A New Hub Devoted to Teaching and Learning Opens January 30

Provost Vincent Price announces the opening of a significant new hub devoted to teaching and learning, located on the first floor of the Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center and encompassing the Center for Teaching and Learning, the Online Learning Initiative and the Center for Learning Analytics.

“This dynamic new space represents a major leap forward for teaching and learning at Penn,” said Provost Price. “It brings together the expertise of these vital resources for online and in-class education, placing them at the heart of campus and providing greater opportunities for them to share ideas, collaborate with the Penn Libraries and work more closely with faculty and students across our 12 Schools.”

All members of the Penn community are invited to the new hub’s open house on Monday, January 30, from 4:30-5:30 p.m.

Penn’s Center for Teaching and Learning, founded in 2000, promotes teaching excellence across the University, offering a wide range of teaching workshops, informal discussions and seminars, and one-on-one consultations. In particular, it has been at the forefront of Penn’s Structured Active In-Class Learning (SAIL), initiative, working closely with faculty on innovative classes in which students engage actively with course material, often through hands-on, in-class group projects. It also customizes programs for the needs of particular disciplines and for instructors who may be planning specific teaching innovations.

The Online Learning Initiative was created in 2012, when Penn became one of the founding university partners in Coursera, the pioneering online learning platform. Penn now offers more than 80 courses on Coursera, with 22 million learners around the world in disciplines that encompass all 12 Penn Schools. At the same time, the University has expanded its engagement with online learning to include the non-profit edX platform, support of executive and professional training certificate programs, assisting in the launch of a new Master of Health Care Innovation, and other innovative and advanced educational programs. The work of Penn faculty members in online learning has also spurred educational innovations on campus, especially through the SAIL initiative and other new forms of active in-class learning. As part of this expansion, the collaborative space will host Penn’s new Center for Learning Analytics, led by Ryan Baker of Penn’s Graduate School of Education. The Center will offer essential research about best practices in teaching and learning, both online and on campus. Collaborating with the Online Learning Initiative and other partners across the University, it will use a wide range of data to examine such areas as how best to promote long-term learning, predict student success and study how learners differ between different cultures.

Co-located in the Van Pelt-Dietrich Library, these three centers will have greater opportunities to work closely with the Libraries’ Office of Teaching, Research, and Learning Services, a key driver of innovative educational technologies across campus, especially the highly successful launch and widespread adoption of Canvas. They will also draw on the Library’s Weigle Information Commons, Vitale Digital Media Lab and Collaborative Classroom to create a truly interconnected hub of activities that collectively advance teaching and learning at Penn.

“From the time of its founding, Penn has been a leader in educational innovation,” said Provost Price. “This vibrant new space will help us sustain that place at the vanguard of teaching and learning, for the benefit of our entire community—and of the wider educational community around the world.”

Greg Rost: Senior Vice President

President Amy Gutmann announced that Gregory S. Rost has been named senior vice president and chief of staff. “This appointment recognizes the increasing scope of Greg’s extraordinarily broad-ranging responsibility, advice and counsel for University-wide agenda setting and strategy. Greg’s responsibilities have expanded over the decade of his exemplary service to include overseeing major parts of the design and implementation of new programs and initiatives of our Penn Compact 2020,” Dr. Gutmann said.

During his 10 years at Penn as Vice President and Chief of Staff, “Greg has worked expertly and tirelessly with me and our entire senior leadership team to advance every priority of Penn Compact 2020. He has unfailingly provided superb advice and counsel to us all. At the same time, Greg has also mobilized the widest range of great Penn teams to drive forward many Penn Compact initiatives from their start to their successful and timely finishes,” Dr. Gutmann added.

(continued on page 3)
The following is published in accordance with the Faculty Senate Rules. Among other purposes, the publication of SEC actions is intended to stimulate discussion among the constituencies and their representatives. Please communicate your comments to Patrick Walsh, executive assistant to the Senate Office, either by telephone at (215) 898-6435 or by email at senate@pobox.upenn.edu.

Faculty Senate Executive Committee Actions Wednesday, January 18, 2017

Chair’s Report. Faculty Senate Chair Laura Perna invited SEC members to participate in “Listening to Diversity,” a forum for the Penn community to share suggestions for how to bring about productive change on campus. The forum, to be held today, January 24, 4-6 p.m., at the Van Pelt Library’s Library Pavilion (6th floor), is convened by the University Council Committee on Diversity and Equity, the Faculty Senate and the Penn Forum for Women Faculty. This initial public forum will provide all members of the campus community (faculty, staff, and students) the opportunity to voice their concerns and share their suggestions for how Penn might work together to bring about productive change. The coordinating committee for the event will then make recommendations to the university as to how best to be preemptively responsive to ongoing questions and concerns about equity and diversity that are directly affecting the Penn community.

Past-Chair’s Report. Faculty Senate Past Chair Reed Pyeritz reported that the Academic Planning and Budget Committee and Capital Council continued to meet and that the Campaign for Community Steering Committee is in the process of scheduling its next meeting.

Update from the Office of the President. President Amy Gutmann provided updates on philanthropic initiatives, innovation efforts and the search for a new provost. She encouraged faculty members to attend the Consultative Committee on the Selection of a Provost, which will be held on January 30 at noon in the Claudia Cohen Hall Terrace Room. SEC members then discussed a number of other issues with President Gutmann, including: Penn’s status as a sanctuary campus for undocumented students, the future of online learning at Penn, student mental health and wellness and the Sachs Program for Arts Innovation.

Discussion and Votes on Proposed Amendments to Faculty Tracks in SP2 and Annenberg. The Senate Committee on Faculty and the Academic Mission (SCOF) reviewed and unanimously approved two proposals from the School of Social Policy and Practice (SP2). The first proposal is to adopt the Senior Lecturer track and the second proposal is to adopt the Practice Professor track in the school. Following discussion, SEC members voted to approve the first proposal by a vote of 24 in favor, 2 opposed, and 5 abstentions, and they voted to approve the second proposal by a vote of 26 in favor, none opposed, and 5 abstentions. Following SCOF’s meeting but prior to the SEC meeting, the Senate Tri-Chairs received a proposal from the Annenberg School for Communication to adopt the Practice Professor track in that school, requesting that the proposal’s review be expedited by SEC due to exigent circumstances. Upon motion made and seconded, and following discussion, SEC members voted to approve this proposal by a vote of 24 in favor, none opposed, and 7 abstentions.

Discussion on the Role and Representation of the “Non-Standing Faculty” at Penn. SCOF Chair Amy Sepinwall (Wharton) led a discussion of SEC members designed to inform SCOF as it addresses its charge to “Initiate a review of teaching by Academic Support Staff and Associated Faculty in the undergraduate schools.” SEC members broke into smaller groups for the discussion. Upon reconvening in plenary session, SEC members suggested that the Senate consider the feasibility of including the non-Standing Faculty more substantially in shared governance at Penn. They also noted the great variation in the experiences and responsibilities of this group and the implications of this variation for efforts to codify shared governance roles.

Report of the Senate Ad Hoc Committee to Review the Academic Calendar. SEC member Ron Donagi (SAS/ Mathematics), chair of the Ad Hoc Committee, presented a proposal for restructuring the academic calendar. Following a discussion, the proposal was referred to the Senate Committee on Students and Educational Policy (SCSEP) for further review. Faculty may voice concerns pertaining to the academic calendar by emailing the Senate office.

TCPW Grants for Groups: February 10

The Trustees’ Council of Penn Women (TCPW) is accepting applications for its Annual Grants Program and encourages members of the University community to apply.

Grants ranging between $1,000-$5,000 will be available to individuals or organizations which promote:
- women’s issues
- the quality of undergraduate and graduate life for women
- the advancement of women
- the physical, emotional and psychological well-being of women

Favorable consideration will be given to projects that:
- affect a broad segment of the University population
- foster a greater awareness of women’s issues
- provide seed money for pilot programs that have the potential to become ongoing self-supporting programs

To apply, visit the TCPW website at https://provost.upenn.edu/tcpwgrants and download the application from the Grants page. Applications must be submitted no later than February 10, 2017. Awards will be announced in the Spring of 2017 and funds will be distributed in July/August 2017 for projects in the 2017-2018 academic year.

TCPW: Nominations for the Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Advising: March 1

The Trustees’ Council of Penn Women (TCPW) is an international network of Penn alumnae. By power of their example, these leaders support, foster and promote the advancement of women and women’s issues within the University, thus enriching the University community as a whole.

Beginning in 2012, the organization’s quarter-century milestone, the TCPW 25th Anniversary Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Advising was established to recognize undergraduate faculty advisors who have distinguished themselves in providing assistance and advice to their advisee students and who have made a significant impact on the academic experience of these students.

Nominations of standing faculty may be made by an undergraduate or any member of Penn’s community for someone other than oneself and must be submitted together with an essay—not to exceed 250 words in length—supporting the nomination. The deadline for these nominations will be at 5 p.m. on March 1, 2017.

The nomination form is available at https://provost.upenn.edu/education/teaching-at-penn/tcpw-award The winners of this award will receive $2,500 and will be celebrated at the Fall TCPW Conference, to be held on November 2-3, 2017.
Penn Libraries Acquire Only Known Copy of Legendary Franklin Broadside, “The Elegy on the Death of Aquila Rose”

In 1750 Benjamin Franklin, lifelong bibliophile, lover of knowledge, and founder of the University of Pennsylvania, gave the Penn Libraries one of its very first books. In honor of his 311th birthday, the Libraries announce the acquisition of the publication that launched his career and legend—“The Elegy on the Death of Aquila Rose.” It is the last previously-missing major piece of Franklin’s printing to become available to scholars, and it marks the beginning of Franklin’s Philadelphia legacy.

The broadside laments the recent death of Philadelphia poet and pressman Aquila Rose and was composed by the printer Samuel Keimer. It was printed by a teen-aged Franklin almost immediately upon his arrival in Philadelphia in 1723. According to Jim Green, a Franklin expert and librarian at the Library Company of Philadelphia, “‘The Elegy on the Death of Aquila Rose’ reveals how much care Franklin lavished on the first thing he printed in Philadelphia. Franklin imposed the type in two columns and added a mourning border headed by a woodcut (below) perhaps of his own design.” Green notes that the presswork involved in the broadside is “impeccable” suggesting that this masterpiece is what earned him a job as a pressman and kept him in Philadelphia. Without the opportunity to print the broadside for Keimer, one can imagine Franklin quickly moving on from Philadelphia, drastically changing the course of history.

This excerpt from Ben Franklin’s autobiography illustrates the circumstances around the elegy’s printing:

“Keimer’s printing-house, I found, consisted of an old shatter’d press… which he was then using himself, composing an Elegy on Aquila Rose… promising to come and print off his Elegy as soon as he should have got it ready.”

According to Penn Libraries’ Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books, and Manuscripts curator Mitch Fraus, scholars know of around 900 surviving works printed by Franklin. “Many of these works, especially broadsides and small ephemeral pieces, exist in only one or two copies,” explains Mr. Fraus. “The Penn Libraries now hold more than a third of his print production, making our collection of Franklin’s printing among the most important in the world.”

Though discussed in Franklin’s autobiography, no other copies of this broadside are known to survive. This particular copy is legendary for having appeared in the 1820s before disappearing from public view—until now. Discovered by an antiquarian book dealer inside the scrapbook of its 1820s owner and offered to the Penn Libraries, this is the first time the broadside will be available to scholars.

With the acquisition of “The Elegy on the Death of Aquila Rose,” the Penn Libraries now has the bookends of Franklin’s career, both his first and last works of printing. “As an institution founded by Franklin and dedicated to his passion for the widest possible dissemination of knowledge and the promotion of learning,” Vice Provost and Director of Libraries H. Carton Rogers says, “the Penn Libraries is proud to carry the torch of his legacy, lighting pathways to the future by making Franklin’s work open and accessible to the wider world.”

Now through February 10, the broadside (detail above) along with the album in which it was found will be on display on the first floor of Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center. A digitized copy of the broadside can be found at: http://hdl.library.upenn.edu/1017/d/print/6768025
Netter Center Faculty-Community Partnership Award

We are pleased to announce the Netter Center Faculty-Community Partnership Award. This is a new annual award of $5,000 to recognize outstanding Faculty-Community Partnership projects in Philadelphia, particularly West Philadelphia. One award will be made annually: $2,500 to a faculty member and $2,500 to the community partner to develop and advance an existing partnership. Junior and senior faculty along with senior lecturers and associated faculty from any of Penn’s 12 schools are eligible for nomination. Please see below for the complete description and process of nomination. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this award, please direct them to Jenny Bae, ABCS coordinator, at baeji@sas.upenn.edu

—Dennis DeTurck, Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences and Professor of Mathematics, SAS; Faculty Fellow of Riepe College House; Netter Center Faculty Advisory Board Co-Chair

—John Gearhart, James W. Effron University Professor and Emeritus Director, Institute for Regenerative Medicine; Professor of Cell and Developmental Biology and Animal Biology, PSOM and School of Veterinary Medicine; Netter Center Faculty Advisory Board Co-Chair

—John Gearhart, John Geary Professor of Regenerative Medicine; Emeritus Director, Institute for Regenerative Medicine; Professor of Cancer Biology and Immunology, PSOM; Netter Center Faculty Advisory Board Co-Chair

—Ira Harkavy, Associate Vice President, Founding Director, Barbara and Edward Netter Center for Community Partnerships

—Carol Muller, Professor of Music, Director of Jazz and Popular Music Studies Minor, SAS; Netter Center Faculty Fellow, Moorman-Simon Program for Education and Schooling for Democracy and Citizenship

ABCs Course Development Grants: March 17

The Barbara and Edward Netter Center for Community Partnerships announces course development grants for Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 to promote Academically Based Community Service (ABCS) courses that integrate research, teaching, learning and service. Over 150 courses from a wide range of disciplines and Penn schools have linked Penn undergraduate and graduate students to work in the community. The grants support University faculty to develop new courses or adapt existing courses that combine research with school and community projects.

To see a list of the ABCS courses, visit https://www.nettercenter.upenn.edu/abcs-courses/current-courses

Grants will be for no more than $5,000 per project. These funds can be used to provide graduate and undergraduate support, course support and/or summer salary ($5,000 is inclusive of employee benefits if taken as salary).

Funded by the Netter Center, course development grants facilitate faculty in developing new and substantially restructured undergraduate and graduate level courses that engage students in real-world problem-solving projects in conjunction with schools and community organizations located in West Philadelphia.

The following criteria will be used to evaluate proposals:

1. Academic excellence
2. Integration of research, teaching and service
3. Partnership with schools, community groups, service agencies, etc.
4. Focus on Philadelphia, especially West Philadelphia
5. Evidence as to how the course activity will involve participation or interaction with the community as well as contribute to improving the community
6. Evidence as to how the course activity will engage undergraduate and/or graduate students in real-world problem-solving research opportunities
7. Potential for sustainability

Please format proposals as follows:
1. Cover page
   1.1 Name, title, department, school, mailing address
   1.2 Title of the proposal
   1.3 Total amount of funding you would like
   1.4 100-word abstract of the proposal (include a description of how the course will involve interaction with the community and benefit the community)
   2. One-page biographical sketch of applicant
   3. A two-to-four-page mini-proposal
   4. Budget detailing how you intend to use the requested funding

Proposals for Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 courses should be submitted to the Netter Center for Community Partnerships by March 17, 2017. Please e-mail proposals to Jenny Bae, ABCS coordinator, at baeji@sas.upenn.edu

Penn Humanities Forum Faculty Research Fellowships: March 20

Applications are now being accepted for research proposals from standing faculty in the humanities and allied departments on the topic of Afterlives, the Forum’s topic for 2017-2018. Two types of awards are available: $5,000 research fund stipends for junior faculty (assistant professors), and up to $10,000 for senior faculty, payable to departments for one course offset.

Fellows are required to attend the Forum’s weekly Mellon seminars (Tuesdays, noon–1:50 p.m.) and to present their research at one of those sessions during the year. In addition to Penn faculty, seminar members include Mellon Postdoctoral Fellows, regional faculty, the Forum’s director (Jim English) and topic director (Emily Wilson) and others.

For details on the Afterlives topic and how to apply for the fellowship, please visit the Penn Humanities Forum website: ph.upenn.edu

Application deadline: March 20, 2017.
Kathryn Hellerstein: Fenia and Yaakov Leviant Memorial Prize

The Modern Language Association of America has awarded Kathryn Hellerstein, associate professor of Germanic languages and literatures at the University of Pennsylvania, with the eighth Fenia and Yaakov Leviant Memorial Prize in Yiddish Studies.

Dr. Hellerstein’s translation, A Question of Tradition: Women Poets in Yiddish, 1586-1987 was chosen for the award, which is awarded each even-numbered year to either an outstanding translation of a Yiddish literary work or an outstanding scholarly work in English in the field of Yiddish.

James D. Lewis: Achievement in IBD Clinical Science Award

James D. Lewis, a professor of medicine and epidemiology and associate director of the inflammatory bowel disease program in the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, received the 2016 Achievement in Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) Clinical Science Award from the Crohn’s and Colitis Foundation of America (CCFA).

During Dr. Lewis’ 20-year career, he has published 200 scholarly articles. Dr. Lewis, who is also a senior scholar in the Center for Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, is among few researchers leading NIH-funded clinical trials for novel therapeutic strategies for IBD. He has also conducted studies looking at whether patients treated with various medications for IBD are at increased risk for cancer, infections, neurologic diseases and death, and whether such risks are warranted given the effectiveness of the therapy.

Dr. Lewis is the lead scientist behind CCFA’s IBD Plexus, a resource that will standardize data collection and sharing, allowing researchers to mine extensive patient data for new insights into Crohn’s and colitis.

“The enormous potential to improve the lives of those with IBD is the driving force behind my research efforts,” Dr. Lewis said. “By improving current treatments and creating less toxic therapies, my colleagues and I will continue advancing the body of knowledge in Crohn’s and colitis to help patients control their IBD and improve their quality of life.”

Yvonne Paterson: National Academy of Inventors Fellow

Yvonne J. Paterson, a professor of microbiology in the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, has been elected a fellow of the National Academy of Inventors. The 2016 class includes 175 named inventors on US patents who have created or facilitated outstanding innovations that have tangibly impacted quality of life, economic development and the welfare of society.

Dr. Paterson, a breast cancer survivor, works to harness the body’s immune system to provide protection against, and find cures for, cancer. She has been issued 32 US patents and numerous foreign patents; a further 12 possible US patents are under review.

Among her achievements, she led the development and testing of a cancer vaccine that uses the common bacterium Listeria monocytogenes, which can cause food poisoning and other illnesses, to fight tumors.

Dr. Paterson genetically modifies listeria to smuggle in proteins that can activate the immune system while reducing listeria’s adverse symptoms in the patient. She then uses the modified listeria to mimic an infection in the cancer cells, which cues the immune system to eradicate the contamination. The goal is to destroy tumor cells while preventing metastatic cells from developing and spreading the cancer elsewhere in the body.

The research has led to the formation of two US companies, one of which, Advaxis, is in phase 3 clinical trials for this immunotherapy for cervical cancer, as well as earlier-stage trials for several more forms of cancer. Other potential targets include lung, prostate, head and neck, anal, breast, and gastric cancers, as well as melanoma and lymphoma.

“In principle, this could be used against virtually any cancer,” said Dr. Paterson.

Through a partnership with Penn School of Veterinary Medicine, use of the therapy is generating positive results against bone cancer in dogs—adding as many as live years of extra, tumor-free living.

Jennifer Pinto-Martin and Leah Moran: Penn Nurse Innovation Fellows

Jennifer Pinto-Martin and Leah Moran have been appointed the inaugural Penn Nurse Innovation Fellows. Dr. Pinto-Martin is the Viola Maclnnes/Independent Professor of Nursing, a professor of epidemiology in Penn’s Perelman School of Medicine, and executive director of the Center for Public Health Initiatives. Ms. Moran is nurse manager for the Cardiac Intermediate Care Unit at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania.

The Fellowship, which was formed through a collaboration among the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing, Penn Medicine’s Center for Health Care Innovation (CHCI) and the Department of Nursing from the University of Pennsylvania Health System (UPHS), supports nursing faculty and staff to develop an intellectual foundation in innovation methodology and gain expertise in the rapid testing of new approaches to enhance health care delivery and patient outcomes.

“Both Dr. Pinto-Martin and Leah Moran make excellent inaugural recipients of this important fellowship,” said Regina Cunningham, senior vice president and chief nurse executive for UPHS. “It is through this type of collaboration—nurses, researchers, physicians, developers coming together—that new avenues to improve patient experiences and outcomes will be developed.”

The new program will foster multidisciplinary collaboration by enabling fellows to work directly with designers, developers and innovation specialists from the CHCI over the course of a semester. As the fellows learn new techniques, they will be able to apply that knowledge to drive change in health care, both at Penn Medicine and beyond.

Lauren Sallan: TED Fellow

Lauren Sallan, an assistant professor at the School of Arts & Sciences’ department of earth and environmental science, has been selected as a TED Fellow. Dr. Sallan joins a class of 15 innovators from around the world, each of whom will deliver a talk on the TED stage in April in Vancouver, BC.

Dr. Sallan is a paleobiologist who uses “big data” approaches to understand the ways global events, environmental change and ecological interactions have shaped evolution and modern biodiversity. She will share her work with fish fossils, which has shed light on mass extinction events.

“This is an amazing opportunity to share what fossil data tells us about the rules of biodiversity with a global audience and connect with incredible people doing awesome things,” Dr. Sallan said. “I am excited and honored to have been chosen.”
Human Resources: Upcoming February Programs

Professional & Personal Development Programs

Improve your skills and get ahead in your career by taking advantage of the many development opportunities provided by HR. You can register for programs by visiting knowledgeLink.upenn.edu or contacting Learning and Education at (215) 898-3400.

STEP UP: Introduction; 2/7; 9 a.m.–noon; $150. STEP UP is a pre-supervisory training program designed for motivated individuals who aspire to be supervisors or managers. This initial course, First Steps to Excellence, is the entry point for the seven-course STEP UP Pre-Supervisory Curriculum and must be completed as the first course in the curriculum. For your convenience, all seven courses are offered multiple times on a rotating basis throughout the semester. Please also enroll in the STEP UP Pre-Supervisory Curriculum, which tracks your program completion.

Emotional Intelligence; 2/8; 9 a.m.–noon; $75. Professionals who have a high level of awareness and understanding of the emotional and behavioral aspects of the relationships they have with others, and develop positive relationships, often find greater success in the workplace. This soft skill is known as emotional intelligence, and it is an essential element in the business workplace. You will learn about emotional intelligence and how it applies to your professional and personal life. The program will provide a theoretical basis for understanding your emotions and the emotions of others. You will also learn strategies for managing your emotions and the emotions of others. This program is designed to provide you with the knowledge and tools to develop your emotional intelligence.

The Art of Presentation, Part 1; 2/2; 9 a.m.–noon; $75. The Art of Presentation is a two-part skills seminar that will help you improve your presentations, whether you are persuading, educating or informing. The seminar is focused on enhancing your presentation skills and the impact your presentation has on your audience. The seminar will cover tips and techniques on how to engage your audience, how to organize your presentation and how to make your presentation engaging and informative. The seminar will be interactive and you will have the opportunity to practice your presentation skills in a supportive environment.

Choosing High School Classes for Next Year? Navigating the Curriculum Waters; 2/16; 12:30-1:30 p.m.; free. Join staff from Penn’s Undergraduate Admissions office for a discussion about the role of the high school transcript and course selection in the holistic admissions review. This may be particularly timely for parents of high school freshmen, sophomores, and juniors as course selection will be happening soon.

Brown Bag: Managing Conflict; 2/22; 12:30-1:30 p.m.; free. Conflict is a natural part of working with others, and is typically the result of stress in a relationship. Conflict in the workplace should be addressed in order to maintain productivity, increase retention rates and improve morale. Failure to address conflict can cause a breakdown in the spirit of cooperation and may lead to unproductive behaviors such as resentment, displacement or defensiveness. In this program we will explore how conflict can be helpful and strategies to better manage conflict at work. While the seminar will provide participants with a thorough understanding of the concept of managing conflict, it’s important to understand your international colleagues’ underlying values, beliefs and history. In this course, Kelley School of Business professor and executive coach Tatiana Kolovou demonstrates how to bridge cultural differences and recognize and cross cultures as a manager, peer and coworker.

Mindfulness Skills Course; 2/20; 3:45-4:30 p.m.; free. The four-week mindfulness skills course, offered by Penn’s Employee Assistance Program, is designed to teach you the core principles and practices of mindfulness. You will learn about the practices of mindfulness, body scan, sitting meditation, and movement meditation. In addition, each class will focus on a theme linking mindfulness, stress and quality of life. The time will be devoted to experiential guided meditations. To be added to the waiting list, call EAP at 1-888-321-4433, select option 3, and ask to register for an upcoming mindfulness course.

Guided Meditation: Take a Breath and Relax; 2/21; 12:30-1:30 p.m.; free. Practice mindful breathing that focuses your attention on the present moment with kindness, compassion and awareness.

Healthy Living Workshops

Get the tools you need to live well year-round. From expert nutrition and weight loss advice to exercise and disease prevention strategies, we can help you kick-start your body and embrace a healthy lifestyle. These free workshops are sponsored by HR. For complete details and to register, visit www.hr.upenn.edu/myhr/registration or contact HR at (215) 573-2471 or gqwl@hr.upenn.edu.

February Wellness Walk (Indoors); 2/3; noon-1 p.m.; free. Let your body and mind relax in this gentle yoga class. This 1-2 mile walk will help you kick-start your body and embrace a healthy lifestyle. These free workshops are sponsored by HR. For complete details and to register, visit www.hr.upenn.edu/myhr/registration or contact HR at (215) 573-2471 or gqwl@hr.upenn.edu.

Comparative Mandala Meditation; 2/7; 9 a.m.–noon; $150. This workshop will explore the comparative mandala meditation practice and its applications in mindfulness meditation, body scan, sitting meditation, and movement meditation. In addition, each class will focus on a theme linking mindfulness, stress and quality of life. The time will be devoted to experiential guided meditations. To be added to the waiting list, call EAP at 1-888-321-4433, select option 3, and ask to register for an upcoming mindfulness course.

Tips for Managing Stress; 2/23; 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; free. Learn to identify when you are relaxed, how to manage it, and how to use it to improve your quality of life. Participants will discover responses to relaxation techniques and the emotional, mental and physical signs of relaxation, and specific relaxation exercises and techniques. Please feel free to bring your lunch.

Brown Bag: Learning with Lynda–Disrupting Yourself; 2/8; 12:30-1:30 p.m.; free. “Disruptors” secure a foothold by coming up with ideas and innovations that eventually spread their entire community. If you can disrupt your own routine, stopping a trend or breaking into a new field, never settling for less, and achieving more. This course, author, Harvard Business Review blogger, and consultant Whitney Johnson walks you through her seven-step model to develop your disruptor skills and find your authentic self.

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Tips for Managing Stress; 2/23; 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; free. Learn to identify when you are relaxed, how to manage it, and how to use it to improve your quality of life. Participants will discover responses to relaxation techniques and the emotional, mental and physical signs of relaxation, and specific relaxation exercises and techniques. Please feel free to bring your lunch.

Brown Bag: Learning with Lynda–Disrupting Yourself; 2/8; 12:30-1:30 p.m.; free. “Disruptors” secure a foothold by coming up with ideas and innovations that eventually spread their entire community. If you can disrupt your own routine, stopping a trend or breaking into a new field, never settling for less, and achieving more. This course, author, Harvard Business Review blogger, and consultant Whitney Johnson walks you through her seven-step model to develop your disruptor skills and find your authentic self.

Choosing High School Classes for Next Year? Navigating the Curriculum Waters; 2/16; 12:30-1:30 p.m.; free. Join staff from Penn’s Undergraduate Admissions office for a discussion about the role of the high school transcript and course selection in the holistic admissions review. This may be particularly timely for parents of high school freshmen, sophomores, and juniors as course selection will be happening soon.
body reward itself with movement! Join us for this Gentle Yoga session and explore the natural movements of the spine with slow and fluid movements. As an added bonus, you will get a workout in the process. Mats and props will be provided.

**Body Pump:** 2/15; 1-2 p.m.; free. A toning and conditioning class with weights that is for everybody! It’s perfect for anyone who wants to add strength training into their aerobic workout. You won’t know if you don’t go. So meet the challenge and reap the rewards!

*Get to Know What’s Healthy at Houston Market:* 2/21; 11-11:30 a.m.; free. Join Dan Connolly, Bon Appétit’s registered dietitian nutritionist, on an interesting tour of the many delicious, healthy options in Houston Market. You will meet Dan at Houston Hall’s Information Desk, where he will give a brief history of Bon Appétit and explain the elements of a healthy meal. Then, you’ll follow Dan downstairs to Houston Market, where he’ll walk you through the various food stations and explain how you, too, can eat healthy at Houston Market!

**Spinning:** 2/23; 11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m.; free. Pedal your way to a fantastic workout indoors! With the use of stationary cycles, each class is led on a “virtual” outdoor road, complete with a variety of exercises. This class will give you an energizing, calorie-burning, fun workout. It is great for all fitness levels because you will always ride at a self-directed pace.

**Relax with Free Yoga:** 2/26; 3-4 p.m.; free. Open to all levels: Join Campus Recreation and Campus Health in a 50-minute yoga practice to calm your mind and strengthen your body through movement and breath. A limited amount of mats will be provided, so we encourage you to bring your own! Registration opens 15 minutes prior to class. Free to all faculty and staff. No membership required. For location updates follow @healthypenn and @pennrecreations on Twitter.

**Gentle Yoga:** 2/27; noon-1 p.m.; free. Let your body reward itself with movement! Join us for this Gentle Yoga session and explore the natural movements of the spine with slow and fluid moving bends and soft twists. During this session, you will flow into modified sun salutations that loosen those tightened muscles and joints of the lower back, neck, shoulders, and wrists. And as an added bonus, you will get a workout in the process. Mats and props will be provided.

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**Architectural Archives: Back Matter**

Back Matter, at Penn’s Architectural Archives until Friday, March 3, traces the development and manifold permutations of the provocative ideas put forth in Robert Venturi’s Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture, marking the 50th anniversary of its publication. The exhibition contributes a broader perspective of the catalytic role that teaching played in defining his artistic voice. Works on view include manuscript drafts and working documents related to this publication, along with original sketches and never-before-seen period photographs of the architect’s early built works, including the iconic Vanna Venturi House (above). Of particular note are materials related to Venturi’s Theories of Architecture course, which he taught from 1961-1965 at Penn.

**AT PENN Deadlines**

The January AT PENN calendar is online at www.upenn.edu/almanac/ The February AT PENN will be published in next week’s issue, January 24. The deadline for the March AT PENN calendar is February 14, 2017.

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**The University of Pennsylvania Police Department Community Crime Report**

*About the Crime Report:* Below are all Crimes Against Persons or Crimes Against Society from the campus report for January 9-15, 2017. Also reported were 21 Crimes Against Property (14 thefts, 3 burglaries, 3 frauds and 1 narcotics). Full reports are available at: www.upenn.edu/almanac/volumes/v63/n20/crep.html Prior weeks reports are also online. —Eds.

This summary is prepared by the Division of Public Safety and includes all criminal incidents reported and made known to the University Police Department between the dates of January 9-15, 2017. The University Police actively patrol from Market Street to Baltimore Avenue and from the Schuylkill River to 43rd Street in concert with the Philadelphia Police. In this effort to provide you with a thorough and accurate report on public safety concerns, we hope that your increased awareness will lessen the opportunity for crime. For any concerns or suggestions regarding this report, please call the Division of Public Safety at (215) 898-4482.

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**18th District Report**

Below are the Crimes Against Persons from the 18th District: 8 Incidents with 1 arrest (4 aggravated assaults, 2 domestic assaults, 1 assault and 1 robbery) were reported between January 9-15, 2017 by the 18th District covering the Schuylkill River to 49th Street & Market Street to Woodland Avenue.

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**The Vanna Venturi House,** (above) one of the first prominent works of the postmodern architecture movement, is in Chestnut Hill.

**Update**

**January AT PENN**

**CHANGES TO MLK SYMPOSIUM**

See www.upenn.edu/aarc/mlk/ for the latest information.

**26 Talking To Our Children About Race and Diversity: A Discussion For Parents and Caregivers; noon-1 p.m.; Lounge Front, Family Center; register: www.upenn.edu/aarc/mlk (AARC).**

**26 Eric Grimes’ talk, For the Love of Black Children, will take place from 5:30-8 p.m. in the Amado Room, Irvine Auditorium.**

**2/2 The screening of the movie 13th, formerly scheduled for January 30, will now take place on February 2 from 5:30-8 p.m. in W.E.B. DuBois College House.**

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The University of Pennsylvania’s journal of record, opinion and news is published Tuesdays during the academic year, and as needed during summer and holiday breaks. Its electronic editions on the Internet (accessibile through the Penn website) include HTML, Acrobat and mobile versions of the print edition, and interim information may be posted in electronic-only form. Guidelines for readers and contributors are available on request and online.

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**ALMANAC January 24, 2017**

www.upenn.edu/almanac
Teaching STEM at the Time of Political Distress

Zahra Fakhraai

When I was 2 years old, all universities in Iran were closed for three years. The universities reopened (1982) in the midst of a war that took the lives of about 1.5 million people on both sides (1980-1988). Two major universities established their first PhD programs in physics in the same year that the war ended, even as both cities where these universities are located (Tehran and Shiraz) were the targets of daily missiles that killed many civilians and displaced millions.

I often ask myself what motivated a handful of US-educated physicists with job opportunities in the US to return to Iran to establish these PhD programs while civilians were dying. What motivated that first cohort of PhD students to pursue high-energy physics rather than fighting for their country or participating in the reconstruction efforts? Regardless of the answer, their decision profoundly affected my life and many others. One of the first graduates of the PhD program became one of my favorite teachers/scholars during my undergraduate studies, giving me a chance to pursue my dream and passion, physics. The programs they established quickly became some of the most successful physics programs in the Middle East and their graduates are now successful scientists, engineers, economists, politicians and leaders of the country. Their model spread, motivating development of many other PhD programs in the basic sciences.

Perhaps they chose to dedicate their lives to science and education, because education is needed in any society under any circumstance. It is motivating to me to think about their impact on me and my country when I think about my role teaching chemistry (and STEM in general) in times of political distress. When we teach basic science, we are teaching more than just the laws of nature. We teach how our understanding of the laws of nature is constructed using evidence-based reasoning. We teach how one gathers evidence, builds hypotheses and fortifies those hypotheses using various observation methods in order to move towards maximizing scientific consensus. We teach how to construct “facts,” not just as facts that are written in stone, but as “consensus” that is carefully constructed based on gathering various pieces of evidence, constructing mathematical concepts to explain them, and verifying them over and over, until new phenomena emerges that necessitates changing and upgrading those “facts.” The scientific process is like designing a new Lego set from scratch. These critical thinking skills are something that we hope our students would apply in their real life.

Evidence-based reasoning provides an intellectual anchor to hold when the world appears to be falling apart. When few others are willing to apply reason, science trains us to use that logic to survive and to build consensus with others in order to resolve conflicts. When opinions appear to be more important than facts, evidence-based reasoning can return us to the facts and allow us to question and verify those facts. Education, both in the sciences and humanities is important not just because it guarantees the future technological advances of a country, but also because it provides critical skills for the educators, politicians, and the general public.

Should political events be discussed in a science class? I see multiple reasons against and for discussing major political or social events in a science classroom or making exceptions in exam and assignment deadlines. As scientists it is our mandate to teach science and follow a specific curriculum, and to prepare our students for their future classes/careers. Discussing politics may be distracting and lead to delays in teaching. Students may see the science classroom as a refuge or feel that exam or assignment delays are unfair to them if they have already struggled to meet the deadline. Moreover, as scientists most of us are not trained in social or political sciences. We don’t always feel as if we have the right background and tools to critically think about complex political events. Most of us are unsure how to bring up the subject, and feel that it is easier to stay on topic.

However, sometimes the crisis dominates. On Friday, November 11, when Penn’s black freshmen were targeted by a hate crime, most of us wanted to do something to protect and help our students to cope with this unacceptable attack. I went back to the lab, unsure of what to do when I couldn’t find my two undergraduate students. One thing was very clear though: this event could not have been ignored, because many of our students—in particular our black students who are typically already under-represented and marginalized in STEM classes—could not have been expected to focus on a class discussion or exam when there was an ongoing perceived threat to their safety. It is important for me to be prepared should another crisis happen.

If I decide to discuss a political event, what should I consider? I don’t have a recipe, but here are a few things that I may consider when discussing politics.

1. Student well-being is important to their learning. We make exceptions when a student faces a personal distress and try to accommodate them. Major political or social events could probably follow the same path. It is important, however, to remember that when the majority of our students are in distress, support networks on campus can be quickly overloaded, so there may be even more of a need to be lenient. Sometimes, just acknowledging the event could be a big step towards students’ emotional recovery.

2. Not everyone is affected in the same way. Our students have a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences. A major shift in the policy may mean just an inconvenience for one group, while others may face deportations, hate crimes, or attacks based on their sexual and religious identity. While we may instinctively want to help everyone, and rightly so, we may not always be able to. It is important to be conscious of how a discussion may affect those who are the most marginalized and ensure that they are given the chance to stay and excel in our class. A generic response may not address their specific concerns and can further disenfranchise them.

3. Classrooms are not safe spaces. Marginalized students may not feel safe to speak out or may find it traumatizing to share their concerns with strangers. One can consider providing a chance for students to discuss their concerns during office hours, over email, Canvas or even anonymously. While trying to be more generous with my time, I can also provide an alternative list of places they go for help.

4. Group assignments can be challenging. There has been significant effort on campus to promote SAIL (structured, active, in-class, learning) classrooms. While we typically assign students to random groups, the groups cannot function well if the students don’t work together. Major disagreements on political issues can reduce student participation and hinder learning. One could show flexibility by allowing students to group change or even to opt out if such action becomes warranted.

5. The instructor may not feel safe. Finally, when considering discussing politics in the classroom it is fair to ask whether one feels safe with the discussion, given the recent backlash against professors who speak about politics in their classrooms or on social media. An instructor from a marginalized group could consider whether their safety would be compromised and whether that is a price they are willing to pay. One can contribute differently, by reaching out to specific students in distress, or by volunteering their time outside the class instead.

Zahra Fakhraai is an assistant professor of chemistry in the School of Arts and Sciences.