

## Report of the Committee on Campus and Community Life: 2014-15

### The Committee Charge

The Committee on Campus and Community Life (CCCL) is an established committee of the University Council, which is charged with the following four general areas of responsibility:

1. [It has] cognizance over the **University's communications and public relations activities** in their various formats and media including electronic, audio (the telephone system), video and printed copy, and it shall **monitor the University's internal communications**, the operations of the University Communications Office, communications to alumni, and the interpretation of the University to its many constituencies;
2. [It] shall advise the Council on the **relationship of the University to the surrounding community** and the relevant University policies, work to ensure that the University develops and maintains a constructive relationship with the community, and **monitor pending real estate activities** of concern to the community;
3. [It] shall have cognizance of the **conditions and rules of undergraduate and graduate student life** on campus, including (1) gathering and analyzing information concerning student life and student affairs and making recommendations to the Council; and (2) responding as appropriate to requests from and reporting information and recommendations concerning student life and student affairs to the vice provost for university life and other appropriate administrative officers; and
4. [It] shall advise the president, the director of public safety, and the administrators or directors of specific buildings, offices, or projects on all **matters concerning safety and security** in the conduct of their operations, including consideration and assessment of means to improve safety and security on the campus.

The University Council issued four [specific charges to the 2014-15 Committee](#) that fall under the general domain of its responsibilities:

1. Consider trends in **university responses to allegations of sexual assault** and Penn's response to these trends.
2. Follow up on the recommendations of the **Commission on Student Safety, Alcohol and Student Life**.
3. Consider enhanced **advising and support structures for international students**.
4. Review and discuss this Committee's general charge and identify two or three issues that should be given the highest **priority for the committee's work in academic year 2015-16**.

### Committee Members

The [committee](#) was chaired by Rebecca Maynard who is a faculty member in the Graduate School of Education. In addition to the chair, the committee included seven other faculty

members (Janice Asher, Jonah Gelbach, Campbell Grey, Amy Hillier, Daeyeon Lee, Serena Mayeri, and Matt McHugh); two representatives of graduate and professional students (Jingwen Jiao and Demetri Morgan); two undergraduate student representatives (Daniel Kahan and Alex Zimmermann); two representatives of the Penn Professional Staff Assembly (PPSA) (James Allen and Peter Gemmellaro); and two representatives of the Weekly Paid Professional Staff Association (WPSA) (Simcha Katsnelson and Joyce Woodward Jones). Amelia Carter was staff to the committee and Karu Kozuma was liaison. (See Exhibit 1)

## **Committee Processes**

The committee conducted its work through three means: (1) full committee meetings; (2) subcommittee meetings; and (3) individual outreach and information collection by members of the committee. Over the course of the year, the full committee met four times with invited guests who had deep knowledge about one or more of the issues related to the committee's charge (See Exhibit 2). The first of those meetings (October 29<sup>th</sup>) focused on updates from key stakeholder groups regarding issues falling under the committee's purview. The second (December 2) focused on the university's commitment to and engagement with the Philadelphia public schools—particularly its engagement with Penn Alexander and the Lee School, and developments following the issuance of the [2013-14 Committee report](#). It also focused on the University's efforts to prevent sexual violence and to educate the Penn community on violence prevention and student safety in general. The third meeting (January 20<sup>th</sup>) focused on responses to the recommendations of the Commission on Student Safety, Alcohol, and Student Life and support needs and the University Council's request that the committee examine needs for enhanced advising and supports for international students and scholars. A fourth meeting (February 4<sup>th</sup>) focused on off-campus student housing. A fifth meeting (February 18<sup>th</sup>) was attended only by the committee and focused on recommended priority issues for next year's committee to address.

Subcommittees conducted preparatory work for various the meetings and follow-up, as warranted.

## **Main Conclusions of the Committee:**

**Penn's engagement with the Philadelphia Public Schools.** The Committee commends the University for its continued efforts to support the Philadelphia Public Schools, particularly two elementary schools within University City—the Penn Alexander School and the Lea School. However, the Committee also noted that the University's involvement in the District schools extends well beyond these two schools.

Penn Partnership Schools. The ongoing contract with the School District for support of the [Penn Alexander School](#) (due to expire in 2021) has been influential in creating a high performing school, which since its inception has served a highly diverse population. However, the Committee noted that the Penn Alexander School appears to be serving decreasing proportions of low-income and minority students—a result that University representatives suggested may be a natural result of area gentrification.

The Committee followed up on an observation from the 2013-14 Committee that Penn Alexander School sometimes had vacancies in the higher grades—a consequence of the school not admitting student from outside the Penn Alexander catchment area. As of this report filing, the [School Enrollment Policy](#) still limits enrollment to students residing within the designated catchment area for the school.

The University has a very different model of support for the [Henry C. Lea School](#) that it believes is more sustainable and easily reproducible. This model focuses on material consumables and staff/infrastructure access rather than the contracted fiscal support model used at Penn Alexander. The Committee did actively examine developments at the Lea school since the prior Committee's report.

The Committee looked for obvious evidence of systematic teaching or research programs associated with either or both of these schools and did not identify any.

Recommendation 1: The University and the Graduate School of Education in particular, should engage more actively with both area schools and the school district in general to develop sustainable partnerships that support research and promote improved practice.

Recommendation 2: The University should work with the school district to secure ongoing access to data support monitoring and improvements in practice at not only Penn Alexander and Lea schools, but at other partnership schools.

Recommendation 3: The University should consider conducting a survey to determine what elementary schools children of Penn faculty and staff attend and the factors that affect their decisions.

Recommendation 4: The University should work with the District to allow Penn Alexander to develop a policy that would allow parents from outside of the catchment area to apply to send their child to Penn Alexander and that would require the School to accept such applicants on a fair basis (e.g., by lottery) if it has capacity.

More general engagement with District schools. The Committee noted that Penn has many students, faculty and staff from across campus who engage with Philadelphia Public Schools, including through Academically Based Learning Courses, faculty initiated research projects, and volunteer activities. Notable important recent developments include efforts of faculty in the Graduate School of Education and the School of Social Policy and Practice for their capacity building initiatives to create integrated data systems and their partnership programs.

Recommendation 1: The University should conduct a periodic evaluation of its support of and outreach to Philadelphia Public Schools.

Recommendation 2: The University should create and maintain a central data base of Penn's involvement in Philadelphia Public Schools, including its charter schools. Moreover, the University should explore other ways to connect the various departments and organizations engaging with the Philadelphia Public School system in other ways, such as active knowledge-sharing platforms and active discussion of best practices.

**Report of the Commission on Student Safety, Alcohol, and Student Life.** In response to the 2013-14 Committee's report, this year's committee examined steps the university has taken to address two particular areas of concern raised by the Commission—sexual assault and interpersonal violence and bullying.

Sexual assault and interpersonal violence. With respect to the University's response to concerns about sexual assault and interpersonal violence, the committee commends the University for its Decision to establish the [Office of Student Sexual Violence Prevention and Education](#). In a very short time period, the office (of one staff) has made considerable progress in raising awareness of sexual violence, educating students about signs and protective actions, and improving awareness of resources available to victims or witnesses of sexual assault and personal violence.

The office has developed some good educational resources, created inventories of resources to support witnesses to or victims of sexual assault and interpersonal violence against students, and developed and offered staff training on the resources available to students. For example, the various resources include the following: Student Health Services, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Penn Women's Center and the Division of Public Safety Special Services Unit.

In exploring ease of accessibility to the many resources available to victims and witnesses, the committee noted that it could be difficult to locate resources, depending on the initial point of entry to the University's website. Notably, it seemed especially challenging to find resources if one was not starting from within the Penn website.

The committee offers the following recommendations for strengthening its response:

Recommendation 1: Consider expanding the responsibilities of the Office to efforts to raise awareness prevention of sexual assaults among staff and faculty, as well as students, perhaps by fostering greater collaboration and coordination between this new Office and the [Title IX Office](#), which has responsibility for prevention efforts targeted at staff and faculty.

Recommendation 2: The University should continue to invest in improving ready access to information about campus resources to help witnesses to or victims of sexual assault or interpersonal violence. This might include a diagram of services that survivors of violence can access on campus.

Recommendation 3: Improve the visibility of on-line resources including preparing the on-line resources to be more easily accessed by users other than students.

Bullying. The committee commends the Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Opportunity Programs (OAAEO) for its efforts to improve support to vulnerable populations on campus including those who are experiencing work place harassment of any kind. University officials acknowledged that bullying is a major issue on campus and the University has a responsibility to

educate students, staff, and faculty on the range of behaviors that constitute bullying and the various sources of support.

Recommendation 1: The committee recommends that a clear definition of the behaviors that constitute bullying be incorporated into the code of student conduct as well as in documents and training governing the behavior of faculty and staff.

Recommendation 2: The committee recommends that supports for victims of bullying be available to the entire University community, including faculty and staff.

Recommendation 3: The committee recommends that the University improve accessibility on the web to information that would help faculty, staff, and students identify bullying and support services available to those who have witnessed or been the victim of bullying or harassment.

**Advising and Support Structures for International Students.** The committee examined the challenges that international students face in their studies and personal lives, focusing particularly on issues that have been raised by the Assembly International Students—concerns that may contribute to a persistently low 4-year graduation rate as compared with other students, including under-represented minorities. The two most pressing concerns raised by in a recent joint report by the Undergraduate Assembly (UA) and the Assembly of International Students (AIS) to President Gutman (September 2014) are (1) the need for an extended orientation and (2) the creation of adequate, “designed” community space for international students.

The focus of support for international students is through the [International Student and Scholar Services](#) (ISSS) Office, which reports having initiated a number of actions over recent years aimed at improving the experiences of and outcomes for international students. Recent initiatives include the creation of the International Student Advisory Board (ISAB), the International Partners Outreach Group (IPOG), and the International Spouses and Partners at Penn (ISPP). Most recently, the University created a new position of Program Coordinator within the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) dedicated to improving the integration of the international community within the University—a position now held by Ryan Villanueva.

In light of the University’s commitment to global issues and the numbers of international students enrolled, the Committee offers three recommendations:

Recommendation 1: The University staff responsible for new student orientation should work with the AIS and the ISAB to re-design new student orientation to include more and better structured opportunities for international students to both build a supportive community of international students and to foster supportive relationships with domestic students.

Recommendation 2: The University should examine the general level of resources dedicated to international student orientation and support currently provided in relation to international support service needs.

Recommendation 3: Work with the ISAB and the AIS and central university staff to assess the adequacy of community spaces available to international students and, if they are judged to be inadequate, work to find spaces that would improve the prospects for developing a strong, supportive international community.

**Student Off-campus Housing.** Students brought to the committee a number of concerns related to Off-campus housing and housing support services. The more prominent issues for students related to the quality and quantity of on-campus housing, the quality and maintenance of off-campus housing, lease provisions (particularly the start and end dates relative to the academic calendar) and the calendar for signing leases—almost a year in advance.

There are two main offices with responsibilities that relate to off-campus housing: the [Office of Off-Campus Services](#) (OCS) and the [Facilities and Real Estate Services](#) (FRES). OCS assists undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff at all stages of experience with off-campus housing, including providing education about their lease agreements, rights and responsibilities and assistance with housing searches, identifying roommates, and resolving tenant-landlord disputes. FRES is responsible for 540 units of off-campus housing units that are owned by Penn and managed by Campus Apartments and it participates in local real-estate development through the Neighborhood Preservation and Development Fund and Penn Homeownership Services. FRES does not directly interact with student renters. Rather their influence is indirect through practices and encouragements that affect cleanliness, parking, and landlord behavior.

The committee heard clear reports that the education programs offered by OCS had improved the abilities of students to be more effective in understanding and negotiating their leases and in advocating for themselves on maintenance issues. However, the committee also concluded that there was more that the university could do to improve the housing situation for students and, quite possibly, to encourage more undergraduates to remain on campus. The specific recommendations are the following:

Recommendation 1: The University should work with landlords to encourage better alignment of their calendars for leasing with the University's academic year and summer school calendars. This could eliminate gaps and overlaps in availability of off-campus housing that often arises due to move out dates that overlap with the start of summer sessions.

Recommendation 2: The University should work with landlords to encourage a later schedule for lease signing relative to the end of the Academic year. Presently, students are generally required to sign leases in early fall for the following academic year, putting undue pressure on students to select roommates and living arrangements. Students feel

that less signing dates that are more aligned with campus housing sign up dates would result in fewer students moving off campus.

Recommendation 3: The committee recommends that the University promote use of on-line maintenance systems by the major landlords serving its students.

Recommendation 4: The committee recommends that the University explore how to address tensions created when students are exploring their options for on and off campus housing, including through better alignment of the resources and information available to assist students as they decide on their housing.

Recommendation 5: The committee encouraged the University to consider reinstating a survey of students regarding their housing experiences, similar to the Penn Course Review. However, to avoid problems encountered in a prior survey conducted by GAPSA of off campus residents (e.g., low response rates), the university should consider working with stakeholders to manage the survey. As such, the committee recommends that the University engage with student bodies and organizations to develop the survey, and may consider offering support such as student contact information, PennKey authentication, or marketing and distribution, to assist in student implementation of the survey.

### **Suggested Charges for Next Year's Committee**

1. Systematically examine the range of experiences of international students and identify priorities for improving the on-boarding and ongoing support of this community.
2. Examine the breadth and depth of Penn's engagement with the City in the areas of health, education, social services, criminal justice, and community and economic development and make recommendations for improving the coordination and benefits to Penn and the community of such engagements.
3. Examine the University's policies related to sexual harassment, assault, and bullying that involve faculty and staff, as victims or as perpetrators, as well as the services to address such issues.
4. Examine the riverfront development plans and assess whether they present opportunities or threats to issues of central importance to campus and community life, for example, related to housing, safety, or community engagement opportunities.

Exhibit 1  
2014-15 CCLC Committee Members

**Chair:** Rebecca Maynard- [rmaynard@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:rmaynard@gse.upenn.edu)

**Liason:** Karu Kozuma [kozuma@exchange.upenn.edu](mailto:kozuma@exchange.upenn.edu)

**Staff:** Amelia Carter [ameliaca@exchange.upenn.edu](mailto:ameliaca@exchange.upenn.edu)

**Faculty:**

Janice Asher [asher@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:asher@pobox.upenn.edu)

Jonah Gelbach [jgelbach@law.upenn.edu](mailto:jgelbach@law.upenn.edu)

Campbell Grey [cgrey@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:cgrey@sas.upenn.edu)

Amy Hillier [ahillier@design.upenn.edu](mailto:ahillier@design.upenn.edu)

Daeyeon Lee [daeyeon@seas.upenn.edu](mailto:daeyeon@seas.upenn.edu)

Serena Mayeri [smayeri@law.upenn.edu](mailto:smayeri@law.upenn.edu)

Matt McHugh [mchughm@nursing.upenn.edu](mailto:mchughm@nursing.upenn.edu)

**Graduate/professional students:**

Rebekkah Merrell [gapsa.vicechair@gmail.com](mailto:gapsa.vicechair@gmail.com)

Demetri Morgan [demetrim@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:demetrim@gse.upenn.edu)

**Undergraduate students:**

Daniel Kahan [dkahana@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:dkahana@sas.upenn.edu)

Alex Zimmermann [demetrim@gse.upenn.edu](mailto:demetrim@gse.upenn.edu)

**PPSA:**

James Allen\* [jgallen@upenn.edu](mailto:jgallen@upenn.edu)

Peter Gemmellaro [petergem@upenn.edu](mailto:petergem@upenn.edu)

**WPPSA:**

Simcha Katsnelson [ksimcha@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:ksimcha@sas.upenn.edu)

Joyce Woodward-Jones\* [woodwarj@upenn.edu](mailto:woodwarj@upenn.edu)

Exhibit 2: Committee on Campus and Community Life Meetings (2014-15)

Meeting Date	Focal Topics	Invited Guests
October 29th	Committee charge; Related University Efforts; Updates on Prior Recommendations	Andy Binns, Vice Provost for Education; Katie Bonner, Executive Director, Office of Student Affairs; Sam Starks, Executive Director, Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Programs; Katie Bonner, Executive Director, Office of Student Affairs
December 2nd	(1) Update on the University-school partnerships and PAS and (2) Sexual and Interpersonal Violence;	Joann Mitchell, Vice President for Institutional Affairs, and Jeff Cooper, Vice President for Government and Community Affairs; Leslie Kruhly, Rebecca Mertz, Director of Student Sexual Violence Prevention, Education; and Jane Myer
January 20th	(1) International Student Integration and (2) Alcohol Commission Review	Joann Mitchell (Vice President for Institutional Affairs) and Julie Nettleton (Director for the Office of Student Conduct, but at the time of the commission, she was on the commission as the Director for the Office of Alcohol and Other Drugs; Alex Zimmerman, External VP of the Assembly of International Students and Rudie Altamirano, Director for International Student and Scholars Services
February 4th	Off Campus Housing	Ed Datz, Executive Director of Facilities and Real Estate Services (datz@upenn.edu)
February 18th	End of Year Wrap Up	None