

funding was matched by the pace of designing and engineering. Houghton chose William G. Perry, most famous for his meticulous restoration of Colonial Williamsburg, as the chief architect. Construction got under way almost immediately, which proved a major blessing: the library was completed shortly before the attack on Pearl Harbor.

“Houghton Library was built at about the last moment in which it was possible to do such work,” wrote Bainbridge Bunting, Ph.D. ’52, in *Harvard: An Architectural History*. “A few months later shortages of materials occasioned by the war would have made construction impossible; after the war the cost of materials and labor would have precluded such an undertaking for financial reasons alone.” Lamont Library, completed just *after* the war, shows how big an architectural difference a half-decade could make.

To complete the first project so quickly required a major commitment from the former Treasure Room’s small staff. In A

Houghton Library Chronicle: 1942-1992, former Houghton librarian William H. Bond called the movement of books from Widener to their new location “a do-it-yourself operation,” in which staff was often charged with moving books at night and on weekends:

This “home industry” aspect of the move into the new library and the preparations for its dedication, necessitated by budgetary limitations on the size of the staff, placed considerable burdens on those involved. At the same time it created a sense of involvement and the *esprit de corps* that have pervaded the Houghton Library during most of its history.

Houghton’s *esprit de corps* remains. When asked how, logistically, the books will be moved, Hyry looked helplessly to the sky. “I’m smiling because I think it’s very likely that almost every member of the staff is going to have to move something at some point,” he said with a laugh. “And when I speak about

it publicly, for good reason, I talk about how exciting it is, because it’s kind of literally a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to do something great in this building....But it’s not a small project and it’s incredibly disruptive to our staff, and they’re being heroic about it.”

“It’s definitely all hands on deck,” Eze added.

In an ideal world, the library wouldn’t have to close at all, but the scope of the renovation all but necessitates shutting the building for a year, beginning in September 2019. For Hyry and Solomon, though, the wait will be worth it. Houghton is already planning for many more visitors after the renovation is complete, and Solomon said he’s received emails from alumni expressing enthusiasm about the project and the future of the library.

“I think it’s just heightening the interest in and teaching and use of books,” Solomon said. “And it will please my wife because now my collection is going someplace, and she can get rid of the clutter.” ~JACOB SWEET

Debating Diversity

THE Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA) lawsuit alleging Harvard College bias against Asian-American applicants is now in the hands of federal judge Allison D. Burroughs in Boston; final arguments were heard on February 13. In the meantime, SFFA’s suit against the University of North Carolina, challenging its use of race as a factor in admissions and alleging discrimination against white applicants, is also proceeding (UNC makes its case at admissionslawsuit.unc.edu). Amid these current challenges to affirmative action in admissions—continuing litigation that now extends back more than four decades—Princeton University Press has released a twentieth-anniversary edition of the landmark *The Shape of the River: Long-Term Consequences of Considering Race in College and University Admissions*. It stands as a comprehensive assessment of the data by the two preeminent research-university presidents emeriti perhaps most associated with the policy then: Princeton’s William G. Bowen and Harvard’s Derek C. Bok. Separately, President Lawrence S. Bacow, who has been immersed in these issues himself, advanced a new formulation of the issue



Allan Bakke’s admissions suit began four decades-plus of protests and litigation.

aimed at casting it in a different, more productive light.

• *The closing arguments.* In their pre-Valentine’s Day reprise of their arguments before Burroughs, counsel for SFFA and for Harvard pre-

sented anew their statistical arguments—the core facts—in the case (see “Admissions on Trial,” January-February, page 15, for a review of the trial). Burroughs highlighted an issue in each side’s presentation that might

weigh on her deliberations.

In SFFA’s case, that is the “no-victim problem”: relying entirely on the statistical data, without presenting testimony from an Asian-American applicant who was rejected by Harvard and claimed harm from its admissions policies. In all prior cases on this subject (*Bakke*, *Grutter*, *Fisher*), there has been an individual plaintiff suing to right a perceived, deliberate harm.

In Harvard’s, it is the “personal-rating problem”: that SFFA shows a pattern of lower personal ratings assigned to Asian-American applicants than to whites, blacks, or Hispanics with seemingly similar aca-



BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES (2)

demographic qualifications. The University has maintained that SFFA's finding is a statistical artifice, erroneously derived from its misinterpretation of the applicant pool. Also in question is whether such a skew in assessments of personal qualities reflects unconscious bias or deliberate intent—and if the former, its legal and practical weight.

Burroughs, who heard the case directly, will now craft her opinion and issue her ruling—a process expected to take several months.

• *The bigger picture.* The SFFA case turns in part on the judge's interpretation of the data and assessment of how Harvard implements its admissions policies. It also involves fine

points of constitutional law and the antidiscrimination language of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (which applies to institutions, like the University, which receive federal funding). Her ruling, and subsequent appeals, may thus appear highly technical, turning on what rules for the use of race in admissions are permissible (SFFA hopes there are

Coming to Terms with Sexual Harassment

Following the January news that Winthrop House faculty dean Ronald S. Sullivan Jr. would represent movie producer Harvey Weinstein against multiple charges of sexual assault, student residents, and other undergraduates, called for him to step down from House leadership—perhaps because the University's data show a significant number of internal cases of sexual harassment or assault, many emanating from the College (see harvardmag.com/title9&odr-report-18). Sullivan, clinical professor of law and Johnston lecturer on law (he directs the Harvard Criminal Justice Institute and the Harvard Trial Advocacy Workshop) and a practicing trial attorney with a penchant for hard cases, made the argument that everyone is entitled to counsel—an argument strongly endorsed subsequently by many of his Law School colleagues in a letter to *The Boston Globe*. (A separate House officer is designated as students' contact person for discussing sexual-assault issues.)

Cutting much closer to home, Sullivan was subsequently quoted by Stuart Taylor Jr., J.D. '77, in a long report for RealClearInvestigations, as sharply critical of Harvard's conduct and processes in its widely reported investigation of Lee professor of economics and professor of education Roland G. Fryer Jr. for allegedly sexually harassing his research staff.

Faculty of Arts and Sciences dean Claudine Gay told *The Harvard Crimson* that Sullivan's response to students, centering on the argument about legal representation, did not fully address continuing concerns about the faculty dean's role, academically and pastorally, within the House. Harvard College dean Rakesh Khurana, who defended Sullivan's academic freedom to pursue his work, in late February asked former dean of freshmen Tom Dingman to conduct a confidential review of the "climate" in Winthrop. Khurana cited concerns by residents about the "support that students can expect to receive," given Sullivan's legal work. (Data-gathering for the House survey concluded March 15, as the College headed into spring break.)

The intramural tensions escalated considerably from there, as the *Crimson* reported that Sullivan had emailed House residents criticizing the paper's coverage of his legal work for Weinstein; he also granted an interview to *The New Yorker* in which he acknowledged that "some students are concerned that people will be less inclined to speak about sexual assault in the House"; noted his own past representation of women who were victims of sexual assault; and said, in response to a question about whether criticisms of him had been "racially motivated," that they were—and specifically "this climate survey. It's absolutely never happened before, and I

do not believe that it would happen again to any non-minority dean." He observed, "This is all some vicarious association with a client whom several in our community don't like. If that becomes the new standard...then we're going to see continued threat" to academic freedom and robust exchanges of ideas.

Obviously, that wraps many issues into a charged environment for coming to terms with local allegations of sexual harassment or assault. Harvard's professional-school faculty members routinely pursue outside engagements, to keep current on developments within their fields. Little discussed in this instance is whether the demands of Sullivan's involvement in complex criminal trials might raise questions about his (or any similar faculty dean's) time commitment to a House's resident undergraduates—perhaps an issue for another, calmer day. Further muddying this situation is Sullivan's possible engagement with a faculty member (Fryer) being investigated through campus protocols, pitting various members of the community in difficult, cross-cutting positions toward one another.

Results of the climate survey and further developments were pending as this issue went to press in early April.

This uproar quickly superseded news of the government department's "Climate Survey Report," released February 6, following the retirement last year of longtime professor Jorge Domínguez in the wake of allegations of persistent sexual harassment (see harvardmag.com/dominguez-18)—which remain under investigation. The survey of faculty members, graduate students, undergraduate concentrators, and staff members found 35 percent of female graduate students dissatisfied with the department—more than twice the rate among male peers. Some 12 percent of respondents reported harassment or discrimination, with women and graduate students more likely to report harassment. One-quarter of respondents (and 34 percent of graduate students, and 47 percent of women) disagreed, or strongly disagreed, that their mentors, teachers, and advisers are "sufficiently sensitive to diversity and inclusion."

In disseminating the report (<https://gov.harvard.edu/government-department-climate-survey>), chair Jennifer Hochschild, Jayne professor of government and professor of African and African American studies, wrote, "We are dismayed" by the reports of "harassment, discrimination, or other impediments to success," and expressed her hope that the survey and other work undertaken by the department's Climate Change Committee "will facilitate improvement in what is inevitably a work in progress."

—JOHN S. ROSENBERG

none), and their application in practice.

From the public perspective, the issues may appear in much starker terms. Hence the timeliness of reissuing *The Shape of the River*. When Bowen and Bok collaborated, they acknowledged that both brought to their research on “race-sensitive admissions...a history of having worked hard, over more than three decades, to enroll and educate more diverse student bodies” at their institutions and were, accordingly, “strongly identified with what we regard as responsible efforts to improve educational opportunities for well-qualified minority students.” They wrote as it became likely that the U.S. Supreme Court would hear further challenges to the admissions processes it upheld in the 1978 *Bakke* decision. And indeed, *Grutter* (2003) and *Fisher* (2013, 2016) ensued, to be followed by SFFA’s current challenges to the use of race as a factor in holistic admissions processes.

In his review for *Harvard Magazine*’s centennial edition (“Affirmative Admissions,” November–December 1998, page 27), Daniel Steiner, who had served as vice president and general counsel in the Bok administration, found that *The Shape of the River* made two basic claims for “supporting race consciousness” in selective institutions’ review of applicants:

First, such a policy helps prepare qualified minority students for the many opportunities they will have to contribute to a society that is still trying to solve its racial problems within a population that will soon be one-third black and Hispanic. Second, the policy provides a racially diverse environment that can help prepare *all* students to live and work in our increasingly multiracial society.

Steiner cited two shortcomings in the book. He wished for more human texture, from interviews for example, to augment the data. And he called for further evidence—along the lines of President Neil L. Rudenstine’s argument, in “Diversity and Learning,” his *President’s Report, 1993–1995*—that student diversity “contribute[s] powerfully to the process of learning.” Steiner nonetheless concluded that Bowen and Bok provided considerable support for their claims that “the policy is achieving these objectives.”

In his afterword to the new edition, Bok finds the book vindicated. He recalls a 1998 finding that still resonates: “From almost every point of view...minority students had



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been helped, not harmed, by their admission to selective colleges,” rebutting a canard that deploying a “plus factor” would subject minorities to withering competition from better prepared, more able classmates. And research since then has showed, with a nod to Rudenstine’s theme, that “The interaction of white and minority undergraduates turns out to do much more than create greater understanding and reduce racial bias. A diverse student body also appears to

ect two pertinent books (*The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America*, and *The Big Test: The Secret History of the American Meritocracy*), and experience as a dean (see “The Press Professor,” September–October 2005, page 78).

He places *The Shape of the River* in the context of its times, in the mid to late 1990s, when further legal and political challenges were pending. That had to be profoundly troubling to Bowen, Bok, and many of their

Although diversity in admissions is a core value within university communities, it is “never a winner in electoral politics.”

help undergraduates make progress toward a remarkably broad array of other educational goals,” such as critical thinking, civic engagement, and empathy. Such attributes extend far beyond the benefits the Supreme Court knew about when it sanctioned race-sensitive admissions in *Bakke*.

Given the nation’s prevalent residential segregation by race today, Bok notes, “many students attending selective colleges will be experiencing their first opportunities to live in a racially diverse environment.” That reality underscores efforts at assembling undergraduate cohorts that “are richly diverse, not only racially but in other respects as well,” and then working to be sure those students interact and thrive in inclusive campus communities.

The 2019 edition begins with a productive and thought-provoking foreword by Nicholas Lemann ’76, who brings to the proj-

peers because, as he puts it, “If you work in a university, you’ll know that the value of diversity in admissions—meaning, foremost, racial diversity—is a core value of the community,” even as affirmative action is “never a winner in electoral politics.”

(This point is not even close. A Pew Research Center report released in late February found that 73 percent of Americans opposed considering race or ethnicity in admissions—and although the share of respondents varied, strong majorities of white, black, Hispanic, and Asian respondents, and of Republicans and Democrats, agreed with this position. Majorities favored relying on high-school grades and standardized test scores as the major criteria for admissions; majorities opposed considering athletic ability, first-generation or legacy status, or gender in making admissions decisions.)

Universities found their path narrow and

Yesterday's News

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

1929 The Law School's Institute of Criminal Law opens, to study practical ways—including consultations with psychiatrists, social workers, and doctors—to deal with criminals, as “mere punishment...does not yield adequate results.”

1954 Half a year after defending Harvard against Senator Joseph McCarthy, President Nathan Pusey draws more than 500 people to the National Press Club's luncheon in his honor; his speech on “Freedom, Loyalty, and the American University” and his willingness to answer all questions earn a “remarkable ovation.”

1969 Eighteen students have signed up to concentrate in the newly created field of Afro-American studies.

A representative of Students for a Democratic Society receives last-minute permission to speak at the Morning Exercises [see page 4], and attacks Harvard, calling the Commencement ceremony “an obscenity” and “an atrocity.” Subsequently, he,

about 30 seniors, and some hundred others walk out to hold a brief counter-Commencement and listen to an address by philosophy professor Hilary Putnam.

1974 About 125 Radcliffe seniors organize a demonstration during Commencement week, wearing armbands, placards on their backs sporting equal signs, and bright yellow ribbons atop their caps. Their four demands are: equal admissions; equal job opportunities; equal facilities and finances for athletics; equal distribution of fellowship funds.

1979 The success of National Lampoon's *Animal House* prompts Universal Pictures to offer \$500 to sponsor a toga party in South [Cabot] House. Dean of students Archie Epps vetoes the proposal.

1989 South African archbishop Desmond Tutu, LL.D. '79, running as a petition candidate for Harvard-Radcliffe Alumni Against Apartheid, gains a seat on Harvard's Board of Overseers.

tricky, Lemann writes, as they navigated the law laid down by *Bakke*; their desire to increase enrollment of underrepresented black students; and the dictates of the academic, meritocratic admissions hurdles represented by the universal adoption of SATs and similar metrics (see *The Big Test*).

Integrating elite schools, and the leadership cohort whom they educate, “has been a success,” he finds. “It would be a mistake, though, to assume that affirmative action is now safe.” Lemann notes the current litigation, recent Department of Justice actions opposing affirmative action in admissions, and the populist politics of the present moment. More enduringly, “Applicants and their families see an admissions slot as a golden ticket that universities should be duty-bound to offer to those who deserve it most. Universities see admissions as an exercise in institutional curation, requiring the subtle balancing of subjective cultural, political, and economic factors.” Even if they end up enrolling at *another* elite school, for students rejected from their first choice, he continues, “that doesn't mean it's possible to achieve comity between applicants and admissions offices. It isn't. Many people are going to wind up feeling wronged.”

That is a formula for continued disputes over admissions—particularly given that “the value of racial diversity is assumed” on elite campuses, where the principal question is how to achieve *more* and more effective (inclusive) diversity. From other perspectives—in litigation, initiative campaigns—“another set of questions emerges. Why should it be permissible to consider race in the operation of institutions, even as a positive factor? Why should a black applicant from an economically privileged background get a place that might have gone to a poor white applicant?”

Such questions, Lemann warns, “will surely reappear.” Given the persistent effects of centuries of racial discrimination in the United States, and selective universities' commitment to lessening those effects on their campuses and in the wider society, “no one should make the mistake of believing that the battles over affirmative action have ended.” That is true no matter what Judge Burroughs rules, or the ultimate disposition of SFFA's Harvard and UNC cases: if current admissions practices are prohibited, universities will assuredly pursue alternatives, even as they maintain that such workarounds are inferior and socially counterproductive.



Illustration by Mark Steele

• *Reframing the question.* President Bacow has left no doubt about his commitment to Harvard's use of race as a plus factor in holistic admissions reviews: he attended the closing arguments on February 13, lending his personal and presidential support to the University's case.

As Lemann has noted, opponents of affirmative action, and disappointed applicants, like to cite students' quantitative, seemingly meritocratic qualifications: grades, test scores. If universities are academic enterprises, shouldn't objective, academic criteria govern admissions? Take the students with the highest GPAs and SATs and declare victory.

Universities, of course, point out that they are broad intellectual communities. They seek to enroll not report cards, but undergraduates who might study diverse fields ranging from literature or foreign languages to microeconomics or bioengineering—and whose activities encompass athletics, artistic performance, public service, and more. As Bacow has pointed out, it would be a dull place if everyone at the College concentrated in one thing. (In

fact, if that one thing were, say, computer science, a liberal-arts institution would become a sort of trade school.) More technically, admissions officers sometimes point out that scores on standardized tests have very limited predictive value about a high-school student's ultimate performance in college.

During the winter, he advanced another formulation, perhaps with practical appeal for the broader society. This February, for example, at an American Enterprise Institute-Brookings Institution higher-education forum, he asked audience members how many had ever hired anyone. Hands flew up. And then he asked how many had done so *solely* on the basis of metrics like past grades and test scores, *without* checking an applicant's references or work product.

For a society deeply divided about the propriety of vetting applicants along a spectrum of diverse criteria, it was a vivid illustration of the daily use, and clear worth, of holistic evaluations. Might it even point toward a way out of conflicts over high-stakes university admissions that have, for

half a century, supported a good chunk of the country's legal talent?

Perhaps—but other issues might well arise: in February, New America, a think tank, responding to several Democratic senators' request for ideas on how to narrow gaps in access to higher education, suggested, among other ideas, "ending federal financial aid for schools that use legacy admissions," one of Harvard's practices publicized during the course of the SFFA trial. Without noting that such schools are among those that offer need-blind admissions, New America defined its target as "those highly-resourced and highly-selective institutions that engage in legacy admissions and other preferential admissions treatments that overwhelming favor wealthy and white families, including early decision programs."

The tickets remain golden, more so than ever (see application data for the class of 2023 on page 30)—and so the selective colleges should fully expect their policies for distributing them to remain hotly contested.

—JOHN S. ROSENBERG

New Faculty Faces

HARVARD'S faculty ranks have, gradually, become increasingly diverse. The intersection of lifetime tenured appointments; no mandatory retirement age; a decade of very constrained growth; and the long time it takes students to progress from studying a discipline through completing doctoral work and proceeding into academia necessarily combine to make the pace of change evolutionary, not revolutionary. But comparing the census totals

from late in the presidencies of Lawrence H. Summers (which ended in 2006) and Drew Gilpin Faust (2018) provides clarity. In the fall of 2006, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS, the largest Harvard faculty) had 702 tenured and tenure-track members, of whom 172 were women and 116 minorities; in the fall of 2017, of 738 members, 222 were women (an increase from 24.5 percent to 30.0 percent) and 162 minorities (from 16.5 percent to 22.0 percent).

The data come from the annual report of the office of faculty development and diversity; its director, senior vice provost Judith D. Singer, points to an accelerating pace of

change. Across the University, from calendar year 2006 through last year (when there were about 1,100 tenured professors), 582 offers of tenure were accepted—half by women and/or minorities, and 39 percent by women and/or members of underrepresented minorities. Of the 170 tenured appointments made during the latest four calendar years (2015 through 2018), 57 percent were women and/or minorities, and 45 percent women and/or underrepresented minorities.

Singer points to varying indicators to explain the change in the faculties' composition. During those four latest years, 61 percent of the tenured appointments were

internal promotions. Harvard's schools have, during the past decade plus, adopted a tenure-track system: bringing a cohort of junior faculty members to campus to be mentored, offered opportunities to develop, and then be considered for promotion. That system favors recruiting young scholars, who tend to be more diverse, reflecting today's more diverse university enrollments. (Past Harvard practice expected junior faculty members to leave after several years, and made tenured appointments only at the senior, full professor level—a less diverse cohort, given prior decades' academic population.)

Of course who is recruited matters, at any

Faculty Demographics in 2019

