At the Summer Fair: Minivisions of Penn's Future

The fair was on though the weather wasn’t, as some 2000 Penn staff, faculty and students found their way to the food, prizes and information being handed out at this year’s Summer Fair, hastily relocated from College Green to the lobby of the Annenberg Center as the rains came June 7.

Over 1200 luncheon dishes were served by the Faculty Club, Dining Service and Penn Tower Hotel, a record for the Fair that began three years ago to give Penn offices, departments and schools a place to exchange information and celebrate the end of term. Visitors, exhibitors, clowns, dancers and jazzmen jammed the lobby and its multilevel wings. Far from discouraging attendance, the move drew such favorable comment that the Senior Vice President’s Office is considering an indoor-outdoor version next year.

Although every fairgoer could walk away with something—a health checkup from Nursing, a free long-distance call for the asking, dozens of giveaways and discount cards—the big prizes took a little work. For the skilled, there was a typing contest. For everyone, there was a raffle—but the only way to enter was by dashing off “Visions of Penn’s Future.”

Over 500 people did so, and below is a sample of the variety that poured in. Senior administrators are reading them all, and Human Resources Vice President Barbara Butterfield expects to talk further with staff about the visions Penn as workplace (including suggestions for benefits, job-sharing and the like) in the coming year’s brown-bag series.

For the contest and raffle winners, see next page above photo. Here are some thumbnail visions of...

Penn as #1. 38 entries including: Increased prominence in the academic community...The school best known for its well-rounded, challenging academic programs...The prominent business, as well as liberal arts education institution...Penn will be the school of choice...People will respect its great traditions...To be #1 on all surveys in all areas...The innovator—the institution on the cutting edge...The best liberal arts school in the nation becomes the best in the world...Penn will finally surpass Harvard as the most thought of...Students clamoring to get in...Rejection rate for admissions reaches 90%...Blow Harvard’s doors off...Top computer science department in the nation...Best managed research institution in the country...To combat the Penn State syndrome, give all employees a Penn sticker for their cars.

Education. 28 including: Scaling down to concentrate on a few main businesses (i.e., only education)...A great teaching and research-leading institution...A strong academic environment...A tenured professor of Hindi and Urdu...Using its interdisciplinary potential to actually help society in combating the dual problems of personal violence and environmental destruction...A world-class University advanced in technology, academia, and business where anyone can come to learn...The physical and psychological proximity of Penn's great graduate schools can enable the University to take the lead in promoting a more humane world through the collaboration of disciplines, using Philadelphia as its laboratory...A center where learning is abundant and surrounding from your residence to the classroom...A free thinking, academically exciting environment...A modern school with plenty of tradition...Wall-to-wall Wharton...A leader in medical research...Penn as the east coast hub for intellectual traffic and socially responsible research...With the implementation of instantaneous information transfer, Penn can lead the way to the formation of a truly international academic community...Ever-growing intellectualism with enriching contributions to the arts, sciences, and humanity...Leader in sensitizing the world as to the importance of education...A major research and development facility creating the leading edge of technology...Offer a quality education...A great medical center that is financially stable...Leader in the arts...Getting better in the humanities...A perpetual, intellectual enterprise with an emphasis on side distractions...Continuing progressive education in arts and sciences...As well as professions...Expanding its educational capability...Smaller classes...The best education you could receive anywhere.

Community Relations. 14 including: Community partnership with Public Safety to enhance the quality of life at Penn...Increased community awareness of activities at Penn...Reach out more to the community surrounding Penn—the homeless, school-age population, the elderly...A University outreach to the community around it, growing stronger with the people around it, instead of without it...Better community spirit...A revitalized West Philadelphia...Greater integration into the West Philadelphia community...A place with an active commitment to participate in developing the surrounding area...Penn merges with the city of Philadelphia in an academic effort such as sponsoring an annual week of lectures reflecting a current theme of interest...Penn as an extraordinary resource for the community and city—constant exchange between academia and civilian life.

Diversity. 26 including: Racially diverse...The world’s truly international university...A department with focus on each country in the world...Expanding scholarly knowledge of the world...No racism, no sexism, no inappropriate treatment of anyone...Lecture/seminar series featuring Penn people from around the