MEMORANDUM

To: Members of University Council
From: Amy Gutmann, President
Date: March 30, 2011
Subject: Report to the University Council

College Green is dotted with students; the flowers have started to bloom, and the Spring Fling concert lineup has been announced: a new season has started at Penn. Together, we welcome warmer weather, celebrate our shared progress, and rededicate ourselves to increasing access, integrating knowledge across disciplines, and engaging locally and globally.

We continue to partner and engage with government leaders and community organizations to increase environmental sustainability across the City. On Thursday, faculty and staff who own homes within the city limits will gather on College Green to pick up free trees as part of Greenworks Philadelphia, an initiative to plant 300,000 new trees in the city by 2015. Penn is sponsoring the pilot program in partnership with Philadelphia Parks and Recreation and UC Green, and we are delighted that Penn alum Mayor Michael A. Nutter will be joining us for the event.

Beginning at 5:00 p.m. on March 30, high school students from around the world will be able to access regular admissions decisions online. To help increase the number of students from underrepresented groups in the Class of 2015, the Quaker Opportunity and Access Team, which was created this fall and includes representatives from the Asian Pacific Student Coalition, the Latino Student Coalition, the Lambda Alliance, UMOJA, and the United Minorities Council, will be reaching out to prospective students over the phone.

As the Class of 2015 takes shape, we prepare to celebrate the graduates of Class of 2011. This year’s honorary degree recipients recently were announced. Director, producer, and Academy Award-winning actor Denzel Washington will deliver the Commencement Address and will be presented with an honorary degree. Penn also will honor the contributions of Annenberg Professor Emerita of the Social Sciences Renée C. Fox, entrepreneur and philanthropist Mo Ibrahim, Pulitzer Prize winning-journalists Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, Nobel Laureate and Penn alum Ei-ichi Negishi, and celebrated author Joyce Carol Oates.

Earlier this month, an earthquake in the Pacific Ocean and a subsequent tsunami devastated the eastern coast of Japan. The effects of this staggering natural disaster and efforts to repair reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station held the attention of people around the world. The University community is grateful that no Penn students, faculty, or staff were harmed, and we extend our deepest condolences to the people of Japan as they work to recover from this tragic event.