After the Storm: Presidential Perspectives

During a conversation at her Massachusetts Hall office on September 8, and in a September 21 Sanders Theatre dialogue with former ABC news anchor Charlie Gibson, President Drew Faust sounded sanguine notes about the condition of the University and its direction. After the “unanticipated, earthshaking crises of 2008-2009” (when the endowment’s value sank by nearly $11 billion and Harvard faced liquidity challenges), she said, it feels as though the institution has “come through a thunderstorm and into the sunlight again.” She touched on finances and operations (fortified by positive investment returns for fiscal year 2010—see “Endowment Improvements,” page 58); Harvard’s ability to sustain its core academic priorities; the prospects for a fundraising campaign; the findings of scientific misconduct by a faculty member (see “Scientific Misconduct, and Its Aftermath,” page 57); University govern-

GUT RENOVATION of the Sherman Fairchild building this fall will yield 62,000 square feet of space for 275 investigators dedicated to stem-cell research, including faculty members, graduate students, technicians, postdoctoral fellows, and research assistants. The high-density open labs—211 net square feet per work station—are part of a design philosophy intended to foster collaboration that carries over from the unbulit Allston science complex. When the $65-million to $70-million project is complete in the fall of 2011, there will be 16 faculty investigators engaged in stem-cell and regenerative biology in Cambridge here and in the adjacent Bauer Laboratory.
in conversation
drew Faust and Charlie Gibson
to the central administration. Necessity
work is done, from the individual schools
us the opportunity” to scrutinize how
Faust said that fiscal constraints had “giv­
and was reminded, she joked, that as a
problems and pursue new opportunities
wouldn’t have undertaken that scrutiny”
and enhanced digital capabilities. “We
proved collecting practices,
tangible efficiencies, im­
better integrated operations,
breakfast service to one location, rather
on essentials: teaching, scholarship, and fi­
complex in Allston. Addressing meals first,
Faust explained that Harvard had focused
on essentials; teaching, scholarship, and fi­
financial aid; confining undergraduate hot­
Gibson, and had been among her highest
priorities on taking office in 2007—but
the financial events of 2008-2009 (implic­
so) made it impossible to move forward
rapidly. She said that during the process
planning and consulting with prospec­
tive donors (now under way), neither the
timeline nor the size of a campaign goal
could be set or publicized. That planning
includes sorting out deans’ priorities,
aligning them with the University’s, and
testing ideas with donors. On September
8, she noted that this effort, lasting at least
several months, is taking place in an eco­
which shaped peer insti­
ations’ plans earlier in the decade, and
the campaigns they now have under way.
(Among institutions attempting to raise
$1 billion or more are Brown, Columbia,
Dartmouth, Penn, Princeton, Stanford,
and Yale.) In all, she indicated, the initial
strategizing and the “quiet phase” of ac­
tual fundraising—where institutions seek
to secure commitments for a substantial
minority of their capital goals—could

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Photograph by Rose Lincoln/Harvard News Office
The Harvard faculty includes few who drop out of college for 27 years later return to join the Harvard faculty. But Marshall Ganz ’64, M.P.A. ’93, Ph.D. ’00, who left after his junior year to register black Mississippi voters (he wrote his senior tutor: “How can I come back and study history, when we are busy making history?”) didn’t complete his A.B. until 1992. He’s now a lecturer in public policy at the Kennedy School and a lecturer on social studies at the College. In the interval, he worked as an organizer with César Chávez and the United Farm Workers from 1965 to 1981; his 2009 book, Why David Sometimes Wins, recounts that saga and extracts its lessons. Toward the end, “The organization began to implode,” he recalls. “They were fruitful years that ended with a lot of hurt. A tragic story of success consuming itself.” The son of a rabbi and a teacher, Ganz imbibed an ardor for social justice, but explains, “I never got engaged in the theoretical, ideological stuff. I was really engaged by meeting the people involved.” He later worked on electoral campaigns for politicians like Robert F. Kennedy ’48, Nancy Pelosi, and Jerry Brown; in 2008, he helped set up a Camp Obama operation that trained 3,000 organizers. Ganz met his late wife, Susan Eaton ’79, M.P.A. ’93, at his twenty-fifth class reunion; she died of leukemia in 2003. His training in “leadership through community organizing” has reached organizations ranging from the Sierra Club to the Episcopal Church to grassroots groups in Jordan and Syria. Ganz teaches courses on moral leadership, organizing, and “public narrative”—stories that transform values into action. “They’re not courses about leadership,” he says. “They’re courses in leadership.”
ate concentration—but who had also prompted sharp criticisms for his broad attacks on Muslims* (see “50 Years of Social Studies,” page 62). Ought Harvard to be honoring this man—in a research fund raised in his name? Gibson inquired.

For Faust, who had just talked about making Harvard open and inclusive, these are obviously fundamental matters. She referred to her remarks on this theme at Morning Prayers, at the beginning of

* Blogging in early September, Peretz had written, as editor in chief of the New Republic, “Muslim life is cheap, most notably to Muslims,” and added, “I wonder whether I need honor these people and pretend that they are worthy of the privileges of the First Amendment which I have in my gut the sense that they will abuse.” These comments prompted New York Times columnist Nicholas D. Kristof ’82 (recently elected an Overseer), to lament the “venomous and debased discourse about Islam” represented by Peretz’s post. James Fallows ’70, writing for TheAtlantic.com, denounced Peretz for “an incredible instance of public bigotry in the American intelligentsia.” On September 13, Peretz posted “An Apology,” saying he was embarrassed about the sentence concerning Muslims’ First Amendment rights, but stating about his other sentence, “This is a statement of fact, not value.” For Yom Kippur, Peretz followed up with “Atonement,” noting that “in this past year I have publicly committed the sin of wild and wounding language, especially hurtful to our Muslim brothers and sisters.... I allowed emotion to run way ahead of reason, and feelings to trample arguments.”

The outlook. Faust declared herself “really excited about this year.... We can get a lot done,” given the community’s “appetite for change and a willingness to get it done,” academically and administratively. With leaner operations, and further improvements in processes planned, “It’s an extraordinary moment for Harvard,” she said. Campaign planning represents a commitment to take advantage of opportunities ahead by envisioning the University as a “forward-thinking, integrated” whole, identifying the most important dreams involved in its teaching and research missions, and coming together to realize them. The result, the president said, will be a “coherent statement of what Harvard is—and thus of what a university is in the twenty-first century.”