PROVOST’S STATUS REPORT
University Council
February 2010

It is a pleasure to welcome everyone back for a new year, decade, and semester. President Gutmann and I are enormously proud of and moved by our community’s widespread response to the tragedy in Haiti. From doctors to student leaders to everyone who has contributed time, supplies, or funds, we are grateful for your compassionate efforts.

I expect that all undergraduates have experienced the new Penn Portal, which is more flexible and customizable than any previous version. I encourage students to provide feedback on the portal – and also on our online syllabi and course evaluation initiatives – so that my office can continue to work with ISC to make student technologies as useful and accessible as possible.

I am delighted that Prof. Lynn Lees, Professor of History in the School of Arts and Sciences, took office in January as Vice Provost for Faculty. Prof. Lees is an extraordinarily experienced and accomplished scholar, who has taught at Penn for 35 years and served in a wide range of major roles, including two terms as Chair of the History Department. She and I are pleased to announce the 2010 cohort of Penn Fellows, a program begun last year to provide leadership development to a select group of mid-career faculty. They are: Profs. Lisa Bellini (SOM), Camille Charles (SAS), Chanita Hughes-Halbert (SOM), Kelly Jordan-Sciutto (SDM), Randall Mason (Penn Design), and Peter Struck (SAS). I encourage you to learn more about them at: http://www.upenn.edu/provost/penn_fellows.

Penn continues to be a leader in family-friendly initiatives, which become ever more important in an era of constrained resources. This semester will see the development of the Penn Forum for Women Faculty, a new group of women faculty, representing all twelve Schools, that will offer programs and events to help women faculty build networks across campus, advocate for policies and practices important to women faculty, advise the administration on matters of significance to women faculty, and learn more about best practices at other universities.

Last month saw the opening of our Family Resource Center for student parents, located on the second floor of Houston Hall, and the introduction of a new backup care program that gives faculty and staff a way to get emergency care in their homes, whenever they need it, for children, parents, or other family members. These initiatives complement the new adoption benefit inaugurated last year, which helps subsidize qualified adoption expenses for Penn faculty and staff.

I look forward to working together in the year ahead.

Vincent Price
Provost