

others are more deliberate. In the HILT-funded Sound Lab, for instance, students have access to equipment and software for composing, recording, and editing music. In "The Art of Listening," one of three new introductory courses in the humanities (see "Toward Cultural Citizenship," page 35), students use this equipment to create mix tapes and soundscapes that explore the possibilities of everyday sounds.

"If you work with sounds yourself, if you learn what it is to use digital sound-editing software, you necessarily have to understand how a sound works," says Peabody professor of music Alexander Rehding, who co-teaches that course. "I could explain it all theoretically, and all that is good up to a point, but if you work with a digital version of a sound wave, you have to engage with it in very practical ways. I see it as complementary." The experiential component in fact underscores the importance of the humanities; in Rehding's words, "We're engaging with the humanities all the time, even when we don't know it."

Sometimes, the engagement is deeply personal. In the HILT-funded course "Quests for Wisdom: Religious, Moral,

and Aesthetic Searches for the Art of Living," offered for the first time last fall, Rabb professor of anthropology Arthur Kleinman and Rudenstine professor for the study of Latin America David Carrasco interwove philosophical and religious texts with stories from their academic work and personal lives. Kleinman (who is also professor of medical anthropology and professor of psychiatry) spoke movingly about finding wisdom in caregiving during his wife's decline and death from Alzheimer's disease (see "On Caregiving," July-August 2010, page 25). "The academic and the existential should be mixed," says Carrasco. In the context of students' personal quests for wisdom, thinkers like William James and Toni Morrison became dialogue partners and interlocutors—as Carrasco describes it: "someone who was not just a theoretician or a novelist, but someone who was a life."

The quest expanded beyond philosophy into anthropology, religious studies, and the arts. Through excursions and guest workshops, students learned modern dance, listened to jazz, contributed art to the Day of the Dead altar at the Peabody

Museum, and developed and performed a play after spending time with Holocaust survivor Judith Sherman and reading her memoir, *Say the Name: A Survivor's Tale in Prose and Poetry*. "Arthur and I were profoundly moved by the intensity and depth of the students' responses," says Carrasco; he and Kleinman have asked their students to stay in touch for the next five years. "We care for these students," Carrasco says. "We think this is one of the ways to awaken in them the potential not just for a career, but for a meaningful life."

At the same time, Carrasco offers some cautions about experiential education: "Partly because students are sitting on their behinds for hours, experiential learning sounds like stretching." But experiences gain their value in combination with intellectual discipline, he says; in "Quests for Wisdom," students assessed the readings and media they encountered through frequent analytical writing assignments and a final project. Carrasco also takes care to emphasize the value of more traditional forms of experience. "I might want to go to [Friedrich] Schleiermacher's hometown and look at the environment in which he preached and thought—and that's good," he says, referring to the German theologian and philosopher. "But you can read Schleiermacher and have a profound, insightful experience. You just have to know how to do it."

Harvard Measures Its MOOCs

FROM ITS INCEPTION in May 2012, a guiding goal of Harvard's participation in the edX online-course venture has been to "advance teaching and learning through research" (as the HarvardX website puts it). The initial product has now been released: the HarvardX research group and MIT's Office of Digital Learning have published papers surveying the registrants in Harvard and MIT courses offered through the edX platform and the ways in which those users interacted with the contents they accessed. Separately, Harvard Business School has announced its own online program, and both edX and the for-profit online enterprise, Coursera, announced significant management appointments (see below).

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An overview report on the first six Harvard and 11 MIT courses, offered during the 2012-2013 academic year, addressed the most elemental questions: Who registered? What did they do? Where are they from? It thus engages with a basic issue about the current online courses. The report tallied 841,687 course registrations, of whom:

292,852 never proceeded past registration;

469,702 viewed less than half of the course content;

35,937 explored half or more of the content, but did *not* earn certificates of completion; and

43,196 *did* earn certificates of completion.

The “shopping period,” if that is a good analogy, is brief: “The average percentage of registrants who cease activity in these open online courses is highest in the first week at around 50 percent.” The paper’s authors, including Andrew Ho, co-chair of the HarvardX research committee, maintain that “Course certification rates are misleading and counterproductive indicators of the impact and potential of open online courses”—in part because “large numbers of non-certified registrants access substantial amounts of course content.” That is, learning occurs in units or chunks, rather than in course-length study.

Among other findings, the proportion of registrants who report having a college degree ranged from 54 percent to 85 percent. That is perhaps not surprising for Harvard- and MIT-level courses, but it indicates that a different approach, or different courses, may be necessary to serve introductory learners or people pursuing foundational skills. In fact, on average, 72 percent of the HarvardX registrants had a bachelor’s degree or higher. Just 2.7 percent of registrants had Internet or mailing addresses from identified “least-developed” countries—suggesting issues about the level of course content and registrants’ preparation, access to the Internet, and

Yesterday’s News

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

1919 With the War Department’s approval, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences votes to resume military training at Harvard, with courses “tuned up to the same [scholastic] standard” as others in the curriculum and military drills to be conducted at summer camps, not on campus.

1929 For Radcliffe’s semicentennial celebration from May 30 to June 1, “the vicinity of Memorial Hall [is] thronged with delegates wearing gaily colored academic costumes”; Mrs. Herbert Hoover brings greetings from the White House; and President Lowell offers the congratulations of Harvard.

1934 The baseball team accepts an invitation to play 12 Japanese college teams over the summer, thereby becoming the first Harvard team and “the first [college] squad from the effete East to carry its bats to the Far East.”

1939 Competing under cover, Edward C.K. Read ’40, president of the *Lampoon*,

wins the annual Wellesley College hoop race, a tradition alleged to determine which member of the graduating class will be married first. According to the *Alumni Bulletin*, Read reportedly “had accomplices ‘within the ranks’ who fitted him out with the necessary feminine paraphernalia and slipped him into the starting line-up.”

1944 Instructor in chemistry Robert B. Woodward and Polaroid Corporation researcher William von E. Doering ’38, Ph.D. ’43, working together in the University laboratories, have succeeded in synthesizing quinine.

1989 The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences celebrates its centennial on June 2 and 3 with symposia, receptions, and awards to several of its most distinguished alumni.

1999 Harvard joins a yearlong monitoring project, initiated by Notre Dame, to gather information about the conditions inside apparel factories that make university insignia wear and to formulate ideas on how to improve them.



English-language skill. These matters need to be addressed if massive open online courses (MOOCs) are to extend higher-education access to countries where the availability of such experiences is very limited—an expressed aim of edX and other enterprises.

The report made these overall findings, among others:

- “HarvardX and MITx registrants are not ‘students’ in a conventional sense, and they and their behavior differ from traditional students in K-12 and post-secondary institutions,” not least because registration “requires no cost or commitment” and “skilled learners [may be] dropping in to learn one specific aspect of a course.”

- “There will be no grand unifying

theory of MOOCs,” given that “courses from professional schools like the Harvard School of Public Health” are certain to attract “registrants [who are] are more highly educated and...higher percentages of registrants from outside the U.S.” than, say, an introduction to computer science.

- “Online courses can offer rich, real-time data to understand and improve student learning, but current data [describe] activity more often than learning gains or desired future outcomes. We need to invest more in high-quality, scalable assessments, as well as research designs, including pre-testing and experiments, to understand what and how registrants are learning.” (The same is also very much true for assessing on-campus, classroom courses.)

Justin Reich



COURTESY OF JUSTIN REICH

Brevia

Teaching Spaces in Allston

A School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (SEAS) task force has outlined parameters for the teaching and common spaces that will be purpose-built in Allston, where a substantial portion of the school is expected to be relocated, in new quarters—a principal priority of

The Harvard Campaign. The SEAS January white paper envisions highly flexible teaching spaces and learning laboratories—to the point of discouraging fixed classrooms with permanent furnishings. In a similar vein, the task force recommends consumer-grade communications and media technology, rather than more expensive equipment that might be rendered obsolete rapidly, with the savings applied to rapid refreshing as warranted. The paper also emphasizes the importance of making the building transparent, so it readily appears to passersby as an

engineering campus within a liberal-arts university. For a full report on the principles and recommendations, and what they suggest about teaching at Harvard generally, see <http://www.harvardmagazine.com/allston-14>.

Reshaping the Square

A rare bit of new construction is under way in Harvard Square. Developer Richard Friedman has razed the frame building at 114 Mount Auburn Street, and will construct an eight-story, 70,000-square-foot office building (the space is reportedly fully leased to the University) with first-floor restaurant and retail space. He will also renovate the brick Conductor's Building across a narrow roadway, for restaurant or similar use. The project will in effect clean up the view from the Charles Hotel, which Friedman built previously.



THE CORPORATION REPLENISHED. Kenneth I. Chenault, J.D. '76, and Karen Gordon Mills '75, M.B.A. '77, have been elected members of the Harvard Corporation, the senior governing board, effective July 1. They succeed retiring members Robert D. Reischauer '63, who is the senior fellow, and Robert E. Rubin '60, LL.D. '01, whose service concludes at the end of the academic year. Chenault is chairman and chief executive officer of American Express Company. A graduate of Bowdoin College, he has served on Harvard Law School's visiting committee and is a member of the Committee on University Resources (COUR), Harvard's senior fundraising advisory group. A member of diverse nonprofit boards and advisory councils, he is also a director of IBM and Procter & Gamble. Kenneth and Kathryn Cassell Chenault's son Kenneth graduated from the College in 2012; son Kevin is a

senior. Mills was administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration from 2009 to 2013, and is currently a fellow at the Business School and the Harvard Kennedy School. A private-equity executive, she has served on diverse corporate boards, and was a member of the Board of Overseers, the junior governing board, from 1999 to 2005, and a Radcliffe College trustee from 1985 to 1993. She is married to Barry Mills, president of Bowdoin College; they have three sons, including George, a Harvard junior.



Author Honorands

Three of the five Harvard affiliates nominated as finalists for National Book Critics Circle awards (see Brevia, March-April, page 22) were named winners in mid March: Amy Wilentz '76, for *Farewell, Fred Voodoo: A Letter from Haiti* (autobiography); Leo Damrosch, Bernbaum professor of literature emeritus, for *Jonathan Swift: His Life and His World* (bi-

● “Open online courses are neither useless nor the salvation of higher education. Large-scale, ‘low-touch’ learning platforms will have sectors and niches where they are very useful and others where they are less so....Thoughtful instructors and administrators...will take advantage of resources that can be saved by using these technologies and redeploy those resources to places where ‘high touch’ matters.”

INTEGRATING these overall conclusions with a specific course, “The Ancient Greek Hero,” Menschel HarvardX research fellow Justin Reich put the research into broader and deeper context during a symposium at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He began by noting two limitations of

the first-year analyses: the initial HarvardX courses were very heterogeneous (from a public-health statistics offering and a limited-enrollment class on copyright law to the popular “Justice” and Greek heroes surveys), and a small sample from which to draw general conclusions.

He observed further that research to date derived principally from analyzing basic data on course mechanics captured from the edX operating platform—what he called “fishing in the exhaust.” Much more sophisticated research lies in the future. Some will take the form of anthropological field observations: what students do during their time online in the course, whom they talk to, what other software they are using, whether they

take notes: the sorts of data not available in the “click stream” from the platform (capturing keystrokes as students register and work through a course). The ultimate goal, he said, would be “design research” that draws upon learning science, examines the pedagogy and learning objective of each course, and experiments to see what teaching methods are most effective.

His in-depth case study examined the online adaptation of the long-running course offered since 1978 by Jones professor of classical Greek literature Gregory Nagy. Its exercises emphasize “slow” reading assignments, guiding students to experience the texts from an ancient perspective, rather than reading mod-

CERAMICS CENTER. The Office for the Arts inaugurated a new ceramics center at 224 Western Avenue in Allston in late February. It replaces a prior facility, located across the street, on a site being redeveloped for other University uses.

ography); and Frank Bidart, A.M. ’67, for *Metaphysical Dog* (poetry).

Nota Bene

THE NEW CLASS’S TERM TAB. The College announced that tuition, room, board, and fees for the 2014-15 academic year will be \$58,607, up 3.9 percent (\$2,200) from \$56,407 this year, and a slight acceleration from the 3.5 percent increase imposed in the prior year. Yale increased its undergraduate term bill 4 percent, to \$59,800; Brown imposed a 3.8 percent increase, to \$59,428. The \$60,000 undergraduate year looms in the immediate future.

THE NEW CLASS. Despite the rising price, demand remains strong: the College offered admission to 2,023 students (including 992 of the 4,692 who sought early-action decisions, as previously announced), from a total candidate pool of 34,295—down marginally from 35,023 applicants last year. The overall admission rate therefore crept up one-tenth of a point, to 5.9 percent. Stanford apparently recorded the most punishing admission statistics, with a record 42,167 undergraduate applications (up 9 percent from the prior year) and 2,138 acceptances: a mere 5.1 percent. Yale admitted 6.3 percent of applicants, and Princeton 7.3 percent.



MISCELLANY. Lane MacDonald ’88, recently appointed managing director for private equity at Harvard Management Company (HMC), which invests the endowment (see Brevia, January-February, page 30), departed in February to become director of the personal wealth-management firm for Fidelity Investments chairman Edward C. Johnson III ’54. HMC announced that Richard Hall ’90, who was most recently at the Teacher Retirement System of Texas, will assume the post....Penguin Books, India, has withdrawn from publication and pulped copies of *The Hindus: An Alternative History*, by Wendy Doniger ’62, Ph.D. ’69, Litt.D. ’09, Eliade Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago and a fore-

most scholar of Hinduism. In a *New York Times* essay, Doniger wrote of the decision, “My case has helped highlight the extent to which Hindu fundamentalists...now dominate the political discourse in India,” an issue in the current national election campaign....The charitable foundation of Sumner M. Redstone ’44, LL.B. ’47, who recently gave \$10 million to Harvard Law School, has donated \$30 million to George Washington University’s School of Public Health....Stanford has approved a new joint concentration in computer science and humanities, with either English or music tracks, similar to Carnegie Mellon’s existing bachelor of computer sciences and arts degree, which links to architecture, art, design, drama, or music.

ern meanings into them. The multiple-choice assessments emphasize such close readings. But of course registrants are free, Reich said, to use the course for their own purposes, as “explorers” who sample the content, or as “certificate seekers.” Registrants tended to be highly educated and older than typical undergraduates; if an instructor wanted to serve a different audience, he said, an online course design could be modified to appeal to other users.

The course data generally can be arrayed to show different levels of engagement and of performance, and different intensities of “meaningful learning experience,” ranging from those explorers who dip in to the diligent users aiming for course completion and certification. From the user perspective, Reich said, that is a liberating feature of online courses: a learner can pursue a specific learning objective, and achieve it, without having to invest in a complete, formal course experience. He characterized this as a “voluntary, informal” learning environment, with students registering when they pleased and pursuing as much or little of the course as they liked, at their own pace.

The online format and technology clearly will enable much deeper research into learning and the effectiveness of diverse pedagogies, along the lines Reich outlined. That there will be ample op-

portunities for such work is evident, too. At the beginning of the symposium, vice provost for advances in learning Peter K. Bol, who oversees HarvardX (and who as Carswell professor of East Asian languages and civilizations co-teaches the HarvardX China course), indicated that the University plans to mount 20 online offerings per semester (including initial and repeated courses and shorter modules) for the foreseeable future.

HBX, the business school’s online venture, unveiled March 21, represents a significant departure from the HarvardX MOOC model. Its courses—a suite of foundational business-skills offerings for undergraduates, non-business graduate and professional students, and people early in their careers; and specialized executive courses—are fee-based, and aimed at limited enrollments. Moreover, the school has built a proprietary technology platform to replicate key features of its case-based classroom pedagogy.

In late March, Coursera announced that Yale president emeritus Richard C. Levin would become chief executive, focusing on university partnerships, strategy, and international expansion, particularly in China, where he has been very active. edX subsequently reported that Wendy Cebula, former chief operating officer of Vistaprint, an online provider of printing and other services to business custom-

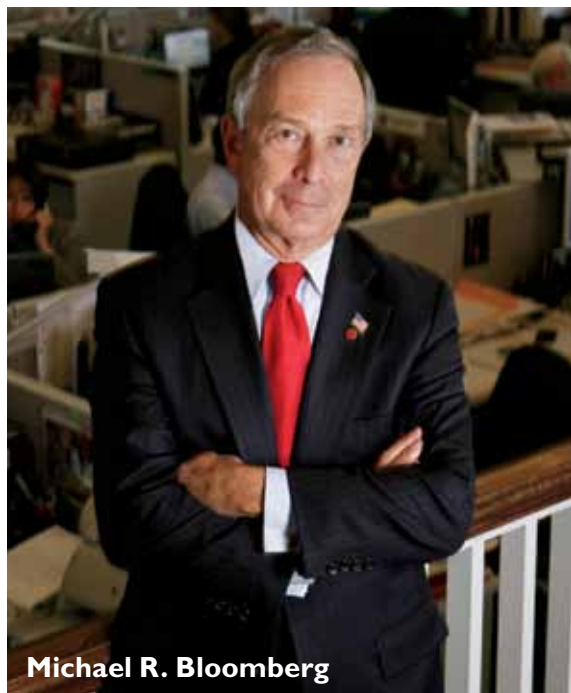
ers, would join as president, helping the organization with operations as it continues to scale up its staff and institutional membership.

Access the HarvardX research at <http://harvardx.harvard.edu/harvardx-working-papers>. A video recording of Reich’s presentation is available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y8Bic6gfs_Q&feature=youtu.be. For a full report on HBX, see <http://www.harvardmagazine.com/hbx-14>.

An E-Privacy Policy

A HARVARD TASK FORCE assigned by President Drew Faust to develop a University policy governing electronic communications released its recommendations in late February. Its work began in March 2013, following a controversy sparked by University administrators’ decisions to access information about e-mails during an Administrative Board investigation into undergraduate academic misconduct (see “E-mail Imbroglio,” May-June 2013, page 46). After disclosures that a senior administrator had authorized multiple searches that led information-technology personnel to access as many as 17,000 Harvard e-mail accounts to find a purported leak, Faust said the University had “highly inadequate” policies and processes in place for treating electronic communications properly.

The task force, chaired by David J. Barron, Green professor of public law, has recommended adoption of a single, comprehensive, University policy applicable “across all components, faculties and schools.” The task-force report and draft recommendations were meant, it said, to “honor the University’s commitment to



Michael R. Bloomberg

Mr. Speaker

Entrepreneur (Bloomberg L.P., the financial-information and news company), civic leader (three-time mayor of New York City), and philanthropist (including gifts of \$1.1 billion to his alma mater, Johns Hopkins) Michael R. Bloomberg, M.B.A. '66, will be the principal speaker at the 363rd Commencement, on May 29. Born in Boston and raised in nearby Medford, Bloomberg returned to the area for his business degree—and has supported the Business School with a professorship and a gift for the renovated Baker Library|Bloomberg Center, both named in honor of his father, William Henry Bloomberg. He has spoken out nationally on issues such as gun control and public health; during his commencement address at Stanford last year (“no other university in the world has so profoundly shaped our modern age”), he advocated immigration reform, as a linchpin of economic growth, and same-sex marriage, as a basic civil right. Bloomberg will speak that afternoon, during Harvard Alumni Association’s annual meeting, following the Morning Exercises.

COURTESY OF MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG