Freshman to Freshmen
Welcoming his first College entering class as dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, William C. Kirby played the historian he is in remarks to the ’06ers on the evening of September 8 in Tercentenary Theatre. He told them about Elias Mann, who wrote in August 1796 of his first day of “colledge” life, “nothing of importance has transferred, & I went to bed early.” Things quickly looked up, Kirby reported, as Mann the next day “Wrestled some, and tore my pantaloons very badly in the knee and seat” before having a “savage time” later that evening in the Square.

In his decanal capacity, Kirby—a leading faculty proponent of study abroad—urged the students to remember that “your learning may not take place only here” and encouraged them to consider pursuing “an education in the world.” Finally, Kirby reassured parents that “Bill Cosby reminds us that ‘human beings are the only creatures on earth that allow their children to come back home.’ This is a good thing, since we turn the heat down over winter break.”

Studying Sexual Assault
The committee created last spring to advise the provost and the dean of Harvard College on support services for victims of sexual violence, and on programs to reduce such assaults, began meeting in September. Professor of international health Jennifer Leaning, M.D., was appointed to chair the committee last May, following Faculty of Arts and Sciences approval of a new policy governing the evidence that must be presented to the Administrative Board before it agrees to hear such cases (see “Adjudicating Sexual-Assault Cases,” July-August, page 8i).

Her colleagues are Diana Eck, professor of comparative religion and Indian studies and master of Lowell House; Sarah Bess Levit-Shore ’03; Everett Mendelsohn, professor of the history of science; Elizabeth Studley Nathans, dean of freshmen; Katherine Park, Stone Radcliffe professor of the history of science and chair of the committee on degrees in women’s studies; Maureen Rezendes, a psychologist at the University Health Services; Michael Rodriguez, lecturer on psychology and senior tutor of Adams House; Veronica Reed Ryback, clinical instructor in psychiatry and former director of Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center’s rape crisis center; Jared Slade ’03; and James H. Ware, Mosteller professor of biostatistics, dean for academic affairs in the School of Public Health, and master of Cabot House. The committee’s website is www.college.harvard.edu/services/leaning-committee.

Nota Bene
Solid second. For the third consecutive year, U.S. News & World Report ranked Princeton the country’s premier university, trailed closely by Harvard and Yale in a tie for second. As in years past, Harvard lagged slightly behind its two Ivy peers in the magazine’s rankings of class size and student-faculty ratio. Five institutions were tied for fourth place: Caltech, Duke, MIT, Stanford, and the University of Pennsylvania. Dartmouth and Columbia (tied with Northwestern) rounded out the top 10.

MacArthur manna. Professor of history Ann M. Blair ’84, a specialist in early modern European intellectual history, has been awarded a MacArthur Fellowship. The so-called “genius grants” provide $500,000 over a five-year period. Blair is currently researching the “information overload” associated with the introduction of print-
ing, Paul H. Ginsparg ‘77, Jf ’81, professor of physics and computing science at Cornell; MIT economist Sendhil Mullainathan, Ph.D. ’98, seismologist Brian Tucker, M.P.A. ’91; Paul O. Wennberg, Ph.D. ’94, professor of atmospheric chemistry and environmental engineering at Caltech; and two novelists—Jack Miles, Ph.D. ’71, and Arch C. (Colson) Whitehead ’91—were also among this year’s 24 fellows.

Pudding pleas. Suzanne M. Pomey ’02 and Randy J. Gomes ’02, charged with looting the Hasty Pudding Theatricals of nearly $100,000 (see “Underhanded Undergraduates,” May-June, page 59), reversed their original not-guilty pleas on September 13. Even though prosecutors urged that they serve time in jail, they were sentenced to probation by Judge Peter W. Agnes Jr. on October 3.

Acting art director. The Harvard University Art Museums will be in familiar hands throughout the search for a successor to James Cuno, who is moving to the Courtauld Institute of Art (see “Brevia,” September-October, page 73). Marjorie B. Cohn, Weyerhauser curator of prints at the Fogg Art Museum, has been named acting director by Provost Steven E. Hyman, who is leading the search. Cohn, a 40-year veteran of the museums, has been a conservator (see “Turning History’s Page,” March-April, page 35) and director of the Center for Conservation and Technical Studies. She served an earlier stint as acting director before Cuno arrived in 1991.

ROTC reading. While debate continues over the terms of the relationship between Harvard and the undergraduate ROTC program (see page 72), cadets may now earn military credit for at least one College course. Government 1730, “War and Politics,” will now fulfill the U.S. Air Force’s sophomore military history requirement, simplifying students’ classroom and travel burdens. Kaneb professor of national security and military affairs Stephen Peter Rosen told the Crimson that the course would not be altered in any way to satisfy ROTC requirements.

Stellar seminars. The Faculty of Arts and Sciences has managed both to increase the number of freshman seminars (see “Face-to-Face with Faculty,” January-February 2001, page 64) and to lure stellar professors to give the small (12 students), selective classes. This year’s offerings include “The Poetry of Walt Whitman,” with Porter University Professor Helen Vendler; an exploration of natural-language interaction with computers, led by Stuart M. Shieber, McKay professor of computer science and Harvard College Professor; and a course starkly entitled “Addiction,” offered by University provost Steven E. Hyman, a neuroscientist who was most recently the director of the National Institute of Mental Health.

Politics prizes. At its annual meeting, held this year in Boston just before Labor Day, the American Political Science Association conferred awards on 21 scholars and professionals, including Linda Greenhouse ’68, Supreme Court reporter for the New York Times, for journalism contributing to understanding of politics; Lars-Erik Cederman, Danziger associate professor of government, for a journal article; Daniel Carpenter, professor of government, for his book The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy; Michael Dawson, professor of government, for his book The Roots of Contemporary African-American Political Ideologies; and Sidney Verba, Pforzheimer University Professor, as coauthor of The Private Roots of Public Action: Gender, Equality, and Political Participation.