Cambridge 02138
Procurement policy, admissions, tenure, personals

SEGREGATION, NOW AND THEN

I enjoyed Drew Gilpin Faust’s delightful “Living History” (May-June, page 38), about racial segregation in Virginia, but your cover line, “When Schools Were Segregated,” is erroneous. It suggests that schools are not now segregated.

I challenge you to produce evidence that anywhere in classes with a high proportion of black and Hispanic students are as qualified and experienced as teachers in classes with high proportions of white and Asian students in the same school district. In Concord, California, where I have resided for more than 50 years, the school district is not only discriminatory against blacks and Hispanics in the quality of teaching staff, but also buses students from poor (and thus minority) neighborhoods past the nearest high school to a more distant high school that has predominantly poor (and minority) students, and buses students from rich (and thus white) neighborhoods past their nearest school to a much more distant school whose student body is rich and thus includes few blacks or Hispanics.

The motivation for this segregation is that the richer people want the best teachers and most of the resources for their own children. The teachers prefer to teach in schools with wealthy students, and the teachers’ union makes seniority the wealthier have more influence and not “equality” determine the staffing of schools. Unfortunately, in our democracy the wealthy have more influence than the poor do, and the quality of education for our poor is a disgrace.

Clyde D. Bird Jr. ’45
Concord, Calif.

Faust’s story about her early awareness of segregation hit very close to home. I was raised in Arlington, Virginia, and attended all-white schools until I graduated from high school in 1947. My sudden awareness of discrimination came at a later age than was the case for the nine-year-old Faust. I suspect that we all have moments in our lives when we suddenly understand something that has been in front of our eyes for some time. I had such an event in the summer of 1944, when I was 14. I took a job as a soda-fountain clerk in a national chain drugstore in Arlington. In those days the drugstores had full-service lunch counters. The manager gave me a brief training and explained that any black customers were to be served at the end of the counter on a “take-out” basis only. Although I knew at that time that the blacks went to separate schools and were asked to sit in the back of the bus, it was not until I was told that blacks could not sit at the counter that I began to understand the unfairness of such discrimination. Later in the day, I asked my mother why the blacks were treated this way. She was a kind and thoughtful lady and usually had a good answer for every-
thing, but in this case she said, “That’s just the way it is.” As with many whites, we needed a push to begin to see discrimination not as something that existed, but as something that was just simply not fair.

Richard H. Wilcox, M.B.A. ’56
Lady Lake, Fla.

COMMERCE AND THE ACADEMY
Thanks to Derek Bok for speaking out against commercialization of the university (“The Purely Pragmatic University,” May-June, page 28.) I would add one major symptom to those he enumerates: ever greater reliance on temporary and part-time labor to teach undergraduates. This practice is a bit off to one side of former president Bok’s main concern, the university’s attempt to sell its resources profitably. But cost-cutting and revenue-seeking are two parts of the same commercial package, and they have progressed in tandem during the past three decades. The results of casualizing the university work force are unfortunate, both for students’ learning and for the well-being of college teachers.

It would be healthy for university administrations to restore decent working conditions for the reserve army of the semi-employed. I’m gloomy about that possibility, though. The privatizing impetus that is everywhere in charge may be stronger even than well-meaning administrators’ ability to resist.

Richard Ohmann, Ph.D. ’60
Hawley, Mass.

Bok expresses the concern that the university will be shaped in undesirable ways by active commercialization. As true as that no doubt is, some of the dangers of commercialization can enter universities through failure to be participants in the commercial world, albeit as nonprofits. Universities can through inaction leave the field open to firms whose profit-seeking requires control over the dissemination of the source material of scholarship and of its results, thus turning libraries into agents of copyright holders. When libraries cannot freely make available their resources, the mix between libraries being private goods and public goods shifts in the direction of the private, thus making libraries less attractive to supporters from outside their parent institutions.

It is well known that libraries, through
subscribers, are buying hack the scholar-
ship produced by their faculties after
that scholarship has gone through the
hands of the commercial sector. Besides
bringing significantly rising costs to uni-
versities, the electronic environment places
control over dissemination in the hands of
those whose primary motive is profit
rather than the furtherance of scholarship.

Less noticed has it been that libraries
have been ceding control over much of
the basic source material of scholarship.
To name only a few instances, early Eng-
lish books, early American books, and
nineteenth-century African-American
journals are now—as parts of digital col-
cctions—basically the property of busi-
ness firms. For current students and em-
ployees of major universities, the result is
more access, from office and home, to the
world’s cultural resources than has ever
been the case before. This comes, how-
ever, at the price of an inequality that is
not inherent in the rarity of the material
but rather in the mode of its dissemina-
cation. Concretely, a library can lend a book
or a microfilm; it cannot lend a portion of
a digital file, because it doesn’t own a
physical manifestation of it.

Although the reasons behind this entry
of the commercial sector into academia
are different from those put forth by Bok,
the long-term implications are similarly
disturbing, perhaps even more so, since
only widespread concerted action can re-
sult in reversal.

Kenneth Carpenter
Harvard University Library (retired)
Newton Centre, Mass.

RACE-CONSCIOUS ADMISSIONS

“On diversity” (“Brevia,” March-April,
page 71) notified readers that Harvard
would file a brief in the University of
Michigan cases at the United States
Supreme Court, which involve use of race
in admitting students to the undergraduate
and the law school. In doing so, you state that the brief will support “the
right of higher-education institutions to
consider race as a factor in a well-con-
structed admissions program.” You
blithely ignore the fact, however, that the
University of Michigan is a state institu-
tion, supported by taxpayers, in con-
tradistinction to Harvard, a privately
chartered institution. The difference,
of course, is compellingly pertinent to the
contentions of those who understandably
challenge the use of racial preferences in
admissions to taxpayer-supported uni-
ersities. The intervention of Harvard and
similarly situated private universities rep-
resents a kind of meddlesomeness, signi-
fiying either political correctness or plain
officiousness.

Quentin L. Kopp, LL.B. ’52
Redwood City, Calif.

Editor’s note: The editors went on in the
May-June issue (“Affirmative Amicus,”
page 50) to report more fully on the brief.
It was written, at the request of President
Lawrence H. Summers, by Harvard’s
Tyler professor of constitutional law, Lau-
rence H. Tribe, serving as counsel of
record for Harvard and the seven other
colleges and universities on whose behalf
the brief was filed (Brown, Chicago, Dart-
mouth, Duke, Penn, Princeton, and Yale).

FATHER OF FULLER FOUND

Phoebe Kosman’s “Undergraduate” col-
umn “Finding Fuller” (May-June, page
60) brought a great deal of pleasure to me
and my daughter, Lilian Faulhaber ’00, L
’05. Robert Playfair ’36, author of the 1939
novel Fuller at Harvard, is my father, now
deceased. He wrote three books of fiction,

DAVID IVES
Harvard Magazine notes with sadness
the death on May 16 of David O. Ives ’41, M.B.A. ’43. He was most
widely known in Boston and in pub-
lic-television circles nationwide for
his stewardship of WGBH, which he
made the premier supplier of pro-
gramming for the Public Broadcasting Service. But
David loomed largest at Wadsworth
House and then 7 Ware Street as a
member of the magazine’s board of di-
rectors from 1978 to 1985 and then as
president from 1986 to 1995. During
those years of growth and change, David was unwavering in his support
for the magazine’s service to its alumni
readers. We remember and honor that
commitment, even as we miss David’s
deriving combination of Puritan pro-
piety with true warmth and a twink-
lng sense of humor. ~THE EDITORS

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Board of Incorporators
This magazine, at first called the Harvard Bulletin, was
founded in 1898. Its Board of Incorporators was char-
tered in 1924 and remains active in the magazine’s
governance. The membership is as follows: Daniel
Steiner ’54, LL.B. ’58, president; Stephen J. Bailey, AMP
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’78; Robert H. Weiss ’54, Elizabeth Winship ’43; Jan
Ziolkowski.
all involving daring athletic feats by Harvard students. What is perhaps more intriguing is that he didn’t need an outside muse to write about college athletes. He was a runner who was credited with never being beaten by a Yale runner, and who won the triangular meet with Princeton and Yale in each of his three varsity years. In his first year of running varsity, he briefly held the American outdoor mile record.

Thank you and Kosman for reviving Fuller, and also my father the author, almost 64 years after publication of Fuller at Harvard.

Susan R. Playfair
Cohasset, Mass.

REPAY SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS
I was saddened to read in “A Down Payment on Financial Aid” (March-April, page 56) that there is inadequate scholarship money for graduate- and professional-school students. For some years I have advocated a program that requires all recipients of fellowship and scholarship monies to acknowledge a moral obligation to repay those funds if, as, and when they are financially able to. The only exceptions would be graduates who go into the nonprofit sector, for whom one-third of the moral obligation would be forgiven for each year of such service.

If a fraction of the effort that is spent raising alumni gifts would be directed toward recovering scholarship and fellowship grants from past recipients who have the financial wherewithal, most of these funding requirements would be satisfied.

Michael E. Tenenbaum, M.B.A. ’62
Los Angeles

NEEDED: A MANDATORY PROCUREMENT POLICY
We were disappointed with the profile of Harvard’s vice president for finance, Ann Berman, “CFO for Tighter Times,” and the sidebar, “Cutting Costs” (May-June, pages 52 and 53). They failed to see “the elephant in the room.” After several years of study of Harvard’s procurement practices and discussion with various parties inside and outside of the University, it is our belief that Harvard could save between $100 million and $250 million a year—once or twice the income from the last capital campaign.

While we applaud the Summers administration’s recent statements and initiatives, Harvard simply needs a mandatory competitive-sourcing program for the University’s annual purchase of $1.2 billion in goods and services. At a meeting last month with Harvard Corporation and administration representatives, we recommended that Harvard establish a formal procurement committee. The committee would be composed of alumni who have special expertise in each of the principal industries from which Harvard purchases goods and services. The committee would work with the finance VP, the director of procurement, and others in the administration to structure competitive-sourcing deals to maximize Harvard’s savings. It should be relatively easy to identify the most suitable candidates among Harvard’s 283,000 alumni.

The time has passed for debating how much money Harvard can save. In the past three years, Harvard has lost $3 billion in endowment and 25 percent of its purchasing power. McKinsey studies are no substitute for a mandate. The only way to be sure that corporate assets are not being wasted is to compete Harvard’s “spend” in the marketplace. The procurement committee will possess the industry-specific knowledge to recommend the best possible deals for the University as a whole. We believe that there is no defensible alternative to a mandatory procurement policy across all schools. We believe it is the duty of Harvard’s alumni to create a sense of urgency, and the responsibility of Harvard’s administration to steward the University’s scarce resources.

C. Boyden Gray ’64
John B. Henry ’71
Timothy E. Wirth ’61, Ed.M. ’65
Washington, D.C.

A SIMPLER ADMISSIONS PROCESS
In his review of The Early Admissions Game, William Fitzsimmons (“Entering the Elite,” May-June, page 15) emphasizes the tremendous investment Harvard makes in assessing its applicant pool. He writes that admission-staff ratings are “based on multiple readings of each applicant.” And he goes on to say that “our decisions are not made automatically, but after lengthy deliberations by majority vote of a large and experienced admissions committee.”

A skeptic might wonder whether there are not perhaps other far less-costly and time-consuming approaches that might
Making a bequest is often the best option for individuals who want to create an enduring legacy at Harvard. Our planned giving professionals can help you shape your intentions to best meet your objectives.

EARLY FLYERS

Harriet Quimby’s death, when she and William Willard were pitched from her plane into Dorchester Bay at the 1912 Boston Air Meet (“Conquest of the Air,” May-June, page 32), was surely a factor in ending air meets in Boston, but poor management, confusion among aviators as to which events were sanctioned by the Aero Club, as well as uncertain weather conditions were major reasons why women and men of ability, including scholars of color, found the academic profession inhospitable. Just as women and scholars of color are poised to enter the academy in greater numbers, these developments are among the major reasons why women and men of ability, including scholars of color, seek the assistance of the AAUP on a daily basis? The answer is quite simply because they recognize the critical importance of tenure, if not in name, then in the working conditions that afford them the best of what tenure has to offer—protection of academic freedom, assurance of economic security, and the conditions under which they can participate in the governance of their institutions without fear of retribution.

SPEAK UP, PLEASE

Harvard Magazine welcomes letters on its contents. Please write to “Letters,” Harvard Magazine, 7 Ware Street, Cambridge 02138, or send comments by facsimile to 617-495-0124, or by e-mail to yourturn@harvard.edu, or use our Internet site, www.harvard-magazine.com. Letters may be edited to fit the available space.
tenure lines and better practices, rather than fewer? We at AAUP answer with a resounding affirmation of tenure.

Anita Levy
Associate secretary
American Association of University Professors
Washington, D.C.

CULTURAL PROPERTY SURVEY
As members of the advisory committee to the Cultural Property Survey project, we were pleased to see “Prowlers Discover Harvard Valuables” in the March-April issue (page 67). The article is informative and helps to spread the word about the project.

We want to make sure, however, that readers are not left with the impression that the project aims to recreate a campus version of Antiques Roadshow. The goal of this survey is documentation, whether or not the property it includes is worth large sums of money. In the end, an accurate, consistent record of what the University owns, including gifts from its many friends and benefactors, will help to support responsible custody of this property.

We also want to dispel the suggestion that highly valuable objects are lying around unattended in insecure locations. (To set the record straight, the $100,000 Persian carpet has always been kept in a secure location.) In most cases, those in proximity to valuable objects have been aware of their significance.

With the gathering of information in one central database, these objects can be tracked, receive appropriate care, and take their rightful place in Harvard’s venerable history.

Robin McElheny, chair; Sandra Grindlay; Harley Holden; Ardis Kozbial; Lisa Plato; Peter Riley
Cambridge

Editor’s note: The $100,000 carpet was judged safely housed and was not moved, and the editors regret the reporting error. A desk, valuable because of its associations, was moved from a House senior common room to a safer location.

HARVARD MAGAZINE PERSONALS
What a trip! “A more mature Meg Ryan,” “A more feminine Annette Benning.” Mountain ranges of good endowment, acres of high cheekbones, black holes of “aqua” eyes. Where were all these drop-dead-gorgeous babes when I was at...
EMERSON WANNABE, ET CETERA

After opening his copy of the May-June issue of this magazine, Lawrence Buell, author of “The Infinitude of the Private Man,” an appreciation of Ralph Waldo Emerson, warned us to expect some mail about the photograph on page 25, which the editors had captioned, “Emerson as a young man...” Then came:

Although I do not know the provenance of the picture, it is certainly not Emerson. By the look of the clothing and facial styling, it would appear to have been made in the 1860s. But other evidence is more crucial. The young man in the photograph looks to be about 25 or 30; but even if he is 35 (not considered “young” in Emerson’s time) that would still place him—if he were Emerson—in the year 1838, which is some two years before the introduction of daguerreotypy into America. The first known photographs of Emerson date, probably, from the early to mid 1840s, when he was no longer “young.”

Joe Porte, Ph.D. ’62
White professor of American studies and humane letters, Cornell University
Ithaca, N.Y.

Editor’s note: The photograph was obtained by the art director of the magazine from a folder labeled “Emerson” in the Harvard University Archives; it was, furthermore, twice identified on its back, and once on its front, as of Emerson. Perhaps some reader can tell us—and the waylayers at Archives—who this person really is. Meantime, the editors acknowledge a second error:

For many years I have looked forward to and relished reading our magazine. I was a teacher by profession and continue to be an unregenerate proofreader of all I read. I can always relax a bit when I sit down to read Harvard Magazine, with assurance that all will be right in this little part of the universe.

So you can imagine my incredulous horror on finding (seeing while not looking for) not one, but five misspellings on page 84 of the May-June issue (“A Box of Pox”)—all noun and verb forms of the base “inoculat-”; N.B. one “n.”

A pox upon the editor of that article.

Richard P. Turner ’53
Avon Lake, Ohio

Editor’s note: A not-innocent error. Finally, Nicole Legnani ’03 was reported (“Estimable Seniors,” May-June, page 249) as being “back in Peru, working at a nongovernmental organization affiliated with the United Nations.” It is not so affiliated. “My friends and I only just started it this past year,” writes Legnani.

The photograph

The back of the photograph

ONEISMUS’S ROLE

Your article on Benjamin Waterhouse ("A Box of Pox,” May-June, page 84) ignores a vital factor in Boston’s efforts to combat the 1721 smallpox epidemic. Though it is true that Cotton Mather influenced Dr. Zabdiel Boylston’s use of variolation as a cure for smallpox, Mather first learned of variolation from his African-born slave, Onesimus. In a 1716 letter to the Royal Society of London, Mather proposed “ye Method of Inoculation” as the best means of curing smallpox, and noted that he had learned of this process from “my Negro-Man Onesimus, who is a pretty Intelligent Fellow.”

Reports of similar practices among other African slaves in Boston and reports of variolation in Turkey convinced Mather to mount a public inoculation campaign. With the exception of Boylston, however, most white physicians in Boston rejected variolation, in part because of their contempt for African medical knowledge.

Steven Niven
African American National Biography project
Cambridge

“Y’ALL”: AN AMPLIFICATION

In “Jabber and Babel” (March-April, page 19), you reported that associate professor Bert Vaux’s English-usage survey showed “y’all” to be the term most commonly used in the South to address a group of two or more people. What the survey missed, though, is the fact that “y’all” is frequently used in the singular; “all y’all” is the plural form in this here part of Texas.

John Kappelman, Ph.D. ’87
Austin