

Almanac

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From the Board of Trustees Chair

Update on a Search for Penn's Next President

June 10, 2024

Dear Members of the Penn Community,

I write to share an update on the timeline for launching a search for Penn's next president. I want to first express my immense gratitude to Interim President J. Larry Jameson for his steady, thoughtful leadership during this time of transition at Penn. We are extremely fortunate to have the benefit of his vast experience and talents as we sustain Penn's important missions and focus on the future. I am delighted to share that he has graciously agreed to remain in the role through academic year 2026, or until we have identified a successor.

More information will be forthcoming as we get closer to launching the next presidential search, including opportunities to share your thoughts as members of the Penn community.

I was humbled to preside over this year's Commencement for the first time in my role as board chair and found it to be a beautiful, celebratory end to what has been a challenging year. I wish all of you a restful and re-energizing summer.

—Ramanan Raghavendran
Chair, University of Pennsylvania Board of Trustees

From the University Leadership

Temporary Standards and Procedures for Campus Events and Demonstrations

June 6, 2024

Today, we write to share two important updates about Penn's policies and procedures for when, where, and how open expression can take place. Throughout the academic year, members of the Penn community have urged University leadership to clarify and update our guidance and policies specific to campus events and demonstrations. This request for increased clarity also emerged as a priority recommendation in the final reports from both the [University's Task Force on Antisemitism](#) and the [Presidential Commission on Countering Hate and Building Community](#).

First, effective immediately, Penn will adopt and implement [Temporary Standards and Procedures for Campus Events and Demonstrations](#). In developing these temporary standards, feedback and input were sought from school deans, the Faculty Senate, and student, faculty, and staff leaders.

The purpose of the Temporary Standards and Procedures is to reinforce and reaffirm Penn's commitment to open expression and, at the same time, ensure that events, demonstrations, and other expressions of free speech are appropriately managed, while allowing Penn to deliver its

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Brigitte Weinsteiger: H. Carton Rogers III Vice Provost and Director of the Penn Libraries

The University of Pennsylvania has named Brigitte Weinsteiger the H. Carton Rogers III Vice Provost and director of the Penn Libraries, effective June 1. Provost John L. Jackson Jr. announced the appointment following a national search.

Ms. Weinsteiger has served as the Gershwind and Bennett Family Senior Associate Vice Provost for Collections and Scholarly Communications since September 2022 and as interim director of the Penn Libraries since September 2023. In this



Brigitte Weinsteiger

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Mary-Hunter “Mae” McDonnell: Bantwal Family Goldman Sachs Presidential Professorship

Penn Interim President J. Larry Jameson and Wharton dean Erika James have announced that Mary-Hunter (“Mae”) McDonnell has been named the inaugural Bantwal Family Goldman Sachs Presidential Associate Professor at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

The Bantwal Family Goldman Sachs Presidential Professorship was endowed by Vivek J. Bantwal, W’99 and Sarika Singh Bantwal. The Bantwals were inspired to establish this fund as a tribute to Vivek Bantwal’s



Mae McDonnell

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Felicia Washington: Vice President of Human Resources

Felicia Washington has been named vice president of human resources at the University of Pennsylvania, effective September 1, 2024. She succeeds Jack Heuer, who is retiring.

In making the announcement, Craig Carnaroli, senior executive vice president, praised Ms. Washington for “her exceptional leadership skills, experience, and commitment to the mission of higher education.”



Felicia Washington

As vice president, Ms. Washington will oversee talent acquisition and management, compensation, benefits, employee relations, wellness and quality of work life programs, and professional development. She will also lead and manage Human Resources’ strategic and operational direction.

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Launch of Penn Washington

Interim President J. Larry Jameson and Provost John L. Jackson, Jr. announce the creation of Penn Washington, a physical and programmatic home for the University of Pennsylvania’s engagement in the nation’s capital. Penn Washington will enrich the connection between federal and global policy makers and Penn faculty, students, and staff; expand educational and academic programs connected to Washington; identify and promote opportunities for Penn scholarship to inform and engage policy; and reinforce the essential contributions that one of the world’s greatest Universities can make to the structure and function of democracy and global affairs.

In announcing the initiative, Dr. Jameson reflected that the new program embodies the directions and imperatives of the University’s strategic framework, *In Principle and Practice*, “to address truth, trust, and democracy as one of the great challenges that command our attention, to deepen connections with neighbors and the world, and to foster leadership and service.”

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Fayyaz Vellani: Bozza Family Penn First Plus Faculty Co-Director

Provost John L. Jackson, Jr. has announced the appointment of Fayyaz Vellani as the Bozza Family Penn First Plus Faculty Co-Director, beginning July 1, 2024. Dr. Vellani is currently faculty director of the College House Undergraduate Research Program, a fellow of Hill College House, and a lecturer in critical writing.

"Fayyaz Vellani, across 15 years at Penn has been one of our most strongly committed, thoughtful, and empathetic community members in advancing support and mentoring for our first-generation and/or lower-income students," said Provost Jackson. "He is deeply experienced at connecting student resources with the wider campus missions of undergraduate teaching, research, and campus life, especially for students from historically underrepresented backgrounds, and has worked around the world with students from a wide range of global areas, including Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. We are deeply grateful to Camille Charles for her extraordinary service as an inaugural faculty co-director of P1P from the program's founding five years ago—as well as to ongoing Bozza Family Penn First Plus faculty co-director Russ Composto, executive director Marc Lo, and the outstanding P1P staff for their work in sustaining P1P's invaluable mission on our campus."

Penn First Plus, founded in 2018, provides support, resources, and community-building for undergraduate students who are the first in their families to pursue the baccalaureate and/or



Fayyaz Vellani

come from limited or modest financial means. It includes the Shleifer Family Penn First Plus Center in College Hall; the Pre-First Year Program, an intensive four-week summer program for select incoming first-year students; and the College Achievement Program, which offers comprehensive support services that continue throughout students' undergraduate experiences at Penn.

Dr. Vellani—trained as a geographer with specializations in geopolitics, disability studies, and sustainable development—is the author of *Understanding Disability Discrimination Law Through Geography* (Routledge, 2016) and the novel *Tea With Ms. Tanzania* (Red Sea Press, 2022) about life in Tanzania in the tumultuous 1960s. His article, "Engagement with Place: Cairo as Classroom," which analyzes events and discourses related to the Arab Spring in the early 2010s, won the International Award for Excellence from the *International Journal of Diversity in Organizations, Communities, and Nations*. As faculty director of the College House Undergraduate Research Program, he mentors undergraduate research fellows drawn from each college house and across all four undergraduate schools, who receive academic and financial support to pursue a one-year interdisciplinary research project of their own design.

Dr Vellani served from 2010-2013 as head of graduate studies at the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London and has been associate director of critical writing at Penn, director of admissions and financial aid at the University of Toronto Faculty of Law, and associate registrar of the Yale Law School, among other positions. He received a PhD in geography from Royal Holloway, University of London; an MA in higher education administration from New York University; and a BES with honors in environment and resource studies from the University of Waterloo.

From the University Leadership

From the University Leadership: Temporary Standards and Procedures for Campus Events and Demonstrations

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core missions of teaching, research, service, and patient care without disruption. We encourage all members of the Penn community to review these [Temporary Standards and Procedures](#), which consolidate, organize, clarify, and update guidelines specific to campus events, including demonstrations.

Second, a faculty-led task force will be charged with reviewing the Guidelines on Open Expression and making recommendations for revisions to the guidelines. Penn remains steadfast in its commitment to freedom of thought, inquiry, speech, and lawful assembly, and it is essential from time to time that we review the Guidelines on Open Expression to ensure they are supporting these foundational commitments.

Lisa Bellini, senior vice dean for academic affairs in the Perelman School of Medicine, and chair of the Committee on Open Expression, and Sigal Ben-Porath, MRMJJ Presidential Professor of Education in the Graduate School of Education and faculty director of the SNF Paideia Program, will co-lead the task force. Additional members will soon be appointed, and the task force will begin its work this summer.

The task force's work will follow the historical precedent for reviewing the Guidelines on Open Expression, which last occurred in 1989. This review will include the task force providing recommendations for consideration by the Committee on Open Expression (COE). The COE, in turn, will present recommendations to the University Council. The University Council will then present final recommendations to the Interim President. As part of this effort, the task force will also be charged with reviewing the Temporary Standards and Procedures for Campus Events and Demonstrations.

These are important steps forward for our campus community, and we look forward to sharing additional updates as this work progresses over the summer.

Sincerely,

—J. Larry Jameson, Interim President

—John L. Jackson, Jr., Provost

—Craig R. Carnaroli, Senior Executive

Vice President

—Sara S. Bachman, Dean, School of Social Policy & Practice

—Sarah Banet-Weiser, Walter H. Annenberg Dean, Annenberg School for Communication

—Jonathan A. Epstein, Interim Executive Vice President of the University of Pennsylvania

Launch of Penn Washington

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Penn Washington is located at 101 Constitution Avenue, adjacent to the Capitol Building, at the seat of the federal government. The program will initially comprise three functions:

1. The Penn Franklin Initiative, a new set of programs to focus on domestic policy, through curriculum, scholarship, and convenings.
2. The Penn Biden Center for Diplomacy & Global Engagement, since 2018 a set of Penn engagements focused on global policy, in collaboration with Penn Global, Perry World House, and related Penn programs.
3. A platform for the University of Pennsylvania in Washington, supporting the longstanding undergraduate Penn in Washington program from the School of Arts and Sciences and other ongoing and new school and center initiatives, annual lectures, student courses, executive education, research opportunities, and events.

Penn Washington will collaborate with faculty from all 12 schools on activities and programs to generate new insight and knowledge. Vice Provost for Global Initiatives Ezekiel J. Emanuel will serve as the initial faculty director, with Associate Vice Provost Amy Gadsden as deputy director. Provost Jackson reflected on these initial appointments: "Zeke has an inside knowledge of Washington that is exceptionally strong, and his record of entrepreneurship and institution-building at Penn make him an ideal candidate to launch this important new initiative. And Amy has time and time again proven her ability to develop and execute Penn's strategic initiatives and work with school and center partners to project them brilliantly into new locations."

Penn Washington will be the University's home in the nation's capital.

for the Health System & Interim Dean of the Perelman School of Medicine, Perelman School of Medicine

—Steven J. Fluharty, Dean and Thomas S. Gates, Jr. Professor of Psychology, Pharmacology, and Neuroscience, School of Arts & Sciences

—Andrew M. Hoffman, Gilbert S. Kahn Dean of Veterinary Medicine, School of Veterinary Medicine

—Erika H. James, Dean and Reliance Professor of Management and Private Enterprise, The Wharton School

—Vijay Kumar, Professor and Nemirovsky Family Dean, Penn Engineering

—Sophia Z. Lee, Dean and Bernard G. Segal Professor of Law, Penn Carey Law School

—Frederick Steiner, Dean and Paley Professor, Stuart Weitzman School of Design

—Katharine O. Strunk, Dean and George and Diane Weiss Professor of Education, Graduate School of Education

—Antonia M. Villaruel, Professor and Margaret Bond Simon Dean of Nursing, School of Nursing

—Mark S. Wolff, Morton Amsterdam Dean, School of Dental Medicine

Mary-Hunter "Mae" McDonnell: Bantwal Family Goldman Sachs Presidential Professor

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late father, Jayawant D. Bantwal.

"Professor McDonnell is known for exploring the nature of organizations and how complex and interwoven forces shape their actions," said Interim President Jameson. "By drawing from a variety of fields and integrating them into her scholarship, she offers vital insights that explain a foundational aspect of our modern world. We are deeply thankful to Vivek and Sarika for endowing this professorship, which positions Professor McDonnell to continue investigating these important dynamics and their impact on our world."

Dr. McDonnell joined the Wharton School as an assistant professor of management in 2015 and held the Clarence Nickman Assistant Professorship from 2019 to 2020. She was promoted to associate professor of management with tenure in 2020. In 2023, Dr. McDonnell also became faculty co-director of the Zicklin Center for Governance and Business Ethics. Along with her primary appointment as the Bantwal Family Goldman Sachs Presidential Professor, Dr. McDonnell has secondary appointments in both Wharton's legal studies & business ethics department and in the sociology department of Penn's School of Arts & Sciences.

In her research, Dr. McDonnell uses organizational theory and sociology to explore the relationships and interactions between politics, corporations, and the stakeholders of both insti-

tutions. Dr. McDonnell's recent publications investigate topics such as organizational misconduct and dealings among governmental agents, social activists, and businesses.

"I am filled with gratitude for Vivek and Sarika's philanthropy and dedication to Wharton, which is exemplified through the creation of this presidential professorship," said Dean James. "Since Vivek's graduation in 1999, he has been a committed alumnus, giving generously in many ways, including his current service on Wharton's Undergraduate Executive Board. I am delighted the Bantwals have made it possible to further recognize Professor McDonnell's impactful research and leadership."

Vivek Bantwal is currently a partner and global head of the financing group at Goldman Sachs Group, Inc. He has been an active member of Wharton's Undergraduate Executive Board since 2019 and was the 2024 Wharton undergraduate graduation speaker.

On the motivation behind creating this professorship, Vivek and Sarika Bantwal said, "looking back on Vivek's experience as a student at Wharton with fondness and gratitude, we are proud to be able to support Wharton faculty and their pedagogical knowledge and practice today. It is an even greater honor to be able to establish this professorship to commemorate a beloved family member who made the pathway to Vivek's Wharton education possible."

The stated meeting of the Board of Trustees was held on Friday, June 14, 2024, at the Inn at Penn. Reverend Charles Howard, vice president for social equity and community and University chaplain, gave the invocation.

Board chair Ramanan Raghavendran's report included the following resolutions, all of which were approved:

- Memorial for Claire Muriel Mintzer Fagin
- Appreciation for William P. Lauder and designation as Trustee Emeritus
- Re-election of Julie Beren Platt as vice chair of the Board of Trustees
- Election of the executive committee and the investment board

Vice chair Julie Beren Platt presented a resolution to re-elect Ramanan Raghavendran as chair of the Board of Trustees, effective July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025, which was approved.

Interim President J. Larry Jameson lauded a "picture-perfect" Commencement On May 20th and an outstanding Alumni Weekend attended by more than 10,000 alumni. He thanked members of the University Task Force on Antisemitism and Presidential Commission on Countering Hate and Building Community for their reports. He also expressed gratitude to the Board of Trustees for their support and said he looks forward to working with them over the next two years.

Interim President Jameson presented the following resolutions, each of which was approved:

- To appoint Thomas P. Sontag as interim vice president for human resources from July 1-August 31, 2024
- To appoint Felicia Washington as vice president for human resources, effective September 1, 2024

Provost John L. Jackson, Jr., presented the academic report. He noted the appointment of Brigitte Weinsteiger as the H. Carton Rogers III Vice

Trustees June Meeting Coverage

Provost and director of the Penn Libraries, effective on June 1, 2024. He thanked her for having served in the interim role since September 2023. Provost Jackson indicated that searches had been launched for a vice provost for climate science, policy, and action and a vice provost for the arts. Each vice provost will be a member of the standing faculty and are expected to begin in the fall. A resolution on faculty appointments and promotions was approved.

Senior Executive Vice President Craig Carnaroli presented the financial report. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, total net assets for the consolidated University are forecasted to increase \$1.1 billion to \$30.9 billion (\$21.5 billion for Penn's academic component, \$9.4 billion for the health system). An increase in net assets from operations of \$686 million is projected for the consolidated University.

The health system is projecting an increase in net assets from operations of \$314 million and the academic component is projecting an increase in net assets from operations of \$372 million. Cash is projected to decrease \$107 million to \$3.1 billion for the consolidated University (\$2.0 billion for the academic component, \$1.1 billion for the health system). The change in cash includes forecasted capital spending of \$1.1 billion and \$320 million of University investments into the Accredited Investment Fiduciary (AIF), partially offset by returns on cash balances and lower levels of mRNA patent revenue.

For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, total net assets for the consolidated University are budgeted to increase \$1.2 billion to \$32.1 billion (\$22.2 billion for the academic component, \$9.9 billion for the health system). An increase in net assets from operations of \$407 million is budgeted for the consolidated University, with the health system budgeting an increase of \$303 million and the academic component budgeting an increase of \$105 million. Cash is projected to de-

Felicia Washington: Vice President of Human Resources

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Since 2019, Ms. Washington has served as the senior vice president of human resources at the University of Southern California, where she provided leadership that impacted 28,000 faculty and staff members as well as 47,500 students. She was instrumental in forming the Human Resources, Equity, and Compliance Division and implementing USC's first university-wide policy on prohibited discrimination, harassment, and retaliation, covering all community members.

Before her tenure at USC, Ms. Washington served as vice chancellor for workforce strategy, equity, and engagement at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Ms. Washington holds a BA from the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill and a law degree from the University of Virginia. She has led an extensive career in higher education and private practice, including her role as a partner at the law firm of K&L Gates LLP. Ms. Washington has served on several boards and committees within various academic and professional communities, including the North Carolina Medical Board and UNC Board of Trustees.

Tom Sontag, the executive director of human resources, will serve as interim vice president for the two months until Ms. Washington's arrival at Penn.

Increase \$242 million to \$2.9 billion for the consolidated University (\$2.0 billion for the academic component, \$895 million for the health system), primarily due to planned capital expenditures of \$1.2 billion and lower levels of mRNA patent revenue, partially offset by proceeds from a planned debt issuance and cash from operations.

Jonathan A. Epstein, interim executive vice president of the University of Pennsylvania for the health system & interim dean of the Perelman School of Medicine, gave the Penn Medicine report. He congratulated the 2024 MD, PhD, and master's degree graduates and described his recent meetings with alumni and other groups. There is a focus on implementing new therapies for patients that come from new discoveries, in line with *In Principle and Practice*.

E. Whitney Soule, vice provost and dean of admissions reported that 65,235 applications were received for the Class of 2028. Just over 3,500 applicants were accepted, for a target class of 2,400 students.

The Board of Trustees received reports from the committees on academic policy; audit & compliance; budget & finance; development; facilities & campus planning; local, national and global engagement; and student life. Sixteen resolutions from the budget & finance committee were approved.

Michael Barrett, President of Penn Alumni, saluted Trustee Emerita Gloria Twine Chisum, on the 50th anniversary of her appointment as the first Black woman to serve on the Board of Trustees. Dr. Chisum is also the co-founder of Penn Alumni's James Brister Society. Mr. Barrett also announced the 2024 alumni award winners.

Mr. Raghavendran presented resolutions on appointments to Penn Medicine and other advisory boards, which were approved.

The next meetings of the Board of Trustees will be held on September 26, 2024.

Honors & Other Things

Charlene Compher: President of ASPEN Rhoads Research Foundation

Charlene Compher, the Shearer Chair of Healthy Community Practices, a professor of nutrition science, and director of nutrition programs at Penn Nursing, will serve as president of the ASPEN Rhoads Research Foundation for the next two years. Its mission is to raise money to fund clinical and metabolic research that will translate into safe and effective nutrition care. Many of its grant recipients go on to become leaders of ASPEN, including Dr. Compher, who served as ASPEN president from 2016 to 2017.

Dr. Compher is an advanced practice clinical dietitian specialist with the Clinical Nutrition Support Service at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, where she works with the home parenteral nutrition team and leads dietetics research.

"When I think about the goals and values of the Rhoads Research Foundation, I cannot think of anyone who personifies these more than Dr. Compher," said her Penn Nursing colleague and newly elected ASPEN vice president Sharon Irving. "Throughout her distinguished career, Dr. Compher has furthered nutrition research by collaborating with teams of diverse scientists from multidisciplinary specialties and shares her enthusiasm and clinical acumen with Penn students. She is renowned and respected for her knowledge, teaching, and supportive mentorship. We look forward to her leadership as the president of the Rhoads Research Foundation for ASPEN."

"The foundation will be in very skilled hands," said ASPEN clinical practice specialist Ainsley Malone. "There are numerous examples of Dr. Compher's leadership, including the six years she served as editor-in-chief of ASPEN's Clinical Guidelines. While ASPEN president, Dr. Compher inspired global efforts to standardize the diagnosis of malnutrition in adults. She is a core leader with the Global Leadership Initiative on Malnutrition (GLIM) and led a systematic review of validation of the Academy-ASPEN Indicators of Malnutrition (AAIM)."

To date, the Rhoads Research Foundation has awarded \$2.78 million in funding dollars to 139 investigators, clinicians, trainees, and graduate students whose research includes basic investigations aimed at improving scientific understanding of nutrient regulation in different disease states, as well as clinical and translational research to determine how the practice of nutrition support can continue to be refined and individualized to optimize clinical outcomes.

"The dedication I feel for the foundation stems in part from the pivotal role it has played in my own academic career," said Dr. Compher. "My doctoral research was funded in part by a dietitian's research grant from the foundation. Applying for and being awarded this grant was my first experience with grantsmanship and a source of great satisfaction and skill development. My research enabled me to enter the

academy at Penn Nursing while maintaining a clinical practice at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. I have had many opportunities in these roles to conduct research and collaborate with and mentor promising young investigators."

Annamarie Hufford-Bucklin: American Constitution Society Next Generation Leader

Annamarie Hufford-Bucklin, L'24, has been selected by the American Constitution Society (ACS) as a 2024 Next Generation Leader (NGL).

Each year, roughly 25 recent and forthcoming law school graduates across the country who have demonstrated special leadership in their work with ACS's student chapters are selected as NGLs, joining a small group of law students guiding the future of the organization.

The leadership program from the progressive legal organization, whose membership includes more than 250 chapters of students and lawyers nationwide, provides the chance for participants to engage in meaningful career development opportunities while accessing vast networks of progressive lawyers and change-makers throughout the country.

Cara McClellan, director of the Advocacy for Racial and Civil (ARC) Justice Clinic and Practice Associate Professor of Law in the Penn Carey Law School, who nominated Ms. Hufford-Bucklin for the 2024 Clinical Legal Education Association (CLEA) Outstanding Team Award, said, "Annamarie has gone above and beyond throughout the semester in her thorough representation of clients. In addition to getting to know her as a clinic student, she also served as my research assistant and demonstrated the same commitment to excellence."

Ms. Hufford-Bucklin began working with ACS in 2019 as a Network Advancement Fellow with ACS's Pro Bono and State Attorney General projects. As co-president of Penn Carey Law's ACS chapter during the most recent academic year, Ms. Hufford-Bucklin has worked diligently to help expand the chapter's campus presence while also connecting with the Temple University chapter and other Philadelphia area student and lawyer ACS chapters to foster a growing network of cooperation and collaboration.

"Annamarie helped lead the chapter through a very successful year of events that ranged from advice on 1L exams, to Supreme Court Reviews, to visits from judges, DAs, and state SGs," said Kermit Roosevelt, the David Berger Professor for the Administration of Justice and Penn Carey Law's ACS faculty advisor. "The chapter's programming helped students understand the legal world that confronts them. I'm delighted to see Annamarie get the recognition she deserves for her leadership in supporting Penn students and the mission of ACS."



Charlene Compher



Annamarie Hufford-Bucklin

Penn Medicine: Human Rights Campaign Foundation LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leader

Six hospitals in the University of Pennsylvania Health System (UPHS) have earned perfect scores as part of Penn Medicine being named a 2024 LGBTQ+ Healthcare Equality Leader by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation. The 16th annual Healthcare Equality Index (HEI) surveyed 1,065 participating institutions, scoring them based on how many LGBTQ+ inclusive policies and practices they have in place in four different criteria areas: the foundational elements of LGBTQ+ patient-centered care, patient services and support, employee benefits and policies, and patient and community engagement.

Based on these criteria, the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, Penn Presbyterian Medical Center, Chester County Hospital, Lancaster General Hospital, Princeton Health, and Pennsylvania Hospital each received the top score of 100 points.

"We are proud of our continued recognition, as it represents our ongoing commitment to providing high quality care for LGBTQ+ patients across the system," said Kevin Kline, an assistant professor of family medicine and community health in the Perelman School of Medicine and Penn Medicine's inaugural medical director for LGBTQ+ Health.

The Healthcare Equality Index is a project of the Health & Aging Program at the Human Rights Campaign Foundation. The Health & Aging Program researches, develops, and advocates for LGBTQ+ health and aging initiatives at the federal, state, and local levels, and provides support to institutions seeking to enhance LGBTQ+ well-being via education, policy, research, and technical assistance.

Antonia M. Villarruel: Modern Healthcare's 50 Most Influential Clinical Executives

Penn Nursing Dean Antonia M. Villarruel has been recognized by *Modern Healthcare* as one of the 50 Most Influential Clinical Executives for 2024. The profiles of all the honorees are featured in the June 10, 2024, issue of the magazine.

This award honors licensed clinicians in executive roles who are deemed by their peers and the senior editors of *Modern Healthcare* to be paving the way to better health through their executive responsibility, leadership qualities, innovation, community service and achievements inside and outside of their respective organizations.



Antonia Villarruel

"Our 2024 honorees work in all corners of the industry and at organizations and companies of all sizes," said Mary Ellen Podmolik, editor-in-chief at *Modern Healthcare*. "Yet one thing they share is a commitment to improving their organizations inside and out. They are leading workforce strategies, expanding access to care and improving the bottom line. At the same time, our

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Brigitte Weinsteiger: H. Carton Rogers III Vice Provost and Director of the Penn Libraries

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50 Most Influential Clinical Executives also are finding time to be part of their communities, a critical part of understanding the patient's needs and redefining healthcare."

Andrew Zahrt: Scialog Funding for Automating Chemical Laboratories

Andrew Zahrt, an assistant professor of chemistry in the School of Arts & Sciences, is a member of one of seven teams of early career researchers that have won Scialog funding for automating chemical laboratories. Dr. Zahrt's team's project is called *Automated Workflows to Assess Physical Constraints in Neural Networks for Molecular Property Prediction*.

The awards are given through *Scialog: Automating Chemical Laboratories*, a three-year initiative that aims to accelerate innovation and broaden access within the chemical enterprise through advances in automated instrumentation and artificial intelligence. Individual awards of \$60,000 will go to 17 researchers from several institutions in the United States and Canada. The awards are funded by the Research Corporation for Science Advancement (RCSA), the Arnold and Mabel Beckman Foundation, and the Frederick Gardner Cottrell Foundation.

Scialog is short for "science + dialog." Created in 2010 by the RCSA, the Scialog format aims to accelerate breakthroughs by building a creative network of scientists that crosses disciplinary silos, and by stimulating intensive conversation around a scientific theme of global importance. Participants are selected from multiple disciplines, approaches and methodologies and propose high-risk, high-reward projects based on innovative ideas.

capacity, she oversees the libraries' \$30 million budget for collections, its 10 million print and electronic volumes, 350,000 journals, and a rich array of digital resources. She leads the collections and scholarly communications division of the Penn Libraries, ensuring that the selection, acquisition, management, and preservation of the libraries' collections meet the diverse needs of the Penn community, and she oversees outreach, teaching, and research support to faculty and students at Penn, in Philadelphia, and beyond.

"Brigitte has been a visionary and dynamic leader of the Penn Libraries for more than 16 years," said Provost Jackson, "placing a high priority on engaging our campus and our community, advancing diversity and inclusion across our collections, and promoting open communications both internally and externally. She will be a great partner for all of us in advancing the values of *In Principle and Practice* in the years ahead, accelerating interdisciplinary inquiry across campus while deepening our connections with local neighbors and with the wider world through research and scholarship. I am very grateful to Deputy Provost Beth A. Winkelstein and the members of the consultative committee that she chaired, who helped us to arrive at this outstanding result for our university."

In her 16-year tenure with Penn Libraries, Ms. Weinsteiger has overseen a wide range of departments, including the 11 departmental libraries situated in academic and cultural buildings across the University's campus, among them the Fisher Fine Arts Library and the recently renovated Holman Biotech Commons. Leading 115 highly experienced staff, along with

hundreds of student employees and interns, she has launched initiatives that advance the Penn Libraries as a whole, including Diversity in the Stacks, and the transformation of Penn scholarship to make it freely available to the world. She also led the formation of the new Center for Global Collections and defined a set of strategic priorities for the libraries' special and global collections that emphasize building distinctive collections that create an enduring contribution to history and global understanding.

"I see my role as a library leader to connect vision, partners, resources, and strategy," Ms. Weinsteiger said. "Libraries are not just about books or buildings; they are also about people. A central aim of the libraries will be to engage and partner with University and community stakeholders in furthering the University's academic and societal mission, including effective communication and collaboration with partners, a pragmatic resolve to inspire a culture focused on practical outcomes and engagement, and an ethos of entrepreneurship to find opportunities across campus and beyond."

Ms. Weinsteiger comes to this role with a master of science in library and information science from Drexel University and a master of arts in liberal arts with a focus in medieval studies from the University of Pennsylvania, along with two bachelor of arts degrees from Penn State, one in medieval studies and one in integrative arts.

2024-2025 University Catalog

The Office of the University Registrar is pleased to announce the release of the [2024-2025 University Catalog](#) for the University of Pennsylvania.

This edition of the University Catalog includes all degree granting programs, many certificates offered across the University, and courses at all levels associated with these programs. The catalog also includes the Pennbook, the Faculty Handbook, and many academic policies and resources.

This edition introduces an exciting new feature that shows users the courses associated with attribute requirements, making clear which courses will count toward program requirements.

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to the work of compiling and publishing this latest catalog. The University Catalog can be found at <https://catalog.upenn.edu>. Please send all questions and comments to catalog@registrar.upenn.edu.

— Margaret Kip, University Registrar

Call for Applications: Regional Network Collaborative for Water Leadership

The Water Center at the University of Pennsylvania is accepting applications to the 2024-2025 Regional Network Collaborative for Water Leadership cohort. This nine-month program aims to build a collaborative network that will provide support, opportunity, and inspiration for mid-career water-related professionals.

If you or someone you know is interested in participating in the 2024-2025 Leadership Collaborative, fill out the application form [here](#) no later than July 15, 2024. For more information, click, [here](#).

Newly Soundproofed Recording Studios in Penn Libraries' Albrecht Music Library's Ormandy Music and Media Center

Two newly soundproofed recording studios in the Albrecht Music Library's Ormandy Music and Media Center provide expanded opportunities for the Penn community to make recordings of their creative work.

As a response to an ongoing need on campus for recording spaces available to students, two studio spaces in the Glossberg Suite, located on the fourth floor of Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center, are being outfitted with soundproof tiles and doors this semester. Once complete, the studios will reopen for all Penn students, faculty, and staff to reserve.

"We are incredibly happy to be able to enhance the Glossberg Suite to provide more recording space for the Penn community," said Liza Vick, head of the Otto E. Albrecht Music Library. "The University of Pennsylvania's new strategic plan calls us to be interwoven and inventive, and our studios enable this creative practice across the disciplines by allowing musicians and podcasters to create in our space and with our collections."

The studios come equipped with the fundamental tools needed to create a high-quality recording, including microphones, headphones, and computers with editing software.

Both spaces can be used to record the spoken word for podcasts, video voice-overs, and interviews. The Glossberg Recording Room, the older of the studios, has been a popular choice for campus podcasters for several years, including *#OurWharton*, *Amplify Nursing*, and *The Lauder Podcast*, and podcast hosts will now benefit from the studio's enhanced soundproofing.

The newer studio—Recording Room 424.6—is specifically outfitted for music recording, ideal for enthusiasts looking for a small-scale recording area outside of their home or office. "Our campus is full of students who love music and are passionate about their work, but aren't necessarily earning a degree in music," Ms. Vick noted. This studio features broadcast microphones, small diaphragm condenser mics, stands, cabling, and a four-channel Avid interface.

Other spaces for recording and media production in the Penn Libraries include the Hechtman Recording Studio, which supports video, audio, and photo production. The Music Library also lends musical instruments, hosts vast collections of scores, books, and other reference materials, and provides access to streaming audio and video.

Bookings began on June 3, 2024. To request a reservation, visit the web pages for either studio: [Recording Room 424.6](#) (suitable for recording music and spoken word) or the [Glossberg Recording Room 424.2](#) (suitable for recording spoken word).

Deaths

David Espey, English

David Baldwin Espey, former assistant dean of the College of Arts & Sciences and a former lecturer and administrator in the department of English, died on April 19. He was 83.

Born in Elmira, New York, Dr. Espey graduated from Hamilton College, then went on to earn his master's degree from Johns Hopkins University and his PhD in English from the University of Michigan. He spent two years in Morocco as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the early 1960s, which gave him a deep appreciation of other cultures and perspectives and inspired his love of teaching. Dr. Espey received Fulbright senior fellowships to teach in Morocco, Turkey, and Japan.

In 1979, Dr. Espey joined Penn's faculty as assistant dean of the College of Arts & Sciences and as an academic advisor in the school. In 1984, he became a coordinator in the department of English, and nine years later, he became director of the department. During his time at Penn, he also served as a lecturer in the English department and in the College of General Studies (the precursor of today's College of Liberal & Professional Studies) and directed the English department's freshman English program. In 2006, Dr. Espey earned a teaching award for his lectures in CGS ([Almanac April 18, 2006](#)). "In courses on topics ranging from travel writing to modernism," said his write-up upon receiving the award, "he has garnered high marks from his CGS students, one of whom writes, 'In attending Prof. Espey's class, I found inspiration and a burning love for poetry!'" He retired from Penn in 2007.

Dr. Espey loved traveling, hiking, reading, and gardening. He cared deeply about issues like literacy, poverty, and international health, and donated to and volunteered for various non-profit organizations, including serving as a board member of the Eastern Service Workers in Philadelphia.

He is survived by his wife, Molly Tobin Espey; his children, Daniel J. Espey and Claire Tobin Espey; his sisters, Libby Reider and Margaret Iaconelli; his brother, John Espey; and many nieces and nephews. A celebration of Dr. Espey's life will be held later this summer. Donations can be made to the Abramson Cancer Center of the University of Pennsylvania (<https://www.pennmedicine.org/cancer/giving>).

Donald Trachtenberg, Penn Dental Medicine

Donald I. Trachtenberg, C'58, D'63, GM'67, a former lecturer, clinical associate, and adjunct professor in the department of preventive and restorative sciences of Penn Dental Medicine, died on December 20, 2023. He was 86.

Dr. Trachtenberg was born in Philadelphia and grew up in nearby Wynnefield, attending Overbrook High School and receiving a full scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania. He graduated from the School of Arts & Sciences in 1958 and participated in the Christian As-

sociation. He went on to serve as a dentist in the U.S. Coast Guard in Groton, Connecticut, then returned to Penn to complete his training in prosthodontics, earning a dental degree from Penn in 1963 and a medical certificate in 1967.

Dr. Trachtenberg joined Penn Dental Medicine's faculty in 1967 as an associate professor in the crown and bridge department, the precursor of today's department of preventive and restorative sciences. In 1975, he became an associate clinical professor in the department of histology, a position he held until 1992, when he became an adjunct professor in preventive and restorative sciences. He retired from Penn in 2007. Dr. Trachtenberg also ran his own dental practice from 1976 to 1999 (and practiced for several years afterward in other offices), specializing in periodontology and prosthodontics.

He loved nature photography, writing, playing folk and bluegrass music on his guitar and banjo, telling stories, and spending time with family and friends. "Don wanted the best of everything for those he loved and even for people he just met, and couldn't believe that wasn't always possible," said his family in an online tribute.

Dr. Trachtenberg is survived by his daughters, Julie and Jennifer; and his granddaughter, Janey Hecht. A memorial and reception were held on December 23, 2023. Donations in his memory may be made to the American Indian College Fund, Planned Parenthood, or the Environmental Defense Fund.

To Report A Death

Almanac appreciates being informed of the deaths of current and former faculty and staff members, students and other members of the University community. Call (215) 898-5274 or email almanac@upenn.edu.

Paver Stone in Memory of Jennifer Ehmann



Jennifer, Aiden, and Edward Ehmann.

Ellen Furxhi: Vice Dean and Chief of Staff, School of Arts & Sciences

Ellen Furxhi has been appointed vice dean and chief of staff of the School of Arts and Sciences, effective June 27, 2024.

Ms. Furxhi has served at the Wharton School as the chief of staff to the deputy dean since 2021, where she was the primary administrative lead to the deputy dean, providing comprehensive support on all academic matters and overseeing faculty affairs and institutional research.

Ms. Furxhi's previous experience also includes two roles at Harvard University. As assistant dean for the division of arts and humanities in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences there, she managed faculty-related procedures and policies for a division comprising approximately 400 ladder and non-ladder faculty across 21 departments and 14 centers and museums.

Before that position, Ms. Furxhi served as director of administration in the department of epidemiology at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health.

"Ellen brings with her a distinguished career in higher education administration and leadership that positions her well for this critical role as a senior advisor to the dean and key partner in the planning and execution of high-level priorities and initiatives," said Steven J. Fluharty, dean of the School of Arts & Sciences and the Thomas S. Gates, Jr. Professor of Psychology, Pharmacology, and Neuroscience.

Ms. Furxhi succeeds Allison Rose, who is retiring after a 34-year Penn career that has included 27 years in the School of Arts & Sciences Dean's Office.

"Allison's deep knowledge about Penn and SAS, and her skilled management of a broad range of school-wide planning and administrative activities, have made her a highly valued member of the SAS senior leadership and a tremendous asset to each of the deans she has served," said Dean Fluharty.

A paver stone in memory of Jennifer Ehmann has been dedicated on Legacy Walk between Fagin Hall and Stellar-Chance Laboratories. Ms. Ehmann first worked in the department of cell & developmental biology (CDB) in 2010 and then took a position at the Abramson Family Cancer Research Institute. Ms. Ehmann was a devoted wife to Edward "Ed" Ehmann and a loving and caring mother to Aiden Vicario. Penn community members who saw her on campus remember the big smile on her face and the way she often carried a bunch of papers and/or a caffeinated beverage. She is greatly missed and will never be forgotten. Donations for this paver stone were generously made by her friends and former co-workers from CDB and her husband Ed Ehmann. Ms. Ehmann died on June 21, 2019, at the age of 43.

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 **June 3-9, 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 Phila-

delphia Police Department (PPD) that occurred within our patrol zone, for the dates of **June 3-9, 2024**. 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>	06/03/24	11:29 AM	3001 Walnut St	Complainant assaulted by known offender
	06/04/24	4:47 PM	3800 Chestnut St	Complainant assaulted by unknown offender
<i>Assault-Domestic</i>	06/08/24	7:43 AM	51 N 39th St	Complainant assaulted by known male/Arrest
<i>Bike Theft</i>	06/05/24	6:39 PM	3000 Chestnut St	Unsecured bicycle taken
	06/09/24	3:15 PM	3400 Spruce St	Secured bike taken from bike rack
<i>Other Offense</i>	06/06/24	1:42 PM	220 S 33rd St	Defiant trespass by six demonstrators, CVNs issued
<i>Retail Theft</i>	06/04/24	11:17 AM	4233 Chestnut St	Retail theft of alcohol
<i>Robbery</i>	06/03/24	12:34 AM	3600 Market St	Attempted carjacking on highway
<i>Theft from Building</i>	06/05/24	11:44 AM	3901 Locust Walk	House plants and coffee mugs taken
	06/05/24	3:45 PM	3400 Civic Center Blvd	Wallet taken from purse
	06/06/24	11:38 AM	51 N 39th St	Personal items taken from maintenance cart
	06/06/24	10:50 PM	3601 Market St	Wallet taken/charges made on credit card
	06/06/24	2:18 PM	3141 Chestnut St	Theft of a wallet from building
	06/07/24	12:21 PM	51 N 39th St	Currency taken from wallet in secured locker
	06/07/24	3:22 PM	3400 Spruce St	Cellphone taken from patient's room
	06/09/24	2:18 PM	233 S 33rd St	Backpack taken from hallway
<i>Theft Other</i>	06/03/24	6:31 AM	3400 Spruce St	Secured scooter taken from bike rack
	06/07/24	11:51 PM	3400 Spruce St	Secured scooter taken from bike rack
	06/07/24	6:32 PM	3935 Pine St	Package taken from location
	06/08/24	12:09 PM	3300 Market St	Theft of unsecured scooter
	06/09/24	12:42 PM	3910 Irving St	Secured scooter taken from bike rack

Philadelphia Police 18th District
Schuylkill River to 49th Street & Market Street to Woodland Avenue

Below are the crimes against persons from the 18th District: 6 incidents were reported for **June 3-9, 2024** by the 18th District, covering the Schuylkill River to 49th Street & Market Street to Woodland Avenue.

Crime Category	Date	Time	Location
<i>Assault</i>	06/03/24	11:29 AM	3001 Walnut St
	06/04/24	11:59 AM	4519 Chestnut St
<i>Domestic Assault/Arrest</i>	06/04/24	5:15 PM	S 38th & Chestnut Sts
<i>Robbery</i>	06/08/24	1:05 AM	4101 Chestnut St
	06/09/24	7:31 AM	S 49th St & Hazel Ave
	06/09/24	10:57 AM	S 49th & Spruce Sts

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, nearby exits, etc.)
- Keep your valuables out of sight and only carry necessary documents.



On June 20, enjoy a relaxing summer solstice sunrise stroll at the Morris Arboretum & Gardens. See *Fitness & Learning*.

Recognized Holidays for Fiscal Year 2025

The following holidays will be observed by the University in the upcoming fiscal year (July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025) on the dates listed below:

Independence Day, Thursday, July 4, 2024
Labor Day, Monday, September 2, 2024
Thanksgiving, Thursday and Friday, November 28 & 29, 2024
Christmas Day, Wednesday, December 25, 2024
New Year's Day, Wednesday, January 1, 2025
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Monday, January 20, 2025
Memorial Day, Monday, May 26, 2025
Juneteenth, Thursday, June 19, 2025

Each year, the President, Provost, and Senior Executive Vice President assess the feasibility of observing Penn's traditional Special Winter Vacation. Thus, the Special Winter Vacation granted to faculty and staff will be on December 26, 27, 30, and 31, 2024. If an employee is required to work to continue departmental operations for part or all of this period, the Special Winter Vacation can be rescheduled for some other time.

Staff members who are absent from work either the workday before a holiday, the workday after a holiday, or both days will receive holiday pay if that absence is charged to pre-approved paid time off or to sick time substantiated by a written note from the staff member's healthcare provider.

Vacations and holidays for hospital employees or those staff members in collective bargaining units are governed by the terms of hospital policies or their respective collective bargaining agreements.

—Division of Human Resources

	Fiscal Year 2025	Fiscal Year 2026	Fiscal Year 2027
Independence Day	Thurs., 7/4/24	Fri., 7/4/25	Fri., 7/3/26
Labor Day	Mon., 9/2/24	Mon. 9/1/25	Mon., 9/7/26
Thanksgiving	Thurs. & Fri., 11/28 & 11/29/24	Thurs., & Fri., 11/27 & 11/28/25	Thurs., & Fri., 11/26 & 11/27/26
Christmas Day	Wed., 12/25/24	Thurs., 12/25/25	Fri., 12/25/26
New Year's Day	Wed., 1/1/25	Thurs., 1/1/26	Fri., 1/1/27
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Mon., 1/20/25	Mon., 1/19/26	Mon., 1/18/27
Memorial Day	Mon., 5/26/25	Mon., 5/25/26	Mon., 5/31/27
Juneteenth	Thurs., 6/19/25	Fri., 6/19/26	Fri., 6/18/27

Update Summer AT PENN

FITNESS & LEARNING

6/18 *Juneteenth 2024: Celebratory Learning Event at Weitzman*; a unique learning experience about the history of Juneteenth: participants will create original artwork for reflection and display to raise awareness of this national holiday's communal value; lunch provided; 11:30 a.m.; Upper Gallery, Meyerson Hall; register: https://upenn.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3C31PkH8tQtDe3A (Weitzman School).

Center for Undergraduate Research & Fellowships

Online webinars. Info and to register: <https://curf.upenn.edu/events>.

6/20 *Introduction to the Fulbright U.S. Student Program*; noon.

Penn Libraries: What is Information Literacy? 4 p.m.

Graduate School of Education

Online webinars. Info and to register: <https://www.gse.upenn.edu/news/events-calendar>.

6/20 *Penn Chief Learning Officer Virtual Information Session*; noon.

Morris Arboretum & Gardens

In-person events at Morris Arboretum & Gardens. Info and to register: <https://www.morrisarboretum.org/see-do/events-calendar>.

6/20 *Sunrise Solstice Stroll*; welcome in the sun on the summer solstice, the longest day of the year; bring a blanket and enjoy coffee and donuts; 5:30 a.m.; registration: \$5/members, \$10/general.

This is an update to the *Summer AT PENN calendar*, which is online now. To include events in a future AT PENN calendar or weekly update, send the salient details to almanac@upenn.edu.

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Association Found Between Media Diet and Science-Consistent Beliefs About Climate Change

In a paper titled “The Politicization of Climate Science: Media Consumption, Perceptions of Science and Scientists, and Support for Policy,” published May 26, 2024, in the *Journal of Health Communication*, researchers probed the associations between media exposure and science-consistent beliefs about climate change and the threat it posed to the respondent.

Expanding on earlier work associating Fox News consumption with doubts about the existence of human-caused climate change, a team of scholars affiliated with Penn’s Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC) found that exposure to Fox News and far-right media was negatively associated, and centrist and science media exposure positively associated, with belief in anthropogenic climate change, perceptions of the personal threat posed by climate change, and support for a carbon tax.

The research team included Yotam Ophir, an assistant professor of communication at the State University of New York at Buffalo and a distinguished research fellow and former postdoctoral fellow at APPC; Dror Walter, assistant professor of digital communication at Georgia State University and an APPC distinguished research fellow; APPC’s Annenberg Health and Risk Communication Institute director Patrick Jamieson; and APPC Director Kathleen Hall Jamieson.

“The results of this study suggest that climate science scholars and advocates should pay more attention to the complex media diets of individuals and specifically of partisans to better understand the possible influence of messages and narratives about climate science and scientists circulating in the American media environment,” the authors wrote. In short, said Dr. Ophir, the lead author of the new study, “a lot of research was asking people if they watch Fox News and if they believe in climate change. But there’s more to the story.”

For this study, the researchers asked people about their use of far-right, Christian, alternative health, and science media in addition to mainstream media (liberal, centrist, and conservative). To assess climate beliefs, the researchers asked participants whether they thought climate change poses a personal threat to them—“One of the challenges with climate change is that people don’t feel vulnerable. There is some vagueness to the impact,” said Dr. Ophir—and whether they support a carbon tax. “We wanted to go beyond just acceptance of the science into behavioral intentions,” said Dr. Ophir.

The study found that perceptions of science and scientists mediated the relationship between exposure to media and a set of dependent variables, including belief in anthropogenic climate change, risk perception, and support for a carbon tax. Among the team’s findings are that far-right media have an even stronger relationship with rejection of the scientific consensus around climate change than do more mainstream conservative outlets like Fox News. They also found that exposure to right-wing media in general is associated with lower perceptions of threat from climate change and lower likelihood of supporting a carbon tax. “Consumption of right-wing media is associated not only with your views on climate change,” said Dr. Ophir. “It is associated with more negative views of the scientific endeavor as a whole, and that affects your views on climate change.”

The findings have important implications for how climate science scholars and advocates move forward trying to understand resistance to climate science and policy, and crafting messages aimed at countering that resistance.

Adapted from a Annenberg Public Policy Center [article](#), June 10, 2024.

Replacing Registered Nurses in High Stakes Hospital Care is Dangerous to Patients

A new [study](#) published in *Medical Care* showed that substituting registered nurses (RN) with lower-wage staff (e.g. licensed practical nurses, unlicensed assistive personnel) in hospital care is linked with more deaths, readmissions, longer hospital stays, poorer patient satisfaction, and higher costs of care.

The study, by the Center for Health Outcomes and Policy Research (CHOPR) at Penn’s School of Nursing, comes at a time when hospitals are struggling to recruit and retain RNs in hospital care because of poor working conditions. “Nurses in hospitals provide care for the sickest patients. It’s high stakes care. The findings show that replacing RNs with non-RN staff is dangerous to patients,” said lead author Karen Lasater, an associate professor and the Jessie M. Scott Term Chair in Nursing and Health Policy.

Though hospitals often cite a low supply of RNs as the reason they cannot hire enough, the latest research shows there is no evidence of an RN shortage in the US. Thus, there is no justification for substituting less qualified staff for RNs.

The researchers studied the outcomes of over 6.5 million Medicare patients in 2,676 general acute care hospitals across the U.S. They found that:

- Even a modest substitution in RN care is associated with poorer patient

outcomes. A 10-percentage point reduction in the proportion of RNs was associated with 7% higher odds of dying in the hospital; as well as higher odds of readmission, experiencing a longer length of stay, and poorer patient satisfaction.

- Substituting RN care is associated with avoidable patient deaths. Researchers estimated that if every U.S. hospital reduced RN care by 10 percentage points, nearly 11,000 avoidable deaths among Medicare patients could occur annually.
- Alternative hospital staffing models yield a poor return on investment for hospitals. Hospitals substituting lower-wage staff for RNs will not save money because longer lengths of stay will erase their labor savings.
- Medicare risks spending millions of dollars annually on avoidable, preventable hospital readmissions. The thousands of preventable readmissions associated with a 10-percentage point reduction in RNs translates to \$68.5 million in avoidable costs paid by Medicare.

“The public has no way of assessing the adequacy of hospital RN staffing, and in all but two states (California and Oregon) there are no regulations establishing minimum safe RN staffing requirements in hospitals to protect the safety of patients,” said senior author Linda Aiken, professor of nursing and Founding Director of CHOPR. “Rather than replacing RNs with less qualified staff, hospital leaders should focus on improving their work environments to retain RNs.”

“With roughly half of hospital RNs reporting high levels of burnout, hospitals should focus on fixing the root causes of their burnout—chronic understaffing and poor work environments—not replacing RNs with less-trained nursing staff that the evidence shows is likely dangerous to patients,” said Dr. Lasater.

Adapted from a Penn Nursing news [article](#), June 10, 2024.

Exploring the Limits of Robotic Systems

Bruce Lee, a doctoral student in Penn Engineering’s department of electrical and systems engineering, works to identify how robotic systems learn to perform different tasks, focusing on how to tell when a problem may be too complex—and what to do about it.

Mr. Lee, who is advised by Nikolai Matni, an assistant professor of electrical and systems engineering and member of the Penn Research in Embedded Computing and Integrated Systems Engineering (PRECISE) Center, studies how robotic systems learn from data, with the goal of understanding when robots struggle to learn a dynamic system, and what approaches might be effective at combating those challenges. His work offers insights into the fundamental limits of machine learning, guiding the development of new algorithms and systems that are both data-efficient and robust.

Ultimately, the goal is to create robotic systems that can better serve humanity, contributing to advancements in various fields including transportation, healthcare, and beyond. One case study that Mr. Lee is currently considering is a project by Google that aims to help robots learn general control policies from data. The generalist policies are intended to help robots perform new tasks with a limited amount of training data by leveraging similarities to tasks that have been conducted during the training phase.

“New results in machine learning, such as ChatGPT, Midjourney, diffusion models or deep learning in general, are very exciting and are enabling new capabilities we haven’t seen before,” said Dr. Matni. “However, despite this exciting progress, they are still unreliable and data-hungry. While this is not a problem when applied to chatbots or image generation, it can be catastrophic when applied to safety-critical systems that interact with the physical world, such as self-driving cars.”

One key takeaway from the research, Mr. Lee said, is that sometimes the problem is just too difficult. Control system engineers and researchers often think their job is to design an effective control system for a specific system facing a specific challenge, but this isn’t always the right approach. Mr. Lee’s results can also help to guide the design of systems that are easier to control.

Mr. Lee, who is expected to graduate in 2025, is also studying how researchers and practitioners can work around the fundamental limits of what robotic systems can do. One approach to doing so is strategically designing systems to make them as easy to learn as possible. Another is to supplement the data collected from any system of interest with data from related systems, leveraging the similarity between the two to continue to learn while using less data from the system of interest. “Many outside the field think machine learning can solve almost anything. My work helps to show that it cannot,” said Mr. Lee. “Our results show that if we have complicated systems with a high number of states, then learning an adequate control system from scratch will require an exorbitant amount of data to be collected from the world, which may be impossible for physical robotic systems.”

Adapted from a Penn Engineering Today [article](#) by Liz Wai-Ping Ng, June 10, 2024.