

## MEMORANDUM

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

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On Monday, November 11th, Provost Pritchett and I wrote to the Penn community about our ongoing efforts, which will continue throughout this academic year and beyond, to further strengthen and support the health and wellness of our students. I want to share my gratitude once again for the several hundred Penn students, faculty, and staff who took time at the end of October to attend our Campus Conversation. We have now had an opportunity to digest the great comments that grew from the breakout discussions and came through the Campaign for Community website. In response to the Conversation and these comments, we're taking certain steps immediately, including expanding staff capacity at CAPS and fast-tracking a CAPS process and operations review to ascertain any further refinements to support our students, as well as launching a Campaign for Wellness.

Our Campus Conversation in October was an encouraging start to what we hope will be a comprehensive wellness campaign. I am grateful for all the students, faculty, and staff who are working so passionately on this important priority, and we will continue the conversation to ensure we are doing all that is possible to sustain a campus community in which everyone can thrive.

As we pull together to further strengthen our community, outstanding students and faculty continue earning significant recognition for their good work in the world. To name just a very few recent examples, my warmest congratulations to Penn's latest Rhodes Scholars and the latest Penn faculty inducted into the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

We couldn't be more proud of Penn seniors Chris D'Urso and Zikri Jaafar for earning prestigious Rhodes scholarships for graduate study at Oxford. They both share a passion for community engagement, human rights, and social justice, and their work embodies the finest attributes of Penn scholars who are working to make a profound difference in the world. Chris has focused on consumer protection and advocacy as the founder of Penn CASE, which is providing education and support to local consumers in our community. He also has been actively engaged on the Task Force on a Safe and Responsible Campus Community. Zikri's undergraduate research has focused on social-impact bonds. He also has done volunteer work with refugees and has been an ambassador for Penn's Giving What We Can. Chris and Zikri are extraordinarily talented, engaged, and committed individuals who are deeply deserving of this preeminent recognition.

We are also enormously proud of Penn's four new faculty fellows of the AAAS. Honored for their scientifically and socially distinguished efforts, they are:

- Gustavo D. Aguirre, professor of medical genetics and ophthalmology at Penn Vet
- Daniel José Mindiola, Presidential Professor of Chemistry in SAS
- Hongzhe Li, professor of biostatistics and statistics and Director of the Center for Statistics in Big Data in the Perelman School
- Anil K. Rustgi, T. Grier Miller Professor and Chief of the Division of Gastroenterology in the Perelman School

Thank you all for your exemplary service and for all you have done to support our University community. I wish you the very best as we head into the end of the semester and winter break.

## PROVOST'S STATUS REPORT

University Council

December 2017

President Gutmann and I are deeply grateful to the members of the Penn community who participated in the Campus Conversation on October 30, as well as to everyone who offered comments at the event or on the [Conversation website](#). We encourage you to continue to send your suggestions and ideas, which you can submit directly (and anonymously if you choose) on the website, where you can also watch the event if you were unable to attend: <http://provost.upenn.edu/initiatives/campaign/events/campus-conversation>. We are carefully considering all of these ideas, as well as others that can help us continue to advance wellness at Penn. For a first step, as we announced on November 20, we are adding five full-time staff members to CAPS. Moving forward, we will assess further operational changes at CAPS and any other ways to foster the healthiest possible environment for living and learning at Penn.

These initiatives will center on a campus-wide Campaign for Wellness, organized as part of our ongoing [Campaign for Community](#). The Campaign for Community provides funding and sponsorship for campus events that fulfill a mission to “promote understanding of and respect for multiple points of view on important topics related to the University community, encourage dialogue and discussion among members of the community about issues with the potential for difference and disagreement, and create opportunities for all members of the University community to participate in conversations about important topics.” Any Penn student, faculty member, or staff member can propose an event at: <http://provost.upenn.edu/initiatives/campaign/grants>.

This semester's Campaign events have inspired important conversations across campus, including a Muslim-Jewish Cooperative Kickoff in DuBois House; an exhibit on Gender and Sexual Identities in Asian Communities, as well as a ConversAsians lunch discussion on Queerness at the LGBT Center; an African American Arts Alliance “dessert theatre” event at New College House; a talk by a leading national expert on systemic inequalities faced by Asian and Latino law students; and a conference on Racism in Medicine, organized by Students Opposing Racism in Medicine (StORM) at the Perelman School of Medicine. In February, the Campaign will help bring to Penn the fourth annual Inter-Ivy First Generation (1vyG) Students' Conference. This wide range of events touches every part of our campus, and I encourage all of you to participate in these events and to consider proposing events of your own.

In closing, I happily join President Gutmann in congratulating our two recent winners of Rhodes Scholarships, Christopher D'Urso and Adnan Zikri Jaafar. Chris and Zikri exemplify the passionate engagement of our Penn students, who are making a difference every day in the vital issues facing our country and our world. Here on campus, I am especially pleased to note that Chris serves as co-chair of the [University Honor Council](#) and a student member of the [Task Force on a Safe and Responsible Campus Community](#) and that Zikri has been both a [Fox Research and Service Fellow](#) and a [Wharton Research Scholar](#), conducting hands-on research under the direct supervision of a faculty member.

I hope all of you enjoy a stimulating end to the semester and a wonderful winter break.

Wendell Pritchett  
Provost



**Status Report- Penn Professional Staff Assembly**

*The theme year for the PPSA is Year of Growth*

- This week, we hosted a successful event for more than 100 Penn employees. The session, “What Does it Take? Furthering Your Education at Penn” included a riveting panel discussion featuring:
  - Janae Boone, Senior Tuition Benefits Specialist, Penn HR Information Management
  - Adam Roth-Saks, Associate Director, MS in Nonprofit Leadership Program, SP2, Alum MSED
  - Catherine Restrepo, Director, Master in Law Program, Penn Law
  - Maura Tucker, Coordinator, Admissions, LPS and MSED Higher Ed student
  - Lucia Dinapoli, Director, Penn Nursing, Alumna BA and MES
- On December 14<sup>th</sup>, we will host an open house from 12n-4pm in Houston Hall. Staff are invited to bring clothing donations benefiting local organizations and enjoy some holiday cheer.
- On January 30<sup>th</sup>, we will hold our open membership meeting and look forward to hearing from Provost Pritchett. We are still finding a room, but will update you when we have it.
- Our second “Chats with Jack” will be held tomorrow. Three to four staff members will be invited to meet with Jack Heuer, Vice President of Human Resources, to create lines of communication and foster open dialogue around issues of staff concern.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather J. Kelley – Thompson  
Chair, PPSA

Kuan R. Evans  
Past Chair, PPSA

Stephanie S. Yee  
Chair Elect, PPSA



November 15, 2017

Weekly Paid Professional Staff Assembly (WPPSA)

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

Status Report for November 2017

WPPSA met on Nov. 14 and began working on a revision of the Assembly bylaws. In general, our revisions will focus on making sure that the Assembly is organizationally sound, and that systematic procedures are in place in the event of resignations or job changes. Ultimately, our bylaws will serve as a better roadmap to ensure continuity on an annual basis and should lead to long-term growth and success for the Assembly.

On Nov. 16 WPPSA will collaborate with the First-Generation, Low-Income program for a “Lunchtime Learning” workshop to continue our theme of supporting students. The workshop will be formatted in a way where attendees will constructively gain knowledge that they can then share with others. Although we hope for a strong turnout, we have chosen this format to maximize the production of the workshop regardless of how many weekly paid staff attend.

Also, we have confirmed a Lunchtime Learning workshop for Nov. 30 with CAPS and will ask to use the same format.

#### **I. Recent Business:**

- a. Marcus and Rhonda met with Jack Heuer and Syreeta Gary on Oct. 20 to discuss ways that WPPSA and Human Resources can collaborate, and some of the resources that can be provided to help WPPSA raise visibility of events to the campus community. WPPSA looks forward to strengthening our collaborative efforts with human resources, and will be thinking of short-term and long-term ways to do so.
- b. Provost Wendell Pritchett has graciously accepted our invitation to attend the February WPPSA meeting. The Assembly has determined that it would be best to ask weekly paid constituents to submit their questions via email ahead of time, which will be screened by the Executive Board, and (if this works best for the Provost) sent before the meeting to the Provost’s office. We are ecstatic regarding the opportunities to build our relationships with senior administration at Penn.

#### **II. Next Steps:**

- a. Our immediate plans are:
  - to continue revising the bylaws and subsequently publicize the proposed changes to weekly-paid constituents;
  - to coordinate a Lunchtime Learning workshop with the Office of Student Conduct for the Spring semester;

- to promote our annual Holiday Party to all weekly-paid staff at Penn, as well as raise awareness of the family that we have “adopted” through the Netter Center VIPS program to provide gifts for the holidays; and
- to put the finishing touches on our collaboration with the Ronald McDonald House to collect soda can aluminum tabs to support their programs.

Humbly submitted,

Marcus T. Wright  
Chair, WPPSA

Rhonda D. Kirlew  
Co-Chair, WPPSA