MEMORANDUM

To: Members of University Council

From: Amy Gutmann, President

Date: February 3, 2010

Subject: Report to the University Council

We begin the New Year rejuvenated. In the short time since the semester began, we have broken our undergraduate application record, reached a new milestone in our Making History campaign, reaped the success of our capital projects, and answered the call of our brothers and sisters in Haiti.

Penn continues to attract many of the world’s most talented students. This year, Penn’s undergraduate application record was shattered when 26,800 students submitted applications for admission to our Class of 2014. This figure represents a 17 percent increase in applicants since last year’s cycle. The number of applications from black or African-American students and from Latino students increased by 33 percent and 29 percent, respectively. Notably, our School of Engineering and Applied Science saw a 32 percent increase in applications, and our School of Nursing saw a 31 percent increase.

In Making History campaign news, the support of our alumni, parents, and friends has helped us reach another significant milestone. To date, we have raised $2.62 billion, which represents 75 percent of our $3.5 billion goal. Earlier this month, Penn announced a strategically-important gift from Campaign Chair George Weiss to endow four new PIK University Professorships, which will allow Penn to recruit more eminent faculty members who engage in interdisciplinary research. The $20-million donation brings the total amount raised to support faculty to more than $386 million, surpassing 60 percent of our goal.

On campus, the renovated and expanded Music Building opened its doors to the delight of students, faculty, and staff. New classrooms, practice rooms, offices, computer labs, recording and electronic studios provide much-needed space, and the revitalized façade beautifies 34th Street. Meanwhile, Skirkanich Hall, winner of the 2008 New York Chapter Design Award, received the 2010 Institute Honor Award for Architecture from the American Institute of Architects. In particular, the members of the jury lauded the building’s beauty and its integration with adjacent buildings.
This semester, we will continue to strengthen our sustainability efforts. The 2010 RecycleMania Tournament is already underway and runs until March 28. The competition pits Penn against Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, MIT, Princeton, Stanford, and Yale and is an effective and fun way to increase sustainability awareness on campus. Penn is competing in three categories this year: highest overall recycling rate, highest amount of recyclables per person, and least amount of trash per person. Waste reduction and increased recycling rates are two of the goals of our Climate Action Plan, and this friendly contest gives each of us a chance to learn about good practices and incorporate them into our daily lives.

In addition to organizing on-campus initiatives such as RecycleMania, Penn is collaborating with universities around the world to enhance our sustainability efforts. In late January at the annual World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, I joined the members of the Global University Leadership Forum in signing the Sustainable Campus Charter. The agreement calls for the development of campus-wide principles and measurable goals for sustainable development, construction, and operations, as well as the enhancement of educational offerings that focus on sustainability principles and practice. Penn already has made great strides in these areas, and this new initiative will help us share what we have learned with other institutions.

I am also pleased to report that Provost Price and I will recommend to the Board of Trustees at their February meeting that Dr. Michael X. Delli Carpini be reappointed for a second term as Dean of the Annenberg School for Communication. Dean Delli Carpini’s first term was distinguished by marked success across major dimensions, and we anticipate continued progress under his superb leadership.

Finally, when a catastrophic earthquake struck Haiti a day before this semester began, the Penn community mobilized quickly and efficiently. Campus groups hosted vigils and benefit events, organized donation campaigns, and collected necessities including food, clothing, and shoes to support the victims. The School of Social Policy and Practice’s Institute for High Impact Philanthropy created a website to help donors identify legitimate charity organizations, and a team from Penn Medicine traveled to the devastated country to provide care and deliver more than 1200 pounds of much-needed medical equipment. These are just some examples of the tremendous outpouring of support from students, faculty, and staff, and I am proud of all that we continue to do to help the victims.

With just a month of 2010 behind us, we have celebrated record-breaking admissions numbers, benefited from the generosity of Penn’s stalwart supporters, celebrated openings and accolades, and joined together to support the citizens of Haiti. The New Year is off to a bright start at Penn, and I look forward to reporting more good news in the coming months.