think they mean something.

The survey also includes open-ended questions, asking members to report instances when they have been made to feel uncomfortable on the basis of class, race, gender, or sexual orientation. "I think the *Advocate* is in the process of developing a strong culture of inclusion and openness, which was not necessarily the case when I first comped," wrote one member. But mostly—as is expected when you ask people to complain—they're critical. "The Harvard public generally thinks of us as pretentious ivory tower aesthetes," another member wrote. Some are deeply upsetting: "I began to dread going to meetings to the point of feeling physically ill because I felt so stupid and uncomfortable around everyone."

Bias can make it difficult to distinguish between institutional problems and personal ones.

We've spent a lot of meeting time this spring trying to make sense of the responses. In a small organization where everyone knows everyone else, bias and other noise can make it difficult to distinguish between institutional problems and personal ones. Still, anonymity gives a megaphone to those who might otherwise never speak up, and I think it's important to take each response seriously in its biased yet vital subjectivity. As a whole, though, members are split between feeling things are getting better and getting worse, between prescribing modifications and feeling it's hopeless.

Our conversations about inclusivity inadvertently and almost invariably become conversations about comp. Comp is an obvious proxy for otherwise abstract issues: it's a concrete ritual with clear rules and clear outcomes, a ritual we explicitly control. We have a fresh shot at it every semester and can see our changes play out in real time. But this conversational slippage makes the line between members and nonmembers seem like the only frontier in the fight for belonging.

The most emphatic survey responses concerned the *Advocate*'s internal social scene. Many felt the community had "become tighter and more good-natured." Others still felt unwelcome: "I definitely feel like I need to put on a bit of an act to be in the building or to interact with people in it." "I'd be most proud," wrote one member, "if a nonmember left our building thinking not 'Wow, *The Advocate* is so cool I wish I were on,' but instead 'Wow, those people are so nice and really like each other.'" Some complained about cliques: "Oftentimes it seems like a certain group of people own the building and are not particularly welcoming to those who do not fit their mold."

As a new member I was confronted by a conglomerate of well-dressed upperclassmen who spoke eloquently about books I hadn't read and music I hadn't heard of. I was faced, like high-school students everywhere, with a clique I desperately wanted to be a part of and didn't know how to break into. When my parents visited that fall I cried to my dad for three hours about how I was never, *ever* going to make friends or be one of the cool kids. It turns out making it into the magazine's membership doesn't guarantee inclusion.

Eventually, with effort, you make friends. You're not necessarily happy or cool, but you're comfortable. You've had to wrench open a number of closed doors to get here, to grit your teeth through insecurity and exclusion. You assumed that when you finally got these doors open—the doors that keep compers from members and the *Advocate*'s social periphery from its core—they would stay open. You would be kinder and fight to make the community a better and more welcoming place. After you everyone else would be able to stroll through, as if you were Moses parting the Red Sea of exclusivity. But the doors lock behind you.

Being jaded won't help. The beauty of college organizations is their rapid turnover: you can make drastic changes and in four years no one will remember things were ever not that way. I cannot eliminate the barriers to full inclusion, but I still have an imperative to be kind and welcoming and to wring every last drop of cynicism out of my demeanor. We need to be encouraging, to remind those who come after us that doors can open, that belonging is possible—and so is change. Some doors will still stick, however frequently we apply the WD-40 of institutional self-reflection to their rusty hinges. We will keep applying it. This building with its sticky doors has become our home, and we do not want to be alone here.

Berta Greenwald Ledecky Undergraduate Fellow Lily Scherlis '18 has not yet left the building.

SPORTS

"Feeling Fast"

Nomin-Erdene Jagdagdorj's "very Mongolian attitude" toward water

With roots in Mongolia and Missouri, Nomin-Erdene Jagdagdorj didn't exactly have sailing in her blood. "Yeah, we're not really an aquatic people," says the senior, who last year co-captained Harvard's sailing team. "For Mongolians, and Missourians too...water is kind of a foreign concept." Maybe that's what drew her to it. Before trying out as a walk-on sailor during her first semester in Cambridge, she had been in a sailboat exactly once: on a "tiny, tiny lake" one summer day in Minnesota, where her friend's family had a cabin and a little Sunfish. "My friend and her siblings were bored with this boat," Jagdagdorj recalls. "But her grandfather was like, 'I love sailing.' And I was like, 'What is a boat?'"

She soon found out. After joining the team, she spent a year mostly on the practice roster, learning her way around the mast and the mainsail and the jib and the halyard and the bow and the centerboard—and the water. The Charles River, Harvard's home field, "is a famously shifty venue," she says. "A lot of people get frustrated with that. The para-

digms you expect on the water aren't there. Or you do something that gets you really far in one race, and the exact same thing puts you last in the next race." But she found that the river's unpredictability freed her to make mistakes and recover from them, knowing that a bad race or an upturned boat wasn't always her fault.

Collegiate sailing is both a spring and a fall sport, and after two semesters as crew to a new skipper each week, Jagdagdorj was paired with Nick Sertl '18, a skipper who'd been recruited out of high school, who'd led his youth teams to championships, whose mother was an Olympic skier. That year, he and Jagdagdorj took home numerous first-, second-, third-, and fourth-place finishes, helping Harvard to first place in the BU Trophy regatta and runner-up in the Sister Esther regatta in Newport, Rhode Island, plus other top-10 finishes. Then last spring, the two were voted co-captains.

"Nomin's a really good athlete," says head coach Michael O'Connor. Harvard recruits only a few sailors a year, and the team relies on walk-ons to fill out the rest of the roster—some with prior experience, others without. Jagdagdorj, he says, is the kind of newcomer he tries to cultivate: one who's smart, tough, adaptable, and who "doesn't mind being cold and wet a lot." Some years, he adds, a dozen or more students will come out in the fall with ambitions to sail. "And then after a month, two or three are left." Jagdagdorj was one of those. Last fall, O'Connor paired her with skipper Lucy Wilmot, a freshman who was this year's top recruit. "We have high hopes for Lucy and we felt it was important to give her an experienced crew right off the bat, someone very level-headed," O'Connor says. "Nomin fit the bill perfectly. We knew it would be a seamless transition for Lucy not to have to worry about anything going on in the front of the boat."

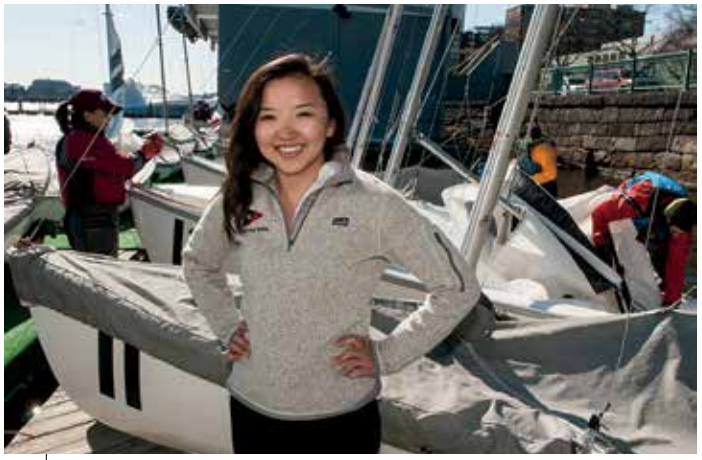
Jagdagdorj spent much of this spring's sailing with another of the team's top skippers, sophomore Nicholas Karnovsky, and at practice out on the Charles one brisk, sunny afternoon in late March, days after the two had helped Harvard take second place in a race at MIT, they scrimmaged with teammates. The Zakim Bridge and the rooftops of Boston gleamed in the distance as the team rehearsed complicated, difficult moves to slow another boat: by tacking upwind to "pin" it, or sidling up into the opposing boat's "shadow" to steal its wind. O'Connor, who was circling in a Boston Whaler, shouted instructions to his sailors through a red megaphone, while his black lab, Sophie, lounged on the bow. "One of the things that's hard here," he said, "is that the crews have to react to what the skippers are doing, and very often before the skippers have time to communicate what they're doing."

In the two-person Flying Junior dinghies that Harvard races, the skipper sits at the stern and controls the rudder and the mainsail, and the crew, in the bow, controls the jib. That barely begins to capture the role, though, says Jagdagdorj. While the skipper reads the wind and makes decisions for the boat—when to tack or jibe, when to ease or trim the sails—the crew is responsible for the countless tiny adjustments that can make the difference between winning and losing. And sometimes not-so-tiny adjustments: "When it's really, really windy," she says, "you hike." That's when she tucks her feet into the straps at the base of the boat and straightens out nearly parallel to the water, clutching a rope and leaning hard into the wind, with all the weight of her five-foot-two-inch frame, to keep the boat from rolling sideways. "Your thighs are burning, your abs are tight, you're choking on water, and you're thinking, 'Almost there, almost there, 30 seconds, almost there.' You start saying whatever you need to say to stay in that position. If you come up for even one second, you can lose a whole boat length." It's the crew, she says, who has to keep the boat flat.

That's true in more ways than one. Alongside the tactical responsibilities, crew must act, Jagdagdorj says, as an onboard sports psychologist and occasional mind reader. Tempering excitement, soothing despair, keeping things even: that's the job within the job. "You want to be aware of the skipper's mental state at all times," she says, "and make him or her feel OK about what's happening, even if they're making mistakes." Because, she adds, "feeling fast is almost as important as actually being fast." When you feel slow, the whole atmosphere in the boat changes, and sailors start wondering which one of them is to blame. Skippers steer more anxiously, the crew jerks at the sails, they fall out of synch. "And to maneuver the boat,

Far from Missouri: Nomin-Erdene Jagdagdorj on the choppy, cold Charles with skipper Nicholas Karnovsky '19

Photographs by Jim Harrison



Back on terra firma: Jagdagdorj at the Harvard Sailing Center

you have to be in unison and trust that the other person is with you; you have to be slamming your weight over at exactly the same time, to give the boat the momentum it needs."

She remembers a race at Tufts that sophomore year, one of the last regattas of the fall, when it began to hail. ("Unless there's lightning, we race," she says. "We've sailed in snow, in really torrential downpours, in 50-mile-per-hour winds—in zero wind. Sometimes you're wearing a drysuit and an entire winter outfit underneath it, and you're still frozen at the end of the day.") Jagdagdorj and Sertl were doing well, going fast despite the weather. But then, sailing around the last mark to head downwind to the finish, the boat flipped over. And the rudder, which wasn't tied down, fell out. They got the boat upright, but then they couldn't steer. Huddled in the hull together, they started to really feel it then: the hail and the cold and the wet. And the lost race.

That's when Jagdagdorj knew she was serious about sailing. She'd seen it at its worst and still came back for more. To her family, this was all somewhat baffling. Born in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, she came to the United States with her parents at five years old, when her mother began graduate school in journalism at the University of Missouri (she's now an instructor there; Jagdagdorj's father works for IBM). In the early months after Jagdagdorj joined the team, there were worried phone calls from her grandmother back home in Mongolia; her grandparents kept asking if she'd given up sailing yet. She kept having to tell them she hadn't. Then she had to tell them she'd been named co-captain.

And yet her origins in landlocked Mongolia, to which she returned during summers growing up and where her distant relatives remain nomadic herders, helped launch her into the sport. "Mongolians have such a strong tie to nature," she says. It is a country full of ancient beauty, where you can drive out into the desert or the steppe and look back 800 years. "A big part of the nomadic culture is sustainability," Jagdagdorj says. "There isn't really even a word for it, because there is no other way." (This same experience led her to major in environmental engineering.)

She talks about the particular hill in the southeast that she and her family return to whenever they're there, and the ritual they perform: the men climb to the top, while the women circle the base three times. "It's about respecting and being grateful for the land you're in....And I think what's really beautiful about sailing is that you can't help but respect nature. You're at the mercy of the wind. You're going out in a very tiny carbon-fiber boat into large bodies of water. People die sailing. Things can get out of control really quickly." She thinks about that, even now, whenever she pushes off the dock into high wind or heavy waves. "There's still that one flip of my stomach, like, 'All right, here we go.' You can't ever get complacent with water. And that's a very Mongolian attitude." —LYDIALYLE GIBSON

A Hardwood Foundation

Young basketball teams' seesaw seasons

DURING THE 2016-2017 season, a construction crew labored outside Lavietes Pavilion, the home of the Harvard basketball teams. Making incremental progress on a project to refurbish the 91-year-old building, the workers were mostly waiting for the season to end and the teams to vacate the premises, so they could gut the second-oldest arena in college basketball (see **harvardmag.com/lavietes-redo-16**).

The construction parallels the rebuilding projects under way this winter on the hardwood within. Both the women's and men's squads depended heavily on underclassmen: the men started four freshmen, and the women started two freshmen and a sophomore. These talented young players were striving for Ivy League championships, but they were also laying the foundation for several years of team growth. Among the goals for that growth: a twelfth Ivy League championship under the leadership of women's head coach Kathy Delaney-Smith, who just completed her thirty-fifth season leading the Crimson (see "'Acting As If' for 35 Seasons," November-December 2016, page 31); and a deep NCAA tournament run for the men, whose seven freshmen were rated by ESPN as the country's tenth-best recruiting class in 2016.

After both teams lost in the Ivy League tournament semifinals in March, what can the women (who finished the year 21-9 overall, 8-6 Ivy) and the men (18-10 overall, 10-4 Ivy) learn from their up-and-down seasons

Katie Benzan '20 was a first-team All-Ivy honoree and led the team in scoring (13.4 points per game) and assists (4.2 assists per game).

Photographs courtesy of Harvard Athletic Communications