

New Faculty Institute 2017 Transcript

September 18, 2017

Welcome Remarks

JUDITH SINGER: Thank you all for coming out this afternoon for the 10th annual New Faculty Institute. This is the 10th year we have been hosting these events for new faculty from all across Harvard University.

I'm Judy Singer. I'm the Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity. And I'm also a professor of statistics at the Graduate School of Education.

I will come back and make a few remarks, but we're privileged to have Provost Alan Garber joining us. And I thought rather than me start and then turn over to Alan, I'm just going to turn it over to Alan to come and make a few remarks. And he'll also take some questions from you-- if you wonder what a provost does, which is often a question that people wonder.

So Alan, why don't you come on over.

ALAN GARBER: Can you hear me OK without the mic? Half the room? OK. I'll use the mic.

OK. Thanks.

First of all, let me thank Judy and her office for organizing this event. It's an example of the wonderful work that her office does. And I'm going to be pretty brief in my welcoming comments. But there's a reason why I want to emphasize what her office does.

You all came here for different reasons-- presumably, because of the professional opportunities. But what that means in each case, I'm sure, is different among you. For some of you, it's about your immediate colleagues. For some of you, it's about the students in your department, perhaps in your school. It may have a lot to do with the kinds of collaborations that you can have. And you're also at different levels of seniority. Some of you are beginning assistant professors. Some of you are tenured faculty here at Harvard.

So what that means is I'm not going to take your time by telling you what you need to do to get tenure. And by the way, when the provost says that, it sounds almost like it's a contract or a guarantee or something, so I'm not going to

go there. But there is one common bit of advice that I'd like to give all of you, which is to truly take advantage of what Harvard University has to offer.

Well, what do I mean by that?

There's the obvious kinds of resources that you have available to you for your research, and for your teaching and so on. But for many people, it's so easy to become fully engaged in what's going on in your school or your department that you might lose sight of what's going on in the rest of the university, and how you might benefit from becoming involved in the university more broadly.

And in fact, today's event, where we bring together people from all over the university, is actually not as common as I would like it to be. And this is part of what Judy's office works on-- to bring together faculty from across the university.

Now, especially if you're a beginning assistant professor, you may be thinking, well, don't I need to worry about getting my papers published, my research done, all the other things that you need to do to get your career off the ground. That's all necessary. But if you don't take advantage of the fact that you have colleagues with expertise in virtually every academic endeavor, who, if nothing else, will educate you in a very broad sense-- if you don't take advantage of that, then you're missing out of a lot of what makes Harvard such a special place.

There are extraordinary people here in every field and extraordinary resources. And we have dinners for faculty, other kinds of events, to make sure that there are opportunities to get to know people outside your area.

Occasionally, new research collaborations form. Often, friendships form. You have a lot in common with people who aren't in your immediate area. I urge you to seek opportunities to take advantage of that.

It's not only about faculty. It's also about sometimes sharing students for collaboration. Students and postdocs-- as many of you who are experienced, tenured faculty certainly know that-- are often the glue that will hold together interdisciplinary collaborations.

There is another part of Harvard that I would urge you not to overlook, and that's our many cultural institutions and resources. I'll just mention a few that report to the provost's office. There is the-- well, this isn't exactly a cultural institution, but the Harvard Library. It's the largest university library in the world. And when I say library, by the way, some of you are probably surprised I used the singular. It's many libraries, many different buildings. There are many, many treasures to be found in the library.

There is the Harvard Art Museums. By some measures, it's the sixth largest art museum in the country. And it's an unusual museum. It's quite new. It only opened a few years ago. And it's set up to be a teaching museum. You will

find that, for many of you, it can be a resource for your teaching. And they support various kinds of courses in many subjects, not only those related to, say, art— or even, not only the humanities.

And then there's the ART, the American Repertory Theater, which is a theater that every year typically gets a Tony Award for a play that was developed there and is brought to New York.

So I could go on and on. There's many different kinds of musical opportunities, and so on. This is an amazing community that's just full of life and vitality. And if you don't take advantage of all there is to offer, it's not as though you will have a bad experience, but you really missed out. So I urge you to get to know your colleagues, and especially today, take the opportunities to get to know the people who are here.

And then, I hope I'll get a chance to talk with you again about what we look for to make tenure decisions. But that's a story for another day.

You have a great panel here to hear from, who will be able to tell you a lot more than I can about how you manage the various demands on your time, how you manage life as a faculty member. They are people who are in the thick of it, at a somewhat different stage of their careers than I am.

So I don't want to take much more time. But let me ask if there are any questions or comments.

Well, I hope this means that all your questions have already been answered.

Well, let me just turn it over to Judy. Do you want to introduce the panel?

JUDITH SINGER: Yep.

ALAN GARBER: Oh, you're going to have [INAUDIBLE].

JUDITH SINGER: Thank you, Alan. Alan has to run off to his next meeting. One of the things provosts do is they make opening remarks.

[LAUGHTER]

So let me just make a few comments about Harvard in general. And then I'm going to have everybody go around the room and introduce themselves, very briefly, and then turn it over to my colleague Elizabeth Ancarana, the Assistant Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity, who will moderate and facilitate the panel.

As I said earlier, I've been here awhile. I actually started as a faculty member in 1984 when I was three years old. And it was pretty amazing that they hired three-year-olds at that time. But Harvard didn't have a tenure track. So you could hire a three-year-old, and you wouldn't expect that they would actually grow up to get tenure. I did get tenure

in 1993. And I want to share with you a few lessons that I've learned more from my provostial perch, probably in contrast to some of the things that you'll hear from some of our colleagues here.

One is about the size of the university. Harvard is a very, very large place. So we have, not counting our affiliated hospitals, where there are another 12,000 faculty-- I did not add zeros. There are 12,000 faculty in the Harvard affiliated hospitals. There are 1,500 ladder faculty at the university. About 1,100 of them are tenured. That's nearly 3/4 of the ladder faculty are tenured. And the remaining are assistant and associate professors-- tenure track faculty.

The language of having a tenure track is relatively new at Harvard. Each of you were hired with the expectation that we would nurture your careers here. And we would like to see you succeed here. That doesn't mean everybody will, but what it means is we have an investment. It's very much in contrast to what happened when I was initially hired, which was assume you will not get tenure, which basically is a great way to get people to not invest in the institution.

And so part of what we've done-- this is entirely enlightened self-interest. And the enlightened self interest is by having a tenure track, we are more likely to hire faculty at the assistant and

associate professor level who will invest in their careers here, invest in their teaching-- we do take teaching seriously here-- and contribute to the environment and the life of the university.

The university is also increasingly diverse. You'd never know it by seeing portraits in these rooms-- they're mostly dead, white men hanging around on the walls-- but we are increasingly diverse. Right now about 30% of the ladder faculty are female. About 22% are minorities. Your entering class, the people around the room, is over 40% female and 27% minority.

That's very different from the Harvard of the past. And that's part of a conscious decision of working towards inclusive excellence. We think we can be a stronger faculty by being a more diverse faculty, and by welcoming voices that previously might not be a part of Harvard University, but whose voices we really want here at the table.

The third thing that I'll say is much more different recently is a push towards what President Faust calls One Harvard. And the One Harvard mantra is very different from the every tub on its own bottom mantra. So Harvard is a proud institution. It's been around for a long time. It's been pretty successful and it has operated, still operates, on what's called a tub system. Each one of the schools is independent. It sets its own tuition. It has its own endowment.

One of the things that President Faust wanted to foster, and we have every expectation that the next president of Harvard will continue to foster, is the notion of One Harvard. And this event is a very clear illustration of the One Harvard ethos. We hope that you had orientations within your own school. But we also want to welcome you to being the faculty of the university.

And as Alan mentioned, our office hosts a lot of events during the academic year. Some of them are like this, more professional development. Some of them are purely social. You heard Alan mention the American Repertory Theater. We often do faculty nights at the ART. We did one last week for WARHOLCAPOTE, which is playing at the American Repertory Theater. And having seen it, I suspect this, too, is heading to Broadway if not a Tony Award.

And as part of these faculty nights, we have somebody from the production. Last week, we had Rob Roth, who was the writer of the script of WARHOLCAPOTE, come in and do a talk just for the faculty with Q&A, and get a sense of what's involved in the artistic production.

We're also planning, later this semester, media training for faculty. Some of you have never been approached by a reporter. And it's important to know how to think about presenting yourself and presenting your research, and also how to work with the public information officers in your schools to get word out about your research. And so we're going to be hosting an event in early November.

This is all, by way of saying, is don't delete my emails They have lots of interesting things in them.

And I'm going to stop there, and ask people to go around the room and introduce themselves.

Panelist Introductions

ELIZABETH ANCARANA: It's so great to see you all here today. Thanks so much for coming. This is a large group, and we're just delighted to have you here. As Judy mentioned, my name is Elizabeth Ancarana, and I'm the Assistant Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity.

I have the pleasure of introducing our four faculty panelists to you today. We have four panelists, who will each talk for about 10 or 15 minutes on various aspects of work and life, and navigating your scholarly career at Harvard.

I'm going to start with Michael Luca. Mike is the Lee J. Styslinger III Associate Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School. Mike's research uses field experiments and observational data to understand how online platforms are impacting the world, how their data can improve our understanding of society and the economy, and how to better design the platforms themselves.

His recent research has sought to understand how data from Yelp can improve our understanding of the minimum wage, how Airbnb's design choices have facilitated discrimination, and how to rethink government disclosure policies for the digital age.

At HBS, he teaches a doctoral course on field experiments and an MBA course on applying behavioral insights for the social good.

Mike earned his Bachelor's of Science from SUNY Albany and his PhD from Boston University.

JUDITH SINGER: Mike and I both graduated from SUNY Albany. We're quite happy about that.

[LAUGHTER]

ELIZABETH ANCARANA: From his perspective as a newly promoted associate professor, Mike will talk about navigating Harvard in your department, and pleasures of your faculty position.

Next to Mike--

MICHAEL LUCA: I didn't choose the topic.

[LAUGHTER]

ELIZABETH ANCARANA: Next to Mike is Emily Balskus. Emily is the Morris Kahn Associate Professor of Chemistry and Chemical Biology in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, integrating knowledge of microbiology with an understanding of biochemical logic and organic chemistry. Emily's research aims to discover, understand, and manipulate microbial metabolism, which is essential to life on Earth. Her work focuses on deciphering the chemical mechanisms by which microorganisms living in and on the human body influence health and disease, as well as developing approaches for manipulating functions of human-associated microbial communities.

The Balskus Lab is uncovering new metabolic pathways in enzymes and microbial genome sequencing data, and devising strategies for integrating synthetic organic chemistry with microbial metabolism to modify cellular metabolites.

Emily earned her bachelor's degree from Williams College and her PhD from Harvard.

Emily, from her perspective as an associate professor, will talk about mentoring, setting priorities, and resources for your scholarship at Harvard.

Next to Emily, we have our two tenured faculty members.

We have Sara Bleich. Sara is a professor of public health policy at the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health and the Department of Health Policy and Management. She's also the Carol K. Pforzheimer Professor at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study.

Sara's scholarship lies at the nexus of health policy and health services research. Her work provides evidence to support policy alternatives for obesity prevention and control, particularly among populations of higher risk for this disease. A signature theme throughout her research is an interest in asking simple yet meaningful questions about the complex problem of obesity, which can fill important gaps in the literature.

During the Obama administration, Sara also served as a White House Fellow, where she was a senior policy advisor to the US Department of Agriculture and the first lady's Let's Move! initiative.

Sara holds a bachelor's degree from Columbia and a PhD from Harvard.

Sara is going to focus, from her vantage point as a recently tenured faculty member, on establishing your reputation as a scholar, navigating the new tenure review process, mentoring and your life at Harvard, and some other tips.

And finally, we have Jason Mitchell. Jason is a professor of psychology in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. And he's also taken on the role as faculty director of Harvard's Program in General Education.

Jason uses neural imaging techniques to study the brain basis of human social interaction, especially how we make sense of the thoughts, feelings, and personalities of those around us. Situated in the field of social cognitive neuroscience, his research makes use of new imaging techniques developed by cognitive neuroscientists to illuminate, in innovative ways, long-standing questions in social psychology around how the brain processes information.

His experimental work has produced four general discoveries around social cognition, understanding the minds of others, our future self, and altruistic behavior.

Jason received his bachelor's and master's degrees from Yale University and his PhD from Harvard.

From his vantage point as a tenured faculty member, Jason will talk about teaching, teaching resources, and his experience teaching at Harvard.

So welcome. And why don't we begin with you, Mike. Mike?

Faculty Panel

Speaker 1: Michael Luca

MICHAEL LUCA: Great. Good afternoon, everybody.

I just wanted to start by saying that I'm honored and humbled to have the opportunity to chat with you all today. When Judy invited me to speak here, I remember my initial thought was, oh, well, that must have been meant for somebody else. After all, she was looking for an esteemed faculty member to come participate in this. But before she could change her mind, I responded quickly. And at that point, I think it would have been too awkward to rescind the invitation. So here I am.

So when I started thinking about the things that I wanted to share today, my mind started drifting, actually, back to before I was a faculty member here, and to when I was a graduate student at Boston University.

I remember in April 2010, I had gotten a phone call from a friend and a classmate, who had implored me to come to the office. Our offices were actually, literally converted bathrooms on the fifth floor of the economics building there. "Hurry," he told me, "you've got to come see this."

So I went into the office. And when I arrived, I remember he opened a browser to show me a blog post about a paper we had been working on. And the blog post was by Al Roth, who's a leading economist, who was then at Harvard. I'll kind of gloss over the fact that he's now at Stanford-- conversation for another day.

So we had never met Al at that point, but we were Al groupies. We knew the research, and we were fans. And this was a big deal for us.

Looking back now-- I went back and found the blog post. Actually, it turns out it wasn't really a blog post so much as a sentence with a link to our paper. But that was enough for us. So I remember, that day, this felt like a big break. So we went over to celebrate-- how else would one celebrate other than to have chai lattes with skim milk at the Starbucks down the street from Boston University. And of course, later we went and told our parents about this.

So I remember, a year and a half later, I was invited to interview at Harvard Business School. And I hadn't really been at business schools before, let alone Harvard Business School. And I saw that Al was on my interview schedule. So I sat there, and I was preparing. I prepared my content, but also prepared what should I say when I finally have a chance to meet Professor Roth. Hello, Professor Roth. I thought, no, that's maybe too formal. Hey Al, good to see you. I was like, no, that doesn't quite seem right either.

So in any case, I arrived at Al's office, and we chatted about research. The day went well. And ultimately, I ended up getting and accepting an offer at HBS, for which I'm all very grateful.

But there was one part of the day that stuck with me for the years. And it was kind of an idiosyncratic interaction that I had had with Al as I was leaving his office. He may be horrified that I'm sharing this. He said, "Here's a piece of advice for the job market." I leaned in, waiting to hear what the words of wisdom from this future Nobel laureate-- who now

has won the Nobel Prize-- had to say to me. And Al leaned over, and I remember he said, "If you see a bathroom, use it." And the advice was, "Otherwise, you just don't know when you're going to have another chance to get into a bathroom on the job market."

And this actually stuck with me through the years for multiple reasons. One, it's useful. And when I go on talks I still kind of have this in the back of my head. But it also stuck with me because this was the moment that I first realized that Al wasn't just a giant in the field, that Al was actually a very kind person, a thoughtful person, and an empathetic person.

And for me, my interaction with Al on that day was basically my vision of what Harvard is when it's at its best, which is, at its best, the university life provides this opportunity to engage with inspiring colleagues, the opportunity to teach, to mentor, to learn from students-- here we have amazing students-- and the opportunity to have a unique platform for creating change and sharing knowledge with the world around us. And importantly, it's an environment that, at its best, is so supportive that your colleagues all want to make sure that you have a chance to go to the bathroom before your next meeting.

So when thinking about Harvard, though, Harvard also has a set of challenges. And this is what I was thinking about when reflecting on navigating the Harvard system. And when I think about the reasons that sometimes the promise of Harvard isn't realized for individual faculty members who are navigating it, I see three challenges that, at least for me, come to mind.

The first is those inspiring colleagues-- they could also be intimidating as hell. So you're in there, and these are amazing minds that you're surrounded by. And sometimes, by assembling a large group of impressive, quick-on-their-feet, often opinionated people, this could create a culture of self-doubt and an environment in which it's easy to feel like wherever you are, you need to have your game face on.

Second-- and this seems like a little bit of a paradox after the first thing I said-- is that we're surrounded by fascinating people, but Harvard can also be a lonely place if you let it be a lonely place. And I'll circle back to the relationship between this and One Harvard in a little bit, but many of your colleagues will have unimaginably busy schedules, between research, teaching, lectures, and-- at least one case that I could think about-- a cameo in the latest Spider-Man movie. And if you haven't seen it yet, you should watch it.

And at times, when thinking about that, it's hard to find your community. I remember once taking a train to New York just to catch up with lunch from a colleague from the economics department here.

So third-- and this also seems a little bit funny on the surface-- which is that there's a lot of things going on at Harvard, as you mentioned. And I know what you're thinking. Oh, isn't that great? Isn't that the reason we're here? How is that challenging? But actually, it's great to have so many

things going on, but it could also be overwhelming. And it's overwhelming when you're trying to balance your research, your teaching, attending seminars, giving talks, while also trying to find time for friends, family, and the latest episode of Game of Thrones.

And if anybody knows what happened in the last one, please don't tell me. I haven't quite caught up on it yet.

So with this in mind, I just wanted to share a few thoughts about navigating the Harvard system, and about overcoming some of these challenges to make sure that you could get as much from it as I feel like I've been able to get out of it now. And I think it has a lot of promise.

The first thing that I think about is to seek advice. So when thinking about being a faculty member rather than being a graduate student-- especially for people who are new here-- as a graduate student, it's very easy to seek advice. It's sort of part and parcel of being a student. But then when you start looking for a job, there is a little bit of a change in the ethos. You start polishing your research. You start practicing for interviews. You prepare for any question that might be thrown your way. And if you don't have an answer, you know why you don't have an answer and how you would go about getting it.

And then when you start as a faculty member, sometimes it's easy to stay in this mindset and think that you're always being evaluated, or that you always should have the answers to everything. But when I think about that, I think that's sometimes a mistake. And I think that you're missing out by not seeking the advice from your colleagues.

Why? Because here's the thing. When thinking about the colleagues in your department, the people who hired you like you. And they want you to succeed. And you're actually surrounded by people who care about your success, otherwise none of you would be here today. And for me, I really think it's important to just let that sink in, and to feel comfortable seeking out advice from your senior colleagues and mentors.

And linking this back to this feeling of needing a game face, I think it's important sometimes to just take your game face off and to share your successes, but also your struggles, your thoughts, your concerns, the things that you're not sure what the answer is to. And remember that seeking advice doesn't mean following everybody's advice. It just means hearing what people have to say and understanding that some of the advice is going to be contradictory, but this way you could get a broader perspective on the challenges that you are facing.

Now, second-- cross bridges. And now I should caveat that-- I don't mean that in a deep metaphorical sense. I mean that in a literal sense. The Larz Anderson Bridge is finally done with construction. It's actually quite nice now. And if you still don't like that one, you could cross between HBS and Harvard Square on the walking bridge down the street from it.

So the reason I say this is because, for me personally, I've found it a privilege to be part of the Harvard Business School community, but I've also found a great set of collaborators around the university more broadly.

So I've had co-authors in the Kennedy School of the economics department, the psychology department. I've presented in the computer science department. And last year, I organized a workshop with a group of people from the sociology department. And I didn't actually know any of these people before I came to the university. These are just people who, through chance encounters, I had the opportunity to meet in my years here.

And overall, thinking about this, part of what's facilitated this is that people are generally excited about their work and about exchanging ideas.

And also, a little bit of practical advice. As a practical matter, Crema and Henrietta's Table are convenient to many different schools-- so an easy meeting place for those looking to do so.

So the thing that I would want to take away for that is to enjoy your department-- so I love the unit that I'm located in-- but also to find what I think about as a vacation home in another part of the school.

So third comes down to teaching at Harvard. When I think about teaching, for me, there's a switch I really turned on here, which was the idea that we really, at the heart of it, should be enjoying our teaching and enjoying working with students. When thinking about the role of students at the university, they really are vital to the intellectual vibrancy that all of us feel. And I think there is sometimes a little bit of bias, I think, about, oh, my students are my mini-mes, or my students are my workforce, or my students are people I want to impart something on. But I think that relationships with students are best when you respect your students, and learn from them as well as feeling like you're just teaching them.

And it reminds me of this moment in Kung Fu Panda 3-- don't pretend you haven't seen it, I know many of you probably have-- where the protagonist, Po, comes to this important realization about teaching after almost giving up, and feeling like he's not a great teacher. And I remember, he realizes that his goal as a teacher is not just to help the students to be like him. His job is to help the students be the best them that they could be, and to help find their strengths.

So when I think about when I've had the most successful collaborations with, or engagements with, students at the university has been when I've thought about students and the things that they would need, and the fact that the things that worked for you may not work for your doctoral students, or may not work for the MBA students you're teaching in a classroom, and thinking about what the different strengths they have in the different approaches to teaching there are.

Forth is the fact that there is a lot of strongly established norms. And we were even talking before this panel about, sometimes norms vary across different parts of the school. And one thing that I think people underappreciate is that sometimes it's good to break norms.

So there are some norms that make a lot of sense and that are good to have in place, but there are a lot of norms that are just norms for-- I don't even know why they became norms.

For me, I had one personal experience with this when I had my first son. At Harvard Business School, there wasn't a real norm for fathers to take parental leave at HBS. I remember, the idea

was essentially that you would teach your class as usual, and on the day that the baby arrived, you would have people on call to cover for the next couple of days. They would cover your class, and then you'd get back to teaching shortly thereafter.

And I remember, after our conversation with a mentor who-- note aforementioned advice-seeking-- I chatted with and thought about, is this something I want to do. I'd like to spend more time with my son when he's born. I decided to ignore that norm and to take parental leave so I could spend time doing things that parents of new babies want to do-- change diapers, not sleep, and get to know your child.

And I remember that I had a very awkward conversation in the department about wanting to do this. But once I actually got it out there, despite the fact that there wasn't a strong norm of this, people were actually very supportive of it. And looking back on it, it was amazing to spend this time together with my son. And in retrospect, I can't imagine not having spent that time home and away from work.

So lastly, I just wanted to end on a positive note. So I wanted to quote the economist John Maynard Keynes, who in the typical optimism of an economist said, "In the long run, we're all dead."

[LAUGHTER]

And this brings me to the broader point, which is something that I would want people to take away with them today, which is that we're often told about the things that we could do after tenure, and to play it safe while you're going for a promotion, and to optimize a little bit to that.

And when I think about this, I sometimes feel that this advice is misguided. And the way, at least that I've thought about navigating, as a junior faculty member, through the university is that we have a limited amount of time. So I think sometimes the best that we could do is just think about the time that we have here, and the impact that you can have while you're fortunate to be in this environment.

So I tend to think about things in a shorter horizon than the 35-year, here's what I'm going to do down the road. And for me, this has meant taking unconventional risks at times-- so taking on untraditional research projects, teaching untraditional courses. So at HBS, this means things that are not only based on cases, but also things that are in the field, and even courses that are cross-listed with the Kennedy School-- and hoping that if I do things that are high impact, and that are important, and, for me, fun, that other people will find them to be that as well.

So for me, it also, though, means remembering that there is life beyond Harvard. And on a practical level, we have a commitment device that we set for ourselves in our household, which is to try to have a day trip every week.

So some of the things that we like to do in the Boston area-- for people who are new-- include going to Rockport for a lobster at Roy Moore, Salem for a day trip to the Peabody Essex Museum, and the deCordova Sculpture Park for an afternoon stroll with our kids.

And the last thing that I want to note is that some of those places, actually, you get free admission if you bring your Harvard ID. And for some that don't-- the Outings & Innings website, which I don't know if it's managed by your--

JUDITH SINGER: It's not. [INAUDIBLE]

MICHAEL LUCA: Got it. So they have great discounts, though, for a lot of things in the Boston area.

So I'll stop here for now. But I'm looking forward to chatting more.

[APPLAUSE]

Speaker 2: Emily Balskus

EMILY BALSUS: OK. It looks like I'm next.

So I'd just like to start by echoing everyone else and welcoming you to Harvard. So you're about to start a really amazing both academic as well as personal journey here. And I guarantee you'll learn things you never imagined, and not just in the context of your research and your scholarship.

So I think I'll start with the ending, sort of the punch line. My overall message that I want to convey today is really, I think, to embrace this experience as a learning opportunity-- so really, the next step in your own education. And just like every previous step, I think you'll mature as a scholar and as a teacher as you go along.

And for me at least, I think viewing my time as a junior faculty member through this lens has been incredibly helpful in dealing with the obstacles, stresses, and anxieties that I think inevitably accompany this type of position.

So the specific things that I wanted to talk to all about today are establishing yourself as a scholar, with a particular focus on resources for scholarship that are available here, and also priority setting. And then secondly, mentoring-- both in the context of being mentored by others and mentoring others.

And I want to note before I start that, because I'm an experimental scientist, some of the things that have been really important for me are definitely not going to be universally applicable to everyone. And likewise, if some of the scientists here have additional questions about things that I won't have time to cover, I'd be happy to chat with anyone outside of this event.

So first, in thinking about establishing yourself as a scholar here at Harvard, one piece of advice that I have, that I especially extend to the scientists, is to get started right away-- not just with your research, but also in building relationships within and outside of the university.

So especially if you're an experimental scientist, I think it can be really easy to focus a lot of your time and energy on preparing to do research. So your lab space might not be finished yet. There's always a lot of things to order and to get up and running. Make sure that as you're doing

this, you're also still engaging with, especially, grad students within the department-- also, your colleagues both in and outside of your department.

You start thinking about writing grants and proposals. It may seem like it's a long way away before you feel ready to do that, but I think you know the experience of attempting to write these things early on is really, really helpful.

You go to meetings in your field, even though you might not actually have independent work ready to present.

Early on, start figuring out what resources on campus can be helpful to you. So for example, for scientists, if you start reaching out to staff in the dean's office-- Jeremy Bloxham's staff-- you can learn a lot about funding opportunities. You can look at example proposals. This is something that I started doing right away, and it was really helpful.

If you know, for example, that there are facilities or instruments somewhere within Harvard that would be helpful to your research eventually, I'd really urge you to start getting in touch with those people, exploring those resources, now. The university's a big place. Things can sometimes move more slowly than you'd like. And so if you're on people's radar and you have done some of the legwork in advance, that can help enormously in helping to move things along when you're ready to do those things.

A second message, I think, is take advantage of this opportunity to explore in your scholarship. So don't be afraid to step outside of your comfort zone and move into new areas if you see that there are really exciting opportunities.

So this is really, I think, personally relevant for me. The research work I'm actually now best known for was not something that I proposed to work on when I applied for jobs. It wasn't even something that I had explored in any previous training experience. And so it's been really amazing to have had the opportunity to kind of start off in a new direction. And I think I'd just advise everyone to believe in yourself and trust your scholarly instincts. It really, I think, is not the time to be too conservative when it comes to your scholarship.

And I think that, with that spirit of exploration in mind, I'd also encourage everyone to try to seek out organizations and initiatives that lie outside of your own research group and department to get involved in.

And so I had the opportunity pretty early on to get involved in the Microbial Sciences Initiative, which-- across the sciences, there are many initiatives like this that are designed to bring together professors, graduate students, and postdocs from different departments, different schools, who are interested in similar questions. In our case, it's studies of the microbial world. And this was incredibly helpful. I made a lot of connections to faculty members at other departments and schools. I met some current collaborators through people in the MSI. My first graduate students and postdocs could get help with experiments we weren't as familiar with, because we had met people through this organization.

So it really helped to shape my research program. And also, I think, just gave me, pretty early on-- since I was such an enthusiastic contributor-- a lot of visibility among that group of people on campus.

So another piece of advice that I have found to be really helpful in my own work is to try as much as possible to integrate your scholarship into other activities and obligations that you have to do-- things like teaching and service.

And so I've had a couple of opportunities to design new classes. And every time I've done this-- both at the graduate level and, actually, at the undergraduate level in the context of a freshman seminar-- I've tried to frame the courses around areas of science that are closely related to my own research interests. And so you can then use the time you're spending preparing for the class-- it benefits you, because it's research time as well.

And even when I teach a big undergraduate class-- so I've taught, in the past, undergraduate organic chemistry. And I'd try to find sometimes subtle, sometimes not-so-subtle ways of introducing concepts and themes that I'm excited about in my research into lectures. And this is not only, I think, a good way to engage students, really introducing them to questions and ideas that practicing scientists are interested in, but I think it's also a really good way to practice communicating your science and research to an audience of non-specialists, which will pay dividends in a lot of other contexts.

So one other thing that I'll mention is the importance of building good time management skills right from the start, and making your scholarly work a priority. So I kind of alluded to all these other activities. I'm sure you're starting to experience this-- if you haven't started to experience it yet-- there is a lot of additional obligations that you'll have to deal with that you potentially have not experienced before. And I think that it can be an obstacle for, particularly, new faculty at the assistant professor level to try to manage scholarly work in the context of these other obligations. And the big problem is that of course all these other obligations usually have deadlines attached to them. And so it's really easy to sort of push other work aside to get those seemingly more urgent things finished.

And so there are a lot of ways to deal with this problem. One thing that's worked well for me is to try to organize my schedule so that I place time blocks that are dedicated to certain things like writing and reading. I'll try to carve out very specific periods of time to prepare for class, and not really let myself spend time outside of those blocks on certain things.

I think the other thing to remember is that research, at least in the context of experimental science, I think it always takes longer than you think it will. So I think for me it's been a goal to try to find a balance in terms of time management, where I can keep up a steady pace with a lot of the writing and travel, all the other components of scholarly activities, that is manageable, not overwhelming, but allows me to make steady progress over long, long periods of time.

And so I think, again, there are many different solutions to that problem. But really, having time management at the forefront of your mind as you start to tackle some of these new responsibilities can be helpful.

And with this in mind, I think one of the things that hopefully you'll do here-- building bonds with younger colleagues can be really helpful. It's great to exchange ideas about those types of things. I know that some of my newly tenured

female colleagues in science, they actually have a weekly lunch meeting where they'll get together, have lunch, and each person will bring a problem or a question that they'd like to pose the rest of the group to get advice about. So you can organize those types of groups with colleagues in your department or in other departments.

Then, I think the last thing I want to say about scholarship, is really, it's been very helpful for me to approach my scholarly work with a growth mindset. I think it's really easy to feel like everybody expects you to already be the scholar that you'll be in seven years right now, or that because you've been hired to be at a place like this that you have to be successful at everything you attempt to do, all the time. And I can reassure you that's not the case.

And as I mentioned earlier, I've found it very helpful to think about what I can learn from each of the experiences that I've encountered during the process of being a junior faculty member. So having this growth mindset makes it a lot easier to deal with things like rejected papers, rejected grants, teaching evaluations, and things like that.

So the next topic I wanted to touch on is mentoring. And as I think probably everyone knows, you'll have both formal mentors here as well as, hopefully, informal mentors. And I know the formal side of mentoring can differ a lot between departments, between schools. And so what I have to say probably applies mostly to thinking about informal mentors and interactions with them.

And so one piece of advice, again, that has been very important for me has been to find mentors in multiple departments. Particularly if your work is interdisciplinary, I think it's critical to get feedback from scholars in related fields that lie outside of the expertise that's in your department. For me, actually, right from the beginning, I was encouraged to have someone from another department on my formal mentoring committee, and I think that's been very helpful. But I've also made an effort to get to know colleagues in other departments in a more informal way as well.

And so I'd urge everyone, if you think that it would be helpful to you to have a potentially formal mentor from another department, just make sure that you ask about that opportunity.

So another piece of advice I'm sure pretty much everyone has probably heard before is to figure out, really, how to engage each of your mentors on an individual basis. So some of your mentors will really want to talk about the things that are frustrating you, problems you're encountering, and will give good advice-- not all of them will. Some them may be more excited about talking to you about teaching, or coming to actually sit in on classes. Others will be really good, really engaged when you ask them to look at your scholarly work, look at your papers or other pieces of written work.

And so trying to figure out what everyone is good at but also really engaged in, I think, helps you to distribute the mentoring burden across multiple people. It's important, I think, to be persistent when you're interacting with your mentors. You might need, in identifying especially informal mentors, to interact with multiple people to figure out who you best connect with.

I think this has been alluded to a couple times-- you also face the obstacle that everyone here is really, incredibly busy. And so it's important to identify when it's really important that you interact with someone, and be persistent when it really matters. But of course, planning as far in advance as possible also will help with that problem.

Finding mentors who are in your field who are outside of Harvard has also been something that has really helped me a lot. I was actually forced to do this because all of my graduate and postdoctoral training was here at Harvard. And so for certain things like grant applications, other opportunities, I actually wasn't allowed to have reference letter writers from within the university.

So I was forced to go out and try to build connections with people at other places. And that actually was very, very helpful. Some of those people were individuals who had known me earlier on in my career. Some of those people were actually people who I had first got to know through just scientific collaborations.

But I think that having that outside perspective can be really helpful. And of course, those people can continue to be supporters down the line.

So I guess then the last thing I'd like to say about mentoring is that I'd encourage everyone to get involved in mentoring others. So I think one reason, at least that I have been hesitant to reach out to mentors in the past, is that I always worry about taking up too much of someone's time. And of course, having multiple mentors can help with this. But I think another thing that's helped me not to worry as much about this aspect of mentoring is really to start volunteering my time to mentor others. And this includes not just, of course, the students who are in my research group but also other opportunities around campus.

So there are lots of, for example, undergraduate groups focused on science research. Women in Science, I've worked with those groups. I've participated in the Graduate Women in Science Mentoring Program.

Also, I try whenever I can to help the younger colleagues here and at other institutions. I think not only can you sort of pay back the time that others have spent helping you, but all of these experiences add to your general mentoring skills. And this will be, down the road, beneficial for your students that you're working with, and with the many other people you'll have the opportunity to mentor during your career.

So I think those are the major points that I wanted to emphasize. And once again, welcome. I'd be really excited to answer any questions that you have later on.

[APPLAUSE]

Speaker 3: Sara Bleich

SARA BLEICH: Hi, everyone. One, it's great to be here.

I'm with the School of Public Health. And I want you to grain-of-salt a lot of what I say, because I didn't go through the process here. I've been back for one year. So I'm going to try to stay pretty

general and talk about what I think works as you go through the tenure process, but definitely talk to people who have been through the process in your department.

And I would say that if I can leave you with any advice today, I would say you will probably get promoted if you can do good, innovative work, if you can be highly reliable and collegial. And those three things become so important as you move through the process.

And so what I want to do is give you, for me, what have been key bullets that have, I think, helped me navigate the process. And it will hopefully be something that you could adapt.

And the first is really where we started with this-- what is your professional shingle? And so you all went around and you said, I do x. And the best outcome of when you meet a new person is they walk away and they say, so-and-so is so interesting, and they do blah blah blah blah blah. So you want to keep your shingle short and brief and clear, and you want it to be able to be grown.

So for example, I've always focused on obesity policy, which can take on a zillion different forms. But I purposely always said obesity policy, because I sort of knew that I'll be in one area, then another, then a third. And I want to leave myself that room to grow. And I would imagine all of your fields, there's a couple of words which would define what you do, which you could leave with someone. And they can say, oh, I met John at a party. He has the most interesting area of blah. But you want to leave someone with that impression. If you do that, you've sort of done your job at whatever that interaction is.

Another is focus. And you hear this a lot. And I think the key is to focus on an area that you love. There's no point in being focused on something you do not like. Because this is your life. This is your time away from your children. And so pick an area that you love. Because it's going to frustrate you. It's going to make you crazy. Things are not going to

work out. But if you love it, and it gets you up in the morning, it's going to make the process that much more enjoyable.

Another concrete bit of advice is you should, if you haven't already, pick one to three professional conferences which you will attend every single year. And in doing so, begin to build this network of people that you know quite well, that are outside of the university, that matter a lot for going through the process. Because they'll be the referee letters that you get back.

And don't just go to the conferences. Challenge yourself that at every single conference, you're going to reach out to two to four people you've never met before, whose work you've cited in papers, who you want to get to know, and make sure you have coffee with them. And they may be people that are more senior. They may be other doctoral students. But just gradually begin to grow your network, and those sorts of things pay off dividends.

Because you'll need someone to give a lecture somewhere. Or, you'll need someone to serve on x and y panel. And someone will think, oh, I met that person at a conference. They seem really nice. Let me go ahead and invite them. And so don't discount the value of personal relationships. Because I think in this world, it really does matter a lot.

I mentioned, be reliable. And I say that sort of tongue-in-cheek, but I think that the two hardest things in life are to do what you say you're going to do, and show up on time. And we are academics, so it's sort of like herding cats. But I think that for me, at least personally, I am allergic to people that cannot respond to email, and I'm allergic to people that are late to my office. Because my time is so precious to me, personally.

And so all of us have our red lines. And you just want to think carefully about, for your working style, for the group that you run, what are the things that make it effective. And then get rid of the things that don't make it effective.

You can sort of think of it as the calendar test. You wake up every day and you look at your calendar. And I suspect-- well, I know-- that all of you are extremely bright. So it's not the difficulty of the work that makes your day challenging. It's the people that are in your life that are either hard to work with, that you don't like.

And the luxury of this world is you can pick and choose your teams. So I would pick very, very carefully. And surround yourself with people that, ideally, play to your weaknesses, not your strengths, and that help you really push good ideas through the process.

I would be patient. I remember on my first day of graduate school, I sat down with my mentor-- this is Bob Blendon, who's in the School of Public Health-- and he said-- he said, "Sara"-- and I'm a very impatient person-- he said, "you have to have staying power. You have to chip on an issue long enough to really have an influence."

And in academic research, you never quite know when that moment's going to come along. And so you do this because you love the field, and you love to sort of pull at threads. But that does require, I think, a high degree of patience— both with the process of academia and with yourself. And so I think setting reasonable benchmarks and not making yourself too crazy becomes very important along the way.

And the last piece, and this goes back to the conferencing piece, but it's a broader point about, you'll hear people say network. And I'm going to reiterate, you really should network.

And so Alan mentioned, get out in the school and try out different things. And those are all opportunities for networking. And this is an opportunity for networking. Walking down the hall is an opportunity for networking.

My post when I finished graduate school was at Hopkins. And I was there for eight years. And I think in my first year, I had coffee with like 60 people. Because I'd meet with someone and I'd say, oh, is there anyone else that you really admire that you think I should talk to— often unrelated to my field. And the act of buying someone a cup of coffee that maybe cost me \$2, that act of kindness paid so many dividends. Like, you'd run into someone they'd say, oh, that was so nice of you to buy me that cup of coffee. My first year I'm like, really? But over and over again I had that reaction. And it was also just kind of nice to get to know people.

Your time is so precious. But I'd say particularly for those of you that are brand new to the school and don't have a lot of exposure here, just take the time to get out. Maybe every week you say to yourself, I'm going to email a new person. I'm going to try to get to know someone new. And it really is both helpful for understanding how different the university is across schools, but then just, ideally, having people at your level that become mentors and peers and people that you can relate to.

So that's sort of reputation.

And then switching over to navigating the tenure process, thinking globally— not just about Harvard— I think, again, do good work. Don't make yourself crazy trying to get through the Harvard process. Just do good academic work and make yourself promotable anywhere. And ideally, you will make it through this process.

But the thing to remember is all of us, I would imagine, are in prime years of our lives. We are at childbearing years. We're at getting-married years. We're at having a life. And so this job is important, but so, too, is everything else. And if you make yourself crazy to get through a process and then don't make it through, it's not going to feel so good. But if you just do good work that makes you professionally happy, you will be happy anywhere where you do that work. And I would just sort of keep that in the back of your mind.

I would also be-- and this is something that has helped me hugely as a mom, which is level-set people from the beginning. When I first had my daughter, who's-- the oldest is six, the youngest is four-- someone said to me, don't do anything when she's young that you do not want to do when she is old.

And the exact same thing applies here. Do not answer email at night and on the weekends if you don't want to start doing that for the rest of your career. Because the minute you stop, you're slacking. Well, not working on a Saturday is not slacking, but if you've done it for six years, and you have a kid, and all of a sudden someone can't rely on you-- like, well, what happened to so-and-so?

So level-set people. It doesn't mean you can't monitor emails. It doesn't mean that you can't keep an eye on things. But don't create expectations that for you to keep them up, you will literally make yourself crazy. Because then you really interfere with your own well-being, and other things that matter to you that are outside of this university.

I would also-- and this is for those of you that are coming close to the tenure process-- get your hands on a successful dossier from your department if you can. So the dossier process is-- no offense, Judy-- is painful. It is hard. It's just a lot that you have to do, which I think, on the other side, is quite helpful. But the process of doing it is quite challenging. So don't reinvent the wheel more than you have to. You obviously have to write up your own story. But get an example of someone who's relatively recent who's gone through that can serve as a guide.

And then to the extent to which you're willing to get advice-- because this is obviously a very sensitive area-- get a couple of people to read it and sort of say, am I highlighting the right

points. And hopefully, getting to that point, you've had pretty clear conversations with either your department chair or your mentors about, am I hitting the right benchmarks, where do I need to course correct, and am I elevating the right things in my dossier.

And those are conversations which shouldn't happen at year six or year seven. They should be happening annually. You should really know where you're at relative to where you should be.

And importantly, you should know where you're at relative to yourself. Don't be thinking about everyone else in your department. It is your track. It is your time. And it's really easy to get caught up in the noise around you.

And that brings me to the general tips.

I think one of the things that becomes important to success in this environment, anywhere, is your signal-to-noise ratio. We are increasingly inundated with invitations and asks, or things that we should be doing with our time. And you have to get good at both saying no-- kids are really good excuse for that, or mentors, you can use your mentor as

an excuse-- both saying no, but then trying to figure out, what should I be focusing on right now. Because I walk into work and I think that I know what my schedule is going to look like. And then x, y, and z happens, and I have to reprioritize.

And so your ability to find that needle in a haystack and figure out what the important nugget is right now becomes really important. And that's where, to Emily's point, mentoring becomes key.

So there are a few people, still, where an opportunity will come along, and I'm not quite sure if it makes sense, and I'll just feed it to them and say, should I or shouldn't I. And then I'll get a quick response. But if you have a few people in your life, mentors that are both formal and informal, they can play that role. And I would really urge you to lean on them for that.

And ideally, you should sit down with yourself and be honest and say, OK, I'm smart, I'm on faculty at Harvard, but there's a lot of things that don't do so well. Figure out what your holes are and plug them with people who are really good at plugging them.

So in my case, I am in a soft money environment, where I have to write grants all the time. And so when I went on faculty at Harvard, I had made one of these lists. And I felt very comfortable in my topic area, but I had no idea how to write a grant. So I attached myself to the senior faculty member, who worked in mental health, we had zero topical overlap, but he showed me how to write a grant. And that experience was invaluable.

And so each of you is going to have the Achilles heel, the thing that you're not so good at. Just find the one or two people that can really support you, and make sure that you're successful.

And then the other thing, in terms of general advice, would be-- and this goes back to staff-- collaborations are so important. They're particularly important for those of us that are either in the School of Public Health or the Medical School. But you're going to find people that you work well with, and then hold on really tight. Because those productive relationships will pay

dividends for you professionally, but then it's just nice to go to work and surround yourself with people that you enjoy working with. And I think it's hard to overemphasize that point.

So in terms of other key skills to mention, we haven't talked much about email today. And I'm one of these people who, I do not like to leave the office until I can see all of my email on one page. It doesn't always happen. But email drives me a little bit crazy sometimes. And I think that each of us is going to have our own system for managing it. But it is worth spending a few minutes and thinking about it.

And I wouldn't just do that in the abstract. There are people that you know that probably work like you and think like you-- ask them, how do you manage all your email, what are the strategies that you use. And just figure out what is a system that works well for you. Because it will suck up all of your time if you let it. And so that's something that I think it is worth putting a little bit of thought into.

And then the last thing-- and I had a really good experience with this-- is don't make any decisions when you're angry or you're tired. And any time you get a new opportunity, even if it sounds perfect, give it 24 hours. And find out, do I want to work with that person, does that person have a reputation which may hurt me later. Because it is so much better to say no gracefully than to have to extract yourself because of a bad experience.

Because anywhere-- particularly, I think, at Harvard-- your reputation is your currency. And if it gets damaged because you get into a bad working relationship that you perhaps could have prevented with better knowledge, those can be pretty hard things to course-correct from. So I'd be thoughtful, I'd be careful, and I'd rely on a few trusted colleagues to help you navigate the process.

And lastly, have fun. I mean, I know that when I'm here, I'm not with my kids. And so there's obviously trade-offs there. I love my job, and I love being a mom. And I think that if you allow this environment, which is quite intense, to become very, very stressful, it's hard then to enjoy the pleasurable things that we should be doing when we're not here. And so figuring out what works for you, and listening to your own sort of non-verbals, and how you respond to situations becomes really important.

And I want to extend my congratulations in welcoming you all here.

[APPLAUSE]

Speaker 3: Jason Mitchell

JASON MITCHELL: So thanks, Judy, for organizing this. I think I was at the very first one of these some number of years ago.

I've, in general, found myself in a very reminiscent mood, and I think in large part because I just passed the 20 year mark of being here at Harvard. I know that's when I came because I drove up on the morning after Princess Diana had died on August 31, 1997. And so it's really stuck in my memory when exactly that was.

And I think partly from having just passed that anniversary, and also I'm thinking about this, this event, I've spent a lot of the last couple of weeks thinking about two things. One, my perceptions of how Harvard has changed the most in the years since I've been here, and then also how I've changed at Harvard in that 20 year period. And what I realized--

I think by surprise, it wasn't something I had in the back of my head even-- is that both of those have landed on teaching-- both Harvard's approach to teaching, and my own thoughts about how teaching has changed me.

So I thought I would just spend a few minutes talking about reflections on both of those. And then I've actually gotten some additional thoughts from all the wonderful comments that came before me. So if I have time, I'll augment, amplify some of what you've heard before.

So you heard Judy say, right from the beginning, that Harvard has changed quite a bit with regard to how it thinks about its junior faculty members, its non-tenured faculty members. And as you know-- you've probably already sensed this if you've been here in any capacity before-- you know that Harvard is kind of a strange place. Like, it likes to do things in its own particular way, even though other places have kind of-- you would have thought-- worked out some of the kinks.

And one of the ways that Harvard was strange until fairly recently was that almost all of the tenured faculty came from outside of its ranks. The non-tenured faculty were here for some number of years before typically moving on to some other institution. And that created a lot of strangeness, and strange dynamics between faculty, and faculty and students, and lots of senior people in their 60s and 70s, and then a bunch of younger people in their 30s, and no one in between.

But one of the ways that I think it created strangeness was really around teaching. Because when you think about what an institution might do in bringing folks from outside, it's typically, you're looking for the best scholars in that field-- the best historian of science, or the best chemical engineer. And you may pay less attention to whether that person's a wonderful teacher.

And so what kind of happened was that senior faculty-- and I should also say, many people who were thinking about coming to Harvard might have found it attractive to come to a place where teaching was emphasized less than at their previous institution. So much of the teaching devolved to the younger, junior faculty. But there was also a sense that teachers are sort of born, not made, and that there just wasn't much one could do to influence teaching. You either had the knack for it or not.

And so I think around the time that the tenure system changed, there was also this realization that we could be approaching teaching the same way that we approach many of our mentoring activities-- to take individuals who were new to the classroom, or new to the kinds of teaching they were being asked to do, whether it be case methods or teaching a big lecture course, and to try to work with those individuals to improve what it is they did in the classroom.

And so over the last 10 or 15 years, Harvard's made what I consider to be a very sizable investment in the infrastructure around teaching and learning. So I'll just mention a couple of those things that are-- and as others have said before, I have a particular lens, being an FAS

faculty member. So not all of this is relevant to individuals in the other schools. But I think what is true across the schools is the renewed emphasis on trying to help individuals-- especially our new assistant, associate professors-- figure out how to be most effective in the classroom.

So under the umbrella of "Harvard likes to do things in its own way," what Harvard has not done, at least not in my department, and I don't think across the FAS-- although, it might be different in your schools-- is some of the things that other institutions have done.

For instance, in the FAS, there's no FAS-wide policy that your teaching is reviewed by some other faculty member. Nobody has literally ever come into my classroom in the 10 years I've been teaching here to try to give me tips. That may happen in your department. I hope it does. But there's no kind of expectation. I know other places, that's actually built formally into the mentoring process.

And unlike other places, there's nobody who's ever reviewed a syllabus I've written. I've just been asked-- I have, for the last 10 years, been teaching Intro Psych. I got a bunch of PowerPoint slides from the other person who teaches it. And that's been the extent to which anybody knows what I do inside my classroom.

So unlike, let's say at Yale, there's no committee in the FAS that reviews course syllabi.

This is kind of crazy when you think about it in this way. So it's a little bit of the quirkiness of Harvard. But I think it's also in the spirit of Harvard trying to instead not micromanage what goes on inside your classroom. But instead, the FAS and the university have taken the approach of trying to build infrastructure to invest in systemic places where faculty members can improve their teaching and access resources for improving pedagogy.

So I'll mention a few of those. And if you want to follow up with me at any point, I'd be happy to talk more with you.

So two things that will be relevant for, I think, everyone in this room is the Bok Center, which I'm sure most of you have heard about by now. And the Bok Center was originally created with kind of a limited mindset to think about, how do we improve the day-to-day, nuts-and-bolts aspects of teaching.

So when I first encountered the Bok Center as a graduate student in the late '90s, lots of what they did was to say, let's talk about what's going to happen on the very first day of class. Let's workshop that. And that was incredibly valuable. And as I got further in my career, I could access the Bok Center for other kinds of nuts-and-bolts issues-- I'm

having trouble figuring out how to lecture effectively in time management. And I had people help work with me to think through, why are your lecturers not feeling right, how can you manage your time better.

And you can still access the Bok Center for those kinds of nuts-and-bolts sorts of concerns. And I would encourage you to go over there, even in advance of actually teaching your first class, to just talk to them about tips about what to do on the first day of class, how do you manage your time in a 120 minute lecture, et cetera.

But recently, as you know, the world has changed. And the 120 minute lecture is not the only format we have available to us, nor is the 5 to 10 page paper.

And so partly spurred on by innovations and advances with digital learning, the Bok Center, and also other parts of the university which I'll talk about in just a second, have also been very interested in helping faculty think through what they could be doing differently in their class. So to think through, sure, I know that the five page paper has been effective for you as a learner-- that the 120 minute lecture worked for you, but given your goals in this course, are there other ways that you might approach the material-- everything from the famed flipped classroom that you've heard a lot about to just thinking through what kinds of assignments you might challenge your students with that are different from the kinds of assignments that you encountered when you were an undergraduate.

So part of that can be accessed through the Bok Center. And again, I encourage you as you're thinking about your courses to talk to folks over there, who, you could disregard all of their suggestions, but will at least help you think in a different way than you're probably used to about what's possible inside your classroom.

At the same time, the university has other university-wide programs. So Peter Bol, who's the Vice Provost for Advances in Learning, runs a couple of groups that have a variety of different initiatives. One is, Peter's group hosts an entire library of digital resources.

So that could be everything from, hey, I'm teaching this course, Intro Psych, and I really need somebody to talk to my students about the hippocampus-- and I'm just not an expert on the hippocampus. So it turns out there's some lecture that somebody has filmed, somewhere. And maybe it's just a little five minute blurb, and you can insert that into your course-- either through Canvas, the website, or show it to your students. So that's one kind of digital resource.

But everything up to, I can't get enough TFs for my course, is there any other way I could think about designing sections, and all sorts of tools around rethinking, maybe I don't need to have TFs for my course. Maybe we can do this peer-to-peer, among students. Or maybe we can do some kind of digital platforming of what goes on inside sections.

So that's another area where resources exist. They're not widely advertised, but I know that group is very eager to have faculty from across the schools access those resources.

And then finally, I'll mention HILT, the Hauser Initiative in Learning and Teaching, which provides small, startup, what they often call Spark Grants, for faculty who want to try something new in their course. That might be to create some new resource, or to help offset personnel who will help you think very differently about what it is you're doing.

There's a couple of other FAS-specific resources, which I won't mention now. But if you're interested in accessing some of these pedagogical resources, again, I'm happy to talk about any of this. Feel free to email me at any point.

Part of my mission, role, as faculty director of the Program in General Education, is to talk to new faculty about ideas they have. Maybe not right now, as you start your career here, but things that you might be interested in sometime in the future.

So that's, I think, how Harvard has changed-- at least, my experience of Harvard has changed-- since I've come here.

And I thought I would also just say a little bit about how teaching has changed me as a scholar and intellectual.

So maybe some of you have this intuition as well. I felt like from the moment I took Intro Psych as a freshman, through everything I ever did as a psychologist for the next 10 years, was sort of like this decreasingly sized funnel. It went from this really big picture of the field and all the excitement around learning the whole panoply of what's out there in psychology to drilling down to very, very specific problems within the field, writing grants and papers, and becoming an expert in something.

And I realized that the moment where that really changed, where the funnel started expanding again, was the moment that I started teaching Intro Psych. And what that course has done for me, it has really forced me to start to think about the field through a lens that's much broader than the one I get by just talking to my graduate students, or doing the kinds of scholarly work that I do.

And so without that experience, I feel like I would be a much more narrow intellectual, scholar, academic than I ever would have been after that experience. And so I think, OK, that's all well and good. We like to be intellectuals. But then I thought, just for selfish reasons, I feel like beyond just my own personal enjoyment of that experience, it has actually affected my scholarship in ways that I could never have anticipated, were I not to have the teaching experience. It's helped me understand how what I do fits into a much bigger picture. It's often pointed places out to me where there just isn't research being done, or not as much as you'd like, and so suggested questions that I didn't actually know were there.

And also, as someone said, this place is full of all sorts of different kinds of people from all sorts of different walks of life. And probably the most diverse group on the entire campus is our undergraduates. And as you'll see as you're-- for those of you who are-- especially teaching in the FAS, it's an enormous source both of personal joy, but also intellectual excitement to engage in this way with students.

So that's just my own personal reflection on what it means to teach here.

Could I take a couple more minutes? OK.

Occasionally, you'll hear someone talk about how they've gotten teaching relief, as if they put teaching in the same category as dental pain and hemorrhoids or something. It never feels like that to me. I have always thought, yes, sometimes I'm exhausted by the demands of teaching, but in general, I have gotten more out of it than I think, probably, my students have gotten out of me.

I wanted to say a couple other things that were just spurred on by various comments, mostly to amplify them.

And Judy mentioned President Faust's One Harvard Initiative, which is fantastic. But despite the attempt to bring us all on board, I want to remind everyone here that there is no such thing as one Harvard. That is, Harvard is not one thing.

I'm reminded of how-- I grew up in New York City. And most people think about New York City in a particular-- like a little slice. They think of Times Square and seeing Broadway plays. And maybe getting on a bus and seeing Grant's tomb and the Statue of Liberty or something. But that's some very, very tiny slice of New York City. There's 7 million other experiences of New York City besides that, most of which have nothing to do with that.

And Harvard lends itself to the same sorts of misconceptions.

Even now, when I think about what Harvard is, I think of some guy with a big gray beard who speaks in iambic pentameter at faculty meetings, and starts off by saying, in my 47 years here at Harvard, I have never been so angry, at whatever it is that they're angry about. And that is definitely part of Harvard. There is a Harvard that does that.

And there's the Harvard of Nobel laureates, and New Yorker contributors, and National Academy members, and all of those things that make Harvard wonderful.

And then there's the Harvard of the people in this room, the people who are coming to this place for the first time, often from different places with completely different ways of doing things, with a completely different lens on what's possible.

And there's the Harvard of our graduate students, who are eager to engage for the first time in the same serious way that we do, with the kinds of work that animates us and keeps us up at night.

And there are the undergraduates, as I mentioned before, who are spectacular and open vessels for the kinds of things that we want to teach them about.

There are the administrators, who make this place run.

And each of those groups is contributing to Harvard in its own particular way.

And so one of the things that I have only recently begun to realize is that there are many paths through this place. If you may want to be that person in 47 years time who gets up and throws a shoe at the faculty meeting, and that's wonderful, but you may want your Harvard to be one of political activism, as we've begun to see many of our faculty are interested in. Or you may want your Harvard to be an investment in undergraduates. That's your particular slice of what it means to be a here.

So I would just encourage you to remind yourself that just like your bus tour of New York City did not give you a sense of what New York really is, your particular experience through Harvard

will be shaded by the one path you take through here. But that path can be much more windy and multifaceted than I think it appears to us from the outside.

Last thing I'm going to say-- I think all of my colleagues before me suggested to you-- they gave you the advice to seek advice. And I think that's really good. And I would actually go one step further, which is that you don't really want to seek advice so much as you want to seek criticism.

And the distinction that I make is that very few of my colleagues has ever been willing to answer the question, what could I-- if I go to them and say, what kind of advice would you give me, unless you're an economist, you tend not to want to demoralize people.

[LAUGHTER]

Or at least think twice about it.

So it's been very hard for me to extract meaningful advice from that. And I think what tends to come out is the person's own experience of how he or she navigated through academia. But as I said before, there are many different paths. And there are many different paths to getting tenure here. No two people's dossier looks the same. And so you should take that with a grain of salt, that this was this person's successful path through to tenure, or through Harvard, et cetera.

What I do find more valuable is to actually give people license to criticize you, and to actually put yourself in the way of criticism as much as you can. So the trick that I use is to really play on people's own ego. That's why I'm a psychologist. And it's to ask people the question, what would you do differently, what would you have done if you were me. And very few of my colleagues are comfortable saying, oh, no, you did it just perfectly. I couldn't improve upon what you did.

But people need to feel licensed to say, oh, yeah, I would have said this differently, or, I wouldn't have done that, or whatever it is.

So I try to do this even now. After every meeting I have-- I will ask Judy at the end of this, what could I have done differently-- every talk that I give, both within my department and also if I have close friends outside the department.

So I would just encourage you to try to put yourself in the way of criticism as much as possible with this growth mindset at the back of your head.

It's almost certain that you are not an expert, or not perfect at various aspects of this job.

And so I think about, if you were launching a satellite to a distant planet, you've got a couple of choices. One is to get the trajectory just right at the onset, which is really hard-- impossible-- or to build in a system that can course-correct as it gets there. I would encourage you to think about your own career in that way. You're unlikely to have the trajectory set just right at the very outset. So think about how you might build in mechanisms for course-correcting.

So I'm going to stop there.

And like everyone else, I'm very happy to answer questions.

[APPLAUSE]

ELIZABETH ANCARANA: That was so interesting. Thank you to each of you for such great advice for your colleagues.