

it out at Harvard. “Why would you stay?” Kramer asked. Some departments have made *no* internal promotions to tenure within living memory.

“It’s a real disparity across the divisions,” she observed. Indeed, even before the tenure track was created five years ago, the fierce competition in many of the science departments for the best colleagues resulted in successful appointments of junior colleagues who were expected to do well, and did—overwhelmingly realizing full professorships.

Elsewhere, “It’s just a very different mindset,” she said—resulting in a culture, a job market, and a tradition that will have to be changed over time before the more-diverse junior-faculty cohorts make an impact on those humanities and social-sciences departments (which are especially heavily weighted toward tenured professorships). That makes it more important, Kramer said, that Judith Singer’s efforts to “educate departments on how to search, how to retain, and how to promote” pay off. And it explains Singer’s realism: even as Harvard makes its tenure track more effective, and becomes more systematic about offering retirement options for senior professors, she said, progress on the path toward a more diverse faculty “is all at the margins.”

## A Digital Public Library?

THE DREAM OF CREATING a national digital library, free to all, began to seem much less like a fantasy in early October. In a private meeting convened by Pforzheimer University Professor Robert Darnton—arranged by the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, and funded by a private foundation—42 leaders of research libraries, major foundations, and national cultural institutions met in Cambridge to discuss how to work together toward the creation of a Digital Public Library of America.

“I was amazed by the response,” says Darnton, who is director of the Harvard University Library, but was acting as a public intellectual and longtime champion of the idea, rather than in his official capacity. “Everyone I asked said instantly, ‘This is a great idea, we’ll be there.’” As Darnton declared in his welcoming remarks, the library would be “the digital

## Yesterday’s News

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

**1911** The College Library expects to be without money to buy new books for the next several months.

**1926** Construction under way includes Straus Hall, the Fogg Art Museum, McKinlock Hall (a freshman residence fronting the Charles), and the Business School complex, a gift of George F. Baker.

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The first movie theater in Cambridge is about to open across from the Yard.

**1931** The masters of Adams, Kirkland, Leverett, Eliot, and Winthrop, the five new Houses, have joined the masters of Dunster and Lowell in apportioning a cross-section of current sophomores and juniors to each House for the coming year. The *Bulletin* reports that the proportion of public-school graduates is approximately the same in all the Houses, as is the distribution of students from different sections of the country.

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The Corporation declines a Boston lawyer’s bequest of \$25,000 for a lectureship designed to prove that the “modern feminist movement...[impairs] the family as a basis of civilization and its advance....”

**1936** Harvard has established a laboratory at Glen Cove, Long Island, to study the origin, spread, and eradication of various plant diseases, especially Dutch elm disease.

**1951** A survey of *Bulletin* readers finds that only one in four subscribers owns a television set.

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President Conant urges passage of the Universal Military Service and Training Bill, partly because “the U.S. monopoly of the bomb has ended [and] Soviet allies have shown a readiness to gain their ends by force.”

**1961** President-elect John F. Kennedy ’40, LL.D. ’56, is mobbed by enthusiastic Harvard students as he arrives to attend a meeting of the Board of Overseers.

**1966** The Cambridge City Council approves Harvard’s request to construct, at its own expense, a six-lane underpass at the western end of Cambridge Street, north of the Yard.

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Linda McVeigh ’67 becomes the first female managing editor of the *Crimson*.

**1986** Backed by Alumni Against Apartheid, John Plotz ’69, Gay Seidman ’78 (the first woman president of the *Crimson*), and Kenneth Simmons ’54 collect enough signatures to run as petition candidates for the Board of Overseers, seeking to press Harvard to divest its holdings in companies doing business in South Africa.



equivalent of the Library of Congress... bringing millions of books and digitized material in other media within clicking distance of public libraries, high schools, colleges, universities, retirement communities, and any individual with access to the Internet."

Darnton has argued in the past that a "united front of foundations," if persuaded that creating a digital library would be in the interests of the American people, could overcome any financial hurdles to launching such a resource. That intuition was correct. "The very first session concerned costs," he reports. Even though estimates ranged widely, depending on what the library would hold (and in particular the cost of digital preservation: see "Gutenberg 2.0," May-June 2010, page 36), "everyone agreed that it is a feasible project and the funding is not the major obstacle." For example, a project to digitize all books in the public domain (no longer in copyright) as well as so-called orphan books (those published between 1923 and 1964 for which no copyright owner can be found) might cost \$1 billion, Darnton says. Given a coalition of foundations, each contributing a share across five years, he says, "There is no question but that we could afford it."

Mary Lee Kennedy, executive director of the Business School's Baker Library, presented research on the national digitization efforts of 21 countries, with particular emphasis on models in Norway and the Netherlands. The ambition of the Dutch, for example, is to digitize every Dutch book, newspaper, and pamphlet from 1470 to the present. Interestingly, their national library, which began

the project in 1996, has entered into a partnership with Google to digitize more than 160,000 public-domain books from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with Google paying for the cost of digitization. Among the lessons learned from the Dutch, Kennedy said, is that preservation costs are difficult to predict, and that copyright issues are a significant challenge.

Experts on copyright also made presentations. Darnton hopes that bipartisan support in Congress may eventually lead to some sort of accommodation or change to copyright laws that would allow more books still in copyright to become part of the digital library. Innovative technological solutions that enable limiting the number of loaned copies of books in digital form may also play a role in facilitating a digital public lending library. Darnton imagines "a core which you could think of as a huge digital database that would expand indefinitely over time." Other resources might be added later, such as the database of newspapers from all 50 states already digitized by the Library of Congress.

Such details will doubtless be worked out at subsequent meetings. For now, the group has come up with what Darnton calls "the beginnings of a strategy." Two follow-up conferences are planned: one of foundation leaders, in order to organize their support; and a second, much larger, public conference in Washington, D.C., this spring intended to organize support among the great cultural institutions in the nation's capital. Of the Harvard gathering, Darnton said, "We just provided an occasion to get things started."

## No Surprises

THE *Harvard University Financial Report* for the fiscal year ended last June 30 appears to fulfill administrators' hopes: it conveys essentially no surprises. In this, the mid-October report contrasts sharply with the fiscal 2009 version, which disclosed nearly \$3 billion of previously unreported losses sustained from investing Harvard's cash reserves alongside the endowment and from unwinding interest-rate swaps intended to buttress financing for future campus construction in Allston. (The swaps backfired badly, given the recession and record-low interest rates; see "Further Financial Fallout," January-February 2010, page 45.)

Nonetheless, the 2010 report outlines a new state of University financial affairs. Operating revenue *declined* to \$3.72 billion, down from \$3.81 billion in 2009, and operating expenses were modestly lower, too: \$3.73 billion, down from \$3.76 billion. During the five fiscal years from 2005 to 2009, revenues had *risen* by more than a billion dollars (from \$2.80 billion to \$3.81 billion), and spending had kept pace (climbing from \$2.76 billion to \$3.76 billion). The days of an 8 percent compound annual growth rate in spending—of \$200-million increases in annual outlays—are over.

Fiscal 2010's 2.2 percent decrease in revenue is a surprisingly good result. The Corporation had directed an 8 percent reduction in the endowment funds distributed for operations during the year—the source of 38 percent of operating revenues in fiscal 2009. The fiscal 2010 report indicates that the actual reduction came in at 7 percent (\$1.32 billion, down from \$1.42 billion); the slight difference reflects the buffering effect of distributions on new gifts to the endowment. "Decapitalizations" of endowment principal remained nearly level, at \$237.4 million in fiscal 2010; the "administrative assessment"—formerly called the "strategic infrastructure fund," a half-percent annual levy on the endowment for University expenses associated with Allston campus development—apparently declined to about \$130 million from fiscal 2009's \$176 million. But there were offsetting pockets of strength: tuition income from graduate- and professional-degree programs rose a robust \$23 million, and nearly \$15 million from continuing-education and executive programs; and federal support for sponsored

### Unifying Harvard's Libraries

**After** "exhaustive analysis," an implementation work group of the Task Force on University Libraries has recommended creating a coordinated management structure for the entire University library system (see "Libraries on the Edge," January-February 2010, page 41). A new position, executive director of the University library, will report to a board of directors, chaired by Provost Steven Hyman, comprising Pforzheimer University Professor Robert Darnton, currently director of the Harvard University Library, and deans (or their designates) and faculty members from Harvard's schools. This new administrative structure seeks to preserve local autonomy—by serving scholarly interests within specialized areas of study such as business or medicine—while facilitating the "global strategic, administrative, and business processes" of the library system as a whole.



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