KENNEDY SCHOOL, UNDER CONSTRUCTION. The Harvard Kennedy School aims to build students' capacity for better public policy, wise democratic governance, international amity, and more. Now it is addressing its own capacity issues (as described at harvardmag.com/hks-16). In January, as seen across Eliot Street from the northeast (opposite page), work was well under way to raise the level of the interior courtyard, install utility space in a new below-grade level, and erect a four-story "south building." The project will bridge the Eliot Street opening between the Belfer (left) and Taubman (right) buildings with a new "gateway" structure that includes faculty offices and other spaces. The images on this page (above and upper right) show views diagonally across the courtyard from Taubman toward Littauer, and vice versa. Turning west, across the courtyard toward the Charles Hotel complex (right), affords a look at the current open space between buildings; the gap is to be filled with a new, connective academic building, including classrooms.

Debating Diversity

Toward a more inclusive Harvard

Amid widely publicized student protests on campuses around the country in the last year and a half, many of them animated by concerns about racial and class inequities, Harvard has had its own—sometimes quieter—upwelling of activism. The cadence of campus protests has gained particular urgency in the last two academic years, following the widely publicized deaths of African-American men and women at the hands of police. Particularly last semester, a new wave of activism, and the University's responses to it, have invited members of the Harvard community on all sides of the issues to confront the challenges of inclusion.

Campus conversation on racism peaked last November, when the portraits of African-American professors at Harvard Law School (HLS) were found defaced with black tape. The same day, College dean Rakesh Khurana distributed to undergraduates the results of an 18-month study on diversity at the College. The day before, President Drew Faust had joined students at a rally in solidarity with racial-justice activists at Yale and the University of Missouri.

Leaders of the Houses. In December, the heads of all 12 undergraduate Houses decided unanimously to abandon the title "House master" (imported in the 1930s from the Oxbridge residential systems), in favor of a new term more in line with their role in the twenty-first century; the University is expected to announce a new title this semester. Said Michael Rosengarten, co-master of Mather House, "[The title]

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Photographs by Jim Harrison

had an association with slavery in the South, and you just can't divorce them.... We have a long history relating to Oxford and Cambridge, but times change, and we have to make sure the University isn't so inflexible that it can't change."

He and Mather House master Christie McDonald, Smith professor of French language and literature and professor of comparative literature, had, as a joke, briefly changed their own titles to "chief executive officers" on the House website a few weeks ahead of the college-wide decision. "It was a non-gendered name that described most of what we do," Rosengarten said, alluding to the feeling among some that "master" is biased with respect to gender as well as race.

Students and journalists have tended to interpret the masters' December decision as a reaction to current conversations about race. A few weeks ahead of the change, a group of students had met with Faust to discuss their demands to make Harvard more hospitable to students of color, including changing the House master title. Other undergraduates felt the change was an abrupt and trivial concession to activist demands. Any "connection between the academic title of master and slavery is grounded neither in history nor in reality.... Rather than legitimizing these games of word association," *The Harvard Crimson* editorialized, "Harvard and its administrators ought to spend time addressing actual issues of inclusivity on campus."

House masters insist this wasn't how their decision was made. The change "only seems ridiculous if you believe that we didn't understand the etymology. We know the etymology. It isn't that we didn't get it," said Anne Harrington, master of Pforzheimer House and Ford professor of the history of science. "I don't think you could find a single House master who is comfortable using that title anymore. We all go by our first names. [The title] rings in twenty-first-century ears as imperious and suggestive of a kind of arbitrary power."

"It's important to understand that the impetus to change the title of 'House master' definitely was not just a reaction to current events," McDonald said. "House leaders have been thinking about this for a long time." The change has been delayed not by disagreement about the need for a new title, but by uncertainty about what that should be, said Khurana (who is himself master of Cabot House).

Similar changes are under way at peer schools: Princeton announced that it would drop the title "master of the residential college" two weeks before Harvard's announcement, and administrators at Yale, where a long and public debate over "master" has raged, are considering doing the same. (Yale also is expected to announce whether it will strike the name of fervently pro-slavery alumnus John C. Calhoun from one of its residential colleges. In January, portraits of Calhoun were removed from the college.)

Do such symbolic matters truly influence undergraduates' experiences? Those who called for the change insist that they do. "Our job is to not have any impediments to doing our job," Harrington said. "We're trying to wrap our arms around 400-plus students and create a community for them....We don't want barriers to that relationship." Anthony Jack, a tutor in Mather who is African American, recalled a moment when the title evoked an uncomfortable historical connotation. "I was asked to come to Amherst for an event, and I wrote back, 'I would love to, but let me ask my House master for permission to leave,'" he explained. "When you transport something from one context to another, it doesn't allow it to be devoid of the context of the new setting."

Mather House co-master Michael Rosengarten and master Christie McDonald

The Law School's roots. At graduate schools, too, students have protested matters both symbolic and fundamental. The vandalism of black professors' portraits in November (University police have closed the investigation without finding a suspect) lent momentum to Reclaim Harvard Law School, a coalition of students and staff members advocating for racial-justice reforms, including removal from the school's shield of the crest of the slave-owning Royall family, whose wealth endowed HLS's first faculty chair. That demand had already been made by the HLS student group Royall Must Fall, but failed to gain traction until after the vandalism, when Dean Martha Minow called racism a "serious problem" at the school and created a committee to consider dropping the crest. (Faust, for her part, told the *Crimson* in January that she does not favor hastily abandoning building names and symbols of Harvard's past, though she remains undecided about the HLS shield.)

These demands, and protesters' broader challenges to University policy, pose "a profound challenge to those who have never seriously contemplated how inclusion might or should change institutional practices," wrote Paul professor of constitutional law and professor of history Tomiko Brown-Nagin in a *Slate* op-ed.

Some students have criticized Minow for what they see as her unwillingness to address their other demands, including the creation of a program in critical race theory (which examines the role of racism in law and society); curricular reforms that would "ensure the integration of marginalized narratives and a serious study into the implications of racism, white supremacy, and imperialism in creating and perpetuating legal analysis and thought"; and significantly expanded financial aid. "Some students and staff have presented a list of demands. We are, however, a community of many voices and hopes, and we have an obligation to provide and protect the opportunity for all to participate, speak, and be heard," Minow wrote in an e-mail to the HLS community in December. "Real institutional change requires the engagement of many members of our large and diverse community."

Photograph courtesy of Christie McDonald and Michael Rosengarten

Perhaps because of the racially fraught legacy of law in the United States, tensions at the school appear to run especially high. Michele Hall, a second-year student, said that students of color are routinely exposed to racism in the classroom. "It's hostile every day to go into class and talk about laws that affect populations of color....Every time issues of profiling come up, black students say, yes, they've been profiled on campus, and white students are shocked," she continued. "Our daily experience is colored by these types of incidents, big and small."

Other members of the community describe what they view as a climate of intolerance toward dissenting views. Third-year student William Barthow, who created Responsible Speech at HLS, a website where students have expressed disagreement with the protesters, believes many students who oppose activist demands are intimidated into silence. "There's a contingent that disagrees with the protesters but is afraid to voice that view publicly because of the social backlash of doing so," he said. Barthow and 36 other students signed a letter in December urging Reclaim Harvard Law School to remove from its demands certain items that the signers believe threaten academic freedom—such as the proposed first-year course on racial inequality in the law, which, they write, "would be taught in a highly partisan manner."

Animating a diverse community. This tension has played out most visibly at Yale, where disputes about social-justice issues escalated into a discussion about whether college students and administrators were acting more as censors than facilitators of free inquiry. In Cambridge, the College's responses have been more muted. Khurana rejects the dichotomy drawn between free speech and student calls for racial justice: "Those are sort of false binaries...one can engage in free-spirited exchange and also do that in a way that is respectful," he said. "It requires skill and capacity-building and a genuine desire to hear from somebody else's perspective." Others suggest that the challenges of embracing Harvard's increasingly diverse student body demand more expansive University strategies. "From the 1960s on, it was about quantitative diversity. Now it's about qualitative diversity, as Tomiko Brown-Nagin has written. So the question

HARVARD PORTRAIT

James Mickens

James Mickens is explaining how comedians Hannibal Buress and Louis C.K. get their laughs: Buress's high "joke density" versus Louis C.K.'s slow-build storytelling. For Mickens, an associate professor of computer science known for his snappy, engaging, and laugh-out-loud funny PowerPoint presentations on computer security (many viewable online), YouTube comedy clips are research. "A lot of people don't realize that even the sciences are a social field," he says. "When you can explain your work well and create a narrative, you are building a universe for people to inhabit with you." He approaches teaching the same way. Mickens joined Harvard's faculty last fall, after six years with Microsoft Research and a one-year visiting professorship at MIT. He tries to give his students a "deeper sense of the work," he says, beyond money and prestige and Silicon Valley. Growing up in Atlanta as a physicist's son (and a serious heavy metal fan; he owns a formidable record collection and plays in two one-man bands), he was drawn to computer science and the potential to "build things with your mind, without needing a backhoe. There's a lot of architectural thought, and yet at a certain level you're in a different reality." After Georgia Tech, and a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan, he now studies security—or the lack of it—in distributed systems (multiple computers connected to a network). A lot of his research, he says, "is thinking about failure scenarios." It also addresses the fundamental tension between privacy and profit in Web services like Facebook and Gmail. He's working on a data-storage system that would allow users to retain control of their online content—and a whole new ecosystem of Web services to go with it. Building without a backhoe. —LYDIALYLE GIBSON

Photographs by Jim Harrison

Yesterday's News

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

1926 Thick ice on the Charles River has lasted a month longer than usual, forcing the crew coach to hire men to cut a channel from Newell Boathouse to areas of the river with more open water.

1936 The article "Electing Overseers Fifty Years Ago" reports that alumni in 1886 were informed not only of candidates' qualifications but also of their opinions on controversial Harvard issues: should attendance at morning prayers be made voluntary? should knowledge of Greek be required for admission to the College? should women be allowed in the professional schools? should the marking system be abolished in College courses?

1941 The first *Crimson* to appear after spring recess decries the prejudice that led the U.S. Naval Academy to forbid Lucien V. Alexis Jr. '42, a black member of the Harvard lacrosse team, from playing in the game held there during the break.

1961 Radcliffe women are included in the Harvard Who's Who directory, lengthening the student section by some 35 pages.

1971 The peer-counseling group Room 13, operating from 8 P.M. to 8 A.M. every night, has been founded as a way for students to talk anonymously to a sympathetic listener or get information on sensitive topics like birth control and drug use. The founders credit their motto to the Beatles: "We get by with a little help from our friends."

1981 The student-faculty committee formed in response to student demands for a Third World Center unanimously recommends instead the establishment of a foundation to improve racial relations on campus. Rather than encourage "further separation of the races," the committee seeks an organization that does for race and ethnicity what Phillips Brooks House does for charity and service.

1996 The Harvard women's basketball team (20-7 overall, 13-1 Ivy) reaches the NCAA tournament playoffs for the first time in history. (The men's team hadn't made it since 1946.) Despite losing 100-83 to number-three seed Vanderbilt, number-14 seed Harvard twice draws within five points of its rival in the game's final minutes.

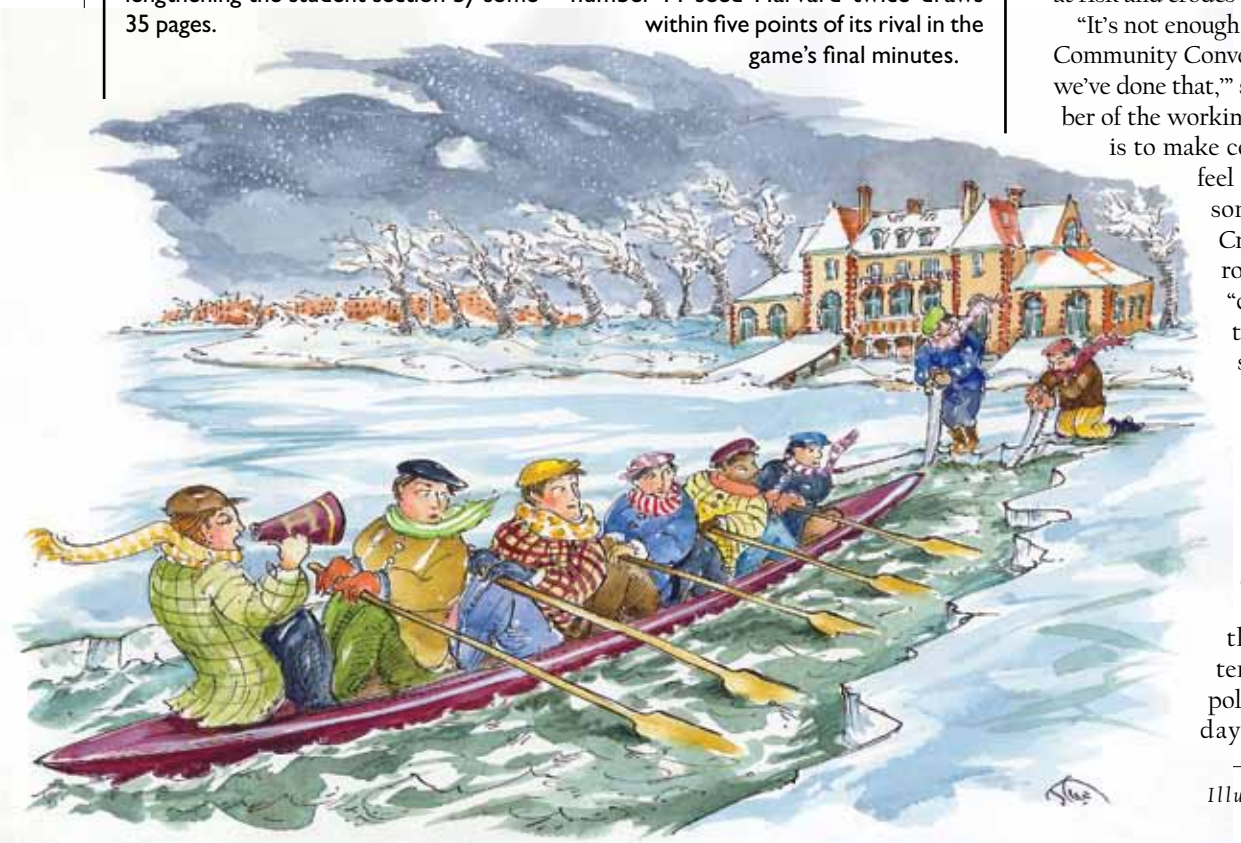

Illustration by Mark Steele

is, how do you bring together a community of diverse people?" McDonald said.

That question was the subject of the College Working Group on Diversity and Inclusion's report, released in November. It addressed ways to ensure that undergraduates can benefit equally from their Harvard experience, regardless of racial, economic, or other background. The study spans College life from the academic, by calling on departments to consider how their methods of inquiry or lack of diversity may exclude some groups, to the extracurricular and residential, by urging the Houses to create programming that promotes conversations about diversity.

In their freshman year, for example, students participate in mandatory Community Conversations: a series of discussions about diversity and the Harvard community. But the report notes that many House tutors stress the need for dialogue beyond the first year. It sharply criticizes the lack of regularity across Houses in their commitment to diversity: "The process of appointing resident tutors and scholars is informal and thus lacks transparency, which leads to mistrust in its integrity," it states, later referencing allegations raised last May that Dunster House was unwelcoming to LGBT students. "The lack of clear policies, structures of accountability, and consistency across Houses puts everyone at risk and erodes trust."

"It's not enough to have just two days of Community Conversations and say, 'Okay, we've done that,'" said Harrington, a member of the working group. "Our challenge is to make community conversation feel like a value rather than something burdensome." Creating an inclusive environment also might mean "changing the optics of the residential Houses, so that they celebrate the traditions of individuals who aren't necessarily just straight white men," she added. As a way to express Harvard's values, she stressed, such symbols matter.

Skeptics like Barthow question the extent to which University policy can affect students' day-to-day experiences

and interactions, where many grievances about racial intolerance originate. "Microaggressions"—everyday slights against marginalized groups, like the prejudiced assumptions that students of color say they experience in their social groups or in College or law school classes—occur outside the administration's sphere of influence, he said. "I'm not sure if the right response is a top-down response…It's a social problem, not an administrative problem."

The faculty. Beyond the portraits hung on House walls, an area of wide student concern has been the composition of Harvard's faculties, whose members they meet daily in classrooms. Student activists on many campuses have called for increasing the number of underrepresented minorities in the faculty ranks. In January, a group of Harvard Medical School and Dental School students delivered a petition calling on Faust to select a medical school dean who is committed to increasing student and faculty diversity. Yale committed $50 million last fall to increase the diversity of its faculty over five years. University of Missouri students have called on the administration to increase the share of black faculty to 10 percent by next year—up from 3 percent now. And Brown has announced an ambitious plan to double its share of underrepresented minority faculty to 18 percent by 2025.

Recent history suggests that such changes won't come easily. Nationally, only about 6 percent of University faculty members are African American. At Harvard and elsewhere, the share of underrepresented minority professors has moved little in the last decade. "With respect to faculty diversity," said McDonald, "we're still working on the quantitative."

Harvard's latest data on total ladder faculty (a group including both tenured and tenure-track professors) show the proportion of black faculty remaining stable at 4 percent. Of 1,485 *total* ladder faculty, 42 are black professors, and 18 are black junior faculty. Another 4 percent of ladder faculty are Latino, representing 36 professors and 26 junior faculty. Both groups are more likely to be non-tenured than the faculty overall. The population of tenured black and Latino professors has grown steadily in the last decade: the number of black professors has increased from 26 to 42, an increase of 62 percent; Latino professors have doubled from 18 to 36. But as noted, their share of the faculty overall remains low: during the past decade, the proportion of underrepresented minority junior faculty (which includes African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and faculty of two or more races) has grown from 10 percent to 11 percent; the share of underrepresented minority senior faculty increased from 5 percent to 8 percent. Asian Americans, who are not considered underrepresented, account for 10 percent of senior faculty and 19 percent of junior faculty. No faculty members are Native American.

"For 11 percent of the junior faculty to be underrepresented minorities and 8 percent of professors to be underrepresented minorities—Harvard's doing better than a lot of other places," said Judith Singer, senior vice provost for faculty development and diversity. Nonetheless, she continued, "You see these percentages moving, but they're moving more slowly than a lot of people would like." Stressing that the composition of the faculty evolves appointment by appointment, over long stretches of time, she pointed out, "Last year we tenured our first Latino in psychology, our first African American in computer science."

Part of the challenge is the dearth of underrepresented minorities in academia. African Americans account for about 6 percent of Ph.D. recipients in the United States, according to the National Science Foundation—a figure that has not changed in a decade. Latinos also make up 6 percent of recipients, up from 5 percent a decade ago. "We're all in competition for the same people," Singer said. At Harvard, these trends also appear to hold. Harvard College is the most diverse school in the University, she said, while graduate students look roughly the same as faculty in terms of diversity statistics. That trend reinforces itself: minority students who don't interact with minority faculty are less likely to pursue academic careers.

To meet the demands of equity and diversity, Harvard has had to rethink every stage of its faculty recruitment process. "We've discovered that the way our position descriptions are worded influences who applies," Singer explained. Her office encourages faculty search committees to write broad position descriptions and to

conduct active outreach to talented minority candidates: "If you want to diversify your faculty, you cannot just sit there, post an ad, and expect people to apply."

"In the old days," she said, faculty hiring worked quite differently. "You called up a few of your buddies, or your former students, and said, 'Who do you have for me this year?'" Persuading professors to abandon old systems, and to confront their implicit biases, she added, is not simple.

* * *

Harvard's approach to date has many critics who believe the University could do more to prevent attrition of minority scholars at the source of the problem: the academic pipeline. Mather House tutor Anthony Jack, a Ph.D. candidate in sociology who studies the effects of race and class on students' experiences at elite colleges, said Harvard should make a broader effort to diversify its ranks: embrace novel areas of research (such as his own scholarship), for example, and develop minority scholars at the college and graduate levels. "Diversify your graduate programs—I was the first black male in eight years in my department," he said. Jack was recently named a Junior Fellow, and next fall will join the faculty of the Graduate School of Education.

Jack traced the current wave of student protest to the Black Lives Matter movement of the last few years. Critics who condemn coddled college students "miss the point of the protests," he said, and those protests' connections to broader inequities that extend to the gates of elite universities. The symptoms raised by the national racial-justice movement also are reflected in Harvard's racial legacy, the experiences of students, and the diversity of the faculty. "We know the target of the criminal justice system is men and women of color. When we think about the faculty, it's the inverse: there's nobody—relatively—who's African American," Jack said. "The underlying issue is equality."

—Marina Bolotnikova

News Briefs

An Overseers' Challenge?

On February 1, Ron Unz '83 delivered petitions for himself and four other candidates seeking places on the ballot for the annual election of new members to Harvard's Board of Overseers. (The list of Harvard Alumni Association nominees appears on page 66.)

Under the theme, "Free Harvard, Fair Harvard," the petitioners advocate "greater transparency" in admissions, a message coupled with language about "abuses" in admissions and "powerful statistical evidence" of a quota that limits admission of Asians—leading to their statement, "Racial discrimination against Asian-American students has no place at Harvard University and must end." They also "demand the immediate elimination of all tuition for undergraduates," citing both income from the endowment and the notion that moving from financial aid to a tuition-free model would more readily promote diversity in the student body. A detailed report on Harvard's admissions and student-diversity policies, its finances, and the petitioners' arguments appears at **harvardmag.com/overseers-16**.

If the petitioners qualify for the ballot, an announcement with the full list of candidates is expected in mid February, after this issue of the magazine was printed; the outcome will be noted online at harvardmagazine.com toward the end of February, and printed in the May-June issue.

Reenvisioning Admissions

The Graduate School of Education's Making Caring Common project (which seeks to "develop effective strategies for promoting in children kindness and a commitment to the greater good") has addressed the cutthroat arena of college admissions. "Turning the Tide," a report released in January, proposes reworking admissions to promote ethical engagement among applicants, reduce excessive pressure for achievement, and create a fairer process for economically disadvantaged students.

It recommends that students participate in authentic service or community engagement—lasting at least a year, and including such contributions as working to provide income for one's family (a leveling step that recognizes diverse student circumstances). It also recommends that students go beyond individual service to collective action that addresses community challenges, exposing them to the emotional and problem-solving aspects of teamwork. The report urges institutions to state clearly their interest in the *quality* of applicants' activities, not their quantity, and to put their use of standardized tests in the evaluation process into context. The recommendations arose from a meeting of admissions officers, counselors, and others; they have been endorsed by admissions officers from dozens of institutions, including Brown, Harvard, Princeton, and Yale.

General Education, Downsized

The proposed revision of the College's General Education curriculum reached the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) for debate on February 2. Compared to the program outlined in December (described at **harvardmag.com/curriculum-16**), this version, on which FAS members will vote later this term, further eases course requirements.

If enacted, undergraduates will take four Gen Ed courses (down from eight now), each "explicitly designed to prepare students for a life of civic and ethical engagement in a changing world." They will fall into four broadened categories: Aesthetics, Culture, Intepretation; Histories, Societies, Individuals; Science and Technology in Society; and Ethics and Civics. Students will also have to fulfill a distribution requirement, taking a course each in arts and humanities; social science; and science and engineering—but one of these may be from their concentration (flexibility the December proposal did not permit). And they face a new Empirical and Mathematical Reasoning requirement. If a student were to place out of that (the course remains to be defined by a separate committee) *and* use a concentration course for distributional purposes, she would reduce her requirements for Gen Ed plus distribution to six term-length classes.

—John S. Rosenberg