This is the thirtieth annual report of the Steering Committee of the University Council, prepared in accordance with a requirement in the Council Bylaws that the Steering Committee publish an annual report to the University community that reviews the previous year’s Council deliberations and highlights “both significant discussions and the formal votes taken on matters of substance.”

SEPTEMBER MEETING

In accordance with the Bylaws, Council called for the selection and ranking of focus issues for the 2007 – 2008 academic year. Council Steering Committee Chair Larry Gladney reported that the Steering Committee had held a preliminary discussion regarding focus issues and opened the floor for discussion. After significant discussion, Council members were asked to rank his/her top three possible focus issues from the following list:

- Full analysis and discussion of mental health issues
- Safety and emergency preparedness for Penn and Philadelphia
- Penn Connects
- Penn’s involvement in the community
- How international students and scholars at Penn and Penn Study Abroad affect Penn
- Penn’s response to communicable diseases
- Recruitment and retention of preeminent and diverse faculty and scholars
- Metrics used to measure the quality and effectiveness of programs and how they are communicated to the University community
- Campus climate

University Secretary Leslie Kruhly advised that her office would tally the votes and report back to Council at the next meeting regarding the order and ranking of focus issues for the year.

Council then turned to a discussion of the Committee Charges. Undergraduate Assembly Vice Chair Wilson Tong asked and Council agreed that Penn’s response to communicable diseases be included in the charges for the Committee on Campus and Community Life, rather than discussed as a separate focus issue.
OCTOBER MEETING

In accordance with the Bylaws, the President and other administrators presented extended reports covering the State of the University. President Amy Gutmann’s presentation focused on the kick-off celebration of the University’s Making History fundraising campaign on October 20, 2007 and the award-winning eastern campus development plan, Penn Connects. She asked Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations John Zeller and Executive Vice President Craig Carnaroli to comment on those topics respectively.

It was announced that, based on the results of the poll taken at the previous Council meeting, Steering had decided on the following schedule of focus issues for the 2007 – 2008 academic year:

October 24, 2007
Presentation by the President and other administrators on the State of the University

Safety and Emergency Preparedness at Penn

November 14, 2007
Presentation by the Provost on the State of the University

Full Analysis and Discussion of Mental Health Issues

January 30, 2008
Update on Penn Connects
Steering agreed that Council should receive a mid-year update report on the state of Penn Connects, the campus development plan.

February 27, 2008
Recruitment and Retention of Preeminent and Diverse Faculty and Scholars

March 26, 2008
Annual budget presentation (as mandated by the Bylaws)

April 30, 2008
Committee Presentations

Council then turned to a discussion of the first focus issue for the year: safety and emergency preparedness at Penn. Vice President for Public Safety Maureen Rush focused most of her presentation on the new UPennAlert Emergency Notification System. She also gave an overview of Penn’s pyramid-style crisis management plan: prevention, response, and recovery.
During his status report to Council, Undergraduate Assembly Chair Jason Karsh updated Council regarding recent events surrounding Terrorism Awareness Week, Islamo-Fascism Awareness Week, and Islam Awareness Week. Mr. Karsh advised Council that concerns regarding the College Republicans’ intent to host events associated with Islamo-Fascism Awareness Week were first brought to the UA by the inter-faith student group PRISM. Mr. Karsh concluded by highlighting the willingness of the student groups involved (PRISM, the College Republicans, and the Muslim Student Association) to discuss the issue. The groups reached an amicable resolution to the immediate issue by changing the name of the event from Islamo-Fascism Awareness Week to Terrorism Awareness Week.

At the November meeting of Council, Steering Chair Larry Gladney gave an overview of what constitutes an appropriate topic for Open Forum. He noted that there was discrepancy between the practice agreed upon by Council in February 2003, which allowed for the availability of an Open Forum session at every meeting, and the practice dictated by the Bylaws. He advised that Steering would consider questions relating to Open Forum at its January meeting, but that there would be an Open Forum session available at the end of the November meeting.

Moderator Paul Guyer then turned the meeting over to Provost Daniels for the continuation of the State of the University presentation begun at the October meeting. Provost Daniels focused his presentation on two of the main University initiatives: diversity and internationalization.

Following the Provost’s State of the University presentation, Council turned to the second focus for the year: a discussion of mental health issues. The discussion featured three presenters covering different perspectives and mental health initiatives at Penn:

- Dr. Ilene Rosenstein: Director of Counseling and Psychological Services
- Dr. Stephanie Ives: Director of Strategic Initiatives for VPUL
- Ms. Marilyn Kraut: Director of Quality of Life Programs for Human Resources

Several issues emerged during the Open Forum portion of the meeting. In response to questions regarding the possibility of conducting a sophomore survey similar to the COFHE Senior Survey as well as some sort of climate survey for graduate students, Provost Daniels offered to brief Council on the survey instruments currently in use at Penn at a later Council meeting.

A student asked whether the Penn program in Botswana would address the specific issues of the centralization of resources and programs and backlogging of patient testing. Provost Daniels advised that although Penn’s program is centralized in Gaborone, the capital of Botswana, both the government and the hospital had requested that Penn set up satellite service areas outside the central region. Dr. Gutmann also noted that the Botswanan government was working hard to increase the capacity of the service areas.
Undergraduate Assembly Vice Chair Wilson Tong took the opportunity to convey his support for the Division of Public Safety and encouraged everyone to take advantage of the services provided, such as the walking escort service.

Finally, with regard to questions concerning the format and advertisement of Open Forum, Steering Chair Larry Gladney advised that Steering would fully discuss all of the issues pertaining to Open Forum at the January meeting and report back to Council.

JANUARY MEETING

The January meeting opened with a statement by Steering Chair Larry Gladney concerning Steering’s discussion of the Council Bylaws governing Open Forum and Steering’s role in setting the agenda for each Council meeting. He advised that there would be a second Open Forum during the academic year at the March University Council meeting and that it and all future Open Forums would be widely-publicized through such channels as the University Council website, Almanac, and The Daily Pennsylvanian. The new standard text for all Open Forum announcements can be found on the Office of the University Secretary website at:
http://www.upenn.edu/secretary/council/openforum.html.

President Gutmann then reported on her participation in the United Nations Colloquium of University Presidents which discussed the challenges posed by global warming and Penn’s continuing commitment to decrease emissions that contribute to global warming.

Council then turned to a discussion of political engagement on campus, an issue which was raised initially as an Open Forum item. Steering determined that the issue was significant enough to add to Council’s focus issues for the year. The discussion featured a panel of presenters including:

- Dr. Matthew Hartley (assistant professor at the Graduate School of Education)
- Michael Shiey (Chairman of the Penn College Republicans)
- Clayton Robinson (President of the Penn College Democrats)
- Joseph Tierney (Executive Director of the Robert A. Fox Leadership Program)
- Stephanie Simon (student president of Penn Leads the Vote)
- Allison Evans (a Ph.D. candidate in political science at the School of Arts and Sciences and a Fellow at the Graduate Student Center)

The presentations highlighted many of the political activities in which Penn students are engaged around campus, such as voter registration drives, political debates, and roundtable discussions concerning the American Electoral College. However, several of the presenters also indicated that there were many areas in which Penn could increase political engagement and awareness on campus. Some of the suggestions included making it easier for student groups to reserve space for large political events as well as the possibility of establishing a public service center, similar to Harvard’s Institute of Politics, whose mission it is to engage students by bringing politicians, government
leaders, and think tank leaders to campus. In response to some of the concerns raised, Vice Provost for University Life Valarie Swain-Cade McCoullum advised that Matthew Waller, Director of Communications and External Affairs for VPUL, could serve as a liaison to facilitate student groups in locating venues on campus. Dr. Gutmann also noted that her Chief of Staff, Vice President Greg Rost, would be available to assist students in this regard. In response to a question regarding the steps that the University might take to foster political engagement on campus, Provost Daniels advised that he would follow-up with Dr. Swain-Cade McCoullum regarding specific responses and recommendations.

At the end of the meeting, a member of Council asked whether there were any plans for the University to publicly release the results of the COFHE Survey. Provost Daniels advised that he would soon address this issue with Steering in preparation for a presentation to University Council.

FEBRUARY MEETING

At the February meeting, Provost Daniels advised that he had distributed a memo to Council members before the meeting which addressed a number of the issues raised during the discussion of political engagement on campus at the January meeting. (The full memorandum can be found online at http://www.upenn.edu/secretary/council/0802ProvostMemo.pdf.)

Provost Daniels then introduced Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs Vincent Price and Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences Rebecca Bushnell, who lead the discussion of the fourth focus issue for the year: the recruitment and retention of preeminent and diverse faculty.

Dr. Price’s presentation focused on the current composition of Penn’s faculty; the challenges faced by the University in recruiting diverse and preeminent faculty; the opportunities available at Penn to attract new faculty members; and Penn’s strategies for success in accomplishing its faculty objectives of excellence, diversity and interdisciplinary scholarship. He noted that there had been steady progress in the recruitment of women and minorities and that Penn, like its peer institutions, faced many challenges including: a competitive peer environment, space and resource limitations, a restricted pipeline, faculty attrition and work/family conflicts. Some of Penn’s current strategies for success include: a focus on faculty mentoring, campaign priorities (both building a stronger faculty and increasing graduate and undergraduate student aid), the provision of career support to facilitate locating jobs for partners of new and prospective faculty, a wide array of family-friendly policies and expanded diversity initiatives.

Dean Bushnell noted that what attracts faculty to Penn are not only its resources, space, and research, but also the intellectual community of the students with whom they can work and the opportunities to collaborate with other faculty members from Penn’s 12 diverse schools. She also advised that when a school seeks to build a faculty, the goal is to build communities within a department, that the building of these communities is a “very local business” at the department level.
At the end of the meeting, Steering Chair Larry Gladney reminded Council that a second Open Forum for this school year would be held at the March 26, 2008 University Council meeting.

MARCH MEETING

Council Moderator Paul Guyer advised Council that, in accordance with the Bylaws, the March University Council meeting would include extended reports by the President, the Provost and other administrators covering budgets and plans for the next academic year. President Gutmann then introduced the two presenters: Vice President for Budget and Management Analysis Bonnie Gibson and Director of Recreation and Intercollegiate Athletics Steven Bilsky.

Ms. Gibson focused her presentation on the operating budget for FY 08 and on the expected undergraduate tuition and charges for 2008-2009. She outlined the breakdown of revenue sources and expenditures; compared Penn’s total expenditures, endowment, and per student charges to our peer institutions; charted trends in spending, tuition and fees, and financial aid over several years; and highlighted expected total charges for 2008-2009. Ms. Gibson fielded questions regarding the tuition and charges for graduate and professional students, loss on investments given the current state of the economy, and the use of the Higher Education Price Index as opposed to the Consumer Price Index as a market indicator.

In response to a concern raised regarding the limited information given regard to graduate student fees and tuition, Ms. Gibson advised that she has given separate presentations which were geared toward graduate and professional student charges, but that in the following year she would include topics related to graduate and professional students in her Council presentation in a more substantial way.

More details from Ms. Gibson’s report can be found online at: http://www.upenn.edu/almanac/volumes/v54/n27/council.html.

Steven Bilsky then presented Penn’s plans to enhance athletic and recreational facilities. Mr. Bilsky described three phases for the proposed expansion of athletic and recreational facilities, including development of the 47 acres along the Schuylkill River:

- Phase I, scheduled for 2008-2010, includes the development of the George Weiss Pavilion at Franklin Field, the creation of the new Palestra Green, and the development of Penn Park
- Phase II, scheduled for 2010-2012, includes renovations to the Palestra and Hutchinson Gym
- Phase III, scheduled for 2012 and beyond, will include a new indoor track and swimming facilities
During the Open Forum session, several members of the University community addressed questions to Council and the administration. In response to a question concerning annual pay increases in light of the economic down-turn and the University’s commitment to performance-based salary increases, Ms. Gibson highlighted Penn’s reputation as the “best employer” in the Philadelphia region and commented that Penn’s salary structure is highly competitive, especially given Penn’s total compensation package. Dr. Gutmann affirmed that the University is committed to providing salary increases based on performance and that Vice President for Human Resources Jack Heuer would be apprised of the concern raised by this Open Forum topic.

In response to concerns regarding the impact of the proposed hotel at 40th and Pine Streets on the surrounding neighborhood, Vice President for Facilities and Real Estate Services Anne Papageorge advised that the project was currently in the “letter of intent” phase with a developer with a zoning hearing set for May 6, 2008. She indicated that the developer and the University were aware of the concerns that the community had raised about this project and were taking steps to respond accordingly.

A long-time member of the University community voiced her concern that the University was not genuinely committed to recycling. Ms. Papageorge and others (including students) emphasized Penn’s strong commitment to recycling. It was noted that even though trash may be co-mingled in the bins around campus, it is separated into proper categories once it arrives at the recycling plant. Ms. Papageorge also advised that there would be a new website devoted to Penn’s sustainability efforts. (The new website can be found here: http://www.business-services.upenn.edu/sustainability/index.html).

Dr. Gutmann affirmed that Penn’s recycling efforts were substantial but that the University would continue to seek additional ways to become more sustainable.

Dr. Swain-Cade McCoullum addressed a concern raised regarding the “antiquated and classist” Greek system by highlighting the numerous community service and outreach programs in which members of Penn’s fraternities and sororities participate. Mr. Karsh concurred and Ms. Rush thanked the fraternities and sororities for their active participation in Penn Police community outreach programs.

In response to a concern raised regarding the 25% budget decrease for the Asian American Studies Program, Dr. Price advised that each school at Penn has its own budget and financial concerns due to the decentralized structure of the University. He noted that the real issue may be a question of curriculum, rather than a decision about a specific program per se.

Vice President for Business Services Marie Witt addressed a student’s concern regarding the funding for renovations for DuBois College House and other low rises. Ms. Witt advised that the administration was addressing needed College House improvements in a timely fashion and that there were planned improvements scheduled for Du Bois and other low rises over the next nine months. Because of the critical nature of the renovations needed, she noted that the high rises had demanded more immediate attention.
In response to a suggestion to create a fund for library staff to purchase books for newly hired professors, Dr. Price advised that he would look into the need and feasibility for such a fund.

A member of Council noted that, for undergraduate applicants, Penn now uses the Common Application, which does not provide a gender option other than male or female and asked whether there were any plans to provide a supplementary option. Dr. Gutmann noted that Penn would soon be moving to the Universal Application but that this question could be best addressed by Penn’s new Dean of Admissions Eric Furda.

In response to a question, Mr. Bilsky advised that the upcoming NCAA diversity training program was primarily aimed toward coaches and staff and already had about 100 people enrolled. He advised that consideration would be given to offering an additional training session for athletes.

APRIL MEETING

The last Council meeting of the year featured final reports by committee chairs of three of the University Council standing committees, a report by the chair of the Committee on Committees, and a presentation by Associate Provost Andy Binns regarding selected results of the COFHE Senior Survey. (The full text of each of the committee reports can be found online at http://www.upenn.edu/secretary/council/index.html.)

Professor Sohrab Rabii, Chair of the Committee on Academic and Related Affairs, reported on the work of that Committee this year. He advised that the Committee’s charges for the year were centered on three predominant themes: issues pertaining to admissions and recruiting, the governance of athletics and recreation, and policies surrounding the ethical conduct of research, scholarship, and professional education at Penn. Professor Rabii noted that the Committee met with several members of the administration including Interim Dean of Admissions Eric Kaplan, Director of International Admissions Elisabeth O’Connell, Director of Recreation and Intercollegiate Athletics Steven Bilsky, Associate Director of Athletics and Recreation Mike Diorka, Director of Recreation Amy Wagner, Associate Provost for Education Andrew Binns, and Director of the Office of Student Conduct Susan Herron.

Professor Walter Wales, Chair of the Committee on Facilities, reported that this Committee focused on the plans to close the South Street Bridge as well as promote and expand Penn Transportation services. He noted that new construction along 34th Street as well as the closing of the South Street Bridge would have a tremendous effect on traffic patterns and pedestrian safety. He noted that both of these issues should remain on the Committee’s list of charges for the following year. Other charges for the Committee included receiving updates on University sustainability efforts, Penn Connects projects, and deferred maintenance issues.
Committee Chair John Jackson reported to Council on the work of the Committee on Diversity and Equity. Dr. Jackson advised Council that the Committee concentrated its efforts on four main issues:

- Finalizing proposed language for Penn’s Equal Opportunity Policy and Affirmative Action Statement
- Researching available means of assessing campus climate and urging the University to publicize the results of the COFHE Senior Survey
- Examining the barriers to recruiting diverse and preeminent faculty at Penn
- Analyzing issues pertaining to the recruitment and retention of diverse graduate students; and meeting with representatives of the Office of the Provost to advise on creating a centralized diversity website which features prominently on the Penn homepage

Dr. Gutmann thanked all of the Committee chairs for their presentations and advised that the administration was looking forward to reviewing their reports in greater detail. In addition, she advised Council that she wanted to restate the University’s continuing opposition to the “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” policy of the United States Department of Defense, advising that the policy is inconsistent with the University’s own principles of non-discrimination. She noted that the policy is now codified into federal law and is backed by the threat of losing tens of millions of dollars in federal funding. In response to a question regarding the University’s funding of ROTC programs on campus, Dr. Gutmann advised that it is important for Penn not to deprive its students of the ability to partake in ROTC, but that the University would continue to work to lobby Congress and the military to abandon its discriminatory policies.

Steering Chair Larry Gladney then reported to Council on the findings of the Committee on Committees, whose role is to evaluate the functioning of the Council committees. Dr. Gladney reminded Council that this was the second year under the new committee structure and he provided a brief overview of the mechanism that the Committee on Committees used in its evaluation. Based on interviews with Committee chairs, staffers, and members, several themes and recommendations emerged that were applicable to all committees and Dr. Gladney noted that Steering would take action to implement all of them:

- The chair of each of the standing committees of Council should have experience with the work of that committee.
- Committee meeting times should be set in advance of the academic year so that committees can meet earlier in the year and committee members can arrange their schedules to permit maximum participation.
- Steering should reinforce the purpose of the Council committees and the processes by which their deliberations are reported to Council and further considered by Steering.

Provost Daniels then introduced a discussion of selected results of the COFHE Senior Survey. He advised Council that the presentation followed a very extensive period of
deliberation, debate, reflection, and considerable analysis on the part of the administration. Provost Daniels advised that the COFHE data was just one instrument in the University’s “arsenal” of tools used to explore issues of campus climate. He noted that making the COFHE data available did not suggest that the discussion of this data at Council would be the only discussion regarding campus climate.

Provost Daniels turned the meeting over to Dr. Binns to lead the discussion. Dr. Binns first gave an overview of the COFHE Senior Survey, the advantages of using this survey, and the type of information garnered from the Senior Survey. After the overview, Dr. Binns reported to Council on the actual data gathered from the 2006 survey results. Finally, he advised Council on some of Penn’s future plans for assessments and surveys, including eliciting feedback from the Penn community in terms of the Penn-specific questions for use on future Senior Surveys. He advised Council that while the Senior Survey looks at many different areas of concern to students, his presentation focused primarily on the data that related specifically to climate issues.

Provost Daniels, Dr. Binns and Vice President for Institutional Affairs Joann Mitchell fielded many questions regarding the results presented, including:

- Whether the administration would seek input from student leaders regarding the additional questions that Penn would include in future surveys
- Whether Penn would include questions about how the University is faring in light of the goals of the Penn Compact
- Whether the data could be broken down in other ways besides race, such as socio-economic status
- How the survey handles those students who self-identify as multi-racial or multi-ethnic
- Whether there were any plans to survey graduate and professional students in terms of campus climate

(The power point slides for this presentation can be found online at http://www.upenn.edu/secretary/council/index.html.)

The moderator then turned the meeting over to Steering Chair Larry Gladney who advised Council that Steering had discussed the following preliminary list of focus issues for the 2008 – 2009 academic year:

- Discussion of diversity issues and initiatives on campus
- Metrics used by the University to measure the quality and effectiveness of programs at Penn and how the results are communicated to the University community
- Penn’s involvement in West Philadelphia and the greater Philadelphia community
- Analysis of international issues:
  - how the University supports international students and scholars on campus
  - how the University protects and communicates with students and scholars who are studying and conducting research abroad (particularly when there is
some sort of emergency either here on campus or in the region in which they are studying)

- Follow-up conversations on Penn Connects, University sustainability, campus climate, campus safety, and political engagement
- Presentation from the new Dean of Admissions Eric Furda in the fall
- Examination of campus life issues: affordable housing for graduate students, dining services, and Penn Transit
- Update on new financial aid initiatives for both undergraduate and graduate students.

A member of Council asked whether it would also be possible for the administration to provide Council with a timeline for when the campus climate issue would come back to Council for further updates and discussion. Professor Gladney advised that each member of Council is encouraged to communicate with Steering those items they feel should appear on Council’s agenda each month.

In closing, Dr. Gutmann noted that the April 30, 2008 edition of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, featured an article entitled, “Penn Scores Highest in National Green Power Contest.” As the article described, Penn is now, by far, the largest consumer of wind power among colleges and universities in the United States. Finally, Dr. Gutmann thanked all members of Council for a productive year, highlighting Neville Strumpf’s four years of service as one of the Faculty Senate Tri-Chairs and Mark Frazier Lloyd’s record 17 years of service as Council Parliamentarian.