

VPA Connections

Office of the Vice President for Administration
Harvard University



Spring 2008

Arnold Arboretum • Faculty Club • Harvard Magazine • Harvard Real Estate Services • Harvard University Dining Services • Harvard University Press • Office of the Vice President for Administration • University Operations Services • University Planning Office

Connecting to Colleagues: Diversity Matters

Best Practices or Best Guesses: What Works in Diversity Management

Presenter: Frank Dobbin, Department of Sociology,
Harvard University

Date: Tuesday, March 18, 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Place: Harvard Faculty Club



Since the 1960s, employers have implemented a wide range of equal opportunity and diversity practices—but how effective have they been? Do diversity training, diversity councils, diversity performance evaluations and other practices and programs actually lead to increases in diversity hiring and retention? Research, based on data collected between 1971 and 2002 from over 800 companies, has yielded surprising results. On the whole, practices

designed to change the behavior of individual managers (i.e. training) fall flat, while practices designed to establish responsibility for change show solid effects. Harvard Professor of Sociology Frank Dobbin will share the findings included in his recent article, “The Architecture of Inclusion: Evidence from Corporate Diversity Programs” (*Harvard Journal of Law and Gender*, summer 2007).

Book Group

Omnivore's Dilemma

by Michael Pollan

Date: Wednesday, March 26, 12:15 p.m. to 1:15 p.m.

Place: Holyoke Center 571

What should we have for dinner? That question has confronted us for all time. To find out, Pollan follows each of the food chains that sustain us—industrial food, organic or alternative food, and food we forage ourselves—from the source to a final meal, and in the process develops a definitive account of the American way of eating. He takes us from Iowa cornfields to food-science laboratories, from feedlots

and fast-food restaurants to organic farms and hunting grounds, always emphasizing our dynamic coevolutionary relationship with the handful of plant and animal species we depend on. Each time Pollan sits down to a meal, he traces the origins of everything consumed, revealing what we unwittingly ingest and explaining how our taste for particular foods and flavors reflects our evolutionary inheritance. After reading *Omnivore's Dilemma*, dinner will never again look, or taste, quite the same. (Adapted from michaelpollan.com/omnivore.php)

Book Group

Man Gone Down

by Michael Thomas

Date: Monday, May 12, 12:15 p.m. to 1:15 p.m.

Place: Holyoke Center 571

One of the *New York Times* Top Ten Best Books of 2007, *Man Gone Down* is an insightful, devastating first novel about a young black father of three in a biracial marriage, who is trying to claim a piece of the American Dream he has counted on since youth. On the eve of the unnamed narrator's thirty-fifth birthday, he finds himself broke, estranged from his white Boston Brahmin wife and three children, and living in the bedroom of a friend's six-year-old child. He has four days to come up with the money to keep his family afloat, four days to try to make some sense of his life. He's been getting by working construction jobs though he's known on the streets as “the professor,” as he was expected to make something out of his life. Alternating between his past—as a child in inner-city Boston, he was bussed to the suburbs as part of the doomed attempts at integration in the 1970s—and the present in New York City where he is trying mightily to keep his children in private schools, we learn of his mother's abuses, his father's abandonment and raging alcoholism, and the best and worst intentions of a supposedly integrated America. It is a story of the American Dream gone awry, about what it's like to feel preprogrammed to fail in life—and the urge to escape that sentence. (Adapted from the publisher's description)

Complimentary copies of the books will be sent to book group participants upon registration.

For more information check us out at www.vpa.harvard.edu
To register for a program: Phone: 617/496-1072 or Email: vpa_connections@harvard.edu

Connecting to Work

Building Credibility and Trust

Presenter: Jacqueline Collins, Partnering for Performance

Date: Tuesday, May 6, 9:00 a.m. to noon

Place: Harvard Faculty Club

Do you trust others? In what situations are you comfortable saying “yes” and in which ones do you tend to say “no”? What do you look for when considering whether another person is trustworthy? Do others trust you? Do they think you are “credible”? What are trust and credibility and how do you develop the behaviors that demonstrate you possess both?

This highly interactive workshop focuses on ways to create more productive and rewarding work relationships built on trust and credibility. Participants will learn about methods and tools helpful in fostering a more trusting environment, with a goal of enhancing creativity, collaboration, and a willingness to take risks and admit mistakes.

Connecting to Harvard

How Things Work at Harvard

Presenter: Susan Shefte, Office of the Vice President for Administration

Date: Wednesday, February 27, 12:15 p.m. to 1:15 p.m.

Place: Holyoke Center 571

What is the Corporation and what does the Board of Overseers do? How is the endowment managed, and who decides how to spend it? How are budgets set? This program will unravel many of Harvard’s mysteries in an hour. Learn about the relationships between the schools, Central Administration and Mass Hall, about how big decisions are made, and about how Harvard’s finances work.

VPA Night at Harvard Basketball

Date: Friday, March 7, Dinner at 6:00 p.m., Game at 7:00 p.m.

Place: Dinner at Dillon Field House Dillon Lounge, 2nd floor; game at Lavietes Pavillion

Bring your family and join your colleagues for a night of Crimson basketball. Under the direction of new men’s basketball coach, Tommy Amekar, the Harvard men are looking to this last weekend of conference play for a strong finish in the Ivy League. We will meet for dinner, compliments of Crimson Catering, and then cheer on the Crimson as they take on the Bears of Brown University. When signing up please indicate how many tickets you will need and whether you plan on joining us for dinner. Tickets are limited and will be first come, first served.

To Whom the Bell’s Sold: The Story of Harvard and the Danilov Monastery Bells

Presenter: Peter Riley, Harvard Real Estate Services

Date: Monday, March 10, 12:15 p.m. to 1:15 p.m.

Place: Holyoke Center 571

How are Harvard Real Estate, Lowell House, Josef Stalin, a Russian monastery and 18 bells weighing 25 tons all connected? The ancient Danilov Monastery bells, purchased from Stalinist Russia in 1930 and donated to Harvard, have hung in the Lowell House tower and the Business School’s Baker Library for 76 years. Several years ago, the Danilov Monastery was re-opened, and talks began around the return of the bells. This summer, the bells will be rung once more, then shipped to Moscow – and a new set of bells will be installed in their place. Peter Riley, project manager for the exchange, will give an insider’s account of this fascinating story – of the bells, their history, the negotiations for their return, and the complex logistics involved in the actual move.

Behind the Scenes at the Peabody Museum at Harvard University

Presenter: Diana Loren, Peabody Museum

Date: Tuesday, April 8, 12:15 p.m. to 1:15 p.m.

Place: Meet at the entrance to the Peabody Museum, 11 Divinity Avenue

Harvard University’s Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, founded in 1866, is one of the oldest museums in the world devoted to anthropology; it houses one of the most comprehensive records of human cultural history in the Western Hemisphere. With more than six million objects in the Peabody’s collections, less than 1% is exhibited, meaning the bulk of the collection is located behind-the-scenes. In the last academic year, approximately 130 classes with 2,942 students have been able to see collections housed in storage. Here’s your opportunity to view the world-class Peabody Museum collections behind-the-scenes without taking a Harvard course!

The Orienting Express: A Guided Van Tour of Harvard

Presenter: Carl Tempesta, University Operations Services

Date: Thursday, April 10, 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Place: Meet on the Mount Auburn Street side of Holyoke Center

If you can’t quite place the Quad, the Law School or the site of the proposed science building in Allston, you are not alone. Harvard is large and sprawling, and most people have some buildings – or entire schools – they cannot place. In this hour van tour, we will travel from Holyoke Center, past the River Houses and Blackstone, through the proposed Allston sites, and back to the Business School, the Quad, Radcliffe, the Law School, the museums – and everything in between. Carl Tempesta of UOS will provide an entertaining commentary throughout the tour, and participants will come away with maps, history, and interesting facts about the tour sites.