The United States’ Permanent Representative to the United Nations and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Samantha Power will be Penn’s Commencement Speaker at the 259th Commencement on Monday, May 18, 2015. She and these six others will be presented with honorary degrees from the University of Pennsylvania.

Vice President and Secretary of the University Leslie Laird Kruhly has announced the 2015 honorary degree recipients and the Commencement Speaker for the University of Pennsylvania. The Office of the University Secretary manages the honorary degree selection process and University Commencement.

See pages 4-5 for the bios of this year’s honorary degree recipients.

The 259th Commencement ceremony will be streamed live over the Internet.

For University of Pennsylvania Commencement information, including historical information about the ceremony, academic regalia, prior speakers and honorary degree recipients, see www.upenn.edu/commencement

The Robert A. Fox Leadership Program already engages thousands of students each year with its “study and serve” mission, accomplished through a combination of coursework, advising, events and service experiences. Robert A. Fox, C’52, and Penny Grossman Fox, ED’53, established the program in 1999 and permanently endowed it with a gift of $10 million in 2007. Their gift of $5 million in 2013 expanded the program and established four new scholarships in Penn Arts & Sciences. The Foxes’ total giving to the program exceeds $33 million.

“For 15 years, Robert and Penny Fox have stood by our side in creating and advancing a path-breaking program that prepares countless students for leadership and service-learning careers benefitting their personal and professional lives,” said Penn President Amy Gutmann. “Fox Leadership International is another shining jewel in the crown of the Foxes’ legacy at Penn.”

Fox Leadership International (FLI) builds on current global initiatives and creates new programs to add a robust international component to every facet of the Foxes’ mission. It has already tested one initiative, working with Penn’s Fels Institute of Government to organize a three-week leadership training and cultural exchange program that brought 46 students from Jiangsu Province in China last summer.

FLI will also add internationally focused content to Fox events, workshops and teaching. John Dilulio, Frederic Fox Leadership Professor of Politics, Religion and Civil Society and faculty director of the Fox program, said, “FLI is a big leap, but we have the information, experience and partnerships to make it work.”

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Samantha Power
Arthur Ashbury
Lee C. Bollinger
Joan Myers Brown
Rita Moreno
Ellen Ochoa
Cass R. Sunstein

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Their gift of $5 million in 2013 expanded the program and established four new scholarships.

A $5 million gift from Robert and Penny Fox to the Fox Leadership Program at the University of Pennsylvania will create Fox Leadership International, adding a global dimension to all of the program’s initiatives.

“The Foxes’ profound generosity has enabled us to prepare hundreds of Penn students for leadership roles locally and nationally,” said Penn Arts & Sciences Dean Steven J. Fluharty. “Now they have provided the resources to expand the Fox Leadership program globally, giving our most talented and committed students the opportunity to serve and learn through internships in China, the European Union and Africa.”

FLI will also add internationally focused content to Fox events, workshops and teaching. John Dilulio, Frederic Fox Leadership Professor of Politics, Religion and Civil Society and faculty director of the Fox program, said, “FLI is a big leap, but we have the information, experience and partnerships to make it work.”

(continued on page 2)
Faculty Senate Executive Committee Actions
Wednesday, February 11, 2015

Chair’s Report. Faculty Senate Chair Claire Finkelstein reported that the Faculty Senate Committee on Committees will meet to fill committee vacancies for next year, and she asked SEC members to submit suggestions. She reminded SEC members that the March SEC meeting will be held in Meyerson Conference Room in Van Pelt-Dietrich Library. She noted Vice Provost for Faculty Anita Allen will attend the March SEC meeting, and asked SEC members to submit any items they would like her to address in advance. The Chair gave a brief update on the activities of the Faculty Senate committees.

Past Chair’s Report. Faculty Senate Past Chair Dwight Jaggard reported that the Academic Planning and Budget committee and Capital Council have been meeting.

New Business. Faculty Senate Chair Claire Finkelstein noted that a prior change to the Faculty Handbook section on Senior Lecturers at the Law School did not accurately reflect the vote of the Law School when the faculty voted to amend that provision of the Faculty Handbook. The Law School has asked that the number of Senior Lecturers be changed from “five” to “six” to more accurately reflect the Law Faculty’s original vote. SEC members voted to approve this change.

Update from the President. President Amy Gutmann informed SEC on actions the Administration is taking to build and support the Standing Faculty. She noted that while the number of standing faculty in higher education as a whole has declined over the past decade due to the weak economy and the diminution in state and federal funding, Penn has added 100 positions, thus growing the size of the faculty by roughly 4% in that time. In the future, Penn will work to expand the faculty by strengthening opportunities for research and by robust fundraising for new endowed chairs. In the past decade, the number of endowed professorships increased by 40% for a total of 164 new chairs, and the current Presidential Initiative seeks to add another 50 chairs within the next five years. Penn’s faculty is also becoming more diverse, with the percentages of women faculty and underrepresented minority faculty having risen over the last decade. A salary gap still exists between men and women faculty, and the President noted that narrowing the gap was a priority for the University. She also gave an UPDATE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION SECURITY AT PENN. Tom Murphy, Vice President for Information Technology and University CIO, and Joshua Beeman, University Information Security Officer, updated SEC on the progress of information technology and information security at Penn. Priorities for Information Systems and Computing (ISC) include encouraging a community of IT professions across schools, supporting research and finding common solutions for IT problems. ISC has also been negotiating to bring a common email and calendaring platform to Penn, which should be available to the schools by this summer. Information security was chosen as the top priority by the Institutional Risk Management Committee in 2013. After studying the problem, ISC has made 18 recommendations to increase information security, about half of which are administrative changes and the other half technical.

SEC members and the President then discussed: faculty teaching loads; the process by which faculty endowed chairs are chosen; strategies to retain faculty, especially underrepresented minority faculty; the importance of the humanities to University education; faculty research funds; and transportation to and around Penn’s campus.

Update on Information Technology and Information Security at Penn. Tom Murphy, Vice President for Information Technology and University CIO, and Joshua Beeman, University Information Security Officer, updated SEC on the progress of information technology and information security at Penn. Priorities for Information Systems and Computing (ISC) include encouraging a community of IT professions across schools, supporting research and finding common solutions for IT problems. ISC has also been negotiating to bring a common email and calendaring platform to Penn, which should be available to the schools by this summer. Information security was chosen as the top priority by the Institutional Risk Management Committee in 2013. After studying the problem, ISC has made 18 recommendations to increase information security, about half of which are administrative changes and the other half technical.

SEC members and the guests then discussed: the benefits and risks of a common platform for email and calendar functions; how the network of the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania differs from Penn’s; how ISC tests information security; and the security benefits of regular password changes.

PPSA: Continuing the Conversations—February 24

PPSA presents a special luncheon event: Continuing the Conversations, facilitated by Ann Tiao, GR’06, on February 24, from 11:45 a.m.-1 p.m. in Jon M. Huntsman Hall, Room F60. PPSA has scheduled an anchor presentation with Dr. Ann Tiao, who last year began the conversation on diversity which spawned an introspective workshop that focused on microaggressions and how we can improve our day-to-day interactions with our colleagues and customers. Dr. Tiao will help us to continue our discussion with an interactive activity that will help to foster a comfortable environment where we can explore issues of diversity both within ourselves and with others. This session will focus on unconscious bias. Join us as we delve into this very enlightening presentation, which drew a full house last year and left our audience with much to contemplate. Lunch will be provided.

Registration is limited; register today at http://bit.ly/PPSA_Feb2015

PPSA

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Gift from Robert and Penny Fox
(continued from page 1)

Mr. Fox is the chairman and CEO of R.A.F. Industries Inc., a private investment company that acquires and manages a diversified group of middle market companies located across the United States. He is an emeritus trustee at Penn and was awarded the University’s Alumni Award of Merit in 1999. Mrs. Fox serves on the boards of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Moore College of Art and Design and the Pennsylvania Ballet. In addition to establishing the Fox Leadership Program, the Foxes support a variety of other areas of the University, including faculty, Penn Medicine, athletics and student life.

Rutman Teaching Fellow Program: Academic Year 2015-2016: March 16

The USC Shoah Foundation’s Institute for Visual History and Education invites proposals for its 2015-2016 Rutman Teaching Fellow program that will provide summer support for one member of the University of Pennsylvania faculty to integrate the Institute’s testimonies into a new or modified existing course. The fellowship is open to all disciplinary and methodological approaches. This fellowship is made possible by a generous gift from the Lori and Mark Fife Foundation. The Institute’s Visual History Archive holds over 52,000 video testimonies of survivors and other eyewitnesses of the Holocaust, Rwandan Tutsi Genocide, Nanjing Massacre and the Armenian Genocide. The interviews were taken in 39 languages and in 61 countries. They encompass the experience not only of Jewish and Tutsi survivors, but also of others targeted for death, as well as liberators, aid providers and war crimes trials participants. As these interviews are life histories, their subject matter includes the history and culture of the countries of the interviewees’ birth and their lives before, during and after genocide. The interviews average two hours in length and offer a wealth of possibilities for integration into many disciplines’ coursework. More information about accessing the archive at Penn is available at http://guides.library.upenn.edu/vha

Proposals will be judged according to the centrality of the interviews to the course content. Preference will be given to classes that will be taught in the 2015-2016 academic year for existing courses and the 2016-2017 year for new course proposals. Stipends will be awarded in the amount of $3,500. Rutman Teaching Fellows will also be invited to spend one week in Los Angeles over the spring/summer of 2015 to collaborate with USC Shoah Foundation staff and researchers. They will also be asked to present a lecture to the USC community about their research. Following the fellowship course, Rutman Teaching Fellows will present a lecture, hosted by the USC Shoah Foundation, at the University of Pennsylvania about their experience researching in the archive and using it in-class with their students. Final course syllabi will be posted to the Institute’s website and in a quarterly digest alongside a brief evaluation.

For any questions or to submit an application, please contact the Institute’s Program Coordinator, Research & Documentation, Kia Hays, at kiahays@usc.edu

Proposals are due by Monday, March 16, 2015. Awards will be announced in early April.

For further information about the USC Shoah Foundation, please consult the Institute website: http://sfi.usc.edu
Call for Volunteers for 2015-2016 Committee Service: March 23

Committees And Their Work:

Academic and Related Affairs has cognizance over matters of undergraduate recruiting, admissions and financial aid that concern the University as a whole or those that are not the specific responsibility of individual faculties; of all programs in recreation, intramural and club sports and intercollegiate athletics; and of all matters of policy relating to research and the general environment for research at the University, including the assignment and distribution of indirect costs and the assignment of those research funds distributed by the University. The Committee considers the purposes of a university bookstore. It advises the administration on policies, developments and operations of the bookstores and libraries; in such areas as international student services, foreign fellowships and studies abroad, exchange programs and cooperative undertakings with foreign universities; on athletic operations and recommends changes in policy when appropriate; and on those proposals for sponsored research referred to it because of potential conflict with University policy.

Campus and Community Life has cognizance over the University’s electronic and physical communications and public relations activities; advises on the relationship of the University to the surrounding community; has cognizance of the conditions and rules of undergraduate and graduate student life on campus; and considers and recommends the means to improve safety and security on the campus.

Facilities keeps under review the planning and operation of the University’s physical plans and all services associated therewith, including transportation and parking.

Honorary Degrees is charged with soliciting recommendations for honorary degrees from faculty, staff and students and submits nominations to the Trustee Committee on Honorary Degrees.

Personnel Benefits has cognizance over the benefits programs for all University personnel. Special expertise in personnel, insurance, taxes or law is often helpful.

Diversity and Equity aids Penn in fostering and taking full advantage of its diversity as well as in strengthening ties across all boundaries to enrich and enliven the campus community. The Committee shall advise the offices of the president, provost and the executive vice presidents on ways to develop and maintain a supportive atmosphere on campus for the inclusion and appreciation of diversity among all members of the University community. The Committee will review and provide advice regarding the University’s equal opportunity and affirmative action programs and policies. The areas in which the Committee shall report to the Council include diversity within the educational and work settings, integration of staff and faculty into the larger campus community and ways to foster a campus environment that is inclusive and supportive of difference.

NOTE: Faculty who wish to serve on the Committee on Open Expression also may use the form below. Nominations will be forwarded to the appropriate Faculty Senate committee. Please forward names and contact information to Vicki Hewitt, Faculty Senate Office, Box 12 College Hall/6303, tel. (215) 898-6943; fax (215) 898-0974 or email at senate@pobox.upenn.edu Please respond by March 23, 2015.

Form to Volunteer for 2015-2016 Community Service

For Faculty volunteers, mail this form to: Vicki Hewitt, Faculty Senate Office, Box 12 College Hall/6303, tel. (215) 898-6943; fax (215) 898-0974 or email at senate@pobox.upenn.edu

For Penn Professional Staff Assembly volunteers, mail this form to Lucia DiNapoli, School of Nursing Dean’s Office, Room 430 Nursing, Claire M. Fagin Hall/4217, tel. (215) 573-4999; or email at luciad@nursing.upenn.edu

For Weekly-Paid Professional Staff Assembly volunteers, mail this form to Loretta Hauber, Weingarten Learning Resources Center, Ste. 300, 3702 Spruce St./6027, tel. (215) 573-9235; or email at lhauber@exchange.upenn.edu

Committee(s) of interest: ____________________________________________

Candidate: _________________________________________________________

Title or Position: ____________________________________________________

Department: ________________________________________________________

Campus Address (including mail code): _________________________________

Campus Phone and Email: ____________________________________________

Please specify if you think that you are especially qualified for or interested in serving on a particular committee. __________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________
Arthur K. Asbury—Doctor of Sciences
Van Meter Professor of Neurology Emeritus, Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania

Lee C. Bollinger—Doctor of Laws
President, Columbia University; First Amendment scholar

Joan Myers Brown—Doctor of Arts
Founder and Artistic Director, PHILADANCO and The Philadelphia School of Dance Arts

Rita Moreno—Doctor of Arts
Actor, dancer and musical performer; recipient of the Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony awards

Ellen Ochoa—Doctor of Sciences
Director, NASA’s Johnson Space Center; scientist and astronaut

Samantha Power—Doctor of Laws
US Permanent Representative to the United Nations; Pulitzer Prize-winning author

Cass R. Sunstein—Doctor of Laws
Robert Walmsley University Professor, Harvard University; Constitutional scholar

Samantha Power

Samantha Power is the US Permanent Representative to the United Nations and a member of President Obama’s Cabinet. At the United Nations, Ambassador Power works to advance US interests and address pressing challenges to global peace, security and prosperity. Prior to her current role, Ambassador Power served as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights on the National Security Staff at the White House where she focused on issues including LGBT and women’s rights, the promotion of religious freedom and the protection of religious minorities, human trafficking and democracy and human rights. Ambassador Power immigrated with her family to the United States from Ireland at the age of nine. She received her BA from Yale University and JD from Harvard Law School. Before her government service, Ambassador Power was the Anna Lindh Professor of the Practice of Global Leadership and Public Policy at Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government, teaching courses on US foreign policy, human rights and UN reform. She is also the founding executive director of the school’s Carr Center for Human Rights Policy.

Ambassador Power is the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide and Chasing the Flame: Sergio Vieira de Mello and the Fight to Save the World, the basis for the award-winning HBO documentary “Sergio.” She is also the co-author of The Unquiet American: Richard Holbrooke in the World. Ambassador Power began her career as a journalist, reporting globally from locales such as Bosnia, Rwanda, Sudan and Zimbabwe, and was a regular contributor to The Atlantic Monthly, The New Republic, The New York Review of Books and The New Yorker Magazine. Ambassador Power is married to fellow honoree Cass Sunstein.

Arthur K. Asbury

Arthur K. Asbury, Van Meter Professor of Neurology Emeritus at Penn’s Perelman School of Medicine, is renowned for his clinical and experimental studies of peripheral neuropathies, particularly those seen with chronic kidney failure, and in patients with diabetes mellitus and Guillain-Barré syndrome. A graduate of the University of Kentucky and the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine, Dr. Asbury completed his postgraduate training at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School and served as chief of neurology at the San Francisco Veterans Administration Medical Center and as vice chair of neurology at the University of California, San Francisco. Dr. Asbury held many leadership roles at Penn after his arrival in 1973—as chair of neurology, interim dean and executive vice president of Penn’s Medical Center, vice dean for research and for faculty affairs and again as interim dean of the School of Medicine in 2000-2001.

Dr. Asbury’s work is published in over 230 articles, chapters and books. He was elected to the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, led many editorial boards and was Chief Editor of the Annals of Neurology. Dr. Asbury held leadership roles in many professional organizations, including the World Federation of Neurology, the American Neurological Association and the Council of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. He is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Royal College of Physicians. Dr. Asbury received the Penn Health System I.S. Ravdin Master Clinician Award, Penn’s Lindback Award for Teaching Excellence, the Lifetime Achievement Award of the World Federation of Neurology and the Meritorious Service Award of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia. In his honor, Penn’s Perelman School of Medicine established the Arthur K. Asbury Award for Outstanding Faculty Mentoring.

Lee C. Bollinger

Lee C. Bollinger, one of the country’s foremost First Amendment scholars, has served since 2002 as Columbia University’s 19th president. He is Columbia’s first Seth Low Professor of the University and a member of Columbia’s Law School faculty. President Bollinger speaks and writes frequently about the value of racial, cultural and socio-economic diversity to American society and on the freedom of speech and press. His most recent work, Uninhibited, Robust and Wide-Open: A Free Press for a New Century, has fostered public discussion about the importance of topics such as global free speech and continued social progress. A native of California and a graduate of the University of Oregon and Columbia Law School, President Bollinger served as law clerk for Judge Wilfred Feinberg on the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and for Chief Justice Warren Burger on the United States Supreme Court. He joined the University of Michigan Law School faculty in 1973, where he served as dean. From 1996 to 2002, as president of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, he led the school’s historic litigation in Grutter v. Bollinger and Gratz v. Bollinger, United States Supreme Court decisions that upheld and clarified the importance of diversity as a compelling justification for affirmative action in higher education. In 2011, President Bollinger served as the chair of the Board of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and has served as a member of the Pulitzer Prize Board. He is a fellow of both the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Philosophical Society. President Bollinger is the recipient of the National Humanitarian Award from the National Conference for Community and Justice and the National Equal Justice Award from the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

(continued on page 5)
Honorary Degree Recipients

(continued from page 4)

Joan Myers Brown

Joan Myers Brown, former dancer, choreographer and director, is the founder and executive artistic director of the Philadelphia School of Dance Arts and the Philadelphia Dance Company (aka PHILADANCO). For decades, she has worked on behalf of dancers seeking opportunities in professional mainstream dance, providing scholarships, housing and more. Today, PHILADANCO, which tours globally each year, is the resident modern dance company at Philadelphia’s Kimmel Center. A native Philadelphian and West Philadelphia High School graduate, Ms. Brown founded the International Association of Blacks in Dance and the International Conference of Black Dance Companies. Ms. Brown is a Distinguished Visiting Professor at Philadelphia’s University of the Arts and serves as a member of the dance faculty at Howard University. She also holds several honorary degrees.

In 2005, the Kennedy Center honored Ms. Brown as a Master of African American Choreography, and she is also the recipient of the prestigious Philadelphia Award and is a Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania. In 2012, Ms. Brown received the National Medal of Arts from President Obama, the nation’shighest civic honor for excellence in the arts.

Ms. Brown has served on numerous boards including Arts America, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Arts Council of Pennsylvania and several other states, the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance and the Philadelphia Mayor’s Cultural Advisory Council. She also served as vice president and was co-founder of the Coalition of African American Cultural Organizations and served on the choreographer’s panel of the Rockefeller Foundation Arts & Humanities Program. Ms. Brown has received a host of other accolades throughout her career, including three Governor Awards and several Mayors Awards. Her legacy has been documented in the 2011 publication Joan Myers Brown & the Audacious Hope of the Black Ballerina: A Biohistory of American Performance by dance scholar Brenda Dixon Gottschild.

Rita Moreno

Rita Moreno, performing artist and star of film, stage and television, is one of only a very few “EGOT” winners, having received all four of the entertainment industry’s most prestigious awards: the Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony. Her career spanning for more than six decades has been one of creative diversity, with appearances in over 40 feature films, countless television programs and roles on both Broadway and London’s West End. A native of Puerto Rico, she made her Broadway debut at age 13. In true Hollywood tradition, Ms. Moreno, spotted by a talent scout, was signed to a film contract by MGM mogul Louis B. Mayer. Ms. Moreno went on to appear in many classic films, such as The King and I and Singin’ in the Rain, among others. She won the Oscar in 1962 for her portrayal of Anita in West Side Story. Ms. Moreno has been widely recognized by generations of children for her work on the highly-regarded educational program The Electric Company and appearances on Sesame Street and the Muppet Show.

Her recent television roles include TVLand’s hit series Happily Divorced and the HBO series Oz. Ever one of the entertainment industry’s busiest performers, Ms. Moreno premiered her one-woman repertory show Life Without Make-up in 2011, last year was the voice of Aunt Mimi in the animated film Rio 2 and just completed recording her first Spanish-language album.

Her first book, Rita Moreno: A Memoir, was an instant New York Times bestseller. A popular lecturer, Ms. Moreno also volunteers her talents on behalf of many civic and charitable organizations. She is the recipient of both the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the National Medal of Arts, and in 2014, she received the Life Achievement Award from the Screen Actors Guild.

Ellen Ochoa

Ellen Ochoa is a veteran astronaut and the 11th director of the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas. The Center, which houses “Mission Control,” is home to NASA’s astronaut corps and a technical workforce associated with all aspects of human spaceflight including flight operations. The Center’s first Hispanic director and only the second female to serve in that role, Dr. Ochoa became the first Hispanic woman to go to space when she served on a nine-day mission aboard the space shuttle Discovery in 1993. Dr. Ochoa went on to log nearly 1,900 hours in space over four missions as a mission specialist, flight engineer and payload commander. A California native, Dr. Ochoa received her Bachelor of Science degree in physics from San Diego State University and her Master of Science degree and Doctorate in electrical engineering from Stanford University. As a doctoral student at Stanford, and later as a researcher at Sandia National Laboratories and the NASA Ames Research Center, Dr. Ochoa investigated optical systems for performing information processing.

She is a co-inventor on three patents for optical systems. Dr. Ochoa is the recipient of several NASA medals for distinguished service and outstanding leadership, as well as numerous other awards, including the Harvard Foundation Science Award, Women in Aerospace Outstanding Achievement Award, the Hispanic Engineer Albert Baetz Award for Outstanding Technical Contribution to Humanity and the Hispanic Heritage Leadership Award. She is a fellow of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics. Dr. Ochoa is honored to have four public schools named for her.

Cass R. Sunstein

Cass R. Sunstein is an American legal scholar in the fields of constitutional, administrative and environmental law, as well as law and behavioral economics. He is the Robert Walmsley University Professor at Harvard University and the founder and director of the Program on Behavioral Economics and Public Policy at Harvard Law School. From 2009 to 2012, Professor Sunstein served as the Administrator of the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs and in 2013 was selected by the White House as a panel member to conduct a full review of US surveillance programs. Professor Sunstein has testified before congressional committees on many subjects and has been involved in constitution-making and law reform activities in a number of nations. For 27 years, he taught at the University of Chicago Law School where he was awarded the title of Karl N. Llewellyn Distinguished Service Professor of Jurisprudence in the Law School and department of political science. A native of Massachusetts, Professor Sunstein is a graduate of Harvard University and the Harvard Law School. He served as a law clerk for Justice Benjamin Kaplan of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court and for Justice Thurgood Marshall of the United States Supreme Court.

He is the author and co-author of over 35 books and numerous articles, including Republic.com, Infotopia: How Many Minds Produce Knowledge, Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth and Happiness and Valuing Life: Humanizing the Regulatory State. His latest book is Wise: Getting Beyond Groupthink to Make Groups Smarter. Professor Sunstein is also a contributing editor to The New Republic and The American Prospect. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Professor Sunstein is married to fellow honoree Ambassador Power.
African melodies and moves, along with tales, proverbs, artifacts, crafts and cuisine from cultural traditions spanning the African continent, come together at the Penn Museum’s annual Celebration of African Cultures on Saturday, February 28, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The festivities showcase acclaimed local artists and griots, including storyteller Queen Nur, Odunde365 and the Universal African Dance and Drum Ensemble. The celebration is free with Museum admission donation ($15 general admission; $13 seniors [65+]; $10 children [6-17] and full-time students [with ID]; $2 ACCESS Card holders; free to children under five, members, active US Military, STAMP and PennCard holders).

Activities From Regional Perspectives for Children and Elders

West Africa

The Women’s Sekere Ensemble greets the day with the rhythms and tones of the sekere, a traditional Nigerian percussion instrument made from intricately beaded gourds, and an agogô, a bell with origins in traditional Yoruba music. Dedicated to the preservation of African music, the percussionists perform at 11:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.

Beginning at 1:30 p.m., award-winning griot (storyteller) Queen Nur leads “Stories from the Motherland: An Interactive Storytelling Celebration,” accompanied by percussionist Yomi Jojolo. Queen Nur’s stories recall historical victories and celebrate folkloric traditions in a toe-tapping, hand-clapping experience. Guests can also learn traditional Nigerian folk-songs during the presentation.

Members of the Universal African Dance and Drum Ensemble offer a thrilling performance at 3 p.m. The group—nown for presentations representing Senegal, Mali, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia and Sierra Leone—treats guests to an energetic finale.

North Africa

At 1 p.m., Habiba, international belly dancer, demonstrates folkloric and classical belly dances of Morocco and Tunisia, such as the Raks al Juzur (Pot Dance) and Raks al Maharem (Scarf Dance). Tunisia, a North African country, has a richly mixed cultural heritage, including Phoenician, Berber, Roman, early Christian, Islamic and Jewish elements. The Raks al Juzur dance comes from southern Tunisia and celebrates the region’s pottery industry. The dancer must balance a water jug on his or her head as the tempo of the music increases. The Raks al Maharem originated as a flirtatious dance before adopting patriotic overtones in support of the independence movement. The Tunisian style of belly dance concentrates on sharp hip twists and is performed by men and women. All guests are encouraged to try to learn how to shimmy, hip-drop and undulate in this fun workshop.

The Women’s Selere Ensemble perform in the morning and afternoon.

Mancala, a Marketplace and More

Throughout the day visitors can learn to play the traditional “board” game mancala, which originated in West Africa. Today, the game is called warri in Barbados, conka in Indonesia and Swahili-speaking cultures along the east coast of Africa play a complex variation called bao. Guests are also invited to design a family craft with members of Odunde365 and fair trade, African-made items.

An African mini-marketplace brings colorful textile prints, art, apparel and wooden, leather and bronze accessories available for purchase to the afternoon celebration.

Visitors can also stop by the Museum Shop to browse African-inspired and fair trade, African-made items.

The Pepper Mill Café gets into the spirit, offering African-inspired afternoon snacks.

Reflection Throughout The Galleries

“When you follow in the path of your father, you learn to walk like him.” —Ashanti Proverb

Visitors young and young at heart can join an African Proverbs Family Gallery Tour of the Museum’s Africa Gallery to learn about the brass weights of different shapes and sizes designed to weigh gold—made by the Akan peoples of present-day Ghana and Ivory Coast—and learn about some of the proverbs represented by some of the weights. Tours depart every 15 minutes from 11 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

The Africa Gallery features more than 300 objects from cultures throughout the continent, including masks, gold weights, textiles, sculpture and musical instruments. The Museum also includes the Lower and Upper Egypt Galleries with Egyptian mummies, a 12-ton red granite Sphinx (the third largest Sphinx in the Western hemisphere) and architectural elements from the Palace of the Pharaoh Merenptah, all ca. 1200 BCE, as well as statuary and tomb materials from 5,000 years of Egyptian culture.

Mastering the game mancala, which originated in West Africa.

Annual Celebration of African Cultures 2015 Schedule

11 a.m.—African Proverbs Family Gallery Tour (every 15 minutes until 12:30 p.m.)
11:30 a.m.—Women’s Sekere Ensemble
1 p.m.—Tunisian and Moroccan Belly Dance Workshop with Habiba
1-3 p.m.—Craft station with Odunde365
1:30 p.m.—“Stories from the Motherland: An Interactive Storytelling Celebration” with Queen Nur and Yomi Jojolo
2:30 p.m.—Women’s Sekere Ensemble
3 p.m.—Universal African Dance and Drum Ensemble and Finale
All Day Events—Mancala African Marketplace and Museum Shop Pepper Mill Café Special African-inspired Snack Menu
Update

February AT PENN

CONFERENCE

20 Values of Color; a conversation among artists and scholars on the political, economic and aesthetic values of color; 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Slought (Slought).

ON STAGE

20 Comedians Joe List & Mark Normand Live!: a night of stand-up comedy; 7:30 p.m.; Penn Museum (PPSA).

FITNESS & LEARNING

18 Organizational Dynamics Programs Information Session; 6 p.m.; Café 58, Irvine Auditorium; register: www.sas.upenn.edu/lps/info-sessions-dynm (LPS).

19 Masters of Environmental Studies Virtual Information Session; 5 p.m.; register: www.sas.upenn.edu/lps/info-sessions-mes (LPS).

20 Your Career At Penn: Getting into the Driver’s Seat of Your Career; Holly Marrone, Learning & Education; noon; rm. 217, Stiteler Hall; RSVP: mdotson@sas.upenn.edu (WPPSA).

SPECIAL EVENTS

20 PAACH Lunar New Year Munchies; yummy snacks from Chinatown and great company; noon-2 p.m.; ste. G22, ARCH Bldg. (PAACH).

15-Year Kick-Off Event: PAACHING History; panel of speakers; 4 p.m.; rm. 108, ARCH Bldg. (PAACH).

TALKS

19 Quarantine, the Mediterranean and the British Public, 1800-1870; Alex Chase-Levenson, Princeton; 4:30 p.m.; rm. 209, College Hall (History).


AT PENN Deadlines

The February AT PENN calendar is online at www.upenn.edu/almanac. The March AT PENN calendar will be published next Tuesday, February 24.

The deadline for the April AT PENN calendar is Tuesday, March 17.

The University of Pennsylvania Police Department

Community Crime Report

About the Crime Report: Below are all Crimes Against Persons and Crimes Against Society from the campus report for February 2-8, 2015. Also reported were 25 Crimes Against Property (15 thefts, 4 frauds, 4 other offenses, 1 DUI and 1 traffic violation). Full reports are available at: www.upenn.edu/almanac/volumes/v61/zreports.html. Prior weeks’ reports are also online. —Eds.

This summary is prepared by the Division of Public Safety and includes all criminal incidents reported and made known to the University Police Department between the dates of February 2-8, 2015. The University Police actively patrol from Market Street to Baltimore Avenue and from the Schuylkill River to 43rd Street in conjunction with the Philadelphia Police. In this effort to provide you with a thorough and accurate report on public safety concerns, we hope that your increased awareness will lessen the opportunity for crime. For any concerns or suggestions regarding this report, please call the Division of Public Safety at (215) 882-4443.

18 District Report

Below are the Crimes Against Persons from the 18th District: 6 incidents with 0 arrests (2 assaults, 2 robberies, 1 aggravated assault and 1 purse snatch) were reported between February 2-8, 2015 by the 18th District covering the Schuylkill River to 49th Street & Market Street to Woodland Avenue.

02/02/15 11:52 AM 4900 Cedar Ave Aggravated Assault
02/03/15 10:41 AM 3400 Spruce St Assault
02/05/15 11:41 AM 4712 Chestnut Ave Purse Snatch
02/07/15 10:34 AM 3420 Sansom St Assault
02/08/15 2:49 AM 200 S 38th St Robbery
02/09/15 8:22 PM 4108 Pine St Robbery

Access to Employee Exposure Records

The Office of Environmental Health & Radiation Safety (EHRS) monitors employee exposure to toxic substances and harmful physical agents and maintains employee exposure records. The Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) standard, “Access to Employee Exposure and Medical Records” (29CFR1910.1020) permits access to employer-maintained exposure and medical records by employees or their designated representative and by OSHA.

University employees may obtain a copy of their exposure record by calling EHRs at (215) 898-4453 or by e-mail: ehrs@ehrs.upenn.edu

Hazard Communication Program

The University of Pennsylvania’s Hazard Communication Program consists of information regarding access to Safety Data Sheets, proper labeling of hazardous chemicals and hazard communication training programs required for all employees who handle hazardous chemicals as part of their work.

Penn’s written Hazard Communication Program is available from the Office of Environmental Health & Radiation Safety, 3160 Chestnut Street Suite 400/6287. It is also available on the EHRs website, www.ohs.upenn.edu Laboratory workers should refer to Penn’s Chemical Hygiene Plan for additional information concerning the safe handling of chemicals in laboratories.

OSHA Training Requirements

OSHA requires training for all employees who may be exposed to hazardous chemicals, human blood or other human source materials. To determine which training programs apply to your work, complete the Penn Profiler.

2015 Summer Camps at Penn

Penn offers children and teens an array of summer activities from academics, enrichment and recreation—to more than a dozen athletic sports camps. See http://www.upenn.edu/almanac/volumes/v61/ n20/summercamps.html in the January 27 issue of Almanac.

The University of Pennsylvania's journal of record, opinion and news is published Tuesdays during the academic year, and as needed during summer and holiday breaks. Its electronic edition is the Internet (accessible through the Penn website) include HTML, Acrobat and mobile versions of the print edition, and interim information may be posted in electronic-only format. Guidelines for readers and contributors are available on request and online. EDITOR: Marguerite F. Miller ASSISTANT EDITOR STAFF ASSISTANTS Victoria Fiengo Inna Bleibakh, Gita Badillo, Isabella Avalos, Carolyn Marvin, Cary Mazer, Tess Wikinson-Ryan, Carlos Acosta, Michael Wachtel, Stephen MacCarthy. For the Staff Assemblies, Nancy McCue, PPSA, Ijanaa Sanders, WPPSA, Jon Shaw, Librarians Assembly. ALMANAC ADVISORY BOARD: For the Faculty Senate, Martin Pining (chair), Sunday Akintoye, Ann Hickerson, Cary Maurice, Tess Wikinson-Ryan, Sarah Leifer, Stephen MacCarthy. For the Staff Assemblies, Nancy McCue, PPSA, Ijanaa Sanders, WPPSA, Jon Shaw, Librarians Assembly.

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How ‘Spontaneous’ Social Norms Emerge

A new study led by the University of Pennsylvania’s Damon Centola provides a scientific explanation for how social conventions—everything from acceptable body weight standards to proper attire—can suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere, with no external forces driving their creation. The research used an original Web-based experiment to test whether and how large populations come to consensus. The findings have implications for everything from understanding why different regions of the country have distinct words for the same product—soda versus pop, for example—to explaining how norms regarding widespread fractionation of the United States.

The paper, “The Spontaneous Emergence of Conventions,” appeared in the Early Edition of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. “Our study explains how certain ideas and behaviors can gain a foothold and, all of a sudden, emerge as big winners,” Dr. Centola said. “It’s a common misconception that this process depends upon some kind of leader, or centralized media source, to coordinate a population. We show that it can depend on nothing more than the normal interactions of people in social networks.”

Dr. Centola is an associate professor in Penn’s Annenberg School for Communication and the School of Engineering & Applied Science and is director of the Network Dynamics Group at Penn. He partnered on the work with physicist Andrea Baronchelli, an assistant professor at City University London.

To understand how social norms arise, Dr. Centola and Dr. Baronchelli invented a Web-based game, which recruited participants from around the World Wide Web using online advertisements. In each round of the “Name Game,” participants were paired, shown a photograph of a human face and asked to give it a name. If both players provided the same name, they won a small amount of money. If they failed, they lost a small amount and saw their partner’s name suggestion. The game continued with new partners for as many as 40 rounds. The structure of the game remained the same throughout the experiment, the researchers wanted to see whether changing the way that players interacted with one another would affect the ability of the group to come to consensus.

Wearable Tracking Devices Alone Won’t Drive Health Behavior Change

New Year’s weight loss resolutions are in full swing, but despite all the hype about the latest wearable tracking devices, there’s little evidence that this technology alone can change behavior and improve health for those that need it most, according to a new study published in an online-first viewpoint piece in JAMA. The paper, written by researchers at the Perelman School of Medicine, the Penn Medicine Center for Health Care Innovation and the LDI Center for Health Incentives and Behavioral Economics at the University of Pennsylvania, points out that even though several large technology companies are entering this expanding market, there may be a disconnect between the assumed benefits and actual outcomes.

“The notion is that by recording and reporting information about behaviors such as physical activity or sleep patterns, these devices can educate and motivate individuals toward better habits and better health,” wrote authors Mitesh S. Patel, David A. Asch and Kevin G. Volpp, all of whom are faculty at Penn and attending physicians at the Philadelphia VA Medical Center. “The gap between recording information and changing behavior is substantial, however, and while daily steps, increasing in popularity, little evidence suggests that they are bridging the gap.”

Instead, the authors suggest that applying behavioral economics concepts—such as lotteries or telling individuals what they would have won had they lost a game that captures the individual’s attention at those moments when he or she is most likely to take action.

The authors believe that there are four challenges that need to be addressed for wearable devices—available as bracelets, watches and even necklaces from end-high designers—to effectively promote health behavior change. First, a person must be motivated enough to want a device and be able to afford it. Second, there is high acquisitive, a person must remember to wear it and occasionally recharge it. Third, the device must be able to accurately track its targeted behavior. And fourth, the information must be presented back to the user (using a feedback loop) in a way that can be understood, that motivates action and that sustains the motivation towards improved health.

Why Wound Healing Is Impaired in Diabetics

One of the most troubling complications of diabetes is its effect on wound healing. Roughly 15 percent of diabetics will suffer from a non-healing wound in their lifetime. In some cases, these open ulcers on the skin lead to amputations. For years, researchers have investigated the reasons for problems with wound healing in diabetics. And while many factors contribute, the specific molecular events responsible have remained unclear and therapies to treat these stubborn wounds are few.

Now, scientists at the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine have identified a critical molecule that helps explain why diabetics suffer from this problem and pinpoints a target for therapies that could help boost healing. The research was led by Dana T. Graves, professor in Penn Dental Medicine’s department of periodontics and vice dean for scholarship and research. The team found that the molecule called Foxo1 played an unexpected role in wound healing (Foxo1 refers to the protein and FOXO1 refers to the gene). While earlier findings had suggested its presence might be detrimental to healing, their team showed that it in fact promoted healing by “doing two things that are beneficial: protecting cells against oxidative stress and inducing TGF-β1, a molecule critical to the healing process,” Dr. Graves said. Yet the team wonders if researchers members of the gene might be responsible for the poor healing seen in people with diabetes.

To find out, they compared mice with diabetes to normal mice, creating small wounds on their tongues under anesthesia. As expected, the diabetic mice healed more slowly than normal mice. But, when the researchers performed the same experiment in diabetic mice that had been bred to lack Foxo1 in their keratinocytes, the primary cells comprising the outer layer, wound healing was significantly improved. Surprisingly, the effect of deleting the FOXO1 gene in keratinocytes was opposite in diabetic compared to normal mice. To drill down more precisely on how reducing Foxo1 improved healing, the researchers examined various aspects of healing, focusing on the movement of keratinocytes to fill in the hole left by the injury and the proliferation of cells to close the gap, in this case, in the layer of cells on the tongue’s surface known as the mucosal epithelium.

“A critical aspect of wound healing is to cover the wound to limit its exposure to the environment and prevent it from being colonized by a microbial biofilm,” Dr. Graves said. Looking at mice with diabetes, the team observed that both cell movement and, to a lesser extent, cell proliferation were suppressed in diabetic mice, unless the keratinocytes of the mice lacked Foxo1, in which case the negative impact of diabetes was largely reversed. The same response was seen in cells in culture: cells grown in a high-sugar media had an impaired ability to move and proliferate compared to cells grown in standard solution. This impairment was reduced when Foxo1 was silenced.

Penn-led Team Pieces Together Signaling Pathway Leading to Obesity

As scientists probe the molecular underpinnings of why some people are prone to obesity and some to leanness, they are discovering that weight maintenance is more complicated than the old “calories in, calories out” adage. A team of researchers led by the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine’s Kendra K. Bence have now drawn connections between known regulators of body mass, pointing to possible treatments for obesity and metabolic disorders. Their work also presents intriguing clues that these same molecular pathways may play a role in learning and perhaps, even in some forms of brain cancer.

Bence highlighted the importance of the enzyme tyrosine phosphatase 1B (PTP1B) in regulating body weight. They showed that PTP1B acts to counter the action of the hormone leptin, which is produced by fat cells and suppresses appetite. When mice have been bred to lack PTP1B, they remain lean even when they have unlimited access to high-fat food. Yet other work has shown that mice lacking both leptin and PTP1B are trimmer than mice that lacked just leptin. “That nagged at us because clearly indicates that there are other targets than just leptin signaling for this phosphatase,” Dr. Bence said.

That sparked a search for these theoretical targets. The team knew that PTP1B has an affinity to recognize a particular sequence of amino acids. Looking for other proteins with this sequence, they turned up tropomysosin receptor kinase B (TrKB), a receptor in the brain that binds to a molecule called brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF). “That was interesting because mutations in the BDNF gene have been found in study after study to be strongly correlated with body mass index in humans,” Dr. Bence said.

To see if PTP1B does in fact act upon TrKB, the researchers first performed a series of experiments on neuronal cells in culture. They found that boosting expression of PTP1B suppressed BDNF and TrKB activity. Conversely, inhibiting PTP1B activity enhanced the activity of the BDNF-TrKB signaling pathway. The researchers also used biochemical assays to confirm that PTP1B physically interacts with TrKB.

Moving to mice, the team gave animals bred to lack PTP1B a dose of BDNF in their brains, an action that, in normal mice, reduces appetite. Lacking PTP1B didn’t change this fact. But these mice did differ from normal mice in one important way: their core temperature. The genetically altered mice had higher core temperatures after a dose of BDNF than normal mice, an effect that correlates with increased energy expenditure — calories out — and thus causes weight loss. “This is the first time that anyone has linked PTP1B with BDNF and TrKB in vivo,” Dr. Bence said. “And it was interesting to see that the effect on weight regulation seems to be through impacting core temperature and not food consumption.”

RESEARCH ROUNDUP