

INSPIRING IMPACT

MAGAZINE

Winter 2025

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Harnessing the Possibilities of AI





Dear Friends,

Every day, the work at Penn leads us toward new discoveries, new ideas, and new ways of thinking. This work is affirmed by the University’s strategic framework, *In Principle and Practice*.

As part of our efforts to lead on the great challenges of our time, Penn has identified climate and support for the arts as two important priorities, and we’ve appointed new vice provosts to lead our work in these areas. In addition, to guide the University’s work on artificial intelligence, we have appointed an AI Council of distinguished faculty members to advance AI research across all schools and centers. You can read more about these exciting developments—and other ways Penn is transforming our world for the better—in the following pages.

Finally, I would like to mention that by the time you read this message, my tenure as Chair of the Trustee Development Committee will have come to a close, and so this will be my last introductory note in this magazine. It has truly been an honor to serve the University and a privilege to share with you the exciting developments made possible by your engagement and the power of philanthropy.

I hope you enjoy this issue, and I look forward to seeing you at a Penn event in the future!

Warmly,
Bonnie

Bonnie Miao Bandeen, C’80, WG’85, PAR’16, PAR’22
Chair, Trustee Development Committee



Learn more about Penn’s strategic framework, *In Principle and Practice*.

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Throughout this issue, we’ve included QR codes that link to related videos and other digital content. Using your mobile phone or tablet, open the built-in camera app. Point the camera at the QR code, and tap the banner to access the content.



Harnessing the Possibilities of Artificial Intelligence

With new resources, facilities, and initiatives, Penn is bringing together researchers from across disciplines to spur the next generation of AI breakthroughs.

What if? The imagination behind those two words has fueled countless discoveries.

It's the question that inspired Penn's founder Benjamin Franklin to fly a kite into a lightning storm, and it's the question that drives researchers at every school in the University today.

What if scientists could create custom molecules for RNA-based health care treatments? What if researchers could generate virtual environments just by describing them in a few sentences? And what if designers could use robots to turn some of the world's oldest building materials—like clay bricks—into modern, sustainable components?

Thanks to artificial intelligence (AI), those ideas no longer fall into the category of *what if?* The question now is *what's next?*

"How do we equip Penn students to understand the myriad ways AI will touch the world? This is a fascinating challenge, since AI itself is evolving rapidly. We want our students to play leading roles in the next chapters of this story."

Bhuvnesh Jain

The latest advances in artificial intelligence are helping Penn scholars and researchers rethink what is possible. With new tools and technologies powered by AI, the solutions to previously unsolvable problems are suddenly within our grasp.

To guide Penn in this new era, the University's newly established AI Council is forging AI and data science connections across diverse fields to inspire new breakthroughs. The Council will provide strategic input, coordinate cross-disciplinary research, and catalyze new initiatives for Penn's expanding leadership in the ethical use of AI—embodying the goals set forth in the University's strategic framework, *In Principle and Practice*. The inaugural Council members are senior faculty members who are leaders in AI research (see sidebar on page 5).

Key early philanthropic investments are also buoying Penn's work in AI. In 2019, Harlan Stone, C'80, PAR'13, a Trustee and Penn Engineering Advisor, made a lead gift to enable the construction of Amy Gutmann Hall, providing a new physical hub for interdisciplinary AI innovation. And in 2023, Raj and Neera Singh, PAR'10, PAR'11, endowed the first undergraduate degree program in AI at Penn Engineering—and the first of its kind in the Ivy League—as well as the new online Master of Science in Engineering degree in AI. These options add to the more than 20 other data science-related degrees and programs across the University. Philanthropy will continue to be vital to Penn's leadership in the field, and there are opportunities to make a significant impact in a myriad of specific areas of study and implementation.

"With the help of AI, new doors to discovery are opening every day."

Eric Bradlow

"All 12 of Penn's schools are actively engaging with AI tools across disciplines, uniquely positioning Penn to further faculty research, curricular innovation to our students, efficiencies and new opportunities for staff, and greater impact of our work to alumni worldwide," says Eric Bradlow, K.P. Chao Professor and Vice Dean of AI & Analytics at the Wharton School. "With the help of AI, new doors to discovery are opening every day."

"Today, because of the widespread interest in AI, we are finding more areas of mutual interest with our colleagues in different fields," adds Marylyn Ritchie, the Edward Rose, MD, and Elizabeth Kirk Rose, MD, Professor and Vice Dean of Artificial Intelligence and Computing at the Perelman School of Medicine. "This also leads to more innovative and impactful research, as the creativity from diverse scholarly viewpoints often leads to new discoveries and new ways of thinking about a problem or question."

Tools for Discovery

One way Penn is powering interdisciplinary research is through the Penn Advanced Research Computing Center (PARCC), which will make AI research accessible to faculty in every discipline. Once complete, the center will be a platform for computational and data-driven research, providing hardware, software, system support, and consulting services to all students and faculty. And as a hub for computational research across all 12 of Penn's schools, PARCC will provide University-wide support and resources that will be essential for the next breakthroughs in data science and AI.

PARCC will come online in two phases. Phase I, which will be available to researchers in spring of 2025, includes a high-performance computer data cluster housed at a regional colocation data center, which will double Penn's current processing capacity.

Phase II will provide additional resources, including data science consulting on campus, to meet the increasing needs and growth of the computational research community at Penn.



AI Foundations

The mathematical and algorithmic foundations of AI underpin its remarkably broad applications. Penn researchers are exploring why AI methods work when they do, examining why they fail, and discovering the fundamental principles that will enable the next generation of AI advances.

- ▶ Computer scientists and engineers are developing algorithms with a wide range of capabilities—from allowing robots to navigate and interact with a three-dimensional environment to extracting complex information from images, text, and videos.



AI + Health

AI is unlocking our understanding of biological systems and enhancing modern medicine.

- ▶ At Penn Medicine, Penn AI nSights, an AI-guided imaging system, helps create a more precise, three-dimensional view of internal organs.
- ▶ Researchers at Penn Nursing have used AI to create an early warning system that accurately detects patient deterioration far sooner than was previously possible.
- ▶ Penn Engineering researchers are using AI to find new potential antibiotics inside the human gut microbiome.

What's Next?

AI at Penn will impact all aspects of life and society. With advanced computing power, a unique infrastructure and culture at Penn that supports interdisciplinary research, and a new physical hub for innovators to catalyze ideas across disciplines, artificial intelligence is showing just how many answers there are to the question: *What if?* 🌐



To learn more about AI at Penn, visit ai.upenn.edu, the University's campus-wide online platform launched by the AI Council. To learn how you can support AI work at Penn, contact Wylie Thomas at wthomas@upenn.edu.

AI@Penn

Penn is leading the way in AI innovation—advancing science, society, health, and business with groundbreaking research and transformative applications. Here are just a few examples.



AI + Business

Penn is defining what the future of industry could look like as AI advances in capability, enhances productivity, and potentially changes the nature of our relationship with work itself.

- ▶ The Wharton AI & Analytics Initiative (WAI AI) leads in advancing the application of AI and analytics to drive business innovation, bridging cutting-edge technology with actionable insights for today's complex challenges.
- ▶ The AI & Analytics Accelerator transforms classroom knowledge into impactful learning experiences, equipping students to tackle real-world business challenges using advanced AI and analytics tools.



AI + Science

With AI tools, scientists are building global climate models, exploring the nature of matter, and learning the structure of proteins.

- ▶ Researchers at Penn Engineering and Penn Medicine are constructing "self-driving" scientific laboratories that can perform thousands of experiments at a time.
- ▶ Penn astronomers are making new discoveries about the nature of the universe by applying AI to big data astronomy.



AI + Society

Scholars at Penn are investigating how AI can be used ethically and how AI can teach us what it means to be human.

- ▶ Researchers at Penn Carey Law are showing how AI can help reduce eyewitness misidentifications, one of the largest known contributors to wrongful conviction.
- ▶ The Graduate School of Education is launching Pioneering AI in School Systems (PASS), a professional development program to help teachers and school leaders effectively harness the power of AI in the classroom and develop policies around AI use, which is being piloted in the School District of Philadelphia.
- ▶ Psychologists at Penn Arts & Sciences are using AI to better understand how we think—how we reason, make social decisions, store memories, and conceptualize the world around us.

Penn AI Council

ERIC BRADLOW

K.P. Chao Professor, Vice Dean of AI & Analytics; Professor and Chair of Marketing, the Wharton School

BHUVNESH JAIN

Walter H. and Leonore C. Annenberg Professor, Department of Physics and Astronomy, Penn Arts & Sciences; Co-Director, Penn Center for Particle Cosmology; Co-Director, Data Driven Discovery Initiative

MARYLYN RITCHIE

Edward Rose, MD, and Elizabeth Kirk Rose, MD, Professor and Vice Dean of Artificial Intelligence and Computing, Perelman School of Medicine; Vice President for Research Informatics, University of Pennsylvania Health System

RENÉ VIDAL

Rachleff University Professor, Department of Radiology, Perelman School of Medicine; Department of Electrical and Systems Engineering, School of Engineering and Applied Science; Director, Innovation in Data Engineering and Science (IDEAS) Initiative

DUNCAN WATTS

Stevens University Professor, Department of Computer and Information Science, School of Engineering and Applied Science; Annenberg School for Communication; and Department of Operations, Information and Decisions, the Wharton School

A CAMPUS REIMAGINED

At Penn, thoughtfully designed spaces are essential to the work that takes place within them. Ongoing renovations and revitalizations across campus continue to support and enhance the University’s mission to channel its boundless creative energy to meet the needs of our time. These five buildings are just a few examples of how new construction and reimagined historic spaces will enrich the student experience and foster innovation in disciplines across the University.

JANE AND DAVID OTT CENTER FOR TRACK & FIELD

Architect: Cannon Design
Completed: December 2024

The Jane and David Ott Center for Track & Field is the only collegiate indoor facility of its kind in the greater Philadelphia region. The space includes a six-lane, 200-meter banked track; an eight-lane sprint track; space for simultaneous men’s and women’s high jump, long jump, and pole vault competitions; and a dedicated throwing area.

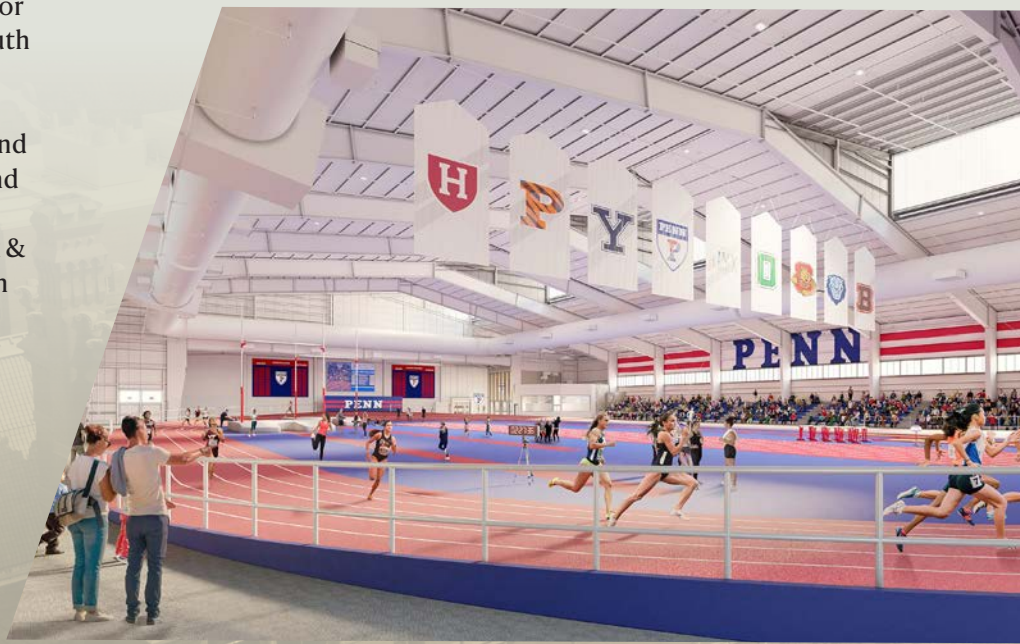
A generous gift from former track athletes Jane, W’87, and David Ott, W’85, provided vital lead funding for the project. “We have each experienced the great sport of track and field as athletes, recreational runners, parents, fans, and coaches,” said the Ott’s. “We are thrilled to provide opportunities for Penn students and Philadelphia high school and youth athletes to participate and excel in this sport.”

Milestone gifts from Jay Alix, W’77, and Adria, C’97, and Brian Sheth, W’97, complement the Ott’s lead gift and will name prominent spaces in the new facility. The Ott Center will be a year-round home for Penn Track & Field, enabling athletes across all disciplines to train and compete in the same facility. In addition, Penn will welcome youth and high school athletes from Philadelphia and beyond to over 30 meets during the inaugural season.



▲ The Ott Center is located behind the Hollenback Center, near the South Street Bridge.

▼ The facility encompasses 73,000 square feet and will have more than 1,000 spectator seats.



AMY GUTMANN HALL

Architect: Lake/Flato and KSS Architects
Expected Completion Date: January 2025

Amy Gutmann Hall is poised to have a monumental impact on the future of data science and AI. Housed at Penn Engineering, this sleek and sustainable facility will centralize resources for researchers and scholars while making data science and AI more accessible to the entire Penn community.

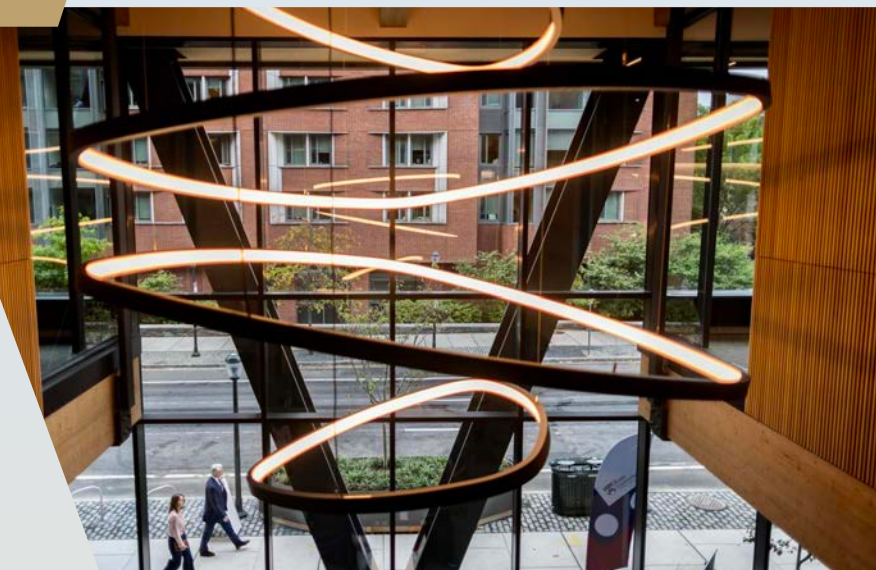
The six-story building features student-centered, technology-rich classrooms for hybrid learning, while modern research facilities and areas that invite spontaneous collaboration will advance the work of faculty and students who are helping to solve some of the most urgent problems we face today.

A \$25 million gift from University Trustee Harlan Stone, C’80, PAR’13—the largest in Penn Engineering’s history—was instrumental in making this project possible. “I feel very strongly that rigorous application of engineering principles can benefit humanity, especially data science,” said Stone, who is also a member of Penn Engineering’s Board of Advisors. “This building is all about realizing and seizing opportunity.”

Stone, in consultation with the University, chose to name the building to honor Amy Gutmann’s extraordinary vision and leadership as Penn’s eighth president. Amy Gutmann Hall was formally dedicated during a ceremony in September 2024 and will open its doors to students in early 2025.



To learn more about Amy Gutmann Hall, visit pennpri.de/amygutmannhall.



▲ The 116,000-square-foot building is Philadelphia’s tallest new mass timber structure, built with 82 truckloads of mass timber—a material more sustainable and efficient than steel or concrete.



Penn Engineering awarded polymedia artist Eto Otigbè a commission to create *Cascade*, a landmark public art installation on the façade of the parking garage adjacent to Amy Gutmann Hall.



Anticipated completion: Fall 2026
(Steven Holl Architects)

STUDENT PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

The curtain will soon rise on an even bigger stage for Penn's thriving performing arts scene. A modern, student-centered performing arts venue will offer additional space for performances, teaching, rehearsals, and practices for the more than 70 performing arts groups on campus. Students involved with dance, theater arts, a cappella, and music ensembles will have access to a 300-seat proscenium theater with a full fly tower and orchestra pit, a 125-seat studio theater, and five rehearsal studios. Built within a triangular site on Woodland Walk, the Center will serve as a beacon of light and activity at a prominent University gateway.



Anticipated completion: Fall 2025
(KieranTimberlake Architects)

STUART WEITZMAN HALL

The **Stuart Weitzman School of Design** is currently undertaking transformative renovations to the historic Morgan Building and adding a new wing on its south side. In 2022, the building was renamed Stuart Weitzman Hall after designer and footwear icon Stuart Weitzman, W'63, reflecting his enduring commitment to the success of Penn students and his extraordinary ongoing support of the School. Historic preservation and innovation will be on display with light-filled art and design studios, dedicated exhibition spaces, and outdoor gathering spaces, along with flexible areas for informal gatherings, juries, and student or faculty meetings. 🏠



Pharaoh Merenptah's throne room
(Gluckman Tang Architects)
Image courtesy of Haley Sharpe Design

PENN MUSEUM'S ANCIENT EGYPT AND NUBIA GALLERIES

A multi-year renovation of the **Coxe (Egyptian) Wing at the Penn Museum** reimagines the 14,000-square-foot Ancient Egypt and Nubia Galleries. With a targeted opening date near the end of 2026, the Main Level gallery will focus on life and afterlife in Ancient Egypt. It will be anchored by a 4,500-year-old limestone tomb chapel, which has not been on display in its complete state for more than 30 years. When completed, the Upper Level will showcase gods, kings, and pharaohs, including a 3,000-year-old palace of pharaoh Merenptah, with 30-foot-tall columns on display at their full height for the first time since their excavation more than 100 years ago. During construction, an exhibition, *Ancient Egypt: From Discovery to Display*, will stay open to highlight this collection.

Learn more at pennpri.de/egypt-nubia

LOOKING AHEAD

The **Vagelos Laboratory for Energy Science and Technology (VLEST)** opened its doors to faculty and students in December. We look forward to sharing more details in our next issue, but for a sneak peek, visit web.sas.upenn.edu/energy-lab



Examining Digital Media's Impact on Democracy

In September 2024, the University announced \$10 million in funding dedicated to the new Penn Center for Media, Technology, and Democracy.

The Center will benefit from a five-year, \$5 million investment from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation as well as an additional \$5 million in combined resources from Penn Engineering, Penn Arts & Sciences, the Annenberg School for Communication, the Wharton School, Penn Carey Law, the School of Social Policy & Practice, and the Annenberg Public Policy Center.



◀ Jenny Allen, a postdoctoral fellow, researches misinformation. Her recent work looked at the role of different news outlets in driving vaccine hesitancy.

At the outset, the Center will propel research involving media, technology, and democracy. Once established, however, the goal is for the Center to become a global hub for researchers, private sector leaders, and policymakers—by sharing research findings and creating near-real-time dashboards that provide a clear view of the current media landscape. Over the long term, the Center also aims to serve as a repository for data sharing with the broader research community.

Christopher Yoo and Duncan Watts, the grant's two principal investigators, are trusted partners in industry and academia. Together, they offer unique synergies between policymakers and leaders in media and technology.

The Center will operate around four programmatic pillars, including an annual flagship conference for media leaders industry-wide, an internal grants program to support research among Penn faculty and students, a research infrastructure to facilitate data sharing and collaboration, and a cohort of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers.

The Penn Center for Media, Technology, and Democracy will be housed in one of Penn's newest buildings, Amy Gutmann Hall, a hub for cross-disciplinary collaborations that harness research and data across Penn's 12 schools. 🏠

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS



CHRISTOPHER YOO, Imasogie Professor in Law and Technology at Penn Carey Law, with secondary appointments in Penn Engineering and Annenberg, is the founding director of the Center for Technology, Innovation & Competition at Penn Carey Law. His work focuses on normative issues in legal policy.



DUNCAN WATTS, the founding director of Penn's Computational Social Science Lab, is an empirical scholar whose research is marked by innovation. He is also the Stevens University Professor and a Penn Integrates Knowledge Professor with appointments in Penn Engineering, Annenberg, and Wharton, where he is also the inaugural Rowan Fellow.

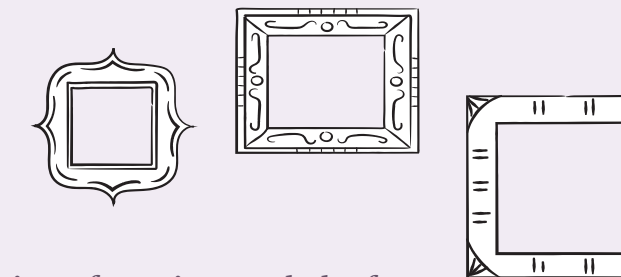


To learn more about the Penn Center for Media, Technology, and Democracy, visit pennpri.de/CMTD



Framing Art at Penn

A collections director, curatorial and exhibitions director, and development director talk art.



The works of art in Penn's collections are campus landmarks, points of meeting, symbols of an era, and, each and every one of them, gifts. From the iconic *Split Button* to the powerful *Brick House*, about 60 public sculptures dot Penn's 300 acres—a mere half percent of all the items in Penn's art collection.

Considering all their angles are hundreds of students and arts professionals at Penn researching, studying, constructing, deconstructing, and reconstructing the meaning of art.

Among these professionals are Lynn Dolby, Director of the Penn Art Collection; Emily Zimmerman, Director of Exhibitions and Curatorial Affairs at the Arthur Ross Gallery and Guest Lecturer of the Spiegel-Wilks Seminar "Curating Contemporary Art"; and Jenny Laden, Director of Development for the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA). All three sat down to talk shop.

How do you approach visual arts collection and display in your roles?

JENNY: I'll go first, since the ICA is a unique case. We're a *kunsthalle*, which means that we actually don't collect art. We like to think of ICA as having a collection that ends up living elsewhere. Many of our shows can originate new works through commissions, and those commissions can go on to other museums or even be acquired by collectors or other institutions. Being a *kunsthalle* allows us to be nimble and to lean into the experimental part of our mission. It also allows artists, curators, and scholars to expand their practices—to explore new territories that they haven't necessarily had the capacity, space, or resources to do.

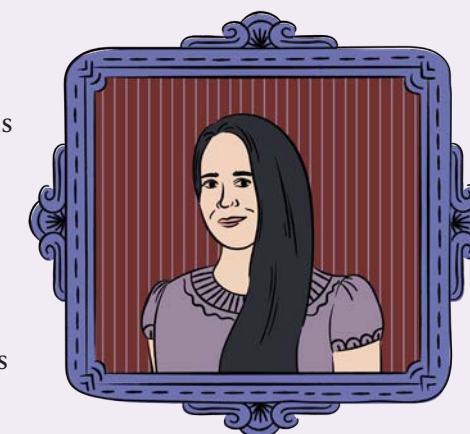
A recent example was David Antonio Cruz's show *When the Children Come Home*. Cruz is a multimedia artist, and the show was originally going to consist of only his paintings. He was interested in expanding his practice for this show with an installation. So, he brought it to us, and we looked at our budget for the show and calculated exactly how much more we would need for this incredible installation idea. Fortunately, a donor was able to meet that need, and David's installation has now gone on tour to a few different museums.

EMILY: Being able to work with space is incredible, and teaching that to students is an enormous gift. My own graduate work was in philosophies of embodiment, and one of the things that attracted me to the curatorial profession is the ability to make arguments in space. Being able to make arguments through objects and their placement—as well as walls, colors, pedestals, and other elements of experience—is

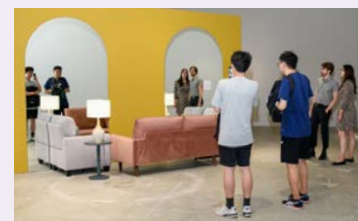
powerful. Sharing those tools with students is incredible, and they tie directly to many of the practical considerations of curation.

LYNN: "Considering practicalities" is a big part of how I think about how Penn's monumental sculptures are displayed. A good example of this is *Brick House*, by Simone Leigh, a newer sculpture currently on loan and the promised gift from Glenn and Amanda Fuhrman. There was another sculpture in that location, *Black Forest* by Robinson Fredenthal. One of the first things we did was present the specs to the University Architect and landscape architect and ask, "Are there open spaces that can accommodate 6,000 pounds?" They gave us some renderings of potential sites, and we immediately agreed that such an important sculpture needs to have a prominent location.

We relocated *Black Forest*—it's now next to Claudia Cohen Hall—and placed *Brick House* at 34th and Walnut. It's a well-traveled area and a gateway where she's visible not just to the Penn community but to our neighbors in West Philadelphia. If they're lucky, a curator might move a monumental sculpture once in their career, maybe twice. In my seven years at Penn, I've done four or five major sculptures, which is a little mind-boggling!



Emily Zimmerman



What is most exciting in your work right now?

EMILY: Sharing the philosophies of curating with the next generation is the most exciting part of my work. And one of the aspects of the Spiegel-Wilks Seminar that I particularly love is arranging conversations with curators from around Philadelphia. Students can see concrete examples of how this specific set of skills translates to the real world. Curating is very much a “learn by doing” profession: you need a lot of experience to accumulate a good toolkit. Those conversations with the curators are just so rich and deep. For example, Erica Battle from the Philadelphia Museum of Art has come and spoken, Rob Blackson from Art Philly, Kelly Schindler from the Pew Center—so, so many.



Jenny Laden

JENNY: One thing that really excites me is the people that I get to work with.

Everyone at ICA is incredibly dedicated and hardworking and very collaborative, and there’s a lot of joy here. I’m also excited by our donor base and our board, they are incredible—just so caring and supportive of people and art that’s experimental, that’s at the forefront, even if they aren’t yet a household name.

In terms of the shows, I’m very excited about the Mavis Pusey exhibition, coming in 2025, and I think it typifies ICA: a place that can do a deep dive into an artist’s practice and elevate or amplify work that hasn’t been recognized in the way that it should be. Warhol, Mapplethorpe—so many artists who showed at ICA early on really saw their careers blossom.

EMILY: And curators—I had an early internship there.

JENNY: Exactly. And there are so many ways in which other parts of our culture look to contemporary art as a place that’s originating new work and amplifying underrecognized voices, bringing equity a little bit closer to where it should be. That’s what I love about working at ICA: it’s a place that’s doing important work.

Can you elaborate on the connection between visual arts and the non-art student experience at Penn?

LYNN: I think that campus sculptures really create the life of the campus. They are meeting places, right? Everyone says, “Oh, I’ll meet you at the *Button*.” And they can be cornerstones of life events like graduations, memorials, or proposals. On Valentine’s Day, the *LOVE* statue has a table set out in front of it, and it’s plastered with notes, with beautiful messages that people write to one another. More than just being a backdrop to everyone’s daily walks, these sculptures are places where people make meaning and have relationships with one another. It’s an obvious part of the culture here.

EMILY: Students don’t need to be studying the arts to learn from the arts, have transformative experiences with art, or to apply lessons taken from the arts to their fields of study. There are countless, generative points of cross-pollination and influence between the arts and other fields of study. One example that comes to mind is how engaging with the arts engenders creative problem-solving. It’s a skill that’s as useful to engineers as it is to managing and leading teams.

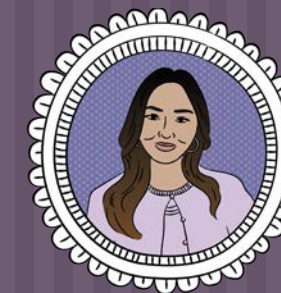


Lynn Dolby

JENNY: I think contemporary art can sometimes feel off-putting to people, so we really want to invite and welcome everyone in. We open our doors to hundreds of students each month from Penn and from around Philly, our student board is thriving, and we host programming that is free to all. Students enjoying coming to our annual dance, receptions, presentations—and especially our openings, which are always full of music, food, and joy. It’s a truly vibrant center for the Penn community.

The ICA transforms every few months, with each exhibition. And to have that kind of space for dialogue and beauty and curiosity and ideas, a space that is ever-changing, free to the public, and wants nothing more than people to just come in and experience what we’ve got? That’s a real treasure. *[Laughs]* I’ll shout that from the rooftops all day, because I do truly believe that. ☺

Meet



Hana Yang
C’26

INTERESTS: Criticism & curation

RECENTLY MOVED BY: Alain Resnais’s film *Hiroshima, Mon Amour* in cinema class. My passion for contemporary art stems from an upbringing immersed in the arts—from intricate stage designs to art galleries and museum galas. This year, I’m excited to integrate this passion at Penn through the ICA Student Board as I continue my studies in law.



Noa Mori
Machover
MLA’26, MFA’26

INTERESTS: Interdisciplinary arts & criticism, with a curiosity and care for entanglements of ecology, technology, and diaspora

RECENTLY MOVED BY: The ICA’s incredible exhibitions, talks, and performances. One of my favorites was hearing gorgeous poetry from Kai Davis and Yolanda Wisher at the opening for Tomashi Jackson’s, Dominique White’s, and Alberta Whittle’s exhibitions. Being in Philadelphia also means many exciting contemporary artworks that we can engage with here or in NYC. But there’s much more spaciousness to reflect and slow down without the pressure of making our work too public too soon, which is essential in times of experimentation and transformation.

Interested in supporting Penn Collections, ICA, or the Arthur Ross Gallery?

Contact Lynn Dolby (LDOLBY@UPENN.EDU), Jenny Laden (JLADEN@ICA.UPENN.EDU), or Emily Zimmerman (ZIMMEE3@UPENN.EDU) to learn more about ongoing priorities and initiatives.

Healthy Farms, Healthy Environments

Making farms more productive and sustainable



Penn Vet's Center for Stewardship Agriculture and Food Security (CSAFS) stands at the intersection of two fields—agriculture and climate—that often are at odds.

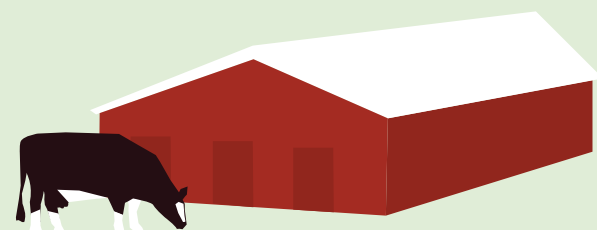
Consider the following: We all need to eat, and animal protein can be an invaluable source of nutrition, especially in areas such as the Global South, where malnutrition is rampant.

At the same time, animal agriculture contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, mainly from fertilizers, manure management, and methane release from cattle.

What is the solution?

“Farmers are entrusted by society with the resources to make food, including air, water, and land,” explains Tom Parsons, the Marie A. Moore Endowed Professor and inaugural director of the Center (pictured at left, on right). “How can we help farmers be the best stewards of the resources they need to make our food?”

That is the question being answered at CSAFS, an interdisciplinary initiative founded two years ago at Penn Vet's New Bolton Center (NBC) campus in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. The Center is a natural fit for Penn Vet, which plays an important role in advancing animal agriculture in Pennsylvania and beyond. Home to a working swine center and dairy farm, NBC has a history of innovation and contributions to best practices in animal health and productivity.



An Interdisciplinary Approach

CSAFS draws on the expertise of Penn Vet faculty who work in nearly 20 agriculture-related specialties, as well as University faculty from multiple schools, centers, and programs on the main campus.

“These are difficult and complicated problems that are often interdisciplinary in nature. Our goal is to bring some of the best people in the world that we have here at Penn—engineers, landscape architects, business and public health people, and of course, veterinarians—to think about agriculture in the most informed way,” Parsons adds.

The Center perfectly illustrates the University's commitment to working across disciplines to solve challenging problems, one of the key principles of Penn's strategic framework, *In Principle and Practice*.

Reducing Agriculture's Environmental Impact

Penn's Regenerative Agriculture Alliance is a research community co-founded by CSAFS that brings together multiple campus partners to promote the restoration and revitalization of farms and neighboring ecosystems to ensure long-term productivity.

Working together, the team designed a land-use plan to help protect the headwaters of the local White Clay Creek watershed, improve ecosystem services, and feed cows. The innovative plan embraces several elements: riparian buffers (strips of vegetation planted next to streams or other bodies of water), silvopasture (integrating trees into pastureland), and adaptive grazing (carefully controlling the timing and intensity of grazing and the number of cows). Over the last year, volunteers have helped plant over 4,000 trees and shrubs on an underutilized piece of farmland at NBC. The long-term goal is to replicate this agroforestry model on other farms. But in the meantime, as these trees and shrubs grow on the NBC campus, researchers will study grazing opportunities for NBC's dairy cows, their benefits to the local environment, and their climate impact.



“Our goal is to bring some of the best people in the world, who we have here at Penn—engineers, landscape architects, business and public health people, and of course, veterinarians—to think about agriculture in the most informed way.”



Tom Parsons
Director, Center for Stewardship
Agriculture and Food Security

Another area of research originating out of CSAFS focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from animal agriculture. Cows are significant culprits, since they burp out methane, which damages the environment.

Dipti Pitta, the Mark Whittier and Lila Griswold Allam Associate Professor (pictured below), is conducting studies to help us understand how methane is formed in a cow's gut and how we can safely reduce it without altering the cow's health and production. In one recent investigation, Pitta and her team identified the attributes of cows that emit less methane than average. “Knowing these characteristics could enable us to selectively breed low methane emitting cows,” Pitta explains.

Pitta's team of investigators is also examining how supplements—for example, red seaweed—added to the cows' diets affect the animals' gut microbiome and, thus, the amount of methane they produce. In another study, Pitta's group tested a special probiotic “cocktail” that was developed in the lab on commercial dairy herds to determine its effectiveness in mitigating methane emissions. Together, these investigations promise to benefit farmers and make animal agriculture more sustainable.

“The Center was conceived around the dynamic tension between the need to feed the world and to do right by it,” Parsons notes. “Rather than being considered as part of the problem, we'd love to make agriculture part of the solution to a resilient, sustainable, and equitable future.”



The Center for Stewardship Agriculture and Food Security relies on philanthropic support to fulfill its mission and make an impact.

For more information on how you can support the Center, contact Hyemi Sevening, Associate Dean of Institutional Advancement, Penn Vet, at (215) 898-1482 or sevening@upenn.edu.

Advancing Social Good



A new professorship will advance public impact through philanthropy

For the first time, a Penn professor will hold appointments marrying business with social innovation, thanks to a \$5 million gift from Scott A. Wieler, WG'87, and his wife, Mary Baily Wieler. The Wieler Family Professorship in Philanthropy will be based in the School of Social Policy & Practice (SP2) with a secondary appointment at the Wharton School.

The new position will bridge the gap between social innovation and business leadership. SP2 is spearheading the search for the inaugural professor, working alongside Wharton leaders to recruit a distinguished faculty member specializing in philanthropy.

The Wieler Family Professorship will enhance SP2's social innovation expertise and strengthen ties to the business sector. Additionally, it will complement existing programs, such as the Master of Science in Nonprofit Leadership, while amplifying the study of philanthropy within Wharton's curriculum.

Scott A. Wieler, a 1987 graduate of Wharton's MBA Program for Executives, a longtime Wharton Graduate Executive Board member, and an enthusiastic leadership volunteer, expressed his vision for the new role. "The art of merging capitalism with philanthropy is about transforming the pursuit of profit into a force for social progress. With this new professorship, we can shape a world where entrepreneurship and empathy coexist, creating a brighter future for all."

▲ As members of the Academy, the Wieler family have a longstanding history of philanthropy at Penn. They have contributed generously to various initiatives, including The Wharton Fund and the Penn Museum, underscoring their commitment to supporting the University and its broader mission.



This visionary professorship builds upon SP2's deep commitment to philanthropy and our interdisciplinary collaborations across the University. It will inspire students to explore the relationship between business and philanthropy, as well as the role of philanthropy as an increasingly important driver of social policies and practices that improve lives.

Sara S. Bachman, *Dean of SP2*



We thank the Wieler family for their ingenuity and their generosity through this gift, which gets to the heart of the Wharton ethos. With their support, we will ever more encourage exceptional faculty and the students who benefit from their teaching to apply insights beyond the academy and campus, ultimately achieving holistic progress.

Erika H. James, *Dean of the Wharton School*

Giving Highlights

Philanthropy touches every part of the University. Through the support of our engaged and generous donors, Penn is able to inspire impact locally and globally. Here is a small sample of recent gifts that are fueling the University's drive to advance knowledge for good.



◀ A recent \$3 million commitment from **Denis R. Dancanet, PhD, C'90, ENG'90**, has endowed two new Assistant Professorships at the School of Engineering and Applied Science, enabling the School to attract promising talent and provide them with a pathway for career advancement at Penn. Dancanet, a member of Penn Engineering's Technical Advisory Board, has a long history of supporting the School, including gifts to Amy Gutmann Hall, the School's new AI and data science building, and to endow two undergraduate scholarships.

Penn Engineering recently received \$1,667,000 from the estate of **Norman S. Rosenfeld, EE'58**, as an addition to the Norman S. Rosenfeld Scholarship Fund. In 2003, Rosenfeld generously established a Charitable Gift Annuity with Penn to create the Rosenfeld Scholarship Fund, which supports Penn Engineering students from U.S. high schools with low college attendance rates.

Jay Gleacher, C'07, and his wife, **Adele**, made a \$250,000 gift to Penn Arts & Sciences to support the Instrumentation Renewal Fund, which purchases and renews equipment and instrumentation for the Vagelos Institute for Energy Science and Technology.

▶ **Andrea B. Laporte, Nu'69**, gave \$1 million to add to her original gift supporting the Andrea B. Laporte Curator position at the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), upgrading it to a full curatorial position. The role is currently held by Denise Ryner, a distinguished scholar and curator. Ryner's research-based exhibitions and publications put artistic representations of "history-from-below" in conversation with broader themes, supporting ICA's mission as a launchpad for contemporary art and ideas.



Photo by Constance Mensh

Giving Highlights

Kort Schnabel, C’98, and **Kathryn Schnabel** gave over \$1 million to Penn Medicine to establish a named fund supporting hearing loss research within the Penn Center for Adult-Onset Hearing Loss.

Brandon Gardner, C’97, W’97, a new Board Member at the School of Social Policy & Practice (SP2), endowed a Social Justice Scholarship at the School. This full tuition scholarship supports SP2’s ongoing commitment to the recruitment and retention of students with a particular interest in and demonstrated capacity for social justice leadership in their field.

Jackie Myung, WG’06, and **Dr. George Ko** have generously contributed \$250,000 to the Wharton School, a gift that the University will match with an additional \$50,000. Together, these funds will establish the Jackie J. Myung Endowed Scholarship Fund. This scholarship will provide vital financial support to students in need, empowering them to access a world-class education and pursue their fullest potential.

Louis Henry Edmunds, Jr., MD, HOM’73, PAR’86, Emeritus Chief of the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery at Penn Medicine and former Julian Johnson Professor of Cardiothoracic Surgery, and **Martha Mel Stumberg Edmunds, PhD, G’86, Gr’93, PAR’86**, made a \$2 million gift to establish the Edmunds Family Faculty Fellowship at the Perelman School of Medicine. The Edmunds Fellowship will support promising investigators as they seek to establish their careers as independent biomedical physician-scientists at Penn.

▼ A \$3 million commitment from **Barry Gertz C’73, Gr’79, M’79, INT’80, RES’82**, and his wife, **Laura Friedman**, will endow the Barry J. Gertz Professorship for Translational Research at the Perelman School of Medicine—a position focused on drug discovery and therapeutic development. Dr. Gertz and Ms. Friedman have given generously to many Penn Medicine priorities over their decades of engagement, and Dr. Gertz has also served on the Penn Medicine Board since 2017.

Apoorv Saxena, WG’08, has generously contributed \$100,000 to support the Wharton School’s newly launched Wharton AI & Analytics Initiative (WAI). In addition to his philanthropic commitment, Saxena has joined the WAI Advisory Board, where he will help drive the School’s leadership in cutting-edge AI education, research, and its broader impact on business and society.

The Delta Dental Foundation awarded \$660,929 to Penn Dental Medicine for the creation of oral health education materials for families and caregivers of persons with disabilities.

A. Brooks Harris, HOM’69, Physics Professor Emeritus, gave \$50,000 to establish a fund to provide financial support to the Math/Physics/Astronomy Library at Penn, at the discretion of the head of that library. This fund recognizes past scholarship and innovation made possible by the library and aims to facilitate future scientific research and discovery.

▼ **Allison Powell, C’93**, and **Thomas Vandever, C’92**, continue to support the Powell-Vandever Dance Master Class Series, which underwrites master classes with visiting professional dance artists for both Penn students and other college and high school students studying dance in Philadelphia. In addition, they made a new commitment to establish an endowed fund to provide support for the Carnegie Student Showcase, a bi-annual event where student performing arts groups perform at Carnegie Hall for Penn alumni, parents, and friends.



▲ Multiple gifts were made to endow key educator positions for Unpacking the Past, the Penn Museum’s signature school field trip program. Gifts from **Andrew Moelis, C’10**, and **Rosa Levitan Moelis; Ron, C’78, W’78**, and **Kerry Moelis**; and **Brian K. Wong, W’05**, also include a one-to-one match from the University.



Giving Highlights



▲ **The Bedford Falls Foundation**, founded by **Bill Conway, PAR'00**, gave \$1 million to extend the duration of funding and expand the total number of Conway Scholars in Penn Nursing from 10 to 15 annually. A total of 80 high-merit Nursing students with financial need will be awarded scholarships.

▲ **An anonymous donor** made a \$600,000 gift to support the Weitzman School's *Glass Bridge* prototype, a four-year team project of interinstitutional research showcasing innovative design using ultra-thin, high-performance glass. The project is led by Masoud Akbarzadeh, an associate professor of architecture and the director of the Polyhedral Structures Laboratory at Weitzman. The sustainable structure utilizes geometry-based design methods to maximize efficiency and reduce material use and carbon emissions. *Glass Bridge* is currently on display at the Corning Museum of Glass through April 20, 2025, and will be displayed at Penn in the near future.

Vishal Bhagwati, WG'05, and **Rina Bhagwati** have made a generous gift to establish the Vishal and Rina Bhagwati Fellowship at the Wharton School. This fellowship will provide vital support to Wharton MBA students, enhancing the School's ability to empower the next generation of innovative business leaders.

Tyrone Chang, W'96, made a gift to Penn Arts & Sciences to name the T & M Chang Family Student Lounge for VIPER students in the Vagelos Laboratory for Energy Science and Technology.



PENN=O=RAMA

A CELEBRATION OF ALL THINGS PENN

Last year, in alignment with the University's strategic framework, *In Principle and Practice*, Penn announced the creation of two new University leadership positions designed to help knit together initiatives across campus and advance Penn's leadership in critical areas: the Vice Provost for the Arts and the Vice Provost for Climate Science, Policy, and Action. This fall, Penn appointed two distinguished faculty members to these inaugural roles.

Timothy Rommen: Vice Provost for the Arts



TIMOTHY ROMMEN, who has taught at Penn since 2002, is the Martin Meyerson Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies and Professor of Music and Africana Studies at Penn Arts & Sciences. He is the author of multiple books in the field of ethnomusicology, and he received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2016.

"Tim Rommen is the ideal colleague to serve as Penn's first Vice Provost for the Arts," said Provost John L. Jackson Jr. "He is widely respected as a collaborative and consultative leader who is strongly committed

to scholarship and teaching, to our diverse arts communities on campus and in Philadelphia, and to the goals of *In Principle and Practice*, which he played a key role in developing."

In this new role, Rommen will expand opportunities in and impact of the arts at Penn, partnering with University arts leaders, academics, students, and practitioners, as well as with the wider Philadelphia arts community, to further interdisciplinary and experimental work and to imagine new possibilities for the arts at Penn and beyond.

Michael Mann: Vice Provost for Climate Science, Policy, and Action



MICHAEL MANN is a Presidential Distinguished Professor in the Department of Earth and Environmental Science and Director of the Penn Center for Science, Sustainability, and the Media.

He is a globally renowned scholar of climate science, and he has been named one of the world's most influential people in climate policy, one of the 10 most influential earth

scientists, one of the top influencers in sustainability, and one of the 50 scientists who are changing the way we see the world.

"As Vice Provost, Michael Mann will continue his essential work while partnering across campus to bring together the wide range of work already being done at Penn, leading innovations and catalyzing new collaborations," said Jackson.

