Radcliffe Engaged
Strategic Plan 2019–2024
An Overview
In the 2018–2019 exhibition Measure, commissioned by Radcliffe, Von Mertens explored the life of Henrietta Leavitt (1868–1921), one of the women “computers” hired a century ago to study glass plate astronomical photographs at the Harvard College Observatory. Leavitt searched for patterns among these glassy stars; her findings provided a unit of measurement for galactic distances and led to our current understanding of the shape of the cosmos. Von Mertens’s meticulous stitches reimagine Leavitt’s painstaking work. Photo by Kevin Grady/Radcliffe Institute
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PART I
Introduction and Framework
Friends and colleagues:

As we embark together on the Radcliffe Institute’s third decade—strengthened by our successful capital campaign, Invest in Ideas—we have a unique opportunity to celebrate the remarkable work of the past 20 years, consolidate vital programmatic and administrative gains, and build an ambitious strategy for what we can achieve in the years ahead.

We are calling this strategy Radcliffe Engaged.

Radcliffe Engaged is a vision of both continuity and change. It embraces the Institute’s legacy and leverages its existing strengths, including our unique founding mandate to unite pathbreaking scholarship across academic disciplines and the creative arts with critical work in applied fields such as law, public health, education, and medicine; our established reputation as a preeminent research institution and a sought-after interdisciplinary convener; and our history as Radcliffe College—an institution founded to ensure that the excellence embodied in Harvard was accessible to students and scholars then excluded from the University. The legacy of Radcliffe College is not merely coeducation at Harvard; it is the recognition that universities will always be greater when they draw wisdom and talent from the widest possible pool of individuals.

At its heart, Radcliffe Engaged is an effort to enhance the outstanding work of our core programs, recognize the singular value of the Institute to the Harvard community, and refine how we work together to achieve greater success. Crucially, Radcliffe Engaged entails a more explicit focus on impact and applications, including collaborations that build new, mutually beneficial relationships between Radcliffe and its community, along with enhanced opportunities for students to engage in experiential, interdisciplinary learning with real-world impact.

Accomplishing the work that lies ahead, while continuing to act as good stewards of the significant resources entrusted to us, will require careful thought and strategic alignment. This document summarizes the critical first step in an ongoing process of strategic assessment and action at Radcliffe. We have already benefited from a broad range of insights within the Institute, across Harvard, and beyond, and this process will continue in the coming months. It is my sincere hope that this work will be collaborative through and through. I encourage you to engage thoughtfully with the strategy outlined here and freely share your feedback. I began my deanship with a listening tour, and I intend to continue listening in the years ahead as we implement Radcliffe Engaged.

Tomiko Brown-Nagin
Dean
At its heart, Radcliffe Engaged is an effort to enhance the outstanding work of our core programs, recognize the singular value of the Institute to the Harvard community, and refine how we work together to achieve greater success.

Tomiko Brown-Nagin—dean, Radcliffe Institute; Daniel P.S. Paul Professor of Constitutional Law, Harvard Law School; and professor of history, Harvard University—addresses a capacity audience on April 25, 2019, the opening day of Radcliffe’s “Vision & Justice,” a two-day creative convening that explored the role of the arts in understanding the nexus of art, race, and justice. Photo by Melissa Blackall
A civil rights activist, organizer, and cofounder of what became the United Farm Workers of America, Dolores Huerta was the 2019 Radcliffe Medalist. She is pictured here at Radcliffe Day, May 31, 2019, in conversation with the award-winning journalist and author Soledad O’Brien. Photo by Tony Rinaldo

The Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study is at a critical juncture. Twenty years after its establishment as Harvard’s institute for advanced study—and 140 years since the founding of what would become Radcliffe College—the Institute has just completed a landmark capital campaign, Invest in Ideas, and welcomed its fourth dean, the legal historian Tomiko Brown-Nagin.
WHAT IS THE RADCLIFFE INSTITUTE?

Radcliffe is a cross-disciplinary laboratory of ideas. The Institute brings together scholars, students, and practitioners to engage with issues that can only be fully understood by drawing on research from across the humanities, sciences, social sciences, arts, and professions. It is a unique school within Harvard—one that is interdisciplinary by design and animated by an institutional legacy of promoting inclusion and opportunity. By fostering inquiry across disciplinary boundaries, we ignite creativity and innovation. Crucial to this effort is the inclusion of those who have historically been underrepresented in academia. A diversity of voices is critical to full and rich discourse. Indeed, it strengthens Harvard and fosters excellence.

This mission and our institutional values underpin Radcliffe’s academic programs, including a residential fellowship for leading scholars, scientists, artists, and practitioners and a robust calendar of public and private events exploring topics at the frontiers of knowledge. Radcliffe’s unique history as the driver of coeducation at Harvard is reflected in our enduring commitment to gender—most visible in the Institute’s Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, the world’s preeminent archive of American women’s lives, and central to much of Radcliffe’s programming. Whether incubating bold ideas, enabling deep research, or engaging new audiences, we actively seek opportunities to advance and enrich the society and the university to which we belong.

RADCLIFFE’S LEGACY: FOSTERING EXCELLENCE THROUGH OPPORTUNITY

Over the course of its 140-year history, beginning with its founding in 1879 as a program for the instruction of women who were at the time denied access to Harvard College, Radcliffe has educated, supported, and benefited from the scholarship and leadership of remarkable individuals. Our illustrious presidents and deans have included pioneers in coeducation at Harvard and beyond, scientists and scholars of remarkable impact, and important firsts—including the Institute’s founding dean, Drew Gilpin Faust, who went on to lead Harvard University for more than a decade as its first female president. Radcliffe College graduated scores of influential woman leaders in law, medicine, government, commerce, and the arts, and it nurtured generations of woman scholars in its Bunting Institute, the precursor to today’s Radcliffe Fellowship Program. Reflecting this legacy, the Institute’s founding document enshrined a “continuing commitment to the study of women, gender, and society” and the explicit inclusion of the professions in our definition of advanced study.

Each dean of the Radcliffe Institute has promoted its mission in a distinct way. Dean Faust and her predecessor, Acting President of Radcliffe College and Acting Dean Mary Maples Dunn, united the interwoven legacies of three beloved institutions—the Schlesinger Library, the Bunting Institute, and Radcliffe College itself—to create a world-class interdisciplinary research institute. Dean Barbara Grosz significantly expanded public programming at the Institute, turning it into a destination for discussion of cutting-edge research, particularly in the sciences. Dean Lizabeth Cohen further expanded programming, successfully led the Institute’s first major capital campaign securing Radcliffe’s future, and established the Institute as a focal point for the arts at Harvard and beyond.

Each dean has also sought opportunities to honor the Institute’s legacy as a women’s college while broadening its reach and impact by attracting new communities to Radcliffe. Today the Institute is stronger—and its reach wider—than ever before, positioning us to be bold and declarative about our enduring identity. Is Radcliffe dedicated to the study of women, gender, and society, broadly defined? Yes. And to much more.

Alberta Virginia Scott (1876–1903) was the first African American graduate of Radcliffe College. Scott graduated with distinction from the Cambridge Latin School in 1894 and entered Radcliffe, graduating in 1898. Source: Radcliffe College Archives Photograph Collection, Schlesinger Library
Ma Thida (ca. 1966–) is a Burmese human rights activist, physician, writer, and former prisoner of conscience. She began studying medicine at 16—eventually working at a clinic that offered medical care to poor people free of charge—and started writing at a young age. “I want to write because I want to share what I observe; poverty, for example,” she explains.

In Myanmar, she became a well-known public intellectual whose books grappled with the country’s political situation. Perceived as a threat by its oppressive regime, Thida was arrested in 1993 and sentenced to 20 years in Insein Prison for “endangering public peace, having contact with illegal organizations, and distributing unlawful literature.” She served her time in unhealthful—mostly solitary—conditions and contracted tuberculosis. Close to death she turned to the Buddhist meditation technique of Vipassana, meditating for up to 20 hours each day.

She was finally released because of her health, increasing political pressure, and the efforts of human rights organizations such as Amnesty International.

Thida founded and served until 2016 as president of PEN Myanmar, whose mission includes monitoring issues related to freedom of expression. Her memoir—begun at Radcliffe—was published in Myanmar in 2012.

In 2009, Thida was awarded a Radcliffe fellowship as part of the Scholars at Risk Program, allowing her to write a book about the five and a half years she spent in a Burmese prison for her political activities.
HELEN KELLER

Radcliffe welcomed Keller at a time when many questioned the value of an education for women. It was virtually unheard of for a woman with disabilities to aspire to a college education.

Helen Keller (1880–1968) lost her senses of sight, smell, and hearing after contracting scarlet fever at the age of 19 months. Her parents requested that a teacher from what is now the Perkins School for the Blind be sent to instruct their child. In 1887, Anne M. Sullivan arrived at the Keller home in Alabama to work with Helen. It required an enormous effort for both: Keller learned not only how to speak, read, and write, but she also mastered several languages as well as the standard school curriculum.

Then she decided she wanted to attend college.

Keller gained entrance to Radcliffe College, where—with the aid of tutors and her teacher and constant companion Annie Sullivan—she graduated cum laude in 1904.

After leaving Radcliffe, Keller advocated internationally for the rights and well-being of blind individuals. During and after World War II, she worked tirelessly to help blind veterans, orphans, and refugees. A prolific author and recipient of many honors and awards during her lifetime, Keller is credited with having helped change perceptions of people with disabilities.
A STRATEGIC JUNCTURE

When Tomiko Brown-Nagin became the fourth dean of the Radcliffe Institute, in July 2018, she embarked on a listening tour, meeting with staff members, pressing faculty colleagues on how they viewed Radcliffe’s role and its potential for growth, and engaging hundreds of alumnae/i and friends of the Institute around the country. There was no shortage of praise for all that had been accomplished in two short decades. Indeed, the Institute’s growth and successes were remarkable. What also emerged, however, was an understanding of several long-standing challenges:

• Structurally and for historical reasons, Radcliffe’s programs were not sufficiently integrated.
• The Institute had a complicated relationship with its past as a women’s college. After the merger, Radcliffe’s identity was unclear, and key supporters were divided on how to navigate the Institute’s connection to its history.
• Because Radcliffe no longer conferred degrees, the value of the Institute to Harvard faculty and students often went unrecognized.
• Because the Institute was a relatively young school, programmatic planning at Radcliffe tended to be guided by individual programs rather than by a centrally driven strategic process aligned with long-term objectives.
• The Institute’s necessary transition from a degree-based fundraising model to an affiliate-based one required a substantial effort to reach and engage new supporters.

Brown-Nagin recognized the need for a strategic planning process to address these issues head-on and provide a vision for uniting the Institute’s work. She saw the through-line that connected Radcliffe’s history as a women’s college and its current mission: a commitment to excellence and opportunity in education. Responding to the well-documented hunger among Harvard students for engagement in experiential, interdisciplinary learning—the kind of work Radcliffe is uniquely suited to support—she saw an opportunity to deepen and expand Radcliffe’s offerings to students. She envisioned a renewed commitment to the value of professions and applied work, which would broaden—not supersede—the Institute’s established strength as an incubator of interdisciplinary scholarship. And she recognized the value of new community partnerships, reasoning that the combination of cutting-edge scholarship with deep experience and on-the-ground expertise could produce powerful insights and impact in selected focus areas.

To create clarity and institutional alignment around this vision for the future of the Institute, Dean Brown-Nagin and members of her senior staff partnered with Wellspring Consulting over approximately six months to develop an Institute-wide strategic plan. This effort aimed to illuminate the Institute’s fundamental purpose and its value to the Harvard community and the broader world; to clarify the overarching objectives of Radcliffe Engaged; and to identify the staff, resources, and partners the Institute would need to realize its ambitious goals.
A visitor—one of the more than 3,500 people who flocked to Radcliffe for this remarkable exhibition—interacts with teamLab at Radcliffe: What a Loving and Beautiful World (at the Johnson-Kulukundis Family Gallery, 2015). TeamLab, a Japan-based consortium of artists, engineers, and computer scientists, specializes in unique installations at the intersection of contemporary art, design, engineering, and computer science. Photo by Kevin Grady/Radcliffe Institute
METHODOLOGY

The shape of Radcliffe Engaged reflects the contributions of many stakeholders who participated in numerous planning meetings, focus-group discussions, and one-on-one interviews over the six-month period. Key stakeholder groups included members of the Radcliffe Dean’s Advisory Council and the Schlesinger Library Council, senior leaders across Harvard University, Harvard faculty members from a range of schools and disciplines, Harvard College students, civic and community leaders beyond the University, Radcliffe faculty directors, Radcliffe fellows, and Radcliffe staff members.

Wellspring organized multiple facilitated group discussions that captured the insights of:

- 15 Harvard undergraduates (3 focus groups)
- 10 faculty members, fellows, and other affiliates
- 21 members of the Dean’s Advisory Council
- 60 Radcliffe staff members representing every program and administrative department (4 focus groups)

The Wellspring team also conducted one-on-one interviews with an additional:

- 12 senior Radcliffe staff members
- 6 members of the Dean’s Advisory Council and the Schlesinger Library Council
- 5 senior Harvard leaders
- 11 experts and potential partners—including civic and community organizations—external to the Radcliffe Institute

Throughout the process, Wellspring engaged in regular meetings with Dean Brown-Nagin, Executive Dean Nisha Mongia, and Radcliffe’s core planning team (individually and as a group), and it held extended work sessions with the Departments of Human Resources and Finance.

Moon Duchin—a graduate of Harvard College, a former Radcliffe Research Partner, and the 2018–2019 Evelyn Green Davis Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute—is a mathematician at Tufts University. She recently served as a consulting expert for the governor of Pennsylvania in a court-mandated push to redraw the congressional map. Duchin is engaged in a long-term project on the geometry of gerrymandering, applying mathematics to civil rights. Photo by Tony Rinaldo
This image—generated by Moon Duchin—shows a 32-district partition of an abstract state with more than 100,000 units, made with a random spanning tree algorithm. Algorithms can shed light on the universe of possible districting plans for real states and assist in evaluating the dynamics of racial packing in Virginia or partisan skew in Pennsylvania.
Stakeholder groups affirmed the Institute’s existing strengths, which form a foundation for future growth:

- Given its size and structure, Radcliffe is agile and well positioned to engage with pressing issues.
- Radcliffe provides a dedicated space where scholars can pursue innovative and unorthodox interdisciplinary research and ideas.
- Radcliffe serves as the key convener within the University and between Harvard and its surrounding community.
- Radcliffe brings to the fore critical voices and research that would not otherwise receive the attention they merit.

Several more-specific themes emerged in conversations with Harvard and Radcliffe faculty members, senior leaders, and advisory council members; Harvard students; and community leaders. These themes are summarized below.

HARVARD AND RADCLIFFE FACULTY MEMBERS, SENIOR LEADERS, AND ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Conversations with Harvard and Radcliffe faculty members and senior leaders and with members of the Institute’s Dean’s Advisory Council and Schlesinger Library Council frequently centered on the unique value that Radcliffe offers to Harvard. These stakeholders agreed that the Institute plays a vital, albeit sometimes not fully understood, role at the heart of the University—from helping recruit outstanding and diverse faculty members to convening a broad spectrum of scholars and driving interdisciplinary research that, but for Radcliffe, might not be done. It was widely agreed that the Institute must do more to communicate clearly about its singular value to the Harvard community.

Looking ahead, these leaders envisioned a Radcliffe that pushes the University to engage more students around interdisciplinary scholarship, conveys and strengthens the link between excellence and inclusion, and pursues applied research more intentionally.

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Michael Pollan, a professor, the author of The Omnivore’s Dilemma, and the 2015–2016 Suzanne Young Murray Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute, talks with students at a lunch hosted at Radcliffe in April 2016. Pollan spent his fellowship year working on his 2018 best-selling book How to Change Your Mind: What the New Science of Psychedelics Teaches Us about Consciousness, Dying, Addiction, Depression, and Transcendence. Photo by Kevin Grady/Radcliffe Institute
Bryan Stevenson, a lawyer, a social justice activist, and the founder and director of the Equal Justice Initiative, spoke on the panel “Mass Incarceration and Visual Narratives” at “Vision & Justice” with Danielle Allen (left), the James Bryant Conant University Professor and director of the Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics, Harvard University, and Elizabeth Hinton (center), the John L. Loeb Associate Professor of the Social Sciences in the Department of History and the Department of African and African American Studies, Harvard University, on April 26, 2019. Photo by Melissa Blackall
HARVARD STUDENTS

Students already familiar with the Institute consistently reported that they valued the unique opportunities that Radcliffe affords them. For many Harvard undergraduates, Radcliffe is a place to pursue research that aligns with their academic and professional interests. In addition, student staff members at the Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Research Partners, and Academic Ventures student board members all cited mentorship as a key benefit of interaction with the Institute. Radcliffe’s structure encourages faculty members and fellows to develop strong mentoring relationships with undergraduates.

Students affirmed the value of working with scholars and practitioners across a wide range of disciplines. They also expressed excitement about opportunities to engage with communities outside Harvard and to bridge the seemingly wide gulf between academia and applied knowledge. One said, “I feel like Harvard doesn’t have opportunities ... for engaged scholarship.” Another added, “You don’t find this type of applied research in the departments, so this was refreshing.” A third student commented that “actually getting off campus and working with people more directly would be very valuable.”

Despite positive—often transformative—academic and personal experiences with Radcliffe, few students reported a strong sense of affiliation with the Institute as a whole. One Radcliffe Research Partner said, “Right now, we connect to the fellow we are working with, but we don’t connect to the Institute. You should get us to say we are a part of Radcliffe.” Recognizing this as a challenge, several students offered suggestions to forge a deeper connection:

- Create experiences that connect students to the Institute itself—not just the fellow, faculty member, or staff member with whom they work closely.
- Empower and broaden the mandate of Radcliffe’s student board to look holistically at undergraduate engagement at the Institute and present a clear and unified vision for the Institute to the undergraduate community.
- Build a stronger sense of community and potentially a more structured cohort experience for students affiliated with Radcliffe.
- Schedule and market events that sync with the rhythms of student life: “Make it clear they are meant for us.”
- Provide additional financial and administrative support for students to pursue their own research, including convenings that are proposed and led by students.
- Support more opportunities for students to conduct research or to work off campus on critical policy issues of our time.

CIVIC AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

Leaders of civic organizations in the Boston-Cambridge area viewed the Radcliffe Institute as an attractive partner and welcomed opportunities to collaborate on the development, application, and dissemination of new knowledge. They also emphasized a need to strengthen—and in some cases repair—the relationship between Harvard and its surrounding communities. Despite this note of caution, the prospect of Radcliffe’s engaging civic organizations as it implements Radcliffe Engaged was met with optimism and excitement. As one leader said, “This kind of initiative pulls students out of their own heads and gets them involved in the community in a collaborative way. They are truly changed by the experience in a way that is better for everyone.”

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OPPOSITE TOP: Khalil Gibran Muhammad at a student lunch hosted by Radcliffe prior to his 2016 lecture “How Numbers Lie: Intersectional Violence and the Quantification of Race.” Muhammad is a professor at the Harvard Kennedy School and a Suzanne Young Murray Professor at the Radcliffe Institute. He is also a 2019–2020 Radcliffe fellow. Photo by Tony Rinaldo

OPPOSITE BOTTOM LEFT: The research partners of the 2017–2018 Radcliffe fellows Michael Bronstein (back row, center) and Zia Haider Rahman (back row, fourth from the right). Through the Radcliffe Research Partnership program, undergraduates are paid to work with Radcliffe Institute fellows, making for unique mentorship opportunities. Photo by Kevin Grady/Radcliffe Institute
Anwar Omeish ’19 shares her thoughts at a poetry reading hosted by Radcliffe’s Schlesinger Library on March 1, 2016. More than three years after this photo was taken, Dean Brown-Nagin awarded Omeish and two of her classmates the Fay Prize for their exceptional undergraduate theses. They were chosen from among 72 Harvard College seniors, each of whom had received the Hoopes Prize for outstanding scholarly work or research.

Radcliffe College bestowed this honor for 90 years, and the Radcliffe Institute has continued the tradition since its founding. The award reflects the mission of the Institute to foster advanced work across a wide range of disciplines. Photo by Kevin Grady/Radcliffe Institute
PART II:
Radcliffe
Engaged
An “all-purpose Africa reporter,” National Public Radio’s Ofeibea Quist-Arcton gave the 2018–2019 Rama S. Mehta Lecture. She emphasized the importance of listening to women and girls in her coverage of Africa—and why reporting their voices is crucial. Photo by Kevin Grady/Radcliffe Institute
Over the course of this strategic effort, Radcliffe’s core planning team worked together with Wellspring to clarify the core identity of the Radcliffe Institute:

Radcliffe is Harvard University’s institute for advanced study: a laboratory of ideas that brings together students, scholars, and practitioners from the humanities, sciences, social sciences, arts, and professions and engages with questions that demand cross-disciplinary exploration.

The core planning team defined six strategic goals that will unite and drive Radcliffe’s work over the next five years.

1. Catalyze interdisciplinary research, including scholarship that can inform policy debates. Achieve this by engaging students, faculty members, scholars, and practitioners around two or three strategic focus areas.

2. Create dynamic learning experiences for Harvard students that foster interdisciplinary scholarship and civic engagement. Do so in a way that supports active engagement and affiliation with the Radcliffe Institute.

3. Engage new and diverse populations and civic organizations in the Institute’s work, thereby enriching both Harvard and the surrounding community.

4. Execute all programs and supporting functions in an integrated and strategic manner, ensuring that Radcliffe is an institute for advanced study characterized by consistent and unparalleled excellence, known for real-world applications and impact as well as pathbreaking interdisciplinary scholarship.

5. Increase the impact of Radcliffe communications. Do so by shifting to a strategic communications model that fosters a strong organizational identity and privileges the Institute’s priorities and core audiences.

6. Develop and implement a comprehensive fundraising strategy to support these strategic goals and ensure long-term financial sustainability.

These strategic goals reflect the Institute’s continued commitment to its core identity, and they affirm Radcliffe’s breadth. They facilitate the continuation—and continuous enhancement of—the Institute’s existing work, including engaging Harvard students; supporting pathbreaking interdisciplinary research; and welcoming the public to participate in events, explore new knowledge, and delve into invaluable archives.

At the same time, the strategic goals reflect change. Most important, Radcliffe Engaged embraces:

• An increased emphasis on research applications
• A greater focus on scholarship that engages civic and community partners, public debates, and broad audiences
• An increased commitment to engaging and supporting the development of Harvard students by fostering a sense of community and affiliation with Radcliffe
• New tools and procedures to operate in a more cohesive, collaborative, and strategic manner, including a set of common criteria to guide planning and prioritization, ensuring strategic alignment and maximizing impact
Radcliffe’s “Jellyfish Guy,” David Gruber—a marine biologist, professor of biology at City University of New York, research associate of invertebrate zoology at New York’s American Museum of Natural History, and 2017–2018 Radcliffe fellow—shares a treasure from Harvard’s Museum of Comparative Zoology: a cannonball jellyfish (Stomolophus meleagris), also known as the cabbagehead jellyfish. Photo by Tony Luong
Radcliffe programming is broadly respected as thoughtful and of extraordinarily high quality. Staff and faculty members and others have, however, questioned whether the drive for excellence has at times pushed the Institute to do too much. Indeed, this tension was reflected in the report of the Institute’s most recent Visiting Committee of the Harvard Board of Overseers:

Ever since the redefinition of Radcliffe as an Institute for Advanced Study, the increased scope of activities has been nothing short of breath-taking, from the Fellowship Program, to Academic Ventures, to Exploratory Seminars, to Workshops, to the ambitious range of activities at the Schlesinger Library. The question arose within the Visiting Committee as to whether continued expansion of mission would be able to preserve the extraordinary quality of the organization.

That led the strategic planning committee to devise tools for integrating Radcliffe’s work without sacrificing the rich breadth of scholarship and related programming that characterizes the Institute. Fortunately, Radcliffe has experience on which to draw: the Institute has at various points embraced thematic programming. The themes, however, shaped only a small fraction of any given year’s programming and had limited external visibility. To quote the Visiting Committee again:

The relatively recent implementation of annual or multi-year themes (Native Americans in 2015–2016, urbanism in 2016–2017, and citizenship in 2017–2019) has demonstrated in a powerful way an ability to energize and integrate the programs. Optimizing the role of themes can help assure the quality and intellectual excitement of the program moving forward and underscore some of the key emphases of the Institute’s mission.

This is precisely the impetus for developing the Radcliffe Engaged focus areas called for in the first of the Institute-wide strategic goals. They represent a shift from annual thematic groupings to more-intensive multiyear initiatives. Radcliffe programming “already provides a highly effective structure by which it [the Institute] explores issues of current importance” (report of the 2017 Visiting Committee). Through the strategic plan, Radcliffe Engaged will build on this existing strength while taking inspiration from current pressing issues where the Institute can add value. Each focus area will reflect Radcliffe’s commitment to interdisciplinary and applied research, public programming, active involvement of students, and direct engagement with partners inside and outside the University.

Radcliffe Engaged focus areas are designed to be dynamic, experimental, and iterative. They will be shaped by Radcliffe-affiliated faculty and staff members in collaboration with civic and community partners.
Matika Wilbur, an acclaimed photographer from the Tulalip and Swinomish tribes (Washington), is the creator and director of Project 562 and the only Native American photographer and social documentarian to be welcomed into each of the 562-plus Native American sovereign territories in the United States. Wilbur’s 2016 exhibition at the Radcliffe Institute—Seeds of Culture: The Portraits and Voices of Native American Women—provided remarkable insights into contemporary Native American women. This photo is a self-portrait by Wilbur with her RV “Big Girl,” in which she traveled to document Native American tribes.

The musician Frank Wain (Sicangu Lakota) speaks at Radcliffe’s 2016 conference “Native Peoples, Native Politics. The event explored a range of mechanisms for political expression with leading members of Native communities, academics, policymakers, journalists, students, artists, and writers. Photo by Tony Rinaldo
Defining and Implementing a Radcliffe Engaged Focus Area

Identify a pressing issue that would benefit from interdisciplinary exploration and the connection of scholarship to policy and practice

Dynamic Engagement

Foster interdisciplinary scholarship on that issue within Harvard

Support Harvard students to engage with faculty members, other scholars, practitioners, and communities in learning, research, service, and mentorship

Engage practitioners and affected communities beyond Harvard

In selected cases: Develop and apply problem-solving approaches

Create applications and disseminate them to inform practice

Develop strong relationships with new and external audiences

Build a base of civically engaged Radcliffe affiliates

OPPOSITE BOTTOM LEFT: Students from the Summer of HOPE Institute gathered at Radcliffe in August 2019 to hear personal narratives and explore concepts of justice and injustice. The program is a collaboration among Radcliffe, Boston Public Schools, and the Juvenile Alternative Resolution Program of the Suffolk County District Attorney’s Office. Summer of HOPE is part of an effort to reduce juvenile involvement in the justice system—a system that disproportionately harms black and brown children. Photo by Kevin Grady/Radcliffe Institute
The Institute will begin by launching two Radcliffe Engaged focus areas in the 2019–2020 academic year: one on youth leadership and one on law, education, and justice.

**THE YOUTH LEADERSHIP FOCUS AREA** is grounded in research demonstrating that the cultivation of civic engagement, problem solving, and leadership among young people is critical to a healthy democratic society. This area of work also reflects Radcliffe College’s history as an institution that educated and provided critical support to generations of young scholars and leaders. The youth leadership focus area connects that inspiring history with the Institute’s success in creating unique and often transformative learning experiences for students pursuing degrees at Harvard schools. In the near term, we will expand on and formalize existing opportunities at Radcliffe for Harvard students (undergraduate and graduate) to design and lead public or private programs in coordination with an Institute-wide student board. We anticipate that successful student-led proposals will take an interdisciplinary and research-based perspective, will address timely topics of public importance, and will bridge scholarship and practice. They will be implemented with guidance and mentorship by Radcliffe staff and faculty members and fellows, who will support students as they engage with scholarship and develop the critical thinking and communication skills to tackle pressing societal issues.

**THE FOCUS AREA ON LAW, EDUCATION, AND JUSTICE** reflects a growing consensus that historically high rates of incarceration in the United States constitute a crisis with broad social, educational, and family impacts. Initially, the Institute will provide a physical space and intellectual infrastructure for students, fellows, faculty members, and outside experts to build community, develop programs, and launch multidisciplinary research projects. The goal is to translate this work into real-world impact, including by engaging directly with individuals and communities affected by incarceration and its educational consequences. Dean Brown-Nagin’s background as a legal scholar makes her uniquely suited to guide a body of work that has been pursued at Radcliffe, albeit in a decentralized manner, for some years. The Institute has advanced scholarly research and public understanding of issues related to mass incarceration by investing in the work of scholars such as Tayari Jones, Devah Pager, Kaia Stern, and Bruce Western (among many other Radcliffe fellows); by designing seminars that tackle specific policy questions (such as how the war on drugs has influenced drug policy); and by providing access to materials of critical research importance (most recently, by acquiring the papers of the activist Angela Davis, whose work is the focus of a major conference at Radcliffe in October 2019 and the subject of an exhibition curated by the historian Elizabeth Hinton).

*ABOVE: This exhibition design for Angela Davis: Freed by the People—opening at Radcliffe in September 2019—is based on the pamphlet “Freed by the People: Closing Defense Statement Made in the Angela Davis Trial,” created June 1, 1972.*
This plan is the beginning, not the end. Implementation will involve an ongoing collaboration among the dean, senior leaders, staff and faculty members, students, and friends of the Institute to bring the strategic goals to life.

Specific action steps for implementing Radcliffe Engaged in years 1 and 2 include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Implement a single set of criteria for making choices across all program areas (see decision tool on page 28).
- Implement a more streamlined, strategic approach to communications with priority audiences and promote public events with target audiences and clear end goals in mind.
- Establish a coherent, Institute-wide approach to student engagement that will include interdisciplinary student-led workshops and expanded opportunities for engaged scholarship.
- Develop a Student Advisory Board to guide programming across the Institute—building on the success of the existing Academic Ventures student board.
- Establish a Faculty Advisory Board—composed of Radcliffe faculty directors and other members—to advise the dean and shape the Institute’s academic programming.
- Appoint an associate dean for strategy and academic programs, who will strengthen the connection between the Radcliffe Institute and other Harvard schools and ensure that the Institute follows through on its commitment to bring greater strategic focus to its work.
- Invest in a set of public and private convenings, research, and collections related to the initial focus areas.
- Design and pilot targeted service initiatives in the initial focus areas that connect research to real-world impact while providing meaningful opportunities for students.
- Explore the feasibility of expanding the youth leadership focus area to include a pilot initiative that brings undergraduates together with talented secondary school students who share a desire for service and engagement in their communities.
- Implement a comprehensive financial plan including reallocations and new fundraising focused on strategic priorities, recognizing the critical role of philanthropy in achieving our objectives.

**John Wang** attends a Radcliffe student lunch with the author and 2015–2016 Suzanne Young Murray Fellow Michael Pollan. Wang graduated in 2016 and began working toward a degree at the Graduate School of Design later that year, but not before winning the 2016 Radcliffe Institute Public Art Competition with a project titled 100+ Years at 73 Brattle, making him the first undergraduate student to win the biennial contest. The installation was on display in the Susan S. and Kenneth L. Wallach Garden from 2017 until 2019. Photo by Kevin Grady/Radcliffe Institute
Two Harvard students examine archival materials. In 2014, the historian and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Laurel Thatcher Ulrich held classes in Radcliffe’s Schlesinger Library to allow students to experience history firsthand; librarians pulled tintypes, daguerreotypes, and Polaroids for them. Photo by Tony Rinaldo
APPRAOCH TO DECISION MAKING

As part of the planning process, Radcliffe has established clear accountability for each of the goals and action steps within the strategic plan and will monitor key indicators of performance. Over the coming five years, managers will work with their staffs to define budgets and action items on an annual basis.

Much of the Radcliffe Engaged strategy will, however, evolve over time in a collaborative and iterative manner. To allow for this evolution while ensuring strategic alignment, it is critical that the Institute have a shared approach to setting priorities going forward.

To this end, the Institute has developed a single set of criteria that encapsulates the ethos of Radcliffe Engaged and that will be refracted across the Institute. These criteria will guide Schlesinger Library collection priorities, how the Institute recruits and selects fellows, which seminars and workshops it funds, which public programs it undertakes, and more, ensuring that the Institute invests in a manageable number of opportunities selected to maximize impact in line with Radcliffe’s strategic priorities.

RADCLIFFE ENGAGED DECISION TOOL

Across its portfolio of research and programming, Radcliffe seeks to invest in programs that:

- Reflect a cross-disciplinary approach
- Catalyze research that engages with pressing problems and can inform policy debates
- Build strong reciprocal relationships with communities and practitioners
- Engage Harvard students and forge an enduring connection to the Institute
- Are an intellectual priority for the Harvard faculty across schools and disciplines
- Contribute to achieving University-wide priorities
- Build on the Radcliffe Institute’s founding commitment to women and gender
- Take real and appropriate risks
- And—but for Radcliffe—would not be done
The Schlesinger Library’s documentation of the movement to obtain votes for women is unparalleled. In fact, the Library grew out of a gift from the activist and Radcliffe alumna Maud Wood Park, who donated her collection of suffrage materials in 1943. Since then, the Library has grown into a world-class resource of more than 4,100 manuscript collections. “We need new collections to tell new stories. In recent years, increasing the diversity of our collections along racial, ethnic, class, regional, and ideological lines has been our highest strategic priority,” says Jane Kamensky, the Pforzheimer Foundation Director of the Library and Jonathan Trumbull Professor of American History.

An artifact of women’s history from the Schlesinger Library: a 1910 silver gelatin print by the pioneering photojournalist Jessie Tarbox Beals (1870–1942). The Schlesinger Library holds the Jessie Tarbox Beals Papers and work by a number of photographers who followed the trail blazed by Beals and others like her. This image—of a suffrage parade in New York City—was shot by Beals in 1910.

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ABOVE: Photo of a demonstration in 1979 taken by the photographer Freda Leinwand (1932–2012), who is best known for chronicling the women’s movement. Her papers were acquired by the Schlesinger Library after her death.

RIGHT: Among the fascinating collections at the Library are the papers of Mildred Fay Jefferson (1927–2010), pictured here circa 1947. A surgeon, a right-to-life activist, and a noted speaker, Jefferson was the first African American woman to graduate from Harvard Medical School (in 1951). She was also the first woman employed as a general surgeon at Boston University Medical Center. Jefferson became active in the right-to-life movement in 1970 and held various offices with the Value of Life Committee, the National Right to Life Committee, and the Right to Life Crusade. A self-described “Lincoln Republican,” Jefferson was influenced by her commitment to the right-to-life movement to campaign for the US Senate. Her name was placed in nomination at Republican conventions in 1982, 1990, and 1994.
There is something inarguably exciting about the expansiveness of the early years of the Institute. They were days of ideation, exploration, and growth—and of remarkable accomplishments.

Now, after 20 years, we must shift our strategic approach to more-focused growth, with a commitment to preserve—and, where possible, enhance—the standard of quality and rigor established by our predecessors, for which the Institute is well-known. Strategic planning, done well, provides clarity and a shared sense of purpose. Through this process, we have affirmed Radcliffe’s role as an intellectual haven for academic research and creative exploration—from pushing the boundaries of science to creating abstract art. But strategic planning is not only an exercise in defining what we will do. Radcliffe Engaged also provides an organizing principle that is allowing us to answer the vital question, What must we set aside?

Through this process, we have begun to identify what we will de-emphasize in light of our strategic priorities. For example, we will hold a smaller number of higher-impact public events. We will put the full weight of our efforts into those initiatives across all programs that are most likely to result in impact. Similarly, we will continue to identify opportunities to shift resources toward digital content and distribution in an effort to increase our reach. We will also hold fewer and more modest public receptions while increasing the number of events that we livestream, so that we can expand our audience beyond local attendees.

As we move forward under this strategy, we will embrace a spirit of experimentation and risk taking, always guided by our core values and principles. We will build upon our historical strengths: intellectual excellence, interdisciplinarity, inclusion, and engagement. Radcliffe College and the Bunting Institute were both created to answer pressing social needs while achieving the highest standards of scholarship. Radcliffe Engaged inspires us because it celebrates and builds on that rich history while equipping today’s Radcliffe Institute for future success.

“Vision & Justice” attendees give Wynton Marsalis a standing ovation. Marsalis performed on the second day of the Radcliffe convening, which brought together luminaries from across the academic, artistic, and philanthropic worlds to explore the nexus of art, race, and justice.

PICTURED (LEFT TO RIGHT): Claudine Gay, Edgerley Family Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and Wilbur A. Cowett Professor of Government and of African and African American Studies, Harvard University; Mona Hanna-Attisha, the public health advocate whose research exposed the Flint water crisis, an assistant professor of pediatrics and human development, Michigan State University, and the founder and director of the Michigan State University–Hurley Children’s Hospital Pediatric Public Health Initiative; Henry Louis Gates Jr., Alphonse Fletcher Jr. University Professor and director of the Hutchins Center for African & African American Research, Harvard University; Theaster Gates, founder and executive director of the Rebuild Foundation, inaugural distinguished artist in residence and director of artist initiatives at the Lunder Institute for American Art, and professor in the Department of Visual Arts, University of Chicago; David Adjaye, architect and principal, Adjaye Associates; Lawrence S. Bacow, president, Harvard University; Elizabeth Alexander, chancellor of the Academy of American Poets, president of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the 2007—2008 Mildred Londa Weisman Fellow at Radcliffe. Slightly occluded by all the hands raised in applause: Darren Walker, president of the Ford Foundation, and Sarah Lewis, assistant professor of history of art and architecture and African and African American studies, Harvard University, who conceived of “Vision & Justice.” Photo by Evgenia Eliseeva

The political scientist Jacob S. Hacker delivers a public lecture, “Plutocrats with Pitchforks,” in December 2018. Hacker was the 2018–2019 Perrin Moorhead Grayson and Bruns Grayson Fellow at Radcliffe and worked on the book Fault Lines: How the New Geography of Prosperity and Partisanship Are Remaking American Politics. In it, he and his coauthor argue that in today’s knowledge economy, the dominant fissure in American politics is between high-growth urban areas and the rest of the nation. Populous metro areas are becoming richer and more Democratic; small towns and rural areas, relatively poorer and more Republican. Photo by Kevin Grady/Radcliffe Institute
This image was produced using data from the NASA Spitzer Space Telescope's Infrared Array Camera and shows just a section of a very long, very thin, very cold cloud of interstellar gas known as “Nessie.” In 2014, Alyssa A. Goodman—codirector of Radcliffe’s science program; 2016–2017 Edward, Frances, and Shirley B. Daniels Fellow, Radcliffe Institute; and Robert Wheeler Wilson Professor of Applied Astronomy, Harvard University—and her colleagues discovered that Nessie was far longer than originally thought. Critically, it marks the mid-plane of our galaxy’s disk. Goodman named Nessie-like objects “bones,” and in the past few years, Goodman’s team (led by Harvard graduate student Catherine Zucker) and others around the world have searched for and discovered many more bones on the way to mapping the full “skeleton” of the Milky Way.
COVER IMAGE: Afternoon sun streaming through Gray Gate on Garden Street invites visitors into Radcliffe Yard. Design by Jessica Brilli, based on a photo by Kevin Grady/Radcliffe Institute