This is the thirty-first 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

At the September meeting, long-time Parliamentarian Mark Frazier Lloyd gave a brief overview of the purpose and history of Council.

In accordance with the Bylaws, Moderator Paul Guyer then called for the selection and ranking of focus issues for the 2008-2009 academic year. Council Steering Committee Chair Sherri Adams advised that Steering drew on discussions held at the April 2008 Steering and Council meetings to create the following list of five focus issues for the 2008-2009 academic year:

- Discussion of diversity issues and initiatives on campus
- Discussion of campus life issues: affordable housing for graduate students, dining services, retail options, and Penn Transit
- Dialogue on Penn’s involvement in West Philadelphia and the greater Philadelphia community
- Analysis of international issues:
  - How does the University support international students and scholars on campus
  - How does the University protect and communicate with students and scholars who are studying and conducting research abroad, particularly when there is an emergency in the region where the student is studying
- Discussion on metrics used by the University to measure the quality and effectiveness of programs at Penn and how these results are communicated to the University community

Professor Adams then led the discussion of the proposed charges for each Council committee. She said that the list of committee charges was recommended by the committees in their final reports last year, fine-tuned by the Tri-Chairs of the Faculty Senate and the Office of the University Secretary, and approved by Steering at its September 2008 meeting. There were no amendments or comments concerning the Council committee charges.
Finally, Professor Adams reminded Council members that there would be two Open Forum sessions during the 2008-2009 academic year, one at the December meeting and one at the February meeting. She noted that both sessions would be advertised in *Almanac, The Daily Pennsylvanian* and on the University Council website.

**OCTOBER MEETING**

In accordance with the Bylaws, the President and other administrators presented extended reports covering the State of the University. President Amy Gutmann commented on the impact of the current economic crisis on Penn but emphasized that the University’s strategic priorities and its prudent management of resources allow Penn to remain in a strong position.

Dr. Gutmann introduced Dr. Glen Gaulton, Executive Vice President and Chief Scientific Officer of the School of Medicine, and Rebecca Bushnell, Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, who presented on aspects of Penn’s renewed vision for neuroscience, and Dean of Admissions Eric Furda who presented on the changing landscape of admissions.

The full reports can be found online at [http://www.upenn.edu/almanac/volumes/v55/n10/council_ag.html](http://www.upenn.edu/almanac/volumes/v55/n10/council_ag.html)

Council then turned to a discussion of the first focus issue of the year, Campus Life Issues. Paul Guyer introduced Craig Carnaroli whose presentation covered the following topics:

- Transportation issues
- Public safety
- Graduate student housing
- Retail options on campus
- Dining services

**DECEMBER MEETING**

At the December meeting of Council, Provost Ron Daniels gave his portion of the State of the University address which concentrated on the “connections that permeate Penn and the ways in which these connections give rise to a very robust sense of community,” where joint efforts are being made in the areas of undergraduate, graduate, international and research initiatives.

Provost Daniels also led the discussion of the second focus issue of the year: Metrics Used by the University to Evaluate Programs. He advised Council that Penn has made significant improvements in this area over the last four years, developing the capacity to use data more effectively to shape priorities in University programming. He stated that, for the first time, the administration has been able to take a university-wide “snap shot” of activities in a number of different areas, which allows administrators to benchmark
Penn’s efforts, evaluate program performance, and compare how faculty in different schools and disciplines are supported. Provost Daniels highlighted the following specific areas which have seen significant increases in the availability and usability of data: admissions, undergraduate programs, and research funding and performance.

The Provost’s full report can be found at http://www.upenn.edu/almanac/volumes/v55/n16/council.html.

At the December Open Forum, University administrators fielded questions regarding a variety of issues, including:

- Penn’s relationship to HEI Hotels and Resorts and steps the University may take to have more accountability for socially responsible investing
- The potential development of a new casino in Center City
- A new student organization called Penn Students of Ailing Mothers and Fathers
- Penn’s decision not to cancel classes in honor of the Phillies World Series Parade
- Issues of quality control, including technology in supplies, equipment and services
- Energy education at Penn
- The proposed hotel at 40th and Pine Streets

JANUARY MEETING

During his status report to Council, GAPSA Chair Andrew Rennekamp indicated that GAPSA had passed a resolution regarding graduate and professional students with children, specifically urging the University: to maintain and furnish to GAPSA data concerning the number of students with children; to prioritize additional space in close proximity to campus for affordable childcare services for the children of students; and to extend PennCard privileges to child dependents of students, so that they may receive nominal access to University services, such as libraries, recreational facilities and transportation; and to identify adequate space on campus for a Family Resource Center.

Provost Daniels noted that his office was convening groups to further discuss issues raised in the GAPSA resolution.

Council then held a discussion of the third focus issue for the year: International Issues. Dr. Anne Waters, Executive Director of the Office of International Programs, summarized the role of her office as falling into two categories: providing visa support and general assistance for students, staff and faculty who are coming to Penn and advising students who hope to study abroad. She noted that a collaborative network of University-wide and departmental offices works to address the specific challenges of international students including: Public Safety, Government and Community Affairs, Student Conduct, the Vice Provost for University Life and Career Services. In closing, Dr. Waters addressed issues that Penn students and faculty may face while abroad, as well as the different notions of what actually defines study abroad.
In her status report, Dr. Gutmann updated Council on two recent health advisories. She stated that a Wharton graduate student had contracted measles, but that the majority of the Penn community was not at risk for the disease. In addition, she advised that five students had been hospitalized due to suspected meningococcal infections and that all were doing well. She thanked everyone involved in addressing these health issues.

Professor Guyer called on Provost Daniels to open the discussion of the third focus issue of the year: Diversity Issues and Initiatives on Campus. Provost Daniels remarked that while diversity has been a top priority for the University and there has been much progress, there was still much more work to do. He then gave a brief overview of some of the recent initiatives in the area of diversity, including:

- Eliminating loans for all students eligible for financial aid and meeting student financial need through grants and Federal Work Study
- Continuing Penn’s commitment to a need-blind admissions policy
- Appointing a new Associate Dean for Equity and Access in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and partnering with the QuestBridge program
- Ongoing support for the diversity fund, which was designed to increase access and support for students and to promote new pipeline programs to attract students of diverse backgrounds to Penn
- Continuing progress in the recruitment of minority faculty

Associate Provost for Education Andy Binns continued the presentation and introduced the panelists for the discussion: Chair of the Faculty Senate Sherri Adams, Associate Vice Provost for Equity and Access William Gipson, Vice Provost for University Life Valarie Swain-Cade McCoullum, Dean of the College Dennis DeTurck and Director of Student Financial Aid Bill Schilling

The panelists covered a variety of topics, including:

- The faculty’s role in improving the recruitment and retention of minority faculty
- Reverend Gipson’s duties, including meeting with students, staff and faculty to discuss a myriad of issues pertaining to diversity
- VPUL’s collaborations across campus to expand the array of cross-cultural, campus-wide activities that foster interactions among all of Penn’s diverse community members
- Recent changes to the College’s general education curriculum, incorporating a Cross-Cultural Analysis requirement, as well as a Cultural Diversity in the United States requirement
- Penn’s continued commitment to its undergraduate student aid program despite the recession
Finally, Council held the second Open Forum session for the academic year. Topics included:

- Update on the RecycleMania 2009 Competition
- Update on Penn Students of Ailing Mothers and Fathers (AMF)
- Questions Regarding the Screening Process for Visiting Professors and the Statistics Concerning Arab Students on Campus
- Training Options for International Postdoctoral Students
- Proposal for Standardized System to Evaluate Work Space Allocation for Faculty Facing Work Space Elimination

MARCH MEETING

Professor Guyer announced 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 as well as a discussion of Penn’s Involvement in the West Philadelphia and Greater Philadelphia Community, the fifth focus issue for the year. Vice President of the Office of Budget and Management Bonnie Gibson gave the budget presentation and Associate Vice Provost for Education Andy Binns led the discussion on plans for the next academic year.

Ms. Gibson focused her presentation on the current fiscal year operating budget and projected student charges for the next academic year. She outlined the breakdown of revenue sources and expenditures; compared Penn’s undergraduate charges to those of its peer institutions; charted trends in spending, tuition, fees and financial aid over the past several years; discussed expected total undergraduate charges for 2009-2010; and highlighted trends in graduate and professional student tuition and aid. In addition, she discussed investment income and gifts, noting that income from the endowment represented only 9% of Penn’s operating budget in FY 2009. Because of this, Penn was not required to make some of the large budgetary cuts made by some of its peer institutions, where, on average, endowment income supports 20% of the budget. Ms. Gibson closed her presentation by assuring Council that Penn will begin the new academic year from a position of financial strength due to sound fiscal management and prudent investment strategies.

Acting Provost Vincent Price then introduced Andy Binns who presented two new Information Systems and Computing (ISC) initiatives: online course evaluations and online syllabi. Dr. Binns informed Council that for the Spring 2009 semester, the online course evaluation form will simply be an online version of the paper evaluation in order to determine whether the switch to the online format will cause a different pattern of responses.
Dr. Binns indicated that students will benefit from the change in three ways:

- Instructors use evaluations to improve teaching
- Penn Course Review uses evaluation data to help students choose courses
- Faculty colleagues, deans and others use evaluations to assess and improve instruction

He added that Penn will use several strategies to encourage participation including:

- In-class reminders by instructors describing why evaluations are important
- Facebook and online DP ads linking directly to the course evaluation system
- Email reminders distributed during the evaluation window

Dr. Binns highlighted the flexibility of the new online system. He explained that although some of the new features will not be used this semester, in the future, faculty members will be able to develop their own questions to gather the data they need to improve their courses. Dr. Binns also commented on the new online course syllabus system, which allows an instructor to upload a syllabus during the advance registration period, giving students a more complete view of what a course might entail.

Professor Guyer then turned the discussion to the fifth focus issue of the year, Dialogue on Penn’s Involvement in West Philadelphia and the Greater Philadelphia Community. He introduced Director of Civic House David Grossman, Mark Pan, a sophomore in the College and member of the Civic Scholars Program, Vice President for Real Estate and Facilities Services Anne Papageorge and Vice President for Business Services Marie Witt who each talked about different aspects of community engagement at Penn.

In his presentation, Dr. Grossman gave an overview of the civic engagement activities offered through Civic House, outlined the student engagement work done outside of Civic House and briefly described the Civic Scholars Program. He indicated that Civic House is considered a hub for student community service and social advocacy work. Civic House staff members advise approximately four dozen student-led organizations in a variety of activities including: tutoring and mentoring, Amnesty International and work in health care and the arts. Dr. Grossman said that Civic House also provides a variety of programs to help students better understand their roles as citizens.

Mark Pan, a Civic Scholars participant, discussed his personal experience with the program and said that the reason he came to Penn was the availability of Academically-Based Service Learning courses. In his words, “Penn stood out from the other Ivy League [institutions] as well as from the schools in the University of California System.” Mr. Pan said that he had especially benefited from the program’s Proseminars in which students meet with faculty, guest speakers and community representatives to discuss one particular issue or topic in depth for an entire academic year. Topics included, Citizenship: Past, Present, Future; Poverty and Policy and Public Schooling: Its Past and Future.
Ms. Papageorge and Ms. Witt presented a recent study commissioned by the University to identify sustainable infrastructure and policy initiatives to improve multi-modal access and ensure safe and efficient circulation throughout campus. Ms. Papageorge noted that the study analyzes existing conditions, proposes short-term and long-term enhancements and recommends a variety of improvements for all modes of travel including:

- Pedestrian improvements at heavily used crosswalks
- Bicycle initiatives to improve convenience and safety of bike travel to campus, while preserving the pedestrian core
- Commuter services to inform, promote and assist employees in using more sustainable travel options
- Specific actions to increase the level of service provided by the transit network to the University community
- Traffic operational improvements concentrated on the 38th Street/University Avenue corridor designed to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety as well as mitigate existing congestion
- Parking recommendations and analysis of access and capacity for a proposed new parking facility on South Street adjacent to Franklin Field

APRIL MEETING

The last Council meeting of the year featured summary reports by each of the chairs of the five standing University Council committees as well as a discussion of potential focus issues for the 2009-2010 academic year. Dr. Gutmann thanked the five committee chairs: Peter Decherney, John Jackson, Phil Nichols, Ingrid Waldron and Walter Wales.

Chair of the Committee on Academic and Related Affairs Professor Peter Decherney advised Council that the committee had tackled three primary charges: global engagement initiatives, Penn’s use of educational technology and how it compares to its peer institutions, and concerns regarding the consistency of communication of ethical standards across the University.

Chair of the Committee on Campus and Community Life Professor Phil Nichols thanked the members of the administration who had met with the committee over the past year to discuss its six primary charges: the economic inclusion plan, the relocation of Student Health, Counseling and Psychological Services, graduate and professional student housing, public safety, and civic engagement.
Christa Heyward read a prepared statement from chair John Jackson, who could not attend the meeting. Ms. Heyward summarized the committee’s five core recommendations for the year:

- Reorganize Penn’s “Target of Opportunity” process
- Consider creating a relatively small number of two-year or three-year postdoctoral fellowships open to newly-minted Ph.D.’s
- Continue to expand its commitment to quantitative climate assessment and try to “get behind the numbers” provided by PULSE and COHFE
- Push for each School to add a “diversity” link to its individual homepage and for Penn’s homepage to include a link to a page that would contain links to all campus units with diversity-related web content
- Rationalize and publicize its commitments to gender-neutral inclusion by listing all gender-non-specific restrooms on Penn’s website, providing more accessible information about gender-neutral housing options, and updating forms inquiring about gender by offering broader options

Chair of the Committee on Facilities Walter Wales stated that the committee focused its time on three major charges: the closure of the South Street Bridge, green space on campus and pedestrian and bicycle safety. The committee found that, although the completion of Penn Park will eventually provide a significant increase in available green space on campus, the staging area required for the bridge reconstruction has temporarily produced a significant reduction in available green space. The committee recommended that during construction, all efforts should be made to ensure that the remaining green space is being used for recreational purposes. In addition, the committee found that increased traffic on alternate streets around campus due to the South Street Bridge closure has produced extra delays and frustration for motorists and increased hazards for pedestrians and cyclists. Professor Wales advised Council that the committee would take a fresh look at this problem next year.

Chair of the Committee on Personnel Benefits Ingrid Waldron mentioned that the report submitted was an interim report and that the committee had several more meetings scheduled throughout the summer. Professor Waldron said that the committee had worked closely with the Benefits Office in Human Resources throughout the year and commended Executive Director of Benefits Leny Bader and Vice President for Human Resources Jack Heuer for their efforts to improve various aspects of Penn’s benefits, such as improvements to the group life insurance policy and the new CVS/Caremark Extra Care Card. Some of the topics discussed by the committee included:

- A new plan to extend adoption benefits
- The longstanding request to modify the tuition assistance program so that the University will provide staff with a modest benefit to pursue studies toward an Associate’s or Bachelor’s degree at other accredited colleges and universities in the Philadelphia area
• The substantially improved turnaround time for Penn Behavioral Health reimbursement checks for out-of-network visits
• The Aetna HMO Pilot Disease Management Program, which early results show to be improving medical care

Steering Chair-Elect Harvey Rubin then reported to Council on the findings of the Committee on Committees (CoC), whose role it is to evaluate the functioning of the Council committees. Dr. Rubin reminded Council that the CoC is comprised of faculty members and representatives from PPSA, WPSA, GAPSA and UA. Dr. Rubin stated that the committee divided the work so that each chair, staff liaison and constituency group member was asked the following questions:

• How does the committee work?
• Are the charges appropriate?
• Were the staff members and faculty members on the committees engaged and committed?
• Would they change the charges in any way?
• What new charges would they suggest for committees in the future?

Dr. Rubin observed that three common questions emerged from all five standing committees:

• Who reads the report?
• What effect does the report have?
• How could each committee receive feedback?

Dr. Rubin said that the Tri-Chairs will meet with the President and Provost in July and review the committee reports. The Tri-Chairs will then report back to the committee chairs at the fall Committee Chair Orientation.

Professor Guyer then turned the meeting over to Steering Chair Sherri Adams who led the discussion of possible focus issues for the 2009-2010 academic year. She remarked that at its April meeting, the Steering Committee developed a list of potential focus issues which had been distributed to Council members prior to the meeting. She then opened the floor for additional discussion or suggestions.

It was suggested that several of the items on the list could be streamlined by combining some of the topics, such as merging the discussion of the PULSE survey with the discussion of survey instruments in general and combining the discussion around arts and cultural coursework with that of curriculum changes. Professor Adams responded that the Tri-Chairs and the President and the Provost would discuss the issues over the summer and hopefully present a more streamlined list to Steering in the fall.

In closing, Dr. Gutmann congratulated PPSA Chair Nancy McCue who received a Models of Excellence award as part of the Penn Moves Team and thanked all members of Council for their diligent work throughout the year.