The premise of the “Google Game,” as the Poynter Institute’s Craig Silverman called it, was simple: Paste text from science writer Jonah Lehrer’s Frontal Cortex blog into the search engine, and in seconds find a nearly identical previous piece—published in, say, the magazine’s website in June 2012. Prosecutors joined in the hunt for more than a decade as readers gone online and subscriptions have declined. At the same time, journalists must write quickly and often, frequently sidestepping time-consuming editorial processes to keep up with the fast pace of the Web. “It breeds dumbness, shoddiness, and almost plagiarism,” Seife says. Lehrer’s blog posts, for example, escaped the usual rounds of editing and fact-checking for which the New York Times is renowned, even though they too ran under the magazine’s byline. In a more universally embarrassing stumble last November, the Associated Press, Forbes, Business Insider, and TechCrunch were all forced to retract statements after discovering that he’d fabricated sources and quotes in at least 25 stories.

C. Moynihan revealed in Talbert magazine that Lehrer had fabricated some stories, and well-received articles for top-notch publications such as The Washington Post and Nature. But his defenders fell silent on July 30, when Michael
n March 15, NYU’s Faculty of Arts and Science registered a vote on President John Sexton’s leadership. Of the 682 full-time tenured and tenure-track professors in the school, 569 participated. Fifty-two percent of those voting expressed “no confidence,” while 39 percent disagreed and 8 percent abstained.

That same day, the Board of Trustees passed a resolution of support for Sexton, with Chair Martin Lipton writing: “It is clear to us that NYU is a great success story. It is also the case that higher education faces pressures that call for leadership that can enact change where needed.” Other statements of support have come in from deans across the university, as well as the NYU Alumni Association and departments or councils within the School of Medicine, College of Dentistry, College of Nursing, and School of Law.

The circumstances that led to this moment, and may lead to further votes at several NYU schools, can be interpreted in 10 different ways:

One example, bold shape-shifting over the past decade—from the rise of new campuses in Abu Dhabi and Shanghai to plans for a major university in Shanghai—has posed by CUNY’s new open-admissions policy. But I believe that today’s challenges are just as great—the political pressure on universities relating to costs, the expense of technology, and the competition posed by foreign universities. The responsibility for me as president, and for the Board, is to recognize those challenges now, before they overwhelm us, and to innovate in ways that sustain the extraordinary academic momentum that has brought us here.

The pace of change at NYU has been rapid and, at times, there was not adequate consultation. But I would say to my fellow faculty colleagues that it has not been intentional. I feel bad if it seemed that way because I greatly value their judgment and thinking.

Where does this current debate belong in the NYU story?

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, NYU was understood to be in serious trouble, yet the NYU community pulled together to ensure that the university survived, and then blossomed. The difficulties of those times were much more obvious—especially the terrible state of our finances, and the challenge posed by CUNY’s new open-admissions policy. But I believe that today’s challenges are just as great—the political pressure on universities relating to costs, the expense of technology, and the competition posed by foreign universities. The responsibility for me as president, and for the Board, is to recognize those challenges now, before they overwhelm us, and to innovate in ways that sustain the extraordinary academic momentum that has brought us here.

All else aside, a number of faculty members feel hurt or alienated by NYU right now. What would you say to them on a personal level?

I want to be able to work with them to find ways to better ensure their involvement in university decision-making.

Most of my professional life has been devoted to NYU. Like many of our faculty, I was part of the generation that helped transform this institution from a good regional school to an outstanding, revered international research University. It is our faculty’s commitment to teaching and learning that is the core of what has driven our successes in recent decades, and will be the key to our future success.

Many on campus have expressed a desire for their voices to be heard right now. How will the administration accommodate that?

We have already taken a number of steps to broaden and deepen channels of faculty input, from an agreement between the Faculty Senators Council and the university administration on principles of shared governance to the creation of faculty-led committees on space, on global initiatives, on technology, and on how the university should respond to a possible NRIB ruling on unionization of graduate assistants. But beyond that, it’s clear that it’s a good time to reflect on whether the mechanisms to give voice to all NYU constituents are serving us as well as they could. So I have proposed that our Board form a special committee of trustees led by Chair Marty Lipton that will meet the next two months to listen to a range of faculty groups, students, and alumni and to hear their ideas on how we can develop new mechanisms and channels to receive input from all stakeholders in our community and, in particular, the faculty.

Some say that adversity makes an institution stronger. What kind of productive soul-searching—both for yourself and NYU—has this experience inspired?

It’s clear that we still have work to do, and I include myself in this equation, in getting the balance right on a crucial challenge facing places like NYU. How do we do it efficiently and also run a large, diverse, complex institution that can move nimblly through the very difficult time in American higher education and, at the same time, allow our community to be involved and invested? The events of the past several months have convinced me that we have to do a better job in this regard, and I am committed to finding ways for NYU to be an exemplar of getting this right for the future.

I won’t say that the vote of no confidence didn’t hurt. Both before and since, there have been many expressions of support—for some personal, some by faculty or other NYU constituents. I am grateful for them. They make me feel that what we have been trying to accomplish has been heard and understood. I worry that the vote of no confidence will have some negative effects on the university in the short term, but I do think that the difficulties inherent in it compel me—and all of us—to think even more deeply on what we can do to make NYU benefit from its many voices, now and in the long run.

In the past decade, there have been more than 50 votes of no confidence at U.S. colleges and universities for widely varied reasons. Does this signify a trend in higher education?

Universities are among the most enduring institutions in human history, and they tend to be very tradition-bound. Those traditions, by the way, have carried U.S. universities a very long way—they are seen as the golden standard for higher education throughout the world. But this is a time of profound and rapid change in higher education, without a clear pathway forward. Reduced support from governments, concern over rising tuition, the impact of technology on learning, the pressures from a globally competitive landscape...the challenges are being felt by all of us. In these times of strain and anxiety, it’s perhaps unsurprising that university leaders are under increasing scrutiny and even criticism for innovating to forge sustainable futures for their institutions.

This is an especially complicated time to be a university president. After 12 years of leadership, what propels you each morning to navigate through all these tangled issues?

I was put on Earth to be a teacher, and my time in the classroom grounded me. Beyond that, I love NYU and its mission. I love NYU’s connection to the city and how we overcame near-bankruptcy to achieve soaring success. I love in its ambition, grit, and entrepreneurship, and how unprecedented is it. I believe strongly in history, and I think we need to offer to our scholars and students, both here in New York and through the Global Network University. I love that I was able to raise my family here, where I have spent more than 30 years—as professor, as dean, as president—with a single aim: to lead my students to NYU as best I could and to leave my successors a stronger, more resilient university, able to withstand the challenges of the 21st century. That makes it so easy to come to work every day.

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In this still-young country, it’s hard to imagine grand estates riding out the ages Downton Abbey-style in the care of a single family. And yet the Sylvester Manor on Shelter Island, nestled in between Long Island’s two forks, has been passed down through 15 generations of Sylvester. Among the house’s historic treasures are 60 linear feet of Sylvester archives, and artifacts, offering a range of insight into early American culture—from the little-acknowledged practice of slavery in New York to the industrialization of agriculture. Now organ-ized and protected within NYU’s Fales Library & Special Collections, the new Sylvester Manor Archive has inaugurated its open- ing with an exhibition at Bobst Library.

The manor was initially a point on the infamous triangle of trade, whose coordinates were in West Africa, the American colonies, and the Caribbean. In 1632, Nathaniel Sylvester bought Shelter Island to use for raising livestock to sell in the West Indies and harvesting

trees for wooden barrels to be shipped to the islands and filled with rum. The estate ran on the labor of African slaves, Na-tive Americans impressed into service, and indentured Euro-pean servants. Some of the archive’s earliest documents are bills of sale from the Boston slave market.

By 1859, when the property passed to Eben Norton Horsford, a wealthy Boston chemist and the inventor of baking powder, the manor was used as a vacation home, wel-coming the likes of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Sarah Orne Jewett, whose handwritten poetry resides in the archive. Today, the most recent Sylvester relation has opened the estate to the pub-li as an organic farm and food education center. The “Sylvester Manor: Food and Power on a Northern Plantation” exhibition closes August 31.

**MATTERS OF THE MANOR**

by Naomi Howell / GAL ‘14

**HISTORY**

**MUSIC**

When the man who co-wrote “Hotel California” talks about songwriting, peo-ple listen. So this year, lucky students in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development were following every word that came out of their professor’s mouth. Glenn Frey—who has won six Grammys and sold more than 120 million albums as a solo artist and founding member of the Eagles—helped team-teach a master class in the school’s new songwriting program. NYU Alumni Magazine spoke with singer, actor, and guitarist Frey (below) at the Beacon Theater last November as he and the rest of the Eagles prepared to take the stage for the Steinhardt Vision Award Gala.

**HOW’D YOU DECIDE TO COME TEACH AT STEINHARDT?**

I was at the Country Music Association Awards with the Eagles three years ago, and we went on last. So for the better part of three hours, I sat watching the show. And with no offense to any partic-ular artist or songwriter, I sat through some of the most cliché, half-baked, boring songs. It was troubling to say the least. As luck would have it, the very next morning [producer and engineer] Elliot Scheiner calls me up and says, “Would you talk to a buddy of mine, [songwriter-in-residence] Phil Galston, and another guy over at NYU, [professor] Lawrence Ferrari? They’re talking about starting an elite songwriting program, and they want to pick your brain about curriculum.” So the timing couldn’t have been bet-ter. It was supposed to be a 15-minute conversation, and we wound up talking for an hour and a half, and only got started. And then this year, Phil asked if I would be interested in team-teach-ing a class with him.

**HAS THE GIG BEEN CHALLENGING?**

It’s different teaching songwriting than it is teaching how to write music. That you can teach a little more pragmatically. This is an elu-sive subject, but there are rules. Like, keep it interesting. Don’t have there be a place in your song where people are going to change the channel or tune out. So it’s been really exciting to share our insights. Phil and I are already thinking about what we’ll do next and how we’d tweak the program a little bit.

**WHAT’S BEEN THE BEST PART OF THIS EXPERIENCE?**

Coming to New York and seeing my daughter, who’s a senior at Tisch [school]. She’s made it a good excuse to come do this. But the best part of it is how contagious the enthusiasm and the commit-ment of the students has been. That really gets me feeling like a musician.

—Jason Hollander
His response was to found the new Center for Constitutional Transitions at the NYU School of Law, which aims to act as a “back office” for legal advisors working in countries undergoing a regime change. For comparative constitutional specialists such as Choudhry, who is the faculty director of the project, fieldwork usually involves traveling to a remote locale with little advance notice, minimal academic resources, and bare-bones communication infrastructure.

The center, which relies on 20 law students working for academic credit, will provide a sort of research department for clients abroad. They are currently preparing a series of reports for legal advisers in Jordan, Libya, Tunisia, and Morocco on issues that arose during the Arab Spring, such as how to build a liberal democracy in which the partisans interests of civilians don’t lead to an abuse of power by the security sector. “This is the first time in the world anyone has tried to do this,” Choudhry says. “There is a lot of excitement about this work—people are waiting for our answers.”

Dworkin’s response was to found the Balzan Prize for his “fundamental contributions to jurisprudence, characterized by outstanding gifts of sharpness, originality, and clarity of thought in a constant and fruitful interaction with ethical and political theories and with legal practices.” The prize was accompanied by an award of 750,000 Swiss francs, about $800,000, half of which must be invested in research—preferably involving young scholars. Dworkin authored numerous books, including most recently, Justice for Hedgehogs (Belknap Press/Harvard), which he noted was not a treatise on animal rights nor a take-down of hedge fund barons, but a nod to an ancient Greek axiom and the notion that a single value undermines truth, morality, justice, and life.

The BUSINESS of MEDICINE

Along the grueling path of medical education, students will memorize every bone, muscle, and ligament in the body, plus a laundry of diseases and their telltale signs. As residents, they’ll easily clock 80 hours in a week at the hospital. The result generally is a tested physician with a wide-ranging knowledge of sickness and health. But some are finding that is no longer enough.

As the health-care system grows ever more complex, doctors have realized that they must also develop expertise in areas such as management, business strategy, and public policy—or risk abdicating their role in shaping the future of medicine. To that end, NYU has joined the cadre of medical schools that now offer dual degrees in medicine and business administration. Darien Sutton-Ramsey (MEd ’14), a third-year medical student and class president, sees the degree as a way to “fill a void between the people who make health care and the people who do health care.”

The program is part of the School of Medicine’s Curriculum for the 21st Century, or C21, which also offers medical students a chance to earn a dual degree in one of four other disciplines: bioethics, clinical investigation, global public health, or health policy and management. “Our goal [with C21] is to take on very smart students and offer them pathways to go deeper into the areas of their particular interest,” explains Steven Abramson, senior vice president and vice dean for education, faculty, and academic affairs.

Abramson says that the response from would-be students has been “remarkably strong”—particularly to the MD/MBA, whose first class starts this fall. The investment, med student Sutton-Ramsey notes, will give NYU grads far more tools to use in the field. With such a degree, he says, “I will be able to treat not just one patient, but populations of patients.”
ideal for children on the autism spectrum because they thrive on predictability, says Kristin Keong, an assistant professor of occupational therapy at the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. Together with Steinhardt doctoral student Satvika Garg, Keong ran a 16-week study of GRTL in which teachers and parents completed a checklist recording the daily behavior of students with autism. The resulting paper, recently published in The American Journal of Occupational Therapy, notes that the children who participated in yoga showed less aggression and hyperactivity than their counterparts.

In 1972, along the crumbling lakeside of the Lake Turkana Basin in Kenya, paleoanthropologist Richard Leakey uncovered the skull of an odd-looking hominid, KNM-ER 1470, or simply “1470,” as it came to be known, appeared to date from the dawn of the Homo genus nearly two million years ago, but was unlike any early human fossils found before. It had a large skull and notably flat face. The question that distressed anthropologists again was whether it was simply an outlier—an abnormal-size or deformed individual—or evidence of a whole other species.

The answer to that question was recently unearthed with three new fossils—a juvenile’s face, a nearly complete lower jaw, and a portion of another lower jaw—that closely match the unusual structure of “1470.” Scientists with the Koobi Fora Research Project, led by Meave and Louise Leakey (Richard’s wife and daughter, respectively), made the discoveries, which were announced in the journal Nature. They suggest this was indeed a separate species; the new find along with two other early types of humans, Homo habilis and our direct ancestor, Homo erectus. “Since we’re the only species of Homo living today, we tend to think that’s the way it was universally in the past,” says NYU anthropologist Susan Antón, who analyzed the bones as a member of the Koobi Fora team. “And that’s not the case.”

The advent of early humans was likely a dynamic time. Antón observes, where various species may have experimented with foods or environments in their evolutionary quest to survive. But scientists refrain from supposing that “1470” represented a new species. “It always kind of evokes an outlier—an abnormal-size or deformed individual—or evidence of a whole other species,” Antón muses. “It’s just kind of a nagging curiosity.”

Infact, the students reported feeling less stressed and anxious after yoga, and a number of early human species have been found in the last few years, including Homo naledi, which is only two million years ago.

Science & Education

A few years ago, Stephen Arnold was at an Inthak Public event when his mind wandered. “I was wondering what a piece of dust would do if it hit a string,” he says. The professor of physics and chemistry at NYU-Poly says. Surely the dust would change the string’s frequency over so slightly. He then wondered whether the same principle could be used to detect something even smaller, such as a virus, and he took the idea to the lab. What emerged was a new type of biosensor, one that could revolutionize the diagnosis of disease. Here’s how it works. A laser shines through a glass fiber to a detector. When a tiny gas sphere is placed between the fiber and the detector, certain wavelengths of light will bounce back out of the sphere and bounce around inside, creating a dip in the light the detector receives. If a virus cloaks the gas sphere, which is only two thousandths of an inch across, the sphere will resonate at a different frequency and take in different wavelengths of light. Arnold named the system a “whispering gallery-mode” biosensor, or WGM, in a nod to the way voices bounce around the whispering gallery under the dome of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London. In a recent issue of Applied Physics Letters, Arnold and collaborators reported that they’ve now taken WGM biosensors to a new level. By attaching a smaller gold nanoparticle to the microscope, they’ve managed to amplify its sensitivity. Before this innovation, they could detect viruses such as influenza, which weighs a few hundred attograms, or quintillionths of a gram, at one at a time, but not smaller viruses, such as polio and hepatitis. Now even the smallest known RNA virus particle, MS2, at only six attograms, can be detected. When the scientists confirmed that results from the cough did not provoke their interest as extensively, one scientist believes this confirms that infants are more perceptive than previously thought. “[They] understand not only that other people have invisible thoughts, but that people can use speech to inform others about these unspeakable thoughts,” she says. The implication is that infants “could learn, in theory, about things beyond their immediate experience.” —Naomi Novell

A new study suggests that infants lack the correlation not just between speech and observation, but also between speech and undetectable social cues. In a study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, NYU psychology professor Athena Vouloumanos, her former research assistant Amanda Pogue, and Kristine Dinsat of McGill University observed that adults “communicate and recipients’ act out predictable and unpredictable scenes in front of infants. In one case, an actor tried to stack rings onto a funnel and showed frustration at being out of reach. In another, a communicator said words or noises to a recipient: In one example, a made-up word, “koko,” in another, a common cough. The young subjects held “koko” in another, a common cough. The young subjects held “koba,” indicating that they viewed this result as incongruent with the instruction and the intention. Results from the cough did not provoke their interest as extensively. —Matthew Hare