

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of University Council
From: Amy Gutmann, President
Date: September 6, 2017
Subject: Report to the University Council

Welcome to the 278th year of the University of Pennsylvania, and a very warm welcome back to University Council. We officially began with Convocation for the great Class of 2021 and transfers out on College Green. The Provost and I were thrilled to officially welcome Penn's newest students, and hats off to Dean Eric Furda and his Admissions team for yet another fantastic Class.

We also officially celebrate a slate of dynamic new leaders and eminent faculty, including our new Provost, Wendell Pritchett. Wendell is a celebrated teacher and scholar of urban policy, education, civil rights, and race relations; an accomplished leader and administrator; and a passionate advocate for academic excellence and civic engagement. He has already begun advancing Penn's highest priorities with our deans, faculty, staff, students, and me. I invite the entire University community to join in congratulating him and wishing him the very best in his work as Penn's Provost.

Congratulations as well to Paul Sniegowski, the new Stephen A. Levin Family Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. An eminent evolutionary biologist, award-winning teacher, and widely respected member of the Penn community, Paul has a long history of engagement on behalf of undergraduate affairs and student policy. As we celebrate Paul's accomplishments and welcome him in his new role, we also sincerely thank Dr. Andy Binns, who served as interim Dean of the College while we conducted the search for former Dean Dennis DeTurck's successor.

We were pleased to announce that Herbert Hovenkampf is the 20th Penn Integrates Knowledge University Professor, effective July 1, 2017. He is an exceptionally influential scholar of antitrust law and policy who brings wide-ranging expertise at the intersection of law and business. He epitomizes the uniquely collaborative and multidisciplinary skill sets of our PIK professors, and we are thrilled he has joined Penn's eminent faculty.

We also congratulate Dr. Robert Vonderheide on being named the new director of the world-renowned Abramson Cancer Center. He has been a champion for translational research and immunotherapy advances that are fundamentally reshaping the fight against cancer. There couldn't be a finer choice for leading the Abramson Cancer Center and our incredible Penn researchers and clinicians on to even greater achievements and even more lives saved.

They arrive just as we celebrate the grand reopening of Hill College House, which has been beautifully renovated and revitalized. From Hill House's welcoming communal atrium to the abundance of renovated study rooms, lounges, music practice rooms, and even a project innovation room, this special space will forge lifetime bonds of learning and living for generations of Penn students to come. We are especially pleased to welcome Hill House back to complement the New College House that opened last year. Together, they foster a vibrant and inclusive community at the northeast gateway to our campus.

Finally, I call on all seniors to consider competing for this year's President's Engagement Prize and President's Innovation Prize. Unmatched in size and scope anywhere in higher education, these Prizes provide a graduating Penn senior or team of graduating seniors with up to \$100,000 and a generous living stipend to undertake transformative projects that make a real difference in the world.

You can visit the Prizes' websites to learn more about previous winners and to find information sessions to attend this fall.

All of these wonderful milestones and more promise yet another outstanding year for the University of Pennsylvania. I look forward to all we will accomplish together.

PROVOST'S STATUS REPORT

University Council

September 2017

It is a pleasure to welcome everyone back for another great semester at Penn. I am honored to serve as Penn's thirtieth Provost, and I look forward to working with all of you in the years ahead. We begin the year with several new appointments and initiatives. In the Provost's Office of Administrative Affairs, Mark Dingfield starts on September 5 as Associate Provost for Finance and Planning. Mark comes to us from Princeton University, where he was most recently Executive Director for Planning, Analysis, and Technology in the Office of Finance and Treasury. He brings particular expertise in strategic planning, including leading "Princeton Prime," the university's multi-year initiative to modernize financial processes and infrastructure. He has a wide-ranging background – including work at Microsoft, a PhD in Political Science from Temple, and a BA from Swarthmore – that will make him a valuable successor to Trevor Lewis, who will continue to work closely with all of us as the University's new Vice President for Budget and Finance.

I am also delighted to welcome Peter Decherney, Professor of Cinema Studies and English in the School of Arts and Sciences, as the new Faculty Director of the Online Learning Initiative. Peter has been a dynamic chair of OLI's faculty advisory group for the past five years, so he is already a key driver of our campus-wide engagement with new forms of teaching and learning, as well as a leading scholar of media innovation and policy. He will work closely with the OLI team – especially Rebecca Stein, OLI's new Executive Director – along with the faculty advisory group and our partners across the University to advance our work in online learning. This work now encompasses more than 90 courses and 8 specializations on Coursera – with 25 million learners around the world in disciplines that encompass all Penn Schools – as well as a wide range of other new and advanced educational programs, including almost 20 courses on the non-profit edX platform. OLI begins the year in its new space on the ground floor of Van Pelt Library, where it is now co-located with the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Center for Learning Analytics. This reconceived hub for teaching and learning brings together in one place these vital resources for online and in-class education, placing them at the heart of campus and thereby providing greater opportunities for them to share ideas, collaborate with the Penn Libraries, and work more closely with faculty and students across our twelve Schools.

Finally, we welcome John McNerney as the inaugural Executive Director of the new Sachs Program for Arts Innovation. John was most recently Vice President of the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, where he worked for thirteen years (following several years at Penn's Institute of Contemporary Art), leading strategic research, advocacy and communications campaigns that included the Phillyfunguide events calendar and Funsavers ticket discount program, which has become one of the largest nonprofit ticket discount programs in the US; the *Engage 2020* initiative to increase cultural engagement in Greater Philadelphia; and the successful campaign to defeat a statewide "arts tax." He is the ideal leader to build the Sachs Program – founded with a \$15 million gift from alumni Keith and Katherine Sachs, the largest gift ever made across the arts at Penn – which aims to energize the arts and arts innovation at Penn, integrating research, teaching, and practice and establishing a dedicated Arts Innovation Hub in the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts.

Wendell Pritchett
Provost



Undergraduate Assembly

UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

Status Report – Undergraduate Assembly

September 6th, 2017

I. 2017-2018 Executive Board

President: Michelle Xu (president@pennua.org)

Vice President: Jay Shah (vp@pennua.org)

Speaker: Michael Krone (speaker@pennua.org)

Treasurer: Samantha Shea (treasurer@pennua.org)

Secretary: Brian Goldstein (secretary@pennua.org)

Respectfully submitted,
Jay Shah, UA Vice President



**Status Report- Penn Professional Staff Assembly
August 30, 2017**

The theme year for the PPSA is Year of Growth

- PPSA held its annual elections in May. We have a new Chair-Elect, Stephanie S. Yee. Four new board members were elected and six representatives have been appointed to sit on University Council Committees.
- PPSA met today to hold our 2017-2018 planning retreat. We discussed plans for the year and met the new board members and committee representatives.
- PPSA together with the Jack Heuer, Vice President of Human Resources, will continue the small group discussions platform on a monthly basis beginning September, 2017 known as “Chat with Jack.” Three to four staff members are invited to meet with the Vice President to create lines of communication and foster open dialogue around issues of staff concern.
- For our September event, we will relaunch the PPSA Connect program with a speed-round of networking. PPSA Connect provides monthly random matching for staff members to connect with colleagues across campus. It has been one of our most successful programs. There is continued demand by Penn employees to connect across schools and centers. This event will be held September 27, 2017.
- On October 4, 2017, PPSA will co-host the Annual Employment Resource Fair with the WPPSA. The fair will host external and internal vendors. We anticipate nearly 1,000 employees to attend the fair.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather J. Kelley – Thompson
Chair, PPSA

Kuan R. Evans
Past Chair, PPSA

Stephanie S. Yee
Chair Elect, PPSA



August 29, 2017

Weekly Paid Professional Staff Assembly (WPPSA)

<http://www.upenn.edu/wpsa/>

Status Report for August 2017

The new Chair for WPPSA is Marcus T. Wright from Sociology (also a Doctoral student in Higher Education at GSE). Joining Marcus on the Executive Board is Rhonda D. Kirlew from DRIA Administrative Affairs (Co-Chair), Peter G. Rockett from Mechanical Engineering and Applied Mechanics (Secretary), and Maureen Goldsmith from ISC (Treasurer).

The theme for the year is ***Students: The Reasons We Are Here***. There are numerous things going on at Penn at any given time, and it can be easy to take for granted that the students are the reasons why all of us – faculty, staff and administration – are here. There is often minimal attention paid to how support staff can connect with students in Universities. Given the current climate in the country and the world at-large, we feel that this is the right time to learn more about best practices for working with a diverse student population and being members of a student-centered community. Therefore, our event programming and speaker series will focus on how staff can connect with today's Penn student. We will also look for partnership opportunities with organizations on campus who already host events on this topic, and promote these events to weekly-paid staff.

We believe that even if some weekly-paid staff do not interact with students as part of their job duties, it would benefit them to learn about the students at Penn in order to become more informed members of the Penn community. One example of how we'd like to facilitate this is communicating to staff their discounts and free ticket opportunities for Penn athletic events, and encouraging them to attend games this year (particularly games that start outside of typical work hours).

In addition to building on our theme year, there are 5 organizational goals we would like to focus on this year to help with the long-term success of WPPSA. We will begin working on them this year and continue to build on them moving forward:

- 1. Raising awareness of who we are, who we represent, and what exactly we do on campus to the larger Penn community.** We are going to shift our focus a bit from trying to get more weekly-paid staff to our meetings to more of an outreach/communications type of approach. To get things started, we will create a newsletter that will go out to our mailing list on a monthly basis (possibly bi-weekly in the future if deemed appropriate).
- 2. Discuss the addition of a Communications role to the Executive Board.** Establishing this position will help us with outreach and allow us to look at unique ways to communicate to weekly-paid staff (such as original podcasts and online video with content geared towards them).

3. **Further the knowledge and understanding of the higher educational benefits and opportunities offered to Penn staff.** Because professional development is critical for weekly-paid staff who would like to continue to “climb the ladder” at Penn, we would like to help curate and disseminate information on the options afforded to Penn staff who want to take for-credit courses. We would also like to relay pertinent information regarding financial aid (from the SFS office).
4. **Review and update the bylaws for the 2018-19 year.**
5. **Redirect our spending** towards items and resources that can be helpful for weekly-paid staff (i.e. supplies for classes they take).

We look forward to working with everyone in what should be a fantastic year.

Humbly submitted,

Marcus T. Wright
Chair, WPPSA

Rhonda D. Kirlew
Co-Chair, WPPSA