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Harvard division drops diversity mandate

Move to cut DEI essay requirement in academic hiring echoes policy trend

By Mike Damiano
GLOBE STAFF

Less than five years ago, Harvard University's Faculty of Arts and Sciences followed a trend that was then sweeping across American higher education. It instituted a requirement that professors who wished to

work at Harvard submit an essay explaining how they would advance "diversity, inclusion, and belonging" in their work.

On Monday, the university's largest division announced it had reversed course, eliminating the requirement after receiving "feedback

from numerous faculty members" who were concerned about the mandatory statements.

A seemingly routine part of academic hiring, diversity statements have become the focus of intense scrutiny as universities grapple with the question of whether well-intentioned efforts to diversify the elite ranks of American institutions have sometimes collided with other core values of academia.

"By requiring academics to profess — and flaunt — faith in DEI, the proliferation of diversity statements poses a profound challenge to academic freedom," Randall Kennedy, a scholar of race and civil rights at Harvard Law School, wrote in an April op-ed in the Harvard Crimson, the student newspaper.

That essay was widely read in academic circles. It was also cited ap-

HARVARD, Page A10

'It's really about figuring out what is the challenge the person's having.'

ELIZABETH SPEAKMAN, *director of Cambridge's CARE team*



JESSICA RINALDI/GLOBE STAFF

Cambridge's new five-member Community Assistance Response and Engagement team is the city's first real try at deploying an alternative to police in emergencies. Above, Matthew Gomes, a CARE responder, embraced a Central Square inhabitant.

Cambridge 911 calls may soon bring social workers

Team could respond to nonviolent, mental health incidents instead of police

By Spencer Buell
GLOBE STAFF

CAMBRIDGE — It took less than a minute for the crew of five social workers in matching mint-green T-shirts to find people who could use some help.

Right outside the door to their Central Square headquarters last month, they found a woman sitting on the ground with a few small bags, taking a rest in the 80-plus-de-

gree heat, and gave her water and snacks. A few steps down Massachusetts Avenue, they chatted with a homeless man who wanted assistance getting an ID.

Later, they consoled a woman who walked up to them in tears, asking if someone could pray with her. They obliged.

It was just another afternoon for Cambridge's new five-member Community Assistance Response and Engagement, or CARE,

team, which has for months been meeting with some of the city's most vulnerable.

But if all goes according to plan, the team will soon have a more high-stakes task: responding to 911 calls, sent to the scenes of nonviolent, mental health-related incidents handled at present by cops with guns.

Four years after the Minneapolis police killing of George Floyd spurred nationwide

CARE TEAM, Page A7

The state's secretary of elder affairs has left the position. No reason was given for the departure of Elizabeth Chen. **B1.**

Steward Health Care was granted permission by a bankruptcy judge to offer financial sweeteners to a new lender while it prepares to sell its hospitals and doctor groups. **D1.**

By controlling the buffer zone between Gaza and Egypt, Israel risks upsetting a delicate balance with its Arab neighbor. **A3.**

Air it out

Tuesday: Mostly sunny.
High 65-70, low 56-61.

Wednesday: Warmer, sunny.
High 78-83, low 61-66.
Obituaries, **C9.**
Comics and Weather, **D6.**

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JESSICA RINALDI/GLOBE STAFF

FANFARE FOR PRIDE MONTH

Andrea "Adubbs" Woelfel (center), of Roslindale, played with fellow members of the Jamaica Plain Honk Band at City Hall Plaza in Boston on Monday during the flag-raising ceremony to kick off Pride Month. Elected officials and local leaders shared plans for a range of Pride events scheduled throughout June. **B2.**

In Weymouth, novel plan averts EV charging station delay

By Aaron Pressman
GLOBE STAFF

The new electric vehicle fast-charging station next to a shawarma joint in Weymouth looks pretty much like any other: a metal cabinet the size of a refrigerator with two thick black charging cables and a big screen, set in front of a couple of reserved parking spaces in a strip mall.

But off to the side, hidden away in an enclosure, is something quite different from the typical charging setup: a bank of lithium-ion batteries that take up a full parking space.

The batteries allow the station to charge electric vehicles at high speed without a high-voltage connection to the electrical grid. It's a clever hack that allowed owners Shawn Ward and Matt

Kelcourse to avoid a multiyear backlog for electrical components and build the station in only six months.

Most other EV charging projects in the state, however, have been going the conventional route — and not getting very far, largely because of a vexing shortage of a basic but crucial piece of equipment: higher-voltage transformers. Wait times for the hulking gear can

stretch more than two years, delaying a critical part of the state's strategy to combat climate change that relies on persuading almost 1 million drivers to switch to EVs, 10 times the current level, by 2030.

And with other parts of the climate plan also relying on electrification, the transformer shortage threatens to short-

EV, Page A7

Biden set to curtail bids for asylum

Executive order would let him close US border amid high levels of crossings

By Nick Miroff and Toluse Olorunnipa
WASHINGTON POST

President Biden plans to issue an order Tuesday that would shut off access to the US asylum system when illegal border crossings exceed a daily threshold, according to four administration officials and people with knowledge of the plans.

Migrants would be returned to Mexico and ineligible for asylum consideration once the limit is surpassed, according to the officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the pending White House order.

The move has been under consideration by the administration since the failure of bipartisan border legislation this year that would have enacted a similar trigger to shut off asylum access at times when US authorities become overwhelmed. People with knowledge of the plans said they expected the cap to be set at an average of 2,500 to 3,000 daily crossings.

Illegal crossings along the Mexico border have averaged more than 3,500 in recent weeks, according to the latest government data, so Biden's order could have immediate effects.

During the peak of the coronavirus pandemic, US authorities under direction from then-President Trump used a public health emergency to rapidly "expel" migrants and turn away asylum seekers who arrived illegally. Officials said Biden's expected order will operate similarly, while agents at the border will continue to face limitations, including a lack of detention space, transportation capacity, and asylum officers.

The failed border legislation would have pro-

BORDER, Page A6

\$6.2b bond bill targets housing crisis

But real estate transfer fee championed by Wu left out of House package

By Samantha J. Gross, Matt Stout, and Andrew Brinker
GLOBE STAFF

The Massachusetts House on Monday unveiled a \$6.2 billion housing bond bill pitching it as Beacon Hill's most forceful response yet to the state's intractable housing crisis, with promises of billions for affordable housing, tax credits, and plans to remake statewide zoning rules.

The sweeping package, however, leaves out a key proposal championed by both Governor Maura Healey and Boston Mayor Michelle Wu: a provision to allow cities and towns to impose a fee on the sales of high-end properties.

The exclusion of this so-called local real estate transfer fee marks a blow to Wu, and the leaders of Nantucket and other high-cost communities, who had been clamoring for years to institute a fee of up to 2 percent on real estate sales above \$1 million, in hopes of using that money to build more affordable housing. The powerful real estate lobby has lobbied hard against the transfer tax in recent months, claiming that the fee could raise housing costs without providing reliable streams of revenue.

Instead, the House's version of the bill would allow the state to borrow \$2 billion more than what Healey sought in her own \$4 billion version of the

HOUSING, Page A10