

# Cambridge 02138

*Overseers' election, "flyover" states, Law School shield*

## FROM EUGENICS...

I COMMEND the excellent article "Harvard's Eugenics Era" (by Adam Cohen, March-April, page 48). The "era" was not just at Harvard but really encompasses the United States generally and ought to be required reading for American history, lest we forget.

ALAN GOLDHAMMER, J.D. '66  
Berkeley, Calif.

## 7 WARE STREET

### The Tiger Roars

PRINCETON IS NOT Harvard. Smaller, more intimate, it offers superb undergraduate and doctoral education in the liberal arts and engineering and applied sciences, without the huge professional schools (business, law, medicine) that shine so brightly in the Crimson firmament.

For whatever reason—a more unified culture, sheer nimbleness—the Tiger has shown it can roar with a single voice. The trustees' Princeton University Strategic Framework, dated January 30 (a frills-free 24 pages, black type on white paper), outlines an institutional vision, a contemporary operating context, a financial model, and clear priorities for the next few years. The framework, and progress in effecting it, are to be reviewed every four years.

Adherents of peer schools might take note. Eschewing the sprawl of the "multiversity," Princeton declares itself a "cohesive institution with a shared and intensely felt sense of mission." Perhaps as a result it is materially fortunate (per student, Princeton's endowment is about 50 percent larger than Harvard's), and the trustees find that the spending of that wealth has "tended in practice to favor future generations" unduly. They therefore adopt a higher maximum spending rate, the better to advance research and education in the here and now—and to reduce

ADAM COHEN's article stimulated me to run a quick check on the Oregon State Board of Eugenics, which ordered more than 2,600 involuntary sterilizations from 1917 to 1981.

As a lowly intern rotating on the gynecology service at the University of Oregon Hospital in 1961, I was handed a formal court order to perform an involuntary sterilization on a woman. My strong protests

a possible bias that might "favor financial capital at the expense of human and physical capital."

Administrators are directed to increase spending from the current low level, to "co-invest" with eager supporters who share Princeton's goals—a nifty option, immediately after a capital campaign. To that end, the university will, inter alia, expand its undergraduate population by 500, to about 5,800, adding a new residential college; accept transfers, in part to seek economic diversity by enrolling veterans, community-college students, and others; augment service-oriented education and extracurriculars; build capacity significantly in environmental sciences, education research, engineering (computer science, statistics, and machine learning); and seek partnerships with external constituencies.

In all, it is a useful vision for Princeton as a "liberal arts university for the twenty-first century."

The governance reforms Harvard enacted in late 2010 aimed in part to give the Corporation capacity to think more strategically. Toward that end, Princeton's framework, downloaded from New Jersey, would fit nicely in the Fellows' next briefing packets. Harvard is emphatically not Princeton—but this community could surely benefit from engaging in a similar exercise, and producing an equivalent road map.

—JOHN S. ROSENBERG, *Editor*

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were squelched by the administration. The buck stopped with me, the bottom of the staff totem pole, so I did the admitting history and physical. She was a healthy Anglo in her late teens, very much the girl-next-door. She spoke well but, according to the paperwork, had been declared feeble-minded and promiscuous. She was living in some sort of a state institution and did not understand why she had been brought to the hospital. I explained as best I could, including what would happen in surgery and how she would feel post-op. Tears trickled down her cheeks and she said something like, "You are going to make me hurt," but she did not object. Uneventful surgery and recovery. The episode is still a problem for me.

WILLIAM VAN H. MASON '51  
*Albuquerque*

IT WAS a humbling experience to read about Harvard's love affair with eugenics. But it reminded me that the eugenics movement of the recent past (or maybe not so recent, since I can still recall Professor Earnest Hooton's lecture to my class some 70 years ago) is still around and thriving.

The details are different, though. For example, to my knowledge, no active or retired member of the Board of Overseers, teaching staff, or administration is publicly endorsing the view that Mexican migrants are rapists or that we should haul in the gangplank and prevent any of the billion or so Muslims from entering our country.

Earlier, it was "No Jews, Italians,

#### SPEAK UP, PLEASE

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Asians...," with prominent Harvard figures leading the charge, armed with terrifying visions of "Irish Catholics marrying white Anglo-Saxon Protestants, Jews marrying Gentiles, and blacks marrying whites,"

and predictions of physically and mentally defective persons polluting the gene pool unless rigorous programs of sterilization and immigration restrictions were instituted. What a sad commentary that Harvard's prestige should have provided an aura of scientific truth to these shameful sentiments.

Yet how do such draconian techniques for dealing with "troublesome" folk compare with recent suggestions from the campaign trail that we should ban Muslims from entering our country and kill the families of people we believe to be terrorists?

The motivations haven't changed: xenophobia—in this case, a fear of *anyone* who is different—and the absolute conviction that we can make America great again through harsh measures such as torture and suppression of protest, plus a return to the reassuring mantra that "The business of America is business."

The saving grace today is that the academic community is not at the forefront of this latest campaign of hatred and fear-mongering...yet.

JOHN A. BROUSSARD '49  
*Kamuela, Hawaii*

#### ...TO ABORTION AND ANIMAL RIGHTS

CIVILIZATION has made progress by extending rights to those who were previously thought unworthy of them, and often by limiting the rights of their oppressors. The Thirteenth Amendment accorded citizenship to African Americans. Since then protections have been granted to the "feeble-minded," the physically disabled (see "Harvard's Eugenics Era"), to animals (see "Are Animals 'Things'?" by Cara Feinberg, March-April, page 40), and even to inanimate objects. The Catholic Church did not wait for the Nazi Holocaust to condemn

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the eugenics movement; it was condemned in the 1930 papal encyclical, *Casti Cannubii*. Likewise the Church has taken the lead in condemning abortion. Perhaps someday the unborn child will have same right to live that chimps in the U.S. have.

RICHARD B. JOHNSON, M.P.H. 1985, M.D.  
Williamsburg, Va.

THE ANSWER to Steven Wise's question, "Why should a human have fundamental rights?" does not seem to require tremendous nuance, since the entire concept of "fundamental rights" is a creation of specifically human cognition. The long struggle to define those rights and assert them in the world belongs entirely to humans. They are not a natural phenomenon but a function of our choices. In short, we have rights because we have articulated them, claimed them, and (at least sometimes) organized our society to make them real. That we have chosen to apply them to edge cases within our own species, per Wise's example of the brain-stem-only baby, makes them neither universalizable nor incoherent. Indeed, there have been societies that have taken a different view of human liberty in edge cases, so its scope when applied to people has clearly been open to debate.

But that doesn't create any logical compulsion to transfer the concept of human rights to any nonhuman species that can't itself articulate or assert them. That doesn't rule out the ethical treatment of animals or preclude the idea they may possess some moral status. That's a fair discussion, and there are compelling arguments for treating animals as something other than things. But confusing human rights with a concept of "animal rights" is just that—confusion.

WILLIAM SWISLOW '79  
Chicago

#### THE OVERSEERS' ELECTION

*Editor's note:* Harvard Magazine received the following letter, addressed "Dear Friends and Fellow Alumni." For the full slate of candidates for election to the Board of Overseers, see page 74. A news report about the election appears on page 26, and includes links to extensive online reports about the issues.

WE WRITE to you as past Presidents of the Harvard Board of Overseers to urge that you participate in this year's election

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for the Board of Overseers. This year's election is particularly important to the future of Harvard because a slate of five alumni has petitioned to join this year's ballot in support of an ill-advised platform that would elevate ideology over crucial academic interests of the University. Under the banner "Free Harvard, Fair Harvard," these five alumni propose "the immediate elimination of all tuition for undergraduates," including those whose families can afford to pay full tuition. They also suggest that Harvard's admissions practices are "corrupt" and that Harvard discriminates against Asian-American applicants.

The proposal to eliminate tuition for all undergraduates is misguided. Harvard's financial aid program, among the most generous in the country, already ensures that Harvard is affordable for *all* students. Roughly 20 percent of Harvard undergraduates—those whose parents earn less than \$65,000—already attend free of cost. Students from families earning between \$65,000 and \$150,000 receive a financial aid package designed to ensure that no family is asked to pay more than 10 percent of its

income. And hundreds of students from families earning more than \$150,000 receive financial aid. In total, more than 70 percent of undergraduates receive some form of aid.

Harvard's focus on affordability also ensures that tuition from those who can afford to pay continues to provide a significant source of funding for Harvard's extraordinary educational programs. It simply does not make sense to forgo this considerable sum in order to make tuition free for students whose families can afford to pay. Although the candidates propose that free tuition could be funded by Harvard's endowment, that simplistic premise fails to recognize that the endowment must be maintained in perpetuity and that much of it consists of restricted gifts. Rather than eliminating tuition, Harvard should continue to ensure that the cost of attendance remains affordable, and we have full confidence that the administration is committed to this important goal.

The allegations of corruption and discrimination in admissions are wholly unfounded, and mirror allegations raised in a lawsuit filed against Harvard by activists

who seek to dismantle Harvard's long-standing program to ensure racial and ethnic diversity in undergraduate admissions. In reality, Harvard's admissions process—which considers each applicant as a whole person—has long been a model for undergraduate admissions at universities around the country. The current admissions policies ensure that Harvard maintains a diverse student body with a range of talents and experiences that enriches the experience of all students on campus. President Faust has recently reaffirmed Harvard's "commitment to a widely diverse student body," and has stated that Harvard will pursue a "vigorous defense of [its] procedures and...the kind of educational experience they are intended to create." We fully endorse her commitment to defending diversity.

Ballots for this year's Overseers election were mailed April 1, and must be received by May 20. The Harvard Alumni Association has already proposed a slate of eight strong candidates for the Board of Overseers with a wide range of talents and expertise. We urge you to consider their



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candidacies carefully and to select the five candidates who you think will best serve the interests of Harvard in the years to come. The candidates running on the “Free Harvard, Fair Harvard” slate, while accomplished individuals, are committed to a platform that would disserve the interests of the University about which we all care deeply.

MORGAN CHU, J.D. '76

*Partner, Irell & Manella LLP (2014-15)*

LEILA FAWAZ, Ph.D. '79

*Professor, The Fletcher School, Tufts (2011-12)*

FRANCES FERGUSON, Ph.D. '73, BI '75

*President emerita, Vassar (2007-08)*

RICHARD MESERVE, J.D. '75

*President emeritus, Carnegie Institution for Science (2012-13)*

DAVID OXTOBY '72

*President, Pomona (2013-14)*

*Editor's note:* The years shown indicate each signer's period of service as president of the Board of Overseers.

#### FAN MAIL

SOPHIA NGUYEN'S exquisitely researched and thoughtfully written “Elbow Room” [on the Dark Room Collective of writers, the March-April cover story] was much appreciated.

KEN WHITE, M.P.A. '97

*Richmond, Calif.*

**SIGN US UP.** The current *Harvard Magazine* (January-February), finally convinces us, who were dead to pleas to contribute, that we were wrong. In addition to the fine main articles, this issue alone has four highly relevant articles: Jenny Gathright's is superb, especially her conclusion that she “would rather be awake than blind” (The Undergraduate, page 35). That epitomizes the role of an excellent education, which a big majority of our country lack. Second, the article on the wonderful brass chandelier recalls, again painfully, that Trinity Church in the City of Boston took its down, in the 1930s, presumably (erroneously) because it was unsafe, a decision that still riles me, who was Trinity's first archivist/historian (Treasure, on Sanders Theatre's overhead brass, page 84). Third, my husband and I were at a reunion when the newly chosen dean Henry Rosovsky spoke to us about his ideas for the Core Curriculum (“Henry the Great,” page 30); we all were very impressed then, and we were right! Last, how wonderful that

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Harvard again has (probably with some dissension) welcomed Yosvany Terry, exploring the Afro-Cuban jazz scene (Harvard Portrait, page 25); the music department of The World's Greatest University has come a long way from the days when it would not recognize performance as worthy of study. Send us a bill.

BETTINA A. NORTON (*Uxor*, JOHN M. '56)  
Boston

### FLYOVER-STATE FACTS

BAILEY TRELA'S "Kid from a Flyover State" (The Undergraduate, March-April, page 25) reminded me of one small moment during my years at Harvard.

I, too, was from a Flyover State: Minnesota. I, too, was proud of my Flyover State and annoyed by those who saw the country between the coasts as thousands of miles of big empty nothingness—as in Saul Steinberg's famous "View of the World from Ninth Avenue" cover for *The New Yorker*.

One evening at dinner, in the Leverett House dining hall, a classmate from Westport, Connecticut, rejected my assertion that he and many of his fellow-Easterners were a provincial crowd, mostly ignorant of American geography. He invited me to put him to the test.

I was happy to do so. I said: "Which state is directly west of Minnesota?" (There are two correct answers, as some of you know: North Dakota and South Dakota. I was being generous, giving him two shots at getting it right.)

He sat there, silent. He did not know.

I told him I'd give him a clue: It wasn't Idaho. I thought he might say: "Montana?"

He said: "Washington?"

DAN KELLY '75  
Hopkins, Minn.

MUCH APPLAUSE for Trela and his splendid essay. It is full of wistful insights and loaded with wise truths about those who grew up on one coast and know about the other, but view the country's vast midsection as unexplored territory. We graduated together 60 years ago from Radcliffe and Harvard, and after 58 years of marriage still remember the phenomenon he describes, even more stark then than today. One of us, Ellen, grew up in Chicago, and had to tutor the other, Tom, raised in Boston, about the Midwest and its values. Years later, when Tom was president of Indiana University,

we found New Harmony, Indiana, Trela's beautiful home town and a former utopian community, a place of serenity and charm, one that periodically restored our engines and enabled us to reflect on our priorities. Trela's classmates, and Harvard/Radcliffe alums alike, would do well to ask him to tell them about the Hoosier State, just as he suggests in his closing line.

ELLEN EHRLICH '56 AND TOM EHRLICH '56  
Palo Alto

### CURRICULUM REDESIGN

A COURAGEOUS REDESIGN ("General Education, Downsized," March-April, page 22) would have focused on streamlining an undergraduate curriculum that could be delivered in three years instead of four. Such a move would reduce tuition cost; leverage digital-delivery opportunities; and, most importantly, show leadership in an industry whose archaic infrastructure is crumbling.

DR. CHARLES A. MORRISSEY, M.B.A. '62  
Irvine, Calif.

### JACK REARDON

WHAT A DELIGHTFUL surprise to see that Jack Reardon's portrait turned out so well ("Our John Harvard," March-April, page 67). Jack was manager of the hockey team, of which I was a member, in the late '50s, and he was actually a "presence" more than a manager. He was an integral part of the team, and we thought of him as nothing less, nothing more. Whatever he was supposed to do was done without anyone else thinking much about it. We were all too preoccupied to appreciate his contributions, but that is often the case of things being well done. Jack stood out by fitting in.

DICK FISCHER '59, J.D. '63  
Stillwater, Okla.

### HOUSE MASTER, LAW SCHOOL SHIELD

HARVARD DITCHES the term "Master" as racist and misogynist (see "Debating Diversity," March-April, page 17, and [harvardmag.com/masters-16](http://harvardmag.com/masters-16)). The angst is new. (When my cousin Barbara Rosenkrantz '44 became Harvard's first female master, at Currier, in 1974, the worry was what to call her husband. "Just call me Paul," he said.) Slavery was long a common trope among historians, economists, anthropologists, and English teachers.

Their annual meetings were "slave markets" for recruitment, "a frenzied and cruel

spectacle," recounted a Modern Language Association observer.

Graduate students in my lily-white history department in 1950 greeted newcomers with the query, "Who's your white man?" Master and slave are unproblematic terms for automotive cylinders, electrical sockets, and computer appliances. To replace "master" with an anodyne moniker uncursed by connotations of power and servility fosters the delusion that academe is a color-blind, egalitarian oasis.

Squeamish ex-masters claim, "Our job is to not have any impediments to doing our job...to wrap our arms around 400-plus students and create a community for them. We don't want barriers to that relationship." This infantilizes Harvard. A university is not a nursery nor a shelter for people to feel comfortable in, with their sensibilities undisturbed. It is "a forum for the provocative, the disturbing, and the unorthodox," to cite the historian C. Vann Woodward.

Barriers are to be confronted, not eliminated. The masters' (or resident tutors') main job is mental stimulus. Rather than wishing away impediments, students should be challenged to master them. To do so they must engage with ideas and values of their own and other times and cultures they may find abhorrent, distressing, even offensive.

DAVID LOWENTHAL '44  
Berkeley, Calif.

I STRONGLY oppose abandoning the Harvard Law School (HLS) shield. This is political correctness run amok. The shield has absolutely no connection to, or connotation of support for, slavery. Nor does it even contain a likeness of a member of the Royall family.

If we accept the reasoning that led to this recommendation, we would have to take George Washington, the founder of our country, off the \$1 bill, and out of the flag of the State of Washington, as well as rename the capital of our nation.

The recommendation also smells of hypocrisy. If the Royall family really is deemed to be so repugnant that its crest must be expunged from HLS's shield, how can Harvard hold on to the funds that are the proceeds of Isaac Royall Jr.'s donation to the school? In- (please turn to page 83)



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## LETTERS

(continued from page 8)

stead of funding the Royall professor of law position, HLS should track down all the descendants of Isaac Royall Jr. living today, and return the funds to them.

I hope the Harvard Corporation rejects the recommendation to change the shield, something that would make the school a laughingstock outside the rarefied air of politically correct academia.

KAJ AHLBURG, J.D. '84  
Port Angeles, Wash.

*Editor's note:* The Corporation has agreed that the shield be abandoned; see page 29.

IS THERE any principled way in which Harvard will be able to resist demands that the entire institution should be taken down because it was established by a group of fundamentalist Protestants who harbored what are by current politically correct "standards" sexist, racist, anti-Semitic, anti-papist, anti-Islamic, you name your "progressive" cause of the day "ist" views? Isn't all money tainted in some fashion? Is the law school going to start checking all donors for adherence to whatever feelings need to be accommodated before accepting their dollars and, more to the point, is Harvard going to return to the Royall heirs their ancestor's disgusting donation?

I laud the faculty member whose portrait was defaced [Professor Annette Gordon-Reed] for having the courage to stand up to this wave of anti-intellectual bullying for reasons that make solid sense. There's not much difference between removing this shield and the Communists' photoshopping out of May Day parade pictures people who were purged by the dictatorships. You have to be able to face the whole of history and its legacy, not just the parts that aren't "upsetting" or "controversial." It's particularly ironic that this gesture is being made at the Law School, where students are supposed to be trained to deal with thorny controversies professionally.

This is a profoundly embarrassing day to be a Harvard graduate—almost as embarrassing as the stupid "how to deal with controversial issues" placemats and dropping the name of House "Master"—by the

way, what are you calling the degree between a bachelor's and a Ph.D.?

ROSA CUMARE, PH.D. '77  
Pasadena

## CELEBRATING CHANDELIERS

I WAS DELIGHTED to see the story of the magnificent chandelier in Sanders Theatre ("A Treasure Way Up High," January-February, page 84) and applaud recent sustainability and energy saving efforts, bringing this historic treasure into the twenty-first century. As a Divinity School alumna, former freshman proctor, and director of education at the Memorial Church, I have many memories of performances under this beautiful chandelier! I now serve as one of the two clergy at Church of the Covenant on Newbury Street, where we, too, have been engaged with many sustainability efforts as a faith community deeply concerned with environmental justice. Church of the Covenant is home to another magnificent chandelier and thus, it was a particular delight to see the reference to our Tiffany chandelier in your recent article, another nineteenth-century jewel now lit with LEDs.

The Tiffany art glass chandelier, originally displayed at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, became the centerpiece of a sanctuary completely redecorated by Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company the following year. Two features take center stage: the huge chandelier at the crossing of the transept and the 42 stained glass windows. Art historian Virginia Raguin has described the program of windows as "one of the most impressive collections of glass in America," and the National Park Service recently recognized the importance of the sanctuary by designating the Church a National Historic Landmark. I hope you have a chance to visit! The sanctuary is open for self-guided tours from mid April through mid December. Consider walking about with a brochure on the Tiffany art...or sitting in the beauty and peace of the space.

REV. JULIE M. ROGERS, M.Div. '12  
Boston

## LANGUAGE MATTERS

YOU MIGHT want to check this with one of the college's English professors, but I be-

lieve there is a grammatical error in Drew Faust's recent "View from Mass Hall" (January-February, page 5). In paragraph two, she writes, "Today the School's faculty lead and inspire students...." I believe that the word "faculty" is a collective noun and is therefore singular. Faculty members lead, whereas the faculty leads.

PAUL I. KAROFKY, OPM '79, Ed.M. '90  
Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.

*Editor's note:* The president's office forwarded this response from Johnstone Family professor of psychology Steven Pinker, author of *The Sense of Style: The Thinking Person's Guide to Writing in the 21st Century*:

As a member of the Usage Panel of the *American Heritage Dictionary*, President Faust can be expected to choose her words with care, and there is nothing wrong with her sentence. You can look it up: Sense 2(a) of faculty in the Fifth Edition of the *AHD* indicates that the noun may be "used with a sing. or pl. verb." Examples go back at least to 1843, when the *Yale Literary Magazine* observed that "the faculty were funny fellows." Faust is not even the first in her position to use the noun in this way: In his 1968-69 *President's Report*, Nathan Pusey wrote that "not all faculty even yet concur in this resolve."

What we're seeing here is a linguistic phenomenon called notional agreement, in which the grammatical number of a noun depends on whether the writer conceives of its referent as singular or plural rather than on whether it is *grammatically marked* as singular or plural. It's common, for example, to read *We know a couple who never argue* or *The committee disagree about the solution*. Notional agreement is more common in British English; Americans do a double take when they read *The government are listening at last*, *The Guardian are giving you the chance to win books*, or *Microsoft are considering the offer*. At the same time, what could be more American than "When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one *people* to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another...?"

## ERRATA

THE PROFILE of hockey goalie Emerance Maschmeyer ("A Calming Presence," March-April, page 26) inadvertently misspelled the name of her "roommate, best friend, and teammate," Karly Heffernan. "Debating Diversity" (page 17) rendered William Barlow's last name incorrectly. Our apologies.

