the College and the coauthor of the article "Time Out or Burn Out for the Next Generation," says he has spent the last few years spreading the message that Harvard is not looking for perfect candidates: "Admissions isn't a hundred-meter dash, it's a marathon—we look for students with character and personality." He reports that the admissions office is promoting gap years to applicants as well as to those students who are admitted, and emphasizes that Harvard "encourages students to take time off, to enjoy themselves and their studies."

But the idea for this column came to me at a time when I was not enjoying my studies very much: I was leaving a section certain that no one else in the room had completed any more of the assigned reading than I had, which was very little indeed. Why none of us could admit that, why instead each of us said some uninformed thing about the assigned reading, I could not immediately understand. Wanting to put the best face forward, not wanting to seem unprepared, or just being too bored to sit quietly—there were many ways of understanding our behavior, but none seemed that compelling, so I started asking my peers.

Students, it seems, really do worry about how they are being evaluated in every minute of every section they attend, with every word of every paper they write. A perpetual nervousness haunts the undergraduate experience, and students' reluctance to share these worries publicly does not mean they don't exist. I have noticed it most often in section, but these pressures exert themselves on playing fields, in newsrooms, behind stage curtains, as well as in classrooms. The Bureau of Study Counsel's well-attended workshops on busyness, procrastination, time management, and perfectionism are unfortunate reminders of the challenges undergraduates face.

And while the message of excellence without perfection may be repeated by every voice of authority within the College, that hardly drowns out the competing voices from outside the gates. Résumés, applications, and interviews all require accomplished and overachieving subjects, leaving many undergraduates without the courage or strength to acknowledge their own limitations. "The saddest part is that the College is producing more corner-cutters than risk takers," says Timothy McCarthy. "And some of the most successful people in history were miserable failures, or great risk-takers, or both."

Berta Greenwald Ledecky Undergraduate Fellow and graduating senior Casey N. Cep will miss the tiny white rooms of Harvard College.

SPORTS

Rebound & Transition

Coach Tommy Amaker is the new ruler of roundball.

Harvard has never won an Ivy League basketball championship. Changing that legacy, which dates from 1955 (the first year of play in the league), ranks high among the priorities of Tommy Amaker, the Crimson's new head coach of men's basketball, who met local media, fellow coaches, and supporters at a press conference, complete with brunch, in mid April. "I'm excited about coaching in the Ivy League," said Amaker. "Perhaps we'll have a chance to make history." Addressing those of his Harvard athletes who were present, he added, "You already are winners. If you are at Harvard, you're a winner. And if you can attack those rebounds like you attacked that orange juice, we'll be fine."

Nichols Family director of athletics Robert Scalise introduced Amaker, noting his success as a player and assistant coach at Duke, and in head coaching jobs at Seton Hall and Michigan. As a coach, Amaker was part of two Duke NCAA championship teams (1991 and 1992), made six Final Four appearances, and reached postseason play 22 times. "Tommy joins us with experience and a pedigree that are second to none in college basketball," Scalise said. When Amaker rose, he thanked his new boss "for your math there with all the postseasons," and then added, "You omitted the fact that I've been fired"—to explosive laughter.

The University of Michigan did release Amaker—after six seasons (2001-07) in which the Wolverines compiled a creditable 109-83 record, but failed to make the NCAA tournament. Some Michiganders reportedly considered Amaker to be too principled for big-time college hoops. "If that's the speculation," he told the *New York Times*, "I'll take it every day of the week and twice on Sunday." He added that he never felt any pressure there to alter his convictions.

Tommy Amaker

Amaker succeeds Frank Sullivan, who compiled a 178-245 record over 16 seasons. A widely respected figure, Sullivan nonetheless was fired this spring; Scalise was concerned that Harvard had begun to

Photograph by Stu Rosner

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finish behind not only Penn and Princeton (Ivy powers who have won or shared the league title every year since 1988), but also less-prepossessing rivals. Sullivan's most recent squad, for example, went 12-16 and 5-9 in the Ivies, finishing sixth in the league.

The new coach also adds a note of racial diversity to the staff. In March, the *Boston Globe* reported that none of Harvard's 32 head coaches (in 41 intercollegiate sports) was African American—nor were Scalise and his 13 senior administrators. (Harvard's last black head coach was Peter Roby, who headed the men's basketball program from 1985 until 1991. Another African American, Tom "Satch" Sanders, coached the Crimson from 1973 to 1977.) "To think that Harvard would not have a single African-American head coach, male or female, in 2007 is breathtaking," Climenko professor of law Charles J. Ogletree Jr. told the *Globe*.

Since 2001, Scalise has hired new head coaches for men's ice hockey and volleyball, women's lacrosse, skiing, and water polo, and men's and women's golf and track and field and cross-country. All are white. In April, at a gathering organized by the Harvard Foundation for Intercultural and Race Relations, he explained that in "white middle-class suburban" sports like skiing, field hockey, and women's lacrosse, good minority candidates tend to be scarce, and said that greater diversity among athletes would eventuate in more diversity among coaches. "We contact the Black Coaches Association on every search we do," he said.

Amaker started at point guard for four years at Duke, playing against stars like Michael Jordan and graduating with a degree in economics in 1987. He captained the Blue Devils as a senior, when he was named an all-American and National Defensive Player of the Year. The Seattle Supersonics chose him in the 1987 NBA draft, but he went into coaching, including nine years at Duke under the celebrated Mike Krzyzewski, "Coach K," who enthusiastically endorsed the new appointment. "What an amazing selection," Krzyzewski said. "Tommy will be fantastic for Harvard and Harvard will be fantastic for Tommy. I am just ecstatic about the potential of that marriage."

—CRAIG LAMBERT

Sports Wrap

Softball
The softballers (31-15, 15-6 Ivy) won the league championship, with Ivy Pitcher of the Year Shelly Madick '08 (16-6) tossing a no-hitter against Penn in the playoff. Hofstra and Albany both edged the Crimson, 3-2 and 1-0, in the NCAAs. Freshman Lauren Murphy, the Ivy Rookie of the Year, set a Harvard home-run record, clouting 18 dingers.

Men's Heavyweight Crew
Harvard won the Eastern Sprints and finished second (tied with Stanford) to Washington at the IRA national championship regatta. Yale upset Harvard in their annual four-mile race, breaking a seven-year Crimson win streak.

ALUMNI

Seeing Red

Beachcomber tracks marine toxins in Florida.

EPIDEMIOLOGIST Lora Fleming '78, M.D.-M.P.H. '84, tackles breathing, cancer, and unexpected days at the beach. At the office, she directs research on a database of 3 million cancer cases, or culls morbidity factors among blue-collar workers across the country. Other days she may find herself swabbing the noses of asthmatics exposed to Florida red-tide toxins. Not too long ago, she and a colleague spent a morning chasing after dogs that had defecated on a Miami beach. "That was part of the recreational microbes study—or, as we call it, the 'poop in the water' study," she explains. Even trickier than corralling the canines was "figuring out how to get the damn seabirds to go on the plastic we had laid out for them. Then some bird guy called us from Mississippi and said, 'I have two words for you: "Cheese Doodles."' They eat the doodles and poop, apparently."

Fleming's aplomb sometimes shields

Lora Fleming

Photograph by Christian Howard/Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences at the University of Miami

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