

To: Members of University Council
From: President Liz Magill
Date: February 1, 2023
Subject: Report to the University Council

Welcome to a new year of Council and a new semester at Penn, which is already off to an excellent start. I recently announced the appointment of John L. Jackson, Jr., as the 31st Provost of Penn, effective June 1, 2023, following ratification by Penn's Board of Trustees. John is currently dean of the Annenberg School and Richard Perry University Professor. As many of you know, John is one of our most respected and accomplished academic leaders, and I know he will guide Penn to even greater heights. Dr. Beth Winkelstein has been an exceptional Interim Provost, a trusted partner and problem-solver, and a steady leader with unwavering commitment to Penn, especially during the pandemic and the presidential transition. All of us are deeply grateful for all she has done. I am also grateful to Dr. Larry Jameson, who chaired the Consultative Committee for the Provost search, and all the Committee members.

The Franklin Institute recently announced that Penn faculty member Nader Engheta will receive the coveted Benjamin Franklin Medal, which recognizes exemplary achievement across seven domains of knowledge. Past Franklin Medal include Penn's Katie Karikó and Drew Weissman. This is fitting recognition for Professor Engheta's pioneering work in metamaterials and transformation optics, opening a possible future of nano-computing at the speed of light.

We were also pleased to announce the appointment of the latest Penn Integrates Knowledge University Professor, René Vidal. He is a world leader in deploying data science, engineering, and medical innovation to advance the frontiers of machine learning and health care.

Penn students continue to achieve at the highest levels as well. As just one example among countless, we are proud of College Seniors Ryan Jeong and Arnav Lal. They have been awarded Churchill Scholarships, highly competitive fellowships for graduate study at the University of Cambridge.

Congratulations also to this year's winners of the MLK Community Awards, which recognize those working for justice in our community. I had the privilege of participating in last month's MLK Interfaith Commemoration, where we celebrated these individuals: Herman Beavers, Paulette Branson, Jasmine Brown, Mya Gordon, Melany Nelson, and Joe Nock. We are grateful for their leadership.

In that same spirit of gratitude, I began the semester with a campus-wide message thanking Penn's staff. Every day of the year, Penn staff do the vital work that permits Penn to perform at the very highest level of excellence. I hope you'll join me in thanking them.

Welcome back and thank you all for your service to Council.

PROVOST'S STATUS REPORT

University Council

February 2023

I am delighted to let you know that Penn received a large, multi-year grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute to support our initiatives in inclusive STEM education for undergraduates. This [six-year award](#) builds on longstanding efforts across our Schools, especially in undergraduate education and faculty development and recruitment, and will synergize with a number of initiatives already underway across the University to enhance teaching evaluation. I am especially grateful to the leaders of the team that worked with fifteen other universities as part of a Learning Community Cluster to develop a proposal guided by the question, "What would it take to empower institutions to develop systems that investigate, support, evaluate, and reward teaching and learning that centers diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and access?" They are: Paul Sniegowski, Stephen A. Levin Family Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, the Principal Investigator on the grant; Russell Composto, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education in the School of Engineering and Applied Science; Karen Detlefsen, Vice Provost for Education; and Bruce Lenthall, Executive Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning. This project is particularly exciting because it focuses on how we teach, and it will generate ideas and projects on our campus (and other campuses) that make our classrooms more welcoming and our teaching more equitable. The leadership team of this project is paving a new pathway to ensure that Penn continues to lead in STEM education, with inclusion and belonging at the forefront.

We have a strong commitment to supporting the well-being of our graduate and professional students and to continually enhancing that support in the years ahead. To further those efforts, we will be convening a cross-campus task force this semester to review the recommendations of the [Graduate Student Mental Health and Well-Being Project](#) of the Council of Graduate Schools and the JED Foundation and assess the relevance and application of those recommendations – and/or other potential recommendations – for graduate and professional life at Penn. We are also keenly aware of the uncertainties of the academic job market for doctoral students, especially in the wake of the COVID pandemic. To help address these concerns in a practical way, Penn Career Services is now launching the [PhD Career Exploration Fellowship](#). This program provides doctoral students with concrete opportunities to explore careers in industry, government, non-profit, and other non-academic sectors and to receive one-on-one mentoring with professionals in these fields who have advanced degrees from graduate and professional programs.

I hope everyone has had a great start to the semester, and I look forward to working together this term!

Beth A. Winkelstein
Interim Provost



PPSA – Penn Professional Staff Assembly

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

CONTACT US: ppsa@lists.upenn.edu

Status Report for University Council – February 1, 2023

We invite you to reach out to us at *any* time about matters of Penn staff interest. The email listserv, ppsa@lists.upenn.edu, will reach the PPSA Tri-Chairs collectively.

PPSA is working closely with WPPSA to help reestablish the organization for weekly-paid employees. All staff are invited to become involved in this effort by writing to the address above.

A selection of recent and upcoming events offered by the PPSA:

- **Penn Safety Series: Kathleen Shields Anderson will kick off our *Penn Safety Series* with a presentation on Penn Campus safety (January 17, 2022). The series will continue in early Spring with a focus on bicycle safety.**
- **PPSA Book Club, Next Book: *Tastes Like War* by Grace M. Cho (January 25, 2023)**
- **Committee Member Replacements:** Open UC Committee PPSA representatives are being filled per staff nominations.

Respectfully submitted,

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Patrick Walsh, PPSA Past Chair, Executive Assistant, Faculty Senate, walshjam@upenn.edu



Graduate and Professional Student Assembly

UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT ASSEMBLY (GAPSA) STATUS REPORT

University Council Committee

January 2023

President Gutmann Leadership Award (PGLA)

GAPSA reviewed and awarded the Fall 2022 cycle of the *President Gutmann Leadership Award (PGLA)* to 12 students with a total amount of \$ 14,537 approved. We received 70 total applications with over \$ 97,000 requested. We are grateful to the *Office of the President* for generously providing additional funding to GAPSA to augment our funding for graduate and professional student travel. The award was given to students presenting their research at a conference, either within the United States or internationally, that would normally be out of their budget even with an individual travel grant through GAPSA.

Student Representations on Penn's Board of Trustees

The Graduate and Professional Student Assembly unanimously voted to call on the *Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania* to amend the *Statutes of the Trustees* to insert *Article 2.2(g)*, "Student Trustees." The resolution proposes the creation of two student trustee positions, one for an undergraduate student and one for a graduate student, each elected by the procedures established by their respective assemblies with the concurrence of the Trustees. The student trustees would serve a one-year term and must abide by the Statutes of Trustees and any other rules, obligations, and agreements that may bind other classes of trustees. The resolution aims to increase student input in the decision-making processes of the University beyond our inclusion in Penn's sub-committees and councils.

Iris Photo Booth – Increasing Access to Professional Headshots for Students

The Graduate and Professional Student Assembly has directed 7,000 dollars from the President's discretionary fund and \$ 10,000 from the General Assembly Discretionary Fund as a one-time allocation to the Career Services Center for the express purpose of securing an Iris Photo Booth for student use on campus for the purposes of providing increased access to Professional Headshots, along with a Constitutional Amendment directing \$ 3,000 to be annually allocated to the Career Services Center for continuous maintenance costs associated with the booth. These costs represent half the total cost of the booth, to be split equally with the Undergraduate Assembly. We are grateful for the various campus partnerships that made this possible!

GAPSA Executive Board Service Awards

The Graduate and Professional Student Assembly has formalized flat-rate GAPSA Executive Board Awards for the purposes of recognizing the labor of its student government leadership and expressed its desire to have more freedom in determining the award structure without interference from the University administration. The Graduate and Professional Student Assembly still recognizes that it has consistently preferred a tiered structure of awards that recognize the varied roles and responsibilities of its Executive Board members.

Ludwig Zhao
Graduate and Professional Student Assembly
Chair for Research Students

Hoang Anh Phan
Graduate and Professional Student Assembly
Executive Vice President

Robert Blake Watson
Graduate and Professional Student Assembly
President



Undergraduate Assembly

UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

Status Report for University Council

February 2023

UA 50th Session Mid-Session Report

During the first half of the 50th Session of the UA, the Executive Board focused on improving internal funding and continued to advocate for our long-term projects. You can find a [copy of the report here](#).

Student Funding

The first half of the session was dedicated to creating better allocation methods for the Undergraduate Assembly Reserve Fund, where over \$1 million dollars has accumulated. Additionally, we focused on identifying projects that would benefit the experiences of Penn students. Through a lengthy amendment process, the number of voices heard has greatly increased and has allowed for public comment in the process. As of now, over \$300,000 has been spent on proposals.

Large-scale Initiatives

Outside of funding, we have continued advocacy efforts targeting a variety of aspects of Penn's campus. We have started the process of proposing policies to protect students' academic breaks, have dedicated significant amounts of time and thought to ensure economic diversity at the new Radian college house despite its high-cost threshold, and have continued to push for improved space accessibility by increasing the availability of classrooms to students and ensuring faster booking times.

Project Work in the Body

Several projects have reached completion during the first half of this session. The implementation of a Transfer Critical Writing Seminar pilot program for the fall semester of 2023 and the expansion of the Resident Assistant (RA) program to allow for the Transfer Living Community (TLC) at Rodin to have an undergraduate transfer student RA were completed. Additionally, projects to make the RA experience at Penn have been completed, including an expansion to the RA dining plan. Finally, projects bringing awareness of sustainability to Penn students were completed, including a water bottle giveaway event that will occur during the beginning of the 2023 Spring semester with the goal of encouraging students to utilize reusable water bottles and learn more ways to be environmentally friendly on campus.

Conclusion

The 50th Session of the UA is far from complete. We hope to add to all of our achievements, and we encourage you to reach out to us at exec@pennua.org or through our Suggestions box on our website. We remain committed to hearing the concerns of all individuals at Penn, and we look forward to finishing our term with the same dedication and passion with which we began.

Respectfully submitted,

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