Last February, the powerhouse Harvard women’s swimming and diving squad rolled into Princeton for the three-day Ivy championship meet, hoping to seize its first Ivy conference title since 1992. (The meets alternate between Harvard and Princeton, the only colleges with suitable facilities; the host institution supplies the officials.) Princeton had won five consecutive times, starting in 2000. The Crimson came in second in 2003, and in 2004 finished only 16.5 points behind the Tigers (1,361 to 1,344.5). But in 2005, Harvard entered the meet with an undefeated 10-0 record.

Yet on the first day of competition, the Crimson dug itself a hole. Its 400-yard medley relay team, which was cruising to victory by a wide margin, was disqualified when an official said Harvard’s last swimmer entered the water before her teammate had touched. The Princeton crowd cheered the disqualification, which meant that, instead of 64 points for the win, Harvard scored nothing. Princeton finished the day in the lead by 17.5 points.

Harvard women’s relay teams have been disqualified at three of the last four championship meets at Princeton’s DiNunzio Pool, though nowhere else. So last winter’s disqualification in a won race could have been disheartening. It wasn’t. Swimming meets are won or lost in the preliminary heats, and on the morning of day two, Harvard women dominated them.

The Ivy championships score points for the top 24 swimmers in the heats: the fastest eight make the finals, the next group (places 9 through 16) swim the consolation, and the third group (places 17 through 24) swim the “bonus.” “If you make the [evening] finals, then you can’t score lower than eighth place,” says Stephanie Wriede Morawski ’92, Ed.M. ’99, head coach of women’s swimming and diving. “The big thing is doing it in the morning; you’ve got to get into the finals.” Get in they did—in droves, and in all four swimming strokes: freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly (or ‘fly). Harvard did win the championship, drowning the Tigers by 226 points, 1,615 to 1,389; Brown, in third place, was more than 600 points back.

The undefeated season and dominance at the Ivy meet spotlighted a deep Harvard squad that boasts a few superstars. This year they again went undefeated (10-0) and, by January, ranked twenty-third in the nation after edging out a powerful Rutgers squad, 150-149. “We have tons of talent,” says Morawski, now in her ninth year as head coach, noting that Harvard had three sophomores at the 2004 Olympic trials: breaststroker Jaclyn Pangilinan (pan-jill-e-nan), freestyle and butterfly specialist Bridget O’Connor, and backstroker Lindsay Hart. Junior Noelle Bassi was also there in the butterfly.

“It’s not just about the clock and the times they go, it’s about racing,” says Morawski. “It doesn’t matter what it takes; their goal is to beat the person in the next lane. I’ve seen women who are absolutely shocked at how fast they went. It’s a lot more enjoyable to race someone than to race the clock.”

Swimming is unique among sports because the 80-degree water provides a con-
workload builds a reserve of energy that 50- and 100-yard sprinters. The reduced perhaps 10 days of taper for distance perfonnance; then, the swimmers take an ex-
season, when the team targets peak per-
train uninterruptedly.”

That changes toward the end of the season, when the team targets peak performance; then, the swimmers take an extended “taper” of reduced workouts—perhaps 10 days of taper for distance swimmers, or as much as six weeks for 50- and 100-yard sprinters. The reduced workload builds a reserve of energy that explodes from the starting blocks in a big competition like the Ivy championships, the NCAAs, or the world’s fastest swimming meet, the U.S. Olympic trials. (Overall, heats at the U.S. trials are even faster than those at the Olympic Games, reflecting the unusual depth of swimming talent in the States.)

Before big meets, male and fe-
male swimmers also shave their bodies, which does more than decrease drag through the water. “When you fully shave, you’re ex-
foliating the top layer of your skin, and exposing the pores,” Morawski explains. “The feeling you get when you dive in is fantastic, as if you’re smooth and gliding through the water effortlessly.” The ad-
vent of swimsuits that reach the ankles—“fast suits”—is “sort of taking away the need for the shave,” she notes, but can’t replace its psychological effect.

Two of the fastest Crimson aqua-
women grew up only a few miles apart in New Jersey. Noelle Bassi ’07 of Franklin Lakes had a swimming pool in her back-
yard; a YMCA teacher gave her lessons there when she was only three years old. Bassi was a decisive child. “I don’t want to dance anymore,” she told her mother on the day of her dance recital at the age of four. “I want to swim.” Bassi did twice-
daily workouts in middle school and made her first national cut as a freshman at Mercersburg Academy in Pennsylvania. The next year she was fast enough to make the U.S. trials cut for the Sydney Olympics. She matriculated at the University of Tennessee on a full athletic scholarship, but transferred to Harvard after one year: “It was too far from home,” she says, “and not the place for me.”

Tennessee did not release Bassi to com-
pete in her sophomore year, so even though she trained with the team, she couldn’t race for Harvard. But she did win gold in her best event, the 200-meter but-
terfly, at the 2004 U.S. nationals. With ad-

ditional qualifying times in the 100-meter fly and the 400-meter individual medley, she went to the 2004 Olympic trials, finishing sixth in the 200-meter fly. (Only the top two swimmers went to Athens.)

Jaclyn Pangilinan did swim at Athens, for the Philippines’ Olympic squad, finishing twentieth overall in the 200-meter breaststroke and thirty-third in the 100-

meter breaststroke; she holds the Philip-
ines’ national records in those events. Al-
though her hometown is Clifton, New Jersey, Pangilinan established dual citi-
zenship with the Philippines early in 2004; her father, a native Filipino, emigrated to the United States in his twenties.

Pangilinan took an entourage of 14 relatives to Athens, but she herself enjoyed living with 15,000 other athletes in the Olympic Village. “It was an amazing feeling, to go into this huge cafeteria and be surrounded by some of the greatest ath-
letes in the world,” she recalls. “Everyone is on the same level—LeBron James and Andy Roddick were right there; you could walk up and talk to them.”

Pangilinan danced longer than Bassi: she studied tap and jazz for nine years. She started swimming at nine (“kind of old,” she says) and once beat a friend at a country-club lap race. “I liked it!” she says. By the age of 10, she was at the top of her age group for all YMCA swimmers in the country. At 14 she found coach Ilan Noach of the White Plains, New York, “Middies” swim club, and has worked with him ever since. In high school, that meant driving nearly an hour each way to practices from 4 to 6 p.m. on weekdays, plus a Sunday workout from 6 to 8 a.m.

“Jackie has great feel for the water,” says Morawski, “and tremendous strength in her legs, a powerful kick. Her turns are very strong.” Pangilinan swims the 200-
yard individual medley for Harvard as well as her breaststroke specialties. Last year she was undefeated in the 100-yard breaststroke in dual meets, and lost only...
once in the 200—to teammate LeeAnn Chang ’07. At the H-Y-P meet, freshman Pangilinan handed Princeton’s all-Ivy senior Stephanie Hsiao the only defeat of the latter’s four-year career in the 100-yard breaststroke. “She was ahead the whole race, but I came from behind in the last five yards,” Pangilinan recalls. At the NCAA meet in 2005, she finished fifteenth and lowered Harvard’s previous record (set by Morawski) with a 2:13.98 time in the 200-yard breaststroke. Pangilinan and her teammates wouldn’t mind setting a few more records this season, and repeating as Ivy champions at the season-ending meet in Blodgett Pool.

—CRAIG LAMBERT

**Olympic Harvard**

Visit this magazine’s website (www.harvardmagazine.com/on-line/030655.html) for an account of the special Alumni College program on Harvard in the Olympics.

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**UNDERGRADUATE**

**Fashion Forward**

*by Elizabeth S. Widdicombe ’06*

![Drawings by Lewis Albert](image)

The spotlights are on and the music is pounding. I am sitting close to the edge of a stage in the darkened Bright Hockey Center, gaping as my fellow Harvard students parade above me in blazers with no shirts underneath, and sometimes just a sprinkling of strategically placed paper lilies. I’m not alone: 1500 of us have turned out for Eleganza—the popular charity fashion show run under the auspices of BlackCAST (Harvard Black Community and Student Theater). A showcase of trends, this event is in some ways a trend in itself. For an increasingly visible set of undergraduates, fashion—the runway kind—has acquired a new significance, becoming both an avowed interest and a professional pursuit.

The idea of Harvard students strutting around in bikinis (and in the case of one brave male, a satin robe that was dropped to reveal a black G-string) might seem to some observers a death knell for both fashion and the University. But no one who’s been to Eleganza can escape its positive energy. Now entering its twelfth year, it attracts one of the most diverse audiences of any campus spectacle—whether by race, nationality, or type of interest—to enjoy what one of its co-producers, Tessa Petrich ’07, calls “pop culture.”

“**I THINK MORE PEOPLE are embracing fashion these days,**” says Lewis Remele ’06. “The age of the supermodel is kind of dead. It was totally unheard of until five years ago that you would have actresses on the cover of fashion magazines. But there’s been a coming together of fashion and mainstream pop culture.”

It’s a trend Remele is counting on to fuel his career. Wearing a cashmere scarf and blue jeans, he’s just wrapped up an interview with the *Boston Herald* about his line of designer women’s clothing, which he produced this year in collaboration with a friend, Liz Whitman ’06. Remele, who has been sketching dresses since he was seven or eight, says he hadn’t planned to become a designer so soon, but Whitman, a history concentrator with experience ranging from costume styling to photography, persuaded him that she could help get the dresses made. It would be expensive—Remele wanted to use natural fabrics like wool and silk—but she thought they could cover their costs. Having interned on the business side of *Vogue* the previous summer, she knew a thing or two about marketing. Remele spent weeks researching, plan-