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

1932 Guided by meteorologists’ advice to find a spot in the lee of a large lake—to avoid the cumulus clouds typical of New England August afternoons—the 17-member Harvard Eclipse Expedition sets up camp east of Lake Sebago, in Gray, Maine, and successfully completes its scientific studies of the August 31 total solar eclipse.

1942 The path from University Hall to Johnston Gate has been widened by the Navy to accommodate formations of marching men from the Harvard Naval Training School.

1947 Members of the newly formed Harvard Youth for Democracy stage a protest outside the Old South Meeting House in Boston at a July 13 speech by the anti-Semite Gerald L.K. Smith. The 35 students picket the Meeting House with signs reading “No Free Speech to Preach Murder.”

1957 The proprietors of all stores in the block slated to become Holyoke Center are invited to meet with the University’s planning coordinator and the dean of the Design School; they are assured that Harvard proposes to render every assistance possible during construction and to grant them space in the new building once it is completed.

1962 U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, M.B.A. ’39, is awarded an honorary doctor of laws degree: “With vigor and courage he directs our nation’s huge responsibility for the free world’s defense.”

1967 The major Harvard and Radcliffe Commencement speakers, Edwin O. Reischauer, Ph.D. ’39, and Barbara Tuchman ’33, criticize U.S. policies toward Asia in general and the Vietnam War in particular in their addresses.

1972 Among going-away gifts received by retiring Radcliffe president Mary Bunting is a specially bred purple cow (the product of a Charolais-Holstein cross) for her New Hampshire farm.

On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the announcement of the Marshall Plan, West German chancellor Willy Brandt, LL.D. ’63, announces the creation of the German Marshall Fund in a speech at Sanders Theatre. The new fund will underwrite academic and scientific programs to stimulate American involvement in European questions and to promote mutual cooperation.

2002 Harvard agrees to participate in the “Scholars at Risk Network,” which offers temporary positions to scholars threatened in their homelands; the University will host researchers from Iran and Ethiopia in the new academic year.

the legitimacy of the department-by-department balloting and has asked the national office of the NLRB to review its case; if the board agrees to hear it, that could put cases at Harvard and elsewhere on hold. Finally, a reconstituted NLRB under President Donald Trump might revoke the right of private university students to unionize, rendering the elections at Harvard and other universities moot.

Read more at harvardmag.com/union-appeal-17.

~MARINA BOLOTNIKOVA

Diversifying the Faculties
A decade ago, more than two-thirds of tenured professors and nearly one-half of tenure-track professors at Harvard were white men. Since then, the composition of the faculty has evolved considerably, most notably among tenured professors: 25.8 percent are women and 18.8 percent are minorities, up from 20.5 percent and 12.6 percent in 2008. The share of tenured underrepresented minorities, including African Americans and Latinos (Harvard has no Native American professors), increased to 7.7 percent from 5 percent in the same period.

If these changes sound small, that is because faculty turnover is slow. Harvard has added 49 tenure-track and 42 tenured faculty members this year, within a total body of just 1,500. “With the faculty not changing in size, and very few retirements, this actually reflects a real push on the part of the leadership of the University,” says senior vice provost Judith Singer, who directs the office of faculty development and diversity. Harvard’s schools hire one faculty member at a time, and recruitment is a very intensive activity. Of tenure-track and tenured appointees made in 2015-2016, 19 percent are minority men, 16 percent minority women, 22 percent white women, and 43 percent white men.
Diversity still varies widely at the departmental level. “The [Faculty of Arts and Sciences] divisions that are doing particularly well are, not surprisingly, the places where the graduate-student pools are themselves more diverse,” Singer says. The arts and humanities division has the University’s largest fraction of tenure-track women: 63 percent. The schools of education and diversity have relatively high shares of underrepresented minority faculty members, reflecting the makeup of Ph.D. programs in those fields. Singer also gives credit to high achievers in fields that typically aren’t as diverse. Women represent 46 percent of tenure-track faculty in FAS’s science division, for example: “That is really high.” In the school of engineering and applied sciences, underrepresented minorities now make up 15 percent of tenure-track faculty.

Additional details are available at harvardmag.com/facdiversity-17. ~M.B.

**Pending Business:**

**Maths**

The academic year ended with two important matters affecting undergraduates’ Harvard lives—intellectual and social—left very much pending.

At its April 4 meeting, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) discussed a reconceived empirical and mathematical reasoning requirement under the revised undergraduate Program in General Education, which takes effect in the fall of 2018—and introduced a new Harvard acronym, TwD, for “Thinking with Data,” reflecting a bent toward data science (see harvardmag.com/mathreq-17).

Dean of undergraduate education Jay M. Harris presented the report of the committee charged with refining the course, which asserted that all Harvard undergraduates “should be able to understand, interpret, and manipulate the data they will encounter in their lives beyond the University, as well as comprehend the basic quantitative concepts that are essential to many academic disciplines, across all the divisions.” The proposed “arc” of the required course options envisioned five actions students would take in learning to work with data: “Ask, Get, Analyze, Iterate, and Communicate” with consideration of ethical issues embedded in each step.” Harris asked that an implementation committee be authorized to proceed.

But faculty members raised several concerns. Those in mathematics, engineering, and applied sciences (including applied mathematics) found the proposal too focused on data science at the expense of math, logic, and related disciplines. Some speakers worried that finding nearly 1,700 seats annually might prove infeasible, particularly when nearly half of entering students each year require extra help in entry-level calculus. Among the issues are who will teach (faculty members, or adjuncts or preceptors, as in Expository Writing), and whether sufficiently skilled teachers could be hired at a time of fiscal constraint.

Harris therefore withdrew the motion at the May 2 FAS meeting, pending further discussion with the mathematicians and refinement of the proposal. Presumably, the issues will return this fall—making for a sprint to the following academic year, when students begin selecting courses to fulfill their new gen-ed requirements. ~J.S.R.

**Pending Business:**

**Social Organizations**

Separately, at the May 2 meeting, FAS members adopted changes to the Harvard College Handbook for Students for the 2017-2018 academic year—an annual routine. “In keeping with the University’s articulation of belonging and inclusion,” gendered pronouns will be rendered gender-neutral. Other passages concerned Expos, advanced standing, email accounts and email privacy, and the new gen-ed requirements (with a caveat: “Until the new Quantitative Facility requirement is finalized and takes effect, students must complete the current Empirical Mathematical Reasoning requirement”). Separate language addressed marijuana (given the Massachusetts law permitting recreational use for adults); smoking (of tobacco, including vaping); and final examinations in absentia.

But the Handbook remains silent about the controversial new policy on student membership in unrecognized single-gender social organizations (USGSOs, such as final clubs, fraternities, and sororities), the subject of divisive FAS debate for most of the year (see “Social-Club Saga,” May-June, page 18). It denies members of USGSOs the required College recommendations for prestigious scholarships and fellowships, and prohibits leadership positions in recognized clubs and athletic teams. Students who seek such recommendations or leadership positions must affirm that they do not belong to such groups. Alleged untruthfulness would be subject to review by the Honor Council, created by the faculty to hear cases of academic misconduct (cheating on examinations, plagiarism, and so on).

Both the policy and its implementation are under review, but for now, it remains in effect for freshmen arriving this August. They would not join USGSOs during their first months on campus, in any event—but they would still be affected by the rule because the affirmation requires that students attest that they have not been a member of a