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Photo by Eric Sucar



Convocation for the Class of 2030 and New Transfer Students

The Class of 2030 and new transfer students began their Penn journeys on Franklin Field during a comfortable late-summer evening. The University welcomed 2,427 freshmen and transfer students from 76 countries, who were surrounded by faculty, staff, and classmates, who have gone from strangers to fellow travelers during their first week on campus.

Penn's 287th academic year formally began during the August 24, 2026 ceremony. Speeches delivered by President J. Larry Jameson and Provost John L. Jackson, Jr. are printed on pages 3-4.

2026-2027 Provost's Special Advisors

Provost John L. Jackson, Jr. and Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Laura W. Perna have announced the appointment of five faculty members to the Provost's Special Advisor Program.

The Special Advisor Program provides an immersive leadership development opportunity for faculty interested in academic administration and service to the Penn community. Special Advisors will spend the academic year embedded in the Provost's Office, contributing to strategic projects that enhance its programs, policies, and operations.

The 2026-2027 Special Advisors are:

- Eric Feldman, the Heimbold Professor of International Law and deputy dean for global engagement in the Penn Carey Law School, has been named senior advisor to Provost John L. Jackson, Jr. Professor Feldman will work closely with Provost Jackson and other University leaders as they continue to revise the University of Pennsylvania's Open Expression Guidelines.
- Aswin Punathambekar, a professor of communication and associate dean of master's programs in the Annenberg School for Communication, has been named a special advisor to Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Laura W. Perna. Professor Punathambekar will lead the response to the Faculty Senate Executive Committee's resolution that

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Jed Esty: Curriculum Lead in the College of Arts & Sciences Effective January 2027

Jed Esty, the Vartan Gregorian Professor of English, has been named the curriculum lead of the College of Arts & Sciences. In this three-year position, he will help operationalize and champion a new curriculum that represents the school's most substantive overhaul in decades.

When the College of Arts & Sciences adopted a new undergraduate curriculum in April 2026, it was the most substantial change of its kind since the late 1980s—one that will "enable us to continue to engage our students with a transformative education and to meet the challenges of our time," said Peter Struck, the Stephen A. Levin Family Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences and the Vartan Gregorian Professor of the Humanities.

"We've done this once-every-generation reboot," Dr. Esty said. "It's a major redefinition of what an undergraduate education at Penn is



Jed Esty

and should be. My goal is really to put learning at the center of the student experience on campus. The curriculum should be the place where big questions about a student's own social role, their life's purpose, their vocation, their life as educated citizens, should be both asked and answered."

The new framework itself will offer many such opportunities. At its core is a new program called Foundations, which includes innovative Kite and Key courses and an updated first-year seminar and writing seminar. There is also a revised distribution of general education requirements, revamped language requirements, courses in a new category called Perspectives and Difference, and a wider scope for electives.

The Foundations program will welcome new students by introducing them to the full range of School of Arts & Sciences faculty and by emphasizing a common, connected experience for all. "We want students to launch their Penn careers by exploring new passions and interests at the outset rather than waiting until senior year to take a chance on that one fascinating elective," Dr. Esty said.

"Over the last 20 years or so," he added, "asking the big questions, deciding the mean-

ing of life, connecting intellectual joy and curiosity to career and job security—those vital parts of a college education have been gradually leaking out of the classroom. I believe going deep in the arts and sciences and going far in a career are absolutely intertwined. Going deep at Penn, learning everything you can in these four years—that is what's going to take you far after you go out into the world."

Dr. Esty will carry out many ideas that will help make this happen. At the highest level, he is tasked with helping to implement the new curriculum and troubleshoot challenges that arise. He will also communicate about the program and its goal to students, the larger Penn community, alums, and the wider public.

Beyond that, Dr. Esty plans to dive deep over the next several years. For example, given

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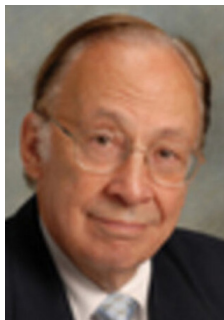
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Deaths

Sydney Pulver, Psychiatry

Sydney (Syd) Earl Pulver, M'53, GM'57, a clinical professor in the department of psychiatry in the Perelman School of Medicine, as well as the former medical director and a senior attending staff psychiatrist at the Institute of Pennsylvania Hospital and former chief of psychiatry at the defunct Philadelphia Hospital, died on March 23 of tachydysrhythmia at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital. He was 98.



Sydney Pulver

Born in Scranton, Pennsylvania, in 1927, Dr. Pulver left high school to serve in the United States Army during World War II, from 1945 to 1947, during which time he was stationed in Japan and eventually attained the rank of Second Lieutenant. During childhood, Dr. Pulver developed a passion for understanding people and helping them heal. After leaving the Army, he earned his undergraduate degree from Pennsylvania State University, then a medical degree from Penn in 1953. Dr. Pulver completed a psychiatric residency at the now-closed Institute of Pennsylvania Hospital in 1957 and joined the hospital's staff that year. He later became a senior attending physician in 1964 and served as medical director from 1981 to 1983. Dr. Pulver was also named assistant chief of psychiatry in 1957 and chief of psychiatry in 1962 at Philadelphia Hospital.

In 1960, Dr. Pulver joined the faculty of Penn's School of Medicine as an associate in psychology. In 1973, he became an associate clinical professor, and nine years later, he became a full clinical professor. At Penn, Dr. Pulver taught graduate students and psychiatry residents, and taught popular courses like *The Mind in Conflict*, *Freud's Papers*, and *The History of Psychoanalysis*. In 1987, Dr. Pulver won the Dean's Award for Excellence in Clinical Teaching. He never retired from Penn and continued to teach until his death. Colleagues at Penn praised his "scholarship, clinical acumen, warmth, and abounding enthusiasm."

Dr. Pulver was active in the Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia, the Philadelphia Psychoanalytic Institute, the International and American Psychoanalytic Associations, the American and Philadelphia Psychiatric Societies, the Horsham Clinic, and other professional groups. In addition to his Dean's Award from Penn, Dr. Pulver won a lifetime achievement award from the Philadelphia Psychoanalytic Society and teaching awards from the Institute of Pennsylvania Hospital.

He is survived by his children, Mitchell Pulver, Bradley Pulver, and Susan Mardinly; his daughters-in-law, Sheila Pulver and Lauren Pulver; his son-in-law, Peter Mardinly; his grandchildren, Jessica Pulver, Daniel Pulver, Alan Mardinly, and Shaina Mardinly; and their spouses, Eric Senecal, Suzy Pulver, Kristin Smith, and Jonathan Nahas. He is also survived by his great-grandchildren, Leo, Piper, Sal, Maya, Charlotte, Avi, Sadie, and Penny. A celebration of his life will be held later.

Donations in his name may be made to the Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia, 925 Dickinson St., Box 18027, Philadelphia, PA 19147.

Donald Thompson, ISC

Donald Thompson, WEv'67, who held various tech support-related positions at Penn for nearly 70 years, died on February 7, 2026. He was 92.

Mr. Thompson began work at Penn as a 17-year-old in 1955, serving as a messenger in the development office. In 1958, he became a clerk in the same department, where he served intermittently until 1967. That year, he graduated from Wharton Evening School and joined the staff of Penn's Institute of Cooperative Research as a duplicate machine operator. Later in 1967, he became a tech records clerk at Penn's Data Processing Office. Two years later, he became an assistant computer operator in the Data Processing Office, which was renamed University Management Information Services (UMIS) in 1972. Mr. Thompson rose through the ranks in UMIS until 1992, when he joined Penn's department of Information Systems & Computing (ISC) as a Multiple Virtual Storage (MVS) operator. He retired from Penn in 1996, but remained at ISC in a temporary role as a computer tech until he left Penn in 2024.

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.

Jed Esty: Curriculum Lead in the College of Arts & Sciences Effective January 2027

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the range of expertise across Penn Arts & Sciences, he wants to connect students' intellectual interests to an equally wide range of meaningful careers. He also wants to work closely with his faculty colleagues to rebuild the pipeline of students coming into every major and minor.

"We have to teach students who we are and what college is—that's a much more active way of thinking about our role on this campus, and a very important shift," Dr. Esty said. "The people who have already taught the Kite and Key classes have been reinvigorated by working with colleagues in other disciplines and discovering new texts and materials across the disciplines. We want the curriculum to be galvanizing and energizing not just for students, but for faculty, too."

According to Dean Struck, Dr. Esty's experience and passion for this work made him the right person for the job. "Jed's perspicacious insight and broad engagement in leadership positions over nearly two decades at Penn position him well to do this crucial work for the College," Dean Struck said. "He will play a key role in facilitating the many dimensions of this transition, working closely with faculty leadership on the College committees and in departments."

The curriculum lead role officially begins in January 2027.

TCPW Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Advising: Call for Nominations

The Office of the Provost invites nominations for the Trustees' Council of Penn Women (TCPW) 25th Anniversary Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Advising.

The TCPW Undergraduate Advising Award recognizes undergraduate faculty advisors who have distinguished themselves through exceptional advising and mentorship and who have made a significant impact on the academic experience of their students.

The Trustees' Council of Penn Women is an international network of Penn alumni whose members support, foster, and promote the advancement of women and women's issues across the University. In 2012, to mark the organization's 25th anniversary, TCPW established this award to recognize excellence in undergraduate advising. Recipients receive a \$2,500 award and are recognized at the annual TCPW Fall Conference.

Nominations may be submitted for any faculty member by an undergraduate student or any member of the Penn community, excluding self-nominations. Each nomination must include a supporting statement written by the nominator of no more than 250 words describing the nominee's contributions and impact as an undergraduate advisor.

The nomination period will open on August 25, 2026 and close on September 28, 2026. Undergraduate deans will review nominations and select the recipient(s) in early October.

Nominations must be submitted online through the Office of the Provost website: <https://provost.upenn.edu/for-students/teaching-at-penn/tcpw-undergraduate-advising-award/>

For additional information about the award and nomination process, please visit the nomination website.

Call for Applications for Faculty Director of the Arthur Ross Gallery

Provost John L. Jackson, Jr. and Vice Provost for the Arts Timothy Rommen invite nominations, applications, and expressions of interest from Penn faculty members to be the next faculty director of the [Arthur Ross Gallery](#), beginning July 1, 2027. The three-year term of the gallery's inaugural faculty director—Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw, the James and Nan Wagner Farquhar Professor of the History of Art in the School of Arts & Sciences—will conclude at the end of June 2027.

The faculty director of the Arthur Ross Gallery works with two full-time staff members to plan and mount a program of art exhibits, educational activities, public programs, artist residencies, student internships, and community and campus events, including engaging Philadelphia schools, developing new cross-campus and cross-city partnerships, and integrating the work of the gallery with the academic mission of the University. The gallery collaborates with the Penn Art Collection; with academic programs across campus, especially but not limited to the department of history of art in the School of Arts & Sciences and the department of fine arts in the Weitzman School of Design; and with other Penn arts organizations, including the Institute of Contemporary Art, Penn Museum, and Sachs Program for Arts Innovation.

Applications, nominations, questions, and expressions of interest can be sent to vp-arts@upenn.edu by October 30, 2026.

CONVOCATION 2026

On Monday, August 24, 2026, Convocation for the Class of 2030 and new transfer students was held on Franklin Field.

Your Penn Odyssey President J. Larry Jameson

Class of 2030 and new transfer students: You have traveled from across the country and around the world. We are thrilled you are here. Welcome to Penn!

Convocation is all about beginnings. It is the official start of the academic year. It is also the launch of your Penn odyssey.

Many factors will influence your direction and what you do along the way. None will be more important than what I propose we do, together, right now. So please, listen closely to some simple instructions.

When I say “go,” and only when I say “go,” I want you to stand up, look around, and find someone nearby who you have not met yet.

Shake hands, say your name, say where you are from and what you hope to study.

The goal is to engage with someone new. No exceptions—not even me! I will be coming down to meet you, too.

Is everybody ready? Okay, let’s go!

Alright, everyone, please, take your seats.

Do you feel that? That leap into the unknown, that energy, is fundamental to everything that comes next.

To show you what I mean, I want to share three riddles.

The first: what could a starfish, a spaceship, and the packaging in your Amazon deliveries have in common?

Second: how might something dangerous, like venom, save more than a million lives a year?

And third: why is an ancient poem, nearly 3,000 years old, new today?

I want you to hold these riddles in your mind for a minute. The answers reveal something fundamental, even exhilarating, about your new University. I will say more about that soon.

But first, one more question, the most important one yet: Why are you here?

You have arrived with hopes and ambitions. You aim to meet brilliant faculty and make new friends. You expect to be challenged, and you aspire to learn and grow beyond what you might imagine. These things will come to be and so much more.

You are also here to be part of the life, and the work, of this University, which is older than the United States itself.

It goes back to our founder, Benjamin Franklin, a renowned philosopher, inventor, and statesman. He was legendary, even in his own time. He is famous for flying a kite and key to investigate the nature of lightning. You learned this story in elementary school but behind it was deep scientific inquiry that led to the electrification of the world.

Today, that ethos of exploration and experimentation remain the keystones of life at Penn.

Exploration and experimentation. That is why we are here.

Let’s go back to the three riddles.

What could a starfish, a spaceship, and the packaging in your deliveries have in common?

A team at Penn recently found that the skeleton of a chocolate chip starfish does double duty. It supports the animal, of course. But this skeleton also senses and concentrates light. These findings could inspire next-generation materials that are tough, lightweight, and responsive to the environment – which may protect passengers during space travel and precious cargo in your household deliveries.

Next, how might a venom save more than a million lives a year?

Our faculty recently used AI to explore more than 40 million peptides found in venom from snakes, spiders, and other creatures. The goal? To synthesize powerful new antibiotics, countering antibiotic resistance and potentially saving the lives of millions of patients.

Finally, why is an ancient poem new today?

You likely guessed it when I mentioned your Penn odyssey. Did anybody see the summer blockbuster movie, *The Odyssey*? Let’s see a show of hands.



Photo by Eric Sucar

President J. Larry Jameson delivers remarks during Convocation.

Director Christopher Nolan worked from several translations of the ancient poem about the adventures of Odysseus. One special translation is the work of Penn professor and MacArthur “Genius” Grant recipient Emily Wilson. She provided a new translation of *The Odyssey*, breathing new life and relevance into Homer’s classic story. This required choosing how each word and phrase could be interpreted while creating a vivid story and maintaining the cadence of the poem.

The film has surpassed \$1 billion in sales. Professor Wilson’s translation sold more than one million copies this year. That kind of relevance makes for more than just a pop culture moment. Timeless human stories endure because new generations find fresh ways to share and learn from them.

These examples are just three stars in the vast constellation of Penn’s research and the student experience. As you explore and experiment, you will encounter much more.

In *The Odyssey*, the hero turned often to the goddess, Athena, who was patron of the city of Athens, Greece, and the Parthenon. This summer, student fellows in the Penn Paideia Program got to travel to Athens and visit the Parthenon. Our Paideia Program teaches the art and science of dialogue across difference and can be an integral part of your Penn odyssey, too.

As you chart your course, you will meet many fellow travelers: amazing Penn faculty, staff, coaches and mentors, alumni, and of course your peers. You are already off to a great start, and we are all here to help you succeed.

Just as important, each of you will leave your mark on this University. Through your unique perspectives and experiences, your ideas and talents, your service and leadership, you will make Penn better.

So, explore bravely and experiment boldly. Engage with new perspectives and ideas. If something works, run with it. If a theory does not pan out, learn what you can from it and then try something else. Above all, always look for opportunities to meet someone new. Such engagement may just transform your entire journey.

Like Odysseus in the face of setbacks and challenges, you will persevere. You will have fantastic adventures. You will see and do wonderful things. It will be epic.

Class of 2030 and transfers: your Penn odyssey begins now. Let’s get started!

Rigor and Humility at Penn

Provost John L. Jackson, Jr.

As Provost—Penn’s Chief Academic Officer—it is my great pleasure to welcome you this evening.

You are entering the University at a moment of both profound turbulence and remarkable possibility. Our political landscape is unsettled; our public discourse is strained. Many are questioning the role of institutions—especially universities—in helping society navigate uncertainty. Yet it is *precisely* in moments like this that places like Penn matter most.

Your time here will be brief—astonishingly brief. Four years; less, for our transfers. A blink. A blip compared with Penn’s 286-year run. And in the universe’s 13.8 billion years? Not even a rounding error. Not even a blip. Though I admit that every once in a while an 8 a.m. recitation may *seem* like it’s taking billions of years.

But during your relatively brief time here, you have the chance to do something extraordinary: to experiment intellectually, to push yourself ideologically, to question your assumptions, and to learn how to engage the world with both rigor and humility.

Penn was founded during another era of upheaval. Our early history was full of debates about religion, curriculum, and the purpose of advanced study. Even then, people disagreed—sometimes fiercely—about what should be taught, how it should be taught, who should be taught and do the teaching.

Amid political disagreement—including among the country’s founders—Benjamin Franklin imagined a university that would prepare students not only for careers, but for *citizenship*: the hard work of thinking clearly, debating openly, and helping to build a better world. Some of today’s debates may be different, but the stakes are familiar. How do we learn together? How do we disagree constructively? How do we build communities capable of holding complexity without collapsing into cynicism or contempt?

I spoke a little earlier about rigor and humility. One of Penn’s earliest medical faculty members, Philip Syng Physick—often called the father of American surgery—believed that education required both *precision* and *compassion*. He argued that technical mastery meant little without a deep respect for the people one served. His view, grounded in both science and humanity, offers a model for how intellectual humility and empathy can coexist—and how they can guide us in turbulent times.

I am trained as an anthropologist. Ward Goodenough, who taught anthropology at Penn for more than forty years, before I arrived, used to say that some of his most important discoveries came not from traveling thousands of miles, but from realizing how much he had taken for granted be-



Provost John L. Jackson, Jr., delivers remarks during Convocation.

fore he ever left home. After months of fieldwork in Micronesia, he wrote that the greatest shock was not encountering a different culture, but recognizing how deeply his own unexamined assumptions shaped the way he interpreted the world. That moment—when the familiar becomes strange and the strange becomes familiar, as anthropologists like to say—was, for him, the essence of ethnographic insight. It’s a reminder that genuine discovery *begins* with humility: the willingness to let your own worldview be unsettled.

My advice for you is to cultivate both humility and empathy. And to develop habits of mind that allow you to navigate political times without being negatively consumed or debilitated by them. To learn how to listen deeply, argue honestly, and recognize the humanity in people whose experiences and worldviews differ profoundly from your own.

Also: Use your time here to connect dots between fields that may seem, at first glance, to have nothing in common. Study engineering and poetry. Economics and environmental justice. Neuroscience and philosophy. The more disparate the dots, the more surprising—and transformative—the connections will be. And don’t forget to visit a special field: this one! Historic Franklin Field, as well as our one-and-only Palestra—this year, celebrating its Centennial. Make memories in these spaces, because you’ll cherish those memories for the rest of your life.

And it sounds simple, even banal. But talk to each other. Talk to people who grew up differently than you did, who pray differently, who vote differently, who imagine the future differently. Not to win arguments, but to understand the complex constitution of this vast world we all share. To model a way of engaging that privileges intellectual humility and our common humanity.

Take advantage of everything Penn offers: thousands of courses, hundreds of student groups, our cultural centers, our athletic traditions, and this extraordinary city. Explore widely. Ask big questions. Let yourself be changed. Above all: get involved. Penn has long been a place where students engage deeply with questions of speech, liberty, and democracy—not through polemics and partisanship, but through curiosity, dialogue, and a commitment to understanding the world in all its vastness. That tradition is yours to carry forward.

Your time here may be brief. But what you do with it—how you think, how you listen, how you grow—will shape your trajectory long after you leave campus. Members of the class of 2030 and transfers: Welcome to Penn.



Student procession onto Franklin Field for Convocation.

Photos by Eric Sucar

Honors & Other Things

William W. Braham: Tulane Prize for Climate Change Curriculum

The Weitzman School's William W. Braham, the Andrew Gordon Professor of Architecture, director of the environmental building design master programs, and director of the Center for Environmental Building + Design (CEBD), has received the Tulane Prize for Climate Change Curriculum in the Built Environment of the Tulane Center on Climate Change and Urbanism (CCU), located at Tulane University's School of Architecture and Built Environment.



William W. Braham

Selected from an international pool of nominees, the award honors educators whose work advances innovative approaches to climate change mitigation and adaptation within the education of future architects, urban planners, landscape architects, urban designers, and other built environment professionals.

The award recognizes Mr. Braham's contributions to architectural education through the development of curricula addressing climate change and the built environment. Mr. Braham received the award for his elective course Fundamentals of Bioclimatic Design, which examines the passive environmental performance of building envelopes through analytical methods, design strategies, and case studies.

The recognition highlights Mr. Braham's longstanding commitment to integrating climate change, environmental performance, and sustainable design practices into architectural education. Through his teaching, research, and leadership at CEBD and Weitzman, Mr. Braham has contributed to advancing climate-focused design education and preparing future generations of architects to address environmental challenges.

Tejas Harad: 2026-27 Sobti Fieldwork Fellowship

Annenberg School doctoral student Tejas Harad has been awarded the 2026-27 Sobti Fieldwork Fellowship by the Penn Center for the Advanced Study of India. The fellowship provides a Penn doctoral student studying contemporary India with funding to conduct dissertation fieldwork and to develop research interests around India's current politics, society, economy, and international relations.

Mr. Harad's research focuses on how anti-caste activists in India use social media platforms, particularly Instagram, to challenge caste discrimination and how these platforms affect social movement activism. "I study how Instagram's platform architecture, algorithm, and content



Tejas Harad

moderation policies play a constraining and enabling role and how anti-caste content creators negotiate with them," he explained. He will use the grant to investigate the work of these artists and content creators in Mumbai.

"The Sobti Fieldwork Fellowship will greatly aid me in my fieldwork. I am grateful to the Center for the Advanced Study of India for its support," Mr. Harad said. "In my ethnographic research, I will work with anti-caste artists and content creators, spending time with them at their studios, community spaces, galleries, public meetings, and social media conferences."

In addition, Mr. Harad will also interview artists, content creators, social media talent management agencies, and platform company personnel.

Weitzman School of Design Awards Kanter Tritsch Medal and Witte-Sakamoto Medal

The Weitzman School of Design has selected architect Steven Holl to receive the 2026 Kanter Tritsch Medal in Architecture and the City of Boston's 2030 Climate Action Plan to receive the 2026 Witte-Sakamoto Family Medal in City and Regional Planning. The awards will be presented at a celebratory dinner on November 10, 2026 at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

"Steven Holl has expanded architecture's expressive potential," said Fritz Steiner, Dean and Paley Professor at the Weitzman School. "Boston's 2030 Climate Action Plan demonstrates how cities can connect climate policy to public health, quality of life, and environmental justice. Together, these honorees exemplify the possibilities for design and planning to uplift people in cities around the world."

Widely considered one of America's most influential architects, Steven Holl is internationally recognized for architecture that combines space and light with a sensitivity to cultural and historical context. His major works include the Chapel of St. Ignatius in Seattle; the Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki; Simmons Hall at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art expansion in Kansas City; Linked Hybrid in Beijing; the Visual Arts Building at the University of Iowa; the Lewis Center for the Arts at Princeton University; the REACH at the Kennedy Center in Washington; Hunters Point Library in Queens; and Meander Housing in Helsinki. At Penn, Mr. Holl has designed the Platt Student Performing Arts Center, a 37,300-square-foot facility combining performance, teaching, rehearsal, and practice spaces that is currently under construction.

The Kanter Tritsch Medal in Architecture was established in 2017 through a gift from Weitzman alumna Lori Kanter Tritsch, MArch'85, a member of the school's Board of Advisors. The medal honors an architect or firm that has changed the course of design history, with particular attention to energy conservation, environmental quality, and diversity.

Although cities across the United States have adopted climate action plans in various forms, Boston's ambitious 2030 Climate Action Plan takes an all-of-government approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, articulating concrete strategies and measurable targets across municipal operations as well as housing,

transportation, and energy sectors. Decision-making and accountability are strengthened by a cross-departmental Climate Council that brings together senior officials who were originally tasked with delivering the plan.

The Witte-Sakamoto Family Medal in City and Regional Planning was established in 2019 by William Witte, C'73, MCP'75, an alumnus of the Weitzman School, and his wife, Keiko Sakamoto. It recognizes a firm, team, or professional responsible for an exemplary plan that advances at least four of the following areas: social equity, environmental quality, design, public health, mobility, housing affordability, and economic development.

In conjunction with the professional medals, the Weitzman School has selected students entering their final year of study to receive the 2026 Kanter Tritsch Prize in Energy and Architectural Innovation and the 2026 Witte-Sakamoto Family Prize in City and Regional Planning. Each prize includes a \$50,000 scholarship. The recipient of the 2026 Kanter Tritsch Prize is Tony Chen, and the recipient of the 2026 Witte-Sakamoto Family Prize is Weikang Kong. Peng Qi has received the Kanter Tritsch Second Place Prize in Architecture, and Indrajeet Chavan has received the Witte-Sakamoto Second Place Prize in City and Regional Planning. Each second-place prize includes a \$10,000 scholarship for the 2026-2027 Academic Year.

The juries for the Kanter Tritsch Medal and Prize were chaired by Rossana Hu, the Miller Professor and chair of architecture and a co-founding partner at Neri&Hu Design and Research Office. The juries for the Witte-Sakamoto Family Medal and Prize were chaired by Megan Ryerson, the UPS Foundation Chair of Transportation, chair of city and regional planning, and a professor of city and regional planning and electrical and systems engineering.

The 2026 Weitzman School Awards will take place on Tuesday, November 10, 2026 at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

2026 Penn Global Dissertation Grants Program to Support 13 Doctoral Students

Penn Global will support 13 doctoral students to conduct globally-oriented research through the 2026 Penn Global Dissertation Grants Program.

Launched in 2023, the program supports PhD students conducting international fieldwork and research, enabling deeper engagement with communities, archives, and datasets around the world. The program also reflects Penn Global's commitment to fostering early-career scholarship that addresses pressing global questions through interdisciplinary approaches.

The 2026 awardees will conduct research spanning Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas and come from six schools at Penn, highlighting the breadth of global research activity across the University.

"These awards reflect Penn Global's commitment to supporting doctoral students as they develop innovative, globally engaged research at a pivotal stage in their academic careers," said Amy Gadsden, associate vice provost for global initiatives. "The Dissertation Grants program responds directly to the need for greater support for international research by enabling students to deepen the global dimensions of their work

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Honors & Other Things

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and supports the University's *In Principle and Practice* strategic goals."

Topics for this year's Dissertation Grant-supported research include a study of heat stress and perinatal outcomes in Ghana and an examination of climate resilience in informal settlements in Jakarta, with implications for climate policy across the Global South. Other projects explore how U.S. domestic politics shapes international audiences' perceptions of political leadership, architectural migration in post-Ottoman countries, South Asian science fiction, and advances in AI and public health.

"The Dissertation Grants program not only enables students to expand the global scope of their research but also helps position their work to address shared challenges with implications beyond academia," noted Chris Klaniecki, associate director of global initiatives.

By supporting projects that span disciplines, regions, and methods, Penn is investing in research that can generate actionable insights and inform policy discussions on issues ranging from climate and health to governance and technological change."

The 2026 Penn Global Dissertation Grants awardees include:

- Fertility and Assisted Reproductive Technology—Venera Albaeva, School of Arts & Sciences
- Heat Stress and Perinatal Outcomes in Ghana: A Spatio-Temporal Analysis—Vincent-Bio Bediako, School of Arts & Sciences
- Fragmented Feminist Histories of Architectural Migration: Unsettled Grounds and Archives in the Post-Ottoman Borderlands—Basak Eren, Weitzman School of Design
- A New Face of Interdependence: How the Global Reach of U.S. Domestic Politics Builds Foreign Audiences' Attachments to American Political Elites—Tom Etienne, Annenberg School for Communication/School of Arts & Sciences
- Antigen Presentation Changes Driving Adaptive Immunity in Inflammatory Bowel Disease—Julia Fleming, Perelman School of Medicine
- Climate Change Adaptation and Urban Resilience in the Global South—Huseli Husile, School of Social Policy & Practice
- The Everyday Prophet: The Milād and Muslim Communities in South Asia (c. 1865–1965)—Rushnae Kabir, School of Arts & Sciences
- Technologies of the Marvelous: Urdu and Hindi Science Fiction in South Asia (c. 1880–1980)—Nudrat Kamal, School of Arts & Sciences
- Crisis, Cohesion and Consolidation: Salafism and Transnational Networks of Learning—Mohamud Mohamed, School of Arts & Sciences
- Comparative Politics (Pakistan)—Shanze-Fatima Rauf, School of Arts & Sciences
- Partitioned Peoples and the Limits of Self-Determination: A Comparative Study of the Kurds—Sirwan Renas, School of Arts & Sciences
- Field of Study: AI and Public Health—Neil Sehgal, School of Engineering and Applied Science

- The Emergence of Arabian Archaeology in the Long Twentieth Century—Amber Zambelli, School of Arts & Sciences

Ten SAS Postdocs: Inaugural Cohort of SAS Commons Society of Fellows in Public Knowledge

Ten postdoctoral researchers have been named to the inaugural cohort of the SAS Commons Society of Fellows in Public Knowledge, an initiative created as part of SAS Horizons: Pathways for a Changing World. These early-career scholars have expertise across a range of fields, from astronomy and chemistry to political science and ethnomusicology.

"Postdoctoral researchers operate in this very special place," said Sophia Rosenfeld, the Walter H. Annenberg Professor of History and the inaugural director of SAS Commons. "They've finished their formal training. This is an intermediary step before they begin their full professional lives. Whether they're going to go on in academia or do something else, the focus here is on creating a community of early-career scholars and bringing their scholarship into the public arena."

A call went out for applications last spring, and fellows were notified of their selection in July. The first official meeting will take place in late September. Then fellows will meet 10 times over the course of the year-long program. At each gathering, a different postdoc will briefly present a research talk. "We'll be each other's audience," Dr. Rosenfeld explained. "They'll have to figure out how to explain work that might be technical and esoteric in its scholarly dimensions to people not in their fields."

And though none of the postdocs specifically research Democracy and Knowledge—the theme of the inaugural SAS Commons programming—Dr. Rosenfeld believes the research agendas of these scholars all fit well with this theme. "Democracy requires us to explain how advanced study of different fields contributes to the public good. We're bringing scholarship into the public arena. Almost none of these scholars is working on the topic of democracy per se, but I think there is democratic potential in all of their topics, as well as their methods. We're hoping a culminating event will be an ideas festival with public presentations of this work."

The first cohort of Society of Fellows in Public Knowledge includes:

- Yintong Chen, biology PhD, postdoc in the department of dermatology, Perelman School of Medicine
- Amy Funck, political science PhD, postdoc with the philosophy, politics, and economics program, Penn Arts & Sciences
- Emma Kalb, South Asian languages and civilizations PhD, postdoc in the department of South Asia studies, Penn Arts & Sciences
- Nathan Kong, cognitive neuroscience PhD, postdoc in the department of psychology, Penn Arts & Sciences
- Madeline Lucey, astronomy PhD, postdoc in the department of physics & astronomy, Penn Arts & Sciences
- Sewon Oh, chemistry PhD, postdoc in the department of chemistry, Penn Arts & Sciences
- Elizabeth Stippell, physical/theoretical chemistry PhD, postdoc in the department of chemistry, Penn Arts & Sciences

- Sejin Um, sociology PhD, postdoc in the James Joo-Jin Kim Center for Korean Studies, Penn Arts & Sciences
- Helena Yoo-Roth, history PhD, postdoc at the McNeil Center for Early American Studies, Penn Arts & Sciences
- Allan Zheng, ethnomusicology PhD, postdoc at the Wolf Humanities Center, Penn Arts & Sciences

Dr. Rosenfeld is excited about upcoming conversations with and among the fellows, and for the part they'll play in SAS Commons overall. "The SAS Commons initiative is happening from undergrad classes to community events to the postdoctoral realm," she said. "They're all part of the same enterprise. And for this group in particular, we want to emphasize not just what they're contributing to their specific scholarly domain, but how they can explain it to people in the world, explain its relevance and value—an important task for all early career scholars today."

American Academy of Nursing Announces 2026 Fellows

Penn Nursing congratulates the 19 nursing professionals with ties to Penn Nursing who will be inducted as 2026 Fellows of the American Academy of Nursing (AAN). Two are current Penn Nursing faculty members, including one Penn Nursing alumna, and the other 17 are Penn Nursing alumni. All inductees will be honored at a ceremony during the AAN's 2026 Health Policy Conference, taking place October 8-10, 2026 in Washington, D.C.

Penn Nursing Faculty

- Amy Jo Lisanti, Research Assistant Professor of Nursing, Department of Family and Community Health
- K. Jane Muir, Assistant Professor of Nursing, Department of Family and Community Health

Penn Nursing Alumni

- James Ballinghoff, GRN'19, Chief Nurse Executive, University of Pennsylvania Health System
- Jennifer Graber, GNu'99, University of Delaware School of Nursing
- Martha L. Grubaugh, Nu'99, UCHHealth/University of Colorado
- Grissel Hernandez, Nu'97, Stanford Health Care
- Abigail R. Kra-Friedman, Nu'01, Ashkelon Academic College
- Evelyn Lengetti, GNu'80, Villanova University M. Louise Fitzpatrick College of Nursing
- Kelly Keefe Marcoux, GNu'94, Children's Specialized Hospital/RWJ Barnabas Health
- Ellen M. McCabe, Nu'88, GNu'91, GR'19, Hunter College, Hunter-Bellevue School of Nursing
- Nicholas Metheny, Nu'14, Emory University Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing
- Jeanne Moore, Nu'98, GNu'00, Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing
- Joshua Porat-Dahlerbruch, Nu'17, GNu'18, GR'21, The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center
- Kathryn E. Roberts, Nu'91, GNu'98, Nemours Children's Health, Delaware
- Michele K. Savin, GNu'92, Thomas Jefferson University, College of Nursing

(continued on page 8)

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 **August 17-23, 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 **August 17-**

23, 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>Aggravated Assault</i>	08/17/26	1:30 PM	4109 Walnut St	Aggravated assault
	08/17/26	9:45 AM	3910 Filbert St	Unknown person made threats over a vehicle charging station
	08/18/26	1:02 AM	3400 Civic Center Blvd	Threats made toward complainant by known persons
<i>Auto Theft</i>	08/18/26	3:44 PM	300 S 42nd St	Stolen automobile recovered
	08/18/26	1:41 PM	3200 Chestnut St	Theft of a secured e-bike from bike rack
	08/20/26	7:54 AM	4200 Ludlow St	Stolen automobile; vehicle recovered next day
	08/22/26	11:53 PM	1 S 41st St	Automobile theft
<i>Disorderly Conduct</i>	08/17/26	7:11 PM	3900 Walnut St	Several persons cited for disorderly conduct
<i>Fraud</i>	08/17/26	2:25 PM	211 S 40th St	Unauthorized Verizon account opened by unknown person using fraudulent means
<i>Other Offense</i>	08/17/26	2:52 AM	4017 Pine St	Warrant/Arrest
	08/18/26	5:42 PM	3801 Spruce St	Warrant after causing an automobile accident/Arrest
<i>Retail Theft</i>	08/17/26	4:56 PM	3604 Chestnut St	Retail theft of consumable goods; offender fled area
	08/20/26	3:21 AM	3604 Chestnut St	Retail theft by numerous subjects/Arrest
	08/20/26	9:19 PM	3744 Spruce St	Retail theft of consumable goods; offenders fled area
	08/21/26	7:24 PM	3744 Spruce St	Retail theft of consumable goods; offenders fled area
<i>Robbery</i>	08/19/26	3:54 PM	3700 Market St	Strongarm robbery of a cell phone by two subjects/Arrest
<i>Theft from Building</i>	08/20/26	3:28 PM	400 S 40th St	Package theft from apartment building's common area
	08/20/26	9:48 AM	51 N 39th St	Patient reports theft of currency from inside purse
	08/22/26	2:09 PM	3820 Locust Walk	Theft of a package from common area mail room
	08/22/26	8:57 PM	3900 Walnut St	Theft of an unattended package from sidewalk area
<i>Theft from Vehicle</i>	08/23/26	3:38 PM	699 Hollenback Dr	Theft from secured automobile after unknown person broke rear window
				Theft of a cell phone
<i>Theft Other</i>	08/21/26	1:03 PM	3800 Chestnut St	Package theft
<i>Vandalism</i>	08/21/26	9:30 PM	4258 Chestnut St	Graffiti tags on wall of new building at construction site
	08/20/26	12:48 PM	3500 Grays Ferry Ave	Complainant's vehicle's windshield was shattered with a brick
	08/21/26	6:29 AM	3400 Sansom St	Known subject threw a brick through vehicle windows during an argument
	08/21/26	11:37 AM	3910 Filbert St	

Philadelphia Police 18th District

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

Below are the crimes against persons from the 18th District: 5 incidents were reported for **August 17-23, 2026** by the 18th District, covering the Schuylkill River to 49th Street & Market Street to Woodland Avenue.

Crime Category	Date	Time	Location
<i>Aggravated Assault</i>	08/17/26	1:27 PM	4109 Walnut St
	08/18/26	1:00 AM	3400 Civic Center Blvd
	08/19/26	7:08 PM	220 S 47th St
	08/21/26	10:06 PM	1 Convention Ave
<i>Robbery</i>	08/19/26	1:18 AM	4702 Chestnut St

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.

Update

September AT PENN

FILMS

3 *Undergraduate Film Viewing & Pizza: Conclave*; Cardinal Thomas Lawrence (Fiennes) organizes a conclave to elect the next pope and finds himself investigating secrets and scandals about the major candidates; 5:30 p.m.; room 337, Cohen Hall (Religious Studies).

4 *Latin American Film Series: Aído Estoy Aquí*; film based on a true story about how Eunice Paiva and her family responded to the forced disappearance of her husband Rubens Paiva in 1971 during Brazil's military dictatorship; 5:30 p.m.; room 473, McNeil Building; RSVP: <https://tinyurl.com/lafs-sept-4> (Center for Latin American & Latinx Studies).

LEARNING & WORKSHOPS

2 *LGBT Center Open House*; beloved campus resource's yearly kickoff event to build community and share resources, including food and fun giveaways; 4:30-6:30 p.m.; LGBT Center (LGBT Center).

8 *Penn Women's Center Undergraduate Open House*; get to know a campus institution that has been active in promoting the rights of women and gender-marginalized individuals on campus and beyond for over 50 years; noon-4 p.m.; Penn Women's Center (Penn Women's Center).

Penn Libraries

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

3 *Coffee with a Codex: Two Notated Liturgical Books, a Joint Event with the University of Rochester*; a special one-hour event featuring two large liturgical books with musical notation; noon; online webinar.

8 *Introduction to ArcGIS Online*; a hands-on introduction to ArcGIS Online, the powerful, cloud-based platform that makes creating professional web maps accessible to everyone; 4 p.m.; Research Data & Digital Scholarship Exchange, Van Pelt Library.

Honors & Other Things

(continued from page 6)

Friends of Penn Nursing

- Benjamin Joel L. Breboneria, Almoosa College of Health Sciences
- Howard Catton, Chief Executive Office, International Council of Nurses
- Maria Reila Molina, Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania

Living Legend

- Eileen Sullivan-Marx, HUP'72, NU'76, GR'95, Penn Nursing Professor Emerita of Scholarly Practice, Clinician-Educator, Adjunct Faculty, & Dean and Professor Emerita, New York University Rory Meyers College of Nursing

Four Weitzman Architecture Students: Finalists in USTA Future Courts Competition

Master of Architecture students Ann Teng Chua, Teng Long (Tommy) Lee, Liam Niland, and Kotaro Shiraishi have been named finalists in "Future Courts," a student design competi-

MUSIC

5 *Ira Dot's In Blue Time*; English PhD student Eddy Wang will perform a night of dynamic and heartfelt songs, commemorating the release of indie-experimental Toronto-ish band Ira Dot's debut album *In Blue Time*; 7 p.m.; the Rotunda (English).

READINGS & SIGNINGS

4 *Constructed Geographies*; Paulo Mendes da Rocha; Vanessa Grossman, architecture; noon; room 473, McNeil Building; RSVP: <https://tinyurl.com/grossman-reading-sept-4> (Center for Latin American & Latinx Studies).

TALKS

2 *Systems Biology Approaches to Identify Regulators of Epithelial-Mesenchymal Transition in the Pancreas Cancer Tumor Microenvironment*; Matthew J. Lazzara, University of Virginia; 3:30 p.m.; Wu & Chen Auditorium, Levine Hall (Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering).

When Flow Networks Remember: Fluidic Hysteresis and Collective Switching; Amir Pahlavan, Yale University; 3:30 p.m.; room 2N3, DRL (Physics & Astronomy).

Substance; Andrew Clancy and Colm Moore, Clancy Moore Architects; 6:30 p.m.; Plaza Gallery, Meyerson Hall (Architecture).

3 *The Climate of Architectural History and Theory*; Barry Bergdoll, Columbia University; noon; Lower Gallery, Meyerson Hall (Architecture).

Large Deviations for Rare-Event Estimation and Control; Shanyin Tong, mathematics; noon; room 414, Gutmann Hall (SEAS IDEAS Center, Statistics & Data Science; PennAI).

A Memory-Driven Paradigm Shift in Computing; Gu-Yeon Wei, Harvard University; 1 p.m.; room 225, Towne Building (Electrical & Systems Engineering).

8 *Rewatching Films of the 1950s & 1960s in the 2020s*; Al Filreis, English; William Sturkey, history; Josephine Park, English; 6 p.m.; Kelly Writers House; RSVP: <https://tinyurl.com/filreis-sturkey-park-sept-8> (Cinema & Media Studies).

tion organized by the USTA, the national governing body for the sport of tennis in the U.S.

The dimensions of a tennis court have remained unchanged for generations, since the court provides the same familiar foundation for play. But the environment around the court is a different story. Florida's extreme heat, Maine's long winters and changing seasons, and New York's lack of space create challenges for designing and placing tennis courts. The "Future Courts" project asked students to consider the larger environment around the courts, including landscape, infrastructure, sustainability, accessibility, and community use.

The Weitzman team's proposal, The Rainwoven Court, imagines a tennis environment in Houston designed around the city's heat, humidity and heavy rainfall. Rain chains, permeable surfaces and water collection systems are integrated throughout the site, while pathways connect the courts with the surrounding park and landscape.

The Weitzman team is one of three shortlisted by the USTA.

Economics

In-person events. Info: <https://economics.sas.upenn.edu/events>.

1 *Binary Betweenness*; David Dillenberger, economics; 4 p.m.; room 203, PCPSE.

8 *Orders of Similarity: Concentration Along the Diagonal*; Joyee Deb, New York University; 4 p.m.; room 203, PCPSE.

This is an update to the [September AT PENN calendar](#), which is online now. Submit events to almanac@upenn.edu by Monday, September 14 for the October AT PENN calendar.

2026-2027 Provost's Special Advisors

(continued from page 1)

recommends a new teaching faculty track in the associated faculty.

- Megan Ryerson, the UPS Foundation Professor of Transportation and chair of city and regional planning in the Weitzman School of Design, has been named a special advisor to Provost John L. Jackson, Jr. Professor Ryerson will lead the academic and operational aspects of [Penn Learning for Life](#), a key initiative of [Penn Forward](#).

- Florian Schwarz, a professor and the undergraduate chair of linguistics in the School of Arts & Sciences, has been named a special advisor to Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education Russell Composto. Professor Schwarz will lead the implementation of the Penn STEM Foundations Center, a key initiative of [Penn Forward](#).

- Heather Sharkey, a professor of Middle Eastern languages and cultures in the School of Arts & Sciences, has been named a special advisor to Vice Provost for Graduate Education Kelly Jordan-Sciutto. Professor Sharkey will lead the [Benjamin Franklin Scholars](#) and [University Scholars](#) programs in the [Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships](#).

Almanac

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Garden Railway: Revolutionary Philly



Garden Railway: Revolutionary Philly exhibit, part of its commemoration of America's 250th, will be on view at Morris Arboretum & Gardens through September 30, 2026.



Experience one of the Morris Arboretum & Gardens' most beloved traditions. [The Garden Railway](#) brings model trains to life as they weave through a vibrant outdoor landscape filled with handcrafted bridges, tunnels, and miniature worlds.

Each season introduces new themes and details that bring visitors back again and again.

The Morris Arboretum & Gardens' beloved Garden Railway returns with a new theme, *Garden Railway: Revolutionary Philly*, placing this signature attraction at the center of the arboretum's America 250 storytelling.

Set within lush garden plantings, the immersive miniature landscape celebrates Philadelphia's pivotal role in the nation's founding and brings Revolutionary history vividly to life.

Visitors of all ages can take a miniature tour of eighteenth-century Philadelphia along more than a third of a mile of track, featuring seven loops and tunnels, fifteen rail lines, two cable cars, and nine bridges, including a trestle bridge that guests can walk beneath.

Bustling model trains move through scenes inspired by colonial Philadelphia, highlighting landmarks and historic moments such as the Battle of Germantown.

Every structure in the Garden Railway is handcrafted from natural materials such as bark, leaves, twigs, hollow logs, mosses, acorns, dried flowers, seeds, and stones. Each building faithfully replicates its historic counterpart, interpreted through organic materials to create a richly detailed miniature world.

Philadelphia-area landmarks, including a striking replica of Independence Hall, complete the scene and underscore the connection between history and nature.

The Garden Railway is free with general admission. Learn about Morris Arboretum's other upcoming exhibitions celebrating America's 250th by [clicking here](#).