to the Broad Institute, he says, there was no discussion of this issue. Maniatis believes there is “no question that ultimately the outcome [of the Broad Institute] is going to be positive.” But he says that many faculty members in the life sciences are concerned about the “highly secretive” process by which the new institute was approved. Administrators, Maniatis says, informed faculty members of the decision two weeks before the public announcement, at a meeting at which there was no documentation explaining anything.” Professor of physics Daniel S. Fisher, who also teaches in the Division of Engineering and Applied Sciences, says the decision to commit resources to the new institute was made “under a pretense of consultation.”

Maniatis is concerned that generous funding has been allocated to an undertaking with no clearly articulated plan of research and no details about how the enterprise will “benefit the University as a whole.” The new institute, some faculty members worry, will siphon off donations that would otherwise have gone to promising research based in traditional departmental laboratories.

But Schreiber, in an earlier interview, said that the new venture will expand the capabilities of departments with affiliated faculty members, and will benefit both graduate and undergraduate students, who will have an opportunity to work in new laboratories undertaking broad interdisciplinary research projects.

**Allston Deliberations**

**Having hired** a team of consultants and engineers one year ago to assess the University’s existing real estate assets in Allston, as well as the infrastructure needs of a future campus across the river, Harvard’s leaders are taking a deep breath before making any decisions. Among considerations that will figure into any plan, says chief University planner and director of the Allston Initiative Kathy Spiegelman, are four main questions: What are Harvard’s academic program requirements? What does the real estate allow in terms of physical planning? What does the political process allow? What is the cost? The first and last questions are proving to be the most challenging.

As a first step toward figuring out future program requirements, the School of Public Health, the Graduate School of Education, the Law School, and the Kennedy School of Government have each completed studies of what they might do in Allston as compared to their current locations. But the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS), with an immediate need for science facilities for existing faculty, is actively pursuing expansion in Cambridge on a site east of Oxford Street.

Last year, four advisory groups, composed primarily of faculty members, developed scenarios emphasizing different uses of Harvard’s Allston land. One looked at graduate and professional education, contemplating the feasibility of creating an academic precinct across the Charles River. Another studied the pros and cons of building new cultural amenities—museums, theaters, or performance spaces. The third looked at housing, primarily with an eye to addressing the needs of graduate students. The fourth, the science committee, had perhaps the most challenging task. Neither FAS nor the Medical School, the two major centers for Harvard’s science programs, has immediate needs for Allston space, unlike some schools and other parts of the University. Yet for science in Allston to be feasible virtually requires their participation. Add to that the burgeoning interdepartmental nature of fields like bioengineering—whose heavy computational needs intersect with requirements for traditional “wet lab” space—as well as possibilities for intra- and inter-institutional collaborations (see “Genomic Joint Venture,” page 75), and the patterns of future growth become highly unpredictable. “Science has been the most difficult to plan,” says Spiegelman, “because it is so dynamic.”

Even as the question of what will emerge in Allston becomes more complex, the University’s holdings across the river continue to grow. Most recently, the University acquired commercial property housing the headquarters for Bickford’s Family Restaurants; Harvard has also been approached by the board of the Charlesview Apartments, an affordable housing development at the intersection of Western Avenue and North Harvard Street, to discuss whether there is any University interest in their land, says Spiegelman. “That might be the source of a better future for them than trying to maintain the buildings that they already have.” The Charlesview board is keeping the tenants informed and has hired a consultant to ensure that whatever Harvard might offer or suggest will be in the residents’ best interest.

Regardless of what properties Harvard eventually owns in Allston, development will track the
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transportation possibilities, says Spiegelman. That is why the recent acquisition of 91 acres of potentially undevelopable land from the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority (MTA) could in the long term be advantageous to Harvard and the North Allston community (see “Over 91-Acre Allston Purchase, a Fresh Political Maelstrom,” July-August, page 67). A $1-million transportation study (paid for by the University, but conducted by state transportation secretary Daniel A. Grabauskas) will examine a host of issues, including railyard-to-port connections; reconfiguration of the turnpike off-ramp and the railroad tracks across two Harvard parcels that were formerly owned by the MTA; strategies for calming traffic on Storrow Drive (a major barrier between Allston and the river); and the possibility that a long-discussed “urban ring” public-transit system might link to North Allston.

Indeed, one of the most important conclusions of the academic planning this year was the recognition that Harvard Square, North Allston, and the Longwood Medical Area must be better connected. Allston is not very well served at the moment, says Spiegelman. The Larz Anderson Bridge is congested and there is no good public transit access.

The consultants Harvard hired last year were supposed to figure out how much it would cost to address those infrastructure challenges. But Harvard administrators are not ready to share those big numbers yet, pointing out that until the time-frame for development of Allston is known—whether over 15, 30, or 45 years—the annualized expenditures can’t be determined and so put into perspective.

An understanding of the financial and economic consequences of how Allston is developed is still at an early stage. “We are dealing with a very important set of choices,” says Jacqueline O’Neill, Allston Initiative communications and external-relations director. “President Summers wants to make sure he gets them right, because they are a very long-term, consequential set of decisions.” The challenge, says Spiegelman, is to think about what will move a very complicated agenda that has to do with the pursuit of knowledge far into the future. “The consultants have given us lots of information that will help President Summers and the Corporation make the decisions that will capture the essence of what Harvard will be 50 years from now. Only they, not our consultants, can tell us that.”

For the Virtual Museumgoer

The BUSCH-REISINGER MUSEUM will celebrate its hundredth birthday by mounting an exhibition, from October 24 through February 15, 2004, devoted to art in Germany in 1903, its natal year. That was a vibrant time in the arts community, as about 40 paintings, sculpture, drawings, prints, and photographs will show.

Giving a gift to art lovers unable to come to the party, the Busch-Reisinger is now presenting an Internet-only, mixed-media, interactive exhibition, “Extraordinary Every Day.” About Germany’s Bauhaus school of art, it concerns the intersection of fine art and the production of useful things and focuses on a lamp, a chair, a house, a theater stage, and an automobile. (It may be seen at www.artmuseums.harvard.edu/sites/eoed through December 2005.)

The virtues of a virtual exhibition are several. Viewers may experience it at 3 a.m. if they wish, and free of charge. Curators do not have to contend with limited gallery space or, indeed, the limitations of exhibiting in galleries. If objects are of diverse materials, as here, placing them in a gallery creates divisions among them based on that diversity, or perhaps on the fragility of particular items; in virtual space, they coexist in equality. Moreover, as Marjorie B. Cohn, acting director of the Harvard University Art Museums, points out, objects may be kept “on view” in cyberspace “far longer than the artworks themselves, some in light-sensitive media, would allow.” The exhibition includes a sculpture by László Moholy-Nagy, operated by an electric motor, which he described as “an apparatus for the demonstration of special lighting and motion effects,” and a short film by him, Lightplay Black, White, Gray. Says Cohn, “The Moholy-Nagy film and sculpture, which is very fragile and cannot be operated without risk, can now be set into virtual motion on demand.”

The exhibition includes 21 objects from the museum’s permanent collection but is augmented by links to other works by these artists in the art museums’ database.

Costume Designs for the “Triadic Ballet” (detail), 1926, by Oskar Schlemmer