

University People

Humanities Leaders

Cogan University Professor Stephen Greenblatt, acclaimed for his Shakespeare scholarship (see “The Mysterious Mr. Shakespeare,” September–October 2004, page 54) and his Pulitzer Prize-winning book on Lucretius’s De rerum natura (see “Swerves,” July–August 2011, page 8), has won the Holberg Prize, conferred by Norway for academic work in the arts, humanities, social sciences, law, and theology. The prize, perhaps the leading honor for humanities scholarship, comes with an award of 4.5 million kroner (about $525,000). Greenblatt is now working on a book about the story of Adam and Eve....Burden professor of photography Robin Kelsey, chair of the department of history of art and architecture, has been appointed dean of arts and humanities within the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, effective July 1. Kelsey, profiled in “From Daguerreotype to Photoshop” (January–February 2009, page 42), succeeds Rothenberg professor of Romance languages and literatures and of comparative literature Diana Sorensen.
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John Zwaanstra Professor of International Studies and of Sociology Emeritus

O’Shea has been named president of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, the leading private funder of medical research. O’Shea, an HHMI investigator since 2000 and chief scientific officer since 2013, is the institute’s first female president. Mallinckrodt professor of physics and of applied physics David A. Weitz has been elected to the National Academy of Engineering.

M.D.s on the Move
Professor of medicine and of epidemiology Paula A. Johnson ’80, M.D. ’84, M.P.H. ’85, has been appointed president of Wellesley College, effective this summer; she will be the first African-American leader of that institution. Laurie H. Glimcher ’72, M.D. ’76, who held professorial positions at the medical and public-health schools before becoming dean of the Medical College at Weill Cornell Medicine, will return to Boston next January to become president and CEO of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. And Deborah Prothrow-Stith, M.D. ’79, former professor of public health practice, has been appointed dean of the College of Medicine at Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science, in Los Angeles.

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Yesterday’s News
From the pages of the Harvard Alumni Bulletin and Harvard Magazine

1911 The Bulletin notes that A Lawyer’s Recollections, by George Torrey, A.B. 1859, LL.B. 1861, reveals that in his day the only requirement for an LL.B. was that the candidate enter his name as a student at the Law School and pay his term fees.

1916 Newly planted elms in the College Yard are restoring greenness to a “blinding wilderness,” observes a Bulletin editorialist, applauding a decision to “check an increasing disturbance of the academic peace” by closing certain roads in the Yard against “the menace and noisiness of the automobile.”

1936 Dedication exercises for the Old Yard’s restored College pump are held, 35 years after it was blown up by a secret undergraduate society, the Med. Fac. Senior College alumnus Henry Munroe Rogers ’62 takes the first drink.

1946 Phi Beta Kappa poet W.H. Auden describes a university in which undergraduates with “nerves that never flinched at slaughter/Are shot to pieces by the shorter/Poems of Donne” and “Professors back from secret missions/Resume their proper eruditions/Though some regret it.”

1976 The Adams House Raft Race draws more than 25 entries from Harvard, Radcliffe, and Cambridge public schools to the Charles. The Collegium Musicum’s craft finishes first, its crew singing as they paddle. (Many contestants sink early.)

1991 Under a consent decree, all eight Ivy League colleges agree to abandon shared guidelines for undergraduate financial aid, given a Justice Department contention that such cooperation violates antitrust laws.

2001 A 21-day “living-wage” sit-in at Massachusetts Hall, apparently the longest such protest in Harvard history to that date, ends on May 8, after negotiations in which the University agrees to freeze further outsourcing of jobs and accelerate a contract renegotiation with the union for its custodial workers.

agnostic. The course also asks students to answer questions about the global impact of computing. The decision to focus on the big ideas of computer science in the new course was informed by research suggesting that K-12 students were intimidated by computer science and had narrow ideas about what the field is and what kind of people can succeed in it, said Lien Diaz, the director of the College Board’s entire AP program. The new curriculum aims to convey “the excitement that’s built around what you can do with programming,” Diaz explained, and to draw in more women and minority students, who are underrepresented in computer science. “I believe that is what David Malan tries to do,” she said. The College Board expects to endorse CS50’s curriculum, as well as curricula developed by other universities and private companies, all as teaching options for AP CS Principles.

But CS50’s AP curriculum is hardly watered down. The course teaches C, an old and notoriously opaque programming language, while some of the other introductory curricula opt for high-level languages that are easier to use, but teach students less about how computer processes work. Kathleen O’Shaughnesssey, a teacher at the private Hopkins School in New Haven, believes CS50’s combination of rigorous material and encouraging pedagogy helps students understand computer-science principles with more depth than other curricula. “What Malan’s curriculum seems to do so well is create problems that reveal easy-to-miss details of computer science without totally alienating the less comfortable students,” she said. “It feels much more empowering than how my own C education at Yale went.” Diaz agreed that CS50’s curriculum involves more serious programming than other curricula developed for AP CS Principles.

Recruiting qualified teachers continues to be a barrier to implementing K-12 computer-science education on a mass scale. Computer-science professionals considering second careers have little incentive to consider teaching unless they have an intrinsic interest in the field: said Yakes,
Larry Summers Reflects

In the decade since Lawrence H. Summers departed Massachusetts Hall, the former Harvard president, now Eliot University Professor, took a sabbatical; resumed teaching; joined President Barack Obama’s administration to help secure recovery from the recession; and then re-engaged as a teacher, economics scholar, and participant in high-level policy discussions around the globe. Harvard Magazine visited Summers at his Kennedy School office for a reflective conversation about these activities and some of the ideas that interest him now. The complete transcript appears at harvardmag.com/summers-16; highlights follow.

- On the economic crisis: The economic statistics were, by almost any measure, worse in the fall of 2008 and the winter of 2009 than they had been in the fall of 1929 and the winter of 1930. And we were able to produce an outcome that, while unsatisfactory in many respects, was infinitely better than the outcome that played out in the early 1930s—or the outcome that has played out in Europe and in Japan.

- On higher education’s role—and challenges: I still think what I thought throughout my time as Harvard president—that universities have never had a greater opportunity to transform the world, because the world is ever more driven by ideas. It’s ever more driven by personal connections that cross boundaries of nations, of class, and of ethnicity. And the older I get, the more I realize that the ways in which people think and act are products of the experiences they had when they were young. So I’m ever more convinced of the importance of universities.

At the same time, I hold to the conviction that I expressed in my inaugural speech as Harvard president and my valedictory speech that the greatest threat to universities in general—and to Harvard in particular—is complacency, and an excessive attachment to tradition. One of my wife’s colleagues put it very well when he said Harvard will have to choose in the years ahead between its commitment to preeminence and its commitment to doing things in its traditional ways. I’ve always been clearly on one side of that—respecting tradition, but focusing on the future.

- On technology and distance learning: I think Harvard has the potential to multiply its impact on the world threefold or fivefold or tenfold, through reaching the entire planet with the knowledge that is here and the capacity to teach and impart knowledge that is here, in a way that would have been unimaginable when I was a graduate student here in the 1970s or when I was on the faculty in the 1980s. Any student, anywhere, could have substantially the experience of taking Harvard’s great courses and increasingly benefiting from the interactions that make this such a great place.

Distance education and the use of the Internet are perhaps the most important things that are going to be disruptive in higher education.

- On today’s economic situation: Let me talk about...the macroeconomic and analytic research I’ve done on the idea of secu...