$3 Million Grant from the Gray Foundation to Katherine Nathanson at the Abramson Cancer Center

Katherine L. Nathanson, deputy director of the Abramson Cancer Center at the University of Pennsylvania and the Pearl Basser Professor for BRCA-Related Research in Penn’s Perelman School of Medicine, has been awarded a $3 million research grant from the Gray Foundation. This new Team Science Grant, “Determinants of immune activity and molecular features in BRCA1/2 mutation carriers,” will support Dr. Nathanson and her team as they study new approaches to understanding immune function both in healthy BRCA mutation carriers and BRCA-related cancers. It is one of seven teams to receive a Team Science Grant nationally, with the Gray Foundation awarding $25 million total.

The Team Science Grant will support two lines of Dr. Nathanson’s research. First, she and her team will investigate the immune systems of healthy individuals with BRCA1/2 mutations, using the flu vaccine, to see if there are differences in the way in which their immune systems respond to the vaccine. They will also investigate the immune systems of those with normal breast health to determine whether there are differences between mutation and non-mutation carriers. Second, they will work with BRCA1/2-related breast cancers to determine if the molecular features are linked to immunogenicity, building upon Dr. Nathanson’s prior studies.

E. John Wherry, director of Penn’s Institute for Immunology, and Marylyn D. Ritchie, director of Penn’s Center for Translational Bioinformatics, are part of Dr. Nathanson’s research team. That group also extends beyond Philadelphia and the United States to include Antonis Antoniou from the University of Cambridge and Georgia Chenexiv-Trench from the Queensland Institute for Medical Research. Roger Greenberg, director of Basic Science at the Basser Center for BRCA, along with the grant’s principal investigator, Patrick Sung of the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, were awarded $3.75 million for their research, “Dissection of BRCA-mediated Tumor Suppression Pathways.” Susan Domchek, executive director of the Basser Center for BRCA, and Ronny Drapkin, director of gynecological research at the Basser Center for BRCA, along with the grant’s principal investigator, Victor Velculescu of Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, were awarded $3.75 million for their research, “Early detection of cancer in high-risk BRCA mutation carriers using liquid biopsies.” Additional teams are led by researchers from Harvard University, Cornell University, and the Cleveland Clinic.

The lifetime risk of female breast cancer is up to 75 percent in the setting of a BRCA1/2 mutation. The lifetime risks of ovarian cancer and prostate cancer are 50 percent and 25 percent, respectively.

“It’s a serious concern for many individuals,” said Dr. Nathanson.

Heather Andrea Williams: Geraldine R. Segal Professor in American Social Thought

Heather Andrea Williams, professor of Africana studies, has been named Geraldine R. Segal Professor in American Social Thought. An internationally recognized historian, Dr. Williams was a Presidential Professor from 2014 until this year. Her research focuses on slavery and African American history in the 18th- and 19th-century American South. Her book Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom has won many prizes and awards, including the Lillian Smith Book Award of the Southern Regional Council and the American Educational Research Association New Scholar’s Book Award.

Dr. Williams has also completed a Mellon New Directions Fellowship to train herself to be a documentary filmmaker. She is working on a documentary film called Jamaican Journeys, based on interviews with Jamaicans who migrated to the United States in the 1950s and ’60s, in addition to her new monograph, Murder on the Plantation: Violence in the Ante-Bellum South, which is focused on criminal cases involving enslaved people. Dr. Williams served as undergraduate and graduate chair of Africana Studies from 2016 to 2019.

The late Bernard (C’28, L’31, Hon’69) and Geraldine (Ed’30, Gr’78) Segal created the Geraldine R. Segal Professorship in American Social Thought in 1978 when she completed her PhD in sociology at Penn. She was the author of In Any Fight Some Fall and Blocks in the Law, Bernard Segal, a former University Trustee and the former president of the American Bar Association, was one of America’s most respected lawyers and received Penn’s Alumni Award of Merit in 1977. The professorship is interdisciplinary in nature and awarded to a scholar of national reputation whose central interests include human rights, civil liberties and race relations.
Deaths

Ruth McCorkle, Nursing
Margaret Ruth (“Ruth”) McCorkle, professor emerita of nursing at the University of Pennsylvania’s School of Nursing and a pioneer in cancer nursing education, prevention and cancer-control research, died in her Connecticut home on August 17. She was 79.

Dr. McCorkle was born in Johnson City, Tennessee. Prior to entering the world of academia, she served in the US Air Force Nurse Corps, helping mortally wounded soldiers transition from battlefields in Vietnam. This experience led her to study at St. Christopher’s Hospice in London and later to co-found the Hospice of Seattle and the Northwest Regional Oncology Society, culminating in the development of the Symptom Distress Scale and the Enforced Social Dependency Scale, both groundbreaking measures in psychosocial oncology.

She received a bachelor’s degree in nursing from the University of Maryland and a master’s in medical-surgical nursing from the University of Iowa. She earned her doctorate in mass communications from the University of Iowa.

Dr. McCorkle joined the faculty at Penn in 1986. In addition to teaching oncology nursing, she was director of Cancer Control at Penn’s Cancer Comprehensive Center and director of the Nursing School’s Center for Advancing Care in Serious Illness. She also held various leadership roles in the school, including director of the master’s oncology program and chair of the adult health and illness division. She retired from Penn in 1998, earning emerita status at that time. She went on to take a position at Yale School of Nursing where, most recently, she was the Florence Schorske Wald Emerita Professor of Nursing and Professor of Epidemiology.

Her work also led to many firsts, including appointments as the first research chair of the Oncology Nursing Society and first non-medical scientist to be designated as a program director of a pre and postdoctoral training grant from the National Institutes of Health. She also served on the boards of the Oncology Nursing Society and the International Society of Nurses in Cancer Care. She was a member of numerous study sections of the National Cancer Institute and the National Institute of Nursing Research.

Dr. McCorkle was elected to the National Academy of Medicine in 1990, and she received numerous other honors, including Book of the Year Award for Cancer Nursing from the American Journal of Nursing, a Distinguished Merit Award from the International Society of Nurses in Cancer Care and a Distinguished Research Award from the Oncology Nursing Society. She was named the Nurse Scientist of the Year by the Council of Nurse Researchers of the American Nurses Association. In 2014, she was inducted to the Sigma Theta Tau International Hall of Fame, and in 2018 she was designated a Living Legend by the American Academy of Nursing. A prolific writer, her work appears in many professional journals in the US and abroad.

Dr. McCorkle was also well-known for humanizing the face of cancer care. According to Penn Nursing Dean Antonia Villarruel, “For those of us who knew her here at Penn, we also remember well her fun-loving and generous spirit as she was at the forefront of special events and activities, donning costumes at Halloween, decorating her office and being first in line to sign up for the Penn Nursing softball team. And, as part of the American Cancer Society Daffodil Days, an annual fundraiser, Dr. McCorkle would purchase yellow daffodils for every member of the School’s staff and personally deliver them around the School!”

Dr. McCorkle is survived by six children; a granddaughter; one sister; three nieces; and countless protégés.

Paul Messaris Memorial
On Friday, September 6, there will be a memorial at the Annenberg School for Paul Messaris, the Lev Kuleshov Emeritus Professor of Communication in Penn’s Annenberg School of Communication, who died last year (Almanac January 8, 2019). The Memorial will be held 4-5:30 p.m., followed by a reception until 6:30 p.m. Please RSVP at www.asc.upenn.edu/messaris

The event will also be livestreamed at www.asc.upenn.edu/live

$3 Million Grant from the Gray Foundation
(continued from page 1)

especially those in the Ashkenazi Jewish population who are more likely to carry a BRCA1/2 mutation than the general public,” said Dr. Nathanson. “But I’m truly encouraged by the brilliance, compassion and research that is going into the care of these patients.”

Dr. Nathanson is an international leader in cancer genetics and genomics and is lauded for her clinical and research work in a multidisciplinary Breast Care Center. As the Gray Foundation’s Basser Center for BRCA at Penn Medicine’s Abramson Cancer Center, the Basser Center for BRCA was named after Mindy’s sister, Faith Basser, who at age 44 passed away from a BRCA-related ovarian cancer. The Grays have given a total of $55 million to the Basser Center. The couple has also continued supporting projects around the world aimed at preventing the molecular changes in cells that lead to cancer, extending educational resources to at-risk populations and understanding racial disparities in BRCA mutations and associated cancers.

Almanac appreciates being informed of the deaths of current and former faculty and staff members, students and other members of the University community. Call (215) 898-5274 or email almanac@upenn.edu.

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

To Report A Death

Faculty Senate Executive Meetings 2019-2020

Senate Executive Meetings are held 3-5 p.m. on Wednesdays.
September 4, room 205, College Hall
For the Agenda, see Almanac August 27.
October through April: Meyern Conference Room (2nd floor), Van Pelt Library
October 16, 2019
November 20, 2019
December 11, 2019
January 22, 2020
February 12, 2020
March 18, 2020
April 15, 2020
May 13, 2020, room 205, College Hall

From the Office of the University Secretary

University Council Meeting Agenda
Wednesday, September 11
4 p.m., Bodek Lounge, Houston Hall
I. Welcome. 1 minute
II. Appointment of a Moderator. 1 minute
III. Appointment of Appointee for a Parliamentarian. 1 minute
IV. Approval of the minutes of April 24, 2019. 2 minutes
V. Follow-up comments or questions on Status Reports. 5 minutes
VI. Presentation and scheduling of Focus Issues for the academic year. 5 minutes
VII. Presentation of the Council committee charges. 10 minutes
VIII. Timing and format of Open Forum sessions. 5 minutes
IX. Presentation on academic theme year programming: The Year of Data. 15 minutes
X. New business. 5 minutes
XI. Adjournment.

University Council Meetings 2019-2020

Wednesday, 4-6 p.m.
Bodek Lounge, Houston Hall
September 11, 2019
October 3, 2019
October 23, 2019
January 22, 2020
February 19, 2020
March 25, 2020
April 22, 2020

WXPN Policy Board Meeting: September 18
The next open session meeting of the WXPN Policy Board will take place Wednesday, September 18 at noon at WXPN. For more information, call (215) 898-0628 during business hours.

University of Pennsylvania Trustees September 26 Meetings
The University of Pennsylvania’s Board of Trustees will meet on Thursday, September 26, at Bodek Lounge, Houston Hall:
Budget & Finance Committee Meeting, 9:30-11:05 a.m.
Executive Committee, 1:45-1:55 p.m.
Send your meeting attendance plans to Antoine Jones at jonesan@upenn.edu

Accessing Almanac Online
Subscribe now to Express Almanac (http://www.upenn.edu/almanac/express.html) to receive each Tuesday’s issue in your inbox before it reaches your desk.
Breaking news will be posted in the Almanac Between Issues section of the Almanac website and sent out to Express Almanac subscribers.
Ravi Radhakrishnan: PICS Director

Ravi Radhakrishnan, professor in the departments of bioengineering and chemical and biomolecular engineering at Penn SEAS, has been named the director of the Penn Institute for Computational Science (PICS).

PICS is a cross-disciplinary institute for the advancement, integration and support of Penn research via the tools and techniques of high-performance computing. It promotes research through a regular seminar series, an annual conference, by hosting joint research projects and through researcher and student training.

PICS also enables computational science research by providing an ongoing series of short technical “how to” workshops or bootcamps for Penn researchers and graduate students.

Dr. Radhakrishnan’s research interests lie at the interface of chemical physics and molecular biology. He graduated from the Indian Institute of Technology in 1995 and earned his PhD from Cornell University in 2001. He is a member of the Penn Center for Molecular Discovery and the Center for Engineering Cells and Regeneration.

Mark Yim and CJ Taylor: Director and Deputy Director of GRASP Lab

Mark Yim, a professor in the department of mechanical engineering and applied mechanics at Penn SEAS, has been named director of Penn Engineering’s GRASP Lab. CJ Taylor, a professor in the department of computer and information science, will serve in the deputy director position.

The GRASP Lab is an interdisciplinary research center now entering its 40th year of working to revolutionize robotics. A large part of the GRASP Lab’s work centers around making robots better at sensing and perceiving their surroundings to improve their reactivity, teaching them to adapt to a wide range of environments. Drs. Yim and Taylor are cornerstone members of the GRASP Lab, having a long history of impressive work in robotics.

App to Access Penn Transit Services

Penn Transit is pleased to announce the introduction of a new mobile application that allows riders to request a ride on one of the University’s shuttle services from their mobile devices as well as obtain real-time information about the fixed-route vehicle schedules.

Similar to popular rideshare apps like Uber and Lyft, PennRides on Request is a downloadable app and is now available on the App Store and Google Play to members of the Penn community. This convenient new app allows passengers using Penn Transit’s on-demand shuttle services to:

• Request a ride immediately or schedule a ride in advance (A minimum of two hours ahead of time is necessary and a request can be placed up to seven days in advance);

• Receive estimated arrival times for their rides that can be followed on the app;

• Get a digital push notification when the driver has arrived at the pick-up location; and,

• Ensure that an ADA-accessible vehicle is assigned to any passenger request that requires accommodation for a wheelchair.

The PennRides on Request app also offers users the ability to toggle to PennRides on Route, Penn Transit’s fixed-route, live-map service that features Penn Bus and Penn FMC Shuttle, along with information about Loop Around University City (LUCY®) and the Walking Escort Program. Riders can now choose the mode of transportation that is most appropriate for their travels to, from and around campus, all from within the rideshare app.

You may download the free app using your PennKey and password. To use the new mobile app for either of the University’s on-demand transit shuttle services, it is no longer necessary to call (215) 898-RIDE/7422 to ask for a ride, although that option remains available. When using the app for travel to and from campus, shuttle passengers may only be picked-up and dropped-off at designated campus locations, which are conveniently listed in the mobile app. Shuttles and buses will continue to operate within designated boundaries and current operational hours.

The application’s minimum operating system requirements for Apple mobile devices is 9.0 and Droid users will need at least Android Version 5.1 to experience the app’s complete capabilities. Additionally, it’s recommended that app users be sure to review their mobile device settings to accept push notifications.

More information about PennRides on Request, PennRides on Route, and the full complement of the University’s bus and shuttle services is available at www.upenn.edu/PennTransit/appinformation

Ravi Radhakrishnan

Ravi Radhakrishnan

Mark Yim

Mark Yim

Batsirai Bvunzawabaya: CAPS Associate Director for Outreach and Prevention

Batsirai Bvunzawabaya

CJ Taylor

Batsirai Bvunzawabaya

CJ Taylor

App to Access Penn Transit Services

PennRides on Request

PennRides on Route

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ALMANAC September 3, 2019 www.upenn.edu/almanac 3
The Opening Convocation for Penn's 2,400 students in the Class of 2023 and 115 transfer students was held on Blanche P. Levy Park and College Hall Green on August 26, 2019. The evening began with the processional, led by Penn's new Vice President and Secretary of the University Medha Narvekar, who carried the University Mace. Penn's Chaplain Charles Howard gave the Invocation which invoked "a freedom of mind, freedom of spirit and a freedom of heart that will endure." Dean of Admissions Eric Furda presented the Class of 2023 to President Amy Gutmann, who welcomed the new students to the Penn community. Provost Wendell Pritchett urged them to be fearless. The Penn Band, Countertop and the Glee Club provided musical interludes between the speeches.

Expanding Your Orbit
President Amy Gutmann

Members of the Class of 2023: You have arrived!
Transfer Students: You made the right call!
You come from all 50 states, Washington, DC, and 79 countries around the globe. The sheer diversity you represent is nearly impossible to capture in words.

But this is Penn, so we will attempt it anyway.
On the count of three, together, I want you to shout out your home state or country. Ready? One, two, three!
I don’t think I heard everyone. Let’s try it one more time. One, two, three! Good!
I welcome you all to the Penn family. I also congratulate you on the journey you made to arrive right here.

For most of you, the journey began in 2001, the year you were born. People say it was the year that changed everything. If that is true, then I say you are the Class that can transform anything.

In coming to Penn, you’ve arrived at the very best place in the world to do exactly that. Here, together, you will have profound opportunities to dig deeply, explore boldly and deploy your creativity to maximum effect.

Consider this the official launch date for the next stage in your journey.
Let’s call it 2021: A Penn Odyssey.
And trust me when I tell you: It’s going to be out of this world.
To maximize your Penn odyssey, I challenge you first, foremost and every day to do one thing:
Expand your orbit.
This year is the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 mission that put the first person on the Moon. Neil Armstrong stepped out on the lunar landscape and said, “That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.”
It’s a line we know by heart. Here’s something we can all take to heart: Penn alumni helped put the first person on the Moon. Neil graduates helped run the Kennedy Space Center and engineer the rocket technology that powered the Apollo program.

In my lifetime, the Moon landing was a defining achievement. In your lifetime, it may very well be Mars.

And Penn people will make that possible as well, people such as Elon Musk, the Penn alum whose SpaceX program is transforming how we journey to the stars. Penn faculty are investigating how the human body can better cope with space travel. And Penn undergraduates just like you intern at NASA every year. Our Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships—which we call CURF—can connect you with many such opportunities.

But space exploration is just one possibility. Expanding your orbit at Penn involves any field and every endeavor.

For instance, who here is a movie fan? I’m a huge movie buff myself, and I wonder: Who went to the theater this summer to see Avengers: Endgame?
I guessed you might—after all, it is the highest grossing film of all time. What you might not know is that both Avengers: Infinity War and Endgame were co-directed by none other than a Penn grad.

That’s right: Anthony Russo graduated from the College in 1992 with a degree in English.
It just goes to show you: To do something out of this world at Penn, you don’t have to major in physics.
Expanding your orbit goes well beyond your major. It means growing your understanding of service, citizenship and—most importantly—your wellbeing.
To help you do this, I encourage you to pursue an exciting new certificate program that we’ll launch this spring called Paideia. It means educating the whole person. The idea comes from the ancient past, but Penn’s Paideia is updated and innovated for modern times—like a form of time travel. Think of it as Benjamin Franklin meets Back to the Future.

In everything you undertake at Penn, from coursework to citizenship, the secret to success is to expand your orbit.
And since there’s no time like the present, I propose we start right now.
Please stand up. Go ahead, stretch your legs.

The very first step in expanding your orbit is reaching out to somebody new. So look around and choose somebody you haven’t met before. When I give the word, go say hi. Shake hands and share a quick fact about yourself.

Ok everyone, go for it! Come on now, no exceptions. Not even me! OK, great! Please have a seat. I see plenty of smiles, so I declare your first launch a success!

Today, you officially join a Penn line of explorers stretching back nearly three centuries.
Benjamin Franklin; eight signers of the Declaration of Independence; nine signers of the US Constitution; and nearly 320,000 Penn alumni currently living around the world: Past and present, it’s the most passionately engaged network of leaders and innovators anywhere.

They have all expanded their orbits through Penn. The results are often transformational. This I know not just as Penn’s president but also as a fellow explorer.

Not long ago, I asked Jonathan Moreno, who is one of our Penn Integrates Knowledge University Professors, to partner with me on a new book about bioethics. The book is intended to help all of us better navigate the hot-button medical issues of our time. It’s called Everybody Wants to Go to Heaven But Nobody Wants to Die.

Now, Professor Moreno and I had worked together on President Obama’s bioethics commission, but we have diverse backgrounds. I’m a political scientist, and he’s an expert in the history of medicine and health policy. I thought that by expanding our orbits together, the book would be better than if we had written it solo.

Luckily for me, Professor Moreno agreed. Writing a book is super exciting, but it’s also hard work and long hours. I won’t go into detail about our many months of collaboration, except to offer you this: Insomnia Cookies makes home deliveries til 3 a.m. every night! This may be the tastiest piece of information in your entire orientation. You heard it here first!

The outcome of our teamwork is far more than a book. It is a case study for what we at Penn do every day, and it’s what makes Penn such a powerful force in all our lives and for new knowledge and good in the world.
Together, we forge deep and long-lasting relationships; we reach across diverse perspectives and disciplines; and we build community.
As you embark on your Penn odyssey, you join a remarkable University that’s committed to helping each and every one of you work together, discover together, and have fun together.
Most of all, every day, in countless ways, we will expand our orbits—together.
It’s going to be a blast!
Welcome to Penn!
As Provost—Penn’s Chief Academic Officer—it’s my great pleasure to welcome you this evening. Convocation marks the first time you’re assembled together, as a class; it’s a Penn tradition that dates back, at least formally, to 1910. Penn has changed, a lot, since then. The Class of 1914 didn’t look much like your class; they didn’t have the same diverse backgrounds; they weren’t from across the country and around the world; and they didn’t have the diversity of goals that you do.

But—and this is just a guess—sitting here that evening, their thoughts were probably not that much different than yours: I got this! Or: maybe I don’t got this. They were excited and uncertain about the future. Uncertainty, excitement—even fear—are natural emotions when confronting the unknown. Maybe you felt them when you wobbled unsteadily on your first bike ride; or when you peered over the steering wheel that first time; or when you first faced the SAT.

Penn is a new place, and college is a new stage of life for you. All those emotions are in play tonight. Yes, even fear. But my message to you this evening is to be fearless in shaping the future. I’m deferring to you when you first faced the SAT.

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In the recent Spring 2019 cycle of Penn’s internally-funded University Research Foundation, URF Conference and Impact Seminar Support (noted with *), the Office of the Vice Provost for Research has announced awards to the following members of the faculty for the projects listed below.

Spring 2019: University Research Foundation Awards

Jaimo Ahn, PSOM, Characterization of a critical bone progenitor population in the aging skeleton
Masoud Akbarzadeh, Weitzman, High-performance compression-only modular hollow glass structures: innovative engineering and use of material for ultra-transparent long-span structures
Paulo Arratia, SEAS, High-Throughput Microfluidic Device for Precision-Targeted Multi-genetic Functional Genomics
Roberto Bonasio, PSOM, Regulation of social behavior by oxytocin in ants
*Kathleen Brown, SAS, The Penn & Slavery Project Campus Tour: Reimagining Penn’s History through Augmented Reality
Sanjeev Chawla, PSOM, Ultrahigh-field MR Imaging Identification of IDH Mutant Glioma Patients with Poor Prognosis
*Karen Deitelson, SAS, Early Modern European Woman Philosophers
Nathaniel Dyment, PSOM, Defining the functional role of a unique cell population during tendon fibrillogenesis
Christopher Favilla, PSOM, Personalized Patient and Caregiver Education after Stroke
*Roquinaldo Ferreira, SAS, Empire, Sovereignty, and Labor in the Age of Global Abolition
Marc Fuccillo, PSOM, Bridging the gap between synaptic and network dysfunction in mouse neuropsychiatric disease models
Vivian Gadsten, GSE, Building Evidence-based Data Models for Philadelphia to Enhance Child, Family and Community School Readiness
Juan Sebastian Gil Riano, SAS, Redeeming Race?: Anti-Racist Science and Postcolonial Development in the Twentieth Century
*Glenda Goodman, SAS, American Contact: Intercultural Encounter and the History of the Book
*Anna Kashina, SVM, Posttranslational Biology Symposium
*David Kazanjian, SAS, New Directions in Armenian Studies
Daeyoon Lee, SEAS, Anti-Fouling and Self-Cleaning Hollow Fiber Ceramic Membranes for Solar Desalination
*Marc Meredith, SAS, 2019 Election Sciences, Reform and Administration (ESRA) conference
*Projit Mukharji, SAS, Collaborative Pedagogies in the Global History of Science
*Rahul Mukherjee, SAS, Elemental Archives: Environmental Research in Documentaries
*Kavindra Nath, PSOM, Optimization of Therapeutic response in Metastatic-Castration-Resistant Prostate Cancer
Amy Offner, SAS, The Disappearing Worker
*Donovan Schafer, SAS, Material Secularisms
*Howard Stevenson, GSE, When “other” becomes “self”. Virtual reality’s role in reducing implicit racism and fostering positive attitude and helping behaviors towards African American Youth
Alan Stolker, SAS, Understanding visual working memory formation
Julia Verkholyantsev, SAS, Medieval Etymology and the Writing of History, Monograph
*Jeremy Wang, SVM, Penn Vet SCS Transplantation 25th Anniversary Symposium
Doug Wiebe, PSOM, Refraining Injury as a Biopsychosocial Disease to “Stop it, Fix it, and Live on”
*Dagmawi Woubshet, SAS, The Legacy of 1619: The 2019 Annual Callaloo Conference
Richard Zettler, SAS, Building a Regional Chronology: Excavations at Gird-i Dashi in the Soran District, Iraqi Kurdistan

The University Research Foundation (URF) is now accepting applications for the 5 p.m. October 18 deadline. The URF is an intramural program that provides four funding mechanisms: Research and Conference Support, Impact Seminar Grants and Research Opportunity Development Grants.

University Research Foundation: October 18

URF Research Grants and Conference Support provides up to $50,000 in project support and up to $3,000 for conference support. Its objectives are to:
- help junior faculty undertake pilot projects that will enable them to successfully apply for extramural sources of funding and aid in establishing their careers as independent investigators;
- help established faculty perform novel, pioneering research to determine project feasibility and develop preliminary data to support extramural grant applications;
- provide support in disciplines where extramural support is difficult to obtain and where significant research can be facilitated with internal funding; and
- provide limited institutional matching funds that are required as part of a successful external peer-reviewed application.

URF Impact Seminar Grants will make awards up to $20,000 for support for a cross-school, cross-disciplinary large scale event to be held on Penn’s campus within a year of the award. Funding for this award can be used to augment an already scheduled University event. The event—which can be a symposium, forum or conference—should occur over one to two days and be open to the entire Penn community. It should highlight the scholarship of Penn faculty and bring distinguished scholars to Penn’s campus, with a particular focus on the University’s distinguishing strength in integrating knowledge. Documented school and/or department matching dollar for dollar funds are required.

URF Research Opportunity Development Grants (RODG)
The Research Opportunity Grant program (Phase 1 and Phase 2) was designed to facilitate the intersection of the forward trajectory of Penn’s research frontiers with the trajectory of the national and global research priorities. RODG Applications should map on to emerging research areas with new opportunities for support. Awards from these programs should be used to develop preliminary information and data for new applications in these emerging research areas. The two programs are described below.

Research Opportunity Development Grants: Phase 1
With an identified new research area in mind, Phase 1 grants enable a team to articulate the research focus, map Penn’s intellectual assets in the new area, coalesce the appropriate group of scholars, identify Penn’s potential contributions in the area in the context of national and international research initiatives and identify a funding target. Typically a Phase 1 proposal would lead to a Phase 2 application. In addition, special attention will be paid to project proposals that include mentorship of Penn undergraduates. Applications up to $10,000 will be considered.

Research Opportunity Development Grants: Phase 2
Phase 2 grants offer extensive support for up to two years to enable specific outcomes in support of a center or group proposal to an external funding organization. Applicants are required to identify their future funding opportunity targets in the research proposal. Activities include research workshops, preliminary studies, networking in the relevant research community, etc. Specific outcomes are expected. Documented matching department and/or school funds will be considered positively. In addition, special attention will be paid to project proposals that include mentorship of Penn undergraduates. Applications with requests between $50,000 to $200,000 will be considered.

Note that Phase 2 grants are not intended to support the development of proposals that respond to regular solicitations such as those for NIH RO1 grants or NSF Division programs. Applicants must identify a target of opportunity.

Disciplines for all award programs: Biomedical Sciences, Humanities, Natural Sciences and Engineering, Social Science and Management.

Undergraduate Participation: As part of the University’s commitment to providing research opportunities to scholars across our campus community, URF applicants are encouraged to include undergraduate student participants within the framework of their proposals.

Budget: Each URF program has separate budget requirements.

Eligibility for all award programs: Eligibility is limited to Penn assistant, associate and full professors, in any track. Instructors and research associates must provide a letter from their department chair establishing that the applicant will receive an appointment as an assistant professor by the time of the award. Adjunct and emeritus faculty are not eligible to apply. Only one application per PI per cycle. Awards must be expended on University of Pennsylvania facilities, equipment and/or associated University technical staff and undergraduate students.

Detailed information including application materials can be found at https://research.upenn.edu/funding/university-research-foundation/grant-guidelines/
The Pennsylvania Game Commission and Penn Vet: Establishing a Partnership—New Wildlife Health Program

Chronic wasting disease continues to spread to new parts of Pennsylvania, infecting and killing deer and threatening hunting tradition. West Nile virus has left Pennsylvania’s state bird, the ruffed grouse, with an uncertain future. At no time in history has disease posed more problems for wildlife and its conservation. And that’s why a new partnership between the Pennsylvania Wildlife Game Commission and the University of Pennsylvania’s School of Veterinary Medicine (Penn Vet) has formed to address those problems head-on.

Penn Vet and the Game Commission announced the Pennsylvania Wildlife Futures Program, a new science-based, wildlife health program that will increase disease surveillance, management and research to better protect wildlife across the Commonwealth.

For hunters who submit samples from deer they harvest for chronic wasting disease (CWD) testing, the partnership will provide much faster turnaround for test results—about seven to 10 days as opposed to weeks or sometimes months—as well as the ability to track test results online. But there are broader benefits as well.

The Pennsylvania Wildlife Futures Program will dedicate 12 employees, one of them working full-time out of the Game Commission’s Harrisburg headquarters, to addressing wildlife diseases. Not only will that allow for more thorough disease documentation, research and management, it will allow agency biologists to spend less time dealing with disease issues and more time focusing on managing wildlife populations.

Game Commission Bureau of Wildlife Management director Matthew Schnupp said the new partnership will greatly benefit wildlife and all who care about conserving it.

“The Pennsylvania Wildlife Futures Program demonstrates how public-private partnerships can advance the health of our wildlife and the resilience of their habitats,” Dr. Schnupp said. “This initiative directly supports the Game Commission’s mission to safeguard the Commonwealth’s wildlife resources for current and future generations. Our research-oriented partnership with Penn Vet will be invaluable in helping us define wildlife diseases, their impacts, and how we can manage them. It will undoubtedly enhance our ability to coordinate disease responses across agencies, our hunting community, and the general public.”

Based out of Penn Vet’s New Bolton Center located in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Wildlife Futures Program will be led by Julie Ellis, ecologist and senior research investigator, and Lisa Murphy, veterinarian and associate professor of toxicology.

“The Pennsylvania Wildlife Futures Program establishes a sustainable infrastructure for collaboration, and really represents a paradigm shift in managing wildlife disease,” said Dr. Ellis. “Not only are we charting a novel and comprehensive program that helps protect Pennsylvania wildlife, but ultimately, we are working to safeguard the health of Pennsylvania’s nearly 13 million residents from the potential impacts of wildlife disease. Land use in Pennsylvania is changing, and wildlife species are coming into closer contact with humans. We need to be prepared for these possible, broader consequences on both animal and human health.”

“As the state’s only veterinary school, Penn Vet has a depth of experience investigating disease in veterinary medicine,” said Dr. Murphy. “Through our affiliation with the Pennsylvania Animal Diagnostic Laboratory System (PADLS), we have the capacity and wildlife health expertise to support this exciting new partnership with the Pennsylvania Game Commission.”

The Pennsylvania Wildlife Futures Program was established under a five-year, $10 million contract financed by the Game Commission. Penn Vet was the only university to submit a bid for the work.

Game Commission Executive Director Bryan Burans said the program is a necessary expense in an age when impacts are mounting from many wildlife diseases, some of which afflict humans. The program’s benefits to wildlife will be well worth the cost, he said.

“The Pennsylvania Wildlife Futures Program will expand and expedite the Game Commission’s capacity to identify,” Mr. Burans said. “It is a responsible step forward for a wildlife management agency that seemingly is besieged by new wildlife issues almost annually.”

For more about the Wildlife Health Program, see www.vet.upenn.edu/wildlife-futures

SEPTA Regional Rail TrailPsses

SEPTA, the region’s transportation authority in Southeastern Pennsylvania, recently announced that Regional Rail TrailPasses have been added to its SEPTA Key retail sales program. This transition will not impact Penn’s Commuter Pass program. In general, the changes that SEPTA currently publicizes relative to their rollout of SEPTA Key apply to their riders who purchase their fare products directly from SEPTA. There are no changes at this time being made to its institutional program that SEPTA offers to employers such as Penn.

When, and if, SEPTA makes changes to its institutional program offerings, additional information will be provided by the Penn Transportation and Parking Office along with instructions to help commuters manage their transit orders.

The University of Pennsylvania Police Department Community Crime Report

18th District

Below are the Crimes Against Persons from the 18th District: 8 incidents (4 aggravated assaults, 2 domestic assaults, 1 indecent assault and 1 robbery) with 1 arrest were reported between August 19-25, 2019 by the 18th District covering 2nd, 4th, and 6th Waverly Street to 2nd, 4th, and 6th Woodland Avenue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Suspect Details</th>
<th>Offense</th>
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<td>4001 Walnut St</td>
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<td>Criminal Trespass</td>
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<td>3700 Chestnut St</td>
<td>Compliant assaulted by known female</td>
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<tr>
<td>08/23/19</td>
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<td>Compliant assaulted by group of males</td>
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<td>12:00 PM</td>
<td>3800 Locust Walk</td>
<td>Confidential sex offense</td>
<td>Battery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The University of Pennsylvania Police Department Community Crime Report

About the Crime Report: Below are the Crimes Against Persons or Crimes Against Society from the campus report for August 19-25, 2019. Also reported were 15 Crimes Against Property (5 thefts from building, 3 frauds, 2 theft others, 1 auto theft, 1 burglary, 1 disorderly conduct, 1 other offense and 1 retail theft) with 2 arrests. Full reports are available at: https://almanac.upenn.edu/sections/criminalactivity. Reports are also available online. -Eds.

This summary is prepared by the Division of Public Safety and includes all criminal incidents reported and made known to the University Police Department between the dates of August 19-25, 2019. The University Police actively patrol from Market Street to Baltimore Avenue and from the Schuylkill River to 43rd St in conjunction with the Philadelphia Police. In this effort to provide you with a thorough and accurate report on public safety concerns, we hope that your increased awareness will lessen the opportunity for crime. For any concerns or questions regarding this report, please call the Division of Public Safety at (215) 898-4482.

"The Pennsylvania Wildlife Futures Program establishes a sustainable infrastructure for collaboration, and really represents a paradigm shift in managing wildlife disease," said Dr. Ellis. "Not only are we charting a novel and comprehensive program that helps protect Pennsylvania wildlife, but ultimately, we are working to safeguard the health of Pennsylvania's nearly 13 million residents from the potential impacts of wildlife disease. Land use in Pennsylvania is changing, and wildlife species are coming into closer contact with humans. We need to be prepared for these possible, broader consequences on both animal and human health."

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Detecting Signals from the Early Universe

Penn astronomers are part of an international collaboration to construct the Simons Observatory, a new telescope that will search the skies in a quest to learn more about the formation of the universe.

In early July of this year, a large aperture telescope receiver (LATR)—seven-feet wide and 8,000 pounds—was transported from Boston to Penn’s David Rittenhouse Laboratory and placed in the High Bay Lab, where the researchers on the team of Mark Devlin, the Reese W. Flower Professor of Astronomy and Astrophysics in the department of physics and astronomy in the School of Arts and Sciences, were ready to get to work.

As members of the Simons Observatory collaboration, Dr. Devlin’s team will be putting the finishing touches on the LATR, the sensor that will be the “heart” of a cutting-edge astronomical observatory. The observatory will include a series of telescopes, located in the high Atacama Desert in northern Chile, that are designed to detect cosmic microwave background (CMB), residual radiation left behind by the Big Bang that astronomers study to learn about the first moments of the universe.

The challenge with measuring the CMB is that the signal is incredibly faint. “Because it’s so faint, we need to control the noise,” explained Zhilei Xu, a postdoc in the Devlin group. “And all of the electronics work better when they are colder. If it’s too hot, they are noisier.”

The CMB exists around three degrees Kelvin, nearly -450 degrees Fahrenheit. And because the Simons Observatory wants to study the CMB in the ultra-microwave range, they’ll need to make the detector even colder, down to 0.1 degrees Kelvin (0 Kelvin is Absolute zero, the lowest theoretical temperature that isn’t actually possible to reach).

As experts in cryogenics, the Devlin group is working on creating the right type of super-cold environment for the detectors to find the CMB. The group designed the massive metallic shell that will house all of the detection technology, with graduate students Ningfeng Zhu and Jack Olowski-Scherer heavily involved in the design of the LATR.

Dr. Devlin’s team will spend the coming months running tests to make sure the LATR, the shell of which was fabricated in Boston with all components precise to one mm, works as it should before installing insulation, detectors, thermometers and sensors.

In parallel, the large aperture telescope, LAT for short, is being produced in Germany with the aim of having both the LATR and LAT assembled and shipped to Chile in early 2021. The goal is for the observatory to collect its “first light” sometime in the spring of 2021.

This is the largest ground-based CMB experiment ever built, and Dr. Devlin said that the finished product will be 10 times more sensitive than any other CMB experiment he’s worked on.

For the complete story, visit https://penntoday.upenn.edu/news/search-signals-early-universe

High-Tech AviaryFocused on Behavioral Research

A high-tech aviary at Pennovation Works, equipped with eight computer-vision cameras and 24 high-precision microphones to record the behavior of 10 male and 10 female brown-headed cowbirds, is allowing biologists, physicists and computer scientists to make advancements in our understanding of animal behavior, neuroscience and machine learning. The group began recording in the aviary during this past spring’s breeding season; the cameras and microphones recorded 10 hours a day for 100 days.

The goal of the aviary, originally envisioned by Marc Schmidt, a professor of biology in Penn’s School of Arts and Sciences, is to use the latest in machine learning technology to answer questions about animals’ social behavior that can be addressed in no other way.

The scientists working on the aviary are collecting data and then developing the tools and algorithms to parse it carefully to make new discoveries. According to Kostas Danilidis, the Ruth Yalom Stone Professor in the School of Engineering and Applied Science’s department of computer and information science, “It gives us the chance to work on translating two-dimensional data to three-dimensional data, and it also gives us a chance to use AI tools to recognize complex poses in the birds.”

A grant from the National Science Foundation’s Major Research Instrumentation Program funded building the facility. Vijay Balasubramanian, the Cathy and Marc Lasy Professor of Physics in SAS, who had pursued graduate work in mathematics at Harvard and was heavily involved, said, “The thing I find very interesting about this project is it’s an attempt to completely analyze a developing social network,” he noted. “As a physicist I would like to understand the formation of the collective behavior.”

Cowbirds are a gregarious species that dwell in groups, but they also form breeding pairs each season. One aim of the work is to see how different interactions between the birds influence their behavior. Often, the advice givers answer a series of questions about topics like the intervention, on average, raised grades for all students. Often, the advice givers they thought they have valuable knowledge and information about how to motivate themselves in school and asked them to share that knowledge with younger students.

The paper represents the first major project from Penn’s Behavior Change for Good (BCFG) initiative. It was co-authored by BCFG co-directors and Penn professors Katherine Milkman, the Evan C Thompson Endowed Term Chair for Excellence in Teaching and Wharton professor of operations, information and decisions, and Angela Duckworth, the Christopher H. Browne Distinguished Professor of Psychology in SAS, BCFG co-lead and head of the nonprofit Character Lab, and BCFG executive director Dena Gromet.

“Motivation is not calculus. If you told students who don’t know calculus, ‘Teach this to somebody else,’ that would be ludicrous,” Dr. Eskreis-Winkler explained. “It gives us the chance to work on translating two-dimensional data to three-dimensional data, and it also gives us a chance to use AI tools to recognize complex poses in the birds.”

Marc Badger, a postdoctoral researcher in Dr. Danilidis’s group, is working to craft algorithms capable of discerning different poses of the birds based on their silhouettes.

Dr. Schmidt would like to expand the experimental work on brain circuits associated with singing and reproductive behavior that he’s conducted in the lab to the aviary. The goal is also exploring applications for this kind of observatory so the setup could be used by other research groups pursuing different scientific questions on a variety of species.

For the complete story, visit https://penntoday.upenn.edu/news/smart-aviary-poised-break-new-ground-behavioral-research

Advice Giving Is Good for the Giver

In an intervention with nearly 2,000 schoolchildren, a team led by Wharton postdoctoral researcher, Lauren Eskreis-Winkler (now a postdoc at University of Chicago) discovered that advice-giving helps the students doing the counseling. Half of the students were randomized to be advice givers; half to a control condition. Dr. Eskreis-Winkler’s team told the advice givers they thought they have valuable knowledge and information about how to motivate themselves in school and asked them to share that knowledge with younger students.

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