

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-

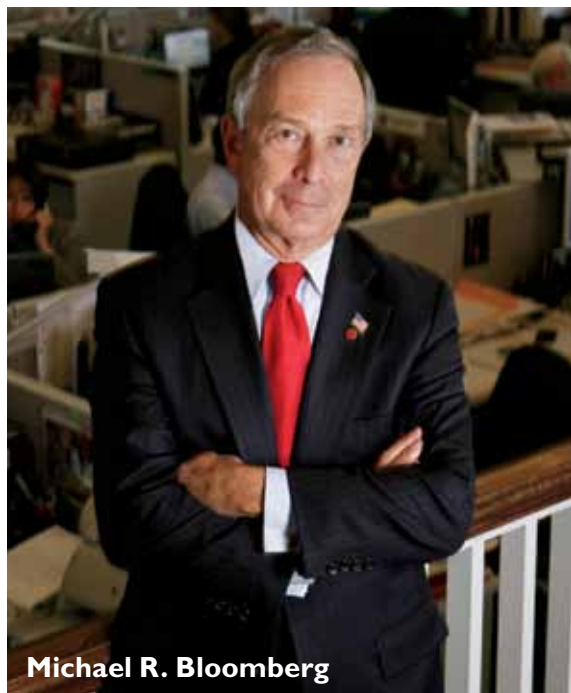
ers, would join as president, helping the organization with operations as it continues to scale up its staff and institutional membership.

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](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