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James S. and Gail Petty Riepe Endow PIK Professorship in Honor of President Amy Gutmann



James S. and Gail Petty Riepe

The University of Pennsylvania has announced that alumni James S. and Gail Petty Riepe have made a gift of \$5 million to endow a Penn Integrates Knowledge (PIK) University Professorship in honor of Amy Gutmann, Penn's longest-serving president. The Riepes' contribution recognizes President Gutmann's distinguished service to the University and her commitment to interdisciplinary teaching and research.

An award-winning political scientist, author, and advocate for access to education, President Gutmann's term began in 2004 and will conclude this year.

"Amy Gutmann has created a tremendous legacy at Penn, and the Penn Integrates Knowl-

edge program stands as one of her signature initiatives," Jim Riepe explained. "Gail and I thought it only fitting to establish this faculty position in her name. We are delighted to honor Amy in this way, recognizing one of her most important accomplishments at Penn and our friendship."

Integrating knowledge across disciplines was one of the founding principles of the Penn Compact, the strategic vision that President Gutmann first articulated in her inaugural remarks as Penn's President. One of Penn's great strengths has been its 12 undergraduate and professional schools, all located on a single campus. The goal of the PIK program was to capitalize on this strength by breaking down the traditional barriers between academic disciplines and promoting collaboration among all 12 schools.

The Penn Integrates Knowledge initiative recruits renowned scholars whose work draws from one or more academic disciplines and who thrive at the intersection of multiple



Amy Gutmann

fields. Each PIK University Professor holds appointments in two or more schools at Penn.

The PIK program has proven to be a powerful tool for attracting eminent faculty members to Penn. Today, 26 accomplished interdisciplinary scholars, distinguished by their groundbreaking research and teaching, hold these innovative positions.

"I came to Penn with a mission to extensively support and invest in faculty, and I am honored to have that commitment reflected in

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Samuel J. Whitaker and Jennifer Peters Establish Challenge Fund for Undergraduate Financial Aid

Samuel J. Whitaker, C'02, and Jennifer Peters have made a gift of \$2 million, including matching funds, to establish the Peters-Whitaker Family President's Men and Women of Pennsylvania Challenge Fund. The fund will support undergraduate financial aid by matching future scholarship gifts for highly aided students in the College of Arts & Sciences, increasing the impact of those gifts for years to come.

"I'm incredibly grateful for this generous gift from Samuel and Jennifer," said Steven J. Fluharty, Dean of SAS and Thomas S. Gates, Jr. Professor of Psychology, Pharmacology, and Neuroscience. "Undergraduate aid and support for our highly aided students are a top priority, and the Peters-Whitaker Family President's Men and Women of Pennsylvania Challenge Fund will encourage and amplify gifts that make a real difference in the lives of our students."

Mr. Whitaker, who was motivated to make the gift in honor of his 20th reunion, said, "I know that support is critical in order for young people to achieve their goals. Jennifer and I are excited to be able to offer that support to students with high levels of need."

Mr. Whitaker earned his bachelor's degree in philosophy in 2002 and is the founder of ENDK, a venture capital and private equity firm. At Penn, he is a member of the Undergraduate Financial Aid Leadership Council. Ms. Peters is a board member at ClinOne, a remote patient experience management tool, and a volunteer with KIPP Philadelphia Schools.

The Men and Women of Pennsylvania initiative recognizes donors who make exceptionally generous investments in student aid.

Aman Husbands: Blatt Presidential Assistant Professor

Aman Husbands has been named the Mitchell J. Blatt and Margo Krody Blatt Presidential Assistant Professor of Biology. He will also be joining the Penn Epigenetics Institute as a core faculty member.

As a plant molecular biologist, Dr. Husbands studies gene regulation of plant function. He said he is "primarily interested in control. Biology is incredibly complicated, and we want to understand the regulatory mechanisms that make it work. How do organisms generate complex morphologies, and how do they do it with such reproducibility?" Since starting his own lab at Ohio State University (OSU) in 2018, Dr. Husbands has made great strides in developing insights into these important questions. He uses a variety of state-of-the-art molecular approaches to better understand gene function and has recently expanded his analyses beyond plants to include the human tumor suppressor Defective in Liver Cancer-1 (DLC1).



Aman Husbands

As a teacher, Dr. Husbands has built a reputation as being innovative and cares deeply about enhancing equity and diversity in science and STEM fields. He has developed a highly-regarded and highly-interactive short course that introduces undergraduates to the importance of genetic mutants in developmental biology, and is the founder of OSU Columbus Campus Research Opportunities, which works to bring students from satellite campuses of OSU to the main campus to complete a nine-week full-time internship (which includes housing and a monthly stipend).

Junhyong Kim, the Patricia M. Williams Term Professor and chair of the department of biology, stated, "What started as just a seminar talk here at Penn has grown into an exciting opportunity to bring a phenomenal researcher, instructor, and mentor to our campus. [Dr. Husbands'] research focus will help build our already robust expertise in plant biology, and his background in teaching molecular biology and plant development will help train the next generation of scientists here at Penn."

The Mitchell J. Blatt and Margo Krody Blatt Presidential Professorship is one of three Presidential Professorships established in 2017 by Mitchell J. Blatt, C'78, M'82, WG'87, and Margo Krody Blatt. Mr. Blatt is the chief exec-

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The following agenda is published in accordance with the Faculty Senate Rules. Any member of the standing faculty may attend SEC meetings and observe. Questions may be directed to Patrick Walsh, executive assistant to the Senate Office, either by telephone at (215) 898-6943 or by email at senate@pobox.upenn.edu.

Faculty Senate Executive Committee Actions Wednesday, January 26, 2022

Report from the Senate Tri-Chairs. Faculty Senate Chair William Braham reported on the following matters:

- The Senate Tri-Chairs have met weekly since the rise of the Omicron variant in December and consulted regularly with the administration and the Senate Select Committee on Planning for Post-Pandemic Penn (“P4”) to advise Penn leadership on navigating the COVID-19 pandemic and maintaining the interests of Penn and its faculty in the process.
- SEC members are requested to consult with their constituents to seek feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the new set of common start times for classes that became effective during Fall 2021. Time will be devoted to discussing this matter during SEC’s February meeting.
- Following on the Faculty Senate Seminar held December 8, Academic Freedom and Responsibility in Contentious Times, a 15-minute excerpt of the seminar recording and an information sheet was shared with deans and department chairs along with a request that time in a faculty meeting be reserved to discuss its content with respect to diversity, equity, and inclusion issues faced in their respective areas and in particular classroom practices and norms. A follow-up to this seminar is being planned and will be announced in due course.

- The Tri-Chairs understand that Carey Law School Dean Ted Ruger is considering bringing charges against Professor Amy Wax but are not yet aware of the specific nature of the charges or proposed sanctions. The Faculty Senate will be following the protocol set forth in Faculty Handbook Section II.E.16, which includes several due process steps. The process will remain confidential and will not be taken up by the Faculty Senate in any public way.
- The Senate Select Committee on Scholarly Communication was formed in 2019 following observations of a change in the publishing industry to a pay-to-publish model. Penn Libraries’ leadership has been actively involved in the Committee’s deliberations and has entered into its first “read and publish” arrangement with Cambridge University Press for the calendar years 2022-2024.

Update from the Office of the President. President Amy Gutmann expressed gratitude for the numerous contributions made by the Tri-Chairs, the Senate Executive Committee, and the Faculty Senate in advancing the life of the University and the excellence and eminence of Penn.

Faculty Senate Seminar: “Returning to In-Person Teaching”. At 4 p.m. ET, a Faculty Senate Seminar was held virtually and was open to all Penn faculty, of which an archived recording is available on the [Faculty Senate](#) website.

Penn Libraries: Read and Publish Agreement with Cambridge University Press

As of January 1, 2022, University of Pennsylvania students, faculty, and staff whose research articles are accepted for publication in academic journals published by Cambridge University Press have the option to make their article open access at no additional cost to them.

This marks the first time that Penn has signed what is commonly called a “Read and Publish” agreement. Negotiated by the NorthEast Research Libraries (NERL) Consortium, of which Penn is a Program Council member, the “Publish” provision of the agreement allows anyone affiliated with the University of Pennsylvania to publish research articles open access in Cambridge University Press hybrid or gold journals without paying article processing charges (commonly called APCs) themselves. Previously, Penn-affiliated authors would often pay APCs using funds from grants and departmental budgets, but under the agreement this will no longer be necessary when publishing with Cambridge University Press journals. In addition, the “Read” provision expands the number of online publications that Penn students, faculty, and staff can read. Now they can access the entire suite of academic journals published by Cambridge University Press, which totals 168 more Cambridge titles than were available to them previously.

Cambridge University Press is the oldest publishing press in the world and one of the most prestigious academic presses of the 21st century. Cambridge publishes over 400 academic journals, including high-profile publications like *American Political Science Review*, *Journal of Global History*, and *British Journal of Nutrition*. By signing this agreement, Penn joins more than a thousand other institutions, including 140 in the United States, that have a Read and Publish agreement with this important academic press.

Brigitte Weinsteiniger, Gershwind & Bennett Family Associate Vice Provost for Collections and Scholarly Communications at the Penn Libraries, led the team that negotiated the

agreement for the NorthEast Research Libraries Consortium, and is pleased to have struck a deal that benefits the institutions comprising NERL as well as the Penn community. “My hope is that other publishers, particularly nonprofits, will also collaborate with us to think creatively about how to expand their open access publishing while centering our shared values of sustainability and equity in scholarly publishing.”

Read and Publish agreements are just one of the ways that advocates for open access publishing close the gap between the ideal—that scholarly work should be free and available to all—and the realities of academic publishing, which does require funding, even when publishing books and articles open access. A common solution to this perpetual funding issue is for publishers to require authors to pay fees to publish open access with them, thus flipping the burden of the cost from readers to authors. With Read and Publish agreements, however, the cost for open access publishing is largely shifted from individual authors to the university or library with which they are affiliated.

However, as these agreements grow in popularity among major academic research institutions and publishers, some open access advocates say that transformative agreements, like Read and Publish, have done little to disrupt an inequitable publishing industry. Most notably, transformative agreements do not reduce the costs associated with publishing, nor do they help scholars who are not affiliated with institutions that can afford transformative agreements. Even relatively well-financed institutions can find themselves limited. For example, agreements might come with caps on the number of open access articles that can be published by affiliated scholars.

With these concerns in mind, Ms. Weinsteiniger sought to ensure that Penn’s first transformative agreement avoided some of the model’s common pitfalls. “This agreement is financially sustainable for the publisher and it is financially sustain-

able for us. This is not insignificant; because Penn is a research-intensive institution, many transformative agreements modeled on paying to publish are cost-prohibitive.” The agreement also does not limit the number of open access articles that Penn-affiliated scholars can publish each year: “It allows for uncapped publishing for all Penn-affiliated corresponding authors, which means a huge proportion of our Penn researchers’ publications will be opened up to be freely read and cited.”

Ms. Weinsteiniger and NERL were also interested in Cambridge University Press’ larger efforts to create a more equitable publishing environment. Cambridge has stated that its long-term goal is to ensure that all scholars can have article processing charges covered by their institutions, grants, or waivers. As part of this goal, Cambridge University Press participates in Research4Life, an initiative that offers waivers to scholars based in low- or middle-income countries where institutions are less likely to be able to afford Read and Publish agreements and grant funding is harder to come by.

While Ms. Weinsteiniger noted that Cambridge and other publishers need to do significantly more to ensure a sustainable, equitable future for open access publishing, she thinks that these efforts are good first steps. “APC-based models for open access funding [like the one Cambridge uses] inherently have one shortcoming,” she observed. “They risk inadvertently excluding authors without the individual or institutional means to cover their publishing fees.” That said, Ms. Weinsteiniger is encouraged by the success that Cambridge has had in transitioning to open access publishing, and particularly by their goal to become a majority open access publisher by 2025. “It means that more authors should be able to participate, even without their own individual funds. While not ideal, we recognize that this transition can take some time, and are willing to partner with Cambridge on this new model in the spirit of collaboration and experimentation.”

Deaths

Robin Beckett, Weitzman School Board of Advisors

Robin Beckett, MCP'75, a member of the Weitzman School of Design's Board of Advisors from 2006 to 2018, passed away recently.

Ms. Beckett received a master of city planning from Penn's School of Design in 1975 and a master of business administration from Columbia two years later, whereupon she embarked on a career that ran the gamut from banker to planner to historical preservationist. She served as a managing director and a consultant at various firms in the U.S. and in Hong Kong. She was active in historic preservation circles, sitting on the board of the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions from 2005 to 2013 and making her voice heard in historic preservation issues in New York and New Canaan, Connecticut.

Her work at Penn is fondly remembered. "Through her committed mentoring of students, her advocacy for career-service support, and financial support, many cohorts of HSPV graduates felt the direct impact of her long service on the school's Board of Advisors," said her colleague Randy Mason, professor in the graduate program in historic preservation, in an online tribute. "Her personal and material contributions to our school directly improved students' experiences. She created and endowed the Robin M. Beckett Fund, which continues to support field-based learning experiences and conference attendance for current graduate students.

"Robin's steadfast support of our program was a highlight of my years as chair," continued Dr. Mason, "as were our many conversations about our school, the preservation field, her uphill battles in New Canaan preservation debates, and always, 'What are you working on next?!' She demonstrated over and over again her great passion, dedication, and deep care for others—especially Penn preservationists. She will be greatly missed."



Robin Beckett

Edward Huth, Medicine

Edward Huth, M'47, a former faculty member in Penn's School of Medicine's department of medicine, passed away on November 2, 2021, from complications of vascular dementia. He was 98.

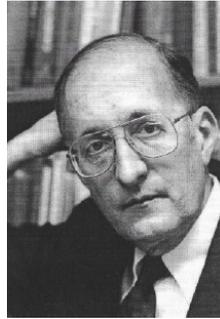
Dr. Huth was born in Philadelphia and graduated from Haddonfield Memorial High School in 1941 and Wesleyan College in 1943. He obtained a medical degree from Penn's School of Medicine in 1947, then completed his internship and residency at Penn in internal medicine. In 1948, he joined Penn's faculty as an assistant instructor in pharmacology, then three years later accepted a position as a staff physician in Penn's department of Student Health. From 1952 to 1961, he was an assistant instructor, then an instructor, then an assistant professor in medicine.

In 1960, Dr. Huth took a job as an associate editor for *Annals of Internal Medicine*, which is published by the Philadelphia-based American College of Physicians. From then on, he steadily

rose through the ranks at the *Annals*, helping to revolutionize the field of medical publishing in the process. He dispensed with medical journals' practices of printing summaries of complex issues in layman's terms, and instead printed detailed new clinical research and influential peer reviews, reasoning that if non-specialist editors simplified issues for their audiences, the simplified pieces could not be considered trustworthy. While at the *Annals*, Dr. Huth standardized procedures for submitting manuscripts and created guidelines for how medical writers should handle authorship, conflicts of interest, industry influence over their content, and other issues that had largely gone unaddressed. Before retiring in 1990 as editor-in-chief, he published important pieces about hepatitis, Legionnaire's disease, and AIDS before many other journals.

While he was busy at the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, Dr. Huth scaled back his involvement with Penn, holding several visiting and adjunct associate and assistant professorships at Penn during the 1960s and 1970s (as well as a brief appointment at Penn Vet). During the 1980s, he taught a popular class at Penn about the process of publishing research papers. He also held an appointment at the Medical College of Pennsylvania, now Drexel University College of Medicine. Dr. Huth retired from Penn in 1989. He cofounded the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, edited style manuals for the Council of Science Editors and others, and published several books on writing and editing medical literature, including the influential *How to Write and Publish Papers in the Medical Sciences* (1982). He was an early proponent of online publishing; after his retirement, he worked in the 1990s as editor-in-chief of the *Online Journal of Current Clinical Trials*.

Dr. Huth is survived by his wife, Carol, and two sons, James and John. A memorial service was held on November 20, 2021. Donations in his name may be made to Harriton House, 500 Harriton Rd., P.O. Box 1364, Bryn Mawr, Pa. 19010.



Edward Huth

Haig Kazazian, Jr., Genetics

Haig H. Kazazian, Jr., an emeritus professor in the department of genetics in the Perelman School of Medicine, passed away recently. He was 84.

A son of Armenian immigrants, Dr. Kazazian was born in Toledo, Ohio. His father, from Kayseri, Turkey, escaped the terror of the 1915 persecutions, forced marches, concentration camps, and death (known as the Armenian genocide); after many years of wandering, he came to the U.S. in 1923. His mother came from Istanbul in 1920.

Dr. Kazazian graduated magna cum laude from Dartmouth College in 1959 with an AB in medical science, where he took pre-med classes alongside philosophy and French. He then continued his medical education at Dartmouth, where he completed a two-year preclinical program and worked in several laboratories. In 1960, he transferred to Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, preferring the weather

in Maryland (where he had rowed in the Naval Academy) to cold New England winters. He obtained an MD from Johns Hopkins in 1962, after which he completed pediatrics training in the University of Minnesota Hospital and at Hopkins. While at Hopkins, he joined the lab of pediatrics professor Barton Childs, researching dosage compensation with fruit flies.

Dr. Kazazian found a love of genetics while conducting this research and took it on full-time. In 1966, took a position at Harvey Itano's laboratory at the National Institutes of Health, working with hemoglobin regulation, and entered the Public Health Service. In 1969, he was recruited to return to Hopkins, where he continued this research and rose to the rank of professor. Working with colleagues interested in other hemoglobin disorders, such as sickle cell anemia, Dr. Kazazian helped develop methods for prenatal diagnosis while at Hopkins. Over the course of the next two decades, Dr. Kazazian collaborated with researchers at Cornell University to discover many new mutations of β -thalassemia, a blood disorder that reduces the production of hemoglobin.

He joined Penn's faculty in 1994 when he was named the Seymour Gray Professor of Molecular Medicine in the department of genetics. There, he helped build the genetics department and moved further away from clinical research and firmly into basic research. While at Penn, Dr. Kazazian continued groundbreaking research (which he had begun in 1984 while at Hopkins) on the nature of retrotransposable elements in humans and mice. Using mouse models, Dr. Kazazian's lab was able to create a model for treating the blood disorder hemophilia A with factor VIII, the hemoglobin gene, which was defective in patients with hemophilia A. These experiments completely cured the mice of hemophilia within a year. In addition to genetics, he held secondary appointments in pediatrics and medicine. In 2007, he was elected a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences ([Almanac May 8, 2007](#)), and two years later, he was given the American Society of Human Genetics' Allan Award ([Almanac January 20, 2009](#)).

In 2011, he retired from Penn and took emeritus status. That same year, he returned to Johns Hopkins as a professor of pediatrics, molecular biology, and genetics. At Johns Hopkins, he resumed his research on LINE-1 (L1) retrotransposons—insertions into the DNA that cause diseases. In 2018, he was elected to the National Academy of Sciences. He closed his laboratory in 2020, but continued to be curious about the biology of transposable elements, and worked on writing a book.

Dr. Kazazian is survived by his wife, Lilli; his children, Haig (Betsy) and Sonya (Dave); and five grandchildren.



Haig Kazazian

To Report A Death

Call (215) 898-5274 or email almanac@upenn.edu.

Application Deadline Extended: Provost's Graduate Academic Engagement Fellowship at the Netter Center

Due to the delayed return to campus, the application deadline for the Provost's Graduate Academic Engagement Fellowship (PGAEF) at the Netter Center for Community Partnerships has been extended to *February 12, 2022*. The Provost's Graduate Academic Engagement Fellowship is an opportunity for PhD students across all schools and fields at the University of Pennsylvania. Fellows are outstanding students whose scholarship significantly involves Academically Based Community Service (ABCS) and related activities, including locally-based community problem-solving, engaged scholarship, service learning, and learning by teaching in public schools.

The fellowship will involve the following:

- Years One (2022-2023) and Two (2023-2024): Participation in a faculty-student seminar on community-engaged research and teaching, a research fund for each fellow of \$5,000 over the two years, as well as support to attend and present at conferences.
- Year Two (2023-2024): A full fellowship in which fellows continue their studies and/or work on their dissertation. This fellowship should be treated like an external fellowship consistent with the practices of your graduate group.

Eligibility: PhD Students will be eligible to apply in the spring semester of their first year of study or any year thereafter provided they have at least two years left in their program at the start of the next term. The deadline for PhD students to apply is now *February 12, 2022*.

For more information, visit <https://www.nettercenter.upenn.edu/get-involved/pgaeef> or email provost-ed@upenn.edu.

Wolf Humanities Center Research Fellowships

Each year, the Wolf Humanities Center provides fellowships for Penn undergraduate and graduate students, standing faculty at Penn and regional universities, and postdoctoral scholars who are interested in conducting research that relates to the center's topic. As part of their research, all fellows participate in the Wolf Humanities Center's interdisciplinary seminars as well as conferences and cultural events.

Penn Faculty Fellowships

A small number of \$5,000 research fund stipends are available for tenure-track assistant professors in the humanities and allied fields. Tenured faculty may apply for either a \$5,000 research stipend or up to two course reliefs.

Regional Faculty Fellowships

Several \$5,000 awards are open to standing faculty in the humanities from Philadelphia-area colleges and universities.

Penn Graduate Fellowships

Two \$2,500 fellowships are available for Penn ABD (all-but-dissertation) graduate students in the humanities.

Penn Undergraduate Fellowships

Twelve fellowships are available: nine \$1,500 awards, two \$1,750 awards, and one \$2,000 award for full-time Penn undergraduate students wishing to conduct independent research in the humanities outside their academic coursework.

Now accepting applications for 2022–2023 with applications due by *March 21, 2022*. For more information, visit <https://wolfhumanities.upenn.edu/fellowships>.

Penn Summer Camps and Programs

Almanac publishes a supplement each year featuring the camps and programs taking place at Penn over the summer.

It features camps for children, teens, and young adults for an array of activities, from academics, enrichment and recreation—including anthropology, business, law, veterinary medicine and music—to numerous sports camps.

To submit information about a camp, email almanac@upenn.edu with the following information: name of camp; dates held (if multiple sessions, indicate dates for each); age range for participants; summary of the program that is 35 words or less; cost (note any discounts); URL for enrollment/application forms; deadline to apply/enroll (if applicable); and an email, link, and/or phone number to obtain more information.

The supplement is scheduled to be published on Tuesday, February 15, 2022.

Form 1095-C to Arrive in February

While you do not need to attach a 1095-C to your tax return, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) requires that Penn send the [1095-C](#) tax form to certain benefits-eligible faculty and staff members.

This form includes information about the health insurance coverage offered to you by Penn and information for each of your family members enrolled under your Penn benefits plan.

The 1095-C form was mailed at the end of January and it will be available online in early February. To access your form online, go to the My Pay section of the secure U@Penn portal at www.upenn.edu/u@penn, then select "My 1095-C form."

If you have questions about your form, contact the Penn Employee Solution Center at (215) 898-7372 or solutioncenter@upenn.edu for assistance.

—Division of Human Resources

James S. and Gail Petty Riepe Endow PIK Professorship in Honor of President Amy Gutmann

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this exceptional gift," President Gutmann said. "I am especially touched by Jim and Gail's thoughtful generosity. It is personally meaningful to have my name associated with an eminent faculty member as part of the PIK program at Penn. This gift truly embodies the dedication to pathbreaking interdisciplinary scholarship that was at the heart of my presidency, and for that, I am enormously grateful."

Jim Riepe served as chair of the University Board of Trustees during the early years of President Gutmann's tenure, when the PIK initiative was established. "I have had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with these exceptional scholars and seeing their impact across our campus. Gail and I are honored to help strengthen this innovative program," he said.

James S. Riepe is a graduate of the Wharton School, receiving a BA in 1965 and an MBA in 1967. He is retired vice chair of the T. Rowe Price Group. A University Trustee Emeritus, Mr. Riepe served as chair of Penn's Board of Trustees from 1999 to 2009 and chair of the Penn Medicine Board from 2009 to 2011. He was recognized with an honorary degree from Penn in 2010 and with the Alumni Award of Merit in 2014. Gail Petty Riepe, CW'68, received her Bachelor of Arts from Penn and serves as a member of the Board of Advisors of Penn's School of Veterinary Medicine.

Aman Husbands: Blutt Presidential Assistant Professor

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utive officer of Consonance Capital, an investment firm focused on the healthcare industry. He was formerly the executive partner of J.P. Morgan Partners, the private equity investment fund of J.P. Morgan Chase & Co. and one of the largest private equity and venture capital activities in the world. He is also an adjunct professor of medicine at Weill Cornell Medical College.

At Penn, Mr. Blutt is a member of the Wharton Board of Advisors and an emeritus member of the Penn Arts & Sciences Board of Advisors. He is also a former member of the Penn Medicine Board, where he served on its Executive and Finance Committees. He previously served as a University Trustee, chair of the University Trustees' Committee for Strategic Initiatives, and vice chair of both the Trustees' Diversity Committee and the University Committee for Undergraduate Financial Aid. He received Penn's Alumni Award of Merit in 2018.

Mitchell and Margo Blutt's past Penn giving has benefited undergraduate scholarships, graduate fellowships, internships, and professorships in Penn Arts & Sciences, the Perelman School of Medicine, and the Wharton School. The Blutts also support music at Penn through the Blutt Band Slam, a popular live music competition held each year at Homecoming; a music program that provides instruction to undergraduate students and supports professional performances, master classes, and other musical events; and a singer-songwriter symposium held each year at Kelly Writers House.

Honors & Other Things

Gary Bernstein: American Astronomical Society Award

Gary Bernstein, Reese W. Flower Professor of Astronomy and Astrophysics in the School of Arts and Sciences, has been named a fellow of the American Astronomical Society (AAS), a major international organization of professional astronomers, astronomy educators, and amateur astronomers. He is one of 23 members honored in 2022 for extraordinary achievement and service in original research and publications, innovative contributions to astronomical techniques or instrumentation, significant contributions to education and public outreach, and noteworthy service to astronomy and to the AAS.



Gary Bernstein

Dr. Bernstein was recognized “for advancing the state of the art in optical surveys through contributions to instrumentation, theory, algorithms, and project development; leadership in developing weak gravitational lensing as a precision measure of the dark universe; and discoveries in the outer solar system.”

Dr. Bernstein researches the use of gravitational lensing—the deflection of light by gravity as predicted by general relativity. His current work consists of large astronomical survey projects from space and ground that will use this lensing effect to measure as-yet-unexplained dark matter and dark energy. His projects also include surveys of the solar system beyond Neptune and the construction of one of the first mosaic CCD cameras to be placed on a large telescope, which was used to measure many of the high-redshift supernovae that provided early evidence of the accelerating universe. He is also a past recipient of a CAREER Faculty Award from the National Science Foundation.

David Brownlee: Paul Philippe Cret Award

David Brownlee, the Frances Shapiro-Weitzenhoffer Professor Emeritus of 19th Century European Art in the department of history of art in the School of Arts and Sciences, has received the Paul Philippe Cret Award of the Philadelphia chapter of the American Institute of Architects.



David Brownlee

Named after the renowned 20th century Philadelphia architect, teacher, and design leader, the Cret Award recognizes individuals or organizations who are not architects but who have made an outstanding and lasting contribution to the design of buildings, structures, landscapes, and the public realm of Greater Philadelphia. Philadelphia is enriched when non-architects see the benefit of design excellence and provide leadership and vision in the making of significant buildings and public environments.

All current and future citizens of our community enjoy the rewards of such design excellence. The Cret award provides a permanent recognition for those leaders outside the design profession who have made such a contribution.

Regina Cunningham: Lang Award

Regina S. Cunningham, Chief Executive Officer, Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania and Penn Nursing Assistant Dean for Clinical Practice, has been selected to receive the Norma M. Lang Award for Scholarly Practice and Policy. The award is given biennially to a Penn Nursing faculty member or a graduate from the school’s doctoral program who has made a distinguished contribution to nursing through scholarly practice. It honors Norma M. Lang, the professor and Dean Emerita of Penn Nursing, for her world-renowned contributions to health policy and practice. The 7th Norma L. Lang Lecture will take place on Wednesday, April 6, 2022, 3-5 p.m. in the Ann L. Roy Auditorium.

Dr. Cunningham was selected for this award because of her impressive and extensive scope of influence on practice and health policy that is evident from her national and local executive leadership. She has excelled in an executive leadership role of a complex health system overseeing the new Patient Pavilion and HUP Cedar at Penn Medicine. Her clinical expertise in oncology and her commitment to patient and family centered care have made her an exemplary Chief Executive Officer. She has a prominent standing in the scientific and practice communities and is a member of the National Academy of Medicine’s Future of Nursing 2020-2030 committee.

Dr. Cunningham’s contribution to the improvement of healthcare is substantial and includes key contributions to the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI), the Macy Foundation, and other leading organizations. She has used her unique positions to exert her national leadership in shaping practice and health policy. Her expansive list of invited national presentations is an indication of her high-profile status in healthcare. Throughout Penn Medicine and the region, Dr. Cunningham’s work serves as a national model for health system integration and expansion.

Pam Grossman: Vice President of National Academy of Education

Penn Graduate School of Education (GSE) Dean Pam Grossman was recently named Vice President of the National Academy of Education (NAEd), a prestigious organization dedicated to advancing high-quality education research and evidence-based policy. Dean Grossman will serve with newly elected NAEd President Carol D. Lee of Northwestern University, who recently won the 2021 McGraw Prize in Learning Science. Additionally, two Penn GSE Professors—Howard Stevenson and Nancy Hornberger—were inducted into the academy in November (inductions announced in advance in [Almanac March 30, 2021](#)).



Pam Grossman

The NAEd consists of members from the U.S. and associates from around the world who are elected on the basis of outstanding scholarship related to education. Nominations are submitted by individual academy members once a year for review and election by the organization’s membership. In addition to serving on expert study panels that address pressing issues in education, members are deeply engaged in NAEd’s professional development programs.

Lisa Miracchi: NEH Grant

Lisa Miracchi, an associate professor of philosophy in the School of Arts and Sciences, has received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) for her project, *New Foundations for the Study of Biological and Artificial Intelligence*. The grant will provide support during the research and writing of a forthcoming book exploring the distinction between artificial and human intelligence. Dr. Miracchi, who is also affiliated with Penn’s MindCORE initiative and the General Robotics, Automation, Sensing, and Perception (GRASP) Lab, studies questions related to the mind and intelligence, including the effective and ethical development and application of AI and robotic systems. Her work draws on the cognitive sciences, AI, robotics, epistemology, and ethics.



Lisa Miracchi

Wesley Wilson: 40 Under 40

Wesley Wilson, a postdoctoral researcher in the department of pathology and laboratory medicine in the Perelman School of Medicine, has been acknowledged as a 2021 “40 Under 40 in Cancer.” The award recognizes contributions being made across the field of cancer by rising stars and emerging leaders under the age of 40. Dr. Wilson has been working in cancer research for more than a decade with a focus on developing new therapies for hard-to-treat diseases like childhood brain tumors, adult mesothelioma, and multiple myeloma, the latter of which he is studying at Penn using CAR T-cell therapy. His specialties include focusing on modulation of the immune response to cancer using a variety of tools and technologies to characterize the cancer immune response and then using cutting-edge immunotherapies like checkpoint blockade immunotherapy and CAR-T cell therapy to improve patient response. In receiving the award, Dr. Wilson was recognized as one of the nation’s most promising young oncology professionals whose contributions have helped to improve the lives of those affected by cancer.



Wesley Wilson

Athletics Events Open to Public Effective February 1

The Division of Recreation and Intercollegiate Athletics (DRIA) at the University of Pennsylvania has announced the return of spectators for all indoor winter sports with the following updated spectator guidelines for all remaining home contests and additional indoor events:

- Effective February 1, all spectators, ages 12 and above, must show proof of vaccination to access any indoor competition facility. A valid government or school issued photo ID must also be shown with proof of vaccination. Spectators 5 years and 3 months through 11 will need to show proof of one dose of COVID vaccine to gain admission and must be fully vaccinated by February 3 to gain access to the indoor competition facility. A photo ID is not required for this age group.
- Acceptable forms of vaccination proof include physical vaccination card or photo of full vaccination card on smartphone. Apps and QR codes will not be accepted.
- Proof of exemptions or negative test results are not valid to gain admission.
- Spectators under the age of 5 will not be required to be vaccinated but must wear masks at all times if able.
- Concessions will not be made available for purchase to spectators at ticketed events at the Palestra until further notice. Fans are not permitted to bring their own food into any indoor competition facility. Fans are permitted to bring one sealed bottle of water per spectator into any indoor competition facility.

The previously announced spectator guidelines for winter sports will continue to remain in place for all DRIA indoor venues:

- All fans are required to wear a mask that meets current University guidelines (N95, KN95, or cloth mask over a surgical mask) that covers their nose and mouth at all times

upon entering, and throughout an indoor competition venue, except when removing intermittently for drinking (and eating when concessions re-open). This applies to all hospitality areas, media workspaces, or restrooms within, or adjacent to, the competition venue. Venue staff will be monitoring compliance throughout the competition. Those who do not comply will be asked to leave the venue by event management.

- Although competing student-athletes and officials are not required to wear masks during active warm-ups or competition, masks are required to be worn by those individuals on team benches when not substituting and in locker rooms.
- Penn Community members attending competitions should already be enrolled in [PennOpen Pass](#) and fill it out daily. Spectators and campus visitors should access [PennOpen Campus](#) on game days to receive the required green PennOpen pass for admission to competition venues. (Guardians will attest for spectators aged 5 years and 3 months through 17 under their supervision).
- Doors open 60 minutes prior to the scheduled start of all ticketed and non-ticketed winter sport competitions (except men's basketball which is 90 minutes).
- Spectators are reminded to monitor their health symptoms daily and not attend an event if they feel sick.
- Winter sport spectator guidelines fall under the University of Pennsylvania's updated guidance for [visitors](#).

Any further updates regarding health and safety protocols for spectators for Penn winter sport athletic contests will be announced as needed based on local health conditions. Spring sport spectator guidelines for outdoor sports will be announced this month.

Weitzman School: Spring 2022 Lectures Series

The University of Pennsylvania Stuart Weitzman School of Design Spring 2022 Lecture Series brings together distinguished architects, landscape architects, artists, historians, preservationists, planners, policy experts, and data scientists from the U.S. and abroad.

The series began on Wednesday, January 26, with a lecture by the architectural historian Lucia Allais on the fortifications built around European monuments during World War I and World War II. It is the first in a series of eight roundtable discussions organized by renowned archeologist Lynn Meskell, a Penn Integrates Knowledge University Professor with an ap-

pointment in the graduate program in historic preservation.

The series also includes a symposium on the cross-cultural dialogues animating Chinese architecture over the last century, a panel discussion on the untapped potential of America's megaregions to advance climate resilience and economic prosperity, an introduction to the ambitious reimagining of Los Angeles' Crenshaw Boulevard, and an overview of the intersectional history of politics and public housing in Atlanta.

Among the scheduled speakers:

- *Steven Holl*, principal, Steven Holl Architects
- *Pepón Osorio*, artist and MacArthur Fellow
- *Nada Hosking*, executive director, Global Heritage Fund
- *Bryony Roberts*, founder, Bryony Roberts Studio

Admission is free and open to the public, but advance registration is required for visitors at in-person events. Unless noted otherwise, lectures take place at Meyerson Hall, 210 South 34th Street, Philadelphia.

Because information is subject to change, visitors are advised to consult www.design.upenn.edu/calendar to confirm program details.

For more information, visit <https://www.design.upenn.edu/news/post/weitzman-announces-spring-2022-lectures-series>.

One Step Ahead

Security & Privacy
Made Simple

Another tip in a series provided by the
Offices of Information Security, Information
Systems & Computing and Audit,
Compliance & Privacy

Focus on FERPA and Student Data Privacy

National Data Privacy Day, which was on January 28, is always a welcome opportunity to raise awareness regarding individuals' privacy, securing information systems, and protecting data from unauthorized access.

As an institution of learning, Penn faculty and staff must always consider FERPA, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, when receiving, processing, or transmitting student information.

FERPA and Penn protect personally identifiable information contained in "education records," generally including records that are directly related to a student and maintained by the University or a party acting for the University.

Several other Penn policies mirror FERPA requirements and ensure the protection of Penn student information, prohibiting disclosure of student records except with the student's written consent or to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

Protected student information includes, but is not limited to, biographical information, enrollment records (including class lists), grades, and schedules. (Education records generally do not include law enforcement records, employment records, and directory information).

The most significant exception to the student consent requirement allows sharing with school officials with a "legitimate educational interest." School officials include, but are not limited to, Penn employees or any other persons performing work for Penn under proper authorization including third-party service providers.

Penn may also release "directory information" to third parties without a student's consent, unless the student specifically asked Penn not to do so, or "opted-out." Penn defines FERPA directory information to include a student's name, addresses, telephone number, date and place of birth, major, participation in officially recognized activities (including social and honorary fraternities) and sports, weight, and height if a member of an athletic team, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and previous educational institutions attended.

If a student wishes to opt out of sharing FERPA directory information, the student must complete and submit an opt-out form to the Office of the Registrar.

For more information on FERPA: <https://oacp.upenn.edu/privacy/pennndata/appropriate-use-of-penn-data/ferpa/>.

For additional tips, see the One Step Ahead link on the Information Security website: <https://www.isc.upenn.edu/security/news-alerts#One-Step-Ahead>.

Penn Undergraduate Research Mentoring Program Applications Due February 20

First- and second-year students in any undergraduate college at Penn are invited to apply for this summer's Penn Undergraduate Research Mentoring program (PURM). Student participants will receive a \$5,000 award. PURM is a great opportunity to get deeper into a field of interest and to get a taste of what academic research is all about. Applications are due February 20, 2022.

Research projects and application instructions are available at <https://www.curf.upenn.edu/purm>.

Update

February AT PENN

FILMS

2 *Dialogue Lab: America*; document of a powerful dialogue experiment on political polarization, featuring twelve Americans who convened in July 2021; 10 a.m.; room 203, PCPSE; register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/250388357317> (Paideia Program).

FITNESS & LEARNING

2 *12@12 with Catherine Bartch*; a concise description of a piece of art in 12 minutes flat; noon; Zoom webinar; join: <https://tinyurl.com/12-at-12-feb-2> (Arthur Ross Gallery).

Center for Undergraduate Research & Fellowships (CURF)

Zoom webinars. Info: <https://www.curf.upenn.edu/curf-events>.

4 *Summer Research and Fellowships Fair*; 4 p.m.

Penn Dental

Unless noted, online events. Info: <https://www.dental.upenn.edu/news-events/events/>.

1 *Progressive Materials in Dentistry—Facing Reality*; Alexander Wünsche, Zahntechnik Dental Laboratory; 6 p.m.

SPORTS

For a listing of in-person and livestreamed Penn Athletics events for the month of February, visit <https://pennathletics.com/calendar>. In-person attendance at Penn Athletics events resumes on February 1.

TALKS

1 *Super Size Me: How Massive UN Summits Advance Policy Agendas*; panel of speakers; 4 p.m.; Perry World House; register: <https://tinyurl.com/pwh-talk-feb-1> (Perry World House).

A New Political Economy of Music?; Eric Drott, University of Texas at Austin; 5:15 p.m.; room 101, Lerner Center (Music).

2 *Color-Evasive Racism in the Final Stage of Faculty Searches: Examining Search Committee*

Hiring Practices That Jeopardize Racial Equity Policy; Roman Liera, Montclair State University; 10:30 a.m.; room 200, GSE (Diversity at Penn).

The Taliban Takeover and the Future of Afghan Media; panel of speakers; 12:30 p.m.; Zoom webinar; join: <https://upenn.zoom.us/my/ascmediarisk> (Center for Media at Risk).

Understanding the Cosmological Evolution of Galaxies with Intensity Mapping; Jason Sun, Caltech; 3:30 p.m.; Zoom webinar; join: <https://tinyurl.com/sun-talk-feb-2> (Physics & Astronomy).

3 *Thermodynamic Contributions to Glass Fragility*; Hillary Smith, Swarthmore College; 10:30 a.m.; Zoom webinar; join: <https://tinyurl.com/smith-talk-feb-3> (Materials Science & Engineering).

The Healing Power of Self-Expression: Photography by Female Refugee Artists; panel of speakers; 11:30 a.m.; Perry World House; <https://tinyurl.com/pwh-talk-feb-3> (Perry World House).

Towards the Development of Gender Responsive Interventions to Improve Men's Engagement in TB Care and Treatment; Andrew Medina-Marino, Desmond Tutu Health Foundation; noon; location TBA; info: <https://www.med.upenn.edu/cfar/seminar-series.html> (Center for AIDS Research).

From Bench to Pet-Side: Intratumoral Immunotherapy Principles and Practice; Noor Momin, Harvard; 3:30 p.m.; room 216, Moore Building (Bioengineering).

Sexuality and Gendered Hierarchy: Old Babylonian Sumerian Poetry; Ming-Qing Literature; Christie Carr and Julie Chan, Oxford; 5 p.m.; Zoom webinar; register: <https://tinyurl.com/gsws-seminars-spring-2022> (Gender, Sexuality & Women's Studies).

4 *Towards Robust Human-Robot Interaction: A Quality Diversity Approach*; Stefanos Nikolaidis, University of Southern California; 10:30 a.m.; Wu and Chen Auditorium, Levine Hall (GRASP Lab).

7 *Modeling Toxoplasma Sexual Development in Mice and Microphysiological Devices*; Laura Knoll, University of Wisconsin-Madison; noon; Zoom webinar; join: <https://upenn.zoom.us/j/91921012177> (Penn Vet).

Designing Equitable Algorithms For Criminal Justice And Beyond; Sharad Goel, Harvard; 3:30 p.m.; Auditorium, Levin Building (Psychology).

8 *Brought to Life by the Voice: Thinking with Playback*; Amanda Weidman, Bryn Mawr College; 5:15 p.m.; room 101, Lerner Center (Music).

Asian American Studies (ASAM)

Online and in-person events. Info: <https://asam.sas.upenn.edu/events>.

7 *Asian America Across the Disciplines*; Teresa Maebori, Japanese American Citizens League, Philadelphia Chapter; 5:15 p.m.; room 315, Williams Hall.

Computer and Information Science (CIS)

Wu and Chen Auditorium, Levine Hall, and Zoom webinars. Info: <https://www.cis.upenn.edu/events/>.

1 *Trustworthy Machine Learning Systems via PAC Uncertainty Quantification*; Osbert Bastani, CIS; 3:30 p.m.

3 *Sublinear Algorithms for Massive Datasets*; Erik Waingarten, Stanford; 3:30 p.m.

8 *Learned Query Optimization*; Ryan Marcus, MIT; 3:30 p.m.

Population Studies Center (PSC)

Unless noted, in-person events at room 150, McNeil Building. Info: <https://www.pop.upenn.edu/>.

7 *Civil Liberties in Times of Crisis*; Marcella Alsan, Harvard; noon.

Sociology

Unless noted, in-person events at room 367, McNeil Building. Info: <https://sociology.sas.upenn.edu/events>.

2 *Understanding the Relationship Between Childbearing Goals and Outcomes*; Sarah Hayford, Ohio State University; noon; room 150, McNeil Building.

3 *Misperceptions of Immigrant Origins and Their Causal Effects on Policy Attitudes*; Tiffany Huang, sociology; 9:30 a.m.

AT PENN Calendar

This is an update to the [February AT PENN calendar](https://www.almanac.upenn.edu), which is online now. To submit an event for a future calendar or weekly update, email almanac@upenn.edu.

Almanac

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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 (accessible 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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The University of Pennsylvania Police Department Community Crime Report

About the Crime Report: Below are the Crimes Against Persons or Crimes Against Society from the campus report for **January 17-23, 2022**. Also reported were 20 crimes against property (8 thefts from building, 3 retail thefts, 3 vandalisms, 2 burglaries, 2 other thefts, 1 bike theft, and 1 other offense) with 2 arrests. Full reports are available at: <https://almanac.upenn.edu/sections/crimes> 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 17-23, 2022**. The University Police actively patrol from Market St to Baltimore Avenue and from the Schuylkill River to 43rd St in conjunction 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.

01/17/22	10:41 PM	3400 Civic Center Blvd	Complainant struck in head with a toy knife
01/18/22	2:45 PM	3735 Walnut St	Bank robbery/Arrest

18th District

Below are the Crimes Against Persons from the 18th District: 4 incidents (2 assaults and 2 robberies) with 2 arrests were reported for **January 17-23, 2022** by the 18th District covering the Schuylkill River to 49th St & Market St to Woodland Avenue.

01/17/22	11:27 PM	3400 Blk Civic Center Blvd	Assault
01/18/22	2:48 PM	3735 Walnut St	Robbery/Arrest
01/21/22	12:46 AM	4764 Chestnut St	Assault/Arrest
01/23/22	8:39 PM	S 46th St & Larchwood Ave	Robbery

In The Word Game ‘Wordle,’ A Case for Pure Play

Seemingly overnight, software engineer Josh Wardle’s “Wordle” word game has become a cultural phenomenon in certain corners of the web. The reality, though, is that the game has been accruing popularity for months—and perhaps, culturally, was an inevitability.

Wordle is a once-a-day word puzzle in which players have six tries to guess a five-letter word of the day, with a few hints along the way. Since November, the game’s audience has grown from double digits to as many as 2 million players per week, largely driven by millennials.

Cait Lambertson, the Alberto I. Duran President’s Distinguished Professor of Marketing at the Wharton School, said it’s no coincidence that the game has become popular at a moment when work is “anywhere and everywhere,” making it more appealing to carve out space for something that is simply “play.” Here, Dr. Lambertson explains this further, along with other reasons a game so simple has had such a large impact.

Q: Being available only once per day, what do you think is the significance of that in getting people interested?

A: This is a great question. In marketing, we often assume that people want options and, at least within a manageable scope, more than one opportunity to do something they enjoy. Wordle presents us with a situation where people are drawn to something that’s completely limited. You can do one, and then you wait until the next day.

But I think this is a different experience of scarcity than, for example, the scarcity you experience when a store is out of paper towels. I’d argue that Wordle’s experiential value doesn’t exist because it’s scarce, but because the game is wonderfully unitary. It’s just one thing. It has a discrete beginning and discrete end. So if you complete one Wordle, you’ve completed 100 percent of something.

Most of us have a lot of tasks more like the second kind—they have lots of pieces, they stretch out over days, and they have indiscriminate endings. Our workdays might not even feel like they have beginnings and endings right now. Given that people have a strong bias toward completion, the appeal of the one-and-done Wordle format makes a lot of sense.

Q: And the contrast is that if you use any other word game or app, any other mobile game, they’re always trying to get you onto the next task?

A: Yes. Most games and apps are designed to create continued engagement. Behavioral scientists who design many of our most popular apps understand exactly how to give you correctly timed rewards, how to appeal to your motivation, and how to create a sense of deprivation when you stop playing. [Former Google design ethicist] Tristan Harris has done a lot to shine a light on the way that tech companies have learned to capture and manage our attention. They make a strong argument that many of our tech experiences are explicitly designed to shape the way we process information, change items that are top of mind, or alter what we think is important, all the time. Many of us now know that we’re addicted to our phones, our social media, or our email. We know that our buttons are pretty easily pushed, and we have to guard against that. I think Wordle, in its visual and experiential simplicity, does something quite reassuring. For a few minutes, people don’t need to filter out intrusive messages or sort out information from disinformation. Instead, we come to Wordle by choice, and take from it exactly what we put into it. There are no ads or guilt trips or obligations. The un-designed, un-strategic format might be a welcome break from the tech pile-up that chases us in most of our on-line experiences.

Q: No one is inundated with ads, which is something that’s come up in observations of its appeal. That’s nearly every app, with the badges and cutesy stuff.

A: Yes—that’s part of keeping people in this constant cycle of achievement. And I think this is part of the genius of Wordle, too. By contrast, it lets us really play. [Dutch cultural historian] Johan Huizinga wrote this wonderful book in the late 1930s called *Homo Ludens*, which seems relevant here. Because even though we call those other badge-heavy things “games,” they’ve been designed in a way that Huizinga would say doesn’t actually allow us to play. By being so heavily incentivized, online games create a sort of material interest. It may be a social interest, or just virtual badging, but it’s captured in a visible, extrinsic motivator. And it’s not that the people who do Wordle aren’t excited about doing well—some of them post their scores everywhere—but because the game is contained, these achievements are localized. You can get a great score once in one day and do badly the next day.

Q: My editor’s husband has been playing and has been frustrated he can only play once a day. Is it that he’s genuinely enjoying it or is that sort of like a symptom of addiction?

A: [Laughs] Well, it could be that he doesn’t have a lot of tasks in his life that have this character. Because it feels both satisfying and engaging, it’s natural to want more. The truth is when you click away from the Wordle, you’re faced with tasks not nearly as discrete and cognitively

clean. So, when you find a task that really does allow you to engage your mind in a way that is satisfying and undistracted, you’ll be likely to look for more. That said, if Wordle rolled more puzzles out on a regular basis, the appeal might fade for a lot of people. What research also tells us is that people can become easily satiated; it may not take that many repeat games before people say, ‘I’ve had enough.’ And many apps show exactly this pattern: their growth hits a very fast peak, but once people satiate, the apps become ignored. At that point, the developer has a couple of options. One thing they can do is add more ‘widgets’—features that keep people engaged. Another option is to constantly find new people who haven’t played it before, to keep expanding the market. And another is to find true loyalists and monetize them. Wordle, were it to become a more typical on-line game where you could play 1,000 games in a row, could easily need to take these steps to keep growing. It’s not clear that doing so wouldn’t undermine the game’s entire appeal.

As it is, it may also be a relief that they don’t seem concerned about keeping people on the platform. People play because they choose to. Nothing yells, ‘Come back tomorrow!’ or ‘If you play again, we’ll give you a reward!’ Wordle is very ‘pure’ play in that sense.

Q: Can you talk about this idea of needing play?

A: In Huizinga’s book, he argued that human nature is rooted in play. We are, by nature, creatures that play. More than that, he argues that play is central to human flourishing. Play allows us an experience that is truly free, and separate from our real life in such a way that we are allowed to try different experiences and even experiment with our own identities. He argues that it’s also important that play offers an ordered environment—it’s not simply chaos or fantasy. Rather, play offers humans the balance of order and experimentation that we need to learn and grow. At the same time, the play itself isn’t directly about giving benefits, it’s the experience of playing that teaches us and allows us to solve more problems. When you look at Wordle, you see Huizinga’s characteristics: It doesn’t cost anything, it’s driven by personal free choice to engage, and it’s not tied to real life. I’m a fan of the *New York Times* crossword puzzle, but to get to the puzzle, I have to go through all the real news. [Laughs] The *New York Times* crossword, as much as I love it, is deeply embedded in real life—the crossword puzzle clues might even refer to news or historical events. Wordle doesn’t do that. It doesn’t draw from any of your outside knowledge. That makes it a little more play-like, in Huizinga’s framework, than the *New York Times* crossword.

Q: In console gaming, the dilemma of competitiveness has been treated differently by each company. Whereas Microsoft might value things like leaderboards, for example, Nintendo shies away from that and values simply whether the experience is ‘fun.’

A: I think so. Another nice aspect of Wordle is that people can use it either as a forum for competition or not: They can post it on social media and in that way enjoy the competitive aspect, but they can also post to be part of a community. But the difference in these games is something Huizinga also writes about. He also says that as cultures mature, it’s hard for them to keep their playfulness. By his theory, gaming systems that introduce extrinsic rewards and competitions, badges, etc., are following a natural progression, just as people do. Developmentally, we move from play to work, and then we get very good at work.

In that sense, I think part of what you may be seeing among people who prefer the Nintendo approach is a desire to preserve an experience as something that feels like true play. And part of the appeal of Wordle might also lie in its—thus far, anyway—refusal to create the types of leaderboards and competitions that so many apps have incorporated. That’s in contrast to much of the rest of our lives. Right now, our work systems, home systems, health systems, and news systems don’t allow us a lot of pure play opportunities. So, the simplicity of the interface and lack of badges and rewards and quests may be something we need.

Q: And how do you think this moment plays into the popularity?

A: I think it’s critical. We like to have a sense of order in a world that’s handed us an intermittent sense of chaos for at least the last 22 months. We also like the community formed around this—this community doesn’t involve opinions or politics. Your membership is only reliant on the extent to which you like playing this little game. While there are certainly many crucially important topics around which we need to organize, maybe we also have a bit of ideology fatigue. For a few minutes, something like talking about Wordle allows us to simply connect with people who like guessing words in squares, in a game that none of us control, where everyone has equal power. Maybe that’s more important right now than we might have expected. And I do think the lack of commercial intrusion is a relief for many people. I hope it remains pure. And I hope I get a lot better at it.

Adapted from a [Penn Today article](#) by Brandon Baker, January 25, 2022.