

Inbox

From Das's desk

WHILE THE EXTERNAL RELATIONS TEAM IS WORKING TO develop a lifelong learning program for alumni, efforts are under way elsewhere at the School to help prepare MBA students for their lives beyond HBS.

Professor **Leslie Perlow**, with 17 second-year MBA students, is creating a new course called *Crafting Your Life: Tactics and Practices for the First 10 Years after HBS*. The course will give students practical advice, skills, and insights to prepare them for success in life—not just in their careers, but across

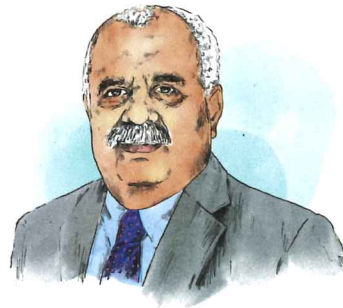
the breadth of their lives, their interactions with others, and their impact on the world.

The course brings together several innovative elements. First, students are engaged with the faculty in developing the course's concept and content, including video, simulations, workshops, and other new teaching methodologies; second, the course is focused on the totality of students' lives; and third, alumni are playing a large part in shaping the course and will be actively engaged in the classroom experience next fall when the course is first offered.

Underpinning *Crafting Your Life* is the aspiration to prepare graduates for the ups and downs of their careers and personal lives, especially in those critical first few years after HBS. The course will cover a variety of topics, including:

- **Career navigation.** How to establish a path through the transitions and tradeoffs as they move toward their personal definition of success.
- **Self-care.** The role that health, well-being, and mindfulness plays in finding balance in work and life.
- **Anxiety and fear.** How to deal with the unknown and unexpected along the way.
- **Work-life imbalance.** What to do when faced with the choices and demands between a busy career and a full home and personal life.
- **Difficult decisions.** How to address and share life's challenges with their partner.
- **Purpose and values.** How to navigate life's milestones in meaningful, intentional, and ethical ways.
- **Lifelong reflection.** Strategies for building introspection and growth into their master plan.

Where do alumni enter the picture? On several occasions last fall, Professor Perlow and her students met with alumni to test the assumptions and refine the themes of the course, including holding workshop sessions for more than 80 reunion attendees and members of the Alumni Board. The students also interviewed individual alumni to gather narratives and practical advice, such



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as how their careers were impacted by their choice of location or how their definition of home and family roles have evolved since graduation.

Currently, the students are recruiting alumni to be surveyed around each of the primary threads of the course, which will help identify areas that students need to be prepared to handle. They are also seeking alumni who are willing to share their stories to help deepen students' understanding of the challenges that lie ahead as well as ways alumni have surmounted these challenges.

I am excited to watch *Crafting Your Life* come to fruition, as it represents the continued evolution of our thinking here at HBS. No longer is the MBA Program (or Executive Education for that matter) a one-and-done prospect. This new course is fully embracing that ideal, hoping to start students on a lifelong journey in which we can be partners. Let me know how you think we're doing and where the opportunities lie to do even better.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Das Narayandas".

Das Narayandas is Senior Associate Dean, External Relations and Harvard Business Publishing, and the Edsel Bryant Ford Professor of Business Administration.