

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Almanac

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From the President and Provost

Reappointment of Antonia Villarruel as Dean of the School of Nursing

We have received the report of the Consultative Review Committee on the Reappointment of Antonia M. Villarruel as Dean of the School of Nursing, and are delighted to recommend to the Trustees the reappointment of Dean Villarruel for a second term, to run through June 30, 2026.

As our University, nation, and world continue to grapple with a crippling health crisis, as well as a consistent and urgent cry for social justice, it is an especially critical time for nursing education, research, and practice. Historically marginalized and disadvantaged populations face a higher burden of illness, injury, disability, and mortality, and their access to and use of care is limited. Nursing, and specifically Penn Nursing, has long focused on social justice and improving health outcomes for the most vulnerable. The Committee was unanimous that Dean Villarruel has the vision, energy, skills, and broad support needed to thrive and succeed in a second term as Dean, especially in these challenging times. We enthusiastically agree.

Dean Villarruel's first term was one of significant accomplishment. Under Dean Villarruel's leadership, Penn Nursing has been ranked by *QS World University* as the top nursing school in the world annually since 2017. The Committee found especially notable the comprehensive, inclusive, and far-reaching strategic plan—titled *Leading to a Healthier Future*—that guided the Dean's first term. The strategic plan has catalyzed progress across the entire Penn Nursing enterprise, including: a near-doubling of NIH funding, from \$7.8 million in FY15 to \$15.3 million in FY19; the launch of a post-master's Doctor of Nursing Practice; the establishment of a formal Academic Practice Partnership with Penn Medicine; the successful transition of the Living Independently for Elders (LIFE) program to Trinity Health; and, among myriad other accomplishments, the creation of strategic global initiatives in regions including Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia.

The Review Committee also commended Dean Villarruel for her exemplary leadership of the School of Nursing throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Dean Villarruel's response to the present pandemic, the Committee noted, embodies resilience in all its forms. We join with the Review Committee in thanking Dean Villarruel for her inspired and inspiring leadership, and we join with so many others in voicing our appreciation for the truly heroic work of nurses near and far.

We are especially grateful, as well, to the members of the Review Committee for their time and effort throughout this important process. After receiving its charge from us in March 2020, the Committee—both in formal meetings and through its chair, Andrew M. Hoffman, the

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\$10 Million Gift from Foundation Established by Yuri and Julia Milner: Full-Tuition MBA Fellowship for Israeli Wharton Students

Penn President Amy Gutmann and Wharton Dean Erika H. James are pleased to announce a \$10 million commitment from the foundation established by Wharton MBA alumnus Yuri Milner and his wife Julia to create the Friends of Israel MBA Fund. This new fellowship will provide full-tuition financial support to Israeli MBA students at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

"Yuri's philanthropy has been as visionary as his distinguished business career," said Penn President Amy Gutmann. "With his exceptional gift creating the Friends of Israel MBA Fund, Yuri has created another forward-looking philanthropic initiative. We are profoundly grateful to Yuri and to the Breakthrough foundation for supporting the graduate students who will become tomorrow's global business leaders."

The Friends of Israel MBA Fund will provide full tuition over the course of the two-year Wharton MBA program for a cohort of over 60 students over the next decade. The fellowship is dedicated to Israeli students—including those

who have completed Israeli military service, attended an Israeli undergraduate institution, or worked at an Israeli company. The term funding will provide immediate support, enabling the School to reach, welcome, and support exceptional international students through offering generous financial aid packages.

"Israel has become a global center of innovation and Wharton has long helped train the top entrepreneurs and business leaders across the world. This is a perfect match," said Ron Dermer (W'93), Israel's Ambassador to the United States. "As a Wharton alumnus, I'm delighted that other Israelis will benefit from this unique experience."

"We are thrilled by the foundation's commitment to supporting the best and brightest MBA candidates from the Israeli community," said Dean James. "As part of the Wharton family, Mr. Milner's dedication to welcoming international talent advances the School's mission to foster a diverse and inclusive student cohort benefitting the entire community."

This commitment marks a historic investment in student aid, which is a main area of focus for the Wharton School's *More than Ever* campaign. Fellowship funding provides the means for Wharton to provide competitive financial aid to the world's best and brightest students, breaks down barriers toward their attendance, and enables their full immersion into the Wharton MBA experience. International students like those who will benefit from the Friends of Israel MBA Fund bring their global experience to enrich the student community and ultimately the Wharton alumni network and business community at large.

"As a former international student myself, I know the transformative impact that an education in America and at Wharton can have," said Mr. Milner (WG'92). "Israel, too, has been an important home for me and my family, and our bond with the country remains strong. My hope is that this scholarship will support talented

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Yuri Milner

Ani Hsieh: GRASP Lab Deputy Director

M. Ani Hsieh, research associate professor in the department of mechanical engineering and applied mechanics, has been named deputy director of the General Robotics, Automation, Sensing and Perception (GRASP) Laboratory. Dr. Hsieh assumes the role as former deputy director CJ Taylor transitions to his new position, Penn Engineering's first associate dean for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Dr. Hsieh, who began her tenure in the GRASP Lab as a graduate student, is an expert in the control and planning of multi-agent robotic system. She is particularly interested in marine robotic systems and their applications in environmental monitoring.

Though the open ocean is a particularly challenging environment for delicate machinery and electronics, ocean currents and waves can help propel fleets of miniature, autonomous robots and provide data relevant to studying the spread of pollution, climate change, and more.

Dr. Hsieh's work has been recognized with the Office of Naval Research Young Investigator Award and the National Science Foundation CAREER Award.



Ani Hsieh

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Provost's Postdoctoral Fellowships: November 15

The Provost's Postdoctoral Fellowships (previously called the Postdoctoral Fellowships for Academic Diversity) seek to attract promising researchers and educators from different backgrounds, races, ethnic groups, and other diverse populations whose life experience, research experience, and employment background will contribute significantly to the University's academic and research missions. Fellowships are available for postdoctoral training in all areas of study at Penn.

Fellows receive a stipend of \$54,000 in year one, with \$2,000 increments in years two and three, as well as annual allowances for travel (\$2,000) and research (\$5,000) and a one-time relocation allowance of \$5,000. The University also provides a medical, vision, dental, and life insurance benefits package. Successful candidates will receive highly mentored scholarly and research training, as well as workshops to enhance their research and professional success skills. Penn graduate students who are completing their doctoral programs and looking for postdoctoral positions are eligible to apply for fellowships starting July 2021.

The application deadline is November 15, 2020. Complete details about the program can be found at <https://research.upenn.edu/postdocs-and-students/postdoctoral-fellowships/>.

University City Dining Days: Through October 4

University City Dining Days, our popular restaurant promotion, returns this year with new dates and new deals to showcase West Philadelphia's diverse restaurant scene with 25+ restaurants. In addition to the typical Dining Days option of three courses for a set price, local restaurants will offer alternate deals including to-go cocktails, special add-ons, and takeout options, all perfect for picnics in the neighborhood's beautiful public spaces. This year's Dining Days promotion will run longer than usual, from September 19 through October 4, giving diners plenty of time to visit old favorites or try something new!

Check out the list of participating restaurants below, and browse menus and specials at [our Dining Days website](#). Also stay tuned when we announce a few exciting opportunities to enjoy favorite local restaurants outdoors.

—University City District

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.

However, notices of alumni deaths should be directed to the Alumni Records Office at Suite 300, 2929 Walnut St., (215) 898-8136 or email record@ben.dev.upenn.edu.

Reappointment of Antonia Villarruel as Dean of the School of Nursing

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Gilbert S. Kahn Dean of Veterinary Medicine—interviewed Dean Villarruel; conducted informational interviews and conversations with various members of the faculty, staff, student body, and alumni community; and held open meetings for faculty and staff within the School. The Committee also examined a comprehensive selection of data and documents concerning the School, including detailed budget, enrollment, and employment data. The Committee met five times over a period of eight weeks.

The Committee's final report to us assessed and analyzed the accomplishments of the Dean and the School over the past five years in a wide array of domains, including: strategic vision and planning; faculty recruitment, retention, and diversity; academic programs and student quality; research and scholarly programs; clinical programs and services; School administration and staff; finances and philanthropy; facilities and infrastructure; and engagement with alumni, the professional community, and the general public.

We believe that Dean Villarruel is exceptionally well-positioned to lead the School of Nursing through a period characterized by great opportunity and change. We wholeheartedly agree with the unanimous sentiment of the Review Committee and will enthusiastically recommend to the Trustees that Antonia M. Villarruel be reappointed as Dean of the School of Nursing.

—Amy Gutmann, President
—Wendell Pritchett, Provost

\$10 Million Gift for Israeli Wharton Students

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individuals to look beyond the horizon and pursue their vision of what the world can be, and that the state of Israel will benefit from the expertise in business and entrepreneurship that Wharton program graduates will bring back home."

Mr. Milner is an Israeli science and technology investor and philanthropist. He attended Wharton and went on to found DST Global, one of the world's leading technology investors, with a portfolio that includes some of the most prominent internet companies. Mr. Milner and his wife partnered with Sergey Brin, Priscilla Chan and Mark Zuckerberg, and Anne Wojcicki to launch the Breakthrough Prizes—the world's largest scientific awards, honoring important, primarily recent, achievements in fundamental physics, life sciences, and mathematics. In July 2015, together with Stephen Hawking, Mr. Milner launched the \$100 million Breakthrough Listen initiative to reinvigorate the search for extraterrestrial intelligence in the universe. In April 2016 they launched Breakthrough Starshot—a \$100 million research and engineering program seeking to develop a technology for interstellar travel. All these philanthropic initiatives are funded by the Breakthrough Foundation established by Mr. and Mrs. Milner. Mr. Milner was the keynote speaker at the 2017 Wharton MBA Graduation Ceremony.

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Trustees Meetings: September 24

On Thursday, September 24 there will be virtual meetings of the Trustees committees via BlueJeans Events.

The Open Meetings are:

- Budget & Finance Committee Meeting, 10:45-11:30 a.m.
- Executive Committee, 2:15-2:30 p.m.

Agenda and call-in information will be posted on September 24 by 10 a.m. at <https://secretary.upenn.edu/trustees-governance/open-trustee-meeting>. Please contact the Office of the University Secretary at (215) 898-7005 or ofc-sec@pobox.upenn.edu with questions regarding Trustee meetings or your attendance plans.

September 16 Council Meeting Coverage

The Council meeting on September 16, via BlueJeans Events, was the first Council meeting since the pre-pandemic meeting, which had been held in person on February 19. The following months' scheduled spring meetings had been canceled due to COVID-19.

At last week's meeting, after calling the meeting to order and welcoming everyone, President Amy Gutmann appointed Melissa Wilde, professor of sociology, as the Moderator for this academic year. President Gutmann also announced that Lauren Steinfeld will once again serve as the Parliamentarian.

Kathleen Hall Jamieson, chair of Steering, presented the focus issues for the upcoming Council meetings:

- *December 2*: Outcome and impact to research activities and academic instruction given COVID-19;
- *January 27*: The engagement and support of our international students and scholars;
- *February 17*: *Campaign for Community and Penn Projects for Progress*;
- *March 24*: *Climate and Sustainability Action Plan 3.0* and an Update on the Environmental Innovations Initiative (EII).

This year's Open Forum sessions will be held on *December 2* and *February 17*.

Secretary of Council Lizann Boyle Rode described the disposition of the Open Forum items from last February. She noted that several of the students who had presented have subsequently spoken with various members of the administration about their concerns.

The chairs of the 2019-2020 Council Committees each gave a brief report summarizing their respective year-end reports, which were published in *Almanac* in the [April 28, 2020 issue](#). President Gutmann thanked the chairs and their committees for their work and said that their recommendations would be considered. She noted that changes, such as a reduction of air travel, which has decreased dramatically in the past several months, would be worth continuing. She also noted that a day where diversity officers from across the campus could connect would be a worthwhile endeavor.

The 2020-2021 Council Committees received their charges for this year, which had been approved by Steering at its last meeting. Dr. Jamieson also noted that Climate Week (September 21-25) is a way for the Penn community to become more aware how each person can make a difference, at Penn and at home. She cited the document, [Bring it Home](#).

The next Council meeting will be on *October 21* and it will include the presentation of the State of the University.

Honors & Other Things

M. Grace Calhoun: SBJ Game Changer

M. Grace Calhoun, the T. Gibbs Kane, Jr. W'69 Director of Athletics and Recreation, has been named to the 2020 class of Game Changers: Women in Sports Business by the *Sports Business Journal*. Honorees represent every sector across sports business from teams and leagues, to agencies and sponsors, to technology companies and media outlets. Dr. Calhoun will be profiled in *Sports Business Journal* on October 19 and recognized during a virtual conference October 27.



M. Grace Calhoun

In 2011, *SBJ* created Game Changers to “tell the stories of women in the sports business—women with broad, deep, and varied responsibilities and oversight who contribute to the success of the industry in multiple ways.” The 392 women honored in all 10 classes of Game Changers follow in the progressive heritage of their colleagues who have been part of *SBJ*’s Lifetime Achievement, Champions and Forty Under 40 programs.

In her first year as the chair of the NCAA Division I Council in 2019-2020, Dr. Calhoun guided the organization through one of the most complex and challenging times in its history. While steady progress was made around student-athlete Name, Image and Likeness (NIL) and other top priorities such as transfer issues and financial aid, Dr. Calhoun played her most critical role in leading the Division I membership through the coronavirus pandemic. This included weekly work to accommodate issues arising from the cancellation of winter championships and spring seasons. The work currently continues around the postponement of fall championships, and designing solutions that prioritize student-athlete safety and well-being while providing maximum membership flexibility as the Association endeavors to return to sports participation and competition.

As the chair of the NCAA Division I Council, Dr. Calhoun also serves on the NCAA Division I Board of Directors and NCAA Association-wide Board of Governors where she has played an important role representing membership perspectives on the key issues confronting college athletics. She recently completed a two-year term as the chair of the Ivy League Directors of Athletics, where she guided a “21st Century Review” of Ivy League athletics and is the current chair of the Philadelphia Big 5 Athletic Directors. She is also the vice chair of the PHL Sports Advisory Board, which brings together the area sports community to attract major sporting events to Philadelphia.

Noam Lior: Honorary ECOS Chair

Noam Lior, professor of mechanical engineering and applied mechanics at Penn’s School of Engineering, was appointed the honorary chair and International Scientific Committee member of the 33rd International Conference on Efficiency, Cost, Optimization, Simulation and Environmental Impact of Energy Systems

(ECOS), which was held June 29-July 3.

Dr. Lior opened the conference with his keynote paper “Sustainable Energy Development Status with Key Lessons from the Pandemic,” which he was originally scheduled to present in Osaka, Japan. While the event was held virtually this year, over 300 attendees joined in on the annual celebration of new research results and the exchange of views on the performance, economics, and environmental impact of various energy systems.

Dr. Lior’s research interests are in heat transfer and fluid mechanics, thermodynamics and Second-Law/Exergy analysis, energy conversion, solar energy, combustion, membrane distillation, flash evaporation and water desalination, destruction of hazardous wastes by photocatalysis and supercritical oxidation, scientific sustainability analysis, and heat treatment.

Jennifer Phillips-Cremens: CZI Grant

Jennifer Phillips-Cremens, associate professor in Penn Engineering’s department of bioengineering and in the Perelman School of Medicine’s department of genetics, is among 60 researchers taking part in a \$4.5 Million Chan Zuckerberg Initiative project that aims to apply novel, interdisciplinary approaches toward investigating neurodegenerative disorders. The CZI Collaborative Pairs Pilot Project will fund 30 teams that combine clinical and basic science expertise and have at least one early- or mid-career researcher.

More than 30 inherited disorders are caused by the unstable expansion of repetitive DNA sequences, including Huntington’s disease, ALS, Fragile X syndrome, and Friedreich’s ataxia. Dr. Phillips-Cremens’ research has shown another link between these disorders: the location of these expanding genes relative to the complicated folding patterns the genome exhibits to fit inside the nucleus of a cell.

Dr. Phillips-Cremens will collaborate with Kristen Brennand of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. Their project, “3D genome misfolding due to repeat instability in neurodegenerative disease,” will investigate the emerging link between the genetic sequence’s higher-order folding patterns and pathologic repeat instability in trinucleotide repeat (TNR) expansion disorders.

In a 2018 study published in the journal *Cell*, Dr. Phillips-Cremens and her colleagues established a strong correlation between 3D genome misfolding, short tandem repeat instability, and pathologic gene disruption in TNR disorders, suggesting new research questions whose answers could improve diagnosis or treatment.

Sadye Stern: Peggy Browning Fellowship

Sadye Stern (L’22) has been awarded a Peggy Browning Fellowship to support her summer internship with Justice at Work (formerly known as Friends of Farmworkers) in Philadelphia.



Jennifer Phillips-Cremens

At Justice at Work, which supports low-wage workers with legal services, education, and advocacy, Ms. Stern provided a range of employment and immigration support for migrant workers in Pennsylvania.

“I conducted background research in support of litigation related to employers failing to protect their employees from COVID-19,” she said. “I spoke with clients who were survivors of workplace crimes or trafficking and helped them take steps towards applying for legal status. I researched and prepared a memo on establishing joint employment under the Fair Labor Standards Act. I also researched and co-wrote an article on the ways in which the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Act fail to provide effective protection for low-wage and immigrant workers.”

Originally from the Mt. Airy neighborhood of Philadelphia, Ms. Stern attended New York University and then worked as an organizer for the Hotel Trades Council, the hotel workers’ union of New York and Northern New Jersey before coming to Penn Law.

The Peggy Browning Fund is a not-for-profit organization that provides support for law students fighting for social and economic justice to encourage the pursuit of careers in public interest labor law.

Roopa Vasudevan: Eyebeam Fellowship, James D. Woods Award

Annenberg School for Communication doctoral student Roopa Vasudevan recently received both a 2020 Eyebeam Fellowship and the 2020 James D. Woods Award.

Eyebeam, a New York City-based organization supporting diverse, impact-driven artists working with technology, has launched a new initiative after being forced to close its doors by the coronavirus pandemic. Entitled “Rapid Response for a Better Digital Future,” the initiative will fund 30 projects that shine a spotlight on a digital future free of surveillance, including one by Ms. Vasudevan.

Ms. Vasudevan plans to design a practical toolkit for creative resistance through tech-based art. Concerned by the ties between new media art practice and big technology, she hopes that by developing new mechanisms for creative refusal, she and other artists can eventually break the current cycle of co-optation and dependency and use their art to bring about structural change.

Given in memory of Annenberg School graduate student James D. Woods, the Woods Award is presented to an outstanding graduate teaching assistant each year. Ms. Vasudevan was nominated for Matthew Brook O’Donnell’s undergraduate courses COMM 318: Stories from Data and COMM 313: Computational Text Analysis. Mr. O’Donnell’s courses involve teaching basic programming and data analysis to students without any coding background so that they can apply these skills to a communication-focused data science project.



Roopa Vasudevan

Since 1956, Penn has celebrated a rite of passage each year for faculty and staff who meet one common requisite: they have been members of the University community for 25 years. Another 163 new members crossed the 25-year mark in 2020. Although we won't be holding a reception this year, we want to honor these employees and thank them for their commitment to Penn.
—Division of Human Resources

Twenty-Five Year Club: New Members for 2020

<i>N. Scott Adzick</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Francis Deroos</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Daniel Kessler</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Ann Moyer</i> , School of Arts and Sciences
<i>Dan Alig</i> , Wharton School	<i>Maiheng Dietrich</i> , School of Arts and Sciences	<i>Peter Klein</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Mary Mullins</i> , Perelman School of Medicine
<i>Jane Anderson</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Winka Dubbeldam</i> , Weitzman School of Design	<i>Pamela Knight</i> , Wharton School	<i>David Musto</i> , Wharton School
<i>Terry Anderson</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Maryellen Eckenhoff</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Laura Kosseim</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Ann O'Brien Jenkins</i> , Perelman School of Medicine
<i>Haimanti Banerjee</i> , Wharton School	<i>Scott Edwards</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Vicky Kresge</i> , Wharton School	<i>Kim Olthoff</i> , Perelman School of Medicine
<i>Bryant Barr</i> , Facilities and Real Estate Services	<i>Ricardo Eiraldi</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Pauline Kulynych</i> , School of Arts and Sciences	<i>Olga Ortiz</i> , Perelman School of Medicine
<i>Sarah Barr</i> , Provost	<i>Ronit Engel</i> , School of Arts and Sciences	<i>Barbara Lang</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Anthony Pagano</i> , Facilities and Real Estate Services
Interdisciplinary Programs	<i>Stanford Ewing</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Robert Lawler</i> , Information Systems and Computing	<i>Felicity Paxton</i> , Annenberg School for Communication
<i>James Berger</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Autumn Fiester</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Hae-Rhi Lee</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Louise Pedraz</i> , Human Resources
<i>Edward Bergman</i> , Wharton School	<i>Chioma Fitzgerald</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Julie Leu</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Martha Penny</i> , Perelman School of Medicine
<i>Hema Bhargava</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>James Foskett</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Trevor Lewis</i> , General University Special	<i>Ann Perch</i> , Wharton School
<i>Aregawi Biru</i> , Facilities and Real Estate Services	<i>Douglas Fraker</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Janet Lioy</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Michael Perillo</i> , School of Dental Medicine
<i>Eve Bosnick</i> , School of Nursing	<i>Robert Gallop</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Gregg Lipschik</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Jeanmarie Perrone</i> , Perelman School of Medicine
<i>Jennifer Bottomley</i> , School of Arts and Sciences	<i>Arupa Ganguly</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Huan Lou</i> , School of Dental Medicine	<i>Christopher Petro</i> , Perelman School of Medicine
<i>Eric Bradlow</i> , Wharton School	<i>Noah Gans</i> , Wharton School	<i>Ping Loveland</i> , Penn Global	<i>Rebecca Phillips</i> , School of Nursing
<i>Joseph Breslin</i> , School of Dental Medicine	<i>J. Gaynor</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>John Macdermott</i> , School of Arts and Sciences	<i>Loretta Picklo</i> , Facilities and Real Estate Services
<i>Kathleen Brown</i> , School of Arts and Sciences	<i>James Gee</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Rosemary Malague</i> , School of Arts and Sciences	<i>Donald Pijak</i> , Perelman School of Medicine
<i>Loretta Brown</i> , University Library	<i>Maria Gifoli</i> , Facilities and Real Estate Services	<i>Richard Maniglia</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Mary Pipan</i> , Perelman School of Medicine
<i>Beverly Browne</i> , Facilities and Real Estate Services	<i>Catherine Gontarek</i> , Development and Alumni Relations	<i>Richard Marcantuno</i> , School of Veterinary Medicine	<i>Anne Pomerantz</i> , Graduate School of Education
<i>Richard Cardona</i> , Annenberg School for Communication	<i>Kathleen Hall</i> , Graduate School of Education	<i>Michael Marks</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>J. Russell Ramsay</i> , Perelman School of Medicine
<i>Michele Carlin</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Jason Hart</i> , Facilities and Real Estate Services	<i>Jerome Marrow</i> , Facilities and Real Estate Services	<i>Tarik Richardson</i> , Wharton School
<i>Latanya Carter</i> , Business Services	<i>Gus Hartman</i> , School of Arts and Sciences	<i>Nicola Mason</i> , School of Veterinary Medicine	<i>Mary Ritchie</i> , Information Systems and Computing
<i>Joseph Carver</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Karen Hirschman</i> , School of Nursing	<i>Giacomina Massaro-Giordano</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Louis Rulli</i> , Law School
<i>Lorene Cary</i> , School of Arts and Sciences	<i>Joanne Inverso</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Deborah Mathis</i> , Student Services	<i>Paul Ryersbach</i> , University Library
<i>Benjamin Chang</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Samuel Jacobson</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Thomas McCaffery</i> , Information Systems and Computing	<i>Bernadette Salera</i> , Perelman School of Medicine
<i>Youhai Chen</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Stephanie Johnson</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Joseph McLaurin</i> , Information Systems and Computing	<i>Mohamednur Salih</i> , Business Services
<i>Artur Cideciyan</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Cynthia Johnson-Mollen</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Jon Merz</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Barbara Savage</i> , School of Arts and Sciences
<i>James Clavin</i> , Division of Finance	<i>Randall Kamien</i> , School of Arts and Sciences	<i>Stephen Metraux</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Susan Schachtner</i> , Perelman School of Medicine
<i>Theresa Colligon</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Hillary Kane</i> , School of Arts and Sciences	<i>Bonnie Milas</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Theresa Schuck</i> , Perelman School of Medicine
<i>Sherrie Cornish</i> , Residential and Hospitality Services	<i>Ayako Kano</i> , School of Arts and Sciences	<i>Jaime Miller</i> , School of Veterinary Medicine	<i>Jonathan Schug</i> , Perelman School of Medicine
<i>Julia Crane</i> , School of Arts and Sciences	<i>Marcelo Kazanietz</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Claire Mitchell</i> , School of Dental Medicine	<i>Stacey Secreto-Dankanich</i> , School of Dental Medicine
<i>Barbara Dallap Schaer</i> , School of Veterinary Medicine	<i>Mary Kelly</i> , Perelman School of Medicine	<i>Frank Moore</i> , Facilities and Real Estate Services	<i>Abraham Shaked</i> , Perelman School of Medicine
<i>Annet Davis</i> , Perelman School of Medicine		<i>Diedre Morrison</i> , Division of Public Safety	<i>Allen Shinn</i> , Perelman School of Medicine
<i>Carmen De La Rosa</i> , School of Arts and Sciences			<i>Douglas Sloane</i> , School of Nursing
<i>Leah Dennis</i> , School of Arts and Sciences			

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Pam Smith, Perelman School of Medicine
Wenchao Song, Perelman School of Medicine
Shobana Sood, Perelman School of Medicine
Michele Souli, School of Arts and Sciences
Laura Sprague, School of Dental Medicine
Deborah Stagg, Wharton School
Susan Staggs, Provost's Center
Holly Stefanow, Perelman School of Medicine

Paul Stephens, Perelman School of Medicine
Alan Strudler, Wharton School
Tomoko Takami, School of Arts and Sciences
Jian-Qin Tao, Perelman School of Medicine
Gihan Tennekoon, Perelman School of Medicine
Joanne Thorvaldsen, Perelman School of Medicine
David Toccafondi, University Library
Donald Tsai, Perelman School of Medicine

Gregory Van Duyne, Perelman School of Medicine
Antonia Villarruel, School of Nursing
Kevin Walker, School of Arts and Sciences
Donna Walter, Facilities and Real Estate Services
Ann Webb, Development and Alumni Relations
Frederick Webb, Facilities and Real Estate Services
Janet Weiner, Perelman School of Medicine

Timothy Wells, University Library
E. Wileyto, Perelman School of Medicine
Yin Wong, School of Social Policy and Practice
Barbara Woodford, School of Arts and Sciences
Yanjie Yi, Perelman School of Medicine
Xiuqin Zhou, University Museum
Hongming Zhuang, Perelman School of Medicine
Emily Zug, School of Veterinary Medicine

New Penn Grant to Ease Childcare Costs

Whether you work remotely or on campus, navigating childcare during the pandemic is a challenge for many staff and faculty—and so is the expense. That's why the University has developed the Penn COVID-19 Childcare Grant.

The Penn COVID-19 Childcare Grant provides reimbursements up to a total of \$2,000 per household to eligible faculty, staff, and postdoctoral trainees to cover childcare expenses incurred in their homes or in a childcare or learning center from *September 1, 2020 to May 31, 2021*. You are eligible to apply for the grant if you meet the following criteria:

- Be an active, full-time, Penn benefits-eligible employee or postdoctoral trainee. Faculty, staff, and postdoctoral trainees who are on leave or sabbatical are not eligible. Faculty, staff, and postdoctoral trainees must be completing their normal work requirements remotely or on campus.
- Have at least one child aged 10 or younger, or 11-18 years of age with a disability-related special need at the time of the first application.
- The grant amount is per household, not per child. If both parents are employed at the University of Pennsylvania, the Childcare Grant benefit is limited to the benefit that

would be provided to one faculty or staff member.

- Have a yearly Penn salary of \$100,000 or less (from all Penn sources).

The grant application is available in [Workday](#) from *September 15, 2020 through May 31, 2021*. To apply, follow these steps:

1. Log into [Workday](#).
2. Search for "Create Request" in the Workday search box. Select "Create Request."
3. Select "All" from the Request Type Menu and navigate to "COVID-19 Childcare Grant Application."
4. Click "OK."
5. Answer all questions on the application, ensuring the necessary supporting documentation is attached.
6. Sign the application by typing full legal name in Question 10.
7. Click Submit.

You can submit up to one application per month for reimbursement of expenses not to exceed \$2,000 in total. If you submit your application by the 15th day of the month, once approved, you will receive reimbursement by the end of the following month; however, it may be processed sooner.

When applying, you will need to attach documentation to support your grant request such as childcare center receipts or provider payment confirmation. Costs associated with therapy services such as speech, physical, or occupational therapy are not covered by the grant.

If your child is age 11-18 with a disability-related special need, you will need to submit an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) from your child's school or a letter from a medical doctor or other professional.

If your child is not covered by a Penn health insurance plan, for each child you will need to attach a birth certificate, official court adoption certificate, your 2019 tax return (with Social Security number and salary information redacted), proof of legal guardianship, or other attestation that certifies that your child is age 10 or younger.

If you experience any issues with the application, please email worklife@hr.upenn.edu. If you have questions about the grant benefit, call the Penn Employee Solution Center at (215) 898-7372.

For information about additional resources to help you navigate your childcare needs, visit the [Penn Childcare Resources and Support webpage](#).

—Division of Human Resources

2021 Models of Excellence Call for Nominations

This spring and summer, Penn faculty and staff found new ways to carry on the University's proudest traditions, including the Models of Excellence Awards. The Models of Excellence Award Program celebrates the outstanding achievements of full- and part-time staff members and teams throughout the University's schools and centers.

This fall, Penn's long-standing recognition program will continue to highlight the best in staff commitment and achievement with the [2021 call for nominations](#). Nomination submissions will be accepted through *October 23*.

The online nomination form and guide are available at www.hr.upenn.edu/models. Refer to the [Quick Start Guide to Submitting a Nomination](#) to make the process easier.

You can nominate individual Penn staff members and teams for an award in these categories:

Models of Excellence Award—recognizes staff member accomplishments that reflect initiative, leadership, increased efficiency, and a deep commitment to service.

Model Supervisor Award—honors supervisors who are effective and productive leaders for the University.

Pillars of Excellence Award—recognizes the important support Penn's weekly-paid staff members provide to promote the University's mission.

Sustaining Penn Through COVID-19—For 2021 only, this category was created in recognition of extraordinary staff efforts to continue education and research in the face of the pandemic.

In each category, award recipients each receive \$500 and a symbolic award. Nominees selected for honorable mention receive \$250 and a symbolic award. Awards will be announced and the honorees celebrated in the spring of 2021.

The Models of Excellence Selection Committee bases their choices on the content of your nominations, so your participation is crucial. Learn how to submit a nomination that conveys the exceptional work of your colleagues by attending a virtual *How to Write a Models of Excellence Nomination* information session. Two sessions will be held on:

- Tuesday, September 29, noon-1 p.m.
- Tuesday, October 13, noon-1 p.m.

Register at www.hr.upenn.edu/models-info-session or models@hr.upenn.edu.

While the way we work has changed, Penn's



standards remain high. In spite of unprecedented obstacles, staff members not only met those standards, but frequently surpassed them. If you know a staff member or team who exemplify this spirit, don't miss this opportunity to share their story with the entire Penn community. Nominate them for a Models of Excellence program by *October 23*.

Visit the [Models of Excellence Program webpage](#) for more information.

—Division of Human Resources

October Human Resources: Upcoming Programs

Professional and Personal Development Programs

Open to faculty and staff. Register at <http://knowledgeink.upenn.edu/>.

Tools for Career Assessment and Development; 10/7; 12:30-1:30 p.m. In this program we will examine questions for assessing and developing your career. You will contrast your career options by utilizing a variety of tools. By the end of the session you will have the resources needed to develop a plan for career success.

Develop Your Presentation Skills; 10/13; 12:30-1:30 p.m. Fear. That's the main reason most people won't make presentations—or make them poorly. By following some simple lessons anyone can conquer presentation phobia and go on to make his or her case successfully and professionally.

Virtual Training 101; 10/21; 12:30-1:30 p.m. Using our training structure roadmap, we will take a look at how to prepare and execute a virtual training. We will examine the phases of training and how those are structured for a virtual training, how to reformat course activities and communication to participants, tips for using video platforms, and best practices for facilitating your course.

Creating and Maintaining Your LinkedIn Profile; 10/26; 12:30-1:30 p.m. a review of tips on creating a great LinkedIn profile that will get you noticed by recruiters and industry professionals.

TED Talk Tuesday: How to Manage for Collective Creativity; 10/27; 12:30-1:30 p.m. What's the secret to unlocking the creativity hidden inside your daily work, and giving every great idea a chance? Harvard professor Linda Hill, co-author of *Collective Genius*, has studied some of the world's most creative companies to come up with a set of tools and tactics to keep great ideas flowing—from everyone in the company, not just the designated creatives.

Effectively Communicating in the Workplace 10/29; 12:30-1:30 p.m. You are supervising or managing other employees and feel the need to learn more about how to prepare for and conduct performance appraisals. Join us to find out best practices for this important annual procedure.

Work-life Workshops

Open to faculty and staff. Register at www.hr.upenn.edu/registration.

Flexible Work Options; 10/1; 11 a.m.-noon. Flexible work options offer creative approaches to successfully complete work while maintaining balance between work and personal commitments. Currently, the majority of Penn staff and faculty are working remotely while maintaining availability during core work hours. Learn how you can incorporate flexible work going forward, focus on a mutually beneficial outcome, make the business case for your flexible work proposal, and honor your work-life boundaries. This presentation will provide an overview of flexible work options and provide guidelines for proposing and implementing a flex request including: understanding the applicable HR guidelines and policies, assessing the fit between position and job responsibilities, reviewing a sample proposal, documenting the flexible work option request, and implementing the request.

New and Expectant Parent Briefing; 10/8; 12:30-1:30 p.m. This is an introductory resource briefing designed for expectant parents and those who are new to parenting or childcare. Participants will learn about local and University childcare and parenting resources including the lactation program, childcare locators, back-up care, adjusting to new schedules, flexible work options, among other topics. This session will also cover Penn's time away from work policies including short-term disability (STD), parental leave, and related sick leave policies.

How to Write a Models of Excellence Nomination; 10/13; 12:30-1:30 p.m. Do you work with someone who shows special initiative or demonstrates outstanding leadership? Have you noticed that a colleague or team excels at fostering work-

place collaboration or shows an especially deep commitment to service? If so, then recognize them as a Model of Excellence. The Selection Committee depends on the content of the nominations to make its decisions. Therefore, nominations submitted should be as detailed and descriptive as possible in order to convey a nominee's exceptional performance. Be sure to attend this workshop and learn about how best to write your nomination and obtain some tips on doing so!

Strategies for Managing Stress and Avoiding Burnout; 10/15; 12:30-1:30 p.m. It is natural to become stressed when the demands on time and energy have become too great. This can happen both at home and at work and can severely limit productivity and effectiveness. This workshop shows the physiological stages of stress development, and its harmful effects on the body. It also addresses the defining symptoms and different sources of stress. This useful information is incorporated with helpful stress relievers and imagery techniques.

Penn Healthy You Workshops

Open to faculty and staff. Register at www.hr.upenn.edu/registration.

Vinyasa Yoga; 10/1, 10/13, 10/29; noon-1 p.m. A unique sequence of postures aimed at strengthening the mind-body connection. Its hallmark is the emphasis on the connection between breath and body. With roots in multiple forms of classic yoga—including ashtanga vinyasa yoga—this class will allow you to stretch and strengthen your body and clarify your mind. This method encourages vitality, strength, and healing as we work with the body as a whole. No previous experience or knowledge of yoga is required.

Parents' Guide to Kids and Money—Toddlers to Teens; 10/8; noon-1 p.m. For many of us, as children, discussing money was off-limits. Questions were ignored or received vague incomplete answers. But times have changed. Today you need to teach your kids good money habits and how to make sound spending, saving, and investing decisions. In this complimentary workshop you will learn about:

- What's the best age to have the first "money" talk with your child
- How can you encourage saving, spending and giving wisely
- When and how should you introduce investing, budgeting and credit cards

Chair Yoga; 10/21; noon-1 p.m. Plenty of people turn to yoga for exercise, but striking a pose isn't for everyone. If you've been tempted to try it but don't know where to start, it's time to try chair yoga. Chair yoga is a more moderate form of yoga that's done while sitting in a chair or using a chair for support. You get the same benefits of a regular yoga workout (like increased strength, flexibility, and balance) but don't have to master complex poses. Chair yoga can even better your breathing and teach you how to relax your mind and improve your wellbeing. And don't worry about your experience or flexibility—chair yoga can be modified for all levels!

HIIT Strength; 10/23; noon-1 p.m. a High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) workout! Each session will be a different sequence of exercises, with a focus on strength training. This workout will be a full-body blast, guaranteed to leave you sweating!

The Role of Social Security in Your Retirement Income Strategy; 10/28; noon-1 p.m. This seminar identifies the current rules surrounding Social Security, as well as specific collection strategies geared towards helping you make the most of your benefits.

PENN New Wellness Program and Virgin Pulse Live Platform Demonstration; 10/29; noon-1 p.m. During the demonstration, Virgin Pulse Client Success Manager Emma Doyle will walk participants through many aspects of the platform, showing you how to:

- Enroll and set up your Virgin Pulse account.
- Create your user profile.
- Review the dashboard page, including daily cards and support options.

- Explore Virgin Pulse programs, including challenges, tracking options, Journeys, and more.
- Review *Be in the Know* campaign activities, including the Health Check and Bonus Actions.
- Fill out Attestation Forms to get credit for certain completed Bonus Actions.
- Create a personal challenge.
- Connect devices and apps that sync.

There will also be a Q&A section at the end of the demonstration in which participants can submit questions via the chat feature.

—Division of Human Resources

One Step Ahead

Security & Privacy Made Simple

Another tip in a series provided by the
Offices of Information Security, Information
Systems & Computing and Audit,
Compliance & Privacy

Using Cloud Storage Services Securely

With many of us working from home, cloud storage plays a vital role in helping us work more efficiently when we are physically away from campus.

Cloud storage stores digital data online, using a cloud service provider's computing infrastructure. Cloud services offer an easy method to store, sync, and share files at low cost. Some well-known cloud services include Box, Google Drive, Microsoft OneDrive, Amazon Drive, Apple iCloud, Dropbox, and Amazon Web Services.

With any cloud service you use, it is critical to pay attention to the level of security that service provides. Before considering a cloud service for housing University data:

1. Use a University- or School-recommended cloud service. If you have questions about which services are available to you contact your local computing support.

2. Follow University guidelines on the type of data you can safely store with these cloud services based on Penn Data Risk Classification.

3. Select a strong password with letters, numbers, and symbols. Avoid re-using the same password over multiple platforms.

4. For your personal use, choose a cloud platform offering two-factor authentication, and secure encryption for at-rest data, and data in transit to/from your device. Penn+Box (a Penn-specific branding of Box) and Amazon Web Services are platforms you can access using your PennKey and Penn Two-Step Verification.

Special Note: Be on the lookout for phishing scams related to cloud services. These scams may send deceptive, unsolicited email or text messages that appear as if they originated from a cloud service provider, one of your contacts, or one of Penn's departments—but in fact carry a malicious attachment or a link. If you suspect an email is a scam, report it to your School or Center computing support staff.

References

Use of Penn+Box and Amazon Web Services at <https://www.isc.upenn.edu/security/data-box-amazon>

Penn Data Risk Classification at <https://www.isc.upenn.edu/security/data-classification>

Update

September AT PENN

CONFERENCES

30 *Cancer and COVID-19*; CME-accredited conference featuring keynote speech from Anthony Fauci; 5:45-8:45 p.m.; virtual event; register: <https://www.med.upenn.edu/MEDCOV-ID19/> (Abramson Cancer Center).

FITNESS AND LEARNING

30 *How to Design and Plan Your Home Landscape*; Marc Radell, Penn State Extension; \$10/ members, \$15/non-members; info: morrisarboretum.org (Morris Arboretum).

TALKS

23 *Documentary Filmmaking and the Climate Crisis*; panel discussion; noon; BlueJeans meeting; join: <https://bluejeans.com/4522959735> (Annenberg School).

Leveraging the Alignment Between Machine Learning and Intersectionality: Using Word Embeddings to Visualize Intersectional Experiences of the Nineteenth-Century U.S. South; Laura Nelson, Northeastern University; noon; virtual event; info: <https://sociology.sas.upenn.edu/events/> (Sociology).

Penn Contributions to COVID Solutions; panel of speakers; 1 p.m.; online event; register: <https://tinyurl.com/penn-techweek> (PCI, PACT).

Sudden Stops, Productivity, and the Exchange Rate; Laura Castillo-Martinez, Duke; 4 p.m.; Zoom meeting; info: <https://economics.sas.upenn.edu/events/> (Economics).

24 *Towards Clean Energy Equity: Overcoming Racial Disparities*; panel of speakers; noon; Zoom meeting; register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/116043642659/> (Kleinman Center for Energy Policy).

Monuments and Social Justice; panel discussion; 4 p.m.; Zoom meeting; join: <https://tinyurl.com/arthur-ross-zoom-sept-24> (Arthur Ross Gallery).

Complexity & The Politics of the Green Energy Transition; David Spence, University of Texas; 4:30 p.m.; virtual event; register: <https://tinyurl.com/kleinman-talk-sept-24> (Kleinman Center for Energy Policy).

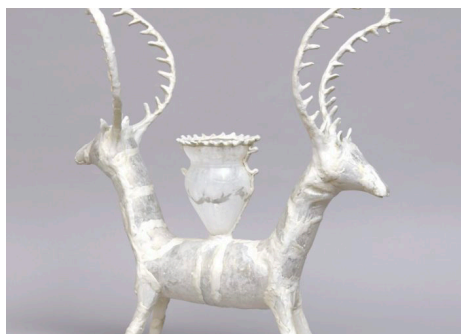
25 *Avoiding Us Versus Them: How Schools' Dependence on Privileged "Helicopter" Parents Influences Enforcement of Rules*; Jessica Calarco, Indiana University; noon; Zoom meeting; info: <https://sociology.sas.upenn.edu/events/> (Sociology).

28 *Contemporary Architectural Discourse: Race, Environment, Gender*; Fernando Lara, University of Texas at Austin; noon; Zoom meeting; info: <https://www.design.upenn.edu/architecture/graduate/events/> (Graduate Architecture).

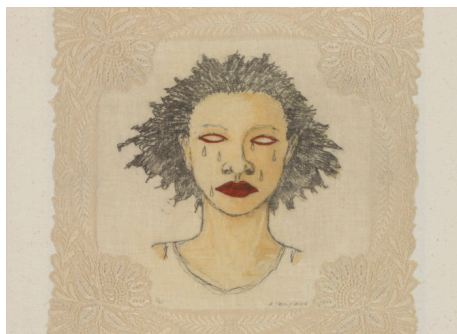
29 *Listening to Waves: Tuning to Cosmic, Oceanic, and Sociogenic Noise, Sound, and Music*; Stefan Helmreich, MIT; 5:15 p.m.; RSVP: <https://tinyurl.com/stefan-helmreich-talk> (Music).

30 *Using Market Design to Improve the Provision of Sanitation*; JF Houde, University of Wisconsin-Madison; 3:30 p.m.; Zoom meeting; info: <https://economics.sas.upenn.edu/events/using-market-design-improve-provision-sanitation> (Economics).

Re-Materialize at the Arthur Ross Gallery: Through December 20



Shari Mendelson, *Double Deer with Cup*, 2019; Repurposed plastic, hot glue, resin, acrylic polymer, mica; Photo by Alan Weiner



Alison Saar, *High Yella' Blue*, edition 1/21, 2016, Intaglio, porchoir; Collection of Jordon D. Schnitzer

The exhibition *Re-materialize* features artists who have built their practices using materials sourced from discarded packaging, personal items, and architectural elements. Works by the Ghanaian-Nigerian artist El Anatsui show the changeability of material culture and the unfixed nature of art. Brooklyn-based sculptor Shari Mendelson creates iridescent stained glass-like vessels from plastic bottles (above left). California-based artist Alison Saar shines a light on Southern Black communities with prints on vintage textile fragments and handkerchiefs (above right). Jackie Milad, a Baltimore-based artist, makes rich collaged canvases that refer to her Egyptian and Honduran heritage. The Arthur Ross Gallery is open by reservation only at this time.

See www.ArthurRossGallery.org

AT PENN Deadlines

The [September AT PENN calendar](#) is now online. The deadline for the October AT PENN was last week; the November AT PENN deadline is *October 12*.

Almanac

3910 Chestnut Street, 2nd floor
Philadelphia, PA 19104-3111
Phone: (215) 898-5274 or 5275
FAX: (215) 898-9137
Email: almanac@upenn.edu
URL: www.upenn.edu/almanac

The University of Pennsylvania's journal of record, opinion and news is published Tuesdays during the academic year, and as needed during summer and holiday breaks. Its electronic editions on the Internet (accessible through the Penn website) include HTML, Acrobat and mobile versions of the print edition, and interim information may be posted in electronic-only form. Guidelines for readers and contributors are available on request and online.

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The University of Pennsylvania Police Department Community Crime Report

About the Crime Report: Below are the Crimes Against Persons or Crimes Against Society from the campus report for **September 7-13, 2020**. Also reported were 8 crimes against property (5 thefts from building, 1 retail theft, 1 vandalism, 1 other offense) with 1 arrest. Full 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 and includes all criminal incidents reported and made known to the University Police Department between the dates of **September 7-13, 2020**. The University Police actively patrol from Market St to Baltimore Avenue and from the Schuylkill River to 43rd St 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 the Division of Public Safety at (215) 898-4482.

09/08/20	1:48 PM	4000 Chestnut St	Gunshots fired at vehicle
00/09/20	12:49 PM	3549 Chestnut St	Bullet hole found in TV, blood found in room

18th District

Below are the Crimes Against Persons from the **18th District**: 9 crimes against persons (3 assaults, 2 aggravated assaults, 2 domestic assaults, and 2 robberies) were reported for **September 7-13, 2020** by the 18th District, covering the Schuylkill River to 49th Street & Market Street to Woodland Avenue.

09/07/20	8:58 PM	3401 Civic Center Blvd	Domestic Assault
09/08/20	3:27 AM	4837 Woodland Ave	Aggravated Assault
09/08/20	4:24 PM	4002 Market St	Assault
09/10/20	9:00 PM	202 S 43rd St	Robbery
09/11/20	5:11 PM	3330 Market St	Assault
09/12/20	2:49 PM	4833 Woodland Ave	Aggravated Assault
09/13/20	2:25 AM	4314 Walnut St	Domestic Assault
09/13/20	2:45 AM	4314 Walnut St	Assault
09/13/20	11:10 PM	4514 Pine St	Robbery

Attention, Intentions, and Just Plain Tension

Phil Nelson

Like you, perhaps, I felt a lot of tension this past March—how could I give my students what they needed? Here are some reflections on what I came up with, and some things I hope to try in the fall. I'll argue that the fundamental nut we must crack involves student attention; whatever our good intentions, we must address this issue head-on if we are to be effective. We have all heard many good ideas about elaborate course structures to maintain attention. Here instead are some ideas that focus on how I try to keep human connection front and center.

Any major disruption offers us the chance to rethink our core values. I decided to attend some remote classes given by colleagues at other institutions. I encourage you to do the same, because what I saw was eye-opening, or rather, eye-shutting: Often there is just a white screen with equations appearing from an invisible hand. In the corner there is a thumbnail image of an expressionless face, its gaze averted. Naturally—the professor is concentrating hard on the tablet where (s)he is writing out the equations! Others were busy showing PowerPoint slides and moving their cursor around to make various points. Their gaze was fixed on their second monitor—again, not on “me” (that is, not on their camera). Either way, the user experience is nothing but pure content. Isn't that our ideal as intellectuals? Well, for me at least, it is absolutely impossible to maintain my attention under such conditions.

Much has changed, but much remains unchanged. What, anyway, is the indispensable core of education? One answer is that it's what happens when a *human* wishes to work hard to give beautiful, important, but difficult skills and frameworks to other humans who wish to acquire them, and each side *doesn't want to let the other side down*. This certainly motivates me during a normal semester, and perhaps my students as well. The human interaction is what distinguishes this activity from outstanding but one-way content like Khan Academy (or reading a book). Preserving that aspect became a priority for me.

I remind students that attention is the gold or petroleum of the 21st century, that *their attention is a commodity* bought and sold by giant corporations, and that it's up to them to grip their attention tightly and nail it for an hour to whatever they believe deserves it, despite the best efforts of those corporations to disrupt it. I admit to them that this is much harder with remote instruction. I can certainly tell them in all humility that *I, too, struggle* with fragmented attention, but that there are mindful strategies we can all learn.

Beyond commiserating, what can I, as the professor, do to help? Let's recognize that we are animals, and we evolved to focus our attention on another who is moving around, gesticulating, adding emphasis with vocal tone, sometimes dropping the eraser, and especially *making eye contact while asking questions*. So I want to prioritize a live activity, where I model doing science. I keep the usual classroom fiction, that I'm inventing the subject right there on the spot; I do some things, step back, look directly at students, and ask “What should I do next?”, maybe even call on one by name. I want to *mess up* (hopefully not too often), demonstrate how to recover, and get forgiven.

All of this turns out to be possible with available tech. I set up a room with a real (not virtual) whiteboard, where I can do all those human

things. I set up a camera that's several feet from me, not two feet as on a laptop. (Of course, that means I must be wearing trousers!) And I look right at that camera about as often as I once looked at students in a regular class. Yes, obviously, it is not real eye contact. But it still helps—our attentional circuits are so easily fooled.

I would dearly love an arrangement where students were also more aware of one another's presences. As humans, we are also wired to give attention especially when we're in a room full of others who are also focusing on the same thing. The electricity—when you know that “Others are Getting It so I had better Keep Up”—is mostly lost in Zoom-world. Nobody gives their best attentional effort without that nudge. What's the next best thing? This term, I am creating breakout teams (“assigned tables”) where just a few students will work together for discussions and for a project or two, then get reassigned to a new team over and over throughout the term. I hope these teams will work because (a) each member doesn't want to let the others down, and (b) humans actually enjoy contributing to common goals. I won't rely on Zoom's auto-assignment feature, because I want to engineer connections between students with different disciplinary backgrounds. Also, Zoom's “random” assignments end up with a surprising amount of duplication; I want each student to get acquainted with as many different classmates as possible during the semester.

As to the projects themselves, now more than ever I think it's important that they not all be exercises I did decades ago; at least some of them should be projects I tried for the first time in the past *month*. Then I can tell students honestly about the frustrations I faced; I can show them my initial flawed attempt; I can hold out the possibility that with some initiative their team may do better than I did in some respects.

Are these ideas merely hunches, or are they the results of rigorous, peer-reviewed, double-blind research? Answer: They are hunches, of course. If they sound worth trying, you can try them; I'm reporting that they are not very hard to implement. For what it's worth, multiple students this spring commented that I “cared about” them; perhaps this form of connection was part of what drove that sense.

Technical asides: I record my sessions locally. This approach lets me edit out students' thumbnail images, addressing privacy concerns they may have and perhaps letting them relax while still being visible to each other in class, knowing that only I will be visible in the recording. When students ask questions, I repeat the question for the recording, which anyway is good practice.

After class, I upload each session to Panopto, which conveniently allows streaming access. However, overseas students may prefer to download the whole episode before watching it; Panopto offers an option to allow this.

It can be done. *Human connection* is what we offer as an elite institution. I believe this is why universities still exist after many centuries, and might be worth saving. Would I choose to keep working in this mode in a hypothetical post-pandemic world? No way! But while we're waiting for that day, improved connection can be arranged with a little care, once we realize its importance.

Phil Nelson is Professor of Physics and Astronomy in SAS.
He is the recipient of the 2018 Dennis M. Deturck Award for Innovation in Teaching
and the 2001 Ira Abrams Memorial Award for excellence in undergraduate teaching.

*This essay continues the series that began in the fall of 1994 as the joint creation of the College of Arts and Sciences,
the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Lindback Society for Distinguished Teaching.*

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