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 divinity 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...
Brown Dank Stash of Memes for Unproductive Groups

I come across while scrolling through Harvard's extensive investment in developing and posting the online courses, which can easily amount to tens of thousands of dollars or more per new offering.

In other online developments, edX—the Harvard-MIT-led consortium and technology platform through which HarvardX distributes its online courses—in April launched a “Professional Certificate” program for career-related courses created by companies and edX-affiliated universities. The programs, lasting two to six months (and thus shorter than MicroMasters, in which students begin online and then transfer to on-campus instruction), are explicitly related to career applications. Among them are “Data Science for Executives” from Columbia, “Retail and Omnichannel Management,” from Dartmouth, and “Microsoft Professional Program in Data Science,” from Microsoft. Meanwhile, Coursera, a for-profit competitor to edX, announced a plan to offer 15 to 20 online degree programs by the end of 2019, including master’s degrees in innovation and entrepreneurship, and in accounting. Both ventures illustrate how online programs are taking a more professional tilt, more oriented toward revenue (comparable to HBX and HMX, from the business and medical schools; see harvardmag.com/hmx-17 for additional details)—a mission distinctly different from HarvardX’s nondegree, liberal-arts brief and its predominantly free distribution.

Taking market logic one step further, also in April, Purdue announced its acquisition of Kaplan University—the credential-issuing operation of the Kaplan higher-education business, encompassing 32,000 students at 15 campus locations. Purdue has announced that it intends to create a nonprofit, online university, operating under Purdue’s name, that focuses primarily on adult learners. About 85 percent of those Kaplan students are in fully online programs; the rest are in hybrid (online and classroom) settings. ~J.S.R.

__THE UNDERGRADUATE__

**Our Memes, Ourselves**

*by Matthew Browne ’17*

I stare at a stock photo on my Facebook feed of a blond woman leaning over an infant, both caught in a delighted gaze. The generic rendering of motherly bliss has been repurposed into a two-panel comic, with text Photoshopped on top. In first panel, the infant says “M-mm-,” and the elated mother reacts, “Oh my god! The baby! He’s saying his first words!” In the second panel, the infant finishes: “McKinsey and Company.”

This is just one of the hundreds of images I come across while scrolling through Harvard Memes for Elitist 1% Teens. HMFEOPT, as its users abbreviate it, is a Facebook group started in February that’s become a phenomenon on campus, one in a string of such groups cropping up at schools this year, from UC Berkeley Memes for Edgy Teens, to Brown Dank Stash of Memes for Unproductive Teens, to Yale Memes for Special Snowflake Teens. The groups are forums dedicated to sharing memes—a reference-heavy sort of humor that’s grown up on Internet social-media platforms—related to each university. It’s essentially a big game of passing inside jokes back and forth, isolating quirks of collegiate culture and exploiting them for fun.

On-campus recruiting by financial and consulting firms is just one of dozens of popular targets in HMFEOPT. To scroll through the group is to wade through a swift current of allusions to all corners of Harvard life, from the particulars of swiping into certain dining halls, to the challenges of catching the Quad shuttle, to the seeming impossibility of getting a good night’s sleep. No school norm is safe from being identified as a trope and turned into a punch line. In the past, the only analysis you might get of a slice of Harvard life might be a conversation, in person among friends, or an op-ed in the Crimson. Now, an accompanying flood of memes adds another layer of commentary. By providing a space for people to share such observations, HMFEOPT has become the site of a new type of dialogue on campus.

This subculture of wry analysis has grown alongside concerns about how to create a school-wide dialogue on difficult issues. Generating such a dialogue is particularly difficult at Harvard, where students spread themselves thin across dizzying arrays of commitments, academic and otherwise, and social organizations tend to di-