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Burying Standards

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**Harvey Mudd College has acceded to the worst impulses of the diversicrats.**

[Burying Standards - The American Mind](https://americanmind.org/salvo/burying-standards/)

Harvey Mudd College, in Claremont, California, ranks among America’s best STEM schools. Like most other elite academic institutions, the school has committed itself to diversity and social justice. It’s a commitment that has had questionable results.

In 2017, the College capitulated to student [demands](https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/04/18/harvey-mudd-cancels-classes-after-student-protests-over-issues-race-workload-and) “to funnel more money into counseling services, specifically geared toward students of color, and to prioritize minority student groups with funding and other perks.” Last summer, angry students [forced](https://tsl.news/black-lives-at-harvey-mudd/) President Maria Klawe to release an official [statement](https://www.hmc.edu/about-hmc/2020/06/24/addressing-systemic-racism/) in which she affirmed that “*Black Lives Matter*” and that HMC must combat systemic racism with “anti-racism.”

An obsession with “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” (DEI) initiatives grips American universities. These initiatives aim to make universities more diverse and more accessible to the less privileged, but this obsession—and the worldview behind it—undermines education in both the classical and everyday senses of the term. It allows radical politics to stifle dissent, encourages activism over learning, and lowers standards. Harvey Mudd College has embraced the illiberal and anti-intellectual dogmas that dominate today’s left. Recent events exemplify this trend.

Anup [Gampa](https://www.hmc.edu/hsa/faculty-staff/anup-gampa/), hired last year as a professor of Psychology, [describes](https://magazine.scienceforthepeople.org/vol23-3-bio-politics/a-peoples-psychology-of-anti-racism/) himself as a “Marxist-queer-feminist…interested in understanding and dismantling systems of oppression.” He [stands](https://tsl.news/anup-gampa-black-lives-matter/) “in full solidarity [with calls to] entirely abolish the police.” Gampa’s radical politics mandate him to turn the classroom into a venue for activism. The “last thing,” Gampa proclaims, “I want to do [in the classroom] is talk about this stuff but not help students fight an actively racist, sexist, misogynistic society.” Rather than teach, he indoctrinates.

Brian Shuve, who has taught physics at Harvey Mudd since 2016, co-authored the “Particles for Justice” [statement](https://www.particlesforjustice.org/) that called on academics to fight “white supremacy” in academia and claimed that black Americans do not have the “right to survive.” He privileges diversity over merit to [support](https://www.aps.org/publications/apsnews/202103/diversity.cfm) race and sex quotas in physics admissions and hiring policies. Shuve perversely insists that “to maximize objectivity while studying such a universal field…the physics community should reflect the demographics of our society.” Scientific standards of “objectivity” are explicitly subordinated to politics. The physics department [celebrates](https://physics.hmc.edu/news/114/) Shuve’s activism.

Every job [posting](https://academicjobsonline.org/ajo/jobs/18889) for new faculty contains the line, “your written materials should address your interests, experiences, and future plans with diversity, equity and inclusion.” The College will only hire scholars who have accepted these leftist dogmas.

DEI now affects virtually [every](https://magazine.hmc.edu/summer-2020/diversity-and-inclusion-at-harvey-mudd/) aspect of the College. New students will be greeted with “anti-racism” sessions during orientation. Applicants are no longer required to submit SAT subject tests—“a policy change that is expected to remove a barrier to applying to the College and help further diversify its student body.” President Klawe [discourages](https://www.inc.com/kimberly-weisul/how-harvey-mudd-college-achieved-gender-parity-computer-science-engineering-physics.html) the enthusiasm, or “macho behavior,” of white male students so that others feel safe.

Klawe [prioritizes](https://www.inc.com/kimberly-weisul/how-harvey-mudd-college-achieved-gender-parity-computer-science-engineering-physics.html) diversity above all. “I was surprised,” she said in 2017, “to find out the meme around Harvey Mudd was that we are a merit-based institution and bringing in more women or people of color would mean lowering our standards.” But then, last semester, a new Core curriculum was adopted which significantly eased requirements. To “reduce student stress,” the new Core [drops](https://www.hmc.edu/core-implementation/proposal-4-four-courses-with-optional-electivity/) Electricity and Magnetism (still [required](http://catalog.mit.edu/mit/undergraduate-education/general-institute-requirements/) at peer institutions like MIT) and Differential Equations—an essential course for all STEM disciplines. In addition, the new Core will add an “Impact Course…which will address the intersection of STEM and society”; this new course will surely have a strong social justice orientation. Klawe maintains that the new curriculum is unrelated to diversity-focused recruitment efforts, but it’s widely understood to be the motivation.

Klawe and her administration seem more concerned with student comfort than excellence, more concerned about the diversity of graduates than their achievements. She denies that diversity and merit are at odds, yet the evidence suggests otherwise.

The case of Harvey Mudd College aligns with the national trend toward an obsession with DEI at the expense of rigorous education. This obsession inevitably leads to lower standards and a confused blend of activism and education. The actions of the administration implicitly condone the radical activity and beliefs of the faculty. The College portrays itself as a vehicle for social justice; following its lead, the professors promote activism in the classroom.

The students of Harvey Mudd College must resist the encroachment of DEI on their education. They should speak out about professors who use their authority to politicize the classroom and demand that the administration not lower standards of education. Current faculty must fight the dilution of standards for tenure and the imposition of quotas for new hires. Alumni should refrain from donating to the college as long as its focus remains on social engineering rather than educational rigor. Otherwise, there is no hope for the future of Harvey Mudd College as a standard of excellence, nor for the future of standards generally.