called commitments of $1.8 billion to private funds” during the next five years. Under “normal circumstances,” expected investment distributions would exceed the capital calls, but few distributions were expected through 2009. In a November 26 letter, UVIMC’s chief executive, Chris Brightman, put investment losses at $1 billion, or 21 percent, for the 12 months ended October 31, and explained how his team expected to meet such calls through its liquid assets, bonds, and redemption of hedge-fund investments.

Harvard clearly is not alone. Universities and colleges nationwide have reported losses and taken action: Stanford intends to reduce its $800-million “general funds budget” for faculty and staff salaries, administrative operations, and non-research expenses by $45 million in each of the next two fiscal years. MIT projected 5 percent to 15 percent cuts, on a $1-billion base, in the same period. (To date, among the few peer institutions that have indicated they do not now anticipate similar reductions are Princeton, with the highest endowment per student; Yale, which said its spending rule will likely “buffer the operating budget from any dramatic short-term losses”; and Duke, where endowment distributions contribute less than one-fifth of operating revenues.)

At Harvard, if the most adverse scenarios become reality, hiring freezes and wage restraints will not be sufficient. FAS will have to reduce programs, Smith told the faculty—“not something we typically do.” The University’s decentralized structure and the schools’ differing revenue streams mean that such work will unfold case by case. Much of it will have to be directed by a relatively new group of deans (half appointed during Faust’s first 15 months) and by an administration that was still filling senior positions last fall.

And these new leaders must cope with the whiplash sensation of pivoting from ambitious planning for future academic growth to the possibility of swift, sharp expense reductions. As recently as October 9, Smith’s fall FAS letter mentioned a nagging “structural deficit”—with no inkling of the possibly draconian cuts now figuring into budget plans.

But Harvard’s leaders sought to balance the disruptive present with a longer-term perspective. Faust’s initial message observed that “we are fortunate to be part of an institution remarkable for its resilience...Harvard has weathered many storms and sustained its strength through difficult times. We have done so by staying true to our academic values and our long-term ambitions, by carefully stewarding our resources and thoughtfully adapting to change. We will do so again.” And Smith told his colleagues, “business continues” as they teach students and meet research deadlines—though he added a new priority, bluntly asking them to “save cash.” His most lingering message, perhaps, was that “everything we do has merit,” underscoring “how hard it is going to be to make these changes.” The worst possible solution, he stressed, was a wholesale, fixed-percentage cut: a formula for doing everything FAS does now, but less well. A better solution is possible, Smith said, but, “It has to come from you.”

Educating Students for Life

On a Wednesday afternoon in a Sever Hall classroom, students are discussing the Nuremberg Trials. The point of the trials—to punish those responsible for Nazi atrocities—is well known. But Saltonstall professor of history Charles S. Maier tries to push students beyond a simplistic understanding that crimes were committed and justice delivered.

Why did the charges in these cases not emphasize the targeted effort to wipe out the Jewish people? Maier notes that genocide had not yet been codified as a crime by any state or transnational body (the term had only recently been coined) so the prosecutors had to work within the existing framework of international law.

A student raises his hand and expresses the opinion that there are some actions that are universally morally offensive, whether they violate the letter of some law or not. “If somebody has done something wrong,” he says, “there should be a way of trying them.”

Suddenly, the class has made a leap from analyzing one concrete example to discussing whether universal moral principles exist—or whether, on the contrary, these principles arise from cultural context. In such moments, the new general-education curriculum approaches its goal: to introduce undergraduates to ways of thinking about the world that will shape their lives beyond college. This stands in opposition to the Core curriculum now being phased out, which placed more emphasis on introducing students to approaches used by academic disciplines or sets of disciplines. Maier’s course, Ethical Reasoning 12: “Political Justice and Political Trials,” begins with Socrates (who was tried and sentenced to death for allegedly corrupting the minds of Athenian youths) and progresses through cases from the French Revolution, the Soviet purges, South Africa, Rwanda, Rwanda,
and the U.S. war on terror. Maier looked for trials where English-language sources existed—when possible, students read transcripts of the proceedings. And he looked for “those great dramaturgic moments in which general principles are being debated.”

Maier aims to illustrate how political trials move beyond bureaucracy to broadcast a message about a society’s values. He prods students to consider how, in an international context or that of a nation divided against itself, a given entity gains the standing to command defendants’ attendance and mete out punishment. During the Nuremberg lecture, he notes that in Stockholm in 1967, a group of left-wing intellectuals found the United States guilty of alleged war crimes in Vietnam; the proceeding was considered a show trial, and had no effect beyond symbolism. Then he asks students a provocative question: how would they view an attempt by some foreign or transnational body to try George W. Bush for war crimes in Iraq?

This focus on applied ethics reflects a major difference between general education’s “ethical reasoning” category and the Core’s “moral reasoning” category, whose offerings were limited to the theoretical, says dean of undergraduate education Jay M. Harris, Wollson professor of Jewish studies, who taught “If There Is No God, All Is Permitted: Theism and Moral Reasoning” under the Core.

In the arts, three categories from the Core (one focusing on literary texts, one on visual arts and music, and one on cultural epochs in history) were joined into one: “aesthetic and interpretive understanding.” These courses combine the approaches of all three former categories, spanning broad swaths of history, making cross-cultural comparisons, or considering several media within a single course. Meanwhile, two new categories—“societies of the world” and “culture and belief”—broadly map onto the Core’s “foreign cultures.” (Harris himself will teach a course in the second category, “The Contested Bible: The Sacred-Secular Dance.”)

Historical studies—which constituted two categories in the Core—has disappeared altogether, subsumed in other categories, including the two just mentioned and “the United States in the world.” (Maier’s popular Core courses on the two world wars, which he has taught since the 1980s, will be offered in the history department in future years.) Courses in the two new science categories are expected to engage with the history of science when possible. There is also an explicit requirement that students take at least one general-education course that “engages substantially with study of the past.”

The new categories have more fluid boundaries than the old. For example, professor of Slavic languages and literatures Julie Buckler will teach Culture and Belief 15: “The Presence of the Past” this spring. Considering museums, memorials, monuments, and other ways in which people commemorate the past, the new course will analyze the process of constructing a culture and a collective past; its reading list includes theory, but also Pushkin, Nabokov, Borges, and Sylvia Plath. There is an element of visual art and aesthetics inherent in the subjects considered; students will also view films (Eisenstein’s October and Welles’s Citizen Kane).

The Core gave professors a chance to introduce their own discipline to students from remote concentrations. General education asks professors to venture outside their home departments and take a cross-disciplinary approach. “It’s a really exciting model,” says Buckler, who serves on the standing committee that will approve new general-education courses. She says she was challenged to look beyond the post-Soviet sphere she knows best, but found the exercise of assembling the course “exhilarating.”

She believes “a certain sense of bafflement” about general education persists among students and faculty; with the program’s broad principles down on paper (see “College Curriculum Change Completed,” July-August 2007, page 65), the standing committee’s members are now engaged in recruiting colleagues and discussing how they might craft courses that fit these rubrics. “People may not be used to thinking as flexibly as the new categories encourage us to do,” says Buckler.

The general-education principles approved in May 2007, and the first course offerings this past fall, are the product of a curriculum review that spanned four years. Freshmen who entered this year will approve new general-education courses. She says she was challenged to look beyond the post-Soviet sphere she knows best, but found the exercise of assembling the course “exhilarating.”

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Although some of the latter are refashioned Core courses, Jay Harris warns that an identical title doesn’t mean the course hasn’t changed. When professors come before the committee for approval, he says, “we are strongly urging reconsidering assessment, rethinking pedagogy, updating content.”

This is the first major overhaul of undergraduate education since the Core was implemented in the late 1970s. Maier, a member of the class of 1960, has seen the tide turn from general education to the Core and back again. He sees pluses and minuses in both models. “The real virtue” of conducting such an evaluation every few decades, he says, “is to get some of the really good teachers involved in discussing the curriculum and producing exciting courses.”

**Advancing Art**

As a university task force readied its vision for curricular and facilities investments in the creative and performing arts (see page 57), Emily Rauh Pulitzer, A.M. ’63, gave the Harvard Art Museum 31 important works of modern and contemporary art (one of the most significant such donations in the museum’s history) and $45 million (the largest single cash donation in its history). The gift, unveiled on October 17, was a culminating moment in Pulitzer’s lifelong devotion to art collecting, connoisseurship, and scholarship and in her engagement with the University. (See the October 17 posting at http://harvardmagazine.com/web/breaking-news for a list of the art works, an illustrated 1988 Harvard Magazine article by Judith Parker on the Pulitzer collection, and more details.)

The art museum also disclosed previous gifts of 43 other modern and contemporary works, made between 1953 and 2005 by Pulitzer and her late husband, Joseph Pulitzer Jr. ’36, and by Mr. Pulitzer and his first wife, Louise Vauclain (who died in 1968), and of financial support that enabled the museum to purchase 92

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**Yesterday’s News**

From the pages of the Harvard Alumni Bulletin and Harvard Magazine

1929 The Student Council criticizes the administration’s plan to erect one of the newly endowed Houses east of DeWolfe Street, arguing that the future Dunster House will be too far from such “immovable centers” as Widener, Mallinckrodt Laboratory, and the University Museum.

1934 The editors publish a list of nearly 200 books Widener Library cannot afford to buy because of the Depression, prompting gifts of books and money from Bulletin readers.

1939 A group of undergraduates begins raising money for 15 scholarships to bring South American students to Harvard; U.S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull calls it a great idea.

1949 Lamont Library opens, prompting a special 18-page issue of the Crimson that raves about its comfort, brightness, and efficiency.

1954 The Faculty’s Educational Policy Committee approves a program of early admission and advanced placement for able and mature students.

1959 Assistant U.S. Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare Elliot Richardson ’41, LL.B. ’44, proposes that the federal government help out the parents of college students by means of tax exemptions, tax deductions, or tax credits.

1969 The Faculty of Arts and Sciences votes to withdraw academic credit for Reserve Officers’ Training Corps activities at Harvard—home of the oldest ROTC program in the country.

The Harvard-Radcliffe Policy Committee proposes that a co-residential trial exchange of students in the undergraduate Houses begin at once. A committee survey has indicated that 80 percent of Radcliffe students and 65.5 percent of Harvard students support the plan.

1989 Judith Richards Hope, J.D. ’64, becomes the first woman appointed to serve on the Harvard Corporation.