

logic was that delivering some aid—even if it failed to meet needs fully, or the people delivering it lacked experience and training—was better than doing nothing. But, says VanRooyen, “Sometimes it’s actually worse than nothing.” He gives the example of how a cholera epidemic swept refugee camps in Zaire in 1994, killing 30,000 people who had fled genocide in Rwanda only to die in the place that was supposed to keep them safe.

One outgrowth of such unintended consequences is the Sphere Project, a set

of minimum standards for humanitarian-aid operations first issued in 1997 and most recently revised in 2004. But because compliance is optional, minimum standards have become another area of interest for HHI.

Though some may voice frustration at the slow pace of change, Leaning draws a parallel to the field of public health. “It’s taken decades,” she says, for the Centers for Disease Control “to come up with its routine measures of what it’s watching over the years. It’s a really hard problem.”

to a school like this. There’s really no point in coming if you have nothing to say. If you’re just purely a facilitator, then I think it’s really not interesting.”

The Iranian-born Mostafavi received his professional training at the prestigious Architectural Association School of Architecture in London, to which he returned as head from 1995 until 2004. He operates a private practice with his wife, Homa Fardjadi, who is a professor of the practice of architecture at the University of Pennsylvania. This will be his second stint at Harvard; he directed a master’s program in architecture at the GSD from 1992 to 1995. Now he will be the school’s seventh dean since its founding in 1936.

He succeeds Alan Altshuler, whom former University president Lawrence H. Summers appointed in February 2005. Altshuler, who holds a joint appointment in urban policy and planning through the GSD and the Kennedy School of Government, had been one of three members of the Allston Client Group, which acted on the president’s behalf as the day-to-day point of contact for Allston’s planners. For his part, when asked about the school’s role in planning Allston in general, Mostafavi said he is “more than willing to provide any advice that’s requested”—either personally or through the expertise of others at the GSD.

Under Peter G. Rowe, who preceded Altshuler and spent 12 years as dean, the student body grew by 15 percent and the size of the faculty increased by 40 percent. Mostafavi does not envision additional growth, but says the GSD needs more space to accommodate the increased use of prototyping—both actual-size and more conventional scale models—and other new technologies. “I think the appropriate thing would be to be open...and not really leave out any possible option,” Mostafavi says. “[But] my gut reaction...is that it might be more advisable for us to really think more closely about what facilities we have, and what other spaces might be available nearby,” rather than joining the march to Allston.

IF MOSTAFAVI BELIEVES the GSD’s atmosphere is as important as substantive matters of teaching and research, the same can be said of his approach to architect-



Mohsen Mostafavi

favi—the current dean of the College of Architecture, Art, and Planning at Cornell University—asked GSD faculty members and students to greet him with “a certain level of suspension of judgment.”

He seeks to create an environment in which there are no sacred cows, in which people, including himself, feel comfortable questioning long-standing assumptions and making suggestions without committing to their adoption—discussing for the sake of discussion. At least publicly, he has thus far refrained from floating specific ideas,

but he has hinted that will change when he arrives in January. “It’s really important, I think, to have a position, if only to put forward that position, if only to incorporate disagreement with others, and be influenced and affected by the argumentation of others,” he said during an interview the day of his visit. “I do have a certain set of opinions and beliefs, and I think that’s an important part of coming

A New Dean Designs without Borders

EXPECT BOLD IDEAS from Mohsen Mostafavi when he begins his term as dean of the Graduate School of Design (GSD). On a late September visit to Harvard, Mostafavi

ture. Historically, he says, “the emphasis in architecture has been so much on structures.” But now, he says, environmental factors such as light and air quality “are becoming so critical....You breathe that and you feel all of that, even though a drawing or a picture doesn’t address it.” In one of his courses at Cornell, students focused on the edges of New York City, looking at everything from food supply to transportation and the production of salt for treating roads in winter. His books include the 1993 *On Weathering*, which studies the way natural forces affect buildings’ outer surfaces and advocates for a temporal view of buildings’ lifespans, as opposed to considering them complete and perfect in their initial form and degraded later by weather; and the 2002 *Surface Architecture*, which argues that a building and its façade should not be viewed as disparate entities, but rather, as elements of a cohesive whole.

Taking a holistic approach is “sometimes not so easy” in the context of academic organizational structures and the inertia that often accompanies them, Mostafavi notes. He is not speaking of changes in programs *per se*, but says he wants to examine whether the school’s structure fits its intellectual mission. This investigation, he says, “could lead to the evolution of new programs.”

One of three deans President Drew Gilpin Faust has appointed in her brief tenure, Mostafavi evinces enthusiasm for her goals, including crossing disciplinary boundaries. Some potential collaborations are readily apparent: with the schools of law and government, because politics and economics affect patterns of development; with the humanities division of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, because buildings are a form of art; and with the newly minted School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (see page 74), because advances in engineering pave the way for new forms in architecture, just as engineering concerns limit the scope of what is possible.

But Mostafavi also suggests a more creative interpretation of the idea of crossing boundaries. For an example, he looks to “Logique Visuelle,” a 2003 project in which he and Fardjadi designed a pavilion for a fashion show by the French lux-

ury-goods house Louis Vuitton and an exhibition on the role of architecture in fashion. The idea was not just that there are trends within architecture and that architectural concepts fall in and out of vogue, he says, but also that architecture can learn from fashion’s methods. With samples, fashion designers create full-scale models of their products. While full-scale models of entire projects don’t usually make sense in architecture, building a life-size model, with the actual materials, of some piece of the building—a single room, or a part of the façade—can lend “a much more immediate and clear sense of the architecture,” he explains, and can tease out unexpected reactions.

The incoming dean is certain the school

will need to intensify its focus on two facets of the field that are growing rapidly: urban design and planning—roughly half the world’s population lives in cities, and that number is expected to surpass 60 percent by 2030—and sustainability, another major theme for Faust. Mostafavi foresees an increasing role for historic preservation, and calls landscape architecture “phenomenally important” to the type of holistic approach he espouses. He pledges to maintain the long-prized internationalism of the GSD’s student body, faculty, and outlook, and he anticipates looking beyond academia to learn from practitioners in the field. The most adventurous and important architecture today, he says, is “not stuff that is just in books.”

Getting and Spending

THE UNIVERSITY’S annual financial accounting—usually a forbidding and retrospective document—this year sports a new look and abounds with news about important matters fiscal, academic, and strategic. The new title (the fusty *Financial Report to the Board of Overseers of Harvard College* has given way to a more modern, matter-of-fact *Harvard University Financial Report* for fiscal year 2007) introduces a streamlined text and colorful graphics. (The report is available at <http://vpf-web.harvard.edu/-annualfinancial>.) Among the highlights within:

- Federal funding for research—a critical source of revenue—*declined* 1 percent, to \$515 million, a clear indication of the multiyear leveling-off of the National Institutes of Health’s (NIH) appropriations. NIH is the principal source of support for biomedical research, and, overwhelmingly, Harvard’s single most important provider of research funding. (The National Science Foundation reported in late September that during fiscal year 2006, federal funding of academic research grew less than the rate of inflation for the first time in a quarter-century.)

- The endowment continued to grow rapidly, totaling \$34.9 billion as of June 30—a gain of \$9 billion, or 35 percent, in the past two fiscal years (see page 64). Ac-

