



Radcliffe Club of San Francisco

108 Poppy Court
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

May 22, 2021

Dean Tomiko Brown-Nagin
Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University
10 Garden Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
Via postal mail and email

Dear Dean Brown-Nagin,

The Radcliffe Club of San Francisco, founded in 1898, was the first, and is now the only remaining, independent Radcliffe Club in the world. At our May 22, 2021, Annual Meeting, it was the unanimous sense of the membership that we send this letter regarding the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study's unexpected rebranding as the Harvard Radcliffe Institute.

We oppose the rebranding. The Radcliffe name, in its evolution from Radcliffe College to Radcliffe Institute, represents Radcliffe's history and intellectual traditions and should be preserved. Many alumnae have supported the Institute over the years because they believed it honored and carried forward this history and these traditions. They have been dismayed by the rebranding.

We respectfully request that the full name, "Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University," appear prominently at least once in every document (paper, digital, email or website) that refers to the Institute. We join other alumnae in urging that "Radcliffe Institute at Harvard" could be used as a short title. We note that some other institutes at the university, such as the Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies and the Institute for Applied Computational Science, do not have "Harvard" as the first word of the title.

Thank you for considering our request.

Yours truly,

Handwritten signature of Alison Boeckmann in cursive.

Handwritten signature of Patricia Bourne in cursive.

Alison Boeckmann '61 and Patricia Bourne '61
Co-Presidents, Radcliffe Club of San Francisco

cc: Harvard University President Lawrence Bacow

The following response from Dean Brown-Nagin was received by email to Alison Boeckmann and Pat Bourne on June 7, 2021, cc: to Harvard University President Lawrence Bacow and Stacey Elwood, Associate Dean for External Relations at the Radcliffe Institute

Dear Alison and Patricia (if I may),

Thank you for your message. I value your perspectives as Radcliffe alumnae, your leadership of the Radcliffe Club of San Francisco, and your taking the time to convey your members' feedback on our branding. I also want to commend the Club's efforts to document the experiences of Radcliffe College students through your oral history project, which we are proud to support and archive at the Schlesinger Library.

Please know that the decision to adopt "Harvard Radcliffe Institute" as a shorthand name was not made lightly or with an intent to diminish or obscure Radcliffe's history. Rather, it is an effort to increase understanding and awareness of Radcliffe's work—now, in the past, and in the future—within the Harvard community and the broader public. Unlike other institutes at the University, Radcliffe is one of Harvard's Schools. In claiming our space within the University, we believe that more people will recognize the integral role we play at Harvard and learn about the unique history leading up to our founding. For more background on our branding efforts, I encourage you to visit the webpage below.

<https://www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/about-radcliffe/a-fresh-look-for-the-radcliffe-institute-for-advanced-study>

I also appreciate your suggestion that we list our full name in all materials that refer to the Institute. For reasons outlined on the webpage above, we feel that it is important to foster awareness of our new shorthand, *though we will also continue to leverage our full name in our communications.*

I want to thank you again for sharing your thoughts with me. As I remarked during our recent Radcliffe Day program, the history of Radcliffe College [remains central to our work](#) at the Institute today. I am committed to ensuring that this history will continue to guide our work in the years to come and be known to those who engage with us.

With best wishes,
Tomiko