

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA *Almanac*

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Four Faculty Members in the School of Engineering & Applied Science Appointed to Endowed Chairs

Chris Callison-Burch: Raj and Neera Singh Professor

Chris Callison-Burch, a professor in the department of computer and information science, has been named the Raj and Neera Singh Professor.

Dr. Callison-Burch is best known for research in natural language processing and artificial intelligence (AI). His current work focuses on large language models and their use in longstanding challenges in AI, including reasoning, verification, model evaluation, and AI-generated text. His research also spans machine translation, paraphrasing, crowdsourcing, multilingual language technologies, and multimodal systems. As director of Penn Engineering Online's master of science in engineering in artificial intelligence, he has helped shape Penn's growing AI curriculum.

Dr. Callison-Burch earned a BS with honors in symbolic systems from Stanford University,



Chris Callison-Burch

an MS with distinction in computer science from the University of Edinburgh, and a PhD in informatics from the University of Edinburgh. He is a Sloan Research Fellow and has received faculty research awards from Google, Microsoft, Amazon and Facebook.

The Raj and Neera Singh Professorship reflects Raj and Neera Singh's support for expanding AI education and research at Penn Engineering. Their philanthropy has supported leadership, faculty and infrastructure for Penn's artificial intelligence initiatives, including undergraduate and online graduate programs that prepare engineers to use AI responsibly and imaginatively.

Andrew Tsourkas: Eduardo D. Glandt President's Distinguished Professor

Andrew Tsourkas, a professor in the department of bioengineering, has been named the Eduardo D. Glandt President's Distinguished Professor. He also serves as co-director of the Center for Targeted Therapeutics and Translational Nanomedicine and as undergraduate chair of bioengineering.

Dr. Tsourkas has established a leading research program in molecular imaging, targeted therapeutics and nanomedicine. His laboratory develops imaging agents, molecular probes and

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Penn GSE Receives \$3 Million to Create the Milken Endowed Scholarship for Educational Entrepreneurship

Penn's Graduate School of Education (GSE) has received a \$3 million commitment from the Gregory and EJ Milken Foundation to establish the Milken Endowed Scholarship for Education Entrepreneurship Fund. The gift will create permanent scholarship support for students in GSE's education entrepreneurship MEd program to attract and develop the next generation of education entrepreneurs, innovators, and changemakers.

"Education entrepreneurship plays a vital role in advancing new ideas, technologies, and approaches that can improve learning and expand opportunity," said Katharine O. Strunk, dean of Penn GSE and the George and Diane Weiss Professor of Education. "The Milken family has been a longstanding champion of Penn GSE's leadership in education entrepreneurship, encouraging our faculty and students to pursue bold ideas that can transform education. This extraordinary gift will open doors for talented students to explore innovative and entrepreneurial opportunities regardless of their financial circumstances, while strengthening Penn GSE's ability to cultivate the next generation of education innovators. We are deeply grateful to Gregory and EJ Milken for their generosity, partnership, and shared commitment."

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Penn Medicine, Independence Blue Cross, and Regent Surgical Launch Ambulatory Surgery Partnership

Penn Medicine, Independence Blue Cross (IBX), and Regent Surgical (Regent) have announced a first-of-its-kind strategic partnership designed to rapidly expand access to high-quality outpatient surgical care across the region. Through an innovative development model, the collaboration will support the creation of at least 18 ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs), accelerating the growth of one of the region's largest outpatient surgery networks and bringing care closer to patients and communities.

The three organizations are launching a new company, bringing their distinct strengths together under one roof. Penn Medicine brings nationally recognized clinical expertise and a leading physician network. IBX contributes deep experience in improving access, affordability, and the health care experience for members, while Regent adds decades of expertise in developing, operating, and scaling ASCs across the country. Together, the organizations are uniquely positioned to expand patient access to high-quality surgical care in outpatient settings across the region.

"This partnership will help us meet growing demand for outpatient surgery while driving down the cost of care in our region and keeping

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Penn and Miami Researchers Awarded \$26 Million NIH Grant to Study Early Detection of ALS and Frontotemporal Dementia

Researchers launched a major effort to identify the earliest biological and clinical changes that signal whether people with a certain genetic variant will develop amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) or frontotemporal dementia (FTD), with an eye toward potentially treating these conditions before symptoms even show up. Funded by a \$26 million grant from the National Institutes of Health, the effort is led by teams from the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine.

The five-year study, spanning 13 research sites across the United States, focuses on a variant in the C9orf72 gene known as a "C9 expansion," the most common inherited cause of both ALS and FTD. By identifying markers that predict when symptoms are likely to begin, researchers aim to establish the foundation for prevention trials that would entail intervention before irreversible damage to brain and nerve cells occurs.

"One of the biggest barriers to developing effective treatments for ALS and FTD is that we may be intervening too late, after the diseases have progressed too far," said multi-principal investigator, Michael Benatar, the Walter Bradley Chair in ALS Research and a professor of neurology and public health sciences at the University of Miami's Miller School. "If we can identify biological changes that occur before symptoms start, we can begin developing therapies that prevent disease rather than treating it after it starts."

While the C9 expansion is the most common inherited cause of ALS and FTD, researchers cannot reliably predict whether a person carrying the C9 expansion will develop ALS, FTD, both conditions, or remain symptom-free.

Although ALS and FTD are increasingly recognized as related neurodegenerative diseases, research and clinical care have traditionally focused on one condition or the other. ALS specialists focus more on motor and muscular symptoms, while cognitive and behavioral changes may receive less attention. Conversely, FTD specialists typically monitor for changes in thinking and behavior, with less emphasis on motor function.

To address this gap, the researchers brought together expertise from both fields. The study combines neurologists or psychiatrists with mo-

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Penn Healthy You: Schedule Your Penn Healthy You Biometric Screening

Dear Colleagues,

Have you scheduled your Penn Healthy You biometric screening yet?

Take advantage of this free opportunity to gain valuable insight into your health. Confidential, [on-campus biometric screenings](#) are available October 6 through November 19, and completing your screening earns a \$50 cash reward through the 2026–2027 Penn Healthy You rewards campaign.

Kick Off Penn Healthy You on October 6

Join us today, Tuesday, October 6, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Houston Hall's Bodek Lounge for the biometric screening kickoff and wellness fair. Along with your [pre-registered screening](#), connect with Penn health and well-being partners, explore available resources, and enter prize drawings.

What Your Screening Includes

During this quick, non-fasting screening, Health Advocate staff will measure your:

- Blood pressure
- Lipids, including total, HDL and LDL cholesterol, and triglycerides
- Blood sugar/glucose

Your privacy is protected. Penn will not see your individual screening results, health assessment answers, or personal health goals.

Schedule Your Screening

[Schedule your screening through Health Advocate](#) by logging in with your PennKey and password, then:

1. Click the "Health" tab at the top.
2. Select "Get a Health Screening."
3. Find Health Screening Event and click "Schedule Now."
4. Choose your preferred location and complete your registration.

You'll receive a confirmation email from Health Advocate.

Get Healthy. Get Rewarded.

Completing your biometric screening earns 1,000 points and a \$50 cash reward toward the 2026–2027 Penn Healthy You annual rewards campaign. Eligible participants can earn up to \$300 in cash rewards by completing eligible wellness activities during the campaign year.*

To earn rewards, [enroll on the WebMD platform](#) or download the Wellness At Your Side app using connection code Penn.

For Penn Healthy You program details, visit www.hr.upenn.edu/pennhealthyyou.

Make time for your health this fall. Schedule your biometric screening today!

—Division of Human Resources

**Per IRS guidelines, all Penn Healthy You rewards are subject to applicable payroll taxes. Earned cash rewards will be added to your paycheck monthly.*

For HR, Payroll, and Workday questions, please make the Penn Employee Solution Center your first call. Contact the Penn Employee Solution Center online or by phone at (215) 898-7372.

Penn Medicine, Independence Blue Cross, and Regent Surgical Launch Ambulatory Surgery Partnership

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Penn Medicine's standards for clinical excellence at the center of every decision," said Kevin B. Mahoney, CEO of the University of Pennsylvania Health System. "By expanding access to appropriate procedures in convenient, high-quality outpatient settings, we can give more patients affordable options closer to home."

ASCs make it possible for many procedures that once required a hospital stay to be performed safely in an outpatient setting, allowing patients to go home the same day. For common outpatient procedures, hospital facility fees can approach twice those charged in ASCs, reinforcing the opportunity to lower the total cost of care.

According to a study by Vizient, outpatient surgical volumes are projected to grow 20 percent through 2035, creating significant demand for additional ambulatory capacity. The new centers will support this growth across Penn Medicine's service area, which spans Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware.

"Health care needs to work better for the people we serve, and that means creating more convenient ways to access high-quality affordable care," said Kelly Munson, president and CEO of Independence Blue Cross. "MedPAC reports that Medicare payment rates for most services performed in ambulatory surgery centers are approximately 46 % lower than in hos-

pital outpatient departments. This partnership brings together the right organizations to expand access, improve affordability, and deliver a better experience for the people and communities we serve."

"The opportunity in front of healthcare isn't simply to build more surgery centers," said Travis Messina, CEO of Regent. "It's to create the alignment required to move the right care to the right setting at scale. Penn Medicine brings extraordinary clinical expertise, Independence Blue Cross brings a unique perspective on affordability and value, and Regent brings the infrastructure and operating capabilities to translate that alignment into a scalable ambulatory strategy. Together, we have an opportunity to create a model that expands access, lowers costs, and preserves hospital resources for the patients who need them most."

Beyond expanding access to care, the partnership is expected to create jobs, drive local investment, and contribute to economic growth across Greater Philadelphia. The actual timing, scope, and economic impact of future projects will depend on a variety of factors, including regulatory approvals, community needs, and market conditions.

As the network expands, the organizations hope to create lasting benefits for patients, communities, and the region's health care system for years to come.

Honors & Other Things

Sidney G. Winter: 2026 Clarivate Citation Laureate

Sidney G. Winter, the Deloitte and Touche Professor Emeritus of Management in the Wharton School, has been named a 2026 Clarivate Citation Laureate for his work on economic dynamism and organizational behavior inspired by evolutionary theory.

Dr. Winter is one of 22 researchers honored this year who have been selected by experts at the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) at Clarivate for their "Nobel-class" research contributions. In fact, since the program's creation, 89 Citation Laureates have gone on to receive Nobel Prizes. Bar Veinstein, president of academia & government at Clarivate, said, "For more than two decades, Citation Laureates has been among the world's most closely watched data-led indicators of exceptional research influence. The Citation Laureates program recognizes researchers whose discoveries demonstrate the extraordinary value of fundamental research. Many of the advances we honor this year, from GLP-1 medicines to precision gene editing and optical medical imaging, began as scientific questions explored decades ago. Today, they are improving lives, informing policy, and helping shape the future. We are proud to recognize these researchers and the lasting impact of their work."

The 2026 laureates are affiliated with leading academic institutions in seven countries/regions, reflecting the global nature of Nobel-class research. Sixteen are based in the United States, and one each in Canada, Denmark, Israel, Japan, Mainland China, and Switzerland. Since 2002, ISI analysts have used publication and citation data from the Web of Science Core Collection to identify researchers whose work is of Nobel class. Out of more than 67 million articles and proceedings indexed since 1970, less than 0.02% have been cited more than 2,000 times. Citation Laureates are selected from this elite group through rigorous citation analysis and expert insight.

Penn Dental Medicine Designated Apple Distinguished School

Penn Dental Medicine has been recognized as an Apple Distinguished School for the 2026-2029 program term. Schools apply and are selected for this distinction based on their commitment to continuous innovation in education and using Apple products to inspire, imagine, and impact teaching and learning.

Apple Distinguished Schools are centers of leadership and educational excellence, with a clear vision for how technology-rich environments support learning goals. In Apple Distinguished Schools, forward-thinking leaders and their communities work to inspire, imagine, and impact teaching and learning, and they have documented results of academic accomplishments.

Schools all over the world are using iPads and Mac computers to transform learning. As teachers incorporate technology into their lessons, they empower students to lead, learn, and thrive, to discover new opportunities, and to make their world a better place.

Founded in 1878, Penn Dental Medicine is among the nation's oldest university-affiliated dental schools, with a long-standing tradition of leadership in education, research, and patient care. The school fosters a humanistic environ-

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COUNCIL

Membership of University Council 2026-2027

Please see bylaws for Committee membership composition: <https://secretary.upenn.edu/univ-council>

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Moe Mansour, *UA Vice President*
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Taya Allardice
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Pablo Czerkas

Kayuga de Guzman
Rodrigo Jara-Calderon
Lauren Kulyk
Nicolina Monacelli
Oona Riley Swartz
Alondra Santos Godinez
Jasleen Sidhu
Cristian Solano

United Minorities Council

Zainab Adeoye

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Elona Canaj, *Chair-Elect*

Weekly-Paid Penn Professional Staff Assembly

Vacant, *WPPSA Chair*
Vacant, *WPPSA Chair-Elect*

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Vacant

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Vacant

Moderator*

Michael McGarvey

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Scott Schafer

Secretary of University Council*

Lizann Boyle Rode

Asterisk [] indicates non-voting status.*

Honors & Other Things

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ment in which every member of its community is valued, respected, and empowered. Penn Dental Medicine is committed to providing compassionate, evidence-based care, advancing transformative initiatives to address complex health challenges, and shaping the future of the global dental profession. Through interdisciplinary collaboration and scientific discovery, the school also works to address unmet health needs while mentoring exceptional leaders in oral health, research, and practice.

This recognition reflects the work of the school's Center for Educational Technology & Innovation (CETI), which advances Penn Dental Medicine's mission by integrating state-of-the-art technology to empower teaching and learning.

Bo Zhen: 2026 Moore Foundation Experimental Physics Investigator

Bo Zhen, the Jin K. Lee Presidential Professor of Physics and Astronomy in the School of Arts & Sciences, is among the 2026 cohort of Moore Foundation Experimental Physics Investigators, a distinguished group of mid-career researchers. The 21 new investigators join scientists from

four previous cohorts in advancing the frontiers of fundamental research in experimental physics.

Together with his peers, Dr. Zhen will receive \$1.35 million over five years from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation's Experimental Physics Investigators Initiative, with funding meant to provide flexibility to acceler-

ate breakthroughs. Support also extends beyond the research grants, with the initiative bringing together cohorts annually to trade ideas and imagine new experiments. The investigators are also asked to lead research groups that develop the next generation of scientific talent and support professional development.

Penn GSE Receives \$3 Million to Create the Milken Endowed Scholarship for Educational Entrepreneurship

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ment to expanding what is possible in education."

The education entrepreneurship program is the world's first master's degree program focused on combining education, business, and innovation to address critical challenges in learning. Launched in 2014, this year-long hybrid executive program uses on-campus/online weekends and summer intensives, allowing professionals to work full-time while pursuing their degrees. In this program, faculty from Penn GSE, Wharton, Weitzman School of Design, and Penn Engineering teach students to launch, scale, and sustain solutions for K-12, higher education, workforce development, and educational technology. Grad-

uates have launched more than 500 ventures.

"As a venture capitalist, I have seen how an entrepreneurial mindset can unlock opportunities," said Penn GSE board member Gregory Milken. "EJ and I have witnessed firsthand how expanding educational opportunity through innovation and leadership has been instrumental in changing outcomes. Penn GSE's Education Entrepreneurship program is helping to develop leaders who will bring fresh ideas and commitment to education, and we are honored to support these amazing individuals who have dedicated their life's work to make a lasting difference in their communities."

Four Faculty Members in the School of Engineering & Applied Science Appointed to Endowed Chairs

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nanoscale-delivery technologies designed to detect disease earlier and improve treatment precision, particularly for cancer. His work combines engineering, chemistry, biology, and medicine to create tools that can identify molecular signatures of disease and deliver therapeutic agents to specific cells and tissues.

Dr. Tsourkas earned a BS from Cornell University, an MS from Johns Hopkins University, and a PhD from the Georgia Institute of Technology and Emory University. His scholarship and mentorship have been recognized across the field of bioengineering, and his laboratory's translational work connects fundamental engineering research with clinical needs in oncology and precision medicine.

The Eduardo D. Glandt President's Distinguished Professorships were established in 2015 by numerous donors to honor Eduardo D. Glandt, dean emeritus of Penn Engineering. The professorships recognize exceptional faculty whose scholarship, teaching and leadership reflect Dean Glandt's legacy of academic excellence and interdisciplinary innovation.

Dongun (Dan) Huh: J. Peter Skirkanich Professor

Dongun (Dan) Huh, a professor in the department of bioengineering, has been named the J. Peter Skirkanich Professor. He also serves as chair of the bioengineering graduate group.

Dr. Huh is an internationally recognized pioneer of organ-on-a-chip technology. His research integrates microengineering, biomaterials, cell biology, and biologically inspired design to create micro-physiological systems that reproduce important functions of human organs. These engineered models are used to study human physiology, disease mechanisms, drug responses, precision medicine, and environmental health while offering alternatives to conventional cell culture and animal testing.

Dr. Huh holds a BS in mechanical engineering from Seoul National University and MS and PhD degrees from the University of Michigan. He completed postdoctoral training at Harvard Medical School and Boston Children's Hospital and later served as a technology development fellow at the Wyss Institute at Harvard University.

The J. Peter Skirkanich Professorship was established to honor J. Peter "Pete" Skirkanich, a Penn Engineering alumnus and an advisor, Penn Trustee, and campaign leader. His support helped make Skirkanich Hall possible and advanced the school's research and educational mission. The professorship recognizes faculty whose scholarship and leadership embody his

commitment to engineering innovation and the Penn community.

Michael J. Mitchell: Hibbert Professor

Michael J. Mitchell has been appointed the inaugural Hibbert Professor in the department of bioengineering. The appointment recognizes his leadership in genetic medicine, biomaterials and drug delivery.

Dr. Mitchell's laboratory engineers lipid nanoparticles and related biomaterials to deliver RNA- and DNA-based therapeutics safely and effectively. His group works to overcome biological barriers that limit the delivery of genetic medicines and develops platforms with applications in cancer immunotherapy, vaccines, genome editing, autoimmune disease, infectious disease, and fetal and maternal therapeutics.

Dr. Mitchell earned a BE in biomedical engineering and an ME in materials science and engineering from the Stevens Institute of Technology, then earned an MS and PhD in biomedical engineering from Cornell University. He completed postdoctoral training at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His honors include a National Science Foundation CAREER Award, an NIH Director's New Innovator Award, and Penn's Emerging Inventor of the Year Award.

The Hibbert Professorship was endowed through the generosity of Alister M. Hibbert and Sharon N. Hibbert, supporters of Penn Engineering and parents of two Penn Engineering students.

The professorship recognizes outstanding achievement in research, teaching, and innovation in engineering health.



Andrew Tsourkas



Michael J. Mitchell



Dan Huh

Penn and Miami Researchers Awarded \$26 Million NIH Grant to Study Early Detection of ALS and Frontotemporal Dementia

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tor and cognitive specializations, and neuropsychologists to evaluate participants across the full ALS-FTD spectrum.

"This disease does not fit neatly into one specialty," said multi-principal investigator Corey McMillan, an associate professor of neurology and co-director of the Penn Frontotemporal Degeneration Center. "Understanding C9-related disease requires us to study cognition, behavior, and motor function together. By breaking down those silos, we hope to unlock key understandings of how these conditions develop and how we might be able to prevent it."

The effort builds on lessons from recent advances in another inherited form of ALS caused by mutations in the SOD1 gene.

Research on the SOD1 gene, found in approximately 2 percent of people with ALS, showed that levels of a blood biomarker called neurofilament light chain rise approximately one year before symptoms begin. Those findings helped support the development of a prevention clinical trial called ATLAS to investigate whether the recently approved ALS treatment tofersen (Qalsody) can be used to prevent ALS symptoms before at-risk individuals begin to experience symptoms of motor dysfunction.

Researchers hope to achieve a similar breakthrough in carriers of the C9 expansion, but there is currently no equivalent single biomarker that identifies when a person carrying the variant is approaching symptom onset. While neurofilament light chain remains a key biomarker, it is also clear that it will be insufficient on its own.

Future disease prevention trials will require development of promising therapeutics that would be worthy of study in a prevention trial paradigm. However, the authors cautioned that there is much preparation to be done so that the field can initiate such trials when these experimental therapeutic candidates emerge.

Penn Engineering and Penn Carey Law Launch Certificate of Study in AI and Law

The Penn Carey Law School and Penn Engineering have developed a new graduate certificate of Study in AI and Law, now available for students to pursue this semester.

One of more than a dozen certificates of study offered at the Law School, the program is open to all Penn Carey Law students in its first year, with in-person, on-campus graduate students from Penn Engineering able to join starting in fall 2027. Certificates of study provide opportunities to pursue credentials in additional areas, allowing for more concentrated coursework en route to specialized or focused career paths.

"One of the advantages of the Law School's cross-disciplinary curriculum is our flexibility to create new, diverse programming in collaboration with the amazing grad schools across Penn," said Amanda Aronoff, managing director of cross-disciplinary programs at Penn Carey Law and director of student engagement for the Francis J. & William Polk Carey JD/MBA program. "We're very excited to meet the demand for more cross-disciplinary opportunities related to AI as it becomes increasingly important to the practice of law."

The new offering is the first step in a broader, deepening partnership between Penn Carey Law and Penn Engineering in AI and law. Future plans include a reciprocal certificate pathway, enabling students in both schools to complete a shared curriculum. The collaboration also includes the ongoing development of joint degree programs in AI and law designed to serve both law and engineering students. Together, these initiatives reflect a shared commitment to building durable institutional infrastructure at the intersection of law and technology.

Students pursuing the certificate must complete five courses in the general area of AI and law as well as attend four AI-related events, such as workshops, lectures, or pedagogy seminars.

"We are excited to partner with the Law School on this new certificate, which reflects a simple but urgent reality: Every discipline is being reshaped by artificial intelligence," said Vijay Kumar, Nemirovsky Family Dean of Penn Engineering. "Whether in law, engineering, or beyond, understanding how AI impacts your field, and how to use AI tools thoughtfully and effectively, is essential."

25-Year Club: New Members for 2026

The Division of Human Resources will celebrate members of the Penn community who have worked at the University for 25 or more years at the annual 25-Year Club Celebration. The event will be held on Tuesday, October 20 at 5 p.m. New and current 25-Year Club members and their guests are invited to register for this event at <http://www.hr.upenn.edu/25yearclub>. Registration is required by October 13.

Joy Abt, School of Dental Medicine
 Anne Ades, Perelman School of Medicine
 Faizan Alawi, School of Dental Medicine
 Gary Althouse, School of Veterinary Medicine
 James Amendola, Division of Finance
 Scott Andrews, Penn Libraries
 Richard Aplenc, Perelman School of Medicine
 Robin Armstrong, Perelman School of Medicine
 Brandy Atchison, Penn Carey Law School
 Janet Audrain-McGovern, Perelman School of Medicine
 Eiichi Azuma, School of Arts and Sciences
 Kalyani Balasubramanian, Information Systems and Computing
 Lavenia Banas, Perelman School of Medicine
 Debra Barber, School of Veterinary Medicine
 Ryan Barnett, Division of Finance
 Ted Barrell, Perelman School of Medicine
 Gina Barrett, Wharton School
 Nathaniel Bender, Penn Libraries
 Timothy Blake, Wharton School
 Christopher Bogs, College Houses and Academic Services
 David Brainard, School of Arts and Sciences
 Keith Brown, Provost's Center
 Kevin Browne, Perelman School of Medicine
 Tricia Bruning, Development and Alumni Relations
 Erika Burnett, Wharton School
 Theresa Busch, Perelman School of Medicine
 Yuko Butler, Graduate School of Education
 Tina Cairns, School of Dental Medicine
 Maria Calabrese, School of Veterinary Medicine
 Linda Carmichael, Perelman School of Medicine
 Robert Chaney, Institute of Contemporary Art
 Wilson Chang, Information Systems and Computing
 Shizhi Chen, Information Systems and Computing
 Jerry Cheng, Facilities and Real Estate Services
 Jennifer Chiappardi, University Museum
 Yongwon Choi, Perelman School of Medicine
 Hoon Choi, Perelman School of Medicine
 Akiva Cohen, Perelman School of Medicine
 Renee Crews, Provost's Center
 John Crocker, School of Engineering and Applied Science
 Peter Cronholm, Perelman School of Medicine
 Alexander Crowe, Perelman School of Medicine
 James Crumley, Provost's Center
 Tina Daly, Development and Alumni Relations
 Maria Deshields, President's Center
 Karen Detlefsen, School of Arts and Sciences
 Susan Domchek, Perelman School of Medicine
 David Domico, Audit Compliance and Privacy
 Edward Doolin, Perelman School of Medicine
 Richard Dunn, School of Arts and Sciences
 Douglass Eagar, Development and Alumni Relations
 John Egan, Perelman School of Medicine
 Eric Feldman, Penn Carey Law School
 Chad Felsenstein, Perelman School of Medicine
 Jesus Fernandez-Villaverde, School of Arts and Sciences
 Mark Ferraiolo, Facilities and Real Estate Services
 Claire Finkelstein, Penn Carey Law School
 Talya Fishman, School of Arts and Sciences
 James Fiumara, School of Arts and Sciences
 Amy Forsyth, School of Arts and Sciences
 Lucyna Fortuna, Facilities and Real Estate Services
 Jill Ginsberg, Perelman School of Medicine
 David Glaser, Perelman School of Medicine
 Seth Glick, Perelman School of Medicine
 Hilary Goff, School of Veterinary Medicine
 Jeffrey Gray, Perelman School of Medicine
 David Grazian, School of Arts and Sciences
 Antje Greenfield, Perelman School of Medicine
 Patrick Guinan, School of Nursing
 Gayathri Gulendran, Perelman School of Medicine
 Wei Guo, School of Arts and Sciences

Noah Gustkey, Division of Recreation & Intercollegiate Athletics
 James Haglund, School of Arts and Sciences
 Femida Handy, School of Social Policy and Practice
 Emily Hannum, School of Arts and Sciences
 Miriam Harris, Graduate School of Education
 John Hartley, Graduate School of Education
 Angela Hay, Perelman School of Medicine
 Maureen Helwig, Perelman School of Medicine
 Lykes Henderson, Penn Libraries
 Dennis Hicks, Facilities and Real Estate Services
 David Horn, Perelman School of Medicine
 Kimberly Hummel, Perelman School of Medicine
 Wei-Ting Hwang, Perelman School of Medicine
 Shawn Hyla, University Museum
 Bhuvnesh Jain, School of Arts and Sciences
 Abike James, Perelman School of Medicine
 Cherie Jester, Perelman School of Medicine
 Frederick Johnson, Perelman School of Medicine
 Lisa Jones, Perelman School of Medicine
 Kelly Jordan-Sciutto, School of Dental Medicine
 Jamie-Lee Josselyn, School of Arts and Sciences
 Peggy Kaschak, Perelman School of Medicine
 Nadene Kelley, Perelman School of Medicine
 Eileen Kelly, Penn Libraries
 Ron Keren, Perelman School of Medicine
 David Kern, Division of Public Safety
 Leslie Kersun, Perelman School of Medicine
 Tanya Keyhani, Facilities and Real Estate Services
 Grace Kim-Lee, Perelman School of Medicine
 John Kiser, Penn Libraries
 Artur Kofman, School of Dental Medicine
 Jennifer Kollar, School of Arts and Sciences
 Thomas Kolon, Perelman School of Medicine
 Stephen Krauss, Perelman School of Medicine
 Dirk Krueger, School of Arts and Sciences
 Katherine Kruger, School of Veterinary Medicine
 John Kucharczuk, Perelman School of Medicine
 Cynthia Kwan, Perelman School of Medicine
 Brenda La, School of Dental Medicine
 Darco Lalevic, Perelman School of Medicine
 Michael Lamonaca, Wharton School
 James Lane, Provost's Center
 Rita Leite, Perelman School of Medicine
 Irma Lerma, Division of Finance
 Nicolae Leu, School of Veterinary Medicine
 Jie Lian, Perelman School of Medicine
 Yuling Liang, Perelman School of Medicine
 Feiyan Liu, Perelman School of Medicine
 John Longo, Facilities and Real Estate Services
 Tracey Longs, Perelman School of Medicine
 Barbara Lopez, Perelman School of Medicine
 Jessica Lowenthal, Provost Interdisciplinary Programs
 Milly Luciano, Perelman School of Medicine
 Elizabeth Lunger, School of Arts and Sciences
 Kevin Lynch, Perelman School of Medicine
 Julia Lynch, School of Arts and Sciences
 Nicole Maloy, President's Center
 Deborah Mandel, School of Veterinary Medicine
 Edward Mansfield, School of Arts and Sciences
 Justin Mazur, Provost's Center
 Laurie McCall, Student Services
 Kevin McCarthy, Perelman School of Medicine
 Beth McCarthy, Wharton School
 Elizabeth Medenilla, Perelman School of Medicine
 Dora Medina, School of Veterinary Medicine
 Eydie Miller, Perelman School of Medicine
 Mikki Miller, Wharton School
 Steven Minicola, President's Center
 Jeffrey Mondschein, Perelman School of Medicine
 Jeannie Moon, President's Center

(continued on page 6)

25 Year Club: New Members for 2026

(continued from page 5)

Karen Moore, Perelman School of Medicine
Ariel Mosenco, School of Veterinary Medicine
Jennifer Myers, Perelman School of Medicine
Sunita Nasta, Perelman School of Medicine
Megan Nelson, School of Veterinary Medicine
Terence Newby, School of Social Policy and Practice
Kobina Ofori-Donkoh, School of Arts and Sciences
Oluseyi Ogunfidodo, Perelman School of Medicine
Nicholas Okrent, Penn Libraries
Brendan O'Leary, School of Arts and Sciences
James Palmer, Perelman School of Medicine
Jennifer Parker, School of Veterinary Medicine
Mark Patrick, School of Engineering and Applied Science
Nykia Perez Kibler, School of Arts and Sciences
Amy Pethick, Perelman School of Medicine
West Phinney, Information Systems and Computing
Yael Porat-Mosenco, School of Veterinary Medicine
Jacqueline Raynor, Information Systems and Computing
Rajender Reddy, Perelman School of Medicine
Anne Reilly, Perelman School of Medicine
Maria Rieders, Wharton School
Stacy Ritchey, Division of Public Safety
Marlana Robinson, Perelman School of Medicine
Daniel Roling, Perelman School of Medicine
Arthur Rubenstein, Perelman School of Medicine
Victoria Sallee, Perelman School of Medicine
Michael Sanders, Provost's Center
Prithvi Sankar, Perelman School of Medicine
Adrienne Sanogo, Perelman School of Medicine
Rebaia Saouli, School of Arts and Sciences
Paula Scarborough, School of Arts and Sciences
Rachael Schechter, Penn Libraries
Paul Schmidt, School of Arts and Sciences
Jason Schnittker, School of Arts and Sciences
Theodore Schurr, School of Arts and Sciences
James Schuster, Perelman School of Medicine
Carl Shaw, Perelman School of Medicine
Jeffrey Solvibile, Perelman School of Medicine
Ellen Solvibile, Perelman School of Medicine
Ansheai Spence-Jones, Perelman School of Medicine
Jason Szostek, Perelman School of Medicine
Arthur Topoulos, Perelman School of Medicine
Mary Valiga, Perelman School of Medicine
Estha Venter, Information Systems and Computing
Kevin Volpp, Perelman School of Medicine
Robert Vonderheide, Perelman School of Medicine
Vanessa Vuong, Facilities and Real Estate Services
Geraldine Waltman, Perelman School of Medicine
Susan Ware, Perelman School of Medicine
Sheryl D. Warfield, Student Services
Mathias Wegner, Information Systems and Computing
Daniel Weintraub, Perelman School of Medicine
Gary Williams, Division of Public Safety
Aisha Wilson, Perelman School of Medicine
Shyh-Shiun Wu, Perelman School of Medicine
Lana Xu-Litt, Annenberg School for Communication
Albert Yan, Perelman School of Medicine

For more information, please contact 25yearclub@hr.upenn.edu.



Penn's Way

A Workplace Charitable Campaign

Penn's Way: Going the Distance for Our Community

Dear colleagues,

Penn's Way, our annual University of Pennsylvania and Penn Medicine workplace giving campaign for faculty and staff, begins October 1. The "Going the Distance for Our Community" campaign offers a matching gift program that gives you the opportunity to maximize donations to the causes that matter most to you. Faculty and staff can choose from hundreds of charitable organizations on the Penn's Way site. To record a donation and receive a match, make your contributions through the site by the end of the campaign on Friday, November 20.

We are also grateful to campaign co-chairs Kathleen Shields Anderson, Penn's Vice President for Public Safety, and Raina Merchant, UPHS VP and Chief Transformation Officer, as well as our many coordinators, department captains, and other staff volunteers, for their hard work to make Penn's Way a continued success. If you have any questions, email pennsway@upenn.edu.

How the match works:

- We'll match 100% of your donation, dollar-for-dollar, up to \$2,500.
- Any amount you give beyond \$2,500 will be matched at 50% (up to a total matched amount of \$20,000).

Last year, the campaign donated more than \$6.4 million to support a wide range of efforts—from providing meals to protecting forestland to purchasing library books. Together, let's build on that momentum. [Make your gift, max your match](#), and share why you give by posting on social media using #OurWayPennsWay.

—J. Larry Jameson, President

—Kevin B. Mahoney, Chief Executive Officer,
University of Pennsylvania Health System

—Mark Dingfield, Executive Vice President



The Pumpkin Cottage at Morris Arboretum & Gardens.

It's ArBOOretum Month at Morris Arboretum & Gardens

Through October 31, celebrate fall at Morris Arboretum & Gardens with acres of colorful foliage and seasonal fun for the whole family.

See the annual display of the arboretum's Scarecrow Walk! Get into the spirit of the season with more than 50 scarecrows designed by members of the public, on display through October 31.

This Halloween, visitors can take a trip through the '70s—any '70s! See scarecrows inspired by the 1770s, the 1970s, the 2070s, or any decade ending in "70" throughout history and beyond. Visitors can vote for their favorite scarecrow on-site from October 1 to 18 to determine the winners. The top three scarecrows win a cash prize: \$300, \$200, and

\$100. The Scarecrow Walk is free with general arboretum admission.

As part of ArBOOretum Month, kids of all ages are invited to enjoy the Morris Pumpkin Cottage, a 100-square-foot exhibition covered in hundreds of pumpkins of various shapes and sizes.

The cottage, a throwback to when the neighborhood around the arboretum used to be known as "Pumpkintown," is tucked at the end of the Pumpkin Promenade, a small trail lined with pumpkins, gourds, scarecrows, and more.

For more information, visit <http://morrisarb.org/arBOOretum>.

**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 **September 21-27, 2026**. The crime reports are available at: <https://almanac.upenn.edu/sections/crimes>. Prior weeks' reports are also online. —Eds.

This summary is prepared by the Division of Public Safety (DPS) and contains all criminal incidents reported and made known to the Penn Police, including those reported to the Philadelphia Police Department (PPD) that occurred within our patrol zone, for the dates of **September**

21-27, 2026. The Penn Police actively patrol from Market Street to Baltimore Avenue and from 30th Street to 43rd Street in conjunction with the Philadelphia Police.

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

Penn Police Patrol Zone

Market Street to Baltimore Avenue and from 30th Street to 43rd Street

Crime Category	Date	Time	Location	Description
<i>Aggravated Assault Assault</i>	09/21/26	5:20 PM	4001 Walnut St	Assault with a weapon by subject/Arrest
	09/26/26	4:25 PM	40th & Spruce Sts	Unknown subject struck complainant's face, fleeing on a bike
	09/27/26	4:16 PM	100 S 41st St	Confidential
<i>Auto Theft</i>	09/22/26	1:41 PM	3730 Walnut St	Theft of a secured scooter from bike racks
	09/22/26	4:49 PM	3700 Walnut St	Theft of a cable-secured scooter from bike racks
	09/22/26	10:40 PM	210 S 33rd St	Theft of a secured electric bike from bike racks
	09/23/26	9:45 AM	240 S 40th St	Attempted theft of an electric scooter from bike racks
	09/25/26	12:20 PM	3200 Chestnut St	Theft of a secured electric scooter
	09/25/26	4:51 PM	208 S 37th St	Theft of a secured electric bicycle from bike rack
<i>Bike Theft</i>	09/26/26	1:59 AM	3820 Locust Walk	Theft of a secured electric scooter from bike rack
	09/26/26	11:19 AM	3900 Irving St	Theft of a secured electric scooter from bike rack
	09/23/26	5:38 PM	3200 Walnut St	Theft of a secured bicycle from bike rack
	09/25/26	9:48 PM	235 S 33rd St	Theft of a secured bicycle from bike rack
	09/25/26	7:38 PM	200 S 33rd St	Theft of a secured bicycle from sidewalk
<i>Burglary</i>	09/21/26	10:20 AM	425 S 42nd St	Burglary
	09/23/26	2:48 AM	4200 Ludlow St	Burglary reported with nothing taken and no signs of forced entry
<i>Other Offense</i>	09/24/26	7:52 PM	215 S 33rd St	Trespass/Arrest
	09/21/26	5:42 PM	4233 Chestnut St	Retail theft of alcohol; offender fled area
<i>Retail Theft</i>	09/22/26	6:29 PM	3741 Walnut St	Theft of a display device from store
	09/26/26	9:46 PM	4233 Chestnut St	Retail theft of alcohol; offender fled area
	09/27/26	1:27 PM	3604 Chestnut St	Retail theft/Arrest
<i>Theft from Building</i>	09/22/26	9:45 AM	3620 Hamilton Walk	Theft of Penn-owned electronics from office
	09/22/26	7:14 PM	1 Convention Ave	Theft of a bag containing personal items from hospital
	09/23/26	1:52 PM	3417 Spruce St	Theft of an iPad tablet from Griski Room
	09/24/26	12:19 PM	3945 Chestnut St	Package theft from common area of apartment building
<i>Theft from Vehicle</i>	09/24/26	10:34 AM	4111 Walnut St	Theft of a bicycle from apartment storage area
	09/24/26	10:51 AM	3400 Blk Chestnut St	Theft of tools from secured truck
	09/26/26	12:15 PM	4200 Pine St	Theft of a catalytic converter
<i>Theft Other</i>	09/26/26	4:25 PM	300 St Marks Sq	Theft of a catalytic converter from parked automobile
	09/21/26	5:39 PM	220 S 33rd St	Theft of money from unsecured backpack
	09/21/26	12:46 PM	3945 Chestnut St	Package theft from inside common area apartment building

Philadelphia Police 18th District

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

Below are the crimes against persons from the 18th District: 5 incidents were reported for **September 21-27, 2026** by the 18th District, covering the Schuylkill River to 49th Street & Market Street to Woodland Avenue.

Crime Category	Date	Time	Location
<i>Aggravated Assault</i>	09/21/26	5:50 PM	4001 Walnut St
	09/27/26	3:45 AM	216 S 48th St
<i>Assault</i>	09/24/26	11:02 PM	1 Convention Ave
	09/26/26	4:51 PM	S 40th & Spruce Sts
	09/27/26	5:18 PM	121 S 41st St

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

- See something concerning? Connect with Penn Public Safety 24/7 at (215) 573-3333.
- Worried about a friend's or colleague's mental or physical health? Get 24/7 connection to appropriate resources at (215) 898-HELP (4357).
- Seeking support after experiencing a crime? Call Special Services (support and advocacy resources) at (215) 898-4481 or email an advocate at specialservices@publicsafety.upenn.edu.
- Use the [Walking Escort](#) and [Riding](#) services available to you free of charge.
- Take a moment to update your cell phone information for the [UPennAlert Emergency Notification System](#).
- Download the [Penn Guardian App](#), which can help police better find your location when you call in an emergency.
- Access free [self-empowerment and defense courses](#) through Penn DPS.
- Stay alert and reduce distractions. (Using cell phones, ear buds, etc. may limit your awareness.)
- Orient yourself to your surroundings. (Identify your location, nearby exits, etc.)
- Keep your valuables out of sight and only carry necessary documents.

Update

October AT PENN

CONFERENCES

9 *Entertainment Unlocked: Wharton Undergraduate Media and Entertainment Conference*; will bring together Penn students who are passionate about the future of media and entertainment; this year's theme, *Scaling Stories*, explores how creativity, business strategy, and innovation shape the way stories are developed, produced, and shared with audiences worldwide; 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.; room F85, Huntsman Hall; register: <https://tinyurl.com/wharton-ume-oct-9> (Wharton Undergraduate Media and Entertainment Club).

The Paradox At Our Founding: The Legacy of Abolition & Slavery in Philadelphia; will explore how the law both enables and constrains the pursuit of intergenerational justice in the city where America's constitutional project began; 9:30 a.m.-4:15 p.m.; room 100, Golkin Hall; register: <https://bit.ly/4h1TZk7> (Journal of Law and Social Change, ARC Justice Clinic).

LEARNING & WORKSHOPS

9 *Yalla Nidbik! (Let's Dance!) Arab Folk Dance Workshop with Karim Nag*; join Egyptian American musician and dancer Karim Nagi for a lively evening of traditional Arab folk dance; 5 p.m.; lobby, Platt Student Performing Arts House (Middle East Center).

Penn Libraries

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

6 *3-D Visualization in QGIS*; 4 p.m.; room 113, Van Pelt Library. Also October 8, 4 p.m.; online webinar.

9 *Digital Humanist's Helpdesk: Basic Humanities Data Analysis*; 10 a.m.; Research Data & Digital Scholarship Exchange, Van Pelt Library.

13 *Mapping Census Data in QGIS*; 4 p.m.; Research Data & Digital Scholarship Exchange, Van Pelt Library.

READINGS & SIGNINGS

8 *Roots to Routes*; Rachel Wahl, University of Virginia; noon; multi-purpose room, Gutmann College House; register: <https://tinyurl.com/wahl-talk-oct-8> (Paideia Program).

Mosul Eye: A Clandestine History of Mosul Under the Islamic State; Omar Mohammed, George Washington University; 5:30 p.m.; room 118, SPARC Center (Middle East Center, Center for Civil Rights).

13 *Inside China's Secret Prisons: An Undercover Exposé and Its Lasting Legacy*; Orville Schell, Center on U.S.-China Relations; 12:15 p.m.; room 418, PCPSE (Center for the Study of Contemporary China).

SPECIAL EVENTS

9 *Transform Penn: A Green Fund Pitch Competition*; Penn students are invited to pitch their boldest sustainability ideas in a live, "Shark Tank"-style competition for a chance to raise visibility of the project and receive mentorship towards a Green Fund application; noon; College Hall Climate Tent; info: <https://climate-week.provost.upenn.edu/event/transform-penn>

[green-fund-pitch-competition-0](#) (Climate Week At Penn).

TALKS

6 *Self-Improving & Co-Improving AI*; Jason Weston, Meta FAIR; 3:30 p.m.; room 414, Gutmann Hall (Computer & Information Science).

7 *The Science of Health Care Transformation*; Raina Merchant, emergency medicine; 9 a.m.; room 05-031, 3600 Civic Center Blvd, and Zoom webinar; join: <https://pennmedicine.zoom.us/j/98976330974> Center for Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics).

Finding a Bipartisan Path Forward on Environmental Policy; Bill Cassidy, U.S. Republican Senator from Louisiana; 11 a.m.; Global Forum, Perry World House, and online livestream; register: <https://tinyurl.com/cassidy-talk-oct-7> (Perry World House).

The Complete Tissue Picture: Multiplexed Spatial Biology Unleashed; Claire Deleage, Frederick National Laboratory for Cancer Research; noon; Austrian Auditorium, Rubenstein Research Building (Microbiology).

When Does Supervised Learning Suffice for Imitation? Statistics and Optimization for Distillation; Adam Block, Columbia University; noon; room 414, Gutmann Hall, and Zoom Webinar; join: <https://upenn.zoom.us/j/97645937545> (SEAS AI-Enabled Systems: Safe, Explainable, and Trustworthy Center).

Decoding Climate Policy from City Hall to the White House; Kasim Reed, former mayor of Atlanta; Ali Zaidi, Kleinman Center for Energy Policy; 3 p.m.; room 414, Gutmann Hall; register: <https://tinyurl.com/reed-zaidi-oct-7> (Penn Public Service and Policy Initiative, Penn Engineering).

Making Robot Data Count: Toward Robots That Keep Learning After Deployment; Jesse Zhang, University of Washington; 3 p.m.; room 307, Levine Hall, and Zoom webinar; join: <https://upenn.zoom.us/j/98865728100> (GRASP Lab).

Cavity Electrodynamics of van der Waals Heterostructures; James McIver, Columbia University; 3:30 p.m.; room 2N3, DRL (Physics & Astronomy).

8 *Catalysis at the Nanoscale for the Sustainable Synthesis of Fuels and Chemicals*; Joseph DuChene, University of Massachusetts—Amherst; 10:30 a.m.; Wu & Chen Auditorium, Levine Hall (Materials Science & Engineering).

Extragradient Methods for Modern Machine Learning Settings: New Convergence Guarantees, Step-Size Rules, and Stochastic Variants; Nicolas Loizou, Johns Hopkins University; noon; room 414, Gutmann Hall, and Zoom webinar; join: <https://upenn.zoom.us/j/98220304722> (IDEAS Center, PennAI, Statistics & Data Science).

From The Classroom to the Frontline: South American Women Intellectuals and the Second World War; Vanesa Miseres, University of Notre Dame; 4 p.m.; room 623, Williams Hall (Spanish & Portuguese).

Priming of Lung Immune Cells Protects Against Viral and Helminth Infections; Oye-bola Oyesola, Penn Vet; 4 p.m.; room 11-146, Smilow Center (Penn-CHOP Lung Biology Institute).

Parthenaic Choreia in Thebes and Athens; Laura McClure, University of Wisconsin-Madison; 4:45 p.m.; room 402, Cohen Hall (Classical Studies).

9 *Policy Coffee Talk*; Miriam Enriquez, Wawa, Inc.; 8:30 a.m.; Fox-Fels Hall (Fels Institute of Government).

Where it Rains and What Kind: From Environmental Controls to the Anatomy of Individual Storms; Sara Shamekh, New York University; 3 p.m.; room 358, Hayden Hall (Earth & Environmental Science).

12 *Landing Waterscapes: Make-Believe Land in the Little Rann of Kutch, India*; Sita Mamidipudi, Center for the Study of Contemporary India; noon; room 345, Penn Museum (Anthropology).

Teaching in Oil Country: Petro Pedagogy and Teacher Agency in U.S. Schools; Darren Rabinowitz, Drexel University; 3 p.m.; room 367, McNeil Building (Population Studies Center).

13 *The Effects of Taxes on Sugar-Sweetened Beverages in the U.S.*; John Cawley, Syracuse University; noon; room 1201, Steinberg Hall-Dietrich Hall; register: <https://tinyurl.com/cawley-talk-oct-13> (Leonard Davis Institute).

Techno-Orientalism in the Long Downturn; Ikko Day, Mount Holyoke College; 5 p.m.; room 135, Fisher-Bennett Hall (English, Wolf Humanities Center).

Mathematics

In-person events. Info: <https://www.math.upenn.edu/events>.

6 *Derived Categories of Generalized Complex Tori and T-Duality*; Patrick Antweiler, University of Hamburg; 3:30 p.m.; room A2, DRL.

7 *Interpolation Problems for Curves*; Isabel Vogel, Brown University; 3:30 p.m.; room A4, DRL.

8 *Foliations Forcing Closed Orbits*; Ellis Buckminster, mathematics; 5:15 p.m.; location TBA.

13 *The Stable Homotopy Groups of Spheres*; Tomer Schlank, Harvard University; 3:30 p.m.; room A6, DRL.

This is an update to the [October AT PENN calendar](#). To submit events for upcoming AT PENN calendars or weekly updates, email almanac@upenn.edu.

Almanac

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

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AI Model Shows How Climate Events Drive Human Migration

Several years ago, political scientist Erik Wibbels learned through conversations with climate scientists Irina Marinov and Anna Cabré that there is a lack of good data on how climate events like droughts or floods impact protests, violence, migration, legal changes, and other actions worldwide.

Fortunately, Dr. Wibbels had the infrastructure to address this: Starting around 2018, with support from Penn data scientist Zung-Ru Lin, he led a team that created Machine Learning for Peace, an AI model that processed millions of locally sourced news articles from 70 countries to help anticipate political instability and election violence. Using the same tools deployed for Machine Learning for Peace, Dr. Wibbels created the Machine Learning for Environmental Event Detection (MLEED) project and dataset.

Drawing on about 130 million news articles from 71 countries, the project tracks three types of environmental events—sudden-onset disasters such as floods, slow-onset disasters such as droughts, and human-induced disasters such as oil spills—and 13 social responses over time and across subnational regions. That includes violence (e.g., between herders and villagers in farming communities), environmental crimes such as poaching and illegal fishing, environmental protests, and legal changes. These adaptations can impact migration patterns.

Researchers hope this knowledge will help policymakers anticipate migration trends months in advance, support planning to better manage displacement, and improve people's ability to adapt without moving.

How Environmental Disasters Impact Migration

"The conventional wisdom in the migration space is that natural disasters are associated with temporary and largely local displacement," said Dr. Wibbels, the Presidential Penn Compact Professor of Political Science in the School of Arts & Sciences. But by linking natural disaster data to migration data, researchers showed that from January 2012 through June 2025, disasters like a major hurricane in Central America were associated with waves of encounters at the southwest border six to nine months later. That's because it can take people six months or more to mobilize the resources necessary to move.

Dr. Wibbels, predoctoral fellow Iman Dahr, collaborator Anna Cabré, and Dr. Marinov published a report in April for the Kleinman Center for Energy Policy that analyzes AI-driven data from 25 million news articles since 2012 to understand climate impacts in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

They found that:

- Slow-onset environmental disasters are associated with lower international migration in subsequent months, whereas sudden-onset environmental disasters are associated with higher international migration.
- El Niño years are associated with higher prices for key agricultural commodities like beans and maize, and higher prices are associated with higher international migration in subsequent months, but only from areas in Central America that consume—but don't produce—those commodities.
- Resource competition can lead to environmental violence in areas where agriculture is the dominant mode of production, which is associated with increased international migration in later months.

Dr. Wibbels added that drought traps farmers, because while it generates an incentive to migrate, it also eliminates the resources necessary to do so.

Dr. Marinov, an oceanographer and climate modeler in Penn Arts & Sciences, notes that expanding the temporal coverage of the MLEED dataset—both further back and into the future—is critical to understanding societal impacts of climate change.

Using the Data for Teaching

Dr. Marinov—with Dr. Cabré's help—has incorporated MLEED into her mixed undergraduate-graduate Climate and Big Data course. The spring class teaches students how to code in Python and analyze data, skills that students apply to the latest climate models and satellite datasets while working on the National Center for Atmospheric Research supercomputer in Boulder, Colorado.

This past spring, students analyzed MLEED data from different countries in West Africa and South Asia and looked for connections between environmental disasters, food prices, and population displacement.

Over the summer, undergraduate students Julian Huang and Luca Zhang continued this work with Dr. Cabré and Dr. Marinov. The Kleinman Center will publish two policy digests based on the group's research on the association between weather shocks and food prices in South Asia and West Africa.

Dr. Marinov pointed out that this research on the links between climate and agriculture also touches on migration. For example, in India, migration is largely driven by people in rural areas responding to periods of crop failure by temporarily moving to Indian cities, where they wait for a better monsoon season before returning to their villages about six months later. Cities are overwhelmed in the process.

Looking ahead, the researchers plan to investigate whether climate-driven changes in crop prices cause legal changes or legal changes cause a drop in crop prices, which, in turn, decreases migration.

Dr. Wibbels said the class has helped make sense of an enormous amount of new data. "It's so many countries, and it's so many months, and it's so many different kinds of environmental indicators that none of us really know it very well," he said, "so to have a bunch of students mucking around in the data is actually very helpful."

Adapted from a [Penn Today article](#) by Erica Moser, September 25, 2026.

Tailored Anti-Smoking Messages Resonate Better With LGBTQ+ Young Adults

In the U.S., LGBTQ+ adults smoke cigarettes at significantly higher rates than their cisgender and heterosexual peers. "These health inequalities make it urgent to develop the need for effective anti-smoking interventions intended for targeted toward LGBTQ+ young adults," said associate professor Andy Tan, director of the Health Communication & Equity Lab at the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania.

A new study by Dr. Tan and his colleagues, including Qijia Ye, a doctoral candidate at the Annenberg School, investigated what makes anti-smoking messages tailored toward LGBTQ+ young adults resonate with them. The study, published in *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*, discovered that LGBTQ+ young adults resonate more strongly with anti-smoking messages when the visual imagery in those messages reflects their own gender identity.

What Did The Study Do?

The study examined whether LGBTQ+ young adults felt that anti-smoking messages were intended for them—a concept researchers call "perceived targetedness"—based on the gender expressions depicted in campaign imagery.

The team conducted two experiments. In the first, 461 LGBTQ+ adults aged 18-30 were randomly assigned to evaluate eight images selected from a pool of 80 images, which they were told would be used in anti-tobacco messaging. The researchers chose images of young adults with diverse gender expressions: transgender/nonbinary, feminine, masculine, or an image comprising a group of adults representing multiple gender expressions. Participants were asked to rate the perceived targetedness of each image and other variables, including whether they liked the image. For example, participants were asked to rate how strongly they agree or disagree with the statement, "I would feel this message was intended for people like me."

In experiment two, 1,190 LGBTQ+ adults aged 18-30 were randomly assigned to one of four gender expression conditions: transgender/nonbinary, feminine, masculine, or multiple genders, and viewed anti-smoking messages that included an image from one of the six top-ranked images from experiment one.

The images were paired with text presenting an anti-smoking argument as well as a QR code directing viewers to get more information on quitting smoking, a logo, and the slogan of the project ("LGBTQ+ health is our focus.")

What Did the Study Find?

Participants reported significantly higher perceived targetedness when the gender expressions in a message matched their own gender identity. Messages featuring multiple gender expressions also performed well, suggesting that inclusive portrayals can resonate across subgroups within the LGBTQ+ community.

What's Next?

"Our research shows that health communicators cannot treat the LGBTQ+ community as a monolith in smoking interventions," Mr. Ye said. "Our results show that tailoring messages to specific gender identities within the community is crucial to reaching diverse audiences effectively. By respecting the distinctive characteristics of different groups within the LGBTQ+ community and designing messages accordingly, communicators are more likely to create campaigns that truly connect and that can make a real difference in health outcomes."

Adapted from a [Annenberg School for Communication article](#) by Hailley Reissman, September 4, 2026.