

A Message to Penn Faculty and Staff

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A MESSAGE TO PENN FACULTY AND STAFF

from

Amy Gutmann, President

Wendell Pritchett, Provost

Craig Carnaroli, Executive Vice President

Jack Heuer, Vice President for Human Resources

Laura Perna, Vice Provost for Faculty

The last nine months have tested everyone's resolve and demonstrated your unwavering commitment to support the University's mission of education, research, and service. We thank every member of the Penn community, whether working from home or on campus, for the hard work required in these unprecedented times to ensure strong and seamless operations. We are enormously grateful to the [essential staff](#) who have worked tirelessly on campus since day one of this public health crisis. We thank faculty for the complex tasks of planning for the spring semester while simultaneously teaching, advising, and grading in the fall semester. For those who have returned to work onsite, we cannot thank you enough for adhering to safety protocols by using [PennOpen Pass](#) and consulting the [Return to Campus Guide](#) for workplace expectations and guidelines.

To show our gratitude for this extraordinary work, the University is pleased to announce an extended winter break. This year, the [Special Winter Vacation](#) will also include December 24, 2020 and January 4 and 5, 2021. Essential staff required to work one or more of these days will receive comp time that can be used by March 31, 2021.

It is especially important, during these trying times, to take time off to recharge. We understand that most of you are working from home, balancing your professional duties with supporting your families, negotiating health concerns, and navigating the unpredictable schedules of schools and childcare. We greatly appreciate your efforts to maintain a remote work environment as we must limit the number of faculty and staff on campus.

Working from home while juggling caregiving can be a challenge, and many of you have asked for neighborhood-based approaches to help meet your caregiving needs. In response, Penn has launched [Caregiver Connections](#), a new online platform for faculty, staff, graduate students, and postdocs who are also caregivers to build connections and find support in our local neighborhoods. We welcome feedback on this pilot program as we aim to develop the most useful solutions for members of the Penn community.

We also encourage you to learn more about [Penn's COVID-19 Childcare Grant](#) and other childcare resources, as well as [Senior Care Solutions](#) for benefits-eligible faculty and staff. During these uncertain times, please remember that Penn's [Employee Assistance Program](#) and [MindWell at Penn](#) are always available to assist you with your mental and emotional wellbeing.

We are heartened by how powerfully the Penn community has come together this year. We are confident that our collective strength and dedication will carry us forward in ways that are productive and inspiring.

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Please address questions or comments about University-wide communications to University Communications, univcomms@pobox.upenn.edu.