



## DISCUSSION & REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- Towards the beginning of the video, Mr. Kirk advocates for, “Diversity of thought. That’s right: people expressing different points of view on an issue. At most colleges today, that’s a dangerous, revolutionary idea – if that different point of view is not on the Left.” Why do you think that perspectives that differ from the progressive point of view are considered ‘dangerous’ on college campuses? Do you think that only the Left point of view should be accepted on college campuses? Why or why not?
- Mr. Kirk goes on to explain that, “The moment you enter college, you enter an indoctrination center. Remember orientation week? It starts there and never stops. They tell you to be open-minded, but they don’t really mean it.” Who do you think controls which points of view are acceptable or not on college campuses? Explain. Who do you think should control which points of view are acceptable or not, if by anyone or by any group? Explain.
- Later, Mr. Kirk points out that, “There are many departments at many colleges that don’t have a single conservative voice. The administration invariably supports Leftist positions. And, all those diversity administrators, they depend for their livelihood – that means their paycheck – on creating victims.” Why do you think that so many college administrators tend to support progressive agendas? How does indoctrinating so many students to believe that they are victims actually harm the student population?
- Mr. Kirk also shares with us that, “Diversity of race or gender or sexuality or any of the other distinctions du jour that universities glorify are, at best, superficial and, at worst, just plain destructive... because it pits racial, ethnic, and gender groups against one another. In other words, diversity, as practiced on your typical college campus divides, not unites people.” Do you agree with Mr. Kirk’s conclusion? Why or why not? How else might superficial diversity be damaging to any of the constituents of a college community?
- Towards the end of the video, Mr. Kirk proclaims that, “College is a place where they want everyone to look different, but think exactly the same... It’s time to diversify thought on campus. It’s time to demand a real education.” Why do you think that colleges tend to more heavily value superficial diversity rather than the meaningful and useful diversity of thought? What do you think Mr. Kirk means by the phrase ‘real education?’

## EXTEND THE LEARNING:

### CASE STUDY: Harvard Placemats

INSTRUCTIONS: Read the article “College-Distributed Advice on Race Discussions Divides Students,” then answer the questions that follow.

- What did Harvard do in their dining halls? Where did the printed content come from? Which office of the administration created the placemat? Who endorses the placemats? How did Ms. Waddell characterize the installation of the placemats? What did the placemat say in reference to the treatment of Syrian refugees? What is Emelyn A. dela Peña’s title?
- Why do you think that Harvard took this action? Do you think that the placemats constitute indoctrination? Explain. How would you feel if you experienced the same conditions at your school? What were the arguments against the placemats? Do you think those arguments have merit? Why or why not?
- How does this article support Mr. Kirk’s points in the video? How do you think that college campuses can get back to being more tolerant of balanced points of view?



# QUIZ

## THE LEAST DIVERSE PLACE IN AMERICA

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1. What type of diversity does Mr. Kirk say is lacking on American college campuses?
  - a. Racial.
  - b. Gender.
  - c. Sexual.
  - d. Thought.
  
2. What does diversity, as practiced on typical college campuses do to people?
  - a. Educates them.
  - b. Divides them.
  - c. Unites them.
  - d. Enriches them.
  
3. College is a place where they want everyone to look different, but think exactly the same.
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
4. The moment you enter college, you enter \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. a prison
  - b. an indoctrination center
  - c. a hotbed of racism
  - d. a land of inequality
  
5. Turns out that the “liberal” in “liberal education” means \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. leftist
  - b. liberation
  - c. conservative
  - d. classical



# QUIZ - ANSWER KEY

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# College-Distributed Advice on Race Discussions Divides Students

*Some students criticize College materials on discussing race and diversity issues as telling them what to think*

By Daphne C. Thompson, CRIMSON STAFF WRITER December 16, 2015

At the close of a semester that saw a surge in racial tensions on college campuses nationwide, Harvard outfitted a number of dining halls with laminated guides printed with what purports to be advice for students discussing issues related to race and diversity with family members, but that some undergraduates decried as telling them what to think politically.

Adapted from a similar guide published by an activist group called Showing Up for Racial Justice, the placemats address controversial topics including student activism about race at Yale and other colleges, the debate over whether the U.S. should welcome Syrian refugees, and Harvard's recent decision to change the title of its "House master" position.



Last week, the College outfitted a number of dining halls with laminated placemats described as "[guides] for holiday discussions on race and justice with loved ones." Aaron I. Henricks '16 said he found the publication of the placemats by an official Harvard office "beyond inappropriate and arrogant," criticizing their one-sided presentation of "highly debateable subjects." The placemats offer a single response to each proposed question.  
Helen Y. Wu

Dubbed "Holiday Placemat for Social Justice" and described as "a placemat guide for holiday discussions on race and justice with loved ones," the placemats pose hypothetical statements on

those topics and offer a “response” to each of those in a question and answer format. For example, under a section entitled “Yale/Student Activism,” the placemat poses the question, “Why are Black students complaining? Shouldn’t they be happy to be in college?” and suggests that students respond by saying, “When I hear students expressing their experiences on campus I don’t hear complaining.”

In the center of the placemat are what it calls “tips for talking to families,” with recommendations such as “Listen mindfully before formulating a thoughtful response” and “Breathe.”



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Katherine L Borrazzo

The placemats are endorsed by Harvard administrators. The product of a collaboration between the College’s Office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion and the Freshman Dean’s Office, the placemats first appeared in Annenberg last week. Jasmine M. Waddell, the freshman resident dean for Elm Yard, described the placemats’ goal as giving freshmen strategies for discussing those issues with their families over winter break.

“This is a way to say, ‘You’ve been exposed to a lot of different ideas, and particularly in this moment when there’s a lot of discussion about various topics, you’re going to go home and you may or may not be able to speak the same language,’” Waddell said. “It’s not that you have to believe in what’s on the placemat, but it gives you some tools to be able to have productive conversations.”

Waddell added that the Freshman Dean’s Office decided against emailing the placemats directly to students, instead installing them in Annenberg without comment as a piece of “passive programming.”

Some students, such as Ivraj S. Seerha '19, praised the placemats and their stances; other were not so positive.

Aaron I. Henricks '16 said he found the publication of the placemats by an official Harvard office “beyond inappropriate and arrogant,” criticizing their one-sided presentation of “highly debateable subjects.” The placemats offer a single response to each proposed question.

“I don’t think that’s the place of any Harvard employee to tell students the right way to think about the Syrian refugee crisis. That’s ridiculous to me,” Henricks said, referencing a statement on the placemat that reads “Racial justice involves welcoming Syrian refugees.”

Emelyn A. dela Peña, the College’s assistant dean of student life for equity, diversity, and inclusion, said the placemats do not express any official positions of the College. Still, she said their recommendations are in line with recent statements Harvard administrators have made in support of students of color.

“We’ve expressed support for black students on campus very visibly, for Muslim students during a time that’s difficult for them, and the House masters themselves voted to change their title,” dela Peña said. “I think the sentiments in the placemat are in line with the spirit of things that have been expressed to students.”

Dela Peña also maintained that they are not forcing students to hold any one opinion.

“It’s not about stifling opinion, but about giving us a starting point,” dela Peña said. “Some students might not find it helpful, and that’s OK too. But if they’re sparking dialogue across campus or even just in the dining hall, I think we’ve done a good job by helping students to have difficult conversations.”

Dean of Freshmen Thomas A. Dingman '67 acknowledged that some statements on the placemats, such as the one on Syria, may be controversial, but said others, like the quadrant defending Yale student activists, were more rooted in fairness than politics.

Waddell, too, maintained that the placements are “residential education but not indoctrination.”

Dela Peña said she received positive feedback on the placemats from freshmen like Seerha, prompting her to forward them to the masters of Harvard’s 12 undergraduate residential Houses. A number of Houses, including Dunster, Currier, and Mather, elected to print the placemats or display them on television screens in their dining halls.

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