

University Council Committee on Campus and Community Life
Annual Report
2013-2014 (AY2014)

2013-14 Specific Charges

1. The committee should review Penn's engagement in and support of public elementary education in the surrounding community.
2. The Committee should review the role of historic preservation in the development of the main campus of the University and its off-campus properties.
3. As part of general charges (i), (ii), and (iii), the committee should look at political discourse on campus and university support for local and national civic engagement.
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 2014-15.
5. In addition, as part of the administrative response to last year's report and recommendations on bullying, the committee was asked to develop additional information on bullying.

The Committee met five times during the year. Subcommittees met on the three specific charges as well as on the University request for information on bullying. The Office of Student Affairs provided invaluable administrative support for the committee. The first charge occupied the largest part of the committee and subcommittee work.

The following conclusions were reached by the committee:

1. The University should proactively seek the opening of empty seats in the Penn Alexander School to out of catchment children. The rationale for leaving empty seats in the upper grades of PAS is greatly outweighed by the negative appearance and inequities that are caused by closing them off to out of catchment students. The committee strongly encourages the university to ask the SDP that these seats, no matter how few, be available to non-catchment children.
2. The University should develop a seven year plan to address the shifting support priorities and community needs around the Penn campus to achieve community development and educational equity in Penn's West Philadelphia

- community including managing the last seven years of the PAS contracted support to assure PAS independent sustainability after the contract ends.
3. The committee strongly believes that the lottery system at PAS is more equitable than a first-come, first-served model for distribution of the limited number of seats in kindergarten.
 4. The committee recommends a definition of bullying that is adopted from organizational models available online. Specifics are described within the report below.

Suggested Charges for Next Year

1. Examine the role of and level of social cohesion in community life.
2. Review the system of housing assignments for Penn students both on and off campus. Look at Penn's relationship with off campus housing owners and managers including Penn owned off campus housing.
3. Review green campus initiatives
4. Examine facilities costs and the costs when Penn cost centers purchase goods from other Penn cost centers.

Report regarding administrative response to last years report

1. Tobacco Free Campus-The committee is extremely grateful for the thoughtful and considerate responses to last year's recommendations. The President has formed a committee to discuss the implementation of a healthy campus environment which recognizes the challenges of addiction while sharing the collective goal of health in our broad community. This committee is being led by Frank Leone. This action-based and inclusive approach to the recommendations is welcomed.
2. Counseling and Psychological Services- Early in the academic year, Bill Alexander spoke on the welcoming environment created at CAPS and the availability of walk-in appointments. He reported that 40% of students are seen within three days and during the busiest times, waits can reach 3 weeks for non-urgent visits. He reported that only 23% of students are referred to other providers based on either student request, need for long term therapy, or need for a service not offered by CAPS. Some students are not referred out due to cost or transportation considerations. One correction to last year's report was offered. Bill Alexander clarified that the "Mental Health First Aid" referred to in the report should more accurately be called "Emotional First Aid".
3. Dining Services- Committee members noted a further shift in the balance between AYE options and retail dining options in Dining Services. The committee remains concerned with this shift in facilities development and

believes more information should be available on the financial structures, incentives, and disincentives that contribute to the shift in facilities away from AYE and towards retail dining.

Finally, the administration requested clarification on bullying definitions which is reported below.

Report per charges

1. Penn's Engagement in and support of public education.

In considering Penn's engagement in and support of public elementary education, the committee considered four issues: support for public elementary schools proximate to Penn, the new lottery system and the wait list that has been created at PAS, empty seats at PAS in upper grades, and opportunities to work with the Lea School.

The Committee hosted several guests and sought input from several sources during the year. Representation from Lea, Powel, Greenfield, West Philly Coalition for Neighborhood Schools, and the University presented to the committee. Because representation from Penn Alexander School was not available, individual committee members sought input from individual parents from the PAS catchment. Leadership of the PAS HSA suggested the University could speak best on the issues.

The committee discussed this charge as both a geographic charge with particular attention to schools near the university campus as well as a Penn community-member based charge with a focus on schools where Penn community members may send their children. Except for the Penn Alexander School, no community-member based data were available. This represents an opportunity for the university to understand the educational needs and decisions of its students, faculty, and staff with children. Based on the lack of personnel based data, the committee decided to focus on public elementary schools geographically close to Penn's campus. Of the open schools in the 2013-2014 academic year, this included: Powel (university catchment area), Penn Alexander, Lea, and Greenfield. The committee early in the year was able to engage with parents and organizations associated with the Lea, Powel, and Greenfield schools.

The ethnicity, economic disadvantage, special education, English language learner, enrollment, attendance, and PSSA 4th grade achievement scores are presented in the following table for the schools geographically close to the university. These data were accessed from the SDP website. PSSA scores were looked at in the 4th grade year because it is the last common grade between the schools as Powell ends at 4th grade.

	Greenfield	Powel	Lea	Penn Alexander
Enrollment	571	287	582	554
Ethnicity				
African American	38.2%	72.8%	82.3%	25.1%
White	39.4%	12.2%	2.4%	39.5%
Asian	8.4%	4.2%	6.9%	17.7%
Latino	4.2%	1.4%	1.4%	7.2%
Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
American Indian	0.5%	1.4%	0.5%	0.7%
Other	9.3%	8.0%	6.5%	9.7%
Economically Disadvantaged				
Yes	31.9%	64.4%	93.7%	27.3%
No	68.1%	35.6%	6.3%	72.7%
Special Education				
Students with Disabilities	12.6%	7.7%	15.1%	4.0%
Mentally Gifted	5.4%	7.0%	0.0%	1.1%
Students without IEPs	82.0%	85.3%	84.9%	94.9%
English Language Learners				
ELL	3.0%	1.4%	12.4%	7.9%
No	97.0%	98.6%	87.6%	92.1%
Attendance	97.3%	96.0%	96.1%	98.1%
Enrollment				
2011	520	233	355	553
2012	579	259	400	553
2013	571	287	582	554
Increase in enrollment	10%	23%	64%	0%
PSSA				
Grade 4 Reading	69.6%	66.7%	37.6%	84.7%
Grade 4 Math	71.7%	83.4%	40.6%	91.5%

Greenfield is both ethnically and socioeconomically diverse with a significant population of special education children. Greenfield has a small English Language Learner population. The student population has grown 10% from 2011 to 2013. The committee discussed Greenfield at the beginning of the academic year based on the school model that Greenfield parents each individually financially support the budget with a contribution of \$613. These payments were controlled at the Principal level. The school has benefited from strong leadership. The additional direct contributions were separate from and in addition to Home and School Association contributions and classroom supply expectations and all schools. Greenfield parents, including Penn community members, directly support the cost of the operations of the school where their children attend. Greenfield has had success in educating students independent of a specific Penn partnership or direct financial support. This independent relationship and dependence on the attending-children's parents to support the school directly financially was noted in light of the close similarities between the Economically Disadvantaged population percentage at Greenfield (31.9%) and Penn Alexander (27.3%)

The University campus sits in the Powel catchment area. The Powel school population is primarily African American and the majority of students are economically disadvantaged. Powel has the smallest number of English Language Learners. Powel's student population has increased 23% from 2011-2013. The Powell School has significant resource and financial needs and also expects parental support through the Home and School Association and classroom supplies. There was not a direct financial support expectation from parents to the school itself. The committee recognized that Drexel University had announced partnership plans with the Powel school. While the Powel catchment area includes the campus, the committee did not focus on Powel due to the Drexel partnership. There are, however, coordinating opportunities as Penn can lead in how higher education institutions work with public schools across the city.

The Lea School is primarily African American(82.3%) and overwhelmingly made up of students from an economically disadvantaged background(93.7%). Of the comparison schools, it has the largest population of students with disabilities and the highest population of students who are English Language Learners. Profoundly, the Lea School population has grown 64% from 2011 to 2013. There is great need at the Lea school for support. While the Netter Center is engaged in ABCS collaborative activities at the Lea school, there is significant need for human and physical plant investment at the Lea School. There are Home and School Association fundraisers and classroom supply requests at Lea. There is no history of direct funding requests to funds controlled directly by the principal. The parent community, based on the demographic data of students, does not have the economic

capacity to be a significant funder of and financial investor in the physical plant or personnel of the school. Despite the physical plant and personnel needs, it is recognized how international, educationally diverse, and personally invested the Lea community is.

The Penn Alexander School has the lowest African American (25.1%) and highest Asian (17.7%) student population of the comparison schools. The white student population is on par with Greenfield. PAS has the lowest economically disadvantaged rate (27.3%) and lowest disabled student percentage (4.0%). The economically disadvantaged rate is low even though all children from the co-located Head-Start program were admitted to PAS before catchment children. [This policy is reportedly changing in the coming year.] While the other comparison schools saw significant population increases over the last three academic years, PAS had increased 0% (one additional student). PAS receives parent support through the Home and School Association and parent groups. The school receives \$1300 in direct cash support from the University each year (over \$700,000 last year). These funds are controlled at the school level and have been responsibly overseen by a single principal since the school was founded.

As the year progressed, the committee began to focus on the differences ethnically, socio-economically, and in PSSA performance at the 4th grade level between Lea and PAS. The geographic proximity to each other with immediate adjacent catchment areas was noted. While there was not an assumption of causality, the cash investment the University makes in the PAS is associated with a less diverse school population and better performance on the PSSA examinations. This remained troublesome across the committee in light of the University's stated goals in the Penn Compact.

The University initially invested in the PAS in order to improve the community around Penn. This has been achieved on multiple measures. There are, however, emerging differences between the two schools that the committee presents above that contrast with the larger University social goals. It was presented by multiple parties, from a broad range of perspectives, that the University's cash investment in PAS was not sustainable or replicable. Anecdotally it was also presented that the two communities are different based on the monthly-paid:weekly-paid Penn faculty/staff who live in the two catchment areas.

Except on an historic and legacy basis, the committee could not reconcile the University payments to support education at PAS with the socio-economic capacity of the PAS community to self fund (Greenfield model), the needs of

other schools and communities in geographic proximity to the University, and the larger Penn compact goals. While the current agreement has seven more years of commitment, the committee came to the following conclusion:

The University should develop a seven year plan to address the shifting priorities in supporting public elementary education and community needs to achieve community development and educational equity in Penn's West Philadelphia community. This specifically includes managing the last seven years of the PAS contracted-support to assure PAS independent sustainability after the contract ends.

The origin of the first charge came from a question about the enrollment system at PAS. Beyond looking at Penn's support for public elementary education broadly, the committee also considered the specific questions of the enrollment process at PAS and the filling of empty seats in the upper grades. It was noted that there was a shift in the enrollment process for kindergarten from a first-come, first-served method to a lottery system for the 2013-2014 academic year. In recent years, there have not been enough kindergarten seats for the number of 5 year olds in the catchment area. It was reported that this limitation comes from an inability to expand capacity due to facility and safety issues only. Simultaneously, however, after the fourth grade, there have been empty seats in the 5th through 8th grade classrooms as students transferred to special admit schools. The co-existence of this shortage of seats and surplus of seats and their distribution was discussed by the committee with helpful information contributed by the Office of Government and Community Relations and community members as described above.

On the issue of these empty seats, the committee heard from Penn community members who could not get their children into empty upper grade seats at PAS. Because of catchment area restrictions, students from other areas of the city, including the community surrounding Penn outside the PAS catchment, could not transfer into PAS even when there are empty seats. This was a unique policy for PAS due to the Penn, SDP, PFT agreement. While seats were limited in the entering kindergarten class, available seats in the upper grades were simply made unavailable to non-PAS catchment students in the SDP.

While it is a small number of seats, the appearance of this policy only seems to exacerbate the disparate access to education and potentially outcomes faced by non-PAS catchment families. The rationale that the committee was given for the protection of these empty seats was that in a future year a family may move into the catchment who may want the seat. The committee,

however, could identify no reason beyond history that these seats should not be available to any SDP student who applies consistent with the voluntary transfer system that applies to the rest of the school district. The SDP has a district wide policy regarding transferring between catchment areas that could be applied for these empty seats.

The committee strongly encourages the university to ask the SDP that these seats, no matter how few, be available to non-catchment children. Holding those seats away from other Philadelphia children to protect the hypothetical school choice of a potential future family does not justify the appearance of exclusivity.

On the issue of switching to a lottery system instead of a first-come, first-serve basis, the committee strongly supports this as more equitable and fair to catchment residents from diverse backgrounds. The committee encourages the University to support the SDP in this decision.

After the regularly scheduled committee meetings for the year, the SDP announced that the Head Start children would no longer be admitted before catchment kids and they would have to enter the same lottery as the catchment families. The committee expects this may adversely lower the already low economically disadvantaged rate at PAS.

The committee encourages the University to ask the SDP to reconsider the new Head-Start PAS admission policy change that may decrease socio-economic diversity further at the Penn Alexander School.

The newly implemented lottery system has created a wait list for students not admitted. Anecdotally, the committee heard that everyone that was left on the wait list for 2013-14 and who had not made another school choice at the opening of school in September 2013 was admitted to PAS. The committee also heard anecdotally that students left the waiting list because they understood they would not be admitted. There was no objective or balanced data on what happens to children on the waiting list. The University has an opportunity to track where kids who are initially put on a wait list due to excess demand end up. Currently the school has been able to meet the wait list demand only for those who do not elect other options while on the wait list. There is an opportunity to understand who gives up on the wait list, why, and where they end up.

On a constructive basis, the committee would like to highlight the University investment in the Lea school through the Penn-Lea liaison Caroline Watts and the ABCS investments coordinated by the Netter Center. With the

significant investment from the Philadelphia Water Department (Greening Lea), PECO, and the community members of the Lea School, it became clear to the committee that there is an opportunity for the University to engage on an original basis in support of public elementary education with the Lea school. The Lea School is soon to celebrate its 100th anniversary in a classic building. Instead of direct cash support opportunities, there is the opportunity to remake the physical plant of the Lea School as well as the overall perception of Lea in the community. Lea is a dignified community that values learning diversity and it's international population.

Suggestions for collaboration with Lea include: Physical plant development and the replacement of all the windows at Lea, improvement of signage and marketing to change the perceived image of Lea, professional development opportunities for Lea faculty and staff, graphic design and website development.

The committee concluded its discussions with a clear understanding that Penn's engagement in and support for public elementary education has shifted over the last 20 years from a neighborhood development program to a social justice issue. While the University should not try to take on the educational challenges of the entire city, there is an opportunity for leadership around:

- a. carving out an opportunity for partnership, investment, and collaboration at the Lea school beyond the ABCS model and without direct cash support,
- b. developing a national model for other institutions to imitate, and
- c. working with other Philadelphia institutions to coordinate partnership activities so that together there is a broad social impact on Philadelphia education.

2. Historic Preservation

A subcommittee was formed to consider the issue of historic preservation in the development of the University main campus and outlying properties. The committee reached out to community members including administrators at the university. The subcommittee was not successful in developing a focus or receiving formal presentations regarding historic preservation and development on university properties during the academic year. Therefore, the committee does not have specific recommendations in an reporting, affirming, supportive, evaluative, reflective, or any other manner for this charge.

3. Political Discourse on campus and local and national civic engagement

The committee heard reports from the Office of Government and Community Affairs, the Penn Political Coalition, and the Office of the Vice Provost for University Life. The charge of political discourse focused on three aspects:

bringing speakers to campus, limitations on university support for current candidates, and the student expressed sentiment of an unsafe university environment to be politically different.

Uniquely, the University has two federal mandates under the Higher Education Act regarding political discourse and engagement. The University must promote voter registration and acknowledge [Constitution Day](#) on 17 September. The Office of Government and Community Affairs actively maintains oversight and implementation of these two charges.

There is regular enthusiasm during presidential election years to bring candidates or debates to campus. Due to Penn's 501c3 status, Penn cannot raise money to advance a candidate or idea. Any partisan activities cannot be supported with university funds or resources. This has a significant impact on the implementation of civic engagement and political discourse on campus in practice. In addition, while a debate could be hosted on campus, concern over the cost, security, and access by the Penn community limit the implementation. A potential solution is to focus on debates about ideas or non-national elected positions. Local candidates would not have the logistical and security issues that a national campaign requires.

As an active campus, faculty often exercise their individual right to free speech in the classroom, their offices, or on university resources like email to advance a political ideology or advance a specific candidate. This individual expression by faculty to students may have two outcomes: it could provide an educational opportunity for students or it may silence students due to the power differential and role faculty have in evaluating students. Student guests and representatives described to the committee the importance of a political identity as similar to a cultural, gender, or racial identity. Political tolerance or sensitivity towards political identity could be an opportunity for development in the faculty and staff. One opportunity is to help faculty and staff develop John DiLulio-like statements such as "I have these viewpoints but I am excited to hear what you have to say," when they talk about political issues in the classroom.

The Penn Political Coalition (PoCo) hosts Political Action Week every two years. This is part of their mission to develop political discourse on campus. There is a strong desire to see Penn as a space for engagement. There are challenges, however, to implementing this desire. The prohibition on political activity due to non-profit status above is a challenge. This means that students cannot have a petition at an activity where University funds have bought food as part of a larger event. The cost of Facilities is prohibitive and student groups cannot afford these costs. Even when certain student facilities are designated as free, staffing, cleaning, or security costs present a barrier to student groups. Finally, honoraria are difficult to manage given the

size and system for funding student groups. One solution is utilizing the Penn PoCo Synergy Fund and growing this as a strategic opportunity for growing national civic engagement.

In order to create a safe and non-disruptive environment on campus, the University maintains a program for Open Expression. The goal of the program is to encourage conversation but not disruption. Open Expression faculty and staff volunteer monitors attend protests that are on campus. The committee received a report that it is difficult to support the open expression on campus of viewpoints that are not supported by the majority of community members.

The committee discussed the myriad of topics around political discourse and national engagement and endorses a goal of growing discourse and engagement. This recommendation, however, comes with sensitivity towards the risk of an environment dominated by majority views. The committee endorses the following:

- a. **Political views that are expressed in an environment where there is a power differential or a clear majority view point can border on bullying.**
- b. **Defining banned political activity instead of permitted activity may have a chilling effect on achieving the goal of expanded discourse.**
- c. **Seeking opportunities to support open expression that is not based on events (protests or meetings) could be considered.**
- d. **The university could seek data from seniors on their experience with political repression**
- e. **The university could work to support political discourse that encourages an exchange of ideas rather than the discovery of a single best answer.**
- f. **Faculty and staff openness could be increased.**

Follow Up on Bullying definition

A subcommittee was formed to address the request regarding bullying in the administrative response to the AY13 report. The subcommittee used internet based searches as well as conversations with campus stakeholders in considering a definition. The following definition of bullying is recommended:

- a. Bullying can be exhibited by an intentional physical, psychological, verbal, nonverbal, written, or electronic act or series of acts directed at another person, which occurs in and/or around the a university setting, that is severe, persistent or pervasive and has the effect of doing any of the following:
 - i. Substantial interference with a community member's role.
 - ii. Creation of a threatening and hostile environment.

- iii. Substantial disruption of the orderly operation of part of the organization.
- b. Bullying is characterized by the following three (3) criteria:
 - i. It is intentional or deliberate aggressive behavior or harm doing, and
 - ii. It is carried out repeatedly over time, and
 - iii. It occurs within an interpersonal relationship where there is an imbalance of power (e.g. one (1) person is physically larger, stronger, mentally quicker or by position, profession or socially more powerful).
- c. Bullying takes many forms and can include a variety of behaviors. As defined in this policy, bullying refers to direct or indirect action, which may include but is not limited to:
 - i. Physical – touching, hitting, kicking, pushing, shoving, getting another person to hurt someone
 - ii. Verbal-name-calling, teasing, taunting, gossiping, and spreading rumors
 - iii. Nonverbal-threatening, intimidation, obscene gestures, isolation, exclusion, stalking, reprisal, and retaliation
 - iv. Cyber bullying- using electronic or communication devices through means of social networks, email, instant or text messaging, tweets, blogs, photo or video sharing, chat rooms, boards, or websites.

The following Penn community members served on the Campus and Community Life Committee. Their time, attention, and input are greatly appreciated.

Committee on Campus and Community Life 2013-2014

Chair: Kent Bream; **Faculty:** Janice Asher, Andrea Doyle, Campbell Grey, Randall Mason, Rebecca Maynard, Matt McHugh, Guobin Yang; **PPSA:** James Allen, Heather Calvert; **WPPSA:** Joyce Woodward-Jones; **Graduate Students:** Shicong Meng, Tianyuan Shi; **Undergraduates:** Christian Cortes, Alex Zimmerman; **Liaison:** Karu Kozama; **Staff:** Amelia Carter