

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA *Almanac*

Tuesday
April 21, 2026
Volume 72 Number 32
www.upenn.edu/almanac

From the President

A Message to the Penn Community: An Update on Penn Forward

April 15, 2026

To the University Community:

With Penn Forward, we asked our community to think ambitiously and practically about how Penn can evolve for continued excellence—in the near term, through the next decade, and beyond. I am pleased to provide an update on our progress and the actions we are taking to build momentum.

The faculty, staff, students, and postdoctoral scholars of our six working groups took on this charge with remarkable energy and creativity. Informed by your feedback, they proposed 30 initiatives that might strengthen the University. Through the winter, we analyzed these ideas to determine which offered the greatest opportunities for timely, meaningful traction. Nine initiatives stood out, clustered around three core themes:

- Building trust with the people Penn serves
- Strengthening Penn's efforts to discover
- Extending Penn's reach globally and across lifelong learning

We have appointed leaders who are already at work on clear operational planning and tangible outcomes, and details on their progress will come as we begin the next academic year. This University-wide process moves in tandem with the important strategic planning conducted by Penn's twelve outstanding schools.

This morning, *Penn Today* published a [Q&A](#) that expands on this work. The Penn Forward [web-site](#) also has the latest, including an overview of each of the nine initiatives and their leaders. I encourage you to read both.

Through Penn Forward, we are seizing this moment to shape the future of our exceptional University. As we move from ideas to action, guided by Penn's values, I look forward to keeping our community informed.

—J. Larry Jameson, President

School of Arts & Sciences to Launch the SAS Commons Initiative

The School of Arts & Sciences has announced SAS Commons, a new academic initiative that will bring students, faculty, and the public together to examine complex and consequential topics across the full range of arts and sciences disciplines. Launching this summer, SAS Commons will be organized around a single, timely theme that rotates every two years. The inaugural theme will be Democracy and Knowledge, with Sophia Rosenfeld, the Walter H. Annenberg Professor of History, serving as inaugural director.

Through courses, symposia, workshops, and related initiatives, SAS Commons will create opportunities for sustained exchange across fields, fostering engagement with big questions.

"Historically, the 'commons' is a space where people gather, a shared resource," said Mark

Trodden, dean of the School of Arts & Sciences and the Thomas S. Gates, Jr. Professor of Physics & Astronomy in SAS. "SAS Commons draws on that tradition while creating new opportunities for scholars, students, and the community to examine important questions together."

The initiative advances the goals of *SAS Horizons*, the school's recently-announced strategic vision, by creating new ways to share scholarly work and connect it to broader public conversation.

A historian of European and American intellectual and cultural life, Dr. Rosenfeld teaches courses on the Enlightenment, the trans-Atlantic Age of Revolutions, and the impact of the 18th century on modern democracy. As the nation ap-

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Soosun You: James Joo-Jin Kim Korean Studies Assistant Professor of Political Science

Soosun You has been named the inaugural James Joo-Jin Kim Korean Studies Assistant Professor of Political Science in the School of Arts & Sciences. Her expertise lies at the intersection of gender and migration, comparative politics, and political behavior, with a regional focus on South Korea.

Dr. You's current research examines



Soosun You

the consequences of broad macro-level changes, including shifting demographics and rising economic inequality, for women's empowerment and the emergence of conservative backlash in South Korea. Her work employs a range of methodological approaches, including surveys and field experiments, statistical analysis, in-depth interviews, and archival research. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in the *American Political Science Review* and *The Journal of Law and Economics*.

Dr. You earned her PhD and MA in political science from the University of California, Berkeley, and a master's degree in public policy from Seoul National University.

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Strategic Vision for Annenberg School for Communication: Connected Futures

The Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania has launched *Connected Futures*, its first-ever strategic vision, charting a bold course for research, education, and public engagement over the next five years.

Rooted in the founding mission of Ambassador Walter H. Annenberg—that every human advancement can be understood through communication, and that education must be in service to all people—the framework reaffirms the school's commitment to scholarship that shapes society. Guided by core values of intellectual rigor, curiosity, social responsibility, academic freedom, and belonging, the plan translates the mission into four actionable pillars.

Dean of the Annenberg School Sarah Banet-Weiser has spent the past two years developing the vision collaboratively with faculty, staff, students, and community members.

The result is a framework designed not just to sustain Annenberg's prominence in the field but to expand its impact for a new era.

A Vibrant Intellectual Ecosystem

At the center of the vision is the conviction that communication shapes how we live—informing health, guiding decisions, and influencing the structures of society. To advance that understanding, the school has established four research networks: Health Communication; Politics, Policy, and Institutions; Cultural Inquiry; and Computational Social Science.

These networks are designed to do more than organize research priorities. Vice Dean Emily Falk, who led the creation of the four school-wide networks, said the networks provide "structure, community, and support for our intellectual ecosystem. These networks encourage scholars to surface shared questions and complementary approaches, serving as connective tissue across disciplines and methods," she added.

Human-Centered Infrastructure

Bold ideas need strong foundations. The school's second pillar recognizes that its spaces and resources are not merely functional—they actively shape culture, well-being, and collaboration.

"Our approach to building out our infrastructure integrates human, technical, and physical resources with the experiences, needs, and talents of our community," said Katie Rawson, director of library services and operations and co-director

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From the Faculty 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.

Faculty Senate Executive Committee Actions Wednesday, April 15, 2026

Report from the Tri-Chairs. Faculty Senate Chair Kathy Brown reminded SEC members of two upcoming Community Listening Sessions on the proposed revisions to the Guidelines on Open Expression. An in-person session will be held on Thursday, April 23, at 4 p.m., at Perry World House. A virtual session will be held on Friday, April 24 at noon [and requires registration by April 22 at 4 p.m.](#) Feedback may be shared with openexpressionfeedback@upenn.edu or anonymously via [this form](#) through May 18.

The listening sessions will emphasize anonymous feedback and privacy and acknowledgement of transparency concerns and distrust stemming from the review process and timeline to-date. SEC members encouraged administrators to summarize community feedback publicly, including clear explanations of any feedback that was rejected and a better articulation of the rationale for the changes to be made to the existing guidelines, and to signal an openness to revising language and procedures based upon it. Feedback regarding the proposed revisions included vagueness of language, centralization of authority, and insufficient faculty governance involvement.

Professor Brown and SEC member Anna Schapiro co-authored, with input from others, a “one-pager” about the rights and responsibilities of the Faculty Senate and the critical importance of its role in shared governance at Penn with the intent to raise faculty literacy across all twelve schools about how the faculty participate in shared governance. Upon motion and second made, SEC members unanimously endorsed the wide distribution of this document, which is now available via the [Faculty Senate website](#).

Faculty Appointees to the Committee on Open Expression. By mail ballot in March and April 2026, SEC adopted a roster of eight faculty members to the Committee on Open Expression for 2025-2026. During the balloting period, one candidate resigned from committee membership. Professor Brown nominated another faculty member as an interim member through the end of the academic year. Upon motion and second made, SEC members unanimously ratified the nomination.

Proposed Amendments to the Faculty Handbook. Several proposed amendments to the Faculty Handbook were discussed.

First, continuing from an initial discussion in March 2026, and upon motion and second made, a “Proposal to Revise Section II.E.9.C. (Rights and Privileges of Retired Faculty Members) to Clarify the Use of the Emeritus/a Title” was approved unanimously.

Second, continuing from an initial discussion in March 2026, and upon motion and second made, a “Proposal from the School of Veterinary Medicine to Increase the Cap on Clinician-Educators in the School from 50% to 60% of the Standing Faculty” was approved by a vote of 33 in favor and three opposed, with four abstentions noted.

Time did not permit a discussion on a “Proposal to Revise the Policy on Extension of the Probationary Periods that Apply to Granting of Tenure or Promotion to Associate Professor Because of a Catastrophic Professional Event.” A mail ballot will be conducted prior to the May 2026 meeting.

Update from the Office of the Provost. Provost John L. Jackson, Jr., discussed the [Update on Penn Forward](#), an initiative aimed at expanding faculty engagement with the Office of the Provost, and the status of the Guidelines on Open Expression and their review process.

Update from the Office of International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS). ISSS Executive Director Rodolfo Altamirano discussed the role of ISSS in assisting Penn community members during this period of rapidly evolving regulations with respect to immigration and status of foreign nationals.

Strategic Vision for Annenberg School for Communication: Connected Futures

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of media and information technology.

This includes reimagining the Annenberg School building by turning the library into a “collaboratory,” redesigning classrooms to support evolving pedagogies, and creating convening spaces that foster creativity, connection, and community.

Transformative and Foundational Education

The students who move through these programs are central to Annenberg’s mission, and the third pillar ensures that the school is preparing them to lead. The curriculum spans all levels—undergraduate, master’s, doctoral, and postdoctoral—each with a distinct purpose, from developing foundational critical skills to producing field-defining original research.

A flagship example of this pillar in action is the new master of communication and media industries (MCMI), which will welcome its inaugural class this fall. The program bridges academic research and industry practice, training the next generation of leaders to navigate and transform the media ecosystem.

As the media landscape continues to evolve,

so does the commitment to preparing students to lead with insight, creativity, and purpose.

Collaboration and Connection for the Public Good

The fourth pillar makes explicit what runs through all the others: Annenberg’s work must connect meaningfully to the world beyond its walls. The school’s research, which spans health, misinformation, media, and democracy, is pursued not in isolation but in trustworthy collaboration with communities, practitioners, lawmakers, and global partners, who share the work widely and collaborate with the goal to foster mutual understanding and create lasting, positive change.

“By working alongside practitioners, from medical professionals and journalists to teachers and lawmakers, our incredible students, staff, and scholars do their best, most meaningful, and impactful research,” said Kelly Fernández, chief of staff and senior director of faculty affairs. “And we want to continue to support them in their collaborative endeavors.”

A Connected Future

Together, the four pillars form a coherent vi-

School of Arts & Sciences to Launch the SAS Commons Initiative

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proaches America 250, the theme of Democracy and Knowledge arrives at a timely moment, inviting reflection on the relationship between democratic life and the production of knowledge and educated citizens.

Under Dr. Rosenfeld’s direction, the program will examine how different fields within the liberal arts, including the natural and physical sciences, the social sciences, and the arts and humanities, can and do contribute to democratic revitalization and the flourishing of democratic citizenship.

“We need, in this moment, to make an affirmative case for what universities, and especially the arts and sciences, contribute to public life,” Dr. Rosenfeld said. “The focus on Democracy and Knowledge is not designed to be right-wing or left-wing or even an effort at balance. Rather, the aim is to show how scholarship in different core disciplines can and does transcend day-to-day political debate so as to open up new questions, new forms of critique, and new ideas that are not otherwise on our mental horizon.”

SAS Commons will also create new opportunities for student engagement. The initiative will build on existing and new courses across the College’s curriculum. A Society of Fellows in Public Knowledge will bring together a select group of postdocs and advanced graduate students to share cross-disciplinary conversation, with a focus on the public-facing presentation of research.

Discussions in the initial two years will address topics ranging from “The Mathematics of Democracy and Fiction” to “Democratic Citizenship” to “How to Look in the Era of AI.” Programs will include conversations, colloquia, and round tables featuring Penn faculty and invited guests, along with an annual ideas festival, extending the reach of SAS Commons across campus and into the broader community.

Soosun You: James Joo-Jin Kim Korean Studies Assistant Professor of Political Science

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James Joo-Jin Kim and Agnes Kim and the James and Agnes Kim Family Foundation established the James Joo-Jin Kim Korean Studies Professorship in 2021. James Joo-Jin Kim is executive chairman of Amkor Technology. Mr. Kim graduated from the Wharton School with a bachelor’s degree in economics in 1959, then earned a master’s degree in economics from Penn Arts & Sciences in 1961. He is an emeritus Penn Trustee and a former member of the Lauder Institute Board of Governors, the Penn Arts & Sciences Board of Advisors, and the Wharton Executive Board for Asia.

In addition to his leadership support, which established the James Joo-Jin Kim Center for Korean Studies, Mr. Kim has established the James Joo-Jin Kim Professorship in Economics at Penn Arts & Sciences and the James Joo-Jin Kim Professorship at the Wharton School, as well as consistently supporting Penn Medicine, the Penn Fund, and the Wharton Fund.

sion: a school that fosters rigorous scholarship, builds infrastructure worthy of its mission, educates students with purpose, and engages the world with integrity. In Dean Banet-Weiser’s words, Annenberg is poised to carry its founding mission forward, into a more informed, just, and connected future.

Wharton Online Announces Digital Strategy in the Era of AI Certificate

Wharton Online has announced the launch of its new Digital Strategy in the Era of AI Certificate, a fully online, self-paced credential designed to help professionals navigate digital disruption, evaluate where AI creates real value, and lead transformation with strategic clarity.

Built as a four-course learning journey, the certificate focuses on the decisions that determine whether digital and AI initiatives succeed or stall. Drawing on decades of Wharton research, the program moves beyond tools and trends to emphasize disciplined thinking, organizational alignment, and practical execution under uncertainty. Participants may enroll in individual courses or complete all four to earn the full certificate.

“Organizations are under pressure to act on digital and AI opportunities before the path forward is fully clear,” said Rahul Kapoor, the David W. Hauck Professor of Management and academic director of the program. “This certificate is designed to help leaders make better strategic choices in that environment—understanding where disruption is coming from, where AI creates value, and how to translate insight into action inside real organizations.”

The Digital Strategy in the Era of AI Certificate is designed for professionals responsible for shaping strategy, leading change, and making decisions in increasingly complex environments. Rather than treating digital transformation as a technology challenge, the program focuses on the strategic, organizational, and leadership capabilities required to move initiatives forward.

The certificate consists of four integrated online courses featuring faculty-led videos, applied exercises, and guided reflections:

1. [Navigating Digital Disruption](#)—Led by Rahul Kapoor, this course helps participants diagnose how disruption unfolds across industries, assess organizational readiness, and evaluate innovation and platform strategies. Learners will build practical frameworks for making informed strategic recommendations under uncertainty.
2. [Leading the Digital Organization](#)—Taught by Lori Rosenkopf and George Day, this course focuses on execution. Participants will learn how to align structures, incentives, and leadership approaches to sustain transformation, balancing short-term performance with long-term adaptability.
3. [AI Strategy and Decision Making](#)—Led by Raghuram Iyengar and Prasanna Tambe, this course develops the strategic judgment needed to evaluate where AI creates value. Participants will assess when to automate, augment, or rely on human expertise while navigating risks such as bias, data limitations, and overreliance on analytics.
4. [Advancing Digital Innovation](#)—Taught by Tyler Wry and Ethan Mollick, this course shifts from insight to execution. Learners will evaluate digital opportunities, design business models, and test assumptions through disciplined experimentation, building initiatives that are both strategically sound and organizationally viable.

Together, the four courses form a cohesive progression that mirrors the realities of transformation work, from diagnosing disruption and designing organizations to applying AI and advancing innovation with discipline.

Courses are delivered fully online and asynchronously, allowing participants to begin at any time and progress at their own pace. Each course awards a digital badge and continuing education units upon completion, and learners who complete all four will earn the Digital Strategy in the Era of AI Certificate, a verified Wharton credential that can be shared on professional profiles and résumés.

The program is designed for strategy leaders, transformation and innovation professionals, product and platform leaders, and general managers seeking to strengthen their ability to lead digital and AI-driven change. No technical background is required.

Enrollment for the [Digital Strategy in the Era of AI Certificate](#) and each individual course is now open.

Penn GSE and Urban Studies Program in the School of Arts & Sciences Launch Secondary Education Minor

Penn GSE and the urban studies program in the School of Arts & Sciences have partnered to launch a new secondary education minor that is designed to create a direct undergraduate pathway into the teaching profession. This new offering is the second minor at Penn GSE (after the longstanding urban education minor) available to undergraduates and reflects a growing commitment to expanding access to teacher preparation earlier in students’ academic careers.

“We are excited to offer this new pathway into the teaching profession for Penn undergrads,” said GSE Dean Katharine Strunk. “Especially in this moment of nationwide teacher shortages, it is incumbent upon institutions like ours to make it easier for students to pursue their interest in joining the profession.”

The secondary education minor is a teacher licensure-focused program that prepares Penn undergraduates for teaching careers while they pursue their primary fields of study. The nine-unit minor integrates coursework in urban education, research, and educational foundations with subject-specific methods courses in areas

such as English, mathematics, science, social studies, and world languages.

A defining feature of the new minor is its embedded student teaching requirement. Students complete a full-time student teaching placement in the spring of their senior year. Research has shown that this kind of full-time student teaching is critical for those training to be teachers, as it enables students to apply theory to practice while working closely with a mentor teacher, receiving detailed and targeted feedback from an experienced coach. This approach, along with their minor coursework and undergraduate majors, prepares students to not only meet state licensure competencies but also enter the profession well-prepared to tackle the realities of classroom instruction. By aligning undergraduate study with certification requirements, the program lowers traditional barriers to entering the teaching profession and offers students a clear, efficient route into classrooms immediately after college.

“That is the main difference between this new program and the existing urban education minor, which is continuing,” said GSE’s assis-

Penn Professional Staff Assembly 2026-2027 Executive Board and Committee Nominations Now Open

The PPSA offers an excellent opportunity for professional development, networking, and making an impact on campus. If you wish to enhance your leadership abilities, broaden your network, or become more involved at the University of Pennsylvania, consider being a candidate on the 2026-2027 election slate. Positions are open on the Executive Board or as a University committee representative. Any of these positions could be a valuable part of your career journey at Penn. All monthly-paid, full-time University staff members are eligible to apply, regardless of previous engagement with PPSA.

- Deadline to nominate a colleague: Friday, May 1, 2026 at noon
- Deadline to self-nominate: Friday, May 15, 2026 at noon

PPSA Executive Board Open Positions

- *Chair-Elect* (one position, three-year term of service): The PPSA operates under a tri-chair format. The chair-elect role is a one-year term, followed by a one-year term as PPSA chair, and then transitioning to the past-chair role in the third year. The chair is the primary executive officer responsible for calling and presiding over meetings, preparing agendas, and providing leadership and representation of PPSA at University Council and University-level committees.
- *Members-at-Large* (four positions, two-year term of service): The members-at-large participate in Executive Board meetings, manage PPSA projects and events, and serve on other University committees as needed.

University Council Committee Open Positions

Nominations for a two-year term on University Council committees can choose from five standing committees and two independent committees. These committees, comprising faculty and student members, advise on academic and administrative policies. This is an opportunity to learn about the University’s administrative structure and contribute to its decisions. The PPSA tri-chairs will appoint committee members from all applicants after the election. For further information on the committees, visit: <https://secretary.upenn.edu/univ-council/committees>.

Any Questions? Contact the PPSA Nomination Committee at ppsa@lists.upenn.edu.

—Lamesha C. Brown, Director
College Achievement Program, Penn First Plus

—Chris Klaniacki, Associate Director
Office of the Vice Provost for Global Initiatives

—Valerie Wrenn, Associate Director
Weingarten Center, University Life

tant dean for teacher preparation and undergraduate education Patrick Sexton, noting that the older program requires slightly fewer credits (seven) and is geared towards students who are looking to work at the intersection of education and social impact—say, in policy, nonprofits, or research. “We are grateful to our partners in urban studies, especially Julie McWilliams, who have worked so hard to respond to student interest in preparing for careers in the classroom. And we are so excited about these amazing students building their commitment to the kids and families of Philadelphia.”

2026 President's Engagement and Innovation Prize Winners



The recipients of the 2026 President's Engagement and Innovation Prizes: (Top left) Connie Ni, Darlene Leohansson, and Chloe Chang. (Top right) Justin Wang, Janine Haros, and Eric Lee. (Bottom left) Margaret Zhu; (bottom right) Nhlanhla Mavuso.

Penn President J. Larry Jameson announced the recipients of the 2026 President's Engagement and Innovation Prizes. Awarded annually, the prizes empower Penn undergraduate students to design and undertake post-graduation projects that make a positive, lasting difference in the world. Since the establishment of the President's Prizes, generous philanthropic support has ensured that each prize-winning project receives \$100,000, as well as a \$50,000 living stipend per team member. Each team collaborates with a Penn faculty or staff mentor to implement their project.

Six Penn seniors have been named recipients of the 2026 President's Engagement Prize. They are Chloe Chang, Darlene Leohansson, and Connie Ni for HAVEN, and Janine Haros, Eric Lee, and Justin Wang for Shared Vision. Senior Margaret Zhu has received the President's Innovation Prize for Serpent Robotics and senior Nhlanhla Mavuso has received the President's Sustainability Prize, a sub-category of the President's Innovation Prize, for Fluid Silicon.

"This year's recipients of the President's Prizes exemplify the creative rigor and civic commitment that define Penn at its best," said President Jameson. "Through projects such as HAVEN, Shared Vision, Serpent Robotics, and Fluid Silicon, our students are translating bold ideas into real-world impact. I am deeply grateful to the faculty and staff mentors who helped bring these projects to life and proud of the lasting difference these students will make."

The 2026 prize recipients—selected from an applicant pool of 67—will spend the next year implementing their projects:

Chloe Chang, Darlene Leohansson, and Connie Ni for HAVEN: Ms. Chang, an English major with a concentration in creative writing in the College of Arts & Sciences from Manhasset Hills, New York; Ms. Leohansson, a neuroscience major in the College from Philadelphia; and Ms. Ni, a health and societies major in the College from Chattanooga, Tennessee, will focus on Home for Arts, Voices, Enrichment, and Nurturing (HAVEN), an in-shelter after-school program for families experiencing homelessness at Jane Addams Place, a family shelter in North Philadelphia. Designed to reimagine the shelter as a site for childhood, creativity, and growth, HAVEN addresses urgent gaps in literacy, prosocial play, and

emotional development for children while creating leadership pathways for high-school youth and reducing caregivers' barriers to employment. The HAVEN team is mentored by Caroline Watts, a senior lecturer and director of the Office of School and Community Engagement at the Graduate School of Education.

Janine Haros, Eric Lee, and Justin Wang for Shared Vision: Ms. Haros, a health and societies major in the College from Pen Argyl, Pennsylvania; Mr. Lee, a biochemistry and biophysics dual-degree major in the Roy and Diana Vagelos Program in Molecular Life Sciences in the College; and Mr. Wang, a biology major in the College from Seattle, Washington, will work on Shared Vision, which aims to deliver free eye screenings, care coordination, and patient education directly within Philadelphia's homeless shelters to holistically empower unhoused individuals. Shared Vision is mentored by Rithambara Ramachandran, an assistant professor of ophthalmology in the Perelman School of Medicine.

Margaret Zhu for Serpent Robotics: Ms. Zhu, a finance major in the Wharton School from Short Hills, New Jersey, will develop Serpent Robotics, an electric, rope-climbing robotic system that allows arborists and tree care workers to cut branches and secure their descent to the ground, dramatically reducing injuries in one of the nation's most dangerous industries. Its lightweight, portable platform improves safety, lowers costs, and supports utility vegetation management by helping prevent outages and wildfire risks caused by unmanaged tree growth. Serpent Robotics is mentored by Jeffrey Babin, a professor and associate director of engineering entrepreneurship in the School of Engineering and Applied Science and the engineering faculty director for Venture Lab.

Nhlanhla Mavuso for Fluid Silicon: Mr. Mavuso, who is completing a coordinated-dual degree in physics and computer engineering and an accelerated masters in electrical engineering in the Vagelos Integrated Program in Energy Research (a joint program in the School of Arts & Sciences and the School of Engineering and Applied Science), from Simunye, Eswatini, will work on Fluid Silicon. Working in novel ways with modern computers' core component, silicon, Fluid Silicon will enhance energy efficiency by al-

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Weitzman School of Design and Penn IUR To Launch Public Service and Policy Initiative

The Weitzman School of Design, in partnership with the Penn Institute for Urban Research (Penn IUR), is launching the Public Service and Policy Initiative (PSPI). Founded by former Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, W'79, PSPI applies rigorous academic research, the experience of former local public executives, and human-centered solutions to combat economic hardship in Philadelphia. The initiative reinforces the Weitzman School's commitment to design as a tool for public good by bringing together research, civic leadership, and community partnerships.



Michael Nutter

“Design is fundamentally about improving the conditions of everyday life,” said Weitzman School Dean and Paley Professor Fritz Steiner. “With PSPI, we are leveraging the Weitzman School's strengths in urban planning and community engagement to better understand the realities of economic hardship in our city—and to translate that understanding into practical, scalable solutions.”

Bridging Research, Leadership, and Practice

Municipal governments are on the front lines of responding to public needs more than ever—a trend likely to grow given the federal landscape.

2026 President's Engagement and Innovation Prize Winners

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lowing reconfigurable chips to monitor how their characteristics change over time and temperature to identify opportunities for adaptive compensation thereby lowering voltage, improving frequency, and further enhancing chip reliability. The platform exploits these opportunities to recover 30+% of silicon performance and energy waste to reduce data-center energy and improve reliability without the need to fabricate costly new chips. Fluid Silicon is mentored by André DeHon, the Oliver C. Boileau Jr. and Nan Eleze Boileau Professor of Electrical Engineering.

This year's finalists also included seniors Anmol Dash, Allison Li, and Claire Zhang for MOMENT; Maxfield Brody and Guadalupe Espinoza-Chavez for Reaching the Heartland; Brian Dinh for PEACH; Shailesh Senthil Kumar for Colab; and Andrew Mao for Lucy.

“We are very proud of our great Penn students who aim to change the world by innovating new technologies and advancing health and well-being across our communities,” said Provost John L. Jackson Jr. “These exciting projects reflect the wide range of interests on our campus, from robotics and energy efficiency to vision care and childhood development. They also demonstrate the powerful ways that interdisciplinary connections shape research and education at Penn. We are grateful to their faculty advisors and the staff of the Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships, who worked closely with them to develop these promising initiatives.”

The prizes are supported by Trustee Emerita Judith Bollinger and William G. Bollinger, in honor of Ed Resovsky, and chair of the Board of Trustees Ramanan Raghavendran.

PSPI's integrated model aims to disrupt the status quo; challenge preconceived notions built into policy and investment with reliable, resident-informed data; and facilitate learning between experienced local public executives and aspiring ones.

PSPI will advance three interconnected efforts: the ongoing Philadelphia Economic Equity Project (formerly housed at Penn's School of Social Policy & Practice), as well as two additional programs in partnership with Penn IUR—the Impact Scholars and the Public Service Pipeline.

The Philadelphia Economic Equity Project (PEEP) generates key data to help shape scalable solutions to economic hardship and mobility through a longitudinal, neighborhood-level survey of Philadelphia residents.

The Impact Scholars program will provide a platform for former local public executives to advance unfinished projects, share insights with current leaders, researchers, and students, and help bring tested strategies to other American cities. The Public Service Pipeline program will create learning opportunities and career-pathway exposure for undergraduate and graduate students at Penn by providing access to the real-world, practical experiences of former public executives. Together, PSPI's programs will create a holistic platform for exploring and designing strategies that keep people and communities healthy, safe, and economically thriving.

“The Public Service and Policy Initiative is a natural partner for Penn IUR,” said Eugénie L. Birch, co-director of Penn IUR and Lawrence C. Nussdorf Professor of Urban Research and Education at Weitzman. “Its mission aligns directly with our commitment to interdisciplinary urban scholarship and the cultivation of informed, effective urban leadership to advance sustainable development.”

A New Model for Local Data and Policy Insight

PSPI originated in 2022 with its research arm, PEEP, which integrates academic research with

the lived experiences of Philadelphia residents and the expertise of public-sector leaders. Adapted from Columbia University's New York City Poverty Tracker, PEEP is designed to focus specifically on the experiences and insights of Philadelphians, building a hyper-local information system that captures how residents interact with city, state, and federal services.

In the fall of 2023, PEEP launched its initial longitudinal panel survey with over 2,400 Philadelphia residents participating in a comprehensive study of employment, housing, income, benefits use, and life experiences. The intentional use of strategies to reach hard-to-engage communities, such as offering materials in multiple languages and modes, and enhanced participation incentives, resulted in panel enrollment that surpassed the initial target sample size by 25 percent. By combining longitudinal surveys with interviews and administrative data, PEEP provides a rare level of specificity that can better target solutions to the needs of Philadelphians.

Looking Ahead

The first cohort of PSPI's Impact Scholars will be invited in the coming months and announced preceding the fall 2026 semester. New PEEP research insights, including white papers and briefs to inform local decision-making and investments, will be released throughout the year.

“I am excited and honored to join both the Weitzman School of Design and Penn IUR in launching the Public Service and Policy Initiative,” said Mr. Nutter, a senior executive fellow and PSPI's managing director. “The future of local governance relies on us strengthening cities, listening and responding to community members experiencing hardship, and inspiring and preparing the next generation of local public servants. We are committed to developing strong leaders and advancing solutions that help communities truly prosper—and there is no better place to start than Philadelphia.”

Penn Procurement Services and Penn Sustainability Announce 2025 Green Purchasing Honorees

The recipients of the University of Pennsylvania's 2025 Green Purchasing Award were announced on April 10 by Penn Procurement Services and Penn Sustainability. Now in its ninth year, the award recognizes outstanding contributions to sustainable purchasing across the University. This year, three recipients representing two centers were honored for their impactful work.

Lauder College House Reupholstery Project

When Lauder College House opened in 2016, Penn Residential Services invested in high-quality, sustainably sourced furniture from Herman Miller. Rather than replacing these furnishings at the end of their usable life, assistant director of projects and contract management Jeremy Estrada developed a plan to extend their lifespan through reupholstery once the soft surfaces showed wear.

In summer 2024, after confirming that the furniture frames remained structurally sound, the project, managed by special projects coordinator Caleb Younkman, became Penn's first large-scale reupholstery initiative. This effort diverted a significant volume of waste from landfills, reduced demand for new raw materials, and applied key circular economy principles. It also resulted in an estimated cost savings of \$64,000.

Penn Libraries Fleet Electrification, Water Filtration, and Waste Separation Efforts

As director of facilities management, Salvatore Caputo led a series of sustainability initiatives across Penn Libraries that extended well beyond his core responsibilities. Most notably, he oversaw the transition to a new fleet of electric vans, replacing three gas-powered vehicles and reducing carbon emissions by 3,881 pounds annually—the equivalent of 18 barrels of oil.

Mr. Caputo also expanded recycling efforts and introduced composting through the installation of multi-stream waste receptacles throughout the Van Pelt–Dietrich Library Center, working closely with Housekeeping to ensure proper implementation. In addition, he led the installation of advanced water filtration systems, enabling the phase-out of bottled water services. This change both reduced environmental impact and generated more than \$5,000 in annual operating cost savings.

From advancing circular economy strategies to reducing emissions and operational waste, these initiatives demonstrate the vital role sustainable purchasing plays in supporting Penn's climate and fiscal goals. The Green Purchasing Award recipients exemplify how leadership at every level can drive meaningful, lasting change. Their work reflects Penn's commitment to responsible resource use and shows how practical, solutions-oriented approaches can strengthen our operations, lower our environmental footprint, and model sustainable practices across campus.

Honors & Other Things

Twelve ASSET Center PhD Students Named 2026 AWS Fellows

Through the ASSET (AI-Enabled Systems: Safe, Explainable and Trustworthy) Center, 12 exceptional doctoral students who are advancing the frontiers of trustworthy artificial intelligence will receive \$840,000 in funding for research and mentoring support as 2026 Amazon Web Services (AWS) ASSET Fellows. Supported by a long-standing relationship between the ASSET Center and AWS, the fellowship continues to empower emerging leaders whose research addresses the technical, ethical and societal challenges of modern AI systems.

Building on the success of the 2025 AWS ASSET Fellows, whose work spanned areas such as robust machine learning, interpretability and AI safety, the program has further strengthened the ASSET Center's mission to develop AI systems that are reliable, transparent and aligned with human values. The 2026 cohort reflects both the depth and diversity of research underway across Penn Engineering, with fellows working at the intersection of machine learning, systems theory and real-world applications.

"We are grateful to AWS AI for their continued support," said Rajeev Alur, the Zisman Family Professor of Computer and Information Science and founding director of the ASSET Center. "Since the inception of the AWS ASSET Fellows program three years ago, AI technology has rapidly progressed, and its applications have become more pervasive. This has created new challenges in ensuring the trustworthiness of emerging architectures such as Multimodal GenAI systems and Agentic AI systems. This year's class of fellows has been selected to explore these new directions, and I eagerly look forward to the results of their research."

The ASSET Center recognizes the following students as 2026 AWS Fellows:

- Ryan Chan (electrical and systems engineering)
- Seewon Choi (computer and information science)
- Cassandra (Casey) Goldberg (computer and information science)
- Mayank Keoliya (computer and information science)
- Shayan Kiyani (electrical and systems engineering)
- Jiuyao Lu (statistics [Wharton School])
- Josh Ludan (computer and information science)
- Marcus Min (computer and information science)
- Ramya Ramalingam (computer and information science)
- Yao Tang (computer and information science)
- Honam Wong (computer and information science)
- Zixuan Yi (computer and information science)

Recent Honors for Penn GSE Faculty for Research, Leadership, Impact and Innovation

Several Penn GSE faculty members have recently received awards and honors for their research, leadership, and impact across education, policy, and interdisciplinary innovation. Recognitions this year include multiple honors from

the American Educational Research Association (AERA), a university-wide artificial intelligence award, and national distinctions in medical education leadership and alumni engagement.

These accolades reflect Penn GSE's strategic vision, *Together for Good*, and its ongoing commitment to advancing knowledge, shaping educational practice, and supporting communities through research, collaboration, and public scholarship.

This year's faculty honors include:

Sigal Ben-Porath (MRMJJ Presidential Professor of Education)

Sigal Ben-Porath will receive the 2026 Faculty Award of Merit from Penn Alumni, which recognizes Penn faculty who make outstanding contributions to Penn alumni's lifelong learning and engagement by sharing their scholarship with the broader Penn community. The award will be presented to her at a gala on November 13.

Dr. Ben-Porath, who also serves as faculty director of the SNF Paideia Program for Civic Dialogue, studies schools and universities as democratic institutions, with a focus on free speech, civic engagement, and higher education policy. Her work extends beyond the classroom through public scholarship and engagement with alumni and academic communities, helping to foster dialogue and intellectual connection across the University.



Sigal Ben-Porath

Ed Brockenbrough (Associate Professor)

Ed Brockenbrough has received a Spencer Foundation Racial Equity Grant for his study, "Online Content as Sexuality Education Curricula for LGBTQ+ Youth of Color," which explores the online sexuality education experiences of LGBTQ+ youth of color. He also recently appeared on the *Teach the Babies* podcast, where he talked about queerly responsive pedagogy and sex education, and the *Ratchet Roundtable* podcast, where he talked about Black queerness, safe spaces, and a pedagogy of the closet.



Ed Brockenbrough

Dr. Brockenbrough's research focuses on negotiations of identity, pedagogy, and power in urban educational contexts, particularly through the lenses of Black masculinity studies and queer of color critique.

H. Gerald Campano (Professor)

H. Gerald Campano has been named a 2026 Fellow of the American Educational Research Association, one of the field's highest honors, which recognizes scholars for their exceptional contributions to education research. He was inducted at the AERA's annual meeting in Los

Angeles. In addition, Dr. Campano, alongside collaborator Maria Paula Ghiso of Columbia University, received the AERA Division G Luis Moll Creative Work/Book Award, which recognizes outstanding scholarship on the social contexts of education, for *Methods for Community-Based Research*.

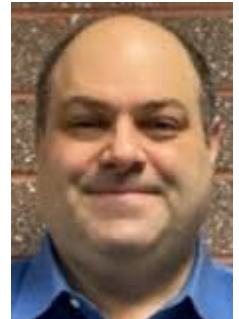


Gerald Campano

Dr. Campano's work spans elementary literacy, critical ethnic studies, immigrant education, and participatory research methodologies. His scholarship emphasizes community-based inquiry and positions research as an epistemic right, advancing approaches to education that are grounded in care, interdependence, and collaboration, with a strong commitment to equity and justice.

Andy Danilchick (Director of the Project for Mental Health and Optimal Development)

Andy Danilchick has been awarded \$1 million in funding from two Public School Districts' Opioid Recovery Trust three-year grants: half in partnership with the Chester-Upland School District in Pennsylvania and half with the Red Clay Consolidated School District in Delaware. The grants support membership in the Consortium for Mental Health and Optimal Development and the development of opioid and addiction toolkits for students, educators, and the community.



Andy Danilchick

Nelson Flores (Professor)

Nelson Flores has been appointed to the American Educational Research Association Minority Fellowship Program Selection Committee, which supports the development of scholars from historically underrepresented backgrounds in education research.

Dr. Flores's scholarship examines how race and language have been historically constructed in the U.S. and how those dynamics continue to shape education policy and practice. His work has been central to advancing a raciolinguistic perspective, which explores the intersection of language, power, and racialization in schooling.

Vivian L. Gadsden (William T. Carter Professor Emerita of Child Development and Education)

Vivian L. Gadsden has received two of AERA's highest honors: the 2026 Distinguished Contributions to Research in Education Award and the inaugural Felice J. Levine Distinguished Contributions to Mentoring in Research and Leadership Award, recognizing her profound impact on scholarship and the development of future scholars.

Dr. Gadsden's research has significantly advanced understanding of families, literacy, and

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early childhood development, while her mentorship has shaped generations of students and education leaders. Her career spans leadership roles in national research centers, federal and foundation advisory boards, and at Penn, where she has contributed extensively to academic governance and the field of education research. In the fall of 2025, she was elected vice president of the National Academy of Education.



Vivian Gadsden

Seiji Isotani (Associate Professor)

Seiji Isotani has received a Discovering the Future of AI Award from Penn AI for leading the Penn AI Pedagogy Initiative, a University-wide effort to support the responsible and effective integration of artificial intelligence in teaching and learning.

The initiative brings together interdisciplinary student and faculty teams to co-design, test, and refine AI-supported instructional strategies across courses at Penn. By focusing on real classroom challenges, the project aims to develop scalable, evidence-based approaches to AI in education while preserving the human elements of teaching. An outcome of the work will be the Penn AI Pedagogy Repository, a shared digital library of tools and models that can be adopted across institutions.

Dr. Isotani is an internationally recognized leader in artificial intelligence in education whose work bridges computer science, the learning sciences, and public policy, with a focus on expanding access to personalized learning in diverse contexts.

James P. Orlando (Adjunct Associate Professor)

James P. Orlando has received both the Ethel Weinberg Medical Education Leadership Award from the Alliance of Independent Academic Medical Centers and the Parker J. Palmer Courage to Lead Award from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, which recognizes designated institutional officials who demonstrate excellence in leading graduate medical education programs.

Dr. Orlando, who serves as associate dean for graduate medical education at Washington State University's Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine, has spent his career advancing leadership development and innovation in medical education. His work emphasizes a "learning leader" approach, supporting students, residents, and faculty in developing their skills while aligning training programs with institutional and community needs.



James Orlando

Damon Centola: 2026 Guggenheim Fellow

Damon Centola, a faculty member in the Annenberg School for Communication, School of Engineering and Applied Science, and School of Arts & Sciences, has been named a 2026 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellow. He is among 223 fellows in 55 disciplines chosen from nearly 5,000 applicants in this 101st class of Guggenheim Fellows, and he is one of just three awardees to receive the fellowship in the category of sociology.



Damon Centola

The Elihu Katz Professor of Communication, Sociology and Engineering at the University of Pennsylvania, where he also directs the network dynamics group and is a senior fellow at the Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics, Dr. Centola researches social networks and behavior change. His work has received numerous scientific awards, including the Goodman Prize for Outstanding Contributions to Sociological Methodology in 2011; the James Coleman Award for Outstanding Research in Rationality and Society in 2017; and the Harrison White Outstanding Scholarly Book Award in 2019.

Dr. Centola was a developer of the NetLogo agent-based modeling environment and was awarded a U.S. patent for inventing a method to promote diffusion in online networks. He is a member of the Science Foo community and a fellow of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University. He is a series editor for Princeton University Press and the author of *How Behavior Spreads: The Science of Complex Contagions and Change: How to Make Big Things Happen*.

Founded in 1925, the Guggenheim Fellowship was created by Simon and Olga Guggenheim in memory of their son John Simon. The award is designed to support a project lasting six to 12 months and to allow fellows to pursue independent work at the highest level under the "freest possible conditions," according to the foundation.

Iris Horng and Anicca Liu: 2026-2028 Provost's Graduate Academic Engagement Fellows

Iris Horng and Anicca Liu were recently named the 2026-2028 Provost's Graduate Academic Engagement Fellows.

PGAEF at the Netter Center is an opportunity for PhD students across all schools and fields at the University of Pennsylvania. Fellows are outstanding students who are involved in community-engaged scholarship and related activities, including Academically-Based Community Service (ABCS), participatory action research, service-learning, and learning by teaching in public schools. The fellowship involves participation in an interdisciplinary faculty-student seminar on community-engaged research and teaching, designing and teaching an ABCS course or engage in other kinds of research and teaching in connection with the Netter Center, a \$5,000 research fund for each fellow, addition-

al support to attend and present at conferences, and one year of full fellowship funding.

Iris Horng, statistics and data science, Wharton (faculty sponsor and advisor: Dylan Small, Universal Furniture Professor and professor of statistics and data science, Wharton) plans to design and teach an Academically-Based Community Service (ABCS) course that introduces statistical literacy to high school students in West Philadelphia through music-centered, project-based learning and near-peer mentorship from Penn undergraduates. Students will leverage their interest in music to explore how algorithms shape music recommendation systems and predictions of musical trends, while developing their own data-driven projects. Relatedly, Ms. Horng will examine how students learn and apply statistical skills through these music-based projects, investigating how this relates to their feelings of empowerment and interest in mathematics. Ms. Horng's research focuses on causal inference and statistical pedagogy, and she is excited to work with the Netter Center to create learning experiences in mathematics and statistics that are creative, collaborative, and connected to students' own lives, encouraging them to pursue these fields further. Prior to starting her PhD at Penn, Ms. Horng studied mathematics at the University of Pennsylvania.

Anicca Liu, Social Welfare, SP2 (faculty sponsor and advisor: Sara S. Bachman, Dean of the School of Social Policy & Practice) plans to develop and teach an ABCS course in which Penn students and Philadelphia high school students partner to co-investigate health disparities affecting LGBTQ+ youth and develop community-driven research and action projects. The course will draw on queer theory and participatory research methods as a basis for addressing the intersecting crises of HIV/AIDS, nicotine vaping, and other substance use that disproportionately impact LGBTQ+ young people. Ms. Liu's research examines stakeholder perspectives on LGBTQ+ youth utilization of sexual health and tobacco cessation services in Philadelphia.

Hemza Tarawneh C'26: Davis Projects for Peace Grant & Huntington Public Service Award

College of Arts & Sciences senior Hemza Tarawneh has been chosen for a Kathryn Wasserman Davis Projects for Peace grant to help refugees in Jordan find protection from the heat and sun.

Mr. Tarawneh, of Milwaukee, is majoring in biology with a minor in chemistry. A first-generation American, his interests include advancing health equity and expanding access to care for underserved communities.

His project is among 142 projects nominated by 98 partner institutions chosen for the Projects for Peace program this year. It is the 18th project from Penn since the award was founded in 2007. The program aims to encourage student initiative, innovation, and entrepreneurship focused on conflict prevention, resolution, or reconciliation.

Mr. Tarawneh's project, the Shade Program, will support the purchase and installation of shade structures to help women and children in two of Jordan's largest refugee camps live comfortably, safely, and with dignity. The structures will be portable and durable and will protect from

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**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 **April 6-12, 2026**. 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 patrol zone, for the dates of **April 6-12,**

2026. The Penn Police actively patrol from Market Street to Baltimore Avenue and from 30th Street to 43rd 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 30th Street to 43rd Street

Crime Category	Date	Time	Location	Description
<i>Assault</i>	04/06/26	9:50 AM	4100 Pine St	Complainant was assaulted by known person
	04/08/26	9:04 PM	Confidential	Confidential
	04/09/26	12:14 AM	Confidential	Confidential
	04/10/26	3:54 PM	4000 Sansom St	Complainant reported a simple assault after an unknown person struck his chest area
<i>Auto Theft</i>	04/11/26	7:05 PM	200 S 40th St	Complainant struck in the face with a rock
	04/06/26	1:42 PM	3600 Sansom St	Theft of a secured e-bike from bike rack
	04/07/26	7:34 AM	3400 Civic Center Blvd	Secured electric scooter taken from bike racks
	04/08/26	10:43 AM	300 S 33rd St	Theft of a secured electric bicycle from bike racks
	04/08/26	4:29 PM	200 S 40th St	Theft of a secured electric scooter from bike racks
	04/08/26	8:32 PM	1 Convention Ave	Theft of a secured electric scooter from loading dock area
	04/09/26	4:43 PM	3720 Walnut St	Theft of a secured electric scooter from bike racks
	04/09/26	6:10 PM	210 S 34th St	Theft of a secured electric scooter from bike racks
	04/09/26	7:46 PM	220 S 33rd St	Theft of a secured electric scooter from bike racks
	04/09/26	9:42 PM	3200 Market St	Theft of an electric scooter from highway
	04/10/26	4:43 PM	4138-52 Market St	Theft of a parked motor vehicle from highway
	04/10/26	8:19 PM	4100 Spruce St	Theft of a parked motor vehicle from highway
	04/10/26	5:06 PM	3710 Hamilton Walk	Theft of a secured electric bike from bike rack
	04/10/26	6:35 PM	3711 Market St	Theft of a secured scooter from bike racks
<i>Disorderly Conduct</i>	04/11/26	7:50 AM	3711 Market St	Secured e-bike taken from bike rack
	04/07/26	7:53 PM	3900 Walnut St	Subject cited for disorderly conduct
<i>Fraud</i>	04/07/26	5:51 AM	1 Convention Ave	Subject cited for defiant trespass/Arrest
	04/12/26	1:42 PM	3901 Locust Walk	Unauthorized charges on complainant's credit cards
<i>Homicide-Gun</i>	04/06/26	4:41 PM	4004 Market St	Gunshot victim found inside of convenience store
<i>Other Offense</i>	04/09/26	1:37 PM	3400 Spruce St	Unwanted contact via text message from an unrecognized number
<i>Retail Theft</i>	04/06/26	9:45 AM	3604 Chestnut St	Retail theft of consumable goods; offenders left the area
	04/07/26	8:28 PM	3604 Chestnut St	Retail theft of consumable goods
<i>Robbery</i>	04/12/26	12:26 PM	3700 Market St	Theft of a cell phone from complainant's hand
<i>Sex Offense</i>	04/10/26	12:54 PM	Confidential	Confidential
	04/10/26	4:06 PM	Confidential	Confidential
<i>Theft from Building</i>	04/06/26	4:30 PM	119 S 31st St	Theft of consumables in apartment building lobby
	04/12/26	7:45 PM	1 Convention Ave	Theft of ID, credit cards, and money from wallet
<i>Theft Other</i>	04/06/26	10:59 AM	4030 Spruce St	Theft of an electric vehicle charging unit and cable from unsecured backyard
	04/10/26	1:17 PM	200 S 38th St	Theft of luggage by an Uber driver
<i>Vandalism</i>	04/10/26	6:09 PM	4000 Chestnut St	Complainant's vehicle incurred damaged during an argument
	04/10/26	1:39 AM	4001 Walnut St	Offender spray painted graffiti on Penn property/Arrest

Philadelphia Police 18th District

Schuylkill River to 49th Street & Market Street to Woodland Avenue

Below are the crimes against persons from the 18th District: 9 incidents were reported for **April 6-12, 2026** by the 18th District, covering the Schuylkill River to 49th Street & Market Street to Woodland Avenue.

Crime Category	Date	Time	Location
<i>Assault</i>	04/06/26	1:57 PM	4824 Baltimore Ave
	04/08/26	3:01 PM	220 S 47th St
	04/09/26	12:20 AM	3700 Blk Locust Walk
	04/09/26	1:38 PM	3400 Spruce St
	04/09/26	5:43 PM	S 34th & Market Sts
	04/10/26	4:53 PM	4000 Sansom St
	04/11/26	8:06 PM	3935 Walnut St
	04/12/26	12:58 PM	4719 Baltimore Ave
	04/06/26	4:42 PM	4004 Market St
<i>Homicide</i>			

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.
- 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, near-by exits, etc.)

Update

April AT PENN

CONFERENCES

24 Penn GSE AI & Education Symposium; join Penn GSE faculty, invited guests, and industry leaders to explore the future of teaching and learning and education policy in the AI era; 11 a.m.-4:15 p.m.; 2nd floor, 3700 Walnut Street; register: <https://aiedpennngse.substack.com/p/ai-and-education-symposium-2026> (Graduate School of Education). Also April 25, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.; online.

Voices Across Borders: Italian Language Symposium; a day-long cultural and pedagogical event centered on the work of Italo-Ethiopian author, storyteller, and music performer Gabriella Ghermandi, opens the event with a free performance open to the public; 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; rooms 200 and 319, College Hall; register: <https://tinyurl.com/italian-conf-apr-24> (Francophone, Italian & Germanic Studies; Center for Italian Studies).

FILMS

22 Spring, Spring & When Buckwheat Flowers Bloom; animated film that tells the sto-

ry of a son-in-law struggling to overcome a series of obstacles on his path to marriage; conversation with filmmaker Jae-huun Ahn; 5:30 p.m.; room 401, Fisher-Bennett Hall; register: <https://forms.gle/nrUmNxfEoNASjzUUA> (Korean Studies).

23 Free Beer Tomorrow; a documentary film project that tells the story of Jack's/Summit Station, Ohio's longest running lesbian bar; 5:30 p.m.; room 109, Annenberg School; register: <https://tinyurl.com/free-beer-apr-23> (Annenberg School for Communication).

24 Punishing the Professor; traces the journey of P. Senrayaperumal, who rose from a village dropout to a college professor, only to face institutional discrimination rooted in caste prejudice; features conversation with filmmaker Aayna; 12:30 p.m.; room B1, PCPSE (Cinema & Media Studies).

FITNESS & LEARNING

23 Exhibiting Your Work; Alessandro Faccete, art critic, and Nicole Pollard, exhibition designer, will share information on gallery representation, curatorial relationships, self-organized exhibition-making, publishing, and online publicity and presence; 6 p.m.; Stuart Weitzman Hall (Weitzman School of Design).

Center for Undergraduate Research & Fellowships

Various locations. Info: <https://curf.upenn.edu/events>.

23 Earth Day Crafting + Research Discussion; a hands-on research-themed crafting event celebrating Earth Day, featuring a discussion on how to make the most of summer research; 5 p.m.; room 209, Gutmann College House.

Penn Libraries

Various locations. Info: <https://www.library.upenn.edu/events>.

22 Digital Humanist's Helpdesk: Creating your Scholarly Portfolio with Domain of One's Own; introduces Penn students to the fundamentals of creating a polished, professional scholarly portfolio using accessible, beginner-friendly web hosting tools; 11 a.m.-2 p.m.; Research Data & Digital Scholarship Exchange, Van Pelt Library.

Common Press: Studio Use Training; a one-hour intensive session focused on proper studio practices to use the Common Press independently as an advanced user; noon; Common Press, Fisher Fine Arts Library.

This is an update to the [April AT PENN calendar](#), which is online now. Submit events for future AT PENN calendars at almanac@upenn.edu.

Honors & Other Things

(continued from page 7)

UV radiation while withstanding desert winds, sun, and heat, and materials will be sourced from Jordanian vendors. The project will work in collaboration with partner organizations that run the Azraq and Za'atari refugee camps and will be involved in on-the-ground implementation.

Mr. Tarawneh's initiative prioritizes the highest-need sites and focuses on hospital-affiliated outdoor spaces and those near community centers. He has also been awarded the Samuel Huntington Public Service Award to continue implementing this project for the year following his Projects for Peace Summer Grant.

Projects for Peace was founded by philanthropist Kathryn W. Davis, who celebrated her 100th birthday by supporting 100 projects, designed "to bring about a mindset of preparing for peace, instead of preparing for war." Mr. Tarawneh applied for the grant with assistance from the Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships.

Christy Xie L'27: 2026 Madhani Legal Tech Fellow

The University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School has announced Christy Xie, L'27, as the inaugural recipient of the Madhani Legal Tech Fellowship, which provides financial support and resources to Penn Carey Law students pursuing the creation and development of legal tech projects or ventures.

"This fellowship reflects Penn Carey Law's commitment to supporting student-driven innovation at the intersection of law and technology," said Sophia Z. Lee, Dean and Bernard G. Segal Profes-

sor of Law. "Christy's selection highlights both the strength of her work and the important role our students are playing in shaping the future of legal services by building tools that improve systems and rethink how legal services are delivered."

Ms. Xie's venture, InVera IP, is an innovative platform designed to help inventors navigate the early stages of the patent process, from organizing invention disclosures to evaluating patentability.

"I am honored to be selected as the inaugural Madhani Legal Tech Fellow and truly grateful for the support and opportunity during this early stage of my legal tech startup journey and career," said Ms. Xie. "This recognition truly reflects the efforts of the entire InVera team, and I appreciate building this product alongside such capable and motivated teammates."

The fellowship's selection committee reviewed applications from a competitive pool of candidates proposing solutions across various areas of legal technology, including litigation tools, compliance platforms, and client service innovations.

"We were especially impressed with Christy's entrepreneurial vision, her deep understanding of the patent process, and the domain expertise of the team she has assembled," said R. Polk Wagner, deputy dean for academic affairs and innovation at Penn Carey Law, who led the fellowship selection committee.

The InVera platform uses artificial intelligence to guide inventors and patent professionals through the entire patent application process—from initial idea conception and patentability research to drafting applications and responding to patent office actions. The platform aims to make the traditionally lengthy and costly patent application process significantly more efficient.

"The funding will help us continue developing and improving the platform, while the mentorship and access to leaders in legal technology will encourage us to think more critically about designing a product that is both useful and re-

sponsible," said Ms. Xie. "We especially look forward to connecting with practitioners and learning from their experiences to ensure that what we are creating is practical and meets client needs."

Made possible through the generous support of Nehal Madhani, L'09, founder of Alt Legal, the Madhani Legal Tech Fellowship provides selected students with mentorship, resources, and support to develop innovative legal technology solutions. The year-long fellowship reflects Penn Carey Law's commitment to interdisciplinarity and fostering innovation at the intersection of law and technology.

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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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TALK ABOUT TEACHING AND LEARNING

AI-Informed Assignments and Activities

For AI month, the Center for Excellence in Teaching, Learning & Innovation (CETLI) has asked several faculty to share ideas about how they are using AI in assignments and activities to support student learning both about AI and about course content. To learn more about the strategies shared here, attend CETLI's [AI-Informed Activities and Assignments Panel](#) on April 21, 2026 from 3:30 to 5 p.m.

Faizan Alawi, Equipping Future Dentists

Penn Dental Medicine has integrated artificial intelligence into its educational program to prepare students for a clinical environment increasingly influenced by AI-assisted decision support. One example is the use of generative AI in differential diagnosis. In these activities, students work in groups to analyze patient cases with unknown disorders where there are multiple possible diagnoses that might explain the patients' signs and symptoms. After completing the group assignment, we ask the students to repeat the exercise with the AI of their choice. Then we have the groups reflect on their responses and the AI responses, which allows them to compare reasoning pathways and critically evaluate AI-generated suggestions. The goal is not to replace clinical judgment, but to help students develop the skills needed to interpret, question, and responsibly incorporate AI insights into diagnostic reasoning. By engaging with AI outputs alongside traditional clinical training, students learn to identify limitations, recognize bias, and validate recommendations against established evidence and clinical findings.

In parallel, we have developed a generative AI "tutorbot" (Dr. Byte) as an educational support tool. Embedded within Canvas, Dr. Byte provides on-demand explanations, case-based prompts, and guided questioning that help students deepen their understanding of their didactic coursework. Together, these initiatives aim to build AI literacy, strengthen diagnostic thinking, and equip future dentists to use these technologies thoughtfully and ethically in patient care.

Faizan Alawi is the vice dean for academics and director of Penn Oral Pathology Services at Penn Dental.

Liz Emery, Understanding Nutrition Plans

For my course, "Nutrition Essentials: Bridging Disciplines for Better Health," I have students reflect on an AI response to a task that gives them insight into their own health and helps to assimilate course material in a way that they can apply personally. In this project, students were guided through a step-by-step assessment of their physical activity level, something students often overestimate, then they used an online body weight planner from the NIDDK to estimate their energy needs. They developed some personal nutrition goals based on prior course learning and used AI to create a three-day meal plan based on their calculated energy needs, typically a tedious task that requires specialized expertise. The most important step was that students critiqued the AI plan for accuracy, relevancy, and applicability. They reflected on their likelihood of being able to follow the plan, and what supports they might need to incorporate at least some of the ideas, and lastly, the implications of using AI for nutrition advice without professional guidance. Often, the AI suggested plans with errors or that were too expensive or culturally inappropriate. This activity gave students a hands-on way to learn and apply the material in an online asynchronous class and allowed them to think critically about "nutrition science" delivered by AI.

Liz Emery is a practice associate professor in the department of biobehavioral health sciences at Penn Nursing.

Bhuvnesh Jain, Helping Students Understand Their Careers (not confirmed)

One key concern students have is their careers and what impact AI may have on their future. In my "Introduction to AI" course, for the final project I have students start by using LLMs (large language models) to figure out how AI is affecting entry-level roles in the field in which they are interested. I ask them to outline their initial assumptions about the job and why they are interested in it. Then I encourage them to use a combination of LLM queries and standard research to chart the skills they need for that job, the ways in which entry level jobs are changing and what skills they might develop that are AI complementary. The final product of

this work is a "personal roadmap" and a reflection where students outline for themselves what they will need to develop to thrive in their future. They also reflect on how their views on AI have evolved over the semester. This project allows students to use AI in an interactive way and understand that it is not simply a Google search. Instead, they see the ways that going back and forth with AI can be useful as they complete a project that is personal and meaningful for their future.

Bhuvnesh Jain is the Walter H. and Leonore C. Annenberg Professor in the Natural Sciences in the department of physics and astronomy at SAS.

James Petersson, TAsk

For my graduate level Biological Chemistry II class, my TA and I created a customized GPT called Teaching Assistant for Specialized Knowledge (TAsk) to help students ask and get answers about the material. We trained the model using the papers that the course would cover as well as audio transcripts from my lectures. Using TAsk, students were able to get their questions answered relatively quickly (two-minute average response time). The bot gave students mostly correct answers and proved a helpful brainstorming tool for students working on their more creative final project. The answers provided did contain some errors, were sometimes more detailed than the student needed, and occasionally included irrelevant information, but those problems were rare. Overall TAsk was as effective as a human TA for most tasks and students found it a useful supplement to the professor and TAs, particularly for its 24/7 accessibility. While getting quick answers to questions was helpful to students, students were also more likely to submit AI-generated content as their own work, which made grading more difficult.

James Petersson is a professor of chemistry and biochemistry & biophysics and the chair of graduate studies at SAS.

Sarah Pierce, Teaching Law Students to Use AI Like Lawyers

At Penn Carey Law's Legal Practice Skills program, we've approached generative AI the way we approach every other lawyering skill: Deliberately, developmentally, and grounded in professional responsibility. Our first-year law students spend the fall building the foundations of legal analysis from scratch. For their first major assignment, there is no AI use at all. Students aren't yet equipped to evaluate AI's legal analysis critically. And a lawyer who can't do that can't catch AI's mistakes. Those foundational skills have to come first. By mid-fall, carefully scoped AI use is introduced, paired with substantive instruction on how large language models work, their risks and limitations, ethical use, and effective prompting. Lawyers have ethical obligations to understand and supervise the tools they use, and so this training is both professional and pedagogical. In the spring, we allow students to use AI, but within a framework that mirrors actual practice. Students complete a real federal court AI disclosure form with their federal court brief, independently verify every AI output, and learn a core principle: AI belongs in the middle of the writing process. The lawyer first diagnoses the problem herself, uses AI to explore options, and retains full responsibility for every decision.

Our students' reflections on that process—submitted alongside their disclosure forms—bore this out. Most used AI for editing and surface-level revisions, not substantive analysis. Nearly two-thirds described specific steps taken to verify AI output. And when asked how they'd approach AI use in the future, the most common answer was more targeted and more restrained—not more expansive. For students just beginning to develop professional judgment, that kind of calibration is exactly what we hoped to see.

Sarah Pierce is the Denise A. Rotko Associate Dean for Legal Practice Skills and the academic director of the JD/MBA capstone program at Penn Carey Law.

If you have questions about your own classes and ways to support your students—either in using or not using AI—please reach out to CETLI: cetli-info@upenn.edu.

This continues the series that began in the fall of 1994 as the joint creation of the College of Arts & Sciences, the Center for Teaching and Learning (the precursor to CETLI) and the Lindback Society for Distinguished Teaching.

See <https://almanac.upenn.edu/talk-about-teaching-and-learning-archive> for previous essays.