

league rose to say that “the relative weights of research and teaching at Stanford are three-to-one or four-to-one, and that’s the way it ought to be” for research universities. (The classic study of how this culture was formed, Shulman added, is Larry Cuban’s 1999 book, *How Scholars Trumped Teachers: Change without Reform in University Curriculum, Teaching, and Research, 1890-1990*, a case study of Stanford.) In Shulman’s experience, some of the large public research universities are “much more responsive” to these kinds of concerns, usually at the behest of individual faculty members or departments; for a detailed look at two of these institutions, see www.harvardmagazine.com/on-line/110622.html.

COULD MEASURES similar to Shulman’s take root at Harvard, where a productive culture of research and doctoral training has become embedded during the past century and more?

In *Our Underachieving Colleges*, Bok suggests that critics overstate the primacy of research relative to undergraduate teaching—but “nothing forces [professors] or their academic leaders to go beyond normal conscientiousness in fulfilling their classroom duties.” He seeks to create incentives for continuous improvement in teaching and learning. (The “neglect of pedagogy” in higher education, he also says, “is probably rooted in an instinct for self-preservation.”)

Rather than learning new skills and changing old habits, Bok suggests, it has been simpler for faculty members to extend the principle of academic freedom “to gain immunity from interference with how their courses should be taught”—today a matter of “personal prerogative” except in small liberal-arts colleges. But in spelling out the findings of recent education research, he concludes, “With encouragement and prodding, careful research, and modest support for innovation, leaders in every college can aspire to create a culture of honest self-appraisal, continuing experimentation, and constant improvement” in student learning—goals consistent with the mission of the new FAS task force.

Compared to Stanford’s experience a decade ago, Bok believes, external conditions might help bring about the kind of

changes that the task force is exploring. In conversation, he cited “increasing concern about the quality of undergraduate education nationally,” from the recent federal Commission on the Future of Higher Education to widespread worries about American economic competitiveness. He also pointed to Carnegie Foundation surveys showing “steady, gradual increases in the percentage of American professors who say they are more inter-

ested in undergraduate education and teaching.” And looming in the background is the larger accountability movement aimed at assessing educational outcomes generally.

As these trends converge, Bok said, there is an “opportunity for Harvard to try to demonstrate some leadership” on important, difficult issues and make “a genuine contribution to the development of undergraduate education in this country.”

Interim Agendas

ALTHOUGH Derek Bok and Jeremy R. Knowles are serving as president and dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS), respectively, on an interim basis, both have articulated ambitious agendas engaging large University issues.

In interviews with this and other publications (see www.president.harvard.edu), Bok outlined “a much more active year, with much more important substantive issues, than one might have expected” when he agreed last February to return to Massachusetts Hall for a limited time. He highlighted three such priorities.

- Undergraduate education. Bok hopes to “pick up and conclude successfully” the review of the College curriculum. An FAS working group of senior professors brought forward in early October a new approach to revising general education, for discussion during fall faculty meetings. Bok was thoroughly involved in the new, simultaneous effort to improve teaching, announced on September 4 (see page 60). His role in the swift decision to end early admissions (see page 68), announced a week later, contributed to the sense of moving Harvard forward briskly on such issues.

- Allston. Purchases of land for future campus development in Allston began in the late 1980s, toward the end of Bok’s first presidency. Now, with a first science complex being designed (see page 66) and a development-management organization in place, he aims to maintain momentum. A master plan is forthcoming soon, for review by the city of Boston, and internal design guidelines for future buildings are being prepared.

- Science. Bok said the report of the



University Planning Committee for Science and Engineering (see “Sweeping Change for Science,” September-October, page 71) reflects concerns extending beyond Harvard. As scientists pursue interdisciplinary research, of the sort envisioned for the Allston facilities, he said they sense that separate departments, programs, and schools “impede the very salutary effort to do exciting research with new combinations of people.” Given the responsibility of creating an environment for the best people to do their best work, Bok intends to examine how other universities may surmount such obstacles, and to “work away at barriers, to cut them down to size.”

Knowles, following a period of turmoil within FAS, intends above all to make the faculty’s affairs transparent—to build common understanding of issues that a successor dean will have to address in the long-term best interest of the College and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

An overarching concern, he indicated, would be to bring “clarity” to FAS’s fiscal position. The Resources Committee projected last January that costs for adding professors (the ladder-faculty ranks have grown by 56, to 719, in just the past three

years) and financing and operating nearly \$750 million in new buildings would result in a yawning financial gap by 2010 (see "Fraught Finances," March-April, page 61). Knowles put FAS on an austerity budget during his first deanship, but the structural deficits looming now—prospectively, several tens of millions of dollars annually—are not susceptible to a quick fix during his current, brief term. He aims, instead, to explain FAS's assets and cash flows in unprecedented detail during faculty meetings this fall, engaging fellow professors in thinking through the necessary actions.

Knowles, a chemist, also expects to detail the complex issues of science planning: the institutional innovations required to support collaborative research while sustaining teaching, and the appointments needed to make use of the new facilities (most are for science).



Jeremy R. Knowles

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He suggested that he might also address faculty hiring generally, taking stock of the recent rapid growth in FAS relative to planned research objectives and to teaching goals emerging from the curriculum review and the new teaching committee. Finally, in recent years, Allston planning has proceeded as an activ-

ity largely separate from the faculty. So Knowles said he hoped to explain how FAS's future was not threatened by growth there; to the contrary, he perceives important opportunities for the faculty in the choices made for Allston, which will in time extend far beyond the science investments now taking shape.

Money-Management Makeover

THE VALUE of Harvard's endowment increased by \$3.3 billion during the fiscal year ended June 30, rising to \$29.2 billion. The 12.7 percent growth, from the year-earlier total of \$25.9 billion, reflects a 16.7 percent investment return on endowment assets after expenses, plus gifts received, offset by the distribution of funds to support University operations (about \$930 million in the fiscal year, plus more than \$100 million set aside for Allston development).

The results, released on September 19, usually attract attention, because Harvard's endowment is the largest of its

kind. This year, there is added interest because the report on investment performance is the first since Mohamed A. El-Erian became president and CEO of Harvard Management Company (HMC) in February. His arrival began a period of extensive hiring for the senior staff and of long-range reevaluation of HMC's operations in the face of rapidly changing financial markets. The outcome of those actions will influence Harvard's future significantly: endowment distributions now account for much the largest share—nearly one-third—of University revenue.

EL-ERIAN characterized the fiscal year as "pretty strong," especially given market conditions. (During the 12-month period,

Adios, Early Admissions

Harvard College has ended its early admissions deadline. Beginning in the fall of 2007, students applying for admission to the class of 2012 will face a single January 1 deadline, with notification of acceptance or rejection on April 1 and a student reply date one month later. The "early-action" system—with applications due November 1, notification by December 15, and student commitments by the following May 1 (unlike binding "early decision" systems used elsewhere, which commit admitted applicants to attend a college)—remains in place for this year.

Harvard's decision was motivated by concerns that early admissions "tend to advantage the advantaged," according to a statement by President Derek Bok. Early applicants come from more affluent communities and schools with more resources; students with lesser means, who often must compare financial-aid packages from the colleges that admit them, tend not to apply early. Beyond the potential socioeconomic effects, abolishing early admissions may make high-school students' senior years more productive academically, and their ultimate college choices better informed.

The undergraduate admissions office drafted the proposal during the summer, secured the support of Faculty of Arts and

Sciences dean Jeremy R. Knowles and Bok, and then saw it sail through the Corporation. The announcement, remarkably, made the front page of the *New York Times* on September 12, alongside fifth-anniversary coverage of the 9/11 attacks, and was hailed in editorials coast to coast. Princeton followed suit a week later, and the University of Virginia shortly thereafter.

But not all institutions agreed with Harvard. Both Yale and Stanford said that their nonbinding early-action programs, with early and regular applicants evaluated by common standards, were neutral in socioeconomic terms, and that the challenges of identifying and recruiting academically qualified but economically underprivileged students would remain. "Access to the Most Selective Private Colleges by High-Ability, Low-Income Students: Are they out there?" a recent paper by Gordon C. Winston and Catharine B. Hill of the Project on the Economics of Higher Education, at Williams College, confirms that such candidates exist and could be enrolled by elite higher-education institutions. Nor do these steps address the problem of improving the college preparation of capable students held back by deficient school systems.

And, it appears, some traditions remain unchanged. The *Crimson* reported on September 29 that even as early action disappears for most Harvard applicants, athletes would still receive "likely letters," indicating their prospective acceptance, as early as October 1, where necessary to counter "exploding offers" of admission from competing schools.