

Yesterday's News

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

1925 The Associated Harvard Clubs' Committee on Service to the University suggests that descendants of Harvard graduates be given preference in the admission process; the *Bulletin's* editors write, "Inbreeding within the student body would be quite as dangerous for the College itself as inbreeding in the Faculty... [it] never should be established."

The Massachusetts legislature passes an act to permit construction of a footbridge over the Charles River from the Cambridge side to the site of the Business School's proposed buildings.

1935 President Conant's proposal to eliminate Latin as an entrance requirement for A.B. candidates creates a furor... The Faculty Council decides that knowledge of either Latin or Greek will remain a requirement for that degree.

1945 Harvard Medical School accepts its first women students. The University, meanwhile, mails out 6,000 booklets entitled *What about Harvard?* to students on leave and other veterans, presenting its plans to help them resume or begin work at the College or professional schools.

1960 The Faculty of Arts and Sciences approves Social Studies as the second interdepartmental honors concentration for undergraduates, almost 60 years after History and Literature became the first.

1965 The market value of Harvard's investments passes \$1 billion.

1970 The U.S. invasion

of Cambodia sends many students out on strike, demanding withdrawal from Southeast Asia, an end to the U.S. government's "oppression of political dissidents," and an end to defense research at universities... The Faculty of Arts and Sciences rejects these demands but passes two antiwar motions and allows wide options for completing spring-term coursework.

1975 Class Day speaker Dick Gregory tells seniors, "You must offer your services to save the needy from the greedy... Universities have to teach how to live, and get out of the business of teaching how to make a living."

1980 The Quincy House Film Society screens the X-rated *Deep Throat*, hoping, according to the *Crimson*, to pay off the group's debts. Right after the screening, the society's co-presidents are arrested by state police and charged with "disseminating obscene matter." Harvard's general counsel notes that the College "strongly discouraged" showing a film it considered degrading and offensive, but thought the film society should decide for itself what to do.

in "shocking ways that violate elementary norms of academic freedom and of tenure"; use of committees and consultations "for symbolic show only—wasting hundreds of hours of faculty and staff time just to arrive at exactly the conclusions proclaimed in advance by the president"; efforts to "turn our deans into transmission belts to implement centralized directives"; and, finally, an obsession "with claiming personal credit for all that happens that is good—and [determination] to blame others when he messes up."

The challenge to FAS, Skocpol concluded, was "how do we want to proceed in addressing the pathologies of leadership that are undermining the honor, the competitive effectiveness, and the collegial governance of Harvard University?"

For the balance of the meeting and its continuation a week later, indictments spilled out, fueled by events public and private: the president's 2001 confrontation with then-Fletcher University Professor Cornel West, who decamped for Princeton; disagreements on the process for and likely outcome of Allston planning, particularly for science facilities; Summers's remarks at Morning Prayers in September 2002, when he criticized the actions of supporters of divestiture from Israel as anti-Semitic "in their effect if not their intent"—which some faculty members took as a form of labeling that precluded, rather than promoted, debate; the perception that certain disciplines are privileged over others; Summers's 2003 Commencement address, seen by some as claiming that the curriculum was more a presidential creation than FAS's, and as a directive about where the then-nascent review ought to end up.

Such sentiments were not universal. Ruth Wisse, Peretz professor of Yiddish literature and professor of comparative literature, denounced "the

