social and historical forces, we have a much more empathetic understanding of Trump supporters than we might otherwise. Beyond the frustration with the new regime and its political agenda, much of the conversation in the wake of the election has sought to understand the factors behind Trump's support and where his supporters are coming from.

BUT I DO THINK the election has exposed a *different* type of coddling on our campus. Another critique, William Deresiewicz's "Don't Send Your Kid to the Ivy League," seems to get it right. His essay takes aim at an increasingly technocratic economy that has dictated the logic of our education. As the job market in the United States skews

toward fewer, high-skilled positions, and economic uncertainty and the threat of crisis challenge us all, people are pressured to view their education in terms of return on investment. Education, from an early age, becomes concerned with gathering credentials to ensure a secure position in the next stage. The admissions standards at ultra-competitive universities like Harvard, Deresiewicz argues, all but guarantee they accept students whose childhoods were rat races.

As admissions requirements become lengthier and more specific, our campus becomes filled with students who are different in many ways, but similar in one. We are, by and large, rule compliant and risk averse. Because of the exhausting amount of credentialing required for admission to a university like Harvard, securing our spot on campus is essentially predicated on our carefulness. If we're coddled, it's not because we've been encouraged to think too emotionally, but rather that the educational system has discouraged us from taking risks that might complicate a clear next step.

My education has been intellectually rigorous, teaching me to criticize my world deliberately and forcefully, while simultaneously encouraging me always to make careful decisions that ensure my security. I've been prompted to think that the world we've made isn't good enough for the people who live in it, but also that I should hesitate to act. To be concerned about the state of so-

ciety, but always to think, ultimately, about myself and my next step. Radical critiques of society run all over my syllabi, but never a workshop on effective political organizing.

If there's something bothersome about my education, it's that it has promoted a gulf between my thought and action. The election has only put that gulf in sharper relief. As many of my peers and I continue to reel from a shock that has challenged our notions of the reality of our country and global politics, there's now pressure on us to recognize our thought-action gulf and figure out how we want to deal with it. It seems like the true test of intellectual coddling on our campus won't be to see whether unsettled students are willing to have intellectually rigorous conversations about the world—we're already having them—but to see if we're fit to do something about our shock and outrage. The wave of my friends who attended women's marches around the country following the presidential inauguration makes me think we're becoming firmer in our politics and that we're stepping toward action. Once the decisions to try to make changes we believe in become more taxing for us, and riskier—like taking a different career path or dedicating more time to political action—perhaps we'll really see just how coddled we are. ▽

Berta Greenwald Ledecy Undergraduate Fellow
Matthew Browne '17 is a social-studies concentrator.

SPORTS

A "Players' Coach"

Ted Minnis makes Harvard an East Coast power in a West Coast sport.

WHEN the final buzzer sounded last November in the game that won the Harvard men's water-polo team its first conference championship—and clinched a spot in the NCAA tournament (another first), where the Crimson would go all the way to the Final Four—there was a giant, jubilant pile-up in the pool. Every player jumped in, splashing and hugging and laughing and cheering. At poolside stood their coach, Ted Minnis, who had arrived

at Harvard in 2010 with this very moment in mind. And with plans to build an East Coast powerhouse in this West Coast sport.

It is an uphill aspiration. In the east, Brown and Princeton are perennially strong, but Harvard had for decades labored in disappointment and futility; in the two seasons before Minnis came, the team won a total of 12 games—while losing 29. Back then, Minnis was a club-team coach in California, and although he often sent players on to the Ivy League, it was almost never to



Ted Minnis is Harvard's winningest water polo coach, but his path to Blodgett Pool included a few detours and sharp turns.

Harvard. When he accepted the Crimson job, he didn't move right away; first he called a Harvard equipment manager and asked him to send out a couple of shirts with the University crest. Minnis wore them every day for weeks at national competitions. "I'd go home and wash them and put them back on," he says. "I just wanted to get the Harvard name out there. Like, 'Hey, we have a water-polo program here. It's going to be pretty viable, and we'd love for you to start thinking about us.'" That fall, he arrived in Cambridge and moved his stuff into the small cinderblock coach's office atop the Blodgett Pool bleachers, with windows overlooking the water.

Tall and genial, with big round glasses and an almost bashful smile, Harvard's winningest water-polo coach is an unlikely figure on campus, not just as a Californian who hadn't been east much before he moved here, or as an African American in a mostly white sport. Until he took the Harvard job, Minnis had never coached (or played) college water polo. Here, he leads both the men's and women's teams: the men play during

fall semester, the women during the spring (the 2017 schedule got under way in early February, as this magazine went to press). Both teams draw heavily from the West Coast's deep well of talent; 11 of 16 men and 10 of 14 women on the current rosters hail from California. And while the men's 2016 season was historic—they finished with a best-ever 27-7 record—the women have also gained strength, rising steadily if not yet as spectacularly. For the first time, the women have completed back-to-back 20-win seasons, and last year's 22-10 record was the best finish since 2004. It earned Minnis a coach-of-the-year award from the conference's northern division, and Yoshi Andersen '16 became the first player in program history to win all-conference honors all four years.

Minnis calls himself a "players' coach,"

At a team practice (clockwise from top), Julie Harrison '20 shoots on goalie Sam Acker '19; Cleo Harrington '18 defends the net against Haley Bowe '19; and Angie Varona '20 looks to get the ball over her classmate Harrison.

and his players call him that, too. Practices are tailored around lab schedules ("We have a lot of science concentrators on our teams," Minnis explains), and he often eats with students in their dining halls and Houses. "Ted's the reason a lot of guys are here," says men's co-captain Joey Colton '17. Fifth-year senior Noah Harrison, a leading scorer who finished his Harvard career with 287 goals and 244 steals, succumbed to mononucleosis at the start of his junior year; he decided to take the whole season off and tack on an extra year of school (his major is molecular and cellular biology)

so that he could play four full seasons with Minnis and the rest of the team. "I just really wanted to come back," he says.

MINNIS'S FIRST LOVE was basketball. Twenty-five years ago, that's what he would have guessed he'd be coaching now. Water polo was something he picked up after eighth grade because a friend's dad had played. Minnis was looking for a sport



Photographs by Stu Rosner

to occupy the school year's non-basketball months, and he was a swimmer, so he tried water polo. And discovered he was good at it.

The path to coaching, and to Harvard, was a little more circuitous. Minnis never graduated from high school. At 19, he became a father, and at 20 he earned a GED. A little less than a year later, his former PE teacher hired him to coach water polo at his old high school, Menlo-Atherton, near Palo Alto. "I still thank her every time I see her," he says. The school paid him \$2,000 for that season, and, Minnis says with a grin, "They let me volunteer as the JV basketball coach." He stayed there seven years, working at a meat company in San Jose to earn his living. "I'd go to work at 2 o'clock in the morning so that I would be able to get off in time to coach my high-school team," he recalls. When his son was in fourth grade,

Minnis and the boy's mother split up and his son came to live with him full time. "We stayed in this little studio apartment," he says. By then, water polo had won out over basketball and Minnis was coaching multiple teams, not only high school (including an independent all-girls school whose players he placed in Ivy League programs) but also youth and high-level club teams. At the same time, he was working toward his college degree, which he earned from San Jose State in 2005, when he was 35 years old. Then he started looking toward coaching jobs in college programs. "I always said if I ever got an interview, I was going to talk them into giving me the job," he says, grinning again. "And this was the first interview I got."

What's next? More championships, he hopes. "The main goal" all fall, he says, was to "win conference and bring the first

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For an online-only article about a lesser-known Harvard team making its NCAA tournament debut, see:

"Water Polo Is Home"

Talking strategy and swim lessons with two players from the Harvard men's team in the midst of their historic season



championship to Blodgett Pool and hang the banner." Now the goal is more of the same.

—LYDIALYLE GIBSON

Sports in Brief

Hockey

Heading into February and the sixty-fifth annual Beanpot Tournament, the men's hockey team held onto second place in conference standings with a 15-5-2 record (11-4-2 ECAC). The season started strong, with early wins over Cornell and St. Lawrence, and a 5-2 triumph over Boston College, in front of a sold-out crowd at Bright-Landry Hockey Center, that snapped the Eagles' 10-game win streak. But a series of bad losses on the road in January—including one to an underwhelming Rensselaer squad and an 8-4 drubbing at Dartmouth—broke the team's stride. It regained its footing by beating Brown (goalie Merrick Madsen '18 earned his second shutout of the season) and taking revenge on Dartmouth, 5-2. Senior forward Sean Malone led the team with 13 goals; classmate Tyler Moy and Ryan Donato '19 (son of Ziff head coach Ted Donato '91) had 11 each.

Squash

Both men's and women's squash remained unbeaten going into the season's home stretch. For the women's team (6-0 overall; 3-0 Ivy), perfect seasons are not unusual: in February 2016, the top-ranked women capped off their twelfth unbeaten season and captured the College Squash Association's Howe Cup for the fourth time in six years (and the second year in a row). The current season was looking similarly strong. In a January 27 match against Tufts, the Crimson earned its third clean sweep, winning 9-0. Four Harvard players—senior co-captains Dileas MacGowan and Caroline Monrad, along with sisters Alyssa and Sophie Mehta—all moved to 6-0 for the season, winning their respective matches.



Harvard's Ryan Donato rushes toward the net in the November game that broke Boston College's win streak.

Swimming and Diving

Standout freshman swimmer Mikaela Dahlke helped propel the women's swimming and diving team—last year's conference champions—to an unbeaten record through January, including a tough win over Penn (with perhaps tougher matchups still to come against Princeton and the also-unbeaten Yale). In the Penn contest, Harvard's divers dominated as well: led by Hannah Allchurch and Jing Leung, the Crimson took the top four spots in the three-meter event. Junior Alisha Mah claimed the top spot in the one-meter dive. Meanwhile, as of early February, Dahlke, who qualified for the 2016 Olympic trials, owned the Crimson's best times in the 50-, 100-, and 200-meter freestyle and the 100 butterfly.

Also unbeaten through January, men's swimming and diving opened the season by thrashing Cornell and Dartmouth by more than 100 points each, and then went on to beat Penn for its ninth win of the season. In that meet, junior Koya Osada, another qualifier for the 2016 Olympic trials, finished far ahead of his opponents in the 200 backstroke, winning by an astonishing 9.76 seconds.

—LYDIALYLE GIBSON