Deep Dig

This enormous excavation might tempt Virginia Lee Burton, who lived in Gloucester, Massachusetts, when she wrote *Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel* in 1939, to draft a sequel. The hole, shown in early summer, will accommodate two-thirds of the 137,000-square-foot Laboratory for Interface Science and Engineering, providing clean-room and vibration-free research space underground for work in materials science and nanotechnology.

This view, looking south toward the Science Center, shows the stout beams, slurry walls, and tiebacks used to hold up McKay Laboratory (on the left), where much of the Division of Engineering and Applied Sciences is housed, and the Music Building (on the right); construction for the new structure, at the bottom of the pit, had just...
begun. The above-grade part of the complex, on columnar stilts to allow pedestrian passage, will enclose a quadrangle in the courtyard north of the Science Center (the roof over the current hole), which will become a performance space.

Even with much bigger equipment than Mike’s steam shovel (and help from many sidewalk superintendents), it took many days longer, and millions of dollars more, to get down this deep than to dig the cellar for the new Popperville town hall in the children’s story. And an even bigger excavation has just begun a couple of blocks north, beyond the Museum of Comparative Zoology, for the 460,000-square-foot Northwest Building, a multidisciplinary laboratory complex. For views of above-ground summer construction, please see page 66.

Diversity Director

Evelyn M. Hammonds has become Harvard’s first senior vice provost for faculty development and diversity. She will direct implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force on Women Faculty and the Task Force on Women in Science and Engineering, which reported in May (see “Engineering Equity,” July-August, page 55). The former, which Hammonds chaired, proposed the new post; her decision to administer the initiative should speed action on a daunting agenda that may have significant effects on the future composition of the University’s faculty. Meanwhile, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) designated its own senior diversity adviser—one of a set of counterparts in each school who will work internally and, with Hammonds, on University-wide concerns. Separately, new research by a Harvard Graduate School of Education (GSE) scholar indicates some of the effects of teachers’ gender on students’ courses of study. Hammonds, professor of the history of science and of African and African American studies, said in an interview that she had “learned a great deal about Harvard through the task force’s investigations, and now wanted “to be a part of the implementation,” even at the cost of forgone teaching and research. Although dozens of steps are involved—from faculty and staff training programs to new recruiting procedures, changes in family benefits, and innovative ways of funding research—Hammonds described as her overarching priorities tenured appointments and the environment in which Harvard junior faculty members work.

As adviser to the president and provost, Hammonds will vet the files submitted when candidates for tenure are reviewed during the appointment procedure. Her aim, she said, will be to assess whether “the process of building the case has been as broad as possible.” She will also “review junior-faculty and other term appointments across the University,” according to the July 20 news release accompanying her appointment.

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Harvard’s July 28 announcement, posted on its website and selectively called to the attention of a few newspapers, quoted Houghton as saying about Harper, “I regret that he has chosen, in reflecting on recent matters at the University, to bring his service to a close.” Summers expressed gratitude for Harper’s “candid and insightful counsel.” Requests for further comment were declined. Harper said his reasoning was spelled out in a letter to Summers, release of which was up to Harvard; the