

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA *Almanac*

Tuesday
December 16, 2025
Volume 72 Number 18
www.upenn.edu/almanac

From the President

Our Thoughts are with the Brown University Community

December 14, 2025

To the University Community:

I was devastated to learn of the tragic shooting on the Brown University campus last night. While details are still evolving, our hearts go out to their entire community during this profoundly difficult time. Our Penn leadership team is following this closely and we remind you that support and wellness resources are available, if needed. As we enter the final week of the fall semester, I am reminded of how precious our community is. Please take care of yourselves and look after one another.

—J. Larry Jameson, President

Medical Miracles at Penn Medicine

Penn Medicine Surgeons Led Teams That Performed Historic Double Hand Transplant



Penn hand transplant program director and orthopaedic and plastic surgeon L. Scott Levin with Luka Krizanac.

When 29-year-old Luka Krizanac reflects on the long chapter of his life without hands, he emphasizes that it wasn't an entirely sad one.

Those 16 years in Zurich, Switzerland, were filled with moments of beauty and personal fulfillment. Mr. Krizanac (pronounced Kree-JAH-nahtz) took up drawing and painting, graduated from college, received a master's degree in political science and business administration, got a job in banking, traveled with his family, and spent glorious summers by the sea in Croatia. Through the years, he had immeasurable support from his parents and brother. Yet, the loss of his hands at age 12 was a trauma and tragedy that robbed him of independence during those teen and early adult years.

"People usually struggle to understand how much they do with their hands," he said. "And I don't mean just practical stuff, but basically surviving as humans, even in today's modern world. As much as you try to build the comfort and confidence without hands...you always have someone assisting you. As much as you love them, as much as you care about them, you never have the chance to do it on your own, which ties into the fact that you're also not able to fully develop as a person."

In the fall of 2024, Mr. Krizanac received the gift of new hands at Penn Medicine. Long before

he regained sensation or functionality in the new limbs, he said, he began to feel like "a whole human being."

Penn hand transplant program director and orthopaedic and plastic surgeon L. Scott Levin, with plastic surgeon Benjamin Chang, the program's co-director, worked with four surgical teams for more than 10 hours at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania to connect donor forearms and hands to Mr. Krizanac's upper arms.

Mr. Krizanac was Penn Medicine's first bilateral hand and forearm transplant recipient since before the COVID pandemic and the first in the U.S. since 2021. His was the fifth such transplant performed by the vascularized composite allotransplantation team led by Drs. Levin and Chang.

Penn's hand transplant program is one of only a few in the world. Dr. Levin established the program with liver transplant surgeon Abraham Shaked in 2009, as part of the Penn Transplant Institute, with support from liver, kidney, and pancreas transplant surgeon Matthew H. Levine and liver transplant surgeon Kim Olthoff.

For Mr. Krizanac, the journey to receive hands spanned more than 16 years, a global pandemic, a fateful connection between a surgeon and his mentor, and surgeries on two continents.

A Devastating Loss

Mr. Krizanac was on the cusp of adolescence in 2008 when an improperly treated infection led to severe sepsis and multi-organ failure that almost killed him. Surgeons at another hospital amputated parts of both his arms and legs to save his life.

He learned early on to use prosthetic legs, and they served him well in daily life; he never thought about not having legs. But hands were

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Steven A. Lipman, C'71: \$3 Million Bequest for Penn Libraries

Steven A. Lipman, C'71, made a \$3 million gift to the Penn Libraries upon his death on March 17, 2025. Mr. Lipman bequeathed funds to endow multiple facets of the Penn Libraries: the Steven A. Lipman Librarian and Coordinating Bibliographer for the Humanities, a staff position; the Steven A. Lipman Fund for Truth and Democracy, to purchase library resources supporting the department of history; and the Steven A. Lipman Fund for Community Engagement, supporting the Penn Libraries' work in Philadelphia public schools. In addition to this bequest, Mr. Lipman contributed more than \$500,000 to the libraries during his lifetime.

"Steve's generous support of the Penn Libraries ensures that we can equip students with the resources and tools they need to thrive," said Brigitte Weisteiger, the H. Carton Rogers III Vice Provost and director of the Penn Libraries. "His legacy of giving underscores the crucial role our libraries play as centers of academic life on campus and the importance of cultivating lifelong learners, ready for the complexities of a rapidly evolving world."

Mr. Lipman wanted to honor his transformative undergraduate experience at Penn, particularly his experience as a history major, by offering support and resources to the next generation of history students.

"I don't know anyone who had a stronger commitment to the Penn Libraries and to the history department than Steve," said Eddie Chez, W'71, Mr. Lipman's friend and executor of his will. In recent years, Mr. Chez visited the Penn Libraries and reported back to Mr. Lipman, who was too ill to travel, as they made plans for his estate. "Steve was always so appreciative that giving to the libraries was a way to fulfill his dreams about this money," Mr. Chez continued. "The overall sense of purpose that it gave him in his last years was inspiring."

The first Steven A. Lipman Librarian and Coordinating Bibliographer for the Humanities is Nick Okrent. Mr. Okrent joined the libraries in 2001 as an information literacy librarian, and over the years has worked with many departments and disciplines, mainly focused on the humanities but also including the social sciences. He noted that some of the faculty Mr. Lipman identified as key figures in his education and life, such as Michael Zuckerman, Lee Cassanelli, the late Robert (Bob) Engs, and the late Richard

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From the Faculty Senate Office

The following is published in accordance with the Faculty Senate Rules. Among other purposes, the publication of SEC actions is intended to stimulate discussion among the constituencies and their representatives. Please communicate your comments to Patrick Walsh, executive assistant to the Senate Office, by email at senate@pobox.upenn.edu.

Faculty Senate Executive Committee Actions Wednesday, December 10, 2025

Reports from Constituencies. Faculty Senate chair Kathleen Brown invited three SEC members to offer reports from their constituencies.

Update from the Office of the Provost. Provost John L. Jackson, Jr., offered updates on the Penn Forward initiative, forthcoming strategic plans from the Vice Provost for Arts and the Vice Provost for Climate Science, Policy, and Action; concerns about a proposed rule change by the US Department of Homeland Security regarding duration of status for F and J non-immigrants; continued efforts by Penn researchers to diversify their funding portfolios, and commitments to protecting academic freedom. He also addressed questions about the proposed Open Expression guidelines and heard from SEC about their interest in providing faculty input.

Proposed Revisions to the Policy for Reviewing Alleged Misconduct in Research. Professor of neurology and chair of the Senate Committee on Faculty and the Administration (SCOA) Geoffrey Aguirre detailed the review performed by SCOA of the policy draft, which was created jointly by a working group appointed by the Office of the Vice Provost for Research in collaboration with the Office of General Counsel. Forthcoming changes in federal regulations catalyzed the draft's creation, but the process was used as an opportunity to clarify definitions and procedures in the policy. Upon motion made and seconded, SEC members voted unanimously (with one abstention noted) to accept the proposed policy. The policy draft will be published for review in a future edition of *Almanac*.

Resolution in Support of Penn's Administrative Response to the EEOC Complaint. SEC members reviewed the text of a proposed resolution. Upon motion made and seconded, and following amendments, SEC members voted unanimously to adopt the resolution, which is presented in this issue of *Almanac*.

Special Property Checks

Under the special checks program, DPS officers check the exterior of registered properties for signs of criminal activity or security breaches at peak travel times during Thanksgiving, spring, and winter breaks.

Winter Break: Special checks will begin on December 18 at 5 p.m. and will extend through January 13 at 3 p.m.

The program is available at no extra charge to residents in the Penn patrol zone, bounded by 30th Street and 43rd Street and by Baltimore Avenue and Market Street.

Students, faculty, and staff who live in the patrol zone are encouraged to register their residence. Be sure to list your contact information, other occupants, landlord (if applicable), vacancy dates, scheduled repairs, and someone other than a landlord with access or a key to the property.

Penn Police will periodically check the exterior of registered properties, for signs of criminal activity or security breaches during the break.

Special checks cannot be provided for interior areas of apartment complexes. Remember to close and lock all doors and windows before you leave and arrange for packages to be delivered elsewhere while you are away.

Avoid package theft. Have a plan. Arrange to be home for delivery or have your packages delivered to a secure location. Penn has an Amazon@Penn center at 3734 Spruce Street for Amazon deliveries.

Register for a special check at <https://www.publicsafety.upenn.edu/contact/property-check/>.

—Division of Public Safety

Special Winter Vacation Reminder

As they do every year, Penn's President, Provost, and Executive Vice President evaluate the feasibility of observing Penn's traditional Special Winter Vacation.

This year, the Special Winter Vacation granted to all regular full-time staff members, including faculty, will be on December 26, 29, 30, and 31. Employees required to work to continue departmental operations for part or all of this period may reschedule, within 90 days of the [Special Winter Vacation](#) period, time off for some other time during the year.

As a gesture of thanks, Penn is extending Winter Break to include Friday, January 2, 2026. Essential staff required to work that day will receive comp time that can be used by March 31, 2026.

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

The complete list of recognized holidays for this fiscal year is available on the [Holidays policy page](#).

—Division of Human Resources

Planning an Event? Email *Almanac*

Almanac's monthly AT PENN calendar is the only all-inclusive calendar of Penn events on campus. A free listing in the AT PENN increases visibility and attendance.

Email us at almanac@upenn.edu with your event details. For more information, visit <https://almanac.upenn.edu/deadlines-for-submitting-at-penn-information>.

Faculty Senate Resolution in Support of Penn's Administrative Response to the EEOC Complaint

The University of Pennsylvania's Faculty Senate Executive Committee strongly supports the Penn administration's refusal to provide the names and contact information of Jewish faculty, students, and staff to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). We believe that the EEOC's demand for such information compromises and puts at risk the safety and privacy of members of Penn's Jewish community and that it will play no meaningful role in combating antisemitism, the EEOC's purported justification for its demand.

Endorsed: Faculty Senate Executive Committee [December 10, 2025].

Redesigned Workday Website

A redesign of the [Workday@Penn website](#) delivers an improved experience tailored to the needs of business administrators, human resources professionals, faculty coordinators, managers, and faculty, staff, postdocs, students, and affiliates across campus. The new site focuses on helping people find the resources most relevant to their day-to-day responsibilities or the task they need to accomplish.

At the top of the redesign is a streamlined role-based structure. Site visitors can select the role they use in Workday—such as a Workday security role, a manager of people, a worker performing a self-service task, or a learner with job-related training needs—and find curated content specific to their tasks.

The site offers more prominent access to new, custom-designed, and easily navigable Workday tip sheets. They feature expanded content that includes links to related tip sheets and guides, as well as applicable University policies. Each tip sheet focuses on when to use or not use the tip sheet, gives an overview of the business process, highlights important considerations, and lists the names of related Workday reports. Most importantly, tip sheets continue their purpose of providing up-to-date, step-by-step instructions for robust business processes or quick self-service tasks.

A growing library of topical guides receives more prominence. Guides provide context for transactions such as recruiting, hiring, compensation changes, time tracking, payroll processes, performance management, and administrative learning management.

The enhancements create a more intuitive, role-aware resource that supports the University community in executing Workday transactions accurately and confidently. The site looks modern and meaningfully improves how the community can engage with University resources.

—Workday Operations

January

AT PENN

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

- 14** First day of classes (Monday classes).
19 MLK, Jr. Day observed (no classes).
27 Course Selection Period ends.

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

- 17** *Up Late with the Sphinx*; an evening filled with family-friendly games and gallery activities; drop into a hands-on workshop and make something special to take home, then finish your evening with a flashlight tour through the museum; 5-10 p.m.; Penn Museum; tickets: \$35/general, \$30/members; register: <https://www.penn.museum/calendar/775/up-late-with-the-sphinx> (Penn Museum).

CONFERENCES

- 16** *Pollutants and Policy in the Built Environment*; will explore how environmental law, landscape architecture, and city and regional planning can address issues of environmental justice in Philadelphia's urban landscapes; 8 a.m.-6 p.m.; room 100, Golkin Hall; register: <https://tinyurl.com/law-conf-jan-16> (Carey Law; Weitzman School of Design).
29 *Adventive America: Follow the Plants*; will explore the stories of collectors, collections, and global botanical exchanges between the United States, Indigenous nations, Britain, Spain, Japan, and China, from the early American republic to the present day; 6:30-8 p.m.; Kleinman Energy Forum, Fisher Fine Arts Li-

brary; register: <https://www.design.upenn.edu/events/adventive-america> (Landscape Architecture). Also January 30, 9:30 a.m.-6 p.m.

EXHIBITS

Upcoming

- 14** *Nursing the Revolution*; challenges the widespread belief that nursing began in the 19th century with Florence Nightingale by displaying rare evidence of a world of nursing and caretaking that thrived before, during, and after the American Revolution; floor 2U, Claire Fagin Hall. Through November 20, 2026.

Re/Make History: Crafting the Past with 21st-Century Technologies; demonstrates how technologies in the Education Commons and the Bollinger Digital Fabrication Lab can be used to investigate and/or draw creative inspiration from the rare books of the Museum Library and artifacts from the Penn Museum; Penn Museum Library.

- 28** *Collecting the New Irascibles: Art in the 1980s*; contemporary critics described the avant-garde art of the 1980s and '90s as Post-modernist appropriation, Neo-Expressionism, Neo-Geometric Conceptualism, and Post-Graffiti; these movements signaled a decisive break from past expectations and a full-force tilt toward the "new"; Arthur Ross Gallery. Through April 12, 2026. Opening reception: January 30, 5-7 p.m.

Now

Postigo Express: Documenting the Basque Conflict in San Sebastián, 1977-2003;

a collection of acclaimed Basque photographer Fernando Postigo's photos documenting Spain's transition to democracy following Franco's death in 1975, the implementation of the new Spanish Constitution in 1978, and, most significantly, the Basque struggle for autonomy; Arthur Ross Gallery. Through January 4, 2026.

Reinventing Aristotle; using the rich and varied Aristotelian materials held in the Penn Libraries' collections, this exhibit explores how perceptions of Aristotle have evolved over the centuries—across cultures, disciplines, and imaginations; Goldstein Gallery, Van Pelt Library. Through January 16, 2026.

Penn in the Field: Student Fieldwork Photography; experience fieldwork and research travel of current undergraduate and graduate students as documented through their own lenses; Penn Museum Library. Through August 30, 2026.

Mavis Pusey: Mobile Images; the first major museum survey dedicated to the work and life of Jamaican-born artist Mavis Pusey (1928-2019), an important figure in geometric abstraction, featuring over 60 artworks from her prolific 50-year career; Institute of Contemporary Art. Through December 2026.

FITNESS & LEARNING

- 6** *Working Dog Center Tour*; see firsthand what it takes to train leading detection dogs; watch as the Working Dog Center staff explains the step-by-step process to preparing a dog to serve in explosive detection, search & rescue, cancer detection, and more; 10 a.m.; Penn Working Dog Center; register: pvwdc outreach@vet.upenn.edu (Penn Vet). Also January 22.

The Deep Dig: Power and Propaganda in Ancient Rome; in this four-week virtual course, led by world-renowned archaeologist C. Brian Rose, participants will explore how images, monuments, and mythmaking helped build one of history's most influential and enduring empires; 6:30 p.m.; online webinars; registration: \$180/general, \$130/members; register: <https://www.penn.museum/calendar/906/the-deep-dig> (Penn Museum). Weekly through January 27.

- 7** *Mind and Mood Recharge Powered by Penn Medicine*; an uplifting array of health-centric happenings during a popular after-hours wellness series; 5-8 p.m.; Penn Museum; free with museum admission; register: <https://www.penn.museum/calendar/870/mind-and-mood-recharge> (Penn Medicine, Penn Museum).

- 10** *Ancient Alcohol: A Taste of Bygone Booze: Tour & Tasting*; take an unconventional (and boozy) journey back in time to discover what people of the past thought about alcohol, from how they made it to its role in society; 2 p.m.; Penn Museum; tickets: \$41/general, \$37/members; register: <https://www.penn.museum/calendar/843/ancient-alcohol-a-taste-of-bygone-booze> (Penn Museum). Also January 11.

- 23** *Summer Opportunities and Funding Resources Fair*; a "one-stop shop" for undergraduate students interested in learning more about summer opportunities provided through Penn entities, including internships, research experiences, or funding to support expenses associated with low-paid or unpaid opportunities; 2-4 p.m.; Hall of Flags, Houston Hall (Center for Undergraduate Research & Fellowships).

In 2026, Thomas Paine's pamphlet "Common Sense," will be among the historical American documents marking the 250th anniversary of its publication. A talk at the Penn Libraries on January 15th will examine the document's history and legacy. See Talks.



College of Liberal & Professional Studies

Online webinars. Info and to register: <https://www.lps.upenn.edu/about/events>.

5 Penn LPS Online Certificates: Meet Us Monday; 12:30 p.m.

6 Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences Virtual Information Session; noon. Also January 20, 6 p.m.

Master of Environmental Studies Virtual Drop-in Hour; noon.

Pre-Health Post-Baccalaureate Programs Virtual Information Session; 4 p.m.

7 Master of Liberal Arts Virtual Information Session; noon.

8 Master of Behavioral and Decision Sciences Virtual Café; 10 a.m.

Admissions Event: Fels Executive MPA Meet & Greet; noon.

13 Fels Institute of Government Virtual Information Session; noon.

Pre-Health Programs Virtual Application Completion Session; 12:30 p.m.

14 Global Master of Public Administration Virtual Information Session; noon.

15 Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences Virtual Application Completion Session; 12:30 p.m. Also January 29.

21 Master of Applied Positive Psychology Virtual Alumni Panel; 5:30 p.m.

22 Master of Chemical Sciences Virtual Information Session; 9:30 a.m.

28 Penn Employee Virtual Information Session; 12:30 p.m.

Graduate School of Education

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

14 Medical Education, MEd Virtual Information Session; noon.

Mid-Career Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership, EdD Virtual Information Session; 7 p.m.

15 Education Entrepreneurship, MEd Virtual Information Session; noon.

20 Executive Doctorate in Higher Education Management, EdD Virtual Information Session; noon.

22 Introduction to Negotiations—Virtual Workshop; all day. Through January 23.

Human Resources

For Penn faculty and staff. Unless noted, online webinars. Info and to register: <https://www.hr.upenn.edu/>.

5 30-Minute Chair Yoga Plus Core; noon. Also January 12, 26.

7 Lunchtime Chair Yoga; noon. Also January 21.

8 Group Fitness: HR Strength; noon.

9 30-Minute Guided Meditation; noon. Also January 16, 23, 30.

13 Job Architecture Webinar; 1 p.m. Also January 29.

14 January Wellness Walk; noon; the Palestra.

15 MetLife Workshop: Be an Investor—Tips on Ways Your Money Can Work For You; noon.

22 Time and Energy Management; 12:30 p.m.

28 Moving Your 2026 Resolutions Forward; noon.

Morris Arboretum & Gardens

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

10 Winter Wellness Walks: Nature Watch; walk that will explore wintry aspects of the arboretum, like tree bark color/texture, tree silhouettes, buds, and winter-blooming plants; 10:30 a.m.

Bare Naked Trees Tour; join an experienced guide to explore the beauty of “bare naked trees,” which reveal a variety of shapes and patterns during the winter; 11 a.m.

17 Winter Wellness Family Walk; a joyful family stroll where families can feel free to walk at their own pace and use strollers; 10:30 a.m.

25 Winter Wellness Walk: Nature’s Nurture; get moving, get outdoors, and get connected to nature and others during a brisk walk with stimulating conversation; 10:30 a.m.

Penn Libraries

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

9 Open Studio Session: Time in the Revolutionary Era; learn how to print your own copy of a broadside about how the pace of time impacted life in the Revolutionary era; 2–4 p.m.; Common Press, Fisher Fine Arts Library.

16 Reinterpreting the Declaration: A Creative Typesetting Workshop; in this creative typesetting workshop, the Declaration text will be split amongst registered participants, and each participant will have the freedom to choose to include, edit, or redact the words in their segment; noon–5 p.m.; Common Press, Fisher Fine Arts Library.

20 Reimagining Illumination: Light in Artists’ Books; look at the many ways that modern artists make use of light in their book creations—including transparencies, reflections, and electric light; 2–4 p.m.; room 623, Van Pelt Library.

21 Manuscript Studies Interest Group: Recipes; a regular meeting for people who want to get up close and personal with a variety of handwritten artifacts in the libraries’ collections; 2 p.m.; room 623, Van Pelt Library.

MUSIC

24 Isaiah Collier & Keyon Harrold; performance by an innovative trumpeter whose expressive sound blends jazz, Afrobeat, rock, blues, and hip-hop, together on a bill with saxophonist and jazz prodigy Isaiah Collier; 7:30 p.m.; Zellerbach Theatre, Annenberg Center; tickets: \$41–\$93; register: <https://tickets.pennlivearts.org/0/97810> (Penn Live Arts).

29 Ruckus with Davóne Tines: What is Your Hand in This?; intrepid early music ensemble Ruckus and singer Davóne Tines deliver the bite of America’s earliest revolutionary music, time-traveling through four centuries of reimagined songs, hymns and dance tunes; 7 p.m.; Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral, 19 S 38th Street; tickets: \$55; register: <https://tickets.pennlivearts.org/0/97820> (Penn Live Arts).

ON STAGE

16 Dance Theatre of Harlem; a dynamic force in the dance world brings unprecedented relevance to classical ballet with cutting-edge new works and timeless masterpieces per-

formed by exceptionally trained dancers; 7:30 p.m.; Zellerbach Theatre, Annenberg Center; tickets: \$59–\$119; register: <https://tickets.pennlivearts.org/0/97790> (Penn Live Arts). Also January 17, 2 and 7:30 p.m.; January 18, 2 p.m.

23 Alcoléa & Cie: Right in the Eye; celebration of Georges Méliès, a pioneer of the cinema and inventor of special effects, that adds an original, multi-layered score to complement and interpret twelve of his otherwise silent films; 7:30 p.m.; Harold Prince Theatre, Annenberg Center; tickets: \$57; register: <https://tickets.pennlivearts.org/0/97736> (Penn Live Arts).

READINGS & SIGNINGS

Kelly Writers House

In-person events at Kelly Writers House. Info and to register: <https://writing.upenn.edu/wh/calendar/0126.php>.

22 Mind of Winter; homemade soups and stews followed by winter-themed readings selected by KWH community members; 5:30 p.m.

26 Live at the Writers House; monthly radio show produced at the KWH in collaboration with WXPB; 6:30 p.m.

27 New Poems for the New Year; a reading by members of Suppose an Eyes, a poetry workshop sponsored by the Kelly Writers House; 6 p.m.

28 Speakeasy Open Mic Night; student-run open mic night that welcomes all kinds of readings and performances; 7 p.m.

29 The Classroom and the Crowd; Al Filreis, English; 6 p.m.

SPECIAL EVENTS

19 Martin Luther King, Jr., Day of Service; a full day of service activities as part of the commemorative symposium on social change; 8:30 a.m.–7 p.m.; event info: <https://aarc.upenn.edu/events> (AARC).

31 CultureFest! Lunar New Year; experience vibrant Asian traditions during a full day of festivities, including storytelling, artmak-



Penn Live Arts presents the Dance Theatre of Harlem January 16 to 18 at the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts. See On Stage.

ing, live music and dance performances, and a traditional Lion Dance finale; 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Penn Museum; included with museum admission; register: <https://www.penn.museum/calendar/888/culturefest> (Penn Museum).

SPORTS

Home games only. Info and tickets: <https://pennathletics.com/calendar>.

3 *Women's Basketball vs. Princeton*; 2 p.m.; the Palestra.

10 *Men's Swimming vs. Yale*; 11 a.m.; Sheerr Pool.

Men's Swimming vs. Dartmouth; 11 a.m.; Sheerr Pool.

Women's Swimming vs. Yale; 11 a.m.; Sheerr Pool.

Women's Swimming vs. Dartmouth; 11 a.m.; Sheerr Pool.

Men's Basketball vs. Brown; 2 p.m.; the Palestra.

17 *Women's Basketball vs. Harvard*; 2 p.m.; the Palestra.

19 *Women's Basketball vs. Dartmouth*; 2 p.m.; the Palestra.

22 *Men's Swimming vs. La Salle*; 5 p.m.; Sheerr Pool.

24 *Men's Basketball vs. Yale*; 2 p.m.; the Palestra.

25 *Wrestling vs. Columbia*; 1 p.m.; the Palestra.

30 *Women's Basketball vs. Cornell*; 6 p.m.; the Palestra.

31 *Women's Basketball vs. Columbia*; 5 p.m.; the Palestra.

TALKS

7 *Archaeology in Action: Revealing Hidden History*; Jason Herrmann, anthropology; 7 p.m.; online webinar; tickets: \$15/general, \$9/members; register: <https://www.penn.museum/calendar/877/archaeology-in-action> (Penn Museum).

8 *Informative Ordeals in Healthcare: Prior Authorization of Drugs in Medicaid*; LJ Ristovska, University of Texas-Austin; 10 a.m.; room 1104, Blockley Hall, and Zoom webinar; join: <https://upenn.zoom.us/j/95740259034> (Medical Ethics & Health Policy).

12 *Establishment of Malaria Infection: Exploring Transmission Dynamics and Host-Parasite Interactions at the Inoculation Site*; Photini Sinnis, Johns Hopkins University; noon; room 132, Hill Pavilion, and Zoom webinar; join: <https://upenn.zoom.us/j/91485597704> (Penn Vet).

13 *A Demographic Future Without Children?* Hans-Peter Kohler, sociology; noon; room 473, McNeil Building, and Zoom webinar; register: <https://tinyurl.com/kohler-talk-jan-13> (Penn Association of Senior & Emeritus Faculty).

Research Issues Arising in Alzheimer's Disease-Related Dementias; Jason Karlawish, medicine and medical ethics & health policy; noon; room B102AB, Richards Building, and Zoom webinar; register: <https://tinyurl.com/karlawish-talk-jan-13> (Medical Ethics & Health Policy).

Stress Testing Markets for Cardiac Care; Yashaswini Singh, Brown University; noon; auditorium, Colonial Penn Center; register:



Penn Lions help celebrate the Lunar New Year at the Penn Museum during a day full of festivities. See Special Events.

<https://ldi.upenn.edu/events/research-seminar-with-yashaswini-singh-phd/> (Leonard Davis Institute).

15 *Immune-Based therapies for HIV Cure: Understanding and Targeting the Mechanisms of HIV Persistence*; Mirko Paiardini, Emory University; noon; online webinar; info: <https://www.med.upenn.edu/cfar/seminar-series/> (Center for AIDS Research).

Synthetic Circuits for Recording Cell Histories; Junhong Choi, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center; noon; room 109, Leidy Laboratory, and Zoom webinar; info: <https://tinyurl.com/choi-talk-jan-15> (Biology).

Common Sense at 250: A Panel Discussion; Emma Hart, history; Sophia Rosenfeld, history; Duncan Watts, Stevens University Professor; 5:30 p.m.; Class of 1978 Orrery Pavilion, Van Pelt Library, and Zoom webinar; register: <https://tinyurl.com/global-disc-jan-15> (Penn Libraries, Global Discovery Series).

16 *Drug Pricing in Trump 2.0: Where Are We and What's Ahead?* Avik Roy, Foundation for Research on Equal Opportunity; Rachel Sachs, Washington University; Marta Wosinska, Brookings Institution; noon; online webinar; register: <https://tinyurl.com/ldi-talk-jan-16> (Leonard Davis Institute).

Multiscale Fluid, Sediment, and Biota Interactions in Aquatic Ecosystems; Judy Yang, University of Minnesota Twin Cities; 3 p.m.; room 358, Hayden Hall (Earth & Environmental Science).

20 *25th MLK Jr. Social Justice Lecture & Award*; Spike Lee, actor and filmmaker; 5:30 p.m.; Zellerbach Theater, Annenberg Center; register: <https://tinyurl.com/lee-talk-jan-20> (Africana Studies).

21 *One Health@Penn Research Community Work in Progress Series: Vectors and Climate Change*; Sara Cherry, pathology & laboratory medicine; Carol Sobotytk, Penn Vet; noon; Zoom webinar; join: <https://tinyurl.com/cherry-sobotyk-jan-21> (Penn Vet).

22 *From Colony to Independence: How Missionaries Influenced American Perceptions of Korea*; Hannah Kim, University of Delaware; noon; suite 310, 3600 Market Street (Korean Studies).

Identity and Well-Being; Amy Hillier, SP2; DeMarcus A. Jenkins, SP2 and Annenberg School; 4:30 p.m.; room 250, PCPSE (SP2) and Andrea Mitchell Center for the Study of Democracy).

The Trouble with Buddhist Gifts: The Ethics of Ritual Care in Contemporary Japan; Paulina Kolata, Harvard University; 5:15 p.m.; room 111, Annenberg School (Center for East Asian Studies, Religious Studies).

26 *Social Network Biology*; Nicholas Christakis, Yale University; 3:30 p.m.; auditorium, Levin Building (Psychology).

27 *Organ Diversion or Match Run Deviation? Ethical Considerations in Allocation Out of Sequence*; Andrew M. Courtwright, University of Utah; noon; Zoom webinar; register: <https://tinyurl.com/courtwright-talk-jan-27> (Medical Ethics & Health Policy).

SOSIP-Trimer/mRNA Combination for Novel Preventive and Therapeutic HIV-1 Vaccine Regimens; Wilton Bryan Williams, Duke University; 4 p.m.; location TBA; info: <https://www.med.upenn.edu/cfar/seminar-series/> (Center for AIDS Research).

The Messiness of Independence; Emily Sneff, Declaration of Independence historian; 5:30 p.m.; Class of 1978 Orrery Pavilion, Van Pelt Library; register: www.library.upenn.edu/events/messiness-independence (Penn Libraries).

The Performance of Translation: Journeys in Afro-Diasporic Women's Modernisms; Rosie Poku, Africana studies & comparative literature; 5:30 p.m.; room 329A, Max Kade Center; register: <https://tinyurl.com/poku-talk-jan-27> (Africana Studies).

29 *The Black Space Project*; Charles L. Davis II, University of Texas at Austin; noon; Upper Gallery, Meyerson Hall; register: <https://www.design.upenn.edu/events/black-space-project> (Historic Preservation).

Disentangling Genocide from Proportionality: Understanding the Dangerous Assault on International Law; Claire Finkelstein, Penn Carey Law School; noon; Zoom webinar; register: <https://tinyurl.com/finkelstein-talk-jan-29> (Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies).

Framed Insurance and Billing Frictions: Understanding Denied Health Insurance Claims; Riley League, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; noon; auditorium, Colonial Penn Center; register: <https://ldi.upenn.edu/events/research-seminar-with-riley-league-phd/> (Leonard Davis Institute).

A "Critical Somatopolitics" of "Seal Skins from the Bottom of the Sea"? Ancient Aquatic Bodies in Modern Film Horror; Benjamin Eldon Stevens, Bryn Mawr College; 4:45 p.m.; room 402, Cohen Hall (Classical Studies).

30 *Life in a Fifth-Century Greek Colonial World: Metaponto Between Narratives and Practices*; Maddalena Scarperi, ancient history; noon; room 344, Fisher-Bennett Hall (Gender, Sexuality & Women's Studies).

Labour Costs, Wage Bargaining, and Technological Change: Evidence for Skilled Work from Early Industrialising England, 1760-1840; Judy Stephenson, University College London; 2 p.m.; room 209, College Hall (History).

Medical Miracles at Penn Medicine

Penn Medicine Surgeons Led Teams That Performed Historic Double Hand Transplant

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a different story. Prosthetics didn't come close to replicating the intricate movements and flexibility of the real thing.

"A lower leg is less complex than the human hand," Dr. Levin said, noting that the lower extremity is primarily used for standing and walking. On the other hand, "you do 1,001 activities on a daily basis with your hands. Upper extremity prosthetics usually cannot provide that degree of function."

Mr. Krizanac learned to eat, type, draw, and do many things for himself at home without prosthetic hands, and he reserved the prosthetics for when he left the house.

But Mr. Krizanac couldn't hold a pen and take notes with a silicone hand or slip on a jacket without the prosthetics getting stuck in his sleeves. It wasn't possible to run a silicone hand through his hair and not tear out the hair. Nor could he go to a cafe on his own and buy himself a coffee, with all the steps the trip entailed: Put on his jacket. Open his wallet. Hold the cup. Take off the lid to add a bit of cold milk. He required assistance for so many of the tasks many people rely on their hands to do without thinking.

"For everyone else, this is a daily thing that they don't even think about—they forget about it the instant that they do it," he said, thinking about the coffee shop. He mentioned the example, not because he cared that much about going out for coffee, but to illustrate the independence it represented.

A Fateful Connection

Not long after his illness, his mother read about a patient who received a hand transplant in Austria. He and his parents would sit in countless doctors' waiting rooms, pursuing a hand transplant in their country and making no progress.

Meanwhile, in 2016, Dr. Levin traveled to Switzerland's Balgrist University Hospital to give a lecture about the program he and Dr. Chang had built at Penn; at that point, they had performed two bilateral hand transplants, including the world's first on a child, a collaboration between Penn Medicine and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. The lecture Dr. Levin gave that day was named for Reinhold Ganz—a pioneering hip surgeon and Dr. Levin's mentor during a specialized orthopaedics fellowship in Switzerland in 1988. Dr. Ganz was in the audience as Dr. Levin spoke.

Two years later, when Mr. Krizanac's family was facing roadblocks, Dr. Ganz called his former fellow. Mr. Krizanac's father, a nurse, was the operating room manager at the medical center where the renowned surgeon worked.

Getting a referral from his former mentor "was a tremendous honor, but also a tremendous responsibility," Dr. Levin said. "He's a remarkable guy and has done so much for thousands of patients." Being given the chance by Dr. Ganz to perform the first vascularized composite allotransplant—the term for the transplantation of multiple tissue types as a single functional unit—of a Swiss patient was particularly meaningful. Mr. Krizanac was 22 years old and had been living without hands for a decade.

"As you can imagine, especially as a kid, you are disappointed in doctors," Mr. Krizanac said. "You're disappointed in health care. You feel betrayed by that. But then, to encounter someone who is so dedicated to you, so dedicated to helping you and making your life better, this just changes your whole perspective on the medical field and what it means to be a patient."

The Penn hand transplant team began the labor-intensive process of rehearsing for his transplant in Philadelphia. Unlike other surgeries, each hand transplant is customized to the patient. Attending surgeons, residents, fellows, and nurses rehearsed Mr. Krizanac's surgery more than 12 times. They donated their time after hours to rehearsals in the cadaver lab, continuing through the COVID pandemic so they would be ready to go when a match

was found.

A Complication and a Committed Team

Mr. Krizanac's belief in Dr. Levin and his team was cemented when he developed painful wounds on his knees and required reconstructive surgery before the hand transplants could go forward. Transplant recipients must take immunosuppressant drugs continuously to stop their bodies from rejecting the foreign limbs, and the immunosuppression would impair the wound-healing process on his legs.

In April 2021, Dr. Levin and Penn Medicine plastic surgeon Stephen J. Kovach, III, co-director of the Penn Orthoplastic Limb Salvage Center, flew to Switzerland to reconstruct Mr. Krizanac's lower limbs. They worked in two teams at the University Hospital of Bern, with Esther Vögelin and Radu Olariu, the hospital's co-director of hand and plastic surgery and co-chief of plastic surgery. The surgery took seven hours.

"Luka saw in our team that we were committed to him for the long haul," Dr. Chang said.

It wasn't just that Dr. Levin was willing to cross an ocean for Mr. Krizanac. The surgeon treated him as more than a patient, he said.

"When I came out of the surgery for the legs, people would talk to me standing at the end of the bed," Mr. Krizanac said. "He would kneel to be the same height as me. He's a person who is very senior, who has a huge, huge amount of knowledge and talent; but when he speaks to me, he's like, 'What is worrying you? What can I explain? What has someone said that is unclear?'"

After a year of recovery, Mr. Krizanac was ready for hands.

The Wait

Through the years, Mr. Krizanac remained hopeful that there was a light at the end of his tunnel—even if he didn't know how long it would take to get there. But desperation set in at times, knowing there was a solution out there—but not knowing when, or if, it would come to him.

Then, last fall, Dr. Levin and Mr. Krizanac agreed that he should come to Philadelphia to wait for a donor. Mr. Krizanac was the only one on the national waiting list for a bilateral hand transplant, Dr. Levin said, and he was "the perfect candidate."

But the days passed by. Finding the right set of arms and hands is complicated—in addition to matching blood and tissue types, they must also match for gender, skin color and tone, and size.

Mr. Krizanac and his family felt the ongoing support of not only Dr. Levin, but the whole transplant team, along with Dr. Levin's wife, Helga,

who is German. She baked German bread for Mr. Krizanac's family each week and made them feel at home. Each day, the surgeon remembers asking her, "When is this going to happen? We must find a donor for Luka."

Finally, after eight weeks, the call came. There was a match.

At 1:34 a.m., Mr. Krizanac went into surgery. Like all hand transplants, it was a complicated operation, involving four surgical teams—two on the donor limbs, and two on the recipient's—working through the night to carefully connect the bones, nerves, arteries, muscles, and skin.

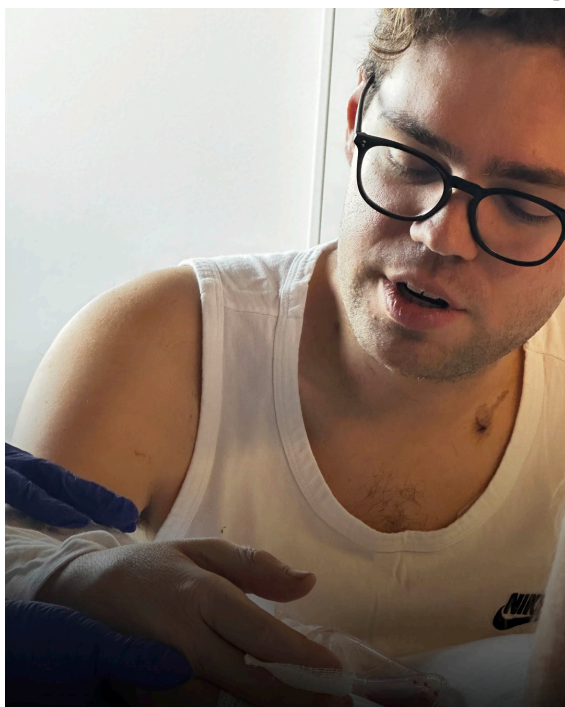
Feeling the Weight of New Hands

Transplant nurse Charlotte "Carly" Baker, remembers a day, a couple of weeks after the surgery, when the physical therapy team put Mr. Krizanac's new arms into slings and had him walk.

"He didn't let anyone rush him in the moment; it seemed like he wanted to soak it all in, as he felt where his new arms and hands were," she said. "That moment is something that will stick with me forever, because I was very amazed at his ability to be really mindful."

Just three weeks after the surgery, Mr. Krizanac could push up his glasses and scratch his cheek using his own fingertip.

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Taken a few days after surgery, this was one of the first photos that Mr. Krizanac shared with family and friends after his transplant.

Breakthrough with Customized CRISPR Treatment for Patient with CPS1



KJ (center) pictured with his siblings.

In a historic medical breakthrough, a child diagnosed with a rare genetic disorder has been successfully treated with a customized CRISPR gene editing therapy by a team at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) and Penn Medicine. The infant, KJ, was born with a rare metabolic disease known as severe carbamoyl phosphate synthetase 1 (CPS1) deficiency. After spending the first several months of his life in the hospital and on a very restrictive diet, KJ received the first dose of his bespoke therapy in February 2025, when he was between six and seven months of age. The treatment was administered safely, and he is now growing well and thriving.

The case is detailed in a study published by the *New England Journal of Medicine* and was presented at the American Society of Gene & Cell Therapy Annual Meeting in New Orleans. This landmark finding could provide a pathway for gene editing technology to be successfully adapted to treat individuals with rare diseases for whom no medical treatments are available.

"Years and years of progress in gene editing and collaboration between researchers and clinicians made this moment possible, and while KJ is just one patient, we hope he is the first of many to benefit from a methodology that can be scaled to fit an individual patient's needs," said Rebecca Ahrens-Nicklas, director of the Gene Therapy for Inherited Metabolic Disorders Frontier Program (GTIMD) at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and an assistant professor of pediatrics in the Perelman School of Medicine.

CRISPR (clustered regularly-interspaced short palindromic repeats)-based gene editing can precisely correct disease-causing variants in the human genome. Gene editing tools are incredibly complex and nuanced, and up to this point, researchers have built them to target more common diseases that affect tens or hundreds of thousands of patients, such as the two diseases for which there currently are U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved therapies, sickle cell disease and beta thalassemia. However, relatively few diseases benefit from a "one-size-fits-all" gene editing approach, since so many disease-causing variants exist. Even as the field advances, many patients with rare genetic diseases—collectively impacting millions of patients worldwide—have been left behind.

A Collaborative Effort

Drs. Ahrens-Nicklas and Kiran Musunuru, the Barry J. Gertz Professor for Translational Research in Penn's Perelman School of Medicine, who are co-corresponding authors of the published report, began collaborating to study the feasibility of creating customized gene editing therapies for individual patients in 2023, building upon many years of research into rare metabolic disorders, as well as the feasibility of gene editing to treat patients. Both are members of the NIH-funded Somatic Cell Genome Editing Consortium, which supports collaborative genome editing research.

Drs. Ahrens-Nicklas and Musunuru decided to focus on urea cycle disorders. During the normal breakdown of proteins in the body, ammonia is naturally produced. Typically, our bodies know to convert the ammonia to urea and then excrete that urea through urination. However, a child with a urea cycle disorder lacks an enzyme in the liver needed to convert ammonia to urea. Ammonia then builds up to a toxic level, which can cause organ damage, particularly in the brain and the liver.

After years of preclinical research with similar disease-causing variants, Drs. Ahrens-Nicklas and Musunuru targeted KJ's specific variant of CPS1, identified soon after his birth. Within six months, their team designed and manufactured a base editing therapy delivered via lipid nanoparticles to the liver in order to correct KJ's faulty enzyme. In late February 2025, KJ received his first infusion of this experimental therapy, and since then, he has received follow-up doses in March and April 2025. In the newly-published *New England Journal of Medicine* paper, the researchers, along with

their academic and industry collaborators, describe the customized CRISPR gene editing therapy that was rigorously yet speedily developed for administration to KJ.

As of April 2025, KJ had received three doses of the therapy with no serious side effects. In the short time since treatment, he has tolerated increased dietary protein and needed less nitrogen scavenger medication. He also has been able to recover from certain typical childhood illnesses like rhinovirus without ammonia building up in his body. A longer follow-up is needed to fully evaluate the benefits of the therapy.

"While KJ will need to be monitored carefully for the rest of his life, our initial findings are quite promising," Dr. Ahrens-Nicklas said.

"We want each and every patient to have the potential to experience the same results we saw in this first patient, and we hope that other academic investigators will replicate this method for many rare diseases and give many patients a fair shot at living a healthy life," Dr. Musunuru said. "The promise of gene therapy that we've heard about for decades is coming to fruition, and it's going to utterly transform the way we approach medicine."

A Future for KJ

Typically, patients with CPS1 deficiency, like KJ, are treated with a liver transplant. However, for patients to receive a liver transplant, they need to be medically stable and old enough to handle such a major procedure. During that time, episodes of increased ammonia can put patients at risk for ongoing, lifelong neurologic damage or even prove fatal. Because of these threats to lifelong health, the researchers knew that finding new ways to treat patients who are too young and small to receive liver transplants would be life-changing for families whose children faced this disorder.

"We would do anything for our kids, so with KJ, we wanted to figure out how we were going to support him and how we were going to get him to the point where he can do all the things a normal kid should be able to do," his mother, Nicole Muldoon, said. "We thought it was our responsibility to help our child, so when the doctors came to us with their idea, we put our trust in them in the hopes that it could help not just KJ but other families in our position."

"We've been in the thick of this since KJ was born, and our whole world's been revolving around this little guy and his stay in the hospital," his father, Kyle Muldoon, said. "We're so excited to be able to finally be together at home so that KJ can be with his siblings, and we can finally take a deep breath."

This study was supported by grants from the National Institutes of Health Somatic Cell Genome Editing Program (U01TR005355, U19NS132301), as well as additional National Institutes of Health grants (R35HL145203, U19NS132303, DP2CA281401, P01HL142494). In-kind contributions were received from Acuitas Therapeutics, Integrated DNA Technologies, Aldevron, and Danaher Corporation. Additional funding was provided by the CHOP Research Institute's Gene Therapy for Inherited Metabolic Disorders Frontier Program.

Adapted from a [Penn Medicine article](#) by Matt Toal, May 15, 2025.



KJ smiling while in the hospital.

Medical Miracles at Penn Vet

State of the Art Care at Penn Vet's New Bolton Center Saves Kale the Goat

One March morning, while at work, Allyson Bloodgood checked the remote camera on her farm. What she saw made her stomach drop. One of her one-month-old goat kids, Cabbage, had collapsed.

She rushed home, loaded Cabbage and his brother Kale, as a companion, into the car. They headed straight to Penn Vet's New Bolton Center.

The brothers had a difficult start to life. Their mother died shortly after giving birth, and neither kid took well to the bottle. Ms. Bloodgood even bought another doe to adopt and feed them, but still, the little ones struggled. Nevertheless, she wasn't prepared to see Cabbage so ill.

"We made it to New Bolton Center," Ms. Bloodgood said. "Cabbage's care team did everything they could, but sadly, he passed shortly after we arrived. Thankfully, they also examined Kale, even though he looked fine. Turns out, he was headed toward critical condition as well."

The smaller, quieter Kale immediately became the focus of everyone's attention.

Unseen Dangers

Kale appeared healthy. He drank from a bottle and was alert and active. But point-of-care bloodwork told a different story.

"Kale's white blood cell count and blood sugar were low, both red flags in a neonate," said Kavita Shroff, an internal medicine resident at Penn Vet. "With young animals, even the smallest abnormalities can signal something serious, and time is of the essence—things can go downhill quickly."

The decreased white blood cells were concerning for a potential infection. Lungs, joints, and the gastrointestinal system and umbilicus are all places where infections can easily establish themselves in neonatal animals.

Kale was hospitalized and started on antibiotics. But, after a few days, his condition worsened even though follow-up blood work showed his white blood count had normalized.

"We conducted more diagnostics," said Joy Tomlinson, an assistant professor of large animal medicine.

Digestive Detour

An ultrasound revealed the cause of Kale's troubles: He was "rumen drinking."

Goats have four stomach compartments—rumen, reticulum, omasum, and abomasum. In young goats, milk normally bypasses the rumen and goes straight to the abomasum, where it can be properly digested. This happens through a reflex that closes the esophageal groove during feed-



Joy Tomlinson with Kale the goat.

ing. But when the groove fails to close—often due to illness or stress—milk enters the rumen instead, where it ferments and can cause serious complications.

"To stabilize Kale, we stopped all milk feedings and started total IV nutrition to deliver essential calories and nutrients directly into the bloodstream," said Dr. Tomlinson. "We also began pain medication and stomach protectants to treat suspected abomasal ulcers, likely triggered by stress."

But then another setback. Kale had a blood clot in his jugular vein. His care team quickly adjusted course, changing medications and starting anticoagulants.

Kale began to respond to treatment and slowly started to recover.

From Couch to Pasture

By early April, Kale was thriving. He went home more than twice the size he was on arrival.

"He lived with me inside the house at first," Ms. Bloodgood said. "But then he started showing that goat spirit and had to get back with the herd."

Today, Kale is outside with his friends, bounding through the pasture like a proper fainting goat. And Ms. Bloodgood is grateful to have access to specialized veterinary care.

Adapted from a [PennVet article](#) by Sacha Adorno, May 20, 2025.

Penn Vet and Penn Medicine Collaborate on Canine Brain Surgery Using Cutting-Edge Augmented Reality Technology



(Left to right:) Wojciech Panek, Erica and Michael Crotty with their dog Geddy Lee, and Tessa Arendt.

Geddy Lee has lived a big life for a little dog. As a puppy, the tiny terrier mix was abandoned in Mississippi during a high-speed car chase. Rescued by law enforcement, she found a loving home in Pennsylvania. Life was good—until last summer.

In August, Geddy Lee began having seizures, and her veterinarian referred the eight-year-old to Penn Vet for further evaluation. At Penn Vet's Ryan Hospital, Tessa Arendt, a specialty intern in neurology, and Wojciech Panek, an assistant professor of neurology and neurosurgery in

the department of clinical sciences and advanced medicine, performed a brain MRI, which revealed a right frontal lobe mass.

"An MRI doesn't always tell us exactly what we're dealing with, even though it allows us to see the tumor," said Dr. Panek. "Based on Geddy Lee's tumor imaging characteristics, we suspected a glioma—an aggressive brain tumor."

Gliomas affect both dogs and humans. In people, the most malignant type, glioblastoma, carries a life expectancy of approximately 15-18 months with surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy. Without aggressive treatment, dogs typically survive for about a few months.

Geddy Lee's owners, Michael and Erica Crotty, wanted to explore every option, including surgery. Surgery would also enable Dr. Panek to biopsy the tumor for a more exact diagnosis and to guide further therapeutic opportunities for Geddy Lee.

"It was amazing how much the team—all the doctors and nurses—rallied around her," said Mr. Crotty. "It was so impressive that they pulled out all the stops—Erica and I said, do whatever you can for our girl."

Geddy Lee's procedure took place in September. She arrived at Ryan Hospital on a Monday. A week later, she would leave as the first dog to undergo successful canine brain surgery using cutting-edge augmented reality technology combined with infrared real-time guided resection.

Her case required a highly specialized team, including a veterinary neurosurgeon, radiologist, anesthesiologist, pathologist, nurses, and operating room technicians.

Joining the Penn Vet experts was a renowned neurosurgeon and brain tumor specialist from Penn's Perelman School of Medicine: Presidential Associate Professor of Neurosurgery Nduka Amankulor, chief of neurosurgical oncology and director of the Penn Brain Tumor Center.

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Drs. Amankulor and Panek partnered on Geddy Lee's case, merging their world-class expertise in human and canine neurosurgery to push the boundaries of veterinary and human medicine.

"When I started at Penn, I approached Nduka because we face similar challenges," said Dr. Panek, who has shadowed his colleague in human surgeries.

Added Dr. Amankulor, "One of the things that's fascinating from a science perspective is that dogs develop brain tumors in a way that's similar to humans, and genetically, the distribution of brain tumors in dogs is identical to humans."

"This makes cases like Geddy Lee's incredibly valuable for both veterinary and human science to advance the care mutually," said Dr. Panek.

A Three-Pronged, Groundbreaking Approach

The primary goal of cancer excision—or debulking—surgery is to achieve "clean margins." Even the tiniest remnant of cancerous tissue can increase the risk of local recurrence and disease spread, but gliomas infiltrate healthy brain tissue, making it extremely difficult to distinguish the tumor border.

Geddy Lee's care team used a combination of advanced tools to ensure precise debulking.

"We combined several novel techniques to achieve the best possible tumor resection," said Dr. Panek. "This was a unique three-part approach."

A day before surgery, the pup received an injection of a special dye that glows under near-infrared light and accumulates in cancer cells. The imaging agent helps neurosurgeons better identify the limits of the glioma. Penn Vet's David Holt, a professor of surgery, developed this technique to remove mammary and lung tumors from dogs.

The next day, Geddy Lee was placed under general anesthesia. The team performed a modified trans-frontal craniotomy, opening her skull for access to the brain. They then used three critical tools for guidance.

First, the surgical team broke new ground by employing an immersive augmented reality neuro-navigational system called VisAR to obtain optimal access to the tumor.

Developed by Novarad, the technology is used in human medical procedures for its precision and accuracy. It's essentially, as Novarad describes it, "like a surgical GPS providing a road map to guide the surgeon through simple or complex surgeries."

"The technology created a hologram from Geddy Lee's initial MRI, which was really helpful for procedure planning and navigating hard-to-see areas," said Dr. Panek. By superimposing Geddy Lee's MRI images with anatomical accuracy onto the dog's skull, the surgeons were able to first biopsy and then debulk the tumor.

"Penn Vet was the first in the world to use this technology in a canine surgery," said Novarad CEO Wendell Gibby, the co-inventor of VisAR, who trained in neuroradiology at Penn Medicine. "Unlike traditional navigation, this system doesn't just project an image on a 2D screen—it places the surgeon inside a fully immersive, 3D anatomical space co-registered to the patient. You can see areas inside the patient that you can't see with the naked eye; hence augmented reality. The small footprint and lower cost mean that this technology can be widely used by veterinarians everywhere."

Next for Geddy Lee was infrared imaging: "We shined an infrared

camera on the brain, picking up the dye to map the tumor as we operated," said Dr. Panek.

"Because infrared imaging is still relatively new, we also integrated intraoperative ultrasound," he said. "This enabled us to see into the brain in real-time and confirm the infrared imaging was accurate and that we were removing the tumor to the best of our ability. The complex and delicate procedure took roughly five hours and was a success. Geddy Lee emerged from surgery unaware she had just made history."

"The way we approached her surgery highlights the value of state-of-the-art treatments that combine VisAR-guided biopsy and resection with infrared tumor imaging and complex genetic testing to guide the best next therapeutic steps," Dr. Panek continued.

The Penn Vet lab of Timour Baslan would then perform a whole genome sequencing of Geddy Lee's tumor.

"In veterinary medicine, the diagnostic process often ends after MRI imaging, and further treatment may be recommended based on those results alone. Many owners opt for radiation therapy or chemotherapy based on MRI findings, but without precise knowledge of the condition, these may not always be the best options."

The following day, Geddy Lee was awake and charming her care team.

Soon after, she was discharged with medication to manage inflammation and prevent seizures. Follow-up visits showed that she was healing well. During a March re-evaluation at Ryan Hospital, Drs. Panek and Arndt were happy to report that Geddy Lee showed no radiological signs of tumor regrowth. Even better was the biopsy result from the Baslan lab.

"Geddy Lee's genetic testing does not look like it is a glioma," said Dr. Panek. "This is great news for the Crottys!" And for Geddy Lee, who will forever be a veterinary pioneer.

"In human medicine, we often have clearer answers because of extensive research and data," said Dr. Panek. "But in veterinary medicine, we are still building our knowledge. Cases like Geddy Lee's help validate our approach and provide insights for future studies in dogs and humans."

For the Crottys, Geddy Lee's contribution to science is a value-add: "She's such a part of our family. There was never a question—we would do whatever it took to help her. And seeing her now, it was all worth it. She's been through so much, and she just keeps going. She really is a survivor. We'll always be grateful to the Ryan Hospital team. And we hope that research and technologies that come from Geddy Lee's surgery can help, even if in a small way, to treat brain cancer."

Another twist in Geddy Lee's story: she is named after the lead singer of the band Rush, whose bandmate Neil Peart passed away in 2020 from brain cancer.

And for Dr. Amankulor, the entire experience was more than a professional highlight; it was personal. His father also died of the disease, inspiring him to move the needle on research. And, as a dog owner himself, he felt a personal tug during Geddy Lee's surgery. "This was one of the most remarkable cases of my career," he said. "I was emotional when Geddy Lee woke up, knowing what she means to her family. And her case is the beginning of something remarkable for science. It's powerful, and we should all be proud of her contributions!"

Adapted from a [PennVet article](#) by Sacha Adorno, February 19, 2025.

Penn Medicine Surgeons Led Teams That Performed Historic Double Hand Transplant

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And less than a week after that, Dr. Levin received a video on his phone from Mr. Krizanac. It showed his patient using his phone with his new hand.

"That was really incredible ... to get that video," Dr. Levin said. "All the nights, all the rehearsals, all the anxiety, all the preparation—of course, it's worth it."

Dr. Levin emphasized that the outcome would not have been possible without the close collaboration with his Swiss colleagues—from Dr. Ganz's referral of Mr. Krizanac to Dr. Vögelin and her team's partnership, first for Mr. Krizanac's leg surgery, and continuing through his ongoing physical therapy and recovery.

In fact, Dr. Vögelin visited Philadelphia for two weeks while Mr. Krizanac was waiting, hoping the right donor would be found during that time. Having performed research in the field of VCA, the Swiss surgeon hoped to attend the complex surgery of bilateral forearm transplantation, she said. While she couldn't be at the surgery, she was grateful for the time spent in Philadelphia with Mr. Krizanac, his family, and the whole Penn team.

"Such international collaborations are very stimulating because of the exchange of knowledge in another environment," Dr. Vögelin said. Being in Philadelphia "also established a relationship of trust for an optimal aftercare in Switzerland."

Five months later, Mr. Krizanac leaned his head on his hand as he spoke—something he could never do with prosthetics. He could feel cold water on his hands. And he could almost put his jacket on without assistance. He continues to undergo several hours of physical and occupational therapy each week to practice using his new hands.

"He has waited so long for his 'new hands'—we experience his devotion and motivation towards his rehabilitation with every visit," Dr. Vögelin said, adding that Mr. Krizanac "has had an amazing recovery so far."

Over the next few years, his nerves and muscles will gradually regrow into the transplanted hands to give him more feeling and function. Mr. Krizanac knows he will achieve the independence he has longed for. For now, he said, resting his hand on his upper arm, "feeling full sensation, and just feeling fingers that are not made out of silicone, is still mind-blowing."

Adapted from a [Penn Medicine article](#) by Daphne Sashin, June 13, 2025.

Deaths

Thomas Childers, History

Thomas C. Childers, Jr., the Sheldon and Lucy Hackney Professor Emeritus in the department of history in the School of Arts & Sciences, died on November 7 after a long illness. He was 78.

Born in Cleveland, Tennessee, Dr. Childers grew up playing baseball, basketball, and football; he also tap danced, sang, and wrote articles for his grammar school newspaper. After graduating from high school, he spent a semester at Tennessee Tech. He soon transferred to the University of Tennessee in Knoxville after injuries sidelined his football career, and there, he turned to a new passion—history—under the mentorship of renowned history professor Arthur Haas.

After earning his bachelor's degree, Dr. Childers traveled to Germany to study at the Goethe Institute in Passau (and later returned to Mainz, Germany, in 1969 on a Fulbright Scholarship). While earning his master's degree at the University of Tennessee, he wrote his master's thesis on the Kreisau Circle, a group that met in secret to plan an assassination attempt on Adolf Hitler, and interviewed Countess Freya von Moltke and other prominent figures in the group. This thesis set Dr. Childers on a lifelong course of teaching and scholarship of the history of Germany, and particularly the rise of the Nazis and the Second World War. He then moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts, to earn a PhD at Harvard University in 1976, a process that was interrupted by service in the U.S. Army Ready Reserves during the Vietnam War.

In 1977, Dr. Childers joined Penn's School of Arts & Sciences as an assistant professor of history. In 1982, he became an associate professor, and four years later, a full professor. Dr. Childers served on Penn's University Council, and in 1987, he received the Ira Abrams Memorial Award for Distinguished Teaching in the Arts and Sciences (*Almanac* April 21, 1987). He also received the Richard S. Dunn Award for Distinguished Teaching in History (1999), the inaugural Senior Class Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching (2000), chosen by a popular vote of the graduating senior class, and the Spotlight on Teaching Award as the Best Lecturer in the Humanities (2004), selected by Penn's entire student body. In 2002, Dr. Childers was appointed to the Sheldon and Lucy Hackney Professorship in History (*Almanac* November 19, 2002). Dr. Childers retired from Penn in 2016.

During his time at Penn, Dr. Childers received numerous fellowships and awards, including the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung Research Grant, a fellowship in European Studies from the American Council of Learned Societies, and a West European Studies Research Grant from Harvard University. In addition to his teaching at Penn, Dr. Childers held visiting professorships at Trinity Hall College, Cambridge; Smith College; and Swarthmore College. He also lectured across the United

States and Europe. Dr. Childers wrote and edited several books, including *The Nazi Voter* (1983), *The Formation of the Nazi Constituency* (1987), *Reevaluating the Third Reich: New Controversies, New Interpretations* (1993), and *The Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany* (2017). He also wrote more broadly about the experiences of WWII soldiers, with *Wings of Morning: The Story of the Last American Bomber Shot Down Over Germany in World War II* (1995), *In the Shadows of War* (2003), and *Soldier from the War Returning: The Greatest Generation's Troubled Homecoming from World War* (2009) receiving wide acclaim for their sensitive depictions of the emotional tolls of war.

He is survived by his wife, Kristen; his son, Nicholas (Vanessa); his daughter, Ava (Tristan); and his sons, James and Timothy; his mother-in-law, Jean; and his granddaughters, Sophia and Claire.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the ACLU or the ASPCA.

Roger K. Raufer, City & Regional Planning

Roger K. Raufer, Gr'84, an adjunct professor of city & regional planning in Penn's School of Design (now the Weitzman School) and a lecturer in other departments around the University, including in computing, materials science & engineering, and legal studies & business ethics, died on August 2 after a battle with prostate cancer. He was 75.

Dr. Raufer earned a BS in chemical engineering from the Ohio University in 1971, then earned an MS in environmental engineering from the University of Cincinnati in 1974, an MA in political science from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 1980, and a PhD in energy management & policy from Penn in 1984. At Penn, he wrote one of the earliest doctoral dissertations about emissions trading, a field that formed the basis of his career.

From 1974 to 1981, Dr. Raufer was the manager of environmental services at ETA Engineering, Inc., in Westmont, Illinois, then came east to serve as vice president of environmental services at PMC, Inc. in Philadelphia. In 1990, he founded Raufer & Co, an independent consulting company based in the U.S. and Hong Kong. Under the auspices of Raufer & Co., he was an environmental project consultant for the U.N. & World Bank project and for other initiatives relating to air pollution policy, acid rain, and power plants.

During his five-decade career, Dr. Raufer blended his engineering expertise with policy insight to address energy and environmental challenges across the globe. He played key roles in developing pollution control strategies, including emissions trading systems that influenced the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. He authored two books about the role of emissions trading in environmental management, as well as numerous other peer-reviewed publications.

In addition to his consulting, Dr. Raufer held several academic positions, including at Penn. From 1984 to 2014, he served as an adjunct professor of city and regional planning in the School of Design and as a lecturer in computing (School of Arts & Sciences and the College of Liberal & Professional Studies), materials science and engineering (School of Engineering & Applied Science), and legal studies and business ethics (Wharton School).

He was also a visiting professor at the Institut Français du Pétrole Energies Nouvelles in Rueil-Malmaison, France and taught in the General Electric "Oil & Gas University" in Italy, Abu Dhabi, and Indonesia; the University of the West Indies in Jamaica; and various World Bank and UN training programs.

"To his students, hundreds of whom he kept in correspondence with, Professor Raufer was a supportive mentor and beloved teacher," said Dr. Raufer's family. "He was kind, funny, smart, and generous with his time and expertise."

Dr. Raufer was predeceased by his wife, Nicki. He is survived by his three daughters, Lisa Capasso (Armando); Jessica Travis (John Paul); Sarah Raufer; five grandchildren; and eight of his ten siblings.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to the Environmental Defense Fund, the Prostate Cancer Foundation, or your environmental charity of choice.

Call for Summer Camps and Programs

Almanac publishes a supplement early each year featuring the camps and programs being held at Penn next summer. It lists camps for children, teens, and young adults representing an array of activities, from academic enrichment—including anthropology, business, law, veterinary medicine, and music—to recreation and sports camps. To submit information about a camp, email almanac@upenn.edu with the following information:

- Name of camp
- Dates held (if multiple sessions, indicate dates for each)
- Age range for participants
- Short summary of the program
- Cost (note any scholarships, financial aid, or discounts)
- URL for enrollment/application forms
- Deadline to apply/enroll (if applicable)
- An email, link, and/or phone number to obtain more information.

If possible, please submit information by Tuesday, January 20, 2026.

Almanac Publication Schedule

This is the last issue of *Almanac* of the fall 2025 semester. The first issue of the spring 2026 semester will be published on January 13, 2026.

Send news stories, honors, obituaries, policies, bulletins, events, and other pieces to almanac@upenn.edu by January 5, 2026 for inclusion in that issue.



Thomas Childers



Roger Raufer

**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 **December 1-7, 2025**. The crime reports are available at: <https://almanac.upenn.edu/sections/crimes>. Prior weeks' reports are also online. –Eds.

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

1-7, 2025. The Penn Police actively patrol from Market Street to Baltimore Avenue and from 30th Street to 43rd Street in conjunction with the Philadelphia Police.

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

Penn Police Patrol Zone

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

Crime Category	Date	Time	Location	Description
<i>Assault</i>	12/07/25	9:31 PM	100 S 40th St	Offender detained for threatening complainant
<i>Auto Theft</i>	12/01/25	7:00 PM	100 S 40th St	Theft of a secured electric bicycle from highway
	12/03/25	11:33 AM	3900 Walnut St	Theft of an unsecured electric bicycle from sidewalk
	12/03/25	3:09 PM	233 S 33rd St	Theft of an unsecured motorized scooter
	12/03/25	3:10 PM	3800 Locust Walk	Theft of a secured e-bike from bike rack
	12/04/25	10:11 AM	4101 Walnut St	Multiple electric scooters were reported stolen from building's common area
	12/06/25	3:49 PM	100 S 40th St	Theft of an unsecured electric bicycle from sidewalk
<i>Bike Theft</i>	12/04/25	7:45 PM	3900 Walnut St	Theft of an unattended bicycle
<i>Disorderly Conduct</i>	12/05/25	5:08 PM	201 S 40th St	Disorderly conduct on highway/Arrest
	12/05/25	10:40 PM	4002 Market St	Offender failed to comply with police during a vandalism investigation/Arrest
	12/06/25	5:38 PM	3744 Spruce St	Offender behaved in a disorderly manner and refused to leave/Arrest
<i>Other Offense</i>	12/05/25	8:15 PM	3700 Spruce St	Threats by an unknown offender through social media messages
<i>Retail Theft</i>	12/01/25	1:48 AM	3744 Spruce St	Retail theft of consumable goods
	12/02/25	12:42 AM	3604 Chestnut St	Retail theft of consumable goods
	12/03/25	1:59 PM	4233 Chestnut St	Retail theft of alcohol
	12/04/25	11:09 AM	3604 Chestnut St	Retail theft of consumable goods; offenders fled area
	12/04/25	12:44 PM	3604 Chestnut St	Retail theft of consumable goods; offenders fled area
	12/05/25	1:11 AM	3744 Spruce St	Retail theft of consumable goods/Arrest
	12/06/25	6:30 AM	3604 Chestnut St	Retail theft of consumable goods
<i>Robbery</i>	12/07/25	7:47 PM	3900 Walnut St	Strongarm robbery of grocery products/Arrest
<i>Theft from Building</i>	12/01/25	3:16 PM	3400 Spruce St	Theft of cash from unattended purse in observation room
	12/01/25	4:55 PM	3417 Spruce St	Theft of an unattended bag from cafeteria area
	12/02/25	11:57 PM	51 N 39th St	Unsecured purse taken from nurse's station
	12/04/25	8:34 AM	51 N 39th St	Theft of prescription glasses from complainant's workstation
	12/04/25	7:10 PM	3401 Grays Ferry Ave	Unauthorized transactions on credit cards
	12/05/25	1:34 PM	4039 Chestnut St	Theft of a package containing a cell phone from lobby
	12/05/25	6:48 PM	4200 Ludlow St	Theft of a package containing perfume from lobby area
	12/06/25	1:33 PM	4125 Chestnut St	Theft of a package from apartment building lobby
<i>Theft from Vehicle</i>	12/05/25	1:35 PM	3900 Pine St	Theft of a catalytic converter from parked vehicle
<i>Theft Other</i>	12/01/25	7:01 PM	4042-4044 Chestnut St	Theft of a package from porch
	12/02/25	2:31 PM	3720 Chestnut St	Wallet taken from backpack
	12/02/25	3:12 PM	3419 Walnut St	Theft of a wallet from backpack
<i>Vandalism</i>	12/01/25	9:42 PM	3400 Civic Center Blvd	Offender shattered a glass door with a rock/Arrest
	12/04/25	5:14 PM	3700 Locust Walk	Vandalism to outdoor Christmas lights

Philadelphia Police 18th District

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

Below are the crimes against persons from the 18th District: 7 incidents were reported for **December 1-7, 2025** 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>	12/05/25	11:14 PM	4002 Market St
	12/06/25	3:11 AM	4640 Walnut St
<i>Assault</i>	12/01/25	10:02 PM	S 46th & Market Sts
	12/02/25	1:17 PM	S 43rd & Walnut Sts
	12/04/25	4:03 PM	4228 Walnut St
	12/05/25	8:59 PM	3700 Blk Spruce St
	12/05/25	11:31 PM	4002 Market 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.)

Honors & Other Things

ICA and WXPN Awarded Project Grants and Sosena Solomon a Fellowship in the Arts from the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage

The University of Pennsylvania's Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA) and WXPN radio station have received Pew creative project grants. Additionally, filmmaker Sosena Solomon, who teaches in the department of cinema and media studies in the School of Arts & Sciences, has been awarded a 2025 Pew Fellowship in the Arts.

The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage has announced \$8.6 million awarded through 44 grants to Philadelphia-area cultural institutions and artists. This year's 32 creative project grants total more than \$7.3 million that supports cultural experiences across the greater Philadelphia region. The Pew Fellowship in the Arts awards 12 local artists an annual grant of \$85,000 in unrestricted funds, as well as professional advancement resources such as financial counseling, workshops, and opportunities to participate in artist residency programs.

The ICA has been awarded \$360,000 to support *Blackwater Creature* (working title), the first museum survey of artist Allison Janae Hamilton, which will be on view in the spring of 2027. Curated by Hallie Ringle, ICA's Brett Sundheim Chief Curator, the exhibition will debut new work that explores Black southern domestic life, land stewardship, displacement, and ecological change. Ms. Hamilton's practice spans sculpture, film, photography, and immersive installation, drawing on the mythic and material landscapes of the American South to examine memory, identity, and community. The award will support newly commissioned works, the artist's first catalog, and community-centered programs that connect these themes with the histories and lived experiences in Philadelphia.

WXPN has been awarded \$323,460 for the project *Declarations of Independents: Philly Anthems*. As part of that project, musicians from Philadelphia will share their perspectives on America's founding document in a multifaceted project honoring the country's semiquincentennial (250th anniversary). Featuring newly commissioned songs by established artists—including Eric Bazilian (the Hooters), Devon Gilfillian, and Eliza Hardy Jones (the War On Drugs)—a songwriting challenge for emerging artists, workshops, live performances, and a vinyl LP, the project offers contemporary reflections on the concept of independence. The project is one of numerous events, exhibitions, and initiatives planned throughout 2026 that will mark the anniversary through the initiative America 250 at Penn.

Dr. Solomon was awarded one of 12 arts fellowships by the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage. Through a combination of film, installation, and archival methods, she seeks to document and reimagine the complex experiences

of African communities undergoing transition. Foregrounding personal narratives, her work explores culture and identity—as seen in projects like a permanent 12-part film installation for the Metropolitan Museum of Art that highlights major cultural landmarks across sub-Saharan Africa and the caretakers who preserve them. Dr. Solomon will teach the courses Documentary Ethnography for Museum of Exhibition Practices and Intro to Media Production at Penn this spring.

Deep Jariwala: 2026 Optica Fellow

Deep Jariwala, an associate professor and the Peter and Susanne Armstrong Distinguished Scholar in Electrical and Systems Engineering in Penn Engineering, has been elected to the 2026 class of Optica Fellows, a distinction granted to no more than 10 percent of the society's membership and reserved for researchers who have made outstanding contributions to the fields of optics and photonics.

Dr. Jariwala is being honored "for his important contributions to understanding light-matter interactions in quantum-confined materials and pioneering excitonic metamaterials."

"Being a fellow of Optica means a lot to me," said Dr. Jariwala. "I entered the field of optics and photonics quite late in my research career, but was accepted into the community with open arms, and they have been supporting the work my team has done over the past seven to eight years."

"I have a lot of people to thank for this accomplishment, most importantly, my students and postdocs who believed in our ideas and worked hard to accomplish them," he continued. "I also want to thank my mentors and supporters over the years, and specifically my colleagues Nader Engheta and Cherie Kagan, who have been very inspirational and supportive of my group's research in the optics and photonics domain."

At Penn Engineering, Dr. Jariwala's research explores how light behaves when it interacts with materials that are only a few atoms thick. In these extremely small spaces—known as quantum-confined environments—electrons move differently, allowing light to be controlled in new ways. His group designs materials in which light and matter interact so strongly that they behave almost like coupled pairs, called "excitons," which can be engineered to guide, absorb or emit light with exceptional efficiency.

Dr. Jariwala's work helps to answer questions of how devices like phone cameras, solar cells or optical communication systems can be made smaller, faster and more energy efficient. By developing new "metamaterials" that manipulate light beyond what natural materials can do, his research opens pathways to technologies that are thinner, brighter, and more powerful than what is currently possible.

Antonio Loquercio: 2025 ISSNAF Young Investigator Mario Gerla Award

On November 6, the Italian Scientists and Scholars in North America Foundation (ISSNAF) held its annual event at the Embassy of Italy in Washington, D.C., welcoming ambassador Marco Peronaci, along with representatives from major Italian institutions. The gathering highlighted the finalists for the foundation's five 2025 Young Investigator Awards and culminated in the announcement of this year's distinguished award recipients.

Antonio Loquercio, an assistant professor in electrical systems and engineering and in computer and information science in Penn Engineering, was awarded the 2025 ISSNAF Young Investigator Mario Gerla Award for his research in "enhancing the performance of complex robotic systems by focusing on the pivotal role of perception in building effective world models for decision-making." The award, established in memory of the late Mario Gerla, a pioneer of computer networking and a founding member of ISSNAF, acknowledges early-career researchers who are making transformative advances in computer science.

"I've always felt that the fusion of Italian and American culture—something this award celebrates—is at the heart of my work," said Dr. Loquercio. "The dedication to excellence and creativity that is alive in Italian culture shapes the problems I choose to pursue, and the hard work and resilience at the forefront of American culture helps me refine ideas and turn abstract concepts into concrete solutions."

In his work, *Rethinking the Role of Perception for Decision Making*, Dr. Loquercio investigates how even relatively simple perceptual and dynamical models can enable highly agile robotic systems, such as demonstrating agile drone flight, and explores how robots can refine their world models from their own sensor data to make better decisions.

The award honors Dr. Loquercio's research at Penn Engineering, which pushes the boundaries of physical intelligence and the ability of robots to truly understand and react to the world around them. With a goal of establishing robotic agile autonomy, Dr. Loquercio builds robots that rely solely on their onboard sensors and processors to move with remarkable speed, precision and adaptability. Whether navigating demanding environments or performing high-stakes maneuvers, these systems perceive and act in a tightly integrated way. By uniting advances in computer vision and artificial intelligence, Dr. Loquercio is creating robots that don't only follow instructions, but also learn, respond and thrive in dynamic, real-world conditions.

"I deeply believe in the potential of my research to lead to meaningful real-world impact, even as that path is still unfolding," he said. "This award motivates me to keep pushing my work



Sosena Solomon



Deep Jariwala



Antonio Loquercio

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forward and to navigate challenges with determination.”

Dr. Loquercio earned his PhD and master's degrees from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich (ETH) and the University of Zurich. His past honors include the ETH Medal, the Georges Giralt PhD Award, and best-paper recognitions at top conferences like the Conference of Robotic Learning and Robotics: *Science and Systems*.

Penn Carey Law 2025-2026 International Visiting Professors

The University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School welcomes six international visiting professors to campus this academic year:

- Katya Zakharov-Assaf: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel Exchange Professor (Spring 2026)
- Megan Davis: Bok Visiting International Professor (Fall 2025)
- Wojciech Sadurski: Bok Visiting International Professor (Spring 2026)
- Chaim Saiman: Gruss Visiting Professor of Talmudic Civil Law (Spring 2026)
- Shen Wei: Bok Visiting International Professor (Fall 2025)
- Michal Bar-Asher Siegal: Gruss Visiting Professor of Talmudic Civil Law (Fall 2025)

Bok Visiting International Professors (VIPs) are distinguished senior academics, jurists, or professionals from a wide range of disciplines and specialties. Nominated by Penn Carey Law faculty, each visitor spends their time on campus teaching a course, conducting a faculty seminar, and participating in University-wide activities related to their field.

The Gruss Visiting Professorship of Talmudic Civil Law was established in 1987 by Joseph Gruss, and it supports the annual Caroline Zelaznik & Joseph S. Gruss Lecture in Talmudic Civil Law.

Additionally, the faculty exchange component of a program enacted in 2019 by Penn Carey Law and the Faculty of Law at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem permits faculty members of both institutions to teach as visiting professors.

Flavia Teles: American Academy of Periodontology 2025 Clinical Research Award

Flavia Teles, a professor in the department of basic & translational sciences in Penn Dental Medicine, has been honored for her periodontal research as the recipient of the American Academy of Periodontology (AAP)'s 2025 Clinical Research Award.

The award is presented for the most outstanding published work each year that offers direct clinical relevance in periodontics, presenting innovative insights that can be readily applied by practitioners in the evaluation and management of periodontal diseases.

Dr. Teles was recognized as lead author of the paper, *Salivary and Serum Inflammatory Biomarkers During Periodontitis Progression and After Treatment*.

The innovative insight of the study is the identification and validation of certain biomarkers that correlate with the progression of periodontitis and reflect the effectiveness of treatment. These findings offer practitioners:

- *Objective diagnostic tools:* The potential for more objective measures of disease status beyond traditional clinical assessments.
- *Predictive capabilities:* The ability to potentially predict disease progression in individual patients.
- *Personalized treatment monitoring:* A way to monitor patient response to therapy at a molecular level, allowing for more personalized care plans.

Dr. Teles's multidisciplinary program is redefining oral health through the convergence of microbiology, immunology, informatics, and clinical innovation—promising earlier detection, personalized treatment, and improved outcomes for patients worldwide. Dr. Teles is also a core faculty member of the Center for Innovation & Precision Dentistry (CiPD), a joint institute with Penn's School of Engineering & Applied Science, where she is developing innovative approaches to predict periodontal diseases using artificial intelligence and machine learning-guided data integration.

Dr. Teles leads a world-class research program focused on the oral microbiome, particularly the characterization of dysbiosis, a key event in periodontitis pathogenesis that is poorly defined and understood. Using cutting-edge omics techniques, her lab aims to define the molecular markers of periodontitis progression that precede clinically detectable disease, so that less invasive treatment can be provided and more effective preventive strategies can be devised.

"I am absolutely honored to have received this award," said Dr. Teles. "It means so much to me to be recognized by the AAP for our clinical translational work. Further, to realize that my own mentor, Sig Socransky, received the same award in 2003, made this recognition even more special."

Adelaide Lyall and Norah Rami: 2026 Marshall Scholars

University of Pennsylvania graduate student Adelaide Lyall and senior Norah Rami have been chosen as 2026 Marshall Scholars. Established by the British government, the Marshall Scholarship funds as much as three years of study for a graduate degree in any field in an institution in the United Kingdom.

Ms. Lyall and Ms. Rami are among the 43 Marshall Scholars for 2026 representing 31 institutions in the United States chosen from 1,023 applicants. Meant to strengthen U.S.-U.K. relations, the competitive scholarship is offered to



Adelaide Lyall



Norah Rami

winners based on academic merit, leadership, and ambassadorial potential.

Ms. Lyall, from Saco, Maine, is a graduate student in the School of Social Policy & Practice studying social policy. She is also a 2025 graduate of the College of Arts & Sciences and majored in sociology with a minor in Hispanic studies. Ms. Lyall interned at the National Consumer Law Center, American Civil Liberties Union, and Terrance Lewis Liberation Foundation. She volunteers for the Youth Advocacy Project at Penn Carey Law and worked as a writing tutor at the Marks Family Writing Center. As an undergraduate, she was recognized as a Dean's Scholar, a Benjamin Franklin Scholar, and an Andrea Mitchell Center Undergraduate Research Fellow.

Her senior thesis, *"We Left a Great Life": African Immigrant Incorporation in Maine*, analyzing the experiences of African asylum seekers, won the E. Digby Baltzell Award for the Outstanding Senior Thesis in Sociology. With the Marshall Scholarship, Ms. Lyall will pursue master's degrees in data and artificial intelligence ethics and digital sociology at the University of Edinburgh. After returning to the U.S., she plans to pursue a law degree.

Ms. Rami, from Sugar Land, Texas, is studying English and political science in the College of Arts & Sciences, with concentrations in literary theory and political theory and a minor in history. She is editor-in-chief of *34th Street Magazine*, and her writing has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Chalkbeat*, *Teen Vogue*, *The Philadelphia Citizen*, and other outlets; her reporting on the Supreme Court was featured on NPR's *Here and Now*. Ms. Rami works as a tutor at the Marks Family Writing Center, is vice president of Pi Sigma Alpha, is a University Scholar, and serves as a mentor with PEER.

She has contributed to projects at the Penn Computational Social Science Lab and was a board member of Penn Mock Trial. As a Pulitzer Center for Crisis Reporting Campus Fellow, Ms. Rami reported on literary markets in India. With the Marshall Scholarship, Ms. Rami will spend a year studying media governance at the London School of Economics and then complete an MPhil in sociolegal research at the University of Oxford.

Ms. Lyall and Ms. Rami applied for the Marshall Scholarship with assistance from the Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships. They are the 28th and 29th Marshall Scholars from Penn since the scholarship's inception in 1953 and among 15 Penn affiliates chosen in the last eight consecutive years.

Commonwealth Appropriation to Penn Vet for FY 2025-2026

On November 19, 2025, Governor Josh Shapiro signed into law House Bill 1421, the non-preferred legislation appropriating funds in Fiscal Year 2025-2026 to Pennsylvania's state-aided institutions of higher education. Now Act 11A of 2025, the legislation appropriates \$33.353 million to the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. A week earlier, on November 12, Governor Shapiro signed the general appropriations bill (Senate Bill 160) into law as Act 1A of 2025. It appropriates \$250,000 to the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency for search and rescue training through Penn Vet's Working Dog Center, as well as \$11.35 million to the Animal Health and Diagnostic Commission (AHDC). One-half of the AHDC appropriation is directed to the Pennsylvania Animal Diagnostic Laboratory System site at Penn Vet's New Bolton Center campus.

Steven A. Lipman, C'71: \$3 Million Request to Penn Libraries

(continued from page 1)

(Rick) Beeman, continued to make an impact at Penn decades later. "Having been able to work with each of them, I can understand how the experience was so powerful for Steve," he said. As Mr. Lipman described his time at Penn, "the story was the archetype of what we imagine a young man who's exploring the world through getting a liberal arts education ought to be."

Mr. Okrent will oversee the purchase of resources via the Steven A. Lipman Fund for Truth and Democracy, which Mr. Lipman created to provide databases, news subscriptions, and collections that enhance research and education in the department of history. The fund aligns with the libraries' commitment to develop global citizens and foster critical thinking skills students need to navigate and shape the future. It also echoes Penn's dedication to driving conversations about democracy, trust, and truth on campus and in the wider world.

The final focus area for the gift is the Steven A. Lipman Fund for Community Engagement, which supports resource sharing, library collection development, and storytelling initiatives led by the Penn Libraries Community Engagement team in Philadelphia public elementary and high schools. When Mr. Chez visited the Penn Libraries on Mr. Lipman's behalf last year, he had the opportunity to visit a local high school whose library had just reopened thanks in part to a partnership with the Community Engagement team.

Throughout his life as a proud Penn alumnus and later as a donor to the Penn Libraries, Mr. Lipman eschewed publicity; but as a close friend, Mr. Chez is thrilled by the opportunity to share his legacy as a supporter of the Penn Libraries and the department of history. He hopes Mr. Lipman's generosity will inspire fellow alumni as much as it has himself.

Mr. Lipman's gifts also inspire Mr. Okrent's continued work with faculty and students. "I've been fortunate to work with large segments of the university, which is always extraordinarily rewarding," Mr. Okrent said. "I spend a lot of time working directly with individual patrons and classes to help them make sense of the enormous number of resources that are available. The fact that Steve had this experience at Penn and that he felt like the best way to give back was by supporting the mission of the Penn Libraries is very moving."

Adapted from a [Penn Libraries news release](#), October 6, 2025.

2025–2026 Winter Break Operations and Services

Arthur Ross Gallery: Closed December 25-26 and January 1-2. Open normal hours December 20-21 and 27-31 and January 3-4. Open December 24 with a 5 p.m. closing time. *Postigo Express* exhibition on display through January 4.

Hospitality Services: Closed December 25-January 4. Re-opens January 5 at 9 a.m. Info: www.upenn.edu/hospitalityservices.

Houston Hall and Irvine Auditorium: Info: <https://spaceandevents.universitylife.upenn.edu/#hours>.

Off Campus Services: Closed starting December 25. Re-opens January 5 at 9 a.m. Info: www.upenn.edu/offcampusservices.

Hilton Inn at Penn: Open and operating on a regular schedule. Info: www.theinnatpenn.com.

LUCY (SEPTA Loop Through University City): Not operating Saturdays and Sundays or December 25 or January 1.

Sheraton Philadelphia University City Hotel: Open and operating on a regular schedule. Info: <http://www.philadelphiasheraton.com/>.

Morris Arboretum & Gardens: Open to the public daily 10 a.m.–4 p.m.; Last entry is 3 p.m. Closed December 24, December 25, December 31, and January 1. Info: www.morrisarboretum.org.

Penn Admissions: Closed December 24-January 2. During this time, staff will only be reachable via email and will not be available over the phone. The Admissions Visitor Center closed to the public at 5 p.m. ET on December 10 and will reopen with regular hours on January 14.

Penn Bookstore: Open 10 a.m.–5 p.m. from December 24 to December 31, but closed December 25 and January 1. Open 10 a.m.–5 p.m. from January 2-4. Normal operating hours resume January 5. Info: www.upenn.edu/bookstore.

PennCard Center: Closed December 24-January 4. Reopens at 8:30 a.m. on January 5. To report a lost or stolen PennCard when the PennCard Center is closed, please call Penn Public Safety at (215) 573-3333. Info: www.upenn.edu/penncard

Penn Homeownership Services: Closed December 25-January 4. Reopens at 8:30 a.m. on January 5. Info: www.upenn.edu/homeownership.

Penn Ice Rink at the Class of 1923 Arena: Closed December 24, 25, and 31 and January 1. Check public skating and freestyle sessions at www.upenn.edu/icerink.

Penn Live Arts Box Office: Closed December 24-January 4. Reopens on January 5 with normal business hours.

Penn Museum: Closed December 24-25 and December 31-January 1. Closed on Mondays.

Residential Services Offices: Closed December 25-January 4. Re-opens January 5. Info: www.upenn.edu/housing.

CHAS and Residential Services: Building access will require a valid PennCard and is restricted to residents and authorized staff. Access to Gutmann, Radian, Mayer, Harnwell, Harrison, and Rodin will be restricted to only those residents who have registered with Residential Services as staying in the building during the break. PennCard access for live-in faculty or staff will not change. Residential Services, College Houses, Public Safety and Facilities Services staff will also have PennCard access. Allied Universal security staff will visually check PennCards at the building entrances as they monitor swipe access. Information Center and residential mail and package operations will be available in these buildings on a limited basis; hours are posted at www.upenn.edu/housing. Facilities issues in a residence hall during the break should be reported directly to Facilities Services at (215) 898-7208. During the break, the front desks of open buildings will be staffed around the clock. Additionally, a housing manager on duty may be reached in an emergency by calling the Harnwell Information Center at (215) 898-6873. Complete information can be found at <http://www.upenn.edu/housing>.

Penn Dining: Dining cafés will be open through December 18. All cafés will be closed from December 19-January 4. Cafés will begin to re-open with limited hours/locations on January 5. All-you-care-to-eat cafés will begin to re-open with limited hours/locations on January 5. A complete list of Winter Break hours for all residential and retail dining facilities is posted [here](#).

Penn Mail Services: Closed December 25 and January 1 with regular schedules resuming January 5. Important information regarding delivery times, services, and limitations over special winter break, including a required form for requesting departmental mail delivery during that time, is available by clicking on the [Special Winter Break Mail Form](#). The form is required to receive delivery.

Penn Parking Services: The Parking Office closes on December 24 at 5 p.m. and reopens on January 5 at 8:30 a.m. Permit holders will always have access to their garages during Winter Break. Contact the Operations Office at (215) 898-6933 should you require operational assistance to access your parking garage during this period. From December 24 through January 2 (excluding December 25 and January 1, when all parking garages are closed), Chestnut 34 and Walnut 40 parking garages will be open for visitor parking from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Regular hours resume on January 3, 2026.

Penn Transit Services: Closes December 24 at 6 p.m.; regular hours resume on January 3 at 6 p.m. Limited transportation service is available from December 25 to January 2, 6 p.m.–7 a.m., excluding December 31. Request service on PennTransit Mobile or call 215-898-RIDE (7433). Info: www.upenn.edu/PennTransit.

Penn Children's Center: Closed for services from December 25 through January 4. Reopens on January 5.

Student Health Services: Info: <https://wellness.upenn.edu/winter-break-hours>.

Van Pelt-Dietrich Library: Info: <https://www.library.upenn.edu/about/hours/vp>.

From the Division of Public Safety

Winter Safety Resources

The Division of Public Safety is committed to the safety and well-being of the Penn and West Philadelphia communities which we serve. Know that DPS maintains the same staffing level of police and security officers throughout the winter break. If you should have any concerns or see someone exhibiting suspicious behavior, call the PennComm Emergency Communications Center at (215) 573-3333.

We are here for you 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call any time.

Special Property Checks: We offer our special property checks for residents in our patrol zone during the winter break. Under the special checks program, DPS officers check the exterior of registered properties for signs of safety or security breaches. This free program is available to all residents in the Penn patrol zone (the area from 30th Street to 43rd Street and from Baltimore Avenue to Market Street).

Walking Escort Program: Walking escorts are an excellent resource for Penn and the local community. Uniformed Allied Universal public safety officers provide free walking escorts, available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Escort services also extend west to 50th Street and north/south from Spring Garden Street to Woodland Avenue between 10 a.m. and 3 a.m. via the University's partnership with the University City District Ambassador Program. Again, anyone in the community can use these services, regardless of whether they have a PennCard.

Request a Walking Escort:

- Ask any Public Safety Officer on patrol or inside a building.
- Call (215) 898-WALK (9255) or 511 from any campus phone.

Use building and blue-light emergency phones located on and off Penn's campus.

Also, we offer special walk backs during reading days and finals at Van Pelt Library. A Public Safety Officer will be posted at the "Split Button" on Woodland Walk from 10 p.m. until 3 a.m. from December 9-18, 2025. Approximately every half hour, the officer will enter Van Pelt-Dietrich Library to offer walking escorts to anyone in the building. The officer will then perform the escort and return to repeat the process.

Walk/Ride/Drive Safe: As the winter months and shorter days arrive, remember to stay safe when traveling on the streets, whether you walk, ride a bike or scooter, or drive a car. Drivers are reminded to turn on vehicle headlights at dusk and be vigilant in watching for cyclists and pedestrians.

While it is never the fault of the victim/survivor of a crime, there are specific patterns of criminal activity that we are mindful of during the winter holiday season. Consider these steps you can take to empower and protect yourself as you travel near and far:

- **Package Theft:** Avoid package theft—have a plan. Arrange to be home for delivery or have your packages delivered to a secure location.
- **Theft of an Occupied Vehicle:** Also known as carjacking, these thefts are often crimes of opportunity. Be mindful in situations when entering and exiting your vehicle, while parking (look for well-lit areas), and when encountering double-parked vehicles or faked car accidents (fender-benders).
- **Pedestrian Safety:** There have been some reported instances throughout University City and other areas of the city in which groups of unsupervised juveniles have committed harassment or robberies against passersby. Stay alert to your surroundings and avoid walking alone. Call Penn Police if you witness suspicious behavior or unusual congregation of adolescents.
- **Phone and Email Fraud:** Fraud attempts may spike during the holiday season. As you filter your email and phone calls, remember that legitimate businesses and government agencies would never solicit/initiate account administration activities or ask you to provide confidential information or money via phone or email. As a reminder, malicious and misleading emails, also called "phishing" emails, are the number one way that cyber-criminals begin their attacks. Even if unsure, please call us immediately at (215) 573-3333 if you think you may have experienced such an encounter.

Awareness

- Stay alert and be aware of individuals who may be shadowing you as you travel.
- Stay off your cell phone when shopping and keep it out of view.
- Familiarize yourself with your surroundings (location, garages, parking lots, etc).
- If you encounter someone aggressively asking for money, do not engage with them; walk away—go into a business or other safe place.
- If you feel that you are being followed, walk towards a well-lit, populated area.

Shopping

- Limit the amount of cash you carry while shopping.
- Carry purses close to your body and place wallets in an inside pocket.
- Take a family member or friend with you as you conduct your holiday shopping.

Vehicles

- Have keys ready as you approach your vehicle.
- Place all packages out of view and secure them in the trunk.
- Lock the doors as soon as you get into your vehicle.

Wishing you a happy holiday season and a restful and restorative winter break.

—Division of Public Safety

Update

December AT PENN

FITNESS AND LEARNING

College of Liberal & Professional Studies

Online webinars. Info and to register: <https://www.lps.upenn.edu/about/events>.

16 *Global Master of Public Administration Virtual Information Sessions*; noon.

17 *Global Master of Public Administration Virtual Information Session*; noon.

Post-Graduate Perspectives: From Stage to Scholarship; noon.

Graduate School of Education

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

18 *Financing Your Doctorate in Higher Education Management, EdD Virtual Information Session*; 2 p.m.

TALKS

17 *Global Perspectives on Medicine, Rehab, and Robots*; panel of speakers; 10 a.m.; Zoom webinar; register: <https://tinyurl.com/global-health-talk-dec-17> (Global Health).

Causal Inference Methods for Treatment Effect Heterogeneity in Trials and Observational Studies; Zhe Chen, biostatistics, epidemiology & informatics; 2 p.m.; Zoom webinar; join: <https://pennmedicine.zoom.us/j/98976330974> (Center for Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics).

This is an update to the [December AT PENN calendar](#), which is online now. The January AT PENN calendar appears in this issue. To submit events for future AT PENN calendars or weekly updates, email almanac@upenn.edu.

Almanac

3910 Chestnut Street, 2nd floor
Philadelphia, PA 19104-3111
Phone: (215) 898-5274 or 5275
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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New HIV Mapping Tool Helps Public Health Workers Track and Predict HIV Outbreaks

While effective prevention and treatment for HIV exist, rates of HIV infections in the United States are still concerning, and public health officials are always looking for more effective ways to monitor and curtail the spread of the virus. A new tool, CyberGIS-HIV, created by researchers at the Social Action Lab at the University of Pennsylvania in collaboration with the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, could help them achieve that goal.

Annenberg School for Communication researchers Dolores Albarracín, the Amy Gutmann Penn Integrates Knowledge University Professor and director of the Social Action Lab; Sally Chan, an associate research professor, and Bita Fayaz-Farkhad, an assistant research professor, have spent years developing methods to gauge accessibility to HIV testing, treatment, and prevention services. CyberGIS-HIV is a predictive modeling tool that allows users to view HIV data on an interactive map, compare different years side by side, and model future scenarios. For example, users can simulate how different policy actions, such as doubling community mental health centers, doubling linkage to HIV care, or reducing opioid prescriptions by 50%, might affect HIV rates through 2026. The goal is to provide health departments with a clearer picture of which policies to prioritize.

“The prevalence and incidence of HIV infections in the United States remain troubling and inequitable despite the availability of successful biomedical interventions,” Dr. Chan explains. “Some of the challenges we face, like delays in surveillance data or limited access to prevention and care, might have been avoided if officials had better forecasting tools that model specific policy actions, like increasing PrEP use. CyberGIS-HIV was designed to meet that need.”

In a recent article published in the *American Journal of Public Health*, the researchers asked over 40 state and federal public health officials to test CyberGIS-HIV against the forecasting methods they currently use. Participants rated the tool more highly for both ease of use and its potential to improve public health planning, the researchers found.

“Estimating HIV cases is critical for monitoring the spread of the virus, planning screening programs, and evaluating prevention efforts,” said Dr. Chan. “To date, however, existing methods involve spreadsheets and, occasionally, heat maps of regional epidemiology in addition to informal knowledge of the area in question and insights from community partners.”

The researchers plan to disseminate CyberGIS-HIV at public health conferences, journals, and Centers for AIDS Research to ensure that it remains accessible to researchers and public health officials at no cost. The tool will also be disseminated by the Penn Center for AIDS Research (CFAR).

“By putting complex HIV data into an accessible, visual format, CyberGIS-HIV will help officials not only see the present reality of HIV but also anticipate what might happen next given their policy decisions,” Dr. Albarracín said. “By doing so, we can support stronger prevention efforts and ultimately save lives.”

Adapted from an [Annenberg School press release](#), December 2, 2025.

Doctoral Student Leads Groundbreaking Research on Why Students Leave Community College

When doctoral candidate Estefanie Aguilar Padilla joined Penn GSE’s higher education PhD program, she set out to understand the challenges that prevent students from persevering in college. And now, she has been part of new research, guided by associate professor Rachel Baker, that offers insights into why so many students—roughly 40%—leave community college before finishing their course of study.

Aguilar Padilla, a fourth-year PhD student and first-generation college graduate, has long been passionate about equity in education. “Higher education has made a big difference in my own life,” she said. “That experience broadly motivated my interest in studying the barriers students face when trying to pursue and persist in college.”

Her latest project, part of a larger study led by Dr. Baker and the Community College Research Center (CCRC) focused on how students choose programs of study and careers, zeroes in on students who left community college after their first year. While financial challenges have long been cited as a major factor, this new work uncovers a more complex reality—one that could reshape how colleges support students.

Based on a survey of 480 former students who attended one of four community colleges in California, Maryland, Ohio, or Texas, the results, published as a report from the CCRC, challenge conventional wisdom. While financial strain was a factor for many who dropped out, it was seldom the only one. “Students rarely leave college for a single reason,” Ms. Aguilar Padilla said. “For most, it was compounding varied reasons—many of which colleges can address.”

Among the most striking findings: a significant number of students cit-

ed low academic self-efficacy, such as feeling unsuccessful academically, stress, and changes in career goals as reasons for leaving. These patterns suggest that interventions focused solely on financial aid may miss other critical supports students need. “If schools could address the fact that these students were also feeling unsuccessful academically, feeling stressed out, feeling out of the community, could that be a protective factor and lead many students to stay enrolled?” asked Dr. Baker.

According to her advisor, Ms. Aguilar Padilla played a pivotal role in the study. While she wasn’t part of the original study design, she co-lead the drafting of survey questions aimed at former students, conducted a thorough review of the related literature, and was a key member of the team in recruiting students to fill out their survey.

Ms. Aguilar Padilla, a Penn IES predoctoral fellow, Presidential Fellow, and Fontaine Fellow, is now preparing her dissertation proposal, which will build on this research by examining how first-year experiences predict persistence among community college students. She is also working on additional papers and helping the team collect more data to understand what former students are doing now—and what might help them return to college.

The implications of this research are already resonating with college administrators, said Dr. Baker. A recent webinar on the larger study drew record attendance, signaling strong interest in strategies to better serve students who leave college.

Adapted from a [Penn GSE press release](#), December 4, 2025.

Improving Treatment for ITP—an Autoimmune Disorder

More than half of patients in a Phase III clinical trial who received a limited course of the experimental monoclonal antibody ivalumab for primary immune thrombocytopenia (ITP), an autoimmune disorder that can cause life-threatening bleeding, were able to maintain safe platelet counts without serious bleeding episodes for at least one year. The results were published on December 9 in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, conducted and written by researchers from the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, and presented by collaborators at the 67th American Society of Hematology (ASH) Annual Meeting and Exposition Orlando, Florida.

ITP is an autoimmune condition where the body’s immune cells mistakenly attack platelets, the blood cells responsible for clotting. It affects about 50,000 people in the U.S. and can be diagnosed at any age. ITP is associated with abnormal bleeding from the skin and mucous membranes—including nosebleeds, gum bleeding, and/or heavy menstruation—that can be severe when platelet counts are particularly low. ITP also contributes to easy bruising and fatigue.

“As a hematologist, I’m glad that we have effective therapies for ITP, but they’re not necessarily ideal for chronic disease management or long-term quality of life,” said lead author Adam Cuker, section chief of hematology and clinical director of the Penn Blood Disorders Center. “This study shows that prolonged, durable responses to ITP treatment, without the need for ongoing therapy, are possible—and that’s a huge advantage for patients.”

The double-blind, multicenter clinical trial (called the VAYHIT2 study) randomized 152 adult patients with ITP to three arms: a higher-dose of ivalumab (50 patients), a lower-dose of ivalumab (51 patients), or a placebo (51 patients). Ivalumab works by targeting the B-cell-activating factor (BAFF) receptor, resulting in a depletion of autoreactive B cells that are responsible for the anti-platelet antibodies that cause ITP. Patients were eligible for the study if they had already experienced a relapse after steroids or if their ITP did not respond to treatment with steroids. Ivalumab was given intravenously once a month for four months, and because it takes time to start working, all patients also received eltrombopag, one of the pills currently approved for second-line treatment. Eltrombopag is normally taken indefinitely but was intended to be tapered off and stopped for this study.

The study measured “time to treatment failure,” defined as a low platelet count, the need for additional ITP therapy, inability to taper or discontinue eltrombopag, or death. The estimated probability of avoiding treatment failure at 12 months was 54.2 percent in the high-dose arm and 50.5 percent in the low-dose arm, versus only 30 percent of patients in the placebo arm. Additionally, when platelet counts were measured at six months (two months after the last dose of ivalumab), 62 percent of patients in the high-dose treatment arm had stable platelet counts, versus only 39.2 percent of patients in the placebo arm.

“We’re looking forward to seeing if the treatment-free responses in this study extend out even further,” Dr. Cuker said. “Improving the long-term reality of living with ITP is not something we’ve been able to think about before. The goal has always been to improve platelet counts or reduce the risk of bleeding, but this research is ushering in a new era of hope.”

Adapted from a [Penn Medicine press release](#) by Meagan Raeke, December 9, 2025.