in a harsh light. The message it sends “is one of moral superiority,” dispatched not just to oil executives, but also “to the oil roughneck in west Texas, the refinery worker in Louisiana, the long-haul trucker, and the coal miner in Gillette, Wyoming. Those workers are not morally flawed by…working in the fossil-fuel industry. But how could they interpret Harvard’s divestment as other than yet another criticism by liberal elites of the honest way of life they adopted to earn a living and support their families?” He, too, favored investment in research and teaching.

Gordon McKay professor of computer science Harry R. Lewis sounded similar themes. “[A]s we are an institution devoted to teaching and research, those are the weapons we are best positioned to marshal in the fight,” he said, observing that for FAS “as a body to alter our education requires no petition to the Corporation or permission from any dean or president.... If we wanted to make it happen, it would happen....” He also cautioned that political statements “tend to be welcomed by people who don’t need convincing and to do little to persuade skeptics. They are divisive, when academia more than ever needs friends and allies today.”

At the conclusion of this discussion, which resumed in December, President Bacow said, “I think it’s important for us to focus not on points of disagreement but on points of agreement”—namely, that climate change is real, threatening, and demands action. He was troubled, he said, that divestment was seen as a “litmus test” of whether an individual or institution cared about climate change. “I do,” he emphasized, recalling his scholarly career in environmental science at MIT.

He continued, “[W]e need to be modest about our capacity to improve the world merely by making political statements.” As Stock had noted, Harvard is an elite institution regarded by many skeptically, even with mistrust. “We don’t want to make it harder to solve this problem,” Bacow said. “We want to make it easier.” Thus he is supporting research within FAS on how to aid areas where people might suffer from changes necessary to adapt to climate change.

As for the case of tobacco, he noted, the product has no social utility, is dangerous, and that owning tobacco securities was repugnant. When it sold them, Harvard also banned tobacco sales on campus, banned consumption, and prohibited research funded by tobacco interests. The “day after” divesting from fossil-fuel enterprises, he said, “We would still have to turn on the lights, we would still have to heat our buildings,” and many faculty members would still get on airplanes. “We cannot wash our hands of this problem.”

Given the Corporation’s and his own apparent disinclination to divest, it was natural that he turned to the point Lewis expressed: “What is it that as a faculty we want to do? What do you want to do,” as faculty members, “with no permission from anyone”—in scholarship, teaching, and the way FAS members conduct their lives, demonstrating the power of their conviction to their students?

Read a full report, with the speakers’ statements, at harvardmag.com/fas-divestdebate-nov-19. And the faculty’s December 3 debate on a divestment motion is covered in depth at harvardmag.com/fas-divestdebate-dec-19.

Alumni and Student Activism
Meanwhile, in late October, alumni supporters of divestment (their website reported about 3,200 endorsers in early November) again made their case, writing to Bacow and William F. Lee, senior fellow of the Corporation, to request a meeting with that board. They propose to advocate divestment (among those assets managed directly by Harvard Management Company, and ultimately those managed by external advisers) and reinvestment of the endowment in accordance with sustainability principles by 2030.

They also expressed support for student and faculty divestment advocates. The students turned out in the rain to leaflet pro-

**Jobs Well Done**

We Salute four outstanding contributors to Harvard Magazine for their work on readers’ behalf during 2019, and confer a $1,000 honorarium on each. Our awards for distinguished writing happily recognize a veteran graduate and a recent one. The McCord Writing Prize (honoring David T.W. McCord ’21, A.M. ’22, L.H.D. ’56, and his enduring prose and verse, composed for these pages and the Harvard College Fund) justly goes to Chad M. Oldfather ’90, for “Throw Your Fastball,” his deft, self-knowing essay about coming to terms with being a freshman (September-October, page 46)—one of the nicest surprises we’ve ever received over the transom. And Lily Scherlis ’18, a former magazine Ledecky Undergraduate Fellow, applied different kinds of knowledge (about art history, and Harvard history) to fine effect in “What a Human Should Be” (March-April, page 44), extending beyond the Art Museums’ Bauhaus exhibition to the wider University. It is fitting to recognize the result with the Smith-Weld Prize (in memory of A. Calvert Smith ’14, former secretary to the governing boards and executive assistant to President James Bryant Conant, and of Philip S. Weld ’36, a former president of the magazine); it highlights thought-provoking articles about Harvard.

Illustrator Taylor Callery, a second-time honorand, did a superb job rendering the ideas explored in “Artificial Intelligence and Ethics” (January-February 2019)—one of the most important and widely read articles we published during the year. He reappears on page 9 in this issue.

And at the risk of repeating ourselves, we again recognize contributing editor Jim Harrison for imaginative, precise, and demanding photographic portraits and other assignments, from the physicians featured in “The Opioids Emergency” (March-April, page 36) and Nobel laureate Jack Szostak in the lab (“How Life Began,” July-August, page 40) to the synthetic-biology innovators, beginning on page 38, and athletic trainer Brant Berkstresser, on page 35, of this issue.

We are delighted to work with, and to thank, these superb professionals.

~The Editors

![Chad M. Oldfather](image)

![Lilly Scherlis](image)

![Taylor Callery](image)

![Jim Harrison](image)