

Committee on Academic and Related Affairs

Committee General Charges

Shall have cognizance over matters of recruitment, admissions, and financial aid that concern the University as a whole and that are not the specific responsibility of individual faculties, including the authority to carry out studies on existing recruitment and admissions procedures and their relationships with existing policies on admissions and financial aid and to recommend changes in policy to the Council;

Shall consider the purposes of a University bookstore and advise the Council and the management of the University bookstore on policies, development, and operations;

Shall review and monitor issues related to the international programs and other international activities of the University, including advice and policy recommendations in such areas as services for international students and scholars, foreign fellowships and studies abroad, faculty, staff and student exchange programs, and cooperative undertakings with foreign universities;

Shall advise the vice provost and director of libraries on the policies, development, and operation of the University libraries;

Shall have cognizance over recreation and intramural and intercollegiate athletics and their integration with the educational program of the University, including the planning and provision of adequate facilities for various sports and recreational activities; and

Shall have cognizance of all matters of policy relating to research and the general environment for research at the University, including the assignment and distribution of indirect costs and the assignment of those research funds distributed by the University, and shall advise the administration on those proposals for sponsored research referred to it because of potential conflict with University policy.

2023-2024 Specific Charges

1. Review and focus specifically, but not exclusively, on research experiences and in the various curricula for our undergraduates and graduate students. This could also extend to postdoctoral scholars across the University.
2. Penn Global's next five-year strategic vision is set to be released in spring 2023, thus follow-up on committee recommendations and major discussion points could be extended in 2023-2024. The committee could focus on International Student and Scholar Services, as these parts of the charge were not addressed in 2022-2023.

Summary of Committee Activity

The full committee met six times during 2023-2024, either in person or on Zoom. After an initial Zoom meeting in September between committee leadership and University staff, the full committee met in person to discuss the charges, set the agenda, and decide whom to invite as guests to help the committee in its work. In this meeting, the first charge was reimagined to focus more specifically on the opportunities (and challenges) for research and learning across departments and schools on issues and themes (such as the environment) that cut across disciplines. A subcommittee also met separately to discuss this charge. This reimagined first charge dovetailed with the second charge, in that research and student interest in world regions and global challenges cuts across units in the University—what role might Penn Global play in weaving these interests into a coherent fabric that connects students and faculty across the University?

The second meeting in October reconvened the full committee to discuss Penn Global's five-year plan in detail and formulate specific questions for guests and directors of regional centers in separate one-on-one meetings by individual committee members. Our guest in the third meeting in November was Amy Gadsden, Associate Vice Provost for Global Initiatives, who provided a detailed overview of how and why Penn Global's new five-year plan differs from its previous five-year plan (2018), and concrete steps Penn Global would like to take moving forward to implement its new initiatives.

In November and December, members of the committee met separately with the directors of nine regional centers on campus (Title VI and otherwise) to seek their feedback on Penn Global's five-year plan and how collaborative efficiencies might be fostered between each center and Penn Global. Following a scheduling conflict in December, the committee met in January with Rudolfo Altamirano, Director of International Student and Scholar Services to seek information about the role of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) in Penn Global and current challenges it faces. In the fifth meeting in February, the committee met by Zoom with

Dean of Arts & Sciences Steven Fluharty. The sixth and final full committee meeting in March served to discuss and refine the draft committee report.

Response to the 2023-2024 Specific Charges

The committee welcomes Penn Global's new five-year strategic plan and views the plan as an appropriate next step in continuing Penn Global's important work to advance Penn's international vision and impact. After the very successful implementation of the first two five-year plans, the 2023-2028 plan appropriately responds to a changing global environment and addresses many new challenges and opportunities. Though the three pillars of the strategic plan generally track the pillars of past plans, they continue to provide a useful framework for prioritizing resources and activities.

The committee notes some meaningful changes within each pillar of the strategic plan. Under Pillar I, the University remains committed to “ensuring every Penn Student has a meaningful global experience” and the plan suggests new and expanded mechanisms to provide those experiences. Under Pillar II, the new strategic plan emphasizes the role of both Perry World House and regional studies centers as partners in “producing research for global impact.” Under Pillar III, greater emphasis is placed on immigration advocacy as part of the effort to “rebuild and strengthen global networks.”

We frame our recommendations around the new aspects of each of these three pillars, particularly on issues where we believe that additional reflection, further conversation and dialogue between key groups, or new initiatives may be needed to advance the University's global mission.

The committee wholeheartedly endorses the goal of “ensuring every Penn student has a meaningful global experience.” However, the committee believes that more thought and conversation should be given to how “meaningful global experience[s]” are understood in light of a changing international context. In particular, we think it will be important to consider the impact of different models of engagement, particularly overseas activities of shorter duration, such as Penn Global Seminars, for local communities that may be engaged during such visits and for the University's carbon footprint. Ensuring that a Penn student's global experience also provides benefits and opportunities for the local communities with which our students engage is a critical element of good global citizenship, particularly when the engagement is with communities marked by a history of colonization. Consideration of these issues should begin in deliberations regarding the allocation of funding, or approval for, such experiences. The committee also recognizes that it is possible to have a “meaningful global experience” without leaving Philadelphia and, thereby, minimizing our carbon footprint. Locally based global experiences should not be ruled out.

The committee devoted considerable time and attention to Pillar II and the critical goal of producing research for global impact. As a starting point, the committee and all of the administrators with whom we spoke, noted the positive and significant contributions of Perry World House in catalyzing impactful global research and connecting academic work with key policy audiences. The committee did not, however, review Perry World House's work in detail. Instead, our deliberations focused on the new emphasis in the 2023-2028 strategic plan on the role of regional studies centers. The committee agrees that regional studies are absolutely essential both to Penn's educational mission and to impactful global research. Recent global events all-too-clearly reaffirm the importance of researching and studying countries and regions. Yet, the committee notes that the structural organization around and support for regional studies centers at Penn does not allow them to realize their full potential.

As Penn Global looks to regional studies centers as a source of “impactful global research” and seeks to achieve “collaborative efficiencies” in their operation, it will be critical to ensure that resourcing and support is commensurate with expectations. New efforts and processes are needed to ensure that such centers—whether or not they receive federal government funds—have the funding, faculty expertise, and clout to meet the growing demands being placed upon them. Particularly in light of the declining support for Title VI from the federal government, the dependence of many regional studies centers on federal funding will need to be re-evaluated and new sources of fiscal support developed.

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Penn Global's new strategic plan notes the potential for "collaborative efficiencies" if regional studies centers were to work more closely with one another and with Penn Global. The committee recognizes efficiencies might range from communications to community outreach, and lauds the effort to build stronger connections among regional studies centers. Many peer universities organize regional studies centers under an institutional structure that allows for such synergies and efficiencies. Yale's MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies, Princeton's Institute for International and Regional Studies and Stanford's Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies offer three quite different models. Penn should consider and learn from these examples in thinking about the potential for linkages among regional studies centers and the impact these centers could have going forward.

The committee also notes that research and engagement around several critical regions of the globe, including Europe and Central and South East Asia, is not currently supported by a regional studies center. Consideration should be given to the establishment of centers related to unrepresented regions. In the meantime, Penn Global (and Perry World House) might also contribute to collaborative efficiencies by supporting programming and research on important regions that are not currently well represented by the University's regional centers.

The committee is convinced that the collective strength of our excellent regional studies centers is more than the sum of their individual parts. New mechanisms are needed to facilitate collaboration among regional studies centers, including both Title VI and non-Title VI. While further conversation among stakeholders and deliberation across the University is needed to determine an appropriate approach, a few guiding principles emerge. First, as we ask more of our regional studies centers, we must ensure they are adequately resourced to take on new challenges and seize new opportunities. Second, efforts to elevate regional studies must carefully address structural and Responsibility Center Management (RCM) related challenges to more formal linkages among regional studies centers or between regional studies centers and Penn Global. Third, any such efforts must embrace—not sever—the critical ties between regional studies centers and school-based disciplinary departments and academic programs. The committee recommends that a more formal and broadly engaged consultation process—beyond Penn Global's strategic planning—be initiated to consider alternative models for the organization of regional studies centers that would both promote impactful research and achieve collaborative efficiencies in a way that is true to Penn's structure and culture.

The committee also observes that, to the degree that the Penn Global strategic plan suggests added activity and research in the area of regional studies, faculty resources must also be aligned with these expanded ambitions. In light of both the evolving international context and the University's commitment to international research and impact, global and regional experts will need to be added to the standing faculty. For maximum impact, new faculty resources should be spread across all the University's schools and departments. Incentives are needed for existing faculty to devote time and attention to the policy implications of their work, potentially through opportunities with Perry World House.

The committee also considered Pillar III of the 2023-2028 strategic plan in detail, with a particular focus on the goal of bringing more international students and visitors to Penn. The committee notes with enthusiasm the increased demand from within the University for international students and visitors—including undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, visiting faculty, visiting researchers, and others—to campus. As our desire to bring foreign students and visitors to campus increases, so too does the need to support them, particularly in the visa application process. ISSS plays a critical role in providing such support and has meaningfully expanded its capabilities in recent years. Yet, ISSS remains resource-constrained and is unable to meet all of the compelling, but also competing, demands, particularly for international visitor support. To address this challenge, staffing resources within the ISSS visa support team must be expanded further to meet the rapidly growing demand. In the

meantime, it may be helpful to ISSS if schools and/or departments establish clear lines of communication—such as a designated point-person—to help ISSS prioritize visa support requests in line with school and/or department objectives.

The committee also notes that restrictions in US visa law often frustrate school objectives of building longer-term relationships with international visitors and may impose constraints on those visitors' personal and professional objectives. The committee welcomes ISSS's new focus on advocacy to promote more sensible visa policies. Schools and individuals inviting faculty should recognize that most of these visa restrictions are outside of ISSS's or the University's direct control. Nonetheless, there may be areas in which greater internal flexibility in the types of visas Penn supports could better align international visitors' immigration statuses with a school or department's long-term priorities. Specifically support for visa types that allow extended or repeat visits is of particular importance to several schools. The committee recommends that ISSS, Penn Division of Human Resources, and other key administrative units examine how to achieve and support greater visa flexibility within the current remit of US law.

Proposed Future Charges

Given the broad-ranging scope of the committee's inquiries related to research on campus and Penn Global's five-year plan, both in 2023-2024 and in the previous year, the committee recommends that future charges home in on three specific areas:

Research at Penn: The reimagining of this charge in 2023-2024 highlighted the challenges for undergraduates and graduates to engage in globally oriented research on campus that does not require leaving the greater Philadelphia area. Beyond study abroad and Penn Global Seminars, the committee might focus on the opportunities, or obstacles, for students to have a meaningful global experience on campus or in the Philadelphia area. Are courses being offered? Are there opportunities for cross-school or cross-department clusters of research activity? If/when Penn initiates cluster hires of faculty working on specific themes, are these clusters of faculty members able to connect meaningfully across departments and schools, whether in research or teaching? Are undergraduate and graduate students provided with enough support and opportunities to conduct meaningful and impactful research?

Penn Global and Regional Centers: Penn Global's five-year plan includes a vision for working more closely with Penn's Title VI centers (and other non-Title VI regional centers) to find collaborative efficiencies and support their global engagement, research, and policy impact. How might Penn best achieve synergies across its regional studies centers to maximize their contributions to the University and the world, while preserving their unique identities and structural organizations? In what ways can the research and activities of regional centers be supported in light of increasing demands and declining federal support? The committee could focus on the role of regional centers in the University and their relationship to Penn Global.

Admissions: In light of the U.S. Supreme Court's recent decision on affirmative action, as well as recent decisions by peer institutions to reconsider other aspects of undergraduate and graduate admissions—including standardized testing requirements and preferential admissions decisions for legacy applicants—the committee believes that the timing is appropriate for the 2024-2025 committee to evaluate Penn's past and current admissions policies and strategies for attracting the very best students into the University.

Committee Membership

Co-Chairs: William Burke-White, Daniel Smith
Faculty: Kent Bream, Mike Levy, Kristina Lyons
Graduate and Professional Students: Rachit Kumar
Undergraduate Students: Luna Sato
Penn Professional Staff: Justin Knoebel
Administrative Liaison: Leo Charney
Staff: Margie Chavez

Committee on Campus and Community Life

Committee General Charges

The Committee on Campus and Community Life:

(i) Shall have cognizance over the University's communications and public relations activities in their various formats and media including electronic, audio (the telephone system), video and printed copy, and it shall monitor the University's internal communications, the operations of the University Communications Office, communications to alumni, and the interpretation of the University to its many constituencies.

(ii) Shall advise the Council on the relationship of the University to the surrounding community and the relevant University policies, work to ensure that the University develops and maintains a constructive relationship with the community, and monitor pending real estate activities of concern to the community.

(iii) Shall have cognizance of the conditions and rules of undergraduate and graduate student life on campus, including 1) gathering and analyzing information concerning student life and student affairs and making recommendations to the Council; and 2) responding as appropriate to requests from and reporting information and recommendations concerning student life and student affairs to the vice provost for university life and other appropriate administrative officers; and

(iv) Shall advise the president, the vice president for public safety, and the administrators or directors of specific buildings, offices, or projects on all matters concerning safety and security in the conduct of their operations, including consideration and assessment of means to improve safety and security on the campus.

2023-2024 Specific Charges

1. Review public crime data to assess levels of gun violence in the communities near Penn's campus over the last year (West Philadelphia and Grays Ferry). Inventory existing Penn programs towards violence reduction by location. Compare crime data with Penn programs for identifying gaps.
2. Review the current student life initiatives and activities across campus related to civic engagement in West Philadelphia and Grays Ferry.

Summary of Committee Activity

The committee met eight times between September 2023 and the end of February 2024. Meetings alternated between presentations and discussions with guest speakers and meetings in which committee members discussed our charges and shared committee members' respective expertise and work related to the charges. Data and inventories of Penn programs provided by the offices of guest speakers, committee members, and other divisions of the University complemented and informed our discussions and this report.

The first two meetings (9/22 and 10/30) focused on the committee's organization and brainstorming our questions and plans for exploring our charges. The third meeting (11/29) was a discussion of our first charge with Scott Filken, Director of the Office of Social Equity and Community; Cory Bowman, Associate Director of the Netter Center for Community Partnerships; and Paulette Branson, Director of University-Assisted Community Schools Sports, Fitness, and Health at the Netter Center. The fourth meeting (12/13) continued committee members' discussion of our first charge and the ways our two charges relate to Penn's recently released strategic plan, *In Principle and Practice*. The fifth meeting (1/17) featured a presentation and discussion of our second charge with Rand Quinn, Associate Professor of Education and Faculty Director, Civic House and Civic Scholars Program and discussion of the same charge as it relates to activities under Penn University Life with committee member Tamara Greenfield King, Senior Associate Vice Provost for Student Life. The sixth meeting (1/22) included a presentation and discussion of both charges in relation to the new Penn & Philly website and inventory created by committee member Tony Sorrentino, Associate Vice President, Office of the Executive Vice President; and review of tables and maps related to the first charge generated by the Division of Public Safety (DPS). The seventh meeting (2/5) was devoted to a discussion with Jamie Gauthier, Philadelphia City Councilmember (3rd District) about the two specific charges and other topics related to the committee's general charges. The eighth meeting (2/27) focused on reviewing and refining the committee's report.

Response to 2023-2024 Specific Charges

1. Review public crime data to assess levels of gun violence in the communities near Penn's campus over the last year (West Philadelphia and Grays Ferry). Inventory existing Penn programs towards violence reduction by location. Compare crime data with Penn programs for identifying gaps.

Issues Discussed and Discovered

The committee's approach to this charge included review of documented violence involving firearms in West Philadelphia and Grays Ferry over the last four years, to understand recent trends as well as patterns; and discussion with guest speakers from the Office of Social Equity and Community, Netter Center for Community Partnerships, and the Office of the 3rd District City Councilmember Jamie Gauthier, as well as committee members with relevant expertise.

- The committee and guest speakers discussed specific patterns, trends, and questions related to gun violence in West Philadelphia and Grays Ferry, as well as the broader contexts of city and state policies, the root causes and conditions for violence and violence reduction, and Penn's relationships with all the above.
- The four years and 11 months of gun violence data the committee requested and received from DPS, covering the years 2019 through November 2023, showed a clear and consistent pattern across all those years. There has been a small number of reported incidents of gun violence on Penn's campus and in the wider University City District, while in other parts of West Philadelphia and Grays Ferry there have been high levels of gun violence, often concentrated in the same immediate areas and on the same blocks.
- In the full years we examined, 2019-2022, there were zero homicides with a firearm in the area defined as Penn's campus by DPS. This compares to an average of just below 18 homicides with a firearm per year (2019-2022) in the 18th Police District in West Philadelphia below Market Street and 20.5 per year in the 16th Police District above Market Street. As one committee member observed, Penn provides an important level of safety for people on our campus. What would it take to provide a similarly elevated level of safety for Penn's neighbors?
- From our review of activities and discussions with guests, it is clear people at Penn do a lot of work in the areas of violence prevention, reduction, and response in West Philadelphia and the city more broadly. Three themes emerged from our discussion of violence reduction:
 1. There is plenty of room for greater investment in and coordination of this work, including opportunities to do more platforming and drive more resources toward violence reduction research and community-based projects and programs; recruit more faculty and program staff who are leaders in fields related to violence reduction; develop students, staff, and faculty into leaders in this work; and make a long-term commitment to opening up Penn's campus arts, culture, recreation, and other resources to neighbors, avoiding past cycles of opening and then closing again. For specific examples: Penn could invest more in public health interventions for victims of gun violence who visit Penn hospitals, following up with their families and neighbors; for another example, people in various Penn schools and centers could partner on a comprehensive education, wellness, social service, job training, and re-entry initiative for youth in the Juvenile Justice Services Center in West Philadelphia.
 2. In the past, no office has kept track of everything people at Penn are doing related to violence, but this is beginning to change. Multiple offices at Penn have at least partial inventories of Penn programs focused on violence reduction, prevention, and response. The most comprehensive inventory our committee identified at this point appears to be the one developed by the Office of Social Equity and Community. The Netter Center also has an inventory of programs it supports, often in partnership with other centers, schools, and programs. The new Penn & Philly website features work related to violence reduction, and its inventory could serve as a more central repository.
 3. The most prominent recurring theme in our discussions of this

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charge was the underlying causes of violence. Committee members and guest speakers regularly pointed to the links between violence and social, economic, health, and other dimensions of inequality. Committee members and guests observed that Penn has had a wide variety of more and less salutary impacts on these conditions in West Philadelphia and Grays Ferry, including a history of displacement that working-class neighborhood residents remember. Committee members and guests also discussed the overlapping challenges of housing and healthcare affordability; access to family-sustaining employment; and other dimensions of persistent poverty and inequality in Philadelphia (topics on which committee members had extensive expertise). Committee members and guests observed Penn is a large anchor institution with capacity to make meaningful investments that combat poverty, structural inequality, and related underlying causes of violence. People in numerous departments, schools, and centers at Penn are leaders in research, policy, and practice related to these problems.

Recommendations

- The committee encourages the Office of Social Equity and Community and its partners to continue convening people at Penn and in West Philadelphia and Grays Ferry who work on preventing, reducing, and responding to gun violence, to discuss what Penn can and should do beyond current activities. In addition, the committee recommends that people and organizations working on the underlying causes of violence be added to this effort. The committee recommends the President, Provost, and Executive Vice President consider directing specific resources toward this work, both for the conversations and for new initiatives and targeted investments that come out of it.
- Existing inventories of Penn programs working on violence prevention created by the Office of the Executive Vice President, Office of Social Equity and Community, Netter Center for Community Partnerships, the new Center for Health Justice, and other offices, centers, schools, and programs at Penn should be consolidated. This inventory should become part of a broader inventory of civic engagement by Penn faculty, students, and staff in West Philadelphia, Grays Ferry, and the city and region at large (a recommendation also in response to our second charge). It could be maintained by the creators and managers of the Penn & Philly website and/or another office. Information could be gathered through an annual self-reporting system akin to the inventory of global activities managed by Penn Global or the directory of faculty research open to undergraduates managed by the Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships. The inventory of civic engagement should be a public-facing resource that faculty, staff, students, community and civic organizations, social enterprises, and individuals in the Philadelphia region can use to learn about, participate, and seek opportunities to collaborate in this work.

2. Review the current student life initiatives and activities across campus related to civic engagement in West Philadelphia and Grays Ferry.

Issues Discussed and Discovered

The committee's approach to this less specific charge involved exploring the range of activities that fall under the broad scope of civic engagement involving students in the neighborhoods around Penn's campus. As with the first charge, we invited leaders of the centers, offices, and programs that are major conveners and facilitators of students' civic engagement in West Philadelphia and Grays Ferry. Compared to the first charge, more members of our committee had extensive and diverse experiences and expertise in civic engagement, which also informed our discussions of the many forms, focuses, and cultures of off-campus civic engagement at Penn.

- Committee members recognized that Penn has a reputation as "the civic Ivy," with many off-campus civic engagement opportunities for students, and that there are diverse areas, approaches, and attitudes and cultures of civic engagement across Penn. Put another way, civic engagement means different things to different entities on campus and in the communities where Penn students are engaged.
- Committee members recognized the nuanced challenges of making

civic engagement activities beneficial both to students and to partners in communities at the same time. One of the many challenges relates to multiple Penn programs working in the same communities without coordinating with one another.

- Some guest speakers echoed Penn's new strategic plan in encouraging greater coordination of civic engagement, but they and committee members also cautioned against imposing coordination on civic engagement activities that operate in distinct ways, sometimes with longstanding relationships in the communities where they work.
- Guest speakers and committee members favored knowledge-sharing and greater access to information about the different civic engagement activities at Penn, what they do, and how people can get involved in them. This could be helpful to multiple constituencies: students exploring civic engagement opportunities; faculty, staff, and community organizations seeking partners; administrators working to understand the scope and extent of Penn's civic engagement activities; and Philadelphia area residents seeking to get involved.

Recommendations

- *The Office of the Executive Vice President, Office of Social Equity and Community, Office of Institutional Research, Office of the Vice Provost for University Life, Civic House, Netter Center for Community Partnerships, and other offices, centers, schools, and programs at Penn should collaborate in creating an inventory of civic engagement by Penn faculty, students, and staff in West Philadelphia, Grays Ferry, and the city and region at large. This inventory could be maintained by the creators and managers of the Penn & Philly website and/or another office. Information could be gathered through an annual self-reporting system akin to the inventory of global activities managed by Penn Global or the directory of faculty research open to undergraduates managed by the Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships. The inventory of civic engagement should be a public-facing resource that faculty, staff, students, community and civic organizations, social enterprises, and individuals in the Philadelphia region can use to learn about, participate, and seek opportunities to collaborate in this work.*

Recommendations for Future Charges

General comments

Following on the committee's discussions and the second recommendation related to our first charge, the committee recommends that next year's two charges for this committee focus on housing and neighborhood stabilization. For the charge on housing, next year's committee should review and discuss the housing study produced by colleagues in the Penn Institute for Urban Research; explore ways that Penn can address challenges identified by this study and realize its recommendations, potentially including such strategies as rental assistance, home repair assistance, investments in affordable housing, among other potential ways to promote housing affordability and quality in West Philadelphia and Grays Ferry. Two particular campus constituencies whose housing and economic security should be addressed are hourly-paid staff (e.g., in housekeeping, dining, contracted public safety) and students living off-campus, including graduate and international students. For the broader charge on neighborhood stabilization, next year's committee should convene conversations that support and inform the work of people studying the underlying causes of violence and working on various dimensions of neighborhood stabilization in West Philadelphia and Grays Ferry. The committee's membership will ideally include people involved in that work.

Exhibit 1: Committee Speakers 2023-2024

November 29:

- Cory Bowman, Associate Director, Netter Center for Community Partnerships
- Paulette Branson, Director of University-Assisted Community Schools Sports, Fitness, and Health, Netter Center for Community Partnerships
- Scott Filken, Director, Office of Social Equity and Community

January 17:

- Rand Quinn, Associate Professor of Education and Faculty Director, Civic House and Civic Scholars Program

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February 5:

- Jamie Gauthier, Philadelphia City Councilmember (3rd District)
- Mary Jones, Director of Policy and Legislation, Office of Councilmember Jamie Gauthier

Committee Membership

Chair: Domenic Vitiello

Faculty: Elinore Kaufman, Sarah Kavanagh, Akira Drake Rodriguez, Mark Stern, Tukufu Zuberi

Graduate and Professional Students: Asep Suryana, Yi Yu

Undergraduate Students: Lina Chihoub, Hannah Liu

PPSA: Elona Canaj, Christine Weeks

Administrative Liaison: Tamara Greenfield King, Tony Sorrentino

Staff: Dante Brown

Committee on Diversity and Equity

Committee General Charges

The Committee on Diversity and Equity aids Penn in fostering and taking full advantage of its diversity as well as in strengthening ties across all boundaries to enrich and enliven the campus community. The committee shall advise the offices of the president, provost, and the executive vice presidents on ways to develop and maintain a supportive atmosphere on campus for the inclusion and appreciation of diversity among all members of the University community. The committee will review and provide advice regarding the University's equal opportunity and affirmative action programs and policies. The areas in which the committee shall report to the Council include diversity within the educational and work settings, integration of staff and faculty into the larger campus community, and ways to foster a campus environment that is inclusive and supportive of difference. The committee also will advise the administration on specific diversity issues that may arise on campus.

2023-2024 Specific Charges

1. Advise the Senior Vice President for Institutional Affairs and Chief Diversity Officer, Senior Vice President for Human Resources, Vice Provost for Faculty, Vice Provost for University Life, and Vice President for Community and Social Equity on new and existing opportunities to demonstrate Penn's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, including those that facilitate sharing of best practices among school and center DEI officers.
2. Advise the Senior Vice President for Institutional Affairs and Chief Diversity Officer, Senior Vice President for Human Resources, and Vice Provost for Faculty on the content of and timing for a staff survey that would lend itself to understanding any differences in the experiences of staff members by a variety of demographic characteristics.

Summary of Committee Activity

The committee held five monthly meetings between September 2023 and January 2024.

September 18, 2023

In this initial meeting, the committee members introduced themselves and their roles in the University. The committee reviewed the charges and raised a number of broad questions that would need to be addressed in order to act meaningfully with respect to the charges. These included but were not limited to how the charges should be interpreted, what aspect of each charge the committee would choose to focus on, what data would be necessary to address each charge, and what additional stakeholders the committee would need to engage with to address each charge.

October 20, 2023

At its second meeting, the committee considered a framework that would enable it to move from abstract charges to concrete actions. This framework involved: 1) Interpreting the purpose of each charge ("our objective"); 2) Identifying the committee's broad approach for addressing the objective of each charge ("our strategy"); 3) Determining the specific action that the committee would take in the service of the strategy ("our tactic"); and accomplishing the to-do-list required to accomplish each tactic ("our next steps").

Using this framework, the committee identified that, for charge 1, its objectives are to recommend ways to leverage existing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) offices and to create new ways to connect DEI offices to share best practices. Its strategies are to work toward developing an asset map of diversity offices, persons, and resources at Penn and to create new ways to connect DEI offices to share best practices. *It was decided that the committee's specific tactic would be to host a meeting for DEI officers & staff.* Consequently, an action item from this meeting was to obtain a list of DEI officers across the University.

For charge 2, the committee reviewed its objective to make recommendations about the content of a staff survey that captures differences based on demographics, and to recommend when it should happen. The committee's strategy is to develop a clearer understanding of the various areas that would need to be surveyed. It was discussed that the committee could develop recommendations for categories of topics that would need to be addressed in a staff culture survey. However, unlike charge 1, the committee did not settle on a specific tactic for charge 2.

November 20, 2023

Having decided that the committee's approach to charge 1 would be to

support a meeting for institutional DEI officers, the discussion centered on the objectives, structure, timing, cadence, desired outcomes, invitees, and implementation of such a meeting. The committee came to the conclusion that many questions would need to be answered by DEI officers themselves. A recommendation was therefore made that the committee draft a brief survey to send to school DEI officers in order address these and other questions. A recommendation was made that the committee draft a brief survey to send to DEI officers to find out how likely they would be to participate in an event.

For charge 2, the committee continued to work on defining its charge and the specific tactic it would take to address it. There was a brief discussion of developing a meeting inviting representatives from the Division of Human Resources to meet with the committee to discuss pertinent questions and what would be the right format and venue for a staff culture survey. The committee discussed that it would be useful to know what survey instruments are employed by different schools at Penn and what is in them. One specific example discussed was the culture survey that the Perelman School of Medicine (PSOM) sends its faculty, trainees, and staff. The decision was made to review this and other culture survey instruments employed by other schools at the next meeting.

December 18, 2023

The committee revisited the scope of its responsibilities with respect to developing a meeting for institutional DEI officers. It was clarified that it was beyond the scope of the committee to host such a meeting. Rather, the role of the committee would be to make a recommendation for the administration of such a meeting. The nature of the meeting will be informed and shaped by the survey being developed by the committee. Therefore, developing the survey was deemed to be the committee's priority with respect to charge 1 moving forward. An initial draft of the survey was reviewed at this meeting.

With respect to charge 2, the committee briefly reviewed the Diversity Engagement Survey (DES) employed as a culture survey by PSOM. It was discussed that a survey such as the DES may contain elements that are useful in the survey. The committee discussed the challenges that developing a single culture survey across the University may pose, due to the decentralized nature of the University. It was decided that it would be worthwhile to take a deeper look at the DES and possibly other surveys to determine if other surveys have characteristics that would be useful to employ in an institutional culture survey.

January 22, 2024

With respect to charge 1, a revised draft of the survey for DEI officers was presented. The committee was joined by Dr. Stacey Lopez, Vice President for Institutional Research & Analysis, who provided critical feedback regarding the wording and implementation of the survey. Based on this feedback, the committee will revise the survey and present it at its next meeting.

For charge 2, the committee went through a detailed review of the DES. Several characteristics of the DES were deemed to be useful survey properties, which should be considered in the development of a culture survey at Penn. However, other features were deemed to be grounds for caution and pointed to issues that would likely need to be considered carefully for an institution-wide survey of culture to be successfully implemented. Similarly, a culture survey employed by the Department of Medical Ethics and Health Policy was reviewed off-line following this meeting.

Response to 2023-2024 Specific Charges

The committee interpreted its first charge as a mandate to find ways to leverage existing DEI offices and to create new ways to connect DEI offices to share best practices. It was the committee's determination that the most direct way to do this would be to create opportunities for direct communication between DEI offices and DEI officers in different schools across the University. To that end, the committee recommends:

3. University surveys DEI officers regarding the objectives, structure, timing, cadence, desired outcomes, invitees, and implementation of a meeting (or meetings).
4. Based on feedback from DEI officers, the University host a meeting (or meetings) that convenes the DEI officers across the institution, focusing on the leading DEI officers at each school.

(continued on page 7)

Committee on Diversity and Equity

(continued from page 6)

The committee interpreted its second charge as a mandate to make recommendations about the content of a staff survey that captures differences based on demographics and to recommend when it should happen. The committee focused primarily on the content of the staff survey and deferred consideration of its specific timing. The committee recommends that a culture survey have the following traits (*recommendation 1*) and be mindful of the following challenges (*recommendation 2*):

1. Penn's staff culture survey should include: a) A strong theoretical grounding; b) A framework that adequately captures many aspects of diversity; c) Assessment of specific characteristics that have been shown to comprise an inclusive culture, which are reliably associated with the survey questions*; d) Developed and analyzed in close collaboration with experts in survey data analytics.
2. In developing the culture survey, Penn should be mindful that: a) Pre-existing surveys may not adequately capture elements of diversity or inclusion that are of specific interest to the organization; b) Capturing the "organizational dimension" of identity (i.e., what one does in an organization and where one does it) is complicated in a massive institution like Penn and will require collaboration between schools and the University to develop categories that can be aggregated and disaggregated meaningfully; 3) Careful thought will need to be given to what and whom survey subject responses are being compared.

Proposed Future Charges

The committee recommends continuing the current charges as priorities for the academic year 2024-2025. With respect to charge 1, as noted above, the committee recommends surveying DEI officers regarding the desired characteristics of an institution-wide meeting. The committee has preliminarily developed a survey instrument for this purpose, which could be further refined and implemented in the 2024-2025 academic year.

Committee Membership

Chair: Roy Hamilton

Faculty: Roberto Gonzales, Timothy Rommen, Susan Taylor, and Guobin Yang

Graduate and Professional Students: Joyce Kim, Kathryn Xin Qian

Undergraduate Students: Remy Capers, Astrid Raganas

PPSA: Samantha Fellman, Kaitlin Johnstone

Administrative Liaison: Sam Starks

Staff: Kuan Evans

* *Examples of organizational characteristics that are associated with an inclusive culture include but are not limited to appreciation, purpose, camaraderie, respect, trust, and cultural competence.*

Committee on Facilities

Committee General Charges

The Committee on Facilities shall be responsible for keeping under review the planning and operation by the University of its physical plant and all services associated therewith, including transportation and parking.

2023-2024 Specific Charges

1. Review and explore how the processes related to managing the University's real estate holdings affect Penn and surrounding communities.
2. Review the University's plans to adapt and track the effects of the climate emergency on its infrastructure and lands, including the emergency disaster plan for weather events and natural disasters.

Summary of Committee Activity

During the 2023-2024 academic year, the committee met five times, starting with monthly meetings in October 2023. To encourage wide participation, we adopted a hybrid format for our sessions. The initial gathering focused on introductions and a thorough review of both the general and specific mandates of the committee. The next two meetings were dedicated to our initial charge.

In November, we received presentations by Dr. Kwesi Daniels, Architecture Department Head at Tuskegee University, and Dr. Davarian Baldwin, Paul E. Raether Distinguished Professor of American Studies at Trinity College. Dr. Daniels provided insights into indicators, historical context, and strategies for mitigating cultural displacement and gentrification in West Philadelphia, emphasizing the preservation of community identity. Concurrently, Dr. Baldwin outlined the historical and contemporary challenges stemming from the location of higher education institutions in urban communities, particularly focusing on how campus expansion affects housing affordability, economic disparities, and policing practices. He also proposed strategies for fostering equitable development and community engagement.

In December, our focus shifted to internal presentations by Tony Sorrentino, Associate Vice President, Office of the Executive Vice President, and Ed Datz, Executive Director of Real Estate regarding Penn's real estate development practices. Associate Vice President Sorrentino began by tracing Penn's earliest days in West Philadelphia to the present, outlining the various eras of campus expansion and their impact on the local community. He discussed the evolving leadership objectives of past Penn Presidents regarding the concept of being an anchor institution, from social impact to economic impact. He then articulated the goals and tactics of the West Philadelphia Initiatives, which include improving public safety, investing in public education, supporting local homeownership among the Penn workforce, and engaging in local hiring, procurement, and construction contracting. Additionally, he highlighted efforts to attract investment in commercial corridors and mixed-use real estate development. Furthermore, Associate Vice President Sorrentino outlined how Penn has integrated these initiatives with the Netter Center for Community Partnership's goals to create a more comprehensive anchor institution strategy.

The January meeting was dedicated to a discussion of our second charge. During this session, we spoke with Walt Molishus, Facilities and Real Estate Services (FRES) Operations and Maintenance, Director of Trades, about the University's strategies to maintain operations during disasters and severe weather events.

The final meetings of the year were used for a discussion of the recommendations for the upcoming academic year.

Response to 2023-2024 Specific Charges

Charge 1: Review and explore how the processes related to managing the University's real estate holdings affect Penn and surrounding communities.

To understand the intricate relationships between the University and our surrounding communities, the committee considered the impact of our policies and practices concerning land acquisition and development. Through discussions with experts from outside of the University and key University personnel, we explored the historical roots and contemporary implications of these policies, recognizing their profound influence on the urban landscape and its residents. The creation of urban clusters that interconnect live, work, and play spaces underscores the campus community's role as a form of value capture within urban settings. Our discussions shed light on the complexities of educational institutions' financial practices and their impact on local economies and public services.

The history of the campus and its expansion reveal a series of significant events and systemic issues regarding the University's negative impact on the West Philadelphia community. The University of Pennsylvania was involved in the West Philadelphia Corporation, which played a critical role in displacing hundreds of Black Bottom residents in the 1960s. As the campus extends its reach across the Schuylkill River, residents of Gray's Ferry face similar vulnerabilities to cultural and economic displacement. There is a pressing need for higher education institutions, including the University of Pennsylvania, to recognize, examine, and address their impact on surrounding communities through solutions that prioritize public welfare and social justice.

The committee recognizes there are various pressures on University development, including land constraints and the professionalization of sponsored research, driving the increased need for building facilities. Efforts to address housing shortages through property acquisition and development phases were noted. However, as an employer, landholder, and policing agent, the University wields a privileged and growing influence on economic development in the region. Soaring land values in the area threaten to eliminate low-income housing options in the neighborhoods surrounding campus, which will adversely affect city residents and many students who can no longer afford to live nearby. Beyond our core missions of education and research, the committee affirmed the imperative for the University to be a good neighbor in the communities where we are situated, acknowledging the broader socioeconomic context of Philadelphia.

To address these challenges while emphasizing more equitable urban development and community engagement, potential action items discussed include reparative programs that support communities affected by historical injustices. This includes directing Payments In Lieu of Taxes (PILOTs) towards the establishment of a community land trust and establishing community-engaged endowments to fund social justice initiatives. Additionally, community benefits agreements could be tied to campus projects to provide tangible benefits such as affordable and mixed-income housing and living wage job opportunities, governed by community legislative boards. Other possibilities include the establishment of community-based zoning and planning boards to oversee campus expansion projects and other initiatives to address local needs. Such programs emphasize the need for transparency and community involvement in shaping the future of urban development in and around the campus. However, it is essential to acknowledge that considerable questions remain. For instance, does the University have any formal mechanisms in place for tracking the impact of its development projects on community economic wellbeing, such as metrics of residential vulnerability indexes for renters, elderly homeowners on fixed incomes, and social cohesion indicators. The committee did not reach consensus on the need for, and desirability of potential action items discussed. Further exploration and consideration of possible initiatives are needed as a part of the University's ongoing efforts to enhance its relationship with the surrounding communities.

Recommendations:

The impacts of campus planning and real estate development extend far beyond their physical boundaries. The layout, development, and expansion of a University campus intricately intertwine with the fabric of the surrounding community. Beyond physical structures, campus planning shapes socioeconomic dynamics, cultural interactions, and environmental considerations within the neighborhood. A well-designed campus fosters symbiotic relationships with local residents, businesses, and institutions, enriching the broader community fabric. Conversely, inadequate or insensitive campus planning can intensify tensions, exacerbate socioeconomic and racial disparities, and foster a sense of exclusion among neighborhood residents.

Given the complexity and critical importance of this issue, the committee believes it would be premature to make recommendations on this charge at this time. Therefore, it recommends continuing to address this specific charge during the next academic year.

Charge 2: Review the University's plans to adapt and track the effects of the climate emergency on its infrastructure and lands, including the emergency disaster plan for weather events and natural disasters.

The University's Mission Continuity Plan is a comprehensive strat-

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Committee on Facilities

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egy designed to tackle various weather-related challenges, such as rain and snow. It utilizes a priority scale to guide decision-making for upcoming events, including thorough checks on building statuses well in advance of predicted weather occurrences to ensure their readiness. This involves verifying the functionality of crucial equipment for maintaining campus operations. Additionally, arrangements are made to accommodate staff members on campus by renting hotels, ensuring the availability of essential personnel during weather emergencies. Measures are also taken to maintain safe pedestrian traffic across the campus, enhancing overall safety and accessibility. Preparation for snow events begins as early as the summer months to proactively address winter weather challenges.

Penn's Crisis Management Team operates University-wide to address various challenges and emergencies, with a primary focus on ensuring the availability of accurate information and adequate time to assess situations effectively.

Regarding climate vulnerability, managing extreme heat conditions is a major concern for the University. To mitigate electricity usage during heat waves, efforts are made to reduce peak load demand through initiatives such as chilled water setbacks, whereby chillers are operated at lower speeds. Implementing such measures requires substantial effort, including rolling shutdowns of air handler units. Moreover, the University has entered into a Power Purchase Agreement with a company that constructed a significant solar array west of Harrisburg, indirectly contributing to decarbonization efforts. While financial considerations play a significant role in decision-making, there is also a commitment to ethical principles and environmental responsibility. Notably, buildings are constructed with a 100-year lifespan in mind, reflecting a long-term approach to infrastructure planning and resilience.

In terms of flooding, most of Penn's facilities are situated above the floodplain, offering protection against flooding. However, minor instances have been reported, particularly at the Hollenback Center and a small section of the Pennovation Center. Efforts have been made to enhance the resilience of the campus electrical infrastructure, with all substations now positioned above ground. These substations feature redundant feeds, providing a high level of resilience to the system, with seven substations across the campus receiving power from multiple sources, further fortifying the system against potential disruptions.

The committee emphasized the significance of implementing adaptation strategies to address the impacts of climate change. However, it also underscored the distinction between adaptation planning and decarbonization initiatives, acknowledging their close relationship. While adaptation focuses on adjusting to the changing climate and its effects, decarbonization aims to reduce carbon emissions to mitigate the root causes of climate change. Despite their distinct objectives, the committee recognized that effective adaptation strategies often rely on decarbonization efforts to minimize future climate risks. Therefore, integrating both adaptation and decarbonization measures into comprehensive climate action plans is essential for building resilience and sustainability in the face of environmental challenges.

Recommendations:

The committee appreciates the considerable effort in proactive planning that the University has made to be prepared to respond to the effects of climate change on its infrastructure and lands.

1. The committee contemplated the feasibility and potential benefits of tracking changes in embodied carbon across all University buildings. Both a Whole Building Life Cycle Assessment (WBLCA) or a Whole-Life Carbon Assessment (WLCA) can track both operational and embodied carbon on new building or capital improvement projects and infrastructure. Currently, there is no efficient tracking system in place to comprehensively monitor changes in building operations, with the work order system being the only available method. The University should put a system in place for tracking both embodied and operational carbon across its new and substantially renovated buildings and infrastructure, and operational carbon on all existing buildings.
2. The committee recommends that the University actively explore and implement measures to contribute to mitigating heat-related health risks within the surrounding community. This includes assessing the feasibility of providing support through publicly accessible cooling areas during periods of extreme heat. By establishing cooling areas that are easily accessible to community members, particularly in areas where heat-health emergencies are prevalent, the University can play a crucial role in safeguarding public health and well-being. Furthermore, the committee suggests engaging with local authorities and community organizations to coordinate efforts and ensure the effectiveness of such initiatives. Additionally, the University should prioritize raising awareness among students, faculty, and staff about the importance of heat-related health risks and the available resources for mitigating them.

Proposed Future Charges

1. Review and explore the historical impact of the University's real estate development practices on the surrounding area and assess strategies to address these impacts.
2. Assess the potential impact of current and planned real estate development practices on Penn and its neighboring communities.

Committee Membership

Chair: Rashida Ng

Faculty: Tom Baker, Maria Geffen, Deep Jariwala, Zhongjie Lin, Nicholas Pevzner, Franca Trubiano

Graduate and Professional Students: Brian Buhr, Adam Ziada

Undergraduate Students: Iman Alia Dorman, Regan Smith

PPSA: Jessica Bolton, James McGonigle

Administrative Liaison: Mark Kocent

Staff: Rebecca Jacob

COUNCIL 2023-2024 Year-End Reports

Committee on Personnel Benefits

Committee General Charges

The Committee on Personnel Benefits shall have cognizance over the benefits programs for all University personnel. The Committee shall consist of eight faculty members (of whom one shall be a member of the Senate Committee on the Economic Status of the Faculty), three representatives of the Penn Professional Staff Assembly, and three representatives of the Weekly-Paid Professional Staff Assembly. The Vice President for Human Resources, Associate Provost, and Director of Benefits shall serve as non-voting ex officio members.

2023-2024 Specific Charges

1. Read, review, and comment on updates related to two major issues affecting current and retiring employees:
 - a. the administration of retirement benefits including recent retirement plan changes, and
 - b. wellness and behavioral health programs for University employees and dependents.
2. Review the current policies related to parental and teaching leave for faculty and staff who choose to grow their families via foster care.

Summary of Committee Activity

The committee met 4 times during the academic year 2023-2024:

- Tuesday, September 26, 2023
- Tuesday October 24, 2023
- Tuesday December 5, 2023
- Tuesday January 23, 2024

The meetings covered the following topics:

- Overview of employee benefits
- Review of retiree health benefits
- Review of national benefits
- Overview of wellness programs including behavioral health resources
- Review of the tuition benefit program and retirement savings program including cyber security
- Employee benefit outlook and changes for FY25

Response to 2023-2024 Specific Charges

1. *Read, review, and comment on updates related to two major issues affecting current and retiring employees:*
 - a. *the administration of retirement benefits including recent retirement plan changes, and*
The review of retirement benefits was provided at the meeting held on December 5, 2023. The meeting covered the adequacy of the retirement match and basic contributions as a retirement

saving vehicle. The current plan, changed in January of 2023, provides for a significant contribution by Penn (up to 10%) if a participant also contributes 5% of earnings. Overall, the plan was viewed as competitive with our peers, and more than adequate to provide for an appropriate income stream in retirement. The plan is well received by plan participants.

- b. *Wellness and behavioral health programs for University employees and dependents*

The wellness programs and behavioral health programs, including the onsite biometric screening program, were reviewed and discussed at the October 24, 2023, meeting. To date over 7,000 participants have registered on the Virgin Pulse portal, indicative of enthusiasm for these programs. Mindwell at Penn was also introduced, to review the solutions and resources available for faculty and staff needing behavioral health support. Penn's Division of Human Resources is reviewing the adequacy of the Employee Assistance Plan (EAP) and will share any new developments in this area at a future meeting.

2. *Review the current policies related to parental and teaching leave for faculty and staff who choose to grow their families via foster care.*
This topic was reviewed as it relates to the four-week paid parental leave benefit, and a recommendation was made to permit the leave to apply to participants who have a child placed in their household as a foster child while adoption is pending.
3. *Additional discussion: Review policy for eligibility of domestic partners to be included as dependents under Penn benefit plans.*
It has been recommended and approved to revise dependent eligibility under the health plans to include same- and opposite-sex domestic partners effective July 1, 2024. An affidavit process is being implemented for open enrollment this spring.

Proposed Future Charges

1. Review and comment on active employee and retiree health programs.
2. Review and comment on any proposed changes to the Employee Assistance program for 2025.

Committee Membership

Chair: Olivia S. Mitchell

Faculty: Julie Nelson Davis, Johanna K.P. Greeson, Jonathan Klick, M. Susan Lindee, Reed Shuldiner

PPSA: Tomas Isakowitz, Andy Maynard, Kathy Tang

Administrative Liaison: Jack Heuer, Sue Sproat

Staff: Melissa Brown

Ex-Officio: Laura Perna

Committee on Open Expression

Committee General Charges

The Committee on Open Expression has as its major task: monitoring the communication processes to prevent conflicts that might emerge from failure of communication, recommending policies and procedures for improvement of all levels of communication, investigating alleged infringements of the right of open expression of any member or members of the University community, advising administrative officers where appropriate, and participating in evaluation and resolution of conflicts that may arise from incidents or disturbances on campus. The committee shall consist of seventeen members: eight faculty members, two representatives of the Penn Professional Staff Assembly, one representative of the Weekly-Paid Professional Staff Assembly, three undergraduate students, and three graduate/professional students. The faculty and representatives of the Penn Professional Staff Assembly are appointed to two-year terms, staggered so that in each year either two or three faculty members are appointed, and one representative of the Penn Professional Staff Assembly is appointed. The student members are appointed to one-year terms. The chair of the committee shall be selected by the Committee on Committees from among the members. The jurisdiction of and procedures of the committee shall follow the Guidelines on Open Expression. At the beginning of every year, the committee shall conduct a meeting in order to familiarize the members with the Guidelines and the responsibilities of committee members in enforcing and implementing the Guidelines.

Background

University Council approved the Guidelines on Open Expression in 1969. Their purpose was, and is, to guarantee the right of all members of the University community to assemble, express their ideas, demonstrate or picket on behalf of them, or to engage in any other form of individual or collective expression while at the same time refraining from preventing others from exercising their own rights. The Guidelines embody a set of principles which protect and foster full and free expression of ideas in a manner consistent with the necessary respect required for the rights of all. The Guidelines are thus an attempt to define for this University community principles consistent with those of all societies that regard the free expression of thought and opinion as a fundamental right of all people.

To further this purpose, the Committee on Open Expression (COE) (<https://secretary.upenn.edu/univ-council/committees/open-expression>) was established as an independent committee of the University Council to ensure openness and effectiveness of channels of communication among members of the University community on questions of common interest. The major responsibilities of the Committee on Open Expression include: participating in the resolution of conflicts that may arise from incidents or disturbances implicating these Guidelines; mediating among the parties to prevent conflicts and violations of these Guidelines; interpreting these Guidelines; advising administrative officers when appropriate; and recommending policies and procedures for the improvement of all levels of communication.

Overview of COE Activities

The COE has met 12 times since August 2023. Committee members can be found here: [2023-2024 Committee OE | Office of the University Secretary \(upenn.edu\)](#) Various guests were invited to participate in COE meetings including: Vice Provost for University Life; Director of the Center for Standards and Accountability; Penn community members; Senior Counsel from the Office of General Counsel (OGC).

Major topics considered included:

- Palestine Freedom School (PFS) encampment in Houston Hall
- Open Expression (OE) observer/delegate roles, branding, and education
- Review of student participation in Center City rally
- American Association of University Professors correspondence
- *Daily Pennsylvanian* requests for interpretation around OE
- Internal guidance for signage
- Penn Chavurah film screening
- COE Chair discussion with the University Task Force on Antisemitism
- COE Chair discussion with the Presidential Commission on Countering Hate and Building Community
- Request for COE documents from OGC for congressional inquiry
- Van Pelt library study-in by the Palestine Freedom School

The COE issued a revised interpretation of section IV.B on June 20, 2023. The intent of this interpretation was to clarify the relationship between the COE, the Office of University Life, and the Office of Community Standards and Accountability through the development of a framework to operationalize the Guidelines on Open Expression in a fair and transparent manner. This framework has guided the COE's work this academic year. It is important to understand that the COE responds to questions and concerns that are brought to it. The COE does not issue opinions or interpretations outside of specific requests relevant to the interpretation of the OE Guidelines.

One significant test of the revised interpretation and current operational Guidelines involved the Palestine Freedom School (PFS) in the fall of 2023. The PFS started as a teach-in and evolved into an encampment over a period of weeks. Given the level of engagement required between University Life and the PFS, a COE subcommittee was formed to work with the students and their faculty advisors to support their open expression in Houston Hall within the Guidelines. The impact of the subcommittee and the larger COE was important to the informing the boundaries of open expression that will guide future cases.

The COE believes it is critically important that the University community is aware of and understands the OE Guidelines; the role of OE observer/delegates; and the advisory role that the COE can play in the interpretation of the OE Guidelines. As a University community we must support open expression and apply the Guidelines in a fair and consistent manner.

Committee Membership

Chair: Lisa Bellini

Faculty: Ann Farnsworth-Alvear, Claire Finkelstein, Jeff Green, Carolyn Marvin, Zita Nunes, Eric Orts, Simon Richter

Graduate and Professional Students: DeA'ja Gardner, Raheem Williams, Yuanjie Zhang

Undergraduate Students: Iman Alia Dorman, Ria Ellendula, Euel Kebebew

PPSA: Cynthia Kwan

Staff: Alexa Duffy

COUNCIL 2023-2024 Year-End Reports

Committee on Committees Report on the Functioning of Council Committees

Executive Summary

This report summarizes the general functioning and procedures of University Council (UC) committees during the 2023–2024 academic year. These committees are: Committee on Academic and Related Affairs (CARA), Committee on Campus and Community Life (CCL), Committee on Diversity and Equity (CDE), Committee on Facilities, and Committee on Personnel Benefits (CPB).

Suggestions for enhancing the functioning of these committees include:

(1) Encourage or mandate meetings to be held in-person only to engage all committee members and (2) (echoing a recommendation from the previous year,) each committee should reassess its general charges and propose reforms to them to make committee work more effective given limited available time.

Mechanism of Evaluation

Members of the Committee on Committees (UCCoC) collected information for this report. Information was collected via in-person, phone, and/or email interviews, using the list of questions below as a guide. UCCoC members interviewed committee members from their own constituency. For example, faculty members interviewed committee chairs, as well as faculty representatives as available; students sought to interview the corresponding student representatives; and staff members of the UCCoC interviewed their counterparts in the committees. This report provides an overview of the general findings from the data collected and comments on the functioning and procedures of each committee. The UC Steering Committee is encouraged to refer to the individual committee reports for more information on the functioning of each committee.

Questions Posed to Each Committee Chair

1. What changes, if any, do you think need to be made in the committee's general charges? Do you feel the scope of the committee is appropriate?
2. What issues did the committee address this year? Will they be resolved by year's end? Were the committee's specific charges for this year clear and appropriate?
3. What issues in the committee's charges are unlikely to be addressed or resolved by the end of the academic year? What do you see as issues emerging for consideration next year?
4. How many times did the full committee meet? Were any subcommittees created? If so, how many were created, how often did they meet, what were their purposes, and did they achieve their goals?
5. Is the membership of the committee well suited to the committee's charges in terms of relevant expertise, representation of interests, etc.? Does the chair demonstrate sufficient leadership; if not, then who on the committee does? Which members would you recommend to serve on the committee next year?
6. What was the role of the administrative liaison in your committee? (The liaison is an administrative person who can provide relevant information for a committee charge or connect the committee with others on campus with relevant information.)
7. Did someone from the administration provide explicit feedback on last year's recommendations? Was the feedback satisfactory? Were there any aspects that have not been resolved or for which a path to resolving them has not been developed?
8. What problems did the committee encounter (e.g., limitations on access to necessary resources or information)?
9. Was the committee effectively structured to accomplish its charges? Were there appropriate opportunities for the committee to provide advice, to work with its administrative liaison to resolve specific issues, and/or to generate grander recommendations? Were constituents outside of the membership roster consulted in the committee's work?
10. What recommendations about the committee's process and organization do you have? Is there any question that should have been asked about process that was not included?
11. For staff and students: Do you feel that your voice was heard as part of the committee?

General Comments Across all Committees

Feedback received from multiple committees indicated a desire of committee members to suggest specific charges at the beginning of each

academic year, rather than the customary process wherein those charges are developed in the summer months after considering feedback from the previous year reports as well as recommendations from relevant campus stakeholders.

Others noted with concern that some committees struggled to offer specific follow-up actions for University leaders to undertake, leading to internal perceptions that committees' reports would not hold value in influencing near-term decisions made at the University level on the corresponding topics.

Considering feedback received, UCCoC makes the following specific recommendations for consideration during the 2024 – 2025 academic year:

1. Recognizing the perennial challenges of meeting scheduling, we encourage committees to hold in-person meetings to ensure active participation by all committee members.
2. We urge each committee to review its general charges and advise the University Council on how its bylaws might be amended such that the committees can offer impactful advice through its work.
3. We echo a recommendation from the previous year that encourages the University to devote appropriate resources to ensure that committee work rises above superficiality.

University Council Committee on Academic and Related Affairs (CARA)

General Comments

Comments were noted again this year regarding the breadth of CARA's general charges. A recommendation for a future charge was noted regarding the future of affirmative action policies (or their equivalents) at Penn.

UCCoC praises CARA on the comprehensive approach it undertook in addressing both its specific charges.

Membership

Co-Chairs: William Burke-White, Daniel Smith
Faculty: Kent Bream, Mike Levy, Kristina Lyons
Graduate and Professional Students: Rachit Kumar
Undergraduate Students: Luna Sato
Penn Professional Staff: Justin Knoebel
Administrative Liaison: Leo Charney
Staff: Margie Chavez

General Committee Charges

The Committee on Academic and Related Affairs (CARA):

(i) shall have cognizance over matters of recruitment, admissions, and financial aid that concern the University as a whole and that are not the specific responsibility of individual faculties, including the authority to carry out studies on existing recruitment and admissions procedures and their relationships with existing policies on admissions and financial aid and to recommend changes in policy to the Council;

(ii) shall consider the purposes of a University bookstore and advise the Council and the management of the University bookstore on policies, development, and operations;

(iii) shall review and monitor issues related to the international programs and other international activities of the University, including advice and policy recommendations in such areas as services for international students and scholars, foreign fellowships and studies abroad, faculty, staff and student exchange programs, and cooperative undertakings with foreign universities;

(iv) shall advise the vice provost and director of libraries on the policies, development, and operation of the University libraries;

(v) shall have cognizance over recreation and intramural and intercollegiate athletics and their integration with the educational program of the University, including the planning and provision of adequate facilities for various sports and recreational activities; and

(vi) shall have cognizance of all matters of policy relating to research and the general environment for research at the University, including the assignment and distribution of indirect costs and the assignment of those research funds distributed by the University, and shall advise the Administration on those proposals for sponsored research referred to it because of potential conflict with University policy.

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Committee on Committees

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2023-2024 Specific Charges

Review and focus specifically, but not exclusively, on research experiences and inclusion in the various curricula for our undergraduates and graduate students. This could also extend to Postdoctoral Scholars across the University.

Penn Global's next five-year strategic vision is set to be released in spring 2023, thus follow-up on committee recommendations and major discussion points could be extended in 2023-2024. The committee could focus on International Student and Scholar Services, as these parts of the charge were not addressed in 2022-2023.

The University Council Committee on Campus and Community Life (CCL)

General Comments

CCL was again challenged to address its charges, one which they indicated was too specific and the other too broad. It was also hampered by hybrid meetings in which remote attendees were not fully engaged in the discussion by virtue of their remote participation (and despite attempts at engagement from the committee chairperson). Committee members urged future membership to include content area experts related to the committee's specific charges.

UCCoC concurs with the concerns of CCL members and encourages meetings to take place in-person. It will also convey to the nominating bodies the utility of appointing committee members who demonstrate specific content area expertise.

Membership

Chair: Domenic Vitiello

Faculty: Elinore Kaufman, Sarah Kavanagh, Akira Drake Rodriguez, Mark Stern, Tukufu Zuberi

Graduate and Professional Students: Asep Suryana, Yi Yu

Undergraduate Students: Lina Chihoub, Hannah Liu

PPSA: Elona Canaj, Christine Weeks

Administrative Liaison: Tamara Greenfield King, Tony Sorrentino

Staff: Dante Brown

General Committee Charges

(i) shall have cognizance over the University's communications and public relations activities in their various formats and media including electronic, audio (the telephone system), video and printed copy, and it shall monitor the University's internal communications, the operations of the University Communications Office, communications to alumni, and the interpretation of the University to its many constituencies;

(ii) shall advise the Council on the relationship of the University to the surrounding community and the relevant University policies, work to ensure that the University develops and maintains a constructive relationship with the community, and monitor pending real estate activities of concern to the community;

(iii) shall have cognizance of the conditions and rules of undergraduate and graduate student life on campus, including 1) gathering and analyzing information concerning student life and student affairs and making recommendations to the Council; and 2) responding as appropriate to requests from and reporting information and recommendations concerning student life and student affairs to the vice provost for university life and other appropriate administrative officers; and

(iv) shall advise the president, the director of public safety, and the administrators or directors of specific buildings, offices, or projects on all matters concerning safety and security in the conduct of their operations, including consideration and assessment of means to improve safety and security on the campus.

2023-2024 Specific Charges

Review public crime data to assess levels of gun violence in the communities near Penn's campus over the last year (West Philadelphia and Grays Ferry). Inventory existing Penn programs towards violence reduction by location. Compare crime data with Penn programs for identifying gaps.

Review the current student life initiatives and activities across campus related to civic engagement in West Philadelphia and Grays Ferry.

The University Council Committee on Diversity and Equity (CDE)

General Comments

CDE members praised the meetings for their productiveness and the balanced approach of the committee's leadership in addressing sensitive issues. They urged campus leadership to endorse the distribution of a campuswide survey on topics relevant to the committee's charges.

UCCoC congratulates the committee on another productive year and encourages the administrative liaisons to, during the fall semester of 2024, inform current and recent committee members of actions taken in response to its report recommendations.

Membership

Chair: Roy Hamilton

Faculty: Roberto Gonzales, Timothy Rommen, Susan Taylor, and Guobin Yang

Graduate and Professional Students: Joyce Kim, Kathryn Xin Qian

Undergraduate Students: Remy Capers, Astrid Raganas

PPSA: Samantha Fellman, Kaitlin Johnstone

Administrative Liaison: Sam Starks

Staff: Kuan Evans

General Committee Charges

The Committee on Diversity and Equity aids Penn in fostering and taking full advantage of its diversity as well as in strengthening ties across all boundaries to enrich and enliven the campus community. The committee shall advise the offices of the president, provost, and the executive vice presidents on ways to develop and maintain a supportive atmosphere on campus for the inclusion and appreciation of diversity among all members of the University community. The committee will review and provide advice regarding the University's equal opportunity and affirmative action programs and policies. The areas in which the committee shall report to the Council include diversity within the educational and work settings, integration of staff and faculty into the larger campus community, and ways to foster a campus environment that is inclusive and supportive of difference. The committee also will advise the Administration on specific diversity issues that may arise on campus.

2023-2024 Specific Charges

Advise the Senior Vice President for Institutional Affairs and Chief Diversity Officer, Senior Vice President for Human Resources, Vice Provost for Faculty, Vice Provost for University Life, and Vice President for Community and Social Equity on new and existing opportunities to demonstrate Penn's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, including those that facilitate sharing of best practices among school and center DEI officers.

Advise the Senior Vice President for Institutional Affairs and Chief Diversity Officer, Senior Vice President for Human Resources, and Vice Provost for Faculty on the content of and timing for a staff survey that would lend itself to understanding any differences in the experiences of staff members by a variety of demographic characteristics.

The University Council Committee on Facilities

General Comments

The committee again functioned as expected and intended. No concerns were noted.

UCCoC acknowledges with appreciation the work of the Committee on Facilities during the 2023-2024 academic year.

Membership

Chair: Rashida Ng

Faculty: Tom Baker, Maria Geffen, Deep Jariwala, Zhongjie Lin, Nicholas Pevzner, Franca Trubiano

Graduate and Professional Students: Brian Buhr, Adam Ziada

Undergraduate Students: Iman Alia Dorman, Regan Smith

PPSA: Jessica Bolton, James McGonigle

Administrative Liaison: Mark Kocent

Staff: Rebecca Jacob

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COUNCIL 2023-2024 Year-End Reports

Committee on Committees

(continued from page 13)

General Committee Charges

The Committee on Facilities shall be responsible for keeping under review the planning and operation by the University of its physical plant and all services associated therewith, including transportation and parking.

2023-2024 Specific Charges

1. Review and explore how the processes related to managing the University's real estate holdings affect Penn and surrounding communities.
2. Review the University's plans to adapt and track the effects of the climate emergency on its infrastructure and lands, including the emergency disaster plan for weather events and natural disasters.

The University Council Committee on Personnel Benefits

General Comments

The committee continued to work closely with the Division of Human Resources, which provided ample information for the committee to consider its charges.

UCCoC encourages committee leadership to develop guiding questions that can be used as a basis for discussion during meetings and through which the committee's findings and recommendations can be developed.

Membership

Chair: Olivia S. Mitchell

Faculty: Julie Nelson Davis, Johanna K.P. Greeson, Jonathan Klick, M. Susan Lindee, Reed Shuldiner

PPSA: Tomas Isakowitz, Andy Maynard, Kathy Tang

Administrative Liaison: Jack Heuer, Sue Sproat

Staff: Melissa Brown

Ex-Officio: Laura Perna

General Committee Charges

The Committee on Personnel Benefits shall have cognizance over the benefits programs for all University personnel. The committee shall consist of eight faculty members (of whom one shall be a member of the Senate Committee on the Economic Status of the Faculty (SCESF)), three representatives of the Penn Professional Staff Assembly, and three representatives of the Weekly-Paid Professional Staff Assembly. The Vice President for Human Resources, Associate Provost, and Director of Benefits shall serve as non-voting ex officio members.

2023-2024 Specific Charges

1. Read, review, and comment on updates related to two major issues affecting current and retiring employees:
 - a. the administration of retirement benefits including recent retirement plan changes, and
 - b. wellness and behavioral health programs for University employees and dependents.
2. Review the current policies related to parental and teaching leave for faculty and staff who choose to grow their families via foster care.

Committee on Committee Membership

Chair: Eric Feldman

Faculty: Eric Feldman, Vivian Gadsden, Tulia Falleti, John Holmes, Krithika Lingappan, Claire Mitchell, Eric Orts

Graduate Student: Michael Krone

Undergraduate Student: Shriya Boyapati

PPSA: Tonya Bennett

Staff: J. Patrick Walsh and Roxanna Pasquier