comes below $65,000 will be able to send their children to Harvard at no parental cost, an increase from the current $60,000 ceiling (established in 2006); this change applies to returning undergraduates and those matriculating with the class of 2016. (According to a chart on the financial-aid website, close to 1,200 scholarship students now in the College are from families with incomes of $60,000 or less.)

At the same time, the expected parental contribution for newly enrolling students and their successors will grade up from 0 to 10 percent of income for families whose incomes fall between $65,000 and $150,000; the prior ceiling for this formula, introduced in late 2007, was $180,000. Those families in the range of $150,000 to $180,000 will, according to the news release, “be asked to pay slightly more than 10 percent of income”—grading up to 16.5 percent, an increase of as much as $11,700 in their annual bill compared to the prior formula. (According to the website, slightly fewer than 600 families of students now receiving scholarship aid have incomes from $140,000 to $180,000.)

The College’s financial-aid payout—$166 million this year—will likely increase even with the new scholarship parameters, given that the term bill for tuition, room, and board ($52,652 now) will continue to rise. Part of the aid, in turn, is funded by the unrestricted tuition funds the College collects. (For fuller details, including peer schools’ aid decisions, see harvardmag.com/financial-aid-2011.)

Arts and Sciences
Annual Report

Dean Michael D. Smith discussed his draft annual message (available at www.fas.harvard.edu/home/content/annual-report) with Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) colleagues at their first meeting of the year on October 4. Among the notable points:

- FAS reduced its unrestricted core deficit from a projected $35 million to an actual $16 million during the fiscal year ended last June; Smith still expects to eliminate the structural deficit this year.
- With the size of the tenured and tenure-track faculty holding constant since 2008, the number of junior professors decreased by one-sixth, as promotions to tenure exceeded retirements. Since the in-

Rebecca Henderson began her career studying why large companies find it difficult to change. One part of the answer is the phenomenon of “overload”—essentially, the failure to spend time planning for the future because one is so focused on urgent needs of the present. This phenomenon, the subject of research by the newly minted McArthur University Professor, applies to individuals as well as companies. For example, even though we know that skimping on sleep and exercise can harm us, “we jeopardize long-term health for short-term results.” (Henderson herself recharges by kayaking and hiking with her 15-year-old son, Harry. Her late husband, John Huchra, was Doyle professor of cosmology in the astronomy department.)

The dangers of such short-term thinking are also a theme of her current work as co-director of the Business and Environment Initiative at Harvard Business School. Predictions of the likely fallout from climate change are dire—erratic rainfall and drastically diminished crop yields, followed by famine and political unrest—yet environmental legislation failed in Washington again last year: “Are we really going to wait until these things are upon us to take action?” she asks. Yet she remains an optimist: even with government gridlock, she has faith in the power of the private sector. Saving the environment will be the next big wave in innovation and job creation, she believes, as steel, railways, plastics, and information technology were for previous generations. “We need clean energy. We need abundant clean water. We need safe and effective waste disposal,” she says. “Business can do that. That’s what business does.”

Rebecca Henderson
troduction of the faculty-retirement pro-
gram, 51 tenured professors have signed
agreements to phase out of their positions
within a four-year period; 42 retirements
are planned during the next four years,
up from 27 during the past four years. The
proportion of women in the faculty ranks
has held at 25 to 26 percent since 2008.
• In the College, the dean of under-
graduate education has commissioned a two-
year study of academic integrity.
• The Graduate School of Arts and Sci-
ences, where underrepresented American
minorities have persistently made up less
than five percent of the doctoral population,
appointed an assistant dean for diver-
sity and minority affairs; new recruiting
strategies resulted in stronger admissions
and a 20-percentage-point increase in the
yield of admitted minority applicants. Se-
parately, the graduate students’ Dudley
House celebrates its twentieth anniver-
sary on October 27.
• Following the 2010 introduction of its
biomechanical engineering concentration
for undergraduates in 2010, the School of
Engineering and Applied Sciences plans
concentrations in electrical engineering
and materials and mechanical engineering.
• Continuing incremental investments
in arts practice and performance, the di-
vision of arts and humanities created
Arts@29 Garden, a space for arts-making
collaborations among faculty members,
students, and visiting practitioners.
• The division of science, emphasizing
 collaborative research in a more constrained
funding environment, has proposed a center
for neurophysics and a center for the study
of extrasolar Earths as candidates for Na-
tional Science Foundation support. Sepa-
rately, the Museum of Comparative Zoology
is beginning to move its huge collections
to modern work and storage spaces in the
Northwest Building, ultimately freeing mu-
seum areas for academic reuse.
• And the division of continuing educa-
tion reported that distance learning ac-
counted for 42 percent of total course en-
rollments, as the Extension School offered
171 online courses.

For a more detailed account of the an-
nual report, see harvardmag.com/fas-re-
port-2011.

THE UNDERGRADUATE

Far Away

by KATHERINE XUE ’13

I t took 15 minutes to walk to town.
I went across the sand, out the school
gates to a path through the tall, feath-
erly savanna grass (Are there snakes?
I’d asked a student once, and he said yes.
Then, with glee—Are you afraid?). Next,
the dusty, unpaved road through the dry
riverbed; another student showed me how
to dig and find water just below the sur-
face. On the other side was the one road
through the town of Omaruru in central
Namibia, and next to the municipal build-
ing was the supermarket, Spar.

Under the warm yellow lights among
the well-stocked shelves I found, on one
occasion, cupcake tins and a grapefruit
fork, and the presence of these objects
struck me as peculiar, and stayed with me.

Other oddities, carefully catalogued and
considered:

I sat halfway in the aisle of a crowded
combi as it sped down wide, open roads
to the coast. Outside, termite mounds and
stunted trees interrupted kilometers of
vast savanna and the perpetually cloud-
less sky; inside, Rihanna’s “Rude Boy”
blasted over the speakers.

In class, my students jabbered in three
or four tribal languages, but they’d seen
Rubik’s Cubes and watched detective
shows. A few friended me on Facebook via
their (school-banned) cell phones.

My most bizarre finding: nightly on tele-
vision, after the national news, came India–
A Love Story, a soap opera with a cult fol-
lowing, its Brazilian-and-Indian plotline,
originally broadcast in Portuguese, dubbed
to English for its Namibian run. On Satur-
day they replayed all the week’s episodes.

All this made me wonder how big the
world really is, and what it would take to
be far away.

I was supposed to be far away. In win-
ter of my sophomore year I started feeling