MEMORANDUM

To: Members of University Council
From: Amy Gutmann, President
Date: October 2, 2013
Subject: Status Report to the University Council

Welcome to another year of discovery and possibility at Penn, and welcome back to University Council. We ushered in the 274th year of the University of Pennsylvania with Convocation, where I officially welcomed the most selective Class in our history. Wonderfully diverse and hugely talented, the Class of 2017 is a real testament to the outstanding work of Dean Eric Furda and his team.

We also recently welcomed Steve Fluharty to his new role as dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, where he’s moving forward with great energy and vision. We’ve begun dean searches in GSE, Nursing, SP2, and Wharton, and our consultative committees are diligently at work identifying candidates who will advance Penn’s commitment to excellence and diversity. Until their work is done, each School remains in the capable hands of its current dean.

I join Provost Price in congratulating Anita Allen, our new Vice Provost for Faculty, and Dawn Bonnell, Penn’s new Vice Provost for Research, on joining the Provost’s Office. We’re also thrilled to welcome Peter Ammon as Penn’s new Chief Investment Officer.

In May, we proudly announced the appointment of Rakesh Vohra as the University of Pennsylvania’s 15th Penn Integrates Knowledge Professor. Rakesh is the George A. Weiss and Lydia Bravo Weiss University Professor with appointments in SAS and in SEAS. He is a prolific scholar whose mechanism design research combines economics, engineering, and computer science to bring critical new insights to fields such as operations and market systems.

In June, we were pleased to announce the appointment of Daniel Mindiola as our fourth Presidential Term Professor, serving as Professor of Chemistry in the SAS. Daniel is widely recognized as a one of the most important rising scholars in inorganic chemistry. With these two important appointments, we continue to strengthen Penn’s world-class faculty and interdisciplinary eminence.

This Friday, October 4, we will celebrate the long-awaited grand opening of Penn’s stunning new Singh Center for Nanotechnology. The Singh Center is an innovation and impact tour de force as well as an architectural marvel. It brings together basic research, applied technology, and interdisciplinary inquiry spanning both SAS and SEAS. It adds immensely to the beautification of the eastern gateway to our campus. And it will inspire even greater local engagement, with exciting new industry and community partnerships that will help make the Singh Center a regional nanotech powerhouse.

I want to conclude with well-deserved praise for our superb faculty, who continue to garner prestigious honors and awards. To cite just one eminent example: This summer, Laurie Olin, the Practice Professor of Landscape Architecture in PennDesign, was presented with the National Medal of Arts by President Barack Obama. The Medal is our nation’s highest civic honor for excellence in the arts and is stewarded by the National Endowment for the Arts.
Professor Olin has taught at Penn for 35 years and been a key advisor to me on Penn Connects, our master plan for campus. His firm has contributed to renowned design for the Barnes Foundation, New York City’s Bryant Park, and the Washington Monument Grounds.

Thank you for your service to University Council and to Penn. I join you in looking forward to the wonderful and productive year ahead.