I hope that everyone enjoyed a wonderful winter break. I am very pleased to begin the year by announcing the appointment of Prof. John L. Jackson, Jr., Richard Perry University Professor of Communication and Anthropology, as Senior Advisor to the Provost for Diversity. In this new, three-year position, Prof. Jackson will serve as the key strategic advisor on diversity initiatives to me and my senior leadership team. He will work closely with the Deans, Faculty Senate, University Council, and other campus leaders to make recommendations for diversity goals and programs, develop appropriate means of assessment, and help implement our ambitious Action Plan for Faculty Diversity & Excellence. As many of you know, Prof. Jackson already served the Council with great distinction as the founding chair of the Committee on Diversity and Equity. He will be an invaluable partner in helping us chart the future of diversity at Penn, and I encourage you to welcome him and work closely with him in his important new role.

We also mark the start of each calendar year by welcoming a new cohort of Penn Fellows. This program, begun in 2009, offers leadership development to a select group of faculty members in mid-career, providing them with opportunities to learn more about university governance, build alliances across Schools, and meet with Penn’s senior administrators. The 2012 Penn Fellows are: Patricia D’Antonio (SON), Emma Dillon (SAS), Mark Duggan (Wharton), John Hogenesch (PSOM), Benjamin Horton (SAS), Marisa Kozlowski (SAS), Jennifer Lukes (SEAS), and Beth Winkelstein (SEAS). Please join me and Prof. Lynn Lees, Vice Provost for Faculty, in congratulating these outstanding campus leaders.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that, at the end of the fall semester, we made 17 awards from the Global Engagement Fund to a wide variety of exciting projects that will further the range and scope of Penn’s global engagement. This Fund is designed to support projects that collaborate across Schools and disciplines; engage regions in which Penn has ongoing academic partnerships and collaborative ventures, such as China and India; or represent cross-university academic and thematic priorities, such as sustainability or neuroscience. The awards, which encompass 11 Penn Schools and more than 15 countries around the world, will support new courses, faculty research projects, international conferences and collaborations, and visits to Penn by distinguished international scholars. Proposals for the spring funding cycle will be due on March 2, with an official Call for Proposals in the January 24 Almanac.

I look forward to working together in the year ahead.

Vincent Price
Provost