

awards.) On December 7, just ahead of Harvard, Duke—nearing the conclusion of a \$300-million financial-aid campaign—eliminated parental contributions for families with incomes below \$60,000; moved to help students with family incomes below \$40,000 graduate debt-free; reduced loans for students from families with incomes up to \$100,000; and capped loans for families with higher incomes at \$5,000 per year. Duke estimated the cost of the initiatives at \$12.7 million in the first year, a 17 percent increase over current spending on need-based, merit, and athletic scholarships.

These measures, like Harvard's, reflect several factors. First, the earnings of middle- and even some upper-income families have not kept pace with the costs of private higher education, which typically rise faster than the rate of consumer-price inflation in general. Second, Harvard and other need-blind selective colleges have had some success in expanding applications from lower-income students, and now see the opportunity, using recent endowment gains, to extend aid to most of the population. Third is heightened competition among schools for top students. (By making its aid policy public on December 10, Harvard, which no longer offers early admissions, sent a signal to students awaiting early-action decisions from other institutions, typically mailed in the middle of that month; presumably those accepted would then begin studying financial options.) And fourth, members of Congress, led by Senator Charles Grassley (R-Iowa), have raised questions about endowed universities' and colleges' use of their assets—particularly after several years of strong investment returns—and about continuing increases in tuition, room, and board fees. He has advocated that such institutions, like tax-exempt grant-making foundations, spend 5 percent of their endowments annually—well above the disbursements made by Harvard and most of its peers.

FAS dean Michael Smith emphasized that the aid enhancements are not meant to address only "one segment" of the faculty's students, citing recent increases in graduate-student stipends

Yesterday's News

From the pages of the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin* and *Harvard Magazine*

1923 The committee examining Harvard's admissions process discourages giving preferential treatment to alumni children because "unearned exemptions and favors are apt to be demoralizing to their recipients."

1928 The first reading period at Harvard College has proven successful in bolstering student achievement. The *Bulletin* cites an increase in honor and satisfactory grades and a corresponding decrease in unsatisfactory marks as proof that upperclassmen have the "capacity and interest to work independently."

1948 The University announces that tuition for the College will rise to \$525 in the fall, the first increase in 20 years, and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences decides to eliminate the taking of attendance in upperclass courses.

1953 A Senate Judiciary Committee subcommittee holds two days of hearings in Boston to investigate Communist influences in education; three Harvard

students and a junior faculty member are summoned to testify.

1968 Following the assassination of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., the Association of African and Afro-American Students calls on the University to establish an endowed chair for a black professor, hire more black junior faculty members, create courses relevant to black students at Harvard, and admit blacks in proportion to their percentage of the nation's population as a whole.

1988 Harvard undergraduates triumph over students from Columbia and Dartmouth in a dining-hall survey designed to gauge "cultural literacy." Initiated by the editors of the conservative *Dartmouth Review* and administered at the College by the like-minded *Harvard Salient*, the survey features questions from various disciplines, including: "Who wrote *The Prince*?" "What is another name for the aurora borealis?" and "What is the capital of West Germany?" The Harvard respondents average 70 percent correct answers.

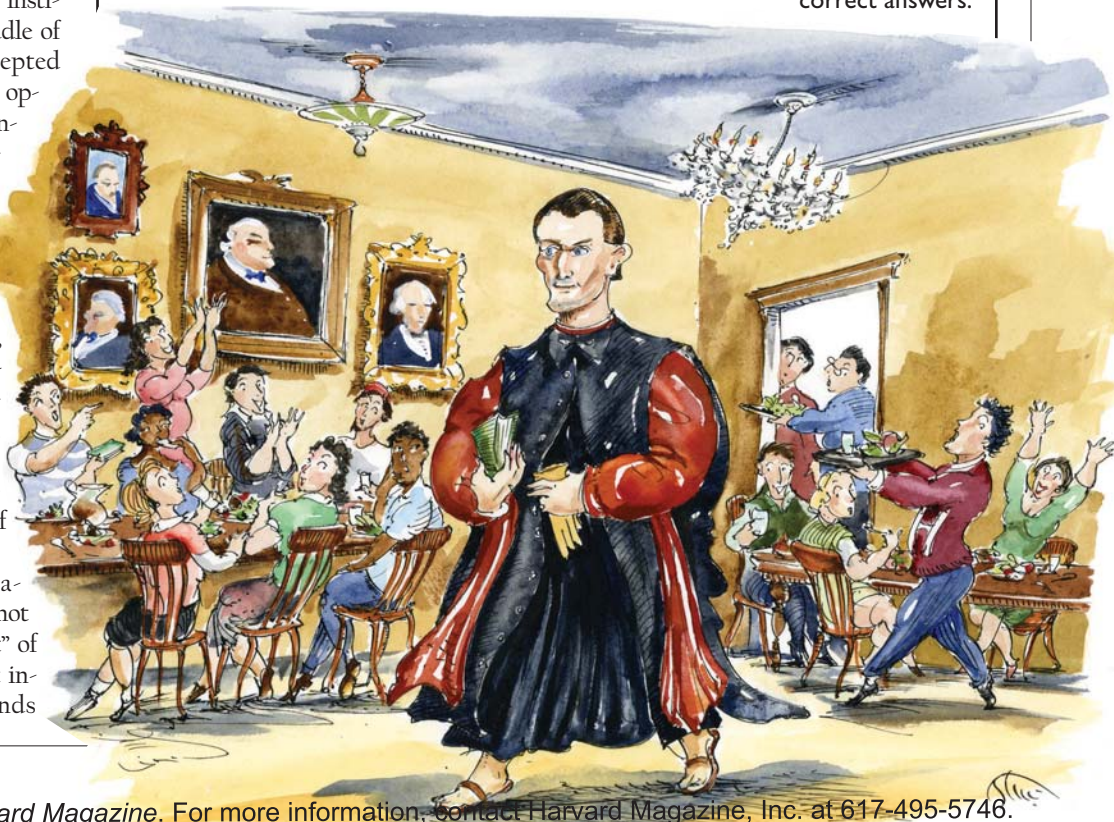


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