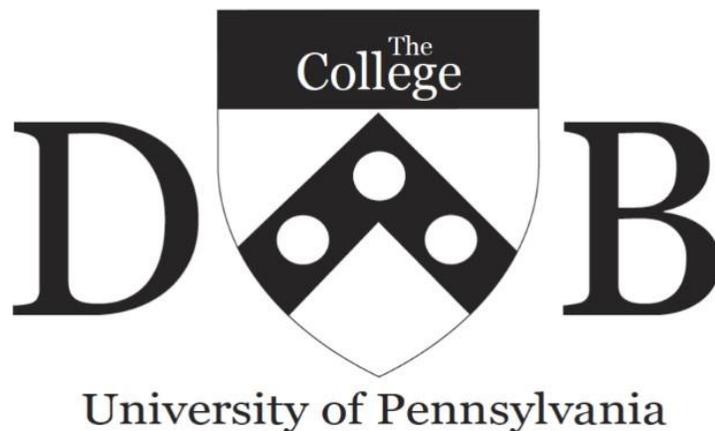


# The White Paper on Undergraduate Education and Student Life in the College of Arts and Sciences

2016

The Dean's Advisory Board of the College of Arts and Sciences  
University of Pennsylvania



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The College Dean's Advisory Board (DAB) has been devoted to improving the quality of undergraduate education and student life within the College of Arts and Sciences. Working with our faculty advisor Dean DeTurck and College administrators, our members serve the College and its student body in many ways. Externally, we advise the College administration on student issues, carry out academic and student life initiatives, sit on faculty committees, collaborate with University-wide student organizations, execute College Palooza, assist with College graduation, host University-wide social events, and remain leaders in the Penn community. Internally, our members work within the structure of various committees. Most recently, our committees focused on analyzing student data in the College, publishing the white paper, running College Palooza, and completing the graduation slideshow.

In January, 2016, our white paper committee began drafting our first report to the University in the history of DAB. The report serves two purposes: In part 1, we share the initiatives, projects, and committees that our members have worked on over the past two semesters. In part 2, we offer in-depth analysis on crucial student life and academic issues—including underclassmen advising, awareness of mental health resources, and student-faculty interaction—facing the College and the University community as a whole. The report sheds light on the current state of affairs of these issues and includes practical recommendations to both DAB and the College administration to consider. We expect to continually update the white paper to reflect our progress in addressing these issues.

Finally, I want to thank the many contributors who led DAB to publish our first white paper. Arjun Malik inspired its creation and chaired the white paper committee. Georgia Huang and Sophia Witte designed, wrote, and edited the contents of the white paper. Dean DeTurck provided guidance and support while giving us access to College administrators. Throughout the publication of the white paper, our members reaffirmed that the diversity of College majors, programs, and opportunities creates a unique learning environment. We endeavor to leverage it to positively impact the academic and student life experiences of all members in the College.

We sincerely hope that both administrators and students will find the report an informative and useful resource as we all strive to improve the College and make it even better.

Sincerely,  
Samip Sheth, C'17

## **Part 1: DAB Initiatives, Projects, and Committees**

### **Deconstructing the Penn Face**

Sophia Witte

"Deconstructing the Penn Face" is an event that aims to spark open discussions about the realities of stress and mental health issues among Penn students. In partnership with Active Minds, RAP-Line, and Penn Benjamins, and Fisher Hassenfeld College House, DAB organized a diverse panel of accomplished upperclassmen to share their experiences with handling stress over their time at Penn. The panelists also responded to questions that were submitted anonymously online or asked by members of the audience during the question and answer portion of the event.

Overall, the event was very successful, with about forty people (roughly two times more than last year) in attendance. Since the seven panelists came from different undergraduate schools and engaged in a wide range of extracurricular activities, the diversity of voices was a key strength at the event, and DAB should be sure to again have each school represented among the panel.

For next year, we have discussed potential changes to maximize the impact of the event. First, we hope to hold two events in total next year. The goal is to have the first even a month into first semester as the chaos of NSO fades and freshmen begin to truly settle into Penn as their new home. This early event will not only expose freshmen to the stresses that they will inevitably face over their four years, but also set a powerful precedent for the candid conversations that should be consistently happening on the topic. Second, we plan to break up the event into two clear portions. In the first half, panelists will introduce themselves and respond to questions prompted by the moderator (similar to the entire event this year). For the last half, we will break the audience into smaller groups (around 10 people) and one panelist will answer questions and lead a discussion among the small group. Finally, we plan to have a much stronger marketing campaign in the weeks leading up to the event next year. In addition to flyers, listserv emails, and Facebook posts/events, we will establish partnerships with mental wellness groups and make sure to leverage their marketing networks.

### **College Palooza**

Shriya Gupta & Samip Sheth

College Palooza is an annual fair on College Green that celebrates the talent, diversity, and accomplishments of the College of Arts and Sciences. College Palooza showcases the dynamism and depth of a liberal arts education with a day full of performances from student art and dance groups, 60-second lectures by College faculty, and booths from over 50 departments. College Palooza is held to unite students and faculty under a common College identity. It is also an opportunity for departments, faculty, and students to present their interests and talents in a public forum. We have had the honor of holding College Palooza during the Quaker Days preview for admitted Penn students. We estimated an attendance of 2,500 people.

### **Coffee with Faculty**

Santosh Nori

This past semester, we launched the pilot phase of the "Coffee with Faculty" initiative. Through the study of a number of surveys and student feedback forms, it was determined that students desired

greater interaction with their professors and felt that they were not able to engage in such interaction in the status quo. The “Coffee with Faculty” initiative aimed to solve this problem by offering students a way to interact with their professors in a more informal setting. The coffee chats that make up this program ideally last about 1 hour, and allow groups of 2-3 students to meet with their professor in a coffee shop of the professor’s choosing. The ultimate goal of this initiative is to expand into the “Take Your Professor out to Lunch” program and improve the latter program’s function. The success and efficiency of this program will be measured through surveys evaluating professor and student satisfaction with the coffee chats.

### **Food Insecurity Initiative**

Victor Fabian Arellano

The Food Insecurity Initiative has finally taken off the ground since the start of the spring 2016 semester. A survey has been created in order for students to give feedback around the current dining plan, and look into the greater eating habits of students at Penn. Directors of PENNCAP, Pamela Edwards, and La Casa Latina, Johnny Irizarry, have both expressed their support for the initiative and have agreed to distribute the survey to their listervs. As of now, the survey has been distributed with the goal of targeting low income students and other ethnic minority groups on campus since these students are the most dependent on the school's dining plan even after their freshman year.

### **Social Media Developments**

Morgan Savige

This semester I launched a Facebook page for the Dean's Advisory Board, and Georgia and I started a tradition of "study breaks" for students to promote the page. The page now has 112 likes and reaches approximately 5,000 people per week with posts such as "member of the week" and those promoting events for CampusPhilly. The Facebook page has also been used to post photos and promote our events such as College Palooza and the PennFace event coming up. Specifically, I took and posted approximately 150 photos from College Palooza on the Facebook page, which will hopefully engage more people in the DAB. The eventual goal is to have a large enough following on the page to promote our events and receive feedback about the College of Arts and Sciences, although the latter is difficult to obtain from students online. In addition to launching the Facebook page, I have also been maintaining the website by posting minutes each week after the meetings and updating our photos.

### **Research in Class**

Arjun Malik

This past semester we launched the Research in Class initiative. Feedback from students indicated that many would like to hear more about the research their instructors are involved in. In response, we encouraged all College instructors to take at least 20-30 minutes during one of their classes to discuss their own research and/or the research that takes place in their academic field more generally. Although we have anecdotal evidence that professors engaged positively with the initiative, we currently lack a reliable measure of how many professors speak with students about their academic research. We plan to investigate whether we can use course evaluations as a mechanism to measure this going forward.

## **Work Study Awareness and Cataloging**

Shay Moon

In hope of providing a quality introductory material for incoming freshman and current students on the full range of employment opportunities on campus, this work study initiative aims to catalog all work study and non-work study wage opportunities and provide a useful policy guide. The catalog and policy guide will become available to students either independently of or in conjunction with the existing catalog and introduction offered by the Student Registration and Financial Services (SRFS) student employment page. This page and office are limited to mostly work study positions, but will undergo reconstruction next year. Our current intention is to coordinate with, rather than distract from, these existing resources.

The Vice Provost's office was the research launching point, giving reference to John Rudolph in the Student Financial Office and Dr. Ann Vernon-Grey in the Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships. Mr. Rudolph provided a catalog of SEM employment coordinators for every department on campus. Each SEM coordinator has been contacted to begin cataloging regular wage opportunities within academic departments. Simultaneously, a catalog of all research institutes associated with the Vice Provost's office is in progress in hope of contacting each to record regularly offered employment opportunities outside of traditional work study and department opportunities. By the fall of 2016, this initiative will have completed revisions for the existing SRFS guide, catalogued all SEM coordinator and research institute related wage opportunities, and designed a policy introduction supplement.

## **Designing and Executing a Translational Research Symposium**

Samip Sheth

This initiative required DAB to host a translational research symposium in conjunction with Institute for Translational Medicine and Therapeutics at the Perelman Center for Medicine and Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships at the University of Pennsylvania. It was held on April 1st, 2016 at the Biomedical Research Building; explored the emerging field of translational research that connects the basic and clinical sciences; and hosted approximately 50 undergraduates from Penn, the Philadelphia area, and greater region as well as post-baccalaureate students, graduate and medical students, postdoctoral fellows, faculty, and the public.

To introduce students to translational research, the symposium provided a variety of seminars and speakers. The seminars include a primer of translational research, four career panels (MD, PhD, MD-PhD, and alternative biomedical science career paths), and a poster session. The speakers included faculty involved in translational research and admissions, such as Penn's Biomedical Graduate Studies Career Development Director Dave Manning and Penn's MD-PhD director Skip Brass. The speakers also included selected undergraduates who presented their own translational research to their peers.

To fund the symposium, the Provost's Office at Penn generously provided a \$500 Year of Discovery grant, which aligned with the core mission of the initiative: to inform, educate, and inspire students about research. Open to all undergraduates, particularly those in the biomedical sciences and healthcare communities, the symposium provided exceptional opportunity to not only learn but connect with distinguished faculty in the field. In relationship with the symposium, CURF hosted

interviews for students interested in a summer research position. Several faculty members expressed interest in the symposium and the ability to find undergraduate research assistants. By co-localizing students, faculty, and program directors at the symposium, the Dean's Advisory Board wants to unify Penn's undergraduate research community—and provide a model that other symposia can adopt.

### **Accessing Previous Course Syllabi during Advanced Registration**

Samip Sheth

This initiative required DAB to address a common student request: provide access to previous syllabi of courses and professors for students registering for an upcoming semester. Members of DAB met with Dean DeTurck, Dean Peterman, and other administrators in the College to explain the need for greater course information at the time of registration. Generally, these individuals supported the initiative, although they noted it depended on willingness of professors who were comfortable posting previous syllabi. Additionally, they indicated that another online system would replace PennInTouch, which contains the current registration system, in the next 3-5 years. They noted that technology add-ons to the current system would not transfer over to the new system, which left them unwilling to dedicate resources in terms of funds and technology to PennInTouch. DAB has not further pursued this initiative. Short-term solutions include an in-house collaboration with PennApps and the Undergraduate Technology Advisory Board to shortcut the PennInTouch system and create a new database of syllabi. Additionally, the Undergraduate Assembly Academic Affairs committee has been pursuing this initiative. Working with the UA committee and thus advocating for the larger undergraduate community may cause administrators to lend greater support to this initiative in order to develop a short-term solution to address an asymmetry of course information during registration.

### **Data Analysis Committee**

Samip Sheth

The data analysis committee uses data to inform initiatives and projects of the Dean's Advisory Board. These initiatives are rooted in data and designed to address the broader needs of all College students. They include student-faculty engagement, student-administration engagement, dining costs and campus food pricing, and a roadmap and database of work study positions. After analyzing the data, members on the committee discuss emerging themes as a board; with Dean DeTurck; and with other faculty, students, and administrators. The two-step approach to translate themes into initiatives depends on placing the data within the contextual knowledge and experiences of such individuals

The committee uses surveys, publications, and other resources from the Office of Institutional Analysis and College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania. The office of Institutional Research & Analysis (IR&A) is responsible for coordinating and conducting several institutional surveys for a variety of university sponsors. Penn's survey plan is a comprehensive program designed to assist in institutional effectiveness efforts and to support the University's mission and purpose. Data collected in these survey initiatives provide insight into the experiences, opinions, and satisfaction levels of members of our university community. The surveys we examined include: Survey of New Students and Cooperative Institutional Research Program Freshman Survey, Undergraduate Enrolled Student Survey (ESS), Senior Survey, The Alumni Survey, Survey of

Parents of Undergraduates, and Career Plan Survey Reports.

**Graduation Slideshow Committee**

Renata O'Donnell

The Graduation Slideshow committee is responsible for compiling a photo slide show to be shown to parents and students at the College graduation ceremony each year. All photos are generated by students in the College, documenting their past four years at Penn.

**Student Representatives on Faculty Committees of the College of Arts and Sciences**

Various Members

Committee on Undergraduate Education: Samip Sheth

Section Requirement Committee: Arjun Malik, Ryan Anderson

Curriculum Committee: Sarah Hinstorff

Committee on Undergraduate Admissions: Matt Foman

## Part 2: Issues and Recommendations

### Underclassmen Advising

Georgia Huang

#### *The Problem*

As one of the most important support systems in the College, academic advising is essential to helping students explore and find their academic paths. The College currently faces an issue with the effectiveness and availability of academic advising, especially with regards to underclassmen. Responses to the College Dean's Advisory Board's 2015 survey indicate that the student body is dissatisfied with the current state of advising. Around 35% of respondents answered that the frequency of communication with their advisor was too low, with multiple respondents commenting that it was hard to schedule meetings due to unresponsiveness. On average, respondents rated their general advisor satisfaction a 3.19 out of 5.

Student responses also indicate a clear request for more accurate and tailored advising instead of generic advice. Respondents expressed that their advisors were not able to give relevant advice as they were in a different department, rating the advisor's knowledge of the student's major a 3.02 out of 5. As the Student Council on Undergraduate Education notes in their 2015 report, "there seems to be some inconsistency among the answers different advisors give regarding questions about class credit, study abroad, and course selection," leading to an "information gap within the advising office surrounding policies and classes." Respondents also expressed a desire for their advisors to care more about personal and social issues of advisees, rating their level of comfort with discussing such issues a 2.64 out of 5.

As of now, the College has taken several steps towards addressing this issue. For instance, students may choose to switch advisors by contacting Dr. Tighe in the College Office, where there are also general advisors available by appointment. However, 51% of respondents to the DAB survey were not aware of this helpful option. Additionally, pre-major advisors are all volunteers who take on the role of their own volition. However, some faculty volunteers approach the role with more enthusiasm and commitment than others. This section of the DAB White Paper aims to discuss how these current solutions may be improved and future solutions may be implemented.

#### *Past DAB Initiatives*

- The Senior to Freshman Panel Initiative: This committee planned and presented a series of panels in September of 2014 that featured the stories of current College seniors including academic journeys, extracurricular involvements, passions and plans, social niches, and more. Newly arrived College freshmen were invited to the panel events to gain a better understanding of how life in the College at Penn begins and ends up for many students in a very genuine, small-scale discussion format.
- Pre-Major Advising: This committee aims to improve the process by which students are paired with their pre-major advisors by attempting to pinpoint the services and resources that students seek the most from their advisors. The committee was based on the notion that there exists a gap of communication between pre-major advisors and advisees, which

may partially lead to some of the dissatisfaction experienced by some students. The committee developed a survey that was sent out as a pilot run to 500 students, the results of which were presented above.

### *Past College Initiatives and Effectiveness*

- Peer advisors: Over the summer, the peer advisor program pairs each incoming student up with an older student who serves as a guide to the College. The peer advisor answers any questions the incoming student may have about academics, social life, extracurriculars, housing, and more. This is a great initiative, but many peer advisor relationships don't last beyond the first semester. Additionally, peer advisors reach out to incoming students to different extents. There is also a concern about the ability of peer advisors to answer factual questions about class credit or policies with accuracy.
- Option to switch advisor: Dr. Tighe is available in the College Office to help students switch their advisors. This is a great option that certainly addresses many current problems. However, this option is not publicized well enough to incoming freshmen.
- College office advising: There are general advisors available in the College Office for walk-ins and appointments. This is a great option for discussing credit units and requirements, but it may not be as helpful for major-specific questions.
- Major dinners: The college office holds a catered dinner for a different major each week in one of the high-rise sky lounges. There is usually a representative from the college office and one from the department. They speak about the major in general and then take questions from the attendees. This is a great initiative, but it is limited in its capacity to reach the student body if students are not able to make that specific date. Additionally, interested students may have questions for older students about the major that cannot be well addressed from a faculty point of view.

### *Recommendations for administration*

Short-term solutions:

- While the College offers the option to switch advisors, this option is relatively unknown to most students. According to our survey, 51% reported that they were not aware of this possibility. While working to improve pre-major advising, the College administration can also work on informing students about this through a listserv email, RAs, surveys, etc. Faculty advisors could be asked to inform students that they have the option to switch advisors at any time, especially if the student decides on a major different from what they entered on their application. This would help students find more appropriate advisors for their specific academic path.
- Similarly, colleges should also publicize more about walk-in hours for advisors in the College Office. If students could use this resource for general requirement questions, faculty advisors would be able to focus more on major-specific questions. This could help improve the

accuracy of information that students get, and faculty advisors would be able to help more in the capacity of a major area they know about.

Long-term solutions:

- The College Office could send out short surveys at the end of freshmen fall and spring asking students to rate their advisor. Advisors who are rated poorly across the board could be sent a basic file with tips on academic advising. Their advisees could be emailed about other available academic advising resources, making sure that no students are neglected by unresponsive advisors.
- The administration could develop a student advisor program by department. For each major, the department could choose 5 upperclassmen who are passionate about their major. A list of these upperclassmen by major can be distributed to underclassmen, who can be encouraged to reach out with questions.
- The administration could also make it easier for students to subscribe to major listservs. In the fall of freshmen year, students can be asked to check off all the majors they are seriously considering. They could then get subscribed to the listserv and find out about events at which they could explore the major further. It may be hard for freshmen to find out more about the culture or programming of a major otherwise.

*Recommendations for DAB*

- Senior major hours: While there are major dinners every week, not all interested students have the availability to attend. Additionally, these dinners often present generic information that is more useful to people who have no knowledge of the major. The presenters are also department chairs and professors who have not experienced the major from the student perspective. In the fall, a DAB committee could hold similar major “office hours” in freshman dorms with upperclassmen of different majors available to hold more tailored, personal conversations with freshmen. The upperclassmen could easily come from DAB or friends who are passionate about their majors. Freshmen may feel more comfortable talking to another student, and upperclassmen can provide advice in areas that professors would not be able to. Also, more freshmen might attend these in their dorm instead of walking out to the high rises for a major dinner.
- Senior to Freshmen Panel Initiative: This event was a success in the fall of 2014, and DAB can work on making this a large annual event in the fall for freshmen to attend. Seniors who are speaking can also discuss different academic advising resources, and a detailed pamphlet with extensive information about all campus resources in areas such as academic advising and mental health can be disseminated.

## **Awareness of Mental Health Resources**

Sophia Witte

### *The Problem*

Despite the various mental health and wellness services offered through Penn organizations and student groups, many students are unaware of issues and resources related to mental health on campus. In 2015, the University formed the Task Force on Student Psychological Health and Welfare to examine Penn's mental health resources and identify the main challenges facing students' mental wellness. According to the Task Force's report findings, Penn can improve its efforts by communicating the importance of mental wellbeing to student success, making information about resources and supports more accessible, educating and training all members of the community about fostering mental health, and optimizing the resources devoted to CAPS. The first three of these findings all suggest that Penn has the potential to better spread awareness about mental health information and resources, as well as instill a deeper understanding of the issue to all members of the community. Therefore, in order to more effectively and comprehensively support the mental wellness of students, Penn faculty, administration and students must actively confront the problem of mental health awareness that exists on campus.

### *What is currently being done? Is it effective?*

The University offers various educational, outreach and support programs through many entities on campus, including Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Student Health Service (SHS), Student Intervention Services (SIS), College Houses and cultural resource centers. These resources provide a diverse set of services ranging from counseling, advising and meditation, to stigma reduction, awareness training and competitiveness management.

In terms of raising awareness, the University has worked to educate all members of the community about addressing their own as well as others' mental health issues. CAPS is the main institution on campus that works with mental health awareness. To communicate its services to the general student body, CAPS engages in several outreach and prevention programs that include workshops, specialized trainings and peer education programs. CAPS works to foster a stronger understanding of mental wellness and strategies for identifying students struggling with mental health. For example, the I CARE program is an intensive session that trains teachers, faculty and staff to recognize and respond to signs of students dealing in distress. Between 2009 and 2014, the number of student contacts resulting from CAPS outreach efforts increased from 7,502 to 10,490.

There are various individual efforts to spread mental health awareness throughout campus, such as initiatives of student groups like Active Minds and targeted programs within minority centers such as Penn Women's Center and the LGBT Center. However, the many actors involved in this awareness effort need to better coordinate in order to effectively and consistently communicate with students regarding mental wellness. Therefore, there must be an active effort to centralize information about mental health and foster collaboration between all entities that work with mental health issues on campus.

Finally, to provide a truly supportive environment across campus, all members of the Penn community must be engaged in the movement to better understand and deal with issues of mental

health among students.

*Recommendations for administrators*

- Require mental health training sessions for all College professors.
  - Hold a mandatory orientation-style session for all professors at beginning of year, or require them to participate in CAPS' I CARE Program.
- Extend I CARE training to all student organizations, clubs and sports teams on campus.
- Centralize the marketing platform that the University uses to communicate the various mental health resources on campus. Hold monthly meetings between all providers of mental health resources in order to ensure coordination and consistency.
- Showcase mental health student groups at NSO through an event that introduces students not only to official resources like CAPS, but also to the more informal outlets for peer support networks, such as student groups and specific programs within minority centers.
- Encourage faculty members to generally talk more frequently and openly about mental health issues, resources, and organizations to students.
- Train College advisors to serve as intermediaries between students and Penn resources.
  - Since all students interact with their College advisor at some point, College advisors should be trained to know how to direct students to proper mental health resources or support networks.

*Recommendations for DAB*

- Enhance and expand “Deconstructing the Penn Face”
  - Hold one event at least once a semester, especially at the beginning of the year so that freshmen can better anticipate the stressful experiences that will inevitably happen at Penn.
  - Conduct a marketing campaign in the weeks leading up to the event so that it becomes a more well-known tradition on campus.
- Create mental health group discussion forum
  - Hold a recurring meeting between DAB and representatives/leaders from each mental health student group in order to foster collaboration and brainstorming about best practices and potential initiatives.
  - Also hold meetings between DAB and representatives from key campus entities that

provide mental health resources (i.e. CAPS, SHS, College Houses).

- Serve as mediator between CAPS and College student groups
  - Partner with clubs/student groups through the College to coordinate at least one visit from a CAPS administrator to come to the group's meeting and give a talk about mental wellness awareness and education.
- Plan an educational lecture night of mental health experts
  - Bring in a panel of mental health experts and/or students/faculty with mental health experiences to speak at a College-sponsored event.
  - Host this event on Penn Mental Health Day, which is designed to promote awareness about mental health issues and spur partnership between the University and various mental health organizations on campus.
- Create a comprehensive brochure that very simply outlines all mental health resources, student groups, initiatives and programs.
- Collaborate with artistic and creative expression groups to promote mental health awareness in an engaging format.
  - For example, partner with Kelly Writer's House to host an open mic night of poetry, spoken word, etc. that specifically expresses people's struggles with, or responses to, issues of mental health.
- Create guide/resource for taking a leave of absence
  - Publish and distribute simple step-by-step guide for students who may be considering a leave of absence
  - Create step-by-step guide for what students need to do when they are returning from a leave of absence

## Student-Faculty Interaction

Arjun Malik

### *The Problem*

We believe that student-faculty interaction is invaluable for the personal and educational development of students. It is thus quite disturbing that the Enrolled Student Survey (ESS) reveals that 74% of students report that they have “interacted with faculty less than they would have liked.” Moreover, the same dataset reveals that less than 23% of students report often “discussing post-college plans” or “holding intellectual discussions” with faculty.

When we look at possible sources of this problem, the first point that we must make clear is that faculty availability is not the major issue here. On the contrary, 90% of students are “generally satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the availability of faculty at Penn, and 94% of students report that faculty members are willing to talk to them on an individual basis.

This disconnect between high levels of faculty availability and desire for student-faculty interaction on the one hand, and low levels of actual student-faculty interaction on the other suggests that there are certain barriers preventing such interaction from taking place. For example, some students may feel intimidated by their professors and find it difficult to begin conversations with them. Or some students may have trouble making time to meet with their professors. We think there is a space for the college to design programs to reduce these sorts of barriers and encourage as much student-faculty interaction as possible. This will be the subject of the rest of the section.

### *What is currently being done? Is it effective?*

There are a number of pre-existing College programs that are designed to encourage student-faculty interaction. The best known of these is the “Take Your Professor to Lunch” program, which enables small groups of students can invite their professors to have lunch with them. A small number of professors, for example Luca Bossi in the economics department, have actively encouraged students in their classes to make use of the program. However, they are exception not the rule. Overall, the “Take Your Professor to Lunch” program is publicized quite poorly among both students and faculty. Although the program is certainly a beneficial initiative that should be promoted among the College community, we should also be mindful of a number of factors that diminish its effectiveness. First, lunchtime is a busy period for both students and faculty members making it a logistical challenge to arrange lunch. Second, having lunch is a fairly big commitment for both students and faculty, making it an especially intimidating prospect for many students. One DAB project this past semester has been the “Coffee with Faculty” initiative. It is a direct response to this problem of commitment – shorter meetings over coffee might be a more palatable alternative for both students and faculty.

Other lesser-known pre-existing college initiatives include the “Host Your Students at Home” and the “Take Your Class to Lunch (Or Dinner).” The hosting program enables faculty members to host their class to eat in their own private home and be reimbursed up to a certain amount per student. The second program allows faculty members to take their class to eat at one of Penn’s residential dining facilities. While both these programs have great potential to spur student-faculty interaction, they are massively underutilized. Most students, including DAB members, have not even heard, let

alone participated in, these programs.

The overall takeaway should be that there is a clear under-utilization of existing programs designed to bring students and professors together outside of the traditional classroom setting. Although the College does offer a number of programs to bring students and faculty together, the vast majority of students have never participated in the “Take Your Professor to Lunch” program or those similar to it. Our recommendations focus on both increasing utilization of existing programs and creating new programs that better foster student-faculty interaction.

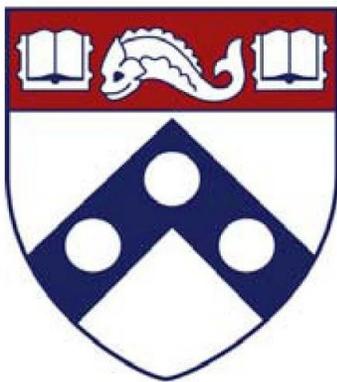
#### *Recommendations for administrators*

- Publicize existing programs and encourage faculty members to make use of such programs.
  - Could be part of a broader campaign focused on increasing student-faculty interaction and research collaboration
  - Quick fix: Simple email at the beginning of the semester to all college faculty and students encouraging them to make use of the programs
- Consider Expanding “Take Your Professor to Lunch” Program
  - This appears to be the most successful existing program in terms of numbers
  - Consider expanding to dinner as well to get rid of timing issue
  - Consider expanding to multiple restaurants to increase choice

#### *Recommendations for DAB*

- Execute and Evaluate Coffee with Faculty Pilot Program
  - We believe that coffee could be a better, less intensive forum for student-faculty interaction than other existing programs
  - Work with professors to hold coffee chats this semester. We are well on our way to achieving this goal.
  - Elicit feedback from students and faculty
  - Google form will be sent out to professors and students who participated
  - Discuss institutionalizing the program in the long-term with Dean DeTurck
- Focus Groups with Faculty and Students
  - We need more qualitative data on why students are discouraged from spending time with faculty that they actually would like to interact more with

- We also need suggestions on specific tools or programs that students desire that could better facilitate student0faculty interaction
- Help Publicize Existing Programs like “Take Your Professor to Lunch”
  - Use the DAB Facebook group
  - Put up links to programs on the DAB website
- Organize Panel on Student-Faculty Interaction
  - Panel of students and faculty members that can share how they got to know their professors/students and what successful strategies are for achieving that end.
- Continue Research in Class Initiative



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