STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARDS
CLASS OF 2020
Congratulations, seniors! It is with tremendous Red and Blue pride that I write to you from my home in Rye, New York, to applaud your success in earning a degree from the University of Pennsylvania. It has been 46 years since my own graduation, and much more recently that I watched two of my children complete their time at Penn. You have already accomplished so much—and many of you are honored here as Student Leadership Award recipients—Hurrah! Hurrah!

As individuals, you have brought something uniquely “you” to Penn. But as a group, you share qualities like compassion, conviction, and confidence. I’m excited for you all over again, thinking about the endless possibilities that lay ahead. Penn launched me on an exciting journey from Economics major to Fortune 500 companies and eventually to adoption advocacy. I have no doubt that your own journey will be equally rewarding!

I am not alone in experiencing a range of emotions for all of you, including heartbreak over the abrupt end to your final semester on campus. I’d like to pause for a moment to recognize that. The good news is—you will be back. Before COVID-19, I returned to Locust Walk more than I could have ever imagined when I graduated. In time, we will all be reunited.

So, here is the silver lining with a little bit of perspective—gratitude. I am grateful in this moment to be a part of a community that is as vibrant and hopeful as each of you. I am grateful for the technology that allows us to stay connected. Finally, I am grateful for all that you have already contributed to Penn, by bringing us the best version of yourself.

Let us celebrate your achievements, small and large. Good luck on the next chapter.

Best wishes,
Ann Reese, CW’74
Penn Alumni would like to congratulate all award recipients from the Class of 2020. The Student Leadership Award Book highlights a selection of the Class of 2020’s award recipients. The awardee profiles feature a selection of quotes, personal narratives, or a spotlight on the awardee’s Penn accomplishments.
CAROLYNNE LIU

Althea K. Hottel Shield Award

This award is named for Penn’s first Dean of Women, educational pioneer Althea K. Hottel. Represented by the Shield, this award honors intellectual competence, commitment to ideals and loyalty to the University. The recipient of the 2020 Althea K Hottel Shield Award is Carolynne Liu.

During her time at Penn, Carolynne gave back to the community in many ways. She served as Tutor, Outreach Director and Chair of the West Philadelphia Tutoring Project. An active member in her a cappella group, PennYo, she served in many capacities including Marketing Chair, Vice President and President. While participating in the Fellowship for Building Intercultural Communities, she rose through the ranks, starting as a facilitator and eventually serving as President.

Carolynne draws her energy from working with her peers. Her leadership embodies the spirit of the Hottel Shield Award, connecting Penn and the local communities.
Heidi has consistently volunteered in leading thoughtful and fruitful discussions at PAACH, drawing bridges between the nursing and greater college communities. According to her peers, Heidi is unafraid to openly share her experiences at Penn, including setbacks, because she knows she will overcome them and provides a healthy example to her peers.

Dalmacio Dennis Flores  
Ph.D. ACRN Assistant Professor
My first year at Penn, I was introduced to a culture of inclusivity, collaboration, and hard work. I’ve learned these cultural values are contagious and deeply rooted in the Track & Field and Nursing programs at Penn. There is an inspiring sense of togetherness that facilitates success. In 2018, I was fortunate enough to be a member of the Women’s Track and Field team as the program won our first Ivy team title since 1987. We continued to win the team title at every indoor and outdoor Ivy Championship through my senior year in 2020. In 2019, I placed second at both the indoor and outdoor NCAA championship in the 800m run. I was also a member of the Distance Medley Relay that claimed the Ivy League’s first female Championship of America Penn Relays Wheel, after which I was named College Athlete of the Meet. Balancing nursing and track was difficult, but never impossible because of the support I’ve received along the way. Although my senior year, and perhaps history, was interrupted with the advent of a global pandemic—I found the character and spirit of my Penn Family remains unscathed. Then and now, the support we have received from our alumni is seemingly boundless. I hope to join this cohort and will retain involvement in the Penn community as an alumna by staying connected with the track program, and supporting those through their undergraduate experience. I also plan on returning for key events like Homecoming and Penn Relays. Once a Quaker, always a Quaker!
I have witnessed the outstanding growth of this young man into a brilliant scholar, socially aware, thoughtful in his actions and engaged in serving our society in ways that would provide him the opportunities to contribute to building a better and just world where true equity and justice live at the core of our human existence.

Johnny Irizarry
Former Director, La Casa Latina
As a Native woman in science, Dana is eager to learn how she can give back, not only to her own community, but also to girls and young women considering careers in science. After working long hours as a student, she looks forward to exploring opportunities to share her academic journey.

Toyce Holmes
FGLI Program Coordinator,
Greenfield Intercultural Center
As an Ambassador for the PennKIPP program, Ajibola has made many positive contributions to our program, specifically using his in and out of the classroom training to broaden outreach to students through various communication strategies. Whether he designs program flyers, teach others various social media platforms to advertise programs, or serve as a representative during on or off-campus meetings, his voice and reach has nurtured community and increased student engagement in academic, social, wellness, recruitment, and career development events.

Keisha Johnson
Director, PennKIPP
The Bowl Award recognizes a graduating students’ devotedness to helping others and building a better community at Penn and its surrounding communities. This year’s recipient, Jordan Williams, is a true example of this dedication.

Jordan is hard-wired to be helpful as demonstrated through his many endeavors as a Penn undergraduate. A member of the Black Wharton Undergraduate Association and student employee with Wharton’s Baker Retailing Center, he discovered his entrepreneurship passion early in life. A passion which lead him to pursue several initiatives including co-founding the Youth Entrepreneurs Diversity Corporation, a non-profit organization that connects students with mentors as well as Young Moguls Brand, a fashion and lifestyle brand that promotes empowering messages of entrepreneurship.

Perhaps his most inspiring endeavor is his self-published book, “Breaking the System”, where he explores transcending society’s confines and improving society by fearlessly challenging it. There is no doubt Jordan will do just that as an active Penn alumnus.
The Cane Award recipient for 2020 is Daniel Gonzalez. The Cane Award recognizes a graduating senior who has made an impactful contribution to the lives of their fellow classmates.

Daniel has provided leadership, support and inspiration to his peers throughout his undergraduate career. He helped others, especially those within the First-Generation, Low-Income (FGLI) community, become more involved in student life, supporting their interests and helping them grow and thrive as students.

He has mentored many fellow students as they navigated their way through Penn. Through his involvement in Penn First, a student organization for first-generation college students and students from a low-income background, he helped to build a community for all FGLI students by providing support through mentorship, outreach, and advocacy.

Daniel’s commitment to ensuring all students from diverse backgrounds and situations have the support they need to be successful Penn students is truly commendable.
Adam Goldner’s senior season was cut short after five games due to the national outbreak of coronavirus COVID-19. At the time, the senior co-captain was second on the team in assists (5) and third in both goals (11) and points (16). He also ranked fifth in program history with 106 career goals and 13th with 126 career points. Goldner’s final game was certainly one to remember, as he recorded seven points and scored the game-winning goal with 48 seconds left to give Penn a 13-12 win at Saint Joseph’s. Goldner ended his career having scored at least one goal in each of his last 30 games, dating back to his sophomore year. Adam’s leadership on and off the field has been a tremendous asset to the men’s lacrosse program and the University as a whole.
Continuing Education Award

The University of Pennsylvania is a place where good things happen. At Penn, I have had the opportunity to focus my intellectual interests in the history of technology and develop my strengths as a researcher. I have found my place in a community of scholars and activists who have provided counsel and comfort as I prepare to leave the school I love and set off on a new adventure. However, I almost worried myself out of a fantastic experience at Penn by being too afraid to ask questions. It might seem like such a simple thing, but for those who wrestle with imposter syndrome and anxiety, revealing that you need help or are confused at an Ivy League university can seem like an impossible thing. But asking for help, raising your hand for clarification, is not a sign of inferiority. In fact, it is a part of self-advocacy that is crucial at every professional level.

Now, as a graduating senior, preparing for her first semester in a Ph.D. program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, I hope to use my experience advocating for myself and my fellow students to help make the transitions that populate the lives of nontraditional students less challenging. I am excited to unlock what the future holds, and I cherish every opportunity to help others do so as well.
The Goddard Loving Cup Award, established in honor of former Provost David R. Goddard, recognizes a senior’s exemplary service to the University and fellow classmates. Jordan Andrews, the 2020 recipient, is a shining example of someone who has truly served the community.

In her role as Political Chair of UMOJA, Jordan served as a leader within Penn’s black community, bringing people together in solidarity. As Vice President of the Undergraduate Assembly, she played a similar role for the entire student body, ensuring the important issues she and her peers were most passionate about were not only heard but actions were taken.

An active member of Sister Sister, West Philadelphia Tutoring Project and Beyond Arrests: Re-thinking Systematic Oppression, Jordan is the epitome of a leader who gets things done, motivates her peers and advocates for others.
ANGELICA DU
Gaylord P. Harnwell Flag Award

This award named in honor of President Gaylord P. Harnwell, who believed that selfless service to the university and community has ripple effects impacting generations to come. Represented by the Penn flag, this year’s recipient is Angelica Du.

Angelica’s involvements focused on a variety of areas from the performing arts to undergraduate research, displaying her range of interests.

She shared her love of singing and arranging music with Penn and surrounding Philadelphia communities as Musical Director of Disney A Cappella. She served as a worship ministry team leader with the Christian Union, where she learned the extraordinary power of investing in genuine relationships with others.

Angelica has also made an academic impact at Penn, serving as a writing center tutor, researcher, and teaching assistant. Her leadership reflects the variety of facets that make up the community and life at Penn.
Chi is a self-directed team player; he is able to communicate effectively with different constituents on a positive level... Chi is always of service to others and an example for his peers because he is deeply committed to making the lives of others better and wanting to be of service.

Ebonish Lamar
Dean- Fisher Hassenfeld College House
Louis has played a critical role in transforming the landscape at Penn for students who identify as First Generation and/or Low Income (FGLI)...

In my 30 years in student affairs at four different institutions, I have met many outstanding students, but Louis stands out amongst the top 1% in this group.

Valerie De Cruz
Director, Greenfield Intercultural Center
Among my observations of Louis is that he possesses a seemingly boundless energy, which he channels into a dizzying number of engagements on campus (as well as in the Philadelphia community). His fuel is an empathic concern for others, a determination to collaborate and problem-solve, and a powerful optimism.

Louis cares deeply about many things – health, education, immigrant communities, low-income communities, Asian-American identity, democratic processes – and has an uncanny ability to approach these varied priorities in a manner that is both holistic and highly productive. He is poised to make a major contribution at the intersection of health and education.

Lauren Orr
Associate Director for Fellowships
Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships
I am impressed with Wesley’s commitment to build up a positive student environment on campus and the city. His main focus is Transgender/LGBTQ+ rights and how to make the university a more welcoming place for everyone. Wesley is a humble person and very aware of how important is to make sure that other voices are heard as well.

Prof. Américo Mendoza-Mori
Coordinator of the Quechua Language Program, Penn Language Center
Department of Romance Languages
As a Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering major, a demanding chemical engineering curriculum was always part of the game plan, as Promise became well acquainted in complex topics like thermodynamics, reactor kinetics, and electrochemical energy conversion.

A two-term President of Penn For Jesus, Promise brought students from different backgrounds together to find a shared compassion. As Co-Founder of the Bible study group My Brother’s Keeper, he helped other Black men at Penn share and spread spiritual guidance, and fellowship.

As the Treasurer of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), Promise brought the wonders of science, technology, engineering, and math to over 50 kids in West Philadelphia. And even in the face of the COVID-19 crisis that abruptly dismissed so many spring plans, he secured funding for NSBE members to attend the national conference, and pivoted when the event was moved to a future date.
Gabriel’s passion for public policy and the democratic process has been on display during his four years at Penn, beginning with his success as a Political Science major. Gabriel earned a spot on the Dean’s List and election to the Pi Sigma Alpha Honor Society. During his junior year, Gabriel joined the Penn in Washington Semester Program, where he served as a Research and Communications Intern at the Penn Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement.

On campus, Gabriel has been a champion in supporting civic engagement and increasing student turnout. As Vice President of Penn Democrats, he successfully led Penn’s largest non-partisan voter registration drive, leading to the revitalization of Penn Leads the Vote, a voter engagement group now run by the Netter Center for Community Partnerships. During the 2018 midterm elections, Penn Democrats continued to lead by creating voter guides, presentations, and Get Out the Vote events. Voting on campus increased from 19.8% in 2014 to 41.8% in 2018. Thanks in part to Gabriel’s commitment to democratic engagement, Penn was named the only “Voter Friendly Campus” in the Ivy League by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.
Since Raj set foot on campus, one word above all others exemplifies his time at Penn: ambassador. Everywhere Raj went, he created meaningful connections with the people he met: in the classroom, in research labs, in residence halls, in the West Philadelphia community, and even on stage. That diplomatic spirit has been with Raj since freshman year in high school when he first discovered his passion for Model United Nations—a passion that continued throughout college.

Raj made connections across Penn and beyond, whether mentoring student teams on their business ventures as the program director of YouthHack Philadelphia, or acting on stage in a production of 12 Angry Men. The same curiosity that fueled academic success led Raj to build meaningful relationships with everyone he met, whether they were scientists, entrepreneurs, or artists.
As a Dean’s List student majoring in Political Science with two minors—Psychology and Survey Research and Data Analytics—Hayley has worked hard to realize incredible results. As a member of the Sigma Alpha Political Science Honor Society and a QuestBridge Scholar, her achievements reveal an intellectual curiosity and devotion to lifelong learning.

Hayley is a self-starter who sought leadership positions on campus. As Co-Chair of the Seniors for Penn Fund, her team broke records, with more seniors donating than ever before. While President of the Penn Government and Politics Association, Hayley engaged with classmates in political debates, non-partisan events, and discussions. Hayley also taught debate at the Science Leadership Academy through the Penn for Youth Debate program.
“Lindsay is the reason I came to Penn.” Those are strong words, but true for many Penn Nursing undergraduates who had the pleasure of meeting Lindsay as a Kite and Key ambassador or during Penn Nursing recruitment events. Rare was the time that she missed a chance to share her experiences with prospective students. In fact, Penn Nursing Associate Director of Admissions Marianne Smith frequently enlisted Lindsay to represent the school, and the entire University. This esteem, and consistent knack for stepping up whenever and wherever needed, extend naturally from her dedication to support others.
Dan is a regular at La Casa Latina and is the type of leader that meaningfully engages in supporting other student leadership initiatives, and not just in the efforts he is directly leading. His serious dedication to Penn initiatives for first-generation students via the FGLI Program and Penn First led him to serve on the Planning Team of the Penn’s 1vyG Conference.

Dan has earned sincere respect from his peers, faculty, and staff who know him well. He at times can appear to be shy, but once he feels confident his passion for causes of equity and justice emerge with deep conviction and seriousness. Dan has an extraordinary level of human compassion and has worked very hard to overcome challenges throughout his young life.

Johnny Irizarry
Former Director, La Casa Latina
First, I want to emphasize the leadership impact Jessica has had at the personal/individual level. In this respect, I have watched her coach and mentor students in my course who are struggling to learn required information. She freely shared her cell phone number and invited students to text her with problems – and she faithfully replied.

Additionally, Jessica has tutored since her sophomore year, taking on almost double the average number of tutees when asked to do so. Although I know she benefited from being paid for these work-study positions, I also know that her bigger motivation was to help others succeed – which to me is a true mark of leadership.

Connie B. Scanga
Practice Professor of Nursing
The Brownlee Skimmer Hat Award commemorates one of Penn’s most historic traditions, Hey Day. Named in honor of Dean R Jean Brownlee’s enduring legacy of unifying the Penn community, this year’s award recipient is Natasha Menon.

Since her initial days at Penn, Natasha was involved in numerous activities that enhanced student life and created a positive impact on campus. She was the President of the Undergraduate Assembly; a member of the Student Activities Council Executive Board; and Creative Director for the South Asian fusion dance team, Penn Masti.

A Civic Scholar and a 2020 Thouron Award recipient, Natasha is incredibly passionate about seeing Penn grow to become an even greater resource for current and future students alike. Through her tireless work and commitment to enhancing the undergraduate experience, she has proven herself to be an exceptional University citizen.
Delaney Keenan joined Penn Traditions Class Ambassadors during her freshman year as a way to be involved with alumni, fellow students, and the unique celebrations at Penn. Throughout her tenure with Penn Traditions, Delaney has been a strong volunteer and she has positively impacted the organization in many ways. During her experience with Penn Traditions, Delaney learned that the alumni community is very strong and the association with Penn is forever. Delaney took that lesson to heart; she already has plans on how she will remain engaged as an alumna in the future.
Penn Traditions was the first student organization Jacky joined her freshman year and she has been a committed member throughout her time at Penn. *Jacky’s warm personality and inviting nature allowed her to thrive in her roles with Penn Traditions and work with others to provide opportunities to build community for all Penn undergraduate students.*

From planning the Sophomore Friendsgiving and the Homecoming Student Section to one on one interactions with peers, Jacky’s leadership with Penn Traditions has made an impact.
The Spade Award recognizes a graduating senior who has demonstrated leadership in both academically focused and co-curricular opportunities. Arman Ramezani, the 2020 recipient, is an outstanding choice for this honor.

He has served as Chair of the Student Committee on Undergraduate Education, Co-President of Penn Persians as well as a Benjamin Franklin Society Co-Chair for Seniors for the Penn Fund. In each of these roles, he learned invaluable lessons in community building and discovered how collaboration can inspire a successful outcome.

Working with faculty, staff, and peers, Arman fully appreciated the unique opportunities he’s been offered at Penn. He’s found mentors and partners who have truly enhanced his undergraduate experience beyond anything he could have imagined.

Being selected to receive the 2020 Spade Award is a clear tribute to Arman’s scholastic success and steadfast commitment to enhancing the undergraduate experience for all students.
The Spoon Award, the oldest among the senior honor awards, recognizes a graduating seniors’ achievement and contribution to the class and to the University. This year’s recipient is Karim El Sewedy.

In his most visible role, Karim created a strong community among his peers as President of the Class of 2020. During his four years on the Class Board, Karim focused his efforts on upholding many school traditions while ensuring inclusivity, improving class unity, and increasing student participation.

His level of commitment and devotion to the Class of 2020 are unquestionable. A true Penn ambassador, he spent countless hours putting Penn on display as an Admissions Office tour guide with the Kite and Key Society.

Administrators and students alike recognize the indelible mark this 2020 Spoon Award honoree has left on our community. He truly embodies the spirit and enthusiasm of the graduating class.
Qiaochu, ‘Nova,’ has been involved with the Eta Kappa Nu honor society for electrical and computer engineers, working to increase student involvement, she has been Events Chair and Vice President. She was involved with the AOE Engineering Sorority, Penn Aerospace Club, and Venus, the women’s Penn Frisbee team. She has enjoyed being a teaching assistant for statistics and computer science classes.
Natasha Menon is a senior studying Philosophy, Politics, and Economics with a minor in Legal Studies and History from Scottsdale, AZ. Previously having served as the Social Justice Committee Director and Treasurer, Natasha has continued her work this year as President of the Undergraduate Assembly and focuses on promoting university resources and elevating the voices of marginalized communities on campus. Through her time on the UA, Natasha worked to increase visibility of the cultural resource centers, promote spaces to explore intersectional identities, and helped to expand inclusive classroom workshops for faculty and administrative leadership. Outside of the UA, Natasha has been involved with the Pan-Asian American Community House as a member of the Board of Advisors, and is also a member of the Civic Scholars program, the Penn Public Policy Initiative Student Group, and the Penn Masti dance team.
CONGRATULATIONS

Class of 2020

Penn Alumni
University of Pennsylvania