

# UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA *Almanac*

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## Tianquan “Tim” Lian: John H. and Margaret B. Fassitt Professor of Chemistry

Penn Arts & Sciences welcomes Tianquan “Tim” Lian as the John H. and Margaret B. Fassitt Professor of Chemistry in the School of Arts & Sciences. Coming to Penn from Emory University, where he served as the William Henry Emerson Professor of Chemistry, Dr. Lian will join Penn’s Vagelos Laboratory for Energy Science and Technology. He is the editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Chemical Physics* and a member of both the American Chemical Society and the American Physical Society.



Tianquan “Tim” Lian

Recognized as an expert in ultrafast and nonlinear spectroscopy, Dr. Lian investigates solar energy conversion through fundamental physical chemistry research. The discoveries made by his lab group are critical to improving existing energy solutions and to developing new, sustainable technologies for energy conversion and storage.

## Ivan Drpić: Cecil L. Striker Associate Professor of History of Art

Ivan Drpić has been named the inaugural Cecil L. Striker Associate Professor of History of Art in the School of Arts & Sciences. Dr. Drpić joined the Penn faculty in 2017 and is currently serving as the undergraduate chair of the department of history of art.



Ivan Drpić

Dr. Drpić’s research interests center upon the art, architecture, and material culture of Byzantium and its Slavic neighbors in Southeastern Europe, with a particular focus on the period from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Winner of the 2017 Runciman Book Award and the 2019 Karen Gould Prize, Dr. Drpić’s first book *Epigram, Art, and Devotion in Later Byzantium* examines the intersection of art, personal piety, and self-representation in the last centuries of the Byzantine period. He is currently working on a second book project titled *The Enkolpion: Object and Self in Medieval Byzantium*, which explores the inter-

play of subjectivity, materiality, and the power of objects in Byzantine culture. This latest project examines “enkolpia,” a broad category of objects worn around the neck, such as crosses, engraved gems mounted in precious metal, and miniature reliquaries. Dr. Drpić has also authored a number of peer-reviewed articles and book chapters and is the recipient of several research grants.

Dr. Lian has published more than 290 peer-reviewed articles in top academic journals, including *Science*, *Nature Materials*, the *Journal of the American Chemical Society*, *Nano Letters*, *ACS Nano*, and the *Journal of Chemical Physics*. His honors include a National Science Foundation CAREER award, an Alfred P. Sloan Fellowship, an ACS Senior Experimental Physical Chemistry Award, and fellowship in the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The John H. and Margaret B. Fassitt Professorship was established in 1993 through the generosity of the late John H. Fassitt, who was a 1941 graduate of Penn’s former Wharton evening program.

Ute Striker endowed the Cecil L. Striker Professorship in honor of her late husband, Cecil L. Striker, professor emeritus of the history of art, whom she met at Kalenderhane Camii in Istanbul. She taught Italian at Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges and German and Italian at Drexel University. Ute Striker acknowledges the advice and help of her nephew, Robert Lee Striker, in establishing this chair.

A world-renowned archaeologist and leading authority on Byzantine and Western Medieval architecture, Cecil L. Striker served on the Penn faculty from 1968 to 2001. During his tenure, he mentored generations of undergraduate and graduate students, and was instrumental in developing innovative graduate programs in the history of art. His groundbreaking archaeological work in Istanbul included the restoration of key Byzantine sites, such as Kalenderhane Camii and Bodrum Camii, where he uncovered Roman baths, medieval frescoes, rare mosaics, and earlier phases of ecclesiastic monuments.

Cecil L. Striker was a pioneer in applying dendrochronology to date medieval Mediterranean structures, and he was among the first to introduce computer-based analysis and statistical methods to the study of architectural histo-

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## Emily Steiner: A.M. Rosenthal Professor of English

Emily Steiner has been named the A.M. Rosenthal Professor of English in the School of Arts & Sciences. Dr. Steiner joined Penn’s department of English in 1999 and served as the Rose Family Endowed Term Professor of English from 2021 until her appointment to the Rosenthal Professorship.

A scholar of medieval literature and culture, Dr. Steiner’s research centers on law and literature, natural history and the history of information, and Jewish-Christian relations in the Middle Ages. Her teaching covers the fields of Old English literature, Chaucer, Arthurian literature, alliterative poetry, premodern drama, and poetry of all periods. She is presently teaching a new freshman seminar on Collecting and Collections.

Dr. Steiner is author of the books *Documentary Culture and the Making of Medieval English Literature*, *Reading “Piers Plowman,”* and *John Trevisa’s Information Age: Knowledge and the Pursuit of Literature, c.1400*. She has co-edited several collections of essays, and her articles have appeared in many academic journals, such as the *Yearbook of Langland Studies*, *New Medieval Literatures*, *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, and *New Literary History*. Her current writing projects include a book entitled *Forms of Knowledge: Animals in Medieval Culture*, and a new translation of the important fourteenth-century poem, *Piers Plowman*. Dr. Steiner’s ongoing editing projects include a volume on medieval English prose and several volumes on medieval Jews and Judaism.

Recognized for distinguished teaching, Dr. Steiner has received several awards, including the Medieval Academy of America’s CARA Teaching Award, the David Delaura Teaching Award, the Alan Filreis Teaching Award, and Penn’s prestigious Christian R. and Mary F. Lindback Teaching Award.

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## Convocation 2025

Photos and speeches from Penn’s 2025 Convocation, held August 25 on Franklin Field, can be found on pages 4-5 of this issue.

## John Silvanus Wilson, Jr.: Executive Director of the McGraw Center for Educational Leadership at Penn GSE

The Graduate School of Education has named John Silvanus Wilson, Jr.—a nationally recognized leader in higher education—as the next executive director of the McGraw Center for Educational Leadership. Dean Katharine O. Strunk, the George and Diane Weiss Professor of Education, announced the appointment on August 27, with Dr. Wilson set to begin his role on September 2.



John Silvanus Wilson, Jr.

Dr. Wilson's role at the McGraw Center will use his deep expertise to advance the center's mission of cultivating visionary educational leaders. A Philadelphia native, Dr. Wilson returns to his hometown with decades of experience at the highest levels of academic leadership, public service, and institutional advancement. Most recently, Dr. Wilson helped establish the Open Leadership Project at MIT's Media Lab. He served as executive director of the White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities under President Barack Obama, as president of Morehouse College, and as senior advisor and strategist to two Harvard University presidents. In 1985, his professional life began at the start of American higher education's billion-dollar capital campaign era, and he spent 16 years as a successful fundraiser at MIT.

"The McGraw Center for Educational Leadership plays a vital role in bringing our strategic vision, *Together for Good*, to life," said Dean

Strunk. "By welcoming Dr. Wilson, we are investing in leaders who can rise to the challenges of today and tomorrow—leaders who will collaborate across sectors, bridge research and practice, and advance education as a public good."

"I am thrilled to welcome John Silvanus Wilson, Jr. to Penn GSE," said L. Michael Golden, vice dean of innovative programs & partnerships at Catalyst @ Penn GSE. "John brims with purpose and humility. He has offered a compelling and clear-eyed vision of what comes next for the McGraw Center. His leadership will ensure that the center continues to be a place where exceptional leaders are prepared to transform education at every level."

A Morehouse College graduate with three degrees from Harvard University, Dr. Wilson has long been recognized as an influential voice on the future of higher education—particularly the role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities in advancing democracy and opportunity. He is also widely recognized for his expertise in civic engagement, helping institutions connect more deeply with the communities they serve and strengthening education's role in advancing democracy. He examined many of those issues in his 2023 book published by the Harvard Education Press, *Hope and Healing: Black Colleges and the Future of American Democracy*. Also, as the board chairman of the EdTech platform Campus, Dr. Wilson is now deeply involved in one of the most innovative efforts in the EdTech ecosystem.

In his new role, Dr. Wilson will guide the McGraw Center in expanding its reach, strengthening partnerships, and equipping the next generation of leaders with the skills, mindsets, and values needed to address today's most pressing challenges in education.

## School of Social Policy & Practice Launches Practice Doctorate in Nonprofit Administration

Penn's School of Social Policy & Practice (SP2) has announced the launch of the doctorate in nonprofit administration (DNPA), the first practice-based doctoral program in the U.S. focused exclusively on leadership for nonprofit administrators.

At a time when nonprofit, philanthropic, and mission-driven organizations are navigating unprecedented complexity and change, the DNPA responds to a growing leadership gap in the sector by offering a rigorous program tailored to working professionals. Building on the success of SP2's master of science in nonprofit leadership (NPL) and first-of-its-kind practice doctorate in clinical social work (DSW), the DNPA will equip nonprofit professionals with the knowledge and skills to translate research into practice, implement research-informed strategies, manage projects, and further develop as leaders.

Applications for the inaugural DNPA cohort will open in September 2025, with the program beginning in fall 2026.

"We are seeking leaders who are ready to take the next step to effectively further their impact and the mission of their organizations," said Ram Cnaan, faculty director of the DNPA. "I am excited to collaborate with the next generation of nonprofit leaders, individuals driven by purpose and a commitment to meaningful impact. We aim to help cultivate the vision, skills, and resilience needed to lead organizations that

truly make the world a better place."

The three-year program combines live online coursework with two on-campus immersion experiences, allowing students to pursue doctoral-level study without interrupting their careers. Students will complete a data-driven dissertation project, and courses will be taught by Penn's world-class standing faculty alongside CEOs who are practicing in the field, providing multiple perspectives on the challenges facing the nonprofit sector.

"We are proud to offer a new doctoral program designed for experienced nonprofit professionals ready to lead with purpose, advance social good, and drive meaningful change in complex and evolving environments," said SP2 dean Sara S. Bachman. "This program reflects our deep commitment to preparing strategic, ethical leaders who will transform the future of the nonprofit sector."

## Emily Steiner: A.M. Rosenthal Professor of English

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The late Saul P. Steinberg, W'59, was an emeritus trustee of the University of Pennsylvania and chair emeritus of the Board of Advisors at the Wharton School. He established three endowed professorships at Penn Arts & Sciences in the department of English and also supported Wharton and Penn during his lifetime.

## From the Office of the Secretary

### University Council Agenda

Wednesday, September 10

4-6 p.m. in the Hall of Flags at Houston Hall

- I. Welcome
- II. Appointment of Moderator
- III. Appointment of Parliamentarian
- IV. Approval of the Minutes of April 30, 2025
- V. Follow-up Comments or Questions on Status Reports
- VI. Presentation of Council Committee Charges for 2025-2026
- VII. Presentation of Focus Issues for 2025-2026
- VIII. Responses to New Business Topics Raised at the April 30, 2025, University Council meeting
- IX. New Business
- X. Adjournment

### 2026–2027 Penn-CHOP Provost's Postdoctoral Fellowship Applications Due October 13, 2025

The Provost's Postdoctoral Fellowships seek to attract promising scholars whose life experience, research training, and professional interests will contribute to academic excellence at Penn. Fellowships are available for postdoctoral training in all areas of study. Selected fellows receive structured scholarly and research mentorship, access to career development resources, and support for independent scholarship at Penn.

For fellows beginning in July 2026, the stipend is \$68,300 in year one, with increases of \$2,000 in years two and three. Fellows also receive a \$7,000 annual research and travel allowance, and a one-time \$5,000 relocation allowance (if eligible). The University provides a comprehensive benefits package: <https://www.hr.upenn.edu/PennHR/benefits-pay/postdoctoral-researchers-and-fellows>

The application for the 2026–2027 fellowship cycle is now open and can be accessed at <https://postdocs.upenn.edu/provosts-fellowship/>.

The deadline to submit all materials is October 13, 2025, by 11:59 p.m. Penn doctoral students and graduating PhD students from other institutions are welcome to apply.

Applicants must be U.S. citizens, permanent residents (green card holders), or DACA recipients at the time of application, and must complete all requirements for an eligible doctoral degree (PhD, JD, SJD, MD, ScD, DVM, DDS, DMD, or equivalent).

Please note: Fellowships are funded in partnership between the fellow's host school and the Office of the Provost.

Questions may be directed to the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs at [opa@provost.upenn.edu](mailto:opa@provost.upenn.edu).

### Ivan Drpić: Cecil L. Striker Associate Professor of History of Art

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ry. Beyond his academic contributions, he held leadership positions with the American Research Institute in Turkey and the Council of American Overseas Research Centers and advised the Istanbul municipality on major infrastructure projects. Working at the nexus of architecture and archaeology, he was also a driving force in shaping the late 20<sup>th</sup> century as a golden era for Byzantine studies in North America. This professorship honors his enduring legacy of scholarship, mentorship, and innovation.



## Deaths

### Douglas Ewbank, Sociology

Douglas C. Ewbank, an emeritus research professor of sociology and the former associate director of Penn's Population Studies Center and the Population Aging Research Center, died on July 22. He was 77.

Dr. Ewbank grew up in Illinois. He earned his PhD in economics from Princeton University in 1975 and launched his academic career with positions at Stanford University, the Harvard School of Public Health, the University of Dar es Salaam, and Bowdoin College. He joined Penn's faculty as a senior research investigator and as a lecturer in sociology in 1982. He became an associate director in his department in 1986, an adjunct associate professor in 1989, and a research associate professor in 2001. He left Penn in 2007.



Douglas Ewbank

Dr. Ewbank's early research focused on the demography of tropical Africa and genetic differences in mortality by genotype. He collaborated with Penn's Alzheimer's Disease Center on various aspects of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases, co-authoring several clinical studies on these topics. His research also addressed longevity and chronic disease in older adults, including studies on excess mortality associated with Alzheimer's disease, and his most recent work documented the social-demographic history of Powelton Village in West Philadelphia. In addition to his research, he trained several generations of GGD students. He also interned at the Population Council and the American Friends Service Committee and served on the board of directors of the Population Association of America.

"Douglas was a thoughtful and willful man who understood the responsibilities that came with his academic status," said his family in an obituary. "His unique approach to problem solving was admired by many, not the least of which were his students who carry on his legacy here and abroad."

He is survived by his husband, Scott Ryder; his sisters, Diane and Barbara; and their respective families.

Donations in Dr. Ewbank's memory can be made to the George School in Newtown, Pennsylvania.

### John Hover, Penn Trustee

John Calvin Hover II, C'65, WG'67, a former Penn trustee and chairman of the advisors of the Penn Museum, died on July 18. He was 82.

Raised in Short Hills, New Jersey, Mr. Hover graduated from the Lawrenceville School and went on to attend Penn, earning a BA from the College of Arts & Sciences and an MBA from the Wharton School. After graduating from Wharton, he joined Chemical Bank in New York; he later joined the United States Trust Company in New York, where he eventually became executive vice president and a member of the management committee, roles

in which he helped the company grow to become a national leader.

In 1997, Mr. Hover became a member of the Penn Museum's board of advisors and eventually rose to chair the board. As chair, he oversaw the development and completion of the museum's Mainwaring Wing for Collections and Storage and the construction of the infrastructure to bring air conditioning to the building. In 2005, Mr. Hover received the Angell Medal, established by the Penn Museum to honor distinguished service to the museum by a museum supporter ([Almanac January 10, 2006](#)). From 2000 to 2005, Mr. Hover also served as a Penn Trustee; he also founded and served as president of the Penn Club of New York. Penn Alumni awarded Mr. Hover the Alumni Award of Merit in recognition of his service to Penn.

Among other involvements, Mr. Hover served as a deacon, elder, and trustee of the Brick Presbyterian Church in New York; was a director of the Tweedy, Browne Fund Inc.; and was made commander of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem. He was also an owner and director of the New Hope & Ivyland Railroad and the New Hope Historical Society in New Hope, Pennsylvania, and served on the New Hope Zoning Hearing Board.

Mr. Hover is survived by his wife, Jacqueline; his daughter, Molly (Mark); and his grandchildren, Caroline and John.

### Claire Lee, Penn Nursing

Claire Lee, a rising junior in Penn Nursing, died unexpectedly on August 20.

Ms. Lee graduated from Fayetteville-Manlius High School in New York in 2023. While in high school, she co-founded Club HOPE, which aimed to address toxic diet culture, break the stigma on disordered eating, and create a supportive environment for individuals to share their struggles with mental health. She was a member of the National Honor Society, the Science Honor Society, the National Art Honor Society, and the High Honor Roll in high school, and she received the Wendi Birnbaum Memorial Scholarship in June 2023.

Ms. Lee was named one of Syracuse.com's Best and Brightest students in 2022. At Penn, Ms. Lee was a Benjamin Franklin Scholar and served as a student clinical assistant at Upstate Medical University this summer.

Among other family members, Ms. Lee is survived by her sister, Chloe.



John Hover



Claire Lee

## Honors & Other Things

### 2025–2026 Provost's Postdoctoral Fellows

The Office of the Vice Provost for Research and the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs have announced the 2025–2026 cohort of Provost's Postdoctoral Fellows. These scholars represent a broad range of disciplines across the School of Arts & Sciences, the Perelman School of Medicine, and the School of Engineering & Applied Science. Each fellow was selected for their outstanding scholarly potential and will contribute to Penn's academic and research community through independent research, teaching, and professional development.

#### Marquise D. Bell

Marquise D. Bell joins the School of Engineering & Applied Science, where he will collaborate with Kevin Turner in the department of mechanical engineering and applied mechanics. His research explores programmable materials and soft robotic systems, with a focus on wearable technologies designed for physical assistance and mobility support.

#### Audrey Drotos

Audrey Drotos brings expertise in auditory neuroscience to the Perelman School of Medicine, where she will work in the lab of Maria Geffen in the department of otolaryngology. Her work examines how the brain processes sound through thalamocortical circuits, using in vivo recordings and computational tools to study sensory encoding.

#### Malcolm Nelson

Malcolm Nelson joins the department of classical studies in the School of Arts & Sciences, where he will expand on his recent dissertation from Harvard University. His research investigates the role of empathy, moral norms, and emotion in ancient Greek society, with a particular focus on law, warfare, and political authority. A U.S. Army veteran, Dr. Nelson brings a unique perspective to historical inquiry, connecting lived experience with the study of ancient cultures. He will be working under the mentorship of Julia Wilker.

#### Julia Honoroff

Julia Honoroff comes to Penn from Northwestern University and will be based in the department of psychology in the School of Arts & Sciences. She will collaborate with department chair Sara Jaffee on the PHLHousing+ Evaluation, examining how housing and economic support programs influence child and household outcomes. Her work draws on interdisciplinary methods in developmental psychology and policy research.

#### Rama Hagos

Rama Hagos joins the department of sociology in the School of Arts & Sciences, where she will work with Chenoa Flippen and Jason Schnittker. She will also be affiliated with Penn's Center for the Study of Ethnicity, Race, and Immigration (CSERI) and the Population Studies Center. Her research spans historical and contemporary topics in population studies, including marriage patterns, health trends, and institutional contact.

# CONVOCATION 2025

On Monday, August 25, 2025, Penn's Class of 2029 Convocation was held on Franklin Field.

## Illumination, Connection, and Purpose

President J. Larry Jameson

To the Class of 2029 and our newest transfer students: welcome to Penn!

As I prepared these remarks, I found myself thinking back to my own start to college. I had recently returned from a summer of camping in our amazing national parks—Yellowstone, Yosemite, Glacier, and one close to where I grew up, in Asheville, North Carolina—the Great Smoky Mountain National Park.

Deep in the Great Smokies, there is a fleeting, natural phenomenon. Each summer, fireflies light up the forest in a display so mesmerizing that people travel from all around the globe to witness it. The species in the Great Smokies—*Photinus carolinus*—is especially famous, and I will soon explain why.

Fireflies—or lightning bugs as some call them—are found worldwide. They exhibit bioluminescence—their abdomens blink on and off.

As a scientist and avid observer of nature, I like to draw lessons from our natural environment. For tonight, and the beginning of your Penn experience, there are three qualities of fireflies that I will share with you—the Class of 2029.

First, *Illumination*:

The Pennsylvania firefly, *Photuris pensylvanica*, is native to this region. In-season, you may see them nearby at the BioPond or further afield at Penn's Morris Arboretum. Each flash is a signal—an expression of identity and intent.

Each of you also brings your own identity and brilliance to this community. A passion, a curiosity, a life experience and a perspective that no one else can replicate. Whether through the rigorous pursuit of research, showcasing your talents on the stage, or testing your athletic prowess, at Penn, you will have countless resources and opportunities to shine. In doing so, you will also meet plenty of new people. Which brings me to my second observation.

*Connection*:

Fireflies do not glow alone. Their light is a form of communication—a way to find one another in the dark. You have been connecting, even before coming to Penn, and especially this week at NSO.

This is just the beginning. Over the next several years, you will form bonds that will shape your life. I know this from speaking with countless alumni who always highlight their Penn network and friends. You will learn from faculty at the forefront of their fields. You may make a friend who becomes family. But connection is not always easy. You will encounter differences—and disagreements. That is an essential part of the Penn experience: learning how to engage across perspectives, to disagree respectfully, and grow through conversations. Finding connection in a global community is at the heart of this place.

I recently asked some Penn students what advice they would give to new students. Maddy said: “The people around you all have crazy amazing stories. You never know who you will meet and how they will change your outlook, so make the connection.” She made it a point to introduce herself to someone sitting nearby.

Well, we are going to act on Maddy's excellent advice right now. I want us to try something: a quick activity to bring this idea to life before I continue my remarks. Please listen carefully.

You may be sitting with people you already know. When I ask you: please stand up and greet someone nearby you have *not* met yet. Say hi, exchange names, maybe share where you are from. I will come down and join you too. Alright, here we go.

[Dr. Jameson models the interaction, leaving the stage to greet a few students down the middle aisle while all students engage.]

Please take your seats.

Do you feel that? That is the power of new connections, and it can lead to something even bigger. Which brings me to my third point:

*Purpose*:

A firefly's adult life is brief—sometimes just a few weeks—but pur-



President J. Larry Jameson waves while entering Convocation.

poseful. Every moment counts.

Out of 72,000 applicants, you are here because we saw something extraordinary in you. Your purpose at Penn is not nearly as prescribed as a lightning bug's—which is a good thing. Instead, let me put on my white doctor's coat for a moment as Dr. Jameson, and give you a formal prescription: embrace the unexpected. That is a key purpose of all Penn people.

Try out for a play. Take a class that scares you a little. Go to a party and keep your phone in your pocket. Another student I spoke with last spring, Rafi, suggested, “When you make unexpected connections and step into the unknown, wonderful—even groundbreaking things—can happen.”

Here is some brilliant—and groundbreaking—proof, and yes, it involves fireflies.

At Penn, researchers have harnessed the enzyme that makes fireflies glow. It is called luciferase. Luciferase is used to track engineered T cells in CAR T therapy, a pioneering, lifesaving cancer treatment invented here at Penn. By adding luciferase to these engineered immune cells, scientists can watch them in real time during lab experiments. This bioluminescent tracking helps make treatments more precise, more effective, and safer for patients.

I want to wrap up by returning to the Great Smoky Mountains, to that dazzling display of thousands of *Photinus carolinus* lights. What I did not share earlier is that this species is famous because they do something rare: they blink in perfect unison. Most fireflies blink individually. But *Photinus carolinus* blink together.

That is the potential I see in all of you. You have your own rhythm and brilliance, but together you are capable of something extraordinary. At Penn, that coming together is our greatest strength. We solve problems not by working alone, but by syncing up—across disciplines, backgrounds, and ideas. Collaboration is not just encouraged—it is our superpower.

You will likely experience setbacks and know moments of doubt. But you will also have enormous support here and experience no end to discovery, joy, and growth.

As you begin your journey, remember: *Illumination. Connection. Purpose.*

Here is to your brilliant beginning. Welcome to Penn!



## Celebrate Its Past, Create Penn's Future

Provost John L. Jackson, Jr.

As Provost—Penn's chief academic officer—it's my great pleasure to welcome you this evening.

You are entering the University at a pivotal time: next year marks the nation's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday—and it will be Penn's 287<sup>th</sup>. As you may know, the creation of Benjamin Franklin's university was deeply intertwined with the founding of the United States. Several signers of the Declaration of Independence were alumni or trustees of this very university. There is, however, another reason why this particular moment feels charged: American colleges and universities—and indeed higher education more generally—are facing significant headwinds.

Many people are questioning the very purpose and mission of academic institutions: not simply what we teach, our courses and subjects. But also how we learn, together, in this community: the ways we consider different ideas, backgrounds, and experiences, and how those differences shape us, create knowledge, and inform our worldview.

You didn't choose Penn because you imagined that you could avoid engaging with perspectives and opinions different from your own. Or because you assumed that what you take for granted about the world would never be tested or challenged. Or because you longed for homogeneity in your social network and intellectual pursuits. If anything, Penn should have stood out because it attracts so many different kinds of learners and teachers and researchers from all over the country and the world.

Aside from being Provost, I'm an anthropologist. I would argue, anthropologically speaking, that at a certain fundamental level, human beings need and crave difference, even if it sometimes scares us, because that is how we learn and grow. We encounter (or create) something novel, study it, absorb it, and then we seek out the next emergent thing, even as we go back, again and again, to revise and perfect some of what we thought we already knew.

My hope for you over these next four years is straightforward: that you will come to view your Penn education not as a destination, but as an exceptionally robust launching pad—as a series of investigations of what's new and ever-evolving—and maybe even what's impossible to fully grasp quite yet. And that you allow those investigations, those curiosities, those questions, existential and otherwise, to lead you in unexpected directions.

Current concerns about education may seem far removed from those of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, debates about the methods and purpose of advanced study are as old as Penn—not to mention disagreements about then-novel concepts like religious freedom and free speech. Penn was the first colonial college without theological training, and with most classes



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

taught in English, not Latin. Franklin wanted his school in the city, and he specified a non-denominational college. Yet it wasn't long before disagreements and infighting led most non-Anglicans to be pushed aside. Franklin was not pleased. And one year, a student—a young man named Francis Murray—was censured for his speech. Murray's offense? Speaking positively about John André, a British Loyalist. That was in 1781.

So yes, then—as now—contentious debates, especially about religion and acceptable speech, roiled higher education. And it is easy to understand why. Exploring and understanding our world mandates debate. There are guardrails, as there must be. But investigation requires us to examine differing viewpoints. And it absolutely demands that we each sincerely question our own. When education is withheld—or even controlled through political or other means—human progress suffers.

Someone once argued that anyone who teaches others should not feel that mission as “mean, inferior, or circumscribed. [Neither] politics nor religion present to us a calling higher than this primary business of unfolding and strengthening the powers of the human soul. It is a permanent vocation.” That's not Franklin or another early Penn leader. Those are the words of abolitionist Frederick Douglass, in 1894; a time when difference meant education was still denied, by law, to many.

Fortunately, that era has passed. Yet his sentiment remains true. Your Penn education is a time of opening—Douglass's *unfolding*—of your mind and spirit; a time to be excited, and joyful, and likely even a little nervous about some of the differences you'll encounter.

Take this time to examine the new and distinct opportunities Penn has to offer: the thousands of courses, hundreds of student and affinity groups, athletics (Franklin Field and the Palestra next door are iconic, so don't graduate without creating exciting moments you will never forget cheering on all of our Penn Quaker teams), our cultural centers, and of course this amazing city, birthplace of our nation—and of the cheesesteak.

And finally: get involved! Be a part of our community. It's no coincidence that before there was a United States, the College of Philadelphia graduated not just good students but good citizens: young people who were active and engaged in debates about speech, liberty, and democracy. Those debates are as crucial today as they ever were way back then. Speak your mind, respectfully, and allow others to speak theirs. When you listen—carefully, actively, sincerely—you will always learn something valuable.

250 years ago, this country was just getting started on a remarkable trajectory. Tomorrow, it's your turn.

Members of the Class of 2029 and transfers, welcome to Penn.



Members of the Class of 2029 on Franklin Field during Convocation.

## 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 18-24, 2025**. 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 18-**

**24, 2025**. The Penn Police actively patrol from Market Street to Baltimore Avenue and from 30<sup>th</sup> Street to 43<sup>rd</sup> Street in conjunction with the Philadelphia Police.

In this effort to provide you with a thorough and accurate report on public safety concerns, we hope that your increased awareness will lessen the opportunity for crime. For any concerns or suggestions regarding this report, please call DPS at (215) 898-7297. You can view the daily crime log on the [DPS website](#).

### Penn Police Patrol Zone

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

Crime Category	Date	Time	Location	Description
Assault	08/20/25	7:28 PM	1 Convention Ave	Offender threatened complainant and hospital staff over the phone
	08/20/25	11:44 PM	3400 Spruce St	Bomb threat called into hospital; suspect identified from previous threats incident
Auto Theft	08/23/25	6:30 PM	3800 Chestnut St	Rideshare driver assaulted by another driver in a road rage incident
	08/24/25	8:40 PM	4001 Walnut St	Theft of an unsecured electric bicycle from lobby of Acme Market
	08/19/25	11:18 PM	3900 Locust Walk	Secured bicycle taken from bike racks outside of Rodin College House
Burglary	08/24/25	11:20 AM	233 S 42nd St	Complainant discovered an unhoused person sleeping in the kitchen of her apartment; nothing reported missing
Fraud	08/20/25	1:22 PM	3735 Walnut St	Offender attempted to cash a fraudulent check/Arrest
Other Offense	08/21/25	2:29 PM	3700 Spruce St	Driver threatened police, refused to stop, and fled in the bike lane on Spruce St
Retail Theft	08/22/25	8:30 AM	3330 Market St	Retail theft of consumable goods/Arrest
Sex Offense	08/20/25	4:29 PM	Confidential	Confidential
Theft from Building	08/19/25	10:56 PM	121 S 41st St	Package containing a tablet taken from apartment building lobby
	08/21/25	11:41 AM	51 N 39th St	Theft of two tents from the loading dock area
	08/21/25	10:41 PM	3744 Spruce St	Theft of an unsecured bicycle
	08/22/25	3:54 PM	3405 Woodland Walk	Theft of a dropped cellphone from building
	08/22/25	5:36 PM	4036 Walnut St	Theft of a package containing furniture from apartment common area
Theft from Vehicle	08/22/25	6:19 PM	51 N 39th St	Theft of a wallet and purse from ED bathroom
	08/20/25	4:08 PM	3400 Civic Center Blvd	Theft of a cellphone charger from vehicle parked by valet staff
	08/22/25	10:52 AM	51 N 39th St	Theft of power tools from secured lock boxes on bed of truck
	08/24/25	9:48 AM	119 S 31st St	Unknown offender broke the passenger window and took personal items from vehicle
Theft Other	08/19/25	9:25 PM	3800 Locust Walk	Attempted theft of a purse from table outside of 1920 Dining Commons
	08/23/25	7:19 AM	3912 Delancey St	Theft of multiple packages from front porch of residence
	08/24/25	3:14 PM	3900 Spruce St	Theft of a lunch box

### Philadelphia Police 18th District

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

Below are the crimes against persons from the 18<sup>th</sup> District: 7 incidents were reported for **August 18-24, 2025** by the 18<sup>th</sup> District, covering the Schuylkill River to 49<sup>th</sup> Street & Market Street to Woodland Avenue.

Crime Category	Date	Time	Location
Assault	08/18/25	9:55 AM	S 43rd & Locust Sts
	08/20/25	8:12 PM	3400 Blk Spruce St
	08/22/25	4:51 PM	3900 Blk Chestnut St
	08/23/25	12:39 PM	1440 Grays Ferry Ave
	08/23/25	6:31 PM	3800 Blk Spruce St
	08/24/25	1:21 AM	1239 S 49th St
	08/21/25	2:21 AM	4627 Woodland Ave
Robbery			

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

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

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



# Update

September AT PENN

## FITNESS & LEARNING

**4** *Personal Statement Workshop: Writing About Your Research*; learn how to accentuate your research experiences in your personal statement for graduate school and fellowship applications; 10 a.m.; room G08, College Hall (Center for Undergraduate Research & Fellowships).

*Introduction to the Federalist Society*; Missouri Solicitor General Louis Capozzi, a Penn Carey School alumnus and former clerk to Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch, will provide an introduction to the Federalist Society, both at Penn and nationally; noon; location TBA; register: <https://tinyurl.com/fed-intro-sept-4> (Federalist Society).

*Meet and Greet the Panda Express Postdoctoral Fellows in Asian American Studies*; meet Elaine Andres and Khoi Nguyen, who will teach new courses during fall 2025 and spring 2026; 4 p.m.; room 473, McNeil Building; register: <https://tinyurl.com/panda-express-fellows-sept-4> (Asian American Studies).

**8** *Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) Center Open House*; learn about a Penn cultural house that provides a welcoming space and invaluable resources for LGBTQ students; 5-7 p.m.; LGBT Center (LGBT Center).

**9** *Title IX Q&A Hour with the Office of General Counsel*; if you have questions about Penn's Title IX policy or are concerned about how the Department of Education's investigation affects you and your communities, get answers from the Office of General Counsel; 11 a.m.; Goodhand Room, LGBT Center (Office of General Counsel, Penn Women's Center, LGBT Center, Penn Violence Prevention Program).

### Penn Libraries

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

**2** *Canvas 101 for Faculty and Staff*; will introduce basic Canvas functions that will allow participants set profile and notifications; navigate the Canvas interface; create content for a Canvas site; and post files, images, and videos; noon; online webinar.

*PitchBook Crash Course*; an introduction to PitchBook, a financial platform that covers public and private companies, from competitors and cap tables to financials and financing history; noon; room 244, Van Pelt Library.

**3** *Fisher Fine Arts Library Staff Recs Book Fair*; browse a selection of staff-recommended reads from the Fisher Fine Arts Library, meet a librarian who can help you with your research, and pick up a letterpress-printed bookmark; 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; basement, Meyerson Hall.

*Bloomberg 101*; learn the basics of Bloomberg, a definitive source of information for security pricing, indicative and fundamental data, customized analytics and business news; 3:30 p.m.; room 244, Van Pelt Library.

**5** *Open Studio Session: Printing and Movable Type in the Revolutionary Era*; drop-in open studio where you can experience letterpress printing for yourself; noon; Common Press, Fisher Fine Arts Library.

*Rag Collection at Common Press Open Studio Sessions*; donate cotton and linen fabric to be processed and made into sheets of paper; community-wide rag collection mimics the

papermaking process in 1770s; noon; Common Press, Fisher Fine Arts Library.

**8** *Canvas Assignment & Quiz Basics*; will focus on using assignments and quizzes in Canvas; topics covered include creating assignments with various submission types, creating quizzes with multiple question types, configuring quiz and assignment settings, and using assignment groups; noon; online webinar.

**9** *Business Research Strategies*; an overview of essential resources and self-help tools from Lippincott Library to support your academic, career and entrepreneurial goals; noon; room 242, Van Pelt Library.

*Introduction to QGIS*; learn how to create, edit, and manage geospatial data using QGIS, a free and open-source GIS software; 4 p.m.; online webinar.

## READINGS & SIGNINGS

### Kelly Writers House

In-person events at Arts Café, Kelly Writers House. Info: <https://writing.upenn.edu/wh/calendar/0925.php>.

**9** *Two Truths and a Lie*; icebreaker night open to the entire Penn community; 6 p.m.

## TALKS

**2** *Harnessing Living Bacteria, Fungi, and Plants as Functional Materials*; Meredith Silberstein, Cornell University; 10:15 a.m.; room 101, Levine Hall (Mechanical Engineering & Applied Mechanics).

**3** *Best of Both Worlds: Integrating AI/ML Tools with Principled Searches for Gravitational Waves*; Digvijay Wadekar, Johns Hopkins University; 3:30 p.m.; room 4E19, DRL (Physics & Astronomy).

*Water-Hydrophobe Interfaces: From Debunking Myths to Boosting Global Food-Water-Climate Resilience*; Himanshu Mishra, KAUST; 3:30 p.m.; room 101, Levine Hall (Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering).

*Architecture For Sharing*; Takaharu Tezuka, architect; 6:30 p.m.; Plaza Gallery, Meyerson Hall (Architecture).

**4** *The Poles are Warming Faster: Why This Matters for All (Biological Systems)*; Leigh Stearns, Earth & environmental sciences; noon; room 109, Leidy Laboratory, and Zoom webinar; join: <https://tinyurl.com/biology-zoom-fall-2025> (Biology).

*Positive Random Walks and Positive-Semidefinite Random Matrices*; Joel A. Tropp, California Institute of Technology; noon; room 414, Amy Gutmann Hall, and Zoom webinar; register: <https://upenn.zoom.us/j/98220304722> (IDEAS Center, Wharton Statistics & Data Science, PennAI).

*Haters Gonna Hate? Free Speech and Sanctioning Hate Speech in Europe*; Anna Demenko, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań; 5:15 p.m.; room 201, Fisher-Bennett Hall (Russian & East European Studies).

**9** *Crazy Epic Courage: How a "Nobody" Challenged Brutal Dictators and Moved a Nation*; Evan Mawarire, Zimbabwean human rights activist; noon; Perry World House (Perry World House).

This is an update to the [September AT PENN calendar](#), which is available online now. The deadline to submit events for *Almanac's* October AT PENN calendar is Monday, October 16. Submit events for AT PENN calendars or weekly updates at [almanac@upenn.edu](mailto:almanac@upenn.edu).

## Penn's Annual Friends and Family Day October 4

On Saturday, October 4, the Division of Human Resources and Penn Athletics invite faculty, staff, postdocs, and friends to Penn's Annual Friends and Family Day celebration. Treat yourself to a day of football, food, community, and fun! Tickets are available now through October 1 at the [Penn Athletics ticket webpage](#). (Please sign in using your email address instead of your PennKey.)

"My kids look forward to joining me for this event every year," said Karen Kille, manager, of quality of work-life programs. "They love the Penn traditions, hearing the Penn Band, spending a fall day on our beautiful campus, and connecting with my coworkers and Penn faculty and staff."

The 2025 Friends and Family Day line-up of activities features a family-friendly tailgate party on Shoemaker Green, just outside of Franklin Field and the famous Palestra. During the party, your family and friends can enjoy lunch, games, a row of bounce houses, a DJ, and face painting. Special appearances include the Penn Band, Penn Cheer, the Division of Public Safety, Fire Safety and MERT, and the Penn Vet Working Dog Center.

After the tailgate party, the Penn vs. Dartmouth football game kicks off at 1 p.m. You can order up to four free tickets for the tailgate party and football game (additional tickets are \$8 each). Your ticket includes lunch at the tailgate party and admission to the football game. To order tickets, log into the [Penn Athletics ticket website](#).

The fun continues on Sunday, October 5 with a special Friends and Family Day discount at the Morris Arboretum & Gardens. Check out the full [schedule of Penn Friends and Family Day activities](#) for details, including free admission to soccer and volleyball matches, ice skating, and discount admission to Penn Live Arts shows.

There's something for everyone at this campus celebration.

—Division of Human Resources

## Almanac

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## Hung Liu: *Happy and Gay* Traveling Exhibition at the Arthur Ross Gallery Through October 26

Born in Changchun, China in 1948, Hung Liu experienced war, famine, and political turmoil before emigrating to the United States in 1984. Coming of age during the era of Mao Zedong, Ms. Liu was sent to the countryside, where she lived and worked on a communal farm for four years for “proletarian re-education” during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76). Trained as an artist in the official Socialist Realist style, Ms. Liu was accepted to graduate school in the visual arts department of the University of California, San Diego, but was denied a passport by the Chinese government for four years. At UCSD, she studied with influential feminist art historian Moira Roth as well as with conceptual artist Allan Kaprow, who invented “Happenings,” live performances that combined elements of painting, music, dance, poetry, and theater. At the time of her death in 2021 she was a professor emerita at Mills College at Northeastern University, where she taught for twenty-four years.

Known for paintings based on historical Chinese and American Dust Bowl-era photographs, Ms. Liu portrayed refugees, street performers, laborers, soldiers, prisoners and displaced women and children. As a painter, she challenged the authority of archival photographs by cropping the original compositions, enlarging them from handheld objects to monumental canvases, and imbuing the images with color and texture.

*Hung Liu: Happy and Gay* is a travelling exhibition that originated from Georgetown University art and curatorial studies graduate students in collaboration with Dorothy Moss. The exhibition presents a selection of Ms. Liu’s works from 2011-2013. In the series, Ms. Liu revisits cartoons of her youth that were published in children’s books and primers (known as *xiaorensu*). Like the Dick and Jane readers circulating in the United States during the postwar era, the illustrations were used in China to socialize children by instilling values such as hard work, family unity, and patriotism. Ms. Liu’s reformulation of this palm-size historic childhood imagery into large-scale, richly-painted contemporary canvases not only turns mass-produced illustrations into paintings but also raises questions at the intersection of ideology, propaganda, and education. Ms. Liu invites viewers to think critically about the words and images that shape our collective identities, challenging us to reimagine them, a form of re-

writing history. As she often said, “history is a verb. It is constantly flowing forward.”

A series of events at the Arthur Ross Gallery will tie into the exhibition:

- On September 5, celebrate the exhibit’s opening with a dim sum reception and a vocal performance by PennYo, Penn’s premier Chinese a cappella group.
- On September 18, Ina Choi, a scholar and a recent PhD graduate in East Asian languages and civilizations from Penn, will give a talk called *Embodied Re-presentation—Hung Liu’s Intermedial Space of Photo-Painting*.
- On September 25, a Penn faculty panel featuring Bakirathi Mani, the Penn Presidential Compact Professor of English; Chloe Estep, an assistant professor of modern Chinese and Sinophone literatures; Chenshu Zhou, an assistant professor of cinema & media studies; and Emily Ng, an assistant professor of anthropology, will discuss the theme *Seeing is Believing? Truth, Propaganda, and Maoist Children’s Book Illustrations in Hung Liu’s “Happy and Gay” Series*.
- On October 2, a conversation called *A Couple of Old Chinese Guys Talking About Art: Ken Lum & John Yau in Conversation* will feature Ken Lum, the Marilyn Jordan Taylor Presidential Professor in the Weitzman School of Design, and John Yau, a celebrated poet and art critic.
- On October 16, artist Jesse Krimes will deliver the Susan T. Marx Distinguished Lecture in conversation with Andrew Lamas, a professor of urban studies in the School of Social Policy & Practice.

At Georgetown, this exhibition was supported by Maria & Alberto de la Cruz and curated by Brett Everette Adams, Cindy Chen, Hannah Cunningham, Clare Daly, Catie Higgins, Amanda Jones, Rosa Manuel, Ali Mills, Sara Miller, Maia Perry, Sambhavi Sinha, Morgan Stevenson-Swadling, and Kaitlyn Wood. At the Arthur Ross Gallery, the exhibition is organized by Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw, the inaugural faculty director of the Arthur Ross Gallery and the James and Nan Wagner Farquhar Professor of History of Art in the history of art department in the School of Arts & Sciences.



Courtesy of the Arthur Ross Gallery.