Where Is Harvard?

A few years ago, a graduate student used that question to sum up one of her earliest experiences walking through campus. As she traveled up John F. Kennedy Street, undergraduates made their way from the River Houses to the Yard, passing in and out of Lamont and Widener while freshmen streamed to and from Annenberg Hall. Around them, people crisscrossed the lawns, passing one another to get to the Design School or the Divinity School or the Law School. Every corner was alive with activity, but there were no spaces shared by all members of the University. There was nowhere to point to when she asked, "Where is Harvard?"

Spaces matter. They create unique opportunities in the present and make the past rush back to us in vivid memory. As part of the Harvard Campaign, we will reaffirm the importance of learning and working side by side as we create a campus for the next century. Late last semester, I gathered with members of the Harvard community to celebrate groundbreakings for two common spaces that will enhance the campus experience not just for alumni, students, faculty, and staff, but also for neighbors and visitors.

The Richard A. and Susan F. Smith Campus Center, formerly known as the Holyoke Center, will become an important hub of activity at the heart of our campus. We will create spaces where people will read and study, forge and share ideas, host events and performances, make art and mount exhibits, as well as chat over meals and relax together. Some of the most exciting work being undertaken by students and faculty is interdisciplinary, arising from connections across boundaries. We must continue to generate the conditions for serendipitous encounters—the unexpected conversation that becomes a fruitful partnership or the passing observation that sparks a discovery or innovation.

Across the Charles River, we are transforming the intersection of North Harvard Street and Western Avenue—an area commonly known as Barry's Corner—into an attractive and inviting destination. New residential and retail spaces will complement the five restaurants that have opened in the area since 2009. Harvard also will renovate and create spaces for recreation and athletics, and improve the public realm with a grove, parks, and pathways. The revitalized common spaces will create a beautiful green gateway to the University, heralding changes in Allston that will shape our future.

Bricks and mortar connect us to one another and to our extraordinary predecessors, stirring in us the hope of making a lasting mark on the world. Witnessing the College's 200th anniversary celebration, Emerson wrote of a "long winding train [reaching] back into eternity," an observation etched in stone at Meyer Gate. Across the street in Radcliffe's lecture halls, Helen Keller had lessons spelled into her hand. In Massachusetts Hall, John Adams jotted down the day's weather in his diary, and George Washington quartered his

troops. Carl Sandburg, George Marshall, Benazir Bhutto, and J.K. Rowling have all looked out over a crowded Tercentenary Theatre and walked the same grounds as the unknowable John Harvard and the ebullient Seamus Heaney.

In 1901, Henry Lee Higginson reflected on the significance of the newly built Harvard Union. "This house," he explained, "is a mere shell, a body into which you, Harvard students, and you alone can breathe life and then by a constant and generous use of it, educate yourselves and each other." The Harvard Campaign will help to provide hundreds of thousands of square feet of new space for our "constant and generous use" as we come together from across the University and on both sides of the Charles River to educate one another and share our discoveries with the wider world.

Sincerely,

Drew Faust

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