President and Vice President Platform Mid-Year Status Report

Kat McKay, President

Sola Park, Vice President

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Reduce tuition increases

Eric Tepper and Kat McKay have worked with administrators from the President's Office, the Provost's Office, the EVP's Office, and others to convey how important it is that Penn limit the expenses students and their families are expected to bear. They are working on a presentation for the Trustee Committee on Budget and Finance's upcoming meeting in February. They have also been in touch with Secretary Kruhly about meeting with the Trustee Chair of that committee over winter break.

Reduce course costs & increase cost transparency

Kat, SCUE, and PennFirst have worked together to circulate a survey to students about course costs. We first raised the issue at the Council of Undergraduate Deans' October meeting. Since then we created a 5-page executive summary of the survey results and recommendations to limit costs. CUD is meeting on December 14th to review each school's status implementing those recommendations. The executive summary will be included in the UA's next annual report.

Create a standard six-month mental health leave policy

Cabinet has raised the issue of inconsistent and unclear leave of absence policies to President Gutmann, Provost Price, Craig Carnaroli, VPUL Val Cade, and other administrators. Since the undergraduate schools each set their own policies, SCUE and the UA are going to bring the topic to CUD next semester, most likely in March. Active Minds Penn has reached out to the UA asking if we will help them distribute a survey on leaves of absence early next semester. One possible

outcome is changing how Penn denotes a leave of absence on a student's official university transcript.

Expand students' access to Penn resources during leaves of absence

This project is closely related to standardizing six-month mental health leaves. The UA will work with Active Minds and SCUE to improve this aspect of the leave experience during our work on the topic next semester.

Publicize Penn's wellness resources

The UA has been working to help spread mental health awareness around campus in a few ways. We produced a peer community wellness guide with PUHC and Penn Wellness, which the Communications Team is distributing to different resource centers around campus. We intend to give two copies of the guide to every RA/GA in the College Houses to tape to their doors. Jason and Simon have been working on a project to promote Penn Benjamins, a peer-led mental health services club on campus. They are trying to help Penn Bens acquire permanent space in the college houses, especially the Quad and New College House. Bringing this organization closer to students, especially freshmen, will reduce the stigma of getting help for mental health-related problems and expand the accessibility of non-CAPS wellness resources.

Targeted community resource outreach

The SL committee is working to create an outreach program for freshmen high school students in the Penn area. Many of these students don't have a good understanding of the college admissions process. Roberto is designing a program where Penn students meet with local high school freshmen to help them learn more about the benefits of going to college and how to best position themselves to get admitted. He has met with administrators from the Netter Center to talk about scaling the program through their community outreach student groups. Roberto is giving a formal presentation to the Netter Center this week to see about integrating the program with their existing GEAR UP program. Depending on the outcome of this proposal, classroom presentations will begin next semester.

Emphasize every student's freedom of speech, opinion, and viewpoint

The UA exists to support the experiences of all Penn students. Kat wrote a guest column in the Daily Pennsylvanian before freshmen elections to compel students from many different backgrounds to run. She wrote that "it doesn't matter where you come from, what your background is or whether or not you were involved with student government in high school. Every type of person has been and can be successful in Penn Student Government." In general the UA's leadership tries to be supportive of our diverse student community.

Connect survivors of interpersonal violence with UA Legal Services and other resources

This is a project Sola is looking to work on through next semester. She is planning outreach to the Penn Violence Prevention Office, DPS, the Women's Center, and administrators in other spaces students may turn to when they experience interpersonal violence.

Add performing arts spaces on and around campus

Jay has met with the Performing Arts Council executive board to discuss their concerns regarding performing arts spaces. Cabinet has presented the need for new performance spaces to FRES (Facilities and Real Estate Services), Provost Price's office, President Gutmann, and Executive Vice President Craig Carnaroli. In the short term, existing spaces are being evaluated by EVP's office to determine if they can be modified to fit performing groups' needs. Laurie McCall, director of the Platt Performing Arts House, and PAC Exec have put together a comprehensive document that outlines performing arts space supply and demand (in terms of hours of space requested and awarded). This document also includes the cost of using each space so administrators can better understand the financial aspect of this problem. Jay is going to connect PAC Exec with Vice Provost for Faculty Anita Allen, who is working on an assessment of performing arts at Penn on behalf of the Provost.

Create a Veterans resource center

No work has been done on this project yet this year.

Create an international student center

With the creation of Perry World House, the UA has explored the possibility of creating an international student center in that space. Although ISSS exists, the center serves as an administrative building dealing with immigration and visa issues. The UA is looking to work with the Assembly of International Students to create a physical space to bring international students together in the Perry World House. Sola has been in contact with Katelyn Leader, the PWH Program Associate, to determine the feasibility of this project.

Expand half-credit courses

The UA is working with SCUE to circulate a survey to students about half-credit courses. We intend to present curricular options to the deans of all 4 undergraduate schools at the February CUD meeting. The Academics Initiatives committee has also been pursuing this concept through extracurricular platforms. Wharton piloted three non-seminar credit courses this semester: Design and Photoshop, Financial Modeling and Excel, and "Learn to Code." AI has been in touch with the College Dean's Advisory Board and the Engineering Dean's Advisory Board about creating similar 'courses' in their schools. Nile is going to present a more detailed pitch to the College Dean's Advisory Board in January.

Offer introductory computer science courses that appeal to students from diverse backgrounds

The AI committee has done some work related to creating a "CIS 001" course. If the course is housed in SEAS, it cannot fulfill sector or other requirements for students in the other schools. Since we feel it is important that this course draw students from across the 4 schools, we are going to work with the Provost's Office and the deans to see if it can be created as an interdisciplinary program. It is also possible to teach computer science or coding skills through non-credit-bearing courses like those offered by WDAB.