

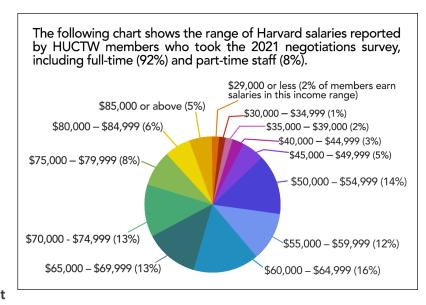
# **2021 HUCTW Negotiations Survey Report**

Thank you to everyone who responded to our survey in May and June. We received 2,873 overall responses to the survey (almost 60% of our membership) and 9,677 written comments, which is a fantastic sign of the energy and commitment of HUCTW members. Union leaders have used the stories and statistics from the survey to shape and strengthen our negotiations with Harvard, and we will continue to use these results to guide our initiatives in the future. Below is a summary of some of the main themes and highlights from the survey, supplemented with additional data from the University about our HUCTW population. Please contact the HUCTW office at huctw.info@huctw.org or 617-661-8289 with any questions or further thoughts.

## **INCOME & EXPENSES**

University records show that HUCTW member salaries (including part-time staff and full-time staff), range from \$19,000 to \$117,000 with the average union member earning approximately \$63,000. According to survey responses, most members work full-time (92%) at Harvard, with a remaining 8% working part-time hours.

Although the majority of HUCTW members reported that their personal income levels stayed the same during the pandemic, **about** 20% of respondents indicated that



they had lost personal income over the last year and a half--due primarily to loss of overtime (12%), loss of a second job (5%) or hours at a second job (3%), or because they were unable to work some or all of their regular hours due to campus restrictions (1%). Comparing overtime pay between fiscal year 2020 and fiscal year 2019 (the last year not affected by the pandemic), HUCTW members lost 49% of their overtime pay, which amounts to more than five million dollars in lost income for those who typically work overtime.

In addition to questions about personal income, the survey also asked members about their household income. Of the 48% of respondents who said they lived with an income-earning partner, most indicated that they live with a spouse or partner who earns a similar salary to themselves.

About 22% of respondents reported that their partner or spouse lost income during the pandemic due to job loss or reduced hours.

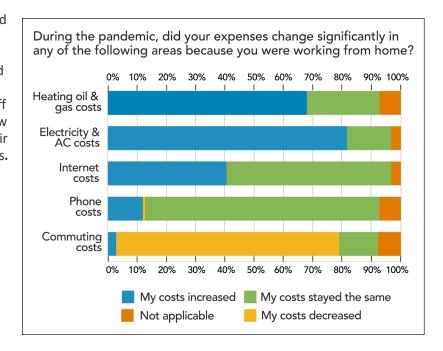
Members shared their experiences with personal and family income loss in the survey comments:

"I work part time at Harvard and usually hold at least one other job to make ends meet. My partner also works two jobs. We both lost our part time jobs due to COVID-19 and are unlikely to get those jobs back. We are getting married this summer and have been saving up to buy a house and start a family. The financial hit of the past year of instability has definitely set us back [significantly]."

"We've had a rough year financially. My husband lost his job in January 2020. He was unable to find work until last month, when he was hired for a short-term summer contract. Our family of four have been almost entirely dependent on my salary alone. I lost all my regular opportunities for overtime [during the pandemic], so my Harvard income was substantially reduced as well."

"Overtime used to be a big portion of my take-home salary. Typically, 5-10K. Since we are no longer hosting on-campus events, this has been reduced to less than 1k."

Because most HUCTW staff worked primarily from home during the pandemic, the majority of Union members reported that they saved money on commuting expenses. However, many of these same staff said that they took on multiple new expenses due to working from their own homes rather than on campus. A large majority of members reported substantially higher utility bills during the pandemic, with 82% of members reporting that their electricity/air conditioning expenses have **increased significantly** during the pandemic and 68% of members reporting that their heating expenses have been much higher over the last year and a half.



Many HUCTW staff also indicated that they had to spend their own money on costly job-related expenses in order to accomplish their work, such as computers, ergonomic chairs and desks, and Internet upgrades. Almost 50% of respondents said that they spent more than \$500 on this type of work from home equipment. Of that same group, about half indicated that they spent more than \$1,000 on work from home equipment. In the comments field in this section, members elaborated on their experiences:

"I estimate that I spent about \$600 on office equipment since March 2020, but this does not include the fact that I needed to move to a bigger apartment since my current apartment does not have room for WFH space."

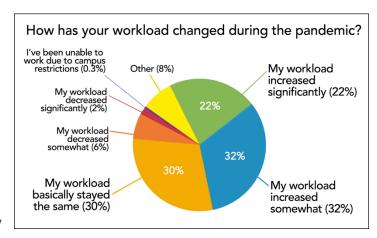
"My utility bills have certainly increased due to WFH. I also had to outfit my apartment with a makeshift desk, as well as other ergonomic products in order to make WFH possible."

"Managers have always had access to new Harvard laptops when \*choosing\* to work from home, while staff must try to borrow a sub-par refurbished laptop or pay for their own computer when they are \*required\* to work at-home during the pandemic. Also, there's been no effort to compensate staff for internet/electricity/heat/phone costs for required work from home and those costs have gone way up."

# **WORKLOAD & EXTRA COMPENSATION**

Survey data and University records indicate that HUCTW members have been working as hard as ever to get their jobs done during the pandemic.

Although a very small group of HUCTW members were unable to work 100% of their regular hours due to campus restrictions, it is clear from looking at Harvard records that the vast majority of HUCTW staff (over 98%) were able to work all their regular hours over the last year and a half. In fact, according to HUCTW's survey results, almost 60% of our members



**experienced** <u>increased</u> <u>workloads since</u> <u>March</u> **2020**. Many members shared that they have been covering for positions that went unfilled due to the hiring freeze and colleagues who left due to the VERIP. Respondents shared stories about their expanded workloads:

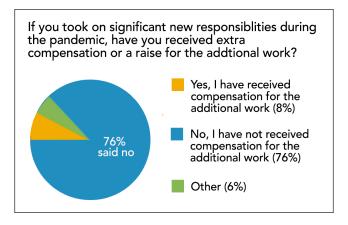
"I have been made "lab manager" since we are in a hiring freeze and ours left. Now I am doing two manager-type positions but still with the pay and title of a research assistant. They are putting too much on the employees who are left behind."

"My role includes significant HR work for my department. The departure of [those who took the VERIP], the release of the hiring freeze, and the mad scramble to fill roles has been compounded by the fact that our department has an 18% vacancy rate yet is somehow still performing at pre-pandemic levels. Everyone is working extra and working at peak. We are proud of that, but we are also exhausted, and the cracks are starting to show."

"Expectations for work remained higher than ever despite increased workload without increased compensation or support. Working through a pandemic has been grueling. We're encouraged to "take vacation time" and "step away from our laptops", while being expected to complete more and more work."

Of those who said they took on significant new tasks or higher-level responsibilities, only 8% report receiving extra compensation for this extra work. Many members said that they were told by department managers that there were no funds available to pay them for the increased workload, while others indicated that they did not feel comfortable asking to be paid for their additional efforts.

According to University records, between fiscal year 2019 and fiscal year 2020, career advancement events (including job



reclassifications, job transfers, job promotions, extra pay increases) dropped by 62% for HUCTW members, resulting in \$2.8 million dollars in lost pay growth.

In the comments section of the survey, many respondents shared personal stories about being asked to take on additional work without extra compensation or a reclassification:

"Due to retirements and people leaving my department, we've lost a great deal of co-workers, none of whom have been replaced. I've been asked to do work well beyond my pay grade and responsibilities with no extra pay. I want to do this work to remain helpful during the pandemic, but I worry that these extra responsibilities will continue, and I will not be fairly compensated."

"My workload increased significantly because two people's positions have not been filled in our department due to the hiring freeze. My manager asked for a pay increase or promotion on my behalf and was told no by HR. A coworker in the same situation was told by a member of HR that she just "needed to be a team player." The disconnect between our efforts and our pay is becoming demoralizing."

Similarly, of the respondents who said they worked overtime hours in order to accomplish larger workloads, 64% indicated that they did not request to be paid for some or all of this overtime worked in PeopleSoft, often due to departmental pressure or a wanting to seem like "a team player" during a tough time.

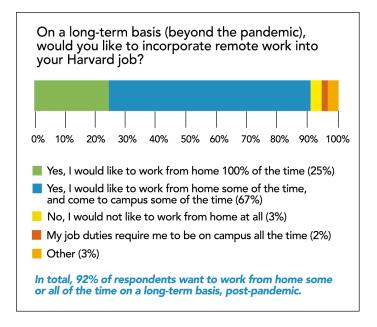
"Over the past year and a half, my responsibilities have increased significantly. I am more stressed and more overworked than I have ever been. Our roles have essentially doubled to include the Online Learning Facilitator role as well as our normal duties. I consistently work over my usual time, but have found management to be so difficult regarding overtime that I stopped reporting it last summer, while continuing to do the work."

"Many of us have been working outside of the scope of our job description for over a year with no bonuses, raises, work equipment, or really any incentive or motivation other than a 'nice job, keep it up!' Additionally, we continuously get pushback on reporting overtime when we have to work it, which contributes to a fear of reporting extra hours even when we've worked those hours and we've worked HARD."

## **REMOTE WORK**

The majority of HUCTW members worked from home during the pandemic and, not surprisingly, remote work was one of the most popular topics on the survey. 86% of respondents indicated that they worked entirely (71%) or almost entirely (15%) from home due to pandemic-related campus restrictions.

Numerous members commented that the experience of the last year and a half with remote work had given them a newfound appreciation for the benefits of working from home. We asked members if they wanted to build remote work into their schedules on a short-term basis (during the pandemic recovery)—93% of respondents said yes. We also asked if members would like to build remote work into their schedules on a long-



term basis (beyond the pandemic) – 92% said yes. In the comments section, members shared their thoughts on working from home:

"Remote work has been such an amazing experience that has helped me so much mentally. I don't want to give it up after everyone has been vaccinated. It truly makes me so much more productive and gives me so many hours back to my life every week; I can't ever put a monetary value on that, it's priceless."

"Working from home saves me time and is much more convenient. I am able to work with less interruption in a more comfortable setting. I also get to spend more time with my family, prepare more family meals at decent times, and have more time to spend on my well-being."

Members were asked how working from home during the pandemic impacted their productivity. **75% of members felt that their productivity increased (49%) or stayed the same (26%) while working from home**. Many of those who said their productivity decreased indicated that the decrease was due to having to care for or teach dependents who were at home due to pandemic restrictions. Some members shared:

"Working from home has been life-changing. While I would have preferred to have had the opportunity to do so under better conditions of course (i.e. not during a pandemic), I have loved the flexibility. I truly feel that I have been more productive and more motivated to do my work."

"Our office hasn't lost any productivity due to remote work - we know this from our data collection and student interactions. If anything, we've been able to do so much more in this remote world."

We asked members, if they were told by their department that they would be unable to work from home at all after the pandemic, would this prompt them to reconsider staying at Harvard? 66% of members indicated that might rethink (39%) or would definitely rethink (27%) staying at Harvard if

**they were not able to build remote work into their schedules after the pandemic.** In the comments section, members elaborated:

"Working remotely has completely changed my perception of my job. I will be devastated and searching for new work if I have to return to my office."

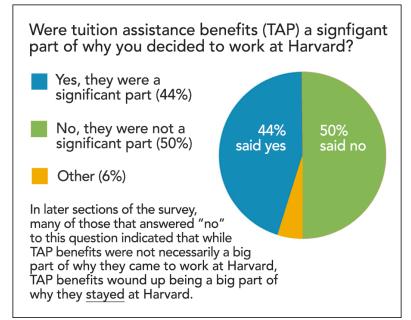
"Since the pandemic, we have been busier than ever and have still managed our increased workload and work hours. If not for being able to work from home, it would have made this situation much more difficult to manage. For that reason, if this accommodation is no longer available, or becomes a challenge to retain, I would consider leaving Harvard to find other employment with additional resources and accommodations."

"Working from home has provided the well-deserved work/life balance that my family needed. The positive attributions are priceless and something that my family wouldn't want to compromise going forward."

# **TAX ON TUITION ASSISTANCE**

The Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) -- allowing staff to take courses at Harvard at a significantly reduced rate--is one of the most popular University benefits among HUCTW members. According to University data, over **2,500 HUCTW members** took almost 10,000 TAP-eligible classes over the last three years. When asked whether TAP benefits were a significant part of why members came to work at Harvard, 44% of survey respondents indicated that yes, Harvard tuition assistance benefits played a significant role in their decision to come to work at Harvard.

Some members commented further:



"The tuition assistance program and the ability to take classes was the primary reason that I applied to work at Harvard, so TAP affordability has a lot of weight in my decision to stay."

"There have been a few times over the years when I interviewed for jobs outside of Harvard because they were either closer to home or paid more, but I ended up staying because of the great TAP benefits."

In 2019, in order to bring the University into IRS compliance, Harvard began applying a new tax policy to graduate-level TAP classes that meet certain criteria. The primary criteria is whether the course is considered to be "job related" according to the IRS definition—courses that are <u>not</u> considered "job related" are taxed on their value. The new policy resulted in significantly higher costs for many members

using the TAP program. Although the University initially provided some helpful transitional assistance to reimburse staff for some or all of the new costs, that assistance has ended, and members are now facing the full burden of the tax hit. In the comments section, members shared how the tax burden affected them:

"As a single person living with roommates out of necessity, paying the taxes was rough. Having my paycheck be only about \$900 when my bi-weekly pay is \$1350. That was really hard, and I racked up some credit card debt as a result."

"As a single mother of a child with special needs, having my pay cut in half for six months will be an extreme challenge. I am trying to better myself and advance my skills, but now I'm not sure I can afford to get a degree."

"I knew that there were new taxes, but I had no idea that they would be this much. It was a real financial burden to suddenly have all this money taken [out of my paycheck]. TAP is advertised as an opportunity to take Harvard classes for only \$40, but there has been a significant decrease in my income because of the tax costs."

HUCTW leaders have provided the following chart so that survey report readers can better understand the scope of the TAP tax issue for those who take graduate-level classes that are considered <u>non</u> jobrelated. The course costs listed come from the tuition pricing information provided on the websites of the Harvard Extension School and the T.H. Chan School of Public Health at the time of publication.

# Effect of the Tax on Tuition Assistance on the Average Member Pursuing a Non Job-Related Graduate Degree

The average HUCTW member earns \$63,000 and takes home \$1,869 net per pay period. TAP tax withholding happens over six pay periods each semester. If the average member is taking two classes each semester at the Extension School she will take home \$329 less per paycheck for 12 paychecks (a 17% pay reduction for almost half the year) due to the TAP tax withholding.

If she is pursuing a part-time MPH at the School of Public Health, she will take home \$535 less per paycheck for 6 paychecks (a 29% pay reduction) and \$839 less per paycheck for 12 paychecks (a 45% pay reduction for almost half the year) due to the TAP tax withholding.

Harvard School	Semester	Total Cost of Classes	Imputed Income	Tax Withheld per Semester	Tax Withheld per Paycheck	% Reduction Per Paycheck
Extension School	Spring Summer Fall	\$5960 \$5960 \$5960	\$710 \$5960 \$5960	\$246 \$1974 \$1974	\$41 \$329 \$329	2% per check 17% per check 17% per check
School of Public Health	Spring Summer Fall	\$14500 \$14500 \$14500	\$9250 \$14500 \$14500	\$3210 \$5031 \$5031	\$535 \$839 \$839	29% per check 45% per check 45% per check

As mentioned above, after certain thresholds are met, the most important factor in determining whether a member owes tax on a particular graduate-level class is whether the class is considered to be "job-related" based on IRS guidelines as applied by Harvard. Ultimately, each member's supervisor makes the final decision as to whether a course is deemed job-related or not. If a supervisor indicates that a course is <u>not</u> job-related, the member will have to pay tax on that course.

From survey comments, it is clear that some managers and HR offices are applying restrictive standards of "job-relatedness" to staff courses and this is contributing to higher costs for members. Some members shared:

"The willingness of supervisors to sign off on job-related coursework is largely left to the individual supervisor in terms of whether they will sign off or not. The training that Harvard provides to them allows for only the narrowest interpretation of the IRS guidelines. In most cases, I don't feel that the Administration's interpretation will allow many people in my position to pursue advanced degrees during their tenure."

"My manager has been told that she is not allowed to sign the "job relatedness" form for any classes I'm taking. HR told her that 'there is NO class that would EVER be job-related for my position."

When asked if the new TAP tax rules would deter members from taking TAP classes, **nearly 40% of respondents indicated that, yes, the new tax would deter them from signing up for classes in the future.** Some members noted:

"The changes are so confusing. [That combined with] all the additional costs makes it not even worth taking classes. If their purpose was to dissuade staff from taking classes, they achieved their goal."

"This new tax has made me reconsider taking classes, which is a shame because this is an educational institution and supporting employee education should be a top priority. The tax is a deterrent to continued learning."

## **PAID TIME OFF**

Survey results indicated that members experienced a number of disruptions to paid time off usage due to COVID-19. The most common of these was the inability to use vacation time. Lockdowns, travel restrictions, and changing workloads and attitudes towards work meant that many members have felt unable to use their paid vacation time during the pandemic. As a result, Union members are carrying unusually high vacation balances in their paid time off banks in 2021. Not only have they not been able to take time away to rest and recharge, but some are at risk of losing accrued vacation time because their hitting the accrual limit in their vacation banks. According to University data, HUCTW members had 184,800 more hours in their vacation banks in March 2021 than they did in March 2020. Survey respondents shared some of the reasons why they felt unable to take time away:

"Staff universally chose not to take time off in order not to burden colleagues. Vacation time went unused. Eventually several staff members, including management, fell ill due to overwork and had to take FMLA leave. Staff burnout was never addressed in spite of this. When asked, management stated that we were privileged to have kept our jobs."

"There's an idea that because we are all working from home it's been easier and there's less of acceptability for taking a vacation or personal days because 'you're already home so what's the difference' is the attitude even though we have more work than we did before COVID."

"We essential workers could not leave the state or take a proper vacation for a year because we would have had to quarantine for 2 week, putting an undo burden on our coworkers."

Conversely, we heard from some HUCTW staff who used an usually high number of their sick days and/or vacation days caring for dependents during the pandemic. Largely these were parents with children who were otherwise healthy but in need of care or schooling during the workday due to COVID closures. Some members shared that, while they were grateful for the additional 10 days of "dependent well care" that the University provided for this purpose on two occasions, they used up all their well care days early on because of the challenges of working while parenting/schooling. 20% of respondents reported that they used a significant portion of their sick/ vacation time caring for healthy dependents during the pandemic. Below are some of the stories shared by these HUCTW members:

'Gilberto' worked on campus throughout the pandemic and contracted COVID in 2020. He had to use a significant amount of sick time while he was recovering. On two occasions, he was required to quarantine because of possible exposures to COVID, one of which happened on the job. He had to use his sick time for each of these as well. He also had to use sick time to care for his children due to school and daycare closures. His once hefty sick bank now has a negative balance.

"I used up the 10 days of Dependent Well Care in approximately 1 hot second, as my first-grader with ADHD (who required basically constant oversight) was home and fully-remote until a few weeks ago."

"Unfortunately, while the ten [dependent well care] days was helpful it wasn't enough and my manager has complained about me taking the days off for childcare. They don't complain about people without kids taking time off, which feels discriminating."

HUCTW also heard from a small but important group of members who worked on campus throughout the pandemic and were forced to use large amounts of sick time and/or vacation time due to COVID symptoms or two-week quarantine. Some of these members had to quarantine multiple times due to possible exposure and went negative into their sick time balances. Two of these members--who were unable to take the survey online--shared their stories with us verbally (we have changed their names for anonymity):

**'Gilberto'** is 52 years old and has worked at Harvard for 22 years. Before COVID he had a positive sick leave balance, and as of this spring he had negative balance at minus-6 sick days. Gilberto's job required him to work on-campus throughout the pandemic. He contracted COVID last year and missed some work time when he was sick and also isolating to keep others safe. There were two other periods of time when he was required to quarantine because of possible exposures to COVID, including one in which the exposure happened on the job. He has also had to miss work when his children's schools were disrupted, and he has used some Dependent Well Care days for those days.

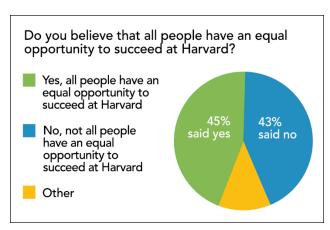
**'Robert'** is 54 years old and has worked in his department for 15 years. He also has a negative balance at minus-7 days as of this spring. He had COVID last year, missed a lot of work, also had another injury

during the pandemic which required him to use some sick time. He is back at work and healthy at this point, but with a negative balance he has told us he's very worried about his daughter's health with school starting soon – she is too young to be vaccinated.

# **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION**

Although many HUCTW members indicated that they have found the Harvard community to be welcoming and inclusive, many others shared that they or their colleagues did not always have this experience. While 45% of survey respondents indicated that they believe that all staff have an equal opportunity to succeed at Harvard, another 43% of respondents indicated that they do not believe this to be the case for all. In the comments section, members shared some of the experiences that have shaped their views:

"I have mental disabilities that I have not disclosed to anyone out of fear of discrimination, and it has taken a huge mental and physical toll on me at work. In addition, the only reason I got my current job was because I started with a temp position in my department and was able to prove that I could work well, and was later offered a [permanent] position. Because of my disabilities, I have a very hard time with traditional job interviews. If I had applied to this job without having done temp work here beforehand, I know I would have been rejected. The traditional interview



process makes it extremely difficult and unlikely for me, and people like me, to be able to get a job."

"I'm a young Black cis woman and I feel like I can't stay at Harvard for long because it is honestly so draining being the only Black person on my team, especially in this climate of wanting to talk about "race relations." Harvard needs to state there is a problem, a historic problem, and then make tangible goals and metrics that they will stick to. They are leaving real opportunities on the table for the sake of lip service."

"I feel that Harvard is better than most other employers when it comes to diversity and inclusion. People at Harvard seem to be less afraid of being themselves if that includes being LGBTQ which I absolutely love. When one of our coworkers came out as trans and changed their name, I was so happy that they felt safe enough to show their true self. I am very proud that Harvard appears to be a safe space for all. It's not perfect, but it's way better than many other places."

"I feel we older workers are looked upon as expensive dinosaurs at times, and that management would love us to quit so they can hire a younger/cheaper model. I do not see a lot of new staff hires going to qualified workers 50+ in age at Harvard."

"I am fortunate that my office is diverse. One of the few that include gay, straight, male, female, Asian, Black, Latino, etc. It is one reason I am engaged and patiently work with my department to advance,

### creating new opportunities to stay and contribute to the mission."

We also asked members if they believed that Harvard leaders were prepared to manage a culturally diverse workforce. 40% of respondents answered, yes to this question. However, another 43% of respondents answered no, indicating that they don't believe the University is prepared to manage a culturally diverse workforce.

In one of the final questions in this section, we asked HUCTW members, "What can we or Harvard leaders do to improve diversity and inclusion at Harvard?" Hundreds of members shared their thoughts—these are just a few of their responses:

"There is so much to be done, and perhaps a good starting point could be to make anti-racist training required, not just strongly recommended. There is also an extensive problem of faculty abusing their power and mistreating/bullying the staff they work with. For this, I do think it is essential for support staff feedback to be taken seriously. Harvard could take away faculty access to support staff--so if they want to have a faculty assistant, they need to learn to work with them in a fair, respectful way, otherwise they need to do their own work in that regard."

"Harvard needs to respect women in the workplace. Actively seek to promote cultural dialogues instead of focusing on protecting the university from accountability. Actually practice what they preach and hire people from different backgrounds to leadership positions. Work to address the rampant classism in Harvard."

"I wish I had the answers! Two suggestions: #1: provide all staff with some kind of mandatory "humanity" training, so there's more compassion when it comes to generally connecting with and working through tricky situations with staff/colleagues/faculty/students/public. #2: provide funding to support payment of interns. I have interviewed a wide range of candidates over the years who hold out hope that we could pay them, but when I remind them we have no budget, they turn down the offer of the internship because they are not in a financial position to take a free job. I feel strongly that being able to offer paid internships would attract more diverse candidates."

"Disabled folks who have long been requesting remote work and have been told no suddenly got to see how easy it actually was for that to be provided when the university pivoted in March 2020. Harvard needs to discuss ways to become a more accessible workplace. Also, consider the make-up of HR departments and the biases people in that gatekeeping role may have. But hiring a diverse workforce isn't enough, though. If someone comes to work here only to constantly face micro-aggressive racism, sexism, homophobia, or ableism, how can they be expected to thrive? The most racially diverse places in the Harvard community seem to be in the lower paying service jobs. Pay staff in these roles more money and create opportunities for their professional development."

"In terms of gender diversity and inclusion, it would be nice if there were more LGBTQ+ oriented resources. It seems like Harvard has done a lot of surface-level work (at least in the recruitment process) at addressing diverse gender identities, but it is clear that not everyone is quite on the same page once you're in an individual department. Usually not outright malicious, but some definitely need some more knowledge on the topic. It can be pretty isolating."

"Keep looking and learning at what other institutions/people/organizations are doing and what steps they are taking to improve and strive for diversity and inclusion. Continue to tout HUCTW/Harvard's own successes with diversity and inclusion, but also be transparent when failures occur, and strive to do

#### better."

"It is great these trainings are offered, but the people who SHOULD take these things and participate in committees NEVER DO. Beyond that, really truly focusing on diverse hiring and advancement. The only way we can move toward true DEIB is for those blocking the way to MOVE OUT, and those who've been silenced/passed over to MOVE IN AND UP. Thanks for asking us about all this. Fingers crossed that real change will result from it."

If you have concerns around race, age, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, or other aspects of workplace equity and inclusion, please do not hesitate to reach out to your HUCTW organizer(s). If you are unsure who that is, please email huctw.info@huctw.org or call 617-661-8289 and we will connect you with an HUCTW organizer who works with your department. Anything you share with an HUCTW organizer is confidential.

Although HUCTW works with members on a one-on-one basis around diversity and equity concerns every day, our Union is also taking a more proactive and coordinated approach to tackling these issues University-wide as a part of our 2021 negotiations.

Additionally, Union leaders have put a special focus on anti-racism, creating a new role within our HUCTW leadership—a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advocate—who will lead our efforts to promote anti-racism across Harvard, working with HUCTW members, Union leaders, and University leaders to identify and remove barriers that can prevent people of color from succeeding and thriving at Harvard, as well as helping HUCTW Organizers on a day-to-day basis better support members of color in the workplace.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. If you have questions, please contact the HUCTW office at huctw.info@huctw.org or 617-661-8289. Please see the following page for a list of HUCTW benefits you might not know about, from previous rounds of negotiations.