

JOHN HARVARD'S JOURNAL



Transition Time

DREW GILPIN FAUST announced on June 14 that she would step down as Harvard's twenty-eighth president on June 30, 2018, the end of the new academic year, concluding service that began on July 1, 2007. Her

planned retirement from Massachusetts Hall is a logical transition:

- It coincides with the scheduled completion of The Harvard Campaign (which had raised \$8 billion as of the date of her announcement).
- It echoes the orderly transition effected by Neil L. Rudenstine, who announced in May 2000—just after the celebration for the \$2.6-billion University Campaign—that he would conclude his presidency in June 2001.

Conveying the news now provides the Harvard Corporation (enlarged and reconstituted during Faust's tenure) with plenty of time to conduct a search for her successor. It also affords her time to

pursue remaining items on her likely to-do list: further fundraising (for the Allston science and engineering center shown above, House renewal, financial aid, the arts, and so on); and advocacy for higher education and public support for basic research (at a time of heightened political rhetoric concerning both).

From a personal standpoint, the transition should have the welcome effect of enabling Faust to contemplate the end of a grueling travel schedule (campaign events worldwide, and this year, frequent trips to Washington to discuss changes in immigration policy, federal funding for research, and more), and to enjoy time with her husband, Charles Rosenberg, Monrad professor of the social sciences emeritus (an historian of medicine), and family members and friends. Faust turns 70 this September, and Rosenberg will be 81 in November.

Envois...

IN HER MESSAGE emailed to the community, Faust wrote:

It will be the right time for the tran-

Drew Faust



KRIS SNIBBER/HAC



JOHN HARVARD, general contractor, was flat-out this summer—in all seriousness, perhaps the University's busiest building season. Marquee projects include assembling the future home of much of the engineering and applied sciences faculty.

Construction was halted during the financial crisis, in early 2010; the new facility, redesigned in a smaller footprint, is to open by the 2020-2021 academic year. Work also began on the district energy plant that will serve the area. Mockups of the science complex's façade, shown here, suggest the detailed construction ahead. Meanwhile, Harvard Business School's sidewalk superintendents had plenty to watch at Klarman Hall (below), the future conference center, where the applied scientists will no doubt be welcomed (see page 22).

(continued on page 17)



FROM TOP LEFT: TAKEN FROM THE SEAS CONSTRUCTION CAM; COURTESY OF SEAS (2); JIM HARRISON

sition to Harvard's next chapter, led by a new president.

It has been a privilege beyond words to work with all of you to lead Harvard, in the words of her alma mater, "through change and through storm." We have shared ample portions of both over the last decade and have confronted them together in ways that have made the University stronger—more integrated both intellectually and administratively, more effectively governed, more open and diverse, more in the world and across the world, more innovative and experimental. The dedication of students, faculty, and staff to the ideal and excellence of Harvard, and to the importance of its pursuit of Veritas has made all this possible. I know this commitment will carry Harvard forward, from strength to strength, in the years to come.

Separately, the Corporation's senior fellow, William F. Lee, wrote of Faust, "For the last 10 years, she has approached every

day with a singular purpose:

to ensure that Harvard remains the pre-eminent academic institution in the world by constantly driving Harvard forward." He reminded the community that during that period, her presidency was especially challenging:

She came into office after a period of strife and controversy on campus, and she quickly restored trust and a sense of common purpose.... But just over a year later, Harvard faced an even more profound challenge—as did the rest of the world—in the form of a global financial crisis. While the crisis challenged every major research university, Harvard was particularly hard hit. Drew acted swiftly and decisively to minimize exposure, curtail risk, and chart a disciplined and responsible course forward. She made hard decisions—and unpopular ones.

Their full statements, and a detailed overview of Faust's presidency (the important challenges sketched in Lee's note, plus ac-

ademic priorities such as engineering and applied sciences; governance reforms; the rebooted fundraising campaign; initiatives on diversity and inclusion; and more) and an outline of pending business for the Corporation and a new president (investing in life sciences amid uncertainty in Washington, D.C.; the University's evolving, and no less uncertain, financial model; articulating Harvard's strategy leading up to its four-hundredth anniversary in 2036) are discussed at

IN THIS ISSUE

- 16 Making a MOOC
- 19 Harvard Portrait
- 20 News Briefs
- 21 Back-to-School Bookshelf
- 22 Yesterday's News
- 23 Brevia
- 25 The Undergraduate
- 26 New Fellows
- 28 Sports



length at harvardmag.com/faustexit-17. As is customary, *Harvard Magazine* will publish a full review of President Faust's administration at its conclusion, following what may well be an eventful final year.

...and the Search

IN A CONVERSATION on June 14, Lee commented on organizing a search to ensure that "the transition is smooth and in the best interest of Harvard." It will differ from prior searches because the Corporation now comprises a dozen members plus the president (who will not be involved)—twice

the size of earlier cohorts. Lee said the enlarged Corporation brings to the task broader "experience, expertise, and judgment" than were available to the senior governing board in 2006-2007, and more channels through which to reach out for ideas and sug-



William F. Lee

STEPHANIE MITCHELL/HARVARD

gestions. He also noted the "unique" asset of having four university leaders affiliated with the Corporation (Faust; Wellesley and Duke president emerita Nannerl O. Keohane, whose service concluded June 30; Tufts president emeritus Lawrence S. Bacow; and Princeton president emerita

Shirley M. Tilghman) and said, "We'd be crazy not to get the benefit of that." Bacow and Tilghman will obviously be directly involved, Lee continued, and he expects that Keohane's continued counsel will be sought as well.

Consistent with past practice, three Overseers will join the Corporation members, making a 15-person search committee. The full roster was released in a July 11 message from Lee to the community. He also announced that following the precedents set in 2006, when the search for a successor to Lawrence H. Summers resulted in Faust's appointment, faculty and student advisory committees will again be formally organized—joined this time by a committee of staff members. Lee solicited perspectives on:

- the principal opportunities and challenges likely to face Harvard and higher education in the coming years and the priorities that our new president should have most in mind;
- the qualities and experience most important in the next president; [and]
- any individuals you believe warrant serious consideration as possible candidates.

Comments may be directed to pssearch@harvard.edu or mailed to Harvard University Presidential Search Committee, Loeb House, 17 Quincy Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138.

Further details on the search appear at harvardmag.com/prezsearch-17.

~JOHN S. ROSENBERG

Making a MOOC

A WELL-KNOWN public-health anecdote, the birth-weight paradox, is often used to illustrate how cause and effect can become tangled: "You probably know that maternal smoking during pregnancy is associated with increased infant mortality. What you may not know," explains Miguel Hernán, "is that maternal smoking is associated with a lower risk of mortality among infants who had a low birth weight." In other words, in a cohort of low-birth-weight babies, those

born to mothers who smoked were healthier than those born to mothers who didn't. Could maternal smoking be beneficial for some infants—or is there some other explanation? Hernán, the Kolokotronis professor of biostatistics and epidemiology, teaches students how to use a tool called a causal diagram—an intuitive picture that maps the causal structure of problems—to clarify what is really going on. (The answer: the *other* causes of low birth-weight are associated with health problems more severe than those caused by maternal smoking.)

Hernán is a hot property: a leading, and



The former Holyoke Center's rear entry was razed during its makeover into Smith Campus Center; surrounding streets gave way to heavy work on Lowell House, and finish work at Winthrop, including new faculty-dean quarters—all part of undergraduate House renewal. In addition (though not shown): Lavietes Pavilion will reemerge for fall basketball; the Sackler Museum is being renovated for new users; and Soldiers Field Park renovation continues. And smaller nips and tucks, as at Grays Hall in Harvard Yard (for a serenity room and BGLTQ offices), were undertaken, too.



FROM TOP LEFT: HARVARD MAGAZINE/JC; JIM HARRISON/S; HARVARD MAGAZINE/JC

charismatic, exponent of these causal diagrams, which in the past 20 years have become critical tools for assessing the effectiveness of treatment strategies and policy interventions in the health and social sciences. Now, as one of a small number of Harvard faculty members each year whose course is selected to become a MOOC (a massive, online, open course), he is about to go global. Just 20 new courses are chosen by a faculty review committee annually, all of them ultimately offered to learners in at least one free version—part of Harvard's commitment to improve access to education globally through HarvardX (HX), the University's online course initiative. Hernán's course is based on Epidemiology (EPI) 289: "Models for Causal Inference," the core offering he's taught for 14 years at the Harvard Chan School of Public Health (HSPH). *Harvard Magazine* accompanied Hernán during the making of his MOOC to find out what it takes to produce one, and how that compares to creating a traditional course.

Examples of other real-world public-health problems like the birth-weight paradox—"hooks" to engage and draw learn-

ers into the subject quickly—open each of the course's five lessons, and are one of the major changes in pedagogical approach Hernán has made to adapt his course for HarvardX. (HX project lead April Opoliner advocated the "hook" strategy.) With in each lesson, five seven-minute videos produced in the HX studio expand on the problem introduced in the hook; a closing video then demonstrates how causal diagrams are used to resolve it. Supplementing these lessons are case studies shot on location at HSPH in which Hernán interviews leading public-health scholars. Because causal diagrams can be applied to problems in many disciplines, he hopes in a future version to expand the cases to include interviews with faculty members from outside the health sciences.

Faculty members typically spend 96 to 142 hours helping produce and run an eight-week MOOC, according to HarvardX estimates. The production of Hernán's—its pacing dictated by his availability amid a packed schedule of lectures in the United States and abroad—will have spanned 20 months, a bit longer than usual. But when complete, it will free him from much of the

time and expense of traveling to teach this fundamental introductory material.

IN THE HARVARDX STUDIO, Hernán stands in front of a greenscreen, as technicians prepare to shoot the first video of the course. It's early 2016. A boom mike hangs from the ceiling, just out of frame. "3-1, take 4," calls out HX videographer Alex Auriema. *Craaack!* The arm of the clapperboard snaps down, signaling a new scene. It is Hernán's first day in front of the camera, and the videographers have been prepping him, adjusting his clothes, attaching a microphone to his shirt, taking his eyeglasses on and off, offering him water, repositioning lights, adding a diffuser, running sound checks, and marking the floor with colored tape to ensure repeatability in the perfect positioning of equipment—a whirl of activity. Hernán says he's a little nervous, too, even though he knows the material so well that he gives three near-