



The President

May 13, 2009

Dear Members of our University Community,

I am pleased to report we have taken the first step toward reinventing the eastern edge of Penn's campus.

Earlier this spring, construction was completed on the Weave Bridge, a beautiful new pedestrian span designed by Penn's own Cecil Balmond, the Paul Philippe Cret Practice Professor of Architecture. Crafted from a unique mix of steel, wood and polymers, this striking pedestrian bridge makes a powerful statement about Penn's commitment to beautiful design. The design community is already taking note. Upon seeing Balmond's plans, *Philadelphia Inquirer* architecture critic Inga Saffron raved that crossing Balmond's bridge would be a "full-blown adventure trek, with looping turns and whooshing slaloms." Indeed, people don't simply cross the Weave Bridge. They experience it.

Currently, the bridge is serving an important practical purpose. As construction continues on the South Street Bridge, the Weave Bridge is carrying pedestrians over the Amtrak lines east of Franklin Field, enabling them to access Bower Field.

The bridge holds important symbolic value, too. It represents the first real "connection" of the groundbreaking Penn Connects plan—our ambitious vision to reconnect University City and Center City, revitalize the long-neglected Eastern edge of campus, and create a greener, more beautiful, more exciting campus community.

In short, the Weave Bridge not only makes a dramatic design statement of its own, but also points to a brighter, better future for Penn and for University City. So I'd like to take a moment to update you about some of projects included in the Penn Connects plan.

As you've likely noticed, work has already begun on the new Weiss Pavilion at Franklin Field. This Pavilion is one of the most important projects ever launched on behalf of Penn Athletics. When completed later this year, it will offer our student-athletes an athletic training facility as fine as any in the Ivy League. Slated to cover more than 22,000 square feet, the Pavilion will include a varsity weight room, a recreation fitness center and retail space.

Construction on an even more ambitious project, meanwhile, will begin later this year. The 24-acre Penn Park will bring the Penn community acres of much-needed green space, recreational areas and athletics fields. The park will improve the Penn experience for our students and fundamentally change the image of the eastern edge of our campus.

For far too long, the lands east of Franklin Field have sat vacant. Now, through Penn Park, we will transform those barren acres of blacktop into a stunning park space that will extend Penn's campus, for the first time, all the way to the Schuylkill River. With this single project, we will create more open space on campus than we've ever had before. Penn Park will provide new recreational opportunities for our students, better training facilities for our student-athletes, and a more beautiful experience for everyone in the campus community—faculty, students and staff.

In the years to come, we anticipate even further development, and more exciting changes, for the East Campus area.

At Penn Park, we envision a softball stadium, a tennis center and an enclosed season air structure. New office and research buildings will extend the heart of campus eastward, bring new life to the area, and spur commercial development along the Walnut Street corridor. Ultimately, the combined efforts of Penn and our development partners will create a true new neighborhood east of campus—a dynamic urban place where we can live, work and play.

Sincerely,

Amy Gutmann