



Jonathan Eisen [@phylogenomics](#)

Sep 12 19 · 11 tweets

Letter from [@Harvard University](#) President to affiliates (e.g., alumni like me) regarding funding from Jeffrey Epstein [#NotImpressed](#)



HARVARD
Office of the President

Dear Members of the Harvard Community,

All of us have been horrified by the revelations regarding Jeffrey Epstein, and I write today to update our community on steps we are taking in view of current information about his philanthropy to Harvard.

Let me start by emphasizing the obvious: Epstein's reported criminal actions were utterly abhorrent. They flagrantly offend the values of our society and this institution, and we condemn them. We also recognize the profound pain that Epstein caused to his victims and their families, and we commend their courage in coming forward to bring his crimes to light.

Epstein's connections as a donor to this University, and other institutions, raise important concerns. With that in mind, two weeks ago I asked for a review of his donations to Harvard. Our decentralization makes such a review more complicated than it would be at some other institutions. I want to emphasize that this review is ongoing. Our review to date indicates that between 1998 and 2007, Epstein made a number of gifts to support various faculty and institutional research activities across the University. The largest of these was a \$6.5 million gift in 2003 to support the Program for Evolutionary Dynamics. The University received other gifts, which totaled approximately \$2.4 million, based on current information. Each of these gifts from Epstein and his affiliated foundations to Harvard University predates his guilty plea in June 2008. To date, we have uncovered no gifts received from Epstein or his foundation following his guilty plea. Moreover, we specifically rejected a gift from Epstein following his conviction in 2008. We have also recently learned that Stephen Kosslyn, a former faculty member and a beneficiary of Epstein's philanthropy, designated Epstein as a Visiting Fellow in the Department of Psychology in 2005. We are seeking to learn more about the nature of that appointment from Dr. Kosslyn, who no longer works at the University.

The majority of Epstein's gifts were designated for current use, not as endowed funds, and nearly all were spent years ago for their intended purposes in support of research and education. Our ongoing review of these gifts has identified one current use fund and one small endowment designated to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences with a total unspent balance of \$186,000. After consultation with the Dean of the FAS, we have decided that the University will redirect the unspent resources to organizations that support victims of human trafficking and sexual assault. This is an unusual step for the University, but we have decided it is the proper course of action under the circumstances of Epstein's egregiously repugnant crimes. The issue of the gifts given to institutions by donors at Jeffrey Epstein's suggestion, is also one that has emerged in recent days, and we are looking into this as part of our ongoing review.

Epstein's behavior, not just at Harvard, but elsewhere, raises significant questions about how institutions like ours review and vet donors. I will be convening a group here at Harvard to review how we prevent these situations in the future. I also hope to engage our peer institutions to consider how we can collectively improve our processes. We can all learn from each other.

Let me end where I began. Jeffrey Epstein's crimes were repulsive and reprehensible. I profoundly regret Harvard's past association with him. Conduct such as his has no place in our society. We act today in recognition of that fact. And we do so knowing that the scourge of sexual assault continues to demand our close attention and concerted action.

Harvard is not perfect, but you have my commitment as president that we will always strive to be better.

Sincerely,

Lawrence S. Bacow

Lawrence S. Bacow
President
Harvard University

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Why am I not impressed? How about #1 - WTF did this take so long to make any comment? This is just absurd.

#2 - really - how can it take weeks for a place like Harvard to find out who they got money from? This is just silly.

#3 - this has repeated attempts to not take responsibility by saying others also did bad things e.g. "as a donor to this University, and other institutions, and "Epstein's behavior, not just at Harvard, but elsewhere, " -- really [@Harvard University](#) - how about just dealing with your mess?

#4 the President of [@Harvard University](#) expresses "regret" this happened - like he is sad they got caught? sorry but being regretful something happened is not an apology

#5 - re "All of us have been horrified by the revelations " let it be clear that [@Harvard University](#) did not make any of these revelations - [@Harvard University](#) has sat in pathetic silence while whistleblowers, reporters & others made the revelations

6 - the emphasis on whether or not they took money after Epstein's conviction is only minimally important - [@Harvard University](#) kept spending the money, apparently until LAST WEEK [#FFS](#)

7 - by keeping the money UNTIL LAST WEEK, [@Harvard University](#) let Epstein bask in the glory of funding activities at [@Harvard University](#) and he continued to interact with those he funded which I believe compromises the integrity of all of the work from places like the PED group

#8 - sorry - but actually I was wrong saying they kept the money UNTIL LAST WEEK - they still have the money " the University WILL REDIRECT the unspent resources" - so it has not happened - does that mean [@Martin A. Nowak](#) can still use this money? [#WTF?](#)

9 - why was this simply sent out as an email to [@Harvard University](#) affiliates and not posted anywhere on the web as far as I can tell - here are the latest news stories from [@Harvard University](#) I could find

SCIENCE

Playing our song

Online Music Lab studies questions of melody and humanity

SCIENCE

A precise chemical fingerprint of the Amazon

Drone-based monitoring system reveals important information on the health of the Amazon

WORLD

Symposium celebrates career of William Julius Wilson

Professor influenced the national conversation on race for half a century

WORLD

New report urges Congress to close its growing tech gap

Harvard Kennedy School researchers craft materials on evolving areas, along with policy considerations

#10 - As recently as July [@Harvard University](#) said "the University has no plans to return the \$6.5M to Epstein" [newsweek.com/harvard-wont-r...](#) so this letter now, without ever mentioning their previous statements is just complete, utter BS

Source: <https://x.com/phylogenomics/status/1172326369897828355>

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