



The Harvard Club of Birmingham
2019 Annual Report

December 2019

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Letter from the President

What a year!

It's always nice to say this... In 2019, we did what we set out to do in 2018. We refreshed our club and engaged more clearly and strategically with our communities. We brought new energy to our mission, new leadership to the club and set ourselves up for a great new year. Now, our goal is to be able to say the same thing in 2020. Let's keep up the energy!

As we continue to build a strong foundation, we do feel that now is a good time to tackle some larger challenges for Harvard in Alabama. Namely, brain drain. Despite the fact that we have tremendous opportunities for leadership and change, we have noticed as a club that too often talented alums from Alabama do not return to Alabama and too few alums from elsewhere move here. This net brain drain makes it harder to be a vibrant club and harder for us as leaders to build growing and vibrant communities and economic endeavours. In 2020, we would like to make efforts as a club to reverse this to the extent we can.

This report, therefore, lays out our plans as we head into 2020. It covers 3 major topics:

1. **Celebrating our growth in 2019:** We have done a lot in 2019 and it's important to take time to reflect on these accomplishments.
2. **Laying out our plans for 2020:** The club does a lot for its size and will continue to do a lot. We will maintain a sustainable pace of engagement and take on some strategic projects designed to help the club's long term impact in Alabama.
3. **Asking for your help!** This club lives on the energy and contributions of alumni like yourselves. To that, we need your help in two key ways:
 - As a volunteer! We have a number of open positions in the club as well as needs for venues, speakers, and more. We need folks to step up to engage. The club is a wonderful platform to be creative and experimental as well, but it can only happen when people volunteer!
 - As a donor! In previous years, we have done very little fundraising, but with our goals for 2020 and plans to sustain these, we will need to raise funds. At the most basic level, we need dues-paying members. Please become a member and renew each year!

Looking forward to a great year ahead.

Will Wright, COL '03
President (2018 - 2020), The Harvard Club of Birmingham

Celebrating 2019

With renewed energy and a commitment to increase value to members, we launched in 2019 with ambitious goals. Many of which we achieved and even beat, but several of which we weren't able to hit. Below is the list of key metrics from our year end report in 2018 and how we fared against them this year. We would love to have your feedback on our metrics for 2020.

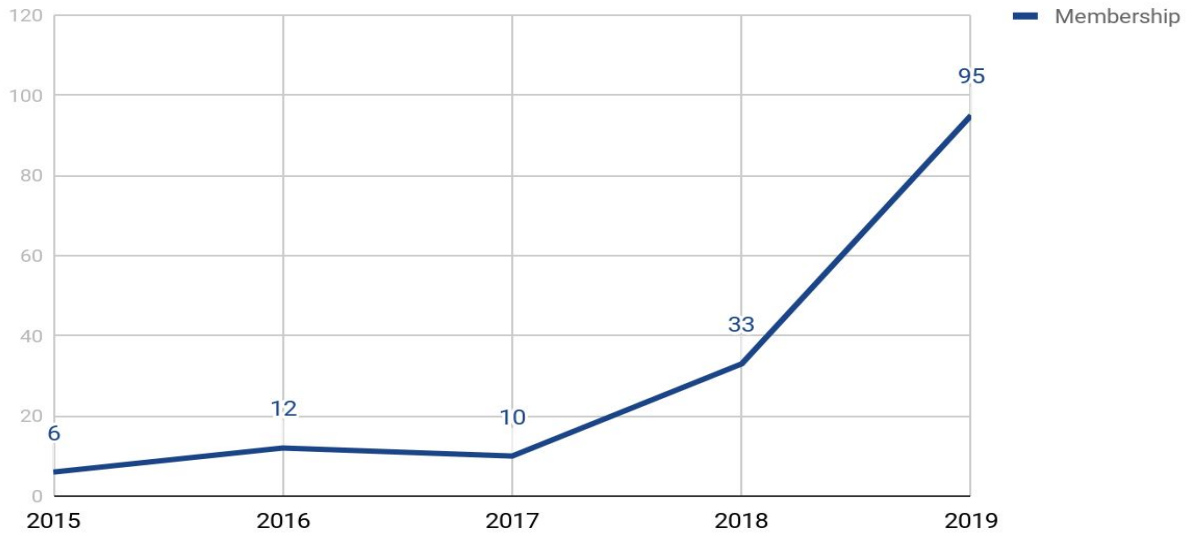
Key metrics for the club

Metric	2019 goal	2019 Actual	Actual over goal
Paid club members	80	95	+19%
Events	33	90	+173%
Alumni interviewers	40	36	-10%
Prize Books awarded	10	17	+70%
External funds raised	\$10,000	\$4,802	-52%
Scholarship awards	\$10,000	<\$200	Miss
Newsletters / VIA	24 / 0	43 / 6	+104%
501(c)(3) Status	Yes / Active	Yes / Active	Success!
Direct community service hours/value	192 / \$8,590	525 / \$28,105	+173%

Membership up nearly 3x from 2018

Membership is the lifeblood of the club. Not only are the dollars collected critical for club events and operations, but it's a signal to bigger donors that we have an engaged group aligned with our aims. Starting in 2018, we commenced a focused membership drive that tripled Club membership in 2018. In 2019, we really hit the gas and got membership to 95 dues-paying members as of December 20th (we peaked at over 100 in Q4). We continue to strive to increase membership as a clear metric of support and engagement from our alumni.

Membership



We had 90 excellent events

We had a number of really stellar events in 2019. From open community lectures, to meet and greets, to interviewing Super Saturdays, to book groups and a museum tour, to debates, to deep dives, and beyond, we really knocked it out of the park in terms of trying new things and getting energy at these events. There are just too many events to go through them all!

We are managing the key responsibilities of the club better

We have a certain set of key duties as a club that we must do. These are: (1) conducting interviews; (2) welcoming new alums to the area; (3) hosting key events (e.g., Harvard-Yale viewing); and (4) delivering Harvard Book prizes to high schools throughout Alabama. We effectively did these activities in 2019 with more clarity and focus. As you can see in our key metrics for 2019, we've increased our active interviewer cohort, over-delivered on book prizes, and have welcomed many new alums to the region this past year.

Our financials are healthy and more organized

We will end this year with \$6,712.06 in the bank which is up from \$3,856.91 at the end of 2018 and end of 2017 of \$4,237.03. This is reflective of our focus on building a financial base that can support a larger impact in 2020 and beyond. Other key activities include: (1) registering as a nonprofit and (2) bringing on board a bookkeeper to keep us organized. Our expenses will increase in 2020 due to expanding mission operations of the club such as sponsoring scholarships.

We have a growing set of new and returning officers in the club

While many officers of the club are the same as in 2018, we have new officers joining us, which is excellent and vitally important for the health and longevity of the club. Our currently and most recent officers are:

Returning officers:

- President: **Will Wright**, COL '03
- HAA Regional Director & Board Member at Large, The E.O. Wilson Distinguished Lecture Series: **Rowena Saldarriaga Frazer**, COL '76

New officers:

- Chair, Cultural Events and Strategic Initiatives: **Lauren Faraino**, COL '13
- Secretary: **Loren Gary**, MDV '86
- Chair, Harvard Prize Book: **Mark Martin**, EDLD 2017
- Treasurer & Chair, Harvard Engagement and Community Service: **Raymond Osbun**, COL '75
- REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES
 - Auburn: **Rebecca O'Neal Dagg**, MAR '99
 - Huntsville: **Tara Mello**, ALB '93
 - Tuscaloosa: **Colton Houston**, COL '04

Officers who have retired from their posts this year include:

- Vice President; Chair, Membership and Events: **John R. Whitman**, GSE '79
- Treasurer: **Anne Knox Averitt**, HLS '11

We sincerely thank John and Anne Knox for their wonderful service to Harvard in Alabama.

Our goals for 2020

As we move into 2020, we want to maintain our momentum as a club. Our proposed goals center around 3 major areas: (1) maintaining a sustainable pace of engagement across the state; (2) bringing in new volunteers and leaders for the club; and (3) raising funds to expand our focus on reversing brain drain in Alabama. More details below.

Deliver a consistent level of engagement

During 2020, our goal as a club is to deliver consistent, statewide events and engagement. We have experimented significantly in 2019 and in 2020 we will be focused on finding our rhythm as a club. We will therefore seek to achieve the following goals:

- Regular events in all regions of the state, including Birmingham but also Tuscaloosa, Montgomery, Auburn, Huntsville and other regions
- Better use of technology to connect alums all over the state, particularly during key events (e.g., lunch and learns, invited speakers)
- Strong engagement with students through interviews, mentorship, and book prizes

Bring new leadership and volunteer support for the club

We have been very fortunate to have new leadership in the club in 2019. This has been excellent! As we continue to grow in 2020, our goal is to continue to bring in new leaders and volunteers for the club. That's because we need support!

Specifically, we need to bring in leaders in the following areas:

- **Chair of membership:** This is a critical role. Membership is our club's lifeblood and having a leader who can regularly welcome new alums to the club and engage past alumni members to become members will be critical.
- **Chair of website and social media presence:** We have a critical need to improve our website and social media presence. This person will work to elevate our online presence.
- **Chair of schools and scholarships (i.e. interviews statewide):** We currently have been plugging the gap for our schools and scholarships chair, but this is perhaps our most critical role as a club. Organizing interviews is critical.

We also need volunteers who can support the club. We would very much like to hear from you if you can

- Provide a **venue for events!**
- Become a **mentor for students!**
- **Give a talk** at a lunch and learn or at Health Rounds!
- **Engage in a study** of brain drain!

Raise funds to expand our impact

To support our expanded growth and desires for impact, we are seeking to raise more funds. These funds will go to several key activities including:

- Better events across the state
- A study of brain drain in the state
- Activities to engage students at Cambridge to come back to Alabama

One thing you can do right now

We need your support. If you would like to be more involved with the mission and with Harvard in Alabama in any capacity, **please raise your hand!** Whether it's a one-off event, volunteering a venue, speaking at an event, or giving a little money, it all helps. In the coming weeks, we will make you aware of these efforts and have several asks coming as well. Please make an effort.

We are excited for the possibilities that 2020 holds and look forward to our continued growth as a club in Alabama.

Join us!