Seniors Say…

The Crimson’s class of 2014 survey (http://features.thecrimson.com/2014/senior-survey), which elicited 758 responses, revealed that lucrative finance and consulting jobs will employ 31 percent of working graduates, a statistic that has stayed steady in the past several years (after falling sharply between 2007 and 2009)—despite the recovery in other fields and restraints on the financial sector caused by changes in regulation and market conditions. White students were more than four times as likely to be legacies than students of color, according to their self-reported accounts. Seventeen percent of respondents said they had cheated while at Harvard, only 12 percent said an honor code would have changed their behavior, and 24 percent approved of the new code (see page 26)—versus 64 percent who had too little information or no opinion. Recruited athletes were nearly three times as likely to be economics concentrators, and twice as likely to be government concentrators, than classmates—and twice as likely to admit to academic cheating. Twelve percent of women said they had been sexually assaulted as undergraduates—but only one-sixth of those reported the assault.

Withal, 92 percent of respondents would choose Harvard again.

Real Life: Day One

Given the crowds and the scarcity of nearby hotel rooms, many families bunk far afield. On Commencement morning, begowned students and their parents could be seen queuing at some of the suburban MBTA stations, trying to apply their expensive book learning to figuring out how to buy subway passes, presumably for the first time, for the early commute underground into Harvard Square.

Degrees Data

Harvard conferred a bumper crop of 7,301 degrees and 33 certificates: 1,662 from the College, 1,003 from the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (including 590 Ph.D.s), 909 from the Business School, 750 from the Law School, 700 from the Extension School, 566 from the Kennedy School...and on down to 112 from the Divinity School and 71 from the School of Dental Medicine.

Theses Three

Radcliffe awarded the Captain Jonathan Fay Prize for the most imaginative, original theses to three College seniors. Mathematics concentrator Levent Alpoge wrote “The Average Elliptic Curve Has Few Integral Points” (you knew this, right?). Elizabeth Byrne, a human development and regenerative biology student, conducted research on hormonal contraception, genital immune activation, HIV, and the microbiome of the female genital tract. And history and science...
concentrator Sandra Korn examined “Sex, Science, and Politics in the Sociology Debate.”

Harvard Heroes
At the dinner for honorands in Annenberg Hall Wednesday night, President Drew Faust preceded her remarks about one Harvard pillar (retired Corporation member Patricia A. King, J.D. ’63, soon-to-be LL.D. ’14) by hailing two others: Robert D. Reischauer ’63, stepping down as Senior Fellow of the Corporation—concluding 18 years of leadership on the University’s governing boards; and John P. (Jack) Reardon Jr. ’60, who is stepping down as director of the Harvard Alumni Association, but staying aboard to work on governance, fundraising, and other matters. Both received thunderous ovations. On Thursday, Reischauer, who plays ice hockey, donned a class-appropriate jersey given to him during the afternoon program—where Reardon received a surprise Harvard Medal (see page 77). To his amusement, Reardon has also been named a “Harvard Hero,” an annual recognition for staff employees, and so was to be hailed anew in that mid-June ceremony. Spoiler alert: Look for Reischauer to be among the honorands next May. (Robert E. Rubin ’60, LL.D. ’91, also concluding his Corporation service, left campus after the board meetings on Wednesday, and did not attend Commencement.)

Rebooting
Longtime Commencement volunteer Cynthia Rossano observed that the video screens early that morning broadcast the information that this was the 364th graduation. The subtraction of one, by keystroke, set matters aright before too many mobile-phone photos were dispatched.

Pfister on Fungi
Donald Pfister—Gray professor of systemic botany (an expert on fungi) and former master of Kirkland House—became a student favorite as interim dean of Harvard College this academic year. (The sentiment was reciprocated: he choked up while attempting to present the bachelors’ candidates for their degrees, paused, said, “I’m emotional,” was cheered, and then continued getting his charges graduated.) Although President Drew Faust’s afternoon remarks pointed up, depicting Tercentenary Theatre as a roofless space for learning, Pfister’s gaze was earthward: his last message to undergraduates, in the morning’s compendious Crimson, noted that inky-cap mushrooms, of the genus Coprinus, were growing in the Yard that day.

Final Words of Wisdom
Washington Post columnist Alexandra Petri ’10, an Ivy Orator emerita, continues to enlighten the new crop of graduates annually. This year’s pearls of wisdom, published on May 21, conclude: “The longer your life goes on, the smaller the proportion of it that you will have spent at college. Try to live life in a way that reflects this information. I have not successfully identified the precise moment in your 20s when telling people about That Time in College stops seeming like a sad man- or womanchild who needs to go out and do real-life things now, but I assure you it is there. Don’t be caught on the wrong side of it.”

YOU DON’T HAVE TO BE BRITISH. Commencement lends itself to headline headgear. Harvard Alumni Association president Catherine A. Gellert ’93, mistress of ceremonies for the afternoon program, indulged in a fascinator (in taupe, left), as did reunion marshal Courtney Greene, an associate director of the Harvard College Fund (in red and black). And of course, mortarboards provide a platform for speech. Dunster House’s Angela Lee and Linxi Wu wore the strip of red tape favored by advocates making a statement about sexual assault on campus (see page 23); according to www.ourharvard14.com, “Red tape symbolizes the institutional barriers preventing students from creating the safe and inclusive environment necessary to put a stop to sexual violence and fully support survivors.”

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