Activist Administrator

The executive vice president’s website defines the post, neutrally, as the University’s “principal ranking officer...on business and organizational matters.” But Katie Lapp’s self-definition continues in a more action-oriented tone, describing her responsibilities for revising Harvard’s budget and planning processes, restructuring capital planning and project management, implementing a new capital-planning process, updating human-resources policies, leading the evaluation of options for Allston development, and more.

During a late-July conversation, 10 months into her tenure, Lapp (who came to Cambridge from a similar position at the University of California) reeled off examples of work on most of those priorities. She began by underscoring her enthusiasm about the “strong talent here, working very hard,” with a shared commitment to improving operations in Harvard’s schools and administration. Having met administration colleagues, deans, their senior administrators, and others—and established regular get-togethers to share information and set priorities—Lapp has hired several senior staff members: the previously reported appointment of Lisa Hogarty as vice president for campus services, in April; Anne H. Margulies as chief information officer in early July—significantly, combining information technology for both the central administration and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, to harvest future synergies and efficiencies; and Lisa M. Coleman as chief diversity officer (last December).

These appointments, advised in part by a “diagnostic” of the central administration assisted by the Monitor Group,
have resulted in some job realignments. For instance, because Hogarty manages real-estate, dining, and facilities services and comes from a purchasing background (most recently at Columbia’s medical center), she has assumed responsibility for purchasing, where there are opportunities for savings on travel, office supplies, scientific equipment, and so on. (Oversight had previously been with the finance staff, whose central mission is budgeting, auditing and compliance, risk management, and treasury services.) Human-resources functions from diverse administration units have been centralized, and Lapp expects to consolidate communications as well.

More generally, Lapp, the finance staff, and the deans are working on a multiyear financial plan, something she calls a “very important discipline to have.” Her seat on the Harvard Management Company board provides insight on the endowment, and she and HMC president Jane Mendillo both serve on the financial management committee—all steps toward coordinating investment strategy, budgeting, cash management, and capital plans and financing.

Of wider public interest will be the remaking of campus physical planning, building plans, and management of construction projects, all under the umbrella of a new University capital planning and project management organization; Lapp is conducting a national search for a new vice president now. She aims to have a five-year capital plan—“something that most major enterprises do”—so the Corporation can have a clear view of individual school and overall objectives and investments, within the context of a coherent financial plan and budget.

Much attention has focused on Harvard’s ambitions in Allston, and the decision last December to halt construction on its $1.4 billion science complex, the first major project there (see “Arrested Development,” March-April, page 47). In a tangible sign of the changed circumstances, Christopher M. Gordon, chief operating officer of the Allston Development Group, relinquished his position during the summer. “The work I came here to do will be happening at a slower pace and intensity,” he said in a statement in early June, “and that reality led to today’s announcement.” Gordon, who came to Harvard in 2005, had also been responsible of late for overseeing the Fogg Art Museum renovation, now under way (see page 46), and for planning the renovation of the undergraduate Houses, as yet unscheduled—a role Lapp’s new vice president will assume.

She intends, more broadly, for all capital programs—in Allston, Cambridge, and the Longwood Medical Area—to be part of a “cohesive,” integrated plan. “I feel pretty strongly that as we look at the future in Allston,” Lapp said, “that it not be a geographic district,” but rather “part of a ‘cohesive,’ integrated plan. ‘Arrested Development,’ March-April, page 47). In a tangible sign of the changed circumstances, Christopher M. Gordon, chief operating officer of the Allston Development Group, relinquished his position during the summer. “The work I came here to do will be happening at a slower pace and intensity,” he said in a statement in early June, “and that reality led to today’s announcement.” Gordon, who came to Harvard in 2005, had also been responsible of late for overseeing the Fogg Art Museum renovation, now under way (see page 46), and for planning the renovation of the undergraduate Houses, as yet unscheduled—a role Lapp’s new vice president will assume.

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She is also in the center of some of Harvard’s liveliest intramural politick-

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**Retirements in the Faculty Ranks**

The 180 senior faculty members University-wide who were offered retirement incentives last December had to indicate their intentions as of June 30. About 70 percent of those eligible are from the large Faculty of Arts and Sciences, whose ranks are weighted toward senior, full professors. Data on their response will not become available until a reconsideration period expires in late summer. Depending on their decisions, and any appointments to fill openings, the faculties could be reconfigured significantly, with possibly large financial consequences. For context, see “The New Tenure Track,” page 48, and look for news updates at harvardmagazine.com.

**Due the Union**

The Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers and the University agreed on a new two-year contract, effective July 1, that delivers $1,000 pay increases to full-time covered staff members this fiscal year (and pro-rated increases to part-time workers), and approximately 3.5 percent increases in fiscal year 2011. Under the prior contract, they realized increases averaging 4.9 percent in the year ended this past June 30. Nonunion staff and faculty members had compensation frozen during the past fiscal year, and will see pay increases averaging 2 percent in the current one.

**Help from the Hospitals**

Harvard Medical School’s (HMS) affiliated hospitals have agreed to provide $36 million of financial support during the next three years—welcome relief for an institution that has of late relied on income from the now-shrunken endowment for nearly 30 percent of its operating revenue.

HMS does not own its teaching hospitals. That can be a mixed blessing: Duke has regularly received significant funds from its hospital system, for instance, but the University of Pennsylvania as a whole was financially threatened when its hospital suffered enormous losses several years ago. The medical school and its affiliates have a complicated relationship, with Harvard offering clinical teaching appointments to hospital staff members; shared and sometimes competing streams of research funding; and other interactions.

Several years ago, when a number of the hospitals were under financial pressure, Harvard advanced payments from endowed professorships to support their teaching mission. Now, the flow of funds is reversed, with Massachusetts General Hospital pledging to pay HMS $11 million and its sister hospital, Brigham and Women’s, another $9 million.
Summer ends, and almost before I've settled into my room for junior year, course selection will be upon us. After making it through four of these cycles, you get to be a kind of pro. You don't have to check where buildings are, like a freshman, and you don't have to worry about balancing classes from prospective concentrations, like a sophomore. You just look at the catalog, note the time, note the place, and choose. What could be easier?

Except choosing is, to conflate Oscar Wilde with the Lovin' Spoonful, rarely easy and never kind. Even when the choice has no bearing on your graduation requirements or concentration demands, even when the class is completely elective—it's hard. And so this summer I found myself doing the same thing I was doing exactly two years before: combing the course catalog online, looking at language classes, and trying, without much success, to decide what, if anything, I wanted to take.

I love learning languages, and when I found the pamphlet on the offerings at Harvard in my admission packet, fireworks went off in my head. Sanskrit! Kikuyu! Uighur! There were more languages than anyone could hope to learn in a lifetime. Would learning Chinese open more doors, or Hindi? Would learning Irish help me understand Finnegans Wake any better? Or should I keep working on my two high-school languages—Latin and French? I was wracked with indecision. I figured that the “shopping week” I'd heard so much about would help me decide.

It didn't. By the time I'd visited the classes and worked out the competing demands of Expos, freshman seminars, the Core, and potential concentrations, I didn't have any room left in my schedule. I was a little disappointed, but by the time I'd realized how busy four classes kept me, I didn't have time for any regrets. Every semester after that, there seemed to be too many other classes I wanted or needed to take. And though I've taken some French since then, I still haven't started a new language at Harvard.

"Halfway through college? How did that happen? And when?" one of my classmates asked me this past June. He was echoing the thoughts of a lot of