Cambridge 02138
Faculty diversity, general education, gym clothes

THE FAUST YEARS
I read the article about Drew Faust’s tenure in the July-August issue (“Faust in Focus,” page 46).

Management consultants tell us to measure outputs, not inputs. But the article discussed fundraising, building programs, hiring, and the like—inputs all—with barely a mention of the results.

If I read a similar article about Stanford, I would expect to see discussion of its role as an anchor of Silicon Valley, exactly how important an anchor it had been, and the positive and negative effects of that on Stanford’s academic mission.

What would a parallel discussion of Harvard’s recent history look like?

William F. Pedersen ’65, LL.B. ’68
South Royalton, Vt.

A DIVERSE FACULTY?
The July-August 2018 edition (News Briefs, page 35) mentioned the efforts relative to faculty “diversity,” the aim to be more inclusive in terms of race and gender.

Until Harvard realizes its biggest issue is lack of real diversity, of opinion, such shallow efforts aimed to re-enforce racial and gender-identity politics are doomed to fail.

Critical thinking is the heart of a vibrant center of learning...That requires having a faculty of diverse opinions.

David W. Thompson, M.P.A. ’88
Easley, S.C.

VOTING, IMMIGRATION
In the July-August issue, there is a silly error in the Moorfield Storey Vita (page 44). A “grandfather clause” was not a rule that men whose grandfathers did not vote before the Civil War (i.e., blacks) could not vote. Rather, it was a cynical loophole that men who could vote, or whose fathers or grandfathers could, before 1867 (i.e., whites), were exempt from an onerous requirement like a poll tax or literacy test that most individuals could not meet. Subtle difference and similar effect, but especially given the ubiquity of the term “grandfathering in,” I expect Harvard to get the details right.

The underlying premise of “Crimmigration” (page 4) is that a non-citizen’s commission of a crime should not enter into the decision of whether or not to deport. That is a pliable position for a seriously underpopulated and underdeveloped country, but not in the United States today. If there are going to be limitations on the aggregate numbers of immigrants, one can argue in favor of prioritizing personal considerations (escape from persecution, close family ties, economics (important skills), or even a diversity lottery, but no good argument can be advanced against the proposition that a sine qua non is for an immigrant of any kind to be a good citizen and not to commit serious crimes. It is fair to ask what is a serious crime for this purpose, but it is no answer to criminal activity.

That requires having a faculty of diverse opinions.

NOTE TO READERS: You will receive your November-December magazine a week late, as we cover President Lawrence S. Bacow’s installation on October 5; read online coverage at www.harvardmagazine.com. —The Editors
LETTERS

Nor can a charge of criminal activity be parried by repackaging length of stay as a novel asylum criterion (potential for being treated badly back in one’s home country for having lived in the United States).

Buried way in the back of the article is an objection to using “citizenship and immigration status [to allocate] resources based on where people are born.” Sorry, folks; one may advocate the abolition of countries and nationalities, but unless that happens, a country may decide that where and/or to whom one is born forms a core basis for citizenship and for the right to be in the country.

Robert Kantowitz, J.D. ’79
Lawrence, N.Y.

Editor’s note: We thank Mr. Kantowitz for explicating the “grandfather clause” and reminding us to vet wording more carefully when condensing text to fit limited space.

GEN ED, THEN AND NOW

I enjoyed your “Unfinished Business” essay (7 Ware Street, July-August, page 3), and pondered Dean Michael Smith’s statement that “Gen Ed courses ought to challenge students’ ingrained ideas...broadening how students think about things that they enter the class thinking that they know.” Then I read (page 17) Latin Salutatorian Phoebe Lakin’s statement at Commencement: “Harvard University, as many of you have no doubt already observed, is not so different from the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.” Looks like Smith, if he gets his wish, has his work cut out for him!

General education courses established in the 1950s by President James Conant (taught by the likes of Paul Tillich) were obviously based on a different conception of what constitutes “general education.” They had an impact on me such that I changed my major from biology to philosophy.

Mark Titus ’58
Washington, D.C.

ADVANCED STANDING

I read with great interest the article on Harvard’s plans to overhaul Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate credits (“Advanced Standing Reduced,” May-June, page 24).

It is a pity that Harlan “Harpo” Hanson ’46, Ph.D. ’59, is not alive to comment. Sixty years ago, as director of Harvard’s Office of Advanced Standing, he worked with the academic departments to provide recognition...
and credit for AP courses—which he considered essential for students with unique academic qualifications and/or economic constraints. He went on to lead the College Board’s AP program for 25 years, during which time he was instrumental in establishing IB standards among universities from around the world. It would be interesting to have his perspective on the sanctity of Harvard’s “curated eight-semester experience.”

Oh well, Nihil perpetuum, pauca diurna sunt; alius alio modo fragile est, rerum exitus variatur; ceterum quicquid coepit et desinit [“Nothing is everlasting, few things are even long-lasting; one thing perishes in one way, another in another, though the manner of their passing varies, yet whatever has beginning has also an end,” Seneca the Younger, as translated by John W. Basore for the Loeb Classical Library].

SPEAK UP, PLEASE

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ALMA MATER ENCORE

In the July-August issue (The College Pump, page 76), it is reported that the last line in “Fair Harvard” has been changed from “Till the stock of the Puritans die” to “Till the stars in the firmament die.”

In no way am I from the stock of the Puritans and as a 60-year member of the American Civil Liberties Union I have fought for equality for all for a very long time.

The change is political correctness run riot.

This silly change, if it must happen, deserves an equally silly last line: “Till elephants learn how to fly.”

Charles L. Edson ’56, J.D. ’59
Chevy Chase, Md.

ERRATUM

The name of director of admissions Marlyn McGrath ’70, Ph.D. ’78, was rendered incorrectly in “Commencement Confetti” (July-August, page 19). Our error—and apologies.