

which leaves more time for active learning through discussion and application.” HX hired Dickerman, a critical support in producing the course, to help develop creative materials for the animations, illustrations, hooks, cases, and so on.

Reflecting on what she has learned by working on this MOOC, Dickerman cites, above all, how “to present information concisely.” In addition, she has a new appreciation for “the power of visuals and graph-

of barriers that keep people from being here in the classroom.” And it optimizes resources: “For example, it seems obvious, but there’s only one Miguel Hernán. And he can either teach a class of 70” once a year, “or develop this course that reaches many more around the world and across different disciplines.”

Though the full, online course will launch around the time this magazine goes to press, Hernán is already pleased because the residential students who’ve used those online

The use of “hooks” to engage and draw learners into the subject quickly are among the major changes in Hernán’s pedagogical approach.

ics and movement to augment the content that’s being spoken. I think that is a powerful advantage over the classroom setting.” And she, too, praises the MOOC advantage of allowing students to move through the material at their own pace.

“I think this kind of format is going to be a big part of the future of education,” she continues. “It’s effective. It breaks down all kinds

modules are learning more. “Instead of spending 90 percent of the course listening to me lecture,” he points out, they watch a 10-minute video, “and then we spend 90 percent of the course in scientific discussion. It’s completely different, the level at which they absorb the material. They are asking questions that they were not asking before.”

~JONATHAN SHAW

News Briefs

Social Club Ban?

IN JULY, a Harvard committee recommended banning students from joining any final club or other unrecognized social organization, whether gender neutral in its membership practices or not. The ban, modeled on one at Williams College, would take effect beginning with students entering in the fall of 2018, and effectively end undergraduate participation in off-campus social organizations by 2022.

Prior committees charged with studying the impact of such organizations on undergraduate life published reports seeking to link them to sexual assault, and cited gender discrimination as the source of their negative social impacts. But the ban proposed by the current committee of faculty members, administrators, and students pivots to an expanded rationale: these organizations “go against the educational mission and principles espoused by Harvard University.” Citing student comments submitted as part of an earlier survey (rather than the survey data itself), the latest report argues

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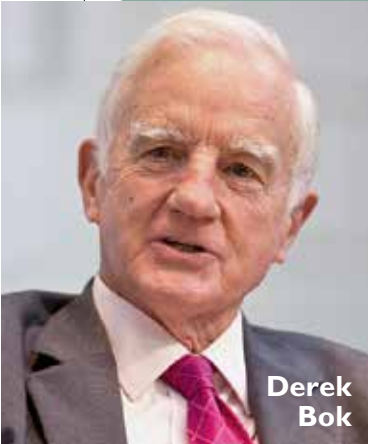
Digging Deep into Chinese History

Hudson professor of archaeology Rowan Flad reflects on an excavation in Gansu Province, China, a part of his work on the origins and development of socially complex societies in China during late prehistory—particularly the third and second millennia B.C.E.—during which major transformations took place.

harvardmag.com/chinadig-17

COUNTER CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: ROWAN FLAD; ZMEEL PHOTOGRAPHY /ISTOCK; COURTESY OF SCHLESINGER LIBRARY; THOMAS FORREST KELLY

Back-to-School Bookshelf



Derek Bok

JUSTIN IDE/HPAC

By now, Derek Bok's two-decade initial stint as Harvard's president seems only a chapter in his career as a leader in American higher education. *The Struggle to Reform Our Colleges* (Princeton, \$29.95) is the most recent in his long series of distinguished analyses: critiques that credit the value of higher education by treating its flaws seriously and teasing out appropriate remedies. Unfashionably reasonable and soft-spoken, Bok here engages the fundamental irony: at a time when educational attainment matters more than ever, and scholars have gained new

insights into effective teaching and learning (and promising technologies to enhance both), the United States has, seemingly, made little progress. Citing the imperative to educate more of the populace, and to do so better, he writes, "It is the need to make progress toward both objectives simultaneously that presents the greatest challenge for America's colleges" now.

But where to turn when universities themselves are "conservative," tenure-track faculty members "reluctant" to alter pedagogies and curriculums, adjuncts too hard-pressed and insecure to have a voice, and few presidents eager to pursue major reforms "that could prove to be time-consuming, contentious, and ultimately unsuccessful"? Don't look to students, Bok says. Their future employers are a source of pressure for justifiable efforts "to evaluate the effects of a college education," opposition to which is "harder to defend" today. Technology may be promising. Foundations, state and federal government, and accrediting agencies might play constructive roles in raising graduation rates and enhancing quality—but the record is not encouraging.

Bok the educator thus suggests that colleges and universities act as, well, *learning* institutions: they should test and assess models like Arizona State's online tutoring as a possible way to enhance the efficacy of remedial courses; or marry financial aid to orientation, mentoring, and peer advising, to see if that boosts college

completion. Focus on better graduate education as well, he suggests, so future teachers are better prepared to educate their students; create *teaching* faculties (rather than beggar adjuncts, who handle so much introductory instruction); put those who teach in charge of revising the curriculum; and get serious about educational research.

Not very tweetable—but an agenda guided by experience, wisdom, and belief in gradual improvement. Bok notes near his conclusion: "many college leaders and their faculties are excessively optimistic about the performance of their own institution." Just perhaps, a few might listen to one of their own, and begin to assess their performance more realistically.

In an important, related vein, Nobel laureate Carl Wieman, now professor of physics and of education at Stanford, has brought *his* scholarly skills to bear on rigorous design and testing of better teaching. *Improving How Universities Teach Science* (Harvard University Press, \$35) helpfully guides readers through discoveries disseminated previously in education journals and forums. Nothing he proposes should be too difficult for any institution that cares about teaching and learning to implement, and the lessons are presented with clarity and force. This is the kind of emerging work Bok hopes to encourage—against the inertial forces Wieman's scientific colleagues understand so well in their own research.

Finally, just try to be objective about selective college admissions: you will find it impossible to separate your own experience, or hopes for loved ones, from your assessment. At the start of another frenzied admissions season, Rebecca Zwick (formerly of University of California, Santa Barbara, now affiliated with the Educational Testing Service) examines essentially every option and its trade-offs. The result is *Who Gets In?* (Harvard, \$35). Its last sentence says just about everything needed to move "public conversation" about admissions toward a "less rancorous and more productive" place: "The first step is for schools to reveal what is behind the curtain."
~J.S.R.



Carl Wieman

COURTESY OF CARL WIEMAN

that even though such organizations involve only a small number of students, their effects "permeate the fabric of campus culture."

The Harvard policy, as proposed, reads:

Harvard students may neither join nor participate in final clubs, fraternities or sororities, or other similar private, exclusionary social organizations that are exclusively or predominantly made up of Harvard students, whether they have any local or national affiliation, during their time in the College. The College will take disciplinary action against students who are found to be participating in such organizations.

Violations will be adjudicated by the Administrative Board.

In a dissenting opinion, Putnam professor of organismic and evolutionary biology David Haig framed the past academic year's fiercely debated sanctions policies (see "Social-Club Saga," May-June, page 18) as "a conflict between competing goods: on the one hand, respect for student autonomy and freedom of association; on the other hand, non-discrimination and inclusivity." He noted the lack of good data on the effects of such organizations, and the fact that faculty opinion of the sanctions is unknown, because the policy has "never come to the faculty for a vote." Because

a 2016 survey of students showed 60 percent of respondents in favor of repealing an earlier sanctions policy, and 30 percent in favor of retaining it, he pointed to "a disconnect between these numbers...and the general tone of this committee's report, which emphasizes deep unhappiness among students with the social environment created by the clubs..."

The committee recommending the ban was appointed in early March by dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) Michael D. Smith, and includes dean of Harvard College Rakesh Khurana as co-chair. (Khurana's earlier recommendations had led to the existing policy, and to his work with

Yesterday's News

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

1922 "The Reds in America," an article published in the *Boston Transcript*, charges that the University is a "hot-bed" of radicalism, that "no institution of learning in the country has been so thoroughly saturated with the 'liberal' activity as Harvard," and intimates that members of the faculty "are not all unwaveringly faithful to the status quo..."

1937 Through its employment agency, the College dean's office has helped more than 200 part-time-job applicants, recruiting "for every sort of position from chauffeur to chess teacher," including, it's said, a student who can teach "jiu-jitsu."

Prompted by President Conant's suggestion that every college graduate should have a knowledge of the cultural history of the country in the broadest sense of the term, enabling them to face the future "united and unafraid," a voluntary examination in American history for all undergraduates who haven't taken a course in that field will be held on November 15.

1947 *The New York Times* reports that the basic cost of a Harvard education has risen only 3 percent above the pre-war

cost, versus 39 percent for other private colleges and 47 percent for public colleges.

1952 Eight Allston Burr senior tutors have been appointed as part of a new effort to enlarge the Houses' role in undergraduate life through the establishment of intra-House group-tutorial systems.

1972 The new Harvard Center for Research in Children's Television, funded by the Markle Foundation with administrative support from the University and Children's Television Workshop, will explore the effects of visual media on children.

1982 Sharon Beckman '80, her late-August attempt partly supported by a \$1,000 grant from Radcliffe College, becomes the first New England woman to swim the English Channel (covering almost 21 miles in nine hours and six minutes). She celebrates that victory two weeks later by winning the 10-mile Boston Light swim in Boston Harbor.

1997 In accord with Harvard's non-discrimination policy, Memorial Church begins holding same-sex commitment ceremonies.

an "implementation committee.") Smith charged the group with:

- reviewing existing policy, reports, and data;
- considering "whether there are other means of achieving our stated goals, including and especially that of fully advancing the non-discrimination objectives reflected in the current policy, and to evaluate whether any would be more effective than our current policy"; and
- proposing, "should more effective means be identified, changes or expansions to the current policy or a new approach."

If the newly recommended policy is adopted, it would do away with the existing controversial regime of sanctions set to take effect this September that has been the subject of faculty debate since last fall—but it seems likely to spark a new debate. Whether the FAS will vote on the committee's recommendations is itself likely to become an issue this fall, especially after a *Crimson* article raised questions about the committee's commitment to reflecting the diversity of faculty opinions on the subject. The report itself does not mention a vote, instead inviting faculty feedback through a website, email, or during "open faculty discussions" at the beginning of the academic year. Such feedback "will be taken into account," the report says, when the recommendation is presented in the fall to President Drew Faust, who "will make the final decision." (For more information, see harvardmag.com/usgsoban-17.)

~JONATHAN SHAW

Building Bridges in Allston

AS IRONWORKERS assembled the frame of the University's science and engineering complex in the summer heat (see page 14), bridge-building of an academic kind proceeded, too, as Harvard's Business and Engineering and Applied Sciences schools (HBS and SEAS) anticipate their physical proximity, scheduled for 2020, by launching a joint degree program now. The two-year master's degree in engineering, management, and design skills aims to equip students to drive innovation in new or established technology companies. Nitin Nohria and Francis Doyle III, the schools' deans, unveiled the program in June; students will enroll in August 2018. The schools' faculties have been meeting

Illustration by Mark Steele