MEMORANDUM

To: Members of University Council
From: Amy Gutmann, President
Date: January 28, 2015
Subject: Report to the University Council

Happy New Year and welcome back to University Council. I am pleased to report that applications for the Class of 2019 have broken all previous Penn records with a 4 percent increase over last year. In all, Penn has received over 37,200 applications, and the quality and competitiveness among these applicants is extremely high. Thanks to the superb efforts of Dean Eric Furda and the Admissions team, Penn is well on its way to welcoming an extraordinary Class of 2019.

Last month, Penn celebrated the “topping off” ceremony for our new Neural and Behavioral Sciences Building. This signified the completion of the structural phase of this new home for psychology, biology, and behavioral sciences. When completed, the beautiful $68.6 million, six-story structure will house advanced teaching facilities, cutting edge laboratories, and study space. With an eye for Penn’s sustainability goals, we are also aiming for a LEED Silver rating or higher for the new NBS building. Penn’s Neural and Behavioral Sciences Building will be a signature addition to the nation’s most innovative, beautiful, and sustainable urban campus, as well as an invaluable resource for our students and faculty.

The Penn community has some very special anniversaries to celebrate as well. The Perelman School of Medicine marks its 250th Anniversary this year, and the Graduate School of Education celebrates its Centennial. Throughout the spring, both the Perelman School and GSE will be showcasing how centuries of Penn teaching and discovery have transformed care for the body and cultivation for the mind. I encourage everyone to participate in these historic anniversaries and learn more about these two landmark Penn Schools.

With GSE’s Centennial celebration underway, there really couldn’t be a more fitting time to welcome our new Graduate School of Education Dean, Pam Grossman, who began her term this month. She is an internationally respected expert on some of the most important issues confronting primary and secondary education today, and she is passionate about great teaching. Pam’s proven track record of collaborative leadership makes her a perfect match for GSE’s exceptional students, faculty, alumni, and staff. I invite everyone in the Penn community to join me in giving Pam a very warm welcome.

Four Penn professors were recently elected to the prestigious American Association for the Advancement of Science. The new Penn AAAS members represent SAS and the Perelman School across several critically important areas of research:

- Dr. Rexford Ahima, professor of medicine at the Perelman School.
- Dr. Marisa Bartolomei, professor of cell and developmental biology at the Perelman School.
- Dr. Charles Epstein, Thomas A. Scott Professor of Mathematics and professor of radiology in mathematics in SAS.
- Dr. Robert Kalb, professor of neurology at the Perelman School.
I am also proud to report Penn’s newest Rhodes Scholar is Rutendo Chigora, whose work in creating economic opportunities for vulnerable communities garnered a win at the 2014 Clinton Global Initiatives University Conference. On behalf of Penn, I wish Ruti the very best as she finishes her senior year and prepares for graduate study at Oxford University.

Finally, Provost Price, EVP Carnaroli, and I announced the launch of the HELP Line last month. It is a 24-hour phone service for any member of the Penn community who is seeking time-sensitive help in navigating Penn’s resources for health and wellness. The HELP Line is open all day and night, seven days a week, and is run by professionals trained in mental health referrals by staff from CAPS. This resource is one in a series of steps Penn continues to take to expand mental health support for students and all members of our community. The number is 215-898-HELP. I encourage all University Council members to share this important update with your constituents and to use it yourselves whenever you need guidance on how best to offer support and assistance to those in distress.

We have a productive and rewarding semester ahead of us, and I look forward to working with you. Thank you for your service to University Council.