I would like to begin by emphasizing the significance of last month’s announcement that we will grant financial aid packages without loans to students whose parents earn $50,000 or less. With this move we are putting Penn on the radar of academically qualified students who previously may have considered a Penn education beyond their reach. We expect that this move will deepen and broaden the quality and diversity of our applicant pool. By widening our pipeline in this way we take a big step forward toward our goal of increasing access for qualified low-income students.

I also call your attention to the information that emerged from a new report issued last month on Penn’s regional and statewide economic impact. The news was impressive: this University annually generates, through direct and indirect expenditures, the equivalent of 2% of Pennsylvania’s entire economy and 3% of Philadelphia’s economy.

The statewide economic contribution by this University, almost $10 billion, is almost as great as that of Philadelphia’s entire tourism and hospitality industry, which is just over $11 billion.

These numbers underscore a headline we know well: This University is both a premier educational leader and a powerful economic engine for our region and our state. You can read the entire report, prepared by Econsult Corporation, on our Penn website.

On the research front, I am pleased to note two exciting breakthroughs achieved by Penn Medicine: First, researchers Eileen M. Shore, PhD and Frederick S. Kaplan, MD have led an international team in locating the gene that, when damaged, causes fibrodysplasia ossifican progressiva (FOP). This rare but terribly disabling condition turns children’s soft tissues into bone and imprisons them in a kind of second skeleton. The new knowledge now points the way toward treatment of this illness and of other more common skeleton disorders.

In another important advance, Penn researcher Michael S. Marks, PhD, and colleagues have discovered how a protein called Pmel17 is sorted by pigment cells in the skin and eye. Understanding this process and how it goes awry can lead to a better understanding of melanoma and Alzheimer’s disease.
Penn Medicine also is leading the fight against HIV/AIDS in Africa. Our team recently won a $1 million grant from the President’s Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), to continue treatment and research work by Penn Medicine faculty, residents and students in Botswana. With about 38% of adults between the ages of 15 and 49 infected with the disease, Botswana has the highest HIV rate in the world. We hope our Penn expertise will help shake the grip of this deadly epidemic.

We celebrate with Penn Medicine the designation of its Center for Toxicology as a national Center of Excellence by the National Institutes of Health. Congratulations, too, to the School of Medicine on recapturing the #3 ranking for medical schools in *U.S. News and Report*.

I am delighted to welcome John L. Jackson, Jr. as our first Penn Integrates Knowledge professor. Dr. Jackson will be the Richard Perry University Associate Professor of Communications and Anthropology, holding joint appointments in the Annenberg School of Communications and the School of Arts and Sciences. Dr. Jackson also will be affiliated with the Center for Africana Studies.

As a leading scholar of cultural anthropology as well as a documentary filmmaker, Dr. Jackson brings exciting multiple perspectives to Penn through his work in race studies, urban anthropology, and popular culture. His appointment will strengthen bonds between the Annenberg School and the School of Arts and Sciences, reaffirming the spirit of our Penn Compact.

There was a vibrant spirit of integrated knowledge at *Poor, Young, Black & Male: A Case for National Action?*, the national conference Penn hosted in April. Sponsored by nine Penn schools and centers, this three-day event brought together leading scholars, journalists and community leaders to scrutinize one of our society’s most complex and urgent challenges: the plight of our young African American men. We are grateful to Elijah Anderson, Charles and William L. Day Distinguished Professor of the Social Sciences and Professor of Sociology, for his leadership in organizing this important meeting of the minds.

Another strong Penn leader, Michael Fitts, will be recommended to the Trustees for reappointment as Dean of the Law School for a second term through 2012. Dean Fitts has done an absolutely outstanding job of leading the Law School to ever greater
academic heights and has fostered a collaborative culture that redounds to the benefit of our entire University community.

Finally, we have memorialized a great Penn leader who served for 25 years as Dean of the Annenberg School for Communication, George Gerbner. The Annenberg Foundation has generously contributed $2.5 million to establish and support the George Gerbner Post-Doctoral Fellowship Program at the Annenberg School for Communication at Penn. A scholar, teacher, mentor, academic leader, and aspiring poet,

George Gerbner was a pioneer in the academic field of Communication and Penn’s longest-serving dean. Students from the Annenberg School at Penn and the Annenberg School at the University of Southern California will be eligible for selection to the two-year residencies for study and research of communication.