

these institutions to come together to make a coherent argument—not just Harvard and Yale but Wisconsin and Michigan—as to why these are national assets.” The recent public attention has made edu-

cation leaders aware that they cannot “take for granted that the public understands how important these institutions can be.”

How to proceed in this conversation, he said, has become a concern at the highest

level of the University. As the administration seeks a new vice president for government, community, and public affairs, such issues will no doubt loom large in the discussion.

## A “Pause” and Progress in FAS

DURING SPRING faculty meetings, dean Michael D. Smith explained his approach to leading the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS), with important implications for the growth of professorial ranks. And the faculty progressed in rolling out the new general-education curriculum, the most consequential development now on the agenda for undergraduates’ academic experience at Harvard—and perhaps an unforeseen enhancement in graduate students’ education as well. (Smith also discussed his retrospective report on FAS’s activities from late 2006 through this past winter at the May 20 faculty meeting; see [www.fas.harvard.edu/~home](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~home)).

allocate space; tie together FAS and departmental academic and strategic plans; and oversee research centers, institutes, museums, and other formerly autonomous units.

Smith also described a thorough academic planning process that would enable him to “allocate resources” and to align them with the faculty’s “aspirations.” “The worst outcome,” he wrote in a hand-out to the faculty, “would be to undertake a planning exercise and have no resource ‘headroom’ at the end of the exercise to implement our plans.”

Accordingly, he said, the faculty would “pause to plan.” With the faculty ranks having risen 19 percent (from 596 positions to 712) between mid 1997 and mid 2007, and continued growth in 2007–2008, he proposed in his text “arresting our growth” for 2008–2009, an abrupt shift. During the past decade, according to his handout, the number of professors grew in all academic divisions, but only the engineering and applied sciences division expanded in relative size (see table). Smith asked the faculty whether it wished to put more effort into certain fields—as FAS’s enormous investments in science laboratories strongly imply—and said that it had not done so in the recent past. The “pause” he proposed suggests a different path of hiring to be defined in the run-up to the next University capital campaign, and implemented as the resulting resources become available.

• General education. Work continues to develop new courses for the successor to the undergraduate Core curriculum, as Wolfson professor of Jewish studies Jay M. Harris reported to the faculty on May 6. (Harris, master of Cabot House, directs the effort.) A “preview year” will begin this fall, he said, with perhaps three dozen courses offered (see [www.generaleducation.fas.harvard.edu](http://www.generaleducation.fas.harvard.edu)); the full program begins in the fall of 2009, as the general-education requirement for the class of 2013. Harris said the committee was examining

both course content and pedagogical design: opportunities for faculty-student interaction, use of technological tools and University museum collections, and integration of writing and speaking in class requirements and aims.

Graduate School of Arts and Sciences dean Allan M. Brandt then told the faculty about new graduate seminars in general education: a series of for-credit working groups in which faculty members planning the new courses engage their graduate students to review the field, examine pertinent pedagogies, and contribute to the design. Brandt subsequently described a process of bringing graduate students and faculty members together to “critically assess appropriate readings, primary materials, laboratory work, and other methodological skills as well as theoretical themes that will be pursued” in general-education classes. Further, he said, participants will “consider alternative pedagogic strategies, teaching techniques, and technologies,” as well as development of applicable research, writing, and evaluation skills.

The immediate hope is that the graduate students involved will become especially adept teaching fellows when the courses debut in the fall of 2009—a far cry from handing a teaching fellow a syllabus and asking her to run a section. Brandt hopes six to eight such seminars will operate each year. Among those organized for 2008–2009 are sessions on international human rights, Asia in the making of the modern world, probability, ethics and aesthetics, the literature and art of the American Civil War, and food in America (from the starvation at Jamestown to present concerns about obesity).

Longer term, if effective, the experiment would yield fresh courses with up-to-date content, while providing graduate students with much richer teaching skills when they pursue academic careers—an unexpected payoff from revising the undergraduate curriculum.

### Faculty Growth and Composition

	1997	2007
Arts & Humanities	177 (29.7%)	210 (29.5%)
Social Sciences	216 (36.2%)	252 (35.4%)
Engineering	50 ( 8.4%)	70 ( 9.8%)
Life Sciences	76 (12.8%)	91 (12.8%)
Physical Sciences	77 (12.9%)	89 (12.5%)
Total	<b>596 (100%)</b>	<b>712 (100%)</b>

Addressing his colleagues on April 8, Smith outlined changes in administrative processes, responsibilities, and personnel. Most visibly, the divisional deans—a position created earlier this decade, to provide coordinating and oversight roles for the arts and humanities, social sciences, and the sciences—will be significantly empowered. Beyond their current advisory roles, Smith’s divisional deans will authorize faculty searches, recruitment, and leaves; appoint department chairs, set salaries, and approve office and laboratory renovations;