



Penn parents

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Dear Proud Penn Parents,

One of the most rewarding parts of my work is witnessing the drive, intellect, and character of our incredible undergraduates. Your children are among a generation of innovators, and they are leading the way. They arrive at Penn with their many talents and their possibilities proceed without limit. As they collaborate with peers, engage with faculty, and explore inside and outside the classroom, they cultivate the soil of their aptitude and grow and thrive as the new leaders of discovery and change.

On any given day, a walk through campus tells this story. Students are at tables engaging in important dialogue around complex issues. They are in libraries navigating vast resources and formulating powerful arguments. They are in advanced laboratories conducting research to better understand challenging problems. Within these spaces, and many others, you will hear students asking important questions and searching for new answers.

Yes, the view from College Hall is an inspiring one. Penn undergraduates—your children—are the leaders of our promising future. Thank you for your role in making that possible.

AMY GUTMANN, *President*
Christopher H. Browne Distinguished Professor
of Political Science and Professor,
Annenberg School for Communication



Your children are among a generation of innovators, and they are leading the way.

PARTNERS IN WELLNESS

The network of support at Penn is extensive. It is built on circuits of staff, faculty, and peers who work in tandem to ensure no student's voice goes unheard. At the helm of this careful system is CAPS: Counseling and Psychological Services.

"My first advice for students who are facing a problem: go talk to somebody," says Dr. William Alexander, Psychologist and Director of CAPS. "Whether it's a coach or an academic advisor, they're connected and will hook them into the network."

It's inevitable that students will face difficult tests and tough questions while they're at Penn, both within the classroom and beyond it. Sometimes, the hardest of these challenges can be life challenges.

"This is a normal part of growth," says Dr. Meeta Kumar, Psychologist and Director of Outreach and Prevention. "Let's make this an open conversation."

The staff at CAPS encourages families to be their partners in this effort. CAPS welcomes parents to reach out, whether it be with specific questions or concerns, or to simply to learn more. Families can also participate in panel discussions held during New Student Orientation and Family Weekend, which focus on the transition to college and parenting from afar.

"We want to hear from you," says Dr. Kumar. "Parents sometimes see things that no one else does. Don't be dismissive. Trust your instincts."



CAPS staff is comprised of psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers of diverse backgrounds who specialize in working with university students. Programs and services are confidential and free, including individual counseling, group counseling, crisis intervention, psychiatric services, after-hours emergency, workshops, and referral services.

CAPS can be reached by students or their families any time at 215-898-7021, or on the web at vpul.upenn.edu/caps. Interested in the latest CAPS webinar? Visit pennparents.upenn.edu and head to *Penn Parent Experience > Resources*.

Interdisciplinary Innovation

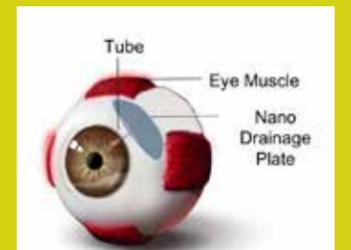
An open stage, a nano-sized technology, and \$10,000 at stake... The pressure was on and the room was full. Enter team VisiPlate.

One seamless pitch and game-changing idea later, juniors Adarsh Battu, Rui Jing Jiang, and Brandon Kao were on their way to securing the grand prize. The three team members had developed a new defense against glaucoma, using an ultra-thin material called "plates."

The plates, developed in the lab of Engineering Professor Igor Bargatin, are the thinnest material that can be picked up and manipulated by hand. Despite being hundreds of times thinner than household cling wrap or aluminum foil, these textured plates of aluminum oxide can spring back to their original shape after being bent and twisted.

Team VisiPlate merged their backgrounds in business and engineering to design the product and form a business plan. They recognized the technology's unique combination of strength and leanness, and then imagined a concept that involved implanting a drainage plate in the eye of a glaucoma patient. Because the plates are so thin, they can be implanted just under the surface, in the front of the eye. Diffusing fluid over a wide area, the plates will allow that fluid to be reabsorbed at a manageable rate, thus making for a less invasive surgery and less risk to patients.

So what's the next stage for VisiPlate? They're heading out of the lab and into the market. With backing from the Y-Prize, VisiPlate is ready to move into pre-clinical testing and prototyping.



WHAT'S A Y-PRIZE?

The Y-Prize founders often describe the competition as "an inverted X-Prize." An X-Prize competition first identifies a challenge—put a robot on the moon, harness CO2 emissions, design a self-driving car—and then asks participants to come up with a technological solution. The Y-Prize turns this concept on its head. It identifies an exciting but underused technology, then asks participants to find a problem that this technology can help solve. Instead of starting with the challenge, participants start with the solution and work backwards.

A collaboration between the Mack Institute, Penn Engineering, Penn Wharton Entrepreneurship, and the Penn Center for Innovation, the Y-Prize is a university-wide competition, open to students of all levels and fields of study.



THE POWER OF PEER-TO-PEER: PENN BENJAMINS

Penn Benjamins is an organization run by students, for students. The group was formed by undergrads in 2014, with a focus on peer listening in a safe space. Benjamins operates with the understanding that there's a certain connection between two students at a university because of their shared experience. This common ground can make peer-to-peer counseling a less intimidating option for students who may have reservations about approaching a professional. All of the peer counselors—known on campus as "Bens"—have been through an extensive interview and training process overseen by CAPS professionals.



Through recurring walk-in hours held every Sunday through Thursday, Bens offer a listening ear, meaningful support, and guidance on mental health services. Penn Benjamins wants to break down the walls of communication, and they're starting with each other.

pennbenjamins.org



Brandon Kao, EAS'18, Rui Jing Jiang, W'18, and Adarsh Battu, W'18, were named Y-Prize winners at the competition's culminating event in January. Since its beginnings in 2012, the story of the Y-Prize has been one of cross-disciplinary invention. This year, three undergrads came out on top.

Self-Starter Marketers...

These two young alums are creating their own definitions of what it means to be a millennial in the world of work. Here's a look at their paths from Penn to present.

Liz Wessel, C'12

NEW YORK CITY

MAJOR: Political Science with minors in Math and Japanese

Liz is the co-founder and CEO of WayUp, the leading online marketplace for college students to get hired for jobs and internships. She started the business with fellow Penn grad JJ Fliegelman, W'11, and they now have more than 50 employees in their NYC office. But the impressive stats don't end there. WayUp has connected 12,000 startups, local businesses, and Fortune 500s with 3 million students and recent graduates... Not bad for a powerhouse entrepreneur whose trajectory is, certainly, nowhere but up.

What have you been up to since graduation?

After Penn, I moved to California as a product marketing manager for Google, where I got to work on everything from filming commercials to negotiating a partnership with the Oscars. Then, I transferred to Google India to lead their Brand team. Two years after starting my career, I quit to cofound WayUp with a Penn friend, JJ Fliegelman.

How has Penn been a part of this journey?

I've drawn on my Penn network every step of the way. Going to Google, I got lots of advice from fellow alumni—on everything from preparing for the interview to succeeding in my new job. Later, when starting a company, a number of Penn connections became investors and some of our first employees.

Any wisdom for current undergrads?

The advice I'd offer to students is to try as many opportunities—jobs, internships, and extracurriculars—during college as possible. It was because I did a summer internship that I learned I didn't like finance, and because I worked as an Anheuser-Busch Campus Ambassador (promoting their jobs, not their beer!) that I learned I loved marketing.

What's next for you?

Continuing to build WayUp so that every student and recent grad can find an amazing job or internship. One out of every three students who uses WayUp gets hired, with our user base made up of 72% underrepresented minorities. We're democratizing the hiring process for young talent and employers, and I'm utterly passionate about the business we continue to build.



Jon Youshaei, C'13, W'13

SAN FRANCISCO

DUAL DEGREE: Huntsman Program in International Studies and Business

Jon is a writer and content creator for sites like *Forbes*, *Time*, *Buzzfeed* and more. He writes about 20-somethings in the workplace and has a knack for viral content. He also does product marketing for Google, and is the founder of EveryVowel.com. (Hint: You can't spell his last name without every single one.) Speaking of his name, you'll find it topping lists of marketing influencers who are leading the digital pack—including *Inc. Magazine's* top 7 marketers of 2017.

As an undergrad, what was the most valuable thing you did outside of class?

I was lucky enough to serve as class president for 4 years and represent 2,500 students who were much smarter than I am. As a kid who grew up in the tiny suburbs of Chicago, I saw running for class president as a way to get outside my bubble and meet more of my classmates.

Tell us about your career since Penn.

By day, I'm a product marketing manager at Google. By nights and weekends, I'm a cartoonist and writer behind EveryVowel.com. The comic series is all about office humor and paying forward the career advice I got in landing a job at Google. *Business Insider* called EveryVowel the "Dilbert for millennials" and my work has been featured all over the web. I'm a big believer that your job shouldn't define everything about you. As long as you're staying on top of your work, then what you do outside of the office—like drawing and writing—can help make you more creative, productive, and interesting.

How has your Penn network played a role in all of this?

There were so many Penn alums who gave me advice when I was applying to my first job. It's made me realize that Penn's network is really special. We look after each other. There's an unspoken understanding that Penn people can get the job done.

What's your advice for current students?

Embrace your quirkiness. Listen to your artistic side. Do what you loved to do as a child before prestige and society influenced your thinking. It can be easy to forget that there's more than just business out there. I know I did. That's why I started making the EveryVowel cartoons and doodling like I did as a kid. It may seem silly and not part of any "five-year plan" but it has brought me so much joy and fulfillment.



Lauren Sallan

Assistant Professor, Department of Earth and Environmental Science



Professor Sallan will be teaching **GEOL 205: Paleontology** in the fall, an introductory course available to all majors.

Dr. Lauren Sallan is a paleobiologist who uses “big data” approaches to understand how global events, environmental change, and ecological interactions have shaped evolution and modern biodiversity. Her work with fish fossils has shed light on mass extinctions of the past, with significant implications for Earth’s future.

“The fossil record tells the story of our history,” she says. “And understanding the past is key in understanding what is to come.” Sallan’s recent study published by Science details her research of 1,120 ancient fossils. The short of it: After a mass extinction event 359 million years ago, school-bus sized sea creatures gave way to their shrimpy counterparts, as these smaller species could reproduce quickly and survive on less food during ecological unrest. The findings support evidence that mass extinctions have caused marked shrinkage in the animal population over millions of years. So perhaps being the smallest fish in the pond isn’t so bad after all?

“I don’t know quite what to expect, but I know it will be incredible.”

DR. SALLAN ON BEING SELECTED AS A 2017 TED FELLOW

Sallan’s groundbreaking work has made national headlines, and she was recently selected as a 2017 TED Fellow. She’ll be joining a class of 15 innovators from around the world who will deliver a talk on the TED stage this month in Vancouver, B.C.

“I don’t know quite what to expect, but I know it will be incredible,” Sallan says. She looks forward to gaining perspectives from big thinkers across diverse fields. The potential for cross-disciplinary projects is inherent to the

JACK STACK, C’19, first became interested in paleontology when he stumbled upon a 385-million-year-old fossil in his grandmother’s backyard. He was in high school in Michigan at the time and decided to dig a bit deeper. This led Jack to Dr. Sallan, who was at nearby University of Michigan. His passion for conducting research, analyzing data, and unearthing discoveries grew from there. Jack ended up following Dr. Sallan to Penn for his undergraduate studies, where he works in her lab and is majoring in paleontology.



TED Fellow experience, and she cites “crowdsourcing the assembly of huge fossil databases” as an idea she already has brewing.

“I hope to bring a deep-time perspective,” she says about what she plans to contribute to the group of gurus. (The 15 Fellows range from an investigative journalist to a neuroscientist entrepreneur.) “Understanding our place within long-term evolution is essential... It can answer a lot of questions about the current world we live in.”

Karen Hamilton, C’87, PAR’14, PAR’18

Karen was born and raised in Philadelphia, a few blocks away from Penn’s campus. She came to Penn as an undergraduate in 1983 where she met her husband, Dexter

Hamilton, L’87. Their oldest son James, C’14, graduated with a degree in urban studies, and daughter Doris, C’18, is majoring in theatre arts and Africana studies.



As a Penn parent, Karen has participated in making welcome calls, speaking on Penn Parents panels, and serving as a resource on campus to families who are making the transition to college. As a Philadelphian, she has enjoyed comforting far-away parents and touching base with their children, as well as hosting students for Thanksgiving who were unable to travel home.

Karen shares some of her experience as a Penn parent, and what it has meant for her:

When our children were small, someone gave me a book titled “Parenting Isn’t for Cowards.” I dusted it off when we moved our oldest son James into DuBois College House freshman year. One of the most challenging aspects of parenthood for me has been balancing the inevitable “letting go” with the desire and responsibility I have to “be there” for my kids. There is the natural fear about how your son or daughter will handle freedom, stressful course loads, disappointment, or even failure. But, I have found that many of my fears revolve around my identity as a parent, and how that changes as my children mature, embrace new ideas, and make decisions on their own. It’s scary and humbling to relinquish those elements of control, but I’ve watched in amazement and enjoyed so many rewarding moments in the process of our children becoming adults at Penn.

My volunteer work as a Penn parent has allowed me to redefine what parental involvement at this stage looks like—this is not the school fieldtrip revisited. It has also given me the privilege of coming alongside other parents and their students as they become integrated at Penn.

Finally, drawing from my own experience as an underrepresented student on Penn’s campus, I remember how important it was to find validation from people who looked like me, and who celebrated my presence. I am passionate about leveraging my identity as a Penn parent to actively encourage students and families of color that they have made a good choice in selecting Penn, that Penn is fortunate to have chosen them, that they belong here, and that they’re going to have the time of their lives.

THE PARENTS FUND UPDATE

Your support of undergraduate education through The Parents Fund is a wonderful way to show your commitment to the University, while positively impacting the student experience. Gifts to The Parents Fund support areas such as residential programming, innovative curricula, scholarships, campus enhancements, and technology upgrades.

Every gift, regardless of size, makes a difference in the lives of our students. Last year, parent donors gave more than \$227,000, primarily through gifts of \$250 or less!

SENIOR PARENTS: HONOR YOUR GRADUATING SENIOR

Parents of the Class of 2017 are invited to honor their child through the Parents Class of 2017 Senior Gift, which supports the Provost’s Fund for the Enhancement of the Undergraduate Experience. This fund ensures that current and future students are able to participate in groundbreaking research, experience vibrant student life activities, and learn from world-renowned faculty.

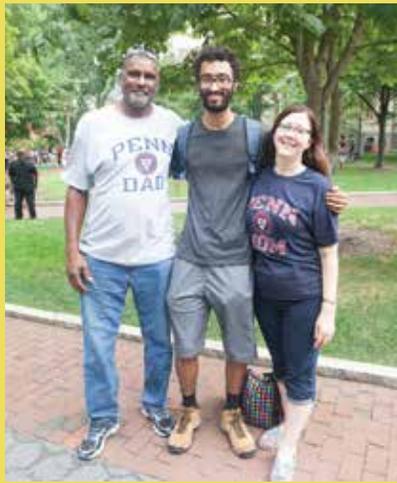
We hope we can count on your support through a gift to The Parents Fund or the Parents Class of 2017 Senior Gift Fund this year. To date, we have raised \$845,000 from 1,725 donors. Please help us reach our goal of \$1.3 million from 3,000 donors. Thank you for your generous support!

LEARN MORE AT:
www.pennparents.upenn.edu/the-parents-fund

UPDATE

www.pennparents.upenn.edu

We love welcoming Penn families to campus!



2016-2017