

October 17, 2016

A Message to the Penn Community - Campaign for Community

Recent events and challenging issues have divided communities across our country. This is an important moment for us to reflect on the ways in which Penn can serve as a model of constructive conversations about difficult matters.

To this end, I am writing to invite all members of the Penn community to propose events, large or small, for our [Campaign for Community](#).

The Campaign for Community, as many of you know, began last year in the context of events in Ferguson and elsewhere, the Black Lives Matter movement, and an invaluable panel discussion at Penn of *Race Relations and Law Enforcement*. The goal is to foster continued campus conversations about the most complex and challenging issues that confront us – the very topics that may often seem controversial or “difficult” to talk about, especially among groups and individuals who otherwise may often not engage or speak with each other.

The Campaign aims to generate such conversations and to promote understanding of and respect for multiple points of view on campus. Many of its events have addressed key questions about race, democracy, and freedom: for example, a *Faculty/Student Conversation About Race, Respect, and Classroom Culture*; a *Black Lives Matter Arts Showcase*; and a *Practical Workshop for Dealing with Racialized Situations in Everyday Life*. Other Campaign events last year discussed such issues as academic freedom, open expression, combat trauma, and intersectional feminism.

The Campaign sponsors events developed and proposed directly by members of the Penn community. It therefore has a unique ability, by its very nature, to respond to our most pressing and immediate concerns. Events this year have already included a UMOJA Town Hall, a panel on Asians in Media, and a discussion series on Science and Race.

President Gutmann and I are deeply committed to fostering open discussion across our campus, and we invite all of you to join in these conversations. The Campaign Steering Committee wants to encourage every kind of discussion and program, whether small and specific or larger panels and public events. This year, it has also shortened its deadlines to be even more responsive to changing national events and to encourage broad participation.

You can learn more about how to propose an event at: <http://provost.upenn.edu/initiatives/campaign/grants>

The Steering Committee also welcomes questions or suggestions at any time at: c4c@exchange.upenn.edu

As a diverse and vibrant community dedicated to seeking knowledge in the service of society, we should not shy away from the opportunity – indeed, the responsibility – to confront our challenges together, with open minds and hearts. W.E.B. DuBois, in an address in Philadelphia nearly 120 years ago, remarked that: “there is but one coward on earth, and that is the coward that dare not know.” Knowing begins with reaching out, engaging with, and learning from each other. I invite you to join me in making these goals a vital daily part of the community we share.

Vincent Price
Provost