

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of University Council
From: Amy Gutmann, President
Date: December 1, 2021
Subject: Report to the University Council

We were delighted to announce an in-person University-wide Commencement ceremony for the undergraduate Class of 2020 as well as graduate students from the Classes of 2020 and 2021. The ceremony will take place on Sunday, May 22, at 10 a.m. on Franklin Field.

Throughout the pandemic, Penn students worked hard and persevered with grace. Now, we will honor their tenacity and wisdom by holding the graduation they so richly deserve. We are pleased to celebrate their distinguished academic achievements by joining friends and family on Franklin Field to honor their resilience and patience with a very special one-of-a-kind celebration. Registration will be required, and we will send those details and more very soon.

We also shared an important campus-wide message concerning Penn's ongoing efforts to combat the effects of climate change. Along with our achievements to date, we announced that Penn will cease new investments in any new commitments to private equity vehicles dedicated to investments in fossil fuel production. We further confirmed that Penn does not directly invest in companies engaged in the production of fossil fuels. We also announced the creation of a new President's Sustainability Prize, a new category in our successful President's Engagement and Innovation Prizes. It is of vital importance that we take strong action to mitigate climate change, and Penn continues to lead in doing so.

Penn's leadership in medicine, public health, science, and technology likewise takes a great leap forward. We recently opened Penn Medicine's beautiful and innovative new Pavilion at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. And we announced the launch of a new \$750 million investment to advance Penn's pathbreaking contributions across four areas of scientific research: novel therapeutics and health-related initiatives; energy and sustainability; data engineering and science; and infrastructure to support physical science research. These investments are made possible thanks to our skyrocketing innovation ecosystem led by our faculty, the Penn Center for Innovation, and our blockbuster *Power of Penn* Campaign. This historic new investment will further support faculty recruitment and retention and position Penn to be a world leader in some of the most critically important scientific fields for years to come.

As we enter the final weeks of the semester and the holiday season, I commend the Penn community yet again for enabling our full return to campus life, in-person classes, and student activities. This could only be made possible through shared resolve and a fervent commitment to safeguarding one another's health and wellbeing. Let's keep up the excellent work and remain vigilant, especially with robust COVID testing and other measures. As campus leaders, all Council members have been and remain invaluable allies in our University's continued efforts to navigate this pandemic. Thank you all.

Thank you as well for your service to University Council. You have my warmest wishes for a great end of semester and a happy, healthy, restful winter break.

PROVOST'S STATUS REPORT

University Council

November 2021

I am grateful to every member of the Penn community for your extraordinary efforts in resuming our shared lives on campus this semester. We look forward to continuing in-person classes and activities in the spring semester, as well as the pilot of the hybrid work program that began this semester. As we head into the closing weeks of the semester and the Thanksgiving break, I strongly encourage everyone to continue to make use of our free COVID tests, which are available at any time on campus without an appointment. We have expanded testing hours to include the Sunday before Thanksgiving (November 21), as well as all three weekdays before Thanksgiving. You can find the full holiday testing schedule, including both Thanksgiving break and winter break, on the [Penn Coronavirus website](#). Our COVID positivity rate in asymptomatic individuals, most recently 0.45%, has been below 0.5% for the past nine weeks. Our vaccination rates for students, staff, postdocs, and faculty are all above 97%. And we have accomplished all of this while successfully adapting as a community to regular testing (twice a week for those with exemptions) and vigilant mask-wearing. We expect to resume our gateway testing program for the community at the start of next semester and will have more details as January gets closer.

As we head into the holiday season, I want to encourage all of you to find a moment to visit our great arts organizations, which were most directly impacted by the pandemic and have now been at the heart of our – and our city's – ongoing recovery. The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, newly rebranded as [Penn Live Arts](#) for its 50th anniversary, will feature three Penn debuts in just the next six weeks: the legendary mandolinist Chris Thile, the innovative tap choreographer Michelle Dorrance, and the brilliant jazz singer Cécile McLorin Salvant. The Penn Museum is offering a vibrant [Stories We Wear](#) exhibit that features 2500 years of clothes, accessories, jewelry, tattoos, and uniforms. The Institute of Contemporary Art is showcasing two landmark contemporary artists: the pioneering California-based video and media artist [Ulysses Jenkins](#) and the dazzling Korean-German graphic designer [Na Kim](#). And the Arthur Ross Gallery is presenting a curation of the Penn Art Collection by North Philadelphia artist, ceramicist, and social activist [Roberto Lugo](#). In addition, the Sachs Program for Arts Innovation will be hosting its annual [grants information session](#) on Zoom on December 1. This is a great way to learn more about its wide range of [different kinds of grants](#) to support collaborative and innovative arts activities at Penn, including small rolling grants for students and student groups, community partnership grants, and an annual grant process for larger projects.

I thank all of you again for your resilience and perseverance this semester and wish you a wonderful and restful Thanksgiving Break.

Beth A. Winkelstein
Interim Provost



PPSA – Penn Professional Staff Assembly

WEBSITE: <https://ppsa.upenn.edu>

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Status Report for University Council – December 1, 2021

- We offer our sincere thanks to Pablo Cerdera, Associate Director of Restorative Practices, and his team at [Restorative Practices at Penn](#) for convening two Restorative Circles for Essential Workers, held November 16 and 18.
- We also offer our sincere thanks to Isabel Sampson-Mapp, Associate Director Staff, Faculty, Alumni Volunteer Service and Director of [Penn Volunteers In Public Service \(VIPS\)](#) in the Netter Center for Community Partnerships, for discussing the many ways that Penn staff can volunteer and give back to the West Philadelphia community. [Click here for a summary.](#)
- The PPSA **Book Club** will next discuss *Stories of Your Life and Others* by Ted Chiang on January 26, 2022, from 12-1pm. [Click here to join the Book Club.](#) (*Monthly except Jul., Aug., Dec. Open to monthly-paid staff.*)
- Other Spring 2022 events and activities for Professional Staff will be announced in January.
- PPSA wishes the campus community a pleasant holiday season. We invite you to reach out to us at *any* time about matters of Penn staff interest.
 - The email listserv, ppsa@lists.upenn.edu, reach the PPSA Tri-Chairs collectively.
 - PPSA's Executive Board meets on the second Monday each month from 12:30-1:30pm. All monthly paid staff are invited to attend and observe. Meetings are held via Zoom until further notice.
 - PPSA publishes a **weekly newsletter** on Tuesday mornings. [Click here to join the mailing list.](#)

Respectfully submitted,

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Weekly Paid Professional Staff Assembly Status Report

- WPPSA 2021-2022 hosted its monthly General Members meeting on Oct 28th, 2021. Our guest speakers included University Committees WPPSA representatives. Of note, we doubled our attendance.
- Revisions to the Bylaws: In order to streamline and provide sustainable structure to WPPSA, our executive committee reviewed and updated the bylaws.
 - A Communications Deputy was added to the Executive Committee.
 - A 2nd Treasurer was eliminated from the Executive Committee.
 - Volunteer Staff positions and responsibilities were redefined. New positions include: Outreach Specialist and Digital Platform Specialist. Both positions will work in tandem with the Communications Deputy and oversight by the WPPSA Chair.
- WPPSA Success Stories:
 - Our “Creating Capital” series will commence with WPPSA success stories. These stories include current and former WPPSA members that have utilized WPPSA as a resource for professional and personal growth. Stories will be posted to our website.
- A Restorative Circle initiative will be implemented through our “Creating Capital” series next Spring.
 - The emphasis will be on cultivating solidarity within the community and restorative justice education through various practices and modalities.
 - Training will include RP@Penn 101 and Weekly Paid Staff Restorative Circles
- WPPSA Holiday Kick-off will be hosted in early December.
 - Event will include HR participation with possible guest speaker Jack Heuer, Vice President for Human Resources.
 - Branded giveaways and food will be offered.

Website: <https://wppsa.upenn.edu>

Contact Us: https://upenn.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_abgOq0SqM9YpRL8



Best,

Amber Banayat, Chair of WPPSA

Cynthia Di Loretto, Co-Chair of WPPSA