I encourage all members of the Penn community, as we look ahead to the wonderful spring and Commencement season, to learn more about the important initiatives now accepting proposals for next academic year. I would like to call particular attention to two significant funds whose proposal deadlines are approaching soon, in early April.

The Diversity Fund, for almost fifteen years, has done vital work in upholding the University’s commitment to a diverse community. It helps to implement Schools’ strategic plans to recruit and retain faculty members from historically underrepresented minority groups, and it supports projects to diversify the Penn community and advance research on diversity in higher education. The Fund prioritizes projects with the potential for lasting contributions to Penn, and it therefore gives priority to proposals that demonstrate strong prospects for success and sustainability, as reflected in such criteria as matching financial commitments from Schools or centers, existing external support, or well-articulated plans to seek such support. Proposals for the Diversity Fund are due April 8, and you can find more information at: http://www.upenn.edu/almanac/volumes/v57/n22/diversity.html

The Provost’s Interdisciplinary Arts Fund is a new initiative to support collaborative, interdisciplinary arts & culture projects that integrate knowledge across the University and directly engage students, as well as those that contribute to academic theme years. It will be offered each spring term for projects during the next academic year. Proposals are due to my office by April 1, and you can learn more at: http://www.upenn.edu/almanac/volumes/v57/n22/artsfund.html.

I am also pleased to note that, this fall, we will begin a new program of Family Grants for PhD Students with Children. These annual awards, up to $2500 a year for students who meet specific eligibility and income criteria, will help defray the costs of such expenses as child care and dependent health care. Family Grants form part of a group of initiatives for students with children – such as the Family Resource Center, student-parent mentoring program, and new policies for dependent care leave – which help ensure that our graduate students are not forced to choose between pursuing their academic careers and caring for their families. For more information about these resources for Penn students with children, please visit: www.gsc.upenn.edu/kids/resources.php.

I encourage everyone to apply for – and to let others know about – these valuable programs, and I look forward to working together in the months ahead.

Vincent Price
Provost