

# JOHN HARVARD'S JOURNAL



## Arts and Sciences Dean to Leave Office

FRIDAY EVENING, January 27, was quiet, with the College dispersed for intercession. Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) dean William C. Kirby was returning from fundraising meetings in New York. President Lawrence H. Summers was at the World Economic Forum in Switzerland. Then, around 10:30, a notice appeared on the University website announcing Kirby's departure from his administrative duties on June 30, after just four years. This transition exposes serious questions about the faculty historically at the University's center, and about Harvard itself.

The news seemed abrupt. There was no

indication of a change at the top when professors on FAS's Resources Committee laid out a plan for dealing with burgeoning expenses at a faculty meeting on January 10 (see page 61). Ten days later, Kirby disseminated a spring schedule for legislation on revising the undergraduate curriculum, his highest-profile priority (see page 69). He was drafting his annual letter to the faculty, usually sent at the beginning of the term (now delayed until later in the spring). Then, during the day on

January 27, the *Crimson* signaled that it was about to report the decanal change, and did so electronically that evening. That prompted an accelerated posting of the official release—the announcement

said the e-mail address for nominating candidates to succeed Kirby would not be activated until the following Monday. (Suggestions can be sent to [fasdeansearch@harvard.edu](mailto:fasdeansearch@harvard.edu).)

The story in the *Crimson* (first attributed to "two individuals who have discussed Kirby's

William C. Kirby



JON CHASE/HARVARD NEWS OFFICE



## Crimson Cranescape

THIS PANORAMA, photographed from the Western Avenue Bridge over the Charles River, gives some sense of Harvard's current, very extensive construc-

tion program. From right (east) to left, the cranes in Cambridge work at Western Avenue and Memorial Drive, near the Peabody Terrace towers (new graduate-student housing); across Cowperthwaite Street from Mather and Dunster Houses (more apart-

ments); and in the distance, at the Laboratory for Interface Science and Engineering. Not visible are another laboratory facility, the Northwest Building, and the reconstruction of the Hasty Pudding Theatricals performing-arts space. The building boom is quantified on the next page.



status with a member of the Harvard Corporation,” and later to “four people close to the central administration”) said that he had been fired by Summers. In an interview on February 2, Kirby said that he had intended to disclose his decision to resign on the first day of classes, February 1; the early report made him scramble to tell his senior staff members about his forthcoming departure before the official posting.

Nonetheless, the announcements themselves indicated extensive preparation for a settled plan. There were letters from Kirby and Summers, a detailed news release, and messages to faculty, development staff, and key alumni. The news release indicated not only that Kirby would return to scholarship (modern Chinese history) and teaching, but that he would

also assume two new roles. He will direct the Fairbank Center for East Asian Research, one of the principal regional-studies centers—a natural intellectual fit. Former director Roderick MacFarquhar, Williams professor of history and political science, has been serving a second term as director this year. Second, Kirby will “take on a University-wide role in guiding Harvard’s expanding array of academic initiatives focused on China.”

Close observers were not surprised that Kirby relinquished the deanship. A senior University administrator said, “No one who is around here is unaware that there have been tensions between Mass. Hall and University Hall.” Despite expectations that Kirby and Summers would be a good team, “It hasn’t worked out that way,” even

though the two men shared many goals; the president was “frustrated by the slowness of movement,” as he perceived it, and likes “to be involved, to come to meetings, to *push* his ideas.” A faculty member with administrative duties said, “Bill’s resignation was not a big surprise,” but characterized the leak as “troubling” because “this is symptomatic of what has been happening in FAS and the University more widely in the last year and...indicates underlying problems of politicization and lack of trust.” The bluntest assessment—one of the few made on the record—came from Carswell professor of East Asian languages and civilizations Peter K. Bol, who told the *Crimson* that “Kirby resigned because President Summers didn’t leave,” and that “it was impossible to work with the presi-



dent." Bol cited an atmosphere where the dean was being derogated in private conversations with his own faculty colleagues. Other FAS members echoed those accounts.

In his letter, Kirby cited "the allure and the increasingly dynamic nature of my field of study" as factors making his decision "timely and compelling." He cited accomplishments in faculty growth, facilities investments, and, "most important," in the faculty's recommitment to Harvard students. Kirby then reflected on the "serious challenges" during the past year.

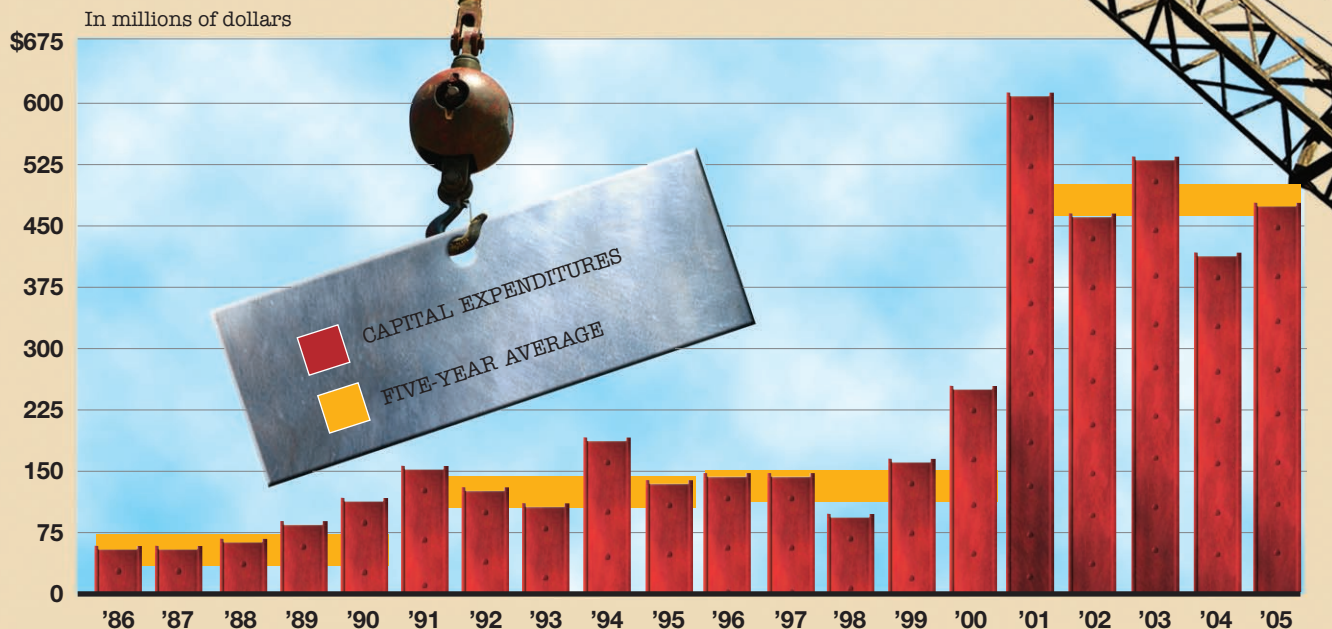
(Despite his previous plea that the faculty not emerge "divided, fractious, and polarized," those challenges culminated in the faculty's sharp debate about Summers's management and, last March, its unexpected vote of lack of confidence in his leadership; see "At Odds," May-June 2005, page 55.) Kirby observed that in the future, "it will be important for the president and the dean to work closely together, in collaboration with the faculty, toward our common objectives." He then expressed gratitude for working with and on behalf of "this stellar faculty," the

FAS staff, "our wonderful alumni," and, "above all," Harvard's students.

Summers used his letter to "express my gratitude, personally and on behalf of the Harvard community," for Kirby's "imaginative and dedicated leadership" during what he acknowledged "has been a not-uncomplicated time in the life of the University." He cited the curriculum review, rapid expansion of the faculty ranks, new paths for study abroad, enhanced financial aid, and "critical large-scale investments" in facilities as among the accomplishments of Kirby's deanship, a "transformative pe-

## HARVARD BY THE NUMBERS

### ANNUAL FACILITY EXPENDITURES



### Capital Costs

The dimensions of Harvard's current building boom—readily obvious to sidewalk superintendents along Memorial Drive at Western Avenue (graduate-student housing), across from Mather House (ditto), behind the Science Center (physical sciences and engineering laboratories), north of the Museum of Comparative Zoology (life-sciences laboratories), and elsewhere—are quantified in the *Financial Report to the Board of Overseers of Harvard College* for the 2004-2005 fiscal year. The exhibit on annual facility expenditures, adapted here, shows capital spending for new construc-

tion, building renovations, and acquisitions of structures and land—the latter principally in Allston. The sharp rise since 2000 is made more graphic when five-year averages are calculated:

that figure rises from \$78.8 million in the first period, 1986-1990, to \$494.5 million from 2001-2005. Even adjusting for inflation, the recent expenditures have been at a rate two to three times higher than in any previous year. As a direct result, University debt outstanding has grown from \$1.6 billion in 2001 to \$2.8 billion last June. A discussion of the financial implications of this extensive building program for the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, which is particularly affected, begins opposite.



riod" for FAS. Summers declined separate comment, but was later reported in the *Crimson* as having said that Kirby's letter "speaks for itself."

In searching for a successor, Summers wrote, he would convene the customary faculty advisory group. Indicating the unusual circumstances, he said he also intended to consult with the Faculty Council (some of whose members have been meeting with the Corporation during the past year to air FAS concerns) and with department chairs, who have also been working together, regularly, apart from the customary administrative structure.

All that will be necessary. On February 1, the Faculty Council created a task force, chaired by new University Professor Laurel Thatcher Ulrich (see page 63), to assure that its views are considered in the search. FAS's Standing Committee on Women wrote about the importance of affirming commitments to faculty excellence and diversity—and of a search process that is "genuinely open, without a predetermined outcome," involving "real and credible" consultation, without which the faculty "will not support the outcome."

THE END of Kirby's deanship leaves much unsettled. He is the second of Summers's decanal appointees to leave office: Graduate School of Education dean Ellen Condliffe Lagemann departed last summer. As of early February, neither that search nor the one for a new leader of Harvard Business School had concluded. Within FAS, a search for the important deanship of the Division of Engineering and Applied Sciences is under way. The vice president for finance—Harvard's CFO—is exiting Massachusetts Hall (see "University People," November-December 2005, page 63). Now, the need to fill the FAS vacancy at University Hall adds significantly to the priorities Summers spelled out in his long "Letter to the Community" released last November 9. Those include planning for Allston development and a Harvard capital campaign, in both of which FAS priorities figure prominently.

Within FAS, the stakes are high, too. Three years and more into the curriculum review, the faculty's reaction to official proposals is uncertain. Summers

publicly outlined some of the directions he sought for the review in his 2003 Commencement address, and actively advocated for them until he stepped back from participating in the study committees' work last year after professorial tensions with the president surfaced. Kirby, who drove the review forward, was passionate about some of those objectives—notably, international study (see "Elsewhere," January-February, page 59). But the approach to general education advanced to date may neither satisfy faculty members concerned about students' need for intellectual guidance, nor deliver the foundational courses Summers envisioned, nor meet his goals for deeper education in science and empirical methods. On January 31, the Division of Engineering and Applied Sciences, worried about preparing students for concentration work and higher-level study, voted its reservations about lessening requirements and about de-emphasizing the breadth of education, concerns other scientists share.

As noted, paying for FAS's agenda promises to be expensive, too. The strategy for balancing the budget requires successful FAS fundraising now, preceding a large University capital campaign. The decanal vacancy may delay academic planning and outreach to important prospective donors (although some large gifts are pending). A new dean can presumably rely on the central administration's promises of major financial support. Some professors see that as paying FAS back in part for the sums being "de-capitalized" from Harvard's endowment

(\$106 million in fiscal year 2005, about half from FAS) for the "strategic infrastructure fund" for Allston development. Separately, a professor wrote about the need for departments to "make sure that their palisades are in good order, with all the posts sharpened...and with vigilant guards on duty" to protect their budgets.

Beyond these issues, other matters involving FAS in ways significant and small await resolution. Among the latter, the central administration is negotiating with FAS to acquire Massachusetts Hall, Harvard's oldest building, where the president and his senior staff are based; some of the upper-floor space houses freshmen. Converting that area to administrative offices has some symbolic and nostalgic significance. Among the larger issues: the FAS, medical, and public-health deans, and a large faculty committee, are trying to address the future of science University-wide if large new laboratories are built in Allston (as now planned). Triangulating research and teaching in Cambridge, the Longwood medical area, and Allston has huge implications for faculty assignments and appointments, student life, and, not least, access to the research grants and accompanying overhead payments needed to defray the enormous costs of such facilities.

Progress on all these fronts between now and June 30, and beyond, matters to both FAS and Harvard as a whole. Whatever happens, Dean Kirby's successor faces a very challenging agenda.

[An account of the contentious February 7 faculty meeting on the decanal transition and search will be posted at [www.harvardmagazine.com](http://www.harvardmagazine.com).]

## Fraught Finances

AMID an historic expansion, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) must now come to terms with the costs of its growth. An anticipated deficit of \$40 million-plus in the fiscal year ending this June 30 was disclosed at the January 10 faculty meeting; that gap is being filled from reserves on hand.

More daunting challenges loom thereafter. From this year to 2010, the annual cost of building and operating facilities now under construction, hiring more pro-

fessors (now 700, rising to 750), and funding desired new programs will increase to an estimated \$108 million to \$122 million. These expenses are *in addition* to already budgeted costs for continuing operations (College and graduate-school teaching and student life, research, financial aid) and exceed the income projected from the endowment, tuition, research, and gifts. The forecasts follow substantial increases in FAS's operating budget, from \$699 million (fiscal year 2003), to \$754 million (2004) and \$858 million (2005)—each of which yielded a surplus—to about \$970