As we begin the spring semester, I hope that everyone has had an opportunity to visit the beautiful, renovated ARCH building on Locust Walk. The new ARCH brings together two of Penn’s highest priorities: the Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships (CURF) and our vibrant cultural centers. Its expansive and flexible spaces will allow CURF and the cultural centers to enhance their programs and play an ever larger role at the heart of campus life. President Gutmann and I invite all members of the Penn community to an Open House at the ARCH on February 6, between 3 PM and 7 PM. It will feature performances and master classes from our student performing arts groups, a scavenger hunt to explore the building, workshops and panels, and wonderful food from Rick Bayless, the acclaimed chef whose café will be one of the highlights of the new building – and his first such venue on a university campus.

The advisory committee has now been named on the appointment of a Director of Recreation and Intercollegiate Athletics to succeed Steve Bilsky. It is chaired by me and Executive Vice President Craig Carnaroli and includes students, faculty, staff, alumni, and coaches, many of them outstanding Penn student-athletes themselves. You will find more information, as well as an opportunity to offer comments and suggestions, at: http://provost.upenn.edu/about/dria-search. Nominations of and inquiries from potential candidates may also be sent by February 28 to Assistant Provost Lynne Hunter, at lynneh@upenn.edu.

I am grateful to all the members of the Penn community who offered their suggestions last semester on the draft Self-Study Report for our upcoming reaccreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The Report will be submitted to Middle States by the end of this month, followed in March by a site visit from a team of distinguished leaders and higher education experts from other universities, headed by President John DeGioia of Georgetown University. The evaluation team will then issue its own report which, together with our Self-Study, will help chart the future of educational initiatives at Penn in the years to come.

Finally, please join me in congratulating our eight new Penn Fellows. This invaluable program provides leadership development to a small group of Penn faculty members in mid-career, providing them with opportunities to build alliances across Schools, meet with Penn’s senior administrators and other academic leaders, and think strategically about universities and university governance. This year’s eight Fellows come to us from five Penn schools: Professors Paulo Arratia from SEAS; Jennifer Blouin from Wharton; Sara Cherry and Ronald Rubenstein from PSOM; Justin Khoury, Emilio Parrado, and Adriana Petryna from SAS; and Laura Perna from GSE.

I look forward to working together in the semester ahead.

Vincent Price
Provost