**Ground to a Halt**

[Harvey Mudd cancels classes after student protests over issues of race, workload and more (insidehighered.com)](https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/04/18/harvey-mudd-cancels-classes-after-student-protests-over-issues-race-workload-and)

Harvey Mudd College canceled classes for two days after sit-in and protests over issues of race, workload and a leaked report in which faculty appeared to be insulting students.

By [Jeremy Bauer-Wolf](https://www.insidehighered.com/users/jeremy-bauer-wolf)

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Harvey Mudd eight years ago revised its core curriculum, cutting it back from four semesters of courses to three and allowing for more elective classes. It was a measure that faculty and administrators believed would reduce student workload and stresses, and they were frustrated to learn it was not successful after many months of planning, Klawe said.

Some faculty members, meanwhile, told the interviewers that students were not prepared for their classes, and that they’d observed deterioration in the quality of students accepted to Harvey Mudd over the years. They described students as wed to their phones and not committed to the sciences.

Still, someone provided it to the student newspaper, and a story on the so-called **Wabash report** was published two weeks ago, the same day that a memorial service for one of the students was being held on campus.

Klawe described the significant shifts that have occurred on campus in the past decade -- white men have historically dominated at the college -- until it attempted to diversify the campus, a campaign that has seen relative success.

While leadership there has recruited more women -- to the point where they comprise nearly 50 percent of the student body -- gains in the numbers of Hispanic and black students were sluggish until recent years, Klawe said. As a college recognized for its sciences, Harvey Mudd competes with institutions like Stanford University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, both with higher profiles.

With this diversity comes growing pains, and practices that benefited what was the traditional Harvey Mudd student still linger but are being identified.

Students pointed out a couple years ago that all lecturers in a campus speaker series were white men, Klawe said. In a required, basic course for engineering majors, women performed poorly until the college tweaked how it was taught, bringing in a hands-on component in which students built mini robots that could function underwater. The same mathematics concepts were being taught, but in a way that would appeal and allow women to thrive, Klawe said.

Some excerpts from the link below, from the Amer Mind article The Black community demanding recognition.

[Black Lives at Mudd and others demand better support for Black students - The Student Life (tsl.news)](https://tsl.news/black-lives-at-harvey-mudd/)

“President Klawe has stated clearly and unequivocally that ‘Black Lives Matter,’ and she stands behind her [June 24] statement,” Mudd spokesperson Judy Augsburger said in an email. “She has been quite open and firm maintaining that this is what she believes — and that this message is an important and vital one for both our campus community at Harvey Mudd College as well as in all communities across the country.”

HMC Take a Stand was also dissatisfied with the June 23 webinar and sent Klawe and the Cabinet a statement June 29.

*“I would like to see [Klawe] acknowledge the amount of work Black students put in to try to make Harvey Mudd a place for Black people.” — Natasha Crepeau HM ’21*

“We asked for a conversation about the petition, and we neither discussed the petition nor got a proper conversation,” the response said, while acknowledging that the cabinet did respond to many of students’ concerns.

In response to concerns from BLAM and Take a Stand, Augsburger said Klawe was open to dialogue.

“President Klawe approached those two conversations as opportunities to listen to the concerns of our students, faculty and staff” to find a ‘path forward,’ Augsburger said. “The specific actions included in the June 24 statement are the beginning stages of addressing those issues, and the College anticipates continuing this work well into the future.”

The BLAM presidents asked Klawe to work with Black students directly.

“You have to be willing to put in active work and consider your own privileges and how that impacts you, and I don’t think she considers the privileges of her being a white woman versus being a woman of color,” Crepeau said. “I would like to see her acknowledge the amount of work Black students put in to try to make Harvey Mudd a place for Black people. I think the Mudd administration has a problem with using its Black students as tokens.”

BLAM wants an apology from Klawe for her earlier statement and for taking so long to address racism in the Harvey Mudd community. Augsburger did not address whether or not Mudd would release an apology.

“I would like an apology. It doesn’t even need to be addressed to the entire campus in my opinion. I think she needs to apologize to BLAM, especially the people who met with her and had this conversation with her,” Crepeau said.

During Klawe’s 14-year tenure as president, Mudd’s gender equity has increased significantly. HMC was [29 percent female](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Zd6DiN3USRMGMWFyDVGvn09bhIY-RdbRzGw48wKCEd8/edit) and computer science majors were [ten percent female](https://techcrunch.com/2013/10/10/how-harvey-mudd-transformed-its-computer-science-program-and-nearly-closed-its-gender-gap/)in 2006. Female representation has increased under Klawe to its current level of [50 percent female](https://www.hmc.edu/institutional-research/institutional-statistics/institutional-statistics-students/student-enrollment-gender/) and computer science majors are now [49 percent female](https://www.hmc.edu/about-hmc/2019/05/22/harvey-mudd-graduates-class-of-2019/).

The BLAM presidents see increasing Black representation in STEM as the next battle for Klawe and Mudd to undertake.

“If Harvey Mudd really is going to be an institution that prides itself on being all about equity in STEM and impact on society, then you have to acknowledge that in order for that to happen you will have to have a lot of discussions with people who disagree, because that is all part of making sure that people’s voices are heard. Having equity in STEM means all kinds of things, it doesn’t just mean gender,” Crepeau said.