Public Health Dean Steps Down

Barry R. Bloom, dean of the Harvard School of Public Health since 1999 (and thus the University's senior dean) will relinquish his post on June 30. Doing so, he said in an announcement on November 15, will enable a new leader to plan the school's relocation to the Allston campus. For the rest of this academic year, Bloom intends to focus on new programs in genes and the environment, quantitative genomics, and global health. The latter has long been a personal priority: Bloom, who is Jacobson professor of public health, is a specialist in tuberculosis and infectious diseases—work he expects to continue as a Distinguished Service Professor. The magazine will examine his tenure in more detail in a future issue.

Calendar for Curriculum Change

Wolfson professor of Jewish studies Jay M. Harris, master of Cabot House, reported to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences that the undergraduate general education curriculum, legislated last spring (see “College Curriculum Change Completed,” July-August 2007, page 64), will offer new courses beginning this fall and take full effect in 2009, for the entering College class of 2013. Speaking November 13 as chair of the standing committee on general education, Harris said early efforts are focusing on the creation of complex multidisciplinary courses. Core curriculum courses will be available at least through 2012, supplemented by departmental offerings. Students entering Harvard this fall would likely have the opportunity to complete either set of requirements; current freshmen and sophomores will find it difficult to do so.

National Humanities Medalists

President Bush has conferred the National Humanities Medal on Baird professor of history emeritus Richard Pipes and Peretz professor of Yiddish literature and professor of comparative literature Ruth R. Wisse (profiled in “Mame-loshn’ at Harvard,” July-August 1997, page 32). In the White House ceremony on November 15, the president cited Pipes for “peerless scholarship on Russia and Eastern Europe and for a life of service to freedom’s cause.” He recognized Wisse, author of the current Jews and Power, for scholarship that has “illuminated Jewish literary traditions.”

Interim Endowment Executive

Harvard Business School (HBS) professor of management practice Robert S. Kaplan, M.B.A. ’83, has been appointed interim CEO of Harvard Management Company (HMC), effective November 12. HMC, which manages the University’s endowment, pension, and other assets, is conducting a search for a permanent successor to Mohamed El-Erian, who has returned to Pacific Investment Management Company (see “An Unexpected Risk Factor,” November-December 2007, page 64). Kaplan is a senior director of Goldman Sachs Group, where he became partner in 1990, led international and domestic investment-banking and corporate-finance units, and served as vice chairman from 2002 to 2006, with responsibility for investment banking and investment management. Separately, HBS’s Schiff professor of investment banking, Josh Lerner, and two MIT colleagues published “Secrets of the Academy: Drivers of University Endowment Success,” interpreting the market-beating performance of large, elite universities’ endowments during the past two decades in terms of their commitment to alternative investments: venture capital, hedge funds, and real estate (http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1027450).

Nota Bene

Vatican envoy. Hand professor of law Mary Ann Glendon has been appointed United States ambassador to the Holy See. She was appointed to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences in 1994 and named its president in 2004, and led the Holy See’s delegation to the 1995 United Nations Conference on Women.
The competition. The University of Pennsylvania launched a $3.5-billion capital campaign in late October. The University of California, Berkeley, has received a $113-million challenge gift from the Hewlett Foundation to support 100 new faculty chairs and to attract graduate students. The University of Michigan has announced a $30-million program to hire 100 new interdisciplinary junior faculty members. MIT alumnus David H. Koch has given that institution $100 million to jump-start construction of an integrative cancer-research center. And on the financial-aid front, Williams College eliminated loans from students’ aid packages, effective this fall, and Tufts University has introduced a program to pay the loans of its college alumni who go on to pursue public-service careers.

Connecting to china. Rosovsky professor of government Elizabeth J. Perry, who studies grassroots governance and social protest in China, has been appointed director of the Harvard-Yenching Institute effective July 1. She succeeds Tu Wei-Ming, Harvard-Yenching professor of Chinese history and philosophy and of Confucian studies, director since 1996. The institute (see “Where East Meets West,” January-February 2006, page 67) promotes cultural and social-sciences studies in Asian higher education, in part through extensive visiting fellowships at the University.

Scholar roster. Pole-vaulter Clara L. Blättler ‘08, who is concentrating in earth and planetary sciences, won a Rhodes Scholarship, as did Sammy K. Sambu ‘08, as a Rhodes Scholar from Kenya. A biomedical science and engineering concentrator, he intends to work on vaccine-delivery systems that can be used in developing nations that lack refrigeration and sterilization equipment. Shayak Sarkar ‘07, who received a bachelor’s degree in applied mathematics and a master’s degree in statistics last June, was the College’s third Rhodes; he aims to apply analytical techniques to problems such as affordable housing. Megan Galbreth ‘08, a joint concentrator in French and linguistics, won a Marshall Scholarship; she will study at Oxford.

Courageous jurist. In the wake of Pakistan’s state of emergency, the Harvard Law School Association awarded that country’s chief justice, Iftikhar Chaudhry, who was put under house arrest, its highest honor, the school’s Medal of Freedom, along with an invitation to visit to receive the honor when he is free to travel.

Touch of glamour. Glamour magazine’s “women of the year” (December 2007) included Ivy presidents Drew Faust, Amy Gutmann (Penn), Ruth Simmons (Brown), and Shirley Tilghman (Princeton).

Energy initiative. Shell Exploration & Production Company is funding a five-year, $375-million University energy-policy program to be coordinated by the Kennedy School of Government.

Miscellany. With Harvard, Princeton, and Virginia having abolished early admissions for undergraduate applicants, competing institutions such as Yale, Chicago, and Georgetown saw their early-applicant rosters rise 20 percent to 45 percent. Admissions officials expect a more complicated sorting out of which accepted students ultimately choose to enroll in which schools come this spring...The American Association for the Advancement of Science has named four faculty members fellows: Brooks professor of international science, public policy, and human development William C. Clark; Clowes professor of anthropology Peter T. Ellison; Hessel professor of biology Naomi E. Pierce; and McKay professor of environmental engineering Peter P. Rogers...Susan Fliss was appointed associate librarian for Harvard College for research and instruction, effective October 15; she will focus on aligning library programs with teaching and research uses of the collections...The Institute of Medicine has elected these new members from Harvard faculties: Massachusetts General Hospital professor of anaesthesia Emery N. Brown; professor of medicine William G. Kaelin; Jordan professor of medicine David T. Scadden; Bugher Foundation professor of genetics Jonathan G. Seidman; and professor of health policy and economics Katherine Swartz...The Coop is celebrating its 125th anniversary year with monthly events and promotions; see www.thecoop.com for details.

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY 400TH: To celebrate John Harvard’s 400th anniversary, President Drew Faust and actor Richard Davia blew out the candles on a Veritas-themed cake at the Murr Center, site of a post-Princeton-game party on October 20. Harvard Alumni Association executive director John P. Reardon Jr. supervised.