

taken into account before any work can proceed. And the plans for Allston campus development more generally have always included elements of arts and cultural facilities, but the details await clearer academic and intellectual underpinnings.

In the Harvard context, too, such University initiatives will have to be grounded in the faculties, particularly FAS. The news release on the formation of the task force included comments from Dean Michael D. Smith, welcoming the prospective “University-wide perspective in a domain that is so directly pertinent to the work of FAS” and promising his close cooperation with Faust and the many FAS professors directly engaged.

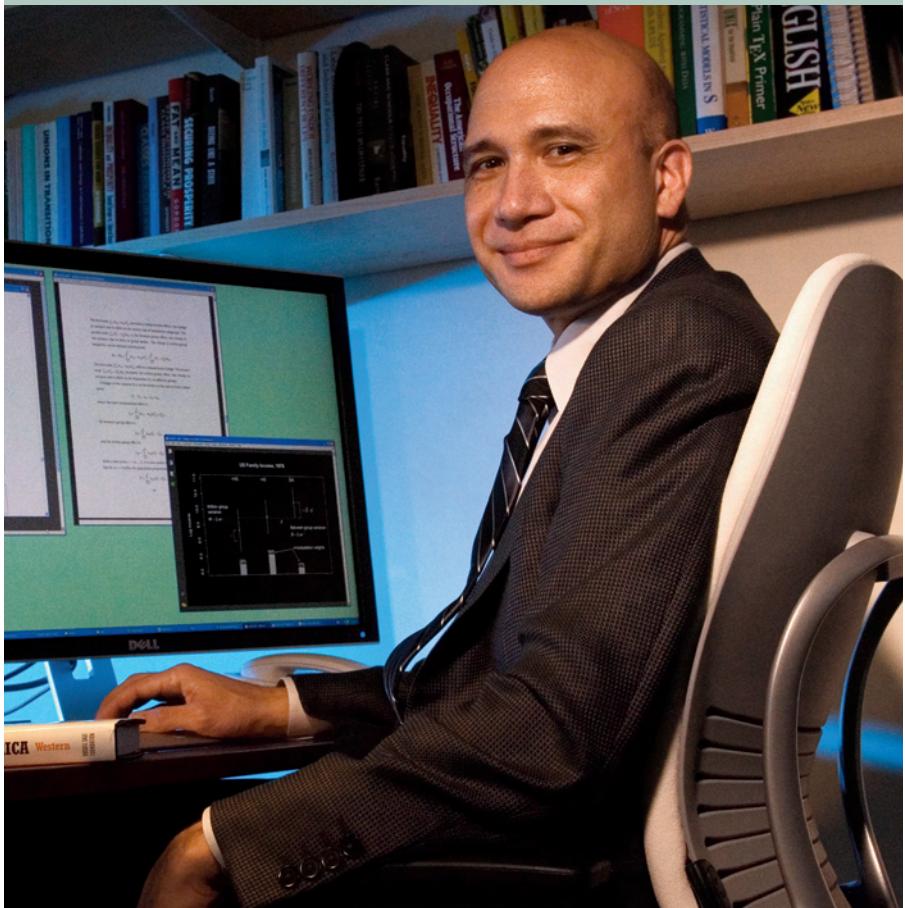
As the task force strains to meet Faust’s deadline that it report in the fall of 2008, it clearly has a huge assignment. It begins with fundamental questions: as the president has repeatedly put it, “What should the place of the arts be in a research university? What should the place of the arts be in a liberal-arts education?” Whatever their answers, the task-force members will then proceed to the details of advocating expanded or new academic programs, faculty growth, and facilities large and small.

If the result resonates in the community, it will go a long way toward advancing Faust’s aim of bringing Harvard units together as one university. The recommendations will no doubt shape Harvard’s own forthcoming capital campaign. In these senses, Faust has asked the task force to think both expansively and urgently, recognizing that through its work, a new vision of the arts could affect the design of teaching and learning across the campus, and of the very campus itself.

The Rise of Faculty Centrism

POLITICALLY, U.S. professors are less liberal than many people believe, but their ranks also include fewer conservatives than in the early 1970s. Meanwhile, centrism is ascendant among faculty members under the age of 35. These are among the conclusions of a major new national study of professors and their politics, also the topic of an October 6 symposium at

HARVARD PORTRAIT



Bruce Western

His interest in prisons began “almost by accident,” says the new director of the Kennedy School of Government’s Multidisciplinary Program in Inequality and Social Policy. Bruce Western, a sociology professor hired away from Princeton in 2007, once studied organized labor. He recalls a pivotal conversation with a colleague about the way many European states use social-welfare programs to manage disadvantaged populations, while the United States, whether by design or accident, has used prisons for the same purpose. That exchange grew into a vocation: Western is now author or coauthor of more than a dozen articles on the causes and consequences of incarceration, has written one book and edited two others on the topic, and has testified before Congress on options for reforming the criminal code and prison policy. Although his work challenges the notion that higher incarceration rates have caused a major decrease in crime, he says it has not stirred much controversy; the desperate need to deal with surging prison costs and recidivism seems, he says, to keep people off political and moral soapboxes. Western—who hails from Australia and lives in Brookline with his wife and three daughters—taught a course on the sociology of crime and punishment for inmates at a maximum-security prison in New Jersey and says he’d like to do something similar here, perhaps joining student volunteers who teach classes at the Suffolk County jail. Because most jurisdictions have chosen to cut prisoner-reentry programs as prison costs have grown, “An elite university like Harvard,” Western says, “really has a role to play.”

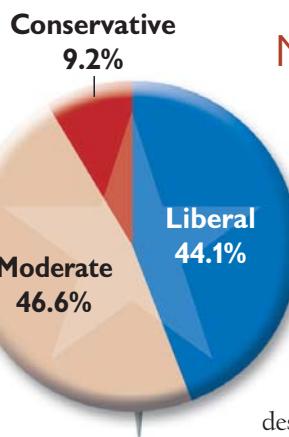
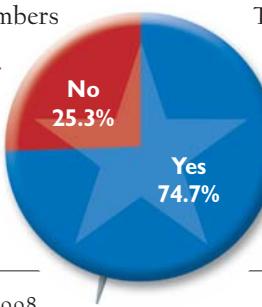
Harvard organized by the study's authors, assistant professor of sociology Neil Gross and Solon J. Simmons, assistant professor of sociology at George Mason University.

The study, says Gross, was intended to move discussions about professors' political views "away from partisan polemic and back toward rigorous social science." The seminal comprehensive survey in this area was conducted in 1969 by Everett Carll Ladd and Seymour Martin Lipset, who found that professors were more liberal than members of many other occupations: at that time, "46 percent of professors described their overall political identity as left or liberal, 27 percent as middle of the road, and 28 percent as conservative, with younger faculty members more liberal than older ones."

But recent decades, Gross and Simmons argue, have brought a reactionary targeting of liberal academics: "[a] conservative strategy of attempting to influence public opinion on a wide variety of matters by starting think-tanks—most independent of academe—funded by conservative foundations that build and then leverage ties to the increasingly consolidated mass media in order to get their message across; and...the rhetorical strategy that accompanied this institution-building effort, of calling into question the legitimacy of intellectuals on the other side of the political aisle who would contest conservative claims." A wave of faculty studies that appeared in the context of this new order were, according to Gross and Solon, "closer to thinly disguised works of political advocacy intended to back up the charge of liberal bias in academe" than to "thoughtful scientific investigations."

Their own study, which the *Chronicle of Higher Education* described as "arguably the best-designed survey of American faculty beliefs since the early 1970s," found that 44 percent of faculty members

Should it be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion if the woman wants it for any reason?



Moderates Emergent

Political Orientation by Age

Age	Liberal %	Moderate %	Conservative %
26-35	32.5	60.0	7.5
36-49	41.5	49.9	8.6
50-64	49.4	42.7	7.9
65+	36.9	52.3	10.8

today are self-described liberal, 46 percent are moderate, and 9 percent are conservative. Only 20 percent voted for George Bush in 2004. The rise in centrism, the study authors say, seems to have come at the expense of conservatives.

While the nearly steady number of liberals teaching in higher education might have been expected, there were surprises.

On the question of affirmative action in college admissions, for example, the study (with funding from the Richard Lounsbery Foundation) found, after surveying 1,417 faculty members at 927 colleges, that professors are nearly split on the issue. As compared to the general population, they are also more conservative on certain issues of economic policy.

Less than half agreed with the statement, "Business corporations make too much profit," compared to two-thirds of the American public. In other ways, however, faculty members lean sharply left. Eighty percent believe President Bush misled the American people about the reasons to go to war in Iraq, and 75 percent think having an abortion should be legal "if a woman wants it for any reason."

The highest concentration of left-leaning academics, the study found, appears in liberal-arts colleges (61 percent liberal), while the lowest (37 percent liberal) is found in community colleges, where conservatives reach their zenith (19 percent

conservative). Only 4 percent of professors at liberal-arts colleges identify as conservative. Elite Ph.D.-granting institutions fall in the middle.

Patterns of political belief track disciplines, write Gross and Simmons: for example, more than half of professors in health sciences voted for Bush in 2004, while only 15 percent of humanities faculty members did so. They also track age: 60 percent of professors aged 26 to 35 are moderate, as compared to 50 percent of professors aged 36 to 49, and 43 percent of professors aged 50 to 64.

At the symposium held

to discuss the study, some participants emphasized different interpretations of the data. Eliot University Professor Lawrence H. Summers (who three weeks earlier had been

disinvited to address the board of regents of the University of California because of faculty pressure) said that he was surprised to find in the survey data "even less ideological diversity in the American university than I had imagined." This led him "naturally" to question whether professors' politics affect their students. Bass professor of English

Business corporations make too much profit.

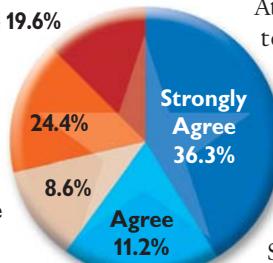
Strongly Disagree 19.6%

Disagree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree



President Bush misled the American people about the reasons to go to war in Iraq.

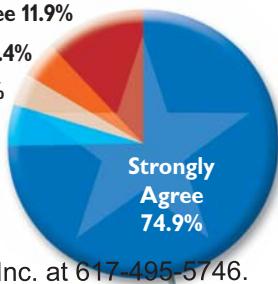
Strongly Disagree 11.9%

Disagree 4.4%

Don't know 3.7%

Agree 5.1%

Strongly Agree 74.9%



and American literature and language. Louis Menand worried that convergent political beliefs among faculty and students, whether caused by self-selection or conformist socialization—in combination with the long time commitments required to earn a Ph. D.—might stifle beneficial “ferment” and “iconoclasm.”

For their part, the authors hope their work will lay the foundation for “serious social-scientific scholarship” that could explain the “social mechanisms and processes that account for the relative liberalism of the faculty.” What are the effects of professors’ politics, they ask, not only on students, but also on “the structure of intellectual fields?” To what extent, they ask, do the “political propensities” of “the contemporary professoriate...both reflect and feed into broader social and cultural dynamics?” These are questions they hope will be the future “subject of lively—and empirically informed...debate.”

Retooling Tech Transfer

WHEN PHYSICIST Eric Mazur’s research group created a new material called black silicon one day in 1998, he knew right away they were on to something. The material absorbs 50 percent more visible light than regular silicon, making possible uses easy to imagine—in solar panels, for instance. But the material also has unusual capacity to detect infrared light, giving it potential applications in the defense, automotive, telecommunications, and electronics industries (see “A Sponge for Light,” May–June 2002, page 12).

Mazur, now Balkanski professor of applied physics and professor of physics, remembers approaching someone in what was then the University’s Office of Technology and Trademark Licensing (OTTL) about patenting his discovery. The response was, “No, this is not interesting.” Mazur dropped the idea. A few months later, he spoke about black silicon at a meeting of the American Physical Society: “I said, ‘It could be used for this. It could be used for that.’ I was freely talking about it, because”—supposedly—“it wasn’t worth

Science and Sleep on Line

The University’s Office of News and Public Affairs has debuted HarvardScience (<http://harvard-science.harvard.edu>), a website on scientific, medical, and engineering research—and the people who conduct it—throughout Harvard. The site reports science news, profiles researchers, and follows Harvard people out into the field. There are also links to affiliated hospitals and research institutes; a directory of science researchers (although links to their labs and home pages may be found more readily, in many instances, directly through their departmental and school listings); and topical indexes. These aids may even prove useful within the University to connect researchers with common interests or emerging queries.

Separately, Harvard Medical School’s Division of Sleep Medicine (<http://sleep.med.harvard.edu>) has joined with WGBH Interactive, an affiliate of Boston’s PBS channel, to create an on-line sleep and health education program, www.HealthySleep.hms.harvard.edu. The first unit, on healthy sleep, appears in January,



with interactive content explaining the science of sleep, why it matters, and how to get it. Coverage of disorders—such as insomnia, apnea, narcolepsy—will follow. The timing (just after New Year’s Eve revels) and the home venue (a research university where students seem barely able to get to bed before sunrise) seem especially apt.

patenting.” But with each statement, by putting his ideas in the public domain, Mazur was unknowingly closing off a possible patent for Harvard. “When I came out of my talk, the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Economist*, *Discover* magazine—they were all there to interview me,” he recalls. The word was out.

After the media flurry, OTTL had second thoughts, Mazur says. “They came to me and said, ‘Well, maybe we should do something.’ But it was too late. We lost the chance of protecting the basic idea.” Harvard now holds patents to two applications of black silicon and continues to apply for more, but the University is still paying for that sin of omission; Mazur planned to travel to the U.S. Patent Office in December to defend an application.

Mazur’s experience may stem from one bad decision, but it is also emblematic of a subsequent transformation. During the last five years, the University has completely retooled the way it handles com-

mercializing professors’ inventions and innovations, a process known as technology transfer. The metamorphosis involved combining two offices and rechristening the merged entity the Office of Technology Development (OTD, <http://otd.harvard.edu>), hiring a new director, and systematically updating Harvard’s intellectual-property policies.

Mazur has a unique vantage point as someone hampered by the old office and helped by the new one. He has been on the Harvard faculty since 1984, but his name was on just one patent application prior to 2002; since 2002, his lab has filed a dozen. In 2005, with funding from three venture-capital firms, he founded a company called SiOnyx that is developing applications for black silicon and expects to launch its first product soon. Now, Mazur’s name appears on a list of OTD “success stories”—recent start-ups spun off from work in University labs—as evidence of a burgeoning entrepreneurial spirit at Harvard. With OTD’s help,

