MEMORANDUM

To: Members of University Council
From: Amy Gutmann, President
Date: February 19, 2014
Subject: Report to the University Council

At Penn, the wellbeing of our students is paramount. In a university-wide email on February 6, Provost Price, Executive Vice President Carnaroli, and I outlined immediate steps to expand Penn’s mental health efforts and support students in distress. We approved three new permanent clinical staff positions in CAPS, with three interim temporary staff, which helps allow for more flexible hours. In the long term, we will continue to give this matter our full attention, ensuring the best use of Penn’s resources in support of our students and adding to those resources as needed. We strive to provide the best possible systems of student care, but we cannot fully succeed through administrative action alone. Every member of the Penn community must also endeavor to foster a positive, accepting, and supportive environment on campus.

So I have been greatly heartened during this difficult time by the many ways Penn students, faculty, and staff have pulled together. From vigils to extended office hours to outreach on Locust Walk, we remember that even in the most challenging times, our greatest strength and most valuable resource is the support of one another.

The power of community at Penn was abundantly evident at the celebratory ARCH open house two weeks ago. The ARCH embodies and supports all the ways the Penn community comes together to support one another, and this event really captured that spirit, thanks in large part to the wonderful student performing groups, CURF, and the cultural centers La Casa Latina, Makuu, and the Pan-Asian American Community House. Visitors also enjoyed a preview of Chef Rick Bayless’ cuisine, whose new Tortas Frontera café is now in full operation at the ARCH. My thanks to everyone who helped make the grand reopening such a memorable experience.

Michael Fitts, Penn Law’s longstanding dean and a model university citizen, was recently named the next president of Tulane University and will assume the post this summer. During his 14-year tenure, Dean Fitts has been exemplary in his leadership of Penn Law. Among his many accomplishments, he has overseen dramatic growth of the Law faculty, significantly expanded interdisciplinary programming, strengthened student financial aid, and exceeded campaign fundraising and alumni engagement goals. Dean Fitts is a universally respected colleague and superb leader, and though we are sorry to lose him, he’s an inspired choice to become Tulane’s next president. In the meantime, we will announce an interim dean for Penn Law soon.

Finally, I’m proud to announce that four Penn students have received Thouron Awards to pursue their graduate studies in the United Kingdom:

- Sonya Davey, C’14, is applying to Oxford for an MSc in medical anthropology
- Christi Economy, C’14, is applying to Oxford for an MPP
- Allison Pearce, EAS’14, is applying to Cambridge for an MPhil in advanced computer science
- Carson Woodbury, C’14, is applying to Cambridge for an MPhil in biological science

Congratulations to our 2014 Thouron Award winners!