Princeton trustees adopt strategic planning framework

Princeton University’s Board of Trustees has adopted a strategic planning framework that aims to enhance the University’s core commitments to excellence in teaching and research, and to such fundamental principles as affordability, diversity, inclusivity and service, while also strengthening its capacity to have “significant and lasting impact” at a time of transformative social and technological change.

The framework identifies key goals and major priorities for the University and articulates standards and questions that will be used over the coming years to guide decisions about new programs and capital investments. While it identifies some areas where specific decisions have been made, its principal objective “is not to specify all of the University’s future initiatives, but to create a planning framework for determining them and for understanding the trade-offs among them.”

The chair of the board, Kathryn A. Hall, said the trustees “adopted the framework enthusiastically” following two years of intensive deliberations, informed by extensive background information and the work of numerous campus-based task forces. “We believe the framework provides a clear reaffirmation of Princeton’s mission and its defining characteristics, and a compelling blueprint for building on and enhancing Princeton’s capacity to achieve the highest possible standards of teaching, learning and research,” she said. “We look forward to working with President Eisgruber and other members of the University community to achieve the goals and priorities that we have articulated.”

“I am very grateful to the trustees and the many members of the University community who helped to develop a framework that builds on Princeton’s distinctive strengths, reaffirms our commitment to the liberal arts and to the value of services, and lays out a compelling vision for the University’s future,” said President Christopher L. Eisgruber.

“While the completion of this framework is a significant achievement, more planning remains ahead of us,” he said. “The framework identifies a number of goals that will require very substantial commitments of resources and significant fundraising — including expansion of the undergraduate student body and new facilities to support engineering and environmental studies — and all of the priorities it articulates will require thorough consultation, wise decision-making, and the judicious allocation of funds.”

Mission

In the framework document, the trustees reaffirm Princeton’s distinctive mission as a “residential research university committed to an expansive vision of the liberal arts” that encompasses the arts and humanities, the social sciences, the natural sciences, and engineering and the applied sciences. Incorporated into it is a mission statement and a set of defining characteristics and aspirations; the mission statement calls upon the University to...

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Valenzuela finds a place as a scholar and a mentor

E arly in the spring of her junior year at Princeton, Emile Burke grew nervous about her plans for the summer as, one by one, her friends secured the kinds of high-powered internships she had hoped to land. As the daughter of an immigrant mother and the first in her family to grow up in Los Angeles, where her parents settled after moving, she lacked the connections she needed to secure an internship and get ahead. For advice, she turned to Ali Valenzuela, an assistant professor of politics, and a mentor and the child of immigrants himself.

“We had a really honest conversation about socioeconomic class, realties and professionalism,” said Burke, a member of the Class of 2015. “That summer, Burke completed a nonprofit consulting internship at the Rescue Mission of Trenton through the University’s Community-Based Learning Initiative. Today, she is a Venture for America Fellow at a Baltimore startup that works to improve educational outcomes by combining educational, finance and technology tools.

“The conversation remains something I refer to often,” Burke said. “I hope that someday I can provide the guidance and mentorship to some lost person the way Professor Valenzuela did for me.”

Since joining the Princeton faculty in 2011, Valenzuela has investigated American electoral politics and political behavior with a focus on Latino public opinion and voter turnout, religion, race and ethnicity, and the politics of identity in the United States. Valenzuela, who is affiliated with Princeton’s Center for the Study of Democratic Politics and the Program in Latino Studies, is working on a book that examines how election campaigns that focus on wooing Latino voters can influence how those voters view their own identity and its relationship to politics.

Valenzuela has worked, too, to help a range of students find their way in the classroom, at the University and in the world. He earned his bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of California-Los Angeles and his Ph.D. in the field from Stanford University.

Valenzuela grew up in Los Angeles, where his parents settled after moving from Mexico. He points to his parents, now U.S. citizens and regular voters, as part of what sparked his academic interest in politics.

The heated political environment of California in the mid-1990s also shaped him, as he experienced firsthand the fights over Proposition 187, a measure designed to crack down on illegal immigrants in the state. A rally against the measure, which was viewed by opponents as discriminatory and ultimately was ruled unconstitutional by the state supreme court, was his first political experience.

But it was a moment far from the public debates that sticks with Valenzuela most. As a teenager, he was...

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Tim Vasen, a lecturer in theater and the Lewis Center for the Arts, and director of the Program in Theater at Princeton, died Dec. 28 following an accident in Brooklyn, N.Y. He was 51.

Vasen directed plays and taught classes at Princeton part-time starting in 1993; he joined the faculty in 2003 and in 2012 became director of the Program in Theater.

Raised in Culver City, California, Vasen earned a bachelor’s degree in American studies at Yale University in 1987, graduating summa cum laude. He later received a master of fine arts in directing from the Yale School of Drama in 1993. In spring of that year, he was hired to direct the Princeton Program in Theater and Dance and fall show — Molière’s “The Misanthrope.”

After a few years of part-time work at Princeton, Vasen pursued the itinerant life of a younger director, working in New York, Pennsylvania, California and Minnesota. From 1997 to 2003, Vasen served as resident director at Center Stage, a professional regional theater company in Baltimore.

Vasen returned to Princeton in 2003. His university directing credits include many classical plays and classic works as well as new works by emerging student playwrights at Princeton, Yale School of Drama and New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts.

Vasen’s courses have often crossed fertilized with other disciplines, including Slavic languages and literatures, music, and Helenic studies. He became a recognized authority among theater scholars and practitioners for his knowledge of and perspectives on unproduced Soviet-era projects, often in collaboration with fellow artists and scholars including native in Slavic languages and literatures, comparative literature, music, dance and musical performance. These productions, feature-ting student performers, included an unproduced 1950s collaboration between Prokofiev and Bulgakov on Pushkin’s “Boris Godunov” in 2007 and an unproduced 1950s collaboration between Prokofiev and Bulgakov on Pushkin’s “Eugene Onegin” in 2012.

As director of the Program in Theater, Vasen also helped to bring renowned theater artists and scholars to the University: Robert Wilson, Anna Halprin, Robert Lepage.

Vasen often stayed in contact with former students, directing their postgraduate work, and was instrumental in starting the Princeton Arts Alumni group with Pilar Castro Kiltz, a member of the Class of 2010.

Vasen is survived by his wife Leslie Vasen; his children, Sally Vasen Alter of Culver City, California; his father Richard Vasen of Houston, Texas; and his brother, Dan Vasen of Covina, California.

Wallace Walter, a professor of sociol-ogy at Princeton University who was beloved by generations of undergraduates for his courses in sociological theory and in race and ethnicity, died Sept. 18 in Princeton. He was 88 years old.

Wallace joined the faculty in 1971 and transferred to emeritus status in 2001. Wallace’s research spanned three broad areas: the sociology of educa- tion, social policy, and issues of ethnicity, race and nationality in human societies. He taught in the Department of Sociology and in the Program in Theater.

Wallace, who was born in 1927, served in the military from 1950 to 1952 and worked as a series of jobs before earning his Ph.D. in sociology at Columbia University in 1954 with a bachelor’s degree in Slavic languages and literatures, comparative literature and music.

In 1959, after earning his master’s degree in sociology from Atlanta University in 1953 and his Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Chicago in 1960, before arriving at Princeton, Wallace taught at Spelman College and Northwestern University and held an appoint- ment at the Russell Sage Foundation.

In the 1960s, he wrote influential pieces on peer effects on aspirations, the process of socialization for college freshmen and factors affecting student achievement.

By the late 1960s, he acquired an interest in sociological theory, which he pursued throughout his time at Princeton. His book “Principles of Social Scientific Sociology,” published in 1966, was an attempt to redirect the course of contemporary sociological thought and to promote a more general study of sociology as a natural science.

Later in his career, he turned his attention to issues of ethnicity, race and nationality. His publications in those areas include the 1997 book “The Future of Ethnicity, Race, and Nationality” and a major review article on “A Darwinian Theory of Ethnicity, Race,” and Nationalism.

Wallace continued to write throughout retirement, focusing on German sociologist Max Weber as well as Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx.


Wallace served as an adviser to students’ independent work gained notice in 2008 when the presidential campaign of Barack Obama sparked interest in the Princeton career of his wife, Michelle, an associate professor of government.

Wallace, who was born in 1927, served as a member of the George Washington University, where she has been a fellow since 2012. Stoddard studies evolutionary biology. She earned her B.A., her master’s degree at Karazin Kharkiv National University and her Ph.D. at the Institute for Low Temperature Physics, Kharkov.

Mary Caswell Stoddard, in ecology and evolutionary biology, will join the faculty in summer 2016 from Harvard University, where she has been a fellow since 2012. Stoddard studies integrative, behavioral and evolutionary biology. She earned her B.S. at Yale University and her Ph.D. at Cambridge.

Wallace is survived by his wife Leslie Vasen; his children, Sally Vasen Alter of Culver City, California; his father Richard Vasen of Houston, Texas; and his brother, Dan Vasen of Covina, California.
S imon Levin, Princeton University’s George M. Moffett Professor of Biology and renowned ecologist and evolutionary biologist, will receive a National Medal of Science, the nation’s highest honor for scientists. Levin will be honored at a White House ceremony in early 2016 along with eight fellow Medal of Science recipients and eight recipients of the National Medal of Technology and Innovation.

“The president has called for a doubling of the number of Americans receiving the nation’s highest scientific honor. I am thrilled to be among recipients who have received the National Medal of Science. Two Princeton alumni also were recognized. Michael Artin, a professor emeritus of mathematics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who received his bachelor’s degree in mathematics in 1955, will receive a Medal of Science. Cato Laurencin, a professor of orthopedic surgery at the University of Connecticut who received his bachelor’s degree in chemical engineering from Princeton in 1980, will receive a Medal of Technology and Innovation,” Levin said. The National Medal of Science was established by Congress in 1959 and is administered by the National Science Foundation. The National Medal of Technology and Innovation was created in 1980 under the auspices of the Department of Commerce’s Patent and Trademark Office.

Levin wins National Medal of Science for unraveling ecological complexity

MORGAN KELLY

rubenstein, who was chair for 1991 to 1994 and has often collaborated with Levin. “Simon Levin is truly an amaz- ing person and scientist. He has had a unique ability to harness the power of theory to enrich thinking and descriptive sci- ence from one intellectual domain to another,” said Rubenstein.

Levin joined Princeton’s faculty from Cornell University in 1992. He has received numerous awards throughout his career, including the Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement in 2004; the Zoological Society of Ameri- ca’s Eminent Ecologist Award in 2010; and the 2005 Kyoto Prize in Biological Sciences from the Inouye Foundation of Japan. Levin is a member of numer- ous national and international honorary societies, including the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (1992) and the National Academy of Sciences (2009).

Levin received his bachelor’s degree in mathematics from Johns Hopkins University in 1961, and his doctorate in mathematics from the University of Maryland-College Park in 1964. He was a National Science Foundation postdoctoral researcher at the Univer- sity of California-Berkeley from 1964 to 1965.

Levin’s award brings to 21 the number of Princeton faculty members who have received the National Medal of Science.

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“Visiting the News at Princeton webpage at www.princeton.edu/main/news for recent stories, such as:

- Randall Kennedy, a Princeton alumnus, former trustee, and the Michael R. Klein Professor of Law at Harvard Law School, has been selected as the speaker for the University’s 2016 Baccalaureate ceremony.

- Princeton University has offered admission to 785 students from a pool of 4,229 candidates who applied through single-choice early action for the Class of 2020. The pool was the largest in the last five years, representing a 9.8 percent increase over last year’s early applicant pool. The admitted students represent 33 countries, 46 states and the District of Columbia. Forty-two percent of the admitted students are U.S. students with a parent who is an employee of Princeton, and 42 percent of admitted students receive some form of financial aid (need or merit-based)."
The University community, particularly undergraduates, has become much more diverse during the past 30 years. However, progress has been slower among faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students. Faculty from certain groups, particularly underrepresented minorities, have not increased very much since 1980 among our faculty, postdoctoral and graduate student ranks.

There are a number of factors at Princeton, within higher education more broadly, that influence our ability to diversify the faculty. We recognize these challenges and continue to develop new ways to encourage more diversity among faculty, as well as postdoctoral fellows and graduate students.

What are the challenges to diversifying the faculty? There is often discussion about the need to diversify the academic pipeline of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows who pursue professional careers.

Prentice: The academic pipeline is very relevant for understanding how we can move forward and where we can make progress. When we talk about the academic pipeline, we are typically referring to the fact that there are not a large number of underrepresented minorities pursuing Ph.D.s in academic fields that Princeton covers. In order to diversify, we need a strong pool of candidates from which to choose when we hire our faculty. Leaders across higher education need to think holistically about the pipeline and underrepresented individuals to pursue academic careers by going to graduate school and earning advanced degrees.

Lee: We have diversified the faculty in many ways, though some may ask why the pace has not been faster. Princeton has committed substantial financial resources to diversifying the faculty. The part that takes the longest is finding the best candidates for these faculty positions — again, the academic pipeline is a challenge. It also is about mobilizing the entire University community to support this work. The academic departments lead the searches for faculty within their departments, so we want to incentivize and encourage academic departments to include diverse candidates in their pools.

Prentice: The dean of the faculty’s office does not hire faculty. The people who hire faculty are the other faculty within the academic departments. We need leaders and partners within the academic departments. Departments know best their own opportunities and challenges to diversifying. And, most importantly, they know the kind of diversity that will enhance what they do.

What programs has the University implemented to diversify faculty, postdoctoral fellows and graduate students? What specific efforts are underway?

Lee: My office coordinates and approves funding for many of the initiatives, continues to work with the Office of the Dean of the Faculty, particularly Office of Human Resources, Graduate School and academic departments on a number of proposals and pilot summer access programs. On the faculty side specifically, the University has made substantial and ongoing funding commitments that diversify the faculty, with diversity understood broadly. This also includes significant funding continuing to diversify the postdoctoral program.

Prentice: In addition, we have a Faculty Advisory Committee on Diversity, which is pursuing a number of efforts. All academic departments were asked to develop a comprehensive strategy to increase diversity with five- and 10-year outlooks. The plans included a consideration of the opportunities and hiring directions the department will have, and how they plan to increase diversity within the department. The advisory committee is now reviewing those department plans and pulling out the best ideas to feed back to all departments. We want to help department leaders learn from each other and work together to make progress in this challenging endeavor.

Specific faculty, postdoctoral and graduate student efforts include:

FACULTY

• In February 2015, the Office of the Dean of the Faculty announced it would make available to departments funding equivalent to 10 full-time faculty positions for faculty who diversify the faculty. As departments typically share in funding the new position, the goal is 15 to 20 new hires and results from this initiative. Hiring for these positions is ongoing within diverse departments.

• In May 2015, the University launched the Provost’s Fund for Cultural Diversity, which supports current faculty members, faculty visitors and teaching postdoctoral candidates to fill curricular gaps in cultural studies. Initial round of funding has helped support:

— A postdoctoral research associate in the Program in American Studies focused on scholarship within the areas of race, ethnicity and migration.

— A postdoctoral research associate in the Program in Gender and Sexual Studies with a focus on the field of disability studies.

— A postdoctoral research associate recently appointed in the Program in American Studies and the Program in Gender and Sexual Studies to work at the intersection of race/ethnicity and gender/sexuality studies.

— A postdoctoral research associate in the Program in Anthropology who focuses on transnational aspects of identity and cultural and community.

— A postdoctoral research associate in the Global Health Program (GHP) to support a new initiative on identity, culture and health in the United States.

A three-year pilot research grant in GHP to allow departments to experiment with how identity and culture impact vulnerability and health in the United States.

— A postdoctoral research associate in the Program in Gender and Sexual Studies to support current faculty.

• The Office of the Dean of the Faculty continues to work closely with academic departments to support faculty searches that may yield more female and underrepresented minority candidates. This includes providing increased resources and support to departments; encouraging departments to develop “watch lists” to track promising young scholars in their respective fields; and identifying recruitment and retention incentives, such as the University’s family-friendly policies for faculty balancing careers and families.

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS

• The University is providing greater oversight of postdoctoral staff positions, including increased mentoring and training to help postdoctoral fellows learn academic careers and to strengthen the sense of community among postdoctoral fellows on campus.

• The creation of new, three-year postdoctoral staff positions to increase the intellectual diversity in the classroom. The postdoctoral research assistant positions funded by the Provost’s Fund for Cultural Studies (mentioned above) are all teaching positions. Each postdoctoral fellow will teach two courses per academic year.

• The development of a competitive, honorific fellowship to attract top women and underrepresented postdoctoral fellows to Princeton.

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Graduate School has created a new position: assistant dean for diversity initiatives in the natural sciences. The assistant dean will support the recruitment and success of students underrepresented in the University’s graduate programs in the natural sciences. The assistant dean will have a particular focus on the life sciences and will also work closely with former student member Alison Gimme, who led a graduate diversity program for the Department of Molecular Biology.

• The University is supporting existing academic pipeline programs, such as the Princeton Summer Undergraduate Research Experience (PSURE), and also experimenting with new pilot programs in astrophysics, physics and politics that encourage underrepresented students to pursue a doctoral degree in these fields. The Office of Politics has launched an Emerging Scholars in Political Science Program (ESP) to provide fellowships to earned bachelor’s degrees at other universities to spend up to two years conducting research under the direction of a Princeton faculty member. The program will allow underrepresented students to develop new ideas, and prepare for graduate school through intensive research, coursework and mentoring.

• The implementation of improvements to the recruitment and selection process for applicants to PhD programs, including a holistic application review process and the Graduate School’s enhanced relationship with academic departments.

What do you see for the future?

Prentice: Diversifying the faculty, postdoctoral fellows and graduate students who may one day become faculty, is a full community endeavor. It is also something that requires constant attention and sustained effort. If we are going to make progress, we have to engage departments and people across campus in an ongoing effort.

Lee: Lasting change does not happen overnight. Many, many different things must happen over a long period of time to make our campus a truly diverse and inclusive environment, not one bullet at a time. It is a full community effort that has been going on for a long time and will continue to go on with many people working together in various ways.
Larry Bernard has been named director of communications for the U.S. Department of Energy’s Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory (PPPL), effective Dec. 14. PPPL is the nation’s leading center for plasma physics, fusion energy research and the science and technology of magnetic confinement. He will lead the PPPL communications team and create and implement a plan to increase the visibility of the laboratory, especially its leadership role in the science and technology of magnetic fusion energy research and the science of plasma physics.

“I am thrilled that Tim will lead our strategic communications effort and that he is a strong supporter of the laboratory’s Plasma Fusion Center and are about to embark on an immensely compelling research program. Communications efforts and those of our other cutting-edge programs will broaden and deepen awareness of the laboratory’s Plasma Fusion Center and our fusion fusion facility, and are about to embark on an immensely compelling research program. Communications efforts and those of our other cutting-edge programs will broaden and deepen awareness of the laboratory’s Plasma Fusion Center and our fusion facility,” said PPPL Director David McComas.

In addition to his work at PPPL, Bernard has also served as a graduate assistant at the Massachusetts Institute for Technology’s Rainbow Lounge, a teacher at Bard College’s Pre-College Program, and a guest lecturer at Barnard’s Women’s Leadership Institute for Higher Education.”

McComas earned a bachelor’s degree in plasma physics. He will advise PPPL fusion energy research and the science and technology of magnetic confinement. He will also coordinate the Laboratory’s Whiteness Series and the Unpacking Queer Laboratory. He will advise PPPL fusion energy research and the science and technology of magnetic confinement.

“Larry arrives at an exciting time for the laboratory,” said PPPL Director David McComas. “We have completed construction of the National Spherical Torus Experiment-Upgrade, our major project. Communicating its findings across the nation. We welcome Larry to PPPL. He will bring years of deep experience and a commitment to the University’s programs at Los Alamos.”

David McComas, an executive leader in magnetic confinement fusion projects and programs, has been named vice president for PPPL. McComas also has an impressive record of research, while also having a demonstrated record of successful management and operational experience.

As CISO at Princeton, Sherry will be responsible for developing a comprehensive information security policy and strategy regarding matters of information security. As a member of the Office of Information Technology’s leadership team, he will play a critical role in addressing institutional issues of security policy and practice, data governance, risk assessment, and business continuity planning. Within this role, Sherry will serve in several key capacities, including as a consulting member of the Information Security Advisory Committee, the University’s primary vendor risk management, and as an independent member of the University’s executive leadership team as chief strategic communications officer.

Sherry has served as CISO at Brown since 2008. From 2001 to 2008, he was a vice president for enterprise identity and access management, and a senior vice president for enterprise information security at Citizens Bank/Citizens Financial Group, in Providence, Rhode Island. He was also part of a security startup, DataCom, which was part of the first managed network security firms in the country. Sherry also spent 15 years with the United States Postal Service, where he led a team that was a leading information technology and national public and private organizations. Sherry has also been a member of the University’s executive leadership team as chief strategic communications officer.

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Princeton University honors King's legacy, ongoing quest for racial justice

By Emily Aronson

P rinceton University honored Martin Luther King Jr. during a 3-hour 2016 ceremony highlighting the civil rights leader's message of equality and the importance of racial unity.

At the ceremony on Monday, Feb. 18, in Richardson Auditorium, Christopher Achen, the Roger E. Martin University Professor, noted that "Dr. King's vision is still relevant today, as we face continuing challenges to racial equality."

Achen highlighted four key principles of King's legacy:

1. The power of nonviolence: "It is a powerful weapon, a weapon for the disarmed."

2. The importance of education: "King recognized that education is the key to unlocking the doors of opportunity."

3. The role of economic justice: "King understood that economic inequality is a root cause of social injustice."

4. The power of unity: "King emphasized the importance of unity and the power of collective action."

Achen concluded by saying, "Dr. King's legacy is not just about the past; it is about the present and the future. Let us continue to strive for a world that is free from racial injustice and discrimination."

Valenzuela

Continued from page 1

running laps with his mother at a community center in nearly his entire life. A woman they didn't know made an appearance in Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall. In his introductory remarks, President Christopher L. Eisgruber said recent student activism is part of a struggle for genuine equality on college campuses and across the country.

“We should care about making our college campuses more inclusive and more fully committed to real mutual understanding,” Dr. King said, “and, more fundamentally, we should care about making this true for the country.”

Eisgruber also noted that Dr. King urged us to do, about what he called the ‘other America’ — about the Americas where so few are so fortunate as we are on this campus, about the Americas where people struggle to find decent jobs, to get health care, to educate their children, to be treated fairly and to live without fear.”

Eisgruber also noted that “Only by making that struggle our own can we celebrate and honor Dr. King in a way that is meaningful.”

Keynote speaker Wesly Harris, the Charles Stark Draper Professor of Aeronautics and Astronautics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), spoke of his experiences growing up in the 1940s and 1950s, and how a personal encounter with King shaped his life. "He was my model and my inspira- tion in the celebration of the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is an honor," Harris said. "He inspired me to do so much, much, more, I remain grateful to Dr. King." Harris is the first African American to receive a Ph.D. in engineering at Princeton, in 1958. Among many positions he's held at MIT, he served as associate provost for faculty equity from 2008-13 and as head of the Depa-
Strategic plan

Continued from page 1

continue to advance “learning through scholarship, research, and teaching of unsurpassed quality, with an emphasis on undergraduate and doctoral education that is distinctive among the world’s great universities, and with a pervasive commitment to serve the nation and the world.”

Strategic priorities

The framework identifies the University’s strategic priorities under three broad headings:

Under “supporting excellence in the University’s core mission,” the framework calls for:

• sustaining a world-class faculty in every field and providing faculty members with the support they need to maintain Princeton’s distinctive combination of teaching and research and enable faculty and departments to seize key research opportunities.

• continued efforts to attract and support talented faculty, students and staff from a wide range of demographic groups and to enhance the diversity and inclusivity of the entire campus community, “at all levels and in all fields.”

• ensuring that Princeton’s residential life programs are vibrant and inclusive for all students.

• reaffirming Princeton’s “signature commitment” to affordability and ensuring that all students on financial aid are able to attend Princeton without requiring loans and to share fully in the educational opportunities it offers.

• providing stipends and other support that allow Princeton to attract the best graduate students and enable them to pursue their studies successfully.

• adjusting the size of the graduate student body selectively and strategically, with an expectation of incremental growth over time as the University adds faculty members and expands into new areas of scholarship and research.

• stewarding and developing the University’s buildings and grounds in ways that preserve Princeton’s distinctive character and strengths, advance its strategic priorities, and optimize the extent to which its facilities support and advance its educational and research mission.

Under “meeting Princeton’s responsibilities for leadership in research and education,” the framework calls for:

• beginning to plan for 125 more undergraduates per class (leading to an additional (seventh) residential college with 6.25 percent. (The lower level of the target range remains at 4 percent.) The trustees made this change to accommodate increasing market volatility and reduce the likelihood that future generations would be favored over present ones or that financial capital would be favored over human and physical capital.

The trustees noted that the current spending rate is close to the low end of the range, and concluded that the University should be willing to make greater use of its financial capital to enhance its human capital, physical capital and mission at times when it is able to act strategically. The trustees agreed to consider proposals for increased spending from the endowment in the coming years to give the University greater capacity to co-invest with donors to achieve its strategic priorities.

Two-year process

The strategic planning process began in January 2014. Campus task forces were formed to deliberate on a broad range of topics; a number of these continue to meet and new ones may still be formed. The trustees met with representatives of many of the task forces and considered preliminary reports from them in preparing the planning framework. (Completed task force reports are posted on the strategic planning website, www.princeton.edu/strategic-plan.) One goal of the planning process was to generate more proposals than could be implemented to allow for full appreciation of the tradeoffs involved in proceeding with any particular proposal.

Guided by the planning framework, the administration will review the task force recommendations with an expectation that some will be pursued further, some will not, and some will get only if there is sufficient philanthropic support to pay for them. Proposals that require a significant commitment of resources will be brought to the trustees through their usual processes and both the administration and the board will evaluate proposals on the basis of criteria that are outlined in the report.

A liberal arts university for the 21st century

The framework concludes by noting that “among the world’s great universities and colleges, Princeton University has long been recognized for its distinctive model and mission. In an era when many other research institutions have become more like universities, Princeton has remained resolutely focused on the excellence of its programs in the arts and humanities, natural sciences, the social sciences, and engineering and the applied sciences. In times when many people measure the quality of universities through metrics that privilege size or quantity, Princeton has instead emphasized the uniformly high quality of its faculty and students and the vibrancy of the personalized contact made possible by the human dimensions of its campus and its educational enterprise. Where many of the biggest growth and prestige gains are likely to come in the future, Princeton remains very much an arts and science institution.”

Who: The framework attributes the financial strength of the University principally to the generosity of its donors and exceptional stewardship of their gifts through the endowment. Whereas endowment payout provided only about 14 percent of the University’s operating revenue in 1985, it now accounts for 47 percent. Princeton uses its endowment payout every year to support current programs as well as new initiatives and capital projects.

As part of the planning process, the trustees last summer modified the University’s endowment spending policy by increasing the upper level of the target range for annual payout from the endowment from 5.75 percent of its value to 6.25 percent. (The lower level of the target range remains at 4 percent.) The trustees made this change to accommodate increasing market volatility and reduce the likelihood that future generations would be favored over present ones or that financial capital would be favored over human and physical capital.

The trustees noted that the current spending rate is close to the low end of the range, and concluded that the University should be willing to make greater use of its financial capital to enhance its human capital, physical capital and mission at times when it is able to act strategically. The trustees agreed to consider proposals for increased spending from the endowment in the coming years to give the University greater capacity to co-invest with donors to achieve its strategic priorities.

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Christina Riehl, a Princeton alumna and now assistant professor of ecology and environmental biology, first became interested in nesting behavior of the species Greater Anis in Panama.

Riehl’s decision to study these birds was “a combination of my own personal interest and serendipity,” she said. In graduate school, she went to Panama for the first time to study animal movement with her Ph.D. adviser Martin Wikelski, a former Princeton associate professor of ecology and environmental biology who is now the director of the Max Planck Institute for Ornithology in Germany. She was surprised to find that, although greater anis were very common, no one had studied them in the wild. “I knew they were a terrible subject for the study of animal movement because they don’t go anywhere, but they turned out to be a great subject for the study of social behavior,” Riehl said.

One example of the birds’ fascinating social behavior is that the communally breeding pairs of Greater Anis are not genetically related to one another. “This is unusual, and intriguing,” Riehl said. “The benefits of cooperative breeding are generally assumed to be through kin selection — an individual helps parent its own genes by helping relatives that share those genes.”

Although greater anis sharing a nest are related, the groups that are formed are not related to each other. Rather, groups tend to be formed or joined together by snakes, which attack up to 70 percent of a nest group’s eggs before being laid in the communal nest. Riehl found a strong correlation between the size of the nest group and the likelihood that the group will be able to compete for a high-quality nesting spot, such as one in a bush or emergent tree surrounded by water. Snakes rarely swim to these isolated nests.

Riehl said she first became interested in biology “solely through birds.” She was an avid bird watcher by age 11.

“The thing I wanted to do more than anything was to go into the wild,” Riehl said. “I knew they were a terrible subject for the study of animal movement because they don’t go anywhere, but they turned out to be a great subject for the study of social behavior.”

This early passion led Riehl to start thinking of careers that would allow her to spend most of her time watching birds. As she learned more about their behavior, she recognized that understanding the evolution of sociality and cooperation is the problem that fascinates her most.

After receiving her doctorate from Princeton in 2011, Riehl entered Harvard University’s Society of Fellows to continue her research as a postdoctoral fellow. She is excited to have returned to the department where her work has been featured.

“I think one of the things that is most special about Princeton is the independence it affords its researchers and the amount of time and support that is given to them,” Riehl said. “It’s the place where you can work with undergraduate and graduate students and the amount of support and resources available.

Riehl is excited about the opportunity to do research and teach. In the fall, she taught an undergraduate course in behavioral ecology that introduced students to the array of behaviors found in the animal kingdom and challenges students to think about why behaviors occur and how they might have evolved. The first assignment for the class asked students to go outside and observe a wild animal for 30 minutes, record the animal’s behavior, and then think critically about what they had seen.

Riehl looks forward to developing new courses, including field courses for undergraduates, and bringing students to Panama to be involved in her work.

Riehl’s research comes from the Princeton Program for Latin American Studies, the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute and the Harvard Society of Fellows.

It takes a village: Riehl studies communal nesting in birds

Photo by Christina Riehl

A greater anis is tripped and fitted with leg bands for identification before being released. Riehl’s work in Panama was the first to document egg-ejection behavior in greater anis and to explain why birds share nests despite high reproductive competition.

and document egg-ejection behavior in greater anis (Cotopaxi maguari), and to explain why the birds share nests despite high reproductive competition. At the time, Riehl was a graduate student in Princeton’s Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. This fall, four years later, she returned to Princeton as an assistant professor, and a main focus of her research is to explore the reproductive costs and benefits of group nesting. In the process, Riehl hopes to inspire her students to investigate animal behavior at a deeper level.

Riehl’s research focuses on the evolution of cooperation and the greater anis’ extraordinary breeding behavior. Many species of crows lay their eggs in the nests of other species, but anis nest communally. Up to eight individuals — four breeding pairs — construct a single nest in which all the females lay their eggs, and all group members participate in incubation, defense and food delivery.

Reproductive competition within the group is intense, however; before laying her first egg, each female ejects any eggs that have already been laid in the communal nest. Previous researchers found that if a female stops ejecting eggs once she has laid her first egg, presumably to avoid accidentally removing her own. As a result, the first female to begin laying eggs in the communal nest invariably loses the last egg — sometimes several — whereas the last female to lay loses none.

Anis’ nests are built to study their eggs are quite large and it often occurs 24 to 48 hours after the first egg is laid, once the other females have had time to come back to the nest and see that the egg is there. But the battery life on Riehl’s video cameras was much shorter. She had to play a guessing game of when to put the camera in place.

Riehl and her graduate assistants tried to predict where and when the egg-ejection behavior would occur. There were several false alarms. One day, Riehl put up a camera, came back and saw that the egg was gone, and thought that she had finally captured the ejection on film. But when she reviewed the video, she saw that a snake had eaten the egg instead. After much persistence, Riehl finally captured the egg-ejection footage. “It was really a special moment,” she said. The video revealed the significant amount of time and energy it takes for the female to roll the egg out of the nest. The eggs are quite large and it usually takes a couple of tries.

The behavior that Riehl was finally able to capture on film had been proposed by earlier researchers in the 1970s, and it had been documented in two closely related species. However, Riehl was the first to confirm it in greater anis using both video and genetic evidence. “I think there was some satisfaction in seeing established behavioral ecologists who were pleased to see the earlier findings both replicated and extended. It’s a real thrill,” Riehl said.

Riehl said that she decided to study these birds was “a combination of my own personal interest and serendipity,” she said. In graduate school, she went to Panama for the first time to study animal movement with her Ph.D. adviser Martin Wikelski, a former Princeton associate professor of ecology and environmental biology who is now the director of the Max Planck Institute for Ornithology in Germany. She was surprised to find that, although greater anis were very common, no one had studied them in the wild. “I knew they were a terrible subject for the study of animal movement because they don’t go anywhere, but they turned out to be a great subject for the study of social behavior,” Riehl said.

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