

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of University Council
From: Amy Gutmann, President
Date: January 27, 2021
Subject: Report to the University Council

Welcome back to University Council and to a new year at Penn. We ushered in the spring semester with the sounds and sights of nearly 3,000 undergraduates, the majority of whom are first-years, arriving on campus and moving into their College Houses. For many, this was their first time seeing our beautiful campus in person.

We all want nothing more than a full return to normal campus life with all of our friends, colleagues, and neighbors safely close by. This latest step toward that goal is an encouraging one. I am grateful to the many staff, Penn community members, and families who helped make it possible, successful, and safe.

As students began moving in, we shared an update with the Penn community about Penn Cares, our COVID-19 response program established to help thwart the spread of the disease. It is worth repeating often that we all have a responsibility to do our part to ensure the success of Penn Cares and to think about the impact our decisions have on others, especially in our surrounding communities.

We can help create a safe environment to live, learn, and work by following the strict public health guidance we've instituted for those on and off campus. These include masking, washing hands, remaining physically distant, staying home when sick, taking part in our robust screening testing program, and completing your daily PennOpen Pass symptom and exposure tracker.

We also observed the start of Penn's 26th annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Symposium, which continues today with the 20th annual Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Lecture in Social Justice featuring Dr. Cornel West. Scant days before our Symposium began, we watched in shock and outrage as rioters assaulted the nation's capital. The sight of Nazi symbols and Confederate flags desecrating the halls of Congress especially devastated us. The call to honor, learn from, and act upon Dr. King's legacy has always been urgent, never more so than now. I am grateful as always to the African-American Resource Center and the Black Graduate and Professional Student Assembly for all they do for this important Symposium and far beyond.

As the Penn community continues to work tirelessly for public health and against injustice, it is most fitting that our faculty earn special recognition for their leadership in these domains. For their outstanding contributions to our understanding of ethics in healthcare, science, and technology, Scott Halpern and Jennifer Prah Ruger have been named Hastings Center Fellows. Congratulations to them both.

I hope you all enjoyed a restful and healthy winter break, and I look forward to our work together in the coming semester. Welcome back!

PROVOST'S STATUS REPORT

University Council

January 2021

I am grateful to every member of the Penn community for your commitment to sustaining our University at this challenging moment, especially as we now begin our comprehensive spring semester testing program and observe our January Quiet Period. We are confident that there are better days ahead, and we will continue to keep you informed as our plans move forward.

I am delighted to start the year by welcoming Christopher Woods as the new Williams Director of the Penn Museum, beginning April 1. Dr. Woods comes to us from the University of Chicago, where he is John A. Wilson Professor of Sumerology and Director of the Oriental Institute, one of world's leading centers for interdisciplinary research on Near East civilizations. An eminent museum director who is also a distinguished scholar, he will be the ideal leader to help us shape, for a new decade, the Museum's historic educational mission: illuminating the present and the future by helping us to better understand – and vividly experience – our collective past. Please also join me in congratulating Prof. José Bauermeister on his appointment as the University's fifth Greenfield Professor of Human Relations. Prof. Bauermeister, chair of the Department of Family and Community Health in the School of Nursing and most recently Presidential Professor of Nursing, is a pioneer of new ways to improve public health for teenagers and young adults, especially in the treatment of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. This work exemplifies the mission of the Greenfield Professorship, which honors a distinguished scholar who embodies the humanitarian vision of the late Albert M. Greenfield, a longtime city leader who chaired the Philadelphia City Planning Commission and many other civic and philanthropic organizations.

I encourage eligible faculty members to consider applying for our [Penn Fellows](#) and Arts and Humanities Leadership programs. Both programs provide mid-career faculty members (from newly tenured to early full professors) with opportunities to develop leadership skills, build networks across campus, and interact with campus leaders. The new Provost's Arts and Humanities Leadership Project, funded by the Mellon Foundation, specifically supports leadership development for mid-career faculty members from humanities and arts disciplines or whose work is strongly based on cultural/historical analysis. We will select approximately fifteen faculty members for each program. Applications, nominations, and inquiries can be submitted to provost-fac@upenn.edu by Friday, January 29. Applications and nominations should identify the preferred program and include a letter of support from the dean or department chair and the candidate's CV.

I thank you for your partnership and look forward to working together this semester.

Wendell Pritchett
Provost