

The Graduate Center
The City University of New York

365

ANNUAL REPORT 2017–2018



**THE
GRADUATE
CENTER**
CITY UNIVERSITY
OF NEW YORK

Graduate Education for the Public Good

Our commitment to the public good defines doctoral and master's education at The Graduate Center of The City University of New York—the most public of public universities.

In the nearly 60 years since The Graduate Center was established, we have become one of the leading Ph.D.-granting institutions in the country. We are especially proud to rank among the country's top 10 institutions in awarding doctorates to students from underrepresented minority groups.

In serving the public good, graduate education prepares students for careers within the academy—as teachers and researchers—and increasingly for careers outside of the academy. Ours is a world in which creative, problem-solving expertise is more important than ever—and that's what we're about.

This idea animates the goals of our strategic plan, and our annual report highlights significant achievements over the past year. We boosted science at The Graduate Center when we assumed management of CUNY's Advanced Science Research Center. We grew our faculty in disciplines ranging from ethnomusicology to structural biology. We created six new master's programs in cutting-edge fields. With generous gifts, we increased student support, most visibly in the establishment of the Quantitative Research Consulting Center and hiring of new post-doctoral fellows. Combined gifts totaling almost \$1 million launched The Graduate Center Wealth Project, part of our Stone Center on Socio-Economic Inequality. And, with essential support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, we are transforming doctoral education for the public good.

Graduate Center alumni make their education count. Two months before graduation, Saisha Grayson (Ph.D. '18, Art History) was named curator of time-based media—what she calls “an international language of media production and sharing”—at the Smithsonian American Art Museum. “In addition to feeling elated by the incredible opportunity to steward this important collection at such a prestigious institution, I'm also so gratified to know that the extraordinary effort of pursuing and completing the Ph.D. has been worth it,” Grayson says. “I'm sure this level of scholarly commitment was a huge part of getting my job.”

In their commitment to their scholarship and its potential, our alumni are redeeming the promise of public graduate education.

We, in turn, benefit greatly from the generosity of alumni and friends who invest in our purpose and people. Thank you to all of our donors. You make it possible for us to carry out our mission.

Sincerely,



Chase F. Robinson
President

Joy Connolly
Provost and Senior Vice President

Unprecedented Support

Generous gifts and grants change our students' lives and advance research, scholarship, and teaching at The Graduate Center. This past year, we benefited from remarkable support that is already making a difference.

TRANSFORMING DOCTORAL EDUCATION IN THE HUMANITIES

That's the audacious goal set by The Graduate Center and backed by a five-year, \$2.265 million grant from **The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**.

Among other initiatives, the grant will fund doctoral student fellows who will pursue internships and participate in other career preparation activities as a central part of their doctoral education.

THINKING BROADLY ABOUT THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION

The Graduate Center's leadership in preparing doctoral students to teach undergraduates received a boost this year in the form of generous funding from **Leonard and Judy Lauder** and **The Charina Endowment Fund, Inc.** Both gifts went to The Graduate Center's Teaching & Learning Center, one of the very few teaching centers dedicated to working exclusively with graduate student instructors. Our students teach in thousands of CUNY classrooms each year and contribute to CUNY's success at propelling its diverse students into the middle and upper classes. The benefits of these two gifts are exponential, effectively reaching hundreds of thousands of students.

HELPING STUDENTS COMPLETE THEIR EDUCATION

Assisting students facing unexpected health issues. Supporting a student to relocate after a fire. Helping another to go home to visit a sick family member. Generous support from **The Carroll and Milton Petrie Foundation, Inc.** provides quick-response grants for Graduate Center students facing short-term financial emergencies. For students living on tight budgets, the funds can make all the difference, allowing them to stay focused on their studies and achieve their graduate degrees.

LEADING GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH

Professor Andrea Alù, director of the Photonics Initiative at our Advanced Science Research Center, was awarded a \$7.5 million grant from the **Department of Defense** to lead a team of researchers from The Graduate Center, Columbia University, Stanford University, and the University of Michigan in cutting-edge metamaterials research. The grant is the largest of its kind on record to a Graduate Center faculty member. Alù envisions that the research it supports may lead to breakthroughs in wireless communications, radar, and optical computing.

PROMOTING SCHOLARSHIP ON PUERTO RICAN MIGRATION

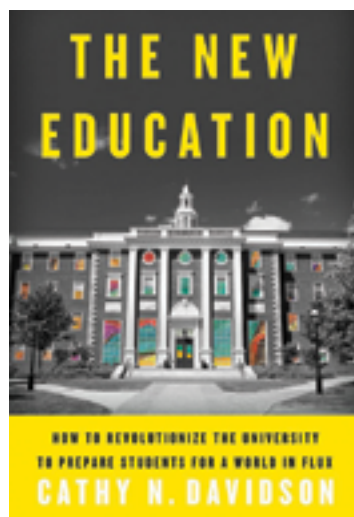
Acknowledging "The Graduate Center's prestigious research reputation and its commitment to scholarship as a public good, especially with respect to Latin American and Caribbean studies," **Luis A. Miranda Jr. and his family** endowed the Miranda Fellowship to elevate research on Puerto Rican migration and communities in the United States. Cathy Cabrera-Figueroa, the first recipient of the fellowship and a first-year Ph.D. student in history, is interested in capturing the migrant experience through oral history and the perspectives of women.

"First, we believe that a strong doctoral education prepares students for careers both within and outside academe. Second, we want to place the goals of creating and circulating knowledge for the public good at the center of the way we teach and mentor doctoral students."

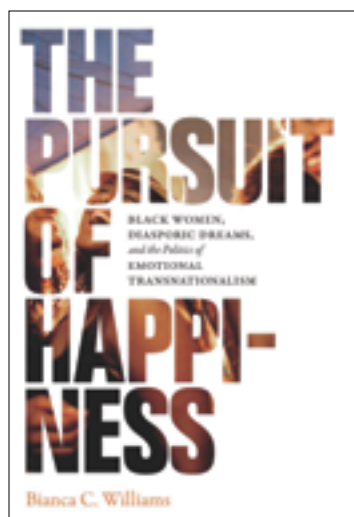
—**Joy Connolly**
Provost and Senior
Vice President

Conversation Starters, New York to Hollywood

From living rooms to seminar rooms to screening rooms, people are talking about the scholarship and artistry of Graduate Center faculty. Their work appeals to audiences within and far beyond academic circles.



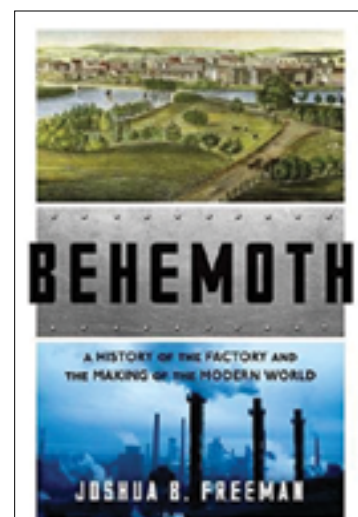
A “manifesto” for 21st-century education: The new book by Distinguished Professor **Cathy N. Davidson** (English), director of The Graduate Center’s Futures Initiative, profiles educators designing new paths to learning.



Professor **Bianca C. Williams** (Anthropology) examines the persistence of racism, sexism, and ageism in this firsthand account of African-American women seeking solace in repeated trips to Jamaica.

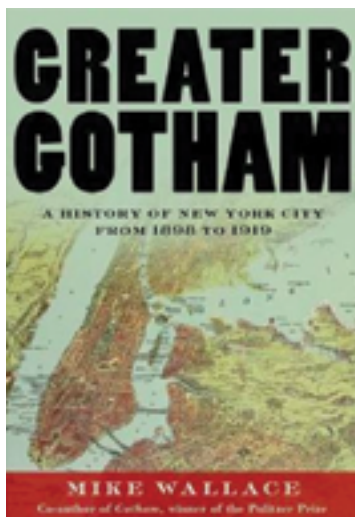


Novelist and Distinguished Professor **André Aciman** (Comparative Literature and French) wrote the book that was made into an Academy Award–winning film.

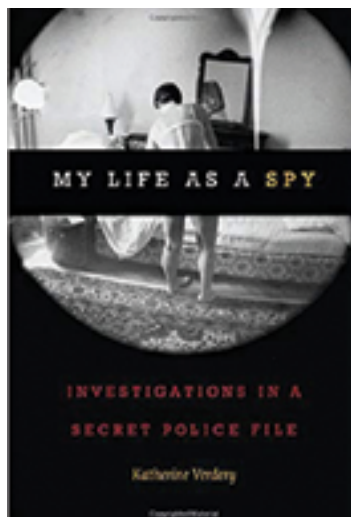


The New York Times called this book by **Joshua B. Freeman**, distinguished professor of history at The Graduate Center, Queens College, and the School of Labor and Urban Studies, “required reading for all Americans.”

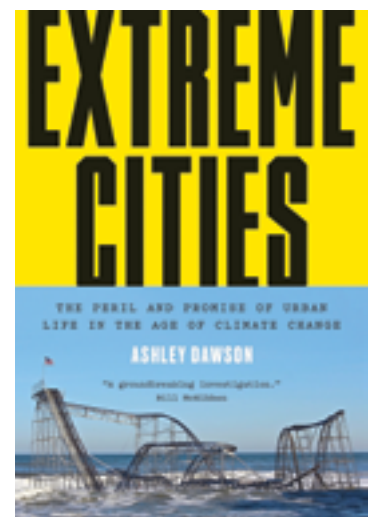
Find more books and news at www.gc.cuny.edu/news.



Critics hailed the new book by **Mike Wallace**, distinguished professor of history at The Graduate Center and John Jay College, as a “magisterial sequel” to his Pulitzer Prize-winning *Gotham*.



In her acclaimed memoir, Distinguished Professor **Katherine Verdery** (Anthropology) reveals that she was surveilled as a spy while studying village life in communist Romania.



Ashley Dawson, professor of English at The Graduate Center and the College of Staten Island, details the devastating effects of climate change on coastal cities in one of *Publishers Weekly's* Best Books of 2017.

SETTING THE LITTLE ROCK NINE TO A NEW SCORE

Civil rights history is the inspiration for the opera-in-progress, *The Little Rock Nine*, one of the latest works by **Tania León**, professor of music at The Graduate Center and Brooklyn College. *The New York Times* praised the composition, calling it a “musical tapestry of jazz, gospel and snippets of ragtime,” distinctive combinations that have defined León’s style since she emigrated from Cuba 50 years ago.

The performance of the opera was just one of the highlights in an exceptional year for León, whose career was honored with a major award from United States Artists.

A very busy musician, whose compositions are performed all over the world, León is equally dedicated to developing new talent. She collaborates closely with her students at The Graduate Center, encouraging them to discover their compositional styles. With her United States Artists award, she plans to create a series of lectures and talks to inspire tomorrow’s musicians. “I want to encourage young people that any career in the arts is possible.”

Photo credit: Andrea Morales



Science That Breaks Barriers

To solve the most pressing challenges and seize the most exciting opportunities, The Graduate Center encourages science research that transcends fields and disciplines.



ADDING ALGORITHMS TO NEUROSCIENCE

Big data, machine learning, cognitive neuroscience—this is the scientific intersection where Fahd Alhazmi conducts his research. A doctoral candidate in psychology and biology, Alhazmi uses his training as a software engineer to understand the intricacies of the human brain. Working with Presidential Professor Tony Ro (Biology and Psychology), he applies algorithms—similar to the ones used to teach computers to act without explicit instructions—to brain wave data to explore how the brain processes routine tasks, such as eye movements. But Alhazmi's vision goes beyond the lab. He has amassed nearly 20,000 followers on Twitter and has contributed bylined articles to popular Arab media outlets. "Science needs selfies and stories in order to combat misinformation and restore public trust," he says.

EXPLORING THE PHYSICS OF LIFE

With major support from the National Science Foundation, The Graduate Center and Princeton University joined forces this year to create the Center for the Physics of Biological Function. This interdisciplinary initiative creates new research opportunities for graduate students and inspires advanced undergraduates (our future master's and doctoral students) with specialized summer classes. Featuring major scientists, such as Visiting Presidential Professor William Bialek (Physics), the center's free events and programs bring exciting research and theory to the public. This center and The Graduate Center's Initiative for the Theoretical Sciences advance our vision of promoting leading interdisciplinary scientific research and discovery for the benefit of this and future generations.

TACKLING ALZHEIMER'S FROM THE ASRC

While still a postdoc, Professor Shana Elbaum-Garfinkle (Biochemistry) made a breakthrough discovery about proteins and cell structure. Today, as head of her own lab—part of the Structural Biology Initiative at The Graduate Center's Advanced Science Research Center (ASRC)—Elbaum-Garfinkle and her colleagues are building on that research, opening potential new pathways to treat Alzheimer's disease.

Her interdisciplinary background in physics, biochemistry, and biochemical engineering is the perfect fit for the collaborative energy of the ASRC. "It's the place where my research program can really thrive because it's very, very rare to have people with such diverse expertise—nanoscience, neuroscience, structural biology, environmental science, and photonics—in one building, meeting weekly. Here, every week, every day, we're cross-pollinating. For me, that is tremendous because I've always been at the interface of fields," she says.



PRIMED FOR COLLABORATION

Form follows function at The Graduate Center's Advanced Science Research Center (ASRC). All 200,000 square feet of the ASRC are designed for creative collaboration among its cutting-edge fields: nanoscience, photonics, structural biology, neuroscience, and environmental sciences. ASRC scientists are carrying out the building's promise for promoting research across disciplines. Recent discoveries include nanomaterials that mimic aspects of living matter and adapting the mechanisms of myelin production for treating certain central nervous system diseases. Innovative work like this is attracting significant funding. Living up to The Graduate Center's commitment to science in the public interest, the ASRC welcomes the youngest "scientists" starting in kindergarten for tours; opens events, conferences, and symposia to public participation; and has just completed its IlluminationSpace, an exploratory learning center for middle and high school students.

Public Scholars

Scholars and scholarship make the world a better place. Our students are proof of this concept. It is what is moving us to create new research-intensive master's programs, advancing our public mission and increasing our impact.

ACTIVIST SCHOLAR

For **Do Lee** (Ph.D. '18), research has inspired activism. Focusing on the immigrant New Yorkers whose livelihoods depend on electric bikes to deliver food quickly around the city, Lee's research has given voice to the immigrants' concerns, and his expertise has made him invaluable in bringing their stories to the public.



SCIENTIST SCHOLAR

Julia Castello's research on a protein named CK2 may be a key to more effective antidepressants. Lead author of a paper detailing the breakthrough, Castello says that, "Identifying new targets broadens our understanding about the cause of depression as well as the action of antidepressants, which could lead to new antidepressants that work more efficiently and faster for more people."





CURATOR SCHOLAR

When New York's Museum of Modern Art mounted its first fashion exhibition in 70 years—"Items: Is Fashion Modern?"—co-curating the show was **Michelle Millar Fisher**. Working in MoMA's design department was a dream come true for Fisher, who said that her courses and the collaborative experience at The Graduate Center made all the difference in landing this position and her new curator role at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

"A COMMUNITY TO GROW WITH"

In 2017–2018, The Graduate Center launched new master's programs in some of today's most dynamic disciplines: cognitive neuroscience, data analysis and visualization, data science, digital humanities, international migration studies, and quantitative methods in the social sciences. The programs are extending opportunities for graduate education and attracting a growing and diverse group of students like **Raven Gomez**.

Gomez is convinced that technology empowers students. That conviction led her to The Graduate Center's new digital humanities master's program, where she intends to develop high-tech ways to benefit nontraditional students like her.

Gomez's own path to a master's degree took some unexpected turns. Health problems kept her from completing high school, but she earned her GED, entered LaGuardia Community College, and earned a scholarship to Smith College. Smith exposed her to the field of game studies and to the concept of incorporating games and technology into learning. She chose The Graduate Center's digital humanities master's program for its commitment to digital technology in education. Gomez says that, "This was the kind of community that I wanted to grow with." Already, she is eyeing The Graduate Center's Ph.D. programs.



In Unexpected Places



“The Graduate Center was my portal to New York City, providing the path to museums, gardens, libraries—a cultural world I learned to navigate with joy and curiosity.”

— **Carrie Rebora Barratt**

(Ph.D. '90, Art History)

Named CEO and president of The New York Botanical Garden in February 2018



“My Graduate Center experience changed my life fundamentally.”

— **J. Phillip Thompson**

(Ph.D. '90, Political Science)

Named Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives for New York City in February 2018



“People often say to me, ‘How did you end up in financial services? You’re a psychologist.’ But they don’t recognize the rigor of a Graduate Center degree in psychology.”

— **Tiffany Perkins-Munn**

(Ph.D. '03, Psychology)

Named global head of decision sciences at BlackRock in April 2018

“The Graduate Center’s program in English was both a superb intellectual experience and a springboard for the rest of my career. I saw firsthand the power of a national-level graduate program to contribute to the life of the city and the needs of society.”

—**Daniel R. Porterfield** (Ph.D. '95, English)
Former president of Franklin & Marshall College, named president and CEO of the Aspen Institute in November 2017



Photo credit: Dan Bayer

**PATRICIA CHAPPLE WRIGHT (PH.D. '85, ANTHROPOLOGY)
PRESIDENT'S DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI MEDALIST (2018)**

Primatologist, professor, award-winning conservationist

Patricia Chapple Wright was a social worker with a young daughter when a paper she researched on the parenting habits of owl monkeys led her to The Graduate Center to study with world-renowned primatologists and pursue her Ph.D. in anthropology. With her new doctoral degree, she traveled to Madagascar to search for the greater bamboo lemur, a species thought to be extinct. She found it and then discovered the golden bamboo lemur. With a passion to protect the lemurs and Madagascar's biodiversity, she partnered with the government and local communities to create the Ranomafana National Park and, later, established the Centre ValBio, a sustainable research station for wildlife science, environmental arts, community health, and conservation education.

Wright's story and work are the focus of the 2014 IMAX film *Island of the Lemurs*. She won the 2014 Indianapolis Prize, considered the Nobel Prize for conservationists, and was named a MacArthur Fellow.

Now a distinguished professor of anthropology at The State University of New York at Stony Brook, Wright told NPR that The Graduate Center's philosophy of graduate education for the public good resonates with her. "I feel that my responsibility now is to use my Ph.D. to train the next generation of primatologists, tropical biologists, and conservationists."



Leading Conversation

This past year, The Graduate Center welcomed leaders in politics, economics, education, the arts, and activism—part of our effort to promote dialogue and kindle new ideas, perspectives, and understanding. We put the public at the center of the conversation with free lectures and events.



French President Emmanuel Macron launched the nonprofit French Dual Language Fund before a capacity crowd at The Graduate Center, recognized for its commitment to diversity and multilingualism.



Nobel Laureate and Distinguished Professor Paul Krugman (Economics), who is also a faculty member at The Graduate Center's Stone Center on Socio-Economic Inequality, engaged in a timely discussion amidst sweeping changes to the U.S. tax code.



Patriesse Cullors, co-founder of Black Lives Matter, spoke about her life and work before she received the José Muñoz Award from The Graduate Center's CLAGS: The Center for LGBTQ Studies.



Upon publication of his memoir, *Air Traffic*, **Pulitzer Prize winner Gregory Pardlo**, a Ph.D. candidate at The Graduate Center, joined fellow poet Vieve Francis for a reading and conversation on race and labor in their work.



Ai-jen Poo '15 (Honorary) of the National Domestic Workers Alliance; **Barbara Ehrenreich**, acclaimed author of *Nickel and Dimed*; **Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw** of Columbia and UCLA; television host **Laura Flanders**; and Graduate Center **Distinguished Professor Emerita Frances Fox Piven** (Political Science and Sociology) backstage before speaking to a full auditorium about activism in the Trump Administration era



"Shared Sacred Sites" on the convergence of faith and belief—a collaboration with The New York Public Library and The Morgan Library & Museum—was one of a series of important exhibitions of art and ideas at The Graduate Center's James Gallery.

The Graduate Center by the Numbers

WE ARE ...

3,900+ doctoral and master's students taught by **130+** faculty members appointed at The Graduate Center and **1,700+** faculty members from throughout CUNY.

ACCOMPLISHED

Graduate Center faculty and students are winners of the **Nobel and Pulitzer prizes and Guggenheim and Fulbright fellowships**, among many other accolades.

15,000+ doctoral graduates. Of graduates from 2003 to 2014: **68% work in education**, about **20% work in private industry or business or are self-employed**, and just over **10% work in either the government or nonprofit sector**.

DIVERSE

Ranked #8 among institutions in awarding Ph.D.'s to Hispanic or Latino students.

21% of incoming doctoral and master's students identified as under-represented minorities.

23% of doctoral students are international, representing nearly 80 countries.

ENGAGED

180,000+ CUNY undergraduates are taught by Graduate Center students every year, making the GC an important part of CUNY's success at propelling almost six times as many low-income students into the middle class and beyond as all eight Ivy League campuses.

100+ free public programs each year draw **20,000+** attendees.

SELECTIVE

18% of doctoral applicants are admitted.

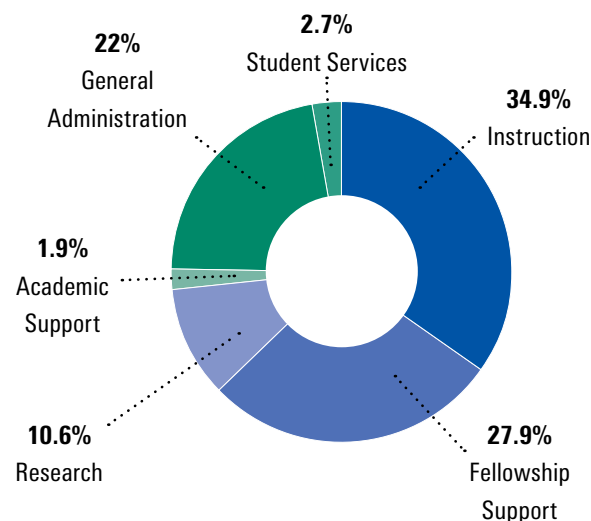
AFFORDABLE

90% of incoming doctoral students receive five-year fellowship packages.

45% of incoming doctoral students are guaranteed to receive summer support for five years.

2017–2018 BUDGET BY SPENDING CATEGORY

Total Tax-Levy Budget: \$130,695,304*



For more detailed budget information, visit www.gc.cuny/budget.

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as of fall 2018

*This budget includes funds allocated to CUNY's Macaulay Honors College as part of the University Center academic entities as well as funds allocated to the Advanced Science Research Center, which joined The Graduate Center in 2017.

Donor Impact

Thank you to our donors who generously supported The Graduate Center last year.



This past year, through private philanthropy, The Graduate Center was able to:

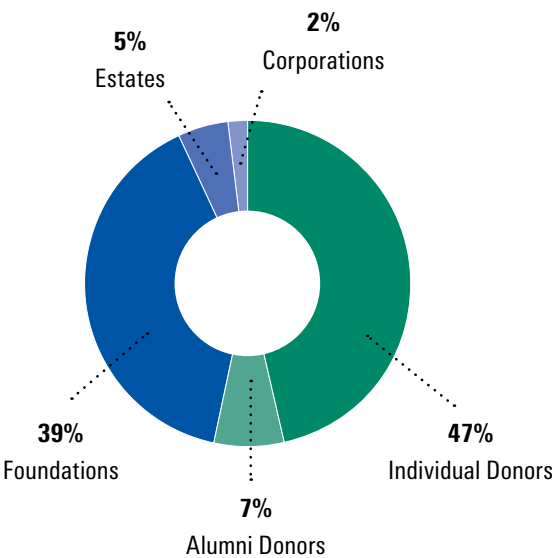
- Offer **31 dissertation research awards**
- Make **44 emergency grants** in support of immediate student financial need
- Provide funding for **32 students to engage in summer research projects**
- Sustain the quality of our programs and embark on new initiatives that will advance our standing as a national leader in graduate education



DONOR SUPPORT

1,355	Total donors
618	Alumni donors
24	Planned gift donors (Mina Rees Society)
10	Gifts of \$100,000 or more
60	Gifts of \$10,000 or more
134	Gifts of \$1,000 or more
811	Gifts of \$100 or more

SOURCES OF SUPPORT



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365 Fifth Avenue
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“The coolest bit of the coolest university in New York.”

—Katharine Viner '18 (Honorary)
Editor-in-Chief of Guardian News & Media

See why inside ...



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We welcome updates and feedback from alumni and friends.

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