MEMORANDUM

To:       Members of University Council
From:     Amy Gutmann, President
Date:     February 2, 2011
Subject:  Report to the University Council

Though we are just one month into a New Year, Penn is humming along, and we’ve started the semester on several wonderful notes. A record number of young women and men have submitted applications for admission; our beautiful campus is growing more sustainable, and our most recent graduates are thriving. This year, we will work side-by-side to advance the Penn Compact and to improve Penn’s formidable reputation here in the United States and around the world.

Many of the world’s most talented students are seeking admission to Penn’s Class of 2015. This year, more 31,000 students submitted applications, a 17.5 percent increase in applications since last year’s cycle and a record for the University. Geographic diversity continues to grow; applications from residents of the southeastern United States and parts of the Midwest increased more than 20 percent, and applications from California increased 25 percent.

Current students continue to pursue the goals set out in our Climate Action Plan, adopting environmentally-friendly and sustainable practices that improve our campus and inspire our peer institutions. In December, more than 2,000 Penn students pledged to reduce energy consumption as part of our Power Down Challenge. Before leaving for winter break, they turned off and unplugged appliances, a simple step that saved the University $2,300 and, more importantly, reduced average daily electric use by 7.2 percent. Faculty and staff in hundreds of offices and laboratories across campus also powered down to conserve energy, and have been active and energized partners in our greening efforts.

Career Services recently closed its annual survey of graduates, and the Class of 2010 is faring well in the job market. Only 9 percent of respondents reported that that they were seeking employment, down from 11 percent in 2009. More than 80 percent of the graduates who are employed full time had offers in hand by graduation. We are optimistic that that percentage will increase this year because more employers have been attending career days, and on-campus interviews have increased by more than 10 percent.
In *Making History* campaign news, we will very soon pass the $3 billion mark in commitments, a remarkable 90 percent of which are already in hand. Our alumni, parents, and friends continue to engage with the University while generously supporting our highest strategic priorities. Last month, nearly 200 friends of Penn attended our *Engaging Minds* program in London, where three of our PIK professors shared their research and described the ways in which working at Penn has enabled them to improve our world.

In other news, Lori Doyle has stepped down from her position as Vice President for University Communications after a decade of service defined by collaborative leadership, unflagging adaptability, and diverse expertise. She will join Drexel University as Senior Vice President of University Communications. A search for her successor will begin immediately. Vice President and Chief of Staff Greg Rost will lead the search. Phyllis Holtzman will serve Penn as Interim Vice President for University Communications until the position is filled.

Finally, since our last University Council meeting, the U.S. Congress overturned its previous “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy for the U.S. military. Penn consistently opposed the policy since its formulation nearly two decades ago. We remain fundamentally committed to the values of diversity and equality of opportunity. This important step forward in repealing “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” not only strengthens the fundamental civil rights of all Americans, but also underscores the critical importance of speaking out against discriminatory practices.