

# Almanac

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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## Peter Decherney and Dagmawi Woubshet: Edmund J. and Louise W. Kahn Endowed Term Professors in the School of Arts & Sciences



Peter Decherney

Dagmawi Woubshet

Peter Decherney and Dagmawi Woubshet have been named Edmund J. and Louise W. Kahn Endowed Term Professors in Penn Arts & Sciences.

Dr. Decherney, the Edmund J. and Louise W. Kahn Endowed Term Professor

in the Humanities, is a professor in the department of cinema & media studies, director of the Penn Global Documentary Institute, and faculty director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching, Learning, and Innovation. He holds a secondary appointment at the Annenberg School for Communication and an affiliation with the Center for Technology, Innovation, and Competition in the Penn Carey Law School.

Dr. Decherney has authored or edited seven books, including *Hollywood's Copyright Wars: From Edison to the Internet* and *Hollywood: A Very Short Introduction*, and has written for *The New York Times*, *Forbes*, *Inside Higher Ed*, and other publications. His first book of photography, *Endless Exodus: The Jewish Experience in Ethiopia*, is forthcoming. In addition, Dr. Decherney is an award-winning documentary and virtual-reality filmmaker who has directed films about

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## Penn Engineering: First BSE Program in Artificial Intelligence in the Ivy League



Raj and Neera Singh

The University of Pennsylvania School of Engineering and Applied Science has introduced its bachelor of science in engineering (BSE) in artificial intelligence (AI) degree, the first undergraduate major of its kind among Ivy League universities and one of the very first AI undergraduate engineering programs in the U.S.

The rapid rise of generative AI is transforming virtually every aspect of life: health, energy, transportation, robotics, computer vision, commerce, learning and even national security. This produces an urgent need for innovative, leading-edge AI engineers who understand the principles of AI and how to apply them in a responsible and ethical way.

"Inventive at its core, Penn excels at the cutting edge," said Penn Interim President J. Larry Jameson. "Data, including AI, is a critical area of focus for our strategic framework, *In Principle and Practice*, and this new degree program represents a leap forward for the Penn engineers who will lead in developing and deploying these powerful technologies in service to humanity. We are deeply grateful to Raj and Neera Singh, whose leadership helps make this possible."

The Raj and Neera Singh Program in Artificial Intelligence equips students to unlock AI's potential to benefit our society. Students in the program will be empowered to develop responsible AI tools that can harness the full knowledge available on the internet, provide superhuman attention to detail, and augment humans in making transformative scientific discoveries, researching materials for chips of the

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PENN MEDICINE AND THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA EXEMPLIFIED

THANK YOU!



GOING THE

DISTANCE

FOR OUR COMMUNITY

## Employee Generosity Helps Penn's Way Exceed Expectations

February 14, 2024

Each year, Penn's Way calls upon the strength of the Penn community to respond to the needs of the communities we serve. For this year's *Going the Distance for our Community* campaign, you answered the call. On behalf of the Penn's Way Committee, we would like to thank you for your dedication in conveying a message of hope and support.

We are excited to share that employees donated over \$2.2 million through Penn's Way. And this year, through the generosity of Penn Medicine and the University of Pennsylvania, all contributions were matched dollar for dollar, making the total more than \$4.4 million and doubling the impact your donation will have on the causes you value most.

The funds raised through Penn's Way allow charities to provide services such as:

- Over 4,000 after-school meals and summer camp lunches to children in after-school care, shelters, and schools of special education
- 975 children with summer literacy kits to prevent summer learning loss
- Over 250 planted trees, offsetting over 5,000 tons of carbon emissions

- Over 116,000 pounds of fresh produce to food pantries and local families in need
- Over 2,000 meals for rescued shelter animals
- A year of permanent supportive housing to 5 individuals experiencing homelessness
- Thanksgiving and holiday meals for 2,000 individuals living in supportive residential housing facilities

We are especially grateful to our volunteers who gave their time and talent to help Penn's Way for their leadership in this campaign. Their dedication was vital to our success and deeply appreciated.

Thank you for embodying the true spirit of giving through this campaign. Together, we continue to create positive change and leave a lasting impact on our community.

Sincerely,

—Maureen Rush

Penn's Way Campaign Co-Chair  
Senior Advisor to the Senior EVP  
University of Pennsylvania

—Patricia Sullivan

Penn's Way Campaign Co-Chair  
Chief Quality Officer  
University of Pennsylvania Health System

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## From the Senate Office

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, by email at [senate@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:senate@pobox.upenn.edu).

### Faculty Senate Executive Committee Actions

Wednesday, February 14, 2024

**Report from the Tri-Chairs.** Faculty Senate chair Tulia Falleti offered the following report:

Because no comments were received following its January 30, 2024 publication in *Almanac*, the Resolution on Academic Freedom and Open Expression approved on January 24 by SEC is now a binding action of the Faculty Senate.

Upon an invitation made and accepted, Prof. Falleti visited the School of Nursing Faculty Senate on February 5.

Perry World House seeks faculty affiliates to participate in its programming during the coming year. [Full details and an application](#) are available through Interfolio.

**Congressional Requests for Information.** Recent congressional committees' requests for information were discussed.

**Update from the Office of the Provost.** Provost Jackson informed SEC members of the process for implementing the strategic framework *In Principle and In Practice*, which will involve students, faculty, and staff broadly. He then engaged in a discussion with SEC members.

**Antisemitism Task Force.** Mark Wolff, the Morton Amsterdam Dean of the School of Dental Medicine and chair of the [University Task Force on Antisemitism](#), described the task force's work to date and accepted feedback from SEC members. Dean Wolff added that the task force would soon be organizing a campus-wide "listening tour" that will help to inform its work. Feedback may be shared directly with the task force by writing to [antisemitism-taskforce@upenn.edu](mailto:antisemitism-taskforce@upenn.edu).

**New Business.** The Senate Committee on Academic Freedom and Responsibility (SCAFR) must fill a vacancy on its committee for the current term, through June 30, 2024. Nominations (by email to [senate@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:senate@pobox.upenn.edu)) were accepted from SEC members through Monday, February 19. If more than one candidate stands for election, a ballot of SEC members will be held. (Nominations for full-term members starting July 1, 2024, will be determined by the Senate Nominating Committee in accordance with the Faculty Senate Rules.)

## Open Forum Topics at University Council Meeting, February 21, 2024

The following topics have been submitted for the open forum at the February 21 University Council meeting, to be held in the Hall of Flags, Houston Hall.

1. *Supporting Cross-School Collaborations in Psychedelic Research*, Victor Pablo Acero, GR'24
2. *Genocide & Peace (Original Poem)*, Nakisha Jones, LPS'24
3. *Significance of the Open Expression Guidelines*, Lily Brenner, ENG'26
4. *Student Disciplinary Processes*, Mira Sydow, C'25
5. *Opposing Violent Threats*, Hilah Kohen, GR'30
6. *The University's Response to the Israel-Hamas War*, Iman Tednga, C'26
7. *Impact of the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life Regulations*, Lucas Lee, C'25, ENG'25
8. *Support for Open Expression*, Evie Klein, C'24

## Planning an Event? Email *Almanac*

If you or your department is planning an upcoming talk, performance, film screening, or other event, let *Almanac* know so it can be included in the monthly AT PENN calendar. *Almanac's* monthly AT PENN calendar is the most inclusive calendar of Penn events on campus; a listing in AT PENN increases visibility and attendance.

Email [almanac@upenn.edu](mailto:almanac@upenn.edu) with your event details.

## Institute for RNA Innovation: Call for Applications for Spring 2024 Pilot Grant Program

The Penn Institute for RNA Innovation at the University of Pennsylvania, the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), and the Wistar Institute seek to support RNA-related basic, translational and clinical research. Towards that goal, the institute is requesting applications for its Pilot Grants Program for spring 2024. Pilot funding will provide initial support to establish proof of concept or extend findings to enable extramural funding and publications in the future. Priority areas, deadlines, and application guidelines are provided below.

The spring 2024 Pilot Grant Program research priority will be to support cross-disciplinary research that will lead to extramurally-funded research in either basic or translational science in the arena of RNA biology. Projects should use at least one of the Institute for RNA Innovation's shared resource cores or incorporate expertise from the [Leadership group](#). The following core resources are available: [mRNA Core](#), [LNP core](#), [targeting core](#), and [high throughput screening of therapeutics](#). Access to these cores will advance grantees' capabilities in RNA-based technologies (e.g. in design, delivery and targeting).

The institute encourages applicants to consult with core directors early in the

preparation of their application. Allocation of core effort to assist in grant preparation will be available on a first-come first-served basis. Brief descriptions of the cores and additional resources being offered through select leadership labs can be found [here](#).

Basic science applications, including RNA processing, RNA binding proteins, noncoding RNAs, and nucleoside-modifications, are encouraged, along with the development of tools to further the use of RNA technology to treat disease. Translational science that is relevant to prevention, diagnostics, and/or therapeutics for human diseases will also be accepted. Applications that seek to take novel basic science findings towards clinical development are also desired. All aspects of RNA science and biology with translational application will be considered, including mRNA, siRNA, anti-sense oligonucleotides, splicing modulation, and RNA binding proteins. Projects and teams that bridge laboratory-based research to pre-clinical studies or models and/or that extend clinical observations to the laboratory (addressing mechanisms, identifying therapeutic targets, and developing novel interventions) are strongly encouraged to apply.

Applications are due on March 15,

2024. Decisions will be communicated to applicants in May, and funding of successful applications will begin no later than June 2024.

### Eligibility

Principal investigators (PIs) for awards must have a faculty appointment at the University of Pennsylvania, CHOP, or the Wistar Institute and hold the rank of assistant, associate or full professor, research professor, or instructor. Postdoctoral trainees are also encouraged to apply, provided that a faculty sponsor includes a letter of support for the trainee in the application.

Proposals may not describe the same specific research that is funded by other sources during the grant period.

### Budget and Duration

Individual applicants may request budgets up to \$50,000 in direct costs and may propose projects lasting up to 12 months. Applicants are required to budget at least \$10,000 of funds for institute core and/or institute collaboration expenses. An additional \$5,000 can be requested for core expenses with proper justification. The total equipment budget must not exceed \$10,000.

For additional submission details, please click [here](#). For questions and more information, contact [Jill Agolino](#).



## Penn Engineering: First BSE Program in Artificial Intelligence in the Ivy League

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future, creating breakthroughs in healthcare through new antibiotics, applying life-saving treatments, and accelerating knowledge and creativity.

“Penn Engineering has long been a pioneer in computing and education, with ENIAC, the first digital computer, and the first PhD in computer science,” said Raj Singh. “This proud legacy of innovation continues with Penn Engineering’s AI program, which will produce engineers that can leverage this powerful technology in a way that benefits all humankind.” “We are thrilled to continue investing in Penn Engineering and the students who can best shape the future of this field,” said Neera Singh.

The BSE in AI curriculum offers high-level coursework in topics including machine learning, computing algorithms, data analytics and advanced robotics.

“The timing of this new undergraduate program comes as AI poses one of the most promising, yet challenging, opportunities the world currently faces,” said Vijay Kumar, the Nemirovsky Family Dean of Penn Engineering. “Thanks to the generosity of Raj and Neera Singh, Penn Engineering’s BSE in artificial intelligence program, we are preparing the next generation of engineers to create a society where AI isn’t just a tool, but a fundamental force for good to advance society in ways previously unimaginable.”

Leading the program will be George J. Pappas, the UPS Foundation Professor of Transportation in Penn Engineering. “Realizing the potential of AI for positive social impact stands as one of the paramount challenges confronting engineering,” said Dr. Pappas. “We are excited to introduce a cutting-edge curriculum poised to train our students as leaders and innovators in the ongoing AI revolution.”

The program’s courses will be taught by world-renowned faculty in Amy Gutmann Hall, Penn Engineering’s newest building. An anticipated hub for data science on campus and for the Philadelphia community, Amy Gutmann Hall and its state-of-the-art facilities will further transform Penn’s capabilities in engineering education, research, and innovation as Penn Engineering advances the development of artificial intelligence.

“Our carefully selected curriculum reflects the reality that AI has come into its own as an academic discipline, not only because of the many amazing things it can do, but also because we think it’s important to address fundamental questions about the nature of intelligence and learning, how to align AI with our social values, and how to build trustworthy AI systems,” said Zachary Ives, the Adani President’s Distinguished Professor and chair of the department of computer and information science in Penn Engineering.

The program will begin in fall 2024, with applications for existing University of Pennsylvania students who would like to transfer into the 2024 cohort available this fall. Fall 2025 applications for all prospective students will be made available in fall 2024. Visit the new website at <https://ai.seas.upenn.edu/>.

## Penn Program for Environmental Humanities and Morris Arboretum & Gardens: Call for Proposals to Develop Ecotopian Tools for Multispecies Flourishing

In cooperation with the Morris Arboretum & Gardens, the Penn Program for Environmental Humanities invites applications for projects to create ecotopian tools for multispecies flourishing. Successful proposals for ecotopian tools will be explored in designer-led public workshops at Morris in spring 2024 and will be documented in a print catalog and also included in the expanding digital “living archive,” the [Ecotopian Toolkit for the Anthropocene](#).

Proposals will introduce “ecotopian” tools, whether conceptual or realized, that might be used by visitors and inhabitants of Morris to support diverse, multi-species communities, including humans, and to connect them to other places of refuge amidst the ongoing crisis of extinction fueled by habitat loss, climate change, and [other Anthropocene woes](#). By “multispecies,” we refer to “the complexity of living, learning, and becoming with/ alongside/through other planetary beings and cosmological phenomena” (according to education scholars Steven Khan and G. Michael Bowen). Inspired by utopian writing and projects across cultures, traditions, and times, the word “ecotopian” is borrowed from Ernest Callenbach’s 1975 novel, *Ecotopia*. This ongoing initiative to craft and share ecotopian tools across the Delaware Valley takes a utopian approach to ecological crisis as a way to confront the feelings of helplessness and apathy that often arise in the face of global warming and the ongoing sixth mass extinction event.

An ecotopian tool for multispecies flourishing should spark awareness to apprehend and address the multiplying effects of biodiversity loss and climate change. Previous ecotopian tools have included guided tours, workshops, community-built floating sculptures, community science initiatives, data visualizations, and more. Proposals should:

- Foster kinship relations across species divides
- Nurture humans’ connections with both plants and animals
- Facilitate passages between communities across the garden gate
- Allow participants to “get their hands dirty,” both physically and conceptually
- Provide opportunities to “unearth” knowledge about soils and soil health
- Inspire and empower visitors to support multispecies flourishing after they leave Morris

Successful proposals will dig deep—not just into the sciences of the soils, plants, and animals at Morris, but also into the histories and stories that shape this place today. Proposals should help to curate a collection of tools that together engage diverse audiences of all ages, from third-graders to college students to multigenerational families to gardeners and bird lovers of all ages.

The Morris Arboretum & Gardens is primarily located in the Chestnut Hill neighborhood of Philadelphia with a portion that sits in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. The approximately 175 acre site spans several geologic formations evident in the sharp turns of the Wissahickon Creek as it encounters the hard Chickie’s Quartzite formation after broad turns over the Dolomitic Limestone in Montgomery County. One part of the garden sits on Wissahickon Schist, notable as the stone used to build many local homes. Before and during the colonial period, the Leni-Lenape people lived in this area for hundreds of years; they refer to the land as Lenapehoking (land of the Lenape). Post-colonization, many Lenape were forcibly removed; some remained and assimilated with white settler colonials.

The land today that bears the name Morris Arboretum & Gardens is an assemblage of properties bought by siblings John and Lydia Morris between 1887 and 1913. The Morris siblings, avid plant collectors, created a beautiful summer estate and enjoyed sharing it with others. After their deaths, the arboretum became a part of the University of Pennsylvania and was initially run by the botany department. The Morris later transitioned to a public-facing organization and has grown to be one of the larger gardens in the Philadelphia region, with over 170,000 visitors annually.

Successful proposals will be selected by a jury of nine interdisciplinary and community experts: Syd Carpenter (artist), William Cullina (executive director, Morris Arboretum & Gardens), Benoit Dubé (chief wellness officer, Penn), Scott F. Gilbert (biologist and historian), Patricia Kaishian (curator, New York State Museum), Catherine Seavitt (professor and chair of landscape architecture, Penn), Bryan Thompson-Nowak (director of education, Morris Arboretum & Gardens), William Valerio (director and CEO, Woodmere Art Museum), and Tama Matsuoka Wong (author and forager). The jury will be chaired by Bethany Wiggin, with support from Megan Pollin Hernandez of the Penn Program for Environmental Humanities.

Each toolmaker will be awarded micro-grants of \$2,000 to allow for the proposed ecotopian tool to be explored, prototyped, and possibly built, distributed, and used at Morris and connected communities, including the main campus of the University of Pennsylvania. Throughout early spring 2024, toolmakers will work with Morris and PPEH to lead a series of participatory public workshops featuring their tool and its applications. These workshops will be open by advance registration and/or on a drop-in basis for the approximately 1,500 daily visitors who explore Morris on spring Saturdays. Research proposals and outcomes could be featured in installations around Morris and documented in Morris’s and PPEH’s social media feeds, websites, and biannual newsletters. A subsequent fall 2024 workshop at the University of Pennsylvania will result in the creation of a print *Catalog for Ecotopian Tools* and also be included in the project’s digital archive, the *Ecotopian Toolkit for the Anthropocene*.

Proposals are due by March 1, 2024 and must be submitted using this [form](#). Please address questions about this project, including the application process, to [ppehlabsdirector@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:ppehlabsdirector@sas.upenn.edu).

# Honors & Other Things

## Joseph Francisco: 2023 ACS Theodore William Richards Medal

Joseph S. Francisco, the President's Distinguished Professor in the department of chemistry in the School of Arts & Sciences, will receive the 2023 Theodore William Richards Medal. The Richards Medal is awarded for conspicuous achievement in any area of chemistry and honors the U.S.'s first chemistry Nobel laureate. It is given every two years by the ACS Northeastern Section.

## Paul Hendrickson: PSU Humanities Institute Outstanding Alumni

Paul Hendrickson, a senior lecturer in the department of English in the School of Arts & Sciences, has received Penn State's Humanities Institute Outstanding Alumni Award. Since its establishment in 2017-2018, the Humanities Institute has hosted an annual lecture each spring to celebrate the work of the humanities. In 2018-2019, the institute introduced the Alumni Award, given to a Penn State graduate who has made a significant impact in the humanities.

Mr. Hendrickson is a three-time finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award and a winner of it once—for his 2003 *Sons of Mississippi: A Story of Race and its Legacy*. His *The Living and the Dead: Robert McNamara and Five Lives of a Lost War* was a 1996 finalist for the National Book Award. His 2011 *Hemingway's Boat: Everything He Loved in Life, and Lost* was a *New York Times* best-seller. He has been the recipient of writing fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Lyndhurst Foundation, and the Alicia Patterson Foundation. He has been a faculty member at Penn since 1998, and for two decades before that he was a staff writer at *The Washington Post*.

## LilyLoop: Penn Y-Prize

This year's winner of Penn's Y-Prize is LilyLoop, a line of "smart" period products that alert users when to change tampons and captures menstrual flow data for diagnostic purposes.

One in five American women suffers from menorrhagia (heavy menstrual bleeding), which can sometimes result in serious complications such as anemia and infertility. Despite how common menorrhagia is, doctors often struggle to diagnose it because patient data related to menstrual flow is self-reported. Patients are often asked questions like how many pads or tampons they use, but that doesn't capture the precise data needed to recognize when a heavy flow becomes medically dangerous.

LilyLoop proposed a line of pads and tampons that each contain a tiny, body-safe sensor that sends moisture levels to a discreet wearable that interprets and sends data to an app for precise menstrual flow insights. LilyLoop will initially focus on patients with diagnosed uterine fibroids, a leading cause of menorrhagia. From there, they hope to expand to provide the product to a broader consumer base.

The team behind LilyLoop is Kylie Chang, a computer science and finance stu-

dent in the Wharton School and the School of Engineering and Applied Science; Rima Chavali, a life sciences and management student at Wharton and the School of Arts & Sciences; and Neha Chelamkuri, a life sciences and management student.

For over 10 years, the Y-Prize competition has challenged students to build their entrepreneurial skills. Students team up to create business plans using technology invented at Penn Engineering. The team with the best commercial application wins \$10,000 to help make their idea a reality. It is co-sponsored by the Mack Institute, Penn Engineering, Venture Lab, and the Penn Center for Innovation.

## Penn Medicine Awards and Accolades: January 2024

Marisa Bartolomei, co-director of the Epigenetics Institute and Perelman Professor of Cell and Developmental Biology, has been awarded the prestigious 2024 March of Dimes Richard B. Johnston, Jr., MD Prize. This annual honor recognizes exceptional scientists contributing to the advancement of the science behind pregnancy, birth, and prenatal development. Dr. Bartolomei identified one of the first imprinted genes in 1991, and worked to identify connections between imprinted genes and early developmental disorders like Beckwith-Wiedemann Syndrome, a congenital growth disorder.

Nathaniel Dymant, an assistant professor of orthopaedic surgery and bioengineering in the McKay Orthopaedic Research Laboratory, has earned the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons' Kappa Delta Young Investigator Award, recognized for his work investigating the mechanical and molecular processes of tendon development that provide clues for improving repair. Kappa Delta Awards are "bestowed for outstanding manuscripts that focus on basic and/or clinical research related to the musculoskeletal system" and can represent many years of work. The Young Investigator Award specifically recognizes investigators who have made pivotal accomplishments at early stages of their independent career.

## Anna Weesner: Fromm Music Foundation Commission

Anna Weesner, the Robert Weiss Professor of Music and the undergraduate chair of music in the School of Arts & Sciences, has received a commission from the Fromm Music Foundation.

Each year, the Fromm Music Foundation accepts applications for commissions of new music, and awards commissions to fourteen American composers. The Fromm Music Foundation commissions represent one of the ways that the foundation strives

to support the creation of new musical works and bring contemporary concert music closer to the public.

Dr. Weesner's recent output includes a set of songs called *My Mother in Love*, for which she wrote the music and text, originally commissioned by Cygnus Ensemble and forthcoming in a recorded studio version. Her recent chamber music includes *The Eight*



Anna Weesner

*Lost Songs of Orlando Underground*, written for a clarinet quintet and commissioned and premiered by the Lark Quartet with Romie de Guise-Langlois; and *Song-Shaped Absence in a Soundtracked World*, commissioned by Mimi Stillman and the Dolce Suono Ensemble.

## Mark Wolff: Woods System of Care Distinguished Service Award

Penn Dental Medicine's Morton Amsterdam Dean, Mark S. Wolff, has been awarded the Woods System of Care Distinguished Service Award, presented in appreciation and recognition of outstanding leadership, nationally and globally, in providing high-quality dental care to persons with disabilities.

A longstanding advocate for providing comprehensive dental care to individuals with physical, intellectual, and developmental disabilities, Dean Wolff has served this population throughout his time as a practicing clinician and years as an educator. Upon assuming the deanship of Penn Dental Medicine in 2018, he made improved access to care for persons with disabilities and educating students in serving this population a priority for the school. Among the initiatives he has led in this area was a partnership with Woods Services to establish Penn Dental Medicine at Woods Mikey Faulkner Dental Care Center.

Woods Services is a nonprofit organization based in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, dedicated to serving children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, along with acquired brain injuries. The care center, which opened in 2022, is located within Woods' Langhorne, Pennsylvania campus. This state-of-the-art facility features five dental operatories, including a quiet space for individuals requiring a low-stimulation environment for care, along with a waiting/reception area and a conference room. The center caters to residents, clients, and staff of Woods Services, as well as the broader disability community in the vicinity.

Dean Wolff was also acknowledged by the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and the Pennsylvania Senate for his role in establishing the Woods Care Center, exemplifying dedication to community enrichment through care and education. These

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certificates of recognition were presented by State Representative Joe Hogan and State Senator Frank Farry, who both represent the district where the center is located.



### 2024 Models of Excellence Award Program Honorees

Since 1999, Penn's Models of Excellence program has recognized over 1,800 staff members. Now in its twenty-fifth year, Models of Excellence continues to act on the University's [principles](#) by honoring the people who are the foundation of all we do.

Penn is pleased to announce the honorees for the 2024 Models of Excellence Program. This year, awards recognize 54 staff members from across Penn's schools and centers. They were nominated for their outstanding work in the three award categories: Models of Excellence, Pillars of Excellence, and Model Supervisor. The 2024 Selection Committee worked diligently and objectively to review and rate all the submitted nominations and select this year's honorees.

Each Models of Excellence, Pillars of Excellence, and Model Supervisor award winner will receive \$500 and a symbolic award.

The honorees' achievements will be celebrated in person on April 9, 2024, from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. in the Harrison Auditorium at the Penn Museum. A reception will be held after the ceremony in the Penn Museum's Chinese Rotunda.

At this Penn community celebration of distinguished staff, Interim President J. Larry Jameson, Provost John L. Jackson, Jr., senior executive vice president Craig Carnaroli, and senior vice president of human resources Jack Heuer will present Models of Excellence Awards on the Harrison Auditorium stage.

Learn about the 2024 honorees' work at [www.hr.upenn.edu/models](http://www.hr.upenn.edu/models), where you can download the [2024 Models of Excellence Honoree list](#).

#### Model Supervisors

- Erin Brown, Division of Human Resources
- Sharon Fleshman, University Life
- Jane Holahan, University Life
- Adam Roth-Saks, School of Social Policy and Practice

#### Pillars of Excellence

- Bill Dickson, Facilities and Real Estate Services
- Mary Marcopul, School of Arts and Sciences

- Leslie Vallhonrat, Penn Libraries
- Janell Wiseley, Development and Alumni Relations

#### Models of Excellence Award

- Kayla Clark, Perelman School of Medicine
- Abigail Kalkstein, School of Social Policy and Practice
- Lauren Rudick, University Life
- Teri Scott, Morris Arboretum & Gardens
- DEEPenn STEM Organizing Team
  - Christina Burton, School of Engineering and Applied Science
  - Annie Jeong, School of Engineering and Applied Science
  - Patricia Rea, School of Arts and Sciences
  - Ashley J. Wallace, Provost Interdisciplinary Programs
  - Abreeotta J. Williams-Jones, School of Engineering and Applied Science
- Let's Talk Team
  - William Atkins, University Life
  - Zaida Bryant, Provost's Center
  - Batsirai Bvunzawabaya, Penn Wellness
  - Mary Kate Coghlan, Penn Wellness
  - Krista Cortes, University Life
  - Valerie De Cruz, University Life
  - Benoit Dubé, Penn Wellness
  - Bramble Heidt, Penn Wellness
  - Jane Holahan, University Life
  - Jasmine R. Johnson, Penn Wellness
  - Tex Kang, Penn Libraries
  - Steve Kocher, Chaplain's Office
  - Marc A. Lo, Penn First Plus
  - Chelsea Minsky, Penn Wellness
  - Kaden Moriarty, Penn Wellness
- Malak Muhammad, University Life
- Nicole Nardone, Penn Wellness
- Brian Peterson, University Life
- Marian Reiff, Penn Wellness
- Morgen Rosen, Division of Recreation & Intercollegiate Athletics
- Julia Saul, Penn Wellness
- Steve Scaduto, Penn Libraries
- Alaina Spiegel, Penn Wellness
- Yacob Tekie, Penn Wellness
- Miao Tian, Penn Wellness
- Meredith Wooten, Graduate Student Center
- Derik Yager-Elorriaga, Penn Wellness
- Tianhong "Jojo" Yao, Penn Wellness
- Penn Cooks
  - Kristin Cummings, Residential and Hospitality Services
  - Pamela Lampitt, Residential and Hospitality Services
  - Barbara Lea-Kruger, Business Services
  - Thomas MacDonald, Residential and Hospitality Services
  - Ted Morrin, Residential and Hospitality Services
- PVP Consent Circles Team
  - Reema Malhotra Phillips, University Life
  - Julie Millisky, University Life
  - Tyler Rizzo, University Life
  - Elise Scioscia, University Life

If you have any questions about the program or the awards ceremony, visit [www.hr.upenn.edu/models](http://www.hr.upenn.edu/models) or contact Karen Kille, manager, of quality of work-life programs in Human Resources at [karener@upenn.edu](mailto:karener@upenn.edu) or (215) 898-7729.

### Peter Decherney and Dagmawi Woubshet: Edmund J. and Louise W. Kahn Endowed Term Professors in the School of Arts & Sciences

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global migration and the political role of artists in Myanmar, Kenya, Ethiopia, and the U.S. Dr. Decherney has been an Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Scholar, a fellow of the American Council of Learned Societies, and a U.S. State Department Arts Envoy to Myanmar.

Dr. Woubshet is the Edmund J. and Louise W. Kahn Endowed Term Associate Professor of English. He is a scholar, writer, and translator working at the intersection of African American, LGBTQIA+, and African studies. He wrote the book, *The Calendar of Loss: Race, Sexuality, and Mourning in the Early Era of AIDS*, and co-edited "Ethiopia: Literature, Art, and Culture," a special issue of *Callaloo*, a journal focused on the African diaspora. He has three additional book projects underway: *James Baldwin and the Art of Late-Style*; the first English translation of Sebbat Gebre Egziabher's 1966 Amharic novel *The Seventh Angel*; and a collection of lyric essays.

Dr. Woubshet has served as an associate editor of *Callaloo* and currently is on the editorial board of *Transition*, a magazine of Africa and its diaspora. He has held fellowships at the Institute of Ethiopian Studies at Addis Ababa University and at the Modern Art Museum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where he curated *Julie Mehretu: The Addis Show* (2016); *Africa Institute in Sharjah, UAE* (2020-21); and *Civitella Ranieri, Italy* (2022). Before coming to Penn, Dr. Woubshet taught at Cornell University.

The Kahn Endowed Term Chairs were established through a bequest by Edmund J. and Louise W. Kahn. Edmund Kahn was a 1925 Wharton graduate who had a successful career in the oil and natural gas industry. Louise Kahn, a graduate of Smith College, worked for *Newsweek* and owned an interior design firm. They supported many programs and projects at Penn, including the Van Pelt Library, the Modern Languages College House, and other initiatives in scholarship and the humanities.

## Division of Public Safety University of Pennsylvania Police Department Crime Report

About the Crime Report: Below are the Crimes Against Persons and/or Crimes Against Property from the campus report for **February 5-11, 2024**. The Crime 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 (DPS) and contains all criminal incidents reported and made known to the Penn Police, including those reported to the Philadelphia Police Department (PPD) that occurred within our pa-

trol zone, for the dates of **February 5-11, 2024**. The Penn Police actively patrol from Market Street to Baltimore Avenue and from 30<sup>th</sup> Street to 43<sup>rd</sup> Street 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 DPS at (215) 898-7297. You can view the daily crime log on the [DPS website](#).

### Penn Police Patrol Zone

*Market Street to Baltimore Avenue and from 30<sup>th</sup> Street to 43<sup>rd</sup> Street*

Crime Category	Date	Time	Location	Description
Aggravated Assault	02/02/24	1:08 AM	4256 Market St	Gun shots fired inside beer distributor, no injuries reported
Assault/Dating	02/09/24	5:04 PM	3600 Chestnut	Dating violence
Auto Theft	02/05/24	4:42 PM	4000 Pine St	Attempted theft of a motor vehicle parked on highway
	02/09/24	3:40 PM	4200 Pine St	Vehicle taken from highway
	02/11/24	1:14 AM	4200 Spruce St	Theft of secured vehicle from highway
Bike Theft	02/07/24	10:20 AM	211 S 40th St	Theft of secured bicycle from bike rack
	02/07/24	6:29 PM	3420 Walnut St	Theft of secured bicycle from bike rack
	02/07/24	9:44 PM	3900 Chestnut St	Theft of unsecured bicycle from highway
	02/08/24	5:25 PM	255 S 36th St	Secured scooter taken from bike rack
Fraud	02/06/24	1:42 PM	3700 Market St	Money fraudulently transferred to Zelle account
	02/07/24	2:17 PM	3600 Chestnut St	Unauthorized accounts opened under complainant's name
Other Assault	02/07/24	7:09 PM	4040 Chestnut St	Unwanted emails received
Other Offense	02/10/24	6:26 AM	3720 Walnut St	Offender trespassing on private property/Arrest
Retail Theft	02/06/24	5:34 AM	3744 Spruce St	Retail theft of consumable goods/Arrests
	02/09/24	6:27 PM	4233 Chestnut St	Retail theft of alcohol
Theft from Building	02/05/24	12:10 PM	4046 Chestnut	Package taken from lobby
	02/07/24	10:10 PM	3611 Walnut St	Unsecured jacket and purse containing wallet taken
	02/09/24	2:41 PM	3925 Walnut St	Scooter taken from ground level
Theft from Vehicle	02/07/24	12:16 PM	3401 Grays Ferry Ave	Theft of backpack from unsecured vehicle
	02/09/24	9:00 AM	3200 Chestnut St	Theft of tools from secured truck on highway
	02/09/24	10:24 AM	4100 Ludlow St	Rear passenger window broken; skateboard taken
Theft Other	02/05/24	5:38 PM	32 S 32nd St	Theft of secured scooter
	02/05/24	1:36 PM	3405 Woodland Walk	Secured scooter taken from bike rack
	02/06/24	8:35 PM	3740 Hamilton Walk	Secured scooter taken from bike rack
	02/07/24	8:04 PM	220 S 33rd St	Theft of secured scooter from bike rack
	02/07/24	9:50 PM	3900 Chestnut St	Theft of UCD security radio left on steps
	02/08/24	5:14 PM	3700 Hamilton Walk	Theft of secured scooter from bike rack
	02/08/24	8:25 PM	4233 Chestnut St	Theft of a pet from residence by known offender
	02/09/24	3:56 PM	3700 Spruce St	Secured scooter taken from fence
	02/10/24	8:06 PM	3730 Walnut St	Secured scooter taken from bike rack
	02/11/24	9:38 AM	219 S 33rd St	Secured scooter taken from bike rack
	02/11/24	8:01 PM	421 Curie Blvd	Secured scooter taken from bike rack

### Philadelphia Police 18th District

*Schuylkill River to 49<sup>th</sup> Street & Market Street to Woodland Avenue*

Below are the Crimes Against Persons from the 18th District: 8 incidents were reported for **February 5-11, 2024** by the 18th District, covering the Schuylkill River to 49<sup>th</sup> Street & Market Street to Woodland Avenue.

Crime Category	Date	Time	Location
Aggravated Assault	02/09/24	1:08 AM	4256 Market Street
Assault	02/05/24	5:01 PM	140 S. 46th Street
	02/09/24	2:23 PM	3714 Spruce Street
	02/11/24	2:29 PM	4815 Locust Street
Domestic Assault	02/02/24	6:01 PM	3600 Blk of Chestnut Street
Indecent Assault	02/07/24	9:00 AM	4400 Blk of Chestnut Street
Robbery	02/09/24	12:57 AM	4728 Baltimore Avenue
	02/11/24	11:57 PM	100 S. 45th Street

The Division of Public Safety offers resources and support to the Penn community. DPS has developed a few helpful risk reduction strategies outlined below. Know that it is *never* the fault of the person impacted (victim/survivor) by crime.

- See something concerning? Connect with Penn Public Safety 24/7 at (215) 573-3333.
- Worried about a friend's or colleague's mental or physical health? Get 24/7 connection to appropriate resources at (215) 898-HELP (4357).
- Seeking support after experiencing a crime? Call Special Services (support and advocacy resources) at (215) 898-4481 or email an advocate at [specialservices@publicsafety.upenn.edu](mailto:specialservices@publicsafety.upenn.edu).

- Use the [Walking Escort](#) and [Riding](#) services available to you free of charge.
- Take a moment to update your cell phone information for the [UPennAlert Emergency Notification System](#).
- Download the [Penn Guardian App](#), which can help police better find your location when you call in an emergency.
- Access free [self-empowerment and defense courses](#) through Penn DPS.
- Stay alert and reduce distractions. (Using cell phones, ear buds, etc. may limit your awareness.)
- Orient yourself to your surroundings. (Identify your location, nearby exits, etc.)
- Keep your valuables out of sight and only carry necessary documents.



# Update

FEBRUARY AT PENN

## CONFERENCES

**22** *Caribbean Borderlands and Sonic Encounter*; the first conference in the five-year Balzan Foundation project, "Borderlands of Sonic Encounter"; invites participants to engage with the various registers at which borderlands operate, connect, interrupt, energize, and otherwise inform and shape Caribbean musical lives and sonic encounters; 3-5:30 p.m.; room 329A, Max Kade Center (Music Department). Also February 23, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

## EXHIBITS

**21** *What Does LOVE Mean to You?* oSTEM's pop-up art installation celebrates love in all forms; share your unique perspectives on love in a note on the LOVE Sculpture for a chance to win a fancy dinner for yourself and three loved ones; 11 a.m.-3 p.m.; LOVE Sculpture (oSTEM).

## FILMS

**21** *No Hard Feelings*; 7 p.m.; room 543, Williams Hall (Gender, Sexuality & Women's Studies).

**22** *Supernova: The Music Festival Massacre*; features Q&A with the film's directors, Yossi Bloch and Duki Dror; 4:30 p.m.; location TBA; register: <http://tinyurl.com/cerl-film-feb-22> (Center for Ethics & the Rule of Law).

*Perfect Days*; advanced screening of Wim Wenders' new Oscar-nominated film; 7 p.m.; Sky Lounge, Harrison College House (Cinema & Media Studies).

## FITNESS & LEARNING

**20** *Computational Thinking & Board Games*; open to Penn students only; see how computer science concepts show up in games like Catan, Ticket to Ride, etc.; no programming experience required; RSVP: <https://libcal.library.upenn.edu/event/11757110> (Penn Libraries).

**Center for Undergraduate Research & Fellowships**  
Info: <https://curf.upenn.edu/events>.

**22** *Faculty in Research Panel*; 5 p.m.; Ben Franklin Room, Houston Hall.

**23** *Research & Entrepreneurship Panel*; 1:30 p.m.; room 102, 3539 Locust Walk.

**27** *Behind the CV: Stories from Faculty*; 4 p.m.; room 200, ARCH.

## ON STAGE

**23** *Be Holding Project*; an original performance created by poet Ross Gay, composer Tyshawn Sorey, new music ensemble Yarn/Wire, and director Brooke O'Harra, inspired by Philadelphia 76ers basketball legend "Dr. J" and his iconic baseline scoop in the 1980 NBA Finals; noon; online webinar; register: <https://www.ceepenn.org/events/be-holding-in-search-of-black-genius-justice-and-joy> (Center for Experimental Ethnography).

## READINGS & SIGNINGS

**22** *Digital Unsettling: Decoloniality and Dispossession in the Age of Social Media*; Ethiraj Gabriel Dattatreyan, New York University; 12:15 p.m.; room 500, Annenberg School; register: <http://tinyurl.com/dattatreyan-talk-feb-22> (Annenberg Center for Collaborative Communication, Center for Advanced Research in Global Communication).

**23** *Book Club: The Color Purple* by Alice Walker; meeting of a bi-weekly book club in honor of Black History Month; 3 p.m.; Penn Women's Center (Penn Women's Center; Makuu).

## SPECIAL EVENTS

**26** *Penn4C Awardee Celebration*; Community Collaboratory for CoCreation (Penn4C) invites you to attend a special kick-off event to recognize their pilot grant awardees; 5:30 p.m.; Houston Hall; RSVP: <http://tinyurl.com/penn4c-celebration-feb-26> (Penn4C).

## TALKS

**21** *Activity-Based Protein Profiling of the Human Rhomboid Intramembrane Proteases*; William Parsons, Oberlin College; noon; Carolyn Hoff Lynch Lecture Hall, Chemistry Complex (Chemistry).

*Condensed and Living Matter Seminar: Orientational Order in Biological Development - Superfluid Shrimp*; Mark Bowick, University of California, Santa Barbara; 3:30 p.m.; room A8, DRL (Physics & Astronomy).

*How to Lose the Hounds: Maroon Geographies and a World Beyond Policing*; Celeste Winston, Temple University; 5:30 p.m.; English faculty lounge, Fisher-Bennett Hall (Gender, Sexuality & Women's Studies).

**22** *Ultra-High-Throughput Computational Imaging: Towards a Trillion Voxels Per Second*; Kevin Zhou, University of California Berkeley; 11 a.m.; room 225, Towne Building (Bioengineering, Electrical & Systems Engineering).

*From Zhuangzi's Gourd to Cinderella's Pumpkin: Gua 瓜 as a Vehicle for the Imagination*; Christopher Rea, Princeton University; noon; room 623, Williams Hall (East Asian Languages & Civilizations).

*Heat, Harvest, and Health: Unraveling the Impact of Environmental Exposures on Farmworkers and Their Families*; Daniel J. Smith, Villanova University; 3 p.m.; Zoom webinar; register: <https://upenn.zoom.us/j/93589578996> (Philadelphia Regional Center for Children's Environmental Health).

*SPHEREx: An All-Sky Near-Infrared Spectral Survey*; Howard Hui, California Institute of Technology; 3:30 p.m.; Center for Particle Cosmology Lounge, DRL (Physics & Astronomy).

*Finding Sarah Everard: A Critical Discourse Analysis Exploring the First Two Weeks of News Media Coverage Following Her Disappearance and Murder*; Sim Gill, GSWS; *The City of Sexual Deviancy: Race, Rodents, and the Queerness of Single Motherhood*; M.C. Overholt, GSWS; 4 p.m.; room 345, Fisher-Bennett Hall (Gender, Sexuality & Women's Studies).

*Fels Racial Equity and Social Justice Conversation Series*; David Byerman, Council on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation and Byerman Solutions Group; 6 p.m.; online webinar; register: <http://tinyurl.com/byerman-talk-feb-22> (Fels Institute of Government).

**23** *Genetic Testing and Adverse Selection*; Eduardo Azevedo, Wharton; 2 p.m.; room

534, 3401 Walnut Street (Penn Institute for Computational Science).

*Photosculpture: Machine Made Portraiture in the 1860s*; André Dombrowski, history of art; 3 p.m.; room 401, Fisher-Bennett Hall (History of Art).

**26** *Being an Arab Imperialist in Late 19th Century Istanbul*; Mostafa Minawi, Cornell University; noon; room 108, ARCH (History).

*"Is There Room for Me?" The Praxis of Shifting Power and Inclusive Collaboration*; Ifeoma Ike, New York University; 3 p.m.; Zoom webinar; register: <https://bit.ly/sprk24> (School of Social Policy & Practice).

*Events in Mind and Language*; Anna Papafragou, linguistics; 3:30 p.m.; auditorium, Levin Building (Psychology).

*The Structure of Scientific Progress: The Case of Roger Bacon*; Elly Truitt, history & sociology of science; 3:30 p.m.; room 392, Cohen Hall (History & Sociology of Science).

**27** *AI-Accelerated Assessments of Climate and Weather Risks*; Tapio Schneider, California Institute of Technology; noon; Kleinman Energy Forum, Fisher Fine Arts Library; register: <http://tinyurl.com/schneider-talk-feb-27> (Penn Program on Regulation).

*The Problems with Free Trade*; Jamieson Greer and Stephen P. Vaughn, King & Spalding's International Trade practice group; noon; room 213, Gittis Hall; RSVP: <https://forms.gle/ydL4uQXbvSHUFvkZ9> (Federalist Society).

*Ecuador in Crisis*; Andrés Mejía Acosta, University of Notre Dame; Jane Esberg, political science; 4 p.m.; room 473, McNeil Building (Center for Latin American and Latinx Studies).

This is an update to the [February AT PENN calendar](#). To submit an event for a future calendar or weekly update, email [almanac@upenn.edu](mailto:almanac@upenn.edu).

## Almanac

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### New Treatment Reverses Alzheimer's Disease Signs

A “chaperone” molecule that slows the formation of certain proteins reversed disease signs, including memory impairment, in a mouse model of Alzheimer's disease, according to a study from researchers at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.

In the study, published in *Aging Biology*, researchers examined the effects of a compound called 4-phenylbutyrate (PBA), a fatty-acid molecule known to work as a “chemical chaperone” that inhibits protein accumulation. In mice that model Alzheimer's disease, injections of PBA helped to restore signs of normal proteostasis (the protein regulation process) in the animals' brains while also dramatically improving their performance on a standard memory test, even when administered late in the disease course.

“By generally improving neuronal and cellular health, we can mitigate or delay disease progression,” said study senior author Nirinjini Naidoo, a research associate professor of sleep medicine. “In addition, reducing proteotoxicity—irreparable damage to the cell that is caused by an accumulation of impaired and misfolded proteins—can help improve some previously-lost brain functions.”

Alzheimer's disease impacts more than 6 million Americans, and as many as 13.8 million Americans could be diagnosed by 2060, barring medical breakthroughs to slow or cure the disease. Like other neurodegenerative disorders, Alzheimer's disease features the accumulation of protein aggregates in the brain, and includes the dysfunction of proteostasis itself.

Previously, researchers found that PBA treatment improved sleep quality and cognitive test performance—and helped normalize proteostasis—in mice that model normal human brain aging. For the new study, they investigated PBA's effects in mice that model Alzheimer's disease. These mice, known as APPNL-G-F mice, accumulate abnormal protein aggregates in their brains, lose many of the synapses that connect their brain cells, and develop severe memory impairment—much like people with Alzheimer's.

Both early-life and middle-age treatment showed signs of inhibiting the process that forms the most prominent protein aggregates in Alzheimer's disease, known as amyloid beta plaques. For the later treatment, not only the underlying process but also the amyloid plaque numbers themselves were reduced.

As a potential Alzheimer's treatment, PBA has the advantage that it can cross easily from the bloodstream into the brain and is already approved by the Food and Drug Administration for treating an unrelated metabolic disorder.

*Adapted from a [Penn Medicine news release](#), December 20, 2023.*

### Researchers Breathe New Life Into Lung Repair

In the human body, the lungs and their vasculature can be likened to a building with an intricate plumbing system. The lungs' blood vessels are the pipes essential for transporting blood and nutrients for oxygen delivery and carbon dioxide removal. Much like how pipes can get rusty or clogged, disrupting normal water flow, damage from respiratory viruses, like SARS-CoV-2 or influenza, can interfere with this “plumbing system.”

In a recent study, researchers looked at the critical role of vascular endothelial cells in lung repair. Their work, published in *Science Translational Medicine*, was led by Andrew Vaughan of the University of Pennsylvania's School of Veterinary Medicine and shows that, by using techniques that deliver vascular endothelial growth factor alpha (VEGFA) via lipid nanoparticles (LNPs), that they were able to greatly enhance modes of repair for these damaged blood vessels, much like how plumbers patch sections of broken pipes and add new ones.

“While our lab and others have previously shown that endothelial cells are among the unsung heroes in repairing the lungs after viral infections like the flu, this tells us more about the story and sheds light on the molecular mechanisms at play,” said Dr. Vaughan, an assistant professor of biomedical sciences at Penn Vet. “Here we've identified and isolated pathways involved in repairing this tissue, delivered mRNA to endothelial cells, and consequently observed enhanced recovery of the damaged tissue. These findings hint at a more efficient way to promote lung recovery after diseases like COVID-19.”

They found VEGFA's involvement in this recovery, while building on work in which they used single-cell RNA sequencing to identify transforming growth factor beta receptor 2 (TGFB2) as a major signaling pathway. The researchers saw that, when TGFB2 was missing, it stopped the activation of VEGFA. This

lack of signal made the blood vessel cells less able to multiply and renew themselves, which is vital for the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the tiny air sacs of the lungs.

“We'd known there was a link between these two pathways, but this motivated us to see if delivering VEGFA mRNA into endothelial cells could improve lung recovery after disease-related injury,” said first author Gan Zhao, a postdoctoral researcher in the Vaughan Lab.

The Vaughan Lab then reached out to Michael Mitchell in Penn's School of Engineering and Applied Science, whose lab specializes in LNPs, to see if delivery of this mRNA cargo would be feasible.

“LNPs have been great for vaccine delivery and have proven incredibly effective delivery vehicles for genetic information,” said Dr. Mitchell, an associate professor of bioengineering at Penn Engineering and a coauthor of the paper. “But the challenge here was to get the LNPs into the bloodstream without them heading to the liver, which is where they tend to congregate as its porous structure lends favor to substances passing from the blood into hepatic cells for filtration. So, we had to devise a way to specifically target the endothelial cells in the lungs.”

Lulu Xue, a postdoctoral researcher in the Mitchell Lab and a co-first author of the paper, explained that the researchers engineered the LNP to have an affinity for lung endothelial cells, a process known as extra hepatic delivery.

*Adapted from a [Penn Today article](#) by Nathi Magubane, January 31, 2024.*

### Study Analyzes Digital Mourning Practices of Gang-Affiliated Youth

A new paper co-written by Desmond Upton Patton, the Brian and Randi Schwartz University Professor with appointments in Penn's School of Social Policy & Practice (SP2) and Penn's Annenberg School for Communication, explores the role of images in the online grieving practices of gang-affiliated Black youth.

The study is believed to be the first of its kind and aims to add to a limited body of scholarship. Dr. Patton, a pioneer in the interdisciplinary fusion of social work, communications, and data science, was a senior author on the new study.

The new paper, published in *New Media & Society*, explores how gang-affiliated Black youth use Twitter content, photos, and emojis—referred to as multimodal tweets—to memorialize the deceased and navigate feelings of grief and loss. “Black grief is not well-understood, both in offline and online spaces,” the authors write.

The paper's coauthors include researchers at Columbia University, led by SAFELab doctoral student Nathan Aguilar, as well as Aviv Landau, co-director of SAFELab and research assistant professor at SP2; and Shana Kleiner, the lab manager of SAFELab. A research initiative at SP2 and Annenberg, SAFELab is focused on examining the ways in which youth of color navigate violence, grief, and joy online and offline.

The researchers analyzed a data set of Twitter conversations among youth residing in Chicago neighborhoods characterized by high levels of gang activity, taking a critical lens toward the impact of racial segregation and grief on the offline experiences of this population.

Their findings reveal that multimodal tweets are intrinsically linked with the grieving process of gang-affiliated Black youth. This population of young people uses photos to speak to those who have passed away and maintain a connection to their lost loved ones. Researchers identified three themes among the multimodal tweets:

- Adoration—Expressing connection and affection for the deceased.
- Maintaining reputation—Safeguarding the social status and image of the deceased.
- Perseverance—Embodying a commitment to moving forward and embracing life.

The study offers insights that can inform the development of prevention and intervention strategies to support gang-affiliated youth experiencing grief and loss. “Attempting to understand language and imagery posted online by gang-affiliated youth is also an attempt to understand their internal meaning-making and memorialization process when presented with violence, loss, and hardship,” the authors write.

*Adapted from a [School of Social Policy & Practice news release](#), February 8, 2024.*