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Procurement policy, admissions, tenure, personals

SEGREGATION, NOW AND THEN

I ENJOYED Drew Gilpin Faust's delightful "Living History" (May-June, page 38), about racial segregation in Virginia, but your cover line, "When Schools Were Segregated," is erroneous. It suggests that schools are not now segregated.

I challenge you to produce evidence that anywhere teachers in classes with a high proportion of black and Hispanic students are as qualified and experienced as teachers in classes with high proportions of white and Asian students in the same school district. In Concord, California, where I have resided for more than 50 years, the school district not only discriminates against blacks and Hispanics in the quality of teaching staff, but also buses students from poor (and thus minority) neighborhoods past the nearest high school to a more distant high school that has predominantly poor (and minority) students, and buses students from rich (and thus white) neighborhoods past their nearest school to a much more distant school whose student body is rich and thus includes few blacks or Hispanics.

The motivation for this segregation is that the richer people want the best teachers and most of the resources for their own children. The teachers prefer to teach in schools with wealthy students, and the teachers' union makes seniority and not "equality" determine the staffing of schools. Unfortunately, in our democracy the wealthy have more influence than the poor do, and the quality of education for our poor is a disgrace.

Clyde D. Bird Jr. '45
Concord, Calif.

FAUST'S STORY about her early awareness of segregation hit very close to home. I



was raised in Arlington, Virginia, and attended all-white schools until I graduated from high school in 1947. My sudden awareness of discrimination came at a later age than was the case for the nine-year-old Faust. I suspect that we all have moments in our lives when we suddenly understand something that has been in front of our eyes for some time. I had such an event in the summer of 1944, when I was 14. I took a job as a soda-fountain clerk in a national chain drugstore in Arlington. In those days the drugstores had full-service lunch counters. The manager gave me a brief training and explained that any black customers were to be served at the end of the counter on a "take-out" basis only. Although I knew at that time that the blacks went to separate schools and were asked to sit in the back of the bus, it was not until I was told that blacks could not sit at the counter that I began to understand the unfairness of such discrimination. Later in the day, I asked my mother why the blacks were treated this way. She was a kind and thoughtful lady and usually had a good answer for every-

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thing, but in this case she said, "That's just the way it is." As with many whites, we needed a push to begin to see discrimination not as something that existed, but as something that was just simply not fair.

RICHARD H. WILCOX, M.B.A. '56
Lady Lake, Fla.

COMMERCE AND THE ACADEMY


THANKS TO DEREK BOK for speaking out against commercialization of the university ("The Purely Pragmatic University," May-June, page 28.) I would add one major symptom to those he enumerates: ever greater reliance on temporary and part-time labor to teach undergraduates. This practice is a bit off to one side of former president Bok's main concern, the university's attempt to sell its resources profitably. But cost-cutting and revenue-seeking are two parts of the same commercial package, and they have progressed in tandem during the past three decades. The results of casualizing the university work force are unfortunate, both for students' learning and for the well-being of college teachers.

It would be healthy for university administrations to restore decent working conditions for the reserve army of the semi-employed. I'm gloomy about that possibility, though. The privatizing impetus that is everywhere in charge may be stronger even than well-meaning administrators' ability to resist.


RICHARD OHMANN, Ph.D. '60
Hawley, Mass.

BOK EXPRESSES THE CONCERN that the university will be shaped in undesirable ways by active commercialization. As true as that no doubt is, some of the dangers of commercialization can enter universities through failure to be participants in the commercial world, albeit as nonprofits. Universities can through inaction leave the field open to firms whose profit-seeking requires control over the dissemination of the source material of scholarship and of its results, thus turning libraries into agents of copyright holders. When libraries cannot freely make available their resources, the mix between libraries being private goods and public goods shifts in the direction of the private, thus making libraries less attractive to supporters from outside their parent institutions.

It is well known that libraries, through

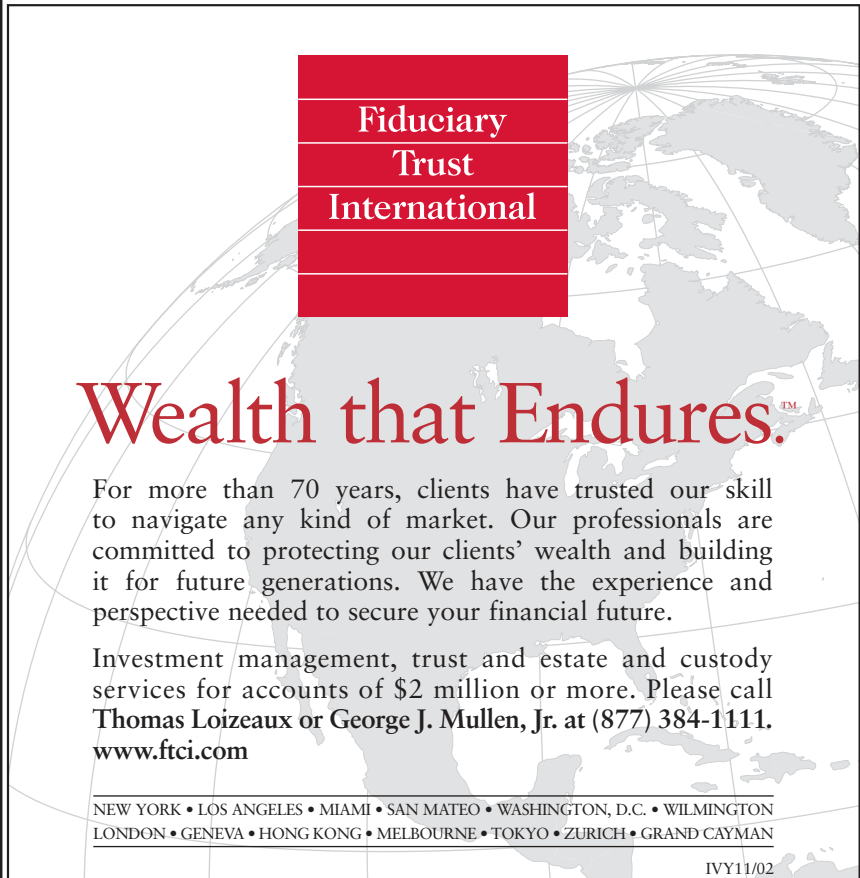


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subscriptions, are buying back the scholarship produced by their faculties after that scholarship has gone through the hands of the commercial sector. Besides bringing significantly rising costs to universities, the electronic environment places control over dissemination in the hands of those whose primary motive is profit rather than the furtherance of scholarship.

Less noticed has it been that libraries have been ceding control over much of the basic source material of scholarship. To name only a few instances, early English books, early American books, and nineteenth-century African-American journals are now—as parts of digital collections—basically the property of business firms. For current students and employees of major universities, the result is more access, from office and home, to the world's cultural resources than has ever been the case before. This comes, however, at the price of an inequality that is not inherent in the rarity of the material but rather in the mode of its dissemination. Concretely, a library can lend a book or a microfilm; it cannot lend a portion of a digital file, because it doesn't own a physical manifestation of it.

Although the reasons behind this entry

DAVID IVES

HARVARD MAGAZINE notes with sadness the death on May 16 of David O. Ives '41, M.B.A. '43. He was most widely known in Boston and in public-television circles nationwide for his stewardship of WGBH, which he made the premier supplier of programming for the Public Broadcasting Service. But David loomed largest at Wadsworth House and then 7 Ware Street as a member of the magazine's board of directors from 1978 to 1985 and then as president from 1986 to 1995. During those years of growth and change, David was unwavering in his support for the magazine's service to its alumni readers. We remember and honor that commitment, even as we miss David's endearing combination of Puritan propriety with true warmth and a twinkling sense of humor. ~THE EDITORS



COURTESY OF WGBH

of the commercial sector into academia are different from those put forth by Bok, the long-term implications are similarly disturbing, perhaps even more so, since only widespread concerted action can result in reversal.

KENNETH CARPENTER
Harvard University Library (retired)
Newton Centre, Mass.

RACE-CONSCIOUS ADMISSIONS

"ON DIVERSITY" ("Brevia," March-April, page 71) notified readers that Harvard would file a brief in the University of Michigan cases at the United States Supreme Court, which involve use of race in admitting students to the undergraduate school and the law school. In doing so, you state that the brief will support "the right of higher-education institutions to consider race as a factor in a well-constructed admissions program." You blithely ignore the fact, however, that the University of Michigan is a state institution, supported by taxpayers, in contradistinction to Harvard, a privately chartered institution. The difference, of course, is compellingly pertinent to the contentions of those who understandably challenge the use of racial preferences in admissions to taxpayer-supported universities. The intervention of Harvard and similarly situated private universities represents a kind of meddlesomeness, signifying either political correctness or plain officiousness.

QUENTIN L. KOPP, LL.B. '52
Redwood City, Calif.

Editor's note: The editors went on in the May-June issue ("Affirmative Amicus," page 50) to report more fully on the brief. It was written, at the request of President Lawrence H. Summers, by Harvard's Tyler professor of constitutional law, Laurence H. Tribe, serving as counsel of record for Harvard and the seven other colleges and universities on whose behalf the brief was filed (Brown, Chicago, Dartmouth, Duke, Penn, Princeton, and Yale).

FATHER OF FULLER FOUND

PHOEBE KOSMAN'S "Undergraduate" column "Finding Fuller" (May-June, page 60) brought a great deal of pleasure to me and my daughter, Lilian Faulhaber '00, L '05. Robert Playfair '36, author of the 1939 novel *Fuller at Harvard*, is my father, now deceased. He wrote three books of fiction,

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all involving daring athletic feats by Harvard students. What is perhaps more intriguing is that he didn't need an outside muse to write about college athletes. He was a runner who was credited with never being beaten by a Yale runner, and who won the triangular meet with Princeton and Yale in each of his three varsity years. In his first year of running varsity, he briefly held the American outdoor mile record.

Thank you and Kosman for reviving Fuller, and also my father the author, almost 64 years after publication of *Fuller at Harvard*.

SUSAN R. PLAYFAIR
Cohasset, Mass.

REPAY SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS

I WAS SADDENED to read in "A 'Down Payment' on Financial Aid" (March-April, page 56) that there is inadequate scholarship money for graduate- and professional-school students. For some years I have advocated a program that requires all recipients of fellowship and scholarship monies to acknowledge a moral obligation to repay those funds if, as, and when they are financially able to. The only exceptions would be graduates who go into the nonprofit sector, for whom one-third of the moral obligation would be forgiven for each year of such service.

If a fraction of the effort that is spent raising alumni gifts would be directed toward recovering scholarship and fellowship grants from past recipients who have the financial wherewithal, most of these funding requirements would be satisfied.

MICHAEL E. TENNENBAUM, M.B.A. '62
Los Angeles

NEEDED: A MANDATORY PROCUREMENT POLICY

WE WERE DISAPPOINTED with the profile of Harvard's vice president for finance, Ann Berman, "CFO for Tighter Times," and the sidebar, "Cutting Costs" (May-June, pages 52 and 53). They failed to see "the elephant in the room." After several years of study of Harvard's procurement practices and discussion with various parties inside and outside of the University, it is our belief that Harvard could save between \$100 million and \$250 million a year—once or twice the income from the last capital campaign.

While we applaud the Summers administration's recent statements and ini-

tiatives, Harvard simply needs a mandatory competitive-sourcing program for the University's annual purchase of \$1.2 billion in goods and services. At a meeting last month with Harvard Corporation and administration representatives, we recommended that Harvard establish a formal procurement committee. The committee would be composed of alumni who have special expertise in each of the principal industries from which Harvard purchases goods and services. The committee would work with the finance VP, the director of procurement, and others in the administration to structure competitive-sourcing deals to maximize Harvard's savings. It should be relatively easy to identify the most suitable candidates among Harvard's 283,000 alumni.

The time has passed for debating how much money Harvard can save. In the past three years, Harvard has lost \$3 billion in endowment and 25 percent of its purchasing power. McKinsey studies are no substitute for a mandate. The only way to be sure that corporate assets are not being wasted is to compete Harvard's "spend" in the marketplace. The procurement committee will possess the industry-specific knowledge to recommend the best possible deals for the University as a whole. We believe that there is no defensible alternative to a mandatory procurement policy across all schools. We believe it is the duty of Harvard's alumni to create a sense of urgency, and the responsibility of Harvard's administration to steward the University's scarce resources.

C. BOYDEN GRAY '64

JOHN B. HENRY '71

TIMOTHY E. WIRTH '61, Ed.M. '65
Washington, D.C.

A SIMPLER ADMISSIONS PROCESS

IN HIS REVIEW of *The Early Admissions Game*, William Fitzsimmons ("Entering the Elite," May-June, page 15) emphasizes the tremendous investment Harvard makes in assessing its applicant pool. He writes that admission-staff ratings are "based on multiple readings of each application in its entirety...." And he goes on to say that "our decisions are not made automatically, but after lengthy deliberations by majority vote of a large and experienced admissions committee."

A skeptic might wonder whether there are not perhaps other far-less-costly and time-consuming approaches that might



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yield the same or better result. For example, I have often wondered whether a simple random selection of students from the applicant pool, like a lottery, might not result in a selection of students with attributes statistically indistinguishable from those obtained through the current process. Such a random selection process need not treat all applicants equally. For example, one could use a weighting scheme to account for a variety of different applicant characteristics.

The idea of using a random applicant-selection procedure may sound blasphemous to some, but I would argue that the current process is already partly random, just not in a way that is directly observable or controllable. Universities obviously want the public to perceive that their admissions processes are rigorous and fair, and part of the way they accomplish this is by projecting the image of admissions-committee members poring assiduously over applications. Whether that approach is the most effective, however, remains an open question.

GERALD FEIGIN, Ph.D. '90
Scarborough, N.Y.

EARLY FLYERS

HARRIET QUIMBY'S DEATH, when she and William Willard were pitched from her plane into Dorchester Bay at the 1912 Boston Air Meet ("Conquest of the Air," May-June, page 32), was surely a factor in ending air meets in Boston, but poor management, confusion among aviators as to which events were sanctioned by the Aero Club, as well as uncertain weather conditions were major reasons these exhibitions failed to continue receiving financial support.

GIACINTA B. KOONTZ
Durango, Colo.

TENURE IS NOT THE PROBLEM

IN "FACULTY DIVERSITY" (March-April 2002, page 33), Cathy A. Trower and Richard P. Chait conclude that "[t]he next decade offers an especially propitious opportunity to diversify the academy." We at the American Association of University Professors agree. The lack of ethnic and gender diversity among faculty described by the authors is a real problem that must be taken seriously.

Where we part company, however, is in our understanding of the reasons for this disturbing absence. With few preliminar-

ies and scarcely a glance at the complex economic and social issues underlying this absence, the authors identify the practice of tenure as the locus of the problem. The "obstacle" holding back women and minorities, they argue, is the "unaccommodating culture" of "orthodox tenure." With reference to tenure as an "outmoded concept," they sound a clarion call for a "constitutional convention to rethink tenure."

An outmoded concept? Why then do so many faculty, including many women and scholars of color, seek the assistance of the AAUP on a daily basis? The answer is quite simply because they recognize the critical importance of tenure, if not in name, then in the working conditions that afford them the best of what tenure has to offer—protection of academic freedom, assurance of economic security, and the conditions under which they can participate in the governance of their institutions without fear of retribution.

If women and scholars of color are poorly represented in the ranks of tenure-track and tenured faculty, does that mean we should undermine or eliminate tenure? May we suggest just the opposite: namely, the dramatic increase in contingent appointments and the consequent narrowing of opportunities for employment on the tenure line, as well as higher standards for tenure imposed in an unfair, inequitable, or untimely manner are among the major reasons why women and men of ability, including scholars of color, find the academic profession inhospitable. Just as women and scholars of color are poised to enter the academy in greater numbers, these developments have coalesced to narrow the opportunities available to them.

It is not the existence of tenure, but its shrinking availability, that must be held accountable for the lack of diversity in the academy. Should we not work for more

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tenure lines and better practices, rather than fewer? We at AAUP answer with a resounding affirmation of tenure.

ANITA LEVY

Associate secretary

American Association of University Professors
Washington, D.C.

CULTURAL PROPERTY SURVEY

AS MEMBERS of the advisory committee to the Cultural Property Survey project, we were pleased to see "Prowlers Discover Harvard Valuables" in the March-April issue (page 67). The article is informative and helps to spread the word about the project.

We want to make sure, however, that readers are not left with the impression that the project aims to recreate a campus version of *Antiques Roadshow*. The goal of this survey is documentation, whether or not the property it includes is worth large sums of money. In the end, an accurate, consistent record of what the University owns, including gifts from its many friends and benefactors, will help to support responsible custody of this property.

We also want to dispel the suggestion that highly valuable objects are lying around unattended in insecure locations. (To set the record straight, the \$100,000 Persian carpet has always been kept in a secure location.) In most cases, those in proximity to valuable objects have been aware of their significance.

With the gathering of information in one central database, these objects can be tracked, receive appropriate care, and take their rightful place in Harvard's venerable history.

ROBIN McELHENY, *chair*; SANDRA GRINDLAY; HARLEY HOLDEN; ARDYS KOZBIAL; LISA PLATO; PETER RILEY
Cambridge

Editor's note: The \$100,000 carpet was judged safely housed and was not moved, and the editors regret the reporting error. A desk, valuable because of its associations, was moved from a House senior common room to a safer location.

HARVARD MAGAZINE PERSONALS

WHAT A TRIP! "A more mature Meg Ryan," "A more feminine Annette Bening." Mountain ranges of good endowment, acres of high cheekbones, black holes of "aqua" eyes. Where were all these drop-dead-gorgeous babes when I was at

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Harvard? How come they need personals to connect? Who is this transparently identical ghostwriter for them, and what will (s)he charge me?

JOHN F. LACKEY, M.Div. '82
Richmond, Ky.

I PLACED AN AD in the personals in 1993. A decade later women seeking men still dominate the section, particularly women in their 40s, 50s, and 60s who are amazingly slender, longlegged, luscious, and redheaded. Ladies, tell the truth. Maybe the spa keeps your legs thin, but what about varicose veins? Is your hair really still flaming red or does it resemble an or-

ange Brillo pad? Are your tresses supple and raven-colored or just over-dyed with that luminous white spot on the top that resembles a bald patch? No, your figure does not draw whistles: men stopped whistling years ago. You may be a gourmet cook, but doesn't the evening bring flatulence? Your skin may be firm, but isn't it sun spotted and aren't there skin tags where there was once a flawless bosom? (When Shakespeare wrote: "if snow be white, why then [my mistress's] breasts are dun," do you think he was reacting to the Elizabethan lonely-hearts column?)

And cut the cliches! You can't all love Provence that much! What's wrong with

the Jersey Shore? Or Scituate, the Irish Riviera? Why Paris? Anyone can have a good time in Paris, but it takes gumption to enjoy oneself in Dayton. Why Italy, or, to be more specific, Tuscany? Because you watched a fundraiser on PBS? What do phrases like, "more *Guiding Light* than *As the World Turns*," mean and why would anyone care? Finally, please do not say that you resemble an actress who is young enough to be your daughter. You do not look like Cameron Diaz if you are 60. Even Elizabeth Taylor no longer looks like Elizabeth Taylor.

SUSAN WOZNIAK, A.L.M. '98
Winchester, Mass.

EMERSON WANNABE, ET CETERA

AFTER OPENING his copy of the May-June issue of this magazine, Lawrence Buell, author of "The Infinitude of the Private Man," an appreciation of Ralph Waldo Emerson, warned us to expect some mail about the photograph on page 25, which the editors had captioned, "Emerson as a young man..." Then came:

ALTHOUGH I DO NOT KNOW the provenance of the picture, it is certainly *not* Emerson. By the look of the clothing and facial styling, it would appear to have

been made in the 1860s. But other evidence is more crucial. The young man in the photograph looks to be about 25 or 30; but even if he is 35 (not considered "young" in Emerson's time) that would still place him—if he were Emerson—in the



The photograph

year 1838, which is some two years before the introduction of daguerreotypy into America. The first known photographs of Emerson date, probably, from the early to mid 1840s, when he was no longer "young."

JOEL PORTE, Ph.D. '62
White professor of American studies
and humane letters, Cornell University
Ithaca, N.Y.

Editor's note: The photograph was obtained by the art director of the maga-



The back of the photograph

—who this person really is. Meantime, the editors acknowledge a second error:

FOR MANY YEARS I have looked forward to and relished reading our magazine. I was a teacher by profession and continue to be an unregenerate proofreader of all I read. I can always relax a bit when I sit down to read *Harvard Magazine*, with assurance that all will be right in this little part of the universe.

So you can imagine my incredulous horror on finding (seeing while *not* looking for) not one, but *five* misspellings on page 84 of the May-June issue ("A Box of Pox")—all noun and verb forms of the base "inoculat-"; N.B: one "n."

A pox upon the editor of that article.

RICHARD P. TURNER '53
Avon Lake, Ohio

Editor's note: A not-innocuous error. Finally, Nicole Legnani '03 was reported ("Estimable Seniors," May-June, page 24j) as being "back in Peru, working at a nongovernmental organization affiliated with the United Nations." It is not so affiliated. "My friends and I only just started it this past year," writes Legnani.

zine from a folder labeled "Emerson" in the Harvard University Archives; it was, furthermore, twice identified on its back, and once on its front, as of Emerson. Perhaps some reader can tell us—and the way-

layers at Archives

ONESIMUS'S ROLE

YOUR ARTICLE on Benjamin Waterhouse ("A Box of Pox," May-June, page 84) ignores a vital factor in Boston's efforts to combat the 1721 smallpox epidemic. Though it is true that Cotton Mather influenced Dr. Zabdiel Boylston's use of variolation as a cure for smallpox, Mather first learned of variolation from his African-born slave, Onesimus. In a 1716 letter to the Royal Society of London, Mather proposed "ye Method of Inoculation" as the best means of curing smallpox, and noted that he had learned of this process from "my Negro-Man Onesimus, who is a pretty Intelligent Fellow."

Reports of similar practices among other African slaves in Boston and reports of variolation in Turkey convinced Mather to mount a public inoculation campaign. With the exception of Boylston, however, most white physicians in Boston rejected variolation, in part because of their contempt for African medical knowledge.

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"Y'ALL": AN AMPLIFICATION

IN "JABBER AND BABEL" (March-April, page 19), you reported that associate professor Bert Vaux's English-usage survey showed "y'all" to be the term most commonly used in the South to address a group of two or more people. What the survey missed, though, is the fact that "y'all" is frequently used in the singular; "all y'all" is the plural form in this here part of Texas.

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