

## Arts and Science Transitions

**The beginning of the end** of a period of instability in the leadership of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) came on June 4, when President-elect Drew Gilpin Faust announced the appointment of Michael D. Smith as dean, effective July 15. Smith succeeds Jeremy R. Knowles, who had served from 1991 through 2002 and then agreed in May 2006 to resume the post on an interim basis at the request of interim president Derek Bok. (The two men filled the vacancies created by the resignations of President Lawrence H. Summers and Dean William C. Kirby in early 2006.)

But illness forced Knowles himself to step down in April, during the faculty's strenuous debates on revising the undergraduate general-education curriculum (see page 65). His successor, Ford professor of human evolution David R. Pilbeam, served on the FAS task force whose recommendations shaped the legislation under discussion; he was previously associate dean for undergraduate education, and led recent efforts to improve academic advising. That experience helped secure FAS enactment of the general-education proposal in a May 15 vote.

Smith earned a B.S. in electrical engineering and computer science from Princeton in 1983, worked at Honeywell Information Systems designing computer chips, and then completed his Ph.D. in electrical engineering from Stanford in 1993. He became an instructor at Harvard in 1992, assistant professor in 1993, associate professor in 1997, and McKay professor of computer science and electrical engineering in 2000. Since 2005, he has been associate dean for computer science and engineering as FAS's Division of Engineering and Applied Sciences began its transition into the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences.

He teaches Computer Science 50, the demanding introductory course, and is a member of Harvard's Center for Research on Computation and Society, which involves faculty from several schools. Smith is also a steering-committee member for the initiative in innovative computing; co-director of the FAS-Harvard Business School doctoral program in information, technology, and management; and co-founder, chief scientist, and chairman of Liquid Machines, a software company that provides security services for computer data. A four-year letterman on Princeton's swim team, Smith has chaired the FAS standing committee on athletic sports. One of his research collaborators has been Higgins professor of natural sciences Barbara J. Grosz, dean of science at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, who succeeds Faust there (see page 69); that connection helped Faust and Smith come to know each other.

In her statement, Faust cited his "deep concern for undergraduates," from the classroom to athletics, and his experience as "an energetic administrative leader with an engaging curiosity and an open, collaborative approach to setting priorities and moving things forward." In his own statement, Smith pledged to "work



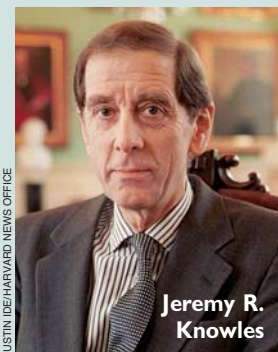
Michael D. Smith

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tirelessly to cultivate" the faculty's "diversity, strength, and intellectual energy." Addressing his colleagues at a faculty reception, he cited "our responsibility to each other" to serve the whole community in making FAS, and Harvard, "the most exciting" learning enterprise in the world. Both Faust and Smith praised Bok, Knowles, and Pilbeam, whose leadership, Smith said, had been "essential to bringing us back together."

Smith himself will have much to do. The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences deanship is open. And FAS secretary and associate dean David B. Fithian, who helped manage faculty meetings and legislation during the decanal transitions, has departed, too, to become secretary of the University of Chicago.

During the year, Knowles had published letters explaining FAS's finances and the expansion of the professoriate (see "House-Poor," January-February, page 58, and "Growth Spurt," May-June, page 62), as a basis for common understanding while faculty members and their new leader shape FAS's future agenda. He also oversaw the long debate on general education, and worked with a separate task force on improving teaching and pedagogy. Both initiatives await implementation, within the faculty's fiscal constraints. Smith's administrative and business experience could help there—as could his exposure to the venture-capital community, when FAS is investing heavily in science and engineering.



Jeremy R. Knowles

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**The faculty first learned** that Knowles was ill at its meeting on Tuesday, April 17, when Bok announced, "[F]or some time, Jeremy has been battling prostate cancer." Knowles had had a "setback," resulting in "acute and persistent pain." In a message circulated that evening, Knowles wrote that "more complicated" conditions necessitated "more aggressive treatment," but that he hoped to be back soon. Five days later, reflecting the severity of his metastatic cancer, he was succeeded by Pilbeam.

At the reception for Smith, Faust reported that she had discussed the new appointment with Knowles, who said he would "give his eye teeth" to help his successor get settled. Some of the qualities the faculty look for in their new leader are sketched in a concluding paragraph of President Bok's annual report (see page 62), where he paid "special tribute to Jeremy Knowles," whose resumption of his FAS responsibilities "set an example of selfless service that none of us who know and care for him will ever forget."